



VISUAL CATECHESIS

Utilizing Pictorial Illustrations to Facilitate Learning and Retention of Protestant Doctrine in the United States

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Visual Catechesis: Utilizing Pictorial Illustrations to Facilitate Learning and Retention of Protestant Doctrine in the United States

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art at Liberty University

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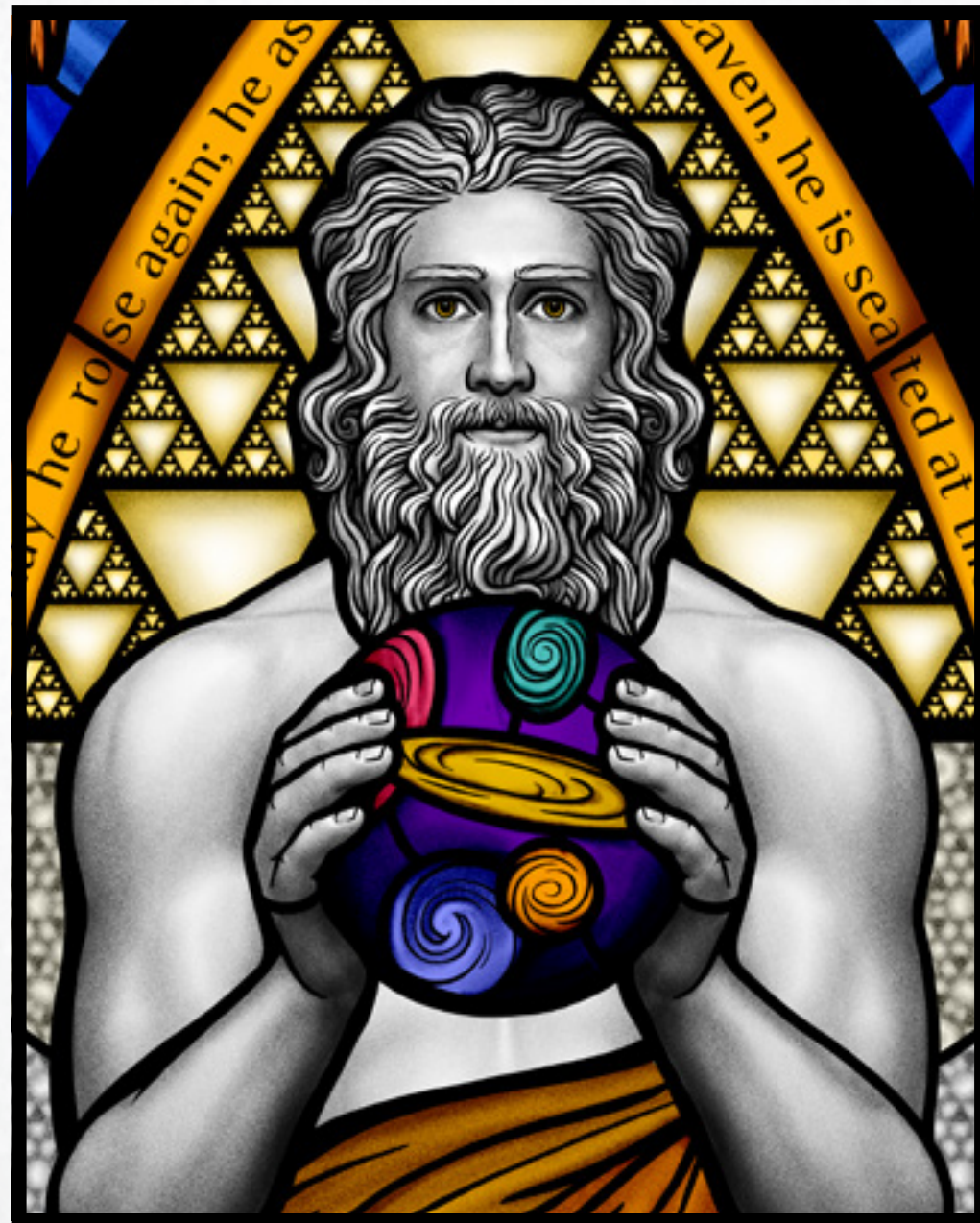


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ABSTRACT

A lack of catechetical instruction within contemporary Protestantism in the United States has resulted in a large number of self-identifying Christians not knowing important tenets of their faith. The modern era also presents a unique dilemma in that North American culture is steeped in visual stimuli due to technology, so that even were catechistic instruction revived, many individuals might balk at a traditional, text-centric process. This thesis explores improving comprehension and retention of orthodox Protestant doctrine in the United States through integrating pictorial illustrations into the classic Christian pedagogical methodology of catechesis. Because of unceasing debates surrounding numerous, nuanced theological stances among different orthodox Christian sects, this study will focus on those elements of the faith that would be, as nearly as possible, universally accepted as comprising “mere’ Christianity” (to use C.S. Lewis’ phraseology, appropriated in turn from Richard Baxter).

A thematic review of relevant literature was combined with a concise case study of artwork from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, visual analyses of several instances of didactic imagery since the Reformation, and an overview of several contemporary efforts within visual catechesis. The goal was first to evaluate doctrinal knowledge of present-day Protestants in the United States; second, once comprehension was determined deficient, to analyze causes; and third, to explore possible solutions from the purview of the visual arts. Upon completion of research, the literature and data decisively lend both scholarly and empirical credence to the original hypothesis: in the 21st

century, many self-proclaimed United States Protestants are either ignorant or misunderstanding of foundational dogma; a major factor thereof is a lack of catechizing; and imagery emphatically enhances nearly all learners’ abilities to perceive and recollect information.

These results suggest that incorporating a prominent display of pedagogical illustrations into modern catechesis would markedly increase desired religious educational outcomes as well as distinctively suit the visual predilections of U.S. culture. Because of the broad array of formats that pictorial content can assume, along with the plethora of environments in which it can be encountered, the visual solutions created for this thesis are designed to appeal to a far-reaching demographic within U.S. Protestantism, as well as being easily adaptable to multiple viewing contexts.



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Hypocrites. How often has that accusation been pronounced in contemporary culture against individuals who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ? More importantly, how often is the statement accurate? From observation within my own spheres of life, I can say without reservation—though certainly with a fair amount of trepidation—the description has been justly deserved quite frequently, through actions and words both ignorant and intentional. Worst of all, I am also acutely aware of the degree to which the epithet could have been correctly applied to *me*. By God’s grace, I believe that in my own life, instances of “claiming to have moral standards or beliefs to which one’s own behavior does not conform” (“hypocrisy”) have been greatly reduced as the years roll by; however, I have not yet “obtained this or am already perfect” (*The Holy Bible*, Phil. 3.12). Many of those times and places where I have blatantly disgraced the Triune God still smolder shamefully in my memory. This sort of defiance to the Person and eternal laws of God, whether in my life or the lives of others, often leaves in its wake human suffering the sum of which would destroy anyone who could fully grasp it, and the state of affairs where such realities becomes eternal and intractable is literally hell itself. Some people already experience a small, horrendous sampling of this torment in their draught of earthly life—but all who engage in rebellious opposition to the character and decrees of God effectively actualize currents from hell’s ocean of misery.

I have described myself to many people as “the least artistic artist that I know personally.” (However, I also have an exceptionally poor memory, so best take that self-assessment with a large grain of salt.) When given leisure time to pursue personal interests and activities, one would rarely find me with pencil in hand sketching compositional ideas or watching Disney+ videos about Pixar’s creative processes (although these events certainly do occur). As that opening paragraph likely communicates, my mind turns towards existential questions and contemplation of ultimate truth (also world football, what we in the U.S. call soccer, but that point is entirely tangential to this thesis. *Viva Barça*.) In short, and in retrospect, I probably should have studied philosophy and theology as an undergraduate...except that for many years before college, and continuing through the present day, a still, small, unceasing Voice has kept a passion alive in my whole being. And that passion is visual art.

I wanted to be a professional artist from an early age; however, the life-path down which God led me was far more winding and unpredictable than I could have imagined. After college, I spent nearly a decade as a rather frustrated “independent fine art professional” (as my tax paperwork labeled me), continually struggling to find viable ways to impart a deeper significance within my studio work while remaining solvent. After marriage, and with the encouragement and help of a loving Wife, I felt God’s call to return to academia and pursue a master’s degree. It was within this postgraduate context that I found direction and fulfilment which had proven so elusive beforehand, as 10 years of practical working experience combined with scholarship in both art and theology-philosophy (hyphenated, as the two are inseparable). I began to have a clearer vision of how God, in His infinite and patient lovingkindness, had been uniquely crafting me for His purposes (if a certain verse from



Ephesians 2 springs to mind here, good: it ought to). The confluence of these purviews also began to pose an increasing number of questions that I deemed to be quite important: one of which became the focus of this thesis. But to introduce that line of inquiry, and to (finally) tie in my grave and disconcerting discussion of hypocrisy and hell, another short narrative is in order.

During my MFA studies, I undertook a rather unexpected practicum at a stained-glass studio in Lynchburg, Virginia. (Unexpected, considering my portfolio at the time consisted primarily of nautical-themed oil paintings and literally no stained-glass work [Fig. 1.1]—I was introduced to the vitreous medium during my second year of graduate school, in a class studying the Arts and Crafts movement). The studio, Lynchburg Stained Glass, creates windows



FIG. 1.1 | St. Peter Paul, *oil painting by the author*

in a variety of styles and sizes almost exclusively for houses of worship—this ancient art form has long been closely associated with Christianity, and the very mention of stained glass might conjure mental images of dark cathedrals, smoking censers, and Gregorian chant sung by hooded monks. I quickly fell in love with the medium.

It just so happened that this Arts and Crafts class and subsequent internship experience followed closely on the heels of a multi-year, personal, in-depth exploration of various philosophical concepts centered around the Christian faith. My journey was facilitated primarily by the podcast of philosopher and Christian apologist William Lane Craig, although recorded lectures by former Asbury University Professor of Philosophy Christopher Bounds; weekly podcasts by theologian Bill Ury; daily readings of John Chrysostom and John Wesley (Figs. 1.2, 1.3); and repeatedly streamed sermons from Methodist Minister Ralph Sigler also played central roles. During this period, the relevance of orthodox Christian doctrine regarding foundational existential questions became increasingly evident to me. Historical, traditional Christianity stood in utter superiority to all other worldviews and truth claims in its ability to provide coherent, reasonable answers to those inescapable inquiries that burn in so many minds and hearts—those unknowns that frequently consternate, and even consume, the human soul.

As I continued to plumb the depths of Christianity's tenets, progressively understanding their absolute essentiality for the function, health, and happiness of humanity, I simultaneously began to see how the flouting of proper dogma—and the way of life incumbent in such statements—has horrifying ramifications. And it is at this point that two-facedness



and hell's gaping maw become manifest. The Bible explicitly lists series of activities that excludes those who practice them from inheriting the Kingdom of God, and because of which God's wrath is coming, such things as sexual immorality, lust, drunkenness, jealousy, and greed (Gal 5.19-21, Col 3.5-10)—and these collections of evils named by the Apostle Paul are distressingly commonplace in the 21st-century United States. The atrocious, infuriating reality is that many of the same individuals who most ardently pursue what could be called “the fruits of the demonic” claim the moniker “Christian.” And again, that hypocritical individual has, many times, been me.

Such was my honest observation, and I was decidedly upset by it: the apparent lack of understanding, and subsequent scarcity of enactment (or downright disobedience), of crucial Christian principles by ostensible adherents must be unequivocally addressed. Therefore, when beginning to formulate a thesis as the culmination of my MFA studies, I quickly concentrated on this issue. The foundational question soon became apparent: how to facilitate the inculcation of Christian doctrine through my sphere of expertise, the visual arts? To narrow the inquiry's scope to a more manageable range, I confined my investigation to that culture with which I am most familiar (U.S. Protestants) and within my media of expertise (two-dimensional, physical artifacts). During my previous forays into Church history and thought, I had come across an historical device for training new adherents to Christianity, called a *catechism*, which had left a favorable impression on my mind as a sound means for religious teaching today. Therefore, I decided to commence my scholarship considering a catechetical model as the framework in which to employ instructional imagery.

PURPOSE AND PROCESS

This thesis explores improving comprehension and retention of orthodox Protestant doctrine in the United States through integrating pictorial illustrations into the classic Christian pedagogical methodology of catechesis. Because of unceasing debates surrounding the numerous, nuanced theological stances among different orthodox Christian sects, this study will focus on those elements of the faith that would be, as nearly as possible, universally accepted as comprising “mere’ Christianity” (to use C.S. Lewis’ phraseology, appropriated in turn from Richard Baxter) (Lewis vii; Keeble 27-31).

To evaluate an efficacious solution, several concerns had to be resolved. First, it was necessary to determine that a problem did indeed exist. Are U.S. Protestants quite as misconceiving as I perceived them to be? Survey results could reveal quantitative data on this front. Next, although I had a favorable opinion of catechesis, my holistic familiarity on the subject was limited. I was unsure of both its prevalence among Protestant churches, either historically or contemporarily, and whether there were already systems of catechizing which have incorporated pictures. A review of relevant scholarly literature was needed. Further, on a slightly more esoteric line (though no less essential considering my demographic), I wondered what potential barriers the consequences of Reformation iconoclasm posed to the assimilation of visual illustrations into 21st century doctrinal instruction. Again, academic research would probably shed light on this matter. Fourth, data and ideas gathered from the fields of science and education could clarify the mode and extent to which imagery increases learning outcomes. Last, a case study of artwork from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder (Fig. 1.4), brief visual



analysis of didactic Protestant images since the Reformation (excluding digital media), and a review of recent attempts at integrating pictures and text within catechesis would guide my own aesthetic approach. By analyzing, assessing, and synthesizing the solutions of Protestant artists both historical and modern, this new artwork could be strongly informed by, and placed firmly within, the tradition of its Protestant antecedents.

RELEVANCE AND SIGNIFICANCE

Although the alarming practical and spiritual repercussions of neglect or disregard for proper Christian dogma have been mentioned, the joyous, life-giving temporal and eternal results of its cherishing and enactment certainly merit stating as well. Theoretically, bolstering recognition, comprehension, and recollection of doctrine, along with an accompanying increase in sustained implementation thereof, would certainly have several effects on U.S. Protestantism. First, heterodoxy—from simple error to outright heresy—could be more clearly and quickly addressed, plausibly resulting in an expansion of flourishing congregations of truly dedicated Believers. Second, during catechesis, initiates to Protestant Christianity would build relationships in the community of believers, an interconnectedness that Scripture commands (Prov. 27.17, 1 Cor. 12.12, Heb. 10.25). Apprehension and a continually deepening exploration of the faith’s tenets in the lives of converts would foster intellectual and spiritual growth throughout life, aiding resistance to the confusion and instability produced by false teachings and aberrant worldviews (Eph 4.14, Jam. 1. 5-8). Last, learning (from a Biblical perspective certainly) begins at home, and robust catechizing in the family unit would strengthen those domestic relationships. Virtues such as compassion, humility, respect, and charity would be stimulated as family members grow in the knowledge, wisdom, and love of the character and Person of the Triune God.



FIG. 1.2 | John Chrysostom, Byzantine mosaic in the Hagia Sophia, c. A.D. 1000 | <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/c/cf/Johnchrysostom.jpg?> Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Ch.Andrew, Public Domain



FIG. 1.3 | Hamilton, William, John Wesley, 1788 | National Portrait Gallery, London | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/89/John_Wesley_by_William_Hamilton.jpg. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Hazbk, Public Domain



FIG. 1.4 | Lucas Cranach the Elder, Martin Luther, Bust to the Left, 1551 | The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York | <https://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/dp/original/DP842187.jpg>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Image by Metropolitan Museum of Art, Public Domain



CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

A lack of catechesis in contemporary Protestantism in the United States has resulted in many self-identifying Christians being ignorant of, or disregarding, important tenets of their faith; the visual arts could facilitate learning within catechetical instruction.

Research Statement

Despite the plethora of Christian churches, organizations, literature, media, and self-help items, ostensible U.S. Protestants frequently believe and act in opposition to clear dogma. Amid these resources, traditional catechesis is notably rare, despite having a strong historical precedent. However, the modern era also presents a unique dilemma in that North American culture is steeped in visual stimuli due to technology, so that even were catechistic instruction revived, numerous individuals might balk at a traditional text-centric process.

Defiance to the Person and eternal laws of God, plainly elucidated in doctrine, leaves in its wake brokenness, suffering, and death—both spiritual and physical. Addressing this disobedience will assist the Fruit of the

Spirit to flourish and the Kingdom of God to advance, both temporally and eternally.

As stated, this thesis will explore improving comprehension and retention of orthodox Protestant doctrine in the United States through integrating pictorial illustrations into the classic Christian pedagogical methodology of catechesis. A thematic review of relevant literature will be combined with a case study of artwork from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, visual analyses of a few instances of didactic imagery since the Reformation, and a brief overview of different contemporary efforts within visual catechesis. This approach will be used first to evaluate doctrinal knowledge of the stated demographic, and second, if knowledge is indeed determined deficient, to analyze causes and to propose a viable remedial aid.

Research Questions

- To what extent do contemporary Protestant laypeople know central doctrine? Are they able to differentiate between orthodox and heretical statements?
- Is catechesis an effective pedagogical method? What have reputable Protestant theologians and scholars (both historical and contemporary) said for or against it?
- What other means of training have churches used (and still use) to educate laypersons?
- To what extent is catechesis actively utilized by present-day Protestant denominations?



- Does iconoclasm affect the incorporation of imagery into Protestant religious instruction?
- Are there precedents for imagery specifically within catechesis?
- Do visual illustrations facilitate and reinforce comprehension and retention in general? How do they accomplish this?
- What aesthetic approach (along with inherent technical aspects) will assist doctrinal learning for a broad age-range within U.S. Protestantism?



FIG. 2.1 | *A fitting allegory for the Protestant Church in the United States?* | Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Blind Leading the Blind* (cropped), distemper on linen canvas, 1568 | Museo di Capodimonte, Naples | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blind_Leading_the_Blind. Accessed 30 Sept. 2021 | Photo by 16 BEKA, Public Domain

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The following literature review begins by surveying quantitative data regarding current Protestant doctrinal knowledge in the United States. The review continues by providing a synopsis of historical and contemporary catechistic belief and practice from Scriptural, early Church, Reformation, and post-Reformation theologians, philosophers, and academics. Protestantism's association with the visual arts will also be examined, with a special emphasis on the beliefs and practices of prominent figures during the Reformation. The review moves on to investigate scholarship in the fields of science and education for both how imagery enhances learning and the extent to which it does so. The literature review concludes by evaluating an aesthetic approach for creating contemporary catechetical artwork by considering historical, philosophical, theological, and socio-demographic insights.

AFFIRMATIONS AND IGNORANCE (U.S. PROTESTANTISM)

Anecdotal evidence—to an even moderately observant third party—would seem to indicate that the 21st-century Protestant Church in the United States is enduring a comprehensive crisis. Or rather, its crisis is comprehensive—many Protestants are either ignorant or misunderstanding of central dogma in the faith they claim to follow. Lest observational indications be doubted, quantitative data from multiple sources corroborates the concept, and the results are bleak.



Data (Secular)

From the self-labeled “religiously confused” Stephen Prothero, Professor of Religion at Boston University, comes the revelation that “born-again Christians do only moderately better than other Americans on surveys of religious literacy”—an unenviable statistic that carries right on through seminary, of all places, “where many ministers-in-the-making are unable to describe the distinguishing marks of the denominations they are training to serve” (5-6). Prothero goes on to cite Gallup poll and other survey statistics where Christians of various ages do only marginally better—or even worse—than other demographic groups (31).

Ryan Burgh, who holds a PhD in Political Science from Southern Illinois University and is a lead contributor to the *Religion in Public* blog, plotted data from both Gallup and the General Social Survey regarding American views on Biblical literacy, with the aggregate showing that over 20% of Americans believe the Bible to be a “book of fables.” Burgh directly associates these statistics with the decline of mainline Protestant churches, which “have traditionally held to the view that the Bible is inspired, but not literal” (“Changing Views”). In a separate article on the blog, Burgh’s associate contributor Paul Djupe, who also holds a PhD in Political Science, cites 2016 survey data from the Cooperative Congressional Election Study where practicing members of the LGBTQ community claim to belong to Protestant Christianity; this comprises an obvious non sequitur to any orthodox adherent.

Data (Religious)

In order to probe Protestant demographic trends with more specificity, it stands to reason that a para-Protestant organization would be at the survey helm—enter *The State of Theology*, administered under the joint auspices of Ligonier Ministries (one of the foremost conservative Reformed organizations in the U.S.) and LifeWay Research (a subsidiary of LifeWay Christian Resources, the publishing and distribution division of the Southern Baptist Convention). Results from *The State of Theology* surveys show that although the overwhelming majority of Protestants agree that God is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, over half also agree with the statement that “Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God.” A subsequent question furthers the contradiction, where nearly half of Protestant respondents agree that “Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.” Later questions also reveal a greater-than-50% agreement with “most people are good by nature,” and a 29% disagreement with the statement that “Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin.”

This relative handful of examples suffices to reveal that basic religious knowledge is often woefully absent from the lives of many who claim to follow Jesus Christ. The question then arises, in a country where free speech is sacrosanct, books (including the Bible) abundant, churches prevalent, and preachers popular, where does the breakdown occur?



Agent of Doctrinal Illiteracy (Absence of Catechesis)

A contingent of erudite theologians and scholars have cited a loss of catechistic instruction as a primary cause of this spiritual-intellectual quandary. Gary Parrett and J.I. Packer, both distinguished theologians and co-authors of



FIG. 2.2 | *How to preclude such a descent?* | Pace, E.J., *Descent of the Modernists*, published 1922 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/10/Descent_of_the_Modernists%2C_E._J._Pace%2C_Christian_Cartoons%2C_1922.jpg. Accessed 15 Jan. 2021 | Image by Brian0918, Public Domain

Grounded in the Gospel: Building Believers the Old-Fashioned Way, express in their introduction that “we see catechesis as integral...we mourn its current eclipse, perceiving this as the deepest root of the immaturity that is so widespread in evangelical circles” (10). The authors presently go on to convey the premise of their book—an exhortation for returning to catechetical practice within Christianity:

As we contemplate today’s complex concerns, hopes, dreams, and ventures of Christian renewal, discipleship impresses us as the key present-day issue, and catechesis as the key present-day element of discipleship, all the world over. The Christian faith must be both well and wisely taught and well and truly learned! (17)

The sentiment of these two authors is shared in church pulpits and university lecterns alike. In an article for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, Ordained Anglican minister, author, and PhD student at University of Aberdeen Matthew Mason says, “The patristic catechumenate and the Reformation catechism are not the only way of grounding believers in the faith; nevertheless, these doctrinally and biblically rich models stand in striking contrast to the relative lack of doctrinal teaching in the contemporary evangelical church” (209).

Thomas Nettles, former Professor of Historical Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (a 38-year tenure), also takes up the torch in a 2014 article for *The Journal of Discipleship and Family Ministry* entitled “An Encouragement to Use Catechisms”:

Suspicion of catechisms as a legitimate tool for teaching God’s Word cannot be justified historically, biblically, or practically...catechizing



aims ultimately at the eyes of understanding, heart knowledge...The design of the catechism is, under God, to chase the darkness from a sinner's understanding, so that he may be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ and freely embrace him in forgiveness of sin. (7, 9).

Finally, in his article concerning catechesis in contemporary evangelicalism for *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Clinton Arnold, Dean of the Talbot School of Theology, states "It has become increasingly clear to me that the evangelical church as a whole could benefit from re-examining the testimony of the Church fathers and gleaning insights from how they ministered to new believers" (39).

Based on these testimonies, it appears manifest that catechistic instruction (and the catechism booklets that were created to encompass such instruction) have formed a critical component in Church history for training knowledgeable, devoted disciples, and that the contemporary Protestant Church in the United States suffers because of a deprivation of catechistic education.

CONTENTS OF CATECHESIS (COMMON ELEMENTS WITHIN THE PRACTICE)

It is important to recognize that catechesis has no singular, typical definition; likely due to the complexity, comprehensiveness, and geographical extent of its employment through the centuries (Parrett and Packer 25-27; Arnold 40-41). However, a brief overview of common catechetical hallmarks will help instill the importance of this lauded pedagogical approach.

Iterations of the word catechesis originate from Greek (and later, Latin) verbs revolving around the concept of listening, teaching, and instructing (specifically, the Greek words *katēchein*, *katecheo*, and *kateleo*, and the Latin *catechismus*) (Arnold 40; Potgieter 2; Parrett and Packer 25). Raymond Potgieter, faculty of theology at North-West University in South Africa, notes that in its original context, the concept implies "word of mouth teaching" (2): the oral nature of early catechesis is agreed upon throughout the consulted scholarship (Parrett and Packer 26; Williams 21; Arnold 45-46). The teaching of catechumens was carried out predominately by trained theologians, and the process was lengthy and rigorous, often lasting three years (Arnold 42-45).

Potgieter states that catechisms (a term which can be used for the holistic process, not only for booklets containing catechetical writings) were intended as a "means of religious instruction preparing catechumens including children and adults for confirmation of their Christian faith" (2). In his article "The Future is Behind Us: Catechesis and Educational Ministries," Darwin Glassford, Director of Online Learning and Graduate Program Director at Kuyper College, states that catechesis is defined by "passing on a fixed body of knowledge the learner (catechumen) is expected to learn" and is also "holistic, concerned with the learner's (catechumen's) knowledge, affections and lifestyle" (S-176). Daniel Williams, Professor of Patristics and Historical Theology at Baylor University, echoes Glassford's description, saying that the catechumenate entailed "a series of steps that leads the new believer to baptism and a deeper knowledge of the faith" which included "ethical and theological exhortations" (21). Williams describes the contents of catechesis as arising organically out of "situations of need" (such as apologetic defenses against heresy) and consisting of expressions of the early Church's faith (all centered



on Scripture), namely, “Bible commentary, creedal statements, doctrinal explanations, hymns, and so on, which articulated in a few words a basic understanding of the Christian Bible and its profession” (21-22). Summarizing such-like descriptions, Arnold lists four key features of early church catechesis: first, immersion in the Word of God, second, teaching central doctrines of the faith, third, spiritual and moral formation, and fourth, deliverance from demonic influences (46-54). Centuries later, catechesis became more standardized in written form, often referred to specifically as a “catechism,” and containing at least three primary elements: the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Decalogue, although additional material was often included, such as a lengthy question-and-answer format of doctrinal instruction (Parrett and Packer 26, 156, 160, 174; Potgieter 2-3; Hollon 4; Nettles 7-8).

Calls to renew catechesis and a general description are well and good, but a Protestant might argue “what about *Sola Scriptura*?” Does the practice find definitive substantiation in the words and writings of the Reformers, or early Church Fathers, and especially, within the Bible itself? Where did this idea of catechesis come from, who has used it, and why has present-day Protestantism within the United States largely abandoned it?

COMPASSING CATECHISMS (YE HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE)

The response to the inquiry about catechesis having substantiation from Reformation, ancient, and Biblical sources is an emphatic “yes, yes, and yes” (amen, amen, and amen). Since contemporary scholars’ claims are under scrutiny, their research will also guide the way towards historical justification.

Validation (Biblical)

The obvious and most crucial source of validation for catechesis is the Bible, so it should come as no surprise that several scholars and theologians appeal primarily to that authority. Although catechesis is not explicitly presented in a formalized manner (this would become established in the post-apostolic period), Holy Scripture sets the precedent, and the verb itself—derived from the Greek word *katēchein*, as already described—occurs eight times in the New Testament (Glassford S-176).

In adding his assent to this Biblical practice, Thomas Nettles writes “Scripture itself encourages the use of catechisms in our efforts to be transformed by the biblical message...Examples or models of instruction used by the first-century church abound in Scripture, both in method and content” (13). He first specifically notes how theological instruction was interwoven “into the very fabric of the history of Israel. The people were commanded to instruct their children in the ways of God,” as summarized in Deuteronomy 6 (14, 16). Later in Israel’s history, during the time of the prophet Nehemiah, the scribes and Levites, headed by Ezra, led the people in “intensive sessions” to learn the Word of God. These men “helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading” (Neh. 8.7b-8). Nettles goes on to describe several New Testament instances of catechesis, such as Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 13:52 and the literal catechizing that Apollos had undergone even before encountering Aquila and Priscilla (15).

Parrett and Packer devote an entire chapter from their book—aptly titled



“Catechesis Is a (Very!) Biblical Idea”—to affirming the Scriptural precedence for catechesis. The chapter begins with a “literal rendering” of Galatians 6:6, which says “One who is catechized must share all good things with the one who catechizes” (qtd. in Parrett and Packer 31). The authors then discuss the same Deuteronomy passages as Nettles, before mentioning Psalm 78, where “the psalmist pleads with his people to faithfully pass on to future generations the record of God’s mighty deeds and holy commands” (34). Concerning the New Testament, Parrett and Packer declare that “the notion of catechesis becomes sharper still, particularly in terms of its focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ” (35). The Apostle Paul, for example, “always uses the term [catechesis] to refer to giving instruction about the content of the faith” (such as in 1 Corinthians 14:19) (35). They also discern evidence (though not definitive) of an emerging standardization for “imparting basic Christian knowledge” from the usage of the Greek word *katēcheō* in passages such as Luke 1:3-4, Acts 18, and Galatians 6:6 (35-36). Despite being unable to declare decisively that *katēcheō* became a technical term during the New Testament timeframe, Parrett and Packer firmly assert that “it became such a term soon afterwards”; the authors cite the early Christian writing of 2 Clement, penned in the middle of the second century, as significant substantiation (36).

Last, writing from a Methodist perspective in their essay for the *Christian Education Journal*, Benjamin Espinoza and Beverly Johnson-Miller (the latter Professor of Transformative Education and Aging at Asbury Theological Seminary) cover the same material as Nettles and Parrett and Packer regarding the Scriptural preeminence of catechesis. Espinoza and Johnson-Miller conclude their segment by positing “The biblical precedent suggests that

catechesis is relevant and necessary for anyone who looks to Scripture as the source or guide for faith. Catechesis is a comprehensive process of Christian initiation and growth” (17).

Validation (Ancient Church)

Next to Holy Scripture, the practices of the ancient Church, as recorded in the writings of the Early Church Fathers, have carried a prodigious authority and influence throughout the history of Christianity. These revered patriarchs overwhelmingly lend their vigorous approbation to catechesis, and it is from the Church Fathers that the practice began to take on a standard form. Daniel Williams succinctly proffers that “The practice of a catechumenate... was created by the early Fathers” (21). Potgieter, for his part, refers to John Chrysostom and Hippolytus of Rome and their emphasis within catechesis on the definite, consistent practice of Christian principles within individual and family life (2). And in his discussion of the early development of an organized catechumenate, Clinton Arnold stresses the priority that Church Fathers placed on teaching new believers. He includes a list of eminent names that “devoted themselves” to the instruction of converts, men such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Pantaenus, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Ambrose, Cyprian, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Augustine (45). Arnold further reveals that catechistic practice was not a localized phenomenon but was widespread throughout the ancient Christian Church, expanding around the Mediterranean and quickly being translated into Egyptian, Arabic, and Ethiopian (40).

Validation (Reformation)

Protestants, by and large, place immense value on the positions taken by the



original Reformers, especially Martin Luther and John Calvin. Those holding a libertarian position regarding human agency might also name John Wesley as a notable successor in the lineage of Reformers. Unsurprisingly, they all emphatically exhorted the use of catechisms.

Potgieter declares that “Protestant heritage is synonymous with the traditional employment of catechisms and catechetical teaching of both young and old... Although not a new concept at the time of the Reformation, it became a standard for religious instruction” (1-2) Immediately after citing Clinton Arnold’s cadre of Early Church Fathers devoted to Catechesis, Matthew Mason continues by identifying Reformers as well, saying “A similar inventory of sixteenth and seventeenth century theologians could be made, including Luther, Calvin, Ursinus, the Westminster Divines, Richard Baxter, and John Owen” (209). Thomas Nettles goes so far as to describe the Reformation as the “Golden Age” of catechisms:

The golden Age of catechisms emerged in the Reformation. Both Luther and Calvin placed high priority on instruction by catechetical method and considered the success of the Reformation as virtually dependent on the faithfulness of Protestants to this process. In 1548, Calvin wrote Edward VI’s protector Somerset: ‘Believe my Lord, that the Church of God shall never be conserved without catechism, for it is as the seed to be kept that the good grain perish not but that it may increase from age to age.’ (7-8)

Last, Gayle Felton, the late assistant professor at Duke Divinity School and Meredith College, relates how John Wesley began to catechize North American children regularly while in the colonies in the early-mid 1700s

FIG. 2.3 | Meunier, Jules-Alexis, The Catechism Lesson, 1890, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Besançon, Besançon, France | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jules-Alexis_Muenier_-_La_Leçon_de_catéchisme.jpg. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Botaurus, Public Domain



FIG. 2.4 | Genga, Girolamo, Saint Augustine Giving the Habit of His Order to Three Catechumens, 1516–1518, The Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina | https://www.columbiamuseum.org/sites/default/files/styles/open_crop/public/2019-01/Screenshot%20%2827%29.png?itok=BsliEOVF. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Colombia Museum of Art, Public Domain

and subsequently constructed his own catechism. He urged the use of this catechism by all Methodist preachers and Methodist households (97, 99). Wesley's preface to the catechism reveals his stance that it was fit for all ages: "And although the great truths herein contained are more immediately addressed to children, yet they are worthy the deepest consideration both of the oldest and wisest of men" (qtd. in Felton 100).

The weight of these historical affirmations further highlights the pertinent aforementioned question: what went wrong within U.S. Protestantism that caused catechisms to fall out of favor?

Compounds of Doctrinal Illiteracy (The Decline and Fall of Catechesis)

Three main reasons for the discontinuation of catechesis were uncovered in the research; the first and second of which were unsurprising...the third, manifestly less expected (to the point of incredible irony). The factors are intertwined, however, and the consequences reverberate almost unabated through the present day (as will be discussed later).

For Parrett and Packer, the initial step towards the loss of catechesis was (and is) also the "first and biggest factor that inhibits catechesis, and the hardest to counter or circumvent," namely, "*the turn away from external authority in Western culture*" (11). The authors cite factors such as anti-Roman Catholic fervor, knock-on effects of the French Revolution, and the burgeoning Romantic movement as the impetus for such a rebellion against authority. Along these same lines within the Christian community itself, Parrett and Packer include a resistance to authoritative instruction, with the emphasis instead placed upon "liturgical conformity" in some contexts and "personal devotional application" in others, resulting in "our reaction to realities [being]

more significant than any of the realities to which we react" (12).

Growing alongside and out of this movement against authority was the second cause of catechetical decay: liberal theology (11). Prothero remarks that North American Protestantism, at first so passionate about doctrinal knowledge imparted through a catechism, gradually shifted towards an approach that emphasized "morality and experience" (93). Per Prothero:

Over the course of the nineteenth century evangelicals learned to ignore religious learning. Evangelicals did more than that, however. In the name of heartfelt faith, unmediated experience, and Jesus himself, they actively discouraged religious learning...Here evangelicalism was assisted, however, by liberal Protestantism, a movement that sought to accommodate Christianity to modern circumstances. Although liberal Protestants disagreed with evangelicals on such matters as the inspiration of the Bible, they shared with their antagonists an emphasis on morality and experience that also tended to shut doctrine out. (93)

Parrett and Packer affirm this nascent stage of liberal theology, asserting that "leading thinkers in the West began to see themselves as pioneers of a new, post-Christian era in which the Christian heritage of belief might be questioned and critiqued like any other human point of view...This liberal mindset undercuts catechesis completely, for catechesis assumes the existence of authoritative truth that needs to be taught" (11).

The third catalyst of catechistic decline was, of all things, the Sunday school movement. As oxymoronic as it might sound, what began as a vital spiritual tool, originally formed primarily for the purpose of teaching a catechism, degenerated into a weapon of ignorance-mongering. Again, from



Parrett and Packer:

The church in the West has largely abandoned serious catechesis as a normative practice. Among the more surprising of the factors that have contributed to this decline are the unintended consequences of the great Sunday school movement. This lay-driven phenomenon swept across North America in the 1800s and came to dominate educational efforts in most evangelical churches through the twentieth century. It effectively replaced pastor-catechists with relatively untrained lay workers and substituted an instilling of familiarity (or shall we say, perhaps, over familiarity) with Bible stories for any form of grounding in the basic beliefs, practices, and ethics of the faith. (22)

It is abundantly clear, then, that a robust catechumenate is validated



FIG. 2.5 | *A prototypical children's service in a Protestant church—is doctrinal learning a priority?* | <https://unsplash.com/photos/XBDHmIXvsvM>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Anna Earl on Unsplash

throughout the history of the church, is a powerfully effective means of instilling doctrine, and has had various factors undermining its use within U.S. Protestantism. But are things really so bad catechetically nowadays? To what extent do Protestant churches implement, or ignore, catechesis?

CONCERNING CATECHISMS (THE CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE)

Paralleling the data concerning Protestant ambivalence of the faith's tenets, the research indicates that the dereliction of catechizing is almost ubiquitous—ignorance and suspicion about the practice rule the day.

Despised and Rejected (Catechesis Forsaken)

In his article's introductory comments, Thomas Nettles, a stalwart Baptist, speaks of the way his own denomination tends to view catechesis, saying “Many contemporaries have a deep-seated suspicion of catechisms. In our own Baptist denomination, many would consider the words ‘Baptist catechism’ as mutually exclusive (6). Parrett and Packer echo this sentiment from within the Reformed tradition, saying “It will doubtless surprise a good number of evangelical Protestants to hear that catechesis is not only a biblical idea, but a very biblical idea. Many of us—especially those of us who grew up in North American Evangelical cultures in recent times—rarely if ever heard the words *catechesis* or *catechism*” (31). Stephen Prothero gives voice to another concern, clear to most orthodox Protestants, by noting that liberal theology is still flourishing—“Confessional Christians...seem to be a voice crying in the wilderness. As the nation has migrated from understanding itself as



Protestant to understanding itself as Christian, then Judeo-Christian, and then Abrahamic, many have jettisoned (in the name of tolerance) the great teachings and stories of the Christian tradition” (120). Matthew Mason references other scholars who have pronounced that doctrine is notably absent from the life of modern Christians before adding his own insight that “evidence for this absence of doctrine is the neglect of serious catechesis in evangelical churches” (208). Along with his comments previously quoted, Clinton Arnold also articulates that modern evangelical churches “...place a minimal emphasis on the training of new believers, especially when compared to the prominence and importance of the catechumenate in the ancient church” (44). Later, he underscores this lack of neophyte training specifically for central dogma, saying “Some new believers’ classes cover a few of the cardinal doctrines, but a systematic training in the principal doctrines of historic orthodoxy are missing in the curricula for new believers” (49). Espinoza and Johnson-Miller posit that a modern over-reliance on developmental theory has left behind “sixteen centuries of church history” in which theology proper held the principal position of making mature believers who are spiritually and mentally healthy, whole, and growing (9, 12-13). Their recommendation is not to forsake developmental theory, but instead that “catechesis should be given its rightful place as the overarching process for understanding and cultivating Christian formation and lifelong spiritual growth” (9). For these authors, catechesis should be recovered in order to become “a comprehensive overarching theological orientation” (15).

Lacking Alternatives (Catechesis Replaced)

In catechesis’ contemporary absence, Sunday schools, still replete with the vices already mentioned, continue to dominate (Parrett and Packer 22). As recently

as 2012, Darwin Glassford’s article for *Christian Education Journal* states that “Sunday schools have usurped parental and congregational responsibility for teaching the Scriptures...If one is willing to take a hard look at a church’s formal education programs, including Sunday school/Church education, it becomes clear they have not delivered on their promises” (S-174, S-178). Mason calls out another commonplace alternative to rigorous and edifying catechesis—the lay-led small-group. His description is both decidedly accurate and disheartening:

Packer and Parrett tied the decline of catechesis in the eighteenth century to the rise of the lay-led Sunday school, with teachers whose lack of theological training led to less competent study and teaching of [the Bible]. We can trace the same pattern for adults with the rise of the lay-led small group...Instead of serious teaching from a pastor steeped in the Scriptures, the typical evangelical home group features an inductive Bible study led by a lay-leader from pre-packaged material. Sometimes these are well led and edifying. However, even at their best, the relative lack of training and knowledge of [the Bible] has deleterious effects on the study and therefore performance of [the Bible] (219-220).

In Summary (Catechistic Conclusions)

Parrett and Packer include in their book a fairly concise list that encompasses nearly the whole of what has been said to this point, and so will serve as a fitting conclusion to this section:

- *Catechesis is a thoroughly biblical idea and practice*, and we (that is, the evangelical movement as a whole) have strayed grievously from the



mandates and model of Scripture in this regard...

- *The practice of rigorous catechesis has proven to be essential and effective* at numerous critical junctures in the life of the church and there is much to be learned from this history for ministry in contemporary contexts today...
- *Many forces have conspired to distract most of today's evangelicals from the biblical business of catechizing*, and there are significant consequences that have resulted from our failures in regard to this ministry...
- *Happily, there are a number of contemporary efforts under way to renew catechetical ministries*. These are worthy of our serious observation and, in some cases, emulation...
- Catechesis involves instruction that is both ancient and essential. It focuses on the primary doctrines of 'the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints' (Jude 3), and especially upon the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. Thus it aims to celebrate and preserve the unity of the church...
- *Catechesis involves instruction that is holistic*. It touches the entire person (and the entire community)—head, heart, and hands; doctrine, experience, and practice...
- *Catechesis involves instruction that is highly relational and interactive*. It is a ministry of the church and must be carried on in the context of the community of faith.
- *Catechesis involves instruction that is timely and culturally relevant*.

