

# Pneuma and Charisma in the Indian Church

*Pneuma* and *charisma* are intimately related to one another as two sides of the same coin. *Pneuma* as the Spirit, the Life-giver, is the fountainhead of all charisms whereas the charisms are the triumphant signals of the life of the Spirit in the Church. *Pneuma* is the foundation of the inner experience of man and *Charism* is the expression of the same experience enriched by the Spirit.

As a land given to the experience of the Spirit, India is very rich in developing a religion of the Spirit (*atman*) and expressing it in manifold ways through the men and women of *siddhi* (accomplishment or charism) she has produced in the course of her history. The Church in India also needs new articulation of her existence in India and for that sake new awakening of the Spirit and the expression of the newly awakened consciousness. The Spirit of God, the *pneuma*, the *atman*, which guided the primitive Church should lead her now in a special way and new men of charism should appear to enlighten and enliven the Church of India today. Hence this study on the *Pneuma* and *charisma* in the Indian Church.

## 1. *Pneuma* and *Charisma* in Religions

### Religion as the religion of the Spirit

Religions are generally known as the religions of the Spirit. Even if certain religions do not make any explicit mention of the Spirit, they do speak about the need of a new awareness, a transformed consciousness in man. This consciousness is a spiritual consciousness, something different from man's average, every day awareness. Religions also think that man, in his ordinary everydayness, is prone to lead an inauthentic life and should come to authenticity through the awakening of the Spirit that is in him. This Spirit about which the religions speak is ultimately the Divine that is within him, the very immanent

Transcendence in man which alone makes religion possible. Man carries within himself the seed of Transcendence which is beyond his very self. That is why man never understands himself fully, ever struggles to realize himself more and more. This Transcendence that is immanent in man is what the *Upaniṣads* called the *atman*, the ultimate Self in all selves. This ultimate Self in its absolute Transcendence is called *Brahman*; but in its innermost immanence was known as *atman*. In fact this *atman* points to the divine centre that is in every man, the image of God in which man is created. The awakening of this divine centre in man is of vital importance in all religions. Because this centre is trans-empirical, spiritual and divine, the awakening of this centre is generally attributed to the Spirit: a word we use in analogy to the evaporating spirit which is without visible body-structure. The Spirit, therefore, stands for the Divine in man in contrast to the mundane in him, for the Eternal in him in contrast to the temporal and for what is immanently transcendent in him in contrast to what is empirically immanent in him. Though situated in the world, in time and space, and led by empirical awareness, man is continuously called by the Spirit to the Divine, to the Eternal and to Self-transcendence.

Seen from the Christian perspective of the Trinitarian dynamism God the Father, the ultimate source of all being, is the Absolute Transcendence. But the Father is made known to us through the Son. The Son revealing the Father to us, took our own form and made the Transcendent Absolute immanent in our human nature. It is this abiding presence of the transcendent God within us we call the uncreated grace, the abiding Spirit. Strictly speaking this Spirit is not the one to be prayed to, but is to be experienced, to be awakened; and once awakened with him we may pray to the Father, crying 'Abba, Father' (Gal. 4:6) and acknowledge the Son. Thus the Spirit becomes a constitutive element of our own interior centre. As regards the genuine experience of the Spirit Karl Rahner writes as follows:

In addressing ourselves to the question whether a man freely accepts this experience or rejects it, we must remember that the experience of the Spirit is not constituted by a particular divine operation 'from without', working upon the human spirit conceived



as an already finished entity. It comes about rather through God's self-communication to the human spirit ('uncreated grace') by which God becomes a constitutive element of human transcendence. Experience of the Spirit is, therefore, experience of the radical and permanent nature of human transcendence, which goes beyond itself towards God because it is constantly impelled by his self-communication.<sup>1</sup>

Though Rahner's theory may sound new to many western readers, to the Indian mind it offers nothing that is startlingly new. In India the transcendent Brahman was always conceived also as immanent *atman*. About this *atman*, the inner Spirit, the Upaniṣad says:

