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# RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES AND THE ARTS

## ARTS IN SOCIETY



SPRING/SUMMER, 1976  
VOL. 13, NO. 1  
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## Arts in Society

Founded in 1958 and published by  
The University of Wisconsin-Extension



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**The First Thanksgiving** by Jennie Browncombe, (detail). Photo courtesy: Pilgrim Society.

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**transition . . .**

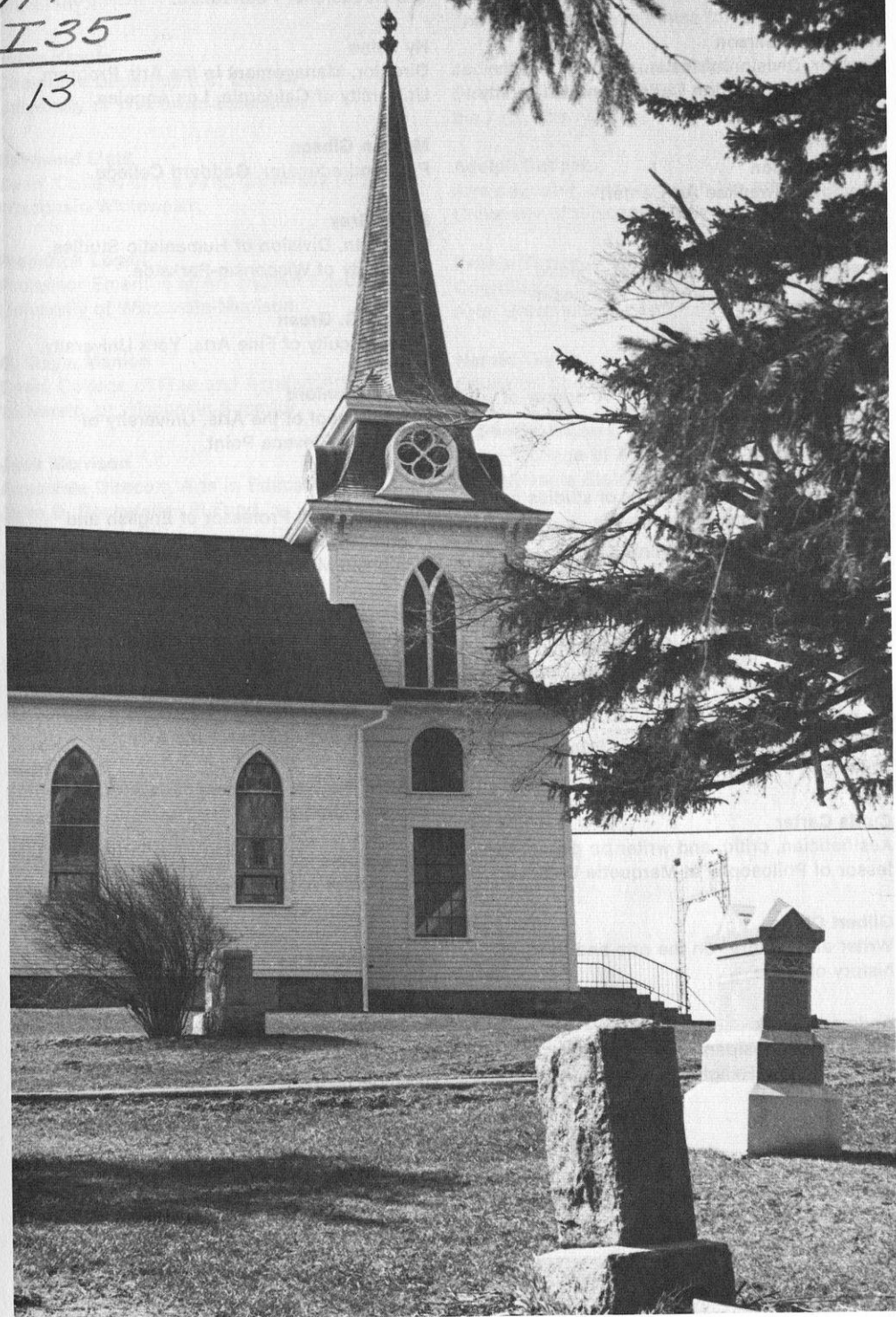
Linda Heddle, who served on the staff of **Arts in Society** for over six years — initially as Circulation Manager and then later also as Art Editor — has recently resigned to pursue further academic studies, and also to undertake some writing projects. Her contributions have been immeasurable, and they have been made to virtually all areas of production and editorial development. Notable among them have been: a dramatic increase in subscriptions; the inauguration of our project for the development and sale of Instructional Resource Packages; a more focused and cohesive delineation of design in the planning and creation of our issues; and the successful effort to build the now-vigorous statewide Wisconsin Women in the Arts (as well as laying a groundwork for a nationally projected organization). Without doubt these have left an indelible mark of augmented vigor, for which we cannot thank her enough.

With this issue, Judy Grant joins us as Art Editor, with responsibility also for development of associated projects relating to radio, television, and film. She has an impressively rich background — as a designer, as an initiator of a variety of experimental intermedia projects, as a film and television producer and director, as a teacher, and as an all-around interdisciplinary specialist and leader in the arts. Appropriately, her MFA, earned on the UW-Madison campus, embraced advanced creative work in theatre, dance, film, and the visual arts. She does, in fact, seem tailor-made for **Arts in Society**, and we warmly welcome her.

Photograph by J. Moldenhauer.



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 כְּצַפְרִים עֲפוֹת כִּן יִגֹּן יְהוֹנָה צְבָאוֹת לְיְרוּשָׁלַם  
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יְשׁוּבוּ לְאִשֶׁר הָעַמִּיקוּ סָרָה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִמָּאֵסוּ  
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 וְנִפְלְ אֲשׁוּר בְּתָרַב לֹא-אִישׁ וְחָת לֹא-אָדָם תֵּאכְלֵנוּ

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## Prefatory Note

Late in 1972 Grant Spradling, Consultant in the Arts to the Division of Higher Education and AMA of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, and Edward Kamarck, Editor, **Arts in Society**, began discussing the need for greater articulation of the relationships between the religious communities and the arts.

After the Religious Communities for the Arts had been formed and a series of consultations on this relationship planned, the Johnson Foundation of Racine, Wisconsin made possible a consultation at Wingspread in April of 1975. Dr. Theodore Gill was asked to write a paper on arts and the religious communities, which was circulated prior to the consultation to all participants. Five participants were asked to respond (formally) to Professor Gill's paper. His paper, his own comments on the paper, the formal and informal responses of the other consultants provided the basis for this issue of **Arts in Society**. Five papers follow that were prepared for other Religious Communities for the Arts consultations. And, finally, there appears an article by Curtis Carter written independently of the RCA consultation process.

While the responsibility for the editorial judgements in this issue must remain mine, I want to thank Anderson Clark, Wesley Hotchkiss and others for their valuable editorial suggestions, Edward Kamarck for his patience and fortitude in seeing this project through from conversations at Wingspread to words and pictures on paper. Particular credit must go to Grant Spradling for his overall guidance of the editorial process and the material he has gathered and edited for this issue.

All of the consultants are grateful to Leslie Paffrath, Rita Goodman and Kay Mauer for their hospitality at Wingspread and to Richard Aleguas and staff of the Religious Communities for the Arts for their efforts in seeing to the many arrangements necessary to this consultation.

Guest Editor  
James Buell



Jay Buell. Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

## The Religious Communities for the Arts

Affirming the aesthetic dimension as essential for wholeness of life, the Religious Communities for the Arts (RCA) calls the religious communities of the nation to support the arts because of the singular contribution the arts make to human meaning and values. Formally known as The Religious Communities, the Arts and the American Revolution and referred to as RCAAR, the Religious Communities for the Arts has held five national consultations on the common cause of arts and the religious communities, administers a major art exhibit touring the country for two years and produces a nationwide syndicated radio program.

Early in 1971 a group of church and arts leaders—primarily United Church Board for Homeland Ministries (UCBHM) staff, United Presbyterian clergy and officers of Affiliate Artists, Inc.—began to explore the common ground between the religious communities and the arts as the nation approached its Bicentennial. It immediately became apparent that while the Bicentennial was a fitting occasion for this exploration, the exploration between the arts and the religious committees would go on long after the Bicentennial celebrations were over.

In November 1972, Anderson Clark, Senior Vice President, Affiliate Artists, Inc., and an United Presbyterian clergyman, convened an ad hoc group to meet with Walter Anderson, Director, Music Program, National Endowment for the Arts. As a consequence of these explorations, a grant was sought from the NEA and ultimately received for a consultation to “discuss programs and procedures through which the American religious communities can more extensively support the development of the arts in the American society. . . .” The grant application went on to state, “The religious community has a vested interest in the quality of the arts in the society both for its own life’s sake and because of its extensive participation in the human and social values the artist expresses.”

In February 1973, Grant Spradling and I met together in St. Paul, Minnesota to discuss

holding the consultation there. Subsequently, the church of which I am pastor—House of Hope Presbyterian Church—in St. Paul and the UCBHM provided the matching funds to the National Endowment grant, and the first Religious Communities for the Arts consultation was held in October, 1974.

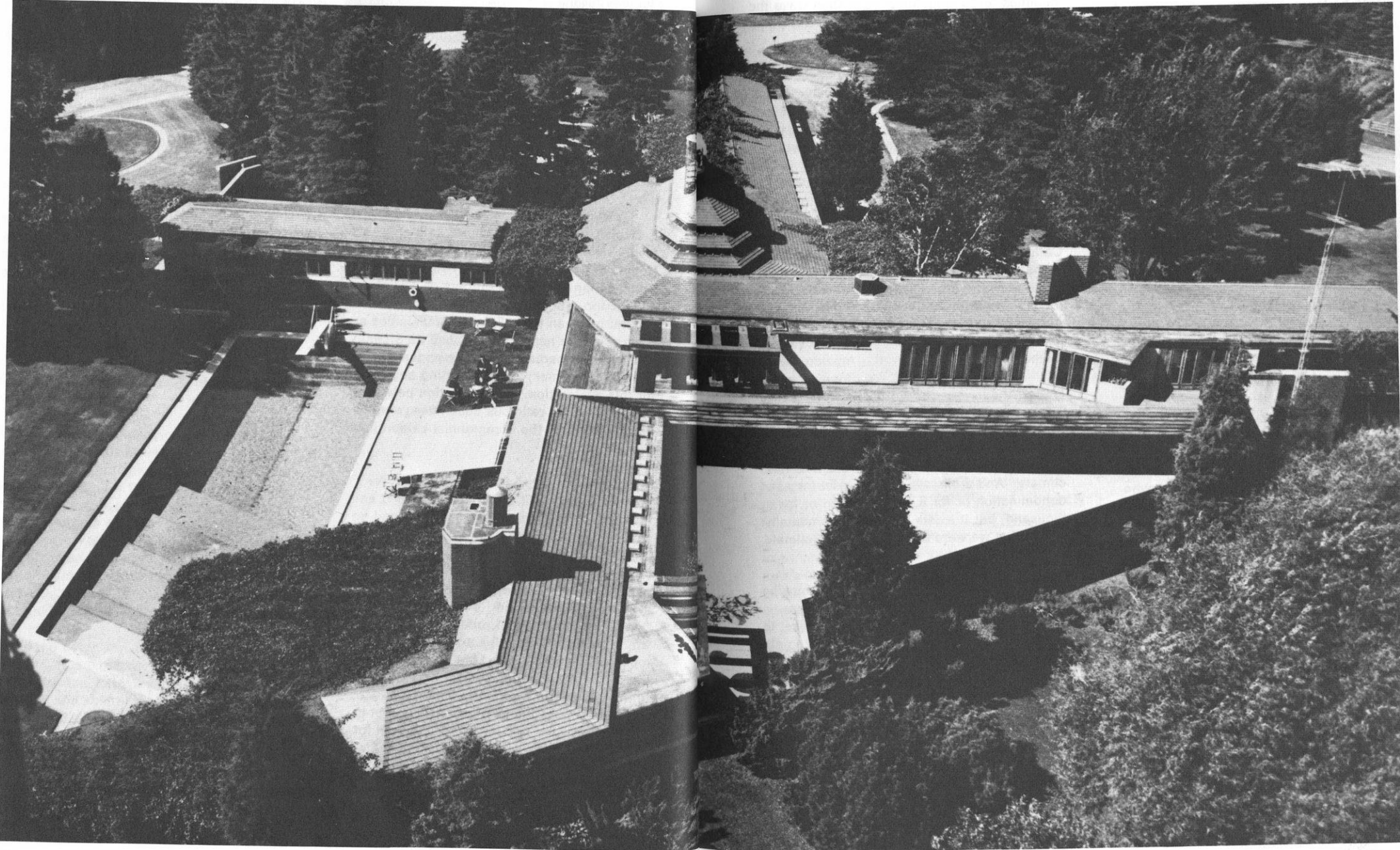
The Religious Communities, the Arts and the American Revolution (RCAAR) was incorporated in December 1973. We have recently begun using the more simplified name—the Religious Communities for the Arts.

Some may puzzle over that name. The “for” was chosen deliberately to indicate our firm belief that in this time and for some time to come the religious communities need to be strong advocates for the arts and that this necessity grows out of their very nature as religious communities. A discussion of why we elected to be “religious communities” rather than “religious institutions” or “churches and synagogues” opened the Wingspread consultation.

Calvin Didier, President  
Religious Communities for the Arts



# The Wingspread Consultation





# The Naming of Things

**Ray Scott:** I'm curious about what your definition of the "religious communities" is.

**Grant Spradling:** "Religious communities" would be those communities or groups of people who identify with some faith commitment. We are not specifically speaking of Christian institutions, for example. We are speaking of many Christian communities and institutions but of other faiths, too. We spoke of the "religious community" rather than "religion"—although we are concerned about the dialogue between "religion" and the arts—but we focussed on the religious communities: what does this group of people, who identify with a particular faith commitment—what is their common cause with artists?

**Ray Scott:** Are you talking about the structured church or religious organizations?

**Grant Spradling:** I think we are talking about churches or ecclesiastical bodies rather than some religious-related organization. We are talking about people, about the faith group rather than some of their agencies.

**Calvin Didier:** It may be even simpler than that in one sense. Its origins are with certain religious communities but without any concept of exclusivity; then it just broadens and broadens so that I think that anyone who would include themselves within the concept of religious communities can well be included within that. For instance, in St. Paul at our first consultation, the invitations were not based upon any quota system. There were many people who would be included in the religious communities who did not think of themselves as particularly religious. So it wasn't limiting. Perhaps it was to identify our-

selves historically from the standpoint of the origins in the American Revolution. But the whole impetus was in thinking that the religious communities as such had a part, an enormous part, in the whole propulsion of the American Revolution in many ways, politically, culturally and in just the power to exist. In those senses we felt it was incumbent upon those of us who work in the religious communities to do something more than wave the flag and beat the Bible at this particular point in history.

**Ray Scott:** My question is simply based on the selection of the word "communities."

**Calvin Didier:** Communities identifies us—it's necessary to try to find something to put your finger on.

**James Buell:** The expression "religious communities," does cause some practical problems. I was talking to a rather sheltered Catholic about our organization. He said, "What are you trying to do?" I told him the purpose of the organization is to elicit support for the arts from the religious communities. And he said that shouldn't be so difficult. You just go around to each one and speak to the Mother Superior!

**Walter Anderson:** Certain things were realized—overtly or otherwise—in the way we came together. We came to select the term community because we were thinking of the end product as one that would represent a climate. And a climate doesn't exist for a denomination or for a certain group or for a thousand, but it exists for a total community. I think that we were looking toward a climate of mutual support.

I believe in our early quests we were thinking of some of the needs of the religious community to benefit *from* the arts and not just to give support *to* the arts. I think in looking at the organization which this group has taken through the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries is an indication of how freely we were thinking. In this organization (RCAAR) we have minimal structures through which we work; however, we had in the UCBHM a fiscal agent which means we were able to organize the first consultation and our other early activities without going through a succession of highly formalized church officials as related to a given denomination. □

# Art and Ethics: Some Practical Considerations

by Theodore Gill

In 1799 Friedrich Schleiermacher published his Discourses on Religion Addressed to its Cultivated Despisers (*Über die Religion; Reden an die Gebildeten unter ihren Verachtern*). The *Reden* were the young chaplain-theologian's appeal to the reigning rationalists of his time, asking them to look again at the religion they had so justifiably denied any place in their thinking. He, though a churchman, would reject such religion, too. But would he then have rejected *religion*: is there not more to the whole phenomenon, or, may not the phenomenon be quite other than has been assumed by too many for too long a time?

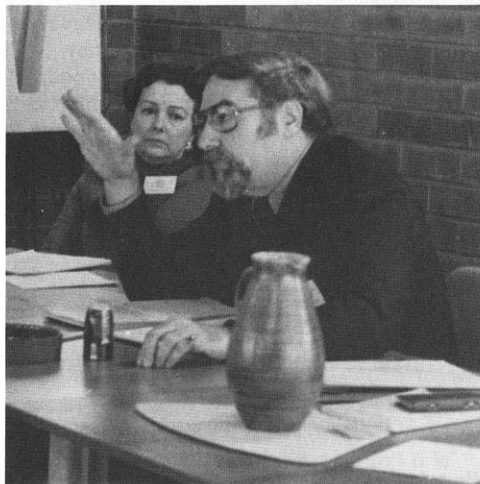
"In these essays Schleiermacher meets the Rationalist objector on his own ground," crowns his contemporary, R. A. Vaughn, enthusiasm fluttering his admirably scholarly British phlegm. "In what aspect, he asks, have you considered religion that you so despise it? Have you looked on its outward manifestations only? These the peculiarities of any age or a nation may modify. You should have looked deeper. That which constitutes the religion's *life* has escaped you. Your criticism has dissected a dead creed. That scalpel will never detect a soul. . . ." (*Essays and Remains*, Vol. 1, p. 61)

In some way, this paper and colloquium are a reach for some reverse *Reden*: for the materials, at least, from which discourses could later be addressed to the religious despisers of a certain cultivation. Or, if that is too indistinct, to the ethical planners and movers who are suspicious of the arts, don't quite know what to do about the arts, worry about the arts' deflecting our attentions from the world's epidemic ills.

Our aim is flatly practical and terribly serious. What do we say to such people? What do we say, not to score debating points, not to justify ourselves, but to correlate these two activisms? We who meet at Wingspread are assembled by an organization which seeks

*Gill was given the opportunity to reflect on his own paper first. In this column, we have those comments.*

**The first question that I would ask if I were reviewing this thing is why he begins with that bristling thicket of German jabber strung across the page. It's like a dam across the source end of what turned out to be a meandering stream, but was a stream.**



Ted Gill. All photos in this article are courtesy of The Johnson Foundation.

**The point, I hope, is an acute one that we can turn the *Reden* around now days—or hope we can turn it around—and find reason for addressing ourselves as people of a certain cultivation. To the religious despisers of that type of cultivation.**

**I am, or was, educated to be a theologian. I was identified with the religious communities of this country and I guess of the world through the World Council of Churches. All that time, personally and temperamentally, a big part of the vitality of my existence was**

personally and socially productive conjunctions between “the American Religious Communities” and “the Arts.” The organization itself is largely peopled by religionists for whom the arts are personally fulfilling, to whom the arts have been marvelously suggestive in the understanding and interpretation of their religion, and in whom there lives a certainty that the arts are powerfully related to the shaping and refining of our individual and community life (in these Bicentennial years, read “national” for “community”).

But how to detail that certainty? We in RCAAR are surrounded by church colleagues, comrades in earlier strenuous campaigns for the various missing righteousnesses, erstwhile comrades who continue their grim crusades and redemptions, saddened by what they regard as our defection to a gaudy peripheral cause. While we, sure that we are as bent as ever on ransoming the time, grope for words to show that allegiance with the arts is no dabbling at the edge of events, but is an engagement of moral power and promise. The exercise at Wingspread is a part of that groping. Not to prove the arts—the arts prove themselves or they don’t, that is the whole possibility—but to indicate how the artistic enterprise, completely justified in its own creations, is also intricately and inseparably knotted into the ethical program and prospect for now.

We can paraphrase those Schleiermacher/Vaughan questions, turning them on our questioners: “In what aspect have you considered art, that you so despise it? Have you looked at its outward manifestations only? These the peculiarities of an age or a nation may modify. You should look deeper. . . .” But we will best meet the objectors on their own ground if we can locate issues in private and in public life where ethical and aesthetic instinct, passion, and activity already intersect. That, at least, is the tack taken in this paper. There is no elegance in the compiling of such intersections. What follows is a helter-skelter of one man’s observations. Much has been missed, much may be mistaken: hence the colloquium. But throughout, the writing is after what it is hoped the talk will capture, too—specific areas of practical moment in which ethical and aesthetic elements, whether recognized as such or not, are already fused, so that to talk about or to activate one is to involve the other, necessarily.

**drawn from the arts. As many ministers are, I am a frustrated artist. A lot of ministers have every thing in the world to be really great artists—all the sensitivities, all the perceptions, all the proportion and balance, all in the world we lack is talent. And so we become ministers. The religious substance that I lived on has always come to me somehow or other in aesthetic cast.**

**I’ve gone to the barricades my share of times. My colleagues now look at me, and I know they do because they tell me so, as some kind of backslider, because I’ve become more and more involved professionally now with the arts, as if this were some kind of betrayal.**

**All of us are congenitally religious; when we think we’ve spotted something like that we want to talk about it.**

**How do you locate, identify and communicate this sibling relationship between art and religion, so often a sibling rivalry but all the more poignant because it is a sibling rivalry and not a political one.**

**I wanted practicality and that’s why I make snide little allusions to artists and critics and so forth who love to get together on occasions like this and say things of such sophistication and such nuance, such wowf, such delicate essences on the air turning ideas into perfumes so that we can all inhale and just get the wimwams. Forget that and consider a few people who are really trying to make a point.**

I do not know where this check list of arts/ethics concurrences might have begun, had I not come directly from breakfast table and the *New York Times* this day to writing desk. The Op Ed page this morning (3/6/75) is dominated by an anguished communication from Mstislav Rostropovich, master cellist/conductor, who wrote also for his wife, Galina Vichnevskaia, leading soprano in the world's major opera houses. Days before, the same page had carried a rebuke by Igor Shaferevich, mathematician, writing from Russia to chide the Rostropovich family for leaving the Soviet Union to spend several years performing abroad. Professor Shaferevich, veteran of that kind of political protest which is now widely familiar but perhaps especially perilous in the U.S.S.R., thought he knew well the standard legal limitations the Russian government had thrown around the homeland careers of his musical friends, but he knew even more certainly that other scholar friends, equally repressed by the state, were sticking it out at home anyway, helping to keep a critical witness alive, giving to other resisters the comfort and courage of their presence.

The Russians' argument is not my point, here. Though there is terrible poignancy in the cellist's retort—he and his wife are interpretive, re-creating artists. Unless they are actually interpreting, re-creating music, out loud, before listeners, they have no art. When the government cancelled both performances and recordings for them, they were dead as artists. So they had to come out to live. Otherwise, silenced, suspect, losing public stature daily because they were no longer alive as artists (and it was that fugitive artistic prestige which gave to their political witness whatever special weight it had), they could look forward only to some distant day when, dying, the long-silent cellist might murmur, "Ah, how I could have played that work!" Vichnevskaia, with the briefer performing span of a vocalist, would have had to confess to herself that emptiness years earlier. Or is the Russian's argument exactly my first point? The standard activist, attentions fixed still on the standard political-economic elements in the ethical issue, patterning his counsel on the usual protest, misses just those artistic considerations which give the Rostropoviches' situation its special pathos, even horror, and their departure from Russia its unique testimonial power. Because of an aesthetic blind spot, the routine moralist has missed the real ethical issue.



**That's why I've appealed to the arts representatives here. That's why I should have started with the *Times*. I did, once I got through all that German junk, get out the *New York Times*. I could have hung it all on the bones of the *New York Times*, of repeated references, because it is currency and it is practical. And I'd like to keep us always talking about an extant reality.**

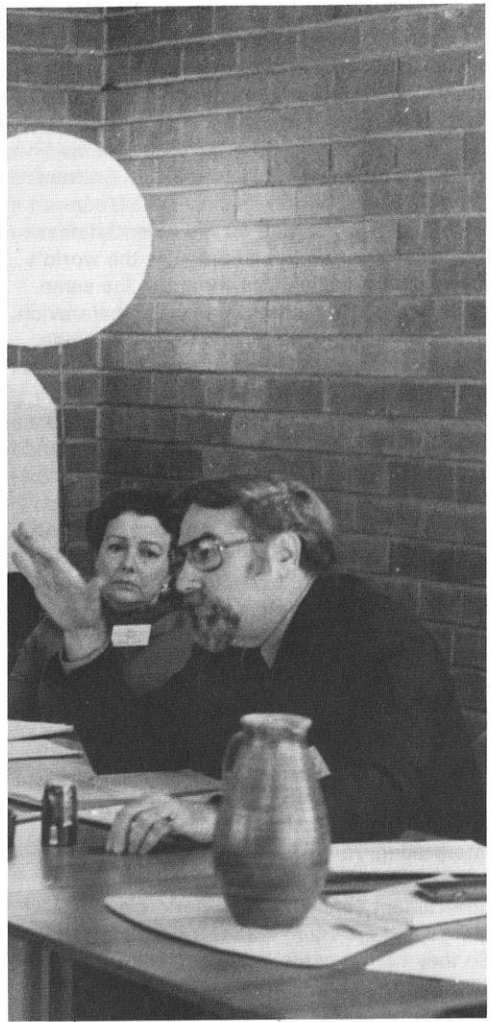
**I think the business about the artist being involved in moral issues and ethical issues whether we noticed it or not is utterly obvious, inarguable, and it doesn't take much to establish that. That seems to me simply an observation.**

On the same Op Ed page this day, William Safire unexpectedly opens his "Essay" with, "Americans may be the only people who fail to see the importance of poetry in politics." By which he means more than the obvious—other peoples suppress seditious poetry and enlist artists in huckstering for the state. Instead, Mr. Safire means that politicians—and, I would add, all those whose professed aim is the commonwealth—cannot any longer be sensitive to the terms and shapes of social health without being sensitive to the arts and artists and *their* sensitivity to the actual "yearnings and uncertain freedoms of this generation" (Safire).

The columnist, today, had our extraordinary group of women poets especially in mind—Sexton, Levertov, Wakowski, Rich, Angelou, Giovanni, Piercy, Jong. "For students of politics the significance of the poetry (of this group) is in the absence of political or racial protest, which has permeated so much of the poetry of the past. Like the varied carols of the folk singers (Carole King, Carly Simon), the message . . . flows from an awareness of their liberation. . . . Their message is mainly inward and affirmative, rather than outward and angry, or upward and fearful. The protest, when it appears, is social rather than political. . . . Rebellion is directed at the way we live and not so much at the way we govern ourselves."

I know, I know. It does my point no good that the provenance of Mr. Safire's opinions is what it is; it is all too handy, this interpretation of the poets which so suits his usual disdain for others given to too close "attention to the way we govern ourselves." Even so, we can stand with him in his tactical conclusions: "If the young poets are singing what most of their contemporaries are thinking, then aspiring political leaders would do well to push aside conventional polls and tune themselves in. Instead of dealing exclusively with energy, environmental policy, unemployment, inflation trade-offs and services vs. taxes arguments, political leaders will have to find a wavelength that concerns itself with respect for individuality, the glorification of privacy, the resentment toward society's standard imposition. . . . The social protest of the young women poets is a political fact, ignored by politicians at their peril."

It is a double point this morning's Op Ed page





makes, the duplicity making our single point for us. One, aesthetic elements are now a large part of important ethical issues, and, two, the arts are an essential source of insight for ethical (including political) formulation and action. That latter is, of course, an updated and vulgarized version of the long familiar recognition of the arts as "mirror" to man or soul or life or state. But the importance of the image is all in its vulgarization, this time. In its political definition the portentousness of the "mirror" simile is shed, its Delphic aura is away; the temptation to concoct and to ramify insights appreciated only by the few who can inhale them—this delight is put on reserve, while moral crusaders and thoughtful politicians are urged to develop both the aesthetic sensitivity and the artist discrimination ("find a wavelength") which are essential now to everyday ethical analyses and to the most briskly practical of political decisions and doings.



## II

Point two rides comfortably on that same loaded back page. The ethical issues in which aesthetic sensitivity and discrimination play large roles, both in diagnosis and in prescriptions, are far huger and more complicated than the one involving the Rostropovich family. There are enormous public issues demanding just such discrimination, for which issues that individual crisis is only a partial symbol.

The perennial issues of social ethics—war and peace, poverty and starvation, racial justice and civil rights—are all still with us, some apparently still or again in ascendance. But we will fault the traditional moralist if he ignores or minimizes the new issues of social ethics crowding in now on the technologically developed nations—all the issues cognate to ecology and conservation, air and water pollution, city planning, wilderness preservation, landmark rescuing. All of these, too, are commanding moral issues. They have to do with the quality of life, with the interest and importance of whatever life we shall be able to defend against its grossest ancient foes. These twentieth century salvaging issues have to do with the health and the chance at happiness of all the people. They are current problems in social ethics, and all morally sensitive people must see them as such.

**A good many of the public ethical issues are now springing in the middle of the aesthetic patch or vice versa.**

What has not been seen by all morally sensitive people is how aesthetic/artistic these issues fundamentally are. They are certainly social/ethical issues, but they all rise dead-center in the aesthetic field. Or reverse that last ascription—aesthetic issues spang in the middle of the social/ethical plot. No matter how you phrase it, there is no escaping the fact that political action essential to the full life must now deal with questions of aesthetic order, grace and beauty, artistic pasts, presents and futures, the conditions and contributions of design. These are arts' issues—which are also political and economic matters of utmost urgency.

For insistent ethical reasons, then, the morally serious (religionists included) must cultivate the arts. Answers to large public questions now need the artists' participation in their location. Those answers will be found, whether the morally serious rally in time or not. Some are being found right now. Designs and orderings, commissions and organizations and institutions and programs, all of which will give form and content to the life ahead, are being settled on presently. Often this is in the absence of anybody from the old ethical activist cadres, all of them hunkered down still in their politico-economic trenches. And, if they do get to the new socio-aesthetic lines in time to help, they are apt to bring with them an insipidity and sentimentality which they would not permit for a moment in anyone in their own socio-political campaigns.

Hence, as soon as possible, an arts adjacency for all who are actively concerned about the human future. Without that adjacency, decisions of incalculable implication for the structures and style of our existence will continue to be made by people unknown to the old guardians of morality, and unavailable to them. These latter don't even know the language in which the discussions move to independent resolutions. So, of course, an arts adjacency for them. What ethical activists, religious or not, have to gain from an association with the arts is that sensitizing of the aesthetic antennae, that informing of taste, that enlargement of sensibility, that practice in appreciation and discrimination on which will depend the usefulness of their judgement and action in large moral fields.

**But meanwhile coming right up along side of them are the new issues and my point was that a great many of those are one way or another aesthetic issues, they have aesthetic elements in them which have not been noticed by the politicians, the behavioral scientists who set themselves up to solve all of our problems.**

**Do we always have to be overwhelmed by new movements, even when we can see them coming so clearly? Thinking back to a slightly earlier crisis, the crisis in civil rights, where apparently whole churches, whole denominations, at least whole congregations simply weren't ready for the crisis when it came, in spite of generations of dedicated preachers pouring out their golden hearts with silver tongue. . . . When it suddenly came, nobody was ready. What are you doing marching there in Baltimore?**

**This extraordinary new wave of arts and aesthetics interest and activity is going to crest, you know. To be able not just to ride it, but somehow to use the enormous energies that there will be; instead of letting it crack down on us and destroy us, inundate us, leave us floundering for another few decades. Why not begin to contemplate that, which I think this whole meeting is a part of?**

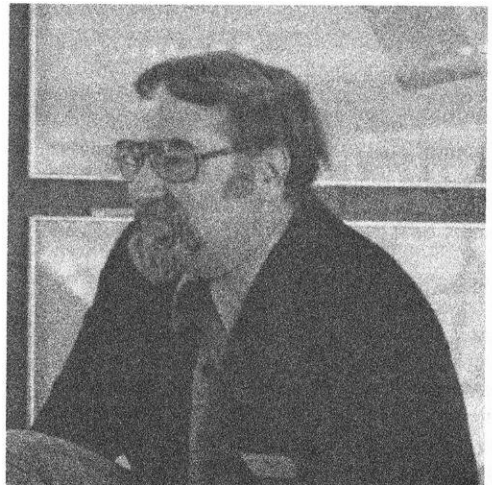
And, while we are on the subject of fields of moral/aesthetic action not yet clearly seen as such by enough of our agents of social reform, let me add some even less discernible sociological developments, in handling which, moral and aesthetic judgments will even more be one judgment.

Consider the long-term moral significance of an over-populated world. Not the short-term moral significance, now; not the feeding, clothing, housing problems, not the population control arguments—all crucial, moral issues, but all necessarily short-term if there is to be any future worth thinking about. No, consider *the* problem of long-term moral significance in the human densities projected for the globe: the problem of authority, which means the problem of freedom, which means the possibility of truly human being.

In the swollen billions ahead, we being who we are, there is going to be an always larger apparatus of government. With close proximities laying very strenuous levy on the slender grace that is in us and, at the same time, exacerbating sorely all that has been rough between us even in looser days, authority will have to be felt as an ever closer and heavier hand. To stay alive at all, we will get used to civic forms in which there is very little political play.

Political innovation or adventuring, even very strenuous criticism of the political institution which contrives and patrols the careful balance that sustains life, will not be permitted. And will not be wanted, for on so interdependent a globe, restlessness anywhere could threaten the existence of tens of millions of people, who might be nowhere near the incident itself. When inadvertent genocide is the operative sanction, moralists will see a continuation of earlier activisms as murderously mischievous, and will settle for delicately attempted, subtle adjustments in the status quo—and seek out new fields for the heartier exercise of human freedom.

Less surrealistic, because already more familiar, but a part of exactly the same development can be seen now shaping up in the economic ordering of life on Earth. Suddenly all the decades-old talk about universal history, interlocking technologies, interpenetrat-



ing cultures, finite resources, etc., is about us and is about now. We learn the hard way that what affects any of us, say in economics, now affects all of us. Suddenly it is not just a physical law that pressure applied anywhere on a sealed liquid is transmitted equally and immediately to all other parts of the sphere. That is economic law, too, nowadays. Which means that the viability of the human community depends upon the world's finding among the current economic options or beyond them, that philosophy or order which the world can live with, and which—it can be hoped, will give maximal satisfaction and freedom to all.

But, again, as in the case of political freedoms in the nicely balanced state orders which will maintain the world's dense life, so the freedoms which may be secured in the fairest possible economic structure for the future will not include much freedom to alter economics. And, hard as it is to believe in this age of economic rambunctiousness, we will not finally regret that limitation of choice in an area where, considering what is at stake, almost any change will come to be seen as license, recklessness with the common good. To preserve the species, we will come to satisfy our economic creativities with cautious, controlled tinkering with the order that does keep everyone alive. Heroics in this field would be mass murderous; heroism will feature prodigies of restraint. And we will seek out other fields for more exuberant testings of human freedom.

Once, more, still in the area of sociological futurities, consider the long-term moral significance of the development of leisure in the world. A very ragged development, that—more in some places than in others, some a result of technological replacement of manpower, some (unemployment) a result of displacement within the technology. But whatever its occasion or location, all of it asking stentoriously the same moral question. What happens to life gone suddenly slack? What happens to the forms of personality and morality developed to contain solidities of vocation, heavy and important with the daily decisions demanded and responsibilities assigned? What happens to the quality of existence when, for whatever reason, it is slowly drained of or suddenly denied or early retired from the work that once filled it? There is general rejoicing when machinery takes over the routine, mindless drudgery of people. But what happens to character when





one of the most ancient demands upon our deciding and responding capacities is just not there as it was? Only a few are cold-blooded enough to ask a dismantling of the machine that is eviscerating time for us. At the moment, that would swiftly destroy some billions of people whose existence, often bare subsistence, depends completely on the machine's hypoing of nature. No, we will accept our leisure, working as we can at its evener distribution, and seeking other arenas than work for more interesting exercises of our freedom than most work has given us for a long, long time, anyway.

This has been a long and impressionistic peek into the impenetrable. It would be good to live long enough to know how wrong the prognostication is. Surely, though, two basics are right. *The* moral issues we must not wait to confront are Space and Time—too little space, and too much time. And those physical-mathematical elements become moral issues because human beings are essentially choosers. My ability and right and chance to choose is one way at least to describe my humanity. Moral meaning for your life depends upon some significance remaining to your own decisions. So what becomes of our humanity when some of the widest, longest occupied fields of our freedom (politics, economics, jobs) are necessarily closer hedged, or when some of the areas where our freedom has been most vigorously exercised just aren't there in the same way any more?

Evidence mounts that people are not waiting for scholars or moralists to suggest in what unnoticed or forgotten or previously skimped sectors of the human enterprise, imagination and initiative will always have freedom to assert themselves. It is almost as if we knew in our bones what we do not yet know in our heads—as if premonitory seismic shudders in our society were registering on our cellular jellies, even before the cataclysm throws our nerve-needle clean off the scale. Hard facts, like the commercial statistics of the day, prove that increasing numbers of us are turning to the arts (and to athletics, games, travel—all, for me, in one rubric with the arts), some of us learning a new appreciation, others hazarding creation and participation themselves, but all instinctively acting to preserve their humanity by pouring themselves into activities where a wide new awareness is required, where significant choice is left to them, where the indi-

**Whatever else we forget that we learned from the existentialists, this we will never forget—that what makes being human is its capacity to choose, to decide. Human beings are deciders and choosers.**

**What I see ahead is a time when the reality of a human being is going to depend upon our expertise in the arts, our handiness, our ability to live, not just freely but with some frolic in the area which we now call aesthetic and artistic.**

**So with a very hard-nosed Protestant, puritan work ethic operating in me, by God, we've got to be able to reconnoiter, and move and live in the fields of the arts where our humanity may at last have its chance of existence. I have to add athletics and games to this area too you see, because those are the places also. And I do think that they both are aesthetic phenomena some way or other. Where the participant's choice determines everything. We're going to be desperate for those areas.**

vidual's making or doing or observing is exactly what it is all about, where their decisions either in creating or appreciating (which is, it goes without saying, a kind of focusing, choosing, deciding) are what the field is for.

*This morning's Times (3/27/75)* carries word from Klaus Harpprecht (via Flora Lewis), a West German writer and social philosopher, germane to my already over-long plea to our social ethicists to include the arts in their moral analyses and prescriptions. Herr Harpprecht, too, is addressing the problem of "the eternal human urge" to do, to create, to achieve, in a finite earth with finite resources: ". . . growth can be continued, but it will have to be quite a different kind for societies that have already managed to produce enough for basic needs. There is a switch to be made from material growth, the production and consumption of more and more things, to a growth in services. Schools, hospitals, cultural facilities, sports, all the things that make life more pleasant and enjoyable without actually using up more goods. That's a kind of growth that can still be supported by scarce resources and at the same time serve to support a high level of economic activity. The choice isn't whether or not to go all out for prosperity—it's a matter of moving to another kind of consumption." Not quite on, but in the area.

Where people go to preserve their humanity, to flex in freedom the powers that mark them as human, there religion and morality go, too; because men and women and their powers and their freedom are religion's and morality's concern. So they must turn to the arts, if not long before the crowd gets there, it is hoped not too long after.

#### IV

But back, now, from such far reaches, we have more to attend on that *Times* page with which we began. The Rostropovich incident has further immediate instruction for those who have not yet noticed the large new aesthetic component in the ethical picture. The issue seems a familiar enough one: civil rights, we would call it—rights to utterance ("speech" isn't quite enough, anymore, as even the most traditional moralists, their aesthetic perception generally fixated at the rhetorical level, must begin to appreciate), rights to play and sing, rights to perform,

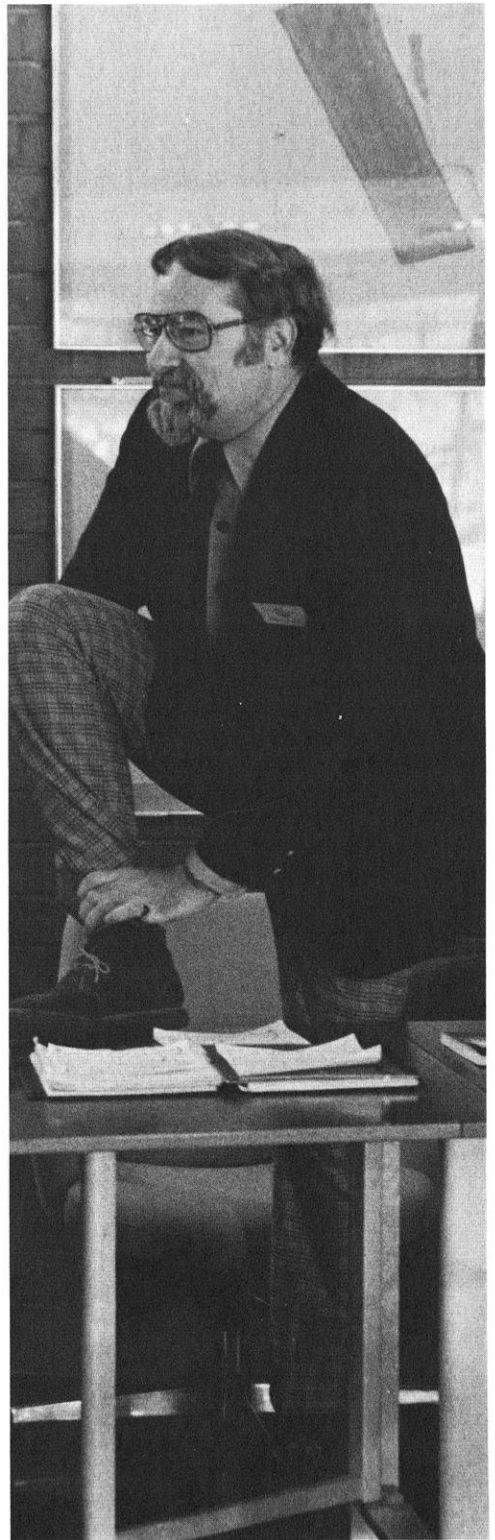
**To my Aunt Effie, the card table was anathema if you're a Christian. As a matter of fact, when she became a Christian—dear Aunt Effie, she was born a Presbyterian, but somewhere along the way she got next to somebody who was full of the fire so she was reborn. And she had to go to her bridge club and tell them that alas, now that she was a Christian, she couldn't play cards. And the other three women looked at her and said, "Effie, we could have told you that, the way *you* play cards."**

**Just think what reorganization this will take in your preaching. Cards could become that little square, that hour or two could become the arena for your humanity because everything there depends upon what you choose, what happens is totally your decision, your recollections, your knowledge, your intuition, everything is summoned and you're exercised in your humanity. Don't knock it. Of course, it's artificial. We're coming to the day when choosing the right artificiality is exactly what will keep us human. All I'm trying to say is that in this area that may seem less obvious to some. I'm more sure than ever that the arts broadly defined do have to do with our salvation.**

rights to work, rights to movement. The usual econo-politico-legal analysis and prescription suffices to locate the problem (even if, as this paper tries to observe above, that analysis misses the most poignant reality and hence the profoundest moral issue involved) and to suggest action, even if it be no more than protest.

There is more to the incident than that, though, which those who wonder about any fundamental relationship between the arts and ethics simply must attend. Look again at those principals. Rostropovich is a cellist/ conductor; Vishnevskaya is a soprano. Their trouble began when they sheltered Alexander Solzhenitsyn, who is a novelist. And his trouble surfaced when he would not foreswear Boris Pasternak, who was a poet/playwright/ novelist. Name now, if you can, a recent professional moralist around whom has swirled international storms over ethical issues. Or a reverend moralist from the land of those musicians and poets who has risked himself any time in the last fifty years on a public ethical issue. Who struck for freedom in East Berlin, those years ago when life there was at its most frozen? Who led the attempt in Prague to put a human face on that socialism? Poets, painters, singers, writers, cabaret wits, filmmakers, cartoonists, and the student fans of all those artists, that is who. And those of us who waited anxiously for word of the fate of our clergy friends, waited in vain, even for word of their most peripheral involvement. Who integrated audiences in our own South? Who are integrating them now in South Africa? Ethics departments? Churches? Never. Artists again. Artists and athletes, once more. Increasingly, the aesthetic disciplines are at home at the heart of ethical activity.

If for no other reason, arts and artists *must* now be included in the ethical equation. If professional moralists have managed to miss this so far (and every ethical inquiry, commission, colloquium, task force I know has missed it), colleges and universities haven't. This June, watch your *Newsweek* and *Time* lists of men and women being decorated on the great campuses. From a scattering of artists noted when I began watching the kudos list years ago, last summer's rolls showed about seven out of ten to be artists. The great institutional guardians of human values have sensed who their trustiest co-conspirators are, nor are they by any means all defenders of the



traditional statements of human values.

The claim here is not that artists are invariably "right" on moral issues. The claim is that the arts are an unmissable and undismissible moral litmus, signalling social, moral change on a scale from "climactic" to "crisis" while philosophical-theological-legal-behavioral ethicists are still setting up their questionnaires. Somehow, artists and their testimony and their insight must find serious, systematic place in the ethical calibrations and celebrations now in course. They are not just symbols around whom issues develop and sometimes rage. It is because of the artists' peculiar rootage in reality (ontological, moral, social) that so often now they *are* the issue. There is no reason in the world why textbook moralists should know what artists know. There is every reason why ethical logicians should avail themselves not just of what verbal data can be extracted from the arts, but of the lively unpredictable, essential participation of the artists in ethical deliberation and decision.

That participation goes far beyond the identification and discussion of moral pressure points, too. Among the ethical activists who question the time and attention that some supposedly morally serious people give to the arts, it is not unusual to contrast that aesthetic preoccupation with the activists' own ready occupation of trenches and barricades and any other lines where protest and demand, push come to shove, promise change for the better.

It is a contrast that cannot be documented. The great public demonstrations of our day, some tactically designed and some fairly spontaneous, have swum in an arts sea. At their most availing, these demonstrations have themselves been theater pieces, deliberately exploiting the television cameras, attentive to costume and settings, generating oratory, banners, posters, poetry, song, choreography. Little may have been great art or even fine art, but all of it was of the arts—symbol making, form giving, celebrational expression in all the portable arts media. Nor was this merely the decoration of some solid central action. This arts activity was the action, and that simply has to say something true but not enough noticed about the inextricability of arts/ethics interconnections now.

It is hard in this month of March 1975 for a

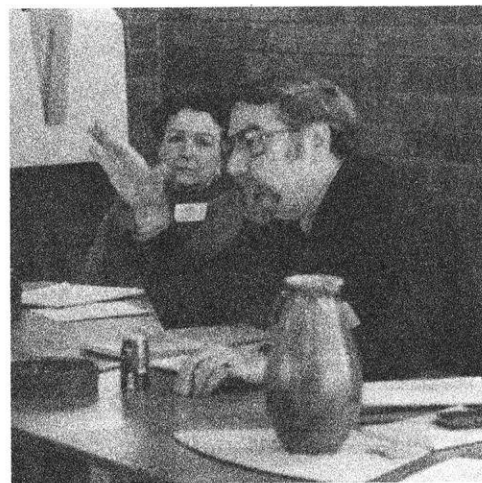




participant in the Selma March—going on, ten years ago, in the days that I write—not to wonder why, with all the attention that has been given that event, no one has yet publicly noted that the Selma March, admittedly a high point in a decade's activism, was a moving festival of the arts. It was sparked by great rhetoric, spontaneous most of it, but superbly artful all of it. We swung forward on song and strong, poetic exhortation, and devised appropriate dialogue for the occasion, and made memorable shapes strung out along the highway to Montgomery, which became full-color images on tens of millions of screens all over the world.

Above all there was the poetry and the style of Martin Luther King. Others knew what he knew about power and moral theory and social statistics and demonstration strategy, but none had his art: that presence, aware of its effect, gauged, controlled by the artist inside and never by the audience; that voice, as knowledgably produced, focused, shaded as is Birgit Nilsson's; that language, Jacobean in its cast, with all the overtones attaching to that; that rhetoric, its rhythms, its magnificent Hebraic parallelisms (and when noting those grand, ancient artists who are the West's prime moralists, do not miss his models, the Old Testament prophets—had anyone ever thought that that germinal ethical literature was preserved by the weight of its ideas alone, and not quite as much by the glory of its song and the powerful, undulant elasticity of its line? If so, think again, and while at it consider the moral monumentality of some of the Greek dramatists. Once, poets and playwrights were the ethical establishment. Whatever happened in between, that now we should have to argue the art/ethics nexus?).

Anyway, moralists bewildered by the lack of direction and drive in the social action of the seventies would do well to consider the leadership role of a fine artist, never perceived apparently as an artist, and therefore never replaced. Just as they should consider the falling away of once committed legions, no longer appealed to on all the levels native to an artist-leader, but untouchable by even very good people with all the right ideas. And just as they should consider the sure drying up of ethical drive endlessly exhorted by logic, argument, statistics and authority, but never supported and renewed by attention to the myth and imagery and music which is the real



soil of decision and action (cf. Plato, in the *Republic*, admitting the vulnerability of the best ideas in the world to that insidious art, music!).

## V.

Specific attention to the systematic relations between religion and the arts will be paid at another time on the RCAAR schedule. But brief note must be given here to twentieth century developments in religious ethics which add to all the other calls for renewal of the arts/ethics bond.

As the closer look at contemporary theology will show, I think the whole movement of theology in this century has been toward a more aesthetic definition of itself (though no first-line theologian has yet made that definition, unequivocally). At its best it has rejected the repetitious parsing of previous phrasings as its legitimate function, and with great imagination and artistry has projected a context, an ultimate, affirmative frame for life and action, the imagery of which context it has clarified and elaborated, drawing on myth, revelation, tradition, and, often, aesthetic insight.

In this reading, religious ethics become a search for the kind of action which is the most grateful possible response to the theological fact of our ultimate affirmation. Religious morality is the quest for a content for life which will be appropriate to and consonant with what we believe its context to be. Religious moralists look for those balanced judgements, those proportionate acts which will bring us and our world more into line with the affirmative will that contains it.

Which means that the religious moralist has to be a kind of artist. The moral life becomes a designing of answers that force themselves, always to bring things as they are closer to what they should be, that is, more appropriate to that circumambient mythic reality. Those who would find and live the good life in this understanding of religious ethics, now have to do with matters of style, quality, balance, proportion, appropriateness, design. And all of those are aesthetic terms, just as adeptness at living with them calls on aesthetic instinct. The language and inquiry and proposals of current ethics are aesthetic. Religious ethics are no longer a juridical discipline, but are an

**Maybe ethics should or could move into the aesthetic mode. The ethical modalities have all been juridicial till now. In the twentieth century, at least in religious ethics, things began to happen to it. Judicial ethics became aesthetic ethics. Ethics changed from a kind of legality to a kind of art. We were all called upon within a frame to compose a life, and composition can be an aesthetic enterprise.**

**I tried to ruminate on the fact that our ethical words became balance and proportion, appropriateness. This is an aesthetic vocabulary which is now ethical vocabulary, so is there a way to recognize that systematically?**

**In the Nichomacean ethics, where Aristotle finally comes around to the virtues, the live human virtues, there they all are, you know, honesty, truthfulness, and prudence and patience and a great long list and spang in the middle of it *magnificence*. I said it, that's what I meant and wouldn't you know, somebody had thought of it first. I remember that a classmate from Princeton Seminary reported how disconcerted he was when while doing his duty in a Wisconsin privy, he understood the Platonic gorms and thought, he invented them, and then went to school and found that it'd all been thought of before.**

art. So even from the most formal heart of its most technical discipline, religion calls for the arts, perhaps as never before. Going from surprise to surprise in this twentieth century, determined as ever to do right by this creation, favored with all the records and admonitions of all our predecessors in faith, we must choose and decide, *compose* the response of high morality, elaborate the truly religious (moral) life among the competing possibilities. Desperately we need that practice in discrimination, that critical awareness of history and tradition, that dissatisfaction with the obvious and contempt for the ordinary, that bent for what is fine, that restlessness of the imagination which long has been featured among true artists.

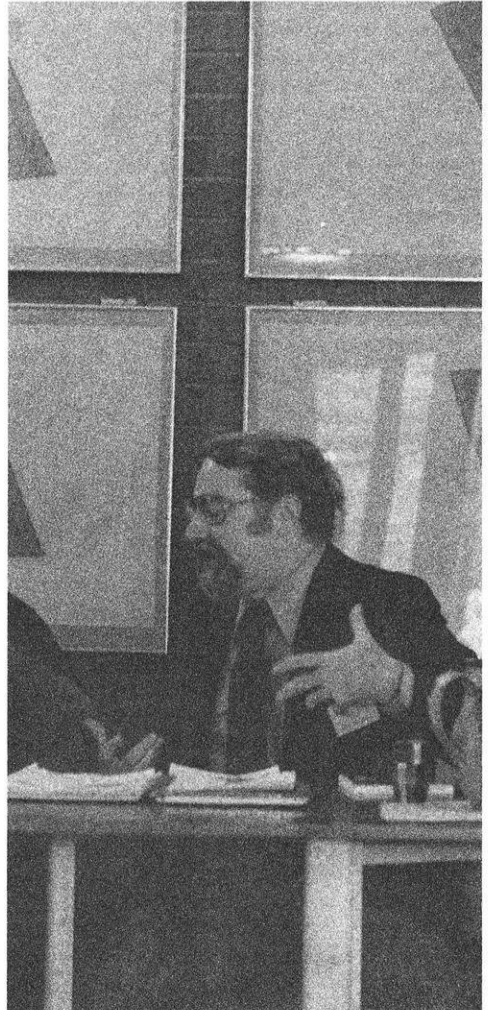
Just as the close and casual relations between the good and the true have long been recognized in the familiar triad, so now we see the same nourishing two-way commerce between the good and the beautiful.

## VI.

The roughness of this paper is not calculated, but neither is it disowned. Roughness may snag the attentions, criticisms, qualifications, rejections, substitutions, expansions of the Wingspread conferees. Which is the point. More lamented by its weaver is the raggedness of this ending. Two quotations have dogged my pencil since writing began, and here they still are, unhoused in earlier pages, pressing still for utterance. So I just dump them at this closing.

One is from Alfred North Whitehead: "Style is the ultimate morality of the mind." And I wonder, just the mind? Is it conceivable that the public moralities we have known, so juridicial in all their forms, might be if not supplanted then augmented by public moralities in which style is the plumb line and the canons are aesthetic? No question was ever less rhetorical. I really wonder.

I may have wondered it first when Conservative Senator James Buckley, of New York, was the first of former President Richard Nixon's ideological compatibles to call for his resignation, long before the ultimate revelations that required his removal, long before other Republican stalwarts admitted even to themselves that the administration had to go. But not before first glimpses at the tape transcripts



revealed the flat banality and ugly gracelessness of what passed for politics in the Oval Office. Is the ample culture of Senator Buckley and the well-known artistic sophistication of his family utterly unrelated to his early perception of the inappropriateness of such shoddy people and parlance in that place of power? Beside his announced reasons for early arrival at his decision to declare against the President, was there not in that declaration a note of aesthetic outrage? In the sequel, was not such a distaste as good a canon as any for judgement?\*

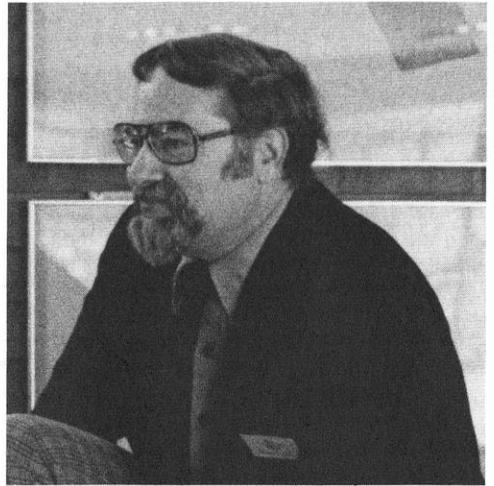
But if so, and this is why my hunch above remains a question, where was that aesthetic outrage in Senator Buckley's position on our Southeast Asian belliciosities? Why did the sensitivities and refinements so instinctively right on the cheap vulgarities of presiding persons, give him such faint and obviously all too controllable readings on our policy maker's yen to continue the destruction of beautiful places and beautiful people far away? Why is a cultivated politician's sense of the intolerably grotesque so selectively activated?

None of which disabuses me of the notion that somewhere there is something in an aesthetic ethics. That contradictions will have to be comprehended in any useful formulation is no novelty. The juridical ethics with which we are familiar have not been notable, either, for the regularity and consistency of our acquiescence to their biddings and bindings. Could it be that an old and new ethics must somehow be conflated?

Other possible grist: after all the legalistic

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\*And might it not have been a swifter service of right and good if our understanding of ethics were already artful enough so Senator Scott at the same crucial time could have counted on full public understanding had he included more forcefully his well-known aesthetic discrimination, his educated taste in his early judgements of the President's situation? The "facts" deceived him; his taste, there is good reason to believe, was never in any doubt. So the torment dragged on, too bad for everyone. But how to calibrate taste, how to evaluate the sense of quality, in the arithmetic logic of our usual ethics?



huffing and puffing over the late Senator Joseph McCarthy's latherings, was he not brought to order really by the theatre piece which was his trial, played on television's prime to the nation as audience, where the senator's slovenly thought and sound registered on all, and his quite legitimate use of legal ploy struck the watchers as funny, and one grand old character got to cry for us all "Have you no shame, sir, have you no shame?" It is, admittedly, hard to work distaste into ethical frame, but is it not on occasion *the* effective moral arbiter? And cannot that be formulated someway?

