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## Introduction

The evangelical church is often understood as a people of "the book." Scripture is the key foundation of the evangelical identity. However, the Bible has had a longstanding companion volume in the hymn book. Generations past demonstrated an intuitive sense of aesthetics as a key component of expressing and learning the practices of Christian faith. Yet there has always been an uncomfortable tension between these two books in the life and experience of the church. The arts tend to be employed as subservient to either utilitarian or decorative purposes.

Contemporary evangelical understandings of religious art tend to rely heavily on modern philosophical concepts of aesthetics. Ancient history is not able to supply the church with a robust theology of taste. A systematic theory of aesthetics was not developed until the Enlightenment (Brown 2000, 5). In fact, art was never really understood or perceived as art while under the direction and guidance of the church. The church was involved in producing and distributing aesthetic work, whether that be music, painting, architecture, or sculpture, but really had no systemized theology of art. Art theory did not truly emerge until the modernist era when the value of aesthetics began to be examined outside the auspices of the church (Brown 2000, 60).

With modern aesthetic theory, philosophers and artists started to distance themselves from traditional views in which art was employed as a servant of either institution or ideology and began to see art as free and unrestricted from such masters. Art was instead understood as worthy of contemplation, and this contemplation was of the work itself, without any necessity for carrying a specific content or message. Hence arose the idea that art could be produced for its own sake. The church today has inherited this philosophical premise and has continually struggled with two polarities that color most discussions in the church today regarding art. Of course, wherever there are polarities, there is the possibility of tension.

As an artist myself, I have struggled through these two ideas and at times feel caught between the two factious sides. On the one hand, my devotion to the gospel narrative aligns with missiological intention to use whatever methods are at my disposal to ensure the gracious offer of salvation is announced. But in this I see the conflict when artistic values are compromised and at times even abused, being somehow less than what God intended. My artistic sensibilities see the value and beauty in art that is free from such concrete constraints and can revel and play with the material provided in the gracious playground of God's creation. Yet, this sensibility tends to leave art in the realm of merely decorative, and hence sidelined in offering anything of value to the church in regard to meaning.

Andy Crouch represents this kind of pull, arguing that utilitarian approaches to art ignore the broader implications and possibilities and that religion itself is by nature more than modern ideas of the useful (2010, 38–39). He sees art as challenging the narrative that reduces everything to what is most efficient in essence (2010, 42). In turn, he sees in aesthetics the practice of play as a means to rediscover God's giving and gracious nature. Yet, the church continues to struggle with whether aesthetics is intended for utility or beauty.

Basing the church's understanding of aesthetics on this conflict unfortunately misses the mark and ultimately diminishes arts' full range of effectiveness to bear and transmit meaning. The power of art to connect is based on the nature of communication. Communication is what builds connection and thus community and culture. I would like to argue that the issue is not one of pragmatics but rather an issue of language. What is at issue here is a loss in the contemporary evangelical church of understanding the arts as a unique and diverse complex of language.

This article will present an understanding of arts as language capable of communicating meaning as well as give some direction in recovering our aesthetic sensibilities, particularly through the role of the local artist. Just as everyone is on some level a theologian, everyone is aesthetic, and thus an artist. The Evangelical Church will need aesthetic skills in communicating with the diversity of cultures, subcultures, languages, and dialects increasingly presented in a postmodern world.

## Understanding Aesthetics as Language

Common wisdom holds that music is the "universal language." This broad concept attempts to emphasize the power and appeal of music in drawing humanity together in

some form of harmony. Yet, in practice, we see that music just as often divides. I grew up in rural Western Canada and the heartbeat of our community soundtrack was country and western music. Yet, the sounds being broadcast into my life through mass media communication were very different. On television, I watched rock music videos and heard distorted guitars on the radio. This was a sound that was much more interesting and attractive to me. I would express my discontinuity with my community in terms of taste: I did not like country and western music. But truly the genre of my community did not adequately communicate or represent the world I was experiencing.

Since communication is more than simply the transmission of information, it is a means of connection between human being. However, at times I felt quite out of touch with my community. This was even an issue in my church, as I grew up observing the transition from traditional forms of musical worship to more contemporary musical styles. Tensions could be very high as different factions of our small church argued about the purpose and place of music within the church. There was not any difficulty with the presence of music in worship—that was a given. But the precise expression of music in our small rural church did not bring unity.

