

Liturgy – a transforming act

Imagine:

What worlds are gathered here?

What is present through the people gathered?

When you gather as the Church,
what is the first act of worship?

End of worship

To be sent into the world from which we came

To know our place in the world means to know the nature of world

– a resource or a means of communion with God?

For the Church to know that it is *in* the world

- A) Explore a vision of the world as sacrament
- B) Explore a vision of worship that accords to such a view
- C) Find concrete expression of such a vision

A) World as Sacrament

Alexander Schmemmann

1. The Kingdom of God: renewal of all creation (God's and ours)

- Not anymore or not yet? Paradise or the city to come?
- The world as God in becoming: *theosis*

Sergej N. Bulgakov

- God became man to give his life as the life of the world
- The true nature of the world is found in its fulfillment, not in its origin

A) World as Sacrament

Alexander Schmemmann

2. Christ the revealer and fulfillment of creation
 - The eschatological transformation of the world happened in Christ's Eucharist
 - The human response to world as sacrament: Giving thanks to God
 - God's sacramental presence in this world is not easily recognized
 - Taking the world for less deforms its creative powers to become destructive and demonic

A) World as Sacrament

Alexander Schmemmann

3. Spiritual / transcendence =

The future of this world

- Prayer is not withdrawal from the world but taking the world as a means of prayer
- against materialism: no reduction, no dualism
- God's Spirit brings into the presence the risen Christ and with Him the eschatic transformed world
- The reality of the demonic: a spiritual presence against the innate nature of things

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

1. Presence of the World in Worship:

- Body: cleansing
- Body: getting up and dressing for worship
- Body: leaving home and taking it with us

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

1. Presence of the World in Worship:

- Gift: offering ourselves
- Gift: the gifts for the community as basis of Eucharist
- Gift: Collect / Offering: Is it enough to make real my presence?

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

1. Presence of the World in Worship:

- Memory: Presence of times of the week
- Memory: Presence of the absent

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

2. Liturgy as Transformation: Time and Worship

- Time as a line of moments
- Time as contrast to eternity
- Eternity as fulfillment of time
- Time as conditions of existence: aeon

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

2. Liturgy as Transformation: Time and Worship

- God's remembrance as gift of life
- Christ remembering as the foundation of participation in a symbolic reality

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

2. Liturgy as Transformation: Moves and web

- Christ remembering
- active participation
- epiklesis
- representation:
 - the gifts
 - the priest

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

2. Liturgy as Transformation: Moves and web

- entrance of the Word of God
- giving thanks and repentance
- reconstruction of the body

B) Transformative Worship

Alexander Schmemmann

3. Sending: A transformed community into a transformed world
 - The end from the beginning: Mission
 - leaving the world to emphasize the importance of the world
 - liturgical experience as critique: we are not there yet!
 - liturgical experience as prefiguration: pointing out the transforming realities in the world

C) Mennonite Worship:

A process of sacramental transformation?

- Where do your forms of worship resonate with the presented vision?
- Where do you see obstacles to adopt such a view?
- Presence of the Spirit in the world as the life of life – in all aspects of world: agreements and obstacles?
- What images would you use to speak about the presence of the Spirit in this world, that would help us to overcome our disembodied, dematerialized conceptions of the Spiritual?

Literature:

Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World. Sacraments and Orthodoxy*, St.Vladimir's Press 1973.

Alexander Schmemmann, *Of Water and the Spirit. A Liturgical Study of Baptism*, St.Vladimir's Press 1974.

Jürg Bräker, *Kirche, Welt, Mission. Alexander Schmemmann – Eine ökumenisch relevante Ekklesiologie*, V&R unipress 2013