AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC SPATIAL EXPRESSION IN PROTESTANT CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

by 4088

EUGENE GEORGE WENDT

B. Arch., Kansas State University, 1959

A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Department of Architecture

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas
1970

Approved by:

Emil C. Fisher
Major Professor

LD
2668
T4
1970
W452
c.2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE PROBLEM	1
	Statement of the Problem	1
	Importance of the Problem	2
	Limitations of the Problem	4
II.	DEFINITION OF TERMS USED	6
	Symbol	6
	Spatial Expression	9
III.	REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	12
	Theological Literature on Church Architecture	12
	Architectural Literature on Church Architecture	14
	Limitations of Previous Studies	16
IV.	PROTESTANT THEOLOGY AND LITURGY	18
	General Beliefs and Worship Practices	18
	The Pulpit	22
	The Baptismal Font or Baptistery	24
	The Altar-Table	26
	Some New Directions	29
V.	LITURGICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES	32
	The Early Church	32
	Worship in Homes	34
	The Basilica Church	36

ILLEGIBLE DOCUMENT

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT(S) IS OF POOR LEGIBILITY IN THE ORIGINAL

THIS IS THE BEST COPY AVAILABLE

THIS BOOK IS OF POOR LEGIBILITY DUE TO LIGHT PRINTING THROUGH OUT IT'S ENTIRETY.

THIS IS AS RECEIVED FROM THE CUSTOMER.

THIS BOOK CONTAINS NUMEROUS PAGES WITH DIAGRAMS THAT ARE CROOKED COMPARED TO THE REST OF THE INFORMATION ON THE PAGE.

THIS IS AS RECEIVED FROM CUSTOMER.

CHAPTER PAGE

The Medieval Church (Catholic) 41

The Cathedral 44

The Parish Church 46

The Reformation Church 50

Transformation of Medieval Churches 50

Protestants Experiments 52

The 19th and 20th Century Church 59

The Concert Stage Arrangement 62

The Divided Chancel Arrangement 64

Recent Developments 68

VI. PROPOSALS FOR SYMBOLIC RELIGIOUS SPACES FOR PROTESTANT WORSHIP 69

The Entry 71

The Liturgical Centers 73

The Pulpit 75

The Altar-Table 79

The Baptistery 81

The Choir 84

Spatial Arrangements of the Liturgical Centers . . 87

The Liturgical Centers Grouped Together at One Spatial Focus 88

The Liturgical Centers in One Space But with Individual Spatial Focuses 96

The Liturgical Centers in Separate Spaces or in Subspaces of a Main Space 102

VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 108

BIBLIOGRAPHY 113

LIST OF PLATES

PLATE		PAGE
I.	Partial Floor Plan of a Typical Roman House, Fourth Century B.C. to A.D. Second Century	35
II.	Floor Plan of the Basilica of Trajan, Rome, A.D. 98-112	37
III.	Floor Plan of San Clemente, Rome, 1099-1108	39
IV.	Floor Plan of the Baptistery of Constantine, Rome, A.D. 340	42
V.	Floor Plan of Salisbury Cathedral, England, 1220-2184 .	45
VI.	Floor Plan of S. Andrew, Heckington, England, 1345-1380	48
VII.	Diagram Floor Plans of Early German Lutheran Churches, 1601-1738	53
VIII.	Diagram Floor Plans of Early Netherlands Reformed Churches, 1623-1671	55
IX.	Floor Plan of S. Mary-at-Hill, London, 1670-1676 . . .	57
X.	Diagram Floor Plans of Early Anglican Churches Built in America, 1707-1763	58
XI.	Diagram Floor Plans of Early Puritan Meetinghouses Built in America, 1681-1787	60
XII.	Diagram Floor Plan of the Concert Stage Type of Church Spatial Arrangement	63

PLATE		PAGE
XIII.	Diagram Floor Plan of the Akron Plan Auditorium Church	65
XIV.	Floor Plan of Harold Wood, St. Peter Church, Chelmsford, England, 1939	67
XV.	Plan of the Entry Court for the Proposed First Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, Kansas	74
XVI.	Floor Plan of St. James the Fisherman	90
XVII.	Floor Plan of the Ark, a Reformed Church in Slotervaart, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	93
XVIII.	Exterior of the Ark, a Reformed Church in Slotervaart, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	95
XIX.	Floor Plan of the Faith United Presbyterian Church, Medford, New Jersey	98
XX.	Partial Floor Plan of the Northfield Methodist Church .	101
XXI.	Floor Plan of a Reformed Church off Stockackerstrasse, Reinach, Basel, Switzerland	105
XXII.	Interior of a Reformed Church off Stockackerstrasse, Reinach, Basel, Switzerland	107

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

In discussing church architecture, William S. Clark, editor of Your Church, has stated that:

> The person who maintains that he wants a church that looks like a church is a pragmatist and is out of touch with the facts and the world around him. If he really wants such a church he should contact his psychologist or consult with an archeologist, not an architect.[1]

This statement, which is outrageous to many church members, indicates the depth of the controversy that has been taking place in Protestant discussions regarding the church building. Architects, given commissions to design Protestant churches, are caught in the middle of this controversy and must find their way to a valid symbolic expression of today's Church in the community.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study to analyze and define the symbolic spatial expression that is possible and necessary in Protestant church architecture. This required: (1) a review of Protestant beliefs and current directions in worship practices; (2) a review of the liturgical factors affecting spatial expression in historical protestant churches; and (3) an analysis of how the liturgical factors

---

[1] William S. Clark, "The Architectural Captivity of the Church," Your Church, XI, No. 5 (September/October, 1956), 60.

can determine the symbolic spatial expression of churches for current Protestant worship.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

Christianity is currently in the midst of a great questioning; of its traditions, its purpose, its means, and its directions. This is manifest in theological controversies, the ecumenical movement, and the liturgical movement. Together these movements make up what is referred to as The Twentieth Century Reformation.[2]

One result of this reformation, and of the liturgical movement in particular, has been a new awareness of the importance of the church building in Protestant worship. It is recognized that putting a cross in the high school auditorium and using this space for religious services does not symbolize the Church to the world. All the applied symbols in the world will not make a sanctuary out of a saloon, even though religious services can and do take place in spaces such as this. This would indicate that there is something unique about the nature of a church building and that his unique character has been expressed in churches in the past.

The liturgical movement has raised questions concerning the nature of the church building; how it fulfills its purpose, and what it symbolized. In current church publications these questions have tended to center around the adequacy of the typical church for today's worship.

---

[2] Peter Hammond, Liturgy and Architecture (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960) p. 13.

Rev. Edward S. Frey stated, in Your Church, that:

> Space has been designed for worship without a previous understanding of the act of worship itself. That this error could continue over so long a period of time without being more apparent is due to the fact that the image of the church building inherited from the past has long been an integral part of the landscape. Almost no one questioned its adequacy as either a tool or a symbol for the church in a changing world.[3]

The modern church building has been accused, among other shortcomings, of being basically irrelevant and obsolete.[4] White has said that:

> An astoundingly large number of the "contemporary" churches built in the last decade have been contemporary only in appearance. In many cases their liturgical arrangement may have been derived from that suited to a congregation of medieval peasants. Yet the same arrangement has been imposed upon Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians in countless American suburbs and we have called it contemporary because the details of the building were of our time.[5]

The liturgical movement has given rise to the realization that the character of the church building must be derived from what takes place within the church; the nature of the religious service. "The task of the modern architect," as Hammond pointed out, "is not to design a building that looks like a church [Italics in the original]. It is to create a building that works [Italics in the original] as a

---

[3] Edward S. Frey, "The Glory for Which We Build," Your Church, VIII, No. 2, (April/May/June 1962), 24.

[4] David N. Barry, "Aesthetic Responsibilities of the Church," Your Church, VIII, No. 3, (July/August/September, 1962), 20.

[5] James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 198.

place for liturgy."[6] This functionalist concept is hardly new in architecture, but not widely understood by those outside architecture and, unfortunately, all too often forgotten by those within. However, a functional plan in itself will not guarantee a symbolic expression in the church building. Space, being the mode of expression in architecture, is the key to the expression of any building.[7] So what is needed for symbolic expression in churches is an analysis and understanding of how a spatial arrangement can be expressive of the liturgy and what it symbolizes.

Much has been written about applied or graphic religious symbols but never has adequate attention been given to the symbolic spatial expression inherent in the liturgical arrangement of Protestant church spaces. Several studies, which are discussed in Chapter III of this study, are excellent as far as they go, but they stop short of realizing the symbolic possibilities of what they advocate in liturgical arrangements. This study is an attempt to partially fill this void.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE PROBLEM

This study was limited to an analysis of liturgical factors in the symbolic expression of spaces for Protestant worship. This is not a denial of the importance of emotive factors in a religious experience.

---

[6] Hammond, op. cit., p. 9.

[7] Bruno Zevi, Architecture as Space (New York: Horizon Press, 1957) pp. 214-224.

However, as is shown in detail in Chapter IV of this study, the Protestant worship service is primarily a corporate activity, not private devotions, and this activity is liturgy. Similarly, a limited amount of attention was given in Chapter VI of this study to lighting and color and texture of the materials forming the spaces under consideration. This is not to say that these modifiers of architectural space are unimportant to the present study, but that they are important primarily in an emotive rather than a liturgical context and where they are discussed it is in a liturgical context. The use of light in a Protestant church space is a separate study in itself, requiring first of all an awareness of liturgical space symbolism, and as such would be an excellent investigation to follow the present one.

The technical problems of air-conditioning, structural considerations, acoustics, etc. were beyond the scope of this study. Acoustics, particularly for music and speaking in a church space, is in itself a complex problem and is deserving of a separate investigation by someone proficient in this field.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

In a study dealing with symbolic spatial expression of church spaces it is necessary to fix firmly in mind (1) what is meant by the term "symbol" when it is used in a religious connotation; and (2) what is meant by the term "spatial expression."

I. SYMBOL

In common usage the term "symbol" is often used interchangeably with the term "sign." This practice destroys the conceptual significance of the term "symbol" particularly as it is used in a religious connotation. When no connotative distinction is made between road signs, industrial or commercial trademarks, and the Christian cross, meaningful discussion of symbolic spatial expression is impossible.

The basic distinction between signs and symbols has been clearly defined by Reverend Marvin P. Halverson when he said that:

> The distinction between the two is that a sign merely points to a referent whereas a symbol participates in the reality of that to which the symbol refers. For instance, a kiss of lovers is more than a sign of token of love. The kiss itself is a part of the love which is shared. In other words a kiss is a symbol. It is a symbol rather than a sign. It partakes of the reality it signifies.[1]

This same distinction between sign and symbol has also been expressed by Tillich in his writings on religious symbolism. He makes

---

[1] Rev. Marvin P. Halverson, "Symbology in Religion," Symbology, ed. Linwood Whitney (New York 22: Hastings House, 1960) p. 174.

the point that, due to its participation in the power of that which it symbolized, a symbol opens up a level of meaning which is otherwise closed. He stresses that this opening up of meaning is in two directions; in the direction of reality which would be otherwise closed, and in the direction of levels of experience of which the human mind would be otherwise unaware.[2]

It is this distinctive character of symbols that makes it impossible to explain a symbol in other terms. As Dr. Cyril C. Richardson has stated:

> For as soon as a symbol is explained in other terms, it ceases to be a true symbol. It is a mere sign or token, artificial and lifeless, and its explanation, not itself, is the point of contact we have with reality: for a true symbol cannot be "explained" [Quotation marks in the original] in the sense that the explanation is more important than the symbol and makes it unnecessary.[3]

Because a symbol participates in the power of that which it symbolized and cannot be explained in other terms, it expresses a level of reality apart from any object and is therefore an abstraction. In fact Langer uses the concept of abstraction as a basis for her definition of a symbol which she defines as: "any device whereby we make an abstraction is a symbolic element, and all abstraction

---

[2]Paul J. Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism," Religious Symbolism, ed. F. Ernest Johnson (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1955) pp. 108-109.

[3]Cyril C. Richardson, "The Foundations of Christian Symbolism," Religious Symbolism, ed. F. Ernest Johnson (New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1955) p. 3.

involves symbolization."[4]

Due to the basic character of a symbol, as outlined in the preceding, one final difference between a sign and a symbol must be mentioned. This is the fact that a sign can be invented and abolished, but nobody can invent or abolish a symbol, even though a symbol can die. "For symbols," as Reverend Halverson has pointed out in reference to religious symbols, "cannot be created. They are not self-conscious constructions but rather emerge out of the totality of man's religious experience. Thus, correspondingly, it is possible for a symbol to die. When it no longer is related to a reality which men experience, the symbol is emptied of its power and eventually disappears."[5] Historically, this birth and death of symbols has been a continuing process into the present. The graphic shape of a fish was once a symbol of great meaning for Christianity. But this symbol is now dead for most Christians. In 1957 a Presbyterian church building was constructed in Stamford, Connecticut, that has a piscine-like form in both plan and silhouette.[6] It is reported that some members of the congregation refer to their church building as the "holy mackerel," suggesting the meaninglessness of the graphic fish shape as a symbol for many of today's Christians.[7]

---

[4] Susanne K. Langer, Philosophical Sketches (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1962) p. 63.

[5] Halverson, loc. cit.

[6] "A Brilliant Canopy for Worship," Architectural Forum, CVIII, No. 4 (April, 1958), 104-107.

[7] Halverson, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

While religious symbols have the general character of all symbols, they have a special character because of that which they symbolize. This was perhaps best explained by Tillich when he said that:

> The religious symbol has special character in that it points to the ultimate level of being, to ultimate reality, to being itself, to meaning itself. That which is the ground of being is the object to which the religious symbol points. It points to that which is of ultimate concern for us, to that which is infinitely meaningful and unconditionally valid. Religious experience is the experience of that which concerns us ultimately. The content of this experience is expressed in religious symbols. How can this be done? The ultimate transcends all levels of reality; it is the ground of reality itself. It transcends all levels of meaning; it is the ground of meaning itself. But in order to express it, we must use the material of our daily encounter. We cannot do it otherwise. Therefore, religious symbols take their material from all realms of life, from all experiences---natural, personal, historical. All realms of being have contributed to religious symbolism. In themselves they all are of preliminary import. They have a limited meaning, they have a conditioned validity; but they are used in order to point beyond themselves to that which has unconditional, unlimited, and infinite meaning.[8]

From the preceding, a religious symbol can be defined, for the purposes of this study, as: an object, word, gesture, place, etc. that acquires its abstract being from man's religious experience and participates in the ultimate reality of the infinite to which it points while opening up levels of meaning that are beyond explanation.

II. SPATIAL EXPRESSION

The late Frank Lloyd Wright was firm in his belief that the potential greatness of architecture was in the quality of its spaces. He believed that space was the reality of architecture and this belief

---

[8] Tillich, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

set the direction of his work.[9] Other architects have recognized, in varying degrees, the fact that the defining of space is what architecture is all about. Bruno Zevi, in his book, Architecture as Space, attempted to establish architectural criticism on spatial considerations.[10] This concern with the spatial in architecture has grown in recent years. One of the best recent definitions of architecture was given by Ernest J. Kump when he said that architecture is: "the expression of feeling through ordered space environment."[11]

Even though architects talk of space, it is easy to think of architecture as being buildings; things within the environment rather than spaces forming the environment. This leads to thinking of expression in architecture as being of the external form or massing of a building: as the person does who says he wants a church that looks like a church. The external mass and void relationships of a building, as a thing, express volume, not space. Volume is an entity external to man and, in its three-dimensional reality, is rightfully the expressive mode or element of sculpture. Space, on the other hand, is the extent within which man has his being and the parceling off and defining of this extent is the expressive mode or element of

---

[9] Frank Lloyd Wright, A Testament (New York: Bramhall House, 1957) pp. 106-107, 130, 155, 224-227.

[10] Bruno Zevi, Architecture as Space (New York: Horizon Press, 1957) pp. 214-243.

[11] Paul Heyer, Architects on Architecture - New Directions in America (New York: Walker and Company, 1966) p. 117.

architecture. Collingwood has defined the aesthetic mode of any art as being expression.[12] Because space is the expressive mode of architecture, the term "spatial expression" is in fact indicative of the aesthetic form of architecture. The term "spatial expression" is, therefore, taken to mean, in this study, architectural form in its aesthetic sense.

[12] R. G. Collingwood, The Principles of Art (New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Book edition, 1958) pp. 105-124.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A great deal of literature has been written, over a period of many years, on the subject of applied or graphic religious symbols. Some of this is so dated as to have little more than curiosity value now; the beliefs making it valid, if it ever was, having died, or evolved and changed by now. But, with a few exceptions discussed below, little attention has been given to the symbolic spatial expression inherent in the liturgical arrangement of Protestant church spaces. However, a few studies, done by both architects and theologians, or people working within organized Protestantism, have a very real bearing on this study and their contributions are a necessary starting point for this investigation.

No attempt was made to review all literature concerning church architecture; only that which proved useful in this investigation.

I. THEOLOGICAL LITERATURE ON CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Most of the studies done by theologians, or people working within organized Protestantism, concerning church symbolism have tended to emphasize an analysis of basic symbolic practices or objects without getting involved with church spaces as such. However, a few works have considered the church building as more than a museum for religious art and as something different than a shrine for devotion.

The first major modern work to look at the church building as a setting for liturgy was Hammond's analysis of the problems relating to the programming of churches in England.[1] This study stressed the liturgical function as the sole reason for building a church. While obviously relating to the practices and needs of the Church of England, the study was a necessary first step for all of Protestantism. It showed both the inadequacies of most church building and some attempts at new directions that were starting to emerge. It is perhaps significant that many of the churches that Hammond chose to illustrate the new directions in liturgical planning were Roman Catholic rather than Protestant. This fact leads to the observation that many of the new Catholic churches may be better Protestant churches than the churches that Protestants are building.

In this country, the magazine, Your Church, William S. Clark, editor, has, over the past several years, been a leader in bringing to the forefront new directions in Protestant church architecture. Clark has done this by devoting a major portion of the magazine to both written articles dealing with the changing theology and its ramifications for contemporary Protestant churches, and picture features showing some of the new churches being built in response to the renewed emphasis on liturgy and a deepening awareness of symbolism. This magazine has done a great job of raising the necessary and relevant questions regarding Protestant churches for our time.

---

[1] Peter Hammond, Liturgy and Architecture (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960)

The second major work of importance is the recent one by White.[2] This study is a depth analysis of the historical architectural and theological considerations that have led to the present concern with Protestant church buildings. White, by using an analysis of Protestant worship and by outlining the liturgical arrangements from the past, has shown the historical precedents for liturgical spaces. Furthermore, he has shown the forces and religious goals that lead to the non-liturgical spaces that have been and are being built and indicated some of the experiments that have attempted to regain meaningful symbolic spaces for Protestant worship. Due to its clarity and depth of analysis, White's study was an extremely valuable foundation for the development of the present study.

II. ARCHITECTUREAL LITERATURE ON CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

The studies done by architects on church architecture have tended to be mostly picture books of churches. These can be very valuable, if the particular church buildings are well chosen, in that they can show, by example, solutions to liturgical problems of today. A few studies have gone beyond reporting and into an analysis of liturgical planning, but most of these have tended to be limited in scope to a particular denomination or sect within Protestantism.

The major picture book on recent church architecture is The New

---

[2] James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964)

Churches of Europe by Kidder Smith.[3] This photographic study of sixty churches is an excellent portrayal of the changes wrought in both Roman Catholic and Protestant churches by both liturgical and architectural developments. The photographs of each church are accompanied by plan drawings and a short text description of the salient features of the church. This study is, at present, undoubtedly the finest review of significant recent church architecture available.

A study which dug a little deeper into the how and why of recent church buildings is the one by Christ-Janer and Foley.[4] The Protestant church section of this book is valuable in that it attempts to outline the basic characteristics of the major denominations and depict, with a short written analysis, significant church buildings for these denominations. The included comments of pastors who use the church buildings are of interest to anyone concerned with church architecture.

A recent study by Bruggink and Droppers is significant for its depth analysis of worship in the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition.[5] The study used theology as a criterion for making architectural decisions concerning Presbyterian/Reformed churches. Considerable attention was given to the theology and planning of the liturgical centers as well as to other factors affecting worship. Photographs were used

---

[3] G. E. Kidder Smith, The New Churches of Europe (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964)

[4] Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley, Modern Church Architecture (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n.d.)

