

# Liturgical movements in culture and society

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In his stimulating paper Paul Post has presented a succinct but pointed sketch of the present-day liturgical practice of Western Christianity, and in particular that of the Roman Catholic Church, within its social and cultural context. He has underlined a number of urgent challenges posed to scholars of liturgy by contemporary practice. A detailed discussion of the specific issues raised by Post would go beyond the scope of the present article, and I shall therefore limit myself to a number of remarks from the perspective of liturgical history, the field of research with which I am most familiar. My comments concern the historical antecedents of the situation sketched by Post, and the possible implications for the study of liturgical history of his plea for a matrix for innovative liturgical studies. The two issues are closely connected, as I hope my reflections will reveal.

Let us start at the point of departure taken by Paul Post: a diagnosis of the present-day liturgical situation in its cultural and anthropological context. Post is convinced that this context differs fundamentally from that prevalent during the emergence, implementation and endorsement of the Liturgical Movement. In support of this, he mentions a number of sweeping developments, which left their mark on much of the Western world, particularly Europe, in the second half of the twentieth century. These include the marginalisation of traditional Christian liturgy, the blurring of boundaries between Christian and secular rituals, the emergence of new rituals in the public and semi-public domain, and a number of counter-movements in the Christian church which are characterised by a critical attitude towards contemporary Western culture. One of Post's main conclusions is that the aims of the Liturgical Movement are not, or are no longer, geared to the contemporary liturgical situation.

On reading Post's analysis of modern liturgical practice and studies, the following four questions occurred to me; my theses have no other pretension than to open up new perspectives and contribute to a fruitful debate about the present state of liturgical studies:

- a. Assuming that the situation during the emergence and implementation of the Liturgical Movement differed from that of our own time, exactly *how* different was it, and *in what respects* did it diverge?
- b. What was the attitude of the leading proponents of the Liturgical Movement towards the cultural and social context of their time – the nineteenth century and, in particular, the first fifty to seventy-five years of the twentieth century?
- c. What attitudes to liturgical history influenced the leaders of the Liturgical Movement in their view of the cultural and social context of their time? To what extent were their ideas based on the reconstruction of liturgical traditions of the past? And how should we evaluate such attempts to reconstruct the past?

d. In the event that interpretations of liturgical traditions by proponents of the Liturgical Movement prove susceptible to criticism, how should we avoid making the same mistakes and falling into the same traps? More precisely, could we develop a method of studying liturgical history that does more justice to the complexity of the material, and at the same time helps us to gain a better understanding of modern liturgical practice in its specific cultural and social context?

## 1. To what extent has the situation changed since the heyday of the Liturgical Movement?

There is no denying that the situation in which Christianity finds itself in the Western world, especially in the Netherlands, has changed dramatically since the 1960s. At that time, most people in the Netherlands were members of one of the major churches, and in a number of places those churches still played a major role in public life. However, it must be added that Christianity and other religions were subject to stronger and more widespread criticism than ever before from positivists, followers of Marx and Freud et cetera. Non-Christian religions such as Islam were represented by small minorities whose voices were hardly heard. Church ministers, whether Roman Catholic, Protestant or whatever, were predominantly male, and the question of the ordination of women received little or no attention. Knowledge, whether academic or otherwise, was still spread mainly by means of the printed word – books, reviews, magazines, newspapers – and nobody even dared dream of the Internet and World Wide Web.

Since the 1960s, this situation has changed drastically with the decline of church membership. On the other hand, in many circles there is a more benevolent attitude to religious phenomena than in the 1960s. In many places, religion was and is approached more openly, even though Islam has become a fiercely disputed issue, viewed by some sections of society as a threat to the enlightenment and tolerance of Western culture. In most denominations of the church, women are fulfilling functions and performing tasks which were not accessible to them before. Lastly, the Internet has become a major source of information and a platform for the exchange of views, including ones on religious matters.

All these developments have been reflected in liturgical practice. Sunday church attendance, for instance, has continued to decline, and this also holds true, albeit to a somewhat lesser degree, of participation in ecclesiastical rites of passage. At the same time, however, new rituals are emerging, and sometimes making their influence felt on traditional Christian rituals.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See especially G. LUKKEN: *Rituals in Abundance. Critical Reflections on the Place, Form and Identity of Christian Ritual in Our Culture* (Louvain 2005 = Liturgia Condenda 17).

