

Think Local: Why Changing the World Begins in Your Backyard – Week Four

Second Pattern: Being Involved in the Arts

Selected Scriptures

Introduction: The arts have always been a source of common ground between those who know Christ and those who are far from Christ. As we think about making a meaningful difference in our city, we need to understand why the arts are so important and how we can make use of them as a source of common grace.

1. *FOUNDATIONAL IDEAS – What is art?*

- A. A definition of art and its relationship to symbol
 - 1. Example: Gruenewald's *Isenheim Altarpiece*
 - 2. Example: Munch's *The Scream*
- B. The source of art
 - 1. Our ultimate example for art is the activity of God. Genesis 1:1-31, esp. 1:26-27
 - 2. Art seems to be hardwired into the human condition. Genesis 4:17

2. *ARTS IN THE BIBLE – Art is a vehicle for worship.*

- A. The fine arts were employed in the construction of the tabernacle.
 - 1. There were skilled craftsmen. Exodus 35:10
 - 2. There were skilled leaders. Exodus 36:2
- B. The artistry in the tabernacle employed complex symbolism.
 - 1. Symbolism related to the *future*. Hebrews 9:5
 - 2. Symbolism related to the *past*. Note the seven speeches of Exodus 25-30.
 - 3. Symbolism related to the *present* seen in the placement of the tabernacle in the camp.
- C. God's passion for the arts is not limited to the visual arts.
 - 1. The artistry of Old Testament literature.
 - 2. The artistry of music and song. Psalm 150

3. *ARTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH – Art both formed and then transformed Western Civilization up to about 1920.*

- A. In the first three centuries of the church the development of art was somewhat slow.
 - 1. It was due to persecution.
 - 2. But fine art does show up in unusual places like the catacombs.
- B. From 300 A.D. through WW1, art as a Christian phenomenon, flourished in three areas.
 - 1. Architecture – Example: The Hagia Sophia and the great Cathedrals.
 - 2. Painting – Example: Michelangelo's Sistine Ceiling and Caravaggio's call of Matthew.
 - 3. Music – Example: J.S. Bach and the Goldberg Variations
- C. But something tragic happened after World War One.
 - 1. The rise of atheism in the U.S. caused the church to withdraw.
 - 2. The church lost the use of the arts as a source of common ground and common grace.

4. *THE REVIVAL OF THE ARTS – During the 1960s things began to change.*

- A. In the 1970s – The influence of Francis Schaeffer and L'Abri.
- B. Around the year 2000 – Missional church movement takes off.
- C. Since 2002 – Local churches become champions of the fine arts.

5. *SO WHAT* – Why should I have any concern about the fine arts as a follower of Christ?

- A. If you are an artist, it's important to remember that God is the ultimate source of art.
 - 1. Many people have artistic abilities that they can employ in ministry: cooking, dance, sculpture, painting, music, etc.
 - 2. You can think of your craft as part of your Christian stewardship to build relationships with those far from Christ.

- B. If you are in a position of being a patron of the arts, this is a worthy cause that can be consistent with your discipleship.

- C. For the rest of us – We must esteem the arts from a biblical vantage point a way of glorifying God and reaching with hands of love into a broken world.