The Making of the Body of Christ:
Worship as a Technological Apocalypse[1]

Introduction: Techno-worship?

Is the contemporary rush on 'techno-worship' an enhancement of that genuinely spiritual longing for God, or is it, rather, an idolatrous fetishization of technology itself? In what sense can watching television, or a sound and light performance, become a legitimate extension or substitute for ruminating upon word and sacrament? Is there any real difference between a digital image and the icons of Rublev: can't both of them mediate the face of God for people at prayer? These are questions about which all of us have an opinion, for we experience them as a pressure pushing in on us from the culture around, and therefore as a voice and spirit within. We live in a time when battle lines are being drawn and people are taking sides!   In the Uniting Church, I can tell you, there are zealots who advocate the 'postmodern' worship of 'café-churches' and 'Late, Late Arthouse Shows'; and there are zealots who favour a more vigorous application of the lessons of the Liturgical Reform movement. But most press on with what can only be described as a sense of confusion and helplessness in the face of falling numbers, a rising mean age, and the omnipresence of the Matrix (otherwise known as 'the web').

For all this, I would argue that the *apparent* urgency of such questions should not be allowed to lead the churches into making *too-hasty* pronouncements either 'for' or 'against' the use of particular technologies in worship. Why? Because worship is, and always has been, a deeply technological mode of human performance. It has always been about "making" or "creating" the voice, image and presence of God for the consumption of human subjects. At the same time however, particularly in the Jewish and Christian traditions, worship also serves to announce the limit, "end," or failure of that enterprise. In this more "apocalyptic" mode, worship is something of *God's* making: an event which comes to fracture and relativise the system or symbolic matrix of our making in the name of a persistent 'secret' which may neither be theologized nor performed.

This means that Christian worship might be justly characterized as a **technological apocalypse.** On the one hand, it necessarily draws upon available technologies in order to fulfill its mission, to imaginatively make and remake material reality—church, society, and cosmos—in the image of Christ's body. On the other hand, worship is overwhelmed or exceeded by a trace or witness to

something 'other,' an 'other' which effectively limits that human project absolutely. In the experience of this contradiction, of this 'double-bind,' as Derrida would have it, it is essential that the church develop a renewed capacity for discernment with regard to the production of liturgical events and resources. Whatever the technologies in use, these should be chosen and used in such a way as to express a profound and determinative **hospitality** within worship for the irreducible 'secret' who is God. Yet technologies there must be, and every kind of technology, for there is a crucial moment in God's becoming that is rightly human, and therefore technological.

Technology as the revelation of truth in the mode of making

It was Heidegger who showed that technology tends to hide its own essential meaning and mission. Veiled beneath the commonplace definition of technology as an instrument or means by which human beings try to master their own ends, Heidegger identifies a vocation and destiny which he calls 'responsibility,' a responsibility to make present or 'reveal' [*das Entbergen*] that which desires to come into presence, namely Being.[2] The road to this conclusion is characteristically tortuous, but ingenious. Taking the usual notion of technology as instrumentality seriously, Heidegger says that instrumentality is causality, but not in the Latin sense of a 'falling out' [*cadere*] which produces some kind of material effect. Rather, causality is that towards which one is indebted [*aiton*] in the Greek sense. So, for example, a chalice is not so much *effected* by the work of a silversmith, but is rather *indebted* to him as the *logos* who gathers together materials and forms and ideas which are not his own creation necessarily, but in some sense precede him, and want to come into expression and existence. The silversmith simply starts these materials and forms and ideas on their way to arriving in the 'occasion' of a chalice.[3]

The play which occasions the arrival of what is not-yet-present into presence is what Aristotle called *poiēsis*, from which we derive our word 'poetry'. Heidegger notes that *poiēsis* unfolds itself in two distinct modes: as a 'bringing-forth in itself,' like the blooming of a flower; or as the 'bringing forth as from another,' as with the activity of a craftsman or artist. This means that, in contrast to popular opinion, the technology of the craftsman is not in essence all that different to the creative art of a poet or painter. Like art and philosophy, technology is a 'way of revealing' the truth of Being.[4] In the Greek mind, *technikon* properly designates not only the work of the craftsperson, but also the art/work of the mind and of the fine arts. Thus, *technē* should be

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[2] Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977)., pp 5, 9, 11, 39.
[3] Ibid., pp 8-10
[4] Ibid., pp 10-12

understood as a synonym of *poiēsis,* and even of *epistēmē* or knowing in the sense of being 'entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert'. Technical or poetic knowing is creative in that it opens up and reveals something which 'needs' such activity in order to come to be.[5] Human creativity is understood by Heidegger to 'shepherd' Being into being.[6] Creativity action, whether that of *technē* or *poiēsis*, is therefore essentially about midwifing the birth of an ecstatic or excessive truth [*alētheia*] into the world of human consciousness and care.