This ancient faith must always be presented vis-à-vis those alternative claims regarding truth, worldview, and lifestyle that dominate the age and culture in which the church lives...

- *Catechesis involves instruction that is foundational for faith development throughout one's life*. While catechesis is often associated (and rightly so) with grounding persons in the basics of the faith, it also envisions practices for ongoing learning upon and within those very foundations that have been laid. (28)

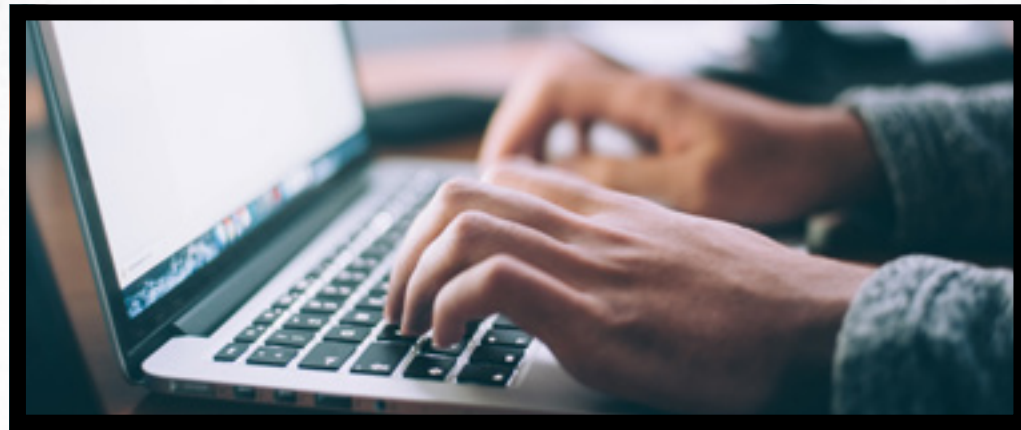
The various other catechetically-focused sources referenced in this literature review all strongly support Parrett and Packer's synopsis; however, much has changed in the 400-some-odd years since the Reformation—to say nothing of the 2,000-give-or-take since Scriptural exhortations to catechesis. How might transformations in culture (especially with the advent of modern technology) affect a catechetical approach?

A PICTURE IS WORTH... (VISUAL LEARNING)

Matthew Mason beautifully expresses the necessity of an evolving instructional approach for doctrine when he writes "it is important that our performances [i.e., active belief and participation] are shaped by the canonical Script, but also that our performances then fit with the new situations in which we find ourselves; there must be contextual as well as exegetical fit. Catechesis should serve this end" (210). One important cultural shift that has considerable relevance to the implementation of contemporary catechesis is the move away from primarily text-based learning towards increasingly visual learning. Society



FIG. 2.6 | "Fire hoses of data" | <https://unsplash.com/photos/npxXWgQ33ZQ>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Glenn Carstens-Peters on Unsplash



is inundated by images, especially by way of technology, and the ubiquitous nature of screens only compounds the cognitive effects of this educational shift.

New Millennium, New Presentation (Approaching a Modern Catechism)

The rise of visual learning and a visual culture has led to a vast quantity of scholarship that spans an extensive array of concepts. However, the ideas of technology being a major contributing factor to this rise and the steadily increasing importance of “visual literacy” were both consistently foundational principles. A group of Australian academics including Judith Dinham, Associate Professor and Director of Learning and Teaching in Curtin University’s School of Education, summarize this position in their article “Visual Education - Repositioning Visual Arts and Design: Educating for Expression and Participation in an Increasingly Visually Mediated World” by describing how “New visual technologies and related multi-modal forms of expression and communication are transforming our society. There is a move from the text as the dominant mode of communication and expression to an increased use of the visual” (78). In his book *Visual Impact, Visual Teaching:*

Using Images to Strengthen Learning, educator Timothy Gangwer articulates his conviction that “The practice of visual thinking becomes a weapon against the ‘fire hoses of data’ that threatens to overwhelm us in the twenty-first century” (ix) (Fig. 2.6). His further analysis of the modern environment, although applied specifically to children, can certainly be extrapolated to older demographics—and obviously, today’s kids quickly become tomorrow’s adults. Per Gangwer:

It is hard to ignore that the generation of children now moving through our educational system is by far the most visually stimulated generation that system has ever had to teach. Having grown up with cable television, video games, computer software that educates and entertains, and the Internet, our children are truly visual learners coming of age in an increasingly visually oriented world. Notwithstanding individual differences in intelligence and learning style, this generation of children needs to be taught the way they learn best—with visual stimulation accompanied by active learning strategies. (1)

Connie Malamed, author of *Visual Language for Designers: Principles for Creating Graphics that People Understand* and founder of an eponymous consulting company specializing in visual instructional design, reiterates Gangwer’s observations of the sheer quantity of information and the importance of imagery within this context. Malamed states that as “the quantity of global information grows exponentially,” individuals “depend on visual language for its efficient and informative value... We often find that technological and scientific information is so rich and complex, it can only be



represented through imagery” (10). She finishes the paragraph by saying that “The sheer quantity of visual messages relayed through new technology has led some to call imagery ‘the new public language’” (10).

In an article for the journal *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Riad Aisami relates that “with today’s advanced technology, digital visuals are being used as a viable learning enhancer due to its capability in conveying the desired instructional message instantly and universally. Therefore, visual literacy has become a required competency for teachers and instructors of all levels as well as for students in many formal educational settings” (359). Writing from the vantage point of a librarian (which profession, the author wryly acknowledges, has a “subtle bias against pictures”), Pauline Dewan reports that “In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, mass-produced cameras, televisions, computers, videocameras, the internet, and mobile devices have facilitated the use of graphics in all forms of communication. And during the last three decades in particular, screens have come to dominate our lives” (1). However, Dewan astutely goes on to examine the tension between text and image from a historical perspective:

Yet, this shift in balance between the picture and the word is nothing new; we are actually returning to our pictorial roots. Humans have used pictures to record their experiences for 250 centuries, pictograms and ideograms for the next 20 centuries...Communicating visually is what we have done for the vast majority of human history. (1-2)

The research simultaneously indicates that a visual approach to learning is both a contemporary necessity and a historical centrality. Does this idea find corroboration in Church history? Can a connection be made between

accepted past practices for facilitating doctrinal apprehension and a method for adapting catechesis to modernity?

Modern Meets Medieval (Imagery within Church History)

As it turns out, the Church Universal has a rich history of visual pedagogy. Until the Reformation, images had been copiously and unabashedly incorporated into the public and private life of the faithful since nearly the beginning of Christianity (two periods of iconoclasm split between the 8th and 9th centuries conspicuously excepted). Celia Chazelle, Professor of early Medieval history at Yale, gives a detailed account of the instructional use of artwork circa 599-600, examining two letters written by Pope Gregory the Great (these letters are prevalent within arguments in favor of Church art, and for good reason). In his enormously famous statement (though often misquoted), Pope Gregory articulates his apologetic for imagery as an educational device for the illiterate, saying “For a picture is displayed in

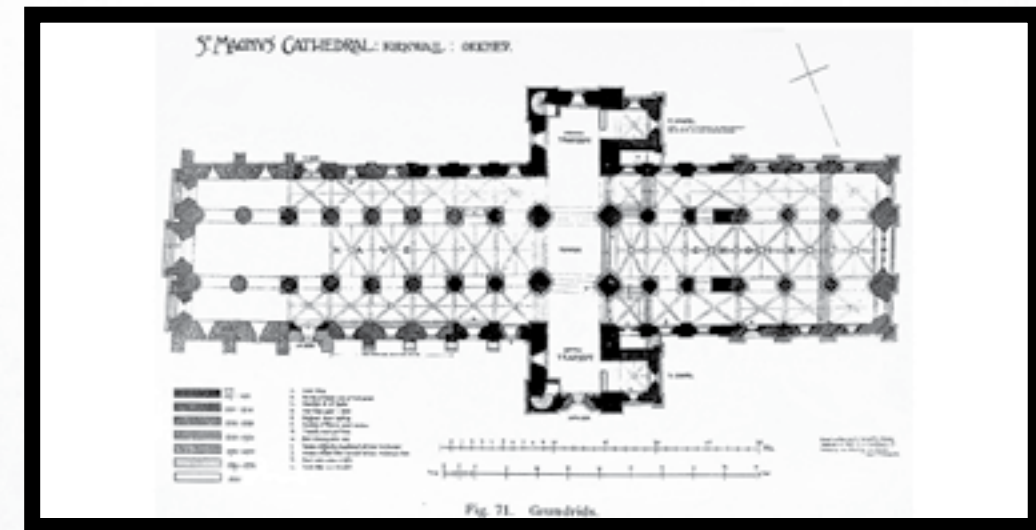


FIG. 2.7 | Floor Plan of St. Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall, Scotland, published 1906 | https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a4/St_Magnus_Cathedral_plan_view.jpg. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Image by Minuth, Public Domain



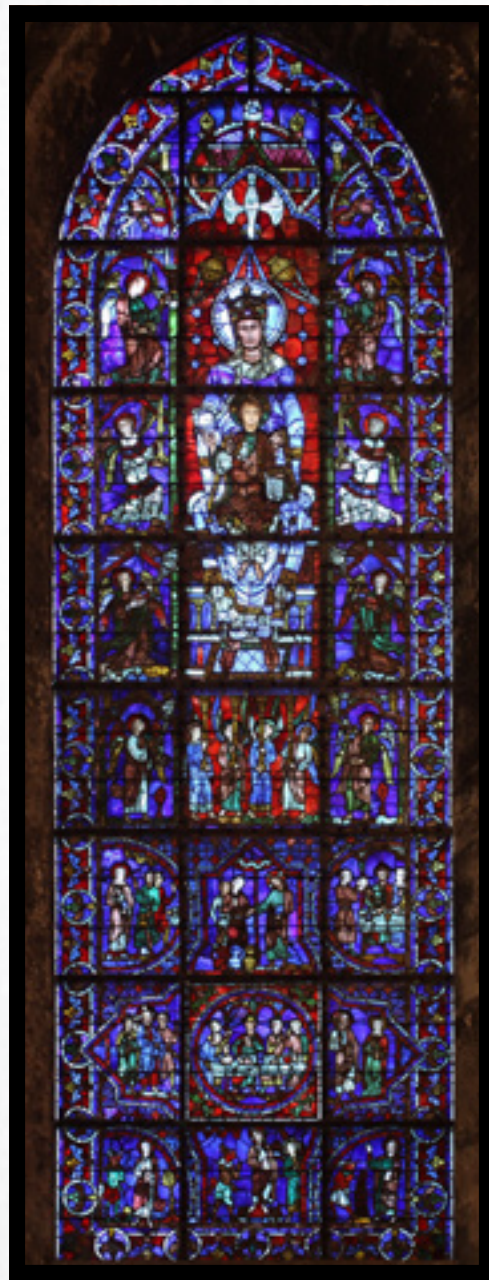


FIG. 2.8 | NOTRE-DAME DE LA BELLE-VERRIÈRE, stained glass window, 1180, Chartres Cathedral | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chartres_Cathedral#/media/File:Chartres_-_cathédrale_-_ND_de_la_belle_verrière.JPG. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Guillaume Piolle, Public Domain



FIG. 2.10 | Statuary at Amiens Cathedral | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Statues_of_Amiens_Cathedral,_pic4.JPG. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Alfvanbeem, CCO 1.0

FIG. 2.9 | Nave, Wells Cathedral, Somerset | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wells_Cathedral#/media/File:Wells_Cathedral_Nave_1,_Somerset,_UK_-_Diliff.jpg. Accessed 27 Feb 2021. | Photo by David Iliff, CC BY-SA 3.0

churches on this account, in order that those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books” (qtd. in Chazelle 139). Chazelle notes that the specific artwork under discussion were large narrative paintings of Bible stories located in a church building, and that the *illiterati* who viewed them would have been in a context where the stories and their meanings would have been explained (139).

A few centuries later, and the pedagogical use of religious art had only increased. In his seminal work *A Universe of Stone: A Biography of Chartres Cathedral*, author Charles Ball minutely examines the multiplicity of methods by which the artistic program at Notre Dame de Chartres carefully and comprehensively teaches Church history and doctrine (Chartres, because of its high level of preservation, can stand as an archetype for medieval cathedrals overall—and there were many). Teaching begins with the very floor plan, which is arranged in the shape of a Latin cross, facing the east, “where the sun rises, because in [the church] the Sun of justice is worshipped and it is foretold that it is in the East that Paradise our home is set” (in the words of twelfth-century theologian and philosopher Honorius of Autun) (qtd. in Ball 29) (Fig. 2.7). The large central area where congregants gather is called the nave, from the Latin *navis*, “suggesting the image of the church as a ship” (29) (Fig. 2.9). Ball describes the cathedral’s sculpture (Fig. 2.10) as “a way of telling stories and illustrating allegories and morals to the illiterate worshippers” (170), a process which commenced the moment worshippers drew near the church, where Christ sits in judgement over the main doorway, called the “Royal Portal,” to this very day (170-171). But the crown jewel of the cathedral (in both a largely literal as well as figurative sense) is the collection of stained-glass windows (Fig. 2.8)—astonishingly, almost entirely



intact and in fine quality from the 12th and 13th centuries. Of these windows and their instructive potential, Ball waxes truly lyrical:

Chartres Cathedral is a library. It is full of picture books, with pages of coloured glass. Everyone knew the stories, but that didn't make them dull. On the contrary, it would be hard to tire of the manner in which they are told. The ordinary man and woman, illiterate and never likely to set eyes on the parchment pages of a book, would have gazed in wonder at these stories of Christ and the Virgin, the saints and the Old Testament, glowing like miraculous visions in the dark stone" (233).

The broad history of the Church irrefutably validates pedagogical artwork as integral to the Christian life. But then came the Reformation, and with it, a substantial challenge erected against religious imagery. Why did some Reformers hold visual artifacts in abhorrence...and should the Church today follow their lead?

Images, Information, and Idolatry (The Reformation and Iconoclasm)

In his book *The Forge of Vision: A Visual History of Modern Christianity*, David Morgan, Professor of Art, Art History, and Visual Studies at Duke University's Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, gives an introductory summary to common perceptions of Protestantism's general relationship with images:

It is often said that Protestantism has no place for images. In fact, Protestants have virtually always made use of images in one way or

another. Yet the view persists that Protestantism is aniconic. This probably depends on several things. One may be the tendency among many Protestant groups to avoid imagery in worship settings, though rarely in the home, school, or everyday life. Another reason is likely the episodes of iconoclastic riots in the 1520s in Germany and Switzerland, and in the Netherlands and England a few decades later. Historians have often treated these ritualized forms of violence as convenient events to locate the birth of the Reformation, a decisive break with the Catholic past symbolized in a dramatic gesture of communal defiance. And a third reason for the myth of Protestant aniconism is surely the theology of reformers such as Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, who insisted that images were incapable of teaching Christian truth, for which the Bible was the only reliable source. (42)

Sergiusz Michalski's book *Reformation and the Visual Arts: The Protestant Image Question in Western and Eastern Europe* expounds on the tension between Reformers and artwork. Michalski probes the conflict by examining four central Reformers; however, the legacies of just two, Martin Luther and John Calvin, principally define the opinions and standings of many Protestants today. To rather brusquely condense Michalski's discussion, Martin Luther was frequently ambivalent on the use of images, both in the private sphere and in public places of worship. Although writing negative-leaning positions (in one instance specifically due to the Catholic Church's tendency towards opulence), Luther also "defiantly" opposed the removal and destruction of artwork from churches and decried an iconoclastic exegesis of the second commandment. Throughout his ministry, Luther vacillated regarding the employment of images: his stances depended on the context in which artwork was used and



the presence of external factors affecting Luther at different periods in his life (5-11). When Luther's attention did turn to art, his focus seemed to be fixed chiefly on its pedagogical nature. Michalski states "Luther refused to reflect on what religious art is and what it could be; he only asked whether it could serve the 'weak' in their religious education" (38). Joseph Leo Koerner, Professor of the History of Art and Architecture and Senior Fellow at the Society of Fellows at Harvard University, also assents to this view by briefly expressing that "Lutheran artists sought to internalize internal conviction through images; the Reformer recommended having pictures 'so that the heart can think on these things' (214).

John Calvin (Fig. 2.11), on the other hand, is closely aligned with iconoclasm. He correlated a serious array of sins with the use of religious imagery, from condemning much artwork as idolatrous (due to his exegesis of the second commandment) to the inclination of humanity towards pride via external grandeur (Michalski 65). Morgan further reveals that Calvin held and promulgated the misconception that the early church—"during which religion was in a more prosperous condition, and a purer doctrine flourished" (qtd. in Morgan 43)—was entirely aniconic (43). Calvin appears to go so far as to explicitly discredit Gregory the Great's exhortations to instruction through art, the Reformer seeing "practical theology" as a non-starter for serious theological dialogue (64). Michalski announces Calvin's polemic using the theologian's own words:

'I do not see what advantage simpletons could derive from images, unless it were that they would become anthropomorphizers... and that they would image a corporeal God.' In rebutting this argument Calvin

FIG. 2.11 | Jean Calvin on his deathbed, with eight men in attendance. *Lithograph by Jacott, 1850. Wellcome Collection, London.* | <https://iiif.wellcomecollection.org/image/V0006910/full/full/0/default.jpg>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Wellcome Collection, CC BY 4.0



referred both to the inscrutability of God and to the affirmation of the role of the word (in the entire gamut of its meaning in those times: i.e. from the Word of God to the spoken and written word as a means of communication), since it is by means of words that God 'descends to the level of common people'. (64)

Michalski underscores Calvin's "strict predestinarianism," with its foundational view of "the majesty and glory of God (*solī Deo gloria*)," as having powerful repercussions on his approach to the image question:

Whereas with Luther the [']Visibility of God experienced through the Passion and cross' enables the believer to give up attempts to grasp the 'invisible God', with Calvin Christology—viewed through the prism of the doctrine of predestination—even deepened the ultimate mystery of God...Calvin praises the omnipotence and greatness of God, while at the same time emphasizing his immeasurable distance from us. (62)

Ironically however, bearing in mind all that has been revealed, Calvin tolerated secular art and was even compelled to acknowledge the value of Biblical narrative art, provided both were kept out of the church building:

Calvin, somewhat contradictorily, allowed the keeping of holy images in private homes...he left an open field for narrative biblical scenes—especially from the Old Testament— and for secular art. Of decisive importance was the removal of works of art from the sacral sphere, from places of worship; in profane places an image took on an entirely different meaning...Calvin stated his position clearly: 'Certainly, it is permissible to make use of images; however, God wishes his temple to be freed from images. If in a secular place, however, we have a portrait or a representation of animals, this is not harmful to religion...even idols kept in such places are not worshipped' (70-71).

Michalski quotes Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as a definitive summation of the Reformer's attitude concerning imagery:

As regards what can be painted or engraved, it is permissible to represent 'histories' as a memorial, or figures, or [to create] medals of animals, cities or countries. Instructive things or remembrances can be derived or depicted from them. As for the rest, I see no other purpose

they can serve except pleasure. (qtd. in Michalski 71-72)

A.T. Coates, Instructor of Religious Studies at Duke University's Trinity College of Arts and Sciences, adds a final, crucially important aspect of the Reformation iconoclasm debate. Even with nascent Protestantism's markedly inconsistent responses to images, one underlying premise remained the same on all sides: Scripture was paramount. As Coates explains,

Image and word rarely displayed a simple antagonistic relationship in Protestant history. Most Protestants agreed that images were permissible as long as they did not impinge upon the supreme authority of the Bible...While the Bible's textual meaning always held primary authority in official Protestant doctrine and theology, the lived reality of Protestantism betrayed complicated interactions between text and image. (1)

Illustrating Change (Pedagogical Imagery during the Reformation)

Amid these frankly paradoxical perspectives, the utilization of instructive religious imagery during the Reformation continued—and, under the auspices of Lutheran theology principally, even flourished. David Morgan describes the Protestant use of artwork as a shift in "economies"; namely, rejecting the personal (and often transactional) interaction with pictures in the various acts of veneration within Roman Catholic practice to an "ambitious traffic of sacred information. It was no longer what you offered or gave up that secured divine favor, but what you knew that counted." (*Forge* 49). The author further categorizes this "sacred information" by presenting "several forms and places that collectively map out the Protestant life-world" where pictures and "visual practices" would subsist (51).



Morgan first lists “textuality,” a realm that consists of “virtually everything Protestants do as religious practice, such as teaching, preaching, proselytism, disputation, and devotional study” along with “advertising and propaganda” (51). Next, he describes how art was incorporated into worship settings, where “the premium spaces within Protestant sanctuaries—the altar, but also and eventually more importantly, the pulpit—were devoted to visual proclamation of the definitive doctrines of Protestantism” (53-54). Third, Morgan notes how portraiture, including narrative scenes depicting life events of specific personages, served a twofold purpose: to “revere great men” and to celebrate “heroes of the faith for their spiritual virtues, their memorable character, and their decisive actions” (54-55). Morgan labels the former as “totemic,” since “an honorific portrait of its key reformer could represent an entire branch of Protestantism. In effect, these images specify the intellectual and ecclesiastic genealogies whereby Protestants tended to distinguish themselves from one another” (54). The latter were intended to inspire “empathic identification with the suffering of Jesus. The rhetorical structuring of the images invited a deeply felt response, a projection or absorption of the viewer’s imaginative faculties in order to be moved by the portrayal of suffering,” with the figures acting “as models of virtue whose cause was just and whose work helped found the church” (57). Fourth, Morgan emphasizes educational illustrations, saying “Protestants knew that the generation of emotion was an effective rhetorical device, and that images were good at eliciting feelings and associating them with texts and memories. Images therefore had a noteworthy contribution to make to education and moral formation” (58). (The author also references an interesting fact by remarking that it was Protestant educators who created the first illustrated children’s schoolbooks [58]). Finally, Morgan includes the domestic setting, of which he claims, “Luther and other reformers stressed the

importance of domestic religious life and it is arguable that the home exceeds the church sanctuary as, practically speaking, the most important religious space in Protestant life” (59).

A couple concise pictorial examples will be presented here, one coming from the Calvinist position and one from the Lutheran context: more specificity of these and other instances will be examined further on. The first, a relatively rare (and therefore apparently less widely known) Calvinistic visual, comes from just a few decades after Calvin’s death, when English theologian and staunch Protestant William Perkins published a book that contained a chart visualizing the doctrine of predestination (Fig. 2.20). In her essay “How-To Books, Protestant Kinetics, and the Art of Theology,” Lori Ann Ferrell, Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities at Claremont Graduate University, states that “By putting this busy visual complex to work, the imagery does not merely illustrate Perkins’s theology but actually provides a complete, one-page précis of an extensive, complex doctrinal treatise (601).” She goes on to contrast the ease of understanding achieved by the visual presentation with the difficulty and convolution of the preceding textual tome (602). Ferrell also specifically makes mention of the concept of a visual catechism in reference to this soteriological diagram, writing “The design of the ocular catechism does not, therefore, merely illustrate the complex, interactive, and unfinished relationship of temporal, finite human experience to eternal, infinite divine decree. It in fact makes the doctrine of predestination not only evidential but also persuasive—it can be handled and traced, and thus, arguably, proven.” (602-603).

The zenith of Reformation visual pedagogy, however, certainly must be works which came from the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, artist and intimate



friend of Luther himself. In her book *Lucas Cranach the Elder: Art and Devotion of the German Reformation*, Bonnie Noble, Associate Professor of Art History at UNC Charlotte, introduces the artist by remarking that he “made the reformer’s complex ideas intelligible to a wide range of viewers” (1). She later articulates the centrality of education within Cranach’s paintings, stating “Cranach’s paintings are didactic, instructing believers in the Lutheran doctrine of salvation by faith without works. It can be argued that all religious art of the sixteenth century (or earlier) is didactic in one form or another. However, much Lutheran art, particularly the *Law and Gospel* panels, had as its first priority educating followers of the new faith in theological basics” (10). Although Noble does not reference Gregory the Great in this passage, a parallelism does seem to exist here between the paintings described by that ancient personage and the Reformation artwork created by the workshop of Lucas Cranach: namely, the works were not meant to be fully comprehended when viewed alone and unaided (Chazelle 138-139). Rather, as Noble exhorts, “it becomes imperative to remember that [these paintings] are meant to remind the beholder of what is already learned or read. A viewer cannot be reminded of something that is brand-new, and an ill-prepared or poorly informed beholder would be just as likely to draw conclusions that were at odds with those of Luther and Cranach...” (42).

A facet of Reformation pictures that has potential ramifications to the current study is the appropriation of Catholic motifs. Bonnie Noble briefly comments on this component of Cranach’s practice, which was shared by his contemporaries, in chapter five of her book, saying that “traditional iconography could retain its significance only if the viewer accepted the parameters of that tradition. The same iconography would transform the Madonna into a different image for a viewer with Lutheran sympathies” (170). However, as part of her

article “Instances of Appropriation in Late Roman and Early Christian Art,” Dale Kinney, Professor Emeritus of the Humanities and Professor Emeritus of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College, further refines the definition of appropriation, distinguishing between innocuous and specious forms of the practice. Although Kinney confines her discussion to the ancient world, the implications certainly port forward to the schism between Catholic and Protestant. In Kinney’s view, the edifying form of appropriation can be described as a “winnowing” of already-extant subject matter that simply “identif[ies] the most acceptable items and reject[s] potentially offensive ones”: the “Good Shepherd” being a prime example (15-16)(Fig. 2.12). In this case, “The adoption of the type for Christian imagery entailed no visible changes; Christian references were purely the product of context and viewer projection” (16).

Conversely, much Protestant art during the Reformation appears to fall more fittingly into Kinney’s alternate category, namely, appropriation proper, or what she labels “readymades” (17). Within this framework:



FIG. 2.12 | An example of positive appropriation: “The Good Shepherd” mosaic, c. 5th century, mausoleum of Galla Placidia, Ravenna, Italy | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%22The_good_Shepherd%22_mosaic_-_Mausoleum_of_Galla_Placidia.jpg. Accessed 22 Oct. 2021 | Photo by Petar Milošević, CC-BY-SA-4.0



Appropriation occurred when the type adopted was outside the semantic or conceptual field...the result was a subversive intrusion. The type's anomalous character is visually apparent, drawing attention to it...Intrusive types might loosely be called readymades, objects that originate outside the realm of their repurposing and bring to it a spectrum of discordant or disruptive associations. (17)

When Protestant artists subsumed standard Catholic objects and aesthetics such as paintings, indulgences, altarpieces, and woodcuts, the boundary proffered by Kinney seems to have been crossed. Kinney concludes her section on appropriation with a sobering reflection, relating how a “readymade enacted its own appropriation, assimilating Christian soteriology to a bucolic pagan stereotype of blessed afterlife. This last effect may have been unintended; it arises in the ‘multi-dimensional space’ of reused signifiers, whose associations cannot be fully controlled” (18).

However, Bonnie Noble, in closing her own short discourse on the topic, renders the whole practice quite innocent—in fact, she puts a rather positive spin on it, saying “Lutheran art does not necessarily consist of an entirely new set of subjects and symbols. Rather than extirpating all pictorial remnants of the old faith, Lutheran art preserved familiar, traditional subjects and reinvented their meaning” (173). Morgan appears to align with Noble on this topic as well, briefly mentioning in his discussion of shifting economies that “Protestantism—and not just Lutheranism—by no means ended the visual culture of Catholicism; rather, it reappointed it. Protestants developed new uses for images that yielded productive visual legacies that remain in place today” (*Forge* 45). As already seen, Morgan outlines many instances of these

reappointments, saying that images became “rhetoric, as visualized speech, as sacred information in order to serve several purposes that were important to Protestants: propaganda, pedagogy, advertisement, evangelism, and public discourse” (*Forge* 43–44). These divergent views of appropriation leave a broad, and not unimportant, uncertainty regarding the prudence of collecting motifs from other cultures (Catholic, secular, and pagan alike) for use in new catechetical imagery.

Despite convolutions from certain strains of Reformed teaching, the belief and practice of Protestantism, both during and after the Reformation, do align with the historical church in broad approval of pedagogical religious imagery. Robin Jensen, the Patrick O’Brien Professor of Theology at Notre Dame University, beautifully articulates this assertion when she says that “the Reformed church always has had a place for the arts, even in communal worship. But, given both history and continuing tradition, the place of art (especially visual art) needs to be understood and managed, both faithfully and sensitively. Thus, the central question is, not whether, but how Protestants should incorporate art in liturgy.” (“Arts” 362). Returning the discussion to the contemporary context, what does current research from the fields of education and life science have to say regarding the effectiveness of visual illustrations on comprehension and retention in general?

Image and Text (Efficacy of Visual Illustrations)

The ability to study effects of imagery on cognition, including direct observation of the brain itself, has advanced alongside the technology that enables the proliferation of pictures in the modern world. The research revealed that visual illustrations aid both comprehension and retention of information—



scholarly work has an overwhelming unanimity concerning this. Patrick Parrish, Chief of the Training Activities Division at the World Meteorological Association, gets right to this point in his essay “Instructional Illustrations,” where he declares that “instructional ‘pictures’ serve a vital function, one much greater than just substituting for an overabundance of words. Instructional illustrations help learners understand and remember information in ways that text and lecture simply cannot.” Later in the same essay, Parrish doubles down on his of evaluation of imagery, stating “the value of illustrations goes far beyond an aesthetic one. Illustrations are often at the root of understanding and learning.” Howard Levie and Richard Lentz—the former a scholar whose work is cited regularly in the study of learning and visual illustrations—address the topic in their article for *Educational Communication and Technology* entitled “Effects of Text Illustrations: A Review of Research.” In the essay, they examine results of 55 separate experiments where learning was evaluated when comparing illustrated text against text alone (195). In their statements synthesizing the outcomes of these tests, Levie and Lentz leave little room for opposition:

Illustrations facilitate learning the information in the written text that is depicted in the illustrations. Learning illustrated text information was better with illustrated text than with text alone in 98% of the experimental comparisons. For 85% of the comparisons this difference was statistically significant. The average improvement for groups reading with pictures was 36%. (213)

Richard E. Mayer, Distinguished Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, writing for *The Cambridge Handbook of Multimedia Learning*, simply pronounces that “People can learn more deeply from words

and pictures than from words alone. This seemingly simple proposition—which can be called the *multimedia learning hypothesis*—is the main focus of this second edition” (1). In nine tests focusing on “problem-solving transfer—which are designed to measure a student’s understanding of the presented material” Mayer and his associates found unanimous results that “students perform much better with words and pictures than with words alone...yielding a median effect size of 1.5” (6).

Timothy Gangwer adds his affirmation of imagery’s efficacy during his exploration of how the brain processes visual input, citing research by Sadoski and Paivio where “students were tested on their recall of instructional text. The study compared text accompanied by visual imagery and abstract verbal text. The findings concluded that using the concreteness of visual imagery was the variable overwhelmingly linked to successful comprehension and recall” (38). Gangwer further reveals scientific and biological data to underscore the fundamental importance of imagery to human perception:

Forty percent of all nerve fibers connected to the brain are linked to the retina. In fact, more than 90 percent of all the information that comes to the brain is visual. In just one hour, more than thirty-six thousand visuals may be registered in the brain (Hyerle, 2000). At least 30 million neurons in the entire visual cortex are activated by the single image of a house or a face (Levy, Hasson, and Malach, 2004). People are able to recognize and extract the gist of a scene— its core meaning— in less than one-tenth of a second. Research conducted by the 3M Corporation found the brain processes visuals sixty thousand times faster than it processes text; visual aids in a classroom have been found to improve learning by up to 400 percent. (37)



Connie Malamed adds further scientific data, stating “We have over one million nerve fibers sending signals from the eye to the brain, and an estimated 20 billion neurons analyzing and integrating visual information at rapid speed. We have a surprisingly large capacity for picture memory, and can remember thousands of images with few errors” (9).

Finally, the late Allan Paivio, former Professor of Psychology at the University of Western Ontario and the originator of dual-coding theory—an individual whose study within the realms of cognition, imagery, and language is nearly ubiquitous within scholarship on those topics—attests to the historical and ongoing significance attached to imagery within cognition. In his 1991 book *Mental Representations: A Dual Coding Approach*, Paivio states “The relations between imaginal and verbal processes and memory are among the most intensively investigated problems in psychology...The implication has always been that imaginal and verbal systems have important functions in the encoding, storage, and retrieval of episodic information” (75).

Multi-Level Learning (Means of Imagery’s Efficacy)

That visual illustrations promote learning is a fact almost beyond disputation; however, the exact manner by which imagery assists education is not known exactly, with several viable options on the table (and of course, they could also work together in varying proportions). In facilitating comprehension of textual information, Levie and Lenz supply a list of methods. First, illustrations can provide a context for understanding written material. Second, pictures can challenge viewers to analyze words and their meanings more carefully. Third, imagery can keep disparate components of complex information in a readily

accessible relationship, enabling the learner to process other aspects more easily. Last, visuals can afford a concrete method for verifying understanding of the text (220-222). The authors go on to convey a range of possibilities regarding how illustrations aid retention of information as well. These options include simple repetition (redundancy of what the text articulates), the creation of vivid mental pictures (invoking the imagination), and a few theoretical approaches including the levels-of-processing approach and dual-coding (222-223). These last items, in particular, are indicative of an idea that appeared prominently throughout the research: when multiple formats for imparting information are utilized, genuine learning increases (especially concerning picture combined with word). Parrish echoes Levie and Lenz in proffering dual-coding theory:

Information is stored in long-term memory both as verbal propositions and as mental images. [Dual-coding] suggests that when information is presented verbally and visually it has a better chance of being remembered...The combination of verbal proposition and mental image establishes multiple pathways by which the information can be retrieved from memory. (“Instructional”)

Although not explicitly using dual-coding terminology, Aisami refers to the same basic conception as a core belief of most teachers, especially at the university level:

Students learn by various learning styles. Hence, the instructional contents must be delivered to students in different ways, and multiple instructional methods should be utilized. However, visuals in particular have been found to be a strong learning enhancer in various learning settings and for students of varied learning styles. Research suggests that using visuals in teaching results in a more effective learning and, therefore, the need to



utilize it in teaching is rationalized. (538)

Allan Paivio and Richard Mayer, eminent scholars whose careers were and are mostly dedicated to imaginal cognitive research, both articulate systems wherein instruction is presented through words (either written or spoken) along with pictures (either static or dynamic); the learner then develops his or her own mental representations of the concept at hand. As mentioned, Paivio's exhaustive analysis of this process is called "dual coding theory," whereas Mayer uses the more generic (and probably more intuitive) moniker "multimedia learning" (Paivio 53; Mayer 3). The two theories in their entirety include far more content than can be satisfactorily extrapolated here; however, they share a foundationally bimodal concept of how the human brain works. In these theories, two information processing frameworks function concurrently: one for verbal data and one for visual data (Mayer 6; Paivio 53-54). When presenting material intended to be learned, deliberately targeting both channels of comprehension "takes advantage of the full capacity of humans for processing information" (Mayer 6). As Paivio enunciates it, "[Both systems] are functionally interconnected so that activity in one system can initiate activity in the other. The structural and functional distinctions combine to produce qualitative differences in the kinds of processing for which the two systems are specialized" (54). Mayer additionally introduces a salient point that depending on the educational context, either words or pictures might be more paramount for a student's understanding—they are not necessarily equivalent in any given scenario. Instead, it is the complementarity of the two working in tandem that is key: "human understanding is enhanced when learners are able to mentally integrate visual and verbal representations...In the process of trying to build connections between words and pictures, learners are able to create a deeper understanding than from words or pictures alone." (7).

Gangwer also expounds on a multimedia approach, moving beyond just visuals and citing an integration within a lesson of "music and drama, direct experiences, emotion, and real-world context" as a means to enhance comprehension. "The more regions of the brain that are involved and the more students employ their emotions during learning, the more channels they have for recalling information" (23-24). The affective response to aesthetics mentioned at the end of Gangwer's statement introduces another central means by which imagery can achieve its efficacy: human emotion. When designing for education, both rational and emotional aspects must be taken into account, as Dennis West, of Brigham Young University's Department of Instructional Psychology and Technology, and his co-authors write:

We as humans are deeply attuned to aesthetics. Our immediate perception of an object—in our case, a learning design—affects us on a visceral level, instantly making the object attractive or repellant to us...This emotional judgment, which occurs much faster than deliberate cognition, frames subsequent thoughts and has a strong impact on our future thinking and actions...Ultimately, visual design influences and connects both emotional and cognitive aspects of the learning experience. Quality visual design piques interest, calls attention, and increases engagement and motivation while simultaneously improving communication, supporting cognitive processing of complex ideas, aiding retention, and fostering creativity.

The authors go on to articulate three ways in which graphics catalyze affective learning, first, through commanding interest (a learner's mental focus), second, by holding attention (enabling greater informational extraction), and third, via increasing engagement and motivation (the desire to learn and persist in the learning experience) (West, et al.). Malamed repeats the rational and cognitive



bypass created by affective graphics and further notes that brain research has validated emotional responses to “both pleasant and unpleasant pictures,” which, even after repeated exposures, elicited “pronounced brain activity that does not occur when [the participants] look at neutral pictures” (a phenomenon which continued despite an absurd amount of repetition) (202-203). Observers also spend more time looking at these sorts of affective images in contrast to their neutral counterparts (202). Malamed asserts that “meaningful emotional content” captures attention and interest “because [these graphics] generate a state of arousal, which is a cognitive and biologically energized state. As a general rule, most people find monotony and boredom to be an unpleasant experience and stimulation and activation to be a pleasant experience...Emotional experiences help people achieve and maintain this optimal state of arousal” (207).

Having established the potency of visuals for enhancing learning and surveyed explanations on how they attain that potency, the question then arises as to what guidance scholarship offers regarding the actual appearance of illustrations intended for integration into catechesis.

A Blank Canvas (An Aesthetic Approach)

Throughout the history of Christian art, the physical appearance of artifacts has varied considerably. In Chartres Cathedral, both sculpture and colored glass reveal doctrine and the history of the faith (Ball 171)—the architecture itself, in its thoughtful and beautiful crafting, can certainly be listed under the heading of pedagogic art as well. Pope Gregory, in his letters to the bishop of Marseilles, discusses large narrative paintings within churches that depicted the deeds of holy people (Chazelle 141). Ferrell gives examples of early

Protestant infographics included in a theological tome, going so far as to claim the pictures are more effective and concise than the literary work itself (601-604). Lucas Cranach completed paintings and altarpieces that borrowed from traditional Roman Catholic formats to reinforce Lutheran theology (Noble 1). Even the iconoclastic Calvin himself condoned paintings, engravings, and other images in certain genres (mainly for educational merit, and only if they were displayed in non-religious contexts) (Michalski 70-72).

As demonstrated, the imperative of Protestant imagery from the time of the Reformation was instruction in the Holy Scriptures: Biblical text was preeminent within the auspices of theology-philosophy, and pictures were supplementary (at best). In the context of a twenty-first century Protestant catechesis, an educational goal necessarily remains central. Therefore, current insights from the realm of instructional design will provide guidance for a creative approach. Dennis West, et al. give a working definition for this realm of study:

Instructional design lies at the crossroads of both the education tradition (instructional) and the artistic tradition (design)...In artistic contexts, design connotes aesthetics as evaluative criteria while in scientific contexts it connotes functionality as evaluative criteria. Instructional design is a bit of both—art and science. An effective learning experience often includes the meeting of instructional objectives, which is part of the science of learning, but also the proverbial “lighting of a fire,” or the art of learning.

For constructing an influential visual educational presentation, the same authors proffer a list of foundational items, including font choice, which



affects readability, emotional impact, and visual clarity; color selection, which influences message (through mental associations), emotion, and enhances visual language (aiding in navigating the picture and interpreting meaning); organization, which guides the eye, increases attention and understanding, and diminishes confusion; iconography, those signs and symbols that cultivate interest, impact emotion, and impart cultural associations; and theme, which organizes all graphical elements into a unified whole and can “cement the message of an instructional object.”

Parrish also expounds numerous means by which illustrations can be effectually incorporated with text, from simplified graphics intended simply to grab attention, to photographically naturalistic images, to complex and annotated diagrams (“Instructional”). He also clarifies when and where certain pictorial approaches can be more helpful. For example, complexity can draw and hold a viewer’s attention, but the artist must be careful not to overdo complexity to the point of bewildering the eye, which would cause an observer to retract his or her gaze. Similarly, the novelty of something new or unexpected entering a viewer’s sensory field commands attention; however, overuse degrades novelty into monotony. The author further articulates the unique value of illustrations in teaching abstract information “by providing images that learners might not generate on their own.” Such imagery might include “Charts showing trends, diagrams of processes, and visual metaphors of abstract ideas” (“Instructional”). Levie and Lentz add a caveat along these lines, stating that “Maps, diagrams, and graphic organizers appear to be less reliable than representational pictures. Some research suggests that a major problem with non-representational pictures is that learners are not practiced in making effective use of them” (218). Similarly, both Malamed and West, et al.

stress the importance of a viewer’s familiarity with iconography or symbolism employed in an instructional context; the latter authors recommend a legend to orient an audience who might not be well-versed in the necessary visual language (Malamed 37; West, et al.).

