

*motive*



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# Motive

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FRONT COVER: EDWARD WALLOWITCH is a vigorous young New York photographer whose facial study we feature on this month's cover. He says about his work: "I am not interested in mere statement but rather in the illumination of experience, a trenchant point in the duration of truth communicated with the honesty of poetry; each photograph an evocation of self in the viewer, as personal, as intimate as a dream."

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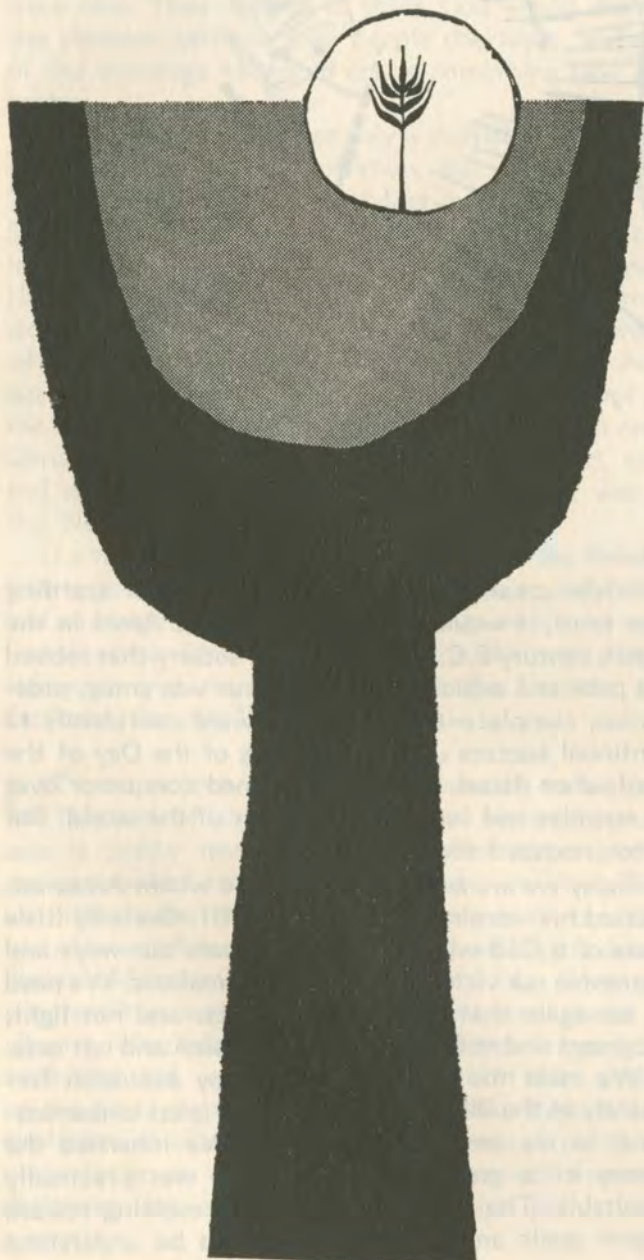
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## words among many words



Contemporary collegians are credited by some critics with having little interest in anything other than "When do I graduate?" and "How much does it cost?" To such critics and skeptics, it would appear sheer folly to convene one more major church conference for college students. What in the world (or out of it for that matter) could be done, said, or contrived, which could possibly entice 3,000 plus students to forego a final fling before fall to spend their hard-earned cash to travel hundreds of miles to debate, discuss, and defend theology, art, liturgy, politics—and sex, of course?

A student conference was held in August, 1961, and the general response of the delegates was that this 7th National Methodist Student Quadrennial Conference was even more creative, significant, challenging than its six predecessors.

Convened on the theme **COVENANT FOR NEW CREATION**, the conference helped students to explore and discover new dimensions in their covenantal relationship to God through the gospel and the church.

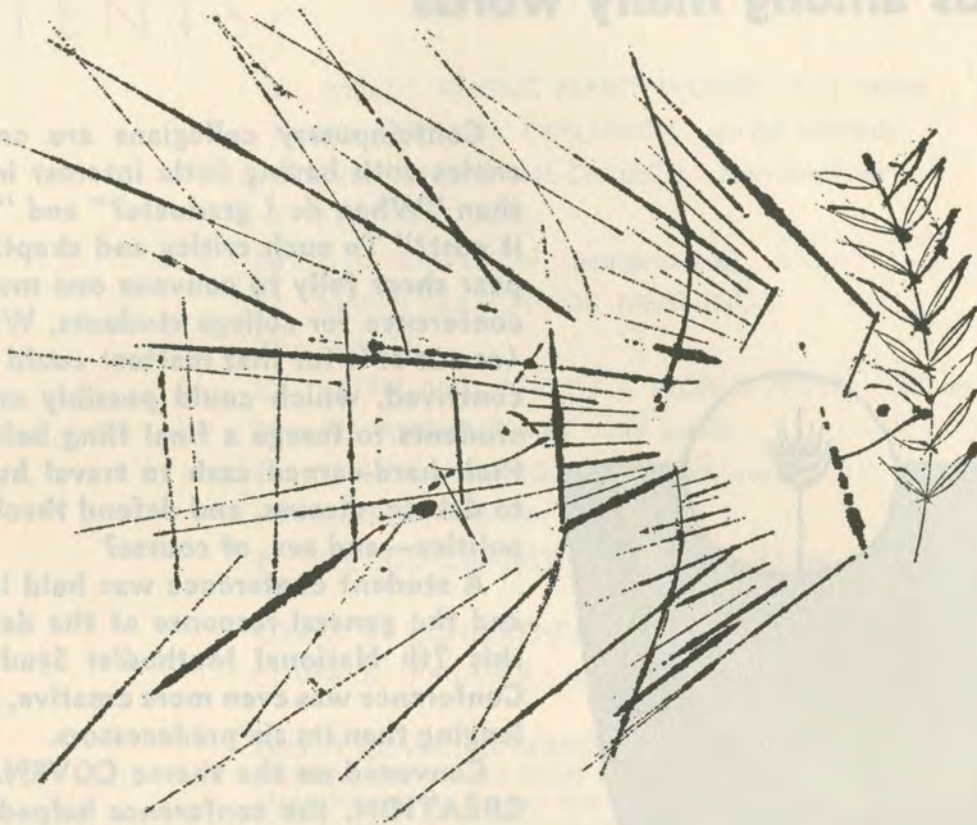
Complex in its structure and diverse in its multiplicity of events, the conference provided an unlimited number of challenges and opportunities for those present. It was impossible for any one delegate to participate in even a fraction of the total conversations and experiences which comprised the conference.

Just as delegates were perplexed in making choices, so the staff of motive has felt "confusticated" in deciding which parts of the conference should comprise this special issue. It has been impossible to record the many significant words and actions which will long be memorable to those who experienced the conference itself.

Thus, what follows are words from among many words, chosen in the hope that they may reveal the Word, that he may come and dwell among us.

—B. J. STILES

# CREATION BY EXPLOSION



BY GERALD KENNEDY

**I**N 1054, oriental astronomers noted the appearance of a dazzling new light in the sky which for a few weeks was visible in the daytime. Gradually it faded but now centuries later, a light is still visible in the same position. Under examination with the instruments of modern astronomy, it proved to be expanding at such a regular rate that it was possible to estimate the time of its origin. This Crab Nebula is the product of the explosion in 1054 which actually happened four thousand years before, as it took forty centuries for the light to reach the earth.

Such an explosion relates to what Harlow Shapley, emeritus professor of astronomy at Harvard University, considers to be one of the main scientific problems in the creation of the universe: how could enough heat be generated to form the heavier elements which are necessary for life? An explosion such as that of 1054 was what astrophysicists have been seeking, for here was heat enough to produce the heavier elements. Which is to say, God explodes stars to produce the materials for his creation.

While creation by explosion may be a startling idea to us, it would not have been so to Amos in the eighth century B.C. He came into a society that robbed the poor and exploited the weak but was smug, prosperous, complacent. It looked forward confidently to continual success until the coming of the Day of the Lord when Israel would be crowned conqueror over its enemies and established as ruler of the world. But Amos reversed the whole idea.

Today we are as the generation to whom Amos addressed his warnings (Amos 5:19-20). Our silly little ideas of a God who exists to vindicate our ways and guarantee our victories are just as unrealistic. We need to see again that His Day is darkness and not light, judgment and not approbation, explosion and not ease.

We meet the God who creates by explosion frequently in the Bible. The Bible was a great embarrassment to my seminary generation. We inherited the theory of a gradual evolution that was practically inevitable. The world and man were evolving toward higher goals and the process was to be understood

scientifically. We tried to fit the Bible into this theory but this was difficult for it was often sudden, abrupt, explosive and personal.

In 1938, Harry Emerson Fosdick published his *GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE* which traced the development of great ideas through the Bible. He observed that one of the permanent contributions of higher criticism was "the discovery of the evolutionary character of the Bible."

The Bible is full of explosions, and its story is of mighty acts, sudden visions, dramatic moments. I once said something uncomplimentary about one of the reactionary groups of superpatriots and a lady wrote: "A Christian is one who, if he cannot say something nice about people, never says anything." Such a pity that Amos and the Prophets had not heard about that idea! For they said things about the rich, the successful and the self-appointed guardians of orthodoxy that even in Elizabethan English sound far from nice. They seemed to think God would destroy the pleasant patterns their people cherished, and out of the wreckage he would create something new and better.

The Crucifixion was not only a stumbling block and foolishness to Paul's generation, but to mine also. That great moment, in its defeat and torture of the Son of God, was a shattering of every reasonable, logical idea of the way God would work. The new Kingdom was born out of an explosion. Even the missionaries in the Book of Acts were regarded as those who were turning the world upside down. Read Acts again and see how a wild, uncontrollable power of the Holy Spirit was set loose in the lives of those early Christians. We may make the Church a good, safe and sound institution, but this is not what it was in the New Testament.

The terrible imagery and awful visions of the Revelation to John make us feel ill at ease. The apocalyptists had an insight into the nature of things which we cannot tame nor ignore. God is not the abstract, gentle influence who never varies. He is the Creator, the Explorer, the All-Terrible.

**L**ET us now look at this idea in relation to history. The view of history as a record of inevitable progress is pretty much discredited. But because this generation has nothing much to put in its place, we still assume that somehow history is on our side and after another crisis or two, things will settle down. Normal life seems to us to be secure life. Wars are abnormalities and crises are what we must avoid at all cost. We dedicate our efforts to keep things from exploding and we make the assumption that sitting on the lid is statesmanship. This gives us tyrants and exploiters as allies too often, but if we can postpone a revolution or prevent one, then we feel that our diplomacy has worked and our foreign policy is a success.

History, however, when taken seriously, is far from a smooth-flowing stream. The great periods of history—the Renaissance, the American Revolution, the French Revolution—were explosive. But we live in the midst of revolutions bigger and more crucial than these. Our revolution is world wide and does not involve merely colonies or a nation, but continents. An upheaval is not so much fun to live in as it is to read about. It is frightening and dangerous and so many of us cry for a quieter time when men felt an assur-



ance about the future. But from what the past indicates, this must be another of God's creative periods and the explosions all about us are the sure signs of his presence. God is always bringing new forces into his world and upsetting the old.

In the third place, we may look at God's explosions in society. For those who are comfortably situated, the good society is a stable society. The reactionaries are ones who see every change as subversive and cling to the established order as if it were sacred. They long for a day when the strata of society has become petrified and everyone knows and accepts his place. Their religion is a system of divine decrees bidding every man to be content with the state in which it pleased God to place him.