Faith and technology: an affinity

Now if, as Derrida argues in several places, Heidegger's philosophy of Being is simply a displaced Christian theology of the most traditional kind,[7] we might draw a number of properly theological lessons from his reflections. First, as faith is at depth a human act of making which responds to the call of the sacred Other, Heidegger's analogy of *poiēsis* with *technē* might be legitimately interpreted as the recognition of a primal affinity between *faith* and *technology*. According to Derrida, Judeo-Christian faith is first of all a response, a responsibility, or a sacramental promise 'to the other, before the other, and to oneself'. As such, faith calls upon an absent or unproducible God as the primary origin and witness to its promise. But this means that faith has no option but to produce and reproduce this 'unproducibility' over and over again in an effective performance of the promise.[8] Not that the promise is entirely of human making, for human promises are always already understood in faith as the messianic inbreaking of another promise, the promise of *God's* faithfulness and justice which 'inscribes itself in advance'. In this sense, the act of faith claims to be, somewhat paradoxically, the performance of a law which comes from elsewhere, which cannot belong to the language which human beings, of themselves, found or inaugurate.[9] Thus, the structure of faith is essentially *sacramental.* It is a human act of promising which nevertheless witnesses to an eschatological promise which has already arrived in the witnessing act itself. 'The promise promises *itself*, it is *already* promised, that is the sworn faith, the given word, and hence the response.'[10]

Second, it is this strange coincidence of divine and human promising which gives to religious discourse its quasi-mechanical or technological flavour. Because the sacred referent or addressee of

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[5] Ibid., pp 12, 13, 34, 40
[6] Ibid., pp 41, 42
[7] Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (London: University of Chicago Press, 1989)., pp 108, 109; Jacques Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge: The Two Sources of 'Religion' at the Limits of Reason Alone," in *Acts of Religion*, ed. Gil Anidjar (London & New York: Routledge, 2002)., p 96
[8] Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge.", p 64
[9] Ibid., pp. 56, 46, 57
[10] Ibid., p. 67

prayer is present as an *absence*, human intentionality attempts to compensate, to 'produce' a God in presence. Thus, one may recognize in the paschal figure of Jesus the essential '*iterability*' of faith, the mechanical and repetitious failure to produce a presence which nevertheless desires to come into presence as the sign of salvation. Here technological reproduction in words and images and artifacts becomes the very *possibility* of faith: the impossible possibility that the absent one may speak his own promise in the faithful litanies of the believer.[11] Elaine Scarry has pointed out that the embodiment of Christ in Christian theology implies that God can now be created and recreated as a work of human art, for to have a body is to allow oneself to be described or inscribed by others, to be given a meaning from a place other than one's own center of consciousness. This is the meaning, according to Scarry, of the overwhelming popularity in Christian art of scenes of birth and crucifixion. At birth, and at death, our bodies are at their most vulnerable, at their most inscribable.[12] Faith, then, is a response to the call of God to 'making and material culture.' It is the responsibility to make the body of Jesus anew in our world, but in a way that recognizes that we are always already responsible to 'see' him better, to express a more comprehensive awareness of the elusive body we seek to render sensible.[13]

Chauvet, for his part, recognizes exactly that structure of faith in the creative performance or 'work' we call the liturgy. Liturgical faith, he says, is first of all the assent to a loss. In worship we renounce the immediacy of the availability of Christ as an instrumental object, in favour of a Christ 'mediated' in the repeated acts of word and sacrament.[14] At the heart of these material symbols is an emptiness that witnesses to the 'other' who resists the projective impulse to simply create, in Christ, another version of ourselves. And yet, it is the emptiness that also necessitates and even grants such projection. Chauvet says that liturgical discourse is essentially sacramental or 'symbolic' (bringing together), in that while Christ and the Church are presumed to be different, in the liturgy each receives their identity from the other in an exchange of voice and body. In the worship and mission of the church, Christ comes to material fullness, while, in that same movement, the church finds its true voice or voca-tion by borrowing the voice of Christ.[15] Here the *poiēsis* of human beings encounters a more pervasive *poiēsis* of God, an action and activity that slips under our radar screens, so to speak, bypassing the noetic processes of human projection. The repetition of the words of Christ in the Scriptures inscribes his mysterious otherness on the surface of material

