

For the Beauty of the Church

What does God say about art and artists? Throughout history, the arts in all their forms have mirrored cultural change and even injected voice into our theological understanding. After introducing the purpose and goals of the network, this session will examine the convergence of art, culture, and faith from a Biblical perspective.

Charles David Kelley is Latvian-American, citizen of both countries. Born in Los Angeles, he has lived in Oregon since 1980. His professional training is in Bible, theology, and missiology. He began ministering in Latvia in 1985. Before founding Bridge Builders International, an Oregon based mission that focuses on Latvia, in 1994, Charles served in pastoral ministry in California, Texas, and Oregon for 21 years. He is chairman and director of BBI's Latvian affiliate, "Partners." He serves as Dean of International Relations at Baltic Pastoral Institute in Riga. Charles is founder of the Imago Dei Artists Network in Latvia and co-founder of the imagiNATIONS Annual Art Festival for Estonia and Latvia. He is a member of the Arts Centre Group in London and is the LausanneARTS Advocate at Large for Europe. Charles is an author, pianist, and painter, having studied at the feet of two masters, professors both, from the Latvian Academy of the Arts. He lives in Latvia 4-5 months per year. He has been married to Nancy for 40 years and has four grown children and nine young grandchildren.

Session 1: What Does God Say About Art and Artists?

1. God was and is the first and best artist
 - a. Genesis 1:26, 27 – When God created man in his own image, He gave us some aspects of His DNA, including imagination, sense of beauty, creativity and the capacity to also create.
 - b. Leviticus 26:1 – God forbids His children from making idols.
 - c. Exodus 25:40 – God gave Moses the plans for the Tabernacle, which included design, garments and all manner of art.
 - d. 1 Chronicles 28:11–19 – God gave David the plans for the temple and he gave these plans, many of which had no useful purposes, but garnished the temple with beauty, to Solomon. (“All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the Lord, all the work to be done according to the plan.”)
2. What are the purposes of art in Scripture?
 - a. Worship
 - b. Beauty
 - c. Pedagogy

- d. Communication
- e. Cultural Identity

3. What art forms are modeled in Scripture?

- a. Poetry
- b. Visual art
- c. Sculpture
- d. Dance
- e. Drama
- f. Music
- g. Debate
- h. Story telling
- i. Creative writing
- j. Preaching
- k. Festivals
- l. Garments
- m. Architecture
- n. Design

Art is a language that God has given to all people. It transcends oral, written and cultural restrictions. The language of art is one of God's clearest and most emotive means of communication. When we create in the image of the Creator we speak a native language of all creation.

Session 2: How Can Artists Strengthen the Church and Influence Society?

1. What historic roles have art and artists played in the Church?
 - a. In the Early church
 - b. In the Medieval church
 - c. During the Reformation
 - d. Modernity and the rise of pragmatism
2. What is the role, purpose and value of art in the church today?
 - a. Why do churches tend to eliminate the beautiful for the sake of the useful?
 - b. Can art be Christian? Can music? Can dance? Can sculpture?
3. What makes a Christian artist?
 - a. Is it a spiritual gift?
 - b. Is it a calling?
 - c. Is it a mentality?
 - d. Is it a lifestyle?
4. What is the importance of Christian artists?
 - a. In the Church
 - i. Worshipper
 - ii. Teacher
 - iii. Healer
 - iv. Unifier

v. Border crosser

b. In Society

i. Interpreter

ii. Bridge builder

iii. Initiator

iv. Innovator

God has given Christian artists a special ability to understand, identify with and connect with society. Good things happen for the Kingdom and society when artists respond to their calling to minister truth and beauty.