[5] Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, Christ and Architecture (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965)

to illustrate the concepts being discussed and are beautifully tied into the text. This study, though limited to Presbyterian/Reformed worship practices, is noteworthy in the way that it uses theological analysis of the physical elements of the liturgy to establish a symbolically expressive worship experience. This aspect of the Bruggink and Droppers work was of great importance in the development of the present study.

Another recent work, this one by the Swiss architect Dr. Justus Dahinden, though concerned primarily with the building of Catholic churches, should be studied by anyone concerned with church architecture.[6] Dr. Dahinden takes the position that the liturgy should be expressed through space forms whose decisive factors are the climate, customs, topography, and other local conditions of the locale where the church is to be built. This strongly regional philosophy of architecture is not new, but the resulting recent church architecture, as shown in the work by examples of churches from different parts of the world, is profound. This philosophy has resulted in the use of complex spaces, asymmetrically arranged and united by movement, that, in contrast to the static space of much prior church architecture, express a vitality of spirit for this age.

III. LIMITATIONS OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

Previous studies on church architecture have been limited to the

---

[6] Justus Dahinden, New Trends in Church Architecture (New York: Universe Books, Inc., 1967)

extent that none of them approach symbolism of church buildings through an analysis of liturgical space. Several studies, as outlined above, come close to facing this task, but their main concern is always some other factor of church design. These studies, therefore, are valuable as a foundation and direction for the present study and contributed much to its development.

CHAPTER IV

PROTESTANT THEOLOGY AND LITURGY

It can be said that a Protestant is any Christian who denies the authority of the Pope in Rome. But, Protestant theology and liturgy vary significantly from what would be expected by this over-generalized statement. Since its birth in the sixteenth century, Protestantism has evolved and changed in many ways. In fact, some of the searchings going on in Protestantism today may well result in what has been referred to as a new reformation. However, within this evolution some basic Protestant characteristics and beliefs have remained basically unchanged. In fact, some of these unchanging beliefs are responsible for much of the changes that have been and are taking place.

These theological constants and changes have their bearing on the liturgical practices of Protestants. As such they are the foundation for a development of liturgical space symbolism. Therefore, a brief outline of the theology of Protestantism as it is expressed in liturgical practice is necessary for the development of this study. However, a depth analysis of the totality of Protestant theology is both unnecessary and beyond the scope of this study, and will not be attempted.

I. GENERAL BELIEFS AND WORSHIP PRACTICES

However Protestantism may be divided into denominations and sects with varying beliefs and practices, this movement within Christianity

has, at its base, a unifying belief out of which all other beliefs grow. This belief is that God deals directly with man as a person and that salvation is gained by faith and by no other means. This puts the emphasis on the individual and his relationship to God within the world rather than on the church. Since man and his relationship to God and the world around him differ at different times and in different places, the faith is bound to vary to meet these circumstances. This basic principle of Protestantism thus makes it inevitable that the faith will exist and be expressed in various ever changing forms and practices. Protestantism is, therefore, a faith in direct relationship with the changing human condition. Indeed, it can be said that when Protestantism loses touch with the times it is itself lost.[1]

Although it might seem that if man gains his salvation through a personal relationship to God that no organized church would then be necessary, or indeed possible, such is not the case. For Protestantism believes that God reveals himself through the Word and an organized church is therefore necessary to hear and proclaim the message of the Word.[2] This belief is responsible for what Tillich calls one of the two fundamental elements of a Protestant worship service: "the predominance of the Word over the sacrament."[3] The main activity of

---

[1] J. Leslie Dunstan (ed.), Protestantism (New York: George Brazillier, 1961), pp. 9 & 35.

[2] Ibid., pp. 205-206.

[3] Paul J. Tillich, "Contemporary Protestant Architecture," Modern Church Architecture, Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n.d.), p. 123.

Protestant worship is the reading and preaching of the Word.

This belief in a personal relationship with God as revealed through the Word within an organized body of believers results in what is sometimes called "the priesthood of all believers." This belief in the right of the individual to approach God directly as an individual is expressed by Tillich in what he calls the second fundamental element of a Protestant worship service: "the predominance of the congregation over the liturgical leader or leaders."[4] In some sects or denominations, principally the Quaker and the Christian Scientist, this belief is extended to the point where ordained liturgical leaders are entirely eliminated.

The relationship of the believer to the Word within the worship service has developed two trends in Protestantism. The original concept was for the congregation to answer in prayer and praise the proclamation of the Word. Worship was seen as basically work done in God's service. This work became conventionalized in the liturgical practices of Protestantism. But, the perfection of revivalism as a system in 19th century America brought a new concept of worship. Revivalism basically existed to bring about a conscious conversion experience in the sinner. It emphasized the emotional aspects of worship to the point where the purpose of worship became primarily the arousing of feelings. Of course, historically, a certain amount of meditative worship had inevitably been retained by the reformers, but this aspect of the believers' worship experience had been private in

---

[4] Ibid.

nature rather than corporate. The worship practices growing out of revivalism, however, tried to make personal feelings the basis of corporate worship.[5]

Worship, seen as feelings rather than work, becomes a passive affair for the congregation. The congregation sits and waits, hoping to be individually aroused to the appropriate emotion. The attitude becomes one of what God can do for the individual rather than what the individual in corporate activity can do in praise and worship of God. The result is that the worship service becomes orientated towards man rather than towards God. This unfortunate trend in Protestant worship practice is, at present, so widespread that few Protestants realize that an alternative approach to worship was practiced by their forefathers.[6]

When worship is considered as work done in God's service, the worship service becomes an active, rather than passive, activity for the congregation to participate in together. This type of corporate worship is concerned with the performance of the worship rather than its effects. The worship is performed as a natural response to God's love; as obedience to God's commandments; and as a symbolic sacrifice or offering of the individual's life and work.[7] However, this activity must not be seen as obligating God to benefit the worshiper. To act

---

[5] James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 3-25.

[6] Ibid. [7] Ibid.

in this manner is to revert to the idea of worship as something done for or to the worshiper. Protestantism has always believed that good deeds are not a means of salvation, but rather a natural response to salvation.[8]

If every worshiper invented or chose his own form of work to perform, a corporate worship service would be impossible because of the resulting confusion. For all to participate fully in corporate worship there must be agreement on the structure of the service and on the words and actions to be employed within this structure. This structure of Protestant worship is the liturgy, which varies somewhat from one denomination or sect to another. The liturgy is focused on liturgical centers or spaces that provide for an activity. In most Protestant churches these centers are generally the pulpit, the baptismal font or baptistery, and the altar-table. Processional space, location of the choir, and other spaces are sometimes considered to be liturgical spaces by some Protestant denominations, but these are of minor importance in comparison to the main liturgical centers and only the main centers will be considered in this chapter.

The Pulpit

As Protestantism was, from the beginning, acutely aware of the importance of the preaching of God's Word, the pulpit has, historically, been the most important liturgical center for most Protestant denominations. In some instances the domination of preaching in the worship

---

[8]Dunstan, op. cit., p. 209.

service has been so great that the sacraments are hardly ever observed. Revivalism and the influences of this movement resulted in an over-emphasis on preaching to the detriment of the sacraments in many denominations. But recently a better balance between the Word and the Eucharist is being established by some Protestants.

The main problem concerning the pulpit for Protestants is that of establishing this liturgical center as a symbol of God's Word. It is very easy to let the pulpit become just a speaker's lectern in which the emphasis is on the speaker instead of the Word. Revivalism, with its emphasis on dynamic speakers who often strode all over an expansive platform, helped in the decline of the pulpit as a symbolic center of the Word. The confusion resulting from lecterns and reading desks, used in some churches in addition to a pulpit, also helped to visually decrease the importance of the pulpit. In some churches all of the service is conducted from the pulpit; reducing the symbolic importance of the Word to the level of the announcements. All of this tends to destroy the symbolic importance of the pulpit and puts the emphasis on a man rather than on God's Word.

There is no reason that all of the service except the reading and preaching of the Word could not be conducted from some place other than the pulpit. Historically this has often been accomplished by conducting the entire service except the reading and preaching of the Word from behind the altar-table as evidently Calvin preferred to do.[9]

---

[9]White, op. cit., p. 38.

This practice can help to restore the pulpit as a symbol of the Word in the church.

Another practice which has symbolic meaning is to display the Bible on the pulpit. This requires a pulpit design which makes it possible for the congregation to easily see the Bible. A ceremony of bringing the Bible to the pulpit prior to the reading and preaching of the Word, lending symbolic significance to these acts, is practiced by the Church of Scotland.[10]

The reading and preaching of the Word in Protestant churches must be symbolically part of a total worship service. Therefore, the pulpit must visually express the symbolism of the Word, but not overdominate the altar-table or baptismal font or baptistery. Reserving this liturgical center for its primary function and not using it for acts which are not part of the reading and preaching of the Word will go a long way towards establishing its symbolic meaning.

The Baptismal Font or Baptistery

The sacrament of baptism is a source of much disagreement within Protestantism. Sprinkling, pouring, and immersion are the various modes of baptism that reflect part of this disagreement. But the main division is between those who see baptism as a sign of a new relationship between the baptized person and Christ and those who see it as being, in itself, responsible for this new relationship. Thus, Barth argues that baptism is a public announcement of salvation already experienced

---

[10] Ibid., pp. 37-38.

and should be reserved for adults. On the other side, Cullman argues that baptism of an infant places the child within the Church which is the realm of salvation.[11]

As most Protestants believe that baptism signifies a new relationship between the baptized person and those in the Church, the sacrament usually takes place before the assembled congregation as a symbol of this relationship. But, there are those who wish to symbolize the entrance into the Church aspect of baptism by having the font or baptistery near the church entrance.[12] This makes it difficult for baptism to take place before the congregation. However, if the font or basin is not too large it can be moved from its permanent entrance position to a temporary position in front of the congregation for the sacrament of baptism, as is done in many churches in Switzerland.[13] This practice, however, conflicts with another belief held by some Protestants: that while baptism is a once only sacrament for the believer, it is symbolic of a continuing participation in the death and resurrection of Christ.[14] For this belief to be symbolically expressed the baptismal font or baptistery must be visually apparent before the worshipers as a reminder; necessitating a large font and a fixed location.[15]

---

[11] Ibid., p. 39.

[12] Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, Christ and Architecture (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965) pp. 136-139.

[13] Ibid. [14] Ibid., pp. 168-169; and White, op. cit., p. 40.

[15] Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., pp. 169-171.

It is very easy for most Protestant congregations to forget the significance of baptism because of its infrequent celebration. This can partly be overcome by making sure that this sacrament is accorded the utmost importance when it is celebrated and by keeping the worshiper visually aware of its importance when it is not being celebrated.

The Altar-Table

The Eucharist, or as it is often called, the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper, is usually considered to be the main Protestant sacrament. Theological concepts concerning this sacrament vary widely within Protestantism. Lutherans believe that the true body of Christ is present in the Eucharist, while at the same time affirming that the bread and wine are also present. Some Protestants believe that the spiritual presence of Christ is present in the Eucharist, while others regard the sacrament as being symbolic only.[16]

The designation "altar-table" signifies for some Protestants the dual function of both man's offering to God and God's gift, the Eucharist, to man.[17] Other Protestants strongly disagree with the altar concept of this liturgical center. They believe that the liturgical statement should be of a table only and that the congregational offering should not be brought to this center. Their belief is that the Lord's Supper should be celebrated on a table, not an altar.[18]

---

[16] L. Harold DeWolf, Present Trends in Christian Thought (New York: Association Press, Reflection Book edition, 1960) pp. 117-118.

[17] White, op. cit., p. 40.

[18] Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., pp. 210-212 and p. 215.

After years of cluttering up the altar-table with candles, crosses, flowers, offering plates, etc., mamy Protestant congregations are now clearing away all of this so that the altar-table can stand as a symbol, rather than a handy place to put things.[19] Along with this trend has been a movement to bring the altar-table away from a position against the east wall of the chancel to one more central, or at least closer, to the congregation. When this has been accompanied by removal of altar rails and credence tables, the result has been a strengthening of the symbolic character of the altar-table. For if the altar-table is to be the focus of a sacrament celebrated by the congregation and not a fenced off private preserve of the clergy, it must be brought out to the people unfettered by screens and rails.[20]

The above changes have been instigated by Protestant leaders with a concern to restore the Lord's Supper to a position of importance in the worship service. Historically, the church celebrated the Eucharist frequently, but over the years the emphasis on Holy Communion decreased in many Protestant denominations. The revival movement, with its emphasis on preaching, relegated the Lord's Supper to a position of minor importance. Consequently, in many denominations the Lord's Supper came to be celebrated only a few times a year. But it is now recognized by many Protestants that the Word and sacrament are of equal importance in a Protestant worship service and many denominations are

---

[19] Ibid., pp. 214-218.

[20] Ibid., p. 221.

now celebrating the Lord's Supper monthly, or even more frequently.[21]

In some cases the trend towards expression of the altar-table in the church has perhaps gone too far, at least for some Protestants. Hammond has claimed that the church building is primarily a room for the Eucharist assembly; ". . . a congregation gathered around an altar."[22] For many Protestants this suggests the theology of Roman Catholicism, not Protestantism. They are quick to point out that for Protestants, God reveals himself through the Word, not the Mass, although the Eucharist is an important part of worship.[23]

All of the foregoing suggests that for Protestants at this time one of the main problems in the development of the liturgy is a careful definition of the symbolic importance of these acts and the establishment of balance between them in the worship service. For the pulpit, this requires that it be symbolically the center of the proclaimed Word and be accorded the importance this requires, while not visually over-dominating the other liturgical centers. As baptism is only an occasional sacrament in Protestant churches, it becomes imperative that if it is to maintain a position of importance in the worship services at which it is not celebrated, it must be spatially provided with a setting that visually recalls the experience to the

---

[21]White, op. cit., pp. 40-41; and Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., p. 58.

[22]Peter Hammond, Liturgy and Architecture (London:Barrie and Rockliff, 1960) p. 28.

[23]Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., pp. 25-27 and p. 62; and Dunstan, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

believer at these times. The altar-table must not be the primary focus of the worship space, but neither must it be hidden or insignificant. The architectural implications of the problems involved in a balanced spatial expression of the symbolism of the liturgy will be explored in Chapter VI of this study.

II. SOME NEW DIRECTIONS

As Protestantism evolves and responds to the 20th century some new directions are becoming apparent. The alienation of man in this age has led some to a belief that God is absent. Tillich has referred to this direction in theology as the pole of emptiness. He believed that this holy emptiness should be expressed in theology, liturgy, and church buildings; as only in this way could communication be reestablished with people for whom the church has become meaningless.[24]

One of Tillich's former students, William Hamilton, is one of the chief advocators of the death-of-God theology. This theology takes Tillich's concept of a withdrawn God, who may return, one step further. The phrase "death-of-God" is offensive to most Protestants, but for Hamilton a number of meanings for this phrase are possible; not all of which would be rejected by many Protestants.[25] The death-of-God theology is a complex and difficult idea that is not even considered by the average believer, who just assumes that it would destroy the

---

[24] Paul J. Tillich, "I Decided to Build," United Church Herald, VIII, No. 12, (June 1965), 18.

[25] William Hamilton, "The Death of God," Playboy, XIII, No. 8, (August 1966), 84.

church. However, Hamilton believes that his theology is making Christian faith, the church, and ministry possible for many today.[26] What the long range effect of this theology will be on the Church only time will tell. If widely accepted, it may require some changes in current liturgical practices.

A new, general direction within Protestantism which may have profound implications for corporate worship is what can be called the social action movement. The role of existentialist thought in the background of this movement is difficult to assess, but the proponents of this kind of Christianity are acting existentially, whether they realize it or not. "For these new-breed Christians," as Cox has pointed out, "man encounters God not just inside the walls of church buildings but in the complexity of everyday life in the world, with all its terrors and delights."[27] This secular movement sees spiritual ministry alone as futile and finds faith in engagement with the problems of the world. For people who support this movement, religion is not primarily going to church, but going out from the church to serve in the world. As it gains momentum this movement will profoundly affect Protestant worship practices. At a recent conference on church architecture, some participants called for a ten year moratorium on church building and suggested that Christians meet in small groups in

---

[26] Ibid., p. 139.

[27] Harvey Cox, "Revolt in the Church," Playboy, XIV, No. 1, (January, 1967), 129.

private homes, as did the early Christians.[28] Carried to its conclusion of every Christian living for service in the world as Christ did, this movement could make organized churches unnecessary and write the conclusion to the Protestant era. "For," as Bishop Robinson has pointed out, "the last thing the Church exists to be is an organization for the religious. Its charter is to be the servant of the world."[29] But many Christians are dropping out of church because the churches have failed to live up to this message of Jesus.[30]

---

[28] 1967 International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts, Aug. 27-Sept. 1, New York City.

[29] John A. T. Robinson, Honest to God (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1963) p. 134.

[30] Cox, loc. cit.

CHAPTER V

LITURGICAL ARRANGEMENTS OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES

Protestant liturgy of today has its roots in the beginnings of Christianity. As worship has developed and changed so have the liturgical arrangements of church buildings. Today, Protestantism is expressing great interest in these changes. In some instances Protestant leaders are looking back to early liturgical arrangements as a stimulus for changing the all too often limiting arrangements used by many denominations today. While many of the liturgical arrangements used in the past are inadequate for today's worship, it is necessary to understand what has been done in order to assess what is needed for current worship practices.

This chapter will be devoted to a brief outline of some of the liturgical arrangements that have been used by the Church in the past. No attempt will be made to outline the total history of architecture of the Church as this would be unnecessary and impractical. Rather, the outline will be limited to the developments which indicate the overall direction of Church architecture and those which have a direct bearing on today's church buildings.

I. THE EARLY CHURCH

Information concerning the spaces used by the first Christians for worship is scanty. During this period the Church was frequently

persecuted, so worship often took place in secret. To avoid attention the early Christians worshiped in small groups which provided, in addition to greater safety, an intimate worship service in which all could participate. These worship services probably took place in the homes of affluent converts. Everyday furnishings of the home could be used in the worship service and consequently the arrangements for the worship could be easily concealed.[1]

In the 4th century the Christian religion became tolerated in the Roman Empire and was espoused by the Emperor Constantine. Subsequent emperors established Christianity as the only legal religion of the Empire. The change of status from an underground sect to a respectable and legal religion had a profound effect on the worship practices of the early Christians. Worship changed from a private meeting of small groups to a public worship service of the general populace. The Church acquired buildings for worship; many built by Constantine reflected the splendor expected of public rites.[2]

The worship practices of the early Christians was expressed in the liturgical arrangements of the spaces they worshiped in. These were of two general types. The first was residential spaces and the second was buildings built especially for worship, generally referred to as basilica churches. The liturgical arrangements of these two general types is of interest because of the influence of these arrangements on later churches.

---

[1] James F. White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) pp. 52-53.

[2] Ibid., pp. 55-56.

Worship in Homes

There are differences of opinion on exactly how the private home was used for worship by the early Christians. In a recent article, architect William M. Cooley advanced the view held by some that the atrium of the typical Roman house was used for worship.[3] This columned courtyard space with roof open in the center was surrounded by rooms of the house (Plate I). In the center of the atrium was a pool and at the end opposite the entrance was a raised area called the tablinum used by the family as a reception area and for ceremonial functions. At the court edge of the tablinum was a large stone table behind which was a chair used by the head of the family on ceremonial occasions. These physical elements provided a ready made setting for Christian worship. According to those who contend that the atrium was used for worship, the congregation gathered around the pool which was used for baptism. The bishop sat on the chair surrounded by other ministers and presided over the Eucharist which was celebrated on the table.[4] If the atrium of the typical Roman house was so used for worship, it provides a logical basis for the liturgical arrangement of the later basilica church.