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[11] Ibid., p 83
[12] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985)., p 216
[13] Ibid., pp 219, 220
[14] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 2001)., p 39
[15] Ibid., pp 85, 86

sacrament and human body alike so that he becomes the unobjectifiable President of all that is said and done in his name.[16] Put simply, while human beings create an Artifact in the liturgy, the Artifact returns to create and recreate human beings; and with an excess which may not be easily reappropriated into a purely anthropological project. Scarry calls this movement 'reciprocation,' the very reason why we make things in the first place. Here the artefact is invested with the very *power* of creating so that, in the end, it is not always clear where authorship ends and artifice begins![17] We are left to wonder, then, if the work of the liturgy is a human work entirely, or whether it is primarily a work of *God* after the model of Christ's incarnation.

Worship as the escha-technological activity of *God*

The *Epistle to the Hebrews* speaks of God as the *technitēs*, the architect or builder of a heavenly city which is the *telos* or destination towards which all the saints are journeying by their faith (Heb 11.10). In a parallel passage from *Ephesians*, human beings are called *poiēma* or artefacts of God, created in Christ Jesus to do the works of good (Eph 2.10). Importantly, in this second passage, it is not the artefacts of human beings which save them, but the ontologically prior work of divine grace—a gift from the past which opens up the human future as a work of God. There is an indisputably eschatological structure to these passages. God the *technitēs* has something in mind from the beginning. By grace God takes a body in human history, and yet this materiality is not finally allowed to capture or domesticate God's eschatological movement, to hold it down in a present. Rather, in the resurrection, the present is revealed as an *incomplete* opening onto a material future, a future which has already been figured in the Jewish stories of exile and exodus.

In Christian thought, the voice of God takes on a human body in Christ. This makes Christ vulnerable, inscribable, as in the eucharistic liturgy of the Church where Christ is made into Scripture, into bread and wine, and finally into a body of human beings. But appearances can be deceptive. For who is author and who is artifice here? This is precisely the kind of question Heidegger was asking in his *Question Concerning Technology.* Read anthropologically, technology is simply the means by which human beings make nature into an extension or projection of themselves. And there is an undeniable truth in that. As Scarry says, technology is the tool by which 'Civilization restructures the naturally existing eternal environment to be laden with human awareness.'[18] But read at another level, the level of ontology, Heidegger would say that technology is also the revealing of Being, that poetry and art and religious ritual are the occasion by which

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[16] Ibid., p 110
[17] Scarry, *The Body in Pain.*, p 306, 310-312
[18] Ibid., p 305

Being enters into human awareness and history. Theologically we could say, with Marianne Sawicki, that while the Jesus of gospels and liturgy is certainly a *made* Jesus, a constructed Jesus, such construction is also the condition or occasion by which the real and resurrected Jesus makes himself discoverable or recognisable in the world beyond Calvary, where 'otherwise his involvement would go unnoticed.'[19]

But what is the nature of that involvement? How, and to what purpose, does God in Christ wield his tools in the world? Let us take those tools of God which are known in the liturgy as 'Scripture' and 'Sacrament' for instance. How are these the tools of God? Certainly we must part, today, with the Scholastic notion that word and sacrament are an *operative* or *instrumental means* by which grace is produced as an object for human consumption, a magic potion to cure all ills.[20] But equally we must do away with the subjectivist claim that word and sacrament are sign-instruments by which an already given and unrepeatable grace is transmitted into the hearts and minds of the community as 'lived experience'.[21] What these two historical perspectives (the one Catholic, the other Protestant) have in common is their philosophical commitment to an instrumental understanding of language and technology, that is, they both assume that the creative role of language or technology is ontologically secondary to either the object or subject of faith.[22] Put simply, such models hypostasise the *substance* of either subject or object before they are brought into *relationship* with each other. But surely this is not how sacraments work. Are they not, rather, sites of symbolic *exchange* between God and human beings, artefacts in which God and human beings mutually or 'intertextually' *make* or *change* one another?[23] In that sense, the tools of God are also the tools of human beings, but this by God's will and consent.

