

# GRAND DESIGN TO HONOUR THE TRINITY

artist paul hobbs' work depicts both vibrant life and worship of a community

BASED on the Holy Trinity, this design was made to speak about the creative power and vitality of God. It was originally planned for a 60ft long wall in a popular church to evoke the vibrant life and worship of its community. On the left the Father is represented by an image of creation, in the centre the Son is shown crucified, and on the right the Holy Spirit is symbolised by wind and water. These aspects of each member of the Godhead were chosen to show the immanence, relevance and dynamism of God - the Three in One.

A loose, abstract style of imagery allows the on-looker to consider the Trinity and both give thanks for the joy of life, as well as meet with God in brokenness. It is hoped that the use of fluid forms will open the imagination and engage the viewer afresh on each occasion.

The work of **the Father** is represented by an image of creation to show His omnipotence and abundant provision. On the left, the creation is seen bursting into life with exuberant waves, mountains, birds and stars. There is both a night sky with the moon, and a day sky with the sun. Animals emerge 'green on green' from out of the landscape.

A male and a female figure dance together on the edge of the sea, suggesting Adam and Eve in the garden. A third figure cartwheels in the background.



Scripture tells of God proclaiming that all He had made was "very good" and of Him walking with Adam and Eve. Perhaps He cartwheeled to celebrate! Alternatively the figures could be seen as the Trinity themselves at work in creation.

Central to the whole image, **the Son** is represented by the crucifixion, showing His redemptive sacrifice for our sin. The cross is found amidst a swirl of shapes,



so that on each occasion the viewer must find its form again. The dynamic angle evokes the excitement of this pivotal moment in history. The purple wash which shrouds this section and darkens the sky is a reference to the three hours of darkness that came over the land at Christ's death. Purple is also the colour of kingship.

Around the cross are several red blocks of colour which are inset with parts of the body of Christ (head, hands, side, feet etc), pictorially broken for us, just as Christ broke the bread and said "This is my body" (Matthew 26/26). Thus, the viewer can mentally assemble Christ's brutalised body to reflect on his death, without facing an overpowering image of Christ's suffering in its rawest form.

The resurrection is implied by the energetic fluidity of the fragmented forms which spin and dance around the cross, and then seem to reform and flow into the third section, connoting Christ's crucifixion as the greatest source of hope and joy.

At the base of the cross Christ's blood flows down, "poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26/28). It flows into the stream of water, relating the water of baptism to the washing of our sins in Christ's blood. Communion and baptism would have been celebrated in front of this part of the picture.

Fed by the blood of Christ running off the cross, a fountain bursts forth from the stream, and spreads high into the sky. This represents the "spring of water welling up to eternal life" that Jesus tells the Samaritan woman she can only find in Him (John 4/14).

In the sky this water rejoins other lively dynamic shapes coming off from the spinning cross, symbolising **the Holy Spirit** as a life-giving force moving freely as the wind. These remind us of Christ's words to Nicodemus, that a person must be "born of water and the Spirit" (John 3/5) and "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear it's sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from, or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." (John 3/8).

The kite-like shapes being blown by the wind may also be seen as visual music -

even a depiction of the singing in tongues that the Holy Spirit enables in some believers - and thus a celebration of praise.

The unity of **the Holy Trinity** is affirmed by the blue and white lines which spiral and flow through the whole picture, suggesting both movement and continuity. The Trinity is further linked by the foreground stream, the River of the Water of Life. This runs from the newly created seas, beneath the base of the cross, through the fountain, and ever onwards. Jesus said "If a man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." (John 7/38).

The design takes account of the architectural features of the church for which it was originally made. Patterns from the building's architecture are shown in the top left-hand corner of the picture. More of these patterns are found on the right-hand side, thus balancing the composition and connecting the images about the Holy Spirit with the creational images on the left, as all members of the Trinity continue to work together creating and re-creating.

As Christians worship the Lord, they express praise to the Father for his creation, to Christ for his redeeming sacrifice, and to the Holy Spirit who refreshes and fills them anew. The visual focus provided by the design offers a way to facilitate and enrich both personal and corporate devotion. It is also the artist's personal celebration of the meaning, personality and power of God who is mysteriously, yet crucially, Three in One.

Written by Paul Hobbs

■ This design is still available for commissioning and can be made to any scale. Paul Hobbs has made a series of 22 paintings from sections of the design and is currently organising a tour of these to British Cathedrals for 2004-2006. He will be showing in Bradford Cathedral from May 28 to June 30 this year, and has another three cathedrals also interested. For enquiries please contact: Paul Hobbs, 23 Alvin Street, Gloucester GL1 3EH, or email: paul@arthobbs.com •