Or again: what does it mean that the only 1933 Germans, who, as a matter of record, were not for one instant deceived about Adolf Hitler and his inevitable ruin of a world were the Bonhoeffers, not yet notable in theology or political activism, but richly cultivated, art loving, grateful, high bourgeois heirs of the high culture of their country? While other subsequent heroes, learned in the intricacies of legal philosophy and theological ethics (Niemoller, Barth) were giving Hitler a few months' "chance" to see what he could do with their shambles of a country, the Bonhoeffers, from the moment of the announcement of Hitler's elevation to the chancellory, seemed to foresee the whole awful train to the entrusting of this heritage to such trash. Snobbism, yes. But a prescient snobbism, an elitist revulsion that turned out to be more instantly related to the truth than any other approaches were, a judgement that gave appropriate place to *taste*—the data, the evaluation, the response of taste.

The problem is, of course, that the Bonhoeffers were not the only tasteful people in Germany. Others of brilliance and refinement in the arts were at the radios on that January 30, 1933, and though many must have been dismayed, there is no record of many who trusted their taste as moral organ, making immediate (and true) political judgement on the basis of aesthetic reaction. So hints are all there are to offer, hints and hunches—and a conviction.

The second quotation leads us out where we came in. A week after Maestro Rostropovich wrote his piece for the Op Ed, Galina Vishevs-kaya wrote again for the page, responding to all who had responded to her husband. Grateful for what must have been their understanding, she dared to be hopeful of the outcome



**I tried to put my suggestion that taste is a moral organ into the paper, but it's tricky. People use it in ways that I find appropriate then sometimes don't use it at all otherwise.**

**My problem with my proposals when I make them, is that as a sometime journalist I'm always aware of the antithesis. At the same time, you're very sure of something and what's wrong with it. But it's even more than that. It isn't just that. It's whether taste as such would still be taste if we found a way to formulate it, whether in its essence it isn't more spontaneous.**



for her family, ending almost rhapsodically with that mysterious sentence of Dostoyevsky, "In the end, Beauty will save the world!"

Now what did that dialectical, darkly mystical, Christ-fixated old artist mean by that? The Christocentric theologians who were his admirers could no doubt so stretch the usual definitions of both Christ and Beauty as to render this a routinely evangelical statement, and, as with other such clever agglomerations, divest it of any unusual insight or suggestions. But what if the Russian novelist meant what he said, in the terms used? What could that have been? Especially now, what could it mean? Now, when beauty is not necessarily at the top of the aesthetic pantheon? Especially now, when for an occasionally innovative part of the culture (anxiously countered by the more conventional part), "beautiful" is a frankly moral attribution, quite separated from its traditionally aesthetic significance?

How will Beauty hold, restore, renew, redeem, save the world? What eschatology is this? What ethics?



### **Post Script**

And since theologically I was brought up to be a realized eschatologist, that means that I never thought that I had to wait for that pie in the sky (no matter who baked it, apocalyptic Christians or radical marxists, they all have it). I have always known that we could have earnest and foretastes of the ultimate fact, all of the wonderful ways to its fulfillment. That's why I wish somebody would get to work on this ethics/aesthetics amalgamation. I have a basic bias: I never wanted to be flicked by the fickle finger of fate that made me young in the thirties and forties. I have always insisted on enjoying the freedoms that I knew my children would have in the fifties and sixties and seventies. I wanted my eschatology realized. And it was. Everybody can have it. You have to be ready to pay for it, but it's a good thing to have. □

# Perceptions in Art and Religion

by John Dillenberger

Ted Gill has raised an issue and marked out directions which run contrary to the major direction of American history and its religious currents. In fact, I told him that I was sure that aesthetics and ethics had always been combined throughout history, except for Protestant America and some sections of Asian history and late Protestant continental history. But in the American scene ethical practice and outlook, even when initially grounded in comprehensive theological orientations prior to their becoming autonomous, were devoid of aesthetic criteria or limits. Only the theology of Jonathan Edwards had an aesthetic component at its very center, but his few followers chose to ignore that basic component and pushed the moral and ethical even more to the center. Nathaniel Taylor and Lyman Beecher pushed revivals for the sake of the moral government of God. American theology, like its English counterpart, was largely "for the sake of."

For anything to stand by itself rather than for some purpose, for one to *be* rather than to *do*, was not to understand the action of faith and to have no sure signs of election. That "faith makes a difference" was translated into "the difference that faith makes." Norman Pettit in his book on early Puritanism, *The Heart Prepared*, as well as the late Joseph Haroutunian in his book, *Piety versus Moralism*, have shown how the theology of grace was transformed by English and American theologians into a moralistic vein. Grace was never a pause, a new creation. People hardly stopped running. They just ran in other directions, a divine adrenalin having been administered. That there were many backsliders did not raise the fundamental question of whether such faith activism needed reassessing. It only meant that more energy needed to be extended. It is more an American habit to try harder to be Number One in the world than to reassess what one is doing.

As Ted has indicated, however, trying harder no longer delivers the desired results. Funda-

mental reorientation is at stake. That the aesthetic and artistic dimensions—either as such or in relation to the ethical—have been largely ignored by religious bodies in the culture at large has such an entrenched history that a new resolve will only become a part of the problem, a continuation of solving by doing. Only historical exorcism and the creation of new perceptions will provide another beginning. Allusion has been made to puritan history in terms of its theological end product—Jonathan Edwards. The disappearance of puritanism's allegedly arbitrary God only made its ethos more dominant and central. When I taught at Harvard in the 1950's, I discovered that the old style New England faculty members had only contempt for puritan theology; but in piety, learning, and practice they exhibited still all its characteristics, unalloyed by over two centuries of history.

It was not liberal theology which brought the morally personal and social into prominence. That had been there all along. The uniqueness in the development of liberal theology in social gospel form was that under new social situations, it insisted that in order to do and to be effective, social institutions had to be changed—that, to use Rauschenbush's phraseology, one needed to create institutions which would make bad men better rather than to have institutions which made good men worse. However needed and necessary, it was a new form of the old goal. Jonathan Edwards again. Perhaps it is a sign of the "doing" mentality that Edwards is widely regarded as America's number one theologian. Partly that is because he stands over there all by himself influencing nobody, and everybody can say he's America's number one. If we were to play the game of number one, I'd say Horace Bushnell. He didn't suffer a better fate. While considered a forefather of liberal Protestant theology, it is usually forgotten that Bushnell's concern with language and imagination—to a great extent under the influence of Coleridge—sent him into different directions than those who followed. The aesthetic components of Bushnell were ignored. But even the aesthetic sensibilities of Edwards and Bushnell were mainly verbal, following the tradition they did not escape. It is a fact not to be lightly dismissed that except for portraits, the average Englishman or English settler who came from England never saw a painting or a piece of sculpture from the time of the Reformation to the early nineteenth century. That

is a strong statement but I think I can document that.

Edwards belongs to this period. Bushnell is slightly after. Bushnell himself took the Grand Tour to Europe, but to read his diary at Yale is to know that he saw what he was told to see both in respect to objects and their meaning. For all the acclaim, too, we give to early church architecture in the colonies, the simplicity of form corresponds to the verbal predilections and does not represent another mode of perception. The Gothic phase in turn also dictated art forms on the basis of a theological fix. The problem in the development of American art and architecture is that it never represented a necessity of the human spirit. It either reflected the dictation of form by a theological position, as in architecture, or the need of elevation, uplift or refinement, as in painting. Nineteenth century clergy lectured on the refining aspects of art appreciation; that is, that art took the rough edges from the scramble of life in the New World. Fortunately, there were some notable exceptions, now largely forgotten, people who have wonderful names, such as the Reformed preacher, George Washington Betheune; the Unitarians, Orville Dewey and Henry Whitney Bellows; and the Baptist, Elias Magoon, whose collection still forms the core of the Vassar College collection. Even—or particularly—Henry Ward Beecher collected paintings of significance, though for him, too, it was largely a matter of refinement. Henry Ward Beecher's collection had five paintings by the great American painter, George Inness. Art for refinement is also "for the sake of," to serve purpose. Art, too, in the light of the revivalistic, evangelistic impulse also served to focus feeling and sentiment with the result that sentiment became sentimental. In the American scene, refinement, sentiment, moral purposes have made art serve purposes.

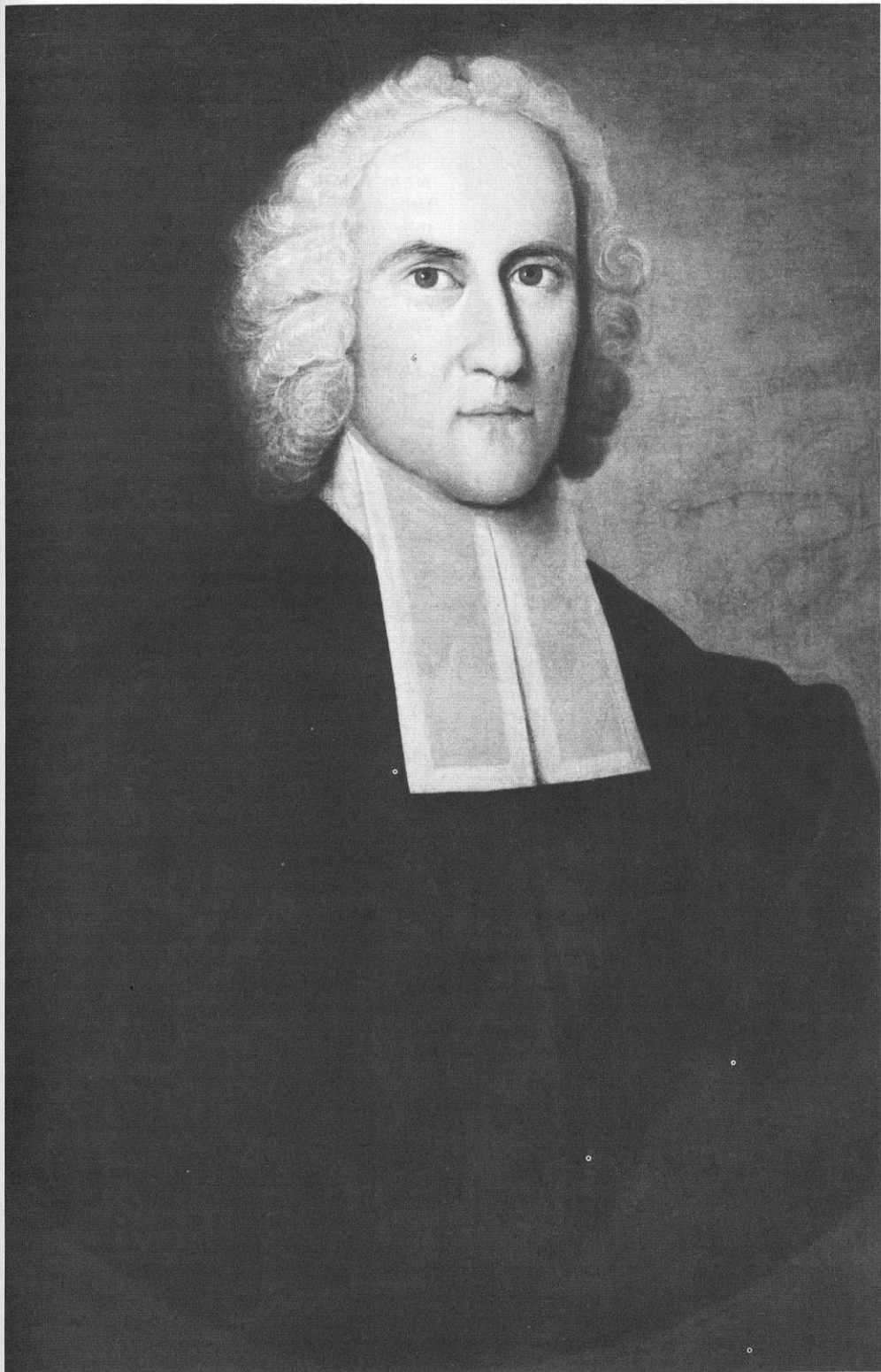
Perhaps that is the inevitable result of the only country in the world which did not appear accidentally but developed its future on the basis of a purpose: from "a city set on a hill" to "manifest destiny" to "making the world safe for democracy"—even if it meant the destruction of the American Indian and the Vietnamese. Now puritan theology has long disappeared and wine, song, dance and sex were never its hangups—though they got saddled with that blame. But the nation is still puritan in its continually purposeful sense. So

Henry Kissinger—despite his Jewish heritage and with apologies to Santayana—is the last puritan. Moreover, America was a Protestant country, and it is only in our own generation that we have recognized it as more than, or different, from that.

Ted has so movingly and centrally focussed on the Russians who left Russia precisely because their art cried out to be expressed, that their humanity or spirituality required it. We will not fully enter into what is offered until our souls and spirits require the seeing and participating in what the arts convey and how they do it. That will require a discipline of seeing and hearing commensurate with the discipline of words. We try to teach everyone to read and to discourse, but the discipline and delight of seeing is largely side-tracked. Something of our humanity and spirit has simply dropped out of the English side of our history. The eloquence of words and English literature led to the clarity of word in proclamation and sacrament, in contrast to the continent, where the mystery of the word in proclamation and sacrament was central.

Ted's central thesis is suggestive and troubling. If the aesthetic is the new ingredient in the moral, morality will be transformed and then we may be able to cope with our world more adequately. But will the aesthetic have fully come into its own, or will we have propped up the wrong-headed history of our moral purpose in the world? When the aesthetic comes into its own, when it is an integral part of our being, our perceptions may be transformed and humanity brought to include levels so long suppressed. The new delights of humanity will occur; then we will be able to let loose of the moral purposes, now extended and made worse by the consumption we require. Then we may have a new meaning to "the end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." We live with so few of our God-given sensibilities and senses. The problem is whether our incapacity to cope will lead to a still greater narrowing of our

**Rev. Jonathan Edwards** by Joseph Badger, oil on canvas. Photo courtesy: Yale University Art Gallery. Bequest of Eugene Phelps Edwards, 1938.



humanity, or become the occasion for the broadening of humanity. In that setting Kierkegaard's aesthetic may provide us with new possibility. The aesthetic may not be the last or the only word. But, when Kierkegaard said that it wasn't the last word, he knew what he was rejecting. What Kierkegaard rejected must be recovered in order to enrich us, if not to save us.

Protestants in America have always been concerned about the aesthetic, they've always had doubts about it. They considered the aesthetic to be allegedly neutral, standing before the possibilities with no passion for ethical decision. When the choices are multiple, the aesthetic may confuse as well as help, and the ethical may be a more central mode—though I am convinced that the ethical as the only mode is one of the most dangerous modes in history. When the possibilities are limited—as they increasingly are in the world—the aesthetic is the stylistic determinant of the ethical dilemma, calling for ingredients of humanity at the limits of possibility. Ethical, religious theory in the United States has always been geared to possibilities without limit. I don't want to blame Sir Francis Bacon and to plead for Job; rather I want us to exercise our ethical religious history, whatever purposes it may have served, and face the new situation with Bacon and Job as perimeters, not as alternatives.

Concretely, but not centrally, Ted's examples occasionally raise new problems, as he himself admits. Bonhoeffer is special. Many cultured in the early Nazi period and in relation to Watergate were shocked first of all by the gracelessness of such a shoddy regard for the human. But those who held such aesthetic tastes frequently collapsed when the pressure was on. The aesthetic is an early detector, needing to be sustained when the going gets tough. Ted makes much of the notion that artists are seismographs, early detectors and measurers of the shifts in perception. But if they are detectors or mirrors for us, it is not because artists have a social or moral purpose. Indeed much nineteenth century art became banal because artists, too, felt forced to provide moral lessons. This is the obverse of those who want to make art into social propaganda. But artists are detectors or mirrors because their perceptions of reality have such unintentional consequences. The church and theologians might well contem-

plate that a too direct ethic short-circuits the whole enterprise and skews all the perspectives. What if theology had unintended consequences? If every "for the sake of" became rather a by-product, a "because of," a mirror, an empowering "now I see," that is, recognition in all its dimensions. Then theology and art in their delineations of reality might become empowering through the perceptions they generate and the consequences that flow from them.

Art more than theology has kept that function. Theology and church are so afraid of the vitalities of life, intimidated by a community of ethos and now, in an uncertain imitation of Catholicism as the latest fad, a hankering for formation. Can one imagine Augustine or Luther or Calvin interested in formation, a subject now so "in" that it is as sacred as motherhood once was. For theology and church to have the perception of the artist, the last refuge of safety must be abandoned. It is not that the church is secure and free of attack; it is that its perceptions do not pry all things loose, to be taken up again in a new way. Truth may be an order to goodness to be Presbyterian; but when goodness is so clearly accepted as the norm or truth, truth no longer puts all in doubt, so that they may be taken up again in a different way—always for interim purposes and sometimes only to enjoy. To serve God and enjoy him forever did mean *enjoy* but I've never seen any interpretations in which there was any enjoyment in it.

Root perceptions at all levels define our contemporary urgent demands. And in this sense, the arts and the church are in the same ballpark, whether or not they are playing the same game. But it is only the root perceptions that will keep art from being used by the church for decoration, variety, recreation, pageant, or therapy. If art or religion is any of these that too, serves a purpose. Fundamentally the nature of art and religion is something different, that is the kind of root perceptions that transform simply by their being, by the kind of perceptions which happen at junctures in history where nudgings can take place. It is the nudgings in history that make the difference, when a situation becomes the possibility of a new perception. Perceptions are born by being nudged; they are not born by being consciously created. At their best, art and theology create and consequences follow. □

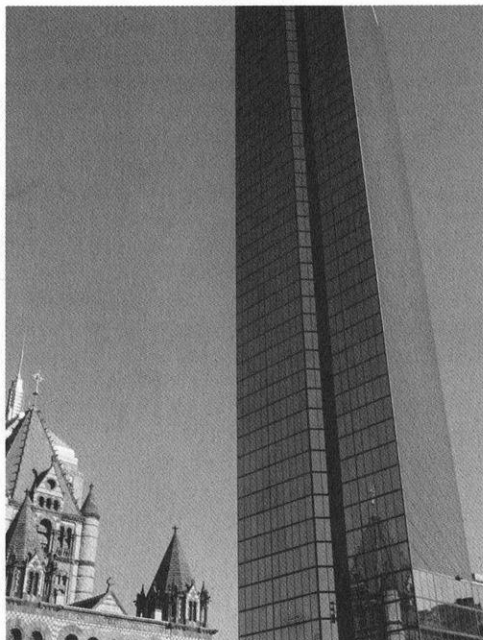


# The Dilemma of 20th Century Artists and the Church

by Jane Dillenberger

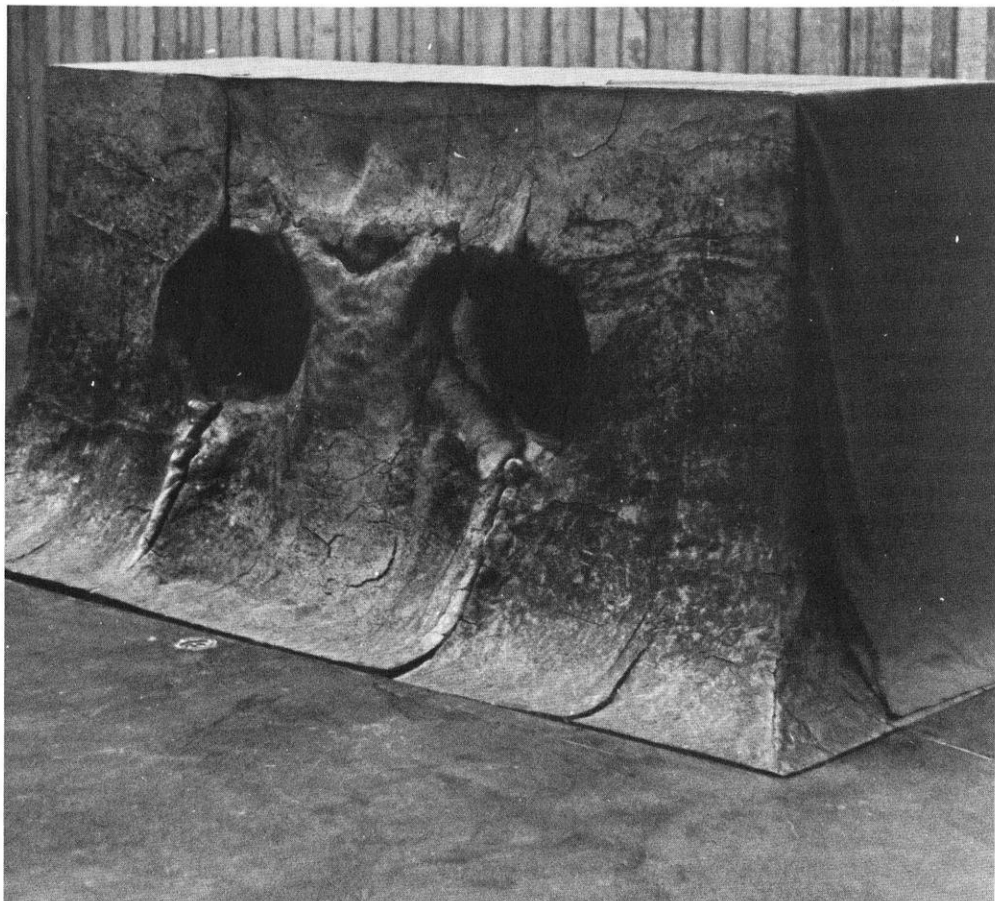
The problem for me centers upon the chasm which lies between the creative artist and the churches and synagogues in our country. On the one hand, we have hundreds and hundreds of artists who continue to paint and sculpt, and poets who sing their songs—even though the artists' studios are crammed with completed works and the poets' desks with unpublished manuscripts. On the other hand, we see churches and synagogues being constructed or expanded by capacious wings and adjacent structures—even in the present crisis—all of them in need of the true artists' creations. It would seem to be a situation where the producer and the consumer could be joined in fruitful relationship. The artists' paintings and sculptures could enrich our places of worship with new visions, and our hymns and canticles and prayers could be composed by our poets and set to music by our musicians. But, alas, the artist remains in his studio, and our musicians are rarely commissioned. Church and synagogue go on building mediocre structures and decorate them with ready-made items from the church supply house catalogues. The artists and poets and musicians remain outside the churches; many of them rejecting the church and religion in its present manifestations, while the clergy become involved in committees and consciousness-raising and continue to search for funds for the multiplicity of causes which are pressed upon them. Today it is the artists who often have the role that the priests always had—passionately committed to their vocation, waiting upon and servant to the bidding of the creative spirit, negligent of comfort and financial gain and security.

I have used the term the true artist. Such an artist's work must be radically distinguished from the banner-making, local arts festivals, art for therapy, or art for communal expression. I mean by the term the professional artists of acknowledged ability in full possession of their technical skills and inner vision. The roster is a substantial one. It's not only



Hancock Building and Trinity Church, Boston. Photo courtesy: Curtis Carter.

the names that appear in the slick art journals and the *New York Times'* art reviews. Locating them and choosing from them those who are open to the challenge of the commission often takes a special individual to act as a kind of intermediary, one who understands the needs of both the church and the artist. Let me tell you of one instance in which the chasm between the artist and church was successfully bridged. The Newman Center at the University of California was built by a Bay area architect of some distinction. It was agreed that the altar, sanctuary, lectern, bishop's chair and the cross would be commissioned to a distinguished sculptor as well as the Stations of the Cross. The University Art History Department compiled a list of local sculptors, and they are fortunate in having a vigorous group in California in the Bay area. Several of these art historians together with the Paulist priests who officiated in the Newman Center then went to see the sculptors in their studios and talked about how they saw the commission with the artists—a feeling out and an exchange of ideas on both sides. The list was then narrowed by the art historians and priests after a thoughtful review of what had happened in the artists' studios at the interviews. Then chosen sculptors were finally



Newman Center, Berkeley, by Stephen de Stabler. Photo courtesy: Fr. Ted Vierra.

commissioned by the Paulist fathers. Today their chapel of wide and geometric and ample spaces is inhabited, warmed, graced by the beautiful, earthy primeval shapes of Stephen De Stabler's altar, lectern, sanctuary and a crucifix almost lifesize in scale.

Last night when I arrived, I heard from Ralph Peterson that he was in conversation with Louise Nevelson, one of the very distinguished sculptors of our own day, in regard to a commission for the new St. Peter's church now under construction in New York.

Is the schism between art and religion an insoluble problem? I don't believe so. We have had a few singular courageous victories and these seem to provide us with procedures and

exempla. There is one thing common to these few cases of the successful wedding once again of religion and the arts. In all these cases and I speak of the Matisse chapel and Ronchamp in France and also the Rothko chapel at Houston (for all its problems—and there are problems about it) in all these cases it was one individual's passionate, courageous, persistent will to overcome on the side of the artist *and* on the side of the church their mutual suspicions. One person to fearlessly and tirelessly work toward a miracle which occurred in each of these instances when artists exceeded themselves in the service of the church and these churches were renewed within, and for thousands of people the church seemed to invite them anew and to speak a language that they understood. □

## From The Record: I

**Grant Spradling:** This “for the sake of” that you speak of, John, do I hear us saying that we may be using aesthetics to prop up a Puritan ethic or some other old ethic? It seems to me that the “for the sake of” problem is a very central problem. When the religious community does engage the arts, for example, in the commissioning of Stephen De Stabler to do the Newman Center, is the religious community using arts “for the sake of” something?

**Calvin Didier:** Is your response a caution, a fear that . . . ?

**John Dillenberger:** I don't know if I'd put it in terms of fears or not. To me it's certainly a question. How far is there a possibility that artistic forms of perception—of which American culture has largely been deprived—how far will such new possibilities enter? We have to admit that for better or worse the country was dominated until very recently by an English ethos. That English ethos had a verbal center—all its seeing was conditioned by the verbal mode. After all, you can say that the continent doesn't have a Shakespeare but England doesn't have a Rubens—although he was in England for a time. From Henry VIII until the nineteenth century, the average Englishman never saw painting and sculpture. They had been destroyed or bought up. The sculpture, the paintings had disappeared. Where was it? In the hands of the nobles and the gentry. Benjamin West, when he was in England, had to be introduced to see them; you simply did not see them otherwise. Pamela's shaking her head no.

**Pamela Ilott:** No. In any part of England in the little churches that persisted, that were part of the parish life and familiar to the children, there is an incredible richness of sculptures. I think they did develop a good visual sense without making a science of it, without talking a lot about it. Landscape gardening in England became one of the great arts. There still was an aesthetic there, but I think people hadn't become self-conscious about it, not even the aristocracy then. It was very much taken for granted.

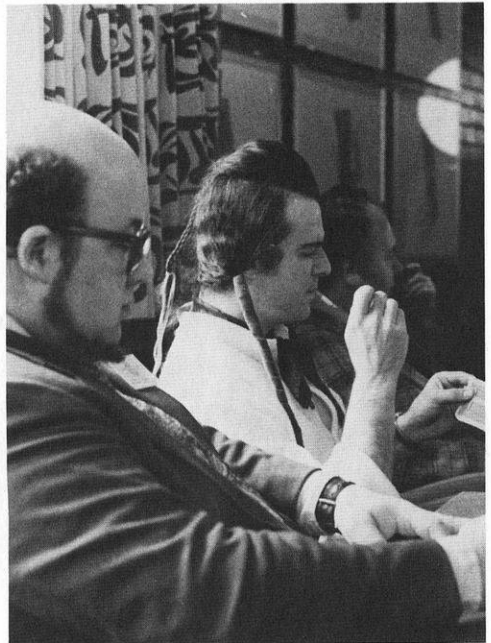
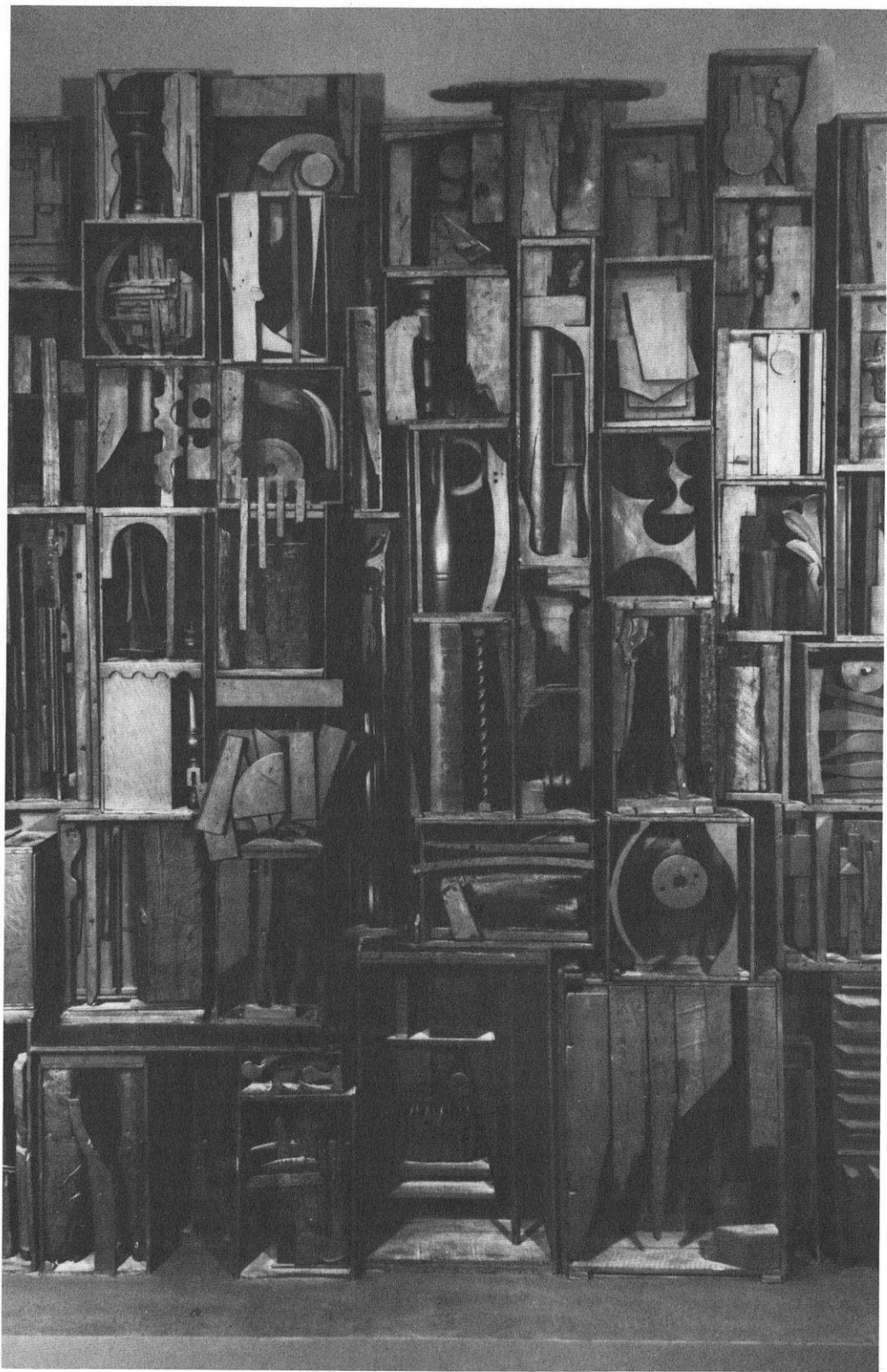


Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

**John Dillenberger:** A lot of English country churches are being restored and in a lot of places the old paintings were whitewashed over, and now the whitewash is being taken off. Probably the only reason we see them now is that they were whitewashed. They wouldn't exist anymore probably if they hadn't been whitewashed.

**Pamela Ilott:** What concerns me is that when the churches do feel that they ought to commission stuff, so often they commission such temporary stuff—what is flashy and à la mode now. You wonder if it's going to ruin peoples' taste eventually rather than encouraging more. It's very often very superficial. I think one of the basic problems is not to say how do we encourage the churches to take more interest in the arts but how can we go even deeper—even if we don't see the results in our lifetime—to try and develop an interest and a taste in the generation that will be coming on before it's too late.

**Susan Barker:** Having dealt with artists on a commercial basis I have problems talking about religion and the arts in these terms. For every artist who can honestly deal with such





an overt symbol—whether it be a crucifix, the stations of the cross, or whatever—there are five thousand who wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. And maybe they shouldn't.

**Jane Dillenberger:** Maybe my example of Stephen De Stabler who did work for the Newman Center and actually took the ancient symbolism and recreated some works for them threw my case a bit off the point, because I don't see religious art as something that is concerned strictly with the ancient symbols or iconography. I think the teaching of what is great from the past is very important, but equally important, and perhaps *more* important, is new forms for religious expression. I don't know how familiar you all are with the work of Louise Nevelson but she takes fragments of old pieces of furniture, shelves and so forth, and constructs out of them whole walls. By none of the usual definitions of the past would one consider that religious art.

Barnett Newman is a Jew and he was very chary about using the word religion. But, in his *Stations of the Cross*, which are fourteen large canvases with vertical stripes of black and white, he's dealing with a central problem of suffering which is essentially what the ancient Stations of the Cross were dealing with by using a series of pictures of incidents. Now it should be that the work of Nevelson and Rothko and Newman—which does not have the traditional religious iconography, but has spiritual content—should speak to all men, not just to people who know the Christian iconography and symbols. These paintings should speak to the Buddhist, to the Indian, to the Black, or minority who might not have had the Christian tradition in his background, to the Eurasians, to the Chicanos, to whatever one brings of culture or lack of culture to the experience. It should have the kind of clang of communication, the ability to draw us out of ourselves which is really what happens in prayer.

**Sister Noemi Weygant:** I want to explain this. You see up to ten years ago, we were a semi-cloistered Benedictine order. I entered later in life, I entered as a former Protestant. And there's so much beauty in the religious life that I could not even put it into words, but they are so wrong in this feeling that if you emerge out into the world you are somehow going to become contaminated. About ten years ago we began to emerge and this has

almost polarized our community. As I see it, if I can't save my soul out in the world, then all of the rest of you ought to be in danger of being on the way to hell. With the religious advantages that I have had and the opportunity of prayer in community with the Lord where I am lifted up onto the mountains, if I can't go down into the valleys, then really there's been something seriously wrong, very dangerously wrong. I belong in the valleys if I've been on the mountain. If I've got to stay up there in the clouds, that's too bad.

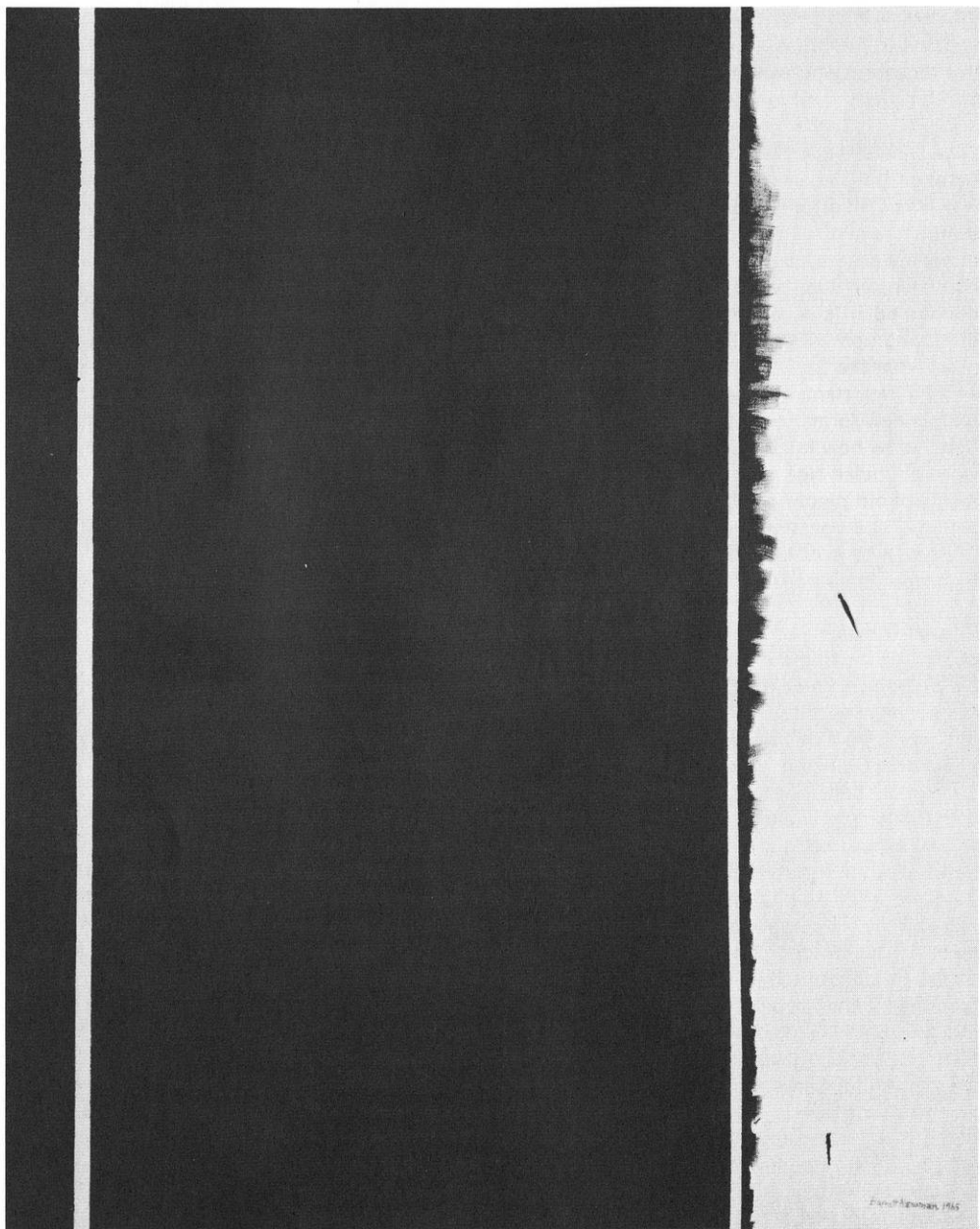
But then I like to tease, too. I had breakfast with the priest—we now let our priests come and eat with us; this is quite an innovation—and I like to tease him because he is a little concerned about me. I said, "You know, father, I bought a new blue coat for this trip. You know I'm really getting worldly with a light blue coat." You must remember that after years of being cloistered this is really a big deal for me; it's really an exciting thing.

A couple of years ago I got a red dress. Well, I want to tell you that when I walked into that dining room in that red dress, I knew what the reaction would be. I said, I'm really a red person. I said that when I die you can bury me in red. They said, "We have heard it!"

**James Buell:** Sister Noemi, I think you have raised here one of the key issues in terms of religion and art and the reason why art is just such a frightening thing to some of the religionists with whom I spend a great deal of time. If you get into light blue or if you get into red, where will it end? The religious mind has a great fear of color and form because there is no way that you can verbalize color and form into a static kind of situation where you can address it and control it and analyze it and weigh it. The possibilities you opened up in your community were aesthetic possibilities and therefore extremely scary. Those of us who are comfortable in a sophisticated religion and art life sometimes forget that when you talk to the chairman of the board of the insurance company about supporting art with his company's funds, as I did recently, you make him very nervous because when you start fooling around with art and where will it end? The actuary tables just don't allow you to figure out the possibilities of color and form.

**David Nelson:** One of the things that concerns





P. 40. **Sky Cathedral** by Louise Nevelson, assemblage, (detail). Photo courtesy: Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Mildwoff.

P. 42. **The Stations of the Cross: Lema Sabachthani** by Barnett Newman, acrylic polymer on canvas, 1965. Photo courtesy: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.

me is this word "taste." And what concerns me is that if we let everybody get involved in art, art will "out" and taste will go all to hell. The church getting out of grace and into taste is a terrible concern of mine. The one thing that is encouraging about art—and I hope someone can find a place in religion to parallel this—is that art will "out." The one thing that approves the existence of art is the naive and primitive art. No matter who makes the taste or who decides what is great, some little old Grandma Moses who's never heard about it all somehow comes forth with beauty and all the things that are contained in art. To me that's not something that is controllable or a systemized thing. I parallel that to the fact that humanity will "out" no matter what system we apply to it. Maybe what we're talking about is that humanity does come out in the form of spirit, and art is one of those manifestations—no matter what the system is.

**Ted Gill:** Apparently we're all born artists, we are able at infancy to do marvelous things, apparently all our lives we are artists in our dreams—we compose scenarios, and stories and plays—but things get in the way. It's a contradiction in terms to talk about arranging things so that spontaneity can be, but you can arrange things so that spontaneity will have a chance.

**Walter Anderson:** Perhaps the meeting place of religion and art is in what we would call liberation. About two weeks ago Anderson Clark and I were talking and we recognized that when there is the laying on of hands, it's not a restriction, it's a blessing that says you are free to go ahead and dance, you're free to sing, you're free to be yourself. Centuries ago we thought we were a melting pot and then, indeed, for a while temporarily accommodated our evolution as a society according to the institutions of English-speaking countries. But we have realized painfully and consciously that we are a pluralistic society, and part of this evolution has been the ethical concern for justice that now allows people to be themselves; and I think this is what religion has done for the individual. I can tell you very frankly that the reason I have believed so strongly in religion for all my life is that I've been emancipated to be myself. The education of today is to help the individual as a youngster to feel relevant to himself and comfortable within himself; and the best education that can be accomplished this way is through

the arts rather than the core curriculum. Abraham Maslow, who was a professor of psychology at Brandeis and former president of the American Psychological Association said at the Tanglewood Symposium in 1967 that the experience of participating in the arts is closer to bringing every individual into a realization of himself than the traditional methods of education. So he would begin with dancing and with music and with painting and all these things. He says that if you haven't made an individual relevant to himself, then education hasn't achieved anything at all. I think the important thing to realize here is that we have before us such as never before the means by which—because of the pluralistic character of our civilization—we can accommodate to ourselves and also share what we are finding within ourselves, individually and as cultures representing many civilizations in our society, with one another those things that are of beauty. It's within that kind of ferment that I think there can be a greater sharing of artistic and moral values than we've ever had before.

Twice I taught a seminar at Antioch gathered around the impact or urbanization on aesthetic values. We went through the Mumford books, and you would guess the bibliography that we might have used. We came out to a two-fold posture in the class. Some members of the seminar said aesthetic values develop in the large urban centers because these are the places where people can be exposed to the great arts, from whence come our aesthetic values. But the other group said, however, aesthetic values begin as the farmer sows his seeds and as a matter of participation. Then you grow to the point where you can be involved in the fine arts that come down as part of our Western culture. And indeed this is what I found when I took four years off to work in the slums of Cleveland away from the academic world just to find out for myself how music could be used in ways other than I had been taught in the conservatory or had been using myself. I realized in working with blind people, singing with kids in back yards around garbage heaps and so on that I was gaining a kind of communication that would help me work with them fundamentally in terms of opening up their life and their lifestyles, becoming a part of the whole municipality. For example, there was a youngster of ten about whom we knew nothing about his home background and the case-

workers had been turned away from the home. I happened to be going down the street one day and I saw an old lady sitting inside reading a Bible and I just opened the screen door because there was a reed organ and I sat down and played some hymns and we started singing together. Before I left I had all the information that the caseworkers wanted. With similar kids I sang first in their backyards and in alleys. Later on I could bring them to a group situation and begin to play for them, and learn about them and from them. They would ask me to play the latest hit tunes, and I could alternate them with the slow movement of a sonata and say, "Since you like to dance to the music of your choice, then dance to the music I choose." And they began to learn about fine art in terms of music as I had learned it in the conservatory and taught it. Through the dance they were willing to go to libraries and to go to concerts; and their lives changed.

We have an opportunity as religionists and artists. We come together because of the very nature of our civilization to conscious realizations that are before us, but also because we have mechanical means of communication that didn't exist in civilizations centuries ago when there were class distinctions and there weren't ways to get together. If you read the book of Louis Thomas, head of the Sloane Kettering cancer research, *The Lives of the Cell*, he refers to a solar system that is a hundred light years from us. If the Russians and the Americans got together their scientists, astronomers and physicists and sent out a message saying "hello" it would take a hundred years to get there and a hundred years for it to come back. Anything we might say could be irrelevant, but the one thing he said that could be accepted would be to send out music. He said he would send out Bach over and over. He said this would be bragging a bit because it wouldn't show our true face.

We have opportunities that haven't existed before. It's not the matter of the hundred years that it goes out I'm interested in but the round trip, because it will come back. It enters into the hearts and minds of the people, and this is where we can begin to work in ways that we could never have done before.

**Ralph Peterson:** I'd like to follow up on what you're saying, Walter, about this whole sense of chasm. I had never met Louise Nevelson

until two weeks ago. She told me that she had been in Tokyo three months before and some Jesuit priests of the university asked her, "Do you do religious art?" She said, "You're the first priest who's ever asked me that question. How can I answer?" We have ten years of jazz ministry at St. Peters Church. We have kids from Bed-Sty (the Bedford-Styvesant section of Brooklyn) that sing in our place every year. I think we are more tied into what happens in Harlem, Bed-Sty and other places because of jazz than we would if we were issuing theses and trying to be "relevant." But we as a church have to have our own sense of identity because I think that's the first thing artists expect. It's not that we're "for the sake of art" or for the sake of anything. It's because of. We're celebrating that which is transcendent.

**Ted Gill:** I thought that along with the marvelous historical background—he is a major scholar in the whole history of ideas—John was warning me, lovingly chiding me, that I could be on the same slippery trail of all the disciples of our only claim to aesthetic faith, theologically—Jonathan Edwards. What he was into and what all aesthetes are into, what aesthetics is about is the fulfillment, completion, and satisfaction there is in the fact itself, in the deed itself, in the act. That is what makes the thing aesthetic. It doesn't have to be justified any other way. You don't have to say that it's grand for us politically, or it will heal our social ills, or will make me healthier, or make me a better husband. There's no occasion that will make it more than it is. It's just marvelous, its magnificent, or whatever it is— that's too large a word for some of them— but its presence suffices. It is its own justification. Now that's an art work, that's aesthetic.

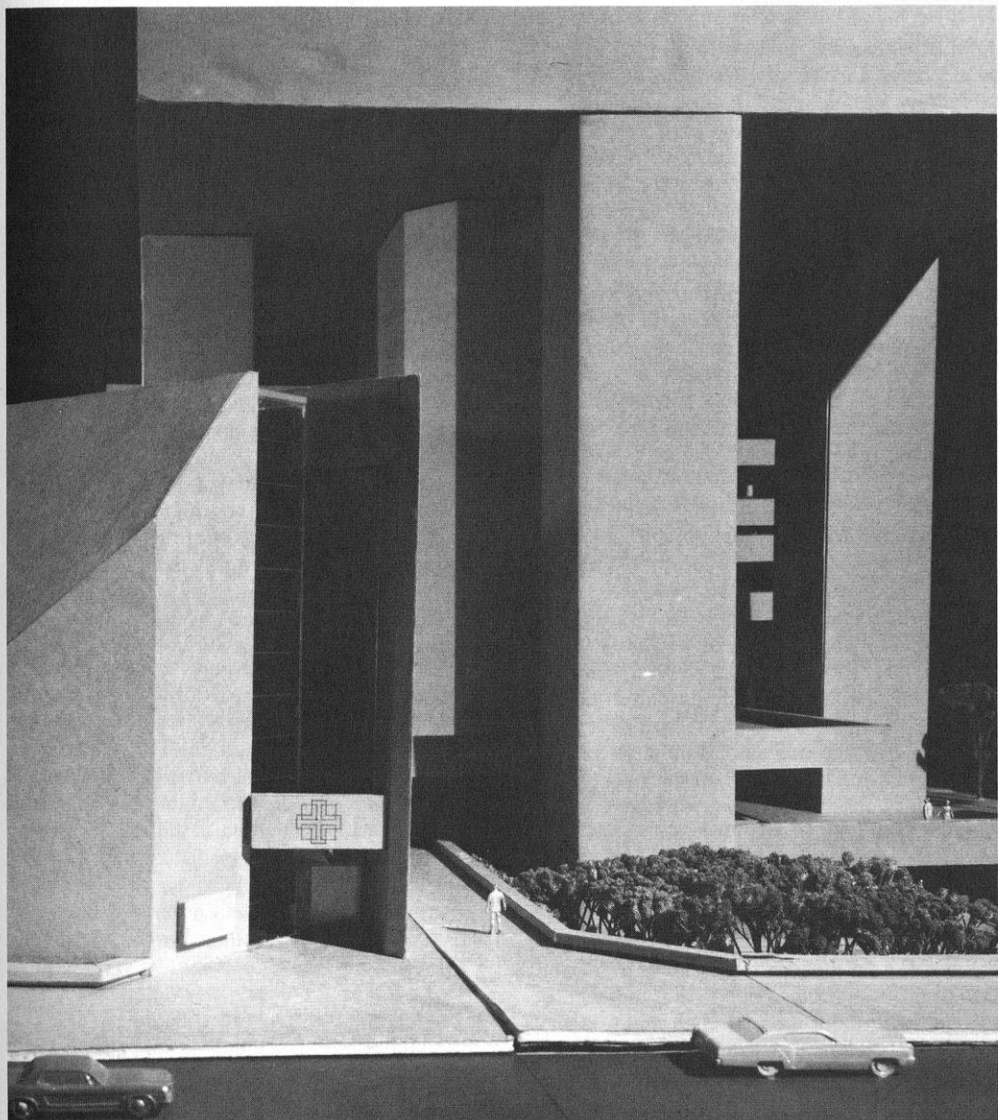
And yet all through what I was saying—and this is what John's so sweet about—a lot of what I was saying sounded like what I really think I abhor. I rejoice in the arts. I rejoice in choice creation, as is. I think I have aesthetic sensibilities. And yet, when I come to discussing art and aesthetics I seem to try to prove that they have something to do with each other. And that can sound as if I were trying to justify the artistic exercise by it. And you see I don't really want to do that. Honestly, personally, art doesn't need anything. For me it gets kind of boring when it gets beyond that. But I'm still the old

preacher, I know I've got to talk to other people who begin somewhere else where they have to have everything justified. I'm hung up.

Years ago, when I started on this at a conference in Namia, a marvelous town south of Rome, I was beginning to feel my way into all this. When we came out of the auditorium, Margaret Mead hit me with her staff and said, "Well, you may talk big, but underneath it's quite clear you are a world council church and

society man." For her that was good: she's a church and society man too. She wasn't chiding me, but I took it as a chiding, as I take this as a warning. When I notice things that I think are real in the political life where aesthetic and political elements are conjoined, when I note them, I really don't mean to force them. I'm trying not to make a recipe out of this and say to do it more consciously. I'm calling people's attention to it, but I would dread trying to structure it because then it

St. Peter's Lutheran Church, New York,  
(detail).



dissipates, then you aren't any longer working with what you noticed. The only place where I admit that I'm talking about myself or anybody else to be deliberate about studying the implications and making something of a science of this is in examining the propriety of certain aesthetic judgments and values within the ethical frame, including them in a rounder ethical statement. There I'd just as soon be more deliberate.

**Calvin Didier:** I think we've really got to have a response from John on that because it's all so interesting because he got in just one light, regular thrust and if thou didst pierce not his heart at least his exterior . . .

**John Dillenberger:** I agree very much with what Walter and Ralph said about our contemporary situation and the new educational possibilities that now mean that out of a very diverse culture and a pluralism we never accepted before educationally we are going to get all sorts of new possibilities. It certainly is the case that in many instances of cultural pluralism we have imagination in the arts playing a role in a way in which they did not in the predominant English culture. And this is a new game and a real new possibility, even though this same English culture frequently suppressed the groups which are now coming into their own and destroyed some of their real artistic possibilities.

As long as Ted Gill is interested in an aesthetic that will transform the ethical, and sees that as a particular contribution that is necessary at his juncture, I have no problems whatsoever because I know what his conception of beauty and of the aesthetic is. It's the other people who follow him who don't have that conception of the aesthetic and of beauty who will be tempted to short-circuit exactly what it is that Ted has said. I think also I'm concerned because in spite of the new pluralism, I'm not sure that we are yet over this English domination. I don't mean that in a pejorative sense. I don't want to say that the English didn't have an aesthetic. They did have an aesthetic, but it was a different kind of aesthetic. And when landscape gardening was mentioned this morning, that is a different kind of aesthetic too. I don't want to get into an argument about the churches, but it is a fact that the English Crown did see to it that many of the art objects were removed from parish churches and other churches, and they

have since been replaced or put back or found again; they were hiding. I do submit the case that the Englishmen who settled this country, until the nineteenth century, saw very little in terms of what we call the visual arts. And that has taken its toll. Moreover, they were suspicious of the visual arts and this has nothing to do with the fact that they were Puritans. You have to remember that the pre-Reformation English/Lollard tradition was interested in a moral Christianity in which art itself was suspicious because of its association with wealth that should be used otherwise. Then there were the special problems of Henry VIIIth. The whole Puritan bit is important in this sense, that after all it was Cromwell who saved the cartoons for the English nation. So Puritanism in one sense saved some art work and gets the credit for destroying it all. All I'm saying is that it is a very mixed English situation, one which is epitomized in what the Italian artist, Canova, said to the English artist, Flaxman, "The problem with you Englishmen is that you see only with your ears." It would never have occurred to anyone on the continent to identify the word of God with words, but it did occur to the English. And they got by with it because their words were so eloquent. And when their eloquence was lost, they had only the literalism of the words identified with the word of God. That was a rather disastrous moment.

The trouble with art is that it does deal with sense and sensibilities, and it is sadly true that this kind of theology is afraid of sense. They say, where will it lead? God, if they knew where it would lead, they wouldn't look at all. There is an ingrained suspicion of art and its subverting qualities in our verbal culture. □



# Arts and Religion I Have Known

by David Nelson

I must admit that I'll take a little different tack. I take refuge in the fact that in a prolonged discussion with a researcher, a young man whom I admire very much, he pointed something out to me, something which I guess I knew but I couldn't really grasp intellectually, and that was for all the research that we carry on, our society is an anecdotal society and we must understand that. So over the past few days I have been trying to assemble in my mind the role of religion and art through anecdotes that traced my history of involvement in the arts, to put together a series of anecdotes that have meaning to me.

Starting from early on in high school I developed the nickname of "Preacher Dave," and I never knew why, because I never espoused any orthodox religion. I guess I just "espoused," and I wasn't quite sure that it was a complimentary nickname. But I also recall that from time to time various religious groups on campus would sooner or later seek me out and request me to become involved in that particular religious movement. I remember them all as someone was selling me an insurance policy—and I wasn't interested in insurance. But I have always seen myself as a religious person.

Then, I became the director of an arts center, which was a terribly new experience for me, and I took it on without any formal background on the sophomoric assumption that I had been interested in the arts and that if you were to run an arts center in a community, you simply made a commitment about doing it. But I found that there weren't any books and that the only source I had for information was that the operation of an arts center is very comparable to the operation of a church in a community of that size. The parallels were very dramatic, from the financial base to where our exhibits became our sermons, where our clientele and our membership all had to be administered to, had to be consoled, had to be educated.

We had a little "miracle worker" show up in the state—fondly referred to as "Super Nun." JoAnn Daley was a Dominican art teacher in a parochial school in Anaconda and was also a very fine artist. Anaconda is a mining community and very dependent on the mining industry. They have strikes quite often, and she took on that community and the arts at a time when the entire community was on strike which puts a great percentage of the people out of work. She put together in an old church—a de-sanctified church that the Salvation Army had given up on—an arts center which is equal to any that I have seen and turned on the community of Anaconda to the arts in a way that was just phenomenal. The last thing that happened was that they elected her "Woman of the Year." That showed me what the arts could do.

What I have to say to you today is from a very practical standpoint. It is that I'm very comfortable with what the arts can do and how the arts can be related to religion and the community, because I see it work every day. My confidence continued to grow. JoAnn now works for us, working with the small communities.

The next anecdote I go to is one which I think has cleared up a lot of history for me as far as the church, religion, and a sense of community is concerned. I was in Minnesota doing a consultancy for City Spirit—a program of the National Endowment for the Arts to bring people together to weave the arts into the fabric of a society and involve all elements of the society not just those who have espoused to be interested in the arts. This group in the north country of Minnesota was attempting to do that, and to our meeting came a member of the clergy from one of the small towns. I had encouraged them to address themselves to problems, not arts problems but problems of their community—then, leaving it up to the group to see if the arts could play any part in the solution.

