

LITURGY AND ETHICS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Culture and cult: those things share a complex relationship, for cult influences its culture, then cult is modified and reproduced from its culture. While culture is the phenomenon arising from an individual's mind, sense and soul. Cult influences each member, and cult characterizes the participator. Then cult characterizes the community and society, and it cultivates the nature of its community. So cult possesses a type and significance of its own, which is inseparable from the context of economic, political, aesthetic, and intellectual life.¹

Nicolas Berdyaev informs us that culture bears a relationship to primordial cult, and cult has the characteristic elements of the culture in itself. This citation is used in my former essays:

Every culture at a certain stage of its development discloses a principle which saps its own spiritual foundations. Culture is the development of the religious cult, of its differentiation and the unfolding of its content. Philosophy, science, architecture, painting, sculpture, music, poetry and morality are all integrally comprised in the ecclesiastical cult in an undifferentiated and undeveloped form. The Egyptian, the most ancient of cultures, began in the temple and the priests were its creators. Culture is also bound up with the ancestral cult and traditions. It is full of sacred symbols and signs of another spiritual reality. Every Culture (even the material one) is spiritual and the product of the creative work of the spirit as applied to the natural elements.²

It follows that social ethics must start from cult; similarly, we must stress the ethical aspect of the sacrament to form the community. The sacrament should then ideally orient the society, because the sacrament is modified to reflect and support social organization. Therefore, the liturgy creates a community and overcomes whatever social crisis is at hand. The liturgy certainly has a dynamic potential of guiding society to a better future.

1 Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, s.v. "Worship," by J. Bartlet.

2 N. Berdyaev, The Meaning of History, trans. by G. Bles. (London: The Centenary Press, 1945), pp. 212-3.

In this paper we hope to consider how the liturgy directs the community in the context of the relationship between cult and ethics in the Christian community, which we can not ignore to build a good Christian community.

First, however, let us consider the definitions of some terms, such as Cult, Liturgy, Sacraments, and Eucharist. Alan Richardson defines Cult and culture as the following.

Cult is used especially of the rites and ceremonies of worship associated with a system of religious belief, whether Christian or non-Christian. 'Culture' is used in a wider or more secular sense of the whole intellectual, artistic and moral achievement of a society or an epoch; religion would thus be considered as a normal ingredient of culture, perhaps in some instances (such as the Christian Middle Ages) as its most important ingredient.

Richardson prescribes the meaning of Cult to encompass a rather wider range than other terms. Also Liturgy is prescribed "a synonym for the Eucharist as the Church's corporate and official act of worship"; also "it covers all the Church's public formal worship".² Sacrament, which implies the baptism and the eucharist, is described as "signs of a holy reality, or grace, which sanctifies men," which, in turn, are "'an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.'" The Sacrament shows that through "the incarnation of Christ matter has been shown to be, not evil or alien to divine in dwelling, but capable of being the vehicle or expression of God's grace and truth." Therefore "For the Christian the whole world is sacramental of divine glory."³ Thus, as defined by Alan Richardson, the Sacrament includes Eucharist.

The Eucharist (thanksgiving) is "the rite which Jesus instituted at the Last Supper."⁴

1 A Dictionary of Christian Theology 1969 ed., s.v. 'Cult, Cultus,' by Alan Richardson.

2 Ibid., s.v. 'Liturgy,' by E. L. Mascall

3 Ibid., s.v. "Sacrament, Sacramental Theology," by Alan Richardson.

4 Ibid., s.v. "Eucharist, Eucharistic Theology," by E. L. Mascall.

Through using these terms we will consider ethics in the context of cult and culture. We will study Sacrament and Ethics in Chapter 2; and in Chapter 3, Asian Society and Cristian Theology, and Chapter 4, the Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

SACRAMENT AND ETHICS

A. What is the sacrament?

The term sacramentum is equivalent of the Greek μυστήριον (mysterion), a mystery which signifies the Body of Christ.¹ Richardson states that "Sacraments involve or imply a promise or a commitment, and they are mysteries in the sense that they do not disclose their meaning to unbelieving eyes."² Sacrament is a visible word included invisible grace from God. Thus, sacrament is an expression of a holy reality which gives grace and sanctifies men.

