

On the Place of Liturgy in the Renewal of the Church

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When the history of the Church in the twentieth century comes to be written, a number of interrelated themes will surely stand out. The most conspicuous of these is Ecumenism, and closely allied to it is the discovery, or rediscovery, of the social implications of the Gospel based on a changing understanding of the role of the People of God in a secular world. Running parallel to these themes, reflecting and commenting upon them, is the movement of liturgical renewal which, beginning already in the nineteenth century, has now affected to some degree all branches of the Christian Church. It is the purpose of this article to draw attention to the significance of this movement and to offer some comments upon it. The article comes out of a theological college, where the writer is sensitive to the tension between the forces of liturgical conservatism on the one hand and the growing impatience (at times uninformed and inconoclastic) of young men towards traditional patterns of worship on the other. This is not an entirely new situation. In every generation there have been those who have found inherited forms of worship irrelevant and inadequate; and at the same time there have always been those who have valued the insights and spiritual dimensions which the liturgical tradition of their own Church has preserved. What is new today is the magnitude of the revolution in the minds of Christians and the urgency of giving focus and shape to new Christian attitudes and aspirations.

In an article published in 1964, Max Thurian, Superior of the Taizé Community, drew attention to the fact that the Liturgical Movement has now entered a third and presumably definitive stage. At first a purely 'Romantic' reaction against liturgical sterility, the Movement later went through an 'Antiquarian' phase during which texts were studied and forgotten practices revived, often regardless of their contemporary relevance. Anything 'primitive' was assumed *ipso facto* to be worthy of resurrection, and while many valid insights were undoubtedly recovered the Movement tended to be regarded with suspicion in some quarters as an academic playground for professional liturgiologists, for whom Liturgiology was in danger of becoming Liturgiolatry.

Yet undoubtedly some significant contributions were made during this early stage of the Liturgical Movement. One of these was the rediscovery of the centrality of the Eucharist as the corporate act of the People of God (a re-emphasis which affected both Protestants and Catholics in varying ways). A second result was the reinstatement of Liturgiology as a valid and indeed essential department of theology.

Now, in the view of Thurian, we have reached a third stage. The Liturgical Movement has taken on theological, sacramental, ecumenical and missionary dimensions and is no longer really a 'Movement' at all. 'The liturgy', he writes, 'has become a natural, ordinary expression of the Church's life . . . merged with the whole life of the Church, the liturgical movement no longer has any independent existence of its own. It is the movement of the Church (both local and universal) in its quest for a form of worship which is deeply but simply theological . . . and genuinely sacramental, i.e. really Christian (free from spiritualism or magic), ecumenical worship which obeys the great laws of tradition and benefits from the deep experience of the Church in all times and places, a truly missionary form of worship which everyone understands and which brings before God the universal mission of the Church.'¹

In other words, the Liturgical Movement has succeeded to a large extent in recovering insights which have in the past been obscured, and at the same time has opened up new dimensions in the Church's understanding of herself and her role. The liturgical life of the Church is coming to be recognized as a process which reflects and embodies her continuing relationship to her Head, rather than a series of texts imposed by authority for 'public worship'. This distinction is made cogently if cryptically by a Roman Catholic scholar, Louis Bouyer, when he distinguishes between liturgy as the '*official form for the external worship of the Church*' and liturgy as '*that system of prayers and rites traditionally canonized by the Church as her own prayer and worship*'.² It is the latter definition, he argues, which leaves elbow-room for liturgical development and adjustment to changing situations; and at the same time provides scope for the realization of the 'liturgies' of each and every member of the People of God, whether ordained or lay, within the on-going liturgical tradition. Liturgy is not an esoteric activity divorced from the life of the world. Since Christians are in the world, not apart from it, their individual contribution to the liturgy of the Church as a whole must reflect their experience as members of the family, society, developing nation, industrialized nation, urban agglomeration and every other form of human organization which

¹ M. Thurian, 'The Present Aims of the Liturgical Movement' in *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. III, No. 2 (1964).