Connie Malamed expresses how artists can accurately communicate their intended message by utilizing sound principles within instructional design, achieving goals as varied as process explanation, emotive response, or data visualization (9). This is achieved foundationally by “directing the cognitive and emotional processes of the audience” (14). In the second portion of her book, Malamed catalogues principles for accomplishing these objectives, several of which overlap information already identified. First is organization, the structure and arrangement within an image that increases efficiency of information processing by shifting “information acquisition to the perception system” (43). Organization includes visual prominence of key features through marked differentiators, segregation of textures, and coherent groupings of disparate parts into associated wholes (54, 57, 63-66). Second involves guiding the viewer’s eyes, in order to present the planned information in a logical sequence: this process acts as “one of the more essential techniques visual communicators can employ to ensure that viewers comprehend their intended message” (72). Directing gaze is accomplished through manipulating pictorial elements in their positioning, emphasis, sense of movement, psychological eye connection, and explicit visual cues like arrows and circles (79, 81, 85, 91-92, 95-96). Third, a reduction in realism, uses lower-fidelity imagery to “focus on essential details, induce a quick response, strengthen the impact of a message, or provide an explanation, particularly to those with nominal knowledge of the content” (102). A distracting degree of realism



can be avoided by reducing the visual noise of texture and shading, starkly accentuating the silhouette, utilizing recognizable iconography, simplifying contours into expressive linework, and strictly limiting the complex quantity of objects compared to typical literal fields of view (109-110, 111, 117, 121, 124). Fourth, Malamed lists “abstract graphics,” a genre which contains imagery such as “diagrams, charts, graphs, visualizations, maps, and timelines” (127). Besides echoing Parrish and Levie and Lentz on this subject, Malamed also explains how abstract graphics enhance the credibility of a message, due to this type of picture’s regular association with “technical, scientific, and business publications,” depicting “facts and data, concepts, and systems” (129-130). Fifth presents a paradox, also articulated by Parrish: visual complexity. Malamed encapsulates the idea this way:

On the one hand, complexity is a compelling feature known to capture a viewer’s attention and stimulate interest. Rather than looking at an entire picture, viewers tend to look at the informative portions, particularly those with intricate detail, patterns, and occlusions.

On the other hand, complexity only arouses curiosity up to a point. When a visual is extremely complex, viewers may tend to avoid it altogether. (166)

Additionally, although the weight of simplicity has been stressed, “some concepts and systems are too deep and too rich to pare down” (169). The proper balance from an instructional design standpoint is to include all visual information “necessary for providing a coherent explanation” while avoiding “extraneous and distracting detail” (174). “Clarifying rather than simplifying complexity is most effective” (184). Malamed explains three approaches for achieving this balance: segmentation and sequencing, where complex content

is rationally split into smaller units to facilitate mental processing and ultimately integrated in the viewer’s mind; specialized views, where graphics not normally observable are isolated or introduced, such as cross-sections, magnifications, and devices to reveal movement (such as arrows or lines); and inherent structure, which presents information “based on an intuitive understanding of how information is ordered,” such as the arrangement of months and days in a calendar—relationships among concepts are key (175, 177, 182, 197). Sixth and last, Malamed assesses the affective impact of imagery (discussed earlier) along with strategies for engaging a viewer’s emotions. The author begins this section by remarking that although emotion and cognition are distinct and often thought of as being in opposition, the two are, in fact, interdependent: “Emotion is known to affect mental processes, such as attention, perception, and memory...Emotions also affect how information is processed and encoded into long-term memory” (206). Although both negative and positive affective associations can influence an observer, the results of positive associations are stronger and longer-lasting (203-206). Autobiographical memories are also often triggered by images, creating a personal, meaningful, and therefore more powerful, connection (206). Aiming for simple emotional responses, as opposed to complex or multi-faceted reactions, also might be a better strategy for influencing an audience in the manner intended, as conflicting emotions could nullify the desired outcome (208). Malamed designates four ways in which emotionally charged pictures can be designed: conveying emotional salience, providing a thematic narrative, making use of visual metaphors, and incorporating novelty and humor (207-208). Conveying emotional salience involves making an affective appeal clear, central, and significant, moving beyond literal interpretations: color, composition, and symbolism all play important roles



here, as does human empathetic relation to other human faces (209-211). Providing a thematic narrative is potent because logical conceptual continuity and storytelling are natural, compelling communication and organizational devices, establishing an “underlying emotional track” which often yields “a vicarious experience” (213-214). Making use of visual metaphors engages a standard method by which the human cognitive system grasps ideas of which it is otherwise ignorant: metaphors in general “transfer the properties of one object to another or...conceptualize an idea in terms of another” (219). Metaphors also assist in making abstract, ambiguous, and ethereal occurrences “explicit and tangible”; pictorial metaphors in particular seek to “compare or combine two previously unconnected objects or ideas” (219). For an individual to successfully extrapolate the deeper, figurative meaning of an image, care must be taken by the designer to choose objects and ideas with which the projected viewer is familiar (220). Finally, incorporating novelty and humor “reliably grab attention and arouse curiosity because they cross into unfamiliar territory, a place that challenges one’s visual memory” (223). Although overlap certainly exists between the two (the latter being a subset of the former), novelty is not constrained to lighthearted topics alone; instead, novelty exploits incongruities by introducing distinctive objects which are either unfamiliar or out of context to induce a person to spend more time in processing and resolving the scenario presented (223). A designer must again be cautious to avoid extremes, however, as an overly incongruous image is self-defeating, creating confusion instead of a favorable reaction (223). Humor, by definition, evokes amusement and prompts laughter; as such, it is not suitable for serious issues. However, when a subject is conducive to this approach, humor is “often considered more interesting than serious messages” (224).

Returning to the history of pedagogical imagery within Protestantism, as intimated, literary centrality combined with the desire for reproducibility on the printing-press seems to have frequently relegated the actual appearance of instructive artwork to a second-class status. Of course, many masterpieces were created within Protestantism during the Baroque era (Rembrandt’s oeuvre being a foremost instance), with straightforward Biblical narratives comprising a large segment. Beginning mainly with the Dutch Golden Age, the category of genre scenes (along with still-life) gives a tolerable exemplar for combining attractive imagery with education outside of Scriptural portrayals. Genre pieces “depicted scenes from everyday life, both high and low” (Meagher) and often “offered clear moral guidance on how to live a pious life” (Collins). Lessons could be presented wittily, morbidly, plainly, covertly, etc., but of note within this genre is artworks’ objective beauty. According to Jennifer Meagher, Senior Collections Cataloguer of European Paintings at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, “genre painting in the Low Countries remained richly diverse in both style and subject as artists achieved new heights of technical refinement, optical and perspectival sophistication, and an often superb evocation of mood” (Fig. 2.13).

The lucid combination of teaching and aesthetic present in such genre scenes segues into one rather understated aspect of Protestant art within the historical portions of the scholarship: discussion of pictures’ visual appeal—their beauty. Although this concept does appear in the purview of instructional design, a more holistic understanding of beauty provides an important counterbalance to dictums from that field. The late Sir Roger Scruton, an English philosopher, author, and speaker who specialized in aesthetics, made this topic (sans overt denominational slant) the focus of his book *Beauty: A*



FIG. 2.13 | van Rijn, Rembrandt, Musical Company, 1626, The Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam | <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/SK-A-4674>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Photo by Rijksmuseum, Public Domain



Very Short Introduction. Scruton sets the stage by presenting an important (though by no means exclusive or undebated) historical understanding of beauty: that it is an “ultimate value—something that we pursue for its own sake, and for the pursuit of which no further reason need be given” (2). The two other concepts in the category of “ultimate value” are truth and goodness; altogether they comprise “a trio of ultimate values which justify our rational inclinations” known as “transcendentals” (2). The author notes that this model of thinking extends at least back to Plato and was later adapted by Christian theologians as attributes of the Triune God (2-3). A robust treatment of Protestant artwork from the philosophical purview of aesthetics would take more time and space than can be allotted here; however, one focus within Scruton’s exploration of beauty does seem pertinent: a caution against utilitarianism. Scruton reminds the reader that “We appreciate beautiful things not for their utility only, but also for what they are in themselves—or more plausibly, for how they *appear* in themselves” (16). In concluding the brief discussion of form and function in his book’s introduction, Scruton articulates a cogent interdependent understanding of the two while retaining the position that beauty is an ultimate value, saying “when we take beauty seriously, function ceases to be an independent variable, and becomes absorbed into the aesthetic goal...Always there is the demand that we approach beauty for its own sake, as a goal that qualifies and limits whatever other purposes we might have” (22).

Patrick Parrish, although not explicitly referring to beauty, does add his approbation to the importance of “aesthetics” within pedagogical settings in his article “Aesthetic Principles for Instructional Design” for the journal *Educational Technology Research and Development*:



By broadening their concerns beyond immediate learning outcomes and considering all the qualities of designed experiences, instructional designers can create designs that have deep and lasting impacts for learners. The aesthetic qualities of learning experiences, in particular, offer a potent dimension through which to expand learning impacts. (512)

Parrish defines his meaning of the term “aesthetics” as going beyond “merely the surface qualities of things and events” and instead pertaining to “heightened, integral experience” (511). His description here is strongly reminiscent of Scruton’s discussion of sensory and intellectual pleasures in beauty (22-23).

Philip Graham Ryken, eighth President of Wheaton College and author of the booklet *Art for God’s Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts*, speaks of both the importance of beauty within the arts and its broad-scale abandonment in modern culture, both secular and Christian:

Art has also suffered a tragic loss of sacred beauty, as many modern and postmodern artists have been attracted instead to absurdity, irrationality, and even cruelty... The question becomes, therefore, whether as Christians we will aspire to high aesthetic standards. All too often we settle for something that is functional, but not beautiful. We gravitate toward what is familiar, popular, or commercial, with little regard for the enduring values of artistic excellence.

Ryken prodigiously stresses the importance of artistic excellence, stating that work which matches the description above “Ultimately...dishonors God because it is not in keeping with the truth and beauty of his character”; he

asserts that a robustly Biblical understanding of the arts “is important not just for artists, but also for everyone else made in God’s image and in need of redemption.” Scruton himself focuses on the abandonment of beauty and embrace of ugly in chapter eight of his book. Like Scruton, Ryken refers to goodness, truth, and beauty as essential criterion for art and highlights beauty as being expressly connected to God’s divine character. However, unlike Scruton, Ryken is forthcoming in his personal declaration of biblical, Trinitarian orthodoxy when pronouncing beauty as an end-in-itself beyond mere functionality:

God is a great lover of beauty...Form is as important to him as function. Thus it was not enough for the tabernacle to be laid out in the right way; it also had to be beautiful...God made sure of this by taking the unprecedented step of endowing its artists with the gift of his Spirit. All of this tells us something about what kind of artist God is: an artist who loves beauty.

Robin Jensen also discusses the centrality of beauty within Christian practice of the visual arts in her article “The Arts in Protestant Worship.” She refers to Augustine as following Plato in underscoring the capacity of beauty in the physical universe—both in nature and in human creations—to draw a person to “the ultimate source of beauty” (which Augustine located in the Trinity) (363). An individual’s eternal position can be directly affected through this ascertainment and pursuit of beauty:

In addition to nature, God is known through spontaneous visions or dreams as well as the things made by art of one form or another. Art, after all, is both the human response to creation and human



participation in creation...If God were not the origin and creator of beauty, these beautiful things could not have existed at all. Without them, we might not find our way to the ultimate beauty. We might not be converted. (363)

An aesthetic consideration closely related to beauty focuses more on the two other classical transcendentals, goodness and truth, in a way which might be defined as “redemptive.” Philip Ryken wonderfully enunciates a Christian view of ideal art by referencing the transcendentals, standards which “are not relative; they are absolute,” and it is from Ryken’s lengthier description that the term “redemptive” has been drawn. Ryken expresses it this way:

Modern and postmodern art often claim to tell the truth about the pain and absurdity of human existence, but that is only part of the story. The Christian approach to the human condition is more complete, and for that reason more hopeful (and ultimately more truthful). Christian artists celebrate the essential goodness of the world God has made, being true to what is there. Such a celebration is not a form of naive idealism, but of healthy realism. At the same time, Christian artists also lament the ugly intrusion of evil into a world that is warped by sin, mourning the lost beauties of a fallen paradise. When truly Christian art portrays the sufferings of fallen humanity, it always does so with a tragic sensibility...There is a sense not only of what we are, but also of what we were: creatures made to be like God.

Even better, there is a sense of what we can become. Christian art is redemptive, and this is its highest purpose. Art is always an interpretation of reality, and the Christian should interpret reality in

its total aspect, including the hope that has come in the world through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Rather than giving in to meaninglessness and despair, Christian artists know that there is a way out. Thus they create images of grace, awakening a desire for the new heavens and the new earth by anticipating the possibilities of redemption in Christ. (Ryken)

In his stated position, Ryken mirrors the late Francis Schaeffer, well-known American theologian, philosopher, and author. In his book *Art and the Bible*, Schaeffer speaks of “minor and major themes” of the Christian worldview (terms which have no relation to music) (82-83). The minor theme equates to the hopelessness and meaningless of life in rebellion to the revelation of Christ (embodied by such personages as Nietzsche and Sartre), while the major theme stands in direct opposition to the minor, with life having hope and purpose, “an optimism in the area of being; everything is not absurd, there is meaning,” because of the reality of the Triune God of Christianity (82-83).

Socio-demographic considerations for an aesthetic approach must also be broached. In her book, Connie Malamed highlights an audience’s cognitive characteristics, including such things as development, distractibility, visual literacy, expertise, motivation, and culture. The theological-philosophical subject-matter presented by a visual solution for this thesis should theoretically only be necessary for new converts (or children, who fall into that category by definition). However, the reality is that many church-going, years-long Protestants need to be instructed in these areas also (a fact plainly demonstrated in *The State of Theology* survey). Of development, Malamed asserts that “A less skilled viewer may interpret a picture literally although the intended meaning is metaphorical” (36). The author adds that a younger



audience is more easily distracted, finding it “more difficult to close their minds to extraneous information,” and so less able to “concentrate on relevant information” (36). Using bright colors is one way to retain focus with children (37). Visual literacy, the importance of which has already been stressed, is discerned in the comprehension of symbols and graphical devices (37). Regarding expertise, “The audience’s level of expertise should significantly affect design decisions...viewers with domain-specific experience are less likely to get overloaded when perceiving a complex visual as compared to novices” (37). West, et al. add that “novice learners benefit much more from added graphics than do more knowledgeable learners because they [the advanced learners] have already formed internal visual imagery related to the content.” Regardless of an observer’s expertise or age, his or her personal motivation is integrally tied to an image’s success: “with enough motivation, a viewer will attend to and work at understanding a graphic” (Malamed 38). If an artwork is well-crafted in aesthetic and conceptual metrics, it will essentially leave active viewers in two basic categories: those who are genuinely seeking for wisdom (and therefore will receive edification, according to Scripture, as in James 4:8-10), and those who harden their hearts (and therefore must actively, willingly reject whatever aspects of God’s Word are the focus of the imagery). Jensen alludes to this idea in her article “The Arts in Protestant Worship,” where she notes that Jesus used parables as a verbal art form in order to reveal God to those who were ready to receive the message and who might be drawn by stories where “intellectual arguments” would fail (364). Cultural considerations are defined by the context of the United States in the twenty-first century; however, the pluralistic nature of American society makes this aspect somewhat vague: a wide breadth of ages, genders, and cultures are represented in contemporary U.S. Protestantism. A tolerable approach seems to be simply

embracing this demographic diversity by including both men and women in a range of ages, ethnicities, and economic circumstances within each illustration. This solution can be observed in even a cursory survey of both commercial and fine art in the current environment, and seems to fulfill the scriptural mandate of equitability (Jam. 2.8–9, Gal. 3.27–28, Col. 3.10-11).

A distillation of the scholarship in the vein of an appropriate artistic approach within modern Protestant catechesis can be stated quite concisely: a vast deal of leeway exists for the appearance of visual illustrations. As West, et al. describe it, “there is no simple formula that can be used to design or select visuals that improve learning and performance in all situations.” One of the more consistent elements evident in the research was the idea that art cannot instruct in a vacuum—the viewer must be informed via additional means, either previously to or in simultaneity with looking at pedagogical artwork. Even within Pope Gregory’s famous description of pictures being displayed in churches “in order that those who do not know letters may at least read by seeing on the walls what they are unable to read in books,” Chazelle carefully notes that Gregory never offers approbation to the idea that illustrations can teach a viewer who is entirely ignorant of the content depicted (138-139). Several additional items that rose to the fore included conceptual clarity (engaging both cognitive and affective domains), a close physical proximity between text and picture (with special emphasis on the primacy of scriptural passages), the necessity for a work of art to have an attractive aesthetic and redemptive tenor (which might properly be labeled beauty), and an ability to be mass-produced (for purposes of evangelism and discipleship). Historical instances of these qualities were further investigated in the case study and visual analyses included just a bit further on.



PUTTING A FRAME ON IT (LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY AND KNOWLEDGE GAP)

The aggregated research surveyed supports the original hypothesis: in the modern era, many self-proclaimed Protestants in the United States either do not know or do not understand foundational dogma, and a major factor of this ignorance and misapprehension is a lack of catechetical instruction. Despite vigorous acclamations for catechesis by a vast number of prominent historical theologians—scriptural, ancient, and Reformer alike—anti-authoritarianism, liberal theology, and lay-led gatherings (such as Sunday schools and small groups) have been major factors steering the vast majority of contemporary Protestant churches in the U.S. to abandon catechistic pedagogy. The result is an array of intellectually and spiritually moribund Christians (or pseudo-Christians).

Currently, a return to catechizing is being called for by intelligent, wise, and eminently Godly individuals from most, if not all, strains of Protestantism. However, while calls for a return to catechistic learning within contemporary Protestantism in the U.S. certainly do exist (albeit in the minority), these sources appear to focus almost exclusively on a traditional, literarily-driven approach, giving little page-space to multimodal learning in general and nearly none whatever to visual illustrations in particular within catechistic methodology (excepting a handful of children’s resources). It does not appear that a 21st-century catechism has been robustly explored that incorporates either insights gained from modern scholarship in visual cognition and pedagogical theory or historical and recent apologetics for imagery from the ambit of theological and philosophical aesthetics. This lack might be due in part to Protestantism’s occasionally strained relationship with pictures, resulting from the iconoclastic

positions of some Reformers; the primacy of a literary presentation is also understandable given the written word’s historical precedence (in both western religions and academia) (Mayer 6). But modern culture’s reliance on and obsession with visual stimuli cries out for an aesthetic reassessment. Recent data concludes that a combination of imagery along with text or verbal information increases understanding in both the short and long-term; therefore, by implementing visual presentations as a foundational part of catechistic learning, comprehension and retention can be amplified through activating multiple learning domains along with engaging a viewer’s emotions. Successful illustrations within a modern Protestant catechetical context could assume a variety of aesthetic styles; however, images should contain conceptual clarity (that invites further dialogue), scriptural immediacy, objective beauty, and easy reproducibility.



FIG. 2.14 | *Lucas Cranach the Elder*, Portrait of Lucas Cranach the Elder, 1550, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucas_Cranach_the_Elder#/media/File:Lucas_Cranach_d._Ä._063.jpg. Accessed 28 Sept. 2021 | Photo by Trzęsacz, Public Domain



FIG. 2.15 | *Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder*, Portrait of Martin Luther, 1528, The Lutherhaus, Wittenberg | [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_d._Ä._\(Werkst.\)_-_Porträt_des_Martin_Luther_\(Lutherhaus_Wittenberg\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_d._Ä._(Werkst.)_-_Porträt_des_Martin_Luther_(Lutherhaus_Wittenberg).jpg). Accessed 28 Sept. 2021 | Photo by Botaurus, Public Domain



CASE STUDY AND VISUAL ANALYSES

INTRODUCTION - CASE STUDY

Religious art from workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder presents a seminal historical instance of utilizing imagery to present Protestant theology-philosophy. Lucas Cranach often worked directly with Martin Luther (Noble 1) (Figs. 2.14, 2.15), so the artist and those within his workshop were naturally among the first to interpret Protestant doctrine into visual language, “[making] the reformer’s complex ideas intelligible to a wide range of viewers” (1). Therefore, studying the artwork that Cranach himself fashioned (or directed others to fashion) will provide valuable insight for guiding artistic decision-making for this genre of picture. The knowledge gained will help inform a strong visual concept for contemporary catechesis, and also place newly crafted pedagogical imagery firmly within the tradition of its Protestant antecedents.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Dying Man (Fig. 2.16)

The first Cranach image to be examined is the painting *Der Sterbende*—known by a few slightly varying names in English but all containing *The Dying*—that actually precedes the widespread traction of Lutheran theology and practice (Ozment 85). In the image, a dying man is lying in bed surrounded in the foreground by several human figures, including a doctor, a person writing, and a clergyman with crucifix, among others. In the background, however, are a plethora of supernatural persona, from

terrifying demons on one side, to angelic beings on the other, to the Holy Trinity, encompassed by a prismatic mandorla and surrounded by redeemed souls, apostles, and cherubs. Above all these, and in a distinctly separate space, a group of churchgoers kneel to pray outside a church-building while the crowned Virgin hovers above them in her own mandorla (replete with clouds and putti). Woven throughout both scenes are lines of text, a prominent feature of Protestant art that Michalski states came about “as an autonomous artistic phenomenon” (41).

The late Steven Ozment, former McLean Professor of Ancient and Modern History at Harvard University (and Professor Emeritus), describes the painting as “present[ing] a more distinct Lutheran message. It depicts the ‘Wrath of Hell’ that awaits the delivery of a dying man’s soul,

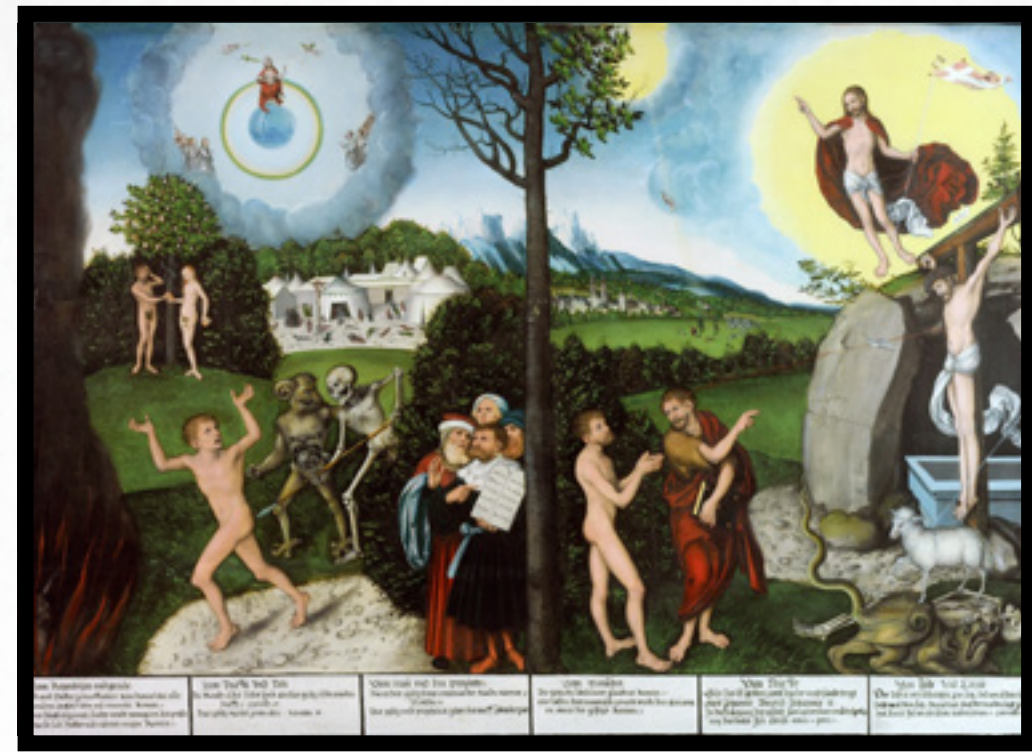


FIG. 2.16 | Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Der Sterbende* (The Dying Man), 1518, Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Der-Sterbende-1518.jpg>. Accessed 29 Nov. 2020 | Photo by Trzęsacz, Public Domain



whose failings over a lifetime are tallied by background monsters who wait to devour him” (85). The dichotomous composition of the lower half, which is similar to Cranach’s subsequent painting *Law and Gospel*, starkly reveals the only two possible endings for the dying man: damnation on the one hand (because he has transgressed God’s commands), or eternal life on the other (if he but repents and seeks forgiveness from God) (Ozment 85). Bonnie Noble’s interpretation of the image slightly contrasts that of Ozment, in that Noble regards *Der Sterbende* as giving approbation to salvation by works (after all, an angel in the scene does hold a placard literally reading “good works”): a doctrine that was certainly antithetical to Lutheran theology (39-40). Noble emphasizes her stance by translating and highlighting the inscription at the foot of the bed, which reads “You must despair, because you neglected God’s commandments, and fervently fulfilled mine [the devil’s] with the help of the woman [Eve]” (40). However, the author does not address the inscription just above the head of the bed, which translates roughly to “I ask you to repent of sin and trust compassion”; a statement that would seem to lend credence to Ozment’s view. (It also certainly appears too late for the dying man to perform any good works.) Concerning the various other lines of text scattered around the composition, Noble relates that they include Psalm 144 (in the Latin Vulgate version, which corresponds to Psalm 145:9 in Luther’s translation) and other supplements to and identifiers for the pictorial motifs (40). She additionally notes that the inclusion of Latin verses here signifies a crucial distinction between this painting and *Law and Gospel*, “where the appended Bible verses and...labels are in German,” because “Luther’s German translation of the Bible is one of the cornerstones of his theology and the basis of *sola scriptura*” (40).

FIG. 2.17 | Lucas Cranach the Elder, *Law and Gospel*, oil painting, 1529, Herzogliches Museum, Gotha | <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GOTHA-cranach-veljo.jpg>. Accessed 29 Nov. 2020 | Photo by Szepec-571, Public Domain



Law and Gospel (Fig. 2.17)

Next to be discussed is the *Schlossmuseum’s* version of Cranach’s most famous painting *Law and Gospel*, located in Gotha, Germany. Produced by Cranach around 1529 and informed by active discussions with Martin Luther, Bonnie Noble describes the piece as “the first definitively Lutheran painting” and asserts that “Cranach’s identity as a Reformation artist is linked inextricably to [this] pictorial type” (29, 270). Noble further claims that the uniqueness of the “Law and Gospel” visual concept (Cranach created multiple iterations with slight compositional changes) lies in the fact that it “does more than merely reiterate

key notions of Lutheran theology. In its form, iconography, and function it differs markedly from art of the preceding period” (27). Michalski echoes this sentiment, declaring Cranach’s illustrations on this theme “the most important new Protestant iconographic formulation,” and stating that this painting (along with its twin located in Prague), “disseminated [the Law and Gospel/Grace] motif throughout Reformation Europe” (34).

As in *Der Sterbende*, the compositional arrangement of *Law and Gospel* is divided strictly in half by an unusual tree in the closest foreground: it is half-alive and half-dead. As the viewer looks at the painting, the dead, left half of the tree overlooks a rather chaotic landscape that includes Old Testament Biblical narratives (namely, the Bronze Serpent and the Fall) and a grotesque allegory where a nude man is being prodded into hellfire. Near the tree, a small cluster of figures stand around a man in 16th-century attire holding tablet of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments. Above all these elements, Christ sits astride the earthly globe in judgement, adored by saints. The right, living side of the tree stands before a more positive (though no less surreal) vista, where Elijah, who grasps a large book, can be seen pointing a another nude man’s gaze towards the crucified Christ. A stream of blood sprays from Christ’s side onto the nude figure, and the Holy Spirit dove flies along this crimson path. At the foot of Jesus’ cross, a lamb, holding a banner of victory, stands astride a skeleton and a demon. In the midground behind the crucifixion, the empty tomb stands open with the risen Christ, also bearing a victory banner, hovering just above. The distant background shows a contemporaneous town with an anachronistic annunciation to the shepherds occurring in the fields before it. Underneath the combined whole, a white strip of panel displays six columns of Scriptural text in German.

Noble summarizes the overall program of the painting succinctly, “*Law and Gospel* explicates the defining point of Luther’s theology, the idea of salvation by faith alone” (35). Furthering this model of a Lutheran apologetic, she also describes how the Law and Gospel motif visualizes the three famous Reformation *sola* slogans in opposition to Catholic belief and practice: instead of illustrating a single Scriptural text, *Law and Gospel* serves to narrate a broad concept (35-36). Although Noble recognizes that strictly typological interpretations of the image have been articulated, she casts doubt on that methodology by referring to the inclusion of Christ in Judgement on the “Law” side of the painting and also, in later version of *Law and Gospel*, the Brazen Serpent on the “Gospel” side (36-37). Of Christ in Judgement, Noble says that “[Its placement] on the law side tells us that Law and Gospel presents not Old Testament against New Testament, or type against antitype, or even law against gospel but, rather, the distinct and simultaneous relationships, both judging and merciful, of God to humanity” (37-38). Similarly, the Brazen Serpent’s “inclusion... on the gospel side in post-1529 versions of Law and Gospel emphasizes that grace exists in both the Old and New Testaments, just as judgment exists in both Testaments. Moreover, because it appears on the grace side of the composition, it demonstrates that the law and gospel coexist throughout scripture, even as they remain distinct” (38).

Didactic Woodcuts (Fig. 2.18)

Last, but certainly not least, are Cranach’s didactic woodcuts, taken as a group. Despite being mass-produced and comprising a wide variety of subjects, Bruce McNair, Professor of History at Campbell University, still echoes Noble’s earlier statement about intelligibility, describing the woodcuts as “intended to teach complex ideas in easily accessible ways” (41). Henk van den Belt, Professor of Reformed Theology at the University of Groningen, says that the woodcuts used



in Martin Luther's *Deusch Catechismus* became "very influential in Lutheran catechetical tradition," even though they were "not very impressive from an artistic perspective" (196).

In an article about the illustrations for the Ten Commandments, van den Belt articulates that the pictures, as originally employed by Luther, were accompanied by a concise amount of text, namely, the commandment itself and one brief question and answer expounding on the commandment in simple terms:

Apparently, the illustrations originally functioned as a visual tool underlining the message of the commandments. For the illiterate, these paratextual elements probably were aids to help them remember the words which most people in sixteenth-century Germany would have learned by heart as a child. The illustrations undoubtedly helped the children to memorize the text of the catechism as an explanation of the Ten Commandments. (198)



FIG. 2.18 | Lucas Cranach the Elder, Illustration of the Ten Commandments, 1529 | Image from "The Law Illuminated: Biblical Illustrations of the Commandments in Lutheran Catechisms" by Henk van den Belt, p. 209 | Public Domain

The decalogue woodcuts also used exclusively narrative scenes from the Old Testament as subject matter—which van den Belt labels an instance of Reformation "iconographical renewal," since portrayals of the Ten Commandments throughout the Middle Ages utilized secular scenes (205–206). The author connects this renewal in with the Lutheran theological emphasis of Law and Gospel, where the Old Testament is inextricably linked with the Law, being a preparation for the Gospel (200). Another theological insight from van den Belt, which ties into the previous idea, is that all Ten Commandment illustrations (except one) highlight punishment for sin, which is another Lutheran emphasis, as "The Law confronts us with sin and its consequences in order to lead us to Christ" (201).

In another article, Bruce McNair looks at Cranach's woodcuts for the Lord's Prayer in *The Large Catechism* and articulates how the illustrations reveal Luther's theology as it developed over time (1). In fact, McNair actually gives little page-space to the illustrations and much more to theology. For example, as of 1519, Luther still associated the petition "give us this day our daily bread" with the Eucharist, with Christ Himself being the bread. However, by 1529 with the publishing of the Greater and Lesser Catechisms (and also translating the Bible into German), Luther had exegeted the prayer as Protestants normally do today, with the phrase referring to normal, physical bread—and therefore, as a supplication for sustenance of the physical body (7–8).

Unlike the consistent use of Old Testament narrative scenes for the Ten Commandment images, the subject matter selected for the Lord's Prayer is a bit more haphazard. The first topic, "hallowed be Thy name," shows an apparently 16th-century preacher giving a message to his congregation



(3); however, the rest of the pictures are New Testament narrative scenes (the Canaanite woman, the feeding of the five thousand, etc.—although the figures within these scenes are also anachronistic in their attire). In the depiction of the parable of the unmerciful servant, Cranach also utilizes a “continuous narrative” format, where a figure appears multiple times in a single image to indicate time passing and subsequent points in the storyline (9). No other images from the Lord’s Prayer series incorporates this approach.

These woodcuts were not originally created as illustrations for Luther’s catechisms; rather, they were intended as poster-prints known as “broadsheets” (van den Belt 202). Van den Belt states these posters likely had been used to teach children textual information that would have been printed next to the images, namely, “the Ten Commandments, the Twelve Articles of the Christian Faith, and the Lord’s Prayer” (202). Although none of the broadsheets has survived, there is literary evidence that all the illustrations were collected into one poster, which might have been called a “catechetical tablet” (202). However, once the illustrations were included in early catechisms, subsequent iterations continued to reuse the same imagery, with little or no changes—even when later catechetical passages did not entirely coincide with the portrayals (202-203).

Other instances of Cranach’s pedagogical woodcuts show how the artist appropriated Catholic imagery into the sphere of Protestantism. An indulgence scene of the Holy Family became a “declaration of Lutheran education” that emphasized the Lutheran values of literacy for the laity and having the Bible available in the common language—“Families were responsible for teaching children to read and study the Bible” (Noble 170, 172-173).

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION - CASE STUDY

An initial reflection on how this case study could influence a visual solution for this thesis might seem at first rather minor but could prove to be subtly quite effective. Like many other examples of historical Christian art, Cranach frequently employs anachronisms within his work (clothing, personages, buildings); however, his reasons for choosing to avoid strict historical literacy are not well developed within the consulted research. Based on past exploration of this phenomenon, it is possible that Cranach incorporated aspects of contemporaneous life in order to create an empathetic connection between the viewer and the scene. If a sinner could see himself or herself more clearly mirrored in the person of the prodigal son, for example, then the potentiality of that individual responding to the message would almost certainly increase. Extrapolating the concept further might also coincide with the more wholesome facets of appropriation, as discussed earlier, where a degree of familiarity may foster a readier reception in the mind of the viewer. A final instance along this same line might be found in *Der Sterbende*, where the donor served as the primary subject matter—his name is included in the inscription that arcs above the scene. Although the resources did not indicate if the donor was alive or deceased at the painting’s completion, the effect certainly would have been similar either way, namely, a *momento mori* for the man himself or members of his household (or any other viewer who knew the subject personally). David Morgan makes brief mention of the progression of this genre of Protestant imagery (i.e., keeping in remembrance one’s own mortality) through the seventeenth century in *The Forge of Vision* (54).



Further, the pictures included in this overview unsurprisingly revolve around issues most prevalent during the Reformation, items such as Law and Gospel, salvation by faith alone, a reduced number of sacraments, the importance of Biblical preaching, and the Alien and Proper Work of God. However, because these images were created from a decidedly Lutheran perspective, their subjects and emphases are not necessarily in keeping with this thesis' framework of "mere Christianity." Instead, topics could be selected that are clearly central to ecumenical orthodoxy while also being uniquely relevant to modern culture.

Another interesting aspect of the study is that none of the examined artworks particularly stand out in terms of technical quality. Henk van den Belt's assessment of the woodcuts is one example (196), but on the whole, even a moderately educated assessment of Cranach's oeuvre would find much room for improvement in technique, especially in contrast to other European works from the same timeframe (e.g., Dürer's prints, Michelangelo's painting and sculpture, or Raphael's altarpieces). Often, Cranach's compositions are stilted, figures are proportionally suspect and under-modeled, perspective is inconsistent, textures are artificial, and overall use of light and shadow is both unrealistic and unappealing, to name several factors. Noble defends such deficiencies by stating that "denying the illusion of reality...circumvents the temptation to venerate the work of art itself" (15). Koerner represents Cranach's "crudeness" in more complex terms, asserting:

"More than that, by [church pictures'] awkward look, as 'crude, external images' (*grobe eusserliche bilde*), they should proclaim themselves to be absurd if taken literally. That way they can be relied upon to point beyond their visible form to what they mean. What modern scholars regard as aesthetic poverty in Cranach's art is, from Luther's

perspective, a pious self-effacement. Like the language of Scripture, and like Scripture's kernel (the crucified Christ), images display their concealment. (248)

Refined argumentation aside, when judged simply on technical merit, these pieces are lacking. (Further discussion of historical contexts, aesthetic systems, and technical developments in the arts are mainly outside the purview of this study). Beyond noting that Luther's overall attitude towards pictures was ambivalent and tangential, Michalski further describes Luther's approach to religious art as "primarily useful in promulgating the Word of God," and that the theologian "always thought in terms of the image's conformity to the Bible and did not display any greater understanding of its aesthetic dimensions" (36, 42). In this regard, it appears that Cranach's workshop was particularly well-suited for working with the Reformer (or perhaps the artisans' knowledge that they could expend less time and energy on each piece—and therefore, make more money—was the driving factor). At any rate, in considering applications from this case study to twenty-first century catechetical imagery, it is probably best to search for aesthetic inspiration from other sources.

On the positive side, Cranach's imagery certainly stands out for its pedagogical clarity—a point that should not be particularly surprising, in light of Michalski's statements about Luther's aesthetic perception of religious art. (In fact, it would seem valid to posit that it is precisely due to a lack of refinement that the instructional quality of the artwork rises so prominently to the fore—there is simply nothing in the piece to compete with it [Noble 27]. However, a counter argument could be that such aforementioned technical deficiencies inhibit a viewer's ability to learn by not generating interest, discouraging engagement and motivation, decreasing communication, and



impeding processing and retention (West, et al.). In images such as *Law and Gospel*, Cranach's composition instills an arguably immediate sense that this painting is intended to teach, versus simply being appreciated (or venerated). The sheer number of overtly symbolical elements, discomfiting figures and objects, and interpersonal significant gesticulation all combine to make that central didactic characteristic nearly inescapable. Among Cranach's Protestant paintings, woodcuts, and altarpieces alike, there is also often an inextricable inclusion of text, such that a theological-philosophical framework is established (at least partially) to aid viewer comprehension, while simultaneously constraining a viewer's interpretative latitude (Noble 27-28).

This integral combination of image and text brings up two final points of reflection for creating modern catechistic imagery. First, for Luther, visual illustrations are meant to be supplemental to text, not a replacement of them (Noble 28; Chazelle 138, 141). Second, as Noble pointedly and repeatedly observes, a concept's transition from word to picture incurs margin for viewer subjectivity (28, 197). In analyzing an early Cranach-Luther collaboration, Noble detects both points in Luther's express avoidance of over-complication. The reformer desired nothing to be included in the illustration that did not aid the text, which in Noble's words, "highlights the priority of aligning pictorial and textual meaning, of creating a limited, reciprocal relationship between word and image" (34). Koerner expands this aspect of Luther's practice to his 1534 illustrated translation of the Bible. Koerner quotes a longtime editor of Luther's, Christoph Walther, who said in a 1563 memoir that Luther "insisted 'the content of the text be painted and drawn as simply as possible'. He 'could not stand it if one smeared in difficult and superfluous things that did not serve the text'" (qtd. in Koerner 42). Considering these two aspects

under the auspices of the tenets of "mere Christianity" in a Protestant strain—dogmas which are frankly not open to equivocation—it seems prudent that artwork developed for this thesis should employ great care in ensuring their didactic content is as well-defined and resolute as possible. Perhaps Luther's own instructive, translated and quoted by Noble, encompasses a best-practice approach:

One has to instruct ordinary people simply and childishly, as much as one can. Otherwise, one of two things will happen: They will neither learn nor understand, or else they will want to be clever, and use their reason to enter into high thoughts, so they move away from belief. (27)

INTRODUCTION - VISUAL ANALYSES

Visual analyses of Protestant didactic art since the Reformation will aid understanding of the artistic decisions for this genre of imagery in order to inform a strong visual concept for contemporary catechesis. Because the purview of this thesis will not extend into digital presentations or platforms (video, web, and so forth) the emphasis will be on physical, "analog" artwork. In this regard, the thesis will seek to further the venerable tradition of classical artforms.

L'INITIATOIRE INSTRUCTION EN LA RELIGION CHRESTIENNE POUR LES ENFANS (Fig. 2.19)

Marguerite de Navarre, wife of Henry II, was princess of France and Queen of Navarre during the first half of the sixteenth century, and this illuminated tome was her Protestant catechism and confession. The reference for this book and its artwork is Myra D. Orth's journal article "Radical Beauty: Marguerite de Navarre's Illuminated Protestant Catechism and Confession."