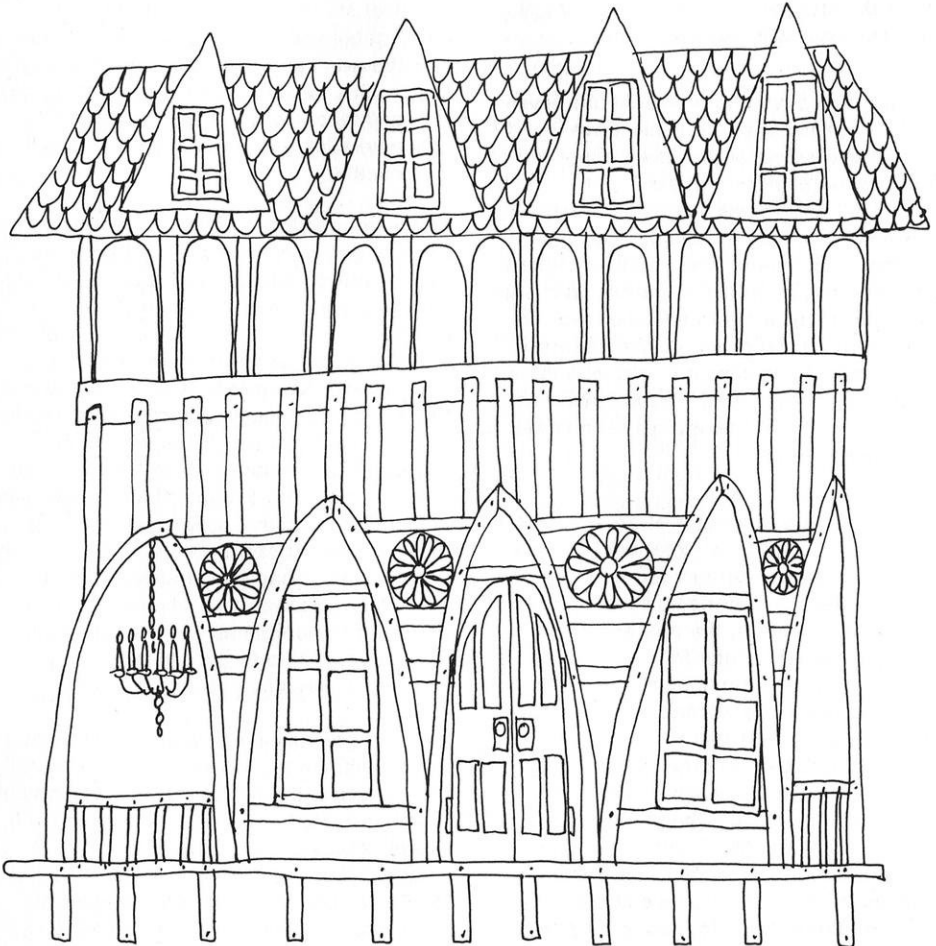
The minister was asked what problems he saw in his community? He said, "Apathy, a splintered community, we can't get the community together." That question was followed with, "Have you ever gotten the community together?" He said, "Yes, as a matter of fact the Easter before last we put together an Easter cantata, and for the first time people from all churches, from all segments of the

population were drawn together into our church and there was a sense of community.” In all my experiences what arts have to do with religion has been so obvious.

Working with small communities, as many of you people know, is a very sensitive situation. You’re not really in a position to go into a small community and illuminate them rapidly about the fine arts. I have no reservation about the fact that the arts contain a continuum, what we’ve found is that the most necessary thing is to let people find their place on that continuum. It’s a long process and it’s a gentle process, but it’s a process I

believe in very much. We’ve often said perhaps some of the program we’re involved with might not meet the national standards of excellence, but we can see the growth and we can see the excitement and we can see the human spirit come forth and that’s at the core of what we’re about. The human spirit has been buried by a lot of things that have happened to our society. I’m not completely confident that the arts have all the answers, but my experience has shown me that the arts have a very central role to play in starting to revitalize that spirit. I am most excited about it, and it’s most obvious to me the role that religion can play in the entire process. □

Drawing by M. G. DeBruyn, pen and ink.  
Courtesy: the artist.



## From The Record: II

**Ralph Peterson:** I just toss this question out to those of you in the arts: How do you cope with the matter of art as propaganda? Wasn't there a collection recently of Nazi art? And isn't it one of the dilemmas that John was raising with Ted that it's the ethical not the aesthetic because the aesthetic even with excellence can be propaganda, whether you're speaking of Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany, or perhaps even theologians running churches.

**David Nelson:** Just a quick response. Very recently we brought in a theatre from California, a street theatre, a very radical street theatre, dyed in the wool communists, mime theatre. We had a very hard time getting the support for that program yet we thought it was important to do it. The requirement for the grant was that after they had presented their political theatre, their propaganda, that there would be an open forum. And I was so pleased to see what transpired. The artists in the group were asked what was the role of art in communism and they gave the stock answer "as long as it supports the revolution they have a place." There was just unilateral rejection by the artists in the audience to that concept. I felt it was important that the artist was the one to come forward to say that concept was not within their realm. But, I understand what you are saying, and it exists and many artists have taken on the role that the artist should be political.

**Grant Spradling:** Hasn't this been the major area in which the religious communities in this country have been involved in the arts, either didactically or as propaganda?

**John Newport:** The propaganda value of art—I am going to mention that this is one of the reasons why conservative religious people are interested in the arts—what can it do to communicate the gospel?

**Anderson Clark:** Ted, I'd like to ask you a question. When you describe this new possibility of some margins in this world, you have described a future where everything tightens up and you see in those spaces art and sports and that they are going to be able to maintain



Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

the freedom to decide. Now doesn't that sort of maintain this moral tradition that defines a person in terms of decisions. I kept wanting to think that in those spaces there's some other kind of knowing, learning that is not again under a new guise of moralizing but maybe something that is ecstatic, it takes you over, it conquers, it captivates, it releases. Now is there any possibility of freedom being found there that does not depend on a very sophisticated piece of existential baggage?

Having said that, I want to say to John, is there a possibility of some of us who because we were raised in a period of time when reality was Sunday school morality, is there some possibility that some of us might be involved in a moral crusade that gives more space to artists even though we may not get all that the artist has? In fact I sort of think RCARR may be in this bag, in this position. I'm worried that you're going into protecting space for freedom and that's it's only in terms of moral decision, and then I'm also worried is there a space for me in all this.

**Ted Gill:** My imagination does not go beyond the exercise of freedom being a basis, a main part in the recipe for humanity. Hearing your question that reminds me that maybe that's a limitation on my own imagination. Your own projection of ecstasy is a possibility that goes beyond the need for any deciding or anything



**Ezekiel's Vision** by William Blake, water color. Photo courtesy: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

in which your humanity is italicized just by the state of its being. I can understand that, I mean I can feel that but I can't understand it maybe because I'm a man. Ecstasies indefinitely prolonged begin to hurt us males. So I just can't image the whole. I like the smack of it but I can't occupy it. I am limited I guess for feeling that doing something with your chooser is what's fun—not just fun but what's significant about being a person and not mineral or vegetable.

**Wesley Hotchkiss:** I think this gets into the alternative thing, John, that you were talking about. I certainly agree with you that we'd be making a real mistake if we get into alternatives here and seeing these things sharply as alternatives that is the empirical or however you put these things. I can't escape the fact that I am an empirical person and in the midst of an empirical culture and yet I know that the salvation of the empirical depends on having the non-rational quality in it, of the unpredictable which is a scandal to the empirical. Anything that is unpredictable scandalizes the empirical, nevertheless it is the salvation of the empirical.

**John Newport:** Doesn't the history of aesthetics illustrate the problems we're having in

defining aesthetics. History reveals a number of aesthetic theories such as those held by John Dewey, Freud, Plato, the Expressionists and the play theory advocates. So there are many different theories of aesthetics. You cannot confine it to one definition. Or is there a definition that would be fairly universal?

**Pamela Ilot:** Does it have to be an either/or? This age particularly is realizing that there are so many levels of each term. We're sitting here enjoying an intellectual exchange, but at the same time those of us sitting near the window can hear a dove out there that is cooing away—and one doesn't detract from the other. If we find ways of really making people realize they don't have to be an either/or person, that they needn't be embarrassed to be sensual in the best sense, to enjoy simple things or they needn't be afraid of being accused of being eggheads. This I think can be very much our ministry—to make people feel at home in more than one dimension, not to scare them away by pretending that you have to be this or that. So much is open to experience if only we could give them the confidence to come on in, wander in and out of both disciplines. That is the great challenge to us.

**David Driskell:** As a practicing artist I want to go back to something that Ted said earlier and try to establish that as a premise for the business of not making a defense for the case of art. By that I simply mean that art by its very nature becomes religious in the sense that it is this encounter with form, the world, with things that happen and be and do. That is, to paraphrase you this morning, deep down there is the artist within all of us, but our artistry will differ according to our ways of making: man is a maker. And this is the same as saying that he makes choices. I don't think that it matters too much about how we categorized these choices—whether it's propaganda or what have you because if we look at all of the great works, specifically those that have been done in the service of the church, they too proselytized and propagandize

**Dancing Angel** by David C. Driskell, oil on canvas, 1973. Photo courtesy: J. Clark Thomas.

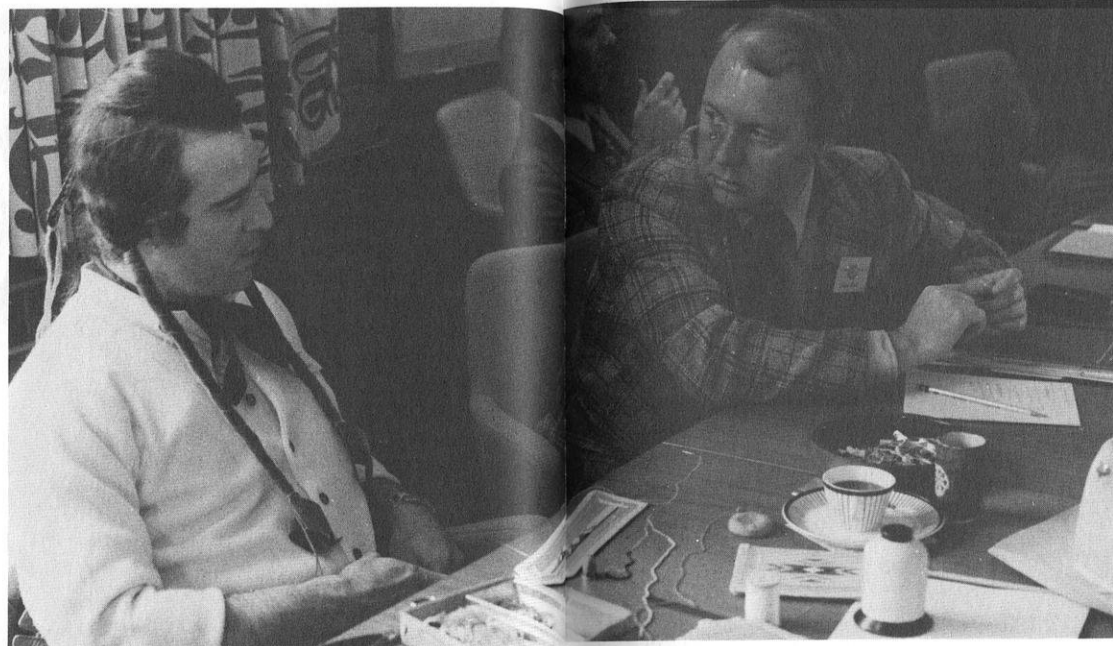




a certain extent and brought us into an aspect of history which, of course, we can look back at now and see these in a different light. But it seems to me that if we go back to this idea that man is a maker and, if we can see our "because" and our "for the sake of" as an outgrowth of that kind of human encounter, then we don't have to apologize for Louise Nevelson being in the church with blocks and shapes which we see in nature and which are repeated in our own lives, in the way we live and the way we work and so forth. It becomes the reincarnation of religious experience in a different format. And I think that we in America can probably appreciate that better now because we are young and new in the sense of history and culture, and we can look back on all the mistakes and see the paths that others have taken, also, because we have not had a specific direction because we have been this melting pot culture.

Speaking for myself, I do think that having been brought up in a special atmosphere—what is only recently being looked at philosophically as black religion—there was something that was always artistic, and there was no separation of the form of beauty of the dance—the ecstasy that has been talked about here—from the word. It was flesh because it was manifested through the body, through the tongue, through songs, through all these things. That's why I think that we need no apology for it at this date in time, we don't need to categorize it. If it happens in the blues, it happens because it speaks of the toils and the tremors of life; if it happens in the gospels of Mahalia Jackson, it happens because she saw it in a different light. And if it happens in jazz, it's happening because there is another idiom through which it can be expressed. I'm simply saying that if we can accept ourselves as being involved in this process of choice making, then there is no need for the categories because we are all involved in a common cause.

**Gary Johnson:** I have listened to three formal and semi-formal statements and to some degree I'm still wondering why I'm here. I had that feeling when I arrived and I still have it somewhat because, as I listen to much of this, I see bits and pieces that I think apply to the world I live in—which is different from this one. Yet, other of what I hear is going past me and is virtually meaningless. I keep



Gary Johnson and Jay Buell. Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

puzzling as I sit here sewing over what I could possibly bring to this gathering that might be of use to you because I see some confusion. In fact I see little else but confusion as to what your purposes are. I think possibly that the only thing that I might be able to bring that is of benefit is as someone who is a product of a society in which these particular problems—the problems of relating religion with art—does not exist. The traditional American Indian—in talking about the traditional Indian I'm talking about the person who is culturally Indian regardless of his biology—to the traditional Indian there is no conflict between religion and art, and I don't know of there ever having been one. The traditional religions and the traditional arts are so bound together, so intermixed with everything else that is a part of Indian society, that it is very difficult to draw a line as to where art ends and religion begins and social practice takes over. These things are all a network. You can compare Indian religion to a spider web. Pull one thing out of it, it falls apart. Our Indian culture, if you pull out one strand the rest of it collapses. You really cannot separate it and dissect it and study it, in that sense. In Indian culture, the problem of how the arts and religion should get along was resolved so long ago

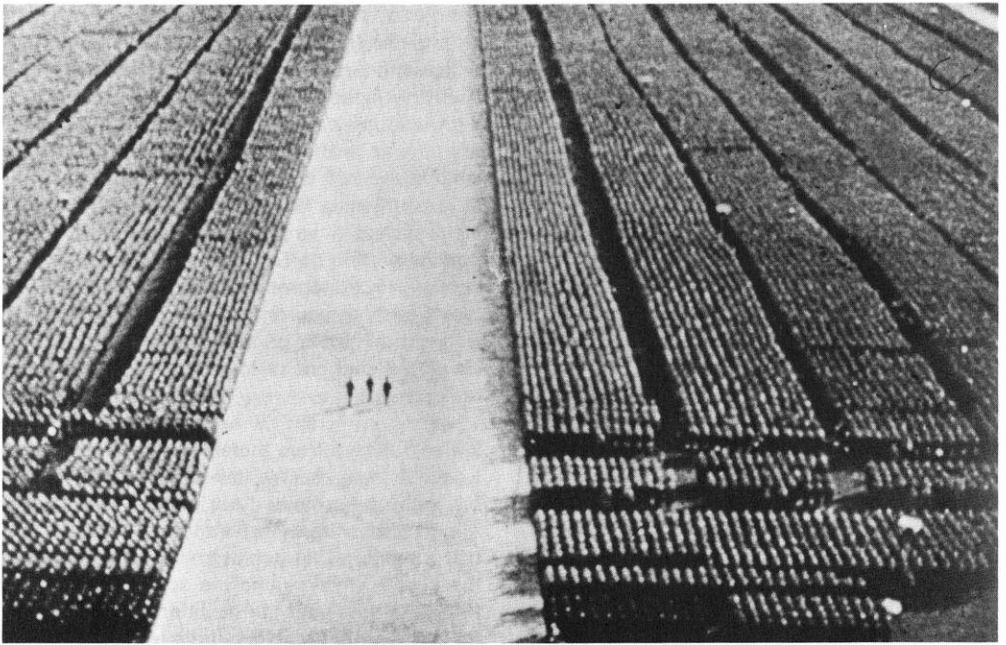
that we have forgotten how we did it. It's sort of like the man who recently asked me at a little production about the Bicentennial, "When was your bicentennial?"

I see some of the problems that Dr. Gill is discussing and I agree with him. I also see what John was saying and I agree with him. And I listened to Dave's anecdotes and I agree with him. The values of art as an integral part of a balanced society has been well proven to me or I wouldn't be sitting here. How you go about doing it, I don't know, but I think it is something that you must do. In the anecdotal sense I have seen art draw out withdrawn children and I've also seen it spoil some pretty good kids too. In Indian communities we have been affected by this Protestant ethic, the anti-artistic bent of American Society. It manifests itself in a little different fashion but until very recently most schools on Indian reservations, regardless of whether the school population was mainly Indian or mainly non-Indian, were modeled after schools in rural, non-Indian communities. In those communities they teach the three R's and they teach art. In Indian school systems or school systems on reservations they teach art, this sort of art (picks up pottery, water

tumbler). In the junior high school in Crow agency the Indian students are producing things similar to this cup with potter's wheels. And they make hanging lamps with holes in them and put candles in them, and they take them home to their grandmother who wonders what in the hell it is, it can't hold water. Well, at least this cup holds water. These types of art programs have been very valuable in Wisconsin or Ohio or Tennessee, but in Crow agency or Lodgegrass (Mont.) this is a cup. It's something you drink water from. It's not a relevant art to our people, and I think it's ridiculous that our children are being taught these things.

We've suffered from this ethic in the attempt to acculturate us. We haven't been denied art but we've been denied our own artistic tradition. The school systems and the churches had a hand in that denial in that they created the people who created the school system. I don't believe that the traditional Indian arts have been persecuted by most of the churches. There are a few Penecostal groups, primarily, who see their way as the only way, but in general the missionaries on reservations did not discourage the traditional arts. In fact in some cases they boosted them as a source of economic development for their parishioners. And they were not intending to develop the aesthetic, but they had that by-product anyhow. In other cases at least they didn't discourage the traditional arts. I recall that a number of years ago the original missionaries in the Lodgegrass community where I'm from used to get Indian families to dress up their little children on Easter Sunday and come to church in all of their buckskins not because they wanted to encourage Indian culture but because they thought it was cute. Its by-product was that it encouraged the Indian culture and that they didn't mind. Neither did the Indians as a matter of fact.

But indirectly, I think that the Protestant ethic has had a negative effect upon the traditional Indian arts just as that ethic has had a negative effect upon Indian culture in general. The arts survived however, and I have to agree with Dave Nelson that the arts will out. Some of you may have seen what I'm sewing here. It's on canvas and brown paper bags, and it's using beads that were manufactured in Czechoslovakia. But method of art was developed prior to the introduction of either canvas, paper bags or beads from Czech-



**Triumph of the Will**, directed by Leni Riefenstahl. Photo courtesy: Museum of Modern Art/Film Stills Archive.

oslovakia. The form of embroidery as an art form was practiced who knows how long ago, using porcupine quills and loose hair and other natural substances. So this piece has its roots in a very long tradition, probably as long or longer than the European traditions. It is an older art form than anything else produced in this country, and it has survived regardless of the outright persecution of some groups and regardless of the negligence of other groups. The traditional Indian would no more think of going into the sun dance without a beaded belt than a priest would think of delivering Mass without his vestments or without his cup. These things are bound up in our religion and in our social interactions, in our celebrations, even in our Halloween parties—they are religious and they are secular, there is no difference. You cannot pick up a piece of traditional Indian art, say it is a religious artifact or is a non religious artifact because chances are that it's both.

I think I would agree with David Driskell in that a personal commitment is what's needed. Art will out as Dave said, but it will only out if the individuals involved take it for what it is, an expression of individuality, an expression of the person's concept of beauty. I don't

think it matters whether you're a Christian, whether you're Black, red, or communist. If you think it's beautiful, then it's beautiful. I don't mean that every one's concept is as good as everyone else's, but I think that individuality and the strength of individual character is the question that we are dealing with rather than a group psychology. If there is a danger that the church's support of the arts will lead to propaganda, then the artists won't participate—the propagandists will participate but the artists won't. Any inclination to bend art to propaganda will simply fail because the artists won't participate in it. I don't really believe that there is a problem of the churches controlling the arts and making the arts their tool. Just as traditional Indian arts have survived in spite of persecution or in spite of neglect, other artistic traditions will survive as well.

**Ronald Whyte:** As far as propaganda goes, there is the case of Leni Riefenstahl and *Triumph of the Will* which is very hard to come up with because the hand reaches for it, as Cocteau would say, because it's so brilliantly done and the Nuremberg rally is so brilliantly staged and so obviously staged to be photographed. It is in essence a work of extreme

evil for a lot of reasons, perfectly obvious ones. But at the same time you still reach toward it, but it can be put into a perspective and in fact completely annihilated if on one screen you project the Nuremberg rally and on another screen you project a Busby Berkeley production number. In that book by Hitler's architect, he says that Hitler used to watch two films a night, and one of them was invariably an American musical and almost invariably a Busby Berkeley. Suddenly the evil just evaporated. What it does come down to ultimately is that if someone says that you have to do a piece of propaganda—whether it's the church, whether it's a government or whether it's even yourself—whatever you do will be dictated by your hand and not by your head. If you are a filmmaker the propaganda will be in the eye and not in the content. There is no way to subvert the true artist. I do not think you can subvert him in any conceivable way. There is no possible way to subvert him and there is no possible way to convert him.

**Ted Gill:** Oddly enough the same film came up with John Dillenger yesterday, and his point was precisely yours I think—that Leni Riefenstahl was a gigantic talent, an artist, as a filmmaker. She may have even recognized that it was propaganda, but she was helpless in the hands of her artistry. She made a great film and, subsequently, looking at the film you see the vulgarity of what it was she was representing at the time. In this case it was the truth that won out. She could not help but tell the truth because she was an artist, although, consciously, she was very probably an agent of the government.

But for me this still leaves the question of propaganda. What about all the propagandists for the church for all the centuries? That's part of our artistic yoke now—all the paintings, medieval and Renaissance people who volunteered to be paid by the church and turned out propaganda for the church. Do I understand wrongly that Baroque art paid for part of the counter-Reformation, the counter-attack? It turned out to be great any way, even though it might have been hired, because they were true artists. It stays great if the intention was propagandistic or not.

**James Buell:** I don't understand why everybody is so afraid of propaganda art. George Bernard Shaw said that all art is propaganda.

One of the great ironies and tragedies of course with his career is that people just laughed and clapped and paid no attention to the propaganda at all. I think that there have been lots of artists who are really hired guns whom somebody sent out with camera or canvas or pen or something to prove something or zap somebody or whatever; and if it's crap nobody's going to pay any attention to it and sometimes if it's great nobody's going to pay any attention to the propaganda that's involved in the packaging.

**Jane Dillenger:** But you killed your own point right there.

**James Buell:** I feel no discomfort with the idea of propaganda art.

**Susan Barker:** In other words, all art has a message? Is that what you are saying?

**Thomas Stewart:** One problem with the church has been propaganda and another is authoritarianism and I'd like to be authoritarian at this point and say that it's time to hear from John Newport. I think that it will be appropriate.

**Gary Johnson:** I'd like to add one observation. It pleases me that it is primarily theologians who are worrying about propagandizing. □



# Arts From a Conservative Perspective

by John Newport

I think I represent the attitude towards the arts of one of the largest conservative religious denominations—Southern Baptists. My attitude can perhaps be expressed best in terms of personal pilgrimage.

I was very interested in the arts as a young man because of my family. A brother and sister are professionally trained as artists, and my mother is devoted to the arts. Soon after finishing college, I was caught up in a dramatic religious youth revival movement which swept throughout the South. In short order, I found myself in a theological seminary. I spent six years in the seminary with a strong emphasis on biblical studies. Upon leaving the seminary, I went to a college church as pastor. I felt that I wanted to broaden my background and so I left for Europe. It was in Switzerland that I first met Ted Gill in a seminar in the home of Emil Brunner.

The European period reawakened my interest in the arts. A short pastorate followed where I found opportunity for experimentation in the arts—especially music and the visual arts.

Soon I went to Baylor University to teach and was at the school during the Paul Baker controversy. Baker presented the world premiere of Eugene O'Neill's "A Long Day's Journey into Night" in an unexpurgated version. This presentation before a group of young people from conservative churches led to a controversy which eventuated in his departure from Baylor.

From Baylor, after a brief interlude in New Orleans, I went to the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary—perhaps the world's largest with 2,900 students. The school has an outstanding Church Music Division. Other art forms have not been as well received. In many ways, there was a good response from a basically conservative student body. Encouraged, I decided to devote sabbatical

leaves to the areas of theology and the arts. A Seatlantic grant from the Rockefeller Foundation undergirded a year at Harvard. Another sabbatical was spent in New York. My book "Theology and Contemporary Art Forms" was published by Ward in 1971. For a period of time there was an excellent response from the students and churches. But we have had in recent years—not only in the South but all over the country—a reaction against the artistic, symbolic and mythical. In many areas there has been a turning toward a more authoritarian approach towards religion, toward a more literal interpretation of the Bible. There has been a suspicion of the arts unless they can be used in a functional way.

Many of the South's largest churches have tremendous music and drama programs. They are used, however, primarily as vehicles for communicating the gospel. Sometimes the artistic quality suffers.

The arts are being used a great deal in the programs promoted by the Southern Baptists' Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tennessee. A new hymnal has just been published. Other art forms are promoted. Three of the six Southern Baptist seminaries have accredited music schools. Foreign mission groups are using music in their programs.

There is still reticence about art forms other than music. Some time ago we attempted an arts week at Southwestern Seminary sponsored by the students. Clips of Tennessee Williams' films were used. Original religious dances were presented. Unfortunately, some of the students were not ready for such presentation. There was a negative reaction on the part of a number of the more conservative students. For one student, the religious dance was "sin in the sanctuary."

Many pastors still harbor resentment against religious sculpture. One incident shows this negative attitude. A life size sculptured group of Da Vinci's "Last Supper" was offered to the seminary as a gift by a wealthy patron. A building was to be erected to house it. The offer was rejected after local pastors and some professors objected that it was anti-biblical. The sculpture set was given to the city of Ft. Worth as a tourist attraction.

A few observations are in order. In conserva-



Drawing by M. G. DeBruyn, pen and ink.  
Courtesy: the artist.

tive religious groups I believe that oftentimes there is seen a rivalry between art and Christianity, unless the arts can be subsumed for proclamation purposes. There has been a long-standing Protestant fear of the visual arts. A family relative was pastor of a prominent Southern church. He would not allow a cross on or in the church. He did not accept the solution to the Iconoclastic Controversy suggested by John of Damascus.

Many feel that the Bible cannot be properly understood unless the symbolic nature of much of its language is appreciated. One of the few ways that conservative students are helped is in terms of the Calvinistic doctrine of accommodation. Calvin suggested that God accommodated or adjusted his visions and language to finite man. For example, God gave the prophet Isaiah a vision of God sitting on a throne. Obviously, even for Calvin, God does not have a physical body and does not sit on a literal throne. This vision was given, however, in this way so man could understand God's holiness and transcendence. For Calvin, behind the symbols, however, is a personal God.

There are other reasons why there is a lack of

appreciation of the arts among some conservative religious people. Many have not had exposure to the arts. Fortunately, however, this handicap is being overcome in some areas. Other people who have interest in the arts, find their interest wavering if the artist is prophetic or challenges the status quo. Conventional and realistic art still has the largest appeal.

One well-known conservative leader, Francis Schaeffer, has a great deal to say about the arts. His son is an artist. For Schaeffer, the greatest value of modern art is that it dramatizes the alternative world views which are available to modern man. According to Schaeffer, most modern art is related to existentialism. And existentialism is dangerous because it has broken with objective categories of morals and thought. The only art that would be valid is that which in some way reflects the theistic view of the universe. Schaeffer grants that art oftentimes needles the Christians, provokes them perhaps.

For conservatives, one of modern art's primary purposes is to show man his need of help outside of himself. From a positive perspective, the arts can help Christians to propagate and celebrate the gospel. For most conservatives, modern art would have little ethical value or contribution. □



## From The Record: III

**William Otis:** I've been persuaded by both Johns that the puritan ethic is indeed responsible for some of the standoffishness between art and the religious communities. I think that there is another element here which we have only hit upon, and that's the reluctant role of the religious communities—particularly those of puritan strain—as a patron. They are very uneasy in the role of being a patron. They don't want to get into the business of patronage. It is offensive to them on its own ground. They hesitate to approach artists for some of the reasons mentioned, but I think that there's a strong element of pride involved here too. The artists will laugh at us.

**John Newport:** The idea that an artist is not a propagandist worries me a great deal because I think everybody expresses a world view through his medium whatever it is. Obviously, certain mediums lend themselves to propaganda more than others. I do think the Christian community—and this is what I call a pluralistic sort of situation—has the right to discuss this propaganda value along with the inherent value of his art object. I think this is something that we should be open and honest about. The artist ought to be open and honest enough to admit that even though he is primarily interested in quality and balance and form, that he is also propagating a view, a perspective on life—consciously or unconsciously.

**David Driskell:** Can I just end with an amen? It's a quotation from the English artist-theologian, Eric Gill. He says that the ultimate aim of education (speaking of art in this case) is to make men more creative. It seems to me that is the basis of the propaganda statement that you are making—that is, the human encounter. But the degree of the propagandizing will vary based on our interpretations and our artistry.

**Thomas Stewart:** I've got one propaganda story to tell before giving John Dillenberger a couple of minutes. The issue of propaganda has come up so often and when Dave mentioned it again towards the end of the last session my mind went back to another discipline and another figure and another time—I



Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

think in 1913 when Nils Bohr was first presenting the interior model of the atom and was presenting papers on this subject. His fellow physicists were assaulting him right and left in the lecture hall and he said, "Gentlemen, I'm not trying to persuade you of anything, I'm just trying to tell you how things really are."

**John Dillenberger:** A couple of quick points. My first one is my last reference to the English scene. It is an interesting point that from the Quakers and Baptists to the Episcopalians there is a common history. It was not until the Tractarian movement that Anglicanism got interested in art and then only in relation to liturgy. Laud, the earlier Puritan opponent, was interested in how they did things in the early church and could hardly have cared less what they meant. In that sense that Anglicanism of the eighteenth century and seventeenth century is just like Puritanism. Now these groups all had particular problems in the English scene, and they identified themselves with Israel in a particular biblical interpretation. Their use of scripture against art was based on their common English experiences, and they went to scripture and found it there. It is not that

they became anti-art out of scriptures; rather they expropriated art out of the particular English problems of their history. The proof of that is that when the Puritans dealt with scripture they were never literalistic on issues which didn't directly touch their English history. They really read scripture, and they thought of themselves as the new Israel. If you take people with the same reformed pedigree who came from the continent to the new colonies, they had art with them. They read the same John Calvin, but they had art. Sometimes they put it in church, sometimes they didn't, but they always had it in their homes, they always had it in public. Take the Moravians, for example. John Valentine Haidt got paid to do nothing else but paint for Moravian churches in the colonies.

In connection with the Indians—I've recently been reading the diary of Father Nicholas Point, the Jesuit in the Flathead country. You remember that for the missionaries, one of the objects was to get people settled in agriculture. Civilization, agriculture, a settled existence were felt to be one with morality and Christianity. It's a very interesting problem. Nicholas Point, out with the Indians, discovered that language wasn't a problem; nevertheless he resorted to art. Why? The Indians had an oral tradition, but they also had a seeing tradition. As hunters, seeing was a mode. And Father Nicholas Point extensively used paintings as part of his mission, not because of the language barrier but because of what seeing meant when compared to a verbal way of thinking only.

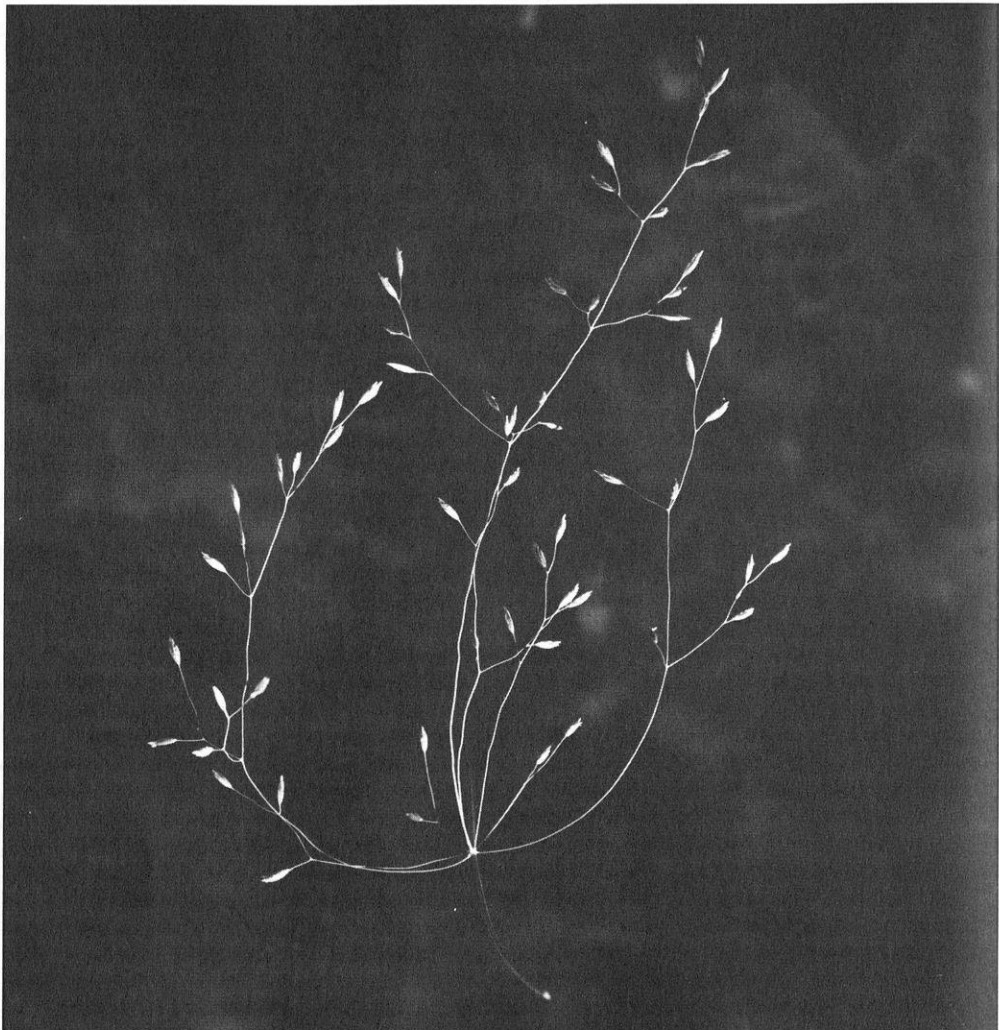
This is really my basic point. Art is a mode of disclosing, a mode of perceiving reality which is not contradictory to the other modes but which cannot be translated into the others. One cannot say what a painting is. I learned the meaning of the word "transgression" from Barnett Newman who was such a great talker; but he never violated a painting, that is the painting finally had its own life. And what the painting conveys as a matter of perception cannot be translated into words. It is this untranslatability which makes such a tremendous difference; it is why we need all our sensibilities to be fully human. This is why when some of the sensibilities drop out, something of our humanity drops out.

Maybe I have found a difference with Ted. I finally decided that at heart he really is a

Presbyterian preacher whose existentialism finally showed up at that point. We are choosers, he says. A lot of choices get made. How do they get made? They get made out of perceptions that overwhelm us, out of perceptions that intrude upon us. Afterwards we can assess their relative legitimacy; but it is perceptions that launch us. In that sense it's out of perceptions that we do make choices. Maybe he doesn't disagree with that, but I think that perceptions are untranslatable. If Ted really believes that, then maybe he is saying the aesthetic is related to the ethical. The ethical grows out of all our perceptions and does not and cannot and should not exist by itself. It exists by itself if it does not grow out of the total perceptions which are around us. In that sense, beauty really is a fundamental mode that is different, unique, not translatable into other categories. And in that sense beauty, is not "for the sake of" but stands by itself. Consequences follow and there are jobs to be done, but that is different than to use the perceptions for the sake of getting a job done. It is perceptions that send us to do tasks. I think that's true both in theology and in good art.

**David Nelson:** Have any of you heard the astronauts try to explain their experience in outer space? To me this was a real revelation. It was in front of a religious group, by the way, to which the astronaut was speaking. His observation was that he did not feel closer to God while out in space. But beyond that he spent much of his talk apologizing for his inadequacies and finally all he could say was he wished they could send a poet or, "I wish I could sing you a song about it." And yet he had brought back thousands of feet that documented his trip. I thought of the great irony that we historically used to send artists along on expeditions so they could record things until the camera came along. And now here in the great era of technology we send a man to the moon and he comes back with all the film in the world but unable to relate to the people back here what happened to him out there.

**Sister Noemi Weygant:** I have to say something to that. He went, I think, with an automatic camera that was run by machine. The photographer today could have come back with something just as good as the artist of yesterday. When I first went up to the convent 27 years ago, the only acceptable arts forms



**Grass** by Sr. Noemi Weygant, 1963. Photo courtesy: the artist

were painting and carving and so forth. I'm not going to argue with anyone, is photography an art or not. As far as I am concerned, I'm as dedicated to my camera as any artist—I don't care what medium he's in. I'm just as dedicated to photography as an *art*, and that's the way I teach it. I'm willing almost to lay my life down for it because that's how much I believe in art and the camera as the medium. One painter said to me one time, "You could have been a great painter." And I said that I never wanted to be a painter, I wanted to be a photographer.

When I went up to the convent they didn't

have any faith in me either as an artist or a potential religious because of my Methodist past and so forth. It was really pretty questionable that Protestant rearing. So I went up there and they just gave me a tiny room and all I had for equipment were apple crates and this kind of thing. I made my own dark room. I had nothing for five years but the Lord. I did have the Lord. I put my whole soul, faith, in a little camera and the help of the Lord. But I decided this was going to take some real propaganda to get photography honored as an art. This is going to take some real salesmanship. I had been in advertising before I went into the religious life so I took a lot of that

spirit in with me and I always said that I cannot be a good teacher of catechism—don't trust me there—but I can really talk about religion through the camera lens. So I started this campaign. The first article I sold was to the *Benedictine Review* and I started my theme song, "Glorifying God through the Camera Lens," and I got by with it.

Now, the Reverend Mother was always with me. It got to the point once I said to a priest, I think I better go because everyone was against me. He said, "Is the Reverend Mother against you?" I said, "No, she's with me." And he said until she tells you to go—if you want to stay—stay. Now, what was the hassle? Photography was looked on practically as a very scandalous art medium. Second, what right had the Reverend Mother to let a sister follow a hobby? "Look at her out over the field wasting that film. A sister should be doing lots of useful things—why all this wasting of time and money on taking pictures?" I've got enough Protestant in me, the Methodist, that I replied, "The Lord said to me." The Lord said to me, "I want you to go forth and be a photographer for me," and I said, "Okay, Lord, I'll go forth and be a photographer for you."

I only had an area of about ten acres to work in—I could go nowhere else to take pictures. And I said, Lord, you told me to sell all I had and buy the field that held the pearl without price and that's what I did. So that pearl is in this acreage back here. I know it is. And do you know what happened? I found pearls and pearls and pearls—they're endless. Where did I begin to see them? I had a new dimension of sight—it was like a miracle happened to me. I would look at a little raindrop and it was as if I was seeing it from inside out. I could look at a little weed and it was almost as if I could envision the growing process. I would take the camera and go out and enter a world of ecstasy. I would come back and I would be so excited. I'll never forget one summer there were gold damsel flies—and yellow ones and green ones and blue ones, and I was going up every day. I learned all about taking damsel flies, and I won a national award on one I called "Blue Fire." One day I was coming back from this expedition and I was just glowing. One of the sisters said, "Sister, I've seen you go up there every afternoon at that same patch, what are you doing?" And I said, "Sister, the dragon-

flies!" She said, "What dragonflies?" This was really my indoctrination.

**Thomas Stewart:** Sister Noemi made a passing reference to a 'hobby'—referring to photography as a hobby. I've heard you, Ted, bad-mouth the *New York Times* section on Sunday that describes itself as "Arts and Leisure."

**Ted Gill:** I see a relationship, but it's more complicated than that. I think that no matter how leisure is coming—and it could be by economic dislocation or technological triumph—it's more and more there. I teach people who retire at 42, after all. My other colleagues who are fortunate enough not to be chairmen teach two days a week, and that's their whole job. This is not something that we still have to debate about with IBM, whether certain developments will give more time to some people. It's already there. Nine percent of us are unemployed; that's leisure too. And that's where it seems to me humanity can go to seed—no, that even sounds too fruitful. The emptiness of time is infinitely more destructive than the overloading of time ever was. Time is a basic component—then something has happened to life itself. So I advertise the arts. I enjoy them and athletics and games and all such activities because those are places where you are kept alive.

Now, John Dillenberger has forced me to recognize something about myself. I delight I guess as frankly as anybody in the aesthetic moment, the experience—God knows I throw myself into it, but I do *throw* myself into it. And for me, I assume that's a part of my delight, that I present myself for it—that, of course, won't accomplish it—but I can at least arrange to be present, to be available and then I do things within it.

**John Dillenberger:** Let me ask you one question. Is it as much a necessity of your being, to see and to savor, as it is a necessity of the artist to create art? That's the critical question I think.

**Ted Gill:** For me, if I understand myself at all, it certainly is. But for me it loses importance the more automatic it becomes. It is the same reason I resist religious spiritualisms or drugs. I mean, down the line wherever another mechanism simply operates on me, without my active participation, the event loses something.



So I am involved. Deliberately. Hauling everything I am or have, up to the brink, to the site of the possibility. Even though I don't create any art, I get ready for it, and when it explodes into new reality in and around me, then around it and within it I do things with it.

**John Dillenberger:** But doesn't art change things directly? It changes the decisions I make. It makes me make decisions that I wouldn't make if I were getting ready just to make decisions.

**Ted Gill:** Yes, I know, but we're not separate on that, I hope. That's what I thought I was talking about. That's what I mean by recognizing that there are affinities or that there are ethical implications, or, are aesthetic implications important to ethics? I'll find more and more modest ways to say this. But finally I think they have to do with each other in some way. Ethics doesn't create aesthetics. Maybe this has something to do with the earlier confessional this week: I'm not an artist, at least in any of the traditional forms. But that way I can have a part in it.

**John Dillenberger:** Well, we're confessional—you see the only authentic conversion experience I'll ever admit to was seeing the film of Jackson Pollak painting. That was a conversion experience in the sense that then I knew that seeing, and seeing an artist work and his perceptions, conveyed something that's terribly important to me that I simply could not find, discover, or have disclosed to me in any other way. That was a terrific watershed.

**Ted Gill:** That happened to you when you were sophisticated enough to understand it that way. I was converted twice in the traditional way when I was too young to know what was going on. In both, I was a high school boy, 15 I think, full of yeast, all sorts of things bubbling in ducts that I didn't even know I had before. These were both churchly situations. The first time the evangelist was a lady, a woman of supernal beauty I thought. In Appleton, Wisconsin, what have you got to go on? She had long golden hair and had on a long white dress with butterfly sleeves and long-stemmed red roses. There was a great flight of stairs coming down—I don't know how they got them in there! But as she entered it was down the flight of stairs with the butterfly sleeves gently waving and the

red roses lying in her arms. I was hers. I was sitting in the balcony. Then when she came to the altar, and she gave the call, "Just come forward and we'll all sing, Just As I Am." Well, we sang "Just As I Am." Then, she started calling. We kept repeating it as other people filtered forward, but she wasn't satisfied. She kept saying to the people—now I understand what she was up to but at the time I was a poor innocent boy—saying to the people, "Now, we're going to sing one more stanza, and all of you up there keep coming down," as she kept sweeping the balcony, with her great eyes, her outstretched arms, begging people in the balcony to come down, which indicated to the people on the main floor that this was a sold-out house, that people were stacked in to the rafters. The fact is that I was the only person in the balcony. While the people sang one more verse and still another verse, there was this intransigent creature begging the people in the balcony to come down. And I was it! So I came down, and some old gentleman—a shoe salesman or something—pawed me all over at the mercy seat.

That was the first conversion. Now the thing I didn't understand there was that for me in Appleton that was an aesthetic experience. She was a kind of artist and I was responding at many levels. Because it was in my vocabulary, I interpreted it theologically or religiously. I think it was religious, but not *just* that.

A few months later a dumpy little woman came to town, and I went to hear her. She was an actress—she did Jonah and Job and Noah and everybody. She told these stories. She had one old broken-down chair and a kitchen table and she populated a world. Even now I think it must have been marvelous. And so I went for her. As a matter of fact, on the way home I was so moved that I wet my pants. The point is once again that this was an aesthetic experience, but I was too young to understand it. I had only mid-western, religious dials on which such experience could register, so I got only theological reading on my experience. John, you had your aesthetic experience when you were old enough to understand. I think there is a whole world of people who are interpreting certain types of experience in a limited way because they have a poor vocabulary.



**Grant Spradling:** It seems to me that the issue of the effectiveness of art is really an important challenge as John Newport mentioned. It seems to me that the problem of the conservative parallels the problem that we've been having in more liberal churches. Only reasons would *sound* different. To the liberal's gospel of bringing about social and economic justice the arts seem counter-revolutionary. They are really evil, they are contrary to the priority agenda. I wonder if there isn't really some parallel between the kind of rationalism that generates biblical literalism and rationalism that gets liberals the social gospel. Then I wonder also if the challenge coming from both those places doesn't have to be met by the art world as well as by those of us in the religious community who are concerned for the arts. Dick Clark and I were talking about the kind of rhetoric that is going into the advocating for more and more public funds to support the arts rather than for private funds to support the arts. Since we are in a society that is increasingly sensitive to sufferings and injustices, what right do we have—when you can see that a person has a home crowded with the works of distinguished artists and this person doesn't seem in any way transformed—do we have a right to measure that?

I know artists who have great gifts, and in many cases I don't see that this brings them much joy. It's almost an affliction.

**John Newport:** Ionesco, the absurd dramatist, is an example of a person who has written extensively about what he was trying to portray in his art. In his case, we know what he's about.

**Ted Gill:** Jeremiah was in the same situation.

**Pamela Ilot:** The prophets were not happy people, they suffered. But I think the churches' social ethics message is being more graphically portrayed off-Broadway in some plays that have been done and some of the things that are even finding their way into Lincoln Center. Television, which hasn't achieved being an art form yet but is a graphic form, has done more I think to make people aware of social injustices and individual moral dilemmas than any other influence in today's culture. Yet we never seem to manage to draw mutual support from these things. So often we go off in a different direction, and the churches don't perceive

their allies. Without capturing the arts, if we can just have more exchange, more mutuality and support and if more of us can become honest brokers in the situation and give people a chance to perceive the things they hold in common.

**Grant Spradling:** I want to test this out too. It seems to me that persons involved in the folk arts seem to be more transformed in their whole lives than people in the non-folk, the classical arts.

**Pamela Ilot:** I think they are more successful because they can bridge more easily into the popular arts. Joan Baez can cut a song that goes onto records or that has a big audience for the young, and it's readily apparent. A lot in the more classic fields are shy, they're embarrassed to be told they're preaching something great. They're doing it because it has to be done. I had Shad Northshield trapped into a conversation with some earnest moral philosophers the other day at a meeting such as this but not as entertaining. Northshield, who has come up with such perceptive documentaries about hunger, about the Navaho situation denied with great embarrassment that he had any moral stance to make in these or was stimulated by any sense of moral outrage to do them. They were just there and he's a documentary man. I wasn't convinced. I remembered Shad Northshield being in enormous vivid arguments with executives twenty years ago about things needing to be done as a moral issue, but he will shun anyone telling him that he's doing the same thing the churches are trying to do.

**John Newport:** Negro spirituals are fascinating. David knows a great deal about them. I have recently read material which seeks to prove that the Negro spirituals were more than an escapism. These spirituals also had revolutionary implications. They combined the aesthetic and the ethical.

**Gary Johnson:** Up to this point it seems primarily the discussion has centered around the fine arts—painting, sculpture, classical dance, music, etc., and the somewhat anti-intellectual sympathies of the Christian churches whether they be the conservative churches or the more liberal churches. I think Grant may have hit on the key in bringing up the term, folk arts. You also mentioned that many people who have marvelous talent and so on or who have

great collections of art get no satisfaction from those collections. That rings true as well with various impressions that I've had.

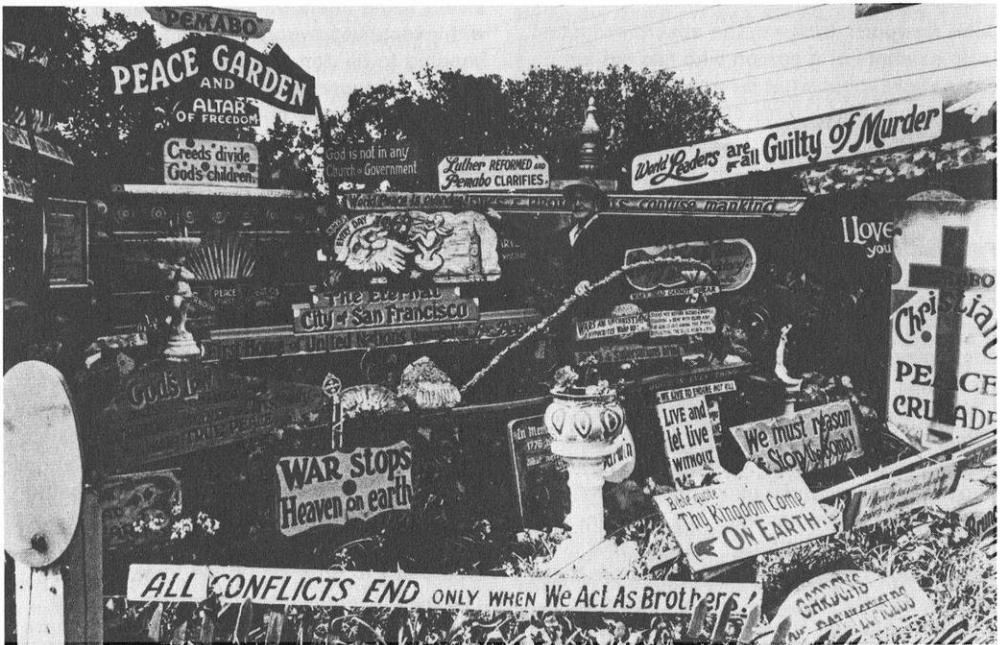
Prior, which is a brand new high school, I think is about 99% Indian. Earlier this year they participated in a Poetry-in-the-Schools program or Poetry Week program through the Montana Arts Council. The people there, both the staff and the students, got a great deal of satisfaction and a great deal of enjoyment out of that program which was an essentially fine arts program . . . brought to the common man. The arts that I'm involved in are folk arts and I can't resist telling a story. My brother-in-law . . . there is an anti-artistic element in the Indian world, too, I guess . . . who happens to be a vice-chairman of the Crow tribe says never marry a woman who does bead work because the sink will always be full of dirty dishes. The folk arts, in whatever ethnic tradition, have traditionally been a form of satisfaction for people. Perhaps the way to narrow this gap between the churches and the artists is through the elevation of the folk arts. I'm not greatly familiar with the Southern Baptist Convention; however, I believe the folk arts are very strong still in the southern states and

I would wager that if you approached even some of the most conservative Baptist or Pentecostal people and begin to uplift their quilt work or bead work or whatever, and say this is art "right on," I think that once these people have recognition as artists themselves they will become somewhat more willing to accept the fine arts as being something other than a subversive element in their churches.

**John Newport:** That is being done. For example, churches are beginning to have art weeks or festivals in which the members are asked to bring samples of their creative work for exhibition. In addition to paintings, quilts, candlework, woodworks and other types of folk art are brought in. This helps show the universality of the creative.

**John Dillenberger:** This is part of the nice problem of art, because I'm for folk art, but folk art and whatever you call the opposite, professional art, are different. Folk art does not demand very much of one. Professional art does, and because it demands something of one, it demands some kind of orientation. Folk art can be readily and quickly appreciated. That being the case, folk art is not

**PEMABO's Peace Garden and Altar of Freedom.** Photo courtesy: Cyril Nelson, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.



subversive. But professional art is subversive precisely because the perceptions are tremendously transforming of one's existence. But that also happens if one develops enough of a discipline to learn how to see.

**Gary Johnson:** If we're going to draw any conclusion I might suggest that the possibility of compromise between these two communities—the artistic community and the religious community—might lie in that common ground that the folk arts can be utilized as a vehicle to bring these people who have somewhat anti-artistic sentiments closer to the fine arts.

**John Newport:** In our city a number of average citizens have joined a square dance group. As a result, some of the men who previously had no interest in ballet have become interested. One woman said, "Before joining the square dance group, I would never have gotten my husband to go to a ballet. But as he has worked and struggled with the art of square dancing, and it is quite complex, he has become interested in what these people are doing in similar or related arts."

**Susan Barker:** I work a great deal with in-

terior designers who deal usually with commercial space, and they want to bring in good design and fine art. Yet, even when the money is there, sometimes they can't persuade their customer to put in even a silk screen or something like that. The way we have bridged the gap often is to bring in good images via fabric. I think that is a lot easier to take, if you don't have the stomach for modern design and abstract image. Fabric is something you wear, that you sleep around and under and with. It is something that is a part of your everyday life. I think that is the point of folk arts. Something that is peculiar to American art is the introduction of new media that are often folk media, they are used by the folk to create their art such as clay and fabric. And I get very angry when people start talking of fine arts in terms only of sculpture and painting and some of the more traditional, continental media. I can say that a camera, or fabric in the hands of a good artist are as worthy as paint. You can use mundane media, folk media, to start generating fine art.

**Thomas Stewart:** I'm still working on the distinction between folk art and fine art in my mind. It occurs to me to ask is the Graham Sutherland tapestry in Coventry Cathedral folk art?

**Susan Barker:** No.

**David Driskell:** I think we are also trapping ourselves by trying to make the word fulfill the function of art in Western society. What we are calling folk art is art related to life . . . an art form which is at the core of life, which has not become so sophisticated that we elevate it to the level when we start talking about the aesthetic form. We accept it as it is without question. Now there are some things to be said pro and con about that; but, if we go back to many of the societies that strangely enough we in the Western world look on as "primitive societies."—and this is really obviously an outmoded word but we still use it—these societies did not divorce art from life, they did not divorce it from living. In fact in Africa, for example, in most of the languages there is no word for art, because the form which becomes the manifestation of the human experience is an outgrowth of being born, of living, of dying, so it speaks of man, the total man. In many ways we in Western societies have thought of this as a lowly form but it seems to me that first man

Jackson Pollack.



## **Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians: A Denominational Model**

**by Thom Jones**

*The Fellowship of United Methodist Musicians is twenty years old this year. During the twenty years its interest has been expanded from one of music in the local church to a total use of all the arts. They are not only interested in the use of the arts in the local church but also in supporting the arts wherever they can.*

*A prime example of the variety of ways in which the Fellowship supports the arts occurred at their recent national convocation in West Virginia.*

*To begin with a graphic artist from Minnesota was commissioned to design two certificates honoring past presidents. An organist-composer was commissioned to compose an organ work and a conductor/composer was commissioned to compose a choral work. Both these works have been published and were performed at the convocation. A noted dancer/choreographer was engaged to teach and perform at the convocation. One of the evenings was designed as a West Virginia Folk Art Festival. Leading performers from West Virginia presented this program. During the week an artist-in-residence program was installed. Placed at key places over the campus of West Virginia Wesleyan College was a sculptor, potter, stained glass artist, and two landscape artists. They all were demonstrating their art and had works available for purchase.*

*In one of the buildings was a display of crafts from West Virginia with items for sale. There were demonstrations in weaving, quilting and woodcarving as well as silk screening and the sewing arts.*

*The convocation was also treated to performing artists in media other than folk. An organ recital by a nationally known organist, late evening concerts by a night club entertainer who is a professional, and uses black music and pop tunes in her act and a one man show by a performer who uses show tunes, dance, drama and mime to communicate.*

*Those attending had an opportunity to talk*

*with the artists and to ask questions. They also had the opportunity to become more than spectators by getting involved in making music, dancing, painting, etc. The overall reaction to this approach to the arts has been extremely favorable. It makes for interesting and informative convocations and conventions.*

Weaver. Photo courtesy: Jeff Bowden.

Wolfgang Flor. Photo courtesy: Jeff Bowden.







saw art in this functional sense. It was not divorced from his person. It is through our translation of the word that we have allowed ourselves to become trapped in categories. Whereas, art was meant to be an extension of man's total being and not really a divorced category. That's why to me I really don't see any such thing as religious art. You're talking about content.

**John Newport:** Is not the concept of aesthetic distance important at this point? In the history of aesthetics the idea of aesthetic distance is well known. In more primitive times, the people did not have perspective. It is helpful to step back and get perspective, and then come closer and relate the art to everyday life.

**Walter Anderson:** David has said part of what I wanted to say. I wanted to point out the fact that certain communities, certain cultural groups, become highly incensed because sometimes their art has been portrayed without their having had the opportunity as a cultured group to identify and interpret their own culture. I think this is an underlying need in certain communities. Just as certain materials express art views, I think that there is a need within the community to express itself and to be understood in terms of the uniqueness of this art rather than just as primitive art. I think that certain groups would say that only the attitudes of other people are primitive in that they have been neglected so long. Then when certain discoveries were made they were made by people who with missionary zeal picked up a thing superficially and portrayed it as the art which had been a part of the grassroots living.