The adoption of reactionary tactics to prevent change is ruinous. Witness Hitler's Germany which in the name of anticommunism plunged Europe into a war that gave the communists half of Europe. Let the United States stop dreaming of going back to a past day by resisting all pressures for growth and change.

There was a period when it seemed to me that the Middle Ages represented the high point of Christianity. Under the influence of Henry Adams, I was impressed by the unity of Christendom and the way the Church entered into all life. But I have changed my mind. The Middle Ages was a period of terrible suffering too, and there was disease of bodies and control of minds. Too much of life had been frozen into rigid patterns, and there were too many indications of the

human spirit under the bondage of yesterday. I take my stand on the proposition that the Church was nearer its best in the revolt of the Reformation. If the old forms would not yield to reform, then it was better to break the old forms and create new ones. Why should the Church think itself exempt from God's creative explosions?

Democracy which is talked about so abstractly and sentimentally is a dangerous experiment and full of terrible possibilities. Democracy is an explosion. When we talk about democracy we are not talking about some harmless, safe little thing. It is one of the most upsetting and terrifying experiments in all history.

Today we are in the throes of trying to establish racial equality in this country. We have professed it for a hundred years, yet I hear men say we must go slower, that we are doing ourselves much harm by pushing forward against the set customs of our people. But I do not know of any social changes that have come without the pressure and sacrifice of concerned people. The Freedom Riders are being jailed for doing what the Constitution says is their right. The young Negroes and whites who receive the blows and suffer the insults are regarded by many as "troublemakers." But they are the kind of trouble that has been in the forefront of every advance man has taken toward freedom. The set customs do not give way until there is an explosion.

**F**INALLY, this idea of creation by explosion has a real meaning for us as persons.

Popular preaching today is concerned with personal tensions and problems. The main drive is toward solving a man's inner conflicts and worries. How to solve individual troubles and how to cure insomnia seem to be the main themes of our message. It is as if our God had become primarily a divine sleeping pill or tranquilizer. We seldom suggest that men should come to church to get stirred up for the battle; too frequently they come only to get so soothed that they forget there is a battle.

Whether cause or effect, our addiction to psychology is a sign of the times. At the first sign of un-

happiness, we must now seek a psychiatrist or psychologist to analyze why we feel the way we do. That gentleman is supposed to give us names for our feelings and assure us that we are not to blame for them. We must be rid of our guilt and adjust ourselves to conditions about us and thus resolve the conflict. We spend so much time having our complexes analyzed, defined and massaged that we have time for little else.

The messages coming from our pulpits are little, squeaking words of cheer. Gone are the thunderings from Sinai and the call to heroic living. One seldom hears the awful authority of a "thus saith the Lord." We have the strange idea that our religion ought to keep us from getting involved in the terrible issues of today. In the PEANUTS comic strip, there was a baseball game being played and Lucy was in the outfield. A ball dropped beside her but she made no move to catch it. Charlie Brown, the manager, came rushing out in anger to ask why she had not caught the ball. He pointed out that she did not even have to take a step, but simply hold out her glove. And Lucy answered simply, "I was having my quiet time." I have nothing against quiet times but there is a time and place for them. A life that is all quiet times is for sloths, not men.

Is this the life God gives to men in the Bible? Hosea's personal tragedy was the loss of a wife whom he loved. He found her at last, now a common prostitute, and brought her home. Out of this devastating tragedy, he learned the love of God and wrote a message the world cannot forget nor escape. Isaiah in the year of the king's death and the consequent end of his hope, saw the Lord in majesty and holiness.

God has a way of interrupting the even tenor of things. Out of the consequent disturbances, he brings a new vision and creates a new man. Failure is bitter and hard to forget, but God explodes a man's self-confidence and pride, so that out of the wreck he may find the new truths and the divine pattern. Not in hiding but in battle is our place. For God would create out of the poor stuff we offer him, new creatures, a new heaven and a new earth.



# renewal in the church

BY JOHN DESCHNER

**A** CHOSEN people, uprooted, driven out of the accustomed place, pursued through the desert, fed day by day with manna from an unseen hand, permitted to build no more than a tent, a chosen people compelled to make exodus: **that** is the classic picture of church renewal.

Renewal means exodus.

Church renewal means dispersal, being forced to suffer change, unable to use the traditional ways, compelled to adapt, to create, to risk, to trust, to find the essential purposes again.

Are students concerned about church renewal? I believe Methodist students of this generation want a church that is less segregated, less divided, less nationalistic, less introverted, less massive, less manipulated, than the church they have inherited. This generation longs for a renewal of the church.

There is a force in this generation's longing which is different from that of other generations. Students are calling not merely for readjustment, but for renewal from the center out. They are uneasy about the Methodist organization man. There is an unrest about numbers, structures, inherited systems, and there is something holy about this unrest. The dissatisfaction of discontented Methodists can be useful to Christ.

But this student generation also has an astonishing loyalty to the inner reality of the church, to the Christ who is known and loved even when the church is not known and loved. They are wrong who simply equate the students' dissatisfaction with the church with an estrangement from Christ. The loyalty of students to the life and mission of the church is tough, imaginative, and creative, although they await leaders of their own generation to give new shape and form to this loyalty.

These paradoxical attitudes—a profound loyalty to the reality which lies at the heart of the church and a growing unrest with the form of the church in our day—are our starting point. The renewal of the church begins with the clarification of these attitudes.

Clarification of attitude means submitting to radical surgery upon our own false loves and false hates for the church. Only One knows the true sickness of the church, and is competent to determine the direction of real healing. It is true that we are in varying degrees dissatisfied with the church; but our dissatisfaction must be purified before it can be used.

It would be easy to point to the familiar wrong loves of others: the love of numbers, enthusiasm, organization and institutions, crusades and programs, and mediocrity. But God must also put his scalpel to our wrong loves for they are partial. He must cut



away the selectivity of our love of race, nation, denomination, and especially our own age group.

The renewal of the church requires, first of all, this healing of the power to love—wholly and widely.

But God must also cut away our wrong hates. This student generation hates not by frontal attack, but much more effectively: by indifference! However it hates, it knows how to reject "those" who are the root of the trouble in the church. Any hatred in the church which pits "us" against "them" is a hatred that will sear and frustrate renewal. God does not ask us to love the church indulgently, but realistically, yet without judging our brothers for judgment belongs to him. We may discuss, debate, disagree, struggle, but we may not judge. And that requires healing, for who of us knows how to struggle discerningly, yet without judgment, or to love discerningly, yet without indulgence?

Given right attitudes, what is the goal in church renewal? Our thesis: The renewal of the church means recovery at the center of *intercession* and *witness*.

By intercession we normally mean prayer on behalf of someone else. But we also use it to describe what Jesus Christ did on the cross: he made intercession for us all. In this light, intercession means taking another's place before God—the place of someone who is himself incapable of facing God—and representing him there. It is in this sense that the church intercedes for the state in its worship. She offers to God on the state's behalf the prayer, the worship which the state is incapable of offering herself. Intercession is the other side of witness. In witness, we represent God to the neighbor who has not heard of him. In intercession, we represent the neighbor to God, before whom the neighbor is powerless to come. In both, the Christian's existence is an existence in the place of another. It is a covenant existence in which we truly say, "We are not our own, but thine," to both God and the neighbor. It is an existence of love.

Christ's life was such an intercession for men. (Think through the implications of Matt. 27:46; Lk. 23:34.) The church continues his intercession: making her own this world's felt sense of distance from God, and representing the world before him.

And witness? Witness is never simply what we say about God to another. It is fundamentally what God says through us to the heart of another. The grand instance of witness happened on Easter morning and Pentecost when God made it clear beyond mistaking that he willed Christ's act of intercession on Good Friday, and acknowledged it as a true representation of his own heart toward us. Witness is God's illumination of one man's cross for another man's good. Witness is that awakening to God's love which God may bring to pass in the heart of another when we love another enough to make intercession for him.

Intercession is making the brother's distance from God our own before God. Witness is God claiming intercession as the vehicle of his love for our brother. The essential point in both intercession and witness is sharing the living cross of Christ, becoming members of his cruciform body, the church.

An example: an East German Christian student took special pains to learn especially well his compulsory studies in Marxism and Leninism. He thought through his Christian position at every point. After his oral examination, his instructor gave him a very high grade, closed the book, and said, "The exam is over. But tell me, how is it that you can know the principles of Marxism-Leninism so well, and obviously not believe in it?" For two hours the student and instructor had a free discussion of the gospel and Marxism. In this genuinely human contact, the student understood intercession, and God used it as an occasion for witness.

The renewal of the church doesn't mean simply polishing the brasswork or tightening the organization. It means a rediscovery of the heart of the mat-

ter, a coming again to the center to intercession and witness.

And now, what could it mean if the Methodist Student Movement became genuinely concerned about renewal in The Methodist Church?

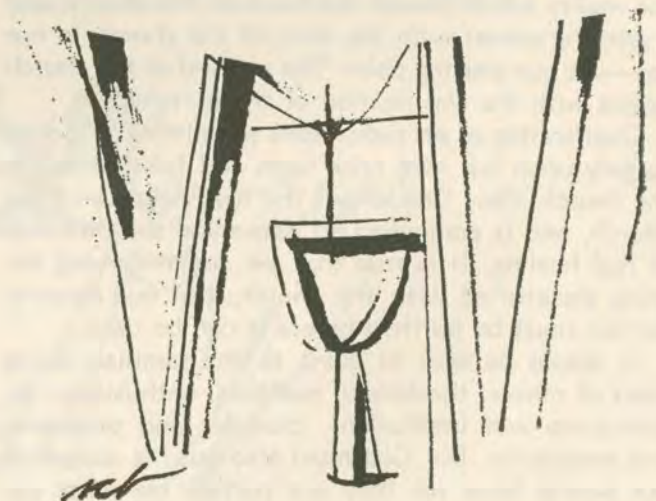
Some will immediately ask if the MSM hasn't been seriously concerned about church renewal all this time. Yes, of course; it has often been a leaven in the church—especially in its stands on race, liturgy, the arts, religious journalism. But a student movement which spends its time congratulating itself on its past is useless for renewal in the church. Renewal means exodus even from our own past achievements.

As we look toward the future, there are six principles which the Methodist Student Movement may keep in mind:

1. *Exodus in covenant.* That is the fundamental principle. Responsible renewal means that we commit ourselves only to that renewal which we can have in fellowship with our Covenant Partner. But our Covenant Partner in exodus! Only covenantal fidelity will persevere through thick and thin or be ready to suffer, to forbear, to be misunderstood, to accept success without distortion.

2. *Renewal, not complaint.* Complaint means giving vent to our quite fallible human judgment of others. Complaint dissipates our spiritual energy which is the power to love realistically but without indulgence. We have much to complain of in Methodism, but no time for complaint.

3. *Accept from God's hand our tension with the church organization.* There will be no renewal without tension. It is possible, perhaps even necessary, that misunderstanding will develop between a renewal-dedicated MSM and a church which prefers to settle down in Egypt. Those who work for renewal need not expect applause, appreciation, or even understanding. But the mere fact of tension with the church does not justify us. It may also be God's warning against our exclusiveness, our wrong loves and hates. It is just possible that the MSM is not the only segment of





Methodism which is concerned for renewal. It is just possible that tension arises because the student movement is, here and there, off chasing butterflies. Tension there will be; let us learn to accept it from God's hand, from the One who judges the truth of our conflicts, who bears the cost of the sin in them, who reconciles us, who teaches us how to be humble and stand for our point at the same time. Tension, as such, is not the problem. Tension belongs to a church in exodus. The problem is justifying ourselves in our tensions against others. Only God is able to judge the truth in our tensions. Let us be mature enough to expect them, and humble enough to accept them from his hand.