FIG. 2.19 | *Dedication page, L'Initiatoire instruction en la religion Chrestienne pour les enfans, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris* | <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55005682w/f10.item.r=L'Initiatoire%20instruction>. Accessed 27 Feb. 2021 | Image by Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Public Domain



Artist, Era, and Place

The codex was created circa 1530, and all the artwork within the manuscript was accomplished by a single artist, although that individual and his or her whereabouts at the time remain unknown (411). The manuscript's lavish decoration places it squarely in the Navarre royalty's patronage; however, the occasion for its creation is disputed (384). The French Reformation was in its infancy, and the king vacillated in his attitude towards the movement, both tolerating and persecuting it throughout the 1520's and 1530's (386). Marguerite de Navarre, on the other hand, was an advocate

of the Reformation, actively engaged in its spiritual, intellectual, and practical aspects (386).

Technical Description

L'Initiatoire instruction is stylistically similar to contemporaneous French "Books of Hours," which were extremely common illustrated texts created for use in Roman Catholic private devotions. Indeed, if not for the overt Protestant content, *L'Initiatoire instruction* would be nearly indistinguishable from its Catholic counterparts—even some scholars have been misled in this vein by over-casual observations of the artifact (383-384). The technical quality is actually slightly below the highest levels of excellence for its time (411, 422). Standard concurrent miniaturist motifs are utilized, including gold tabernacle frames and botanical borders, along with bold gothic-humanist script (411-412). Several full-page illustrations are included in Orth's article, namely *Carrying of the Cross*, *The Penitent David*, *Christ Appearing to the Apostles*, and *Christ's Ascension*. The color palette also appears typical for this era and genre, making prominent use of saturated reds, blues, and greens, along with gold leaf.

Intended Audience

The book was created for the private use of Marguerite de Navarre, "written under Marguerite's protection" and "[d]esigned for a queen's taste" (383). Orth states that such a luxurious manuscript would have been an "expected kind of commission coming from the court" (425), albeit differing from the norm due to its Protestant perspective. Orth asserts that "Had the Reform in France not had such a troubled history, we might have had many more such



presentation manuscripts” (425).

Pertinent Historical Theology-Philosophy

With the Reformation still in its infancy, the “Evangelical Reform in France ran a troubled course” (385). However, under the queen’s protection, French Protestants found some respite from intermittent persecution, with Orth stating that Marguerite “decisively determined the fortunes of many of those who remained in France by her very real influence on the king” (386). The teaching of both Luther and Calvin were being disseminated in France by means of the printing press, and Marguerite herself was thoroughly familiar with the writings of Luther, had direct correspondence with Calvin, and fostered a close relationship with Lefevre d’Etaples, “the real *éminence grise* behind the development of the ill-fated French Reform” (385-387).

Two theological-philosophical concepts of particular interest in the context of *L’Initiatore instruction* are Protestant doctrines such as an “uncompromising Sacramentarian view” of the Eucharist (that is, holding the elements to be spiritual and metaphorical, in opposition to transubstantiation) and a non-sacramental understanding of confession (393-395).

Didactic Content

Orth convincingly discerns an overtly Protestant message in the first full-page miniature, but the author clashes with other scholars in this interpretation (412-414). Located on what would normally have been a dedication page, the painting depicts King Henri holding a daisy (the Queen’s namesake flower) towards his new bride. Underneath the image, an inscription reads “I found a precious *Margaritam* which I have implanted in my heart”—Orth understands

this as Marguerite’s desire and intention for her husband to accept and share her Protestant beliefs, “hiding them in his heart” (413-414). Other pedagogical intentions include the *Carrying of the Cross*, which, although a common motif in Roman Catholicism, Orth describes here as being modified to emphasize the Protestant beliefs of the French Reformation in general and Marguerite de Navarre in particular (414-415, 418). The image includes depictions of the king and queen themselves carrying their own crosses along with Jesus, mirroring the inscription underneath taken from Luke’s Gospel, where Christ exhorts the reader to “take up thy cross and follow me.” Orth notes that “both [Christ’s] action and gesture exhort the cross-carrying followers to emphasize the framed message below,” and that “The *Imitatio Christi* nourished late medieval piety throughout Europe and was favored by the Reformation” (414-415). *The Penitent David* has an obvious and historically prevalent connotation to repentance, especially for royalty (418). However, in *L’Initiatore instruction*, the illustration precedes not a selection of penitential Psalms (as in many books of hours), but rather a Protestant treatise on confession that stresses personal, private contrition (394-395, 418). Two final, full-page paintings are presented by Orth: the first a post-resurrection scene where Christ appears to his apostles at a symbolic table (which holds three fish, bread, and wine) and the second a scene of Christ ascending. The former is unique in that it does not show the more typical narrative of Emmaus; instead, it depicts a larger gathering of people, highlighting the Protestant emphasis of gathering congregationally—a fact explicitly stated within the catechism of *L’Initiatore instruction* itself (420-421). The inscription under the scene reads *pax vobis ego sum nolite timere* (407), which includes Jesus’ words from Luke 24 “Peace be with you.” The *Ascension*, another standard choice for illustration, includes the Virgin prominently



among the crowd of witnesses, with the implication that Marguerite should identify herself with Christ's mother (422). The image and accompanying text are intended to “exhort the faithful to love God and to keep a fraternal faith in the face of torment...at the Judgement Day God will punish the tyrants, and the elect will be rid of their suffering” (422).

Influential Factors for Thesis Artwork

The artwork with *L'Initiatore instruction*, although ostensibly not of the highest level of technical excellence, nevertheless demonstrate a timeless beauty in both picture and text. The use of representational imagery, instead of an iconophobic preference for only abstractions, symbols, and text, allows for a more immediate empathetic viewer response, while simultaneously retaining engagement with the prevalence of interesting, recognizable detail. However, from the standpoint of instructional design, the illusionistic extent of those same details almost certainly inhibits clarity of communication to a broader audience (and perhaps even to Marguerite herself, although the personalization of the whole work would undoubtedly mitigate this consideration).

The inclusion of Biblical texts directly underneath illustrations helpfully corrals a viewer's imagination, allowing for interpretation that is closely in keeping with the intention of the broader text. Aside from the opening painting and its highly personalized, obscure symbolism, the scenes are also relatively unambiguous: depictions are clear and include few peripheral elements beyond the central narrative that might introduce confusion or distraction to a viewer (with the notable exception of an unnecessary bone-gnawing dog which is placed unsettlingly prominently in the post-resurrection scene).

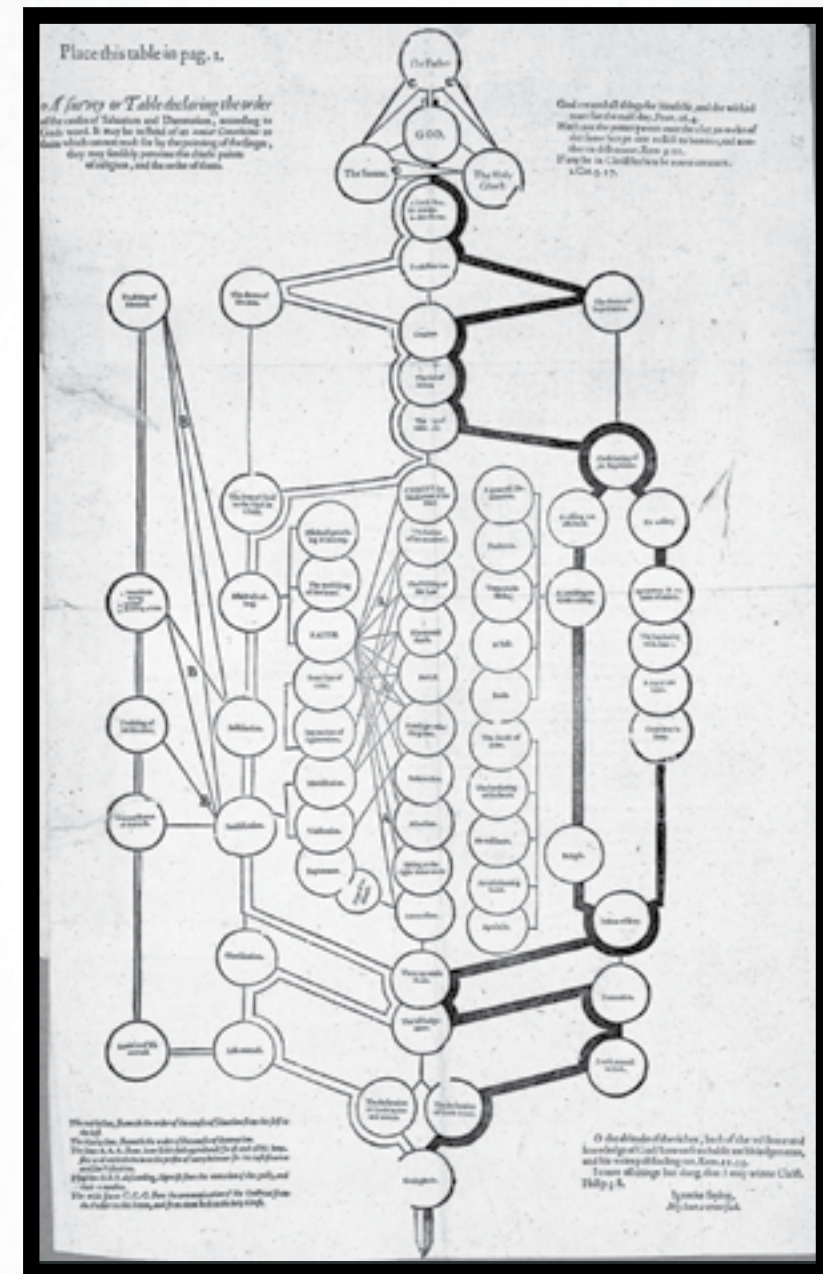


FIG. 2.20 | Perkins, William, chart from *A Golden Chaine*, 1600 | Image from *How-to Books, Protestant Kinetics, and the Art of Theology* by Lori Anne Farrell, p. 603 | Public Domain

“A SURVEY OR TABLE DECLARING THE ORDER OF THE CAUSES OF SALVATION AND DAMNATION ACCORDING TO GOD’S WORD” FROM WILLIAM PERKINS’ *A GOLDEN CHAINE*. (Fig 2.20)

Lori Anne Ferrell’s essay “How-To Books, Protestant Kinetics, and the Art of Theology” constituted the reference for this example.

Artist, Era, and Place

William Perkins first published his *A Golden Chaîne: Or, the Description of Theology, containing the orders of the causes of salvation and damnation, according to God’s Word*, in 1590 (Ferrell 600). Ferrell declares the work to be “one of the bestselling textbooks of Calvinist divinity in the first half of the seventeenth century” (592). Perkins’ primary audience was the Calvinist-Reformed church in England during the “golden age of English Calvinism” (592, 600).

Technical Description

The book and illustration focused on here are categorized by Ferrell as examples of early “how-to” literature, and so the image itself is in keeping with that genre (592, 600). The diagram comprises “a single folio sheet folded first into thirds and then in half,” which was tipped into the larger work between the table of contents and first page of text (600-601). In keeping with the Calvinist-Reformed sensibilities of his time, Perkins shunned representational art in favor of symbols and text to produce a chart that, according to Ferrell, “lucidly, if intricately” illustrates a “potentially confusing idea” within Calvinist theology (602).

Intended Audience

Ferrell describes an audience of both lay and clerical readers (592). Of the lay

persons in particular, Ferrell speaks of a unique “emergent class of learners,” a middle-class who sought to “invest in *cognitive* rather than *monetary* capital” and also “soteriological ‘futures’...the ‘sweet and unspeakable comfort’ of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination”—alongside temporal enjoyment of “an irresistible technological wonder” present within the tactile format (591-592).

Pertinent Historical Theology-Philosophy

Ferrell notes that in their 1563 Articles of Religion, the Church of England, having recently rejected the authority of Roman Catholicism, apparently emphasized a Calvinistic soteriology, which takes a hardline monergistic stance (592, 600). English Protestants also sought to distance themselves from practices reminiscent of Roman Catholicism, a trait replete with its own pros and cons, and a reason cited by Ferrell for Perkins’ illustrative approach in *A Golden Chaîne* (598, 600).

Didactic Content

Perkin’s goal, according to Ferrell, was to illustrate the Calvinist doctrine of predestination (which Ferrell astutely refers to as “dispiriting in the abstract”) in a manner that could yield “practical ministry aimed at finding the comfort in God’s unswerving and, indeed, already enacted internal plan” (600-601).

Influential Factors for Thesis Artwork

As previously stated, Levie and Lentz add a caveat to the use of nonrepresentational diagrams within textual teaching, stating that these formats “appear to be less reliable” perhaps because “learners are not practiced in making effective use of them” (218). Although a teacher engaging with a student during



FIG. 2.21 | Hieroglyphics of the Natural Man and Hieroglyphics of the Christian. Bakewell, J., published by Bowles & Carver. British Museum, London | <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/102734001>, <https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/image/102755001>. Accessed 13 Jan. 2021. | Photo by the Trustees of the British Museum, CC BY-NC-SA 4.0



FIG. 2.22 | Alphabet emblems from the New England Primer. The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington | https://collections.libraries.indiana.edu/lilly/exhibitions_legacy/NewEnglandPrimerWeb/page1.html. Accessed 13 Apr. 2021 | Photo by the Trustees of Indiana University, Public Domain

catechesis might facilitate the efficacy of this type of chart, the reliability of representational images (perhaps due to straightforward experiential familiarity) would seem to enable a “simplicity” of presentation that conforms to Luther’s exhortations while being largely unaffected by the viewer’s context—provided that care is taken not to overcomplicate the composition, as Parrish cautions against (“Instructional”). This particular illustration also clearly focuses on a single, incredibly controversial point of theology, which runs counter to a goal of promoting “mere Christianity.”

HIEROGLYPHICKS OF THE NATURAL MAN; HIEROGLYPHICKS OF THE CHRISTIAN; AND ALPHABETICAL ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER. (Figs. 2.21, 2.22)

These images—the first two intended to be displayed together and the last a two-page spread illustration—are representative of the colossal genre of mass-produced 18th and 19th-century didactic Protestant artwork. David Morgan’s *Protestants and Pictures: Religion, Visual Culture, and the Age of American Mass Production* and David H. Watters’ “I Spake as a Child’: Authority, Metaphor and ‘The New-England Primer’” act as the principal references in examining these pieces.

Artist, Era, and Place

The pair of *Hieroglyphicks* was created by a “J. Bakewell,” an artist who appears to be relatively unknown outside of this frequently reproduced set of images (“J Bakewell”). The dates of the original pictures’ creations are also obscure; the earliest publication date located was 1771. Even greater artistic uncertainty lies upon the alphabetical illustrations of the *Primer*; a dilemma compounded by numerous editions (Watters 193), many of which reveal changes in the subject matter of each letter or the way in which a letter’s subject is presented.



Indiana University's Lilly Library website mentions that "The Primer's rhymes do not appear to have been published anywhere before the book itself" and cites research that "Benjamin Harris, the supposed compiler of the book, wrote the rhymes himself" sometime after 1660 ("New England"). However, no mention is made of the original illustrator.

Technical Description

As has been noted in the woodcuts of Cranach's workshop, the technical qualities of these three illustrations are underwhelming, although J. Bakewell's *Hieroglyphicks* attain to a decidedly higher degree of refinement and complexity than the images of the *Primer*. (Nothing was found in the research explicitly discussing the technical merits of either; however, one could plausibly infer that the degree of sophistication—and time spent in developing the artwork—was less in the *Primer* due to its young target audience and final presentation format). Extant examples of the *Hieroglyphicks* include both monochrome and hand-colored prints; the British Museum has a set of the latter each measuring around 350mm by 246mm.

Intended Audience

Specific information concerning the *Hieroglyphicks* was scarce; however, they were commonly printed in multiple formats such as book illustrations and broadsides (Morgan, *Protestant* 4). In his introduction to *Protestants & Pictures*, David Morgan relates a historical narrative which includes these pieces and demonstrates the effect they could have on an adult viewer (in contrast to the *Primer* images, which were intended for children). In 1799, a 24-year-old young man was converted to Christianity by a Methodist deacon; some five decades later, this convert devoted nearly three pages of his memoirs to

vividly recalling the conviction he felt as he contemplated these two pictures hanging in the Methodist's parlor (Morgan *Protestants* 3-4). Concerning the alphabet imagery, Morgan asserts that illustrated primers were "the workhorse of colonial American education" (203), and Indiana University's Lilly Library states that "the alphabet emblems are the most famous feature of the *New England Primer*." Originally a mixture of secular and religious subject matter, the illustrations became exclusively drawn from Scripture for editions printed during the First Great Awakening before again reintroducing everyday scenes toward century's end ("New England"; Morgan 204). In his article "I Spake as a Child': Authority, Metaphor and 'The New-England Primer,'" David H. Watters explicates the *Primer* as the method by which Puritan children learned and engaged with metaphors of Protestant theology (specifically Calvinism); metaphors which "have a special linguistic authority sanctioned by the words of parents and the Word of God" (194).

Pertinent Historical Theology-Philosophy

Morgan devotes an entire book to the theology-philosophy of this era, so a few sentences here represent a decidedly truncated summary. During the antebellum period, and notably the span of years during the Second Great Awakening, American Protestants were united by a "return to the primitive truth of Christianity" and a subsequent attempt to sustain the longevity of that goal through spiritual disciplines and evangelization (including education): the last of which included a stance against heretical denominations, pagan religions, and Roman Catholicism (Morgan, *Protestants* 13-14). Added to such Protestant zeal was "a new moral technology...the image, mass-produced as well as hand-painted" (5). Morgan also immediately addresses the iconoclastic leanings of some strands of 1800's Protestantism, saying that "Printed



pictures—engravings that illustrated religious texts and served to encapsulate religious doctrine—posed no threat to Protestant iconophobes...the role of images among the American offspring of Calvinism would only grow as the century passed” (6). Evangelical Protestants of the time also laid claim to a direct lineage of the true, historical church by means of a textual emphasis: Morgan describes a perceived connection between the New Testament writers with their pens and the Reformation leaders with their printing press “to return the church to its primitive purity of declaring the Gospel” (26). Of the *Primer*, Watters asserts that memorization and repetition of it and other approved catechistic devices, starting at the earliest possible ages, were encouraged and normative (195-196). Once a Protestant child had memorized the booklet, he or she would have learned about original sin and personal guilt which deserve divine retribution, along with frequent reminders about features of life that are beyond one’s control (e.g., pain, death, laws), hence emphasizing God’s sovereignty (194-195).

Didactic Content

Regarding the *Hieroglyphicks*, what can be discerned must again be gleaned only from the pictures themselves and from a single historical narrative. Of the pair, the British Museum’s “Curator’s comments” simply note the Biblical references and include a statement that the “barren” tree is so “because of a lack of repentance and faith” and also references “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil and...the corruption caused by placing material desires above repentance, faith and spiritual values” (“Print”). In concluding the historical narrative concerning the two pictures, Morgan draws a parallel to Jonathan Edwards seminal sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, and quotes the aforementioned 24-year-old convert as writing “My heart passed

sentence on myself as one standing on the brink of ruin with nothing but the brittle thread of life holding me out of the lake of fire” (qtd. in Morgan, *Protestants* 4). In contrasting the “the fruits of the sinner’s life” with “those of the Christian’s”—the one with its desolate terror and the other with its flourishing peacefulness—it is certain that a response such as the young man’s would have been an ideal scenario to the artist or commissioning entity. Of the *Primer*, Watters says that the literary work begins with “the picture alphabet with its twenty-four woodcuts and simple rhymes suitable for memorization by the youngest children...The subject of each rhyme appeals to the tendency of young children to interpret metaphor literally...the rhymes describe biblical ‘history’ or natural, verifiable events” (197). Through word choice and accompanying illustration, each letter taught the child a facet of Protestant (Calvinistic) theology including federal headship theory, rebellion and redemption, the primacy of Scripture, and biblical typology, among other doctrine (199-202).

Influential Factors for Thesis Artwork

The strength of these mass-produced illustrations is twofold: simplicity in presentation and close physical proximity of imagery with clear scriptural text. Because of these two facets, it would seem quite difficult for a viewer (of appropriate age) to misapprehend the message of the pictures. However, all three illustrations also share the same weakness: poor technical proficiency—or to speak more transcendently, a lack of beauty. Perhaps this was due to an overemphasis on economy, or rapidity, or both (again, such surmises were not readily available for study in the resources). Whatever the case, when compared to prints of contemporaneous artists such as William Hogarth—whose wood engravings were also specifically intended for extensive reproduction—the sub-



par appearance of the three pieces examined here becomes painfully clear. In his essay, Watters also includes a concise, helpful definition of the “emblem” that will aid in the visual approach to deliverable artwork: “the emblem...combines image and text to emphasize the visual component of figurative language” (197).

WILLIAM MORRIS AND CO. STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS, DESIGNED BY EDWARD BURNE-JONES: *THE VISIT OF THE MAGI* AND *DAVID INSTRUCTING SOLOMON FOR THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE*. (Figs. 2.23, 2.24)

Examples of Protestant pedagogical stained glass that are not straightforward scriptural narrative—and especially those that could boast accompanying scholarly exploration—were difficult to locate, presumably due to the difficulties that have surrounded Protestants’ responses to imagery, already discussed at length. Virginia Raguin, Distinguished Professor Emerita at College of the Holy Cross, has written extensively on the vitreous medium in the United States within her short e-book *Style, Status, and Religion: America’s Pictorial Windows 1840-1950*. Raguin’s comments there and in her article “Revivals, Revivalists, and Architectural Stained Glass” reveal several interesting insights regarding the Protestant mentality about ecclesiastical artwork in mid-late 1800’s New England.

Artist, Era, and Place

Although the windows themselves were designed by artist Edward Burne-Jones, they were crafted by William Morris & Co., the eponymous London studio of foundational Arts and Crafts movement idealist William Morris (Raguin, *Style*). The two windows were commissioned for Boston’s Trinity Church; *The Visit of the Magi* was installed in 1880 and *David Instructing Solomon for the Building of the Temple* in 1882.

FIG. 2.23 | Burne-Jones, Edward, for William Morris and Co. David Instructing Solomon for the Building of the Temple, Trinity Church, Boston, 1882 | <https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Boston/Boston.html>. Accessed 14 Apr. 2021 | Photo by Michel M. Raguin, permission of Virginia C. Raguin



Technical Description

Both windows are indicative of the “English-style” of stained glass, which according to Raguin intentionally negates stricter representationalism and three-dimensionality (favored by a “Bavarian” or “Munich” technique heavily associated





FIG. 2.24 | Burne-Jones, Edward, for William Morris and Co. The Visit of the Magi (detail), Trinity Church, Boston, 1880 | <https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Boston/Boston.html>. Accessed 14 Apr. 2021 | Photo by Michel M. Raguin, permission of Virginia C. Raguin

with Roman Catholicism) in favor of a more graphic, two-dimensional stylization (Raguin, *Style*; “Revivals” 326). Morris’ Arts and Crafts ethos and hallmark botanical patterning is also readily discerned in the background of *The Visit of the Magi* window. All three windows utilize “pot-metal” glass (so-called because metal salts are added to the hot, liquid glass—presumably originally contained in a pot—to impart color), which is a vibrant, transparent type of glass favored during the Middle Ages (Lee, et al. 8-9, 146). Morris crafted the windows such that the saturated, inherent hue of the glass colors the subjects, in contrast to both the dull, painted glass of recent centuries (where colored vitreous enamels were applied to clear glass and then fired) and also opalescent glass (the mostly opaque, alabaster-like glass championed by Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge) (148-149). Of the *David Instructing Solomon* window, Burne-Jones himself

said that it “can be said to represent the culmination of my power” (qtd. in Raguin, *Style*). Interestingly, although Burne-Jones designed the windows, he did not participate in further facets their actual construction (apparently including glass selection, cutting, lining, painting, or assembling), leaving those parts of the process to other craftspeople. Raguin notes that it was William Morris who ought to be credited for this sort of “high effective relationship among all members in the studio” (*Style*), a fact which assuredly also enabled the studio to continue producing high-quality windows using Burne-Jones’ designs even after his death in 1898. Owing to this studio-crafted methodology, Lee, et al. remark that it was actually Morris, not Burne-Jones, who (at least at times) decided where lead-lines would go within the compositions. An instance of a later Morris window prompt Lee, et al. to pronounce that it “shows how confident and skilful Morris had become in his use of lead-lines. After centuries of misuse they were once again a vital part of the design” (153).

Intended Audience

The windows of Trinity Church in Boston, of which *The Visit of the Magi* and *David Instructing Solomon for the Building of the Temple* respectively comprise the north nave and baptistry, are given great attention by Raguin in both her book and article. Below the facade of aesthetic preference actually flowed a torrent of anti-Catholic sentiment within the Episcopal congregation—an ideology symptomatic of the broader Boston area which resulted in riots, property destruction, and personal injury (*Style*). Raguin asserts that Episcopalians in general, along with Anglicans, were most likely to be patrons of stained glass, both because of their relative affluence as denominations and because of their “impetus...to affirm social, theological, and artistic connections with England” (*Style*).



Pertinent Historical Theology-Philosophy

Morris' studio epitomized such Arts and Crafts philosophies as "purity of design, simplicity, honesty in materials, and the belief of the...artisan as a conduit to deeper truth" (Raguin, *Style*). This ethos ran parallel to 19th-century revivalist movements within both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, where often the "revival style took on the appearance of a moral imperative in a period in which the forms of the past promised the renewal of the virtues associated with that past" (Raguin, "Revivals" 310). Gothic Revival in particular was the style that many considered "most correctly fulfilled the demands of the 19th-century urban context and provided the most morally uplifting setting for the new urban classes. Thus, its adaptation...was an ethical imperative" (318). A decidedly negative aspect of this outlook was that the aesthetic approach of leaded windows went beyond only beauty or didactic content; instead, their appearance was "heavily influenced by the particular political and religious agenda of the practitioners and the public," with certain styles being deemed "either appropriate or not appropriate to [American congregations'] confessional identities" (327). Due to the innately ecclesiastical domain of stained glass, this polarization of ideology manifested specifically between Protestants and Roman Catholics, where ethnicity, class, and religion were conflated within the discussions of churches' window committees (325; *Style*). Protestants were inclined (sometimes vehemently) to favor English-style windows in opposition to the Munich-style, as laypersons and donors wanted to counteract any appearance of their church (and themselves by extension) being "Romanist" (*Style*). In both cases, however, European imports were considered to be of the finest quality, and at least one reputable American stained-glass artisan was overlooked because of this prevalent mindset (*Style*).

And although Trinity Church embraced the use of figural designs, Raguin relates that there was an ongoing iconophobia surrounding such presentations, citing an 1836 architectural essay written by Episcopal Bishop John Henry Hopkins where the author discusses his disapproval of such motifs, excepting Scriptural illustrations, due to "the danger of superstition and idolatry...so great in the history of Christianity" (*Style*).

Didactic Content

Again, scholarly insight into these specific windows was not readily available; likely because of their relatively simple conceptual nature (viz., biblical scenes). However, reflection on the composition of *The Visit of the Magi* in particular, with its overt botanical symmetry, when combined with familiar, sacred subject matter from Christ's infancy, would seem to clearly recall the historical "Tree of Jesse" tradition within Christian art. Lee, et al. expound on this theme in *Stained Glass*, describing the "Family Tree of Christ," or "Jesse Tree," as "one of the most popular subjects of medieval art," which "derives from Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of the Messiah from the royal line of David—'And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots' (*Isaiah XI, 1*)" (37). The Jesse Tree appears crafted in stained glass almost at the outset of the medium's widespread use during the twelfth century, in the Abbey church of Saint-Denis, designed primarily by Abbott Suger (37). The genealogy of Jesus Christ, represented by symbolic arboreal compositions, powerfully reminds the beholder of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity's eternal identification with the human race—God incarnate. Lee, et al. also mention that the symbol of a tree first appears in the Bible in the Garden of Eden, with the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and the tree as a type can be found repeated in Moses' staff, Aaron's rod, and of course, the Savior's death "on a tree" (37).



Influential Factors for Thesis Artwork

Several aspects of the research regarding these windows are persuasive for orienting the visual solution primarily around stained glass. The medium’s intrinsic association with historical Christianity, placement in ecclesiastical settings, literally radiant beauty, hand-crafted artistry, and multiple-artifact-creating production process—along with such insights as Bishop John Hopkins’ position that stained glass produces “an atmosphere conducive to prayer”—all combine to make a powerful argument for its use. For a stylistic approach within the vitreous genre, guidance comes from several veins: first, the historical precedence of stained glass as a graphic, emblematic medium; second, the aesthetics and mores of Arts and Crafts artisans (especially Edward Burne-Jones); third, lingering Protestant hesitancy regarding figurative realism; and fourth, the association of highly representational “Bavarian” glass with Roman Catholicism (a mindset that, anecdotally at any rate, seems to linger even today).

CONTEMPORARY EFFORTS TOWARDS VISUAL CATECHESIS

INTRODUCTION

Because the target demographic of this thesis is comparatively broad (United States Protestants of all denominations and of a wide age-range), it seemed almost certain that some efforts would have already been made to introduce illustrations into traditional catechesis. However, few examples were found outside of Sunday school or small group-oriented children’s material, where supplies and lessons are to be had in abundance. (Again, an important qualifier here is that digital platforms, such as videos, animations, or videogames were excluded from the research: that genre of instruction is clearly an enormous and efficacious medium for visually-based pedagogy.) In what follows, three different contemporary approaches to visual catechesis were surveyed, each assessed according to perceived strengths, weaknesses, and how their designs might inform solutions for this thesis.

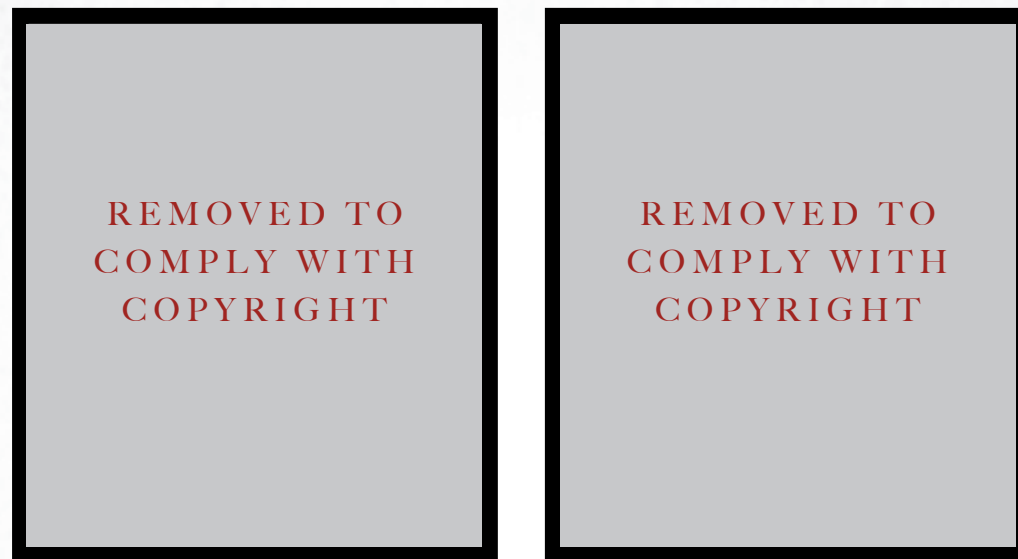
THE NEW CITY CATECHISM

Demographics

Although claiming to be geared towards “children and adults alike,” a primary marketing video makes it fairly certain the focus is on children’s learning. There is a supplemental devotional book intended for adults; however, it does not appear to be illustrated. The NCC has a Reformed (Calvinist) denominational slant, since it is based on “Calvin’s Geneva Catechism, the Westminster Shorter and Larger catechisms, and especially the Heidelberg Catechism” (quoting the adult devotional introduction by Timothy Keller), though quotes and concepts from Martin Luther are referenced also.



FIG. 2.25 | FIG. 2.26 | Illustration and cover from *The New City Catechism*. | Permission Crossway, *The New City Catechism* © 2017 by Redeemer Presbyterian Church and The Gospel Coalition. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, IL 60187, www.crossway.org.



Imagery

Illustrations are unsurprisingly abstracted, considering its Reformed theological foundation; the catechism utilizes symbols as the sole visual component for catechistic questions, with a key at the beginning to decipher the symbolism.

Reflections

Although the rigidly symbolic, graphical approach might be useful for its mnemonic qualities in one sense (e.g., a heart means love, simple to understand and retain), it seems to be decidedly unmemorable in another. The NCC’s symbols are so basic and “mechanical” (lacking indications of creativity or human touch, even down to their unvarying line weight), that they have about as much affective impact as a no-smoking sign: quickly understood and just as quickly forgotten. The simplicity is also so extreme that it rather borders on

insult—the question “What is our only hope in life and death” is accompanied by the unfortunately hackneyed trope of a cross and heart in Figure 2.25. In Figure 2.26, other symbols are alternately either clichéd (lightning bolts, mountains and trees) or ambiguous (pointy things like a fence, a floating and cracked book) to the extent that the reader might be put off. In this thesis’ visual solution, it would be desirable to incorporate a higher degree of technical sophistication, utilizing a stylization that retains more naturalism, as opposed to the NCC’s simplistic, graphical, mechanical approach. A more “traditional” aesthetic should better elicit and maintain viewer interest, engagement, and emotion (Jensen, “Arts” 366-367). It is further intended that the interconnectedness of illustration and concept be as unmistakable and un clichéd as possible (even if scenes or subjects might be familiar).

LUTHER’S SMALL CATECHISM WITH EXPLANATION - 2017 VISUAL EDITION

Demographics

This catechism is, rather obviously, intended primarily for Lutherans. The booklet’s introduction briefly describes the history of *Luther’s Small Catechism* from its inception by Luther during the Reformation right through to the 2013 Convention of the Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod), where changes to the catechism’s “Explanation” portion were decided leading up to the subsequent release of the 2017 edition. The text of the catechism itself remains unchanged since a 1991 translation and certainly holds as closely as possible to Luther’s original German (*Luther’s*). As such, the *Small Catechism* is intended for a broad age-range, being self-described as “Flexible: usable by adults and children in a variety of settings (for example, pastors can simply



use the Central Thought portion in an adult catechetical class and teachers can use the Connections and Applications section to teach apologetics to youth)” (*Luther’s*).

Imagery

The illustrations of the *Small Catechism* are underdeveloped on the whole. The introduction describes the visual approach, which sounds well reasoned:

Full color for engagement and reference, helpful illustrations and charts, callouts, and iconography to help the reader better navigate and use the new Explanation to its fullest. Our desire is that you will be empowered to use this new visual Explanation more freely at home, on your own, and with others. (*Luther’s*)

However, the unfortunate reality is articulated in at least a handful of Amazon reviews, where individuals who purchased the visual catechism describe it unfavorably. One reviewer said “...this sounded perfect! It isn’t. This is really no different then [sic] any other small catechism that has been done” (Family). Another purchaser wrote the following critique:

Highly disappointed in this product. It arrived today in the mail and it doesn’t have many pictures. Only one picture at the beginning of each commandment or section. But there are really no explanations for the average layman to understand the pictures. And then it is full of the catechism questions and answers.

I guess I was thinking this would be more picture / visual based tool to help aid in the teaching of the catechism. Not worth the cost at all in my opinion. (Y)

Fig. 2.27 | Illustrations from Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation - 2017 Visual Edition | Permission of Concordia Publishing House, text © 2018 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.



Fig. 2.28 | Illustration from Luther’s Small Catechism with Explanation - 2017 Visual Edition | Permission of Concordia Publishing House, text © 2018 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.



There is, once again, simple iconography to aid the reader in navigating explanatory notes; however, the catechistic illustrations themselves are generic, clip-art-style images that arguably do not further comprehension or prompt deeper contemplation.

Reflections

The incorporation of narrative imagery is a strength in this instance—albeit not well executed technically or in its relation to the text (both aspects visible in Figure 2.27, an illustration that is included along with the Apostles’ Creed). A more direct relevance begins to be incorporated in Figure 2.28; however, clarity (what Martin Luther might have called “simplicity”) seems to be lacking in this instance, as the illustration is difficult to decipher. (Although this judgement is admittedly made without being able to see accompanying text, as the illustration is taken from an excerpt, not the full book. A robust explanation actually might be near the image, which could resolve the issue of lucidity.) In this thesis’ visual solution, an intentionally “classical” aesthetic will be utilized for the same reasons previously stated. Furthermore, text will be incorporated directly into the artwork, so that the two must be processed together (and theoretically cannot be separated).

THE ILLUMINATED CATECHISM

Demographics

Once again based on *Luther’s Small Catechism*, the booklet is apparently intended for adult Protestants in general. Although this demographic is not explicitly stated, the approach by the authors seems fairly ecumenical; in the introduction, they describe the book as “selections from Luther’s small

catechism, Bible passages, and short devotional thoughts, there is also empty space—space for your doodling, journaling, and reflection” (Cook). The work clearly belongs to the popular literary category of “adult coloring book” due to the relative complexity of the coloring pages and density of accompanying text.

Imagery

The illustrations in this booklet are unique, as they are intended to be colored in by the reader. In this regard, the pictures seem perfectly adequate, having an unrefined technical appearance that conveys a casual, whimsical effect that functions well in the relaxing, meditative context of a coloring book. However, the pictures themselves (again viewed in an excerpt, not the full text) do not seem to engage robustly with catechetical concepts. For instance, Figure 2.30 is included along with the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods [before me]” (qtd. in Cook), yet the illustration depicts a vine-covered fountain in a botanical setting. The image corresponds not to the plain meaning of the



FIG. 2.29 | Cover of *The Illuminated Catechism* | Permission of Concordia Publishing House, text © 2017 Tony Cook. Published by Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.



FIG. 2.30 | Illustration from *The Illuminated Catechism* | Permission of Concordia Publishing House, text © 2017 Tony Cook. Published by Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.



first commandment, but to an accompanying narration about God’s provision and how our hearts should cling to him like a vine, along with the popular hymn lyrics “come thou fount of every blessing...” (Cook).

Reflections

Since this instance of a “visual catechism” is a bit unusual, there does not seem to be much overlap between it and this thesis’ intended visual solution. While the multi-modal approach of *The Illuminated Catechism*, where readers actively participate with illustrations, might theoretically enable better engagement and recollection, the intellectual content could appropriately be described as superficial. Two observations support this assertion: first, the work is not a proper catechism, but rather a coloring book loosely incorporating snippets from *Luther’s Small Catechism*. Second, as already intimated, at least some of the illustrations can be only tangentially associated with doctrine—the examples proffered arguably would not be linked with definite pedagogy.

CONCLUSION (RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS)

To reiterate, the research indicates that the process of catechesis is scripturally sound, historically approved, and ideal for both doctrinal instruction and holistic growth. Within the purview of Protestantism, catechizing was a primary means of educating children and new converts during the Reformation and for two-plus centuries afterwards. However, the 1800’s began to see a dramatic decline of this age-old pedagogical approach. The downfall of Protestant catechesis in the U.S. was generally caused by a rebellion against authority, turn towards liberal theology, and an absence

of capable theologians acting as teachers—trends which have persisted into the 21st century, when Protestant catechesis remains rare. A contingent of erudite and godly men and women, from both church and academia, are calling for a renewal of catechesis; however, in the contemporary cultural context, even were appeals to revive the practice heeded, many laypeople might be unwilling to participate with a primarily textual presentation.

This resistance, however, can be diminished as a hindrance to religious training: the ability of visuals to enhance educational outcomes is well documented, and the practice of employing didactic imagery has a lengthy and robust precedent in the history of the Christian Church. Despite this historicity, Protestantism has had from its inception an ambivalent relationship with pictures; a tendency which continues today. Some of the original Reformers decried the use of images to varying degrees and depending on setting, and these men’s thoughts and theologies still mold the perspectives of many Protestants. Notwithstanding, the Protestant Church does have a rich tradition of pedagogical pictures and illustrated literature: a genre that is perhaps best exemplified by Lucas Cranach’s paintings and woodcuts created in collaboration with Martin Luther.

In light of the considerations presented in the case study and visual analyses, and in continuation of the historical antecedents within Protestant didactic visual imagery (synthesized with more ancient precedents of public and private Christian pictures), a strong visual solution for this thesis would consist of artwork that attracts and maintains a viewer’s attention and engagement through beauty, emotional interest, and organization; facilitates knowledge of, and furthers dialogue in, essential Protestant doctrine by visualizing important themes (with an emphasis on incorporating



biblical texts and symbolism drawn from those texts); includes a special focus on issues where the data demonstrates distinctive ignorance or misunderstanding in contemporary U.S. culture (including pressing moral concerns such as avarice, materialism, and the Persons and attributes of God); and incorporates a format suitable for mass-production (so that both public and private presentations are available). In contrast, the sampling of modern illustrated catechetical publications revealed that each had demonstrable weaknesses in several of the categories just listed.

Theoretical implementations of the imagery in the former, public sense could be stained-glass windows in churches, where the beauty of the sacred environment is enhanced while simultaneously creating both an opportunity and a physical space in which the mature, knowledgeable believer can instruct the ignorant or misinformed. Taking the concept further (and also taking a chapter from the medieval Gothic cathedral playbook), a holistic church decoration strategy could be developed having a catechistic foundation: wall art, murals, statuary, altarpieces—down to the architectural decisions and landscaping—could join stained glass for purposes both beautiful and didactic. Implementation in the second sense, private devotion, could take several forms. Books are probably the most apparent of these, again carrying on not only the Protestant tradition (catechisms, illustrated sermon compilations, theological treatises, apologetic writings) but also more ancient Church practice (books of hours, psalters, breviaries, and of course catechisms once again). Moving away from a codex format, the imagery created as part of this thesis (along with explanatory texts) could be presented either singly or collectively as art for display—posters, framed giclée prints, and the like. (An approach reminiscent of Cranach’s woodcuts

for “broadsheets” before the illustrations appeared in Lutheran catechisms.) In a private context, whether viewed as book, poster, or some other method, the imagery would not only be conducive to edifying contemplation by individuals in their own devotional time, but it would also be an opportunity for spiritual instruction in a family setting, with parents or older siblings serving as teachers to younger children (or in instances where a family contains adult-aged recent converts, the neophyte could be guided by a more knowledgeable family member regardless of age). Simultaneous co-learning could also occur between members at comparatively equal stages of their spiritual journey.



