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Manuscript Submission: The editor is pleased to review manuscripts for possible publication. Any subject material relevant to religious art and architecture is welcome. Good visual material is emphasized. Articles may be submitted online at faithandform.com/submit or to mcrosbie@faithandform.com.

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ON THE COVER:

Symbols of faiths around the world reflect the interfaith nature of *Faith & Form*. The 18 symbols include, from left to right, starting in the top left corner of the cover: Christianity's Cross; Judaism's Star of David; Hinduism's Omkar; Baha'i Faith's Nine-Pointed Star; Islam's Star and Crescent; Pagan Sun Cross; Taoism's Yin and Yang; Shintoism's Torii; Early Christian Fish symbol; Jainism's Swastika; Sikhism's Khanda; Slavic Neopaganism's Hands of God; Jainism's Hand; Ayyavazhism's Lotus; Neopaganism's Triple Goddess; Christianity's Maltese Cross; Buddhism's Wheel of Dharma; Russian Orthodox Cross. The number 18 in Judaism is "chai," which means "living." Cover design by Dave Kuhar.

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DEAR ARCHITECT, CIRCA 2067

EDITOR'S PAGE * MICHAEL J. CROSBIE


Dear architect, dear liturgical designer, dear artist of the sacred, dear creator of those spaces where worshippers of the future might gather. Perhaps you have found the words on this dusty page in a basement archive, or in a box of long-forgotten copies of *Faith & Form* in a congested attic. This time capsule is for

you, written to give you an idea of what we—the architects, artists, and designers of the sacred in the first score years of the 21st century—were struggling with, were questioning.

The very nature of the sacred was, for us, a topic of passionate discussion and speculation. It had changed a lot in the first 50 years of this magazine's existence, but maybe not as much as we thought, because this journal grew out of great shifts in organized religion in the first half of the 20th century. The very fact that this publication started in 1967 was due to the widening sense among many that maybe the sacred might be accessible to us in more ways than had been believed, and that our work as designers, architects, artists, and liturgists was never more needed.

We also had to contend with a great irony: the “dying” of what had come to be known as “main line” religions around the world, while at the very same moment a ravenous hunger was felt among many for the spiritual in their quotidian lives. Religious buildings emptied out, their congregations were spread thin, but the thirst for the spiritual did not

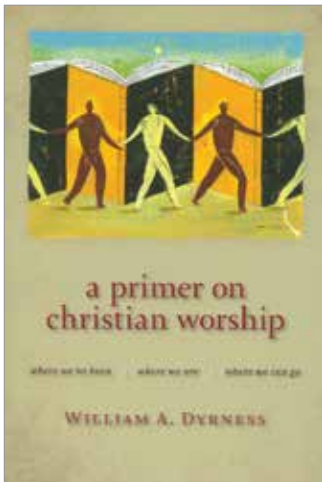
disappear. If anything, its shoots of life appeared in places and in ways that some recognized and cultivated, and others dismissed. The form of faith was changing. But there was something familiar about it too: the need to express the human spirit, to assert a realm beyond the physical world before our eyes, and the desire to do so because these were the very qualities that made us most human. Can you yet understand this? Maybe this notion has become so quaint, so antique, and by now an embarrassment to you who read these words. But when they were written, there was still some hope that it was a possibility.

So, dear architect, dear designer, dear artist of the sacred in the future: If you are still there—and have not been wiped off the face of the earth by a nuclear holocaust, or mass biological weapons, or armed conflicts over clean water and air, or been replaced by a bot—know that we of a half-century earlier believed that you would have your work cut out for you, that there would be no easy answers, that human spirituality would still need a home, a place to be shared, a space in which to be demonstrated, over and over. Know that we had some inkling of the challenges you might now face. Know that the work you continue to do is needed, that it fits into a great chain of creativity that extends throughout human history. And know that we heard the same things you might hear today, as you read these words in 2067, about the work that you do: that it is “useless,” that it is “pointless.” It is always the most useless and pointless things that humans do—striving for the spirit, among them—that make all the difference. 

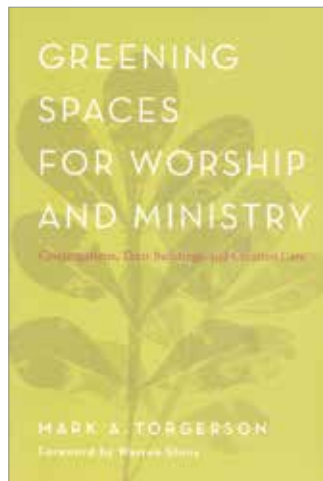
MICHAEL J. CROSBIE IS THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF *FAITH & FORM* AND CAN BE REACHED BY EMAIL AT MCROSBIE@FAITHANDFORM.COM

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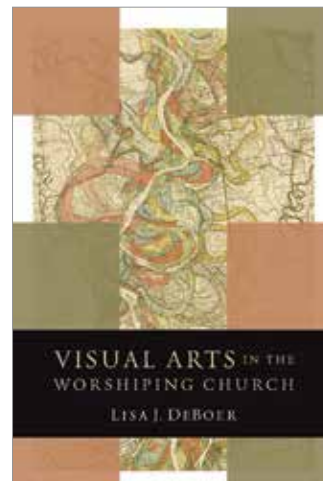
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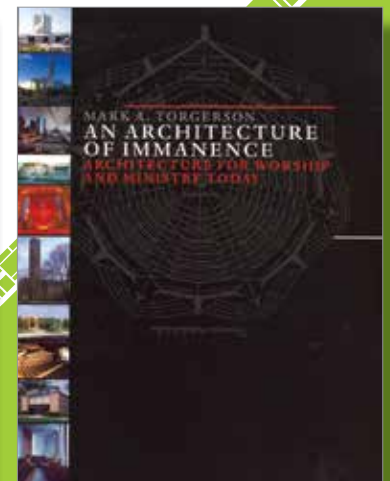
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Church of the Transfiguration, New York City
Photograph / Timothy Schenck

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Voices from the Journal's Past

Edited by Michael J. Crosbie

Since its first issue in 1967, Faith & Form has presented ideas and insights from some of the most important figures in the field of religious architecture and art.

Here are a few of the voices from the journal's past, excerpted from Faith & Form articles with their by-line.

"THE ESSENCE OF DESIGNING A SYNAGOGUE"

PERCIVAL GOODMAN, INAUGURAL ISSUE, 1967

The architecture of our time has based itself on the dynamics of movement between the spaces modifying the spaces to fit the rhythm of the movement. "Form," as Louis Sullivan said, "should follow function."

Like every structure the essence of synagogue design lies in correct understanding and interpretation of the movement within. Such movements have a surface simplicity in comparison, say, to those which take place in the manufacture of computers; they are not technological, not susceptible to scientific analysis. To design the prayer hall of a synagogue does require a knowledge of construction, of acoustics, of heating, ventilating and so on, for the prayer hall technically is an auditorium. What makes it a synagogue are not these things, nor the addition of an ark or menorah.

It is easier to describe what a synagogue is not than what it is. Martin Buber said: "Other gods are dependent on a house, an altar, sacrificial worship, because without these things they have no existence, their whole nature consisting only of what the creatures give them; whereas the living God is not dependent on such things since He is." And Solomon himself said after building the Temple: "Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house I have built."

In the case of the synagogue, what I seek is the negation of the negation. I cannot design to do honor to God; this is a vanity, suitable for

the heathen. The affirmation lies in the effort to make a place in which people can gather together as near face to face as can be, to learn the tradition and its interpretation so things can be understood as they are and as they could be, to improve themselves by striving to learn the meanings of certain words: "peace, justice, love, mercy."

ARCHITECT PERCIVAL GOODMAN (1904-1989) WAS ONE OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL DESIGNERS OF SYNAGOGUES IN 20TH-CENTURY AMERICA, AN URBAN THEORIST, AND THE CO-AUTHOR WITH HIS BROTHER, PAUL, OF THE SEMINAL BOOK, COMMUNITAS.



Photo: Samuel Graber

Percival Goodman's Congregation Shaarey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan, was completed in 1963.

"HEAVEN CAN'T WAIT: THE TRANSCENDENT IN THE EVERYDAY" ROBERT RAMBUSCH, FALL, 1974

Three commonly accepted viewpoints on the present state of religion are: 1) things were never worse; 2) things were never better; and 3) the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Artists are traditionally associated with the social issues of their time. Their prophetic gifts consist in their seeing beyond the ordinary man's ability to express. Present day art neither celebrates nor communicates a prophetic stance on peace, civil rights or prison reform. Artists as people protest; artists as artists do not.

While Christo was busily draping sea cliffs with drop cloths, American bombers were dropping napalm canisters and defoliating Asian agricultural land.

While Norman Rockwell sentimentalized American folkways, the President of the United States, his Cabinet members, and advisors appeared to be violating Constitutional guarantees.

Many people see the religious multipurpose building as an uneasy compromise between the sacred and the profane, the temple and the money changers, the extraordinary and the ordinary. They fail to see that a multipurpose building can incarnate the transcendent in the everyday. An appeal to the history of religious building enables many to see it as exclusive. The word temple, from the Greek, means to cut off. The history of incarnational theology opts for inclusion, the embodiment

of an ideal in the everyday. Multipurpose religious buildings are often generated by economic constraints, cheap in construction and tawdry in material. Competent architects and perceptive congregations sense the importance of humanizing forms and appropriate materials in the articulation of a flexible space. Within this space are integrated all the social and educational aspects of community life, orienting the celebration of these values in ritual.

ROBERT RAMBUSCH (1924-2017) WAS A LITURGICAL ARTIST, SOCIAL ACTIVIST, AND ONE OF THE FOUNDERS OF FAITH & FORM. A REMEMBRANCE OF RAMBUSCH IS FOUND ON PAGE 35 OF THIS ISSUE.

“ARCHITECTS AND ARTISTS—INTERPRETING MAN’S SPIRITUAL DREAMS”
PIETRO BELLUSCHI, SUMMER/SPRING 1979

To design a house of worship is in effect to explore our relationship with God and to search for an understanding of the nature of religion as an institution.

When the great Gothic cathedrals were conceived and built in the Dark Middle Ages, religion was the very core of every community. It possessed transcendent powers seldom comprehended in modern times. Religion was then a total commitment of the Spirit. It gave strength and inspiration to mankind, a power which lasted unimpaired for many centuries. The advent of the age of reason filled men with an earthly pride but left them insecure and full of doubt. Ever since, often unknowingly, the Spirit has been yearning for recognition. It is this search for spiritual fulfillment to which I’m alluding when I speak of the nature of religion, though admitting that such a search is also evident in other fields, notably in the arts.

Father Couturier, the Dominican friar responsible for the great works of art in the church in Notre Dame of Assy, in describing his experience in gathering so many famous artists for that project, did admit that great artists are few and we should take them wherever we can find them, as it is better to turn to geniuses without faith than to believers without talent. In the true artist, the secret and persistent sources of religious faith never fully disappear or deteriorate; they are still the most precious part of his unconscious on which his imagination feeds. He quoted Matisse telling Picasso, “You well know that what we all strive to recapture in our art is the atmosphere of our first communion.”

AIA GOLD MEDALIST PIETRO BELLUSCHI (1899-1994)
WAS ONE OF THE LEADING ARCHITECTS OF RELIGIOUS
BUILDINGS IN THE US IN THE MID-TO-LATE-20TH CENTURY.

“WHAT ARE THE REAL QUESTIONS?”

EDWARD LARABEE BARNES, SPRING 1982

If we are to talk about Art, Architecture, and Religion, we must ask, “What is missing?”

I remember a day in Chartres with blowing cumulus clouds outside. When the sun lit the great windows, all that blue glass with bits of ruby glowed a dazzling crystalline piercing glow that lit the whole cathedral. And then a cloud passed, and the blue glass became deep and dark, glowing like the depths of the sea—and I thought of *de profundis*.

Once on a summer evening I climbed the Acropolis and suddenly was confronted by the Parthenon standing in horizontal golden sunlight. It is a wreck—the Parthenon—and yet everyone who climbs that hill is instantly overcome by it. I walked around in the evening light, stood between the swelling columns, stooped to sight along the steps and see their subtle camber, and then walked back to take it all in again. How was it possible that such a derelict could breath today with such proximate life? What was the spirit that moved those ancient architects?

Perhaps it is unfair to point to great monuments. I do it because we all know them. The same point could be made with thousands of anonymous works from all time and from all around the world—works where the motivation of the artist was truly spiritual. And this, of course, is what we miss so much today—work that is truly spiritual.

ARCHITECT EDWARD LARABEE BARNES (1915-2004)
WAS AWARDED THE AIA GOLD MEDAL POSTHUMOUSLY IN 2007 AND THE
EDWARD S. FREY AWARD FROM THE INTERFAITH
FORUM ON RELIGION, ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN 1996.



Pietro Belluschi’s 1960 Church of St. Gregory the Great in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, won a Faith & Form/IFRAA Award for Restoration by Northeast Collaborative Architects in 2014.

“IMAGINING THE HOLY”

JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNADIN, FALL 1985

In attempting to speak of God, the ultimate reality and ground of all being, philosophers and theologians have traditionally employed the three fundamental concepts of truth, goodness, and beauty. These are three pathways by which we strive to understand God.

The pathway of truth is a challenging one because we encounter great complexity in our attempts to sort out truth from falsehood. The pathway of goodness often evades us because, for all our best efforts, our shortcomings and limitations consistently trip us up.

However, the third pathway—that of beauty—is a more gentle one. It leads us to behold the Creator’s touch revealed in nature as well as in the masterpieces of human art and creativity. It is often the pathway of delight, gentleness and awe. In a sense, then, artists may dedicate themselves to the service of beauty, not simply for its own sake, but also as a revelation of the more profound and ultimate beauty of God.

The artist who seeks to express something about God or about the deepest part of human reality must be willing to walk the tightrope between the terrifying and the fascinating, between the exuberant complexity of God and God’s ultimate simplicity, between God’s revelation of self in creation and God’s transcendence.

JOSEPH CARDINAL BERNADIN (1928-1996) WAS THE
ARCHBISHOP OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI
FROM 1972 TO 1982, AND CHICAGO FROM 1982 TO 1996.



Edward Anders Sövik's 1963 Westwood Lutheran Church in St. Louis Park, Minnesota, won a Faith & Form/IFRAA Award for Restoration by Kodet Architectural Group, Ltd. in 2013.

"THE MIRROR OF THE CHURCH"


EDWARD ANDERS SÖVIK, FALL 1988

Now a church is first of all a body of people, not a building, and the building if it is a good one, ought to be an image or a mirror of the community it shelters. Can the church building be a mirror of the elemental commitments that are the basis of religion? And can this be accomplished architecturally, without the use of inscriptions, discursive symbols or other devices that architects sometimes use to make their intentions clear? If we wish to suppose that there is such a thing as a religious building we must devise an architecture that speaks to our sensibilities encouraging us in our commitment to the true, the good, and the holy.

To deal with Truth there is, I should think, a simple starting point. Things that are real and authentic can be the symbol of truth, just as dissimulation, artificiality and affectations are signs of the opposite. So called "honest architecture" is the beginning point. If we surround ourselves with what is phony we become phony. This kind of respect for authenticity of material and structure is only the beginning point. The study of what is appropriate (true to) is an endless study that involves plan and detail in immense complexity. A building that has the serious intentions of a place of worship demands the most concentrated and consistent attention to the issues of candor, appropriateness and integrity.

If church people sincerely wish to make hospitable architecture they should keep in mind that Christianity and the Judaic tradition that was its basis are what are called secular religions. The meeting with God does not happen because people escape the world to enter God's presence. God is present in the world and meets us where we are. The most vivid paradigm is that when Jesus entered the world it was not into some special out-of-this-world palace, but into the most earthy of places, a stable.

So it is appropriate that a church building should be a secular sort of assembly place, avoiding an other-worldly ambience. And the quality of love carried to a proper end, and reflecting fairly the sense of the Christian community as a servant community, ought to supply a place that is not merely permissive of non-liturgical events but really hospitable to them.

ARCHITECT EDWARD ANDERS SÖVIK (1918-2014) WAS A PROLIFIC WRITER ON RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE, THE DESIGNER OF SCORES OF CHURCHES, AND A FOUNDER OF FAITH & FORM. IN 1981 HE WAS THE FIRST RECIPIENT OF THE EDWARD S. FREY AWARD FROM THE INTERFAITH FORUM ON RELIGION, ART AND ARCHITECTURE. 

An Architecture of Pardon and Consolation

Embodying the meaning of Pope Francis's recent "Year of Mercy" in the language of brick and mortar.

By Michael E. DeSanctis

AT THE OUTSET OF 2016, AS PART OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN to revive and reform the Church for which he serves as universal leader, Pope Francis declared the Roman Catholic faithful beneficiaries of an Extraordinary Jubilee—or so-called "Year of Mercy"—intended to celebrate the saving action of God in each of their lives and, by means of their involvement in the world, the hoped-for redemption of the entire human race. Though the jubilee, like every public gesture in Francis's whirlwind-of-a-pontificate, has been scrutinized by observers of the Church of Rome for its theological, ecclesiological, and even canonical implications, nothing has been said of the impact this prolonged reflection on the immensity of divine love might have on the very places in which ordinary Catholics daily implore God to "have mercy on [them], forgive [them] of [their] sins, and bring [them] to everlasting life" (Penitential Rite, *Roman Missal*, 2011). What, in fact, *would* places of sacred worship look like, no one in Catholic circles seems to have asked, were they to embody in an explicit way the same appreciation for God's limitless mercy that inspired Pope Francis to convoke the jubilee in the first place?

Such a question remains pertinent to the designers and users of Catholic church buildings today, one would think, months after a ritual resealing of church doors in parish communities everywhere signaled the conclusion of the jubilee, along with the sealing-up of homily notes tailored to Francis's belief in a God as "forgetful" as he is forgiving (Papal Homily, March 1, 2016, Vatican Chapel at Casa Santa Marta). Of what would the basic grammar of Catholic church architecture consist, in fact, were its primary task to convey the proximity of God to his people and the clemency he so freely extends them, as opposed to a sort of heavenly aloofness or "justice from afar" so neatly captured in sacred environments over the centuries through the shorthand of vaulted ceilings? The churches in the photos that accompany this article might be interpreted as just such environments.

The pope himself, one could argue, may have been offering clues to creating an architecture of pardon and consolation even as he opened the great Porta Santa at St. Peter Basilica back in December of 2015 to inaugurate his Holy Year. As is customary on such occasions, Francis positioned himself at the portal's outer threshold before splaying its doors with the force of papal tradition dating back to the 14th century. The pope then entered the basilica, the first of millions of visitor-pilgrims in Rome that year expected to do likewise, confident of finding within its vast interior some semblance of heaven's own grandeur and the storehouse of grace to be discovered there. To the astute observer, the underlying "liminality" of Francis's action was unmistakable, though the term and its meaning were likely lost on the many Catholics and others who, in crossing the Porta's threshold during the Holy Year,

THE AUTHOR IS A PROFESSOR OF FINE ARTS AND THEOLOGY AT GANNON UNIVERSITY, ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA. HE WRITES WIDELY ON CATHOLIC CHURCH ARCHITECTURE IN LIGHT OF CATHOLIC LITURGICAL RENEWAL.



*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Hiawatha, Iowa (2010)
by BVH Architects.*

were not inclined to think of the countless other "thresholds" they had crossed in life, spiritual or otherwise. Neither, probably, were they apt to consider what symbolism lay in the Porta's immense panels having been hung to swing inward as they always have, a subtler gesture than that to be found in the outstretched arms of Bernini's famous, twin colonnades, which have invited visitors to enter St. Peter's Square since the 17th century and gently embrace them there. In the language of buildings, however, the action of the Porta doors evokes something of the vulnerability each of us risks when daring to welcome strangers into the protective sphere of our own embrace. Modern fire codes in this country, of course, generally prohibit public buildings of any size from having comparable, inward-opening doors. Nevertheless, one assumes that American Catholics along with their co-religionists universally might discover other means of conveying through various aspects of the places set aside for liturgical action the same hospitality Francis himself offered the world simply by rendering Catholicism's most famous landmark a little less formidable.

Making their places of worship as inviting to visitors as they would want their own homes to be is a virtue the Catholic laity hears less about nowadays than it did, say, in the decades immediately following Vatican II, when the Church's reform-minded leadership was acutely attuned to the so-called "horizontal dimension" of its rites. No explicit guidelines for creating sacred settings attractive to the curious no



Photo: Michael E. DeSanctis



Mount Saint Benedict Chapel, Erie, Pennsylvania (2008) by BCDM Architects.

