

ART AND THE CHRISTIAN MIND

the life and work of H. R. Rookmaaker

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Art and the Christian Mind

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PREFACE

In the spring of 1977 I was living in Edinburgh. The sun was shining beautifully through the windowpanes of my little flat on Rose Street when I answered the telephone on Monday, March 14. My delight in the day and at hearing Marleen Rookmaaker's voice soon jolted into a dark shadow of shock and sadness as she told me that her father had died in the early evening of the night before. It hardly seemed possible that he could have slipped away from all of us so suddenly.

Sorrow softened as I listened to Bach's wonderful cantata, *Gottes Zeit is die allerbeste Zeit* (BWV 106): "God's time is the very best time. . . . In him, we die at the right time, as he wills." Then memories flooded in.

My husband, Ward, and I treasured our friendship with Hans. There had been so many memorable and enjoyable times with him and with Anky and the family. We had had opportunity to see him in all sorts of surroundings: in the intimacy of our home in Vancouver on extended visits as our houseguest, at Dutch and Swiss L'Abri, as well as in various British, American, and Austrian settings. Publicly and personally, professionally and privately, there was no contradiction. He was completely himself. He did not try to ingratiate himself through small talk or chitchat. But he did have a great sense of humor. I think Ward is the only person I ever saw who could make him laugh heartily at himself. We loved the fact that he did not take himself seriously every second of the day.

We also almost killed ourselves suppressing our laughter on one occasion at seeing Hans trying to be as tactful as possible

in giving his opinion of a work of art in which one of our colleagues had invested a considerable amount of money despite his wife's disapproval. He was obviously looking for Hans's endorsement to justify his expenditure and confirm his good taste. When Hans was not immediately forthcoming, he finally asked, "What do you think?" There was a significant interval of silence. There we all were, including our colleague and his spouse and children, waiting with bated breath to hear Hans's expert opinion. Fiddling with his pipe a bit, he finally looked around at all of us and then at the painting and said, "Well, it really should be entitled, 'Tunnel of Love.' It would be best if you put it under your bed."

But writing the biography of a mentor and friend is not simply about warm personal reminiscences. Over the course of writing this brief biography, I have had to ask myself many questions about what it means to give a textual account of someone's life with fidelity to the remaining documentary evidence as well as to the highly personal memories (including my own) of those still living.

By turns I have been challenged, humbled, and awed by the life of a person who was neither famous nor obscure by worldly standards. Here was someone who lived a relatively ordinary life of influence in the middle of the twentieth century. The upsurge in biography today often goes hand in hand with catering to curiosity about a celebrity and the hunger of the public to know the foibles of a famous person's life. Few famous people in any age can be what one might call typical of their time.

Yet we desire deeply to know the lives of people and long for figures who represent their ages. Perhaps the main reason the Bible is still the world's best seller and we name so many of our children after its cast of characters is that it is a book of biographies, giving powerfully rendered, unvarnished, and distilled lives of people who made a difference for good or ill.

Biographies help give us our moral place in history as we participate through identification with or reaction against those

about whom we read. Biographies also overcome the arbitrary distinctions and artificial divisions we make when thinking or writing about history. At best, if crafted well, they can synthesize a personal perspective with a wider view of the events of a period that inspires us to try to understand another time or to live well in the present.

The struggle to achieve a moving narrative while remaining faithful to written evidence and personal recollections is not easy. It provides a great temptation for the biographer to move subtly to create a form closer to fiction than the more limited telling of a life based almost strictly on what can be corroborated.

Out of complete sincerity and desire for Hans Rookmaaker's name not to fall into oblivion, the late Linette Martin made an important first attempt to share his life soon after he died by publishing a biography in 1979. For that, anyone who values the life and work of H.R. Rookmaaker must be grateful. Despite inconsistency regarding chronology, some historical inaccuracies, and elements of invented narrative, anyone who writes a biography after her work stands on her shoulders and owes her a debt of appreciation. In the latter part of her book, she was able brilliantly to capture Rookmaaker's colloquially voiced speech on a page of written text—a voice we do not hear in quite the same way in his recorded lectures or his letters. It is so authentic that we can ever be grateful for her dramatist's gift and forgive her for her factual errors.

The purpose of this additional biography has been to link Rookmaaker to his works and his ongoing influence as well as to try to correct a number of inaccuracies. There has also been an attempt to elaborate the important influence of some people and perspectives in shaping his life and outlook that were overlooked previously.