It is the sacrament that is the mystical Body of Christ. Through the incarnation of Christ, Christianity is essentially sacramental in nature because matter has been proved to be not evil or alien to divine indwelling, but capable of being the means or expression of God's grace and love,³ because God "loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16.)

Therefore, Christ is the true Subject of the sacrament, and the Church is the body of Christ through which God's sacramental power is given to those who receive in faith.⁴

This paper is mainly concerned with the Eucharist.

1 Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 1920ed., s.v. "Sacraments (Christian, Western)" by T.A. Lacey.

2 A Dictionary of Christian Theology, 1969 ed., s.v. "Sacrament, Sacramental Theology," by Alan Richardson.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

B. Eucharist

Jesus commanded his disciples to keep the Eucharist by participating in the paschal meal. "This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19.) Since the Christian community has been formed to keep His commandment, it has made the Eucharist its most important cult. The Christian community would have to be thought of as cultic and the Eucharist; its main cult, characterizes the Christian community.

Christianity has a way of symbolically reaching the Lord Christ through participating in the Eucharist, since it is recorded that Jesus said about bread, "Take; this is my body" (Mark 14:22); about drink "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many (14:24.) Since the early church Christianity has thought the Eucharist as the mediation of salvation.¹

The letter to the Hebrews speaks of Christ as their authentic priest. Then His work as the great priest completes the salvation; to wit, Jesus is described as paschal lamb who sheds His blood for human-kind.² The Hebrews uses the idea of cultic worship to elucidate the task of Jesus. The writer uses sacral, cultic words to explain His cultic realities. Particularly the Hebrews speaks to us that Christ is a great priest of God, though He does not offer incense or sacrificial animals, but His own life. His martyrdom completes the task of Old Testament priestblood.³

Also Jesus held the Eucharist on the Jewish Pasch to celebrate the liberation of the Jews from slavery in Egypt. The Exodus is led by God, who orders Moses to liberate his people from the state of slavery.

¹ Jon Sobrino, Christology at the Crossroads, trans. John Drury (New York: Orbis Books, 1979), p. 302.

² Ibid., p. 303. ³ Ibid.

We can interpret Exodus as a political, cultural, and religious liberation, since the Jews escaped from Egypt to freedom and then attempted to build a just society. Tissa Balasuriya¹ insists God has been deeply involved in history. The Exodus, which is God's involvement in history, is the central theme in the paschal feast, which, turn is inherited in the Eucharist.²

Jesus gave the Pasch a new significance and a deeper relevance. It was His self-oblation to God for the integral human salvation from bondages of sin and the unity of the participants,³ thus, giving the Eucharist at least four aspects.⁴ First, the celebration of the meal of the Jewish Pasch, which recalls the historical salvation by God. Second, the presence of Jesus is inviting us to respond to His sacrifice and the commitment to our society. Third, the Eucharist is the memorial of His passion and death; we recall it and re-enact it. Forth, the Eucharist is a renewal of the Covenant; His death and resurrection is a sign of the new Covenant, which aims to realize to the God's coming Kingdom.

Whenever we eat the bread and drink the wine, we "proclaim the Lord's death until he comes"(1 Cor. 11:26.) The Eucharist has a dynamic power which produces love, courage, self-unity, and communion among its participants. The participant is nurtured to perform an effective action in society. Christianity, essentially, was a dynamic movement of human freedom by God's love from injustice and oppression. The Eucharist meal symbolizes such a Christian dogma.

The subject of Eucharist is not human-beings, but Jesus Christ, and He communicates with participants through material elements by the work of Holy Spirit.

