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The Liturgy: The Context of Worship in the Context of Media

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THE LITURGY:

THE CONTEXT OF WORSHIP IN THE

CONTEXT OF MEDIA

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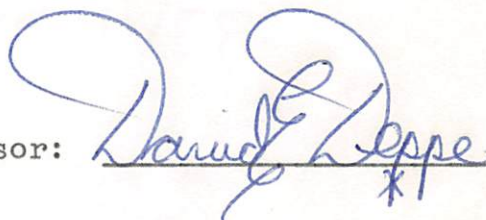
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by

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"Only in the way ahead is there freedom,
for only there is Christ. In him may
again be found a form and experience of
worship that merits the language of the
Constitution on the Liturgy of Vatican II:
it is the summit toward which the activity
of the church is directed; at the same
time it is the fount from which all her
power flows."

- Martin E. Marty

CHAPTER I

A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of this study is an attempt to gain perspective on the current disinterest in the organized church especially on the part of the young. To do this we intend to study the relationship between the worship of the church and the communication media, feeling that media are the fundamental fact in the development of social interaction.

The proposition that "communication is the fundamental fact of society"[1] is not easily disputed, and many sociology and anthropology textbooks begin with this premise; but few have attempted to show how the nature of various media shape the social interaction which they permit.

Herbert Marshall McLuhan has attempted such a study. He attempts to look at the tools of communication to determine the way they shape society. He studies not only the content of the medium, but the cultural matrix within which, and upon which the medium operates as well.[2]

This paper is concerned with liturgical worship and will attempt to show that the environment of man, as shaped by his communications media, shape man's worship patterns.

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[1] William F. Fore, Communication for Churchmen, in Communication for Churchmen, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), I, 14.

[2] Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p.8.

The next chapter will present, therefore, a theory of media based on the works of Marshall McLuhan, and in the following chapters the study will apply that theory to the development of liturgy from early Christian times and to the potential of liturgy in the present day.

To apply McLuhan's theory of media to the broad development of liturgy it was necessary to make certain limitations and assumptions. Therefore more time has been spent studying liturgy where movements and developments are more obvious, and many "minor," although significant, developments in worship have been overlooked. In the study it became necessary to set up "involvement and participation in the liturgy" as a type of barometer with which to measure the effects of media on the shape of liturgy.

The study indicates that media do, in fact, shape liturgy by shaping people's patterns of interaction and involvement with other people. An awareness of this simple fact on the part of the church can promote a more positive communication between God and the People of God in organized worship.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA: A PRESENTATION OF THEORY

The Extensions of Man

McLuhan contends that "it is impossible to understand social and cultural changes without a knowledge of media."[1] His central thesis, in this regard, is that "any technology gradually creates a totally new human environment."[2] Technologies are, for McLuhan, "self-amputations of our own being"[3] in order to extend ourselves in one direction or another. That is, "Every new technological innovation is a literal amputation of ourselves in order that it may be amplified and manipulated for social power and action."[4] For example: the wheel is the extension of the foot; the book is the extension of the eye; clothing, an extension of the skin; electric circuitry, an extension of the central nervous system; and so on.[5] But, "any extension, whether of skin, hand, or foot, affects the whole psychic and social

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[1]Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage: An Inventory of Effects (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 8.

[2]Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Second edition; New York: Signet Books, 1964), p. viii.

[3]Marshall McLuhan, War and Peace in the Global Village (New York: Bantam Books, 1968), p. 5.

[4]Ibid., p. 73.

[5]McLuhan, The Medium, pp. 31-40.

complex."[6] That is to say, when one of these extensions,
or technologies, is introduced into a society, man's sense
perceptions are thrown out of balance in favor of the newly
extended sense. Thus, in McLuhan's words:

> Media, by altering the environment, evoke in us
> unique ratios of sense perceptions. The extension
> of any one sense alters the way we think and act--
> the way we perceive the world. When these ratios
> change, men change.[7]

McLuhan's famous epigram, "The Medium is the Message,"
simply means that man's means of communication themselves
affect his behavior; in fact they are his behavior. Thus,
the primary means of communication are more important than
the content.[8]

In a sense, McLuhan is saying that man's society, that
is his environment as created by his technologies, is a grand,
macro-cosmic, corporate man; in the sense that media, extend
corporate man's sensorium out to other men and out into man's
total environment and bring men's thoughts and feelings and
experiences back to corporate man as sensory imputs conditioned,
however, by the framework that the media itself places around
that sensory imput.[9] To clarify the epigram again, "'the

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[6]McLuhan, Understanding, p. 19.

[7]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 41.

[8]A. Perry, "Back to the Future," Encounter, XXX
(Summer 1969), 242-243.

[9]William F. Fore, Communication for Churchmen, in
Communication for Churchmen, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr.
(New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), I, 31.

medium is the message' because it is the medium that shapes
and controls the scale and form of human association and
action."[10]   McLuhan gives an example of this in The Medium
is the Massage:

> The Alphabet, for instance, is a technology that
> is absorbed by the very young child in a completely
> unconscious manner, by osmosis so to speak.   Words
> and the meaning of words predispose the child to
> think and act automatically in certain ways.   The
> alphabet and print technology fostered and encouraged
> a fragmenting process, a process of specialism and of
> detachment.[11]

The new electronic information environments like
television and computer have a much more profound relation
to our perception of the world than even our old "natural"
environment, since these environments are an extension of
our central nervous system, and so "are live environments
in the full organic sense.   They alter our feelings and
sensibilities, especially when they are not attended to."[12]
It can even be said that "The first satellite ended 'nature'
in the old sense.   'Nature' became the content of a man-
made environment."[13]   So it is that in the new electronic
age, by the sheer speed and spontaneity of communication
we have become "irrevocably involved with, and responsible

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[10]McLuhan, Understanding, p. 24.

[11]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 8.

[12]McLuhan, War, p. 36.

[13]Ibid., pp. 177-178.

for, each other."[14] We live in a brand new world of all-
at-once-ness in which time has ceased and space has vanished.
We live in a global village with all mankind where life is
perceived as a simultaneous happening.[15]

The Environments of Man

While this study's primary concern is with liturgy as
it stands in the context of the present media, it will be
helpful to observe how McLuhan applies his theory to the
various ages or environments of man, both present and past,
to see what responses he correlates with certain media.
This will serve as a model, then, for a survey of liturgy
through the ages, to see if, in fact, the media which shape
environments also shape liturgy; that is, to see if liturgy
does indeed stand in the context of media, and does respond
to it.