Sacred Heart Church, Erie, Pennsylvania (renovation, 1994) by Crowner King Architects.

less than the pious by any means other than proper liturgical order can be found in *Built of Living Stones*, for example, the instruction on sacred art and architecture issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2000. Neither does one hear much speculation from the pulpit lately on the degree to which the Church's stated commitment to "the New Evangelization" necessitates some fundamentally new and dynamic conception of the buildings Catholics charge with making God as real to non-believers as to those whose faith is sound and sure. At a time when many dioceses throughout the US are scrambling just to keep the ageing infrastructures of inner-city parishes intact and their newer, suburban counterparts from receding into a landscape of commercial banality, the Catholic episcopate, for example, seems less inclined to offer specific recommendations on the matter of sacred spaces per se than to lament how empty they are on Sunday mornings compared to the countless other sites with which they now compete.

What would constitute an architecture of mercy and forgiveness in step with the greater "Franciscan Revolution" underway in the Church, of which the jubilee is part? Maybe something like this:


- an array of buildings in all shapes and styles that proclaim "The Lord be with you!" to all who cross their thresholds, unambiguously, gratuitously—with absolutely no presumption of response ("Our doors are always open to you!")

such places would say);

- buildings whose most striking quality isn't cost, or size, or the expression of clerical authority so much as an ability to help users of all kinds feel welcome, safe, and capable of holiness by virtue of their very proximity to the holy;
- architectural environments in which the Church's ancient habit of penance is taken so seriously as to deserve fitting accommodations for the sacrament—not dark and drafty broom-closets or architectural afterthoughts but places bespeaking the warmth, protectiveness, and the clemency of Christ himself;
- buildings that lend proper reverence to Christ's unique mode of dwelling within the tabernacle while promoting the "Real Presencing" in space and time of every member of the Mystical Body of Mercy gathered within them;
- environments that preserve the Church's long history of liturgical and artistic expression while making room for new and original ways of proclaiming the Gospel.

Nothing I have described here should seem particularly novel, a half-century after Vatican II began the process of rejuvenating the Church's ritual life through its books and buildings. Nevertheless, the Catholic faithful face a challenge today that the council could not have anticipated, namely, to engage a culture so enthralled by the miracles of the Digital

Age as to be inured to the effect of page-bound words and place-bound experiences upon the soul. Communion in the hand" has become the prerogative of anyone clutching an iPhone, after all, with no requirement of formal prosody or the sorts of surroundings that have served sacred worship for centuries. Thus, the chatter today among students of liturgy and literature alike concerns the "death of the written word" and, among architects, the threat posed by "virtual places" or "cyberspace" to the traditional art of building.

It is not enough, then, for Catholics to indulge in the fancy retro-styling of churches currently being touted by certain circles of liturgists and architects, a kind of "apologetics by brick and mortar" that enlists *traditio* to distinguish the Church from a culture seemingly devoid of historical memory. Instead, if Pope Francis's pastoral instincts are to be trusted, *compassio* must be the first step in housing their battered but beautiful "field hospital"-of-a-church, an affective bias toward throwing open their tents and temples to those seeking a kind of reconstructive surgery that allows even a sin-weary Church to stand upright "prior to any efforts of [its] own" (*Amoris Laetitia*, 108). Invitation, not insulation, will need to be the primary impulse of this work, no matter how "cultic," along with acknowledgement that the buildings Catholic communities erect in praise of their God are ultimately of less benefit to him than to the vast, terrestrial assembly in search of his mercy. 



Henri Matisse's windows in the Chapelle du Rosaire de Vence, France, 1951.

The Role of Religious Art Over 50 Years: An Assessment

By James Hadley

IN THE IMMEDIATE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR II, the Dominican fathers Marie-Alain Couturier and Pie-Raymond Régamey embarked on a pioneering work to eradicate from sacred art – signifying nothing more than simply the preponderance of “art in churches” – all that had become the handicraft of kitsch taste which, from the 19th century, seemed definitively condemned in the art world. According to Couturier and Régamey, religious art must really be art in the spirit of its time, taking into account the self-consciousness that the artist gained in the modern age as Jacques Maritain defined in his art phi-

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Photo: Carlo Vannini

'Paschal Candle' by Ettore Spalletti, 2012, Cathedral of Reggio Emilia, Italy.

losophy. In them was the confidence that the artist, though not necessarily a believer, was the bearer of a spiritual experience that alone could render justice to images of faith. From this perspective, there were two “miracles” (the term used by Couturier himself): the Matisse chapel of Vence (1951) and Notre-Dame-du-Haute at Ronchamp by Le Corbusier (1954).

Beyond the crisis of catalogue art that marked Christian “religious” art of the period, a more fundamental conflict was at hand between art as representation, mimetic form of the visual world as it had been for Plato and Aristotle, and a new art that according to persons like Klee and Kandinsky was anything but mimetic. Klee saw art as a manifestation of the invisible, a revelation, as if to afford the viewer the possibility to return to time immemorial and the obscurity of origins.¹ Art for Kandinsky, similarly, was itself of a spiritual reality inasmuch as it represented a vibration and resonance in the human spirit as the experience of the absolute. Art ceased to be representation, transforming into the visual language of pure form and color.² The “function” of art was not to point to external objects but affirm its own internal reality born out of and giving vision to both the limits of human being and the unknown horizons of existence; a dialectic between the finite and infinite. In so doing art expressed truth—the truth of itself, becoming symbolic and auto-referential.



Photo: Public

'Untitled Installation' by Dan Flavin, 1996, Maria Annunciata, Milan, Italy.

Couturier and Régamey understood this new art critically and intuitively—chromatic surfaces, pure material, objective geometry, expressive, symbolic, spiritual. Projects such as those at Vence and Ronchamp served as prophetic embodiments of contemporary arts forming places of Christian worship. The art in such venues began to take the characteristic of “art as idea as idea” à la Kosuth, becoming a mental act, a search for its own proper language in which reality of the world seemed inexorably excluded.³ At the same time this seismic shift in the nature of art, and therefore religious art, left many religious institutions writ large, not least Roman Catholics, confused and bewildered.⁴ Every antique point of reference for sacred art seemed to be lost in argumentation to which no more sure coordinates were given.

The story of religious art continues to evidence the same contours more or less as those seen by Couturier and Régamey. If we are to think of the past 50 years of religious art broadly construed, we see contested territory; not only that of art, but also of belief. In a pluralistic Western culture that no longer operates according to metanarratives, this should not be surprising, nor frankly, concerning. Yet, inasmuch as faith is a matter of adherence to religious experience it does propose a challenge to faith communities to speak of their belief within a modern context, but this should



Photo: James Hadley



'Cosmic Correspondence' by Giovanni Ruggiero, 2011, International Museum of Ceramics, Faenza, Italy.

not consign us to be prophets of doom, nor provoke angst in the face of a world that yields ever so slowly to change.

EVERYTHING IN THE FRAGMENT

Religious people today are perhaps people of fragments who traverse a staccato society and human relationships finding the whole in the part. Michel de Certeau wrote that God communicates by robbing us;⁵ the infinite, the absolute is never found whole but it permeates the pieces. To this extent we are freed from the need of metanarrative and hold fast to fragments in which the whole is hidden. This perhaps is a telling analysis of what religious art can be today: tangential incomplete representations of human religious experience but also of the divine that they represent. Let's consider three desirable fragments that define artistic searching today. While I write as a Christian in the Church of England, I think that what I say has some resonance for other faiths as well.

FRAGMENT 1: FROM LITURGICAL IMAGE TO WORK OF ART

The Christian tradition has never truly spoken of art or artistic expression but of cultural images used by the Church in the celebration of the liturgy and for meditation and personal prayer. The image is created to speak of an encounter between God and God's people.

They are not commissioned to realize a work of art per se, but to serve underlying ritual exigencies and spiritual needs. At the same time, even liturgical elements as altars, ambos, fonts, and vestments are works of art inasmuch as they are to evoke admiration, to be studied, to be analyzed, to be enjoyed. More significantly, the image becomes a place of experiencing the profundity of the real and interior life of the viewer. The liturgical image implicates the personal and draws forth a dialogue: Why does the work engage me? What is it saying to me? Does it want something from me?

As a liturgical work of art an image/object cannot render the work simply an aesthetic text to decipher sign after sign, form after form, as if a grammatical construction. Since Couturier and Régamey this struggle has remained present. Overly didactic symbolic coordinates can condemn the liturgical object to an embarrassing superficiality, robbing it of its power. Counterclaims are leveled arguing that without obvious symbolic lexicons contemporary images are embarrassingly, and dangerously, incomprehensible.⁶ What must be recognized is that comprehension is not simply, nor primarily, a matter of "reading" the work. Art is evocation—not explanation. To enter into the mystery of the work, to sympathize with the work, is to grasp its sense. It is in form, material, and color that artists invest themselves personally, searching to translate in their own

language the mystery of the Christian faith for a contemporary audience. One thinks to the "Paschal Candle" (2012) of Ettore Spalletti. Highly evocative the monumental column is split in two evoking the passage through the Red Sea. The blue polychrome marble evokes not only water but the pillar of cloud by day; the glimmering gilded interior, the pillar of fire by night. Its rising out of a black abyss suggests the resurgent Christ from the tomb.

It must also be said that liturgical works of art are not only liturgical furniture. Various factors have contributed to decades of contemporary architecture and design in American churches but rather little art. This thankfully is changing. Since the American artist Dan Flavin's light installation in Milan's S. Maria Annunciata (1996) there is a new awareness of the dimensions of "devotional" art that may or may not appear devotional in a traditional sense, but which are artistic investigations meant to drive one towards meditation, interrogation, and prayer. These works may often be individual as Giovanni Ruggiero's striking ceramic and bronze work "Cosmic Correspondence" (2011), or like Flavin's installation, serve to create immersive spiritual environments that unify the entire liturgical space. One such example is the work of the painter Valentino Vago who treats the entirety of the interior architectural space as a canvas.

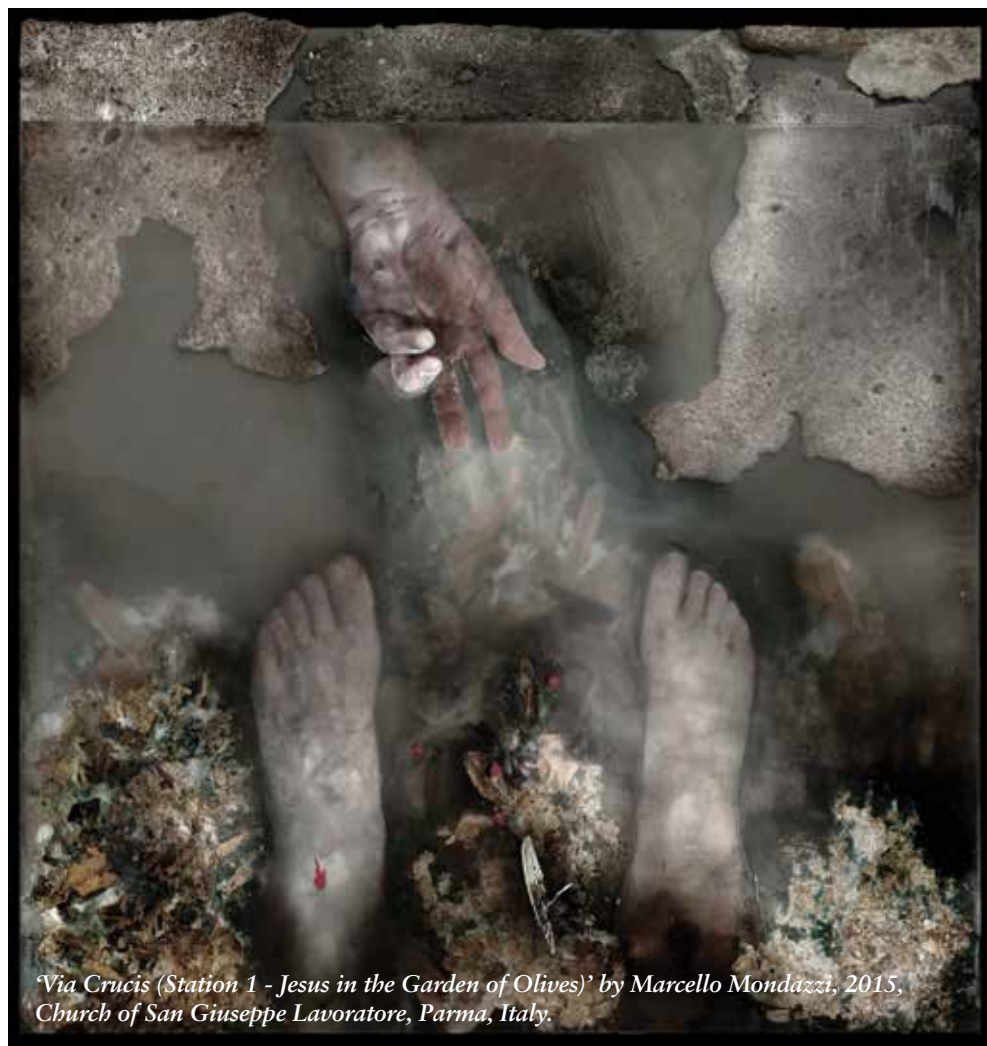
FRAGMENT 2: ART AS ENCOUNTER

Today art does not define a set of objects named by the artist as works of art. Art is not comprised of "rigid designators," to use Saul Kripke's language,⁷ but is a directive move in which referent and referee are embodied in me. Art, in short, is a type of encounter. Already in the 19th century many artists spoke of art as an encounter with presence, mystery, of otherness, the unknown, the sublime, the divine, or cosmic spirit. In this sense the dialogue created by art was itself a religious experience. In western culture and its fragmentation, or sheer rejection, of metanarratives and God, art's claim to religious experience is held suspect. Yet Massimo Iritano has suggested that in the face of desacralization the experience of aesthetic fragments themselves, which connote searching, absence, and suffering, are the authentic referential experience of a human nostalgia that seeks to find a lost God.⁸

Religious art in the Christian key proposes an aesthetic dialogue based in the memory of the encounter with Jesus of Nazareth, dead and risen for the salvation of humanity. The image renders the invisible visible, it renders present the absent. Through it, the represented is manifested to the community and the faithful



'Martyrs (Earth, Air, Fire, Water)' by Bill Viola, 2014, Kira Perov, Saint Paul's Cathedral, London.



'Via Crucis (Station 1 - Jesus in the Garden of Olives)' by Marcello Mondazzi, 2015, Church of San Giuseppe Lavoratore, Parma, Italy.

become, in this way, contemporary to the mystery. The image is not intended to explain belief as much as it is meant to carry within it the truth and profound sense of the encounter. To this end the affective dimensions are of utmost importance. The work of art must be believable and speak to the "newness" of the encounter. As the symbolic place in which the

believer recognizes their own experience the work must both point to mystery and speak in the language—the esthetic canon—of our time, as Bill Viola is adept at doing. Artwork that is kitsch, do-it-yourself, or updated-neo, is inadequate to the task. The best work of the past 50 years is that which opens the door to the absolute, to transcendence, to the mystery



Interior of the Chapel of St. John XXIII in Bergamo, Italy, by architects Aymeric Zublena and Traversi+Traversi Architetti, with artwork by Andrea Mastrovito.

of life. One thinks of the sensitive and gestural bronze work of Giacomo Manzù (1964) in this respect, or the more recent "Via Crucis" of Marchello Mondazzi (2015). His "Via Crucis" is a metaphor of a universe that makes a journey, a conversion, a passage. A continuous dialectic between sculpture and painting, the images appear overlapping with inaccessible transparency and imperceptible visions. The materials form and dissolve in a game of thin shadows, suggesting lightness, and levitation. Out of the decomposing material, the light transforms the surfaces into places of silence that demand ransom and liberation.

FRAGMENT 3: BEAUTY

In postmodernism the notion of beauty and the sublime are no longer an aspect of art, generally speaking. Rather, according the philosopher François Lyotard, aesthetic judgement is now anchored upon the speculation of the market⁹: What will sell? Money is the only absolute criteria of judgement. When the concept of beauty is considered, a diversity of aesthetic articulations of beauty along with a bewildering diversity of criteria for esthetic judgments create seemingly implausible contradictions. Are we speaking about anything, really? Is beauty just a passé equivocation for pretty? The fragmentation of beauty has left its aesthetic mark on our society in movements such as "found art," "readymade art," and "junk art." Perhaps even contributing to what Pope Francis has called the throw-away society. Art may now in fact be ugly and be art.

Religious art today plays a critical role in the search for artistic beauty. Rooted in the three classical metaphysical categories of the true, the beautiful, and the good, the best of religious art has retained a dialogue between artistic object and the capacity to transmit to the viewer via content, form, and color an embodied experience of visual purity or rightness. Indeed, Vatican II considered beauty to be the essential element of religious art as a reflection of the divine itself (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 8).

While in some cases there have been

attempts to define a closed and rigorous canon of what “beauty” looks like, and what therefore constitutes “beauty” in religious art and architecture, there is general appreciation of a necessary poly-systemic approach when art is an encounter between referent-referee-me. The experience of art contains both subjective and objective aspects. We arrive at the moment in which beauty is not purely “aesthetic judgment, simply describing some object in the world. We are giving voice to an encounter, a meeting of a subject and object, in which the response of the first is every bit as important as the qualities of the second.”¹⁰ These qualities of experience can include symmetry, order, proportion, closure, convention, harmony, novelty, openness, imbalance, excitement, energy, discovery, and much more.

If we are to speak of Christian beauty we would concede its presence in works of art that have the capacity to express the mystery of God in the story of humanity, that reveal the story of humanity and its salvation. Beauty in this sense is not so much aesthetic quality as it is the experience of impregnation and bringing forth life. Certainly there are physical qualities implicated, but more important is the ethical relationship between the image and human life. The image that brings forth life by expressing what is true and what is good, in its most profound dimensions, is beautiful. This experience of ideal beauty is hit upon when one feels a contemplative distance with the work as it provokes respect as knowing and pointing to a reality that is beyond me.¹¹ At the same time, it stands as a confrontation evidencing a divine measure against which I must reevaluate myself. The correlating indicator of beauty is that of being pushed toward prayer. Ideal beauty forces us out of being a passive spectator, putting in play our liberty and our critical capacity. Beauty calls to us, interrogates us, invites us to come out of ourselves. In this way beauty becomes a form of prayer as it illuminates the mystery of life and death and puts at risk feelings of self-sufficiency pointing us toward a desire for salvation and nostalgia for the lost God until we enter the House of the Father. Unfortunately, the great seal of contemporary religious art, not only considering aesthetic elements, but in its very capacity to express the mystery of God in human history, has been embarrassingly superficial and banal. A recent unicum against this trend is the chapel of St. John XXIII in Bergamo, Italy (2016). In the context of a hospital the suffering and death of humanity is confronted with a serene and sure dialogue. Nothing seems left to chance. The Garden of Eden is evoked within the concrete etched walls and graphic digitized




Detail of Andrea Mastrovito's crucified Christ in the Chapel of St. John XXIII in Bergamo, Italy.

windows give an almost cinematographic depiction of the suffering of Christ. The space is defined by the fundamental role of natural light that permeates the walls and ceiling in shades of gray and gold. Here the merger of artistic sensitivity and profound invocation of Christian faith create a space of calibrated but stunning beauty.

CONCLUSION

It seems to me that the power of religious arts of the past 50 years has been their capacity to invite us to gaze more intently into the fragment, the incomplete reality we feel has seized us, and there begin to perceive the possibility

of human psycho-spiritual and physical wholeness restored in the divine. The experience of beauty is perhaps one of the unique vocabularies in which religious art is called to speak today. Not that something is to be found pretty, but to serve as a provocateur of a deeper encounter that renders through aesthetic form a sense of the way things ought to be, and the way they can be, not only in houses of prayer, but in a deep ethical sense of life and community that unites humanity binding its piecemeal nature together beyond individual, corporate, and national self-interests. This indeed is a gift of faith on which to build. 

NOTES

1. Paul Klee, *Théorie de l'art modern* (Paris: Denoel, 1985), p. 34.
2. Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (New York: Dover, 1977), p. 43.
3. See Lucy R. Lippard, *Six years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California, 1997), pp. 72-73.
4. A more detailed history can be found in James Thomas Hadley, “Ars Gratia Artis: The Freedom of the Arts in the Twentieth-Century Liturgical Reform and Today,” *Studia Liturgica* 45 (2015), pp. 176-198.
5. Michel de Certeau, *L'étranger ou l'union dans la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 2005), p. 42.
6. François Boespflug, “La liturgia Cristiana una sfida per l'arte contemporanea,” in F. Boespflug, G. Ravasi, E. Fuchs, eds., *Liturgia e arte. La sfida della contemporaneità* (Milan: Quqajon, 2011), pp. 80-81, 93.
7. Thierry de Duve, *Kant after Duchamp* (Chicago: MIT Press, 1996), p. 74.
8. Massimo Iiritano, “Arte e l'esperienza religiosa,” in M. Iiritano and S. Sorrentino, eds., *Arte e esperienza religiosa* (Naples: Fridericiana Editrice Universitaria, 2011), pp. 12-15.
9. Vittorio Gregotti, *Il Sublime al tempo del contemporaneo* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi, 2013), p. x.
10. Roger Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 61.
11. See, Simona Chiodo, *La Bellezza: Un'Introduzione al suo passato e una proposta per il suo futuro* (Milan: Pearson, 2015), p. 102.

