

The New Media: Culture, the Christian Faith, the Church ... and Translation

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1. Communication and Change

The communication patterns in a culture are a major key to understanding what that culture is and how it is organised. Different media of communication have different social and ideological characteristics and consequences. As a result, the dominant media of communication in a society influence how that society organises, interacts and thinks about itself.

A major shift in world societies is now taking place. We are moving from communication systems and forms of social organisation based primarily on writing, print media and literacy to electronic-based communication. This shift is leading to major changes in cultural perception, thought and societal ways of doing things. In this electronic era the new media, or mass media, have become the powerful means of communication affecting huge populations simultaneously.

2. “North” - “South” Change in Christianity

The church has also seen a shift in its presence in the world. There is now “a post-Christian West and a post-western Christianity” — the church in the “north”¹⁾ and the church in the “south” and “east”. The churches of the “north” have decreasing membership and some, but not all, are re-evaluating their presence and practices in

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1) The “north” is defined here in a geopolitical sense by five United Nations regions (53 countries): Eastern Europe (including Russia), Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe and North America. The “south” is defined as the remaining 16 current UN regions (185 countries): Eastern Africa, Middle Africa, Northern Africa, Southern Africa, Western Africa, Eastern Asia, South-central Asia, Southeastern Asia, Western Asia, Caribbean, Central America, South America, Australia/New Zealand, Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia.

society. They look for new directions and guidelines and hope to rediscover the sources of wisdom, vitality and certainty of the early church.

At the same time the churches of the “south” are growing. Their members are enthusiastic and spontaneous. Their leadership is often charismatic; they are modern-day ‘apostles’, whose credentials are signs and wonders. They are usually theologically conservative and supernatural-oriented. They regard Bible as having immediate relevance to life for them and they understand and apply it quite literally²⁾.

Rituals, especially of healing, play an important part in their life and there is a preference for visual representation, dramatization, narrative and the use of traditional art forms. Their faith is inculturated locally, and the worldview which informs action and understanding is often dualistic.

As “north” and “south” look ahead, both need to give serious consideration to the part played by new media in these social and religious changes. We receive and appropriate the Christian message in specific cultural forms. Churches, whether they realise it or not, function as social institutions, so that these changes have profound implications for them. There is therefore a need for a new way of thinking about the relationship between media, culture and the Christian faith. To be fair, the Roman Catholic Church has given attention to this matter,³⁾ but the speed and implications of changes today demand that more be done.

3. Attitudes to Media

In the English-speaking world attitudes to new media are seen in the way some people are said to be “cultured” or “interested in culture”. This has nothing to do with anthropological or sociological interests, but instead means that they spend their time at the Opera or theatre, reading poetry or visiting art galleries. Popular culture, the culture of the masses, is looked down upon — it is regarded as “low culture”. In its history the church has been associated with painting, music and architecture — what has been regarded as “high culture”⁴⁾.

2) Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 217-218.

3) For instance, the Vatican documents on social communications — *Inter Mirifica* (1963), *Communio et Progressio* (1971), *Aetatis Novae* (1992) or the Pope’s annual letters for World Communication Day, e.g., “Internet: A New Forum for the Proclamation of the Gospel” (May 2002).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the emerging media were thought of as just “tools” to get a message across. The “media”, such as the cinema, television and popular (or “pop”) music, were just one aspect of society among many others. They were seen as a kind of “lower” culture, which deceived the unsuspecting public into a wasteful use of time. As a result they were thought of as being of little value to the Christian faith⁵).

In this first decade of the new millennium it is now realised that media are not a peripheral faith concern. Developments in communication sciences show more clearly than ever that communicating with each other is an indispensable part of being human. How we communicate and the means we use to communicate are among the gifts our Creator has given us, to be used for the wellbeing of all.

4. New Media and Culture Change

In fact, the media are more than just “tools” we use to carry a message. The “means” we use to communicate something bring their own form and colour to what is communicated. The media carry meaning in themselves, so that *how* we communicate becomes part of the meaning of *what* is communicated. The media have their own languages and have become a language in themselves.

