

The Visual Arts and Envisioning Hope

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Preacher: Bailey Carrick

[0 : 0 0] We are very blessed today to have a fresh to learners speaker, Bailey Carrick. Has anyone ever met? Who knows Bailey?

Oh, there you go. You're amongst friends. For those of you who don't know Bailey, I'll tell you a little bit about her. She's in the MDiv program at Regent.

And she's also working with Artizo to get ministry experience because her end goal is to do some kind of ministry.

And I'm always delighted when someone wants to speak in the area of the arts. So she's speaking on the visual arts and envisioning hope. Her background is in the arts.

She studied community arts as an undergraduate degree. So she's been here for four years and we're hopefully blessed to have her for at least another couple of years.

[0 : 5 7] So, yes. So if you're fascinated like I am with the concept of community art, you can talk with her afterwards. But I just want to ask you to join me in thanking her so much for being with us today.

Thank you. So as you heard, I am a Regent student.

But I have to admit, I've actually made it through most of my Regent degree by looking at picture books. And the Bible, of course. But I'm afraid I'd probably be more dedicated to my daily devotions if it also had pictures.

So I'm pretty guilty of judging books by their covers too much. But in all seriousness, I'm delighted to have this chance to finally share about all the works that I've had the chance to spend some time with over my time at Regent.

Although I wasn't able to be here last week, I listened to it online because I wanted to hear Antje's share. And she spoke so powerfully about pilgrimage. So I feel that I should just mention that many of these works that I'm going to share today, I actually got to visit in person.

[2 : 1 1] And that's probably why I'm sharing them with you now. And I love that story that she shared of her friend who was standing before a fresco of Jesus with his hand on a cold stone.

And how he said that he, in that moment, he knew that it was for him. Because it shows the way that God uses art and physical objects to reveal himself and his work and make himself present to us.

And throughout church history, art was used to mediate divine presence to a worshiper as they prayed in front of it. It was able to provide a space for the intersection of heaven and earth.

And I think this is why art is so important to hope. Because hope is not just knowing facts about God's coming kingdom. It's actually experiencing it, touching it, and tasting, and seeing that the Lord is good.

I read a book for one of my courses called God in the Gallery, which probably could have a more interesting cover for an art book. But it gives a really good explanation for the place that art has in the Protestant church.

[3 : 25] The Reformation was a turning point for art. In Protestant worship, it became mostly a teaching device instead of an aid to prayer. It was valuable so long as it came with the preached word and a clear explanation.

So it could teach truth about God, but it no longer mediated his presence to worshipers. The problem, though, is that Christian truth is not all about acquiring knowledge about God.

Truth is knowing him in person, in the person of Jesus. And there is a danger to the loss of the mediating role of art as well. Because art still continues to play this role in our lives.

And instead of art guided by the church that promises God's presence and coming kingdom to us, our churches have slowly been filled with art and visuals that rely more on the conventions of our surrounding culture rather than the tradition of the church.

I just went to the IPAT, or arts presentation at Regent, of a friend of mine, Steph Martins, who's a graphic designer, and she was talking about this.

[4 : 38] She shared the way that secular visual culture of film and advertising have made their way into the visuals that the Protestant church uses. And she demonstrated how this culture has cheapened visual worship.

And even at times promises false hopes that clearly conflict with our Christian beliefs. I think if all of us look closely enough at our own lives, we could find ways that we've been shaped and influenced by our surrounding visual culture.

And my own experience has convinced me that the church has a responsibility to begin to recover responsible art in worship as a means of encounter with God in order that we may see true hope.

So today what I want to do is show you a lot of pictures. I want to show you four different ways, if we have time, of that God's presence may be mediated through art.

Because this happens in a lot of different ways. And the four that I want to focus on are memory, experience, healing, and immersion. I'll do this by giving one example of pre-Reformation art, and then a contemporary example that serves each of these purposes.

[5 : 54] And there will be a variety of forms and eras and cultures represented to give us a wide perspective. And I just want to tell you that some will probably be more familiar and comfortable than others, but I encourage you to take a step back and look at them uncritically today.