In his own right, the life and thought of J.P.A. Mekkes, Rookmaaker's most important mentor and a key post-World War II Dutch Reformational thinker, still needs to be made available to English-speaking audiences. Further reflection on the

relationship of Hans Rookmaaker and Francis Schaeffer in their missional dynamic to the so-called hippie generation would also be helpful. It would also be useful for a historian of Christianity to explore the bridge between Rookmaaker's life and thought and the current generation who have been influenced by him in their art or thinking or written work.

I am more than painfully aware of many names that are missing from this account of the life and influence of Hans Rookmaaker that could be mentioned. No biography can encompass a whole life. The next biographer perhaps can craft it even more inclusively now that we have the published *Complete Works* available in accessible form.

I am reminded of Hans's playfulness. Walking along a sidewalk with his family and with our family, he would rush ahead of all of us and say, "Three steps forward and two steps back!" and have us all doing the same thing down the street as people looked at us as if we were crazy. What a life lesson in hope! There are setbacks, but buck up—we are also, by God's grace, going forward. At many instances along the way in life and work, and as I wrote this biography, I have been reminded of "three steps forward and two steps back," not by abstract admonition but by the remembrance of the act of charging up and down an ordinary street in a normal neighborhood, three steps forward and two steps back.

No biography can get it all right. The aim of this biography has been simply to say that an "ordinary" life can make an extraordinary difference.



ONE
IMPACT

Hans Rookmaaker's life spanned a mere fifty-five years (1922–1977). Those years were situated symmetrically in the midst of the twentieth century. He completed the first half of the course of his life in 1949/1950. He was gone by 1977.

Since his death the arts scene among Christians of almost all traditions and denominations in Europe and North America has changed significantly. The Bible Society in New York City now has a serious art gallery. The National Gallery in London marked the year 2000 with an extraordinary exhibition of images of Christ sponsored by two major trusts willing to back such an arts event despite the considerable embarrassment that some art historians still seem to have about Christian subject matter. Over

the past thirty years Christian rock music has matured considerably lyrically and musically. Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA) is an established organization linking and creatively supporting a wide network of Christian artists in all fields of the visual arts. *Image: A Journal of the Arts & Religion* serves as a beacon of hope for many writers and artists as it speaks credibly from a perspective of faith-commitment to a wider culture beyond the boundaries of religious institutions. In Scotland the Leith School of Art was founded, and in the Netherlands a Christian art academy was established as a result of Rookmaaker's own efforts.

A generation ago these kinds of developments and resources that we have begun to take for granted simply did not exist. In North America the marginalizing and minimizing of the arts were not just a condition of the church but also of a pragmatic culture that viewed the arts as a luxury rather than a necessity. In Europe the situation was different. The wider culture valued the arts and invested in them more than their North American counterparts. For many cultured Europeans art, filled with the beauty and greatness of past human achievement, was a surrogate religion. For an extremely influential and highly intellectual minority, it became a staging ground for raging anger and discontent, especially after the debacle of World War II and the collapse of confidence in an abiding moral order. On both sides of the Atlantic the church, challenged by a new society and not completely confident of its identity, frequently closed its eyes and ears to culture by ignoring trends or becoming defensive.

With extraordinary openness and human sympathy, and with deep faith, Hans Rookmaaker faced these cultural conditions squarely. Not only did many of the arts developments mentioned above not exist a generation ago, but they were not fully imaginable. The dynamic impact of Rookmaaker's life and his short lifework made them a lot more probable. Out of all proportion to his length of days, he qualitatively influenced key individuals and groups that would have a remarkable effect on

changing attitudes toward the arts in the church and many other institutions.

In 1961 at the height of the Cold War and the great race for space between the Soviets and the Americans, Rookmaaker, not yet a full professor but teaching at the University of Leiden, made his first extended trip to North America. He was not sponsored or invited by churches, though individual friends from his Reformed tradition welcomed him and warmly hosted him, but came through a grant funded by the Dutch government. The purpose of his trip was to make a study of the teaching of art history in the United States.

To say the least, he made the most of this trip. While in the United States he visited virtually every major center of art-historical study east of St. Louis as well as every major art collection from the northeast seaboard to the Midwest. He attended the College Art Association meeting in New York City, where he met many prominent art historians. He took this golden opportunity also to pursue his passion for African-American music and culture. By this time he was an expert in this field and had recently published a book on jazz, blues, and spirituals. His diary during this trip is dotted with contacts with leading black figures such as Thomas A. Dorsey, Mahalia Jackson, and Langston Hughes. Furthermore, he managed to meet a wide range of church-affiliated people, from black Baptists and Dutch Reformed types to a broad spectrum of evangelicals attached to institutions such as Calvin College and Wheaton College and organizations such as Christianity Today. He also traveled to Canada. Afterward he exuberantly corresponded with an amazing number of the people he had met on his travels.

Rookmaaker continued to deepen his thought and nurture his friendships. By 1968 he was a professor and had formed the Art History Department of the Free University of Amsterdam. He was in full stride. The intervening years had helped prepare him for an increasingly chaotic culture. Often this period is looked back at nostalgically as a gentler, more peace-loving time

flowing with flower children and happy hippies, when marijuana filled the air and some social issues, such as basic civil rights for blacks in the USA, got straightened out. With fading memory the fierceness of the student protest movements that were gaining strength both in Europe and North America have not always remained clear. When a U.S. combat troop led by Lieutenant William Calley massacred all five hundred civilians of the Vietnamese village of My Lai though they showed no sign of resistance, that tragedy inflamed intense anger, as did the entire war. The attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, a well-known German student anarchist and activist, unleashed turbulent solidarity demonstrations in Vienna, Paris, Rome, and London. Student protests closed down the University of Paris in the spring of 1968 and turned the streets of Paris into a battle zone, imperiling the government. West Germany was launched into a decade of tumultuous internal struggle as radicals gathering around the Baader-Meinhof Gang tried to kick-start revolution through violence and terrorism.

During these tumultuous years of student unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s, few thinkers or leaders were prepared for the hard social, political, and philosophical realities of this era. Many academic and administrative careers were broken in universities across the world. Rookmaaker was not impervious to the pressures on and within his own institution or on himself as an administrator and teacher. But, remarkably, he was prepared spiritually and intellectually for the fundamental challenge of the younger generation's radical quest and the turbulence of the times it helped create, because through the years he had striven earnestly to bring to bear Christian understanding on all the issues of life. He made a huge impact on the lives of students in several countries.

At first glance he looked like an unlikely person to have much to say to a radical and rebellious generation bent on changing not only the university but also society and its mores. A driver's license that he obtained in 1961 during his extended

travels in the USA describes him as having brown hair and eyes, weighing 160 pounds, with a height of five feet and eight inches. He was not physically a big man or imposing at all. Dressed in an English worsted three-piece suit and smoking his pipe, he appeared a typical, comfortably positioned bureaucrat or professor. He looked more like a bank manager than an art historian. There was not a trace of bohemian manner in his style. On the surface, it was not difficult to suspect him of being slightly out of touch with current trends or contemporary culture.

When the clamor came, however, he was ready. Many times he faced hostile audiences of art students who were astonished to hear this ordinary-looking, little professor talking impassionately and intelligently about contemporary issues and trends from a Christian perspective. His courage in facing and discussing the questions of art and morals in society, areas rarely ventured into publicly by conservative Christians, motivated many reluctant Christian students who had compartmentalized their lives to relate their faith to their whole lives and studies in a deep and lively way.

But it was not only Christian students who responded to him. Tony Wales, who in the mid-1960s served on the staff of British Inter-Varsity Fellowship (IVF), said he had seen students and others come to faith in Christ through such Rookmaaker lectures as “Three Steps to Modern Art.” Wales also had seen him receive a standing ovation by several hundred students at a London art college following a two-hour-long presentation and analysis of rock and protest music. On that occasion not only did these students of the protest generation show their respect, but at the end of the same lecture the chairman of the painting department of the college acknowledged that he now for the first time could understand his own son. Wales also relates Rookmaaker’s evident disappointment on another occasion when a lecture he was to give at the Royal Academy had to be moved to a larger hall because the Reynolds Room was bulging with people!

Rookmaaker was a masterful communicator in both Dutch and English. When the lights went down and he started to show slides of great works of art of the past or startling contemporary art and comment on them, his audience was fascinated, whether they agreed with him or not. His lecturing style was highly unusual for a continental professor, as he spoke not from a written manuscript but extemporaneously and with full attentive engagement with his listeners. It was an art form, a performance. Like a jazz musician playing inventively with themes, he would improvise within a given structure (the lecture topic) with mastery and control, skill and intensity. He would bait and shock, amuse and bemuse. A lot hung on the sequence of visual or audio examples he used. The more often he repeated a lecture, the richer it got. His material never became stale with repetition because there was always something new, if only in the provocative tone or way he put things.

In the light of day he was equally compelling. Going to an art gallery with him was an exceptional learning experience. He regularly took his own students from the Free University to the many special art collections in the Netherlands as well as on extended excursions to collections abroad, especially to Italy. But he also frequently invited small groups or individuals to join him at the art museum when he spoke at conferences.

