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ON THE COVER: The restored monastery of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca, Mexico, which stands as an early model of a sustainable community. Photo: Lance LaVine

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HOW TO BE GREEN



EDITOR'S PAGE ★ MICHAEL J. CROSBIE

Sustainability and religious buildings is a match made in heaven. If you're unfamiliar with the word sustainability as it relates to architecture, you'll be hearing more about it in the near future. According to a recent article in the *Economist*, in the U.S. buildings account for 65 percent of electricity consumption, 36 percent of total energy use, and 30 percent of greenhouse emissions. We build wastefully and we cannot afford to keep doing so. When we design and build more energy-efficient and resource-conserving buildings we lighten our load on the planet and we also help to loosen our bond to foreign oil (a tether that leads us into all kinds of difficulties, the worst of which is the current carnage in the Middle East).


Building green houses of worship is, excuse me, a no-brainer. Beyond the theological reasons for doing so (which biblical scholar Ellen Davis explores in her thoughtful essay in this issue), creating buildings for the glory of God that are less of a burden on operating budgets potentially allows more financial resources to be devoted to the mission of religious institutions. Because denominations hold on to their buildings for generations, the benefits of conserving energy and improving performance accrue to the stewards directly for many, many years. Almost any strategy to make buildings greener and more efficient will pay off for a forward-looking congregation.

How do you create a green building? What can congregations, building committees, and clergy do to realize a sustainable project once they have made the commitment to do so? The first step is education. Learn all you can about green buildings and sustainable design. Spend some time perusing the U.S. Green Building Council website

(www.usgbc.org), which offers guidance for potential clients. Invite architects and designers who practice green architecture to give presentations. Get your congregation invested in the idea of building green.

When selecting an architect, pay attention to their green credentials. Are they a LEED-accredited professional? Ask how many sustainable buildings they've designed, and if those projects are LEED certified (you can learn more about this by reading Andrew Zumwalt-Hathaway's article on page 9). Ask if the architect plans to use a sustainability consultant, and what the green experience is of other team members such as the mechanical engineer and the civil engineer (which has an impact on site development). Visit their green buildings and talk to the people who pay the bills—find out if what the architect tells you jibes with the experiences of those who maintain the facility.

Even before your project starts, make a change in the place in which you now worship. Do simple things: change all your incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent lights. Recycle office paper, find sources for recycled paper, replace old appliances, computer equipment, and light fixtures with Energy Star models (these help save energy), install motion-detector light switches that turn off lights when rooms are unoccupied, have an energy audit done on your building to find out how you can improve its efficiency (programs such as Interfaith Power & Light will help pay for audits). Reach out and network with other congregations, near and far, to find out how you can pool your conservation efforts. Many denominations now have energy conservation or environmental programs in place. They can be great resources for information and techniques for becoming greener.

Finally, make connections between your faith and your religious community's everyday efforts at conservation. Lightening our burden on the Earth lightens the burden for everyone on the globe. 

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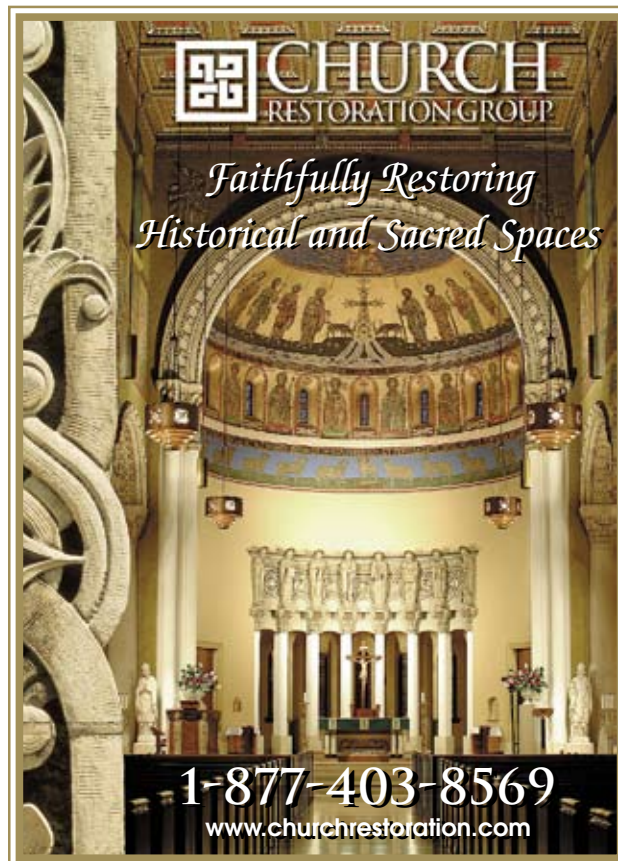
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WISE AND HOLY WORK

The Case for Building Green Sacred Space

By ELLEN F. DAVIS

The seed for this essay was planted during a discussion among members of the Duke University Greening Initiative. One of our Duke Divinity School students, Andrew Coon, posed a question that no one could answer: “Why are we still building churches in North Carolina that do not meet LEED standards?” [For more on LEED, see the article on page 9. –Ed.]

I recall that moment, not only to give credit where credit is due, but also because it helps me with my task of offering a theological and biblical perspective from which to view the work of building green churches. Andrew’s question lodged in my mind, probably because in the Bible, that sort of unanswerable question about some human activity is often an indication that we are looking at a form of sin that has previously gone unrecognized or unnamed. (In the Bible, it is usually God or a prophet asking the people Israel, “What is this that you have done?”) Andrew probably isn’t a prophet, but to the extent that his unanswerable question resembles theirs, it suggests that environmentally substandard construction is more than a bad idea; it’s sinful. And if that is the case, then building un-green churches is truly self-defeating, because it is work that is bad for our souls, bad for our relationship with God.

CONSTRUCTING SACRED SPACE

What is the theological foundation for the holy work of constructing sacred space—that is, doing it in a way that glorifies God and at the same time edifies, builds up the people of God? In addressing that question, I am venturing out well beyond my own expertise as a biblical scholar, yet the Bible does in fact provide a fair amount of guidance. Because building sacred space is for the biblical writers a more than incidental form of work. The Bible offers detailed descriptions of only two products of human labor, and both are, curiously enough, constructed worship spaces: namely, the portable Tabernacle erected during the wilderness wanderings and later, Solomon’s great Temple in Jerusalem. Those lengthy descriptions are even more remarkable when you set them in cultural perspective.

Consider this: the Temple was almost certainly not Israel’s grandest monumental building. Solomon spent seven years building it, but he devoted almost twice that amount of time (thirteen years) to building an opulent palace (1 Kgs.6:38-7:1). Yet the biblical writers find the palace of the Earthly king scarcely worthy of mention. As for other cultural achievements, Israel was a nation accomplished in music and frequently exercised in war. So we might have had admiring descriptions of King David’s lyre, say, or his sword—something comparable to Homer’s descriptions of Achilles’ shield and Odysseus’ bow. We know from archeological excavations in other parts of the Middle East that a king’s lyre or sword represented a fine opportunity for a gifted artisan to shine; yet the biblical writers show no interest at all in such important cultural artifacts, nor in any other form of Israelite craftsmanship—with one exception. They are interested in the construction of sacred space, and they devote pages to the various forms of craftsmanship entailed. Thirteen chapters in Exodus detail the Tabernacle and its furnishings, the priestly robes and accoutrements; Kings and Chronicles each have

extensive reports on the construction and decor of Solomon’s Temple.

If the biblical writers were interested in the construction of sacred space, far beyond all other forms of material or cultural production, I believe that is because they understood that a place for worship is not like other things that people design and create. In a very real way, a sanctuary has a kind of creative capacity of its own. Specifically, it has the capacity to shape the people who spend time there, to form us as believers. Indeed, the several descriptions of the Tabernacle and the Temple suggest that ancient Israel knew that building the House of God and making pilgrimage to it—or later, when the Temple had been destroyed and Israel was in exile, even the act of imagining the Temple—was instrumental in recreating God’s people in faith from generation to generation. For the sanctuary itself deepens religious experience and insight. The physical space we inhabit as worshippers can open for us new possibilities for living in the presence and to the glory of God.

A place for worship is not like other things that people design and create.

Perhaps many of us know this from personal experience. Long before I had paid any attention to the biblical descriptions of sacred space, I knew that a building could teach about God. For it was not a person but a sanctuary that first guided me in prayer. I was fortunate to grow up attending St. Stephen’s Church in Belvedere, California—to date, one of the most prayer-inducing spaces I have known. It also demonstrates that artistic vision can triumph over and through the limitations of cultural circumstance. St. Stephen’s, Belvedere, was completed in 1957—for the most part, not an auspicious time for California architecture. The simplified Norman-style nave is built entirely of poured concrete, with redwood beams and stained glass. Yet the building speaks of God, in an architectural language so clear and profound that a child could comprehend it. It is my early experience of St. Stephen’s, Belvedere, that convinces me that religious philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr is correct when he observes in his book, *Knowledge and the Sacred*, that “most human beings are much more receptive to material forms than to ideas and material forms leave the deepest effect upon the human soul even beyond the mental plane.” It is for this reason, he goes on to observe, that in order to be viable, a religious tradition must create its own art forms. “Religion must remold the world not only mentally but also formally.” All the enduring world religions have at an early stage developed sophisticated forms of what Nasr calls “traditional art.” What makes his treatment of traditional art especially apt for our purposes is Nasr’s emphasis on architecture, engineering, and stonemasonry—the arts that for centuries reached their acme in the building of churches and mosques in Asia, Africa, and Europe.

SACRED ART, SACRED SCIENCE

Nasr’s key insight is that these sacred art forms are communicative and instructive as well as decorative; specifically, they convey knowledge about the world as God’s creation. Indeed, the sacred arts can develop to a sophisticated level only because the same religious tradition that produces the art also fosters exacting scientific inquiry into the nature and structure of the cosmos. Sacred art depends upon sacred science: “How could one stand at the portal of the Chartres Cathedral and expe-

DR. ELLEN DAVIS IS PROFESSOR OF BIBLE AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AT DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL. THIS ESSAY IS AN EXCERPT FROM A LECTURE THAT SHE DELIVERED AT DUKE’S “HOLY & BEAUTIFUL” CONFERENCE THIS PAST WINTER.

rience standing in the center of the cosmic order if the makers of that cathedral had not had a vision of that center from whose perspective they built the cathedral?”

Sacred art depends upon sacred science. When religious architecture is actually practiced as a sacred art, it elevates our hearts and minds toward God and at the same time discloses a profound connection with the created order. Through stone, brick, wood, glass, space, it articulates a holy knowledge of the world that is, properly speaking, ecological. Ecology is the science of relationships. Viewed as a sacred

Through stone, brick, wood, glass, space, religious architecture articulates a holy knowledge of the world that is, properly speaking, ecological.

science, it explores the web of relationships that the Bible describes as “covenantal”—for, as Genesis and Leviticus teach us, God’s covenant extends to “every living creature” and includes the Earth itself (Gen.9:8-17, cf. Lev.26:42). Sacred architecture, drawing upon that sacred science, establishes in three dimensions the essential fact that our lives and therefore our worship are enmeshed in that vast covenantal web.