In spite of all these changes, it should be observed that most of these phenomena are related to more general tendencies which have their roots in earlier phases of Christianity. Processes such as the marginalisation of church and liturgy, for example, and the deepening gap between community-centred classical liturgy and individual-oriented piety have been manifest for centuries, and I would argue that these processes started in the second half of the Middle Ages or earlier. This was the period in which official ecclesiastical ritual became standardised and was laid down in (printed) Missals, Pontificals and Rituals, while at the same time new forms of popular piety and devotion emerged, developing in vernacular languages, which did not find their way into the Tridentine liturgical books.<sup>2</sup> In short, these tendencies as such are not specific to the final decades of the twentieth century, but should rather be qualified as belonging to the *longue durée* of Western Christianity (which, obviously, is not to say that these processes everywhere occurred at the same pace and in the same manner).

## 2. Movements, counter-movements and Western culture

If it is true that at least some of the tendencies observed by Post already existed in the heyday of the Liturgical Movement, and even had their roots in the period prior to its emergence, what was the attitude of the movement's proponents to them?

In this connection, I would argue that the Liturgical Movement is misunderstood if it is viewed exclusively as an attempt to adapt liturgical celebration to modern Western culture. To some extent this was undoubtedly true, and it is reflected in pleas for active congregational participation and intelligibility of the liturgical texts, which eventually led to the introduction of the vernacular. However, the Liturgical Movement was not free of anti-cultural tendencies, as the case of Dom Guéranger demonstrates, assuming that this opponent of the French Revolution and neo-Gallican liturgical traditions may be classified among the adherents of the Liturgical Movement.<sup>3</sup> Apart from Guéranger, it is remarkable that some of the leading proponents of the Liturgical Movement, including Anton L. Mayer, Ildefons Herwegen, Odo Casel and Josef Jungmann, were highly critical of individualist tendencies in the Middle Ages, believing

<sup>2</sup> See for instance H. WEGMAN: *Riten en mythen. Liturgie in de geschiedenis van het christendom* (Kampen 1991) 175-179, 213-219, 229-232; C. MORRIS: *The Papal Monarchy. The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford 1989) 287-315; F. SENN: *Christian Liturgy. Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis 1997) 211-239.

<sup>3</sup> See, for the person and work of Guéranger: C. JOHNSON: *Prosper Guéranger (1805-1875): A Liturgical Theologian* (Rome 1984 = *Analecta liturgica* 9); R. LE GALL: 'A l'unisson des Pères. L'influence durable de Dom Guéranger sur la réforme liturgique', in M. KLÖCKENER & B. KRANEMANN (eds.): *Liturgiereformen. Historische Studien zu einem bleibenden Grundzug des christlichen Gottesdienstes. Teil II: Liturgiereformen seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart* (Münster 2002) 563-591.

them to be the beginning of the estrangement of the faithful from the original communal and objective liturgy as it was thought to have been celebrated in the ancient church.<sup>4</sup> A clear echo of this aversion to what is viewed as late-medieval and modern individualism is to be found in the ambivalent attitude of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy with regard to 'the pious exercises' (*SC*, n. 13), or in other words, popular piety. Though such piety is appreciated and recommended, it is emphasised that it should be subordinate to the official, communal liturgy.

This observation has implications for our understanding of the relationship between movement and counter-movement mentioned by Paul Post. If it is true that the Liturgical Movement and the Second Vatican Council took an ambivalent attitude towards modern Western culture, the so-called counter-movements can no longer be seen merely as a reaction to the Liturgical Movement and Western culture as a whole. In fact, the picture that emerges of the relationship between the Liturgical Movement, the counter-movements and Western culture becomes more complicated. On the one hand, the Liturgical Movement may appear to have been strongly opposed to certain aspects of contemporary Western culture. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that certain trends encountered in the counter-movements may correspond to elements of modern or post-modern Western culture. The strong emphasis placed by some counter-movements on personal piety, therefore, may correspond to a surprising degree with a tendency typical of Western culture and piety since the end of the Middle Ages, which the proponents of the Liturgical Movement attempted to combat. Seen from this perspective, active participation as propagated by the Second Vatican Council may seem at odds with important aspects of Western culture, and counter-movements may make a rather modern or post-modern impression. To make the picture still more complicated, emphasis on the individual in contemporary Western society goes hand in hand with a longing among certain groups for warm and close communities, perhaps in reaction to a highly individualistic society. In principle, emphasis on the communal character of liturgy may also help to fulfil this need.