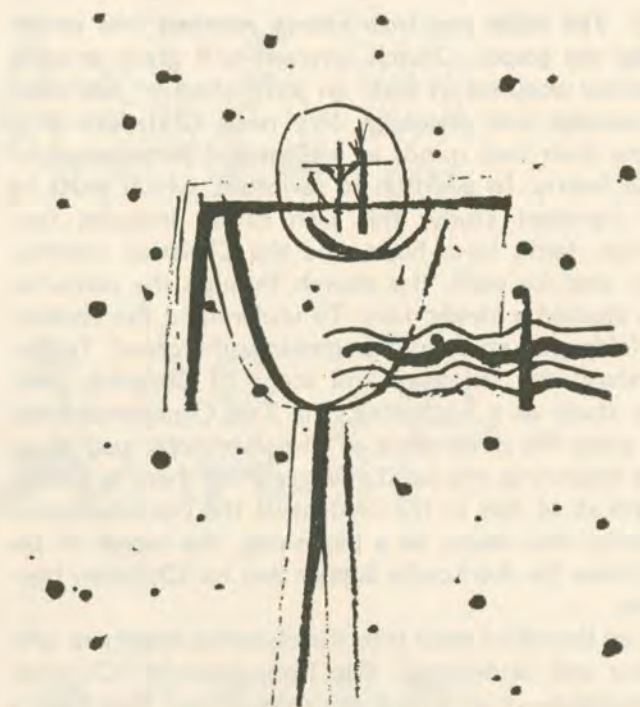
4. *We do not recommend, we embody church renewal.* Is the student movement itself aroused enough about renewal to let fundamental changes occur in her own structures? Is a denominationally divided student Christian movement relevant? Is the MSM aware of the perils in being the most institutionalized student Christian movement in the world today? If we are seriously concerned about church renewal, we will not be content to recommend proposals to other churchmen and church bodies, but to embody renewal within ourselves.

5. *Renewal at the center.* We are not looking for renewal at the edges or on the surface. The results won't be measurable in numbers or dollars or buildings or new slogans and methods. We are looking for the winds of the Spirit to blow again at the center; for the cliché to stop being a cliché by becoming true for once. This means learning what belongs to the center of the church's life—her life of intercession and witness.

6. *Renewal as intercession for the church.* The student movement must be ready to offer to God that service which the church is not always ready to offer. We have thought too small, as though the MSM were for students and the church for parents. In intercession, the MSM may take the place of others, as the church in prayer, thought, and act before God, interceding, representing, being the renewal of the church.

And finally, four practical points where the MSM could make a contribution to the renewal of the church:

1. *The MSM can stand for the recovery of the weekly use of the interpreted sacrament in the local congregation.* There is no act of worship which penetrates more deeply behind the facade of the sinner. There is no single step which could do more to drive trivia from Sunday worship than to center it again—as the church in all ages has centered it—in the interpreted sacrament. And it should be weekly. Wesley communed more often; why shouldn't we meet our Covenant Partner weekly in this incomparably renewing way? But it should be interpreted sacrament; by that I mean a celebration which not only repeats old tradi-



tions, but proclaims the gospel in a lively preaching of the good news which the sacrament celebrates.

The MSM can further this kind of worship renewal simply by asking for it in local congregations, by praying for it, by studying the deeper meaning of the sacrament, by declaring themselves ready to help prepare the sacrament, and, finally, by claiming their right to celebrate the sacrament as a student Christian group, responsibly, regularly, openly, without schism.

2. *The MSM can embody and propagate the Methodist emphasis on the small disciplined Christian group.* The Wesleyan renewal of the church had its roots in the recovery of the Christian community in small groups called "class meetings." There will be no serious renewal today unless it roots again in the small, disciplined Christian group accepting responsibility for the church before God. The elements which Wesley stressed in such communities are: a) Bible study led by laymen in their language; b) commonly accepted disciplines which give the group its corporate force and character of witness; c) the weekly giving of money for someone who has less, and preferably giving which hurts a little; d) mutual pastoral care in which no one fights for his spiritual existence alone but together with a band of companions who in mutual openness and honesty, helpfully criticize, admonish, and encourage. Such openness requires spiritual maturity, but there is no renewal unless Christian community reaches this level. The devil's stranglehold on the church is precisely this curious notion that sin is a private matter! To deal with sin in isolation is to fight sin with sin. The MSM could foster a body of living cells, and transplant them into the life of local congregations. Herein is yeast, powerful leaven, for the renewal of the church at its center.

3. *The MSM can train church members who understand the gospel.* Church renewal will grow as each member acquires at least an iron ration of Christian knowledge and theology. We need Christians who know their own minds as well as the temperature of their hearts. In addition to scripture, which must be our constant study, this iron ration includes four things: faith, love, hope, and the Christian community, and for each, the church through the centuries has studied a classic text. To understand the content of faith, you study as a beginning, the creed. To understand the structure and scope of Christian love, you study as a beginning, the Ten Commandments. To grasp the dimensions of Christian hope, you study as a beginning, the Lord's Prayer. And then, to understand all of this in the context of the Christian community, you study, as a beginning, the words of institution for the Lord's Supper and for Christian baptism.

Let the MSM send into the churches members who know and understand this iron ration of Christian knowledge—their creed, their decalogue, their Lord's Prayer, their sacraments, and who know how to use their Bibles—and the renewal of the church will make itself felt irresistibly.

4. *The MSM can recover and put to creative use the Wesleyan tradition of the layman's ministry.* The layman who knows his iron ration is a layman free for creative lay witness. We Methodists once believed in the lay

ministry, but today the "lay preacher" represents little more than the first step toward ordination. We have revived the Wesley orders of common prayer, why not the Wesleyan lay ministry? What could happen if members of the MSM asked a local congregation to "license" them to be witnesses in such areas as law, medicine, or agriculture, to undertake special studies to this end, and to report regularly to the quarterly conference about their witness, as lay preachers must do? Can you imagine the kinds of discussions, debates, issues touching renewal, intercession, witness which could be raised at the heart of a congregation's life? The lay ministry is a time bomb ticking away at the heart of Methodist ecclesiasticism. The MSM could touch it off.

A concluding remark about tactics: we, as a student movement, have focused our attention on getting students on conference and church boards, and it is good that students are being heard at these points. But the place where renewal of the church will be won or lost is in the local congregation, indeed, in the official board and the quarterly conference of the local congregation. A student movement which takes church renewal seriously will deliberately prepare students to seek and use the opportunities for local leadership. It will aim at the official board, the jugular vein of Methodism!

Let us deliberately train potential board members who understand that basic issues are always decided obliquely, and likely as not in the form of a decision about money, personnel, or program. The renewal of the church will take concrete shape over such issues as how the congregation's budget is raised and spent, who chairs which committee, or teaches which class, or whether to build, or do something more important. And let me stress money. Anyone who loves the incarnation of our Lord has a passion for budgets. Clarify the budgets! Insist that they embody scrupulous responsibility and right purposes.

A planned, intentional, deliberate infiltration of local official boards! If we are serious about church renewal, we will be serious about that.

Church renewal doesn't mean merely enlarging the frontiers. It means exodus at the center—finding new forms for the essentials again, new forms for our worship, for Christian community and pastoral care, for Christian instruction, for the lay ministry. A church which is ready for renewal at these points will be supple enough, resilient enough, imaginative enough to be of service for God's sake to modern men.



## contributors

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**GERALD H. KENNEDY**, Methodist bishop of the Los Angeles Area, is a noted writer, preacher, critic and lecturer. His wide interests include drama (he's on the Board of Directors of the Pasadena Playhouse), literature (he avidly consumes fiction as a reviewer for *Together*), and writing (he's the author of more than fifteen published books).

**JOHN W. DESCHNER** is one of the younger generation of seminary professors who has fast become a world citizen. Born in Minnesota, reared in Texas, educated at Yale and Basel, married in Finland, he is now teaching at Perkins School of Theology in Texas. Since 1946, he has been a leader in W.S.C.F. conferences in South America, Europe, Scandinavia, Greece, and North America.

**POETS** in this issue include **ALAN D. AUSTIN**, first-year student at Duke Divinity School in Durham, North Carolina; **JOSEPH LARRY COOK**, a creative writing student at San Francisco State College, who helps operate a Finnish steam bath, and edits the MSM's "Circuit Rider"; and **LESLIE ANN WILLIAMS**, a junior at the University of Massachusetts majoring in elementary education.

**ROGER ORTMAYER** has become an adopted Texan since leaving the *motive* editorship in 1958 to join the faculty at S.M.U. He was writer, producer, director and defender of the opening drama at the Quadrennial Conference.

**ARTISTS: in order of appearance**  
**ROBERT CHARLES BROWN**, Uncasville, Connecticut. **BOB REGIER**, North Newton, Kansas. **MARGARET RIGG**, Nashville, Tennessee. **E. LINDLEY MURRAY**, Gastonia, North Carolina, a welcome newcomer, student artist. **JACK MORSE**, Rochester, New York. **BETTY WOODS**, Liberty, Texas, promising more new cartoons to come. **TIMOTHY T. BLADE**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, a student at St. Cloud State College; very adept at woodcutting: welcome. **JIM CRANE**, now a student at University of Michigan. **ART VERMILLION**, Indianapolis, Indiana, a recent seminary graduate. **ROBIN JENSEN**, Dayton, Ohio.

November 1961



## NEW CREATION

an exhibition of contemporary painting,  
printmaking and sculpture

The exhibition included more than one hundred and fifty works from sixteen artists. In addition, sixteen prints selected from the **Albion College Print Collection** of international significance were on special loan.

The artists who were present in the conference for workshop discussions and gallery talks were Robert Hodgell, Jim Crane, James McLean, and Margaret Rigg.

Artists whose works were included in the exhibition were Heri Bert Bartscht, sculptor; Jim Crane, painter and sculptor; Clark and Leah Fitz-Gerald, sculptor and weaver; Robert Freimark, painter; Walter Gaudnek, painter; Mathias Goeritz, sculptor and architect; Charles Grooms, painter; Robert Hodgell, printmaker; Elizabeth P. Korn, painter; Barbara Lekberg, sculptor; James McLean, printmaker; Fred Nagler, painter; Joachim Probst, painter; Margaret Rigg, painter; and Alice Terry, painter.

**A catalog of the exhibition**, which includes black-and-white reproductions, statement of theme, and comments by the artists, is available for \$1 each from **motive**, P.O. Box 871, Nashville 2, Tennessee.

THE KING  
WOODCUT BY T. T. BLADE



**T**HE seventh quadrennial conference, on the general theme **COVENANT FOR NEW CREATION**, brought the fine arts directly into the core of the church. This conference differed sharply from previous conferences which employed the arts spottily, for one reason or another: to decorate, to illustrate, to raise questions. . . . In this conference the arts were not a subordinated substructure to the theme. Perhaps for the first time in American Christianity a church conference dared to let the arts come in "through the front door," so to speak.

