

PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY
OF THE EMERGING RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS OF OUR TIME

The topic calls for clarification. I shall begin from brief comments on the terms in the title, and proceed to a few tentative statements on the substantial issue.

"Prolegomena to the Study" What perhaps is desired is a ~~xxxxxtheperhapsxxxxxxx~~ framework within which the several contributions might come together. There cannot be expected any synthesis, for the contributions are as yet not available. At most there is possible a set of suggestions that might facilitate reflection.

"Consciousness" In loose usage "consciousness" is equivalent to ~~xxxxxIn loose usage "consciousness" is equivalent to~~ "awareness," "knowledge." More properly, "consciousness" is an awareness of oneself or of some aspect of oneself. One is aware that the window is open, but conscious that one is about to sneeze.

"Emerging Consciousness" Different lines of inquiry lead ~~xxxxxDifferent lines of inquiry lead~~ to different accounts of the genesis of consciousness. Clinical psychologists relate the emergence of consciousness to the unconscious. So Jolande Jacobi has enumerated the points on which Freud and Jung initially agreed with regard to the "ego" and the "complex."¹ She went on to describe Jung's later position which distinguished the collective unconscious from the personal unconscious and resolved complexes into

their collective and personal components. The collective components came to ^{be} named archetypes and were pronounced non--pathological. The personal components were viewed as modifications of the archetypes arising in personal history and providing a source for deviance. ² Speculation on the archetypes led Erich Neumann to a genetic history of the emergence of the ego, ³ and Gerhard Adler has given us a complementary case-history on the maturation process in which consciousness centered on the ego shifts to consciousness centered on the self. ⁴

In contrast with clinical psychology, the social psychologist, George Herbert Mead, has stressed the social origin of one's awareness of self. ⁵ Personalists have urged that the notions of "I" and "you" emerge as differentiations of a prior "we" or "us." And when the Marxist seeks to arouse the class consciousness of the workers, he is concerned less with the individuality of the workers and far more with their socio-economic reality.

"Emerging Religious Consciousness" When one speaks of the ~~xxxxx~~ religious consciousness emerging in our time, one is not thinking of the transmission of an already developed religion from parents to children or from proselytes to converts. Rather one's thoughts are about innovation. Settled religious belief or practice has been modified in some unexpected manner or measure. Concern with religion has been intensified or on the contrary has been relaxed. Interest in religion has increased where it had been slight, or vanished where it had been strong.

Moreover, inasmuch as changes in many individuals occur within the same period, one is led to suspect some common condition or cause or occasion, and so to look for some socio-cultural factor in the genesis of the new religious consciousness. It remains, however, that a change in religious attitudes can be authentic only if it includes some inward ground for religious commitment, and so while outward factors have their role, an inward factor is also to be sought.

The Coalescence of Outer and Inner Factors To distinguish

~~xxxx~~ ~~two~~ ~~factors~~ ~~invites~~ ~~the~~ ~~question~~, How do they come together? An answer is to be had by reverting to the distinction already drawn between the two meanings of "consciousness" and by going on to add a third.

This addition may be effected most expeditiously by noting three meanings of the word, experience, and by relating these meanings to the meanings of the word, consciousness.

As "consciousness," so too "experience" can be used as a synonym for "knowledge." In this fashion we speak of a man of experience, and we mean a man that has long been engaged in some trade or profession, some art or craft, and has come to possess a full and balanced knowledge of the in's and out's of his way of life.

But there is also a rather technical use of the word, experience; it arises in certain analyses of the various components that together make up human knowing; it would denote an infra-structure within human knowing, and it would contrast the infra-structure with a supra-structure.

For example, any scientist will distinguish sharply between his hypothesis and the data to which he appeals. To the data the hypothesis adds a supra-structure of context, problem, discovery, formulation. But the data, as appealed to, are not yet the infra-structure. For, as appealed to, the data are named; and the naming involves its own supra-structure of a technical language and of the scientific knowledge that had to be acquired to use that language accurately. Moreover, this supra-structure supposes an ordinary language, through which one advances to a grasp of scientific terminology, and a commonsense style of knowledge, through which one advances to scientific knowledge. So finally one comes to the infra-structure. It is pure experience, the experience underpinning and distinct from every supra-structure. As outer experience it is sensation as distinct from perception. As inner experience it is consciousness as distinct from self-knowledge, consciousness as distinct from any introspective process in which one inquires about inquiring, and seeks to understand what happens when one understands, and endeavors to formulate what goes on when one is formulating, and so on for all the inner activities of which all of us are conscious and so few of us have any exact knowledge.

