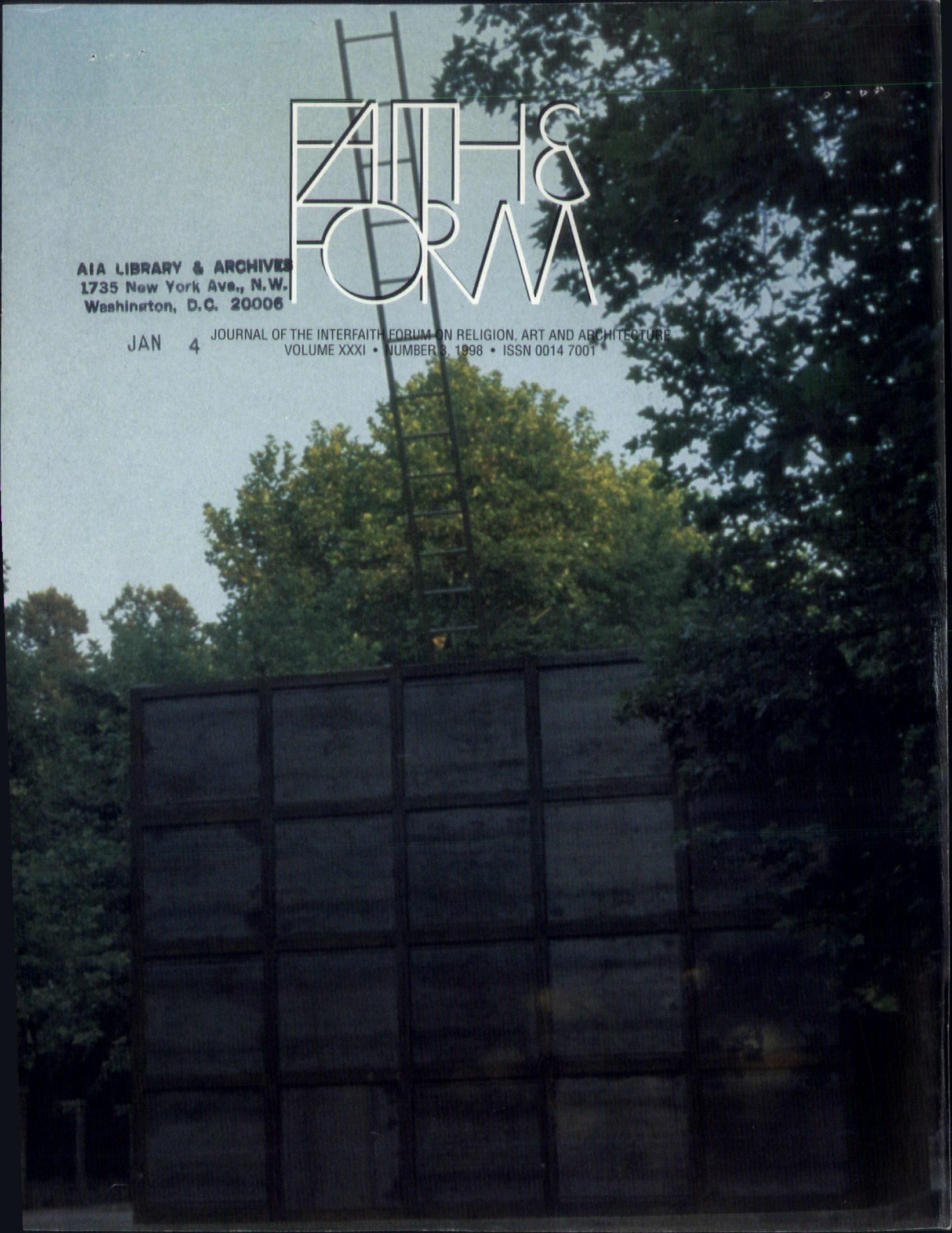


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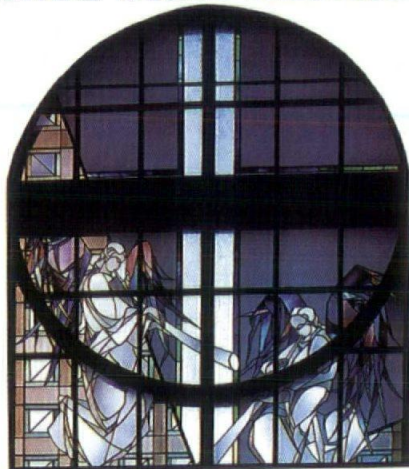
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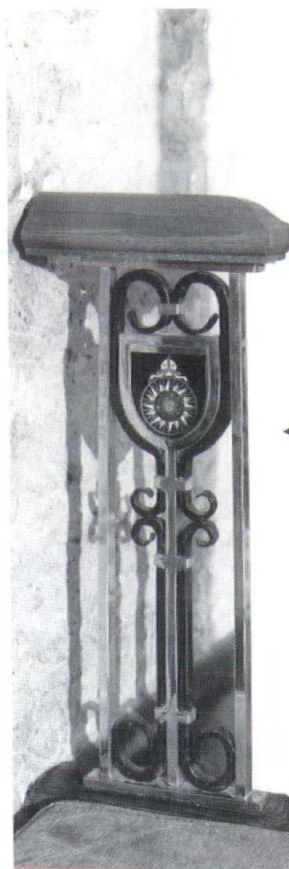
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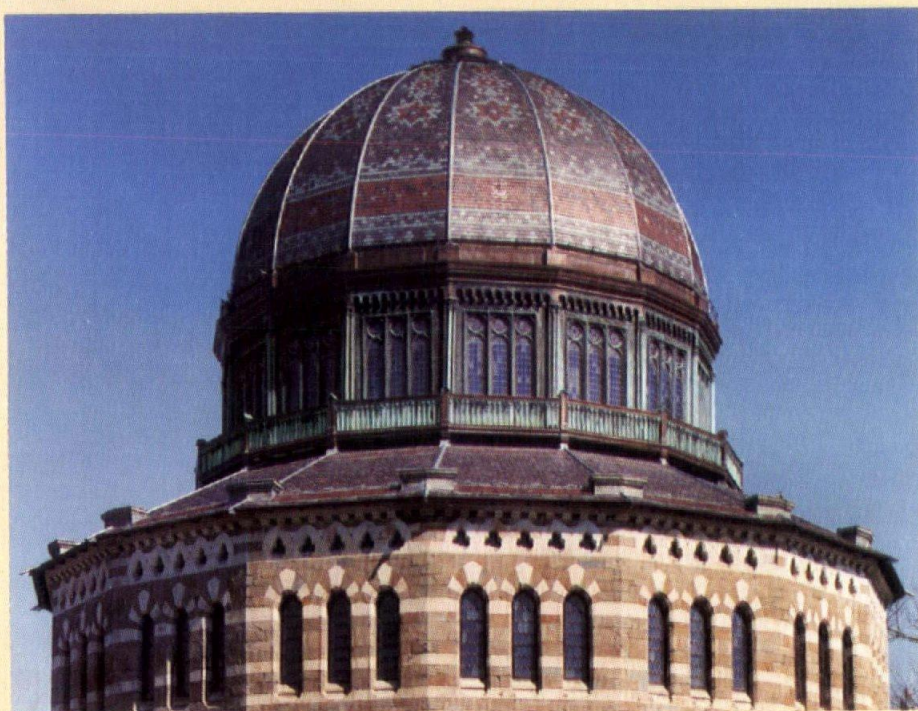
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**Manuscript Submission:** The editor is pleased to review manuscripts for possible publication. Any subject material relevant to art and architecture is welcome. Good visual material is emphasized. Articles may be submitted on disk along with hard copy or e-mailed to: FaithnForm@aol.com. Manuscripts, disks and photos will not be returned unless specifically requested and a return envelope with sufficient postage is included.



# Notes & Comments

## A Continuing Theological Challenge

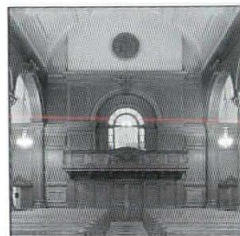
The well designed booklet for the dedication of St. John Neumann Church in Miami, Florida, makes the following statement: "One of the tensions in church architecture is to preserve a sense of God's intimacy with His people without losing a sense of God's utter otherness and holiness, God's transcendence and majesty."

## Cooperation: An Example

When Turner Smith & Associates of Boca Raton, Fla., faced an expansion project for B'nai Israel, it eliminated much of the parking spaces. In cooperation with its neighbor, St. Mark Greek Orthodox Church, a previously informal parking lot sharing agreement was formalized to meet city code. Rabbi Richard Agler commented: The relationships that the synagogue and its neighboring churches have established testify to the fact that we do indeed live in accordance with the highest principles.

## An Historic Chapel

The goal of Shawmut Design and Ann Beha Associates was to restore and renovate the historic Cochrane Chapel on the campus of Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, without it ever looking like they had been there. All the work had to be done in the midst of the summer break. Matching the finish of the woodwork from the 1990s to that of the 1930s was a special challenge.

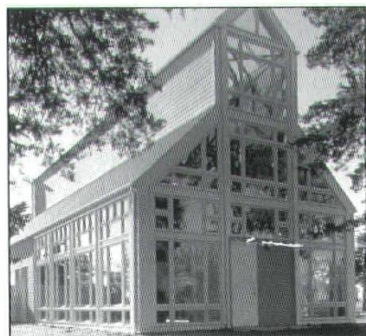


Cochrane Chapel, Phillips Academy. Shawmut Design and Construction.

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## An Oasis is Therapy



Numemaker Chapel, Menninger Clinic. HNTB Architecture.

The Numemaker Chapel for the renowned Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas, was designed to give patients a feeling of being in the middle of a forest. It is in fact in the heart of a grove of old-growth cedar trees. There are full-height wood frame windows on three sides and exposed split ring wood trusses that give warm, simple lines of hand-crafted construction. The

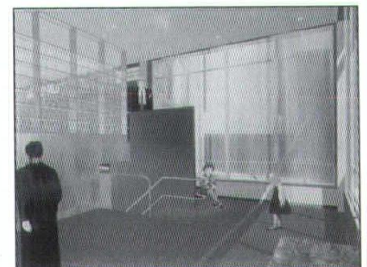
worship space is conducive to group experience as well as individual meditation. The HNTB design draws on a traditional Kansas prairie vernacular, reminiscent of many small churches that dot the state's rural countryside.

## Aftershock

City inspectors confirmed there was no visible damage to St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Oakland, California, after the 1989 earthquake but seven months later a smaller quake brought down the loosened ceiling bricks. For many months the congregation had to meet in a school auditorium or social club. Because St. Paul's is an historical landmark the repair of the ceiling at \$50,000 proved to be the least of their problems. Reinforcing steel beams were necessary as one of the 300 buildings the city ordered to be retrofitted. Applying for the permit triggered an inspection that meant original wiring and light fixtures had to be replaced. Connections between the second and exterior walls had to be strengthened and the tower supported by three walls required a fourth. Accessibility requirements required new ramps, a two-foot-left from auditorium floor to stage and a new elevator.

When plates of a composition were used to replace slate plates, the church's landmark status was challenged, but negotiated. What had been a cost estimate of \$50,000 had grown to well over a million. But in April 1998, the landmark church was rededicated. When one visitor questioned early whether this would ever happen. Father Eastwood asked in reply, "Does Easter follow Good Friday?"

## West End Synagogue



West End Synagogue. Pasanella+ Klein Stolzman + Berg Architects, P.C.

Unable to afford a home of its own on Manhattan's pricey Upper West Side, West End Synagogue lived its first ten years in rented space. The congregation's status went from tenant to owner when the city put up for auction one of its outgrown public libraries and limited the building to not-for-profit groups.

The architects, Pasanella Klein Stolzman Berg, recognized that the library was an appropriate home for a religious group that sees itself as "Children of the Book" and values study as much as prayer. Consequently, much of the library atmosphere has been retained in the new design. What was once the library's main reading room is now the sanctuary. The original bookcases that line the perimeter remain, modified to include



displays for Judaica and to improve their lighting. The clerestory windows have been adorned with text, as has the bronze ark.

## St. Peter's in the Loop

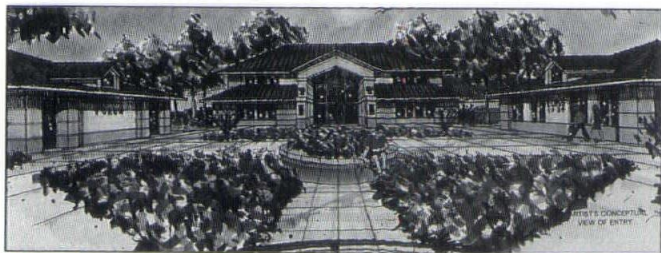
This church has been a part of Chicago's downtown history for more than 150 years and greets more than one million visitors each year. Augustus Taylor, a designer of many of Chicago's first churches drew plans for the original structure in 1946, but it was from a second location that bells rang out to signal the approaching Chicago fire and fortunately the church survived. The friars of the Franciscan Order were asked to be caretakers of the church, which in 1942 purchased the old Woods Theater Bldg. with an eye to converting it into a church and friary. This plan never came into fruition but a new church was made possible with the sale of the old theater.

Sandwiched between two skyscrapers, St. Peter's today is a unique, modernist building. There are no side windows because these scrapers brush directly up against the sides. The building's shell is built steel and concrete with marble covering the interior walls and encasing the floors. Living quarters for the friars are directly above the church that seats over 1,000.

J. Watts, who created Chicago's Buckingham fountain, sculpted an 18-foot-tall crucifix that hangs at the front entrance. Inside are ten panels in bas relief that portray the life of St. Francis by Italian Carlo Vincessi. Father Thomas P. Aldworth is pastor; K.M. Vitthum and J.J. Burns are architects.

## Away from the Traditional

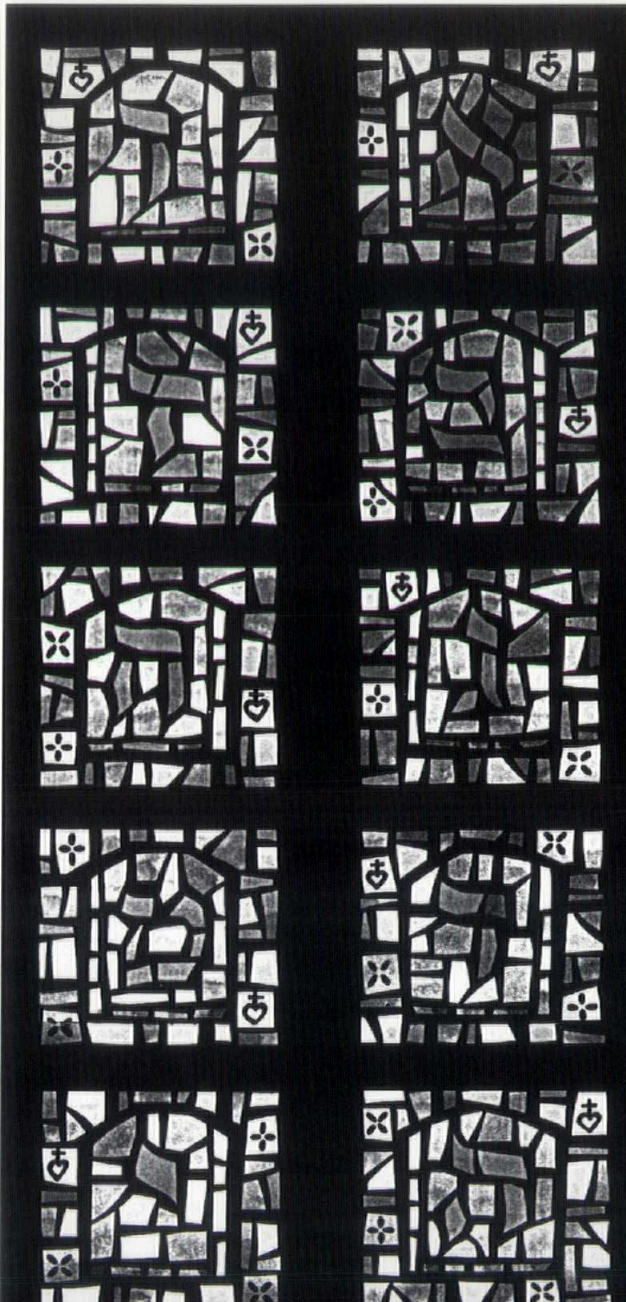
Loving and Campos Architects, Walnut Creek, California, are working with architect Senyo Tetteh of Ghana in designing a new African seminary for Campus Crusade for Christ International. Graduates will receive degrees from the University of Leeds in England, focusing on leadership and management as well as theology and missions. The design is a blend of academic and corporate high-tech aesthetics organized around a central courtyard with stucco buildings, tile roofs and broad overhangs to give some relief from the heat. The city ordered to be retrofitted. Applying for the permit triggered an inspection that meant original wiring and light fixtures had to be replaced. Connections between the second and exterior walls had to be strengthened and the tower supported by three walls required a fourth. Accessibility requirements required new ramps, a two-foot-left from auditorium floor to stage and a new elevator.



Leadership Management Academy. Loving & Campos Architects.

