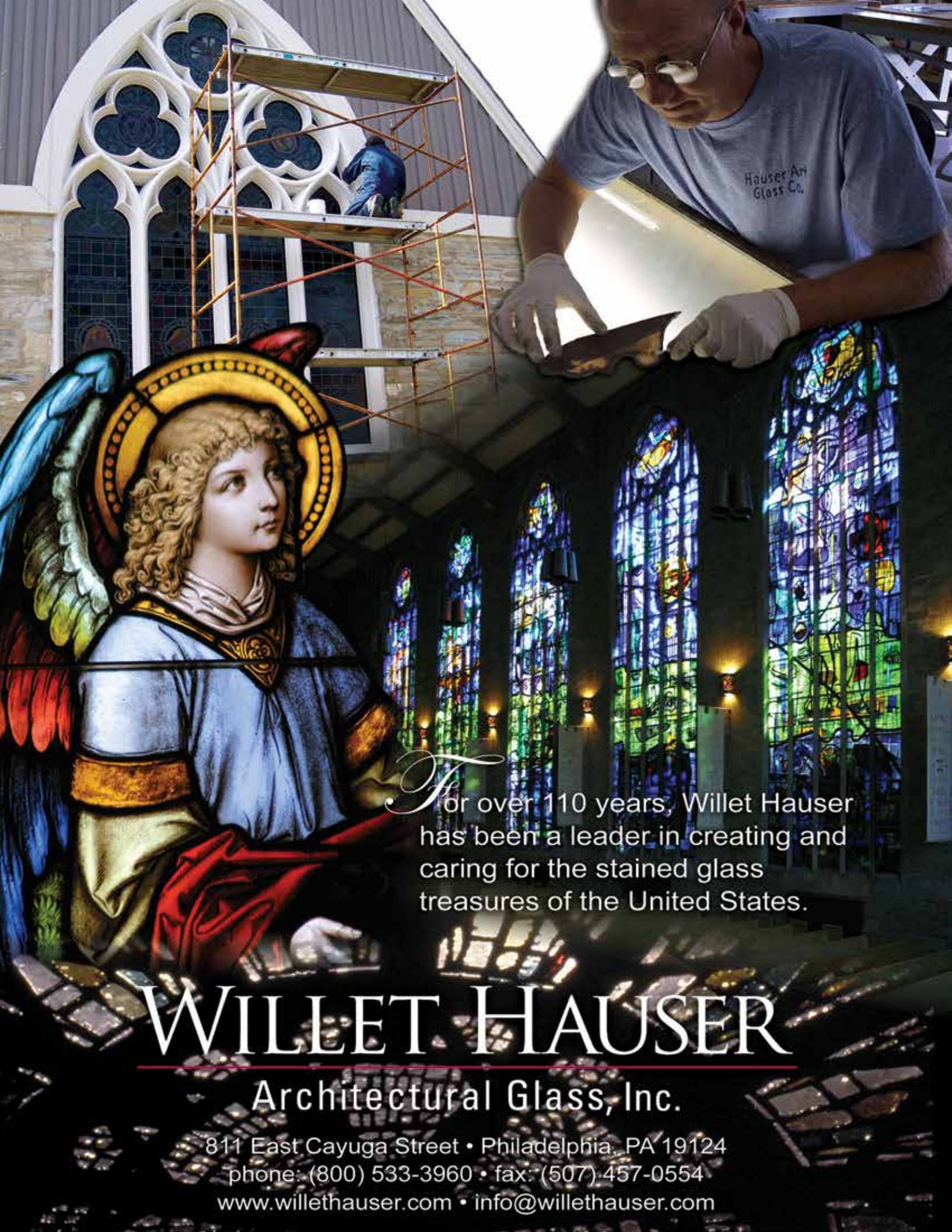


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47 Grandview Terrace
Essex, CT 06426
860-575-4702 cell
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ON THE COVER:

Detail of "Cario, September 30, 2012" from the "Be Still" series by Kristin Bedford. (story begins on page 12)

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Theme Issue:
The Sacred in
the City






A PLACE FOR ALL

WE ARE ALL BROKEN, IN SOME WAY.

Many feel broken spiritually, which draws us to a faith community, perhaps in the hope that our brokenness will find mending. Others are physically broken: arms and legs that don't do what we want them to do, eyes that don't see as well as they once did, ears that lose the highs and lows of prayer and song in the world around us. Some of us are broken from birth, while the abilities of others have been gnawed by the tooth of time. Our bodies fail us, and we might be driven by the same desire to find a form of mending in a community of the spirit. If we seek that community in a religious building, our access might be barred: the steps are too challenging, the walk is too far, the light too dim, the sound too loud or too soft. We might feel embarrassed by our disability; we don't want to cause a fuss, we don't want to call attention to ourselves. But we also ache to be part of this community of faith.

The people in our congregations who are not with us because of disabilities are the missing ones, the members of our faith community who can't or won't come because the physical challenges are too great. Approximately 56 million people in the U.S. have some form of disability—about one in six. A survey by the Kessler Foundation and the National Organization on Disability found that it is far more common for people with disabilities to stay away from a house of worship than it is for those who are able-bodied: 57 percent, versus 50 percent; those with the greatest physical challenges are even less likely to attend. The 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act requires buildings

to be accessible or accommodations to be made for the disabled, but religious facilities are exempt from many of these provisions. Today, more congregations see accessibility less as a legal requirement than as a moral imperative. Communities of faith dedicated to inclusivity are making greater efforts to enable everyone to feel welcome and to attend. Mark I. Pinsky's book, *Amazing Gifts: Stories of Faith, Disability, and Inclusion* tells the tales of many who found welcome in faith communities and how those communities were changed by their presence. The relatively new field of Disability Theology considers the spiritual role that brokenness fulfills in the human relationship to God's divinity.

On a more practical level, how do we know if our religious buildings are living up to our commitment to inclusion? Faith communities can benefit greatly from an interfaith publication created jointly by the Unitarian Universalist Association and the United Methodist Church. "Accessibility Information for Unitarian Universalist Churches" is a resource that any house of worship can use, no matter what the faith tradition. Available free online at bit.ly/uuamannual, the guide can help congregations think about the nature of disability, the challenges of several common disabilities and of those not so common or hidden. A great tool is the Accessibility Audit, which takes one step-by-step through a facility assessment: arrival, getting into the building, ramps and accessible routes, various interior spaces including the sanctuary and fellowship spaces, accessibility for staff and clergy, moving between levels, and the grounds around the facility. There is an ample section on other information resources, standards, building materials, and equipment. Such a resource can make one think about and see one's house of worship in new, accessible ways. 

MICHAEL J. CROSBIE IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *FAITH & FORM* AND CAN BE REACHED BY EMAIL AT MCROSBIE@FAITHANDFORM.COM

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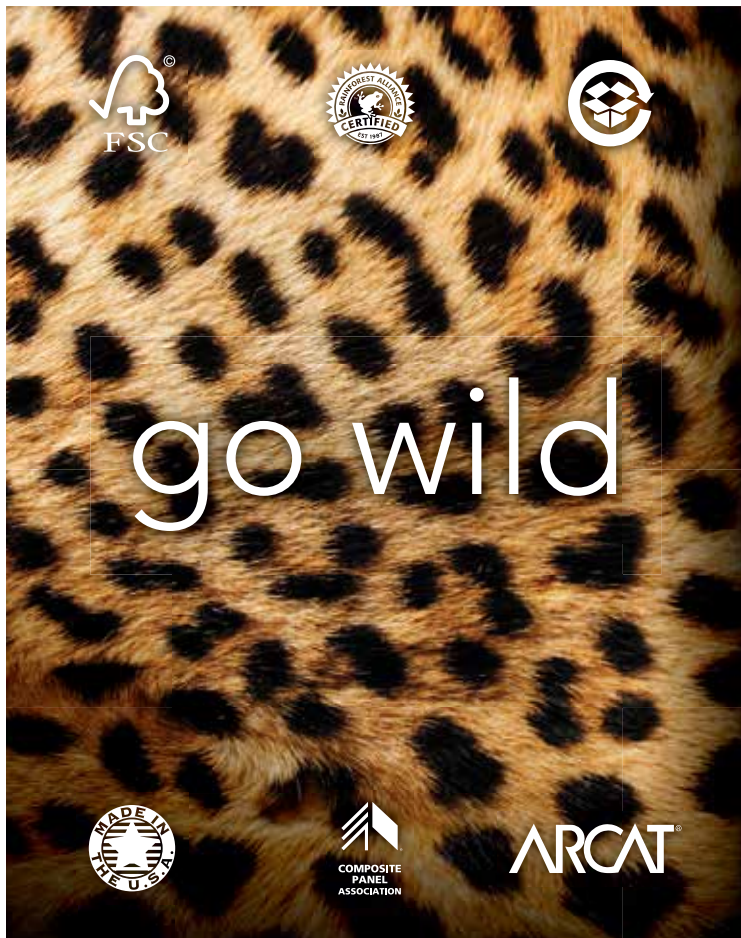
Arts Ministry: Nurturing the Creative Life of God's People

by Michael Bauer

Bauer lays a solid foundation for arts ministry, grounding it in the historic Christian tradition and urging churches to expand their engagement with the creative arts — "to live and worship in full color."

Published with Eerdmans, 2013

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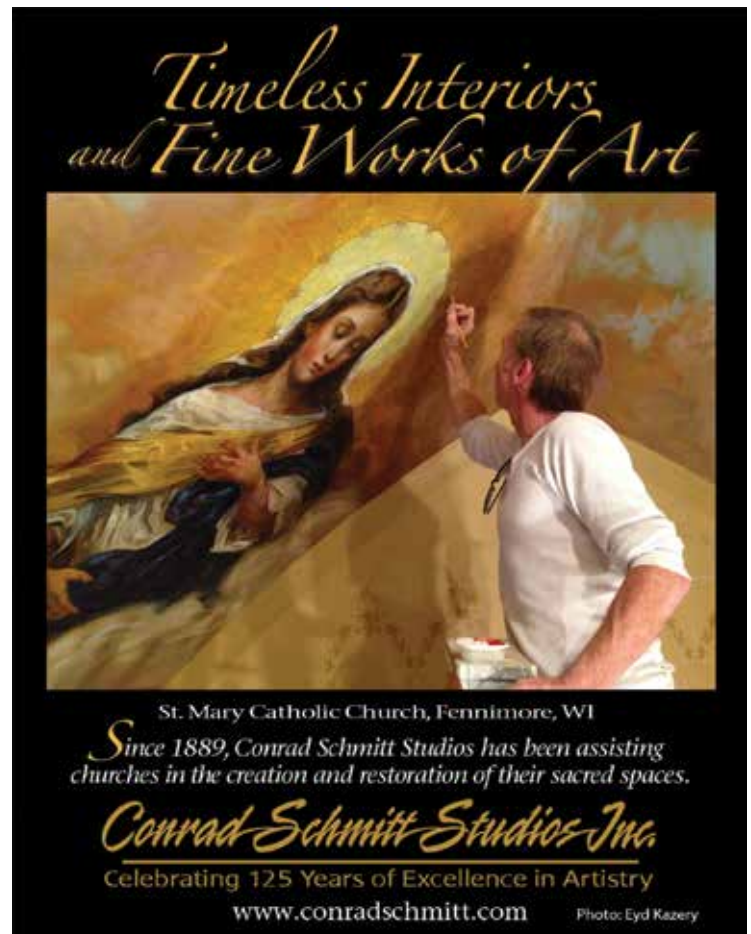
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Complementing a Master

Addition to and renovation of Louis Kahn's Temple Beth-el

*By Alexander Gorlin, FAIA
Photographs by Durston Saylor*

THE AUTHOR IS PRINCIPAL OF ALEXANDER GORLIN ARCHITECTS IN NEW YORK. HIS PRACTICE INCLUDES THE DESIGN OF SYNAGOGUES, HOUSES, AFFORDABLE AND HOMELESS HOUSING, URBAN PLANNING, AND INTERIOR DESIGN. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF FIVE BOOKS, INCLUDING KABBALAH IN ART AND ARCHITECTURE, PUBLISHED BY THAMES & HUDSON.

*Northeast elevation of
Kahn's original building
(at left in the photo) and
its new addition.*

WHEN I WAS ASKED A FEW YEARS AGO TO DESIGN AN addition to, and renovate Louis Kahn's only built synagogue, Temple Beth-el of northern Westchester in Chappaqua, New York, I approached the project with some trepidation. It was a task fraught with risk and psychological tension. How does one touch, with respect and deference, the work of a great modern master while still fulfilling the programmatic goals of the client? In this case the congregation had grown from the original 425 families in 1972 to 660, a community of more than 2,000 people, and the building was bursting at its seams. There was an urgent need to expand and yet to preserve, perhaps even complement and enhance, the experience of the original architecture.

Although Kahn designed a number of synagogues, such as Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia and the Hurva in Jerusalem, only Temple Beth-el was built. Mikveh Israel, designed and redesigned between 1961 and 1970, was organized around a series of cylindrical "light chambers" at the corners of the sanctuary, giving from the outside the impression of a fortress. The interior was to be lit by a mysterious, veiled light from the ten round rooms. The plan recalls the Kabbalistic diagram of the "Sefirot," the mystical plan of the emanations of God.

The other synagogue was the Hurva (meaning in Hebrew burnt ruin), 1968 to 1974, after the Six Day War in Israel, to be built in the Old City of Jerusalem on the site of the historic synagogue destroyed by the Jordanians in 1948. It is close to the Western Wall, the last remnant of Solomon's and Herod's Temple, the holiest site in Judaism. The Hurva was designed as a monumental series of light chapels enclosing a square plan that recalled aspects of the original temple. Mikveh Israel dragged on for nine years and was hopelessly above the budget, and the Hurva was a political football. In the end, a version of the original domed structure was rebuilt, but not by Kahn.



Synagogues are notoriously difficult projects, often with a building committee of volunteers who are well intentioned but opinionated, often at odds with each other, and rarely with the budget to fulfill their dream project. Temple Beth-el was no exception. In fact, one of the members of the original building committee, now more than 90 years old, was still involved. He said to me with great pride that he had "... told Louis Kahn which structural system to use." My job was not going to be easy!

I was no stranger to the architect and his work. As a student at Cooper Union I had attended his second-to-last public lecture at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn on November 27, 1973. At Cooper one of my teachers was Ann Tyng, a proponent of an active, organic geometry as the basis of architecture, who was instrumental in the development of Kahn's ideas. She also informed the class that she was the mother of one of Kahn's children. So, even before his son Nathaniel Kahn's film, *My Architect*, I was familiar with Kahn's personal drama with his three families and three children, only one of whom was with his wife, Esther.

