

This article appears as the second in the series "*Understanding Ideologies*". The first, by Rev. Smith, appeared in 4 *Sri Lanka J. Int'l L.* 121 (1992). Our aim is holistic; the study of law should be related to other social sciences in general and, in particular, to assess the impact of the ideological factor in dispute-generation and dispute-settlement. Readers' contributions on this topic are welcome. - *Editor.*

The Primacy of Experience in the Human Encounter with God

by REV. FR. HILARIAN DISSANAYAKE*

One of the most striking features of our times, prevalent almost everywhere, is that of secularisation. Today, people are striving, and in a large measure have succeeded, to wean away vast areas of their thought and activity, from a sphere which could be termed religious. Although they do not deny religious values, people contend that such values, even Christian ones like adoration, charity and service, can be upheld and lived, without religion as an organised entity, with a finality of its own.¹

We could briefly record the causes of this phenomenon. They seem to be two. On one hand, there is the advancement of modern science and technology, which has made men and women to come to a realisation of their own capabilities. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer put it, mankind has now come of age, and has reached adulthood. In most respects, it feels that it can be on its own, and therefore, does not need to look to God as its problem solver.² On the other hand, religion itself had been, upto a point, infiltrated by superstition and superficiality. The process of secularisation has been accelerated, and given an impetus, by the deterioration of religion.

Bearing these introductory thoughts in mind, we could attempt to make a general assesement of the present trend towards secularisation. We could do so, by a consideration of the nature of religion, (with special reference to Christianity), in so far as it is related, to human thought and activity.

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