

## **Ecclesiology and Church Design: A Balancing Act in Times of Transition**

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Not long ago an article appeared in the New York Times entitled, "A Return to Architectural Traditions."<sup>1</sup> It was a mix of interviews and insights based on observations more than statistics, but it raised a provocative question: Does the search for the sacred in architectural forms have anything to do with the contemporary identity or prevailing mission of a particular congregation?

The very next day a headline in the Sunday edition of the same paper read, "Does Simple Music Form Simple Faith?"<sup>2</sup> The tone of this article, less argumentative and more inquisitive than the one on architectural traditions, bemoaned the lack of composers writing great music for worship. After examining the pros and cons of the decline of classical music in churches, the author concluded, "Ritual driven, beauty ridden Catholics, Episcopalians and Lutherans may not be doing as well right now as they would like, but history keeps turning in circles, and they may have their day again."

Music, art, architecture, sermons, and ceremony have been the long-standing staples of worship practices in many religions. They are perceived as avenues to the experience of the sacred. Some allege that the modernization of church rituals and the subsequent alterations to church design (and music) have contributed to a deconstruction of the sacred. Whether or not this claim can be substantiated, it is apparent that something unsettling is going on in the spiritual sector of this nation. What Christian denominations are experiencing is similar to what Václav Havel said about the Czech Republic during the Velvet Revolution in the 1980s. "Something is on the way out and something else is painfully being born. It is as if something were crumbling, decaying and exhausting itself, while something else, still indistinct, is rising from the rubble."<sup>3</sup>

The restlessness in churches is related to events that have simmered for a few generations. Liturgical reformations, for example, do not happen overnight, or without consideration of long-term advancements in the associated fields of history, archeology, biblical studies, theology, and sociology. Further, current social movements and awareness of human needs continue to inform liturgical praxis. Some examples are people marginalized by gender, ethnicity, race, and economic class. Churches without a history of formal and repetitive worship patterns are also affected by the same research in different ways.

Ironically, the liturgical scholars and practitioners instrumental in liturgical reform are less interested in modernization and more fascinated by a return to ancient liturgical formularies dating back to the early centuries of Christianity. In the Roman Catholic Church the ordinary liturgical rites today have more in common with paleo-Christian practices than they do with those of the Middle Ages. Unfortunately the meaning of tradition is often limited to what one remembers, or the sanctification of a particular period of time. This is why it is important to note when the word "tradition" might be used euphemistically for the word "habit."<sup>4</sup>

I have been asked to focus my paper on those factors often overlooked in the programmatic phases of any church building project: What contributes to the definition, organization, and worship practice of a congregation? And how might that affect church design?

In the first part I will explore briefly the quest for the sacred, and the role of religious

architecture in defining what sacred means. Then I will examine some of the cultural shifts that have affected religious behavior in the United States, and how they affect religious identity. From there I will suggest how a modification in the identity or ecclesiology of a denomination can influence everything that community does, including worship. In a last section I will consider how the design of churches is affected by evolving ecclesiologies.

First, some parameters: (1) I acknowledge that Islam, Judaism, and other religious traditions have much to say about the search for the sacred and architecture as well, but my remarks are, in general, about Christian churches in the United States (and what a variety there is today!). (2) The religious tradition deeply embedded in my bones, Roman Catholicism, will undoubtedly nuance some of my remarks. (3) This paper is a reflection on issues that have surfaced for me as a liturgical design consultant in Jewish and Christian traditions during the past thirty-seven years.

### ***The Quest for the Sacred***

The two articles mentioned earlier suggest to me that the quest for the sacred in the United States these days could be prompted by what might be called a collective ennui—a weariness or dissatisfaction with the hectic pace of life, unfulfilling relationships and jobs, cheap and tawdry material goods, and inequities in the economic, educational, and health care systems. The larger question is whether or not organized religion can come to the rescue. This can be troubling because the word “sacred” is most often associated with God, and the worship of God, as well as with houses of prayer.