I mention this because during the process of the design, Nathaniel Kahn called me to plead the case that his father's design not be touched at all; at least the addition should be separate from the existing building. Unfortunately there was no way to achieve that, as the site was very restricted, and one of the urgent requirements was that there be one entry for security purposes. But more of that later.

I also taught a seminar on Louis Kahn at the Yale School of Architecture from 1980 to 1992, which included a yearly pilgrimage to his great Exeter Library in New Hampshire, although never to Chappaqua, as it was never clear if the synagogue had been built or not. Strangely enough, neither Kahn nor anyone else ever published the Chappaqua synagogue, and almost nothing was written about it over the years. Kahn was working on Dacca and other, much larger commissions at the time, and somehow it slipped through the cracks and remained unpublished, even in Heinz Ronner's: *Louis I. Kahn Complete Work 1935-74*, where only drawings are presented as if it had not been built!

Temple Beth-el was completed and dedicated May 5, 1972, and Kahn not only attended the ceremony, but delivered fairly extensive yet cryptic remarks about the project. Starting off by saying that he "almost

wanted to wring his neck," referring to Jay Bleier, President of Temple Beth-el, he went on to say "... we would have built exactly as we wanted ... the determination to bring it within budget has actually made it a greater building. And I really believe that thoroughly. So I am deeply pleased." He continued, "... I think it is good. And that's about the best you can say of anything, that it is good." Of course in this context, he is citing the work of God himself in Genesis, which states, after the Creation of the universe: "And behold it was very good." So Kahn in his biblical prophet mode was pleased, or so he said.

Although Kahn never said as much, it was assumed and the idea grew to become the conventional wisdom, that the design was based upon wooden synagogues of Poland as a memorial to those destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Kahn did not mention this even during the dedication, which would have made sense if it had been a source of inspiration. However, he almost never revealed his sources, developing his architectural language by abstracting ideas from history, such as from the Roman baths and Hadrian's Villa. In each case he subsumed the plans and forms within his own modernist vocabulary of legible geometry and distinct materials, letting a brick be an arch after asking the brick what it wanted to be.

Temple Beth-el, a symmetrical, octagonal structure with a cubic cupola, sits on a forested site between two hills, much like the Renaissance church Santa Maria della Consolazione in Todi, Italy, from 1508. Beth-el, which means House of God, is basically symmetrical, with an attached concrete entry pavilion on the upper level. There are two entrances to the building. The lower one off the parking lot is through the social hall, with its exposed, waffle-slab ceiling. The upper entrance is through a fairly low, dark, concrete pavilion that opens up to the sanctuary. The sanctuary is a wood structure set between exposed concrete beams in the manner that Kahn used often to clarify the role of each material. Within the octagonal plan, a central square area for the congregation is defined by four squat concrete columns, with a capital atop that extends a few inches, a primitive interpretation of a Tuscan column. Atop the
(Text continues on page 10)



Original synagogue connects to the new addition through a glassy link.



The courtyard at the heart of the addition.





The glazed link at dusk.



Bridge at the top of the grand stair delivers one to the sanctuary.

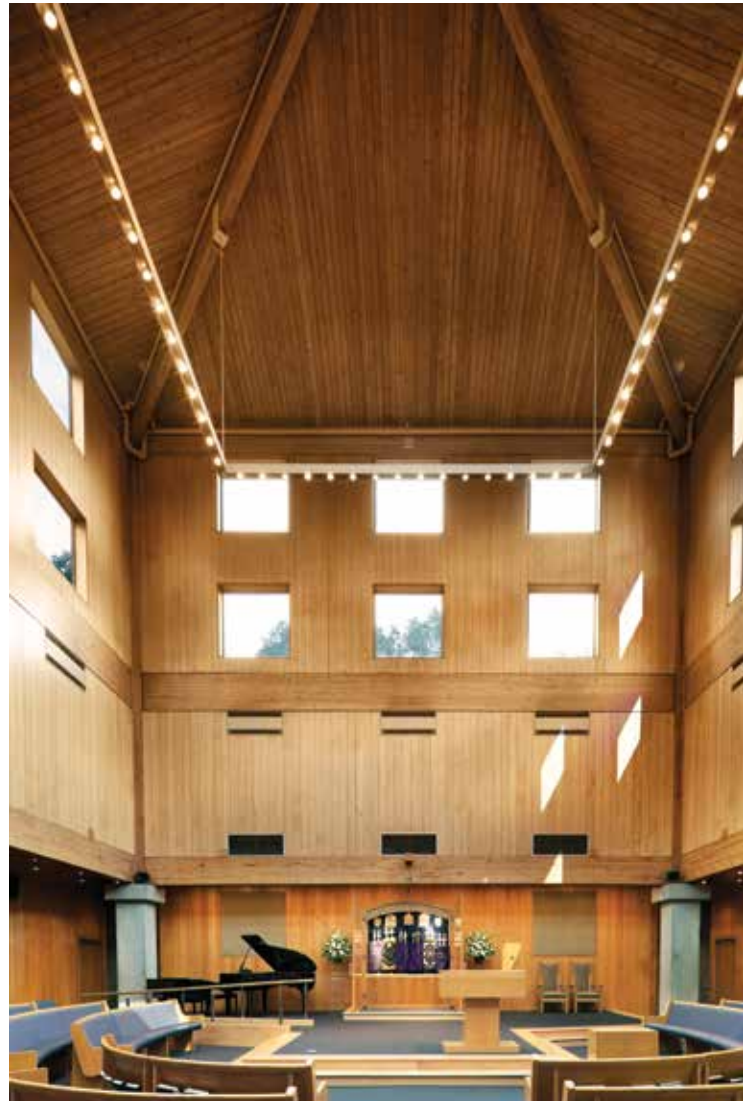


The grand stair in the new entry takes one up to the sanctuary.

columns sits a “cubic balducchino,” a cupola that rises 50 feet, illuminated by 24 square windows. The light changes as the sun slowly crosses the sky, the square beams of light creating angled patterns on the walls and the seats of the congregants. One experiences light and the passage of time, an important aspect of the Jewish service that takes place in the morning and evenings, and is correlated in holidays at different periods of the year.

The dual entries eventually became a problem after the security demands of 9/11 demanded a single point of control. The other even more severe problem was that classrooms were entered directly off the sanctuary, restricting the use of each space when the other was in use. For some reason Kahn did not use his usual device of a circumambulatory to allow for multiple use of these spaces as he did in the Unitarian Church at Rochester, or at a much larger scale in the capital at Dacca, where the central place of assembly also had a sacred resonance for Kahn. This arrangement also recalled Islamic mosques with an adjoining school (*medrese*) and classrooms entered through the main space of prayer.

The extensive addition, which almost doubled the size of the building, includes a major social hall, a kitchen, additional classrooms, a nursery school, a library/chapel, and bathrooms. Our solution was based on ideas that Kahn used when different pavilions were adjacent, such as his plan for the Mother’s House for Dominican Sisters. We created a

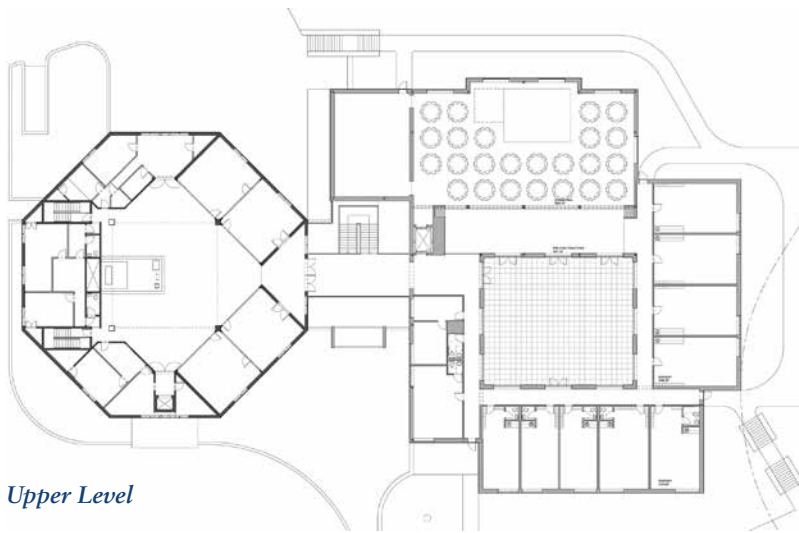


Kahn’s sanctuary has a geometric purity.

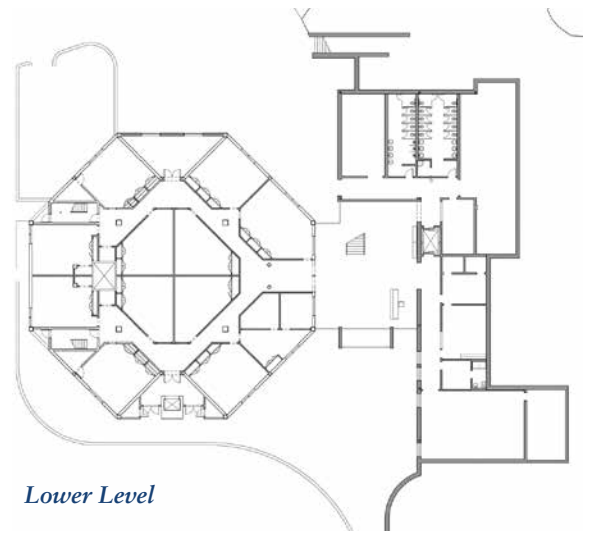
courtyard on axis with the sanctuary around which the different functions are organized. There is now a single entry into a glass cube from which one proceeds left to the sanctuary and classrooms below, or right to the library and courtyard above to the social hall and nursery school. This replaces the original concrete stair hall of Kahn’s design. A ceremonial stair lifts one up to the main level of prayer and education. The original façade of Kahn’s is preserved in this hall. Within this plan concept, the original entry pavilion, which would now be superfluous and unnecessary, was removed. One might see this as a ritual element of sacrifice, recalling a “*bris*” or circumcision of the building that recalls the traditional Jewish ritual for infant boys of eight days old.

Restoring the sanctuary required the installation of a sprinkler system, as the entire interior was clad in wood. This installation was designed with great care to follow the beams on the interior. We also replaced the hanging aluminum lighting armature that weighed heavily on the space with an elevated ring of up lights that was more in keeping with sketches of modern chandeliers that Kahn had proposed.

The courtyard is the complement to the sculptural volume of the octagonal mass of the sanctuary, with Kahn’s cupola rising above the walls. It also recalls the courtyard of the temple. In plan, as in the hierarchy of the Sefirot of the Kabbalah, the sanctuary stands at the head of the treelike diagram and the mother, “Shekinah,” is at the opposite end, appropriately at the play area of the nursery school.

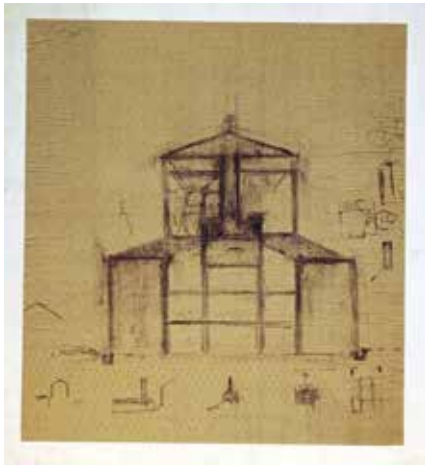


Upper Level



Lower Level


Kahn's sectional study of the sanctuary.



Site Plan



Kahn's drawing of the sanctuary.

During the construction a discovery was made above the ark in a secret door behind the storage room above the library, like the proverbial *genizah*, where ancient prayer books were stored in a synagogue. Eight original drawings by Kahn that had not been seen for almost 40 years were found. They were presentation drawings, some on yellow trace by the master's hand, while others were blue-line prints with freehand sketches by Kahn. They show a more elaborate idea of the sanctuary, with more layered space and multiple floors. But Kahn, as he said in the dedication and as he often did in other projects, simplified, refined, and clarified. A building committee today might say "value engineered," but for Kahn, "It was good." 



‘BE STILL’

Capturing the
Quiet Life and Spirit
of a Storefront Church

Photographs
and Text by
Kristin Bedford

India, August 12, 2012



Pastor Dubois, January 13, 2013

On a Sunday in July 2012, I attended a church service in the front room of a small storefront in North Carolina. I was told that the church, led by the young Pastor Lonnie Dubois, had only started meeting the Sunday before. The humble space, which had been a bank, a pawnshop, and a clothing store, was now the home of Apostolic Deliverance Rebirth Outreach Ministries. I returned the following Sunday and asked if I might take photographs during the service. With the church's permission, I began what would become a 10-month exploration of this sanctuary.

There is a legacy of depicting African American religious worship in storefront churches – or other nontraditional religious spaces such as tent revivals or river baptisms – in its more ecstatic manifestations. From W.E.B. Du Bois's description of “the Frenzy” that overtakes congregants to Milton Rogovin's photographs of churchgoers filled with delirious excitement, this is the particular aspect of worship that is most often portrayed. When we think of the storefront church, the image of fevered praise is the one we carry with us. While attending Apostolic Deliverance, I found myself drawn to quite a different aspect of worship: to moments of devotional solitude and contemplative silence.

The storefront space itself amplifies this quiet undercurrent. Remnants of the building's earlier inhabitants – a bank vault, utility closets, electrical wiring – are always in sight. There are no traditional architectural cues, such as stained glass windows or vaulted ceilings, to kindle a religious experience. The bare interiors make more visible the gentle gestures of faith. Whatever spirit is in the room belongs solely to the worshippers.

Pastor Dubois once preached, “God wants us to stand still. If we are still, the openings will appear, and the devil will be taken out the



Man and Jashua, September 9, 2012



Anyla, March 17, 2013



Quadir, February 10, 2013




Larya, March 17, 2013



Denarius, August 26, 2012



Nyema with drums, February 24, 2013

back door.” The small storefront on the corner of Angier and Driver in Durham, North Carolina, might be just enough space for a congregation to find this liberating stillness. By taking these photos, and now sharing them with you, I am hoping to change the way we imagine faith in such a setting. Perhaps we may even find our own stillness as observers, and help take the devil out back for a while. 