These experiences led me to understand that music is not a universal language but rather a universal phenomenon across cultures. All cultures have some form of musical expression. Yet, just as I cannot understand the spoken language of a people group unless I take the time to live in their community and learn, I need to approach music in the same way. Just as there is a wide diversity in spoken languages, there is also a variety of languages and dialects within musical languages. Different parts of our world have explored quite diverse facets and techniques in the use of sound to communicate. Even within our own North American context we recognize many dialects or genres of music, each with its own internal logic that communicates and connects with a unique people group.

As I went on to formal musical instruction, my ability to speak a wider variety of musical languages increased. In formal classical music training, I learned the importance of form and the unique sound of western instrumentation, such as the piano and orchestral techniques. I learned a wider and extended palette of harmonic color in studying jazz. Currently, I am studying electronic music. I am coming to this style of music as a non-native and am discovering how technology influences composition. Joe Horness identifies an unfortunate misunderstanding that has created a culture of conflict around musical styles in the evangelical church. Identity and traditional values were perceived to be under fire while, he argues, the fundamental issue was the change of language (2004, 103).

Worship scholars are increasingly talking about how worship is ultimately a kind of language, one that the church practices with great diversity in many places. Lang observes that just as there are many languages in the world, there are also many languages used in the worship of the church and many different liturgical forms. Every church will have localized ritual language unique to a specific people group, their situation, and geography (Lang 1997, xi). Don Williams asserts that the church is naïve to think that one musical language will someday be discovered that can universally reach across to all people (2004, 85). The underlying assumption is that when the church gathers, there is a strong aesthetic component in how the congregation encounters one another and God.

Worship is so much more than words and texts. Hugh Graham argues that the physical components of language, sound, voice tone, and quality of enunciation are intrinsically connected to the content of meaning being communicated (2003, 37). Graham sees text and performance as inextricably connected. Communication occurs in essentially artistic ways as the speaker makes choices regarding pacing, dynamics, and other creative devices, shaping interpretation. To say the word "whisper" in a hushed tone of voice is a more faithful realization of the text than simply reading the word without expression. One could choose to shout the same word, and we would feel the disconnect as the language conflicts with the aesthetic realization.

One of the characteristics of language we take for granted is its conversational quality. While we write words in fixed forms, edit and codify our thoughts in permanent works in everyday use, language is the medium in which we improvise conversations. Improvised conversation utilizes complex social systems of knowledge to communicate in a variety of situations with a variety of people. Part of maturity is gaining proficiency in the ability to both write words and communicate effectively in real time interactions with others.

The arts are a living language and in the same way, we see aesthetic work both in fixed and improvisatory forms. Part of the baggage of modern aesthetic theory is the focus on artistic genius and the pursuit of art as elevated or even quasi-divine, with the artists themselves being seen in these terms. In this way, art is most valued as a fixed work and is even afforded considerable protection in perpetuity—consider the care and security at galleries and museums. Yet, we see that even young children are quick to sing a song or paint a picture. They make no pretensions to posterity and are simply communicating what is on their hearts.

Benson considers that artists do not really create, they are simply improvising, using the material of creation and reordering them in a fashion that expresses and communicates with others (2013, 17). Artwork as an improvised journey and essential experience of life means that artists are participants in community, living in an open response to their world (2013, 35). Artistic improvisation reinforces the linguistic character of aesthetic communication. Art as language even helps us move past the objectifying of artistic works that occurs with the commodifying and sale of art. In this way, art has been removed from the community and given into the hands of a privileged few. As a result, our local communities are impoverished, and we have weakened aesthetic sensibilities since we no longer have models or references in speaking our own local dialects.

Scott Aniol observes that the evangelical commitment to inspiration must extend not only to the content but also the forms (2015, 150). For Aniol, truth is communicated beyond the paradigms of modernity's commitment to objective correspondence. The Scriptures themselves demonstrate an essential aesthetic quality that is not simply a decoration but an essential part of presenting the Bible's truth (2015, 151). Essentially, he is stating the obvious in that the Bible contains a wide variety of genres, and great portions of the Scriptures represent the story of God in largely aesthetic forms. The Bible is full of narrative storytelling and poetry. Biblical writers use evocative language that appeals to the senses, and we have references to music and even see the worship of Israel, centering on the temple and tabernacle with lots of detailed attention to aesthetic considerations. In this way, the Bible itself is a telling argument that the life of faith is an artistic experience.