I say that all of us are conscious of these activities, for our sensing and feeling, our inquiring and understanding, our formulating and checking, our deliberating and deciding, are not unconscious but conscious.

I say that so few have any exact knowledge of these operations, for while they are conscious, still that conscious-~~ness~~

ness is not knowledge but only the infra-structure in a potential knowledge that few get around to actuating by adding its appropriate supra-structure.

To conclude this subsection, // let us note a possibility. It may be that inner religious and outer socio-cultural factors come together to constitute a new religious consciousness inasmuch as (1) the inner religious factor resembles an infra-structure while (2) the outer socio-cultural factor makes possible, or begins to countenance, or expresses, or interprets the religious experience.

Further Illustrations of Consciousness as Infra-structure My book,

~~xxxxxMy book~~ Insight,⁶ is an account of human understanding.

As a book, it is an outer socio-cultural factor providing expression and interpretation of events named insights. But at the same time it is inviting the reader to self-discovery, to performing in and for himself the illustrative insights set forth in successive chapters, to adverting to what happens in himself when the insights occur and, no less, to what is missing when they do not occur, until eventually as is hoped he will be as familiar with his own intelligence in act as he is with his ocular vision.

What can be done for insights, can also be done for feelings. Feelings simply as felt pertain to an infra-structure. But as merely felt, so far from being integrated into an equable flow of consciousness, they may become a source of disturbance, upset, inner turmoil. Then a cure or part of a cure would seem to be had from the client-centered therapist who provides the patient with an ambiance in which

he is at ease, can permit feelings to emerge without being engulfed by them, come to distinguish them from other inner events, differentiate among them, add recognition, bestow names, gradually manage to incapsulate within a supra--structure of knowledge and language, of assurance and confidence, what had been an occasion for disorientation, dis- may, disorganization.

I have been distinguishing between an infra-structure of insights as discoveries or of feelings as felt and, on the other hand, a supra-structure of insights as formulated in hypotheses or of feelings as integrated in conscious living. Perhaps I may add a few random indications that depth psychologists are not unaware of the existence and relevance of some such distinction.

In a study of the Jung's psychology Raymond Hostie adduces evidence for his opinion that "Jung refuses to use 'consciousness' in the strict sense of the word unless he is concerned with contents which the subject relates consciously and explicitly to his own ego. In ^(- Out of.. ?)his own words, therefore, consciousness equals reflective consciousness." 7

Karen Horney appeals to "... the fact that there is no strict alternative between conscious and unconscious, but that there are, as H. S. Sullivan has pointed out in a lecture, several levels of consciousness. Not only is the repressed impulse still effective -- one of the basic discoveries of Freud -- but also in a deeper level of consciousness the individual knows about its presence... For the sake of saving repetitive explanations I shall use the term

'register' when I mean that we know what is going on within us without our being aware of it." ⁸

In similar vein Wilhelm Stekel wrote: "Our thinking is a polyphony. There are always several thoughts working simultaneously, one of which is the bearer of the leading voice. The other thoughts represent the medium and low voices... In this framework the whole material with which we deal in psychoanalysis is capable of becoming conscious. It is to be found predominantly in the lower voices. It is covered up by the other voices. To quote Klages, the thing in question is not so much a thing that is not thought as one that is not recognized." ⁹

Application of the Foregoing If consciousness has many ~~xxxxxx consciousness has many~~ meanings, so too will religious consciousness. There follows at once a basic clarification of what might be meant by "emerging religious consciousness," namely, the transition from lesser to greater luminousness, intensity, clarity, fulness.

For those that have lived their lives in the religion in which they were born and brought up, the emergence of religious consciousness is a relatively straight-forward process of coming to assimilate ^{the} available religious meanings, make their own ^{the} available religious ideals, participate with their fellows in ^{the} customary rituals.

