



Tell Out My Soul

Getting Above the Noise

My faith re-formation journey has happened through creating acrylic, ink, and gold leaf canvas paintings of Sunday School stories. They include primary colors in a simplistic, folk-art style. I wanted to depict new interpretations because I was raised in a tradition that made no room for my own curiosity and experience. I was told, "Here's the story, what it means, and what you're supposed to do with it." Anything else was a sin. As I aged, I wanted to look with fresh eyes at a welcoming God. I longed to discover what the Spirit was telling me through Jonah, David and Goliath, and so on. Their all-black silhouettes allow them to represent all genders, nationalities, and cultures. My figures wear gold leaf crowns to represent that we're all made in God's image. I even chose to put a crown on Goliath because he's a child of God too. Every painting includes at least one bright heart to remind the viewer it's all about love, no matter who is represented in the stories and on the canvas.

One painting is of Zaccheus (Luke 19:1-10). He was short and overwhelmed; he couldn't see Jesus and had to climb a tree. Zaccheus was able to get above the noise and was gifted with a new perspective, literally and figuratively. I was trying to express how new viewpoints allow us to hear and see things differently. It's an example of the ways alternative approaches still point to a loving God and not a god who wants to scare us. All perspectives are welcome, even when they may not seem like they're "right" or "acceptable." We all have the love of God inside us and the crown on our heads that mark us as God's beloved, always.

This project let me approach Bible stories in creative ways that were about what I saw and not what I was told to see. It's important to me that all of us experience scripture in healthy, affirming, and welcoming ways. These paintings healed my soul from childhood experiences full of judgment and fear. Now I find so much joy and creative expression in worship and my faith. I hope to offer that same lightness and possibility to other people too. tens.org



Questions for Reflection:

How do you use your creative energies to find your path?



Jason Jansen is grateful to combine his faith with art as he and his wife raise four young children in the Episcopal Church, hoping to inspire awe, wonder, and questions in them as they develop their own relationships with God.



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