The quest for the sacred is constantly affected by advancements in the world. Space explorations have changed our view of our place in creation, and perhaps what sacred means. Whenever I gaze at photos released by NASA I cannot avoid thinking about ancient peoples who lived long before there was a definition of the sacred. What were those folks thinking, standing there in the Olduvai Gorge in the Serengeti Plain, staring into the skies at a blazing ball of fire by day and twinkling lights by night? The separation must have been intriguing and frightful.

Human curiosity about unknown powers led to a variety of explanatory narratives. These myths, stories that are true to the believer even though they cannot be proven, created a relationship between humans and whatever was out there. These narratives were often enacted in rituals, formal ceremonies comprised of chants, prayers, and sacrificial actions that took place in spaces set aside for encountering a Holy One called by different names. Tribal cultures came to depend on these rituals and complex symbol systems for meaning and survival. Great traditions were borne out of them. Soon the notion of a single almighty and invincible God would enter the picture, as described in the Hebrew Bible and other sacred texts.

For a long time the Hebrews worshiped God in natural places along rivers and on mountains. God was encountered in deserts and bushes. The Temple was not considered the dwelling place of God, but a symbol of the presence of God on earth. The members of the community (Qahal) were to make space—the earth—sacred by their ingathering and their ritual actions, which, in turn, made them active partners in the work of God. The word of God (*Torah*) was kept safe in the Temple as a reminder of this collegial relationship. God was no longer out there but somewhere in here, wherever the community was. This understanding of sacred space and the dwelling place of Yahweh revealed the differences between an immanent and a transcendent God. In the meantime other civilizations built grand temples and ceremonial centers to house

sacrificial rituals to appease their gods and goddesses.

The close encounter with divinity is found in the Christian narrative as well. The birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Redeemer-God, Jesus Christ, comprise the myth. Belief in this story provides another strategy for partnering with God by fulfilling certain missions here on earth. With the incarnation the notions of sacred and secular became undifferentiated. Further, the creature, it was believed, could now help the Creator shape the experience of what was considered sacred. Working for justice, for example, would acknowledge that all life is sacred.

The ecclesiology of the early Christians was reflected in part in their places of worship. When Jesus announced that he would destroy the Temple it was only to expand the experience of God on earth beyond the Temple. The early Christians were told they were the living stones and temples of the spirit.<sup>5</sup> That early writers would redefine sacred space is no surprise then. Minucius Felix and Origen wrote that they required no temples for worship, and that the heart was the altar. Tertullian called the church the house of God, meaning the place where the body of Christ gathered. John Chrysostom wrote that it is not the church building that makes the people holy, but the people who make the building holy. How religious peoples understand themselves in relation to God and one another affects their sense of the sacred.

The earlier practice of gathering for Eucharist in Christian house churches changed as the definition of the church evolved. No longer was the church an insignificant band of enthusiastic fans following a miracle worker. Now Christian leaders were becoming key players in affairs of state. Forms and places of worship would soon take on imperial characteristics.

Clericalization altered the identity of the church and how it worshiped. The clergy were closely associated with the government, and became powerful. They were thought to be the sole dispensers of what were considered sacred commodities. Eventually a place of worship took on allegorical significance and was thought to be like heaven, a new Jerusalem. Boundaries were established to separate the laity from the clergy, who occupied what was considered the holiest place in the building. Over time what had been a public liturgy became privatized.

Although the architectural style of churches changed, the understanding of the church was not drastically challenged until the Reformation. Coupled with discoveries, inventions, and advancements in the philosophical, ecclesial, political, scientific, and artistic areas of life, the Christian religion slowly took on new meaning. It also began to lose its tight grip on people. The past five hundred years have been a period when secularization has gradually changed people's attitudes about religion and God. Still until today all branches of the Christian church have continued to search for ways to be effective purveyors of what is sacred in society. The competition is keen, and new challenges must be addressed. To say that a sense of the sacred is found solely in architecture, music, art, or even worship is no longer enough.