The Oral or Tribal Period

"The dominant organ of sensory and social orientation in
pre-alphabet societies was the ear--'hearing was believing.'"[16]
This says much about pre-alphabet society already. In any
society, the media for storing and communicating knowledge

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[14]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 24.

[15]Ibid., p. 63.

[16]Ibid., p. 44.

govern what can be known.[17] "Any culture knows only what

it can recall."[18] Hence an oral culture can know only what

it recalls hearing.[19] As Walter J. Ong, S.J. one-time

colleague and student of McLuhan, describes this society,

> It thinks oral kinds of thoughts. This means thoughts
> which hinge on set themes or are fixed in formulas
> such as Homer's "rosy-fingered dawn" or "wine-dark sea"
> or "tamer of horses." We know now that the _Iliad_
> and the _Odyssey_ are made up for the most part of
> cliche's. . . . Oral culture thinks also in terms of
> balances which facilitate recall: "Blessed are the
> poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
> . . . Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess
> the earth."[20]

Thus oral culture relies on a memory which always holds

things in mind in the present. It is a deeply embedded,

deeply accurate culture, since "What is given in an oral

fashion exists at the roots."[21] As McLuhan puts it,

> Primitive and pre-alphabet people integrate time
> and space as one and live in an acoustic, horizonless,
> boundless, olfactory space, rather than in visual
> space.[22]

Thus, the oral culture is social (privacy is an invention

of writing), synchronic, and present oriented, since all its

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[17]Walter J. Ong, "Worship at the End of the Age of
Literacy," _Worship_, XLIII (October 1969), p. 477.

[18]_Ibid._

[19]_Ibid._

[20]_Ibid._, p. 478.

[21]_Ibid._, p. 479.

[22]McLuhan, _The Medium_, p. 57.

tradition is relegated to mythology in some kind of a-

historical time.[23]

The Environment of Writing

McLuhan describes the effects of writing this way:

Western history was shaped for some three thousand
years by the introduction of the phonetic alephbet (sic),
a medium that depends solely on the eye for compre-
hension. The alphabet is a construct of fragmented
bits and parts which have no semantic meaning in them-
selves, and which must be strung together in a line,
bead-like, and in a prescribed order. Its use fostered
and encouraged the habit of perceiving all environment
in visual and spatial terms--particularly in terms
of a space and of a time that are uniform, c,o,n,t,-
i,n,u,o,u,s and c-o-n-n-e-c-t-e-d.[24]

While the oral society was one of myth and memory,

the writing environment was not. As Socrates warned in

his "Phaedrus,"

The discovery of the alphabet will create forget-
fulness in the learners' souls, because they will
not use their memories; they will trust to the
external written characters and not remember of
themselves. . . You give your disciples not truth
but only semblance of truth; they will be heros of
many things, and will have learned nothing; they will
appear to be omniscent and will generally know
nothing.[25]

Even though Socrates claimed that students will have

learned nothing, writing did, in fact, make study possible.

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[23]Ong, "Worship", p. 481.

[24]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 44.

[25]Ibid., p. 113.

It made it possible for a person to be alone with elaborate systematic thinking.[26] And systematic thinking, it must be added, is inherent in the technology of the alphabet, and this is reflected in our habit of thinking in bits and parts, of step-by-step linear development, and of fragmenting activities into special fields of interest.[27]

The coming of the alphabet did not put an end to speaking, but as it changed the balance of the senses of man it did put speaking into a new perspective, as Ong illucidates:

> When man began to write he did not stop speaking. In fact it is more than likely that the people who wrote spoke much more than those who did not, because writing came into being only with the development of urban centers, which threw people together in large numbers. Speech both lost and gained when writing was invented. It lost because it no longer monopolized the field of verbal expression, but it gained because it was now something you could also put into writing.[28]

The primary importance of the advent of the phonetic alphabet is the sudden breach it created between the auditory and visual experience of man. It gave him an eye for an ear, and freed him from the tribal captivity to the ever-present word and the web of kinship. It can be argued that the phonetic alphabet is the technology responsible for creating "civilized man." It alone has

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[26] Ong, "Worship", p. 475.

[27] McLuhan, The Medium, p. 45.

[28] Ong, "Worship", p. 477.

the power to make a man a "separate man," taken out of
tribal connections and place as an equal individual before
a written code of law.[29] The result of the alphabet
environment, namely "Separatness of the individual, con-
tinuity of space and of time, and uniformity of codes"[30]
are the prime characteristics of literate, civilized
societies.

The Age(s) of Printed Page(s)

It should be noted immediately that the invention
of print technology did not restructure human communication
overnight. Medieval and Renaissance man experienced little
of the separation and speciality that developed later,
since the manuscript and earlier printed books were read
aloud, and poetry was sung or intoned.[31] But the advent
of printing did confirm and extend the visual stress of
the phonetic alphabet. As McLuhan puts it:

> Printing, a ditto device. . . . provided the first
> uniformly repeatable "commodity," the first assembly
> line--mass production.
>
> It created the portable book, which men could read
> in privacy and in isolation from others. Man could
> now inspire--and conspire.

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[29]McLuhan, _Understanding_, p. 86.

[30]_Ibid._, pp. 86-87.

[31]_Ibid._, p. 147.

. . . . The private, fixed point of view became possible and literacy conferred the power of detachment, non-involvement.[32]

This power of detachment and non-involvement was perhaps the most significant gift of typography to man in that it gave him the power to act without reacting, which we recognize as the quality of "emotional detachment."[33]

Printing is a typographic explosion which "extended minds and voices of men to reconstitute the human dialogue on a world scale that has bridged the ages."[34] This explosion put an end to the local dialect by creating a vernacular for the world. Its impact brought with it nationalism, industrialism, mass markets, and universal literacy and education.[35] It established concepts of uniformity and repeatability as well as a design for "correct" spelling, syntax, and pronunciation.[36]

Because of its movable types, printing as the first assembly line--the first process of mass production--and consequently the archetype of all subsequent mechanization.[37]

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[32]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 50.

[33]McLuhan, Understanding, p. 157.

[34]Ibid., p. 155.

[35]Ibid., p. 157.

[36]Ibid., p. 159.

[37]Ibid., p. 155.

As an extension of man, typography with its principles
of continuity, uniformity, and repeatability produced
psychic and social consequences that shifted the previous
boundaries and patterns of culture. The printed book created
a third world, a fusion of the ancient and medieval world,
which was the modern, mechanized world. It is this world
of mechanization which now encounters a new extension of
man--the new electric technology.[38]

The Age of Electronic Implosion

McLuhan describes electric circuitry as the extension
of man's central nervous system and includes that extension
is recasting man into an environment of multi-dimensional
orientation which is similar to that of primitive oral
man.[39] Television, with the ever-present ear and eye has
reordered the balance of senses. No longer is Western man
tied to the domineering visual component of the alphabet
and book technology.[40] Other senses are returning, and
they are bringing with them a new, in-depth involvement
with the other people of our global village, as McLuhan
puts it, "the sense of touch had been anesthetized in the
mechanical age, but today television is only one of the

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[38]Ibid., p. 156.

