

RELIGION

Traditional artists and celebrate life's passages

Elaborate ceremonies and rituals have always marked life's major transitions from birth and coming-of-age to marriage and death. Presented by Portland General Electric, the innovative and multicultural exhibition, "Masters of Ceremony: Traditional Artists and Life's Passages" opens at the Oregon History Center on February 14, 1997 featuring ten master artists who are cultural tradition bearers in their communities. The voices and experiences of these artists illustrates how important it is to preserve the cultural memory and identify of our communities, ethnic groups and families.

Through colorful artifacts, stunning images, and poignant words, Masters of Ceremony allows visitors to contemplate the important markers in their own lives and at the same time celebrate Oregon's cultural diversity. All of the traditional artists featured in this exhibition took part in the Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program founded in 1989, which awards small grants to traditional artists from diverse ethnic communities to work one-on-one with members of their own culture groups to pass on traditional art forms. The artists in Masters of Ceremony share their experiences as performers of ceremonies and as creators of items used in various rites-of-passages.

The importance of ceremony is highlighted throughout the exhibit—from the Mexican coming-of-age ritual, the quinceañera and the traditional Wasco burials at Warm Springs to the use of Plateau cradleboards in child rearing practices and Hmong wedding negotiations. The featured artists cover eight ethnic groups including



lu-Mien baby hat (top left); ceremonial tulle mat (top right); wax and paper corona (lower left); and Plateau Indian wedding gifts (lower right); beaded bag, Hudson Bay blanket, and wampum beads.

Wasco, lu-Mien, Palestinian, Angolan, Mexican, Cayuse, Blue Hmong, and Wallulapum-Palouse. These traditional artists represent Oregon's diverse cultural heritage and illustrate the important role tradition bearers play in our communities. Life's passages are common to all people and Masters of Ceremony presents and honest look at how important and symbolic these events are to our communities—and ourselves.

Masters of Ceremony was conceived and organized by Eliza Buck,

Folklife Coordinator of the Oregon Historical Society's Folklife Program. "While working with master folk artists, the richness of their stories, crafts, and traditional practices opened my eyes to a world of possibilities and made me see how much all people have in common," says Eliza Buck. "I hope people will come away from this exhibit with and understanding that everyone shares certain life experiences, and our traditions guide us successfully through life."

Masters of Ceremony also is a

collaboration with the artists, who contributed personal artifacts, photographs, and quotes, and will perform and demonstrate their traditional arts throughout the six-month stay at the Oregon History Center. Following this major exhibition, a smaller, but equally powerful traveling component will embark on a two-year statewide tour to venues including schools, museums, regional art councils, libraries and community centers.

In conjunction with the exhibitions, the Oregon Historical Society is offering a variety of activities, including: educational programming for students and teachers; traditional art demonstrations (February 23 and March 2, 1997); free admission on Statehood Day (February 14, 1997); and other special events.

Masters of Ceremony is presented by Portland General Electric with additional generous support from: National Endowment for the Arts; Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Community Folklife Program; James F. and Marion L. Miller Fund of the Oregon Community Foundation; Margaret Thiele Petti Foundation; Oregon Arts Commission; and Jeld-Wen Foundation.

The Oregon History Center is located in Portland's Cultural District, 1200 SW Park Avenue, Portland, OR 97205. Admission is \$6.00/adult, \$3.00/student with ID; \$1.50/children 6-12; OHS members and children 5 and under/free; and seniors (60+) on Thursdays free. Museum hours are Tuesday-Saturday, 10-5 p.m., and Sunday, 1-5 p.m. For more information, please contact the Oregon Historical Society at 503/222-1741.

Church-Building Initiative launched

The Congress of National Black Churches, Inc. (CNBC), launched its Church Rebuilding and Arson Prevention Initiative at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., to be implemented in 13 states over the next three years including Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, Kentucky, Missouri, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama and Louisiana.

Because of the recent rash of church burnings -- which include a large number of its member denominations -- CNBC feels a special obligation to take action with a restorative and preventive, long-term strategy that is ecumenically and multi-racially inclusive. CNBC's Church Rebuilding and Arson Prevention Initiative has been awarded \$6 million in funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. and the entire program is estimated to cost at least \$12 million. Together with HUD and National Council of Churches, CNBC is part of the National Rebuilding Initiative established by President Clinton to ensure that burned churches receive rebuilding support quickly and efficiently.

