

REPORT OF THE EXAMINING TEAM

Doctor of Ministry

CANDIDACY & POSITION PAPER ORAL EXAMINATION

Student: NANCY GROW

Type of Exam: ☒ Candidacy ☐ Position Paper

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Stipulations:

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NB: This should be filled out in triplicate and sent to the Registrar who will send one copy to the student, one copy to the Advisor and keep one copy for the records.

TOWARD CANDIDACY EXAMS:

1. A statement on the professional paper project.
2. The theological and theoretical foundations.
3. The research methodology.
4. The position paper.

Nancy Grow  
CTS  
February 22, 1982



## TIME AS A GLOBAL SYMBOL

structuring of time  
reflection  
projection  
rhythm

40 days THE PREMISE: The rituals of humanity have always been linked to some aspect of time, a kairotic moment, natural seasons, historical events and sequences, hopes for the future, transitions and phases of a lifetime. Change in the sense of time has resulted in changes in the form or overlay of ritual celebrations. Ritual has allowed time itself to become a symbol.

In our century a new sense of time has emerged or is emerging which is qualitative and relative rather than cyclical or lineal. It could, perhaps be called pluralistic time. There is also a loss of time, however, a sense of being unrelated to the past and cut off from the future, a sense of meaninglessness and emptiness of time. Time-space is rumored but not ritualised.

In the Ecumenical Institute we have been experimenting with rhythms of the days, weeks, quarters and years. I believe that time is becoming increasingly a symbol of our commonality and globality. But it is a symbol not only to be discerned but to be empowered through self-conscious and intentional use. If this can happen, perhaps time in all its dimensions can be redeemed in this generation.

time is an invention THE EXPERIMENT: Over a thirty year period the Institute has used time in many ways to enable the missional task, to increase family unity, to provide rhythm, healing and discontinuity. The time designs sought to acknowledge the many different kinds of time not by rationalizing them but by superimposing them. The initial work was done in one location with some three hundred people. We know now it was relatively simple.

When our work spread around the world, fourteen years ago, other dimensions entered. The general time design had to be modified in local situations because of the seasonal cycles or lack of cycles, the daily time customs of the people, the technology, the existing religious calendar. The daily rituals by which the changes of time were marked had to be re-written in the idiom and poetry of the local culture yet hold commonality and profundity. At the same time, the interchange of information and staff lead to the addition of celebrations such as the lunar New Year in virtually all our locations spontaneously. The pattern of changing assignments in August of each year built in an internal liminality as well. Preliminary study of the results suggests that in each location there is commonality not only in the overall rhythm and intent but also in the dynamics of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and dedication which are involved. As a result, though perhaps two thirds of our members are Christian, there is a similarity of style and outlook which I believe can be traced to the sharing of time.

When a symbol is shared, unity is possible, not desirable. THE PROJECT: It is time now to pull together the elements of the experiment and to see what has happened and how it may be usefully shared with others and thereby become a liturgy of redeeming time. The project will document the experiment regarding the actual time designs used, their relationship to the culture and to the global pattern of the Institute, and the rituals which mark particularly the rhythms of the day. The data will be gathered from three houses in each of three cultural areas: Japan, India and Africa, where common patterns and rituals have been in use. It will be gathered by the use of questionnaires and analysis of weekly reports shared with the entire Institute. Findings will be incorporated in the planning of the Global Research Assembly to be held in Chicago in July and further interviews at that time will reveal the adequacy or inadequacy of the conclusions drawn. At the end of July, the data will be further analysed and written up for popular publication in the Image, a quarterly journal which goes to friends of the Institute around the world. It's concern will be to suggest how the learnings may be useful in local churches and communities in redeeming time for all society.

in 25 pages? yes results + charts

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.

## THEOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. Liturgy and Time. According to Dom Gregory Dix, liturgy in the Christian Church had its origin in the action of Jesus when he

imposed 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 came to emphasize the training of confessors rather than martyrs and 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 First Day <sup>at the week (Sunday)</sup> and the possible coming of the Kingdom, Vespers at sunset and Lauds at sunrise, 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 considerably, 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 sanctify the passing away of earthly time. The liturgy now became not the work of the people but a work of the clergy on behalf of the people.