What is the Meaning of the Mosque?

An essay in three parts,
and a postscript

By Ozayr Saloojee

PART ONE: PRELUDE

The City of the World's Desire: There is a mosque in Istanbul hidden by the patchwork fabric and program of the old-city; a masterpiece of urban resolution in a complex site and a masterwork of stone and Iznik tile. It sits adjacent to a recently renovated Sufi lodge and inside, on an upper level, from a room where the Sufi master would stay, there is a balcony with a view of the Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mosque – a building commissioned for the Sultan's Grand Vizier. From the balcony, you have a view of this small mosque, one of Istanbul's urban gems; its single minaret a tall interruption to the liquid expanse of the Marmara Sea and its ships: cargo carriers, liquid natural gas tankers, small fishing boats, and ferries. History rewinds: you imagine Greek, Venetian, European, and African ships approaching Istanbul's shoreline. Sailors would have seen the Topkapı Palace, the reaching spires of the Blue Mosque, the Hagia Sophia, and the single, elegantly proportioned minaret of the Sokullu. This mosque surrenders to the presence of the monumental, but its delight lies in its "everydayness," its quiet unobtrusive presence in the city – an oasis in the city.

The City Victorious: Cairo's old mosques are uniquely her own: the Ibn Tulun and its breathtaking minaret, the Mosque of 'Amr, with its perfect courtyard and scale. And the Sultan Hassan with its unparalleled floor – a geometric delight that incorporates multiple and opposing radial and mirror symmetries of tile—that only when it rained once, so wonderfully unexpectedly—was the sublime genius of its pattern revealed. The Sultan Hassan with its magnificent entrance portal so tall that the stalactites of its *muqarnas* are always in shadow. People stream in and out, past, into, and through these monuments. For a moment, when you step out into the busy light of the Cairo streetscape, you warp disconcertingly from the cool interior of the mosque with its deep, *iwans* into the heady modern city.

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View of the Sokullu Mehmet Paşa Mosque from the Sufi lodge in Istanbul.

The City Eternal: Unlike Constantinople and Cairo, for Paolo Portoghesi's Rome mosque there is no local, immediate Islamic history to grow from. But there is, of course, always Rome. The similarity to Michelangelo's Capitoline court is immediately evident, except here, at the *moschea di Roma*, the geometric patterns that make up Michelangelo's courtyard shield take on an Islamic character and aesthetic. Here, geometry is not only abstraction, but also a narrative of and for the divine. At the center of the courtyard, a fountain, a 20th-century nod to tradition in transformation, to history, to the past in the present. That geometry outside becomes another level of formal play, structural expression, geometric dexterity – and of the representation of divine perfection in the interior too. Gone are the calligraphic tours-de-force of Ottoman craftsmanship, of Fatimid and Mamluk profiled domes. Instead here is a space where the roof grows out of the columns that hold it up, where structure becomes space, enclosure, form, and place, becoming, for an instant, one thing out of many.

PART TWO: SOLILOQUY

What is "the mosque" if not all these things, merged into one? It—indeed, *all* mosques—are

spaces that project both into the past and into a desired future. They are catalysts for manifesting the past in the present. At its most elemental, the mosque is a place to pray, a dedicated space to perform a required ritual act of Islamic worship. To see it only as that, however, is to miss its essence. The mosque is history re-lived, re-engaged, brought into the present, parallel and primary. It is the marker of a shore – the presence and signal of a community in the urban (and not so urban) metropolises of the world – from Constantinople to Columbus, from Cairo to Canberra, Rome to Rio. They are (even if they don't have them – like Minneapolis's Masjid al Rahman and so many other mosques around the world) minarets (a word whose etymological roots are in the Arabic word "nur," or light, and can also be interpreted to mean a place of light). They mark place, safety, and security, but serenity, too. They are courtyards both physical and conceptual, gathering people to worship an Abrahamic God, but also courts of the heart, holding community as a contemporary exemplar of the mosque of the Prophet in Medinah, or the Ka'aba in Mecca. They are geometries of form and space, but also of sacred site and sight. Regardless of their location, geographies, or terrains, they orient – in some way through



Looking straight up at the entrance portal of the Sultan Hassan mosque in Cairo.



Courtyard of the Mosque of Rome, designed by Paolo Portoghesi.



Sancaklar Mosque in Istanbul designed by Emre Arolat.

their outward form or the interior *Qibla* (the physical orientation, a wall, a prayer mat, the line of worshippers, that faces Mecca). Beyond that, they orient one to a spiritual geometry that directs bodies and hearts toward the Great Mosque of Mecca. There is unity in diversity; whether through the pencil minarets of Turkey, or the stocky mass of Ibn Tulun – or the none-at-all minarets of storefront mosques around the world. Whether the domes of Isfahan, the courtyards of the Qarawiyyin in Fez, or the Selimiye in Edirne; whether the assertive mosque of Casablanca


or the mud-mosques of Mali; whether the subtle quietude of Emre Arolat's monumentally intimate Sancaklar mosque – all stone-heavy and nestled into the green earth around Istanbul (evoking the first instance of revelation to Muhammad in his cave retreat); or whether the simple everyday space of the Auwal Mosque in Cape Town (the first in South Africa), or Hassan Fathy's mosque at New Gournah. All of these spaces—irrespective of site or scale, modesty or exuberance—are spaces of faith, of surrender to God's will, sites of peace and security, of a momentary break from the frenetic world outside.

PART THREE: EPILOGUE

All Muslims turn to Mecca, God's most beloved landscape in all the cosmos. Here they turn to His house, built by Adam, then Abraham, and attended by Muhammad. Lines of prayer that index mosques around the world focus to this center. All the globe coalesces into a point – the *Kaaba* and here parallel lines of prayer from around the world become concentric circles, an unbroken connectedness radiating outward beyond the geography of place. And this expansion is also a meta-space. Muslims believe that a heavenly house exists above and beyond the *Kaaba* – a hyper-dimensional architecture whose reality is folded from the space-time perception of our human senses. This heavenly house – *al Bayt al Ma'mur* ("the Ancient, Liberated House") is the spiritual analogue of the *Kaaba's* physicality. Around it are the angels who, in an echo of the *Hajj*, perform their own circumambulations around this angelic architecture. And so, when Muslims turn to face the *Kaaba* in prayer, they orient to a point on the earth that in turn connects to an *axis mundi* that is beyond the earth itself.

The term "mosque" itself has a diverse provenance – with roots in 15th, 16th, and 17th-century languages – from the Middle French ("mosque"), the Italian ("moschea"), and Spanish ("mezquita"). But the much older Arabic term "masjid" is etymologically connected to words that also mean congregation, prostration, place. The mosque, then, is a shore where people gather, to place themselves before God. In the most profound moment of the prayer—prostration—the forehead of the worshipper touches the ground and the physical heart (the seat of the soul) is elevated above the intellect and the brain. There is no sculpture or painting to communicate narratives of the divine. With the mosques of the world, there is no emphatic tradition of figural and painterly representation. There is a sacred geometry, there is calligraphy—the words of God—there are the bodies of the believer. There is, in the end, only space.

POSTSCRIPT

Mosques are the many hearts of the Muslim communities around the world. They are spaces of prayer, certainly, but they are also signs of community, of a *communitas* of belonging, of welcoming, of safety and security, of respite and release. While they differ in form and expression, they are representative of the diversity of the Islamic world; in Whitman's words, they "contain multitudes." Their foundational purpose is to catalyze a loving submission to God and His decrees: generosity, compassion, connection to the divine, tolerance. Understanding this—in a sadly increasing global political climate of exclusion, of increased Islamophobia, of bogey-man fearmongering—is more important than ever. While their forms differ across time and space, their essential and oft-unrecognized Abrahamic reality remains constant. From Istanbul, to Cairo, to Rome, to Minneapolis, to Ottawa, they are spaces of loving surrender (the very definition of Islam), they are spaces of faith. They are spaces of peace. 

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Edited by Michael J. Crosbie

The strength of *Faith & Form* as a publication has always rested on its value as a forum for ideas, observations, insights, concerns, and celebrations regarding religious architecture and art. To mark its half-century milestone, we asked contributors, architects, artists, liturgical designers, clergy, academics, and friends of the magazine to share their thoughts about the field over the past 50 years, and where we might be going in the next half-century. Their reflections are presented here, with gratitude from a humbled editor.



The cover of the first issue of Faith & Form, 1967.

50 YEARS OF HISTORY

"Faith & Form, journal of The Guild for Religious Architecture, represents the collaborative efforts of architects, clergy, artists, craftsmen – of all faiths – to develop a forum wherein the inter-relationships of theology, architecture and art as a total expression in religious architecture can be shown."

With that eloquent introduction by Benjamin Elliott the first issue of *Faith & Form* was launched in 1967, a half-century ago. His remarks were joined by Robert Durham, then president of the national American Institute of Architects (AIA), who commented, "The first issue of *Faith & Form* comes to the architectural profession during significant times. The theological implications of new forms for churches and temples are of interest to an ever-widening number of practicing architects, educators and students."

The Guild for Religious Architecture (GRA) was at that time an affiliate of the AIA for a period of two years and was gaining momentum as the go-to organization for exciting changes in religious art and architecture. Since

its inception in 1940 it "championed the cause of good design in religious architecture and its allied arts," per then Executive Director Dorothy Adler. Members of the Guild included architects, artists, religious leaders, and craftspersons, and its primary mission was educational. In cooperation with religious organizations the GRA sponsored annual national conferences featuring speakers and program content on significant new trends in religious design. Additionally, GRA hosted an architectural design competition, essentially the forerunner of the current Faith & Form/IFRAA Religious Art and Architecture Awards program.

Following the launch the magazine was issued quarterly and appeared not unlike its contemporary version, except that it was published exclusively in black and white. It contained similar content, e.g., themes articles, conference announcements and subsequent coverage, relevant book reviews, and a "notes and comments" section. An annual \$5 subscription cost included postage! However, within three years it became too big a financial burden to publish quarterly and dropped to two issues (Spring and Fall) annually. By 1970 *Faith & Form* was reduced to a single issue per year, and this was devoted to coverage of the annual national GRA conference. A turnaround occurred in 1974 when the journal returned to a biannual publication and this kept apace until 1987.

A big change for *Faith & Form* happened on its tenth anniversary, when the GRA merged with two other organizations with like interests: the American Society for Church Architecture (ASCA) and the Commission on Church Planning and Architecture (COCPA). They adopted an interim name of the Society for Religious Arts and Architecture and combined administratively at the GRA office at 1777 Church Street in Washington, D.C. By February 1978 a charter for the newly formed Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art and Architecture (IFRAA) was drafted at Catholic University in D.C. Simultaneously, several prominent religious architects and denominational clergy led workshops to broaden participant knowledge

of "history, belief system, organizational structure, decision-making procedures, funding mechanisms and available resources of the religious groups that design professional may be called to serve." A second goal was to expose participants to and begin proficiency in various consultant skills, including communication, problem solving, and contracting.

Ironically, suburban expansion and the call for new church development in the 1970s and early 80s occurred about the same time denominational offices were reducing or eliminating their architectural staff, having passed the baby boomer bump in church growth. The void of good counsel was filled by the emergence of liturgical consultants, persons trained in interfaith liturgical practices. This was especially true for Catholics who were struggling to implement Vatican II mandates for liturgical reform. IFRAA played a key educational role in assisting with interfaith training and regular regional and national conference tours of contemporary religious art and architecture. *Faith & Form* documented the conferences and featured articles on exemplars with explanatory text from architects, artists and clergy involved with the projects.

Betty Herndon Meyer took over the helm of *Faith & Form* editorship in 1980 and became a familiar and much-loved participant at IFRAA conferences and tours. Her leadership stabilized the magazine after a rocky few years of staff changes, plus her superb editing raised the quality of journalistic style. A devotee of cutting-edge art and architecture, Betty never hesitated to feature innovative works. Architects and artists regularly submitted articles for publication. Editorial meetings between editor, advertising and production managers, and dedicated volunteers were spent sifting through the merits of submittals, checking for adherence to the magazine standards for quality, educational content, and theological underpinnings.

The magazine flourished, moving from a biannual publication schedule to three issues per year starting in 1988. The following year color covers were introduced to afford a more contemporary appearance and by 2000 the

entire issue was printed in color. Another improvement during this period was the return to quarterly publication, which continues today.

It was also during this period that IFRAA, the parent organization to *Faith & Form*, transitioned from a stand-alone organization of artists, architects, and clergy to a more permanent relationship with the AIA as a “Knowledge Community.” It is in this capacity that IFRAA operates today, as an AIA professional interest area. Together *Faith & Form* and IFRAA jointly host the annual awards program, a long tradition of recognizing outstanding works in religious design.

Our current editor, Michael J. Crosbie, joined the *Faith & Form* staff as an assistant editor in 1998 and continued in this role until assuming the mantle of editor-in-chief in 2001. Under Michael’s leadership the magazine thrives with quarterly issues, two dedicated to themes, one covering the annual awards, and one devoted to a variety of topics. Michael’s role as a professor of architecture at the University of Hartford keeps him in touch with emerging trends in architecture, education, and technology as they impact design and construction.

Michael continues to enhance this esteemed journal by securing knowledgeable authors, theologians, clergy, artists, and craftspeople

to discuss and showcase innovative religious art and architecture. He furthers the proud tradition started 50 years ago by the nascent GRA/AIA partnership. Weathering staff changes, rising publication costs, and an ever-diminishing audience for print media, *Faith & Form*’s readership and subscription base has remained intact. The magazine continues as an important forum and highly respected reference manual for those who follow religious art and architecture. —Douglas Hoffman, AIA

THE AUTHOR IS A RETIRED ARCHITECT LIVING IN LAKEWOOD, OHIO, WHO SERVED AS MANAGING EDITOR OF FAITH & FORM FROM 1984 TO 2004.

‘A VERY POSITIVE DIFFERENCE’

With a 52-year career perspective, and having specialized in architecture for worship as a principal of a mid-sized, Midwest firm for 46 years, I can surely say that *Faith & Form* had a significant influence on my career and on our practice.

My association with IFRAA and its former organization—The Guild for Religious Architecture—began with this journal, at one time sent regularly to all AIA members. Each issue delivered the latest information for those in worship design field. I still view the publication *Faith & Form* and the organization IFRAA as inseparable resources.

This exposure to *Faith & Form* and IFRAA, encouraged by an architect friend of mine who suggested me for the IFRAA board in the early 1990s, intensified my interest and started a continuing association with clergy, architects, religious consultants, acousticians, artists, organ manufacturers, and producers of stained glass and worship

fitments in the worship design field.

The early days of IFRAA included national meetings for the sharing of ideas on worship practice and supporting activities and resources. These associations accelerated enthusiasm and focus, and, consequently, success in a highly specialized architectural practice. Professional friendships and important lifetime associations followed. Associations with IFRAA and *Faith & Form* made a very positive difference in the quality of our work.

During my years of IFRAA experience, I was able to learn from regional and national meetings and IFRAA-sponsored tours of significant worship facilities of all faiths. IFRAA’s association with the AIA added to the professional experience. *Faith & Form* accompanied this journey.

In time, learning techniques and methods of communication have changed dramatically. Expensive travel and overnight stays

have reduced the opportunities for frequent membership gatherings across the country. In my experience, these gatherings fostered personal and professional connections and a camaraderie that enriched the learning and practice experience. In the future, I hope to see that more meetings and facility touring events will be included in IFRAA programs, offering more in-person, on-site learning experiences to complement the comprehensive content of *Faith & Form*.

Kudos to *Faith & Form* and IFRAA, and their leadership, for 50 years of richly contributing to professional education in the worship design field. Keep up the high-quality tradition! Thank you for the incomparable resources in my worship-architecture career. —James M. Graham, AIA

THE WRITER IS A PAST PRESIDENT OF IFRAA AND PRACTICES WITH GRAHAM AND HYDE ARCHITECTS, INC. (GRAHAMANDHYDE.COM) IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS.

MOVING IN STRANGE AND MYSTERIOUS WAYS

In the mid-1980s, partially in response to liturgical changes in the Roman Catholic Church fostered by Vatican II, the United Methodist Church went through quite a debate as to what our worship life should look like. We created a new hymnal and adopted new liturgies for Word and Table as well as for Baptism. By the time of this liturgical renewal, the United Methodist Church had been in membership decline since the 1960s. So with this liturgical renewal in the 1980s came increased efforts to reach out and evangelize. It was about this time that I became associated with both *Faith & Form* magazine and IFRAA. My work first at Duke Divinity School and then at The Duke Endowment placed me in the midst of congregations struggling to find answers for decline and how to adopt new worship practices. *Faith & Form* regularly published articles that gave ecumenical voices and images as to how art and architecture enhance and enable worship experiences.

Curiously, as we look toward the next 50 years for sacred environments, congregations in our denomination continue to be challenged by membership decline and how best to worship. Many established congregations are forced to re-think how current worship spaces are employed.

New and expanding congregations are challenged to create sacred space that is affordable and meets contemporary demands. *Faith & Form* can continue to offer a venue for ecumenical thoughts about best practices in art and architecture: Issues like adaptive reuse of facilities; worship space that is flexible and beautiful; sacred space that is simple and in its simplicity helps form community; facilities that serve both the congregational needs and its outreach and service into the community.

In many ways the worship scene for my denomination is more complex than it was 50 years ago. We believe God moves in strange and mysterious ways. The next 50 years need the careful look that *Faith & Form* gives to how varied religious groups see and respond to God’s movement. We all gain from engaged conversations about best practices for worshipping communities so we can be faithful to the One who always goes before us. Thank you, *Faith & Form*, for helping with that conversation.

—Rev. W. Joseph Mann

THE AUTHOR IS ON THE FACULTY OF THE DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL AT DUKE UNIVERSITY, AND IS A FORMER PRESIDENT OF IFRAA.

'REGENERATIVE DESIGN' WILL BE THE NORM

Faith & Form has provided me wide-ranging information and guidance over my 40-plus years as an architect and liturgical design consultant. I remember as an undergraduate student browsing the architectural library and finding those first issues of *Faith & Form*. Not only were they thought-provoking, they offered me the inspiration to pursue a career in religious design. I also cherish past excursions and conferences sponsored by *Faith & Form* and IFRAA. The interactions I had with luminaries such as Ed Sövik, Betty Meyer, Bob Rambusch, and Dick Vosko solidified my desire to create worthy religious designs. In thinking about the question what about the next 50 years for religious architecture, I believe there are two interconnected issues that should define religious design in the future.

First, creating environmentally conscious, sustainable designs will only accelerate. Stewardship of money has always been a part of religious design. Environmental stewardship will become the new ultimatum to be achieved. But it will not just be about resource management; all-inclusive environmental design will mean becoming ecological and social stewards as well.

Second, regenerative design will become the norm. A step beyond environmentally conscious design is the need to think holistically within an ecological system of place making. Regenerative design is based upon whole-system thinking and focuses on a premise that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The overall concept is to collaborate with each other so as to create vibrant cultures and thriving communities for all. In his book, *Designing Regenerative Cultures*, David Wahl sums up the reasons to follow regenerative design principles this way: "Choosing the path of regeneration and cooperation will create a greater level of wellbeing, health, happiness, and equality for everyone and ... will be more meaningful, fulfilling, creative and fun." This is a hoped-for future that I sincerely believe can be achieved not only in religious design, but all design.



Norbertine Abbey Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico, designed by Robert Habiger of Dekker/Perich/Sabatini.

Design attributes of proportion, scale, pattern, proximity, materiality, and light will continue to affect the design of places for worship and devotion. For me, a place only becomes sacred because of the profound actions and experiences that take place in that environment. Creating places that are inclusive of all people who want to assemble in prayer and thanksgiving, while also following the highest benchmarks of architectural design, will then lead to a place becoming a sacred place.