See more photos in this series on faithandform.com

KRISTIN BEDFORD, A LOS ANGELES-BASED PHOTOGRAPHER, FOCUSES ON LONG-TERM VISUAL STUDIES OF WHERE WE LIVE. SHE HOLDS A BA IN RELIGION FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY AND AN MFA IN DOCUMENTARY ARTS FROM DUKE UNIVERSITY.



Maya and Santonio, September 8, 2012

NUMEN LUMEN

Pushing the multifaith model forward

By Howard Hebel, AIA
Photographs by Robert Benson

The new Numen Lumen Pavilion at Elon University in Elon, North Carolina, responds comprehensively to a relatively new demand on the architecture of religious experience: to serve multiple faiths collectively.

Since before recorded history, transcendent places have nurtured and inspired religious communities, one faith at a time. Today's U.S. cultural landscape presents architects with a new opportunity to influence religious experience. The spectrum of religions practicing in this "melting-pot" amid unaffiliated "seekers" fosters new openness to exploring enduring questions collaboratively, with tremendous potential to help reduce conflict stemming from intolerance. Architects can stimulate this ferment by designing places for celebrating humanity's religious diversity holistically, helping both the faithful and the faithless to share a search for meaning and purpose.

Numen Lumen presents a significant step in the evolution of a new prototype for such places. While designed for higher education, its principles apply broadly. Like other recent campus religious buildings, it confirms that multifaith facilities can promote multicultural literacy, engendering mutual understanding and respect. It also suggests new ways in which multifaith centers can encourage collaboration and can catalyze innovation in humanity's quest to understand its existence and live in peace.

PARADIGM SHIFT

The multifaith model embodied by Numen Lumen evolved from the previous "nondenominational" or "interfaith" model developed over the preceding half century. That model responded to demands to serve growing religious diversity with chapels at nonreligious facilities, including schools, colleges and universities, hospitals, and transit centers, as well as outdoor facilities such as cemeteries and parks. It reflected the artistic abstraction, philosophical Existentialism, and religious ecumenism and liturgical experimentation of its cultural context.

NUMEN LUMEN PROJECT DIRECTOR HOWARD HEBEL CONCENTRATES ON BUILDINGS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AT NEWMAN ARCHITECTS, WHILE EXPLORING THE ARCHITECTURE OF RELIGION AS A PERSONAL PASSION.



Face of Numen Lumen as it faces the academic village of the campus.



Sacred Space in the Pavilion's rounded element and north entrance face toward campus and town.

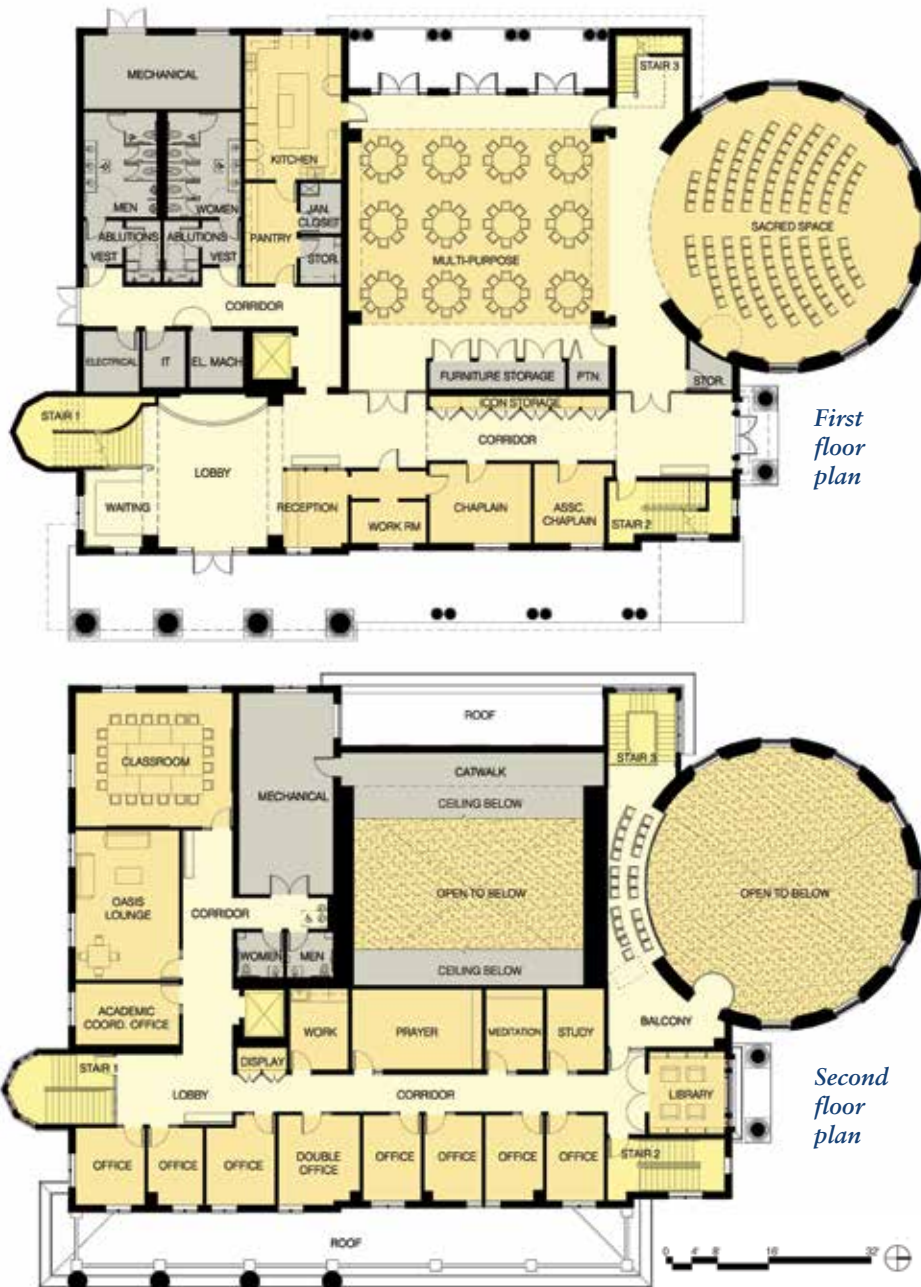
The nondenominational model's innovations included new building forms (drawn from emerging abstract architecture to avoid reference to traditional religious building types), freedom from religion-specific iconographies, and simple furnishings and fixtures. The best of the resulting buildings—such as Eero Saarinen's iconic MIT Chapel of 1955, with its unifying cylindrical form and inspiring cascade of light over Harry Bertioia's glittering

wall sculpture—offered inspiring new places for people of different faiths to share. Many variations on the basic approach appeared over the intervening years.

Multidenominational clusters of separate religious spaces under one roof, such as SOM's dramatic Air Force Academy Chapel of 1962, provide a small number of traditional spaces at each site (only Christian and Jewish spaces at the Academy until recently), with inherent lack of interaction due to the separation. Metadenominational facilities, like Roger Anger's multifaceted 1968 Matrimandir for



Site plan showing Numen Lumen in the context of the academic village.



India's Auroville community, provide uniquely shaped spaces suited best for nontraditional (or non-Western) activities.

Postdenominational (or transdenominational) facilities created by modifying existing Christian churches, such as Yale Divinity School's Marquand Chapel, replacing fixed pews with loose furnishings and open floors and removing some iconographic constructions, nevertheless often retain recognizable building forms, area specializations, room orientations, and built-in iconographies that inhibit use by some faiths.

Outdoor facilities, for example Lloyd Wright's transparent 1951 Wayfarer's Chapel in California, embrace the beauty of natural settings as their architecture. Whether fully open-air or glass-enclosed, though, many feature fixed seating, area specializations, fixed orientations, and recognizable iconographies that inhibit use by some faiths.

Facilities resulting from use of this non-denominational model struggle to support traditional religious activities owing to their inherent limitations including: lack of spaces suited for traditional religious activities, lack of traditional iconographies or liturgical furnishings, interference with key liturgical activities by physical obstacles, and lack of support facilities. These deficiencies leave many faiths unable to use these facilities for activities essential to their spiritual lives and communities, reducing them to participating in activities there only after completing traditional activities in their home facilities.

The multifaith model arose in response to shortcomings that left the nondenominational model ill equipped to meet the needs of contemporary multifaith programs, and particularly limited its ability to serve growing Islamic and non-Abrahamic congregations. As currently constituted, this new model welcomes all religions equally. It complies with design and liturgical requirements of all participating religions, accommodating their program requirements for liturgical, social, and cultural activities, and providing spaces that uplift and inspire without recourse to traditional religious iconography. A key difference between this new model and its predecessor is its embrace of traditional religious activities and its commitment to providing staff and pedagogical and support facilities for them—an observed prerequisite for bringing congregations to these facilities for sufficient time to develop the intended vibrant, diverse educational and spiritual communities.

Wellesley College's Student MultiFaith Center provided an early application of this new model, developed by then Chaplain

Victor Kazanjian and architect Steve Kieran and reported in this journal (“Design from Dialogue,” *Faith & Form*, Vol. 42, 2009, No. 3). While their thoughtful work advanced the model, the project scope was limited by the footprint of Wellesley’s Christian chapel, in the former basement, which was charged to fit the new facility. In spite of needing to prioritize, their mix of small spaces for individual prayer and meditation, educational spaces, offices for programming staff, and support spaces gave the model its fullest expression to date.



Entry lobby with water wall and luminous ceiling and icon display case further down the hallway to the Sacred Space.

THE NEW MODEL AT ELON

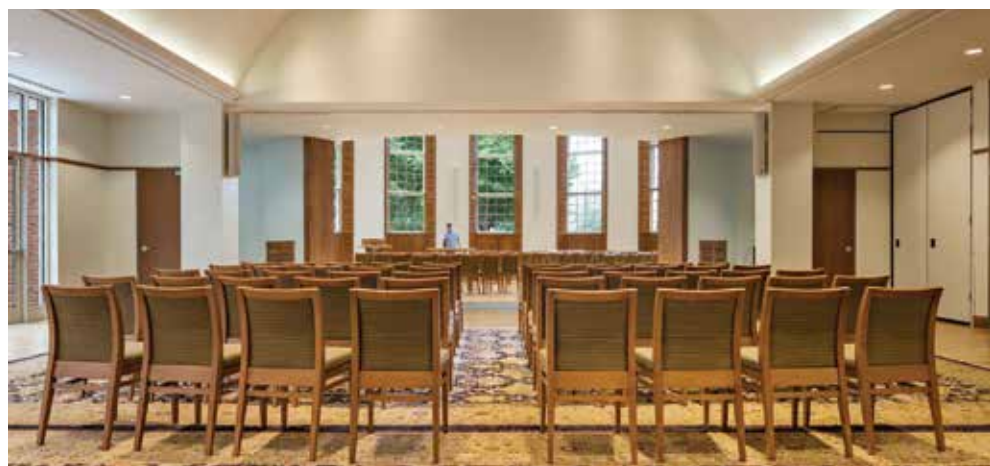
When Elon University committed to developing its own multifaith religious center, it enlisted Kazanjian’s assistance during programming to learn from Wellesley’s lessons and to advance the model further, this time devoting an entire new building to implementing it without preexisting physical limitations.

Elon’s multifaith vision grew from its mission to create “an academic community that transforms mind, body, and spirit ... preparing students to be global citizens and informed leaders motivated by concern for the common good [with] respect for human differences.” Elon’s commitment to addressing cultural conflict, given added urgency by the events of 9/11, crystallized in an initiative to build a new kind of facility and program to tap the power of humanity’s shared search for meaning and purpose. Former Chaplain Richard McBride, who long shepherded this vision, observes: “One has only to read the newspaper or your iPad to see how much religious intolerance still exists in the world, how much fear and mistrust and hatred emanate when religion has gone bad ... yet the longing to lead a meaningful life resides in everyone.” As Elon’s President Leo Lambert declared at the dedication, “It is here in the Numen Lumen Pavilion that we will plant the seed for peace and understanding and prepare our students at Elon to be forces for good in the world.”

From the beginning, Elon also sought to bring town and campus congregations together in a shared place of reflection and inspiration, not to replace existing facilities for individual religions but to complement them. The new center would welcome all to practice in the presence of each other and to gather as a greater community. As alumni donor Edna Truitt Noiles notes, “We wanted to make it possible to find new ways of talking and living with people of all faiths, a place that is porous, a place where the world can come to pose its questions and share its own challenging knowledge ... not governed by age or profession ... perhaps a new kind of religious



The Sacred Space is a primal shape, with views out toward campus and the town beyond.



Multipurpose room opens to the Sacred Space for combined use.



The icon display case shows the various symbols and ritual furnishings of different faith traditions.

life where no questions are off limits for people who are not quite sure what they think of religion but want to offer themselves in service.”

A preparatory review of previously built facilities revealed needed refinements that the new model still lacked. A highly successful facility would require active, invested, user constituencies. Design should position scholarly and practical approaches to complement each other. Primary spaces should be very flexible, and their portable religious icons would merit honorific accommodation when not in use. The facility would require a holistic complement of support spaces, including ample storage for the logistics of space flexibility. It would also need a diverse, energetic, on-site staff. After studying the program and visiting prototype facilities, the project team framed a broad array of objectives that expanded the model to meet Elon’s needs:

Programmatic: Welcome the religious, unaffiliated seekers, and nonbelievers equally (starting with the Abrahamic religions, and adding others through a multiyear plan) from campus and town. Promote the study and practice of religion synergistically. Engender understanding and tolerance among religions, and between religious and nonreligious. Stimulate collaboration and innovation in the search.

Curricular: Position the practice and study of religious experience as a fourth modality of inquiry, understanding, and expression to complement the humanities, arts, and sciences.

Institutional: Equip Elon University for thought leadership at the national level in multifaith exploration.

Campus: Complete a master-planned “Academic Village” quadrangle by building its final pavilion.

Building: Adapt the preestablished neo-Jeffersonian exterior architecture and building form of the quad-pavilion prototype (developed earlier by Spillman Farmer Architects) to accommodate the multifaith program and create an iconic campus landmark to draw town-and-gown users.

This holistic framework prompted Elon to adopt its University motto, “Numen Lumen” (union of spiritual and intellectual lights) as the facility name, symbolizing its welcome of traditional religious practice and scholarly activity together as a mutually illuminating basis for encouraging collaboration and innovation among users.

AN ARCHITECTURAL/SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Newman Architects’ design *parti* of an architectural journey suggesting a spiritual journey demonstrates how forms employed

to implement this program can enhance its operational and symbolic effectiveness.