1 Tissa Balasuriya, The Eucharist and Human Liberation(New York: Orbis Books, 1979), pp. 10-11.

2 Ibid., p. 12.

3 Ibid., p.16.

4 Ibid., p.17.

Thus, God is the subject of the Eucharist, so the Eucharist is the exemplar of the role of purification of persons and community.¹ Arguably, the Eucharist functions in society in at least four ways: (1) personal freedom and responsibility; (2) the establishing of a new humanity; (3) the realization of the justice, truth, freedom, love, equality, and peace within community by the sacrifice of Jesus; and (4) the establishment of the new community.²

We symbolize the resurrected Christ's encounter through the Eucharist and how Christ communicates with His people. Therefore the bread and wine localizes the resurrected Christ, and His own life enters into ourselves and Christ dominates us. Consequently, His people become the body of Christ whereby Christ lives on, so that Christians themselves become a sacrament and a sign of Christ in this world.³

The Christian community would have to be thought of as cultic and the Eucharist, the main cult, orients the Christian community.

1 Ibid., p. 132.

2 Ibid., p. 133.

C. Sacrament and Word

The liturgy is supported by the word, which helps to effect commitment to communion. The community is oriented by the word of liturgy. Through the word People understand the liturgy's meaning.¹ The word characterizes the liturgy. Also, the content of preaching has effective power to commit people to community when it is related with the Eucharist.² Therefore the effect of Eucharist is prescribed by the word in the liturgy.

Furthermore, the sign of the sacrament transmits a reality from beyond itself and teaches the real meaning to participants. Thence the Word and Sacrament are the two ways of communication with Christ.³ For example at the sacrament, we see the wine, which means not only the blood of Christ, but also His pain. God's penalty to humankind, God's love to us, our unity and the promise of banquet of heaven and so on. A symbol and the word helps to form the community reciprocally. Through the Word and Sacrament, the Holy Spirit works effectively to transmit God's messages to His people. This visual sign has dynamic power in its appeal to persons.

Furthermore, the Word expresses the soul of a people, and the soul of a people is reflected in the culture and its symbols. Also the symbol in culture reflects the meaning of the culture, and people communicate with the symbol. The communication of symbols becomes a mutual participation in a community. Paul Tillich writes: "Man has the power of such communication because he has a world in correlation to a completely developed self."⁴ Humankind has the media of communication,

1 Balasuriya, *ibid.*, p. 48.

2 *Ibid.*, p.140.

3 Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, 3 vols. (Digswell Place: James Nisbet. 1968), 3:128.

4 *Ibid.*, 3:130.

5 *Ibid.*, 3:61.

so he has a world, and he has a society based on a communication.¹ The symbol has the common root of morality and culture in the society.² According to Paul Ricoeur, People understand the significance of symbols, and the symbol plays the role of commitment to the cult in the culture.³ The symbolic representation of the past gives people the sense of participation in it and its tradition.

Likewise, metaphor helps people understand the significance of the message. Both the symbol and the metaphor help a person to participate in the community and its tradition. A metaphor functions as an indicator of meaning beyond itself; we understand that the metaphor contains more meaning, because it gives rise to endless exegeses.⁴ A metaphor implies wider connotations than just it alone; a metaphor brings forth a host of other connections.

Now consider preaching: it is related to the sacrament; it should be characterized by Christology, which is related to the theology that is Jesus Christ is the Savior. Therefore Christology, which is based on the Eucharist, transforms the society, and Christ becomes "the transformer of culture."⁵ Further Daniel Jenkins summarizes the assertion of Niebuhr that "The world of culture has its demons, but that can be exorcized, and something like a new Christendom becomes a possibility, not through syntheses is but through radical transformation."⁶

In conclusion, the sacramental material and word help to transmit God's message to the community and transform the community.

1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), p.55.

4 Ibid., pp. 55-57.

5 H. Richard Niebuhr, Christ and Culture (Harper & Row, 1951).

6 A Dictionary of Christian Theology. s. v. "Culture," by Daniel Jenkins.

D. New Community

The Eucharist is the bond of the new community: there is a sacramental unity and oneness is formed. Then the Eucharistic community forms the body of Christ, though the Eucharist is not an individual but a corporate act.¹ By the sacrament of holy communion, the sense of being member of one body of Christ is formed for the participant. This sense forms the communion. Thus the Eucharist is forming a bond of union, it creates the Kingdom of Christ, where there will be no discrimination between rich and poor.²

Therefore, the Eucharist is a remedy against the disunity and discrimination which comes from selfishness, both individual and social; it constructs a new ideal human society on the earth. The blood of Christ is not just symbolically, but actually, healing society.³

