

LITURGY ON THE EDGE OF CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

The dynamic relationship between cult (liturgy) and culture implicates a critical reflection on the changes in society. This article focuses on liturgy and change, specifically from a communication point of view. The changes in communication are explored and the implications for the liturgy considered. A more holistic approach which results inter alia in sensory-sensitive worship services is proposed. This approach may help us to create beautiful worship services and contribute to the liturgy reaching its ultimate goal. That goal is not in the first place adapting to the changes of the culture, but to play an active role in transforming the lives of people and the world they live in. In this way liturgy in itself becomes an agent of change! Liturgy that changes peoples' lives, is indeed on the edge ...

1 INTRODUCTION

The dynamic relationship between cult (as the act of liturgy) and culture are becoming increasingly important in liturgical research. Inculturation and contextualisation have become keywords in the study of liturgy (Barnard 2002:15).

The relationship between liturgy and culture is high on the agenda of churches worldwide (Barnard 2002:11). Contrary to the tendency of churches in a secular society to withdraw and to churchify, the study of liturgy (as part of Practical Theology) is supposed to perform a critical function, namely disclosing both the continuity and the discontinuity between the worship service and the culture of the day (Barnard 2002:19). Vos and Pieterse (1997:15) argue that liturgy not only has a theological focus, but it also has to consider man and

the context he lives in, in order to research the symbolic system that may block his approach to the worship service.

A sound knowledge of the liturgy, as well as the culture, is important for such a critical approach (Barnard 2002:20). Believers must know and understand their context in order to perform acts in service of the gospel in a significant and effective way, inside and outside the church. One of the tasks of Practical Theology as theological science is to serve the church with the required knowledge of the reality of the present time (Pieterse 1993:8). This approach may pave the way for performing Practical Theology in such a way that theory and practice, Word and reality can be connected with each other in a bipolar unit of tension (Pieterse 1993:107-108).

2 LITURGY AND CHANGE

Needless to say, the above-mentioned also implicates a critical reflection on the *changes* in society (Vos & Pieterse 1997:18). The object that has to be examined defines the methodology of a science. If the object is subject to change, it is obvious that the rule of the scientific discipline also has to be adapted (Barnard 2002:14).

Practical Theology in a certain sense always reflects on the context and the changes taking place in society (Vos & Pieterse 1997:17). Therefore Heitink (1993:14) defines Practical Theology as a *science of crisis*. Liturgy cannot function unchanged in varying cultural contexts, but has to be relevant for the people celebrating the liturgy – that is, for a concrete community (Barnard 2001:50).

There are different aspects of cultural change that ask for liturgical reflection and liturgical reaction. The most obvious aspect has to do with the cultural and ethnic diversity within the world church. White (2000:31-32) pleads for "... the acceptance of diversity as one of God's gifts to humanity and a willingness to incorporate such variety in the forms of worship. ... Christian worship becomes more complex and more diverse as it tries to reflect a worldwide community. Thus, although what we have said about constancy remains valid, the cultural expressions of that constancy are becoming even more diverse in the present."

Another form of cultural change is connected with a shift in value systems. Cultures are indeed constantly moving because values are shifting and patterns are changing (Barnard 2001:48). The marriage formulary, according to Barnard (2002:26), is a good example. In the

past it accentuated the differences between man and woman, and male dominance was quite obvious. The newer versions, however, focus on equality between the marriage partners.

The point is that, because the context is continually changing, the practice of the liturgy also has to change – of course without abandoning its distinct character. Liturgy exists as “liturgia condenda” (Barnard 2006:17). Therefore, liturgical practice is continually being adapted to the context and “... zij word telkens weer opgejaagd uit de vormen waarin zij dreigt te verstenen” (Barnard 2006:17).

As far as the liturgical practice in the Netherlands is concerned, Barnard (2006:9) is of the opinion that the form of the worship service is increasingly determined by the context in which it takes place.

