

Understanding the Times

A Paradigm Shift and the arts

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THE ARTS IN A POSTMODERN SOCIETY

The Neglected Aspect

Finally, even though I have referred to this issue in a few cases already, I would like now to begin to tackle a very crucial cultural aspect which has always had an enormous influence and impact in the lives of people and societies in general, since the beginning of time. And, surprisingly enough, this is an issue that has been neglected, ignored, or even rejected by the church at large and by Christians in particular, at certain times in history. I refer to areas related to the *arts, culture* and *humanities*. All of these topics have to do with the intellect, sensibility, passion, the enjoyment of life and the imagination. And the abandonment of these aspects has been more acute at a time when the whole Christian culture began to be eroded and ostracized, producing a situation in which the involvement of Christians in the most influential areas of society has been inhibited; areas such as the media, the arts, education and politics. Paradoxically enough this took place in sharp contrast to the strong emphasis and importance given to these issues by Cultural Marxism and the Frankfurt School as we have seen. This is a situation that has become more evident in recent years, with the disarray in our society and the lack of a Christian presence in any of these vital areas.

By fleeing from or ignoring those areas Christians have been unable to have any influence or say in mainstream culture. This has also contributed to the isolation of Christians from the society in which they live, creating a *ghetto culture* where they can entertain each other. For the most part, Christian artists have been producing art for churches and their Christians audience, but have not been able to engage a decaying, confused culture with images, ideas, sounds and works of art that can resonate with a fallen confused world. The split between religious and secular, which meant that these two fundamental aspects of life would run on separate tracks, has produced a kind of schizophrenia that has been damaging for Christians and for the world at large. Politics is corrupted because politicians are corrupted; the arts are degrading because artists are degraded, and so on. And the Lord's prayer was not that we would be taken out of the world, but that we would be kept pure and faithful within it, so that we could be the salt and light we were supposed to be.

Therefore, the issue of art, beauty, the enjoyment of life and the humanities, now that we face the most challenging crisis the West has even known, have to be taken into consideration and brought to our attention. In fact, the arts may be one of the very few means left in the West to help Christians prepare the way for the proclamation of the gospel message. There is probably no better, more efficient and beautiful tool for producing and depicting creative subversion than the arts.

But the arts can only be a valuable means when we see and understand them for what they are by their very nature, the nature God himself has given them. Now, to understand this important subject, we must consider that the separation between secular and sacred referred to earlier has also inhibited us from being able to produce a *biblical worldview* on which to base our lives, direct our behavior and view all the other non-

religious aspects of life from that perspective. The prevalent idea of dos and don'ts that springs from this shallow and artificial separation, and which is merely a religious but not a spiritual idea, has kept us out of some of the most fundamental and influential areas of society. The crucial issue we must be able to grasp from the outset, concerning the question of the arts and creativity, is that it is the faculty and potential of the creative gift to lift our souls out of the merely materialistic and rational world into the realm of the spirit and the imagination.

This understanding of art has to be based on the knowledge of the technical, aesthetic, philosophical and spiritual aspects related to the nature of the creative gift; what it really is according to its natural conception and make up. But one needs to realize that this approach is one that presents a challenge to Christians whose only experience with the arts comes from an evangelistic approach or from a merely religious understanding of life as such. In other words, it comes from an approach which is void of a foundational and complete biblical worldview.

When the arts are only seen as mere "tools" to be used for evangelistic purposes, or as an emotive and imaginative manifestation of man's passionate desires and inclinations, that can sometimes be tolerated for pious, religious purposes, but with no interest whatsoever in understanding the real nature of the creative gift, this attitude produces a *distortion* and a misunderstanding of the real nature of art and its role in human life. As I have referred to in a few instances already, even materialist, Marxist ideology knew very well how the artistic imagination was a powerful means of reaching into the most significant, profound and meaningful regions of the human soul. Therefore, they made good use of the arts and the mass media as tools for political propaganda and indoctrination; turning them into political pamphlets, and contributing enormously to devalue their very nature.

However, when one takes a closer look at the Bible concerning the issue of *art and beauty* (and in this respect the Greeks, who were the first to reason, theorize and document in treatises some of the norms and rules for creating beauty, have a lot to teach us, but I am not going to get into that here), the view of the subject begins to expand rapidly. Moreover, in contrast to the New Marxist ideology, reading what other Christians throughout history have discovered, offers a pleasant surprise. People like Saint Augustine, Dorothy Sayers, Francis Schaeffer, J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Hans Rookmaaker and others, had long found that although there is a place for the religious "use" of the arts in the church, this cannot be the only reason why God has bestowed such an abundant and exuberant gift of creativity on every aspect of creation. God is not a utilitarian being and everything that springs from his hands has the fundamental characteristics of love, life, reality and vitality, simply because that is who he is -love.