<sup>4</sup> See especially A.L. MAYER: *Die Liturgie in der europäischen Geistesgeschichte. Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Hrsg. von Emmanuel von Severus (Darmstadt 1971); A. SCHILSON: *Theologie als Sakramententheologie. Die Mysterientheologie Odo Casels* (Mainz 1987<sup>2</sup>) 44-108; J. JUNGSMANN: *Missarum sollemnia I* (Vienna 1952<sup>3</sup>) 137-168. For that matter, other representatives of the Liturgical Movement who did not deal extensively with the medieval roots of Western individualism were also highly critical of that movement. Suffice to mention in this connection the case of Romano Guardini (see SCHILSON: *Theologie als Sakramententheologie* 81-91).

### 3. The reconstruction of the past by the Liturgical Movement

The emergence of the Liturgical Movement coincided with an unprecedented boom in the study of liturgical history. A tremendous number of monographs and articles were published in the twentieth century dealing with the origins and development of all sorts of historical matters. Naturally, this phenomenon is closely related to the rise of the Liturgical Movement. As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>5</sup> the great majority of publications on liturgical history were not simply the result of curiosity, but were written to further specific views on liturgical reform. The desire for improvement and reform, out of dissatisfaction with the liturgical practice of the time, prompted an investigation into the provenance of familiar rituals and an examination of alternative practices as they had existed – or were assumed to have existed – in earlier periods, especially in the early church and in the early Middle Ages.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of these historical studies and their role in the reform of the Roman Catholic liturgy in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. It should be borne in mind, however, that the study of history always implies a *reconstruction* of the past. As soon as historical research goes beyond collecting the bare facts, they are interpreted and reconstructed from a certain perspective. Naturally, this is also true of the vast amount of historical studies published in the period of the Liturgical Movement and written from the perspective of that movement. They were inevitably coloured by the ideals of the reformers, and by their implicit and explicit views on the liturgical practice of the time, whether positive, negative or ambivalent; by implication, these publications were also influenced by the movement's outlook on contemporary Western culture.

As is generally the case with reconstructions of the past, the merits and limitations of the reconstruction of liturgical history by scholars affiliated with the Liturgical Movement have become clear only as time has passed. Today, fifty years after the Liturgical Movement was at its heights, attitudes to the study of history and liturgy have changed substantially, and one becomes aware that most historical study of the period, in spite of their merits, are open to criticism on at least three fronts.

<sup>5</sup> G. ROUWHORST: 'Historical Periods as Normative Sources. The Appeal to the Past in the Research on Liturgical History', in J. FRISHMAN, W. OTTEN & G. ROUWHORST (eds.): *Religious Identity and the Problem of Historical Foundation. The Foundational Character of Authoritative Sources in the History of Christianity and Judaism* (Leiden 2004) 495-512; IDEM: 'Bronnen van liturgiehervorming tussen oorsprong en traditie', in *Jaarboek voor liturgieonderzoek* 20 (2004) 7-24. See also A. ANGENDT: *Liturgik und Historik? Gab es eine organische Liturgie-Entwicklung?* (Freiburg / Basel / Vienna 2001<sup>2</sup> = *Quaestiones disputatae* 189) esp. 54-106.

Firstly, many liturgical scholars affiliated with the Liturgical Movement were rather prone to what the New Testament scholar Wayne Meeks, apropos of a different field of research, has called 'the golden age fallacy'.<sup>6</sup> Most of them were particularly attracted to the liturgical traditions of the past, including the pre-Gothic, pre-Carolingian and pre-Constantinian eras, which, they believed, offered solutions to the malaise or impasse to which the liturgy of their own time had fallen victim, particularly with regard to the tension between liturgy and piety, between clergy and laity. In documenting and reconstructing such periods, the inclination to romanticise was never far away.