The intelligent, whose body is spirit, whose form is light, whose thoughts are true, whose nature is like ether, omni-present and invisible, from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and tastes proceed; he who embraces all this, who never speaks, and is never surprised, he is my self within the heart, smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed or the kernel of a canary seed. He also is my self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than the heaven, greater than all these worlds. He from whom all works, all desires, all sweet odours and taste proceed, who embraces all this, who never speaks and who is never surprised, he, my self (*atman*) within the heart, is that Brahman.<sup>2</sup>

I do not mean the Christian understanding of the Spirit and the Indian understanding of the *atman* are identical. Yet India's understanding of *atman* can throw much light on our

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1. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 16 (London; Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979), p. 28
  2. *Chandogya Upaniṣad*, 3.14.2-4.

understanding of the Spirit of God that is within us. As the *atman* is to be awakened so the Spirit is to be experienced. In the last analysis the authentic experience of the Spirit is the awakening from within. The Spirit is often conceived as descending from above (the Pentecost, for example) because of the pre-ponderance of a Transcendent God in the Judeo-Western understanding of God. But if God is conceived immanent, then the Spirit is not to descend from above; rather he is to be brought to one's own awareness from within: He is to be awakened. Hence India speaks about the awakening of the Spirit or even realizing the Spirit (*ātma-sākṣātkāra*).

Irrespective of the expression we use to designate the presence and operations of the Spirit, the Spirit invariably works from within and calls man to realize the potentialities that lie deep in the divine centre of man. The response to this call is a process. A few do respond in an admirable way. They come out as charismatics or men of an awakened consciousness.

### Charism in the Non-Christian Religions of India

India believed the periodic renewal of humanity by the awakening of the Spirit. This is variously expressed in different religious traditions. Buddha appeared as the one who was awakened. The enlightenment was the religion he preached. According to Buddhism every man is considered to be a potential Buddha. Though Buddhism does not explicitly mention the Spirit and even deny any articulate expression of *atman*, yet Buddhism stands for the quest for Transcendence that is in every man. Buddha as the awakened one was certainly a charismatic who opened a new way of enlightenment for millions of people. Hinduism also believes in the continued descent of the Lord in order to renew the face of the earth. Thus in the *Bhagavadgita* we read:

Whenever Dharma fails and adharma prevails, for the restoration of Dharma, I come to this world again and again.<sup>3</sup>

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3. *Bhagavadgita*, 4.8.



The descent of the divine is often understood in the form of *avatāra*, but is not necessarily restricted to the officially accounted avatars alone. God in his goodness can act in any man and awaken the *atman* that is in him and direct him for any specific purpose that He has in mind. They are meant to be the men of wisdom, the shining examples for all. Again the *Gita* comments on them as follows.

But those whose unwisdom is made pure by the wisdom of their inner Spirit, their wisdom is unto them a sun and in its radiance they see the Supreme. Their thoughts on Him and one with Him, they abide in Him, and He is the end of their journey. And they reach the land of never returning, because their wisdom has made them pure of sin.<sup>4</sup>

Such saints and sages whose wisdom has made them pure of sin are plenty in Indian religious traditions. Many of them had great following. The Upanisadic gurus were such illustrated men of great wisdom, and discipleship naturally followed. As leaders who envisaged new vision of life and outlined new ways of life, these masters are to be reckoned as men of special charism, men in whom the Spirit has manifested himself in a special way. True to this Upanisadic tradition, India has produced down the centuries gurus and yogis, fakirs and bhaktas of remarkable calibre and unparalleled excellence. These extraordinary men, filled with the spirit of the divine, always worked for religious renewal of their society and successfully led a large number of people with them. Sankara, the great philosopher, Ramakrishna, the uneducated holy man of Calcutta, Vivekananda, the Hindu missionary to the West, Chaitanya, the distinguished devotees of Kṛṣṇa and many others can be mentioned as examples. In our own time India produces such men of charism who are greatly admired in India and abroad: Swami Sivananda of Rshikesh, Maharshi Mahes Yogi who founded the transcendental Meditation Movement and Swami Chinmaya the founder of Chinmaya Mission, to mention a few names of international fame. As a land of longstanding spiritual tradition India is still capable of bringing about new ways of spiritual realization. Not de-

