

A NEW VISION OF GOD

An interview with the Rt. Rev. Robert (“Bob”) Jones,
Artist and the 7th Bishop of Wyoming

Bishop Paul-Gordon Chandler had the honor of interviewing one of his predecessors, Bishop Bob Jones, about his avocation of painting.

The Rt. Rev. Robert Gordon Jones, known affectionately by many in Wyoming as “Bishop Bobby,” served as Bishop of Wyoming VII, from 1977-1996. He was born in 1932 in Paragould, Arkansas, and graduated with a Bachelor of Business Administration degree from the University of Mississippi in 1956 and a Master of Divinity degree from the Seminary of the Southwest in 1959. The seminary later, in 1978, also awarded him a Doctor of Divinity degree. He had previously served in the United States Navy during the Korean War from 1950 and 1955. Ordinated to the diaconate on June 29, 1959, Bishop Jones became assistant to the Dean of Trinity Cathedral in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was ordained a priest in 1960. In 1962 he left for Alaska, where he became vicar of the Church of St George-in-Arctic in Kotzebue, Alaska. In 1967, he became rector and vicar of St Christopher’s Church in Anchorage, Alaska, where he remained until 1977, when he was elected Bishop of Wyoming, where he served for 19 years until his retirement. After Wyoming, Bishop Jones moved to Jerusalem where he served as Dean of St. George’s College. He is married to Mary Page Jones. They are both passionate about the arts, and their creative work can be seen at artbyjones.com.



Bishop Jones, the artist, at work



Bishop Paul-Gordon with Bishop Bobby and Mary Page Jones in Richmond, VA



Milky way over Bear Lake

When did you start creating art and when did it become a major avocation for you?

I began painting at 15 with watercolors. But I did not paint again until we had moved back from Jerusalem to Wapiti, Wyoming.

What formative influences have shaped your creativity and artwork?

A friend gave me a Great Course on the Hubble Space Telescope. I was smitten by the pictures of space and began painting deep space using oils.



Birthplace of stars in distant galaxy



Spiral Galaxy

Can you share with us about what you see as distinctive in the composition of your paintings?

As I explored deeper into the universe, I found a new sense of God - a new theological sense of adventure in a Creator, a Holy Wisdom, of mystery upon mystery as the Hubble led me deeper and deeper, into heavenly bodies we had never seen before.

Today we can see enormous distances into Creation by many light years. One light year is 5.8 + trillion miles - that's 5.8+ with 12 zeros!

Art serves many roles, what do you see as its greatest value?

Astronomy is only one form of art that influences my mind and spirit. I am moved by art down through the years that portrays compassion, love, kindness, creativity and reminds me that Creation is mother and father of us all.



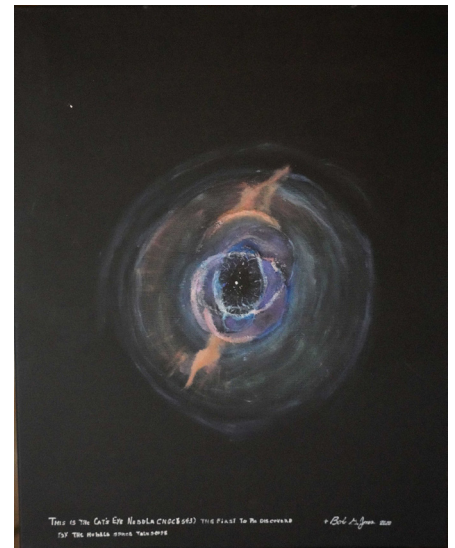
Bishop Jones in his studio

Is there an overall theme that your work expresses, and if so, can you share that with us?

If there is a theme of my interest in art, it is a vision of space and time, ancient and present, and the exploration of the opportunity we have to live what we have learned.

What you are currently working on?

I continue to explore space through painting - especially now with the James Webb Space telescope.



Cat's Eye Nebula

When visiting your home in Richmond, it was evident that you have collected a lot of artwork over the years - from Native American to Middle Eastern, etc. Can you share with us about two works of art that you cherish?

Two artworks that I cherish are an *Icon of Jerusalem*, by Bishop John Bayton, and an *Arapahoe Peace Pipe*. They are from different and important periods of my life. Jerusalem is a place of heart for me, and the pipe is a symbol of Great Spirit coming to us in blessings.

Photo credit: Hullihen Moore



Icon of Jerusalem by Bishop John Bayton



Arapaho Peace Pipe