

Let's Get Rrrrready to Rrrrrumble!

Ever feel like you're in a battle with your church to use your artistic talent???? Welcome to the club. The age old conflict has been going on for hundreds of years.

Let's go to the ring announcer...

In one corner, the Creative Artist (whether named J.S. Bach, Michelangelo, or Michael W. Smith, these are musicians, songwriters, painters, or really any artistic type). In the other corner, the Church (you know, the place with the pews, the cross, the organ, and all the other fancy stuff). Why are they in conflict? Because the arts have always been in question and somewhat in odds with the church, even though they have always existed inside the praise and exaltation of God.

David was a musician, and there were always skilled musicians in the court of kings. Of course there were no churches then, and music was certainly not allowed in the holy tabernacle. Nowadays, many churches have either totally gone to the dark side with rock band praise and worship, or they are trying to move that way. But there is still a fight within the walls isn't there? Art still has to go through so many filters and be okayed by the 'priests', and deemed holy and worthy enough to be played for the masses. Even then, you can have a pastor who really wants to move in some artistic ways, but the church members either don't get it, don't want it, or the absolutely worst: they just don't care.

Shouldn't the church of all places be the outlet for the creative talents God gave us?

From the book "The Heart of the Artist": "Many of us artists are longing for a place to belong, a place where the arts are flourishing, where God is using the arts in a powerful way. A place where artists can experience meaningful fellowship with other Christian artists, where we can learn from each other and cheer each other on. I believe that's part of what God wants our churches to be: a place that harnesses the arts for His glory and nurtures artists."

We were definitely headed there in the 90s. Remember? Churches were trying all sorts of things; drama, dance, painting, video, music genres other than the bland "worship" genre we have now. But then the Chris Tomlin, Hillsong, and Casting Crown types came along and made worship music "popular". Suddenly, and even until now, there we are. 3 to 5 songs (3 up, 2 down please) and a sermon. Oh and maybe you can shake hands too at some point. Beautiful! Now, let's get lunch!

What happened to the arts?? The church didn't kill it. We did. Yes, worshipers heal themselves. I read through a book recently called Church 3.0, which talks about the different churches we've had:

Church 1.0 - the church of and right after the time of Jesus. People just getting out there and spreading the news. Church was anywhere and everywhere...

Church 2.0 - Basically from the time they started making specific buildings with uncomfortable seating and smallish semi-heated hot tubs, to today (ok maybe the seating is a tad more comfortable...)

And then they talk about OUR generation or probably our children building Church 3.0.

I'll let you read the book or check the author's blog (<http://cole-slaw.blogspot.com/2009/09/what-do-you-mean-by-church-30.html>), but maybe this is where we will see the arts become accepted as a more broad part of things. Not just a few music songs to soften the blow...but real art used all around the church for impact, teaching, and effect. Certainly there ARE some churches out there championing the arts. Willow Creek has run a magnificent arts conference for years (although it doesn't look like they are having one this year...?) So, this is a bit open ended.

Would love to get your thoughts and hear your experience with your talent and art use in churches.

Where are you in the never ending struggle between Creatives and the Church??

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