FIG. 3.1 | Burne-Jones, Edward, *The Days of Creation*, c. 1871 | <https://www.bonhams.com/auctions/20485/lot/85/>. Accessed 28 Sept. 2021 | Public Domain



CHAPTER 3: VISUAL PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

Several decisions had to be navigated before establishing a direction for artwork that would serve to assist modern catechesis; an in-depth description of how the research was applied to these considerations will be given in the next chapter. After establishing key higher-level outcomes, a foundational technical consideration had to be resolved: in what medium would this artwork be completed? Although it is a certitude that nearly any standard media could be successfully employed, in the end, I decided upon an approach that yielded three different formats for each picture produced: stained-glass cartoons, art posters, and book illustrations. Modern technological advantages, in the form of computers and creative software, were applied to the centuries-old, ecclesiastical vitreous art form to enable this trifold solution.

Lawrence Lee, et al. write in their book *Stained Glass* that “Stained glass is, basically, a Christian art, for it had no existence until the Christian era” (12). Therefore, it seemed highly appropriate that stained-glass windows, as arguably the quintessential art form of the historical Christian Church, would serve as the primary method for visualizing doctrine for this thesis. However, the time and expense required for creating a series of large-scale stained-glass windows presented an insurmountable obstacle—one person simply could not create larger-scale windows with any degree of technical or aesthetic

proficiency in a reasonable amount of time or within a practicable budget. Fortunately, a viable cost and time-effective alternative solution existed that allowed for the future potentiality of actualized stained-glass windows: full-sized “cartoons.” While studying this majestic medium, it became apparent to me that many preparatory drawings and paintings created during the traditional stained-glass process were masterpieces in their own right (at least one instance from the comparatively recent past is Edward Burne-Jones’ *The Days of Creation* [Cheney 29-30; “Burne-Jones”]) (Fig. 3.1). The “cartoon” is a full-sized, monochromatic drawing used as strict guide at every stage of the window-creating process; however, cartoons (and most other preliminary works of art) are usually filed away subsequent to their use. Such cartoons, with the help of technology, could serve dual functions in the modern age: first in their original capacity as guides to creating fully reified stained-glass windows and second as printed posters and book illustrations (revivifying Reformation practices). To accomplish these goals, it was necessary first to learn the traditional techniques for constructing a stained-glass window and second to establish a digital approach for replicating the historical procedure—technology would allow the rapidity demanded by modernity along with the adaptability necessary for multiple formats. (For purposes of clarity within this paper, the individual designing the window, whether working traditionally or digitally, will be referred to as the “artist-designer,” to differentiate from other artisans within the stained-glass production process; however, this terminology is not industry-standard.) Mark Speake, owner of Lynchburg Stained Glass Company and a second-generation purveyor of stained glass who has extensive knowledge regarding all facets of creating and installing stained-glass windows, acted as an expert source on many technical matters referenced below.



TRADITIONAL STAINED GLASS

Although cutting-edge equipment in the form of computerized water jets and lasers have begun to make inroads within the discipline of stained glass, esoteric hardware and software, cost, and various issues relating to the physical properties of glass itself make the current implementation of such tools problematic (Goldschmidt; Speake). Even slightly less advanced technology, such as electronic “ring” saws for cutting shapes, have drawbacks which might make them unsuitable for a number of people (noise, for instance, and slower production time) (Frances; Speake). Instead, many craftspeople and studios hold closely to a method little changed over the course of eight hundred years in terms of both tools and technique (Lee, et al. 177). Once a window’s concept has been finalized, this process of creation can be summarized as follows: (1) sketch, (2) color study, (3) cartoon, (4) patterns and glass cutting, (5) trace lines and painting, (6) glazing (assembling), (7) waterproofing, and (8) installing. It is the first, second, third, and fifth steps that are especially pertinent to this thesis, although the other stages certainly must be taken into consideration for ensuring the potentiality of practicable windows.

SKETCHING

Initial ideation for stained glass is similar to most other artistic media, with the notable exception that the visual aspect of intrinsic lead-lines must be planned and indicated from the outset. These lead strips, properly called “came” (Figs. 3.2, 3.3) allow sections of glass to be conjoined and therefore function on two levels: structurally and artistically. Concerning the former category, some shapes or angles simply cannot be cut from one piece of glass alone

(Fig. 3.4), and segments of conjoined cut shapes can only be an approximate sixteen square feet combined before necessitating a cross-brace (Speake). In the latter category, the dark lines created by came must be taken into account when designing a window’s aesthetic. Often, came placement is dictated by the scene itself, since a lead strip is almost always required when a new glass color is used. However, the artist-designer also has numerous opportunities to connect glass pieces in a unique manner, and he or she can actively incorporate a desired mood into the piece through the effects of shape and line (calm, energetic, graceful, etc.) (Lee, et al. 178). Thin, horizontal reinforcing strips of metal known as “wind bars” are also necessary every twelve to sixteen vertical inches (Speake); however, these usually have only minimal impact on the design, provided the artist-designer ensures they do not pass in front of important pictorial elements (such as faces).

During the sketch, it is important to maintain the window’s height-to-width ratios: under normal circumstances, size is determined first by the wall into which it is placed and second by the aesthetic preferences of the client. In either case, however, there is almost no margin for error respecting outer dimensions, as the strictures of architecture are not easily altered.



FIG. 3.2 | Lead came, showing the “H”-shaped cross-section that allows glass pieces to be conjoined | Photo by the author



FIG. 3.3 | A glazier soldering lead strips together around painted glass pieces | Photo by the author



FIG. 3.4 | A shape that is structurally unsound, due to the weak point created by the sharp inward curve | Photo by the author



FIG. 3.5 | Traditional, watercolor-and-ink color study for a stained-glass window | Permission of Lynchburg Stained Glass | Photo by the author

COLOR STUDIES

Once a sketch is approved, a color study is rendered, with the degree of refinement a balancing act amongst time, a client's desires, and the artist-designer's inclination. Traditionally, watercolor with ink has been frequently utilized at this stage, as the combination of the two media allows for a respectable visual approximation of lines, values, and, to a slight extent, the luminous effect of colored glass itself (Lee, et al. 177) (Fig. 3.5). When working in a studio environment, color studies can also act as a visual reference for the glass-cutters, who are sometimes tasked by the artist-designer to pick out appropriate glass for use in the window (alternately, the designer can write the designating numbers for specific glass types and colors directly on the cartoon itself). The interconnectedness of all stages of window creation within a studio means that, should a high level of artistic integrity be maintained, either the artist-designer must have direct and continual oversight throughout the process, or all craftspeople need to be skilled, communicating clearly, and working harmoniously towards a shared vision (Raguin, *Style*; Lee, et al. 177).

CARTOON

After concept, composition, and color have been determined, the artist-designer creates a full-sized, finished monochromatic rendering (commonly completed in charcoal on a large paper sheet or roll) of the artwork to be interpreted into glass (Figs. 3.6, 3.7). Often employing the grid-method to upscale from the sketch, the cartoon finalizes all details within the scene, including lead lines, any incorporated text, donors' names, dedications, and so on. This preliminary, though refined, piece of artwork will serve as a strict model for subsequent stages in the construction process, from the cutters



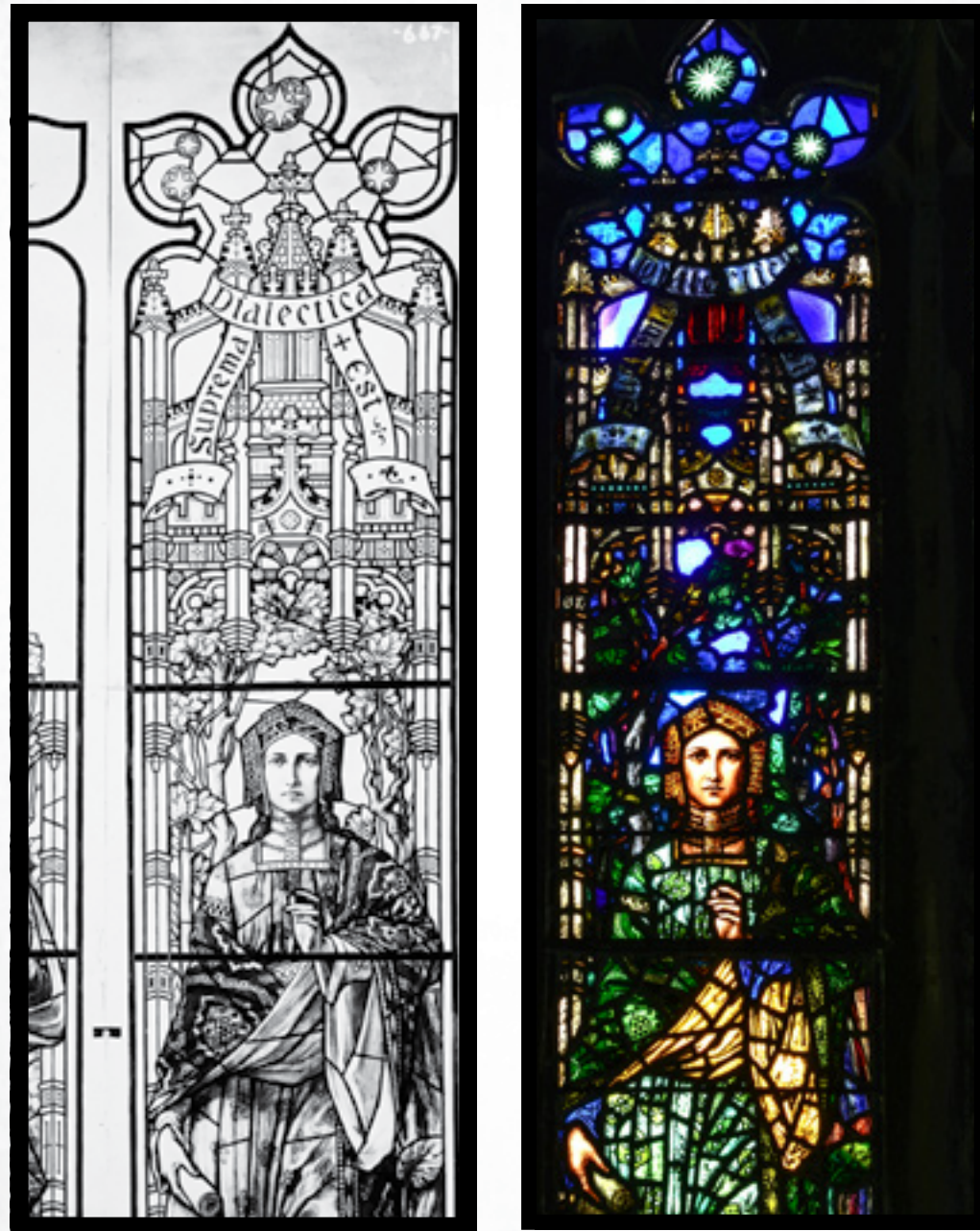


FIG. 3.6 | FIG. 3.7 | Willet Studios, cartoon and finished window for Grammar and Dialectic, details of Seven Liberal Arts, 1912 | Proctor Hall, Graduate College, Princeton University | <https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Gothic/Gothic.html>, Accessed 30 Sept. 2021 | Photo by Michel M. Raguin, permission of Virginia C. Raguin

(those craftspeople who cut individual shapes from raw sheets of glass), to glass-painters (who apply various layers of paint to the glass, primarily as tonal rendering and occasionally for small instances of color, such as jewels in a crown) (Lee, et al. 178), to the glaziers (who assemble the individual pieces into completed panels), even all the way to the installers (who might have to arrange several panels into an enormous, holistic final assemblage). Because of all these factors, it is critical that the cartoon be exactly the right size for the window's physical frame: the margin of error for a window being too small or large is only around one-half inch—inaccuracy in excess of this metric might necessitate the window needing to be returned to the studio for excruciatingly delicate, time-consuming, and costly correction.

Within these functions of the cartoon, cutlines are a unique, necessary facet that operate as a precise guide for the cutters, who frequently work with shapes which are quite amorphous and bizarre when divorced from detailed linear or value renderings. To fashion cutlines traditionally, a glass-cutter first traces over the exact center of all lead-lines from the charcoal cartoon to create templates (Lee, et al. 178). This typically involves carefully nailing the cartoon (or another tracing done on thin paper) tautly to a large wooden table with three more, equally-sized blank sheets of heavy paper underneath, which are in turn separated by carbon transfer paper (Figs. 3.8, 3.9). The act of meticulously tracing the center of the lead lines while applying firm pressure with a slightly dull pencil creates three additional copies of the came framework: glass numbers are also copied on each glass shape. Two of these sheets are used during the actual glass cutting: one, comprised of thicker, heavier paper, is dissected with special scissors to make physical patterns around which a small, circular blade is run to score the glass pieces for accurate cracking apart.



FIG. 3.8 | FIG. 3.9 | *The traditional, carbon-copy process for creating cutlines and patterns* | Photos by the author

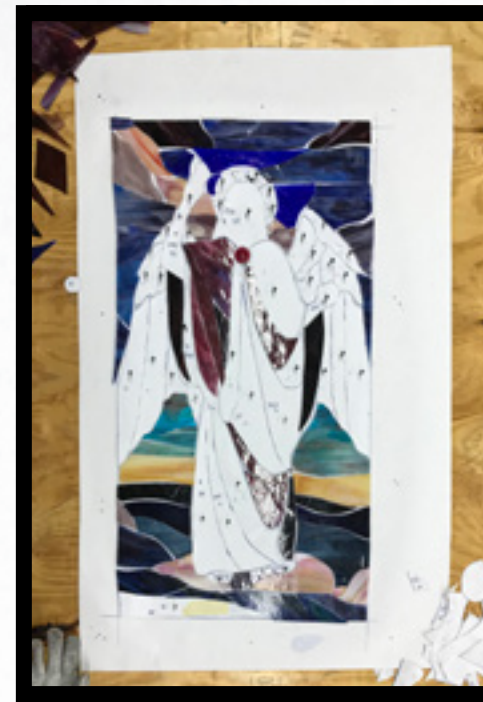


The second is used as a guide to properly arrange those pieces after being successfully cut (Fig. 3.10). Finally, the third sheet acts as a template for the glaziers, when soldering the glass together after they have been painted. As can be perceived, the traditional carbon-paper method is time consuming, even when undertaken by a seasoned worker.

TRACE LINES AND MATT PAINTING

With glass carefully chosen and cut, the final step within direct purview of this thesis is painting the glass itself. Glass-painters perform two primary tasks: “tracing” and “matting.” (Enameling and silver-staining, two additional standard facets of glass painting, can add color to glass without

FIG. 3.10 | *Glass pieces lying on template after being cut* | Photo by the author



styles: variously-weighted outlines of objects primarily, “delineating shape or form,” although it does perform other functions as well (Bera 110) (Fig. 3.11). Two main reasons for trace lines featuring so prominently in stained glass are, first, that the dark linework allows pictorial elements to be readily discerned against the light brilliantly emanating through the transparent

using a separate piece; however, the luminance and saturation of vitreous paint is noticeably lower than intrinsic glass color, while silver stain, although vibrant, only produces yellow and yellow-orange hues.) Tracing, which Speake describes as being as important an art form as shading, involves painting those linear elements ubiquitous to most stained-glass

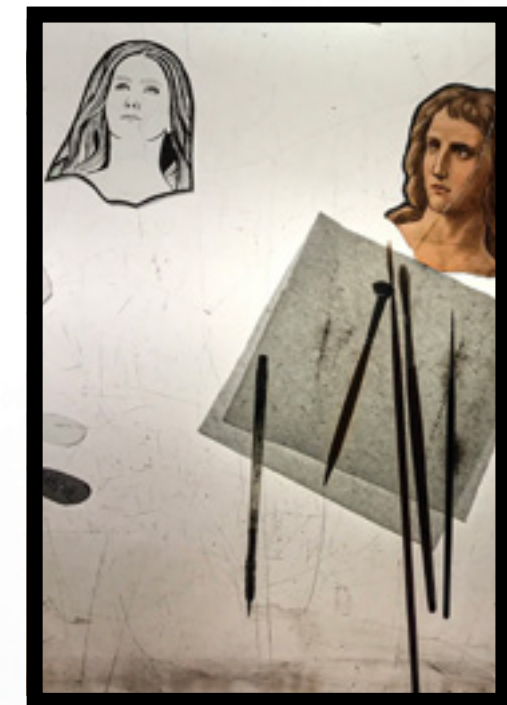


FIG. 3.11 | *Trace lines on glass alongside sable liner brushes, with historical reference piece* | Photo by the author



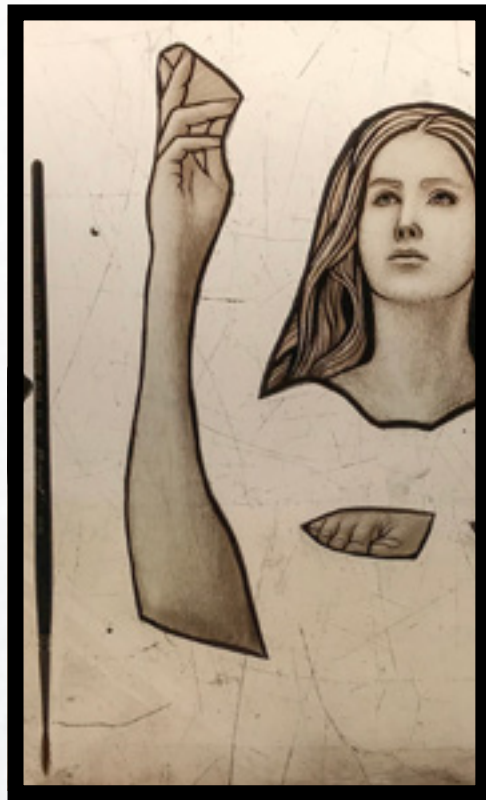


FIG. 3.12 | FIG. 3.13 | FIG. 3.14 | Kiln, glass pieces on firing tray, and glass pieces after matt painting | Photos by the author

medium, reducing the amount of “light irradiation” (Speake; Bera 110). Second, because the compulsory came skeleton immediately imparts a heavy linear quality to artwork in the genre, trace lines reinforce and harmonize the overall appearance with that linear quality (Bera 110). Tracing is usually applied with a sable, “liner”-type brush, having long bristles and coming to a fine point: liner brushes enable an extensive range of line thicknesses during one graceful stroke. The paint itself is a rich black vitreous paint, sold as a powder composed of ground glass and pigment (metal oxides) along with borax as a flux (which lowers the melting temperature) (Lee, et al. 184). Artists add water and gum

Arabic to this powder in different ratios to suit both the painting stage at hand and also individual taste (184). Once trace lines are established and “fired” in a kiln—permanently fusing to the glass at temperatures around 1200 degrees Fahrenheit (“Glass”) (Figs 3.12, 3.13, 3.14)—matt painting can commence. Matting starts with an initial wash of thin paint, a dark brown comprising the standard color (again a powder thinned with water and often minute amounts of gum Arabic). A large badger brush, “a wide, soft brush with hairs three or four inches long,” plays a crucial role within matt painting, as it is used extensively (but delicately)

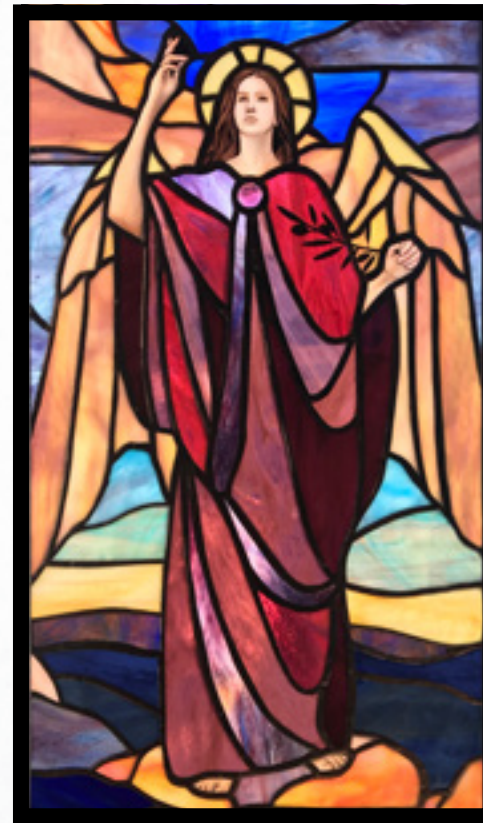


FIG. 3.15 | Finished opalescent stained-glass window | Photo and artwork by the author



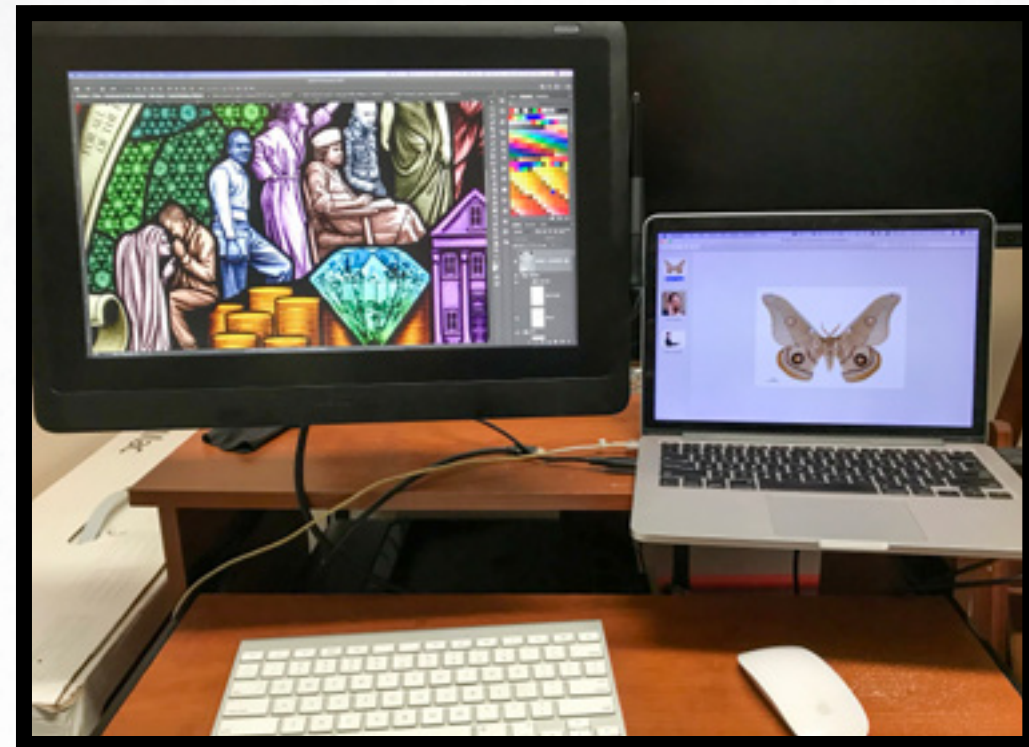
to prepare a suitably consistent paint layer for further working (Lee, et al. 184). Once the wash dries, the artist selectively removes from this paint layer (using a variety of implements including firm brushes, sharpened brush handles, and horn tools, among others) to achieve differing value levels (183-184). As with tracing, matt paint must be fired to around 1200 degrees and cooled slowly (annealed) to unite it lastingly to its glass substrate (184-185).

Once tracing and matting have been completed, the visual artists' roles in fabricating the window are finished, and the glass pieces pass into the hands of other craftspeople for assembly and installation (Fig 3.15).

CREATION NARRATIVE OF THESIS ARTWORK: TECHNOLOGICAL FACILITATION OF STAINED GLASS

With a basic (and admittedly over-simplified) description of the traditional stained-glass process in place, it now remains to reveal how those methods were adapted and applied to create the artwork for this thesis. Although making stained-glass windows in the modern era still requires a considerable degree of age-old, hands-on artistry, from the artist-designer's perspective, technology has contributed to a superior methodology. Creative software (such as Adobe Photoshop), professional digital drawing tablets (like Wacom's Cintiq line), desktop and large-format printers, and studio-standard screen-printing materials permit an artist to achieve nearly identical outcomes as the historical process while affording greater speed, enhanced accuracy, and increased creativity (Fig. 3.16). In the ensuing descriptions, references to "brushes" will

FIG. 3.16 | *The digital studio of a stained-glass artist-designer | Photo by the author*



usually mean digital mark-making settings that produce specific visual effects, often fashioned to imitate some real-world drawing or painting tool (such as a pencil or sable watercolor brush, for example).

SOFTWARE SELECTION

From the outset, the choice of creative software presented an unforeseen challenge. Due to its broad functionality, Photoshop was first to mind; however, replicating the feel and effect of a sable-liner for tracing was one of my priorities, and a naturalistic brush sensation is one area where Photoshop is outclassed by other programs. An additional caveat about using Photoshop



is worth mentioning, although with advancing technology and cost reductions, this consideration will probably largely vanish. For those, like me, who are regularly constrained to use a slightly older computer, system responsiveness can become considerably degraded when working in Photoshop with the large image files often necessary for architectural stained glass—the Adobe program is memory and processor-intensive. For these reasons, I experimented with the Japanese software Clip Studio Paint, since CSP consistently receives high praise from artists around the globe for the lifelikeness of its native brush engine. After relatively vigorous use, I am inclined to agree with the general evaluation regarding Clip Studio Paint: the stock brushes do give a compellingly naturalistic impression. In contrast to Photoshop, the program also had noticeably fewer problems with lag and other glitches when working on hardware that was several years old. Another benefit of CSP is its built-in library of 3D reference models, including figures, objects, and scenery. (Further downloads from the cloud also allow access to a vast array of additional references within these categories). However, one major drawback of Clip Studio Paint, which almost entirely negates its effectiveness in the domain of stained-glass design, is its lack of precise mathematical features, such as “align,” “distribute,” and various vector-based options (line width in particular). If CSP resolved these issues, I would almost certainly recommend it above Adobe’s Photoshop for creative work in this unique domain; however, due to this serious disadvantage, Photoshop remains the best software solution. The objection of brush naturalism is also mitigated in large degree by the utilization of digital brushes crafted by Photoshop experts (such as Kyle T. Webster’s MegaPack, which comes bundled with Photoshop CC, and especially his “Your New Favorite Inker” brush) when combined with a smoothing plugin such as Hej Stylus! V3 (for Mac) or Lazy Nezumi

Pro (for PC). These inexpensive, easy-to-install Photoshop additions help immensely in creating a reliable and pleasurable user experience that mimics a sable-like stroke.

DIGITAL LAYERS

One of the hallmarks of nearly all artistic computer software (beyond the ubiquitous “command-z” or “control-z” keyboard shortcut that enacts the “undo” function) is the ability to work in multiple layers (Fig. 3.17).

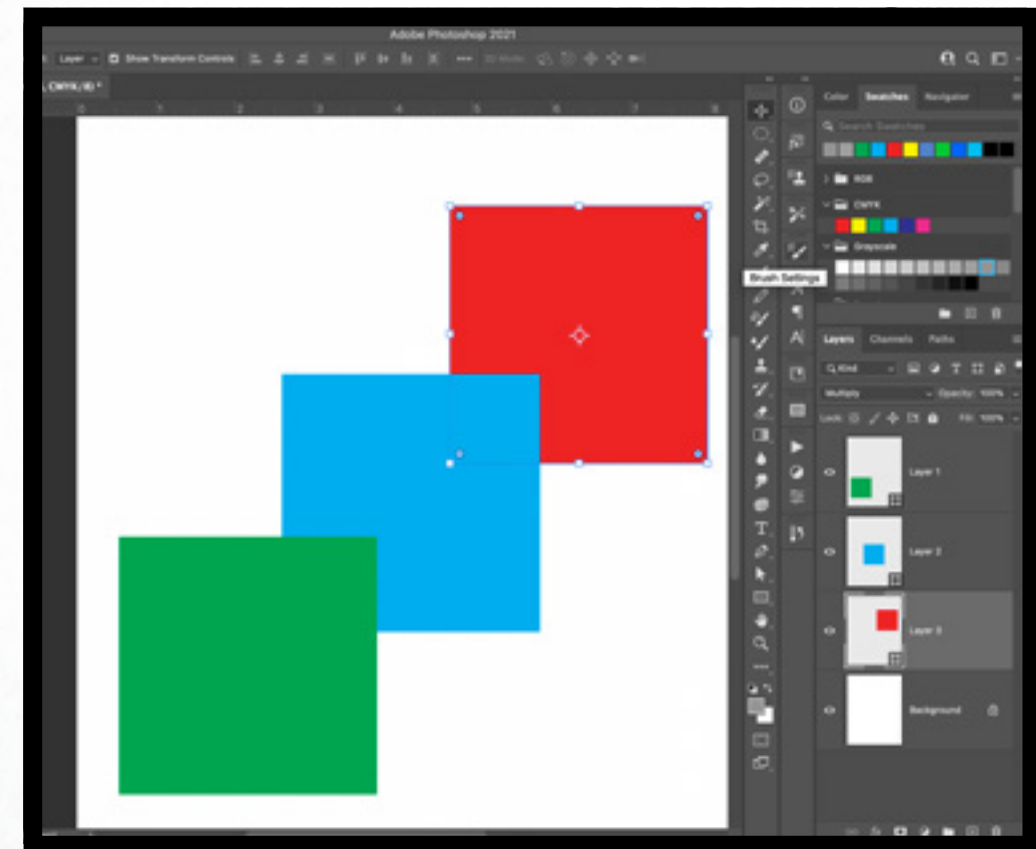


FIG. 3.17 | *Digital Layers in Adobe Photoshop* | Image by the author



This functionality allows for the creation of different aspects of artwork as individual components (e.g., an “ink” layer and a “watercolor” layer), which are then “stacked,” while remaining separate, to form the completed image. (The process is analogous to tracing paper or transparencies being placed on top of each other in years past). Layers truly open a broad range of creative possibilities while expediting nearly every aspect of stained-glass design (as digitization has already done in most other spheres of the visual arts). As a starting point, the inevitable changes and adjustments which occur during an artwork’s evolution—from fledgling compositional arrangements, to proportional adjustments, to pose modifications, to total stylistic reworking on behalf of a client’s demands—can be accommodated both without losing previous iterations and without unnecessary labor. One example (of many) of the incredible efficacy of layers would be resizing a single, intricately-rendered, but disproportionately small, drawing of a figure, present on its own layer, from among a group of other figures, each on its own layer. If not for this ability, the artist would likely have to erase the entire figure and start over from scratch (or, in the copy-machine era, scan the original and print an additional image at some specified enlarged percentage, which copy was then cut-and-pasted physically back unto the original). Various other advantages of working in layers will be highlighted momentarily while traversing the design process.

SKETCHES AND COLOR STUDIES

Once the subject-matter for the artwork was established (a discussion to which Chapter 4 is devoted), I began the thumbnail process. Although working digitally, I initially approached the thumbnails with a more traditional mindset, simply using a small, proportionally-scaled outline of the window and drawing into it with a “pencil” brush that felt comfortable and appropriate within the

miniscule space. However, this led to difficulties upon upscaling, because the accuracy of linework was not precise enough in this roughly-eyeballed miniature—again, considering the physical constraints of stained glass, inexactness becomes a serious issue. When enlarged, compositional elements did not fit together quite correctly, mainly because line-weight was variously too thick or thin, which required unnecessary reworking (as opposed to the constructive sort of reworking which always accompanies creative endeavors). Perhaps this sort of unexpected adaptation could be a welcome part of the process to some artists, leaving room for spontaneity; however, for artists like me who prefer careful control, such modifications present an unwelcome irritation. Besides the complexity and importance of came position, the clarity of trace lines also presented a problem when not scaled accurately. If lines are too thin, elements can be lost in scintillation; the inability to judge the visual weight of tracing within thumbnails compounds this problem. Alternately, upon upscaling, trace lines can suddenly become overly thick and distracting, diminishing the harmony of the whole. The difficulty of attempting to estimate the final appearance of trace lines became particularly acute in planning the intricate patterns and details found within my window designs, from the tiling in the borders to minute anatomical features found within both windows.

Two solutions to the problems I encountered in the thumbnail stage presented themselves in retrospect. First, because of the mathematical accuracy so easily attainable via computers, simple percentages may be ascertained such that brushes can be sized with nearly pixel-perfect scale. For example, if a window at full-size is to be four feet by eight feet, any number of thumbnail sketches can be set up within a single Photoshop document at a simple ratio, such as one-twelfth. Because standard came is one-quarter inch, a hard-edged,



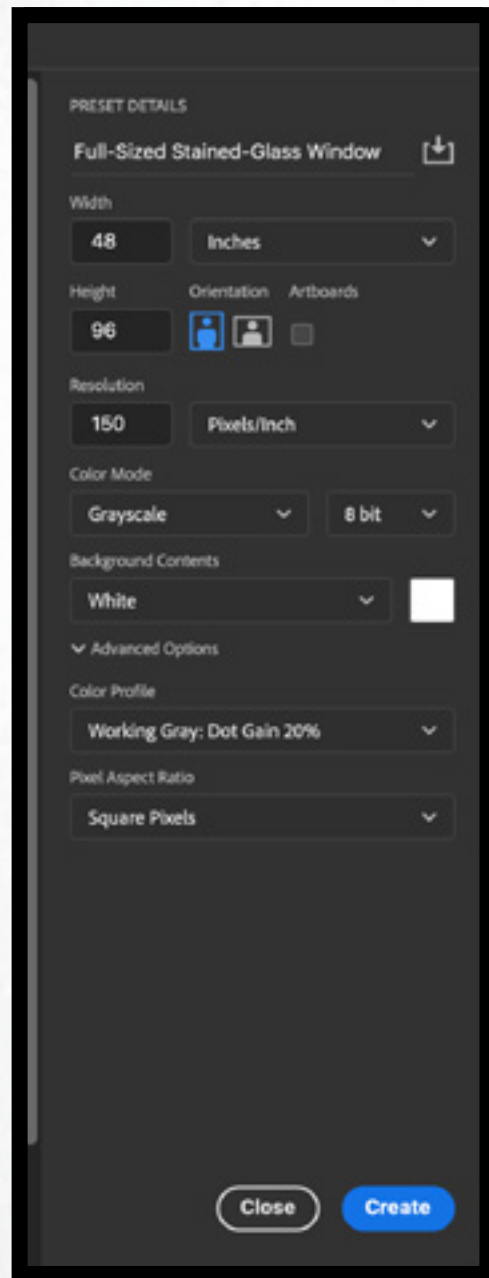
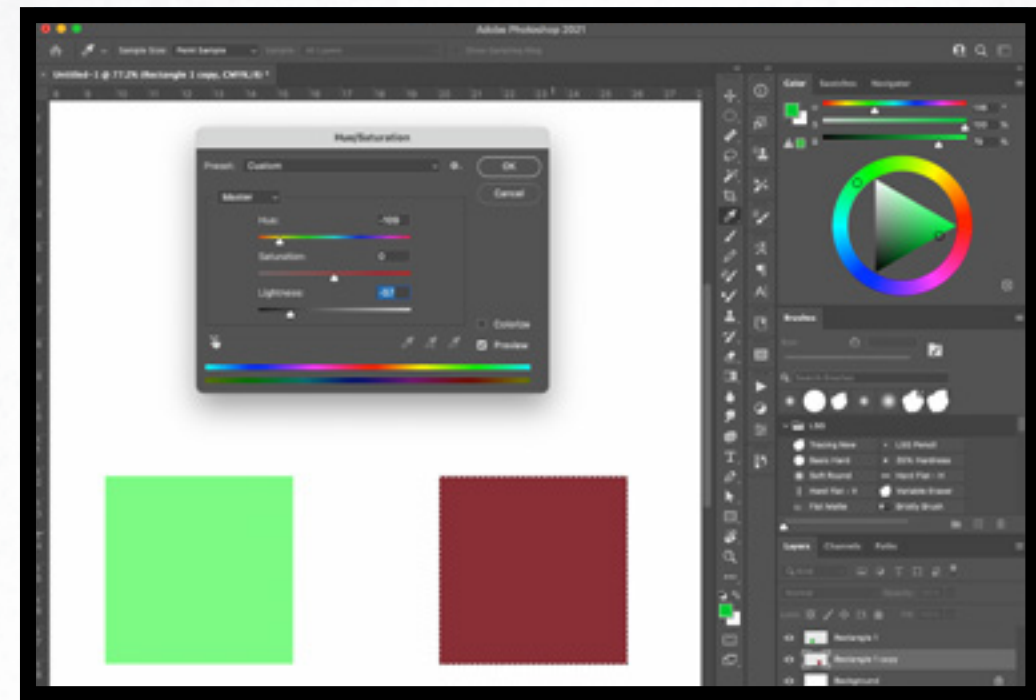


FIG. 3.18 | *Photoshop document setup that reliably conserves memory and maintains system responsiveness when creating full-sized cartoons | Image by the author*

completely opaque Photoshop brush set to .021 inches (converted to pixels at the set document resolution) would closely approximate the visual coverage of the final, physical product. Second, depending on the preferences of the artist-designer—and the computing power at his or her disposal—the sketching process could also be carried out at full size, effectively merging sketch, color study, and cartoon into one seamless workflow. Because the digital process intrinsically reduces the physical dimensions of an enormous sheet of paper to fit a typical computer or tablet display (usually between 16 and 32 inches on the diagonal, depending on brand), there is no need for a “scaling up” sequence. If working resolution is kept at 150ppi and color mode set to grayscale, file sizes, even for windows of quite substantial physical dimensions, will remain tolerably low, enabling modestly-powered computer setups to run the creative software without

FIG. 3.19 | *Hue/Saturation tool | Image by the author*



overmuch complication or lag while still allowing printouts to maintain reasonably high visual quality (Fig 3.18).

