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## **Sociology and Religion: Religious Maturity**

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# Sociology and Religion: Religious Maturity

JOHN F. DOHERTY

**I**N a previous article we indicated that most of the scientific studies to date in the field of religion have not been able to come to grips with some of the more significant problems facing the modern Church.<sup>1</sup> They have contented themselves with measuring religious practice alone and have over-looked the problem of religious maturity. In this article, we wish to examine religious maturity in more detail by proposing certain indices by which it can be measured.

In his work *Social Relations in the Urban Parish*, Fichter set up indicators to analyze four types of parishioner.<sup>2</sup> The first type of parishioner, and for our purposes the most interesting, is the nuclear Catholic. Fichter also refers to his

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Doherty, "Sociology and the Study of Religion," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3 (July, 1964), pp. 473-493.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Fichter, *Social Relations in the Urban Parish* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 9-79 ff. In these chapters, Fichter sets up two criteria, namely, religious observance and social participation in the activities of the parish, to analyze four types of parishioners. First, there is the *nuclear* parishioner discussed above. Secondly, there is the "*modal* parishioner" or the "ordinary Catholic." This type is generally observant of religious practices and obligations but, though his name may be on the roster of a parish society, he rarely attends a meeting. Thirdly, there is the "*marginal* parishioner" or "fringe Catholic." This type practices his religion occasionally but does not participate in the social life of the Church. Finally, there is the "*dormant* parishioner" or "fallen away Catholic" who no longer practices his religion.

nuclears as integrated Catholics, "the core of the Catholic parish," "the most active participants and the most faithful believers." His descriptions indicate that Fichter considers nuclear Catholics to be fully mature religious personalities. It will be interesting, therefore, to look at the criteria Fichter selected to measure such maturity. They are as follows: "not only must they make their annual Easter duty and attend Sunday mass regularly, but they should also be people who receive Holy Communion weekly or oftener and who belong to at least one parish organization."<sup>3</sup> These four criteria can be reduced to two, namely, religious observance and social participation in the life of the parish. But, do these criteria really measure mature Catholicism? It would seem that both criteria measure one thing, participation, two distinct types of participation it is true, but participation nonetheless. When Fichter's variables are seen in this light as measures of either ritual or social participation, one wonders how they can measure a mature Catholicism. For ritual participation in the life of the Church, no matter how faithful it may be, is no index of an integral religious experience. Such participation may only indicate external conformity to prescribed practices motivated by a sense of duty or a fear of the consequences of non-conformity. Of itself, ritual participation does not indicate an awareness of the content of one's faith nor of the riches contained in the sacramental life of the Church and hidden beneath the external rites and symbols. In like manner, social participation may be merely an index of conformity rather than of maturity.

As a sociologist, Fichter realized he had to confine himself to the level of observable and measurable phenomena. In this he was correct, but he selected the wrong phenomena. One passing through a crisis of religious maturity may no longer be practicing his religion very faithfully, yet in his struggle for maturity, he may well be closer to a fully integrated Catholicism than one who has never faced the crisis of growth. The problem is to find indices which will measure maturity on the deeper level. In this quest a number of works on the

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

psychology of religion can be of great help for they have provided indices by which one can distinguish the mature from the immature religious personality types. Interestingly enough, a few ascetical work provide similar indices for measuring religious maturity. We shall first present the indices in a series of tables to show their relationship to one another, then after narrowing them down to five, we shall discuss these five in detail.

The first two columns of Table 1 present a number of indices of religious maturity taken from the works of the psychologists Allport and the Wiemans.<sup>4</sup> The third column of the table lists a series of fundamental attitudes which, according to Von Hildebrand, are structured in the personality which has been formed by the Liturgy.<sup>5</sup>

Table 1  
INDICES OF RELIGIOUS MATURITY

| ALLPORT                           | WIEMANS                                      | VON HILDEBRAND      |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| Differentiation                   | Sensitivity in discriminating between values | Discretio*          |
| Dynamic in character              | Social effectiveness                         | ———                 |
| Integral                          | Completeness of loyalty                      | Organic             |
| Productive of consistent morality | Consistency                                  | Spirit of reverence |

<sup>4</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Individual and His Religion* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 52-74. H. N. Wieman and R. W. Wieman, *Normative Psychology of Religion* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1935), p. 376 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Liturgy and Personality* (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1960).