Aniol argues that biblical truth is best understood as uniting communication of truth in both propositional and aesthetic forms of language (2015, 153). The combination of proposition and art is necessary since, as human beings, we are not simply thought nor are we simply body; we encompass both realities. Commitment to communication in this way addresses both the reformation of our minds through doctrine and our imaginations. If we do not understand the importance of art as language, we are missing out on an essential biblical component of gospel communication, and we end up with a weak container for truth and thus a weak or even truncated gospel (2015, 156–157).

## Art Has Meaning

Understanding aesthetics as language and artistic forms of communication as essential can make those who are highly committed to propositional forms of biblical truth nervous. Evangelicalism is a movement that grew out of modernity and even now is learning how to renew itself and grow into the culture and paradigm of history we are now facing. I want to be very clear that understanding art as language does not compromise a commitment to the truth and the authority of scripture. I am on the conservative side of the evangelical church and understand these concerns. When we hear the words "arts" and "aesthetics," we can easily bring in the baggage of modernity that sees the damage of arts in our culture, having elevated the subjective and placed autonomous authority in the individual will of the artist. We need to address the issue of meaning. If artists speak a complex of many languages or dialects, we need to grapple with how they function and how we can know and understand their communication.

First of all, modernity has given us an overconfidence in the codified representations of life in printed form. One of the first exercises for musicians learning their craft in traditional classical methodology is learning to read music notation. Music notation is in many ways one of the biggest hurdles in a young musician's development. Very few seem to realize that we are teaching students to read a unique language and that students enter lessons with varying degrees of native fluency.

Having grown up in the church and having music at home, I remember struggling with reading proficiency at an early age. This struggle may have even stunted my musical development. As a young musician, I had what we call a good "ear"—that is, I could aurally understand more complex music than I could read on the page. My piano teacher would strategize ways to force me to develop my reading ability and frustrate my free attempts to explore music I could internally conceptualize. Of course, this represents sound pedagogy as teachers challenge students in areas of weakness, but there are other methods of teaching music that emphasize aurality and worry less about the printed representation of notes on staves.

Charlotte Kroeker, in conversation with Mary K. Oyer, observes that the paper and written forms of music are by no means an actual representation of music or the sounds that a person actually hears when a work is ultimately performed (Kroeker 2005, 177). The performance is the actualized and definitive reality of music that the ink and paper can only represent. Notation is an aid, but the ability to communicate only really happens when music comes off the page (2005, 177). This is one of the key

misunderstandings of students as they begin to learn an instrument. The instrument is traditionally how one learns to access the world of music through physical discipline and technique. Yet in reality, the teacher is employing the discipline of an instrument to bring students up to speed on the aesthetic competencies of musical language.

Teaching music is much more complex than simply teaching an instrument, and the students who excel at an instrument are the ones who perceive the language of music best. That is why certain people can pick up and play multiple instruments. They understand music, and the instrument is not a barrier to the musical meaning they are already proficient in expressing. This is one of the difficulties adults have in learning music. There is the desire to play an instrument but a lack of understanding of the commitments required in the greater work of immersing themselves in a language. Children often learn language by immersion, while adults need more pedagogical direction and support.

Hughes takes us further on this journey. He suggests that meaning begins internally with thoughts and ideas that may be initially ineffable. Meaning inevitability emerges as inexpressible ideas are purposefully reordered and rendered, language being the vehicle by which we pass on what we are trying to convey (2003, 104–105). Hughes also wonders if any particular part of a human being is more likely to understand meaning than another and sees bodily reactions to even a simple joke as a demonstration that meaning extends beyond intellectual process 2003, 110). Jensen notes that aesthetic activity brings out meaning in the physical world, confronting us with ideas of which our consciousness tends to be unaware (2004, 18). We reveal ourselves and our community in a way that can be understood, observed, touched, and interacted with through art. In this way we have tools to understand ourselves, and our ideas have concrete anchors on which they can be reshaped and formed.