Today the media are not just one part of culture among many. In our globalised world their presence is everywhere in an intricately connected web of relationships. They are producing a new international culture which touches and influences almost every other cultural system. This culture creates a new way of perceiving and relating to reality, in a way which uses all our senses: aural, oral, tactile, and kinetic⁶).

The new media bring new ways of doing, seeing, thinking and feeling. They introduce new systems for storing and using knowledge. This, in turn, leads to

4) T. J. Gorringer, *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 47-75.

5) Guy, Marchessault, “Why is the Christian Faith so fearful of Media Entertainment?” Paper presented in the IAMCR Conference in Barcelona, Spain, 21-26 July (2002b).

6) Peter G. Horsfield, “Electronic Media and the Past-Future of Christianity”, Jolyon Mitchell and Sophia Marriage, eds., *Mediating Religion: Conversations in Media, Religion and Culture* (London: T & T Clark, 2003), 275.

changes in social relationships and how society organises itself. When the media change, the web of culture changes. We find ourselves within a new symbolic environment where our societies organize and express themselves.

One example of the new media creating new cultures comes from the world of ‘texting’ via cell phone:

Text message (Spanish): akbo d ygr a ksa. tki n un rto. slmos mñna? b. J

Standard Spanish: ‘Acabo de llegar a casa. Tengo que irme en un rato. ¿Salimos mañana? Besos. Estoy contenta.’

English translation: ‘I’ve just got home. I have to go out shortly. Shall we go out tomorrow? Kisses. I’m happy’

Linguists are now analysing these new languages, some think that “we are on the brink of the biggest language revolution ever”⁷⁾, while others, commenting on texting, look on them with disdain as a “regression to infancy”⁸⁾.

We are now in an epoch of fundamental cultural change because of major changes in media. The twentieth century saw significant developments, from the radio, to television, to computers and the electronic chip. Now we have moved from a form of culture shaped on the ideas, world-views, authorities and institutions of print-based understanding to forms of culture being reshaped by electronic media of communication. Our world is being redefined by the Internet and the new global language is digital.

5. New Media and the Church

Since its early history the Church has been closely identified with the culture of manuscripts and writing. The fixing of a canon of sacred writings, the letters and writings of the Church Fathers, and the creeds and decrees of early Councils are evidence of this. The invention of the printing press in the 15th century and the expansion of the printing trade in the 16th century coincided with the Protestant Reformation and allowed the Reformers to disseminate their ideas far more widely

7) David Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 275.

8) García Terán Marcia, “Los adolescentes crean un extraño lenguaje para chatear”, *La Nación*, 25 July (2004), 23.

than was possible earlier. The printing and distribution of the Bible in vernacular languages was a key element in this.

As a result of this heritage so much of the way we understand and practise our faith is associated with print culture. Most Christian churches have been strongly literate in their thinking and organization, especially in the West. While it is true that many people and groups in the Church have been (and are) oral in their communication practices, the “media-culture” that has dominated is one based on printed texts and literacy. Certain denominations have required clergy to be university educated. Their theology has tended to be academic, abstract, presented in books, and unrelated to daily life.

Today, despite the mega-sales of the *Da Vinci Code* and the Harry Potter books, that culture is now changing.⁹⁾ Books are no longer seen as the most powerful and influential medium of communication. These changes leave churches at a disadvantage as they struggle to understand them and adjust to the new media-culture in which they find themselves.

However, the new medium does not kill the old one. It does not do away with books or print medium, but it does change them and redefine their role. The old is taken up into the new, but in a new way or with new meaning. The electronic media are dependent on print and some forms of reading and writing have increased, though the way in which text is used and seen has been changed.¹⁰⁾

6. Some Practical Consequences

The new inter-connectedness, the expansion of horizons and changes in the sources and authority of information mean that the virtual social monopoly that churches had on religion has disappeared. The media now constitute ‘one of the fundamental scenarios of public life’¹¹⁾. The centre of religious activity within the society has shifted to the media marketplace:

9) In Asia the role of *manga* has introduced a visual dimension to the changing scene, which is now influencing book formats and genres in the West.

