Architecture for Worship: Re-Thinking Sacred Space in the Contemporary United States of America

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The purpose of this paper is to examine the symbolic value of religious buildings in the United States. It will focus particularly on places of worship and the theologies conveyed by them in an ever-changing socio-religious landscape. First, I will cite some of the emerging challenges that surface when thinking about conventional religious buildings. I will then describe those architectural "common denominators" that are important when re-thinking sacred space in a contemporary age.

Churches, synagogues, and mosques exist primarily because of the convictions of the membership that built them. The foundations for these spaces are rooted in proud traditions and, sometimes, the idealistic hopes of each congregation. In a world that is seemingly embarked on a never-ending journey of war, poverty, and oppression these structures can be oases of peace, prosperity, and justice. They are, in this sense, potentially sacred spaces.

The Search for the Sacred

The search for the sacred is fraught with incredible distractions and challenges. The earth itself is an endangered species. Pollution is taken for granted. Rain forests are being depleted. Incurable diseases kill thousands daily. Millions have no pure water to drink. Some people are malnourished while others throw food away. Poverty and wealth live side by side, often in the same neighborhoods. Domestic abuse traumatizes family life. Nations are held captive by imperialistic regimes. And terrorism lurks everywhere. What do religious buildings, particularly places of worship, have to say about all of this? Where do homeless, hungry, abused, and stressed-out people find a sense of the sacred in their lives? One might even ask, where is God during this time of turmoil and inequity?

By some estimates nine billion dollars were spent on the construction of religious buildings in the year 2000. This is not a lot of money when you consider what is spent on entertainment, cosmetics, and military defense. Nevertheless, this is a large investment for faith communities who have to raise the money themselves. Some would call it scandalous, suggesting that the money could be used to combat social problems. The rationale for such expenditures, however, is age old. At one time religious buildings towered over all structures in the civic and urban landscape. They were symbols of the powerful place religion held in society. All through the history of the United States immigrants have built places of worship as an integral part of their assimilation process. It is a way of announcing their arrival in a foreign land as they carry with them their customs, trades, recipes, languages and music. These buildings are architectural and
artistic replicas of the spiritual places in their homelands. They are reminders of the strong foundations upon which their value systems and dreams were built. These places provide a sense of security and promise.

Today those very same buildings, for example, Central Synagogue in New York City, like other urban religious places, are dwarfed by architectural symbols of big business and corporate monopolies. The ubiquitous presence of such structures suggests that people could be placing their faith and their future in the non-spiritual enterprises housed in these mammoth high-rises, more so than in their places of worship. The frustrating search for sustenance has been exacerbated recently because of deceptive practices in government and financial institutions. A good example of the competition between sacred and secular space is evident in the rebuilding of the World Trade Center in New York City. While victims and the bereaved want Ground Zero to be preserved as a hallowed site, others are figuring ways to reconstruct lower Manhattan for profit. Such dialectics will continue to accompany the search for the sacred.

Is it possible that the American public, so shaped by the marketing industry, is duped to believe that relief and even spiritual welfare can be found in other places? In the Middle Ages the cathedral was the center of civilization. It was a complex that housed worship, education, the performing arts, the market place, and even refuge from vandals. This observation may border on a romantic notion of what a religious building can be. Still, people today no longer consider their religious places as the only sanctuaries of refreshment. Judging by their popularity, theme parks, athletic arenas, movie theatres, shopping malls, restaurant chains, concert halls, and museums are the venues most visited by Americans desiring temporary relief from the stress and anxiety of everyday life. Is the search for the sacred all that different from the quest for leisure and entertainment?

A good example of how religious buildings may be considered less important than other popular places was discussed in a recent late-night talk show. Charlie Rose was interviewing a prominent Pritzker Prize–winning architect about the importance of his buildings in today's communities. The architect suggested that modern museums have become the new "cathedrals" of our age. People go there for learned lectures, a refreshing lunch, blockbuster exhibits, and even musical performances. The architecture of these places alone can invite stimulating conversation and repartee. With some exceptions religious buildings appear to have lost their place as venues providing experiences of the wholly Other. Has the salt completely lost its savor?