² Louis Bouyer, *Life and Liturgy* (London, Sheed & Ward, 1956), p. 1.

one could enumerate. All these experiences are offered up in the total liturgical activity of the universal Church.

This rediscovery of liturgy as a function of the 'Church-in-the-world', rather than merely the 'Church-at-worship', challenges all existing patterns and traditions of worship; and it could (under certain circumstances) bring new dangers if liturgical adjustment to the secular world is allowed to obscure the godward orientation of worship. Liturgy would cease to be 'liturgical' in the sense that the needs and concerns of the world are no longer brought before God and offered as a sphere for His indwelling and sanctifying action. When this is allowed to happen the Church loses continuity with her past and her future and falls back into precisely the same error of allowing her liturgy to become merely a cultural expression from which the Liturgical Movement has in the past sought to rescue her.

This, then, is the dilemma into which the movement of liturgical renewal plunges Christians. Like other modern dilemmas facing the Church, it can be fruitful, if sometimes traumatic, provided that the underlying issues are faced squarely.

One of the facts to be faced is the self-evident truth (often obscured in the past) that, whereas all liturgical forms tend to be conservative, liturgy is called upon to reflect the developing theological consciousness of the Church, while maintaining its continuity in time. The conservative role of liturgy is enshrined in the proposition known to liturgical scholars as 'Baumstark's Law': 'the law of the conservation of the most ancient texts in the seasons of the most intense liturgical activity'; and until very recently an excellent example of its operation was provided by the Holy Week ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, which provided an interesting window into the worship of the Early Church but had long ceased to provide a comprehensible or theologically acceptable pattern of worship. Lest Protestants, with their less formal pattern of Holy Week worship, should think themselves immune from the operation of this law, it is worth pointing out that the traditional 'Three-hour Devotions' on Good Friday, with its hallowed emphases, is often an equally one-sided and inadequate theological exercise! This inherent conservatism is visible in all forms of liturgical fundamentalism, whether it focuses on a prayer book or an age-old text, or on the unwritten but tenacious clichés of some traditions of Protestant worship. (The present writer remembers a Presbyterian minister whose 'extempore' effusion every Sunday morning never deviated by a syllable, even down to thanking the Almighty for 'the gift of this lovely morning' when the rain and snow were falling in torrents outside.) Very often liturgy has limped along in the wake of the theologians, trying unsuccessfully to keep up, and failing dismally.

There are welcome signs that nowadays the roles are being reversed. Sometimes the tortoise may get ahead of the hare, and the time may have come for the theologians to catch up with the liturgists. The 1963 Faith and Order Conference of the W.C.C.

in Montreal boldly affirmed that the study of liturgy may in fact help theologians to define and articulate their positions.³ While the old maxim, *lex orandi lex credendi*, still holds good, and liturgy is (or should be) the godward articulation of the Church's faith and life, it is equally true that liturgical renewal provides, potentially, a frontier for theological advance and clarification. It is certainly a fact of the present writer's own experience that at parish level a liturgical revolution, carried through with determination but tact, can be a powerful instrument for arousing a congregation from the torpor of centuries and getting it to think of itself theologically. It also seems to be a fact that, at a time when the theologians speak with a faltering and puzzled voice, liturgists have something positive and constructive to say. In the past liturgy has often been examined theologically and found wanting. Now the ball is at the feet of the liturgists, and there is a case for examining theology liturgically. It would seem to follow from this that the study of liturgy is not something which can be relegated to a footnote in Church History but must stand on its own feet as an important department of Biblical and doctrinal study.