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4. *Bhagavadgita*, 5.16,17.

pending on an official sanction of an institutional authority, charism in non-Christian religions may function with greater ease and perhaps with efficiency as well<sup>5</sup>. It may be objected that because of the lack of a censoring authority any doctrine or way of life may creep into the code of Hindu religious conduct. Though this is a valid objection, religious communities are generally capable of correcting themselves and truth will ultimately prove itself. It is also to be noted that the institutional censoring authority of a religion, despite its right and relevant role, when not delicately and carefully handled, can very well be a hindrance to the effective expression of a particular charism in that religion. But the Spirit who blesses the individual with his charismatic gifts can also inspire the man in the office so as to result an ultimate harmony and unity of all. That the Church may be implanted in India and take root in the Indian culture and may have an authentic Indian growth, we need many more men endowed with the creative gifts of the Spirit. Hence the next problem: Pneuma and Charisma in the Church.

## 2. Pneuma and Charisma in the Church

### The Ecclessial Understanding of Charism

The word *Charisma* was introduced into the Church by St. Paul and he obviously meant by that the visible work of the Spirit. This work of the Spirit manifested in the faithful is considered a spiritual gift. Paul speaks elaborately about these gifts in his epistle to Corinthians, Chapters 12 to 14. In his epistle to the Romans he suggests that these gifts are to be seen as the signs of the baptized. "Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us" (Rom. 12:4-5a). But charism is not mere enthusiasm. It is defi-

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5. For a study of the nature of Institution and Charism in Hinduism and Christianity, [cf. Francis Vinceth (Vadake-thala), "Institution and Charism: A Hindu Christian Comparison" in *In Chritso* (Vol. VI, 1968), pp. 28ff.



nitely a work of the Spirit, an awakening from within. And the Spirit works in diverse ways in different people. We have to keep ourselves open to the working of the Spirit not only in us, but also in others and not in one specific form alone, but in a variety of forms. The variety of gifts does not take away the unity of the Spirit. It is due to our selfishness and narrow way of thinking that we restrict the manifold expressions of the Spirit to our own taste and to our own school of thought. What is needed is, while holding our own and thus allowing the Spirit to operate in one way in us, hold ourselves open to other ways of his operation in other individuals. We have no right to set limits to the working of the Spirit. Those who wield power in the Church and have great responsibility to see to the working of the Spirit in the Church, have to take this idea of variety of spiritual gifts very seriously, because as human beings, we all are prone to ignore the work of the Spirit in others, especially when it is not to our taste. But it is to be remembered that personal taste or enthusiasm is not the norm to judge about the Spirit. Paul, enumerates different kinds of gifts of the Spirit and maintains that the Church as a body with different parts is actually in need of them. So he exhorts the Christians of Corinth to be tolerant to one another and to accept each other in love. Love is the crown of all gifts. "Even if I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and even if I have faith in all its fulness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all." (1 Cor. 13:2) Love and acceptance of the other and his gifts is possible especially because it is the same Spirit who bestows his gifts on different persons. "There is variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them" (1 Cor. 12:4-6).

Later on, as the phenomenon of charism become rare, the scholastics were tempted to define charism as "peculiar privilege of the apostolic and primitive Church"<sup>6</sup>. There is no reason why

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6. Karl Rahner, Ed., *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, Vol.1, article "Charisms" by Estevao Bettencourt, p. 283.

charism should be restricted to the primitive Church. Though it should not be denied that the primitive Church was in need of a special power of the Spirit for the primordial installation of the Church on earth, it is also to be maintained that substantially the same assistance of the Spirit is required for the actual implantation of the Church in any country or culture. Accordingly the living Spirit will manifest himself in a special way at any time. Charism is really the sign of the triumph of the Spirit's operation in man. We may call it the triumph of grace, a non-sacramental and "disposing" grace.