One example of a counterpoint to the museum venue is the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles. Over a million pilgrims and tourists have visited this newest Roman Catholic cathedral since it was opened in the fall of 2002. It can seat three thousand persons for worship and sacred concerts. There is a mausoleum in the undercroft. Original works of religious art are found inside and outside the building. Its plaza can accommodate five thousand people for banquets, concerts, rallies, and liturgies. The cathedral center houses offices, expansive conference facilities, a bookstore, and a restaurant. There is also an outreach program where homeless and hungry persons can be helped. One can imagine that, in the future, its six-hundred-car parking garage could be used as a shelter for homeless persons during the overnight off-hours. Although technically not a cultural center, this new cathedral vies for attention with the new Disney concert hall and the museums in the neighborhood. For many people this place is becoming a sacred space in Los Angeles.
Two other cathedrals are also great examples of public places that are also sacred. One is Saint James Cathedral in Seattle, which attracts thousands not only for worship but also because of a renewed dedication to the performing sacred arts. The other is San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, which continues to honor the colorful customs of the Mexican Americans who worship there at the same time that it speaks to the civic issues of the day.

Does the search for sacred space have anything to do with belonging to an organized religion? Some studies now show that attendance at worship in the so-called mainstream religions is in decline while the evangelical denominations are attracting large numbers. A recent trip to Brazil helped me realize the significance of the Pentecostal religious movement, especially in the lives of poor people, and how mainstream religions may be losing their appeal. At one time Brazil was ninety-nine percent Roman Catholic. Now, by some estimates, only seventy-five percent practice Catholicism. One Sunday I was taken to a Pentecostal service on the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro. Twelve thousand people were there! And they filled this "cathedral" with the same standing-room-only crowds at two other services. Thirty-six thousand people traveled on foot and by bus and car that day, from the barrios and the favelas, looking for encouragement as they wrestle with the problems of everyday life. The liturgy was not in a traditional form. A charismatic preacher, a single musician, and large numbers of hospitality ministers tended to the flock. Even this gringo felt welcomed.

This same megachurch movement has taken hold in the United States, attracting the "seekers" who are tired of the shallow sermons, worn out rituals, archaic liturgical languages and musical repertoires that are the staples of some of the main stream denominations. There is no research indicating how long the newer religions will endure. However, the combination of gracious hospitality, social outreach, inspiring preaching, invigorating music, and a strong reliance on sophisticated media technology has quickly become a refreshing antidote to the dusty worship practices of the "old world" religions. The architectural style of these megachurches is best described as the big box variety that can be constructed quickly and inexpensively. Typically there are no bells, stained glass windows, crosses, images, or altars. Only a welcoming sign along the road identifies the structure as a religious building.

What is more important to people—the religious building itself or the worship experience inside? Some will argue that a well-ordered classical-style architectural space is essential to
Christian liturgy. However, it is well known that the great churches and cathedrals in Europe are nearly empty of worshipers and visited mostly by tourists. In many ways they have become museums. And while church attendance is down in many of these countries, the Muslims and Buddhists can't seem to build fast enough to house their ever-growing congregations. I surmise that the role of religious buildings in the United States is less about architectural and artistic beauty and more about enabling meaningful worship experiences. Perhaps in a less prescribed way these spaces serve as places where one can quietly connect with the holy Other.

## Reimagining Sacred Space

The primary purpose of a mosque, synagogue, or church is not leisure-time activity. These places are not, by their very nature, in competition with structures dedicated to sports, the arts, or consumerism. Further, it is not customary for religions to embark on aggressive advertising campaigns touting their services or programs. These places are nevertheless unique in their purpose. The mosque, or masjid, is open for prayer five times a day, for educational programs and social events. At one time the main mosque in Medina was used even as a shelter for poor or itinerant Muslims. Museums don't offer that service.

For the Jews the temple was considered the house of God and a place of prayer for all peoples. Since the destruction of the temple Jews have understood the synagogue, also called temple or shul, as a place of gathering (Beit Ha-Knesset), prayer (Beit T'filah), and learning (Beit Midrash). In this regard it is used for education programs, the performing arts, banquets, social outreach, and worship. Shopping malls do not offer these services.

In the Christian tradition a church is frequently called "God's House" even though there is no mandate in Christian teachings to erect dwelling places for God. The earliest examples of Christian places of worship were neighborhood clubs and the domus ecclesiae, the house for the Church. Since the Second Vatican Council there has been a renewed interest in recovering this older understanding of the Catholic place of worship as primarily a gathering place for the assembly of believers that is devoid of excessive decoration and ornamentation.