Therefore, nothing God has created is superficial, utilitarian or a last decorative thought. Everything God has made has the solidity, the reality, the sacredness of having been wanted and imagined into its existence by Him. God loves art and beauty because it is part of who he is. This is one of the reasons why art is not just decoration or entertainment, though it can sometimes appear to be only that. The contemplation of beauty and the artistic manifestations not only raise our pulse and arouse our emotions;

they actually feed our souls and inspire our spirits in the search for the transcendental aspect of life.

The Nature of the Creative Gift

The stunning thing one encounters when entering into the realm of beauty, creativity and the imagination is that artistic *sensitivity* not only manifests itself in a *natural way* in everything man creates, whether it be a car, a chair, a pair of shoes, or an artistic masterpiece; but that it is present all around us wherever we fix our eyes on the world God has made. One also notices that in the same way that nature proclaims the glory of God by being true to itself, without labels or special religious messages, the arts, by the same token, glorify God by being true to the nature of the creative gift. If someone thought it would be necessary to put a placard on the moon saying “to the glory of God”, or write Bible verses on the leaves of the trees, or make the birds sing hymns and choruses to proclaim the glory of God, it would be a great mistake.

Nature proclaims the glory of God, and in many instances, it inspires people to think about the transcendent aspects of life, just by being true to itself, in a “natural” way. And exactly the same happens with the arts. As George MacDonald¹ put it in his fabulous book *Phantastes*: “Art rescues nature from the weary and sated regards of our senses, and the degrading injustice of our anxious everyday life and appealing to the imagination... reveals nature in some degree as she really is, and as she represents herself to the eyes of the child, whose everyday life, fearless and unambitious meets the true import of the *wonder-teeming* world around him and rejoices therein without questioning”.

There is, certainly, a biblical perspective of life, a comprehensive *biblical worldview* that enables Christians to see the Lordship of Christ over all his redeemed creation, and that allows us to enjoy life in every aspect to its full potential. As C. S. Lewis put it: “I believe in God as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I can see it, but because by it I can see everything else.” In this light, Christians are the only ones able to see and understand sex, food, marriage, love, science, relationships, and art in such a magnificent and revealing way, because only they can see all of them through the eyes of the One who created them, and perceive the real purpose of God’s creation.

Therefore, cultivating our aesthetic sensitivity, enjoying and experiencing the sensuous pleasure of contemplating natural and artistic beauty, and engaging in artistic endeavors and enterprise; is a very important part of God’s plan to make us *whole* and complete human beings; and at the same time enable us to fulfill his cultural mandate.

Actually, if we think about it, the learning process and discovery of the rules, laws and techniques for creating, experiencing and enjoying beauty, make the arts *redemptive* in the sense that they are instrumental in giving us yet another view of God’s glorious and magnificent structure of the universe; and in an intuitive process reveal to us subtle aspects of God’s own character, attributes and love for his creation. And this is all done in a natural way, without the need for religious acts or poses. It is the same way as when we go about making a good meal in a natural non-religious way, with all the natural

¹Macdonald, George. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1981. Scottish novelist (1824-1905) poet, and writer of Christian allegories of man’s pilgrimage back to God. He is remembered chiefly for his allegorical fairy stories, which have continued to delight children and their elders.

ingredients God has provided in nature, for that marvelous and sacred act of coming together to enjoy the food and the company at the table. This is, of course, a very human, profound and spiritual act, but not a religious one.

Natural life does not need to have religious implications to be pleasing to God, apart from the deep attitude of the heart of doing everything to the glory of God. Life, the life that God has given to man, instead of being religious, is human, spiritual and indeed divine. According to Hans Rookmaaker: “²We must be aware that art cannot be used to show the validity of Christianity; it should rather be the reverse. Christianity is true; things and actions and human endeavor only get their meaning from their relationship to God; if Christ came to make us human, the humanity and the reality of art find their foundation in him. So art should not be used to preach even if it can help.”