The second fact to be faced concerns the relationship between liturgy and Ecumenism, with its conflicting claims of variety and 'Catholicity'. If the movement of liturgical renewal is a true response of the Body of Christ to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, it is reasonable to suppose that the Holy Spirit is speaking (as is His wont) through specific local situations. In the past, liturgical patterns were freely exported from the West to the 'Mission Field' regardless of cultural consequences. (An illustration of this occurs in the fact that for many years the only form of Adult Baptism authorized by the Anglican Church in India was a drab little rite concocted in the seventeenth century 'For the Baptism of Natives in His Majesty's Plantations'.) With the disintegration of 'Christendom' and the rise of the 'younger Churches' the legacy of Western-style liturgies (or their absence) is being displaced by more suitable and spontaneous local growths. Are we to dissolve into a chaos of local experiments, well-meant but sometimes misguided? In the past, speaking at least for the Roman Catholic and Anglican Communions, scattered provinces were held together by a common veneration for a particular liturgical tradition. This was often stultifying and culturally deplorable, but there are those today who may be pardoned for wondering whether perhaps the pendulum is beginning to swing too far in the opposite direction, and that what we gain in indigenization we lose in Catholicity. Clearly, some new organizing and focusing centre of liturgical development must be sought.

³ 'Worship and the Oneness of Christ's Church' (Report of Section IV of the Montreal Conference), published in *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. II, No. 4 (1963), p. 244.

It is at this point that Ecumenism steps in to redress the balance and resolve the tension. If the Ecumenical Movement is regarded as a coming together to share in the fullness of the life of the Body of Christ, and the recovery of lost dimensions, the resulting worship of united Christians will be truly 'Catholic'—a delighted exploring of each other's treasures and a corporate offering of all that is best to the Lord of the Church. If, on the other hand, Ecumenism leads to nothing but a series of marriages of convenience, liturgical discussion will become little more than a sordid bargaining: a *Kyrie* here traded for a *Trisagion* there, a prayer for the departed there grudgingly exchanged for an *Epiclesis* here. No one is so naïve as to suppose that reunion will result overnight in liturgical uniformity, and it would be highly undesirable if it did; but it would be sad indeed if reunion did not lead to some measurable advance in liturgical 'Catholicity' (in the sense of a sharing of insights and traditions). In this connection it is worth recalling that Louis Bouyer, a Roman Catholic, described the C.S.I. Liturgy as being more fully in accordance with 'Catholic' liturgical tradition than any of the liturgies which the C.S.I. inherited from the uniting denominations.⁴ The acid test will be whether it continues to develop sensitively in response to new demands as a growing-point for the corporate life of its members, or whether it becomes a new '1662', fossilized for centuries. Equally we may venture to predict that the quality of the forthcoming reunion is N. India will be tested by whether or not its constituents love and trust each other enough to explore and share their respective liturgical patterns, articulating their new-found unity in Christ by a movement of liturgical advance. It would be tragic if, exhausted by the labours of reunion, they are content to go on wearing their old liturgical garments indefinitely, or decide merely to borrow someone else's second-hand.

In fact, once again, the signs are hopeful. One of the most striking features of the Liturgical Movement is the way in which it seems to cut right through the denominational structures of centuries. The most a-liturgical Churches are often the first to turn to old and tried models, while the most rigorously liturgical of Christians are delightedly discovering the virtues of a more free and spontaneous pattern. We have now reached the rather ludicrous situation in which, for example, a 'High' Anglican who attends a Roman Catholic Mass will (since Vatican II) find a much simpler and more clear-cut liturgical layout than he is used to, with emphasis laid upon congregational participation, modern speech and a clearly distinguished 'liturgy of the Word'. With the celebrant standing behind the altar, he will have an uninterrupted view of the entire action of the Consecration; and he will be dismayed to find that many ritual practices lovingly imported

⁴ T. S. Garrett, *Worship in the Church of South India* (London, Lutterworth, 1965), p. 38, No. 4.

from Rome by his Tractarian forebears have now been quietly dropped by his Roman brethren. In the (Protestant) Taizé community he will find the most 'Catholic' of all modern liturgies. It would seem that the liturgical frontier now makes many old boundaries irrelevant and provides a sphere in which Ecumenism is fostered and carried forward significantly.