It is therefore clear that liturgy and (cultural) change are connected in a dynamic relationship that cannot be ignored by the practicing of Practical Theology.

The rest of this article will focus on the dynamic relationship between liturgical practice and change, specifically from a *communication* point of view. Communication is important when reflecting on liturgy and change for the following reasons: Firstly, Practical Theology (and therefore the study of liturgy) can be described from a theological-hermeneutical communicative perspective and secondly, communication plays an undeniable role in (cultural) change. These two reasons will be explored, following which the results will be interpreted in an attempt to define the implications for the liturgy.

3 LITURGY AND COMMUNICATION

Practical Theology is a theological science of acts (Heitink 1993:105-230). These acts were initially defined as acts of faith, but over time the object had become broader. Höfte (1990:88) describes it as a broadening of “kerkelijk handelen naar menselijk handelen in het licht van het evangelie.” This principle can, of course, be refined further in terms of communication. In a profound discussion with Habermas, Peukert paved the way for a theory of acts of communication that could be useful in Practical Theology (Pieterse 1993:1).

Within this framework, Practical Theology can be described as the science of *acts of communication in service of the gospel* (Fiet

1987:260; Heitink 1993:153; Heyns & Pieterse 1990:51-52; Pieterse 1993).

The community of faith is, after all, a community of communication that lives in a durable relationship and constant dialogue with God, as well as each other and the society. In the context of the congregation as a community of communication, the acts of communication in the worship service are central acts that have to be studied in Practical Theology (Vos & Pieterse 1997:16). Pieterse (1993:2) describes Practical Theology as the communication of the gospel in different situations with different acts, such as preaching, liturgy and pastoral care.

If Practical Theology (and therefore liturgy) can be described from a *communicative perspective*, and if Practical Theology (and therefore liturgy) exists in a dynamic relationship with context and *culture*, the following question arises: What is the connection between *communication and culture* (and cultural change)? The answer to this question may contribute to identifying communication as one of the key factors in the interaction between liturgical practice and change.

4 COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE

The world will never be the same again. The electronic media have radically altered the way people think, feel, and act. We are indeed in the midst of a revolution (Griffin 2003:341). Babin (1991:3) is of the opinion that the new methods of communication are not merely an *aid to instruction* or even a *language* in themselves, but that they bring with them a new, all-encompassing *culture*. Sample (1998:15) also believes that the church will have to learn how to deal with the changes that the electronic culture causes and he suggests that it asks for a new reformation:

We face a time reminiscent of the coming of the printing press and the way in which Martin Luther, for one, addressed its implications and responded to the changes it represented. We live in a transformation of the culture with implications even more far-reaching for the life of the contemporary church than those of Luther's time

(Sample 1998:15).

Babin (1991:5) acknowledges that McLuhan opened his mind to the fact that the crucial factors in changing culture and human behaviour are not just ideas, philosophies and religions, but more fundamental are the technological innovations of the era, especially when they touch on communication. Others have commented on the importance of technological change, but McLuhan's vision was to see the complex interaction of technology with all aspects of our social and cultural reality:

McLuhan saw all of reality and the different levels of reality as one, unified system. For him, it was important to keep in view the whole system, with all of the interrelationships of its parts. This means that if the keystone of the structure is changed, the whole structure changes, as well as the meaning of every part of it. Thus, the introduction of electronic media has changed the meaning of all of our cultural institutions and every aspect of our structures of thought, including changes of both religious institutions and theological concepts (Babin 1991:5,6).

We can therefore conclude that communication is at least one of the most important contributors to cultural change. How can we then define and describe the changes in communication that have been taking place over the past few years?