I saw this very clearly in Puerto Rico. I was there nearly four years ago. There was a group who wanted total independence, and this group was saying to me: "In all the years that this wonderful Casals festival has gone on you would have thought that it might have had some spillover on the people in Puerto Rico as a whole. But the only other person we know who plays cello besides Pablo Casals is his wife. We want to develop our own institutions because this festival is an imported presentation. People come from other parts of the world and from the United States, but what has happened to our society as a result of this we don't know." We don't want to get involved with politics but we did agree to

make a grant. We would still continue to give help to the Casals festival but it would include money so that a choreographer could go in—I mean a choreographer from the Puerto Rican people themselves—to work with them on their dance. We had crafts people who could go around the island, to Ponce and other places, to develop this feeling of pride in what they had. I think that this is terribly important because it seems to me that there are certain things that the folk arts, so to speak, can contribute to the ethical.

Now I go back years again, about thirty years, when it wasn't very comfortable to speak about lynchings. Ministers couldn't, no one could. People just got too upset. In this lower economic area of Cleveland I saw one Sunday out on the sidewalk an art exhibit which was just paintings of lynchings, but there was no preaching to go with it. People became very reflective because no one was saying this thing is wrong or right; they were looking and thinking about it. I think this is a marvelous thing that the arts can do in contributing to the growth of ethical values. They can create the atmosphere that will cause people to sit side by side and focus on something. It brings them into a spirit of humility that has something to do with what the church has been saying all along.

**Thomas Stewart:** Let me ask Susan Barker if she'll comment on what she's heard and reflected on since this morning. □

## Response From Susan Barker

I think the first thing that I, a businesswoman, a church woman, an arts consumer saw in Ted's paper was the spirit. There was an unabashed testimony in the paper to his love of art, the profound role that the aesthetic has had in his life. I saw also a churchman, a believer who has seen these two worlds, religion and art, become so wedded in his experience that he cannot separate them. This is true for most of us here. And yet here we are at this conference trying to dissect this inseparable reality.

Ted offers us some help. First of all, he points out that the aesthetic is present wherever the quality of life is pursued. When something of quality occurs, whether it is a new building, a social service program that works, a trial that renders justice, a church worship service, the aesthetic has played a major role, even though it is "solid planning," "hard headed decision making," "courage," or "tradition" that gets the credit.

The absence of an aesthetic consciousness and vocabulary in our popular culture is puzzling. To appreciate art has been a source of embarrassment for me in some circles. So also has been my Christian faith, in some circles. Isn't it interesting that art and religion are popularly considered feminine and the proper pursuit of women?

Ted points out, also, the relationship of the aesthetic and the ethical. He recalls, for instance, Buckley's dismay with the crassness of the Nixon White House. Buckley was not surprised about the revelation of Watergate. Another example of this is familiar to all of us. Something significant will happen, and a TV reporter will stick a microphone in the face of a "man on the street" who will utter some platitude or self-righteous statement. Then Watergate came along and with it the tapes, and the story kept getting more and more incredible. Reporters again interviewed Mr. and Mrs. Average who'd been uttering self-righteous platitudes for years, but now they actually said something that made sense. They expressed their true feelings. Many of them were almost poetic in their expressions

of alienation and anger. I agree with Ted. I think that was the aesthetic welling up in those people, at the point of their alienation. The aesthetic leads to alienation which, I'm hypothesizing, can lead to real change and good, ethical decisions.

Ted believes that art and religion have major roles to play in the quest for ethical change. Where else can we find such strength? Look first at the Judeo-Christian heritage. The Old Testament explores the themes of the covenant, the people of God, the called out. I'm intrigued by this God who is so concerned in the affairs of people. Christian theology goes further. It tells us that God's ultimate expression was to reveal himself in human form, through incarnation.

Look now at art. Like Christianity, it recognizes that physically, bodily, we are confined to this experience. But that recognition becomes the source of the urge to express this reality and the grasp of that beyond it, the transcendent. The reconciliation of the tension between the immanent and transcendent is the stuff of both religion and art. It is this quest for integration that tells me that religion and art can be integrating forces in our culture, ethical forces in our society.

Ted points out that the world is seeking answers to the great problems of society. I've talked about religion and art as integrating forces. Will they give us a better way? Will they give us answers? Answers? Answers simply to cope? Or new ways to expand our world? Recently I heard John Cobb give a lecture in which he spoke of the absolute call of the church to seek out and reach radical, new possibilities for the world. I would like to add the call of art to that. Art and religion do not despair in our physical infirmities and limitation, but uphold them, rejoice in them, if you will. That's why these two areas are in many ways the only roads for finding radical new answers for our society. □

## From The Record: IV

**Pamela Ilott:** Can I add one dissenting footnote before we get into a serious discussion? I would hate this interpretation of the church as feminine to get much further without being challenged. I suspect that men have tended to speak in feminine terms of things of which they were a little respectful of the mystery, like ships and machines. So I shouldn't take it as an insult. Or, since you bring up the Old Testament, I think that the greatest compliment the Jewish had to pay was to honor the sabbath in terms of being a bride.

**Susan Barker:** I don't think most clergymen are terribly aesthetic. They should recognize that a lot of feminine images are really artistic and positive.

**Pamela Ilott:** Whether it's Pallas Athena or whatever, don't let the notion continue that feminine terms are necessarily derogatory.

**John Dillenberger:** I'm getting a little tired of hearing that the revulsion to Nixon was aesthetic. I really don't believe that at all. I believe it had to do with the fact that in their indignation some people got more eloquent. They got more eloquent than they usually are when they found that this man wasn't on the job, as the tapes indicated, and what's more he was a damn crook who had deceived us. Now, that may have aesthetic elements, but the reaction was as moralistic as Americans get. I don't see the aesthetic issue in it at all.

**Ted Gill:** I still think there is something to it, and I don't think anybody will ever see it as long as we are frozen into the categories where some words are ethical and some words are aesthetic. I wasn't trying to make them exclusive but was trying to suggest that they had more to do with each other than our traditional categorizing permits us to even recognize. When the astronaut sliding back down the sky from the moon quoted Genesis, that revolted me and all liberal Protestants because it was an unfair sectarian abuse of the air ways. Keep that kind of cheap and obvious religiosity out of our testimony. What nobody recognized was that it wasn't necessarily a religious phenomenon at all, it was an

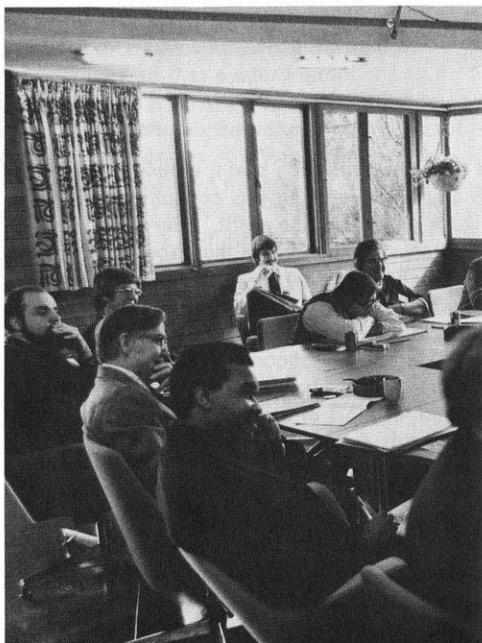


Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

aesthetic one. He was reaching for the only poetry the poor dear knew—the grandest poetry of creation.

**Grant Spradling:** I wonder if some of the ambivalence between religionists and the arts isn't a profound suspicion that artists are claiming territory that belongs to the church, to the religionists. It seems to me that several times we have said that the arts have their own honesty, their own integrity, that they lead the artist, the artist draws upon them. Susan has just said that the arts are our contact with the transcendent, and it seems to me that they are claiming territory.

**John Newport:** I think that the religiously conservative person would say that religion needs art and that art needs religion. However, we would place the priority on grace—the initiative coming from God into the vicious circle of man's inadequacy. The artist, like others, needs the corrective of special revelation from God. I think that you would have to say that all conservative Christianity would start with that.

**David Nelson:** But how do they deal with science? How do they describe the role of science?

**John Newport:** Most religious people would accept and appreciate science. In fact, they see God's approval of science in his ordination of man as a sub-creator under God. Science is fine as long as it is under God and his guidance. Likewise, art is all right as long as it is under God and used under ethical or moral guidelines.

**David Driskell:** In other words, there can't be an equal billing.

**John Dillenberger:** I think there is another point. I think that artists are really not missionary in a conscious sense, and the church is terribly missionary. And I'm not sure whether that isn't still one of the major problems. I get very uneasy when Ted talks about choice and you talk about covenant, that functional freedom to get certain things accomplished. I really believe there is a tremendous difference between a religion in which faith makes a difference and one that is transformed into the difference that faith makes. I think that in the American scene most of the religious traditions fell into this mistake. Consider the language of covenant. Covenant is a biblical word, but I don't see that it was used in scripture as it was used in American theology at all. Freedom of choice—I don't know that anybody before the eighteenth century could use that language; so it is a part of our culture. Now the question is whether the covenant concept needs to be rechanneled or refocused or simply appropriated. I think what's happened is that it's gotten appropriated, and I would say in that sense that most of American Protestantism is just a plain theological mistake.

**John Newport:** One of the things that we Baptists fall back on to escape your criticism is the Roger Williams tradition which does modify to some extent the emphasis of the New England covenant. The religious liberty concept admits that we are finite creatures at all stages and that we could be wrong so we have to give everybody else his right to believe without force or persecution.

**Ray Scott:** I want to say that for seven hours I have been very quietly absorbed, I have been stimulated, I have been titillated, I have been amused, I have been intellectually challenged, and I've relished and savored and

appreciated it. A great deal of it I have even understood. But I'm basically a pragmatist, and I learned to be a pragmatist because I am in arts politics, and that's where you have to get a handle on it somewhere along the line. I've not been able to get a pragmatic handle on this discussion and perhaps that's not necessary. I've been able to enjoy it. But I keep looking at what it says the statement of the purpose of this conference. It says, "The project will encourage churches throughout the country to further the arts in our national life." We've talked a lot today about problems but I've heard no solutions. If we've had any significant listings of how we are going to encourage churches throughout the country to further the arts in our national life, I have missed it. It is my understanding that this is the second, third or fourth of these conferences where you have been considering this sort of thing. I assume that somewhere along the line there may have been some suggested answers, and if that is true then I would like to hear what has come out of the consultations that have preceded this one.

**Calvin Didier:** I think that we should explain that the consultations have not been what this is. This is the first and only of a kind—other than our private discourses. Consultations have been of quite a different nature and out of them have come many practical things. I suppose that all of that revelation will finally come tomorrow. But to use Tillich's phrases about when you finally do get there and get adjusted to yourself along with everybody else and you are accepted, then you aren't to do anything about it. You are just to realize it, you aren't to incorporate it, you aren't really to program it, you are just to understand it.

**Sister Noemi Weygnant:** I say this with tolerance, with holy reverence, love for you all, I'm not prejudiced. But you made a remark, "something's wrong with the Protestant church," now you know there's one great and only answer to that—you should have remained Catholic!

**Walter Anderson:** When I was a kid, when they hadn't distilled everything, there was something called "vinegar mother." The vinegar got older and something began to grow in it and there was a transformation and a big ferment that became something that moved. It even frightened me, but it became bigger and bigger all the time. I think that's



what happened here. I think sometimes we expect magical answers in specific forms that come about if we're believers only because we believed in the first place.

**Anderson Clark:** This morning's key issues—and I want to understand that word in the sense of "what will issue out of"—was indicated yesterday by some of Ray's real concern about where we're to go. It was helpful for me to remember and rethink again some of the early understanding about the direction and meaning and intent of RCAAR. Obviously, in the process things change. But let me read a very brief statement about my own personal hope for the original consultation in St. Paul and then describe some of the things I see happening and moving. The religious communities, the arts and the second American revolution—at that time we were using the term "second revolution," informed by John Rockefeller's book that there is an American revolution going on now—was an object of our concern. The earliest impulse was to deal with the Bicentennial. And I think we've changed from this and wisely so. It never was a matter of religion and arts. There are other agencies and organizations that continue to lift that concern. Ours was a lot more of what John Dillenberger would call "for the sake of." The St. Paul consultation aligned itself with growing numbers of groups in America determined to make something more of the American Revolution Bicentennial than self-conscious, contrived celebration of patriotism and progress. The business of the Founding Fathers expressed in the Declaration of Independence and Constitution is far from finished even minimally. The Bicentennial offers the opportunity to restate the nation's agenda and to struggle for its realization in the continuing citizen context of social, economic, and political issues. Since, as citizens, religionists and artists will surely become involved in a variety of ways in the variety of Bicentennial programs seriously dealing with such issues, it is hoped the consultation and RCAAR will at least view the Bicentennial or what we are about now as such an opportunity and challenge that individuals can make on action.

There is, however, an additional hope—which is where I think RCAAR is going—this is a less programmatic and less obvious hope, and that is that the consultation will in part occasion consideration of the common oppor-

tunity and responsibility that religionists and artists share to build spaces in their communities where what is called pre-citizen views of reality can be encountered and affirmed. Such is the peculiar opportunity and responsibility of those who are both, by definition, "out of it" and who by vocation remind human beings who they are before they're classified and described politically and socially and economically. Much of the energy with which and the dignity for which the fathers struggled in the founding of the country was supplied from wells of spirit dug deep in far earlier times when the world was alive with visions and dreams and grandeur was more than greatness. The common cause of religion and art is to affirm an earlier view in which the spirit of man is basic to the humanity he invests and fights for politically, socially and economically. Quite simply the religionists and artists must get together. Such togetherness will be awkward and painful. Religion has become mercilessly mundane for most with its enterprise indistinguishable from any other goal-setting, operation-planning, task-forcing, bottom-lining social organization. Likewise, many, too many artists have withdrawn into the splendid poverty of aesthetic purity, refusing responsibility to report what they have seen with anybody but their cult members. Actually I hope with the consultations that RCAAR will stimulate a process already begun where churches have opened themselves to the artists in their communities and the artists have responded with excitement and grace, teaching, showing and telling what can be seen and heard when churchmen look and listen to their own past, its meaning and myths. My hope is that more of the 8.6 billions of dollars of resources of the 360,000 local religious communities will be used for the arts as an investment by the religious communities in discovering the richness of its own great resources of spirit and soul for men today and this adds a service to the community of man founded two hundred years ago that has grown now so dry, flat and tasteless for so many. I do *not* hope for a revival or for a massive program of religion and art seminars, a new packaged, programmed fad—not at all. In this consultation, the question for us is what have religion and arts in common cause to do with the second or with the American Revolution. Which is a way of saying that it is religious communities, arts and "for the sake of" what is happening in this society today.



I think several very important possibilities occur when we think of it this way. The revolution of values, the incredible value change that has begun in the last fifteen to twenty years—some of you have heard me say this so often that you are tired of it but “Black is Beautiful,” was an aesthetic judgment that opened up all kinds of power, of meaning, and affirmation of the black human being. It operated also within the American Indian community, so many in ethnic communities all across this country, who suddenly were able to come out and say “this is who we are and this is what’s happened to us.” And I think in our time that almost spiritual or aesthetic affirmation of past and identity is the most exciting and powerful thing in the matter of pluralism, and it has got to be respected.

Now what does the religious community and the arts have to do with the incredible amount of exciting things, the value changes that are going on in society? I have two image hopes. One is the function of the role of the priest of the community. There is a fundamental reason why there is a split between the fine arts and the folk arts. The Arts in Education Council suggests that the Reformation and the Renaissance for all their glories did occasion a split of the hegemony of the arts culture in the Middle Ages and that into that split came this incredible set of energies and enterprise known as the middle class. The middle class came especially so and powerfully so in America with very little if any cultural tradition or cultural background or cultural resource. To people like me growing up in a Protestant church in Pennsylvania, in the 30s and 40s, the fine arts simply were above us and the folk arts simply were below us, and in between our whole of religion was morality.

Let’s take some religious communities across this country and see the priestly role in terms of the arts and affirm in those institutions the damndest, the bestest, finest of the fine arts—the best music, the best organ playing, the best whatever *and at the same time*, affirming, opening and lifting up every piece of folk art, activity, and creativity there is in that community. This is a peculiar role of the religious community in any society. Arts councils can’t do this, museum boards can’t do this. It can be done only because there is an institution like a church or a synagogue that has concern to lift up and heal that split by what it does.

That’s the internal, that’s the function of the priest. The other is the pastoral in terms of social responsibility to the larger community—churches, starting to think of employing artists in the community, giving space to artists, and affirming their social relevance and our commitment to them with no more strings attached than we did when we put money into SNICK, when we put money into retirement homes, when we put money into education, as an act of social responsibility to society. Now this is something that doesn’t have to begin somewhere, some time. It’s already been done. I think of simple illustrations. The Board for Homeland Ministries was so powerfully involved in the origin and development and sustenance of the Affiliate Artists Program—which is not a church program at all—without ever once a suggestion of a silken thread, let alone a string, attached anywhere. What Tom Stewart is doing now for his community of Buffalo. One church is presenting an artist, not a church artist, an artist. I think RCAAR’s responsibility is more pastoral than theological or aesthetic. It allows people like me who don’t understand themselves as artists to participate. The issue is that we have a cause in common, not because we have so much in common. But for a period of time we see a society of people needing breath to breathe, and the artists in this community have something to do with that. Internally, we have a function to affirm both fine and folk art and then to act in a socially responsible and pastoral way to the artist, because society needs him as well as ourselves.

**Wesley Hotchkiss:** I was thinking while I was shaving this morning about the conceptual directions we seemed to be taking yesterday in our conversation, and some things rather bothered me. One concern—and I guess this is inevitable when you do so much talking about the ineffable, was in our discussion about freedom, that it took a very individualistic, individualized turn, as though freedom were a solitary thing and as though freedom were not a social concept. I think we run into great difficulty. I think that we have been seduced by economic definitions of freedom in our society—definitions that were necessary to the exploitation of unlimited resources by individuals. I think it is necessary at this time to see freedom as a communal, social concept. We must define ourselves as a people and I think that art has a critical role in the way we define ourselves as a people since we

must have these common symbols and this common language of symbolism. Pluralism can only be a benefit if there is an underlying assumption about who we are as a people, because otherwise pluralism is a disaster. It's only of benefit if there is an underlying unit to which it refers and to which all elements of the pluralism participate. And art has this role of identifying, symbolizing, making visible, that underlying meaning. In this role of the arts in identifying us as a people I don't see any great danger in using art or artists for propaganda. I think the greater danger is in the forms of idolatry about artists and art. I'm not talking about making graven images but the actual idolizing of the artistic enterprise of itself as though artists were supernatural. Where I come out is to reaffirm the legitimacy and realism of this concern for the role of the arts in the redemption of the people and in their identity. I think that's what we are about here. If that offends the sanctity of the artist, well, I say that the artist is one of us and he's involved in the world and in society and he ought to be of some use to us in our time of crisis.

**Richard Clark:** I certainly am comforted to hear those words, Wes, about the artist and about the artistic enterprise. I thought that I'd heard an awful lot of reverential genuflecting and other kinds of adoration postures taken toward artists, and the term itself is used almost recklessly. I know we do all the time in our organization. It somewhat bothers me. It's a rather new word. David was saying that in many languages there is no word for art. As a matter of fact there wasn't anything like the way we use the word operative in English to my knowledge until right around the end of the eighteenth century. Before that artists were artisans, the distinction between a craftsman and somebody other than a craftsman was basically a product of the industrial revolution it seems to me. I don't think Bach for example thought of himself as an artist and certainly Papa Haydn living above the stables was really a hack who didn't earn very much but was very pleased that his prince liked him and that he could satisfy his prince's expectations.

Now, I don't think that there was very much difference in the other art forms as a matter of fact. In the nineteenth century with the demise of the court system and that kind of patronage, people had to create themselves.

Liszt said that at a certain point early in his life "that being nobody, I had to become somebody," and he did with a tremendous flair. He did it by being a virtuoso pianist and was never able to reconcile in his own life that capacity with his creative capabilities about which he had built a fantasy as so many others did. They were self-made men in the arts, and they put around them a tremendous imagery about their special character. It's helped create for us the problem of dealing with an artist as a contributor to society, generally, without being kept at arm's length.

A reverential attitude toward people or a semi-deification of someone implies to me a certain distance which I think is bad for the artists, bad for the society, bad for people. We can learn from the folk arts where it seems to me a person is respected who contributes something that is useable within the society but is given special credit for its distinction within a continuum of value and of quality. The person who makes the finest belt is likely to get most recognition for that, but it is still something useable and enhancing to the life of the people who use it.

Most of the people that we deal with in the organization that I represent are not to my way of thinking "Artists." They are aspiring artists, they are trying to be really excellent at what they do which is the first set of steps on the thing. But either because of the poverty of language or because it's easier we refer to them as artists. This is not so good in many respects, because then you get into some of the really difficult questions—whether being an artist has something to do with real qualitative distinction. People are to some extent spoiled by it.

This does get involved with some questions that involve more ethical issues it seems to me. Yesterday I heard one statement, I think it was John Dillenberger, who if I understood him correctly, I heard him say that the aesthetic was a mode of perception distinguishable from, if not separate from, other modes of perception. The only analogy to that I can think of is that it's like the person who has a meal put before him and he eats the peas, then the potatoes, then the meat, which doesn't seem to me to be a very interesting way to put one's dinner. I would think that aesthetic perception without ethical

implication is vacuous. I can't imagine a well-informed ethical perception of life or judgement that is not informed by something that is artistic or aesthetic.

Getting back to this issue of how religion and the arts come together, if we have this rather sacrosanct attitude toward artists, I don't think we're going to be able to get together with them very easily in the kind of relationship where people who are professionally involved with religion and people who are professionally involved with the arts can be satisfied with each other's contribution, one to the other. I think it has to be a conjoined collaborative and perhaps fraternal relationship.

**Ted Gill:** I just wanted to indicate that these two deflations of my particular afflatus come from people much involved in the administration of artists, and I understand that. It is especially poignant from Richard, who's an artist and an arts administrator, so he must be ripped right up the middle though he didn't notice. I'm just enough involved with arts administration, too, especially since we have an Affiliate Artist at my college, so I know better than I might have even a few weeks ago what we're talking about. Sometimes I find myself walking down the street muttering, making up speeches to some of the artists for whom I have some responsibility now in an administrative way, I think of it as my Dutch uncle speech for divas. It's to the effect that we all have our problems.

But, fundamentally, I'm a stagedoor Johnny, and that isn't just by accident or nurture, it's sort of my theology. It has to do with religion and the arts now. For me the heart of my religion is creation. The substance of my vision is mystery but the heart of that mystery is creation. I really mean that redemption is not the heart of my vision. Christianity is often defined in terms of redemption. I think that is unbiblical hogwash. It's a religion of creation. Redemption is instrumental and transitional. Creation is original and fundamental and final. And artists happen to be for me the most obvious place where I can adore creation, or one of the places. That's where you can see it happening. It isn't the only place but here's where my birth and nurture do come in and it's the place I respond to, I go to, where I see it with most marvel and delight. If you could ever show me a politician

who was really creative, I think I'd have the same wim-wams. Lead me there and I'll break out. But you don't have to lead me to the arts because I know over and over again it's going on there, in the concert halls, in the studios. Greatness and the making of greatness is what I'm about, theologically. All I'm saying is that in the arts we have public greatness, accessible creation, and for me when I'm in that presence I'm in the furnace room of the universe, or as close as I'm going to get. So, understanding how treacherous this thing is, I still covet it.

**Jane Dillenberger:** I'm greatly puzzled about how the idol and idolatry got into this conversation about the arts. Do you all agree that this was part of our discussions? What do you mean by the idolatry of artists?

**Wesley Hotchkiss:** I was just sounding a note of caution, Jane, that artists are human beings. [J.D.: They are, but who inferred that they were anything but?] Yes, but I think that there is the danger on the part of the religious communities and perhaps our general society, that all of a sudden we have a new savior. It's going to be the artist this time. [J.D.: But not this group surely.] Well, I would hope not.

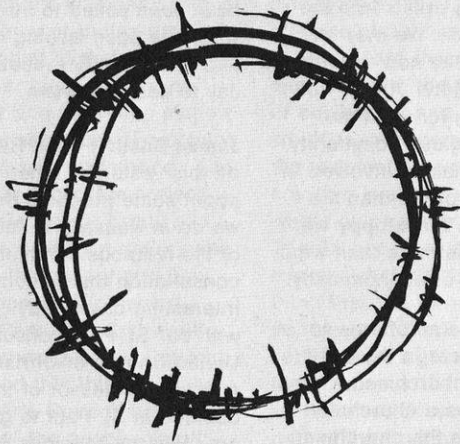
**Jane Dillenberger:** It is true that there is an arts establishment, and that this has touted and made as great personalities people like Andy Warhol. But Andy Warhol's art is something different from him and it seems to me that the country is filled with distinguished artists who don't consider themselves at all to be other than ordinary human beings. They're just doing their job. Yet, they are people of immense talent who do speak of the creation and the mystery, and it's these people that we need. I take it that it is these people, these many artists and their possible gifts to the church that we are talking about here. Am I misreading the whole thing myself?

**Calvin Didier:** I think that his caution was that we not be so hesitant in using the artist, that we're not so coy that we couldn't employ them or use them.

**Jane Dillenberger:** Then I'm wholly with you on that. Ralph Peterson went to Louise Nevelson. She was happy to see him, and there was none of this idolization, although she's an artist of considerable stature. We must not ignore the presence of these people







**Father,  
forgive  
them;  
for  
they  
know  
not  
what  
they  
do.**

March 4

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**Forgive Them**

**Prayer**

Lord God, forgive us  
our sins—our little sins  
and our big sins—all for  
the sake of Your great  
Son and our Savior,  
Jesus Christ, Who gave  
His all for us on His  
cross. We ask You, God,  
because of Jesus—  
forgive our sins. Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 37:1-22

**Lesson**

Luke 23:26-38

**Verily,  
I  
say  
unto  
thee,  
today  
shalt  
you  
be  
with  
me  
in  
paradise.**

March 11

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**Promise of Heaven**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, Savior of  
the world, remember us  
where we are. Forgive  
our sins, heal our hearts,  
give us life and  
empower us with Your  
Spirit. Make us joyful  
today in the sure hope  
of life that is truly  
eternal. To You we pray  
as You told us to pray:  
with faith in You. Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 102

**Lesson**

Luke 23:39-43

**Woman,  
behold  
thy  
son!  
Behold  
thy  
mother!**

March 18

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**Goodbye, Mother**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, we pray to  
You because You have  
a heart for us. As You  
took care of Your  
mother and Your  
disciples, watch out for  
us. Give us the joy of  
knowing You and having  
Your salvation—all in  
faith that You are the  
Savior of the world.  
Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 103

**Lesson**

John 19:23-27

**My  
God,  
my  
God,  
why  
hast  
thou  
forsaken  
me?**

March 25

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**Abandoned**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, remember  
us in those days when  
we feel we haven't got  
a friend in the world.  
Remember us and  
remember our sins no  
more. By Your love, by  
Your sacrifice, by Your  
lordly power forgive us  
and give us life—real  
life—as we trust in You,  
our Savior our our  
Friend. Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 37:23-40

**Lesson**

Matthew 27:45-56

**I  
thirst.**

April 1

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**I'm Thirsty**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, crucified for  
our sins, forgive us what  
we are and make us  
new again with life that  
is real as we live by  
faith in You. To you we  
give our trust and our  
praise for what You and  
You alone, have done  
for us and for the whole  
world, the world You  
have redeemed by  
blood. Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 111

**Lesson**

John 19:28

**It  
is  
finished.**

April 8

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**Finished**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You died for  
us and we thank You.  
You paid the price for  
our sins, and we accept  
Your forgiveness. You  
are the Son of God and  
Savior of the world.  
We trust You to see us  
through life, and through  
death to life again.  
Hear our prayer and  
give us your joy.  
Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 41

**Lesson**

John 19:30

**Father,  
into  
thy  
hands  
I  
commend  
my  
spirit.**

April 15

Christ the Real Man for  
Real People:  
**The Last Words of a  
Real Man!**

**Prayer**

Lord Jesus, with faith in  
You we place ourselves  
into the hands of Your  
Father and ours. In life  
and in death, we follow  
You to the victory You  
have to give by Your  
own death and resurrec-  
tion. Give us the joy  
and peace of life through  
faith in You, our God  
and Savior. Amen.

**Psalm**

Psalm 95

**Lesson**

Luke 23:44-56



or not make use of their gifts. That was the content of my paper—that we have ignored them, we have not invited them in, we have not used their gifts.

**Anderson Clark:** At least one major concern—maybe for a period of time—that the religious communities and the arts have in common has to do with people in the community, whether it is bringing artists into the church or church into the arts. We may have a matter of social responsibility now in terms of a value change within society. And it well may be that society is asking for what the artist has, even what the religious community has, because we're both somehow involved in dealing with a different area of life than the secular. We just have to use that sloppy word, spirit, that something which is more than what a man is socially, politically, or economically.

The other caution which I see so often—not in these gatherings—but out there in the pastoral kind of gatherings—is churchmen who do not believe in who he is as a churchman or what he's about. Often it's the churchman who is intimidated by the artist and the intellectual and the elite. That's not simply in Manhattan but it's all around. One of the things that has to happen to the church is for churchmen to be more and more affirmative as to who they are and what they are about and meet the artist in another way, as committed people.

**Richard Clark:** I think that's partly what I was responding to because in our world often people who are not familiar with day to day working relationships with artists or people who work in the arts are inclined to be intimidated or think that they have to treat artists very specially—which makes the artist nervous, he doesn't know how to respond. And false expectations are raised mutually and then we get into really big problems.

**Wesley Hotchkiss:** I have a concern that we are just switching saviors. Technology was going to be our savior. Now, all of a sudden, we are going to switch to art.

**Jane Dillenberger:** Yes, I think that for you there is a real anxiety about that.

**Susan Barker:** Is it possible that some of the concerns that we are expressing now relate to the fact that we've been sitting around for a day and a half rehearsing the despair and the

dearth of the aesthetic in our lives and in our culture? If you're Protestant, and don't have a prayer. There is nothing aesthetic in your heritage if you go back fifty years, a hundred years. I'm a church musician and I disagree with that negative evaluation, I really do.

**Anderson Clark:** Ed Kamarck is going to summarize this from another point of view—but I have been asked to inform this group about what has been issuing out of concerns earlier expressed, earlier meetings, so I'll call on Jay to describe them.

**James Buell:** I think Ray Scott got me started on this yesterday when he said let's talk about some practical things—and that's what we do in Kansas. In talking about the support of the religious communities to the arts, this consultation that is coming up in Kansas is an interesting case study. The case study began with our St. Paul consultation where a United Church of Christ minister, his wife and a Jewish professor of theatre at Kansas State decided in St. Paul to go back to Kansas and organize the religious communities of Kansas in support of the arts.

They went back and drew up a list of about 85 people in the arts world, the academic world and the religious world they thought would be key to anything that happened in that state and invited them to form an organization. Throughout this process there were people who kept saying, "Why are we doing this? What is the philosophy behind this, what is the theology, what is the aesthetic?" Arthur just kept brushing these things aside and said that the important thing is to get organized.

They got it organized. Arthur Kolsti is president, Norman Fedder, the theatre professor at Kansas State is vice-president and president elect. The secretary is a former high school music teacher in Topeka, who has become a key political figure in the Mexican-American community. Other board members include the wife of the pastor of a large black Baptist church in Topeka who is herself president of the local chapter of LINKS—the prestigious black women's organization, a woman from the tribal council of the Potawatami Nation, and the president of the GI Forum—a large Mexican-American veterans organization.

The consultation itself will be held in con-

junction with meetings of the Association of Kansas Arts Councils and the Association for Kansas Theater. If there is anybody in the state of Kansas who has any interest in the arts and/or religion that hasn't been located yet, he is very well hidden in the barn under the straw.

One of the men Arthur pastors is president of Southwestern Bell Telephone Company who is going to let us have a show of Indian art work in the magnificent big lobby of their centrally located building. Another such man is the owner of the newspaper and television station in Topeka. So far I have seen four two-column articles on this weekend arts conference. The last thing I saw was a big two-column piece with a big picture of Josie Kolsti, Arthur's wife, sitting on the stairs of the art gallery she owns and a write-up on the gallery and how important this was in Topeka. We have a speaker going to the Rotary Club that week and preaching at the Congregational Church. We have met and planned this thing with the other two groups. The Arts Council has sent RCAAR literature to all of the people, every community arts council, inviting them to stay on for our program which goes on after their's has ended.

These are the kinds of arrangements that church people can help the arts communities make. We feel it's a valuable thing to use whatever resources the religious communities have to make arrangements so that more resources will flow to the arts.

**Anderson Clark:** One of the great resources that religious communities have is the pastoral connectedness with people in all different places.

**John Dillenberger:** I understand this language, and I think all of this has to be done. It's one side of the problem. Unless we get as political as everybody else, nothing's going to get done. I simply want to say that we should be doing some other things as well. Particularly since we are doing these things apparently so well, I want some other things done very much. They have to do with the kinds of issues that have been raised. I think that music has a history in the churches which painting and sculpture simply do not. Grant was telling me last night that he really didn't care whether painting and sculpture were in the churches or not because it's really irrele-

vant. Well, that does say something to me about a religious orientation. I'm sure I'm not ready to say that. This is still the nineteenth century answer to the problem; music is still the nineteenth century answer. We're settling for some answers on some of these theoretical levels that we shouldn't necessarily accept yet.

So I want to say from a functional, practical standpoint, I'd like to see some place or places where these kinds of issues also get explored with the possibility of the exorcism of our history and the possibility of new possibilities, new creations which I take it is what the redemption problem was about. New creation is a very interesting possibility for the whole cultural mix. What's going on in Topeka seems to me to be terribly fascinating, exactly what needs to happen, but the next thing that has to happen is that some people, out of and in Topeka, also be exposed to setting their sights higher than they are setting them because there is the question of quality, an issue which we cannot hide and which is part of the problem. The more successful you get in the arts or in religion, the more critical becomes the problem of relating the levels in the fullness of the style and the substance which is not the peas or the meat, but a total constellation more palatable than mere needs.

**Anderson Clark:** What we said earlier this morning, what Jay just described is what RCAAR has been about, but we have maintained that in the process some other things are going to have to happen. One of the things we're hoping will happen is that a group of thirty or forty persons, mostly theologian types and churchmen and key pastors will get together to hew out a confessional statement about the religious communities and the arts today—something that all kinds of other persons from across the country can subscribe to. Maybe this is the next thing one tries.

Then, another dream that Ralph Peterson and I had—John Dillenberger last night too—is to form over a period of time a theological institute and house it in a parish church such as St. Peter's where we could utilize the great artistic resources of New York and bring seminarians along with theologians and others for three weeks or a semester or whatever. Maybe that's the next direction because if we are going to pursue this we have got to



All Nite Soul — Oct. 13, 1974. Ninth anniversary of Jazz Vespers at St. Peter's Lutheran Church. Photo courtesy: Brad Hess.

connect with seminarians and we may have to do it outside the seminaries and focus it in a pastoral situation with arts reaching into that major metropolitan region.

The third thing we want to do is to find five or ten key churches across the country who would be willing to experiment a change from summer bible schools and vacation church schools, to having summer programs in creative arts schools like is done at Charles River School where the professional artists in that community are the teachers. This has been done most powerfully up at Charles River. Let's see if we can't find some major churches across the country to begin modeling that.

**Walter Anderson:** We have spoken of the gap between the folk arts and the fine arts, and I have long been concerned with the gap that exists between the academic and the professional fields—you'd think they were utter enemies at times—and the need to view the

best of both situations in terms of that which is good and professional and of quality. Also, I want to speak to a kind of gap that I think exists in the folk field of the arts. When I came to the Endowment, the panel of specialists in the field of music would not listen to the word jazz. We had one representative on the panel who made a speech every two or four months, but the rest of the panel would promptly look down their noses and talk about what should be done for the established institutions. There came to the point where we got a \$20,000 allocation set aside for jazz. Within a year's time that \$20,000 grew to be \$250,000. Then my job was of a different order, it was to get the jazz world as it was represented by various people to think that there are other cultures, not just the Afro-American. I think bootlegging is an utterly respectable process of working with other people, so I bootlegged a grant to a Spanish-speaking flamenco group, from the jazz funds by shaming the blacks who have been neglected for so long to do something for

somebody else and got one \$3,000 grant. And then I began to work on Endowment to let me change the name of that program from Jazz, to Jazz, Folk, and Ethnic. Some people were terribly disturbed by the term ethnic so now I'm trying to get it changed from Jazz, Folk, and Ethnic to maybe American Musical Heritage Program or something.

I was at a meeting of some 3,000 delegates from junior and community colleges in the country, and at a certain point in their convention format they divide up into largely ethnically-based groups—about eight of them. I took a little visit to various ones of them and I found the Indians and the Chicanos and the Orientals and the other groups saying, "We've got to catch up with the blacks, they're so far ahead of us. Perhaps we ought to have some black music and jazz so we'll learn those techniques." When I got to the black group, they were saying, "Brother, it's over. The days are over when we can scream and yell and get something just because we're black, it's got to be equality." I want to point out to you that there are traditions of cultural expression in different parts of the country, and there is something we will have to do that will help to stimulate these expressions on an unalphabetized basis that has nothing to do with theological training or artistic training or anything else other than love and enlightenment—which are the common ingredients that apply to art and to moral concerns of life. We must help these traditions to feel strong and healthy so that they begin to share. They must be made to feel good where they are. This process will not happen as a result of books or of social scientists or anything other than dedicated people who are the right ones who will be identified and will be received. It has nothing to do with money because these people have the greatest disdain for money because of what is meaningful to them as a particular society within our total society. It has to do with how they have shared certain hardships and they don't want a lot of money. We must be open to listen and to learn and then see the transpositions that move from these groups so that we do begin to share and realize there are artistic possibilities in these groups.

**Grant Spradling:** In our introductory remarks yesterday morning I pointed out that as RCAAR got into its consultations it discovered that it was outdistancing its own

rhetoric, its own theological and philosophical perceptions. I discussed this problem with Ed Kamarck. It was that awareness that we did need to expand our understanding of where we are today in the dialogue about religion and art that decided to try and bring together a tension and an intermix, not just bringing people together who speak the same language. In Ted's paper I underlined his statement in which he said that decisions are being made by people who have very little communication with those who have traditionally been the guardians of the moral and the ethical life in our culture. This consultation is one effort to open up dialogue between people who are making decisions and people who are thinking about the moral basis for decision-making.

It was Ed Kamarck's willingness to help us further this kind of dialogue that brought about this consultation. We have asked Ed if he will help us summarize. □



## **A Garden Grows in Brooklyn: An Urban-Small Church Model**

*The lot at the corner of Hoyt Street and Atlantic Avenue was an eye-sore. Surrounded by an ugly fence it was a dumping ground for all the usual urban waste and junk. The lot was owned by the Presbyterian Inglesia del Christo, worshipping in an unprepossessing cement block building on the adjoining lot. On March 4, 1974 we wrote a proposal: "We, the members of the Hoyt Street Association, propose to create a 'vest pocket' sitting park at the corner of Hoyt Street and Atlantic Avenue." It continued, "We hope to gain the support and enthusiasm of the church members for this project." And they did gain that support.*

*The sponsors of the park wanted a place where parishioners of the church, an increasing number of shoppers attracted from other parts of the city by nearby antique shops, and community members could sit, and meet and rest. The proposal emphasized: "The park will provide a pleasant meeting place for Sunday parishioners before and after services."*

*Several professional artists in the neighborhood donated their time to the project. Local Japanese artists contributed their sense of balance and rhythm which "is apparent in the arrangement of rocks, plants and mounds" according to a story in the New York Times. A week before Christmas 1975 the garden won a Molly Parness award from the New York City Council on the Environment.*

*At the beginning of his remarks at Wingspread, Walter Anderson said, ". . . we were thinking of some of the needs of the religious community to benefit from the arts and not just to give support to the arts." In his article Curtis Carter warns us of the dangers of considering the arts as the handmaiden of religion. This project of mutual benefit with the church donating its land and the artists their skill and vision avoids both dangers.*

People building garden. Photo courtesy: Edward Moran.

Completed garden. Photo courtesy: Jay Barr.



**Broadmoor Community Church:  
A Suburban Model**

*enriched by his contribution to our understanding and appreciation of life."*

*Anderson Clarks' observation that it is the middle class that is most often disadvantaged in the arts, particularly in Protestant churches, may still be true in many places. But it is distinctly not true at the Broadmoor Community Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Organized in 1958, this church was led to an aggressive awareness of the importance of the arts by its first minister, George Wesley Otto, who was called in 1959. Perhaps the most striking piece of art is the free standing bell tower with the Rocky Mountains in the distance, but outside and inside the church is a richness of painting and sculpture.*

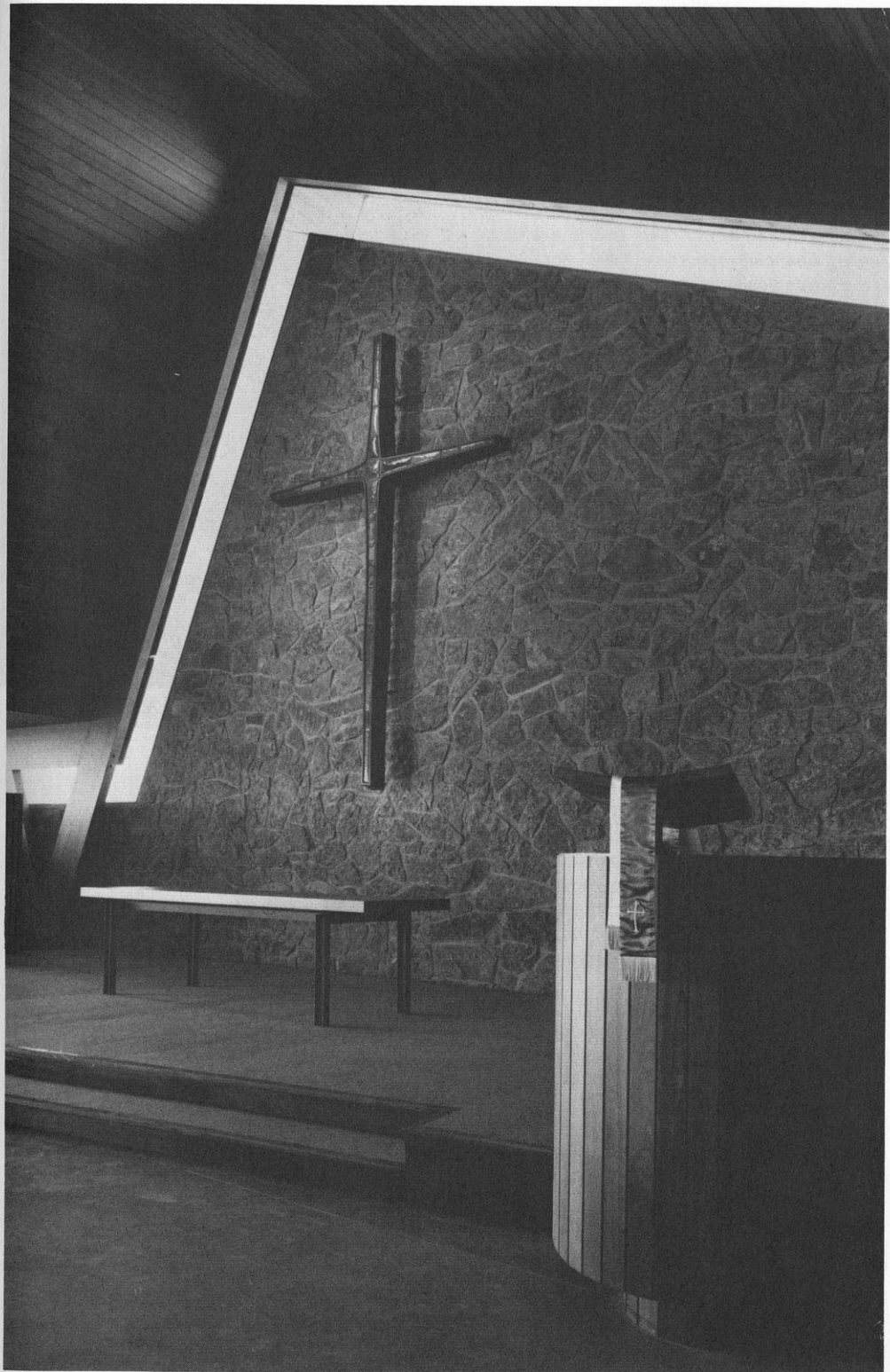
*Since 1962 the Church and the Arts Committee—an outstandingly active and creative church organization—has sponsored an annual art exhibit. Rocky Mountain artists from Santa Fe to Wyoming are invited to participate. The artists price their own works, and the Church and the Arts Committee retains 25 per cent of the purchase price. The art show plus a home tour sponsored by the Women's Fellowship nets the church about a thousand dollars a year which is used to purchase art for the church's own personal collection. In November 1975 this collection numbered seventeen pieces appraised at \$45,000. Some of these pieces were commissioned, some were purchased as prizes from the Annual Exhibit, and some are gifts. They are sculpture, oils, watercolors, a collage, a hanging and a construction on canvas. Among plans currently being considered by the Church and the Arts Committee are using some of the arts purchase reserve to stimulate interest in works they already own and perhaps begin a lending program.*

*According to George Otto, who is now conference minister of the UCC Rocky Mountain Conference, "It has been the conviction of the Broadmoor Community Church since its inception that the church and the arts belong together. Each needs the other for its highest achievement." Edward Manthei, Broadmoor's present minister, adds, "We are enriched by the artist whose capacity for expression transcends the mere speaking of these experiences. In form, color, and design, he gives a new voice to the truth we are seeking about ourselves and the world. The church is*



Broadmore Church symbol.

Broadmore Community Church, Colorado Springs. Photo courtesy: Knutson-Bowers.





**Affiliate Artists, Inc.:**  
**A Nation-Wide Arts Organization**

*Dr. Howard Spragg, Executive Vice-President of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, states that Affiliate Artists, Inc. is an example of how the UCBHM has been able to bring about support for the arts in far greater proportion than would seem possible with its limited financial resources. Seed money is used strategically to establish models and pilot projects which can serve as examples and encouragement for all those groups—both church and secular—with whom the Board shares common goals. Thus, a small investment multiplies its good effects in many ways and many places.*

*In 1966, the Board for Homeland Ministries granted \$10,000 in response to the request from Dr. Miller Upton, president of Beloit College, a United Church of Christ related institution, for assistance in funding Beloit's fledgling Affiliate Artists program. That grant was the first public endorsement of the Affiliate Artists idea by a major national institution. The Board also introduced the program to its thirty church-related institutions of higher education. This action provided a precedent for other church agencies, and within a year, there were fifteen Affiliate Artists appointments with colleges and universities related to the United Church of Christ, the United Presbyterian Church and the Lutheran Church in America. In the ten-year history of Affiliate Artists, Inc. church sponsorships and presentations have grown to a total investment of \$427,000. Today, Affiliate Artists, Inc. is a major, national, non-church program in support of the arts.*

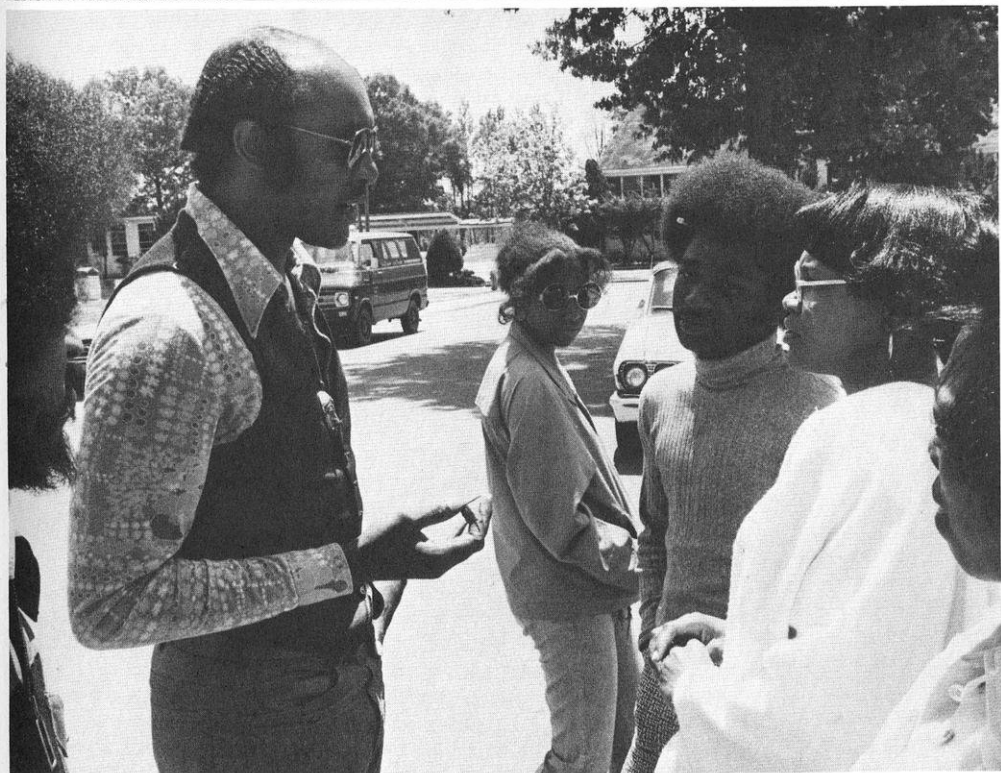
*Altogether since 1966, Affiliate Artists, Inc. has accumulated a total of over \$5,000,000.00 in support from 18 public and private sources, enabling 146 professional performers to carry out 277 residencies in 98 communities throughout the country.*



**Hilda Harris. Photo courtesy: Lisa Bryon, Catalyst.**

Above right: Tom O'Leary. Photo courtesy: Curtis Blake.

Bottom right: J. A. Preston.



## The Matter with Kansas: A State-Wide Model

by Norman Fedder

*"The Matter With Kansas is a nostalgic, loving, serious and humorous look at the history of the state in terms of its more colorful personalities." So Reverend Arthur Kolsti describes my Readers Theatre piece commissioned by his Kansas Association for the Religious Communities, the Arts, and the American Revolution in celebration of the bicentennial.*

*But does the above describe a "religious" artwork? Or need it be so at all? Should there be any criterion other than artistic excellence for a work sponsored by the religious community?*

*In the larger sense, I think not. All great art is religious expression, to my mind. And nothing alienates the artist more than the spectre of censorship. At the same time, the artist must respond to the particular needs of the creative occasion—and it is decidedly challenging and liberating to work within certain limitations (particularly when one is being subsidized to do so!).*

*My commission, I felt, left me "free" with respect to structure, tone, and thematic emphasis—but with a commitment, nevertheless, to create a work expressive of the religious heritage of Kansas and America.*

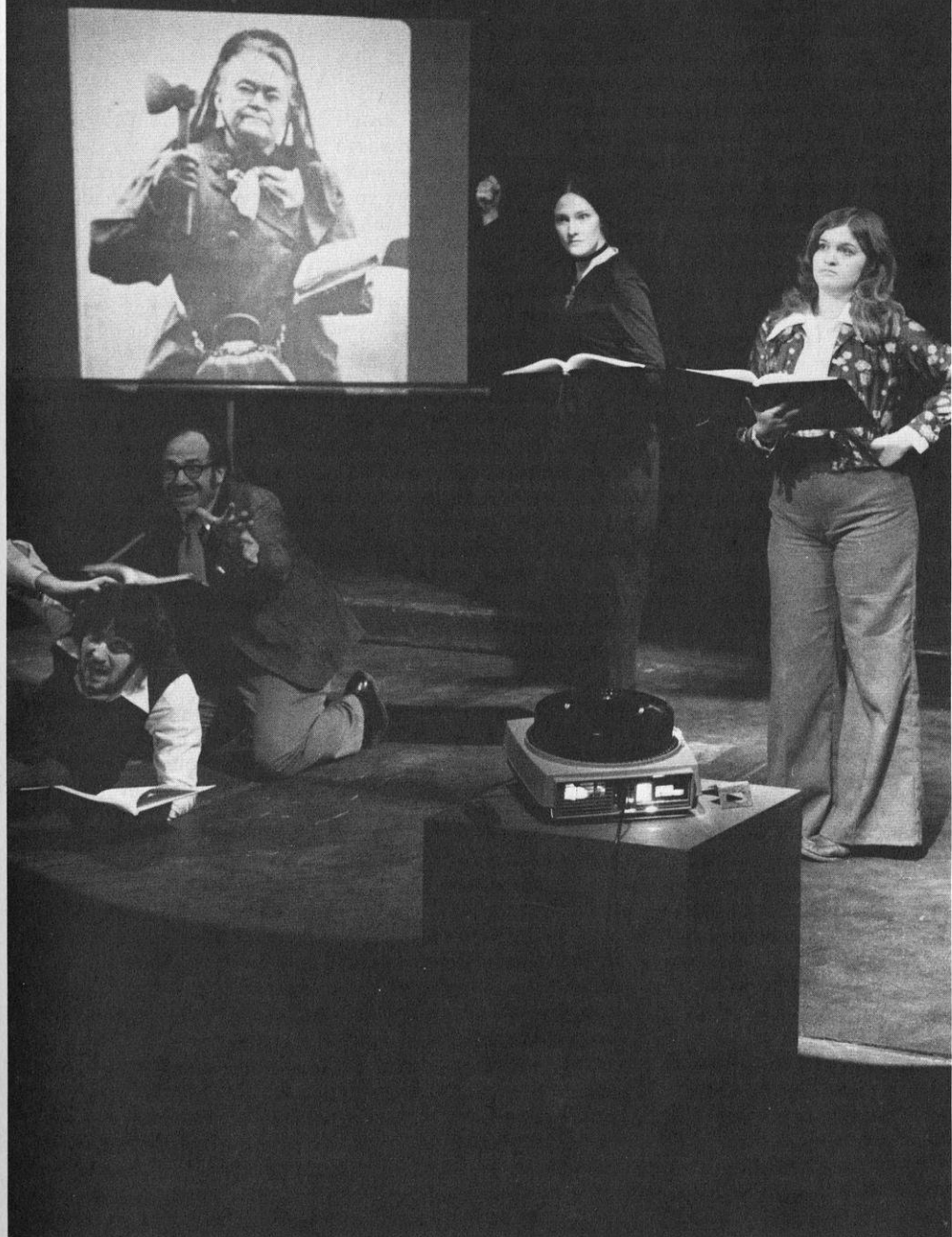
*The result was a piece that Reverend Kolsti was "not sure would relate" to a colleague's "Festival of Christian Art" but was "quite sure would be a rewarding and fun thing" for his community. "Fun"—because it is hilariously satirical of the foibles of such Kansas characters as Senator Jim Lane, Carry Nation, Mary Ellen Lease, and Dr. J. R. Brinkley. "Rewarding"—because it is expressive of the strengths and pitfalls of the American religious heritage: which, on the one hand, has given impulse to the highest reaches of moral idealism, and on the other, to the worst excesses of mindless fanaticism. (Such as the bar-smashing episode of Carry Nation, depicted in the photograph.)*

*The initial production of **The Matter With Kansas** was so well received that it will be performed all over the state during the Bicentennial year. Apparently, the combination of*

*frivolity and profundity hit the mark.*

*"Kansans, like most Americans," the piece concludes, "are a religious people—considering themselves to be entrusted with creating God's Holy Commonwealth on Earth. . . . Ours is no easy approach to grace, no royal road to happiness, no backstairs to beneficence. 'Ad astra per aspera'—to the stars by the hard ways—is the state motto, and kindly note 'the hard ways.'"*

*That "Holy Commonwealth" must include the artist, as uneasy as his grace and hard his ways. There's nothing the matter with Kansas in this regard!*





## Summary Statement

At the last session of the Wingspread consultation, Edward Kamarck, who had participated throughout, was asked to summarize the discussion.

by Edward Kamarck

This has been an exciting and compelling conference. There has been idealism here. Vision in considerable magnitude. Commitment. Eloquence. Humor. And most of all a sense of vital and imaginative search that has cut through many of the shibboleths and grandiose pieties about both religion and the arts.

This has been a notably open group. Far, far less opinionated and doctrinaire than I as a layman expected such a group of formidable theologians to be. In fact, you have been most modest and unassuming in your approach to these very complex issues, eager to learn from one another and in concert. I, for one, learned more than I could possibly integrate overnight. I am sure that it will take me weeks, as I work with the materials of the conference, to even begin to sort out the ideas and issues, tag them, and arrange them according to category, size, and importance, much less to try to interrelate them.

And, of course, interrelating the ideas and issues into some kind of crystal clear mosaic, with meanings and imperatives for action literally springing out at you is what a proper summary should do.

I have to frankly state that it is beyond my capacity to prepare such a summary overnight; and I have too much respect for the seriousness of intent and importance of this effort to try to do so glibly and carelessly. What I propose to do, and I trust it will have some value, is tell you what I have chiefly learned, and to speculate rather tentatively on its implications.