10) E.g. the “web log” or “blog”.

11) Martín-Barbero Jesús, *La educación desde la comunicación* (Bogotá: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2003a), 108.

In today's world the communication media are really the new 'Areopagus'¹²⁾. It is a great forum. When it carries out its role properly, it is possible to exchange reliable information, constructive ideas and healthy values, and as a result creates community. This is a challenge for the church, which should not limit its use of the media to spreading the Gospel, but should really integrate the message of the Gospel into the 'new culture' created by modern communication media, with its 'new languages, new techniques and new psychology.'¹³⁾

The media have become the major resource for many people of spiritual information and exploration. They are now a place for creating meaning, ritual and religious and transcendent experience. The media may be seen "as the place of resacralization and re-enchantment of cultures today"¹⁴⁾. This challenges the churches to intentionally engage and learn the new culture, to express the faith in new media forms.

7. Investigation and evaluation

While the new media are impacting us globally, our societies (and different segments within individual societies) are impacted in different ways and degrees. In Latin America, for instance, pre-modernity, modernity and post modernity coexist in the same country. There are multiple literacies, different media languages and discourse strategies. These require investigation and evaluation to determine the way ahead. The following are examples of research areas.

7.1. Generation TxT?

The cell phone and the Internet-based chat rooms have revolutionised

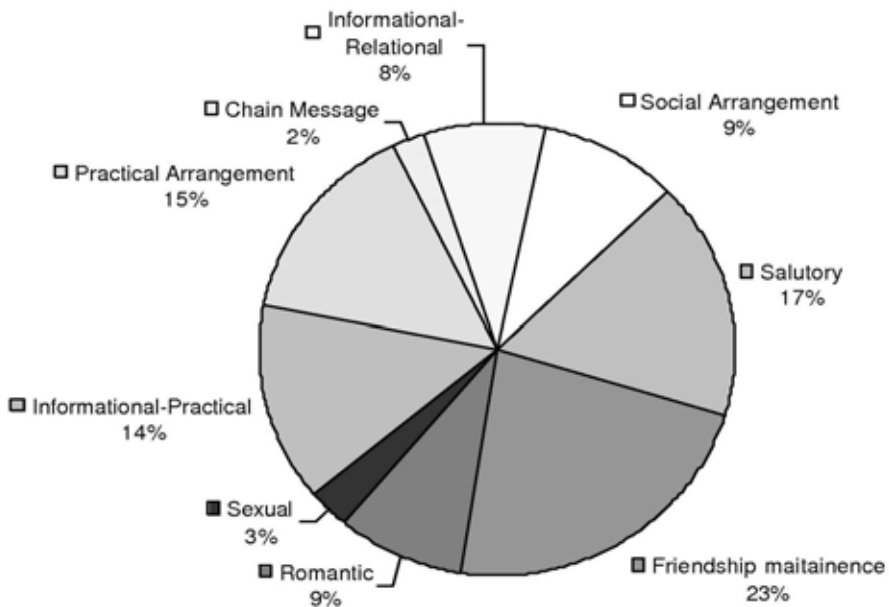
12) "The place where all the citizens of Athens and the foreigners who lived there liked to spend all their time telling and hearing the latest new thing" (Acts 17:21, TEV).

13) John Paul II, "Inspired by the Spirit we communicate hope", Message of the Holy Father for the 32nd World Communication Day. 24 May 1998. www.vatican.va, §5.

14) Martín-Barbero Jesús, "Mass Media as a Site of Resacralization of Contemporary Cultures", Stewart M. Hoover and Knut Lundby, eds., *Rethinking Media, Religion and Culture* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), 111-112.

communication, especially for young people — chatting, texting, SMS have entered our vocabulary in a new way. The language and protocols that have emerged characterize whole new communities of users. These give young people a playful means to affirm their social identities by deviating from conventional forms; in doing so, they differentiate themselves from adults and align themselves with each other, experiencing intimacy and immediacy.