## Form As a Solution

A recent *Environment and Art Letter* featured an article by Thomas Stehle on the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ellicott City, Maryland designed by former IFRAA President Lawrence D.



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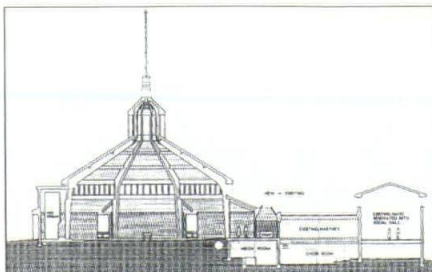
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# Notes & Comments

(continued from page 5)

Cook and associates. Site restraints were difficult but an asymmetrical, polygonal structure eventually proved the form that solved the problem. The basis of the design is an arrangement of eight continuous double-curved laminated exposed arches that spring from the outer edge of the main space. They turn inward toward the clerestory and turn again to carry the main roof. Although central planned churches have been built since the fifth century, rarely has the altar/table been placed in the center of the interior.



First Evangelical Lutheran Church. Lawrence D. Cook & Associates, architect.

## Hispanic Protestant Theology

Alumna and faculty at Andover-Newton Theological School have collaborated on a book, *Teologia en Conjunto: A Collaborative Hispanic Protestant Theology*. Elizabeth Conde-Frazier and Samuel Solivan have contributed articles, and Martell-Otero is one of the editors. A special service was held on campus to honor the achievements of Hispanics, Latinos and Latinas.

## Equal Partners Exhibition

A recent exhibit at the Smith College Museum of Art presented work by 15 American architectural firms founded and run jointly by women and men. It explored not only women taking their place with equal parity but sought to identify "feminism" and "masculine" priorities and to illuminate the true collaborative nature of architectural practice.

## Dedication 2001

This is the date planned for the dedication of the Cathedral of Hope by Philip Johnson in Dallas, Texas. Ground was broken in July for a 78-foot bell tower, which will be followed next year by a sanctuary, chapel and cloister. The congregation served will be gay and lesbian with Michael Piazza as senior minister.

## Continuity

The original building for Temple Emeth in Teaneck, New Jersey, was designed by the late Percival Goodman, a well known synagogue architect and friend of IFRAA. Temple Emeth. Herbert Beckhard When a major addition and Frank Richlan & Associates. rehabilitation was needed, the congregation commissioned Herbert Beckhard/Frank Richlan and Associates to be sure its design excellence continued. This firm is the successor to the internationally recognized Marcel Breuer. Herbert Beckhard and Frank Richlan were both associated with Breuer for many years. Temple Emeth was rededicated September 13. □



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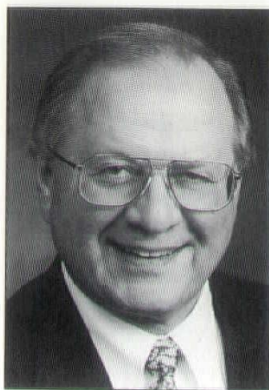
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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

James M. Graham, AIA



Five years ago, the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture became a Professional Interest Area (PIA) of the American Institute of Architects. Financial and staff assistance provided through the AIA has helped evolve new structural viability for our organization including support for our forums and assistance in publication of the special educational issue of *Faith & Form*. Communication with our larger membership has been strengthened, providing critical feedback for the development and enhancement of our programs.

Retaining our diverse identity, IFRAA continues its traditional mission as a forum and has expanded its membership from 600 to more than 1,300 in a relatively short time. Retiring Chair Doug Hoffman, Advisory Committee Member Cindy Voorhees, and AIA Staff Director Jean Barber have been instrumental in our successful transition.

We are now poised to move into a new era of membership growth and improved communication. As our membership increases, the circulation of our journal—*Faith & Form*—expands. Our goal is to engage more non-architect members in IFRAA activities so that it can truly serve as an interdisciplinary forum for the exchange of information on all aspects of the design and construction of religious facilities.

Our biennial conference in San Antonio in October was representative of the diverse nature of our membership and illustrated a synergistic effort of clergy, liturgical consultants, architects, artists, denominational representatives, and manufacturing interests in our common quest for quality design and performance of religious spaces. This year's Religious Art and Architecture awards

program, which included three subcategories—Architecture, Liturgical/Interior Design and the Visual Arts—was also illustrative of our varied but coordinated interests.

With a simplified organizational structure, IFRAA leadership now consists of a five-member Advisory Group—two architects, one liturgical artist/designer and two clergy members—which provides program coordination with the assistance of our new AIA staff director, Ann Thompson.

Our newly formed Membership Council will provide linkage from the Advisory Group to our primary membership—architects, artists, liturgical/interior designers, clergy and denominational representatives, manufacturers and past presidents of IFRAA.

Program events for 1999 will focus on clergy and liturgical consultant collaboration. Emphasis will be placed on helping artists, architects and designers understand how to design for liturgy and the roles that the clergy and liturgical consultants play in the religious building program process. This focus can offer denominational leaders, clergy and church administrators a better understanding of the religious building program process, and what services are provided by the architect, designer and artist in the process.

The 1999 forums will include The Clergy Connection, April 9-10, 1999, in Durham, North Carolina, and Liturgical Collaboration in Design, November 5-6, 1999, in Chicago, Illinois.

1999 will also include our annual Religious Art and Architecture Awards Program, and more issues of our journal, *Faith & Form*. Please join in our activities and let us hear your comments. □

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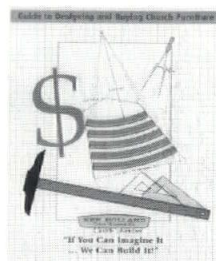
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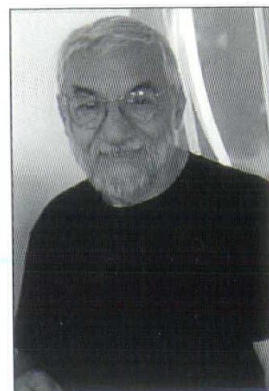
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# INNER SPACE

By Stephen Antonakos

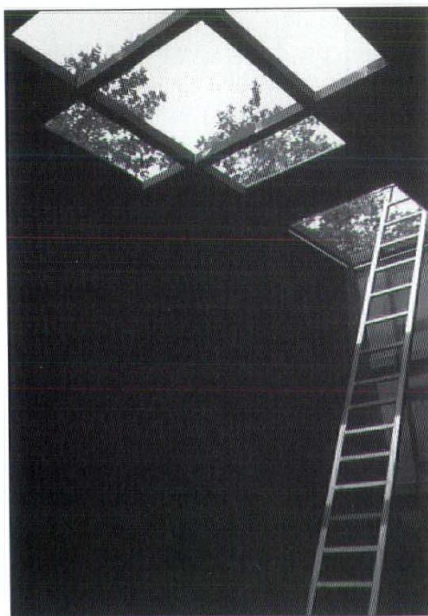


We all know that visual meanings are different from verbal meanings. The two realms have distinct operations—separate ways of understanding life and experience. Words are not my world, so even if my words are clear, understanding them is different from experiencing my work. I hope that when people see my work, they will let themselves be free and open to the visual and spatial experience and forget my words.

Sculpture is visual, but it can also act spatially and rhythmically—in time. I am interested in art that does this, art that we feel to be part of the same space we occupy when we look. This art is not locked into an object; rather, the experience—what happens—involves a correspondence between the viewer and the art in a new, more physical sense. It is a kind of ongoing exchange, an open flow in the space. It seems to be both simple and complicated, quick and slow, conscious and unconscious. It is, however, always active. And this action that we participate in may change our state of being in one way or another.

I believe in abstraction's capacity to engage people mentally, emotionally and physically; and I believe it can convey real and lasting human knowledge. I have worked with a vocabulary of complete and incomplete geometric neon forms—circles, squares, cubes and lines—since

STEPHEN ANTONAKOS designed the *Chapel of the Heavenly Ladder* that is featured on the cover. He has been a pioneer in the sculptural use of light since the 1960s. His work can be seen in numerous American cities and abroad.



*Chapel of the Heavenly Ladder, exterior (top) and interior.*

the early 1960s. I realized fairly early what could be done with neon's intensity, flexibility and ability to redefine spaces.

Art may stir us emotionally, excite us intellectually, transport us spiritually or perhaps even convince us about some-

thing outside itself. My art operates formally: Its meanings all come through the arrangement of a very limited number of abstract elements—their position, proportion, scale, color, light and space. It is hard to separate light and space.

My forms relate to each other, to the work as a whole, to their architectural setting, and beyond that to the space that contains all these elements. It is possible to activate space with very little.

Rooms have played a large role in my exhibitions and commissions from the 1960s onward—both indoors and outdoors. Even in the 1950s, my abstract constructions incorporated open and closed boxes that viewers could enter in their imaginations. The *Packages* of the early 1970s and my *Books* from the 1980s similarly invited viewers to participate in the work physically and imaginatively.

What this spatial engagement has meant in my work—the possibility for people's free participation—is the impetus that led me to create my chapels.

I had been making models and drawings for meditation rooms and chapels since the late 1980s. Sometimes I exhibit the small models, and sometimes I build a full-scale room or chapel. I had been reading about Byzantium, the lives of saints and some monasteries in Greece. One day in the early '90s, I came across a black and white reproduction of the "Icon with the Heavenly Ladder" of John Klimax, a monk who lived at the Holy Monastery of Saint Catherine in Sinai, in the 12th century. It struck me very powerfully. I went out to find a color reproduction, and then to find a larger one. Eventually, I knew I had to make a chapel

PHOTOS © 1997 STEPHEN ANTONAKOS



*This chapel is different:  
It is urgent, it speaks of  
repentance, it is tough,  
uncomfortable, difficult.*

in response. I started drawing, and sometime in 1995 I made a rather large model in iron with a golden ladder that I called the "Chapel of the Heavenly Ladder."

I was very excited about this chapel—although it is very different from all my other chapels. In their own ways, they are like havens from this world, places where a person may find a kind of peace or connection to his or her inner self. This chapel was different: It is urgent, it speaks of repentance, it is tough, uncomfortable, difficult. The floor is loose, rough stones; it can get hot; the rain can come in; and—very important—it reminds you that it is not easy to live a virtuous life, nor does it become easier.

In the spring of 1997, the magnificent exhibition, "The Glory Byzantium," arrived at the Metropolitan Museum, with all its treasures from so many places and the almost unbelievably beautiful icons, including the "Icon with the Heavenly Ladder." When I found myself face to face with it, I was very moved. I felt again the rightness of the need to respond to it

In addition to the gift of access to the

icon itself and the whole Byzantine exhibition, there was another surprise. The monks from the Holy Monastery of St. Catherine at Sinai who had accompanied work in the exhibition heard about me and came to the studio. When they saw the iron model, the models of my other chapels and my book, *Alphavitos*, and praised them, I felt a sense of affirmation that I can hardly put into words. It was very strong, and I will never forget them.

Soon after this, I was asked to represent Greece at the XI.VII Venice Biennale. The commissioner, Efi Strousa, loved the idea of building the Chapel of the Heavenly Ladder full scale, in iron, with the red and blue neon elements and the stony floor. Together, we found a sponsor in Athens, Prodromos Emfletzoglou, and the Chapel was installed in the Giardini. The site was ideal: broad, lined with trees, but open to the sky, close to an old Venetian neighborhood, and with the right ground—packed-down, hard earth.

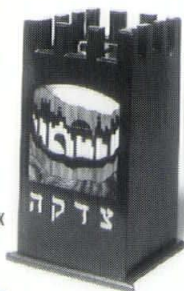
Over the weeks, I saw it from the inside and from far away, in bright sunshine, at night, in the rain, alone, and with other visitors. It was always quiet, even when crowded, and it was always provocative.

I keep the model here in the studio, close by. I imagine being inside it. I see the ladder start on the rocky floor and rise high above the roof. I am in it, it is in me. It spurs me as an artist and as a person to keep on working toward unnameable, necessary knowledge. □

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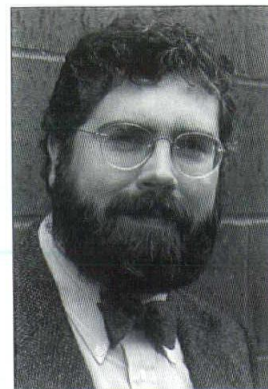
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# RELIGIOUS REGIONALISM: SOUTHWESTERN SACRED SPACES

By Michael J. Crosbie



The fall IFRAA conference in San Antonio, Texas, on regionalism's affect on religion and the sacred spaces we create offered those who attended a spectrum of examples that extended from the 18th century San Antonio missions to a new synagogue on the outskirts of the city. In between, there was plenty of discussion about the nature of regionalism, how it shapes liturgy and design, and how we might preserve and honor its import. There was also plenty of time to tour exhibits by artists, craftspeople, interior designers, and manufacturers who presented their work, and an evening of accolades for the 1998 and 1999 winners of the IFRAA and Faith & Form Religious Art and Architecture Awards.

## The Texture of Regionalism

Rev. Don Neumann set the stage for a discussion of regionalism with his lyrical opening remarks on Friday morning. Neumann, a Roman Catholic priest with the diocese of Galveston-Houston, noted that Texas, being as big as it is, is made of many distinct regions with lots of diversity, from the ancient missions to the "double-wide trailer that someone puts a steeple on top of." There are big metro areas and small towns, "a harmony of land, light, and the interdependence of all things." Neumann described the East Piney Woods region with its "red clay soil and red-neck heritage"; the Gulf Coast region; the South Texas and Rio Grande region with its Tex-Mex hospitality; the Texas panhandle, where, Neumann said, "the word flat takes on a new meaning";

the West Texas region, whose most precious resource is water; and the Hill Country with its "Devil's Backbone."

Neumann reached back through history, to speak of the concept of holy ground and sacred space that was familiar to the ancient Indians who once occupied the Southwest. This spirit, noted Neumann, is difficult to put into words, and is best expressed in the winds that sweep the landscape or a dramatic thunderstorm. He described it as a "mystical region" with a long history of struggle in settlement, and the divine. The native people saw the region as protected by "father sky and mother earth," a world of holy ground where the people, the land, and the heavens were interdependent and one. Neumann noted that Christian, Judaic, and Muslim traditions "share the same sense of oneness" so that space and time are transcended.

Dwelling on the theme of holy ground, Neumann showed slides of a mission near Sante Fe, New Mexico, where sacred ground is dispensed from a hole in the church floor. "The land must be remembered by each new generation," explained Neumann, for to forget is to "lose one's way, and who one is."

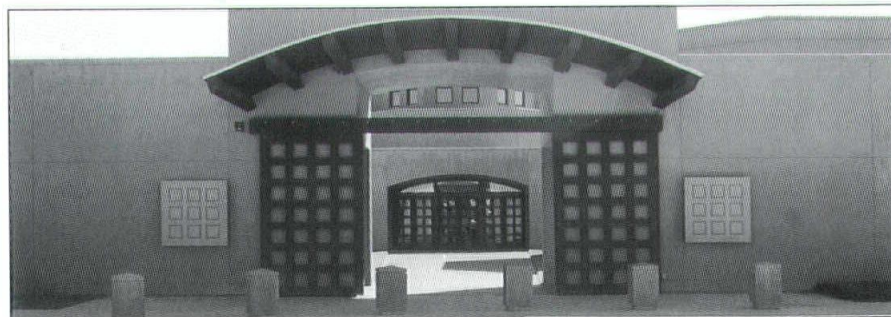
Against this theme of transcendental oneness, Neumann noted the importance of regional differences in religion,

which hinge upon tradition, style, social class, and ethnicity. Such religious regionalism has existed in every age and culture, in every denomination and belief system. It makes visible the traits of geography and culture.

"Religious architecture is a record of what we have valued," explained Neumann. He pointed to the painted churches of central Texas as a good example of religious buildings as repositories for remembrance. Built by immigrants from Germany, Poland, and Eastern Europe, these highly ornate churches express the ethnic heritage of their congregations, which were transplanted to the wilds of Texas. Neumann encouraged architects, artists, craftspeople, and clergy alike to continue to question what values we build and leave behind, as we enter the next millennium.

## Agudas Achim Synagogue

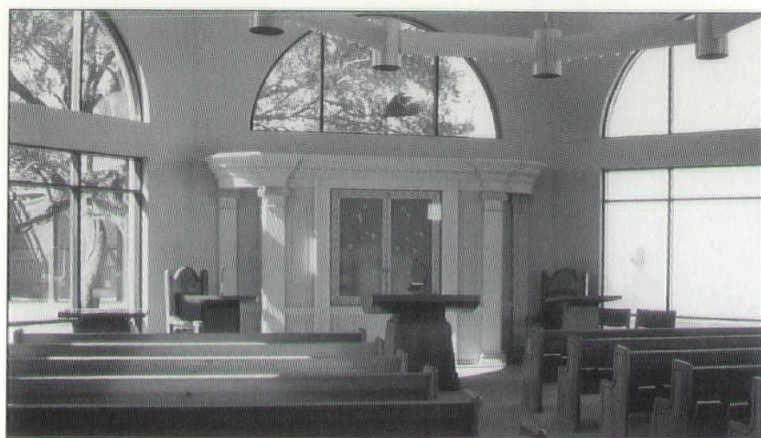
The first stop in a tour of notable religious structures was the Agudas Achim Synagogue, a 44,000-square-foot facility that includes a sanctuary that can accommodate 800, a large social hall, a library, classrooms, offices, and a 115-seat chapel. The tour was led by architect Maurice N. Finegold, FAIA, of Finegold Alexander + Associates Architects in Boston, who was joined by building com-



Agudas Achim Synagogue, Maurice Finegold, architect.