So the first piece that I want to share with you is the Beatus Apocalypse. This piece is a way that God mediates his presence to us through memory.

So in a way we internalize the gospel story so that we can participate in it. And this image is from a commentary that was written by Beatus of Lleibana, who's from Spain in the late 700s.

And it's a commentary on the book of Revelation. It was illustrated between the 10th and 13th centuries, and 24 illustrated copies of this commentary survive.

And they all have the same set of images, with some added or developed over time. The way that this book is structured is that it divides the book of Revelation into 68 short sections of text, which are each followed by an illustration, and then followed by commentary, a commentary mostly from church fathers, and primarily from Tychonius.

[7 : 23] So the way that monks would read this text is that they would read the scripture, absorb the image, and then read the commentary. And in this way they could memorize the entire narrative of Revelation through visuals.

The images actually just translate the text into picture form. So they follow the narrative very closely, and literally as possible. So the text is actually the basis for the content, and not the commentary or other interpretations.

So for example, when the text says that there's a dragon and a beast, it shows a dragon and a beast instead of a world leader, or some other interpretation that might be put to the text.

Now I want us to imagine that we are medieval worshippers. Don't worry, I won't make you close your eyes, because I want you to look at the picture, actually. So just imagine that you walk into a church that's entirely decorated in the same style of Romanesque art as these images.

The first thing you notice is brilliant colors. One art historian describes stepping into a church like this, ablaze with brilliant colors, its capitals alive with a writhing bestiary, its floors a carpet of brightly colored tiles.

[8 : 44] Look at the images in this book. The colors seem to burn on the page. Another writer says they are painted in a burning, hierologically bright color. And I'm not exactly sure what hierologically is.

I think he probably made up that word just for this. But the colors, you can see, play off each other, and they're painted in these stripes and sort of burning bands in the background.

And they fuse optically to create unnameable subtle tones. So the more that you look, you start to see colors that aren't even the ones painted on the page. Your mind begins to see new colors.

And the picture almost begins to lift off the page. And this is what they're designed to do. They're designed to lift themselves off the page and burn themselves into your mind, sort of like a brand or like the stigmata on the body.

They're made to make an impression on your mind. One medieval art critic says, Our cognition arises from our senses through which we move from the particular to the universal, from the visible to the invisible.

[10 : 00] For whenever we see the passion of Christ or the saints, the vision causes the heart to tremble, the soul is wounded, the mind is touched, and the spirit feels compassion and configures in itself the whole passion of Christ and the saints.

Looking at these images, which have Christ and the Lamb or the suffering of the saints, it actually wounds the soul. the images imprint themselves in a person's mind and memory in a way that transforms them to become more like Christ.

And as our minds are transformed, we begin to see in a different way. Augustine wrote about three kinds of seeing. Physical vision, which is what you see on the page.

Inner vision, when you visualize what's on the page in your mind. an intellectual vision in which you contemplate the spiritual. As you train your eyes to see what's on the page, you can begin to see it in your mind and then you can begin to see beyond the physical to the spiritual nature of things.

An example of this is that medieval mystics often wrote about visions. One of the mystics, Gertrude, told about a vision she had while looking at a picture in an illustrated book much like this one.

[11 : 24] As she looked at the image of the crucifix in her prayer book, she saw out of the wound in the side a ray of sunlight with a sharp point like an arrow that beamed out.

In that moment, Christ explained to Gertrude that he makes use of visible things in order to express or explain that which is unfathomable to the human senses.

Senses transform us, body and mind, either to see God more clearly or to corrupt our vision. That's why we have to be careful about which images we absorb.

You can see here that Satan's face is scratched off by worshippers who didn't want any chance of absorbing evil. They physically scratched off his face so that they could practice with their body what they would then be able to do more fully in their mind and spirit and resist the temptations of evil.

So let's look again at this book. Images like this or like this one are easy to absorb at first glance because they're very simple they have flat colors and even if you close your eyes you can still probably picture them in your mind.

[12 : 39] So as you look through this book over and over you begin to store up these images in your brain and medieval worshippers had a whole library stored up of images in their minds.