But, as already remarked, our concern is with ^{an} emerging religious consciousness that has a component of novelty. Such novelty may be in response to social change. It may be released by cultural difference. It may remodel ~~various~~

any of the previously existing forms of religious belief and practice, or scatter into idiosyncratic particularisms, or move (enthusiastically or reluctantly) towards ecumenism or universalism.

On each of these something is to be said, first, on the social factor of alienation, next on the cultural factor of what may be named the second enlightenment, and finally on certain distinctive features of emerging religious consciousness in our time.

Social Alienation

Ours is a time of very large establishments. They are conspicuous in finance, industry, commerce. They have kept growing on all levels of government with its numerous, far-reaching, and intricate departments. They have extended into the intermediate zone in which private initiative has yielded to public concern for general utilities, for health, for education, for the level of ^{employment,} // for care of orphans, the sick, the aged. They are found when the adherents of a religion are numerous, their organization elaborate, their transactions extensive.

The numerous tasks to be performed in a large establishment generates the type of organization named bureaucracy. Policies determine goals. Procedures effect the division of labor. Standards settle acceptable performance. To spell out policies calls not only for broad vision but also for the detailed knowledge of the man of experience. An efficient division of labor demands intimate knowledge

of the tasks to be performed and of the ability of employees to perform them; and to these must be added the long process of trial and error or, alternatively, the enormous ingenuity that fits the many parts into a smoothly functioning whole. Standards finally have to be set not merely for the end--product but also for each of its distinct stages; nor is it enough to set them without providing suitably exacting controls.

The more ^{precise} // the policies, the more efficient the procedures, the more exigent the standards and their controls, then the closer will be the approximation to the ideal bureaucracy. The customer will be supplied with the very product or service that was intended for him or her or, on a further level of sophistication, with the very variety of products or services intended for them. It is the glory of the market system -- underlined by the ineptitude of totalitarian bureaucracy -- that it strives to meet demand and that it strives to adapt to changes in effective demand.

It remains that the large establishment and its bureaucratic organization is a fourfold source of that conjunction of dissatisfaction and hopelessness that is named alienation and foments revolutions.

For policies, procedures, standards are all expressed in general terms. Generalities never reach the full determinateness of concrete reality. But what is good has to be good in every respect for the presence of any defect makes it bad. My point is very ancient, for over two millenia ago Aristotle pronounced equity to be virtue and defined it

as a correction of the law where the law is defective owing to its universality. ¹⁰ Like laws, the policies, procedures, standards of a bureaucracy are universal. But unlike laws, they are not tolerant of equitable correction.

For such correction would have to be the work of those immediately concerned, or else it would have to be referred to those higher in authority. But to grant discretionary power to those immediately concerned would run counter to the purposes of bureaucracy: it would disperse initiative, interfere with the precise location of responsibility, cast doubt on the reliability of the product or ^{the quality of} the service. On the other hand, when the chain of command is from above downwards, any flow of information from below upwards tends to be sluggish, for it is apt to go unrewarded; unwelcome, for it adds to the work of those above; ineffective, for those above are unfamiliar with the situation below, less perceptive of the difficulties that are arising, with little insight into the solutions that are possible, and unsure of their own ability, if need be, to convince those still higher up.

Such rigidity is no great problem in ^a stationary society. But modern society is on the move. For the large establishment the line of least resistance is a judicious combination of apparent change and real stagnation. The product or service remains essentially the same, but the decor is piquantly novel and the advertising a fresh variation on the hard or soft sell.

There is a deeper level to the problem. As science advances by a process of trial and error, so too commerce, industry, finance enjoy no quicker or surer way to ^{greater} wisdom. As science

can operate and apparently flourish for long periods despite its mistaken assumptions, so too can operations in other fields where perceptive attention to data and openness to fresh viewpoints are less developed. For we readily perceive what we expect. Conversely, we may sense what we cannot as yet formulate, but sensation remains mere infra-structure until a relevant supra-structure^u has been developed.