MICHAEL J. CROSBIE, Ph.D., RA, is an associate with Steven Winter Associates in Norwalk, Connecticut, and assistant editor of Faith & Form.





*Agudas Achim Synagogue.*



PHOTOS: DOUGLAS HOFFMAN

mittee chair Elaine Cohen and Rabbi Richard Spiegel.

Finegold remarked that the guiding lights for his design were three questions to the congregation: What do you value from the past? What are your current needs? What are your future dreams? The design for this new synagogue is at once contemporary and regional, suggesting the strong, simple geometries used by the region's indigenous builders, found in ancient adobe architecture. The exterior cladding of stucco is in the spirit of adobe construction, while the muted exterior colors of brown, beige, purple, and yellow capture the hues found in the region's desert flora. The colors also help to break up the mass of the building, making it more intelligible for the first-time visitor.

The building is embraced by a protective wall, which opens at the front with large cedar doors that recall the entrance to a Spanish mission compound. Finegold conceived the entry sequence as passing from the secular world to that of the sacred, "from the outer to the inner world," he explained. Such a sequence of passage continues inside the building, where one is delivered to a light-filled foyer dominated by an octagonal rotunda that gives one a clear sense that they have arrived. Visitors have remarked that the rotunda recalls the type of space and light found in Spanish synagogues. This is the central orienting device of the plan, which extends to the north with an administration wing and classrooms (oriented around their own small courtyard), and to the south with a large social hall, kitchen, and an intimate chapel that holds an ornate historic ark from an older synagogue.

One then passes through a vestibule to the sanctuary—a large space with balcony seating—that can be intimate as

well. A hallmark of the sanctuary is its judicious use of natural light. Finegold remarked that in this region, one must admit light in oblique ways, so as not to bring in the full brunt of the desert sun. Clear side windows under the balconies look out onto deciduous trees that filter the sunlight. The focus of the sanctuary is its back wall behind the bimah, which is rendered in a rough native limestone. This, again, recalls the regional architecture of the Southwest, bringing to mind the sunbaked walls of the old missions. But it also makes a connection to the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In this way, the sanctuary materials create a bridge between regional building and Judaic architectural tradition. The stone's texture is further enhanced by the narrow slit windows that frame it and visually hold it off from the barrel vaulted roof and the side walls. Raked with this band of light, the wall seems heavier and more ancient.

In the sanctuary are works by sculptor Laurie Gross, who collaborated with Finegold on another synagogue, Adath Jeshurun in Minnetonka, Minnesota. At Agudas Achim, Gross designed the menorah, the eternal light, and the ark doors, all rendered in bronze. The imposing ark doors are inscribed with the Ten Commandments, which disappear behind an abstract scroll work that brings to mind several images—the open pages of a book, a gathering of worshippers, or the parting waves of the Red Sea. Gross won a 1999 Religious Art award for her work at Agudas Achim.

The visit to the synagogue was highlighted with presentations by the building committee chair and the rabbi, as well as the architect. Chair Elaine Cohen recounted the acquisition of land for the new building, and the committee's search for an architect. The selection of

Finegold, according to Cohen, was a unanimous decision, and has resulted in a building that is "inspiring to the community, with a sacred, grand space filled with sunlight and art."

Rabbi Spiegel noted that, much to his regret, there are no architecture courses in rabbinical school: "I've grown to appreciate what architects do, and what architecture can do for a community. This building has opened the world of architecture to us."

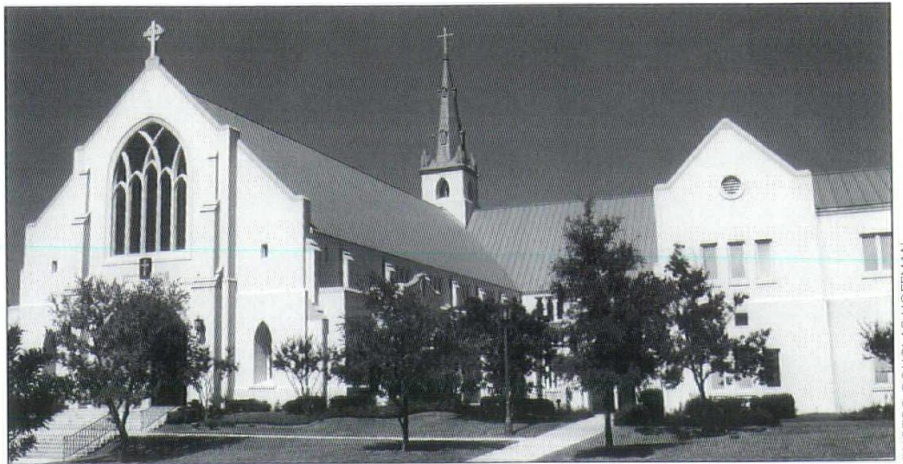
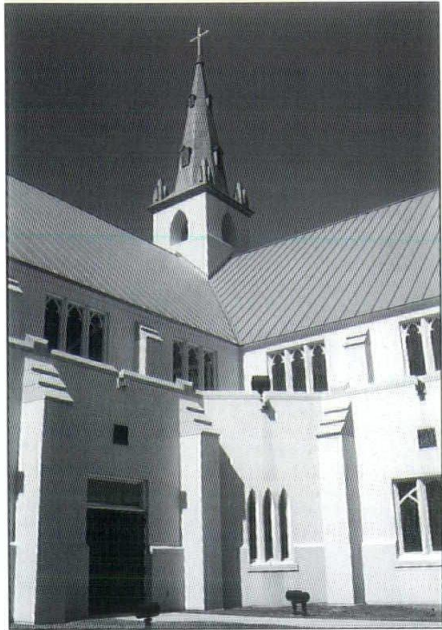
### **Alamo Heights United Methodist Church**

After lunch at Agudas Achim Synagogue, conferees visited the Alamo Heights United Methodist Church, a joint-venture project by Hesson Andrews Sototmayor and Sprinkle/Robey Architects, both local firms.

To say Alamo Heights is a big church is sort of like saying Texas is a big state. This sprawling complex encompasses 87,000 square feet, with a 1,200-seat sanctuary, a youth/adult classroom wing, a children's classroom wing, a 150-seat chapel, music and administrative spaces, a 24-hour prayer chapel, and a fellowship hall big enough to seat 600. This was all accomplished at a construction cost of less than \$100 per square foot. The tour was led by Davis Sprinkle and Richard Garison, AIA, who were from the respective joint venture firms.

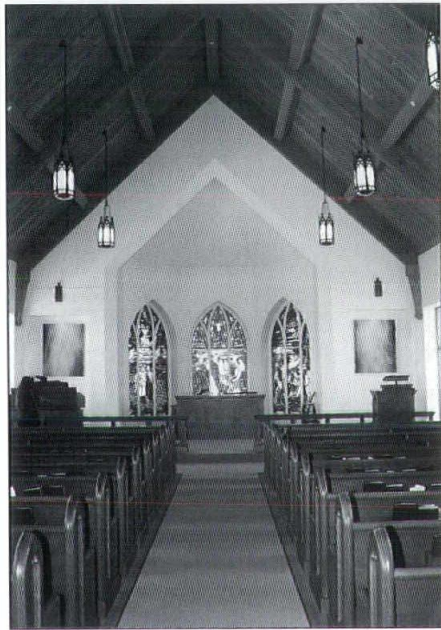
The new church commands an open, wind-swept 13-acre site on the outskirts of the city, a few miles from the church it replaced. The area has been undergoing major development in the past few years, much of it sparked by the construction of Alamo Heights, according to the head of the building committee, Bob Scott. He noted that this project started with a desire to expand the existing church's





PHOTOS: DOUGLAS HOFFMAN

*Alamo Heights United Methodist Church, above and left.*



family life center, but that was met with opposition by the neighborhood. This prompted a search for a new site where Alamo Heights could enlarge its support spaces, and in the process double the size of its sanctuary. Mindful that a new church building would be a big change for many in the congregation, every attempt was made to design it in such a way as to recall the older structure. "The old church informed the architecture of the new church," explained Scott.

One of the most obvious connections between new and old is the exterior appearance of the two churches. Material handed out by the architects shows pictures of the old church next to pictures of

the new, and it is difficult to tell the two apart. Like the older church, the new one is a white building that appears as masonry construction with a stucco exterior. It liberally uses Gothic arches, buttresses, and window tracery. There are long covered walkways connecting the various wings, which shield people from the heat as well as sudden downpours. The new building mimics the old even to the extent that its main entrance is oriented toward a wide road from which anyone rarely, if ever, enters (parking for 500 cars is found in back of the church). The old church faces the same road in just this manner. The architects noted that such an entrance is used mostly for weddings and funerals.

Like its ancestor, the new Alamo Heights has a cavernous nave with a blood-red carpet leading to a main altar, behind which is an imposing organ and choir stalls. The church also has white walls and an exposed roof structure. Old elements incorporated into the new include several stained glass windows and chandeliers. Unlike the old, the seating in the new church fans out around the altar, giving it more of a central focus. The woodwork throughout is very heavy and dark, recalling that of the old church.

While the scale of the main church is anything but intimate, other worship spaces within the complex have a more comfortable human scale. The 150-seat chapel found to the north of the main sanctuary is surrounded by a garden area. One of the interesting aspects of its design are the windows, in which stained glass panels from the old church are held within a frame of clear glass, allowing views out to the garden. The chapel is a popular choice for weddings.

Contrasting the main sanctuary is the

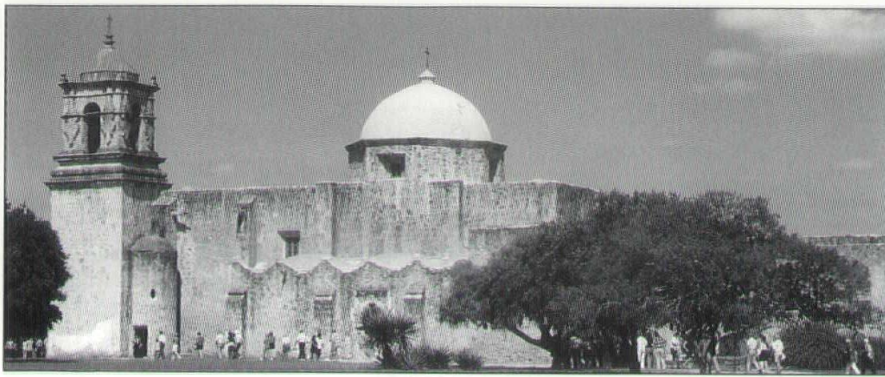
24-hour prayer chapel, which is all of 200 square feet. This little round building sits like a baptistry northwest of the main church, and contains a few seats, a small altar, and seven stained glass windows. It is a private, focused space with a gold-leafed domed ceiling, offering the luxury of a sanctuary for one.

#### **A Diversity of Workshops**

The workshop sessions on Saturday morning brought together a diversity of views, subject matter, and advice for conferees.

In a fascinating review of the impact of state control on religious properties, Greg Davis, AIA, moderated a panel that included major players in a lawsuit between the City of Boerne, Texas, and the Archdiocese of San Antonio, which eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. Davis's firm, Davis Durand-Hollis Rupe Architects, had designed a new addition to St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church in Boerne, taking the project through construction documents. The city moved to block work on the church by denying a building permit, citing the church's inclusion in a historic district. Rev. Anthony Cummins, pastor of St. Peter's, recounted the conflict and its impact on the parish. Attorney Thomas Drought represented the Archdiocese in federal district court, citing the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993, which holds that laws cannot substantially burden the exercise of religion. The court ruled against the Archdiocese, and the city challenged the constitutionality of the RFRA. Attorney Douglas Leacock, who helped draft the RFRA, then argued the case in front of the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled the RFRA unconstitutional. Leacock noted work in Congress





Mission San Jose.

to rewrite the RFRA. The parish eventually settled with the city, and the addition was redesigned.

Another workshop gave a broad overview of how to work toward consensus in the design of religious buildings. Douglas Hoffman, AIA, and Richard Garison, AIA, spoke on how to organize a building project, the various roles of the players involved, techniques in gathering information and feedback from the congregation, and ways to communicate design ideas. This comprehensive approach covered everything from master planning through programming; when to garner congregational approval for schematics, design development, and construction documents; bidding the project; building it; and celebrating the finished work. In a free give-and-take, participants offered a wide range of suggestions and tips on how they have made their own projects run smoothly.

Two of the workshops took regionalism as a point of departure. Rev. Virgilio Elizondo, who is a theologian, author, and pastor, joined with liturgical design consultant and artist Cynthia Tapia to discuss vernacular sacred art. A plethora of slides showed the various creative ways in which art has been made manifest in the religious buildings of the Southwest. Elizondo and Tapia concentrated on uses of color, form, symbols, procession, and music, noting how regional differences are revealed.

A second regional workshop by Carolyn Peterson, FAIA, and Rev. Balthasar Janacek provided a visually stimulating look at how the Mission style in architecture has made a lasting affect on religious buildings in the Southwest. Elements of the Mission style were discussed and parallels to contemporary buildings were drawn. This workshop provided a good warm-up to a tour of two missions on Saturday afternoon.

### San Antonio Missions

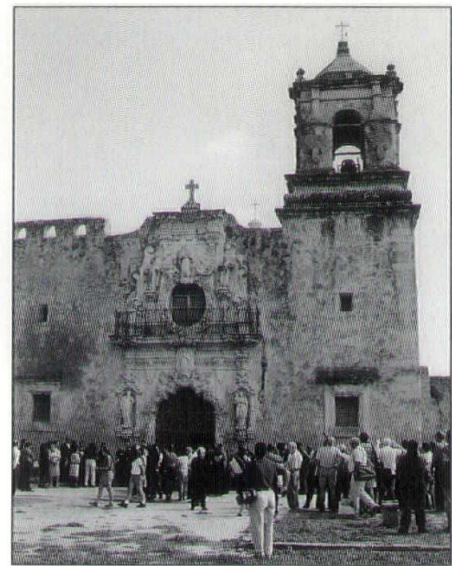
Four missions make up San Antonio's "Mission Trail," which connects these historic sites over a six-mile stretch. A fifth mission, San Antonio de Valero (better known as the Alamo), is in the heart of the city. Conferees were treated to tours of Mission San Jose and Mission Concepcion.

San Jose was founded in 1720, and today its mixture of reconstruction, preservation, and restoration give one a sense of the thriving social and spiritual center it once was for 300 people. The largest of the four missions, San Jose includes a church, convento, and granary, with the entire complex surrounded by a phalanx of buildings used as housing by the Indians. The fact that San Jose is still a working church was demonstrated by the large wedding that had just occurred when we visited. The church's front facade is richly decorated in a Spanish Rococo style, and a portion of the exterior reveals colorful geometric patterns that once covered the walls. In contrast, the white interior was spare and pure, with a large dome marking the crossing.

Mission Concepcion was founded in the mid 1700s, and the complex includes the church and a series of buildings used for food storage, living, and working. The church facade is not elaborate but delicately carved around the entry door. The interior is decorated with wall paintings in rich colors. On the east wall of the sanctuary, overlooking the altar, is a loft space that was used by the sick to attend mass yet maintain quarantine. This, too, is a working church, and some in its congregation are the descendants of the early converts more than 200 years ago.

### "Polyphonic Vernacularism"

Mission Concepcion provided the perfect setting for the conference's closing session. Nathan Mitchell, Associate Director



Mission Concepcion.

PHOTOS: DOUGLAS HOFFMAN

for Research at Notre Dame University's Center for Pastoral Liturgy, delivered a mesmerizing talk on the role of regionalism in shaping both religion and religious architecture.

Today, he noted, we find not only one voice in regional expression, but a wealth of voices and traditions, producing an eclectic style Mitchell calls "polyphonic vernacularism," reflecting the changing culture of contemporary America.

"What we have today," said Mitchell, "is a regional religious architecture that speaks in many voices simultaneously—just as, in fact, many of our congregations do." Many people find this complex expression of the vernacular scary, said Mitchell, "because vernacularism—in painting or pottery, in architecture or ritual, in liturgy or language or life—is a movement that causes power to flow away from the center toward the margins." Most alarmed are the elite (which includes most architects and critics, Mitchell noted) because vernacularism empowers the marginalized, and could cause sacred art to fall into the hands of the unwashed masses. "God, we think, loves the poor but hates their art."