Some programmatic requirements for the construction of places of worship are similar in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions. In each case the buildings are designed for four purposes: meeting, study, worship, and social outreach. But these are task related. One asks the question then, what is it that comprises sacred space today? I believe that a place of worship does not automatically become a sacred space just because it was designed and built to be such. I do not believe that an artist or an architect can make something sacred just by the very act of creating it. Instead, churches, synagogues, and mosques are sacred because of what people do in these places. The Christian writer John Chrysostom once said that it's not the building that makes the people holy; it's the people who make the building holy.

This is true even when something is constructed on a site where an event occurred as a memorial to that incident. For example, Ground Zero is a sacred space because of what happened there and not because of a memorial that will be constructed there. Similarly, some religious structures are retained or erected on or near the site of some significant event or memory: for example, the Western Wall, the remnant of the Second Temple, and the Ka'bah where Abraham is believed to have set up a shrine in the Valley of Baca (Mecca).
A place of worship becomes sacred when someone has a conversion experience there, when someone is initiated into the religion there, when someone falls in love there, when someone is buried there. It becomes sacred as soon as someone touches or venerates an icon or holy book, or when prayer actually occurs there. It becomes sacred as soon as the Bible, the Koran, or the Torah is proclaimed to the worshipers. Thus, the sacred is experienced when a memory is triggered, or when there is an interaction between the believer and someone or something else in that space. A successful religious building or site is one that enables these "religious" experiences to happen. In turn, the spiritual transformations that occur there can convert what was once an ordinary space into a sacred one.

Nevertheless, there are time-honored ingredients which, when used harmoniously, can constitute a space that is conducive to the experience of the sacred or holy. Among them are scale, proportion, materiality, color, light, acoustics, and location. The application of these elements will vary in different cultures. The way in which the building is laid out is also important. What follows is a brief overview of some of these spatial factors.

**Elements of Sacred Space**

**Pathways.** The idea of a spiritual journey is common to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The *hajj* is a once in a lifetime pilgrimage to Mecca to honor the prophet Abraham, and Ishmael, and to renew the commitment to God’s way of life. The Jewish exodus marks the passage from slavery to freedom. The way of the cross can remind Christians of the aspects of the life of Jesus.

This notion of journey is exemplified in the pathways leading to places of worship. Esplanades or sidewalks from parking areas can guide worshipers as they move from one area to another before arriving at the worship center. These pathways move people from the outside world to the inner precincts where one may hope to find a sense of the sacred. The ubiquitous automobile and dangerous neighborhoods have compromised the notion of pilgrimage. In the suburbs the challenge is to keep cars away from the hallowed grounds—the inner precincts. In the city, well-lighted, barrier-free, and beautiful walkways can contribute to a pleasant experience.

**Thresholds.** The arch is a structural form that identifies a passageway. In religious buildings it marks the journey of the worshiper from the tedium of the everyday world into a more liminal state. A lintel is an overhead horizontal beam that has the same Latin root as *limen*, which is the threshold of a
physiological or psychological experience. Whether it is a gateway to a Shinto shrine, or the archway leading to a mosque, an encounter with a threshold signals the first crossing over from the outside into the hallowed grounds of the worship space. This architectural crossing can prompt a subconscious, or even conscious, experience of transition or conversion in someone’s personal life. On another level it can simply add to the excitement that accompanies the arrival at the sacred place.

**Plazas.** The main purpose of a plaza is to foster the ingathering of large numbers of people. Such exterior gathering spaces are found near many older places of worship in areas unencumbered by vehicular traffic. The immense Zócalo in front of the metropolitan cathedral in Mexico City, and the plaza next to the new cathedral in Los Angeles, are in many ways similar to the outer precincts of the Jewish temple, and the area surrounding the Ka’bah in Mecca. These are places to mingle and meditate. In San Antonio, the parishioners of San Fernando Cathedral use the public Main Plaza in front of the cathedral to enact their Holy Week dramas. The new plaza in front of Grace Cathedral in San Francisco encompasses a labyrinth inviting pilgrims to take this particular walk in search of peace and harmony. Engaging with others can be a rewarding segment of public liturgy. The space in front of the main entry to a worship space can foster this experience.

