

The foundation of the American arts is God's law

Our Second President John Adams once wrote to his wife Abigail about the progression he hoped to see in our land from one generation to the next. He wrote:

“The science of government it is my duty to study, more than all other sciences; the arts of legislation and administration and negotiation ought to take the place of, indeed exclude, in a manner, all other arts. I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy. Our sons ought to study mathematics and philosophy, geography, natural history and naval architecture, navigation, commerce and agriculture in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.”

He saw that if a country could establish true liberty rooted and founded upon the “Laws of Nature and Nature's God” then the next generation could build upon that liberty and advance in what might be called the practical arts of mathematics, commerce and agriculture. In advancing that realm of life he knew that following God's laws they would enjoy a new level of prosperity which would build an economic powerhouse that freed their own children to study and enjoy what we often call the fine arts “painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain.” So he envisioned a three tiered cake, the bottom layer which is liberty under God's Law, the next layer economic prosperity established through the practical arts in obedience to God's Laws and finally the top layer of the fine arts as a beautiful expression of God's Law.

Consider his three tiered cake for a moment. What happens if the bottom layer becomes corrupted and debauched? Does it have any effect on the two layers resting upon it? Does a rejection

of “Laws of Nature and Nature’s God” in the political realm have any impact upon the economy, on the practical arts; and does it have any impact upon the finer arts as well? I think it clearly does and we see the evidence around us everywhere.

The political class as a whole has long ago abandoned “the Laws of Nature and Nature’s God” and the impact on the economy is palpable. Just consider what was done more than 100 years ago by Woodrow Wilson. With a stroke of the pen he created the Federal Reserve in direct violation of the eighth commandment. As we have said before, it is the biggest institutionalized gang of thieves the world has ever known. They have robbed the richest nation in the world for more than 100 years – grand theft on a galactic scale. They have effectively ruined the world’s most powerful economy.

So corruption on the first layer has a direct and devastating impact on the second layer. And we could cite multiple hundreds of other examples that demonstrate this as well.

And what of the impact on the third layer: painting, poetry, music, architecture, statuary, tapestry and porcelain? I think the corruption on the political layer has an equally devastating impact on the layer of the finer arts.

If you go to the typical art museum today you’ll find some of the old masters and also modern artist. Just put side by side for example a Rembrandt with an Andy Warhol. There is no comparison, it is as if they lived in two different universes. The first reflects years of a Christian belief system influencing every corner of a culture and the later the post modern meaningless despair. What an artist believes comes out through his brush strokes, his sculpting chisel or his own words and actions on stage. The fine arts are simply an expression of a philosophy of life. One Christian artist writes,

“All of mankind craves and senses the innate potential for

meaning that God has built into all of creation. Love, truth, beauty, and purpose all reflect various aspects of meaning. Man, however, wants his meaning on his own terms with no reciprocal responsibility to any other agent. In other words, man wants to be his own god. Therefore, scripture teaches that God allows man to foolishly rationalize that life just doesn't make sense and can't possibly have ultimate meaning.

Much art that is made reflects these sentiments. The hopelessness, despair, and anger that ultimately follows a denial of God comes screaming through the innate power of aesthetic expression. And, because of that aesthetic, expressive power, often more is communicated than by mere words alone.”[1]

We see in much of the modern art, expressions of the rejection of the Creator God and His Holy Word.

And the reverse is also true, as John Adams envisioned. If the order of society can be established based upon God's Holy Word there will be liberty in economic life that will result in a prosperity which allows for artistic expressions of many kinds to flourish which reflect the order and beauty of the Creator. But when the Creator Himself is rejected along with His Holy Word, then chaos and meaninglessness abound.

Now the realm of the finer arts is often an area that the average Christian doesn't think God's Word speaks directly to; but that is an error. This morning we will discover one example where God speaks directly to this field as well as giving us an understanding of the over arching principles of artistic expression. Let's explore together the calling of Bezaleel in Exodus 31.

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