To embrace the regional, to revel in the vernacular, Mitchell observed, neatly summing up the spirit of this stimulating conference, is to promote architecture and religion that is truly open to everyone. "Above all," Mitchell said, "we need to remember that great art is often made by people who don't know they're making it, and that beauty may glow in grime as easily as it does in the squeaky-clean corridors of an art gallery." □



# CHARLES D. MAGINNIS, ARCHITECT

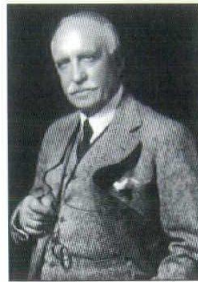
By Dennis H. Keefe, AIA, with Frederick W. Atherton

*In 1996, my firm was asked to prepare a plan for the restoration of the Chapel at Emmanuel College on the Fenway in Boston. Later, following a newspaper article on the project, I had a phone call from Elizabeth Maginnis, the daughter of the architect who had originally designed Emmanuel College in 1914. Her interest and encouragement, backed by a collection of family archives, prompted this brief examination of the life and contribution of a man who played a critical, even revolutionary, role in shaping the architecture of Roman Catholic churches and educational institutions in the early decades of the twentieth century.*

Charles Donagh Maginnis was born in Londonderry, Ireland, in 1867. At the age of 16 he won the Queen's Prize for Mathematics from the South Kensington Museum School in London. His family emigrated to Canada and, within a year, to Boston. At that time, the practice of architecture in Boston was an aristocratic profession; Boston architects were a tight society of men who belonged to the proper clubs, had studied at MIT or the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, and had made the requisite Grand Tour of the architectural monuments of Europe. The young immigrant Maginnis, on the other hand, had no formal architectural training—and certainly no social connections. He later recalled having interviewed with more than 100 architects before being accepted, without pay, as a draftsman. Once he had proven himself, he was paid two dollars a week. Maginnis later en-

tered the office of Edmund Wheelwright (best known for his design of the Harvard Lampoon Building and Boston's Horticultural Hall), where he eventually became chief designer.

Four years later, Charles D. Maginnis went out on his own. He rented a small office in downtown Boston and supplemented his income by teaching pen and ink drawing. Soon after, he was asked by a Boston church magazine to write about Catholic church architecture. The resulting article was an impassioned plea for higher standards in church design. American Catholic churches of the time were usually large, barn-like



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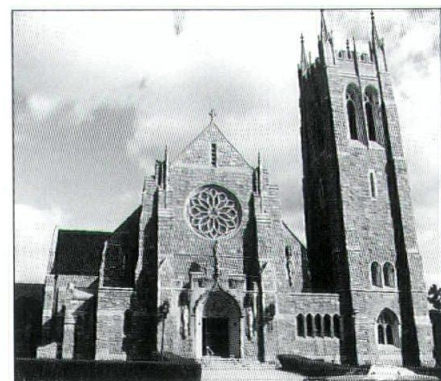
Charles D. Maginnis's first church, St. Patrick, Whitinsville, Mass.

DENNIS H. KEEFE, AIA, is president of Keefe Associates, Inc., Architects, in Boston, Massachusetts, and FREDERICK W. ATHERTON is an architect with Keefe Associates. Established in 1977, the firm specializes in planning and design for churches, independent schools, and colleges. The firm's restoration of Emmanuel College Chapel included the design of new sanctuary furnishings including the freestanding altar. Keefe's late father, Harry J. Keefe, was a partner in the firm Maginnis, Walsh & Kennedy.

brick boxes with an overlay of paint and plaster scenography—an architecture of surface and color, not of depth and strength. Maginnis pointed out the folly of taking elaborate European churches as models for such buildings when only a superficial copy was affordable. He urged study of the traditional styles of northern Italy, where brick used in simple volumes encased well-proportioned, relatively austere interiors.

The article was read by a priest who was so compelled by Maginnis's ideas that in 1898 he asked the young architect to design a new church. When the astounded client learned that his architect had never actually designed a church, Maginnis secured the commission by swiftly replying, "Say, rather, that I have never designed a *bad* church."

With this commission in hand, Maginnis went into partnership with two other young architects, Timothy Walsh and Matthew Sullivan. Their firm prospered and soon developed a reputation for ecclesiastical projects. Their biggest break came when they won the competition to design the Jesuits' new Boston College campus on a commanding summit in Chestnut Hill. Maginnis's collegiate Gothic buildings for BC drew broad critical acclaim. Other work of the period demonstrates his ability to find inspiration across a broad sweep of Christian history, and to work within a budget. The diverse heritage of American Catholics was expressed in the Lombardic style his first article championed at Immaculate Conception in Cambridge (strong Baltic overtones on the entrance front signify that this is an ethnic Lithuanian parish), while an inventive Anglo-French Gothic mode suits the picturesque setting of



St. Theresa of Avila, West Roxbury, Mass., Maginnis's grandest gothic church in greater Boston.





*Emmanuel College Chapel as restored in 1998*

Our Lady of the Presentation in Brighton. The modest resources available for a summer church take form in inexpensive shingles at St. Theresa, Sagamore, on Cape Cod, a charming contrast to the rich masonry grandeur of Maginnis's early masterpiece, St. Catherine of Genoa in Somerville.

### Design Philosophy

In the aftermath of the Modernist revolution, it is easy to overlook the freshness and originality in the work of a self-described "conservative" architect like Charles Maginnis. In 1926 he wrote, "Our architecture for years to come must continue to be reminiscent." In churches, especially, he justified the use of the Gothic style on the basis of its intellectual and emotional content, asserting that "no other system of architecture ever approached it in the felicity with which...it interpreted the genius of the Catholic religion." Note, however, that this pronouncement does not hamstring creativity by presuming that new work never could surpass the work of the past; indeed, he speaks from the opposite conviction: that in building upon so strong a foundation as the Gothic, the modern architect one day would excel all that had gone before.

### Emmanuel College Chapel

The Chapel at Emmanuel College demonstrates how Maginnis deployed Gothic memories with a logical rigor very much of his own time. Both inside and out, richness and intricacy are concentrated in crucial small areas. The nave walls are neutral in color and absolutely plain. Sculpted ornament is restricted to the reredos, shrine canopies, and the



*Trinity Church, Boston, Mass., chancel as redesigned by C.D. Maginnis, 1938.*

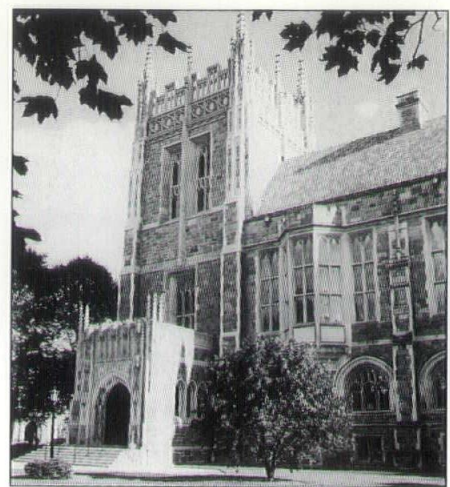
sheltering roof. Painted decoration is likewise confined to the apse, shrine alcoves, and ceiling, with a clear hierarchy of enrichment designed to draw the eye towards the liturgical heart of the space by use of ever-greater amounts of gold leaf as one approaches the altar.

Such restrained use of ornament represented a marked change from the Victorian taste for elaborate pattern blanketing all available surfaces. When every plane is heavily enriched, the mass and solidity of the whole tends to dissolve; not so a Maginnis church, which will always declare and celebrate its structural integrity and sinewy mass. Emmanuel's altar and shrines are given due prominence by their pristine whiteness and strictly disciplined form: a serene, yet radical, reversal of Victorian over-elaboration.

### Design to the Ends of Emotion

Maginnis' concept of the function of a church was not narrowly utilitarian. In his essay on "Architecture and Religious Tradition," he wrote, "The problem which the church presents to the architect is...so abstract that the urgency of realism is represented in the single function of seating a congregation. The rest is design directed to the ends of emotion." What distinguished a church from an auditorium, he said, was "the principle of the Divine Presence by...which the altar is theologically the Church....Terms of high dignity are demanded to give the testimony of it."

The desire to provide a proper setting for the altar accounts for the generous size of the typical Maginnis apse: "A deep chancel," he wrote, "contributes so sensibly, so definitely, to the devotional effect of the church that it is impossible to contrive any appreciable measure of such effect without it." To dignify the altars of the very largest churches, such as St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, he would employ the ancient device of a



*John J. Burns Library, Boston College.*

baldacchino to announce the altar's position of primacy over the heads of even the greatest throng.

### Trinity Church, Boston

Maginnis' statements on altars are particularly relevant to his 1938 remodel of the apse at Trinity Church, which reflects a sea-change in taste within this famous "Low Church" Episcopal parish. In the early 1870s, H.H. Richardson had designed Trinity as a lavish auditorium for the sermons of Phillips Brooks. The building ripples outwards from a massive pulpit, and the original ornamentation around the "communion table" was no more dramatic than that of the side transepts. As a Roman Catholic, Maginnis doubtless would have found that Trinity's interior had little appeal to the emotions and insufficient regard for the altar.

His competition-winning design changed all this, creating a true altar fashioned of shining white marble and gold mosaic nested in a Byzantine setting of green marble and gold-leafed polychromy. The sacramental worship of Catholicism, the ancient emotional appeal of ritual mystery, reasserted dominance over Protestant Episcopal preaching in this most unlikely of locations.

Such an enormous change in Episcopal taste had evolved slowly over the forty years of Maginnis' practice, due in no small part to the compelling works and impassioned writings of Gothic Revivalists such as Ralph Adams Cram and Maginnis himself. The landscape punctuated with elegant masonry churches we take for granted in metropolitan Boston practically owes its existence to Maginnis, Cram, and colleagues.

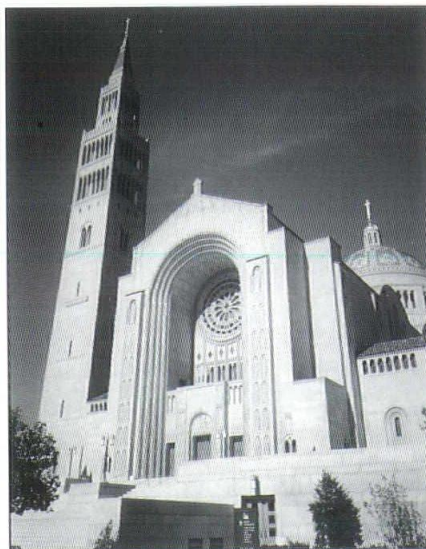


The Emperor Augustus claimed he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble; Maginnis found the American Catholic Church in haphazard shrines of plaster and lath, and left it with a noble architecture of its own.

### "Felicitous Expression" of Function

Ironically enough, by 1938, this great reformer of Catholic taste would have been perceived as deeply reactionary by younger architects preaching the pure-functional gospel of International Style Modernism. Opposing their party line, which held that architectural beauty was an automatic byproduct of functional planning, Maginnis contended that "beauty is the felicitous expression of function and as such clearly assumes the engagement of the imagination."

We now see that Maginnis perceived many subtleties the high Modernists missed in striving for a purely utilitarian architecture. "Less is more" only to a well-considered point, one which Maginnis found. Because they engage the churchgoer on so many levels—body, memory, reverence, and imagination, most Maginnis churches, now from fifty to one hundred years old, still stand as vital works of art, loved, used, and

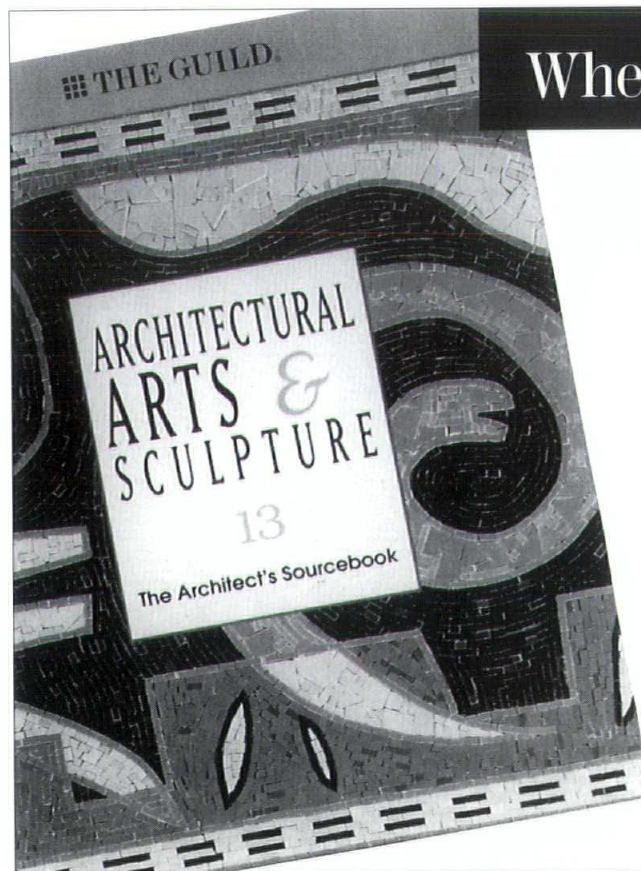


*National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Washington, D.C.*

admired by all who enter. Similarly, the campus buildings he designed, not only at Boston College and Emmanuel College, but at St. John's Seminary, the College of the Holy Cross, and as far away as the University of Notre Dame, brought a grace and character to these institutions that set a high standard for Maginnis's successor architects.

By any measure, Charles Donagh Maginnis was one of the most distinguished architects of his generation. Long esteemed by his colleagues, he was elected president of the Boston Society of Architects, and later, national President of the American Institute of Architects. In 1948, he would earn the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects. It is striking to note that the previous recipient of the AIA's highest award was Frank Lloyd Wright and the next would be Eero Saarinen. Maginnis was the first Bostonian so honored, and only the fourteenth architect to receive the medal in a fifty-year period. Boston College, Holy Cross College, Tufts University and Harvard awarded him honorary degrees. When he died in 1955, many of his eulogists referred to Maginnis as a genius, and architect William Emerson, Dean of the School of Architecture at MIT, acclaimed him as "an heroic figure."

All personal accounts praise Maginnis for his charm, wit, and modesty. George Edgell, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, noted that: "Of all the Yankee aristocrats among the museum trustees, Charles Maginnis is the truest gentleman, in the finest meaning of the word. □



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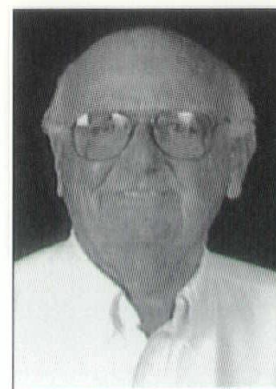
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# IN QUEST OF SPIRITUAL SPACE

By A. Richard Williams



Time out of mind, man has sought places of spiritual inspiration, first in the magnificence of Nature alone, then in an awakening of creative yearning to pray, to sing, to make art and architecture as grace notes interwoven with the majesty of natural settings.

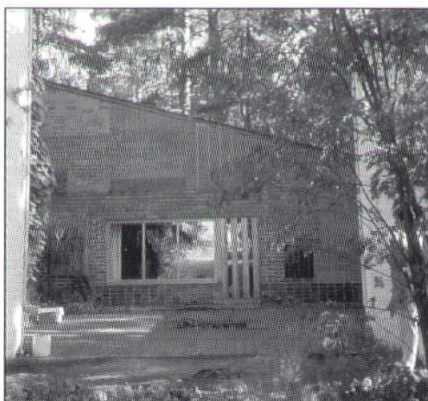
In the broadest sense, such spiritual places exist anywhere across the world in or out of formal religious space:

- A path through virgin California redwoods
- Cape Sounion in Greece
- The sand garden of Ryonni Temple in Kyoto
- The endless forest of columns and arches in the Great Mosque of Cordova
- Thoreau's Walden Pond
- The south transept of Chartres Cathedral with the blazingreds of Blanche of Castille's rose window made more intense by the afternoon sun
- Thorncrown Chapel in the woods near Eureka Springs, Arkansas
- The galleries of the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas
- A gray December dawn in the deserted Piazza San Marco, Venice, with echoes in the mind's ear of the Modern Jazz Quartet's "Golden Striker" theme from the film "No Sun in Venice."

Many more might be added to these favorite few.

What timeless yet timely qualities lie within all of these that may or may not be found in pilgrimage to the best we know of modern churches and shrines

A. RICHARD WILLIAMS, FAIA, is professor emeritus of architecture and former director of the Graduate Architectural Design Program at the University of Illinois. Since his retirement in Tucson, Arizona, he has been asked to serve as a visiting critic to establish a collaboration among the disciplines of architecture, planning and landscape architecture at the University of Arizona.



Aalto House, Muratsalo, Finland.

around the world? This quest has prompted IFRAA travel-study journeys in recent years, the latest to Finland and St. Petersburg, Russia.

Finland is an especially significant choice in the global scene of modern design. Its wealth of examples of architecture, landscape architecture, arts and crafts has achieved a level of integration and harmony that is rare elsewhere in today's world. This legacy goes back to pre-World War II days when the work of Saarinen, Aalto and others attracted international attention through an extra measure of sensitivity in form, space, scale and skillful use of a limited vocabulary of materials—above all a "humanizing" of the otherwise austere, abstract character of the work of the Bauhaus designers, Corbusier and other European Modernists. This year, 1998, happens to be the 100th anniversary of Aalto's birth with conferences, new publications and exhibitions; several of which were included in the IFRAA itinerary.