*The door.* Joseph Campbell once remarked that anything is possible on the other side of the door to a sacred space. Within the hallowed hall is the celebration of success and good news. There one also anticipates an encounter with the holy, where illness, loneliness, hunger, and desperation are replaced by health, companionship, sustenance, and hope. Thus, the doors into a worship center bear a tremendous responsibility. They cannot look or feel like dull and monotonous shopping center doors. Although very different, both Lorenzo Ghiberti’s fifteenth century north doors to the Baptistry in Florence and Robert Graham’s twenty-first century doors to the Cathedral in Los Angeles are touchstones helping visitors connect with the biblical and cultural roots of their faith and hope in God. In a different manner, the main door to the mosque in the Islamic Cultural Center in New York City is a remarkable passageway filled with light—showing the way. These sacred portals enhance the religious experience, and should not be overlooked in the design of newer places of worship.

**Sacred Spaces as Resonators**

Sometimes certain architectural styles, extraordinary interiors, unusual ritual furnishings, or magnificent works of art can characterize a sacred space. James Ingo Freed, the design architect for the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D. C., said he wanted the Museum to act as
a resonator of the holocaust. It would be a place, in his mind, that would, in a sense, "play back" the horror of the shoah. I have often thought that this is what places of worship are suppose to do—play back the myths, the stories, of a particular religious tradition. In this way the place energizes an individual's deep-seated memory in order to reinforce and affirm that person's experiences. The place then verifies spiritual convictions, so that when things go wrong it says back to you that you are okay, and that what you have believed before will get you through this time of trouble. In fact you know you are in a sacred space when it mysteriously puts you in touch with the event memorialized, even though you may have had no first hand personal experience of that event. Once I took my teenage niece and her friend to the Vietnam Memorial. I saw how emotional they became as they traced their fingers over the etched names "remembering" victims they never knew.

I also remember watching a woman on the doorstep of a church in Krakow. In despair she was clinging to a bronze relief of the crucified Jesus. I am sure she was placing all of her hope in her personal Saviour. An architectural guidebook or theological treatise is not required here. The door invites participation in the religious experience, and a connection with the holy is made. It can't be explained. No doctrine can define it. It just happens. It is the responsibility of the artist, the architect, the clergy, and the congregation to make it possible for these religious experiences to occur.

As another example, the artistic program for the new doors at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels is unique in many ways. The sculptor, Robert Graham, developed a concept whereby the doors would resonate with certain myths. On the lower section of the doors are symbols from different ancient cultures. They included a Chumash condor, a Samoan kava bowl, Sicilian legs, etc. The ideas for these symbols came from the peoples of Los Angeles where thirty-eight different languages are spoken in the Catholic churches every Sunday. These symbols on the doors reach back into the collective subconscious of the people who come from various parts of the world, and they are immediately recognizable. The impact would take the visitor beyond what was apparent. Elder generations would take pride in explaining the meaning of the symbols to their children. Again, a connection is made. A story is told. A memory is saved.

The Water Bath. Another ingredient common in the sacred spaces of different faith traditions is an area for ablutions, or a water bath of initiation. Muslims wash themselves (wudu) before entering the mosque to pray. Christians are baptized in fonts containing large amounts of water. And, although not usually found in temples or synagogues, some Jews use a ritual bath (mikvah) for purification of the body and, at times, to celebrate conversion to Judaism. The use of water in sacred rituals represents another crossing of a threshold that the worshiper engages in as part of the religious experience.

Abundance is important. In the paleo-Christian church new members were baptized in rivers and lakes. History teaches us that the increase in infant baptism, and the demise of adult rites of initiation, led to the development of the smaller pedestal fonts. Today many churches still use diminutive bowls, where the water is hardly perceptible, or is absent altogether. The power of both the symbol and the ritual event is all but lost when water is not allowed to be water—flowing, fresh, free, and full. The important sensual connection made possible by immersion in a large quantity of water is reduced or entirely lost when only drops are dribbled on foreheads. Thus, the potential embrace of the underlying mystery effected by the ritual act of purification or initiation is hindered. The intention of the water bath is for the candidate to experience the
passage from one way of life to another. The embodiment of such a transformation cannot be a mere cerebral experience.

In the Roman Catholic tradition today, and some other Christian denominations, there is a renewed emphasis on the presence of water in religious buildings. The Christian School of Theology in Indianapolis, and the First Reformed Church in Tucker, Georgia, offer two good examples where the font for immersion is very large and well integrated both artistically and architecturally into the main body of the church.

