

“What is good news? To the man that is starving, is it not food? To the blind man, is it not sight? To the homeless, is it not a home?” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 2152). To the disaffected, is it not something that meets them where they are at? The arts are an area where the Christian Evangelical church does not meet people. There are two areas Creuk Radio intends to affect: evangelizing and creating community. Since the church is most concerned with evangelizing I will start there although I believe that evangelism is a byproduct of community. This paper advocates for community and radio as a means for that community.

### **Community vs. Church Needs**

The Evangelical Church focuses on the elderly, kids, and families. The higher level needs on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs chart are ignored by the church, things such as esteem and self-actualization. The irony is that most capable people who are atheist/agnostic are living in a world of higher level needs. There will never be any connection to reach these people without a concerted effort to put leadership in the area of arts. Jonny Baker puts it nicely in his book “Curating Worship:” “Unless you can subvert or challenge or throw away the rules on both origination and interpretation (creation and execution), you can’t create a significant shift” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 824).

People need to have other people like them or who understand them in order to be witnessed to. “In order for any group to collaborate or engage in honest and open dialogue, there must be intrinsic trust within the group as a whole and between participants” (Henderson, 2009, p. 23). Music tugs on different heart strings than the logic oriented sermons you hear in church. “Music is one place in the media where kids editorialize to kids” (Stowe, 2011, Loc. 395). “To save hippies, inspiring music was needed” (Stowe, 2011, Loc. 501). The truth about evangelizing

to non-Christians on higher level needs was played out in the Jesus People movement. “Evangelical churches created by or for Jesus People would far outpace their spiritual counterparts among the alternative religious movements. And the musical innovations of the Jesus Movement were a crucial reason for this” (Stowe, 2011, Loc. 654).

Higher level needs are key to how healthy a person is. Henderson (2009) quoting Gilleard and Higgs wrote: “ones social presence in the world and how one perceives, experiences, and interacts with the world has a tremendous impact on how the body functions and ages.” The Christian engaging higher level needs also has heightened sense of spirituality. “If people are engaged on their own terms, then they have ownership and they are more apt to experience the presence of God” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 2755).

The Church puts no real leadership on the arts. They may have someone who is kind of interested in the arts so the church says “hey you’re interested in the arts why don’t you try to start an arts group and see where it goes?” If the church was putting real leadership on it they would hire someone from Harvard or they would hire a consulting group to do a research study. This means creating community with real leadership. The “meaning of art [is] in (inter)actions and sensual impact, not just analysis or observation” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 547). The church sees a disconnect in the arts but is not putting its heart on the matter.

Imago Dei church is one of the model churches for Evangelical Arts in the Portland Oregon area. They have put their worship pastor on arts. Unfortunately he has many other responsibilities like leading worship, church functions/meetings and four kids. This is not putting leadership on the arts. This is only recognizing art. When transformational opportunities arise the church has to put a volunteer on the project because no real leadership is being put on the arts. In

my experience people who have been part of the exploration project at Imago Dei (i.e. pub and lab projects) have seen the continuum/connection break down between process steps. Therefore the group has not seen a project through to completion.

The creation of an arts community or Para-church organization would make it possible so that Christian Creatives are not competing between themselves for scarce resources. The way art is treated in the church is that individuals are pitted against each other for scarce resources. “Pitting individuals against each other in a competition for scarce resources will destroy... trust and morale” (Haidt, 2012, Loc. 4214).

“In many church circles the only gifts that are valued for worship are musical ones (and even then of a small range of music) or the ability to speak well (preferably in a good English accent). This attitude needs shattering, and opening up so that poets, photographers, ideas people, geeks, theologians, liturgists, designers, writers, cooks, politicians, architects, moviemakers, storytellers, parents, campaigners, children, bloggers, DJs, VJs, craft-makers, or just anybody who comes and is willing to bounce ideas around, can get involved” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 390).

The arts are treated as peripheral rather than as essential to witnessing. The church says they want to be relevant but they are doing a poor job. “True inculturation implies a willingness... to listen to culture” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 489). The Message Bible (1998) 1 Corinthians: 25-26 says: “Every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.”

### Who the Community is and What the Mission is

Creuk Radio ([www.creukradio.org](http://www.creukradio.org)) is trying to build community. To accomplish this we need to ask the question: what is it that is important to Creatives? In arts and culture what inspires people is community. Arts people are social people. Group brainstorming is “beneficial, positive, and fulfilling” (Henderson, 2009, p. 73). Hanging out with like-minded Creatives creates the opportunity for:

1. “Transformational leadership... empowers individuals to feel comfortable disagreeing... without worrying about being ridiculed or isolated” (Henderson, 2009, p. 89).
2. “Collective joy” (Haidt, 2012, Loc. 3936).
3. “A platform where [Creatives] can experience this transformation” (Henderson, 2009, p. 3)

Why is the community so important? When I mentioned it to Raymond de Silva a Christian and music promoter he agreed that the Christian community does not do a good job of coming together outside of the church, other than in small groups. He said there is something different about the way groups act together in the music community than in the church community.

Nathan, another friend, referenced his experience with being a youth pastor. He had the experience of community doing youth events that were fun. Now he is grown up and there have been no creative/fun group in the same manner. Arts and culture is the grown up version of youth groups.

Finally, another person at the Imago Dei church arts group referred to Christian music as “cheesy stuff that Christian art puts out.” If we continue down this road of CCM we will

continue to alienate those we want to reach. As far as the Christian walk or evangelizing goes: It's easier to admit you believe in Jesus without all the pressure to act a certain way in someone else's timeline.

