

# INTEGRITY

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# Where Brains and **Hearts Meet**

By  
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Johnson



THE OTHER DAY I DROVE BY a billboard with this saying on it: "If a book about failure doesn't sell, was it a success?"

This caught my attention and brought me to another thought. "If an artist sets out with no expectations, would they be a success? After all, the term "starving artist" expresses our perception of them.

Professional artists in Nova Scotia generate an average annual income of \$30,000. This says that there are many hardworking artists who are just barely making ends meet. Many factors dictate this. The career of an artist is not encouraged in childhood. Some artists don't know where or how to apply their talent in order to generate a steady income. Many take up menial jobs to pay the bills while doing what they love as the opportunities come their way. Artists like to work alone, which can also be a contributing factor that limits income.

Someone from the business world who is a "brains first, heart second" person, may find the artist a bit of a puzzle.

Artists are often "heart first, head second." They tend to be generous, trusting, and can feel unsure and suspicious of those who represent successful big business.

But there's incredible opportunity in bringing together the arts and business. The Lord showed me that there are many ways that businesses can collaborate with artists where both benefit. For example, we enjoy the Saturday markets where we see a cornucopia of crafts and foods. This has been a great success, bringing out the artists to show their wares.

Another example is fundraisers. The business enjoys the attention the artwork attracts, and the artist enjoys the benefit of the public attention. Often, a "Not For Profit" can benefit by generating an income from the artwork.

This is where the artist gets the short end of the stick because they will often not receive an income for their time and effort and will still be required by Revenue Canada to pay the taxes for the art piece out of their own pocket.

As I endeavor to grow my business in a way that honors God, I waited on the Lord to show me opportunities for how I could use my art to benefit others and make a living.

## SILENT AUCTION

In 2003, the Lord opened a door for me to be in the Kid's Help Phone Designer Showcase. It was so exciting to be invited to design my own space while meeting many of the top decorators and designers in the Halifax area.

Symphony Nova Scotia had a gala fundraiser with a live auction and a silent auction. A call went out to artists who would like to create a piece of artwork on a chair. These chairs were then displayed on Spring Garden Road in various storefront windows advertising the event.

## WORKING WITH ARTISTS

Something I would recommend that has worked well in the case of a silent auction is to pay the artist a commission. The artist receives a 30 to 50 percent of the funds generated from their artwork. This works well for both the artist and the business wanting to raise funds. This opens the door for long-term relationships with the artist and they are more likely to participate again in future events.



*Great opportunities arise when artists and businessmen collaborate*

Have you considered working with an artist? You may wonder how to get started. Here are some things to consider if you were to have a silent auction:

- Artist – Make sure to meet him or her first.
- Artwork – See their collection. For an event, you may want to choose the art pieces that the artist is willing to donate to be sure they are suitable for the event.
- Agreement – A written agreement is important for both parties to know what they are responsible for and what to expect. This makes for a good working relationship right from the start.



Associating the good and the natural with government begs questions like: Why do we hear of so much corruption and misuse? Why is the government making decisions against traditional marriage? Why aren't the effects of abortion considered in policies? They're good questions and they certainly cause us to reflect on the amount of say we have regarding these matters.


Actually, we are fortunate in the fact that we do have a say and the freedom to say it. This freedom includes voting and running for elected offices. If we had a totalitarian type of government, or even closer to an anarchic one, we would have little to no say. However, some trends are revealing that: government is increasing in size, there is more abuse of power, our Christian values are eroding away, taxes are increasing, there is a growing gap between the rich and the poor, and the middle class is shrinking. In fact, our society is creeping in the direction of socialist and totalitarian ideologies, which means more government control in all matters of our lives. This suggests we cannot take our governance for granted and that we need more "say."

### BRING FAITH AND LIFE TOGETHER

This idea of "say" brings us to the idea of choice and our faith. As people of faith, we believe that our lives have a purpose. We believe in witnessing to the truth. We believe with hope in our resurrection with Christ. To these matters and our involvement in society, the *Catechism* says: "It is necessary that all participate, each according to his position or role in promoting the common good.... Participation is achieved by taking personal responsibility for family, work and contributing to the common good and active involvement in public life" (#1913-5).

In other words, our "say" is expressed as we bring faith and life together by being immersed in the life of God and inserting ourselves into society. So, driven by love of neighbor more than love of self, we choose a vocation.


How do we know our vocation, our call? Well, we come to know that by knowing the Word of God through liturgical celebrations, personal prayer, spiritual guidance, the exercise of social virtues and a persevering commitment to cultural and professional formation. To the vocation of public office, Christians have a lot to offer, even to non-Christians. This is so, not only because of the virtues we may have acquired, but because we effectively bridge the gap between our spiritual life and our temporal life with our attention to the churches teaching about Natural Law, which, ultimately, is our innate sense of right and wrong.

The familiar concept of "call" means saying yes to the necessary, noble, and more important, godly profession of governance. If politics is your vocation, your joy will be ever more realized through it, even if being in politics involves a cross. Then again, what true vocation doesn't involve a cross, together with a resurrection? 

*Jim is a middle-aged seminarian with the hope of becoming a priest for the Roman Catholic Church. Prior to this, he practiced professional engineering and, in the last few years, worked for the Knights of Columbus as a fraternal counselor to its members regarding financial matters and Christian living. He is father to three daughters, now grown up, but he has also experienced the devastation of a marital breakdown. It is with joy that he is learning more about our Lord and His bride, the Church, in preparation to be a servant for the Christian community.*

(con't of "Where Brains and Hearts Meet")

- Appreciation – Artists need appreciation so be sure to thank them for participating and compliment their work is. Perhaps you might even tell them how it makes you feel.

God has given many of us talents that must not be hidden under a rock. Rather, God has called us to be faithful in sharing with others what He has endowed us with to bless others in Jesus' name. Let the Lord test your faith as you step out and see where He takes you. You may be surprised that the journey is more exciting and rewarding than you expected! 

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your path straight. (Proverbs 3:5,6)*

*Annemarie Johnson, owner of Trompe L'oeil Murals, is an award-winning professional artist, muralist, and faux finisher. Her style of realism and trompe l'oeil evoke emotions of delight and enthusiasm that transforms residential homes and commercial spaces from commonplace to extraordinary. She is happily married to Kevin and they have been pastoring SonLife Community Church in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. They have five children.*

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