Griffin (2003) describes McLuhan's theory as one of *technological determinism*. According to this theory, inventions in technology invariably cause cultural change. Whereas Marx's economic determinism argued that changes in modes of *production* determined the course of history, McLuhan concluded that changes in modes of *communication* specifically shaped human existence (Griffin 2003:343). Of course, the belief in the pivotal role of communication innovation did not originate with McLuhan. Noting the effect of the railroad in the wilderness, fellow Canadian Harold Innis had already suggested that sudden extensions of communication were reflected in cultural disturbances. Griffin, however, argues that McLuhan was unique in claiming that channels of communication were the primary cause of cultural change:

Family life, the workplace, schools, health care, friendship, religious worship, recreation, politics – nothing remains untouched by communication technology (Griffin 2003:343).

Griffin (2003:342) divides all human history into four periods according to McLuhan's theory – a tribal age, a literate age, a print age and an electronic age. McLuhan claimed that the transitions between periods were neither gradual nor evolutionary; in each case the world was wrenched from one era into the next because of new developments in communication technology. Griffin summarises McLuhan's insights on each of the four periods as follows:

The tribal age ... was an acoustic place where the senses of hearing, touch, taste, and smell were developed far beyond the ability to visualize. The right hemisphere of the brain dominated the left hemisphere. The ear was king; hearing was believing. Members of this oral culture were unable to adopt the role of the detached observer – they acted and emotionally reacted at the same time. Conformity to the group was the rule rather than the exception. ... By their dependence on the spoken word for information, people were drawn together into a tribal mesh ... and since the spoken word is more emotionally laden than the written – conveying by intonation such rich emotions as anger, joy, sorrow, fear – tribal man was more spontaneous and passionately volatile (Griffin 2003:345, 346).

The age of literacy and the print age ... the phonetic alphabet fell into the acoustic world like a bombshell, installing sight at the head of the hierarchy of senses. People who could read exchanged an ear for an eye. Of course, the reader is free to disagree, illustrating McLuhan's belief that a private, left-brain *point of view* becomes possible in a visual society. Both writer and reader are separate from the text. Literacy jarred people out of collective tribal involvement into "civilized" private detachment. Writing made it possible to leave the tribe without being cut off from a flow of in-

formation. McLuhan also claimed that the phonetic alphabet established the line as the organizing principle in life. In writing, letter follows letter in a connected, orderly line. Logic is modeled on that step-by-step linear progression. According to McLuhan, when literate people say, *I don't follow you*, they mean, *I don't think you are logical*. ... If the phonetic alphabet made visual dependence possible, the printing press made it widespread (Griffin 2003:346).

The electronic age ... McLuhan insisted that the electronic media are retribalising the human race. Instant communication has returned us to a prealphabetic oral tradition where sound and touch are more important than sight. We've gone back to the future. The day of the individualist, of privacy, of fragmented or "applied" knowledge, of "points of view" and specialist goals is being replaced by the over-all-awareness of a mosaic world in which space and time are overcome by television, jets and computers – a simultaneous, "all-at-once" world in which everything resonates with everything else as in a total electrical field. ... Linear logic is useless in the electronic society that McLuhan described. Acoustic people no longer inquire, *Do you see my point?* Instead we ask, *How does that grab you?* What we feel is more important than what we think (Griffin 2003:347).

The differences between the previous communication era(s) and the one we are in now can be described in many ways. One possibility is to state that writing caused the left hemisphere of the brain to predominate in man, whereas audiovisual electronic language has brought about a dominance of the functions of the right hemisphere. The following indicates some of the differences:

<i>Left hemisphere</i>	<i>Right hemisphere</i>
Speech/Verbal	Spatial/Musical
Logical, Mathematical	Holistic
Linear, Detailed	Artistic, Symbolic
Sequential	Simultaneous
Controlled	Emotional
Intellectual	Intuitive, Creative
Dominant	Minor (Quiet)
Worldly	Spiritual
Active	Receptive
Analytic	Synthetic, Gestalt
Reading, Writing, Naming	Facial Recognition
Sequential Ordering	Simultaneous
	Comprehension
Perception of Significant Order	Perception of Abstract
	Patterns
Complex Motor Sequences	Recognition of Complex
	Figures

