

## Artists in the Cleft – Between Church and Marketplace

Artists who are Christians understand their talents as God-given. Therefore, they are ready to use them for the Glory of God and to be fully included in a church. Yet many of them express that they don't feel really understood by other Christians. On the other hand, they neither feel that they are full members of the "marketplace". How to solve this dilemma? What could help "Christian artists" to be active members in churches and to play at the same time a significant role in the marketplace? What could be the role of the church, which needs the artists and the arts as well?

**Beat Rink**, born in Basel, Switzerland, has studied history, German literature, and later theology. He is an ordained pastor of the Swiss Reformed church. He is founder and director of Crescendo, an international ministry of Cru amongst about 2000 professional musicians / music students (classic / jazz), also serving other artists ([www.crescendo.org](http://www.crescendo.org)). Crescendo is organizing besides local ministries also big events such as the "Crescendo Summer Institute" [www.crescendoinstitute.org](http://www.crescendoinstitute.org) or the "Night of Faith. Festival for Art and Church" [www.nachtdesglaubens.ch](http://www.nachtdesglaubens.ch). He has published several books on arts and faith and his own poetry. He lives with his wife, originally from Finland, in Basel.

### I. Artists in the market place

A. Why should Christian artists be active in the market place?  
(Brief explanation of the term 'Christian artist')

1. The market place is secularized, but has many religious connotations
2. The market place is a mission field
3. The market place is setting aesthetic trends – also for the church

B. What would be other options in a market place with problematic tendencies?

1. Give up art
2. Quit the art world and create art exclusively for the church
3. Create a Christian 'subculture' in the art world
4. Stay in the market place as anonymous Christians

C. What does it mean to stay as a Christian in the market place?

1. Facing or willingly stepping into opposition to some market place mechanisms (= exclusion experience)
2. Facing exclusion from some other Christians
3. Experiencing inclusion in interdenominational Christian art network
4. Experiencing inclusion and living out a transformative presence in the market place

## II. Artists in churches

### A. Why should Christian artists be active in churches?

1. The church needs the arts and has to develop a stronger interest in aesthetics
  - a. Out of dogmatic reasons: Pulchrum, bonum, verum
  - b. Out of missiological reasons: Relating to the culture 'outside of the church'
  - c. Out of ecclesiological reasons: Faithfulness towards the God-given artistic heritage in the church and responsibility towards the shape of the church today
2. Artists need the church
  - a. For the sake of their journey as Christians
  - b. For the sake of their art
3. Churches need the artists
  - a. Their creative gifts: Artists as bearers of special charismata: Innovation, creativity, prophetic alertness, articulation of truth

### B. What would be other options?

1. Church without art / with poor art
  - a. Out of theological reasons: exclusive word-centeredness, Christ against culture-position
  - b. Out of ecclesiological reasons: minister-centeredness
  - c. Out of cultural reasons: Lack of understanding or interest in this field, holding up a mono-culture, fear of 'open' works of art
  - d. Out of practical reasons: no artists, no finances, no possibilities for art
2. Church outsourcing the arts
  - a. What is the price?

### C. What does it mean to stay as a Christian artist in the church?

1. Operating with the following 3 virtues:
  - a. Patience
  - b. Humility, resistance against 'star cult', helping non-professional creative people
  - c. Willingness to be actively involved in the church
  - d. Willingness to be questioned with the artworks presented

## III. The role of the church

### A. Gaining a better understanding of the arts and their role in the church

1. Avoiding art as alibi for a lacking spiritual life

2. Avoiding utilitarianism
3. Avoiding a 'mono culture'
4. Raising interest, starting an educational process in the congregation
5. Stepping into a conversation with artists about their works

B. Helping artists to be active in the church

1. Treating artists not as 'stars'
2. Allowing and enabling artists to bring new forms of worshipping God, expressing faith, showing reality
3. Giving professional artists a mandate
4. Inviting artists to tell the good news and express faith in a new way

C. Gaining a vision for the art world / the market place

1. Sending out artists into the mission field
2. Creating synergies with Christian art networks / movements