One study of text messages in Cardiff, Wales shows the functional role of texting¹⁵:



Such research is instructive, particularly with its role in maintaining and developing the fabric of the human community. “The Internet is not just a technological fact; it is a social fact...and its chief stock-in-trade is language.”¹⁶

7.2. Telenovelas in Latin America

15) Crispin Thurlow, 2003, “Generation Txt? The sociolinguistics of young people’s text-messaging”, <http://faculty.washington.edu/thurlow>. Downloaded 10 August 2005.

16) Crystal David, *Language and the Internet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 271.

The *telenovela* — the serial or soap opera — is one of the staple elements of TV programming in Latin America, drawing huge and dedicated audiences. Visual imagery has always been decisive in the development of Latin American social and cultural identities. Indeed, a long tradition of combining images, culture and religiosity runs through the whole of Latin American history¹⁷⁾.

A study of the genre identifies the key role of the moral narrative, contrasting good and evil and their outcomes. They chart the changes that society has undergone and the new identities that have been forged in the turbulence of the last 25 years. They mark the “door to modernity”, recreating the landscape of Latin America’s changing societies, while also redefining religiosity in an increasingly secular society.

It is worth noting that the Bible Society in England and Wales has launched a major media campaign using scenes from the popular British soap opera “Eastenders” with the aim of changing attitudes to the Bible and promoting its relevance to everyday life.¹⁸⁾

7.3. Videos in Latin America

Although they are rapidly being replaced by DVDs, religious videos played an important part in communicating the Christian faith in the final decades of the twentieth century. Research divides the videos into two groups, each related to specific audiences — *ad intra* and *ad extra* — the established ‘church’ audience and those on the margins of the church community.

The *ad intra* videos use literal pedagogical images, involving traditional symbolism and predictable codes of interpretation. In the *ad extra* videos, however, the audiovisual narrative is innovative. It recognises the transmutation between media languages and dialogues with other narrative forms. The use of intertextuality and ‘intermediality’ enables a richer interpretation.

7.4. The sitcom in North America: The example of *Seinfeld*

17) Rey German, “Identities, Religion and Melodrama: A View from the Cultural Dimension of the Latin American *Telenovela*”, Peter G. Horsfield, Mary E. Hess and Adán G. Medrano, eds., *Belief in Media* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2004), 81-82.

18) See <http://www.biblesociety.org.uk/l3.php?id=395>

The sitcom is a television comedy series that involves a continuing cast of characters in a succession of episodes. Often the characters are markedly different types thrown together by circumstance and occupying a shared environment such as an apartment building or workplace. They are marked by verbal sparring and rapidly resolved conflicts.

A study of the *Seinfeld* series has indicated that one of its roles for its 'yuppie' audience was dealing with appropriate behaviour and ethics in the urban environment. Every episode was about some social rule. Seinfeld was as obsessed with social customs and politeness as Jane Austen was in her day and age. Contemporary society has dilemmas that could not be imagined in Jane Austen's time. For example, how do you approach a romantic relationship with a woman or a man you have never seen and known only through the Internet? In dealing with such issues Seinfeld became "a veritable encyclopedia of postmodern manners."¹⁹⁾

8. Engaging the New Media

As research and investigation help us to understand the new context, we are faced with opportunities to intentionally engage and learn the new culture and the challenge to experiment with expressing our faith in new media forms, to become more multi-sensory and communication-rich. Speaking of the Internet, John Paul II commented:

"Will the face of Jesus appear in this galaxy of images and sounds? Will his voice be heard? Only when his face is seen and his voice is heard will the world know the Good News of our redemption. This is the aim of evangelisation. And this is what will convert the Internet into an authentically human space, for if there is no place for Christ, there is no place for human beings either."²⁰⁾

The following are some options for those who seek to translate and communicate the message of the Bible.

19) Jean Benoit, "The Evolution of Etiquette", *En Route* 21 (2001), 20.