Whereas the canonical hours per se do not speak to humankind today, the



marking of time, through the day, the week, the year and the centuries, is a mark of all religious people. The Chinese year, the Aztec calendar, the Jewish cycles of time are but a few examples. The canonical hours have clues for the future in their phenomenological interpretation. Each hour was divided into four parts: the psalm, the lesson, the hymn and the prayers. The Psalms were carefully chosen to fit both the time of day and the time of year, and to articulate the states of consciousness of awakened people. Penitence, gratitude, longing, anxiety are all reflected. Almost in response to this came the Word in the Gospel or epistle reading. This was the anamnesis of the Good News over against the state of being of the worshipper. This dialectic was resolved in the hymn -- generally a hymn of praise offered as self-conscious decision relative to the relationship one would take to his/her situation -- and the prayer -- the free response of compassion and intercession for self and 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 experienced by all people when they allow the transcendent to inform the temporal and that they are a fair appraisal of the phenomena of the hours.

Both the canonical hours and the rhythm of the Christian year allowed people not only to rehearse the salvation story of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, but also to relate their own lives to it. For example, they communicated that it was natural and healthy to have periods of anxiety and repentance, of joy and anticipation, of being kings and of being servants, of grasping yourself to be chosen for a mighty deed. There is time to think and time to work. <sup>physically</sup> 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 ritualizing of the practices already common in life.

eg Erikson TAKE CARE  
Ph I what you care to do, to be  
II who you care to be with  
III whom you can take care of  
Dimensions of a New Identity

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. Time has become relative for all people who deal in any way with communications around the continent or world or who are involved in shift hours which rearrange the function of night and day. 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, to many people; relationships are fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying. The technology of our century 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.

2. An Ecumenical Theology of Liturgy. One great accomplishment of the Church in the past century 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 understandings of the religions of the world. Hans Kung is one who has initiated dialogue with theologians of other faiths on the rational grounds of the nature of God and man. Jaques Ellul has pioneered in the idea of the comprehensive "Presence of the Kingdom". John Dunne has approached the subject 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. Panikkar, of whom more will be said, has perhaps dealt with the issue most directly from this perspective, but from a theoretical rather than an experimental approach.

It is Panikkar, indeed, who points out another dimension of ecumenical theology. In the sense that theology is lived before it is written, he indicates another ecumenicity of our time. There is something magnetic, he says, about the enactment of a living symbol, and the mobility of people has allowed many to participate in worship beyond their religion in its native setting. Thousands flock to the Shinto shrines with the Japanese on New Year's day; everyone in the country, both Korean and foreign, attends the celebration of Buddha's birthday; 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 symbolic events seem to be becoming global phenomena. (See Panikkar: Worship and Secular Man)

The Global Servant Force of the Ecumenical Institute is one of a number of ecumenical bodies organized for the service of the innocent suffering around the world. Local pluralistic residential staff have shared for the past ten years in the practical liturgy of community service as well as singing, planning, working, eating and celebrating together. This is their liturgy, their service to God and humankind. In some 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

Secretariat  
for Dialogue  
a Non-Vietnamese  
in Vietnam  
builds unity  
on basis  
Wisdom Address  
based on  
common  
experience



directions by which the few who are now self-conscious about the issue might begin to discover the common global 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 the human 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. The insights of Victor Turner and Raimundo Panikkar are helpful in giving indications of how this may be done. They both deal with 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 including spontaneity and universality and the nigrics of internal movement.

But if the anthropological nature of persons<sup>and cultures</sup> is one pole of concern, another is the existential situation, the shared, real-life experience. It is my contention that the major upheavals of our time: political, sexual, economic; the global dispersion of races, the liberation movement in all its aspects, have changed all of life for everyone. Some talk of this as the situation of pluralism. Teilhard de Chardin spoke of it as the problem of the one and the many, a three-fold 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 problem 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. (Gray: The One and the Many, p. 156-7)

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 the 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.

