

The Queen certainly found out

The queen certainly found out. Her remarks on modern means of communication and their disadvantages went down the wrong way for many people.

The queen said, among other things: 'modern technical possibilities seem to bring people closer together, but people keep at 'safe' distance, hiding behind their screens'. And: 'We talk to each other without conversation, we look at each other without seeing the other. People communicate through fast, brief messages'.

Twitter and Hyves

In the past decades means of communication have changed considerably: e-mail, sms, msn, Hyves, Facebook, weblogs, Twitter, there is no end to it. We are part of a constant network of web-communication. We can be in contact with almost everybody at almost any time and place. We reach and are within reach. That is a fascinating development, with unknown possibilities. If someone who had slept for twenty years would wake up now would think that it was magic.

Church at Hyves?

'The church is absent at Hyves, Facebook, etceteras and therefore loses the battle'. I can not imagine that. The church is a national church, but there are also local churches, the ministers etceteras. The church goes along with the new developments as usual. A minister who wants to approach the youth, will have to change his tactics to Hyves.

Invisible and inaudible

There are many complaints that the church is invisible and inaudible. Point taken. But at the same time: you can communicate until you are blue in the face and you will still hear that same complaint. Let's be reasonable: the busier the digital highway gets, the lesser you get your message across.

Communicating always

What happens if we are always communicating? What happens if everybody has his/her website, weblog, Hyves? What happens if we are constantly in a web of information and exchange? If we go through life constantly zapping, from site to site, from Hyves to Hyves, from visiting and being visited?

Then we will automatically have to shield ourselves

Then we will have to make time again for meditation, reflection, intensification, prayer.

Time for our deepest self. You can communicate yourself to pieces.

Time for God and time for a worship together.

Making time for each other

Then we will have to make time for each other again.

That seems to be a paradox. Don't we just have that with all our ultramodern means? Yet it is true. That is the truth of the queen in her speech. We are physical beings who should meet each other physically as well. We also need 'slow' time for each other, time for 'slow questions', for postponement, time to wait for each other. In the name of real life. In the name of love of our fellow man, of which the queen spoke. In God's name.

January 8th, 2010 – Dr. Arjan Plaisier, secretary of the general synod of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands