A Study of Principles and Techniques Involved in Church Drama

Edith D. Bruce

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A STUDY OF PRINCIPLES AND TECHNIQUES
INVOLVED IN CHURCH DRAMA

by

Edith D. Bruce

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Science

Division of Graduate Instruction
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This study has developed from a growing interest in drama in the church. Since youth, I have always felt that there were artistic and creative ways to support great truths of our society. Finding much encouragement from those around me in church, school and community, I have found myself going from one project to another trying to get across ideas and thoughts through the use of "novel" methods.

Every Sunday School teacher or leader of the church's Easter, Christmas, Anniversary, Summer Church School and special dinner programs to say nothing of the leader in scouts, school money raising campaigns, variety shows and philanthropic projects knows the endless planning that goes into all of these.

Although I do not resent most of the frustration and time spent on such things, I do feel that had I had the knowledge I have found in making this study I could have more wisely guided some of these events and put others in much better perspective and even omitted a few.

1What a beautiful awakening to find that Greek tragedy and Shakespeare also made use of some of the same techniques and methods!
On the other hand, I feel the efforts in these projects have aided me in better understanding of drama in the church. I now find that methods and techniques I have always used have names and can be measured in consideration to the whole picture.

My first acknowledgment of thanks must go to my husband and daughter who have so generously allowed their wife and mother to play the role of student and dramatist and participate on many occasions at the expense of time and energy that very well could have gone to them. They not only allowed me this privilege but encouraged me in many ways.

My association with the drama group at First Baptist Church of Indianapolis brought about more serious consideration of the challenge of church drama and led to my enrollment at Christian Theological Seminary.

The opportunities and experiences offered at Christian Theological Seminary have left me with impressions which I shall always cherish and many of these have helped me develop this paper.

Dr. Alfred R. Edyvean, Professor of Communications at CTS has influenced me in so many areas of drama and communications, it would be impossible to separate my own thoughts from those acquired in working with him in his productions and as his Drama Assistant.

Television and Drama Workshops held in association with CTS have also provided me with opportunities to meet others who work in Church Drama and to share their experiences. These workshops have also provided opportunities to meet and work
with such outstanding people as Dr. Martha Cornick, Professor of Dance at Butler University and Dr. Helen Kromer, writer of religious drama.

Dr. Cornick has not only shared insight into movement and choreography for several dramas presented at CTS and worked with classes I have attended on general movement in drama; but she has allowed me personal interviews on several occasions to discuss teaching procedures for possible use in religious drama groups.

Dr. Helen Kromer taught a workshop class which I attended. She shared some of her procedures in writing religious drama and presented insight into some of her musical dramas, such as For Heaven's Sake!, Hannah, and Sure As You're Born. It was also my privilege to receive her advice on certain production problems in costuming, sets, makeup and properties when CTS produced For Heaven's Sake!

My studies and experiences at Butler University in voice and diction, acting and design have proved invaluable in my endeavors to understand the whole area of drama. Much help has come from Mr. Tom Adkins of their Drama Department.

Other influences in the area of drama have come from experiences in Indianapolis with Footlite Musicals. I have had opportunities to participate in small ways and watch their productions develop; and most recently, as their new director of Futulites, have been active in setting up a program for their children's theatre.

The Junior Civic Theatre has also permitted me to observe production and directing techniques. They have also
given me an opportunity to serve as costume director and observe set construction techniques for several shows. Mrs. Margaret Roberts, actress, director and children's theatre director for over twenty-five years, has become one of my favorite consultants and sources of inspiration.

It has also been my privilege to follow and make contributions to North Central High School's Musical production, Sound of Music, given in the Fall of 1967.

Much of this paper originated from the study in preparation for teaching religious drama workshop at Epworth Forest, North Webster, Indiana, summer of 1967. Dr. Edyvean and Dr. Cornick aided and assisted me in the selection of the material to be presented.

My intent in this paper is to present a study of much that is involved in church drama--historical background, definition of, how it is used, some of its tools and techniques, audience consideration, some insight into acting and certain indications of the future of religious drama.

The desire to express this has grown from the many who have approached me, knowing my interest in religious drama, asking how they can get started doing drama in their church. I also expect to present this for use in my own drama group as a general study guide for those who come into our group, interested but uninformed.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The church of today is feeling the growing pains of all society. She is being faced with the same problems of growth in organization and administration that confront the business and professional areas of life. Methods of approach to meeting the challenge of their endeavors are constantly changing.

The general practitioner once served the medical needs of a family quite adequately. Today, because of growth in population, education, and the demands of higher qualified doctors in different areas, we now find specialists of every description. The general store, where once all purchasing needs and desires could be fulfilled, has now been replaced by thousands of specialty stores from groceries to clothing and from candy to wig shops. Insurance which once meant the wife would be taken care of financially if the husband died, now, is so complicated that the average man would have to check his files or with his insurance adviser to know how he is actually covered—car, house, hospitalization, wife, children, retirement, education, life, etc. The school systems are trying to find the "educational balance" among the basics, science, art and culture, technical, and athletic. Transportation is
no longer a question of car, train, plane or bus, but a hundred or more combinations of travel plans including credit and travel agency considerations.

The church, too, has changed. It has gone from the body of persons whose spiritual guidance was encouraged by one man to specialized guidance in music, religious education, visitation, business administration, counselling, and there is increasing evidence of the need for higher qualified personnel in the area of religious drama. This is substantiated by the number of pastors who seek knowledge in the dramatic arts, the job specifications which call for educational directors with dramatic training, and choir directors who are called upon to present combination programs in drama and music.

Larger churches are beginning to consider the acquisition of a full time minister of drama. Some churches have engaged such staff assistance. Others are making plans for these in the future.

This is not surprising to workers in church drama. They are constantly reminded of the values of Christian ministry through the medium of drama. There seems to be a cry for more guide lines, emotional involvement and expressions of worship. Drama can offer this but it takes special understanding and training.

Drama should be as well planned as the minister's sermon. It should present the gospel, meet the needs of the worshipers, and inspire involvement. It requires organization, rehearsal time, and equipment just as a good choir requires.
These considerations are necessary because drama is expected to accomplish what many sermons accomplish and often more than what is expected of a choir.

It is expected to inform, enlighten, influence, inspire, and is becoming more and more used by religious education programs of the church.

While doing all this, drama is also expected to entertain. It is being called on more and more for celebrations and recognition type programs.

For these reasons, it seems expedient that we take a look at the general structure of church drama and the principles and techniques involved in its use.

This study will present principles and techniques involved in church drama and some concluding statements.

The "principles", referred to in this paper are meant to clarify the origin and historical significance of the drama used in the church today, to point out the challenge it offers our constantly changing situations; to offer a breakdown of definitions which are often used interchangeably; and to note uses made of church drama.

The "techniques", referred to in this paper are the tools with which a drama group works to accomplish a ministry for the glory of God. These include analyzing the play, casting, blocking and specific attention to acting and its considerations of voice, movement and other relationships to the audience.

Techniques such as sets, lights, costumes, makeup, and properties are not excluded from this paper because they
are any less significant and vital to a production. They do lend themselves to line, space, color, and form rules which will be discussed in this paper and because of these rules must be given serious consideration.

Another general statement can be made of sets, lights, costumes, makeup, and properties. This is that if they are "right" they are not closely observed by the audience, but if they are wrong, they can weaken the entire production and leave it ineffectual and short of its mission.

However, in the church, these technical aspects are given much less emphasis because of the nature of the purpose and the involvement of specific training necessary to make use of them and, in some instances, the danger of using them wrongly.

This does not mean they should be ignored, not at all. As much time as possible should be given them because of their ability to enhance the production, and the opportunity it provides for those who are creative and can make a contribution in this manner.

Information regarding these technical problems can be acquired by reading the specified chapters in Dean, Gassner, or Nelms listed in the selected bibliography of this paper or can be selected from any number of public library sources. To attempt to cover this, even generally, would detract from the specific intention of this paper, which is to encourage church drama.

To get tangled in a maze of complicated factors which need not be complicated is unnecessary. All that is
really needed is a group of people who have the desire to pay tribute to the Lord through drama. The other necessary elements can be learned from study and experience.
CHAPTER II

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DRAMA

The drive for man to mimic or to express what he sees and feels is not new. It is accepted as innate. It is obvious in the lower forms of animals. We see the cat teach her kittens the art of cleanliness or the bird teach her young to fly by means of imitation.

It was obvious in our primitive ancestors who moved in rhythm to express thanks to the only powers they knew—the sun, the rain, the earth, etc. Likewise, they moved to stir emotions strong enough for effective hunts or wars. They soon felt the drama of excitement in these for the sake of entertainment and so used them in their ceremonies and celebrations for this purpose. However, their main purpose and function remained religious and didactic.

Greek tragedy is known to have developed from the ceremonial dances and songs of the religious festivals in honor of Dionysus, god of fertility. When an individual dressed himself as the god Dionysus and had the others of the group become the god's followers, impersonation was established and acting began.

These festivals of religious nature, which gave birth to drama, were produced by the state. Soon prizes were offered
for the best drama and contests became an annual affair. The theatre was the place of worship and the only scenery was an altar.

From the beginning the drama was to ask questions about human existence and human destiny. The theatre where this took place brought together masses of people and became a great social as well as educational institution.¹

Greek comedy also left its mark of growth from orgiastic ritual to a magnificent combination of poetry, acting, and pageantry. These contributions remain today as interpreters and evaluators of contemporary life.

After the Greek influence, drama became an instrument of pleasure without serious or religious responsibility. Drama, as well as civilization, deteriorated and did not regain its dignity until the Elizabethan Era and the glorious years of Shakespeare, Marlowe and Jonson. This peak in literature and drama recognizes in a universal way man's worth and projects a hope with tremendous magnitude.

After the Shakespearean Era, drama had another decline and did not come back into its own until the beginning of the contemporary drama and the first drama of noteworthy social significance, written by Henrik Ibsen.²

Modern drama is accepted as having grown from the ritual of the medieval church. It grew from re-enactment of

²Ibid., p. 91.
the stories of the Bible and as these gained popularity, they became so well attended they moved to the steps of the churches, from there to the grounds around the church and from there to the market places and to rolling platforms. As it left the influence of the church it became much more secular and soon gained disfavor of the church.

Howe refers to drama as "Religion's Prodigal Daughter".

To survey the whole development: religion in ancient times gave drama its birth; religion at the coming of this modern age gave drama its rebirth; religion created drama, nourished it, imbued it with dignity and purpose; and drama grew up to be religion's prodigal daughter.¹

At any rate, after centuries of alienation, we are witnessing in our day a return of drama to the church and the "recognition by churchmen of the religious dimensions of the theatre."²

John Mason Brown suggests the strong revival of worthwhile drama began in the "full lean years" of the depression when--

... America, rich and poor, tightened its belt and opened its mind. The breadlines, which fed the stomachs of the poor, nourished doubts in the consciences of the rich and poor alike. Starvation in the midst of plenty was food for thought.³


So we see that drama was used for religious purposes before it was used to entertain. Its power to influence, inform, and enlighten is not to be denied. Even the pure entertainer, if there is such a thing, does not fail to recognize the ethical and educational potentialities of his art and the power it has over the human minds and hearts.

Further, the church and other institutions in our society recognize with growing concern the loss of spiritual strength and moral stamina. We have watched other civilizations fall because of this deterioration and if we are to profit from history, it seems we must make use of this powerful instrument of drama to help us see what we are and what we can become and ultimately project the image of Christ.

Albert Johnson says:

... Before we can "become" we must project the image of what we can become. We must witness imitation of the Christlike life if we would imitate the Christ. Drama, being both reenactment and imitation, is the medium through which we not only hold the mirror up to nature but also catch the vision of what we can become.1

J. Edward Moseley upholds this significance of symbolism when he asks "How can God be approached unless he be embodied in that which the senses can grasp?"2

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Halverson quotes John Lehman:

"... life is more complex and more mysterious than the textbooks of progress ever told us. And we look around for symbols that shall re-create faith within the enlarged circumference of this new awareness... even if those symbols should lead us back to a rediscovery of the central meaning of Christianity, restored through the discarding of outworn and corrupted images." ¹

Lehman is primarily referring to the dramatic quality in the worship service itself but this statement may apply to other types of drama in the church as well.

Boyd seems to take for granted the need for symbolization and precisely comments on the "dramatic instinct":

"Since this is a God-implanted instinct, and since it like other instincts, demands some opportunities of expression, and since it is the church's business and its supreme opportunity to minister to the whole of life, it naturally follows that there must be a place for dramatization in the church." ²

With the need for man to sense his purpose and emotions through symbolization coupled with man's innate desire to mimic, we can see that drama not only has a place in the church but a responsibility to serve the church. The challenge is to be able to recognize these principles, the importance of the techniques of drama, and to be able to use them to their greatest potentiality.

In other words, we must understand what we wish to communicate. We must understand the instrument with which

¹Halverson, op. cit., p. 3.

we communicate it, and the techniques which make the instrument work with precision.

As suggested, our first step in understanding what it is we wish to communicate is to define it. What, then, is drama? What are some of the ways others have defined it? And what are the various kinds of church drama and their uses?

Drama is responding. It is responding on the part of the playwright as he interprets life. It is responding on the part of the actor as he interprets the play and on the part of the audience as it responds to the actor and in turn to the playwright, and measures these with his own past responses.

"It is life in motion seen at times of especial significance." It is "a reflector and a molder of the spirit of the people." It is imitation of action through a series of incidents with human agents in dialogue. It is "reenactment and imitation." It is man's expression of the nature of life. It is "... action, a situation of decision and conflict running its course to a resolution, and the dramatic reality of a character lies in the choice which is made and what he does in pursuance of that choice."4

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2Johnson, op. cit., p. xlv.

3Ibid., p. x.

Dean, in his chapter on "Drama as Art", says it is "man's interpretation of life expressed in a way that can be universally recognized and understood," and further states "The purpose of all art is to arouse the emotions."\(^1\)

In arousing emotions, it then seems logical that man will further be stirred to deeper realization of life and his relationships in life. This ultimately would inspire us both intellectually and emotionally and lead us to a better understanding of our purpose and responsibilities.

Religious drama incorporates all of what we could refer to as "drama" and is not considered a kind of drama but a quality of drama. Ehrensperger states: "It is produced like any other type of drama, but the quality of the production is judged by the artistic and theatrical results as well as by a quality inherent in the process of production itself."\(^2\)

He goes on to point out that drama is not religious because it uses material that comes from the religious books or other sources although these may be used but "Drama is truly religious when it shows meaning and purposes in life that grow from the revelation of the highest values conceivable. It seeks to relate man to the totality of his being."\(^3\)


\(^2\) Ehrensperger, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

\(^3\) Ibid., p. 67.
Other notable comments by Ehrensperger are worthy of consideration in understanding the meaning of religious drama.

Religious drama presents characters in action in situations where faith and belief are tested in lives of people at tension moments.

Religious drama is man's straining away trying to make something of himself because he is endowed with this capacity by his creator.

Religious drama, furthermore, deals with characters, situations, and themes that are clarified by means of religion, by man's relationship with his God, with himself, and with his fellowman because of the nature and meaning of his God. It should have high seriousness of purpose whether it is comic or tragic. It derives its meaning from man's struggle to fulfill his destiny to the best of his ability. It communicates life on its deepest level. 1

Ehrensperger also quotes Roderick Robertson who suggests three basic areas of human experience which religious drama may treat. These include (1) "man's state as unrelated to God and may be called the drama of 'religious alienation'." An example of this would be Eugene O'Neil's *Days Without End.* (2) "... it deals with the process through which man goes in order to achieve his relationship to God and may be called the 'drama of the religious experience'." Example: Ronald Duncan's *This Way to the Tomb.* (3) "In the third group are dramas concerned with the person who has found a successful orientation to God, or the 'drama of the religious hero'." Example: Shaw's *Saint Joan.* 2

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However, there are probably no forms or style of drama that cannot be performed to the glory of God, given the right circumstances. All drama has religious values or is strikingly significant for its lack or disregard of values. Howse says, "We may see goodness vanquished, but our hearts are on the side of goodness. We may see evil victorious, but we loathe it even in its victories." He also quotes George Morrison who says about Shakespeare "with the glowing certainty that the good are the real victors though they perish and that heaven, though dark with clouds, is on their side."¹

It seems evident then that we can suggest certain values in drama that could label it "religious drama". These are (1) It treats man's human condition--his loneliness, insecurity, guilt, struggle etc. This could include his relationship with others. (2) It treats man's spiritual condition--his recognition of a power greater than man and his relationship to this power. (3) It has depth of meaning. It deals with great truths and ideas that are universally recognized. (4) It has a "reeling tone"--a mood such as is recognized in Thornton Wilder's Our Town.

It would be fortunate indeed if we could find a great number of dramas that covered all these areas or even several of them but too often we must be content to find dramas which deal with one or more of them.

¹Howse, op. cit., p. 20.
Thus far this paper has dealt with drama as it relates to religious values and has reserved the specific area of Christian values in drama for specific discussion. Obviously, all Christian drama is religious drama but not all religious drama is Christian.

Christian drama is more specific. (1) It treats man as a totally responsible human being with freedom of choice. (2) It suggests an inherent relationship between man and God and that man's nature is best understood through this relationship. (3) It deals with Christian ideals and doctrines. Examples of this would be the Bible, love, fellowship, justice, salvation, prayer, the church, God, Faith, etc. (4) It recognizes Jesus as the Saviour. (5) It offers hope and redemption.

Further clarification of these points will be noted in specific analyses of dramas in the appendixes.

These values may be pointed to literally or symbolically through plot or characterization, and may include such technical devices as sets, lighting and costumes.

In essence, religious drama relates human wills and emotions to the Divine and Christian drama points "The Way" in which they are related.

The uses of drama are many and varied but can be placed in certain categories for the purposes of the church.

The first use of drama is as worship. Drama can be worship and worship is drama. It has and will continue to be. It originated, as we have noted, as an expression of the religious life of primitive peoples. It continues to be significant. It has changed its forms or attitudes towards its
forms but continues to be the means by which man relates to God. It is characterized by a deep emotional overtone, not just intellectual acceptance. And there is general acceptance that all abstract concepts tend to find a concrete expression in symbolism. As Moseley states,

How can the overwhelming desire for the response be expressed unless it be through sensible form? Many of the higher things of life, as well as the lower, are discerned through the gateway of the senses.1

Secondly, we can consider drama as religious education. These uses are obvious. It offers insight into self, into others and how these relationships relate to God. It provides enlightenment of the scriptures and direction for maturity. It is a means by which we can relate the past experiences to the present and to the future with spiritual overtones.

These overtones may be built in or assumed because of the means we use to get to the ultimate end. By this, is suggested that a drama that treats human values with no reference to the spiritual man will assume a spiritual overtone because of the experiences of Christians working together in presenting it and the response of an audience spiritually motivated.

Thirdly, drama as art is an important consideration and should be understood by the church dramatist, lest it "muddy" the water. The questions arise in us all. Shall we consider it as "art for arts' sake"? Do we dare consider the art of drama as a "tool" alone? Is there a middle ground, or

1Moseley, op. cit., p. 59.
should there be such a thing as a middle ground? These questions do not exist if we turn again to the history of drama. The drama was religious and didactic long before it was aesthetic. The refinement and higher development of drama as art grew as man was able to "give up" drama as a necessity against fear of the unknown gods and need for education of the young, and "chose" it as a means to express his emotions because he enjoyed interpreting life in this manner. Because it is aesthetic does not eliminate any of its potentiality as a means of worship and education.

On the other hand, because it is religious and didactic does not mean it must lose any of its aesthetic quality. It will continue to be the most elevated art form as it presents itself through the medium of the human body, and uses the other art forms.

It is interesting to note the times in history when arts such as drama are recognized to be at their peak.

Dolman says,

Great art of all kinds usually follows a period of high religious and moral culture, when thought is growing more liberal and the ideals of goodness and beauty are seen in harmony; but begins to decline when religious and moral standards begin to disintegrate in a welter of extravagance, loose living, confusion and decadence.  

Fourthly, drama is the effective element in celebrations which give quality of meaning and purpose. In other words, to

celebrate an event is to dramatize its meaning. And thus we meet the challenge of the church by keeping these events alive. This is not to limit celebrations to Christmas and Easter but should include other events in the life of Christ, the ordinances of marriage and baptism and any significant events which would uphold Christian faith.

Fifthly, we recognize drama as recreational. This is not to suggest that it is an escape from life but a means by which one can throw themselves into life, to make life more meaningful and complete. It can do this in several ways. It obviously offers fellowship of those who enjoy the creative experience and desire to project the Christian way of life in this manner. This overlaps with the opportunity to make use of the God-given instinct of mimicry to fruitful causes. It also offers opportunity to make use of technical skills and creative arts in a community effort.

To summarize the use of drama in the church, we could suggest the church needs imagination and the drama instinct.

If we are to be persons who are sensitive to other men, if we are to relate ourselves to God, if we are to worship and pray effectively, we must have the capacity to imagine these things, for no matter how wide our contacts and our life span, we cannot know all of these things through direct experience. There must be a means by which we can experience these things emotionally, motivated by what we see, hear and feel. Church drama offers this opportunity.

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1 Ehrensperger, op. cit., p. 100.
In providing this opportunity, it also brings with it certain responsibilities. This is the responsibility to do the drama well. If it's worth doing, it's worth doing well. The return of "this ancient art to its ancient home" demands that if it is to be effective, we must keep improving dramatic techniques--continually removing the stigma of inept, poorly written, and ill-prepared presentations that have branded drama as "tools of the devil" by the prejudiced churchman and a "pious and holy retreat" by the unchurched man.

Johnson presents the optimism that so many, who work in religious drama, feel:

Drama has returned to her ancient home, but her future in the church is a challenge that staggers the imagination. The human need in this exploding world cries out for the best our playwrights, actors, and directors can produce. That 'best' may come via the commercial theatre, but there is an even- Steven chance that the church will be the institution to bring about the drama renaissance.2

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2 Ibid., p. 177.
CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES, THE TOOLS OF THE DRAMATIST

It should be acknowledged at this point that this study of techniques will not make specific reference to the use of the dramatic in the worship service although many of the same elements are involved. It will deal primarily with the drama or play.

Distinction should also be made, at this point, between dramas and dramatic skits or dramatized lessons. Such skits and dramatizations are sometimes used in the church and cause much of the feeling of dullness and apathy that has given religious drama the stigma its new leaders are trying to live down. This is not to argue that there is no place for skits and dramatizations in the educational program of the church, but they should be referred to as skits and dramatizations and not dramas or plays; and much encouragement should be given for better writing and better presentations of this kind of material.

Good plays for the church are not easy to find, but again there are many encouraging signs that the church is rapidly coming to realize that "we must speak frankly, freely, and truthfully about sex, marital relations, the home, delinquency, war, exploitation, labor, imperialism, and discrimination
of all kinds."\(^1\) even if they are disturbing. "So was the gospel of Jesus in his day!"\(^2\) Church drama is beginning to eye better plays of Ibsen, Shaw, Hauptmann, O'Neil, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams although they are not quite ready to do them in the church. However, youth groups and workshops are beginning to view them for religious values which is a giant stride in itself. And as secular films become more available this opens a whole area of communication for the church to observe.

One of the first questions we face is, "What are the components of a good play?" Ehrensperger quotes Aristotle in the Poetic giving six components which still may guide the play analyst. (1) It should have a "worthy theme". This is the idea of the play, the subject, the dramatic situation, the idea behind the tension situation that is being treated. Aristotle suggests tragedy must have a sublime, elevated theme. (2) It should have "convincing characters". The character should be real enough to be believed and identified with, and should be convincing. (3) The play should contain a "well-knit plot". It should be a plot that holds together. It is fastened together be a sequence of events which lead from one to the other so that the audience is kept interested and attentive. Within this plot there should be unity of action. (4 ) Aristotle refers to "memorable diction".

\(^1\) Ehrensperger, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 121.