Further, the Eucharist is a sacrament of nourishment of those baptized. To participate in the Eucharist, the particular individual finds that he, himself, is the subject of belief, and he affirms his existence in the community of Christ.⁴ According to P. Tillich, "the self-integration of the person as a person occurs in a community."⁵ That is, a man becomes a person in his encounter with other persons in a community.⁶ And man is living his real life if he is living as a one in personal communion with other persons, in that basic personal relationship with God.⁷ Consequently the Eucharist helps with the integration

1 Annie Perrin, "Eucharistisch Gebete," Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von Rainer Volp Zeichen (Grunewald: Kaiser, 1982), p. 222.

2 Balasuriya, op cit., p. 48.

3 Ibid., p. 50.

4 Annie Perrin, p. 229.

5 Tillich, op cit., 3: 43.

6 Ibid., 3: 42.

7 Donald M. Baillie, The Theology of the Sacraments (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), p. 48.

of person in the Christian community.

Similarly, the Eucharist is a movement of global proportions: every week millions of Christians meet to celebrate Christ. They all form an international community, brought together by a common bond. They are vitalized by breaking bread and drinking wine, which is a cultural formation symbolizing a new Christian community.¹

Consequently, "in Him we are all one with God and one with each other; and yet our unity will never be complete until we see God face to face. And thus we stand between looking back and looking forward."² Therefore the community, too, should be discussed in the context of historical dimensions, for the community is progressing from its history toward to its purpose, from chaos to God's order. So this history has been given the intention and the significance by the Lord Christ, and this world is ordered by this historical view. Christian ethics is grounded on this belief.

Oscar Cullmann treats this theme of ethics and history in Heil Als Geschichte, in which he mentions that the salvation history is developed in this history, so the historical events are related to the history of salvation.³ Now we predict the word of salvation-history (Heilsgeschichte.) Alan Richardson predicts this word as the following:

the total history of revelation and salvation is connected with real events in actual history, of which Christ is both the centre and the culmination. From all the variety of individual NT elements there emerges one picture of the Christ-event from pre-existence to parusia. This view does not make the Christian religion dependent upon the vicissitudes of historical research; it is faith in Christ which makes sense of the witness of the biblical records, and faith is essential to the right understanding of their historical content. The stress is upon the acts of God in history.⁴ We understand this word as the history of God action, which is some part understood by faith, in the secular history.

1 Balasuriya, *ibid.*, 132.

2 Baillie, *ibid.*, p. 71.

3 Oscar Cullmann, Heil Als Geschichte (Tubingen: Paul Siebeck, 1965), s. 134.

4 S. v. "Heilsgeschichte," by Alan Richardson in *op cit.*

E. Church and Heilsgeschichte

The Church is the Body of Christ, because "Christ is present with us, not incarnate in the Church, but through the Holy Spirit working in the Church by Word and Sacrament."¹ Through the Word-made-flesh, the incarnation of Christ, this history became meaningful and the place of God's action. Also the Incarnation of God signifies that the sacred history has been progressing in this history. Then it is a sacred history that has been developed in and through the secular history. Cullman's point is that we must consider the communion of the Eucharist in the Heilsgeschichte (salvation-history).

Therefore the church communion is taking in advance of the Kingdom of God, which is progressing as the Heilsgeschichte toward the eschatology.² And the Eucharist speaks of the immanence of the Kingdom of God. We live in this period after Christ and before the final consummation, so our present time is an interim period, which is a time in which we may say that the Kingdom has come (since it has already come with Christ) and yet has not yet come because the final consummation has not occurred, which characterizes the concept of time in Christianity.³

In the Eucharist, to break the bread is to take advance of the future and prayer of Maranatha (Our Lord, come! I Corin.16:22) is derived from the Eucharist.⁴ Further We celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday that is the eschatological Lord's Day and His resurrected day.⁵

1 Baillie, *Ibid.*, p. 66.

2 Oscar Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

3 Baillie, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 292.

5 *Ibid.*

Thus the Eucharist shows the past and future and recognizes this history as the history salvation. Accordingly, the Eucharist presents not only the past but also into the future for the participants.