### The Charismatic Nature of the Church

The Catholic Church as it is institutional is also by nature charismatic. It is the Church founded by Jesus Christ and guided by the Spirit. And the Spirit is given to everyone that all may contribute to the building up of the Church. The charismatic function of the Spirit is to unveil different dimensions of truth, to bring it to real splendour and translate it into actual life. Thus charism appears as a particular dimension of truth which needs new vibrations and articulations. Spirit as the bearer of truth, inspires the individuals to do so. This truth which is newly articulated can well be in the Church already. But not all truth that are in the treasury of the Church gets equal attention or articulation. As Rahner puts it:

It is we who may perhaps have to bring out some specific truth from the 'treasury' of the Church, dust it off, polish it, once more achieve a living understanding of it, realize it in our own concrete lives, and decide to do something more than merely to tolerate it or regard it as a matter of indifference.<sup>7</sup>

New dimensions of truth has appeared and reappeared in the history of the Church. The Church's dogmatic position with regard to certain articulations of truth is not at all against these new dimensions of truth. Truth is never articulated completely and exhaustively by any agent on earth. This is pre-

7. Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 14 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1976), p. 41.



cisely why the Spirit has still to work, and actually awakens human consciousness with new experience of truth. Opposition to the newly unveiling dimension of truth is also to be expected in the Church especially because to preserve is easier and more comfortable than to renew and to be creative. But such oppositions are to be faced courageously and if the Spirit is genuine he will certainly work out what he has in store for us. This is what we see in the history of many saints and founders of many religious congregations who had some new visions and aspirations with regard to the life of the Church on earth. The opposition comes also, because of the Church's genuine concern to preserve the truths that have been committed to her by the Lord. But this concern to preserve the Lord's teachings should be reconciled and balanced with the quest for growth and dynamism of the Spirit in the Church.

If we are only concerned about preaching the Saviour Christ, we may forget the dimension of the Spirit. The Spirit of Christ which he promised and actually gave, has wider dimensions than the historical reality of Christ, as traditionally understood by Christians.<sup>8</sup>

What we really need is a charismatic Church where the Spirit works. While helping us to accept and acknowledge the Church of Christ, this Spirit will also help us to transcend its limitations in virtue of our openness to the same Spirit whom we may find operating elsewhere and everywhere. In a Church of the Spirit real men of charism will appear. This Church will never be a slave of its own past structures; rather such a Church will keep its life-current ever dynamic, will be a real *Jeevadhara*, will be ever creative and progressive, and will be able to face the challenges of life courageously without any fear of oppression from outside or preservation complex from inside. It is such a Church we need in India.

### 3. The need of a Pneumatic and Charismatic Church in India

When, almost a century ago, Keshub Chander Sen said that we need a Church of the New Dispensation, he was not

8. Raimundo Panikkar, *The Trinity and the Religious Experience of Man* (New York: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 58.

