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The Shared Lens of Aesthetics and Theology: Ecclesiological and Christological Reflections on my Art Work

Melissa Behrle

The Shared Lens of Aesthetics and Theology: Ecclesiological and
Christological Reflections on my Art Work

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Barry University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
completion of the Honors Program

By

Melissa Behrle

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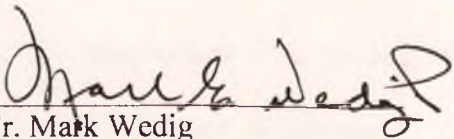
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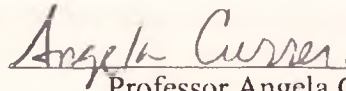
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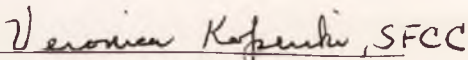
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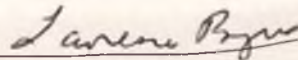
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The Shared Lens of Aesthetics and Theology: Ecclesiological and
Christological Reflections on my Art Work

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Abstract of a senior honors thesis at Barry University.

Thesis supervised by Fr. Mark Wedig, O.P.

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The purpose of this thesis is to show the common lens of Aesthetics and Theology through the interpretation of an original series of paintings. As an artist who is also concerned with theology (faith seeking understanding) to create art inevitably will be an expression of that faith. The goal of art for this person is both aesthetic and concerned with the spiritual because the artist cannot detach themselves from either. In this way, this thesis shows the common lens both disciplines share creating a hermeneutics of art and theology in relation to my work. By constructing an ecclesiology and christology I show that theological reflection was the inspiration for my art revealed through the use of symbol. I then look to what theology might have to say to the series to show that art can be a valid type of theology.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Pope John Paul II (1920-2005). Seeing him in person over Holy Week during my study abroad in Spring 2003 has been a continual inspiration to me, and an experience I will never forget. Some of the images in my art relate to those experiences and were inspired during that time. Furthermore, I would like to thank in a special way Fr. Mark Wedig, my honors thesis mentor, your insight and encouragement is greatly appreciated. To my art teacher Angi Curreri, for always letting me experiment and not be afraid to fail, and to succeed! To my art teacher in Italy Marsha Steinberg, for introducing me to new avenues in my art and showing me that art is hard work. I would like to thank my parents for always encouraging and supporting me. And to God, my creator and Father, thanks and praise to you for the blessings in my life. May all I do be a reflection of your grace, and in all things I pray I would be a channel of you joy and peace, through your Son Jesus Christ.

“The artist must have something to say, for mastery over form is not his goal but rather adapting of form to its inner meaning.”¹

-Wassily Kandinsky

In this thesis I am proposing to use a series of original paintings which make up my graduating senior show to discuss the common lens of theology and aesthetics. I will do this by first interpreting the artwork from the artist’s perspective, citing my purpose for the paintings, how I got the idea, my specific techniques used, as well as my choice of materials and color. Then I will relate my work to the genre of Expressionism, looking to the major artists in this movement like Kandinsky and Marc. I will look to theology’s contribution to aesthetics and vice versa and what these interdisciplinary concerns say about expanding our understanding of our faith. Furthermore, I will research major theologians, specifically Bernard Lonergan and Karl Rahner to develop an aesthetic theology using a method of Correlation. My anthropological question is how can we better understand and broaden our image of God? I claim that this can only be answered through an understanding of revelation, and my goal is to show that aesthetics and the creative process of the artist is a valid pathway toward God’s revelation. Theological reflection was the wellspring for the idea behind the series of paintings. In particular, the subject matter was developed through an ecclesiology and christology. It is reflection on the theology of the Church and Christ that served as the inspiration for this series of abstract paintings. Also, I will look to what theology has to say to art, specifically my own artwork, and finally show that the creative process and art itself can be a type of theology. Just as theology is faith seeking understanding I will show that aesthetics shares a common goal in expanding our image of truth and beauty, especially for the artist that

¹ Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, translated by M.T.H. Sadler (New York: Dover Publications, 1977), 54.

is concerned with both disciplines. Furthermore, I look to develop a hermeneutic for theological reflection as the basis for making art through the power of symbol, as well as the use of art for theological reflection.

Description of my Work

The work discussed for this thesis is a series of original abstract paintings. By describing the works in order to later interpret them through the lens of theology and aesthetics I will demonstrate the common lens both disciplines share. The works are a series of original paintings done in traditional egg tempera. They were created from a group of rubbings from cracked church floors collected all around Italy. These rubbings were then used as a reference to create ten small study paintings that aided in the final series of five finished larger scale paintings. I found that rubbings gave an accurate image of the cracks as opposed to other techniques like the use of photography or sketches. With a rubbing I could get an exact image while at the same time consider composition. In the final paintings the image of the cracks became purposely abstracted and emotive colors were used instead of the natural colors of the original marble floors. The final paintings are 2' by 3' in dimension as I chose to enlarge the scale in order to intentionally abstract them, which also allowed for "successful accidents" and "chance events" that I welcomed in my work.² Furthermore, the color scheme is not necessarily naturalistic but refers to the purple and soft yellow light I experienced in these environments. Using egg tempera allowed me to build up layers of color. The viewer can see blues, magentas, greens, reds, oranges, and purples breaking through the layers of color which was one of my main purposes for using this medium on both an aesthetic and theological level which will be discussed later. Also, I chose to mix my own paint and

²Guy Hubbard, "Abstract Expressionism", *Arts and Activities*, Vol.13 no. 3 (Apr 2002): 29.

stretch my own canvases for this series, including the centerpiece, which is a 9' by 6' mixed media project with the same theme. I did this both for the sake of better learning the craft as I find I enjoy being the sole decision maker in all aspects of the creation process- in the making of paints, the stretching of canvas, to final presentation.