Accordingly, Cullmann insists that the Christian ethics are based on the tension of this interim time, "der Spannung des Schon und Noch nicht".¹ The stance of Christian is directed to the coming of Christ, who will judge every man's mind and behaviour and give appreciation and penalty. The existence of the Christian is viewed from the coming Christ to judge. The Eucharist, expecting the coming of Christ, characterizes the Christian ethics.

¹ Cullmann, Ibid., p. 310.

F Contingency and Providence

However, the contingency seems sometimes to dominate over God's sovereignty. We know the absurdity in history and sometimes a Job is tortured. For example, evil works, wars, epidemics, and starvation, all provoke nihilism and despair. In such chaos, humanity needs to have faith that the world depends on God; without God's will no being could exist.

According to G. Kaufman, every event in history and every phase of phenomena can be rightly comprehended solely in relation to Him; they must, however, be perceived as based in and expressive of God's intentions.¹ God is working in every moment and every event in and with His creation to His purposes. The events of history in their peculiarity and contingency are filled with meaning and truly interpreted as an "Act of God" from the providential faith.² And the Christian faith comprehends that the history is the stage of God's dynamic performance to realize His purposes.

Therefore, Christianity is permeated with the conviction that God's providence is working in the happenings of history and every contingency is given meaning by God in light of His ultimate purposes. Then faith knows every thing has its place in God's providence: "He has made every thing beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes, 3: 10.) The sacred history has continuity in this history.

In this interim period, the Church interprets every historical event and meanings as communications between God and man. Seeking out the direction and progress of communion with God and correspondence

1 Gordon Kaufman, Systematic Theology: A Historicist Perspective (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1978), p. 255.

2 Ibid., p. 271.

between God and man; this response should rightly cause man to ethically determine his every decision.¹ Also the Church has been preaching God's message to this secular world and man's responses by "loving and faithful obedience to the divine will".²

Kaufman says, "..., it is at least conceivable that the universe is moving toward some final historical goal, however this ultimate objective is 'a unity in Christ,' that is, the perfect establishment of God's kingdom as a community of love."³ We live in the midst of this process to the completion and our faith recognize that God is working providentially in and through historical events, even though finite man cannot always comprehend it.⁴ So the Christian has confidence that God will give those struggles meaning.

1 Cullmann, *ibid.*, s. 280.

2 Kaufman, *ibid.*, p. xv.

3 *Ibid.*, p.262.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 310-311.

G love

Love (Agape) is the substantial nature of the God's figure, on which all Christian love is founded.¹

So we know and believe the love of God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.
(I John 4. 16)

Further, Agape (love) is originated from a solemn meal held in the early Church in the connection with the Eucharist. Thence, the Eucharist community is based on God's love, which is the bond of community. The foundation of the Eucharist community is the love of the Father. Then our transformation is caused by Divine Love; love is creative and the Lord's love transforms us as Christ' love changes person to active work of Christian community.

The Christian society is reflected by the trinitarian divine community. Therefore, the Eucharistic community is not only the person but also the Divine; it is communion of the Divine Love.

Accordingly to proclaim the gospel is that the love of God is present in history, and each person is invited to share the love of God: people encounter God through the Eucharist.

Also God's presence at the Eucharist is presence of God's love. Thus, God's love is spreading over the world, transforming the world by means of divine communion. It follows that the love of God is realized in history through the Sacrament.

Therefore, the essence of sacrament is the love of God, which is fraternity in the community, moreover, it vitalizes the weak. The Eucharist forms the Body of Christ and proceeds to the Kingdom of God.

1 A Dictionary of Christian Theology.

s. v. "love," by A. Richardson.

s. v. "Agape," by E. L. Mascall.

H Summary

The Eucharist is derived from the commandment of Jesus Christ, who is the subject of the Eucharist. The Eucharist community is the Body of Christ, capable of building up to the Kingdom of God.

