



November 3, 2005  
Culture

## Culture and Art

### Reading

The church needs artists because without art we cannot reach the world. The simple fact is that the imagination “gets you,” even when your reason is completely against the idea of God. “Imagination communicates,” as Arthur Danto says, “indefinable but inescapable truth.” Those who read a book or listen to music expose themselves to that inescapable truth. There is a sort of schizophrenia that occurs if you are listening to Bach and you hear the glory of God and yet your mind says there is no God and there is no meaning. You are committed to believing that nothing means anything and yet the music comes in and takes you over with your imagination. When you listen to great music, you can’t believe life is meaningless. Your heart knows what your mind is denying. We need Christian artists because we are never going to reach the world without great Christian art to go with great Christian talk.

— **Tim Keller**, “Glory,” in *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*

### Scripture

Then Moses said to the Israelites, “See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts—to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood and to engage in all kinds of artistic craftsmanship. And he has given both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. He has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work as craftsmen, designers, embroiderers in blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weavers—all of them master craftsmen and designers. So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled person to whom the Lord has given skill and ability to know how to carry out all the work of constructing the sanctuary are to do the work just as the Lord has commanded.”

— **Exodus 35:30-36:1**

### Reflect

As Christians we have a story to tell: one of God’s creation, the fall, incarnation, sacrifice and then redemption of mankind through his Son. We tell that story through the use of our gifts. If we have artistic means, we tell the story in ways beyond which words alone can communicate. A work of art makes us look for meaning, both emotional and intellectual meaning. It invites us to use both our mind and our heart. In the heart of New York City, our congregation has the remarkable opportunity to draw upon the creativity of the many artists in our midst—painters, sculptors, poets, actors, musicians, dancers, fiction writers, and more. The City has Christian artists who seek to incarnate the Truth to the world around us who do not know God. And it is filled with artists who deny God but who reveal him, despite themselves, through the creative process.

### Pray

**Think** about when, where and how art has enabled you to know God’s glory through both your mind and heart.

**Pray** for the artists you know in our congregation—that God be glorified and known through their work.

**Pray** that Redeemer can grow in our support of artists and their endeavors to communicate the truth of the redemptive story of the gospel to the culture we live in.

**Praise** God for entrusting mankind with creative gifts and for the many forms in which his grace is administered.