Aalto's lifetime work as an architect, urban designer, furniture and glass designer encompassed a great diversity of commissions: dwellings, commercial, industrial and civil structures. His church

at Imatra stands for his pioneering of multiple, combinable congregation spaces sculpturally composed in light and form, an all-white essay, in and out. However, in my view, it did not reach the quality of spiritual space of his council chamber of the Saynatsalo Town Hall with its exquisite wood ceiling structure, unity of space with intimacy of scale, discreet light sources and fine detail. All this same mastery of harmonious space, light, texture, materials and detail is present in an earlier work, the Villa Mairea, the residence of Harry and Maire Gullichsen where I was a guest in November 1939; a fine demonstration that spiritually inspiring space can exist in a private residence, far more successfully than in the most sumptuous interiors of the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, for example.

Among the newer churches visited, two by architect Juha Leiviska—one in



Mannisto Church in Kuopio, Finland. Juha Leiviska, architect.



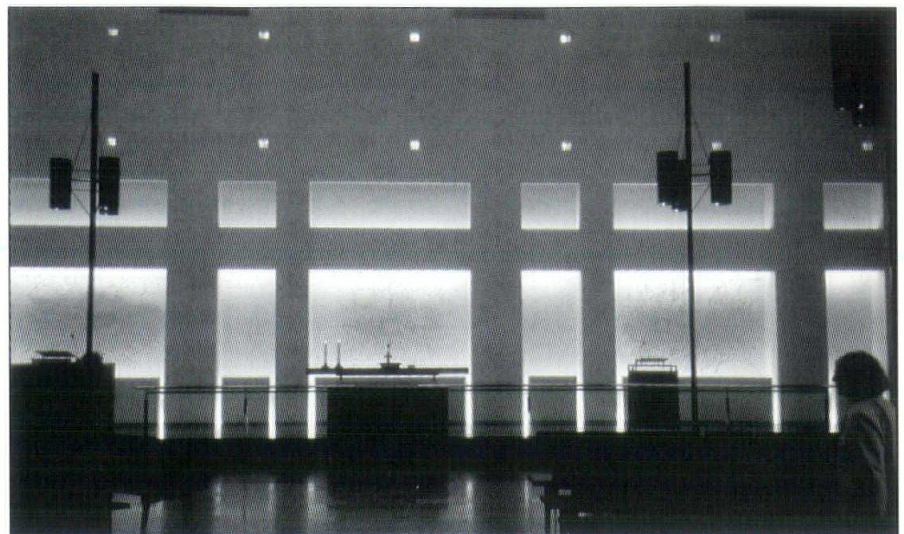


*Myyrmäki Church, Finland. Juhana Leiviska, architect.*

the Helsinki suburb of Myyrmäki, the other in Kuopio—were deserving of highest acclaim. Both had narrow difficult sites: Myyrmäki along a railroad and Kuopio along a row of medium-rise dwellings. Leiviska skillfully manipulated the plans to stretch out in the long dimension parallel and against the difficult edge with barrier walls, opening up the opposite side with a series of parallel planes enclosing small ancillary spaces building up in width and height to the major worship space. These parallel planes ascending and culminating in a bell tower interplayed as an “instrument of light” as described by Finnish architectural critic Junani Pallasmaa.

At the Mannisto Church in Kuopio, the organist gave a brief recital demonstrating how magnificent the church also is as an instrument of sound. Both churches are admirable examples of collaboration with artists and fabric, seating and lighting designers reflecting their mutual respect, and absence of ego, all working as a team toward the goal of unified spiritual space.

The composition of wall planes as modulators of light and space is also characteristic in the work of Kristian Gullionsen, another of Finland's leading architects. My personal interest in his career is heightened because I met him when he was 7 years old during my visit in 1939. We were celebrating his father's birthday with three generations of the Gullichsens raising toasts, made most



*Altar area, Haménkyä Church, Vantaa, Finland. Jokela and Kareoja, architects.*

poignant by the shadow of the coming war. Exemplary of Gullichsen's wide breadth and quality of work is the Grankulla Church and Parish Center in Kauniainen, noteworthy not only for its elegantly resolved balance of solids and voids, fine scale and detail, but also in the fluid interweaving of church and parish functions, especially in its spaces for children.

In the panorama of many experiments observed in the blending of art and architecture in light, the series of naturally lighted symbolic tracery panels by artist Martti Aihla in the Hameenkylä Church in Vantaa, by architects Jokela and Kareoja deserve special mention. This series, together with skylighting and other side lighting, would have been enough for the interior unity of the worship space without the additional colorfully painted panels in a row near the ceiling.

Although there were many praiseworthy features of other churches seen in the IFRAA itinerary, they all seemed to lack some ingredient of excellence as a total composition. The rock-cut church in Helsinki and Kaleva Kyrka in Tampere, both by the Pietiläs seemed to present problems of heavy scale and the Lamminpää Cemetery Chapel by Laiho, Polkkinen, Raunio, also in Tampere employed the recent cliché of the slash-through wall without interior resolution. These too did not succeed so well in the collaboration of artists and craftsmen.

On the more positive side, two of the smallest examples visited merit special applause. One is the university chapel at Otaniemi, by Heikka and Kaija Siren, built in the '50s. It shares the very Finnish character of two provincial mate-

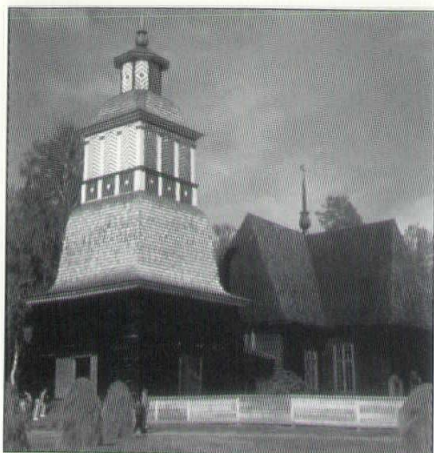
rials, brick and wood, in antiphonal relationship in a wooded, rocky setting with Aalto's Saynatsalo town hall built in the same period. Brick as a wall-bearing material rising from the rocky landscape is delicately related to the wood superstructure, a carefully proportioned truss and roof deck overhead that frames a glass altar area facing the woods in which a simple exterior cross accents the altar focus space.

The other is the Resurrection Chapel by Erik Bryggman in Turku, the main western seaport in Finland. Begun in 1939 and completed in 1941 after the winter war, this funeral chapel is sited on the crown of Unikankare Hill in a magnificently wooded cemetery dating back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The approach upward is a carefully arranged sequence through mature pines along a path modulated by glacier-smoothed granite outcroppings partially covered with lichen and moss, edged with wild flowers.

Entering the chapel one immediately experiences a mood of quiet reverence, achieved by the smooth, white unbroken north wall rising to a barrel-vaulted ceiling, lighted by a low continuous horizontal glass wall along the south side facing a pine-wooded terrace that then drops off to a semi-clearing, the main portion of the cemetery. Natural light is intensified in the altar area as the glazed south wall becomes vertical. This sanctuary space is subtly enriched by tracery of interior planting and the play of shadow from foliage and branches of the trees outside.

Symbolism, iconography and furnishings are all low key, allowing the quiet





Church at Petajavesi, Finland.



Resurrection Chapel, Turku, Finland, left and above.  
Erik Bryggman, architect.

majesty of space, light and landscape to be the main instrument of spiritual space. The Resurrection Chapel thus becomes one of the world's finest and most powerful demonstrations that architecture and landscape are one, inseparable in reaching the highest level of expression and fulfillment of Man's place in Nature.

Enriching this recent visit as a personal experience was my good fortune in November 1939 to spend time with both the Aalto's and Bryggman. I was deeply impressed by the same quiet sense of compassion and humanism conveyed by Gunnar Asplund in an earlier interview in Stockholm.

Bryggman, especially in his humble manner of explaining the design process for the Resurrection Chapel, then just beginning construction, revealed a profound depth and thoroughness of study, contemplation, dedication and patience. His office was full of partial models, alternative detail drawings, color studies, material samples, and combinations, all communicating their purpose as "means" to the full scale reality of the building. Not ends in themselves as so often seems the intention of slick presentation drawings, models and glossy computer displays in our age of media inflation. In reaction to these trends glorifying paper architecture, the Finns stand fast in preferring the word "rakennustaiteen" meaning "art of building," as most reflective of their architectural tradition.

It was in Bryggman's office, and later visiting the completed chapel in 1954, that I felt most strongly the contribution Finland has made to world architecture: that a limited vocabulary of materials and economic means can be an asset rather than a liability in the making of fine build-

ings. Handcraft skills and sensitivity in the assembly of materials, form, space, light and landscape have matured among the people for centuries.

The meticulously preserved wooden church at Petajavesi, circa 1765, now on the United Nations' highly selective list of historic world architecture, expresses the depth of time in which this distinctive art and craft of building has evolved.

Responding to widespread public appreciation of good design, architects,

collaborating artists and craftsmen emerge in such a culture as the most versatile, skillful and sensitive among many who are design-oriented in the society, rather than as separate, synthetically trained, label-identified professionals.

Finland is truly a unique global model for emulation not only in the design arts education and practice but in the broad scope of learning for all who aspire to a higher quality of life. The quest for spiritual space may well lead the way. □

## UNDER SIEGE: ARCHITECTURE AS A CULTURAL VALUE

As an architect and educator on the threshold of the new millenium, I join with colleagues near and far who have lived through most of this passing century, pondering its unprecedented kaleidoscope of change mirrored in our personal and professional lives.

The fate of architecture lies at the heart of our reflection. As artists and scholars we see our experience in this mirror of technological advance, social/political aberration and environmental assault. All are of heavy impact on architecture as a cultural value. We search for causes and effects that have outwardly blurred or corroded its historic legacy and inwardly its conscience and will for continuing advance in canons of excellence.

In many ways we are positioned in a time warp, a replay of Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*: "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." A bewildering complexity of opposites and twilight zones in between.

Best of times for economic growth of the "have" nations; the advance of science, technology and information. Best of times for the privileged elite who in greatly increased numbers enjoy luxurious lifestyles, segregated more and more in protected, gated estates, playgrounds, communities, cities and nations.

Worst of times for the vast majority of peoples yearning for equal opportunity, for access to quality education, health care, satisfying employment, a place to live, the arts; in sum, a higher quality of life.

The twilight zone between is loaded with questions, doubt and debate. Is high tech advance good or bad? Giant mergers good or bad? Giant internationalism good or bad? Media and celebrity inflation, good or bad? Billions upon billions spent on litigation, palaces of "justice" gambling, sports, entertainment, cars, private and public indulgence. The list goes on and on.

We are truly under cultural siege.



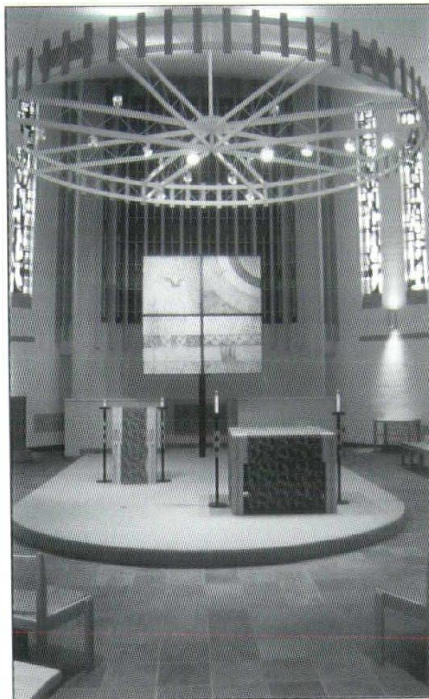
# THREE ARTISTS

## WILLIAM SCHICKEL

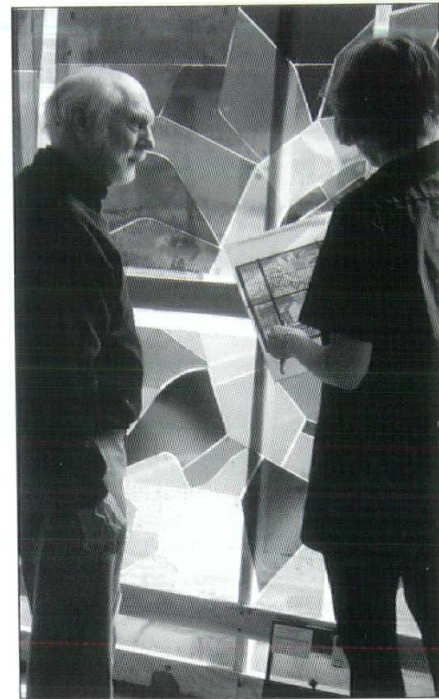
IFRAA members who visited the studios of William Schickel in Loveland, Ohio, as part of a conference can certainly agree with Gregory Wolfe, author of a new book on Schickel's work, entitled *Sacred Passion*. Schickel has welcomed the liberating possibilities offered by modern art, but is aware that the 20th century is marked by a spiritual crisis that makes it difficult to preserve a sense of the sacred. He is determined to use his art (sculpture, painting, design for architecture and furniture as well as stained glass) to reawaken a sense of the sacred.

The hallmark of his career is a drive toward integration and wholeness; an attempt to unify the past and the present, the spirit and the flesh. His works do not convey psychological depths or make social statements but are abstracted forms depicting archetypal images.

*Sacred Passion: The Art of William Schickel* by Gregory Wolfe is published by The University of Notre Dame Press. □



Recent renovation at Bellarmine Chapel, Xavier University, Cincinnati, Ohio.



Window for Mercy Health and Wellness (the artist at left).

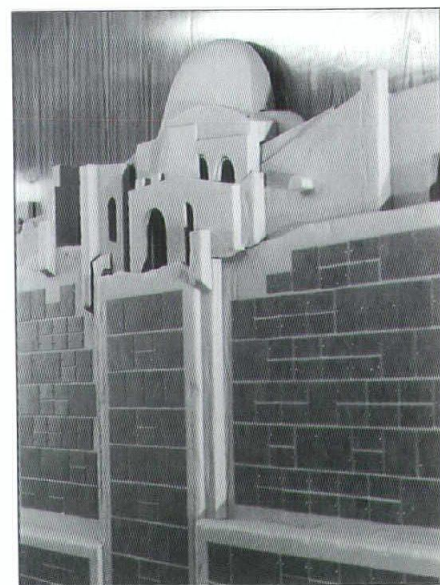
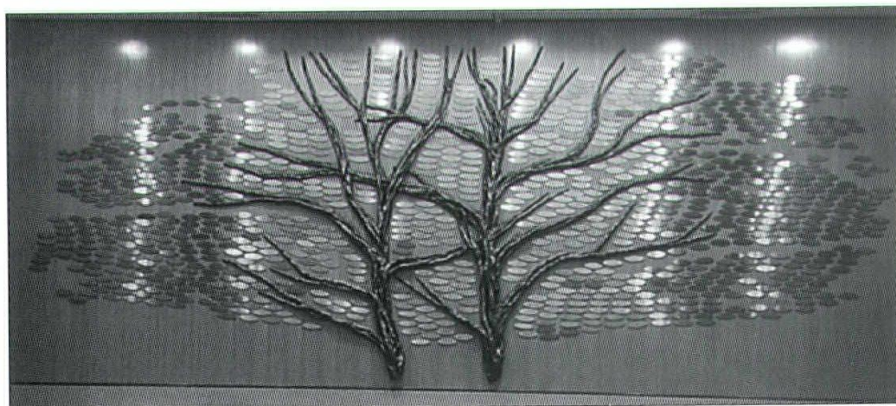
## EMANUEL MILSTEIN

One has only to read letters from clients and building committees after a project has been finished to know that this Judaic artist has a gift for successfully integrating art and architecture. Examples: "The success of the gate is that it looks like it was born for the building" or "They seem to grow organically from the structure itself."

It is not surprising that Milstein is a

licensed architect in New Jersey and New York, as well as being an artist. Since 1962 he has filled over 50 commissions for synagogues.

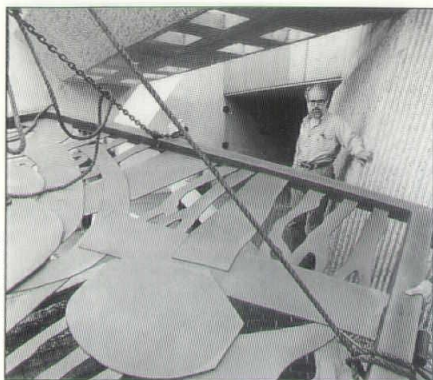
After working as a naval architect and then in the Orient with the U.S. Army Engineers, he studied in Paris under a French government grant and a Fulbright Travel Award. Returning to New York he worked with I.M. Pei and developed the first fiberglass formwork for site cast



Two donor walls designed for Congregation M'Kor Shalom, Cherry Hill, New Jersey: The Tree of Life, left, has over 1,000 engraved donor leaves; the wall above symbolically depicts the Western Wall and Jerusalem skyline and is designed so one can look into the building openings.

PHOTOS © C EMANUEL MILSTEIN





Emanuel Milstein supervising the installation of an iron gate.

architectural concrete buildings. This formwork, now widely used in construction, allows curved, sculpted forms to be economically cast in architectural concrete.