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In the present decade the movement of liturgical renewal has left its mark on a number of key documents, and it is to these that we now turn. Taken together, they confirm the impression voiced by Dr. H. G. Hageman in 1963, that 'The Liturgical Movement is a new frontier on which all Churches, regardless of the rigidity of their liturgical traditions, now find themselves', and that 'the Liturgy is the most fruitful area for ecumenical exploration'.⁵

A convenient starting-point is provided by the Report, 'Worship and the Oneness of Christ's Church', published by the Faith and Order Conference held in Montreal in 1963. This was in fact the first time that a Report on Worship had been given prominence at such a conference and two things in particular stand out.

In the first place, drawing on the very wide spectrum of ecclesiastical opinion represented at the conference, the Report attempted a number of bold definitions as guidelines for further study. It was affirmed, for example, that 'Christian worship, as a participation in Christ's own self-offering, is an act *formative of Christian community*, an act, moreover, which is conducted within the context of the whole Church, representing the one, Catholic Church. Ecclesiastical division among the Churches, personal estrangement, and social division based upon class, race or nation contradict true worship, because they represent a failure fully to carry out the common ministry of reconciliation to which we are called in Christ.'⁶ In more general terms it was laid down that 'Christian worship is the act by which the Church recognizes its identification with the whole creation and offers it to God in service. At the same time, it is an act in which all presumed self-sufficiency of this world is brought to an end, and all things are made new.' It was felt that on the basis of these and other theses the conference should begin to summarize points of agreement about forms of liturgy. In the case of Baptism there was much common ground, but for the Eucharist the list of generally accepted elements is disappointingly vague. However, the attached list of recommendations (agreed by representatives ranging from Orthodox to Pentecostal) is sometimes startlingly specific: it

⁵ H. C. Hageman, 'The Coming of Age of the Liturgical Movement' in *Studia Liturgica*, Vol. II, No. 4, p. 263.

⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 244.

includes the more frequent celebration of Holy Communion, more active participation of the laity in the liturgy, and a greater emphasis on the Christian significance of Sunday and the great festivals.

Secondly, the Report considered the problem of indigenization in the context of the intelligibility and validity of existing liturgical symbols; and a careful distinction was drawn between superficial cultural borrowings, which lead only to a shallow liturgical flirtation with the surrounding society, and the much deeper programme of cultural 'sanctification', leading to the offering up of that culture and society to Christ:

'Just as faith finds its own ways of expression in worship, so the Church's mission involves indigenization, a process of becoming rooted in the culture of the people. This process occurs normally, and most authentically, where Christian faith and worship possess the maturity and vitality to appropriate and convert prevailing cultural forms for the service of Christ. In this way Christian worship not only takes root in the culture, but converts it to Christ and so shares in the reconciliation of the whole creation to God. We ought not to be so much concerned with adapting worship to the local culture that we forget that the culture itself is to be transformed. Indigenization, we believe, is more nearly conversion than accommodation.'

On 4 December 1963, only a few months after the Montreal Report, Pius VI promulgated the 'Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy' at the end of the second session of the Vatican Council. It should be remembered that, like all the conciliar Constitutions, it was the final outcome of years of study and discussion both by experts and non-Catholic 'Observers'; and in its final form it embodies the practical considerations of bishops concerned with pastoral problems in all parts of the world. It may be said to summarize the tested and accepted insights of the Liturgical Movement since its beginnings; and in particular it had been foreshadowed by the important Assisi Congress of 1956 which had taken place, as one Roman Catholic commentator remarks, 'right in the Pope's back yard and with his enthusiastic blessing'.⁷ Certainly the Constitution has far more than purely domestic significance: at all stages of its evolution the reactions of Orthodox and Protestant experts were taken into account, and it is difficult to imagine that any Church, whatever its liturgical tradition, can afford to ignore the text.

Some sections of the Constitution do not directly concern us here, being focused upon specific problems of liturgical renewal within the Roman Catholic Church's own tradition. Yet several things stand out very sharply about the Constitution as a whole.

⁷ W. M. Abbot and J. Gallagher, *The Documents of Vatican II* (London, Geoffrey Chapman, Angelus Books, 1966), p. 133.