much attended to by Christians. But Sen may deserve a hearing from the most faithful followers of Christ himself. By the Church of the New Dispensation Sen meant a Church in which the Spirit works out a creative synthesis of the basic Christian faith and Indian culture. This kind of a pneumatic Church is the need of every country, especially when it is being implanted in a new culture. The Lord himself said to his beloved disciples before his final farewell: "And now I am sending down to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from the high" (Luke, 24:49). Already Jesus foresaw the danger of preaching a religion without the Spirit which alone will give man the power to transcend the limitations of religion, even of the very religion that is being preached. So Jesus carefully warned them to be in Jerusalem praying for the coming of the Spirit, till the Spirit actually descend on them. Of course the New Testament was to be preached as the Testament of the New Commandment of Love enacted and sealed by the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus. It was undoubtedly a Christ-centred message, a kerygma of Christ, that was to be preached. Yet it was to be inaugurated only with the coming of the Spirit who proceeds from the Father and the Son. The Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son, but proceeds from both. Operating within us the Spirit does not leave our religion in the utter unfathomability of the Father nor in the articulate concreteness of the Son alone; rather he helps us to discover his presence and operation in all that is true, good and beautiful. Once again the Spirit unites and recognizes the unlimitedness of the Divine and the limitedness of all its human expressions made available to us through religions. The Father as a mystery of unbound existence is everywhere. The Son as the ground or foundation of any form of existence is also in everything. It is the Spirit who unifies and recognizes, these two in all creatures, elevates them and declares them holy. The Spirit as an abiding presence in all (*isovasyam idam sarvam*, *Iśa*, 1.1) works out this unity in all, not only within the Church, but also in all religions.

Jesus also said to his disciples: "It is for your own good that I am going, because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you" (Jn, 16:7). Jesus saw that the disciples were very



much attached to his humanity. Ofcourse the humanity was the medium through which the Word expressed itself. They had to accept the humanity. But they had also to transcend the humanity in virtue of the Logos. The Spirit alone can give man the power to accept and transcend the visibility of the Invisible. The Spirit alone knows what God really is: invisible and ineffable, and what God has become by his operation: visible and articulate in the form of human flesh. Acceptance and transcendence of the finite articulation of the Infinite is the essence of our Christian faith and it is the work of the Spirit.

The church is often tempted to make the same error from which Jesus carefully saved his disciples. The Church sees herself as the visibility of the kingdom of God which Christ preached. Though this is radically right, this hasty identification can take away all dynamism of the Spirit from within the Church. Then it is likely that the institutional structure of the Church with its power and offices take the place of the visible humanity of Christ and if we consider the proclamation of this Church as our primary duty, then once again we are far away from the kingdom of God Jesus envisaged which includes all men of good will guided by the Spirit. The Spirit alone will make us capable of accepting and transcending the Church.

### **We need a Charismatic Church with a Creative Genius**

Today the world, especially the Western world, is very much looking to the East for spiritual renewal. Thousands and thousands are flowing from the West to the East seeking yoga, meditation and other spiritual ways of self-realization. Usually they all end up in Hindu ashrams as the Christian churches hardly have anything genuinely Indian to offer them. The Churches in India have indulged in aping a dying West and are perhaps still fighting with regard to the details of the same. What the world and thus the universal church as well, needs is something different: the Christian awakening of a forgotten dimension of her own spirituality. Perhaps Indian Church, if allowed to grow with natural spontaneity in the spiritual climate in which she is placed, may be able to give this to the universal Church. But for this the Spirit should work in our Church and we have to allow the Spirit to work.



The experience of the Spirit must be liberating. It is the Spirit of the freedom of the children of God that we have received. With the restoration of the Spirit of Christ in us we are liberated from the slavery of the Law. This was the basic contention of St. Paul. To keep any church under such legal restrictions so as to deny the spontaneity and naturality of her life and expressions is certainly against the basic freedom which the Spirit has given to every one of us. Seen from this perspective, the repression of the Oriental Church in this country is absolutely ununderstandable. To keep a church under the tyranny of Law in such a way as not to allow its natural growth and authentic expression is flagrantly against all standards of basic freedom which all of us are entitled to enjoy. Precisely on account of this many orientals become ultra-defensive and a kind of preservation complex haunt all their thinking and action. This may not be the ideal state of things. But those who blame this stand should also think that it is not these Orientals who created this unjust situation in our Indian Church. What we really need in our church that it may grow and yield desirable fruits, is perhaps not so much a theology of self-defence and self-preservation as that of mutual acceptance and appreciation. That this may take place the Spirit in us must be awakened and help us to lay the foundation for a Church where all are equal, equally treated and respected. At present this is not the case at least with regard to the Orientals. Ecclesiastically, they are deprived of their basic human right of existence and expression in their own country. Such bans which are openly against the spirit of equality and human dignity, must be lifted that all may come with equal dignity and without any preservation complex for a meaningful dialogue and for more constructive programmes. Such a redeemed situation may eventually open the way for a greater synthesis of these churches as is aspired by many bishops and theologians of this country. Such a possibility need not be theologically ruled out. What we have to do is to hold ourselves open to the working of the Spirit, removing the barriers we ourselves have created. The Indian Church is a Church with great potentiality. Once united and decided to be creative, her power can be enormous. Then she may give quite a lot to the world and to the universal Church in the art of praying, meditating and even in liturgical