[39]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 56.

[40]Ibid., p. 125.

tactile agents transforming popular awareness."[41] In

short, the electric circuit is implosive, destroying the

fragmentation of time and space and pouring. upon us in an

instant and continuous flood the concerns of all other

men.[42] The non-involvement and detachment which was a

respected attribute of the mechanical era has given way

to a central nervous system technologically extended to

involve us in the whole·of mankind and to incorporate

the whole of mankind in us so that we necessarily partic-

ipate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action.[43]

"Instant communication insures that all the factors of the

environment and of experience co-exist in a state of

active interplay."[44] Man once again lives mythically in

the present--simultaneously aware of a complete group of

causes and effects.[45] Hence, while other media have

exploded man into highly defined technologies, electric

circuitry is implosive, bringing man's technology back to a

state of unification and fusion. So today, when some-

thing is at its best, the modern idiom claims, "It's all

together." As far as the outward results, McLuhan explains:

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[41]McLuhan, War, p. 77.

[42]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 16.

[43]McLuhan, Understanding, p. 20.

[44]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 63.

[45]Ibid., p. 114.

> The medium, or process, of our time--electric tech-
> nology--is reshaping and restructuring patterns of
> social interdependence and every aspect of our
> personal life. It is forcing us to reconsider and
> re-evaluate practically every thought, every action,
> and every institution formerly taken for granted.
> Everything is changing--you, your family, your neigh-
> borhood, your education, your job, your government,
> your relation to "the others." And they're changing
> dramatically.[46]

The "Now Generation"

While much of what has been said about the present

electronic era can be applied without any difficulty to the

"native" of the TV age, it will be good to characterize him

a bit here, to provide a referent for the coming pages.

The native of the TV age has grown up in an era of anxiety.[47]

This anxiety

> is very much the result of the interface between
> a declining mechanical culture, fragmented and
> specialist, and a new integral culture that is
> inclusive, organic, and macroscopic.[48]

McLuhan records how this anxiety is impressed on the native

of the TV generation:

> Today's television child is attuned to up-to-the-
> minute "adult" news--inflation, rioting, war, taxes,
> crime, bathing beauties--and is bewildered when he
> enters the nineteenth-century environment that still
> characterizes the educational establishment where
> information is scarce but ordered and structured

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[46]Ibid., p. 8.

[47]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[48]McLuhan, War, pp. 64-65.

> by fragmented, classified patterns, subjects, and
> schedules. It is naturally an environment much
> like any factory set-up with its inventories and
> assembly lines.[49]

The students today are the only people who are the native

citizens of the new electronic environment.[50] As natives,

they are moving away from a fragmented, specialized, differ-

entiated world into the world in which they have grown up--

a world with an integrated, holistic, total grasp of life.[51]

Hence, the "now generation" is a "cool generation"

still living in a "hot" establishment. The "hot estab-

lishment" is characterized by hot media, media that extend

once single sense in high definition--to a state of being

well filled in with data.[52] Hot media provide little room

to participate. However, the "now generation" has grown

up on cool media like TV and the telephone. These are

media of low definition; they provide little data and so

demand involvement and participation to complete their

message. So the now generation is an involved generation,

a cool generation demanding participation.[53] William Fore,

Executive Director of the Broadcasting and Film Commission

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[49]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 18.

[50]John M. Culkin, Film and the Church, in Communication for Churchmen, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), II, 209.

[51]Fore, p. 15.

[52]McLuhan, Understanding, p. 36.

[53]Ibid.

of the National Council of Churches in New York City, ex-
presses the need for involvement on the part of the cool
generation this way:

> The under twenty-five generation expresses this in
> their demand for work with meaning, their passion
> for roles rather than jobs, their experience of
> world-wide events, and their desire to participate.[54]

Thus, while the official culture has stressed the outline of
things, today's cool generation wants to explore inner
space in depth,[55] since their whole low-definition environ-
ment compels them to commitment and participation. They
feel irrevocably involved with, and responsible for man and
man's environment.[56]

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[54]Fore, p. 15.

[55]Culkin, p. 210.

[56]McLuhan, The Medium, p. 24.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTEXT OF WORSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA

Liturgy as Communication

The worship of a Christian is adoration and praise.
It is a response to the activity of God the Father, especially
the activity worked through His Son Jesus Christ, and com-
municated to us by God himself through the agency of His
Holy Spirit. "Christian worship is response to a God who
has first spoken and acted in his Word."[1] As H. Grady Davis,
Professor of Functional Theology at The Lutheran School of
Theology at Chicago, explains it,

> We . . . worship . . . some one who makes himself
> known to us, speaks by his chosen messengers and by
> his Son, causes his Word to be written and preached
> in the church. By these means he tells us who he is
> and what he does for us.[2]

Therefore, worship is often simply telling back to God what
He has told us and what He has done for us, and thanking Him
for it. It is a personal dialogue between God and man made
possible by God's grace in Jesus Christ.[3]

When several Christians join to worship God together,
we may call such worship "liturgy." As worship is a dialogue,

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[1]H. Grady Davis, Why We Worship (Philadelphia: Fortress
Press, 1961), p. 35.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Thomas F. O'Meara, "Liturgy Hot and Cool," Worship,
XLII (April 1968), 216.

so liturgy is also a two-way medium.[4] It is a medium

through which Christians listen to God's Word and hear His

will for their lives;[5] and in which they are involved in

replying to that Word and participating in His will. Thus,

liturgy is exactly what it claims to be--it comes from two

Greek words   and   , and means "work of people,"

in this case, the people of God. Thus, liturgy must be the

Gospel in action.[6] Thomas O'Meara, Professor of Theology

in the Aquinas Institute, Dubuque, Iowa, explains the com-

munication of liturgy this way:

> Liturgy is a two-way medium, because the Christian
> does not control God by magic and God does not act
> in a predictable, manageable way. Christian liturgy
> is neither the payment of debts nor the employment
> of God. It is sacramental action as dialogue between
> friends, God and man.[7]

In short, liturgy is a means of communication. "The Word

of God is communicated to us; sacraments are given; through

them grace is communicated to us. We commune with each

other, we commune with God."[8]

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The Development of Liturgy
in the Context of Media

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[4]Ibid.

[5]Davis, p. 35.