Each image is a symbol so when you look at it it represents not only the whole text that it's depicting but it also has many layers of meaning. So for example in this picture of the Whore of Babylon Babylon was a symbol of life consumed by sin in the guise of luxury the Whore was a symbol of iniquity and the kings of the earth were symbols of carnal pleasures.

Another example might be a picture the one of the cup of wrath being poured out. In that one a fallen star represents the body of many who fall by sinning an abyss represents the depths of the human heart and the key represents the dominion exercised over the heart by the devil.

So you have this meaning in the text and then this underlying meaning of what it means for your own life. And since you have all these pictures these simple pictures memorized you can kind of take them out in your mind any time of the day and look at them and compare them with each other and see how they interact with each other and in this way you can memorize the whole gospel and have endless material for contemplation.

So the visual allows you to quickly grasp the narrative while giving space for a depth of meaning that can be contemplated for a lifetime. When you first open this book you actually encounter 14 pages of genealogies beginning with Adam and they tell the story of the gospel passed from hand to hand throughout time.

[14 : 31] And if you're like me you probably just flip through that part pretty quickly and you come to a map with the heads of the apostles marking the places where they brought the gospel. So it's this picture of the gospel spreading through time and space.

And then finally you come to the actual text of Revelation with these kind of images. And notice how dynamic they are. They show key moments of the drama in each one and they carry the story forward.

But as you look at them you're also carried with it. Medieval worshippers internalized the story because they wanted to participate in it internally. For them the drama of scripture became an interior drama of the soul.

Tyconius who I said earlier contributed quite a bit to the commentary part says that the dynamics of salvation that subtle and mysterious interplay of grace free will and divine foreknowledge are constant across nations times and individuals.

As a process then salvation history is less linear than interior and it is the Bible that stands as the annals of those interior events the inspired record of God's saving acts.

[15 : 45] So memorizing the narrative in this visual form worshippers were able to internalize the gospel story and to participate in it in their own life.

So it brought them this transformation. and just as a modern counterpart I wanted to share with you the Sunday school curriculum that St. John's is actually developing.

It's called God's Big Story and I've been working on images like this one that are very simple they capture the key moment in the text.

So this program goes through two years and it goes through the entire text of scripture with children and they have these images to go with each lesson and they're set up afterwards on this timeline so that they can see them all together and I tried to paint them very brightly colored and memorable so that kids when they look at them they can actually memorize the picture and remember the story and I hope that in this way they don't just communicate historical facts about what happened but that kids actually are transformed and they encounter God through these images Did you do this?

Oh yes I did well yeah I helped I helped with it yeah I'll show a few others this is Annunciation and Jesus appearing after the resurrection and obviously probably parents wouldn't be too happy if kids came back with faces scratched off of their images but I do I really appreciate that this program kids get to actually make art themselves and engage with it so they're not only transforming their minds but also their bodies and their senses by taking part in it so in this way through memory I hope that they can encounter Christ and the second function of art in worship that I want to share with you is experience and the book of Kells is an example of this where we experience God in our daily lives right in the midst of everything that surrounds us the book of

[18:16] Kells was created in Iona when Celtic Christianity was first taking root and it's another illustrated manuscript but as you can see the images are quite a different style and they play a different role here the images don't tell a narrative or story like the Beatus ones instead they're ornamental so ornamentation in the book of Kells actually came out of a Celtic world view for Celtic Christians creation related vertically to God making it possible to access in their present reality the whole page is filled with complex interwoven designs and symbols and every detail has rich meaning so it has to be taken in very slowly and contemplated it's almost like a labyrinth if you've ever walked in one of those where you go through this path very slowly and you pray along the way it's kind of like that but for the eyes it's meant to create a space for meditation and prayer so you're supposed to follow it with your eyes and as you do you come across these little surprise images everywhere like a treasure hunt and these images are pretty packed so I'm just going to focus on this one page which is the Cairo page and it begins the Gospel of John in the beginning was the

Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us so we can see lots of circular patterns here this is this kind of relates back to what I said earlier that creation related vertically to God it's because as you look at these circular designs you're meant to spiral your way up to the divine and the spiral signified a spiritual ascent to God's close presence which for Celtic Christians was above them and not beyond them so it's much different than the linear designs that we just looked at those ones gave a sense of progressing towards God's kingdom but circular designs are meant to spiral us up to him and there are also a lot of interwoven patterns that look kind of like a tapestry which was like a permeable boundary between heaven and earth you could almost peer through the little gaps and see heaven right there behind the veil and creating these designs was actually like a religious experience for the artist he experienced

God in a sort of poetic or musical way while doing it and when we look at it and follow the lines with our own eyes we have a similar spiritual experience so these designs are meant to function as points of access into divine reality in the here and now they don't just represent God's close presence they actually draw us into a real experience of his close presence in the midst of our daily surroundings and as you take a closer look you'll notice that the interwoven patterns it's kind of hard to see here but they're actually animals and they have these super long and skinny bodies that are all woven together you can find in these patterns you find a lot of eagles lions humans and oxen kind of hard to see but these there's a lot of eagles in this section and this is because those were the symbols of the four gospels so especially here you see the eagle because it's the symbol of John and actually this was the first time so many of these had been found in one book so it had never been done before and they had never been interlaced like this before so it was a new development when

Roman and Celtic Christianity came together and actually the most common animal that you find in the book of Cells is a lion but it's so stylized that you don't even recognize it as a lion but you just know that it's a four-legged creature and it actually had more dog-like characteristics and this could be because dogs were actually in Celtic mythology companions and messengers of the gods and archaeologists have found little dog figures especially at worship sites at wells and river mouths and springs because people believed that those spots were openings flowing from the other world and access points to the divine so it was fitting that the lion that represented the gospel should look more like a dog because the gospels themselves look similar to the dog were mediators between heaven and earth they introduce us to the true word who is both God and man so as we wander around this page we come across little surprises like I told you we find several more naturalistic animals you can see here they look much more like their natural selves we see the moths with the chrysalis and you can also find mice and cats and an otter with a salmon in its mouth moths yeah and so together they encompass all of material creation because we have the moths for the aerial sphere we have the salmon and the otter for the aquatic sphere and the mice and cats for the earthly sphere so God makes himself present to all of creation and not only that but each of these animals is actually participating in the eucharist if you can see in this picture the circle these are the cats and the mice and you see the circle here is actually the eucharistic host so the mice are participating in the eucharist and you can see this is the otter with the salmon and the salmon was actually a symbol of Christ because there was this creature in

Celtic mythology that had this otherworldly wisdom so the fish became representative of Christ and the moths with the chrysalis the chrysalis was a picture of Christ's burial and resurrection with like the caterpillar forms a chrysalis and then emerges as a butterfly and so together they all participate in the eucharist actually and I think it's amazing especially with this cats and mice that they're actually holding this in their mouths and they're participating in the sacrament in a special way and during medieval times this was actually a huge dilemma because monasteries had massive rodent problems what do you do when multiplying mice were nibbling at the elements was it acceptable to allow a mouse to seize and eat a consecrated host and thus arguably consume Christ we had a mouse problem at our place a couple years ago and I'll tell you that my landlords would have called the exterminator and actually it looks like some of the monks might have agreed since there's also cats present there but my landlords certainly would not be painting their portraits and they definitely wouldn't put their pictures in the place of honor in this Cairo page of the Bible but one of these monks apparently thought them worthy enough and I don't expect you to go home and lay down the bread and wine but I think it's worth thinking about that these common creatures we think of as pests have a place in this beautiful