The large canvas is somewhat different from the rest of the series in that it contains the original rubbing as part of the final work. The rubbing was done from a large crack in a mosaic tile floor from San Giovanni in Laterno, which is the Pope's Cathedral in Rome. This crack ran across a large circular stone tile that is roughly 9' by 9'. Using graphite I captured the crack on a local Italian newspaper, which just happened to contain images of Holy Week, as the newspaper was from Easter Weekend. This rubbing was then gessoed onto the canvas and a figure was superimposed whose outline follows almost perfectly the outline of the crack. With arms outstretched, face straining, and feet together, the figure is recognized easily as Christ crucified. In the beginning the addition of this figure was not my goal, at first I just wanted to capture the crack and develop it on its own, but the more I looked at it, this figure just came to me as if from an outside source. I even amazed myself because of how perfectly it fit the contours of the crack, as if it were there all along.

The rubbings I chose were from cracks that had a very dynamic quality to them. Some were organic and unpredictable while others were geometrical and more precise. I chose them because they broke up the space in such a way that it created an interesting, unpredictable composition. At first it would be hard to recognize the works as cracked floors and this is an intentional abstraction. However, the pieces as a whole lend themselves to the feeling of being cracked or broken, which was my ultimate goal.

I consider myself a student of painting as I have only been working in this craft for a little over five years. I realize that to mature in a medium, to master it and make it one's own, takes decades if it is to be achieved at all. Even if I do become a painter in this sense, I will always be a student of painting because I am working through a process of creation that is beyond myself. As a student of painting I look to the historical references and ideals of abstraction, toward the ideals of expressionism as a valid means of self-expression. My work most follows the ideals and goals related to this movement that started at the turn of the twentieth century and was the beginning of modern art. I have not rejected contemporary art circles and movements but find it hard to express myself and create in the post-pop and post-modernism genres which are just some of the many contemporary art expressions. I agree with Brum Dijkstra when he says about "postmodernism" that "instead of engaging in critical inquiry about the nature and potentialities of the human condition...artists make simple negations and inversions to gain notoriety."³ Post pop art continues to critique a consumerist society, which from the perspective of the social responsibility of the artist is a valid commentary, however, I feel that aesthetically it is lacking as a true art form.

Abstract Expressionists "concentrated on the actions involved in creating artworks rather than trying to produce images that people could recognize."⁴ Furthermore, artistic ideas in expressionism focused on emotional feelings rather than on careful preparation. This coupled with the ideals of abstraction that developed 50 years prior in the works of Picasso, Cezanne, and Matisse and others is the groundwork for the

³ In Dijkstra's article he looks to analyze the difference between the 'dialectics of hope' and the intellectual stasis of art. It contains information on the development of abstract expressionism. Bram Dijkstra, "The dialectics of Hope versus the Politics of Stasis in Art", *Tikkun*, Vol 19 no. 6 (Nov/Dec 2004): 61.

⁴Hubbard, 29.

movement to which I look as a historical reference in my own painting. In Kandinsky's book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, he refers to the 'inner need' of the artist, which he says is built up in three mystical elements.⁵ One, that every artist, as a creator, has something in him/her that calls for expression (this is the element of personality). Two, every artist, as a child of his/her age, is impelled to express the spirit of that age (the element of style). Three, every artist, as a servant of art, has to help the cause of art (the element of pure artistry).⁶ It is within this movement that I most closely relate my own works. In Michael Sadler's Introduction to Kandinsky's book he places Kandinsky's work within a context in order to make it historically credible. He says, "Modern artists are beginning to realize their social duties. They are the spiritual teachers of the world, and for their teaching to have weight it must be comprehensible."⁷ It is Kandinsky's aim to do just this in his book. In a parallel way I aim to make my work comprehensible through this thesis using the language of aesthetics and theology. While I feel that art, as a language of images and a communication of ideas, should be able to stand alone, as the viewer is asked to participate in the communication of those ideas, the context of the artist and her/his personal goals in the creation process can only aid in making art more comprehensible.

Expressionism

In the following section I will discuss expressionism and the beginnings of Abstract Expressionism in the United States in order to connect my work to some of the ideals of

⁵ The phrase "inner need" (Innere Notwendigkeit) means primarily the impulse felt by the artist for spiritual expression. M.T.H. Sadler, from Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 26.

⁶ Kandinsky, 33-34.

⁷ Sadler, introduction to *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, by Kandinsky, xiii.

that movement. In abstraction “the ‘Symbolist’ ideal in art held general sway over the ‘Naturalist.’” Sadler goes on to say, “The symbolist sought to express the inner feeling rather than the outer reality.”⁸ Abstract Expressionism was born by combining the elements of Synthetic Cubism, Geometric Abstraction, and Surrealism, where artists used abstract designs to express emotions and emphasized gestural movements as an integral part of their process.⁹ Abstract Expressionism was a term first attached to Kandinsky and his work in 1919; however, it was made popular by the New York School of art in Post World War II America, where influential European artists fled to escape the war joined by American artists like Rothko and Pollock. I do not necessarily adhere to this form of abstract expressionism as it developed within the United States of America because art became very individualistic and influenced by Existentialist ideas, which emphasized the importance of the act of creating, not of the finished object. It is more toward the ideas of the earlier Expressionist movement in Germany that I connect my own work. It has been said that expressionism is “a revelation of the profoundly problematic condition of Europe at the turn of the century.”¹⁰ For the Expressionist, there was no difference between art and society. Furthermore, the “expressionists grew up in and reacted violently against the self-satisfied world of materialism.”¹¹ Its goals were politically aimed and meant for social critique and most importantly social change. Kandinsky said it best in his essay, *Painting as Pure Art-Form and Content* in 1916:

The work of art consists of two elements’ the inner and the outer. The inner element, seen on its own, is the emotion of the soul of the artist.

⁸ Ibid., xiv.

⁹ Taken from comments made by Laurie Edwards in the video, “Abstract Expressionism,” *School Library Journal*, 03628930 vol.49 no. 7 (July 2003).

¹⁰ Frank, Whitford, *Expressionism: Movements of Modern Art*, ed. Trewin Copplestone (New York: Hamlyn London, 1970), 18.

¹¹ Ibid., 18-22.

