

ronment. Such a study will help us see the relationship between the psychological needs of man and his liturgical needs. It may even show that some present-day theory is in conflict with the way people really are. In any case, much more study needs to be done. Robert Sommer, a psychologist at the University of California, Davis, in his book *Personal Space*, argues that for every building built, a fee should be allocated to evaluate the building one year after its completion. This would reveal its good and strong points, and would be of value to architects in future building. The same procedure would be of tremendous value for buildings for worship. My observations in this article should show that some current theories of worship and its environment are at least questionable and need further study.

The Guild for Religious Architecture acknowledges its ecumenical na-

ture and fully realizes the various theological bases present. It would seem superfluous, therefore, to ask that this diversity of theological perspectives be kept in mind when we discuss the worship situation. Yet it seems to me that such a distinction is terribly important to a congregation and its architect when they decide to build. The plans ultimately chosen should reflect the theological perspectives of that congregation and should not be the reflections of other congregations holding a different theological viewpoint. Otherwise the building will become a source of divisiveness in the community for whom it was designed and will manifest the confusion in the faith concept which binds the community together. We know, for example, that those religions which have strong sacramental systems and which depend heavily upon symbolism to express their faith, will necessarily see

their worship environment quite differently from those religions which are personalist, non-sacramental, and limited in symbolic expression.

There is a great cry today to demythologize religion and religious architecture in order to humanize it. Such an effort can have the salutary effect of cleansing the faith of many unnecessary accretions over the years, but the humanization process can just as easily weaken the spiritual dimension of religion. The famed dictum, *lex orandi, lex credendi* (as the church prays, so does it believe) should be kept in mind. Ritual and symbols are the language through which diverse peoples are united in a communion of faith to express their common belief in God and to praise Him. When you tamper with this language, you tamper with the beliefs expressed by this special language. When the building for worship involves a changing of the ritual ex-

pression of belief, then it has truly affected the belief itself. Consequently, it is necessary that the architect fully appreciate the theological perspective of the community for whom he designs. We might note that in the Roman Catholic Church the emphasis upon public worship and the de-emphasis of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament has had an obvious effect upon the depth of belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament. This has come about in America because many churches which had the Blessed Sacrament centered in the church, have now relegated the Sacrament to a side altar or to a private chapel. Those entering the church today are not always sure where the Sacrament is, and they become confused. They do not know whether they should genuflect out of reverence, or presume that it is elsewhere. Younger people coming to worship where the

Sacrament has been placed in a private chapel are not aware that the private chapel is there, and they are not as inclined to make private visits, nor sense a need to, such as their parents had. We see, therefore, that a change in the customary place for reservation of the Eucharist has caused confusion among Catholics, young and old, and it can affect actual belief in the Real Presence.

The Spring '75 issue of FAITH & FORM carries an article by Peter Smith on Post Religious churches. He offers a different theological perspective. He says, "By now it should be clear that I take my stand with prophets like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who believe that Christ came to admit the post religious age. . . . Christ was the ultimate secular man . . . in his life style there was no division between the sacred and the secular. . . . It follows that a community which claims to follow Christ

should express itself through architecture which is as secular and as sacred as schools and shopping centers." "A church style implies a stylized outlook, which is incompatible with an emergency faith, living to optimize the passing minute." ". . . the Church . . . needs symbols, but it needs new ones; many of the traditional symbols have become case-hardened, no longer conveying the mind to a reality above and beyond themselves." Peter Smith has used his understanding of Bonhoeffer to evolve his own architectural ideology. I would not advocate Smith's architectural ideology should I wish to build a worship environment for Roman Catholics. Moreover, I question the validity of his statements. The pilgrim church, living the constant uncertainty of this moment of life, sounds too much like the party line of those who ad-

Cont. p. 28

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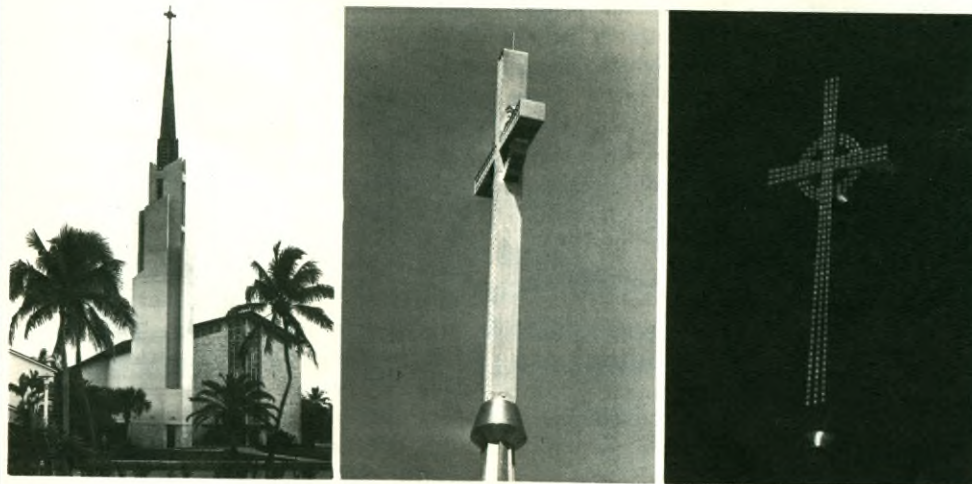
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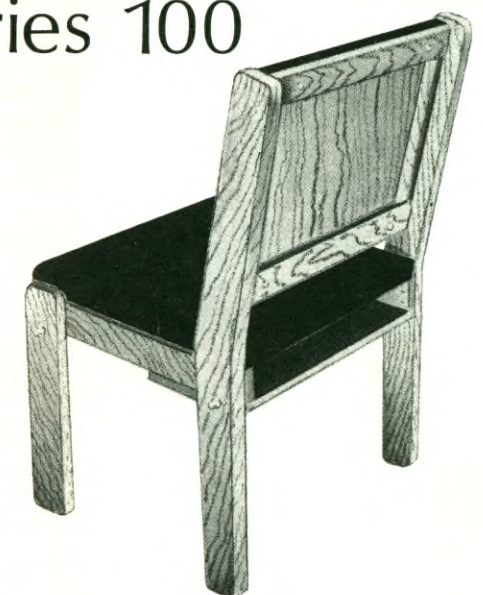
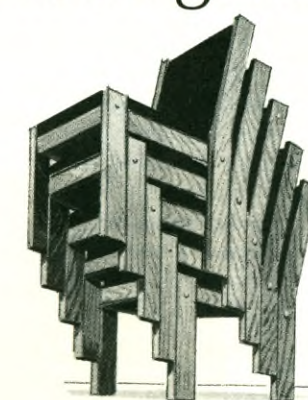
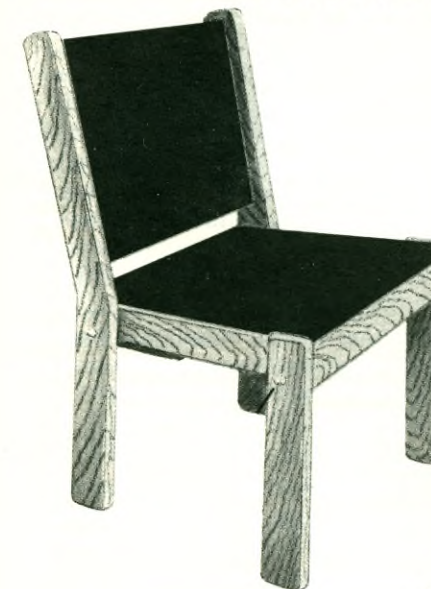


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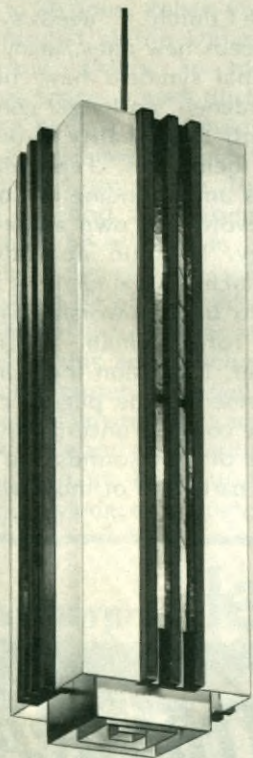