Secondly, most scholars involved in the Liturgical Movement focused their research on the rituals described in normative sources, such as official liturgical books and the tracts and sermons of church fathers, without paying much attention to the way they were actually performed by specific communities in particular historical contexts and architectural settings. Likewise, questions raised by the 'reception' of liturgical traditions, and their 'appropriation' by various categories of the faithful, were hardly addressed, a fact that naturally heightened the risk of idealising earlier liturgical traditions and the active role of the faithful in them.

Finally, little attention was given to questions raised by the relationship between liturgy, culture and society. Liturgical rituals tended to be studied as isolated phenomena, without due consideration of the historical context by which they were influenced and in which they functioned. This approach inevitably produced an unbalanced and even distorted picture of liturgical practices of the past. As a corollary, it brought with it the danger of proposals for liturgical reform, which, in retrospect, were somewhat naive, since they failed to take into account sufficiently that the cultural and social context of the twentieth century was fundamentally different from that of ancient Christendom or the early Middle Ages.

The above remarks are not without implications for the study of liturgical history. In the first case, I wish to emphasise that there is no reason to break radically with the research techniques of the liturgical historians and scholars affiliated with the Liturgical Movement. Careful analysis of official sources remains paramount, even if such sources present ideal scenarios rather than providing insight into liturgical practice. I would even like to break a lance for the traditional historical-critical method and for the comparative liturgy as developed and propagated by Anton Baumstark.<sup>7</sup> These methods remain a *sine qua non* if progress is to be made, especially in relatively unexplored fields such as

<sup>6</sup> W. MEEKS: 'The Christian Beginnings and Christian Ethics: The Hermeneutical Challenge', in *Bulletin ET. Zeitschrift für Theologie in Europa* 9 (1998) 171-181, p. 172-173.

<sup>7</sup> See for this method and its relevance for historical research on liturgy especially R. TAFT & G. WINKLER (eds.): *Acts of the International Congress 'Comparative Liturgy Fifty Years After Anton Baumstark (1872-1948)'* (Rome 2001 = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 265).

Oriental liturgies,<sup>8</sup> Gallican Liturgy<sup>9</sup> or Jewish worship.<sup>10</sup> Alternative research techniques based on unreliable editions, erroneous translations, incorrect attributions with respect to date, region or author, are founded on quicksand. Nonetheless, historians should remain alert to the fact that any reconstruction of the past is indeed but a reconstruction, entailing distortion and possibly idealisation of that past. The work of an earlier generation of liturgical historians will therefore require critical appraisal. Possibly of even greater importance is the necessity to study liturgical history from a broader, interdisciplinary perspective. To be more specific, liturgical traditions of the past should be placed in a wider historical context. This can be achieved not by replacing traditional historical and text-focused methods, but by complementing them with methods employed in other disciplines to further our understanding of cultural phenomena and the relationship between culture and ritual. As I have argued elsewhere, one of the most promising perspectives is offered by combining traditional liturgical-historical methods with an anthropological approach, involving cultural and social anthropology and ritual studies.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4. Culture and society

A new research matrix or paradigm not only improves our understanding of the phenomena studied, but usually creates new problems as well. The new, integral approach to liturgical history that I would advocate is a case in point. The most pertinent of these problems are related to the key concept of *culture*, which is

<sup>8</sup> See for instance the seminal studies of Robert Taft about the history of the liturgy of John Chrysostom: R. TAFT: *The Great Entrance* (Rome 1978 = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 200); IDEM: *The Diptychs* (Rome 1991 = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 238); IDEM: *The Rites* (Rome 2000 = *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 261).

<sup>9</sup> See in particular Els Rose's introduction to her critical edition of the *Missale Gothicum* (Turnhout 2005 = *Corpus Christianorum, Series Latina* CLIX D); M. SMYTH: *La liturgie oubliée. La prière eucharistique en Gaule antique et dans l'Occident non romain* (Paris 2003).