This emotion has the ability to call forth a basically similar emotion in the soul of the spectator...The inner element, created by the soul's vibrations is the content of the work, without content no work can exist. So that the content which at first lives only in the abstract can become the work of art, the second element-the outward-serving to embody it. Thus the content searches for a means of expressions, a material form.¹²

Nature is seen as a point of departure for art, in order to give the spiritual content expression which is the ultimate goal. In this way, Expressionism was a critique of the Impressionists who looked to capture nature and the surface appearances. Franz Marc further comments, "Nature is everywhere, within us and without us. Something exists that is not completely concerned with nature, but reaches beyond and interprets...this is art....Art was and is at every period the boldest departure from nature and naturalism, the bridge into the spirit..."¹³ Kandinsky contended that every color has its proper expressional value, and that it is therefore possible to create meaningful realities without representing objects.¹⁴ This is, for me, a difficult statement because even in Kandinsky's work he is never able to fully achieve this. The very act of painting, of creating, lends itself to form. It is inescapable. Therefore, even if Kandinsky were to find the "proper expressional value" for every color, it could only be used in a way that suggests some kind of form, which inevitably influences the viewer. The form cannot be completely separated from the color; even if color alone does hold its own reality, the form of that color also impacts the viewer for even unrecognizable or non-representative objects are

¹² Excerpt from Kandinsky's essay, "Painting as Pure Art, Form and Content," published in *Expressionism: Movements* by Whitfond.

¹³ Franz, Marc, "The New Painting", article excerpt published in, *Expressionism: Movements* by Whitfond.

¹⁴ Johannes, Itten, *The Elements of Color*, ed. Faber Birren (New York: Van Norstrand Reinhold Company, 1970), 11.

ultimately connected to nature and known objects. With this being said, I do agree “colors have a mystical capacity for spiritual expression, without being tied to objects.”¹⁵

In my own paintings I chose a palette consisting of toned purples and soft orange-yellows, with pure colors breaking in: greens, reds, and blues coming through the layers of color. I used this contrast because for me it is a spiritually charged combination like the shadows in clouds, or the subtle undulations of light and shadow playing on the surfaces of a windowed space. In Expressionism, Johannes Itten said that “the effects of color should be experienced and understood, not only visually, but also psychologically and symbolically.”¹⁶

Naturally speaking the colors I chose represent the physical place where the images originate: the basilica, ciesa, cathedral, where I got the image of the cracked floor. The purple, stony hardness of the marble and granite, contrasted with the soft heavenly natural light and shadows; the glimpses of colors bouncing on the walls through stained glass; the movement of light throughout the space, across the floors; how it has a life of its own and inspires awe in the onlooker- this is the feeling, the “expressional value” I hoped to conjure with the color in my work. On one hand, it is very much connected to nature, to what I observed within a particular space, but also connected to the feeling, the spiritual reality these colors created in me.

It is this spiritual, transcendent feeling that the colors represent symbolically. It is the feeling of a heavenly space, and holiness. They represent calm and silence and create a harmonious balance, one not outweighing or overbearing the other, but all colors working together to create one unified whole. This symbolism through color is very

¹⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

important. As far as the spiritual is concerned the natural colors are not as important as the use of color symbolically because the power of color can transform the meaning and intent.

This was the goal of the Expressionists. Kandinsky worked to develop a theory of how color affects the participant on a spiritual level. Of violet he said, "Violet is therefore both in the physical and spiritual sense a cooled red. It is consequently rather sad and ailing. As a cool color it retreats away from the spectator, moving in a concentric direction."¹⁷ Yellow on the other hand, as a warm color, "approaches the spectator...moving in eccentric direction spiraling toward the viewer."¹⁸ This theory, however, cannot truly be proven. As Itten said, "Yes, the deepest and truest secrets of color effect are, I know, invisible even to the eye, and are beheld by the heart alone."¹⁹ Furthermore, the viewers participate in the symbolic meaning of the color because they bring their own perceptions to the work. Maybe the uneasiness and still of an approaching storm or the repetitious rise and fall of waves approaching the shore are evoked by the spiritual quality of the colors, as well as the forms in which they are seen. Any reference or experience that the viewer brings to the work will be incorporated into the color effect of the paintings so that it can only be truly beheld by the heart alone.

A Hermeneutics of Aesthetics and Theology

For the artist who is also concerned with theology and considers herself a Christian, then the content of her artistic energy will inevitably relate to and be generated by and through that faith. For one to say that she is a Christian is to say that she has and is going through a process of continual conversion. She has put her old self aside for

¹⁷ Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*, 41.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 37-38.

¹⁹ Itten, 7.

something new. Through baptism if we believe that we die to sin and 'put on Christ' then truly we become new beings. As such, we are not Christian only in some aspects of our lives but our entire being is changed so that all that we are changes too. Therefore, the Christian artist cannot separate her art from her faith; in fact, her faith will be the energy, the force behind her art as she realizes her artistic gifts are only from the grace of God to begin with. This does not mean, however, that the Christian artist is only to paint Madonnas and Crucifixions. All art, if done in recognition of the movement and indwelling of the spirit will reflect this faith. In this section of the thesis I will show how the process of creating art can be a method of theology, especially for the artist who is concerned with matters of faith. Specifically for me, I have found that creating art in the tradition of Expressionism, the traditions of the symbolist as opposed to the naturalist, is best for me. Not because I feel that the symbolic tradition is better than, or above the naturalist, but that for me, it allows for the expression, and therefore the meaning to be made more real.

My intent in this portion of the thesis is threefold. First, to show that theological reflection can be the inspiration for creating art. Second, that art itself and the artistic process can be a vehicle toward theological reflection, in both the viewer and the artist. Third, that art itself can be a method of theology. I will do this by showing that it was theological reflection on the symbol of the cracked church floors that inspired my art. I will then show that the artistic process and the final work points and calls us to reflect and ultimately to act on that reflection regardless of the original inspiration. If this is true then through a method of correlation, art itself can be a kind of theological process, and a valid one at that.

Symbol from Ecclesiological Reflection

As I have stated before I believe that it is the symbolic, the language of symbol and metaphor, that gives us the most powerful instruments available to describe the divine. It is within the visual language of symbolism that I place my own artwork. Just as symbol is used in our religion to point beyond, to transcend itself, to give ultimate meaning toward that which otherwise would be indescribable, unnamable, unknowable, and inconceivable, I used symbol in my art as a way to express the same transcendental experience of ultimate meaning.