It is true, of course, that the recondite constructions of theoretical science demand an exactitude that would be out of place in the conduct of human affairs. But this does not completely invalidate my point. A new scientific discovery announces, not a change in nature, but a defect in earlier science. In contrast, a change in human affairs is a change in the way people feel and think and act. It is apprehended not by the natural scientist changing his theories but by the journalist reporting what is occurring and by the psychological or sociological historian noting what ^{had been} // going forward. Is, ^{for instance,} / the maximization of profit a socially desirable economic maxim? Some say yes and some say no, but one may also distinguish. What was desirable in individual entrepreneurs at the beginning of the nineteenth century, can be disastrous in the conduct of multinational corporations towards the end of the twentieth. ¹¹ What in nature would be the evolution of a new species, in human affairs is merely the transformation of an institution. My point is simply that as diligent scientists can overlook the evidence calling for a revision of accepted theory, so too men of affairs can overlook the evidence for significantly changed institutions.

There is a further difference between natural process and human affairs. When natural laws are not observed, one concludes, not that nature has gone astray, but that scientists have been mistaken. When the legitimating precepts of a human institution are not observed, matters are more complex, for one has to reckon not only with the adequacy of the precept but also with the honesty of men. If intelligent self-interest has a defensible meaning, it can also be a cloak for bias -- for the individual bias of the individual that grabs what he can get away with; for the far more insidious bias of the group insensitive to the rights of outsiders and unaware that its own function has diminished or disappeared; for the general bias of mankind, at best ready to listen to the dictates of common sense, but impatient and even contemptuous of criticism that rests on a theoretical source. And ^{the sundry aspects of} this threefold bias, as I have argued elsewhere, ¹² can arise not only in the sphere of economics but also in that of government, not only in politics but in any of the areas into which political benevolence may extend, not only in things secular but also in things sacred.

The large establishment and its bureaucratic administration, then, suffer from four defects. Its products and its services are specified by universals, but the good is always more concrete than a set of universals. Its mode of operation is rigid with little tolerance for discretionary adaptation. Its capacity for the more alert observation and the more critical reflection that generate revised ideas and remodelled operations seem no greater than those attributed to the scientific community

by Thomas Kuhn.¹³ Its size, finally, its complexity, and its solidarity with other large establishments and bureaucracies provide a broad field for the ingenuity of egoists, the biases of groups, the disastrous oversights of 'practical' common sense.

I write no more than prolegomena. But if today social alienation exists, the bureaucratic establishment is clearly a candidate for scrutiny. Injustice breeds hatred. A monopoly of power and initiative breeds resentment. The 'black box' of vast and intricate complexity precludes the understanding that might set a limit to criticism.

The Second Enlightenment¹⁴

The Enlightenment -- it becomes just the first enlightenment if a second is recognized -- was carried socially and culturally. Socially by the movement that would sweep away the remnants of feudalism and a lingering absolutism by proclaiming liberty, fraternity, equality. Culturally by the triumph of Newton, who did for mechanics what Euclid had done for geometry and whose success led philosophers to desert rationalism and swell the ranks of empiricists.

That movement has lasted into our own day and still enjoys a dominant position. But, as it were, from within it there has developed an antithesis, no less massive though, as yet, it has not crystallized. To it I refer when I speak of a second enlightenment.

Culturally its first underpinnings came with the relativization of Euclid: from being regarded as the unique deduction of necessary truth from self-evident principles it became

just one of many possible geometric systems deduced from freely chosen postulates. Newton's mechanics suffered a similar fate when Einstein's special relativity was accepted; the necessary laws of nature gave way before Heisenberg's uncertainty principle; and the iron laws of economics could be ignored by Lord Keynes in the great depression of the thirties. Moreover, the new significance granted statistics replaced Darwin's chance variation by the probability of the emergence of new forms, while his survival of the fittest became the higher probabilities of survival. A deductivist world of mechanist determinism was making way for the probability schedules of a world in process from lower to higher species and ecosystems.

By rejecting pure reason yet granting a primacy to practical reason Kant had sought a middle ground between empiricism and rationalism. The absolutist idealists endeavored to bring about a new rationalist avatar, but the fertility of their suggestiveness was to survive with little acceptance of their abstruse systems. Instead there came Schopenhauer's priority of will and representation, Kierkegaard's surrender to faith, Newman's first toast to conscience, Dilthey's Lebensphilosophie and Nietzsche's will to power, Blondel's philosophy of action and Ricoeur's philosophy of will, with similar tendencies found in pragmatists, personalists, phenomenologists, existentialists.