<sup>10</sup> See for instance the publications of Clemens Leonhard about the development of the Passover Haggada: C. LEONHARD: 'Die älteste Haggada', in *Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft* 45 (2003) 201-231; IDEM: 'Die Ursprünge der Liturgie des jüdischen Pesach und das christliche Osterfest', in A. GERHARDS & H. HENRIX (eds.): *Dialog oder Monolog? Zur liturgischen Beziehung zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (Freiburg / Basel / Vienna 2004 = *Quaestiones disputatae* 208) 150-166; IDEM: 'Die Pesachhaggada als Spiegel religiöser Konflikte' in A. GERHARDS & S. WAHLE (eds.): *Kontinuität und Unterbrechung. Gottesdienst und Gebet in Judentum und Christentum* (Paderborn 2005) 143-171. See also G. ROUWHORST: 'Interacties tussen vroegchristelijke en vroegjoodse rituele tradities: Pesach en Pasen', in B. BECKING & G. ROUWHORST (eds.): *Religies in interactie. Jodendom en christendom in de Oudheid* (Zoetermeer 2006 = *Utrechtse Studies* 9) 159-182.

<sup>11</sup> G. ROUWHORST: 'Baumstark's Methodology in Practice: Historical Research on the Blessing of Baptismal Water in the Roman Liturgy', in TAFT & WINKLER: *Acts of the Congress* 963-977.

frequently mentioned in Post's paper and is at the centre of debates regarding the *inculturation* of liturgy. The concept of culture has for long been the subject of dispute among social scientists, in particular cultural and social anthropologists.<sup>12</sup> It is open to a variety of sometimes contradictory interpretations and is prone to multiple misunderstandings. It is therefore no coincidence that some scholars, particularly British ones, are uneasy about the entire concept and the so-called 'culturalists' approach, preferring to concentrate on fields such as the study of 'social practices'. This deep-rooted uneasiness about the concept of culture is echoed in Martin Stinger's recent book on the history of Christian worship, which, incidentally, has been written from a sociological point of view. He explicitly denies the lasting value of the concept of culture and religion as an organising principle for the study of liturgy, and employs alternative terms such as 'discourse' (borrowed from Michel Foucault) and 'habitus' (a term coined by Pierre Bourdieu to designate embodied social practices).<sup>13</sup>

One may wonder whether it is necessary to replace the concept of culture by other concepts such as those proposed by Stinger. They would doubtlessly become at least as ambiguous and vague as the word 'culture' as soon as they gain acceptance in broader academic circles. I surmise, therefore, that the widely accepted concept of 'culture' will hold for some time. However, if it is to remain current, as I hope (if only for lack of alternatives), one needs to be aware of the term's ambiguities and pitfalls. I would like to mention some of the most imminent dangers inherent in the use of this key word.<sup>14</sup>

a. Firstly, there is the risk that 'culture' will be associated primarily or exclusively with the arts and ideals of the *élite*, despite the fact that this definition of culture has long been abandoned by most cultural anthropologists and social scientists. In a broader connotation, the term usually refers to the values, customs and behaviour patterns of the different strata of society, therefore encompassing what is sometimes referred to as 'popular culture'. Nonetheless, in everyday usage an association with the higher reaches of culture is still quite common. If applied to the study of liturgical history, this may contribute to an elitist, idealised picture of the liturgical traditions of the past, in combination with a more or less conscious or pronounced disdain for ancient and modern forms of popular piety and devotion. One may venture to say that some proponents of the Liturgical Movement were not completely immune to this elitist approach.

b. In its traditional anthropological usage, the word 'culture' has a somewhat static ring because cultural anthropology used to be related to the study of local

<sup>12</sup> See for a brief overview of the discussions A. BARNARD & J. SPENCER: 'Culture', in A. BARNARD & J. SPENCER: *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (London / New York 1996/2002) 136-143. See further M. GALLAGHER: *Clashing Symbols. An Introduction to Faith and Culture* (New York 1998) esp. 1-36.

<sup>13</sup> M. STRINGER: *A Sociological History of Christian Worship* (Cambridge 2005) 9.

