



imago

spring 2003 NEWSLETTER volume five issue one

It is sometimes held that there is a clear dividing line between church and culture. If indeed there is a line it is one that is blurry and hard to discern. In the west at least, the community of faith looks quite like the world around it and appears to offer nothing that would distinguish it from the flow of the mainstream. The church seems to have imbibed at the cisterns of society in a way that makes it look as if it as a mere copy of the trends and values of the culture. This is a complex, not to say controversial matter that has and will continue to generate a good deal of discussion.

It is evident that faith communities cannot escape the influence of their cultural and historical situation. They are in fact simply part of a cultural web. Yet it would be folly to assume that distinctions are irrelevant. Every person of faith has some responsibility to discern what fits and what does not fit in the relationship between culture and faith. One clear example of this responsibility is the call to a prophetic role for the faith community in offering a critique of cultural practices and values. The current talk of war is just such a flash point for debate.

In an article in the current issue of *Books and Culture*, Ralph Wood reflects on the second installment of the Lord of the Rings film series. Though appreciative of the film he faults it for its serious shortfall from Tolkien's original work. The title of the article, *Hungry Eye: The Seductiveness of Spectacle*

anticipates one of its key points. Wood cites a distinction made by Tolkien, between *adventure* and *quest*. "An adventure is a



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Servantship

By Matth Cupido – chalk pastels, 1999

Now resident in Canning Nova Scotia, Matth Cupido has worked in several Canadian locations since emigrating from his native Holland. His journey of faith is deeply woven into his work. Some of his work takes the form of an icon, where the viewer may engage with the image for spiritual nurture. The image here is that of Jesus taking on the servant role of washing the feet of a disciple. The work carries a lasting and important theme that is at the heart of a biblical understanding of the life of faith – self-giving for the sake of the other. This particular drawing was part of an Easter show at Redeemer College, Ancaster, in 1999. Someone has said that

“sacred art evokes and supports an inner movement toward contact with a greater reality” and Cupido’s work fits that description.

His work can be found in a number of Canadian collections and on the walls of Redeemer College and Acadia Divinity School in Nova Scotia. He has recently done a series of five prints depicting the aspects of the Christian pilgrimage, *Separation and Unity, Profession of Faith, Baptism, Marriage and Office Bearing*. These are available through the Christian Reformed Church of North America in Grand Rapids Michigan. ❖

Dal Schindell (left), Curator of Lookout Gallery, and Rod Wilson, President of Regent College, at the Regent show.

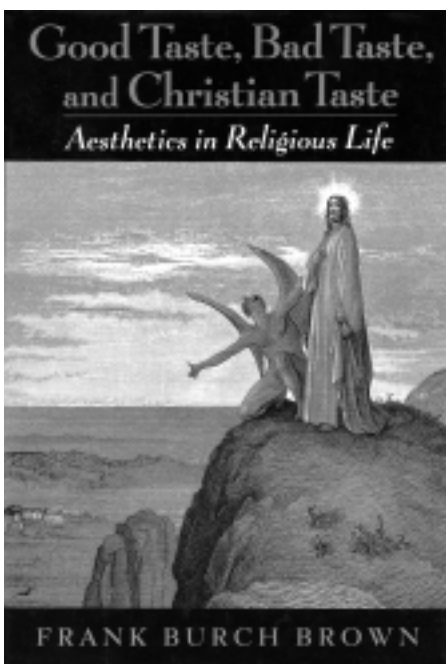


Vancouver Show Concludes Competition

The final phase of our 30th anniversary visual arts competition took place at Regent College Vancouver. A show of the 30 finalists was held in Toronto at Painted City Gallery October 28 to November 9, 2002 and was soon after shipped to the west coast for a show at Regent College's Lookout Gallery,

January 15 to February 8, 2003. The works were well received by the Regent community and opening night saw about 200 in attendance. Special thanks to Dal Schindell, the Director of Lookout Gallery for curating the show and to Regent College for hosting it. ❏

Books



Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life

Frank Burch Brown,
Oxford University Press, 2000

The author of this work is gaining considerable influence as an insightful writer on matters concerning Christian faith and the arts. Taste is commonly thought to be a merely private matter, but not for Brown. He takes us on a journey that provides some fresh perspective on the aesthetic life in the context of religious faith. In the prologue he writes, "I have come to believe that matters of aesthetic taste ... are often intimately tied to ... morality". Later he declares, "I am tapping into a way of thinking that understands taste to be integral to imagination." He has a lot to say about art and its links to religion and while his own craft as a composer provides many musical examples, he has a wide awareness of other forms of art. Though technical at times the work is generally accessible and provides both good questions and many helpful insights. ❏