[26 : 16] Bible and they get to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist the Celtic monk cannot separate the sacred reality of the Eucharist from its present setting in the material world and what about the salmon and the otter well like I mentioned earlier the salmon was a creature which possessed otherworldly knowledge and wisdom in Celtic tradition but for the Celtic reader they would also think of a story of Saint Cuthbert who is one of the saints of the Northumbrian church in Celtic tradition it was recorded by Bede in his account the life and miracles of Saint Cuthbert I'll tell it to you now every night Cuthbert would go out to pray and one night one of the brothers followed Cuthbert in the dark all the way to the beach he watched as Cuthbert waded into the water immersing himself all the way up to his neck he prayed his voice rising and falling with the rhythm of the waves he stayed that way almost all night but as morning drew near he emerged from the waves and came out on the beach he kneeled and continued to pray and then while he was praying as Bede says it two quadrupeds called otters came up from the sea and lying down before him on the sand they breathed upon his feet and wiped them with their hair after which having received his blessing they returned to their native element Bede associated this account with the account of the transfiguration a moment of God's revealed glory it shows Cuthbert's closeness with creation but also with the divine it's like a picture of Eden harmony this moment of heavenly paradise right here on earth where God and humans and creation are all so close to each other and it's a picture of hope not just for some distant future but for the very world around us so the book of

Kells forms hope by connecting us and our surrounding world to the divine as we move visually through the ornamentation and in this way it's able to help us experience the divine a modern example of this that I wanted to show is the work of a friend of mine Steph Martens in her IPAT she actually based some of her work on images from the book of Kells and it's interesting because she's a graphic designer and our world is so filled with graphic design we have it everywhere websites posters every printed material so it's just common for us and we barely give it a glance but Steph Martens has taken that medium and infused it with this theological meaning so you have the the first it grabs your attention like graphic design does but then it draws you deeper and deeper so that you have to spend time with it and think about what is the actual theological meaning here and in this way it creates an unexpected space for meditation right in the the middle of our visual culture and it's able to facilitate for us an experience of the divine right in our common surrounding culture so I want to move on to a piece that will probably be a lot less comfortable to us

Protestants in the way that it was used and this is the Isenheim altarpiece because this was used for healing healing and it connects us to God's healing presence and through the suffering of the saints in Christ and in this way it brings meaning and hope the Isenheim altarpiece was created by Matthias Grunewald who was commissioned to paint it for a hospital built by the brothers of Saint Anthony in Isenheim and it was painted between 1512 and 16 it's a triptych which means it that these these parts are panels that open up and reveal an inner image which then open up to reveal even a third image you call it a cryptic you said?

Triptych? Triptych. Triptych. Yeah. And so this is the normal view where it's closed and this would be on normal days but on special days and it has the the crucifixion and then I believe it's Saint Sebastian and or no Saint Sebastian and Saint Anthony which are the patron saints of the plague and skin diseases.

And on the inner so the second view you see the annunciation and the rejoicing in heaven over Christ's birth.

[31 : 05] You see the nativity and then you see the resurrected Christ. And so there are these pictures of Christ's birth and new life. And then the third panel and this would be opened on certain feast days.

And then the third panel would be opened on very special feast days and you see that it's actually 3D and it's this golden image and it has Saint Anthony in the middle and then another depiction of Saint Anthony fighting the demons in the wilderness.

And because it wasn't always open to all of these images it made the revelation very dramatic and anticipated and has this incredible rich interior so it's this it creates the sense of anticipation.

From the 11th century onwards a disease broke out across Europe caused by consuming rye grain infected with fungus although people didn't know it at the time.

They thought it was a plague and this disease became known as Saint Anthony's fire because it began with a burning sensation in the hands and feet that eventually turned to gangrene and withered and finally had to be amputated.

[32 : 24] This disease attacked the central nervous system and once it was contracted it was progressive and incurable. And it had horrible symptoms skin infection agonizing intestinal pain hallucinations with muscle spasms and violent contortions of the body.

People who got the disease would pray to Saint Anthony for help because he was the patron saint of skin disease. And the brothers of Saint Anthony decided to respond to the suffering they saw by setting up hospitals dedicated to the care for patients of the disease.

One of the ones they set up was at Isenheim and this is the one this is this altar piece. And the man who commissioned it I can't actually pronounce his name because it's French and I never studied it.

But it looks like guy G-U-I in English so that's what I'm going to call him. Anyway, guy commissioned the piece as part of a treatment program.

He believed that it was miracle performing so patients would pray in front of it before receiving medical treatment and he believed that this would open them up to the possibility of a miracle.