As with science, we find that if we come with an open, humble and unprejudiced mind, the more we know and find out about the laws that make up the physical world, the more we come face to face with the fingerprints of our Creator God. Therefore, as we develop and cultivate our aesthetic sensitivity through the *creation* and *contemplation* of beauty we continue to grow into the complete human beings God made us to be. And this must be so, because we have been made in such a way that not only our spirit has to be fed with the devotion to God, as our bodies have to be fed with food, and our intellects have to be fed with rational thoughts, concepts and ideas that help us understand God, us and the world around us; but our souls and imagination also have to be fed with the delightful enchantment of art. Starving any of those appetites or neglecting them or making them what they are not by their very nature, will not only produce damaging and devastating consequences to our human nature; but it will disable us to be able to perceive and be witnesses of God’s magnificent wisdom and love for his creation.

Educating and cultivating our aesthetic sensitivity does not have to be intentionally done in a “religious” way, in the same way that we cannot eat religious food. By its very nature, art naturally rises into the *immaterial* realm of imagination that is only one thin layer away from the spiritual one. Therefore, art does not need to be made “sacred” by Christians adding to it a religious undertone. This is absolutely unnecessary, because art is already spiritual by its very nature, the nature that God himself has given to it. In C. S. Lewis’ words: “³(Beauty) is only the scent of a flower we have not yet found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.”

And this is so because the deep longing for beauty in the human heart, will not be completely satisfied with the contemplation of the beautiful object. It always points to that from which the reflection of beauty comes. As Lewis continues: “These things – the beauty, the memory of our own past – are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers.” In a natural way art and beauty can be a lead that can take people to the actual door of the spiritual world. But this cannot and must not be done in a religious, preachy way.

²Rookmaaker, Hans. *Art Needs no Justification*. Regent College Publishing. 2010. Dutch Christian scholar (1922–1977) professor, and author who wrote and lectured on art theory, art history, music, philosophy, and religion. In 1948 he met Christian theologian Francis Schaeffer and became a member of L’Abri in Switzerland. Some of his other books are *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* and *The Creative Gift*.

³Lewis, C. S. *The Weight of Glory*. [Harper Collins Publishers](https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062628153/). 2015.

The mere contemplation of the magnificent splendor of life shooting up, and reviving in the springtime time in meadows and forests and gardens, can elevate an unbelieving heart and make it begin to ponder the real meaning of life. Thus, dressing art with the clothing of religion, as was done in the Sistine Chapel in 1564 with Michelangelo's nudes, is doing the same as when art is unnaturally made to speak the language of political propaganda, it devalues its very nature. This does not mean that there is no place for religious devotional art that can sincerely and genuinely express man's deep sense of adoration and gratitude to God. But if a genuine Christian loves God, and if that Christian happens to be an artist, he is going to love the world and the life God has made as he has made it and redeemed it in Christ. He is not going to have the feeling that he needs to reinvent them or give them a religious connotation or dress them up so that they will be more pleasing to God. That would be implying that God has made a mistake in his creation or that God's creation is inadequate.

The actual nature of the creative gift springs from the fact that art and beauty are an intrinsic part of God's own nature. Yes, according to the Bible, God is not only holy, just, loving, omnipotent, omniscient, but also Creator, *the supreme Creator* in fact, and for that very reason he is also described as *beautiful*. And this is, of course, the only reason why everything he created was not only good but beautiful, as he himself expressed it in the book of Genesis. In fact, the Greek translation of the word *good* used by God in this context is [*Kalos*], which implies both things at the same time, good and beautiful, pleasing to the contemplation of the eyes.

We could even go further and say that the manifestation and materialization of beauty in nature and the artistic works of man, is probably one of the subtle, delicate and magnificent radiations of God's love, it certainly seems to be what happens in nature. And this is also the reason why everything we see in nature and the universe has the omnipresent quality of beauty. Therefore, if one "unexamined life is not worth living" according to the ancient Greeks, in the same way a life without the experience and enjoyment of beauty is not a completely realized life. The Christian worldview is one that considers the individual as a person made in the image of God, with *emotional, intellectual, physical, spiritual* and *aesthetic* needs. Not only has God created us in his own image, but the Lordship of Christ expands into all of life.