Circling the Son: A Venture in the Arts – Saskatchewan

A second annual city-wide arts festival (March 7 to 9, 2003) was spearheaded by the Prince Albert Alliance Church, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. Open to any and all in the area, the basic criteria was that each piece (visual, performing, literary) must suit a general theme (*Here Comes the Son*), and must have some explicit link to the biblical story. We chose not to jury the show these past two years, but with the high quality of art, the way has been laid for coming years. This year 17 new musical compositions, two original dramas, poems, stories, acrylics, needlework, woodturning, computer generated graphics, slide shows and other formats, gave venue for around 40 artists including authors, visual and performing artists. We preceded the event with *Beggars Feast*, a group of musicians, artists, dancers, and writers that gave a 2 hour performance. The following morning seminars on various aspects of art were explored. The weekend has proven effective in encouraging artists, and in inviting the community to explore the Christian message through the arts.

Contact: Ron Baker, rbaker@inet2000.com

Visual Arts Showcase – Community Fellowship Church – Ontario

The theme chosen for the show is, *Renewal: Glimpses of New Life in Christ.*

Our vision is to invoke conversation about Christ in our community. We anticipate that this exhibit will appeal to both seekers and believers alike who are interested in the arts.

Community Fellowship Church,
Conservation Drive, Waterloo
Dates: April 10 to May 1, 2003
Karin Rabuka or Heather Horsey
rabuka@golden.net and
hmcnair@sympatico.ca
519-699-1101 and 519-220-1870

Calgary's Art Scene Takes Off – Alberta

By *Richelle Wiseman*

Over the past year or so, three new groups in the arts have taken off in Calgary.

Corps Bara, a Youth Dance Theatre Company, has had two public performances, one at the Betty Mitchell Theatre, and the other at the University of Calgary Theatre space. The company consists of 25 girls from public and high school. Under the artistic direction of Karen Sudds, the company put on a full 90 minute show called "Soul Prints" which consists of several pieces. The pieces were inspiring, moving, and demonstrated enormous creativity. The costumes added to the quality of the production.

"We want to give these young dancers an opportunity to perform, and to express their faith through the art of dance," says Sudds. Sudds has run a Christian dance school, Crossings, in Calgary. Corps Bara makes

use of some of the students from Crossings who are looking for performance experience. Corps Bara hopes to develop an adult company based on expressed interest.

A new Christian theatre opened with its first production last September. *Fire Exit Theatre* is being led by Blaine MacDonald of First Assembly Church (PAOC). The theatre has produced a number of plays. Many of the works have been written by local playwrights, including several by Val Lieske who assists MacDonald in running *Fire Exit*.

A group of visual artists now meets monthly at *The House*, a coffee house in Kensington, to encourage each other and to discuss issues of interest to Christian artists. Each month, the group members produce a piece of work on a theme decided at the monthly meetings. By the fall, this body of work will be put into a large exhibition called "Reflections." Last fall, the group produced an exhibition called "Sin and Happiness" which was held at *The House*, and also at First Alliance Church. The group wants to provide instruction, encouragement, and exhibition opportunities to Christian visual artists in the city.

Contact:

Karen Sudds about Corps Bara Youth Dance Theatre: wsudds@shaw.ca

Linda Rempel about the Arts Group: rempel90@hotmail.com or Richelle Wiseman about the Arts Group: inscape@telusplanet.net

Blaine McDonald about Fire Exit Theatre: blainemc@telusplanet.net
website is: www.fireexit.ca

Imago Presence at MissionFest 2003 – Toronto

Imago was pleased to have the opportunity to invite four visual artists to show their work at the Toronto MissionFest February 28, March 1 and 2, 2003. Artists whose work was on display included, William Ho, Rocille Lampitoc, Jim Paterson and James Tughan. We hope that there will be more opportunity in the future to have art be part of this annual event.

Projects

New – The Campus Project

This project is designed to connect artists and their work with university students and campus across Canada. In addition it will seek to assist artists under **imago** to promoting their work. Contact: Ruth Douglas, waterline@sympatico.ca

New – Oratorio Terezin

Ruth Fazal, composer – This full length work scored for orchestra, children's choir, adult choir and three vocal solists, is set in the context of the Holocaust. It uses children's poetry which miraculously survived the ghetto of Terezin, and weaves it together with biblical text from the Hebrew scriptures. The work explores questions we raise in the face of human suffering. The world premier will take place

on November 1st, 2003 at Toronto Centre for the Performing Arts. A European tour is planned for 2004 visiting Prague, Terezin, Vienna and Bratislava. A CD of the live performance will be released as well.