### ***Shifts in Religious Behavior***

I have suggested that the understanding of what constitutes a sense of the sacred is connected to the manner in which a religious group defines itself and presents itself to society. This is important in a conference on church architecture because like music, art, and literature, church buildings are vehicles whereby the wholly other can be experienced. Without underestimating the power of these art forms, I belong to a school of thought that believes that the building style

or the interior design does not matter as much as what happens in the church. At the same time, however, I do concur that most people today go to church looking for answers to perplexing questions and to connect with something or someone sacred. Remember how places of worship were packed in the days immediately following September 11, 2001.

In just about every popular poll citizens of the United States see themselves as spiritual people. This is why understanding what is going on in many denominations is difficult. In the mainline religions we see a decline in church attendance and a dearth of professional ministers while other religious groups are experiencing tremendous growth. Many factors are challenging the usual definitions of religion in this nation. Here are just a few.

(1) *The public square.* The place of religion in establishing public policy has turned into a battle for God's attention. Although religions have always played some role in the development of social behavior they are now being used in ways that are divisive and threatening to this nation's "separation of church and state" policies. Issues that once were exchanged only between pulpit and pew are now shaping political platforms more than ever before. Capital punishment, abortion, stem-cell research, the war in Iraq, immigration laws, and health care programs are just some of the issues that now divide congregations into red and blue seats. How effective a religion is in providing moral direction is related to its public policy agendas. One can only presume these are based on the teachings of a church. Here is where we can find disagreement even within denominations. That some will search other religions looking for a spiritual or sacred direction that suits them is likely.

(2) *The God debate.* Ignoring the contentious debates occurring over God is hard. The discourse on the place of religion in public affairs is apparent in the titles of best-selling books such as *God's Politics* by Jim Wallis; *Is Religion Killing Us?*; *Violence in the Bible and the Quran* by Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer; *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror and the Future of Reason* by Sam Harris; *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins; *Failing America's Faithful: How Today's Churches Are Mixing God with Politics and Losing Their Way* by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend; and *American Fascism: The Christian Right and the War on America* by Chris Hedges—to name just a few. We can choose to ignore these theses, or find out how they just might be shaping the image of God in a nation that is becoming collectively more paranoid about terrorism and defensive about its role in global affairs.

(3) *Intramural struggles.* That internal struggles are breaking down religious groups once united is also apparent. Issues concerning gay and lesbian clergy, lay participation in church finances and governance, the pedophilia scandal, tradition vs. innovation in liturgical matters, the role of women, and the shortage of clergy all continue to plague the heart and soul of mainstream congregations. The inability of church leaders to meet the congregants at the crossroads creates a tension not experienced before, especially in hierarchical churches where the clergy, in the past, enjoyed privileged status and the last word in most matters.

(4) *Demographic shifts.* Two significant factors should be noted as immigration pathways are changing this nation. Today the avenues are very different from those that led to the formation of this country in terms of customs, languages and recipes—all those familiar ingredients in the old melting pot. Now the routes are from different parts of the globe, and the new diversity is being noted in institutions of higher learning, the job market, and in our places of worship. The most noticeable influx is from the south. The Spanish-speaking population is now the largest minority in the nation, and growing every day. The Evangelical churches have gained a

stronghold in many South American countries, replacing the mainstream missionary effort, and that same influence is now being felt here in North America.

The demographic shift is also apparent within this country, causing a different kind of problem. As more people migrate to warmer states like Florida, Texas, and Arizona, church members in the north are left with pressing problems. What becomes of congregations that are too small to sustain themselves and their properties?

(5) *The World Wide Web*. Research groups are fascinated by the differences between generations—the baby boomers, along with the X, Y, and Odyssey generations, have very different personalities and needs. Bred on television, Game Boys, Play Stations, computers, and now a plethora of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), students in schools and workers in industries have changed the way information is stored and utilized. Websites like Facebook and MySpace, blogs, cell phones, and text messaging have contributed to a new understanding of what community means by high school and college students. How do churches reach these younger generations?