[33 : 38] One author put it this way. Guy believed that sufferers should be taken to the altarpiece and encouraged to examine Grunewald's image, thereby opening their mind to the possibility of participating in a miracle.

Only then were they deemed receptive enough to benefit from medical treatment. So the polyptych played a crucial role in the attempt to exert a forceful psychological influence over the minds of the afflicted.

And if they responded to its power, their bodies might subsequently revive as well. I would say though that this wasn't a psychological influence so much as spiritual openness to God and identification with Christ's death and resurrection that led to healing.

But however we understand it, one look at the darkness of this image will tell us that it's certain, that even if it didn't exclude the possibility of a miraculous healing, it certainly didn't promise some easy sudden cure.

Instead, it gives suffering people reassurance, empathy and hope in the reality of suffering. Actually, Grunewald probably painted it right in the hospital ward, in among the patients, from live observation.

[34 : 55] But instead of painting them, he paints Christ, with withered and twisted limbs, pock-marked infected skin, writhing in agony like the patients themselves.

On the inmost panel, he paints St. Anthony, battling against horrifying demons in the wilderness, stretched limb from limb in prayer.

Maybe these demons would have looked familiar to patients battling with hallucinations. Certainly, this demon on the lower left would.

It represents an embodiment of the disease itself. And I've looked at photos of the symptoms which I will spare you from, but I must say that this is an extremely accurate portrayal of the illness at its most advanced.

If you look at the suffering face here, this is the only figure in this panel that doesn't engage with tormenting the saint. It's also suffering, but it's not alone.

[35 : 58] And I think that is the power of this piece, that no one suffers alone. Patients would see their suffering mirrored in Christ and the saints, and they would be able to identify with him.

They could actually find meaning in their suffering and death as they did it alongside Christ. Not only that, but as I said, they would pray in a group in front of the altarpiece before treatment.

So this was like collective prayer that united them on a spiritual level. It was an act that had a sacramental nature, similar to communion, because it joined them in that moment to Christ and the whole body in suffering and hope.

And since it had that sacramental quality, it promised God's healing presence with them. In this way, they could participate in the healing process by entering into communion with Christ and the saints and fellow victims in suffering.

This piece has actually played an important role in my own healing journey. I saw it in Colmar, France on a family trip. And as dark as it may look to some of us, I found great comfort in it at the time.

[37 : 10] I myself was struggling with a mental illness, and I found standing in front of it to be an incredibly moving experience. As I looked at the huge black panels so dark and Christ's body stretched and withered on the cross, I saw the intense suffering of Christ there, and I saw my own suffering held in his.

It comforted me deeply and powerfully. I had felt so guilty for my own dark thoughts, but in that moment I felt that Christ saw me. He saw my suffering and he loved me.

He suffered with me and for me. And I felt that I was not alone, but that he carried me with him. I was really amazed too when I came to Regent, and there it was. At the top of the stairs, a copy of this piece was hanging there.

And even thousands of miles away, he is still with me. So I know that this feels much less comfortable to us Protestants to pray before a devotional object believed to have miraculous healing powers.

But let me give you a modern example of this very same idea that may help us to relate better. The Kais Kama altarpiece is a modern piece which mediates God's healing presence to people in South Africa.

[38 : 32] It's based on the Isenheim Altarpiece. As you can see, it has the same form, and it also has a similar content.

This piece was created as part of a healing program that was begun by Carol Hoffmeyer, who is a nun, a medical doctor, and an artist.

And she facilitated the project in a group of 130 women and men as part of a health program in Hamburg, South Africa. The community she worked with was suffering from AIDS.

Part of AIDS is that it doesn't only cause physical illness, but it also causes a lot of social damage as well. Families are torn apart, and healthy people and sick people are divided.

And it also has many social causes. The program that Hoffmeyer began was meant to address the social causes of disease and focus on primary health care.

[39 : 32] And through health care, medications, and prevention, it saved many lives. The Altarpiece was part of this holistic program to improve the health in the community. She facilitated this art project so that people could envision what hope might look like in their present reality.

It was a way to envision a path forward toward healing in the community. The participants learned traditional craftsmanship of beadwork and embroidery, and it was communally constructed so people worked side by side on the altarpiece.

