

Doing justice to the need

WHEN Ralph Baney and his wife, Vera, were working on their mural of Christ in the chapel at Bishop Anstey's High School in Port-of-Spain sometime last month, two American women went in, looked at the mural, saw Christ in a black body, expressed their horror and flounced away.

Baney tells me that he was amazed by this. Well I am not. Are you? In an age of reason we could rage against this fascism, perhaps. But in today's sickness it is difficult to be unaware of what is happening around us.

What people do to perpetuate their evil and their lies should not be a source of naive wonder. Time has made awe redundant. Logic is no longer serviceable.

Philosophy and reason are obsolete within the framework of ecclesiastical half-truths which have lost meaning in the real world where men live and scratch out a survival.

It is not important that those two women are Americans, or that they are white, or that they belong to R.C., E.C. or Protestant versions of ritualistic Christianity.

VALUE SYSTEM

But what is important to the issue is that this kind of thinking still pervades the earth where you and I live. I resent this duality of standards that church and governments preach in day to day life.

And when that awful, illogical, inhuman value system touches art I am afraid I have to stand firm to the conviction of truth. Because art is truth in all its glory. Because we cannot stand back to the wall and see art crucified on the cross of organised stupidity.

Baney was commissioned to execute "Christ is Majesty" to mark the 50th anniversary of Bishop Anstey's High School. He and Vera have done a magnificent job. The work was designed by Ralph and executed by Vera.

The design concept originated in seeing God in the image of the people. He is supposed to love and care

FOCUS ON THE ARTS



by Clydehoran

for. Christ is black here. If He was made to be the graven image traditional to a form, a colour, a bearing what does it matter to those Christians whose message of peace and love circles the earth to bind our beings to a kiss of faith? Or, is it a kiss of death?

Almighty Buddah was an Indian. Yet to the Chinese he is Chinese. To the Japanese he is Japanese. As a source of a philosophy of a way of life the race and colour of the man is immaterial to his teaching.

PLAIN SURFACE

I look upon black Christ in the chapel after the service and I see what I have been taught to believe. I see a benign man whose life had meaning and whose teaching, no matter how circuitous or irrelevant, was good substance to our souls.

The Baney's have done justice to the need and Christ, therefore, will look upon the people and the children in the chapel from the medium of a black body, arms outstretched in welcome, in His dashiki.

The mural is made up of thousands of multi-coloured glazed clay units produced in the Baney's workshop. Each bit has order and purpose upon the plain surface and blend together in unity to construct the whole which is beautifully perfect.

Ralph and Vera Baney know that it was Christ who said: "Let your light so shine that men may see your work." etc. Let us carry on from there.

Ian Angus Ali, the artist, has produced a shocker of an exhibition entitled, "Aspects of Carnival" thirty-eight pieces of picture postcard art that illustrate things from "jumping up" to making a pan.

For the uninitiated this

of creation within the limitation of the theme he has selected.

I have no doubt that Ali is a dedicated and honest artist. The trouble is it seems that he has hashed up almost four scores of exhibits in so great a hurry that he has done an injustice to himself.

Ali needs to undo his own destruction with an exhibition of his less frivolous work—painting and sculpture.

"Aspects of Carnival" can be seen at his gallery, 105, Frederick Street, Port-of-Spain.



"CHRIST IS MAJESTY" — Mosaic mural designed by Ralph Baney and executed by his wife, Vera. The mural, which is in the Chapel of Bishop Anstey High School, Port-of-Spain, was commissioned to mark the 50th Anniversary of the school.