This last point is crucial to our understanding of the way in which God *inhabits* the liturgical performance. As with the making of Christ in the gospels, God gives human beings the freedom to make what they make in the liturgy. God creates the space, if you like, for another centre of consciousness to be, and to express itself in texts and artefacts. That means, of course, that God takes an enormous risk. Christ was tortured and crucified. Human beings took their creative freedom and turned it into a tool for wounding and repression. So too, in liturgical performance, human beings may choose to push their Nietzschian ideologies of power-over rather than power-

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[19] Marianne Sawicki, *Seeing the Lord: Resurrection and Early Christian Practices* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994)., p 8

[20] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*., p xiv

[21] Ibid., p xix

[22] Ibid., pp 3-5; see also the extended critique of the instrumentalist position in Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute between Theism and Atheism*, trans. Darrell L. Guder (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1983)., pp 5-9

[23] Sawicki, *Seeing the Lord*., pp 326, 327

with. There are many examples of such liturgy in the history of the church: worship as a weapon for the promulgation of hate and violence, usually in its negative form of exclusion. Yet, at precisely the moment when one attempts to *use* the liturgy in this way, the liturgy's subject, Christ, seems to *metamorphose*. At precisely the moment when he is fashioned into a guarantor of racism, or sexism, or repression, Christ seems to escape such nomination, taking form elsewhere as a material *contestation* of those categories. Sawicki says that this is what the resurrection is about, and I agree with her.[24]

Worship as Apocalypse

The technology of worship therefore performs a relationship with God which is fundamentally asymmetrical, but not in the sense of a Lord and his servant. Rather, in the very act of our making of Jesus in bread and wine, we find that we are ourselves being made into bread and wine for the world. 'Let us receive what we are, let us become what we receive.' As we construct, so are we deconstructed and reconstructed. This because the words and actions of the liturgy, as we have received them from bible and church, are fundamentally *apocalyptic* in that word's most literal sense: an uncovering of the will and word of God under the conditions of material reality.[25] This will and word, spoken and acted by human beings, boomerangs back to our hearts and bodies as a new inscription, a conversion and modification of our fundamental sense of identity and vocation. 'Let no one cause me trouble,' says Paul, 'for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus.' (Gal 5.17). As the liturgy tells the story of the death of Christ to all that is evil in the world, and his raising by God to be a new creation, so those who repeat this story are inscribed with it. They are changed and made new. The traditional flow of the liturgy is revealing here. The reading of the word comes first, because it inscribes the sacraments of water and meal with Christological meaning. That meaning is then imbibed and ruminated upon in the sacrament. Finally, it inscribes the identity of Christ on our bodies, in our innermost parts so to speak, so that we are transformed into the very mission and message of Jesus for the world in which we live.

In this we return to the thought of Heidegger, but in a Derridean mode. As noted above, Heidegger proclaimed that even when people have forgotten about Being altogether, even when they have become captive to the belief that technology is nothing more than a utilisation of the world according to our own measure and will, Being nevertheless reasserts its claim on us precisely as revelation. Derrida, for his part, says that it is impossible for human beings to escape the

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[24] Ibid., pp 292-299
[25] Chauvet, *The Sacraments*., p 44

apocalyptic structure of our human projects. It is as if, even in proclaiming the 'end' of Western thinking—which is eschatological from beginning to end—that we do so in the name of some 'other' eschatology, an eschatology which comes to contest the adequacy of our eschatology.[26] In an astonishing reading of the *Revelation of St John*, Derrida points out that the one who promises to 'come,' the Alpha and Omega, never entirely arrives. Rather, he 'posts' himself to the reader through a multivalent layering of hearing and testimony:

> One does not know (for it is no longer of the order of knowing) to whom the apocalyptic sending returns; it leaps [*saute*] from one place of emission to the other (and a place is always determined *starting from* the presumed emission); it goes from one destination, one name, and one tone to another; in always refers [*renvoie*] to the name and the tone of the other that is there but as having been there and before yet coming, no longer being or not yet there in the present of the *récit*.[27]

The result, of course, is that it is no longer possible to determine, absolutely, who is the writer and who is the speaker, who is the author and who is the messenger. When that possibility has elapsed, says Derrida, a text has become apocalyptic.[28] This is exactly the case with liturgy, I submit. Whether we begin with the assumption that it is a work of God or a work of the people, we can never be sure in either case. For in writing the liturgy we find ourselves being summoned by a call from elsewhere; and yet this call from elsewhere says 'write this down'. In the end, our liturgical productions are therefore both enabled and interrupted by a 'transcendental condition' which precedes and exceeds our own productive powers: God.