The correspondence between God’s work in creation and the human work of building sacred space is evident in the way the biblical writers report the construction of the Tabernacle in Exodus. There are multiple parallels between the Tabernacle account and the first chapter of Genesis. Like the creation story, the building instructions in Exodus are divided into seven stages, seven divine speeches, each one beginning, “And God spoke to Moses, saying...” (25:1, 30:11, 17, 22, 34, 31:1, 12). Thus the narrator clues us into the fact that the Tabernacle, like the world itself, came into being in obedient response to God’s express command. Moreover, the work of Tabernacle-construction, like the creation itself, concluded with an act of blessing, and the very same wording is used: just as God blessed the Sabbath when “the heavens and the Earth were finished” (Gen.2:1), so Moses blessed the people, when “all the Tabernacle-work was finished” (Ex.39:32,43). The point of these parallels is to show that the Tabernacle is a microcosm, a small image of the world as it stands under the blessing of God.

The building report in Exodus points to a structure wholly in harmony with God’s creative intention for the world. Moreover, the description of how the people Israel contributed to the construction of the Tabernacle tells us something important about the qualities of character that may bring our creative work into harmony with God’s. Again, I cite Nasr’s observation that the practice of sacred science “requires a certain nobility of character and the acquiring of virtues which are inseparable from knowledge....” In other words, holy work can only be done by those who are good, not just smart and technically competent. The Tabernacle account emphasizes two virtues, wisdom and restraint. Those two are in fact ecological virtues. Wisdom and restraint are the qualities of character and practice that enable us humans to claim our proper place within the created order and thus to render true worship to the God who made heaven and Earth.

PERILS OF WORK WITHOUT WISDOM

As you know, the biblical writers speak often of wisdom; the Hebrew word *hokhmah* (“wisdom”) sums up the qualities that enable us to know God and at the same time make our material existence praiseworthy. But they think of wisdom quite differently than we generally do. We think wisdom resides in the head; we speak of wise insights, wise planning. But in the Bible, wisdom is manifested just as often through the hands; good

work is the best evidence of wisdom. Accordingly, the biblical character whose wisdom gets most praise is not (surprisingly) Solomon but rather Bezal’el, the chief designer for the Tabernacle. This is how God describes him to Moses: “Look, I have called forth Bezal’el son of Uri son of Hur from the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the spirit of God in wisdom and in understanding and in knowledge and in every kind of skilled-work, for designing designs to make in gold and in silver and in bronze and in stone-cutting for inset-work and in wood-carving, for making by every form of skilled-work” (Ex.31:2-5, cf. 35:30ff).

Moreover, the language of wisdom punctuates the building report itself. Listen: “And everyone among you who is wise-of-heart, let them come and make everything that YHWH has commanded” (35:10). “And every woman wise-of-heart spun with her hands, and they brought the spun-yarn, the blue and the purple and the scarlet, and the fine-linen. And all the women whose heart elevated them in wisdom spun the goats-hair” (35:25-26). By their superb spinning skill, these women proved themselves to be wise-hearted. The fact that the Bible puts artistic skill in the category of “wisdom” may seem odd to us, but it makes sense in light of the larger biblical understanding of that concept. For human wisdom is fundamentally the many-faceted art of living in accordance with divine wisdom—which is to say, in accordance with the way God ordered the world: “YHWH with wisdom founded the Earth; he established the heavens with understanding” (Prov.3:20). Therefore our own work of shaping a part of the world for a time, our small daily acts of making, may be counted wise when they acknowledge and honor God’s great act of founding the Earth by wisdom.

Applying the standard of wisdom to our work—drawing the connection accurately between God’s creative work and our own—is a matter of enormous importance to us living at this time in history. For we must reckon with the appalling fact that human work is the effectual cause of the ecological crisis. The life of all creatures, ourselves included, is compromised or endangered by work that is devoid of wisdom.

Wisdom is the virtue that runs through the whole Tabernacle account, but there is another ecological virtue that is evident here, namely restraint, the voluntary practice of limiting one’s action or

We must reckon with the appalling fact that human work is the effectual cause of the ecological crisis.

material expenditure. Although it is never named as such, the practice of restraint is an important part of Israel’s growth in character and faith, once they are freed from bondage in Egypt. In certain matters, only a free people can practice restraint; it is almost meaningless to speak of slaves practicing restraint with respect to time or material expenditure. So once the Israelites are out of Egypt, that is exactly what God expects. The people’s first work in freedom, building the Tabernacle, requires that they practice both kinds of restraint, and their ability to do so establishes the distance they have moved from bondage.

RESTRAINT IN TIME AND MATERIAL

First, restraint with respect to time: There is a pleasant irony to the fact that the “construction job” begins not with work, but with rest; Sabbath observance is the first thing expected of Israel as they begin the building project (Ex.35:1-3). Indeed, the longest and most affecting of multiple iterations of the Sabbath commandment in Torah occurs as the climactic item in God’s building instructions: “Above all, my Sabbaths you shall observe; for it is a sign between me and you through your generations, to know that I am YHWH, who makes you holy. And


you shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holiness for you.... Between me and the Israelites it is a sign forever, that for six days YHWH made the heavens and the Earth, and on the seventh day, he ceased and took a breather" (Ex.31:13-14, 17). That may be my favorite image of God in the whole Bible: a breathless Deity stepping back from the exacting work of creating the world, sitting down (I imagine) on some four-day-old rock, wiping the sweat away—the Creator of heaven and Earth taking a breather. Israel begins its holy work by stopping to remember why it is building the sanctuary anyway, in order to enter into deep and permanent relationship with the real God, the only One, finally, who can sanctify—make us or anything we make holy.

The second aspect of Israel's restraint is a self-imposed limit on material expenditure, and this occurs as soon as Sabbath is over, when the artisans among the people start bringing the work of their hands to contribute to the sanctuary. The narrator comments:

And they brought to [Moses] more, voluntarily, morning after morning. And they came, all the wise people, the ones making all the skilled-work for the Holy-place—each one from their own skilled-work that they were making. And people said to Moses, "The people are bringing more than enough for the service, for the skilled-work that YHWH commanded, to make it." And Moses issued a command, and they passed it by word-of-mouth all through the camp: "Let no man or woman make any more skilled-work for the contribution for the Holy-place!" And the people were restrained from bringing [any more]. And the skilled-work material was sufficient for them, for all the work, to do it and more (Ex.36:3-7).

Here we see the biblical ideal for work that is done in honor of God: the people contributing generously, willingly and free of exploitation, for those who oversee the work themselves practice restraint; they recognize "enough" when they see it. What is being established in the

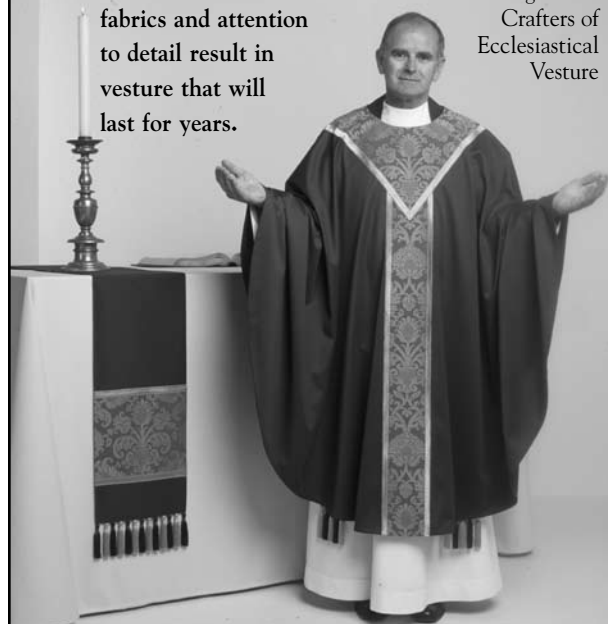
wilderness is an economy of sufficiency, an economy fundamentally opposed to the excesses of Egypt. The power of this small scene is evident if you recall that in Egypt, the Israelite slaves were forced to build store-cities, Ramses and Pithom, whole cities constructed to hold the excess that accrued at the top of Pharaoh's economy of opulence and oppression. But the Tabernacle is not a storehouse; it is erected in the wilderness as the product of wise and holy work, a visible instantiation of the economy of God, whose basic principle is that enough is enough, and more-than-enough is not better. Excess may in fact be contrary to the purposes of God.

For our purposes, the most telling aspect of the Exodus story is the fact that Pharaoh's legendary hard-heartedness—his complete inability to reckon with the reality and the action of God—issues in the series of divinely induced ecological disasters that we call the Ten Plagues. In the end the astonishingly fertile land of the Nile, the wonder and envy of the ancient world, is reduced to a casualty in the war between the self-deified king of Egypt and the Sovereign of the whole Earth. The story is told with a certain bleak irony. Under the threat of the eighth debilitating plague (locusts), Pharaoh's courtiers plead with him: "How long will this [people] be a snare for us? Let the people go, that they may serve YHWH their God! Do you not yet know that Egypt is lost—it's history?" (Ex.10:7). That question is apt also for us who live in a society distinguished by an opulence that outstrips even that of Pharaoh's Egypt, a society that is likewise characterized by a widespread denial of the reality and action of God. Indeed, we would do well to let our minds be troubled by the courtiers' question: "Do you not yet know that Egypt—a godless economy, careless of the very land on which its prosperity depends—do you not yet know that Egypt is lost?" If we as a church can hear that question (as Pharaoh could not), then we might yet repudiate the degradation of people and of the Earth itself, the degradation on which an ungodly economy always supports itself. 

THE HOLY+ROOD GUILD

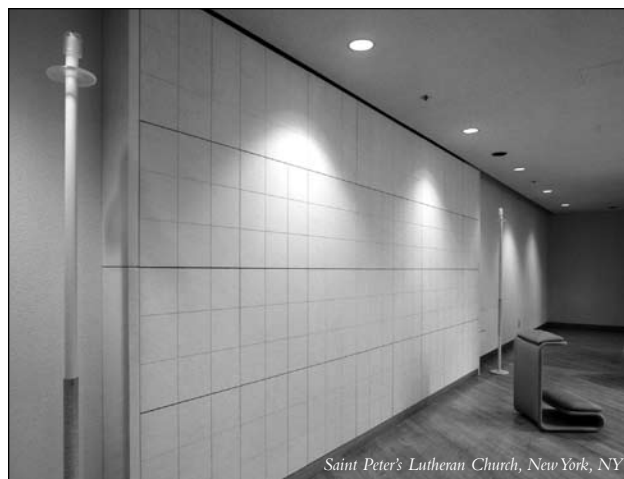
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SUSTAINABILITY? WHAT IS IT?