One reason why mainline denominations are feeling challenged is that more and more members are looking to identify themselves with churches that will make some sense to them. They are indeed looking for the sacred. How are some religions responding to the call?

### ***Ecclesiological Responses to the Challenges***

The word ecclesiology is not found in the prayer books and hymnals of Christian churches. Like computer operating systems, however, it runs unnoticed in the background; it affects the worship experience of the congregation, and everything else in that faith community, including its place of worship. Ecclesiology is the way a religion defines and then structures itself. Balancing continuity with the past and a vision for the future is always a challenge.

Ecclesiology cannot develop in isolation from other factors that affect people and their lives. It is relational. It forms and is formed by the group. Any ecclesiology that is arbitrarily prescribed risks the possibility of not serving the very church it attempts to define. Ecclesiologies emerge over time, and they are tested by time, which is why some last longer than others—and also why some fail. The most effective ecclesiologies emerge in churches that weigh the merits of biblical texts, doctrines, and traditions, along with current events and long-term visions. If not developed in this larger context ecclesiologies can become self-serving.

In my denomination ecclesiology is the fastest developing theological discipline. The Second Vatican Council, in its Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (November 21, 1964), fueled this energetic discourse within the Catholic Church and with other religions. The dialogues that have been going on over the past forty-five years among various Christian churches have been fruitful and frustrating in this regard.<sup>6</sup> We can now appreciate how a variety of religious movements, old and new, are defined and organized. We can begin to notice the similarities and differences.

The hierarchical model ranks its members and defines their roles. In this model some members only are thought to be authorities regarding what that church teaches and how it worships. The collegial model, based on the church as a sacrament, stresses that all who are baptized, clergy and laity alike, share responsibilities, and work out the gospel mission together. The servant church model is similar, and associates itself with all the movements working for peace,

liberation, justice, and reconciliation in the world.<sup>7</sup> The definition of the church as a pilgrim people on a journey serves to offset the clerical and juridical tones evident in some denominations. It is also anti-triumphant, emphasizing that the church is a human group in history. The feminist model celebrates the voices of women in church matters. It is not hierarchical. And just naming another, the ecological model, reminds us that all religions are linked first of all to the environment, and that we are responsible partners in the creative process. All of these models are sacred because they connect humans with each other and with God in some way.

We might, however, be concerned that some of these models are merely special interests, that they are not really theologies. This apprehension is tempered by the realization that theology is fundamentally a body of knowledge dealing with God, and that many dynamics are at work when trying to explain how faithful people are called to partner with God. If a theology does not take into consideration the many facets of human life, if it does not try to adapt, then it will inevitably lose its savor. This is what appears to be happening today. Some religions are clinging to their foundations at all costs, while others are taking risks by reshaping their traditions.

Once a church redefines itself everything it does will be affected: what it teaches, how it governs itself, and how it performs in the public square. These behavior patterns reflect the contemporary narrative of the congregation, which is expressed metaphorically (not allegorically) in its worship center. The most visible manifestation of a church's identity is found in the public liturgy where the sermons, the lyrics of the hymns, and the prayers are expressions of the congregation's belief system, its worship of God, and its concern for the common good. The art may also contribute to this expression. The role of the designer is to fashion a building that metaphorically resonates with the identity of the church.

Denominations that maintain a hierarchical model of church have linear buildings that separate the clergy and laity. The ritual activity takes place in an area reserved for the clergy. Churches that are more collegial have more centralized seating plans that gather the members together as a family. Ritual activity takes place in their midst. If worship is thought of as a private affair then a more meditative environment is appropriate. If worship is considered a more communal experience<sup>8</sup> then a setting that fosters greater interactivity within the rituals is appropriate. Some seminaries and schools of theology are modifying their places of worship to reflect this understanding. For some people the experience of the sacred is found somewhere beyond the moment; for others it is in their midst; for still others it's a little bit of both.