God and 'the Secret'

There are two explanations for the experience of the hiddenness or secrecy of God, a hiddenness which seems to persist even beyond the unique revelation of God in a human form. The philosophical explanation, enunciated by Lévinas and Derrida, is that the word 'God' announces the arrival of some kind of 'infinite' or 'zero' point from a place beyond being. The Infinite, Lévinas' God, is therefore understood as a reality that both 'is' human consciousness and yet bursts out into the 'beyond' of human consciousness as the utterly transcendent. It affects human thought by 'simultaneously devastating it and calling it; through a "putting it in its place," the Infinite puts

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[26] Jacques Derrida, "On a Newly Arisen Apocalyptic Tone in Philosophy," in *Raising the Tone of Philosophy: Late Essays by Emmanuel Kant, Transformative Critique by Jacques Derrida*, ed. Peter Fenves (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993)., pp 147-149
[27] Ibid., p 156
[28] Ibid., p 156

thought in place. It wakes thought up.'[29] When Derrida talks of God he speaks, in the same breath, of a 'secret' which remains secret even as it is disseminated and repeated in performative testimony. There is a language that faith and belief cannot master, he says, a language that speaks *through* us as testimony [*témoignage,* 'bearing witness'] and yet is not *from* us. 'We testify [*témoignons*] to a secret that is without content, without a content that is separable from its performative experience, from its performative tracing. This would not be a secret that one might detect and demystify.'[30] The secret, he says, is neither sacred or profane, because it is beyond all such reductions as the condition of their possibility.[31] Because it exceeds the play of disclosure or concealment, the secret can be spoken about *ad infinitum.* But for all that, the secret will *remain* secret, 'mute impassive as the *khōra.*'[32] For these thinkers, then, God is a secret because 'God,' is the name of a transcendental condition of language which, because it conditions language absolutely, can never be entirely presented *within* language.

A more theological explanation is advanced by Eberhard Jüngel, but one which has a certain resonance with the eschatological structure of post-structural thought. Jüngel says that God is indeed here-and-now, but not in such a way that God is collapsed into the self-presence of the creating ego. Rather, God goes out of himself in order to address us; and that address has the consequence of taking us out of ourselves as well, such that we meet with God in a distance which is also closer to us that we are to ourselves.[33] Thus, for faith, there can be no 'God with us' (*deus pro nobis*) or 'God in us' (*deus in nobis*) without a more fundamental distancing of the human self from *itself.* It is the person who lives outside of themselves that is identical with the nearness of God, which is defined most specifically, in the cross of Jesus.[34] The designation of God as a 'secret' or 'mystery' should not, therefore, be attached to any seeming aporia between 'natural' and 'revealed' knowledge of God, as is the case for philosophy.[35] Rather, as in the New Testament usage of the term, mystery should be understood as a secret which remains secret even as it discloses itself. In the New Testament, the mystery is Christ, and Christ is made known as the speech of God which is also a transfigured kind of human speech: the 'parable'.[36] 'Parabolic speech,' is a form of address in which common understanding is interrupted and transformed by the playfulness of a naming which is far from necessary. It was not necessary to call Jesus 'God's

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[29] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998)., p 66
[30] Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, trans. Ian McLeod (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995)., pp 23, 24
[31] Ibid., pp 25, 26
[32] Ibid., pp 26, 27
[33] Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World*., p 182
[34] Ibid., pp 182-184
[35] Ibid., pp 249, 250
[36] Ibid., pp 252-254

Son,' says Jüngel. And yet 'In such talk, a certain reality is expressed through *possibilities* in such a way that this possibility leads forcefully to the discovery of a new dimension of reality and to greater precision in talk about what is real. Metaphors and parables thus express more in language than was real until now.'[37] The parable of Christ is also, therefore, a *sacrament* in that it allows the hearer to find an eschatological refiguration of his or her own life in the story of another.[38] Here, then, God is secret not because of the gap between God and ourselves, but because of the gap between who we are now, and who we shall be when God finally comes to himself in the *eschaton*.

Pastoral implications: boldness and humility

The pastoral implications of what I've said here might be summarised under the heading of a certain kind of Lutheran dialectic: in boldness, humility.