[6]Richard C. Oudersluys, "The Renewal of Worship," The
Reformed Review, XXII (May 1969), 45.

[7]O'Meara, p. 216.

[8]Ibid.

It is through liturgy, that is, through the work of
the people of God, that the Christian faith has been
transmitted. To put it another way, the faith has been
transmitted "not by closely reasoned doctrine or argu-
ments, but by the witness of countless faithful who were
willing to live and die according to a certain understand-
ing as to what is real."[9]

The Oral Period of Liturgy

The understanding of the faithful as to what is real
comes primarily through revelation; and God's revelation,
as we know, was given to man in a highly oral culture.
That is to say, that the early Christians were "oral
people" who experienced the reality of their Christian
faith in the frame of a continuous present, where what they
knew and understood about their faith was deeply embedded
at the very roots of their being, and where they expressed
that faith continually, and always in social surrounding.
Hence, the liturgy of Christianity is basically oral at
its roots. Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr. explains how
this orality showed itself in the lives of early Chris-
tians:

[9]William F. Fore, Communication for Churchmen, in
Communication for Churchmen, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr.
(New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), I, 58.

The early Christians had no sacred temples or pre-
cincts for specifically cultic acts at specified, holy
and propitious times. Their worship was a "coming to-
gether" at any time and in any place for a celebration
of sharing in the gifts of exhortation, charity, and
table fellowship. The totality of life, not a part
of it, was sacralized. The word "liturgy" was applied
not merely to cultic acts as such, but to every
activity that served the welfare of men, including
the non-believing, governing authorities, who were
"liturgists of God" for the maintenance of justice
and peace.[10]

Liturgy Shaped by the Pen

It was not long, however, until those features of

society which we have associated with the phonetic alphabet

and writing began to effect the worship patterns of the

early Christians. For instance, limitations of time and

space soon became apparent. The laborer tied to his job

could not go around liturgizing whenever he wanted; nor did

the size of the growing community permit table fellowship

at the drop of the hat.[11] Soon the eucharistic celebration

alone stood as the proper form of divine worship, and this

was quickly scheduled to coincide with the rising of the

sun on Sunday mornings.[12] Nevertheless, much of the

liturgy of the early Christian Church was still oral.

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[10]Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., "The Dimension of Lit-
urgical Change," Anglican Theological Review, LI (October
1969), 244.

[11]Joseph A. Jungmann, The Mass of the Roman Rite: Its
Origins and Development (Missarum Sollemnia) (New York:
Benziger Brothers, Inc., 1951), I, 17.

[12]Ibid.

That is, its framework existed in the lives of the Jewish

Christians who patterned much of their worship after the

synagogue usage.[13] This early pattern provided a frame-

work for liturgy, but allowed much freedom for participa-

tion and involvement. This can be seen in the participa-

tion of the whole worshiping assembly which, as Justin points

out in his First Apology, was total and enthusiastic. He

remarks that in a response to a prayer, "the whole crowd

standing by cries out in agreement: 'Amen.'"[14]

By the Third Century A.D. "there is still no fixed

formula for the Mass-liturgy, but only a fixed framework

which the celebrant fills out with his own words . . . ."[15]

Joseph A. Jungmann, S.J., explains that this framework was

included in a type of unified order:

> a network of still flexible regulations stamped
> with the authority of custom. These statutes
> regulated the building of the house of God, the
> time and manner of service, the division of func-
> tions, the way prayers were to begin and end, and
> so forth.[16]

We can therefore, in a wider sense, speak of a unified

liturgical practice developing throughout Christendom.

With the coming of the fourth century we find an

increased stress on visual orientation. Liturgy is moving

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[13]Ibid. p. 19.

[14]Ibid. p. 22.

[15]Ibid. p. 30.

[16]Ibid. p. 32.

rapidly away from the extemporaneous and highly participa-

tional form into a form of increasingly higher definition.

As Jungmann characterizes this century:

> In the organization of the Church, especially within
> Greek territory, there grew up, bit by bit, over and
> above the individual communities with their episcopal
> overseers, certain preponderant centers, above all
> Alexandria and Antioch. From these centers and
> their provincial synods there radiated special legis-
> lation that in time gave a particular stamp to the
> church life of those affected. Thus, too, divergent
> liturgies gradually acquired their fixed form. This
> was a necessary development. The speedy spread of
> congregations, for whom, since Constantine, numberless
> buildings of often vast proportions had been erected,
> required a more rigid control of common worship, and
> demanded a greater carefulness about the text of the
> prayers than was needed in the smaller groups where
> the officiant might perhaps on occasion extemporize.
>
> So it became more and more the rule that the text
> should be set down in writing. And so, too, it
> became necessary to borrow texts from other churches.
> The possibility of a strict control was also heightened
> . . . . The result was the gradual standardization of
> formulas to be used unvaringly throughout a province.[17]

As the liturgy thus became more highly defined, we would

expect, on the basis of McLuhan's theory, that participation

in the liturgy would decrease. Hence it is not surprising

to find Jungmann noting that "The decline in the frequentation

of Communion in the East was already remarked by Latin Fathers

of the fourth-fifth century."[18] It is at this point also

that the separation of the worshiping community from around

the Table of Christ is completed, for now, "the activities

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[17]_Ibid_. p. 33.

[18]_Ibid_. p. 39.

at the altar became the object of the awesome gaze and wonder
of the assembled congregation."[19] As the mass formulary thus
become more fixed and unchangeable, there are repercussions
toward lay-participation in the multiplication of hymns and
songs which join with the readings of scripture to form
variable elements in the service.[20] Nevertheless, by the
seventh century it is possible to speak of "the unchanging
East" and its "immemorial rites," since by that time liturgy
there ceased to develop significantly; and for all practical
purposes, by the ninth century it is totally rigid.[21]

    In the West, however, in the fifth and sixth century
there were still no "rites," but only "the liturgy" which
everyone knew to be the same thing everywhere.[22] This is not
to be construed to indicate a uniform and universal formulary
however, since "every local church had its own traditional
way of doing it, which it was free to revise or augment or
improve as it saw fit, from its own inventions or by bor-
rowing from elsewhere."[23]

    In the political confusion of the sixth and seventh
century, these local differences often hardened into real

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[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid. p. 42.

[21]Dom Gregory Dix, The Shape of the Liturgy (London:
Dacre Press: Adam and Charles Black, 1960), p. 548.

[22]Ibid. p. 550.

