

Lecture 16: The Christian & Modern Art (Part 1)

Father we want to praise You for another beautiful day, for the west wind and the leaves in all their color just blowing here and there. We thank You that every aspect of the creation speaks to us of its being designed and being full of order and beauty and meaning. Father we thank You that we do live in a world that we know is created, that we're not in a world which is uncertain and meaningless, which is going nowhere and is come from nowhere. We thank You Father that we live before You, the eternal and true God, our creator and our redeemer. We ask that You'll be with us in this class hour together, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Review and Introduction: Having answered questions about the article “The New Modernism” in the last lecture, Professor Barrs moves on to another of Dr. Schaeffer’s early writings: “The Christian and Modern Art” from *The Bible Today*, March, 1951.

The Christian & Modern Art (Part 1)

I. Schaeffer’s Background & the Arts

- A. Lack of encouragement re: the arts in early life
- B. Edith’s influence
- C. First trip to Europe
- D. Hans Rookmaaker

II. The Thesis: The Arts Reflect the World View of Any Period

- A. Art not created in a “vacuum”
- B. Religious thinking

III. Modern Art Techniques

- A. Distortion of reality to heighten effect
- B. Time alterations
- C. Space alterations
- D. Use of the spectacular/unusual
- E. Experimentation (“applied arts”)

IV. The Christian’s Response to Modern Art

- A. Modern art brings an understanding of our culture
 - 1. Loss of meaning and certainty
 - 2. Civilization is only a veneer
 - 3. Personality has no basis
 - 4. Morality is only a social convention
- B. Modern arts are more honest than modern theology
- C. Modern artists are consistent
- D. If we make an effort to understand the culture’s drift, we may protect ourselves against the drift
- E. Modern art is a point of contact for communication

V. Final Comments

- A. Criticism of Francis Schaeffer
- B. Answers to criticism
 - 1. Genuinely interested in art
 - 2. Anxious to understand the people of our day
 - 3. Respected the honesty of the consistency he observed
 - 4. Aware of the church’s danger of insensitivity
 - 5. Tremendous compassion to communicate
 - 6. Concern for the lost