This philosophic assertion of human freedom and autonomy was matched by a counterpart in human studies. Philosophies of history that dispensed with historians were countered by the German Historical School. Its ideal had been formulated by August Boeckh as the interpretative reconstruction of the

constructions of mankind. Its deep intuition was that meaning and values have a constitutive and controlling role in human living. Its procedure was empirical without being empiricist. For its basis was the total remains of a culture, whether linguistic, literary, epigraphical, archeological, numismatic; and its background was the whole of previous studies, grammatical, phonetic, chronological, comparative, critical, constructive. Its goal was an understanding that rose out of the data and fitted them in their entirety and particularity as well as was possible at any given time. Its incompletely successful theoretician was Wilhelm Dilthey who grounded the distinction between the Natur- and the Geisteswissenschaften.

While the approach to human studies through hermeneutics and history has never become dominant to the west of Germany, pockets are emerging in which reductionist positivism is set aside. Abraham Maslow in psychology belongs to a 'third force' that shuns both the experimental psychologist's concentration on the subhuman and the clinical psychologist's on the abnormal.¹⁵ Freud's mechanist assumptions have been exorcised by various types of hermeneutic.¹⁶ Talcott Parsons has stressed that it was not theologians but sociologists that put out of court the old-style speculations of anthropologists on religion,¹⁷ and assigns, as does Robert Bellah, a notable role to religion in the continuity of a system of social action.¹⁸ Finally, to mention a point to which we shall return, the correlation between brain waves and various states of consciousness, discovered by Hans Berger in the twenties, has brought to light physiological differences between ordinary consciousness, internally focused states, drowsiness, and deep sleep.¹⁹

Such in summary fashion is the second enlightenment. It is a profound transformation in mathematics and natural science. It is paralleled by a transformation in philosophy. It is complemented by the vast development in human studies stemming from the initiatives of the German Historical School. It has found allies in sociological and psychological tendencies away from the reductionist postulate of positivist philosophy.

Of itself this second enlightenment is culturally significant. But it may have as well a social mission. Just as the first enlightenment had its carrier in the transition from feudal to bourgeois society, so the second may find a role and task in offering hope and providing leadership to the masses alienated by large establishments under bureaucratic management.

An exploration of this possibility would call for another Encyclopédie. Let me just mention the pointed relevance of a single contemporary work, The American Condition, by Richard Goodwin,²⁰ and turn at once to certain features of religious consciousness in this socio-cultural situation.

Emerging Religious Consciousness

In his The Coming Convergence of World Religions²¹ Robley Edward Whitson draws attention to a thrust towards world community in contemporary consciousness. Let me quote:

Without parallel in the past, contemporary civilization is coming to be centered upon consciousness of man as community: the significance of man in personal relationship -- not the isolated individual nor the subordinating society... Perhaps this is the most impressive element in ~~the development of~~

the development of the first half of the century: materialist individualism, exalting the pragmatic good in the isolated value of possession, pleasure, security -- the individual as opposed to others, morally unrelated; and subordinating totalitarianism, identifying all reality in the will of one as leader, as consensus, as collective dictatorship -- the individual absorbed in anti-relational conformism.

In the latter half of the century we find that our choice does not rest between these two. It seems, rather, that opposition to both is stimulating an awareness of a positive correspondence between man as individual and as social: community. And an immediate consequent of even the most rudimentary recognition of human community is the further recognition of human unity, not simply in terms of external pressures and circumstances pragmatically forcing man to come together, but as emerging consciousness of what man really is, and hence the consciousness that these 'external' factors are not determinative causes, but dynamic reflections of the human condition.

Yet human unity... is still clearly at its beginnings, still mostly dream. But perhaps now we can see it as dream in the psychological sense -- a sign from within the hidden inward side of our process of consciousness revealing our fuller life history -- rather than a dream in the sense of theoretical ideal. The thrust toward unity in contemporary civilization is unique precisely because it has emerged in our consciousness from our real, experiential history, not from an abstract social theory. We can see this best in terms of problems. The sense of reality we have about human unity

does not rest upon what has been achieved, but upon the appalling problems experienced (and only partly resolved) in the first half of the century and upon the problems now arising as we seek unity. ²²

I have quoted Prof. Whitson at such length because he brings out so well the mating of external and internal factors in emerging consciousness: consciousness like the dream emerging from the unconscious as an intimation of a reality to be achieved; alienation both from the isolated individualism of misconceived freedom and ^{from} the imposed conformity of totalitarianism; the attraction of an idea only in the bud, of community.