(Babin 1991:55)

Sample (1998:83) argues that “meaning in words” and “meaning in experience” is the most important difference between the pre-electronic and the electronic generation. This difference results in the following distinctive features:

<i>Meaning in words</i>	<i>Meaning in experience</i>
descriptive	emotive
explanatory	embodied
re-presentational	presentational
discourse	vernacular
rational	non-rational
analytic	experiential
explicit exploration	implicit seeking
verifiable “truth”	subjective “truth”
knowing as discipline	knowing as lived
observational distance	intimate immersion

How then, does the new era in communication affect the way in which people live and function in relation to the culture of the day?

Wolfe (1967:19), an analyst of popular culture, summarises McLuhan's thesis by saying that new technologies radically alter the entire way people use their five senses and the way they react to things, and therefore their entire lives and the entire society. According to Griffin (2003:344), McLuhan himself explained it more succinctly: *The medium is the message*. He believed that a medium changed people more than the sum of all the messages of that medium. The same words spoken face-to-face, printed on paper, or presented on television provide three different messages (Griffin 2003:344).

People are now attuned to messages that vibrate with their sensitivities, speak to their hearts and awaken their desires. It is indeed possible to understand things not through words, but through the effects produced in us by visual and aural stimuli (Babin 1991:4). This fact causes Babin (1991:6) to believe that modulation is the essence of audiovisual language, as words and their sequence are the essence of written language. The term *modulation* is deliberately used because of its physical and technical meanings. Practically speaking, modulation indicates vibration frequencies, which vary in length, intensity, harmonics and other nuances. These vibrations are perceived by our senses and induce emotions, images and even ideas (following some social codes), but first and foremost they are based on natural analogies and habitual effects on the mind.

These insights led to the gradual development of a new understanding of the communication of faith in Babin's mind (1991:6,7):

- The message of faith is not first and foremost information affecting my understanding. It is the effect produced in me by the whole complex known as the medium.
- The message is not first and foremost the material vehicle of communication. The message is the whole complex of ministries and conditions that are required for an effect to be produced. In the communication of faith, it is the church, the places of communication, the face, the gestures, and even the clothes of the religious educator ...
- In the communication of faith, the content is not first and foremost the teaching of Christ. Rather, it is those who are being taught, insofar as they are reached by Christ and his church; again, insofar as they are affected by the medium.

The new era in communication asks for a more holistic approach in conveying the message of the gospel. Therefore, it also asks for a more holistic approach according to the *medium* through which the message is communicated. Babin (1991:6) tells about asking McLuhan whether the formula “the medium is the message” could be applied to Christ. He replied at once: *Of course. That is the only case in which the medium and the message are perfectly identical.* In explaining the term “message”, McLuhan insisted that it was not the words spoken by Christ, but Christ himself and all the ministries that extended him that produce an effect on us (Babin 1991:6).

5 COMMUNICATION ... CHANGE ... AND LITURGY

Liturgy is by definition an act of communication. If communication methods change radically, then those changes will obviously have implications for the practice of liturgy. That is not at all unusual in the church. The church in fact has a rich tradition of adaptation. Kimball (2004:7) reminds us that culture and time have changed worship throughout history. Various forms of worship have emerged in the course of the story of God and man. When printing was invented, for example, the church totally changed its way of functioning. It did not take the printed word into the heart of its oral culture – it let that culture disappear and replaced it (Babin 1991:18). Babin therefore (1991:18) urges us to apply this Christian law of adaptation to every communication medium. The spirit of Christ’s incarnation – his becoming a flesh-and-blood reality in human history – does not call on us to patch up our old churches with electronic gadgets, but rather to make use of a totally different and all-embracing system.

The cultural shift that is taking place has such an extensive impact on the design of our worship services that Kimball (2004:45) suggests everything has to change – preaching, evangelism, spiritual formation and all the other acts of communication.