—Robert Habiger, AIA

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PUSH THE BOUNDARIES OF THE POSSIBLE

In 1966, I suggested to the 27th National Conference on Religious Architecture that "such conferences are useless, if we seriously expect that they will lead to better church building and even if we believe that they will produce a new understanding of the possible relationships between Christianity and architecture." It is worth noting that the jury for works of sacred art decided that nothing submitted was worthy of that designation and proposed that the room be draped in black and only the jury's negative report exhibited.

I went on to conclude: "Let us instead initiate a series of on-going workshops throughout the country, in every community, something like the AIA Interfaith Research Center is trying to do on the national level, and develop a real understanding of what we mean by religious life, religious action, worship, love, art, by confronting our planning problems with eyes on this world as well as the next. Let the architects concentrate on developing a body of knowledge, a real theory of architecture (something absent from our time) by critically evaluating one another's works in a constructive manner. Let the theologians concentrate on developing a relevant theology, not a pious mysticism, and perhaps in time we will communicate more clearly and have some basis for holding a conference in 2000 A.D."

Not long after the conference, St. John's Abbey, Minnesota, announced the establishment of the "Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, a residential center where ten Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish, Catholic and other scholars live with their families for extended periods of time while engaged in research and dialogue with one another, with

monks of Saint John's Abbey and with faculty and students."

In 2010 a symposium by a relatively new institution, the Forum for Architecture, Culture, and Spirituality, was held at St. John's Abbey. It signaled a resurrection of the kind of discourse that moves architecture to new understandings of itself because it searches for insight within each of those three terms in the context of actual work and experience of the spiritual. Thus the search for the ineffable is pursued in a systematic way devoid of prejudicial perspectives. And that is most encouraging.

But I find it ironic that the journal *Sacred Architecture* advocates a return to the architecture of the 16th and 17th centuries, espousing the beauties of neoclassical architecture for religious buildings across America. Meanwhile, the Europeans seem bent on pushing the boundaries of the possible in religious architecture. Such wonderful chapels as Renzo Piano's at Ronchamp, Niall McLoughlin's at Ripon Theological College, and John Pawson's at Nový Dvůr are inspirational.

The digital revolution has freed architecture to explore beyond rational boundaries, and we find such brilliant works as the Bird's Nest stadium in Beijing and Zaha Hadid's Olympic swimming pool in London. How long will it be before such spatial/formal exploration includes religious architecture, but with more profound questions raised? Ultimately, all architecture in its essence should seek to accommodate the spiritual dimensions of human experience.

—Patrick J. Quinn, FAIA

A FORMER ARCHITECTURE DEAN AT RENSSLAER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE STUDY AND DESIGN OF RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS.

A SYNAGOGUE, A MOSQUE, AND A CHURCH ARE PLAYING GOLF....

Believing buildings speak and tell a story of what is valued at a certain time and place, this personal anecdote appropriately opens this essay. Sitting in his car seat, our youngest son, then age five and reading street signs, asked why a certain street in our neighborhood was called Church Street. Passing several churches revealed the answer until we approached an intersection and he proclaimed, “and there’s a synagogue!” Only it was a fire station. While unfortunately an apt observation, that moment synthesized my growing concern that Judaism’s faith was not being well expressed in architectural form.

With few rules, the architect has a great deal of freedom to design a synagogue anew each time in response to site, program, and congregational aspirations. Some early mid-century projects, notably by Louis Kahn, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Percival Goodman, represented a variety of contemporary forms with legible plans that clearly articulated the traditional House of Prayer, Study, and Community components of any synagogue.

Many other projects were built in parts: first a sanctuary, then a school, then a social hall, often by different architects. Multiple entry points, sanctuaries, and social halls tagged together, and ordinary classrooms produced visual chaos, little legibility, less control, and a dearth of spirituality of place with an integrating idea.

Commissioned to design our first new synagogue 30 years ago in Omaha, we focused on four central issues that became integral to each project, regardless of size, site, or ritual: 1. An entry sequence leading from the secular to the sacred through a series of courts: Reminiscent of the ancient Temple, this ingathering of the congregation moves through a single point of entry with a distinct and purposeful cadence. 2. The courts serve as orienting spaces: Spaces for gathering, for connecting with others, these community courts have expanded in function from a simple “square” to a “village center,” hosting a variety of spaces including places for study, reading, and informal meetings, described as pockets of holiness by one rabbi. 3. Rethinking capacity needs for worship: Developing needs have led to a variety of prayer spaces, in one case four, with seating for 12 to 1,000. Faced with the high capacity demands for the High Holy Days, we remembered what Philip Johnson once said: a space can be good; small and good or large and good, but it cannot be good at being both. Thus, the tandem plan of social halls and sanctuary separated by a folding wall, while practical, was not satisfactory. We re-examined the problem. Solutions lay in spaces that expand into radial pods or revert to an earlier form with a balcony. Varying seating capacities are resolved within the main sanctuary. The bimah is located to suit the particular congregation, often at the center, its historic antecedent. Social spaces become distinct entities. 4. Integration of the arts: We have sought artists to design liturgical works and have often integrated their



Beth El Synagogue in West Omaha, Nebraska, designed by Finegold Alexander Architects.

pieces with objects from earlier synagogues, binding the generations. Landscape concepts are equally integral to the whole.

Two significant changes are arising in our time. First, buildings are more open, more extroverted, embracing the concept of “Tikkun Olam” the repair of the world, through diversity and sustainability. The other change arose from our second synagogue in Omaha, 25 years after the first. While this 140-year-old reform congregation was seeking land for its new building, it was approached separately by the Islamic and Christian communities to find a site together. Out of this pragmatic need the Tri-Faith Initiative was conceived. Designing a master plan for how these three faith groups could co-mingle and co-exist on one campus (a portion of a former golf course) was thrilling. On this shared site, these three buildings will talk to each other, architecturally, expressing faith, form, and community. This, we believe, speaks volumes as to what may lay ahead.

Congratulations to *Faith & Form* on its 50th anniversary!

—Maurice N. Finegold, FAIA
(with Rebecca Berry, AIA; Tony Hsiao, AIA; and Jeffrey Garriga, AIA)

THE WRITER IS SENIOR PRINCIPAL OF FINEGOLD ALEXANDER ARCHITECTS IN BOSTON; REBECCA BERRY, TONY HSIAO, AND JEFFREY GARRIGAO ARE PRINCIPALS IN THE FIRM.

ART AND ARTIFACTS NOT REQUIRED

This past year, *Faith & Form* has addressed, among other issues, the connection between art and religious architecture. In my own article, I explored questions of whether religious architecture retains its significance if its art and artifacts are stolen or removed, or if the building can stand alone as a religious artifact itself.

Going forward we might also consider whether a religious building needs to look “religious” at all. For example, some new mosques in the US are being built in a more “secular”

fashion to fit with the surrounding context. The architect for the Noor Islamic Center in Dublin, Ohio—one of the largest Islamic worship centers in the country—was tasked with designing a building that fit into a residential neighborhood. “We wanted an American mosque,” explained the mosque’s founders. Rather than a central dome, understated dome forms “hug either side of the building,” according to Paul Vernon of the Associated Press, which appear below a gabled roof that echoes

the peaks of Ohio barns. Another mosque, the Islamic Centre of Kingston, Ontario, is in the form of a Canadian barn. The recently opened Islamic Society of Greater Valley Forge, a \$1.5 million mosque in suburban Philadelphia, lacks minarets and brings to mind a community center, not a house of worship, in Vernon’s view. Mohammad Qadeer, professor emeritus of urban and regional planning at Queen’s University, notes in a *Globe and Mail* article: “In North America, there will be a new type of mosque...There will be other architectural solutions that harmonize the structure into

the landscape.”

A more pessimistic view might suggest that a mosque with minarets or domes is increasingly under threat because of misunderstanding and prejudice in the predominantly non-Muslim communities in which they stand. Secular design might reflect a desire for Islamic communities to present a less threatening image. I would like to believe, however, that this new

generation of Islamic architecture is an attempt at something greater, that is, to bridge those misunderstandings and to embrace the surrounding community. The Noor Center, for example, has opened its doors to non-Muslim visitors and study groups, in hopes of building trust and understanding. The architecture accommodates the neighborhood with many windows that provide a view inside, giving

the building an open look rather than one of secrecy. Art and artifacts are not required to give the building its true significance—that of a bridge in the community. —Gail Hook

THE AUTHOR IS AN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN, HISTORIAN, AND ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY AND AT WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS.

ENVIRONMENTS TO ‘THINK THEOLOGICALLY’

In her much-praised 1998 work, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images*, Mary Carruthers argues that medieval buildings, especially those built for liturgical activities, served as “meditation machines.” She explains that certain late-medieval theologians called upon the biblical models of both tabernacle and temple to serve as mental devices to aid memory and enhance contemplation. They urged that actual places of worship should be built—as much as possible—according to these divinely instituted plans. She maintains this “emphasis on architecture” produced purpose-built spaces “that not only housed and abetted, but *enabled* the *opus Dei*.” Thus, in a very concrete way, medieval church buildings were devices that assisted individual worshippers to advance in their spiritual practices just as much as they functioned as practical shelters for communal religious ceremonies.

Our surroundings shape the ways we experience, comprehend, and remember the activities that take place within them. This is particularly true of buildings designed for sacred rituals and communal worship. It is not chiefly a matter of aesthetics or necessarily dependent on the skills of architects and builders. Fundamentally, buildings constructed for ritual purposes inevitably communicate beliefs about human and divine relationships, past and future, individual and communal identity, and (ultimately) about the meaning of life, death, and the next world. The spaces in which we gather for sacred activities are reflections of what we understand ourselves to be enacting or

accomplishing. They are spaces that we use to think theologically.

Core elements of design that contribute to this include differences between centralized and longitudinal plans; spatial divisions demarcating sacred actions or distinct identities and functions of participants; entrances and aisles that guide or determine passages through ceremonies; towers or steeples that accent the verticality of a religious commitment or linear passageways that emphasize progress toward a destination; features that command the viewer’s attention and resonate with other remembered spaces (such as boats, groves, courtrooms, classrooms); canopies, curtains, or screens designed to alternately hide and reveal objects and actions; altars, pews, kneelers, communion rails, tabernacles, ablution fountains, or Torah shrines; and, finally, how light and darkness prompt emotional and spiritual responses.

Anyone who inhabits such spaces knows this instinctively. One hopes that architects, building committees, theologians, and liturgists likewise realize that environments (made by humans or natural) constitute one very effective mode of acquiring, organizing, retaining, and transmitting religious knowledge. Such knowledge possesses its own kind of rhetoric and yet rarely can be explained in words. It has to be experienced personally, and becomes fully realized when joined simultaneously to certain ritual activities.

—Robin Jensen

THE WRITER IS A PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME AND SERVES ON THE EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD OF FAITH & FORM.

FROM KEYSTONES TO KEYSTROKES

While pausing to reflect on the evolution of religious art and architecture, let’s consider not only their physical forms but also their function in the past and future. Before the masses could read and write, texts were manually copied by candlelight in places like monastic scriptoria. Books were highly prized and reserved for study by clergy or the intelligentsia. Stained-glass windows and icons were more than works of art, they were used as teaching tools and were visual symbols of faith to less educated followers. Histories, customs and moral traditions were passed down through didactic storytelling and rote memorization was an essential practice. In modern times, the advent of printing presses and widespread literacy have made sacred texts readily available to the general populous and revolutionized both private and communal prayer.

Fast forward to a mere quarter-century ago. None of us could have imagined how the Internet and ubiquitous smartphone would change how we worship. Today’s Muslims use

their GPS function to accurately turn to Mecca. Some Orthodox Jews are scandalized by fellow congregants, who are otherwise observant, yet access prayer apps on the Sabbath. Flat screens are replacing hymnals and *The Book of Common Prayer* while clergy upload podcasts to send by blast email. Who could have predicted lighting

and sound technicians would become essential personnel on worship teams?

Without a doubt, these 21st century advances are radical in form and jarring to some, including this writer, but we are also reminded that religious practices have always evolved—as they must to thrive and be relevant. Architects, who design and renovate religious facilities, are eager to include the latest technologies and hopefully make them unobtrusive without sacrificing traditional elements. Like those who have gone before them, religious leaders, in partnership with designers, are obligated to respect artistic traditions while seeking innovative ways to instruct and inspire their flocks. If, as Louis Sullivan said, “form ever follows function,” then we must adapt—while being patient with a generation of us who may never warm to jumbo-trons in the sanctuary.

—Bonnie Larson Staiger, Hon. AIA

THE AUTHOR, A BENEDICTINE OBLATE, IS A PUBLISHED POET WHOSE WORK HAS BEEN ANTHOLOGIZED IN *LEANING INTO THE WIND* AND *WOVEN ON THE WIND*, AS WELL AS INCLUDED IN VARIOUS PUBLICATIONS.

Lesson in the Wine Cellar

*Tucked in a cool corner
of the Abbey’s foundation
among the rough-hewn stones
Father Robert offers a taste
of vintage cabernet
Explaining the need to purge
oxygen from the bottle
to keep the wine from turning
He said purging has lots of uses
in the wine business*

Once in a while

it’s good for people too

—Bonnie Larson Staiger, Hon. AIA

ARCHITECTURE, WORSHIP, RITUAL, AND TIME

Some years ago, I needed to spend three whole days in the Kukke Subrahmanya temple in southwest India. Faith here takes the form of idol-worshipping rituals sustained over centuries, supervised and conducted by Brahmin priests. I have never been an adherent of such orthodoxy, being personally drawn more to the *nirgun* (beyond form or attribute) tradition in Hinduism. And while the temple is considered religiously significant, when compared to many others in the region its architecture is not ranked very high. So I went in wondering how to sustain the tolerance to last through three days.

Toward the end of the first day my perception began to radically change. Spending many hours there led to a slowly inculcated awareness of a cadence of bodies, sounds, scents, and light that moved to a different rate of time compared to the world outside the temple. Outside, time made me aware of its assertive pace, persistently shoving its face in front of mine with a degree of unsettling

unpredictability that forced continual adjustment to its demands. Inside was so different: time moved so much slower. My immersion in a rhythm sustained over centuries, one that showed no signs of rapid change, meant that I was in a time cycle in tune with the wind and the stars: a slow tempo echoing an eternal energy whose scale was far beyond that of paltry individual lives. Each person in the temple seemed alone amid a teeming crowd, but not lonely. They were secure in the internalized and intensely personal companionship of this primordial rhythm, and the resonance of others heightened their own intimate vibrations.

My earlier visits to temples had always been short and specific, to participate in a *puja* (ritual of worship) that lasted maybe an hour or two; that short duration did not provoke me to think beyond the scale of the ritual. This led me to believe that people went to a temple because the liturgical practices within provided access to the divine, and the architecture of spaces for worship was subservient to

liturgy, acting primarily as its container. This, I sense, is the prevalent perception among contemporary architects. Earlier, and even today, liturgy is perceived as springing from established spiritual tradition, therefore design often follows traditional idiom. But now there is a greater openness, and while liturgy has not changed radically, architects use the freedom of modernity to seek new possibilities. But the earlier subservience to liturgy remains, and the impulse is to explore how space, light, and material can heighten the experience of liturgy.

Looking back at my experience at Kukke Subrahmanya, and the investment of time I put into being there, I wonder if we are looking at it correctly. Architecture is not subservient to liturgy. Both seek to serve the same purpose: to shift the speed of time, reducing it from the pace of everyday life to a slow and transcendental pulse. —Prem Chandavarkar

THE WRITER IS AN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTITIONER AND THEORIST IN BANGALORE, INDIA.

National WWII Museum, New Orleans, proposed chapel interior.



Courtesy of Voorsanger Mathes, LLC and the National WWII Museum.

designer of the project, sought in his designs an “architecture of liberation and peace that did not revel in the dramas of war.” The multiple pavilions of concrete, glass, and corrugated metal verge on intimidation, as the architect desired, and provide black box space for exhibitions. And in the yet-to-be-completed Liberation Pavilion, a more characteristic sacred space—a chapel—will be included.

The chapel provides a gathering place for all faiths and all types of services. Its architectural language is contemporary, with materials of concrete and wood speaking to its flexibility, as does its non-existent iconography. Light becomes, as it often does in superbly designed sacred spaces, a defining element of the ethereal and spiritual. For Voorsanger, the chapel is for all who need to be “transported to the privacy of their emotions, their thoughts, and their remembrances.” This is a place of dignity and respect.

I encourage those studying or designing sacred space to remember that the presence of a higher power can be found in multiple aspects of our daily lives, in the most traumatic of events, and in the most unexpected places, such as the World War II Museum. The act of remembering offers a bridge between the past and the present, and provides a grounding from which we as individuals or a society can move forward. —Victoria M. Young

THE AUTHOR IS PROFESSOR OF MODERN ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA.

THE SACRED IN LANDSCAPES OF WAR AND PEACE

Over the years of studying sacred space, I have developed an interest in how we contemplate and remember the people and events connected to World War II. The beaches of Normandy, the city of Hiroshima, Pearl Harbor, and the concentration camp at Dachau are all places where conflict created environments that demanded healing, often through onsite memorials to those who gave their lives. But the landscapes of war and peace can also be created miles away from these locations, most notably as memorials in the hometowns of those who served in the war, or museums

where the story of war is shared in an attempt not only to commemorate, but to preserve history and educate.

Founded by Gordon “Nick” Mueller and Stephen Ambrose, the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans, Louisiana, opened its doors on the 56th anniversary of D-Day, June 6, 2000. A few years later, after becoming the nation’s World War II Museum, the vision was expanded to include a full-scale campus, selecting Voorsanger Architects of New York City to complete the architectural interpretation. Bartholomew Voorsanger, FAIA, lead

SACRED PLACES AS CRITICAL PLACES

What actually is a “critical place,” and how can a “sacred place” become a critical place?

The concept of critical place should not in any way be confused with architectural critique, where built environments and architecture itself are offering the objects of criticism. A critical place by contrast turns into a subject that itself is able to encourage and direct criticism at its surroundings. This should not be misinterpreted ontologically, as the human being remains the subject of critical perceiving, thinking, and acting, even if place hereby is accorded a specific function.

Scholars in the field of environmental education have developed what they call a “critical place-based pedagogy,” an intrinsic value of places for the enhancement of critical awareness and empathy. Sacred places can be understood this way, and a Christian sacred critical place is where and wherewith human critical skills can grow and flourish *coram Deo*, in the presence of God.

Inspired by Herbert Marcuse, one can understand a critical place appearing as a place of utopian remembrance. Theologically it appears as an eschatological place from where one can see and walk unknown paths to a new creation. Following Abrahamic traditions, such places have the capacity to relativize intra-worldly power by referring to the one God and Creator. Such built environments by no means represent specific places where God dwells, but rather offer “places par excellence,” places of clarity where the sacred building reveals how the location, and the life that takes place at it, evolves as a part of the whole of the universe and its order.

Form & Faith has in its rich and valuable history been a forum to discuss many sites and buildings that one could regard as prototypes for sacred as critical places; one thinks of Tadao Ando’s Church on the Water in Japan, the Aegidien-Church in Hannover, Daniel Libeskind’s Garden of Exile in Berlin, and Louis Kahn’s First Unitarian Church in Rochester.

Theologically the sacred place as a critical place becomes a place to experience an authentic utopia, where an “epic optic” (to use Bertolt Brecht’s term) is produced for a liberating contrast, wherein God’s Holy Spirit takes place, gives life, and makes the new aeon a reality.

—Sigurd Bergmann

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‘OUR BEST HOPE’

For 50 years *Faith & Form* has been a unique voice in architectural and liturgical design. My first article for the magazine, entitled “Concerning the Spiritual In Architecture,” was published more than 20 years ago. I still remember feeling honored when Betty Meyer invited me to submit an article, and thrilled when it was published. I am equally delighted to provide reflections for this special issue devoted to the magazine’s 50th anniversary.

Traditionally, religious architecture expressed the beliefs and housed the rituals of particular faiths. Congruent with religion itself, it served to bind people together through common doctrines and practices and, in this context, was often equally inspiring, uplifting, didactic, and exhortative. Often depending on exclusivity, sacred architecture was both sanctuary and contested ground. Today the sacred is more heterogeneous, complex, and conflicted. A recent issue of *Faith & Form*, “Displacement, Safety, and Security,” anticipates future considerations and functions of the built environment. In a globalized world beset with seemingly intractable problems, the communicative, communal, and experiential roles of architecture may find new expression and affect. In other words, the traditional religious and cultural power of built environments could find new expressions to assist in spiritual development, bridge differences, raise consciousness, advance social justice, create a sustainable future, and improve health and well being.