It seems that God has gifted us with the freedom and capacity to make all manner of things, to make a world in which we feel at home. We should therefore feel free to use whatever technology or artifice is to hand in our making of worship. I personally can't see why *any* technology should be excluded from the making of worship out of hand, unless it is specifically designed to be a weapon, to bring harm, and cannot be used in any other way. If worship is to be Christian, though, I suggest that it needs to be conformed to a number of principles, which arise directly from this discussion:

1. The structure of worship needs to be conformed to the structure of Christian belief, that is, it needs to be modelled upon the performance of belief already given us in the revelation of Scripture and of tradition. Principally, this means that our own liturgical performance will have a cruciform character. It will remember and repeat the Paschal event in all its full and rich symbolism, and that means that the Eucharist should be celebrated regularly, as should some kind of recollection of baptism. There should always be a proclamation from the Scriptures.

2. There should be an integrity in the liturgy between word and action. There is no point in announcing that all may feed on Christ in an immediate and scandalously *material* way, but then limiting such participation to watching others so doing on a big screen. That would make as little sense as preaching a homily on 'baptism as a drowning with Christ,' and then

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[37] Ibid., pp 290, 291
[38] Ibid., p 309

baptising a child with only a few tiny droplets of water! In the structure of Christian belief, word must actually *become* flesh.

3. There should also be an integrity between liturgical performance and the performance of living. If we pray, during the Eucharist, that Christ might make of us bread for the world, then the missional rites ought to make that connection between worship and world very, very specific and hard to ignore. This is where images projected on screens can become powerful mediators of that connection. You know, pictures of aid workers distributing food in Africa and the like.

4. That does not mean, of course, that worship should simply be collapsed into the experience of technology that dominates the rest of our lives. We should exercise great care in showing snippets from *The Simpsons* in worship, particularly if everyone is seated and having coffee at the time. Why? Because it is important in worship that we speak our own language, but in *another register*. For it is the gap between the two registers which makes the difference, the possibility of the ordinary becoming revelatory. The artifice and language of worship should reflect this register of otherness in a fundamentally parabolic mode, which episodes of the *Simpsons* could well fit right into. But we must work hard on *recontextualizing* the familiar and the commonplace so that it becomes unfamiliar and revelatory. Remember, in the parables Christ perplexed and challenged his hearers even as he invoked images and practices with which his hearers were already familiar.

5. I would also argue that liturgy would not be liturgy without a quasi-mechanical character, a tendency to repeat itself as in the labour of technological production. This is not only to recognise that worship is properly technological in character, but also to recognise that it is precisely in this mode that liturgy becomes revelatory. There is nothing worse, I think, than making each worship service 'new and novel'. The apparently new and novel rarely allows us to catch up with what it has to reveal. Frequently the new and the novel has very little of God to reveal, because it is really about the individual or individuals who created it. But when prayers are said more than once, and actions are repeated more than once, and even when sermons are performed more than once, human artifice becomes luminescent with divine address. The word of God is given opportunity to transfigure that which, at the beginning, communicates itself only as human artifice.

6. Christian worship should 'reposition' people in *diakonal* relationship to one another. As, in the resurrection, Christ copied himself onto the bodies of the suffering peoples of the world (Matt 25), the architecture of worship should alert us to this fact, perhaps by placing us in such a way that we actually *see* the faces of other worshippers. God, you will remember, is the 'other' before he is the accomplished 'self.' God interrupts self-accomplishment to make us new. The worship should therefore exhibit the work and skill of a number of people, each with their proper roles, who serve one another by their sharing of the diverse gifts of the Spirit, encouraging the other to take up their own *poiētic* vocations in worship and mission. In this connection, perhaps presidency should be redefined to encompass the role of a television/theatre 'director' or 'producer'—someone relatively invisible, 'behind the scenes,' who nevertheless pulls together artifice, skills and gifts into an ordered whole.[39] As this is how Christ works in the liturgy, it would seem appropriate that his presidential representatives do so as well!

7. Finally, and most importantly, worship should be hospitable to the 'secret' who is Christ, the mystery of God. That means that our liturgy should be such that it encourages such hospitality in the faith of worshippers. In order to accomplish that, the liturgy must facilitate not entertainment from the front, but an act of prayer from the hearts of the people. There should be familiar texts, sung responses aplenty, a spareness of movement in both word and sacrament, and plenty of silence and/or space for meditation. In those circumstances, it is more than likely that our own words and images will come back at us in a voice and form and tone not of our own making. But if we clutter the worship with too much frantic movement or novelty, it is unlikely that we shall hear that address above the din of our own artifice.

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[39] See Paul Roberts, "Liturgy and Mission in Postmodern Culture: some reflections arising from 'Alternative' services and communities" at www.trinity-bris.ac.uk/faculty/paulr/articles/lambeth.html

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