Let me give a brief definition of symbol and how it works in our world. There are many definitions of symbol and not all symbols have to be strictly 'religious' for them to point to the Ultimate. "Symbol discloses a previously unknown interior reality."²⁰ As symbols work the way metaphors do in poetry, religious symbols awaken in those who participate in them an encounter with the Ultimate stemming from human experience.

As Theologian Bernard Lonergan states, "Art is not autobiography. It is not telling one's tale to a psychiatrist. It is grasping what is or seems significant, of moment, concern, or import to man. It is truer than experience, leaner, more effective, more to the point."²¹ In this way, it was not my goal to simply reproduce the cracks in the tile floors through painting. Aesthetically I found them beautiful and interesting, and no doubt they would make an intriguing composition and breakup of space. However, to merely paint or try in a way to reproduce them from my own experience was not my objective.

²⁰ Stephen Happel, "The Sacraments: Symbols That Redirect Our Desires," from *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Vernon Gregson (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 243.

²¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 64.

Instead I wanted to represent how the subject of the cracks became something “truer than experience” for me. I looked to change the narrative into the symbolic. In this way my paintings are meant to capture my entire experience, everything I felt, heard, saw, and touched with both my senses and my heart when I experienced the cracks in the floors. This total experience is even truer than ordinary experience because it points to the entirety- to the reflection it caused in me as well as the emotions it raised. In this way art becomes as Lonergan states, “the central moment.”²²

The more I reflected on the images of the cracks in a theological way, the more they transcended the natural object, and became a symbol to me. In this way the cracks had a transcendent meaning; they were no longer just imperfections and broken marble and tile, but a powerful symbol, something that points beyond itself toward the infinite, to mystery. This meaning “lies within the consciousness of the artist, but at first has yet to get hold of it; he is impelled to behold, inspect, dissect, enjoy, repeat it, and this means objectifying, unfolding, making explicit, unveiling, revealing.”²³ For me it was through theological reflection that I was able to, as Lonergan puts it, “get a hold of it.” It was theological reflection of the symbol of the cracks that inspired me to create art as “the proper expression of the elemental meaning is the work of art itself.”²⁴

An ecclesiology emerged in my reflection from the symbol of the cracked floors. As I reflected theologically about the brokenness, the imperfection, and the beauty they created I began to see the actual cracks less and less and what they began to represent for me more and more. This reflection most closely follows the insights of transcendental

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 61.

²⁴ Lonergan defines this elemental meaning as the conscious performing of a transformed subject in his transformed world. In this way the viewer is transported from the space in which we move to the space within the picture. Ibid.

theology and therefore I propose to develop an ecclesiology in line with that of Karl Rahner as my fundamental building block.

The first thing I realized about these broken tiled floors, these cracked marble surfaces and mosaics, was that they were not flaws. Even though they seemed out of place, something to be fixed or possibly a future reconstruction project, I saw them quite differently. In Rosemary Luling Haughton's book, *Images for Change*, she describes this type of symbol as an anachronism, but notes that "anachronism is one of the important elements in making possible the switches of awareness that are needed to deal with change without disaster."²⁵ So something that seems out of place or context becomes the way in which we expand, change, and grow. It was precisely this 'strangeness,' this out-of-placeness of the cracked floors in the otherwise seemingly solid, balanced, symmetrical, perfect and therefore holy construction of the sacred spaces that started my reflection. Haughton states, "This strangeness has turned out to be an integral part of the very practical need to reimagine...because reimagining depends on clear information about the what and the how...and a freedom to shift how we perceive it."²⁶

For me, the cracks represented an organic, unpredictable, and unplanned phenomenon in the midst of a planned, organized, perfect space. However, they did not detract from the original construction but quite oppositely made it more beautiful, more real. To create the analogy of the sacred space, the actual building and structure of the place of worship as representing the Church, I look to say that the cracks did not detract from the whole but in fact symbolically added to and completed the whole.

²⁵ Rosemary L. Haughton, *Images for Change: The Transformation of Society* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 109.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

Before we look to the symbol of the sacred space as the Church and the symbolic role the cracks play within this analogy, it is important to first define what we mean when we refer to the Church. To do this let us turn to the work of Karl Rahner.

Karl Rahner states that ecclesiology (the theology of the Church) is “to the other treatises of dogmatics what grammar, poetics, and semantics are to poetry.”²⁷ The Church best understands herself when she works toward perfection, “when she speaks of God and his grace, of Jesus Christ and his cross and resurrection, of everlasting life, when she allows herself to be seized by the grace of this word which she speaks.”²⁸ The Church is also an institution, with a hierarchical structure, varying pastoral offices along with a myriad of goals following a singular mission. Behind all this is the most fundamental understanding of what we are referring to when we speak of the Church and that is “the people of God, gathered by the grace of God, an outgrowth of God’s grace, the fruit of salvation.”²⁹ In this way, if we see the Church as more than an “authoritative institute of salvation,” and actually something that we all are a part of through God’s grace, then we can begin to truly grasp what the Church is meant to be.³⁰

If we recognize the Church, founded by Jesus Christ containing the people of God gathered through his grace, then we must see the necessity for change and growth as well. Rahner states, “If a church exists which was brought about by the power of the Spirit and by the power of faith in the Risen Jesus and hence if it has its origins in Jesus and was ‘founded’ by him, then not only can we and must we grant her merely the possibility of free and accidental changes... We also have to grant the legitimacy of a process of

²⁷ Karl Rahner, *The Church after the Council* (New York; Herder and Herder, 1966), 70.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 71.

³⁰ Ibid.

becoming in the church from out of her origins into her full essence.”³¹ This is to say that the Church is constantly changing, growing, and renewing by the power of the Holy Spirit. Change and renewal in the Church, if it is authentic and through the Spirit which guides it, should always be welcomed as the Church can never be stagnant, but by its very nature is in a process of becoming into her ‘full essence’. Furthermore, when we look to the image of the early Church in the New Testament, we will find it was already developed on many levels. On one hand, it was already institutionalized as it had bishops, deacons, and presbyters. However, the early theology of the Church, “looks especially to the interior reality of the church in grace and in faith.”³² This is realized for example when it is seen as “the pilgrim people of God, as the community of those who are gathered around Christ as witnesses, as the body of Christ which is constituted ever anew by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper.”³³ In the writings of Paul, especially in the ecclesiology of Ephesians we see that Church is “a cosmic reality and heavenly presence.”³⁴ Furthermore, Paul refers to the Church as, “the penetrating idea of the body of Christ.” However, he also uses the symbols of the plant, the building, the temple, the New Jerusalem, and the bride or spouse of Christ.”³⁵

As we can see, the idea of the Church is manifest on many levels. One cannot define the Church and her role in a solely one-dimensional manner because doing so would defy her very nature. It is in fact the coming together, the interconnectivity of all of these various dimensions that gives us a fuller understanding of the Church and its

³¹ Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, translated by William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2002), 332.