There is much to be learned from sacred places of the past, and preserving their material record ensures that we remember the capacity of the built environment to engage, uplift, and instruct. The unique traditions of discrete religions need to be housed in ways that honor their past and support their future. But, new expressions and building types are needed for a future that holds so much promise, and peril. Our time demands that we build with reverence for our cities, institutions, homes, fellow inhabitants, other beings, and the natural world. In this manner, distinctions between sacred and secular recede to reveal places deeply connected to wisdom. Architecture and the built environment have limits regarding efficacy in effecting positive change but, of all the communal endeavors of humanity, has unique and promising roles to play. It may even be our best hope.

In these contexts, the legacy and new directions of *Faith & Form* portend expanding influence.

—Thomas Barrie, AIA

THE AUTHOR OF *HOUSE AND HOME: CULTURAL CONTEXTS, ONTOLOGICAL ROLES*
(ROUTLEDGE, 2017) AND OTHER BOOKS, THE WRITER IS ALSO
A PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE AND NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY.

MEMENTO MORI

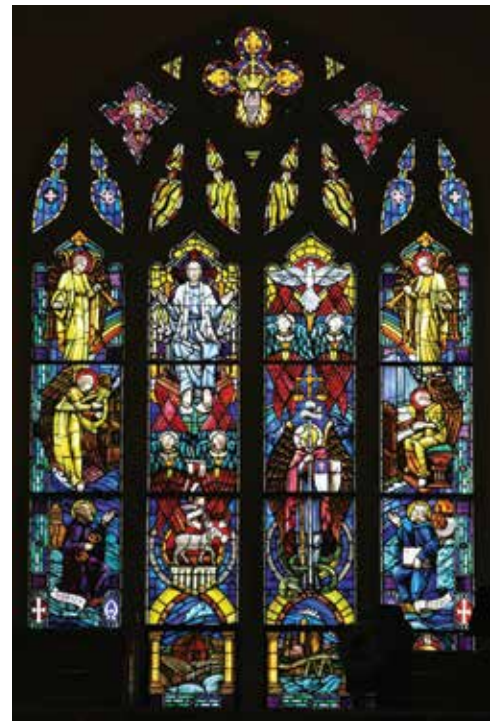
The past 50 years were dynamic and challenging ones for ecclesiastical art and architecture, and particularly trying for the field of stained glass. If current demographic and design trends continue, the 100th anniversary edition of *Faith & Form* may contain the following notice:

OBITUARY

Ecclesiastical Stained Glass Artwork,
675-2067

Born in the 7th century, Ecclesiastical Stained Glass Artwork came of age in the 13th and lived a long and influential life that was both international and interfaith. Its health began to decline in the 20th century, following recurring bouts of Abstractionism, Dalle de Verre, and Lamination. It endured Chronic Cost Justification Syndrome for years before finally suffering a severe reduction in new commissions and was unresponsive to resuscitation attempts by untrained practitioners.

Predeceased by skilled design partners William Willet, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Conrad Pickel, Franz Mayer, Charles Eamer



‘Trinity Window’ by Ronald Neill Dixon at Central United Methodist Church in Kansas City, Missouri; dedicated 1967.

photo by Bruce Mathews for his book, *Windows of Kansas City*, 2014.

Kempe, Wilhelmina Geddes, Ronald Neill Dixon, Charles Connick, and Harry Clarke, stained glass languished alone in its last days. Young talent ignored it, pews emptied, and patrons disappeared; even colleagues in manufacturing had retired, closing their firms or shifting from a hand-blown palette to machine-made clear architectural glass.

Although devoted to the Church, stained glass did flirt with residential and commercial applications but never found meaning in such dalliances. Rumors circulated that Marc Chagall, with whom it had a much-celebrated affair, was the love of its life but, as they came from different worlds, neither

of which understood the relationship, they never married.

Leaving no direct heirs, Ecclesiastical Stained Glass Artwork is survived by distant cousins in the secular glass crafts, as well as its replacements in the Church: the latest sound system, a coffee shop, and an inspirational phone app. A large bequest consisting of warehouses of pictorial glass panels of various vintages and quality has been rejected by major and minor museums and will be available at auction, with no reserve.

The funeral will be a karaoke praise music service held in an austere multipurpose gathering space with a nondenominational pastor

presiding. The six pallbearers carrying the casket to the graveyard will be the self-taught artist, the minimalist architect, the church finance committee, the iconoclastic liturgical consultant, the architectural salvage dealer, and the diocesan director of real estate.

In lieu of flowers, future generations suggest that friends of Ecclesiastical Stained Glass Artwork make donations toward the preservation of historic windows or to scholarships and apprenticeships in the traditional decorative arts.

—Annie Dixon

THE WRITER IS THE PROJECT MANAGER OF THE DIXON STUDIO IN STAUNTON, VIRGINIA, AND SERVES ON THE EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD OF FAITH & FORM.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS ARCHITECTURE?

The September 11, 2001 attacks signaled to me a dramatic shift in the tides of our future world. Following the tragedy was the immediate reaction of the American people—instant blame for the event on a religious group. I felt called to address it in whatever way I could. Most troubling for me was the near-unanimous reaction, because I knew something about Islam and it had nothing to do with the sacrilegious act committed. Many counter-responses took place across the country and I was glad to see the emergence of interfaith organizations.

I also responded as an architect by starting Sacred Space International, through which I educate people about the world's religions via the neutral language of architecture. In this way, I could connect people through the guiding principles that all faiths hold in common and do it in a tangible and inspiring manner.

As I continue my interfaith work of building interreligious communities, I wonder how interfaith can be addressed architecturally. What I foresee is a moving away from hierarchical architecture as exemplified in traditional Roman Catholic churches, and toward egalitarian spaces that encourage community building, as demonstrated in Frank Lloyd Wright's Unitarian Universalist Unity Temple in Oak Park, Illinois, of 1908.

Shared religious practices more accurately describe today's pluralistic evolution. We see connective tissue among the Abrahamic faiths, wherein spaces are emerging that incorporate worship space for multiple religious traditions under one roof. Such designs have been pursued in places like London, Berlin, and Iowa.

These are hopeful signs that through

'BETWEEN NO MORE AND NOT YET'

I think we are in a middle ground when it comes to thinking about architecture for worship. It is somewhat like a thin veil between the heavens and earth where dramatic life-changing transformations occur. It is a period of history drifting in between no more and not yet; a time where nothing is definite but everything is achievable.

Scholars and practitioners from diverse faith traditions are taking advantage of contributions from the fields of historical criticism, archeology, linguistics, and environmental sciences. Interdisciplinary methods for interpreting cosmic history, sacred texts, and liturgical rituals have emerged. A subtle but rewarding by-product of these advancements is bringing diverse faith traditions closer to a common ground.

The houses of worship that serve different religions are also changing and, with some exceptions, are quite similar in design. These resemblances have less to do with shifting architectural styles and details. The equivalence has more to do with a shared humanitarian purpose. While the buildings may function as places for distinct worship activities, other areas within the structures are dedicated to the needs of the local and neighborhood communities.

For the past 50 years, *Faith & Form* has reviewed the architectural and artistic transitions taking place in churches, synagogues, and (more recently) mosques and non-denominational houses of worship. Further, the journal has offered commentaries on various philosophical, cultural, artistic, and theological topics. Browsing through the magazine's annals one can easily recognize how contemporary developments in the practice of architecture have contributed to religious and cultural landscapes.

By the year 2067, I imagine, 1: More houses of worship will look less like their predictable and stylistic predecessors; 2: Saving important historic structures will become fiscally more difficult; 3: The very definition of a "house of worship" will change. New and re-purposed structures will function as interfaith community centers operated, but not necessarily owned, by more than one faith group. To meet the needs of their communities they will house diverse prayer rituals, food pantries, organic gardens, recreation areas, pre-school for children, and daycare centers for seniors. These urban and suburban "sacred" cooperatives, easily accessible and energy efficient, are already materializing in some locations. The worship of God and responsible citizenship are becoming more mutually sustaining partners.

—Richard S. Vosko, Ph.D., Hon. AIA

THE AUTHOR HAS BEEN A SACRED SPACE CONSULTANT SINCE 1970, AND SERVES ON THE EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD OF THIS JOURNAL.

architecture we can cultivate a nurturing environment for a pluralistic future where people

can worship together as related traditions in a single space.

—Suzanne Morgan, AIA

THE WRITER IS THE FOUNDER OF SACRED SPACE INTERNATIONAL, AN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO EDUCATING PEOPLE ABOUT THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS THROUGH ARCHITECTURE, AND SERVES AS THE SACRED SPACE AMBASSADOR FOR THE PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS.



*Drawing by architect Frank Harmon
of Wesley United Methodist Church
in Jacksonboro, South Carolina.*

A HYMN WITHOUT WORDS

When I think of churches that I love I'm drawn to the simplest of structures, such as a wooden church I visited in the Black Mountains of North Carolina, approached along a winding dirt road and cradled in a grove of trees. When I opened the church door on a weekday morning, dried leaves scuttled across the oak floor. I once passed a chapel on an alpine pass near Vals in Switzerland that was no bigger than a bedroom, yet it moved me as much as a cathedral. Bernard Maybeck, architect of the First Church of Christ Scientist in Berkeley, California, admired simple, rustic structures. He translated the fundamental quality of faith he found in rough-hewn Romanesque churches into the language of his church in Berkeley.

Why do small churches attract us? Why is the image of a chapel so poignant in an era of burgeoning megachurches? A modest church I once discovered might suggest an answer. Set 50 feet off of Highway 17 in Jacksonboro, South Carolina, Wesley United Methodist Church sits

empty for most of the week. The pastor serves a rural congregation with pews for a few dozen worshippers. A prayer band meets on Tuesdays. Nearby, a billboard advertises "No-fault Divorce." Churches like Wesley were bulwarks against segregation and discrimination across the South for over 100 years. They were witness to the value of human lives—lives that Jim Crow tried to throw away. Wesley was also witness to a fundamental quality of belief: quietly being present. It was not necessary to use marble and gilded cornices to make this a place of worship. A door, two windows, and a modest steeple made up the face of the church. Any more would have been superfluous. It was, in the words of Maya Angelou, "A Song Flung Up to Heaven."

—Frank Harmon, FAIA

THE AUTHOR IS AN ARCHITECT BASED IN RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, AND THE AUTHOR OF 'NATIVE PLACES,' A BLOG OF HIS OBSERVATIONS AND DRAWINGS OF ARCHITECTURE (NATIVEPLACES.ORG).

THE DARK AND THE LIGHT

A fundamental dynamic of the human condition is the rhythm and flow of dark and light. Throughout the relatively brief time our species has been around, and from the beginning of our self-awareness and our understanding of the reality around us, we have expressed our growing and profound sense of the spiritual experience of light and dark through form and symbol. The tension of light and dark is the "big bang" of spiritual awareness and its religious expression. Without the dark there is no light. Without light there is only darkness.

The state of religious art and architecture has been, is, and will always be experienced in, and therefore evaluated by, the expression of the relationship between the dark and the light. The "success" and power of such architecture, space, and art will be determined by the display of this fundamental tension. Sacred spaces of many different times and beliefs—caves with ancient art on the walls, the pyramids, stone rings, temples, cathedrals, and mosques—have been enhanced by the presence of darkness along with the illumination from many different sources,

such as sunlight and colored-glass windows. These religious and spiritual places and their art foster our perception about the dark and the light—not one or the other.

The expression the "play of light" only makes sense if one is aware of its playmate, the dark. A "sacred space" is a space where dark and light interact. A piece of religious art fulfills its reason for being if the dark and light are experienced together.

In my current work for communities of immigrants and refugees, the need to "name" the reality of dark and light in their human experience is essential in their art and worship spaces. I am confident, given the human condition and the vocation of the artist and architect, that in the future we will behold the continuing generative expression of the dark and light in form, space, and, therefore, in the God of the dark and the light.

—Rod Stephens

THE WRITER IS A LITURGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL, AND GRAPHIC DESIGNER, AND A MEMBER OF THE IMMACULATE HEART COMMUNITY IN LOS ANGELES AND THE ORANGE COUNTY CATHOLIC WORKER.

WALLS THAT BREATHE

As a writing teacher, I'm often provided windows into the souls of my students. I'm not sure whether they completely understand what they are revealing in their drafts and rewrites; my students range from traditional college students to first generation students, English language learners, DACA, Native American, and non-traditional so what I learn through their writing is often part of my own education as a teacher, writer, and human. As final research deadlines approached in May, Michael J. Crosbie's request for reflections on the future of sacred space landed in my inbox; I also found myself on a road trip with a colleague to Old Blandford Church in Petersburg, Virginia, a site holding 300 years of history.

One of my students had just turned in a paper on historical trauma and its long-term effects; the other wrote of the staggering rates and level of depression that immigrants experience, not simply on initial relocation but years after. As I cross the worn threshold of Blandford that late Spring morning, with diffused light from the day's low-hanging clouds bouncing from the aged floor to the centuries-old trusses, I am struck first by the simplicity of the space and then by the weight of the history that this small space holds tight within its brick-and-plaster-thickened walls. The morning's half-light subtly lights the 15 Tiffany windows that guard the perimeter of the chapel. The saints portrayed cast their gazes

toward pews, where worn seating offers hints of long-gone visitors. The smallest Tiffany window, placed out-of-the-way in the balcony above the entry door, is that of the Confederate battle flag.

As I sit in that moment feeling the weight of the walls and the history held within, I think of my students, and the travelers that have landed in and near this church in life and death. I think of the trauma and depression that this history represents. I met that day those who are trying to save the church, using it as a study guide for the past, so that history is examined from all angles, felt deeply and understood, not defended, but taken apart piece by piece. While walking the graveyard, I ponder Michael's question in the context of Blandford, and this is my hope for the future of sacred space: that our sacred spaces are created with walls that breathe—porous in design, both materially and intent; that our walls honor our known traditions and our as yet-unknown future; that translucent, luminous ideas radiate like Tiffany's layered colors through our unlocked doors to create welcoming, healing spaces that proclaim: This is not our space alone, this space is open to all. Please come in.

—Ann Kendall

THE AUTHOR TEACHES WRITING, SERVES ON THE FAITH & FORM BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND IS MANAGING EDITOR OF THE JOURNAL.

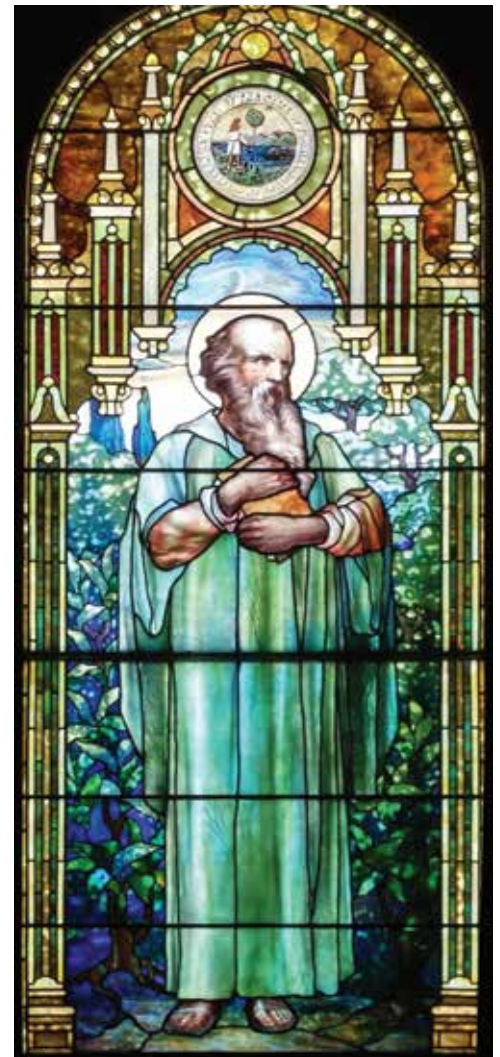


Photo: Ann Kendall

Tiffany Studios' 1912 Florida Memorial Window, depicting St. Matthew, in Blandford Church, Petersburg, Virginia.

SACRED TO ME

I first experienced the sacred 50 years ago, as a youth visiting the churches that my architect-grandfather, Harold Fisher, had designed in Detroit, such as Westminster Church with its modern Georgian style and St. Lazarus Serbian Orthodox Church, with its stripped-down Romanesque aesthetic. I remember standing in these churches with him, entranced by their spaciousness and serenity.

Those buildings remain in use and well-cared for today, and I suspect that 50 years from now, many of the sacred spaces currently under construction will remain so as well. Why? Because, while we often associate the "sacred" with religion, the word also refers to what we consider sacrosanct and inviolate, something that we would never damage or dishonor.

Sacred spaces may become more varied than what my grandfather designed. As the Pew Research Center has documented, the number of adults without a religious affiliation

has increased almost 50 percent over the past decade, while those who view themselves as spiritual has grown rapidly as well. This suggests that sacred spaces a half-century from now will include not just structures that house of various religions, but also the spaces that diverse communities consider sacrosanct; not just places *in which* people worship, but also those *that* they worship.

Which greatly expands the scope of sacred environments. They comprise not just churches, synagogues, and temples, but also places that hold meaning and carry on the memory of some group of people. That could include formal or informal memorials, sites where significant events occurred, and settings where people gather in celebration of something about which they care.

In that sense, the sacred can occur almost anywhere and in almost anything, for anyone who venerates an object or a space and the memory associated with it. And as such,

sacred places will always exist, since their sacredness depends not upon some official designation or ordained space, but upon the meaning it has for us, and the care we give it.

My grandfather might not agree to such a broad definition of the sacred. He devoted most of his 85-year career to the design of religious buildings, which represented for him not just a specialty, but a calling: the creation of large, light-filled spaces in which people come to worship. His buildings, though, also prove my point: whatever else they may mean for their parishioners, those far-off structures, forever a part of my youth, will remain sacred to me.

—Thomas Fisher, Assoc. AIA

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Entry to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Israel.

Photo: CyberCop/Wikimedia Commons

ARCHITECTURE AS A THEOLOGY

The relationship of the built environment to the study of religious belief is integral to the history of architecture, and it remains an unexpectedly live issue today. One recent convergence of the power of religious identity with the physicality of built form was the recognition by UNESCO of the Cave of the Patriarchs in the ancient city of Hebron as a World Heritage Site. As the burial place of Abraham, the great patriarch of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, the site is at once a mosque and pilgrimage destination for Jews and Christians alike—and has been controlled at various

periods by each of the three traditions. The renewed attention given to this ancient site represents the continuing hold that faith and its built manifestation have on our collective imaginations. It not only speaks of the manner in which these three traditions converge historically, but it also suggests allegorically what Abraham Joshua Heschel argued in his essay, “No Religion Is an Island,” their mutual common concern of resisting the nihilistic diminishment of the moral integrity of the human being in late-capitalist society.

Today the body of thinking on our built environment is being challenged by religious concerns perhaps more rigorously than at any time in the past, as for example in the religious revivalism fueling environmental activism in China, in the symbolic importance of the sanctuary church or city in the face of population displacements, or in the solidarity camp hastily constructed to support the Sioux protests at Standing Rock. Theory may differ from practice, yet architects must always confront reality in order to build: the architect always has a direct relationship with power, whether it be the power of the client, the faith community, or the state. Increasingly, religious belief will be a means of countering the frequently destructive forces of these various powers. It is the obligation of religious belief, one might argue—and as a corollary, of the buildings faith communities inhabit—to present now, and for the future, places and means of resistance to the forces of dehumanization. With a view toward the discovery and development of a way of life, religious belief must continually provide humankind with a means for understanding and shaping the relationship we have both with one another as human beings, and with the environment which we inhabit.

—Karla Cavarra Britton

THE AUTHOR IS A LECTURER AT THE
YALE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND
A FREQUENT CONTRIBUTOR TO FAITH & FORM.

‘CARPOOL KARAOKE’ AND HYBRID CHURCH

There’s a great interview with James Cordon, the host of the “Late Late Show” and best known as the creator “Carpool Karaoke,” a segment of the show where he sings in the car with famous artists as they drive around the streets of Los Angeles.

In this interview, he says that because his television show airs at 12:37 AM, his viewing audience numbers have a very low ceiling. However, through social media, he can reach a much larger audience than would ever tune into his show. He says that while most people have never watched and may never have heard of his show, “Carpool Karaoke” is a worldwide phenomenon with millions upon millions of views on YouTube.

Cordon’s insight on today’s media environment has significant import for the Church as it looks ahead to the next 50 years. Studies show and churches know that fewer people, even our members, attend Sunday morning worship. While many lament and resent this phenomenon, I suggest that the Church follow Cordon’s lead and seek to connect with people outside its own regularly scheduled programming to where people connect and gather in digital spaces.

In the coming decades, the Church, if it is to be relevant and survive, must become a hybrid institution, bridging the face-to-face and digital spaces where increasingly we “live and move and have our

being.” We have, for too long, thought of church as a building and worship as one hour on Sunday. We need to think of both much more expansively and imaginatively than ever before.