The Eucharist community, while creating the Church community in the world, is also expressing the action of God's salvation for the world. Thus, the Eucharist realizes the message of God and has the dynamic power to transform the world to help man attain the Kingdom of God. For example, the religious revolution was started by Luther's interpretation of the Bible and the innovation of the sacrament. On Christmas Day 1521 in the Castle Church at the Wartburg, Luther daringly performed the sacrament without vestments, reading the Words of Institution in German, and inviting people to communicate in the bread and wine.¹ Later Calvin insisted his interpretation for the sacrament, thus Calvinism has been established. It was thus that Protestantism formed its culture by its own teachings and sacraments against the Christianity of those days' Catholic Church. In such a society that is organized along Christianity's lines, the liturgy is the focal point.

The re-orientation of culture is caused by the liturgy. As culture is oriented by the cult, the cult plays a role in creating society. The Word in the Eucharist helps to create the new Just Society. Then Christ, Himself, completes the meaning of the cult. Thus, Christ transforms and characterizes the society and ethics.

¹ Bard Thompson, selected and intro. Liturgies of the Western Church (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), p. 95.

CHAPTER 3

ASIAN SOCIETY AND CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

A. Problem in Asia

Many people in Asia are condemned to unemployment. Balasuriya maintains that unemployment is a social disease, with people affected by it losing respect for themselves.¹ Because they hate their social system, crime is on the rise. Young girls are pulled into degrading prostitution in Bangkok, Hong Kong, everywhere in Asia in order to support themselves. Naturally, thus exploited they lose a sense of purpose and usefulness. Sometimes youngsters support their parents and their families for many years in such a manner. Further the nepotism, oppotunism, hypocrisy and corruption cause a marked decline in the public life. To compound the difficulty even more, a nation's ruling elite is comprised of only a few families.²

Generally Asian countries have two faces: the modern and feudal. Of course that dichotomy exacerbates the nation's problems. According to Balasuriya,³ in Asia, a youg person's problem is not only for personal identity but also for national identity. "What is my nation?, where is it going?" is a question asked by many a person from India, Singapore, Taiwan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Their natural desire for justice and a more humane-society is strong.

1 Balasuriya, *ibid.*, p. 71.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.

3 Kosuke Koyama, Waterbuffalo Theology (New York: Orbis Books, 1974), p. 6.

4 Balasuriya, *ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

B. Buddhism

Of course, we must not neglect the pervasive impact of Buddhism on numerous Asian cultures. Buddhism stresses meditation, the way of self-purification through reflection upon oneself. Buddhism's goal is self-liberation from an endless cycle of birth and death. Buddhism thinks that the torturous cycle of birth and death i.e., the transmigration of souls, is the consequence of a mortal sin. In particular, transmigration results from vanity, or desire for earthly (i.e. materialistic) things. Therefore the salvation is "detachment" from the suffering cycle; that is liberation from the involvement of historical phenomena.¹ Thus, salvation for the Buddhist is not suffering, salvation is not eternal life, but just the opposite: the condition in "nothingness." Unfortunately this religious value system (or cosmology) obviously does not work to improve society, but rather to ignore it! Of course contemplation and meditation has good merit: it is "building the wider human unity on a spiritual basis of a deeper understanding of the human person, of nature, and of God."² But the meditator ideally does not labor, and the Buddhist does not want to transform society into a better one. Alas, Buddhism does not have power to reform an errant society or a wicked social system.

Buddhists emphasize peace; quarreling is frowned upon, though not absent in Buddhist societies. The end result, however, is that societies are resistant to radical change. The ideal does not directly aim for perfection, because that is the painful path. We see, thus, that the Buddhist countries of Asia ideally must seek the structure necessary for meaningful-and successful- human-social change. This vehicle seems to be Christianity.

1 Royama, *ibid.*, p. 155.

2 Balasuriya, *ibid.*, p. 162.

In Asia there is "a great historical tradition of sense of value, human relationship, philosophies and religions."¹ However, Buddhism aims to be "No-self is the perfect state of no-pathos."² Also, in Buddhism, salvation is "the transcendental metaphysical solution."³ Thus, the Buddhist finds the final salvation outside history, while the Christian seeks the salvation in history as exemplified by the Incarnation and seeks the Kingdom of God in this world.⁴ Oscar Cullmann mentions that a Christian has a existential ethics on the "Heilsgeschichte," the concept of linear history.⁵

In contrast, the Buddhist does not seek the Kingdom of God in this world or history: he hopes to be erased, as it were, from history. As a consequence, the Buddhist world-view does not value history. Furthermore, the Buddhist thinks anger is far from salvation, because anger is a struggle with a mundane dimension of life to improve this world.