However, some question the theory that the atrium was used for worship by the early Christians. White claims that it is more likely that other rooms in the house were modified for worship.[5] In his view,

---

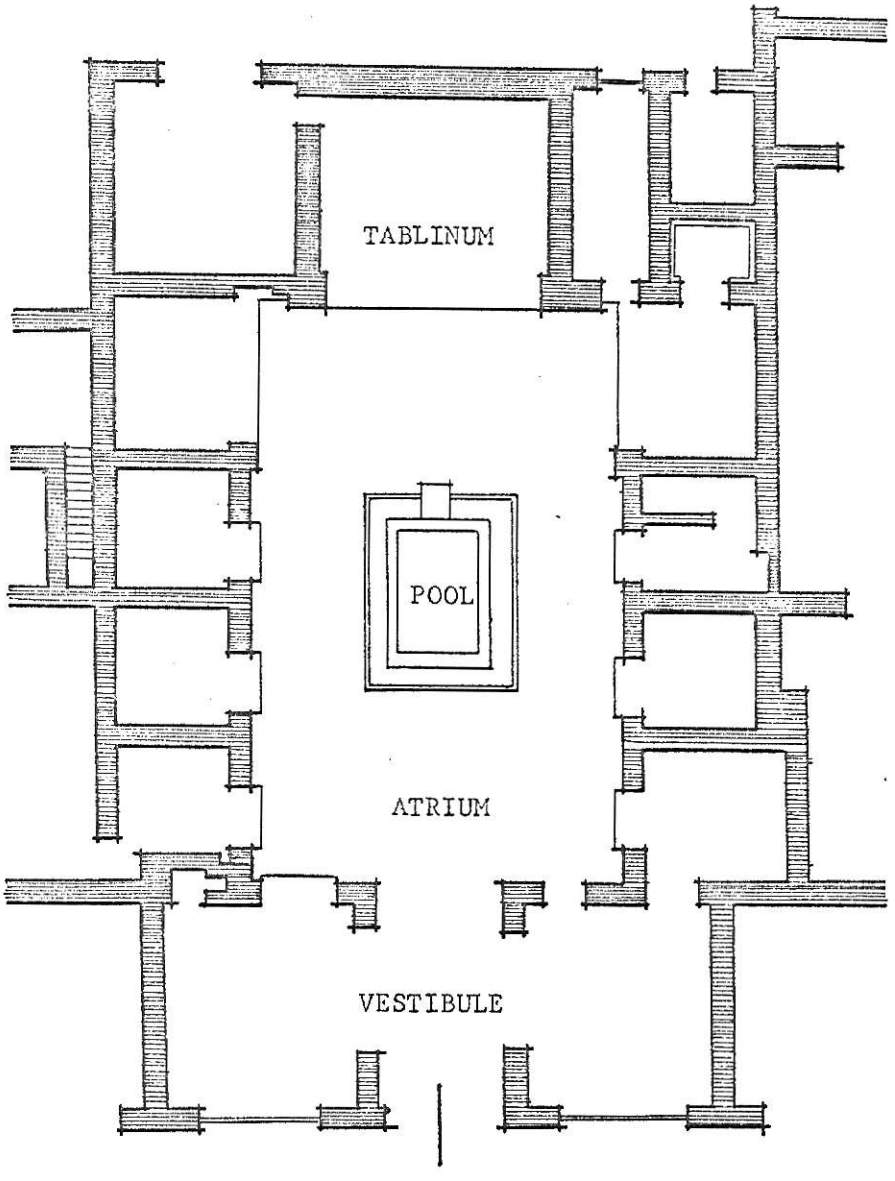
[3] William M. Cooley, "The Historical Background of Church Building," Your Church, VIII, No. 4 (October/November/December, 1962), 24-25.

[4] White, op. cit., pp. 53-54. [5] Ibid., pp. 54-55.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Partial floor plan of a typical Roman house, fourth century B. C. to A. D. second century, showing the atrium and adjoining spaces that may have been used for worship by early Christians. (Hamlin, Architecture Through the Ages, p. 154.)

PLATE I



the atrium would have been too conspicuous in times of persecution and lacked weather protection. The ruins of a 3rd century Roman house, as described by White, seem to back up his claim. In this house a wall between two rooms that opened off of the atrium had been removed to provide a space for the altar-table. On the other side of the atrium the frescoed walls of a room indicate that it had probably been used as a baptistery. If this house was used for Christian worship as indicated, it provides the pattern for later liturgical arrangements in which specific spaces are used for different liturgical functions.

The Basilica Church

When the Christian religion was recognized as legal by the Roman state, worship could come out of hiding and be practiced in public. The main church building type to develop in this early period of public worship was the basilica. The general spatial arrangement of the basilica church followed that of the civil basilica which was the Roman law court (Plate II). These law court buildings were a long rectangular hall with a high center space flanked by aisles which were spatially defined by colonnades and lower ceilings. Clear story windows pierced the walls above the aisles letting light into the high central nave. One end, or occasionally both ends, of the central nave was usually extended in a semicircular apse and provided with a raised floor to contain the throne of the judge.[6] When this type of space was used for Christian worship, entrance was through an atrium

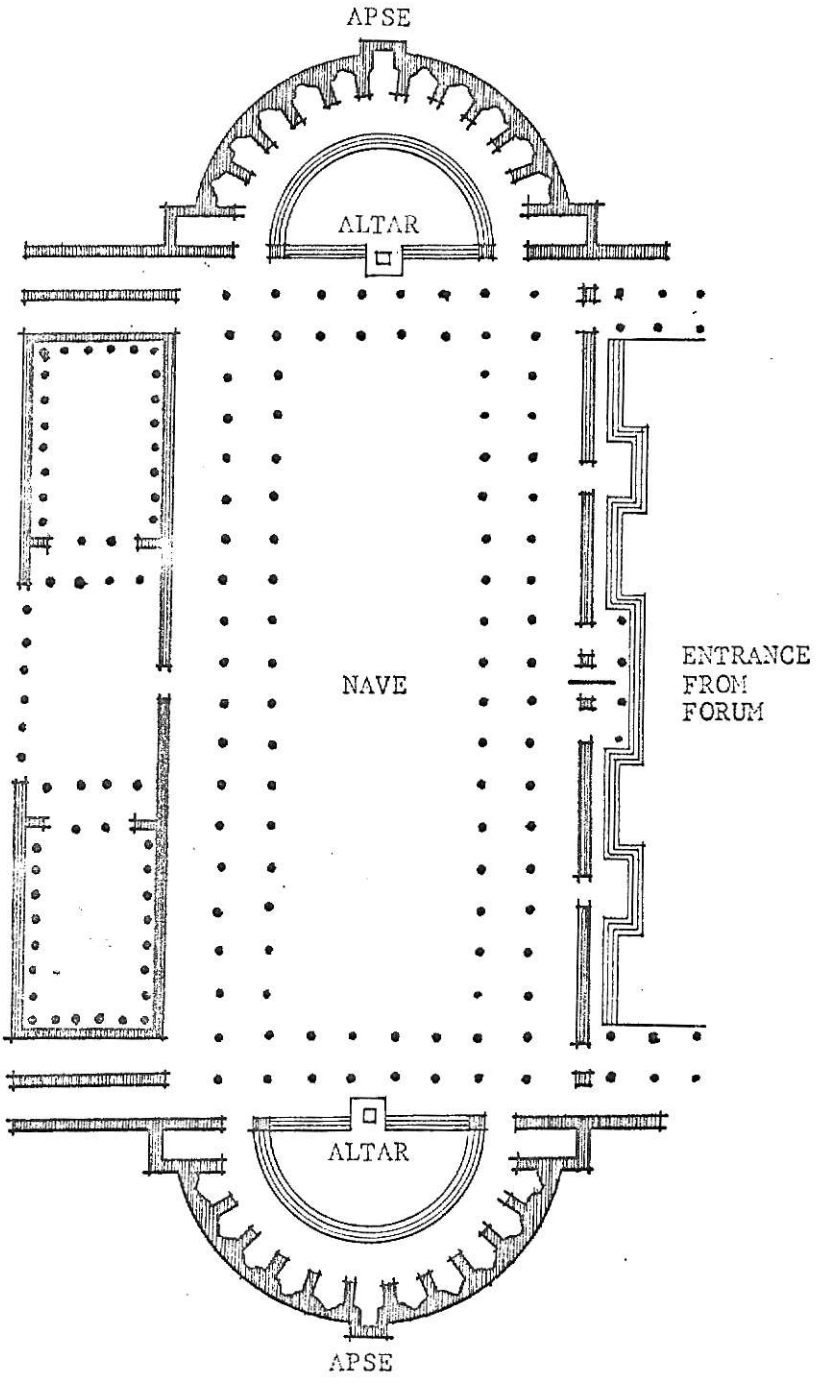
---

[6] Sir Banister Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Seventeenth Edition, 1961) p. 201.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Floor plan of the Basilica of Trajan, Rome, A. D. 98-112. A typical Roman civil basilica. (Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, p. 200.)

PLATE II



to a porch or narthex located on the opposite end of the nave from the apse rather than the side entry common in the civil basilica.

There is some disagreement as to placement of liturgical centers within the typical basilica space when it was used for Christian worship. There is general agreement that the bishop's throne occupied the position of the former judge's throne in the center of the back wall of the semi-circular apse. In Christian usage it was often raised a few steps to make it more visible from a large nave. The curved back wall of the apse was lined with seats on either side of the bishop's throne for the use of the ministers. Cooley maintains that the altar-table was always placed in the center of the nave and that an ambo, or reading desk, was sometimes placed in the center of the apse.[7] However, no example remains of this altar-table and ambo arrangement. Churches of which record exists often had the raised floor of the apse extended as a platform out into the nave with the altar-table placed at the spatial junction of nave and apse (Plate III). The ambo was placed to one side of this platform; sometimes two ambos, one on either side, were used. This platform came to be inclosed with a low screen, thereby separating the clergy from the congregation.[8] Occasionally the platform was extended at the sides, across and to a point beyond the aisles, creating a spatial movement at a right angle to the nave. This

---

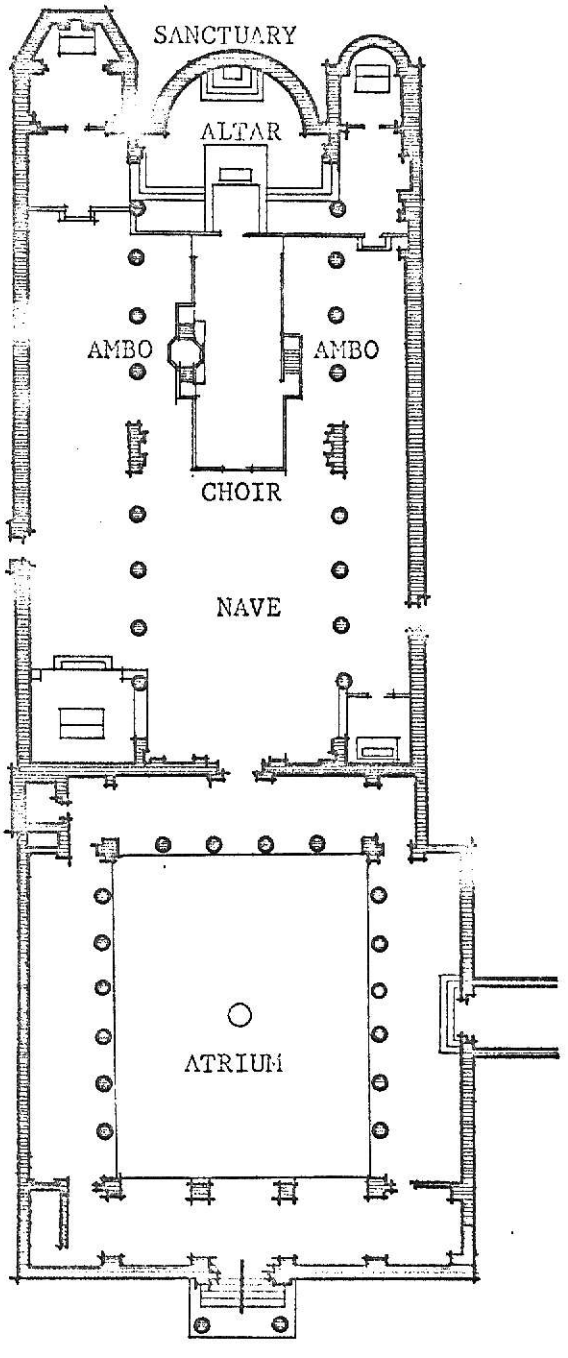
[7] Cooley, loc. cit.

[8] White, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE III

Floor plan of San Clemente, Rome, 1099-1108. A basilica church rebuilt over a much earlier church that retains the earlier spatial arrangement. (Thiry, Churches & Temples, p. 15C.)

PLATE III



space, called a bema, is thought by some to be the basis of the transept of later churches.[9]

The dominant spatial characteristic of the basilica church was a long formal axis focusing on the altar-table with the bishop's throne behind it. In use the congregation stood in the nave and the side aisles with the women usually separated from the men: sometimes the women were restricted to galleries over the aisles. The ambo was used for the reading of the Scriptures and the Psalms, but was not used for preaching. The sermon was preached from the bishop's throne: the seated position symbolizing teaching authority. The bishop and the minister celebrated the Eucharist from behind the altar-table facing the congregation;[10] a position once again gaining favor in current Catholic worship. If, at one time, the altar-table was indeed placed in the center of the nave, the congregation could have gathered around it in a true corporate celebration of the Eucharist. However, the evidence suggests that the altar-table was located at the front of the apse and as time passed it retreated into the apse. At the same time the screen around the platform grew higher as it became the position of a choir. Soon the sanctuary end of the church became spatially an entity within and an extension of the nave, symbolizing a separation of clergy and congregation. Increasingly the worship was performed by the clergy while the congregation became passive.

---

[9] Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 259, 261 & 1259.

[10] White, op. cit., pp. 58-60.

During the time of the basilica churches, baptism took place in a separate space, often in a separate building. These baptisteries varied from square to round in plan. Spatially the baptistery was a high central space surrounded by a lower passage, or ambulatory, often colonnaded. The roof of the central space was frequently domed. The overall spatial effect was of a vertical axis with the visual emphasis on the very center of the space (Plate IV). The font was often a pool sunken into the center of the floor. When pedestal fonts came into use they were sometimes set in a recessed area in the center of the floor. The candidate being baptized was thereby symbolically descending into the grave and arising to a new life.[11]

The central type of space as used in these baptisteries was destined to be of great influence in the development of Christian church buildings. The Eastern Church came to use a central type spatial arrangement almost exclusively. In the present time the central space is once again advocated for Christian worship, even by Protestants.

II. THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH (CATHOLIC)

Medieval church buildings would be of absolutely no importance for an understanding of Protestant liturgical spaces except for two factors. First of all, the Reformers inherited many of these churches so they became the basis of a Protestant development in church architecture. Secondly, mainly through the influence of the Cambridge Movement, gothic revival churches were built by almost all Protestant

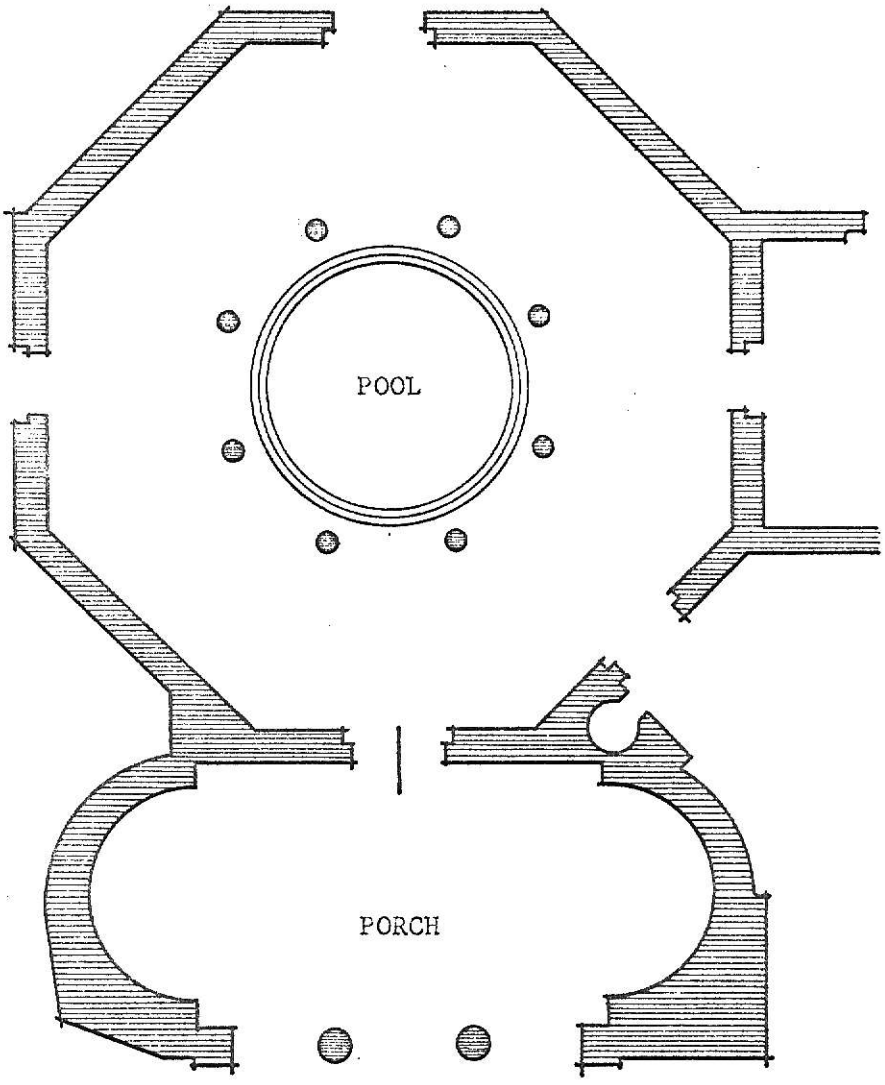
---

[11] Ibid., p. 61

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IV

Floor plan of the Baptistery of Constantine, Rome, A. D. 340. (Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, p. 295.)

PLATE IV



denominations in the 19th and 20th centuries. In fact, the general liturgical arrangement of the medieval church is still being used by many architects, though it is now usually clothed in modern dress.

As Christianity spread northward into Europe from Rome, worship services continued to be conducted in Latin, even though to the majority of the congregation it was a strange tongue. The congregation was reduced to spectators as the clergy and the members of the religious orders celebrated the Mass for the people. This change in worship was expressed in the spatial arrangement of the altar-table. In the basilica church the bishop celebrated from behind the altar-table, facing the people. But, in the West it became common for the celebrant to take a position between the congregation and the altar-table. The altar-table itself was pushed farther and farther back into an increasingly deep apse, thereby becoming remote from the congregation. With the worship service becoming centered almost exclusively on the Mass, the congregation was left with nothing to do but engage in private devotions.[12]

The liturgical arrangement that was common by the late Middle Ages was influenced to a great extent by the requirements of the monastic orders who built many churches. The great cathedral churches copied the monastic liturgical arrangement and the parish churches in turn copied the cathedrals. In this way a liturgical arrangement suited to the work of worship by members of a religious order became the

---

[12] Ibid., pp. 64-68.

accepted pattern for worship by the laity who could not enter the sanctuary where worship took place.