He did not feel compelled to look at every painting or work of art when he entered a gallery. He would say, "Look at the one that draws you to itself." Or when he gathered a small group before a picture, he would ask the most obvious question first: "What are you looking at?" Often there was acute discomfort in the group because such a basic question seemed so self-evident. Suspicion would arise that there must be some hidden agenda behind it to expose their ignorance. Rookmaaker, however, never toyed with people in this way. He would be playful and provocative for pedagogical purposes. He was always a sincere teacher. Soon everyone in the little group would learn that they genuinely needed to see firsthand what they were looking at. Afterward this

made Rookmaaker's own remarks on the picture all the more rewarding because everyone in the group had started first by seeing it for himself or herself.

Rookmaaker was protective of his little flock of students when visiting an art gallery. He did not take kindly to interlopers with whom he did not have a personal connection. Many of his students relate incidents when a curious visitor would sidle up to the group to hear the interesting things the small, dignified gentleman was saying only to be told directly by him in a not so gentle way, "This is a very special art history course. It costs two thousand dollars. Please go away!" Aghast, the intruder would leave. And the small group would beam at being considered so special and exclusive. There lurked beneath an unpretentious exterior a complex personality of immense vitality and not a few surprises.

Rookmaaker brought his own humanity and his understanding of humanity to his scholarship in a conscious way that is unusual for academics. He also sought to help his students bring their humanity fully into their learning and studies. His own words best describe how important the human element was for him in learning and teaching:

We must judge as human beings, not as an abstract homo aestheticus, not as art historians or as artists but with our full human being. . . . But everyone may and can judge art. The difference comes between a practiced judgment, based on experience, and the judgment of someone who is just beginning to look. The latter must still learn a lot—in the first place, to see. And that is exactly the situation of our students. We also need to teach them to look as human beings. All of education is concerned with the humanity of young people. The point of departure is their humanity, their young and inexperienced humanity. They need to develop competence in judging, they need to gain experience and insight. They will have to do that themselves. It is all too subtle and too richly multicoloured for us to be able to teach it to them as one teaches a maths sum.

But we will have to show them the way. Help them. Pass on something of our experience and our knowledge by which they at least can be guarded from the most obvious misconceptions and dead ends. . . .

The student expects that you will judge as a human being . . . a person with conviction, a point of view, a person with a warm heart who can get angry and can also say why you were so moved or became so enthusiastic, can explain why something had such an impact on you. We may talk about works of art, preferably close to the works of art themselves, as long as it is not an argument for argument's sake—so interesting and so cultural—as long as the real commitment is to find the truth, to say the right thing, in order to do justice to the artist, the work in question, and to the students and ourselves as well.

Besides, we can be sure that our work is never perfect. But it certainly can be meaningful. It is possible to work and deal with art and with students in this way. If it were impossible, it would be better never to speak about art again, no, even stronger, to never look at it again. After all, the work proves to be humanly impossible to approach and does not really require our reaction, the input of our personality. Basically these things are about love for our neighbour and for the truth, because only these can make us free and make our work meaningful. (CW [*Complete Works*], 2:134–135)

In 1970, the year Rookmaaker published his best-selling book *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*, most students in Europe or North America were not being thought of or educated in this deeply human and personal way. On May 4 that year, the world looked on with horror as students, only some of whom were protesters against the bombing of Cambodia (a decision by President Nixon that appeared to expand the Vietnam War), were gunned down by National Guardsmen on the campus of Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. The opening words of Rookmaaker's book perfectly captured the mood of the era: "We live at a time of great change, of protest and revolution. We are

aware that something radical is happening around us, but it is not always easy to see just what it is" (CW, 5:5).

He was exactly on target. Rookmaaker had written a searing account in this work of the dehumanization of life in our times as shown in the rise of modern art. These were threatening words for many who had accommodated themselves comfortably to modernity and contemporary culture, whether they were or were not Christians, or whether they were or were not aware of this conformity. When it came out, *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* received wide acknowledgment and even acclaim, from a brief notice and review in *Art News* to Malcolm Muggeridge's making it one of his *Observer* Books of the Year for 1970. Muggeridge also promoted it in *Esquire*, where he was also a book review editor. *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* was a genuine crossover book. It used a single language that was accessible to people whether they had Christian conviction or not. Its success may possibly have inspired its copy-editor at Inter-Varsity Press in England, David Alexander, to co-found with his wife, Pat Alexander, Lion Publishing, a new press dedicated to a refreshingly inclusive way of communicating with and engaging the public.

