

And God Said “It Is Good”

Socrates and Aristotle taught that great art lives at the intersection of truth, goodness, and beauty. This classic understanding ruled the world of art and artists until the twentieth century, when higher purposes of art morphed into mere artistic expressions. When art is reduced to self-expression, it risks losing its ultimate purpose. But prior to the Greek philosophers are the first recorded words of our Creative God: “It is good.” Why did He say this? Why did He repeat it so many times? What did He mean? How does this narrative inform not only our understanding of God and His redemptive plan, but also the way we understand our callings as artists?

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.

I. Goodness and the essence of God

II. Goodness and the creativity of God

III. Goodness and the challenge of the artist

IV. Goodness and the calling of the artist

V. Goodness and the glory of God