At Numen Lumen, the program spaces are arranged within the prototype pavilion’s form, adopting its portico as portal and shifting overflowing program away from the courtyard to feature the sacred space as campus pivot and landmark, invoking Jefferson’s “Temple of Knowledge.”

Once inside, the lobby signals departure from campus and world, setting a scene of primal wonder at existence amid nature, with a water wall suggesting a trickling stream and a luminous ceiling suggesting a forest canopy above. A four-post framework evokes primitive shelters and ceremonial structures like the Jewish Sukkah, while its luminous ceiling echoes Islamic patterns.

From here, a choice between pathways to practical activities on the first floor and intellectual activities above symbolizes two routes to understanding that users discover rejoin as they both arrive at the Sacred Space, itself a play on timeless sacred-space forms employed by all religions. Double-loaded corridors maximize spontaneous seeker interaction along both routes.

Along the way, pedagogical spaces and resident faculty energize the study of religion. The flexible Sacred Space supports many modes of

religious practice, both separately and in tandem with the multi-use social hall to which it opens, complemented by smaller spaces for individual devotion and reflection. The sacred space's balconies provide observation platforms as well as multilevel activity venues, encouraging the study of practice and the practice of study. The social hall sustains this human community and provides an additional primary venue. Altogether, this synergistic mix creates a religious-studies learning laboratory.

At the center's heart, the portable-icon storage represents a new take on this model component, a highly visible, honorific display celebrating the icons' importance and beauty. Its prominent location along the main pathway positions the icons to educate and inspire when not in liturgical use.


Numen Lumen's materiality and process illustrate other opportunities for adding meaning that arise in the course of implementation.

Wood, stone, water, and natural light draw on universal iconographies of life, strength, purity, and divinity. The limestone in the Sacred Space, quarried in Jerusalem, connects to ancient Abrahamic origins. Locally sourced water-wall stone, and benches made of wood from trees cut to clear the site, keynote a LEED Silver Certified sustainable design. All along, a public-information program punctuated by participatory ground-breaking, topping-out, and dedication ceremonies engaged town and gown communities and built user interest.

PROMISING INDICATIONS

Two years of use reveal that Numen Lumen's program and design are proving effective in gathering a multifaith community and energizing interfaith interaction. Traditional devotional and social uses, as well as multifaith information "fairs," campus gatherings, and other nontraditional uses demonstrate suitability

for a wide variety of activities and acceptance by multiple congregations. A growing list of activities attests to the effectiveness of its staff and programs, and to the vitality of its growing community. Subsequent transformation of the weekly "college chapel" activity into a new multifaith gathering called "Numen Lumen" promises more collaboration and innovation to come. Plans call for expanding study-abroad opportunities, piloting a multifaith leadership program, and inaugurating the Center for the Study of Religion, Culture, and Society.

At Elon, the expanded multifaith model succeeds at both institutional and human levels, providing a setting for innovative programs. Most of all, it promotes the essential interpersonal engagement imagined in Chaplain Janet Fuller's dedicatory wish: "May the friendships forged here transform us into our best selves, grow us in respect, and, through us, change the world." 

NUMEN LUMEN PROGRAM SUMMARY

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| PRIMARY ACTIVITY | Study | Indoor-Outdoor Connections |
| Sacred Space | Work | Meditation Garden |
| Multi-use/Social Hall | Lounge | |
| SUPPORT FACILITIES | Offices | OTHER |
| Icon Storage/Display | Kitchen and Pantry | (not included at Numen Lumen) |
| Meditation | Bathrooms | Sacristy |
| Prayer | Storage | Kosher and Halal Kitchens and Pantries |
| Ablutions | | Shoe Storage |
| Classroom | EXTERIOR AND SITE | Music Practice |
| Library | Prominent Entrance Portals | Multi-media |
| | Key Components as Landmarks | |

PROJECT CREDITS

Owner: Elon University; Design Architect: Newman Architects; Architect of Record: Spillman Farmer Architects; Multifaith Advisor: Rev. Victor Kazanjian, Executive Director, United Religions Initiative; Liturgical Consultant: Dr. Serene Jones, President, Union Theological Seminary

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Interfaith Art for Interfaith Chapels

By Anne Barber-Shams



Above Left: Fused-glass art image by the author for her *Wilderness Journey Triptych*. The subjects of the triptych images, 3 by 4 feet, are of the Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire that the ancestors of Jews, Christians, and Muslims followed across the Sinai Peninsula, and the Shekinah/Sakina that remained to hover over the tabernacle.

Above Right: Shahna Lax, *Reflection & Passage Through the Thinning Door*, acid-etched copper with fretwork, Vitrail enamels; 4 tehelet tsisit, copper rivets; two-way acrylic mirror. Framed in mahogany. 27.75 x 17.25 x 1.75 inches.

Artist's comments: At the top of the door are Hebrew inscriptions meaning "enter," "sparks," and "Closer than anything near" — one of the Names for the Eternal. The Moorish design of the door invokes Islamic geometries and carpet page elements. <http://fineartamerica.com/profiles/shahna-lax.html>

My study of the current interfaith movement started as a plan to find appropriate sites for my large, interfaith fused-glass triptych, *The Wilderness Journey*. I began research with questions: What kind of art is available for interfaith chapels, and what makes it the right choice for them? My conclusion is that there seem to be three ways to consider art for interfaith chapels.

ART THAT IS GENERIC

If the purpose of the interfaith chapel is to support religious diversity by avoiding the "can't haves" of any group, finding art is relatively simple. Themes of nature and the cosmos are often chosen, as are prayer flags, banners, and multifaith symbols. The art curator for an interfaith chapel could go online to CODAworx 2014, narrow the search to

public art, wall art, and liturgical art, and find examples of art that has been commissioned and photographed on site and art from artists interested in commissions. There are many choices of fabric art, painted art, sculpture, and glass art with nature themes or abstract and soothing compositions.

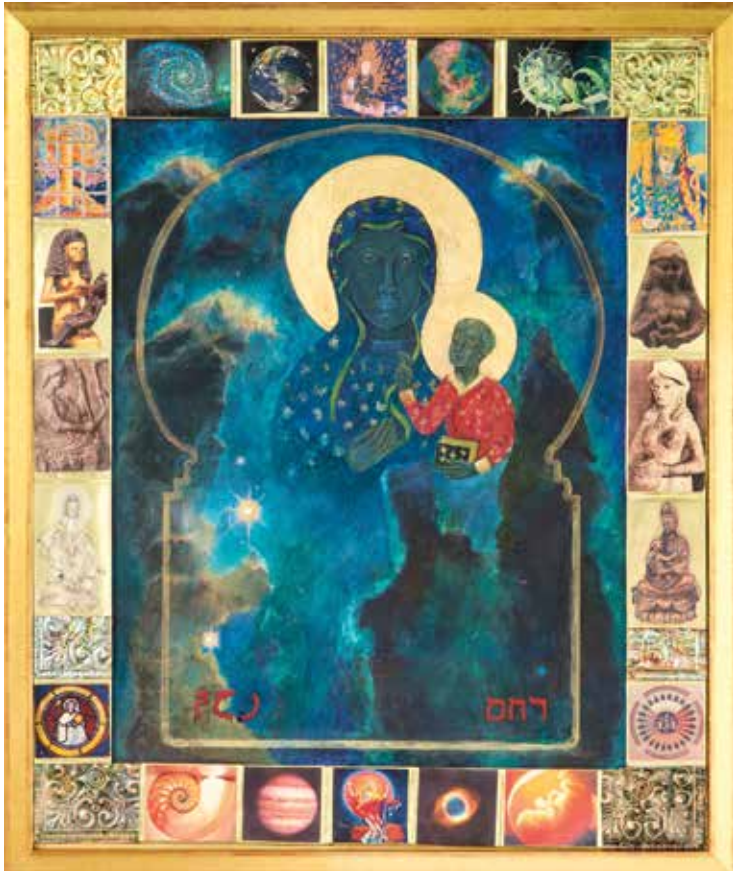
(Text continues on page 21)

ANNE BARBER-SHAMS HAS BEEN CREATING INTERFAITH ART AND INTERFAITH EXHIBITS FOR TWO DECADES.



Shahna Lax, *Blessing Hands*, acid-etched copper, fretwork, oxide, and enamel; backed in amber mica. Framed in Oregon Madrone. 34.5 x 18.5 inches.

Artist's comments: The Hebrew script within the arch is the priestly blessing: "May the Source of Being bless you and protect you; May the Source of Being's Face shine upon you and flow graciousness to you; May the Face lift towards you and establish you in peace." The two hamsas in the position of blessing are each inscribed with an Aribis micrographic "eye" which reads: *Hu Allah* — "the Essence is God."



Anne Shams, *Star Mother*, mixed media on birch plywood: acrylic, embossed brass and copper, collage, 25 x 21 inches.

Artist's comment: The horseshoe arch of the *mihrab* contains the Eagle Nebula, birthplace of stars, and the Black Madonna holding the Christ child, one of the most prevalent images in art. The central image is surrounded with a border that includes images of goddess/mothers from other spiritual traditions. The Arabic and Hebrew letters at the bottom left and right of the painting are the triliteral linguistic root RHM, which means *origin* or *womb*, giving a maternal and feminine slant to the masculine gender usually attributed to the deity.



Siona Benjamin: *Finding Home #72: (Fereshteh) Miriam*, Gouache and gold leaf on wood panel 18 x 15.3 inches.

Artist comment: In "Fereshteh" ("angels" in Urdu), I explore the women of the Bible and bring them forward to combat the wars and violence of today in a Midrash (interpretation) of intricate paintings. In this multicultural society, I would like the viewers to transcend the apparent exotic nature of the images and absorb the core message: tolerance of diversity.

ART THAT REFLECTS EACH TRADITION'S
SPECIFIC, INDIVIDUAL ICONOGRAPHY

This choice suits the winning entries of the 2004 interfaith sacred architecture competition, documented in the book, *Sacred Spaces: 2004 Sacred Space Design Competition*, edited by Donald Frew. The winning designs provided varieties of spaces to accommodate the ritual observances of individual faiths. Without having to avoid the “cannot haves” of each faith, the art curators or committees might visit other existing faith chapels, search online for liturgical art, or search the advertising index of *Faith & Form* or of their individual faith publications.

ART THAT PROVIDES
“ACCESS POINTS TO DIVINITY”

The term “access points to divinity” is from Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi in his book, *The Geologist of the Soul: Talks on Rebbe-craft and Spiritual Leadership*. Describing the great religious leaders who have helped humanity, he writes, “Jesus and the Buddha are certainly *neshamot kaliyot*, access points to Divinity, on a grand scale.”

Art that provides access points to divinity suits the chapel/church for the spiritually independent. As described by Rami Shapiro in *Perennial Wisdom for the Spiritually Independent: Sacred Teachings Annotated and Explained*, the beliefs of the spiritually independent neither exclude nor require a specific religious representation. The art imagery can be inclusive of many traditions or of a singular tradition, or can visually make connections between faith traditions.

A search on CODAworx2014 narrowed to interfaith art would be unsuccessful in finding this kind of art. An internet search for Interfaith Art Exhibits and Galleries would yield artist choices from such sites as MOCRA, the Museum of Contemporary Religious Art at St. Louis University; CIVA, Christians in the Visual Arts; and Paul-Gordon Chandler's CARAVAN (oncaravan.org), an annual art event/exhibit that builds bridges through the arts between the creeds and cultures of East and West. Artists could be found online by searching for interfaith artists or interfaith art.


CONCLUSION

The interfaith movement's architectural and artistic vanguard is the repurposing or creation of sacred spaces that meet the hoped-for results articulated by Donald Frew in *Sacred Spaces*: “...sacred space that would welcome and accommodate the needs of practitioners of *all* religions... where *everyone* who entered would be inspired to practice their own faith and build relationships with those of other faiths.” At the progressive edge of this vanguard is the creation of sacred space and art for the spiritually independent.

If Rami Shapiro is correct about interpreting the Pew study he cites in his book—that the 33 percent of persons 30 or under who checked the box “none” in the religious affiliation category are spiritually independent—the church of the future may not look remarkably different, but what goes on inside it will be remarkably different. The spiritually independent does not require that a cathedral be torn down and replaced with a mosque: the prayer rugs simply take the place of pews.

The future interfaith worshiper may have fewer “must haves” and “cannot haves” and instead may embrace diverse faith symbols and rituals side by side. There is a sense of history made visible when the Star of David, a cross, and the crescent moon and star share the same space. Layers of meaning are added when one is aware that the Star of David symbol predates Neolithic art and, later, represented the Hindu Shakti. This knowledge does not obliterate differences. It seems to me to acknowledge humbly how ancient, multifaceted, and deep are humankind's search for meaning, for access points to divinity.

Architectural space, more or less effectively, creates a container for the numinous. The Hagia Sophia may be a more effective container than the architectural shoebox of Seattle's Interfaith Community Sanctuary, a repurposed centenarian protestant church, but I'm not sure. What happens in the space and who is present may be as important.

Without doubt, beautifully conceived and rendered architecture and art teach us that there is that which is beyond the mundane, inspire us to transcend the mundane, and are a heritage that spiritually enriches us all, irrespective of monetary status, ethnicity, or religious affiliation. Interfaith sacred sites meet an essential contemporary need for us to come together to honor our singular traditions and respect those of others. 

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Ando's Cross

ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ARCHITECTS TODAY, the Japanese autodidact Tadao Ando, creates "complex works of extreme simplicity that are rooted in and yet transcend their regionality."¹ Many of the most recent monographs on contemporary sacred space include references to his oeuvre.² His four modest chapels (1986-1993) belong to the United Church of Christ in Japan, founded in 1942 in order to integrate Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregational, and Baptist denominations, following a directive of the ultra-nationalistic government. These buildings, already more than 20 years old, still have a surprisingly contemporary character.

Ando's most famous Christian buildings are without doubt the Church on the Water in Tomamu (1988) and the Church of the Light in Ibaraki near Osaka (1989). Both chapels are extraordinary statements about the ineffable that breaks into our world. Even photographs cannot restrain the fact that these buildings effectively make room for the ineffable. This is architecture at its best.