BY ANDREW ZUMWALT-HATHAWAY



Sustainable design goes by many names—“High Performance Building,” “Green Building,” and “Whole Building,” to name a few. In the last five years the U.S. building industry has seen remarkable growth in sustainable design. As we know it today, sustainable design grew out of the energy crisis of the 1970s when the limitations of energy resources demanded buildings become more efficient. Unfortunately,

efforts to make buildings more efficient by sealing them up tight led in some cases to poor indoor air quality and “sick building” syndrome. In the ‘90s, with landfills filling up and natural resources strained, environmentally conscience designers began using materials that are rapidly renewable or made from recycled content. All of these issues together gave rise to an integrated approach to reducing the overall environmental impact of buildings.

Genuine sustainable design addresses all of the environmental impacts of buildings—from site issues such as stormwater runoff to conservation issues regarding water, energy, and resource efficiency. In the late-‘90s concern grew that builders looking to capitalize on the “marquee” value of green building would include a few green features in a given project, but not address the whole building—a practice that became known as “green washing.” In 1993 a group of architects, engineers, developers, scientists, and educators formed the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) with the goal of establishing a framework to define measures necessary for building projects to address in order to be considered “green.” The result was the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System.

THE LEED GREEN BUILDING RATING SYSTEM

LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. The program has several goals: define what qualifies as a “green building” by establishing a common standard of measurement; promote integrated, whole-building design practices; recognize environmental leadership in the building industry; stimulate green competition; raise consumer awareness of green building benefits; and transform the building market.

While the current number of registered LEED projects accounts for only about 5 percent of the U.S. building market, this number has grown from 12 certified pilot LEED projects in 1999 to more than 2,000 registered LEED projects as of July 2005. The USGBC also began accrediting professionals who can demonstrate a well rounded understanding of the LEED system through practice, study, and successful completion of a standardized LEED Accreditation Exam. Since 1999, more than 20,000 building professionals have become LEED accredited.


LEED Certification for buildings can be achieved at a Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum level based on the number of LEED credits awarded after a project meets seven LEED Prerequisites. The LEED Rating System divides these credits and prerequisites into five cat-

egories: Sustainable Sites; Water Efficiency; Energy & Atmosphere; Indoor Environmental Quality; and Innovation and Design Process. Prerequisites and credits are based mostly on established governmental or trade group standards such as the Environmental Protection Agency’s Stormwater Management for Construction Activities, or the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration, and Air Conditioning Engineers’ standards for energy efficiency and ventilation effectiveness. The number of points a project earns by satisfying the environmental performance criteria of the various LEED credits determines the level at which a project can be certified.

While the LEED rating system was initially designed for commercial high-rise office buildings, LEED 2.1 for New Construction (NC) includes requirements that could be adapted to religious buildings. The USGBC made some alterations to the credits for three new LEED rating systems: LEED for Core & Shell (CS), LEED for Commercial Interiors (CI), and LEED for Existing Buildings. LEED CS and LEED CI are currently in the pilot phase with over 100 projects registered between them. The USGBC is now developing guidelines for residential and laboratory projects as well. That said, LEED NC guidelines can be applied to a variety of building types, including places of worship.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

Religious buildings have not been left out of the green building movement. In 1999, Enterprising Environmental Solutions, Inc. established Interfaith Power & Light (now known as Interfaith Works). In late 2003, IP&L became a Pennsylvania 501(c)(3) with funding from the Heinz Endowments and the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem. There are currently about a dozen state chapters of IP&L. Through its Sanctuary Exchange Program, IP&L provides energy audits for churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. The energy audits identify how energy is being used in these facilities and recommends improvements, which range from lighting replacement to installation of programmable thermostats to replacement of boiler systems. IP&L also provides congregations with a curriculum that addresses connections between faith, religious spaces, and the environment. IP&L services can be very helpful to capital projects looking to include sustainable design measures and possibly secure a LEED rating.

Using the LEED credits as design goals for a project allows the design and construction team to plan how well the building will perform in terms of reductions in energy costs, water consumption, and material use. This can be a valuable tool not only for environmental excellence, but also for capital fund raising. Many church projects reach a formal design stage and then languish as capital campaigns strive for ways to raise the funds necessary for construction. As with a regular pledge campaign, congregants find giving to a mission more fulfilling than giving to a budget. That is why religious leaders who ask for pledges to pay utility bills are less successful than those who focus pledge campaigns on the social or spiritual mission. Many parishioners may be more willing to give to a capital building project that will not only exercise environmental stewardship, but also lower the facility operating budget, thus leaving more funds available for social missions. 

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Monasteries as Models of Sustainability



*View into the courtyard
of the Monastery of
Santo Domingo in
Oaxaca, Mexico. Such
religious communities
are some of the oldest
and best examples of
sustainable architecture
and development.*



BY THOMAS FISHER

In the recently restored monastery of Santo Domingo in Oaxaca, Mexico, there stands a long, vaulted space that once served as the latrine, with small thrones, whose holes delivered the human waste to a room far below, through which water flowed, carrying the material out to fertilize the adjacent gardens that supplied the monastic community with much of its food. Two thoughts struck me as I stood there looking up at the enormous brickwork vault above and then down one of those holes, to the blackness below. First, even the most common human activity of relieving oneself was cause for contemplation and celebration; never have I seen such a grand and glorious latrine. Second, monasteries such as Santo Domingo stood as sustainable communities and potential models for what we might aspire to today as we face a future as challenging as the Dominicans encountered in the 16th century in Oaxaca.¹

The self-sufficiency of monastic communities stemmed in part from the often-isolated locations in which they willingly stood. As the Cistercian General Chapter decreed: “our monasteries (are) to be constructed in places remote from human intercourse.”² While that isolation had a spiritual component to it, reinforcing the inwardness of monastic life, it also demanded an internalizing of all of the tasks of daily life. The Rule of Saint Benedict states that, “Whenever possible the monastery should be so laid out that everything essential, that is to say water, mills, garden, and workshops for the plying of the various crafts, is found within the monastery walls.”³ Within those walls, every function also had its place and every building its particular purpose. As the monk Hildemar described it, “in a monastery various activities are performed in diverse places, some singing, others reading, and others again doing something with their hands or working in the kitchen.”⁴ Even the words to describe parts of a monastery reinforced the idea of a world behind walls: the Latin root of cloister is *claustrum*, meaning a “shut-in place.”

While we often think of medieval monasteries as large, stone complexes, these communities often began by living lightly off the land, in a very sustainable way. The first monastic communities, writes historian Wolfgang Braunfels, “must have been more like nomadic encampments with people living in scattered tents, than like a classical town. Only the wall marked the area off as hallowed ground.”⁵ And the more austere the settings, the better, as if these communities wanted to spare the best land the burden of human habitation. “Islands and crags, ravines, and wilderness,” says Braunfels, “the uninhabited and the uninhabitable appeared to them as so many invitations to asceticism.”⁶ The Cistercian order, for example, took its name from the Latin name for Cîteaux, the swampy area where they first settled.⁷

Another hallmark of sustainability - the use of local or biodegradable materials - also characterized most monasteries. The medieval Irish monasteries, for example, left little trace, in part, because they often consisted of small structures built of mortarless stone or wattle. On the island of Iona, monks lived in cells made of wood and earth, that have disintegrated over time.⁸ The temporary nature of some monastic construction had to do not just with the monks’ vows of poverty, but with the very idea of humility, which comes from the Latin word *humilitas*, meaning “nearness to the ground.”⁹ With that humility also came a connection to and caring for the soil (Latin word: *humus*) and for a particular place. As one Benedictine monk puts it, “We have a vow of stability so we stay with our little piece of land for the rest of our lives.”¹⁰

Monasteries picked their piece of land carefully, often to straddle a watercourse that was essential to life of the community. A 13th century description of the Cistercian monastery at Clairvaux shows how central the river Aube was to the abbey. “This water serves a dual function, in nurturing fish and irrigating vegetables –making its way through the many offices of the abbey, it everywhere leaves a blessing behind it by virtue of its faithful service.”¹¹ As Braunfels observes about the Cistercian monasteries located over water, “The river is made serviceable and cleanses, offering itself and then returning to nature; it becomes a friend and an example to the monks and even a symbol of their regimen.”¹²

The medieval monasteries certainly created their share of pollution. They not only generated a lot of human waste, with latrines leading directly to watercourses, as in Santo Domingo, but they also created a lot of animal waste from stables, offal from slaughterhouses, and acids from tanneries. In this sense, they stood as mini-medieval cities, with all of the hazards that came from people living close to industrial processes. The monasteries differed, however, in their careful planning, more like the utopian communities of the modern era, where offending or polluting activities existed in their own quarters, usually downwind and downstream.

Indeed, the early monasteries represented not just a model of more sustainable development, but also a precursor of much of what we think of as modern. The critic Lewis Mumford observed this connection in the way monks lived, doing certain tasks at appointed hours, according to the chiming of bells, which created a discipline echoed in the modern work world, governed by the clock.¹³ We can see this connection between the medieval and modern in the monastic architecture as well. The Cistercians, for example, favored a minimalist aesthetic, intended as a way of eliminating distraction from “sound meditation” and “religious gravity.” Their forbidding “any statues or pictures in our churches or in any other rooms of a monastery” recalls the modern association of ornament with crime, while their demanding that “buildings outside the gates must come down” brings to mind the modern urge for urban renewal.¹⁴ The medieval monasteries also seem like predecessors to some modern housing. The Carthusian monasteries, with their L-shaped monks cells around walled-in gardens, have living units in roughly the same size and shape as the 1920s Esprit Nouveau housing of Le Corbusier.¹⁵

This connection between the medieval and the modern holds more than formal or aesthetic interest. As author Umberto Eco has argued, modernism presents us with a pre-medieval condition, joined by a common interest in physical asceticism, visual minimalism, and social egalitarianism.¹⁶ That observation, in turn, suggests that our future will look or at least function a lot like the medieval period.