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McAlister — Cont. from p. 27

vocate the notion that the confusion of modern life and its uncertainty are the norm, and that one should not seek a more stable existence. I see this more as an expression of despair in a difficult situation and the rationalizing of one's way out of a situation instead of facing it. What proof do we have that the symbols of faith are dead? A gratuitous statement does not make it so. And if the symbol is *passe'*, what is the faith value which the symbol expressed? If we are to create new symbols, they should be expressive of the faith value of the old symbol. How do we go about making new symbols? Rituals and symbols to be effective have to transcend the fads of the moment. Remember the early 60's and all the new ideas that seemed to be the salvation of religion. Many of them are already *passe'*. It was during those times that vigil lights were almost viciously removed from our churches as having no value. It was not long, however, until candles appeared in college dorms and communes. The young had discovered the mystical value of candlelight. But the church was still very busily discarding this ancient symbol as being of no value. We really must be cautious about removing symbols. I agree that some may well have served their usefulness, but when do we know that they have?

What is this secularity of Christ of which Peter Smith speaks? Just how secular was Christ? Our Lord asserted that he preached, not himself, but his heavenly Father. That is hardly a secular statement. Christ did not seek human glory or comfort but only the glory of his heavenly Father. That is hardly being secular. The argument that Christ made no distinction between sacred and profane is highly questionable. I agree that Christ used the ordinary things of life, but if we take the dictionary definition of sacred as that which is "set apart," then Christ, in practice, did make a distinction between the sacred and the profane. Before Christ entered his public life, he went into the desert to fast and pray. He set himself apart. At the time of the Last Supper, the Passover meal, he ordered his disciples to go to an upper room and prepare things. He did not

eat among the people, nor in a restaurant, but in an upper room, a place set apart. At Gethsemane, Christ did not pray among the sleeping apostles, but as St. Luke tells us, "He withdrew himself from them about a stone's throw." He once again set himself apart. In all these important prayer moments of Christ's life, he did set himself apart from others. Given our definition of sacred, it seems evident that Christ lived the distinction between sacred and profane, although he may not have spoken of the distinction. How do we interpret the words of Peter, "You are a royal and holy priesthood, a People set apart"? It should be apparent that different theological perspectives will affect how we build.

One last thought in this regard. Peter Smith, in the aforementioned article, discusses the sanctuary, the sacred zone, and the balchino. He says: "Not only do these devices conspire to establish the myth of locational holiness, they also confer 'ex officio' sacrality on all who are permitted to perform liturgical acts within the 'high place.' So the hierarchical element in the ecclesiastical structure is discretely reinforced." For Smith the hierarchical character of religion is not to be encouraged. A building designed to blur the hierarchical nature of worship would be offensive to the religious sensibilities of many. Conrad Antonsen, O.P., Roman Catholic liturgist at Dominican College in San Rafael, Cal., argues that the basis of ritual worship is to be found in the 24th chapter of Exodus with Moses at Mt. Sinai. He says that the hierarchical nature of worship is seen as one of its essential characteristics and it is a constant in Roman Catholic worship from the earliest times. A Roman Catholic worship environment, therefore, which is designed to exclude this hierarchical character strikes at its very concept of worship and belief. It is important that an architect called upon to design worship environments for those of a different faith really understand and be sympathetic to the beliefs of those for whom he works. He is not asked to believe those beliefs, but he is asked to respect them and not to offer a design which will contradict what that particular community believes. ■

Bemporad — Cont. from p. 16

difficult aspiration is by saying that one's task is to know oneself — that is, the task to know oneself is to be committed to the task of knowing oneself without end.