New – Beyond Magazine

Beyond is a non-profit independent magazine that explores what it means to be truly human. It delves in to questions and ideas that wake us up to where we come from and where we are going. The magazine exists to promote the development and enhancement of spiritual awareness in conjunction with an artistic format. We help our readers reflect on their lives while inspiring them to be instruments of justice, compassion, beauty and meaning. *Beyond* is produced without advertising and is reader supported by subscriptions and donations. www.beyondmag.com

Paul Neufeld Spirituals Project

The Paul Neufeld Spirituals Project CD is nearing completion – the CD is finished, the cover is being created, and the CD called *Walk Together*, is slated for a July release on True North Records. The music is Paul's arrangements of 19th Century African-American Spirituals for his ensemble of piano, double bass, and two percussionists. Paul received his fourth Juno nomination this year for his work with NOJO, having won the award in 1996. He is beginning plans to tour Canada in fall 2003 with the Spirituals group and is looking for churches desiring concert opportunities. Please contact Paul at ultrasa@interlog.com or call 905-727-5459.

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Wood cites a distinction found in the work of Tolkien, between adventure and quest.

'there-and-back-again' affair", says Wood, "it is largely a matter of one's own desire. ... a quest by contrast is a fulfillment not of one's desire but of one's calling." He points out how an escapist culture lives for adventure. Whereas the community of faith is called "...like Frodo ... not so much to find a treasure but to lose one...". Adventure is more an end in itself, something done for its own sake and in the interest of self fulfillment, while a quest takes us out of ourselves and asks us to follow the invitation of another.

How this might apply to the doing of art I will leave for others to explore, but I have a hunch that art should be more akin to quest than to adventure. That the faith community might be found slipping into the values and practices championed by the culture in a way that betrays its biblical tradition is a

genuine risk. Art, so it seems, can be a resource to either promote those values or to challenge them.

I have been intentional in including reports in this issue about arts and the church. There is a lot of interest in the arts emerging in church communities across Canada. This is a good sign, but there is need to proceed with caution, lest artistry becomes a mere add on so that we might be culturally relevant. We all rejoice to see the blossoming of a new commitment to the arts and their integration into the life of the church. There is no doubt that this trend is one that is able to enrich those communities and build bridges in a society that is seriously fragmented.

I hope we will see many of you at our next Toronto event, Thursday May 8, 2003 (see notice in this issue). We continue to need your support for the work of *imago* and would welcome your suggestions for ways in which we can be more effective in carrying out our mandate.



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416-421-8745 franklin@ultratech.net
www.imago-arts.on.ca

Upcoming Events

Next *imago* event

Thursday May 8, 2003

7:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse – Toronto
(near Parliament and King)

An evening of poetry, music and visual arts. See www.imago-arts.on.ca for more information or call 416-421-8745.

Word Guild

19th Annual God Uses Ink Christian Writers' Conference, June 12 to 14,

Guelph, Ontario. – Keynote Speaker is award-winning Canadian author, Mark Buchanan, Duncan BC on the theme "Expressing the Invisible". Seminars and workshops and panels on a wide variety of topic of interest to writers will be part of the conference.

For more information on the conference contact Nancy Lindquist, njlindquist@rogers.com www.thewordguild.com



ICS in partnership with *imago* is pleased to present

Art Talks! 2003

Evening Lecture:

Friday April 25, 2003, 7:30pm

Beauty and Affliction: Reflections on Art and Embodiment – A lecture by Erica Grimm-Vance at St. George the Martyr Church, 197 John Street, Toronto, Ontario (north of Queen on McCaul) A suggested donation of \$5.00 would be appreciated.

Symposium:

Saturday April 26, 2003, 9:30am–12:30pm

Body Images: Artists Talk about the role of the body in their work – A panel discussion with Erica and special guests at the Institute for Christian Studies, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario (just east of Spadina) \$15.00 advance, \$20.00 at door.

CD Release

Nick Peros

On February 1, 2003, the CD *O Canada – A Canadian Celebration*, will be made available to Canadians across Canada, courtesy of Home Hardware Stores Ltd. Conceived and produced by Canadian composer/record producer Nick Peros, *O Canada – A Canadian Celebration* features the coming together of a host of great Canadian music artists offering unique and stirring versions of our national anthem across a wide variety of styles, including pop/rock, blues, jazz, classical, Cape Breton Maritime, with both vocal and instrumental versions. Home Hardware is making the *O Canada – A Canadian Celebration* CD available to Canadians throughout all of its Canadian stores in conjunction with a Canadian flag. Contact Peros Music at 1-800-529-1696

Down To Earth

Nick and Joy Hunter

Looking Back – Looking Ahead: A Celebration

Tuesday May 13, 2003 at 7:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, 6 Trinity Street
(near Parliament and King Streets)

Tickets \$10, at the door \$12
416-778-6151

This event provides an opportunity to celebrate the work of Nick and Joy Hunter who, for well over a decade, have employed their skills in drama in a wide variety of settings. Most recently they have brought the healing power of art to prisons in Canada.