### **Case for Support for Creuk Radio**

Creuk Radio is a radio station for Christian Urban and Ethnic music (it started as Electronic, Hip-hop and Spanish music). The goal of Creuk Radio is not about evangelism (although that is a byproduct). The radio station is about having a support community for Christians. Creuk Radio is focused on the younger generation who like urban music. The current step is looking for allies. I believe families would like it if there kids had something to resonate with, rather than being disaffected.

The conceptual enemy is secular dance music. Secular dance music as a whole is deeply influenced by drugs and sexual overtones. These disaffected kids often end up in trouble. "Disaffected kids [end up]... drinking, using drugs and generally hanging out on the streets" (Baker, 2011, Loc. 2100).

### **My Story: How I came to lead Creuk Radio**

During college it became clear that baseball was not going to be my career. I started seeking out new communities. I developed a passion for creative hip-hop music (turntablism and minimalist stuff). I started volunteering on the college radio station. During this time I decided I wanted to make my own turntablist music and I bought a couple of turntables. I took a class on radio and I had a radio show for 1.5 years. I started gravitating towards electronic music and sought out opportunities to play in Seattle. I found a group of people that were also interested in

this and we started a collective. I got into dance music especially drum and bass. Eventually the “scene” overtook me and I got involved with drugs. During this time my parents were splitting up so I really didn’t have much positive support. I got kicked out of my house and ended up going to San Francisco where people I knew were doing even harder drugs. At Christmas I called home. I had a good talk with my mom and she convinced me to come home. After coming back home I decided that I wanted to become a Christian. The transition was hard however since Christians don’t have a lot of avenues for artsy people. I found a website called Flaming Fish which did industrial music and that site became my support group. Eventually that site died and the only other one that remained was Tastyfresh. However, that group was focused only on dance music. I created Creuk Radio to provide a source of Electronica to artsy people who are Christian. Through the years I have found that there are a ton of artists making this music but no radio groups are focusing on bringing these artsy non-dance focused people together. Now I would like to add world music to the mix and expand Creuk Radio to the arts and culture community while focusing on playing music that isn’t “pop” (e.g. CCM). Because Christians aren’t playing Electronica and World music no one gets to hear the great music that can solidify ones walk with Christ instead of detract from it. It is exciting to think what music that is not “pop” can do for disenfranchised people like me. The music has given me the strength to continue my walk. However ever since I became a Christian I have been trying to recreate the communities that I had as a non-Christian when I was involved in “collectives” (e.g. groups of artists that would come together to share thoughts, concerns, anger, just hang out etc.)

### **Model Guidelines**

Dubh (2012), a Christian artist, explains what music does for him:

“The process of painting and the process of making music, are similar... Lots of layers, reliance on happy accident, creating a mood, and... knowing when a piece is finished. Often I create music while literally watching paint dry... Music helps create a mood, gives hints of what is to come. It fills the gaps, creates a coherence, fills awkward silences, or insures that any silences are intentional.”

Additionally Christian arts groups need to be aware of environmental factors.

“Environmental factors such as ‘freedom of choice or autonomy, challenge, and support are seen as critical for intrinsic motivation and creative accomplishment (Amabile, 1996; Paulus, 2000, p. 239)” (Henderson, 2009, p. 88). These environmental factors are only gained in a community setting.

A great guideline for artists to model is below. This is from a Thesis written by Amy Henderson (2009, pp. 84-85). She writes about Creative Combustion consulting. Creative Combustion is:

- Whatever is focused on expands
- Elimination of judgment (of self and others)
- Trust and love one another
- Healthy competition between team members
- Mutual respect
- Seek opportunity to mine diversity
- Integration of core values and behaviors
- Collaborative problem-solving
- Productive conflict-resolution

Why the Creative Combustion model? Because “collective voluntary agreement is necessary for active participation” (Henderson, 2009, p. 59).

Communities are so important because “humans must construct their own knowledge, building their knowledge through experience which is internalized (e.g. mental models) and ultimately realized through abilities and behaviors” (Henderson, 2009, p. 30). Going back to the thought of fun. “‘Fun...’ is necessary for all age cohorts for creative breakthroughs” (Henderson, 2009, p. 69). “Once individuals are gathered together, a sort of electricity is generated from their closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation” (Haidt, 2012, Loc. 3965). This leads to spiritual awareness.

## **Conclusion**

No radio groups are focusing on bringing artsy Christian focused people together in Portland which is one of the artsiest places in the country. There is a lack of hope in the Evangelical Arts community. “A lack of hope in an oppressed group will lead nowhere... If they don’t have hope, they don’t even look for a path (Horton, 1998, p. 44)” (Henderson, 2009, p. 44). Obviously if there not on the path there is no relationship with Jesus Christ. “People want moments of epiphany where a connection is made, where the soul is moved, the presence of God is sensed, as opposed to just thinking that that was a nice set of ideas we explored at some rational level” (Baker, 2011, Loc. 1406).

“Unless educators (i.e. leaders, facilitators, researcher) expose themselves to the popular cultures across the board, their discourse will be hardly heard by anyone but themselves. Not only [that, it] will it be lost and unable to implement” (Henderson, 2009, p. 98).

References

Baker, J. (2011). *Curating Worship*: Seabury Books.

Haidt, J. (2012). *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion*.

New York, NY: Pantheon Books.

Henderson, A. E. (2009). *Intergenerational Collaborative Inquiry for Creative Problem-solving*.

Marylhurst University.

Peterson, E. H. (1998). *The Message: The New Testament in Contemporary Language*:

NavPress.

proost.co.uk. (2012). Proost caught up with Dubh. proost.co.uk.

Stowe, D. W. (2011). *No Sympathy for the Devil: Christian Pop Music and the Transformation*

*of American Evangelicalism*: Univ of North Carolina Pr.