One of the most important challenges for the liturgical practice, I suppose, is to establish a holistic approach to our worship services. Van der Leeuw (1948:36) was convinced that there was a new urge for holism, opposed to the differentiated and fragmented culture of the past:

Wij dansen – en dan bidden we niet; of we bidden en dan dansen we niet. Wij werken en we bidden noch dansen (Van der Leeuw 1948:36).

At last, the new era of communication in the twenty-first century caused that urge to become an unexpected reality (Barnard 2002:22, 23).

A more holistic approach to the liturgical practice naturally has widespread implications. It concerns the *people preparing and participating* in the worship service. Previously pastors, teachers or catechists were primarily in charge. Nowadays, however, the whole community frequently becomes the agent for communicating faith (Babin 1991:35). This is, of course, a theologically sound concept. White (2000:26) calls a worship service “liturgical” if all worshipers actively participate in offering their worship together. This principle reflects the Old Testament roots of the Christian worship service. While the temple service was exclusively entrusted to the priests and the Levites, the whole congregation participated in the service of the synagogue (Brienen 1992:24). Our roots must help us to move away from a spectator type of gathering to a gathering where people can participate to a greater extent (Kimball 2004:73-95).

Of course we are already experiencing this in our worship services. During a recent funeral service in our congregation where a twenty year-old woman was buried, twelve of her friends asked to partake in the service by way of a tribute. They told stories while crying ... and laughing. It indeed took quite some time, but I believe they all experienced it as “their service” in the end and not just as a service that they attended.

A more holistic approach also affects the *space* in which the service takes place. Kimball (2004:45) emphasises the importance of creating a “sacred space”, while Babin (1991:34) argues that the issue is not so much one of concrete places, but of places with soul – places where a mixture of friendship and spiritual leadership exists.

While the above-mentioned are all important issues in creating a more holistic approach, I think it is necessary to explore the implications on a more existential level. After all, the message of the gospel involves the total human being. Communicating the gospel consequently also involves our total human existence (Van der Waals 1990:45).

When considering the function of the human brain, Babin (1991:187) believes that the time has finally come for us to function with both hemispheres of the brain:

Until the sixteenth century, catechesis functioned essentially in “mono 1”, with the right-brain hemisphere predominating. Since Gutenberg and the Council of Trent, it has functioned essentially in “mono 2,” with the left-brain hemisphere predominating. But these times have passed and, although there are still preponderances, we ought now to function definitively in stereo, both in order to enter into the truth of Christ and to respect human wholeness.

To express the Christian message in this new era is to communicate the experience we have of Christ: his being and his words. That obviously presupposes that we have already discovered the fundamental experience of Jesus and his disciples (Babin 1991:32).

Babin (1991:33) uses the example of Christmas as one of the realities of faith and says that we have to go beyond the ideas, theories and formulas that had previously made us intellectually conscious of Christmas, and try to be more open to our personal experience of Christmas as a reality. That experience manifests itself in the form of feelings, emotions, tendencies, movements, images and sounds. We “experience” Christmas; that is, we feel it, see it and hear it. Van Amsterdam (2001:104) argues that a pure spiritual experience does not exist. He believes body and soul are united and that all our thoughts and acts are in some way connected to our feelings.

Some suggest that we are moving towards a much more multi-sensory approach comprised of many dimensions and expressions of worship. The fact is that all of our daily activities are a multi-sensory process. We have to use a combination of senses to perceive what is happening around us and what we have to do next (Lombard 2007:85).

Consequently, we now see art being brought into worship, the use of visuals, the practice of ancient disciplines and the design of the gathering becoming more participatory than that of passive-spectator (Kimball 2004:5). Kimball (2004:11) supposes that worship is eventually a multi-sensory approach of bowing, kneeling, listening, learning, looking, singing, caring, touching and loving with

our minds, our hearts and our bodies. Redman (2002:149) also mentions a multi-sensory approach as one of the features of the “worship awakening”. The worship service is, after all, the appropriate space where people can act in their totality (Vos & Pieterse 1997:9).

