

Faith and Art: A Creative Exploration

Boston AGO Convention

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Outline

A. What is arts ministry?

We want to give our church songs not yet sung, images not yet imagined, words not yet forged into poems, dances not yet rehearsed in our muscles and bones, and all the other dazzling testimonies to the creative power of God at work here within the creation. We long to bring the warmth and disclosure of art to worship; to bring a joy beyond words to the celebration of the sacraments; to incarnate... the pain and sorrow of the reality of crucifixion; to proclaim a promise of resurrection that evokes hope from the whole being, not merely the intellect.¹

Nancy Chinn

1. Arts

a. Fine arts

- Music and Dance
- Architecture/Visual Arts/Environment
- Literary Arts
 1. Literature
 2. Poetry
- Dramatic Arts
 1. Theatre
 2. Film

The purpose of the fine arts is to help us to see, to feel, and to appreciate the world in which we live. They are concerned, not with prosaic facts, but with the poetic joy of discovering beauty wherever it may be found. In the landscape, the sea, the sky, the human soul and many another source, the fine arts discover and picture for those of us who would otherwise be inarticulate, the love, the light, the beauty of God so richly incarnate in Jesus Christ.²

Cynthia Pearl Maus

¹ Nancy Chinn, *Spaces for Spirit: Adorning the Church* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1998), p. 8.

² Cynthia Pearl Maus, *Christ and the Fine Arts* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1938), p. 2.

2. Human Creativity

- Cooking, gardening, woodworking, collecting, crafts
- Living creatively – or artistically, becoming a whole person

Living creatively is much more than artistic activity. It is living all of life in such a manner that we fulfill the potential of our humanity.³

Calvin Johansson

3. Ministry

1. Arts ministry as an independent ministry area and/or a ministry that impacts all other ministry areas

Ministry is not an eight-to-five job but primarily a way of life, which is for others to see and understand so that liberation can become a possibility.⁴

Henri Nouwen

4. Definition:

Arts ministry is an attempt to help human beings incorporate beauty into their individual and corporate lives in an appropriate fashion. It fosters the creative and artistic dimension of the life of God's people, empowering them to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as they manifest the full meaning of their creation in the image of God (the Imago Dei).

B. Who is engaged in arts ministry?

1. Laypeople
2. Artists
3. Churches
4. Sacred arts organizations

³ Calvin M. Johansson, *Music and Ministry: A Biblical Counterpoint* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984), p. 23.

⁴ Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (New York: Doubleday, 1978), p. xxiii.

5. Arts institutions

C. When and where does arts ministry occur?

1. In the church vs. in the world
2. Worship vs. extra-liturgical

D. How does arts ministry impact our lives?

1. Arts as a means of fostering a whole life
 - a. Left *and* right brain
 - b. Reason *and* Intuition
 - c. Mind *and* Emotion
 - d. Spirit *and* Body
2. Arts as a means of fostering understanding

There are ideas, insights and experiences which only sound can communicate, others only communicated by movement, others which only color and line can capture. This is why the arts offer insight into God, each other, and ourselves which can be offered in no other way.⁵

Judith Rock

3. Arts as part of the process of *discipleship* - rehabilitating our relationship to ourselves, our neighbors, our world, and God
4. Arts as a means of fostering spirituality
 - a. Arts as a school for human intuition

The influence of music and art on spirituality is becoming increasingly apparent. Church members, recognizing the spiritual implications of the arts, are overwhelmingly interested in them.⁶

Robert Wuthnow

5. Arts as a means of fostering social justice: re-imagining - allowing us to act on the basis of a new vision of the world around us
6. Arts as a means of fostering community
 - a. Crossing generational, cultural, denominational, theological, and disciplinary barriers

⁵ Judith Rock, quoted in Nena Bryans, *Full Circle: A Proposal to the Church for an Arts Ministry* (San Carlos, CA, Schuyler Institute for Worship and the Arts, 1988), p. 39.

⁶ Robert Wuthnow, *All in Sync: How Music and Art Are Revitalizing American Religion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), p. 134.