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 121.
Today, we might state this differently. It is suggested that the diction should belong to the characters and should be characteristic of the play. (5) The "contributing melody" may mean either the melody of the words themselves as they are spoken or the use of melody accompanying the words. Music is capable of creating emotional responses within the play or accompanying the play. (6) The last component mentioned by Aristotle, "the attendant spectacle"¹, has brought on a whole new perspective to the modern dramatist. It allows for the spectacle to be an inherent aspect of the theatre. This is all inclusive—from the auditorium itself to the sets, costumes, lights, etc.

Other qualities which may or may not be suggested in Aristotle's components would include such things as: The subject matter should be worth the time and energy of the participants and audience. Subject matter should be pertinent to and related to the purpose in production. It is to its favor if the work has literary merit. And the production should be one which is reasonable for the range of abilities, equipment, financial budget and time schedules. Above all it should have "energy of imagination". This is to say, it must not only make us see, but make us see with energy—that which the play is meant to present.

These suggestions for analyzing drama apply to all good drama in the church or outside it. However, more

¹Ibid., p. 23.
specifically, the church drama would incorporate those elements discussed previously in the definitions of religious and Christian drama. Namely, man's human condition, his spiritual condition, having depth of meaning, a feeling tone, and dealing with man's inherent relationship with God, other Christian ideals and doctrine, including hope and redemption, and recognition of man as a totally responsible being. These guidelines and others have been included in the analyses of King Lear and J. B. in Appendixes I and II.

After the play has been selected and copies secured the play is then ready to be cast. In organized drama groups publicity is generally put into the bulletin or spread by way of announcements that tryouts are to be at a specified time. In some churches this may be done as part of the social program of the drama group, but however it is done, it is the responsibility of the director to make the atmosphere as relaxed as possible.

After the play is read and questions about it cleared by the director, individuals may be asked to read for specific parts.

Sometimes the director chooses to cast by personal interview, where he may or may not read the play. This, too, should be as relaxed an atmosphere as possible.

In organized groups where talent is known from experience, casting can be done more easily with fewer chances but this does not leave room for growth of the organization. There must be a balance somewhere between
using well trained talent and offering an opportunity for others to grow through the experiences offered.

After all have had an opportunity to read in the casting session, the possibilities of definite cast can be reduced. The director then considers (1) physical appearance in general, (2) age, (3) voice quality and diction, and (4) sense of movement and rhythm.

In further determining the suitability of an actor for a part, the director must carefully consider five factors. These are "(1) sense of theatre and background, (2) sensitivity and imagination, (3) audience appeal and power of projection, (4) acting experience, (5) personal tonality, and (6) playing ability for kind and style of play."¹

The sense of the theatre and background is determined in many ways by a director. He notes educational and social backgrounds and the actors comprehension and understanding of the play and his sensitivity to the theatre requirements.

Sensitivity and imagination is determined by the actors sense of movement and rhythm and his ability to be creative in specific circumstances.

Audience appeal and power to project includes the general appearance, voice quality and diction, grace and precision of movement and pantomime and general personal magnetism from the standpoint of an audience.

¹Johnson, Church Plays and How to Stage Them.
Acting experience may or may not be known. If it is, of course, the director can more easily imagine what he might be in other roles. It is suggested that experience and actual technique often weigh heavier than personal, physical, and emotional qualities.

Personal tonality is the final check in casting. This is the consideration of personal, physical, and emotional tonality in relationship to other characters in the play and the actor's rightness for the particular kind of play and its style. This is analyzed by the actor's degree of softness, hardness, lightness, heaviness, genuineness, artificiality, and so forth. These should be considered separately from an actor's ability to achieve these.

Before final casting, the director should see the prospective group in the acting area and view them as an audience would.

Other considerations should include contrasts in coloring, heights, personal tonality, and voices. It must never be forgotten that drama is based on its element of conflict. These things as well as the lines help to bring about the response to art presented.

Another important consideration for the good of the play lies in the ability of the participants to cooperate and get along as a composite whole. Many theatrically informed are incapable of submitting to direction and molding of the unit and therefore should be approached with caution. The church cannot afford not to be generous on this point and should always make an effort to find ways to deal with this situation.
You are now ready to set up rehearsals. Rehearsals are determined by the availability of the people involved, the equipment needed, the time of the performance and the type and nature of the play.

Rehearsals should include a specific purpose for each session. These may include: reading and studying the whole play, blocking, and business, runthroughs, adjusting to these aspects, characterization, memorization of lines, rhythm and timing, transitions, costume and technical evaluation and dress rehearsals.

In general, rehearsals are divided into four main working areas—(1) study, (2) blocking-out, (3) enrichment period, and (4) refinement and coordination.

Scheduling rehearsals in the church can sometimes offer its own unique problems. You not only have to work around the busy schedules of the actors but must fit these schedules into the often overcrowded program of the church. This takes a great deal of extra time and in many instances of "give and take"—properly recognized as diplomacy.

Other problems that must be coped with is the personality sensitivity of which the church seems to have an over abundance. The fact these should not be there does not lessen the fact they are there and must be recognized and not be allowed to cause serious hindrance to the mission to be accomplished. The answer would seem to be to attempt to use the sensitivity creatively.

Once the play has been selected, read and interpreted for values in meaning and art, casting completed,
the characters understand their relationship to the play, the
scene design in mind, and the rehearsals set, the director is
now ready for that all inclusive job called "blocking".

Ehrensperger states that blocking "indicates the posi-
tions and movements of the actors within the playing space so
that audience sight lines are good, and the actors' movements
do not block each other from the sight of the audience."¹
Gassner seems to complete this definition of blocking in his
answer to "What is business?" He states that "It is the art
of 'movement', designed to convey both the maximum 'clarity of
motivation' and the maximum 'effectiveness of emotion',
either independent of or in collaboration with the spoken
word."²

Blocking begins with the understanding of the basic
materials with which the director works--the actor and the
stage.

The actor's emotional contact with the audience is
influenced by his body position to the audience. Eliminating
other factors of influence, these are: (1) A full-front posi-
tion to the audience is very strong. (2) One-quarter turned-
away position is still strong but less so than the full front.
(3) The profile, or one-half turned, position is less strong.
(4) The three-quarter turned-away position is weak--the only

¹Ehrensperger, op. cit., p. 135.

²John Gassner, Producing the Play (New York: The
really weak position. (5) The full-back position is as strong as profile but, other things being equal, not so strong as a one-quarter turn.

The stage is divided into three definite parts by two equidistant imaginary lines running from downstage to upstage and perpendicular to the footlights. These parts are designated as right, or R, center, or C and left, or L. R and L are from the actor's R and L and not from the audience's.

Considering the strength of these three parts of the stage we find that C is the strongest, that R is strong, and that L borders on the weak.

If halfway between upstage and downstage we draw a line parallel to the footlights across these three parts, we shall divide the stage into six major areas, each having a designated name. These are Down Right or DR, Down Center or DC, Down Left or DL, Up Right or UR, Up Center or UC, and Up Left or UL.

All other factors being equal, the result of the strength of each area should be in this order: DO (strongest), UC, DR, DL, UR, UL. Both UR and UL are too weak to be used for important scenes unless they have other factors of composition to strengthen them.

Effective blocking takes in consideration the planes of the stage. These are imaginary lines that are parallel to the footlights. These lines are as long as the scenery opening and as wide as the actor standing in the plane. All other factors being equal—that is, the position of the body and the level and distance from left to right being the
same—the figure upstage, or near the rear wall. The degree of strength of the actor lessens proportionately as the figure withdraws upstage.

Levels, too, have their influence in blocking. By levels is meant the height of an actor above the stage floor. Except for sharp contrasts of an actor to that of the other actors on the stage, it is generally accepted that the higher the level of the figure the stronger his position. These levels vary from lying on the floor, sitting on the floor, sitting in a chair, sitting on the chair's arm, standing, standing on one step, two steps, three, etc., until he reaches the height of a stairway or high platform. Of course, levels can be created by use of other unique structures.

With the understanding of the inherent quality in the positions of the actor and the areas, planes, and levels of the stage, the director is ready to weave these into other considerations in blocking. Alexander Dean separates these into five classifications: Composition, Picturization, Movement, Rhythm, and Pantomimic Dramatization.¹ For the sake of an outline, these shall be considered separately as a means to an end in blocking.

COMPOSITION. Composition is the structure, form, or design of the group. It is capable of expressing the feeling, quality, and mood of the subject through color, line, and form (or mass): It does not tell the story, nor give the meaning

¹Dean, op. cit., p. 137.
of the picture. It is the technique; it is not the conception. Dean gives the definition of composition as "the rational arrangement of the people in a stage group through the use of emphasis, stability, sequence, and balance, to achieve an instinctively satisfying clarity and beauty."\(^1\)

The first consideration of composition is in emphasis. Once it has been determined who or what group is to receive emphasis, it can then be obtained through (1) body position, (2) area, (3) plane, (4) level, (5) contrast. To avoid monotony and create interest each of these should be used with variety.

Other methods of obtaining emphasis is through "space". Space around a figure gives it emphasis.

"Repetition" gives emphasis. Whenever a figure is repeated by another figure at a short space behind it, the figure is emphasized. As the number of the rear figures is increased, the emphasis is increased. This is true of furniture as well as actors.

"Focus" is another means of emphasis with many faces. There is the diagonal line to upstage which focus the upstage figure. The visual line is used especially effectively when the focused object is offstage or when it is a very small object on stage or when it is deliberately covered as in the case of a physical fight, a mutilated body, a killing, or a corpse. A group of actors looking at one point will cause the

\(^{1}\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 137.}\)
audience to follow their lines of vision to the same point. The *apex of the triangle* is consistently mentioned by authors on the subject and most of them stress the importance of variety in the use of the triangle for focus. Suggested ways of varying it might be: to change the size, form, position of apex, or placement of the triangle or by a variation in the spacing, in the straightline formation, or in the levels of the figures to the basic form or by the use of counterfocus (figure or figures moving against obvious direction of movement). The semicircle is another method used for focus.

It is important to recognize the four kinds of emphasis. There are (1) Direct. This is the arrangement of figures on the stage so that the attention goes directly, easily, and quickly to one emphatic figure. (2) Duo-Emphasis. This is the arrangement of figures so that the attention goes to two of equal importance in a scene. (3) Diversified. This is where any number of persons may be emphasized individually and take the focus of the composition. (4) Secondary. This is a figure or object that does not take the emphasis of itself but is responded to. Examples of this would be the infant in the Solomon Story, a ring, a mortgage, a piece of furniture, a letter, or even a body of corpse.

After the important figure or figures are emphasized, the next step in composition is to add *stability*. This is the "tying down" of a scene or making use of lines.

Some instances do not lend themselves to be tied together by line so it becomes necessary to tie them together
by space. This is called sequence. It is space relationship. In effect it is a regularly recurring accent.

Balance is another important factor in composition. A psychological friction is felt when a stage is not in balance. When one part of the stage composition is equalized in weight with the other, the composition is said to have balance. This can be done with placement of people as well as furniture. There must also be a balance of the setting, furniture, and costumes.

It would be unfair to leave the subject of composition without acknowledging the importance of the emotional feeling aroused in the spectator from the arrangement of line, color, and form. This is known as "mood". It is significant in itself, and supplements and reinforces all other elements of the play.

PICTURIZATION. Picturization is the story telling quality. It gives us the meaning, or thought, or subject in a stage group. It is the concept as contrasted to composition which is the technique. Many writers approach these two together and discuss them as "Groupings".

The first step in picturization is to divide the play into scenes and analyze the scene so that it may be definitely titled. Is it a scene of struggle, of love, of forgiveness, of oppression, of suspicion, etc.?

The mood qualities that are inherent in the title should be determined. If it is a title of suspicion for a situation in which six people are each suspecting the other, we should have awareness, unrest, nervousness.
The nature of the mood in terms of mood value of compositions such as line, color and form should be expressed. Then it should be expressed in technical terms of composition.

The background of the situation, characters, and setting should be visualized.

The characters should be roughly placed in the proper parts of the stage and in a manner that will express their emotional attitude or relationship of their primitive emotions in terms of their cultural and environmental background.

The factors of composition should be applied that will, in particular, stress the emphatic characters or objects.

The last step in the complete creation of our picturization on stage is to develop the attitude of the individual actor.

Picturization takes emotions observed from life and incorporates them in body expression and relates them to other characters of a grouping.

**MOVEMENT.** Often a scene will play itself out while it is being read but in general, the moving pattern of the play should be worked out after the set is designed and before the rehearsals start. An important factor that cannot be over emphasized is that each movement should correspond exactly to the motive which causes it. Gassner says, "Every movement is a glass to reveal more clearly the mood of the actor."\(^1\)

\(^1\)Gassner, *op. cit.*
Movementshouldbe "visual rhythm". It should move in a certain rhythm, always creating the capacity to stop.

There are four divisions of movement: **Body Movement** such as stepping back or forward, rising or declining, strength or weakness of posture etc., **stage movement** which includes line movement into stronger or weaker areas and planes. Movement from a lower to a higher level is strong. Length of movement is important in that long distance walks weakens unless broken up or counteracted in some way. Entrances and exits are important movement related to ground plan. Emphasis techniques should come into play here.

**Movement from stage left to right** is stronger than **movement from stage right to left**. This is explained by an analogy with the eye movement. As a general rule, **diagonal movement** is less strong than lines of movement parallel of perpendicular to the footlights, but the diagonal line is longer and seems much more so than these others. It seems to traverse a great distance and even seems to extend off-stage. These are often used in important exits and entrances.

There are four general kinds of movement: **Story Movement** may be used to express the story of a play. **Background Movement** that establish locale and atmosphere. **Character Movement** which portray the type of character with which we are dealing or the character's stage of mind. This includes stage business which enriches the character and plot. **Technical Movements** which may be made for the aesthetic reasons of good composition or out of sheer necessity dependent upon clearing the stage for entrances and exits.
Much of movements operation seems to be to tie together composition and picturization.

**RHYTHM.** Rhythm of a play is the heartbeat and lungs that give vitality and power of attraction. It is the ease and effortlessness effect of a production. It is determined by the lines of the script itself, the locale and atmosphere and the characters. Its function in a play is to establish characterization, to convey change of scene or change of locale through change in rhythm, to tie together the actors into a coordinated group, and to tie together and blend all parts of the play.

Along with rhythm, we must consider tempo. Tempo is the speed of the rhythmic pattern, the pace of which it moves. It can be characterized as fast, slow, or medium. A change in tempo in no way changes the fundamental rhythmic pattern.

The rhythmic pattern through its change in tempo produces variety and the main build of a play.

**PANTOMIMIC DRAMATIZATION.** Pantomimic Dramatization makes use of facial expressions, gestures, hand operations, and body positions and movement that, observed from life, is used imaginatively to tell something about the elements of character, situation, locale, and atmosphere of a play. It makes use of composition, picturization, movement and rhythm as well as pantomime to convey, without the use of words, all the elements of a play. This term is used interchangeably with "business".
Essentials of good business is appropriateness, naturalness, precision, rhythmic appropriateness, proportions control, and interesting ground plan and setting.

The key word to business seems to be control. Opening business should be at a lower pitch and there are various controls involved in the middle of the play, at the end of scenes, and used according to the style and emphasis. All business used should be well controlled.

Needless to say blocking in advance of rehearsals will save much time in spite of adjustment to situations which might arise during the rehearsal periods.

With all the blocking considerations well under control and in harmony, the director is ready to fit these to the abilities of the actor with which he has chosen to work.

The actor in church drama may not always be the person with the most experience in theatre arts. Often the director is limited to those who are not experienced and so must train his cast. This makes it even more essential that those who would see drama in the church used most effectively be alert to the creative potential of the prospective actors. Whether one is an actor, director, critic or evaluator of church drama, it would be wise to familiarize themselves with the actor and techniques involved in acting.

One of the most fundamental problems in the art of acting is that of the actor's relationship with his audience.

It cannot be said too often that the church dramatist is not exempt from establishing a keen audience relationship. The audience may be more polite in some instances. But this
could be more of a disadvantage than an advantage. Because of the nature of some church dramas, the actor finds he must work harder for honest emotional relationship.

One of the problems lies in the fact that the actor's relationship with his audience has changed so much in history that the modern actor can well be confused. It has varied from the audience sitting on the stage, when favored members of an audience were permitted there, to complete naturalism and pictorial realism.

In the theatre today where all current standards are being challenged, new ones invented, and older ones tried out in competition, we find the typical unrest and questioning which exists in all phases of life in such a fast changing world. The theatre of today manifests a good deal of instability, and almost hysterical search for variety and novelty, and lack of standards. The church does not escape this.

Dolman says:

... A half-century ago there was one right way of acting a play; now there are nine-and-sixty, and (to paraphrase Kipling) 'every single one of them is right.'

With all these varieties there is naturally a good deal of dispute as to the proper relationship between actor and audience.

The realist insists the actor shall be a perfect objective image, completely aloof from his audience. Such terminology is used as "Be natural," "stay in the picture,

\[1\] Dolman, op. cit., p. 14.
preserve the illusion." Others demand intimacy, or artificiality, or creative interpretation. The actor is expected to be frankly theatrical, to be direct, impressive, facing an audience, not a photographic copy of a character in real life. The propagandist may say to be dynamic or to be a voice of protest; be a social force. And the comedian says to "be funny—no matter how!" It could be very confusing to the actor.

However, armed with the insight that we have an innate urge to imitate that which we see and feel and coupled with the desire to share imaginative and emotional experiences as both a participant and an observer, it seems only natural to find in this, not only the origin of the audience, but suggesting as well the true and proper relationship between actor and audience.

Dolman offers some attitude as a frame of reference for actors' relationship to his audience as he discusses subjectivity and objectivity of intimacy and detachment.

... The intimacy that is needed in the theatre is a subjective intimacy, a kind of hidden community of understanding between actor and audience. The detachment that is needed is an objective detachment, a material separation between actor and audience through which the actor may preserve the integrity of the illusion he is trying to create and at the same time keep it separate in the listener's imagination from the immediate realities of life.  

1 Ibid., p. 20.
He goes on to state that a good actor can manage both. He can be externally convincing, even realistic, in his acting, avoiding the sort of intimacy that breaks down aesthetic distance; while at the same time he can share with us, through some mysterious undercurrent of sympathy, his own inner appreciation and enjoyment of the play.¹

The final test, then, of an actor's attitude as with every other element of the play is the effect it has upon the audience.

The attitude of the audience is based on the stimuli provided, their previous experiences and attitudes and the reaction of others in the audience. Audiences have been, and are still, of many varieties but there are certain elements that can be identified and studied that are present in the various kinds of theatre.

The earliest and most primitive element is that of "open-mouthed wonder, or curiosity". We may laugh at the spectacle of the unsophisticated—the yokels of the world—and gaze in astonishment and admiration at the strange antics of their priests or jugglers or medicine men; but we must not forget that their attitude is an important element in human progress. Without wonder and curiosity human intelligence would never have progressed. Without wonder and curiosity there would never have been any theatre. In fact, the word "theatre, in its Greek original, meant "a spectators' place".

¹Ibid.
or "a place for seeing shows," and it came into use because the curious multitude crowded around to watch the priestly ceremonies. This capacity of the audience to wonder and admire has served the theatre as a beneficial stimulus. From it has grown a wider and livelier transcendent experience.

This is perhaps the crudest, most childlike element in audience attitude; but it is also the most vigorous, the most animating. Dolman states that, "It is far more honestly in the direct line of aesthetic evolution than the attitude of smug indifference affected by many modern sophis-
ticates."¹

The cultural centers of today rarely admit this existence of childlike wonder and these attempts receive criticism. The audience now are not satisfied with stunts, but demand imaginative consistency. It does not mean that audiences today are not thrilled and astonished by the same things. With knowledge and judgment present today the awe comes when it does find itself in the presence of fine thought or feeling, or of a really transcendent dramatic experience.

Another element in audience attitude is that of emotional fervor. It came to us as we have observed, from the religious motive in early drama, and from the war-dance type of self-excitation.

In early history, emotion was freely expressed but as we have become so worldly-wise and introspective as well

¹Ibid., p. 23.
as skeptical, we have become more and more afraid of entertain-
ing false beliefs, or sentiments, or conventions; and in our anxiety to escape the false we become suspicious of the true. Expression of emotions has come to be thought of as a sign of weakness, or unsophisticated and sometimes hypocrisy. But emotion thrives on suppression; the more we restrain it the more intense it grows. This is observed in the technique used on stage of not allowing the actor to literally cry but in obvious attempts to avoid crying the audience is moved.

Emotionalism must have its outlets and by restraining emotion on stage it provides motivation for the audience to respond.

Individually one is afraid to give way to sincere emotion, and especially to be seen doing so; but collectively are not so much afraid. This sense of being one of a crowd, all sharing the same emotion, is the chief reason why feeling can be released, and enables us to share the emotional experiences of the play without self-consciousness or cynicism.

Whether it be a church drama or secular, the actor knows these things and makes use of them.

Closely associated with emotional release is the release of imagination. This is primarily easier on stage than reading, radio, speech or other medium because involved is not only the auditory but the visual sense and the contagious aspects of others in the audience. This gives us motivation not to overact because the actor is playing to a group of people who are more imaginative, as well as more emotional, than the same people would be as individuals. This suggests
something must be left to their imagination. The whole story
does not have to be exposed. This is one of the most important
points to be learned about audience attitude.

"Empathy" is another audience attitude to be taken
into consideration. This word came from the attempt to trans-
late the German word "Einfühlung". It is suggested it is inner
mimicry. Every stimulus experienced by the human organism,
whether real or imagined, produces some sort of bodily response;
and when a bodily response is inhibited or suppressed it takes
the form of a motor attitude or muscular pattern—unseen, but
none the less real. If something is off balance, we try to
balance it. If it is strong at the base, we feel the strength
at the base physically. If it is light and fluffy, muscles
and nerves in our body adjust to this. This response is made
to all art and is a valuable consideration in audience attitude.

"Aesthetic distance", mentioned earlier in this paper,
as an influence in the attitude of the audience is debated by
many because of its variability. This is the amount of de-
tachment or intimacy of the actor to the audience. The
painter hangs his pictures in a frame to define the limits of
the composition and set it apart from the reality of its
surroundings. The sculptor mounts his statue on a pedestal
for the same reason. In the theatre situation, we make use
of the proscenium frame; the raised stage; the bright lights
of the stage in contrast to the darkness of the house; the
non-realistic elements in the setting or lighting; and, most
important of all, the impersonative, non-communicative
attitude of the actor.
In a general sense the aesthetic distance will vary largely depending on the audience. Children or unsophisticated adults, with their less critical imaginations and less restrained empathies, can enjoy a more intimate relationship with the actor and a greater sense of imaginative participation, without loss of aesthetic distance, than the audience of theatre-wise sophisticates.

Another attitude of the audience depends on the element of "the festival spirit". This is not to say the audience demand frivolous entertainment all the time, but to be effective there must be a certain sense of exaltation, a kind of holiday sensation, a feeling that something big and important is going on and they are in on the celebration. Too often because of the serious intent of church drama, there are those who would demand the serious things must be solemn, that nothing can be fine, or important, or artistic, unless it is also depressing, painful—even dull.

There is a craving for joy and merriment as observed by man's attempts to find this through all kinds of activity. Church drama cannot ignore elements of this any more than the secular theatre. Pity, terror, excitement, and exaltation are consistent with the festival spirit; but depression and disgust are not. And the wise actor in church drama will take this into consideration.

As we survey the field, we find that the first consideration of the actor is his relationship to his audience and, in turn, the audiences relationship to the actor. This is the starting point as well as the end result.
Overlapping, integrated, and included in the actor's relationship with his audience is the actor's abilities to make use of the physical and mental processes which he has at his disposal and manipulate them so as to communicate with art and precision the desired interpretation.

Actors and authors in the techniques of acting approach this process in many ways. Some seem terribly complicated where others seem to oversimplify the efforts involved.

In any case, the actor must always be conscious of the fact that he is both the artist and the instrument and must continue to work to improve both.

This uniqueness of the actor as both the artist and the instrument makes acting by far the most unusual of all arts. Dolman pictures it well.