It brought meaning to lives torn apart by disease. It also provided paid work for people and healed social tensions in families. And it gave meaning to people's sufferings.

Hoffmeyer recognized that getting better meant that social and relational symptoms of disease must also be cured. So you can see that this is done in the same triptych form and basic content as the Isenheim altarpiece, but in a South African style with imagery from Hamburg.

Instead of saints, it pictures wise women and local healers on the edges. And a widow mourning her husband's death is placed in the crucifixion panel.

[40 : 49] Local orphans, which you see here. Prophets and grandmothers fill other panels, symbolizing the unification of their stories with Christians throughout history and Christ himself.

So the Kaiskamma altarpiece not only connects patients and families to the story of the gospel, but it joins the suffering of the Hamburg community to the sufferings of the patients in the Antonite monastery.

Fellow followers of Christ in a time of anguish. And here you can see it also in the inner panels, it shows a vision of hope.

And you see the globe on the far left, right, left, whatever it is for you. So it's this picture of global hope.

And Hoffmeyer explains that this altarpiece makes people see that their stories count, that they're valuable. This in turn causes others to see patients with dignity, causing people to connect.

[41 : 57] And the many levels of identification with the larger narratives give the patients suffering richness and depth, and a sense of community and belonging. So it validates and gives meaning to their present sufferings.

The relationship and social unity that the Kaiskamma altarpiece brought to Hamburg also generated hope. One of the participants said, The altarpiece is something that has broken the barriers between the infected and the affected people.

It has brought healing within our community. It has brought hope within our community. This participant describes hope and healing as breaking the barriers between people.

This innermost panel of the Kaiskamma altarpiece contains a photograph of grandmothers caring for their orphaned grandchildren. With so many children left orphans, how could the community move forward through pain and brokenness?

This picture provides one solution. Families and the whole community can support one another. The elderly can care for the vulnerable children instead of leaving them to fend for themselves.

[43 : 10] It is a story of hope that's not about airbrushing the difficulties and dangers out of our world picture. It's about imagining possibilities and devising strategies to flourish in spite of them.

So this is a modern example of how God uses art to mediate his healing presence to us. And the final example I want to give is immersion.

The example I have for this is the Scrovegni Chapel, which was painted by Giotto di Bondone during the early Renaissance.

And the chapel, as you can see, is completely covered in frescoes. So when you enter it, you're just surrounded by this heavenly picture with the heavens above and the stories of the gospel lining the edges.

And this is over the entryway or the exit, which is the Last Judgment. And so you're removed from your everyday space and you're set in this sacred space.

[44 : 20] But it's not the separatist sacred space because it has these very earthly qualities to it. There's three layers of images here.

The first layer, which is the topmost layer, shows Joachim and Anna, who are in tradition, Christ's grandparents. And then the second layer is Mary and Christ's life.

And the third layer is the passion. And then below that, there's a layer with virtues. So at this point in time, linear perspective had not even been invented yet.

And usually sacred images were painted with solid gold backgrounds. So this is quite innovative because it uses real or what looks like real space.

It uses these new developments of illusionism. People had a lot of fun with this, actually, where they would enjoy painting images that looked like they were actually 3D on the wall and tricking people into thinking that they were.

[45 : 28] And so there's a lot of spaces like this where it looks like architectural details coming out of the wall, but it's actually all just painting. And there's also images that look like statues, but they're actually paintings.

And so it's this creation of space within a space that kind of exceeds the boundaries of it. And in this way, it makes it a very earthly space instead of this solid heavenly space that we can't relate to, because we can almost go into these images and be a part of them.

And Giotto, he plays with this kind of space throughout because of that. And we see also this new interest in emotion.

So this is the lamentation. And he pictures these figures that with chiaroscuro, which is this kind of shading. So it makes them like pop out of the wall almost.

And you can see like even they're at the very edge here. They're just like in our space almost. And their backs are turned to us, which had never, which was new. People are usually facing outward, which makes it a very different experience of the picture.