At first glance, all four of his chapels seem to be empty Modernist boxes, the ones we abhor so much nowadays, having rightly compared much of 20th-century churches to underground garages. It may be surprising and revealing that Ando's language for communicating the ineffable is extremely minimalist. Bare concrete happens to be Ando's favorite material. He goes so far in his preference for this material that he brings its inherent potential to life. Ando polishes his hard, cold, and gray concrete walls until they are smooth, shining, and precious as silk. As such, he uses one of the lowest materials to sing about the highest truths in life.

This article's focus is on only one paradigmatic symbol for contemporary church architecture, namely the cross, when it becomes part of minimalist architecture in a Japanese context. I am interested in what then happens to the cross as Christian symbol. I believe that this symbol becomes enriched, without losing anything of its Christian depth, because Ando is a genius in creating universal statements about human life in general.

Moreover, the scope of this approach is limited because I won't delve into the practical or liturgical issues of his churches. There is no tangible evolution in the liturgical setting of Ando's chapels, being classical longitudinal spaces of two rows of pews with a central aisle leading to an empty space with a movable table and lectern. Ando is no liturgist; his intention is not to explore possibilities of liturgical renewal; his work is more phenomenological. What follows will thus bring to light the power of architecture independent of the liturgical function, which is, in this Protestant case, to gather a community around the proclaimed, preached, and praised Word.

However, Ando has done something more than make space for gathering: he has created monuments and moments for contemplation. These chapels are instruments for inwardness, stillness, and prayer. From themselves, they evoke so much power that any other function becomes secondary. Ando's strength is to transform us from observers to participants. He starts by placing us in a comfortable position of distant observer. But gradually, one is gently taken in by a fascinating architectural event that opens itself and us to greater things. Both chapels could be compared to a camera: Ando frames a specific part of nature, a landscape in Tomamu, and pure light in Ibaraki. With bare concrete, visibly the most manmade material, he places a strange element in the cosmos. This functions as a camera to observe the ineffable depth present in the cosmos. Gradually, one makes abstraction of the

The Christian Symbol Between Representation and Expression in Tadao Ando's Churches

By Bert Daelemans, S.J.

The Church of the Light makes a cross out of luminance against darkness.

Photo: Mith Huang/flickr

THE AUTHOR IS PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY AT UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICA COMILLAS IN MADRID, SPAIN.



The focus of the Church on the Water is a dominant but inaccessible cross.

Photo: Miki Yoshimoto/flickr

box and participates in being. Ando has an immense respect for the spirit of the place:

A site possesses its own physical and geographical character; at the same time it has layers of memory imprinted on it. I always listen to the whispering voice of a given place. I think of it comprehensively with all its forces – the visible characteristics as well as the invisible memories to do with interaction of a locality and humankind. And I try to integrate these into my building which shall carry that spirit to latter generations.³

This could still be understood as mere pantheism, seeing the cosmos as divine, in the sense of reducing the divine to the cosmos. However, Ando is more of a panentheist, by laying bare the divine within the cosmos and not necessarily identifying them. The latter, obviously, and not the former, is compatible with Christian theology. What Ando does with the cross as sole Christian symbol in his churches is not incompatible with this cosmic or “secular spirituality.” By placing this Christian symbol in a cosmic context, he enriches it instead of denying it “in favor of a cosmogonic spirituality” and overlaying it “with a symbolic nature worship,” as Kenneth Frampton thought.⁴

People make abstraction of the box because it is not Ando’s intention to focus on the box, which is a mere medium for an experience of the observing body – in Japanese, *shintai*:

The body articulates the world. At the same time, the body is articulated by the world. When ‘I’ perceive the concrete to be something cold and hard, ‘I’ recognize the body as something warm and soft. In this way, the body in its dynamic relationship with the world becomes the *shintai*. It is only the *shintai* in this sense that builds or understands architecture. The *shintai* is a sentient being that responds to the world.⁵

In the Church on Mount Rokko (1986) and the Church at Tarumi (1993), Ando places a cross on the rear wall. On Mount Rokko, this cross is slender and metallic; in Tarumi it is massive and made of wood. The cross is the only tool for designating these edifices formally as Christian. As such, Ando uses it merely as representational sign, to decode the buildings as Christian.

Ando’s Church on the Water at Tomamu (1988) opens entirely to the cosmos, in which he placed a freestanding, Latin cross in steel, similar to what Kaija and Heikki Siren did in the Technical University Chapel at Otaniemi, Finland (1957). But Ando’s genius consisted in placing his cross in a water basin and sliding away the whole rear glass wall like a giant *shoji* screen to give more direct, intimate contact with the natural essences of water, wind, and light. Thus, the cross brings together nature and the sacred, earth and sky, exteriority and interiority, mystery and matter, body and spirit. The cross defines the emptiness as sacred, so that it makes the ineffable palpable. Due to its precise staging in a shallow pond, the cross becomes more than a mere *sign* representing Christianity, such as on Mount Rokko and in Tarumi. In Tomamu, the cross is enriched as expressive *symbol* that yearns for interpretation. The water makes the cross inaccessible, and yet so visibly near; it can theologically be understood as the eschatological cross of glory, materially expressing at once the visual “already” and the physical “not yet.” The creative genius of this architectural event resides not in the object itself but in its staging, in its spatial relationship bridging interior and exterior space.

The Protestant theologian Paul Tillich, who wrote on the theological aspects of architecture, was still wary of opening “the building too widely toward surrounding nature,” even though he valued the intention of opening the church to nature as the idea “to draw nature into



The space in the Church of the Light is revealed in the glow of the cross.

Photo: Mith Huang/flickr

the sphere of the Holy Presence.”⁶ He feared that the opposite would happen, that worshippers would be “drawn away from concentration on the Holy Presence to the outside world.” Ando, however, did not open Tomamu “widely” towards its surroundings but consciously “frames” nature and consciously “stages” a cross in-between exterior and interior spaces. Placing the cross as visible witness of the infinite appearing within the finite, Ando allows their invisible relationship to come to the fore. Ando expands sacred space by incorporating the cosmos into the sacred. Tillich legitimately feared the distraction from the liturgical action. There is indeed a strong pull outwards in these churches, which invite a contemplative mood rather than one focused upon action. Nevertheless, liturgical action would be enriched by such a wonderful and festive backdrop.

Ando goes even further in his Church of the Light (1989). The entire sanctuary wall is a religious symbol: extending over the entire height and width of the concrete wall (8 by 6 meters) a Latin cross is excised. What do we look at? The wall or the cross, which is not really there? This cross is present as absence, because it is cut out of the wall. As Christian symbol it is there, that is, not less but more than there. For a Christian, this could be a magnificent symbol of death and resurrection. For Frampton, it is also a denial in favor of a cosmogonic spirituality. All of Ando’s churches are imbued with this conjunction in which both Christian iconography and its Japanese “other” are simultaneously evoked, although the evocation of the divine depends on the revealed ineffability of nature rather than on the presentation of conventional symbolism.”⁷ From a theological perspective, we could say that it is a denial of the representational character in favor of its expressive dimension. The cross becomes a non-object, a non-place, pure negativity,

pure expression. It serves more to express, that is, to make present, than to represent. In Ibaraki, the cross is made of impalpable light, made ineffable.


Ando does more than merely providing a window onto the landscape. He carefully “stages” nature, and patiently distills natural “essence,” so that nature is served in its awe-inspiring purity. Ando does not treat nature as landscape to look at, as object at a distance, but as a dynamism because “it is the very transitory and haptic character of natural phenomena that serves to enliven and guarantee the spirituality of his architecture.”⁸ One could say that his work in Ibaraki is more interiorized, more intimate, than in Tomamu.

Against the current “homogenization” of light in contemporary society – and in religious buildings bluntly used as cliché for the transcendent (we might think of the Cathedral of Christ the Light in Oakland) Ando stages light against darkness. Faithful to a Japanese tradition “in praise of shadows,”⁹ he literally constructs darkness in order for light to reveal the ineffable:

Light, alone, does not make light. There must be darkness for light to become light – resplendent with dignity and power. Darkness, which kindles the brilliance of light and reveals light’s power, is innately a part of light. [...] Here, I prepared a box with thick enclosing walls of concrete – a ‘construction of darkness.’ I then cut a slot in one wall, allowing the penetration of light – under conditions of severe constraint.¹⁰

Immediately, this centrifugal moment mirrors back on itself, and one is set within this cosmos and realizes her or his own place. This means that Ando’s edifices are never pretty objects to look at by a distant subject, but dynamic and relational events that must be experienced by

a moving body. Because of their strong transcendent appeal they are *domus Dei* even before being *domus ecclesiae*. Even before being defined by their liturgical function as explicitly religious buildings, they are intrinsically religious in their contemplative mood. In this atmosphere, Ando places a cross: not as representative sign that one can decipher but as expressive symbol that one has to interpret. In a way specific to architecture, Ando stretches its original Christian meaning in order to give it a universal significance. He does so in different ways, and it has been my intention to bring to light in this article the basic itinerary of the cross in Ando's oeuvre between representation and expression.

For Ando, there is a clear evolution in the use of the cross: from a devotional object hanging on a wall, over a material symbol at an unapproachable distance, to an abstract, dematerialized absence, condensed to its pure meaning. Important is to hold both dimensions together: such a dematerialization can in architecture only be done by solid materialization. The spiritual can only be revealed through the material, engaging the corporal. By placing the cross within the cosmos and by abstracting it to pure light, the cross becomes eschatological, that is to say, in its shape anamnesis of the historical, salvific cross (already), and in its staging prolepsis of the paradisiacal victory of the end of times (not yet). 

1. Judith Dupré, *Churches* (New York: Harper-Collins, 2001), 140-141. See also *Tadao Ando: Complete Works*, ed. Francesco Dal Co (London: Phaidon, 1996).

2. See Kenneth Frampton, "Corporeal Experience in the Architecture of Tadao Ando," in *Body and Building: Essays on the Changing Relation of Body and Architecture*, eds. George Dodds and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 304-318; Christiane Johannsen, "Spiritual Experience," in *Architecture, Aesth/Ethics and Religion*, ed. Sigurd Bergmann (Frankfurt am Main/London: IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2005), 187-198; Kenneth Frampton, "The Secular Spirituality of Tadao Ando," in *Constructing the Ineffable: Contemporary Sacred*

Architecture, ed. Karla Cavarra Britton (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 96-111; Jin Baek, "Emptiness and Empty Cross: Tadao Ando's Church of Light," in *Divinity Creativity Complexity*, ed. Michael Benedikt (Austin, TX: University of Texas, 2010), 180-193; and Phyllis Richardson, "Introduction: A Legacy of Inspired Innovation," in *New Sacred Architecture* (London: Laurence King, 2004), 6-15.

3. Ando, quoted in William J. R. Curtis, "Between Architecture and Landscape," *GA Architect: Tadao Ando 1994-2000*, 16 (2000): 8-18, at 11.

4. Frampton, *Secular*, 99, 110.

5. Tadao Ando, "Shintai and Space," in *Architecture and Body* (New York: Rizzoli International,

1988), unpaginated. Similarities can be found with the understanding of flesh in French phenomenology.

6. Paul Tillich, "Contemporary Protestant Architecture," in *OAA*, 218.

7. Frampton, *Secular*, 99.

8. Frampton, *Secular*, 98.

9. See the exquisite essay by the Japanese novelist Junichiro Tanizaki, *In Praise of Shadows* (London: Vintage Books, 2001 (1977)).

10. Tadao Ando, "Church of Light," in *Tadao Ando: Complete Works*, ed. Francesco Dal Co (London: Phaidon, 1995), 471.

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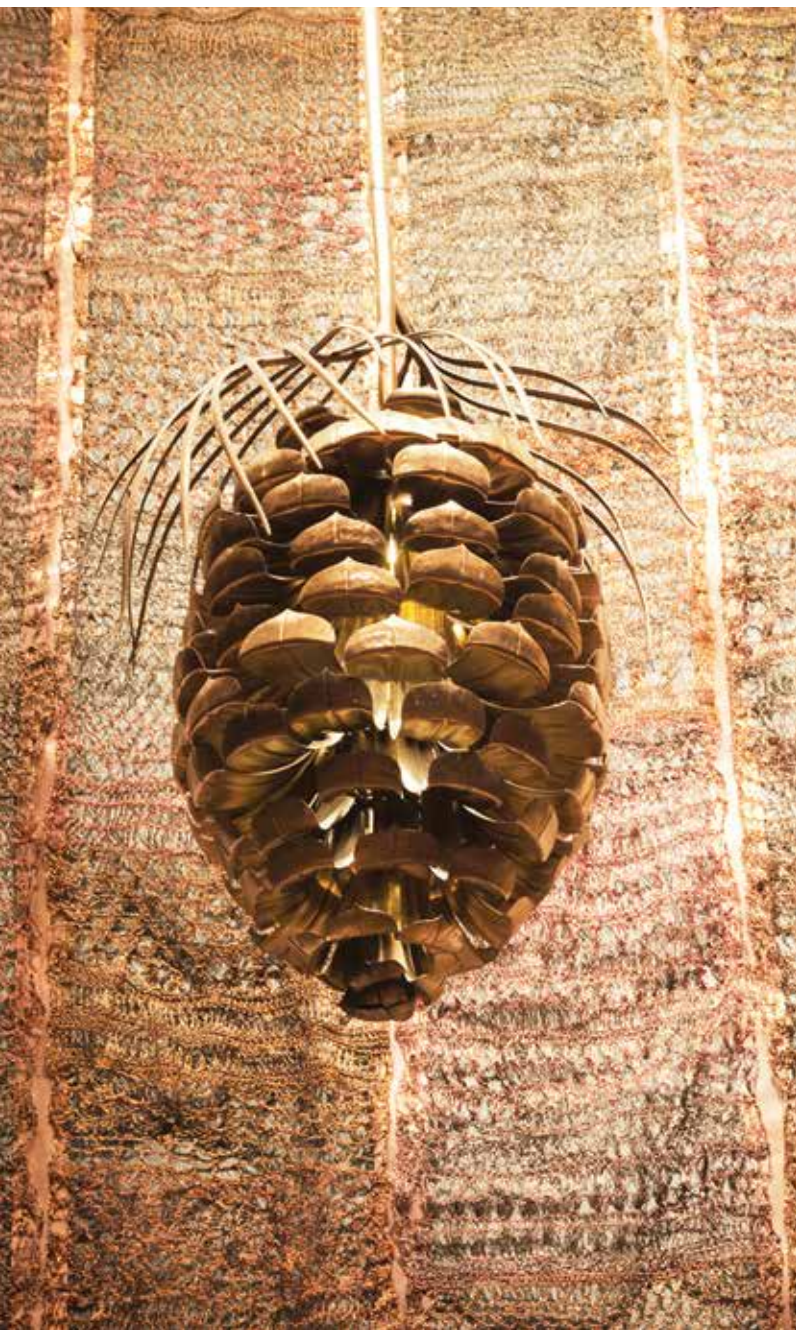
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BEYOND THE MENORAH

The Ner Tamid as the Second Source of Light in Jewish Sacred Space

By Jack A. Bialosky, Jr., AIA



Ner Tamid in the Suburban Temple Kol Ami in Beachwood, Ohio, dates from the 1950s.