Among his projects are the Danforth Chapel on the campus of Montana State University, his alma mater, an orphanage in Korea, a large copper menorah as part of the first U.S. synagogue Holocaust Memorial, three chapels at Goldwater Memorial Hospital, and a large sculpture for a school for the handicapped.

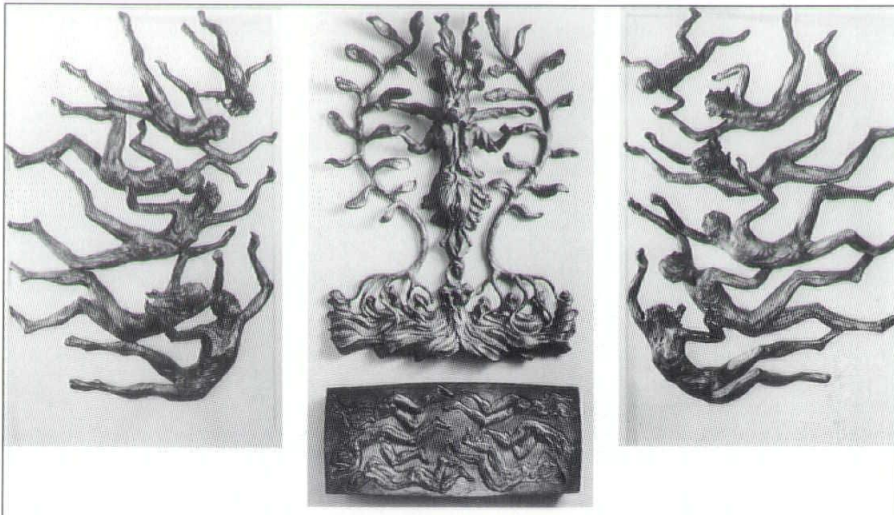
His most recent concern has been centered on the design of donor walls and how to make them more than just a listing of contributors to a synagogue. While donor walls are intended to honor the generosity of an individual or family, Milstein believes they can also be works of art that enhance the building itself and contribute to the worship environment of the whole congregation. □

## PAUL T. GRANLUND

For the past 25 years this artist has held the position of sculptor-in-residence at Gustavus Adolphus College in Saint Peter, Minnesota. His colleague, William Freiert, is a professor of classics there and in *Paul T. Granlund: Spirit of Bronze/Shape of Freedom* he explores Granlund's images and ideas in four essays: "Mythopoeist: The Mediator," "Shaman: The Boundary Crosser," "Cosmologist: The Unifier" and "Unmediated Spirit." □

Freiert notes that Granlund's "medium is bronze but he articulates in molden metal the questions all poets wonder about: he refracts the myths that provide meaning for the human mind, he sings the stories that explore life's essence."

Granlund studied at the University of Minnesota, Cranbrook and the American Academy in Rome. His bronze sculptures are numerous in the U.S. and abroad. The book is published by Primarius Limited. □



Doors of Christ Chapel, south entrance, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota (above). The Hope Door symbolizes the ultimate hope of the Church as revealed in Revelation. Free yet united figures of the family of believers float toward a triumphant, welcoming Christ. Those repelled by righteousness recede into isolation in solid bronze.

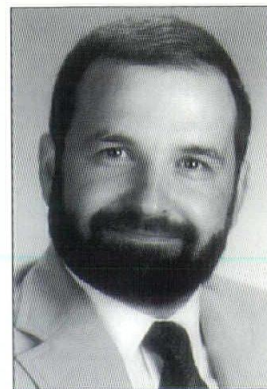
Below, a three-dimensional group of figures representing the early pillars of the Church including Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179), a poet, musician and visionary of creation; Saint Augustine (354-430), one of the great interpreters of scripture; and Saint Jerome (c341-420), translator of the scriptures from Hebrew and Greek to Latin.





# WHAT MAKES AN EXCEPTIONAL SYNAGOGUE?

By George M. Goodwin



At the end of the 20th century, we can look back over 250 years of synagogue architecture in America. From Touro in Newport to Young Israel in Brookline, there are hundreds of structures that represent the hopes, dreams and prayers of millions of Jews from a rich variety of backgrounds.

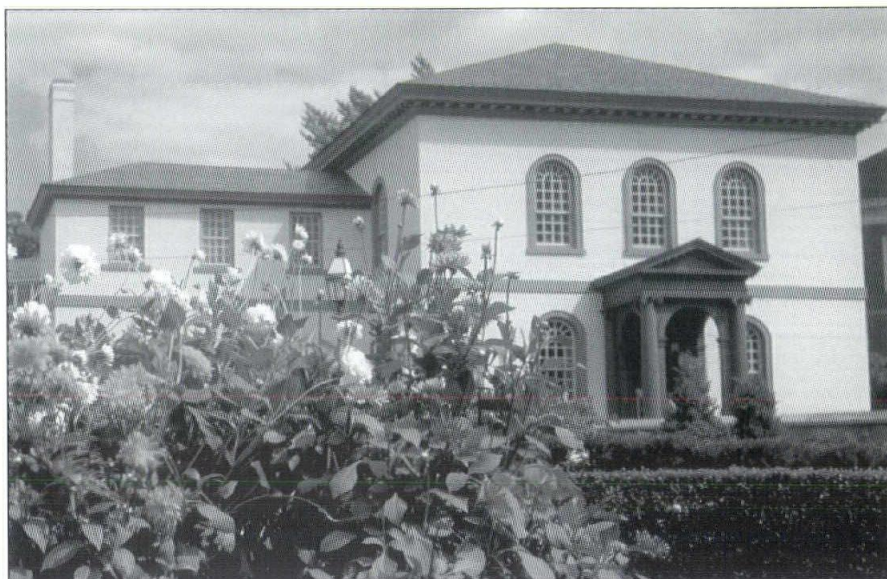
Touro to Brookline provides a fascinating continuum, linking two traditional congregations and two intriguing architects. Peter Harrison and Graham Gund—both highly gifted and learned—also happen to be Christians. Indeed, the larger history of American synagogue architecture would be sadly diminished without the contributions made by many Gentile architects such as Pietro Belluschi, Walter Gropius, Philip Johnson, Gyo Obata, Frank Lloyd Wright and Minoru Yamasaki.

Newport's Touro is the only American synagogue surviving from the 18th century. From the 19th century, there are approximately 100 synagogues scattered throughout the country. Most have found other uses or have been forgotten.

From a religious perspective, all synagogues are sacred and resist architectural categorization. Surprisingly, some highly observant Jews, though they can see God's blessings in every kindness and can visualize his heavenly realm, are oblivious to architecture. The idea that fine buildings embellish song, deepen prayer and strengthen community eludes them.

By contrast, historians and critics grapple fundamentally with quality. Which buildings evoke beauty, joy and wonder?

GEORGE M. GOODWIN, Ph.D., is an art and architectural historian in Providence, Rhode Island, with a special interest in American Jewish history. He has conducted numerous interviews with leading architects on behalf of the Wright Archives at Taliesin West.



Touro Synagogue, Newport, Rhode Island (1763). Peter Harrison, architect.

Which represent a generation's noblest creations?

As an historian surveying the 20th century, I have identified 100 synagogues that I consider distinguished or exceptional. About 70 belong to the period since World War II, 10 to the present decade. Recent examples include Thomas Beeby's chapel addition for North Shore Congregation Israel in Glencoe, Illinois; Norman Jaffe's Gates of the Grove in Easthampton, Long Island; and Robert A.M. Stern's Kol Israel Congregation in Brooklyn.

How does one account for these remarkable synagogues? There is of course no simple explanation or even a formula that would balance tradition and innovation, intimacy and grandeur, modesty and flamboyance. To the contrary, several related factors—political, economic, social and architectural—must be taken into consideration.

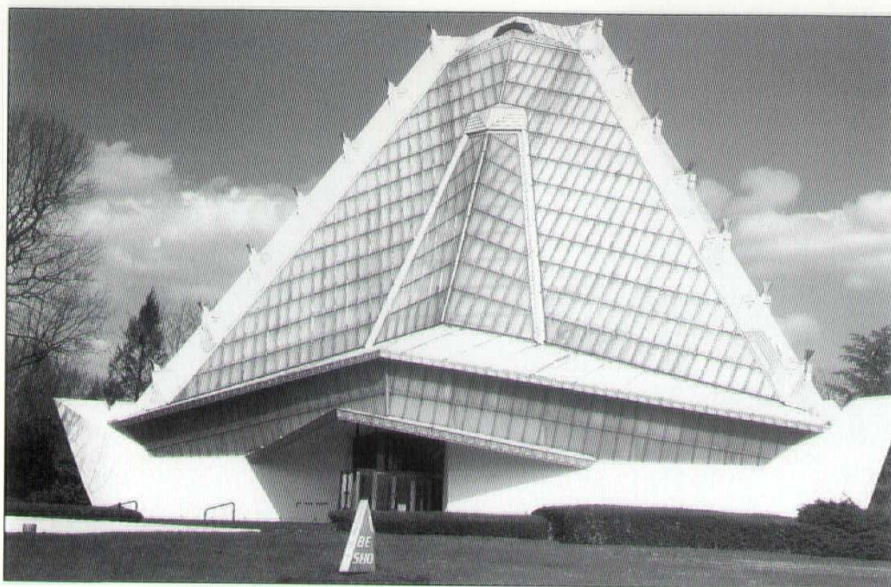
America is a country where, for the

most part, Jews and Judaism have flourished. But freedom and prosperity cannot alone provide architectural integrity. In the 20th century, there have been three significant periods of synagogue construction. The first, in the teens and '20s, coincided with historical revival styles. Monumental domed edifices were erected in Boston, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Kansas City, San Antonio, Los Angeles and San Francisco. But the greatest number of synagogues, reflecting modern styles, were built during the post-war era in the rapidly growing suburbs. Again, in the 1980s and '90s, as new congregations sprang up or older ones again relocated, post-modern styles surfaced. Smaller structures have proliferated, allowing congregants and clergy to feel closer.

While Judaism is practiced in the home and in the community, synagogues are fundamentally an affirmation and a celebration of faith. They reflect pride in the past, engagement in the present, and

PHOTO © STEVE ROSENTHAL





*Beth Shalom Congregation, Frank Lloyd Wright, architect.*

hope for the future. Transcending any particular place or time, synagogues bind generations.

Exceptional synagogues are built out of dedication and with strong, inspired leadership. This is usually not provided by large committees, elaborate flow charts or even democratic methods. An exceptional synagogue requires an exceptional client—a rabbi or a lay person—to serve as a visionary.

Even with inspired clients, there are differences between moderate and extraordinary success. Built during the 1960s in Rochester, New York, both Percival Goodman's Conservative synagogue and Pietro Belluschi's Reform synagogue are impressive buildings but suffer in comparison to Louis Kahn's nearby Unitarian Meeting House. Kahn lifted his building to a new plateau of excellence.

Two synagogues built almost simultaneously in the 1950s in suburban Philadelphia, Keneseth Israel (Reform) and Beth Shalom (Conservative), display similar results. While one achieved comfort and convenience, the other exemplified genius. An observer might conclude that any building by Frank Lloyd Wright mirrored his extraordinary ego, but that would not explain the shortcomings of the other. Does the difference between modest and great architecture revolve around an architect's forcefulness?

Some might say that Israel Demchick had two advantages over Wright: First, he was a Jew; second, he already had built a Jewish chapel. In fact, it was the structure to which Wright's larger sanctuary was to be attached.

No, something else was at work. After accepting the commission, Wright decided against visiting the original Beth Shalom or any older synagogues. Though Wright was not a conventionally religious man, he was deeply spiritual and found divinity in beauty and nature. The son and nephew of Unitarian ministers, he built two masterful meeting houses and several other fascinating houses of worship. Primarily, with Beth Shalom, he relished a professional challenge.

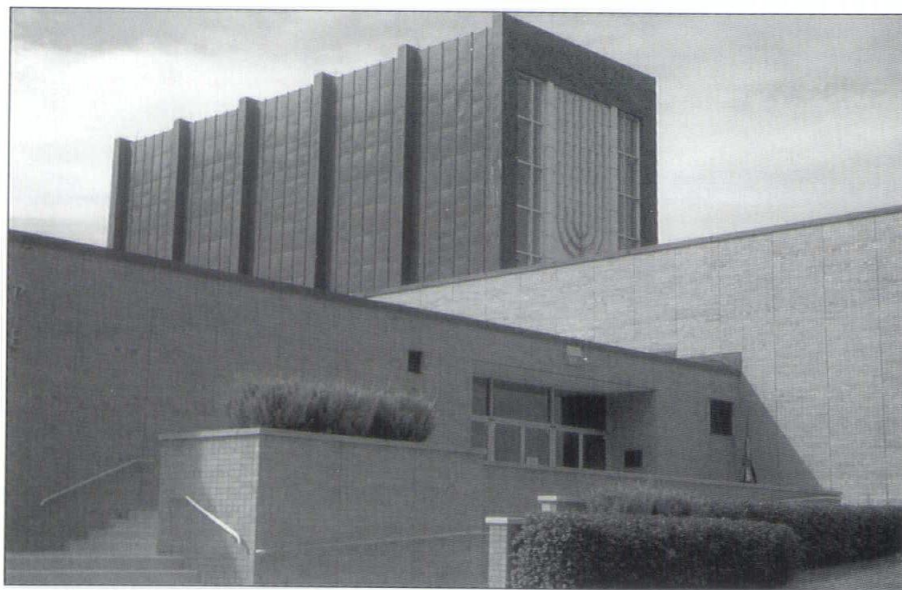
Wright's early employer, Dankmar Adler, the son of a rabbi, built four important synagogues in Chicago. Samuel Eisenshtat, an Orthodox Jew and a president of his congregation, built six synagogues, mostly in California and

Texas. Surprisingly, though, only a few of the best modern synagogues have been built by religiously observant architects. The most remarkable example would be Goodman, a Jewish agnostic, who built more than 60 synagogues in the post-war era. Neither Erich Mendelsohn, who built four American synagogues, nor Max Abramovitz, who built five, was religious in conventional terms.

The same can be said of several Gentile architects. Belluschi, for example, who built five synagogues and scores of churches, had little personal attachment to Catholicism. Indeed, one of the reasons Paul Rudolph turned to architecture was to escape the influence of his father, a Methodist minister. Nevertheless, he designed several impressive houses of worship, including a little-known Conservative synagogue in New London, Connecticut. After World War II, Philip Johnson accepted the commission for Kneses Israel in Port Chester, New York, to repent for his anti-Semitic behavior.

So, if many prominent architects do not bring a personal sense of religiosity to their ecclesiastical commissions, what instead do they offer? They bring respect for their clients' needs and aspirations but also a fresh and penetrating point of view. Dismissing preconceptions, they listen carefully and ask difficult questions. Contrary to popular belief, their designs do not easily or clearly emerge out of these deliberations. More likely, exceptional synagogues result from bold encounters with precedent and theory.

Unfortunately, this means that significant architects are not always pleasant



*Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul, Minnesota. Erich Mendelsohn, architect.*



*Indeed, honor for most designers comes either posthumously or from a distant congregation seeking a replica.*

and gracious people. The building process, often protracted, can result in frustrations, disappointments, and anguish for all participants.

It is extremely difficult to measure success. Long after buildings have been completed and perhaps praised by historians and critics, congregants may not accept them. Johnson's synagogue, for instance, has never been embraced. Indeed, honor for most designers comes either posthumously or from a distant congregation seeking a replica.

From beginning to end, the experience of shaping a synagogue remains a labor of love and vulnerability. Whether mighty or humble, reverent or doubtful, the successful architect must hear the challenge found in Psalms 96 and "sing a new song unto the Lord."



Young Israel Synagogue, Brookline, Mass. Graham Gund, architect. Interior at top shows seats reserved for women at left. Chapel shown in bottom photo.