In the years to come, the Church must rethink its architecture: both the physical architecture within which we gather face-to-face, and the digital architecture that encourages people to worship any place and any time, to “pray without ceasing” on their smartphones, and to find Church and be the Church wherever they go.

This is not necessarily a case of relinquishing the old to embrace the new, although surely some things that worked for the Church in the 20th century can be left there. Rather, as Cordon points out, the success of a social-media-oriented project like “Carpool Karaoke” can lift a more traditional platform like his television show even if it airs in the wee hours of the morning. Reaching into these new digital spaces and reimagining ways of being Church are not an abandonment of what has been. Instead, it can be an invitation to “taste and see” the good things the Church can offer, and maybe even come for an hour on Sunday morning.

—Rev. Keith Anderson

THE WRITER IS PASTOR OF
UPPER DUBLIN LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMBLER, PENNSYLVANIA,
AND THE AUTHOR OF *THE DIGITAL CATHEDRAL* (MOREHOUSE, 2015).

PROMOTING SACRED ARTISTS, ARTISANS, AND ARCHITECTS

Looking back on the past half century, one might expect an even greater change in religious architecture during the next 50 years. This seems likely, given our love of novelty and change. However, I predict that we will also see three main trajectories continue in the design of places of worship. The first trajectory is the small, highly wrought, and innovative worship spaces so ably represented in *Faith & Form*. These will be a minority, however. The second trajectory will be the evolution of the “megachurch” and the further decimation of the traditional neighborhood church. Generally large auditoria with a trendy commercial aesthetic, these buildings will get built and discarded like other structures in our consumer-based society. The third trajectory is that of the classical revival, which has seen modest growth in recent decades. These churches will be larger than the small innovative chapels and of higher cost per square foot than the functional megachurch. They will include historical architectural forms and representational art accessible to people of many backgrounds, including the working class. The main patrons of “new traditional” churches will be Roman Catholics (with a minority of Orthodox and other liturgical traditions) whose numbers continue to grow in parts of the US. Their clergy and laity have a renewed interest in historic church typologies, catechetical iconography, and permanent materials.



Design for a university chapel by Duncan G. Stroik Architect

Yet our contemporary building culture can't fulfill this vision. In order for these new classical churches to go beyond mediocre traditionalism, it will be necessary that their pastors, hierarchy, and patrons promote the roles of the sacred artisan, artist, and architect. Classical architecture can only be as successful as the quality of the artisans who create the designs using natural materials and traditional techniques. To the faithful, the employment of wood carving, ornamental plaster, decorative painting, metal work, and stone carving exhibit the warmth and beauty of an incarnational faith. In addition, the patronage of sacred artists is crucial for art to become accomplished once again. This requires deeper study of the history of sacred art, time to produce it, and

more generous funding. Since the focus of classical churches is usually their artwork, this will be money well spent.

Finally, we need to form architects who are experts in the tradition of sacred architecture, which comes from years of study and experience. Only then can we expect to build new classical churches that are both beautiful and innovative. But more importantly, with talented artisans, artists, and architects working together, it will be possible once again to create magnificent temples to God that will be cherished by future generations.

—Duncan Stroik, FAIA

THE AUTHOR IS A PROFESSOR AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND EDITOR OF SACRED ARCHITECTURE JOURNAL.

FEMINIST SPIRITUALITY IN HIGH FASHION AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

This past May, House of Dior artistic director Maria Grazia Chiuri launched her 2018 Resort Collection: a line of *haute couture* inspired by (no one was more surprised than I) Karen Vogel and Vicki Noble's Motherpeace tarot card deck.

Tarot is a tool for divination: an aspirant uses the cards to ask for an oracle; the oracle, as an image or series of images, guides the aspirant's action. The Motherpeace tarot precipitated from the Women's Spirituality Movement of the 1970s with intentions to put women of all colors back into history and to function worldwide as a shared visual language of the Goddess. Vogel and Noble drew the cards' imagery in states of meditative trance, which is exactly the state in which I first saw them nearly 10 years ago: with my peripheral vision, in a department thrift store, hanging unceremoniously in a plastic bag on a wall amongst hundreds of other plastic bags filled with equally colorful but decidedly less valuable objects. To this day, my discovery of Motherpeace feels like a miracle; my deck remains a treasure even among my most precious possessions. Only in First Nations art and objects have I encountered images so spiritually charged and resonant as those in the Motherpeace tarot. And yet, despite the sale of over 300,000 decks since their original publication in 1981, the cards and the earth-based feminist spirituality

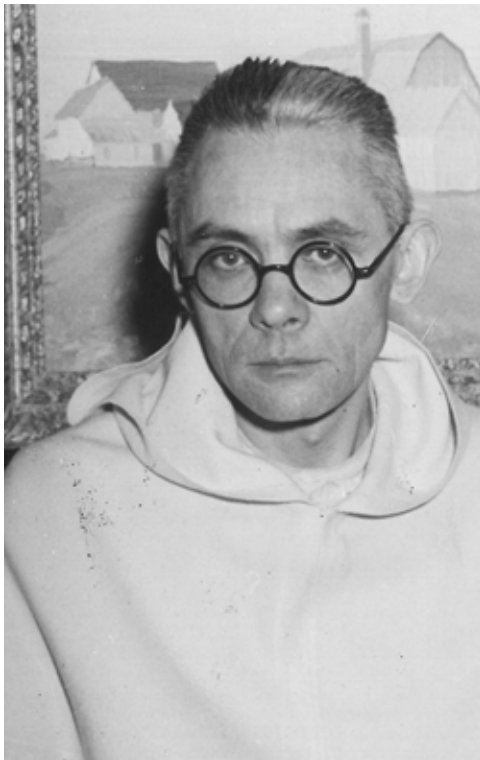
that motivated them remain unfashionable in mainstream contemporary art and cultural discourse—until now.

High fashion is a primary influencer of mainstream fashion, which articulates the values of a society. By integrating tarot and couture, Chiuri changes our culture's relationship to clothes. Closer to our bodies than any house or sanctuary is the soft architecture of our clothes. How would our clothes be different if, instead of brands, they were talismans? If, instead of mass produced, they were one of a kind? If they aided our meditation and prayer? If they raised our consciousness?

More broadly, Chiuri's inclusion of the first-ever permitted reproductions of Vogel and Noble's sacred images in the 2018 Resort Collection heralds a cultural shift toward a reality so clearly envisioned by the cards and so painfully lacking in our contemporary age. In this reality material life becomes a vehicle for spiritual expression, magic is not only possible but expected, communities gather in relationship with natural elements and cycles, women are empowered in and by their own bodies, all people are equal. Next season, next year, next century, on the runways, on our bodies, in our world, what will we see? —Chelsea Rushton

THE WRITER IS AN MFA VISUAL ARTIST WHO FOCUSES ON HOW THE CREATIVE PROCESS CAN DOCUMENT AND FACILITATE PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE GROWTH AND EVOLUTION. HER WORK CAN BE SEEN ONLINE AT: CHELSEARUSHTON.COM

WHY ARCHITECTURE?



The Dominican priest Marie-Alain Couturier, shown here in 1950, worked with some of the architecture and art luminaries of his time.

in the 19th and 20th centuries, resulting both from a failure of the work to reveal and of the human senses to be attuned to this revealing. Over the past several years, I have spent a considerable amount of time reading, studying, and analyzing Couturier's writing and the architectural undertakings he helped to realize. Through his projects and relationships with artists and architects including Marcel Parizeau, Maurice Novarina, Fernand Léger, Henri Matisse, and Le Corbusier, Couturier helped to construct a response to the mounting crisis of truth.

Despite these great efforts, we find ourselves today in a world still in crisis. Our senses, both physical and spiritual, are dulled, and architecture is increasingly reduced to a synthetic, disposable commodity produced primarily for the pleasure of the most elite members of society. To further compound the issue, with the ever-rising cost of land ownership, new generations and institutions are beginning to doubt the necessity of physical space in the virtual age. While our Modern predecessors grappled with the question of what architecture should

be, today we are faced with an equally pressing one—why architecture?

To this end we have much to learn from Couturier. He argued that a living architecture should be recognizable within the context of its time and place, it should open up a reflexive connection between the user and the work, and it should accept responsibility for the preservation of the senses. The result was consistently an approach to design rooted in love for the user and a deep respect for the role of sensory experience in conveying meaning. In light of this, we must respond not by envisioning a new architecture but by radically re-evaluating how and *why* we practice. If we accept, to start, that our physical and spiritual senses are essential components of our being human, then we must aim to slowly recover these diminished pieces of our collective humanity. Such a practice springs not from self-interest or economic necessity but from a deep and sincere love of truth and humanity. It is an act of resistance, wholly counter-cultural, but it is essential in the struggle to preserve the embodied experience of the sacred in the contemporary world.

—Caitlin Turski Watson

THE AUTHOR IS A REGISTERED ARCHITECT
PRACTICING AT KLIMENT HALSBAND ARCHITECTS
IN NEW YORK, NEW YORK.

Father Marie-Alain Couturier was a Dominican priest and a leading figure in the Sacred Art movement in post-war France. He rejected the degradation of sacred art and architecture that plagued the Catholic Church

EVOLVING SACRED ENVIRONMENTS

The question has long been asked about whether religion will be relevant to future generations. As we look to the generations of our children and grandchildren, we wonder about their response to religion itself, more than the buildings that offer a gathering space for the faithful. Polls such as those by the Pew Trust tell us that younger people are “more spiritual than religious.” Many have abandoned organized religion and think of it more philosophically than religiously. If these younger generations are wondering about religion, our own actions around the world have given them reason to be skeptical.

In contrast to what the major faith traditions profess to believe, we see a widening gap between the rich and poor; we seem untroubled by the failure of society to have any regard for the concepts of social justice and the sharing of wealth that religion teaches. Even our sustainable movements tend to focus more on those well off enough to desire a moral stance that they often aren't committed to. Knowing that young people already get far more stimulus from social

media than from religion, the future of religion is at best unclear.

On the other hand, changes occurring in the sciences and neurosciences suggest some optimism about the future, based on better understanding of our underlying motivation. We are rediscovering the value of perceptual silence. We now have “markets” for silence in meditation centers, floating centers, sensory-deprivation experiences, etc. that have much in common with early religious experience millennia ago.

The study of disabilities shows that at least 40 percent of us have perceptual or cognitive disabilities or losses. In the case of churchgoers, the demographic suggests a far higher number. In occupancy studies of neurotypicals (an autism term for “normals”) in workplaces, those who don't actually need a quiet place usually prefer it.

As we begin to understand these disabilities and architectural responses to them, I believe that we will design more spiritual buildings for all types of uses, and it will be the preferred perceptual baseline environment for

most populations. Science and psychology will teach us, quite effectively, what religion taught to earlier generations through experiences of the body. Back then, people understood loosely that the body teaches the mind; now we know it scientifically.

Regarding morality, we will go through the same scientific revolution of 2,000 years ago in religious traditions: that kindness is related to peacefulness and satisfaction, and that selfishness is a predictor of stress and unhappiness. In another 50 years we might find ourselves more in line with Indian mystical beliefs about the importance of science to inform religion. As we begin to understand that our most important experiences are far more emotional than rational, we will know the reasons why we desire love, beauty, excitement, and belief. It is more important that we discover truths than where we find them.

—Steve Orfield

THE WRITER HEADS
ORFIELD LABORATORIES
IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA.

FAITH, FORM

Devoted to the idea that architecture can be a living expression of faith, this modestly glorious journal has toiled for five decades to portray this hope, this belief. As stewards of sacred spaces—owners, congregants, committee members, architects, and designers—we work together to create physical, spatial, experiential embodiments of what our ineffable experiences of faith feel and mean to us.

Without the unfailing work of its editor, Michael J. Crosbie, the journal would not have achieved its thoughtfulness, its excellence, its broad ecumenical breadth, and depth of caring. Ever evolving the contemplative discussion on what constitutes sacred form, he has broadened the journal's scope to commemorate the sacred in landscape, art, urban communities, broadly diverse cultural communities, as well as to tap deeply into the academic communities to work with students, faculty, and scholarship to help us all define together what makes faith and form reflect each other.

As a recipient of no fewer than five Faith & Form/IFRAA awards over two decades, our small architectural firm and all of our stewards and collaborators are deeply grateful for the opportunity to share our vision, to share our labor, to share our humble attempts at envisioning sacred space, form, and (most of all) to share our glimpse of the sacred through the ineffable emergence of light within built matter. Designed more than 20 years ago,



Photo: Fred Housel

Marian Chapel at St. James Cathedral in Seattle, Washington, designed by atelierjones.

our Marian Chapel at St. James Cathedral in Seattle was our first project awarded by Faith & Form/IFRAA, and remains the most eloquent expression I have created of a public place to find the sacred. The intensity of its use and the emotions it provokes today—reactions from international visitors, to those who share no formal faith, to those in deep crisis—is humbling. Even miracles have been attributed to

this small space in Seattle, a city that is known more for its atheism than its faith. For me, the chapel is a constant reminder of the humility needed to create this light that leaps and connects our sacred spaces to the ineffable beyond.

—Susan Jones, FAIA

THE AUTHOR IS THE PRINCIPAL OF ATELIERJONES
IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

THE NEXT 50 YEARS

Forecasting the future fails in direct proportion to how far ahead we look. But, as futurists tell us, being right is less important than starting a conversation that affects the very events that the prediction puts forward. As in quantum physics, the observation (i.e., the forecast) affects the phenomenon under scrutiny (the future of *this* present).

There is little doubt that over the next 50 years our world will undergo changes that will make the past half-century seem tame. For example, how will we respond when and if: Artificial Intelligence is operational; dramatic extensions in life expectancy are realized; contact with natural wilderness becomes nearly impossible while almost all large animals become extinct; extraterrestrial life is found; assisted suicide becomes widely available for a rapidly aging First World; smart dust, cloud computing, and the Internet are coordinated and online; weaponized genetic engineering and full robotic warfare or state security are viable? What would daily life be like in an

overpopulated and super-accelerated world plagued by mass migrations, famine, and ideological/religious radicalization fueled by global warming, pollution, and economic inequality? And let us not forget the (liberating?) possibilities enabled by virtual reality, immediate mass personalized consumerism, super social media apps, large and growing portions of the population rendered idle by widespread automation, and powerful designer drugs, pets, and even babies!

Future citizens facing these unprecedented conditions and changes will not be able to cope using current secular narratives and techniques (e.g., belief in progress, unrelenting distraction from ever-novel memes, consumerism, new technologies, promise of democratic renewal). Nothing short of invoking a transcendent perspective (religious or not) will be required. In other words, the future seems to lead us to religion and spirituality, albeit not necessarily in their present formats and flavors. We could witness a rapid

expansion of religious beliefs and practices into all spheres of secular life, a trend to be strengthened by new and growing alternative spiritual organizations not bound to rigid institutional rules and historical inertia.

What kinds of architecture will support these future spiritual and religious realities? People seeking the sacred will depend on a greater variety of strategies to provide spiritual support and nourishment. The result might be the creation of hybrid spaces in which the sacred and the secular co-exist and are virtually indistinguishable. Whether such places are retreat areas far away from everything, completely new hybrid typologies of sacred-secular buildings, barricaded monastic bunkers in the middle of cities, transitory altars deployed in the midst of public life, traditional temples, high-resolution immersive MUD cyber-environments, gated gardens and communities, or other as-of-yet inconceivable environments is less important than what they will all respond to: our unique “human nature” in terms of our

embodied, emotional, social, existential, and spiritual dimension.

Over the past two decades the architect and theorist Juhani Pallasmaa has promoted just this: advancing, securing, and defending the depth and authenticity of human experience. We encounter the transcendent not by escaping into some other-worldly realm but by being fully awake to the life happening right in front of us — something as true today as 500

years ago or 50 years hence. For it is only in the present and in utter authenticity where the sacred may be found: architecture with restorative, empathic, and contemplative power derived through silence, simplicity, empty space, protected nature, slowness, identity, tradition, uniqueness, gathering, and place.

In short, the future of religion and spirituality and their architectural expressions are bound to be extraordinarily complex,

multifarious, biased, insightful, dangerous, violent, and beautiful all at the same time. The future of faith and its forms will be of crucial importance in how humanity and our planet fare in the late-21st-century and beyond.

—Julio Bermudez

THE WRITER IS A PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE
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AND SPIRITUALITY FORUM (ACSFORUM.ORG)



Photo: University of Chicago Neubauer Collegium

University of Chicago's Meadville Theological Seminary transformed into the Neubauer Collegium, designed by Kliment Halsband Architects.

PRESERVATION AND CREATION

The central design task of our century is joining creation and preservation for a sustainable future, and it is nowhere more relevant than in the creation of religious architecture, where people gather to meditate, worship, and reflect on the continuum of past, present, and future.

Old buildings communicate the values of previous generations and embody physical energy, as well as intellectual and spiritual significance. Our task as designers is to transform old buildings to meet modern needs while retaining the essence of their past. Religious buildings are widely understood as examples of how the past influences the future.

It is relatively easy to preserve an historic building. We study original materials and colors, seek guidance in old photographs and drawings, think about original intentions, and learn to make invisible repairs. The courage to remove or transform what no longer meets our needs is often lacking in the preservation community.

It is relatively easy to create the “new,” to make shapes that have never been seen before,

utilize innovative materials, to ignore the past in favor of completely new approaches.

It is getting easier to think about building sustainably, using less energy, relying on natural systems, natural daylight, and natural and renewable materials.

Putting all three together, however, is not easy. It requires a philosophy of connection, a belief that past and present are of equal value, a conviction that we can learn from the past and yet not be bound by it, that we can join old and new to design for the future. This is where religious structures can set the standard, where values can inform design, where design can give form to values. Respect for the wisdom of the past, the creation of community, the importance of conserving and protecting what we have is at the core of so many religious traditions. Religious architecture can be a model for the all architecture of the future.

—Frances Halsband, FAIA

THE AUTHOR IS A FOUNDING PARTNER OF
KLIMENT HALSBAND ARCHITECTS
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CONTRIBUTOR TO FAITH & FORM.

WHAT MIGHT THE NEXT 50 YEARS BRING?

Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's CEO, recently said his online juggernaut (which just crossed the threshold of two billion users) can offer a “sense of purpose” and “community” in the face of declining membership in churches and other groups. He also said Facebook's artificial intelligence algorithm can power the website to more effectively organize online communities. Zuckerberg believes “community” is what the world needs most right now. What does this mean for mainline churches, which, some experts estimate (with our spiraling downward existence), have 23 Easters left? It means our sacred spaces are vulnerable to bulldozers and nightclubs.

“What would Jesus do?” I believe he would do exactly the same thing he did 2,000 years ago, which was to proclaim the Good News to the poor, the orphan, the widow, and the marginalized in an openly shared community platform. I imagine Jesus would use Facebook and other social media technologies that facilitate the sharing of information to gather souls from around the globe to bring in the Kingdom of God. I don't think Jesus would resist 21st-century technology; I believe he would leverage it and then use our sacred spaces as spiritual hubs to engage in mission and outreach within local communities. If our sacred environments have a future, we need to engage more deeply with the past; not an idealized 1950s past, but to use today's technologies to communicate a message 2,000 years old.

Social media, machine learning, and augmented intelligence will allow the Church to broadcast this message to the cyber highways and byways and engage the world in a more profound, dynamic, and relevant way. I do not believe our sacred spaces should turn into cyber rest stops. Quite the opposite. I believe the 36 percent of Millennials who have no religious affiliation, those who have left the Church or are looking for a spiritual connection, are looking for sacred space that evokes the beauty and mystery of our faith. But they

will only be drawn in by a safe, in-touch, connected, socially responsible community that personally affects them. People are looking for the real deal, a faith defined not by what we can't do, but by what we can accomplish through a highly interactive global community.

—The Rev. Canon Cindy Evans Voorhees

A PRIEST AT SAINT JAMES THE GREAT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, NEWPORT BEACH, CALIFORNIA, THE WRITER CONSIDERS HERSELF A 'SPIRITUAL ARCHITECT.'

IN TIME AND OF TIME

"The monument formula is not constructed so as to 'defeat' time, imposing itself on and regardless of time, but so as to endure time instead..." — Gianni Vattimos

Time is quick to escape our grasp. Places of worship are among the few where we are connected to the moment and able to hold it still. Instead of creating an enclosure that is pristine and complete, a place of meditation can define the beginning of an evolution, a stage that invites the ethereal, here and now. Instead of struggling against time, the space can immerse us in its passage. It can be in time, and of time.