20) John Paul II, "Internet: A New Forum for the Proclamation of the Gospel", Message of the Holy Father for the 36th. World Communication Day. 12 May 2002. www.vatican.va

8.1. INTERNET: The New ‘*Roman Forum*²¹⁾’?

The world of the Internet has created whole new communities of people, or “netizens”, who, through varied “chat rooms”, find meaning, purpose and identity in these interactive relationships. In exploring the question of “God and the chat room?”, Johannes Ehrat understands the online participants as *navigators* using hypertext to chart their own course. They are not so much users or consumers of information content as they are involved in finding and creating meaning. He identifies metaphor as playing a key role in creating meaning.

He describes chat as “narrative role play”, similar to improvised theatre. This takes place in real time and is open and innovative. It is equally “virtual reality” with characteristics that can be seen as parable and fantasy. The possibility of truth and its communication or discovery can be found in the use of those genres²²⁾.

‘Translating’ for the Internet, as opposed to making it possible to access the standard text of the Bible via the Internet, requires understanding and use of a new “media language”.²³⁾ The Internet opens up a semiotic maze where meaning is built through multiple sign systems. The focus is not on notions of reading and writing linear text. Instead it is centered on the integration of semiotics and hypertext.

In Internet ‘reading’ the written text is only one of the sign systems that require attention. Internet text is diverse; it spans all genres, and creates new ones. This requires skills in negotiating multiple sign systems in non-linear ways. Writers of electronic text engage in electronic symbol making — they use word processing and

21) “The Internet is certainly a new “forum” understood in the ancient Roman sense of that public space where politics and business were transacted, where religious duties were fulfilled where much of the social life of the city took place, and where the best and the worst of human nature was on display. It was a crowded and bustling urban space, which both reflected the surrounding culture and created a culture of its own. This is no less true of cyberspace, which is as it were a new frontier opening up at the beginning of this new millennium. Like the new frontiers of other times, this one too is full of the interplay of danger and promise, and not without the sense of adventure which marked other great periods of change. For the Church the new world of cyberspace is a summons to the great adventure of using its potential to proclaim the Gospel message. This challenge is at the heart of what it means at the beginning of the millennium to follow the Lord’s command to ‘put out into the deep.’” John Paul II, “Internet: A New Forum for the Proclamation of the Gospel”, §2.

22) Ehrat Johannes, “Gott im Netz: Chatten über Gott?” 2002.

23) For instance, the new interactive *Basisbible* project of the German Bible Society involves a new Bible translation designed for the screen, not for the printed page. <http://www.basisb.de/>

multimedia tools to create symbols that represent meaning. Hypertext links ‘logically’ connect the meaning of the text in ways that are not ‘logical’ to users of traditional printed texts. Intertextuality, interactivity and intermediality are among the terms applied to this — as has been noted “nothing in traditional language remotely resembles the dynamic flexibility of the Web”²⁴).

8.2. Graphic Novels

The emergence of the graphic novel in North America as a distinct genre builds on and develops the long comic book tradition in the USA.²⁵) In most cases a graphic novel narrates a complete story, rather than being produced in episodes which is a characteristic of the Japanese *manga* publications (which are now also found in the North American market). *Manga* is more visual than American comics, with more image and less text.

The Nida Institute of the American Bible Society (ABS) has developed “Guidelines for Adapting Scripture in the Graphic Novel Format” (Bernstengel, 2005). These consider

- biblical stories set within their historical context;
- biblical stories recast in contemporary settings;
- contemporary stories based on biblical values/themes.

ABS broke new ground with their graphic novel on the biblical ‘judge’ Samson, developed, as it was, for inner-city young people in the USA. However, the art form and the visualization of the Biblical narrative in terms of a contemporary audience required innovations that certain ABS donors found unacceptable. The development of further materials has been suspended for the time being.

J.T.Waldman’s graphic novel *Megillat Esther* has had a very different reception, having been warmly welcomed by many sectors of the Jewish community. The text and images not only ‘re-present’ the book of Esther, they also interact with Jewish

24) David, Crystal, *Language and the Internet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 210.