The first thing religion has to do is to confront the issues of whether man really is an animal or not. And here may I say that we have to say *No*. We have to say that the Freudians, the Skinnerians, the Ardreyans with their territorial imperative are all basically wrong. Man is not an animal to be manipulated. Man is a spiritual being, a symbolic being, and if man is genuinely made in God's image, then he cannot simply act like an animal. Here is the crux: The evil man perpetrates is a corruption of something that transcends animality. Animals don't create a hydrogen bomb that can destroy the world. As Arthur Koestler has pointed out: "What makes man fight is not the biological urge to defend his personal acreage or farmland or meadows, but his loyalty to symbols and slogans derived from tribal lore, divine commandments or political ideologies. In other words, wars are not fought for territory but for words." And so the critical issue that religion has to face in our time is the corruption of the best, the politicizing of values. You go from Eugene Debs to Hoffa, from Marx to Krushchev, from Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence to Nixon and the Watergate tapes. Values are constantly transformed and corrupted. And this is the critical issue of our times. It is not enough merely to say yes, let's stand for spirituality. We have to be very clear as to the nature of man so that he can stand for spirituality.

Now we're talking about religious institutions. I think the hardest thing for a person to do today is to pray. And if he's going to pray, he's going to have to have a place that shall be a continuous reminder that man is more than flesh and bone, more than a thing to be abused, to be manipulated — but a being made in the image of God — that is, a sacred entity.

It seems to me that a religious house of worship is needed to instill in us a sense of awe and reverence, a sense of absolute worth without which all is devalued and has its price. It is here also that man can renew his deepest and profoundest search for God and the things of the spirit that nourish and sustain. And this is what presents us with our task. We're discussing the role of religious architecture and religious institutions at a time of uncertainty, confusion and doubt. This act in itself, in my opinion, is an act of faith, a belief that religion can be meaningful and that the past may throw some light — however dim — on the present and the future.

Only by engaging in love do we become more loving; in justice, more just; in education, more learned. And though we do not know fully what wisdom or love or God is, still by searching for wisdom we become wiser, by sharing love, more loving, and by seeking God, more Godly. I think that if I were to take a verse from the Bible which characterizes our

age, I would take the verse from the prophet Amos, eighth chapter, eleventh verse which says: "There will be a hunger and a thirst but not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but a hunger and a thirst for the word of God." And that's where we are today. ■

Plotkin — Cont. from p. 22

around the *Succah*, and the weather, climate and design make possible the enjoyment of a wonderful festival spirit.

Every religious institution should encourage and nurture the creative talents of its membership — through art displays, the development of Judaica museums and libraries. In addition to individual efforts, there is strength in unity when a number of congregations join together in an art festival. Our Temple belongs to the North Phoenix Corporate Ministry, made up of six Protestant congregations, one Roman Catholic church and two synagogues — one Reform and the other Conservative. For the past three years we have all combined our efforts to produce a truly beautiful art festival of religious tradition. Each congregation encourages its members to submit works of art which have religious feeling and motivation. This has created an ecumenical understanding of the arts. The Catholic begins to appreciate what the Jewish artist is doing and the Protestant understands better his Catholic neighbor. Each festival has had a theme, and the theme has inspired the creative achievement.

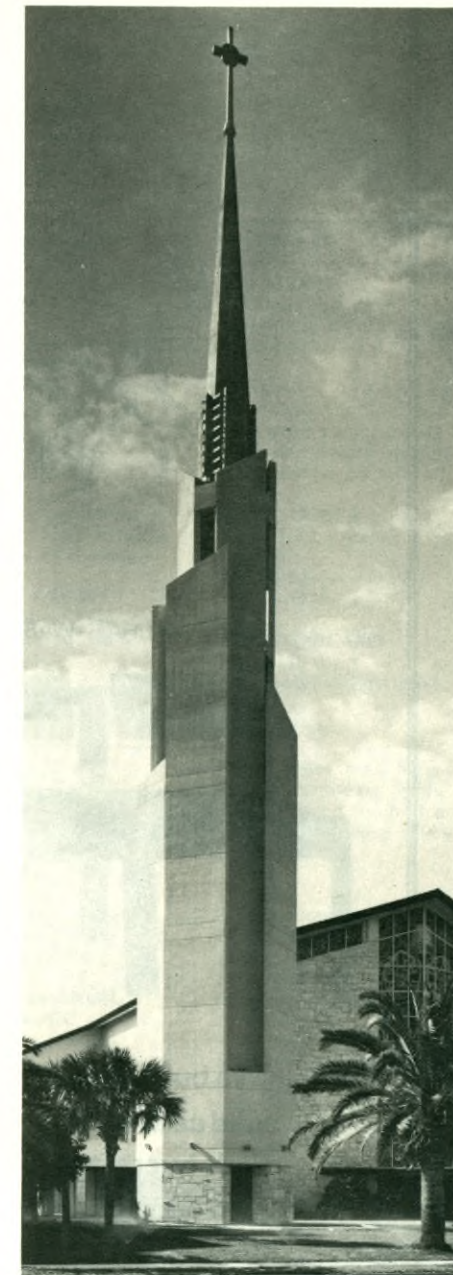
The role that art can play in the synagogue needs intelligent investigation and discussion on the part of the artists and art historians on the one hand, and rabbis and interested lay people on the other. Out of this confrontation may emerge a deeper understanding of art — an understanding that will not only enrich our faith, but may in addition enhance our sense of beauty, awe and spirituality. ■