The exhibit of paintings and sculpture was an attempt to let the full significance of **New Creation**, wherever it is found, raise to the church, not only the life-defining questions, but also some of the central and vital answers—answers which arise out of culture at its best and most authentic. In this way, the church-culture (sacred-secular) relationship is understood as an active two-way street—a situation in which real, life-giving exchanges do occur. We are not satisfied to say that all the disturbance and bitterness and all the questioning come from culture and all the answers, ready-made, come from the church. Sometimes the answers come to the church from culture, though we have despised to admit it.

This art exhibition explored the new vitality of religious and liturgical art expressions. It provided an opportunity to view and experience powerful and exciting work being done by some artists, mainly unknown, across the country.

Three categories comprised the exhibition:

The first: **LITURGICAL ART**. Since ancient times man has made use of the arts in his ritual and worship. From the first century the Christian church has made use of the arts, liturgically, in one way or another. But in each age the theology and expression of belief, the symbols, need to be reinterpreted. Artists of each generation should provide the church with vital and powerful contemporary restatements of traditional symbols, stories, signs, buildings. The liturgical artist is not free to choose any sort of subject or form. He is limited in his subject matter to what is useful and meaningful within the community of believers.

To endure, liturgical art must be vital esthetically as well as religiously. This exhibit included some examples of liturgical art: crosses, crucifixes, ikon-like paintings of Christ, ancient Christian symbols reinterpreted for use in the church's worship today.

The second: **RELIGIOUS ART WITH RELIGIOUS SUBJECT MATTER**. Unlike liturgical art, this art is not done for a "particular" religious group for use in

worship. The artist may draw the subject matter from religious tradition or the Bible or the church. But he does not make it into a religious symbol. The picture remains a picture, which a great many people may be able to feel and understand, regardless of whether they share the religious beliefs behind the subject matter. Religious feeling is expressed in a universal sense rather than in the liturgical or particular sense.

The third: **RELIGIOUS ART, NONRELIGIOUS SUBJECT MATTER**. This included great and moving art which might otherwise be termed "secular" or at best, "humanitarian" but is not usually taken seriously by Christians. Perhaps we sense in it the basic threat to our pat church art. Certainly this art has provided the major attack on our sentimental religious-decoration art. This category includes the Jackson Pollock and William de Kooning brand of probing into the depths of man's condition and destiny. Essentially, these artists search out the questions of life and death: the religious questions. At times they perform a prophetic function, at times as critics of society they defend religious values. Yet whatever the subject matter happens to be, or lack of subject matter, the authenticity of the work, the sense of the sacred breaking through from the depths, the mark of a renewed vision of life and death, the hint of new creation springing from the forms . . . these identify this art.

There could have been a fourth category in the exhibition, namely, pseudo-religious nonart, and it would have included nearly all the works we are so used to seeing in every church across the country, Roman Catholic or Protestant. It would have included all the familiar, soothing, weak portraits of Jesus that cover Sunday school walls and spill over into our subconscious so that we cannot recognize Christ loose in the world: the Suffering Servant. The Messiah disappears in a cloud of sweetness and light.

But this decade is seeing much less religious nonart in churches and homes. Such art is even poor illustration, has no esthetic authenticity and no religious depth. The church is using less of it too, because the artists themselves are concerned with religious dimensions in their work and strive to create pieces that are profound in their religious intensity, freshness and relevance. The church is forced to recognize and finally employ such artists. A kind of religious reformation is under way (sadly enough not led by the church), led by the artists who are concerned to search out the meaning of life and death, of sin and salvation, of creation and destruction. . . . They bring new creation into our midst, here and now, today.

**MARGARET RIGG**

Director of the Exhibition

*"It is the artist in photography who gives form to content by a distillation of ideas, thought, experience, insight, and understanding."*

—Edward Steichen

## MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

IN preparation for the Arts Festival which was part of the conference, an international photography competition on the theme, "MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING" was conducted by the Methodist Student Movement under the direction of B. J. Stiles.

The contest announcement asked for entries which "explore the chaos and despair of our day, as experienced from birth to death. Photographs depicting the tensions, threats of destruction, confusion or absence of purposes, and personal and community conflicts are desired. In addition to expressing the dilemmas which confront modern man, photographs are sought which express the search for meaning which permeates our society. Photographs portraying aspects of hope, expressions of renewal, and experiences of creativity as seen in an age of anxiety are desired."

Entries in both black-and-white and color were received and judged by a distinguished panel of judges which included: Jacob Deschin, photography columnist for the *New York Times* and frequent contributor to major photography journals and publications; Beaumont Newhall, director of the George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, an internationally recognized authority in the field of history of photography; and Yasuhiro Ishimoto, distinguished young photographer from Chicago who has exhibited and published widely in Japan and the United States.

The contest winners are:

### BLACK-AND-WHITE

**First Prize (\$100)**—Miss Chris Mackey, New York city.

A copy research analyst; spends spare time with pottery and photography, which she sees as "an interpreter of man and places."

**Second Prize (\$75)**—Robert D. Gale, Dallas, Texas. In the diamond jewelry business; married, and active in community life; enthusiastic skier and

photographer who does his own processing.

**Third Prize (\$50)**—William M. Holt, Atlanta, Georgia.

Former missionary to Bolivia and Wesley Foundation director in Georgia; now pastor of Trinity Methodist Church; graduate of Emory University with degrees in journalism and theology.

**Certificates of Merit**—Edith Alder, Zurich, Switzerland.

Ardent amateur photographer who "tries to seize the manifold expressions of daily life and to show thus how all men are alike, how they hope and suffer."

David B. Cohen, Montpelier, Vermont.

Retired Navy Commander who is now graduate student at Florida State University; recipient of three Bronze Star medals; interest in photography began during tour of duty in Japan.

Ron Stewart, Aurora, Illinois.

Has studied at Brooks Institute of Photography and Rochester Institute of Technology; has been an award winner in many competitions, including first place in 1960 Agfa contest.

### COLOR

**First Prize (\$100)**—Jack C. Novak, Newburgh, New York.

Graduate of West Point where his father was athletic coach; now with SHAPE headquarters in Fontainebleau, France. Photography is a family hobby shared by wife and daughter; has won three awards in annual competitions of the Photographic Society of America.

**Second and Third Prizes (\$75 and \$50)**—Frank Engel, Melbourne, Australia.

Has been general secretary of the Student Christian Movement in Australia and New Zealand; a staff member of the World Student Christian Federation with special responsibility for East Asia.