In *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*, Rookmaaker resolutely faced the problematic and polemical character of modern art that denounced the nature and dignity of humanity. In the nineteenth century Nietzsche said, "God is dead." In the twentieth century, the most potent stream of modern art implicitly said, "Man is dead." Rookmaaker asked the question:

What has become of people? Miró once painted a picture of a picture. He took a reproduction of a secondary seventeenth-century Dutch picture (it could just as well have been a Vermeer or a Rembrandt) and gave his own reinterpretation. Nothing is more telling. 'Man is dead,' it says. The absurd, the strange, the void, the irrationally horrible is there. The old picture is treated with humour, scorn . . . and devas-

tating irony until nothing is left. As the image is destroyed, so too is man. (CW, 5:88)

For Rookmaaker this was spiritual combat, not simply a matter of aesthetic niceties or opinions. He was attempting to awaken spiritual sleepers to the idea that modern art was not amoral or neutral but was loaded with meaning that conveyed an impact on all of us, whether we ever darkened the door of an art museum or not, because it was an assault on our humanity. The implications were not theoretical but were as practical as how we raise our children, elect our leaders, or care for the earth's environment.

A tremendous disruption with past assumptions of Western culture regarding the nature of humankind and reality had been heralded while most people were distracted by the clever allurements of a technological age. Modern artists like Picasso, Miró, and Duchamp not only promulgated a view of human beings as absurd but also celebrated it, led the way, and propagated it through their works of art. It is widely known that early audiences of this art reacted violently to it. This did not come generally from an informed perspective but out of an intuition at some vague level of being threatened. We may smile at their reaction to the shock of the new and feel mildly superior in being able now to appreciate this art. But Rookmaaker pointed out that only those practicing an aesthetic of detachment, interested purely in formal analysis of the work of art, or somewhat naive viewers not desiring to appear to be philistines could say, "The new art gives nothing more than a human message, conveyed by new means . . . [or] artists are expressing their times, and when they live in different times their forms are different."

He remarked further that "all the while the sometimes obvious content is being ignored. And even when there is an attempt to discuss content, they make it subjective and say 'This is how things are seen by this person.' In any event, to question the truth of what is stated in art is taboo" (CW, 5:196). Rookmaaker tack-

led both the radical implications of meaning in modern art and the studied refusal to engage that meaning.

This changing view of human beings, of course, did not happen overnight, or even in the decades at the turn of the twentieth century. Rookmaaker's own doctoral dissertation on Paul Gauguin, perhaps his most influential scholarly work, concentrated on this pivotal period at the turn of the century. However, his *Complete Works* attest that a monumental amount of his thinking went into analyzing and reflecting on the gradual transformation of thought regarding the nature of being human that transpired in Western culture since the time of the High Middle Ages. He focused frequently on views concerning human nature as formulated in Renaissance and Reformation thought during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and particularly on the implications of the Enlightenment view of man in the eighteenth century for an unfolding view of modernity that the twentieth century ultimately received as a dubious legacy.

He forcefully engaged these ideas in his essay "Commitment in Art":

This new vision of human beings and the world—a result of the development starting with the Enlightenment and continuing through Romanticism and positivism—was first given expression in painting. It happened around 1911: the old view of people having positive contact with reality, a contact already loosened by Impressionism, was totally destroyed. Human being [sic] as an absurdity, estranged from the world, which was in itself chaotic, accidental and apparently contingent and hostile, became the painter's new preoccupation. Some artists, like Picasso, began to paint absurd humanity, while others, like Kandinsky, turned to abstraction. In this revolution, this violent destruction of so many established values, much that was deeply anchored in the reality of human life was torn down. A great part of the alarmed public found it unacceptable. Just as people had reacted violently at the beginning of Impressionism, so Kandinsky relates how his abstract

paintings had to be cleaned every night at his exhibition in 1912 because the public had spat on his work. The artist was committed and had a message. That much the public accepted and did not deny, but being themselves also committed, they retained the right to reject that message. (CW, 5:192–193)

Rookmaaker's approach to these issues was not always appreciated and frequently stirred up strong reactions. Often he was (inaccurately, as his *Complete Works* attest) accused of not understanding and dismissing abstract art. He was criticized for focusing too much on the content and meaning of works of art. In an article written in 1972, Nicholas Wolterstorff believed that Rookmaaker looked "right through the sensory qualities of the work of art in order to discern the message beyond." Alva Steffler, an art professor at Wheaton College in Illinois, had a similar impression after reading Rookmaaker's writing and becoming personally acquainted with him in the early 1970s, though later modifying these views and coming to an appreciation of Rookmaaker's perspective.