Consider the plan of the monastery of St. Gall. Neatly divided into blocks, each with its own function, surrounding a central plaza and cathedral, St. Gall might be seen as a precursor to the modern city, with its single-use areas for working, sleeping, learning, and worshipping. The difference, of course, is one of scale. Where St. Gall had all of these activities occurring within the monastery walls, within a short walking distance from each other, the modern city spreads these functions across a vast landscape, requiring huge amounts of energy to move people and goods from one zone to another. The lack of sustainability of our current patterns of living and working, in other words, may have less to do with the idea of modernism, and much more to do with its scale. Were the modern city to have the same mix of uses at the same scale as the medieval monasteries, we could greatly reduce our use of energy and resources, as is the case

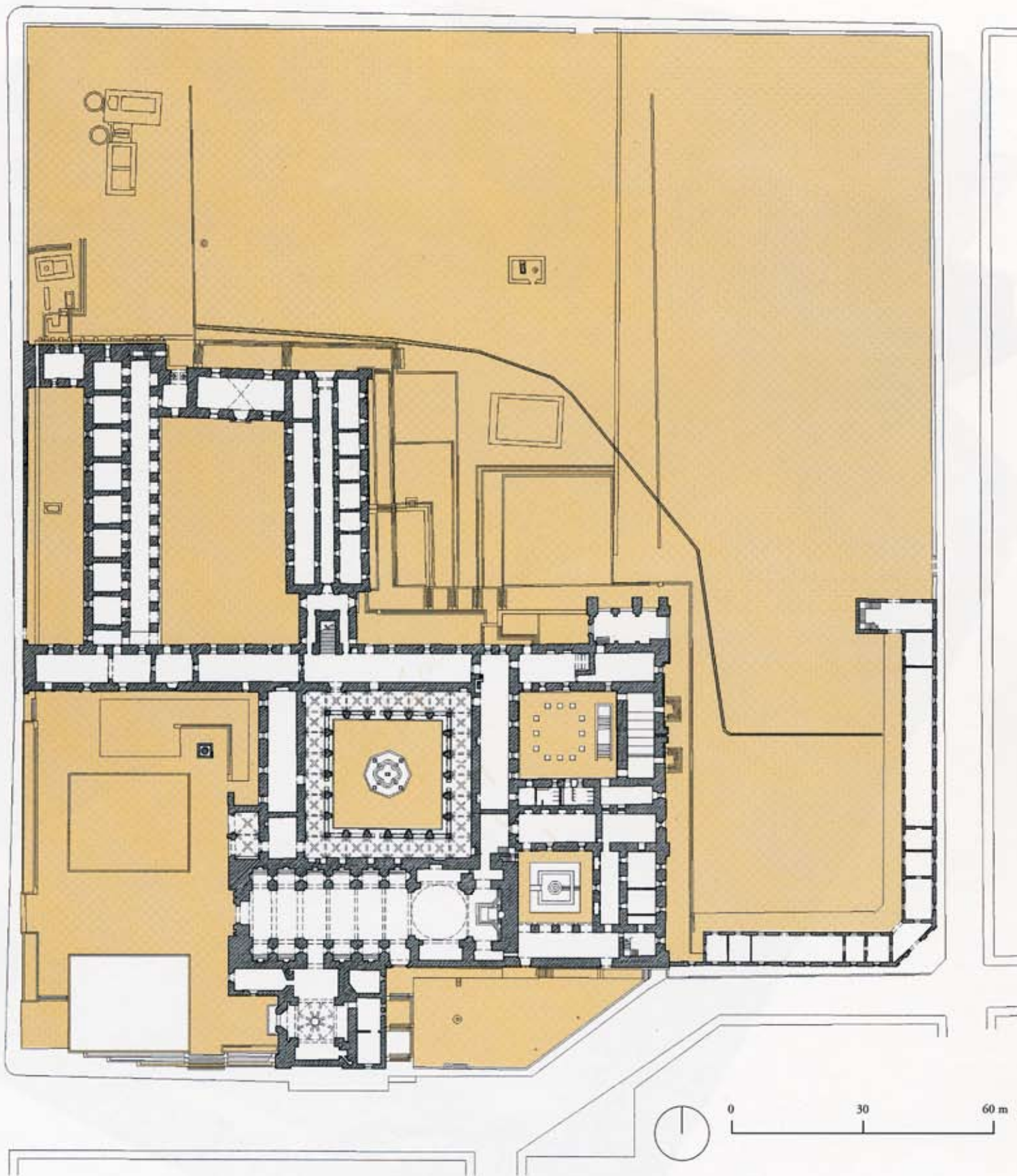


Aerial view of the monastery reveals its closed, self-contained nature. Photo: Lance LaVine

in some high-density cities today.

Modern architects have demonstrated this in their own designs of monasteries, from Le Corbusier's la Tourette near Lyon, France to Marcel Breuer's Saint John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota. But the less-is-more values of medieval monasticism and modern

architecture remain at odds with our current culture in which more-is-never-enough. Modern architects have taken criticism for not providing enough space for storage of all of the material goods people accumulate, but what such architects have not stated clearly enough is what we can gain by not having so much. As architect Garth



Plan of the monastery of Santo Domingo, showing inter-relationship of support functions and spaces.


Planta baja del conjunto.



The monastery courtyard offered a protected place from which the closed community could regulate its sustainable function. Photo: Lance LaVine

Rockcastle has observed after years of studying monasteries, these complexes “are among the most ‘complete’ and compact, mixed-use facilities ever built—communities of common and rigorously adhered to faith.”¹⁷ While modern architects have long explored a monastic aesthetic, the profession has largely ignored the faith behind it, the reason why these religious communities worked so well.

Lewis Mumford criticized the medieval monasteries for encouraging retreat from the active life, but what he and many other critics have overlooked was the active inner life this retreat allowed.¹⁸ What

monastic communities lacked in material wealth, they lavished in spiritual riches on their adherents, giving the faithful a focus and purpose to their lives other than the accumulation of goods. And that, in the end, may be the most important lesson about sustainability we can learn from monasteries: sustainable communities depend not only on more compact, complex, and climatically responsive physical environments, but also on cultures in which compassion for others, contentment with enough, and contemplation of a higher power become dominant values. 

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IN HARMONY WITH GOD'S CREATION

In Genesis, three powerful concepts are introduced about the relationship between humans and the Earth. While mankind is created in God's image, mankind is also created from the earth. Humans were placed in an ideal natural setting where they lived in harmony with the created environment and were commanded to be good stewards of it. The fall of mankind through original sin led to broken relationships between people and God, people and people, and people and the Earth.

Jesus' ministry of reconciliation calls us back into the "pre-fall" state of grace. While many American congregations address the issue of reconciliation through Christ with God and each other, there has not always been an emphasis on bringing healing and harmony to our relationship with the rest of creation. Today, a number of churches are

contemplating their call to live in harmony with the Earth and exercise wise stewardship over it.

PLANNING FOR HARMONY

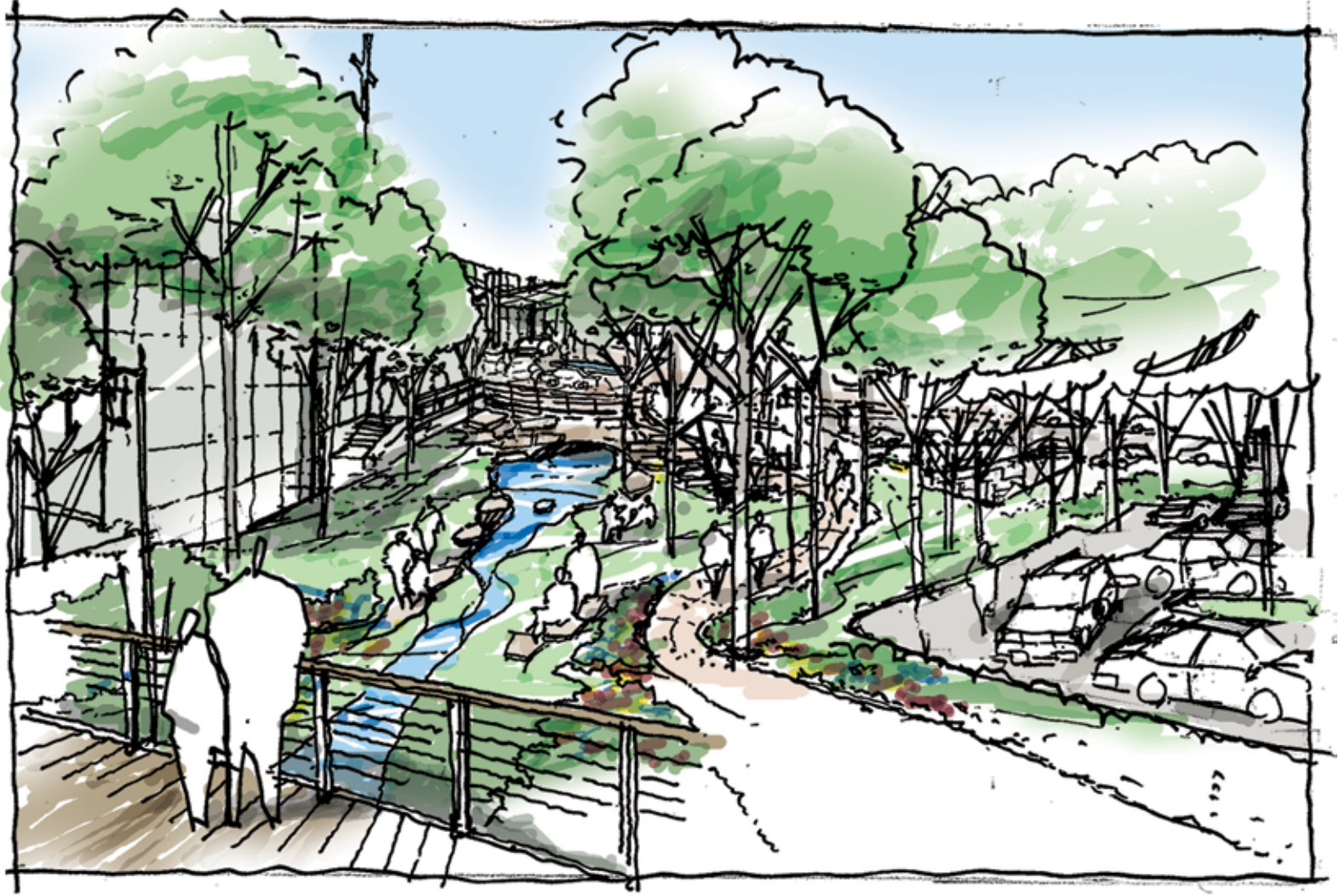
After Crossroads Community Church in Georgia purchased 69 acres of heavily wooded land with hills, streams, and ravines, they contacted Morris Architects of Houston with a specific mission – create a master plan for a new church complex to exist in harmony with nature.

"Developing a harmonious site has been an exciting, energizing process for us," says Robine Hendricks, associate principal in the Morris Church Design Studio. "Our team received a dream assignment – mas-



Master plan integrating features of the site with the church's facilities.

MARK V. MARTOF IS A PRINCIPAL OF MORRIS ARCHITECTS CHURCH DESIGN STUDIO IN HOUSTON, TEXAS.



Landscape features, such as a 'spiritual trail,' provide transitions from the outside world.

SPIRITUAL TRAIL

ter plan and design a multi-phase collection of buildings on a dramatic and dynamic site. Architects are trained to set man-made structures in a context dictated by the natural topography and features of the landscape – but rarely have an opportunity like this.”