For example, healthy ideological debates work best when the opposing views hear each other and can transcend their differences and synthesize new ways of knowing and acting, using words as the vehicle for meaning. Aesthetic communication has a similar logic in that form, sound, color, movement, and substance can all be utilized to awaken and confront our views of ourselves and the world. Where words can be used to compartmentalize and rationalize, the arts have the ability to keep us accountable to truth as they address the whole being.

We all have been in situations where we say one thing, but our body language betrays us by communicating what is at odds with our words. Aesthetics operates as meaning in this context, and we have to grapple with the fact that understanding

transcends words and is found in the way the words are communicated. This is the language and logic of aesthetics, and it is vital for building bridges of meaning between people.

The tendency of modernity to specialize and separate has benefits, but in postmodernity we are seeing the desire for a more holistic approach to language and meaning whereby ideas are carried along by a communication that is wholly aesthetic, comprising both word and art. Oyer reflects on our tendency to see music as the illuminator of text but suggests that the opposite may be at work: through the text, the words illuminate the sounds and give the music a viable voice (Kroeker, 165). The division between words and images is not really distinct, as both are languages utilized to bring ideas into the world (Jensen, 18).

The overconfidence in the precision of words as the fortress of meaning in modernity is a significant blind spot that can carry over into the church. Written language is quite simply not as precise in conveying meaning as we wish. Arguments on finer theological details and extended semantic discussions demonstrate the infinite imprecision we struggle with in the use of words. If words were so capable, we would not need so many commentaries. We are constantly adding books to the libraries of our seminaries. The words we offer on behalf of the Scriptures often outweigh the original text by a large margin.

Bennet Reimer was an American music educator who gave some helpful direction on how to understand the ability of art to convey meaning. He points out that conventional languages tend to operate as symbols in series (1970, 64). In this way, we grasp meaning as the information is released in a linear fashion over time. More information is unveiled with each passing word. That is how you read this article. You can only pull the concepts from the words as you walk through from beginning to end. That is the discipline of reading and listening to text.

Reimer argues that art languages take symbols from the page into an actualized presentational form in which meaning is accessible in concurrent rather than linear ways, and that these artistic forms are the most natural means of human expression (1970, 64). For Reimer, “insight” is the most important aspect of arts languages in that they embody meaning, instead of simply defining or designating in the way we typically understand word-based meanings (1970, 65). For him, the arts are completely objective in the same way as word-language in that the aesthetic logic can be known, evaluated, and learned (1970, 69).

As an example, let us look at the theological concept of incarnational living. Christian disciples do not simply comprehend beliefs but embody them in the world. The pursuit of Christ is an ongoing actualization of the words of scripture taking hold of our lives. The journey is not complete unless we act in concrete ways. The words are empty and even hypocritical without the action. Art functions in the same way, taking ideas and making them concrete in the world. The work is objective because we are able to interact with a physically substantive item, whether a sculpture, painting, or another form. In some ways, artistic expression is the most objective of forms, enabling interaction with both the idea and the expression of the idea.

Saliers gives us the example of church liturgy. In worship, the church acts with words (2005, 17). Words are never left alone in abstraction but are wedded with the aesthetic languages of gesture, movement, and procession. Prior to modernity, the church did not feel the need to separate word and art. Meaning was carried along by a holistic unity of aesthetic communication. All of the church was artistic. Timothy Pierce challenges the church to be both aesthetically skilled and theologically rich and warns that there is a danger in "compartmentalizing" the various actions and acts of worship (2008, 239).

The affective nature of the arts should be held in unity with the rational aspects of understanding. Preaching and music should both be held to this logic. The historical worship patterns of the church undergird the marriage of word and art as well. Word and table are the two essential actions of historical Christian worship. Biblical theology sets up the church to practice faith in both rational and affective ways. As the evangelical church, we would do well to see more of our activity in artistic terms.

## Rediscovering the Amateur and Local Artists

Frank Gaebelein addresses his own personal aesthetic development and looks to the environment provided for him in his home. He tells of how both his father and brother were quite dedicated amateur musicians. Their music was a constant soundtrack that Gaebelein heard as a child. They would play classical music or arrangements of symphonies and other great works. From these experiences, Gaebelein is convinced that the development of good musical taste in the home is important and that unskilled performances of great music is beneficial, maybe even preferred to exposing young musical students to professionals (1985, 170).