The Seating Plan. The orientation of churches, synagogues, and mosques has been an important component in the design of these worship spaces. In mosques the worshipers face Mecca during prayer. In most Jewish traditions, placing the ark on the eastern wall is still considered architecturally appropriate. Christian churches often were and still are "oriented" to face the rising sun—a reference to the "risen son of God." But seating arrangements in these spaces should also be planned to accommodate the ritual practices of the present day congregation. Here I would like to focus specifically on seating plans in Jewish and Christian places of worship.

Studies in sociology and archeology help us realize that the table fellowship practiced in the Greco-Roman culture may have influenced the meal customs of the Jews, and then the Christians, in the first decades of the Common Era. Today, the Passover (Pesach), the ritual meal celebrated by Jews to commemorate the Exodus, occurs mainly in the home. However, the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the Christian Eucharist, generally takes place in a church. The major question has to do with how Christians and Jews arrange themselves together when they worship.

History again teaches us that for various ecclesiological, liturgical, and even political reasons the place of Christian worship has changed drastically from the intimate domestic settings of the early Church. After the Edict of Milan the imperial basilica became the architectural model for church buildings. The clericalization of worship established barriers between the laity and the clergy. The practice of preaching to vast crowds led to the installation of extended rows of pew benches that were aimed at remote and towering pulpits. Liturgical scholarship has prompted a rethinking not only of the way in which Christians worship but also the way in which they gather together while at worship.
Similarly, the assimilation of Jews into the mainstream United States was accompanied by the replication of the architectural styles and plans of civic and religious buildings. Eventually the older, Eastern European, Sephardic seating plan with a more centralized bema was replaced by the basilican or auditorium plan found in so many North American church buildings. Does the long narrow nave help or hinder the embrace of the worship event? Does it foster conscious participation or passivity during public prayer? Is it time to re-think the worship space by considering alternative seating plans in churches and synagogues?

I have often thought of the simple shape of a circle as a model for synagogues and churches, and the ways in which it can embrace and empower those within its grasp. Black Elk, an Oglala Sioux, once said that everything goes around in a circle. The clouds and birds in the sky, ritual dances, tribal meetings among elders, and even the teepee all move in circles. There is strength in this form that celebrates equity and solidarity. There is no audience and stage. The circular plan invites participation and discourages spectatorship. The sense of mystery or sacredness is found not in some remote place or distant ideal but in the deeper dimensions of the gathering itself. Since the circle is such a native or natural symbol is it any wonder that it is found in the great domes, rose windows, and floor patterns of many buildings in all major faith traditions?

Studies in socio-psychological fields offer us new perspectives on seating arrangements and distance factors and suggest that certain floor plans can encourage more active conscious participation in the group than others can. Here is a quick review of the differences in two spatial settings.

Sociofugal and Sociopetal Influences. Rather than incorporate a traditional seating plan in a synagogue or church, congregational leaders and the design professionals are obliged to create a space that will accommodate the cultural customs and the worship practice of the existing community. By its very nature a circular sociopetal plan will draw people into the activity that is taking place in that space. The focus of attention will not only be the event occurring in the circle but also the participants themselves. There are no spectators in a truly centralized plan. Privilege and status are removed. If it is desirable to give the congregation more ownership of the rite by involving them in an active and conscious way, then the sociopetal plan is the more appropriate one.
On the other hand, if there is no desire to draw the congregation into the worship event then a more sociofugal plan will suffice. This type of plan is usually found in long and narrow worship settings. It takes the congregation farther away from the staging, especially as the size of the gathering increases. For example, during the High Holy Days, many Jewish congregations open up folding walls and add hundreds of chairs in their adjacent social halls to accommodate the large crowds. In such a plan people seated in the last rows are so removed from the focal points and ministries that they will find it difficult to embrace the liturgical action, much less see and hear clearly. It seems like the last thing you would want to provide for a once-a-year worshiper is a seat in the last row! It must be stated, however, that some people actually prefer to remain distant during religious events, particularly worship. The same socio-psychological studies dealing with spatial settings also suggest that issues like privacy, territoriality, and introversion are the reasons for not choosing the optimal seat during public worship.