I have learned that this question of healing the schism between art and religion, the deeply ingrained suspicion between the two that has

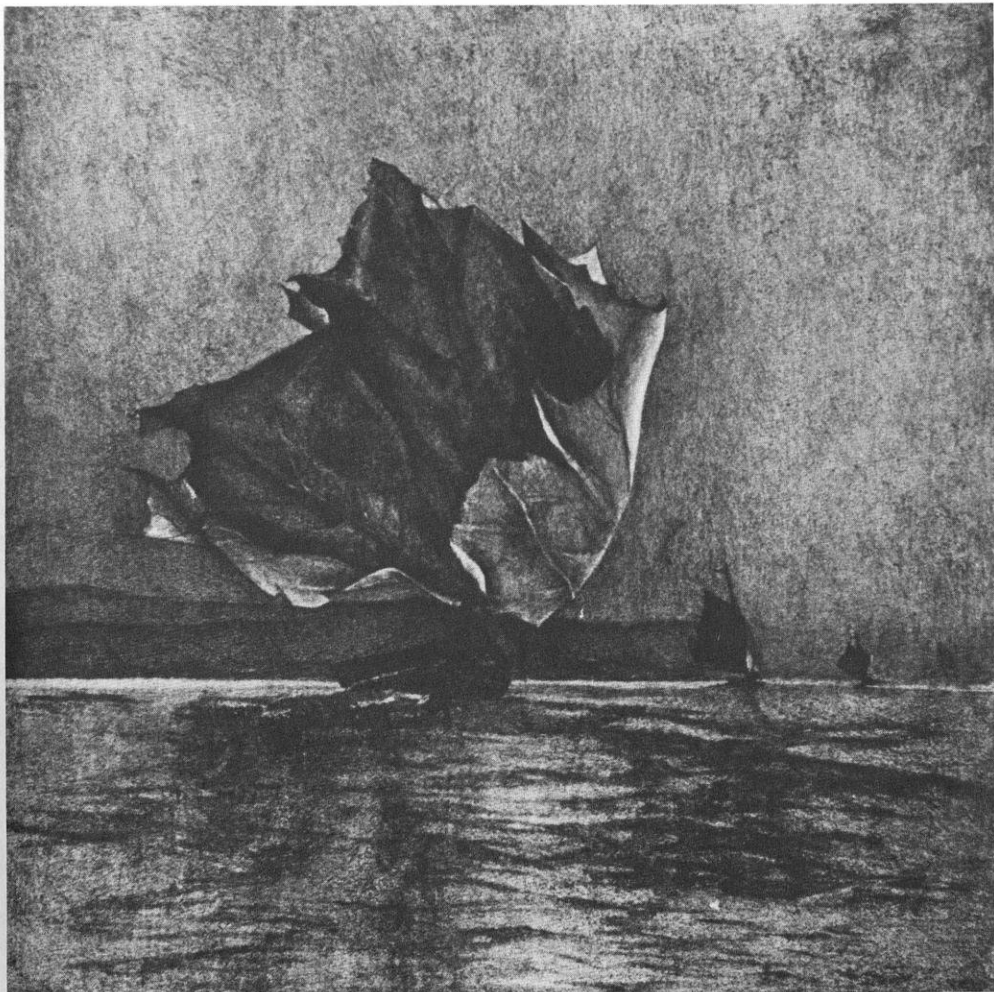
tragically grown up in Protestant America, can be to some degree effectively approached from four different sets of concerns: from those of the theologian; from those of the artist or aesthete or art historian; from those of the caretakers of institutional vitality in both the realms of church and art experience; and more broadly, and significantly subsuming all the above, from the standpoint of those humanistic urgencies, motivations and energies which now seem to be rising to the fore in society.

And I sense that as apparently difficult as it is to interweave them, that pragmatism dictates that we must, in varying combinations and in different stresses, depending upon whom we are talking to.

The key battleground, of course, is that of the community—the literally thousands of them across America—in which the minister, priest, or rabbi sits on one set of institutional resources, and the arts leader on another and never the twain doth meet, or seldom ever. Whatever you say, write, or do, if it does not finally result in those two sets of institutional resources somehow conjoining in vital cooperative enterprise, and on a massive scale, then your efforts will have been largely in vain.

So how do we effect change on that level?

I suspected, but what I have learned at this conference has confirmed it, that it will be infinitely more difficult to alter the attitudes, and motivations of the parish minister. I sense from what I have heard that powerfully persuasive arguments are going to have to be made initially on the theological level—one does not easily roll back several hundred years of habituated prejudice. And I did think that in tandem Ted Gill and John Dillenger are well on the way to marshalling impressive evidence. Ted's point that most social-ethical questions now rise dead-center in the aesthetic field—beautifully illustrated I thought by his description of the essentially high dramatic talent of Martin Luther King and the enormous impact that that had on the moral climate of the sixties—plus his dire warning with respect to the future, that without an arts adjacency, decisions of incalculable implication for the structures and styles of our existence will continue to be made by people unknown to the old guardians of morality and unavailable to them: both of these were most



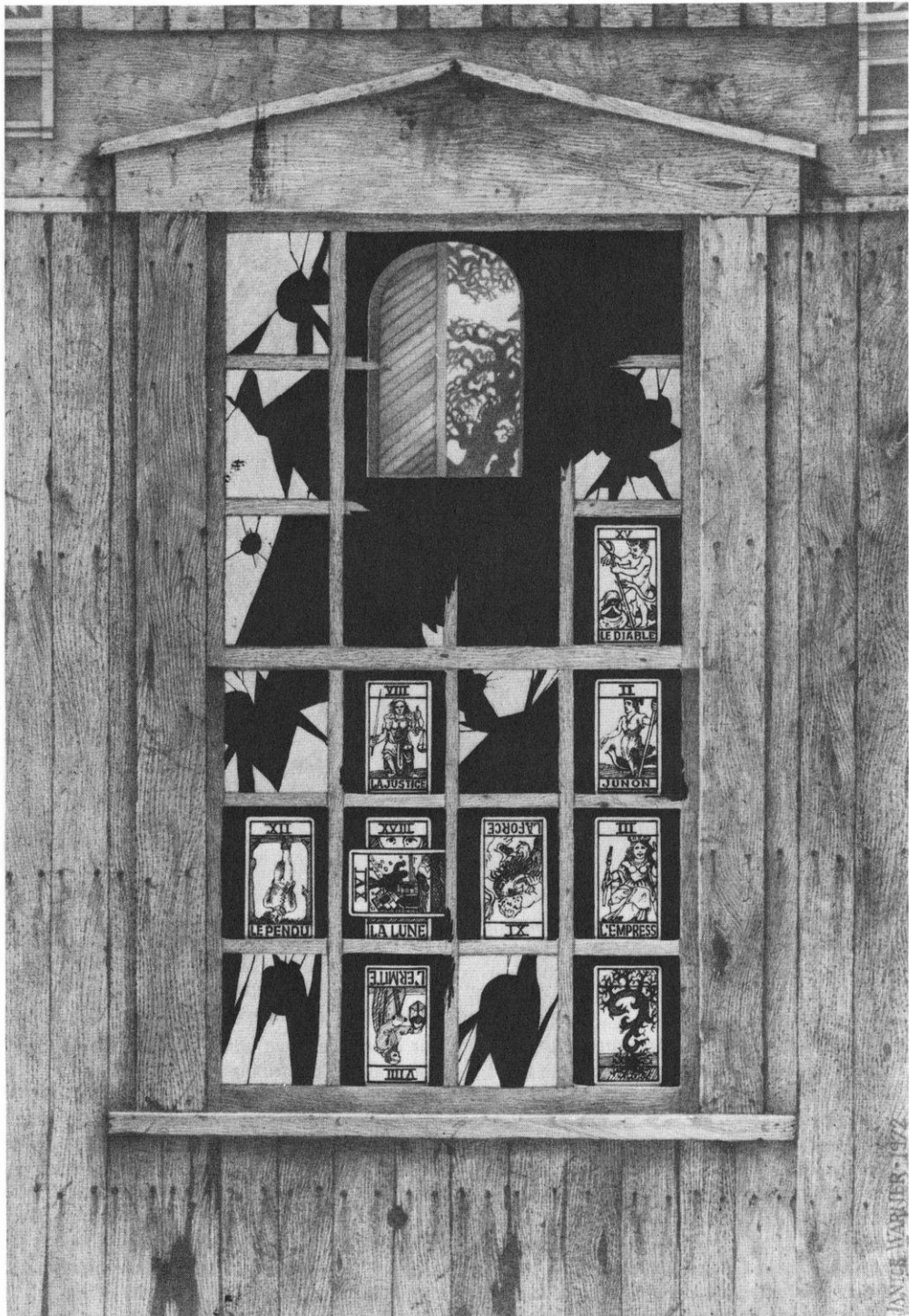
**Leaves to Sail** by Laurin Notheisen, lithograph, 1974. Courtesy: the artist.

telling. But his arguments become even stronger when supported by the kind of lucid historical perspective which John Dillenberger supplies; indicating, at least for me if I interpreted him correctly, that that hostility to and suspicion of the arts arose in the main from a chance confluence of unique circumstance.

But I think their suit could have even greater urgency, if it stressed the unique and compelling opportunity of our humanistic revolutions—the fact that there is now a headlong search for value and meaning in the society, for redefinition of experience—an enormous

stir which I believe demands reckoning with at some as yet unformulated juncture point between art as we know it today with all its ills (and let's face it, much of it does lack a significant ethical base) and religion as we know it today with all its ills (a primary one of which is the lack of a sensate base).

Score a break-through in the theological realm, and I would guess that the caretakers of institutional vitality on all levels in the church will be more readily responsive to the argument that because the arts are dramatically on the ascendancy in the society, increasingly commandeering resources,



energies, and money, that it would be to their advantage to start investigating possibilities.

Because the arts are so essentially anarchic with respect to authoritative dicta, and at the same time opportunistic, I'm not sure it's absolutely necessary to win your argument first at the top—with either aestheticians or our best artists—though it would be helpful to more clearly make the point that our highest art has always been profoundly concerned with fundamental ethical questions—and certainly with the integrity of creative vision. Create an opportunity for artists and would-be artists (for they're important, too) to work and create with freedom and encouragement—and I'm sure they'll work within *any* institutional setting, within the church as well as without. And we already have some examples of churches becoming arts centers—so the institutional prototype is on the way.

With respect to the more conservative faiths, and those especially in the south, it seems apparent that for a long time to come you are going to have to be content with relatively minor goals. Since there seems to be little problem with the seeming subversiveness of music, that would be one area to stress, as would the decorative folk arts, particularly I would think in the area of broad creative participation within the community. While it is true that such arts do not sharply challenge our perceptions of social realities *in the role of consumer*, it must be acknowledged that they do offer vital challenge and growth to the maker. And what is important, their wide-spread practice and flourishing do help provide the kind of ambience, understanding, and receptivity which one requires for ultimate cultural growth in any community.

Perhaps the most feasible challenge that RCAAR might offer the conservative churches of America in the immediate future is in regard to their fond proclivity for using the arts in sentimental ways to serve didactic roles. And I offer in this regard, one of the best definitions of sentimentality I have ever heard—and one appropriate to this gathering. "Sentimentality," some one once said, "is loving something more than God does."

**Coach House at McFarland** by Janice Warner, pencil and ink, 1972. Courtesy: the artist.

I came to this conference with an overall sense of possible strategy, and since nothing that I heard here has caused me to abandon it, and several things I have heard have caused me to affirm it, I will share that concept with you. It is that from all that I perceive that is happening out there around the country—the new sense of possibility arising in many places, the new audiences for the arts, the new participants, the new drives, and motivations—that America is in fact beginning to move toward a fulfillment of Whitman's magnificent dream of a vigorous and democratic culture of all the people. Art leaders and shapers ignore this stir at their peril. What is called for, I believe, is a new concept of culture, a far more inclusive one, which while still stressing the importance of quality and excellence, significantly implies the need for a major effort to build from the bottom up.

In 1970, a meeting in Rotterdam of the Council of Europe, working toward common positions in the Council's nineteen countries on the allocation of funds, leadership, and equipment for culture and art, made a remarkable statement. It was especially remarkable when one reminds oneself of the long-time elitist attitude toward the arts in many European ministries of culture.

The Council said:

*We have come to realize that socio-cultural equipment is not buildings, it is society. Buildings are part of the equipment. . . . Socio-cultural development should begin from the bottom rather than the top . . . the administration must acknowledge the existence of a pluralistic society and recognize the rights of all groups—ethnic, racial and social groups at all levels—the national, regional, local, neighborhood and street block level.*

As one reads the futurologists there seems little doubt that the trends toward further technology and deeper concern with human values will intensify. How they will affect each other is, as Ted Gill points out, the difficult question. It would be, indeed, tragic if the two institutional forces in the community who speak most eloquently for man's spiritual needs and salvation would fail to join hands in common effort. □



## From The Record: V

**Lawrence Gruman:** I liked your last phrase, "join hands," do you want to go on from there. How? Where?

**Ray Scott:** May I ask a question that I think ties into this also. You refer on several occasions to beginning on the bottom rather than on the top. Maybe that's the question that I hear being asked. Where's the bottom and how do you begin?

**Ed Kamarck:** Well, I think that you state arts council directors really have the kind of experience that will confirm the need to take what you have, the opportunities, the motivations, and to build with them what is as imaginative as you can conceive:

**Ray Scott:** In the beginning I had the notion that it was a function of the state arts council to serve on two levels: to respond to needs as expressed by the so-called grassroots and to make funds available to implement programs of merit that were proposed to us by those out there who identified a need and constructed some sort of program that was designed to meet that need. We have as resources available to us the staff of the arts council and the fifteen members on the council appointed by the governor, presumably because of their special interests and expertise. In addition to that we have in our Michigan setup a system of advisory panels whose function is (from a professional standpoint) to provide the expertise necessary to evaluate the proposals that come into us and to present proposals of their own. I think it's the function of arts councils to see that the arts are available to the people of the state wherever they live, in a convenient manner, and at a price that is not prohibitive.

In the early stages there were not a lot of organizations that were equipped to address themselves to this goal of taking the arts to the people in the state. Most of the people in the state lived in communities that are so remote geographically or so small in population that it is not economically feasible for them to bring the arts on a professional level into their communities. It seems to me in-



Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

cumbent on a state arts council not only to respond to their identified needs but also to identify needs as we see them and—avoiding at all risk an imposition of official governmental bureaucratic taste—to make the arts available in their communities.

This was the reason that the Art Train has taken so much of our energies and time and effort and has become controversial as well. If I had to do it over, I would do it again because this was our effort to get the arts out of the Detroit metropolitan area and into the hinterlands. It has worked. But the legislature now has slapped our hands and said, "Naughty, you're not supposed to innovate, you are supposed to respond." This is a very circuitous way of saying arts councils are in a peculiar position of being able to respond only. In regards to a bringing together of the religious and the cultural communities we're going to have to wait for somebody out there to come to us. Our hands are partly tied at the present time. I've been sitting here trying to figure out what I can do when I get to try to make this day and a half translatable into some practical application. I'm still puzzled by it.

**Walter Anderson:** I think that one thing that might be done, Ray, would be to create a better, more direct dialogue between the state arts councils and commissions on the one hand and the religious communities on the other hand so that the religious communities would feel freer to request funds. Some churches fear to request support not realizing that when they request support, it would be for art and not for the church. If you can make that kind of delineation, then I think the dialogue can lead to concepts of projects and programs to which the state agencies can respond.

**James Buell:** I've been working with different state arts councils around the country and it's very difficult to take what's happened in one place and use that as a pattern somewhere else because the political realities are so different. In one state, for example, the state arts council's executive director wouldn't even talk to one of the top church leaders in this particular state because this director was so afraid of getting mixed up in some kind of a religious controversy. The public relations man finally came to an RCAAR meeting to say, "We can have nothing to do with this project whatsoever because of separation of church and state." So I wrote a letter explaining something about the separation of church and state, and I said that among other things the purpose of RCAAR was to elicit support of the largest Protestant denomination and the Catholic archdiocese for the state arts council. I got a very cordial reply. But there's a certain kind of political reality we must accept. I just want to emphasize that the role of the state arts council executive does vary radically from state to state, and I appreciate the political realities that are going to limit what they can do within their particular constituency. On the other hand I think that in some states if the religious communities organized themselves and came to the state arts council that there might be a more sympathetic hearing insofar as the state legislature is concerned—than if it looked as if the state arts council was trying to develop some kind of a religious program.

**Grant Spradling:** There are more examples, Ray. First of all is what your office did in helping the United Church Board develop the Amistad II Exhibit in simply letting one of the scholarship students from Fisk University come be an intern in the Michigan Arts

Council on the Art Train program. There is another program in Montana in which there is a kind of open dialogue going on. And another one is the City Spirit model, the Doane program in Nebraska, where there is a relationship between six communities and a church-related college. Initially the project was funded by a national church agency and finally funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. One thing I'd like to suggest is we have to find new and present models. We tend to look at the Renaissance, we tend to look back when the church was a patron, but this is not a meaningful pattern for us.

**Ray Scott:** Just to pursue this grassroots thing—one of the most successful things that we have been able to do in the last few years is to encourage the formation of community arts councils. The first few years we were in business we encouraged the formation of a lot of community arts councils, but they didn't do anything. They all got together and decided that there ought to be a community council that was concerned with the arts, and they drew up by-laws and elected officers and published a calendar of non-events. That was a non-justification of their existence. We discovered that part of it was that they needed tender loving care from our office and someone to go out and hold hands with them and suggest what they ought to do without appearing to dictate, and show them that it could be done. Now we have lots of community arts councils, and we're putting together a consortium of these councils and they're all looking for something worthwhile to do. Maybe community arts councils would be the place to commence the dialogue between the church and to get this going.

**David Nelson:** We've had instances where it's worked very well. I can trace now why it's worked well. There was just a meeting of the state to bring together people from other state agencies and foundations that are touring the state and trying to get dialogues out of communities, and they haven't been able to do it. And they found out that JoAnn Daly, our community person, was doing it successfully and they brought her into a room to ask why she was doing it and explained they were having trouble selling their program on sewer building or whatever. We've got a lot of young people in these state agencies with all these great programs for the people out there, and they're wondering why the

people aren't buying in on them. The simple reason that we seemed to be having success was we don't go out and sell anything. We go into the community and we say that we would like the people to get together to talk about your community. Then JoAnn has what she calls a "dream session" where they'll dream about what they would like the community to be. Somewhere down the line about two days later they get into a discussion about whether or not the arts could help in any of their problems. If they can, then maybe we can work something out. We showed we cared about the community, we didn't necessarily care about getting some arts programs in that community and apparently weren't carpetbagging anything, and so the doors were open.

When we got into the program with Rocky Mountain College and they requested funds for this community, we got into a very strong dialogue within our council on the separation of church and state. But that was a whole different thing because it was as though we were splitting our small community saying we'll get some programs in for the Protestants but not for the Catholics. In working with small communities, the last thing in the world we want to do is make that split. The dialogue with the church in the small community has to be ecumenical, it has to be between the Catholic and the Protestant. When it comes from that kind of dialogue within the community there are no fears at all, but when it appears to be one sect developing a program throughout the state it becomes a worrisome thing. I think we are beginning to understand that we have a ministry where we just go out and say, "Hey folks, what do you observe in your community and what do you want different and what makes a community in your eyes." The arts always come to the fore, they always become a reason to come together. Ray has the greatest thing in the world—this Art Train—and it really points to some of the basic problems you have because Art Train is not all that well received by the National Endowment for the Arts because they never quite felt it met the standards that it ought to meet.

**Ray Scott:** Art Train is loved by everyone but the professionals.

**David Nelson:** Years ago it was suggested that we were going to get into Art Fleet, and

this was going to be the answer in moving the arts around the United States. Well, they just went after each others' throats. One set of super-professionals would develop a concept and another set of super-professionals would tear it apart. So it had to come out of the hinterland. No one can really evaluate what happens when that train goes into a community—because we've had it in Montana. I'll never forget a grand dame coming up to me in Rocky Ford, Colorado, where we opened it when we toured the West, with tears in her eyes saying this was the greatest thing that ever happened to her community that wasn't political or commercial. Every other time the community had been hit for something, it was either some political hurrah or some tractor convention. But here was this neutral thing of art and everybody got very excited. But those things are going to have to come out of the hinterlands. You cannot depend on the hierarchy to make those things happen, we're going to have to make those things happen ourselves.

**Ralph Peterson:** I just want to respond to your statement. First of all, in terms of community or society there is also a private sector. I am working with the second largest bank in North America exploring a large commitment to the arts. There is an enormous area of the private sector of the United States. It has enormous power and these people should be involved and enlisted. The private sector enables one to be very inventive, innovative and exciting.

Secondly, at this conference I still resonate to what John was saying that much of American Protestantism is a mistake. I believe that if it is taken in context, we need a Catholic vision. In my ministry at our place we've got jazz in. Many people have missed all this; we've missed soul for so many years. But there has to be a kind of honesty which I think that we as leaders in local places cannot just let it drop.

Thirdly, I think there is the whole matter of environment—not only in Nevelson who talks about creating an environment—but art is more than just the canvas or the sculpture—it's space, urban space—the water sculpture, the plaza, the streets. Streets are for people. I don't know where this is heading in terms of the arts of our time but I think that it is social, it is cultural, it is as integrative as a tribe in

Lapland—which I know better than an Indian tribe in Montana—but there is something that can bring us together again in a new sort of urban cave if you will, which is environmental, which is ethical and aesthetic and religious. The environment is where I see the future.

**Grant Spradling:** One thing that the religious community has most of is space and a lot of it is empty.

**Richard Clark:** I have to ask a question about RCAAR vis à vis its great purposes. How are these being communicated down? How much of what has been brought to the table today in either the way of thought or of program suggestion and the models Jay referred to and a number of people I know can report as examples of real possibilities of unified effort here? Is there any communication medium presently being used that gets this to the local parish minister around the United States on an ecumenical basis? Do you have a newsletter or anything like that? Are you bombarding people?

**Grant Spradling:** No, we're not. Part of the reason is that a lot has been going on. A tremendous amount went on in church art in the fifties for example and a lot of celebration of the arts went on in the sixties. We are trying to find those models that seem somehow to break open perceptions, in other words germinal models. There are lots of churches already doing some very fine work, but we are working to find those models that are germinal.

**Richard Clark:** From my point of view that seems to be an overly cautious posture. Whenever you have a good one, why don't you tell everybody about it. Because I think it can be a model for them. When Tom Stewart tells me about what can happen with a singer being presented by his church to the greater community of Buffalo and the kind of responses he's getting in-house from the congregation and from the community in general, I think that there is a lot of evidence that something is happening. We can't let all the people in the country know about that but theoretically you can. And it seems to me that's very important, that's what inspires people who haven't thought about doing anything to try to do something.

**Grant Spradling:** While you've got the floor, I

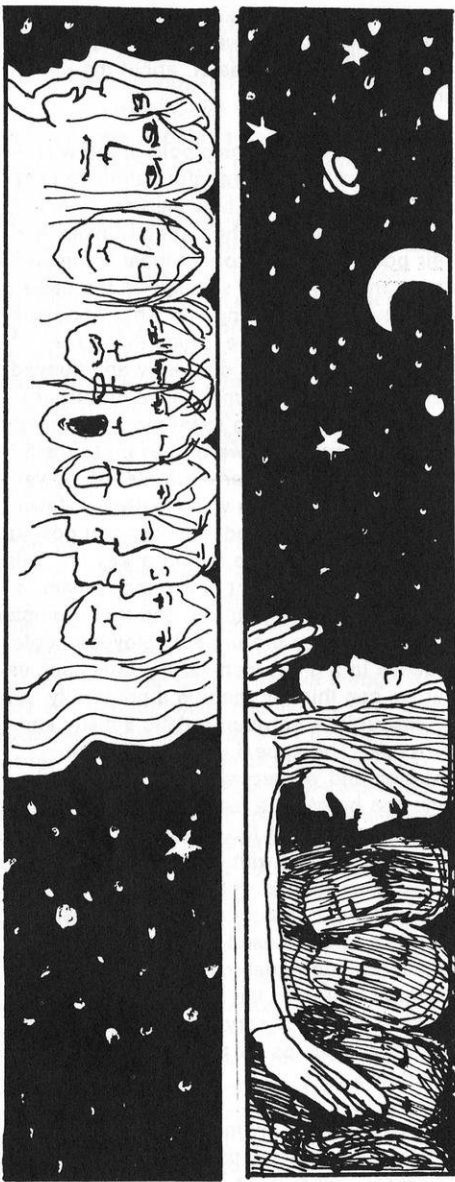
would like for you to talk a little about the germ of the idea you were presenting the other day about the pastor, about the underemployed clergy.

**Richard Clark:** The basic point there was—and seemed to be more information coming from you to me about how men are thinking about their lives and their effectiveness in their positions as pastors in local communities across the country. It seemed on the basis of what you were reporting and what Anderson reports that a lot of the issues that gave ministers a great deal of energy and buoyed them up and gave them a sense of purpose and made their calling seem more meaningful to them—issues that were relevant to them in the sixties—have either dissipated in power or in some cases men were really put down because they espoused controversial positions on social issues in too strong a way for their congregation. So right now people seem to be looking for things to do, and that prompted an idea that they are underemployed people. Because in a great many of the communities that we can think of there is a possibility for new unions between artistic activity and churches. The appeal can be made so that men and women who hold these positions can be given a feeling that they will be given a piece of the action, that they will be supported (not with money necessarily) but by other people with expertise and other people doing it, a community of interest. There's a lot of unused energy across the country among parish ministers that can be brought to bear on the greater use and distribution of artistic services and activities in these communities for the betterment of the community.

**Thomas Stewart:** My instant reaction to that is that latent in every pastor is the gimmick syndrome—what West was saying in very strong terms about using art as the new savior. There are so many guys lusting after transactional analysis and any other thing that comes down the pike, and it surely would subvert the kinds of things that we're talking about if we got them on board on a superficial level.

**Jane Dillenberger:** John and I do a great deal of traveling in this country and we're always looking for works of art—and by this I mean not only in museums but also in churches and graveyards and public monuments in the





towns. The hardest place to find that information about these works of art is in the cities and states where they are. We have to find out about them in Washington, D.C. and through research. Now a few of the arts councils have put out some very good lists of what buildings are considered distinguished and what works are in them, a kind of directory, geographically. They are tremendously helpful to us. But what an opportunity for you people to go into the community and make them look at their community. Many of the works are in churches and they should have this all documented. If you could, get the local librarians, the local archivist, the ministers, the ladies auxiliary busy on programs like this, together with the artists. Then make this information available to people who are interested, in the state and from out of state.

Another source of the kind of information that we wanted was done by the federal government, the marvelous state guides that were published out of federal funds as part of the WPA. These guides also gave the ethnic history of the people and the layers and levels of time at which they came into the state and which objects they brought with them—certain important graveyards, certain important churches. Within each state you could do something very significant in this way, not only bringing artists and clerics together but giving people an awareness of the richness of the heritage of their own area.

**David Nelson:** One quick comment to that—it's in view of a conversation last night on aesthetic distance—and that is that you grow up in a locale and you're very close to it, you go away and find how valuable it was and must go back and relook at it. There is a sensitivity in some states however to carpetbagging that type of information. For instance, I remember the furor in our state when we published the location of ghost towns and what happened to the sites when the treasure hunter got the information. The same thing could go for graveyards. A concern that many arts councils have is they may assume too many natural functions of education. We have a big role in just making our own educational and humanistic facilities aware of more research needs right at home. That's a whole bigger issue of the responsibility of higher education in their own locale. I agree with you on the need to encourage grand

proposals of that nature, but it's down the pike a bit before we're going to be able to build up the administrative hierarchy to conduct that type of project ourselves.

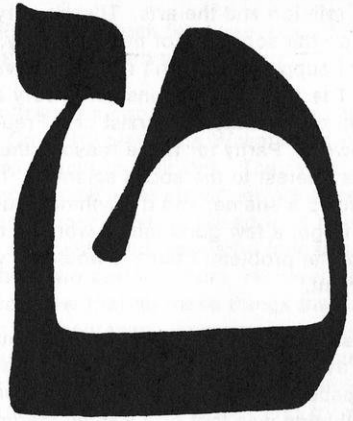
**Ray Scott:** One of the biggest parts of our job is to find somebody else to do it for us. Somebody else has to do our job because we don't have the personnel.

**Jane Dillenberger:** In other words the reason we have these guides is that the federal government did it.

**Ray Scott:** Or some other organization that has the personnel or the expertise and the capability to do it. We could give them the funds if they asked for it.

**Sister Noemi Weygant:** I'm on the executive committee of the Bicentennial Committee of Duluth. I can guarantee you that within the next two years because of the result of this Bicentennial I'll doubt if you'll be able to go into any city or any little town where they will not be able to give you very complete information on almost anything artistic there. My photographic classes have put out a book—and we have had to reprint it many times—on beautiful homes in Duluth. Then I decided that we didn't go anywhere near far enough. We need to go inside those homes and pick up the motifs and the fireplaces and the architecture in the stairways, in the murals, so that after this Bicentennial is over there is going to be a catalogue of everything in Duluth. And I think what's happening there is happening all over the United States.

**John Dillenberger:** When I heard Grant talk I was a little reminded of my experience with foundations and government agencies. Everybody is looking for those germinal models which will transform and change the world. The fact of the matter is that they don't exist. If we really look at what foundations have done in the American scene, the total impact has been disastrous. They do good, tremendous good, but the goals they set for themselves are ridiculous. You don't get any place with most government and foundation groups because they are not open to diverse strategies but have themselves selected those particular options which they think will maximize the situation and make the difference which justifies their existence.



Hebrew letter **Tét**

I think what you're doing is looking for the germinal models. Maybe they don't exist. Maybe there are accents that you need to take and work them for all they're worth, and work with alternative things simultaneously, and maybe at some juncture you will have to switch and reduce doing some things and do more of others. I guess I'm worried, too, about the unemployed clergy. That's not a good reason for them to be doing something in art unless their whole religious vitality takes on a new role in their culture. They are not going to be saved, as you say, any more by art, than they were by transactional analysis or social services. The trouble is that neither transaction analysis or social action transformed their existence. What is there to lead us to believe that working with art would. Root radical transformations, both in art and religion, are terribly necessary; to create instrumentalities and contexts in which they can happen seems to me to be terribly important.

**Richard Clark:** In that area I happen to agree with that. In another area it seems to me that in the academic world one would at least expect to get some seminal research done. To my knowledge very few social scientists

are interested in dealing with the arts, let alone religion and the arts. There's very little done on the sociology of the arts today, partly I suppose it doesn't really work very well. The arts weren't considered very important either under a Marxist or a Freudian framework. Partly for those reasons they are of less interest to the social sciences. I think that that's a shame, and if anything could be done to get a few good minds working on the root of the problem, I think it would be very important.

**James Buell:** What kind of support system is there available? One of the most interesting little papers that came out of the St. Paul consultation was that of a Baptist theologian who teaches at Colgate-Rochester in upstate New York. He wrote a very interesting reaction to Ted's performance in St. Paul. But he said "I'm a religion/and man. I have been a religion and technology man, I have been a religion and science man, I have been a religion and ethics man. Now on the basis of this consultation I'm really quite interested in becoming a religion and arts man." But suppose he did want to do this, what kind of support system would there be to allow him to have time to develop the intellectual tools and vocabulary that one needs to get you going in some new "religion/and"? I don't think that exists.

**Grant Spradling:** Dr. Paffrath has joined us. I'd like to try to express the sense of this group of satisfaction and gratitude for the opportunity to carry on this dialogue in an atmosphere that was so conducive to our pleasure and hopefully to stimulate thought.

**Anderson Clark:** This institution (Wingspread) was so important at a particular time within the first months of exploring the idea of Affiliate Artists. The Johnson Foundation has established a Wingspread artist for Affiliate Artists doing what we had hoped to do in so many other places. It's very exciting that this man Les Paffrath and this institution would once again pick up on some people's dreams and ideas and hopes.

**Leslie Paffrath:** Ralph Peterson was good enough to show me some of his plans last night. We feel that change in art form is very important. Almost nothing that you are looking at here, in the way of art forms, is permanent. In a dynamic society where so

much fresh is being created reflecting that society I think there's a very real risk of becoming stuck with art forms.

The night before you began the meeting yesterday I attended at our church a teenager's version of *Superstar* which was moving and devotional, certainly an expression of the arts. I think this Sunday that same church will have an interpretive dance before the altar depicting the Lord's Prayer. I see great hope in this country for the relationship of the arts to life—including religion.

**John Dillenberger:** This kind of speech always prompts me in another direction. I never resist the devil's prompting at that point. The art tradition in America is much greater than any of us have thought about. Quality is a word which needs careful delineation and certainly doesn't have one characteristic, but I think the time has come for me to spend most of my energy pleading that so much of the new interest in art is going to be another fad, another activity, which is both bad art, bad theology, bad religion. If *Jesus Christ Superstar* is a symbol of it, I can do without it. There is so much of that that isn't worth bothering about.

**Pamela Ilot:** But isn't it worth bothering about whether you judge it on that or not to the possibilities that can grow out of that.

**John Dillenberger:** I don't think that historically I see that anything great has ever come out of anything ungreat.

**Pamela Ilot:** Oh, I think so.

**Ted Gill:** Out of Nazareth?

**Leslie Paffrath:** I wish that you could have experienced with us the other night watching an eleven year old play the part in this teenage production of *Superstar* of Mary Magdalene with sensitivity, with devotion, and great purity. An opportunity for expression for her that may lead her who knows where. It was my first exposure to *Superstar* and it was so pure that I think I don't want to see the play or the movie. I want to rest with that teenage pure rendition of it. But to see that individual, I think that that must open the way to something that is potentially great.

**Grant Spradling:** John Dillenberger has men-

tioned music in the church several times. Not once have we dealt with the fact that the most ubiquitous artist-in-residence in this country is the church musician. Where most of the church's money has gone to the arts—except architecture—is into the church musician and pipe organs. I was speaking to a member of the staff of the National Endowment recently and said we don't take the church musician seriously as a force for the arts at the grass roots. And the reply was, "No, I don't."

**Richard Clark:** Am I correct in thinking that he's not taken seriously enough to be represented here? (G.S.: He's not represented here.) Well, that's like in the music business. We share this view that sometimes the principal obstacle that is presented will be a union man. The musicians union is a very powerful force in the music business, but there is no representation. I don't know how you develop what you call a dialogue.

**Anderson Clark:** One of the RCAAR board members is a church musician. He was hoping to be here, but he's in Buffalo.

**Sister Noemi Weygant:** I think a very great danger in this talk of art is of being an arts snob, an intellectual snob, and an historical snob. When I start my classes I work on this idea: God gave talent to each man, but he did not give them equality. Therefore if a student hasn't the most talents to develop to the highest degree, can we at anytime risk making him feel that what he produces is inferior? Art must also be something that elevates and exalts from within the individual. If a student is working hard and seeking and searching and ascending, he is in spirit an artist; and I don't give a darn if his work doesn't come up to that of someone else. He is an artist and I think his work is worthy of praise, it doesn't have to hang in a museum.

**Thomas Stewart:** When we have a children's choir that has a poor choir director and those kids come in to sing for worship and do a crappy job, I make the decision that they're not going to sing in church again because it's an offense to me and to God. I then fire the choir director.

**John Dillenberger:** One of the reasons that artists in painting or sculpture are so leery about getting tied up with the church is that

they take one look at music in the church.

**Ted Gill:** Even though for some, church music was their first contact with the arts.

**Pamela Ilot:** You can criticize performance, but the Coventry plays, the Wakefield cycle, were pop drama in their day. They were anonymous, they were street performances, they were vulgar. They survived long enough now to be considered wonderful folk arts. We teach them, we perform them, we revere them. Who's to know that all these things that try to grow up spontaneously as an expression won't survive to represent the spirit of our day or our decade and be considered valuable? Let's criticize the performances and try and get them good but not shun expressions that are alien to the education that we were given. Let's encourage them at least to want to try, to want to express themselves, and let them discover whether it works or not, whether they are doing it well. I can't stand *Jesus Christ Superstar* but I do work on the fact that groups all over the country have been stimulated by that to feel that there is a language. They can try to express things in a language they understand. I think that's a great step forward.

**Thomas Stewart:** Regarding Nevelson, yesterday you said how great that someone's going to the quality person and not just going to something current. That was an intimidating remark for me because I'm wondering whether or not to go for a piece of modern sculpture in the side yard of the church.

**Pamela Ilot:** If Nevelson is willing to do it, fine. But at the same time down in the foyer of that church are unknown young artists who may never become the Nevelsons of this world who are encouraged to come and get involved, to show what they can do—bring their offerings to the altar, if you want to get mystic about it. We shouldn't shut them off.

**Anderson Clark:** There's a music school in New York over on the East side that's been there for umpteen years—Turtle Bay. Turtle Bay has a fantastic problem in going to foundations to get grants. They've searched everything and found they had one distinguished alumnus. He played for awhile in the Metropolitan orchestra but didn't last! But the fantastic thing is that the people who come out of Turtle Bay and go into business in



New York become very sophisticated in the arts. They suddenly realized that in a sense they had trained audiences for the great art. They never produced a great artist but have they produced sophisticated audiences!

**Gary Johnson:** I've been picking up bits as we go along. I think everyone who's spoken so far has touched on the role of the arts in the community. There's been a lot of talk about the conflicts, either real or imagined, between theology or art. But I think that the subject of what role can or should the arts play in the community is one that's been touched on but hasn't been developed. I think if there is a sequel to this meeting, the role of the arts in the community might be a worthwhile topic to develop.

**Dale Muchmore:** I feel a little awkward because I feel like I've been put on the board of directors before I've been in the company. I didn't know what RCAAR was all about until I was invited and I've been learning. I hope that what I've learned I can give at some other time. At this point I feel the performing artist's real problem is economic. If there is a place for us to write, to do sculpture, to do whatever it is we do, that's really all we want. I had the impression that that was really what RCAAR was about from just the brief talks I had with people before I came here.

I was telling a couple of you a story yesterday about the time when I was the union representative for a small company and the company had not been paid for two weeks. The director couldn't afford to do it, and he said, "You've got to write a letter to the board of directors and tell them that before the last week of the season you've got to be paid your back salary or you're going to strike." I got together with the other people, we talked about it, and I wrote a letter. I went around and I talked to all the other dancers—it was a small company—and I said now we have to sign this letter and send it to all the members of the board, and just explain to them that we are professionals, we're under a contract, and we should be paid because we have to eat. They discussed it and they all agreed to sign. After they agreed to sign, one girl who'd been a professional dancer for a number of years, raised her hand and she said, "If they don't give us the money, can we dance anyway?" I think this is the position of the artists I know. They just want to perform their

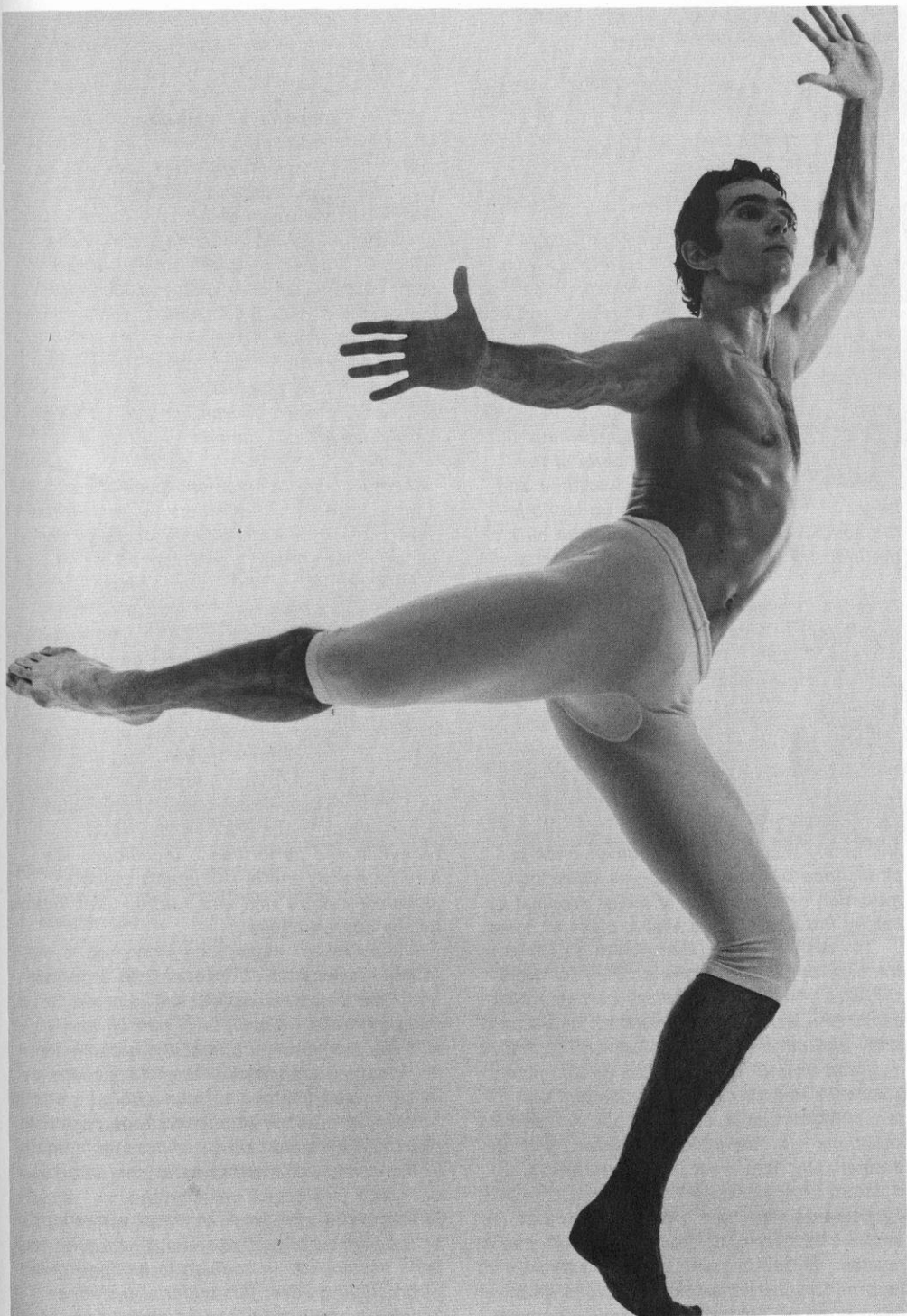
art. I don't know if that's really relevant to the bigger problems, but from my point of view that's the position of the performing artist.

**Ronald Whyte:** Most of the people I know in the performing arts are subsisting on less than subsistence. The phrase of the dancer, "If they don't pay us, can we still dance," is enraging. It just seems like a tradition in America that it's a tremendous privilege to be underprivileged if you are an artist. I think that it is absolute nonsense. If the performing arts are being privileged by being underprivileged, why do we persist then in going along with the dictatorship of those who are underprivileging us? That is to say, we will continue to dance whether we are paid or not but rather than dance in the eighteen-thousandth production of *The Boyfriend* it would be a lot more fun to be underprivileged in the church and do something ultimately much more fun. Perhaps that's how you can lure into the church all of us in the performing arts, by continuing to underprivilege us but give us something more nourishing to play with.

**Ralph Peterson:** I think that there are various ways in which people are underprivileged. I don't mean to defend the economic deprivation of the artist, but our society is underprivileged in other ways. Louise Nevelson was talking about walking, and she said most people walk to cross the street and get to the other side. There are a few of us who walk because we are alive. That is what art is about. If we don't walk, then we are underprivileged.

**Grant Spradling:** Thanks. □

Dale Muchmore.



A world-class figure skater in mid-air during a performance. The skater is wearing a light-colored, short-skirted leotard and dark knee-high socks. His right leg is extended horizontally to the left, and his left leg is bent at the knee. His arms are outstretched, with his right hand flat and his left hand open with fingers spread. He is looking upwards and to the right. The background is a plain, light color.

## Focusing on Music Leadership in Small Churches: A State-Wide Model

by Edward Hugdahl  
Professor of Music  
University of Wisconsin  
Extension Music Department

*University of Wisconsin Extension Arts has for the past seven years sponsored a program uniquely designed to meet the educational needs of music leaders in the small churches of the state.*

*This effort arose out of the recognition that the predominant majority of Wisconsin's 4,600 churches not only have scant resources but are widely dispersed over all parts of the state—as contrasted with the wealthier and larger churches which tend to be found in the southeastern quadrant where the bulk of the industry and population is concentrated.*

*Thus the "traveling" series of workshops go to different out-state locations each summer in a specific effort to encourage as much participation as possible. Underscoring the soundness of this strategy is the fact that over 500 church musicians of all denominations now participate on an annual basis. Also contributing to the growing interest is the two-day length. Since most musicians in small churches are involved in full-time jobs and family responsibilities, convenience of attendance become crucial—as does the reduction or elimination of travel expense by having the workshop available close to home.*

*Necessarily, scheduling in each of the workshops is intensive in an effort to compact as much as possible into the limited period, and they run from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. on the first day, and from 8 A.M. to 4 P.M. on the second. The focus is on those techniques and materials which can most practically be used in situations with limited resources and will dramatically help meet immediate needs.*

*Participants represent a wide diversity of backgrounds, ranging from individuals with a masters degree in sacred music to those with just modest instruction in piano who have been pressed into service in their churches. As would be expected, the largest group is at the amateur end of the spectrum. Every endeavor is made, however, to challenge all*

*persons, with the primary emphasis on the individual with limited experience and background.*

*Organists are perennially anxious to learn about hymn and service playing as well as anthem accompaniment. They seek an understanding of organ registration principles and finger and pedal technique. There are always requests for guidance toward more effective use in the church service of the spinet organ—which because of its limited manuals and octave of "stick" pedals almost always represents a problem for the tyro. Hence much stress is placed on suggesting organ literature which is not only aptly appropriate to the church service but which can be played on manuals alone.*

*Because choirs in small churches almost always have limited numbers as well as few male singers, much emphasis is placed on choral literature which is arranged for unison voices, or two part SB (soprano-bass) or SAB (soprano-alto-baritone). Trying to do the standard arrangements of SATB (soprano-alto-tenor-bass) when there is only one or no tenor is obviously impractical. An effort is also made to suggest music which is within the technical capabilities of amateur singers, and we stress that even with such limitation it is always possible to find literature in all styles and periods to meet a variety of denominational needs. In addition, demonstration of rehearsal and performance techniques are also included, one of the intents being to stimulate a more vital and spirited contribution by the church choirs.*

*In the sessions which involve both organists and choir directors, an attempt is made to integrally relate concepts of church music with the worship function of the church. Encouraging planning for the total parish music program is also offered within a general session, in an attempt to encourage organists, choir directors, and clergy to approach music in the context of worship as a team effort.*

*Throughout these seven years of workshops, an extensive body of "hand-out" material has been developed. In addition to bibliographies of practical guides, this material includes "skeleton outlines" of the presentations, as a basis of the students' own notes, which they are encouraged to amplify with comments and suggestions pertinent to their own situation.*



Kirsten Olson directing Brass Choir, Calvary Lutheran Chapel. Photo courtesy: J. Moldenhauer.

*One of our prime challenges has been with respect to motivation. The typically modest backgrounds and meager resources of the volunteer church musicians tend to make them hesitant about attending a workshop. We have learned that in inherent design and tenor the workshops must be made to seem non-threatening. Furthermore, we have found that putting marked emphasis on practicality in the workshop announcements also aids attendance. Accordingly, we stress that every effort will be made to demonstrate how limited resources and talent can be used imaginatively and creatively.*

*The denominational support for these workshops has been exceptional, and it has included churches with both liturgical and non-liturgical heritages. The tuition structure*

*provides an opportunity for individuals to register as well as churches. The latter fee allows any number of organists, choir directors, clergy, and singers to attend. About seventy-five percent of the tuitions are paid by the churches, the remainder by individuals. We find it encouraging that an ever increasing number of individuals are now returning yearly for additional instruction.*

*The workshops have been held in churches of all denominations. Not only has there been a willingness to offer facilities, but there has been no hesitancy on the part of the participants to cross denominational lines. In fact, we make a conscious effort to choose annually a variety of denominational sponsors.*

*Choral and organ materials are so basic for*





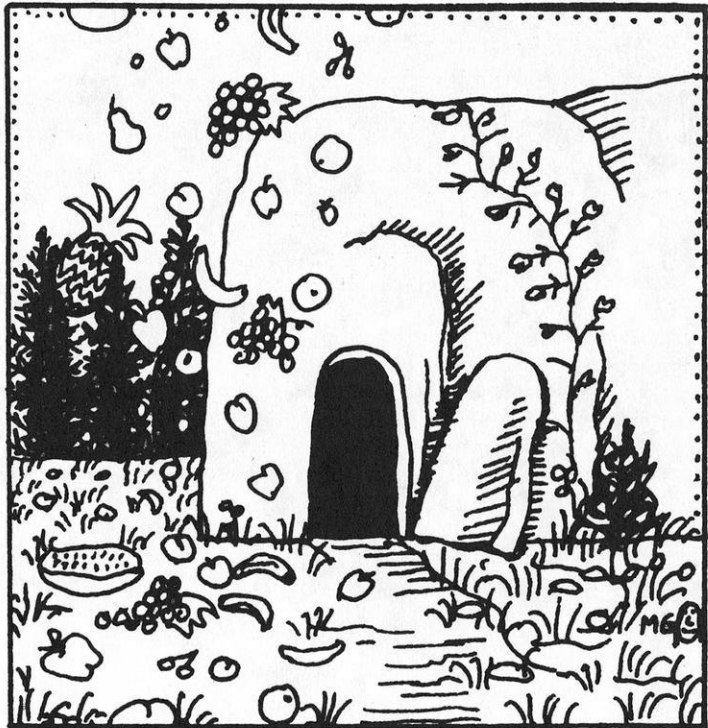
Kirsten Olson, Organist and Director of Music, Calvary Lutheran Chapel, Madison. Photo courtesy: J. Moldenhauer.

*church musicians. Because the cities of Wisconsin, with the exception of the three or four largest, do not have music stores with much church music available, we yearly contact the major church music publishers in the country for displays of their repertoire which can be taken to the workshops. In addition, each member of the workshop team brings along materials from his own personal library for display. (No music, of course, is for sale purposes.) Typically, at least fifteen to twenty banquet-type tables are loaded with these music materials around the side of the church fellowship hall.*

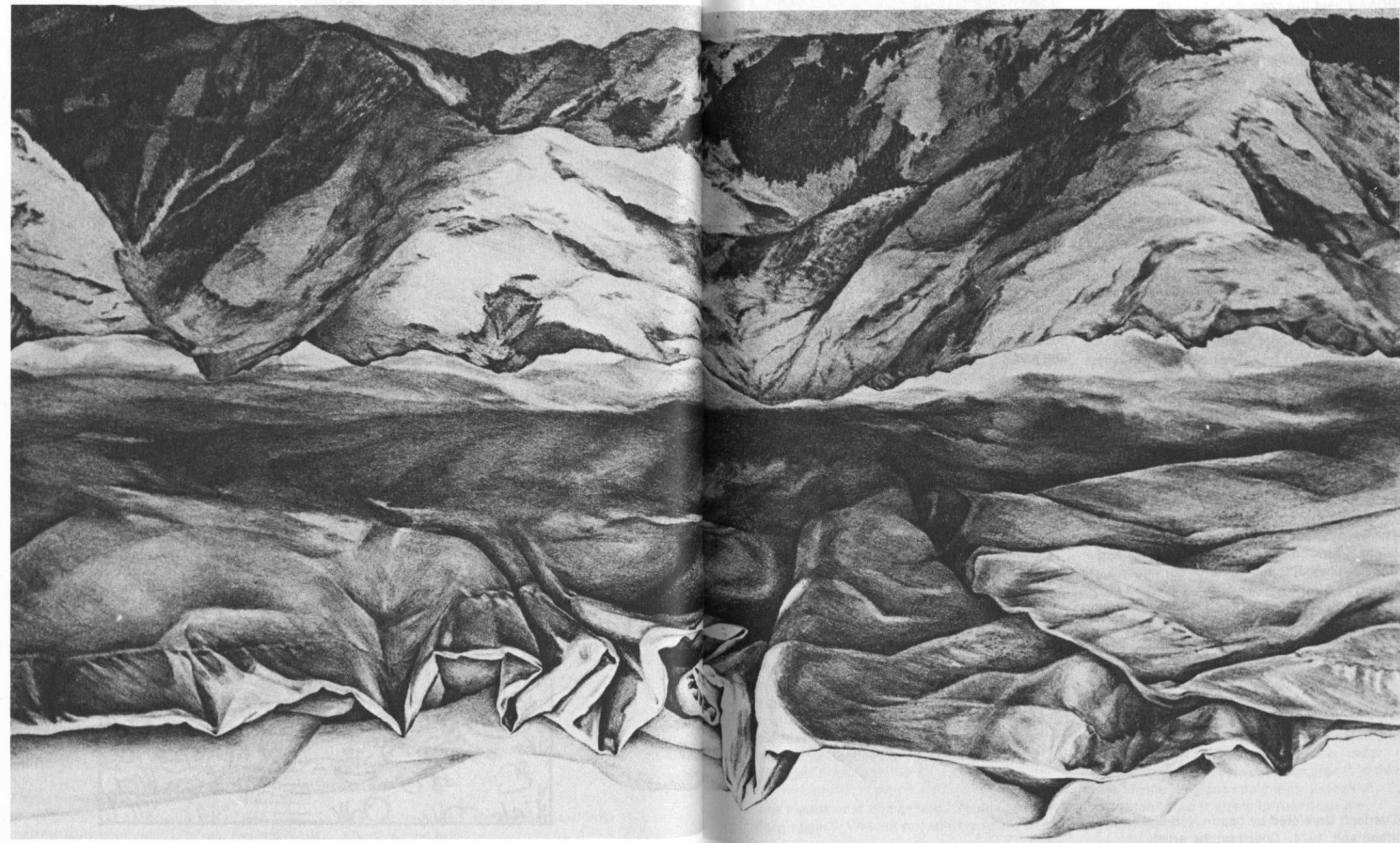
*Today there is more live music performed in the churches of this country than in all the concert halls combined. Therein lies the focus*

*of a tremendous educational challenge, and one particularly centered on the modest resources and as yet insular understanding of the small churches, for they constitute the predominant majority. There are literally tens of thousands of church musicians who badly need exposure to new ideas, techniques, and materials, and perhaps most of all an enriched sense of motivation and possibility.*

Drawing by M. G. DeBruyn, pen and ink.  
Courtesy: the artist.



# Five Consultations





## Foreword

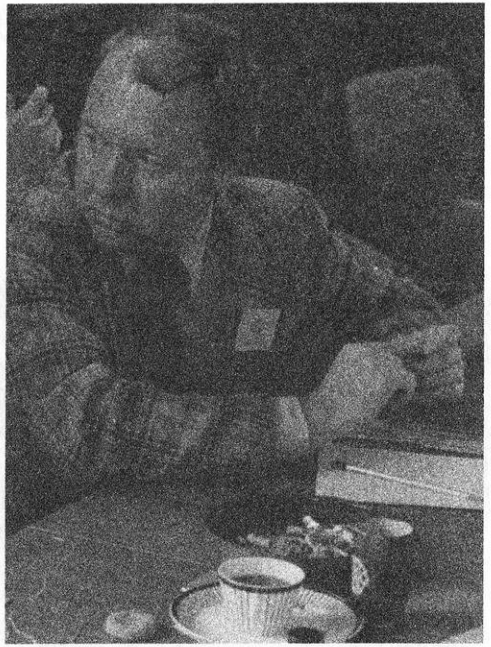
Building on the success of the Upper Midwest (St. Paul) Consultation in the fall of 1973 and financed in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, RCAAR held five consultations in 1975. Besides the Wingspread consultation, the other four were: West Coast (Berkeley, California) February 3-7; Mid-America (Topeka, Kansas), April 17-19; South Central (Nashville, Tennessee) May 1-3 and Rocky Mountain (Colorado Springs, Colorado) November 19-21. A sixth consultation will be held in Boston in November 1976.

Of the papers and addresses generated by these consultations, we have selected of those available for publication five to present here.

At Topeka Anderson Clark examined the priestly and pastoral roles of the religious communities and describes why he believes "it is so urgent in this time for the religious community to look at and listen to what artists in America are about." Edward Kamarck reported on what he saw as issues in the arts today.

One of the features of the Topeka consultation was the Indian art show described in the Wingspread transcript. The well known Indian artist and Navajo leader, Carl Gorman, addressed the relationship of religion and art from an Indian perspective.

The keynote address at Nashville was given by Michael Newton, assessing the problems and opportunities at the juncture of our nation's history.



Jay Buell. Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

At Berkeley, Wesley Hotchkiss introduced his feeling for what he called "the fellowship of the mystery" and then he expanded his concept at Colorado Springs. The latter paper is presented here.

James Buell  
Guest Editor



# Arts and Air and Priests and Pastors

by Anderson Clark

Jesus tells Nicodemus that he must be born again. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a Ruler of the Jews, responds with a question barbed with the practicality of one who need not suffer fools. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb?"

Jesus does not flinch. "Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of spirit is spirit."

Nicodemus evidently does flinch. "Do not marvel that I say to you, 'You must be born anew.' The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes, so it is with everyone born of the spirit."

The title of these remarks is **Art and Air and Priests and Pastors**. It is addressed to all those Nicodemuses among us in the religious community and to the Nicodemus in each of us in the human community. There is but one point to be made in what is said, namely, a Nicodemus must be born again. More sharply, he must be born anew to the spirit. More sharply, yet, he must be born again to the spirit that is like the wind.

## The Wind

I am not speaking of what is generally called spiritual renewal, nor of the quite specific spiritualist movement recently stirring about in the religious community of 1970's America. Nor am I speaking of spiritual crusades, nor of what the mediums sense, spiritualists know, the occult demonstrates, nor of what Pentacost celebrates. I am speaking of something the text suggests is strangely simple and experience testifies is simply strange, very strange.

