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No Words Can Say

By Annemarie Johnson

GOD SPEAKS TO US volumes upon volumes through nature and the wonderful creations all around us every day. To know God, we just have to look around. His love is shown in every detail of an insect or a flower or the grandeur of a tree. Oh, how a picture paints a thousand words.

Irene Lumgair, in her illustrated book, *How to Draw and Paint Wave Action*, writes, “Art is a form of communication and with it we can bypass awkward, inadequate language constraints and go right to the heart, the jugular, the button.”

A man once studied Lumgair’s paintings for a long time then commented that she must like soft jazz music. The man, who was a musician, described how he could see the rhythm of the music in the painting. She was surprised by his insight as she always listens to soft jazz as she paints.

Look at a man’s artwork and you will see into his soul. There is something so true about Luke 6:45 that says, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” To that I would add, “Out of the abundance of the heart, the artist creates.”

The arts speak to our spirit in a language that uses no words. In silence, the picture tells a story. Our emotions are engaged. We understand without explanation, reason or words. We just know. Even business people just know.

In his book *Start with Why*, Simon Sinek looks at how consumers make decisions to purchase a product. Simon points to the Golden circle — a drawing of a circle within a

How the arts sees into the heart

circle, much like a bull’s eye on a dartboard — to describe the different ways in which we make decisions.

The outer circle he calls the neocortex, the part of the brain that is responsible for the rational and analytical thought and language. The center circle is the “limbic brain, which is responsible for all of our feelings, such as trust and loyalty.”

What he learned was that we do not purchase a product primarily based on the information alone. Rather, a deeper feeling or conviction that often cannot be explained or put into words motivates us to choose it. If a product is in line with our beliefs, we are happier with our decision and we stick with our choice for a long time. Sinek says, “The part of the brain that controls our feelings has no capacity for language.” This is why it is hard to put into words the real reason why we do what we do at times.

For example, why did we marry the person we love? We can explain it with a lot of words — reasoning produced from the neocortex. But this is not where the decision was made in the first place. It happened in our limbic brain, our heart.

There is a second level of correlation between arts and business. It has been noted that art-centered cities have a higher level of economic development and therefore higher consumer purchasing power.

Glasgow, Scotland, for example, was a gritty fishing town



with a shipping industry located on the River Clyde. They were declining in population and their young people were leaving home for better jobs in other cities. The town decided to do something about it. They invited artists to their town and started by initiating change with a \$1-million budget. Today, a \$100-million budget supports a vibrant local art economy. Glasgow has been transformed into a trendy metropolis of the

arts and a holiday destination for tourists around the world. There is, therefore, a case for Atlantic Canada business to encourage the flourishing of art in the Maritimes in the same way that Christian

business should encourage the flourishing of Christian art.

In the Bible, two men were set apart and blessed with artistic giftings to build and beautify Solomon’s temple.

See, the Lord has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and he has filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills — to make artistic designs... and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts. (Exodus 35:30-33)

God not only chooses but also fills the artist with the Holy Spirit so that he or she has the skill and knowledge. It’s a calling.

If we consider our marketplace as a living organism and look at how it functions, I would say that business is the engine and the arts its fuel. The arts bring the heart and soul to a region.

The arts bring an element of the Holy Spirit who breathes life and gives inspiration for business creativity and competitiveness. As God speaks to our businesses through art, our hearts are touched and transformed and we gain understanding, in a moment, without a word being spoken. ■

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