One is its timing ; and the other concerns the basic suppositions upon which the whole document is based. It should be remembered that this was the *first* Constitution of the Council ; and that in itself is significant. Pope Paul himself drew attention to this : ‘The liturgy was the first subject to be examined and the first too, in a sense, *in intrinsic worth and importance for the life of the Church*.’ In an age when the Church is beset by so many pressing problems, this has seemed to some to be a curious choice of priorities ! Were the Fathers fiddling while Rome burned ? In fact, the choice of liturgy to open the bowing at the Council was not the result of an obscurantist preoccupation with inessentials, but rather reflects the conviction of the Council that renewal of the liturgy is basic to the renewal of the Church herself :

‘It is through the liturgy, especially the divine Eucharistic Sacrifice, that the work of our redemption is exercised. The liturgy is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church . . . Day by day the liturgy builds up those within the Church into the Lord’s holy temple, into a spiritual dwelling for God—an enterprise which will continue until Christ’s full stature is achieved [Eph. 4:13]. At the same time the liturgy marvellously fortifies the faithful in their capacity to preach Christ. To outsiders the liturgy thereby reveals the Church as a sign raised above the nations.’⁸

Here surely is a very remarkable recognition of the principle that liturgy articulates and offers up the faith and life of the Church in and through its Lord ; and that equally the liturgy is the frontier on which the People of God confront the world. For this reason the Council stressed the task of discarding elements in the liturgy which, ‘with the passage of time, came to be duplicated, or were added with but little advantage’ ; and while there is an explicit recognition of ‘unchangeable elements divinely instituted’, there is an equally clear insistence that there is much in the liturgical tradition which can and must be accommodated to the times and cultures in which the Church lives. The educative and pastoral aspects of liturgy must be clarified by simplification of existing patterns of worship :

‘The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity ; they should be short, clear and unencumbered by useless repetitions ; they should be within the people’s powers of comprehension, and normally should not require much explanation.’⁹

⁸ Abbot and Gallagher, *op. cit.*, pp. 137 f. The whole text of the Constitution is printed in this edition, with Introduction and comments by Catholic and Protestant scholars. The statement of Paul VI, cited above, is found on p. 133.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

But at the same time it is emphasized that 'in that earthly liturgy, by way of foretaste, we share in that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims'. Finally, the Constitution appeals for a bold and imaginative use of all that is best in the artistic and musical traditions of different nations and a sensitive embodiment of local customs where appropriate.

There are other features of the Constitution which could be cited, such as its emphasis on the fuller use of Scripture in worship, and increased delegation of liturgical functions to the laity; but enough has perhaps been said to show that, for the Council Fathers, renewal of liturgy is an aspect of renewal of the life of the Church as a whole. The Constitution aims neither at change for the sake of change, nor an antiquarian unearthing of ancient practices, but rather at a very practical concern for the life and witness of the Church in the present. Liturgy was rightly singled out for the vanguard in the process of *aggiornamento*. One of the most dramatic results of the Council was the quite unprecedented speed with which the provisions of the Constitution were put into practice, and the sense of relief and liberation expressed by many Catholics, both clerical and lay, when the 'new look' made its appearance within months at parish level.

A third significant document must now be cited. When the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches met at Uppsala in 1968 it had before it a Report entitled 'The Worship of God in a Secular Age'. This was, in fact, the first time the W.C.C. had discussed the question of worship at a full Assembly. Some of the delegates felt that the title of the Report was derogatory to the autonomy of the subject, suggesting that it was being considered only as an appendix to the discussion of secularization and theology. The theme of the Assembly was 'Behold, I make all things new', and accordingly the question of liturgy was brought into the main current of the Assembly and the Report was re-titled simply 'Worship'.