... A sculptor works with chisels on marble, or with fingers on clay. A painter works with colors and brushes on canvas. A violinist plays upon a thing of wood and strings. But the actor plays upon himself; upon the whole of himself; upon his body, his movements, his facial expression, even his emotions and imagination. Subjectively he is the artist. Objectively he is the instrument.1

As the instrument, the actor becomes the character he is playing and must look, speak, and behave like the character.

As the artist, we think of him as independent of the character—as an interpreter, studying the character and making him intelligible and interesting to the observer.

1Ibid., pp. 32-33.
Chekhov suggests these two must play on one another. He states:

It is a known fact that the human body and psychology influence each other and are in constant interplay.

And goes on to describe:

... it is seldom that we find a complete balance or harmony between the body and psychology.

But the actor, who must consider his body as an instrument for expressing creative ideas on the stage, must strive for the attainment of complete harmony between the two, body and psychology.¹

Chekhov suggests exercises for four kinds of movement which he calls "molding", "floating", "flying" and "radiating".² Then he suggests duplicating through psychological and physical sensations the same as you experienced while actually moving. He also gives us four qualities that are present in every great piece of art. These are "Ease", "Form", "Beauty", and "Entirety". He states:

... These four qualities must also be developed by the actor; his body and speech must be endowed with them because they are the only instruments available to him on the stage. His body must become a piece of art within itself, must acquire these four qualities, must experience them inwardly.³

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² This paper will not deal with these as most any book on acting will cover these in some manner; and they are somewhat defined by comments on ease, form, beauty and entirety.

³ Chekhov, op. cit., p. 13.
"Ease" has to do with the lightness and/or heaviness of the movement and psychology. It is best accomplished in the flying and radiating exercises provided by Chekhov in his book, To the Actor.

"Form" is how completely and perfectly the actor plays the role. It is acquired best through molding exercises.

True "Beauty" is not only what the actor does but how he does it. It applies to the negative expressions of beauty as well as the positive. Beauty makes use of all four of Chekhov's movements.

By "Entirety" is meant the harmonious and comprehensible effect of the actor's whole part on the audience. All four movements are involved in this, needless to say.

All of these qualities and movements lead to the basic understanding and apply in the creating of the character. Two basic methods are analyzed to point the way that would seem best in creating the character. These are the objective way by observing life and duplicating them. But because this is almost impossible to perfect the subjective method is considered. This is to become completely sympathetic with the character, feeling his emotions and thinking his thoughts. This offers perfect results if there is a great deal of time but this is generally not the case. Stanislavsky's actors rehearsed a play for months and sometimes for years before they were ready to perform. It also is weak in projection if it is well mastered.

So it is generally accepted that a combination of the objective and the subjective methods produce the best and most economical results.
Nelms suggests the application of the objective method in the early stages of the play to include:

(1) the determination of the theme and treatment of the play, and the nature and functions of the characters; (2) the design of groupings and crosses and the invention of business; (3) all matters in which technique is of basic importance.

He states that there is no sharp break between the objective period and the subjective period which follows it. While actors are learning their lines and blocking, they are beginning to feel their way into their characters. Once the lines are learned the subjective method becomes dominant.

In the creation of a character, it is important to think the thoughts of the character in order to find the correct emotions. It is often helpful to work out a "silent script". These are words said to the actors self which projects a more complete interpretation.

It seems obvious then that the successful way to creating a character means calling upon observed experiences as well as finding inner emotions to express them, and making proper use of the techniques available.

The actor has two major tools at his disposal. The first, the body, has been dealt with in blocking and throughout the paper in one way or another, but little has been suggested of the importance of voice.

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The director of church drama must understand the uses of speech in order to cast effectively and be an interpreter of the lines in the play. The actor, too, must realize the importance of this tool and learn to use it to the best of his ability.

Nelms gives us five ways the actor uses speech.

He states that the actor uses speech to:

1. transmit the words of the play to the audience;
2. give special meaning to these words through inflections;
3. convey information about the nature and mood of the character (e.g., age, social position, strength, excitement, despair, rage, etc.);
4. control the mood of the audience much as music does;
5. provide variety. Unless your voice accomplishes all these simultaneously you are not using it to full effect.

Pronunciation is an important consideration to acting. International Phonetic Association offers a system of pronunciation with which the actor would do well to acquaint himself.

Voice production is always of utmost importance and so often spoils the effect of what could have been good drama if you could have heard it. There are several ways an actor could help this but primarily he must consider breath control and opening the mouth to let the sound out.

Diction, or the sounds necessary for clear speech, is a factor the actor must keep in mind and study if he is often misunderstood even though he pronounces his words correctly.

Variety is one of the most desirable aspects of the voice. The actor must have a variety in volume. He must be

1. Ibid., p. 112.
able to make use of his variation in volume from softness to
loudness and still be heard.

There should be a variety of pitch. Most people have
a "pitch" range of one or two octaves, and only use one or
two notes in the middle of their range. The actor must learn
to make use of the full range.

Variety in tempo is an effective method of expressing
caracter and emotions and should be capitalized on by the
actor.

Variety in quality should be practiced so that the
actor can sound harsh when he speaks of harsh subjects,
melodious when he speaks of poetic subjectes, dry when he
wishes to be comic, etc.

Emphasis is achieved in several ways. It can be done
by increasing the volume, by contrast, or changes in pitch,
tempo, and quality. A word may also be emphasized by lowering
the volume—by pronouncing it softly in a loud sentence.

Breaks in the thought are achieved by pauses or by
sudden changes in pitch or volume.

Speech builds are used normally when there are
speeches of any length. This means that one of the following
elements should be increased from the beginning of the speech
to the climax: (1) volume, (2) emotional intensity, (3)
variety, (4) pace. Builds in pitch are also possible but
often cause loss of strength when it becomes to shrill.
Building in one element is not always possible and often the
thing to do is to shift to another element or to build in two
or three elements at once.
Speech can never be improved too much. There are constant challenges and adjustments to be made in uses of speech and the actor would do well to keep in mind that speech is the symbol of ideas great and small and deserves all the time he can spend on it.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Drama was used for religious purposes before it was used to entertain. It was and is an expression of man's soul and its existence. From the earliest history of drama we recognize it as a vehicle to understanding the inner nature of man—his hopes and desires and his fears and frustrations. Early man moved and spoke to express himself more vividly and continues to do so today. Those things he feels the deepest have often been recorded and expressed through the medium of drama.

Drama from all periods has been studied as a means of historical prospective. It has offered insight into the cultures of the past. We have been able to compare man's spiritual problems as well as his concerns with existing political, economic, social and cultural conditions of specific periods in history. With knowledge of the past and knowledge of the present, we can often make analyses for the future with a great deal of accuracy. More and more churches are beginning to recognize how much they can profit from study of these contributions. Good drama has often come from identifiable circumstances.
Greek tragedy maintains the destiny of man as controlled by the gods with no choice for man. Rome's rise to its greatness and its corruption and fall offers little in drama of spiritual value. Its theatre offered more sport and military exercises.

The Dark Ages only seem to hold the seed from which sprang the "new birth". It was not until the Renaissance that man was to become recognized as capable of acting and thinking for himself and the present emphasis in Christianity became influential. Chaucer had started the seed to growing earlier but nations were to receive setbacks before man was to be recognized as seeking, searching and responsible. Dramatic references to such writings as the much criticized "Utopia" by Sir Thomas More support this awakening.

Modern man has a frame of reference from which to proceed and must consider historical contributions whether he accepts or rejects them.

Drama also serves as a guide in moral and social interpretation. Many social reforms began as a response to dramatic writings. Shakespeare mentioned such problems as inherent and environmental influences, rights of the common man, health and mental problems, but it was not until Ibsen's writings that significant reforms began as a result of dramatic presentations. Ibsen spoke out for freedom, women's equality and against poverty and idleness.

Drama of today often exploits moral and social causes. The church is involved in man's efforts to create a just and enduring social order as it is an integrated part of
Christianity and drama is recognized as one of the most effective means of expressing these concerns.

Drama displays psychological insight. It is conflict of human wills and emotions and through this conflict it provides man an opportunity to see his emotions and responses symbolized. Thus, experiencing these in a sensory way, he is better able to cope with them. When one sees King Lear go from vanity and self-satisfaction to understanding and knowledge of others through suffering, it would be difficult to ignore parallel experiences in one's own life.

Other psychological insights provided in drama include man's responses to his basic needs and drives and his adjustment to these and his environment. These include his loneliness, his insecurity and his need for purpose in life. The church has begun to weigh the various dramatic approaches for enlightenment in these areas.

Drama offers man a sense of direction— an opportunity to "try on" the subject (to identify) and to make judgment about himself and his relationships. This insight and his response to it aids in a better understanding of his purpose in life. It is only when you can identify with such characters as St. Joan or Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral that one weighs what strength of character in their lives can be used as guidelines in one's own life. It is when one can identify with frustrations of others that he can adjust to his own problems.

Man is often influenced by the struggles of others to reach their ultimate goal and gains strength and satisfaction
in that others, too, are faced with conflicts in their search for a stronger Christian life. J. B., the modern Job, in the drama by that name (See Appendix II), might inspire strength in face of great frustration.

The dramatic news coverage of the recent tragedies are prime examples of drama pointing out a sense of direction. The dramatic elements behind the strong convictions of President John F. Kennedy and Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King indicate a direction of the past and the need for direction in the future. The lives of any or all of these could be staged with strong possibilities of constructively indicating a society in need of a quality which only seeking the love and understanding of Christ can offer. At their death, they ceased to be a race, a political party, or an office, but became a reminder of where our nation could be heading.

It matters not whether one is of their race or political party, the factor which screams out to society is that a sense of direction is needed.

The story of their lives alone forces one to consider who and what he stands for.

Ehrensperger states:

Drama shows us what ought to be. It is on the move toward perfection of the individual and the social order. It presents the will of man in conflict with the yet-to-be-created or the already-created which is destroying man. This is also its miracle. By way of dramatic experience we can have a sense of fulfillment and delight. It can be so powerful and so wonderful we are jolted when the curtain comes down and the spell is broken.
This hypnotic experience of how life could be or what it is yet to be, despite its being made today frequently in negative statements, can carry us off into constructive or destructive fantasy-making. Drama can fill or empty us. No other art form can so bewitch or inspire us.¹

With an art which can so critically interpret man, his relationship with others and his relationship with his Maker; it seems incredible that we still have those who can see drama only as a means for amusement on the part of the participant and on the part of the audience as well. And some of these, even, go so far as to suggest "if it's amusing it can't be uplifting." Fortunately this attitude is beginning to be less prominent.

This is not to suggest it does not have the quality of entertainment. It does, and if it should cease to be so, it would lose an important part of its effectiveness. Because drama entertains or diverts us does not mean it loses its power to influence, inform and enlighten. Even the pure entertainer, if there is such a thing, does not fail to recognize the ethical and educational potentialities of his art and the power it has over the human minds and hearts.

Because it does have this power to entertain offers the church another positive instrument for the ministry of the gospel.

Closely related is church drama as art which was discussed in the context of this paper. It can only be re-emphasized that as art, church drama of today is a

¹EHrensperger, op. cit., p. 22.
chosen means of interpreting life—whether it be present, past or future.

Yet, in the process of offering an aesthetic presentation and perhaps intergraded with this rendering of beauty is the overpowering feeling that "It gives us something to think about." Even more provocative is the idea it gives us something to "feel" about.

In consideration of all the qualities mentioned and other significant contributions of drama, the church can be assured that drama at its best will bring about the highest religious experiences. Understanding drama and its principles and techniques provides opportunity for the church to witness in a most meaningful way.

There are many other factors which are influencing the place of drama in the church and presenting possibilities never dreamed of by our ancestors.

It is said, "Work once broke man's back; today it is breaking man's minds." Man is doing less and less physical labor and has more mental exercise. He also has more leisure time to take a look at the world around him and the problems involved with it. Frustration develops and the pressure of changing times are felt.

Making use of the creative arts is suggested by many as part of the solution to this problem. This is given as the reason by many for the return of drama in the church.