Architecture becomes a frame, revealing what is otherwise lost in the routine. Many architects have praised the virtues of buildings as backdrops to the changing atmospheres and the daily movement of shadows. All built

forms are subject to these forces, though the forces are made more apparent in some spaces than others. Places of worship can do more to collect time and make it visible for those inside. They can intensify the experience of passing time through formal organization, materiality, and signification.

One approach could be exemplifying growth and decay through rituals of construction and maintenance, material choice and exposure to elements, the incorporation of nature. Another approach could be drawing attention to what was once there through voids and imprints, like echoes and footsteps left by a former place. I am thinking of Peter Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Field Chapel where tree trunks were bound by local farmers and cast in 24 layers of concrete, over a duration. The trees within were then burnt slowly for three weeks, leaving a residual form and texture on the interior room.

This approach to architecture is about intensifying the passage of time so as to make it more apparent, but for the sake of what? If paper is what we write on, time is what we live in. Some might say it brings about an awareness that we are here, right now. We see the whiteness of the page, we feel the condition within which we live. Perhaps this connectedness to the moment is enough. Some might say it helps us to understand ourselves, as beings in time. Perhaps an easier explanation is that



Interior of Peter Zumthor's Bruder Klaus Field Chapel shows profiles of three-trunk concrete forms.

Photo: Seien+Seien/Flickr

places of worship, in this sense, ought to be more like us.

—Justin Wadge

THE AUTHOR IS AN ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNER AT MITCHELL|GIURGOLA ARCHITECTS AND A RECENT RECIPIENT OF THE CORNELL UNIVERSITY EDLITZ TRAVEL FELLOWSHIP.

THE FINAL FRONTIER: SACRED ART IN SPACE

With developing space travel advances in 2017, we find ourselves on the exciting precipice of long-term and alternative habitats in the cosmos, conceivably realized by 2067. Our skies are sacred, they are after all the greater unknown, both presence and void. Jump on the starship with me as we speculate what the sacral in faith, art, culture, and the built environment might mean over the next 50 years.

If we imagine that orthodox religious dogma fades away and is replaced by interfaith spiritual individualists, our personal faith tenets become paramount, they become our new cathedrals and our new altars. Our expressions of the holy become less about location (where one is) and more about intelligence, mentality, and spirituality (where one is going). Our culture, our environments, and our imaginings become futuristic, transitory, portable, and intergalactic bridges between space and time.

Perhaps all our technology will grow wearisome: too fast, too much, too confusing, too problem ridden. Maybe artificial intelligence, super-rapid processors, Jetson-like apartments, and self-driving jetpacks will just be a bit more than we can bear. Or maybe our automated, albeit animated robot lovers will leave us lonelier than we have ever been before. And if we tire of trying to keep up with this technological age, perhaps we will seek to return to new explorations and developments – not as space travelers and dwellers, but as insatiable soul searchers, intrigued by the unseen, unscientific, untried, and unconventional.

We might seek inherent truths that hold fast between sea and sky, from shore to ship, within right and wrong, from old world to new, from utilitarian to extravagant, and most assuredly from aesthetically pleasing to that which simply is not. These are the bonds we will seek: bonds of surety; ties of connection; channels of communication; and still the inerrant proof that the Creator loves us, uniquely and unceasingly, never-endingly, and without fail. And that our returned love is justifiable, provable, worthy, and edifying.

Distinct from strong religious identities, theological beliefs, huge megachurches, or religiously significant historical outposts, will be a larger need: that for experiences of intimacy, silence, consistency, and reflection; a need for community, for interdependence, for realms of love and beauty. It's a lot to process, out there floating around in space. In the end, the final frontier will mean love must win. And if it is true that we are often anxiously protective of the things we most value, then the future must hold reimagined portals for all the classics – literature, music, art, architecture, theology, and philosophy. Those who will see 2067 must not only be travelers to and through new worlds ahead, but also torch-bearers, witnesses, testifiers, sentinels, gatekeepers, pioneers, and evangelists.

—Shauna Lee Lange

THE WRITER IS FOUNDER OF THE ART EVANGELIST, A FULL-SERVICE LITURGICAL ART ADVISORY SPECIALIZING IN SACRED SPACES, PUBLIC PLACES, AND CREATIVE PLACEMAKING, AT THEARTEVANGELIST.COM.



The first purpose-built mosque in Canada constructed in 1938, Al Rashid in Edmonton, Alberta.

SHARED SACRED SPACE

Reflecting on the experiences and documentation of 70-plus mosques I have visited in Canada, approximately half of the total number in the country recorded, I have a number of observations. In addition to the histories of creation, the iteration of spaces communities go through, and the variety of segregated spaces for women, it is critical to consider the sustainability of these spaces. To continue to exist, mosques in Canada need to be inclusive of users of a variety of backgrounds and needs to include within its

architectural programming, in addition to religious activities.

With over a century of Muslim presence in Canada, the earliest mosques in every community were hubs of inclusion and participation. People of different faith backgrounds worked together to finance, build, and create mosques both purpose-built and converted from other, disused spaces. In these earliest mosques, the space was shared with other faith groups and community groups. Likewise, Muslims shared and used buildings of other faith groups in their nascent Canadian communities. Local Christians, Jews, and Muslims, as well as the local government, financially supported the first purpose-built mosque in Canada, Al Rashid, built in 1938. Once built, local community groups for social events and circles used the Al Rashid. In many of the mosques I visited, I learned of early Muslim communities reaching out to churches and creating lasting partnerships of shared spaces.

In contemporary Muslim majority countries, the functions of most mosques are limited to religious activities. The mosque for Muslims in the West, who experience life as a minority, functions much more as hub

of community gathering. In a telling development of mosque design in Canada in the past century, as communities are able to commission purpose-built mosques, spaces are included that specifically address community needs. After the prayer hall, the most important space for a large number of mosque users was the construction of a gymnasium. In order to maintain a sense of community for young Muslims, the mosque needs to be a gathering space open to many kinds of social interaction.

The number of Muslims in Canada is increasing at a steady rate, as is the number of mosques constructed. However, for these spaces to be sustained financially and socially they need to be used frequently and be accessible to a multiplicity of groups and for a variety of purposes, as they have been in the past. Perhaps this shared nature of use is the most important for all kinds of sacred space in the future.

—Tammy Gaber

THE AUTHOR IS A PROFESSOR AT THE LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE IN SUDBURY, ONTARIO. HER RESEARCH OF THE MOSQUES OF CANADA IS FUNDED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES RESEARCH COUNCIL AND IS THE SUBJECT OF A FORTHCOMING BOOK.

Eliel Saarinen's Christ Church Lutheran in Minneapolis was recently awarded a capital grant from the National Fund of Partners for Sacred Places (sacredplaces.org).

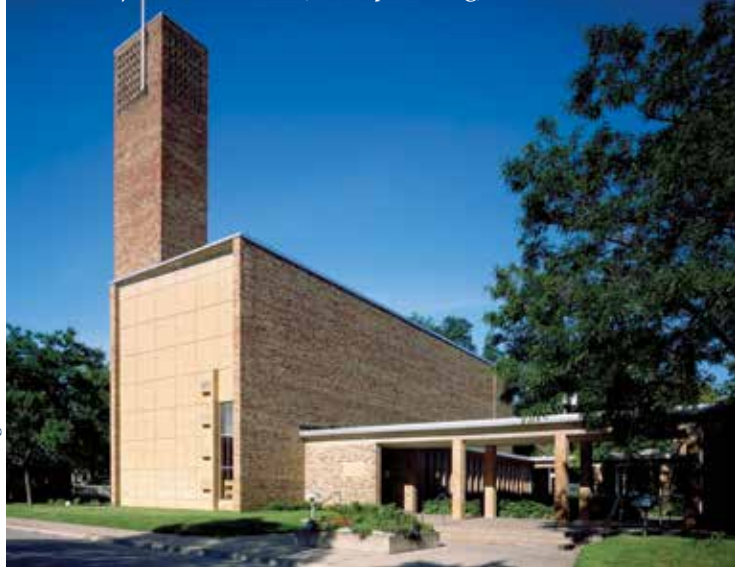


Photo: Carol M. Higgs-Smith

SACRED PLACES AS CIVIC ASSETS

Much has changed over the nearly 30 years that Partners for Sacred Places has been working with older and historic sacred places. And much has stayed the same.

From the beginning we knew that religious architecture contributed something powerful and moving to our lives and our streetscapes. But we did not begin to understand the larger civic value of sacred places until the late 1990s with our *Sacred Places at Risk* study, conducted with the University of Pennsylvania. This research told us that older churches

and synagogues serve as *de facto* community centers for most of the week, and that congregations share their space in important and sacrificial ways. And just last year, Partners' study on the *Economic Halo Effect* of sacred places confirmed their civic value and their power as contributors to neighborhood economic health. The average urban sacred place, we know now, generates \$1.7 million in economic impact each year.

How ironic, though, that we have a fuller understanding now of religious places—an appreciation that can move and inspire secular funders, governmental agencies, and an increasingly “unaffiliated” citizenry—at the very moment that sacred places are most vulnerable, and likelier to close? Ironic, yes, but what we have learned also empowers us. It is highly relevant to the transitions that sacred places are enduring. What we know can empower the nonprofit community to be more helpful to congregations that need to activate half-empty buildings, making them into centers for the arts, food, education, and community regeneration.

What we have learned also prepares us to be involved in all stages of the life of a sacred place, including when it is vacant and most vulnerable. There is no doubt that thousands of churches and synagogues will be closing in the coming years, and many will not have a buyer. The nonprofit community needs to be ready to step in with tools and approaches that enable the larger community to support new purposes that keep these places active and useful.

What we have learned affirms and supports what we knew all along—that sacred places add immeasurably to the cultural and artistic richness of our streetscapes and our neighborhoods, telling us where we've come from, and increasingly where we are going.

Some things do not change.

—A. Robert Jaeger

THE WRITER IS PRESIDENT OF PARTNERS FOR SACRED PLACES, WHICH IS BASED IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

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Sacred Space in Outer Space

By Jaime Lara

SOONER OR LATER SOME ARCHITECT WORKING FOR NASA will have to design a chapel for an international research station on Mars, and it may not be too early to starting thinking about it. While a project like that might at first seem controversial because scientists are thought to be agnostics or atheists, such is actually not the case. Most of the world's physicists, astronomers, mathematicians, molecular biologists, and the like have studied in the Judeo-Christian cultures of America and Europe, and quite a few have received their science degrees at religiously affiliated universities. If the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (founded in 1936) is any indication, many scientists hold to some monotheistic religious tradition.¹ Certainly none are fundamentalists or bible literalists. They have been able to understand religious language, symbolism, and mythopoesis as a valid alternate language to that of pure science and math; like other human beings, they recognize the value and need for rituals. The very fact that there is a Vatican Observatory and Advanced Technology Telescope on Mount Graham in Arizona, confirms that at least some of those who have their eyes on the stars are believers.²

Actually, the idea of a religious building for devout space explorers is not entirely new. The November 1967 issue of *Liturgical Arts*—the journal that publicized the religious buildings of Marcel Breuer, Le Corbusier, and Mies van der Rohe—was dedicated to the theme of space exploration and religious art.³ (In the same year, Oscar Niemeyer's tent-like Cathedral of Brasilia was consecrated and Buckminster Fuller's geodesic bubble—forerunner of the Crystal Cathedral—appeared at the Canadian Expo67.) Two years before NASA's Apollo 11 Mission landed on the moon and Neil Armstrong announced “one giant leap for mankind,” a young architect from California by the name of Mark Mills designed a chapel to be built there, under the lunar crust. The ideology of the proposed project was further developed in the same journal by Father Terence Mangan, a Camaldolese monk, who saw a future moon base as the perfect form of contemporary monasticism.



A late-1960s design for a moon base included a subterranean lunar chapel (8A in the drawing).

In a concrete, manufactured cave, a tent-like structure would be suspended on cables from a ring set in the moon's crust, defining sacred space and providing privacy. The moon's gravity is one-sixth that of Earth, but the engineering principles of a tensile structure there would be practically the same. Tents, of course, are an ancient form of human shelter, and they cross all geographic and ethnic lines, appearing on all continents.⁴ They also have particular importance to Jews, Christians, and Muslims because they appear so often in the Bible and the Qur'an.⁵ The patriarchs lived in tents, as did the wandering tribes of Israel after the Exodus; even God himself dwelt in a desert tabernacle for 40 years like a great nomadic sheik. Saint Paul was a tent maker by profession and employed tenting metaphors; and the opening lines of John's Gospel imply that the incarnate God continues to be a tent-dweller on the move: “In the beginning was the Word . . . And the Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us” (Jn 1:14).⁶

BACK TO THE LITURGICAL FUTURE

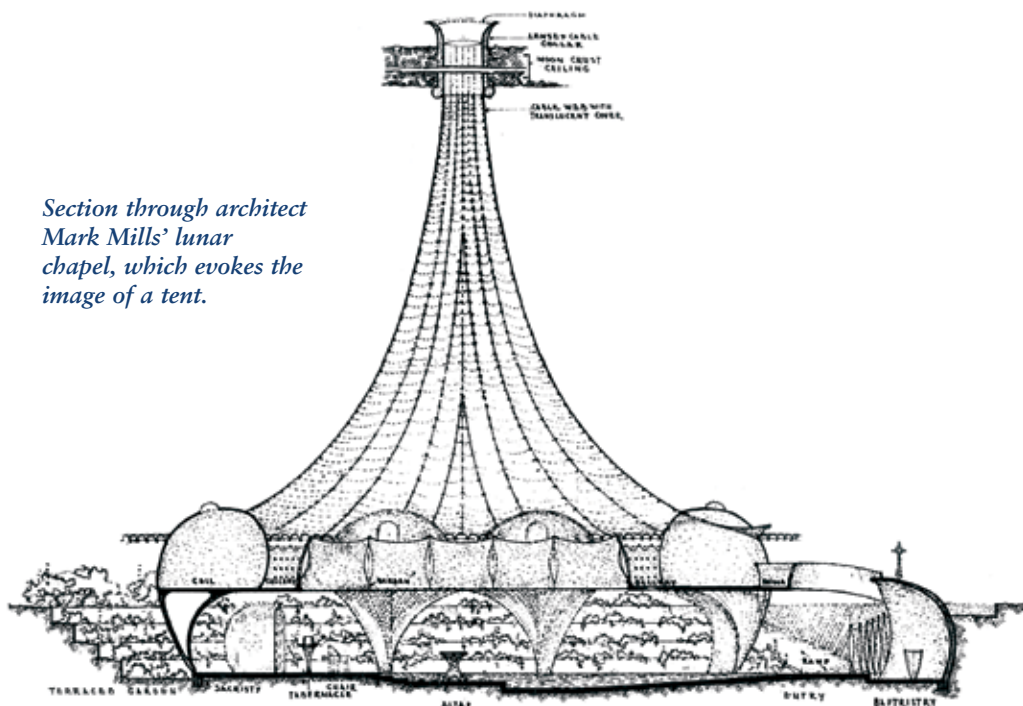
The lunar colonists of the future would be modern Bedouins caravanning about the

bleak, desert-like moonscape on rovers and mining equipment.⁷ But the proposed religious edifice would have references to ancient constructions of a more human and earthly scale. In Mills' chapel, the ring and its oculus act as a solar eye filtering the only natural (sun) light into the worship place. Like the solar oculus of the Roman Pantheon (consecrated in 610 CE with little change as the Church of Santa Maria Rotunda), the diaphragm and sweeping interior of the tent pulls the eye of the worshipper sunward and points the way home.⁸ Floors, ramps, and monastery mezzanine are of reinforced concrete or of hardened moon dust (called regolith). A plant-covered bank mutes outside noises and provides views into a terraced garden.

This sacred space—which is complete with baptistery and confessionals—would be staffed by contemplative monk-psychologists who have exchanged their habits for space suits. In the adjacent monastery and its subterranean cloister the clergy offer psychological counseling for those living underground and under lunar stress. They and their troglodyte parishioners are space-pilgrims with a sense of a larger journey through time and the heavens.

THE AUTHOR, A RESEARCH PROFESSOR IN VISUAL CULTURE AND RELIGION AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY, ALSO SERVES ON THE FAITH & FORM EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD.

Section through architect Mark Mills' lunar chapel, which evokes the image of a tent.



SPACESHIP EARTH

How things have changed since the 1960s! We might look back on those Vietnam-era dreamers as lunatics of a sort. Our world is vastly different from July 20, 1969, when Neil Armstrong put the first footprint on lunar soil, or when astronaut Buzz Aldrin, a devout Presbyterian, performed a communion service for himself in space.⁹ In the Kennedy years it was still a male-dominated world where spacemen were envisioned as interplanetary conquistadors, oblivious to the ecological damage of strip-mining astral bodes. What would environmentalists make of such destruction of virgin territory? What would the religious leaders of Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, or Baha'i communities make of a Christian chapel on the moon, and a chapel of a particular denomination of Christianity, at that? Indeed, times have changed and, by implication, architects have to address a changed and rapidly changing world. And yet, the call of the numinous remains. In sacred buildings, architects are charged with the ineffable task of articulating "mystery" for humans; we could say the ultimate mystery. What might that demand on Mars?

SHRINES ON MARS


Moses and Aaron, the Old Testament tells us, had to make bricks without straw before their people could leave Egypt and begin the journey to the Promised Land. Before astro-colonists can leave Mother Earth and begin populating Mars, today's scientists have to figure out how to make bricks from Martian regolith without water. They are developing a

procedure to bind the regolith with a powder polymer securely enough to serve as a building material, while also acting as a radiation shield.¹⁰ Consequently, the first earthlings to set foot on Mars will have to take at least some of their shielding with them. Unless the colonists discover caverns, most of the raw material will come from underfoot and look like clay bricks. These rego-bricks could be mass-produced at a landing site by robotic devices placed by an unmanned mission years before the first humans land. And they don't have to be bricks; regolith mixed with the polymer bonder could be extruded into logs.

If there is an enterprising architect out there reading this, start thinking: a brick or brick-log circle, square, dome, oculus, apse? In religious experience and reflection, our planet is normative. Both monotheism and polytheism grew out of agrarian-animal husbandry, urban and corporeal metaphors; as well as circadian rhythms, seasons and 24-hour days. Light, water, and "bread," in one form or another, are also normative. It seems to this writer that the Mars architects might consider employing the Islamic notion of the qibla, a word meaning "direction," but which we might also translate as "homing."¹¹ The Martian sacred interreligious chapel might act as a pointer homeward to the foundational event of the religious tradition and the larger fellowship of believers, and an apse, oculus, or dome might enhance the directionality. Temporary religious icons on light-weight fabric could be unfurled in the space for specific services. Christian scientists on the Red Planet might want to bring the ecumenical image of the Pantocrator who they worship appropriately as cosmocrator (lord of

all space) and chronocrator (lord of all time).

Perhaps a common symbol, planted at the heart of the chapel, might be a living tree. Acting as an open bridge symbol, it would represent simultaneously the primeval World Tree, the tree of the biblical Eden, the "tree" of Jesus' cross, the Bodhi tree of the Buddha, and the trees at the heart of the New Jerusalem. The arbor vitae thus would represent human origins and endings, religious past and religious future.

In Roman mythology, Mars is the god of war and considered the father of Romulus and Remus, the mythical twin founders of Rome. Hopefully the Mars scientific colony, an international body, would be a new foundation of peace and cooperation for the commonweal. The Martian interreligious chapel, with its sights, sounds, and symbols of the numinous, would be both reminder and promise of human longing and homing in all space-time dimensions. 

NOTES

1. bit.ly/ff-pas
2. www.vovatt.org
3. Terence J. Mangan, "The Dorman Moon Chapel," *Liturgical Arts*, 36:1 (1967), pp. 3-9.
4. On the history of tensile architecture, see E. M. Hatton, *The Tent Book* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979), pp. 3-112.
5. On tents in the Bible, see *ibid*, pp. 5-10.
6. In early 19th-century America, Methodists developed the classic tent-meeting revivals, and Latter Day Saints built canvas and wooden tabernacles throughout Utah. The theological notion of the Church as the People of God on pilgrimage through time and space was revived in the mid-20th-century and articulated at Vatican II.
7. See Isaac Asimov, "Is 'Space 1999' More Fi than Si?" *The New York Times*, Sect. 2, p. 1. Sunday, Sept. 28, 1975. In 2006 NASA commissioned several architects to brainstorm construction possibilities and problems on the moon, but no chapel has been envisioned: go.nasa.gov/2xBnaTe
8. Presumably the chapel would be constructed on the nearside of the moon, which always faces Earth.
9. "Communion in Space," *Guideposts*, October 1970.
10. See bit.ly/ff-physorg
11. In Islamic architecture, the qibla is indicated by a mini-apse known as the mihrab.