[46 : 50] Because now looking at it, you can be one of these people and you can look in at Christ's lamentation and be part of the scene. And these, they have a very human form as well.

They're not these elongated figures like in the past. And you can see, it's hard to see in this, but all the angels above, they have different emotions on their face, but all expressing lamentation.

But there's this variety of emotion is new to art. So it's this very human view of the lamentation and of divine presence.

And there's all this relationship between people depicted as well. And they're interacting with each other in very human ways. And not only that, but it also, in this picture in particular, the landscape itself draws our eyes downward to Christ.

So it's almost this, he's becoming human. You get that sense through this picture. And as you look around the chapel, as you're heading out the door, you see this virtue, which is the last of the virtues before the exit.

[48 : 11] And it's hope. And she's reaching up towards the last judgment, which is the panel on this panel, the last thing you see before you leave the church.

And she's like one of these, the elect, reaching up towards Christ. And so it's this picture, before you enter the world, that you, this is the real world picture.

And to live out in that world, transformed by this world. And so, um, a modern example of this that I saw was the Church of Santa Maria de Los Angeles, which is in Nicaragua.

And I went to a study trip there. And this church, which is going to be a little different for some people, but, um, it sits in the middle of a poor community, surrounded by houses with corrugated tin roofs, dusty roads, and stray dogs.

And after having heard of the suffering of the people in this community, at the hands of foreign powers and their own government, and living with families who are oppressed by authorities, it was like walking into a world, a new world, stepping into this chapel.

[49 : 27] Because it's almost like the dingy cement walls and the metal ceiling are swept away in this vision. And this is the resurrection. It's picturing the resurrection. And, um, all the horrors of the history of this people are swept up into the gospel narrative.

So in this picture, we can see, um, how people imagine the resurrection in their day-to-day life. And there's business here that's thriving.

And there's, during the Nicaraguan Revolution, there was a lot of kidnappings. And so there was a lot of missing children. And we see the mothers here who are mourning. But above them, their children are dancing.

And they're being reunited together in this, and they're dancing together. And, um, Jesus is pictured here as a Nicaraguan revolutionary.

He was this young man. And you can see the same kind of use of space where he's coming out. And he's coming out. You can hardly tell. Like, these are real people and those are the paintings.

[50 : 33] It's just like this mix of people coming out. And there's this foreshortening. And there's this use of perspective. And, um, yeah, it really changes the space.

And, um, plays with three-dimensionality. And, um, in one of the panels, you see, actually, this is a local young hero who, whose name is David Alfonso Velasquez.

And he is pictured as David facing the giant who are actually symbolizing the foreign powers. So, um, he stood up in the face of them, this young boy.

And so they're using this story of their own redemption and seeing it within the gospel narrative. And, um, in this way, it allows them to see their own stories in light of salvation hope.

And identify with Christ in their own sufferings and struggles. And it's also communally created. So the whole community came together to paint this. Um, and it allowed more of their voices to be heard in this articulation of resurrection hope.

[51 : 46] It brings hope for resurrection, not as some distant future, but, uh, into the daily struggles of their own lives. So in this way, by immersing themselves in God's kingdom, it transforms viewers and how they see their life in this world.

So in conclusion, we went through a lot of different functions of visual arts and worship. Memory, like the Beatrice Apocalypse and the GBS program, help us to memorize and internalize the gospel so we can live it in our own lives.

Experience, like in the book of Kells and with Steph Martin's graphic design, mediate God's presence to us in our daily surroundings through the gospels themselves as we meditate and contemplate.

Healing, like the Isenheim altarpiece and the Christ Kama altarpiece, allow us to participate in Christ's suffering and resurrection and identify with others by entering into communal prayer and contemplation.

An immersion, like the Scrovegni Chapel and the Managua Chapel, set us and our world and its history into the grander reality of the story of redemption, which reminds us that God's world is the real world and we can go out in our daily lives living in it.

[53 : 00] And these are just a few options. I'm sure there's many more ways that art can be used to mediate God's presence. But I hope this gives you a sense that there's many ways that it can be used and that I hope that the Protestant church can begin to grasp onto some of those and use in worship.

So... Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.