

Spheres Of Societal Transformation

Introduction

The sphere concept becomes important for understanding God's purposes in transforming human societies in his mandate to disciple the nations. The Bible makes one thing clear: "...*dominion belongs to the LORD and he rules over the nations*" (Ps. 22:28). The domains or spheres of society are part of God's domain. It is no surprise that an atheistic system of rule over nations will eventually fail.

The collapse of communist governments in Eastern Europe beginning in 1989 represents a popular judgment that more than four decades of Soviet-dominated, Marxist-Leninist practice has failed. The drive is now on to reconstitute the states and societies of that region in ways that will allow political, economic, religious, and cultural life to flourish. Whether those countries will be reconstructed so that democracy, social freedom, and greater prosperity can become standard practice remains to be seen. But at least for the moment the rejection of centralized collectivism as a social model seems to be complete.

The Importance Of The Spheres Of Authority

Jose Gonzalez teaches on the significance of the spheres as representing God's limited delegation of authority. God is the only absolute sovereign, the ALL Mighty, whereas all other "sovereignities" are partial, being delegated by him and therefore subject to the terms and purposes of that delegation. For example, he gave Adam and Eve the authority to eat freely from "every tree in the garden", but harnessed his conscience to a test of obedience, the prohibition to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

John Calvin taught that all authority is delegated by God to different kinds of authorities, each possessing its own "sphere of sovereignty," those spheres being that of the family, the church and of the civil government.

- God exercises His own ruling authority through different offices: "The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king" (Isa. 33:22). Appealing to this scripture, Montesquieu in *Le Spirit des Lois* proposed the "separation of civil powers" into the judicial, legislative and executive branches.
- No authority may trespass into the jurisdiction of another, (hence Saul's sin, offering sacrifices, a religious function).
- They are called to collaborate under God and for His purposes, an institutional example of "two or three gathered in my name," or of "two or three witnesses", thus providing "checks and balances" upon each other, essential when fallen people are in authority.
- Thus the nations have borders and a history (an authority structure and a legal framework) "that they may seek God" (Acts 26:19), a religious motive.

- All spheres operate under the greater, absolute sovereignty of God, who is above all of them: “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar” (the power to tax on earth) “and to God what belongs to God” (his image imprinted in man).

In the end, all spheres, all authorities, thrones, powers and principalities will be subject unto Jesus, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ (Rev. 15:11).

What Are The Spheres?

Only four spheres of authority, which are explicitly ordained in the Bible, are each subject to a holy covenant, a covenant with God. These are the individual conscience, the family, the Church and the civil government.

Some Christian authors only list three institutions, leaving out the *Individual Conscience*. This lends itself to consider man as only a subject, rather than a government of each institution. Created for and called to dominion, that is to say, “government,” self-government under God is the first and most important government. It was the failure of Adam to govern himself under God’s rule that caused the fall. And it is this government that is restored by the new birth and the adoption as children of God. Thus recognizing the sovereign sphere of the Individual Conscience is too important to be left out of the discussion of Spheres of Sovereignty.

The individual is God’s representative on earth, sovereign under God, his conduct ruled by and judged in accordance to the dictates of his conscience (Rom. 3). It is as an individual that he exercises his covenant-making capacity, entering into compacts with others and thus constituting the other “institutions”, each sovereign in their own sphere, but inferior in level of authority, to that of each man’s conscience. No man may violate their own conscience, nor can any institution lawfully require such violation. For example we find in the Scripture expressions such as: “the heart judges no man”, “and if your heart condemns you, God is greater than your heart, and He knows all things”, and “I will make a covenant with them” and “I will write my law in their heart”

Summary: Christian Concept Of Sphere

- Dominion belongs to the LORD in the nations
- God has established certain spheres of sovereignty, also called social institutions.
- Each of these spheres is under God’s authority and social-moral law.
- The authority that each sphere has is delegated from God.
- Each social institution has been given power to exercise authority in a particular area of life.
- These spheres also have specific roles and responsibilities.
- In some cases these spheres overlap to a certain degree.
- For example, the spheres of God, man and the Church cover some common ground and the family overlaps education and community.

