

Christians and Literary Art: How to Build a Healthy Relationship

"Do not say that a Christian art is impossible." (Jacques Maritain) The aim of the workshop is to show how we can approach literary art from a Christian perspective. Ádám Szabados, who studied both literature and theology, addresses questions related to the nature, the means, and the goal of literary art, and suggests helpful metaphors that we can apply to our role either when we encounter or when we create a piece of literature. The workshop is as much for writers as for those who never really understood the role of literature in the Christian life.

Ádám Szabados has been the Pastor at Evangelical Christian Church, Veszprém, since 1999. He is married to Dóra, and has two boys. He studied English literature and linguistics at the University of Veszprém (MA equivalent, with honours), and theology at Schloss Mittersill Study Center (Diploma in Biblical Studies and Culture) and at Covenant Theological Seminary (ThM in Exegetical Theology). He is currently doing his PhD in the area of New Testament at Károli Reformed University. He helped start the Hungarian Evangelical Forum and is the leader of its Steering Committee. His study on the Reformational understanding of sin has been published by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and by ProPhilosophia. He wrote a book on Eros (Erosz nyomában, Harmat Publishing House, 2008), which aims to address both Christians and non-Christians in their search for the good, the true, and the beautiful. Ádám also has a popular theological-apologetic website (divinity.szabadosadam.hu).

I. How Should We *Perceive* Literary Art as Christians?

A. What is literary art?

1. Mimesis

2. Metaphor

B. What is the primary means of literary art?

1. Language

2. Imagination

3. Fertilization

C. What is the purpose of literary art?

1. Penultimate purpose: dulce et utile
2. Ultimate purpose: soli Deo gloria

II. How Should We *Receive* Literary Art as Christians?

- A. Delight in it!
- B. Be hospitable to it!
- C. Go on a journey with it!
- D. See along it!
- E. Criticize it!

III. How Should We *Do* Literary Art as Christians?

- A. Christian literary art is the art of a Christian literary artist
 1. Naming the world as a disciple of Jesus
 2. Bad and good metaphors for the Christian artist

B. How should a Christian literary artist create?

1. Faith

2. Hope

3. Love

Suggested Readings:

Leland Ryken (ed.), *Christian Imagination* (Colorado Springs, CO: ShawBooks, 2002).

Cheryl Forbes, *Imagination* (Portland, MI: Multnomah Press, 1986).

Aristotle, *Poetics* (easily accessible on the internet in many languages)

T. S. Eliot, "Religion and Literature" in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975)

Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977). [French original: *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975)]

Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible: Two Essays* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973)

Hans R. Rookmaker, *The Creative Gift* (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1981)

David Lodge, *The Art of Fiction* (London: Penguin Books, 1992)

J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy Stories" in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine, 1966)

C. S. Lewis, "Meditation in a Toolshed" in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970)

C. S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961)

G. K. Chesterton, *Heretics* (London: The Bodley Head, 1905)

Os Guinness, *The Call* (Nashville, TN: Word, 1998)