The manner in which a particular community enacts its worship practice is dependent on a number of diverse issues—language, indigenous customs, immediate needs of the community, location, population. Likewise, the variety found in the history of church architecture indicates that no one style is preferred over another, even within specific denominations. Various opinions on what constitutes an appropriate environment for worship, and how it is to be designed, will always exist, but I propose here that that's not really the urgent issue. What matters first of all is how the community responds to its needs and those of others. Maybe this is a key issue in nations where individualism and independence are valued. The experience of the sacred just might be a solitary exercise.

My belief is that the ecclesiology of a church is what gives meaning to the community and its belief in a wholly other supreme being. Base on its doctrines, a church will define its role in

society, and will behave accordingly. When that church gathers to worship God its liturgical practice will be a reflection of its identity. All of the verbal and non-verbal requirements for worship, including the church building, will be designed accordingly.

What are the indicators of a successful church in the twenty-first century, and how can they contribute to emerging ecclesiologies and church designs? Here are some findings taken from a 2005 survey involving approximately fourteen thousand Jewish, Muslim, and Christian congregations in the United States.<sup>9</sup>

(1) *Diverse worship experiences.* Congregations with new and frequently changed worship formats were more likely to grow than those that always used prescribed rituals. The contemporary nature of their worship apparently makes the experience more attractive and less predictable. This aspect is contrary to the traditional norm that in order to be effective rituals must be formal and conventional.

(2) *Location.* The study pointed out that although much of the growth in successful congregations is found in the suburbs, urban centers in larger metropolitan cities are also prime locations. Both of these results are indicative of the changing demographics experienced in many places. Many inner cities are beginning to come back to life, attracting younger professionals who can afford affluent lifestyles and expensive housing.

(3) *Use of the Internet.* Reaching out to the membership of a congregation with a website has another advantage. For example, the Lakewood Church in Houston reaches twenty thousand worshipers within the church building every weekend, but it claims to connect with over two hundred million people worldwide through the congregation's web casts and popular media broadcasts. The study points out that those congregations with interactive websites prove that the leaders of the community are interested in reaching out to the members.

(4) *Diversity matters.* More racial and ethnic diversity exists in the United States than ever before. The study indicated that successful growing congregations are the multi-racial ones.

(5) *Mission and vision.* A clear purpose is vital if a church wants to be successful. The outreach programs serving hungry, homeless, and oppressed persons are instrumental in attracting members. The properties are designed to house programs that serve people. Those programs may include education, social services, administration, and worship.

(6) *Future generations.* Congregations with youths and children are bound to grow, at least in the near future, until the next generational cycle comes about, but the numbers are not as important as the involvement factor. Learning to include children and teens in the worship life of the congregation is essential if families are to be attracted to that community.

These benchmarks of successful congregations indicate that the Christian church flourishes when religions are willing to adapt. Other church movements provide examples.

(7) *Base Christian communities.* The first base community was founded in Nicaragua in 1966 by Father Ernesto Cardenal to serve the spiritual needs of poorer members of a Latin American society when the official church turned its back. These communities adhered to the liberation theology practiced in the popular church, and sponsored many activist and educational programs. As more immigrants come from South American countries, this model of church could

become effective here in the United States.

(8) *Women's liturgy groups*. Frustrated by the inequities in the polity and liturgy in their faith traditions many small clusters of women and men gather to worship, giving voice to all people who are oppressed. The worship experience is non-hierarchical and focuses on the stories of the participants. That women would gather in solidarity is an old practice. The current movement is energized by the feminist movement and continues to grow.