<sup>14</sup> See for instance BARNARD & SPENCER: 'Culture' and GALLAGHER: *Clashing Symbols* 1-36.



and closed communities, in which changes occurred slowly and almost unnoticed.<sup>15</sup> If we use the word ‘culture’ in the study of liturgical history, its definition should be adapted to more complex societies in which sweeping and rapid changes are familiar phenomena

c. In recent decades, our understanding of the term ‘culture’ has been strongly influenced by Clifford Geertz, who defined culture as

an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.<sup>16</sup>

Geertz’s definition of religion as a ‘cultural system’ is very similar and likewise often quoted: he defines it as a system of

symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.<sup>17</sup>

These definitions of culture and religion have in common a strong focus on communication of knowledge concerning life, or a general order of existence transmitted by symbols. The definition of religion in particular stresses that ritual plays a decisive role in the transmission of such symbols, and that its primary or even sole function is to transmit the symbols and their concepts, and to bring them into effect.

Despite the impact of Geertz’s definitions on studies dealing with culture and religion, his approach has been strongly criticised by the anthropologist Talal Asad and others.<sup>18</sup> Asad’s criticism is twofold. On the one hand, he claims that Geertz focuses too strongly on the cognitive aspect of culture and religion, and more specifically on the transmission of meanings by messages. On the other hand, Asad believes that Geertz overemphasises the autonomy of culture – and therefore indirectly of religion as well – with regard to social and political reality. Asad claims that in these respects Geertz is a representative of widespread tendencies among Western scholars of religion and society, issuing largely from the Christian tradition and Western Enlightenment.

<sup>15</sup> Thus rightly STRINGER: *A Sociological History* 12.

<sup>16</sup> C. GEERTZ: ‘Religion as a Cultural System’, in IDEM: *The Interpretations of Cultures* (New York 1973) 86-125, p. 89.

<sup>17</sup> IDEM: ‘Religion As a Cultural System’ 90-123.

<sup>18</sup> T. ASAD: *Genealogies of Religion. Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore / London 1993) 27-54. See also G. ROUWHORST: ‘Religies in interactie: joden, christenen en heidenen in de oudheid’, in BECKING & ROUWHORST: *Religies in interactie* 9-30, p. 17-18.

If this criticism is to some extent valid, it has implications for our understanding of rituals. Geertz's approach may be objected to on the grounds that his attitude to culture results in a biased outlook on the meaning of rituals. Essentially, the same point has been made by Catherine Bell, who criticised Geertz and many other scholars for considering rituals primarily as texts from which religious views and concepts can be distilled.<sup>19</sup> According to Bell, rituals should be seen primarily as forms of embodied behaviour that lend structure and colour to social patterns and – largely unconsciously – to hierarchic relations within society.

It is my conviction that the criticism offered by Asad and Bell in respect to Geertz's definition of culture and religion hits the mark in several respects and deserve serious consideration. This brings me to a final remark concerning the study of liturgical history in its cultural and social context. Even if the pitfalls I have mentioned are avoided, and a flexible, open and broad definition of the concept of culture is adopted, the focus on the cultural context should be complemented by an approach that takes social structures into consideration. These should include the size of communities, their hierarchic organisation, and their attitude to those who do not belong to them. In brief, special attention should be paid to *internal and external* social boundaries. This is of importance for two reasons. Firstly, rituals not only transmit meanings but fulfil functions, especially social ones. Rituals affect communities, either by strengthening social bonds or by drawing boundaries between people.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, rituals are always closely related to and embedded in social structures, on which their functioning is largely dependent. Ritual traditions, therefore, cannot simply be transplanted from one culture to another or from one historical period to another. Could it be that one of the main reasons why some reforms of the Liturgical Movement were unsuccessful lies neither in secularisation nor in the transformation of culture as interpreted by Geertz, but in the fact that the social structures of modern, Western society differ substantially from those of Late Antiquity or the Middle Ages?<sup>21</sup>

Finally, I am convinced that the wider research perspectives advocated in this short paper may help us to gain a more profound insight into the liturgical traditions of the past, as well as a better understanding of present-day liturgical practice.

<sup>19</sup> C. BELL: *Ritual Theory. Ritual Practice* (New York / Oxford 1992) 25-35.

<sup>20</sup> See for theories emphasizing the (social) functions of rituals: C. BELL: *Ritual. Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York / Oxford 1997) 23-60.

<sup>21</sup> I have elaborated on this point with regard to the rite of Christian initiation of adults in my article 'Christian initiation in early Christianity', in *Questions liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy* (2006, forthcoming).

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