³² *Ibid.*, 340.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 338.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

crucial role in salvation history. Because the idea of Church is multifaceted and complex in the sense that it is not easily defined, the most useful language to refer to her is through language of symbol. As Bernard Lonergan states, “What language suggests, symbolism confirms.”³⁶ As the framework for my own ecclesiology I use the symbol of the ‘sacred space’, which is similar to the symbolism Paul uses when he refers to the Church as a house or temple. With an attention to the cracked floors I experienced and saw in some of these spaces in particular, the symbolism I use, in fact, refers to the meaning of cracked or brokenness within a sacred space. It is a symbol that, like the Church, is multifaceted and not merely one-dimensional.

From the outset if we look at cracks and physical brokenness within sacred spaces through the language of symbolism, the most obvious meaning we could find would be that they represent imperfection: possibly the negation of a complete reality, or something that takes away from the entirety. As I started to reflect on the cracks as symbol, this analogy of cracks as imperfection in the Church came to mind first. I began to think of the recent scandal of sexual abuse by priests in the Church and how a small number of corrupt men could do so much damage to the Body of Christ. Or how at times in the Church’s past it has made decisions that would seem to break down the Body of Christ, instead of build it up. The Inquisition, the crusades, the beheading of Galileo, these are all examples of our Church’s history that are not so comfortably talked about; the dark and sinful parts of our history that have no place in the Body of Christ and the community of God’s people, but are nevertheless a reality. The cracks were like something that would make a Christian want to turn their head away, something we

³⁶ Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 5.

would rather not remember or look at again, but in fact they remain a part of the Church's history, just as the cracks remain in the floors of the sacred spaces.

However, the more I began to reflect on these cracks as symbol and the more I experienced them in different spaces of worship, the more they began to transcend the idea of imperfection. They began to represent much more in the fact that I was aesthetically drawn to them. It became hard to see something so organic, interesting and unintentional as an imperfection or flaw. Instead the symbol of a cracked floor in a sacred space became the framework for multiple reflections on its symbolic meaning.

For instance, I began to think about how the cracks actually got there in the first place. How the actual weight of human bodies, of believers walking toward God and wanting to be in God's presence created cracks. Through centuries of walking, of processing toward the altar of God, the people of God, those of faith, who believe in the risen Christ and seek him in the presence of bread and wine, create cracks in the floors from the very weight of their bodies. However, the cracks are not deficiencies because it is our very seeking that causes them.

Furthermore, if we look to the interior reality of the Church, which is founded on the grace of God and of faith, we see the Church as the people of God who are constantly renewed by the celebration of the Lord's Supper. If it is this yearning, this physical walking toward God to be renewed through the Lord's Supper, that creates cracks in the floors of the church or sacred place of worship, then those cracks symbolically represent that need and quest for renewal in God. In this way the cracks are beautiful and only add to the whole of the church, to her true essence. When we begin to see the Church beyond the magisterium and the institution toward the understanding of the Church as the people

of God, then the “Church now appears as the sinful Church of sinners, constantly in need of converting herself to the Lord.”³⁷ It is the very weight of our sinfulness, but also our desire for continual conversion to Christ that creates these organic cracks in the floors. So the idea of our own brokenness, our need to continuously walk toward God, is on one level what the symbol of cracks in sacred spaces represents.

In a parallel way the symbol of the cracks within sacred space represents the inbreaking of the Spirit. If we believe that the Church is guided by the Spirit, that her role in salvation history is ultimately not up to humanity, but guided by the indwelling of the Spirit in all of us given at Pentecost, then we can see the cracks as a symbol of that Spirit working in the Church and in us. The very fact that the cracks are organic, dynamic, and unpatterned in a structure that is rigid, human made, and planned suggests this working of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit working in us can be seen as the power that calls us to redefine and change, that calls our attention away from ourselves toward something new. The Spirit breaks into humanity like a crack or fissure. It breaks up what we can sometimes try to profess as holy and perfect and redirects our focus back to God through worship and adoration. The times when we as a Church try to turn the focus on ourselves, when we use language of exclusivity as opposed to inclusivity, when we are not open to positive change or the admittance of past mistakes, it is the inbreaking of the Spirit that redirects our focus back on our true role as Church. Ultimately, it is the working of the Spirit within us and the recognition of God’s Spirit as our guiding light in the Church as it was given to the Church through the Risen Christ on Pentecost that we should rely on as our hope and future for the Church. In my art I represent this idea of the Spirit breaking through the cracks as pure colors coming through the layers of paint.

³⁷ Rahner. *Church after Council*, 72.

Breaking through the soft purples and yellows are bright unpredictable colors. Just as we can see the Spirit at work in the Church any time change is made that builds the body of Christ, any time she acts for peace and justice and on the side of righteousness, when she stands for the poor and those who have no voice, any time the Church finds herself standing alone in light of truth, it is truly the Spirit working through her towards those ends. In the same way I wanted to show pure colors breaking into my work through the cracks as a symbolic representation of this pneumatology.

If the cracks are a symbol of the inbreaking of the Spirit, then they also represent change in a place where often change is resisted. If we are open to the working of the Spirit then it will undoubtedly call us out of ourselves, it will call us to take action and create change as the contexts in which we live are constantly changing. As we have said, since the Church is in fact the gathering together of God's people through God's grace, then it is not something to be seen as 'otherworldly' or outside ourselves. It is, in fact, placed within space and time so that it must see itself in light of its historical context. The Church is called to change in light of the working of the Spirit within her as well as in response to historical change. In time, as we find new insights into our call to be Christians, the Church is then called to change in light of those insights if they reveal truth and build the Body of Christ.