PHOTOS © STEVE ROSENTHAL

## WORKS OF FAITH

by  
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Sculptor

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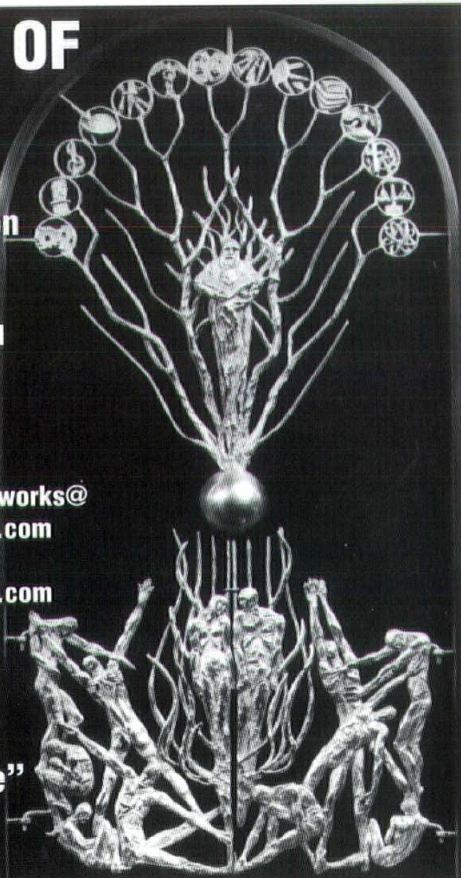
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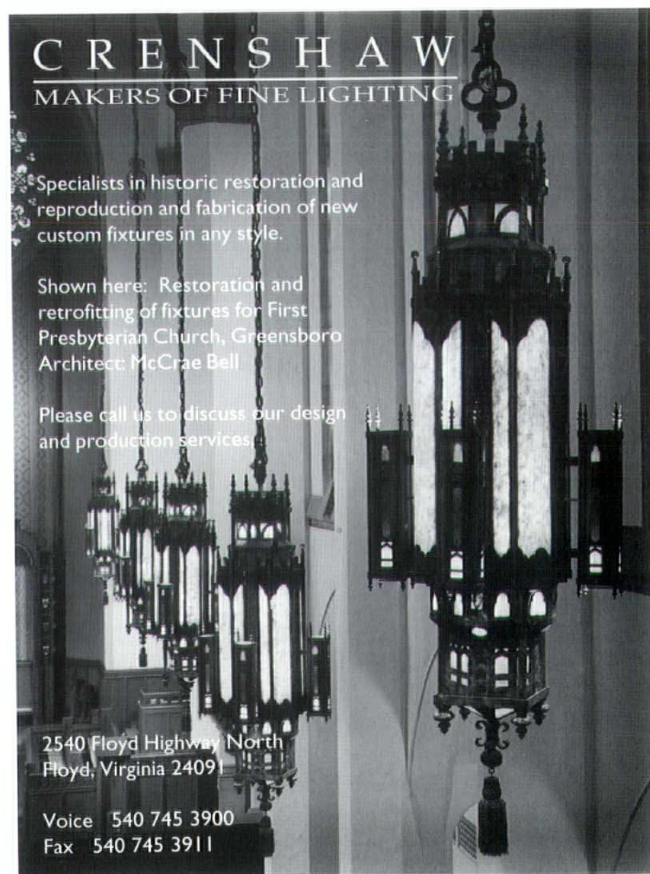
Shown here: Restoration and retrofitting of fixtures for First Presbyterian Church, Greensboro  
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# DOCUMENTS OF FAITH

By Marilyn J. Chiat



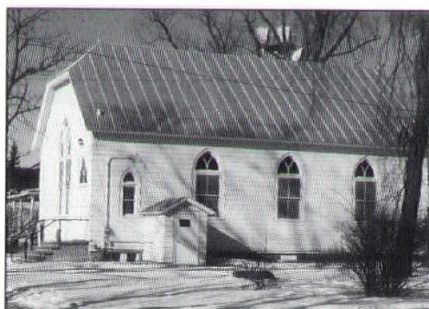
The First Amendment to our nation's constitution guarantees all of its citizens the freedom to worship as they please. Many colonists feared that this freedom would result in a country without a moral order—a heathen wilderness populated by nonbelievers. It is paradoxical that the United States, the first nation established without a state-supported religion, has over the past two-plus centuries evolved into the most religious country on earth.

Reinhold Niebuhr, a leading 20th century Protestant theologian, commented on this phenomenon, noting Americans are "at once the most religious and the most secular of nations. Could it be that we are most religious partly in consequence of being the most secular culture?" Whatever the reasons for this paradox, Americans today, worship in over one quarter of a million places of worship, or one for every 1,000 people. Large and small, plain and fancy, these buildings are part of our visual and mental landscape; they define for many of us what is truly American about America.

## Documents and Stories

I deliberately chose the word "document" because that is precisely what architecture is. Like a text, buildings have important stories to tell to those who pause long enough to "read" them, but I have learned that requires a literate audience. One of my major agendas is to demon-

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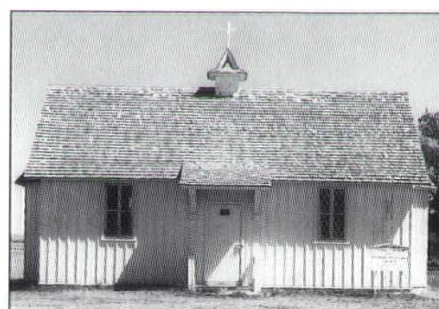


Beth Israel Synagogue, Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

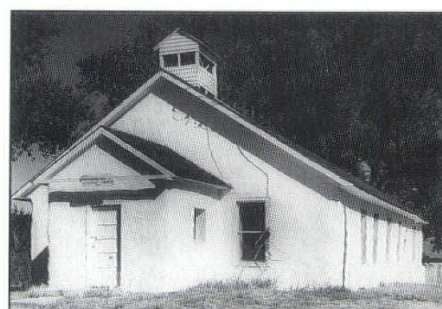
strate to people how this is done. Just as writers try to emulate the work of famed authors, so too do architects try to emulate the work of great architects. They are aware that the essential message of a successful building must be delivered in a universal language. This is particularly true in the case of religious architecture where even "minor" works aspire to the greatness of their monumental models, and where a building must be the voice of a congregation, rather than of one individual.

The majority of Americans rarely have the opportunity to make a statement about their beliefs, their hopes, their aspirations, but collectively statements can be made in the places where they worship as congregations. Many of these buildings may be small in size and modest in appearance, but they can be read by receptive eyes. All have stories to tell; even those that appear the least among buildings, may have tales to share of hope and hardship, grace and celebration.

Examples abound. In Stevens Point, Wisconsin, a small group of Jewish merchants formed a congregation and began building a synagogue that would proclaim their Americanization, but still



Keystone Community Church, Keystone, Nebraska.



Pilgrim Holiness Church, Sand Hills, Nebraska.

retain their identity as a Jewish congregation. Their solution? They erected a typical white clapboard Prairie Gothic church, but eliminated the steeple!

Keystone is located in a sparsely populated area of Nebraska near the border with Colorado. People of diverse faiths settled there, but they were few in number, and remained churchless until the wife of a rancher came up with a solution for a building that could accommodate both Roman Catholic and Protestant services. It is a one-story board and batten church with apses protruding from both ends; one houses an altar, the other a lectern. The backs of pews are hinged so that seating can be reversed.

Ingenuity is also evident in another



Nebraska church located in the Sand Hills region. It was built out of the only available and affordable building material: baled straw. Dutch Reformed settlers in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, were confronted with a similar problem—lack of natural resources and money. Their solution was to build their church out of logs filled with straw and mud. Known as the Old Mud Meetinghouse, the nearly 200-year-old structure is considered one of the most historic and architecturally important buildings in Kentucky.

Thanks to the English architect, Richard Upjohn and his book, *Rural Architecture*, published in 1852 that contains plans for small Gothic Revival Episcopal churches, this style began to spring up all over America, as far west as Tombstone, Arizona, where St. Paul's Episcopal Church was constructed in 1882, not in the usual board and batten, clapboard or stone, but entirely of adobe, the region's traditional material.

Protestant missionaries in Hawaii began building what they called "real" churches to replace the modest utilitarian



San Jose Catholic Church, Upper Rociada, New Mexico.

Hawaiian-style buildings. What was a "real" church? One that looked like the New England meetinghouses they had left behind. Thus, one finds in the midst of swaying palm trees vernacular interpretations of New England churches. Perhaps the most well known and the largest of these churches is Kawaiahao Church in Honolulu.

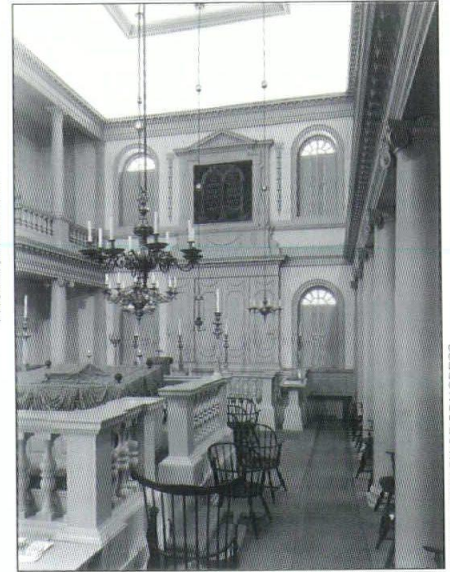
Few of these buildings I have described would qualify as great architecture, but all survive, as do their stories. Within the contexts of their congregations and communities, they are as important as any monumental religious building in any major urban area.

#### Incorporating the Past and the Present

Architects, whether designing new places of worship or renovating old, should learn to "read" historic buildings and to understand and respect the collective stories of their congregations. I am not suggesting historic buildings be encased in amber as museum pieces, or that their stories be viewed as nostalgic memories of the past. Rather, I would urge that their stories be heard with an ear that understands their historic roles and their need to serve current and future needs. Both are equally important.

An excellent model for such an effort is New Mexico's Cornerstones Community Partnerships, a nonprofit organization working with volunteers and professionals to preserve many of the state's historic adobe churches, such as San Jose Mission of Upper Rociada. Recognizing these small churches are the vital centers of their impoverished communities, Cornerstones determined that in order to "fix" the communities it was necessary first to "fix" their churches.

Sadly, the Cornerstone model is not being emulated elsewhere in the nation. We pride ourselves as the New World, but seldom foster a respect for the Old,



Congregation Yeshuat Israel (Touro Synagogue), Newport, Rhode Island.

whether it be people or buildings. We warehouse our elderly, and we demolish our historic buildings. Only now, as our population is graying, are we beginning to acknowledge the value of historic places of worship and those who built them as repositories of history and of faith. Can we not appreciate the past without a naive nostalgia and still celebrate these wonderful buildings?

Recognizing that not all can be saved, can we not save those we can and find adaptive use for others, like the Baltimore Urban League's successful reuse of the Orchard Street Church? Or by restoring and renovating them in a thoughtful and caring manner, as the Cathedral of the Assumption in Louisville, Kentucky, recently honored with an AIA Religious Architecture Award?

It is my hope that we will come to understand more thoroughly the importance of our nation's unique pluralism and freedom as articulated by George Washington in his letter to the members of Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island: "...the Government of the United States gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens...every one shall sit in safety under his own vine and figtree, and there shall be none to make him afraid."

The vine and figtree throughout our nation's history have taken visible form in many and varied places of worship built by myriad peoples who came to occupy this land. □

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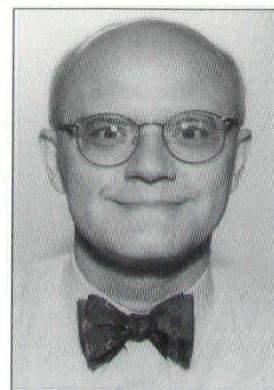
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# THE LANGUAGE OF ARCHITECTURE

By Edward F. Bergman



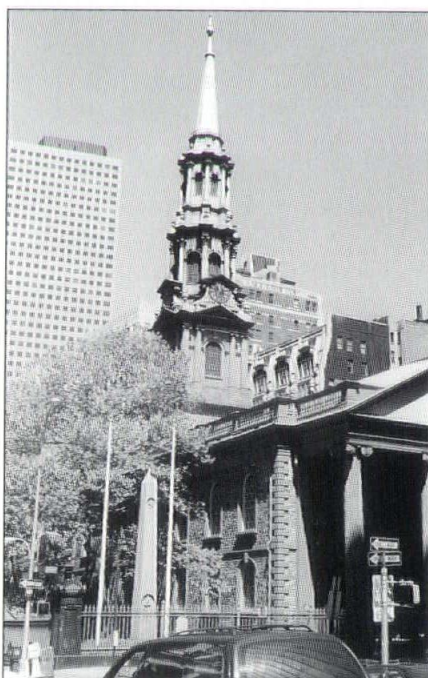
The shapes and styles of religious architecture serve as a living language to express both the architect's originality and a congregation's faith. But if one is to communicate with the other, both must understand the language. While the architect has studied historical styles, members of a building committee may not have had the opportunity, and misunderstandings may result.

I believe that a description of architectural styles in New York City may help committee members recognize parallel styles in their own communities and help them to choose a style for their own building.

## General History

Buildings are seldom stylistically "pure." Sometimes this is because architects inadvertently mixed styles in one building, and in other cases architects mixed styles deliberately to suggest that the buildings have grown over long periods during which congregations' preferences have changed. For general reference, however, the characteristics and connotations here trace a history of popular styles from the eighteenth into the early twentieth century. Some outstanding buildings have been built in the various modern and post-modern styles, too, but this analysis will be confined to historical styles.

EDWARD F. BERGMAN teaches geography and history at Lehman College (CUNY) in New York City and has been a guest professor at several European colleges and universities. He has written several books in his field and anticipates writing a guidebook to New York's houses of worship with notes on their architectural, historical and aesthetic emphases.



Wren-Gibbs East (Broadway) facade (later) of St. Paul's, 1764-66. Thomas McBean, architect.

The historical architect's first consideration was the building's very shape. A square or circle was considered the most "democratic" shape for a house of worship, especially if the altar or pulpit were placed in the center of the congregation. This style is increasingly popular today.

A rectangle is a more common shape, but the placement of the entrance and of the focal point of the interior convey symbolic meaning. Seventeenth century Protestants, for example, often placed the entrance in the middle of one of the long walls and the pulpit in the middle of the other long side. This was considered to be a democratic design, and it is called the "meetinghouse style."

The alternative placement of the

entrance on one of the short sides and the altar and pulpit at the other end is called the "basilica design," from the Greek word for "royal." This design requires the congregation to come forward, to approach the altar and pulpit, so it has always been considered ceremonial. For that reason many early Protestants rejected it. The earliest Presbyterian churches in New York City, for example, were built square or as meetinghouses specifically to avoid the connotations of the basilica form.

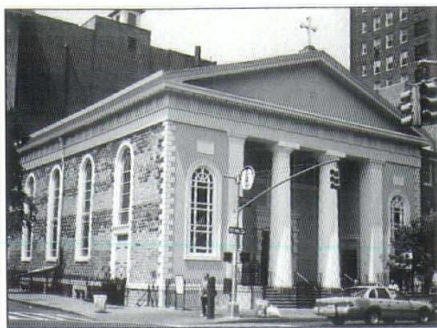
A cruciform design is considered even more hierarchical than a basilica design. The altar may be placed in the center of the crossing, or it may be pushed back away from the congregation into the top of the cross, but the further the altar is removed from the congregation, the more ceremonial the plan is considered.

## The Wren-Gibbs Style

The oldest church building on Manhattan Island, Saint Paul's (1764-66), exemplifies a classical style developed in London by Sir Christopher Wren, who designed 51 new churches for London after the Great Fire of 1666. James Gibbs successfully copied Wren's style and wrote *A Book of Architecture* (1728). The architect of Saint Paul's in New York, Thomas McBean, either studied Gibbs's book or maybe even studied with Gibbs personally.

A typical Wren-Gibbs church combines a classical portico with a steeple rising from the ridge of the roof over the principal entrance, giant pilasters flanking two stories of windows, and a stone belt course topped by a continuous balustrade. Inside, rows of columns support plaster vaults and galleries. The walls usually have a lower row of short windows and an upper row of higher rounded windows. A Palladian window





Greek Revival: St. Joseph's, 1834. John Doran, architect.

often fits behind the altar at an end. The eighteenth century "Enlightenment" spurned stained glass as representing mystical, vague and romantic sentiments. Clear glass, they believed, better represented the clarity of reason. Therefore, the windows in these churches were clear, and the interiors were bright.

Such churches were widely popularized by America's first "how to" handbook, Asher Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant* (1797). This book inspired many of the typical Congregational churches of New England, although economical New Englanders frequently omitted the enormously expensive porticos.

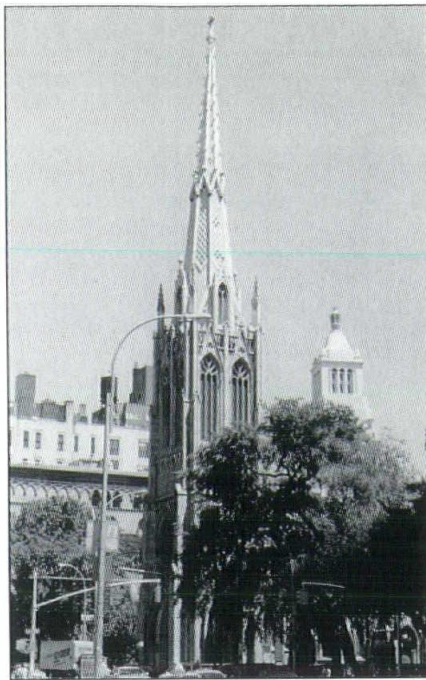
### Greek Revival

Late eighteenth century interest in archaeology spurred an interest in antique architecture, and many Americans thought that Greek architecture best symbolized true democratic spirit. These buildings boasted a portico across the front and a roof ridge running from front to back. Ancient Greeks did not use arches, so all doors and windows were built with posts and beams. Glass windows were clear.

By the 1820s, the Greek Revival style flourished in the United States. The few Greek-style churches still standing in New York City include Saint Joseph's on Sixth Avenue (1834) and the Church of Saint James on James Street (1835-37).