A God's-Eye-View of Sacred Space

By Michael J. Crosbie / Photographs by Thomas R. Schiff



Photographer **Thomas R. Schiff** got interested in panoramic photography about 25 years ago, and has produced amazing images of architecture, documented through books and exhibits. His first impulse was to capture iconic works of architecture throughout the U.S. That project blossomed into several off-shoots: panoramic images devoted to libraries, the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, vernacular architecture in several locales around the country, the Modernist mecca of Columbus, Indiana. Now Schiff is working on a book of houses of worship, and we present here just a taste of its contents (with a particular emphasis on some of

the great modern houses of worship constructed over the past 50 years).

Schiff explains that taking panoramic photos is an entirely different process than using a conventional camera to carefully frame a single view. While a photographer will scout shots from a variety of different spots and angles, Schiff's goal is to capture his subject in its entirety. "I have to be at the very center of it," he says, particularly when photographing interior spaces. Panoramas of religious buildings promise breathtaking views because they offer generous spaces and often dramatic lighting effects (Schiff rarely uses special lighting, working with what is available

in the space). Schiff uses a custom-built tripod that can lift his camera some 30 feet in the air. The camera is motorized, advancing the roll of color negative film at the same speed that the camera moves as it pivots in a circle. The result is an unbroken spool of sacred space, seeing it as it has never before been experienced.

Schiff reports that sometimes he is surprised by what his photographs reveal—how the interiors undulate to form a cocoon of worship. Looking at Schiff's pictures, one comes away with the impression that perhaps this is a God's-eye-view of sacred space, beheld as only a divine being might "see" it.



Center of Gravity Foundation Hall Buddhist Temple; Jemez Springs, New Mexico; Predock Frane Architects.



Beth Shalom Synagogue; Elkins Park, Pennsylvania; Frank Lloyd Wright.



Chapel of St. Ignatius; Seattle, Washington; Steven Holl.



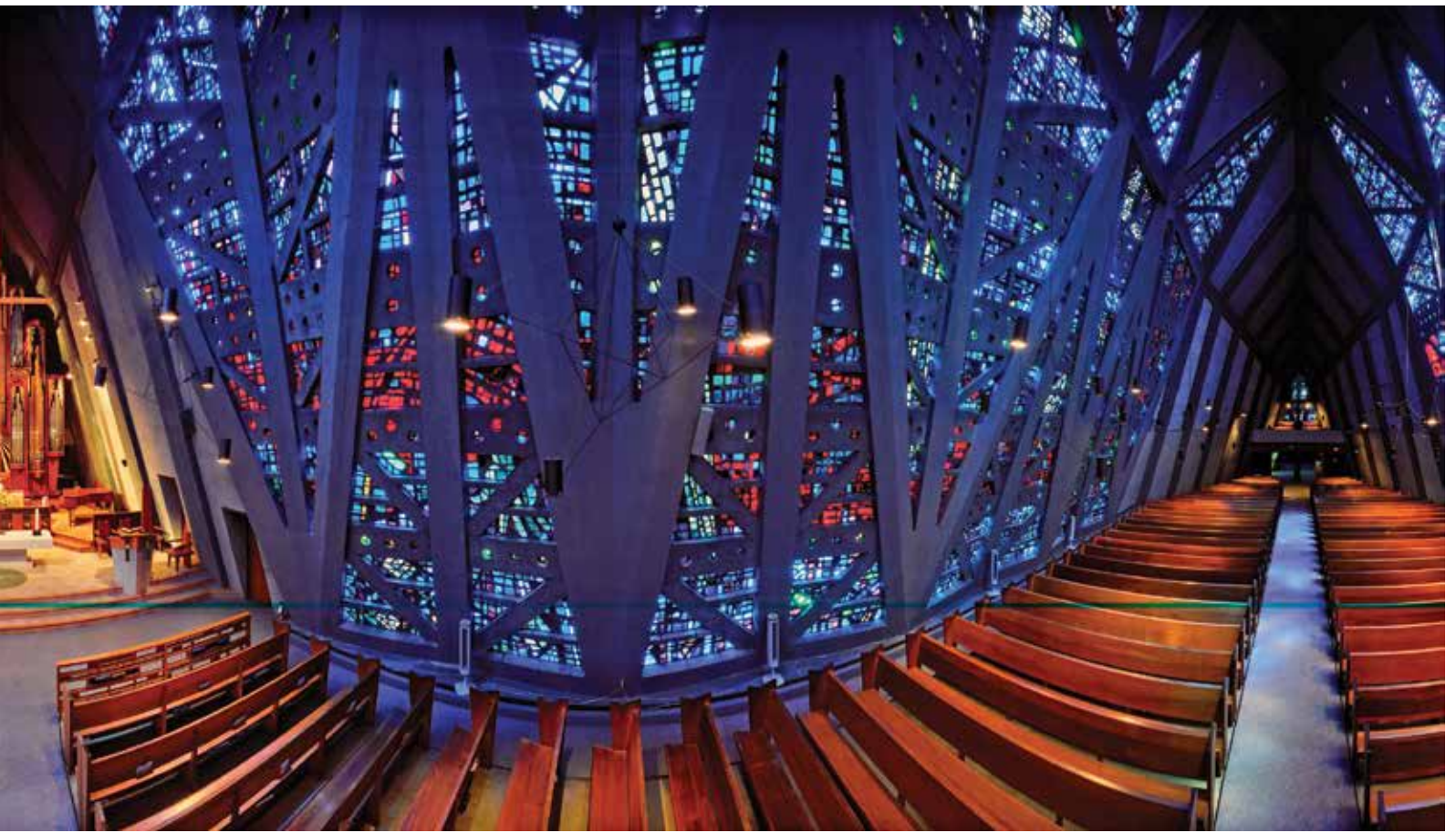


Cathedral of Christ the Light; Oakland, California; Craig W. Hartman.



Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati; West Chester Township, Ohio; Ramzi Mahallawi.

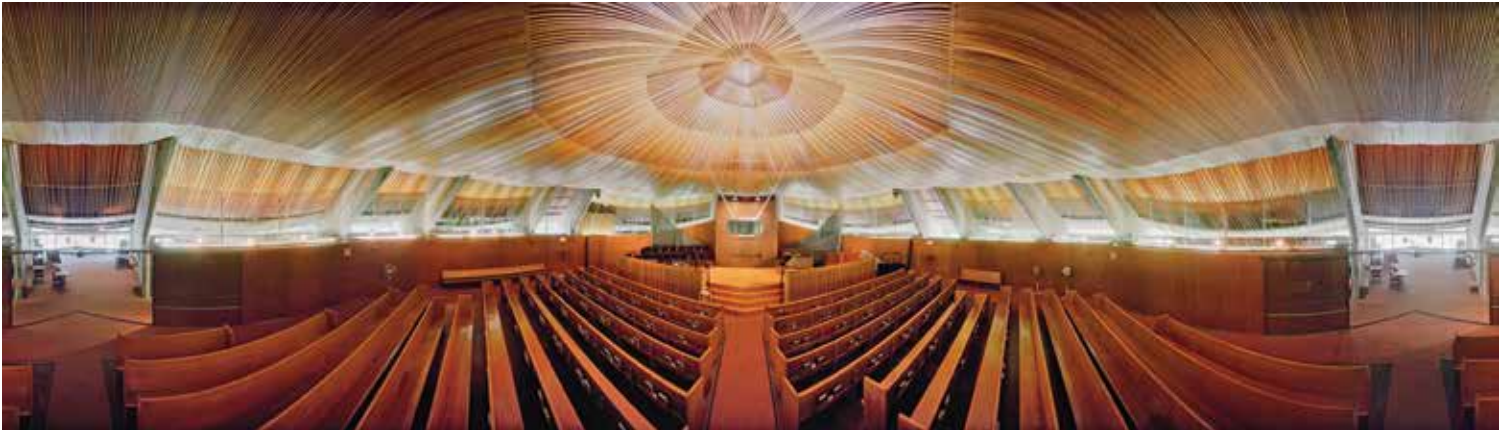




First Presbyterian Church; Stamford, Connecticut; Wallace K. Harrison.



Wayfarers Chapel; Rancho Palos Verdes, California; Lloyd Wright.



Unitarian Society of Hartford; Hartford, Connecticut; Victor Lundy.



Roofless Church; New Harmony, Indiana; Philip Johnson.



MIT Chapel; Cambridge, Massachusetts; Eero Saarinen.

A Bob Rambusch Remembrance

On the passing of a legendary liturgical artist and social activist

By Richard S. Vosko, Hon. AIA

One of the primary movements during the early ecumenical period was the Liturgical Conference. It began in 1940 and sponsored annual liturgical weeks that, up to 1968, drew thousands of participants from all across North America. In February 1965 the Conference held a meeting on church architecture in Cleveland. The theme was “The Shape of Reform.” This timely gathering was prompted by the promulgation of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy in December 1963, the first document published at the Vatican II Ecumenical Council. The conference would be one of the earliest meetings of artists, architects, musicians, and clergy who were genuinely interested in learning how the new teachings of the Council would shape and re-shape houses of worship.

The speakers at the conference included architect Edward A. Sövik, artist Frank Kacmarcik, and liturgical scholars such as Kevin Seasoltz, Gerard Sloyan, and Frederick McManus. Bob Rambusch, a respected and well-known liturgical artist, moderated an ecumenical panel that discussed various aspects connected with building a “post-Conciliar” church. Rambusch was a perfect choice for that role because he understood that the Council would significantly change the way Christians would think about the environment and art for worship. (Incidentally, *Faith & Form* was the 1967 inspiration of Sövik, Benjamin P. Elliot, and Bob in the Netherland Hotel bar, in Cincinnati, Ohio.)

I first met Bob in 1961 while beginning my studies for the ministerial priesthood. He came to our seminary in Albany, New York to speak about liturgical design. Bob introduced us to new churches in France and Germany as well as the US. The Europeans had embraced modern architectural language while Americans were clinging to more traditional styles. The tone of Rambusch’s presentation was light-hearted and informative as he discussed how well versed German, French, and Belgian pastors were in the liturgical movement that began in 19th-century Europe, while most American clerics were just beginning to notice it. The years to follow in the US would become

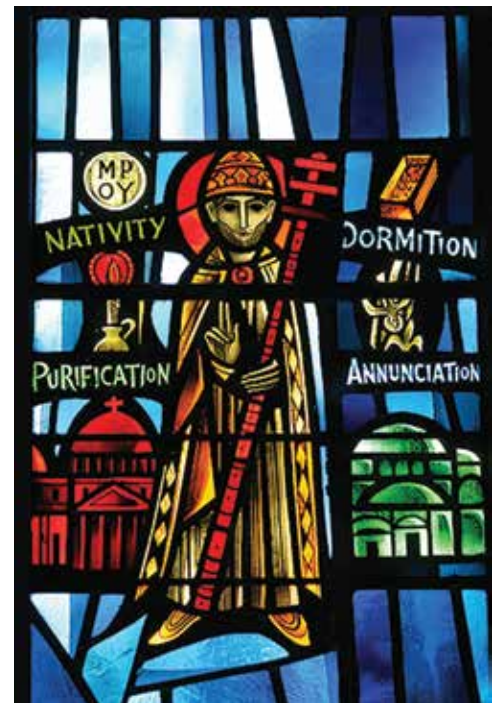
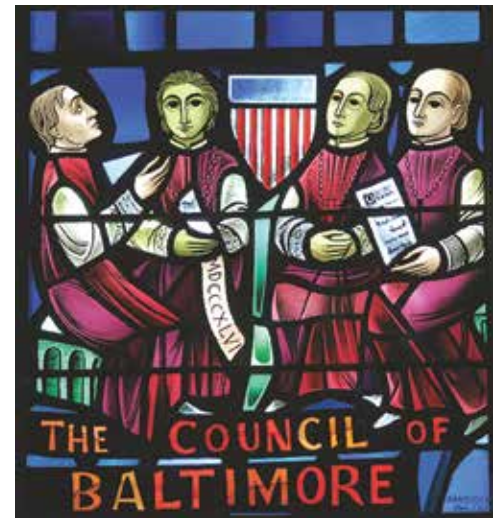
models for creative ideas and designs. Every so often, in recent years, Bob and I would meet for lunch. We would discuss religion, politics, and his career as a liturgical artist. He died on May 23, 2017.

Robert E. Rambusch was born in Brooklyn, New York on January 24, 1924 to a Norwegian mother and a Swedish father. After graduating from Brooklyn Prep, a Jesuit high school, he enrolled in the pre-college program in art and architecture at Pratt Institute, also in Brooklyn. His studies were cut short because of World War II. Bob enlisted in the Army and was assigned to the 45th Infantry Division that would later participate in the liberation of the Dachau concentration camp. Corporal Rambusch was wounded in the war and was decorated for bravery with the Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

After the war, Bob attended The University of St. Michael’s College, Toronto, where he met his future wife, Nancy McCormick. Upon his graduation and before their marriage in 1952, they both studied in Paris — he at Le Centre de L’Art Sacre and Nancy at La Sorbonne. While honing his drawing skills Bob acquired a critical appreciation for design as a student of the famous stained-glass artist and Dominican friar, Marie-Alain Couturier. Couturier surfaced as a key liturgical scholar and practitioner while serving as consultant for Matisse’s Chapelle du Rosaire in Vence and Le Corbusier’s Notre Dame du Haut in Ronchamp. At the Center, Bob met another student, Frank Kacmarcik. Although it is unknown whether they ever worked together on a project, they became good lifelong friends.

While in Paris, Bob participated in liturgies led by members of the Worker Priests Movement, which later was suppressed by the Vatican for its left-leaning support of factory workers’ rights. That experience introduced Bob to the Young Christian Workers Movement, an organization that promoted the labor encyclicals of various popes. This engagement was his initiation into the radical world of social activism. Bob became a secretary in the movement and traveled to India, Burma (Myanmar), Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand, places where he became an advocate for the welfare of industrial workers.

In the late 1940s Rambusch moved back to the States and settled in Greenwich Village where he lived with his parents until his marriage. At this time Bob began working



Photos: Courtesy of the Cathedral of Mary our Queen

in the family business on West 13th Street. In its early years, Rambusch Studios, which was started in 1898 by Danish artist Frode C.V. Rambusch, specialized in church and synagogue design and decoration. The studio became known for its productivity in metalwork, stained glass, and architectural lighting.

While working for Rambusch Studios, Bob traveled widely throughout North America consulting on church and synagogue projects, too many to list here. He believed some of his best work as a stained glass designer is found in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore, Maryland, dedicated in 1959. He created the iconography for 14 windows, each of which is 20 feet high. Bob’s other work included designs for ritual furnishings, books, and devotional art.

His involvement in liturgical and architectural organizations is as legendary as was his custom of sending postcards to almost everyone he knew from wherever he traveled. While

THE AUTHOR IS A PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF ALBANY, HAS WORKED AS A SACRED SPACE CONSULTANT SINCE 1970. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE FAITH & FORM EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD AND A FREQUENT SPEAKER AND AUTHOR ON TOPICS OF RELIGIOUS ART AND ARCHITECTURE.

working full-time Bob was a reliable and energetic visionary who served on many boards and committees in organizations of artists, architects, and clergy. A short list includes: the Liturgical Conference; the Guild for Religious Architecture; the American Society of Church Architecture; the Liturgical Arts Society; the Interfaith Forum on Religion, Art, and Architecture; and the Stained Glass Association of America. He was also a key planner of the interfaith congresses on art and architecture held in places as diverse as Jerusalem and San Antonio.

Bob generously also contributed his knowledge on the local level. He was a member of the art and architecture commission of the New York Archdiocese, which provided advice to local pastors building or renovating churches. In the mid-1970s, Bob chaired a committee of artists, musicians, architects, and pastors in writing an early draft of the US Catholic bishops' guidelines for designing churches. That unprecedented instruction, *Environment and Art for Catholic Worship*, was eventually written by Robert Hovda and issued by the Bishops Committee on the Liturgy in 1978. In 2000, the bishops replaced it with a completely new instruction, *Built of Living Stones*.

The impressive part of Bob's career, however, was not found just in his design work and his passion for the arts, but in his loyal dedication to social justice issues. The connection between worship, art, and Catholic social justice movements was initially introduced in the US in the 1930s and '40s through the work of such groups as The Grail, the Catholic Worker, Catholic Action, and Friendship House. Upon returning to New York after his studies in Paris, Bob became involved in the Catholic Worker Movement started by Dorothy Day. He once wrote an icon depicting Day, which was later used to barter for a truck needed at the Catholic Worker farm in Tivoli, New York.

To strengthen his knowledge about linking worship and social issues, Bob joined the American Benedictine Academy, founded in 1947 as a non-profit association whose intent it was to cultivate, support, and transmit the Benedictine heritage within contemporary culture. Bob was also a member of the Catholic Interracial Council of New York, a progressive wing of the Catholic Church addressing national and local racial issues. Bob's early involvement in working for human rights nourished, no doubt, his work as an artist.

Until recently, Bob continued to volunteer in a Greenwich Village food pantry as well as in other human-rights-related activities in New York City. He told me the story about how he used to help out at the night shelter



A selection of Ramsbusch's stained-glass windows in the Lady Chapel of the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore, Maryland, dedicated in 1959.

for men sponsored by his parish, St. Joseph. He sadly observed that, because the shelter was now closed, homeless people nestled through the night in the cold shadows of that same church building.

Throughout his career at Ramsbusch Studios and as an independent liturgical artist and consultant, Bob developed a reputation as one of the best-known contributors to the practice of liturgical design. He was recognized for his achievements several times. He was the recipient of the Elbert Conover Award from IFRAA (1979), the Christian Culture Gold Medal Award from Assumption University (1984), the Berakah Award from the North American Academy of Liturgy (2001), and the Frederick R. McManus Award from the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (2005).

Before his death at age 93, Bob was still at work. He continued to observe, with the critical eye he developed in

Paris, the state of religious art and architecture. He expressed disappointment at the misinformed and nostalgic return to pre-Vatican II styles of church architecture and liturgical layouts now being reintroduced into some churches and cathedrals in the US.

Quick witted and wise, Bob was current in political and ecclesiastical news and continued to feed his artistic appetite with frequent trips to the opera, museums, and the theatre. Space does not permit a longer exposition of other delightful stories about Bob or his anecdotes about religious art and architecture that he freely shared with many of us. Bob was the last of a great generation of liturgical artists, one of the most influential pioneers in the field of religious art and architecture worldwide. His impact will continue to inspire and guide new generations of religious leaders and liturgical designers. I know he did that for me many years ago. ⁸⁵

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

JUST ONE MORE THING * BETTY H. MEYER



THE NAME OF OUR MAGAZINE IS *Faith & Form* and when I started to think about a subject for my column in this issue, I suddenly realized that I almost always address form instead of faith.

Why? Is it so difficult to describe one's faith in words? Of course, part of our reluctance to do so is that we want people to have the freedom to define their own personal faith. We believe it is their privilege.


Now perhaps I've already stepped on some toes. Many believe that faith is defined quite literally by ancient texts, divine revelation, and commentaries from holy persons down

through the ages. Others, and I guess I lean in this direction, see faith as a very personal and life-long process we pursue to discover and understand our reason for being and our place in the cosmos.

Either way, faith is our attempt to go beyond the physical universe and the empirical approach of science. The dictionary defines faith as "a strong belief in God based on spiritual apprehension rather than proof." It is our way of seeking the meaning of life beyond the simple fact of being alive. The existence of God the Creator, God's role in history and in our lives, life before birth and after death, and the wondrous miracle that we call human consciousness all fall under the canopy of faith and spirit.

So then, what is our job in designing places of worship? Some folks prefer the awesome scope of a cathedral, while others would

rather sit beneath a living tree. To some, the joyous sound of a choir brings on a glorious feeling; others want quiet contemplation. I've even said a prayer or two in rush hour traffic.

And there's the rub. There is no "one size fits all." There is no equation that we can solve. There is no right way to do it. Whatever we think, it's more than that. All we can hope to do is to present the Mystery in a way that helps us transcend the mundane and glimpse the sacred. 

EDITOR'S NOTE: BETTY HERNDON MEYER WAS EDITOR OF FAITH AND FORM FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, STEPPING DOWN IN 2000 TO BECOME EDITOR EMERITUS. AFTERWARD, BETTY WROTE A COLUMN, "JUST ONE MORE THING," IN FAITH & FORM FOR SEVERAL YEARS, AND CHOSE TO SET DOWN HER PEN IN 2011, ABOUT A YEAR BEFORE SHE PASSED AWAY. ABOVE IS A REPRINT OF ONE OF HER LAST COLUMNS.

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