The Report recognized a crisis in worship, reflecting a much deeper crisis of faith at all levels of the life of the Church; and in fact a number of delegates felt that the Report was so much preoccupied with the this-worldly problems of the contemporary Church that it failed to seize the opportunity of presenting a more positive lead. It was criticized for lacking that profound sense of the spiritual dimensions and joy of worship which has given strength to the Church in times of crisis in the past; and in the end it was the Orthodox and Anglican delegates who secured the inclusion of a rather minimal little sentence acknowledging in worship 'the deep mystery which surrounds human life'.¹⁰ Judging by the published comments of a number of delegates there was a desire in some quarters for a far greater emphasis on the

¹⁰ N. Goodall (ed.), *The Uppsala Report, 1968*, pp. 74 ff.

'other-worldly thrust of worship to balance and put in perspective all that the Assembly was (rightly) saying in its other sections about the Church in the secular world. There was perhaps a failure to grasp the opportunity of bringing out what Dr. J. Meyendorff (the Orthodox Chairman of the Section on Worship) brilliantly described as the 'Paschal function' of liturgy, i.e. its capacity to carry us over from the old to the new, liberating us, showing us the Promised Land and (on the level of mission) giving to the world a glimpse of the world beyond. It was the Orthodox, too, in the person of Archbishop Anthony Bloom, who regretted the omission from the text of any reference to the joy of communion with God in worship. 'If there is nothing of this', he said, 'our prayer is sad prayer.'

Perhaps it was inevitable that in an Assembly reflecting every shade of the liturgical spectrum there could be little consensus of opinion; and in places the Report seems fragmentary and over-cautious. Yet this is perhaps a blessing in disguise. The Report honestly faces the fact that 'The crisis in worship and prayer among Christians in many parts of the world is related to the process of secularization' and that a great deal of rethinking has to be done. The suggested guidelines are, on the one hand, a conscious appreciation by the Churches of the continuity of the liturgical tradition and, on the other, an 'open' attitude to the world in which the Church is called to witness. Thus it is affirmed that worship must draw upon the God-given gifts and capacities of man in order to 'reach men in the depth of their being, and to bring them to know and adore the God and Father of Jesus Christ'.¹¹ More specifically it is stated in section 20 that:

'Christian worship should be related to the cultures of the world. It should help a person to be truly Christian and truly a man of his own culture. It should take the risk of indigenization. If the questions raised can be met creatively without compromising the Christian faith, our worship will have a richer meaning.'

The role of liturgy as a meeting-point for theology and mission is reflected in a curiously 'undemythologized' passage in section 7:

'In its worship as surely as in its witness in the world, the Church is called to participate fully in Jesus Christ's reconciling work among men. In worship we enter God's battle against the demonic forces of this world which alienate man from his creator and his fellow men, which imprison him in narrow nationalism or arrogant sectarianism, which attack his life through racism or class-division, war or oppression, famine or disease, poverty or wealth, and which drive him to cynicism, guilt and despair. When we worship,

¹¹ N. Goodall (ed.), *The Uppsala Report, 1968*, p. 80.

God shows us that in this battle the final victory belongs to Jesus Christ.'

Finally, the possibility that the liturgical frontier can offer a sphere for renewal and advance is suggested in the closing words of the Report:

'As man opens himself to the work of the Spirit in worship, the One High Priest, Jesus Christ, lifts up our imperfect prayers and worship into his perfect once-for-all self-offering. Only in him, and by the Spirit, can we offer our own selves, our neighbours and our world in ever deeper humanity and ever fuller joy. In our crisis we must pray as the disciples prayed: *Lord, teach us to pray.*'

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Whether or not this brief survey of a number of key documents published in the present decade supports the general propositions advanced in the first section of this article must be left to the reader to decide. The present writer is convinced that the following conclusions do emerge:

(1) Study of the liturgical tradition of the Church, and its patterns in the past and present, is no longer the concern only of a handful of professional scholars. Rather, in one degree or another, it should be the concern of the Church as a whole, since it is in its worship that the Church expresses its faith, unites itself with its Lord, and confronts the world.

(2) Liturgiology can justifiably claim to be a branch of theology, not an appendix to Church History. Through her liturgical life, rooted in a continuous tradition yet sensitive to contemporary currents of thought and cultural patterns, the Church seeks to articulate and interpret to herself and to the world the insights and debates of contemporary theology, offering them up to God in the form of prayer in and through the risen and ascended Lord.