An even longer passage would have to be quoted to do ^{the} justice to, remarkable consensus achieved in the meetings of of the Research Group on "Philosophy and the Study of Religion" at the last World Congress of Philosophy held at Varna, Bulgaria, in September 1973. There a wide range of participants, representing not only the major religions of the world but also different forms of Marxism and humanism and including the presence of the Moscow Institute for Atheism and Religion, gave unanimous approval to a seven-point formulation drawn up by our colleague in the present symposium, Prof. Raimundo Panikkar. ²³

Concurrent testimony could be inferred, I believe, from the widespread interest in the books of the late Pierre Teilhard de Chardin. Their appeal was not merely ecumenical but universalist. Their influence continues through all those that found in Teilhard the word or example that brought to focus some deeper aspiration of their own.

Less well known is another Jesuit, an Irishman, who has studying and been/teaching at Sophia University in Tokyo for over twenty years. His most recent book, Silent Music: The Science of Meditation,²⁴ continues his exploration of western and eastern mysticism begun in The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing,²⁵ and continued in The Still Point²⁶ and Christian Zen.²⁷ His trajectory has been from the interpretation of a medieval English mystic through a comparison of Zen enlightenment with Christian contemplation to the advocacy of Zen techniques for the promotion of Christian mysticism. He has frequented Zen monasteries and prayed under Zen masters and in recent years had made summer forays in America. His latest work begins from the rapid diffusion of the meditation movement, scientific study of brain waves and correlated states of consciousness, and biofeedback techniques. From psychic states of 'expanded consciousness' through their benefits and dangers he advances to an area that, as experience, is common to east and west, morally uplifting, cosmic in orientation but, when interpreted, takes on the distinctiveness of diverse traditions. It is at this point that we meet what, on the one hand, is religious in its distinctiveness and, so to speak, its essence but, on the other hand, has not yet become the infra-structure incorporated within an interpretative supra-structure.

Let me attempt to elucidate the significance of this virtual isolation of religious experience by placing it in a quite difference context. Some five years ago Dr. Panikkar wrote: The Buddhist would like to believe in the whole message of Christ, and he sincerely thinks he could accept it and even understand it better if it could be purified from what he

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considers to be its theistic superstructure. The Hindu will wonder why he has to join a physical and cultural community simply because of his belief in the divinity of Christ and in his resurrection. The 'death of God' theologian, or whatever name we may choose for him, will say that it is precisely because Christ is the Savior that he can dispense with any conception of a transcendent God or a physical miracle. ²⁸

Without suggesting that the 'death of God' theologian need be a mystic, one may observe that there is not too great a difference between Dr. Johnston's awareness of a religious experience that is incorporated in different interpretations and, on the other hand, what remains when different interpretations are removed.

Now it is precisely this common factor that Dr. Panikkar would take as the basic or starting point in his proposal of a "Metatheology or Diacritical Theology as Fundamental Theology." ²⁹ He holds that there exists "... that human primordial relatedness which occurs when dealing with ultimate problems." He stresses that he is not assuming "... that there must be a kind of objectifiable common ground or certainly universally formulable common statements." He continues: "I am only pleading for a really open dialogue -- one in which the meeting ground may have itself first to be created -- where in the very intermingling of religious currents, ideas and beliefs, a more powerful stream of light, service, and better understanding will emerge." ³⁰

A similar basis seems to lie behind Prof. Whitson's contention that theologians should promote his coming convergence of world religions. He writes:

The peculiarity of this convergence process is that we must not think we are leaving or abandoning traditions for someone else's or for a new construction, but we are bringing traditions into contact with the expectation that when they are no longer isolated we will be able to discover how each in its own authenticity has even greater significance in interaction with the others... We are also assuming that the historic traditions are being called into unity and hence that this is integral to their authenticity. The theological task is to discern this calling in the historic development of the tradition to this point and creatively to project at least something of what a fulfilment of this calling could mean for the tradition in question and the others converging with it. ³¹

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A context for these statements may be surmised from the fact that Father Whitson published Mysticism and Ecumenism in 1966 and Shaker Theological Sources in 1969.

