

structures of religion tend to be ecumenical, world-wide in mission, distinctive in vocation and yet very much interrelated with the secular structures.

(8) A function of the central institution or its educational arm may be to aid the members of the community in remembering, perpetuating and celebrating a heritage. Special events (Passover, Easter, May Day), liturgies, dramatic presentations, or preaching may serve this end. In the Church it is by retelling the Story of God's "mighty acts" for his people that the revelatory past is related to present needs and the consciousness of the group is "raised" to confront the issues of the present.

(9) For a religious group the Story which is central to the received tradition is retold through the distinctive symbols of the faith (Lamb, Cross, the Kingdom of God) and through the use of images and metaphors which are a vital part of the ordinary language of the community.²⁵ These carry that tradition's response to the question of the ultimate or fundamental meaning of historical existence.

(10) If a tradition is to have a "historical type of interpretation of history" (Tillich) it will focus on a central event *in* history which addresses the problem of the salvation of the community from the powers of evil in history and *through* history. From the religious community's point of view history will be essentially "history of salvation" and God will be Lord of the temporal process "controlling the universal history of mankind, acting in history and through history."²⁶

(11) A tradition may be kept open, as may its historical consciousness, to historical and critical analysis. For a religious community, biblical studies and theology have this as part of their task.

(12) The special historical consciousness of a group may support causes from outside the community, as well as from within, although it tries to understand them in terms of its own center. That center may be reflected in movements which are not identified with the community such as Marxism or certain liberation movements. It may be reflected in movements which want to be a part of the community but are not officially accepted by that group (such as Latin American Catholic liberation thought). Unfortunately, it may also be thought to be reflected in movements which make a god out of their particular version of historical consciousness and employ it for very destructive purposes (as in Jonestown). Such is the ambiguity of history this side of the *Eschaton*. But a community may assert the authority of its Center while accepting the judgment of that Center against every temptation to presumptiveness.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Arthur C. Danto, *Analytic Philosophy of History* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965) 110-113.

² W. H. Walsh, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1967) 32, 61.

³ Danto. *op. cit.*, pp. 118ff. Danto and Walsh would presumably agree that if a historian comes up with a "good" historical narrative it will have the following features: (a) it will report events about a past, (b) in the order in which they occurred, and (c) do so in such a way as to explain those events. To accomplish (c) through Walsh's "colligating" of events under "appropriate conceptions" requires, says Danto, (d) that the narrative which reconstructs the