worship. If not, she will keep on living the past rather with a spirit of preservation complex and mutual self-defence and will naturally be barred from all creative programmes of the Spirit. It is here we need the assistance of the Spirit in a special way to break us and make us one, to lead us along the path of life, progress and creativity.

The recourse to law and preservation is not necessarily a sign of the Spirit. It can very well be a sign of refusal to change. It can also be a sign of certain vested interest in preserving the *status quo*. Generally those who lack the power of the Spirit hang on to tradition in a Slavish manner. The Spirit will rather foster a creative acceptance of one's own tradition, especially when it encounters other traditions. But when one's inner depth is empty, then the only norm is from outside. This was the case of Judaism which Jesus encountered. Hence the good News came as the news of the liberation from the slavery of the Law. The fanatic addiction to certain liturgical rubrics of a bygone century at the expense of love and concord in the Church is certainly not a sign of the living Spirit in the Church. It can very well point to the lack of liberating Spirit of God in the Church. The true Spirit combines identity and growth, tradition and modernity, past and present. It does not consist in celebrating the past in the present as performing some rituals evolved in the early centuries without any change or adaptation to the present state of consciousness of the people for whom it is celebrated. Rather it consists in creatively answering the challenges of our time, even in the pattern of worship. This creative work of the Spirit is not the produce of any particular school, though different schools may have their roles to play. It comes from the Spirit itself which alone has the power to transcend all particularities, yet allow the particular to blossom in its own genius and tradition. Thus the capacity of self-acceptance and transcendence will only make a particular Church grow properly. Self-acceptance without transcendence can become fanaticism and uncompromising addiction to outdated tradition. Transcendence without self-acceptance can also be equally unauthentic, as it creates a community without rootedness in its own past. Only the Spirit can bring about the proper synthesis of these two, and the Spirit is at work even now, as it was in the be-

ginning. Our duty is not to block the Spirit nor to project our own self as the Spirit. When the Spirit works it out then real men of charism appear in the Church. In and through them the Spirit works and only in so far as the Spirit works in them, they are real men of charism. We need such men of charism in our Church: bishops, priests, religious or lay, that we may settle the problem of rites amicably for the whole of India, and that we may tide over the liturgical impasse in the Syro-Malabar wing of the Oriental Churches.

We need more and more spiritual men of real charism of the Spirit, that we may change the face of the Church in India, make it more authentically Indian. By imposing an English way of prayer-life, especially by breviary and hymns, the Church in India has alienated many of her faithful from the natural rhythm and spontaneity of their prayer-life. As long as we use these imported prayers, we will be less creative. Since we are not the masters of these prayers, we can only preserve them, and not creatively alter them. In this respect the new malayalam breviary and the service of the dead, produced by the Oriental Church in Kerala, inspite of all the possible imperfections they may have, certainly deserve praise and encouragement. This breviary has helped to restore the rhythm of prayer-life of innumerable religious back to the rhythm of their own country and culture. The result is also visible: the gifted ones compose new music for the texts that are in the breviary in their own mother tongue. This creativity is possible only if the prayer is set in their own rhythm of life. Though the Orientals in Kerala have done comparatively well in this matter, yet they have still to go a long way, that our Church be totally liberated.