DAVID B. COHEN  
November 1961



WILLIAM D. HOLT

14

motive

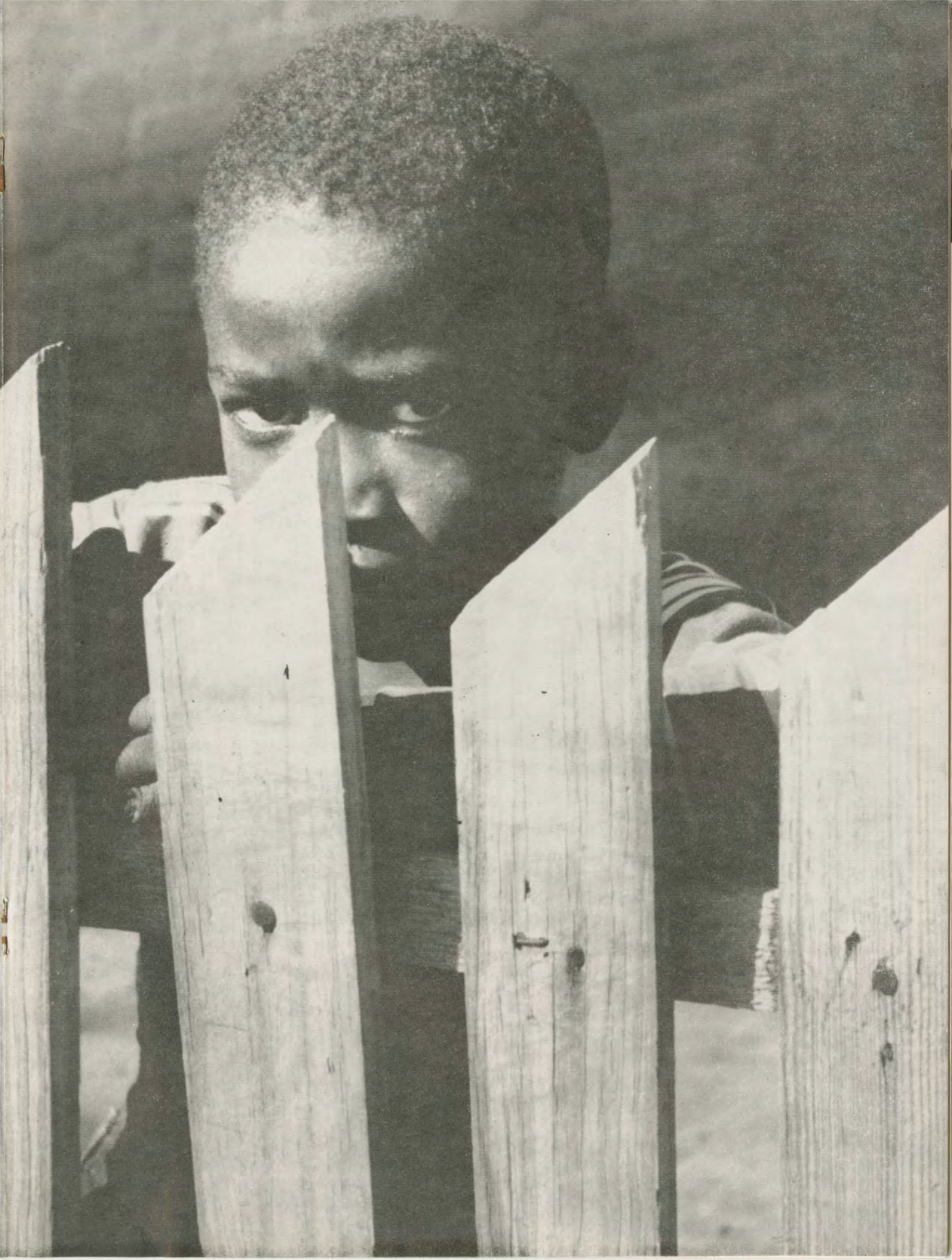




CHRIS MACKEY

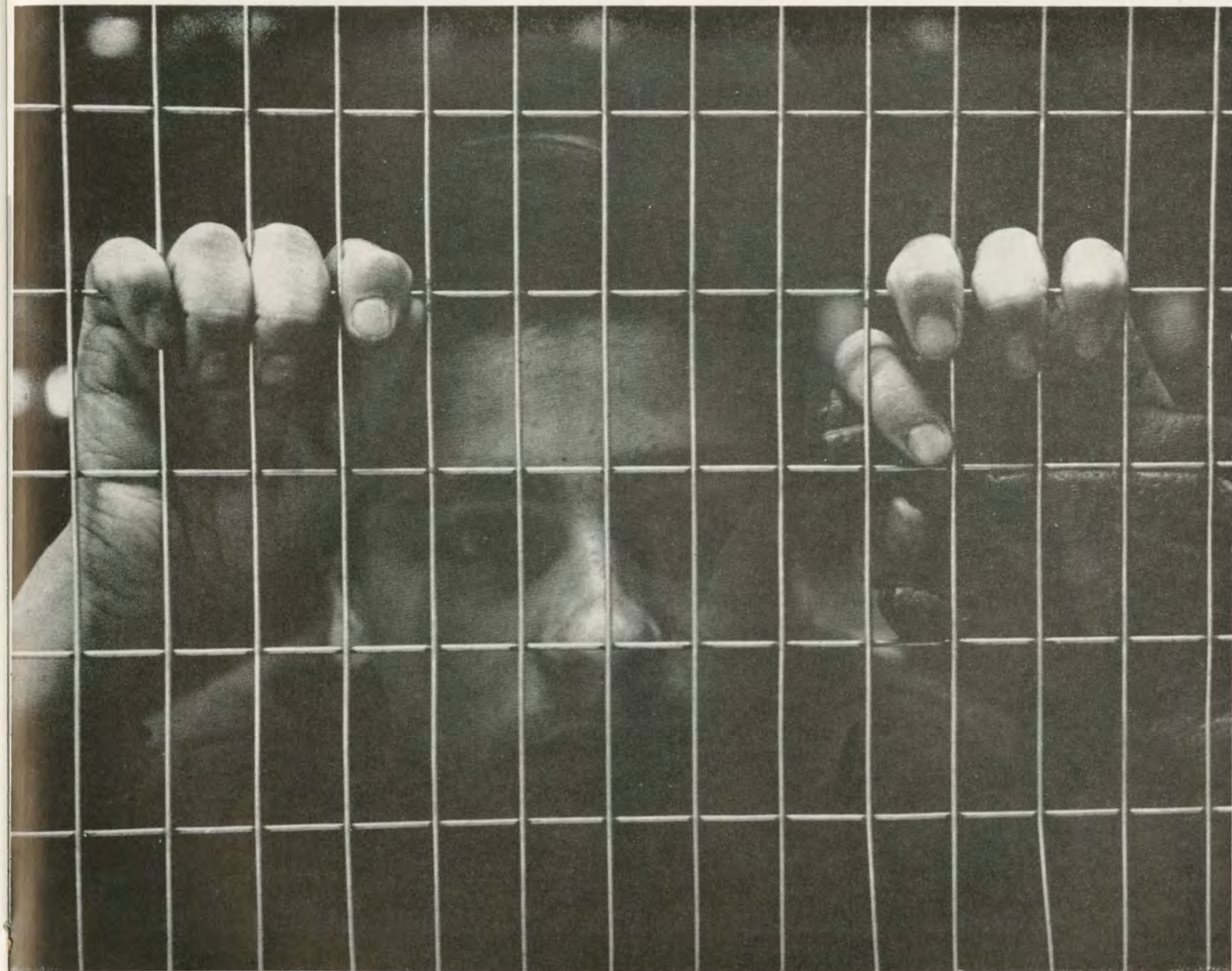
ROBERT D. GALE





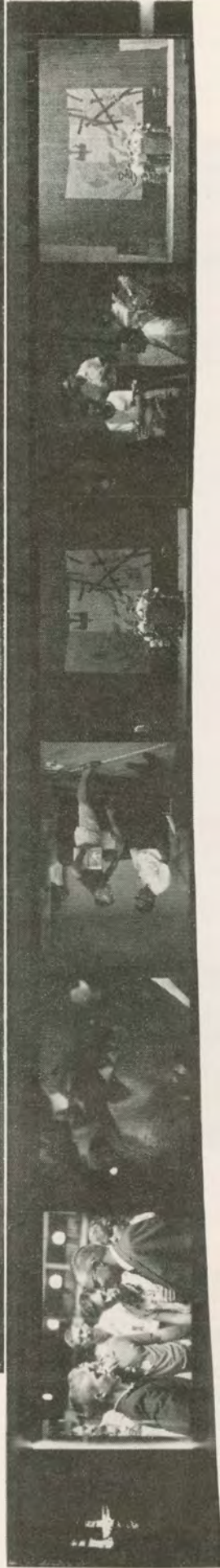
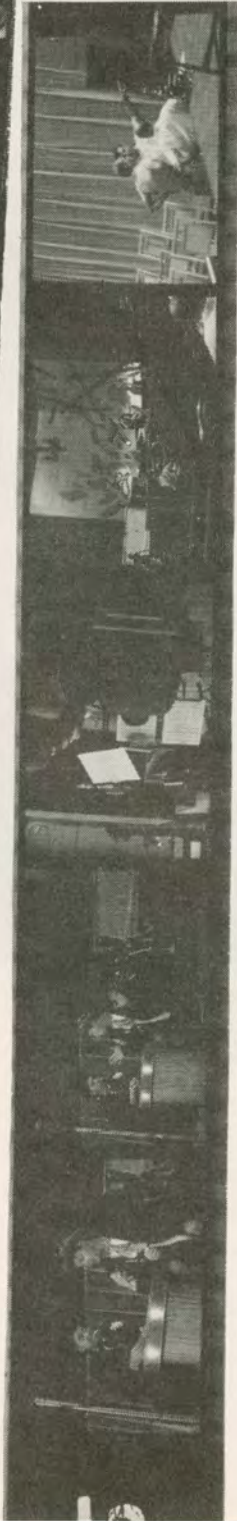
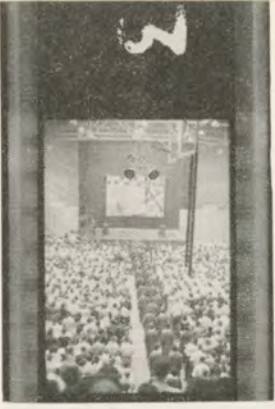


EDITH ALDER



RON STEWART

conference album



Suggested Prayer for use on Sunday,  
November 19, 1961, the opening day of  
the Third Assembly of the World Council  
of Churches in New Delhi, India.



**E**TERNAL God, the Father from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, who art gathering out of every nation one people in Christ, we remember before Thee those from many lands and races who meet at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in New Delhi. As they meet with one accord in one place may the grace and power of Thy Holy Spirit be with them. May He Who is the true Light be the light of their worship and their decisions, to the end that in their witness and service and unity Thy people may glorify Thy name in the whole world.

We remember before Thee all the churches represented at New Delhi, our own communion and our partners in obedience. As we are drawn together in prayer for those who represent us there, so may we be drawn by Christ into greater unity with one another, and by his grace become more faithful witnesses to that Light which is for the healing of the nations and the redemption of the world.

With Thy holy church throughout the world, and with the whole company of Thy saints, we offer Thee the worship and service of this congregation. Keep us constant in the fellowship of Thy family, and faithful in our calling as ambassadors of Christ, until all the ends of the earth shall see Thy salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and with the Holy Spirit be all glory and praise, now and for ever. AMEN.

# FAITH AND ART IN A WORLD AWRY

BY NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.

IT may well have been established in another few years that the most significant development in American theological life during the 1950's was the displacement of an earlier social passion by a new concern for the more purely humanistic dimensions of culture.

A brilliant young social scientist at the University of California, in a massive study of the American theological climate in this century, has suggested that theological thought has lately been attempting to impregnate and deepen itself with the themes of modern literature and the arts, because it has found the artist's methods of rendering "the dramas of childhood, of sexual life, of work . . . [to be] methods for correlation with theology that could help overcome the frustration" <sup>1</sup> that is felt by the religious enterprise in a time of fundamental political impasse. And here, unquestionably, is, in large part, the root of the matter. For the arts, and most especially the arts of literature, can "render and evoke experience in a detail, an intimacy, and an intensity both dangerous and almost impossible in politics." <sup>2</sup> And it may even be, as Professor Meyer suggests, that the widespread preoccupation with the modern arts today amongst Christian interpreters of culture bespeaks an intention to allow the heroic impulse to discharge itself in realms where creative risks of self-definition may be more safely taken than in the hot, explosive furnace of mid-century politics. It would, of course, be unfortunate, if this development were to encourage any simple abdication from politics in the religious community; but since it has not as yet, in any demonstrable way, had this effect, its advent surely deserves acknowledgment as a

most wholesome sign of fresh redintegration in the Church's mission to a whole department of culture which for too long it ignored.

There is, however, one aspect of this insurgency which deserves to be put under some critical pressure, and it is the increasingly recurrent expression of confidence in the possibility and in the imperativeness of developing a "Christian philosophy of art" under whose standards this whole new development may gain its proper enfranchisement. I cannot on this present occasion proceed to explicate, within the compass of a brief essay, the theological grounds from which my own reservations about this kind of project stem. And so therefore it must simply suffice for me flatly to say that I do not conceive it to be the business of the man whom Kierkegaard called "the knight of faith" to bully the world into granting its suffrage to some special system of propositions of his own invention: he does not come into this world from another world, like a *deus ex machina*, with a marvelous formula that can unlock all the entanglements of human culture. No, he lives in the historical order like all his fellows: the resource on which he relies is simply that "new hope and strength which he is given in this world because of what has been done [of God] and for this world." <sup>3</sup> And, having this resource, his vocation is to live, as his Master lived, in solicitude for and in openness to the men to whom he is related by the particular moment in history in which he happens to stand.

THE Christian scholar faces, in other words, the same world that is faced by all other men, and it is, I believe, the most outrageous kind of arrogance for him to assume that his faith provides him with some sort of privileged perspective by means of which he can integrate internally the various fields of culture and then assign to each its proper place in some tidily comprehensive arrangement that will be a Christian map of the modern mind. Indeed, for him even to attempt to produce some special *speculum mentis* for his brethren in the faith is for him profoundly to misunderstand the nature of the intellectual situation in which he must today do his work. And, here, surely the endless multiplication of metaphors based on the "I-Thou" philosophy of Martin Buber is something which itself witnesses to a deep and pervasive intuition amongst the most sensitive men of our age, that the

<sup>1</sup> Donald B. Meyer, *The Protestant Search for Political Realism, 1919-1941* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), p. 412.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Ronald Gregor Smith, *The New Man: Christianity and Man's Coming of Age* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 59.





LOT'S WIFE

WOODCUT

MARGARET RIGG

fragmentation of modern intellectual life commits us irrevocably to an ethos of encounter and to the stance of attentiveness and listening. It is, I take it, the recognition of precisely this that lies behind Roger Hazelton's recent definition of what the theological enterprise must entail in our time. He turns to the physiological image of the systole and diastole of the human heart and suggests that the work of the Christian theologian is, in a way, analogous to the alternate expansions and contractions of the heart: "There are times," he says, "when Christian faith has to turn inward upon itself, asking what is authentically and ultimately its own kind of truth. Then theology becomes an essay in self-discovery and self-definition."<sup>4</sup> But then there are other times when "it becomes imperative for theologians to move out into the world again, on the basis of this self-understanding, seeking out and coming to grips with those modes of truth

from which earlier they had strategically withdrawn."<sup>5</sup> And Dr. Hazelton is alert to the fact that it is into this second phase that the theological community is moving today. Nor does he see the reasons for this as being wholly cultural in character, for he takes careful cognizance of what it is in the nature of Christian faith itself that requires the attitude of attentiveness and listening to the world of culture. "Living within the circle of faith," he says, "involves the most drastic sort of exposure to unwelcome experience and unfamiliar truth. It finds charity and hope to be not simply moral but also intellectual virtues."<sup>6</sup>

And since Christ is the Lord of all the world and not only of those who believe on His name, it would behoove the Christian in his intellectual existence not to segregate himself from anyone and not to suppose that he has been given exclusive charge of the truth about any segment of human reality. The Christian scholar, in other words, had better not come prancing

<sup>4</sup> Roger Hazelton, *New Accents in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

into the forums of our cultural life with a Christian system of aesthetics or with a Christian system of psychology or with a Christian system of anything else. For the world is one, the same for the Christian as for all other men of whatever persuasion: if Christ is truly the *Logos*, then He is witnessed to in all apprehensions of truth, whether they occur within a framework of Christian concern or not. And, this being the case, the Christian theologian will not be in a hurry to sponsor any particular system as *the* necessarily Christian way of ordering the data in a given field of inquiry. For he will understand that the most fundamental issue for Christian thought pertains not to any conceptual structure at all but rather, as Professor Ronald Gregor Smith of Glasgow has recently said, to the question "Whence do we receive?"<sup>7</sup>

So, then, rather than attempting to put forward anything that might be called a "Christian philosophy of art," it may well be that the more important task for a Christian philosophy of culture at the present time is, first of all, that of clearly discerning what in fact the function of art truly is and how it may cooperate with the kind of imagination of reality that is authentically Christian. Then, in addition to basic questions of this sort, it may well be also that careful consideration deserves to be given to the particular respects wherein the present *malaise* of the modern artist is itself something which is pregnant with fruitful possibility for the religious situation in our time.