There are other considerations, however. Some of these include the educational level of the average churchman has so improved that he now demands so much more of a sermon.
Too, the demands in the training of a pastor for a church is having to include so many more aspects than it ever has that, ironically enough, his training in communications must sometimes be sacrificed. Too many pastors must face a congregation inadequately trained to present the gospel as moving as it is.

This demand for better speakers cannot be met so it seems something must replace the stimuli once offered from the pulpit. Drama is being experimented with by many churches as a supplement to the pulpit. And in some cases (admittedly rare ones) this is the only type of service offered--early services and summer resort places. But the fact that they do exist and are often well attended says something.

Another consideration is that where the minister was once asked to come and speak to the local and civic organizations, often, for various reasons, the request is for a drama or dramatic type production.

There are no doubt other influences which might be causing the renewal of interest in church drama but the most significant would seem to be the competitive field which television offers.

_ TV Guide_ recently estimated that the average American home has television turned on about five and a half hours per day. And almost every home has at least one set.

It is a part of our society which offers probably the widest range of responses as any means of communication has ever offered. It varies from accompaniment for background of housework or homework or relaxation--talking, eating,
phoning, and resting to name a few, to sudden great occasions or natural drama breaks when we are all transfixed by the extraordinary fact of witnessing history as it occurs—the space flights, the deaths of famous men (such as the Kennedys and Martin Luther King mentioned previously) and other crises.

These are the moments which make us realize the potential television has to unite people all over the world as we experience the same scenes and sounds as thousands or millions of concerned persons.

There is comfort and growth in such experiences. Our sympathies are engaged, our thoughts are excited and our horizons are expanded through sharing sorrow and tension and acts of courage. There is a deep craving in all of us to feel part of these things. We need to know how other people live and strive, succeed and fail, meet disaster and tragedy and success.

Dr. Karl Menninger, distinguished psychiatrist, in a recent article on television suggests that "Television does tend to teach beliefs about the nature of the world and the motives of people around us, and set up stereotypes and 'heroes'—often of the wrong kind." He states that "Children must learn about violence, but they should not learn incorrectly."¹

Menninger further states:

Television can perhaps help to improve the balance and proportion in lives which sometimes lack romance, sometimes lack excitement, sometimes lack substantial content. It must explain and inform. It should arouse curiosity and stimulate new ideas and make us laugh; it should also make us weep for the sorrows of others. \textsuperscript{1}

These factors which writers and programers would do well to keep in mind. But Menninger goes on to comment on the fact that many well informed people feel strongly that television should offer the people what they want, ignoring the fact that when they get what they want they want something else. The noteworthy statements concluded, "The artist and the author know that art and entertainment must lead, not follow, the public." \textsuperscript{2}

Television may be relaxing and entertaining but its great future lies in waking us up. It shows us how good or bad somethings are in some places and influences us so that we are never the same after having seen them. These powerful qualifications of the potential of dramatic presentations leads to a new vision of church drama.

Its growth and concern must continue within the church environment and its influences felt in the local and civic groups but there are strong indications that its greatest challenge is being offered through the medium of television.

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Ibid.}
The number of people that can be reached through this medium is so encouraging that the church cannot afford to sit idly by and not take advantage of such opportunities to reach the masses.

The television industry is a symbol of our progressive society and if we are to remain a progressive society, the medium must bring about inspiration and understanding of the great truths including growth in spiritual and moral values.

The church has a challenge in making use of television. Many problems are facing us if we are to take the opportunity to project Christianity through this medium. Some of these include: inadequate knowledge of the medium—lack of creative approaches—production costs for superior type programs—trained personnel in writing or selection which must compete with commercial endeavors—seeking adequate talent—programming and time dilemma and others, some of which are faced by the growing industry itself.

These problems should not be permitted to blur the vision of presenting the Word to the individual through mass media. Certainly not all the people can be reached by the same type of program. So it is necessary to be specific, yet have a variety of programs. The prospects of reaching the unchurched is a challenge which is overwhelming and superior drama and dramatic type programs will play a large role in furthering this mission.

The future seems to indicate a need for more and better church drama, more trained people in this area and knowledge of the nature of drama and its uses. It also
indicates a need for training in the television medium. It does not end with just the play itself but includes all qualities innate in drama which can inform, influence and enlighten man to his responsibilities in encouraging and maintaining an enduring social order of a spiritual nature.

In summary, we may reiterate. Religious drama is not new. It has been with us since primitive man stepped from the forest and felt the powers of a Being which he knew must control his environment and he moved in worship to these powers. The forms of drama have changed, meeting the demands of new environment, but the existence of emotions and the need to express them through re-enactment and interpretation still remain static.

What does not remain static are the ways of expression. This offers the church a challenge to understand the principles underlying drama and to make the best possible use of the best possible techniques to give insight into an art from which is capable of portraying life and its relationship to God.

It is not enough to understand these and know how to use them, but it is our responsibility to encourage their use in the church environment.

The church must open her arms to the "prodigal daughter", drama, and provide a home for her if she is not to stray again. She needs the influence of the church and the church needs her. Much of her power is known and because of insight in her history there is every indication her present contribution is only seed from which greater things will grow.
The vision of drama and its potential contribution to the church is staggering and with the availability of today's advanced concepts, there is an even greater challenge to make use of this tool which can point the way to a healthy society and to a Christian Faith with all its beauty and completeness.
APPENDIX I

AN ANALYSIS OF KING LEAR FOR RELIGIOUS VALUES

The greatest of the great tragedies—KING LEAR.

"Tragedy", Edith Hamilton said, "is the suffering of a soul that can suffer greatly," and the one thing all authorities seem to agree on is that King Lear suffers greatly. Much has been written about the great dimension of King Lear as a tragic figure and for our purposes it is a beautiful story of redemption.

It was written "when Shakespeare's genius was burning its brightest and concentrating its flame upon the destiny of man as determined by his inner self."2

G. B. Harrison says,

The Tragedy of King Lear is usually regarded by critics as Shakespeare's greatest play, but it is not his most popular, for there is something terrifying in the grandeur of the tragedy and its immense pessimism. (debateable) Nor is the play often acted on the stage, for the part of Lear requires an actor of exceptional range emotional expression. Indifferently produced, Lear is tedious, but when greatly acted it is almost too intolerably moving.3


2 Howse, op. cit., p. 61.


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Marchette Chute states that "King Lear is the most
titanic of the tragedies, a huge, shattering almost super-
human play whose very shapelessness is part of its strength."¹

A. C. Bradley comments,

King Lear has again and again been described
as Shakespeare's greatest work, the best of
his plays, the tragedy in which he exhibits
most fully his multitudinous powers; and if
we were doomed to lose all his dramas ex-
cept one, probably the majority of those who
know and appreciate him best would pronounce
for keeping King Lear. Yet this tragedy is
certainly the least popular of the famous
four.²

E. M. Howse quotes Swinburne: "If nothing were left
of Shakespeare but the single tragedy of King Lear, it would
still be plain, as it is now, that he was the greatest man
that ever lived." Howse further states, "King Lear is per-
haps the least known of the four tragedies and certainly the
least popular."³ This statement is discussed by many in the
framework of King Lear's difficulty in staging and presenting
the spiritual value which is the heartbeat of the whole play.

H. C. Goddard, in The Meaning of Shakespeare, says:
"King Lear, in a dozen ways, is the culmination of Shakespeare.
It may be regarded from almost as many angles as life itself."
Again, he elaborates this when he quotes one of his students:
"King Lear is a miracle. There is nothing in the whole world

¹Marchette Chute, Stories From Shakespeare (New York:

²A. C. Bradley, Shakespearean Tragedy (London:

³Howse, op. cit.
that is not in this play. It says everything, and if this is
the last and final judgment on this world we live in, then it
is a miraculous world. This is a miracle play."¹

Lear as subject matter was not new to the Elizabethans
who read anything at all. Lear seems to have had his start
as a divine but shadowy figure in the mythology of the ancient
Britons, of whose children wild tales are told. To this was
added an old folktale of the three daughters. There were
many versions of stories of this popular figure but basically
they were alike in that they had a happy ending for Lear who
was restored to his power. However, there was tragedy in
Cordelia's fate some years later. After mistreatment and
imprisonment by her nephews, she hanged herself.

The tale had also been dramatized in The True Chronicle,
History of King Lear, printed in 1605 and other performances
are recorded by Henslowe in April of that year.

Although Shakespeare took some of his names and thoughts
from Spenser's Faerie Queene, authorities readily agree this
takes nothing from the great work. He was the first to give
it the tragic ending. The whole conception of the play is
Shakespeare's own; he owed nothing to his sources for the
madness of Lear, Kent's devotion, the storm, the fool, Oswald,
and above all the ending with Cordelia hanged and Lear dying
of old age and a broken heart.

King Lear can be more precisely dated than most of
Shakespeare's plays. It was recorded in the Register of the

¹H. O. Goddard, The Meaning of Shakespeare (Chicago:
King Lear, the main character, in the beginning of the play is described as vain, impatient, arrogant, cruel and warped by irresponsible power. His great suffering brings about vision, widens his sympathy and leads him to self-knowledge, insight, and lifts him up to "the realm of the gods." King Lear included in, but different from the other famous four, in that in Hamlet, Othello, and MacBeth, good men degenerate; in King Lear, a bad man is redeemed.

Goneril and Regan, two of King Lear's three daughters, offer elaborate expression of their love for him and are granted one-third of the property division. Upon Cordelia's refusal to express more than deserved respect and honest love, Goneril and Regan receive one-half of the kingdom. Goneril and Reagan, in their lust for power, ingratitude, and disrespect for the moral order represent the evil forces which lead to their own destruction. Goneril eventually poisons her sister, Regan, as a result of jealousy over Edmund and then takes her own life.

Duke of Albany, Goneril's husband, soon recognizes his wife as more animal than human. He represents good and would restore King Lear to his power but for Lear's death at the end of the play. He summarizes the tragedy in his final words: "The weight of this sad time we must obey, Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. The oldest hath born most; we that are young Shall never see so much, nor live so long." He, Fool and Edgar act somewhat as narrator or Greek Chorus.
Duke of Cornwall, husband of Regan, is one of the most cruel representations of evil in the drama. He, with Regan, pierce the eyes of Glouster because he refuses to tell them where they can find King Lear and kill a servant who refuses to hold Glouster. The servant wounds Cornwall, who dies later.

Cordelia, the youngest and most favored daughter, appears only in four out of twenty-six scenes and speaks little more than one hundred lines. But, according to Howse, "the master (meaning Shakespeare) has interpreted her more fully with a few strokes than lesser artists could do with a full portrait."¹

She represents all that is good and suffers because of Lear, suffers for him, suffers with him and dies for his cause. (Symbolism for Christ figure.) She becomes Shakespeare's means by which the more optimistic insist King Lear is not pessimistic and "humanity did not devour itself, and King Lear and his child were lifted up in the realm of the gods." This is based on the last lines before King Lear dies with Cordelia in his arms. He first acknowledges her as dead, then with great enthusiasm he says, "Do you see this? Look on her! look! her lips! Look there, look there! (He dies.)" These words seem to suggest hope, light and sight of life after death.

The King of France and Duke of Burgundy were suitors of Cordelia. Burgundy refuses her after she is left without a portion of Lear's kingdom. France accepts her as his wife

¹Howse, op. cit., p. 63.
and Queen and it is through his dialogue that we receive some of the beautiful character of Cordelia. We see him only in the beginning of the drama. Later when his forces seek to protect King Lear, he is called back to France so leaves Cordelia and someone else in charge of his forces and returns.

Earl of Kent loves and respects King Lear very much and serves somewhat as his conscious. He suggests that King Lear is being unjust when he disinherits Cordelia and is exiled from the kingdom. He soon appears in disguise as a servant and follows King Lear to serve him. He is with King Lear during his madness on the heath. He seems to have the greatest understanding of King Lear and his predicament. At the close of the play when Edgar says over the dying Lear, "look up, my lord." Kent replies, "Vex not his ghost; O let him pass! He hates him that would upon the rack of this tough world Stretch him out longer." Then adds: "The wonder is, he hath endured so long."