Wood — Cont. from p. 15

ple, honest narrative proposing that truly good design is based on simplicity and honesty. An earlier tour of his chapel at Trinity University proved that such a basic philosophy can produce great architecture and great art.

This spirit of honesty and simplicity was also evident at the very beginning of the conference when Margaret Cousins sat on the river bank and told why San Antonio was her city. It was echoed in Rabbi Bemporad's excellent presentation (also published here), when he spoke of "a sense of absolute worth without which all is devalued and has its price."

It was hopefully the philosophy which was carried home by those who attended the 1975 Conference — a philosophy applicable to all areas of art and architecture. It is equally applicable to the liturgy of religion which attempts to symbolize the simple relationship of love between man and God. May it ever remain so. ■



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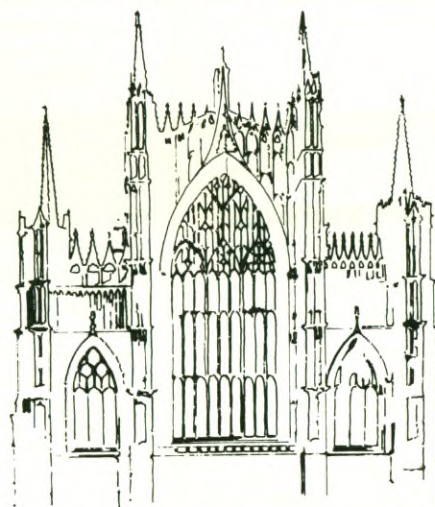
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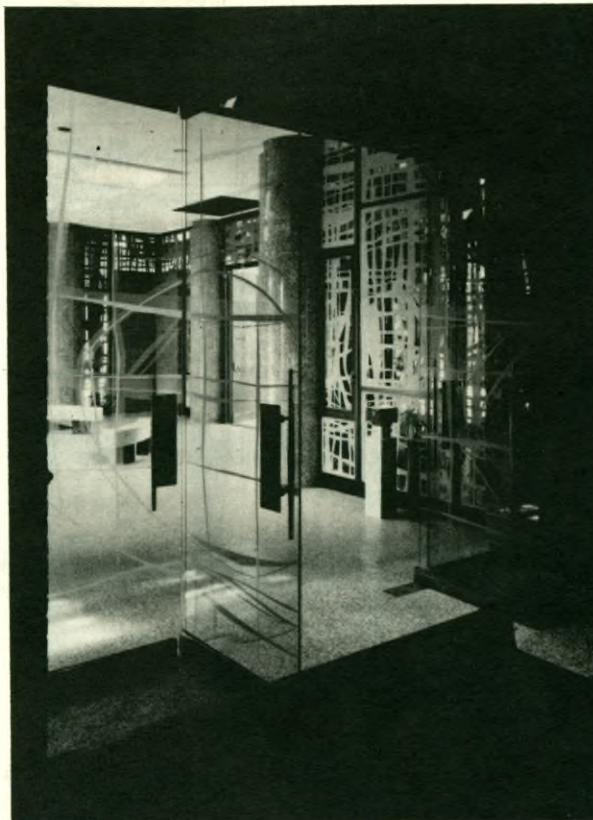
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