\* *Discretion* and the *spirit of communion* as described by von Hildebrand include elements of *social effectiveness* and *dynamism*. So also the *moral consistency* of Allport and the Wiemans are expressions of von Hildebrand's *discretio*, *reverence*, and *response to value*. In fact, we might say that the traits listed and described by Allport and the Wiemans are expressions of the attitudes listed by von Hildebrand.

|                         |   |                     |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Comprehensive           | Worthwhileness of the objective from the point of view of all                         | Spirit of communion |
| Fundamentally heuristic | Progression of loyalties as lesser ones are outgrown and higher ones take their place | Response to value   |
| Reflective              | ————  | Spiritually awake   |

While the wording of these indices and their opposites differ from author to author, there is a great deal of similarity in their basic content. From an evaluation of this content, then, we can derive a simpler set of indices of mature and immature religion. These are given in Table 2.

●Table 2

#### INDICES OF MATURE—IMMATURE RELIGION

| MATURE RELIGION   | IMMATURE RELIGION  |
|---|--|
| Internalization of values   | External conformity only   |
| Ability to differentiate  | Inability to differentiate   |
| Relational—an end in itself—an “I-Thou” relationship                | Utilitarian—a means to an end—an “I-It” relationship                               |
| True morality—relaxed, integral, consistent with whole life pattern | Moralistic—rigid adherence to norms—overconcern with faults of others—inconsistent |
| Altruistic—accent on love and compassion                            | Egoistic—self-oriented—accent on in-group, out-group relations                     |

The indices of immature religion listed above are practically the same as the indices listed by Adorno and his associates for the authoritarian personality type.<sup>6</sup> These similarities can be seen in Table 3.

<sup>6</sup>W. Adorno *et al.*, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950).

Table 3

## INDICES OF IMMATURE RELIGION &amp; AUTHORITARIANISM

| IMMATURE RELIGION  | AUTHORITARIANISM   |
|--|--|
| Externalization-Conformist   | Externalization of conflict                                |
| Inability to differentiate   | Dichotomization  |
| Moralistic   | Intolerance of ambiguity<br>Need for definiteness          |
| Utilitarian—severing<br>religious truth from religious<br>authority among other things | Need for authority figure—<br>contains elements of utility |
| Self-oriented  | In-group attachment, out-group<br>rejection                |

The indices listed in Table 3 seem to indicate that the authoritarian personality, if a religious person, is also a conventional or immature religious personality. It is safe to assume, therefore, that the authoritarian and immature religious personality are one and the same type and that it is this type of personality which forms the basis for conservatism, ethnocentrism and prejudice.

The first index of religious immaturity listed in Table 3 is *externalization*. There are many aspects of this index which could be measured, but as used here, it attempts to locate those who would identify the religious experience with something akin to a feeling of good fellowship. This type of externalization is not unlike that which Allport associates with the authoritarian personality.<sup>7</sup> For the immature religious person, religion is something "out there" to be measured by attendance at religious services and by membership in parish activities with very little notion of personal involvement or responsibility. Often such externalization is manifested by what has been referred to as the "heresy of action." But the activity and involvement is on the external level and makes it easier for a person to avoid inner conflict and self reference. He pre-

<sup>7</sup> Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, New York: A Doubleday Anchor Book, Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1958), p. 379.

fers to think of things happening to him rather than as caused by him. On the deeper levels of his personality he is purely passive, incapable of response. Certain aspects of this index are contained in the *bahala na* attitude, which is not baptizable as resignation to God's will but is basically a withdrawal from confrontation, a passive acceptance of the status quo.