Lear's Fool was qualified for his profession because something had thrown his fine mind off its balance; but he retained no small part of his gifts of nature. This kept coming through in his lines. The insane in Shakespeare's day were believed to have insight that others did not possess. This is why the fool is qualified to serve as Greek chorus might. In King Lear, the fool consoled the King and is identified by King Lear in his madness as Cordelia. Some authorities suggest the fool was in love with Cordelia or the fool, was an attempt on the authors part to show unity of the
spirits in the next world which would be impossible under the existing circumstances.

The Earl of Gloouster is the tragic figure in the subplot. Gloouster had two sons. One son, Edmund, his favorite, was illegitimate, and the other son, Edgar was rightful heir to his properties. Edmund contrived to seek the inheritance for his own. He sought to frame and get rid of Edgar. Through his lust for power, he became the object of jealousy between Goneril and Regan. Eventually, he is mortally wounded by Edgar who reveals him for what he is. Edgar takes a disguise as Old Tom, the beggar and is with King Lear during his madness. He loves his father and leads him, after his blindness, inflicted by Regan and Cornwall, to insight rather than sight.

Oswald, a steward to Goneril, is as evil as his mistress. He is the servant that Kent makes jest with and gains favor with Lear. Oswald is eventually killed by Edgar in defense of his father.

Other minor characters include a courtier, a tenant to Gloouster, the doctor brought to help King Lear by Cordelia, the Captain under Edmund's command, a gentleman, a Herald, servants to Cornwall and knights attending Lear, officers, messengers, soldiers, and attendants.

The dominant subject matter in King Lear is the suffering of a man who has great potential to suffer. Shakespeare seems to be saying that man is potentially a spiritual being and he has within himself, in spite of his weakness, the power to seek and find spirituality.
The plot reveals this theme quite thoroughly. The play has a very finely drawn beginning where King Lear does not have insight. Even his daughter points out that "He has scarcely known himself". He is vain, self-willed, impatient and arrogant.

Through the suffering (compared by Shakespeare to a terrible storm) King Lear begins to gain insight into himself as he becomes more and more aware of others and their plight.

In the ending, he becomes "a man more sinner against than sinning". He achieves insight into himself and ultimately sees his beloved Cordelia as a spirit which he joins in death. Throughout the play he remains "Every inch a king", first of the worldly nature then of a spiritual nature.

In the beginning we see King Lear in all his regal background with robe and crown of great wealth as compared later to his torn garments, bareness and nature's crown of flowers.

The subplot further reveals the theme. Glouster, who like King Lear had favored the unworthy son, went from lack of insight into himself to that which is greater than physical sight. Glouster, as we will recall was blinded by Cornwall and Regan and turned out to find his own way.

Although the subplot compliments the main plot, there is a difference in spirit. Glouster's physical affliction seems great until it is compared to Lear's mental darkness. Also Glouster was not restrained when he would sin, but King Lear's conscience, Kent, tried to restrain him.

The plot is also revealed beautifully in the symbolism. King Lear's madness and the storm; the storm and the torment
of suffering; Glouster's eyes and not seeing—without eyes and seeing. "I stumbled when I saw" and later "A man may see how this world goes without eyes"; Kingly robes and crowns and the crown of flowers; spoiled childlike nature—humility of a child.

Elements of conflict which enrich King Lear as a drama include Lear and Cordelia, Lear and Kent, Lear and Goneril and Regan, Edmund and Edgar, Edgar and Glouster, Albany and Goneril, Goneril and Regan, and Glouster and Edmund. Emotional conflicts include love and hate, good and evil, light and darkness, sight and blindness, and peace and madness.

All this dramatic structure leads to very adequate and consistent characterizations and this coupled with an emotional tone of spirituality leaves one overwhelmed at the power of drama.

However, even this would not be complete unless we mentioned at least some of the irony observed in King Lear.

The first irony we could point out is in regard to the play itself. It is recognized as the greatest of tragedies, yet is unpopular because of the spiritual overtone which is interpreted by some as pessimistic. It moves one greatly in reading but is very difficult to stage even with insight to its power.

Cordelia is the one most loved and one who loves King Lear the most sincerely. Yet, she does not speak up upon demand for words to this effect. Evil prospers as good suffers. Edgar is driven out by his father (poses as Tom the
beggar) and this is not Lear's image but Cordelia's. If Lear saw truly, he would see in Edgar his own crime, not a sympathetic suffering when he said, "Didst thou give all to Thy daughters? And art come to this?". These are only a few examples of irony.

Other irony would include: King Lear making complete reversal in going from earthly king to king of his own soul; Edmund's delay in saving King Lear and Cordelia (not sufficiently motivated); King Lear seeing Cordelia as a spirit, then alive when dead; Albany's statement, "Striving to better, oft we mar what's well".

There is tragic irony as we see Albany praying for Cordelia as King Lear enters with her dead body.

It could be considered ironical that out of the image of the wrongs done to Lear, he begins to grasp the wrongs done others, done man in general; in the image of wronged man, he grasps his own image; and then he turns in a new direction, entirely, grasping the image of the wrongs he has done.

As we analyze man's predicament, we find man as a responsible human being, He is free to make choices. An example of this is stated by Edmund: "I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing."

The basic idea of man as the playwright sees him would seem to be that man is a spiritual being, is responsible, must adjust to the moral order, and be judged for it. On judgment he has several references. One stands above others:
"All friends shall taste the wages of their virtue, and all foes the cup of their deservings."

Some of the reasons for man's suffering might be listed as those below:

King Lear's demand that his daughter declare her love for him. In other words, his vanity and pride.

Glouster's blindness to his illegitimate son's lust for his kingdom.

Lust for power by Edmund and the two daughters.

Hate and revenge on part of Goneril, Regan and Cornwall.

There is little or no question that all of our society would do well to study King Lear. The biological world finds reference to genetic, relation of the generation and the authority of the past over the present. The psychologist has beautiful studies in the nature of man and his relationship to his environment and its forces. The political or legal world finds all kinds of reference to power and justice and social order. A paper could be written on each of these. Any by no means, would this exclude the artistic value of this drama, poetry and literature.

What has been pointed out up to this point is that King Lear is a religious drama. But it may also be conceived as a beautiful example of Christian drama.

First, and as a total picture, it is the story of redemption. King Lear goes from complete lack of concern, to understanding to hope and peace. Gloucester goes from darkness with eyes, to understanding with blindness, to sight without eyes. No one could miss this because it is pointed out in so many ways.
Secondly, it deals so much with some of our basic Christian beliefs. Forgiveness, judgment, reconciliation, hope, suggestions of immortality, faith and love.

Thirdly, because of the biological, psychological, political and artistic reasons mentioned above. King Lear was the first fiery protest against social wrongs presented on stage. Lear who had never thought upon the matter until he himself was exposed "to feel what wretches feel" developed inner integrity, humility of mind, compassion for the poor. Much of his character is developed through his realization of injustice in social order.

Fourthly, it speaks out against sin and says that evil deeds work retribution. Guilt, Shakespeare seems to say, leads man to humility and retribution. Glouster needs the forgiveness of his son, Edgar; Lear needs forgiveness of Cordelia. Edmund calls for release of King Lear and Cordelia (but too late): Goneril who poisoned her sister Regan, commits suicide.

Finally, one feels the identification with King Lear is moving in itself. One feels that King Lear is not only suffering as one would suffer but that he also suffers for all mankind. And although you are constantly reminded that King Lear is "every inch a King" there seems to be a transition of thought to the fact that he is every inch a human being with shortcomings, yet with great potentiality.

In essence, Shakespeare seems to be saying that man is a responsible, spiritual being, capable of making mistakes but with the power within himself to rise above all this.
APPENDIX II

AN ANALYSIS OF J. B. FOR RELIGIOUS VALUES

If an author is new or unknown, it is a good idea to have a thorough understanding of his background if you are to analyze a drama well.

Archibald MacLeish is not new nor unknown to the general public but is a modern dramatist well worth considering. He was born in Glencoe, Illinois, May 7, 1892. He was the son of a Scottish merchant and a Connecticut clergyman's daughter. He spent his boyhood on the lake shore. He attended the public schools of his native town and a Connecticut preparatory school. He graduated from Yale University, fought in World War I and received a Law degree from Harvard University. He taught in college, practiced law and published one volume of poetry by 1917.

In 1923, MacLeish decided that he was dissatisfied with the life he was leading and the poetry he was writing so he moved to Paris with his family and later said that his creative life began with that move. He remained in Paris until 1928, reading widely, especially among the French symbolist poets. He also read the works of Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot who greatly influenced him. It was here he wrote Street in the Moon. This was his first works showing his own personal style through imagism, symbolism, free verse,
adaption of older forms to the cadence of modern speech. Here was born the theme which has dominated much of MacLeish's writing since. One authority refers to it as the "dramatic situation which the condition of self-consciousness in an indifferent universe seems to me to be present". Another authority simply states it as "man's uncertain place in the Unknown".

This fatalistic attitude changed gradually in his works and eventually he arrived at a hopeful attitude which seems to grow out of new respect and love of mankind.

From 1928 to 1938 he was one of the original editors for Fortune. In 1933, he received the Pulitzer Prize for Conquistador, which is described as: "In spite of being cast in the key of reminiscence, is a record of life in action; and this parade of fighting and feasting, of blood, song, and quick surrenders in tune to words that live and leap no less actively." Panic (1935) which had a very brief stay on Broadway, warned of the contagion of mob hysteria. The Fall of the City (1937) pictured an unnamed city accepting through blind fear a "conqueror" whose only power was bluff. This was significant in that it demonstrated that verse drama had a potential as a modern art form and that radio could function as its medium. Air Raid (1938) had to do with facing realities and is significant in that it was the first poetry play written for the radio-spoken word.

MacLeish served as Librarian of Congress from 1939-44. Other war time assignments included: Director of the Office of Facts and Figures, Assistant Director of War Information,
Assistant Secretary State and United States Representative on several cultural missions. Much of his writings of this time was "public" and patriotic. He published vigorous essays in numerous magazines on social and political conditions and issues of the day and on the poets' responsibilities toward them. Some of these were: "The Irresponsible", "The American Cause", "A Time to Speak", and "A Time to Act".

After the war, MacLeish returned to a more purely literary life. He became Boylston Professor at Harvard University. His poetry style and structure matured and won his second Pulitzer Prize in 1953 for his Collected Poems 1917-1952.

MacLeish was so passionately convinced that poetry must serve a role in society, not as an escape from it that he began lecturing widely and publishing critical essays on the reading, teaching, appreciation and value of poetry. He maintains "That science, which is the knowledge of fact, has no quarrel with poetry, which is the feel of fact. Yet poetry is knowledge, for it alone comprehends the relationship between man as knower and the world as known; it is not the description, but rather the 'experience of experience'." The poet, then recreates common experience with uncommon understanding of experience." This he puts in book length for Poetry and Experience.

MacLeish's third Pulitzer prize was as a result of his successfully staged verse drama J. B., presented for the first time December 22, 1958. This drama stirred up so much
critical and theological controversy that it went on for months and still has many of the well informed baffled.

*J. B.*, the drama in verse by MacLeish, based on the Book of Job is a fascinating subject to study. There are many controversial writings about this play as poetry, as drama, and as God's relationship with man. But it will suffice to say that he is least negatively criticized for his poetry. Most give him credit as a worthy follower of T. S. Eliot's and as having gone beyond Eliot's influence to leave his individual mark and his influences which will affect trends.

Criticism of *J. B.*, as a drama, has included wide variations of opinions in *Time*, *Theatre Arts*, *Harper*, *Life*, *Commonweal*, *Catholic World*, *Commentary* and others. Most of it appeared after *J. B.*'s opening on Broadway, December 1958, and declined somewhat after February, 1960. But it has been worthily considered by those who are conscious of religious drama and writing in general.

What seems to be invalid criticism has included statements that MacLeish did not make himself clear; he had no answers to the problems presented; no one wanted to hear about Job's boils, man's suffering and hopelessness; it was too much of a repeat of the Book of Job and the hero is acted upon rather than acting.