3. The Contents of Liturgy. It is not possible at this point to say that certain elements are always present in ecumenical liturgy, but it is possible to point to dynamics and aspects which have been consistently present in Christian liturgy. Two of the functions, according to Hatchett, are anamnesis and prolepsis. By anamnesis is meant, as mentioned earlier, the re-living of the central event of history. Eliade has indicated that this type of event in living again the creation time, is a common feature of rituals in every culture. Christianity may be the only religion which <sup>as Panikkar suggests</sup> has moved the center of history into history itself. At any rate, the re-living of the memory, as opposed to amnesia or the forgetting of your life story, is a central part of liturgy and ritual. Prolepsis is the corresponding dynamic of living the foretaste or anticipation of fulfillment. The Eucharist held both these functions in one symbol. This same dynamic is found again, according to Eliade in the cargo cults and the millennialist movements. The expectation of prolepsis is in opposition to the lethargy of those who feel cut off from any meaningful future. Inherent in these two functions was the conferring of meaning onto all time. In this century, with the passing of the fear of the Day of Judgment, has passed also a sense of the importance of daily existence and activities. The "atomicity of actual occasions" has become the living reality of countless numbers who have never heard of Whitehead. Liturgy and ritual serve the function of relating these lived moments to the total scheme of life. I suggest, therefore that a third function is the thematization of actual occasions or the enjoyment of the immediate situation by relationship with the defining essence. This may be the reality pointed to in the weaving myths or in the understanding of entering into the life of Christ in Christian mysticism. I believe that some such enactment is a valid liturgy for our age.

The <sup>rubrics</sup> dynamics, as suggested by Panikkar, that are perhaps more specific to the contemporary scene are those of spontaneity, or the natural inclinations and responses of people, universality or the self-disclosing quality of symbol, concreteness or experientially grounded myths, truthfulness or authenticity, continuity or evolutionary <sup>development</sup> rather than starting from scratch, and orthopraxis or the ability to relate apart from extended contexting in tradition. These are the rubrics or external dimensions of liturgy in contrast to the nigrics or internal happenings. The nigrics of all worship, for Panikkar, are adoration or devotion including all forms of praise and celebration, knowledge or the intuition of the intellect, and action meaning the actual activity of people in every day life.

This at least indicates the breadth and scope by which ritual may be judged as adequate to any particular body of people. All this is only possible because ritual and liturgy are centered on multivalent symbols. Panikkar points out that there are already symbols which appear to be gaining global power and that hold within themselves the possibilities of being true liturgy. He points to such things as ecology or the earth-rise seen from the moon. It is possible that the earth and history-centering event for the twenty-first century will be not some ancient creation story but a new kairotic centering of the human story. It is in this arena that the research of this project will be the most innovative.



## THE RESEARCH METHOD

The research method will involve a number of steps and at least three phases. The first phase is that of implementing the project. It includes theoretical research, selection of Houses to be studied, and gathering of primary data. The second phase will be that of weighing up the information. It will include preliminary analysis, creation of screens for further data, and testing of emerging understanding. The final phase will be forming the paper and will necessitate the interpretation of the results and their application to a broader constituency.

The first phase will involve the time at CTS to the present and will not end until the end of the Spring Quarter. Many of the classes needed for the theoretical background have already been taken: Dynamics of the Sacred, Rituals, Ecumenical Theology, Christology and Cultures in particular. Some will be taken this spring: Religion and Modern Culture at the Divinity School, the Professional Paper Seminar, and hopefully some further reading in Whitehead and time after Einstein.

In order to select the specific Houses to be studied it will be necessary to compile some of the history of the Houses in Japan, Africa and India and to look at who is assigned there at the moment. Given the time left, it would be foolish to try to get the data from those who are not keenly interested in the subject or very faithful in answering mail. I think the choices will likely be Bombay, Naglapur and Maliwada in India, Kawangware, Kamwelini and Kapini in Kenya and Tokyo, Osaka and <sup>Sapporo</sup> Hai Oh in Japan. This decision will be made and questionnaires sent during spring break.