[23]Ibid.

distinctions which became the basis for the various "rites"
of the Mass in Western Catholicism, but "in A.D. 600 men
were not yet conscious of them as separate things, but
still thought of them rather as different ways of doing
the same thing."[24] Thus, while the laity were still
experiencing the liturgy on an oral level, the preservation
and perpetuation of various local practices in writing
produced the groundwork for Mass-liturgies of the Roman-
African and Gallic families.[25]

Equally important for our study of liturgy in the
context of media is the fact that Latin, which was the sole
language of culture in the West during the days of the
empire, was retained as the only language of the liturgy.[26]
The use of Latin, combined with the influence of the Pope
during the invasions of the sixth century, greatly influenced
the development of the Roman liturgy. During that century
the Pope began to conduct community services for the city
of Rome in various of the city's churches--services which
though modest in character produced extensive results since

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[24]Ibid. p. 551

[25]Jungmann, p. 44.

[26]Ibid. Note: We are speaking here of the "main stream
development of the Western Rite. Besides Latin, national
languages and other liturgical languages have been used
through the centuries in catholic worship as Cyril Korolevsky
clearly shows in his historical inquiry: Living Languages
in Catholic Worship.

they were set down in writing.[27] The regulations of the

external ceremonial of the papal stational rite, as these

services were called, were drawn up in books known as

Roman Ordines.[28] These books made their way into most

of Christendom and so influenced the various regional

developments of the liturgy in Gaul, Spain, Italy, and

England.[29] Thus, the beginnings of uniformity made

possible by writing, as well as the dissolution of tribal

and parochial restraints, can be witnessed in the effect of

the Roman stational rite upon the various regional rites

already in the seventh century when these rites reached

their individual maturity.[30] However, it is only at the

very end of the seventh century and the beginning of the

eighth that liturgical synthesis consciously and deliberately

occurs throughout the Western world.[31] Jungmann explains

the influence of stational worship regarding this development

this way:

> For one thing, the service achieved a moment of
> stability, when all its component elements were
> set down in writing--as all codification entail a
> fixed arrangement, at least for some time. A certain
> interval must have ensued before the lineaments of
> such a form were again broken here or there. And

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[27]Ibid. p. 59.

[28]Ibid. p. 65.

[29]Ibid. pp. 65-66.

[30]Dix, p. 573.

[31]Ibid.

secondly, by the very fact that this solemn service was written down in a definite and determined form and thus could easily be transmitted to other territories--by that very fact it became the model and standard for further shaping and forming the Mass generally.[32]

Again it must be noted, as the definition of the liturgy increases--in McLuhan's terms, becomes hot-ter--participation goes down. Hence in contrast to the courtly pomp and eucharistic solemnity of the Mass of this period, Jungmann notes:

> The old communal feeling, it is true, is no longer so strongly and immediately involved. The people apparently no longer answer the prayers, no longer take part in the singing, which has become the art-function of a small group, but the choir is not a profane intrusion into the texture of the service, but rather a connecting link joining the people to the altar. Prayer and song still sound in the language of the masses, and the people still have an important role in the action through their of-fering of gifts and their reception of Communion.[33]

While the vernacular was still used in "prayer and song," the main part of the service was in Latin. By the time of the Carolingian empire this, of course, was no longer the language of the people and so became the domain of the literate clergy alone. Thus, "a . . . discipline of the secret had developed, a concealment of things holy, not from the heathen--there were none-but from the Christian people themselves."[34] The result seems obvious: the relation

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[32] Jungmann, p. 67.

[33] Ibid. pp. 73-74.

[34] Ibid. p. 81.

between the clergy and the people was no longer that of the
communion of the redeemed bound together as the Body of
Christ. The clergy both because of their higher education,
and the prominent positions they held in society because of
their knowledge tended to further estrange the people, so
that the separation between the clergy and laity became a
broad line of demarcation, a wall of division.[35] By about
the middle of the ninth century, conscious participation in
the liturgy and in communion is lost sight of; instead:

> the Mass becomes all the more the mystery of
> God's coming to man, a mystery one must adoringly
> wonder at and contemplate from afar. The approach
> to the Holy Table of the Lord in Communion is no
> longer the rule even of feast days.[36]

As the liturgy became fixed and standard and obscure,
allegory was used to explain its moments and movements,
perhaps in an attempt to communicate to the people the message
of the Mass.[37] The pattern of development of the Mass is
clearly two-fold to this point. On the one hand, the
liturgy developed in the context of writing media and
became, as we have seen, fragmented, sectionalized, fixed
and standardized on a scale that included all of Christendom.
On the other hand, the laity remained basically in an oral
culture (there are no mass books, nor are the people literate;

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[35]Ibid. p. 83.

[36]Ibid. p. 84.

[37]Ibid. p. 87.

the Mass is read or sung to them), and so were progressive-
ly alienated from participation in and understanding of the
Mass as it developed in its "literate" context. The develop-
ment of allegory provided a bridge for this gap, for while it
is the product of literate reflection fostered by writing
technology, its content is mythic (i.e. in depth) in nature,
and so compatible with the oral culture of the people.[38]
So the Mass-liturgy became a dramatic play which appealed
to the onlooker, while Gregorian chant enriched the audible
side of the liturgical action for him.[39]

The application of the allegorical method coincided
with the transplantation of the Roman liturgy into Frankish
lands.[40] This, along with a Mass book edited and appended
by Alcuin contributed to "the intense spiritual life with
which the Carolingian epoch was filled."[41] While Alcuin's
Mass book was in essence the prescribed and authorized
rite for the empire, and as such, an attempt at uniformity,[42]
"the same process of unauthorized alteration and addition
and borrowing begins again . . . ."[43] And so, the picture

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[38]Ibid. pp. 107-123.

[39]Ibid. p. 123.

[40]Ibid. pp. 87-91.

[41]Ibid. p. 91.

[42]Dix, p. 587.

[43]Ibid.

of liturgy in general for this period of time is that of

a fixed framework within which countless local variations

occur.   There is then, no strictly uniform practice through-

out Christendom.   Uniformity comes with printing--the "ditto

devise."[44]

The Influence of Printing

     The effects of the printing press on the course of

worship are summarized by Jungmann:

> What ended the continuing relics of the old local
> freedom in the West were, 1. the invention of printing,
> and 2. the energetic measures taken by the Papacy
> within its own communion after the Council of Trent
> and (more especially) by the secular governments of
> the protestant powers in the same period, to enforce
> uniformity down to the last comma.[45]

With the coming of the printing press, a broad and

sweeping unification of worship practice was possible with

the innovation of the Mass Book of Pius V.[46] To enforce

this uniformity, the Congregation of Rites was established,

not as an organ for uniform liturgical evolution, but to

see "that the status of things established by the Missal

of Pius V be in no way altered or endangered."[47] Jungmann

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     [44]Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is the Massage: An
Inventory of Effects (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), p. 50.