As the Morris Church Studio at Morris Architects began working with Crossroads, the congregation expressed its values. Congregational leaders had a desire that their land would offer the following amenities to the community and the congregation:

- Provide a peaceful place for casual gathering. Peace versus Pace – a progression of entryways, bridges, transitions, trails, scenes, and other features to instill a calming sensation, emphasizing the peaceful transition from the hectic pace of daily life.
- Preserve the wetlands for the community.
- Keep site disturbance to a minimum.
- Keep the reliance on the city's utilities and infrastructure to a minimum.
- Emphasize the relationship between the land, the people, and the built environment.

Crossroads wanted the buildings to fit into the landscape in such a way that the transition between exterior and interior spaces appeared to be seamless. The architects analyzed the site and the existing natural elements and began placing the program components delicately in the landscape.

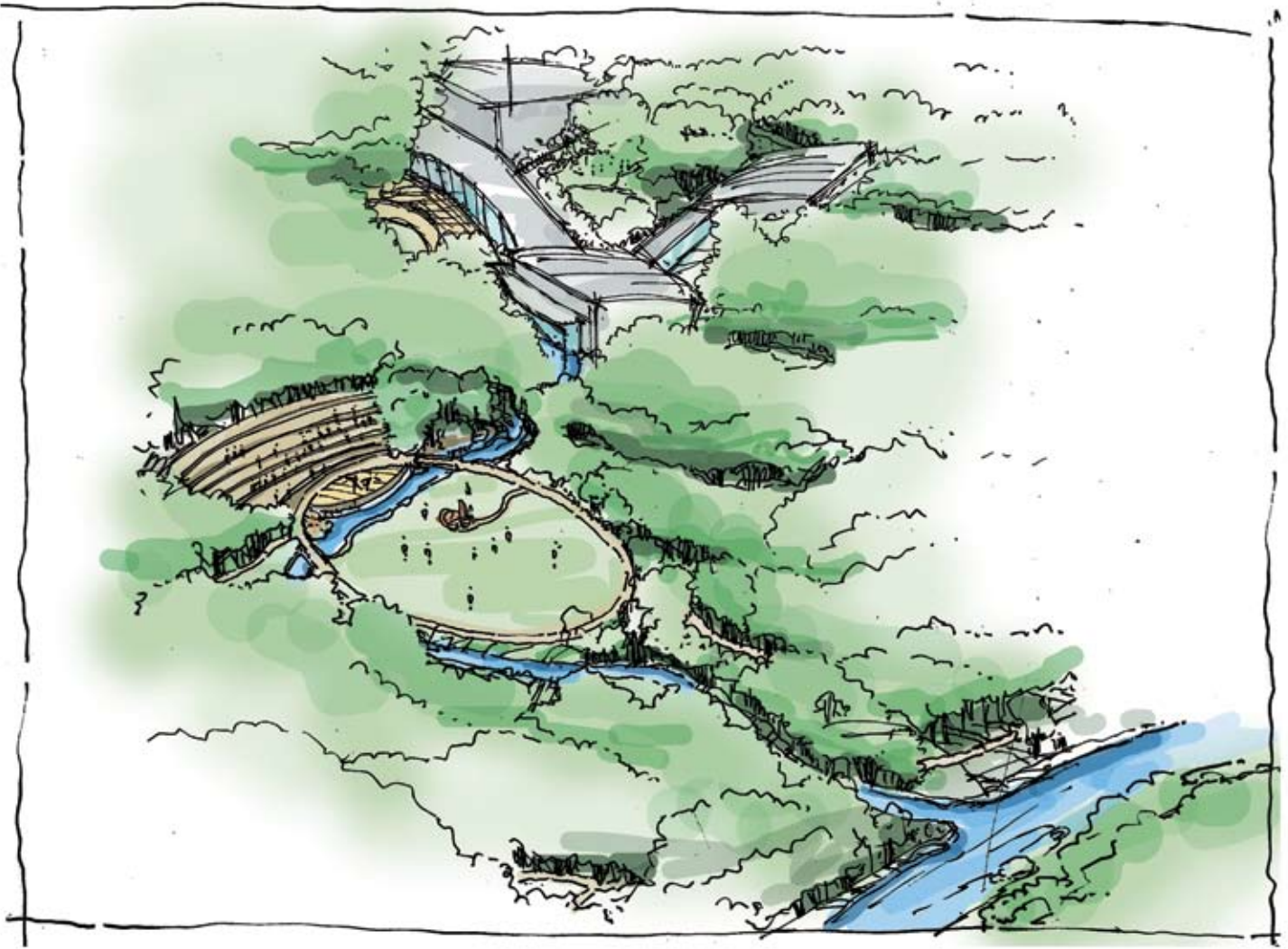
WORKING WITH THE SITE

The site consists of one 90-foot-tall hill bisected vertically by a stream and ending at a river with wetlands at the base of the hill. On one side of the stream the building elements were placed and on the other the parking. The buildings were arranged in a way that minimized the soil disturbance and oriented to catch the views. The parking field was broken down into smaller parking lots and terraces down the hill.

Other program elements were placed in appropriate locations:

- The amphitheater in a natural concave area in the hillside;
- Retreat cabins on the edge of the wetlands in the woods;
- A coffee shop overlooking the wetlands near the entry to the site;
- Logs from cut trees were to be reused for bridges.

As the building design progressed, Morris Architects began experimenting with the client's desire to have a seamless transition into the building. The strategic use of glass panels and glass walls helped integrate the woodlands with the building, but the team pressed for more. Using photographs of hands with fingers interlocked as a diagram of the buildings, the parking, and the landscape, Morris began to pull the design apart to make the buildings more open and transparent and the parking more protected and green. The goal became literally to pierce the built elements with the beauty of the natural wilderness.



Amphitheater is located in a natural depression in the site.

AMPHITHEATER


CREATING 'GREEN' ARCHITECTURE

Crossroads wanted green architecture in two ways: first as described in the site design process above and second in the use of other sustainable building practices.

"By starting with the idea of preserving the land during the master planning phase," says Hendricks, "we are able implement all the site sustainable practices possible and do it in a cost-effective manner."

Other "green" architectural practices and features that Crossroads can implement to continue its commitment to live in harmony with the Earth and exercise stewardship of the land are to develop the building in the following ways:

- Light pollution reduction;
- Innovative wastewater technologies –septic systems and water-less urinals;
- Reuse of cut timber;
- Sustainable material selections;
- Enhancing thermal comforts;
- Accenting daylight and views of nature;
- Using an efficient building envelope.

By the careful and simple placement and control of the built world, churches can honor God's commandment for us to take care of the Earth. Churches will realize significant contributions to the community while at the same time saving money in the initial and long-term life of their facilities. 

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A GREEN CHURCH GROWS IN CHARLESTON



BY KIM WEISS

When architect Frank Harmon was asked to visit South Carolina to discuss a renovation and addition to the oldest church in Charleston, he walked into a situation most “green” architects like himself only dream of. From the oldest church members to the kindergarteners — all of whom are identified as users of the new building — everyone at the Circular Congregational Church was committed to the concept of sustainable design and environmental stewardship. In fact, they demanded it.

“Part of our love for humanity is expressed by our affectionate care for the Earth,” Harmon said after a recent visit to the site. “By simply building in harmony with nature, we support each other.”

COMMITTED TO THE ENVIRONMENT

According to Stephen Cofer-Shabica, a coastal scientist and chairman of the task force for the expansion project, this historic church (founded in 1681) has been committed to protecting the natural environment for many years. It maintains an Environmental Mission Group, which sponsors a variety of Earth-friendly events and educational opportunities throughout the year, including field trips for school children and Earth Day picnics and presentations. The emphasis, he said, is on “finding ways to have as little impact on the Earth as possible.”

Credit for this church’s commitment to environmental stewardship goes in large part to the Reverend Bert Keller, the church’s pastor and a professor of ethics at the Medical University in Charleston. Keller’s ministry has always been eco-centric, he explained, “a friendship with science that will lead the church forward.”

Keller is quite comfortable with the ties he sees between faith and science. “Ian Barbour’s book, *Science and Religion*, is very good in bringing the science-theology dialogue into clearness. Ecology is another word for community, isn’t it? Insofar as the science of ecology assumes an evolutionary

outlook, it also incorporates process. It all begins to fit together.” He is quick to admit that most of his parishioners probably do not read this sort of theology. “But I do...and my church teaching for years has reflected this paradigm change in theological understanding. As far as architecture goes, and more specifically the new building, environmental stewardship works perfectly well.”

SEARCHING FOR A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

The need for the new building arose over the past decade as membership grew by 150 percent and Sunday school enrollment doubled. To accommodate this growth and to increase the church’s vigorous educational and urban outreach ministries, the congregation had to have more space.

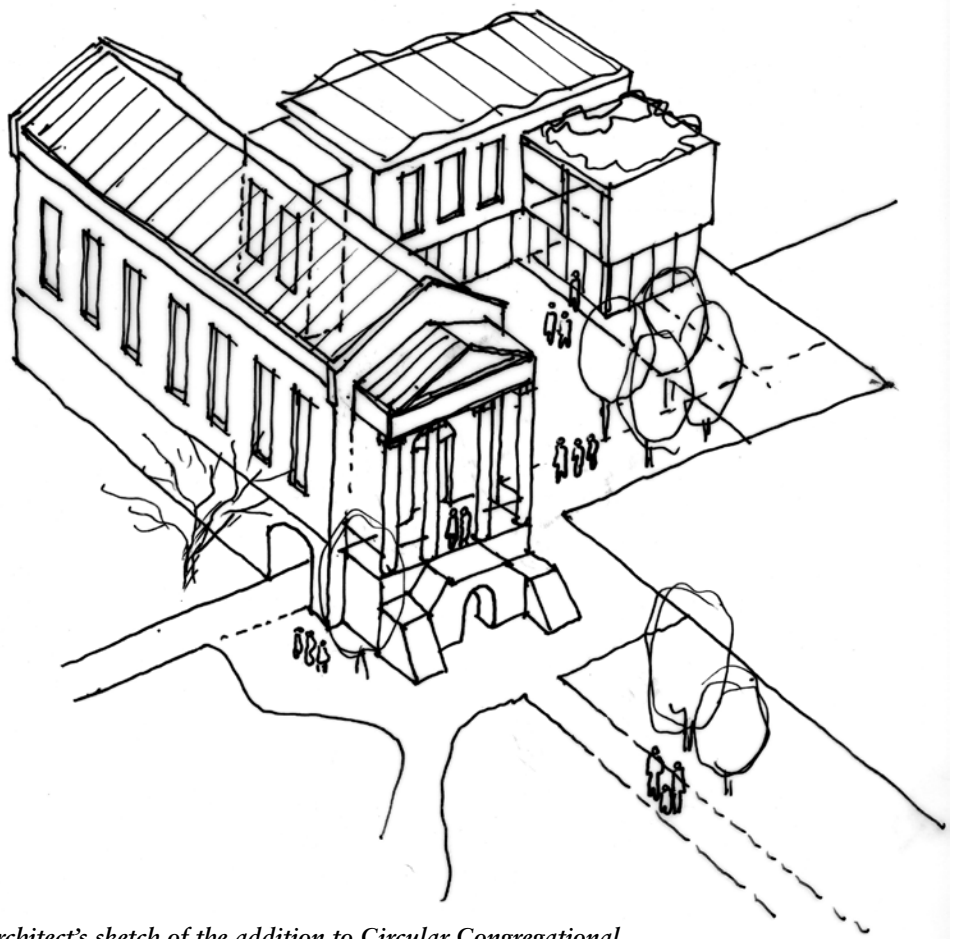
Initially, Cofer-Shabica hoped to find an existing building that could be renovated. But those efforts proved fruitless. Available structures were either too far away from the main campus or too costly in terms of pur-

chase and renovation costs. The task force finally concluded that a new facility, as well as renovation of the existing 1856 educational building, Lance Hall, was the way to proceed.