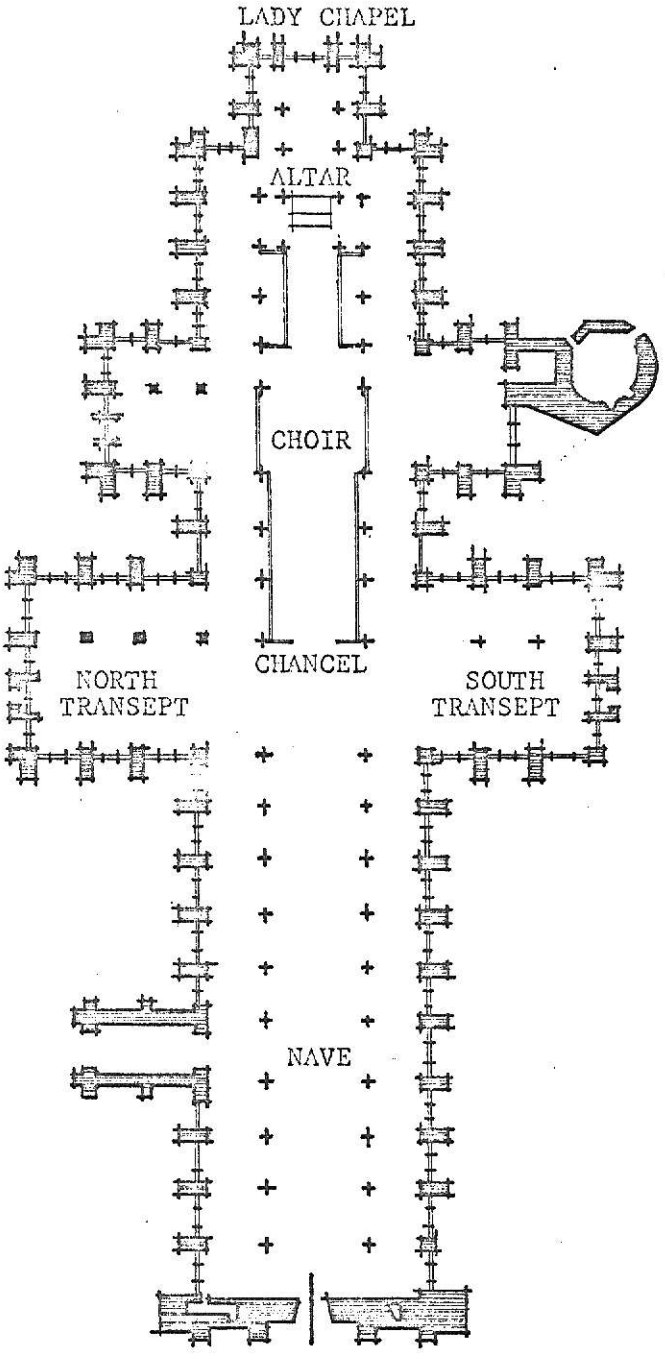
The Cathedral

The cathedral church was basically a long, narrow, and usually very high, complex space flanked with aisles and sometimes chapel spaces. The proportions varied in different places and at different times, but all cathedrals were characteristically huge with a scale that tended to dwarf man. French cathedrals tended to be shorter and wider than English cathedrals and, until the late English gothic, more vertical. The apse end of the cathedral was often as long as the nave and was spatially differentiated by the transepts which created the crossing at the nave (Plate V). The choir and high altar were surrounded by a screen that was, in many cases, so high and solid that spatially it formed a church within a church. This choir area, or chancel, was usually placed wholly within the apse, but in some cases it extended through the crossing and occupied part of the nave as well. The high altar was placed at the east end of the choir and a lectern was placed at the west end. Occasionally, a pulpit was placed to one side of the choir near the altar. Many cathedrals sheltered a shrine which was the object of pilgrimages. This shrine was often placed behind the high altar. To provide access to the shrine without going through the chancel, the side aisles of the nave were extended around the apse providing an ambulatory for processions. Subsidiary altars were generally placed at various locations in the cathedrals for the use of priests celebrating private Masses. These altars occurred in

EXPLANATION OF PLATE V

Floor plan of Salisbury Cathedral, England, 1220-1284. (Thiry, Churches & Temples, p. 25C.)

PLATE V


LADY CHAPEL
ALTAR
CHOIR
CHANCEL
NORTH TRANSEPT
SOUTH TRANSEPT
NAVE

various chapels that were added for devotions, often of the Virgin Mary. Chantry chapels, the burial places of wealthy persons and clergy, which had altars so that Mass could be said for the repose of their souls, were another common type of chapel. These various chapels were often placed in a screened off section of the nave or chancel aisles, or they were built as extensions of the cathedral. A baptismal font, if it was included, was usually placed in the south nave aisle close to the west entrance.[13]

In the cathedrals, the clergy and members of the choir were usually the only corporate body of worshipers so that the enclosed chancel functioned as a complete liturgical space separated from the nave and other spaces. As a monastic arrangement this worked well, but if the laity were present they could not join in the worship service because they were excluded from the chancel. The laity could only hear part of, and occasionally catch a glimpse of, what was going on, so their principal act of worship was to practice their private devotions. For this purpose the cathedrals were undoubtedly well suited. The awe inspiring spaces of a gothic cathedral invoke a mood of reverence in people even today.

The Parish Church

In the Middle Ages, the church building used most often by the average man was his parish church. Here was where he attended Mass, listened to sermons, and practiced his devotions. In addition he conducted much of his business and social life at the church. The

---

[13] Ibid., pp. 68-72.

church was, for all practical purposes, the center of his life.[14]

The parish church developed from a simple two space building in the early Middle Ages to a complex of spaces by the 15th century (Plate VI). The chancel had been lengthened so that in some cases it was almost as long as the nave. The nave had acquired side aisles and often transepts. A tower was added, usually to the west end of the nave, and often a porch to the south side of the nave. Entrance in some churches was through the porch only, while in others it was through the base of the tower. The nave itself was narrow and usually very high with clearstory windows over the aisles. The chancel was separated from the nave by the rood screen, which acquired its name from the large cross it supported. This screen was, unlike the solid screens usual in cathedrals, made of wood tracery, allowing the congregation to see the Mass being celebrated by the clergy at the high altar. Additional altars might be placed in the transepts and one was occasionally placed against the rood screen for use on the rare occasions when the congregation received communion. The baptismal font was usually placed in the nave at the west end close to the entrance, symbolizing entrance into the church.[15]

The chancel contained the high altar which was placed against the east wall. After about a thousand years of wood altars, the altar came to be made of stone and usually contained the relics of a saint. In the 12th century candles were placed on the altar and about the

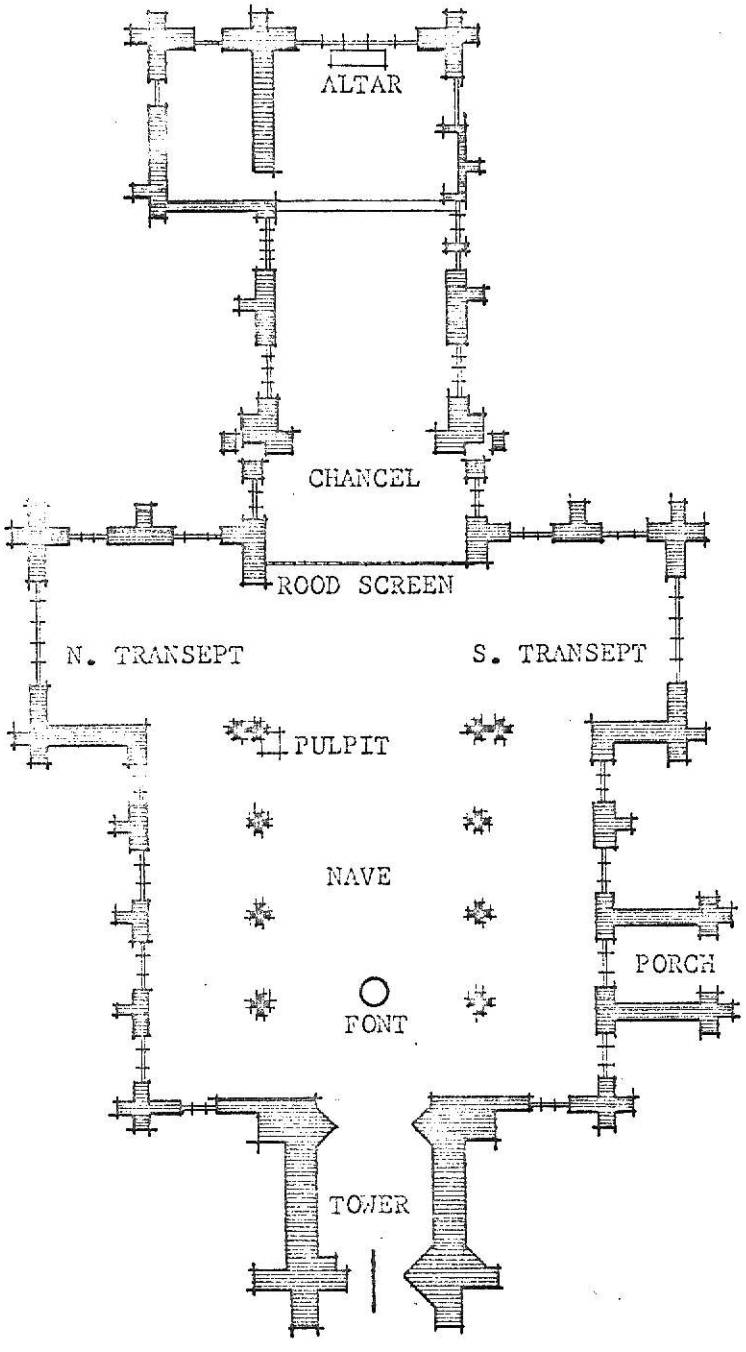
---

[14] Ibid., p. 72. [15] Ibid., pp. 72-75.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VI

Floor plan of S. Andrew, Heckington, England, 1345-1380. (Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, p. 431.)

PLATE VI


ALTAR
CHANCEL
ROOD SCREEN
N. TRANSEPT
S. TRANSEPT
PULPIT
NAVE
PORCH
FONT
TOWER

13th century a crucifix. The west end of the chancel contained stalls for the clergy and families of the nobility. The congregation was usually excluded from the chancel, the nave being their portion of the church.[16]

The pulpit was usually suspended in the nave from one of the piers at the side. Around this the congregation could gather for the sermon as seating was not common in the Western churches before the 14th century and was not used in some churches until even later. The nave thus contained the pulpit and baptismal font as the two main liturgical centers for the laity. In addition the nave was decorated with paintings of the last judgment and figures of the saints. These, with the fourteen stations of the cross and the rood, provided ample devotional conters for the average man to cultivate his devotional life. This practice of personal devotions was his main task during the Mass.[17]

The typical parish church also contained one or more chapels. These were either dedicated to a saint or they were chantry chapels as in the cathedrals. These chapels were usually screened off spaces in the nave aisles. The only other major space of the medieval parish church was the sacristry, usually a projection from the side of the chancel. This space and the porch are not symmetrically balanced with the main church spaces, but they fail to destroy the formal axial expression of the total church building.

---

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., pp. 75-77.

III. THE REFORMATION CHURCH

The Protestant reformers attempted, in the 16th century, to recover a worship practice that included the laity in the total liturgy. The first change made from medieval worship was to conduct the worship service in a language understood by the congregation. In addition, the worship was conducted in such a manner that the congregation could hear the minister and see all the acts being performed during the service. Efforts were made to restore a balance between those elements of the service centered on the scripture and preaching and those centered on the celebration of the Eucharist. The effort to restore preaching in the worship service was very successful; the attempt to achieve weekly celebration of the Eucharist was less than successful.[18]

One immediate problem faced by the reformers was how to achieve their worship goals in the medieval churches they had inherited. New churches were not generally built until the 17th and 18th centuries, during which time many experimental churches for Protestant worship were constructed. These later experiments were often based on factors that had emerged from the attempt to convert the medieval churches to Protestant worship practices.

Transformation of Medieval Churches

Various changes were made in medieval churches to adapt them to Protestant liturgy. The first task was usually a general house cleaning of objects felt to be idolatrous. Most denominations removed the rood

---

[18] Ibid., pp. 78-80.

and most, if not all, of the paintings and statuary. All but one of the altars were removed and the one kept was often replaced with a table form. In some cases, medieval churches were stripped almost bare before some Protestants were satisfied.

The liturgical arrangements that came into being during this period varied. The Lutherans tended to keep the altar-table and baptismal font in approximately their original positions. But the Eucharist was celebrated with the minister standing behind the altar-table, facing the congregation. Many of the Reformed denominations closed off the chancel and abandoned it for worship purposes. Their worship service centered around a large pulpit with sounding board that was located in the middle of one side of the nave. They celebrated the Lord's Supper at long tables which were set up in the nave aisles. The Anglican congregations tended to keep the two separate spaces, the nave and chancel, of the medieval church. They conducted all of their service except the celebration of the Eucharist in the nave. The congregation, as well as the clergy, moved into the chancel where they gathered around a large table for the celebration of Holy Communion.

In all of these liturgical arrangements the emphasis tended to be placed on the pulpit and the preaching of the Word. The seating was generally arranged so that, as a whole, it focused on the pulpit. In some cases galleries were added opposite the pulpit to increase seating capacity. In this way, the formal, axial, character of the medieval

church was, in many cases, ignored in the asymmetrical spatial arrangements used by Protestants.[19]

Protestant Experiments

During the 17th and 18th centuries many Protestant churches were built in Europe, England, and America. Various arrangements of the primary liturgical centers were tried, but all of these experiments were similar in that in general, all the liturgical centers were placed in a single space. Chancels had, for all practical purposes, ceased to exist in Protestant churches. The typical Protestant church built during this time was a one room space in which the clergy and the congregation worshiped together in the acts of the liturgy.

In Lutheran churches of this period, the altar-table retained great importance and in some conservative churches it was placed at the east end of a long nave. But other, more compact, spaces of various shapes were also tried (Plate VII). In these experiments an attempt was made to bring the liturgical centers together and gather the congregation around them. To this end galleries were often used. While galleries were to become almost a trademark of many Protestant denominations, only in Germany were they carried to the extreme of five tiers in height. The spatial effect was quite like that of an opera house. This development made the celebration of Holy Communion difficult, unless it was served in the pews. The galleries also necessitated very high pulpits, often placed at the second-story level.[20]

---

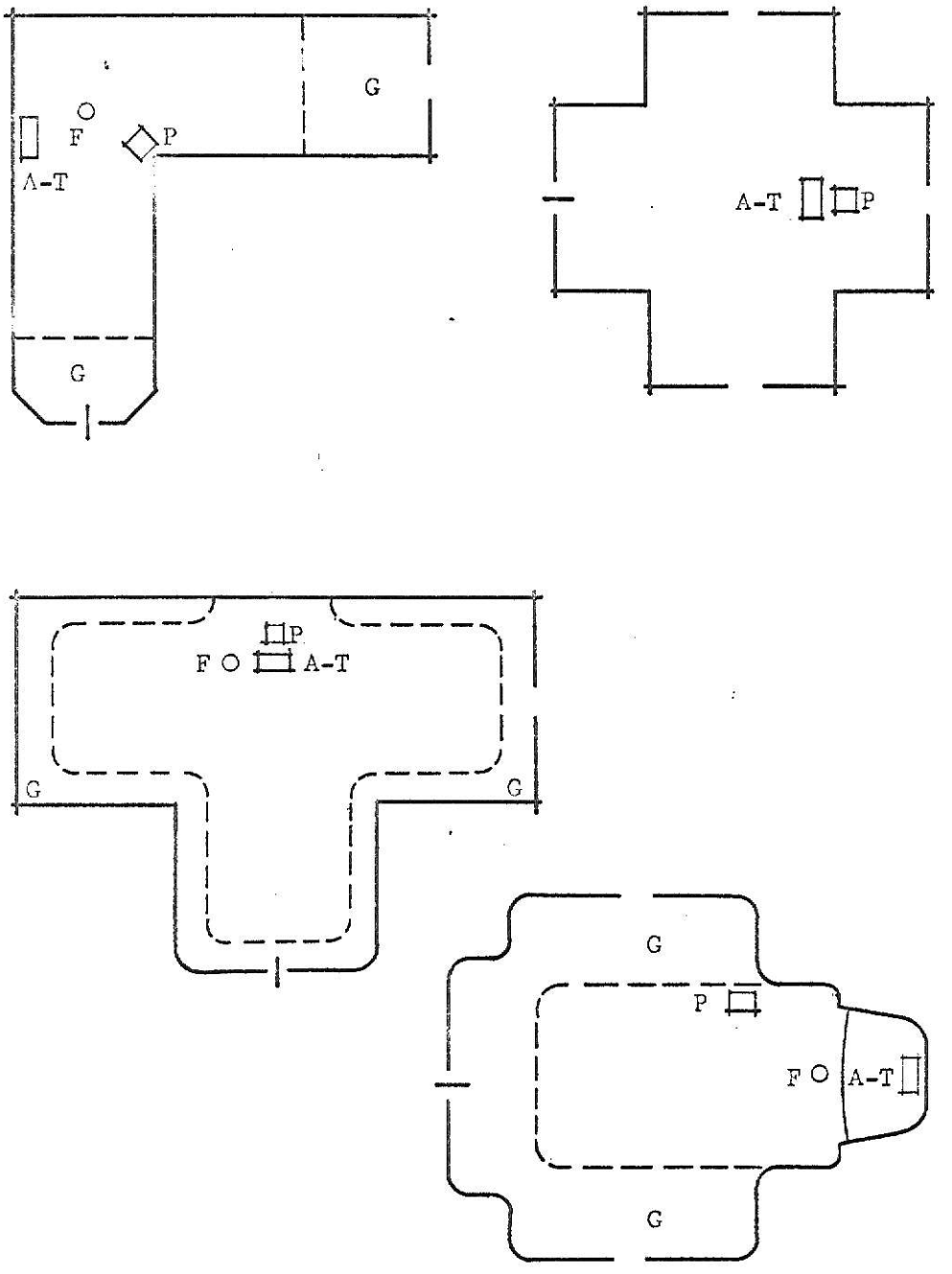
[19] Ibid., pp. 81-84. [20] Ibid., pp. 84-88.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE VII

Diagram floor plans of early German Lutheran churches, 1601-1738.

(White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, pp. 87-88.)

PLATE VII



Protestants who built churches within the Reformed tradition during this period did not face quite the same problems as the Lutherans. The primary liturgical center in the Reformed churches was the pulpit which completely dominated the other liturgical centers. As a consequence, though many plan shapes were tried (Plate VIII), they were all arranged to spatially focus on the pulpit. The pulpit was usually large, high, and beautifully constructed with a large sounding board. On the other hand, the altar-table was usually several portable tables that were set up in long rows down the aisles or across the front of the church space. The congregation would gather around these tables for the celebration of the Lord's Supper and the tables would be removed afterwards. The baptismal font likewise had little visual importance. Usually, a basin was placed in a hoop on the pulpit or on a table when the sacrament of baptism was to be celebrated.[21]

The Anglicans in England built few churches until after the London fire of 1666. Eighty-four churches were destroyed in this fire and Sir Christopher Wren was chosen as the architect for more than fifty of the replacement churches. Wren was very concerned about the inability of the congregation to hear the service in most existing churches. He went so far as to compute the distances from the pulpit that a person could distinctly hear if in front, behind, or beside the pulpit. The auditory church plans that Wren designed became models for Anglican churches for almost two-hundred years.[22]

---

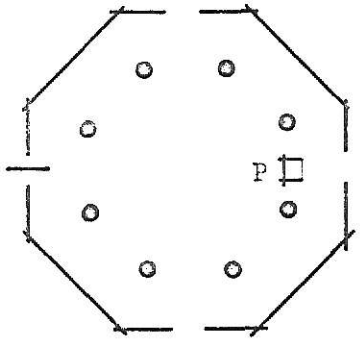
[21] Ibid., pp. 89-94. [22] Ibid., p. 95.

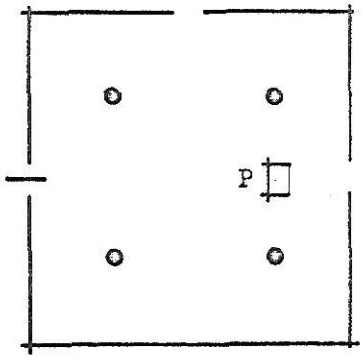
EXPLANATION OF PLATE VIII

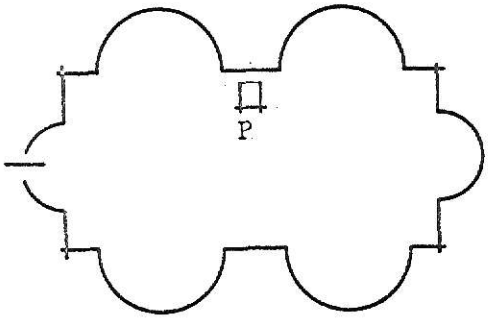
Diagram floor plans of early Netherlands Reformed churches, 1623-1671.

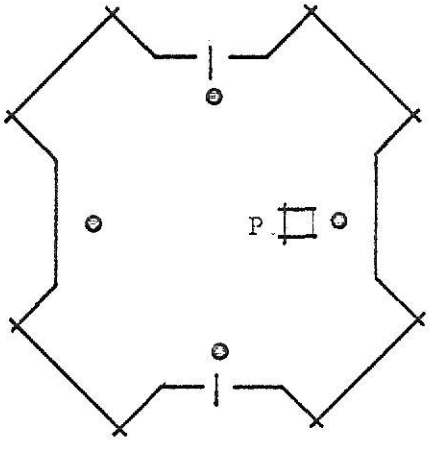
(White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, pp. 90-91.)

