



SHARING THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE ARTS

👤 John Clark 🕒 July 21, 2014 📁 Entertainment, Featured

Sharing The Gospel Through The Arts

By John Livingston Clark

Among the body of Christians worldwide are many people with artistic gifts and talents. Too often, these people are not being put to good use within the Church. At the same time Christians are commanded in Matthew 28:19-20 to go into the world teaching and preaching, as well as making disciples of new believers. What if one were to take these special gifts of each person who is an expert in a particular field and use them in spreading the gospel? What if each individual's unique ministry was used artistically and creatively in a culturally relevant way? It would be exciting to see what would happen.

In 1970 a gentleman by the name of Byron Spradlin had a God-given dream and vision to bring all of this together into a ministry known as "Artists In Christian Testimony, International." He wrote down the following: "To disciple, and mentor people out of music and the arts, working them into the fabric of church, missions, and marketplace ministry around the world."

I first came into contact with the now Rev. Dr. Byron Spradlin in 1977 when he and I attended Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. He was also the director of a Christian musical group that toured the United States of which I was a part. Byron had founded the organization just four years prior to that, in 1973. Today this ministry which is defined as "a ministry to and for artists and innovative ministries and

missionaries doing Christian work around the world," is in 25 countries and 33 states of America, according to Larry Moshell, Director of Staff Development. It is based in Nashville, Tennessee, but has 188 ministry departments throughout the world. The ministry seeks to promote and develop within its staff, innovation and creativity to help the Church become more culturally relevant through any kind of artistic expression and giftedness a person might have. For example, Larry Moshell, told me about a person in Germany who runs a pottery studio and uses that context to share the Christian message of salvation.

There are three serious problems existing within the Church today, according to the ministry's website. One, today's culture listens better to artists than preachers. Two, the Church has not always adequately understood and embraced artistic people, strategies, and methods, so there is a need to integrate innovation and artistic people with projects. Three, the Church is losing the assets of some powerful and effective servants.

Today, Dr. Byron Spradlin, is using his degrees in international relations, music, and theology, to share his talents and gifts in creative and culturally relevant ways with people all around the world, and is training other Christians to do the same. We are told in I Timothy 4:14 to "not neglect the spiritual gift within you." We are to combine this with being all things to all people that we might save some, as it says in I Corinthians 9:22. This is the ministry of A.C.T. International. If you desire to begin using your gifts or specialized abilities in a creative way relevant to a particular culture, go on to the organization's website to find out how: www.actinternational.org.