



BALANCE, please! Don't eliminate/shorten/lengthen any leg of worship's three-legged stool (analogy in Chas. M. Olsen's "The Closet, the House and the Sanctuary," 1285ff XnCentury 9Dec81).

What occasions this thinksheet is, on the part of both laity and clergy, a vague--sometimes sharp!--disgruntlement about the state of public worship. Laity don't come because "I don't get anything out of it," and clergy are perplexed and pained at laity who claim "I can be a good Christian without going to church." The following comments might enable cleric/laic dialog.

1. Societies in which "the secular" does not exist, "public worship" as we know it does not exist: all of life is sacred not just to saints but to everybody. Everything in life is *anamnesis*, re-remembering. The Bible ends with the fullcome kingdom of God, templeless because what sun is to earth, the Lord God is to the new creation--a truth Henry Drummond beautifully articulated in his "The City Without a Church."....Contrariwise, a culture which separates sacred and profane (Latin: "outside the temple") or secular must also separate space-time for anamnesis: some times and some places must be "set aside" for public remembering, or the sacred story will be forgotten and lost (as, in AD2037, the green-grown ruin of Canterbury Cathedral has no meaning other than spookiness for Russell Hoban's RIDDLEY WALKER).
2. Thus, "Do this in remembrance of Me" is more than pretty words incised into Christian altars. You do it, or you become an amnesiac to Jesus Christ. Embattled public creches will not "Keep Christ in Christmas" if we Christians do not perpetually keep ourselves in church, and so keep ourselves in (memory and the presence of) God in Christ. The roof of the U. of Chicago Divinity School chapel has demons outside and angels inside: the roof will fall in if the angels quit, and you are one of the angels when you are inside even if you are a demon outside (or just, in religion, a noaccount).
3. Seen thus from the viewpoint of the human remembering/forgetting power, the point of public worship is anamnesis, the priest re-presenting (both senses) the sacred story for memory, celebration, and motivation to live out the story in the "world" (Latin, *saeculum* [so, "secular"] and *mundus* [so, "mundane"]). "The people"(Greek-into-English, "laity") need to be perpetually (because they forget!) instructed in these three dimension of public worship ....*positively*, so they will be both regular and intelligent participants, and ....*negatively*, so they will not take vengeance on the priest (actively, by seeking his/her dismissal; passively, by the passive-aggressive behavior of absenting themselves) for not meeting needs public worship cannot meet if it is true to itself.
4. Both as instruction to laity, and as warning to clergy not to try in public worship to meet need alien to public worship, here are the two needs public worship cannot meet:

#### DEVOTION

To "devote" yourself to God is Latin for self-giving to God. That nobody can do for you, and it is done not in the sanctuary of the church but in the sanctuary of the soul--what Jesus (and the whole Jewish heritage) calls "the heart" (the locus of all conscious/unconscious yearning-remembering-dreaming-intending-deciding-analyzing [in the narrow sense, "thinking"]). This is the truth in Whitehead's "Religion is what a man does with his solitude." So, says Jesus, "enter into your closet" (NOTE: not "church"). Remember how you felt when going to school-class unprepared? Remember feeling that "Teach" was somehow enemy, while knowing s/he wasn't, and therefore feeling guilty about that negative feeling? That is the syndrome of the soul come to public worship unprepared.

#### INTIMACY

How pathetic the efforts of priest-showmen to "create a warm (read, "intimate") atmosphere" in public worship! Intimacy grows out of the sharing that is possible only in small groups, the "house church." How stupid to expect that in public worship, and how unfair to the priest!