The imagery surrounding Chanukah, the Jewish feast of rededication and the festival of lights, is quite well known: the miraculous story of a single day's worth of oil burning for eight days and nights in the temple. But beyond this story lies the lesser known origin of the second source of light in Jewish sacred spaces, the *Ner Tamid*, or everlasting light.

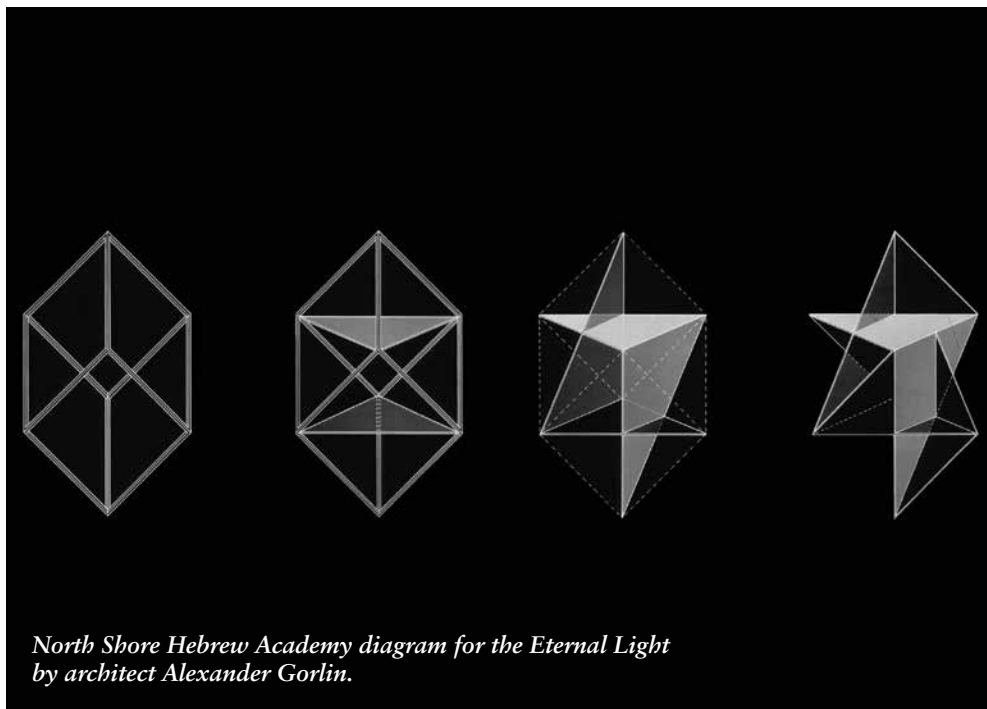
As one of the earliest symbols of Judaism, predating even the ubiquitous Star of David, the iconic candelabra became known as the

menorah, holding the Hebrew word for light (*or*) within it. With special direction for its construction, God conveyed this idea of the menorah to Moses, and appointed Aaron the priestly representative to keep it alight as an offering to Him. Derived from a tree form, the candelabra gracefully stands as a single vertical element with three parallel horizontal branch extensions, each to receive a small oil reservoir and wick, thus totaling seven sources of light, equating to the seven days of the week. The nine-branched menorah adds two lights, one to represent the miraculous eighth day of light from the single day's worth of oil during the rededication of the temple (Chanukah), and one more to serve as a lighter (*shamos*) to balance the symmetrical composition. Existing within an aniconic religion, which prohibits worshipping graven images, the menorah as a symbol of the torah and the Tree of Life has not only thrived as a singular phenomenon, but is echoed in many ritual objects and has even influenced the form of synagogue architecture. This complex duality lived even at the core of the religion, where the abstract concept of a God, who cannot be seen, forbids worship of figural images. It is this duality of tension and contrast that comes alive in designs and motifs, often from nature, but eventually realized in figural imagery that elevates the experience of God.

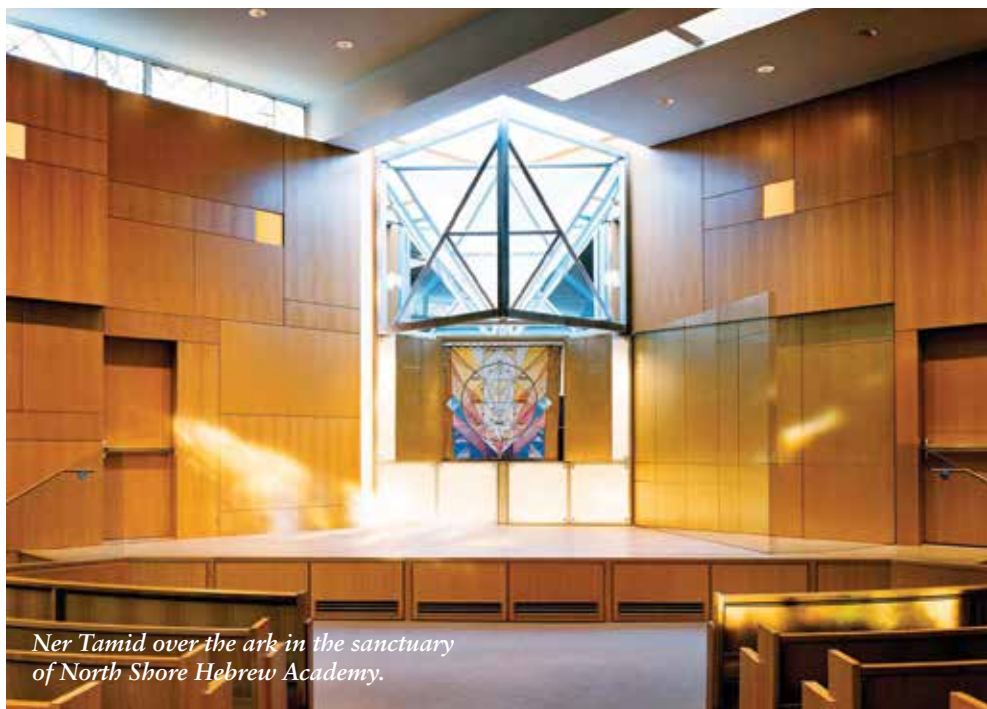
Today, the menorah permeates beyond the sanctuary in homes and for everyday use, but the Ner Tamid is found only in the sanctuary, closely related to the ark, as a signal of God's eternal presence. While the menorah has a clear description as a golden seven-lamped stand with six branches adorned with almond blossom knobs and cups (Exodus 25:31 Terumah), the Ner Tamid's description is, on the other hand, quite vague in the halachic (interpretative) literature. Actually, the vagueness of its details is embraced, providing immense freedom to endow the Ner Tamid with extraordinary artistic expression. Over time, it has been manifested in various imaginative forms, but however rendered, the Ner Tamid consistently represents the abiding presence of God and the spirit of the Jewish people. The Hebrew term is translated as "Everlasting Light," where the word *Ner* in Hebrew is a collective term. In fact, *Ner* (singular) and *Nerot* (plural) are used interchangeably, possibly causing some confusion between these two sources of light. The historical record and rabbinical writings report a tradition in the sanctuary of both the multiple branched candelabra as well as a single fire "that burns perpetually on the altar and is never extinguished."¹ It is from this very fire that the menorah was kindled each evening, fueling the burnt offerings of sacrifice.

This fascinating dichotomy, the worship by means of tangible objects versus the abstract idea of God, folded into the formalization of the religion. During the Exodus from Egypt in the 13th century BCE, the Jewish religion began its transformation into a monotheistic system. The experience of the golden calf, an idol worshipped by the Hebrews in the prolonged absence of Moses, causes God to realize there is a need in primitive culture for a tangible outlet for worshipful expression. To fulfill this need, God then reveals to Moses at Mount Sinai detailed instructions for the design and construction of the *Mishkan* (the tabernacle), which translates to "dwelling place." The surrounding enclosure, the *Aron Kodesh* (the ark to contain the Torah), the Ner Tamid, and even the very vestments of the priests, were specified as components of what would become the singular, portable dwelling place for "His Presence." As the resting place for the tabernacle of a previously nomadic people, the Temple in Jerusalem was the only place where sacrifice was offered. When the temple was destroyed and the community dispersed, eventually all physical forms of offering were replaced by the offering of the oil, and the powerful light it brought forth for the eternal flame.

THE AUTHOR IS MANAGING PRINCIPAL AT BIALOSKY + PARTNERS ARCHITECTS, BASED IN CLEVELAND, OHIO.



*North Shore Hebrew Academy diagram for the Eternal Light
by architect Alexander Gorlin.*



*Ner Tamid over the ark in the sanctuary
of North Shore Hebrew Academy.*

As seen with the construction of the tabernacle, the Jewish religion was founded very much of a place. As the Jewish nation was dispersed by the destruction of the second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, Jews sought to recreate places of worship around the globe that put them in mind of the original Temple sanctuary. Through 5,000 years of reconciling a dispersed once-compact community and also the independent branching-off of the religion, the Ner Tamid has triumphed as the powerful constant in all denominations of the faith: a perpetually illuminated lamp, hanging above the ark of the Torah (*Aron Kodesh*).

Symbolizing God's eternal presence, the Ner Tamid reminds us of both the original menorah, and the altar fire.

NER TAMID AS A SACRED DESIGNED OBJECT

Like Joseph's coat of many colors, contemporary Judaism is a quilt of many cultural and design traditions. Congregations within the faith, whether consciously or unconsciously, have sought to reflect their specific cultural identities in the design execution of their sacred spaces. As different traditions have evolved--religious, cultural, and artistic--the nature of these spaces and artifacts has also

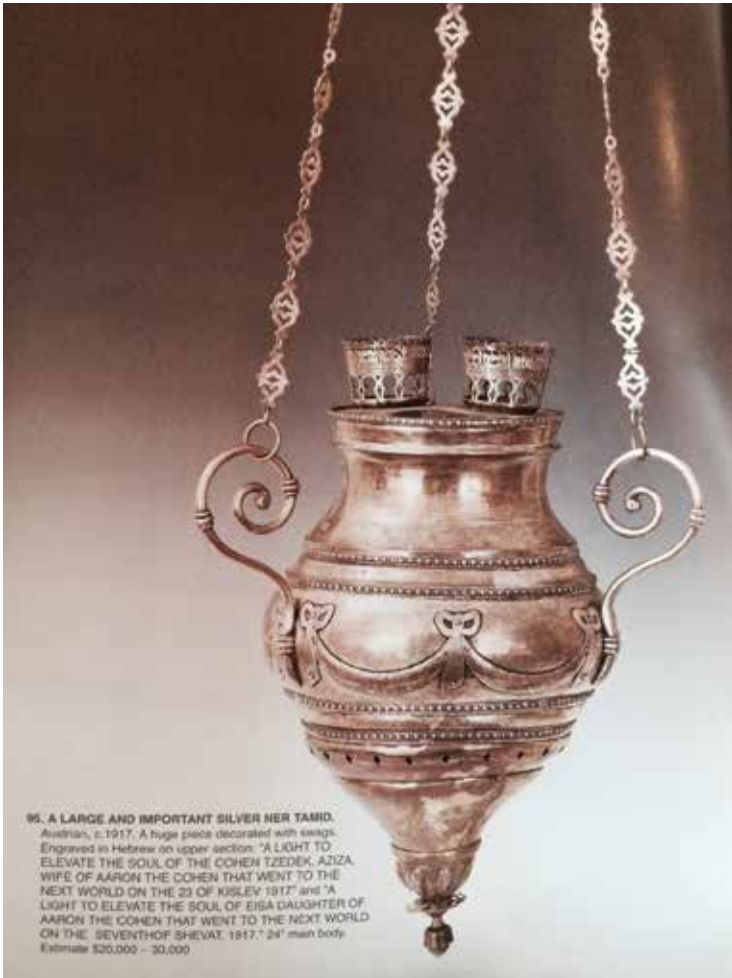
evolved to reflect the influence of new surroundings, new technology, and new ideas about art and design while maintaining the memory of a rich historical tradition. The original oil-fueled lamps have now evolved to adopt modern energy sources, such as gas and electricity. Still evolving to this day, the Ner Tamid is beginning to capture and display solar power, reminding us of our own connection to God's creation and his everlasting presence. As a specialized sacred object, the everlasting light immensely affects both the design and experience of the Temple that holds it. Each Ner Tamid is a carefully crafted piece that tells a unique story, as no two pieces have an identical journey. Such stories follow, as contemporary worship spaces set the stage for incorporating the traditional idea of Everlasting Light.

Suburban Temple Kol Ami in Beachwood, Ohio, was founded in 1948 as a classic reform congregation. Designed in the International Style by my father, Jack A. Bialosky, Sr., AIA, the 1954 facility was built with special attention to the flexibility of the interior gathering and worship spaces. The sanctuary and social hall oppose each other across an intervening foyer separated by rolling partitions that allow either space to expand or to combine as one large formal room. Tall and dramatic, the space is filled with daylight that enters through patterned glass block. The spatial focus is on the *bimah* (the raised platform), the ark, and the suspended everlasting light. Serving as a special backdrop to the Ner Tamid, the ark tapestry and doors were created by Luba Slodov, an artist, temple congregant, and holocaust survivor. She survived the camps by collecting bits of copper wire and learning to crochet them into merchandise to sell; she used this same method to construct the ark's meticulously crafted tapestry. The everlasting light itself was made in Pittsburgh from the architect's original design, in consultation with the rabbi Myron Silverman. Drawing inspiration from a common pine cone, the Ner Tamid was fabricated of folded copper sheets, giving unique illumination patterning and glow. The form intends to embody both the tree of life and the candelabra which it inspired. Just as worship practice has evolved over time, the sanctuary space itself has also transformed to align with contemporary practice. But throughout the decades, the original Everlasting Light has remained a constant reminder of the congregation's foundation and its connection to the Jewish idea.

