



a publication of kirk irwin and sarah kennedy irwin in ministry with Cru and partnering with Friday Arts Project

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## *A day in the life of an arts ministry*

88% of American adults have a "Syncretistic" worldview. 6% have a Biblical worldview\*

*A few vignettes, of a recent experience among those we minister to—please note: some of what is described below may not be for young ears and minds, PG-13.*

Part of our work includes maintaining connection with the greater arts community that encompasses Rock Hill. ZineFest is a day-long "art market" where local artists, or illustrators sell small works of art made by hand—the smallest being a "zine" which is a small magazine that can be sold for as little as \$1. The "fest" is held twice a year. Friday Arts Project has participated in this event since before Covid. Our staffer Brandi has been the touchpoint for these activities and has done a great job. We have become such an important part of the community that the staff of ZineFest makes sure we are a part of it, have saved us tables, even for free - which they did this time around.

Sarah and I attended for the first time a few weeks ago (just before Halloween) and it was an enlightening experience. After walking around the tables to see the creative wares we debriefed. We wanted to write our experience for you so that you know who our audience is.

There were about 50 artist's tables filled with creative pieces for sale but I will describe four.

Behind the first table were two masked individuals. As I perused their work, I observed a woman on the left and what I thought was a man on the right. However, his shirt was unbuttoned clearly showing a bra. Later when I talked with Sarah she thought that person was a woman but then wasn't sure when we looked again—as she observed that women don't usually leave their shirts unbuttoned to the waist.

At the following table the woman behind it was warm and engaging. Her art and booklets were of a cartoon series about her life and clearly showed someone with talent and a grasp on marketing. Sarah talked with her a little as I reached down for one of her pieces. The bookmark I was looking at had a series of four adult cartoon character's severed heads ending with the main character (the artist as a child) holding an axe. As I was staring at it, torn between her skill and the horror of the content, the woman said to me, "Those are the severed heads of family members. It's ok, they are all bad people." It seemed she had grown up in a very severe, religious Christian home—but experienced sexual trauma and even incest there. Sarah told the woman that she was sorry for what she had experienced. Her reply was, "It's ok, I've worked through it and am in a good place now." Later Sarah found out that she is currently married to a woman.

A few tables further down one of the rows we encountered another woman, who was wearing a traditional looking witch's hat. At first I thought she was merely dressed for Halloween. I was mistaken. Sarah began leafing through a mini-zine story from her table. The main character was a witch. I read it over Sarah's shoulder as she turned the pages. In it she described how the witch was invited to a party and had prepared some pumpkin muffins to take. With muffins baked, she traveled to the party on her broom and arrived just on time to a wonderful gathering of her other witch friends. The evening was even better because at the party she got to talk to the warlock she had a crush on. Was she merely writing a children's story or is she an actual witch? I suspect the latter.

Behind the last table were two males—but dressed in very feminine ways. In front of one of them was an illustration of a four-headed, animal-bodied being with several wings. Under the picture was written the word "cherubim". I asked the artist what he based this image on. And he described finding it in an old book from the 15th or 16th century that had religious use. I said, "Oh, you mean like a book of liturgy?" He said, "Yes!" He then pointed to the two words he had placed on either side of the cherubim, which he said was Latin, "Noli Temere"— meaning "Fear Not". He excitedly explained that these were the words the Arch-Angel Gabriel said to Mary, but then angels are different from cherubim." I replied, "And cherubim are different from seraphim." "Yes!", he said. I mentioned I was also interested in these things. But by that time, he seemed to be distracted by others moving around the tables.

As I thought about our time at the ZineFest and processed it with Sarah, two things hit me.

1. There is interest in spiritual things in the art world. I don't know if that translates specifically to Judeo-Christian spirituality, but there is definitely spiritual interest.
2. This spiritual interest is entwined with deeply skewed aspects of humanity in the sexual and occult realms.

There is no doubt our country's history is full of the influence of the Gospel and Judeo-Christian worldview. Sarah and I are beneficiaries of that history—we love Jesus. However, anyone walking down that aisle of tables with us would have been hard pressed to see that influence. For years we have said we are no longer in a Christian (even post-Christian society), but in fact a completely Neo-pagan one.

We are grateful that your giving and prayers allow us to walk down such aisles and engage with our neighbors in our Neo-Pagan society. Please pray that God would use us in the lives of these individuals and people like them to bring Jesus to them. ■

Blessings—

\* American Worldview Inventory 2021-22, G. Barna, Arizona Christian University Press 2022

### *Please Pray*

- » Pray that God would prepare the hearts of those around us. We really want to see people here in our community trust Jesus and we think that is going to happen soon—specifically, you can pray for Mike, Craig and Abby.
- » Download a sign-up form to pray with us for Art Party: <https://bit.ly/Pray-for-Art-Party-2022> Share it with your church small group or Sunday school class and pray for those we encounter during this mini arts festival that we organize every year. The dates for Art Party are November 16-19.

### *Updates*

- » Our Yard: There has been a bit of confusion surrounding this project. Suffice it to say, it has been a difficult process. There will be a delay because some materials needed to finish the project are now on back-order.

★ If you would like to partner with us in ministry, visit our giving page on Cru's website: [www.cru.org/0402593](http://www.cru.org/0402593)

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