

Does God-Talk Make Sense Today?
The Rise of a New Adventist History

SPECTRUM

A Quarterly Journal of the Association of Adventist Forums

Volume 7, Number 4

THE CHURCH AND THE ARTS

The Holiness of Beauty

The Trashy Novel Revisited

God the Storylover

Plus New Poems, Paintings and Music

In This Issue

Articles	Volume Seven, Number Four, Published April 1976	
Providence and Earthly Affairs: The Christian and the Study of History	Gary Land	2
The Holiness of Beauty, or Why Imagination Matters	Ottilie Stafford	7
"Enlightenment" and "Pragmatism": New Songs by an Adventist Composer	Margarita Merriman	13
The Trashy Novel Revisited: Popular Fiction in the Age of Ellen White	John Wood	16
God Loves Stories: A Theological Rationale for the Literary Art	James J. Londis	25
A Trio of Poets	Charles Tidwell, Ben Jacques and Phillip Whidden	31
Abstract Art to the Glory of God!	Jorgen Henriksen	35
Does God-Talk Make Sense Today? Facing the Secular Challenge	Richard Rice	40
Book Reviews		
<i>The Rise of Adventism</i> , edited by Edwin Scott Gaustad	Ronald D. Graybill and Sidney H. Ashlstrom	46
<i>The Christian and His Music</i> , by Paul Hamel	Edith Marie Land	49
Letters from Readers	Lorna Tobler, R. R. Bietz, Richard Utt	51
The cover of SPECTRUM is by Concerned Communications, Arroyo Grande, California		

About This Issue

As of now, the arts have not achieved eminence in the hierarchy of recognized Seventh-day Adventist concerns. No one would disagree with this assertion, and artists themselves, whether musicians, painters, poets or whatever, would probably see it as a kind of droll understatement. Yet in the epigraph of the article that begins on page 7, the poet William Blake exclaims: "A Poet, a Painter, a Musician: the Man or Woman who is not one of these is not a Christian."

These are, as we say, strong words. For the author proposes, not that it would be a nice thing to have a concert series or to buy a painting, but that having the heart of an artist is essential to genuine Christian life. It is something to think about as you read the large special section on the church and the arts that appears in this issue of SPECTRUM.

John Wood's article on popular fiction of the nineteenth century takes us back to the historical context out of which arose our church's traditional opposition to the reading of novels. Then James J. Londis, a pastor whose preaching often reflects his own love of fine literature, explains why God himself may be said to love stories.

This section also contains original musical compositions, original poems and an illustrated talk on the subject of abstract art. Ottilie Stafford, of our Board of Editors, deserves thanks not only for her article on the holiness of beauty, but also for working on this special section through most of the past year.

In his article on God-talk today, Richard Rice explains the difficulty in telling the Gospel to what one writer calls "the complete twentieth century man," that is, the person who has done his best to squeeze the last traces of orthodox religion from his soul.

Gary Land, also of our Board of Editors, takes up the difficult question of how the Christian historian (who believes in the providence of God) should approach his scholarly work.

With this issue, we welcome one more member to the SPECTRUM Board of Editors. Tom Dybdahl, already known to readers from having written two SPECTRUM pieces in the past year, is a graduate of the Columbia School of Journalism and press aide on the congressional staff of Representative Ned Pattison of New York.

The Editors