### Gothic Revival

The Romantic Movement idealized the Christian medieval past and spurred a revival of interest in Gothic architecture, with the universal characteristic of a pointed arch. Other attributes include buttresses, stained glass windows, tracery, large "rose" windows, and sculpture with medieval inspiration. Early Gothic revival buildings were usually monochromatic, but later buildings, often called



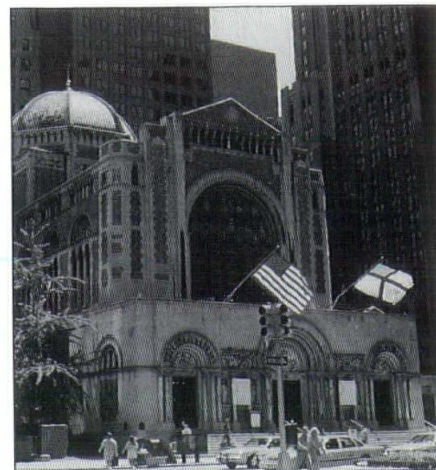
Gothic: Grace Church, 1846. James Renwick, Jr., architect.

High Victorian Gothic, used contrasting colors of stone.

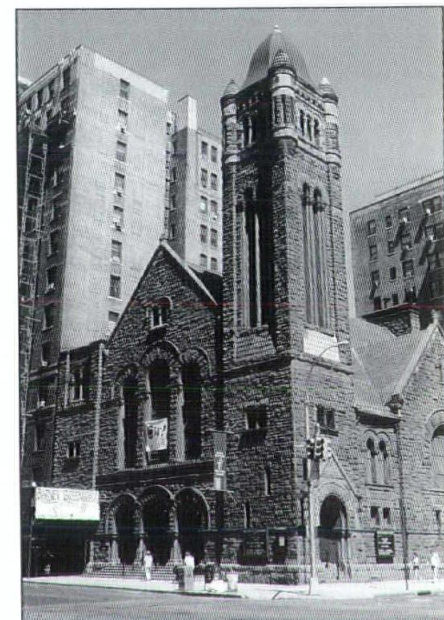
The first Gothic-style church in the United States was Saint Mary's in Baltimore (1807), and the style gained popularity rapidly after Episcopal Bishop John H. Hopkins of Vermont published *An Essay on Gothic Architecture* (1836). New York's first Gothic-style church was Saint Peter's Episcopal (1836-38), designed by parishioner Clement Clarke Moore (who wrote "The Night Before Christmas"). English architect A.W.N. Pugin argued in his book *The True Principle of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841) that Gothic is the only style appropriate for Christian churches.

Richard Upjohn solidified the style's popularity in America with his stunning design for Trinity Church at the head of Wall Street (1846). His later handbook *Rural Architecture* (1852) provided patterns for wooden churches that still stand from the Midwest across to the Pacific Northwest. James Renwick, Jr., followed Upjohn as the leading designer of Gothic-style churches in New York. The beauty of Grace Church (1846) won Renwick the commission for New York's immense Roman Catholic Cathedral, Saint Patrick's (begun 1858, dedicated 1879).

Not all Gothic-style churches are built according to true Gothic methods of construction. In true Gothic construction, a skeleton of stone piers supports the



Romanesque: St. Bartholomew's, 1919. Bertram Goodhue, architect.



Richardsonian Romanesque: West-Park Presbyterian, 1890. Henry Kilburn, architect.

building. The skeleton supports the walls themselves, so that they function as curtains to keep out the rain. Europe's ancient Gothic churches demonstrate that curtain walls can even be made of glass. The construction of these churches, however, absorbed the efforts of whole communities for decades or even centuries. Nineteenth-century American congregations demanded new houses of worship quickly, so most Gothic churches in America exemplified Gothic design and decoration, but they were made of wood. They were called "carpenter's Gothic" to differentiate them from "true" stonemason's Gothic.

When technological improvements in steel manufacture allowed builders to



*Building committees should be able to look at the modern and post-modern styles with informed eyes.*

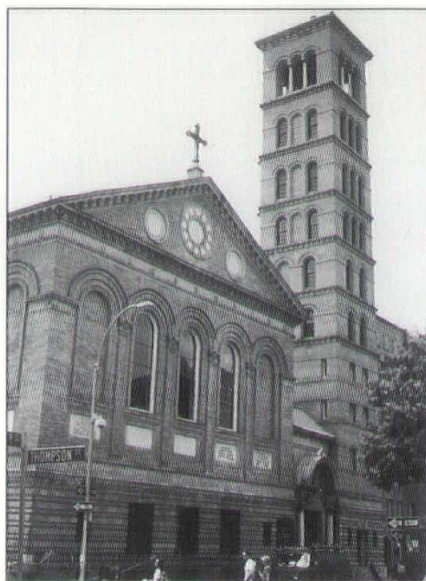
rely on steel skeletons to hold up buildings, architects still often chose to cover the steel skeleton with Gothic decoration. Saint Patrick's Cathedral has cast iron and wrought iron in it, but the world's first church to be erected on a steel frame is New York's Gothic-style Episcopal Church of Saint Mary the Virgin (Napoleon Le Brun & Sons, 1895). New York's Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John, by contrast, begun in 1892 and still today far from finished, is being constructed using true Gothic methods.

### Romanesque

Architect Robert Dale Owen argued in *Hints in Public Architecture* (1849) that Romanesque architecture, the medieval style that preceded the Gothic, should more properly be identified with American democratic Christian values. Reverend Leighton Parks later identified five characteristics of Romanesque architecture that carry spiritual significance. The round arch signifies thankful acceptance of life on earth, rather than heaven as represented by the Gothic pointed arch. Parks argued that an apsidal chancel recalls the early democratic church organization when there were no Bishops' thrones, but the whole clergy sat on benches surrounding the wall of the apse.

Third, a dome symbolized the tents first used for worship among the Jews. Fourth, the purity of clear glass is a metaphor for redemption, and fifth, a bell tower symbolizes a church open to new ideas. Saint Bartholomew's Church (1919), designed by Bertram Goodhue for Parks' congregation, exemplifies the Romanesque style, which often had wheel (clear glass rose) windows, and, if the churches' facade had two towers, one is usually taller than the other.

Later Ralph Adams Cram, a leading proponent of the Gothic style, adopted the Romanesque for Christ Church (Methodist, 1932) on Park Avenue. Cram explained, "the Protestant congregation was averse to Medieval Catholicism both by inheritance and doctrine . . . [so] let



Renaissance: Judson Church, 1892. McKim, Mead & White, architects.

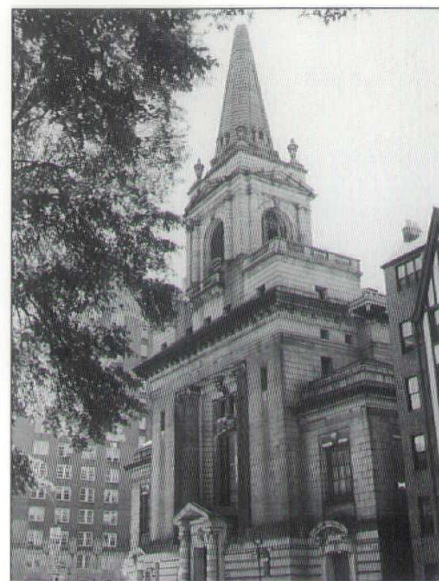
us go back to the first style that evolved to express the Christian religion, long antedating the Gothic of the Catholic West." Romanesque was seen as post-classical, specifically Christian, and yet pre-Catholic.

America's greatest architect in the Romanesque style was undoubtedly Henry Hobson Richardson, although his individual stamp differentiates his work from European precedents. "Richardsonian Romanesque" is characterized by stone construction, round arches framing deeply recessed windows and doors, rough textures, and a horizontal heaviness to the buildings. New York has no churches by Richardson himself, but the city exhibits some fine Richardsonian churches, including Saint Martin's Episcopal (William A. Potter, 1888) and the West-Park Presbyterian Church (1890, Henry F. Kilburn).

### Renaissance, Classical Revival and Beaux-Arts Styles

Richard Morris Hunt was the first American to study architecture at Paris's Ecole des Beaux-Arts, which taught the styles of all periods, but emphasized various forms of classicism, including Italian Renaissance styles. The firm most often associated with the Renaissance style in New York was that of Charles Follen McKim, William Rutherford Mead, and Stanford White. Judson Memorial Baptist Church (1892) is an example of their Renaissance-style work.

Another offshoot of Beaux-Arts training was the slightly later, more refined,



Beaux-Arts: First Church of Christ, Scientist, 1903. Carrere & Hastings, architects.

classical revival style typified by the work of John Mervin Carrere and Thomas Hastings (whose grandfather wrote the tune for "Rock of Ages"). Their many fine churches include The First Church of Christ, Scientist (1903) and Fort Washington Presbyterian (1914).

Many American architects who eventually worked in many styles studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but as a descriptive term, "Beaux-Arts" is usually reserved for a particularly pompous classicism thought to be appropriate to late nineteenth century urban grandeur. These buildings, including museums and court houses, boast large stone bases, grand stairways, paired columns with plinths, monumental attics, grand arched openings, medallions, and sculptural figures.

### Postscript

I hope that building committees will feel stimulated by this brief history of architectural styles to want to embark on a study of their own, asking questions about the evolution of modern and post-modern styles. Perhaps a visit to parallel religious buildings in their own communities will enable them to see the mix of historical styles and what each style symbolized for its period. With this background, they should be able to look at the modern and post-modern styles with informed eyes. They will be able to understand and speak the language of architecture and to talk with the architect about the style that speaks to the faith of their particular congregation. □



# A TOUR OF SHIR SHALOM

*The following article has been adapted from a brochure prepared by the congregation of Temple Shir Shalom in Southfield, Michigan, for its dedication and opening.*

The exterior of the building was fashioned to look like a Torah with the scroll unfurling from right to left and the walkway in the form of a patterned olive branch. We wanted each and every element to reflect the philosophy of our congregation.

Architects Ken Neumann and Joel Smith translated both the mission of our congregation and Rabbi Schwartz's vision into brick and mortar while providing the traditional three-fold purpose of the synagogue: a house for study, a house for prayer and a house for people who wish to share a warmth of heart and spirit.

The lobby houses six 17-foot stained glass windows by Mordechai Rosenstein with each panel celebrating the holidays of the Jewish New Year. Display cases will showcase both traditional and touring exhibitions.

On the right hand side of the lobby is an interfaith garden that includes a fountain and a wedding wall by artist Elizabeth MacDonald and a bricked patio for outdoor services and celebrations. On the walls will be memorials for members' loved ones not of the Jewish faith.

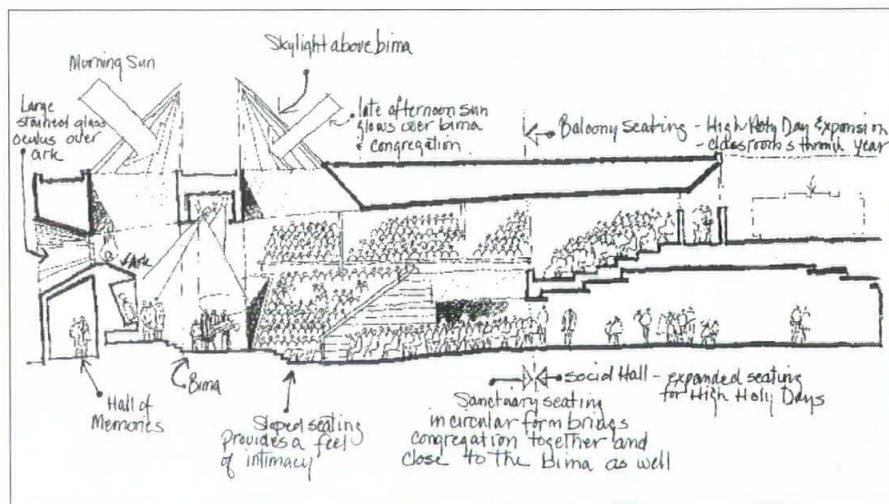
Walking past the Information Center and offices one finds the sanctuary with a distinctive skylight dome created to cast a halo of light during the morning service and a beacon light to the outside world during the evening service.

The Rose Rontal stained glass window and the Fineman tapestry by Gerhard Knodel sit above the ark, which has been fashioned of wood from the four corners of the earth. The tapestry/window combination represents our mystical tradition. The thread of the tapestry is tied into the same knots as the traditional tallis, and the 15 pockets contain the glass shards of 15 different psalms that speak of the world as it should be, a world depicted in the stained glass behind it.

The sanctuary seats 200 on the floor with an additional 175 in the stepped aisles that lead to a second level. Surrounding the sanctuary are seven



Temple Shir Shalom, Southfield, Michigan.

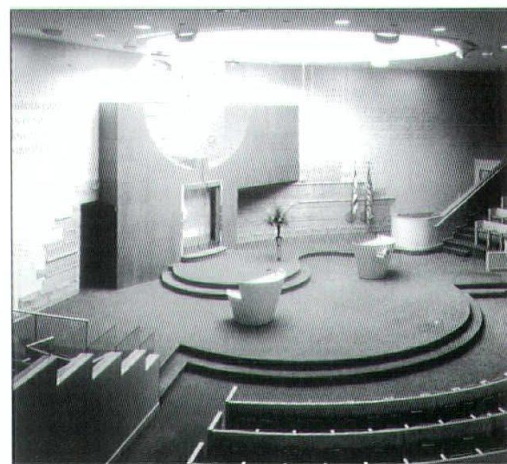


tiered classrooms that serve as a balcony during large services. This makes a statement that learning is part of our mission and part of our prayer. Space, like people, must be multi-dimensional.

Behind the sanctuary is a social hall that surrounds and opens up the sanctuary, providing 1,200 additional seats for High Holy Days. This room fulfills the house of meeting that connects to the house of learning, both literally and figuratively.

Leaving the social hall, one passes the kitchen, gift shop, bridal room and religious school entrance. Here a Hall of Memories contains a Tree of Life and memorial plaques. A second floor reaches a nursery and youth room, a chapel and library.

This building is not who we are; it is a reflection of both our vision and our mis-



sion. We place emphasis on openness to interfaith couples and blended families with a casual but meaningful style. We hope we have built a home that will represent what we believe. □



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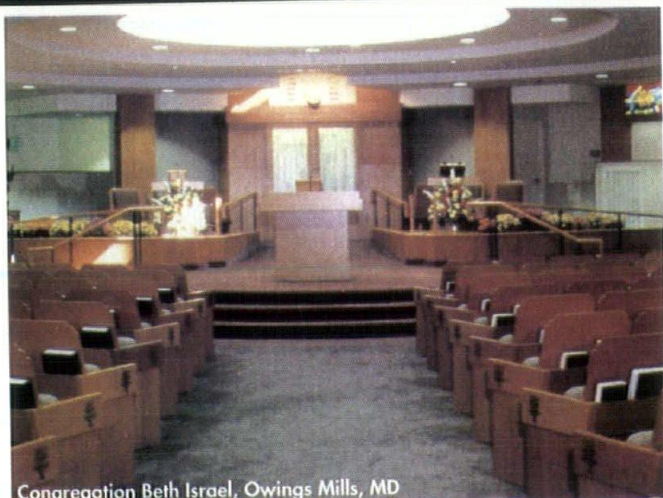
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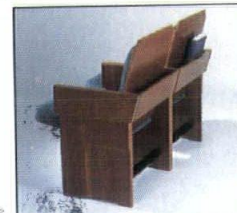
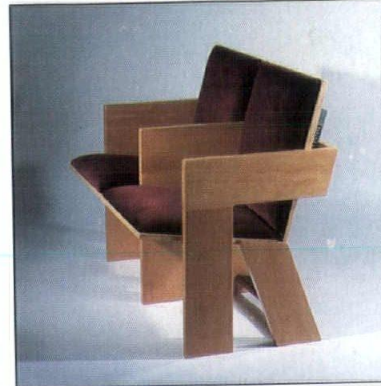


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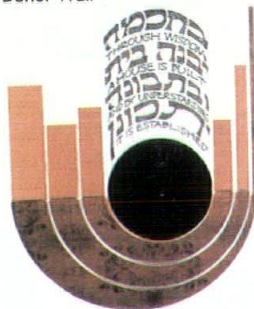
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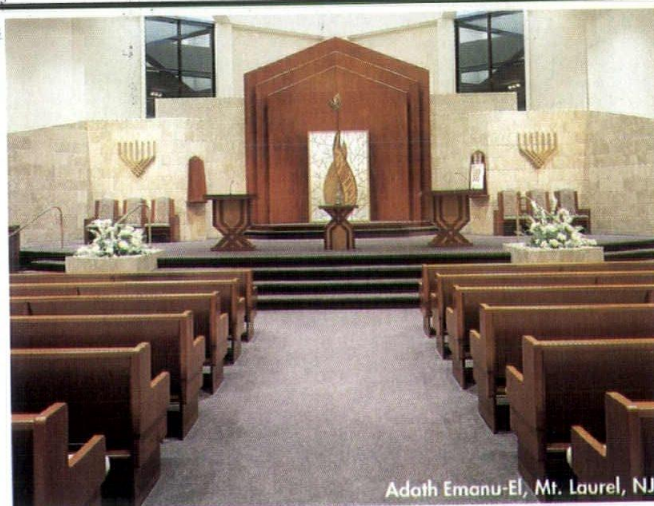
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