     [45]Dix, p. 589.

     [46]Jungmann, p. 138.

     [47]Ibid.

explains what this meant to liturgy:

> After fifteen hundred years of unbroken development
> in the rite of the Roman Mass, after the rushing
> and the streaming from every height and out of every
> valley, the Missal of Pius V was indeed a powerful
> dam holding back the waters or permitting them to
> flow through only firm, well-built canals. At one
> blow all arbitrary meandering to one side or an-
> other was cut off, all floods prevented, and a safe,
> regular and useful flow assured. But the price paid
> was this, that the beautiful river valley now lay
> barren and the forces of further evolution were often
> channeled into the narrow bed of a very inadequate
> devotional life instead of gathering strength for
> new forms of liturgical expression.[48]

During this same period, while the Reformers were
speaking of the priesthood of all believers, it seemed
necessary for the Roman communion to stress not what
was common, but what was distinctive and separative between
the priesthood and the laity.[49] Hence, the Mass again became
the sole domain of the priest, with consequently little
chance for participation of the faithful in the celebration.[50]
Again the laity viewed the mass from afar, since allegory
was no longer a satisfying bridge in a literate age.[51]
Thus the prayer book was introduced as a means of increasing
devotional participation among the laity; but more influential
still was the use of common prayers and singing in the
vernacular during the Mass-a development in no small

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[48]Ibid. pp. 140-141.

[49]Ibid. p. 142.

[50]Ibid. p. 144.

[51]Ibid. pp. 144-145.

way brought about by the liturgies of the Reformers.[52]
In addition, thorough instruction of the faithful to foster
involvement in the liturgy was undertaken, but ultimately
one had to acknowledge that "for a closer communion between
the people and the liturgy the language was the great
stumbling block."[53] Latin was no longer a means of com-
munication even for the cultured. Its use survived only
in the Church.[54]

It was under such conditions that "Luther was prac-
tically forced to prepare a German Service."[55] His Deutsche
Messe, for example, was produced for the uneducated laity
and "sought to promote congregational participation,"[56]
while retaining as much as possible of the historic liturgy.[57]

Unfortunately, the uniform character of the typographic
environment tended to make uniform what Luther had intended
as specialized. Thus, "certain districts fastened upon their
churches by legal enactment the type of service outlined in
the Deutsche Messe."[58] As Luther D. Reed, past professor of

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[52]Ibid. pp. 145-146.

[53]Ibid. p. 154.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Luther D. Reed, The Lutheran Liturgy (Revised Edition; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1947), p. 76.

[56]Ibid. p. 78.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid. p. 79.

liturgies and church art at Lutheran Theological Seminary
in Philadelphia, explains this situation:

> In doing this they failed to appreciate Luther's own
> view of the German Mass as intended only for the un-
> educated laity. By making it (sic) general features
> binding, they perpetuated an abnormal and temporary
> situation and restricted future development. These
> districts dropped to the level of the simplest and
> easiest forms of vernacular worship and stayed there.[59]

So too, other church orders, prepared by representative
leaders of the Lutheran church, were issued by the civil
authorities and given the force of law.[60]

These orders were basically the Roman Rite simplified
and purified, the historic liturgy made evangelical and once
more the property of the common folk. Again there was
participation of the people of God in the worship of God.[61]
But even as the printing press helped in the process of
returning the liturgy to the people, it also hindered the
development of this new spirit. By fixing the new forms
of worship in print, liturgical development closed with the
end of the sixteenth century.[62] The next two centuries
witnessed a great decline in church life and worship.

Almost with the very beginning of the seventeenth
century came war. By 1648 the Thirty Years' War was over,

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Ibid. p. 106.

[61]Ibid. p. 107.

[62]Ibid. pp. 108-109.

but not its effects. The people were demoralized and almost
unresponsive to the Gospel.[63] The involvement of the Refor-
mation era was over. Church life and worship were reduced
to mechanical levels.[64] Orthodoxy prevailed with
its rigid formulations, precise definitions of belief, objec-
tive efficacy of the Sacraments and its legalistic conception
of worship. Attendance at services was required. Fines were
imposed for non-attendance. Civil offenders were ordered by
the courts to make confession and to receive the Sacrament.
The church became more and more a part of the civil govern-
ment, and with this, worship became externalized and the
spiritual quality of life was neglected.[65]

If typographic technology was responsible for "mechan-
ical worship," it also showed its forte' in the area of
theology. This was the century of great dogmaticians like
Chemnitz, Hutter, and John Gerhard, who with great mastery
of biblical and historical material presented their dogmatic
treatises with the power of organization and logical de-
velopment.[66]

Since it was the church, in cooperation with the civil
government, that made worship, like subscription to orthodox

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[63]Ibid. p. 143.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid.

confessions, mechanical--so that the common man was forced
to act without reacting, and to participate without being
involved--anti-clerical movements were begun to revitalize
worship. This developed into the Pietistic Movement which
emphasized personal godliness, involvement, and commitment.
Its emphasis on personal religious experience, a pious and
righteous life, and all manner of individual and subjective
expressions took public worship out of the churches and
supplanted this by meetings in private homes.[67] A great
increase in devotional material fostered the "private point
of view" (made possible by print technology), and this be-
came the touchstone of Christian worship rather than the
liturgy.[68]

To fill the intellectual void created by Pietism,
Rationalism developed. Within the sphere of worship, it was
wholly destructive. Rational reflection, a widespread
possibility only in a printing environment, was not com-
patible with divine revelation, and in rejecting the facts
of Christianity such as the resurrection, also rejected the
content and forms of historical worship.[69]

A return to the historic liturgy of the Church was be-
gun by Frederick William III who endeavored to end liturgical

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[67]Ibid. pp. 144-146.

[68]Ibid. p. 146.

[69]Ibid. pp. 147-148.

confusion and arbitrary individualism. He commissioned a
liturgy, based on the Lutheran orders of the sixteenth cen-
tury, to unite the Lutheran and Reformed churches throughout
Prussia.[70] Other studies soon recovered historic liturgies
for use in the church. Significant among these is that of
Wilhelm Loehe whose work influenced the liturgical practice
of our own Missouri Synod.[71]

Meanwhile, in the Roman Communion, the position of the
faithful in the worship of the Church remained for the most
part what it had been before the Reformation. James King, S.J.,
summarizes the period this way:

> The people continued to attend Mass, read from their
> prayer books, perform their private devotions. They
> received Holy Communion only on great feast days,
> and the children did not ordinarily receive their
> First Communion until their adolescent years. The
> choir sang from the gallery, but the faithful were
> silent at Mass.[72]

This condition only begins to be reversed at the
beginning of the Twentieth Century. This reversal begins
with the principle set forth by Pope St. Pius X: "The
primary and indispensable source of the true Christian
spirit is active participation in the sacred mysteries

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[70]Ibid. pp. 152-153.