"This initiative signifies CNBC's long-term commitment to rebuild churches and restore communities" said CNBC Chairman Bishop Roy L. H. Winbush of the Church of God in Christ. "We also want to build a community," CNBC Founder and Chairman Emeritus Bishop John Hurst Adams of the African Methodist Episcopal Church added. "We must intentionally build a new climate of inclusion, quality and morality."

According to the most recent data available, 318 churches have been victimized by arson between Jan. 1, 1995 and Dec. 17, 1996. CNBC's vision is to eliminate the church burning crisis before the dawn of the 21st century and, in doing so, to build greater ecumenical and multi-racial harmony while empowering African American communities. Also, because an overwhelming number of church arsons are committed by youth, the program will place a special emphasis on reaching and educating young people.

"Lilly Endowment and CNBC have been closely associated since the 1970s," said Dr. Craig Dykstra, Vice President, Religion Division, Lilly Endowment. "We are pleased support CNBC in this important, worthwhile and complex effort. Both Lilly Endowment and CNBC want to focus this effort on long-term constructive solutions for burned as well as vulnerable churches. We also want to bring a wide variety of community and professional resources into play."

The CNBC Church Rebuilding and Arson Prevention initiative has

a three-pronged approach:

- 1. Rebuild burned churches**
 - Over the next three years, 50 churches will be rebuilt with secure, fire-resistive materials
 - The program is being piloted for the first year in Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas
 - The program will develop and conduct technical assistance and training workshops on rebuilding churches and garnering community support
- 2. Prevent and eliminate church arson**
 - Churches will be educated in how to effectively invest in security systems and fire retardant materials and techniques (according to a recent CNBC assessment, security systems were not present in churches and smoke detectors and fire alarms were also not being used) to ensure long-term benefits
 - The initiative will help develop creative and innovative security systems -- in conjunction with the National Institute of Building Science, U.S. Fire Administration and other private and public partners -- that can be installed in existing, rebuilt and newly constructed churches
 - New churches will be equipped with state-of-the-art fire retardant systems
 - The initiative will provide churches with insurance counseling and direction to identify prudent policies
- 3. Promote ecumenical and multi-racial inclusiveness**
 - CNBC has established a toll-free number for more information (1-1-800-424-8808 for callers outside of Washington, D.C. and 202-530-0765 for District callers)
 - The outreach plan will focus on identifying potential sponsors, technical and skilled trade organizations and supporters from the media
 - CNBC will establish forums and activities to promote a healthy, intellectual exchange between different religious groups, ethnic groups and age groups
 - In addition, a comprehensive public education and awareness campaign will be rolled out. As part of this campaign, CNBC will:
 - Produce a documentary film that depicts the impact of the church-burning crisis and offers hope to finding a solution
 - Produce PSAs, educational pamphlets, resource guides and books
 - Provide an 800 number for volunteers, the media, donations and sponsors to support the effort
 - Engage primary and secondary school students in the 13 states to express their feelings about the burnings through essays and art to be read and displayed
 - Establish an information center and database for the effort

The Sacraments of Christ

The Archdiocese of Portland will present another lecture in "The Jesus Series" on the nature and person of Jesus. Father Joseph Di Noia, O.P., will give a presentation on "The Sacraments of Christ." His presentation will be given on Friday, February 21 at 7:30 p.m., at the university of Portland and on Saturday, February 2 at the Franciscan Renewal Center (0858 S.W. Palatine Hill Road), Portland. "The Jesus Series" focuses on Jesus Christ as the resurrected Lord proclaimed by Tradition and Scripture.

Father Di Noia is Executive Director of the Secretariat for Doctrine and Pastoral Practices at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. Father Di Noia received a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy in 1970, both from St. Stephen's College, Dover, MA. A member of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. He earned a Ph.D., in 1980 from Yale University.

In addition to his work at the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Father Di Noia is also Professor of Theology at the Dominican

House of Studies, Adjunct Professor at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family Studies, Washington, D.C., and Editor in Chief of The Thomist. He has authored two books, numerous essays, papers, encyclopedia and newspaper articles and several book reviews.

The "Jesus Series" is organized by the Archdiocese of Portland in collaboration with University of Portland, Marylhurst College and Mt. Angel Seminary. The series will consist of presentations held monthly through May 1997.

Church blossoms

From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the Lord is to be praised-- Psalm 113:3

East meets West! Two diverse congregations join together to pursue racial reconciliation while meeting community needs.