After I had settled on thumbnail compositions for each of my two windows, I began to color them, utilizing a separate layer for the sketches as a group and then each different iteration of colors on its own layer. Other useful tools in Photoshop employed at this stage were Magic Wand and Hue/Saturation (Fig. 3.19). The Magic Wand tool allows instances of a single color on a layer to be targeted, either singly or altogether (providing there’s clear differentiation among surrounding hues regarding local color, saturation, or value). Once any or all occasions of a particular color are selected, the Hue/Saturation panel



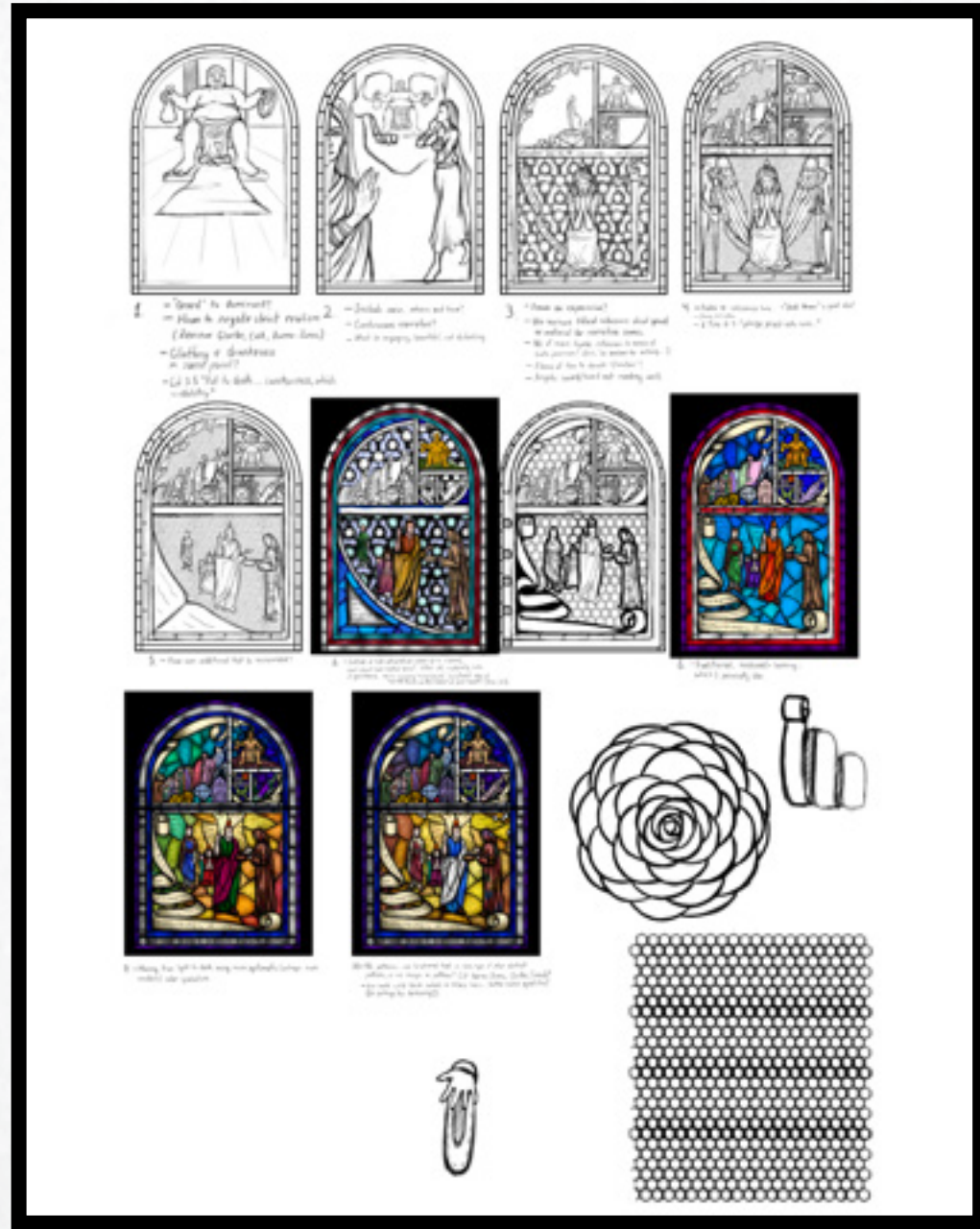


FIG. 3.20 | Thumbnails for Greed and Generosity | Image by the author

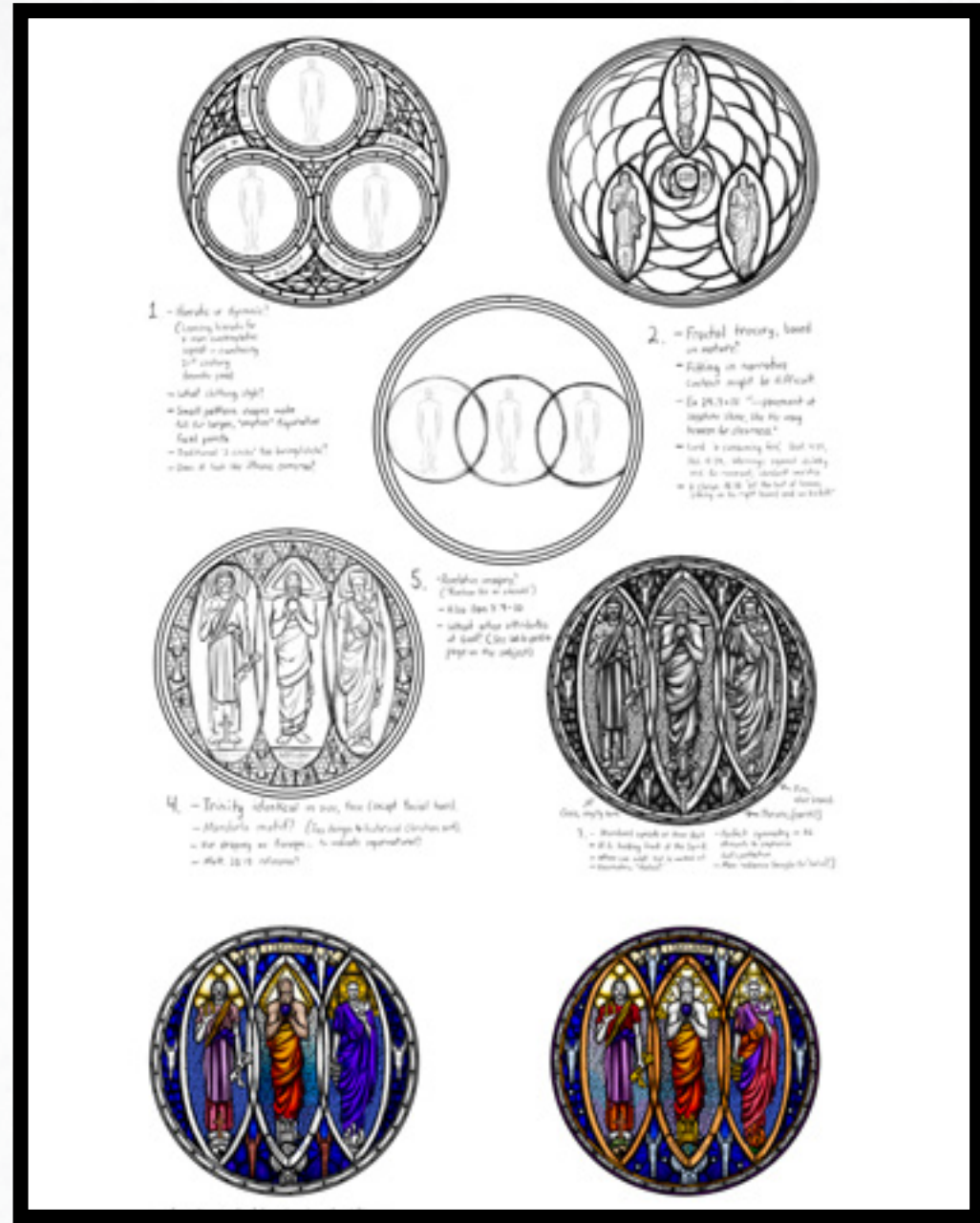


FIG. 3.21 | Thumbnails for Blessed Trinity | Image by the author

enables the artist to change that color in every parameter: local color, intensity, and value. What began as a vibrant, light green can, with a few simple clicks of a mouse or taps of a stylus, become a dull, dark red. With this ability, I was able to explore a wide range of color options in a relatively short period of time.

CARTOONS AND FINAL COLOR RENDERINGS

Once the thumbnails were satisfactory (Figs. 3.20, 3.21), I saved the sketched compositions (sans color) from their isolated layers into individual grayscale .png images, which were then imported and proportionally enlarged to fill a new, actual-size Photoshop document (formatted as previously described). With thumbnails in place and expanded, I set about generating standard layers, most of which were themselves grouped into broad category folders for easier targeting (Fig. 3.22). Depending on the size and complexity of a given window, there can be more or fewer of these groupings: the goal is simply clarity and efficiency, which can necessitate various arrangements depending on context. For my two designs, with their intricacy and clear conceptual divisions, I created a group for each “area,” for example, in *Greed and Generosity*, “Borders,” “Panel 1,” “Panel 2,” etc. Then, within each panel group, further groups and individual layers were created for separate components, such as sketch, came, trace, matting, and shading. When viewed all together, these layers combined to form the full-sized monochrome cartoon, which was essentially identical in appearance with how this cartoon would have looked if fashioned in the traditional method, with dry media and paper. However, the power and importance of digital layers becomes increasingly clear considering, first, the artist-designer’s ease of making changes in the creative phase, and second, in providing material required in each subsequent stage of the window-

FIG. 3.22 | Several standard layer groupings for creating a stained-glass window cartoons | Image by the author

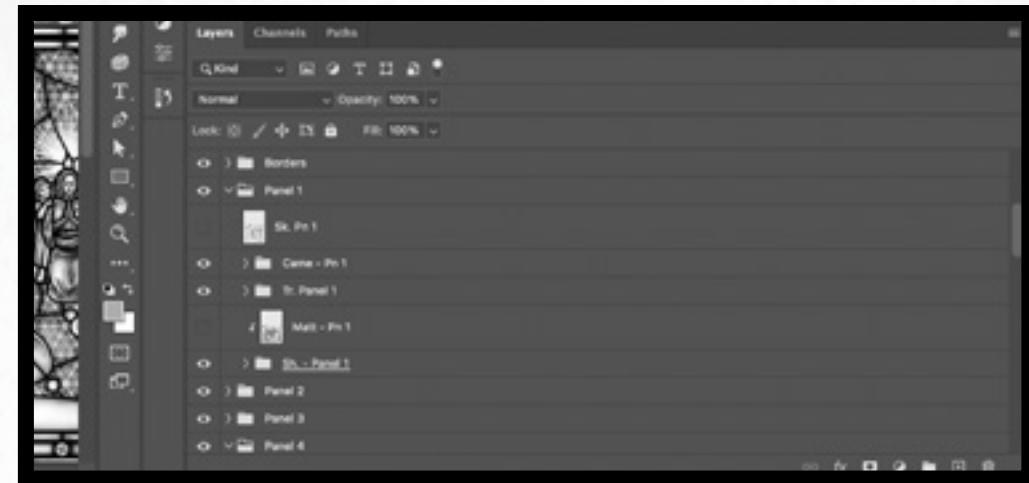


FIG. 3.23 | A typical large-format printer | Photo by the author



fabricating process. (It must be stated at this point that a large-format printer is a critical component for a digital stained-glass process. This sort of printer does add a rather significant up-front expenditure, but for any extensive stained-glass crafting, the benefits far exceed the costs [Speake].) (Fig.3.23)

Before all else, borders had to be firmly instituted; these customary characteristics of stained-glass windows set a hard-and-fast boundary within which all other imagery must reside. Because I wanted to retain an appearance that was primarily traditional in this context, the borders for these two windows are regularly divided into the rectangular and square segments so ubiquitous to the art form. Historically, yardstick, compass, pencil, and careful calculating would have been painstakingly used to arrive at even, regular segmentation. However, the mathematical tools at the artist-designer's disposal within Photoshop make this process almost painless (even to those, like me, who balk at the minute maneuvering of numbers). First, the Rectangle and Ellipse tools were used to create the exact, full-sized dimensions of each border: shape stroke was set to .38 inches, a standard lead came width used when extra structural strength is needed (in contrast to more typical .25-inch came). Second, the borders had to be neatly and evenly segmented. In areas where the border is rectangular, such as the lower approximate third of *Greed and Generosity*, I used the Line Tool to establish a top and bottom came strip in vertical areas (left and right-most strips in horizontal sections), within which parameters several additional line segments were added, each on its own layer. Once the desired number of dividers was created, all layers were targeted, the Move tool was selected, and the option to distribute layers was enacted. Thus, based on the position of the outermost two, Photoshop in milliseconds automatically and perfectly distributes however-

FIG. 3.24 | Distribute horizontal functionality of the Move tool | Image by the author

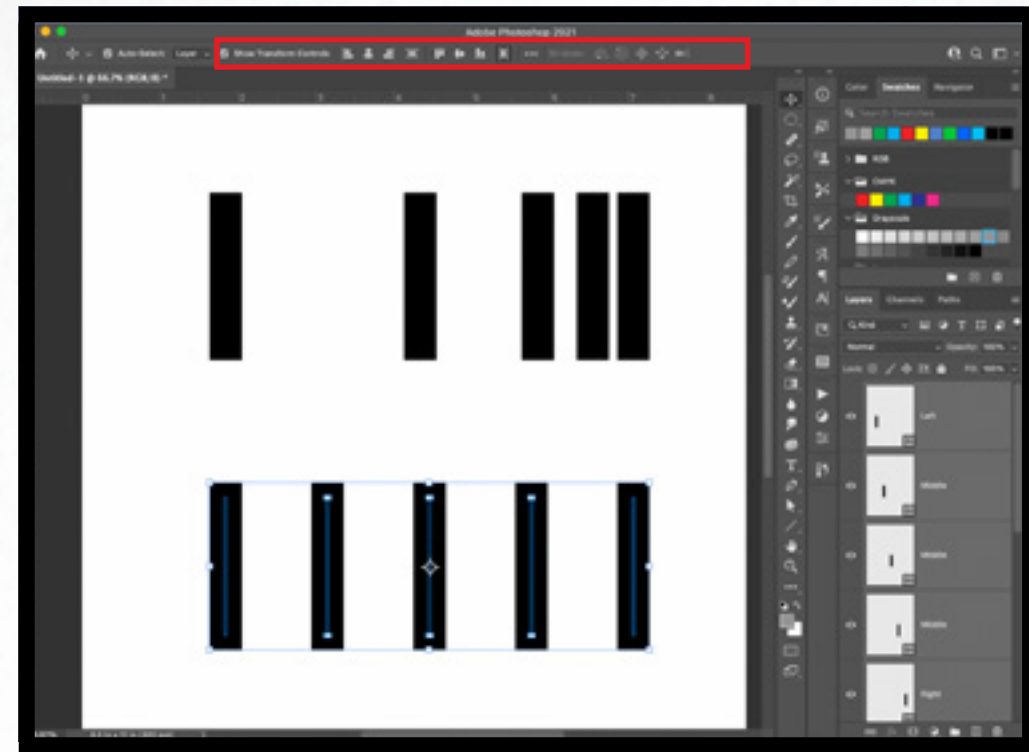


FIG. 3.25 | Degree-specific rotation functionality of the Transform option | Image by the author



many dividers one might have (Fig. 3.24). My process for distributing the border divisions of circles (and by extension, arches) is just as simple, though requiring a few more steps. With the Polygon tool selected, the number of segments needed was typed into the “number of sides” input area, with no fill and stroke set to a very thin line. Then, the polygon was positioned in the exact center of the circle (bottom-middle for a half-circle) and resized so that each vertex just touched the pertinent circular border: this polygon acted as a guide for aligning the dividers. To discover the proper angle for each dividing strip, the 360 degrees of the circle were simply divided by the number of segments, with the Transform tool enabling me to enter the exact amount of rotation. (The polygon is, strictly speaking, unnecessary, since the rotation function for just one divider can be centered on the midpoint of the circle; however, the initial visual reference can be quite helpful [Fig. 3.25].)

Once the borders were resolved (Fig. 3.26), I set forth on the more recognizably artistic bit: the pictures themselves. Every creative naturally has his or her own preferences for beginning and progressing through work; my own approach, after thumbnailing or a loose linear drawing, is generally to start with

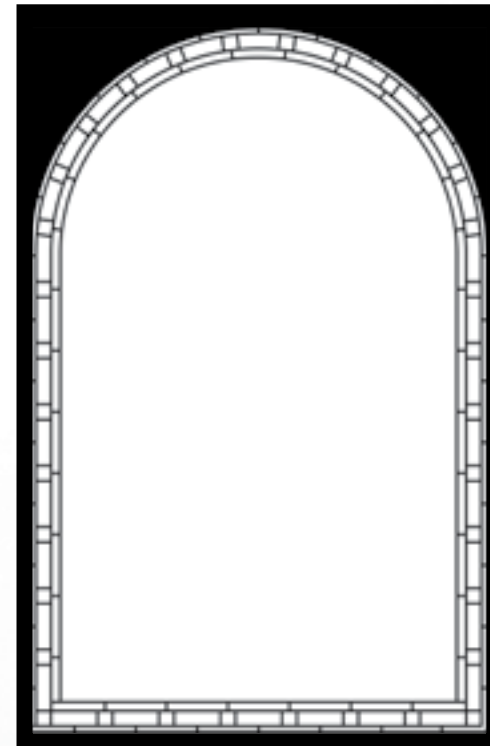
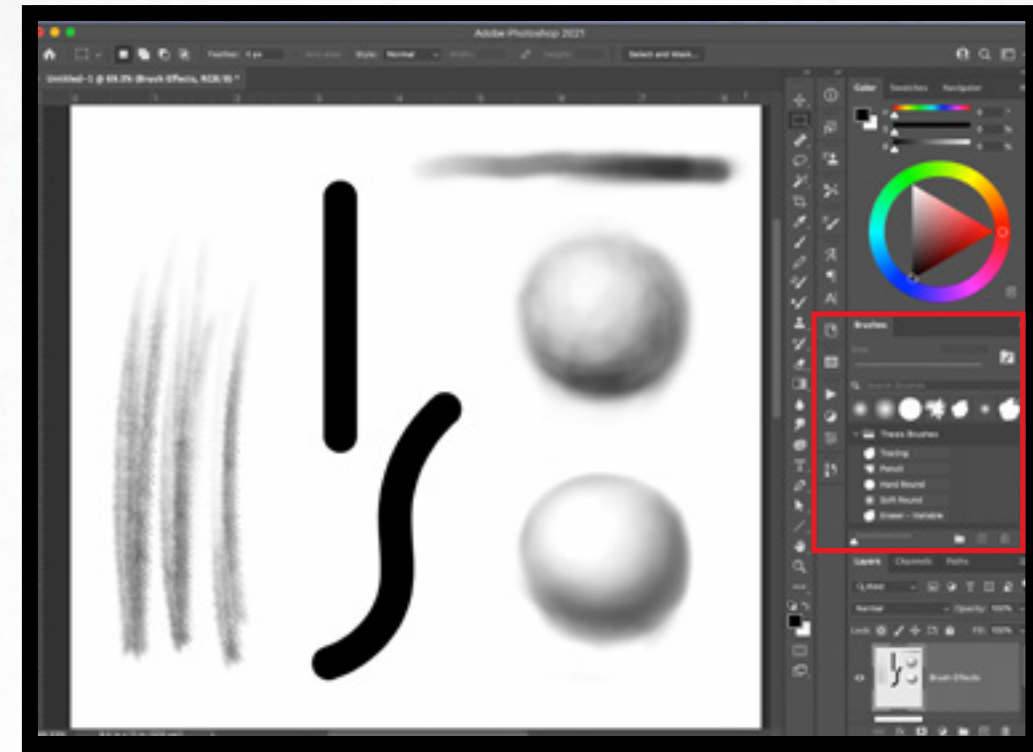


FIG. 3.26 | *Isolated border came* | Image by the author

FIG. 3.27 | *My simple, intuitive selection of brushes, along with an indication of their mark-making effect* | Image by the author



continuous-tone value rendering (probably because of painting in oils for many years), followed by came, with tracing coming last. Some back-and-forth and reworking is of course inevitable, but this sequence allows me to find form and details in a non-constrictive manner: I feel more relaxed and capable of experimentation when working in grayscale and able to manipulate values nearly infinitely, with the ability to undo errors and without the possibility of paint building up, drying out, or otherwise becoming unworkable. My own Photoshop toolset is mostly quite tame and narrow: a 100% soft, circular brush set to full opacity with “Pressure for Opacity” selected; a circular brush at 100% hardness and full opacity with “Pressure for Opacity” deselected; a special



“inking”-style brush from Kyle Webster’s MegaPack provided by Adobe, set to 100% flow; the same soft, circular brush as before but with “Pressure for Opacity” deselected as a Mixer Brush, and an eraser comprised of the same “inking”-style brush but with “Pressure for Opacity” enabled (Fig 3.27). With this simple brush lineup, I accomplished nearly all the digital painting for this thesis’ artwork; however, several other typical tools were used as well, such as the selection and lasso tools for manipulating specific areas; transform tool for altering forms; line, rectangle, and ellipse tools for quickly establishing geometrical components; text tool for Scriptural passages and references; and curves adjustments for efficient, broad-scale value changes. Using these tools in conjunction with a vast repository of reference material from digital imagery to 3D models, I completed the value rendering aspect of each window. The final step in this stage was to create a separate layer of organic visual noise applied to the grayscale painting (using a clipping mask and Overlay setting): this layer convincingly mimics the aesthetic effect of stained-glass matt painting, adding a desirably naturalistic, organic quality to the digital image. With the full-value rendering in place, I then moved on the other two additional key layers: lead came and tracing.

As discussed, the necessity of lead came is unique to the fenestrated art form, and being able to retain the linear indication of the metal scaffold within its own layer group allows the artist-designer to fully evaluate its success regarding both of its dual functions, namely, its visual appeal and structural integrity. The former requires the came to be viewed along with (and specifically, in front of) trace lines and value rendering; in the latter, the lead lines must be viewed entirely alone. In contrast to the traditional process where this isolation of the lead could effectively occur only after the artist had completed the cartoon

(Lee, et al. 178), the digital process allows toggling between the two viewing modes in mere seconds throughout the entire course of design (using the layer visibility icons in the layers panel). This single aspect of the digital workflow can save considerable time and effort: conventionally, if technical issues in the came placement were discovered at a later stage, such as at the glass-cutter’s table, the physical cartoon had to be taken back to the artist and reworked. However, by having separate layers, failings within the lead framework, both in arrangement and aesthetic, can be revealed quite early on and adjusted in a timely manner. Again, working with computer software allows for multiple iterations to be tested quickly, so that the artist-designer can select the best approach. Using this system, I developed the abstract came matrix immediately after the value rendering was firmly in place, identifying and correcting issues as they emerged (although the interaction between the two is kept constantly in mind during the cartoon’s entire development). Once a cartoon is completely finished, an artist-designer can simply take the came layer, duplicate it, reduce all line-widths to approximately one-sixteenth of an inch (the width of the pattern shears), insert pre-selected glass numbers inside each individual piece, and print three outline copies for appropriate distribution. The glass-cutter has only to paste one of these copies to heavier paper for dissecting, and then the normal progression of window-creation continues.

A unique came layer also serves to denote exact boundaries for “painting” digital trace lines with sufficient margin for the lead’s overlap: a vital consideration, since inaccuracy here might result in important visual elements being awkwardly truncated (for example, such things as fingertips, noses, and text). In a digital context, tracing can again be fashioned on its own layer, isolated from, and sandwiched between, value and came layers. Using this methodology in





FIG. 3.28 | Full trace and came lines ready either for printing on transparencies or to be used as a guide by studio glass-painters | Image by the author

my own artwork, I selectively introduced trace lines into my own compositions (Fig. 3.28), guided by a plethora of reference images from historical stained-glass masters. Within creative software, brush strokes are no longer bound by errors endemic to working exclusively by hand: mistakes can be undone and undesirable outcomes tweaked without the potential of either creating a mess or protractedly removing paint. On those regular occasions where the final trace lines—those physically painted on the glass—would be more efficiently and economically completed by hand (such as in one-off windows, or areas without intricate detail), a single, trace line-specific layer is exceedingly useful to the glass-painters, who can use a full-size printout as a guide. However, tracing completed on its own layer can also be inkjet-printed on heavy-duty transparencies, used to make screens for printing directly onto the glass. (Screen-printing is another process that has a surprisingly long-standing precedent within the craft in the form of stencils, which were used for common, repetitious motifs) (LaChiusa; Mills 51). In the modern era, screen-printing is accomplished by coating blank screens with a photosensitive emulsion that hardens when exposed to ultraviolet light (Fig. 3.29). A craftsperson carefully

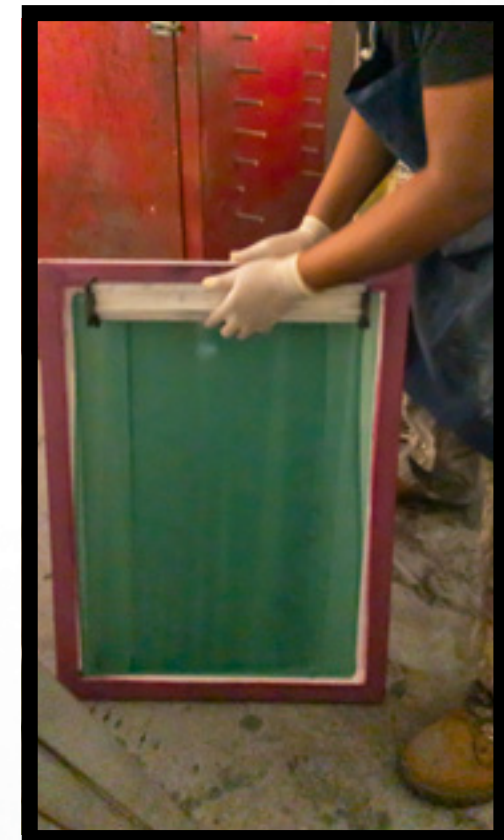


FIG. 3.29 | Screening specialist preparing a screen for printing by applying a thin, even film of light-sensitive emulsion | Photo by the author



FIG. 3.30 | FIG. 3.31 | Inkjet-printed transparency lying on UV machine | Photos by the author



FIG. 3.32 | A finished screen, ready for printing onto a piece of glass | Photo by the author



arranges the printed transparencies on prepared screens before inserting them into a UV exposure machine (Figs 3.30, 3.31). When the device is activated, those areas of the emulsion shielded by black ink on the transparency remain wet, while portions unprotected from the UV rays cure into a hardened film. In rapid succession, the screen is removed from the machine and taken to a spray booth, where a pressure-washer is used to blast away the undried photosensitive paste, leaving the trace lines as a series of intricate negative shapes on the mesh (Fig. 3.32). A specialized, highly viscous vitreous paint is then squeegeed through these negative shapes onto the appropriate piece of glass, resulting in linework that simultaneously retains the visual quality of its





FIG. 3.33 | Black & White Cartoon, Greed and Generosity | Image by the author

hand-rendered origins while also enabling efficient mass-production. As with the large-format printer, although this methodology does require a higher initial investment and might sound complex, it becomes quite efficient and cost-effective when put into regular practice.



FIG. 3.34 | Black & White Cartoon, Blessed Trinity | Image by the author



With values, tracing, and came all finished and assembled, my cartoons were completed, and once printed, had essentially the same appearance as any historical example done with a different medium (Figs. 3.33, 3.34). However, it is precisely at this point that I want to offer an apologetic for the significance of the human touch during the physical painting of stained glass. Although tracing—usually used as a heavily opaque, light-blocking technique—can be successfully achieved using screenprinting, those instances of screening for continuous-tone shading which I have viewed are lacking in quality, with an absence of both finesse and pleasing aesthetic at best and being wholly

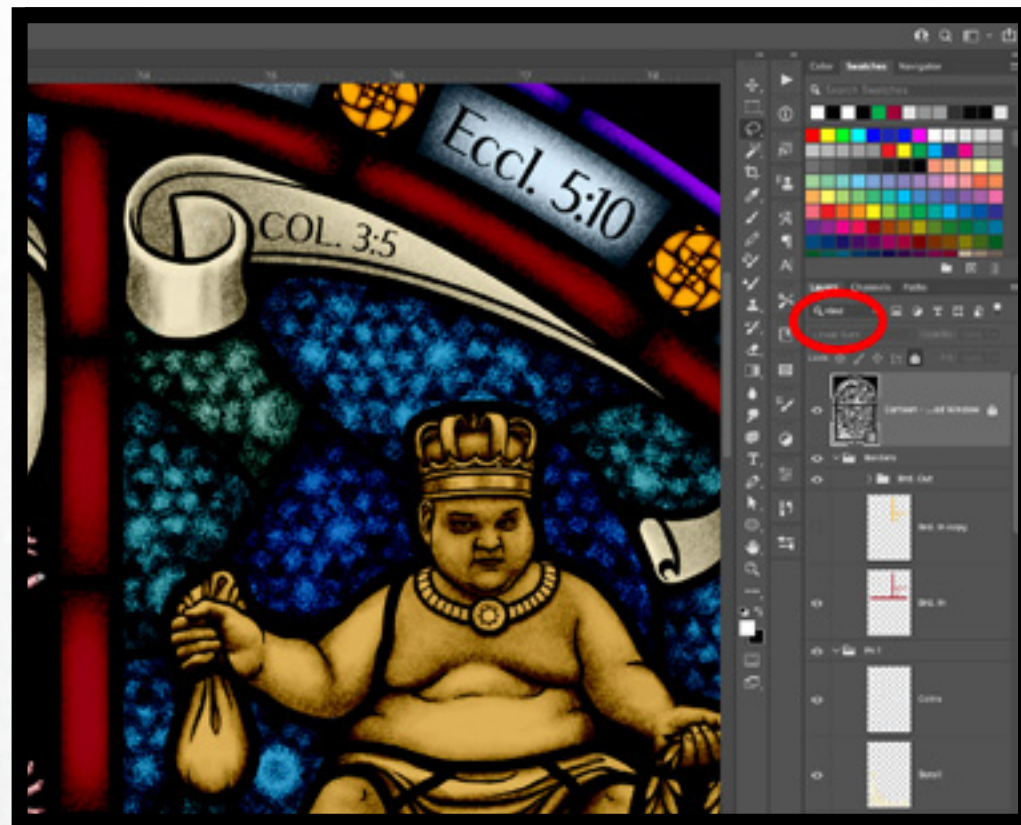
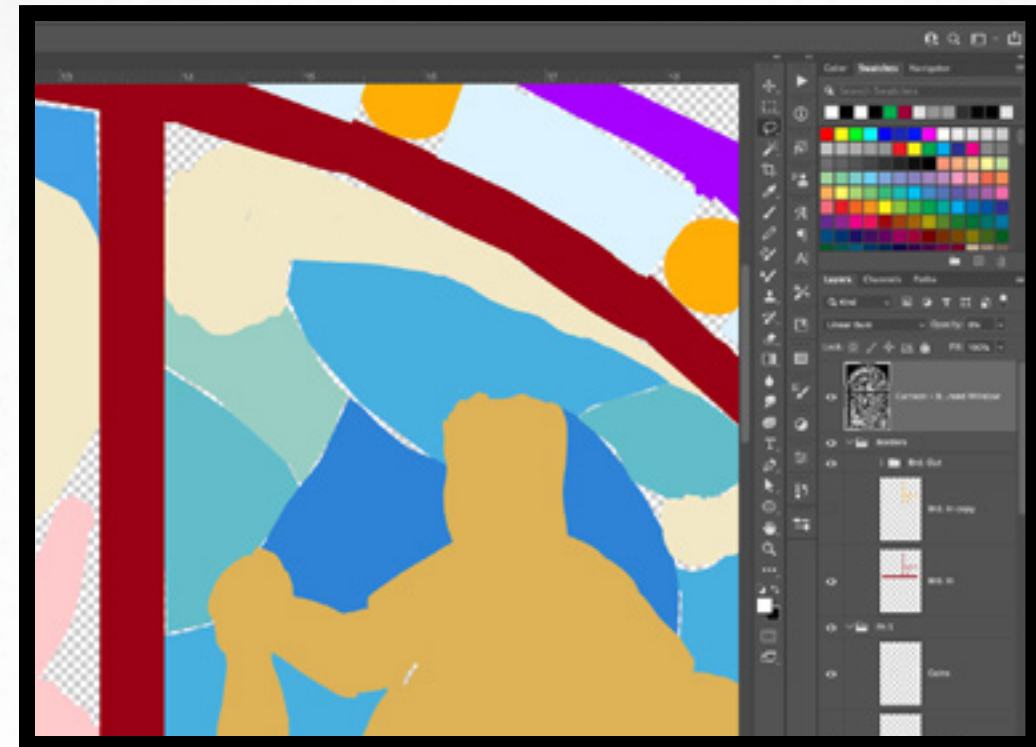


FIG. 3.35 | B&W cartoon layer set to Linear Burn and placed ovetop of color layers, Greed and Generosity | Image by the author

FIG. 3.36 | Color layers with B&W cartoon layer turned off | Image by the author



unattractive at worst. A human artist’s touch adds a distinctly hand-crafted, beautiful quality to a stained-glass window.

At least one additional layer group within the digital workflow is comprised of color. This layer sits underneath the monochrome cartoon, which is itself set to either “Linear Burn” or “Multiply” blending modes: I prefer this second setting, as linear burn tends to impart a more accurate representation of the contrast present once the actual window is installed (Figs. 3.35, 3.36). On older computers, those otherwise lacking powerful processors or graphics cards, or for sake of smaller file sizes, the color cartoon can be created as a separate,



smaller document, with a flattened, reduced-percentage version of the grayscale cartoon linked into the file. In practice, this color study can, depending on project needs, be refined to a high degree of realism, constituting a mock-up that imitates what the window would look like once it has been fabricated, installed, and photographed. Such an advanced imitative level is not usually necessary, however; a monochrome cartoon, set to Linear Burn and placed over multiple layers containing flat color (each designating a unique hue of glass) is nearly always adequate both for showing a client and as a guide for studio craftspeople throughout production. Because my two windows were comparatively large and I value saving digital memory and attempt to maintain rapid computer functionality (again, especially considering older systems), I employed this reduced-size approach.

In a studio environment, individual printouts would then be distributed for subsequent stages of production: cutline sheets to glass-cutters and glaziers (Fig. 3.37), tracing-specific and holistic cartoons to glass-painters, transparencies to the screening specialist (if applicable), and color renderings to

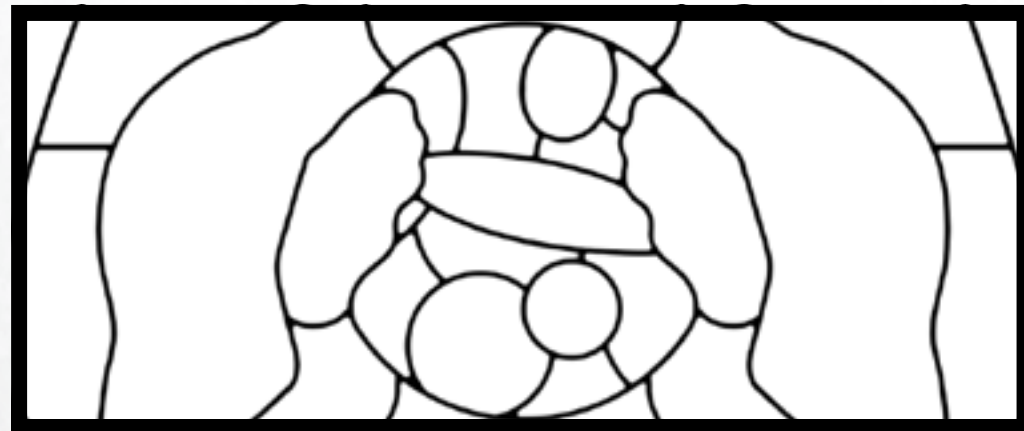


FIG. 3.37 | *Detail of cutlines, Blessed Trinity* | Image by the author

all of the above (Figs. 4.1, 4.2). For purposes of this thesis, my next step was to reappropriate the color cartoon to accomplish my final stated emphasis: broad dissemination.

TRIFOLD MEANS OF MASS-PRODUCTION

Because the digital platform permits multiple components of the cartoon to be preserved via layers, the color cartoon can also be creatively (and relatively painlessly) adapted to fulfill Protestantism's standard imperative to widely publicize information for public and personal consumption. It is this continuing emphasis within Protestantism (and indeed, the whole history of the Christian Church) that segues into the additional formats of this thesis' visual solution. Because a technologically-augmented stained-glass process already demands the production of a color cartoon composed of distinct layers at a high resolution, there is no reason why this traditionally "preparatory" image could not be repositioned as a stand-alone illustration (and again, even within the traditional process, this occurrence is not without its historicity). At its simplest, the transformation from stained-glass cartoon to illustration would be a matter only of size and substrate: from a 44x500-inch bond paper roll used in cartoons to 24x36-inch archival cotton rag on which posters are printed, or from inkjet on matte photo paper to offset lithography on web press paper stock. Even assuming a more complicated degree of adjustment between formats, slight compositional changes such as additional or repositioned text, symbols, or borders could be integrated with relative ease while retaining compositional unity.

For this thesis, I wanted to showcase both compositions in their entirety, and with minimal changes: this would establish a sort of benchmark to assess the



practicality of reusing color cartoons in alternate contexts and enable evaluation of typical changes that might need to be made during such a conversion. (One obvious modification is the removal of border text in the book illustration, when reducing image size rendered characters indecipherable.) With both compositions, the final color cartoons were saved as high-resolution .jpps at dimensions appropriate to the respective formats and then linked into the documents intended for mass-production. For the poster, with its relatively large 24x36-inch size, I retained the original cartoon text since prompt legibility was still present (Fig. 4.3). In the book illustration, with its trinitarian emphasis, I used repetitions of the circular motif to arrange text of the Apostles' Creed, previously located inside the mandorlas; colors were sampled from the artwork itself. Corner embellishments were created by saving one occurrence of the windows' border tracing as an individual .png file, which was then imported into Illustrator and vectorized using the Image Trace tool. After the resultant vector was ungrouped, originally negative shapes could be transformed into positive shapes and color added; the initial black tracing was discarded, as that degree of visual weight was distracting in the environment of an illustration (Fig. 4.4). Because of the ability to work with vector shapes to a reasonable extent in Photoshop, I composed all elements of the poster within that program; however, Illustrator's more complex and refined toolset would probably make this software the better choice for creating such printed iterations.

Having articulated the materials and means by which I produced these images, those decisions to which I alluded in this chapter's introduction remain to be explained: how the research was applied to establish a framework for creating pictures that would serve to assist Protestant doctrinal instruction in the twenty-first century. It is to that discussion we now turn.



FIG. 4.1 | Color Cartoon, Greed and Generosity | Image by the author





FIG. 4.2 | Color Cartoon, Blessed Trinity | Image by the author



FIG. 4.3 | Art Poster, The Lord's Prayer: Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread | Image by the author



CHAPTER 4: FINAL SOLUTION

INTRODUCTION

Several assessments had to be navigated as I developed artwork that would aid modern catechesis; this was the pivotal moment when my scholarship informed my artistry. From lesser to greater, these were the judgements at which I arrived: first, the artwork ought to be established within the convention of historical Protestant visual culture while simultaneously not rejecting those worthy elements from both Roman Catholic and more ancient Church traditions. Second, these pictures are intended to encourage contemporary U.S. Protestant viewers of a broad age-range to engage with them seriously both privately and communally. Last, and foremost, these images should equally teach doctrine clearly and exhibit aesthetic beauty. Because components within my visual solutions serve to fulfill multiple goals—as Jensen notes, “One image may tell us many truths simultaneously” (“Arts” 364)—some repetition is inevitable; however, unique applications of each component to the given concept will be emphasized.

A FENESTRATED FOREWORD

It warrants restating that successful illustrations for renewed catechesis could be accomplished in any number of media; the three objectives listed comprise the core aspects of artwork in this vein and are not dependent on choice of

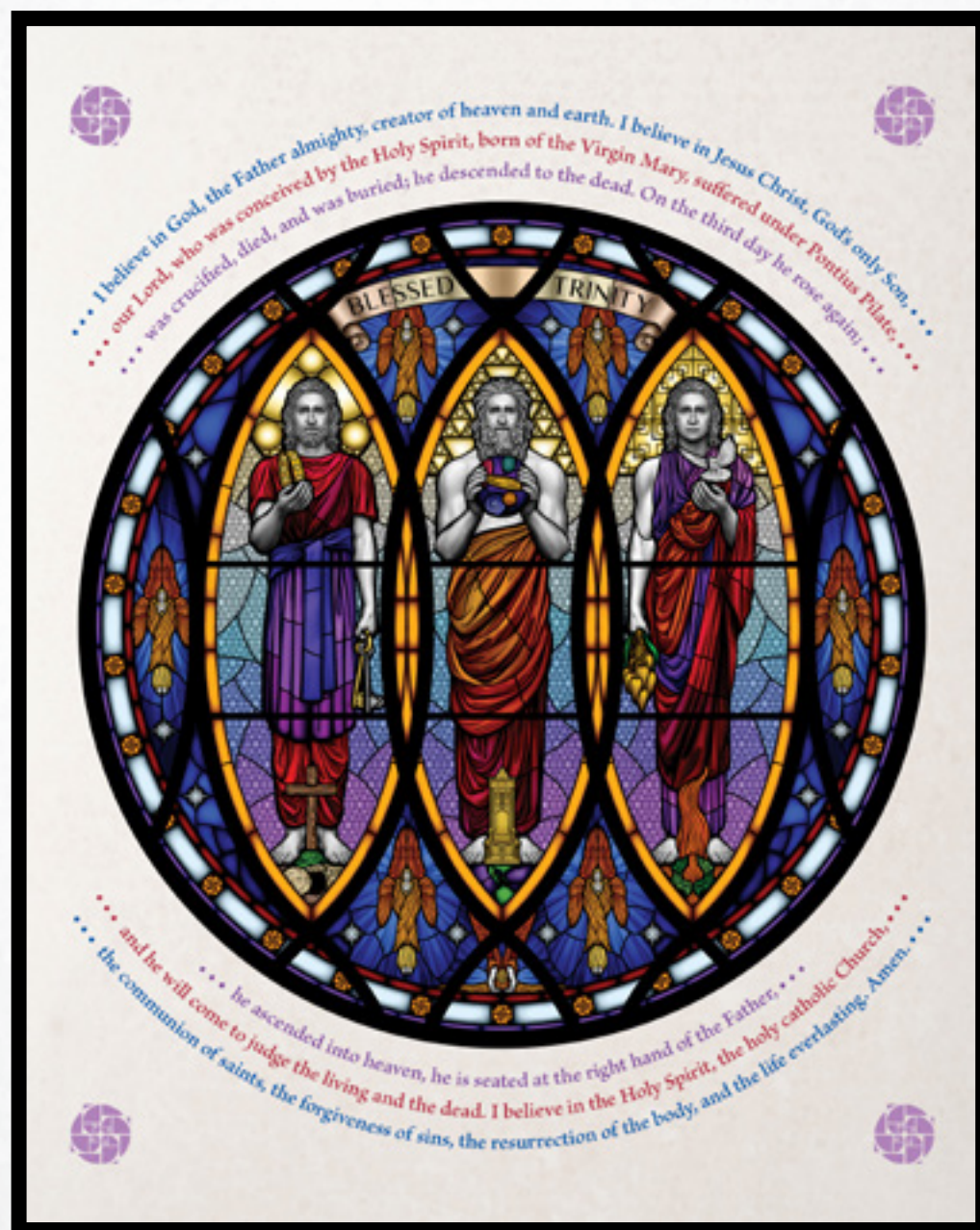


FIG. 4.4 | Book Illustration, Apostles' Creed | Image by the author

medium. However, beyond stained glass being arguably the quintessentially “Christian” visual art form (Raguin, *Style*, “Revivals” 316; Lee, et al. 12), other factors also reinforced the decision to work with a primary focus on this unique medium for my thesis; factors which fulfill all three introductory criteria. First, for those Protestants who persist in leaning towards iconoclasm, stained glass was evidently a slightly more tolerated art form during the Reformation, being permitted in churches even by Zwingli, one of the most stridently aniconic Reformers (Michalski 56, 59; Jensen, “Arts” 361). The medium’s brilliant colors and unique reliance on strong transmitted light create a dynamic effect capable of captivating all viewers while intrinsically invoking ancient philosophical and religious symbolism, especially in Christianity, where Jesus Christ is the True Light and the Light of the World (Lee, et al. 6; Ball 243-245; Jn. 1.9, 8.12, 9.39), and where the Church and individual believers are called likewise to shine as lights in the world (Matt. 5.14, Phil. 2.15). Next, stained glass’ inherent, and often literal, connection to church buildings continues the rich tradition of public, communal church art, where uneducated individuals can receive instruction from those more learned in the faith while viewing the pictures (Chazelle 141; Morgan, *Forge* 50-54; Raguin, *Style*; Jensen, “Arts” 362; Ball 245, 170-171, 233). In this third sense, Raguin’s remarks concerning religious art “in which the forms of the past promised the renewal of the virtues associated with that past” (“Revivals” 310) could plausibly apply today: the historical gravitas (and perhaps also, for many Protestants accustomed to “black box” churches, the novelty) of stained glass might carry with it an impetus to respect—or at least become more conscious of—the ancient-but-never-old orthodoxy contained in the imagery. Last, these designs do not necessarily have to be singular instances, located in only one establishment. In the history of the craft, precedents abound for reusing compositions or design elements (Raguin *Style*; Cheney

30). Technology can aid this process in modern times, as a window’s core components (cartoons, cut lines, and so on) can simply be reprinted and a new iteration constructed. Minimal tweaks, such as changing the color of clothing throughout a window, or slight adjustments to figures’ poses or facial features, would help retain a quality of uniqueness for the commissioning church. (Even a high degree of personalization would not be unduly difficult, such as including recognizable congregants into the scene in place of generic figures. This practice again has abundant historicity [Lee, et al. 152].)