“We looked for an architect who had a track record with green design and a strong commitment to environmental issues,” Cofer-Shabica said. Which led them to Frank Harmon of Raleigh, North Carolina, one of the profession’s “green” architects, who was also strongly recommended by Charleston architect and church member Whitney Powers. Powers had known Harmon for several years and at one time taught with him at North Carolina State University’s College of Design where he is an associate professor.

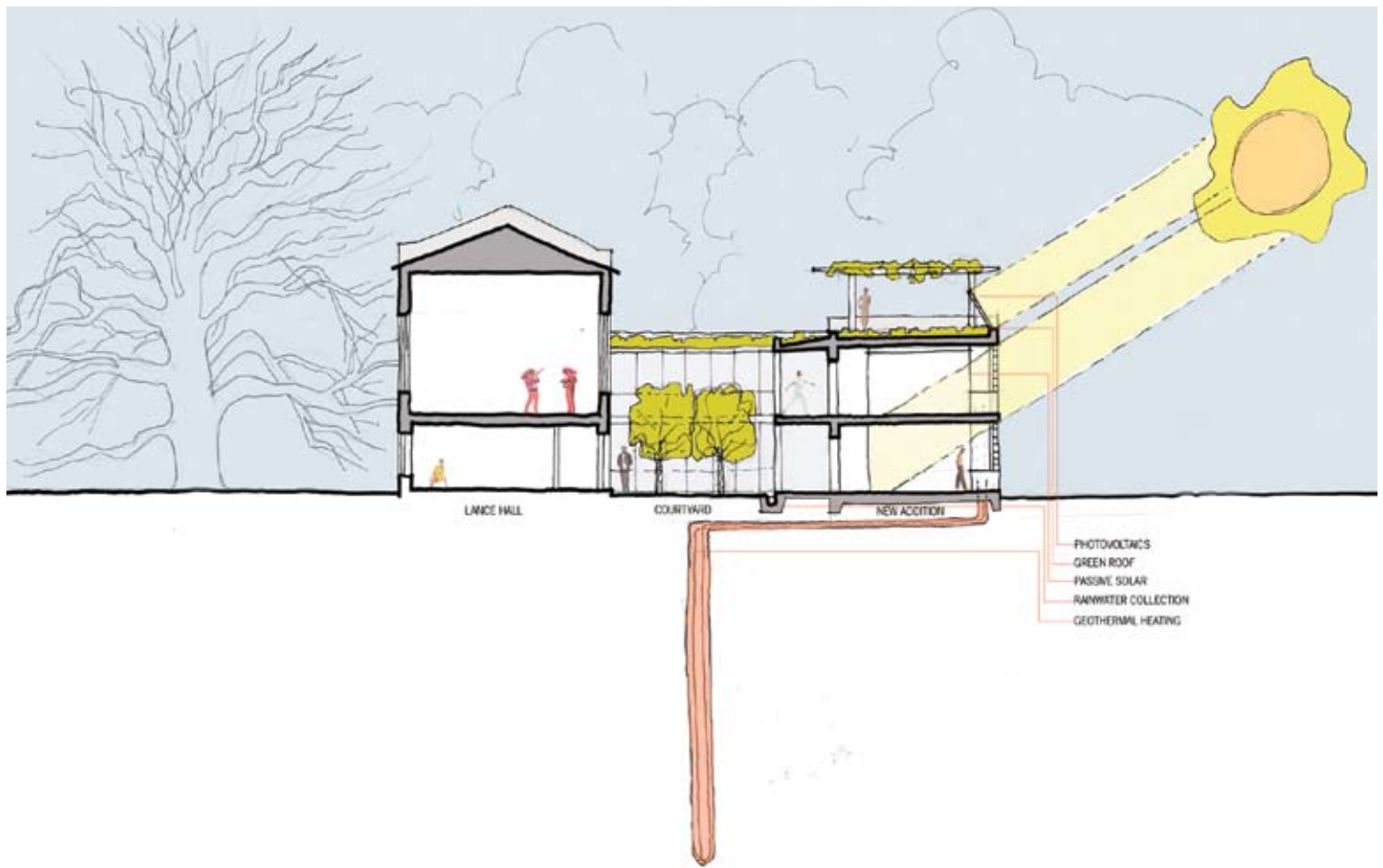
Site selection for the new building proved problematic. After careful consideration, church leaders decided on a site that includes a small portion of the church’s cemetery — the oldest cemetery in the city.

“The section of the graveyard where the



Architect's sketch of the addition to Circular Congregational Church's Lance Hall, to the right of the 1856 building.

KIM WEISS, AN AWARD-WINNING ARCHITECTURAL WRITER WHOSE WORK HAS APPEARED IN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL JOURNALS, IS A FORMER EDITOR OF NORTH CAROLINA ARCHITECT MAGAZINE.



Section through the addition (right) and Lance Hall (left) showing the new building's sustainable features.

building will go is largely invisible and cut off from the rest of it," says Keller. There are some 35 stones there, which will be moved to another section, he explained, and careful records of their original locations will be kept.

Programmatically, the new building will provide a large meeting hall, kitchen facilities, smaller breakout rooms, additional restrooms, and a shower. Lance Hall's renovations will provide a larger nursery and a dedicated adult meeting room. An elevator linking the two buildings will make the church fully accessible for the first time in its history.

GREEN FEATURES

One of the new building's sustainability features will be a "green" or vegetated roof, which helps mitigate the effects of urbanization on water quality by filtering and absorbing rainfall. Constructed of special plants, lightweight soil, a drainage layer, and an impermeable membrane that protects the building structure, green roofs are better insulators than standard insulation, significantly lowering the heat of the roof.

The addition will also feature geothermal (ground source) heating and cooling, which,

although more expensive than conventional systems initially, should save the church between 30 and 60 percent on monthly energy bills.

Was up-front cost a sticking point for some members of the congregation? "People are committed for different reasons, of course," Keller said, "but it doesn't hurt to point out to those who aren't passionate about environmental sustainability that technology that costs more initially will eventually pay for itself in long-term savings." The geothermal system also will be tied into Lance Hall, "So we can get rid of three huge air-handling boxes," Cofer-Shabica notes. Another cost-saving feature will be rainwater collection cisterns, which will provide enough water for landscape use.


Both the church leaders and their architect lament the fact that an old elm tree "smack dab in the middle of the where we need to build," according to Cofer-Shabica, will have to go. "It's pretty diseased anyway," Powers notes. Yet, in the spirit of recycling, the church plans to have the tree milled to provide lumber for doors on the new building and for Sunday school projects.

COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION

According to Powers, the city's architectural review board said the design for the new building "is the finest to come before them during their tenure," and it gave the architect the go-ahead after only one meeting, rather than the usual three. The board's only complaint, she said, "is that they wish it were more visible!"

Ultimately, the key to keeping the entire congregation on board, according to Cofer-Shabica and Keller, has been education – through the pulpit, congregational meetings, and workshops with the architect. "We started talking to the congregation three years ago," Cofer-Shabica said. "Oftentimes, when churches do construction projects, they end up losing members over it. We haven't lost anybody."

According to Powers, the "green" addition to the church "is a demonstration of our stewardship. It was incumbent upon us to do this."

"This will be our generation's contribution," Cofer-Shabica adds, "and a lasting testament to being sensitive to the church, the city, and the Earth." 

CONNECTING BELIEF AND BUILDING

BY TIM SCHORRE

Emerson Unitarian Church in Houston, Texas, is the first church in the U.S. to construct a building registered to meet the rigorous “green” standards of the U.S. Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system.

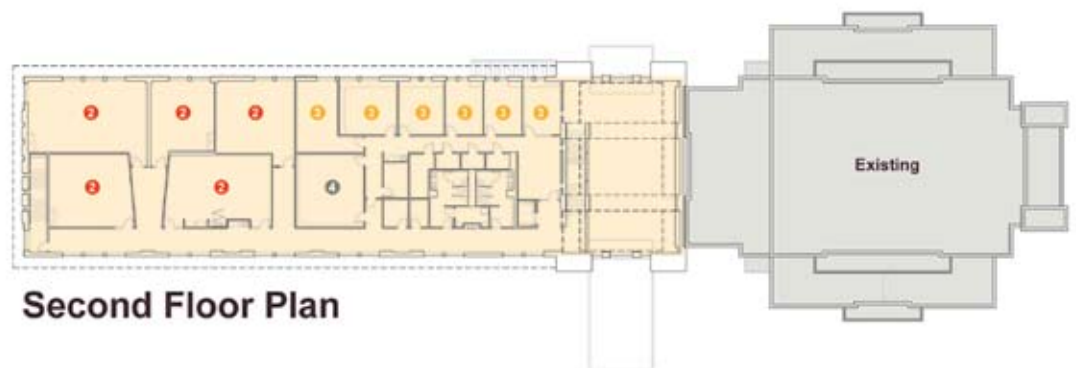
The driving force behind Emerson’s new educational building design was the seventh principle of the Unitarian Church: “To promote respect for the interdependent web of existence of which we are all a part.” The 400-member Emerson congregation recognized the very real impacts that building construction has on the environment and worked to ensure its new

two-story, 22,500-square-foot education building would have a positive impact not only on their own church campus environment but on the global environment as well. Many churches talk about the stewardship of the environment but few consider the real impacts of their everyday facility operations.