Some 15 months ago, Sunset Covenant Church helped plant a new congregation. This new congregation, Oregon Korean Covenant Church, started October 15, 1996, under the leadership of Rev. Sung-Chool Moon. Pastor Moon, a first generation Korean who has been in North America for ten years, has served churches in Ottawa, Ontario, Phoenix, AZ, and Portland, Oregon prior to pioneering this new work. It is estimated that there are 20,000 Koreans in the Beaverton and West Portland area.

Sunset Covenant Church, the first church in the Somerset West/Rock Creek expansions, held its first services 30 years ago. Rev. Jason Knudeson, who has served the church for over five years, has a heart for racial reconciliation and this opportunity was too good to pass up. "Pastor Moon and I share a common vision to show that we can not only work well together, but we can make our community stronger as we join forces" said Knudeson.

Late last year, both congregations voted to a one year trial merger.

Their goal was to see if they could be more effective as one church, with two services, than two separate congregations.

The result of these decisions has led to a new service format that will begin March 2, 1997. The services will be as follows: English service from 9:30-10:45 a.m.; Korean service 11-12:30 p.m.; joint Christian education program from 11-12 p.m.

"This is the ideal format for Koreans" says Moon. It will allow second generation Koreans to be involved in English speaking Sunday school, while providing a worship service in Korean for the adults.

SS Pension scandal breaks

The Church of Scientology announced today it has launched an investigation into criminal and immoral acts by politicians in Germany who are leading the campaign of abuses and harassment of Scientology and other religious minorities in Germany. The first findings reveal widespread criminality such as embezzlement, theft, tax evasion and abuse of office for private benefit which have resulted in convictions and jail terms for many officials of the governing Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) parties.

The exact details about these crimes will be published this coming week in a half-million copy special report by the Church's Freedom Magazine in both English and German. "We will pull the tooth of hypocrisy out of their mouths and will let the world know what we found," said Leisa Goodman, a spokeswoman at Church headquarters in Los Angeles. "These people have the audacity to assign profit, while they have blood and payola [bribery] all over their greedy fingers," she charged.

The announcement was made mid breaking news reports in Europe that the German government has been discovered to still be giving monthly allowances to at least 50,000 war criminals and former members of the Waffen SS who fought in WW II. The pensions, paid for out of taxpayer funds, total 600 million DM per year. One example on the pension roll, according to the Dutch national newspaper, Trouw, is a Nazi

who was convicted of killing 15 Italian men and children in 1943, who was later injured in the leg. He is currently receiving 708 DMs per month in pension--payments 30% higher than what Jewish victims of WWII receive in compensation from the German government to compensate 13,000 Jewish victims of WWII who currently live in eastern Europe.

The millions of DMs in payments for the SS, according to the news reports, are arranged through the Federal ministry of Labor--of which Minister of Labor Norbert Blum has been among the most controversial leaders in what US State Department officials termed a "campaign of harassment and intimidation" when the government's 1996 Human Rights Report was released last week.

The report contained a lengthy section strongly critical of Germany for its massive harassment of Scientology solely on the basis of their belief when there is no evidence of wrongdoing.

"There is no doubt that Blum and his ilk make a political red herring out of Scientology to cover up his own atrocities and scandals," charged Goodman. "we can be sure that is also the same case for the other politicians who scream about Scientology," continued Goodman, who noted that the Church has been found guilty of nothing in Germany, but subjected to "repeated harassing investigations and other political terror tactics which smack of Gestapo mentality."

Words of Hope

BY JAMES SWINTON

Mankind may fail you: father/mother, husband/wife, boyfriend/girlfriend, friend, etc. Jobs can be lost, careers can fail, life can be stressful, Churchianity can be disappointing

But there's one thing that you can always depend upon, God's love for you.

He loves you so much that He sent His son, Jesus Christ to shed His blood, dying instead of you for your sins.

If you are a believer, you are already aware of this. If not, read the following scriptures: Rom. 3:23; 6:23; 1 John 5:20; II Cor. 5:21; Matt. 27:24-50; Heb. 9:22, 26; Col. 1:14

As a believer, let's return to relying, placing our faith completely in Christ, depending 100% upon Him, instead of believing Satan's original lie to Adam and Eve: that they could become a god (Gen. 3:4,5) and become self-reliance, but dependent of Him.

For Christ said, "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). He makes intercession for us (Rom. 8:34).

Take advantage of God's Holy Spirit: He can lead us (Gal. 5:18; Rom. 8:15). He helps and prays for us to the Father on the behalf of our troubles/problems (Rom. 8:26,27).

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February is Black History Month

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