The work of the Spirit is obviously unity of heart. St. Paul clearly speaks of this in his epistle which we have already seen. The fight, disagreement and division in this little Church over such trifle matters are certainly not the signs of the work of the Spirit in the Church. The fight between bishops is an open matter of discussion today, whenever priests, religious or lay people meet in any conference. We need deliverance from this situation. And for this the Spirit should work. Let a bishop or more bishops with the charism of leadership emerge. Unity does not mean absolute oneness in opinion. The Spirit may



unveil different aspects of reality even in the same Church. Accordingly different patterns may be slowly arising even in matters of worship. Unity or a real charismatic leadership demands a basic openness to varieties of expressions and a gradual acceptance of pluriformity. New challenges are to be met newly. People who live in an exclusive community of the Orientals without much interaction with the people of other traditions should not think that the way they think and do must be the norm for all. Others have different situations, problems to solve, challenges to face. In the same way people who live constantly with other ecclesial communities and have continuous interaction with other cultural patterns, should not also think that what they think justified for them should be the norm for those who live as an exclusive community of the Orientals. The one Spirit can allow pluriformity of worship, always remaining in the same genius and under the same jurisdiction. Precisely this is the freedom the Oriental Churches enjoyed. The authoritarian legalism of imposing the same ritual pattern everywhere is neither pneumatic, nor charismatic, nor oriental. Centralization was at its zenith in the Roman Church. Though the Roman Church is decentralizing, certain Oriental groups seem to have imbibed the Roman legalism to such an extent that the mental framework of these people is now completely determined by such an enslaving spirit of legalism. This situation naturally deprives the Oriental Church of its genuine charism of pluriformity and of its power to respond to the challenges of times creatively. Let us hope that a new bishop or more bishops of charisms of the Spirit will emerge in this Church, who will be open to the different aspects of truth needing expressions, who will successfully unite his fellow-bishops in accepting each other and lead the clergy and laity to face the new challenges with creative response.

Christians are told by the Spirit to look to faith for those rewards that righteousness hopes for, for in Christ Jesus whether you are circumcised or not makes no difference. What matters is faith that makes its power felt through love (Gal. 5:5-6).

Similarly the Oriental, Church (the Syro-Malabar) in India is to be told by the Spirit to look to faith for those rewards



that righteousness hopes for; for in Christ Jesus whether you celebrate according to 1962 missal or 1968 missal or any other trifle matters like that makes no difference. What matters is faith that makes its power felt in love, in mutual acceptance and openness to understand each other. The problem here is not that of scholarship or non-scholarship in matters of liturgy, but of an attitude towards the whole reality of liturgy and the reality of God unveiling itself continuously.

St. Paul also speaks about the signs of the Spirit and the signs of the flesh in the same Epistle. Among the signs of the flesh he includes "jealousy, bad temper, quarrels, disagreement, factions and envy" (Gal. 5:20). When it comes to matters of liturgy people often wonder what Spirit guides our leaders, theologians and thinkers. As the signs of the Spirit Paul mentions in the same epistle the following: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, truthfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22). A real charismatic led by the Spirit will have these characteristic notes. If one thinks what he thinks only is right and hence to be uncompromisingly maintained, we shall never come to a unity of heart. The Spirit should help us to accept each other's view and to proceed constructively for a happy synthesis.

Pluriformity in lifestyle and even in worship does not mean chaotic individualism in the Church. As a worshipping community the Church needs some basic common pattern rooted in her own tradition. Apart from the basic minimum, this common pattern need not be the same every where. In other words different texts and forms of liturgies could be evolved and later officially approved. True to the Oriental tradition different anaphoras can also be introduced. That this may be materialized some steps in its favour must be taken and this is the task of leadership with the charism of Spirit. If the Spirit works order and originality can very well go together. Individuality and pluriformity can thrive. Present will meet and transform the past. For this we need a Church led by *Pneuma* and rich in *Charisma*.

Krist Premalaya Theologate,  
Bhopal

V. Francis Vineeth  
Dharmaram College  
Bangalore