The Buddhist considers time and history to be cyclical, not linear. Everything in this mundane world has the same fate, i.e. the neverending cycle of birth, growth and death. "The cycle of days and weeks and years, of vegetable and animal life, of human birth, growth, old age and death, all naturally suggest an interpretation of history in cyclical terms."⁷ For example, Dr. Koyama introduces us to the Thai perspective: "The Thai mind is basically more cosmo-oriented than

1 Koyama, *ibid.*, p. 26.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, p.99.

5 Cullmann, *op cit.*, s. 304.

6 Koyama, *ibid.*, p. 100.

7 *ibid.*, p. 100.

history-oriented. The cosmo-oriented man does not grasp the seriousness of the crisis."¹ This idea of cyclical time is no doubt inspired by the cyclical nature of agriculture.

However, this idea of cyclical flow of history loses to acknowledge "the qualitative difference between God and man."² There is no difference between finite and infinite, so they are unaccustomed to viewing the subject of social progress through logically and strictly.³ Because they are good at intuitive thinking, they might be, by western standards at least, unskillful in discussing the problem. The frustratingly calm Buddhist answer to social change is "All is cyclical, so do not disturb the mind, --hope only for tranquility."⁴ Then they opt for the side of non-pathos. The Buddhist often neglects history and does not seriously take into account the problems of revelation and reason.⁵ Thus, the attitude of neglecting history results in social stagnation.

We believe Christianity can change these diverse Asian culture into better, more diligent, and more socially responsive ones. The Christian liturgy realizes the value of this life and orients this life to a true, meaningful, and vital direction.

1 Ibid., p. 100.

2 Ibid., p. 102.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid., p. 104.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Culture and cult: those things share a complex relationship, for cult influences its culture, and cult is modified and reproduced from its culture. Also cult influences each member, and characterizes the participant. Culture is the phenomenon arising from an individual's mind, sense and soul. Then cult characterizes the community and society, and it cultivates the nature of its community.

Through the incarnation of Christ, this history becomes meaningful and represents the place of God's action. Also the Incarnation of God signifies that the sacred history has been progressing in our contemporary history. Then it is a sacred history that has been developed in and through the secular history.

Sacrament is an expression of a holy reality which gives grace to and sanctifies men. Sacrament is a visible word included in the invisible grace from God. Thus, the sacrament can give people affirmation, love, and benediction from the religious authority. It is the sacrament that is the mystical Body of Christ in this world. Then in Christianity the sacrament helps unify us, particularly in such socially devastating circumstances as the loss of ethics and mores.

Further We celebrate the Eucharist on Sunday, which is the eschatological Lord's Day and His Resurrected Day. Accordingly, the Eucharist presents not only the past but also into the future for the participants. The Eucharist, the awaited coming of Christ, characterizes our contemporary history-orienting to completion.

The Eucharist is the bond of the new community; indeed, it is an individual but a corporate act. Also the Eucharist educates people as to what constitutes the kingdom of God: equality, love, freedom, and justice.

Further, the community should be discussed in the context of historical dimensions, for the community is progressing from its historical roots toward to its purpose, from chaos to God's order. So the Christian community has been given the intention and the significance by the Lord Christ, and this world is ordered by this historical view. Christian ethics is grounded in this belief.

In Asia, people are looking for a new, democratic society, because Buddhism and Shamanism can not offer the solution to our socio-political problems. Thus, in the future Christianity may be expected to play the central role in such countries, too. It isn't easy to change from a feudal society to a new just society. Only the Christian sacrament is able to lead people forwards to what is the true Kingdom of God in advance.

The Eucharist community, which was a tiny community as a mustard seed in the waste land, is creating the Christian community in the world, and the Christian is struggling to establish God's Kingdom, with confidence that God will give our struggles meaning.

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