7. Arts as integral to liturgy
 - a. Ritual moments that enable us to experience transcendence

E. Case Studies

1. Cathedral Arts Project
2. Artist-in-Residence
3. Gardening
4. Fabric Art
5. Labyrinth
6. Concerts with a Cause
8. Art show/purchase pieces

F. Activities

1. Taizé dances
2. Art as *Midrash*: Ps. 42: 1-3, 11 - *Here* by Jennifer Armstrong

G. How does arts ministry happen?

1. Facilitator
 - a. Identifying gifts/interests: Questionnaire
 - b. Assembling
2. The Arts Committee
 - a. Functions
 1. Study
 2. Naming
 3. Focal point for programming
 4. Arts minister
3. Decisions
 - a. Culture of high art and/or popular culture
 - b. Fine arts and/or human creativity
 - c. Religious and/or simply artistic

H. Concluding Thoughts

The world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. It is beauty, like truth, which brings joy to the heart of [people] and is that precious fruit which resists the wear and tear of time.... Remember that you are the guardians of beauty in the world.⁷

Paul VI

⁷ Paul VI, Second Vatican Council II, Closing Speeches and Messages (<http://www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/p6closin.htm>, accessed 6/13/2014).

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Arts Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to provide a brief glimpse of the artistic tastes, background, and interests of the congregation.

Name _____ Phone _____

Email: _____

Age Group: Adult __, High School __, Junior High __

Visual Arts

1. Do you create visual art yourself? If so, please check the appropriate categories: (a) painting __ (b) sculpture __ (c) pottery __ (d) photography __ (e) fabric arts: quilting __, needlepoint __, embroidery __, knitting __, other fabric arts _____ (f) woodworking __ (g) jewelry making __ (h) stained glass __, other visual art forms (specify):
2. Have you studied how to produce any of these visual art forms? Yes __, No __
 - a. If so, was it in: college __ community __ high school __
3. Have you ever had an art history or appreciation course? Yes _ No _
 - a. If so, was it in: college __, community __, high school __
4. Do you visit art museums: regularly __ on occasion __ never __

Literary and Dramatic Arts

1. Have you ever participated in a play? Yes __ No __
 - a. If so, was it in: college __ community __ high school __ church __
 - b. If so, in what capacity: act __, costumes __, set __, lighting __, directing __, other:
2. Have you ever engaged in creative writing? Yes __ No __
 - If so, was it: poetry __ plays __ short stories __ keeping a journal __, other:
3. Do you attend plays: regularly __ on occasion __ never __
4. Do you read: poetry __ novels __ science fiction __, non-fiction __ magazines __ other:

5. Do you watch movies: regularly___, on occasion ____, never ____
6. What type of movies do you most enjoy seeing:
 art films___ comedy___ drama_____ action_____ horror_____
 sci-fi_____, other:

Music and Dance

1. Have you ever learned to play a musical instrument? Yes__ No __
 a. What instrument did you learn to play_____
 b. What instrument do you currently play?_____
2. Have you ever sung in a choir? Yes__ No__
 a. If so, what kind of choir? Church___ Community___
 College___ High School___ Elementary School___
 b. Have you ever studied voice? Yes__ No__
3. During a worship service, can you sing an unfamiliar hymn correctly on the first or second verse simply by listening and reading the musical notation of the hymn? Yes__ No__
4. What style(s) of music do you prefer to listen to when you are at home or in the car? Please check only the styles which you listen to frequently: Rock___ Folk___ Classical___ Country___ Pop___ Jazz___ Other (please specify):
5. Do you attend concerts: regularly___ on occasion___ never___
6. Have you ever taken a music appreciation, music history, or music theory course? Yes__ No__
 a. If so, was it in: college___ community___ high school___
7. How often do you dance: regularly___ on occasion___ never___
8. Have you ever studied dance? Yes__ No__
9. Do you attend dance recitals: regularly__ on occasion__ never___

Arts Ministry

1. I might be interested in the following possible ministries: film/discussion series __, concert series___, visual art show___, poetry ministry __, drama ministry___, dance ministry___, bell choir___, adult choir___, youth choir___, arts committee__

Exploring Life At The Intersection Of Faith And Creativity [Gary A. Molander] on Amazon.com. *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Pursuing Christ. CREATING ART. is written for people who are living in the intersection of the Christian faith.Â But I was never a Senior/Preaching Pastor - I was a Creative Arts Pastor. As a result, for years and years, I lived in the constant tension of faith and creativity. And that's where this book is written from, and where it's heading toward. If you're looking for answers and formulas, then this book probably isn't a good choice for you. Faith Art Community Exploration. Sunday, November 22, 2009. Score One for the Pope. Check out this story about the Pope encouraging artists in their creative efforts. He touches on some good points about how beauty can be a thing that serves as a signpost to the transcendent. I love the fact that this event was multi-disciplinary in reaching out to artists that create in a variety of mediums (music, visual, performing) and even reached outside Catholicism to include those of other faiths. Good stuff. posted by notsilent1 at 6:58 PM | 0 comments.