

Prophet, Priest & King

Woodcut Series by Chris Stoffel Overvoorde



Isaiah: *Misplaced Trust Shamed*



Eli: *High Priest, Helpless Parent*



Abraham: *To Give it All*

Q. *Why is He called "Christ" meaning "Anointed"?*

A. Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to get our *chief prophet* and teacher who perfectly revealed to us the secret *only high priest* who has set us free by the one sacrifice of his body, who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our *eternal king* who governs us by his Word and Spirit, who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.

Q. *But why are you called a Christian?*

A. Because by faith I am a member of Christ and so share in his anointing. I am anointed to confess his name [*prophet*], to present myself to him as a living sacrifice [*priest*] of thanks, to strive with a good conscience against sin and the devil in this life, and afterwards to reign [*king*] with Christ over all creation for all eternity.

I proposed to produce a series of woodcut prints on the theological concept of "Prophet, Priest and King" as exemplified in the Old Testament. This concept originally came to me from questions and answers thirty-one and thirty-two in the Heidelberg Catechism quoted above. Many image-makers in the past have eloquently confessed their faith as *prophets*, others have served as *priests* in providing the congregation with an enriching worship environment, and some have reflected the *kingship* of Christ in a most splendid manner. The three theological virtues of faith, hope, and love parallel these concepts; prophet - *faith*; priest - *hope*; and king - *love*.

It all appeared so simple and well organized. Yet when I went to the Old Testament and began to read about the saintly patriarch of old, I did not find a single organizing principle, nor a simple idea. I had assumed that it would be easy to find great examples which would provide uncomplicated positive reinforcement for the Christian life today.

What I found were people, people who were far from perfect: prophets who complained bitterly, priests without conviction, and kings who ruled without mercy, let alone love. Even the most positive characters had their shortcomings, and even moments of despair. Who could complain louder and more demandingly than Jeremiah? Who was more sneaky than David? Who like Eli also lacked parental conviction?

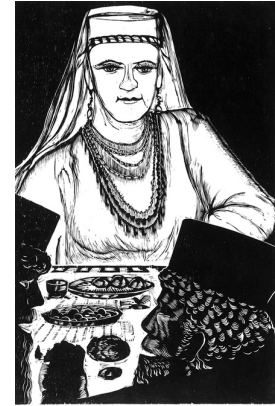
Are the Old Testament prophets, priests, and kings good examples for us to study, visit, and explore visually? I believed so when I started and I do so now, though not for the same reasons. I do believe that they are an important part of God's plan for our salvation. God molded them just



Deborah: *Support in the Valley*



Ezra: *Message from Watergate*



Esther: *For a Time Like This*

as he molds us. The same mercy, grace, and guidance which sustained them, sustains us. It is in Christ that we are partakers in His anointing, in His role as prophet, priest, and king. These offices, too, had to be redeemed, just as we need to be redeemed. Each one of the Biblical historical events are an affirmation of God's faithfulness, of God's working in and through his creation in time and history.

Each character has been portrayed in a single image. The process of selecting one element from many events in each person's life was a difficult and challenging one. The word *selection* implies a limitation, a recognition and admission that one must concentrate on one aspect of a personality, one brief moment in the larger story from among an abundance of information. Many times I was tempted to do another print of the same individual or the same story, not because the first image was not successful, but because there was so much more to explore, so much more on which to elaborate.

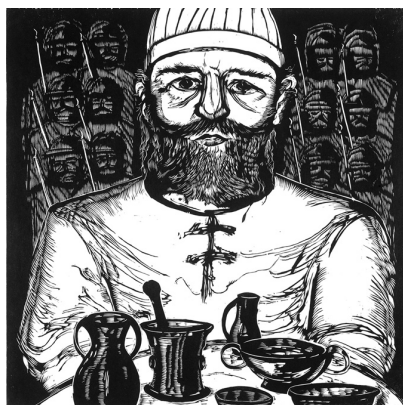
The concept of a series is a mixed blessing. On one hand it provides a framework for the artist and on the other hand it can stand in the way of the natural flow of the creative process. Thus each print is limited because it provides only a glimpse into the life of a saint and God's work in and through that saint.

The titles are gateways into the work, not explanations. Sometimes they have been more problematic than the image, which may be because my involvement was visual rather than verbal. They are left there for you the viewer to explore.

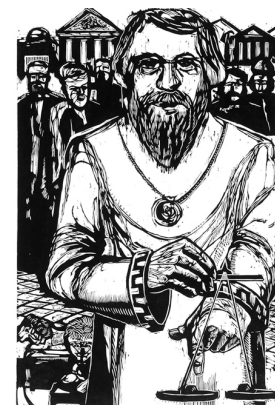
Reprinted from *Twenty-Five Years as an American Artist: Chris Stoffel Overvoorde* Published in 1986



Jeremiah: *Down, Deep Down*



Phinehas: *Visual Reminders*



Solomon: *Affirmation of Peace and Justice*

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PROPHET



Moses: *Chosen and Called*

PRIEST



Aaron: *One Scapegoat for All*

KING



David: *Affirmation with the Sword*



Nathan: *Truth Revealed*



Hosea: *Love Rather Than Ceremony*



Saul: *Obedience Rather Than Strength*



Ahab: *Caught Between Religions*



Hezekiah: *A Measure of Shadow*


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