This also has the implication that education from a Christian perspective cannot only be about the pragmatic acquisition of knowledge and skills to get the expertise needed to make a living. The making of a mature person, able to deal with the different challenges and aspects of the human experience, requires a biblical worldview that includes *instruction, education, and cultivation of artistic sensitivity*. An education that contributes to enriching our emotional and aesthetic sensitivity is an education that opens our imagination to the creative and spiritual dimensions of life and helps deepen our knowledge and understanding of God himself and the human condition. Like many other natural things in life, art complements spiritual education in an imaginative, non-religious way. Who could ever doubt that through the arts and sciences, we can have a glimpse into the intricate and complex structure and design of the world which God has created?

As we have seen in the words of G. MacDonald, *Cennino Cennini*⁴, an artist from the 14th Century, also discovered that the artist with his talent and skill is able *to disclose* to the gazing eye that hidden reality which before the actual making of the artistic masterpiece, did not seem to exist. And Michelangelo Buonarroti, the Renaissance artist, used to say that he did not create his artistic master pieces, but that all he did was to unveil them, because they were already there. C. S. Lewis speaking about the same thing in his book *The Great Divorce* has a dialogue between a painter and one of the “solid people”, this is what the latter tells the artist: “⁵When you painted on earth—at least in your earlier days—it was because you caught glimpses of Heaven in the earthly landscape. The success of your painting was that it enabled others to see the glimpses too. But here you are having the thing itself. It is from here that the messages came.” When the artist is faithful to his calling and honest and humble enough to be led by the work and the love for the thing itself, as Lewis says, he can actually have glimpses of the “higher countries”, and even perhaps read into God’s own imagination.

In other words, art can help us see aspects of reality that are not so obvious to the intellect or the physical eye because it does not touch our reason, but rather our *emotions* and *imagination*. The arts, therefore, cannot only be good as tools for worship, evangelism and liturgical purposes or as a means of providing relaxation and entertainment, though they do play an important role in all of these.

The arts play a fundamental and important role in helping us be more human, sensitive, discerning, reflective, and in the process enrich our lives and help sharpen our minds. The actual contemplation and enjoyment of beauty, not only enriches our emotional and imaginative lives; it can also be a means by which our hearts and our spirits can be enticed and awakened to the actual reality of God’s existence and love. As mentioned already, once the aesthetic, sensuous pleasure has disappeared, the soul is left with a deep longing for the presence, a yearning for that from which the dazzling manifestation of beauty proceeds. Let us now have a quick look at some of the other elements of the nature of the creative gift.

The Aesthetic Experience

As I mentioned already, as it is the case with everything God has created, beauty, imagination, the pleasure of *aesthetic enjoyment*, has not been put there just as an after occurrence. Beauty, then, is part of God’s own nature and character. The fact that artistic expression has been misused and ill-used many times by fallen creatures, does not mean that art is evil or bad, —in the same way that abusing food, sex or anything else in life does not make them intrinsically bad. The fact is that having been made in the image of God, human beings are a complex, tripartite sacred entity: mind, soul and body.

Even though we live in a post-Christian fragmented world, where the basic understanding of human nature has been shot to pieces, Christians are those who can affirm that these three components of human life, mind, soul and body, have different qualities that fulfill different purposes and contribute to making humans the whole,

⁴Cennino d’Andrea Cennini (1360 -1427) Italian painter influenced by Giotto. He was a student of Agnolo Gaddi in Florence. He is remembered mainly for having authored the *Book of Art*. Thought to have been written around the turn of the 15th century, the book is a “how to” on late Medieval and early Renaissance painting.

⁵Lewis, C. S. *The Great Divorce*. William Collins Sons & Ltd. 1988.

complete and unique beings we are. Of course, these three aspects are related, and complement one another to make up the complete person. This was God's design and plan from the beginning, and it is only when the Western rationalistic and materialistic approach to human life began to take hold of the mind, that these three aspects of man were split apart. The *spirit* at one point was emphasized over soul and reason; at other times *reason* took the lead and began to walk by itself, apart from soul and spirit; and finally, in postmodern times, *the soul* was been given preeminence over reason and spirit, making human life fragmented. In the postmodern mind frame art, like ideas and opinions, becomes completely subjective, and it is all about what the artist feels and thinks he sees.

In reality, each one of these three aspects plays a very important role in making man a unified and complete human being. But each one of these aspects fulfills a different purpose and works in different ways and by different means. Rational knowledge and information is communicated to us through the use of reason, the intellect, and *empirical* action facilitated by certain mediums, namely *pedagogy, dissertation, investigation, instruction, research, practical work, oratory, rhetoric, discussion, homiletics*, etc.