The metaphor is demanding "You must be born again." Without air, spirit, you are dead

whether you know it or not as surely without breath there is not life at all when first born.

Like the wind, whatever the spirit is it is objective to us, external, outside in the out-there, not in the inside in-here. It is out there with its own caprice, its own will, having its own way doing what it well pleases to do when and where it pleases to do it—whisper, shout, calm, storm, still or stifle itself.

Not only is the wind independent, non-dependent on us, it is in itself of mystery winding and winding in the unseen. We hear its sounds but know not its whence or whither. Having a will of its own it wills that we know neither its origin or purpose. We are told only that without it we are dead.

Origin and purpose are the left and right hands of human control, the primary parenthesis with which the unknown is held and handled. They are of no help with the spirit. Likewise, tradition-fashioned tools are useless, conventions, institutions, patterns of thought, doctrine, attitudes all self-destruct, oxidized in mystery.

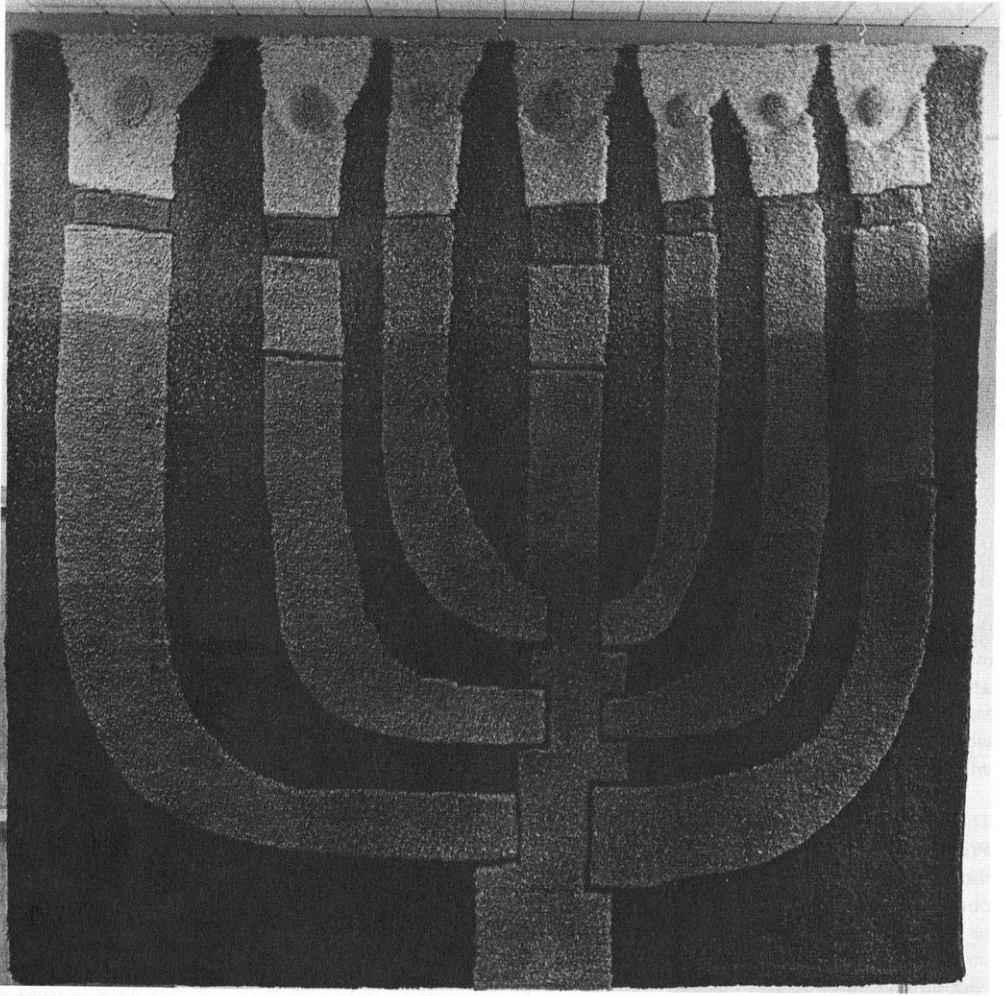
"Born again" is an infuriating image. It was because Nicodemus heard Jesus that he could not believe he heard what he heard. Can man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb? Can the religious community be born again, not revived, excited, enlivened, but can it be *born* again in the deep, dark, moisture back down in the before—before there were budgets or buildings, before there were orders or rubrics, rituals or votaries, songbooks or scriptures, assembly or synods, doctrines or dogmas, back down into the mystery that mothers life?

To be born of the spirit is to breathe. Something happens. You know not what it is, its whence or whither. You only know you begin to breathe newly alive as a human being in a difference that makes the past as death.

So it is with the spirit the religious man says.

So it is with the aesthetic artistic man says.

The dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus occurred when I was trying to find an image to describe why I believe it is so urgent in this time for the religious community to look at and listen to what artists in American are about.



**Menorah** by Matt Kahn, tapestry. Photo courtesy: the artist.

And to do this for the reason that religious man knows the artist is of the air, of the wind, of the space that moves itself—for the simple reason that the religious man knows that he and the artist must breathe air in a society whose soul is deflated.

The religionist and artist have common cause. It is a common cause that the Bicentennial Era focuses, a special opportunity that the Bicentennial provides. I submit that it is so for

two reasons. First, there is a suggestion, and a good one, that the religionist and artist ought now embrace, if for no other reason than for "old times sake." The Bicentennial requires we look back. It would do as well to look way back, back to old, old times.

Theodore Gill, one of America's more skilled theological gymnasts, playfully suggests that the relation between religion and art is abysmal. Meaning that way back down

there in the abyss the religionist and artist were the first fast friends because they shared, each in his own way, the function of vision, each in his own way was a seer.

The word *Nostalgia* in the Greek means literally *home pain*. There is, I suspect, not too far beneath the surface, a longing for the religious man to meet and know again the one he knew in the good and old days before he met the King, the philosopher, the publisher and manager.

Anything for "old times sake" is humanly compelling. I would add that not only was it because the religionist and artist could see things that others could not see, but they were also fast friends back there when mud began to breathe because they could *hear* things other men did not hear. They heard the wind, the moving strangeness in the out there and knew that without that strangeness men cannot live as humans. My totally unsupported suspicion is that in those moments of sight and sound the artist began to paint and the religious man began to dance; that when men see and hear beyond themselves they move hands and feet—and begin to breathe.

In the context of the Bicentennial celebrations of anniversary, nostalgia finds a valid function, and we remember the past and appropriately reintroduce religion and art for friendship's sake, for "old times sake." There is however in the Bicentennial context an urgency for *this* time's sake, *this* time, *this* place, with *this* people in this here and this now. That urgency has to do with the need of religionists and artists to consider their common responsibility they together owe, yes, owe this society, namely, to dream again out loud the dreams upon which this republic was founded, to breathe deep the spirit that sees and hears beyond the here and now.

A political scientist friend, a liberal and activist, and non-churchman, who having been involved in the White House and State Department in Washington for twenty years, got around two years ago to rereading the Constitution and Bill of Rights for the first time since graduate school.

He was shaken, moved by the experience and when reporting to me said, "Anderson, the Founding Fathers said so much more than they saw."

I thought a moment and then said to him, "Yes, the Founding Fathers said so much more than they saw, but their fathers, the fathers who found the land, saw so much more than they said." And so much more than they said for they were men, men who dreamed dreams, envisioned a *new* Jerusalem in a wilderness, a holy commonwealth among men, a *new* Israel, a divine experiment to be a light unto all peoples. When the land was found, men from Europe dreamed. It is so finally important when we celebrate 200 years of the republic that we recall the fact that their ideas of 200 years ago were formed or dreamed 400 years ago.

I state then the common responsibility of religionists and artists as simply, together build spaces in their communities where pre-citizen, pre-political views of reality, where strangeness can be encountered and affirmed; where what is odd will give pause; where what is out of kilter will be entered, where what is strange will be brought down deep into the lungs of social life. As citizens, the religionist and artist, of course, have the continuing political, social and economic agenda of the continuing American revolution. This I believe. I rejoice in the opportunity. But here I speak of another and special responsibility for the religionist and the artist who both by definition are "out of it," who by vocation remind human beings of who they are before they are classified with origin and purpose, and before they are described politically, socially, economically.

This is a peculiar, special responsibility of the religious communities and the arts. Who else, I ask, who else will remind the republic that the energy with which and the dignity for which the fathers struggled in founding the nation 200 years ago was supplied from *wells of spirit* dug deep in the land in far earlier times when the world was alive with visions and dreams, when air was clean and strong, when so much was "blowing in the wind," when grandeur was more than greatness? Who else will remind the Republic of the aspirations, the need for breath, the aspiration that founded the Republic?

The common cause of the religious communities and the arts is to affirm an earlier, now far stranger view in which the spirit of man is basic to the humanity they invest and struggle for politically, socially and economically.

So simply, to build spaces in our communities where the *soul* of men can breathe, and life be born anew.

And they do this radically “for the sake of” the country, this society, this community. It is verses later in the famous third chapter of the Gospel of John where we are reminded that it was because God, who very much loved the world, that he gave this only begotten stranger he called his son.

The cause in common for religious man and artist is to again build spaces, air pockets, in communities where souls of men can breathe and lives be born anew to grand visions and strange sounds, to the mystery of life at all.

Such spaces are made when holes, openings, are punched into the flat, soft assumption of comfortable suffocating secularity. And such holes, openings, are made when religionist and artist modestly, measureably make openings for each other. Whatever I do, I do not call for religion and art to lose their selves in each other. I don't ask for the artist to have an open mind about religion, or the religious man to have an open mind about the arts. I ask only that each have openings in their minds, gingerish, cautious openings where each might consider a cause that might well be common for both.

It is through such openings one sees. Thus, for the religious man I would describe this task as prophetic. Before the prophet is anything else, before he speaks politically, economically, socially, he looks. In the Biblical teaching the prophet was called seer; one who looks and sees, and then shares what he sees (and how often in early times in poetry and dance).

But let me propose not only a prophetic function for the religious community. Let me suggest that both the priestly function and the pastoral function on behalf of the arts are the major contributions the religious community can make to what unoriginally is called a “Common Cause.”

First, let me speak of Priests.

In a report published by the Council for the Arts in Education, there is an eloquent sug-

gestion as to why so many of us in the American middle feel strange when we think of the arts.

*Originally, as always in its anthropological usage, “culture” described all the customs, arts, beliefs, institutions, patterns of work and thought transmitted from one generation to another in a given community. But after the middle ages the Renaissance, for all its glories, and the Reformation for all its liberation of the human spirit, set in train a fateful double split; moral and intellectual education took separate paths; and the arts, once part of the culture of a whole people, became split into the folk arts, for the commoners, and the fine arts, for the elect. And the new middle class that had assumed the leadership of society by the nineteenth century brought no heritage of its own in the arts—the “folk” arts were beneath them, the fine arts of the elite above them.*

By this time in the 20th century much of America is psychologically and socially, if not economically in the middle, and know well the divide of the elite art above and the common art below.

I would propose to the religious communities in the American middle, the creative middle, the priestly function of healing this split, and do so because it is aware of the wind, aware of air and art, and do so by affirming the very best of the fine arts within its being, demanding an excellence, the highest quality of music and of orchestration, of painting and dance within its own ecclesiastical life. And especially the affirmation and demand of excellence in that old and powerful art form—the publicly spoken, publicly performed sermon.

But not just the fine arts. At the same time, I ask the religious community to embrace and affirm the crafts, the ethnic, the folk expressions and with equal enthusiasm and *vivre*, to heal in its own arts, life, in its own use of the arts by affirming all art, elite and common, fine and folk, and to thereby provide new openings for artists and the arts within its own corporate life.

Somewhere, sometime there will be that church that provides its Sunday School rooms as studio space for its community's painters and sculptors because that space is needed by the world and for the very self-





**Sr. Roberta in the Cellar Gardening** by Karlyn Cauley, (detail). Photo courtesy: the artist.

interested reason that it wants its children to see the glorious mess that is the joy of creative process and to see the glorious product that comes of it. To do this, that the children of the church might now read Genesis with the understanding and appreciation of God the Creator, and that their play with paint and clay and song and dance is on a continuum that both God and artists know. There is no other institution in the society that can heal the arts as can the religious community by the priestly affirmation and demon-

stration that all the arts help the soul of man to breathe.

And then it might be that its children would joyfully, gleefully understand the psalmists' image of the Creator God as one who with his hands gouged deep valleys, pressed up high, hard mountains, threw stars into space, planted forests and flowers, and then, if for nothing else, for recreation (re-creation), took clay in his hands and sculpted a human being and then "minded" his creation into life.

The Priestly function is to heal.

The Pastoral function is to exercise power.

In an institution whose leaders live with the births and deaths, weals and woes, joys and pains of people, incredible community power accrues. Not conventional power in a community—economic, social or political—but power of community—the power that is so securely based in continuity, connectedness and constituency; in short, Pastoral Power.

I covet more religious communities exercising their very real and hefty power on behalf of the artist, the artistic organization and institutions in the community.

The religious institutions having endured several thousand years have resources of expertise in community life and organization that arts councils and organizations can but dream about. Not only the support of communities and constituencies, but financial support as well. I honestly believe the arts are an authentic and valid object for benevolence support—and with no strings attached.

Not only money, but as suggested earlier also that leavening resource of actual, real four-by-four space. Perhaps the one, great resource the religious communities have that which Paul Tillich once called “Holy Waste.” Holy Waste. How justify all that vaulted air in a typical sanctuary, that “vaultness” that the religious man knows so intuitively he must have if he is to breathe as a human being? Waste! Yes, all that air. All that air to breathe.

It was but a few years ago that a secular world fell in love with a Pope named John. There have been many explanations why it was, how it was, that so many so immediately, so universally opened themselves to the short, round homely man, but I can't help but think that almost every man appreciates any man who will open windows that men might breathe anew, be born anew.

Jesus tells Nicodemus, “Unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of spirit is spirit.” □

Drawing by M. G. DeBruyn, pen and ink.  
Courtesy: the artist.



# Issues Facing the Arts Today

by Edward Kamarck

I am aware that this consultation is in the pursuit of vision—large vision. Since large visions arise only from the asking of large questions, let me start out by posing one. For those of us in the arts, perhaps the single most encompassing question of our time is, to paraphrase Bertolt Brecht:

*How can the shackled, ignorant, freedom-and-knowledge seeking human being of our century, the tormented and heroic, abused and ingenious, the changeable and the world-changing human being of this frightful and important century achieve his own (art), which will help him to master not only himself but the world?*

It is a question which immediately predicates a meeting ground between arts and religion, and one of infinite breadth.

Certainly, in this time of galvanic social and technical transformation of our society, it is a question which spotlights a premier issue for the arts—the issue of meanings, values, and the renewed affirmation of our humanness. But is this not also a premier issue for religion?

It is a question whose size suggests that given our objectives—and opportunities—this consultation must most be about not art nor religion but people, and the hungers and deprivations of people. About community, and the need for community and what makes a community. About survival and the conditions of survival. Age old concerns which at this juncture of history have become urgencies—for all.

Let me briefly take you to another meeting, one held several years ago in Los Angeles. This was a national conference designed for educators in the arts, in which we thought it would be useful to focus on and highlight the unmet needs in education of the ethnic minorities. So we asked a range of arts groups, situated in the various enclaves of

that impossible city to perform for us, to show us their art works, and at the same time to talk candidly about their problems and aspirations. There were Black, Mexican-American, Native American, Phillipino, and Oriental groups, reflecting a variety of creative expression in all the performing and visual arts. This was a kind of floating conference, in which the entire group over almost a week's time was bussed to each of the various sites around Los Angeles—to the Inner City Cultural Center, to Plaza de la Raza, to the Communicative Arts Academy, to the Mechicano Arts Center, to the Amerasia Book Store, to the Mafundi Institute, to the Watts Tower Arts Center, etc.

We spent almost a half day in each location—listening and learning. And I can't begin to describe to you how impressed we were with the intensity of commitment of each of these groups. They were not playing at culture. The arts were not just adornments, indulged in during idle, leisure moments. They were at the very center of their life. The plays they wrote, their dances, their films, their music spoke not only of their own rich heritages of culture, but even more compellingly of their need as long submerged communities to define themselves, to affirm an important sense of role and dignity as a people, to chart the touchstones of their own survival. There was anger in what they said, despair, courage, and much joy. Most of all, more vitality and energy than I have encountered in the arts in a long long time.

On the next to the last evening, quite incidental to the conference, a few of us were invited to a Hollywood party up on the heights of Beverly Hills. Well, if we in any way required highlighting of the importance of what we had been seeing all week, that evening certainly provided it. And I intend in no way to demean much that is alive, creative and genuine in what is often called the New Hollywood. The point is that even at its best Hollywood remains a big and enormously speculative business, and though it is ostensibly concerned with culture, there are extremely wide gulfs between its definitions of that word and the vital definitions we had heard and seen exemplified all week.

The talk we heard that evening around a kidney-shaped pool, and amidst beautifully attired and coiffured ladies (one of whom had brought along her hairdresser—shades of the



movie, "Shampoo")—that talk was of contracts, of package deals, of the rise and fall of reputations, of the story formulas that work and those that no longer work. Anxious chit chat centered on the selling of self and the fabrication of products that will sell. As we listened there seemed to be little doubt as to which of those two Los Angeles worlds—the one shimmering in splendor on the heights, or the one hidden in the smogs of the valley—which spoke most eloquently of the real needs and of the real creative promise of America.

I had been aware for some time that something of importance was now going on in the communities of this country, but until that Los Angeles experience I must admit I had not really begun to sense the significance of what was happening, nor its exciting potential. I'm talking about a kind of churning toward a redefinition of experience, priorities, and roles—a churning that is uniquely humanistic in its reach and aspirations, and at the same time uniquely aesthetic in its embrace of the arts.

Let me momentarily shift to another conference. This one held somewhat more recently in Wisconsin was also a national conference, and focussed on Women and the Arts. It brought together an impressive group of bright and dynamic women—and they came from all walks of life. It was apparent in the first hours that they had each arrived with a piece of a vision—each individually conceived with respect to their own sense of urgency. And though they put the pieces together fairly quickly, it was only until they did that the conference took fire.

It's fascinating what they came up with. Let me paraphrase just one small portion of their summary statement:

*The arts speak for man's highest aspirations, and for that reason the health and well being of a country can be directly correlated with its aesthetic concerns. It is through the arts that it is possible to build a creative society by humanly applying sensitivity in the uses of power—thereby affirming values and insights on which the total society can and should be based.*

There we have it, one rather powerful suggestion of the nature of the motor energy propelling the churning in the communities: a growing sense of an almost desperate need

for a more open and more humanly conceived society, in which feeling, and a creative search for self-renewal could have far greater play. And, of course, not just the ethnic minorities and the women have been caught up by these imperatives. It has been dramatically embraced by the youth; by the aging; the handicapped, who are now insisting that they be permitted to participate fully in the total range of societal activities. Virtually every social group has been touched in some way. And even such staid and established professions as law, medicine, politics, business, architecture, and teaching are presently going through drastic reappraisals.

*What chiefly set the energies and motivations of what might be called these humanistic revolutions in motion?—for revolutions they are, not cataclysmic and violent in their consequences, but still effecting profound change in attitudes, perception, and expectation.*

It is perhaps axiomatic that all revolutions need a rallying call—electric words to stir the heart and imagination. And almost ten years ago at Selma, Martin Luther King supplied those words, when he intoned: "I have a dream!" Words which cogently reminded Americans of the dream which they all carried deep in their psyche, because they were Americans—and it was of the promise so eloquently proclaimed in our key historical documents: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

And, indeed, if any single force can be given credit for setting this propulsive churning in motion, it is the churches of America, and especially the Black denominations of the South. The chants of the celebrated Freedom Marchers were soon taken up and given further definition by other submerged groups in society. They reminded us that they, too, had a dream, and they wished it attended to. And, now, of course there are many dreams, many ferments. And we can feel sure that they have not yet crested, because every day it becomes more apparent that the unattended agenda of the society remains a large one.

One of the participants in the Los Angeles Conference said:

*This revolution is beyond the rhetoric of the ideologists. It comes down to the simplicity of how we live our lives. We've all built*



Martin Luther King, Jr. Photo courtesy:  
Herbert F. Wiese.

*walls, out of ignorance, that have prevented us from getting in touch with the essential elements we need to live balanced lives—elements of joy, elements of happiness.*

*Institutions, which are only delivery mechanisms, have failed to get us where we need to be. Los Angeles—with its freeways, its isolation, its fragmentation—is often used to symbolize the future of America. But we have seen that this phenomenon called art, if seen in the proper manner, becomes a bridge for getting in touch with those energies of spontaneity that can become a common power.*

And, of course, the vitality and energy that produced the community arts in Los Angeles come from sources common to humanity. They are available everywhere for the knitting together of a human fraternity.

So it is against that kind of background, with all that it implies in the way of possibility that I would like to look at further issues in the arts.

I'd like to early focus on one which commonly

is not even identified as an issue, but which I think is overriding, because it subsumes all others—and for that reason has to be dealt with almost initially. I'm talking about the infernal fragmentation of our culture.

Has it struck you that in this period of enormous growth in the arts—one unparalleled in our history—there are pitifully few efforts aimed at unifying perception between the manifold spheres of culture building? That is why rare meetings of this sort assume an especial importance.

Fragmentation is everywhere rife. Between the arts. Between the artist-teacher and the professional in the arts. Between professional institutions in the arts and community institutions. Between audience and cultural entrepreneurs. Between school and community. Between church and other humanistic institutions. Between doers and thinkers. Between creators and administrators. Between creators. Between what is happening in New York and what is happening in the rest of the country. And I could go on endlessly delineating the tunnel visions—the infinite failures to interrelate, to build bridges of understanding, to perceive the wholeness of what is happening.

These discontinuities in the arts are, of course, closely akin to the discontinuities of virtually every other area of human endeavor today. They constitute the hallmark of an increasingly technologized and bureaucratized America. And therein lies a terrible irony; for is it not the fact of a rising search for wholeness—both within the individual and within the society—that has given the arts this singular opportunity today? If we persistently fail to rise above the very insular patterns of thinking and doing, which have so perniciously fueled today's humanistic crises, are we not in real danger of losing the main chance?

Wholeness is what culture building must be most about. At the heart of the challenge is the need for an affirmation of the wholeness of the human creative vision, of the wholeness of the human community, of the wholeness of our culture, and even of the wholeness of our destiny.

This is largely a new way of looking at the arts—but only *new* for America in our time. For in the perspective of history, a distinguishing characteristic of our best cultural thinkers from Plato on down has been a keen interest in understanding art in the larger arena of society, a broad concern with art and its workings within the totality of man's existence.

The light at the end of each of our tunnels—illusory or actual? So long as our vision remains tunnel-bound, how can we know for sure? Without doubt we now have the opportunity—and for literally the first time—to build an important and vigorous culture. But can we do so with only mole-like perceptions?

Certainly the need to come up with new definitions of culture has already been implied. And I think that's an issue.

Thirteen years ago there was a celebrated meeting on the arts, which was probably the first wholly interdisciplinary one ever held in this country—one which by design included many if not most of the shakers and movers of that time. Recently I had occasion to reread the talks and discussions of that meeting, which were published in one of the very early issues of **Arts in Society**. I was immediately struck with how infinitely dated it now all seems. For one, even our public dialog about the arts today is more boldly exploratory than

the choicest utterances of that meeting. The caution, the constraint, the rigidity which characterized that gathering! It is apparent that in 1962 the foundations of our older cultural outlook were still most secure. The fact that the arts were separated from the rest of our social experience—and tragically so—was little challenged in that era.

Almost everything that has happened in America since has loosened the moorings of all that narrow dogmatism. As I've indicated, the rumblings of the transition can now be felt in many places to a far more inclusive outlook. We are, for example, increasingly coming to a wholly new understanding of the role of the arts—as a vital public resource, comparable in importance to education, health service, housing, and citizen protection and with it a concomitant sense of responsibility to make the arts available to even the long neglected groups in society—and particularly them, because their need is most crucial. The concept of art as process—as contrasted with art as product—that's what's highlighted in this new understanding. As Ken Lash said in a recent meeting in Madison (and I'm paraphrasing him):

*What's involved here is the question of vitality. The tremendous matter of vitality. The vitality can be tapped by getting people to do, not to watch. There's the new center in culture . . . reinstating the individual sense of achievement, the wholeness of the human psyche through doing.*

I am aware that any talk of building a culture from the bottom up invariably brings up concern about quality, and because that exercises a lot of people like Roger Stevens, it is often presented as an issue in itself. But I believe it more logically belongs under the larger issue of culture definition—the increasing need we face to affirm, clarify and differentiate between the various social uses of art. Because we now happen to feel that the notion of art in the prisons, and arts in the schools (to mention just two emerging social uses) are compellingly valid on their own terms, it in no way intimates that we are recklessly courting a debasement of taste. Quite the opposite. Wasn't it Whitman who said, "to have great poets, there must be great audiences, too."

Derived from old European aristocratic so-



Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York. Photo courtesy: Lincoln Center.

cities, our cultural attitudes, concepts, and expectations persist along restrictive elitist patterns. Far too tied to a museum custodianship of the grand models from the past, this is an outlook which at its best says: "The way to build a culture in this country is to bring these models down to the people so they can be enlightened." Well, its best is not good enough, for that strategy has not worked in the past, and it especially is not going to work today, when there is so much that is creatively alive and pressing for articulation in the communities of America.

Guided by the touchstones and the most vigorous heritage of the liberal imagination, can we formulate workable definitions of culture for our time, responsive to the needs of an increasingly pluralistic society? I believe we are strongly pressed to do so.

Institutionalization of the arts is an issue: How *do* we proceed in order to support and encourage the rising interest in the arts? It is becoming apparent that the models provided by our large established institutions are anachronistic, wedded as they are to essentially nineteenth century elitist concepts. Not

only are such institutions finding it difficult to respond to the challenge of cultural innovation, but almost without exception they are verging on financial bankruptcy.

On the other hand, we have not yet fully achieved the new robust models which are more aptly attuned to emerging needs and are also capable of achieving reasonable financial viability. It does seem apparent that the genius of community arts is most suggestive. I am particularly talking about the enterprising ways that our better community arts organizations are making linkages to a variety of local humanistic needs, resources, and institutions. At its best this prototype evokes the promise of finally bringing the arts into the center of American life. And I am convinced that the arts will not have the capability of moving into that center, until we have institutions that are deeply rooted in their communities, are by and large supported by their communities, and creatively speak for those communities. (Contrast that, if you will, with the isolated splendor of a Lincoln Center or a Kennedy Center, both awesome temples of art, remote from life, neither of which has any kind of identifiable community, and both of which require staggering subsidies.)





Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy: Kennedy Center.

In these efforts to achieve new institutional models, how can we develop and maintain leadership on the highest levels so that the new publics are not sold short, as they so often are by the mass media? What are the processes by which new audiences and participants can be introduced into the arts?

We have a crying need for the new modes and strategies—and perhaps most of all, for ways of effecting ties with new kinds of allies across a broad front of humanistic perception and concern. This is a need which underscores the particular opportunity of this consultation.

The issue of the arts in education is a large and pressing one. If we are concerned with humanizing the society, we have got to start with humanizing the schools. And it seems apparent that giving the arts a much stronger role in all phases of education is the best and perhaps the only way of doing so. Charles Silberman sardonically observed in his **Crisis in the Classroom** that most schools do give their students a powerful and effective education. "They teach them that interest in the arts is effeminate or effete, that study of the arts is a frill, and that music, art, beauty and sensitivity bear no relation to any other aspect of the curricula or of life."

Can anything be done to change this? As has been pointed out, it is easier to move a cemetery than to change a school. But with persistence, it is beginning to be done. The state of Pennsylvania stands as an example, and how they did it there suggests how it might be done elsewhere—through enlightened aggressive leadership, and through comprehensive state planning and effort by a number of agencies, cultural organizations, and citizen groups. And that strategy is being increasingly adopted by the burgeoning development around the country of statewide Alliances for Arts Education. I should mention, too, the emerging resource of the American Council for the Arts in Education, which is putting together what will purportedly be a national position paper on the needs and challenges.

Hopeful sources of strength come from the new models for integrating the arts in education—such as the IMPACT program of the JDR III Fund, the Artists in the Schools Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, and the national programs of the Young Audiences, and Affiliate Artists.

What significantly tends to hobble efforts nationally is the protracted failure of the federal government to develop either a stance or to make available adequate funding to highlight more vital possibilities.

What significantly tends to hobble efforts locally is the unfortunate gulf between the school and the community. We need far more exploration of the possibilities of joint planning, joint delineation of objectives—and intermingling of resources. The two spheres could be mutually supportive in many rich ways.

And what I say here about the co-mingling of school and community is probably equally applicable to church and community—with one notable exception. Because of the long-time separation of church and state in this country, one does occasionally hear of concern being voiced about making available public monies to arts projects, in which there is significant church involvement. So that's an issue which this consultation undoubtedly should consider. As far as I know this is still largely an uncharted area, and there are no clearcut legalistic guidelines (and, indeed, there probably will never be any). While there is already significant precedent for such support, it'll probably always come down to a matter of judgement, with the key question in each individual instance being: can we defend the allocation? So, here again, a largeness of vision and understanding becomes crucial, and I would like to suggest, Mr. Chairman, that this may be an apt occasion to lay out some useful parameters.

Viewed in the overall, subsidy, or finding more money for the arts, is itself an enormous issue, and one with so many ramifications that we could easily spend all of our time dealing with it.

Let me initially narrow it to the amply apparent need to increase governmental funding at all levels. And the best argument I can think of is to refer to the impact of the WPA arts projects in the 1930's, at a time when the potential for cultural growth in this country was nowhere as evident as it is now. And it was an era, incidentally, not unlike ours, in the sense that there was a pervasive societal urgency for redefinition of experience. What happened was beyond anyone's expectations: almost overnight the arts in America came

alive—and with a vengeance. At no time previously, nor probably since, have they ever seemed to so surge with excitement. In a few short years—and as you're probably aware, through tragic short-sightedness federal support was cut off—that bold experiment yielded a harvest of talent so abundant that in the decades following it gave firm basis for America's pre-eminence in almost all the arts.

Yes, it does take money to mount a renaissance. And while we should persistently press for expanded governmental support—and particularly at the state level, where arts councils are pitifully understaffed—I certainly agree with those who point out that ideally we require a blending of governmental and private funds. The arts require it—for their health, well-being, and freedom.

Assuming that your state Council does finally get the kind of money it needs and deserves, how it exercises its leadership constitutes another issue. To a considerable degree it's an issue now, but it seems apparent that it will become even more so as funding expands. There is, for example, the question of politics and political pressure—difficult sometime to talk about frankly. And there are places in this country where it's gotten grossly out of hand. While I have discovered that a resourceful executive director can find ways of significantly muting such problems, he does need the concerted support and constant vigilance of his total arts constituency.

But the key question is how does the Council see its role: simply as a dispenser of funds; or as a leadership force, and in that role making a conscientious effort to build and project a vital vision of possibility. Obviously the latter course is both the logical and by far the preferable one. But I'm aware that it is a role not easily achieved—particularly with a meagre staff. Though we have a number of arts councils which seem well on the way, not even New York's Council, with all of its millions, has yet given us a worthy prototype to emulate. And I base that judgement—perhaps unfairly—almost entirely on the pedestrian quality of its public rhetoric, which to me implies not at all that they have inept writers there, but rather that they are still struggling with old patterns of thinking. So obviously money *alone* is not the answer, but admittedly it helps.

I think artists are an issue—their education, their care and nurture, their role, their career development. (And I believe it is most valuable, incidentally, to the purposes of this consultation, that you have scheduled a presentation entirely made up of artists.)

The long-time neglect and undervaluation of the artist in this society should trouble all of us a great deal. It is indeed heart-rending that literally thousands of would-be actors, writers, musicians, filmmakers, and sculptors are yearly pouring out of our conservatories, colleges, and universities, and there seems to be no place for them in our present cultural structures; that even our best dancers are forced to survive on poverty level incomes; that hundreds of very fine painters—many of them fully as accomplished and some of them more so than those that are lionized—live out their lives in neglect, because the New York art scene can only profitably merchandise a very limited number.

Unfortunately, it would appear that we cannot do very much for the artist that is *substantial* until we have done an enormous amount of institution-building. And I don't mean just in New York, or Washington, or San Francisco, but here in Colorado, Arizona, Montana, New Mexico, Wyoming—and in all the countless communities of America. That's where the vital drama must now be centered—in the shaping of the new structures across this land, which can properly channel and give leadership and support to the rising arts interest everywhere.

If artists are willing to roll up their sleeves and help with that building, as they are doing in Watts, in Plaza de la Raza, and in many other places, then great! Welcome their help, for they bring important insights as artists. Nudge them toward such roles, in fact. For it is clearly evident that if we are finally to relate the arts to life, that the roles of artists must change even as our definitions of culture change; that tomorrow's artist—community based, community rooted, community oriented—is likely to be quite a different creature than we know today.

More than a hundred years ago, the poet Whitman eloquently asserted the critical role of the arts in American society. In urging us to conceive of democracy as a complex moral idea—one possessing energy, vitality, beauty

and continual regard for the individual, but dependent always on the ability of the mass of people to advance openly toward those levels of thought and action which can be called equitable, he stressed the importance of the symbolic function in life—the creative process of delineating the forms of reality and of shaping their components within an enriching totality.\*

Accordingly he described the fundamental want of the United States in his day as being that of a flourishing native art. But an art, which is (and in his words):

*... far different, far higher in grade than any yet known, sacerdotal, modern, fit to cope with our occasions, land, permeating the whole mass of American mentality, taste, belief, breathing into it a new breath of life, giving it decision, affecting politics far more than the popular superficial suffrage, with results inside and underneath the elections of Presidents or Congresses—radiating, begetting appropriate teachers, schools, manners, and, as its grandest result, accomplishing (what neither the schools nor the churches and their clergy have hitherto accomplished, and without which this nation will no more stand, permanently, soundly, than a house will stand without a substratum), a religious and moral character beneath the political and productive and intellectual bases of the States.*

That fundamental want is even more pressing in the America of today. Are we now ready—at long last—to move toward the realization of Whitman's magnificent dream of a mature and democratic culture of all the people? I think we are. And I'm very interested in finding out what you think. Thank you. □

\*I am indebted to Dr. Esther Jackson for this highlighting of the pertinence of Whitman's insights. Her current research and writing on Whitman give promise of a most important contribution to our understanding of the vital role the arts can play in American society.

# The American Indian and Religious Art

by Carl Gorman

American Indian art covers a vast area, both in size of geographical territory and in media and art form.

I am pleased that the term artist is used here at this convention in Topeka for those who are usually referred to as craftsman, as well as those who are painters and sculptors. Those who create in any media, with fine sensibilities and artistic talent, are deserving of the name artist.

All art is an expression of the artist. It may be telling a story, as the great religious art of the European Renaissance or the illustrations in a picture book. It may be an artist's ideas or feelings about color, light, space or form, as is the work of abstract painters. It may be decorative, as the patterns on wall paper, pottery and china, or fabrics. It may be beautifully modeled clay bowls or bigger than life sculptures of the human form. It may be something as lovely as turquoise and silver jewelry or as enduring and massive as the material structures of the architect's inner vision.

When I went to art school at Otis Art Institute in Los Angeles, there were many kinds of arts that one could study. I took a number of courses under both commercial and fine arts. Those are broad terms which allow a student to choose courses which are the most in line with what he wants to do with his interest in art. In Native American culture, art was not a separate study. No art for art's sake.

We cannot take an art form out of the context of the culture into which it was born and found expression and compare it with an art form from another culture and say one is better or greater than the other. Whose temples are more beautiful, those of Europe, India, or Japan? Great art speaks a universal language and yet we have to remember that different cultural concepts and world views condition our own personal vision of what is

beautiful, and what has meaning for us.

Western culture, generally for most people, looks upon fine art as painting or sculpture with a tendency toward realistic expression. It often passes traditional American Indian art off as craft work, because there has been no tradition of easel painting until introduced by the white man and it is not usually realistic. Most of our art has been abstract, symbolical and stylized.

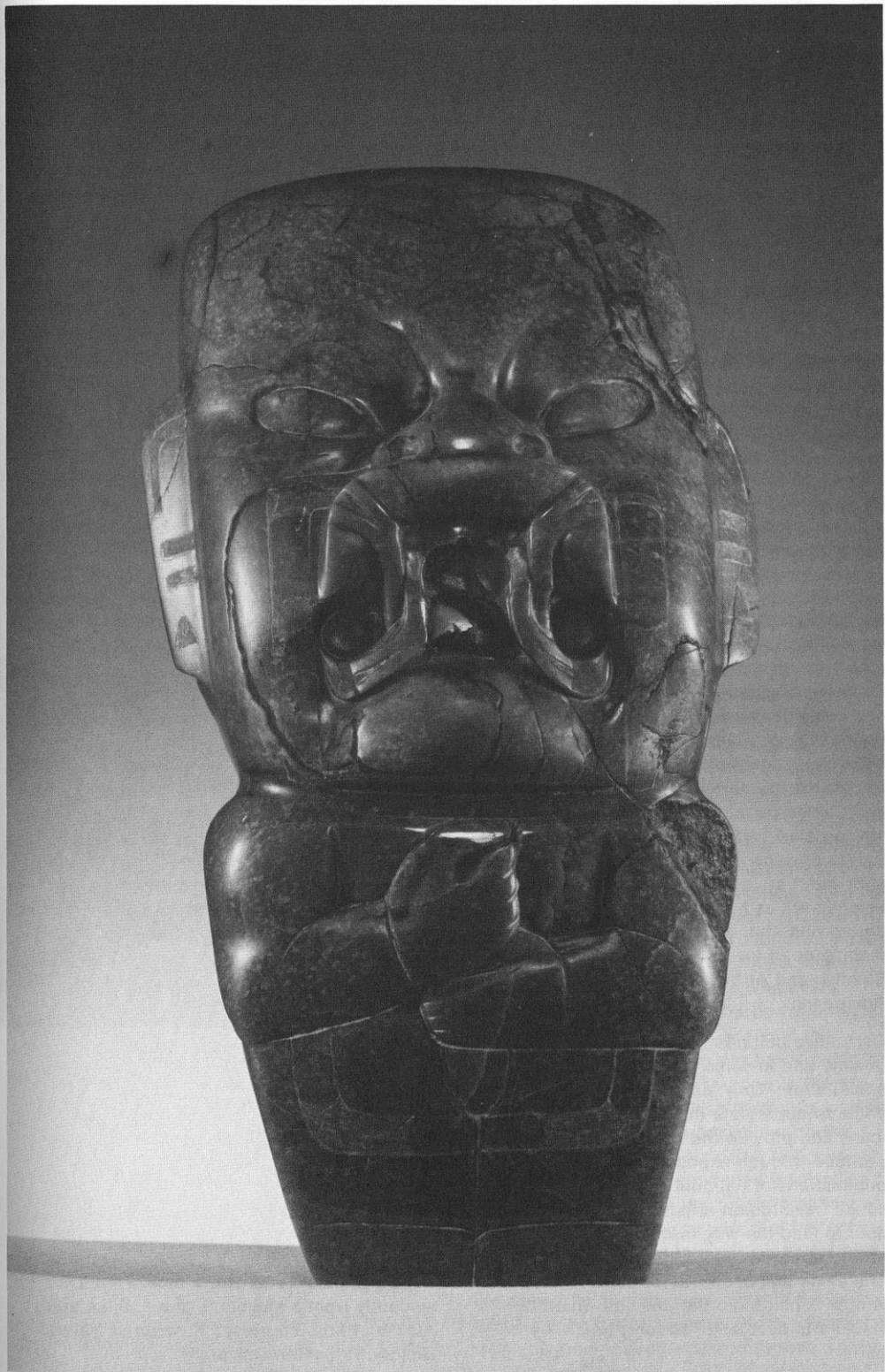
Our discussion today is to center on the religious aspect of Indian art. Most writers on Indian art discuss it from a regional standpoint, certain styles of art being more or less confined to certain geographical areas and governed by the life style of the people of that area and the materials at hand, such as soapstone, clay, shell, wood, etc.

There are also other things we should consider when we are talking about Indian art.

First, the period of time. Pre-Columbian art reached a high degree of technical skill and artistic merit in areas of what is now the United States, as well as the more southerly regions of Mexico, Central and South America. Many people, in speaking of Indian art, draw boundary lines around the United States or around North America above Mexico. We cannot really do this. Those boundaries were not there before the white man came. We should not leave the southern cultures out of the overall view of Native American art forms. Perhaps the art forms of South American cultures did not directly influence those art forms found in what is now the United States and Canada, including Alaska, but indirectly they well may have. The art forms of the cultures of Mexico did undoubtedly have a direct influence. There are close connections with art forms in the United States and this is clearly seen in the Gulf states, the Mississippi Valley, the Southwest and perhaps the North-

**Jade Axe known as Kunz Axe** (Olmec culture). Also known as **Jaquar Baby**. 11 inches high. Courtesy: American Museum of Natural History.





west, an area whose cultural origins have not been clearly traced. Cultural diffusion is almost a certainty.

The late Miguel Covarrubias, Mexican artist and student of Indian art, in his book, **The Eagle, the Jaguar and the Serpent**, suggests cultural diffusion not only northward from Mexico, but intrusive at some period in history from China, the Pacific Islands and Siberia, to areas of North, Central and South America. Other writers have suggested influences from Syria, lost continents in the Atlantic and Pacific, while others insist that all Indian art and culture has grown right here, isolated from the rest of the world until the coming of Columbus and his successors. Cultural diffusion is a theory that fits well with the migration legends of the Hopi and the Navajo history of the Southwest as we know it. Cultural diffusion is something that we see going on in our own tribes, even today, and literally throughout the world. There is no real reason to suppose that it is a new thing on the American continents.

Cultures reach peaks of achievement and creativity and then decline. Infusion of new ideas from outside often provide inspiration for new and different creative efforts and we can sometimes see this happening, as with the making of silver jewelry, wool rugs and easel painting among Southwest tribes. There are events that terminate cultural development and plunge people back into the essentials of staying alive, with little or no time or inclination to develop artistic talent. This happens after great natural catastrophies such as our legends tell us happened several times, and during and after wars, especially of the magnitude of the genocidal war that both the Spanish and Anglo waged against Native Americans.

Our native cultures have thus suffered a decline and in some areas almost complete annihilation. Only since the white man has come to appreciate the arts of Native Americans and provide the market and incentive to produce through exposure in exhibitions and publications of national and international scope have Indian artists and craftsmen been able to lead the way to cultural rejuvenation and to open doors of cultural understanding. The same has been true of Indian music which is now coming into the position which the visual arts have enjoyed for a much longer period.



**Headdress maskette, Hawk face, Tlignit**, evidently from a shaman's grave, Sitka area, Alaska. Photo courtesy: Museum of Natural History, Princeton University.

Phillip Casadore, Apache singer and recording artist, while making a brief visit in May, 1974 to the Zuni Pueblo, was quoted in the Gallup, New Mexico, **Independent** newspaper, as saying:

*Indian entertainers have a marvelous opportunity to educate the public about Indian culture and traditions. Some people really want to know how Indians think and feel, and they respond fantastically to Indian music.*

The arts are means of communication, that can be appreciated by people of other cultures and languages across ages of time. We may know little or nothing of the philosophy that produced them, but we find that many times they will reveal to us quite a bit about how people lived and how they viewed the world. One expression of how people view the world is religion. Art for all Indians, I think, has been a vital part of religious expression and religion has been a vital and ever present part of life. We do not separate our religion and say that it is for Sundays and for church. Every day is holy, and life is holy. We weave our thoughts and feelings about the Creator together with the necessary material and social expressions of life, as our Navajo women weave rugs of beautiful designs; as a rope is woven; or as some tribes braid their hair.

A recognition and understanding of symbology in traditional Indian art is a must and not the kind of symbolic nonsense published by some Indian traders. In the Southwest you used to see charts of Indian symbols and their meanings put out for the tourists. These same people used to tell how Navajo weavers would leave a break in the border of a rug to let the evil spirits out. The break in the border design of a Navajo rug has nothing to do with evil spirits being trapped in the rug and in need of release. I think that is a white man's superstition. A break in the border design of a young weaver's first rug, symbolizes her desire for continued inspiration of design. She leaves the break to assure a continuing flow of inspiration, that her creativity may continue. In a philosophical and non-visual way, the concept of continuity is expressed by our medicine men in the reserving of some knowledge, the holding back of some seed for renewal and growth within

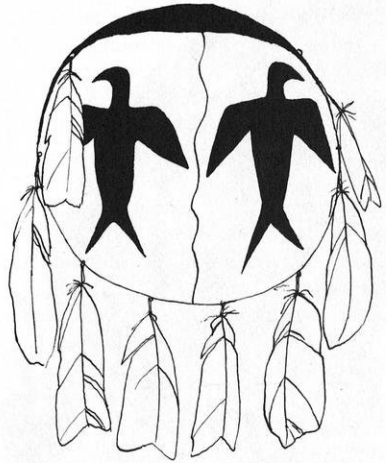
himself. This break is also found in the design of our baskets, often called wedding baskets, and in the decorative band on the neck of our pottery. It is found, too, in the protective rainbow around many sandpaintings.

Let's take a very simple symbol, the circle. It may stand for a very profound concept as the oneness and wholeness of the Universe, of all life. Or the cross may stand for the four directions, the four seasons, a star, or the mystical place where the rivers cross. Symbols may have more than one meaning and may have somewhat different meanings to different tribes. The significance attached to them will also be governed at times by use, as I mentioned with the cross.

And as with the cross used for a star, design elements may have very simple meanings or they may stand for very abstract philosophical concepts. However, in the use of designs for decorative purposes, the meanings are usually subordinate to the overall design and may hold no real significance except by association, as long as they are not for ceremonial purpose. This is found in some of the rug and jewelry designs of the Southwest. If I think more of the Southwest than other regions, it is because I know it best.

There are many examples of purely ceremonial or ritual art which I could mention, such as masks which reach a high degree of artistry and technical skill along the Northwest coast, where woodcarving is a highly developed art. Effectively painted with colorful hues and sometimes inlaid with abalone shell, their carvings adorn nearly everything they use that is made of wood. They are highly stylized and are often religious in nature or related to clan history, the two being woven together there as elsewhere in Indian cultures.

Some paintings, which may seem to the white man to be purely decorative art, held much more meaning to the owner. The pictures and symbols on a war shield, as an example, were symbols of protection for the person who made and carried them. Some were probably interested only in the symbol of protection on the shield, as some people carry St. Christopher medals while traveling. Others put great artistic talent to work and produced shields which can stand as works of art. According to Covarrubias, the Crow were perhaps the most distinguished painters of



Indian war shield.

shields and he compares them to "the vigorous spontaneity of the paleolithic rock painting of Africa or Spain, and at times surprisingly similar in spirit to the paintings of Paul Klee or Joan Miró."

The style of painting found on some of these shields and plains tepees is what has come down into easel painting in the tempera and casein work of contemporary Indian artists, now known as the traditional school of painting. Begun by art instructor, Dorothy Dunn, at the Santa Fe Indian School many years ago as an encouragement of Indian expression of the still life paintings of apples and oranges, it became in the mind of the white buying public a traditional form of American Indian art. It is flat, two-dimensional, with no shading and no perspective. Some traditional artists have modified this concept to include limited shading and perspective, but with the traditional style of placing figures in empty space. What few trees and shrubs are used are also placed traditionally.

For many years this was the only style of painting by Indian artists accepted into such



well known exhibits of Indian art as the one at Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It has been abandoned in more recent years by many Indian artists. I was one of the first in the Southwest to gain recognition for doing so. I did not paint in the traditional style because I was abandoning my culture, but because I felt that I had as much right as anyone to express myself with whatever media and in whatever style I preferred. This has been an exploratory period, beginning in the fifties, and many styles have now been pursued by Indian painters. Even in paintings of the most westernized technique, there is something that is Indian, something besides subject matter. It is an undefinable quality that Indian art collectors call, "Indian feeling." This can often be sensed in a painting even though the style has nothing that marks it particularly as being related to any traditional art form.

Some artists are today seeking inspiration from the symbols, myths and traditional art forms of the past. During the period I was a lecturer in Native American studies at the University of California-Davis, I became interested in the rock paintings found in California, principally in Santa Barbara County. These paintings have been attributed to a people known as the Chumash.

In Campbell Grant's book, **The Rock Paintings of the Chumash**, he correctly speculates that some of these, at least, were painted by priests or medicine men. He refers to them as shamans. The paintings are obviously symbolic and many groupings appear to be unified as part of a story. The great forty foot painting in the Cuyama area was such a painting. It depicted in symbolic form psychic energy and was a very sacred work. According to Grant, this painting has been almost completely destroyed by vandalism. Certain design elements in this painting and others from the same area, and the Emigdiano area, are identical with or similar to some used by my people and some used by the Apache. It is interesting to speculate on possible relationships, as our stories tell of migrations to the coast and back following some great natural disaster, which occurred in the area of present day northern New Mexico and Arizona. Grant claims that these paintings have not been dated accurately by the radio-carbon method due to the small amounts of paint sacrificed from the paintings for the tests. They were dated anywhere from 100 to

2000 years old. Many have undergone natural damage from wind erosion.

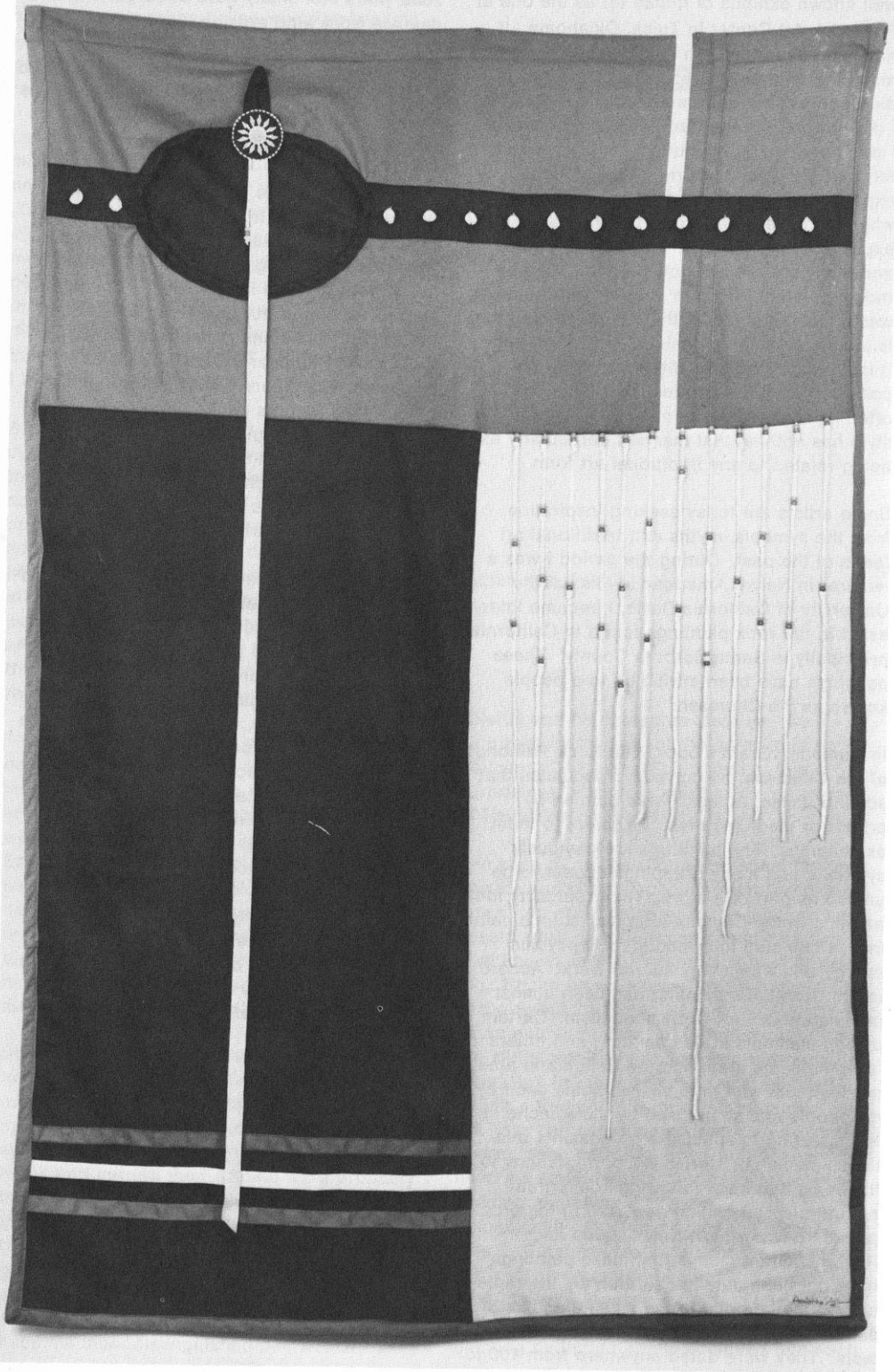
This same type of pictograph painting is found on the walls of caves and canyons throughout Navajo country where medicine men have recorded the elements of myth.

There is an example of this pictured in the recently published book, **The Rocks Begin to Speak**, by LaVan Martineau. He has taken a very sacred painting and given it an interpretation from his own imagination, as being the Navajo version of our defeat at the hands of the United States and the subsequent Long Walk to Fort Sumner in New Mexico as prisoners. His theory is that pictographs and petroglyphs (figures pecked into rock) were all based on sign language. He may be right for some of them in some areas. I don't know that much about sign language, but in his interpretation of this particular painting, nothing could be further from the truth.

Why were these paintings made on rocks and in caves? Those that have religious significance, and were undoubtedly made by medicine men, were painted at some sacred spot or shrine or were in some cases the recording of elements of a ceremony or the myth of a ceremony, to aid memory. Hosteen Clah in Franc Newcomb's book about the famous Navajo medicine man tells how he came upon such a painting as a young boy. He had climbed up to where he could look into a cave, of which we have many in Navajoland. To quote Newcomb:

*The most surprising and awe-inspiring sight of all was the painted figures on the walls, the surface of these walls must have been smoothed by hand to make a canvas for all the immortals in the Yeibichai*







*pantheon. There stood the Talking God, the Rain Maker, the Fire God, the Humpback Twins, the Warrior and his brother, the Yeibaka and the Yeibaade, and four Flint people, all marching in solemn procession around the walls, clothed in elaborate ceremonial costumes, the colors of which were as bright and clear as the day they were painted.*

Hosteen Clah took his uncle, an Apache medicine man, up to the cave the next day, and he came to the conclusion that some medicine man back perhaps when he was preparing for the trip to Fort Sumner recorded his ceremony here and left his ritual paraphernalia, intending to reclaim it when he returned or as a record for posterity if he did not.

Another area from which contemporary artists draw inspiration are the religious paintings of the Pueblo tribes, those paintings found in their ceremonial kivas. A number of well known artists paint in a style and with symbolic figures that are derived from this source. What paintings may be in the kivas of today are only for the initiates, but murals have been found in kivas of ruined pueblos and we can well imagine, with a great deal of probability, that many other ruins also had murals, now completely destroyed or unexcavated and therefore undiscovered.

P. 132. **Washington's Landscape** by Lloyd Oxendine, acrylic/canvas, 1971. Photo courtesy: The Brooklyn Museum.

P. 133. Above: **Transition Robe 1910** by Arthur Amiotte, wool flannel, felt, ribbon, tanned buckskin, beads. Photo courtesy: The Brooklyn Museum.

P. 133. Below: **Modern Eagle** by Se-Gwoi-Don-Kwe (Duffy Wilson), steatite carving, 1972. Photo courtesy: The Brooklyn Museum.

There are several fine examples of such murals, but not necessarily agreement on the part of Indian people as to their meaning or origin.

The ruined pueblo of Kuaua, close to Bernalillo, New Mexico, along the Rio Grande, is thought to have been occupied in the fourteenth century. It is claimed, they say, as their ancestral home by the people of Santa Ana Pueblo, the Awl Clan of the Hopi, and some of the people of Sandia Pueblo. In the book, **Sun Father's Way—The Kiva Murals of Kuaua**, by Bertha P. Dutton, the interpretations are made by a Zuni. It is possible they are all right. At that period of time, we all went by clan and not by the present day tribal names. There is material, cultural evidence there and elsewhere, to bear out the stories of my people that more than one clan, not always linguistically related, lived together in the same pueblo. This situation exists even today on the Hopi Mesa, where Hano on First Mesa is occupied by Tewa-speaking people of the Rio Grande, but officially known as Hopis. Our stories also say that abandoned pueblos were sometimes reoccupied and rebuilt by other migrating clans.

In excavating the Pueblo of Kuaua, archaeologists discovered many layers of clay plaster in one of the circular kivas with different murals painted on each layer. Kivas, either round or rectangular depending on who built them, are semi-subterranean ceremonial chambers and Kuaua had both kinds. The layers of murals were carefully removed and copies were made of each. Badly damaged in some areas, much remained to give a very good idea of the whole. The reconstructed kiva has been decorated with reproductions of some of the murals found and is open to the public as part of the Coronado State Monument.