PLATE VIII









The Anglican liturgical arrangements of this period were characterized by the altar-table placement against the east wall. The altar-table was enclosed with rails at which the communicants knelt to receive the Holy Communion. In addition to the pulpit and a stone font, a reading desk was used. This desk was the center from which the entire service, except the sermon and Holy Communion, was conducted. The pulpit and desk were placed close to the congregation, often on either side of the center aisle (Plate IX). Occasionally, the desk and pulpit were combined in one center. The baptismal font was usually placed near the main church entrance. High box pews were used, both on the main floor and in the gallery. As Wren's churches were often built on odd shaped lots, the general plan shape was often asymmetrical with the tower to one side rather than centered on the main aisle.[23]

In America the Anglican liturgical arrangements tended to exhibit more variety than in England. The altar-table was usually a simple table form, uncluttered by candles and crosses. The baptismal font was sometimes made of wood, rather than stone, and occasionally a silver baptismal basin was used. The font was often placed at the east end of the building so that baptism could be celebrated before the congregation. The pulpit and desk were often combined in a two-decker pulpit. If a separate pulpit and desk were used, they were placed close together (Plate X). In all the arrangements that were used, an attempt was made to bring the liturgical centers, particularly the pulpit and desk, as close to the congregation as possible.[24]

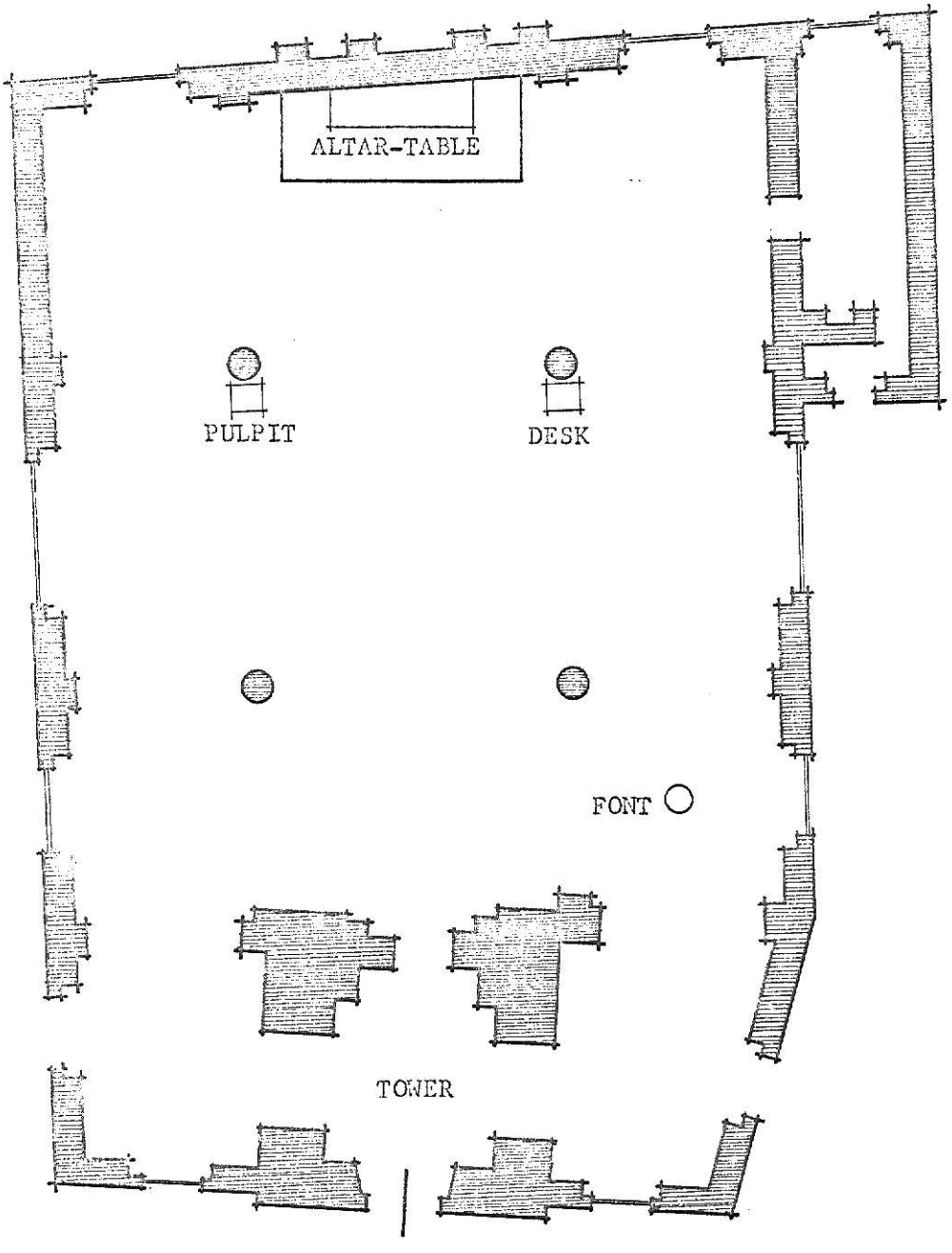
---

[23] Ibid., pp. 95-98. [24] Ibid., pp. 98-105.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE IX

Floor plan of S. Mary-at-Hill, London, 1670-1676, Sir Christopher Wren, architect. (Fletcher, A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, p. 916.)

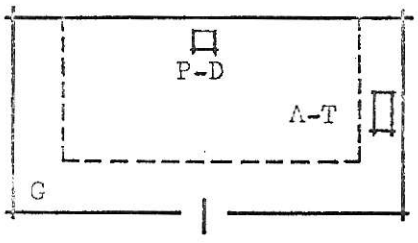
PLATE IX

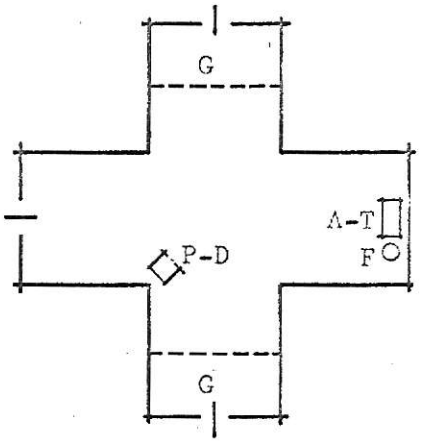


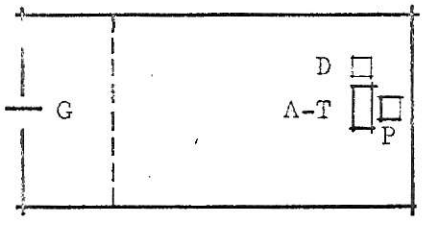
EXPLANATION OF PLATE X

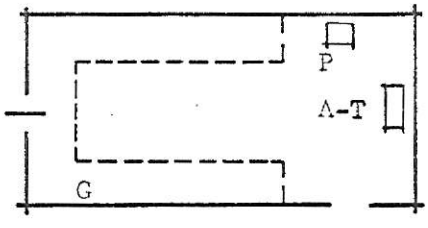
Diagram floor plans of early Anglican churches built in America, 1707-1763. (White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, pp. 102-105.)

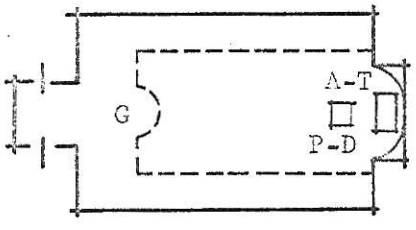
PLATE X

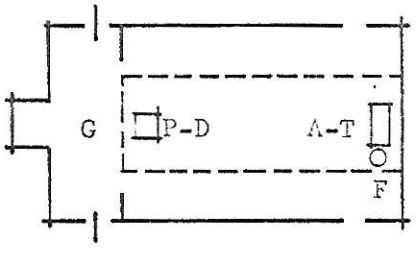












The Puritans in America established, very early, a fixed liturgical arrangement that they retained though the church buildings in which it was used varied. This arrangement was very simple, consisting of a tall pulpit, directly in front of which was the elders' or deacons' pew and before this pew, the altar-table. A baptismal basin was placed on the altar-table for the sacrament of baptism. The large pulpit was frequently surmounted by a large sounding board which gave visual emphasis to this combined liturgical center. The congregation was gathered, on the main floor and in an encircling gallery, around this liturgical center (Plate XI). These New England meetinghouses went through a distinct series of changes in general shape. After the early primitive, fortified buildings, the first stage was a large wooden church, usually square, or almost so, in plan, that was built during the 17th century. During the early 18th century these churches were replaced by buildings that were rectangular in plan with the liturgical center placed in the middle of one long side. Later, the final and most familiar type of building was built. This was also a rectangle, but the liturgical center was placed in the center of a short side opposite the main entrance, which was now through a narthex or portico. These are the churches that are so familiar on calendars and Christmas cards.[25]

IV. THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY CHURCH

The 19th century saw two types of Liturgical arrangements emerge which have dominated Protestant church buildings up until the recent

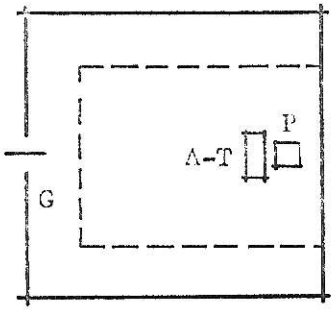
---

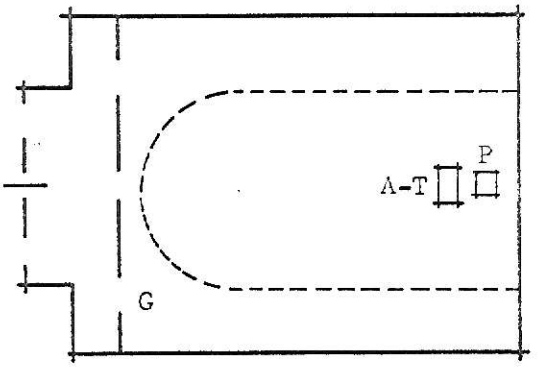
[25] Ibid., pp. 106-110.

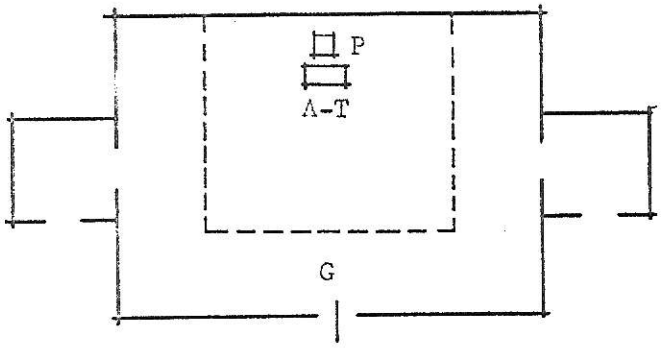
EXPLANATION OF PLATE XI

Diagram floor plans of early Puritan meetinghouses built in America, 1681-1787. (White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, pp. 108-109.)

PLATE XI







Liturgical Movement. These two arrangements came into being from entirely different background beliefs and concerns. However, both arrangements were created by movements which placed a strong emphasis on the feelings of the individual worshiper. Worship came to be dominated by the clergy and the choir, while the congregation was reduced to an audience of spectators who were allowed to sing an occasional hymn.

The first of these movements was the revivalism that swept 19th century America. This movement, as White has pointed out, ". . . changed America from a nation with a Christian minority to a nation in which most of the population belongs to a Church."[26] The liturgical arrangement which grew out of the needs of revivalistic evangelism was what has come to be called the concert stage arrangement. Older churches were remodeled into this arrangement and a great number of new churches were constructed with this plan.

The other liturgical arrangement came from the 19th century Cambridge Movement; a movement started by a group of students at Cambridge University who banded together as the Cambridge Camden Society.[27] This movement was basically a part of the larger romanticism of the time. It resulted in a church arrangement which looked back to the Middle Ages and was generally expressed in the gothic style. The liturgical arrangement of this movement is referred to as the divided chancel. It is still used in new churches today, although now usually clothed in modern dress.

---

[26] Ibid., p. 121. [27] Ibid., p. 132.

The Concert Stage Arrangement

The concert stage arrangement grew out of the revival movement with its emphasis on the salvation of the individual in the congregation. Its features expressed these aims (Plate XII). The pulpit shrunk to little more than a lectern while the platform on which it was centered grew to stage proportions. This enlarged platform provided a stage for the histrionics of the preacher. On the platform with the lectern-pulpit were three large chairs and quite often the organ console. These chairs were for the minister, the choir leader, and often a visiting preacher. The platform was placed on the main central axis of the church space with the choir arranged in concert form in tiers behind it. The organ pipes usually surmounted the choir on the wall behind. The altar-table was usually placed on the floor in front of and below the platform where it was well hidden from the view of most of the congregation. For baptism two different arrangements were common. If sprinkling was practiced, the baptismal basin was placed on the altar-table. If immersion was practiced, the tank was, in early churches, located under the middle of the platform with a floor cover over it. In later churches using the concert stage arrangement, the tank was placed in a separate room behind the choir with an opening in the wall to the sanctuary. The overall effect of this total arrangement was of a theater stage with an audience out front. The congregation became a group of spectators watching the action on stage.[28]

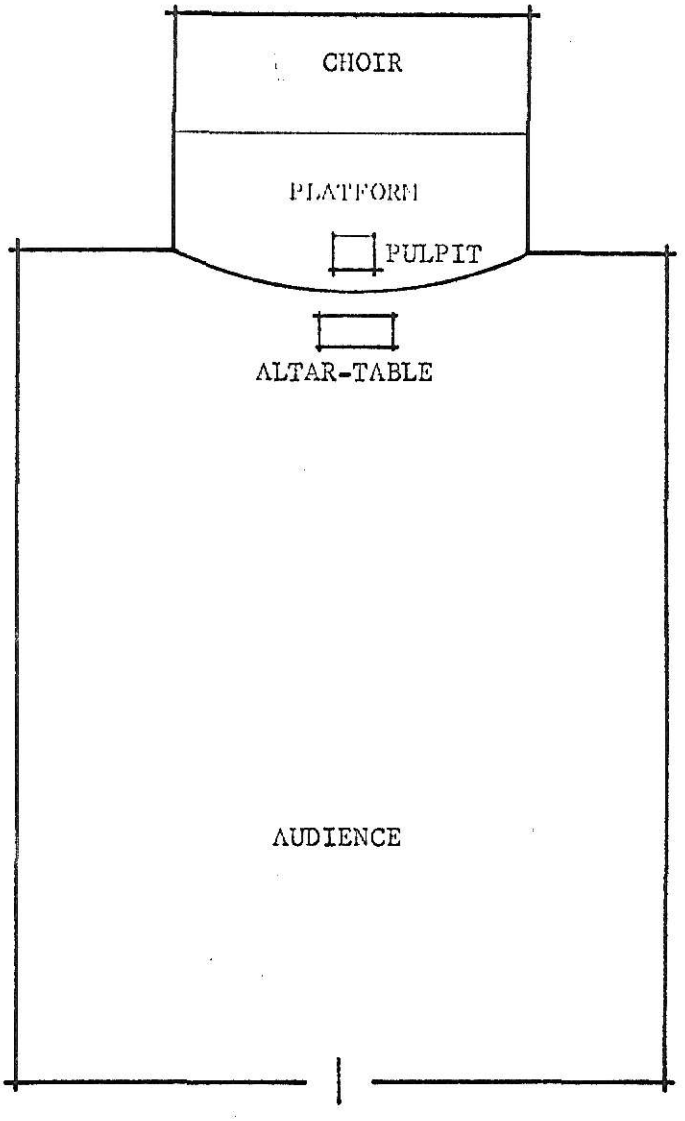
---

[28] Ibid., pp. 121-126.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XII

Diagram floor plan of the concert stage type of church spatial arrangement. (White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, p. 127.)

PLATE XII



A variation of the concert stage arrangement was the so-called Akron plan. This arrangement originated in the late 19th century when it was used in a church built in Akron, Ohio.[29] The arrangement was an expression of an attempt to provide for Sunday School classes within the main church space. The Akron plan was essentially a square hall with the concert stage liturgical arrangement placed in one corner (Plate XIII). A gallery was wrapped around the two sides opposite the pulpit platform. Both this gallery and the space below it on the main floor could be subdivided, by sliding partitions or heavy drapes, into small spaces for classes. These partitions or drapes were then opened for the main service. The main floor usually sloped downwards towards the pulpit platform.

As these concert stage churches were designed to promote conversions, they were usually well decorated and provided with emotive features. Pictorial stained glass windows were used as were impressive organ pipe arrangements. The altar-table was often buried under candles, a cross, and large floral arrangements. Lighting was controlled to create the desired mood. All of these features were carefully contrived to produce the desired "churchy" atmosphere.[30]

The Divided Chancel Arrangement

The Cambridge Movement, which was basically responsible for the divided chancel church arrangement, was influenced by the theology of the Oxford Movement. This theology stressed the importance of the

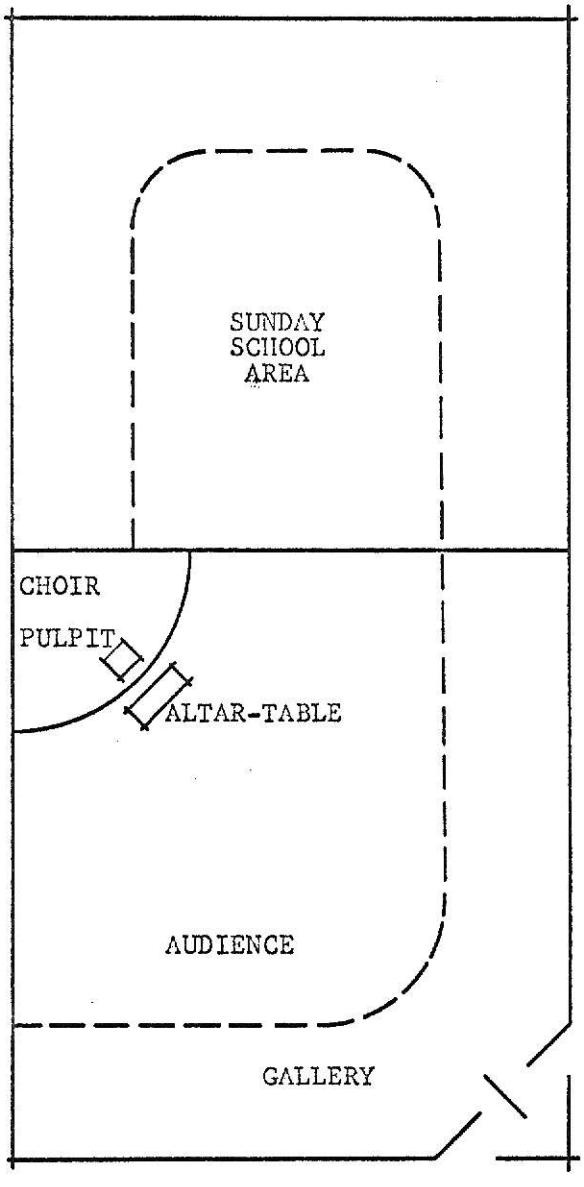
---

[29] Ibid., pp. 126-129. [30] Ibid., pp. 125, 129.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIII

Diagram floor plan of the Akron Plan auditorium church. (White, Protestant Worship and Church Architecture, p. 127.)