Many societies in the contemporary church foster this trait of externalization. Though their avowed aims are spiritual, they have become so involved in social and recreational activities and in money gathering projects that their original purposes are scarcely recognizable. Whether such societies effectively challenge the educated lay Catholic is a matter of speculation since no data is available on this at present. The active leaders of these societies are often good organizers who can be depended on to organize a fiesta or a raffle successfully, thereby gratifying their own desire to be of help to the church. The problem is, however, that these societies have become institutionalized in the contemporary church around social and economic activities and their leaders "tend to develop perfunctory patterns of behavior and thought"<sup>s</sup> associated with maintaining the structure as it is rather than in becoming involved in any of the more complicated problems the educated lay Catholic may face in seeking for a more meaningful integration into the life of the Church. Perhaps this explains why among the rising middle class in the greater Manila area numerous Christian Family Movement groups have arisen outside the parish structure. These young couples are seeking a more meaningful integration into the life of the contemporary Church and though they may not fully grasp all that this integration involves, they do not feel that their search has been rewarded by membership in a parish Holy Name or Altar society, the limited spiritual aims of which have become buried in a maze of over-institutionalization. By reason of their higher educational and occupational achievements, they come in contact with modern secular society on a higher plane than their less educated neighbors. As a result, they are more conscious of problems and difficulties as

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<sup>s</sup> Fichter, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

well as inconsistencies in their own behavior for which they are seeking solutions scarcely available at the monthly meetings of the Holy Name or Altar societies.

The second index of immature religion listed in Table 3 above is *moralism*. Perhaps the best way to define this index is to state that it stresses moral action apart from moral significance. Many Catholics would make religion an instrument the whole purpose of which is to help them lead good moral lives and achieve personal satisfaction.

Obviously there is a great deal of satisfaction for the average Catholic in having a clearly defined moral code by which to guide his life. Yet this can scarcely be considered the purpose of religion unless one wishes to stress the importance of moral behavior apart from its moral significance. Unfortunately the evidence indicates that this is precisely what many Catholics are doing.<sup>9</sup> They can tell with a reasonable degree of certitude what the Church is against in the area of private and social morality but would be lost to define very clearly what she is for. There is among Catholics an excessive dependence on authority even to the extent of substituting authority for personal responsibility in the area of morality. Obviously the mere fact that the Church imposes a moral obligation is in itself binding on all Catholics. Yet, the Church herself, while fully conscious of her moral authority, has always stressed the reasonableness even of the act of faith itself. She has been wary of coercing submission.<sup>10</sup> In defending supernatural revelation and her own teaching authority, the Church was at the same time defending the validity of natural reason and the primacy of the intellect over the will, the emotions and the instincts or any of the other faculties.<sup>11</sup> Yet, all too often in Catholic circles complicated social, political, and moral questions are reduced to simple authority

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<sup>9</sup> John J. O'Brien, "Catholic Schools and American Society," *Social Order*, Vol. XII (February, 1962), p. 84.

<sup>10</sup> Giacomo Cardinal Lecaro, "Religious Tolerance in Catholic Tradition," *Catholic Mind*, Vol. LVIII (January-February, 1960), p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> John Tracy Ellis, *American Catholics and the Intellectual Life* (Chicago: The Heritage Foundation Inc., 1956), p. 7.



statements of right and wrong buttressed by orders to follow a specific course of action. All too often, too, the Catholic tends to identify the directives of an individual priest or sister with the teaching authority of the Church and to accord their directives unquestioning obedience even in areas which lie completely beyond their competence.

This unquestioning acceptance of authority so common in Catholic circles raises the question of the proper relationship between authority and personal responsibility. An understanding of this question is crucial to an understanding of mature religion as well as to an understanding of authoritarianism which is nothing more than a resolution of the dilemma posed by individual responsibility under authority in favor of authority to the almost total exclusion of personal responsibility or involvement.

Mature Catholicism cannot be developed by passive acceptance nor can a mature Christian ever be free of the burden of personal decision. Yet, too often, Catholics are willing to have their thinking done for them. "The truth is, however, that no one—not even God—can do a man's thinking for him, for to refuse to think would be to refuse to be a man. In evading an issue, man still makes a personal choice, though that choice is reduced to a kind of negative quantity and man uses his humanity in order to be less a man and more a victim of his environment. All men in authority and responsibility, whether in Church or State or Society, have the duty of leading within the measure of their authority and preparing the way for others. But in the end it is the individual person himself who lives and who in living should apply to each unique and unrepeatable occasion the knowledge and training which he has acquired. He and he alone has to make the choice."<sup>12</sup>

An acute dilemma faces the Catholic Church due to the fact that so many of its members rely excessively on authority. The dilemma has been summed up acutely by Michael de la Bedoyère as follows:

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<sup>12</sup> Michael de la Bedoyère *Christianity in the Market-place* (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1944), p. 58.