**N**OW, when one bluntly asks what it is the ultimate office of art to do, it is important to avoid at least one of the answers which has continually recurred in the history of aesthetics; and this is the doctrine which, in one way or another, asserts that a work of art is an expression of the artist's subjectivity, or, as

<sup>7</sup> Ronald Gregor Smith, "A Theological Perspective of the Secular," *The Christian Scholar*, Vol. XLIII, No. 1 (March, 1960), p. 14.



it has often been put, of his emotion. The perennial attractiveness of this doctrine is doubtless in large part a result of the fact that we know both the creative process and the aesthetic experience to be suffused with emotion; and when, in a particular case, the work of art is of unquestioned greatness, it does indeed very often stem from and elicit emotion of the intensest sort. But, however much emotion may be a factor both in the act of artistic creation and in the act of aesthetic appreciation, the fact remains that, finally, all emotionalist theories of art are both internally illogical and essentially untrue to the experience that we actually have, when we are in the presence of a work of art that is capable of deeply engaging the imagination. The emotionalist theory is internally illogical, because it succeeds in doing precisely what it is unreasonable to expect an aesthetic theory to do—namely, to dissolve itself into some field of discourse that is not aesthetic but something else. That is to say, in viewing the work of art as significant because of what it tells us about the emotional condition of the artist, an expressionist aesthetic is always tending to convert aesthetics into a branch of psychology and thus to destroy the vital nerve of its own integrity as an independent field of humanistic inquiry. And I speak of the emotionalist theory of art as untrue to our profoundest aesthetic experience because I am convinced that this is a kind of experience which we deem to be of such high importance not at all by reason of any information it conveys about the artist. For what is exhilarating in the encounter that we have with an authentic work of art is always the clarification and deepening that we feel in our perception of the realities that constitute our world environment. The aesthetic experience might be said always to involve an experience of what Paul Tillich calls "the shock of being,"<sup>8</sup> and this may be why Jacques Maritain tells us that "Poetry is ontology."<sup>9</sup>

But, of course, when M. Maritain speaks of poetry as a kind of ontology, he does not intend to imply that the operation which the poet performs is identical, in its kind or agency, with the operation that is performed by a philosopher. For, unlike the philosopher, the poet does not deal with *generalizations* about anything at all: his mode of statement, as Susanne Langer says, is a "nondiscursive" mode.<sup>10</sup> He does not talk, for example, about the mortality of the human creature with the funereal air of a young parson: no, Shakespeare simply says:

*Golden lads and girls all must,  
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.*

Nor does he talk about the internal complications of the mind in the labored, discursive manner of the academic psychologist: no, Hopkins tells us:

<sup>8</sup> Vide Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), p. 85; also *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 110-115 and p. 163.  
<sup>9</sup> Vide Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), pp. 87-122.  
<sup>10</sup> Vide Susanne Langer, *Feeling and Form* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953), Chapter 13.

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall  
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap  
May who ne'er hung there. Nor does long our small  
Durance deal with that steep or deep. . . .

Which is to say that it is the poet's purpose to expose us to the stark irrevocability of things as they are. And "things" is the word we must use, for it is with "things" that the poetic transaction is carried on, since, as I suspect, it is in them that Being has its location. If we may borrow an excellent term from Dr. Langmead Casserley, it might be said that it is the habit of the poet to be fascinated with "the singular"<sup>11</sup>—the particular event, the unrepeatable experience, the unique reality. "The texture of poetry is of actual things," says Fr. McCarron in his fine little essay *Realization*.<sup>12</sup> And we should not forget that Homer dealt with the ocean and Wordsworth with the farmland and Gerard Manley Hopkins with "the dearest freshness deep down things." And so too has the imagination of all true poets been captured by "things," by that which is *other than* the human mind. Indeed, it is "the wonder and mystery of art," as it is also of religion in the last resort, that it "is the revelation of something 'wholly other' by which the inexpressible loneliness of thinking is broken and enriched."<sup>13</sup>

Poetry, characteristically, handles not universals but, rather, the individual aspects of reality. It "uncovers for us the character of particular things in the starkness and strangeness of their being what they are."<sup>14</sup> And this is why the scientist and the philosopher who conceives of philosophy as a handmaiden of science tend to view the poet with misgivings, for he remains incorrigibly devoted to the celebration of that rich complexity of the singular which always resists domestication within the abstract systems of scientific and philosophic ideas. We have long said that poetry's great gift to man is what the Greeks called *katharsis*, and it may well be that that experience involves, fundamentally, the profound relief that is to be had when we succeed in gaining such release from the prison of the mind as enables us simply to contemplate the intractable givenness of reality, as it transcends all our scientific, philosophic propositions about it and our efforts at poetic evocation of it, making its majesty known through what Hegel called the "concrete universal."

**N**OW, of course, modern aestheticians since Kant have often said something quite different about art—namely (as A. C. Bradley put it), that "its nature is to be not a part, nor yet a copy, of the real world . . . but to be a world by itself, independent, complete, autonomous."<sup>15</sup> And this too is true. Indeed,



we here come upon what is perhaps the central paradox that art presents. For, on the one hand, we must never forget that it does establish a world of its own, and, as Bradley said, "to possess it fully, you must enter that world, conform to its laws, and ignore for the time the beliefs, aims, and particular conditions which belong to you in the other world of reality."<sup>16</sup> But, then, on the other hand, it is equally true (and true perhaps in a very much larger order of magnitude) that the greatest and most vital art always drives us beyond itself and makes us contemplate anew, with a shock of discovery, the permanence and glory and strangeness of the circumambient world. Its purpose is to stir and quicken within us an awareness of realities that impinge upon us from beyond ourselves. It wants, as it were, to make all things new, in order that we might marvel at the sheer thereness of them, at the fact that they exist in one way rather than in a thousand other possible ways. "To know facts as facts in the ordinary way has, indeed, no particular power or worth. But," as Professor H. D. Lewis says, "a quickening of our awareness of the irrevocability by which a thing is what it is has such power, and it is . . . the very soul of art."<sup>17</sup> For the artist, as Marianne Moore puts it, is a "literalist of the imagination" who presents "for inspection 'imaginary gardens with real toads in them.'"<sup>18</sup> Which is to say that, though he creates a kind of fiction, it is a fiction that is intended to be a vehicle by means of which there may be enforced upon us a haunting sense of some "otherness in reality"<sup>19</sup> which impinges upon us and with which we must risk a confrontation.

Now I wonder if it is not precisely this sense of

<sup>11</sup> Vide J. V. Langmead Casserley, *The Christian in Philosophy* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1949), *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Hugh McCarron, *Realization: A Philosophy of Poetry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1937), p. 35.

<sup>13</sup> H. D. Lewis, *Morals and Revelation* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1951), p. 241.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>15</sup> A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1909), p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> H. D. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>18</sup> Marianne Moore, "Poetry," *Collected Poems* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 41.

<sup>19</sup> H. D. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 242.

"otherness in reality" to which religious faith itself conduces. Gregor Smith tells us that our ultimate theological concern has to do with what is not ourselves, "with what [we] . . . do not and never can possess at all . . . with what comes to [us] . . . all the time from beyond [ourselves]." <sup>20</sup> And this is indeed the import of vital religion. Becket, in T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, says at one point:

... Only  
The fool, fixed in his folly, may think  
He can turn the wheel on which he turns.

And it is some such realization as this that all great religion promotes: it brings us news of a reality beyond all the extremities of human thought and calculation, and it speaks of a world which moves to "a rhythm which is neither the strophe nor the antistrophe of our mortal music." <sup>21</sup> So, though a certain kind of philistine hostility to the arts may sometimes fob itself off as carrying some sort of religious sanction, the truth of the matter is that both art and religious faith share a common intention to summon us into the presence of what is other than and transcendent to the human mind; and, in this, they provide each other with a kind of mutual confirmation.

But, in the particular kind of faith that Christianity makes available, it is not simply sheer *otherness* that is confronted, however much the early teachings of Karl Barth may have seemed to represent this as being the Christian's situation. For, in the world of Christian experience, the *otherness* which confronts and which challenges man becomes luminously transparent in the incarnate Word of God which was Jesus Christ Himself. Which is to say that, for the Christian imagination, the ultimate reality—which is the reality of God—is disclosed in the person and in the life of Jesus Christ. And this means that, when human life is understood within the terms of the Christian faith, the primary axiom of all thought henceforward be-

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Gregor Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 15.  
<sup>21</sup> M. Channing-Pearce, *The Terrible Crystal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 143.



comes the premise that "man cannot be conceived and known otherwise than in Jesus Christ, and [that] God cannot be conceived and known otherwise than in the human form of Jesus Christ." <sup>22</sup> In Him all Christian reflection finds its basic fulcrum, for He is the transparent center and focus of that disturbing *otherness* which surrounds us and pursues us and requires of us an appropriate acknowledgment.

**N**OW there is no one in recent years to whom I have been more indebted for deepening my understanding of this central reality of Christian faith than to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the distinguished young German theologian who was executed by the Nazis in the spring of 1945. And what above all else I owe to Bonhoeffer is the realization that what we meet in Jesus Christ is not the old metaphysical riddle of how the two natures, the divine and the human, could co-inhere in one person. Nor should it be supposed that Bonhoeffer's refusal to fidget over this ancient puzzle was the result of any intellectual indolence which made him want to find excuses for evading the hard, exacting labor of reading the history of Christian theology. Indeed, it was just as a result of the most careful study of the theological tradition that he reached a conclusion the revolutionary consequences of which for Christian thought in our time are only beginning to be felt. And that conclusion was that, on this one point, the tradition has often been woefully misguided: for, said he, what we meet in Jesus Christ is not a metaphysical enigma but the simple fact of a human life that was totally pledged in responsibility for others, a life indeed so concentrated in the selflessness of its concern for all other life that it had the consequence of disclosing to the community of faith the tremendous fact that in His life the essential structure of all life had been revealed. And to this essential structure of responsible life as bound to man and to God Bonhoeffer applied the term "deputyship." For this, he declared, is the form that life takes when it is lived responsibly: one person or one group of persons acts *for* another: when a "father acts for the children, working for them, caring for them, interceding, fighting and suffering for them . . . in a real sense he is their deputy." <sup>23</sup> Indeed, whenever and wherever life surrenders itself in obedience to the needs and claims of other life, there you have "deputyship." And here, said Bonhoeffer, is the essential truth about Jesus Christ, that He "lived in deputyship for us as the incarnate Son of God," and, since "His living, His action and His dying was deputyship," in Him we have "the responsible person *par excellence*": "In Him there is fulfilled what the living, the action and the suffering of [all] men ought to be." <sup>24</sup>

So, then when St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philip-

<sup>22</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, trans. by Neville Horton Smith and ed. by Eberhard Bethge (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955), p. 192.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 194.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

pians (1:21) tells us that "to me to live is Christ," he is simply saying, both for himself and for other men, that, in so far as we do truly live, we live in and through Christ, for He *is* life. Which is to say that life is "deputyship," or, as it is put by Martin Buber, with his remarkable intuitive sense for things implicitly Christian, real life is "meeting."<sup>25</sup> This is what Christ reveals the fundamental form of reality to be, and faith, as Bonhoeffer taught us to understand, is not so much believing difficult propositions about something or other as it is life lived in "correspondence" with the form that Christ disclosed reality to have: the real man is "the man for others."