Each layer of paintings told a story of a ceremony, a corn ceremony, a rain ceremony, or perhaps a clan history woven in. Among the figures represented are costumed personages, such as the Corn Mother, the Fire God, etc. Several figures are of a dual nature. There are corn plants, deer, bison, and birds. There are water jars, rain symbols, cloud symbols and many other symbols. This is a form of picture writing, but in a manner intended to be decorative, where the work executed on rock walls was often just intended

as a record. These paintings were applied to the wall of clay plaster in a fresco secco technique with a stiff brush or a finger. The color range at Kuaua was predominately yellow, black, white, and some reddish brown. In other ruins the colors also included green, blue, orange, pink, purple, gray and brown.

Of the four areas excavated, Kuaua, Awa'tovi, and Kawa'ika in the Hopi area of northern Arizona, and the Pottery Mound on the Rio Puerco in New Mexico, Covarrubias calls those at Awa'tovi, the finest and "the most spectacular artistic achievement of the Pueblo IV period." He was particularly charmed by a "humanized squash transformed into a dancing girl." These murals, he says, "show the fine sense of color of harmonious flat masses of color combined with careful and even fine designs which is the most laudable characteristic of Anasazi painting."

Awa'tovi was a Hopi village, reputedly destroyed by the Hopi themselves in the eighteenth century, for acceptance of Christianity. As at Kuaua, layers of paintings were found, and each has been copied by Hopi artists. For preservation some are rendered in the form of decorative bands of symbols; corn is a prominent symbol. Others depict Kachinas or dieties as at the New Mexico site.

One painting at Pottery Mound is very reminiscent of work in Mexico. A woman sits with strands of shell beads and decorated fabrics hanging above her head. Behind her stands a tall white crane, flat in rendition, but very realistic. Behind the crane an opening had at some time been cut into the wall, destroying part of the painting, but there appears to have been another person there sitting on a basket. Behind this a man sits with a rainbow headdress out of which grow three white, radiating stalks of corn. There is another bird, probably a parrot, and then the face and headdress of another man are visible. Other parts of the painting have been destroyed. The figures are seated with heads in a profile position. The torsos are face on, much in the manner of the Egyptian murals.

These paintings undoubtedly depicted myths, which are frequently combined with clan history, much as the stories of the Bible. Religious ceremony among the Pueblos, and probably at an early date by the Navajo and Apache, was closely associated with the clan.

Contemporary Pueblo artists are using these myths and symbols, the styles of art found in the kivas and used for decoration on pottery, to create easel paintings filled with abstract symbology.

Another form of traditional Indian painting is generally considered to be uniquely Navajo, but while we have made sandpainting a very beautiful art, rivaling oriental Mandalas, we are not the only people who make them. They are or were also made by the Hopi, Apache, Papago, Zuni, the Luiseno and Diqueno in Southern California and perhaps others. Our healing ceremonies frequently have sand-paintings which depict the myth of the ceremony. These have different symbols depending on the ceremony. The Great Star Chant has a number of different and very beautiful renderings of stars in symbolic colors of blue, pink, yellow, white, many colored and brown. Some paintings have elongated figures of the Holy People dressed with colorful skirts, feathers and so on. Sometimes there are delicate plants of beans, corn, squash, and tobacco. There may be birds, animals, insects, etc. All of the paintings do not radiate from the center in the manner of a mandala, but many do. Very often the design is in the form of a cross or swastika. There are protective rainbows and other symbols. This art is sometimes referred to as dry painting and the pigments are derived from mineral earth colors. Some few paintings are rendered in flower petals and other vegetable materials. A long time ago it is said these designs were painted on hide. The Apache appear to have practiced this long after we discontinued it because there are examples of these paintings on buckskin still to be seen which were done by the Apache. At one time some of the people known as Apache today were living with the Navajo and we still have many things in common besides language.

Sandpainting is done by the medicine man and his helpers. The patient usually sits on the painting, symbolically identifying with the myth and the Holy People. Our healing ceremonies treat the whole man, body, mind and spirit. But that is another story. You may have heard that a sandpainting has to be destroyed before sundown. After a patient sits on it there isn't much left. The transient nature of this delicately beautiful art has inspired contemporary Indian painting, has been copied for and by anthropologists and





ethnologists in watercolor, casein, silk-screen and the like. It has been copied by Navajos in recent years by painting with sand on board that has been spread with glue. These are beautiful, but lack some of the brilliance of real dry paintings. In any copy, something is left out or changed from the original ceremonial design.

We have no great cathedrals to decorate as some cultures do and as some ancient Indian cultures did, as in Mexico. Our place of worship is a hogan, a teepee, a kiva or other building, and the great out of doors where the dances take place. For the Navajo, worship is an individual and everyday affair, with nature as our cathedral where the presence of the song birds and especially the happy bluebird are a reminder of the presence of the Holy People. But in our healing and blessing ceremonies, from the sandpaintings to the costumed dancers, there is much art.

The difference between traditional Indian religious art and what could be termed contemporary religious art is that the traditional religious was and is directly involved in the aspects of ritual, of personal protection or everyday visual reminders of religious stories and philosophical concepts.

Today, individual artists express their own feelings about their culture, their life, their religion, on canvas, paper, sculpture, and so on. They depict these things for the sheer joy of creating, for the bringing of pleasure and knowledge to others; and while less idealistic but as necessary to today's culture, as a means of livelihood.

Today's artists may paint pictures of the same stories found on the kiva walls, in the sandpaintings, the myths, the stories of the Holy People, and the ancient past. He may be as abstract as his traditional culture or as realistic as a Rembrandt, or somewhere in between. He may be depicting a religious

ceremony, dance or ritual or perhaps a peyote vision, if he is a member of the Native American Church. Yes, he may even paint themes from the Christian religion if he also embraces that, or make beautiful silver crosses, or a lovely pottery chalice as I saw at a Benedictine monastery in New Mexico, made by the famous San Ildefonso potter, Maria Martinez.

All Indian art was not religious. All Indian art is not religious. A very significant part of it, both traditional and contemporary in character, was and is of a religious or religiously connected nature.

A painting inspired by sandpainting figures, and done by my son, R. C. Gorman, appears in the book, **Southwest Indian Painting—A Changing Art**, by Clara Lee Tanner. There is also a religious painting of mine reproduced. A revised edition of an earlier book, it came out in 1973. If you have not seen this book, ask for a copy at your library. It has over thirty colored illustrations and many more in black and white. By studying the paintings in this book, you can get a strong feeling for the art tradition upon which modern Indian painting is based and from which it receives its inspiration.

Navajos have a symbol for creativity. It is the same symbol that stands for duality. It looks like a figure eight or an hour glass, but is two triangles rather than two circles. It is bringing together any two opposites. It is most commonly illustrated as male and female, positive and negative, but as a symbol of creativity it is the bringing together of the head and heart or love and reason. It is the bringing together in creative balance of the two cultures in which most Indian people find themselves today. While much traditional Indian art is still being practiced, contemporary Indian artists are becoming known for their expression of native culture with western media and techniques. A renaissance of our culture must not be a going back to things as they were, but coming around again on the cultural cycle with the vitality, creativity. And creativity means something new and different from what has been done before. Firmly rooted in the past it is a new birth, not just a re-birth. □

## The Arts: Issues and Opportunities

by Michael Newton

An organization concerned less with material things than with the sustenance of the spirit, one whose ancestry goes back to the days when people lived in caves, which lives precariously because of heavy personnel and building upkeep costs, which relies for the major part of its support on the gifts of individual citizens, whose professional staff is notoriously underpaid as compared with other occupations—that, it seems to me, is a description that could be used interchangeably with a church or an arts organization.

The association for which I work has a number of task groups functioning as part of its board structure. One of these, headed by Mayor Uhlman of Seattle, is called Alliances. Its purpose is to find ways in which the arts may be placed on the agenda of other national non-arts organizations. An example is the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The fact that we have this organizational concern makes me very happy indeed to take part in an RCAAR consultation. In this work you are practicing specifically in the religious community what we are preaching generally in a number of different fields. Let me add a word about who we—Associated Councils of the Arts (ACA)—are. For sixteen years we have been an association of state and community arts councils. Most recently we have become, or are becoming in addition, an organization of concerned citizens. The shared purpose of the arts councils and the individual citizen members whom we call Advocates for the Arts is to give the arts a higher place among our national priorities. For a start, let's think not about the substance and content of the arts, but about their organization, audiences, needs, and funding.

The historic problem of the arts in America—peculiar to a new country—is that they have been treated (by and large) as an afterthought in the mainstream of our national life. We see this in countless ways. We see it in the

priorities set by our schools where the arts budget, if it ever existed, is the first to go when times are bad. We see it in the Internal Revenue Service code where arts organizations, in order to secure tax exemption, have to disguise themselves as educational. Most dramatically it is demonstrated for all to see in our carelessness about the look of our new buildings, the squalor of so much of our urban and especially suburban development, and our betrayal of the distinguished buildings inherited from the past. Did you know that of the 15,000 buildings on the historical register five years ago, half have already been destroyed. Only a nation of the visually illiterate or insensitive could have allowed that to happen. All this is directly related to a set of priorities in which cost considerations come first, utility comes a poor second, and grace, order, and visual pleasure come nowhere.

If neglect of the arts is a problem in our national life, there are certain facts that offer hope or opportunity. The majority of our fellow Americans share the concerns which I mention. Public opinion in this country is a sleeping giant waiting to be mobilized for an ordering of our society's priorities. I make this claim on the basis of a study of public opinion about experience of the arts that we at ACA commissioned from a subsidiary of Louis Harris and Associates. The full text of the study entitled *Americans and the Arts* was published earlier this month. It represents the findings of more than 3,000 in-depth interviews with a representative cross-section of Americans. What does it tell us? It speaks of many things including peoples' participation (103 million Americans attending a performing arts event or went to a museum in the twelve months preceding the survey), what Americans think of artists (less well than doctors and policemen but better than bankers and businessmen), how Americans hear about arts events (through newspaper advertising), where the cultural ghetto exists in this country (it is among the elderly who go least to performing events and museums, and, even though they have more time on their hands, read less than the rest of us).

The study tells us that there is a vast amount of good will, respect and hope invested in the arts on the part of a great many of our fellow citizens. Four sets of figures I think are especially illuminating.

- a. 89 per cent of the population felt that it is important "to the quality of life in the community to have facilities like museums, theatres and concert halls" (57 per cent said "very important" and 32 per cent said "somewhat important"). 80 per cent felt that such facilities are important "to the business and economy of the community" (46 per cent said "very important" and 34 per cent said "somewhat important").
- b. 89 per cent of the public agreed that "every town and city should have an effective and impartial planning board with real control over the quality, appearance, and location of new buildings." 87 per cent of the public agreed that "communities should make more of an effort to preserve buildings and landmarks from the past. It would make our cities more interesting and pleasant to live in." 87 per cent of the public agreed that "when businesses put up factories or office buildings, they should be given incentives to spend a certain part of the cost on landscaping, attractive interiors, fountains, art works, sculpture, and like that."
- c. 64 per cent of the (adult) public—93.1 million Americans—would be willing to pay an additional \$5 a year (in taxes for cultural support). Even among those with incomes under \$5,000, 50 per cent said they would accept a tax increase of \$5 if they knew that the additional revenues would be directed to support of the arts and cultural facilities. Almost four out of five of those with incomes over \$15,000 would be willing to pay this amount. 47 per cent of the public—68.4 million Americans—would be willing to pay an additional \$25 a year in taxes for this purpose. 36 per cent of the public—52.4 million Americans—would pay an additional \$50 a year in taxes if the money went to maintain and operate cultural facilities.
- d. 94 per cent of the public thought that playing a musical instrument should be taught in the local schools (78 per cent for credit, 16 per cent not for credit). 92 per cent thought that weaving, woodworking, pottery, and other crafts should be taught (71 per cent for credit, 21 per cent not for credit). 89 per cent thought that art appreciation should be taught (70 per cent for credit, 19 per cent non-credit). 81

per cent thought that acting courses should be taught (49 per cent for credit, 32 per cent not for credit). 77 per cent thought that dancing (ballet or modern dance) should be taught (46 per cent for credit, 31 per cent not for credit).

What was interesting about this study was that it dramatized a surge of interest in the arts which many had suspected (do you remember all that talk about a cultural explosion in the 1960's?). One of the problems is that the greater the degree of interest and involvement on the part of growing numbers of people, the greater the cost. The arts are precisely like education. Museums, theatres, orchestras, and dance companies all cost money. In fact, there are two economic rules about them. One is that if you were to attempt to support a museum by admission fees or a professional performing event by ticket sales alone, you would price all but a few patrons out of the market. The second economic law is, approximately, that the more often you perform or the longer you stay open, the more money you lose. Now this is, of course, a gross simplification but I state it simply because the economics of the arts are not understood by our fellow citizens, even by those who fill our orchestra seats or attend our museums.

The increase in costs comes in two ways. First, there is more activity today than ever before. In ten years, the number of professional dance companies has grown from ten to more than forty; the number of professional theatres has grown from 15 to 50. Our major orchestras now offer, in many cases, year round employment to their players. Second, the costs, especially in personnel, have dramatically increased. It is no longer considered acceptable for professional musicians—after years of training—to work for less than the minimum wage. I might add that it still seems to be acceptable for professional dancers to work for little money on an irregular basis and to eke out their rehearsal time with unemployment insurance.

The income gap for the arts is growing at an alarming rate—a rate clearly too fast for the private sector alone (which is the traditional and major source of support for the arts) to keep up. To counter this, the most reassuring development of recent years has been the recognition that support for the arts is an





appropriate function of government. The federal agency, the National Endowment for the Arts, is now just ten years old. Its appropriations from the congress have now so increased that they represent something like 6% of all giving to the arts (other than for capital purposes). Equally heartening is the creation of state arts agencies in all fifty states and the territories. Support from state legislatures for these agencies has grown from \$450,000 some ten years ago to 58 million dollars in 1975. Indeed, over the past two years there has been a silent revolution in state support in which eight states have passed that million dollar mark—a kind of “four minute mile” test—in state support.

To ensure that this growth is maintained, we need to find ways to orchestrate the voices of all concerned citizens to ensure that legislators at the national, state, and local levels know of our needs and the services that the arts can perform. This is a place in which church leaders can be most helpful. We have found it true nationally that a coalition of a broad range of interests (not just the arts alone) is the most effective device for capturing the ear of the congress. Nationally, through Advocates for the Arts and at the state level through individual Advocates or Concerned Citizens Organizations, there is a place for individual church leaders to add their voices to those of others in speaking for public support to balance what the private sector is doing for the arts. The leaders of the National Endowment and of State Arts Councils cannot do this alone.

Another development of the last ten years and a most important manifestation of future directions is the development at the community level of arts councils or commissions whose purpose is to make the arts more central to the life of the local community. These councils offer a remarkable opportunity. At their best they represent both the interests

of arts organizations and of arts consumers. They cut across art forms. They are concerned with funding, buildings, audience development, what is taught in schools or offered through parks and recreation departments of local government, with the protection and enhancement of the man-made environment and with help from city and county government. Most of them—and there are now about 600 in all—are creations of the last ten years. Too many are still weak for lack of the right kind of leadership or staff. Yet they do offer the best organizational opportunity I have seen to bring about that integration of the arts into daily life which is our goal. If they are to be effective, they must work with city and county government, business, the schools, and the churches. You have much to offer them. You have access to people who are experienced in community organizations. You often have buildings or places of assembly which may be underutilized.

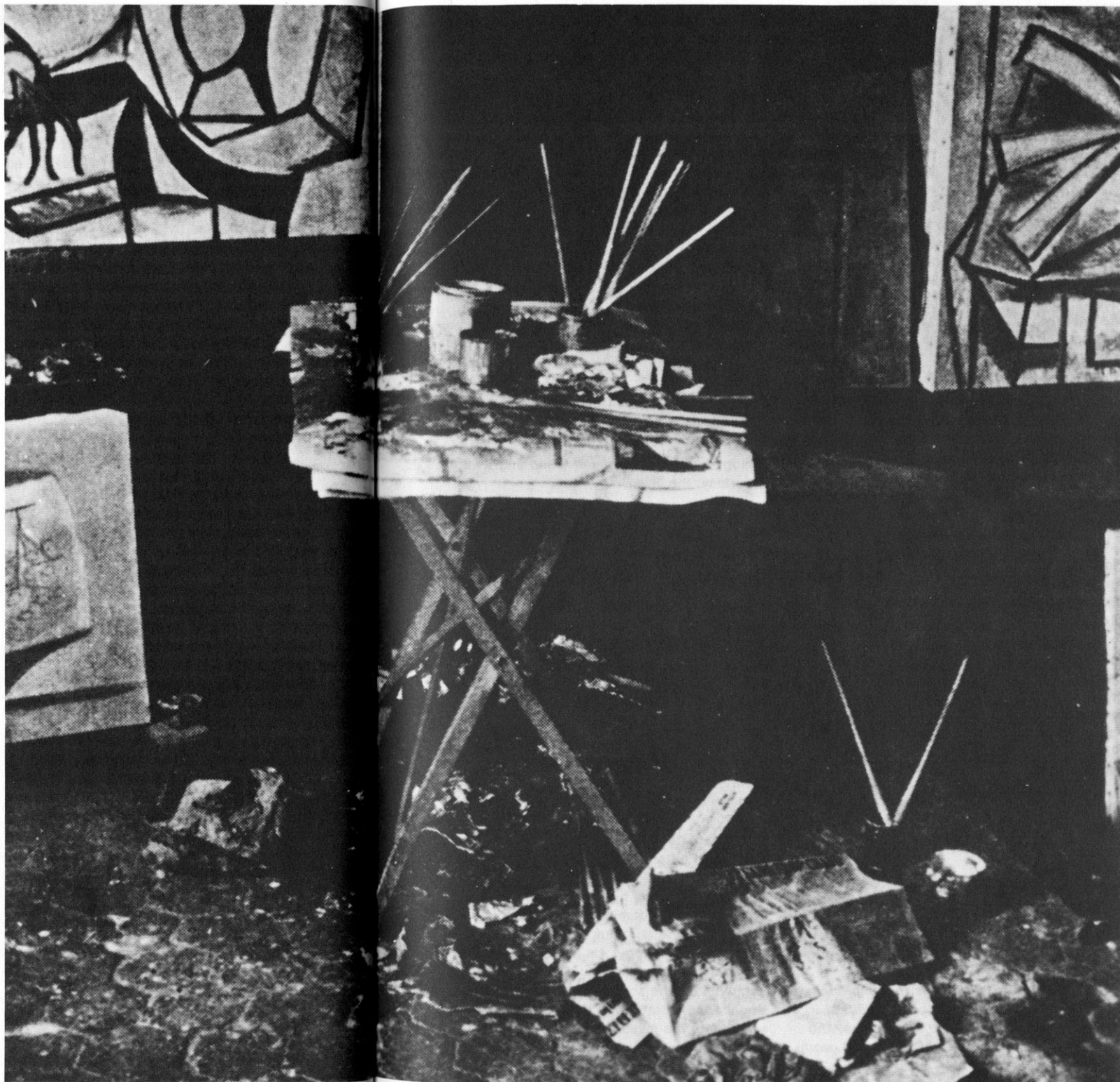
I would stress my warning that these are new instrumentalities, and that many still do not live up to their potential. But others are the most progressive and dynamic forces in their community's life. I think of the Seattle Arts Commission, created less than four years ago, which has now secured city support for 10% of the operating deficits of arts organizations in Seattle, passage of 1% arts and architecture legislation, created jobs for artists with public funds under the CETA legislation, and has produced an arts festival that attracts 300,000 people a year, plus much more.

Much of the emphasis in the accelerated support for and interest in the arts in recent years has been directed towards the institutions of the arts—the museums, theatres, orchestras, dance companies, operas. This is understandable since it is far easier to deal with or make grants to, or volunteer services for an organization which has a board, staff and 501 (c) 3 status. One of our challenges is to ensure, too, that the solitary artist—the painter, sculptor, poet, writer, choreographer, composer, craftsman—is also allowed to work. We have the responsibility not only for passing on the heritage of the past, but for adding to it a contribution from the present. Unless we are artists we cannot create art, but we can create conditions in which artists may work. By work, I mean work at their particular art form, not work simply as

teachers or writers or administrators. We, at ACA, are attempting to secure certain kinds of legislative and administrative changes and to persuade national funding sources of the propriety and practicability of making grants to artists at the local level. At the community level there is challenge to commission or buy work, to enlarge the market within which the artists of today and tomorrow can make a living. This has been one of the most glorious functions of the churches in the history of the West and its inheritance.

My text is that there is an audience in this country that is supportive of the arts. There are severe financial problems, but new instruments have appeared at the national, state, and community level, with which churches and individual church leaders and volunteers can work.

In concluding his series "America," Alistair Cooke wrote, "In this country, a land of the most persistent idealism and the blandest cynicism, the race is on between its decadence and its vitality." From **Americans and the Arts**, from my extensive travels through the length and breadth of the land, I have seen those forces of persistent idealism. I too, conclude, with Louis Harris, that there exists for us to tap, an anxiety that we not allow this land (of the pilgrim's dream) to settle for being simply an endless string of places where people come together to sell each other things. Our task is to create a land hospitable to creativity, understanding, joy, and ordered grace. □



Pablo Picasso's studio.



# The Fellowship of the Mystery

by Wesley Hotchkiss

*For he (God) has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

We who call ourselves Christian, are gathered around a mystery—the “mystery of God’s will”—the mystery of Grace. There is something very unnatural and awkward about this for us liberal, rational Christians. I read just the other day in our church school curriculum, in the very latest edition, that the purpose of religious education for our church children is “to make God understandable.” Therefore, how can we gather around a mystery? What kind of nonsense is this for rational Christians?

How can God be considered a mystery when he has revealed himself as the logos, the Word. Are not words for the purpose of explaining mysteries? And once a mystery is explained, is it not superstition to continue to hold on to it? So, for liberal rational Christians to be called a fellowship of the mystery is a strange and unnatural anomaly.

Professor Charles C. Lemert of Southern Illinois University has proposed a definition of religion which may help us with this problem.

*A religion is to be found where persons take it for granted that their own ethos corresponds to the meaning of the cosmos.*

Those of you who are students of the sociology of religion will recognize the many persons and components which are synthesized into that definition. In this definition religion is both a phenomenon and a function.

*“Ethos” in this definition is the empirical part—this is the “full range” of cultural products: histories, roles, institutions, and typical interactions by which a social group defines itself.*



**Trilogy** by J. Moldenhauer, wood engraving.  
Courtesy: the artist.

“Cosmos” is the extra-empirical part, the meaning perceived in the “general order of existence.” This is the transcendent level to which the “ethos” refers.

The process of relating the ethos to the cosmos is a crucial one. Professor Lemert calls this “reification.” This is the ability to discern in the daily round of our visible ethos that cosmic level of understanding which gives it meaning. In other words, to discern the Kingdom of God amidst the sordid and conflicting kingdoms of this world. And this is the mystery of God’s will, the mystery of grace.

Why, then, do we liberal rational Christians have such a hang-up about mystery? Because the definition of liberal rational Christianity is a religion hung up on its ethos. It is a religious form dominated by the ethical mode. It is the religious expression of western empirical technology. Its priests are not the keepers of the mystery; they are the empirical sociologists, the social planners, the institutional administrators. It does not induct its young into the *mysterium tremendum*, it provides them with learning devices for making God understandable.





How did we get so hung up on our ethos? Something happened to us on the voyage from Europe to America. We picked up all that empirical baggage of the Renaissance and it is now threatening to sink the vessel. On the continent the Word was the mystery enacted in the holy of holies in liturgical drama, in sculpture and painting and architecture but on that voyage the Word became words, at first some immortal magnificent words which were art forms themselves, celebrating the mystery, but later they became mere precepts and dwelt among us as the "golden rule." And the ethos became separated from the cosmos.

When ethos becomes separated from the cosmos it loses its creative power and its ability to be regenerated. Why? Because creation *is* the cosmogonic art of breaking in upon the chaos and ordering it into a cosmos. This is the "plan of the Mystery" referred to by St. Paul, hidden for ages in God who created all things, now revealed in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and on earth.

This kind of plan is not likely to be revealed in a Harris Poll! It has a different origin, and

its archetypes are in every religion. In India in order to find a proper location for a new house, the astrologer fashions a wooden peg from the Khadira tree, drives it into the ground at the proper location. It is understood by everyone that, symbolically, the peg goes through the head of the snake, securing it to the ground so that it cannot move because if the snake should get loose it could shake the foundation of the world and all would return to chaos.

King Solomon was commanded to build a temple in the holy mountain and the plan for the temple was prepared by God "aforehand, from the beginning."

All the Babylonian cities had their archetypes in the constellations: Nineveh was patterned after Ursa Major, Assur after Arctures, Sippara after Cancer and Sennecherib ordered them build after these cosmic plans.

"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. . . ."

It is here in the cosmic vision that the power to reform the ethos is generated. And this

brings us to the central problem of our time: the crisis of the religious situation for liberal rational Christianity and the problem of purpose and meaning for our whole society.

To return to the original problem for us in the celebration of mystery as a first step in our reification we must redefine mystery. We have allowed the empirical problem-solvers to define mystery for us. Their definition of mystery as a problem not yet solved is simply inadequate for the purposes of our fellowship. Mystery is not a body of missing data. Mystery is rather the sense of wonder at the revelation of the nature of our cosmos in Jesus Christ. It is the amazing grace that ties our cosmos and our ethos together in love. And how shall we express this mystery—how shall we communicate it? Since homo sapiens was first created from the mind of God there is only one way to express this mystery and that is through art. Art is the vaporous gossamer tissue that connects the ethos to the cosmos, the continuous re-creation of the original cosmogonic creative Act. Creation is always that event when the cosmos bursts in upon the ethos, and there is no empirical way that can happen. Art is the result of persons attempting to express the way in which their ethos corresponds to the meaning of the cosmos.

The second thing we must do is to end the polarization between the social activists and the transcendental mediators. For Christians, aesthetic modes cannot be an alternative to social action. The Christian faith will not permit the separation of the aesthetic from the ethical, the cosmos from the ethos, myth from morality. It is deep in the nature of reality that these things must be kept together.

One of the reasons for the low state of the arts in the liberal Protestant tradition is that, because it was dominated by the ethical



**Altarpieces** by Stella Waitzkin, resin, 1974, (detail). Photo courtesy: the artist.

empiricist mode, it saw the arts either as irrelevant or as a diversion from the more important social action programs of the church. And now in our time we see the results in a church lacking in ethical power and incapable of regenerating the source of its ethical vision, the impotence of an ethos separated from its cosmos. The power which the church should bring to the ethical struggle, and the one factor which distinguishes the church from secular agencies, is its cosmic vision. When this grows dim the church is not only powerless to act but in times of great oppression and tragedy, the church is unable to sustain itself when it cannot humanly act. The cosmic vision, transcendent to the human scene, is the promise and the eschatological hope which enables the church to wait for the Kairos, and to wait with great expectation in the midst of human despair.

We who form the fellowship of the Religious Communities, the Arts and the American Revolution cannot allow ourselves the easy option of the aesthetic mode *instead of the ethical*. The option is not available to the Christians, nor, probably, to other faith positions. The aesthetic always stands between the ethos and the cosmos. This will not allow us simply to condemn the "technique" as Jacques Ellul does but we are obligated, because of the Mystery revealed to us, to work for the redemption of the technology. We are obligated, as William Blake admonished us, to use our eyes to see through and not just to see with.

There is a great temptation because of the chaotic condition of our ethos, to escape into ecstatic mystery. The new interest in the arts is interpreted in this way, and righteously denounced by many orthodox rational liberals. This tension between the aesthetic and the rational is not new, it is as old as the human dilemma. The figure of Jesus in Christianity has always been in the midst of this tension. Jesus can either be spiritualized into the cosmos or secularized into the ethos, and either way God is dead.

We are not about to announce the advent of a new savior called ART. We must understand this precarious relationship between the sacred and the secular, myth and morality, from a long perspective. The prophetic tradition of stinging criticism of the sacramental is strong in Judaism. The prophets repeatedly

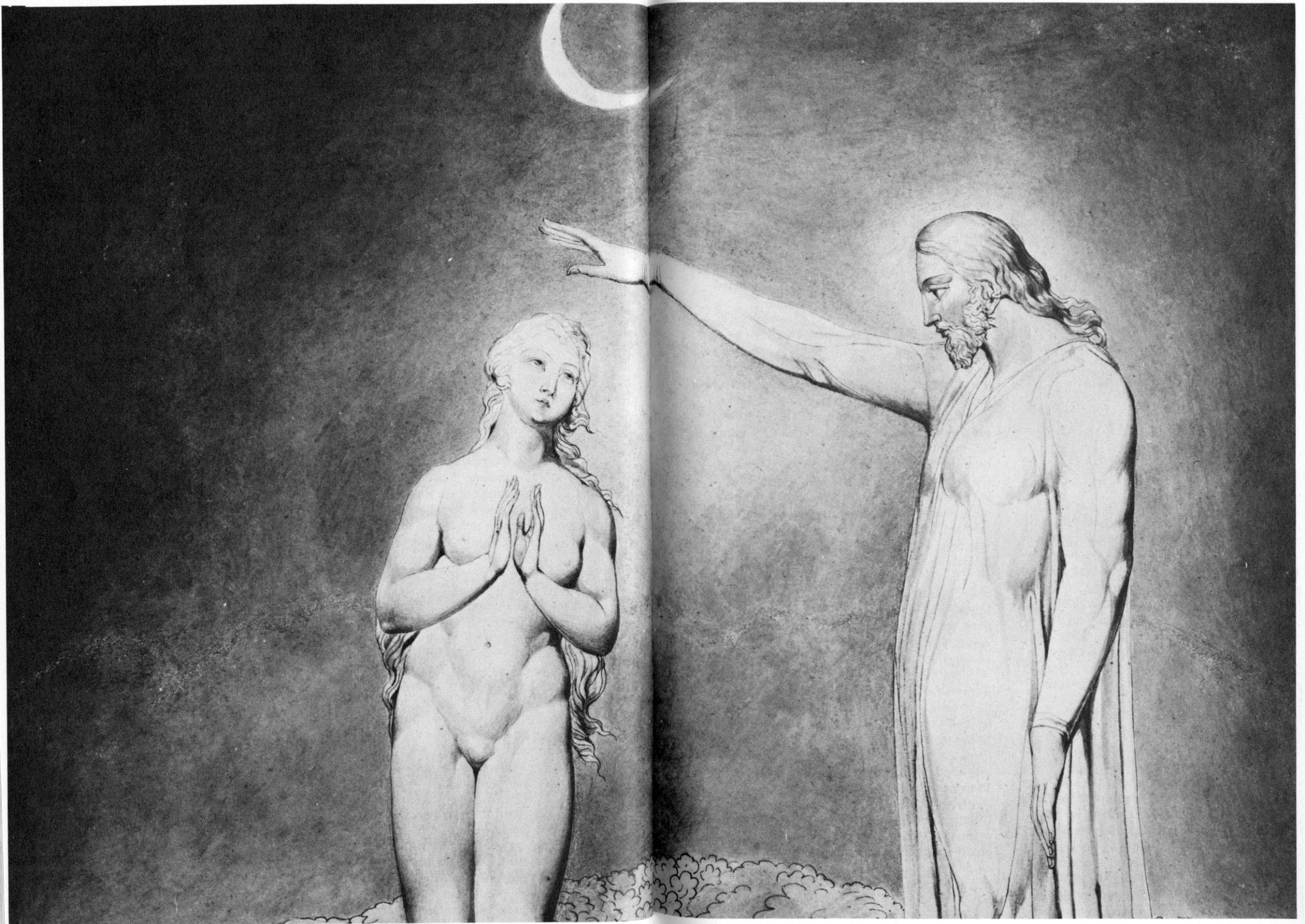
denounced the demonic in sacrament: the denial of justice in the name of holiness, and how Yahweh found the smell of burnt offerings offensive to his nostrils. And in more modern times we shall never be able to forget the planned extermination of Jews against the backdrop of mystical Aryanism. Art is as vulnerable to the demonic as is the technology!

Part of the mystery of grace is that the secular and rational must continually judge the irrationality of the holy. The rational must illuminate and expose the tendency of the sacramental to go demonic. But if the result is to rationalize the sacramental out of existence and go totally secular, then the universal base of religion has been destroyed. This universal base is the correspondence in meaning between the ethos and the cosmos: the experience of the Holy within the finite.

Therefore, as Christians, we cannot allow ourselves the easy option of condemning the ethos which in our case is western technology. In the mystery of grace we Christians have been chosen literally to hold the world together, and obviously, God has not limited his revelation exclusively to us! This holding the ethos and the cosmos together is the cosmogonic creative act, and the Mystery is that the God of love, revealed in Jesus Christ, has called us to participate in the creation, the ordering of our ethos so that it corresponds to the meaning of the cosmos. In this way we are saved from chaos, from purposelessness, from anomie, or whatever empirical name one wishes to use for chaos. This is the central salvation of our play of mystery, and therefore places the sacred and the secular in a saving relationship to each other, and here is the role of the artist in the creative process: to reveal through artistic media (the ethos) the meaning of the cosmos.

Overleaf: **Creation of Eve** by William Blake.  
Photo courtesy: The Boston Museum of Fine Arts.









Here, also for me, is a possible standard for the criticism of art. If art is no more than the portrayal of the chaos, or even the celebration of chaos, it is not creative. If it does not point beyond the chaos to the meaning of the cosmos, it has no creative function. If the artist does not possess the discernment to see the cosmos in the chaos, then he or she lacks the essential quality of the "seer," the prophet. Meaningful art must point beyond itself to the meaning of the cosmos and thereby save us from meaningless secularization.

Finally, I would like to illustrate with a personal experience, the mystery of this relationship of cosmos and ethos. This summer my wife and I, with my brother and his son, went on a canoe trip into the Alaska interior. This was the most strenuous canoeing we have ever done in our lifetime of wilderness trips. We put in on the headwaters of the Beaver River which joins the Yukon at the western end of the Yukon Flats. From the put-in point on the Beaver to the first possible exit point was a distance of about five hundred

miles of almost uninhabited wilderness. We had a five mile portage through difficult swampy terrain to get to the Beaver so we began the river trip exhausted.

The first campsite on this kind of expedition is a moment of truth. Anyone who does not approach this experience with the taste of fear in his mouth just doesn't understand the situation. This is the moment when you discover how adequate your planning has been. The first day or two are days of fear and uncertainty. Are your skills adequate to cope with this unknown environment, are you physically strong enough to meet the demands of five hundred miles of river, much of it white water? Can we cope with the unforeseen hazards of this hostile environment? Why did we ever start this trip?

Then about the third day, when no disaster has struck, after negotiating difficult rapids successfully, when a lifetime of experience in the woods and on the water begins to reassure us, something ecstatic happens. You get up one morning after a secure night's sleep and breathe deeply of the clean air with the sun full bright and you say "My Lord, what a morning!" All the hostile, bloody, competing life forms of that rugged ethos, suddenly in the ecstasy of that glorious moment, become a cosmos with you at the center. In that moment you have participated in the cosmogonic act of creation in which you have been born again, out of time, and the earth is your home, and you say to the wolves, the bears, the moose and the beavers "move over friends because I'm here to join you." You have the strange feeling that the wilderness knows you're there; because you have learned its ways, it has opened itself to you. I kept thinking of that haunting phrase in Leonard Bernstein's Mass for the opening of the Kennedy Center: "I believe in God—does he believe in me?" The question here in the wilderness has been "does this wilderness know I'm here?" Up to that ecstatic morning the wilderness is either indifferent or hostile. Then comes the creative moment when the terrifying chaos becomes a cosmos and the Creation occurs before our eyes. In myriads of ecstatic and mysterious forms, this is the creative process, when the ethos embraces us and begins to correspond to the meaning of the cosmos. □



## Afterword

It should be apparent from the conversation at Wingspread and the documents we have chosen to publish from the other consultations, that the Religious Communities for the Arts (RCA) has quite a different concern and program from other religion and the arts organizations and movements past and present. Some of us have spent our entire professional lives in "religion and the arts." That has been a world of chancel drama, banner making, rhythmic choirs, sacred dance guilds, liturgical arts guilds, drama workshops and caravans, seminars on religion and the arts. We, who as staff or board members, are responsible for the day to day activities of RCA, are well aware of the differences between that world and the one in which we presently work. Our parish is populated by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Associated Councils of the Arts (ACA), state and local arts councils and all manner of arts and religious organizations. The first day there was a formally constituted RCA, while the telephones and typewriters were being installed, we joined ACA as a reminder to ourselves and a signal to the knowledgeable that we considered ourselves a secular arts organization, the result of a religious impulse.

We are not so much concerned about the art that may go on in the chancel of the First Baptist Church as we are for that religious community's common cause with the local community arts council. What is the common cause between the diocese or conference or synod or presbytery and the state arts council? What effect will the legislature's funding for the arts—or lack of it—mean to the spiritual life of the state? How can the

religious community work with the business community, the educational community, and fraternal and civic organizations to improve the arts opportunities of the town or the county or the state? How can the vast real estate owned by religious institutions better serve the aesthetic life in their neighborhoods? These are the questions RCA feels are important.

We applaud and encourage those working in liturgical arts and from time to time as religious persons participate with them just as we admire and sometimes join those who would explore the relationships between aesthetics and theology. But the Religious Communities for the Arts—as its name was intended to imply—is particularly concerned more with the relationships between religious institutions, arts institutions, artists and government and private support for the arts.

Religious communities, as a part of their very calling, have always been concerned for the general welfare—without losing their particularity as the people of God in a certain place at a certain time. They have founded schools, hospitals, neighborhood houses, and social institutions of all kinds. Their religious impulse has carried them into all sorts of movements—labor, peace, world government, hunger.

RCA understands itself to be part of this tradition of concern for the larger community and feels our health as a people depends on the aesthetic possibilities open to us and our openness to them. RCA further recognizes that in 1976 and for some indeterminate period of time the religious communities—while maintaining their own integrity and respecting the integrity of the arts—can spend their time and resources in no more critical way than assuring availability of and access to that wholeness of life to which the arts are essential.

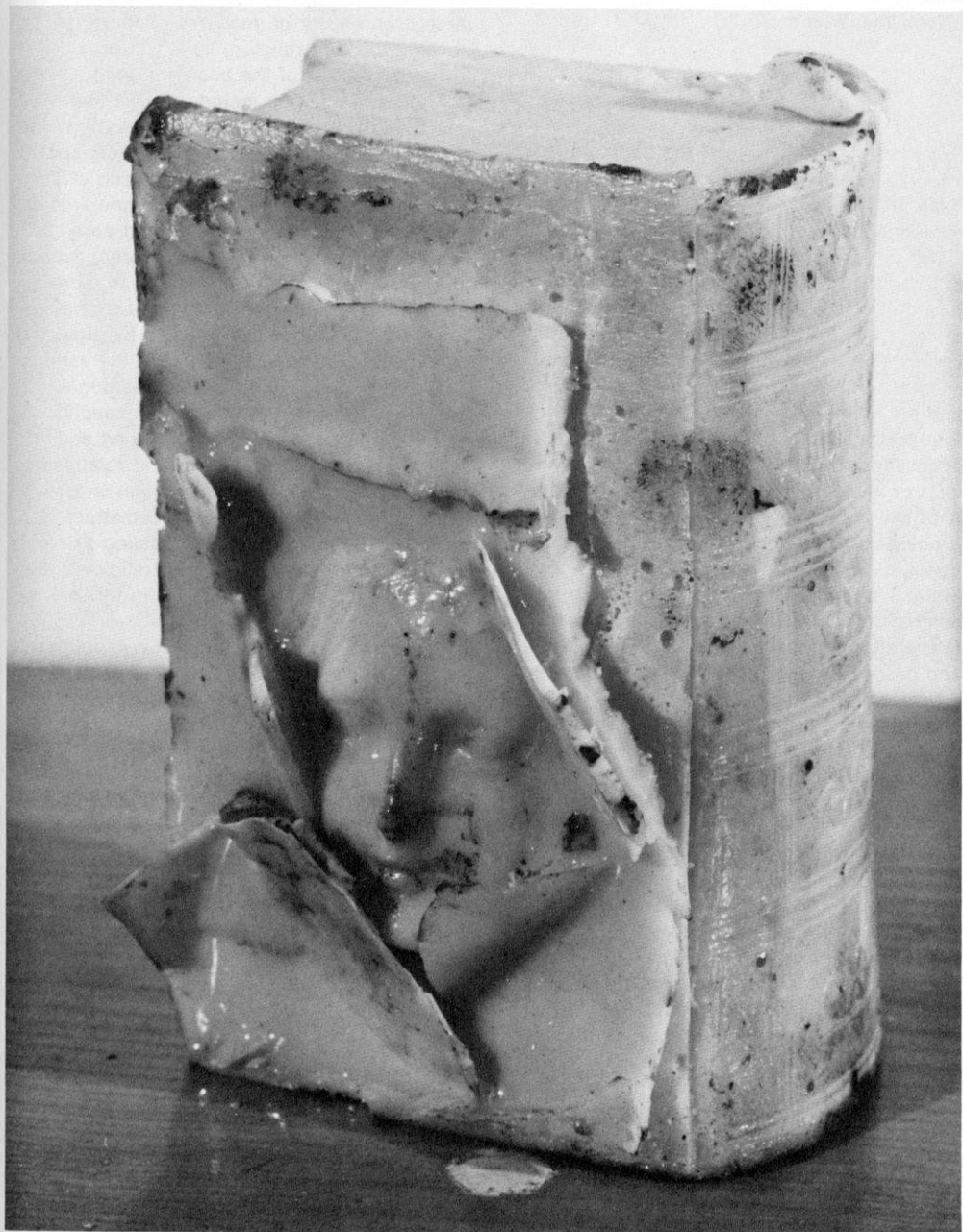
RCA does not pretend to complete knowledge in these matters and hopes this issue of **Arts in Society** will stimulate a nationwide discussion on the religious communities, the arts and their common cause. Curtis Carter in his article "Art and Religion: A Trans-religious Approach" comes to some conclusions quite independently from the Religious Communities for the Arts' consultations. It is printed here because of its intrinsic merit—

Overleaf: **Annunciation to the Shepherds.**  
Cod. Lat. 4452, fol. 8v. Bayerische  
Staatsbibliothek, Munich, W. Germany.

particularly its outstanding analysis of the historic relationships between religion and the arts—and as an example of the kind of conversation we hope this issue stimulates.

James Buell  
Guest Editor

**God's Wife** by Stella Waitzkin, resin, 1975.  
Photo courtesy: the artist.





# Art and Religion: A Transreligious Approach

by Curtis Carter  
Professor of Philosophy  
Marquette University  
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I

Religion and art have from the beginning occupied a major place in human experience. They are, indeed, two of the most important evidences of culture, and no civilization has failed to develop art forms and religious rites or beliefs. Both terms, art and religion, have many different meanings, and I shall not undertake a full or exhaustive definition of either. For my purpose here, religion consists of the rituals, ceremonies, beliefs, and actions that people engage in when they try to interpret human experience and the world in accordance with a relationship to transcendent or immanent divine presence or being. Art I will understand as the images or processes that painters, musicians, dancers, poets, film makers, and others who are working in a tradition of skill, and according to aesthetic principles, create for the purpose of interpreting human experience. The images and processes—paintings, dances, poems—artists produce are symbols for interpreting values, feelings, ideas, and other significant aspects of human experience.

Today there is considerable interest in art and in religion. The arts enjoy a proliferation of styles that range from realism, with its full blown and easily readable images, to "conceptual" styles where the images may be minimal and difficult to interpret. And religion is available in a variety of forms. Public support for the arts is increasing slowly, and public interest is rising steadily. Religion, too, enjoys a comparable resurgence of interest. From a distance the two might appear to proceed in diverse directions, but I believe that art and religion can best serve human needs when the two work in harmony, pursuing their common interests. The essay will develop the following points: (1) Intersecting crises have created social problems common

to the world at large; (2) if religion and art are to perform their function of mediating these contemporary problems, they must establish a new relationship; (3) this end will be accomplished by means of a new conceptual framework for the relation of art and religion, and new art symbols that transcend the boundaries of the different religions.

It is difficult to spell out in advance a complete program for harmonious cooperation between art and religion, but I will provide some indications of the basis for such cooperation. A religion includes in the first instance, of course, internal matters of meditation, worship, and belief that are exercised within a particular religious faith; and at this level, art cooperates with religion primarily as a sacramental element of rites and ceremonies. But religion has also external aspects that relate it to other religions and to more diverse cultural elements. At this external level, art cooperates with religion by providing a means of communication among the various different religions, and between religion and the other elements that make up a specific culture. The cooperation between art and religion, relative to these external relations, must be based upon more universal factors than are operative in the internal matters of particular religions. I will be dealing primarily with the cooperation of art and religion with respect to the external relations in this essay.

One significant way in which art can cooperate with religion is by acting as the catalyst of mutual respect and appreciation among the various religions. Removal of the divisive barriers of ignorance, lack of respect, and lack of appreciation for the values of the "other" religions must precede cooperation that is necessary for the pursuit of common goals. Art can provide a commonly intelligible artistic-religious vocabulary that will enable the various religions to transcend the barriers that separate them. Such a vocabulary of art symbols will of course draw on the insights of

**The Praying Jew** by Marc Chagall, oil on canvas, 1914, (detail). Courtesy: The Art Institute of Chicago.





both art and religion, because art cannot arbitrarily impose its own symbols upon religion. There are existing art works that do transcend particular religious boundaries, but these works are too often ineffective because they are interpreted according to an inadequate or outmoded understanding of the relation of art to religion.

My approach to this question of a vocabulary of art symbols for developing mutual understanding among religions is in two parts: The first is to reexamine the conceptual frameworks that govern the perception of the relation of art to religion in general, and to propose a conceptual framework that will accent the transreligious aspects of presently existing artistic symbols. The second is to recommend a self-conscious effort by today's artists who have an interest in religion to develop new images that will contribute to the aim of transreligious understanding among religions. The new artist religious vocabulary that emerges, like previously existing ones with potential transreligious uses, can best be developed on the basis of a transreligious understanding of the relation of art to religion.<sup>1</sup>

The complex relations between art and religion require periodic reassessment, because changes in the surrounding cultures alter these relations. For the present age, it is necessary to develop a rationale for mutual cooperation between art and religion that is based on the ways in which we see the world today: as pluralistic, interrelated, facing critical problems of readjustment to moral, aesthetic, environmental, economic, and political crises, all of which threaten the quality of human and other natural forms of life. It is not possible to deal with the question of art and religion in relation to each of these separate areas of crisis, but what is said here is intended to apply to each one.

**Coventry Tapestry** by Graham Sutherland.  
Photo courtesy: Provost and Council of  
Coventry Cathedral.

My approach to cooperation between art and religion in these areas of crisis is based on the following statement: Religion and art are both prominent sources of values that are appropriate to the solution of the major social problems referred to here. Religion draws upon divine presence or being as a principal source of positive, life-supporting values such as benevolence, justice, and love, all of which are affirmed by many different religions. Human intelligence interacts with consciousness of the divine to produce an awareness of these values in what we call social conscience. The same intelligence, acting in a concrete social situation, can apply these principles of benevolence, a commitment to the greatest good; of justice, which is respect for persons expressed through the principle of equality; of love or concern for others, to policy and actions in the social order. Artists who experience these values through religion, as participant or as observer, or who become aware of the values through some indirect source, present the values in art images that can influence a broad range of persons who must make decisions to meet the crises. Dancers, musicians, painters, and other artists continuously generate fresh images for such purposes.

The cooperative impact of art and religion on social issues extends beyond art's role as the transmitter of those values that the artist perceives through the influence of religion. Art contributes its own aesthetic values; indeed, the values that are simply transmitted through art images—benevolence, justice, love—are so embodied in the form and feeling and rich sensuous structure of the art work that these carried values are enhanced by the aesthetic values of the art structures in which they are presented.

The aesthetic values of artistic form, expression, and sensuous quality remind us, moreover, to think of their direct application to such social problems as the urban environmental crisis. Perhaps the immediate contribution of art to the partnership with religion in dealing with the urban environment crisis is more difficult to see. I would like to make the connection in the following way: An understanding of formal structure in art works can provide greater awareness of the importance of design and order in the planning of an urban environment. Expressive values in art works call attention to the qualities of



mood, feeling, and atmosphere that are so important to the quality of life; and sensory perception that is heightened by the rich and varied colors, textures, shapes, and patterns of art sensitizes peoples to the necessary presence of such qualities in the planned environments of cities. Environmentalists who fail to realize that the urban crisis includes an aesthetic one will surely fail in their efforts to provide a complete solution to the urban crisis. It is essential therefore that art and religion work together, pooling their value resources and their communicative influence, in the common effort of making certain that humanistic, moral and aesthetic and spiritual values are applied to policy and action in the approach to social problems. They must also influence the selection of economic and political values and means that are compatible with these other humanistic and spiritual values.

## II

My essay will examine briefly three historic relations between art and religion: art and religion as inseparable; art as the handmaid of religion; and art and religion as independent or opposing elements of culture. I will then propose a fourth view that I consider the basis for a practical and creative response of art and religion to the crises of the present world conditions. The brief survey of the relations between art and religion that have developed through past ages offers no single homogeneous pattern. The survey will, however, help us to understand the present situation, by showing the progression of changes and by interpreting the various stages in that progression.

### **Art and Religion as Inseparable Elements of Culture**

Primitive cultures of the world provide a model of art and religion as inseparable elements of culture, where the two are integrally connected with each other and with the whole cultural process. As T. S. Eliot has noted, "The Dyak who spends the better part of a season in shaping, carving, and painting his barque of the peculiar design required for the annual ritual of head-hunting is exercising several cultural activities at once—of art, religion, as well as of amphibious warfare."<sup>2</sup> African arts, particularly the dance, present a paradigm of unity between art and religion.



**Man-Bird (Homme-Oiseau)**, front view, polychrome wood carving, (detail). Photo courtesy: Collection, Washington University, St. Louis.

**Mask, Hawk Face.** Tlingit Shaman's grave, Yukutat, Alaska. Photo courtesy: Museum of Natural History, Princeton University.



A recent book, **African Art in Motion: Icon and Art**, documents with rich details the close connections that exist between art and religion in Africa.<sup>3</sup> The dance in Africa is "a manifestation of life and vitality and a religious act."<sup>4</sup> Dancing is thus a part of the African's idea of being fully human. The dance expresses the sorrow of death as well as the joy of life. It would not be at all disparaging to say that for the primitive African religion was danced out rather than thought out in words. The unity that exists between African dance and religion extends to music, sculpture, masks, iconography, and poetry, all of which are replete with spiritual energy that manifests the essence of the sacred. Art and religion appear as coequal partners in such primitive communities, and there is no effort to subordinate "artistic form" to "religious content." The perfection of artistic form and of character are so integrally related as to produce the double admonition: "improve your character to improve your art;"<sup>5</sup> here, art and the moral aspect of religion merge in actualizing spiritual fulfillment. Other examples of the close relation between religion and art can be found throughout the world. Hopi snake dances of the Southwest United States combine dance and drama with religion and the hope of influencing nature to provide rain for the season's crops. And the making of a Navajo sand painting can be the occasion of a sacred healing ceremony. So too, in ancient Greece, the religious celebration of the cycles of life was the occasion for dance, poetry, and drama. Dancers and actors representing spring and winter, or life and death, enacted the essential passage of life's seasons and thereby exemplified the indivisible connection of art and religion.

In each of these examples, art and religion function as equal partners, inseparable from each other and from the context of the whole culture. Thus they illustrate local variations within the first pattern that I am using to describe historic relations between art and religion. In this pattern, art and religion manifest themselves as harmonious forces within a culture, and their interworkings exemplify a wider cosmic truth: that every part of an organic whole bears an intimate relation to every other part. Those who regard art and religion as conjunctive activities that should work together as they do in primitive cultures are therefore essentially correct in their account of the unity of purpose and action that

links art and religion. The principal limitation of this primitive view of art and religion is not its emphasis upon their essential unity, but localism or parochialism. Primitive man understands the interrelatedness of art and religion primarily through their role in his own local community. He lacks a world view wherein art and religion are the links among diverse communities throughout the world. Primitive people did not comprehend a world as vast as the one we know today, nor did they envision a world that demanded interaction among people of complex and diverse cultures. Their art symbols are formed, consequently, in relation to local religions and local cultures, and are adequate for the local situation where the symbols were intended to function. But locally oriented art symbols do not have sufficient universality to comprehend the necessity of a transreligious, transcultural perspective that must reach across the frontiers of many religions and diverse geographic, economic, and political climates that produce *world* social problems such as the ecological crisis. The conditions of the modern world have altered the nature of society, and so it is necessary to consider other models.

### **Art As the Handmaid of Religion**

The handmaid thesis alters substantially the equal partnership of primitive art and religion. Religion, or its articulation in theological propositions, is the primary and authoritative norm against which all other views, including art, must be measured.<sup>6</sup> Such religions as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism have adopted the handmaid thesis at various times in their respective histories, and some of their believers still operate under its aegis. The handmaid thesis functions positively to incorporate art into the religion and also negatively to exclude images that do not fit. The handmaid thesis sees art from the point of view of religion: art arises and operates within the context of a religious faith, is subordinate to

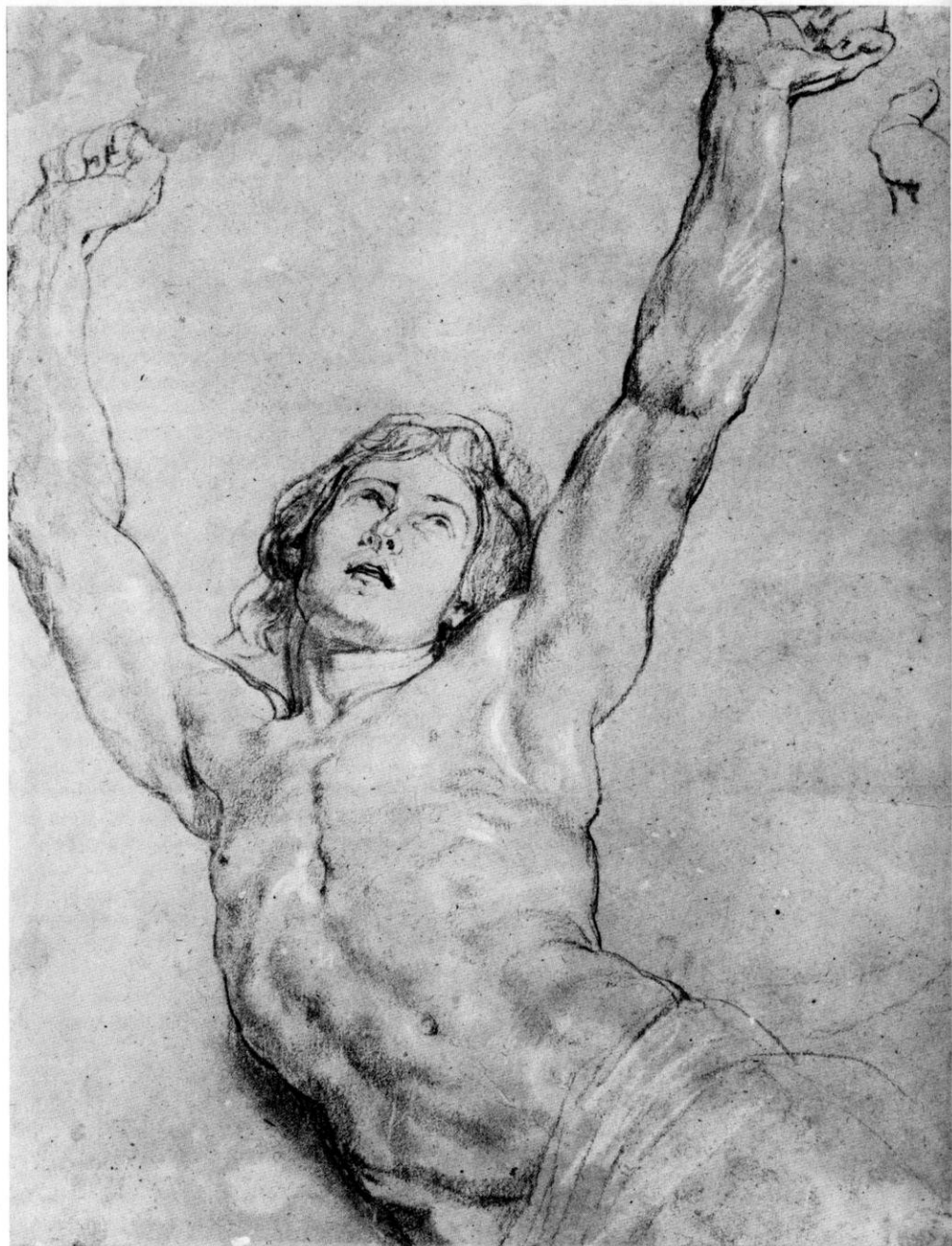
Advent banner, Calvary Lutheran Chapel, Madison. Photo courtesy: J. Moldenhauer.

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the aims of the religion, is used primarily for the promotion of religious aims such as worship, and for educational purposes, and requires that the artist be attentive to the difference that God or sacredness makes to the form of human existence that is being treated in the art work.<sup>7</sup>

Christianity's approach to art, particularly in stages of the religion's development prior to 1300, is an especially clear instance of the subordination of art to religion. During this period, Christian art was considered "bearer of the sacred, an operative mode of the sacramental,"<sup>8</sup> and the work of art was seen as an object functioning within Christian life. Sacramental art, that is, art which is developed for and from the point of view of religion, is the one case in which the handmaid thesis is satisfactory, because the characteristics of the theory and the art happen to correspond.