The aesthetic experience, on the other hand, is aimed not at the mind as rational information is, but at *the soul*; that is our emotions, imagination and intuition. And the means used to express its subject matter are different from those used to communicate to the intellect. Depending on the artistic discipline in question, the medium may be *images, sound, movement, colors, shapes, shades, textures, symmetry, meter*, etc. Furthermore, the aim of the various artistic expressions is not to convey information or knowledge but to carry and convey an aesthetic experience. We have been made in such a way that we have spiritual, emotional, rational and physical needs and appetites that have to be provided for in different ways and by different means. So clearly, artistic and aesthetic enjoyment does not intend to help human beings grasp and understand concepts, rational thoughts and ideas – that is done through the use of reason. This is probably the most basic and fundamental aspect of the nature of the creative gift, but it is essential to mention some other aspects which are critical for understanding it in its full scope.

A God, who is not only loving, just, holy, etc. but beautiful has created a *beautiful* universe. Human beings, created in the image of God, are not only beautiful, but have been endowed with the artistic faculty, the amazing ability to create and produce beauty. This human being has been entrusted with an aesthetic enterprise that implies, creating beauty for enjoyment and contemplation, and producing culture that can make the human world a beautiful, ordered and enjoyable place to live. "Be fruitful and multiply..." (Gen. 1:28.) It is notable that Adam is given the task of naming the animals. (Gen. 2:19.) Human beings have been made with a deep and real longing for the spiritual realm, of course, but also for the experience and enjoyment of beauty.

By its very nature the creative gift elevates us from the world of the rational, practical, frantic and pragmatic to the world of imagination, sensuous pleasure, creativity and mystery; and in doing that in a natural way, it draws people closer, and somehow contributes to prepare us for the spiritual encounter.

Finally, it must be said, that as M. Heidegger⁶ makes it clear in his book *The Origin of the Work of Art*, “Concealment” is an aspect of life and reality that cannot be overlooked. A scientist may be able to split, analyze and decompose the atom, the cell or the genome, but he may also be missing the very essence of reality altogether which is before his very eyes. And that can only happen, because the scientist has eyes for that which is in front of him only; but he has no inner eyes to see that which is beyond physical observation; and he is therefore unable to see the connection between the physical reality and the spiritual reality. That is something that the aesthetic experience can help us glimpse, and spiritual reality can help us comprehend.

The Arts in an Age of Deconstruction

In these postmodern days of deconstruction, degradation and desecration in the realm of the arts, one of the things that the creative imagination can help us see and understand more clearly, is how the process of deconstruction has actually taken place in the West. In the eighteenth century, with the advent of a merely rational worldview, the arts begin to set aside the religious subject matter; God, the saints and the host of angels disappears from canvases.

In this way the world becomes *disenchanted* and not only did the Christian God disappear, but the gods, goddesses and myths of the ancient world also began to vanish. The use of the imagination was compromised. The only things that most artists from the eighteenth and nineteenth century begin to depict on their canvases are those which can be seen by the naked eye. Not only faith disappears, but also the free use of the imagination; and this disapproval is what was at the root of most of the *Avant-garde* movements who merely wanted to recover the use of the imagination. In *Kandinsky's*⁷ words in his book *On the Spiritual in Art*: “We must destroy the soulless, materialistic life of the nineteenth century. We must build the life of the soul and spirit of the twentieth century”. And this is how even F. Schiller in the eighteenth century already longs for those days in his poem *The Gods of Greece*:

Ye in the age gone by,
Who ruled the world--a world how lovely then!--
And guided still the steps of happy men
In the light leading-strings of careless joy!
Ah, flourished then your service of delight!
How different, oh, how different, in the day
When thy sweet fanes with many a wreath were bright,
O Venus Amathusia!

This is also something that Christian writers such as G. K. Chesterton, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis saw very clearly and the reason for their imaginative works full of

¹²⁵Martin Heidegger (1889 -1976) German philosopher who is widely regarded as one of the most important philosophers of the twentieth century. He is best known for contributions to phenomenology, hermeneutics, and existentialism.

⁷Kandinsky, Wassily W. *On the Spiritual in Art*. Dover Publications. 1977. Kandinsky was a Russian painter and art theorist. (1866 - 1944) He is generally credited as the pioneer of [abstract art](#). Born in Moscow, he spent his childhood in [Odessa](#) where he graduated at [Grekov Odessa Art school](#). He enrolled at the [University of Moscow](#), studying law and economics.

