

What Are We Conserving?

Truth and the Aesthetics of Scripture

As Christians, our responsibility should be to faithfully communicate meaning consistent with God's reality.

“To what extent is the perception of cross-modal similarities shared across cultures? The answer is *massively*. Of course, the agreement is not total. But then neither is the agreement total within a culture on many *intra*-modal similarities. Yet it is hard to imagine anyone in any culture thinking that a jagged line fits better with tranquility and an undulating line with restlessness.”

—Nicholas Woltersdorff, *Art in Action*, 108

Fittingness



Fittingness

PING

- ◇ light
- ◇ small
- ◇ ice cream
- ◇ pretty girl
- ◇ trumpet sound
- ◇ Mozart's music

PONG

- ◇ heavy
- ◇ large
- ◇ warm pea soup
- ◇ chubby girl
- ◇ cello sound
- ◇ Beethoven's music

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“What fits the action of confession may well be quite unfitting to the action of praise.”

—Nicholas Woltersdorff, *Art in Action*, 116

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“One of these [fallacies] is that art is totally neutral in its viewpoint and that there can be no such thing as Christian art. . . . Since art not only presents experience but also interprets it—since it has ideational content and embodies a world view or ethical outlook—it will always be open to classification as true or false, Christian or humanist or Marxist or what not. In the long run, every artist's work shows a moral and intellectual bias. It is this bias that can be compared to Christian belief.”

—Leland Ryken, *The Liberated Imagination*, 196

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“The point isn't that both form and content matter. The point is more radical than that: in some significant sense we need to eschew the form/content distinction.”

—James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 169

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“Worship wisdom requires that we be attentive to the practical sense of aesthetics forms, lest we end up singing lyrics that confess Jesus is Lord accompanied by a tune that *means* something very different.”

—James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 175