[71]Ibid. p. 176.

[72]James W. King, The Liturgy and the Laity (Westminster,
Maryland: The Newman Press, 1963), p. 46.

and in the public solemn prayer of the Church."[73] This

begins the "Liturgical Movement"--an effort to win the

faithful back to active participation in the Mass by teach-

ing them the rich history of the Mass; by using the vernacu-

lar in the liturgy for the lessons, collect, Gloria, Creed,

and Sanctus; by having the celebrant face the people;

restoring the offertory procession; and by having communion

at the proper place, instead of after, or outside the Mass,

as had become common practice.[74] This movement has been in-

fluential in the recent development of the various liturgical

churches since it is most probably "the most effective avenue

of communication between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism."[75]

The Liturgical Movement is also responsible for some of the

important changes in the liturgical practice of the Roman

Communion brought about by Vatican Council II.[76]

It is not surprising that the Liturgical Movement,

with its interest in involvement and active participation

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[73]The Liturgical Conference, What is the Liturgical
Movement? (Second edition; Elsberry, Mo.: The Liturgical
Conference, 1956), p. 3.

[74]James Herbert Srawley, The Liturgical Movement: Its
Origin and Growth (Oxford, England: A. R. Mowbray and Co. Ltd.,
1954), pp. 29-32.

[75]Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., The Reform of Liturgical
Worship: Perspectives and Prospects (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1961), p. 3.

[76]King, p. ix.

in worship should develop during the same period that gave

recognition to electronic communication which maximizes the

sense of presence and participation.[77]

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[77]Walter J. Ong, The Presence of the Word: Some
Prolegomena for Cultural and Religious History (New Haven:
Yale University Press, 1967), p. 101.

CHAPTER IV

LITURGY IN THE CONTEXT OF MEDIA TODAY

The Environment Today

We have presented in the last chapter a study of

liturgy as it developed in the context of media from the

early Christian era up to the present day. We have attempted

to show how media provided the framework within which

liturgy grew, and how that framework restricted liturgy

or channeled liturgy in one way or another. Our environ-

ment today provides yet another framework, or context, within

which liturgy can develop. As we indicated in chapter two,

today's environment is not just one of more and speedier

information resources, but it is a totally different social

context from the environment of just fifty years ago.

Walter Ong expresses the difference this way:

> Unlike earlier man, we are in constant touch with
> everything that is going on everywhere. We live in
> a world of global happenings. . . . Today, wherever
> we are, we carry a float of information in our minds
> about things which are going on all over the surface
> of the earth.[1]

As he further clarifies:

> All cultures are present within us today simultane-
> ously. So are all periods of time from a growing
> number of diverse cultures. We not only reach back
> into our own past but across the world into the past
> of other cultures more and more. Our attention is

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[1]Walter J. Ong, "Worship at the End of the Age of
Literacy," Worship, XLIII (October 1969), 474.

focused through time as well as through space in ways unknown to earlier man.[2]

- We exist today in a kind of second oral period in which the spoken word is given a new kind of life through the telephone, television, radio and loudspeaker.[3] We noted in chapter two that oral people integrate time and space, and that they are socially and presently oriented. As Ong pointed out, this is also true of natives of the second oral period. It is in light of this new period, or environment, that our present liturgy, to the extent it has assumed the framework of the print technology, may no longer be adequate to communicate with the younger generation which is the native populous of the present era.

Thus, the crisis in worship today is because of a communications revolution. The older generation has been raised on a diet of words--the newspaper, books, magazines, liturgy, and the pulpit. Reality is perceived by the use of words. This, however, is not true of the "now generation." Reality for them is direct participation and involvement. Reality is present and social, not necessarily rational and codified.[4]

The generation which is coming into the Church now as its young adults is looking for this kind of participational

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[2]Ibid. p. 475.

[3]Ibid. p. 474 n.

[4]Delbert J. Vander Haar, "Youth Leads the Way to Renewal in Worship," The Reformed Review, XXII (May 1969), 63.

reality in worship. As Thomas O'Meara describes this generation:

> It looks for high involvement, and this involvement comes not through much information but through a lasting, significant, experienced message, which in turn stimulates authentic involvement and honest human commitment.[5]

This kind of involvement is not fostered by our present "hot" liturgy which contains a great deal of content and/ information, but is low on personal participation. The liturgy, as we know it, keeps filling in information for/ the worshiper and dictates his responses.[6] And so, while it may be regretted, among the younger generation it is a fact that "the time is past when the idea of worship and liturgy met with ready acceptance."[7]

The true native of the second oral period is not able to act without reacting. He possesses very little of the quality of "detachment" idealized in the print technology. He is basically an integral human being who will hardly consent to be divided between a dynamic culture and a static religion. Torn apart, he will attempt to rebuild his unity at all costs, either by indifference or remoteness, or by criticism, challenge, or open revolt.[8]

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[5] Thomas F. O'Meara, "Liturgy Hot and Cool," Worship, XLII (April 1968), 217.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Jean-Paul Audet, "The Future of Liturgy," Worship, XLIII (October 1969), 450.

[8] Ibid. p. 454.

The Religious Movement of Today

It is not difficult to find this "rebuilding" going on throughout the Church. Youth are either avoiding worship or they are speaking about:

the dullness of worship, the cold formality of liturgy, the stilted words of prayer, the unrelatedness of preaching, the other-worldliness of the music, the non-involvement of the participants, the general lack of deep feeling being expressed in the total experience.[9]

This disenchantment is not confined to a few as the increasing numbers attracted to the underground church indicate. In the underground church, as well as in various Christian youth movements, the all-at-once-ness of the new age leaps over the due processes of renewal and reunion, logical necessities to a typographic age, and embraces the goals of Christian fellowship in all its facets.[10] There is, for them, no attempt to separate the values of life and conduct from the work and life of the Church.[11] Their worship is a desire for real celebration, a time of actual participation, a happening, a time of great joy.[12] For many all of life is sacralized, the salutation from the liturgy is their every-

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[9]Vander Harr, p. 63.

[10]Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., "The Dimension of Liturgical Change," Anglican Theological Review, LI (October 1969), 254.

[11]Vander Harr, p. 62.