Let us now move from universalist to ecumenist concern. In August 1969 the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches granted membership to the Kimbanguist church of the Congo.³² As representative of indigenously developing African Christianity, it calls for our attention and has been described by George B. Thomas in Idoc International.³³ The product of a Christian mission school, Simon Kimbangu finally yielded to a long and repeated call to preach Christ to his African

brothers in April 1921. His mission was to be one of greater fidelity to Christ, his preaching was confirmed by gifts of healing, and he attracted numbers so great that the authorities intervened. On a number of charges he was condemned to death on September 12, 1921, but this sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and so in prison he languished until he died on October 12, 1951.³⁴ The segregation of the leader failed to destroy the movement. Kim^banguists were persecuted. Masters of oral tradition, they went underground until such time as the black man could worship God in his way.³⁵ In 1956 it chanced to become known among the blacks that the Congo had signed the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Man. This seems to have acted as a signal. Organized Kimbanguist protest kept escalating until the colonial authorities capitulated to Kimbanguist demands. From December 24, 1959, public prohibitions and public persecutions ceased. In January 1960 Kimbanguist schools were officially recognized. In June the Congo became independent and its government granted official recognition to the Kimbanguist church.³⁶

Its belief is in God the Father, in Jesus Christ the Son, in the Holy Spirit, the witness of fulfilment of the power of God, the revelation in the Old and New Testaments. Simon Kimbangu is a witness as a prophet in whom the Spirit of God was manifested and has opened the revelation of Christ through African religious experience in fresh ways.³⁷

^{ed} Alienation^A by persecution and by exclusion from the Christian mission churches, the Kimbanguish church has developed its own native symbols.³⁸ It is elaborately organized but in indigenous fashion and under indigenous leadership.³⁹

The impression one gathers is of deep populist roots, a sincere Christian outlook on life, intense religious devotion, strong organization, and the readiness of a body, as independent, to cooperate with other christian groups.

SCHEMATIC FRAMEWORK

There occur experiences commonly named religious.

Their emergence into consciousness may be anything from slight and unnoticed to absorbing, fascinating, dominating.

Of themselves they pertain to an infra-structure, i. e., religious experience does not occur with a label attached; of itself it is not formulated. To place it in an infra-structure regards only its relation to its formulation; it may be above or higher than any other experience.

Any formulation is in the context of some tradition and milieu; diverse formulations reflect different traditions; as yet, the world religions do not share some common theology or style of religious thinking.

The long-term approach to such a common style would seem to be along the lines of Dr. Panikkar's diacritical theology and/or Dr. Whitson's convergence of religions. The latter adds the significant point that it calls for development beyond present positions.

At the present time specific discussion of emerging religious consciousness has to proceed on the basis of some convention. If it is not to be merely generic, it has to adopt the formulation of some particular tradition at least as a temporary convention. Commonly this would be the formulation most congenial to the group that is discussing or the one most relevant to the material being discussed.

When the choice falls on Christianity, the following points may be noted.

A classical formulation of Christian religious experience may perhaps be found in St Paul's statement: God's love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Rom. 5, 5).

As infra-structure it is the dynamic state of being in love in an unrestricted fashion, a conscious content without an apprehended object.

But its supra-structure is included in the account of Christian origins: God's love sending his only Son for our salvation through his preaching, his suffering, his death and resurrection, his promise and the coming of the Spirit.

The distinctiveness of Christianity is expressed by the supra-structure; and non-Christian religions may attribute to Christian supra-structure the formulation of its infra-structure, as an experience of being in love.

There is also in Christianity an aspiration to universalism, e. g., 1 Tim. 2, 4. Perhaps the simplest explanation of this universalism would be that (1) the salvation of the Christian is in and through the gift of charity (1 Cor. 13), and (2) this gift as infra-structure can be the Christian account of religious experience in any and all men.

From this basis one may proceed to a general account of emerging religious consciousness in our time: universalist, or ecumenist, or alienated by secular or ecclesiastical bureaucracy, or 'bottled effervescence,' or seeking the integration of religious awakening with a fuller development of the second enlightenment, or distorted by human obtuseness or frailty or wickedness or all three.