Even though the Church is divinely protected and even though the teaching remains the same, the tone or character of the Church as represented by the body of Christians changes from age to age and even from place to place. Always unique personal adjustments or decisions are being taken by popes, taken by bishops, taken by priests, taken by lay folk, taken by saints, taken by sinners. But if there is a constant habit on the part of Catholics, and often of other Christians to make these decisions passively or negatively by reference solely to higher authority, *by the wooden application of spiritual or even moral rules of thumb*, there will be a progressive tendency for the whole body of Christians to fall back more and more on the strongest and most obvious and simplest influences. The center of gravity of Christian action will move slowly but steadily, in one—and that the safest and most conservative—direction. The Church will tend, or seem to tend, to use the modern jargon, to be ‘escapist,’ to evade rather than to face the full responsibilities of the times.

This, it seems to me, is what does take place. The formal knowledge of God, the abstract pattern of order with its simple code of conduct, is so strong in the Church that the habitual action, the mode, the atmosphere of Christian life is more and more weighed in one direction, that of a closed supernatural and moral system. And, as a consequence, the life of the Church tends to lose its dynamism and spontaneity and contact with ordinary living and ordinary ideas. Thus even among Catholics there can be a wide gap between a state in which they habitually judge on wrong motives, or refuse to judge for themselves at all if they can help it, and a state in which they consciously and responsibly seek to judge in terms of the Christian ideal applied to the world around them.<sup>13</sup>

There is no question here of the doctrine or of the authority of the Church for the question of error does not arise. The real issue posed by the above quotation is how can the members of the Church best use the knowledge and grace God is giving them. For even though an action may be a correct one, the ideal is not to act because one is ordered to do so by authority but rather to act because one sees for oneself in the light of the Church’s authority that the action is right.<sup>14</sup>

The proper understanding of the relationship between authority and personal responsibility is crucial to an understanding of the proper place of the laity in the Church. Lay

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59 ff.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

initiative often provokes reactions on the part of authority figures in the Church to assert their authority and affirm the subordinate position of the laity. Though natural, such a reaction would scarcely be enlightened. The laity will always be a subordinate order in the Church. This does not mean, however, that they must be passive. What they are seeking is a fuller consciousness of being organically active members of the Church in fact as well as by right. As Arnold Toynbee has shrewdly observed, "a proletarian is not made by being in a subordinate condition, but by living in a society of which he does not feel himself to be an active member with his own rights."<sup>15</sup> Admittedly the relationship between authority and personal responsibility is a difficult one. It is scarcely rendered less difficult, however, by the overextension of authority or the virtual denial of responsibility or personal involvement on the part of those subject to authority.

The third index of religious immaturity is *self-orientation*. The index of self-orientation is closely related to moralism and much of what we have said above applies here. The particular focus of this index is the self-enclosed ego, one's own consolation or happiness. The self-oriented individual would effectively manipulate God to his own advantage. This essentially egocentric attitude is, as von Hildebrand has pointed out, "tragic."<sup>16</sup> For the more one seeks personal satisfaction, the less he will obtain it, the reason being that only when a response to value is given to its object purely because it is a value can a fullness in value be achieved.<sup>17</sup> Without this response, reverence is impossible. Yet, it is in the reverent attitude alone that man takes into account his essentially receptive character as a created being. The ultimate grandeur of man is to be *capax Dei*. It is the fact that man can essentially transcend himself that distinguishes him from the plant and animal. Yet the egocentric individual refuses to trans-

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Yves M. J. Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, trans. Donald Attwater (Westminster, Md.: The Newman Press, 1959), p. xxvii.

<sup>16</sup> Von Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 50 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

cent himself and by so doing refuses to recognize his fundamental condition as a man.