All of this point to the fact that we have to rethink the importance of our senses in the process of communication. Our sensory organs are indeed the way through which information is sent to the brain (Lombard 2007:11). Moreover, the world that we experience is in fact a construct composed of all the sensory information that the brain receives (Lombard 2007:12). Lombard (2007) discusses in detail the qualities of our different senses. Some of them, which may also have implications for the practice of liturgy, are mentioned briefly:

- Of all the senses, the *visual* occupies the greater part of the brain (Lombard 2007:12). Researchers found thirty-two independent visual areas in each hemisphere of the brain – an amazing 64 possible locations to which visual information can be sent. It is indeed a complex process between the environment, the eye and the brain, which makes it possible for us to see and to stay in touch with the world we live in. Some of the most important functions of the visual system are, amongst others, communication and learning (Lombard 2007:12,13) – both of which are of course important functions of the worship service! Natural light is “softer” on the eye. It therefore reduces fatigue and helps people to concentrate longer (Lombard 2007:13).
- Like sight, *hearing* is one of our primary connections with the environment. Some of the most important functions of hearing are, amongst others, communication and music (Lombard 2007:15), both of which are important aspects of the worship service.
- Our *tactile* sense is the most powerful and intimate form of communication (Lombard 2007:17).
- Our *olfaction* is, so to speak, the brain’s favourite. Messages from all the other senses have to go to the brain via the thalamus – the most important point of connection of the brain. The olfaction, however, has a direct route to the limbic system. This system is important for emotion and memory, and is called the emotional brain (Lombard

2007:20). The implications for the use of fragrances in communication situations like the worship service are obvious.

- The other primitive sensory organ, namely *taste*, resides in 2 000 to 5 000 taste buds in and around the mouth and identifies tastes in four basic categories – sweet, salt, bitter and sour (Lombard 2007:20).
- Our sixth and seventh senses have to do with movement. We often take movement for granted, but it is a very important part of human behaviour. Movement, the process of learning and emotion are connected with each other (Lombard 2007:23-24). The implications for the worship service are again obvious.

The following facts may be significant for our reflection on the practice of liturgy:

- Our sensations and emotions are forever connected (Lombard 2007:27).
- Our visual and hearing senses are the main senses through which we obtain access to new information (Lombard 2007:68).
- Bright light stimulates the brain and dim light calms the brain (Lombard 2007:71).
- A lot of research has been done on the positive and healing effects of music. It does not matter whether the threshold of your hearing system is high or low, music can be used by either group because of the modular effect of specific kinds of music (Lombard 2007:79).
- Where there are more people, there is more sensory stimulation. Where there is more sensory stimulation, there is more sensory overload, resulting in stress that causes us to shut ourselves off (Lombard 2007:89).
- People with a low sensory threshold are sensitive to what most people would consider as non-irritating stimuli. People with a high threshold are inclined to be non-sensitive to what is going on in their environment and often seek sensation (Lombard 2007:29).
- Your sensory profile is an indication of your comfort zone, in other words where and when you will function at your

best, and which conditions will be optimal for your productivity, peace and wellness. Lombard (2007:111) designed the following outline that can be applied to people's preferences with reference to home and holiday locations:

Profile	Optimal environment according to sensory measures	
	Home	Holiday
High threshold	Multicoloured; open-plan; furnished for entertainment; in a busy part of the city	Overseas trips; busy tourist destinations; camping; adventurous and big-group excursions
Low threshold	Neat; not crowded; spacious; special room or space for quiet times; in a quiet part of the city; good sound and temperature control; near the workplace	Isolated places; organised camping; private beaches; peaceful and small-group excursions

When considering the complex functioning of the human body's senses, it is evident that a sensory approach to the worship service is no simple task. It is not merely a case of using as much sensory stimuli as possible. On the contrary!