Gaebelein's experience seems somewhat counterintuitive, because we tend to celebrate and highly prize the exceptional. Even our common aesthetic education tends to aim at the transcendent examples. To become an artist, our references are the great artists—the Rembrandts, Michelangelos, and Picassos. As musicians, we draw on our rich heritage of classical repertoire—Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. Through technology, would-be artists today have immediate access to examples of history's very best work. Yet, something is lost when only the great masters are our models. Our aspirations can become deceptive, and we can become consumed with what is ultimately elusive and develop expectations that are ultimately unbalanced or even unhealthy. When the goal is to become, or at least compete, on the transcendent aesthetic level, a widening gulf occurs between the elite and the rest of society at large.

The church must always be careful and cautious of elitism. The temptation to see greatness in worldly terms is in constant conflict with the gospel message, and the Scriptures bear witness that the revelation of God's glory comes through weakness. There is a simplicity and confounding of human wisdom inherent in the gospel that will constantly challenge the Babel ambitions of human accomplishment. In the church, the most educated seminary professor must realize that they do not add anything better or more significant to the body than the uneducated farmer. What elitism causes is separation and division. This should not be the relational logic of the church.

Language is meant to be more than the transmission of information. The true objective of communication is interpersonal connection. The aesthetic greats are elevated and adored, but they are at a distance from us. God is not to be objectified in this way, especially in worship. The congregation does not consist of bystanders observing greatness. No, the church congregation is to participate in the glory of God, as they engage in real communion with him.

I became aware of this unintentional elitism in the simple matter of prayer in my congregation. The invitation was given to one of my worship team members to pray in the service, and he was quite uncomfortable with the idea. This went beyond the simple hesitation to public speaking. He was quite articulate in his reasons. His objection was based on the comparison of himself to the pastoral staff. He felt that his prayer would simply not be qualitatively as good and thus was not beneficial or even appropriate for the church. He was giving essentially aesthetic reasons for non-participation.

As I explored his objection with him and others in my church, I was quite surprised at the distance that had developed between the spiritual practices of the congregation and what they were observing on Sunday mornings in corporate worship. Our

commitments to artistic excellence had produced a congregation of bystanders observing the polished work of the trained. This even extended to their home life, where many fathers did not have confidence in praying with their children because the models at church were at too great a distance from what they were able to practice. As a church staff, we had to nuance our aesthetic aspirations in worship, in order to give place to the congregation that was slowly being shut out of the prayers of the church.

Gaebelein's understanding of the role of the amateur certainly harmonizes with my experience, especially as I understand music as an artistic language. The home is the first place of learning many practical skills that are employed in the adult world. We learn the basics of morality and social engagement, as well as basic life skills such as personal care and language. Our formative years are an example of immersive learning. Learning language by being immersed in the environment is the best way to become a confident communicator. Children primarily learn language in this way, picking up words, slowly establishing a vocabulary, and developing conversational skills in bits and pieces. Children do not learn spoken languages through formal instruction. Language learning begins with small bits and pieces that over time are cobbled together such that an individual is able to make connections with others in the world.

This is the way music is learned in the home. As a child I often listened to my father sing and play piano just after I went to bed. He is by no means an accomplished musician, but those notes and melodies, his stylistic choices, and even his joy in making sound, left a strong impression on me. Even as I went on to more formal musical education and experienced more sophisticated aesthetic culture, I still hear those sounds in my head. I owe a debt to the many church musicians, singers, and piano players that were by no means celebrated artists. Their contributions are largely anonymous and forgotten. Yet, in their music, I was tutored in the gospel. Christ is glorified in these simple aesthetic contributions.

Aesthetics is one of the key languages of prayer in the church, and the church, with all its various expressions of worship, should be an immersive artistic experience. The Reformers understood this and were wise to supply the soundtrack to shape the life of their congregations. When they set about to provide the congregation with this soundtrack of new songs, they did not go to the great artists. Their art was locally sourced. Religious singing in the German vernacular was quite common prior to the Reformation. The source and setting were simply that of the home.

Luther's contribution was to take musical works that were already useful and familiar to the people and adapt or revise them, making them suitable for liturgical use

(Leaver, 2017, 65–69). In fact, Luther had a vast amount of rich material to work with and adapt since every aspect of life, including religious experience, was in some way a part of the people's common song (2017, 81). Four of the preachers from Wittenberg were also significant hymn writers. Preachers from the German strand of the Reformation tended to have a functional knowledge of music (2017, 137).

