

TriBakery Group: Christians & Kitsch #9

Compiled by Kirk Irwin

Scripture:

“Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.”

Genesis 1:3

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

II Timothy 3:16

“However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth...”

John 16:13a

“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body.”

James 3:2

Quotes:

“Text is a symbolic system, a collection of visual icons. It is the word separated from the body and stuck on the page. We use it to communicate as a currency, as a kind of bartering system. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn’t...The words do not contain all that we want to say. Something gets lost in the translation between the system of signs and the living being. We never quite succeed in the task of expressing ourselves or explaining our faith, because our languages, including visual languages, are always inadequate.”

Betty Spackman, p46, [A Profound Weakness: Christians and Kitsch](#)

“The world does not need words. It articulates itself in sunlight, leaves, and shadows. The stones on the path are no less real for lying uncatalogued and uncounted. The fluent leaves speak only the dialect of pure being. The kiss is still fully itself though no words were spoken.

And one word transforms it into something less or other—*illicit, chaste, perfunctory, conjugal, covert.* Even calling it a *kiss* betrays the fluster of hands glancing the skin or gripping a shoulder, the slow arching of neck or knee, the silent touching of tongues.

Yet the stones remain less real to those who cannot name them, or read the mute syllables graven in silica. To see a red stone is less than seeing it as jasper—metamorphic quartz, cousin to the flint the Kiowa carved as arrowheads. To name is to know and remember.

The sunlight needs no praise piercing the rainclouds, painting the rocks and leaves with light, then dissolving each lucent droplet back into the clouds that engendered it. The daylight needs no praise, and so we praise it always—greater than ourselves and all the airy words we summon.”

Dana Gioia, “Words” a poem from [Interrogations At Noon](#)

Questions: What are the advantages of using “text” to communicate? The disadvantages? What are the advantages of using “visuals” to communicate? The disadvantages? How does this affect the way we view the Scriptures (a text)? Share a time when a visual helped you understand something that before you had only known through text. Share a time when a text expanded your understanding of something you had only known visually. As artists how do we navigate the two cultures of “text” and “visuals”. Now think about some of your major points of discussion...how would you explain them to a non-artist? How would you get a non-artist to better understand visual communication?