Much in modern Catholicism encourages this egocentrism. The passivity and silence at Mass help an individual to close himself off in his little world and isolate himself in everything but physical presence from his fellow worshippers. The cult of novenas with their emphasis on favors requested and favors received. The stress on personal morality to the neglect of social obligations, the isolation of Catholics from the world of secular thought and finally their loss of a sense of quest, all combine to turn the average Catholic in on himself and inhibit mature religious development.

The fourth index of religious immaturity is an *inability to differentiate*. This inability to differentiate most often manifests itself in a desire for over-simplification and in a tendency to dichotomize. It describes the need for firm, simple, categorical solutions to complex moral and religious questions. For those given to over-simplification, reality falls into clear-cut dichotomies. Everything is either black or white, true or false, right or wrong. There is no middle ground. They seek premature closure on every question, often to the neglect of reality. There is a natural human desire to avoid as much as possible uncertainty in any area. This can often be done quite easily by fitting any new experience into convenient readily available categories. Such a procedure has the added advantage of helping one to deal with the new experience quickly where action is indicated.<sup>18</sup> The process of categorization is facilitated by large segments of the mass communication media which are forced to resort to such over-simplified categories in their coverage of current events. The Catholic press is no exception to this all too human categorizing tendency and it generally facilitates the process of simplification for the average Catholic. These categorizations, whether in the Catholic press or elsewhere, have the apparent value of giving the uninformed a ready made position on many diverse issues, without putting them to the trouble of checking the facts for themselves. Facts are often hard to come by and

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<sup>18</sup> Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice*, p. 19 ff.

harder still to interpret. Often, too, there are conflicting facts not easily subsumed into any clear pattern. The greater one's need, therefore, for immediate solutions, the less ready one is to evaluate the evidence based on such facts. This is where Catholics can be particularly vulnerable. They possess the truth of revelation. They have a clearly defined code of moral principles particularly well defined and elaborated in the areas of personal and family life. Finally, there is a divinely constituted authority to interpret the truths of revelation and to help in applying the moral principles flowing therefrom to concrete situations. In the ordinary, uncomplicated moral problems of everyday personal and family life, therefore, answers are readily available.<sup>19</sup> Immediate solutions are easily had and Catholic education tends to emphasize their availability.<sup>20</sup> The danger is that a pattern is established where such solutions are expected and produced when they are not otherwise available. Such solutions take the form of erecting categories which circumscribe "good" and "evil" within the connotations provided by convenient levels.

These categories, once formed, provide some degree of security in dealing with complex realities. Often, however, they are stereotypes quite resistant to the existential realities of the concrete situation they attempt to define. Such stereotypes are particularly useful in identifying opponents since their emotional overtones tend to make one conscious of whom or what he is against. In addition, they help one to dispense with the necessity of examining one's own position on a given issue or of defining very clearly what one is for. It is generally enough to be against something. What one is against is irrelevant. It can be indecent movies, pornographic literature, immorality in art, secularism or communism. As long as such individuals are aggressively defensive, they feel they are solving pressing problems. Evidence contrary to the position they are defending at the time is disregarded. For the individual attuned to simple solutions is not equipped to face the possibility of a complex solution or what can be even more dis-

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<sup>19</sup> Bernard P. Dauenhauer, "Our Untaught Teachings," *The Commonweal*, Vol. LXXV (February 2, 1961), p. 492.

<sup>20</sup> O'Brien, *op. cit.* p. 87.

concerting, the possibility of no solution at all. It is always easy to be for truth and goodness and to label one's opponents as dishonest or insincere. Such a dichotomy, however, betrays little insight into the nature of truth or of the laborious process by which it is attained. All truth is not absolute nor is it crystal clear. Allowance must always be made for the sincere convictions of those who may be in error as well as for the hard won positions of those who may not be quite sure of where the truth lies on any particular issue.

The tendency to dichotomize leads to a number of interesting anomalies found not infrequently in Catholic circles, such as the individual who is for the truth but against its deeper implications, or the individual who in erecting his defences against the so-called secularist influences in Philippine culture becomes so enmeshed in the material advantage brought by these influences that he is unable to affirm his own spiritual beliefs with any conviction.

