

More than one communication art form by Durk Meijer, March 31, 2016

Does it take more than one communication art form to build the church?

In South Africa I had the privilege to worship with my deaf friends at their church. Since I didn't understand their communication art forms, I did a great deal of observing. At one point the choir got up and started a song. You may ask how that works with deaf people. Well, naturally they signed the whole song and they did so to the beat of a drum. No, of course they did not hear the drum, but they could feel the vibrations it produced with each beat. In this way there was perfect synchronization as everybody kept the beat while deeply expressing every emotion physically as they signed each verse in great detail. In this simple sample already, we find several communication art forms working together. First there is the beat, then the signing of the message expressing the emotions that accentuate the meaning. Likewise, in just about every situation, regardless whether among the deaf or even among the hearing, there will be more than one communication art form at work at the same time. The better they work together and the more they engage us as an audience, the greater the likeliness for us to remember and understand the message. This encourages engagement with the message.

Typically, different communication art forms are also used at different times. First of all, a suitable communication art form may be used for an initial communication, while another one is better to help us memorize and help us engage deeply. For example, a movie about the life of Christ may be a great tool to give initial exposure about who Jesus is. Listening to short scripture stories from the movie or reading through them, may help us to discover and engage with the message. Questions can help us make these truths personal for us. Learning or telling the story through song or poetry, can help us remember it easily and accurately.