PROTESTANT CONVENTIONS WITH ANCIENT ESTEEM

COMPOSITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

While I desired to draw visual inspiration from throughout Church history, I also sought to avoid negative appropriation: admittedly a gray area with much subjectivity (Kinney 15-18; Noble 170, 173; Morgan, *Forge* 45). Therefore, steps were taken to prevent the artwork appearing overly Roman Catholic or Eastern (Byzantine, Eastern Orthodox, etc). For example, *Greed and Generosity*, instead of using a familiar gothic pointed arch often closely aligned with Roman Catholicism (Ball 47-48; Raguin, *Style*, “Revivals” 319; Lee, et al. 72, 150-151), utilizes a semicircular arch found in several historical architectural styles including classical, Byzantine, and Romanesque (along with their modern-day adaptations) (Fig 4.5). This “Roman arch” is therefore quite ecumenical, having been incorporated into church buildings of all Christian denominations around the globe. Likewise, large, circular “rose” windows have been displayed in important locations of churches for nearly a millennium (Lee, et al. 22-23; Ball 34) (Fig. 4.6); however, my own *Blessed Trinity* foregoes traditional radial



symmetry from which the rose window gets its name. Strongly saturated colors predominate both pieces, hues inherent within the glass itself (not applied by enamel paint): a medieval and neo-Gothic precedent (Raguin *Style*; Lee, et al. 62-63, 146); however, color choices, their application, and symbolism deviate from the bulk of historical models. Most other symbols are also not based on centuries-old iconography, since both color and object symbolism are areas often tied to Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox practice. Instead, the symbols I have used are predominantly bespoke, created as literal depictions of biblical passages. This echoes Reformation-era practices, especially by Martin Luther and Cranach (Diehl 51-52, 57-58; Noble 27, 38, 43; Michalski 34). Even halos (also called “aureoles” or “nimbus”), usually a quintessentially Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox convention, I have treated in a unique manner intended to minimize those associations and instead accentuate the symbol’s ostensible *raison d’être*: a visual device for representing the manifestation of God’s glory (Todorova 201). Clothing throughout the artwork does not adhere to the tendency for overabundant, exquisitely-detailed fabric prevalent in much Roman Catholic artwork, including much stained glass (especially the “Munich” style) (Raguin, *Style*) (Fig. 4.7). Although

my images certainly contain classical garb—the model for fashion upon which much Western art (especially religious art) is built (Hollander 417-418, 426-427)—they also employ a range of clothing styles from different eras and cultures. Stylization (including abstraction),



FIG. 4.5 | Example of Roman arch | Arch of Germanicus, 18-19 | Saintes, France | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Arc_de_Germanicus.JPG. Accessed 21 Oct. 2021 | Photo by Waterborough, CC-BY-SA-2.5

FIG. 4.6 | North rose window from Notre-Dame de Paris, c. 1250-1260 | Paris, France | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:North_rose_window_of_Notre-Dame_de_Paris,_Aug_2010.jpg. Accessed 21 Oct. 2021 | Photo by Julie Anne Workamn, CC-BY-SA-3.0

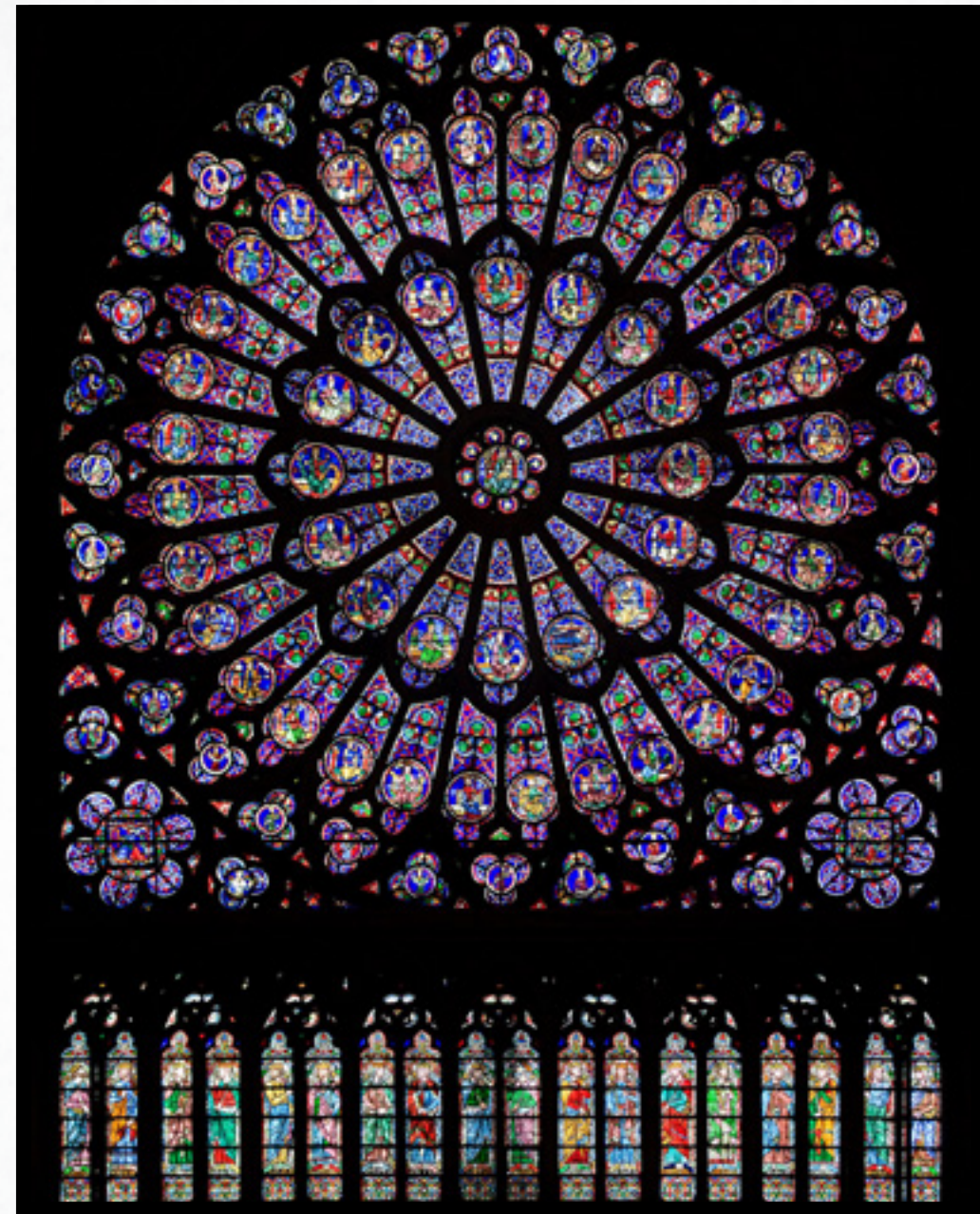


FIG. 4.7 | Intricate cloth detailing from a section of a Mayer of Munich stained-glass window, 1896-1901 | Church of St. Vincent de Paul, Chicago | <https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Ethnic/Ethnic.html>. Accessed 21 Oct. 2021 | Photo by Michel M. Raguin, permission of Virginia C. Raguin



as opposed to a stricter naturalism, is another trait frequently present in historical Protestant artwork, especially regarding depictions of people (Noble 15, 138-139, 142; Koerner 248; Morgan, *Forge* 49-50, 210-211; Michalski 62-63, 77; Diehl 55-56; Raguin *Style*, “Revivals” 326). In my images, the illusion of three-dimensional space is broken up by distinct panels that act as individualized settings for various narrative and emblematic elements (Fig. 4.8). Abstracted background shapes additionally prohibit a convincing realism while incorporating a traditional stained-glass design motif. Figures, although believable in appearance, vary in their exactness to actual human proportions: main characters set in a real-life scenario are satisfactorily anatomically

accurate, while members of the smaller grouping in *Greed and Generosity* are decidedly caricatured, underlining their illustrative nature. The Trinity is heroically proportioned, furthering each Member’s aura of divinity. Individuals’ eyes are slightly enlarged overall to add emphasis to the “windows of the soul,” another custom within stained glass practice. Symbolic items are presented in an array of sizes which ignore realistic scale compared to other objects and persons within the same narrative space, again negating a convincing spatial effect or heightened realism within each scene. Trace lines, though generally intrinsic to the medium, are not an absolute requirement; however, I included tracing as a prominent feature, both to showcase the customary appearance of the art form and to embrace the stylized effect that linework automatically brings with it (due to the lack of outlines in the natural world).



FIG. 4.8 | Detail focusing on stylization in *Greed and Generosity*, including paneling, caricaturing, and scaling | Image by the author

PEDAGOGY AND MASS-PRODUCTION

Another central factor in the saga of Protestant art through the centuries is an ability to be widely distributed (Morgan, *Protestants* 26-28, 51-52, *Forge* 48-53; van den Belt 202-204; Noble 14-15; Michalski 41-42, 165). The reason undergirding historical Protestantism's stress on mass-production is that broad propagation facilitated what were often the most crucial aspects of Protestant imagery: education and recall. In reaction against Roman Catholic image veneration, and regularly ascribed higher status than a picture's beauty, the



FIG. 4.9 | J. & R. Lamb Studios, detail from drawing for Suffer the Little Children stained-glass window at Jamesburg Presbyterian Church, Jamesburg, New Jersey, 1857 | Gouache, watercolor, and ink, mounted size 16"x20" | <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016677632>. Accessed 21 Oct. 2021 | Photo from Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Lamb Studios Archive, Public Domain

pedagogical content of images reigned supreme (Morgan, *Forge* 49-59; Michalski 36, 38, 42, 71-72; Koerner 214, 248; Noble 1, 10, 15; Ferrell 601; van den Belt 196, 198, 202-203; Diehl 56-58). In this regard, stained-glass windows might be somewhat deficient due to their comparatively high price and limited accessibility. Therefore, much like Reformation-era Lutheran broadsheet pictures converted into catechism illustrations (van den Belt 202); a Cranach composition of Luther preaching crafted as both predella painting and woodcuts (Morgan, *Forge* 49-50; van den Belt 197, 199); or Counter-Reformation European masterworks transformed in the mid-nineteenth century, along with contemporaneous religious paintings, into print reproductions for books and tracts (Raguin, *Style*; Morgan, *Protestants* 27, 28); the color cartoons created for this thesis were also reinvented as art posters and book illustrations. With modern tools such as creative software, digital communication, and commercial printing, these images can be utilized in a variety of ways and made rapidly available to many people. And while recasting window designs in different media as standalone illustrations might appear to run counter to certain lines of thought about stained glass in its proper architectural setting—"The concept of the timeless value of a work of art, and its ability be understood even when isolated from

FIG. 4.10 | Color cartoon of Greed and Generosity repurposed as an art poster | Image by the author

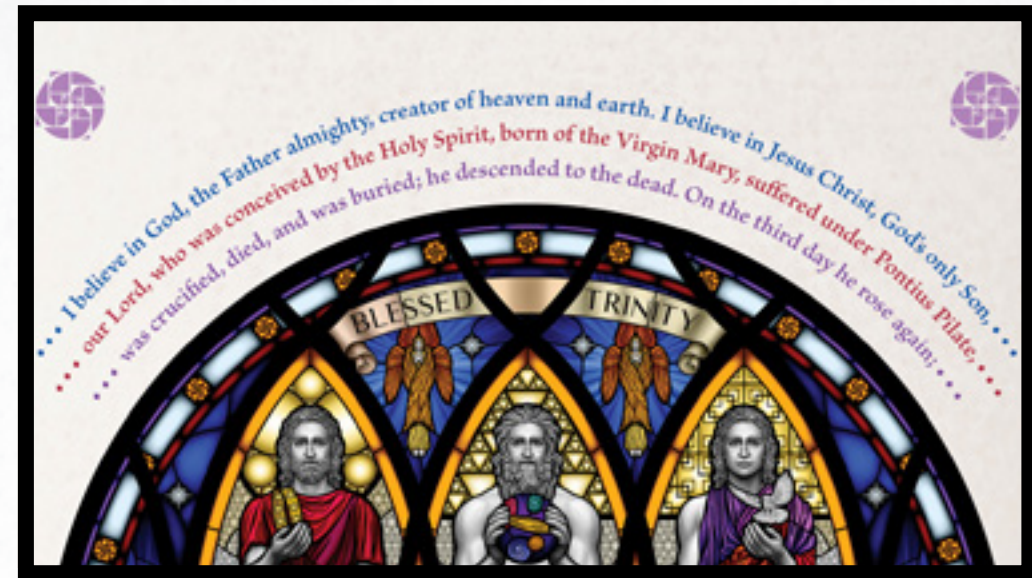


its context...is, indeed, a modern idea” (Raguin, “Revivals” 317)— in this instance, it is not the windows themselves but only their non-architectural, and otherwise transient (even wasted), preparatory images that are at stake (Figs. 4.9, 4.10).

CONTEXT OF TEXT AND IMAGE

The interdependence of image with the written word might be the single most distinctive facet of Protestant art through the centuries (Noble 28, 33-34, 40-41; Koerner 247-248; van den Belt 198; McNair 41; Michalski 41; Morgan, *Forge* 48-49, 51-52, 226-227; Coates 1). In my designs, borders and classical banderoles are the means by which central scriptural text is integrated into the imagery. Historically, stained-glass borders often included devices such as patterns (e.g., geometric shapes, stylized botanical motifs, or even animals and people) or were simple quadrilaterals (Lee, et al. 42-43). However, I have taken advantage of the space provided by border segments to present pertinent biblical references for the doctrine at hand. Although not especially common of stained glass, text within border areas or framing devices can be seen in many other examples of historical Christian art, including work by Lucas Cranach in the case study (Fig. 2.16). Banderoles, those lengths of parchment woven through my compositions, are also known as “speech scrolls” (Syme 34): an appropriate moniker since they contain the words of apostles, prophets, and the Son of God Himself. From within the vitreous purview, Charles J. Connick, a glass artisan who worked primarily in the early 1900s, lends a cogent perspective to working with text and image in a single composition. As Raguin describes it, “Connick’s published descriptions of his windows, often part of the congregation’s dedication or memorial brochures, reveal that he expected to instruct in words as well as in image. It was accepted...he was creating art

FIG. 4.11 | Detail of Apostles’ Creed illustration, with text of the creed incorporated around Blessed Trinity for printing in a book | Image by the author



for a literate public who would have the text in front of them as they viewed his product” (*Style*). In my book illustration adaptation, where reduction in size would hinder readability of script within the window designs themselves, catechetical texts have been arranged into simple, attractive groupings near the pictures.

MANY MODERN VIEWERS, MANY DIFFERENT SETTINGS

Beyond the aforementioned appeal that stained glass might inherently have to contemporary observers, I orchestrated several other components of these images to engage with a broad, 21st-century Protestant viewership who might be in any myriad of settings. The foundational importance and prominence of visuality in communication, learning, and retention within modern culture is



comprehensively documented (Scruton; Judith Dinham, et al. 77-78; Gangwer ix, 1, 37-38; Aisami 359; Dewan 1-2; Malamed 9-10; Parrish, “Instructional”; Levie and Lentz 195, 213; Mayer 1, 6; Paivio 75) and is certainly reflected in current Protestantism (Jensen, “Arts” 359-360, 368; Ryken; Morgan, *Forge* 219-220, 229-232). Protestantism, as a branch of the Church universal, has historically been, and continues to increasingly be, a deeply interpersonal amalgamation of ages, races, and male and female (Parrett and Packer 21, 26-28, 141, 174; Potgieter 2-4; Arnold 41, 49-50; Nettles 7, 10; Felton 96-98).

VIEWING SETTINGS

Those decisions that enable my artwork to be viewed in both public and private spheres have already been well established when articulating the choice to use stained glass along with reinventing color cartoons as book and poster illustrations. David Morgan’s insightful comments regarding the locations of images in Protestant life add considerable seriousness to the ability of pedagogical pictures to be accessible (and explainable) outside of church buildings: “The terrain of religious life is larger than the sanctuary of a church. While this is often the zone most highly charged and publicly scrutinized among Protestants, it is not necessarily the most important space. Home, tavern, municipal building, and schoolroom are often no less important for the practice and publication of the faith” (*Forge*, 51-52). Catechetical and scriptural home-instruction has been of central importance to Protestantism throughout the centuries (Nettles 10, 12, 21; Felton 96; Potgieter 4, Parrett and Packer 179-180; Noble 170; Watters 196-197; Morgan, *Forge* 59, 61; Luther 35); therefore, it was crucial to make my pictures available in formats easily obtainable by nearly every household.

DETERMINATIONS OF DESIGN

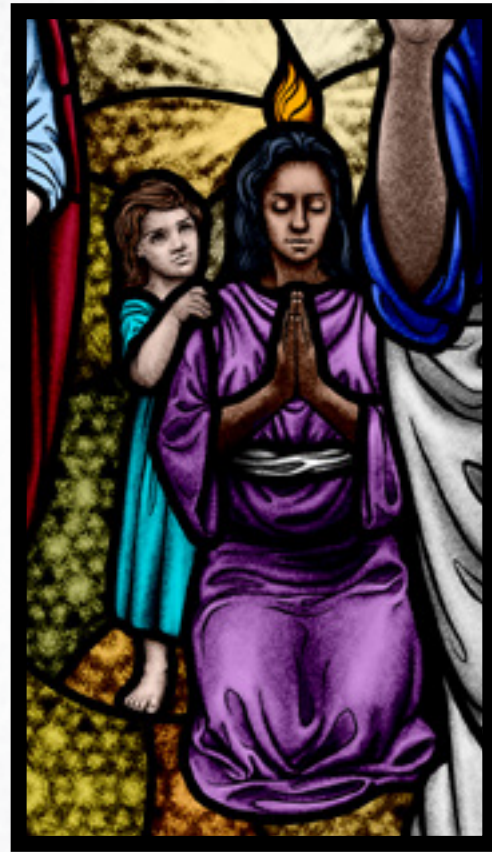
Assorted compositional choices within the artwork were made with the intention of engaging an extensive Protestant demographic. Various ages, socio-economic conditions, nationalities, and both sexes are depicted, with an intentionality towards fair representation. My goal was to obey biblical exhortations to equitability, respect, and love for all humanity, including such passages as James 2:8-9, “If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors.” Along with incorporating a touch of literality from prophetic visions, another reason the Members of the Trinity are colorless is to avoid any notion of ethnicity; race should be a nonfactor concerning the Persons of the Godhead (Gal. 3.28; Eph. 2.14, Acts 10.34-35, Col. 3.10-11): even physical features have been purposefully drawn from various cultures.

In each piece, subject matter does not directly depict specific Scriptural narratives, which unfortunately can feel trite and removed from everyday life. Instead, doctrine has been interpreted into allegorical and ordinary scenarios: this decision draws on the Reformation precedent for artwork to focus “on the individual relationship between the worshipper and God” (Collins; Meagher; Figs. 2.13, 2.16, 2.17, 2.19). Ideally, as with Marguerite de Navarre’s catechism illustrations or Reformation-era narrative portraiture, viewers will experience an empathetic response, either identifying with or being inspired by the figures they see in my images (Orth 422; Morgan, *Forge* 57; Malamed 212-214) (Fig. 4.12).

Clothing choices were also studiously selected: beyond depicting several



FIG. 4.12 | Detail of Greed and Generosity depicting a typical scene from everyday life | Image by the author

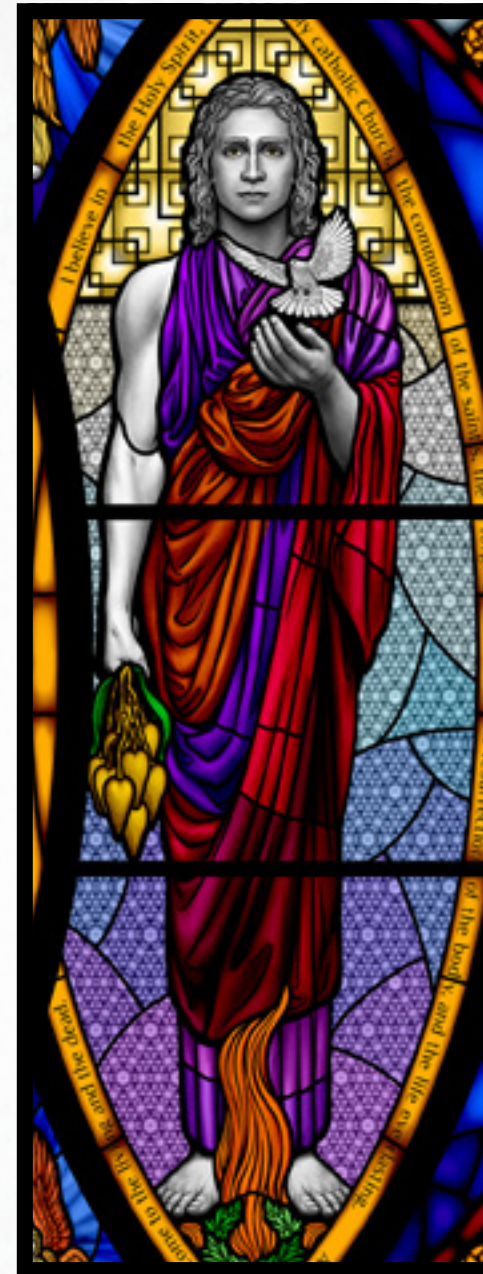


cultural garbs from different time-periods for purposes of historical weight and inclusivity, I also wanted the artwork to have a timeless quality. Current fashion trends, although arguably creating a more immediate connection with a modern viewer—a recognized strategy employed by artisans for centuries (Lee, et al. 54)—forcefully date an image: clothing infamously becomes rapidly passé. My pieces principally make use of stylized historical apparel in the narrative scenes, with key figures in both windows donning the classical archetype (Hollander 417-418) (Fig. 4.13). In this approach to clothing, another aim is for an observer to associate garbs from different

centuries with the dichotomous nature of humanity at large: characters within the pieces do not emphasize their individuality, but rather their collective type: that is, members of either the kingdom of darkness or the Kingdom of God throughout all ages.

As stated, symbols within my images are not confined to standard tropes found throughout the history of Christian Art. Lee, et al. describe how, in the Middle Ages, symbols were “depicted according to certain conventions, but

FIG. 4.13 | Detail of Blessed Trinity illustrating use of archetypal historical apparel | Image by the author



the delightfully fresh interpretation of familiar subjects...show that the artist was not imprisoned in a cast-iron system that gave him no opportunity to express himself. He did, however, have the advantage of a commonly understood symbolic scheme within which he could move with relative freedom” (32). Today, such a shared “scheme” does not exist (or, if one does, it is certainly not “commonly understood”). So, although objects like the cross of Christ, globe of God’s authority, and dove of the Holy Spirit rightfully take their place as attributes of the Trinity in one case, numerous emblematic forms are derived from ordinary modern life, in settings which even a secular person, uninstructed in the semiology of Christianity, could hypothetically apprehend (money, jewels, houses; galaxies, the earth). Moreover, this approach might increase the images’ appeal to younger ages, since children tend to “interpret metaphor literally”



(Watters 197). Still other symbols become clear once the biblical reference is read, being literal visualizations of the text (moth, trap, and fire of James 5, Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5, keys of Death and Hades in Revelation 1). Ideally, this methodology can allow for neophyte Protestant Christians to scripturally contemplate the theological-philosophical content at hand, instead of being distracted by an antiquated pictorial system that is plausibly tainted by folklore (e.g., the *Golden Legend* or similar narratives) (Figs. 4.14, 4.15, 4.16).

Additionally, the modern era has given rise to an immense array of visuals that were not accessible for the majority of human history, while also bringing unique insight to other historical—even ancient—artistic arrangements: specifically, molecular geometry and mathematical visualization, respectively. In my artwork, the latticework present in the background is inspired by the microscopic construct of silicon crystals when seen from a certain angle and magnification: a decidedly contemporary take on the historical appearance of patterns in negative spaces of stained-glass windows. This approach arguably manages to adapt three traditional stained-glass motifs—botanical, geometrical, and “beaded fillets” (Lee, et al. 42-45)—into one integrated design. The pattern invokes modernity on two levels: visually through its foundation, along with similar microscopic matrices, in molecular chemistry, and symbolically, through silicon’s inextricable association with digital devices and the personal computer.

Mathematically-based shapes and designs, on the other hand, have been studied, recognized for their beauty, and used in works of art and architecture for millennia: especially the renowned “Golden Section” which features so prominently in my designs (Fig. 4.17). The mathematical model found in the Golden Section is writ at large in nature itself, from galaxy formations

FIG. 4.14 | Christ holding literal keys of Death and Hades in Blessed Trinity | Image by the author

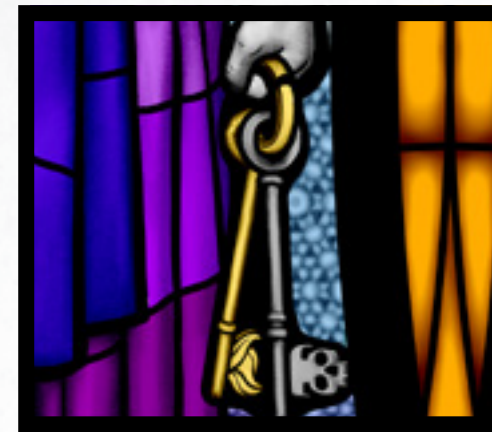


FIG. 4.15 | Combination of traditional “globe of sovereignty” with literal scientific imagery of the universe from Blessed Trinity | Image by the author



FIG. 4.16 | Detail of Greed and Generosity showing several common symbols of avarice | Image by the author



FIG. 4.17 | *A linear depiction of the Golden Spiral* | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fibonacci_spiral_34.svg. Accessed 23. Oct. 2021 | Image by Dicklyon, Public Domain

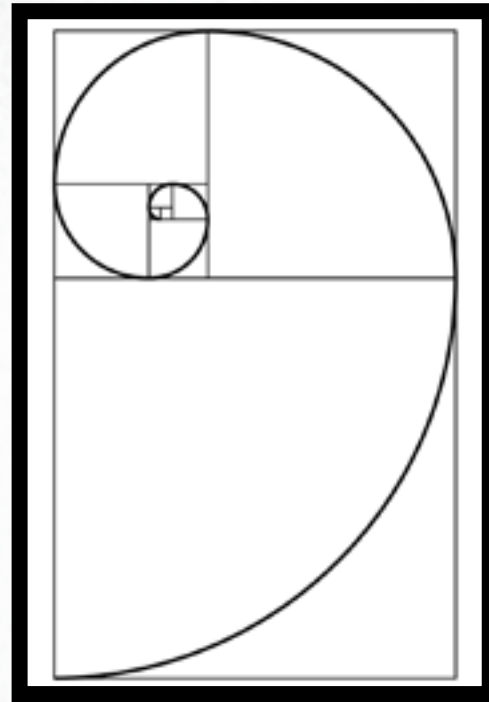


FIG. 4.18 | *Shell of the Nautilus stenomphalus, one of many naturally-occurring Golden Spirals* | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nautilus_stenomphalus. Accessed 23 Oct. 2021 | Photo by James St. John, CC-BY-2.0

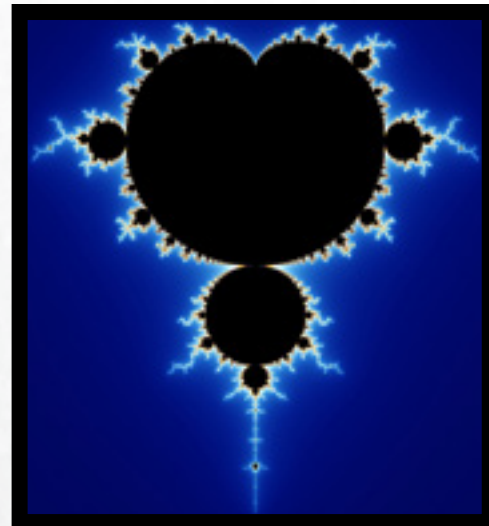


FIG. 4.19 | *Famous fractal known as the Mandelbrot set* | https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mandel_zoom_00_mandelbrot_set.jpg. Accessed 23. Oct. 2021 | Image by Wolfgang Beyer, CC BY-SA 3.0

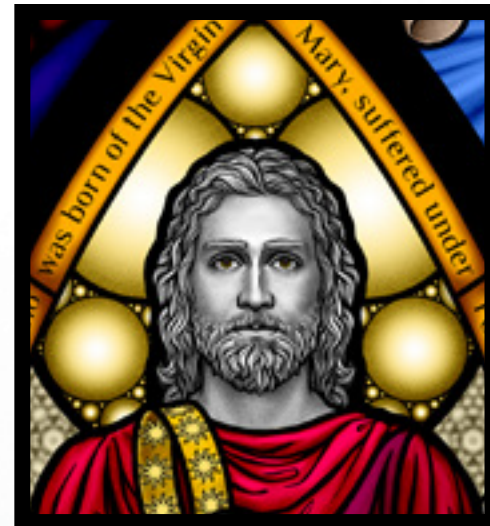


FIG. 4.20 | *Halos from Blessed Trinity are constructed from fractal patterns* | Image by the author

to seashells and an incredible range in between (Fig. 4.18), which assuredly explains humanity’s long fascination with its appearance (Lüttge and Souza 98-101; Meisner 7-9, 12-16, 37-50) But the advent of powerful personal computers, smart devices, software, and the internet has led to a far greater number of ordinary people being exposed to such mathematical-natural beauty, arbitrated by digital platforms (Meisner 7, 11, 133-141, 166-169). Because of the potential for exquisitely beautiful patterns, shapes, and compositions deriving from mathematical constructs so closely associated with technology and modernity, the Golden Section seemed an ideal method for aesthetically engaging a contemporary viewership. Elements using this approach include the sectioning of the arched window and the path of the banderoles therein, along with the graphic border designs in both windows that periodically punctuate biblical references. The other instance of mathematical visualization are the “halos” behind the Persons of the Trinity. These shapes are fractals, patterns that “repeat at varying size scales” (Robles, et al. 1) (Figs. 4.19, 4.20). Like the Golden Section (which is, in fact, the basis for many fractals), these patterns “comprise natural environments and are also present in artistic works deemed to be highly aesthetic” (1). A universal preference for fractals, regardless of age, has also been established within academic research (1, 7), making the inclusion of these design motifs an immanently rational decision.

Although symbolic color references can shift from one culture and era to another (Pentak and Lauer 288; Malamed 210), my illustrations attempt to reflect prevailing Western color concepts and practices. Although incorporating the medieval emphasis on innate glass color and high saturation—which fortunately aligns with current aesthetic trends (Pentak and Lauer 256)—centuries-old color symbolism and application were largely, although not



completely, excluded. (Virginia Raguin comments how contemporary viewers might find these sorts of ancient color associations unfamiliar [*Style*], with Pentak and Lauer also adding their assent to the idea of unfamiliarity with color symbolism depending on a viewer's context [288]). Instead, the hues I have used draw inspiration from both generally-accepted modern color psychology—such as the effect of intrinsically warm and cool colors, along with contextual emotional response and modern color associations (to be unpacked momentarily) (Pentak and Lauer 286-289)—and present-day cosmological photography of celestial objects, which supply the otherworldly palette of *Blessed Trinity* (Fig. 4.21).



FIG. 4.21 | Typical coloration of interstellar photography | Central region of Milky Way galaxy | Central region of Milky Way galaxy | https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Center_of_the_Milky_Way_Galaxy_IV_-_Composite.jpg. Accessed 23 Oct. 2021 | Photo by NASA and ESA, Public Domain

DOCTRINAL INFLUENCE, OBJECTIVE BEAUTY

Subject matter for my works of art could have been drawn from a multiplicity of important Protestant doctrine. Major catechisms crafted since the Reformation, such as Luther's catechisms, The Westminster catechisms, or *The Catechism of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (of 1855) all contain a litany of teachings regarding proper dogma summarized by question-and-answer statements—*The Westminster Larger Catechism*, for example, tallies just shy of two hundred, at one hundred ninety-six. (Luther 6-29; Presbyterian). Completing this thesis in a reasonable timeframe necessitated that I limit my concepts to only a couple; therefore, in light of the twenty-first century U.S. Protestant demographic, my pictures focus on themes which overlap three points of reference: shared components of all major catechisms (the Lord's Prayer, Ten Commandments, and Apostles' Creed); disobedience brought to light by the *State of Theology* survey (accurate Trinitarianism, Christianity as a means to material gain); and my own assessment of the culture in which I live (materialism, self-aggrandizement, sacrilege, ignorance). The fundamental goal in focusing on these themes is to facilitate a catechumen's discernment of sin versus holiness, of error versus truth, and for this recognition to lead to true repentance and a life of discipleship and growth in Christlikeness. As Clinton Arnold puts it, "Are we helping new believers repent completely of sinful life-styles and practices?" (40). Matthew Mason and Darwin Glassford both echo the point, stressing that doctrinal learning within catechesis is not just hearing or rote memorization, but a holistic training of one's self, including will, thoughts, emotions, words, and actions (Mason 211-212; Glassford S-175-S-176). Although few in number, the pictures I have created for this



thesis serve both as an end in themselves and also as a proof of concept for a methodology that can be continually expanded in the future, involving various doctrinal topics depicted in any number of media.

POWERFUL DOGMA

The scholarship shows that one of Martin Luther's central considerations regarding Protestant art during the Reformation was educational comprehensibility, which could be summarized in the idea of simplicity (Noble 27, 32-34, 46, 52, 197; Koerner 246-248; Michalski 38-39). This strain of thought aligns with guidance from the field of instructional design, where "Simple, relevant, and effective visual design reduces extraneous cognitive processing and provides an additional mental channel for the most important information (i.e., the content) to be processed and retained" (West, et al.). Parrish expands on this assertion, stating that "the simplest way to reduce complexity is to remove any elements that are not central to the message. Too often we let tradition, or even cliché, creep into illustration design..." ("Instructional"). However, Connie Malamed provides an important counterbalance when she declares, "Although simplification is highly effective for many communication needs, some concepts and systems are too deep and too rich to pare down" (170). She explains that designing for such concepts "often results in visually complex graphics. Complex graphics are information rich, conveying meaning through an increased use of detail, patterns, shapes, text, color, density, and diversity of elements" (169). Malamed includes the caution that "[v]iewers may have difficulty with these visuals because there are a greater number of pictorial stimuli to discriminate, identify, and process" (169). Since topics of philosophy-theology would seem to fall most naturally into the category Malamed describes, I attempted to strike

a balance between simplicity and complexity—a "paradox" articulated by both Parrish and Malamed—in my artwork. Part of the difficulty between the two is that some facets of instructional design can counteract others: for example, stripping away intricacy may help a viewer focus on important items; however, elaborate detail can also capture attention and stimulate interest (Parrish, "Instructional"; Malamed 166). Many principles and elements of visual design assist in furthering a picture's clarity (Pentak and Lauer 4-6); however, such considerations (e.g., focal points, tone, rhythm, etc.) are better visited within the context of beauty. Alongside a general parameter of simplicity, compositional factors already explored additionally serve to increase pedagogical effectiveness by realizing those imperatives brought forth by instructional design theory: items such as commanding and holding attention; increasing viewer motivation and engagement; directing an observer's gaze; organizing components logically; initiating an emotional response; providing context for written material; presenting a challenge to analyze words and their meanings carefully; keeping disparate parts of complex information in a readily accessible relationship; and affording a concrete method for verifying understanding of the text (West, et al.; Malamed 14, 43, 54, 57, 63-66, 72, 79, 81, 85, 91-92, 95-96, 102, 109-111, 117, 121, 124, 166, 175, 177, 202-203, 206, 209-211, 213-214, 219, 220; Parrish, "Instructional"; Levie and Lentz 220-222).

Textuality

Having biblical passages and references inseparably located nearby the images which illustrate them allows for a strongly impactful presentation: modern scholarship overwhelmingly validates the pedagogical prowess of combining word and picture (Levie and Lentz 213, 220-223; Mayer 1, 3, 6-7; Gangwer



23-24, 37-38; Paivio 53-54, 75; Parrish “Instructional”; Aisami 538). I also found the discussion of subjective viewer interpretation especially important to the inclusion of text directly into my artwork (Levie and Lentz 218; Parrish “Instructional”; Malamed 20; Noble 5, 13, 28, 41-42, 47, 197). By integrating text inextricably into the illustrations, the Scriptural and orthodox context is unavoidable, thereby intending to limit an observer’s own idiosyncratic response. Although original works of art had been joining writing and picture for millennia, David Morgan highlights this sort of methodology as being innovative for printing in the early 1800’s, when wood engraving allowed the two to be printed on the same page, which “immersed the image into the page, where it sat poised between units of text rather than isolated on a separate page...to place Word and image in a graphic dialogue that enhanced the meaning of both” (*Protestants*, 53). In my poster and book illustrations (Fig. 4.22), where additional space becomes an opportunity to include applicable verses, creedal and confessional statements, or quotes from esteemed Christians, I have placed two selections found in every major catechism: the Lord’s Prayer and the Apostles’ Creed (Parrett and Packer 156, 160, 174; Potgieter 5, 7; Hollon 4; Nettles 7-8). The font I have chosen is a relatively bold, but elegant, sans-serif typeface (sans-serif adding an additional layer of modernity within the design) and is located within areas devoid of distraction (Fig. 4.23), keeping the text distinct and its apprehension unhindered (West, et al.). These considerations contrast with Connick’s stained-glass work (viewed via photographs), where there are multiple occurrences of textual legibility being less than optimum (Raguin, *Style*). One concern is value contrast: most of his writing is presented reversed, light on dark, which reduces recognizability of letterforms in printed material, and I would argue often has the same issue in stained glass (Fig 4.24). Font choices are also specious at

FIG. 4.22 | *The Lord’s Prayer inserted below Greed and Generosity as part of an art poster | Image by the author*

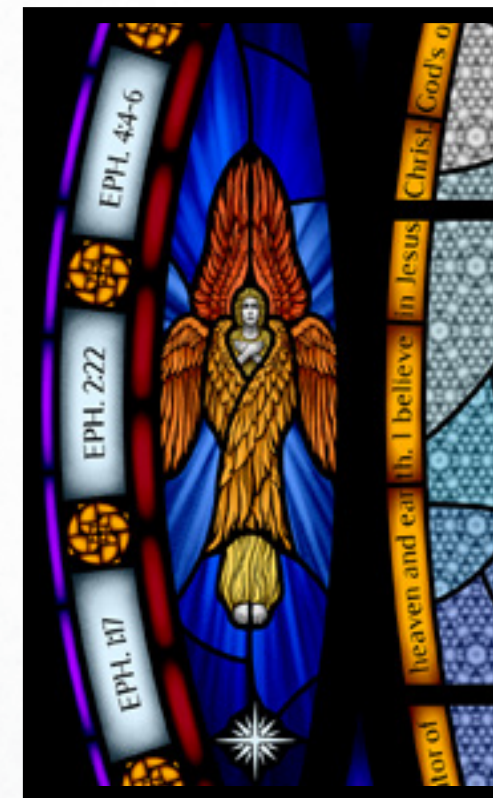
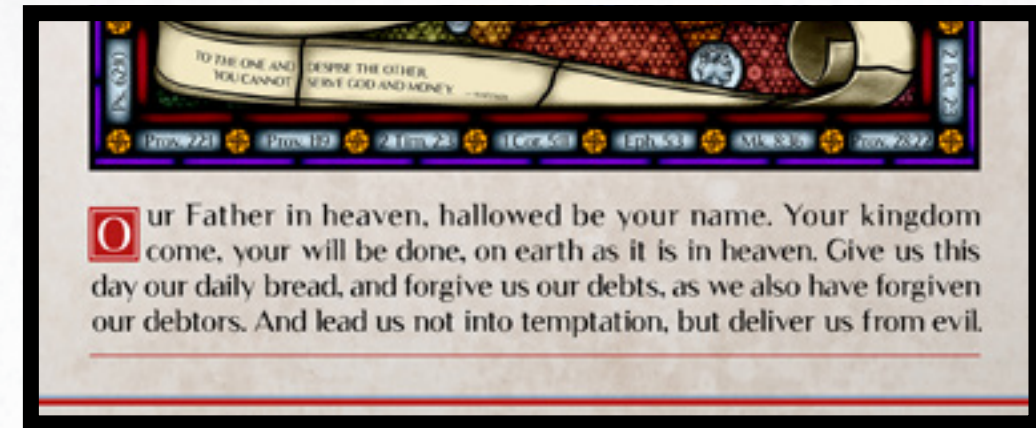


FIG. 4.23 | *Scripture references in border of Blessed Trinity | Image by the author*

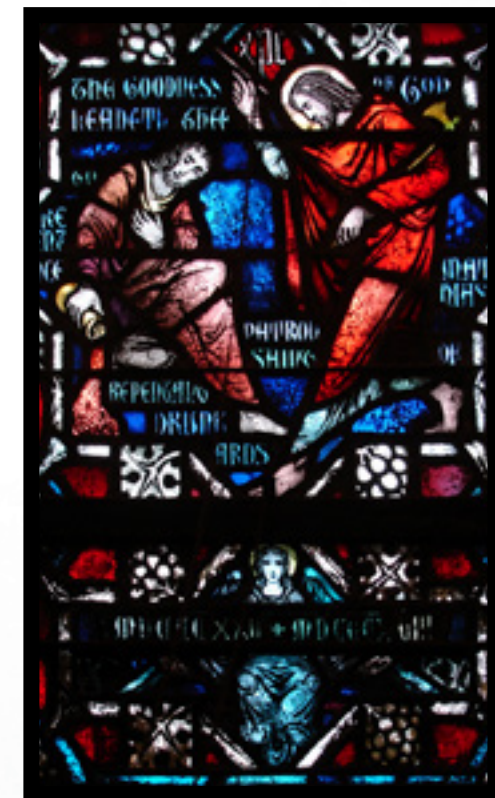


FIG. 4.24 | *Connick, Charles, Christ's Teachings, stained glass, 1926, St. James Church, New York | <https://college.holycross.edu/RaguinStainedGlassInAmerica/Arts&Crafts/Arts&Crafts.html>. Accessed 23 Oct. 2021 | Photo and permission by Virginia C. Raguin*

times: beautiful, but overly narrow in some places, such as horizontals. Finally, his words are knit into the pictorial features in such a way as to significantly lessen their clarity.