The final index of religious immaturity is *utilitarianism*. When religion is considered as a means to one's own personal satisfaction, this index would be similar to that of self-orientation discussed above. This index, however, is much broader than self-orientation in as much as it would place the importance of religion not merely in its potential for satisfying the individual but in the contribution that it can make to the on-going life of society. The familiar "religion is part of the Philippine way of life" theme, as it is often interpreted, means that religion provides a useful support for the civic values Filipinos consider important. This preoccupation with the personal and social uses of religion looks upon religion as little more than a means to achieving ends other than the ends of religion itself. Though never so stated, the attempt is made to press God into the service of the Philippine way of life rather than to interest Filipinos in the service of God. There is, however, another side of the coin and that is the attempt to identify all that is Philippine with religion and to relate unbelief to treason. An interesting example of the former is the way *bahala na* is often baptized as resignation to God's will. The latter identification of unbelief with something akin

to treason should be of concern to many Catholics. The process by which the identification takes place has been described very well by Professor O'Dea:

As religion becomes institutionalized, it comes to be a repository of many of the values from which the on-going life of society derives its meaning and its sense of legitimation. Thus, the maintenance of the religious belief becomes almost inextricably intertwined with the problems of political stability and public order. However, since religion is dependent upon interior disposition, and since that disposition may in fact be weak among the merely nominally religious, there is always present the subtle temptation for religious leaders, defining their task in a way typical of institutional functionaries, to avail themselves of the close connection between religion and general cultural values, especially public order, to reinforce the position of religious beliefs with external props.<sup>21</sup>

One such prop found useful in recent years to reinforce religious beliefs among Catholics has been the threat of Communism.

Religion which is true to itself will always be an effective barrier against Communism. The point is, however, whether religion which is an instrument of society can be true to itself. Can it bear effective witness? Can it fulfill its prophetic functions? Can it clearly and forcefully assert its values? Can it speak out against evil in every form and by whomever practiced, or is it only interested in the evil it conceives as threatening the security of the Philippine way of life? All these questions pose a more important question for the Church in the Philippines, namely, what does religion mean to its practitioners? The question is not a simple one. Though it will undoubtedly vary with age, sex and educational background, it will also be conditioned in large part by the values found in a particular culture.

To indicate what we mean by this, it might be well to say a word about the religious experience. The Abbé Jean Mouroux in his book *The Christian Experiences*<sup>22</sup> distinguishes

<sup>21</sup> Thomas O'Dea, "The Crisis in Christendom: A Sociological Perspective." Unpublished lecture delivered at Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland, November 6, 1957.

<sup>22</sup> Jean Mouroux, *The Christian Experience*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Word, 1954).

three levels of experience. The first level he calls the *empirical*. On this level one finds all experience that is merely endured, which remains uncriticized, which is not brought into the open nor worked through but which becomes arrested or solidified almost immediately. Experience on this level is partial or superficial. More accurately what one finds here are the elements of experience rather than experience itself. Experience on this level is passive, unfree, undifferentiated. It merely impinges on man and is as impersonal as anything can possibly be.

The second level mentioned by Mouroux is the *experimental* level. This is the conscious, intentional level which deals with those elements of experience which can be measured, manipulated, coordinated, and ultimately construed into the world of science. This is the level of means-ends rationality. On this level man not only endures reality but manipulates it to achieve goals.

The third level of experience is the *experiential*. This is the level of personal experience in the fullest sense of the word. It is at this level alone that an experience is understood in its personal totality, with all its structural elements and all its motivating principles, built up and grasped in a clear consciousness that is in full possession of self and that can transcend itself in giving to others. On this level alone, man reaches his full potentiality as a responding being for it is only on this level that man opens himself to others and allows himself to be penetrated and enriched.

The religious experience is on this third level. It is, therefore, a supremely structured experience, the act of a person delivering himself up to God who is calling him. As such it is an integrating experience involving the entire person—intellect, will, and emotions.

In this experience man responds to God as he is, embedded in a concrete social, cultural, and historical situation. To transcend himself, therefore, he must be capable of transcending those social and cultural elements that would keep him purely on the level of passivity or of manipulation.