The Wesley brothers are also an example of seeing value in more humble and localized expressions of music. Erik Routley, in his observations of the Wesleys' musical output, observes that they were not looking for great composers for the purposes of high art. They used local musicians. They were in some sense professionals (they made a living through their musical trade), but their intentions were local (1984, 34). The Wesleys themselves were self-aware of this divide between high and low forms of aesthetic expressions in the church. Their aesthetic methodology began the argument over whether music in the church was "good" or "bad" based on an elevated sense of aesthetics (Routley 1964, 196). This was the beginning of a growing conflict in the church over the aesthetic suitability of worship forms based essentially on personal taste.

Hymnologist Eric Routley is helpful. In his observations on the Wesleys, he notes that for professional musicians, music is not a mystical mystery. Music is simply music (Routley 1984, 34). I tell my students that writing a song is much like writing an essay in that you start with a blank page and you fill it. Artistic ambition does not set the agenda. I simply write notes and rhythms and see where the music takes me, much like a writer simply needs to start writing. I do not worry about whether there is enough musical material or ideas in the cosmos. As a musician I have learned to trust the endless variety of music. God has graciously empowered the world with endless life and activity, and this is true in my own little aesthetic world. Creativity stops when I lack faith in God's provision or turn aside from my work to consider what others may think.

Paralysis occurs when I take these aesthetic fears to unhealthy extremes. Humanity wants to enshrine human accomplishment, and our aesthetic ambitions are one way in which we do this. Museums, art galleries, and concert halls are indicative of this human need to care for and preserve our highest aesthetic ambitions. Yet, God is an eternal source of creative energy that continues to flow through humanity. We do not need to worry about absence or lack. Local artistic expressions continue to persist and demonstrate that God has placed aesthetics into the heart of every human being for the purpose of that local community. There is no need to enshrine those artists or their

work. They are for the people, as surely as the people are for God. Let God enjoy his creation's praise for his own joy and glory—it is for him. We do not need to keep it for ourselves.

## Conclusion

Recently I had the opportunity to watch Terrence Malick's film "A Hidden Life." Malick tells the story of an Austrian farmer who refuses to swear allegiance to Adolf Hitler, despite the pressure of his community and the hardships faced by his family. The way in which the story is told is significant. The film unfolds with a succession of scenes that appeal to the senses, rich in imagery and sound. We are immersed in a wholly aesthetic experience. To be honest, not a lot happens in the movie. This is not a movie of action. The plot does not drive the movie. There are not even a lot of words. In fact, minutes seem to stretch by without dialogue, and there are very few words overall. Malick tells the story in such a way that we understand the facts but are also brought into the feelings of the characters. Viewers are left with a very strong emotional attachment to people struggling with a rather difficult and serious situation. Malick's film is a very good example of how the arts communicate a deep sense of meaning.

Work needs to continue regarding the subject of the arts and the church. Evangelicals have not spent a lot of time thinking about how the arts have influenced and shaped our tradition. Truly, there are very few writers and thinkers in the evangelical church today who have taken up the call to think about the issue. To learn about the arts and aesthetics, evangelicals have to go to the historical church, other contemporary expressions of the church, and secular theories of aesthetics; very little has been written within our own tradition. What has been written in our tradition reflects our experience in music, with very little awareness of how other mediums and genres of art are relevant to ministry.

We have tended to adorn our sanctuaries with words and music but see little need for art, sculpture, and architecture. I am a demonstration of this, as most of my examples and understanding come from my experience as a church musician. I have an affinity for other artistic languages but am in no way a speaker. We need to provide more opportunities to bring artists into the worship of the church in substantive ways. Without models, we simply have no ability to pass on the language, and the same discontinuity I experienced in my home church will continue as congregants encounter a faith that cannot speak meaningfully into their lives. Local churches should invest

time and energy in arts education and training, redirecting the program toward liturgical purposes and allowing the language of the local community to find expression.

As we move forward, I pray that the church will see the arts as a gospel issue. We are immersed in a world that God has made. Creation pours forth speech and cannot help but concretely embody the glory of God. We are made of the same material and should utilize all the languages at our disposal to the same proclamation work. We are to know and live the gospel to the praise of our Creator, so that others might know Christ and be brought into the eternal fold of God.

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