No one may have put it in print, but there was a climate of criticism around Rookmaaker that regarded him as a popularizer. Rookmaaker's communication skills sympathetically won him nicknames like "the pipe-puffing pundit of Amsterdam" and "the Dutch Kenneth Clark" from some of his peers and colleagues. But in the academy there is often, unfortunately, a price to pay for the ability to communicate with a broad audience. Popularizing is not at all popular with most academics! The assumption is that doing this signifies that "the scholar" is "lightweight," meaning he or she is not sufficiently serious in undertaking scholarship. Such a person is frequently accused of oversimplifying complexities or even distorting issues for the sake of having an audience, whether this is well-founded or not. Both J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis were ostracized to a certain extent by their Oxbridge colleagues because of this prejudice. Dorothy L. Sayers was not tarred with this brush because she

was not and did not claim to be a scholar, though her actual achievements belie this. But if the accusation places one in the company of people like the former, it may well be a badge of honor.

Rookmaaker seems to have borne with this well. He had a high degree of personal confidence. While he appreciated the esteem of his colleagues, it does not appear that he had any craven need for their approval. One wonders what his own awareness of his students' appreciation of him was. Did he have any sense of how far some of these inchoate artists and art historians would take his words and work and be formed significantly by them? He clearly basked in their admiration. Perhaps this approbation acted as compensation.

The extent of Rookmaaker's intellectual interests were far broader than usual for an academic. In his own field of art history, his writing was not confined to one or two areas of investigation but ranged over the whole course of Western art. At the same time he published works on African-American music and spoke about various cultural issues on public radio. Moving easily from technical philosophy and scholarship to readable, popular journalism, he was what today we might call a natural-born public intellectual. Yet he never eschewed or disparaged technical scholarship. In his association with Professor H. van de Waal of the University of Leiden, he helped pioneer DIAL/Iconclass, the most important technical art-historical research tool of the twentieth century for comprehensively classifying art-historical subject matter.

Rookmaaker deployed a broad blend of interests and competencies dynamically. He spoke a good number of European languages and had a reading knowledge of several more. Academically his ability ranged from researching technical scholarship for specialists to communicating many of these findings to a general public. He did both with equal respect. In both speaking and writing he had considerable skill to captivate. None of this, however, was in his case an end in itself to

create a brilliant career or to achieve acknowledgment, though he became a full professor and received recognition. From the moment he opened himself to fully embracing a biblical faith in Jesus Christ he was on a mission that motivated him until his last breath. The light shed into his life by the true Light of the world illuminated his vision and imbued him with an immense sense of being called to be fully human in a world created by the living God in accordance with his rich reality. Essentially Rookmaaker's aim was to share this fullness of life with others, not in a reductive or one-sided way but in a way that reflected the complexity and completeness of God's sustaining love in creation.

During his lifetime relatively few people who heard him or read his work knew much about the circumstances of his life or the hard-won way he had come to be a Christian. Occasionally he would share that he had come to Christ in a German prisoner-of-war camp. But it barely needed being stated explicitly, because anyone with ears to hear could tell no matter what topic Rookmaaker talked about they were encountering a powerful genuineness based on actual experience. This tacit undercurrent of strength through struggle permeated his style. Undoubtedly this authenticity was key to his impact on an unusually wide diversity of people. He was not everyone's cup of tea or a typical mass communicator. He was often playful and implied meaning in a way that encouraged his audience to form their understanding of what he was saying in a way that integrated their thinking with their feeling, but he did not strive to manipulate emotions.

One would expect an art historian to influence other art historians. And Rookmaaker did. What is less usual is for an art historian to have influence on many artists, including musicians and writers. But this Rookmaaker also did. It is rare for an art historian to make an impact on mature scholars and thinkers in other fields. Rookmaaker did this as well. In the 1970 Summer School of Regent College (Vancouver, Canada), the distin-

guished British biblical scholar F.F. Bruce, who taught along with Rookmaaker during that time, made clear his appreciation for the widening of his horizons as a result of listening to his Dutch colleague. David McKenna, an influential American Christian educator, while president of Seattle Pacific University, desired to come and study with Rookmaaker because he felt that his understanding of culture was compellingly important for an understanding of higher education in the contemporary world.

Most rare is it for an art historian to make an impact on ordinary people with no singular interest in art, scholarship, or education. Yet Rookmaaker quite often could communicate with people from a variety of walks of life because he was not an aesthete, and his aim was ultimately not simply to inform people about art but to share with others through art the fullness of life and the richness of reality that God created through his love. As a result of hearing or reading Rookmaaker, a sincere housewife could stunningly be awakened to her ingrained bourgeois sentimentality or a businessman suddenly see that it might be a good thing to plant some trees and to landscape his parking lot instead of just covering it over with asphalt and cement.

