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Turner's "Imagine: A vision for Christians in the arts" (Book Review)

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Book Reviews



Turner, S. (2017). *Imagine: A vision for Christians in the arts*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press. 184 pp. \$16.00. ISBN 9780830844630

In this revised and expanded edition of the 2001 publication, Steve Turner renews his appeal to artists to impact all areas of culture while remaining faithful to their Christian calling. Turner, a journalist, poet, and rock music critic, states that the book originally grew out of a lecture he gave to musicians in Los Angeles and Nashville. The book is addressed to creative and performing artists who seek to integrate their faith with their work. It will resonate with those who want their creative work to reflect their faith but who are disheartened by a lack of Christian content in the popular arts and by comparatively low standards of some of what is defined as Christian art.

Drawing on his personal experience in literature and music, the author makes points that apply to all the arts and explores the intersection between the arts and Christianity. The vision presented here is based on the premise that Christians should be involved in the mainstream of the arts world and thereby have more of an impact on contemporary culture. The content, while not original or scholarly, reflects the conversation within the art and faith movement about what it means to be a Christian in the arts. The author suggests that a work of art does not have to be overtly religious to convey a Christian viewpoint. People can experience God through music, poetry, and painting as well as through the activities of the church. The book explores why Christians have been deterred from involvement in the arts and why others, like the rock band U2, have successfully integrated a faith-inspired vision in their work.

The book addresses the tensions between sacred and secular art and then looks at what the Bible says about the arts with emphasis on the doctrines of creation, fall, and redemption. It also touches on the spiritual life of the artist and the challenge to remain faithful so that their faith can permeate their vision.

Through these reflections, the author offers a perspective for thinking about the arts in Christian life and for engaging with contemporary culture. This revised edition includes discussion starters, suggestions for further reading, and a selection of short quotations. Undergraduates and others interested in faith integration will especially find this book helpful.

Reviewer

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