(3) The movement of liturgical renewal provides a significant contribution to ecumenical dialogue, leading separated Christians to share their historical treasures and, through their common worship of a common Lord, to recover the shattered fullness and 'Catholicity' of the Church.

If these claims are true, it would appear that Liturgy provides one of the vital frontiers in the life of the Churches today, and that therefore liturgical study should occupy a central place in the curriculum of our theological colleges and seminaries, as well as in the regular instruction and building up of the faithful at all levels. This is, in fact, given high priority in the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* of Vatican II in words which other denominations might do well to take seriously:

'The study of the sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious

houses of studies ; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal subjects. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral and juridical aspects. Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy, as also the unity which underlies all priestly training.¹²

In section 19 the Constitution goes on to urge that pastors should promote the liturgical instruction of the faithful 'and also their active participation in the liturgy, both internally and externally', taking into account their age and condition, way of life, and cultural background.

In the light of this exacting programme it is deeply painful to notice that in the proposals for the revised B.D. course published in 1968 by the Board of Theological Education of the National Christian Council of India, jointly with the Senate of Serampore College, and intended to provide the basis for an integrated system of theological education in India, the only reference to the study of Liturgy is amongst the eleven optional subjects appended to the Church History section, where it is relegated to the company of 'A Study of Marcionism' and 'Ecclesiastical Syriac' !

It is to be hoped that, in fact, the study of the liturgical life and tradition of the Churches will come to occupy a more, not less, prominent position in the training of clergy and the instruction of God's people. Drawing upon what has already been said in this article, the following four areas of study may be suggested as basic:

(1) The history of Christian worship in the past, in all its manifold variety. Many examples of liturgical stultification will no doubt come to light, and the weakness and partiality of inherited patterns of worship will be exposed. This is a healthy process. But more positively, forgotten dimensions of liturgical life can be rediscovered, and allowed to cross-fertilize the contemporary life of the Church.

(2) The study of meaningful diagrams of worship. One of the architects of the C.S.I. Liturgy has written of the enthusiasm engendered in the Liturgy Committee by the timely publication in 1945 of Gregory Dix's *The Shape of the Liturgy*, which he describes as 'an undoubted *praeparatio liturgica*, albeit one which we hope we have taken with a grain of salt'.¹³ Certainly Dix's rediscovery of the historic 'fourfold shape' of the early liturgical tradition revolutionized liturgical studies in its day. One hopes that professional liturgists will continue to take all writing about the past with a grain of salt ; yet the fact remains that within the

¹² Abbot and Gallagher, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

¹³ Garrett, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

liturgical tradition of the Churches certain symbols, patterns and diagrams have stood the test of time and have an abiding and universal value. Ignorance of these may lead to liturgical impoverishment.

(3) The relationship of liturgy to culture. Here one can only reaffirm what was said in the Montreal 'Faith and Order' Report about the distinction between superficial borrowing of outward customs, and the much deeper task of cultural sanctification and transformation which the Church is called to exercise through its forms of worship in the local situation. Once again, a study of the past can shed much light, and liturgy stands revealed (as Christopher Dawson once pointed out) as one of the great formative elements in human culture. Without this much more profound dimension, much modern 'Pop' Liturgy appears trivial and transient.

(4) The relationship of liturgy to mission. In her liturgy the Church (like the diagram of the Cross of her Lord) reaches out both vertically to God and horizontally to man. Liturgy is surely only valid when it draws men into fellowship and presents them before God. Reconciliation, forgiveness, adoration and offering are all aspects of worship, and any means which can promote these is to be encouraged. Liturgy should be prepared to employ all man's organs and senses (sight, touch, hearing, reasoning; not to mention taste and smell), claiming the whole personality; and it must be presented in such a way that it is intelligible and meaningful and relevant to the life of the world around the Church. It is in this way that the liturgical life of the Church becomes both the vehicle of man's aspiration towards God and the instrument of God's reconciling and sanctifying action in man.

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