



imago

winter 2002 **NEWSLETTER** volume four issue four

In recent months I have thought a good deal about hope. Perhaps this is because the theme of our competition was a new heaven and a new earth and that forward look is characteristic of hope. But hope does not rest only on that which is to come. Rather it has a good deal to do with what has already taken place. This thread called hope can be found throughout the biblical narrative. Not least is it centred on a promise of one who would come and indeed has come to do a work of redemption and healing. Advent brings us face to face with that promise. A young woman had her life disrupted by an encounter with an angel. It was a disruption the consequences of which have been “good news” to countless numbers over subsequent centuries. What appeared to be disorder was in fact the announcing of a new order, a different way to understand ourselves and our world.

The Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, the incarnation as we call it, is often linked with the Greek term *kenosis*. *Kenosis* traditionally refers to the “self emptying” of God. It is an emptying that does not diminish, but expresses love and self-giving for the sake of another. *Kenosis* understood as a human trait has been described as “a joyous, kind and loving attitude that is willing to give up selfish desires and to make sacrifices on behalf of others for the common good and the glory of God, doing this in a generous and creative way, avoiding the pitfall of pride, and guided and inspired by the love of God and the gift of grace.” The divine gesture of self giving that we remember and celebrate in the season of advent instructs us all by offering a paradigm of how we are to live our lives.



The Vladimir Madonna and Child,
School of Andrei Rublev, 15th C.

Self-giving cuts across the values of a consumer culture where getting and spending are the order of the day. Where we seek power and strength for our own agendas the child in swaddling clothes depicts vulnerability and weakness undertaken for the sake of others. And where we engage a spirituality that requires us to escape the world and our embodiment in it, incarnation serves to affirm that very embodiment and extends the offer of redemption for all that it entails.

Our world would be a better world if a *kenotic* spirit were to characterize those of us who seek to live by faith. Artistry born out of this same spirit is likely to be both eloquent and strong. Discerning how God relates to the world and to humanity is instructive for how we are to relate to the world and to each other. It is likewise instructive for how we are to carry out our artistry.

My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.

Gospel of Luke 1: 47–55

This past year has been an exceptional year for Imago. We have added a number of new projects to our roster, opened the way for new partnerships and extended our network among Christian artists. We have also won considerable credibility in the visual arts community in Canada because of our very successful national competition and celebrated 30 years of commitment to the arts and Christian artists. To carry out our mandate we need the support of those who believe in what we are doing. Thank you for your interest in the work of Imago. We look forward to the promise of the year ahead.

John Franklin, *Executive Director*
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Erica Grimm-Vance

– Winner of the Imago National Visual Art Competition

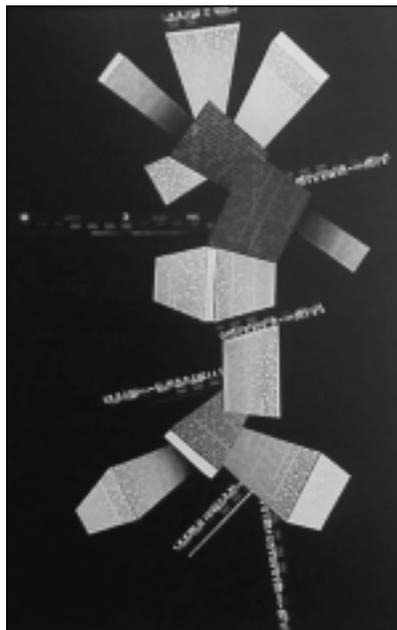
Embodiment has been the theme of my work for almost twenty years. All we know is mediated through the body, and as such, it is the central site of meaning. Simone Weil used the platonic word *metaxu* to describe anything which could be a bridge of mediation between us and God. The created order, including the human body, is a barrier and at the same time, it is a way through. "Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing which separates them but it is also their means of communication. It is the same with us and God. Every separation is a link". The figures in most of my work echo Weil's insistence on our bodily fragility. "Our flesh is fragile... our soul is vulnerable... Our social personality is exposed to every hazard." But it is precisely this intimate fragility that connects us at the core of our being to the cross of Christ.

The figures in most of my images are contrasted with the silent planes or steel and gold which heighten the corporeal, fragile, reading of the figure. In recent years the discovery of material has been exhilarating. Materials carry meaning. Gold, steel, wax, ash and lead are all ripe with metaphoric meanings ranging from precious to toxic. Weil would see the human body and these materials as *metaxu*, bridges between us and God. Hence, both the body and materials are potential sites of transcendence.

Only Say the Word is part of a larger series of arcing figures. The figure negotiates the transition between steel and gessoed plane in an upward resurrectional trajectory. The feet are firmly planted in the silent plane of steel and the figure arcs forward. This is an image of resurrection that does not gloss over the pain of Good Friday. In particular the disjointed shoulder socket identifies some of the bodily effects of the crucifixion. The new heaven is witnessed to without sentimentalizing the pain of this present earth. The title is from the Roman Eucharistic liturgy, the words "*only say the Word*" are completed by the phrase "*...and we shall be healed*".