We can see an example of this in the changes that the Church made in the Second Vatican Council. Rahner cites that "if we carefully review all sixteen of the Second Vatican Council's constitutions, decrees, and declarations, it was concerned mainly with the Church."³⁸ It was in fact the Church reflecting on her very nature. In this thesis I will not go in depth into the specific constitutions, decrees, and declarations of Vatican II;

³⁸ Ibid., 37.

however, let me give a brief overview to show concretely some of the changes the Church is undergoing in light of the working of the Spirit within her as outlined by Karl Rahner in his book, *The Church After the Council*.

We have already stated that Vatican II was, in many ways, a reflection on the Church's very nature. Pope John XXIII who led the Council called for *aggiornamento* within the Church, the opening the windows to let in the fresh air. In this way, the Church "was not only the subject, but also the object of conciliar pronouncements."³⁹ The fact that the Council mainly concerned itself with ecclesiology shows 'how much man and Church, with all their ability of reflection and all their responsibilities toward others, uncannily consider themselves to be the ultimate problem.'⁴⁰ Rahner states that this is both a fear and a consolation because it causes us to ask ourselves "whether man and the Church are not acting too self-reliantly; and it is a consolation, for we believe that ultimately we find our direction from God."⁴¹ Through this openness to reflection on the Church's very nature, the Church allowed itself to be open to change, to let in a fresh breath of air into her living structure.

Another major reflection to come from Vatican II is the recognition and realization of the presence of the Church in the local community. Rahner states, "In this community Christ himself, his Gospel, his love, and the communion of the faithful are present."⁴² The local community is not to be seen as merely the, "administered dioceses of some religious megalomaniac organization called the Church."⁴³ Quite oppositely, it is the "concreteness of the Church," the very presence of Christ. The idea of the Church 'from

³⁹ Ibid., 38-39.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 40.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 48

⁴³ Ibid.

below' as the presence of Christ follows our understanding of the Church as the People of God, the very believers who constitute Church, and therefore it is within this local community of believers that reside's the Church's "loftiest perfection," for it is here that "the most original religious and theological experiences of the Church will take place."⁴⁴

Furthermore, this Church in the local community is to see itself as the community of love. This is a self-evident fact for the Church has always "known and taught that love of God and love of neighbor are one and the same commandment."⁴⁵ However, it calls for a totally new image of the Church in her relationship to the world. The basis of this new understanding, Rahner states is, "The love of those who are unified and assimilated in Christ in community, even though there is hierarchical differentiation in the community, for the basis of this hierarchy is itself love."⁴⁶ In this way the Church is to see the mission of the Gospel as the center of her goal and mission, which is service to the other in our midst.

In these very concrete changes of the Second Vatican Council we can see the true guidance of the Spirit working and breaking through the structures of the Church. The Church was able to reflect on itself in light of the changing times and realize the importance and necessity of positive change in her structure. For just as cracks that break through the surface of the church floor are inevitable, especially in a structure that has a tendency to resist change, they create something beautiful as they point to the very change that they create. Cracks in sacred spaces symbolically remind us that as the Body of Christ we can never be stagnant and unmoving, but because of our very nature we are called to action in love through the Spirit that dwells within us.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 49.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 67

⁴⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

Symbol from Christological Reflection

The third reflection on the symbol of the cracks came as a result of reflecting specifically on the largest work in the series. The more I looked at the image of the crack and contemplated what it already symbolically represented, the image of the Body of Christ on the cross suddenly formed in my mind's eye. I was amazed at how perfectly it followed the contours of the crack so that the final figure appears to be suspended and formed out of the crack, as if it had been there all along and I, as the artist, was merely the one to pull it from beneath the surface of the rubbing. The implications of the symbol then took on another new meaning for me. To describe the symbolic meaning of this image, of the crucified Christ coming through and formed by the crack, I will use the Transcendental Christology of Rahner in my analysis. However, let me clarify that it is not the symbol that serves to better explain Transcendental Christology, but through the language of Transcendental Christology I will develop the meaning of the symbol so that it is the latter which is used to better explain the former and not the other way around.

Building on what has already been said about possible interpretations of the symbol of cracks within sacred spaces; the addition of a Christ figure lends itself to certain implications. First, since I am approaching this symbol through the language of Transcendental Christology, I shall start my reflection anthropologically. This is to say that it is our experiences that form every act of knowledge and freedom in which man transcends himself and the object of experience. This transcendence is one toward incomprehensible mystery, which we call God.

This is a loaded statement that begs clarification. If we believe that man is a transcendent being in so far as he finds his own orientation and dynamism, "imparted by

God himself toward God's self-communication,"⁴⁷ then it is through personal human experiences, through the stuff of life in which man, "transcends himself and the categorical object towards the incomprehensible mystery, by which the act and object are borne, the mystery which we call God."

In this way, as Rahner states, "Transcendental Christology allows one to search for, and in his search to understand what he has already found in Jesus of Nazareth."⁴⁸ What we are saying here has very specific implications. One is that it refers to the Incarnation, to Christ as the "absolute savior," as "God became Man."⁴⁹ Second is that it appeals to an absolute love of neighbor, in light of the previous statement. As this thesis is narrowly focused, we will only consider these implications mentioned above as they pertain to the symbol we are trying to define, although much more can be said about the implications of Transcendental Christology.

In light of what we have said, which is that an ascending Christology from below starts with human experiences, let us look to the meaning of the symbol in the artwork in reference to this understanding.⁵⁰ One is that the symbol of Christ's Crucifixion transposed onto a cracked or broken surface represents the Incarnation. To say that God became human, that God assumes a human nature as his own, can only be understood as mystery to us. However, the very definition of human nature, Rahner says, is this: "unlimited orientation toward the infinite mystery of fullness is assumed by God as *his own reality*."⁵¹ It is in the person of Jesus Christ, this 'God-Man,' where human nature,

⁴⁷ Rahner, *Foundations*, 208-209.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ For further reading on the development of Rahner's Transcendental Christology and its anthropological starting point refer to chapter 6 of *Foundations*. Also, *A World of Grace* by Leo O' Donovan describes the context and the broad themes of Rahner's Christology in a readable way.

⁵¹ Rahner, *Foundations*, 217.