The more highly technical societies with the urge to dominate and control nature predispose their members to the experimental level of experience, that is, the level of means-ends rationality. The tendency here is to manipulate religion, to press it into the service of achievement. In the more traditional societies, on the other hand, with their emphasis on harmony and subjection to nature, the tendency is toward passivity, i.e., to remain on the empirical level of experience as described by Mouroux.

Two recent studies provide a great deal of insight into those elements in Philippine culture which, unless they are understood, tend to block religious experience on the deeper level. Bulatao, in a recent article in *Philippine Studies*, indicates that *hiyâ* as experienced in Philippine culture is really a mechanism for protecting the *unindividuated ego*. Psychologically, the unindividuated person "remains a diffuse part of a greater whole."<sup>23</sup> Such a person "is embedded in his own social group and will seek security in the familiar."<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, "he will feel great anxiety as soon as he feels the familiar supports withdrawn and he is thrown to the task of solving a problem as an individual."<sup>25</sup> These personality characteristics common in Philippine culture<sup>26</sup> can prevent an individual from ever really opening himself to others. He may accept them or manipulate them from the security of the group but he does not allow them to reveal themselves to him nor does he respond to them as persons. This being the case, it becomes very difficult to relate oneself to God in a fully personal way for one is not disposed to open oneself to God nor to allow God to reveal Himself to him. Until such a person transcends the level of *hiyâ*, it would seem that he will remain incapable of experiencing on the deeper level or of making the kind of personal commitment which religion of its very nature demands. Religion for him will always be a group af-

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<sup>23</sup> Jaime Bulatao, "Hiyâ," *Philippine Studies*, Vol. XII, No. 3 (July, 1964), p. 433 ff.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 431.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 433.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 435 ff.

fair and the religious institution will be a haven for security rather than a channel for mediating the sacred.

In an analysis of the Philippine personality through literature, Lumbera provides further insight into the cultural factors which can inhibit experience at this deeper level.<sup>27</sup> He states:

By correlating the temper of the Tagalog writer and the usual themes that he uses, we may arrive at certain conjectures about the Filipino personality. Principally, it may be noted that the Filipino seems loath to 'disturb the universe' by a close scrutiny of the divine plan or of the human order. In general, there is a passive acceptance of the *status quo*, not because it is the best of all possible arrangements but because any change is bound to come when it will. Such 'optimistic fatalism'—*Bahala na* is its popular expression—makes for an uncritical attitude toward experience.<sup>28</sup>

The above quotation indicates that much of the experience of the average Filipino is on the empirical level of Moux. It is uncritical, not worked through. Lumbera's analysis tends to confirm Bulatao's findings and to indicate that religion has not penetrated into the deeper levels of the Filipino personality.

Many thoughtful Filipinos recognize the fact that Catholicism, while integrated with Philippine culture on the superficial level of devotion, has not encountered Philippine culture in any profound way. The picture is complicated by the fact that for over 400 years, Philippine Catholics have lived in an atmosphere of cultural alienation. Most have been born Catholics and have become so accustomed to Catholicism that they have not recognized the incapacity of the Church to encounter their culture on a deeper level, to adopt the valid expressions of the soul of the people.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that Catholicism has not penetrated the culture on a deeper level means that often Catholic practices have

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<sup>27</sup> Bienvenido Lumbera, "Literary Notes on the Filipino Personality," *Philippine Sociological Review*, Vol. XI (July-October, 1963), p. 168.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

<sup>29</sup> "Asian and African Laymen Discuss the Council", *Cross Currents* Vol. XII, No. 2 (Spring, 1962), p. 244 ff.

reinforced cultural blocks rather than helped one transcend such blocks. The result is that the average Filipino Catholic has not been brought to an understanding of the requirements of religious maturity. The quest for maturity is a difficult one. There are no simple paths or easy steps. Yet, it would seem that the liturgy, properly understood, effectively adopted, and practically lived, can be a fruitful institutional means for structuring religiously mature attitudes. In a subsequent article we hope to develop this point at greater length.