25) For a useful summary of what a graphic novel is, see Burke, 2006. The US comic tradition has centred around strong, often violent, hero, superhero or antihero figures (e.g. *Hellboy*, *The Hulk*, *Spawn*, *X-Men*, *The Incredibles*) which means that those accustomed to such literature will come to Bible-based graphic novels with expectations created by this genre.

history and include a series of subplots which are the author-artist's own *midrashim*. Halfway through the story the text and images are turned upside down and force the reader to continue Hebrew-style, reading from right to left. This not only influences the book materially — inverting the book is a metaphor for the whole story itself — it effectively pulls the reader into the event.

8.3. Storytelling

People have been telling stories for as long as we have had speech. Many cultures still maintain a rich oral tradition, even though they are now being impacted by the mass media. At the same time, there has been a striking recovery of story and narrative today in societies where print culture has prevailed.²⁶⁾ This is taking place in education (especially literacy), entertainment, health services (e.g. drama therapy, 'reminiscence' projects), spirituality, and evangelism. The online diary, or blog, is one form of storytelling.

Storytelling in cultures has two basic functions: conservation and transformation. In the first role it communicates values, norms, customs, and practices. It conserves and passes them on to rising generations. This can be both positive and negative. On the one hand it promotes group adhesion and security, while on the other it can exclude contrary thinking and reinforce those in power. In the second role storytelling serves to question and change the dominant value system. It is subversive and aims to transform what has been preserved into something more just, something better adapted to the changed and changing reality.

In the field of Biblical Studies recent decades have seen a growing interest in matters of orality, literacy and memory, which some would date to the publication of Werner Kelber's *The Oral and Written Gospel: The Hermeneutics of Speaking and Writing in the Synoptic Tradition, Mark, Paul and Q* in 1983. This was taken up by scholars such as Tom Boomershine who applied it both to storytelling and the new media²⁷⁾.

26) See, for instance, Ruth Spielmann (2002) for an excellent summary of 'secondary orality.'

27) Thomas E. Boomershine, "Biblical Megatrends: Towards a Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Bible in the Electronic Media", *SBL 1987 Seminar Papers* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 144-157; *Story Journey: An Invitation to the Gospel as Storytelling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1988); "Biblical Storytelling and Biblical Scholarship". Paper presented at the NOBS Scholars Conference, August 2-7 (2004), http://www.nobsseminar.org/pdf_docs/BoomershineTom04.pdf

Recent studies in the Gospels have drawn attention to their oral communication environment and to the close relation between written text and oral performance. Dunn, for instance, suggests the possibility that relationships among the Gospels lie in performance rather than written texts²⁸). Literacy was limited to a socio-cultural elite in the Roman empire, and so models based on the role of cultural memory and cultural texts have been found useful. Within that communication context “texts” are speech acts, where the “text” can be understood as “a message that is repeated, remembered, recovered and referred to”²⁹).

The field has been enriched by the application of performance theory and performance criticism to Biblical texts. It is recognized that although Biblical texts have survived in written form, they contain evidence of having circulated as oral texts. The oral/aural nature of texts links them to performance. Attempts to reconstruct performance take into account:

- Storyteller
- Story
- Audience
- Context

In his work on performance criticism, David Rhoads, himself a storyteller and ‘performer’, asks how we can interpret texts intended to be heard unless we hear them. In this he urges readers to be aware of the variety of interpretations. The interpreter therefore has an obligation to read responsibly, in order to proclaim the text “in ways that bring life and not death to the world”³⁰). With this aim in mind, he advocates reading with others, particularly from races, cultures, and genders other than one’s own.

In commenting on prophetic performance art, Yvonne Sherwood draws attention to the way in which the prophetic word can be dramatised in the body of the prophet, who is both its subject (speaker) and its object (victim). This makes prophetic literature and performance very different to more traditional literary and

28) James D. G. Dunn, *Jesus Remembered* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 248-249.

29) Assmann, “Form as a Mnemonic Device: Cultural Texts and Cultural Memory”, Richard A. Horsley, Jonathan A Draper, and John Miles Foley, eds., *Performing the Gospel: Orality, Memory and Mark* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 67-82.

