

The Role of Art in the Church: Making the Gospel Palatable?

We know that the heart of the Gospel is contained in the Scriptures. That means the preaching, right? Everything else should be background, or at least not get in the way? For several decades the Church has been on a seeker-friendly track, re-imagining its trappings in order to make entry more accessible for a wider audience. How has that worked out? This session will explore the effects of our imitation of the world on discipleship, on our Christian community, and on the world in which we live.

Delta David Gier has been called a dynamic voice on the music scene, recognized widely for his penetrating interpretations of the standard symphonic repertoire, passionate commitment to new music, and significant community engagement. Orchestras Mr. Gier has conducted include the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the St. Louis Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra. In Europe, his engagements include the Bergen Philharmonic, the Polish National Radio Symphony, and the Bucharest Philharmonic, along with many other orchestras in Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey. He studied at the University of Michigan under the renowned conducting teacher Gustav Meier, along with studies at the Tanglewood Music Center and Aspen Music Festival. He was a Fulbright scholar in Eastern Europe from 1988-90. He has chaired the music jury of the Pulitzer Prize and is a frequent panelist for the League of American orchestras. The Lakota Music Project was developed under Gier's direction to address racial tensions between Native Americans and whites in the region the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra serves. Other engagement projects with the SDSO have included Arab, Chinese and Sudanese/Somali refugees.

I. The Tyranny of Taste

- A. What makes for great worship?
- B. What is job?
- C. Too many choices (are we spoiled?)

II. Amusing Ourselves to Death

- A. Individualism
- B. Commercialism and the commodification of culture
- C. Cultural decline

III. Is It Really All About the Music?

A. Music that is “church”

B. Bach’s definition of music

C. Who should choose? Who is qualified? (Hint: not your local radio station)

IV. Examining the Past, Imagining the Future

A. Biblical worship

B. Historical examples from the church (good and bad)

C. Artistic excommunication

D. What would reengagement look like?