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Kandinsky believed that he stood at the threshold of a new age and considered *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* to be a prophetic text that could demonstrate how art could offer sustenance for "hungry souls." The prophetic nature of Kandinsky's text is undeniable. But with a century of hindsight, its prophetic message is not found in its announcement of a new stage the development of modernism but as evidence of its impending death.

Concerning the Spiritual in Art is a desperate attempt to save modern art from its self-mutilating materialism, which Kandinsky calls art for art's sake that denied the inextricable relationship between matter and spirit, what he calls "outward form" and "inner need." Kandinsky fails to maintain this connection without the rich theological inheritance that had reflected on the relationship of the physical and the metaphysical that the modern project had squandered and exploited. Yet Kandinsky's relentless efforts as well as the ultimate end of the modern project and the bankruptcy of its materialist vision, should force us to reconsider his arguments in the context of theology.

An important part of my work consists of the recovery of the history of theology as an important resource for contemporary art and cultural criticism. I am most recently concerned with the theology and practice of the icon, which is given dogmatic formulation in the Council of Nicaea II in 787 and was shaped by the texts of St. John of Damascus and St. Theodore the Studite. For both of these thinkers, the icon is the embodiment of the intimate connection between the body and soul. It is not insignificant that Kandinsky's vision for the new art included the study and appropriation of Russian and Byzantine icons. Philosopher Jean-Luc Marion has suggested that Nicaea II offers the answer to the contemporary crisis of the image, a crisis that Kandinsky himself experienced.