PLATE XIII


SUNDAY
SCHOOL
AREA
CHOIR
PULPIT
ALTAR-TABLE
AUDIENCE
GALLERY

sacraments and the authority of the clergy. It was held that a distinction existed between the clergy and their flocks and that this basic distinction should be always remembered by both sides. In the view of those who adhered to this theology: " . . . the Middle Ages represented the height of Christian piety and worship . . . ."[31] Worship was associated with an aura of awe and mystery and the Middle Ages were looked to as a source of inspiration for this type of worship.[32]

The Cambridge Movement advocated the reproduction of medieval church buildings as it was believed that this basic design was ideally suited to worship as they saw it. Some went so far as to claim that gothic was the only Christian architecture and that the late medieval parish church was the only acceptable church form for Anglican worship. To this end it was proclaimed that every church should have a distinct chancel at least one-third of the length of the nave and separated from it by a chancel arch, or at least by a roodscreen and raised floor.[33]

The divided chancel arrangement which resulted from these beliefs had a long narrow nave with a long and spatially separate chancel (Plate XIV). The altar was placed against the east wall of the chancel and a pulpit and lecturn were placed in the nave, one on each side of the chancel arch. The baptismal font was located at the west end of the nave near the church entrance. The chancel became a natural place for a choir of the laity and it was soon placed in this area, one-half on each side facing each other across an aisle leading to the altar.[34]

---

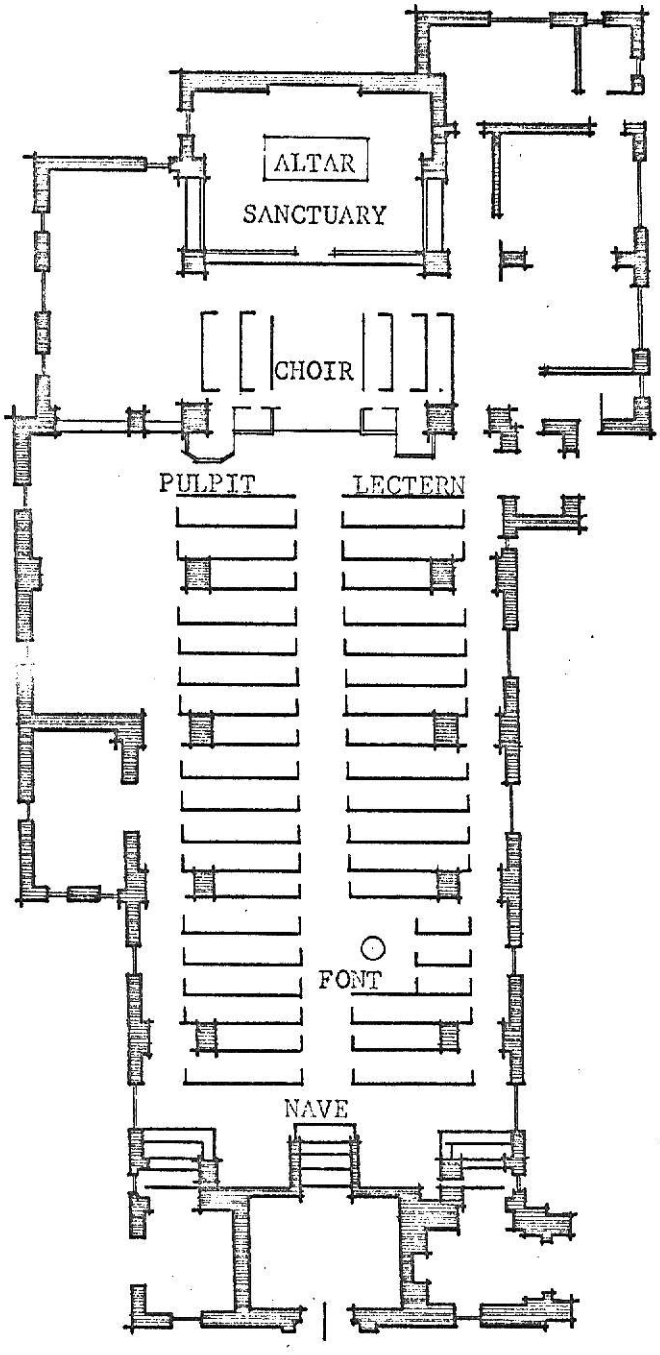
[31] Ibid., p. 132. [32] Ibid., pp. 131-136. [33] Ibid., p. 132.

[34] Ibid., pp. 133, 135.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIV

Floor plan of Harold Wood, St. Peter Church, Chelmsford, England, 1939. A typical divided chancel spatial arrangement. (Incorporated Church Building Society, Fifty Modern Churches, p. 38.)

PLATE XIV



The consequences of this arrangement for Protestant worship were great. The worship was performed by the minister and the choir while the congregation watched; hardly a symbolic expression of the priesthood of all the believers. But, these "churchy" buildings with their dim religious light, stained glass windows, carved woodwork, etc., were nevertheless built by all major Protestant denominations. Few Protestants seem to realize that no matter which stylistic dress the divided chancel is clothed in, ". . . it is still," as White has point out, "an arrangement designed primarily for worship by medieval people who were mainly illiterate and could not or would not join in the worship with the clergy."[35]

Recent Developments

Due to the influence of the Liturgical Movement, some attempts have recently been made to design churches which truly reflect Protestant beliefs. In some instances these experiments have not worked out as well as was hoped. In others, much has been learned, even though the total liturgical arrangement may have fallen short of the ideal. Some of these experimental liturgical arrangements will be considered in the next chapter of this study.

---

[35] Ibid., p. 139.

CHAPTER VI

PROPOSALS FOR SYMBOLIC RELIGIOUS SPACES FOR PROTESTANT WORSHIP

The development of Protestant church buildings, as outlined in the preceding chapter, has led to church spaces that, if the central Protestant belief in the priesthood of all believers is taken seriously, are at best un-Protestant. These church buildings are monuments that are not symbolic of Protestant beliefs and cannot function as spaces for Protestant worship should; even though for some these buildings may possess a general religious character. This typical church building is an inverted closure that is symbolic of an institutionally self-conscious group that has withdrawn from the world of reality. It provides a setting for a passive audience to sit and watch a performance. Meaningful liturgical practices which involve the Protestant congregation in corporate activity are impossible in this type of space.

The general direction that church architecture must take to provide symbolic spaces for Protestant worship has been clearly indicated in recent years. As architect Edward A. Sövik pointed out in reporting on the 1967 International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts:

> True religion is not self-serving, not institutionally self-conscious; its focus of service is the world, its commitment is to the total society, and its commitment is unqualified. If this is the understanding people have of religion the shelters that they build for worship are not going to be

> grand monuments to their institutions, or full of ecclesiastical idioms and devices which "make a church look like a church," [Quotation marks in the original] and separate it from the vernacular of secular architecture.[1]

However, this involvement of the church in the world does not mean that church spaces should be indistinguishable from any other public shelter. The Reverend John T. Golding has outlined the necessity for a symbolic space for worship and defined as the most important characteristic of this symbol that it "should invite (I would almost say compel) [Parentheses in the original] the worshiper's active participation in the liturgical act."[2] Thus the basis of symbolic spaces for Protestant worship must be the active participation of the congregation in the liturgy; rather than some concept of what a church should look like. Frey, in discussing the liturgical basis of church design, has stated that:

> It cannot be said too often that there is no such thing, really, as church architecture---there is only architecture in the service of the church. To design for worship is to create a building that is both a symbol and a tool for the worshipping congregation.[3]

This chapter of this study will be devoted to an analysis of how architecture can serve the church by creating symbolic spaces that

---

[1]Edward A. Sövik, "Review - 1967 International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts," Faith and Form, I, (January, 1968), 29.

[2]John T. Golding, "The Church Remembers Her Future - Liturgical Symbols for Today and Tomorrow," Faith and Form, I, (April, 1968), 29.

[3]Edward S. Frey, This Before Architecture (Jenkintown, Pennsylvania: The Religious Publishing Company, 1963) p. 27.

express the liturgy. This analysis will only involve the primary church spaces and the elements that give these spaces their expression. Christian education and general fellowship spaces which are not liturgical in nature will not be considered in this study.

I. THE ENTRY

The entry into any building or enclosed space is very important. The visitor gets his first impression of the purpose of the enclosed space or spaces from the entry space. The overall character of the enclosed spaces should be suggested in the entry space as this space is the preparatory space for the building. If one purpose is expressed in the entry and something entirely different in the following spaces, spatial unity will be destroyed. However, this does not mean that the entry must be in complete harmony with the main spaces in its architectural use of the spatial defining elements. Rather, the entry must spatially be a part of the total system of spaces in a unified expression. This may require, on occasion, the use of spatial elements in the entry that are in polarity to the spatial elements of the main spaces. Indeed, the entry space itself could be in polarity to the spaces that it serves: the low, small, entry can be a dynamic entrance into a large, high, space. The important point is that the entry is a transition space from the exterior world into the defined spatial expression of the enclosed spaces. It must accomplish the task of suggesting to the visitor the purpose of the spaces that follow while at the same time being the place where the outside world and the enclosed spaces merge.

The typical Protestant church entry is an abrupt change from the street space to the sanctuary. This entry usually expresses a closed, inverted feeling, due, in part, to the lack of glass, especially clear glass. The entry door itself is usually of large scale, heavy and massive, reached, quite frequently, by a monumental set of steps on axis. The overall expression of this typical entry is one of remoteness, exclusiveness, and, if the congregation can afford it, great affluence; in essence, the symbolic expression of a private club. This monumental, pretentious entry symbolizes withdrawal from the world and all its problems into a cosy, exclusive atmosphere of carefully screened club members. But, Protestantism is not a club for a privileged few; rather, it is a faith open to everyone. Therefore, the symbolic expression of most church entries is un-Protestant.

Protestants have generally felt that the sanctuary should be a place set apart for worship. However, this belief does not imply that the church building should symbolize withdrawal from the world. If Protestantism is to serve in the world, its places of worship must be within the world, not withdrawn from it. Therefore, if the sanctuary is to be symbolically a place set apart while the church building itself is symbolically a part of the world, the entry must be the spatial transition between the world and worship. In addition, the entry must be the preparation space for the sanctuary symbolizing accessibility and welcome into the fellowship for all.

For the church entry to symbolize openness and welcome the typical formal axial arrangement must be replaced by an informally

balanced spatial arrangement. The formal entry expresses institutionalism whereas what is needed is a sense of the importance of people coming together to contribute to the corporate worship. This mood can only be established in an informal space where people and their interactions are more important than the institution. This space must be of sufficient size to allow the worshipers to graciously meet before and after the service. Where the climate will allow this activity to take place outside, a court provides an excellent entry space and may allow the enclosed entry to be smaller. The enclosed entry can symbolize accessibility and welcome if it is visually open from the exterior. The spatial union provided by glass as a space defining element of the enclosed entry can be particularly effective if this entry is spatially part of a court (Plate XV). The church entry has traditionally been accented by a bell tower or spire. However, the tower need not be directly above the church door to function as a focal point of the church. If an independent tower is placed in an entry court it can serve as an accent and focus of this space and spatially balance the church structure. An informal system of spaces encompassing a court with its accent tower, and a glazed entry would be completely different from the typical formal Protestant church entry. This informal entry could express accessibility and welcome to the world and symbolize hope and joy.

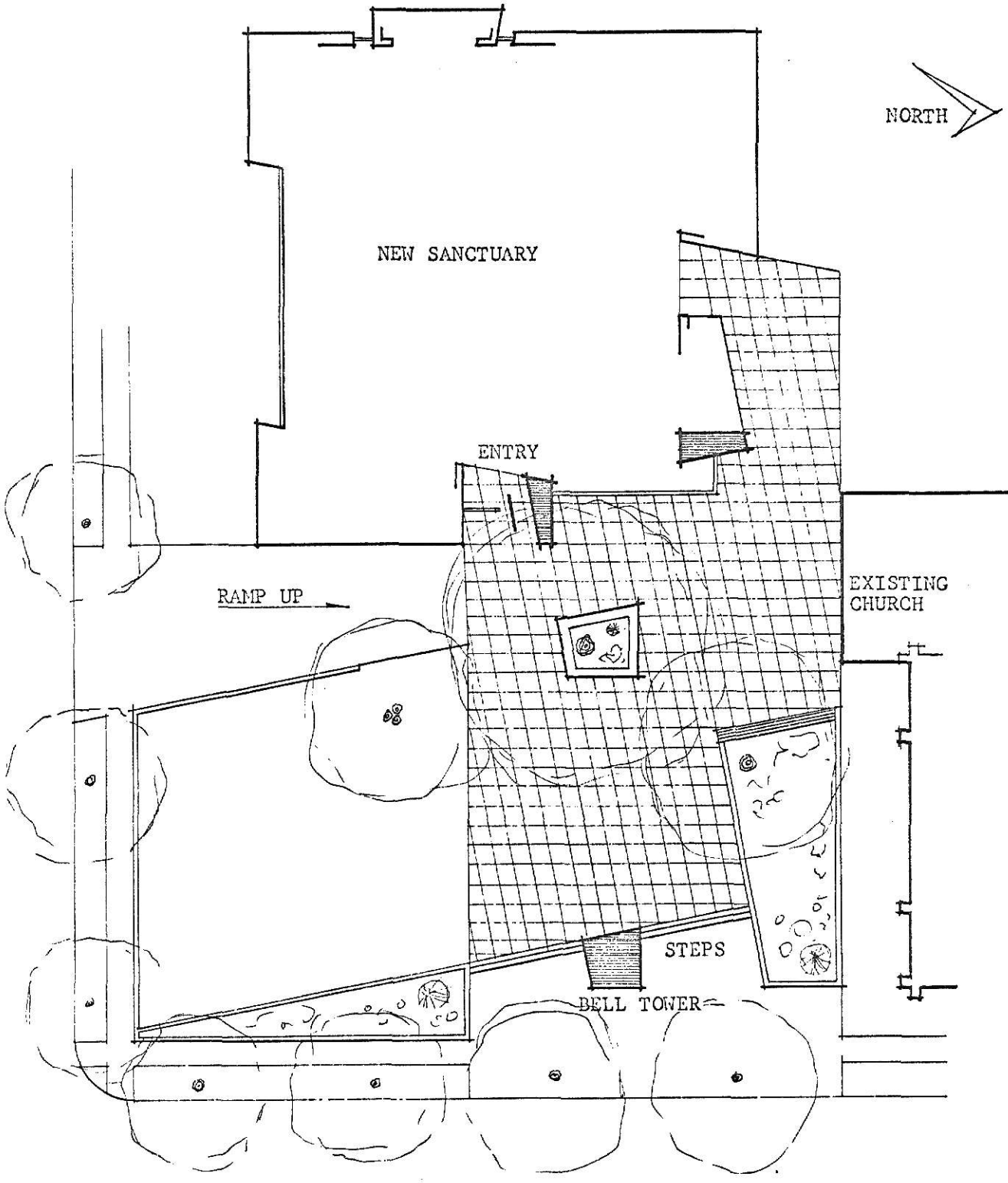
II. THE LITURGICAL CENTERS

The space encompassing the liturgical centers is normally referred to as the sanctuary in Protestant churches. In some examples this

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XV

Plan of the entry court for the proposed First Presbyterian Church, Manhattan, Kansas. Designed by E. Wendt.

PLATE XV


NORTH
NEW SANCTUARY
ENTRY
RAMP UP
EXISTING
CHURCH
STEPS
BELL TOWER

space is divided into two areas; the nave for the congregation and the chancel for the pastor and choir. Whether one space or two, rarely is the sanctuary a spatial expression of Protestant liturgy or beliefs. This often happens because the liturgical centers are placed in a space designed to provide a churchy atmosphere; rather than using the design process to create a space around the liturgical centers that spatially expresses the symbolism of these centers.

The liturgical space of Protestant churches can be: (1) a simple space with all the liturgical centers grouped together at one spatial focus; (2) a simple space with the liturgical centers separated from each other so that each has its own spatial focus; or (3) either a complex space with the liturgical centers in subspaces or separate spaces for each of the liturgical centers. The choice of which arrangement to use is, to a great extent, governed by the total number of worshipers to be provided for at the service. A small congregation can effectively use a liturgical arrangement that would be completely inadequate for a larger congregation. But, before the possible relationships between the liturgical centers can be analyzed, each liturgical center must be studied independently.

The Pulpit

The pulpit is the primary liturgical center of most Protestant denominations. For most Protestants, the reading and preaching of the Word is the primary reason for the worship service. This emphasis makes it mandatory that the pulpit and its liturgical space be truly symbolic of the importance of the Word. This symbolism cannot be

expressed through a cluttered chancel arrangement that balances and equates the pulpit with a lectern or reading desk. Neither can the small, insignificant pulpit, lost on a large platform stage, symbolize the importance of the Word in Protestant worship services.

The pulpit must be, first of all, of sufficient size to diminish the minister. The symbolism must be of the Word, not of a man giving a lecture. The emphasis should be on content, not on the personality of the speaker. In this context, the use of a sounding board, instead of a public address system, can help give visual emphasis to the pulpit.[4] In addition to size, the pulpit should be so designed that the Bible can be displayed upon it at all times.[5] An adequately sized pulpit displaying the Bible is a necessity for the establishment of this liturgical center as the symbolic center of the reading and preaching of the Word.

The pulpit should, ideally, be located at the focus of its liturgical space. If the pulpit is grouped with the altar-table and baptismal font, it will, of course, have to share the focus with these liturgical centers. However, in any case, the pulpit should be an accent in its space. The pulpit should be so located in its liturgical space that the worshipers can gather around it for the reading and preaching of the Word. But, the gathered worshipers should not

---

[4]Donald J. Bruggink and Carl H. Droppers, Christ and Architecture (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965) pp. 93-109.

[5]Ibid., p. 109.

be 360° around the pulpit as this locates some of the congregation behind the pulpit. The practical maximum for effective hearing is approximately 180° from one side around the front to the other side of the pulpit.

Many Protestant churches have, in this century, used a sloped floor for the congregational seating area facing the pulpit. The sloped floor became popular as the size of the pulpit diminished and the size of the congregation grew. This sloped floor allowed the huge body of worshipers to see the small lectern used as a pulpit. The difficulty with a sloped or terraced floor is that it imparts the character of an arena or theatre to the worship space. Of course, a simple solution would be to increase the size of the pulpit and decrease the size of the congregation making the flat floor practical.

The fixed pews used in most Protestant churches in conjunction with the sloped floor are unsatisfactory. They tend to immobilize the congregation and impart a static, rigid quality to the liturgical space. This symbolically casts the congregation as an audience watching a performance when the setting for the reading and preaching of the Word should, more ideally, be one of a dialogue, rather than a performance. Some congregations have experimented with chairs that can be informally grouped and changed as the activity demands. Of course, if chairs are used, their use requires a flat floor for maximum flexibility of placement. If the reading and preaching of the Word were not excessively long, there would be no need for any kind of seating, except for the aged or infirm, in the liturgical space of the pulpit. Indeed,

the use of seating for the congregation is a relatively late development in Christian churches. However, it is doubtful if, at this time, many congregations would give up altogether seating of some sort. So if seating must be provided, it must be of a kind that will provide for a maximum of interaction and participation by the congregation in the worship service. These goals can be accomplished by providing a flat floor in the pulpit space and using individual, moveable chairs grouped in an informal arrangement around the pulpit. The mood could be one of the residential living room; a place for dialogue and interaction. This could express the symbolism of a family gathered together to share in the liturgy of the Word.

The pulpit is, in most Protestant churches, located in a formal sanctuary which is characterized by its dim "religious" light. But this dim, somber spatial expression is in direct opposition to the message of the Word. If jesus is really "the light of the world" and the Christian message is one of hope and joy, then the typical church sanctuary is symbolically invalid. What is needed for the liturgical space of the pulpit is a sense of light and openness symbolizing the joy and freedom of the Word. The liturgical space of the pulpit should be spacious with an above average ceiling height and should spatially open up to the outside. Of course the sanctuary should not be spatially united with a busy street outside; it must be a place set apart. But, both the openness and sense of a place set apart can be accomplished by spatially opening the sanctuary to the entry court.

The liturgical space of the pulpit can express the symbolism of the importance of the message of the Word for Protestant worshipers if it meets all of the above criteria. In summary this would be a light spacious area spatially open to a court or garden. The space should be informally balanced around an accent pulpit. The pulpit should symbolize the importance of God's Word by its size and design. Seating should be flexible and informal; grouped around the pulpit in a manner to suggest the participation of the worshipers.

The Altar-Table

The altar-table is the liturgical center of the main Protestant sacrament: the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper. The symbolic significance of the worshipers gathering together around a table in remembrance of Jesus cannot be captured by a stone tomb pushed against the east wall of the chancel. Neither can the small, insignificant table lost below a platform stage express the symbolic meaning of the Lord's Supper. The altar-table must be returned to the worshipers, free of fences and rails, so that they can gather around it.

The altar-table should look like a table.[6] This does not mean that it cannot be constructed of materials other than wood. But, if it is to be a table, rather than a tomb, it must have the general appearance of a table. The altar-table should be of sufficient size so that the whole congregation can gather together around it. This may necessitate the splitting up of a large congregation into several

---

[6] Ibid., pp. 212-214.

small groups. But, the act of participation by the worshipers as they move together to the altar-table is a necessity if the symbolism of this liturgical practice is to be strengthened. The deadening practice of feeding the congregation in their pews must be stopped as this results in someone doing something for them rather than their being actively involved in the worship service.

In the same way as the pulpit, the altar-table should be an accent located at the focus of its liturgical space. This spatial location should be such that the worshipers can gather together completely around the altar-table. Only in this way can the worshipers observe the remembrance of the Last Supper as a symbolic meal. Some congregations have used seating of one type or another around the altar-table. In most cases this seating has been more symbolic than functional. While it is certainly possible to use seating at the altar-table, particularly for a small congregation, it is not necessary. There is no reason for preventing the worshipers from standing together around the altar-table for the liturgy of the Lord's Supper.