Applying Biblical World View Foundational Principles To The Main Spheres/Areas/Domains Of Human Life & Society

Responding to

THE CALL TO DISCIPLE THE NATIONS

Knowing

THE POWER OF TRUTH TO TRANSFORM NATIONS

Applying a

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW BECAUSE IDEAS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

Arts, Entertainment And Sports

RATIONALE/BACKGROUND

“In the beginning God created,” and “In the beginning was the Word.” God is the author of creation and communication. As the supreme Creator and Communicator, he is the source of art and communication.

God has given all authority in heaven and on earth to his Son, Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ is entitled to have lordship over all areas of life. Christians must bring all art and communication under his authority.

Art is part of God’s created order. They cannot be labeled Christian or un-Christian. However, they can be used for good or evil.

Art is neither synonymous nor mutually exclusive functions in God’s economy. Communication is the act of sharing thoughts, ideas, information, and needs. The arts, whether or not they communicate, are expressions of God’s creativity manifested through man.

Man, created in the image of God, has the capacity to create and communicate. Therefore, all artistic endeavors and communications involve more than technical skills. Their intended purpose is to glorify God. To accomplish this, all art and communication must be brought into captivity to the mind of Christ.

Christ is the standard of excellence. “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men . . .” (Col. 3:23). Within the framework of that excellence, art and communication should reflect the highest quality of creative work possible given the resources available.

Since all abilities are God-given, we can achieve excellence when we submit them to the lordship of Jesus Christ and the guidance of God. This guidance comes from communication with God through prayer, study of his Word and other Biblical disciplines vital to being a Christian.

Art has a great influence on society in shaping man’s view of reality. A career in these fields should be considered a worthy vocation. To achieve such a career, Christians should discern and develop their God-given talents.

It is legitimate for Christians to engage in art and communication without the need to include overt Christian symbolism or content. A Christian may participate in any area of art and communication as long as he submits himself to the lordship of Jesus Christ in accordance with the Word, and acts in the conviction of faith, for “without faith it is impossible to please [God]” (Heb. 11:6).

Biblical Texts

- Ecclesiastes 3:11
- Psalm 27:4
- Colossians 3:23

Insights (OT Template)

- Related themes include music, design, support, dance, culture, dress, poetry, literature, crafts, color, sculpture, and beauty.
- The sphere of the arts and entertainment reveals the Song of Songs and the Potter.
- The primary attribute of God revealed in arts and entertainment is beauty.
- God governments the arts to the laws of aesthetics of each discipline.

Mission Statement

To see those involved in arts, entertainment and sports take on their role in society/culture, both in being transformed and in bringing transformation by expressing the vast heart and character of God. Seeing The Arts as having a contribution to the presence and movement of God on the earth is critical and we want to anchor our practice and vision of diverse human creativity in a truly biblical worldview, framed by a sense of being “sent” into mission so as to avoid the disconnect between being and doing. This contribution will take place with and through all age groups, genders and skill levels. We want to be united to bless the nations.

Principles

1. God is the Creator and Author of all creative abilities.
2. The purpose of art and communication is to glorify God.
3. Communication and art are legitimate spheres of life recognized by the Word of God and available to all Christians for edification and enjoyment.
4. The primacy of the artist over his art and the personal over the impersonal, since the person is always more important than his art.
5. The responsibility and accountability of the artist and communicator in all creative expression and works of art.
6. The role of the artist and place of art as basic to the enhancement of life, the edification of the Church, and the proclamation of the Gospel to all men, however educated, no matter what their culture.
7. Art needs no other justification than that enunciated by the Word of God and confirmed by his Spirit.
8. There is a need for excellence and the development of technique in the media and art.
9. There are a variety of artistic forms referred to in Scripture that are available for serious endeavor in expressing a biblical worldview.

10. Artists have the responsibility to impart their craft to the next generation, nurturing them in artistic excellence and integrity, in accordance with Scripture (Exod. 35:30-34).
11. The field of art, including education in those fields, is an authentic mission field of the Body of Christ.
12. The integrity and motives of the artist are as important as the work of the artist, whether or not they are clearly displayed therein.

Conclusion/ Summary

Arts, sports and entertainment --The Arts --are a critical element in society. The richness of the contribution of those involved will depend on the reality of the Creator God within them, on their obedience to articulate his light, and on the availability of platform to bring that light to the community. Through networking, training, exchanging ideas and providing venues for people in arts, sports and entertainment, the Body of Christ will gain an influential voice in the transforming of nations.

To be continued...

Taken from Transform World Manual

Transform World Connections

A call to transformation: transformational streams are becoming one fast-flowing river for the healing of the nations.

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