Greek, Roman and Nordic *myths*. Indeed, God needs to be restored to his rightful place in the mind, imagination and spirit of Western culture, but maybe before that can take place the world needs to be *re-enchanted*; it needs to go back to that paradigm in which the imagination was open to see and believe in more than what the naked eye can see. The artists of the Avant-garde movement, even though they tried very hard, were unable to do that.

It may be then, that the job of the Christian artist, in the midst of this devastating situation, as Chesterton, Lewis and Tolkien have shown us, has to be that of helping a postmodern, irrational mindset recover the imagination and contribute to re-enchant the world in a way that people can be encouraged to dream, hope, play, believe and enjoy the experience of beauty in a way that has already disappeared from the face of the Western world with the “colonization” of our minds, our emotions and our hearts, by mere entertainment, rationalism and desecration. In fact, for many people today there is no difference between art and entertainment, or for that matter, between a beautiful nude goddess in a canvas and a pornographic picture in a magazine.

For C. S. Lewis the *atheist*, romantic lover of poetry, medieval literature and myth, the thing that sparked the light in his imagination was the book *Phantastes* by G. MacDonald. Not in the sense that he found in it the actual message of redemption, but because in it he discovered a certain aroma, a flavor of a higher country: “A few hours later –after having begun to read the book– I knew that I had crossed a great frontier”. His imagination was somehow awakened to “goodness”. This is how he describes the whole experience of reading the book:

“⁸What it actually did to me was to convert, even to baptize, my imagination. It did nothing to my intellect nor (at that time) to my conscience. Their turn came far later and with the help of many other books and men. But when the process was complete... I found that I was still with MacDonald and that he had accompanied me all the way and that I was now at last ready to hear from him much that he could not have told me at that first meeting. But in a sense, what he was now telling me was the very same that he could have told me at that first meeting... The quality which had enchanted me in his imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the divine, magical, terrifying and ecstatic reality in which we all live.” As Christian artists, we may contribute in a more modest way to help prepare the way and spark a tiny light in the imagination that can encourage people to start their search for the transcendental and spiritual. Our works must not be religious, but they certainly must have the aroma of the higher countries.

In my experience in the last fifteen years working with postmodern, non-Christians, I have noticed that the cultivation and enhancement of artistic sensitivity through arts education is something desired and necessary for every human being. Postmodern people also realize, despite their secularism, irrationality and confusion, that for this learning process to be real, it requires genuine love and appreciation for whatever is good and beautiful not only in nature, but also in the world of human life. Even in this secular mindset, the understanding of the nature of the artistic gift, and the acquisition of aesthetic as well as moral and ethical values, not only becomes

⁸Lewis, C. S. *Introduction to Phantastes*. MacDonald, George. WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. 1994.

relevant and important, but also an efficient tool through the use of the imagination, in opening windows to the spiritual dimension.

The Spiritual Dynamics

Something else that must be remembered in this context is that if we are going to contribute as Christian artists to carry out the much needed third mission to the West, it will not be done in our own strength. As Christian artists we must follow the example of people like Rembrandt, Albrecht Dürer, J. S. Bach and other artists whose lives were one hundred per cent rooted and given to God, and have as our motto “to do everything to the glory of God.” We will never be able to accomplish such a titanic task by our own human means or the use of reason and the imagination. We must dare to think in a Christian way, with our feet well-rooted in the Bible, our minds and hearts filled with the Word of God (“I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you,” Psalm 119:11), our inner eyes fixed on Christ and our physical eyes on the reality of the world God has created.

As Francis Bacon put it, we must learn from God’s two books, the book of Scripture and the book of nature. A mere nominal or intellectual approach is not enough, and above all, there is an urgent need for a biblical worldview that would provide a framework from which to live, think and work as a Christian in this complex post-modern world. This worldview has to integrate the spiritual dimension in such a way that things like faith, prayer, intercession, dependence on God and spiritual warfare are incorporated in the dynamics of any efforts to reach this society with the gospel. We must embody through the grace of God, forgiveness, freedom from bondage, healing, deliverance and the relevance of the gospel message in all aspects of life. Our walk with God has to be a practical demonstration of the reality of God’s presence in this world. Paraphrasing Jordan Peterson⁹ in one of his talks, what right do we have to say that we believe in God if we do not live up to what we believe that assertion requires from our ethical, spiritual and moral lives.

⁹https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=coTKSH_YN7E