First prize winner, "Only Say the Word" by Erica Grimm-Vance, graphite, pastel and steel, 44" x 60"



Second prize winner, "Come to pass" by Adrian Huysman, negative collage, 60" x 30"



Third prize winner, "Waiting for Eternity" by Gerald Folkerts, oil, 60" x 48"

A New Heaven and A New Earth Finalists Exhibition – Regent College – 30 Canadian artists

January 15 to February 4, 2003
at **The Lookout Gallery**, Regent College,
5800 University Blvd., Vancouver, 604-224-3245

All are welcome at the Opening Reception,
Wednesday January 15, 4:00 p.m. to 8 p.m.
Imago's Executive Director and a number of the
finalists from the Vancouver area will be present.

30th anniversary celebrations – A memorable weekend for Imago

Well over 800 people participated in the weekend events around Imago's 30th anniversary, November 1–3, 2002. Friday evening at Glenn Gould Studio in downtown Toronto a capacity crowd of just over 300 enjoyed an evening of the performing

arts and witnessed the presentation of the awards for the three prizes in the National Visual Arts Competition. Twenty seven of the 30 finalists were present for the event at Glenn Gould Studio coming from seven provinces. Performers at the Friday event included Judy Au Longenecker, Motus O Dance Theatre, Blaise Pascal, Jeanine Noyes, John Terpstra and Bart Nameth, and the Paul Neufeld jazz trio. These performers all have an Imago link, most have had projects under Imago.

A show of the artwork of the 30 finalists was held at Painted City Gallery, Toronto from October 29 – November 9. The opening reception took place on Saturday November 2, with more than 300 attending between noon and 6:00 p.m. The twenty seven artists who could be with us were in attendance as well as the three jurors, Sarah Dobbs, Calvin Seerveld and Robert Young. It was a very strong show and the gallery was keep busy throughout the duration of the show. You may see the show in electronic form by going to the Imago website www.imago-arts.on.ca and click on National Competition.

The three prize winners are:

Erica Grimm-Vance, Vancouver, 1st prize,
Adrian Huysman, Calgary, 2nd prize,
Gerald Folkerts, Winnipeg, 3rd prize.

Imago wishes to express its very deep gratitude to the private foundation that provided funds to cover all aspects of the competition. Without the very generous support of those who oversee this foundation such an event would not have been



John Franklin, at the Glenn Gould Studio podium, and the three jurors, Sarah Dobbs, Calvin Seerveld and Robert Young.

possible. It was done in honour of our 30th anniversary and it has served to affirm the value of the arts, particularly the visual arts, and to underscore the importance of the mandate of Imago to “exercise a biblically based influence on the arts and artists in Canada”.

Little Trinity Anglican Church in downtown Toronto partnered with Imago for their Sunday morning service on November 3. It was a service of thanksgiving with special focus on the arts. Little Trinity was selected because Imago grew out of a small community of friends at Little T in the early 70's. It was at that time Wilbur Sutherland's home church. The service was led by the Rector Chris King and was coordinated by Renate Koke who also gave the homily. Renate is a curate at Little Trinity as well as an art historian. A lunch reception organized by the church followed at Enoch Turner Schoolhouse where 17 artists from the Little Trinity community had work on display. Many attended the service and reception especially for the Imago celebration.

While this was happening in Toronto another Imago event was taking place in Vancouver as part of Imago's Vancouver Arts Network lead by Rob Des Cotes. The Toronto event gave attention to the art competition theme, *A New Heaven and A New Earth* (II Peter 3:13) while the west coast network engaged the theme *Unveiled*



Juror Robert Young addressing the crowd at the art show opening at Painted City Gallery, Toronto.

Faces (II Corinthians 3:18). The weekend in Vancouver included workshops on creative writing, spirituality and politics, art as a prophetic act, and evidence of God's creative work in nature. Both east and west culminated in a celebration of arts in worship which together included, dance, visual art, mime, poetry, and music. (See David F. Dawes article *Reclaiming Art through Faith* in BC Christian News November 2002 www.Canadianchristianity.com)

Art Talks 2003

Lecture by – Erica Grimm-Vance

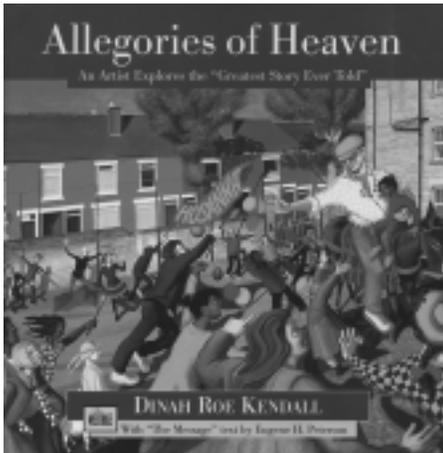
Winner of Imago's national competition and Chair of Fine Art Department, Trinity Western University

Friday April 25, 2003

St. George the Martyr Church, Toronto

Imago is pleased to once again partner with the Institute for Christian Studies for the annual Art Talks lecture. We have just confirmed that Erica Grimm-Vance will give the lecture in 2003. Details of her topic and any additional events for the Art Talks will be announced in the New Year.