He might infuriate some people on occasion. He was not totally approachable. He would have been the last person on the planet to coo over a baby. He would never have made a politician, trying to get elected. He had his shortcomings and blind spots. He could be gruff. He sometimes became truly angry. Though he never especially sought conflict, he could face it. He passionately sought to do justice to the complexities of any issue, idea, opinion, or work of art or scholarship that he encountered. He hungered and thirsted for righteousness. He was not a plaster saint but a man of many complexities and hidden depths.

Hans Rookmaaker's life rang true to reality. He unfailingly engaged his contemporary listeners and readers in refreshing and interesting ways that accorded with the experience of liv-

ing in the twentieth century. It is all the more of interest for us that so much of his thought is still accessible and has application and relevance for many of the challenges of life in the twenty-first century.

Why is this so? Who was Hans Rookmaaker? What formed him?

As we follow the course of his life in subsequent chapters, these are the questions to be engaged.

APPENDIX II: SOURCES

NOTES TO PREFACE

The late Linette Martin wrote a brief study of the life of H.R. Rookmaaker shortly after his death, entitled *Hans Rookmaaker: A Biography* (London: Hodder & Stoughton; Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1979). Until now this is the only book-length biography that has been written on him. Recently Graham Birtwistle has written a succinct entry on “Henderik Roelof Rookmaaker (1922–1977)” in *Biographical Dictionary of Evangelicals*, edited by Timothy Larsen (Downers Grove and Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2003), pp. 563–565. Birtwistle has also contributed an essay on “H.R. Rookmaaker: The Shaping of his Thought” to the first volume of the *Complete Works* (CW, 1:xv–xxxiii). Jeremy S. Begbie’s *Voicing Creation’s Praise* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), pp. 127–141 offers a perspective on Rookmaaker’s aesthetic as it relates to the Neo-Calvinist tradition. A list of writings commenting on the work and thought of H.R.R. is included in this volume (also see CW, 6:434–446).

Primary documents for the life and work of Hans Rookmaaker that have been consulted extensively in preparation for this biography include: *The Complete Works of Hans R. Rookmaaker*, Vols. 1–6, edited by Marleen Hengelaar-Rookmaaker (Carlisle, UK: Piquant, 2002–2003), which were in the process of being edited as I was writing; Hans Rookmaaker Papers in the Special Collections of the Buswell Memorial Library, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, USA; papers, pho-

tographs, letters, official documents, annual appointment agendas, in the possession of the Rookmaaker family. In the interests of readability, liberty has been taken to make minor stylistic changes to some of the letters without changing the meaning.

From 1970 to 1977 I had serious and sustained personal conversations with H.R.R. in Vancouver, Seattle, Amsterdam, Eck en Wiel (Netherlands), Lausanne, Huémoz (Switzerland), Mittersill (Austria), London, and other locations in the UK. During this time I had the opportunity of hearing H.R.R. lecture in many different contexts. I have also had extensive personal communication with members of the Rookmaaker family and a multitude of his former students, friends, colleagues, associates, and others who have been greatly influenced by him.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1: IMPACT

The American Bible Society Gallery is located in mid-Manhattan (1865 Broadway, New York, NY 10023; www.americanbible.org/gallery). On the 2000 exhibition of images of Christ at the National Gallery, see Gabriel Finaldi et al., *The Image of Christ* (London: National Gallery Company Ltd, 2000), a catalog of the exhibition; Neil MacGregor with Erika Langmuir, *Seeing Salvation: Images of Christ in Art* (London: BBC, 2000); and “Nigel Halliday Talks to Neil MacGregor,” *Third Way* (March 2000), pp. 17–21. On the development of contemporary Christian rock music, see John J. Thompson, *Raised By Wolves: The Story of Christian Rock & Roll* (Toronto: ECW, 2000). See the web sites of Christians in the Visual Arts: www.civa.org; *Image: A Journal of the Arts & Religion*, www.imagejournal.org; Christelijke Academie voor de Beeldende Kunsten/CABK, Kampen, www.huygens.nl/21000_frame.htm; and Leith School of Art, Edinburgh, www.leithschoolofart.co.uk.