If the space for the reading and preaching of the Word can be compared to a living room, then the space for the liturgy of the Lord's Supper is like a dining room. Accordingly, this liturgical space should be a more intimate space than the pulpit space. It can have a relatively low ceiling height and dramatic lighting. This lighting could accent the altar-table with a higher level of intensity than the surrounding area. The altar-table space could be completely closed off from the outside, but this is not necessary. Along with

the pulpit space, the altar-table space could be spatially opened into the entry court or into a secluded garden area. The possibility of setting the liturgical space of the altar-table apart from the other liturgical centers by raising its floor level a number of steps should be considered. The relationship of this type of spatial arrangement to the concept of an upper room as the setting of the Last Supper is obvious; although it is possibly more imitative than symbolic.

The liturgical space of the altar-table is a space for a symbolic meal. It can achieve this symbolism if it is indeed a large dining room furnished with an accent altar-table around which the worshipers can gather for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. With this type of arrangement the worshipers can actively participate together in the Lord's Supper as an act of sharing.

The Baptistery

The baptistery is the liturgical center for the sacrament of baptism. Regardless of the differences of opinion as to the modes of baptism and its place in man's salvation, most Protestants believe that this sacrament is necessary for membership in the Church. Baptism is seen as signifying a new relationship between the baptised person and those already in the Church. But, the sacrament of baptism is primarily symbolic of a new relationship between the individual and Christ. This symbolism of baptism cannot be expressed by an insignificant font or basin placed in an out of the way corner of the sanctuary. Neither can the typical window at the rear of the chancel platform opening into a tank serve as a symbolic expression of the importance of baptism in the life of the Protestant worshiper.

The baptistery is first of all a setting for water. Whether a font, a pitcher and basin, or a tank is used as the container for the water, the liturgy centers around the use of water. Therefore, the font or tank must be expressive of water. It should be made of a material which is a logical container of water. Historically, the material for fonts has been stone and there is no reason why it should not be used today. The shape of the font should suggest water. A soft rounded form could give a fluid, flowing character to the font or tank. The circle has been the shape associated with baptismal fonts and spaces since the early church. While the circle is not the only shape with possibilities for a font or baptismal tank, it is certainly a useful shape. Whatever shape and material are chosen for the baptismal font or tank, it is important that they combine to express the water as the source of meaning in the liturgy of baptism.

The baptismal font or tank should be the accent in its liturgical space and occur at the focus of the space. The font or tank could logically be located at, or near, the center of its space so that the worshipers could gather completely around it. This would insure that baptism could take place in the midst of the congregation. The center location is a bit more difficult to architecturally arrange when a tank is used for immersion instead of a font. If dressing rooms were located immediately adjacent to the baptistery and the floor were to be constructed of stone or some other appropriate material, a tank sunk into the center of the baptistery floor would be practical. The embarrassment that at one time an individual supposedly felt about

being seen wet in public is, at this time, of no importance. The important point is that the sacrament of baptism can only achieve the desired symbolism if it takes place in the midst of the congregation as a testimony of faith.

Historically, man has symbolized death as downwardness and resurrection as arising or upwardness. If baptism is to symbolize the death of the old man and the arising of the new man, or if baptism is seen as a symbolic participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, down and up movement associated with the sacrament would be ideal. If immersion in a tank is the mode of baptism this symbolism is assured, provided the tank is sunk into the floor of the baptistery. A font does not have this built in symbolism. But, the font could be located in a depressed area of the baptistery floor necessitating the stepping down of a few steps to get to it. This movement down into the tank or down to the font coupled with the return upwards following the sacrament of baptism is symbolically rich in meaning and architectural means should be provided for the expression of it.

The liturgical space for the sacrament of baptism should be large enough to accommodate the worshipers at the service. There is no need to provide seating, except possibly a few portable seats for the aged or infirm. The worshipers can and should stand around those being baptised as an act of mutual sharing in a common experience. The space could well have a very low ceiling and, except at the font itself, a low level of illumination. Then, upon leaving this low, relatively dark space the worshipers could enter the high, light pulpit space.

This would be in opposition to the character of many historical baptisteries which had very high ceilings. But, the low and dark space in spatial relationship to the high and light space could symbolize the transition from darkness to light of baptism.[7]

Unlike the liturgical spaces of the pulpit and the altar-table which do not need any particular relationship to the entry space, the space for baptism needs a special relationship to the church entry. If baptism is to adequately symbolize entrance into the community of believers, the baptismal space must be so located that the entering worshipers pass by or through it. In this way the baptismal space becomes the transition from the entry to the other liturgical spaces. In this location the font or tank can serve as a constant reminder of the meaning of baptism to the worshipers at the many worship services at which the sacrament of baptism is not observed.

The symbolism of the baptistery is more complex than that of the pulpit or altar-table. A careless handling of the architectural design of the baptismal space will fail to express this rich symbolism. However, if the spatial arrangement and details of the baptistery meet the above criteria it can express all the symbolic aspects of baptism in Protestant worship.

III. THE CHOIR

The choir and organ are not liturgical centers. Even though this fact is indisputable, it is often expressively violated in Protestant

---

[7]Robert Maguire and Keith Murray, Modern Churches of the World (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1965) pp. 12-13.

churches. The visual expression of the sanctuary in too many Protestant churches is one of the primacy of choir and organ. Indeed, the liturgical centers are often insignificant in comparison to the powerful visual emphasis given the choir and organ. Far too many Protestants think of the choir and organ as existing primarily to create a proper "religious mood" and to provide some Sunday morning entertainment. The choir is seen as putting on a performance and hence must be placed in a position in front of the congregation. This attitude towards the choir underscores the fact that for many Protestants worship is a passive affair of watching something happen in the chancel or on the platform stage. These attitudes have resulted in many Protestant churches being built that express a setting for an elaborate musical production rather than the liturgy. In these churches a corporate liturgy is obviously secondary to entertainment and mood creating.

In a Protestant church built for corporate worship there are only two reasons for a choir and organ. The primary reason is to lead the congregation in singing. A secondary reason is to offer anthems, but not as entertainment for the congregation. Neither of these functions can be provided for with the typical choir and organ locations. The divided chancel arrangement, a development of monastic churches, is useless for leading congregational singing. If an anthem is sung from the chancel location it cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be construed as being symbolically from the congregation. The tiered choir seated on a platform stage, surmounted by the organ pipes, is, if anything, even worse than the divided chancel choir. While a

platform stage choir can, to a small degree, assist in congregational singing, this location puts the choir on display in such a way that they tend to overshadow the liturgical centers. An anthem sung from this position is directed at the congregation and becomes a performance. In essence, the choir and organ must be removed from the liturgical centers and so located that their function does not destroy the expression of the liturgy.[8]

The choir position favored by Protestants in Europe, and in this country before the onslaught of Romanticism and Revivalism, is the rear balcony. This location has many advantages. The organ pipes, if a pipe organ is used, are out of the way where they do not visually compete with the liturgical centers. The choir is in an ideal position to lead and assist congregational singing. An anthem sung from this position is at least partially from the congregation and does not become a performance for the worshipers to watch. The primary difficulty in placing the choir in a rear balcony is that this position tends to symbolically set apart the choir as not being part of the worshipping congregation; which of course they are and should be. The choir members cannot easily move from this position to the liturgical centers to participate in the activity at these centers. However, in a church which uses fixed pews the rear balcony position is to be preferred to one that conflicts with the liturgical centers.

---

[8] Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., pp. 387-403.

A few Protestant congregations are beginning to place the choir in the midst of the worshipers. In some instances this has been done by putting the robed or unrobed choir in a special section of the congregational seats. In other instances the unrobed choir members are scattered throughout the congregation. In either case this choir location within the congregation is an excellent one for leading the congregation in singing. An anthem sung by a choir seated with the congregation is symbolically from the worshipers. However, in the case of the scattered choir a special anthem by the choir alone is almost impossible: a fact welcomed by many who wish to return the worship service to a corporate activity participated in by all. The main difficulty with these choir locations is the problem of what to do with the organ. This can be a difficult problem with a pipe organ as the pipes must not be placed where they become a primary visual attraction and compete with the liturgical centers. But the benefits to be gained by locating the choir within the congregation are worth the trouble involved in working out the organ problem. This choir location is very desirable as it permits the choir to perform its necessary function in a Protestant worship service while allowing the choir members to be part of the body of worshipers.

IV. SPATIAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE LITURGICAL CENTERS

Historically, the liturgical centers have been spatially arranged in many different ways as outlined in Chapter V of this study. However, few of these arrangements are of much use today unless greatly modified.

The Liturgical Movement has spawned a number of these recent modifications as well as many experiments in liturgical arrangements. Although many of these recent arrangements are but minor variations of older arrangements, some are so significantly different as to be worthy of study. Basically, the new liturgical arrangements can be grouped into three broad categories: (1) the liturgical centers grouped together at one spatial focus; (2) the liturgical centers in one space but with individual spatial focuses; and (3) the liturgical centers in separate spaces or in individual subspaces of a main space. These categories are based on the spatial relationship of each liturgical center to the others within a space or spaces. The variations within these broad categories that have possibilities for Protestant worship are, perhaps, endless. However, a few examples are sufficient to indicate the range of possibilities and the limitations within these categories.

The Liturgical Centers Grouped Together At One Spatial Focus

The liturgical arrangement in which all the liturgical centers are grouped together in one spatial area has become so common in many recent churches that many worshipers are unaware that other arrangements have merit. As often used, this arrangement consists of the liturgical centers grouped together on a low platform at one end of the sanctuary. The worshipers sit in pews and mainly watch the action on the platform. This encourages worship practices which are little better than those dictated by the split chancel or concert stage arrangements. The liturgical centers can, however, be moved en masse to a position more in the midst of the worshipers allowing the congregation more active participation in the services.

The difficulty with grouping all the liturgical centers together is the different requirements of each center. As was shown in section II of this chapter, the altar-table and the baptismal font should be approached by the worshipers; indeed, they should gather completely around these centers. On the other hand, the congregation should not gather completely around the pulpit. So if all the liturgical centers are grouped closely together and placed in the midst of the congregation the symbolism of worshipers gathered together to share in the service will be expressed but functionally the pulpit may not work and any but a very small group will find it impossible to physically gather together around the font or altar-table without the other getting in the way. This central placement of the liturgical centers has been tried many times, usually with fixed pews that, unfortunately, tend to immobilize the worshipers.

An example of a small church which used the central arrangement to advantage is the Episcopal Chapel of St. James the Fisherman built in 1956 in Wellfleet, Massachusetts.[9] As can be seen in the plan of this church (Plate XVI), the altar-table is given the primary visual emphasis by being placed directly at the accent point in the center of the square space. The relatively low ceiling directly above the altar-table is a large skylight crowned by a spire seen from the exterior. Below this skylight a Latin Cross is suspended above the

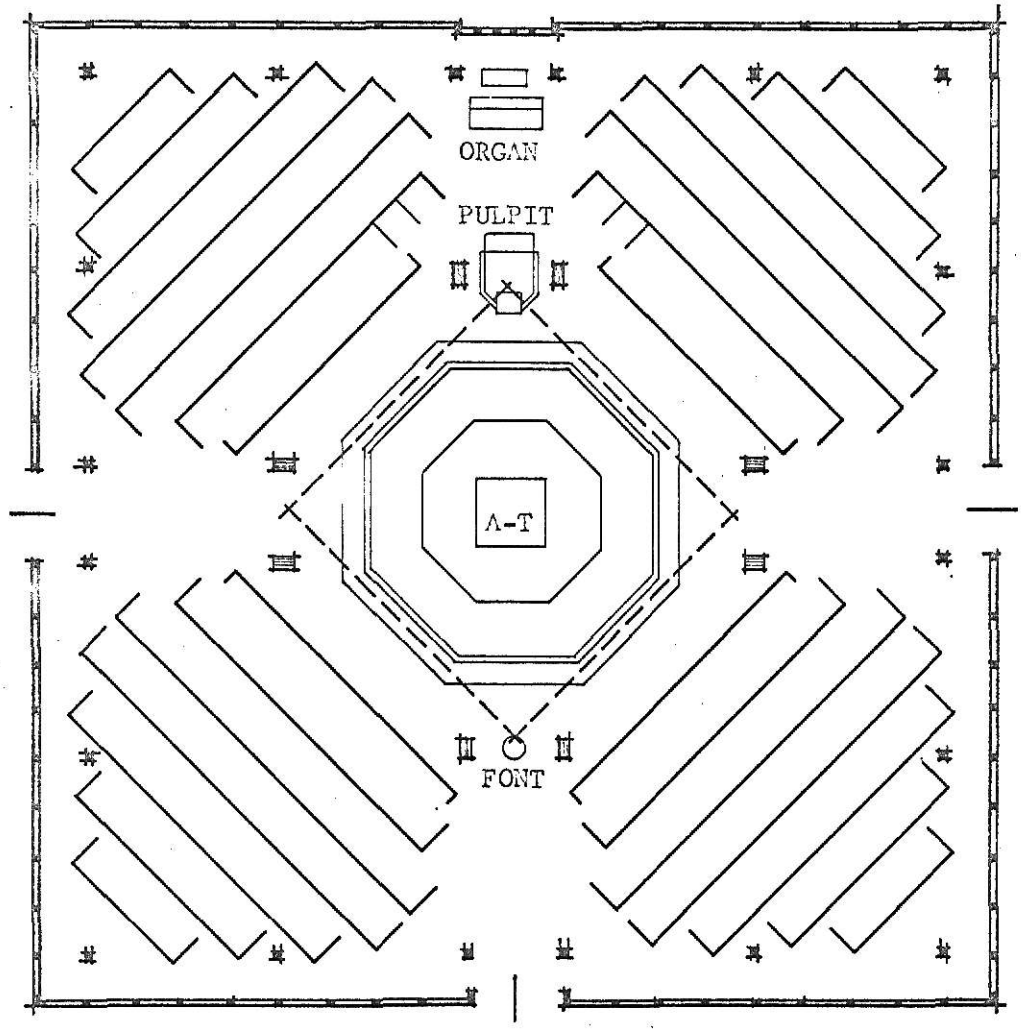
---

[9]Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley, Modern Church Architecture (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n. d.) PP. 163-170.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVI

Floor plan of St. James the Fisherman, an Episcopal Chapel built in 1956 in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, Olav Hammarstrom, architect. An example of the liturgical centers grouped together at one spatial focus. (Christ-Janer, Modern Church Architecture, p. 167.)

PLATE XVI



altar-table. The baptismal font is placed in one aisle close to the altar-table and the pulpit is placed in the opposite aisle also quite close to the altar-table.

The pews are set at a 45-degree angle to the walls forming the space and face the altar-table. The choir is not robed and the members are scattered throughout the congregational seating. Their only task is to lead the singing as no special music is performed by them.

Light enters the sanctuary from strip windows set against the floor and from the central skylight. The effect is one of a dim light everywhere in the space except at the altar-table which receives a much higher level of illumination. The overall character of this lighting enhances the simple wood interior of this chapel.

This church, which seats approximately 300 worshipers, is an excellent example of the central arrangement in which all the liturgical centers are grouped together at the center focus of the space. Two small detail difficulties mar this otherwise symbolically expressive chapel. One difficulty is the rails around the altar-table platform. The other problem is the small, insignificant baptismal font. These difficulties would be easy to correct by discarding the altar-table rails and replacing the baptismal font with one of sufficient size. These changes would enable this small chapel to symbolically express the liturgy in a straightforward and powerful manner.

An example of a church in which the liturgical centers are grouped together in front of the congregation is the Ark, a Reformed church in

Slotervaart, a suburb of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.[10] Although fixed pews are used in this church, the liturgical centers are not placed formally on a platform opposite the entry. Instead, the liturgical centers are informally arranged on a flat floor at the entry position into the sanctuary (Plate XVII). The font is placed so that it is visible within the sanctuary from the entry yet always before the worshipers during services. The altar-table is extended to seat 44 (dotted lines on plan) for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

The sanctuary seats approximately 230 with another 200 seats available in the fellowship area separated from the rear of the sanctuary by a folding partition. With this size congregation the font and altar-table are, unfortunately, invisible from most of the pews. These liturgical centers are clearly visible to the worshipers as they enter the sanctuary but, due to the low placement of these centers on the flat floor, they fail to carry the necessary visual emphasis from the fixed pews. The pulpit, due to its adequate height, does not suffer from this difficulty. Unfortunately, the visual expression of the liturgical centers is marred by the cabinet pipe organ which is placed against the front wall of the sanctuary. Even though this is a small instrument, it visually dominates the liturgical centers and should be relocated. Another problem at the liturgical centers is the metal cross that is placed high up on the front wall of the sanctuary. This cross is too small and insignificant in scale for the size of the

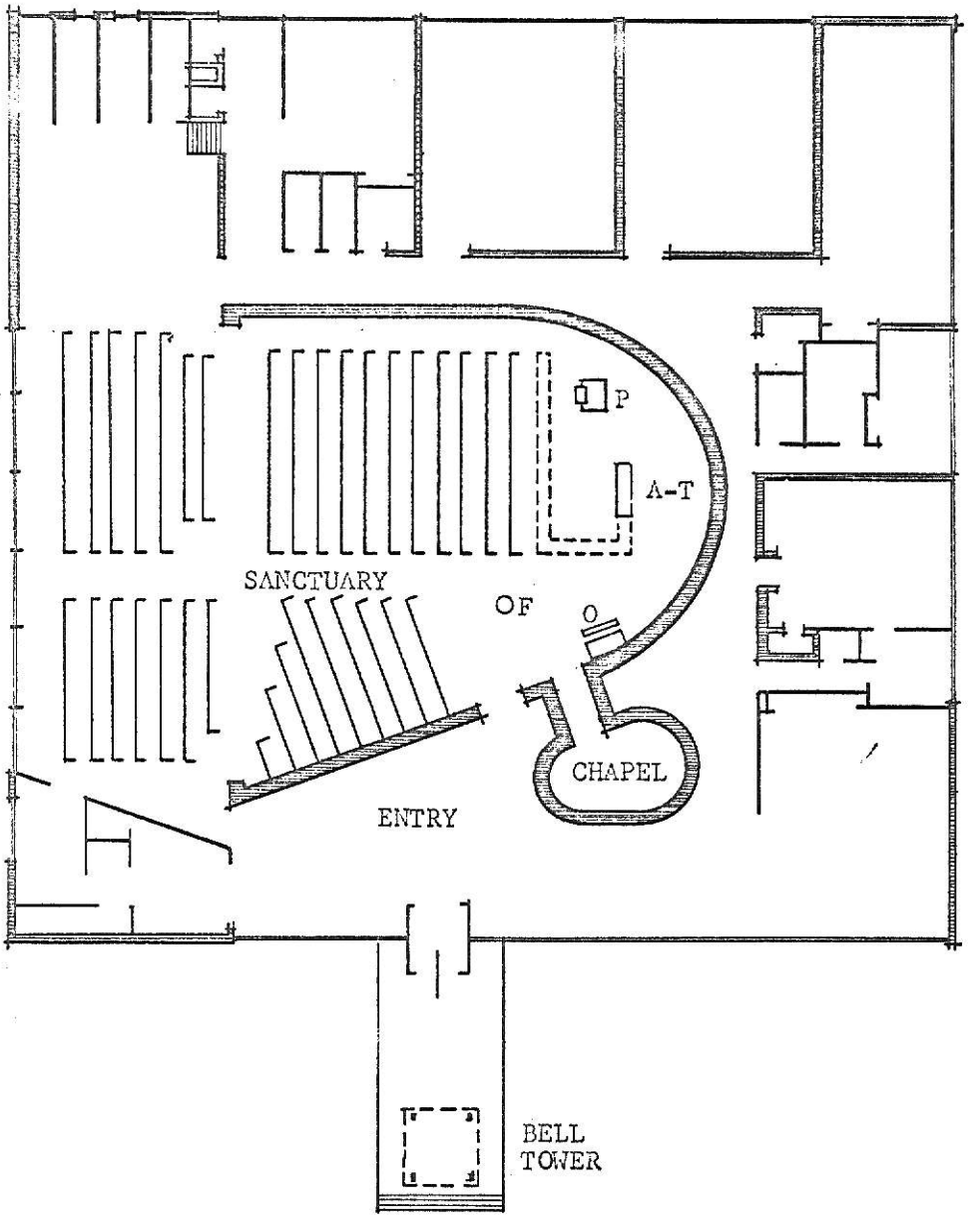
---

[10] Bruggink and Droppers, op. cit., pp. 150-167.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVII

Floor plan of the Ark, a Reformed church in Slotervaart, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, P. Zanstra, architect. An example of the liturgical centers grouped together at one spatial focus. (Bruggink, Christ and Architecture, p. 153.)