Books



Allegories of Heaven: An Artist Explores the “Greatest Story Ever Told”

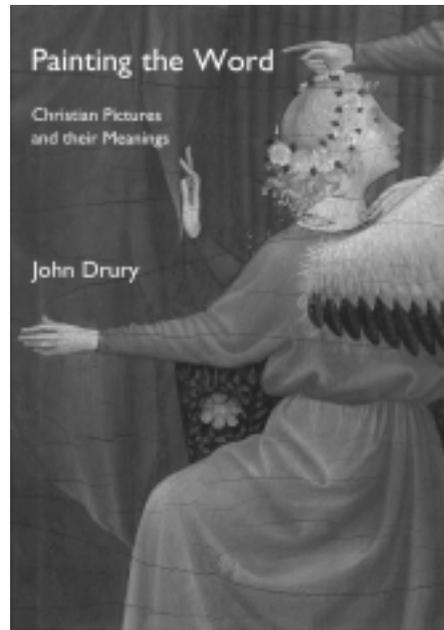
Dinah Roe Kendall, biblical text from “The Message” by Eugene Peterson, InterVarsity Press, and Piquant Books

It is encouraging to see a book like this that takes seriously the work of a particular artist, linking it with biblical text and so opening the way for a fresh understanding of the stories. Art is about communication and the publishers are to be commended for taking up this project. It is likely that we will be seeing more of this kind of publication. The growing appreciation of the arts and a new generation who have lived in a world of images will make this combination a popular option. The work of British artist Dinah Roe Kendall is colourful, down to earth and not without a bit of humour as she retells the biblical stories in her own unique style.

Christ for all People – Celebrating A World of Christian Art

ed. Ron O’Grady, Pace Publishing New Zealand, (published in Canada by Novalis)

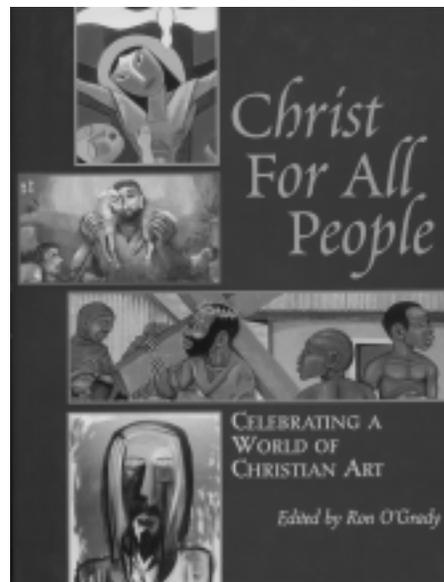
This book offers a rich resource for a wide variety of art work drawn from diverse ethnic communities from around the world, all engaging and depicting aspects of the life of Christ. The text provides helpful insight into the work and the culture out of which the artistry comes. It brings home the universal impact of the biblical story and opens our western eyes to see other depictions of Jesus and the stories which are so familiar to us.



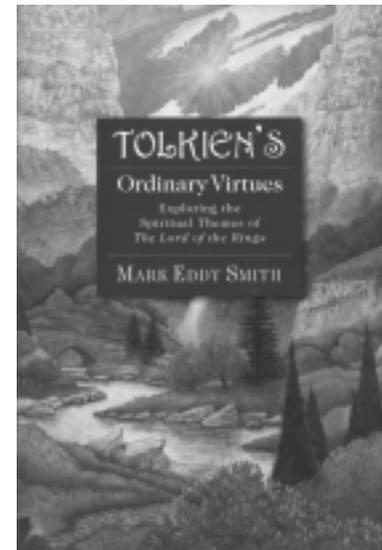
Painting the Word: Christian Pictures and their Meanings

John Drury, Yale University Press in association with the National Gallery Publications, London

This is an exceptional work, by the Dean of Christ’s Church, Oxford. In the preface the author informs us that the “book is about how Christian paintings convey their message.” From Duccio to Velazquez, he says, western civilization was Christian and the culture of the time shapes the meaning of the art. His approach is historical and he is intent on taking the whole work into consideration, not just symbols. The works discussed are from the 15th to the 17th



century, though there is a short epilogue on the work of Cezanne. The text is rich with insight about the paintings clearly articulating the Christian themes found in the works. The book is well illustrated with colour plates.



Tolkien’s Ordinary Virtues: Exploring the Spiritual Themes of Lord of the Rings

Mark Eddy Smith, InterVarsity Press

The author is well acquainted with the Tolkien trilogy and draws upon an extensive knowledge of the stories to articulate the virtues they affirm. At a time when the popular culture is lining up to see the film versions of this important fantasy series Smith’s insights will prove helpful and provocative. This is a book which shows how Tolkien’s work resonates with the biblical story and provides us with strong moral and spiritual insight.

Imago Mission Statement

The primary purpose of **imago** is to exercise a biblically based influence upon the development of the arts and artists in Canada and upon Canadian cultural life.

Visit us on the web at:
www.imago-arts.on.ca

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