“has reached the very point towards which it is always moving by virtue of its essence.”⁵²

In this way, through the Incarnation we see Jesus to be “the highest instance of actualization of the essence of human reality, which consists in this: that man is insofar as he abandons himself to the absolute mystery whom we call God.”⁵³ Symbolically speaking God broke into humanity through his own self-communication in Christ, who is the concrete actualization of true human nature, which is to be one of transcendental orientation toward God.

Secondly, this symbol represents the death of Jesus and implies his resurrection which vindicates him as the ‘absolute savior.’ Rahner says that Jesus as the ‘absolute savior’ is, “constantly breaking through them (religious and moral categories) and subsuming them because they have now *been broken through* by a new and real immediacy of God coming from God himself.”⁵⁴ In this way, if we look at the symbol as representing Jesus breaking through all past religious and moral categories like family, marriage, law, the temple etc., then we can see that these do not function as they did in the past as “mediating and representing God,” and neither do current religious and moral categories unless they view themselves only in light of Christ as the ‘absolute savior.’⁵⁵ If this is applied to the Church, then soteriologically speaking, the Church can only be seen as the mediator of salvation in history insofar as she sees herself as the Body of Christ. Furthermore, if the Church represents the Body of Christ and it is us, the People of God who through God’s own self-communication, which is the essence of grace,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 218.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 280.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

constitute this Church, then there follow very concrete implications: specifically our call to absolute love of neighbor.

Lastly, it is this absolute love of neighbor that this symbol represents. As Christians we recognize love of God and love of neighbor to be one and the same. Consequently, if the symbol of Christ, as God's complete self-communication, as the ultimate reality of human nature, through his death and resurrection in history, represents the greatest love humanly possible, then radical love of neighbor is, "the actualization of Christian existence in an absolute sense."⁵⁶ Rahner states beautifully that, "true love is not individualistic and exclusive, but rather that with all of its necessary concreteness it is always ready to encompass everything." And conversely, "love for everything must always become concrete in the love of a concrete individual."⁵⁷ Therefore, the symbol of Jesus breaking into humanity, crucified, represents the greatest love possible and calls us to that same dynamic love of other in a very concrete way.

Hermeneutics of Art

So far we have developed an understanding of how theological reflection and the lens of theology can be the inspiration toward a symbolic language in art. We have spoken of the symbol of cracks in sacred spaces through ecclesiological reflection and the symbol of the crucifixion of Christ transposed on those cracks through Transcendental Christology. In the next section we will look at the subject from the other side, developing a hermeneutics of symbol and aesthetics through the lens of theology, asking 'what does theology have to say to art, and in particular my own work?

⁵⁶ Ibid., 309.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 296.

In order to develop a hermeneutics of art through the language of theology as it pertains to my own work, it requires from me a detachment from that work. I must be able to look at my own work objectively with as little personal bias or influence as possible, as this would undoubtedly skew what theology has to say to art and specifically my own artwork. I have already discussed my own intentions behind the works in the previous section, so now let us turn to what theology might have to say.

To begin, let us state that since the process of interpretation we are using is the language of theology, we will seek understanding in art through faith. So what does our understanding of faith have to say to the series? We will approach this question by applying Rahner's Transcendental theology to the aesthetic response.

First, if we look at the overall forms in the series they lend themselves to a feeling of cracked or brokenness. Because the paintings are abstractions we cannot speak of formal objects in the works.⁵⁸ Instead we will look to the overall forms of the paintings. This cracked and broken structure engages the viewer in a way that theologically speaking calls one to consider the implications of cracked or brokenness through their own experience. In Richard Viladesau's book, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art*, he builds a case for the claim that all of our everyday sense experience values the use of imagination, and moreover, that the content of these imaginings is "the total horizon of Being, the Absolute."⁵⁹

In this way, if it is human experience that gives us the platform in which we, as oriented toward God, transcend that experience, then we can see art as a recognition of

⁵⁸ Except for the large centerpiece that contains both images from the newspaper on which it was made, and the addition of the figure.

⁵⁹ Richard Viladesau, *Theological Aesthetics: God in Imagination, Beauty, and Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) quoted in Andrew Chignell, "Theological Aesthetics: Book Review" for *Theology Today* vol. 57 no. 4 (Jan 2001), 568.

that transcendence. This is true insofar as art, especially in the symbolist tradition, looks to make comprehensible this awareness of our transcendent nature by trying to represent this understanding in art through symbol.

Furthermore, to return to the specific forms of cracks I hope to say that the viewer, by bringing their own context and experience to the work will be able to view cracks and brokenness in a way that points beyond the actual object toward the elemental meaning.⁶⁰ It is through the emotions raised from an aesthetic response to the work that the elemental meaning of the work is conveyed. Valadesau argues that, “the emotions that characterize aesthetic response to finite objects are so intense that they point beyond any finite or ‘conditioned’ beauty.”⁶¹ I believe that this is the goal, the ‘inner need’ of the artist that Kandinsky was referring to. In his art he tried to create a system where this could be aesthetically accomplished solely through the use of color. I would argue that it is both form and color, working as one, through which the ‘inner need,’ the elemental meaning of art is best expressed. If we agree that art can point beyond our conventional ideas of beauty, then it can expand our image of what beauty is in a finite sense toward infinite beauty. I believe this is the ultimate goal of art. Beyond the subject matter, the artist’s inspiration and goals, the use of historical references, or any other element the artist uses is the viewer’s participation in that artwork and their aesthetic response to it as either transcending their finite idea of beauty toward the infinite, or not.

It is my hope that my artwork calls forth such a response from the viewer. My goal is to convey the emotions of my own soul, the inspiration, awe, and glimpse of

⁶⁰ For further reading on Lonergan’s notion of elemental meaning see Lonergan’s chapter on “Meaning in Art” from *Method in Theology*.

⁶¹ Valadesau, *Theological Aesthetics* from Chignell, 570.

infinite beauty that I experienced and that this could be called forth in the soul of the viewer.