There are, however, art works originating within a context of religious faith that transcend the boundaries of religious faith because of their superior aesthetic qualities or their universal themes. Gerard Manley Hopkins, the nineteenth century poet and a Jesuit, writes from within the Christian faith.<sup>9</sup> Hopkins often treats religious subjects, but his poems unflinchingly speak to the world and defy the constraints that the handmaid thesis impose upon the relation of art and religion. Even the most religious of Hopkins' poems exhibit values that transcend the boundaries of his particular religious faith, and it is not necessary to share Hopkins' religious faith to appreciate the artistic power and depth of insight into life that is manifest in his poetry. Such works as Hopkins' do not receive adequate interpretation under the handmaid thesis.

Art works that originate independently of a particular religion can also serve the aims of religion. Matisse designed and decorated

"Chapelle du Rosaire," the Dominican convent chapel at Vence, a riviera town near Paris, and this work is used as a worship space.<sup>10</sup> I have seen Sartre's play, "No Exit,"<sup>11</sup> performed in Boston churches, offered as a religious statement about the present state of mankind. But when the handmaid thesis is applied to Matisse's chapel or to Sartre's play—that is, to art works which are able to serve religion because of their themes or implications—the inadequacies of the handmaid thesis become apparent. The works that fall into this category cannot be completely subsumed by religion, because such works proceed from a more universal aesthetic base. Art, other than sacramental art, sees itself as a free, autonomous mode of experience that is capable of discerning truth from its own point of view.

While seeking to harmonize the two points of view, the handmaid thesis ironically brings art and religion to the point of separation. Religion places art in a subordinate role that is ultimately incompatible with the autonomy of art. Art is by necessity a free and autonomous activity that is capable of discerning truth and meaning in its own right, without subjecting its perceptions to the measure of religion. Like any other forms of creative activity—religion or science, for example—art can make mistakes in the interpretations that it gives to events. But such errors of artistic insight are not corrected by subordinating the perceptions of art to the judgment of religion, as if the latter were a superior partner.

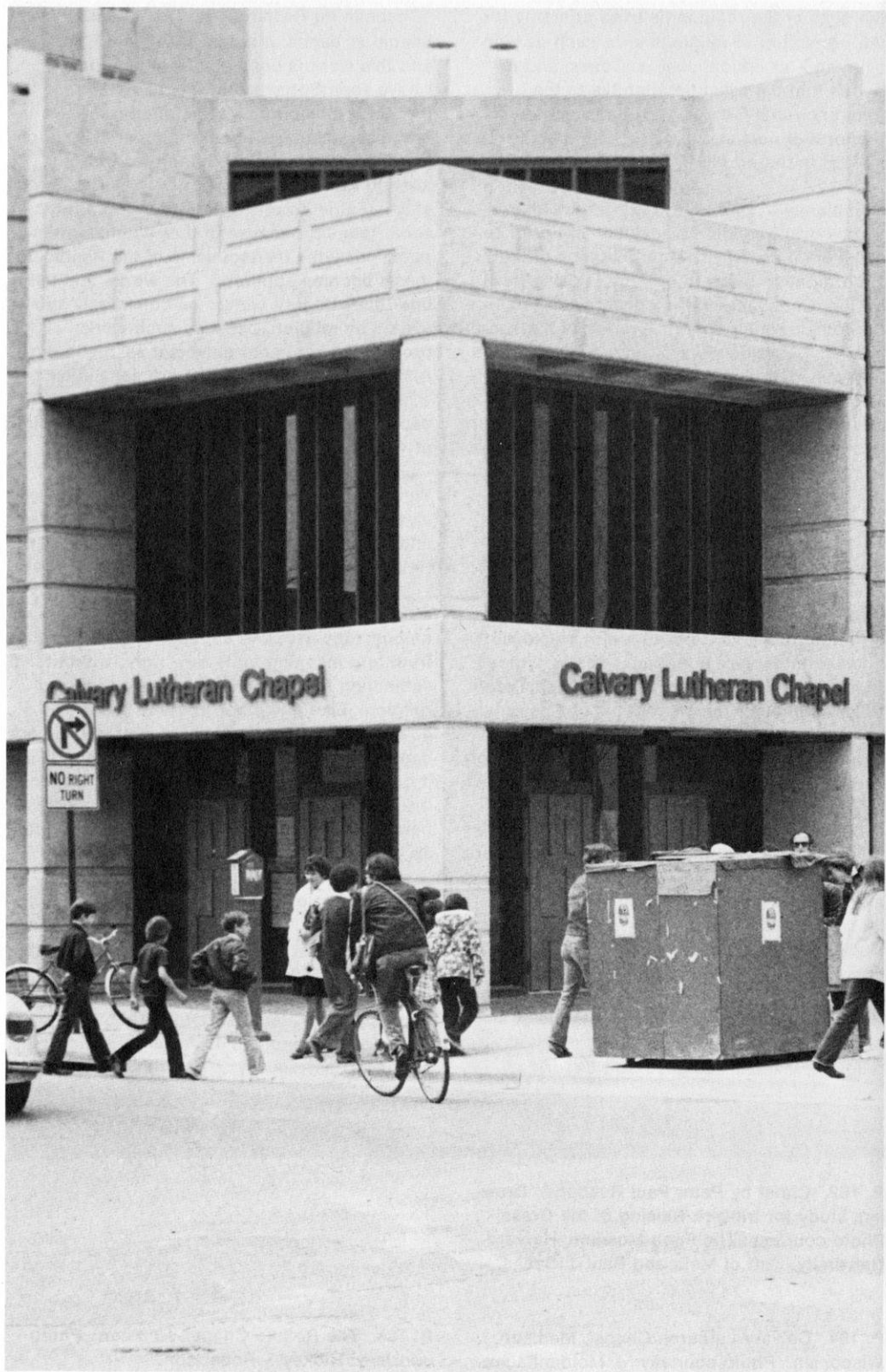
### Art and Religion Isolated

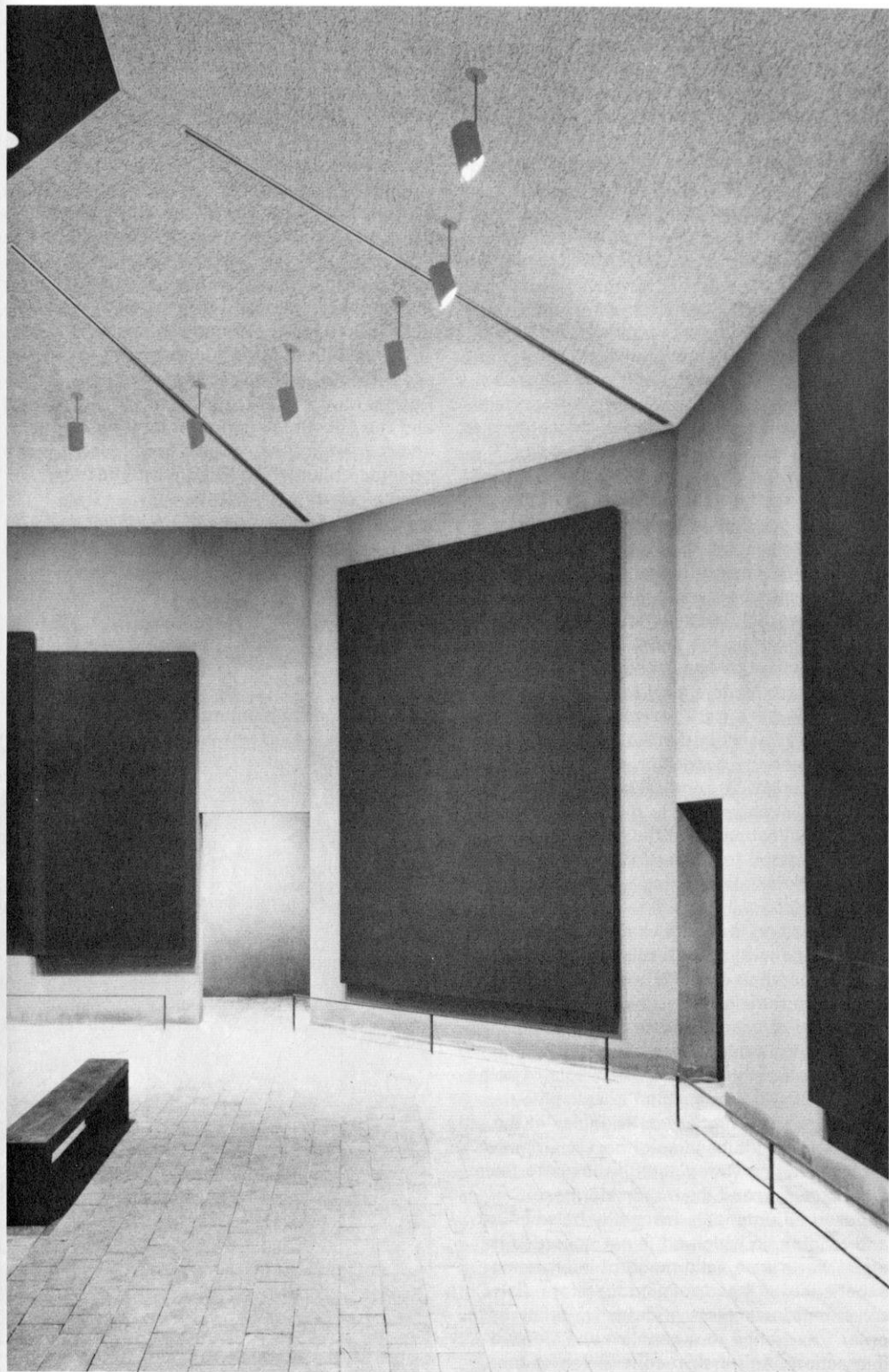
The handmaid thesis has resulted in a necessary division between art and religion. At a certain point, art can no longer tolerate the attempt of religion to subordinate it, as if it were only the handmaid. Art and religion then go their separate ways. The inevitable result

P. 162. **Christ** by Peter Paul Rubens. Drawing, study for triptych **Raising of the Cross**. Photo courtesy: The Fogg Museum, Harvard University. Gift of Meta and Paul J. Sachs.

P. 164. Calvary Lutheran Chapel, Madison, Wisconsin. Photo courtesy: J. Moldenhauer.

P. 165. The Rothko Chapel, Houston. Photo courtesy: Hickey & Robertson.







of this separation is that art and religion consciously struggle not only for autonomy but for dominance, and their progressive isolation from one another is reinforced by the specialization of function that characterizes modern society. The unity of the primitive stage is now completely lost, and with unfortunate consequences for both art and religion. Religion is deprived of aesthetic sensibility, and art, disengaged from or at war with religion, finds itself lacking in spiritual significance.<sup>12</sup>

The state of opposition between art and religion is played out dramatically in Hegel's aesthetics, where Hegel shows art, the sensuous manifestation of divine spirit, in a dialectical relation with religion: At a certain stage in the dialectical process, art appears to disengage itself from its vocation as a manifestation of the divine spirit.<sup>13</sup> In this state of disengagement from its religious grounds, art loses its highest vocation and exists in a state of rootless freedom where it can offer at its best an occasion for the exercise of the artist's imagination and a means of diversion for its viewers.<sup>14</sup> The temporary opposition of art and religion in the dialectical process of Hegel's aesthetics has prompted such post-Hegelian writers as Harries and Heller to see in Hegel's work the very death of art.<sup>15</sup> But Hegel himself, in contrast to his followers, does not see the opposition of art and religion as a final state. Art and religion dissolve their prior relationships only to become reconciled, through philosophy, and thus become capable of a more complete understanding of the organic whole of being.

The opposition that I am using to characterize the third general pattern relating art to religion parallels Hegel's analysis. If the opposition remains unresolved, it constitutes a misguided direction, because it operates in antipathy to the principles of cultural unity and organic relatedness of the whole of being. But this stage of opposition is actually necessary to correct the deficiencies of the primitive and the handmaid theses. Primitive art and religion were limited in focus to their local cultures, and the handmaid thesis imposed an untenable inequality between art and religion, in which art is not accorded its equal worth as a valid mode of interpreting experience. Art and religion therefore dissolve their incomplete or defective relations in order to advance to a new level of creative interaction. And their reconciliation on the

new level will result in a greater freedom for both religion and art, a freedom that will enable them to cooperate as equal partners but on a more global scope than was possible at the primitive stage.

I personally doubt the possibility of a permanent divorce of art and religion, because both are so closely identified with the common tasks that are necessary to the realization of a humane society. Their common interest in human values requires a kind of cooperation that cannot be realized when art and religion pursue their own independent ways. The strongest efforts toward maintaining the separation of art and religion have been the Puritan attempts to exclude art from religion, and the encouragement to a division of art and religion in post-industrial materialist oriented cultures of the United States and Russia, where specialization invites fragmentation. The separation brought on by Puritan attempts to exclude art from religion produced corresponding tendency in art to

develop itself apart from or in a struggle with Puritan religion for dominance. But except for remnant subcultures such as orthodox Judaism and fundamentalist Protestantism, the Puritan effort is, for all practical purposes, dead. The present state of American culture succeeds in alienating art from religion only at the expense of fragmentation and neglect of important spiritual and humanistic values. And the present circumstance must be regarded only as a temporary state of affairs that is to be explained in part by the relatively short time that American society has had to develop. In comparison with the ancient civilizations of Asia and Europe, America is very young and has yet to realize maturity in its approach to the relation of art and religion.

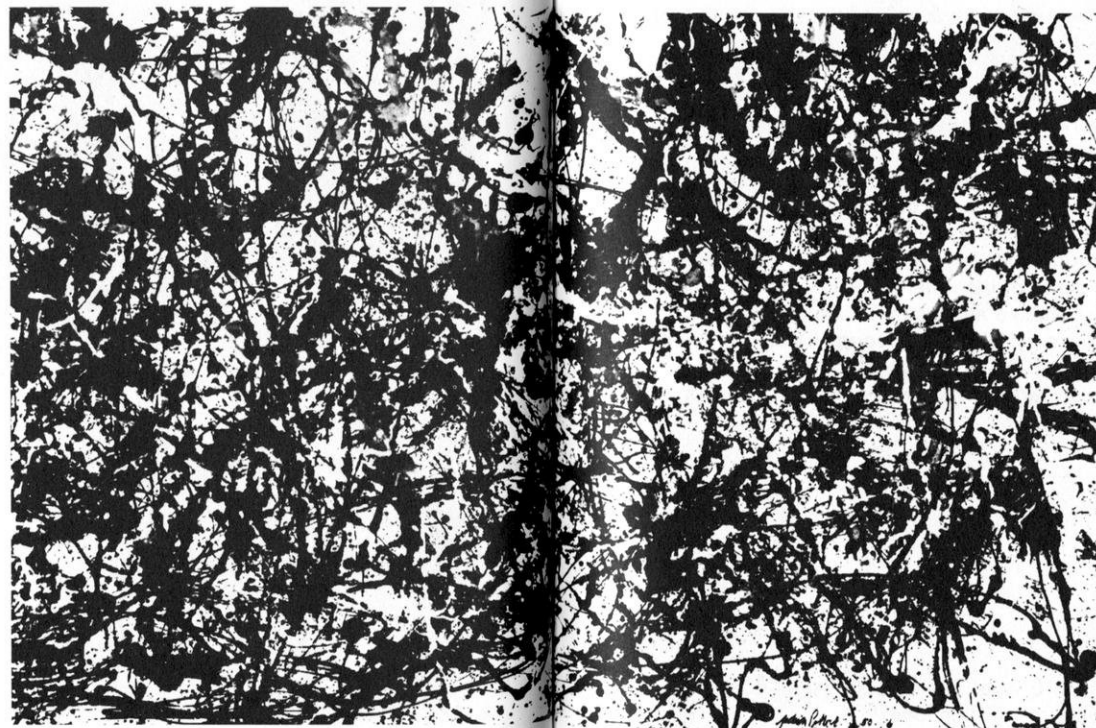
### The Transreligious View of Art and Religion

The three approaches to art and religion that I have discussed up to this point are based on distillations of historical realities. While all three historical patterns still exist in the

Twentieth Century, the unique gift of this century, which is also the mirror of needs in the Twentieth Century, is what I would like to call a transreligious view of art and religion. I cannot be as neat about the future prospects for my proposal for the contemporary situation because there is little to draw upon. The transreligious approach to art and religion is in fact breaking new ground. This approach addresses the main issues that art and religion must deal with in the present age: to express creative sacredness or holiness that is particular to the different religions, but in symbols that can be shared through communication across religious frontiers, and to contribute to positive solutions for social problems common to the world that have resulted from intersecting crises. The transreligious view of art and religion provides the conceptual basis for a new relationship whereby religion and art can perform their function of mediating these contemporary problems. This new relationship is to be founded on mutual respect through which religion and art acknowledge one another as equal partners, each contributing its own values and structures to the solution of their shared problems. No longer can religion assume that its judgments alone are the measure of truth; art and religion are coequal partners in the search for truth. Any mutual or one-sided distrust that may have clouded their relations in the past must now be set aside, in the interest of their common aims.

Although not a great deal can be said about the future application of my transreligious view of art and religion, it is possible to develop support for the thesis by noting certain prophetic themes in the writings of such visionary thinkers as Whitman and Tillich, which are symptomatic of trends in contemporary cultures. In his book *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman expresses great hopes for the redemption of society through creative cooperation between religion and art, particularly when such cooperation takes place in a democratically oriented social order.<sup>16</sup> Whitman may have been overly optimistic about the immediate prospects for the improvement of society through art and religion, but he points in what I believe is the right direction: toward the transreligious approach to art and religion. Only through this new approach to art and religion do we see clearly the need and the possible realization of Whitman's dream.

Jackson Pollack painting (detail).



she is informed of her divine mission: "Fiat mihi voluntas tua," (Let it be done to me according to your will), and instrumental music that exhibits an Eastern influence.

Finally, we can add to these symptomatic "evidences" of the need for a transreligious approach to art and religion suggestions of a theoretical base for the view, that is found in Rahner's studies in the history of religion.<sup>18</sup> Rahner advances the thesis that archetypal forms in every religion exhibit the human search for the divine. There is not time here to examine Rahner's thesis in detail, but if the archetypal thesis were to hold up under critical scrutiny, it would undoubtedly contribute to an explanation of the underlying mind structures from which transreligious concepts and art works can be created.

The beginnings of a transreligious approach to art and religion already exist in such works as Hopkins' poetry and the art works of Rouault who manages to address people of all religions while penetrating deeply into the themes of a single religion. Rouault sensitively combines religious faith and social content in his "Misere" prints and thereby exemplifies especially well these beginnings of the transreligious view from within a particular religion.<sup>19</sup> Beyond these examples of art works with transreligious *implications*, there are a few attempts by artists to produce genuinely transreligious works. I have in mind such works as the chapel at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, an instance in which the architect set out with deliberate intent to create a chapel that would communicate to people of all religions. The chapel is the result of a world wide study of religious architecture and thought of the different religions, and it seeks to combine elements in such a way as to transcend all of their boundaries. The chapel at M.I.T. is only one example of possible future efforts that artists may pursue, and it

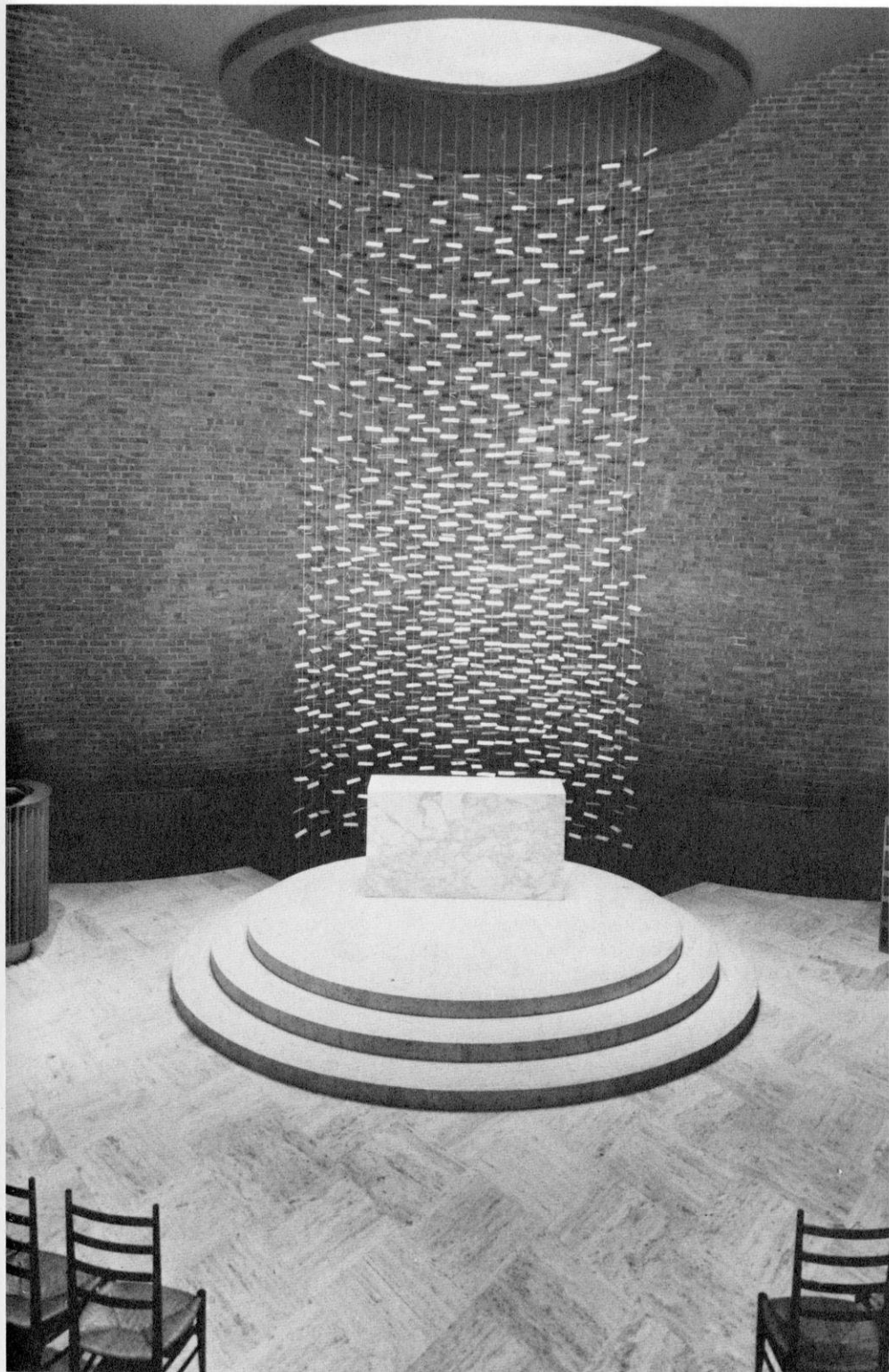
M.I.T. Chapel. Photo courtesy: M.I.T. Historical Collections.



Zodiac sign, **Pisces**.

From a theological perspective, Tillich's last lecture before his death called for a dynamic approach to religion aimed at breaking through the frontiers that divide religions.<sup>17</sup> In this lecture, Tillich confessed that if he were to rewrite his theology, he would take much greater account of the unique manifestations of great moments (*kairos*) in the different religions. Tillich did not live to carry out the implications of his last insights into religion, but the transreligious approach to art and religion provides a frame of reference for further explorations of Tillich's discoveries.

Support for my thesis from these visionary sources, Whitman and Tillich, inspires confidence that the transreligious approach is not without merit. And certain elements of contemporary culture point in a similar direction: The renewed interest in classical mythology and the burgeoning interest in the signs of the zodiac, reaching out across both time and space, are strongly suggestive gropings for a transreligious outlook. Most interesting along these lines is the blending of Eastern and Western themes in contemporary popular music. The Beatles' song, "Let It Be," for example, presents a curious marriage of words adapted from the Virgin Mary's speech when



deals with only one of our tasks. That is, it contributes to breaking down barriers between religions, but it does not go beyond this to deal with social concerns.

### III

#### Applications and Future Investigations

The present state of art and religion is in need of the new beginning that the transreligious approach can provide. There is a definite lack of significant art works that address the questions of my paper—communication and appreciation that extends across religious frontiers and attending to the social crises of the day—and particular religions falter in their isolation from other religions and from art. This lack of significant art to deal with these questions, together with the relative ineptness of the various religions in the face of social problems, has caused critics and sympathizers alike to ask these revealing questions: Is the artist still at his task of interpreting human experience? and has religion lost its relevance for contemporary life? The problem is not that the artist has abandoned his task, or that religion is irrelevant. The problem is, rather, that both art and religion are in need of a new framework in which to address the fundamental questions of contemporary life. I believe that art and religion are still basic elements in the life processes of a culture because they both contribute to and articulate the sense of purpose and meaning that is otherwise lacking. Religion and art, however, do need to improve their respective public images and actively perform their mediating role in relation to the present age. And this can be done with substantial improvement through the adoption of the transreligious approach.

What then are the key areas in which the contribution of religion and art is needed? Here I will add to what I have alluded to in earlier parts of the paper these problems that should concern people of the present age:

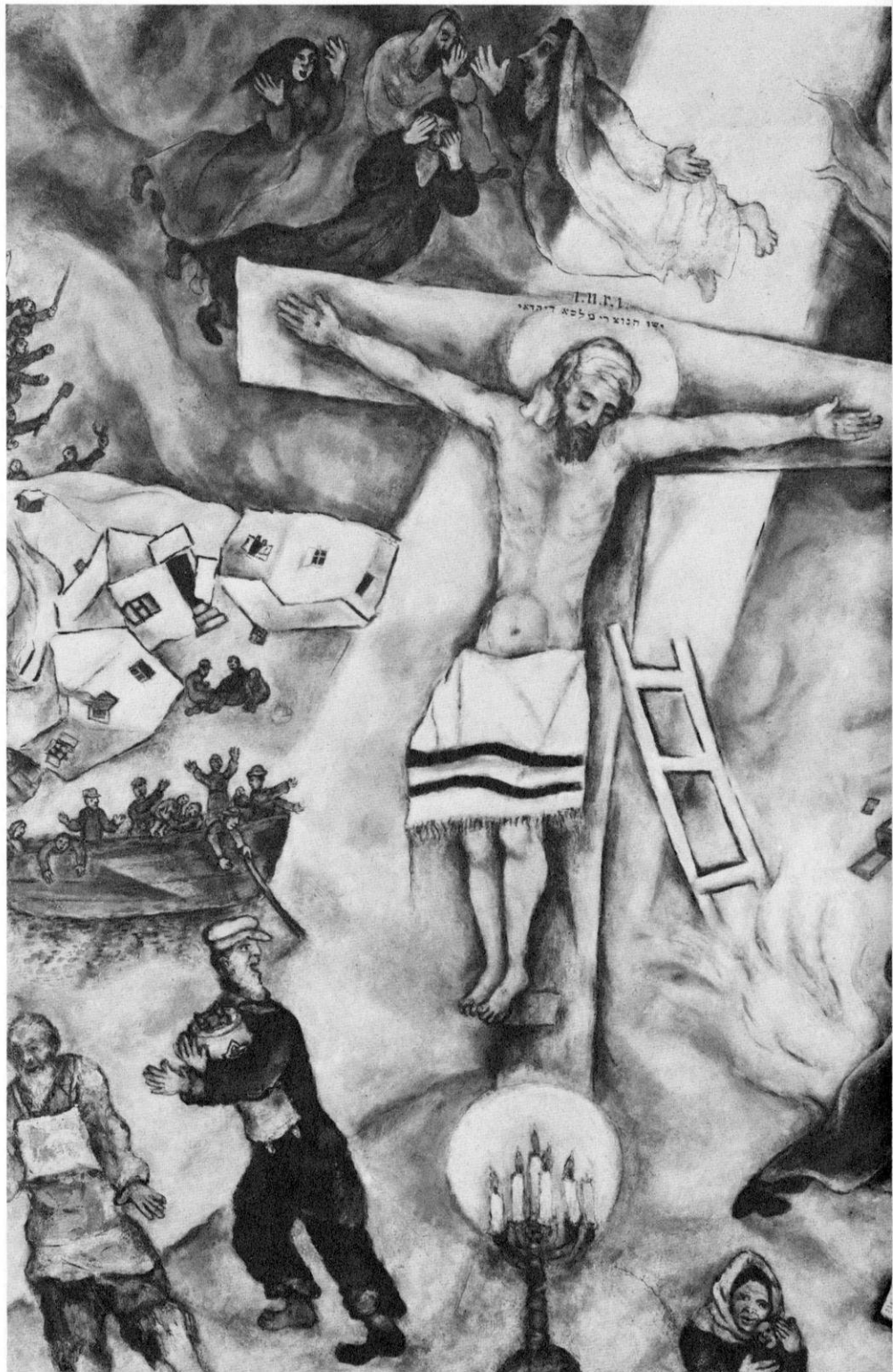
1. Religion and art have an advocacy role in public and corporate policy decisions that is largely ignored. Religion and art can contribute essential information concerning the value implications of alternative policies, and bring to bear the importance of aesthetic, ethical and spiritual values in such decisions. Religion and art, together with philosophy, are

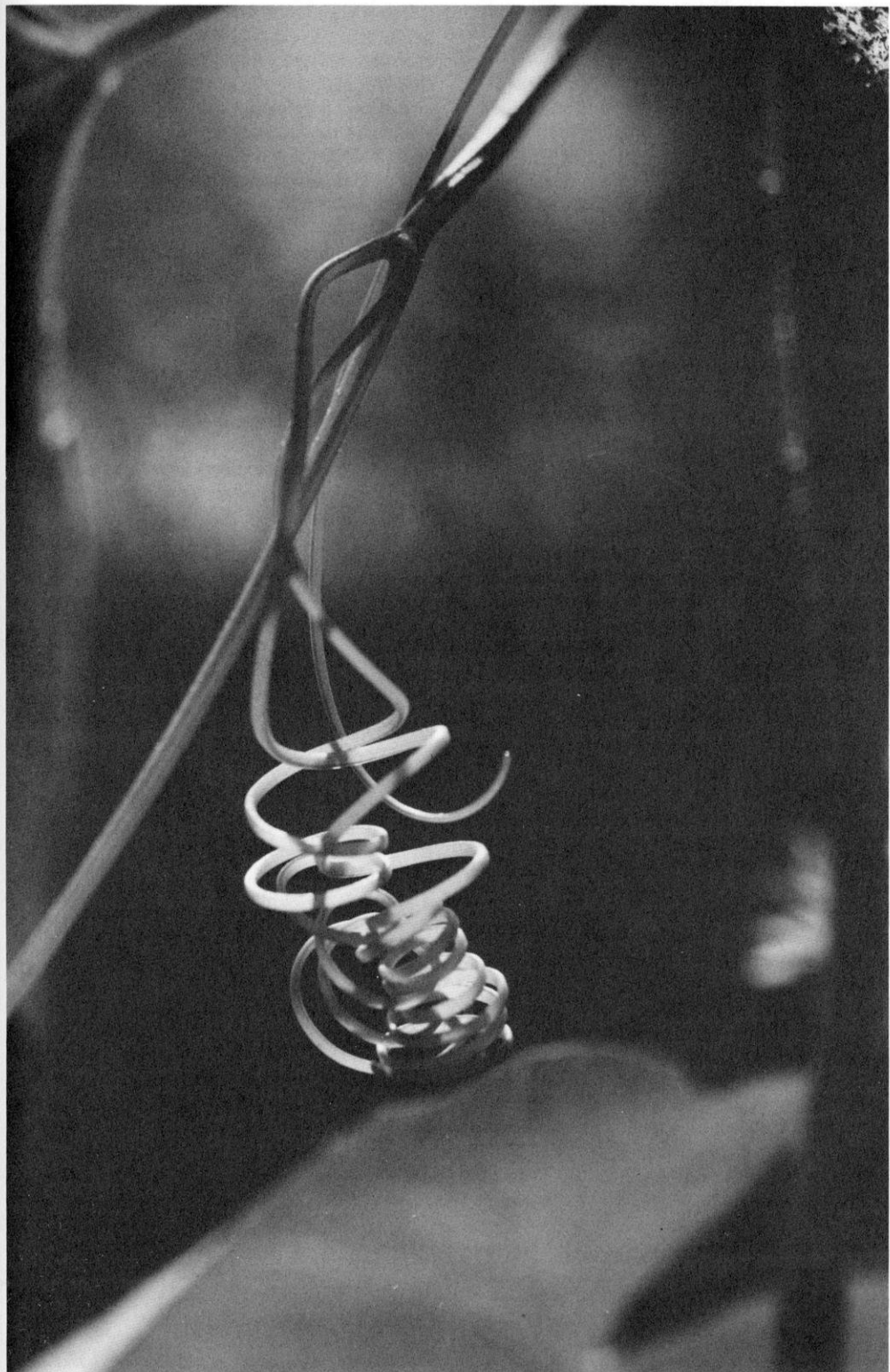


Plate 12 for **Miserere**: "It is hard to live . . ." by Georges Roualt, 1922, (detail). Photo courtesy: Collection, The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of the artist.









in a position to raise the value questions that are quite often missing entirely or treated ineptly in major policy decisions of governmental agencies and private corporations, decisions that affect the welfare of the nation and the world. Far too frequently such decisions are left to persons trained in management sciences who rely mainly on the information provided by technicians in economics, politics, and the social sciences. The policy decisions then are made by people who may have little interest and even less knowledge concerning questions of aesthetic, ethical and spiritual values that are at issue in such decisions. And we are painfully aware of the suffering, frustration, and ineffectiveness of policies affecting such areas as urban renewal that did not give adequate attention to the value implications of the policies that reshaped, or, rather, disabled the life forces of many central cities across the country. Policies that treat values only in terms of "scientific" quantifications that are easily measurable do not supply the lack. The expertise that art and religion can contribute is a specialized knowledge of aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual values, and a language of symbols in which these values can best be communicated. A part of the task of developing a new role for art and religion in policy making will be to help the policy makers to think and experience the values in a language more

suitable than is the statistical scientific language that necessarily reduces the value questions to measurable quantifications. Quantification can be useful for compiling information on values. But quantification must always be developed and interpreted in the context of the values that are being served, and it does not provide a full comprehension of such values as the aesthetic, ethical, and spiritual. Art, in cooperation with religion, can supply the "language of values" for the many persons trained in management and social sciences, who lack the experiences that would prepare them for dealing with such issues. There are surely many policy makers who would do more in this area if they only understood *how* and *what* to do. Another part of the task of developing a role for art and religion in policy making will be to make a place for qualified experts in art and religion on the policy making teams of government and corporate agencies. This step is, perhaps, a new idea for policy making, but I believe it must be done in the interest of human well being. A parochial, self-serving approach in which art and religion think only in terms of "their own interests" will not meet the need. But a plan based on the transreligious view of art and religion would, I believe, provide for the responsible entry of art and religion into the domains of public and corporate policy making processes.

2. There is need for re-examining the definitions of 'human being' in light of changes in the physical, cultural, and social events of the Twentieth century. The dominant views about human beings at the present time are heavily influenced by ancient Near East, Greek and renaissance notions. Art and religion, together with the sciences and philosophy must ask once again, have human beings changed, or do they remain relatively the same amidst social changes? How have such factors as increased population density; changing sex roles; increased knowledge of medical science; nuclear destruction capacity; computers that now perform acts of memory, discrimination, and decision making that were once reserved for the human mind alone; the ecological crisis and other such influences affected the basic character of the human being? Religion and art must act jointly to aid the investigations that spell out the implications of each of these changes for our definition of the contemporary human being. Working together art and religion can con-

P. 172. **White Crucifixion** by Mare Chagall, oil on canvas, 1938, (detail). Courtesy: The Art Institute of Chicago.

P. 173. Photograph by Sr. Noemi Weygant. Courtesy: the artist.



tribute images that symbolize the social changes and develop ceremonies and rituals that integrate the older and the newly emerging concepts that must enter into a redefinition of human identity for our times.

3. Even if it turns out that there is no need to revise substantially our concept of modern human beings, all of these social and cultural changes are in need of interpretation. The implications of these changes for human

values, how the changes will affect the quality of life, are of concern to everyone. What, for example, can art and religion tell us of the short and long range effects of environmental ecology? Religion and art can interpret to a large population the importance of sharing resources and of planning for the well being of future generations, and they can foster respect for all forms of life including the life support systems of nature. These truths of ecology can be interpreted in images of art and can

**Pope Clement of 17th Century** by Stella Waitzkin, resin, paper, ink, 1975, (detail).  
Photo courtesy: the artist.





thus significantly influence people's understanding and decision making. And art and religion can advance the understanding of ecological problems by providing interpretations of the problems that include aesthetic, moral and spiritual values, along with the economic and scientific factors. This task must be accomplished with sensibility, however, rather than in a heavy handed didactic manner.

These suggestions for the application of the transreligious approach to art and religion must be carried further than is possible here, and the processes of developing more detailed applications to these and other problems will be a project for future investigations. It would be foolish of course to assume that art and religion alone can solve complex social problems. But it is equally unwise to omit their insights from the solutions that are being proposed. Art and religion have something to contribute that no other activity offers: This is a firm commitment to humanizing values and the powerful symbol carrying capacity of art to influence change in a positive direction, in the direction of producing a social climate that is commensurate with the realization of maximum degrees of human potential consistent with individual and general well being.

Undoubtedly, the transreligious approach to art and religion raises many other more theoretical questions that will require further investigation. In keeping with my desire to treat the transreligious approach as an open, on-going discussion I would like to end by simply asking these questions:

1. What are the implications of the transreligious approach for theologians who are investigating the relations between art, religion and contemporary culture?
2. What effects will the adoption of the transreligious approach have upon artists who are working today?

**Storm on the Lake**, Darmstadt Hitda-Codex (HS 1640, fol. 117r). Photo courtesy: Hessische Landesund Hochschulbibliothek, Darmstadt, W. Germany.

3. What would be the probable effects of the transreligious approach upon critical studies that interpret individual art works of present and future artists?

4. What effect will the adoption of the transreligious approach have upon the place of traditional religious art symbols?

These and other questions offer significant possibilities for future research into the issues raised by the transreligious approach to art and religion. □

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>In order to forestall a possible objection to my proposal I point out that my argument is not against the preservation of local or regional art symbols that are valued primarily for their application to religious activities of an internal nature such as Christian cathedrals, Islamic mosques, Greek temples or the religious artifacts associated with them. My point is that in addition to symbols for internal use in worship and the expression of a particular faith, we must have symbols, these same ones or others, that speak clearly of the things that the different religions have in common to people of all other religions.

<sup>2</sup>T. S. Eliot, **Notes Toward the Definition of a Culture** (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Farris Thompson, **African Art in Motion: Icon and Act** (Los Angeles, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>Arno Lehmann, **Christian Art in Africa and Asia** (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), p. 58.

<sup>5</sup>Thompson, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup>John W. Dixon, Jr., "The Way Into Matter," in **Art and Religion as Communication** (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1974), p. 23.

<sup>7</sup>Paul Weiss, **Religion and Art: The Aquinas Lecture**, 1963 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press), p. 41.

<sup>8</sup>Dixon, p. 28.

<sup>9</sup>W. H. Gardner and N. H. Mackenzie, **The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins** (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>10</sup>Henri Matisse, "Chapelle du Rosaire," Vence, 1957. Cited in Frank and Dorothy Getlein, **Christianity in Modern Art** (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1961), pp. 116-119.

<sup>11</sup>Jean Paul Sartre, **No Exit** (New York: Vintage Books, 1956).

<sup>12</sup>Eliot, p. 25.

<sup>13</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, **Aesthetics**, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), I:9-12.

<sup>14</sup>Karen Harries, "Hegel on the Future of Art," **The Review of Metaphysics** 27 (June, 1974): 677-696.

<sup>15</sup>Erich Heller, *The Artist's Journey into the Interior* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 115.

<sup>16</sup>Walt Whitman, *Prose Works 1892*, ed. Floyd Stovall (New York: New York University Press, 1964), II: 361-425. I would like to thank professor Esther Jackson of the University of Wisconsin, Madison for calling to my attention Whitman's discussion of art and religion.

<sup>17</sup>Paul Tillich, *The Future of Religions*, ed. Jerald C. Brauer (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), pp. 8 f.

<sup>18</sup>Hugo Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, trans. Brian Battershaw (London: Burns & Oates, 1963), p. 14.

<sup>19</sup>Getlein, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup>I wish to thank Professor William E. Dooley, S.J. for helpful criticisms of a previous draft, and Professor Paton Ryan for suggesting some examples that enriched my presentation, both of Marquette University.

## Statement of Barbara Morgan Photographer

*The divisive role that science too often plays (due to the drive for power, money, etc.) by magnifying and computerizing beyond human scale is one of the threats to human harmony. As I see it, religion and art have functioned as harmonizers throughout our pre-scientific past—and now the computerized escalations are making it more difficult to sustain our individual to individual—individual to group—individual and group to planet [relations] and our own psyche. And unless a new morality based on concern for others can be made to function, I think we are going to be deader than the dinosaur. If religion on a planetary level can awaken this new cosmic mutuality—aided by art—then maybe we can get science to be an aid instead of an atomic blast and extinction. Because science and religion haven't adequately related to serve mankind, Science is, although needed and helpful, serving the exploiters to a formidable degree for dominance and the fast buck. I don't know the answer, but I think science is the frontier of the human spiritual dilemma that has to be coordinated for survival. This is a rather somber contribution, but it hits me. I also think, on the affirmative side, that the inspiration of religion and art as human interaction is the only real solution to cope with the cold mathematics of the anonymity of the machine science world.*

**Gloria Graham** by Barbara Morgan.  
Photo courtesy: the artist.





## The Wingspread Consultants

Dr. **Walter Anderson**, distinguished musician, teacher, churchman, is director of the Music Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Music Program, by far the largest of the NEA's programs, gives assistance to national organizations engaged in audience and artist development programs; it provides grants for jazz/folk/ethnic presentations; and it provides grants to professional opera companies and symphony orchestras. As director of this multi-million dollar federal program, Dr. Anderson is a key figure in American music today.

**Susan Barker** is a Presbyterian laywoman who is actively exploring with local congregations and larger church groups the meanings and uses of the visual arts. During four years as a Twin Cities artists' representative she became well acquainted with the St. Paul/Minneapolis arts community. It is her desire to promote active interchange between these two worlds. Susan is employed as a financial counselor to small business owners.

**James Buell**, administrator of the Religious Communities for the Arts, is a clergyman and writer. Before working as a freelance writer in New York City for several years prior to coming to RCA, he served churches in Reading, Massachusetts and Hanover, New Hampshire. His television film "Aunt Clara" is part of the permanent television film collection of the Museum of Modern Art. He has had commissions from United Church Women, United Methodist Church, United Church of Christ, Southern Baptist Convention and several network programs for ABC Television.

**Anderson Clark**, a Presbyterian clergyman, is a co-founder and Senior Vice-President of Affiliate Artists, Inc. and has been a member of its Board of Directors since its origin in 1966. Dr. Clark is chairman of the board of directors of the Religious Communities for the Arts and is one of the founders. Before joining the staff of Affiliate Artists in 1968, he was Dean of the Chapel and professor of religious studies at Beloit College in Wisconsin.



Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

**Richard Clark** is a founder and president since 1969 of Affiliate Artists, Inc. A graduate of Oberlin College with a M.A. in English Literature from the University of Chicago, Mr. Clark has served as a consultant in the arts to the Ford Foundation and is currently a member of the Planning Section of the Music Panel at the National Endowment for the Arts. He serves as a trustee of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music and is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Institute of International Education.

The Rev. **Calvin Didier**, president of the Religious Communities for the Arts, is Senior Pastor of the 2,500 member House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has served in the Indiana House of Representatives and was appointed later chaplain of the Ohio House of Representatives, having served pastorates in Indiana, Ohio and Detroit, Michigan before coming to House of Hope. He is a director of the St. Paul Opera Company and Philharmonic Orchestra and Affiliate Artists, Inc.

**Jane Dillenberger**, Art Historian, Associate Professor, Religion and the Arts, at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley. Now

doing research for an exhibition entitled: "Perceptions of the Spirit in 20th Century American Art" which will open at the San Francisco Museum of Art and then travel nationally. Her career has been divided between art museum curatorial positions (Art Institute of Chicago, Boston Athenaeum, Newark Museum, San Francisco Museum of Art) and academia (Drew University, San Francisco Theological Seminary, Graduate Theological Union.) Mrs. Dillenberger is author of *Style and Content in Christian Art* (1965), *Secular Art with Sacred Themes* (1969), *The Hand and the Spirit: Religious Art in America 1700-1900*.

**John Dillenberger** is professor of Historical Theology in the Graduate Theological Union and author of works in the Reformation and Protestant History, including the relation to the natural sciences. In recent years, he has given attention to the visual arts and is the author of a forthcoming work on Benjamin West.

**David Driskell** is a well known painter and is Chairman of the Department of Art at Fisk University. A member of the Museum Panel of the National Endowment for the Arts, he is a

recognized expert in African and American black art and has lectured widely on these topics in the U.S. and in Africa. He is the director of the Amistad II Exhibit of Afro-American art which will tour America until the fall of 1977 and, as guest curator, is presently mounting a major exhibit of the works of black artists at the Los Angeles County Museum.

**Theodore Gill** is currently Provost and Dean of the Faculty at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York City as well as Professor of Philosophy (Esthetics), having been chairman of the Department of Art, Music and Philosophy for several years. Dr. Gill is one of America's best known churchmen. He has been executive director of the World Council of Churches' Higher Education Commission, the managing editor of *Christian Century* and president of San Francisco Theological Seminary.

**Carl Gorman's** father was a well known cattleman and trader, and Carl Gorman's son is one of America's best known artists. Carl Gorman himself was born in Chinle, Arizona and named "Kin-ya-onny beyed (Son of Towering House People). He was one of the original twenty-nine Navajo Code Talkers in the U.S. Marines in the Pacific in World War II. Presently, director of the Office of Native Healing Sciences, Navajo Health Authority, Carl Gorman has worked as a free lance artist since 1954 and his art has been exhibited widely. He is a well known teacher and lecturer as well.

The Rev. **Lawrence Gruman** has been chaplain and dean of Berea College in Kentucky and has served pastorates in New York, Montana and Madison, Wisconsin. He has had a consistent interest in religion and the arts over the years with special emphasis in drama. He is presently in United Church of Christ parish in Eugene, Oregon where he has a comprehensive arts program.

The Rev. Dr. **Wesley Hotchkiss** directs the work of the United Church of Christ in the field of higher education. As general secretary of the Division of Higher Education and The American Missionary Association of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, he directs that agency's work with church-related colleges, academies and theological seminaries and supervises the educational programs for blacks, American Indians and

Spanish-speaking Americans and participates in the United Ministries in High Education which has programs on more than 500 campuses. He is a member of the board of directors of the Religious Communities for the Arts and Affiliate Artists, Inc.

**Pamela Ilott** joined CBS in 1954 as script editor for *Lamp Unto My Feet* and proceeded to make quiet but innovative changes in religious television programs. She became Director of Cultural and Religious Broadcasts and her programs have ranged from monastic life to Vietnam, from Negro spirituals to Chinese Art. She is Welsh by birth, English by education, international by inclination: middle-aged but still learning.

**Gary Johnson** is director of Special Services and Indian Studies at Rocky Mountain College, Billings, Montana. A member of the Crow Tribe, he was born and raised at Lodge Grass, Montana. A skilled artist himself in bead and featherwork, he is involved with the Crow Tribe in developing programs to promote traditional arts and is currently writing a series of monographs on beadwork.

**Edward Kamarck** has been a faculty member with University of Wisconsin-Extension for over twenty-five years, where as teacher, playwright, administrator, and researcher and writer on the arts he has been involved in a wide variety of programs directed toward cultural development. Although he continues to hold academic rank as a Professor of Theatre Arts, and in his earlier career authored a number of produced and published plays, he has in recent years increasingly focussed on essentially interdisciplinary outlooks, programs, and objectives in the arts. Since 1960 as editor of *Arts in Society*, which he co-founded in 1957, he has developed over 40 issues individually centered on the keynote questions and problems related to the challenge of augmenting the role of the arts in American society.

**Dale Muchmore** most recently appeared in New York in Guy Lombardo's production of "Oklahoma" at Jones Beach. Broadway audiences saw him in "Sugar" and Tom Stoppard's comedy "Jumpers." Last season saw him in Paris with his wife, Donna Liggitt Forbes, where they appeared in an original musical comedy. As a soloist with the Harkness Ballet, he has danced his way around the



Photo courtesy: The Johnson Foundation.

U.S., North Africa and Europe. With the New York City Opera and Les Grands Ballets Canadiens he has performed throughout the U.S. and Canada.

**David Nelson** is the Executive Director of the Montana Arts Council. He serves also on the executive committee of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, as Folk Arts Consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts, and on the Board of Western States Arts Foundation.

**Dr. John Newport** is Professor of Philosophy of Religion at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. He is the author of *Theology and Contemporary Art Forms*, *Word Books*, and has conducted conferences on religion and the arts on numerous university campuses, for many churches and lay groups.

**Michael Newton** was elected President of the Associated Councils of the Arts (ACA) in 1974. ACA is a national organization concerned with the place of the arts in the ordering of priorities in our society. Before joining ACA as vice president in 1972, Mr. Newton served six years as Executive Director of the

Arts and Education Council of Greater St. Louis. From 1958 to 1966 he was Information Officer for a ten-state region of British Information Services based in Kansas City.

**William Otis** is a musician, music educator, Professor and Chairman, Department of Music, Northland College. Professor Otis was formerly Chairman of the Department of Music Education at University of Regina. A soloist in recitals from 1962-1975, he is also the director of several choral organizations.

**Dr. Ralph Peterson** has had a love affair with New York ever since coming out of his native Midwest in 1962 to head the National Council of Churches' Department of Ministry. For the past ten years he has led the people of St. Peter's Church (Lutheran) in mid-town Manhattan out of their nineteenth century building and kept their vision alive while they wait for a completely new church in part of City Corp. Tower to be completed in 1977.

**E. Ray Scott** was appointed by Governor George Romney to be the first director of the Michigan Council for the Arts in 1966, the year the council was established by legislative action. He supervises the implementation of

the programs determined by the fifteen member non-salaried board appointed by the governor. The Council's 1975 budget of \$2.6 million is derived largely from state appropriation but also includes funds from federal and private sources.

**Grant Spradling**, a United Church of Christ minister, is executive director of the Religious Communities for the Arts and Consultant in the Arts to the Division of Higher Education, United Church Board for Homeland Ministries. He is also the executive in charge of the Amistad II Exhibit of the works of Afro-American artists now touring the country. As a singer he has played on Broadway and on tour in *Kismet*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Ilyla Darling*, *Most Happy Fellow* among others and has been a member of the Metropolitan Opera Studio.

The Rev. **Thomas Stewart**, pastor of Buffalo's Westminster Presbyterian Church, has had a long interest in the arts. He was one of the original incorporating members of the Religious Communities for the Arts and presently serves as vice-president of that organization.

Sister **Noemi Weygant**, born in Ada, Minnesota, spent her childhood on a ranch in Montana before coming to Duluth. She graduated from the State University and worked in advertising before becoming a Benedictine religious. Sister Noemi has won over 50 awards in photography and has published thirteen books. She teaches photography at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth.

**Ron Whyte** has an M.F.A. in playwriting/screenwriting from Yale University and is now completing a Doctor of Divinity at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. Writer of eight full-length films, his play *Welcome to Andromeda* has been presented at the American Place Theatre and Cherry Lane Theatres in New York and the Posthus Theatret in Copenhagen and is contained in *Best Plays of 1974*. Mr. White lectures widely and is a prolific writer of criticism and reviews.



A critical letter to the editors, with which we agree:

*Congratulations on the Summer-Fall issue of **Arts in Society**. Quite apart from our Symposium on Marxist Aesthetic Thought, it has substance and stimulus.*

*I am very distressed, however, by the decision to "break into Russian" when it came to designing the Symposium. The design typography of the issue is outstanding—no doubt of that—but here is the case where the designer's clever idea of a justification for introducing some Cyrillic betrayed the matter and intention of the Symposium. It was an international Symposium; but that is no reason in itself for putting the stamp of a Russian origin or provenance on the thoughts expressed. As you know, Americans are only too ready to dismiss anything marxist as "foreign," as not relevant to our own problems or alternatives. Unfortunately, this design solution has, in my view, created a context for the Symposium which will almost inevitably distort the average reader's ( and the more expert reader's) response. It is as though the designer agrees with Professor Dickie where he says he finds the "marxist vocabulary" something outside the terms of discourse that he actually needs to know.*

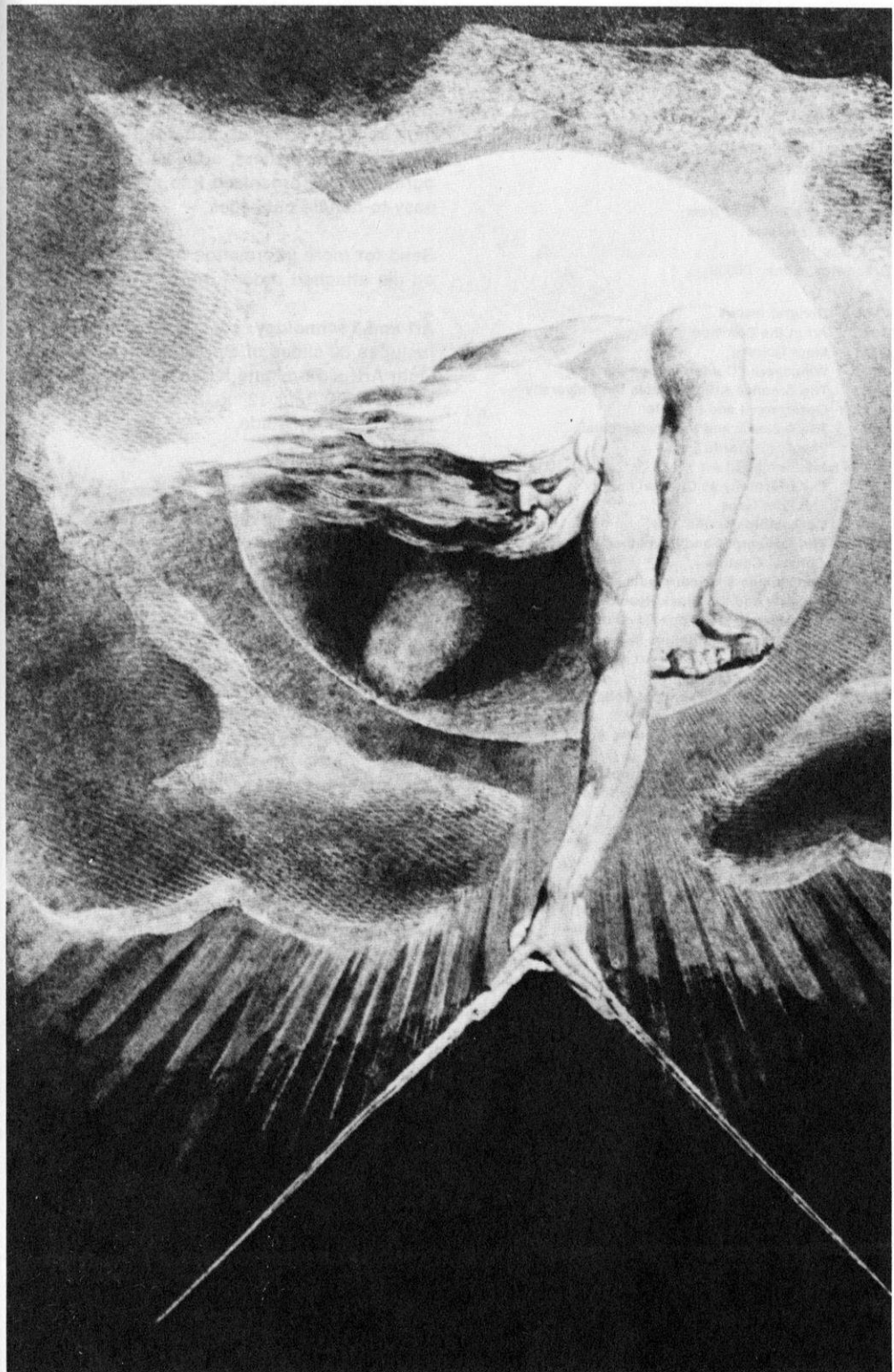
*Why not translate the Symposium titles into Chinese? Or Philipino? By resort to the Cyrillic, it makes the Symposium disappear into the Thirties, and then into some assumed "Russianness" of the entire area of concern. The aim of the Symposium was on the contrary to demonstrate its international vitality for today. The designer, and we, could all have been satisfied perhaps, if the article titles had been translated into six or more languages in each case.*

Lee Baxandall

Our profound apologies to Lee Baxandall and the other participants in the Symposium. As Mr. Baxandall indicates, our design motif *did* evoke a most unfortunate implication—and one which was not consciously intended. As it happened, our designer had originally planned to use a variety of national type styles, *but* their failure to arrive on time and a pressing deadline co-conspired to produce a regrettably injudicious solution. Murphy's Law? We shall be far more alert next time. □

*Ancient of Days*, frontispiece for **Europe, A Prophecy** by William Blake.





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