Now I have spoken of the dimension of otherness into which we are brought by both art and religious faith. But, as I have said, in the Christian apprehension of reality, this is an otherness whose secret is disclosed in the person and in the life of Jesus Christ. For in Him the Christian imagination beholds the fundamental form of reality—which, adopting a central term of the late Charles Williams, we may call "exchange"<sup>26</sup>; or, following the Jew Martin Buber, "meeting"; or which, following Dietrich Bonhoeffer, we may call "deputyship"—or, as he sometimes spoke of it, "life together."

But when, however, we move from any authentically Christian account of things to that which is recorded in the most important art and literature of our period, it becomes immediately apparent that here a quite different form of reality is presented as normative in human experience. Not "life together," but life fractured and broken into isolateness and solitude and loneliness—these are the realities which make up the special kind of pathos that we meet in the representative art of our time.

FROM the painting of this century one recalls, for example—and inevitably—those great Cubist canvases of the early Picasso in which the human image is either shattered utterly or is forsaken altogether for the *pastiche* of newspaper clippings and odd bits of junk extracted from some scrap heap. Or, there are those dreadful and wonderfully fascinating double-faced images which he was painting in the 1930's and which figure forth the awful dragons of the inner life which must be captured in us all. And, then, there is that beautiful and horrible immensity in black and white, the *Guernica* mural, which brings to a kind of climax the scenes of disorder which the artists of our time have painted, a canvas which is ostensibly about a particular moment in the modern agony but which, once we have really confronted it, makes us know that it is about the whole eschatological furnace of our age. It has sometimes been said that what is most essential in Picasso is a "taste for paroxysm," but, in a way, this seems also to be what is most essential

in such men as Kokoschka and de Chirico and Beckmann and Rouault who were his contemporaries and in the generation of Pollock and de Kooning whose vision is felt with especial immediacy at the present



time. Indeed, these and many others have often been navigators negotiating a voyage that has skirted most narrowly the brink of the chaos which has threatened to overwhelm us all.

And not only have our painters fought battles with the dragons of the inner life, but so too have our poets and our novelists. It is "a century of homelessness and exile, of nervous disorder and persecution, of actual enslavement and barbaric cruelty."<sup>27</sup> And it should therefore be no occasion of surprise when these are the things that we encounter in our literature. Here is a sentence, for example, from a novel (*On This Side Nothing*) by the English writer Alex Comfort, and it takes us immediately into the kind of ethos which the representative writers of our age have been exploring: "I saw the same fear in her face that I should have felt if a stranger called at night, the worldwide twentieth-century fear which one sees wherever one knocks unexpectedly at any door." And this is the face of the contemporary hero, whether one encounters him in the plays of Beckett and Ionesco or in the novels of Faulkner and Camus or in the poetry of Penn Warren and Gottfried Benn. There are, to be sure, here and there, a few writers—like Eliot and Edith Sitwell of the older generation, or Auden and Christopher Fry of the middle generation, or Robert Lowell of a still younger group—who are sustained and governed by a traditional faith. But by far the great majority of those on the contemporary scene who exemplify "our period style" are writers who live in much the same ambiance as that with which we associate the great classic moderns, Kafka and Pound and Joyce and Hemingway. For the fundamental form of the human reality, as they report upon it, is that of disruption and anxiety and nostalgia and loneliness.

So when, therefore, the Christian community faces the whole body of testimony issuing from much of the great art of the modern period, it is confronted by

<sup>25</sup> Vide Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1937), *passim*.  
<sup>26</sup> Vide Charles Williams, *The Image of the City—And Other Essays*. Selected by Anne Ridler (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), Section V.

<sup>27</sup> Ralph Harper, *The Sleeping Beauty* (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. 15.

a diametrical opposition between the form of reality that it knows to be the true norm of human existence and that which tends generally to be cited by the artists of our time. Yet surely it would be a great mistake for churchmen simply to reject this testimony and to withdraw into the stiff, imperious certitudes of those theologians who write systems of Church dogmatics and who expatiate on "the divine-human encounter." Indeed, were this to be the prevailing Christian response to the modern movement in art, nothing would more tellingly indicate that ours is today a Church which has forgotten the Cross and all that it implies for Christian participation in the life of culture. For if the Church is an "extension and perpetuation of the Incarnation in the world"<sup>28</sup>—and Bishop Gore's formula has, I suppose, at best but a limited usefulness<sup>29</sup>—then its relation to the world must be wholly governed by God's relation to the world, as this was disclosed in Christ Himself, and most especially in His Crucifixion. The Church, in other words, is the community that lives under the



Cross—which is to say that it is the community which knows the fundamental form of reality to be that of "deputyship," of living and acting "for others." It is, of course, the community in which there is knowledge of the "last things," of the fact that the final and ultimate word to be pronounced on the human situation is that man shall be justified by grace and faith alone. But, when it seeks the kind of profound identification with the world that the message of the Crucifixion demands, it may then, for the very sake of the ultimate truth about human existence, choose not to speak about the "last things" but rather to open itself up to what Dietrich Bonhoeffer called "the things which go before the last things"—that is, to those "penultimate" expressions of humanity which are the real *preparatio* for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the Christian community should never fail to heed Bonhoeffer's wise warning against speaking of the "last things" too soon. "I don't think it is Chris-

tian," he said, "to want to get to the New Testament too soon and too directly."<sup>31</sup> And what he meant is simply that, if the Christian community closets itself in safety away from what is broken and problematic in human life, then the ultimate message of the Gospel will never be grasped in its *relevance* to man's deepest predicaments. Christ's coming in grace, in other words, is, to be sure, the very last thing, but we shall perceive the power and the appositeness of this ultimacy only in so far as we remain attentive to everything that is penultimate in the human story.

SO, therefore, on the particular frontier of culture which is here in view, the task of those who are custodians of the Christian faith in our time is not, I think, to invent something called a Christian *philosophy* of art, and thus to add to the Babel of conflicting *philosophies* which so much oppresses us today. We shall want, I should think, a vigorous Christian criticism in the various fields of art, and there are signs, particularly in the field of literature, that this is an effort which is beginning to be undertaken with intelligence and discrimination.

But a Christian philosophy of art, in the sense of a systematic phenomenology of aesthetic facts which consistently proceeds from Christian presuppositions—this is something the deliverance of which is not to be expected from anyone on the theological scene today of whom I have any knowledge; and I suspect that there are difficult jurisdictional questions of a theoretical order that may in principle rule out even the possibility of such a project. But, were it theoretically possible and were it something which we might expect the best theological intelligence of our day in time to deliver, I should still, from a strategic standpoint, question its real value at this particular juncture of our cultural situation. For that which is, I believe, most needed is for theological interpreters to keep the Church alive to what it is in the nature of its own faith that requires it to be attentive to all the somber reports and prophecies and maledictions that the arts in our time are uttering. And, if this effort is attended with success, so that the Christian community does really appear once again to be a community of "deputyship," of those who are "for others," then it may well be that the artist may be persuaded to move beyond what is "penultimate" to the things that are really "the last things."

<sup>31</sup> Vide Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, ed. by Eberhard Bethge and trans. by Reginald H. Fuller (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1953), p. 79.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Gore, *The Incarnation of the Son of God* (London: John Murray, 1891), p. 219.

<sup>29</sup> The formula's usefulness is limited because, though it does a rough kind of justice to the doctrine of the Mystical Body, it very seriously fails to make adequate provision for the Church itself being under judgment.

<sup>30</sup> Vide Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-91.

## POETRY CONTEST

A poetry competition was conducted by the MSM during the year preceding the Quadrennial Conference in a search for excellent undergraduate work in poetry writing. Many entries were received and judged by the panel of judges. Three award winners and several honorable mentions were chosen. First place was won by Alan D. Austin; second by Joseph Larry Cook, and third by Leslie Ann Williams.

These three, plus judges' comments, and an essay by the poetry workshop leader at the conference, give expression to the conference emphasis upon creativity.

## THE JUDGES' COMMENTS ON CONTEST ENTRIES:

**The general level of the poems has been disappointing, considering the quality of college verse in general. Many of the poems suggest a poverty of cultural background, as though the author had done little reading in modern poetry, or in poetry in general. Numerous poems had a terribly faded quality, echoing the language of bad hymns or second-rate religious verse. Sometimes fresh experience is poured into the tired old language, with a loss of power.**

**Many of the poems exhibited an attitude common among those who turn to religious themes: the implied belief that sincerity alone counts. More attention needs to be given to just plain technique. It is as though a good concept is frequently ruined by a "docetic" kind of incarnation: the concept never becomes the real flesh and blood of verse. Poetic hell is undoubtedly paved with the intentions of religious poets. Sincerity is no substitute for the tools of the craft. The more a poet yearns to sing the glories of God, the harder he should work to perfect his poetic tools.**

**It was encouraging to note that many of the entries did go beyond conventional piety or "peace of mind" subject matter, and attempted to make a real spiritual and psychological contact with the modern world as the modern world is.**

### JUDGES: Roy Battenhouse

Professor of English  
Indiana University

### Stanley Hopper

Dean, Graduate School  
Drew University

### Chad Walsh

Professor of English  
Beloit College

# AN ANCIENT ART

## footnotes on new (poetic)

### creation

BY RAY MIZER

**P**OETRY is an ancient art, reborn and reinvigorated perennially, not because mass culture demands it, but because there is no adequate substitute. It was heartening to see a great conference of those who will mold and activate the attitudes of tomorrow's Methodism recognizing the validity and value of poetry and her sister arts, grappling with the seeming strangeness of a world from which they have become estranged, or in which they have never traveled. We must frankly face the fact that however close and fruitful the marriage of poetry and Christianity may have been at certain periods and places in the past, the two for some time now have been behaving more like strangers or enemies than loving partners. The effect has been to deprive the church of a potent ally in the struggle for the minds and hearts of men, and to deprive poetry of that sustaining faith which gives it depth and breadth.

Surely it is time for poetry and religion to re-establish creative communion. Surely it is time for the church to stop regarding poetry as a harmless ornamental diversion for sweet old ladies of both sexes, or as a kind of sugar-coating for hard-to-swallow doctrinal pills. It is also time some poets asked themselves whether the straw man they have dubbed "Religion and the Church" and which they have so lustily pummeled and berated bears any real resemblance to the living reality.

Today's best-advertised poets are known collectively as "the Beats." One cannot read their work intensively without concluding that there is a terrible sickness here. Instead of turning away in disgust, however, we could appreciatively note that they are actively at war with fakery, inhumanity, and conformity. They are almost hysterically antiwar, antisegregationist, antiauthoritarian, antimaterialist. As frequently happens in literary rebellions, the extremists have pushed nonconformity to the point of seeming to advocate anarchy, nihilism, and a frantic despair. Faith is absent, and sex, alcohol, and narcotics cannot fill the void. A measure of rebellion and iconoclasm, a dissatisfaction with "things as they are," are proper attitudes for students of any era. Few spectacles are quite so alarming for the future as that provided by masses of

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## *the trophy-room*

(to Bertolt Brecht)

1.