Therefore, rather than advocating a *multi-sensory* approach, I would consider a *sensory-sensitive* approach to the practice of liturgy. Of course, this approach is more complicated and asks for further research. Something that may help develop a theory for such an approach is what Lombard (2007:154) calls *sensory ergonomics*. Sensory ergonomics is defined as the manipulation of the environment by adding or taking away sensory stimuli in order to satisfy the needs of the individual functioning in that environment. It has to do with the changes and adaptations within an existing physical, structured environment to help an individual reach an optimal level of performance. It applies to house and work environments (and there-

fore of course to the worship environment). It refers to the subtle rearrangements one can make in order to satisfy sensory needs.

With reference to Lombard (2007:154-156), I suggest the following preliminary guidelines for creating a sensory-sensitive worship service:

For people with a low sensory threshold:

- Create neat and clean spaces with natural light (visual)
- Close windows to prevent strong airflow (tactile)
- Turn the sound softer (hearing)
- Limit different tastes and smells (olfaction and taste)
- Prevent too much movement and participation (movement)
- Plan and organise the service well (activity level)

For people with a high sensory threshold:

- Create bright light, colour and contrasts, and rearrange often (visual)
- Open the windows (tactile)
- Make use of louder sound and background noises (hearing)
- Burn fragrant candles or incense (olfaction and taste)
- Encourage movement and participation (movement)
- Innovate often and change the order of the service (activity level)

We need to be sensory-sensitive in order to create worship services that make it possible for people to receive and to partake in the communication of the gospel in the best manner possible.

6 CONCLUSION

When people experience a sensory-sensitive approach to the worship service, that will hopefully also gives them the opportunity to experience the worship service as *beautiful*. That may just be the most important outcry of the new communication era – that the church will create beautiful liturgies! Babin (1991:13) states that we can no longer speak of the efficaciousness of a liturgy, but that we should rather speak of its beauty. De Gruchy (2001:223) agrees with Brueggemann when he says that an environment of beauty makes

communication between Yahweh and Israel possible and reflects Yahweh's own character.

Babin (1991:12) helps us to understand that the society of the new communication era is a society in which giving new form is more important than producing material goods or even data. It is also a society in which professions that create new forms are more numerous and important than any other trades. The values of the new society are concerned with creating more interconnections of information and giving a more harmonious form to everything and everybody.

Therefore, we should no longer only consider the content of the product. We should insist instead that the religious educator and communicator make the product beautiful, attractive and tempting (Babin 1991:14). Babin (1991:15) summarises this approach as follows: "Communicators of faith should be specialists in 'giving the world a divine form.' "

One of the best resources that can help us create *beautiful* worship services is the arts. This, of course, opens a whole new topic. Therefore, I conclude with one or two comments that may help us to keep reflecting on this issue. Sara Maitland (1995:142) argues that the renewal of the church as a transforming community in society is related to the extent to which it takes seriously the creative arts. De Gruchy (2001:200) claims that art has the potential to change both our personal and corporate consciousness and perception, challenging perceived reality and enabling us to remember what was best in the past even as it evokes fresh images that serve transformation in the present.

De Gruchy (2001:254) then continues to make a connection between art and transformation:

A society that relegates the arts to the periphery of its life may be technologically advanced but is spiritually and culturally poor; it may be committed to transformation, but it has neglected one of the key resources for reaching towards that end. It has, in fact, misconstrued the goal of transformation itself.

But: using the arts to communicate the gospel to people living in a new era, in such a way that they can experience the message with all their senses, may contribute to the liturgy reaching its ultimate goal.

That goal is not in the first place adapting to the changes of the culture, but to play an active role in transforming the lives of people and the world they live in. In this way liturgy in itself becomes an agent of change!

Liturgy that changes peoples lives, is indeed on the edge ...

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