The data asked for will be in three categories: objective, reflective and interpretive. The questions will be somewhat like this:

A. Objective: the actual daily, weekly and annual time designs used.  
accommodation made to local customs, festivals, etc.  
rituals that mark the rhythm of the day  
the amount and use of discontinuity

B. Reflective: the most creative period for work, fellowship, spirit  
the key celebrative event of the past year  
the balance of individual, family, and corporate time  
the effects of the rhythms used on individuals  
the importance of commonality with the rest of the  
Institute

C. Interpretive: a popular name you might give to your design:  
the day of, the week of..., the year of...  
how is your life different from being on this rhythm  
what are we doing with this experiment, why is it  
important  
how does it deal with the various kinds of time:  
kairotic, chronos, seasonal, atomistic.  
why would we continue/ change what we are doing

In addition to this data the brief week by week reports of the key external happening, key internal event and contradiction to be dealt with will be studied and compared with the results of the questionnaire.

The second phase will be in June and July. The results will be analysed and on the basis of the findings suggestions made regarding the overall time design and the specific rituals to be used in the Global Research Assembly to be held in late July. This assembly

is an annual event which brings about six hundred representatives of the Institute from forty different nations together for a four week period of intense research and planning for the coming year.

During the Assembly it will be my plan to interview representatives from the nine Houses, gathering further data as needed and getting their feedback on the results of the study to date.

The final phase will be to take the total material, plus the evaluations which come from the use of data in the planning of the summer and pull it into form for an article for the Image, our quarterly journal. This will require diagrams and illustrations as well as text. It will need to be written in a way that both explains the depth of what we are doing and demonstrates ways in which this can be helpful to the many subscribers who are not resident in a religious house. It will answer the question of whether our time rhythm is a liturgy appropriate to our pluralistic and time-starved society as well as to the Institute.

March	April	May	June	July	Aug
STUDIES SELECTION + QUESTIONNAIRE CREATION COLLECTION OF DATA					
			GRA PLANNING TIME DESIGNING INTERVIEWS FEED BACK		
				EVALUATION WRITING	



## 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup> But again the Lord recalled

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 lead 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 <sup>different</sup> 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.

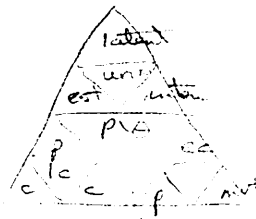
In this paper, then, I will first define my understanding of the Church, the Church as Mission, the Church as Mission from God, and the Church as Mission from God to the World. I will then give rational and existential warrants for this position and finally outline the implications for ministry which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

3.



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



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.<sup>3</sup> *he who is not against us is on our side* I would include within the definition of Church the self-conscious religious, the ones

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

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 task before us now  
if we would not perish  
is to our ancient prejudices  
and to build the earth

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-



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.<sup>5</sup>

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 vocated and therefore embraces spiritual discipline.<sup>6</sup>

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 rootage 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-

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

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 <sup>by</sup> 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.

## 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.<sup>7</sup>

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~~



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 Cantrell 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.<sup>8</sup>

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

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 ~~the~~ 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.<sup>10</sup>

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.

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.<sup>11</sup>

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.<sup>12</sup>

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,



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

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.<sup>13</sup>

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,

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.<sup>14</sup>

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.



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 a 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."<sup>15</sup>) These implica-

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.

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.



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.<sup>16</sup>

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-

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.

## NOTES

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14. Paul Tillich, "You Are Accepted" in Shaking the Foundations.
15. Oswald MacCall, The Hand of God, NY, Harpers, 1947.
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#There has been some criticism regarding use of quotations with "sexist" language. The writings were published before this was a question and I believe the concern was to reveal the personal nature of relationship with God. "Her" is just as sexist. To use the proper noun instead of a pronoun is awkward. I would request that these writers be absolved and their intent heard.