30) Rhoads David, *Mark: Engaging the Gospel* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 219.

performative arts. A prophet such as Ezequiel is often overwhelmed by ‘his’ text, which shows its control of him rather than his control of it. “They perform the heaviness of the oracle/word as ‘burden’ (masa) and excess”³¹). She suggests that in ‘reperformance’ today the Biblical ‘text’ should be juxtaposed with “fragments of the contemporary” to achieve a mutual exegesis and critique.

These various perspectives hold rich potential for storytelling today.

9. Postlude

The prologue of John’s Gospel presents the *logos*, the Word, God — the word become a person: “The word was with God, and the Word was God” (Joh 1:1). Only this word, that is Jesus, has fully revealed the face of God. It is also clear that God has become incarnate, embodied, and thus become image, in Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God sent to the world, “we have seen his glory” (1:14). In Jesus Christ the Word and the image are brought together and lived out *par excellence* — the true representation, the most concrete human expression of God.

Paul states this link in very precise terms: “He is the image of the invisible God” (Col 1:15). He points to the need of mediation by the visible, of the image as the channel of communication. It is in the image that God is visibly revealed. If the *logos* is a key Johannine term, the *eikon* is a basic Pauline expression (Col 1:15-17; 2 Co 4:4; Rom 8:28-31). In a different way John also has this in mind when he refers to Jesus as reflecting the glory of the Father (Joh 17:5, 24), so much so that the person who sees him, sees the Father also (14:9).

Jesus himself related to people in their daily life and, by way of parables, reminded them that he is the one who communicates the Father to them. In this way Jesus’ ‘live communication’ had an iconic basis, which illustrated and exemplified in a live, dynamic, understandable way the realities of the Kingdom of God. He is not only the word and image of the Father, his preferred communication style was iconic, testimonial and narrative, rather than rhetorical or doctrinal. His parables were a “theatre of symbols” — images taken from earthly realities to communicate the reality revealed by God. This captivated those who heard and saw him, and led

31) Sherwood, Yvonne, “Prophetic Performance Art”, *The Bible and Critical Theory* 2:1 (2006), 1.1-1.4. DOI: 10.2104/bc060001.

many to become his followers.

Small wonder that it could be said later:

We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have *heard*, what we have *seen* with our eyes, what we have *looked at* and *touched* with our hands, concerning the word of life... (1 Joh 1:1)

New Testament Christianity was multi-sensory, and is there to be rediscovered and re-presented in our contemporary world.

In the eighth century John of Damascus³²⁾ reasoned against the iconoclastics of his time for whom images were anathema. His words are instructive for us today:

“You cannot see my form”, the Scripture says... How can the invisible be depicted?

It is obvious that when you contemplate God becoming man, then you may depict him clothed in human form...then you may draw his image and show it to anyone willing to gaze upon it... Show his saving cross, the tomb, the resurrection, the ascension into the heavens.

Use every kind of drawing, word, or colour. Fear not; have no anxiety.”³³⁾

<Keyword>

Communication, new media, Internet, graphic novel, storytelling

32) John of Damascus [740?], *Three Treatises on the Divine Images; Translation and Introduction by Andrew Louth* (Crestwood: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 24.

33) Treatise I, “Defense against those who attack the holy images by our Father among the Saints”, § 8.

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<Abstract>

새 매체: 문화, 그리스도교 신앙, 교회 ... 그리고 번역

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(세계성서공회연합회 아메리카 지역 번역 책임자)

지난 20년간 우리의 세계는 문화 관념과 사상과 사회 조직에서 큰 변화를 겪어왔다. 이는 주로 전 세계의 사람들과 문화들에 영향을 미치는 커뮤니케이션 시스템의 발전에 기인한다. 이 글에서 우리는 이 변화하는 세계와 그것이 교회와 신앙에 대해 가지는 함의 그리고 그 맥락에서 성서의 메시지를 전달해야 하는 난제에 대해 살펴볼 것을 제안한다.

(안용성 역)