(9) *Seeker churches*. The largest Christian movement of the twenty-first century is clearly the seeker-friendly, purpose-driven explosion of churches.<sup>10</sup> Over four hundred thousand pastors and leaders have attended church growth seminars at the Willow Creek Community Church outside of Chicago and the Saddleback Church near Los Angeles. An estimated forty thousand church pastors and their congregations have already invested in this megachurch trend.

(10) *Emerging church communities*. These communities are surfacing everywhere. They are small groups that connect through the Internet and thrive 24/7 and not just on Sunday. They have names like Mosaic, Three Nails, Resonance, Quest, and Tribe. When they meet—unlike the seeker churches—members are not spectators but contributors to the worship experience. Full participation in establishing the kingdom of God on earth is a priority, with an open style of leadership that counters the hierarchical model, especially during prayer. The groups utilize liturgical traditions and rituals from around the world, and place a high priority on the centrality of the eucharistic meal.

No doubt the mission and vision in all of these large and small congregations is reshaping what is meant by the sacred, and the place of architecture in that experience. How will the design of churches be affected as mainline religions continue to learn from these emerging churches?

### ***The Impact of Ecclesiology on Church Design***

Thus far I have proposed that the quest for the sacred is often, but not always, guided by religious imagination. That context is shaped by the biblical texts, the traditions, social customs, and doctrines which a religion adheres to, and which identify that religion in the larger community. As various denominations attempt to meet the challenges presented by shifts in public religious attitudes the definition of that religion often changes. The redefined identity influences everything about that religion, including its worship patterns. The design of its churches is affected as well.

Here I will identify what appears to be most important to emerging religions in terms of church design. Earlier this year, RaeAnn Slaybaugh compiled a list of “trends” in the church construction business.<sup>11</sup> Whether or not these directions are applicable to every denomination will again depend on the definition or ecclesiology of that sect.

*Youth programs and facilities*. The common denominator in successful religions is the concerted effort to design programs and events for youths, particularly teenagers. Religious leaders believe that such activities will attract families. Their facilities will reflect the investment that the religion is making in younger generations, tomorrow's members. It is a strange phenomenon that while some mainline denominations have had to close down schools and social halls with gyms, emerging religions are building them in grand style.



*All-purpose centers.* Ideally new places of worship are planned to accommodate a variety of events so they can occur simultaneously within the same structure. Having a single facility brings many benefits in terms of building community and saving on energy bills. Congregations with smaller buildings are planning for total flexibility so that they can maximize the spaces they have, not only for worship, but also for conferences, education, and even recreational activities.

*Flexible buildings.* For some religions a flexible, all-purpose space is not conducive to the worship of God. Such an attitude is based on pre-conceived notions of what a church is supposed to look like. Many of the newer Christian denominations are less worried about appearances. For them the high priority is hospitality, and how effectively worship services and other programs address their search for something spiritual in their lives. Careful planning in these facilities will provide ample opportunities for using the building in many different ways, even simultaneously and 24/7. Many church congregations are beginning to adapt their older churches to increase flexibility.

*Staying put.* There is some evidence that congregations are deciding to sit still and invest in the property they have by expanding and repairing what they own. Religion is a competitive big business and consumers do shop around looking for the best service. Although embarking on a renovation project is usually more costly than building new, for some congregations the best solution is to enhance existing buildings. This is especially true in some downtown centers where real estate is more valuable and neighborhoods are growing. This trend is strikingly different from what is happening in mainline religions that often close or merge congregations in urban settings.

*Wired sanctuaries.* At one time the biggest worry was whether congregants could see and hear. Now, the success of many denominations, especially the seeker churches, is how well they incorporate media technology. Screens, projectors, amplifiers, control panels, pod casting, web casting, lighting and acoustical design, comfortable seats, elevated staging are more important than the customary embellishments that define older sanctuaries.

An example of this significance is found in the Worship Facilities Expositions<sup>12</sup> where forty to fifty thousand participants meet to discuss how to utilize technology in spreading the Christian gospel. This is advertised as an event to help growing churches reach their ministry objectives. As some mainline churches, like my own, begin to explore the use of technology in worship they are concerned about diluting the power of the natural symbols used in worship environments by relying too heavily on entertainment.