Sources of information on the life and travels of Rookmaaker in this chapter include his annual appointment agendas, letters, and papers in the Special Collections at Wheaton College and in the possession of the Rookmaaker family. His book *Jazz, Blues, Spirituals* was originally written in Dutch (Wageningen: Zomer & Keuning, 1960) but is now available in English in *CW* (2:157–311). The quote from Tony Wales is from Hans’s obituary, “H.R. Rookmaaker,” *Third Way* (1/6 [24 March 1977]), p. 10. The review by Michael Shepherd is from the British journal *Art News* in 1971; I have a copy of the review with a note from H.R.R. indicating the source, but I have been unable to locate the exact issue and page number. Muggerridge lists *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture* as one of his four nominations for Books of the Year for *The Observer* (20 December 1970), p. 17; see also *Esquire*, 75 (March 1971), p. 16.

The quotations from Rookmaaker on “the new art” and “new vision of humanity” come from his essay “Commitment in Art” (originally published in *Art and the Public Today* [Huémoz-sur-Ollon: L’Abri Fellowship Foundation, 1968], pp. 5–21; *CW*, 5:188–203). H.R.R.’s study on Gauguin was published as *Synthetist Art Theories* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1959); rev. ed. published as *Gauguin and 19th Century Art Theory* (Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger, 1972); *CW*, 1:3–227. The quo-

tation from Nicholas Wolterstorff is from his article “On Looking at Paintings: A Look at Rookmaaker,” *Reformed Journal* (February 1972), pp. 11–15. Information from Alva Steffler is based on personal communication with the author (November 16, 2002). J. I. Packer dubbed H.R.R. “the pipe-puffing pundit of Amsterdam” in “All That Jazz,” *Christianity Today* 30/18 (December 12, 1986), p. 15. Michael Shepherd (in his review quoted above) described him as “the Dutch Kenneth Clark.” On Decimal Index of Art of the Low Countries (DIAL)/Iconclass, see www.iconclass.nl. F.F. Bruce’s comments are from his article “Regent College, Vancouver,” *The Witness* (November 1970), pp. 418–419. David McKenna’s letter to H.R.R. is in Special Collections, Wheaton College. Testimonials of a housewife and businessman were oral comments to me by Regent College Summer School students.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2: CHILDHOOD

Information contained in this chapter is based on extensive interviews with members of the Rookmaaker family and review of family papers and photographs. On a visit to Indonesia in 1981, I verified some details of H.R.R., Senior’s administrative tenure in the Dutch East Indies by consulting with the authorities in Jakarta who were then the custodians of the documentation of the former colonial administration. I also used L. C. (Kees) Rookmaaker, “The Life of H.R. Rookmaaker (1887–1945), Pioneer of Nature Conservation in the Dutch East Indies,” *Säugetierkundliche Mitteilungen* 41/1 (1998), pp. 2–6. Family sources date the birth of H.R.R., Senior in 1887; however, some government sources give the year of his birth as 1888.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3: YOUTH

The elder H.R.R.’s attitude toward churchgoing was narrated in a chapel talk by Hans Rookmaaker at Regent College in 1972. On this same occasion H.R.R. mentioned that he learned all his theology from Jelly Roll Morton! The substance of the material contained in this chapter was again obtained from conversations with the Rookmaaker family and from papers, letters, documents, and photographs in their possession. A short history of the Royal Netherlands Naval College at Den Helder is contained on their website: www.kim.nl/rnlnc/htm/rnlncnchistory.htm.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4: CONVERSION AND CALLING

Details for this chapter stem from personal letters of Hans Rookmaaker, his family, and Riki Spetter. Information concerning the internment camp at Langwasser near Nuremberg is found on the web site of Stadt Nürnberg: www.museen.nuernberg.de/english/reichsparteitag_e/pages/bauten_e.html. Information concerning the movement of Dutch prisoners from the POW camp at Colditz Castle to Stalag 371 at Stanislaw (Ivano Frankivsk, Ukraine) in June 1943 came from www.geocities.com/schlosscolditz/colditz.html. L. Martin and others have incorrectly located Stanislaw in Poland. Even today Stanislaw is the German identification of Ivano Frankivsk. The four long quotations from Hans concerning his internment are from his reflections on the history of the Cosmogenic Idea (see *CW*, 2:10–12). The original manuscripts of “*Betreffende de Profetie*” and “*Aesthetica*” written in prison are in the Special Collections at Wheaton College. The former document is found in *CW*, 6:91–119 as “Prophecy in the Old and New Testaments: God’s Way with Israel.” The Bible Rookmaaker used was the so-called “Utrecht Translation” by H. Th. Obbink and A. M. Brouwer in 1942. “*Aesthetica*” was first published in two parts in *Philosophia Reformata* (1946–1947) and is found in *CW*,