To return to Kandinsky and the three mystical elements that make up this 'inner need' of the artist, I will show how they relate to my own work and how they help to convey the emotions of my own soul to the aesthetic response and the emotions of the viewer. The first is that every artist as a creator has something that calls for expression. For me, it is my faith and my desire to seek understanding of my faith through symbol. It is this desire within me that calls for expression, as it was theological reflection that in fact inspired my work. Second, every artist is impelled to express the spirit of her age. We live in a time of uncertainty and unrest. From terrorism, the war in Iraq and continued fighting in the Middle East, to tsunami and natural disasters, many are questioning, 'where is God in this?' The artist cannot separate herself from this context, but in fact must be impelled to express it through their work in order to better connect to the viewer and therefore make their participation in the artwork that much more authentic. Third, every artist, as a servant of art, has to help the cause of art. Kandinsky says, "Only the third element- that of pure artistry- will remain forever."⁶² This is because as far as the first two elements of style and personality go, they will be appreciated by people of today; however, if art also contains this third element, it might only reach its full understanding centuries later, and only in retrospect.

As far as my own work follows these elements it is my hope that the meaning in my art could be felt by the viewer. First, through the aesthetic language of symbolic form and color, I hope the meaning and reflection that caused my inspiration for expression is felt. This does not mean for my artwork to be successful the viewer will automatically be

⁶² Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual*, 34.

called toward similar reflection, but hopefully through their participation along with their own experiences, they will be called to a similar emotional response which is my ultimate goal.

Secondly, I hope my work is an expression of our age as it pertains to our current socio-political situation and our faithful response to it. This is most exemplified in the largest work. The newspaper it was created on contains images of the Church and the rituals of the Catholic Holy Week, images of war in Iraq, of the Pope in his frailty, of Fidel Castro, among other images that were highlighted in the works so they became a part of the composition and meaning as the figure of Christ in the crucifixion is transposed over them. It is my hope to suggest in all this God is not distant and uncaring, but in fact God suffers with us, through his Son. Moreover, the image of cracks and brokenness can relay transcendent beauty and therefore a sense of transcendent hope for the future.

Art as Method in Theology

In this way I believe art, as it points beyond and transcends our finite understanding of beauty toward the infinite and the Absolute, can be a kind of theology in itself. It is my goal to show that if art does call us out of our own experiences toward a greater understanding of Absolute beauty, then it can be a kind of method in theology. This is especially true if the artist who is concerned with both aesthetics and theology because they will inevitably be connected to the 'inner need' of expression, whose goal then is to evoke that same need in the response of the viewer.

To build on this idea let us look at how art, and the creative process, could be a method of theology in itself. If we set up a method of correlation then we would start by

looking to ask anthropological questions in light of what we experience in our own contexts.⁶³ In my opinion, this is parallel to the artist's call to expression, to her need to express a transcendent reality that evolves and flows from her own experience and the shared experience of others. Insofar as art itself is transcendent, since it beckons the viewer to not look only at the art, but to take it in, to reflect on it, essentially to participate in it, then the artwork itself can be a vehicle for the revelatory answer to the questions that were posed from the start. We know that revelation can only come from God, from the working of the Spirit. However, this revelation comes in very concrete and specific ways. Through symbol and experience, in prayer and through community, essentially in all good things, if we are open to God communicating with us in our lives, we can come to know and better understand God. In this way, art itself can be a very valid theological method in both asking anthropological questions and mediating revelatory answers.

Furthermore, I believe through art we have found one of the most profound vehicles toward understanding faith available to us. While I feel sometimes theology can get stuck in 'wordiness,' insofar as the way in which something is said takes precedence over the meaning of what is being said, the language of art is more direct. John W. Dixon, in his book *Art and the Theological Imagination*, says, "We live in a world not of words but of sights and sounds and weight and surface, and of lines and colours, of stones and textures, of forms and of space. And this world of sensations cannot possibly be described in words, not even in the words of a genius with words."⁶⁴ If it is within this world of sensory experience that we humans come to understand more and more the

⁶³ A complete construction of a method of correlation is best outlined in Paul Tillich's book, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957).

⁶⁴ John W. Dixon, *Art and the Theological Imagination* from Michael Austin, "Art and Religion as Metaphor" in *British Journal of Aesthetics* vol. 35 no. 2 (Apr 1995), 146.

Absolute, then art, as a language made from those experiences looks to penetrate them, revealing meaning and transcending itself along the way toward a greater understanding of the Absolute in our midst. “Thus the making of a work of art is a metaphorical activity- ‘the penetration into the secret life of things’ to find bonds between them.”⁶⁵

Conclusions

This thesis has been an exercise in relating the lens of theology and theological reflection to the lens of aesthetics and its goals. I have approached this subject not as an outsider, but through the interpretation of my own work. In doing so I have found that for the artist who is also called to respond to her understanding of faith I cannot separate those reflections from my work, but in fact it is from those reflections that my work will be influenced.

By showing that it was reflecting theologically on actual experience, the experience of physical cracks in sacred spaces, I was inspired to create art. I like to call this the “ah-hah” moment. When I saw the cracks and brokenness of the tiles within sacred spaces it caused a stirring within me. For whatever reason it was a moment filled with grace and a greater understanding of beauty than I had previously recognized in the already beautiful and holy space. It beckoned me to reflect, to pay closer attention to detail, to really see things again as if for the first time. It is my goal to try to evoke this same “ah-hah” in the viewer who sees my work, but has not necessarily experienced the cracked floors in the same way as I have. In fact, the viewer has not needed to see the actual reference at all, because ultimately it is not the image of the cracks that is

⁶⁵ Michael Austin, “art and Religion as Metaphor” *from British Journal of Aesthetics* vol.35 no. 2 (Apr 1995), 149.

important but the emotional response to them. For this reason I chose to refer to the images symbolically and in an expressionistic way.

Through theological reflection this “ah-hah” experience started to have concrete meaning. It was in fact this reflection that caused me to create art in the first place. Furthermore, I have tried to look at what theology might say to the completed works on an aesthetic level. Since I feel aesthetics and theology can share a similar viewpoint, then the goals of aesthetics and the goals of theology are very similar. I have tried to show this common lens in my own work through the idea of beauty, what it has to say to us, and how we can seek a greater understanding of our faith through beauty. Conversely I look to how our understanding of faith can influence our idea of beauty and what we consider to be beautiful. If this exercise is successful, then I would argue that art itself can be a type of method for theology, for both the artist and the viewer as the work beckons them to contemplation.





