

February 1, 2006

TriBakery Group: Christians & Kitsch #4

Discussion compiled by Kirk Irwin

Scripture:

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.”

Matthew 23:27

“And He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.’”

Mark 16:15

“For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.”

Romans 8:22-23

Quote:

“There is one more song that has perhaps lingered the longest in the hearts of visual artists in the Protestant community and lately it has again become popular. ‘Let’s get art back into the church!’ is a strange arrangement of synthesizers, cheerleaders and gospel choirs and many, having rehearsed this ‘comeback’ number for so long, think it should be the theme song of artists of faith. Not all of us agree.”

Betty Spackman, p 11, [A Profound Weakness: Christians & Kitsch](#)

Question: Do you agree with the chorus? “Let’s get art back into the church!” Why or why not?

Quote:

“Though the Reformation left its walls bare, we are not convinced that the church is an art gallery. The sacralization of art is just as problematic as the secularization of faith, though there are several reasons for this desire to get art into Protestant churches. One is that it would confirm that the Christian community is finally committed to accepting the artist as a part of the Body of Christ. For some who have been hurt by rejection this would certainly be a step towards healing, but I don’t believe that that is a good enough reason on its own. The time for licking our wounds is over. We need to learn how to assess the value of our own work and not depend on the approval of others. Affirmation will come from God if we are being who He made us to be and doing what He made us to do. We should be doing our work and not caring so much about recognition and acceptance – from inside or outside the church.”

Betty Spackman, p 11, [A Profound Weakness: Christians & Kitsch](#)

Question: Is Betty right? Can we go forward even without the approval and acceptance of the church – especially since God has chosen to work through His church? Defend your thoughts.

Quote:

“Another reason to bring art (back) into churches is simply to help to beautify often barren and sometimes even ugly buildings (especially in North America). In itself this is not a bad goal, as long as Protestants also reconsider their criticism of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches for their use of images. The question is: Will the worship, prayer and community life in these more decorated aesthetically pleasing buildings be any different after their facelift? I believe that if the heart of the community is already on fire with the love of Jesus, a facelift can only be an added joy; but a corpse is still a corpse no matter how much make-up one applies to its cracks and wrinkles.”

Betty Spackman, p 11, [A Profound Weakness: Christians & Kitsch](#)

Questions: What is the relationship between inner and outer beauty? Which is more important?