Emerson wanted its new education building to reflect a strong environmental ethic and serve as a wise investment, but was unsure about the cost of a green building. The building committee asked our firm, Bailey Architects, to design a building that would be energy efficient and use sustainable building practices and materials. Because the lead designer was

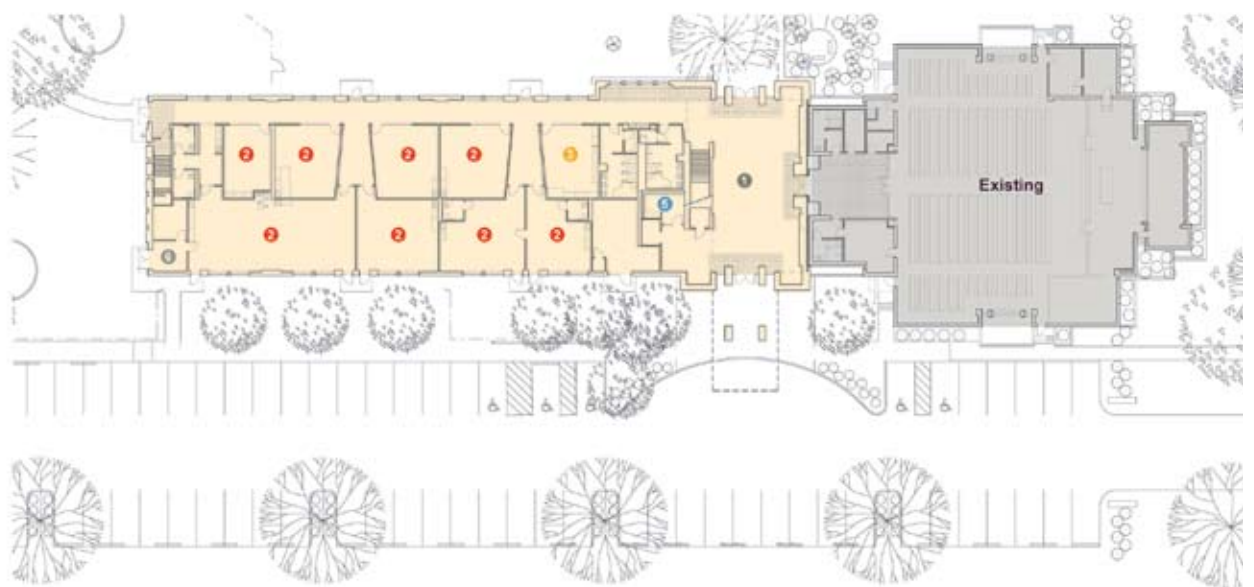
also a member of the church who met his clients every Sunday morning, architectural accountability took on a whole new meaning.

Working with off-the-shelf technologies and products and a limited budget we designed a sustainable project that will deliver long-term savings in operating costs and maintenance. The end result is a building that is approximately 30 percent more efficient than a building that merely met the building code, resulting in a savings for Emerson of an estimated \$12,000 annually in utility costs. Some



Second Floor Plan

- 1 Lobby
- 2 Classroom
- 3 Office
- 4 Library
- 5 Bookstore
- 6 Recycling



First Floor Plan

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The two-story lobby is flooded with natural light, which helps to conserve energy use. Photo: Gerald Moorhead, AIA

of the strategies used included reflective metal roofing, heavily insulated walls, motion-sensing light controls, high-performance windows, and demand-control ventilation. Water-conserving fixtures inside the building save the congregation an additional \$1,500 annually, and a native landscape design reduces irrigation needs by more than half.

PRACTICING WHAT THEY PREACH

Prior to the education building project, the Emerson congregation had already been recognized for its commitment to the environment with the Unitarian Green Sanctuary Award. With a strong and active building committee in place, many principles influenced the design and layout of the new building. Emerson's sanctuary was heavily influenced by Frank Lloyd Wright's Unity Temple and the congregation takes their name and appreciation for nature from Ralph Waldo Emerson. The new building needed to enhance the existing campus's mature landscape, architecture, and spirit.

Appreciating the context with the existing church campus, we designed a soft-faced, salmon color brick building that complements the main sanctuary and is reminiscent of Wright's style. The building houses adult and children's educational classrooms and offices for church staff. A two-story lobby area connects the building to the existing church sanctuary, expanding the narthex and creating a much-needed gathering space at the point of entry to church services. In recognition of the architectural and philosophical heritage of the church, the interior color scheme was distilled from various Wright palettes. (continued on page 22)



The design is integrated with the landscape, and uses vegetation to shade the building, helping to cut on cooling costs. Photo: Gerald Moorhead, AIA

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Emerson's campus is a mature landscape, graced with shady groves of live oak trees. The compact footprint of the new building replaces several smaller buildings and many walkways. An asphalt drive and turn-around has been removed and replaced with an entry court landscaped with native plants. As a result, the campus has more green space than before and a beautiful, low maintenance landscape that makes a great home for wildlife.

Not only saving on operating costs and minimizing environmental impacts, the sustainable design also teaches about the interrelationships between people, buildings, and the environment. From inside their new brightly colored classrooms, preschoolers look out into a green canopy and a butterfly garden. As they grow older, these same children will be taught the paint colors are non-toxic, the trees provide summer shade and savings on energy bills, and the native plants attract birds and butterflies and conserve water usage. The building becomes a tool to teach about the complex ecological interrelationships that sustain us.

The congregation and design team (including architects, engineers, landscape designers, and contractors) worked together to ensure the use of environmentally sensitive build-


ing materials, construction processes, and operations and maintenance procedures. The construction activities were managed to meet stringent indoor air quality standards, minimize disturbance to the existing landscape, and recycle almost 75 percent of the construction and demolition waste. All building materials were evaluated for their health and environmental impacts including location of origin. The building more than doubles LEED recommendations for locally produced materials — a simple act which both supports the local economy and reduces transport costs and pollution.

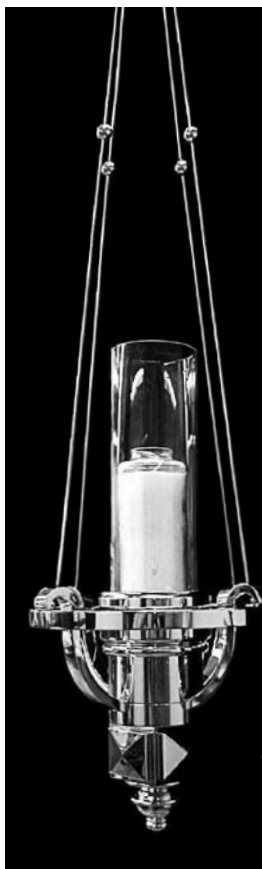
CONGREGATION'S GREEN LIFESTYLE

Green design and construction processes are vital to ensure a healthy and energy- and resource-efficient building. However, everyday operation and maintenance of a building continue to affect the environment long after construction is complete. The congregation continues to work to reduce environmental impacts through green housekeeping and site maintenance policies, careful monitoring of building systems, and recycling and carpooling programs. These efforts earned the project an innovation LEED credit through the U.S. Green Building Council.

The Emerson congregation has settled into its new building and is truly extraordinary in its continued commitment to green building and environmental education. The church has hosted several educational events for other congregations to share information about green building opportunities.

FEAR OF GREEN

Many churches are reluctant to build green facilities for fear of added expense and temperamental or experimental building systems. But with an architecture firm experienced in sustainable design and the LEED certification program, the goals of a church can be realized. Green building strategies that are carefully tailored to a particular site and budget and integrated into the architectural design can be affordable and create significant long-term savings. Ironically, it is often the organizations that can benefit most from savings in energy bills and operations derived from green strategies that are the most reluctant to use them. Emerson's desire to go "green" and its willingness and determination to do so makes the congregation a refreshing exception to that rule. Emerson's new building serves as a model to churches across the U.S. 




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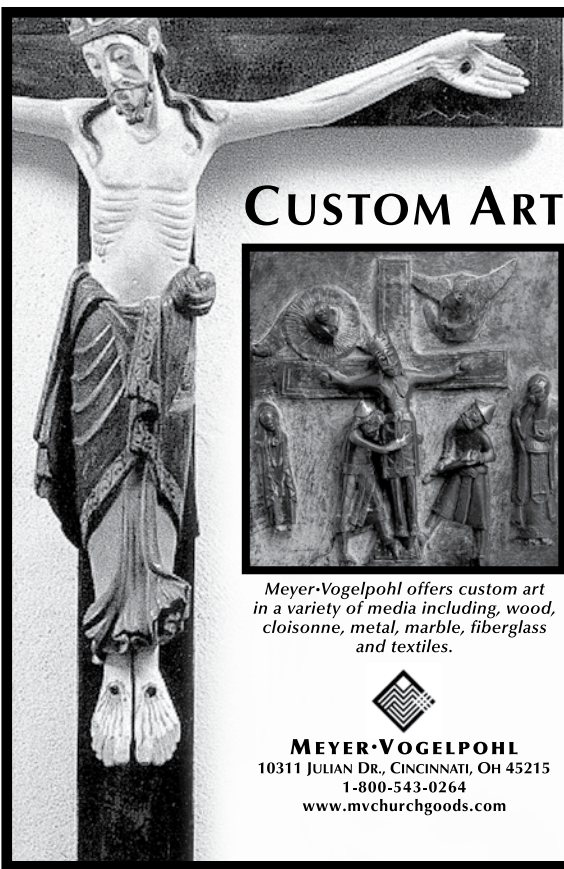
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NOTES & COMMENTS

A STAINED GLASS RACE

When the two-lancet window depicting Abraham and Noah was installed in the clerestory of Saint Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, in May 2004, it marked the completion one of the largest stained glass commissions in the U.S., and the largest ever one-time commission completed by Willet Studios of Philadelphia, which has been in business for more than a century. The total commission included 36 large, detailed, hand-painted and kiln-fired windows—more than 100,000 individual pieces of glass—at a cost of over \$3.5 million. From the day the frame dimensions were given to the studio to the day the last window was installed, only 22 months had passed.

the identity of the mystery client, they were looking to build an enormous church in the style of the Gothic cathedrals of Europe.

Several months later, on a trip to Birmingham on other business, Willet paid a visit to the architect. There he saw photographs of a model for the church that, he recalls, “Looked like York Minster,” the 12th century English cathedral. “The model revealed a church structure unparalleled since the Episcopal Cathedrals in Washington and New York City were started a century ago.” Seeing what the architect had planned, and having been told that the fund-raising for the project was not a concern, Willet began to have an idea of whom he was working with. There are very few congregations that could undertake



Photo courtesy of Willet Hauser Architectural Glass

Crosby Willet, President of Willet Studios, first heard of the project through a mysterious fax from Jim Hauser of Hauser Art Glass Company, parent company of Willet Studios. The fax included notes from a phone conversation between Hauser and a representative from Carraway & Associates, an architecture firm in Birmingham, Alabama. The fax also contained renderings of three window frames, and a copy of an email from John Carraway, requesting budget figures for stained glass windows that would go in those frames, plus a 16-foot rose window. The architect could not divulge who the client was, or even where the project was located. Each window frame contained four lancets topped by highly ornate tracery, all to be executed in stone. Whatever

such a bold plan. Not long after, a call to Willet from the Reverend Dr. Laurence A. Gipson, rector at St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, about window frames cleared up the mystery. Gipson was concerned about the cost of the project, and Willet advised him that metal frames could be used as a cost-effective alternative to stone.