**Pews or Chairs.** Some scholars suggest that the pew bench actually developed during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century mostly to accommodate worshipers during lengthy sermons. Other sources indicate that the pew bench with a tall back and an opening that could be closed was a way of preventing chilly drafts from bothering people. In New England and other parts of the world the pew box was created not to distinguish different classes but because it was a way to keep warm on cold wintry days. People would heat bricks or soapstones in their ovens early in the morning and then bring them in quilted pouches into the pew boxes to keep them warm during long sermons.

Whatever the real reason for the development of the pew bench, it is usually a fixed furnishing that, objectively speaking, locks people into place during worship. Although newer benches may be more comfortable, they do not allow the rearrangement of the space. Again, the choice of seat depends on the liturgical style of the members and what they desire to do in that space at a given time. Many older cathedrals and synagogues utilized movable chairs or pew benches to facilitate various seating arrangements. On occasion they could be removed altogether to make room for other liturgical and non-liturgical events.

The Catholic Cathedral of St. John in Milwaukee was reordered recently to comply with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. In the original plan the congregation was quite removed from the altar. The principles of the sociopetal setting were applied during the renovation. The table was placed closer to the middle of the assembly to achieve better sightlines, and the fixed pews were replaced with movable chairs for increased flexibility. Improved lighting and acoustics help to create a worship space that fosters more participation in the rites.

In this project an important statement was made about the distinctions between the clergy and laity. Before the renovation the archbishop sat on a rather kingly throne remote from the assembly. Now the *cathedra* (the bishop’s chair) is part of the circular layout where the archbishop sits “first among equals.” Such an equitable seating plan does not diminish the importance of the rabbi, the priest, or minister leading the worship, but it creates an environment that expresses solidarity among all worshipers, and states that liturgy is not something performed or delivered to the congregation by clergy. Rather, liturgy is something that the worshipers do with each other. Here the built environment resonates with an important ritual principle: each member in the congregation is called to own and embrace the worship event.
Metaphors for our Time

Rethinking sacred space for worship is challenging, especially in a time when there seems to be more comfort in maintaining traditional ways of doing things. Yet, there is something noteworthy about seeking ways to strip away centuries of embellishments that perhaps have compromised those characteristics that seem to be integral to the religion. William Sloan Coffin once remarked in a sermon at Riverside Church that the word "tradition" is often used as a euphemism for "habit." Sometimes we have to pull ourselves away from the things that are habit forming, those things that appear to be traditional, in order to perceive and appreciate the essentials. That's the way it is with our places of worship. They are not merely containers for religious objects or even rituals. There is nothing magical about them. Further, these places should never, to my mind, be considered solely as relics of a previous era that must be revered at all cost.  

Instead houses for worship are best thought of as metaphors, resonators that take us to deeper dimensions of the sacred that are not limited by architecture, art, music, preaching, or ceremonies. In this way a play on words can be helpful to understanding the power of the metaphor. The church (building) is the "called out ones" (Greek ekklesia). The synagogue (building) is the "gathering of people" (Greek sunagoge). The buildings are sacred because of what goes on in them. Since we believe it is important to periodically rethink our liturgical forms, then it is also time to rethink what constitutes a sacred space. Otherwise it is like trying to pour new wine into old wineskins.

The playwright Tony Kushner once wrote, "In this world there is a kind of painful progress; longing for what we've left behind and dreaming ahead." The challenge today, for students, professors, and colleagues, is to rethink the place of churches, synagogues, and mosques in terms of our worship practice. In the contemporary United States the call is to be imaginative about the future at the same time that we honor our past.

ENDNOTES

1. The congregation at Central Synagogue recently chose to faithfully restore its synagogue in the aftermath of a tragic fire—as a symbolic statement about their convictions as Jews.

2. One researcher, Andrew Greeley, says that the increase is because Evangelicals have had higher fertility rates over the last 100 years!

3. Here, I recognize the important task of maintaining historic treasures. But I also believe that liturgical formation should not be stymied by worship places built in the past.

RECOMMENDED READING


Duby, Georges. The Age of the Cathedrals. Trans. by Eleanor Levieux and Barbara Thompson.


Richard S. Vosko received the 2003 Georgetown Center for Liturgy Award for his "outstanding contributions to the liturgical life of the American Catholic Church." A priest of the Diocese of Albany, New York, he has been working throughout the United States and Canada as a designer and consultant for Christian and Jewish worship environments since 1970. His projects are continually recognized for liturgical and design excellence. His website is www.rvosko.com.