*Designs for building community.* Although the mainstream religions will adhere to a symbol system, the newer Evangelical churches are concentrating on creating a sense of community. Finding a bookstore, a coffee shop, even a restaurant in some of the larger megachurches is not unusual. This aspect of church design is a response to another phenomenon developed some time ago but largely overlooked by religious denominations until now—the third place.

*Third places.* Ray Oldenburg<sup>13</sup> wrote that beer gardens, main streets, pubs, cafes, coffeehouses, post offices, and other third places are the heart of a community's social vitality and the foundation of a functioning democracy. They promote social equality by leveling the status of guests, provide a setting for grassroots politics, create habits of public association, and offer psychological support to individuals and communities. Sounds like a church to me.

Oldenburg reports that in modern suburban societies time is primarily spent in isolated first and second places, which are the home and work place respectively. In contrast, third places offer a neutral public space where people can connect and establish bonds. Like Barnes & Noble and Borders bookstores, the Starbucks phenomenon is successful because for many people it serves as that third place. Finding newer churches that provide such a setting for people, young and old, to hang out in is not unusual. But the question remains for some: what do these places look like?

*Something old, something new.* According to building professionals, some congregations appear to long for more intimate settings for worship and fellowship than huge stadium-style meeting halls. These places, they claim, should be designed with some of the traditional elements of religious buildings while at the same time they take advantage of modern construction methods, new media technology, and energy-saving techniques. All in all, the expense of building a place of worship continues to escalate.

### ***Concluding Remarks***

Making ecclesiology an important component of the building program challenges some assumptions. A building does not automatically become a sacred place simply because it is called a church. Places of worship become sacred over time as life-cycle events and other liturgical experiences happen there. Ultimately people determine what is sacred in their lives. The calculations that have been applied in the design of churches that have become sacred places are not restricted to certain building types or stylistic periods. These include verticality, volume, procession, illumination, and harmony. Mandelbrot's fractal geometry, the Fibonacci series, the Bernoulli spiral and the Golden Mean are tools that can successfully take on new appearances in the twenty-first century.

Architecture for worship does shape the behavior of those who experience that environment, especially over a long period of time. Whether or how a church successfully enables an encounter with God will long be debated. The experience of a divine being in a transcendent and immanent way will largely always be a matter of subjectivity. How a congregation defines and structures itself, what it requires for worship, and how it carries out its mission comprise the program for any church building project. By using ever developing software programs the imagination can produce new and exciting structures in which to celebrate emerging ecclesiologies.

### **ENDNOTES**

1. Brenda Goodman, "A Return to Architectural Traditions," *New York Times*, October 22, 2007, B-5.
2. Bernard Holland, "Does Simple Music Form Simple Faith?" *New York Times*, October 23, 2007, AR-27.
3. Address of Vaclav Havel, Liberty Medal Celebration, Philadelphia, Pa., July 4, 1994.
4. This comparison was an acute perception of the late William Sloan Coffin, Jr.

5. See 1 Peter 2:4 ff.
6. The ecumenical movement between the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church began at the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.
7. See Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (New York: Random House, 1991).
8. See No. 26 in *Vatican II's Constitution on the Liturgy* (December 4, 1963): "Liturgical services are not private affairs."
9. See C. Kirk Hadaway, *Faith Communities Today* 2005. The study was sponsored by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research ([www.hirr.hartsem.edu](http://www.hirr.hartsem.edu)).
10. Read Don Koenig at [ThePropheticYears.com](http://ThePropheticYears.com).
11. See *Church Business Magazine*, January 2007, at [www.churchbusiness.com](http://www.churchbusiness.com).
12. See [wfxweb.com](http://wfxweb.com).
13. Ray Oldenburg, *The Great Good Place* (New York: Marlowe & Co., 1989).

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