

Proposal for Sacred Music School

By Jack Gottlieb

Since liturgical conventions of the three major Western religions are now in a state of transition - due to ecumenical decisions, alienation and the realization that liturgy has not kept pace with world change - it is here proposed that a

School of Sacred Music for All Faiths be instituted. This arises out of the conviction that methodology (i.e. ways and means) can be improved and enhanced by the mutual exposure of these religious traditions to each other; that change is less likely to occur in continued maintenance of exclusive inbred teaching; and that wide-open intermingling on the University level is bound to affect liturgical practice on the Community level. The following suggestions are to be regarded as a first attempt at formulation; they are not complete.

1. To take place during the summer (for at least two months) so that it may attract nationwide interest.
2. In conjunction with Tulane University in order to gain access to their facilities, and to give the project even greater stature and appeal.
3. Three composers on staff (Catholic, Protestant and Jewish) who would give private lessons, in addition to teaching classes and/or seminars in their respective liturgies. Each would also be represented, some way, in performance or lecture - either together or at different times. If possible, these composers should be able to communicate substantially about their liturgies. Otherwise, a musicologist-type assistant (or someone equivalent) should fulfill this function, working hand-in-hand with the composer.

4. Other arts must be involved: especially dance, writing and painting, which presupposes an adequate staff. An integrated program of Arts and Religion, with the emphasis on music, would offer the renewal of vitality one to the other. In other words, artists would welcome such an opportunity as much as theologians.
5. Funds from Protestant and Jewish sources and from Foundations should now become possible; from the former because of the contemporary need for practical reevaluations of the arts within liturgy; from the latter because of the novelty, uniqueness and value of the School. This has never been attempted before.
6. All students would be required to take at least one course in a faith other than their own (assuming that each faith is represented by an equal number of courses, all similar). This is the particular distinction of such a School, and any deviation from such requirement would be self-defeating.
7. All programs given as close to campus as possible. Both the ^University and ^Community should work together. In fact, this would be a necessary condition. Thus, a "creative" service at the ^Holy Name Church, Temple Sinai and a nearby Baptist church (i.e. a new Catholic, Jewish and Protestant service) would be in order. All students would be required to participate in all of these (assuming proper dispensation has been received), as well as the local choirs involved. Carefully thought-out coordination and much advance planning is obvious. For example, those who leave the community during the summer (or those who are occupied with specific summer activities in town) might want to participate if they are informed early enough.