North Shore Hebrew Academy in Kings Point, Long Island, New York, asked architect Alexander Gorlin, FAIA, to design a beautiful small sanctuary in 2001 that lies within



Eternal Light over the ark (created by Peter Diepenbrock) at Temple Beth Elohim.




Auction catalogue entry for the 1933 Ner Tamid that was later installed at Temple Beth Elohim, J. Greenstein & Company, Inc. 2011.

a tightly constrained site. The small space belies the profound spiritual feeling evoked by the mystical nature of the space's play of color and light from stained glass above. The central feature of the room is an installation of ark and skylight and everlasting light. The design is based on a cube form, a smaller version of the proportions of the sacred Temple sanctuary in Jerusalem. The skylight, ark, and everlasting light

are all woven together by a geometric design based on *Sephirot*, the 10 attributes or emanations through which God, The Infinite One, reveals himself in the tradition of Jewish mysticism or *Kabbalah*, and specifically the Kabbalistic creation myth of an initial shattered universe. Inside this assembly of elements suspended as a crystalline form within a geometric matrix of transforming triangles, the floating everlasting light evokes order coming out of chaos, a very powerful meditation.

Temple Beth Elohim in Wellesley, Massachusetts, unfolds a different journey of the Everlasting Light for the sanctuary in its new facility. By designing a room with flexible seating with views out to nature and by providing a low bimah, architect William Rawn, FAIA, successfully achieved the goals of the congregation by creating a sanctuary focused on building community. Adorned with a new ark, created by artist Peter Diepenbrock, designed elements within the space, like the building, were decidedly contemporary. The Ner Tamid became the last outstanding piece to complete this contemporary sanctuary. The building committee determined that the Ner Tamid from the previous facility would be better suited in a smaller study chapel and therefore began the hunt for a larger antique artifact as a source of meditation, inspiration, and prayer. According to inscriptions, the piece ultimately found had been created by Moroccan silversmiths in 1933 as a commission by a French Jew to honor his departed wife and daughter. Based on its size and scale, the artifact must have been intended for a large space in a substantial synagogue. How the artifact survived the war intact (perhaps hidden, or stolen and retrieved) is unknown. Imported to Holland in 1953, the artifact eventually made its way to New York as a prized addition to the private collection of two Hungarian holocaust survivors. A 20-year collection was sold through auction, dispersing the objects, making this Ner Tamid available for acquisition. The journey of this Ner Tamid resonates with many artifacts throughout the Jewish diaspora. This particular story of remembrance and providence was written up by congregant and building committee member Marni Grossman, and shared with me by Rawn. It was written as a history, but also as a *D'var Torah* (literally "word of Torah," but also a lesson or interpretation). The two guiding concepts for seeking the "new" everlasting light were: "remembering" and "peoplehood." Grossman explains "...the act of remembering is indeed transformative, leading to the realization that individual stories are the threads of any sacred community, and therefore a profound embrace of and deepened connection with one's community. Peoplehood is the concept that we are bound by a common history, despite different geographic pasts, and that this concept is critical to the perpetuation of the Jewish people across time."

Today, the Everlasting Light still stands as a wonderful expression of God's eternal presence and mysterious nature. In whatever form, whether contemporary or primitive, the act of kindling this ancient flame, tending it, and ensuring that it never goes out is a *mitzvah* (a good deed, but also a commandment), fortifying each day that God's presence flickers in us. 

1. Nahum M. Sarna, ed. and commentary, *The JPS Torah Commentary Exodus*, (Philadelphia, New York, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p. 176.



A Meeting of Light and Craft

Chestnut Hill Friends Meetinghouse

By James Bradberry, AIA



Meeting room's ceiling is dominated by the skyspace aperture and the gently sloped ceiling bathed in cove lighting.

Top left: The highpoint of Chestnut Hill Meetinghouse is the meeting room (at left in the photo) with a retractable roof that slides to the right on rails to reveal the 'skyspace.'

Bottom left: Architect James Bradberry (at left) meets with artist James Turrell and the artist's wife Kyung-Lim Lee in the Chestnut Hill meeting room.

WHEN THE CHESTNUT HILL FRIENDS OF Chestnut Hills, Pennsylvania, first came to us in 2006 with the notion of building a new meetinghouse, we jumped at the chance. After all, most architects would welcome the opportunity to build a house of worship, and Quakerism is richly imbedded in the history and fabric of the Philadelphia region. From a design standpoint, we were enamored with the idea of how to reinterpret a Quaker meetinghouse for the 21st century, especially since a new meetinghouse had not been built in the Delaware Valley in more than 50 years.

We were also enticed with the idea of working with renowned light artist James Turrell, who is also a Quaker, a man who has spent his life trying to make art literally out of thin air. Though Turrell works with artificial light, his best-known works are "Skyspaces," an aperture in a ceiling open to the sky. Turrell plays with the notion of positive and negative space. The ceiling is painted a neutral color, and the sky is framed. LED lights wash the ceiling, affecting viewers' perceptions of sky and light. The work is meant to be experienced at sunrise or sunset, that liminal time when the sky subtly changes, night to dawn, dusk to evening. Light is also a metaphor in Quakerism, linked to inner spiritualism and energy.

Architects and artists have collaborated on buildings throughout history, most particularly in the pre-Modern period. Gothic

cathedrals come to mind, structures that were amalgam creations by master builders, stained glass artists, stone carvers, sculptors, mosaic craftsmen, muralists, and the like. Such collaborations waned in the post-industrial age, though the Arts and Crafts, Secessionist, and De Stijl movements attempted to rekindle them. Today, the nexus of art and architecture is usually disjointed, for example, when a one-percent-for-art program commissions a piece after the building is designed, and the artist and architect have very little dialogue.

The Chestnut Hill Meetinghouse was a different experience. Both our office and Turrell were involved from the beginning. Our charge was to design the overall building, and to accommodate Turrell's Skyspace in the meeting room. From a design standpoint, that meant designing the room both as functional space and as a work of art. Together with Turrell, we developed the proportions of the room, its height, the particulars of the vaulted ceiling, materiality, the size of the aperture, the lighting cove, viewing angles, etc. Generally our influence stopped at functionality, especially above eye level, deferring to Turrell. For example, he did not want to see any architectural elements on the ceiling, such as light fixtures, sprinkler heads, life safety devices, etc. The plaster finish had to be specified to rigorous standards, the paint to exacting hue and luminance, etc. Our method of working

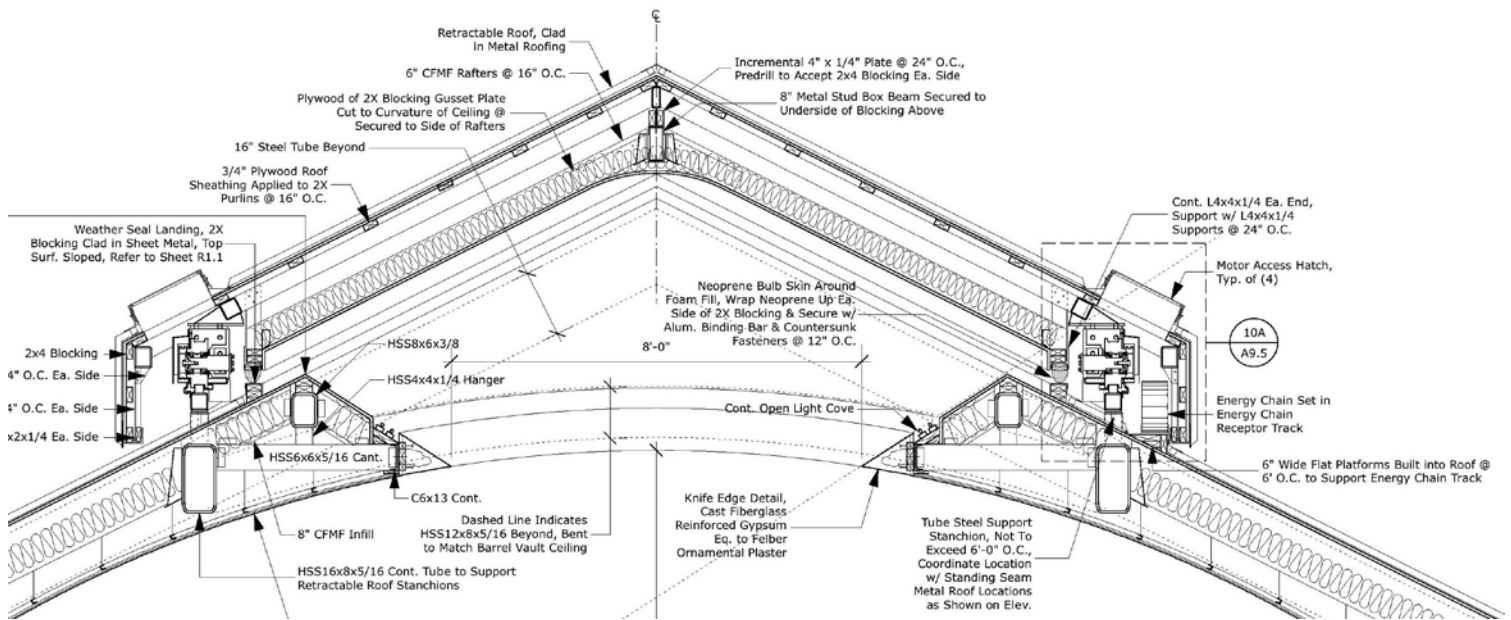
together was for us to develop drawings (plans, sections, elevations), then to sit with Turrell and a roll of tracing paper to refine things. It was a winnowing process, essentially, and the design slowly came together over a period of years. Ultimately we were able to achieve everything he desired, and to do so within the client's budget.

We also consulted with Turrell on the overall building design. Here we took the lead, but since Turrell is a practicing Quaker, we valued his input. We also did not want to create a building design that would be disjunctive with the look and feel of the meeting room. As in any religious structure, the sequence of moving through the building to the worship space is one of utmost importance. Symbolically, one is moving from the profane (the outside world) to the sacred (the worship space), though sacred is a word that most Quakers would eschew. The point is that we felt it important to make that journey special, and to that end, we wanted Turrell to assist us. We also valued his input on materials and furnishings. For example, the meeting room benches were custom designed by our office, and yet Turrell was able to weigh in on them. In the end, we feel, it was a successful collaboration.

There were numerous technical issues to overcome in the design, which for the most part, our office tackled. Beyond Turrell's desire to have unadorned walls and ceiling, he

THE AUTHOR IS PRINCIPAL OF JAMES BRADBERRY ARCHITECTS IN BRYN MAWR, PENNSYLVANIA, AND THE AUTHOR OF THREE NOVELS.

Sectional drawing of the meeting room skyspace, with its knife-edged detail; Turrell wanted the aperture to appear to have no thickness.




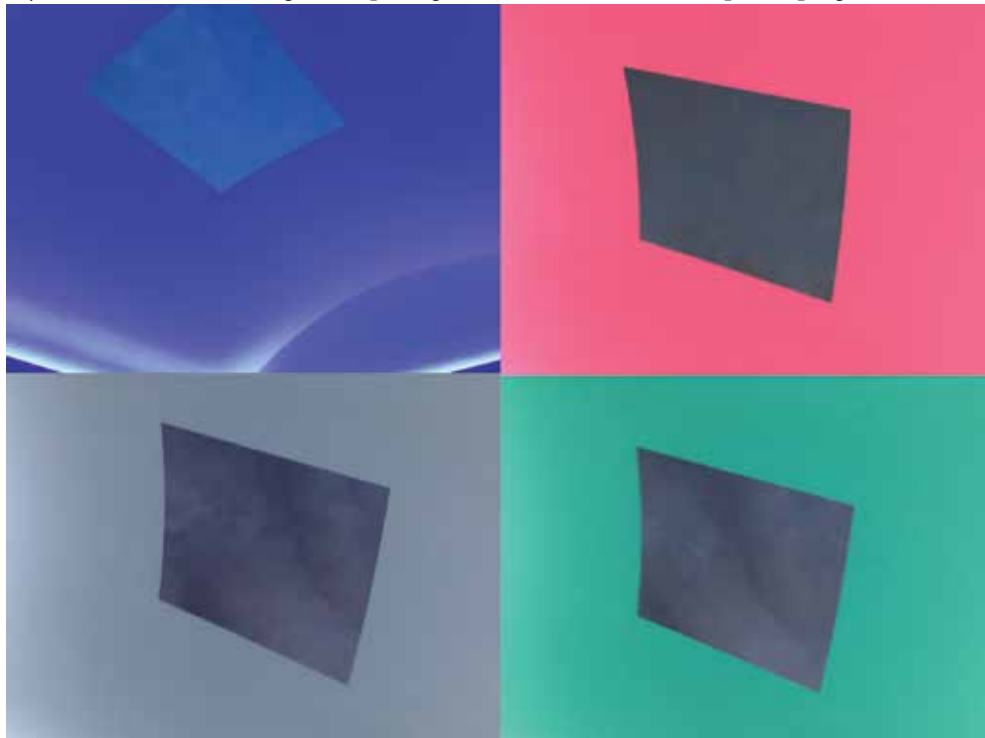
wanted the aperture to have no thickness, at least no thickness that a visitor could see. Thus we developed a fairly sophisticated steel roof structure and “knife’s edge” opening for the aperture, such that when the retractable roof is opened and the sky revealed, the rectangle of light is quite abstract, with no perceived roof thickness. In the same way, surrounding trees were removed or pruned, so that nothing but sky would be visible through the opening. As

noted above, the vaulted ceiling of the meeting room and the aperture are washed by artificial light to augment the daylight projected by the opening. Hidden LED light fixtures are located at the spring point of the vault. The lights consist of the colors green, red, blue, and white, and the colors are mixed via a computer to control for hue, intensity, color fade, etc. Turrell worked with his engineers to create a few different preset programs, custom

designed for Philadelphia’s longitude and latitude and the city’s atmospheric conditions.

The overall project was a leap of faith for Chestnut Hill. They are a small Meeting, and it was an ambitious financial endeavor. There were also those who felt that a work of art, even one so abstract and linked to Quaker values, was not appropriate for a worship space. In the end, these voices were consulted and heard, and ultimately each member was on board. Partnerships were also forged with arts groups, museums, foundations, and the like, and financial support was lent to the project that would not have been forthcoming without the Skyspace. The building is open to the public on certain days for viewing, such that the public/private venture is by all accounts a success.

Quaker Meetinghouses typically last for generations. This was a unique project to have been involved with, and one that we hope will be around for a long time. It would not be a bad thing for an art lover to come to Chestnut Hill Friends Meeting and be moved by the spirituality of the space, nor for a spiritual person to be awed by the beauty of the Skyspace and the meeting room. 