Willet, with the assistance of the studio's iconographer Helene Weis, began to sketch out an iconography for the church, featuring the Resurrection of Christ, Agnus Dei, in the chancel rose window (*above*), the life of Christ depicted in the nave, and the 12 apostles in the clerestory surrounding the altar. By spring 2001, St. Martin's had narrowed down the field of bids and invited the finalists to make



proposals in person to the committee in Houston, and Willet Studios won the contract.

Gibson gave only the direction that the windows should emulate Chartres, the definitive Gothic cathedral in France. From that lead, Willet directed the iconography and design of the windows. The rose would be symbolic and decorative; the nave would feature detailed medallions over elaborate borders; the clerestory would be bold, single-figure lancets to be easily viewed from a distance; and the transepts would vary from one another in color and scale of images – all inspired by the windows of Chartres.

While the window designs proceeded on schedule, no work had begun on the windows themselves. The groundbreaking ceremony had come and gone, and the order had been placed for the majestic pipe organ. The church, in a somewhat simplified translation from the original model, was under construction. Unfortunately, the window frame sizes had not been finalized.

Rick Prigg, general manager at Willet Studios, knew the deadline was Easter 2004, and it was his job to make sure the windows were built and shipped to Houston in time. He discovered the hang-up: the window sizes had in fact been finalized, all except for the arch at the top of each window. Armed with this knowledge, Prigg ordered that

work be started on the windows – from the bottom up – and when the arch sizes eventually came in, they could be added later.

Willet cautioned his artists that the light in Houston is very intense; the glass color selection needed to be especially rich, and the paint application especially dark, to compensate for the burning sun. It was decided that a tinted gray protective glazing would be installed on the outside of each window to further cut the light. Samples of this gray protective glazing were shipped to the studio so that the color selection and painting could be adjusted accordingly.

Work proceeded in earnest for the next year. There were so many people producing so many windows that the studio itself had trouble containing the production. Racks that held the glass in process quickly filled up, and new racks had to be built. By the fall of 2003, production was beyond full capacity but it was far from certain that the deadline would be met. With only six months to go, less than half of the windows had been installed, only three of the 10 naves were installed, and none of the three huge transepts were done. Studio staff was reallocated, putting extra painters on the clerestory and transepts.

Throughout the fall and winter of 2003, 20 windows were completed, shipped, and installed. This left only two clerestory windows at the very back of the church unfinished for the deadline: the Abraham and Noah window, and a window depicting Bishop Samuel Seabury and Bishop Alexander Gregg. In May 2004, with the installation of the two final clerestory windows, the church held a dedication for the now completed stained glass. Entering the building, there is a mystical sense of awe, brought about by the richly colored light. The windows are illustrated in such detail that there is always something new to appreciate.

When Willet asked Gipson to name his favorite window, the rector replied the one on the north facade depicting “The Great Commission” (*shown at left*). Willet laughed. He was not surprised, since it is the window Gipson sees when he is at the altar during services and it was designed especially with him in mind. The coloration is a sea of different blues, in honor of Gipson’s favorite color, and is, “the bluest window I have ever seen, next to the ‘Jesse Tree’ window in Chartres,” observes Willet.

—Leigh Ann Parente

LEIGH ANN PARENTE COMPLETED A STAINED GLASS APPRENTICESHIP AT WILLET STUDIOS AND NOW WORKS OUT OF HER PHILADELPHIA STUDIO, CREATING STAINED GLASS AND MOSAIC PIECES.

CORK FLOORS A GREEN ALTERNATIVE IN SPIRITUAL CENTER

A new Jesuit spiritual renewal center in Watertown, Massachusetts, was designed with sustainability in mind. An important sustainable design strategy is to recycle existing buildings. The new conference facility is an adaptive reuse of an old manufacturing facility.



Another feature is the use of renewable and recycled resources. Cork is both a renewable and a recycled material. Architect Bill Sterling of Sterling Associates suggested the use of cork flooring, for which tree bark is harvested, preserving the living tree. In addition, the flooring manufacturer recycles waste cork from the production of cork bottle stops and produces a variety of cork flooring colors and textures. Inspired by the Jesuitical style floor patterns of San Miniato in Florence, Sterling produced a geometric pattern of cork inlay for the chapel, which was produced by Expanko. The flooring installer was able to take the electronic file of the design and cut the pattern with a laser cutter to the precise dimensions and complexity desired. David Wilson Design produced the chapel's stained glass windows; the furniture was produced by Timothy Clark, Inc.

THEY DON'T BUILD 'EM LIKE THAT ANYMORE

Well, maybe they do. Duke Divinity School celebrated the completion of its new 53,000-square-foot addition last April. Complementing nearby Duke Chapel and the tradition of neo-Gothic architecture on the Durham, North Carolina campus, the addition has a 315-seat chapel where the divinity school community gathers for daily worship. The building also includes offices, a refectory, classrooms, a lecture




Photo: Bryan Becker

hall, and a bookstore. "There is a sense of majesty about the building," observed divinity school dean L. Gregory Jones. "When you view the soaring 55-foot-high ceilings in the new chapel, you understand that this is designed for the honor and glory of God." The addition was designed by Hartman-Cox Architects.

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How Does Your Garden Grow?



JUST ONE MORE THING... ★ BETTY H. MEYER

I was pleased when I learned that landscaping and garden design would be included in this year's Faith & Form/IFRAA Awards program. I knew that many secular buildings are being designed with roof gardens and that hospitals are initiating healing gardens and I assumed that I would have no trouble locating religious buildings that are including gardens—not just as add-ons,

but as major motivators. Wrong! I soon found I was in difficulty.

Professor David Brown of the University of Durham in England has written a book titled: *God and Enchantment of Place, the Spirituality of Gardening*. I would like to quote from his description of why this subject is so important at this time in religious history:


"Today there is a widespread indifference to intellectual content. While it may be acknowledged, there is no commitment. Theology is marginalized and divorced from the interior and sacramental."

Is this your impression, too? If theology is being rejected then something in it must be lacking. If so, how can we make our congregants aware that theology must be carefully considered by all faiths? How can such a learning process begin?

Thinking about this, I began to imagine that a serious consideration of gardens as a part of nature and our own relationship to nature might be a good place to begin. I knew that this was true for a learning project in the inner city schools of Boston. A project known as the Boston Schoolyard Initiative has been making strides in educating teachers and students in a creative way. Up until a few years ago the inner city

schoolyards were macadamized and mostly used as parking lots. But now 67 out of the 130 include gardens designed by landscape architects. Teachers are asked to recognize that the external can be a classroom as well as the internal and that sustainability and environmental concern can be taken outside in the garden. Surrounding communities are proving not only cooperative but genuinely appreciative of this approach. The project won the 2004 Community Service of the American Society of Landscape Architects, and before-and-after pictures of gardens were published in their journal. Following Boston's lead other cities are looking carefully at bringing the natural world into the city's environment. (If you'd like more information on the Boston Initiative, you can contact Kirk Meyer, my son, at kdmeyer@comcast.net)

Aware of this project I began to imagine how a well-designed garden might contribute to a learning process for congregations. We know that the entrance to a religious building is of immense importance because it determines our first and subsequent impressions. Suppose one approaches the entrance through a garden, at the side or at the front. The garden will have been in the original design of the architect. Trees and bushes will have been planted, maybe even with an eye for flowers for the altar. Perhaps stone benches will have been placed for meditation and some sculpture carefully chosen with color throughout taken into consideration. Before one enters the sanctuary one will have been prepared on the exterior for the interior sanctuary experience.

I truly believe that in the silence of such a garden congregants will reach a new consciousness that they are not separate from nature but are a part of it. The wonder and awe that one might miss in the interior will now be more likely to happen. Coming together, the exterior and the interior will attain a new radiant energy, and the story or myth of their faith will become a reality. A first step in a new emphasis in theology will have been taken! 

BETTY H. MEYER IS EDITOR EMERITUS OF *FAITH & FORM* AND CAN BE REACHED BY EMAIL AT BMEYER@FAITHANDFORM.COM

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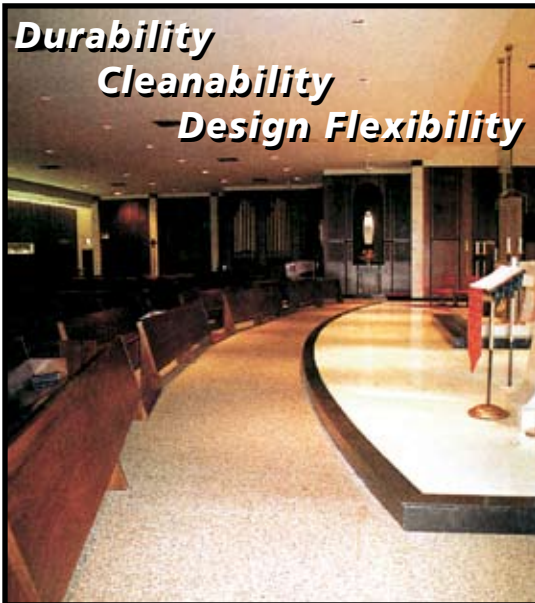


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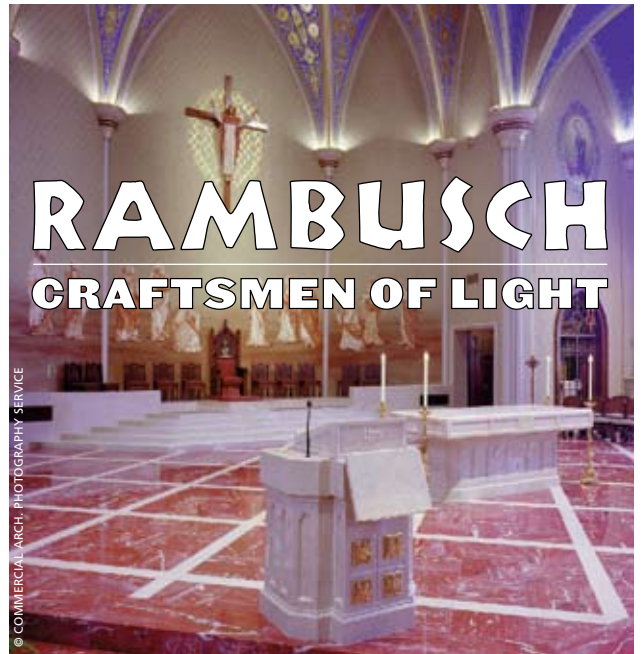
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