

The Murals of Camp Pallatanga

Artist's Interpretation

by Rich Diesslin

As with all theology, interpretation is largely in the eye of the beholder. Similar to theology, it can be argued that the audience really decides what a piece of art means. In this case I thought it would be a useful jumping off point to explain how I view it simply as a reference.



The Aley Mission Team Murals (left 3) painted in June of 2016

There are three murals that we painted which tied into a climbing wall which was painted prior to ours. The idea was to tie into the climbing wall background while still presenting a Gospel story. The main way of *reading* the murals is from right to left along the wall.



The Deep

Starting with the artwork that was already there, I call this “the deep” or “the void” or “the abyss” which essentially the pre-Genesis cosmos. Another way to look at it is God’s pallet, the stuff from which God created the universe. In it we see what looks to us to be chaotic, but God’s spirit is present in all of it - also symbolized by the hints of yellow light dancing in the mix.



Hope

The first mural we added I call “Hope.” Fast forward from pre-religion, through early religion(s) including the formative centuries of the Judaism, to the Birth of Jesus. It is called “hope” because God gives us the one who will give us the proper understanding of God - that of a personal God of love. It is the seed of understanding that moves us from the legalism of an organized religion to the opportunity to love God and love others like God loves us. As Paul would later write, in effect, that love supersedes the law. The yellow light coming from behind the Christmas star represents God’s spirit illuminating our hope. The star’s right beam ties into “The Deep” connecting God’s creation with the coming deeper understanding of God’s love.



Compassion

The second mural I call "Compassion." A smaller step in time than the first, but equally significant. Ironically Jesus, teaching God's love, is put to death by religious leaders who miss the point. Not deterred Jesus is willing to die rather than renounce a loving God. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." -John 15.13. God's spirit is present in the yellow light behind the cross.



Grace

This third mural I call "Grace." The step in time here can be immediately after the cross, or all the way to the present, or the future. The woman standing in the ocean has her arms spread toward the heavens, receiving the dove which represents God's grace. The yellow light has moved to around the woman representing that God's spirit is upon us. God is a loving God, and the grace God extends to us is now what we should bestow on all others. God's kingdom is upon us and it is about love. Just as the ocean reflects the sky above, we are to reflect God's love to the world.

So looking at it still from right to left, it goes from darker to brighter. God's spirit has always been with us, but now it is illuminated in such a way that we should go forth and share God's light with the world!



Grace

Compassion

Hope

The Deep