

Text by Nelson Espinal after Mark Bradford's "What Hath God Wrought"

### A Question Mark Becomes An Exclamation Point

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*Big. Tall. Pointy. Upon first visiting Revelle, I thought it was some sort of emergency alert system, to notify someone to come to that area of campus because someone is in need of assistance.*

As I stumble across campus to get to class, a huge, pole-like structure looms within the center of a plaza. The space links Revelle College and the Old Student Center. The sculpture is easy to ignore, looking similar to a telephone pole or some sort of random piece of infrastructure. The location sits right by York hall and Revelle college's plaza. It makes sense that the building was created at the oldest college on campus, relaying a message from past generations to a young campus. The statue talks to us, but like many other signals in our lives, we choose to ignore it.

*I ignored it as I walked to the library or to class. The presence of the light catches my eye. A red ruby like light bounces off the top of the structure. The light is less visible at night than during the day.*

Mark Bradford created this seemingly random piece of art on a school campus, with the context of this piece being the presentation of a question for students. Bradford probes for a political angle in his works, attempting to advocate the viewer to process the theme of choice. The sculpture sends a message in Morse code, which is clearly illustrated in the night time.

*The structure resembles a freeway traffic light, the vertical, grey structure goes straight into the sky and shines a light. The top of the light is red, with the light emitting being a blueberry blue. From further away, the light becomes a divine white color. The light color shifts, attempting to give those who see it what they need.*

With a political pattern in his previous works, Bradford attempted to spark the question: What have we done? The piece provokes questions about the developments of technology. He wanted to reference the technology that developed and how these developments have come about. Since the development of Morse, people have created a platform to communicate faster, but the thoughts and ideas communicated, within the context of Donald Trump's election, provide a complicated consequence of social media. Bradford, begs people to ask, how things happened, why things happen, and the overarching patterns throughout history.

*Is the piece talking to me? The top half of the building blends into the night sky, with the light taking focus as if it is the burning bush that spoke to Moses. Could the Divine be signalling me like an airplane landing from a coastal adventure?*

Samuel Morse created Morse Code out of grief, pursuing a faster method of communication than horseback mail. He received a letter that his wife was sick and the following day he knew that she passed away. Struck with the need to act on his pain, Morse devoted his energy to creating a system which eventually became Morse Code with the first message being sent from the Supreme Court in Washington D.C. to Baltimore. Morse was inspired to send the message after a family friend presented him with the Bible verse: "What Hath God Wrought?"

*From another angle, the light of the surrounding lamps bounce off of the structure, creating a staircase up to the sky. Is this question the answer to my fear of death? The heavens appear to part like the red sea, opening up for universal, reflectional pondering.*

The question “What Hath God Wrought?” is found in the bible, attempting to capture what God can help people accomplish. From miracles or success in life, people use the term to celebrate what God has done for them. In an ironic twist, the message also highlights the duality of miracles: disaster. With many events highlighted in history, the consequences for each positive are often swept under the metaphorical rug.

*Religion provides a lot for people, a sense of guidance or a map of life. Whether having nowhere to turn or instinctually turning to religion, it is the place to go.*

What God wrought to people is the Bible, a text that remains one of the most purchased books of all time. The Bible, while carrying various interpretations, translations, and iterations, is the cornerstone of Christianity, the most popular religion in the world. To varying degrees, the sacred text established certain principles some parents use as the basis for developing children’s moral compass, either directly or indirectly, through previous generations. The statue serves as a reminder of what impact religion has played in everyone’s life, whether or not students believe in some God. Not only of the impact of Christianity, but of all religions throughout history.

*The answer for me is not straight forward, with religion providing somewhat of a guide on how to be a good person, while lacking the inclusiveness of other religions or certain groups of people.*

Religions provide the basis for many ongoing conflicts throughout history, even currently. Through war and violent conflict, many lives were lost because of differing beliefs. People with varying sexual orientations and gender classifications, remain the victims of people acting in accordance to extreme interpretations of key religious texts of various religions. Whenever I walk past the building now, the question of “What Hath God Wrought?” is an answer with mixed emotions.

*The sculpture itself is presented as a question, for those who walk by campus and reach out to the sky. The pulsating light asks a question, but the rest of the structure is shaped like an examination point, one that follows the answers to the question posed.*