Most of these have been answered by those who would refer to *J. B.* as "one of the lasting achievements of art and mind in our time".
The production was considered a success on Broadway and critics with more insight defend MacLeish against those who said he didn't give any answers by pointing out it was not necessary for an author to have all the answers to a subject he might pursue. Others insisted that answers were given.

MacLeish was praised in many ways by those who feel it took great talent and courage to tackle such a subject as man's faith in God. Even those who refer to J. B. as a "worthy failure" acknowledge MacLeish's contribution as evidence of a "willingness to restore the theatre to its historic grandeur" and "a direction in contemporary writing."

As a picture of man's relationship to God, J. B. has received its widest criticism. The major questions that seem to be involved are the picture of God, justice, guilt, repentance, love and faith. These will be dealt with in the synopsis of the drama.

The drama J. B. is based on the Book of Job with J. B. as the modern day Job. J. B. is an American of substantial wealth with an attractive wife and children.

The drama setting is a circus tent which has been quite impressive but is now worn with years of travel. There is a rough stage across the corner of the tent and on the left a wooden platform has been built at a height of six or seven feet. A wooden ladder leans against it. To the right is a deal table with seven straight chairs. Clothes that have the look of vestments of many churches and times have been left about. Dim light is provided by bulbs dangling
from hanks of wire. The feel is of a public place late at night, the audience gone.

The drama starts with the entrance of two broken down actors, Mr. Zuss and Nickles, who have been reduced to selling balloons and popcorn. They have travelled with the group for years and observed the presentation of the Old Testament story of the suffering of Job.

They are dissatisfied with the interpretation of the story, and so late one evening when the show is over and the tent is empty, they decide to play it themselves as they think it should be played. They set the scene of heaven and hell and earth, cast themselves as God and Satan, and take on the wager of the Book of Job. Nickles, who is cast as Satan wagers that if Job, the perfect and upright man, is stripped of everything he has, he will curse God to His face.

They find a Godmask and a Satanmask and as they begin to use them, the masks seem to take on a life of their own as they are given cues by an unseen prompter. As the Godmask asks that Job as a perfect and upright man be considered, J. B. and his wife and five children and two maids are spotted having a large Thanksgiving dinner and the conversation and activity suggests happiness and prosperity. Some questions introduced in this interaction are: Do we owe for prosperity? Is there reward and punishment? Do we love life because its good or is it good because we love it? Do we accept earth as a gift or do we earn it? These indicate the conflict between J. B. and Sarah. Scene one ends with J. B. declaring, "To be, become, and end are beautiful."
In scene two, Zuss and Nickles take off their mask and discuss suffering and well being and its bearing on man's relationship with God. At the end of the scene the argument becomes rather heated and they put on the masks and are ready for the wager to continue. The Distant Voice which prompts Zuss states that he must not lay a hand on Job.

Zuss and Nickles look on occasionally and enter into the acting from time to time as circus roustabouts dressed as drunken soldiers, then as newspaper reporters, then as traffic policemen, then as air-raid wardens come as messengers.

The drunken soldiers tell of their son's death due to a stupid mistake of his commanding officer. The photographers contrive to photograph Job and Sarah as they hear the news of the horrible automobile accident which killed another son and a daughter.

Here the conflict between Job and Sarah becomes stronger as Sarah demands to know why God took their children. Job insists we must accept the evil with the good.

The third messengers come as a police Sargent and Patrolman to tell of the death of their youngest daughter. Her shoes and toy umbrella had been found and there was suggestion of rape and murder.

The last of the messengers are two men in steel helmets who bring Sarah home. The description of the happenings suggest bombing. Ruth, their last child, had been destroyed. J. B.'s bank, plant and the whole area are left in rubbles. Sarah is completely beside herself but Job remains faithful to the Lord.
Zuss claims victory but Nickles will not concede saying that the suffering was not of Job personally and if it were Job would still curse God to his face. The decision is made to try Job through personal suffering. The Distant Voice surprises them both by entering into conversation and stating Job will hold fast his integrity even if He, God, moves against him without cause.

Job becomes the victim of a nuclear explosion. He is blistered and infected. Four women and a child observe Job in his agony and the conflict between Job and Sarah. Sarah insists Job curse God and die. Although Job begs to die and wants to know of what he is guilty, he still is steadfast in his relationship with God. Sarah can have no peace of mind and cannot bear to see Job as he is, so she leaves. Job is reduced to wishing he had never been born because even death could not heal him.

Nickles feels he just about has Job and calls for the three comforters who he knows can offer no help now.

The comforters come. They represent the psychiatrist, who upholds that there is no guilt as the soul floats free of guilt; the clergyman who insists Job is all guilt and he must find his sin and repent. Finally, he insists that Job's sin is that of all men, simply that of being born man! The third comforter insists that everything is history, a sociological accident and justice is not for one but for the mass. It is for all and one man doesn't matter. Job rejects their comfort and vows, "But I will maintain my own
ways before Him." The Distant Voice speaks to Job and is seen by him.

Nickles admits defeat but with a rejection of Job as a passive nothing. Zuss insists it doesn't end here and that if it ended here it would mean Job's suffering was justified—"Not by the Will of God but Job's acceptance of God's Will". He insists God restores Job, offers him his life back to live again.

The play ends as Sarah returns, having given up the idea of suicide and carrying a sprig of forsythia which had survived the nuclear attack. On this note of symbolism representing new life there is indication that Job and Sarah are willing to "blow on the coal of the heart" and start all over again.

The dominant subject matter is suffering. The suffering dealt with is spelled out in many ways—physically, mentally, and spiritually. The physical suffering is obvious. There is the loss of J. B.'s wealth, his children's death, his tortured body and his wife deserting him.

The mental suffering is brought out in such things as his children not just dying, but in how they died—by the orders of a stupid officer, in the car driven by a drunken teenager, by a mentally ill sex fiend, by senseless war—all so seemingly unnecessary.

The central idea or the theme of J. B. is Faith, the acceptance of life, no matter what it brings and going on even after all has seemingly been lost. The fact that MacLeish used the Book of Job as basis, established his own
Satan and God and goes even further to include the Distant Voice and suggesting Job's steadfastness as a result of his relationship with God would give some indication that this could be interpreted as Faith in God. This is contrary, of course, to what some of the critics suggest. They say his faith is simply in man. Out of love of life man is willing to be born, to live, to die and be born again.

The element of conflict is centered around Job's suffering. Zuss and Nickles conflict because Nickles insists Job will curse God to his face if his property is taken from him. God insists he will remain steadfast.

The conflict between J. B. and Sarah is pointed up in several ways. Sarah insists God took their children without cause. Job states we must accept evil with the good and it is not necessarily true that there is no good. When Sarah demands that Job curse God and die, he insists that God is just.

There is conflict between the comforters and J. B. as they suggest that there is no guilt, life is a sociological accident and that his sin is that of being man. Job rejects these.

The conflict of Job with himself is in his need for justification of suffering and his desperate cry for death and that he might never have been born.

In spite of the suffering and some rather shocking word symbols, MacLeish used to describe suffering through Nickles, there is the suggestion of hope and optimism. This seems to have been helped in no small way through the use of
Zuss and Nickles who give the comedy flavor. The whole drama seemed to be sprinkled with what was absent from MacLeish's earlier writings—"justification for the chaotic in human life".

J. B. is highly criticized because of his lack of characterization. MacLeish is accused of trying to produce a protagonist so universal in time and place that he is without character. Others have said he is acted upon throughout the drama and shows no action himself. MacLeish himself denies this and states he was impressed with what the Bible left out—"Job's action". He says that this action is Job's acceptance of God's restoration and his willingness to accept life again.

Sarah's character seemed so antagonistic in view of Job's that it seemed inconsistent for her to return at the end. It is, however, consistent with the playwright's philosophy of regeneration.

MacLeish's characterizations of the comforters as theologian, psychiatrist and Marxian was one of the most interesting things in the play. Certainly appropo to the time.

Zuss and Nickles, of course, were many things to the drama. They were universal elements, narrators, as well as God and Satan. Nickles rang true in his role as Satan but Mr. Zuss as God leaves one with the feeling he is the actor playing God. The Distant Voice also made Mr. Zuss more of a fantasy.
The messengers added to the contemporary flavor as they appeared as soldiers, photographers and air raid wardens.

J. B. is significant in irony. Probably the most obvious irony pointed out by the playwright and others is that Job did remain steadfast in the face of unjust suffering. Other irony is that the comforters were not comforters at all but agitators. Death of their children was not enough, they were preventable deaths—so unnecessary, so tragic. It seemed somewhat ironical that the modern day messengers who represented our present day messengers of suffering should be timeless circus roustabouts. Critics point out that it is ironical that J. B., the just man, should call upon his God for an explanation of his suffering and God's answer is that of His Greatness.

Man's predicament in the drama is suggested in that J. B. is experiencing unjust suffering and is left alone in his struggle to find justification. Although there is obvious signs of man being a responsible being, it also suggests a lack of man's worthiness, which may or may not be considered humility.

The drama is significant in that the reasons for J. B.'s estrangement, alienation and suffering were unjust. It was a wager between God and Satan to establish whether Job would remain faithful if his prosperity was taken from him. Critics put it more bluntly. "God has need of man, without man's love, He is nothing."
Job's doubts and despair were because he was not given a reason for it and was left alone by God.

One of the greatest criticisms of this drama is that it does not give any answers, guideposts, negatively or affirmatively. It does not reveal the essence of Faith although this is what it seemed to be all about. The possible exception is that of love, which Job offers as a free gift.

**J. B.** is a good example of universal treatment. Here is one place where everyone agrees. It deals with timeless and universal suffering of mankind. Its setting is universal in that it uses the symbolism of the circus which goes on and on, repeating itself wherever it goes. All the major characters indicate universal suffering through some of their lines, particularly Nickles.

In dealing with the problem of identification, the first obvious identification is with that of the subject matter. Every individual has his own world of suffering. Of course, there is the identification with Job in his Faith. This, with reservation. Sarah is probably the most human element to identify with but somehow one gets the feeling that she is a loser all the way and rejects this identification. There is some identity with the comedy between Zuss and Nickles. But in general, the only real identification is with the subject.

Probably the most significant introspection offered is to question the strength of one's own Faith in light of whether it would withstand the test presented to J. B.
Certainly the strength of Job's human will to remain steadfast to God in spite of unjust punishment is a subject worthy of consideration but the critics have interpreted it in so many ways that it can be confusing. William S. White states that Job makes God a Madman who does not trouble to explain himself in simple, finite terms and asks, "Is it really perceptive to complain that God is not 'clear'?" 

Richard Hayes in Commonweal asks, "Is His will our peace?"

Guilt is dealt with through the comforters, but as to a problem of Job's it was only significant in that he wanted justice but felt guilty in his demand for it.

Job's tragic flaw would seem to be that of being acted upon rather than acting. It has also been said that J. B.'s sin was piety. They praise Sarah's inarticulateness over the mangled bodies of their children and condemned J. B.'s philosophizing upon the righteousness of "his" behavior and of his convictions. It suggests J. B. has no true insight to himself.

With all of these factors taken into consideration we are ready to ask the question: "Is J. B. a religious drama?" J. B. can be considered a religious drama in that it raises the question of love, faith, free will and man's need for God and God's need for man. MacLeish has taken a Biblical situation, characters, language, and beliefs and has given

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1William S. White, Harper, April, 1959, p. 58.

2Richard Hayes, Commonweal, April, 1959.
them naturalistic qualities with a suggestion of God's consideration.

The church is involved only in that some of its concepts of redemptiveness, divine forgiveness, Will as a free gift of God, sacrifice and love existing as conflicts between the characters.

The drama does speak of evil, sin and guilt through Job's accusers and his defense which lead to questions in theology. It does offer some pessimistic concepts but does suggest a sense of optimism in that through love, life is worth living.

It would be very difficult to consider *J. B.* a Christian drama in its strictest sense. There seems to be no real enlightenment concerning Christian beliefs.

It does offer Christian subjects for consideration and for this reason it seems that the production of *J. B.* could be justified. It could offer an opportunity for a church to present these subjects for consideration and go further than the drama in pointing out a Christian's view through discussion.

It might also be considered as possible material for presentation after the study of the Book of Job.
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