Words vague and words accurate;  
Speech soft and speech dissonant;  
Sound sweet—  
And sound sonorous,  
Junctured in one which is more than one  
(And thus less than one),  
Echo through halls of empty reliquaries,  
Admiring gold.  
Beyond the casings  
Sparrows shed their twilight excrement  
Staining a parqueted floor of oak  
With delusions of eaglehood.

The hawk is dead, flap, flap,  
May he rest in Greece:  
On the banks of the Rhine  
May he find his reward.

2.

Memories vague and memories acute;  
Dreams damp and dreams devouring;  
Fantasies real—  
And fictions realistic,  
Transcribed with thorny hands distended  
To point backwards only  
(Indicting the future),  
Painting stars on picket fences,  
Brighten papered dangling shreds  
Of faded circus-posters.  
Within the courtyard,  
Athena lolls upon her red-cork couch  
And strokes the tiger's silken neck,  
Unable to fetch again the fence-thrown darts

Today the eunuch passed away;  
We shall not even mourn him:  
The U-boat sails tomorrow  
With the legions of the tide.

3.

Presence in spirit and presence in fact;  
Rapport in flesh and dialogue at distance;  
Absence in mind—  
And abcess on lips  
Speak with dry voice from hollow chest  
(Containing steel heart)  
And coughs a hack for tomorrow.  
Beneath the proscenium, acted grey  
Sheds a tear for heroes past,

Ignoring the threat of enemies present  
To the future, all chromium  
On concrete hills.

The poet's last gasp in sterile-white tent,  
Cylindrical message of unsure intent:  
He died yesterday, of an atrophied lung,  
And yet he was not without honor.

4.

CHORALE: (the voices of silence, singing)

A gift of the past is received in the now,  
A legacy of fear, the fear of hope;  
We join our voices as if one,  
And, as if one, we share one fate:  
When the ball can stand on space alone,  
May our walls come crashing down!

*alan d. austin*

### *introit*

Wind, wind through my empty places. Waiting  
too long, too searching vacuates all mind,  
vacuates thought and sense from meditating.  
(Why does the night make me most naked?) Find  
a lighted place, a smiling face undimmed.  
Love, light the blank loneliness of care  
without communing. (Why do the candles catch  
the moths? Lonely too? or have they sinned  
for wanting full light?) Fly and with a flair  
the moths fling and burn as if a match.  
O Christ, crucify me. Let me be a pure part  
of you. Burst me, fling me from dark. Then, live  
with broken blood and star swirls, drive  
fires of faith into my too-touching heart.

*joseph larry cook*





ROBIN

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THERE'S  
NO POWER IN MY LIFE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

students who ought to be raising a little holy hell with the stupidities and compromises of their elders who flock round the banners of security and the *status quo*.

The delegates to the recent Quadrennial Conference did not sound much like smug standpatters. Indeed, one suspects a marked resemblance between their "anti" attitudes and those of the "Beat" poets. They are out to set fires under the stodgy and break down the walls of inertia and timidity. But these students, unlike the typical "Beat" despite many uncertainties, believe in the brotherhood of man *under* the Fatherhood of God. The vast majority of them have accepted the radical nature of the human predicament. They believe in the genuine possibility of ordering (or reordering) human life through the redeeming power of God's grace, and feel that man has freedom to participate in that redemptive process. This is the plus factor, the positive note of affirmation sorely needed in tomorrow's poetry.

Surely part of such participation includes developing a receptive attitude toward those works of art which by their very existence give evidence that man is something more than an animal or machine. Any true work of art involves a forming of something which did not exist before, imposing an order upon previously chaotic materials. The creative act, bringing

order and harmony out of chaos, is one of the surest ways by which man demonstrates his kinship with the Creator. This bringing of varied elements into a harmonious and unified whole representing in miniature the order which pervades the universe has a basically spiritual value, is a spiritual act wherein the artist participates with God in the continuing act of creation. This is true whether the content of the work is explicitly "religious" or not.

T. S. Eliot has said that all poetry has its origin in the feelings which arise in man's relationships with other men, with the world in which he lives, and with divinity. The modern poet who has lost his sense of kinship with God is cut off from a significant wellspring of poetry. It is the peculiar opportunity and challenge of the prospective poets who *have* a strong central belief to produce a body of poetry which will reassert the validity of the Christian world view. But in order to speak convincingly to our age, the Christian poet must be technically as proficient as his fellow poets. Sincerity, piety, humility, lovingkindness—these desirable and endearing traits are not a substitute for knowledge of the craft. Some of the world's worst poetry has been committed by very pious and sincere versifiers.

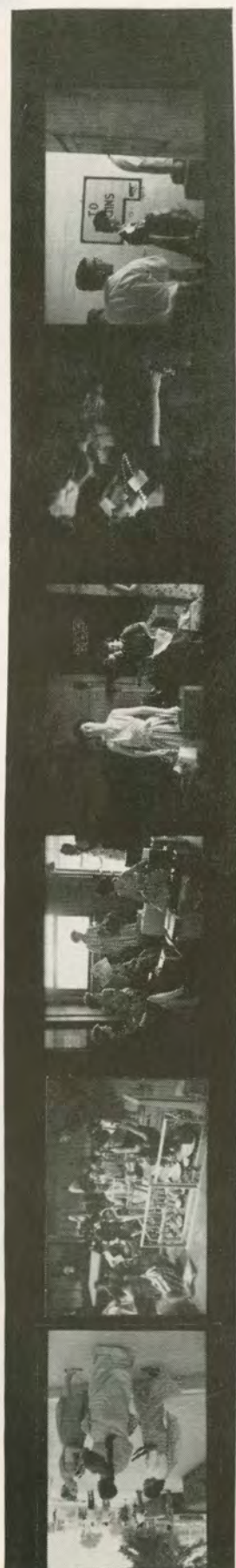
**C**ERTAIN recurring questions arose in the Poetry Workshop: Are there fundamental distinctions between "religious" and "nonreligious" poetry? Does the Christian poet require a special set of techniques or subject matter? Should he acquire a special philosophy of poetry? The answer in each case is essentially "No." Poetry worthy of the name springs from the poet's most deeply held beliefs. It deals with those areas of experience which move him most forcefully and which he regards as supremely important. It pictures life as refracted through his own unique consciousness and perceptions. Let him perfect his craft. Let him have a respect akin to reverence for the language and the tools he uses. Then, if he is a serious and sincere artist, he will write poetry which is Christian with or without his conscious effort to make it so.

The true poetic gift is rare. "Many are called but few are chosen" applies nowhere more emphatically than to the ministry of poetry. Most of us must rest content to be consumers rather than producers; yet without an audience, the poet is thwarted—indeed, he is reduced to a kind of soliloquy. We can listen to the poets, go the second mile, put ourselves in a receptive attitude. Real reading must be active rather than passive, and when it is, the reader participates in the creative function, brings poetry alive from the printed page to become a vital part of his experience. Neither let us share the common misconception that "the only good poet is a dead poet." He would be pleased someday to speak to our grandchildren but just now he would infinitely prefer to speak with us.



ROBIN

"I LIKE PEOPLE"



## parable

ONCE there was a wealthy man and his wife. They had about everything they wanted except happiness. "If only," said the woman, "we had happiness." "If only," said the man, "she was happy."

One day it happened that a spider came from under their house and said, "Your wish shall be fulfilled: before a year has past, you shall be happy."

Sure enough, what the spider prophesied came to be. The woman had a beautiful daughter, and the man got richer. As the years went by the daughter became more beautiful, was eventually elected homecoming queen, and the father got hold of more wealth and the mother was happier and happier, what with planning the daughter's coming-out party and worrying over the husband's cardiac condition.

"In 1961," she told all her friends, "my daughter will have a coming-out party that will be the envy of the nation."

Hubby grunted, neither agreement nor disagreement. He simply grunted. "My husband," she confided, "has a condition. He does work so hard, the old dear. I try to take the load off his shoulders. I am making all the arrangements for the party. All he has to do is pay the bills."

Hubby grunted.

Came the great day. Everybody who was anybody was invited: kindred, friends, acquaintances, wise women and wise men, merchants, bankers, and *couturiers* and the wives of them all. Everybody, that is, except the wife of a famous psychologist at the university. Nobody thought to include either educators or their wives.

The wife of the psychologist was furious. She was also gauche. She went to the party uninvited. While there she shocked about everybody by swinging from a chandelier and crying:

Papa will give her a Jaguar  
And an ermine wrap from mama,  
But when she's twenty-one  
I'll give her a trauma.

SURE enough, when she was twenty-one, the beautiful daughter was unable to decide among the sixteen men who asked her to marry them, the Peace Corps or journalism, a new Jaguar or an Alfa Romero. The decisions were simply too much; she had a seizure which transfixed her. Immediately her mother's plans were

paralyzed and her father had a stroke when he heard about it. His airplanes and railroads and computers and rockets were stopped also, and their happiness collected only dust.

Consternation reigned. "Without her account I shall go broke," wailed the *couturier*. "She had such lovely hair," moaned the *coiffeur*, "and without it I shall lose my *raison d'etre*." And he went to work at Joe Blow's Barber College. The four-star and the three-star generals and the master sergeants and the cabinet officers for defense were all hopelessly enraged. "She must be relieved of that trauma so her father can recover from his stroke because the conventional weapons will not work without her father's complete electronic systems. Wouldn't it be terrible if we had to resort to the ultimate weapon, the crossbow, simply because of a silly girl's trauma?"

Pleas, threats and rages made no difference. The trauma persisted and the stroke was unameliorated and the dust got thicker and thicker and the defense factories pulled out the blue prints of the crossbow and reluctantly began production and Joe Blow fired his newest barber. "You can't cut hair if your soul is not in it," he explained.

Word of what happened spread. LIFE was appalled, TIME was startled, FORTUNE had forebodings, and SPORTS ILLUSTRATED decried the loss of amateur sport's finest status symbol. "It looks as if the racketeers have won," it cried, "when fresh, lovely hazel-eyed homecoming beauty queens can be tricked so easily into a trauma."

All was not lost however. One day an aspiring young master of arts in the classics hitchhiked to her home. Braving the crossbows, he ignored the paralyzed papa and the mortified mama in his compulsive search for the sleeping beauty. Upon discovering her, he did what more young M.A.'s in the classics ought to do: he bent over and kissed her.

AS soon as he kissed her, she awoke, opened her eyes, and looked at him quite sweetly. "Where did you come from?" she asked. "I came to marry you," he said. "O.K." she said. And the rich father recovered from his stroke, the mother lost her paralysis, the electronics systems began to hum, the barber became a *coiffeur*, the secretary of defense started sending memos and the generals were so busy answering them that they forgot whom they were mad at. The sergeants reluctantly turned back the ultimate weapons, their new crossbows, and gained solace in their immemorial function of making life miserable for recruits.

The snaggle-toothed wife of the psychology professor was so furious she refused to take a bath and developed an unaccountable liking for human blood. The spider happened to cross her path and she deliberately stepped on it. So it rained forty days and forty nights.

This is the way it happened.

This is the way it is.

—ROGER ORTMAYER  
from "the WORD . . . IS"