Symbolism

Symbols, again, are either chiefly plain to a modern eye or quickly decipherable from accompanying biblical references, which act as both source for emblems and explanatory key for comprehending them correctly, thus increasing Protestant visual literacy (Malamed 37; West, et al.). Symbols also provide a means for viewer retention, in that they repeat the text in an alternate modal form and inspire creation of vivid mental pictures (Levie and Lentz



222-223). In *Greed and Generosity*, several elements signify that rather archaic, but wonderfully precise word *mammon*: coins, a jewel, a mansion, a money purse, and a laurel wreath (the latter two held by an idol personifying avarice, and denoting fortune and fame respectively). The idol of greed, spoken of in Colossians 3 and Ephesians 5, sits astride a mound of skulls, representing the death and destruction of those who are ensnared by him (1 Tim 6.9-10, 1 Cor. 6.9-11, Jm. 5.1-6 2 Pet. 2.3, Prov. 1.19). The moth indicates the annihilation of worldly treasure

FIG. 4.25 | Detail from *Greed and Generosity*, where symbolism occupies a large portion of the composition | Image by the author

and God’s judgement on those who hoard it (Is 51.8, Hos. 5.12, Jm. 5.2, Matt 6.19). The trap, likewise, comes from 1 Timothy 6:9, and refers to the deceiving, entangling, and destructive nature of covetousness (Fig. 4.25).

In *Blessed Trinity*, symbolism begins with its architectural shape, as the “rose” window’s circular form is a well-known geometric symbol of God’s eternity (Ferguson 153; Lee, et al. 22) Halos, and their synonymous cousins mandorlas, although often considered almost exclusively as Roman Catholic or Eastern, actually originated in the earliest days of Christian art, before any major Church schisms (Todorova 199, 201). Todorova beautifully describes this graphic tradition—“that strange artistic device which appears as a border zone between the divine and the mundane, between the sacred and the material world”—as “a representation of the supreme and unachievable sacred event of the Glory of God— the most direct manifestation of the Divine Dynamics of God” (200, 206). This materialization of God’s radiant glory

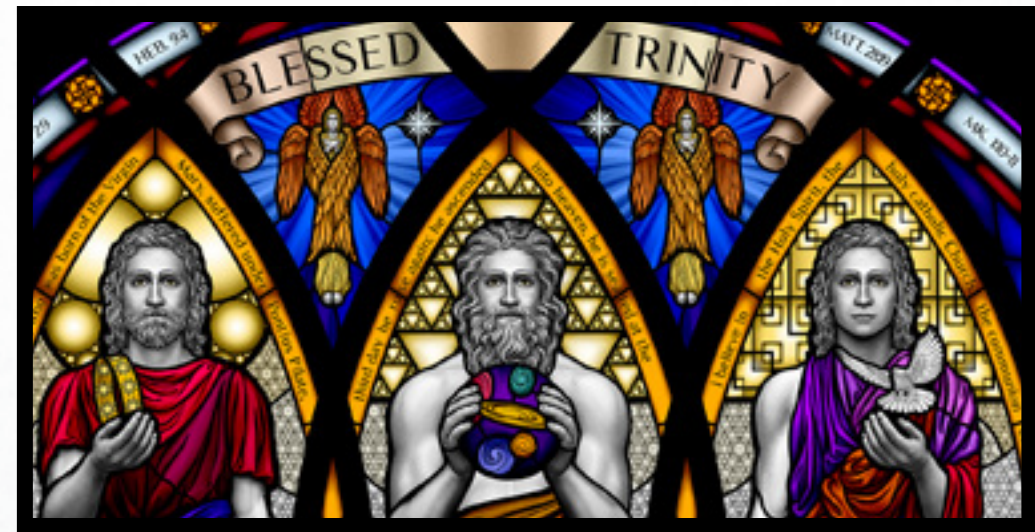


FIG. 4.26 | Halos, mandorlas, and fractals in *Blessed Trinity*: an aggregation of historical and contemporary symbolism | Image by the author



occurs frequently throughout Scripture (Matt. 17.2, 1 Kings 8.10-11, Ex. 40.35, Jn. 1.14). Fractal patterns within the Trinitarian halos speak to God’s essential quality of rationality and His exceptional ordering of the cosmos (Fig. 4.26). And although text within a mandorla is not particularly common, it does have its historical precedents (Fig. 4.27). Seven angels represent God as “The Lord of Hosts” (Ps. 24.10, Zech 4.6, Jer. 32.18, Hag. 2.9) and personify the angels to the Seven Churches from the Revelation of John. Christ holds seven stars which reinforce the same apocalyptic theme; these stars are set into the shape of a wheel, an object often found near the throne of God in prophetic visions. (Dan. 7.9, Ez. 1.15-21, Ez. 10.1, 6, 9-13; Ferguson 183). Twelve stars set in the deep blue firmament serve dual purposes, connoting God’s habitation in the heavens and the historical significance of the twelve Apostles—a prevalent numerical motif that can also signify the Church Universal, which began through the ministry of those persons (Ferguson 44, 154). God’s throne, an item instantly recognizable as showing absolute authority and mentioned recurrently in the Bible (Is. 6.1, Rev 4.2, Ps. 103.19, Rev 20.11, Rev. 3.21, Ps 11.4), sits astride the Northwestern Hemisphere of the earth, this terrestrial sphere described in Holy Writ as the footstool of the Lord (Is 66.1, Matt 5.35). God the



FIG. 4.27 | Example of historical mandorla with text | Seal of Stone Priory in Staffordshire, c. 13th-14th century | [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_StonePriory_Staffordshire_13th14thC_\(MirrorImage\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_StonePriory_Staffordshire_13th14thC_(MirrorImage).png). Accessed 23 Oct. 2021 | Photo by Lobsterthermidor, Public Domain

Father holds a globe, traditionally signifying both power and the pre-created world (Ferguson 93, 175): I have expanded on those themes by incorporating wheeling galaxies, revealing God’s sovereignty and infinitude using distinctly modern imagery. Jesus Christ the Son holds the keys of death and hades alluded to in Revelation chapter one; the indomitable, resplendent cross and open sepulcher reside at his feet. The Holy Spirit, for His part, exhibits the principal attribute of his appearing in the form of a dove (from the event of Jesus’ baptism), along with a literal representation of the nine Fruits of the Spirit (Gal. 5.22-23; Ferguson 31).

One intentional break from symbolic straightforwardness that I have included in both compositions is fire, which has multiple metaphorical connotations in Scripture (Merrill). Flames play slightly different roles in my illustrations, acting as an attribute of the Holy Spirit in *Blessed Trinity* and the marking of Believers, as well as the righteous wrath of God, in *Greed and Generosity* (Heb. 12.29, Matt. 3.11, Acts 2.3-4, Is. 66.15-16, Ezek. 28.18, Heb. 10.27; Ferguson 42) (Figs. 4.28, 4.29, 4.30). These multiple aspects can perhaps be

FIG. 4.28 | Fire as an attribute of the Third Person of the Trinity | Image by the author



FIG. 4.29 | *Fire as a symbol of the indwelling Holy Spirit*
| Image by the author



FIG. 4.30 | *Fire as a symbol of God's judgement*
| Image by the author



understood only through a broader knowledge of biblical contexts or by having such contexts explained. Because catechesis is intended to be a profoundly interpersonal process (Parrett and Packer 28), including a relatively polyvalent symbol seems tenable because of the interaction it would foster. Slightly more advanced iconography could also offer an additional level of interest to individuals further along in their learning, facilitating longevity and breadth of viewer engagement (Malamed 36).

Stylization

As already articulated, I have imparted an overall rejection of illusionistic space and realistic detail in these pieces, an approach that plausibly mitigates distraction (Malamed 102, 109-111, 117, 121, 124; Parrish, “Instructional”; West, et al.) Sectionalizing the pictorial field aids both conceptual organization and directed eye flow. Malamed underscores the first point, saying “segment complex content into smaller units to minimize the amount of information processed at one time. Organizing information into smaller chunks allows

schemas to slowly build up so that content can be gradually understood and ultimately integrated into one whole” (175). She later adds “Information segmentation is particularly effective because it is a natural cognitive strategy we use to decompose our world into smaller units” (177). West, et al. and Malamed together reference the importance of guiding the progression of the viewer’s gaze throughout an illustration, with Malamed stating intentionality here is “one of the more essential techniques visual communicators can employ to ensure that viewers comprehend their intended message” (72).

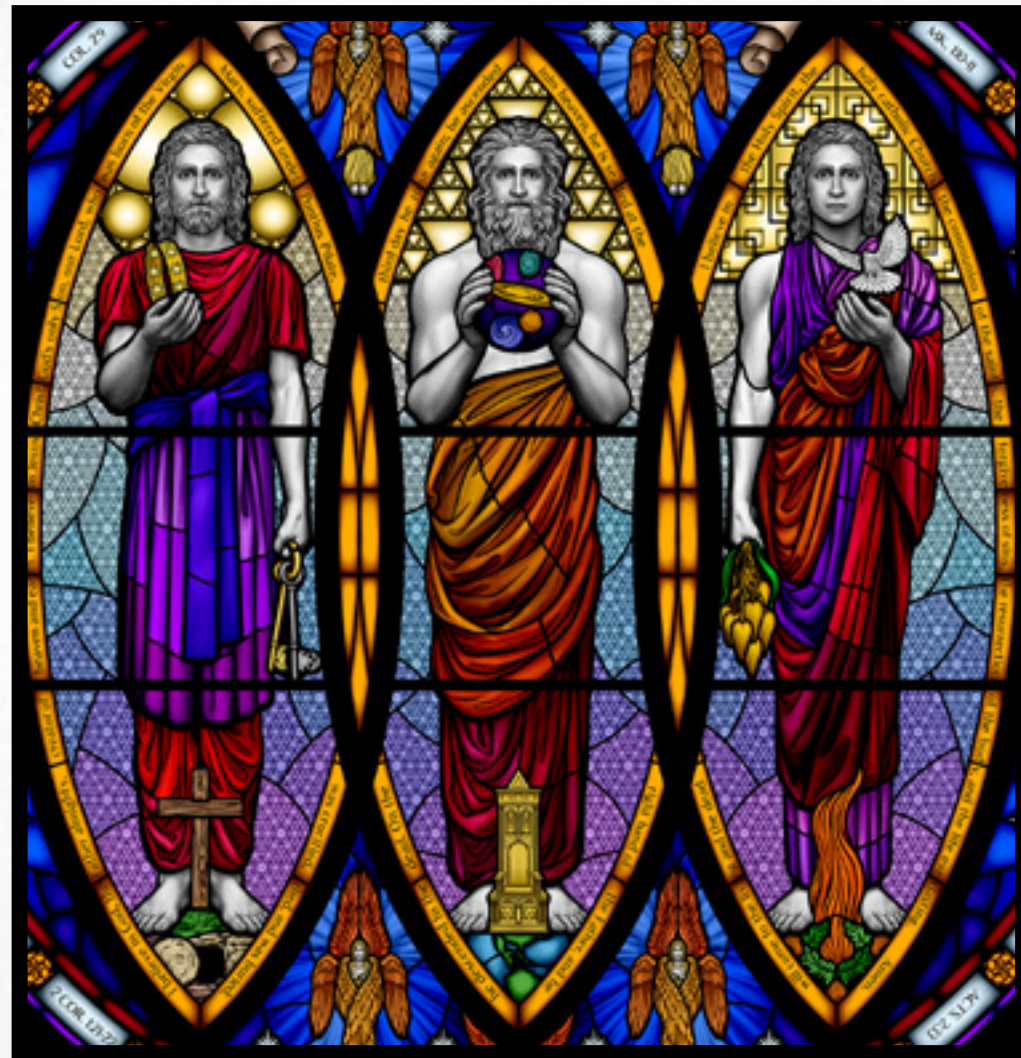
Of unique importance in Their depiction are the Persons of the Trinity (Fig. 4.31). Because They are co-equal, of the same “substance” though different Persons, and co-eternal, I made each Member the same dimension, with the same physical appearance, and on the same plane in order to negate any perception of varying preeminence associated with size, age, or placement (facial hair, clothing, and accompanying symbols serve to distinguish the mystery of Trinitarian individuality-within-unity) (Craig; Jensen, “Economy” 531-532, 535-536; Ferguson 94). Visions of God from throughout Scripture were used as a reference for visually interpreting the personification of the Godhead; therefore, the Son stands on the right hand of the Father (Lk. 22.69, Rom. 8.34, Col. 3.1, Matt. 26.64, Heb. 12.2, Acts 7.55), They all wear robes (Rev. 1.13), and Their appearance—especially when brilliantly lit in a stained-glass window—is intended to be as white-hot metal, the sun in its strength, and white as the light (including Their hair) (Ez. 1.27, Rev. 1.16, Matt. 17.2).

Affectivity

An overarching goal that I have striven for within these works of art is dimension of affectivity. This domain is of equal importance to cognitive

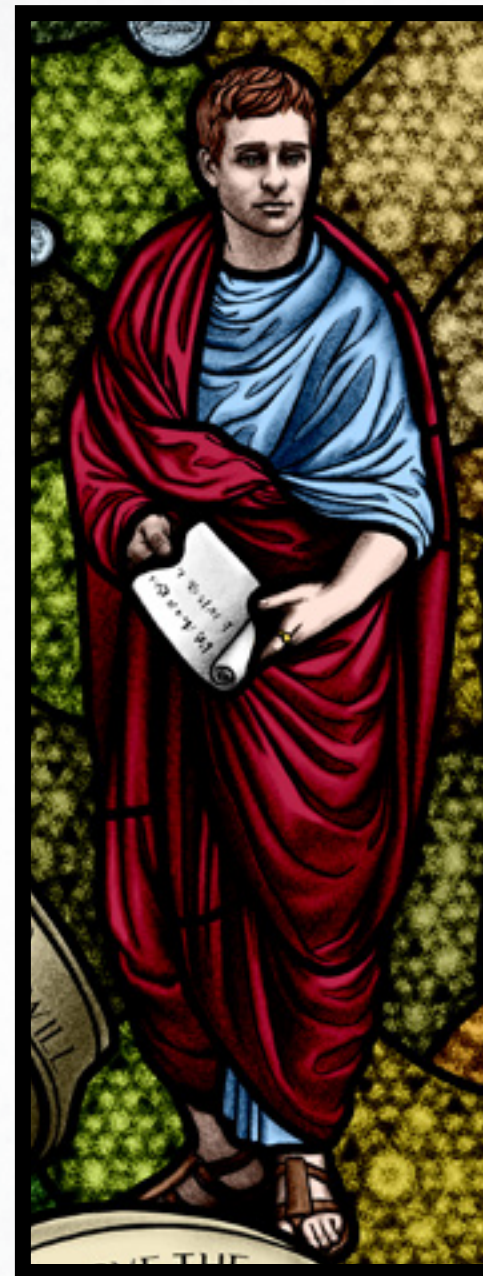


FIG. 4.31 | Personifications of the coequal, coeternal, consubstantial, one true Triune God from Blessed Trinity | Image by the author



considerations, assisting and even bypassing that channel to effect change (West, et al.; Gangwer 23-24; Malamed 202-203, 205-207). Several methods were used to activate the emotive sphere. First, people and objects are depicted in an attractive representational format. Scholarship indicates that a representational

FIG. 4.32 | Interpersonal narrative imparts an impactful emotional quality in Greed and Generosity | Image by the author



approach aids clarity (Levie and Lentz 218), and if it is appealing, it avoids causing viewer distress, with Malamed asserting that exaggerating forms of people or objects beyond natural or conventional shapes can “generate a disquieting and disturbing experience” or “potentially create an unsettling experience” (211). Next, I have included narrative scenes within *Greed and Generosity*: stories, especially those charged with emotion, particularly positive emotion, also greatly increases a picture’s impact and memorability (West, et al.; Malamed 11, 202-203, 206-207, 212-214) (Fig. 4.32). Within the narrative format, the inclusion of symbols and metaphors further enhances an affective response, as “our cognitive system often relies on metaphors and analogies to think and imagine,” while “Symbolism plays a critical role in visual communication and provides an eloquent way to communicate emotional content to represent abstract and often profound ideas. (Malamed 211, 219). Even

without overt narrative content, as in *Blessed Trinity*, simply having a person's face gazing out of a picture draws a viewer's attention and creates a genuine neuropsychological and neurophysiological response (Malamed 91, Folgerø, et al. 1, 12; Kesner, et al. 88, 95).



FIG. 4.33 | The abstract background shapes of Greed and Generosity shift from warm to cool hues, underscoring the thematic shift from Good to Evil | Image by the author

Colors

Emotive outcomes segue into another distinct and imperative category, namely, color. Beyond engaging a modern audience, I have also employed color for pedagogical effectiveness. Emotionally, both West, et al. and Connie Malamed note the emotional power of color choices and its bearing on learning. In the hue progression of *Greed and Generosity*, I attempted to reinforce the message of the scenes by instantiating cognitive research studies showing that “cool colors tend to have a sedating effect and warm colors invoke more energetic feelings...In a continuum from red to yellow, participants associated positive and cheery emotions with the colors that were closer to yellow,” while “darker colors are associated with more negative feelings (Malamed 210) (Fig. 4.33). Within *Blessed Trinity*, as intimated, modern color theory is utilized, as the deep blues, violets, and dazzling orange-yellows indicate the otherworldliness and mystery of the Trinity: again, contemporary photography of interstellar space is assuredly the source of such affective responses to this color palette. Distinct zonal hues within both artworks might also “provide an additional dimension for conveying meaning...The color-coding of elements and data facilitates information retrieval because color is stored in long-term memory along with associated information” (Malamed 137).

ENGAGING AESTHETICS

For many students of aesthetics through the ages, secular and religious alike, the presence of beauty has been paramount to true works of art; beauty is also demonstrably important to the Triune God, encompassing a facet of the Divine nature (Scruton ix, 1-5, ch. 5; Ryken; Jensen, “Arts” 362-364; Morgan, *Forge* 197, 217-219). The Bible contains a litany of passages concerning



beauty as it relates to God, natural creation, and the artwork of humankind (Ps. 27.4, 50.2, Is. 33.17, Rom. 1.19-20, Ex. 31.2-9, 35.22-35, 2 Chron 2.13-14, et cetera). Writings revolving around the definition of beauty fill libraries; unfortunately, authors often have conflicting positions, especially in modern and postmodern cultural milieus. Therefore, the works of art for this thesis take a two-pronged approach to achieving objective beauty: a redemptive presentation combined with technical excellence (Ryken; Schaeffer 82-83; Jensen, “Arts” 365; Scruton ch. 5, ch. 8).

Redemptive Presentation

The first idea is simpler to articulate, achieved by including a dominant component of ultimate hope in each piece (Ryken): the “major theme” of the Christian worldview, to use Schaeffer’s terminology (82-83). Although my compositions do not shy away from hard truths by including warnings against serious evils (either implicitly, in *Blessed Trinity*, or explicitly, in *Greed and Generosity*), the images do not overwhelm and repulse the viewer with associated evils—paganism, occultism, scientism, rapaciousness, tyranny, slavery—in spite of their horrific prevalence in contemporary culture. Instead, the bulk of the space is given to edifying depictions which are intended to counteract those sins, accentuating the majesty of the Trinity in one and godly stewardship of possessions in the other. Using Jensen’s criterion, my images are intended to “empower, move to action, stimulate piety, arouse pity, or even righteous anger” and to astutely avoid being work that “degrades, dehumanizes, manipulates, or is aimed only at profit” (“Arts” 366).

Technical Merit

The second mode, technical excellence, can be seen in the care given to

the crafting of the images: correct and admirable use of medium and materials, “offering God our very best” (Ryken). However, this explanation necessitates a lengthier description.

The preliminary technical feature contributing to beauty within the pieces is unity, a principle of design that is stressed in both the literature of the visual arts generally and of stained glass particularly (Pentak and Lauer ch.2; Raguin Style, “Revivals” 317-319). The windows are clearly intended to belong together, with each piece harmonizing within itself and when seen together (Pentak and Lauer 28). They achieve this visual unity through several shared compositional elements, first of which is the Golden Section along with other fractal patterns. The famed Golden Section predominates throughout the images (Fig. 4.34): this design motif has been widely revered for centuries as being intrinsically beautiful (Pentak and Lauer 82; Meisner 3, 12, 58, 60, 126, 173; Lüttge and Souza 98-10). Likewise, studies show that fractals are regarded as highly aesthetic, with the same research indicating

FIG. 4.34 | Predominance of Golden Spiral motif helps establish unity | Image by the author

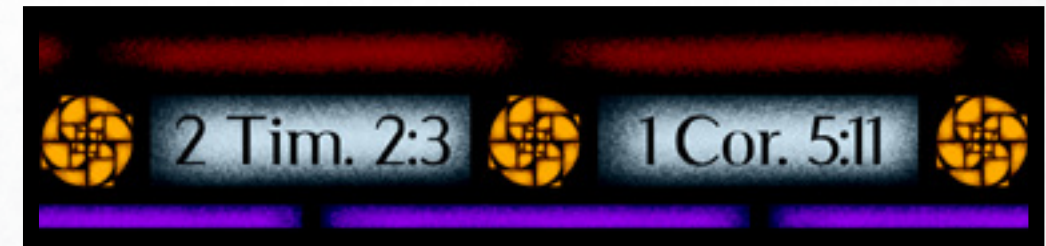


FIG. 4.35 | Likewise, a recurring border arrangement furthers harmoniousness between pictures | Image by the author



preference for high complexity in repeating designs, like those present in the Trinitarian halos, “due to the presence of order introduced by symmetry and exact recursion of features” (Robles, et al. 1-3). Second, the windows have three-part borders utilizing a thin-thick-thin arrangement (Fig. 4.35): within these borders are pleasing, recurring textual and mathematical patterns. There are, in fact, several repetitious features between the windows, since repetition constitutes a “valuable and widely used device for achieving visual unity” (Pentak and Lauer 36). These features include the banderoles (Figs. 4.36, 4.37); segmentation of areas (again with the Golden section and fractals present within these divisions); nonobjective planar shapes comprising large swathes of background space (Fig. 4.38) ; highly saturated glass colors assembled into gradations to heighten the depicted narrative; and sizeable figures dominating the primary pedagogical areas while smaller figures mingle with symbolic objects elsewhere, forming a desirable mixture of large, medium, and small shapes. The final aspect of unity evident in these pieces is continuation. This facet of unity, rather self-evident in its nomenclature, occurs when “something ‘continues’—usually a line, an edge, or a direction from one form to another. The viewer’s eye is carried smoothly from one element to the next” (38). In *Blessed Trinity*, continuation is attained by the three figures forming a strong horizontal through their identical heights and

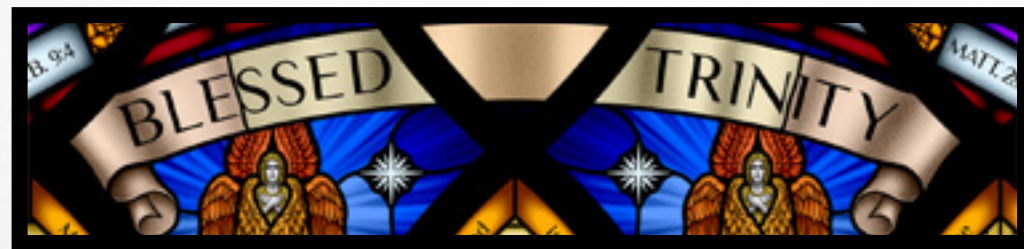


FIG. 4.36 | The use of banderoles as a repeated textual device provides visual consistency between Blessed Trinity... | Image by the author

FIG. 4.37 | ...and Greed and Generosity | Image by the author



aligned placement (this sideways movement is balanced by the strong verticality of their poses). In *Greed and Generosity*, continuation is incorporated primarily through the movement of banderoles, aided by figures and objects.

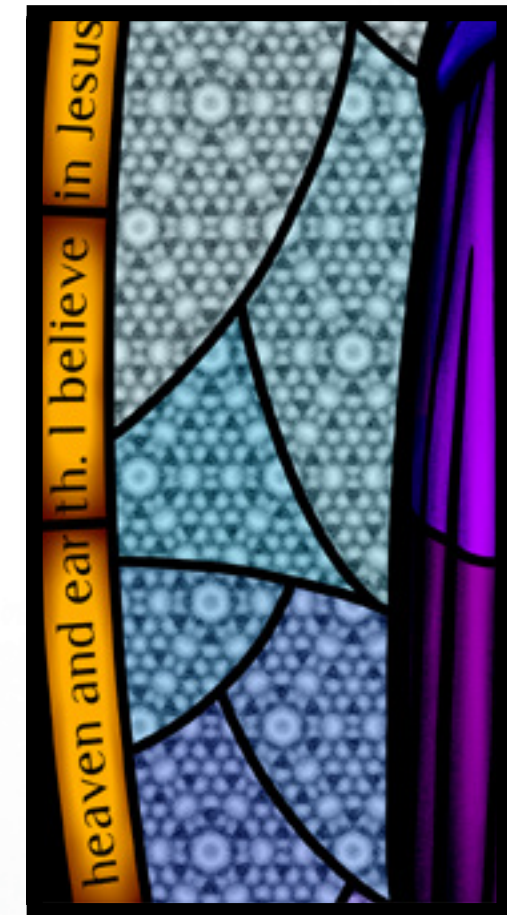


FIG. 4.38 | Recurring abstract background shapes | Image by the author



Beyond unity, my works of art share several additional principles and elements of design and technique that build towards beauty of appearance. Principles of design and technique encompass focal point, proportion, balance, and rhythm. Focal points are admittedly a bit more nuanced within the pieces than might be typical, due to an emphasis on groups over individuals (such as the three Persons of the Trinity or multicultural mob). However, through use of scale, isolation, color, and placement, the relative importance of these components within the larger scheme is clearly discernible while still accentuating the whole over any individual part (56-66). Proportionally, a combination of large, medium, and small shapes is again present and manipulated in such a way as to underscore the intended message while denying illusionistic naturalism. Also already noted, stylized figures are credible in their forms and gestures, unlike some examples of historic and contemporary stained glass alike, where anatomical believability is specious or ignored outright. Pentak and Lauer note that if human proportions are not carefully controlled, the results are “more often disturbing” (80). The presence of the Golden Section naturally imparts a pleasing asymmetrical balance to the overall compositions of the arched window, appropriate to its complex narratives, since asymmetry typifies our visual experience in life (Pentak and Lauer 97). *Blessed Trinity*, on the other hand, utilizes formal symmetry, a method of compositional balance that “is high on the list of universally recognized attributes ascribed to beauty” and conveys “an immediate feeling of permanence, strength, and stability” (92). These implementations of asymmetrical and symmetrical balance also infuse the pieces with rhythm: progressive rhythm in the arched window (as the sections rotate, translate, and decrease in size) and alternating rhythm in the rose window (albeit brief, as a horizontal sequence is established) (118-121).

Elements of design and technique include line, shape, pattern and texture, space, value, and color. Line is used extensively throughout the works, in both its explicit and implied sense (Pentak and Lauer 132-136). Explicitly, contour lines form an intrinsic part of stained glass, with most artists working in the medium embracing this unique feature in both came and tracing. I have done so here, with line-weight carefully composed to underscore the vitreous medium’s boldness while simultaneously not allowing the imagery to become distractingly brusque with visual weight. In contrast to one of the modern iterations of catechistic imagery that I analyzed, linework is also manifestly hand-crafted, varying in thickness in the tracing and comprising organic directionality, instead of a being mechanically rigid (140). Within the craft of stained glass, Mark Speake highlighted the importance of artistry in trace lines, calling it as much of an art-form as shading. Implied lines and psychic lines are also prevalent throughout the compositions, leading the viewer’s gaze through the narratives and even creating a distinctive empathetic human connection with the observer as figures gaze outward from the pictures (Pentak and Lauer 136; Folgerø, et al. 1, 12; Kesner, et al. 88, 95).

The use of shape has already been described within other purviews: arches and circle for the overall picture plane, narrative divisions within the arched window, nonobjective background patterns, and border elements. These items all include a deliberate combination of both rectilinear and curvilinear shapes, exhibiting an attractive degree of variety, contrast, and visual relief between the two, which are generally associated with fabricated and natural objects respectively (Pentak and Lauer 166-169). Positive and negative shapes have also been arranged to create an interesting integration of the two, with negative shapes taking on engaging nonobjective contours and placements (170-175).



Patterns within my illustrations have likewise been earlier established in discussion of the Golden Section, fractals, and the historical aesthetic of stained glass. Beyond inclusion of patterns, these artworks also employ texture in two key areas: stippled matt painting and physical glass surface. The former appears in both book and poster illustrations as well as eventual actualized windows, where it serves to enhance a hand-rendered appearance and to modulate the powerful natural light coming through (unpainted glass “often presents a confusing glare of light and colour”) (Lee, et al. 183). The latter clearly comes into play only in reified windows, where mouth-blown (i.e., handmade) glass characteristically contains variation in thickness and an overall undulating, straited, or unique craquelure-type quality. Incorporating texture within these pictures appeals to the viewer’s sense of touch, creating visual interest and giving “visual clues so that we can enjoy the textures vicariously” (Pentak and Lauer 186).

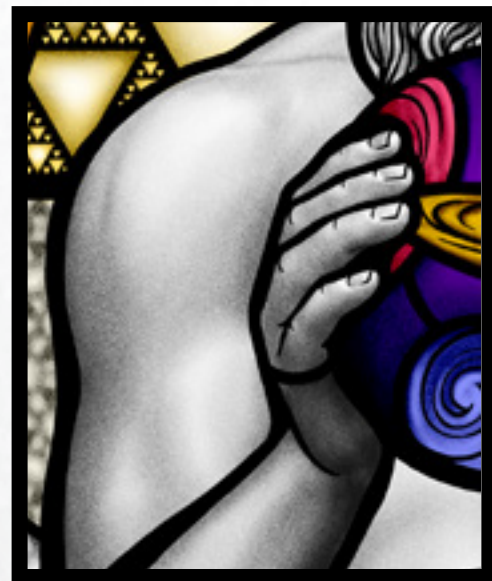


FIG. 4.39 | *Matting texture evident in detail of Blessed Trinity* | Image by the author



FIG. 4.40 | *A variety of standard textures in hand-blown stained glass* | Photo by the author

Space, in an illusionistic sense, is largely denied throughout the scenes. Instead, the pictorial device of multiple perspectives is utilized, along with forms which are mainly closed (with all elements of a section’s composition entirely enclosed within its borders) (218, 222), intending to underscore the pedagogical focus and keep the viewer’s attention within the picture (222).

Values perform multiple roles, from controlling the transmission of light in the matt painting, to establishing an overall pattern from light to dark, to imparting a limited degree of naturalism to individual components, to reinforcing focal points through contrast (246, 248, 250). Stained glass is again distinctive within the visual arts in that the artist-designer deals with transmitted light (direct from the light source) instead of reflected light (redirected from some surface): the range, interaction, and handling of values is therefore markedly different from that found in more typical media.

Finally, the climax of design elements within these images is color. As with value, stained glass is set apart from other media in that the artist-designer works with an additive, instead of subtractive, palette (256). I have used carefully composed color harmonies to avoid broadly discordant,

FIG. 4.41 | *Multiple perspectives is one of several methods by which strict realism is negated* | Image by the author



FIG. 4.42 | Value contrast in Blessed Trinity imparting naturalism to the angelic figure while also reinforcing it as the focal point within its panel. Simultaneous color contrast is also present. | Image by the author



clashing combinations while simultaneously allowing the glass' natural saturation to come to the fore, adhering to traditional conventions in this regard and happily coinciding with abundant modern taste. Contemporary color theory and a modicum of symbolism is also combined with subjective and heightened color for affective purposes, as opposed to a narrower adherence to colors seen in nature (Pentak and Lauer 285). In focal areas, I have strategized the effect of simultaneous contrast by placing complementary colors nearby one another, accentuating the brilliance of each and distinctively attracting the eye (Pentak and Lauer 265).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

RECAP

Hypocrites. A term not infrequently nor undeservedly applied to contemporary Protestant Christianity, where ostensible adherents often fail to perceive, apprehend, and live out the Lord Jesus' command to holiness in thought, word, and deed (Jn. 12.17, 14.15, Matt. 5.1-48, Matt. 22.36-40). The critical concern of a person's recognizing, grasping, and following the laws of God is both complex and ubiquitous; the fall in Eden immediately and irrevocably damaging this and every other facet of the *imago Dei* (i.e., the image of God) in humankind until Christ's return. Although no single methodology will ever act as a silver bullet, ensuring the righteousness of converts generation after generation until the eschaton, the overwhelming testimony of distinguished saints spanning time and geography resound in favor of catechesis. Such a weight of validation would seem to promote the process to the fore of pedagogical practice; however, such is not the case in 21st-century Protestantism in the United States. Catechesis has fallen mostly by the wayside, with but a few denominations holding onto what are mostly murky vestiges of traditions bereft of power. Contributing factors of this decline include the predictable (in the form of errant ideologies) and the inane (with under-educated laypeople acting as leaders for various church-groups, an ironic actualization of the familiar proverb of the blind leading the blind, and heresy the gaping pit waiting to receive all together). Resulting congregations often personify the description



from 2 Timothy 3:5, with church pews filled with those “having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power.” Indeed, stark parallels exist between Paul’s description in 2 Timothy and many a nominal Protestant churchgoer: “lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (2 Tim 3.2-4).

A return to rigorous catechetical instruction seems paramount to remedying this crisis, but the image-laden penchant of the present generations threatens to insert a blockade into an already-tenuous position: how can American Protestant Christianity, so foundationally constructed on text, appeal to denizens of today? One viable solution harkens to the historical Church—apropos for a return to historical catechesis—namely, an integration of imagery into the training of new believers. (And despite a continued notion that Protestantism and pictures tend towards mutual exclusion, the data reveal that even from its formative years, Protestants broadly embraced visuals in private, secular, and sacral spheres, with only a very few specific theological bents excepted—and those not entirely consistent in their disaffirmative practices.) Both reliable scholarship and recent scientific inquiry unequivocally validate the unification of text and image for educational purposes. The final appearance of efficacious twenty-first century artwork created for catechetical pedagogy can be wide-ranging: two-dimensional, three-dimensional, traditional, digital, one-of-a-kind, or mass-produced. The important factor is not media, but form and content: in both their excellence of craftsmanship and clarity of presentation, do the pieces draw viewers to, and teach them about, the one true, Triune God?

REFLECTIONS

Before beginning this research, I knew little about the history of Protestant art in general, much less how it could be applied within contemporary culture to facilitate doctrinal learning. One of the most interesting aspects of the research was the importance of Protestant social contexts regarding the acceptance or rejection of imagery. Biblical exegesis has been, as with every Protestant position, central to any denomination, church, or individual’s theological-philosophical stance. However, once a seminal theologian has set a course based on his sincere elucidation of Scripture, specifically in the context of artistic adiaphora (i.e., morally neutral items to which the Bible neither explicitly promotes nor condemns), extensive adherence to that person’s position can substantiate an illegitimate moral requirement. The tremendously disputable exegesis of the Second Commandment in Exodus 20, “You shall not make for yourself a carved image,” by some Reformers—men like Calvin and Zwingli—have swayed many otherwise brilliant theologians and philosophers to this very day, probably because the visual arts simply do not rate highly enough to warrant much attention in their ambit of study (although this is speculation, and I would be delighted to read other scholarship on this issue). Owing to the visual proclivity of the modern generations, however, such lingering hesitations are assuredly falling away. In fact, the more formidable challenge now seems to be how to direct that pictorial preference away from an addiction to entertainment and media and towards things of God.

Another idea that became more lucid through the course of my research is the equal importance of every person, with his or her unique gifts and abilities, in building the Kingdom of God and reflecting the glorious beauty of the Lord.



Within the stained-glass process, the whole art form would be impossible if individuals in any given sphere were to cease doing their part: from the owner who sets the course of the studio, to the office manager who keeps things running smoothly, to the engineer who calculates structural integrity, to all the artists and craftspeople, right down to the carpenters and installers. The studio environment serves as a wonderful metaphor for living in God's family, the Church Universal: every person has been given distinctive strengths, insights, and positions from the Lord: no calling or gifting is superior in God's economy, provided that each soul "seek[s] first his kingdom and his righteousness" and does everything "with all your heart, as working for the Lord" (Matt. 6.33, Col 3.23). Within the framework of catechesis, this truth underscores the necessity for the Body of Christ to be in communion. Artworks alone, no matter how well-intentioned, well-conceived, or well-executed, cannot attain a comprehensive enough description of dogma, nor a sufficient degree of affectivity, to lead new believers well and truly down the road of Christian maturity. Instead, this critical journey requires multiple instructional modalities intertwined with, and dependent on, meaningful relationships with other Christ followers.

My final observation is that the postmodernist mentality of allowing a viewer to assign arbitrary, personalized meaning to a picture (an already specious practice) is entirely inappropriate when attempting to visually depict and instruct in Christian doctrine (especially concepts comprising central tenets of the Faith, those non-negotiable items belonging to the class of "mere Christianity"). Pictorial articulations of ultimate truth ought not be left hapazardly to a viewer's subjective interpretations. This assertion becomes especially cogent when considering that all of humanity has an inherently fallen nature: the

noetic effects of sin have darkened our perception and understanding. Even if an individual has been recently redeemed, he or she likely still has a disposition (i.e., thoughts, habits, beliefs, subconscious responses) comprised largely of traits left over from a life enslaved to sin and death. When such a person comes before a visual presentation that requires careful contemplation, the results might be quite errant (hence Luther's emphasis on simplicity in artwork). However, the incorporation of scriptural references or doctrinal statements within the piece helps curtail this dilemma, giving a definitive contextual reference and acting as a corrective for misapprehension. If the artwork is located in a sacred space such as a church, as stained glass almost certainly would be, then a mature believer would also certainly be ready at-hand to act as a catechist, providing further articulation and clarity of concepts contained in the piece (especially concerning more advanced or nuanced theological concepts, where pictures standing alone would simply fall short).

Because of the stated purview of this thesis, I have endeavored to fulfill the goals of leading people to and teaching them about the Triune God in a context that is immediate and personal: Protestants within the United States during the twenty-first century. To this end, I have created artwork that resides firmly in traditional Protestant visual culture while incorporating meritorious elements from other Church traditions; encourages engagement from a broad demographic; and present doctrine frankly and beautifully. However, my own solutions have a nearly limitless scope for refinement and expansion, and the door stands open for other scholars and artisans to adjust my approach to suit other cultures and social sectors. Billions of souls, whether they realize it or not, are in desperate need of the only life that is truly life indeed: that which is found in Jesus Christ and entered through repentance, faith, and holiness.





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