[12]Ibid. p. 63.

day greeting, their jobs are a time for witness, and their
designation in the community is by function and service
rather than by status.[13]

The sheer speed of present communication has taken
the world rapidly past the Church. There is no longer a
place for change and adaptation that requires decades or
centuries. Fewer and fewer people are willing to wait for
a reduction of problems into their logical components and
a rearrangement of liturgy to fit a new age. Technology
has brought us to the brink of the continual present which
demands involvement and commitment, and for many, tomorrow
is not soon enough.

It is strange that the organized church has trouble
adjusting to this new age since involvement and commitment
have been its stock in trade all along.[14] It is obvious,
however, that the existing gap will not disappear unless
the church finds new patterns of congregation and community,
and service.[15]

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[13]This comment is from personal experience in an under-
ground church in Detroit. The author became friends with
"Artist John," who did all the art work for worship, as
well as wall posters and signs for the community. Others
could be identified by their titles as deacons, prophets
(preachers), evangelists, etc.

[14]William F. Fore, Communication for Churchmen, in
Communication for Churchmen, edited by B. F. Jackson, Jr.
(New York: Abingdon Press, 1968), I, 15.

[15]Audet, p. 460.

Liturgy for Today

When men worship together they liturgize whether
they are saying the daily office in the cathedral or wit-
nessing to one another in the underground church. And when
they liturgize they speak and act symbolically--even as all
interaction is symbolic and necessarily removed from
experience--to communicate something about the reality of God
in their lives. There are many of the "now generation," who
feeling the loss of a sense of history want to shape the
symbolism of their liturgy solely out of the raw material
of the present.[16] And yet, if liturgy is Christian it can
not lose totally the sense of tradition, of history, of
past, for the shaping event of Christian liturgy must
always remain the activity of God in Jesus Christ.[17]
Hence liturgy, in contrast to preaching, connects the
faithful of any age or era to the Church of all ages.[18]
Thus liturgy, if it is to be true to its purpose of communi-
cation between God and man, need not be dominated by the
cultural moods of the "now generation" of any age; although,
as we have noted, neither can liturgy afford to simply
overlook such moods. It must be ready to move contra

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[16]Martin E. Marty, "The Context of Liturgy Here and Now,
There and Then," Worship, XLIII (October 1969), 469.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Keith Watkins, Liturgies in a Time when Cities Burn
(New York: Abingdon Press, 1969), p. 47.

mundum where the world is evil, and yet ready to sanctify

that which can be used to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

If the organized church is willing to sanctify the

present context of media so that its liturgy will be a means

of communication for the faithful of today, it must dis-

cover "communication which will involve and commit, rather

than analyze and disengage."[19] Jean-Paul Audet puts it

this way:

> The present situation seems to imply that all that
> is needed to make a real congregation is an appro-
> priate space and an obligation to take part in the
> eucharist. But what we usually get in the present
> conditions of urban living is more properly "crowd."
> In this regard, we will have to seek another option:
> it will have directly to do, this time, with our
> congregation, and henceforth with our local com-
> munities. The question will then be whether we
> continue relying on a unique pattern of congregation
> which we have inherited from the local parish, or
> whether we will attempt to create new patterns of
> congregation, new models of community and service,
> which would secure, over and against the anonymity
> of the crowd, the normal relationships of Christian
> fellowship. If it is true, as I have suggested, that
> we need to rediscover the attitudes of dialogue and
> communication toward the word of God, it will be
> even more necessary to rediscover the attitudes of
> encounter, which are essential to the congregation.
> What Christians have a right to expect, instead of
> congregations in which they have to take part, are
> congregations which they could come to love.[20]

He continues:

> The recovery of this area of true Christian fellow-
> ship, with that freedom of movement that such a
> recovery implies, would seem to be, at this partic-

[19]Fore, p. 15.

[20]Audet, p. 464.

ular moment of history, one of the surest hopes for the future of liturgy.[21]

There is much in our second oral period which the Church can use to develop meaningful liturgy for our time and generation, if only the Church is ready to respond to it for the purpose of recovering true Christian fellowship. For one thing, our new orality creates groups. Radio and television create communities: "The speaker has an audience, which can be construed as a singular. . . . 'Audience' is a mass noun: all those in it are caught up in a unity."[22] While our present media does, in fact, create a "group" out of the globe, it also has produced an age of social involvement in which people are extremely interested in groups and communities. This feature, combined with the involvement and participation in each other's lives which is also demanded by the new orality, can provide an excellent context for today's liturgy as far as Christian fellowship is concerned. Undoubtedly another feature of that context will be sound. As in primary orality, so in today's era, "sound is where the action is."[23]

This context will determine some things about the shape and limits of a liturgy for today. If this liturgy is to be one of high involvement, both on a personal and

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[21]Ibid.

[22]Ong, "Worship", p. 485.

[23]Ibid. p. 486.

communial level, it will require that there be a limitation
of "liturgists" and contents. That is, a liturgy of par-
ticipation will not only contribute something to the
individual who comes to the liturgy, but the person coming
will help effect the liturgy itself. Such a liturgy would
be a mutual exchange of creativity--something which cannot
happen in large groups. "Real communities, smaller groups
celebrating their lives and their community, are necessary."[24]
This will require a celebrant who is really a ministerial
leader. He must be the president of the community--able
to form and be formed by the liturgy.[25]

If the liturgy is to be a liturgy of those who are
present, it will of necessity speak a limited message.
So, while the very genius of the Christian liturgy through-
out the ages has been its content of symbol and reality, of
sacrament and sacrifice, in the environment of today, this
content must be channeled.[26] This may mean concentrating on
one aspect of the liturgy, or the meaning of one biblical
text, or on one theme of human existence. By this type
of limitation and focus, the highly defined, "hot" liturgy
can fashion a "cool" experience which is meaningful in our
present age. This is not to imply that worship should

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[24]O'Meara, p. 218.

[25]Ibid. p. 219.

[26]Ibid.

become a series of emotional experiences; but rather it should become a means of channeling the potential of men into the whole breadth of the Body of Christ.[27]

As our present environment has made a global village out of all the groups of the world, so also various communities involved with the Christian lives of one another and committed to participation in the world, become the unity of the Church as members of the Body of Christ. "For liturgy is, after all, centered in holy communion, holy oneness achieved in Christ."[28] And, it should be noted: this unity is one of communication, as Ong summarizes:

> This unity is one of communication, a unity of the Word. The Father speaks the Son, who is his Word, and the Word himself of course speaks. He says, "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (Jn. 14:16). The Advocate or Paraclete is himself a spokesman, as his title indicates, a comforter who speaks to us and for us the word of unity in God's love.[29]

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ong, "Worship", p. 486.

[29]Ibid. pp. 486-487.

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