Four variations of light wash on the meeting room ceiling and their affect on the perception of the skyspace.

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The editors of Faith & Form want to bring its readers the latest news of those involved in the fields of religion, art, and architecture. Send press releases and materials to the attention of Michael J. Crosbie, Editor, Faith & Form, 47 Grandview Terrace, Essex, CT 06426; email: mcrosbie@faithandform.com.

NOTES & COMMENTS

BOOK REVIEW: CORB AS THEOLOGIAN

Sacred Concrete: The Churches of Le Corbusier, Flora Samuel and Inge Linder-Gaillard (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2013) 230 pages, \$85.

Given the inclusion of the word “concrete” in the title of this book, the reader may be led to expect that the authors have provided an account of Le Corbusier’s emblematic use of this material in his church architecture. Yet the focus of the book is not on the material of concrete and its use in Le Corbusier’s religious buildings. Rather, attention is given here to Le Corbusier’s views on religion (very broadly defined); his relationship to the Church; and his contributions to the debates surrounding the modernizing role of liturgical arts, led in large part by the journal *L’Art Sacré* under the auspices of the Dominican Father Marie-Alain Couturier (1897-1954).

Thus the tenor of the book is set up in two opening chapters titled “Modernity and the Catholic Church” and “Le Corbusier and Religion,” which establish what the authors describe as the architect’s “intense interest in issues of religion and faith.” The body of the book is then given over to readings of the major religious works: the proposed Basilica at La Sainte Baume (1946-60); the pilgrimage chapel of Notre Dame du Haut à Ronchamp (1950-54); the Monastery of Sainte-Marie de la Tourette (1956-60); and the Parish Church of Saint-Pierre, Firminy-Vert (completed in 2006, 41 years after the architect’s death). The elaborate Sainte-Baume underground basilica planned for the grotto dedicated to Mary Magdalene in Provence receives particular attention in the book. The many complicated twists and turns of the project; the influence of the client Edouard Trouin; the influence by the writer and diplomat Paul Claudel; and the subsequent impact of the project on Couturier and the architect Antonin Raymond are addressed through a uniquely close reading of archival resources.

Since this volume is not, however, comprehensive of both the built and unbuilt work of Le Corbusier’s church architecture, the reader is left wanting to know more about lesser known projects, as for example, Le Corbusier’s project for a church in Le Tremblay of 1929 (about which only one sentence and a small sketch are provided); the 1951 Delgado Chapel project in Caracas; the 1962 plan for a church in Bologna; and the list of inquiries for potential projects solicited from Le Corbusier after 1955 which includes, according to Gilles Ragot, nine chapels, a convent, two monasteries and 17 churches, mostly stemming from Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and France, but also from Italy, the Netherlands, the United States, Venezuela, and Rwanda.

Le Corbusier’s work is helpfully set within a mention of related religious works such as Auguste Perret’s Notre Dame du Raincy (1921) and careful attention to the mandate of extensive church building in the Ile de France carried out by the association of the Chantier du Cardinal beginning in 1931. Le Corbusier’s legacy is also documented in relation to an assortment of later Modernist and contemporary church buildings that the authors see as extending his influence: works by architects Claude Parent and Paul Virilio; Richard Meier; Steven Holl; Álvaro Siza; Tadao Ando; and Reitermann & Sassenroth.

Le Corbusier had Calvinist origins in his native Switzerland and had lived through the violent political turmoil that Europe suffered between 1914 and 1945. Given this experience, he repeatedly expressed deep concerns regarding the human spirit, yet his spiritual sense of the world defied easy classifications. This is evident not only in his well-known assertion that “some things are spiritual and others are not, whether or not they are religious,” but also in the manner in which the ongoing vacillation between the sacred and the profane is evident in the labyrinthine nature of his work and in the dialogical movement of opposites evident in his writings, including in particular his formation of the principles of Purism; his philosophy of Le Modulor; and his maxims and iconography in *Le Poème de l’angle droit* (1947-53). Rather surprisingly, the current book does not devote significant attention to Le Corbusier’s ideas about “ineffable space” as a fourth dimension, first expressed in his 1946 essay “L’Espace indicible.”

In 1965 James Stirling famously wrote of Ronchamp seeing in the chapel’s emphasis on volume and space a harbinger of a “crisis of rationalism.” In part *Sacred Concrete* sets out to address the readings of Le Corbusier’s religious buildings by Stirling and his contemporaries in the British architectural establishment, including Nikolaus Pevsner, Peter Hammond, and Peter Smithson. Yet these architects and historians often underscore the point--sometimes disguised in this volume--that Le Corbusier’s thought and work on the spirit is in no way hermetic. Engaging his religious building more directly through its historiography stimulates a complicated discussion of Le Corbusier’s fascination with the “religious” and the impact of this strain of his thinking on the culture of architecture after World War II.

~Karla Cavarra Britton

The reviewer is a lecturer at the Yale School of Architecture.

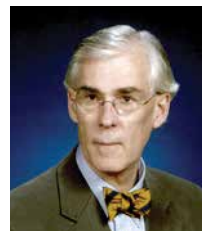
WILLIAMSON SELECTED FOR FREY AWARD

James F. Williamson, FAIA, is the 2014 American Institute of Architects’ Edward S. Frey Award winner for career contributions to religious architecture and support of the allied arts. The national honor is given by the AIA’s Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture (IFRAA) to an architect who has demonstrated a passion for and dedication to quality worship and sacred spaces, including fostering spiritual values and for promoting a cross-denominational community focused on religious arts and architecture. The award

is scheduled to be presented to Williamson at the AIA National Convention in June.

Williamson serves as a professor in the Department of Architecture at the University of Memphis. His professional practice, which focuses on the design of religious architecture, has included both new and restored churches across the country. During some 30 years of practice as a principal in his own firm, Williamson received more than 30 architectural design awards at the local, regional, and national levels, including two Faith & Form/

IFRAA Religious Art and Architecture Design Awards. His work has been published internationally. In addition, his professional activities have included leadership in IFRAA and AIA, as well as articles, lectures, films, and presentations on religious architecture for professional and community groups.



Notes & Comments continue on page 35

HEAR NO EVIL

THE SACRED AND THE MUNDANE
WALTER SEDOVIC, FAIA, LEED AP,
AND JILL H. GOTTHELF, AIA, FAPT

There is a potent takeaway message embedded within the recent multi-billion-dollar valuation of Beats, a popular music streaming application that incorporates “ultra-high quality” headphones: People are concerned about the quality of what they listen to.

Our strivings for acoustic perfection did not begin in our electronic world; they have been a central part of sacred spaces and rituals throughout history. From the dawn of building, sacred spaces were designed with sound in mind and, in fact, the acoustical properties of religious buildings were closely tied to very specific liturgical objectives. The relatively new field of archaeoacoustics studies the significance of sound in ancient sacred places and its relationship to ritual. This field has the exciting potential to overcome a seeming disconnect in our design education and process – one that often disengages us from the past and its lessons – toward a more holistic understanding of the relationship between acoustical performance and architecture.

With acoustics in mind the design of religious buildings can create unique sacred experiences without dependence on mechanical enhancement, supplemental sound systems, and unsightly post occupancy treatments. The failure to consider acoustics as a key design component in religious architecture has spurred a market for acoustical retrofits of sacred spaces—electronic architecture (audio systems and complex controls) and surface-applied sound-absorption materials—baffles, banners, wall and ceiling panels—costs of which are often prohibitive.


With abundant technology derived from what Eisenhower referred to as the “military industrial complex” following World War II, we have had the unique ability to engineer nature completely out of our buildings. This concept (and concern) has been covered earlier in this column in the context of mechanical systems and energy performance. Likewise, when we lose sight of passive acoustic systems – their history, benefit, and ability to enrich our perception and experience of space – acoustics becomes another fallen soldier.

Form, volume, mass, and materials of building have significant intrinsic effects on the sounds generated within a space (or capable of being generated). These four principal building blocks of design can be manipulated, massaged, and tuned like an instrument to harness sound – in fact, many sanctuaries are themselves considered “instruments,” and thereby create myriad desired effects to enhance religious experience. Equally, one can inadvertently create undesired acoustical effects – trapping sound below balconies, reverberation via overly hard surfaces, muffling from carpets and fabrics.

Beginning with programming – whether for a new building, modification, or restoration – let’s seek consistently to be mindful of acoustics and, further, to set a goal of creating the most natural, least intrusive acoustical experience for the intended use. Intended use and response to liturgical need is the trickiest part, and the one

most deserving of our focus and attention: It has long been accepted that spaces may be molded around voice (spoken, chanting) or music (choral, organ, cantorial, orchestral), but never both. There exist significant examples of one taking prominence – often to the detriment of the other. When liturgy or congregations change, affecting physical or programmatic modifications, what were once well-designed acoustical spaces can noticeably fall flat.

A magnificent example of diligent, inspired blending of liturgy, light, form, and acoustics is Cathedral of Christ the Light, designed by Craig Hartman of SOM Architects, located in Oakland, California. Their creative use of architectural elements to address a variety of acoustical needs throughout the building, are seamlessly integrated. Beyond form, mass, and void, other refinements abound. Special woods and finishes were selected and placed with consideration of their specific sound profiles and characteristics. While invisible to most as acoustical treatments, their enhancement of visitors’ auditory experience is profound.

Rather than handing out headphones and iPods, we can learn from examples both old and new to reduce dependence on electronic systems and intrusive interventions, and instead use the power of architecture to enhance our acoustical experience. 

WALTER SEDOVIC AND JILL GOTTHELF ARE PRINCIPALS OF WALTER SEDOVIC ARCHITECTS, AN AWARD-WINNING FIRM SPECIALIZING IN SUSTAINABLE PRESERVATION. THEY CAN BE REACHED AT: WSA@MODERNRUINS.COM

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In beginning the design of a place of worship, many architects value analysis but distrust intuition. They have been taught the Modernist dogma that design is an objective, problem-solving process in which the client's program of functional requirements is absolute. However, analytical thinking and problem solving alone are inadequate for the creation of a work of religious architecture that evokes in us a sense of awe or that is capable of resonating with our deepest joy, sadness, fear, love, or longing.

Architecture that has the power to touch the heart comes from somewhere else, the place Louis Kahn called "Silence." By Silence, Kahn did not mean "very, very quiet." Silence is the source of creativity, "the desire to be, to express." Entering into Silence requires that analysis be set aside in favor of an intuitive search for "what the building wants to be." Design consists of the transformation of "Silence into Light," Kahn's term for the material manifestation of the desire to be. Design entails many twists and turns in which an idea that originates in Silence may first be expressed as Light in the form of a preliminary sketch. If the drawing fails to convey the spirit of the original idea, it is necessary to return to Silence for additional insight. Thus design involves a series of transitions from Silence to Light and from Light to Silence. Kahn taught that after a great building is completed, Silence is present once more.

Silence is sensed in great works of religious art and architecture. It is often most powerfully felt in space, not in mass, and in what is implied but not revealed, as in the *kapporeth*, the cover of the Ark of the Covenant, where a void framed by two golden cherubim represented the unseen presence of Yahweh. Anyone who has felt overwhelmed

in the shadowed vastness of Chartres Cathedral or who has gazed in wonder at a shaft of sunlight slicing across the dome of the Pantheon has known Silence. It can be encountered in the ruins of certain ancient Greek temples, where one can sometimes sense a numinous "something there," described by William James. At Stonehenge on the lonely, windswept Salisbury plain, one feels it--what Kahn described as "the beginning of architecture." It is not "made out of a handbook," and does not start from practical issues, but "from a kind of feeling that there must be a world within a world."

Kahn believed that in order to encounter Silence, it was necessary for the architect to forget the client's program and abandon all preconceptions. "The first thing to do is to throw away the program," he said, arguing that the program for a new building is usually little more than a list of areas copied from previous buildings and fails to reflect its underlying, essential nature. The architect who thinks of the program as a prescription to be filled fails in the higher duty to translate areas into spaces that inspire human thoughts, feelings, and activities.

Kahn challenged much of what architects have been taught about the "process" of design. Analysis and problem solving do have their place. But the architect of worship spaces that touch the heart must first be willing to rely on intuition rather than analysis, entering into Silence, the source of the desire to be. 

THE AUTHOR IS A PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS AND THE WINNER OF THE 2014 AIA/IFRAA EDWARD S. FREY AWARD. HE WAS A STUDENT OF LOUIS KAHN.

NOTES & COMMENTS

EDWARD ANDERS SÖVIK, 1918-2014

Edward Anders Sövik, FAIA, a landmark architect and scholar of sacred architecture and art, and the first editor of *Faith & Form* magazine, passed away on May 4, 2014, at the age of 95. Born of Lutheran missionaries in Henan Province, China, he left at 17 to enroll in St. Olaf College along with a twin brother and an older sister, graduating in 1939. He went on to study painting at the Art Students League in New York, and later theology at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. After the attack on Pearl Harbor he enlisted in the Marine Corps, serving as a night fighter pilot in the Pacific; he was awarded a Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross. In 1949, he earned his architecture degree from Yale University and began an architectural practice in Northfield and a teaching career in the St. Olaf art department.

Sövik was a pioneer in the field of religious architecture and art. He was active in the Guild for Religious Architecture (GRA), which later became the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture (IFRAA), now a Knowledge Community of the AIA. He served as the president of the GRA from 1967 to 1968. He was the first editor of *Faith & Form*, which was launched in 1967. Sövik served on IFRAA's Board of Directors until 1980. In 1981 Sövik was awarded the first Edward S. Frey Memorial Award created by IFRAA to recognize architects who made exemplary contributions to the field of religious architecture. Sövik's writings, particularly his book *Architecture for Worship*, published in 1973, and his innumerable award-winning church building projects continue to stand as guideposts for the architectural community.

Sövik's portfolio included roughly 400 churches as well as other buildings. While churches were a focus of his practice, his work ranged widely, including many buildings for St. Olaf, Carleton, Concordia (Moorhead), and Stevens colleges, the University of Minnesota, and other institutional projects. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, a president of the Minnesota Society of the AIA, and a recipient of the Society's Gold Medal.

He was a man of many interests and talents, including drawing and poetry, and will be further remembered for his good will, eloquence, and quiet generosity.





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Send your projects (built or unbuilt), article ideas, and questions to: mcrosbie@faithandform.com



Photo: Mike Martij