PLATE XVII



wall and the space. It appears to be an afterthought and should be replaced by one having the necessary visual weight.

The sanctuary walls are white plaster, the floor terrazzo, and the curved ceiling is wood. This simple space is illuminated by natural light from glass at the upper rear of the sanctuary and from the glass wall of the fellowship area. Flush spot and flood lights set into the ceiling are the only source of artificial light.

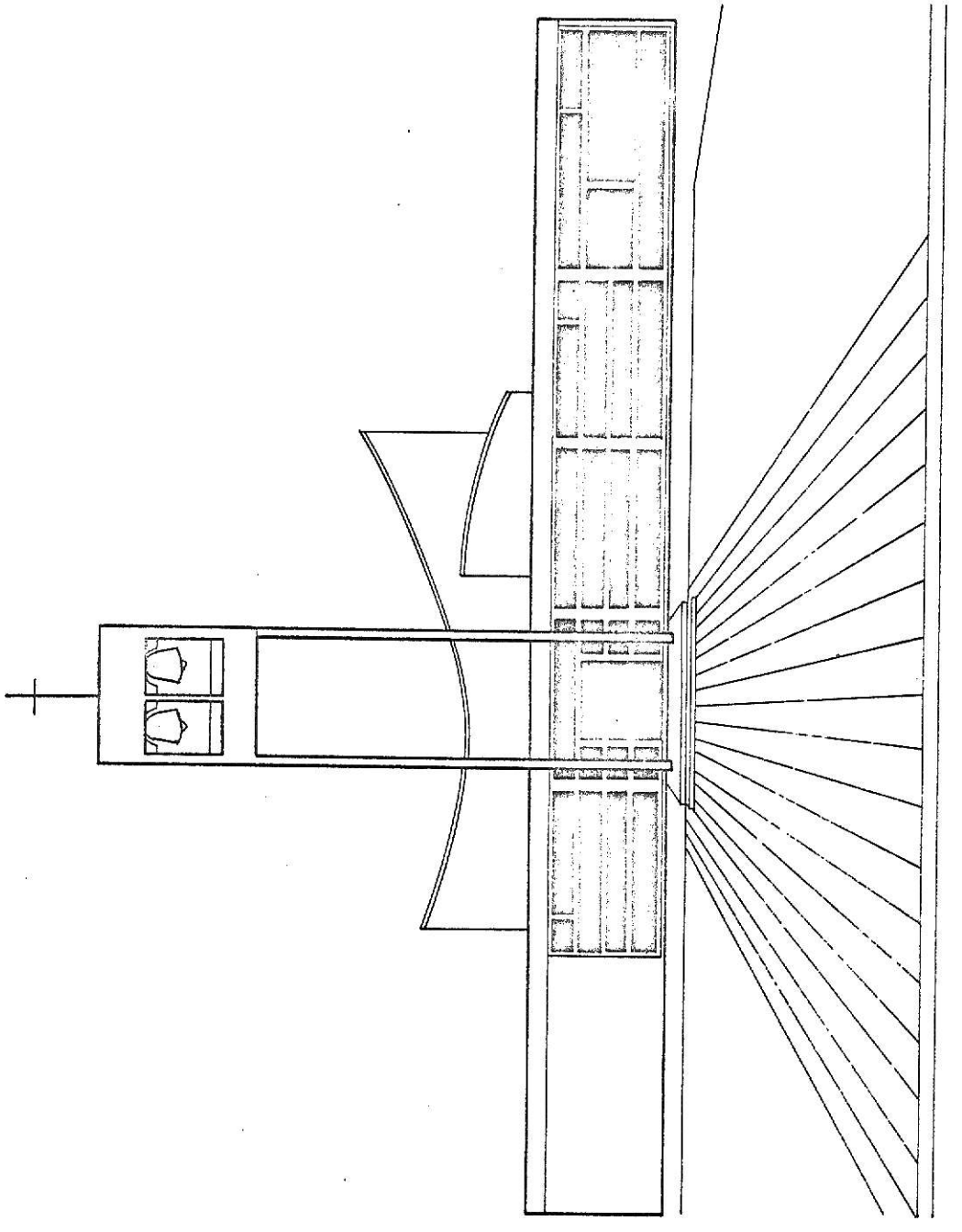
An interesting feature of this church is the small prayer chapel adjacent to the sanctuary. This chapel, which can only be entered from the sanctuary, is a small inclosed space with lighting from above. The sanctuary entry was designed to symbolize the necessity for a relationship to the liturgy before meaningful prayer could take place. The chapel is bare except for a few pews. The intent was to provide an empty prayer space that required the individual person to fill it with prayer. Perhaps the space functions in the way intended but for individual prayer and meditation the concept of an emotional stimulating "mood" space certainly has merit. This prayer chapel seems very lifeless; so much so that the custodian has placed a very large potted plant in front of the pews.

This church, more than most, expresses from the exterior its purpose. The approach to the church is from a large paved terrace which leads up two steps through the light, delicate bell tower to the entry doors (Plate XVIII). The mass of the church expresses its various internal functions. The low, flat roofed area around the sanctuary and prayer chapel, which houses the offices, meeting rooms,

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XVIII

Exterior of the Ark, a Reformed church in Slotervaart, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, P. Zanstra, architect. (Bruggink, Christ and Architecture, p. 151.)

PLATE XVIII



etc., is opened to the exterior with large areas of glass and expresses an open invitation and human scale. The sanctuary and prayer chapel are expressed as solid, enclosed masonry masses projecting upwards through this low, open entry space. The bell tower height acts as an accent for the entry. The total effect is one of great strength and repose without being monumental or withdrawn.

The Liturgical Centers In One Space But With Individual Spatial Focuses

Liturgical arrangements in which the liturgical centers are all placed in one space but separated from each other far enough to allow each to be a spatial focus in itself are becoming increasingly popular in Protestant churches. This type of arrangement has the advantage of allowing complete attention to be focused on an individual liturgical center for the liturgy at this center without the other centers visually intruding upon the action. Unfortunately, this type of arrangement has usually been used with fixed pews which , in addition to immobilizing the worshipers, cannot, obviously, be focused on all the centers at once. This necessitates a lot of turning and looking over the shoulder on the part of the worshipers. However, this could easily be corrected by focusing the pews or chairs on the pulpit and requiring the congregation to get up and move to the altar-table and baptismal font for the liturgy at these centers.

One arrangement of separate liturgical centers in a simple space is the stretched central arrangement. In this arrangement the liturgical centers are arranged along a long axis with sufficient space between centers so that attention can shift to one at a time. The

congregation then sits on each side of this axis facing each other. An example of this arrangement is the Faith United Presbyterian Church in Medford, New Jersey.

The Faith United Presbyterian Church is a small church seating 240 plus 40 in a loft choir.[11] The congregation is grouped on both sides of a long central area containing the altar-table in the center with the pulpit at one end and the font at the other (Plate XIX). The fixed pews are set on a gently sloping floor and the worshipers must look sideways to focus on the font or pulpit. The choir and organ are placed in a balcony or loft above the entry. The only natural light in this windowless sanctuary comes from a long skylight that stretches the length of the liturgical area at the peak of the steeply sloping roof.

The baptismal font is visible from the entry with the altar-table and pulpit also visible beyond it. Thus the font is positioned to meet all the requirements for its symbolism as it is also always in view before the worshipers. The font intself is a well designed pedestal font of adequate size for the scale of the sanctuary and visually holds its own as a liturgical center in the sanctuary. The pulpit also is an effective accent, even though the worshipers must look sideways to see it, because of its adequate size and the large Bible that is visible upon it.

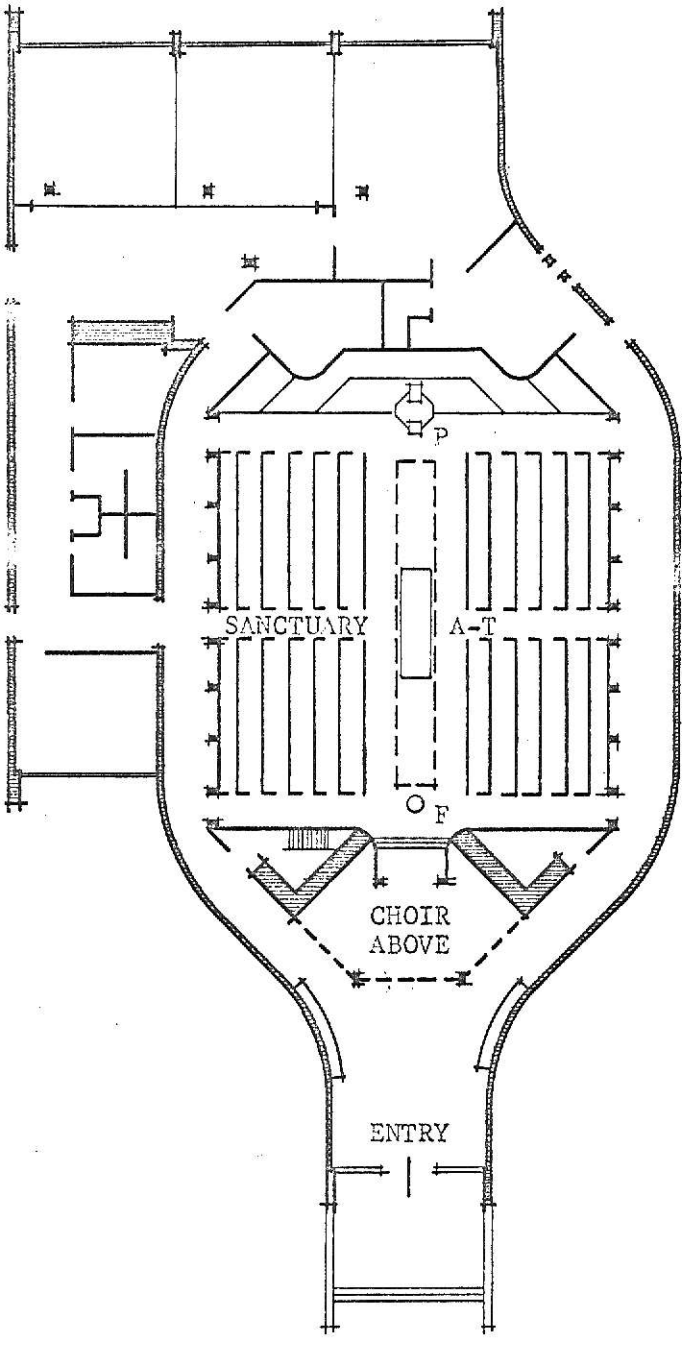
---

[11] "Worship Space in Five New Buildings," Your Church, XIV, No. 2, (March/April 1968), 19-21, 38-41.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XIX

Floor plan of the Faith United Presbyterian Church, Medford, New Jersey, Hassinger and Schwam, architects. An example of the liturgical centers in one space but with individual spatial focuses. ("Worship Space in Five New Buildings," Your Church, XIV, No. 2, p. 19.)

PLATE XIX



The primary spatial focus of this sanctuary space is on the altar-table. This is natural due to its central position in the formally balanced sanctuary. Also the large Celtic Cross suspended above the altar-table from the skylight above provides a strong visual accent for the altar-table. However, all three liturgical centers are well balanced with each other and the symbolic expression is one of a complete and balanced liturgy. This expression of Protestant liturgy is the strongest feature of this small church and is marred only by the fixed pews and sloping floor which immobilize the worshipers and impart a bit of an arena character to the sanctuary.

The stretched central arrangement as used in the Faith United Presbyterian Church is not the only way in which the liturgical centers can be separated in a simple space. Another method of separating the liturgical centers in a simple space is to informally place the centers in the space as independent spatial focuses. This type of arrangement avoids the formal axis of the stretched central arrangement and makes it easier for the worshipers to move to the individual liturgical centers if desired.

The informally arranged liturgical centers with individual spatial focuses in a simple space were effectively used by architect Edward A. Sövik in his design for the Northfield Methodist Church in Northfield, Minnesota.[12] The almost square, flat roofed sanctuary of this church

---

[12] Edward A. Sövik, "A Portfolio of Reflections on The Design of Northfield Methodist Church," Your Church, XIII, No. 5, (September/ October 1967), 16-17, 46-59.

is arranged so that the primary focus of the pews is on the altar-table (Plate XX). The choir is placed in a group of pews that form part of the overall pattern of seating for the worshipers.

The primary liturgical center in the sanctuary is the large wood altar-table which is placed on a large platform three steps above the flat sanctuary floor. The baptismal font is placed in one corner of the sanctuary in front of a window that provides a view of a small enclosed court. Sufficient space is provided around the font for a reasonable number of worshipers to gather at this liturgical center. The pulpit is a small portable lectern that can be placed at various positions around the altar-table platform. This lectern lacks the visual scale necessary to compete with the altar-table and fails to be an expressive symbol of the Word in the sanctuary.

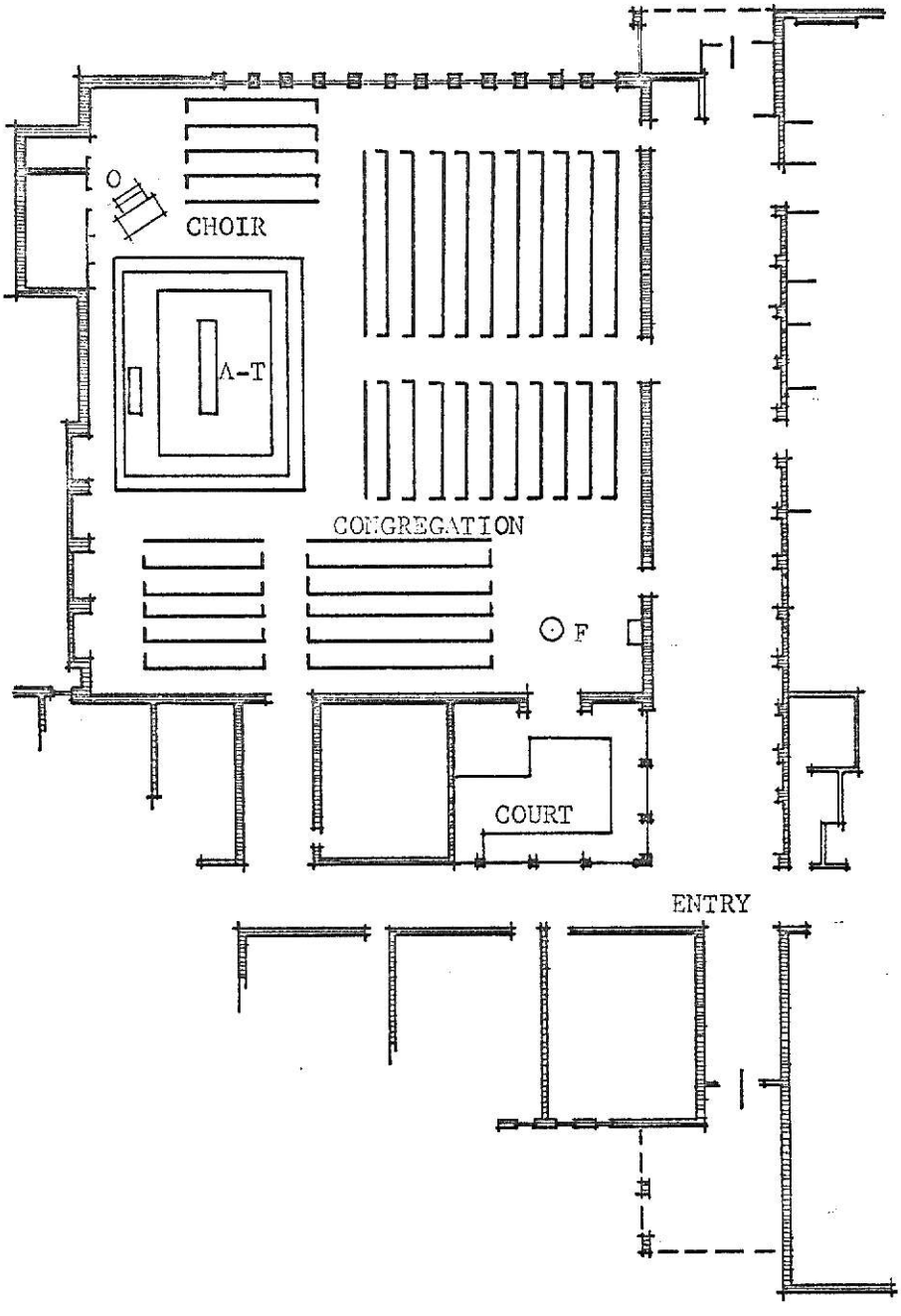
An interesting feature of this church is the use of the cross-symbol. In explaining the thinking behind the planning of the cross for this sanctuary, architect Sövik said that:

> The location of the proposed cross on a standard situated within the body of the congregation is, indeed, a new idea although it has been done elsewhere. It is proposed because of the intent to avoid the sense that the cross is something toward which we direct our adoration or veneration. It is not this, but the symbol of Christ and therefore of His Body, the Church. And we propose to erect it among the people of God, a sort of standard about and under which they gather. And we hope that this will remind the congregation that Christ is indeed, not in front of them, nor apart from them, but among them.
>
> There are three main types of crosses which Christians have used. One is the crucifix which shows a crucified figure on the Latin cross. Protestants usually have used the same Latin cross but without the figure. In both these forms the reference is clearly to Golgotha and the tragic events of Good Friday. Those outside the faith are sometimes amazed that Christians seem to center their attention on the tragic. But

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XX

Partial floor plan of the Northfield Methodist Church, Northfield, Minnesota, Edward A. Sövik, architect. An example of the liturgical centers in one space but with individual spatial focuses. (Sövik, "A Portfolio of Reflections on the Design of Northfield Methodist Church," Your Church, XIII, No. 5, p. 16.)

PLATE XX



> this is not true, in fact, since in our celebrations we treat Good Friday as a tragedy that has its denouement in the great victory of Easter.
>
> Nor is it entirely true in our symbolic heritage, since there is another commonly used cross called the "Greek" cross which does not have the direct association with Good Friday. It is this cross, with its equal arms, which is proposed for the principal symbol in Northfield Methodist.
>
> From what can be learned about church history it is apparent that this was the only symbolic cross used for hundreds of years in the early church. And it has been consistently used by the eastern branch of Christendom throughout its history and frequently in the western church as well.
>
> Its form derives simply from the Greek letter X which is the initial of the Greek word for Christ. It carries a sort of explosive joy in its form, and perhaps because of its relation to compass points, a suggestion of universality. Certainly one can make a connection between this form and the Good Friday events, but its reference is broader, and can therefore suggest not only Good Friday, but Easter as well and the other aspects of our Lord's life. It is, then, a more general symbol, and therefore a better one for a community which does not concentrate exclusively on the tragic.[13]

The Liturgical Centers In Separate Spaces Or In Subspaces Of A Main Space

Although it would be possible to build a Protestant Church with each liturgical center in a separate space completely isolated from the others, this type of church is neither necessary nor probably desirable. Historically, the baptistery has often been a separate space in Christian churches and the Early Church may have used separate rooms of a house for each liturgical activity. But, from the evidence available, it is probable that completely separate spaces for each liturgical activity have seldom if ever been planned for Christian churches.

---

[13] Ibid., pp. 55-57.

There is a great deal of merit in a liturgical arrangement which provides a visual spatial relationship between the liturgical centers. The liturgy at each center is a part of the total worship service and should be symbolically expressed as such. However, the liturgical centers need not all be in one simple space to provide a visual relationship between them. An arrangement of subspaces interpenetrated with a main connecting space can provide the spatial expression of each liturgical center as an entity while still being part of the overall expression.

In modern Protestant churches this type of spatial arrangement has not been provided for all the liturgical centers; possibly because the fixed seating concept is so strong in the minds of those planning new churches. The one liturgical center that, occasionally, has been provided with a strong subspace in Protestant churches has been the altar-table. Particularly in Europe, the liturgical practice of the worshipers moving to the altar-table in a subspace for the Lord's Supper has become, in some areas, quite common. A number of excellent Protestant churches have been built in Europe in recent years using a subspace arrangement for the altar-table.

One interesting church that uses a subspace for the altar-table is the Reformed Church of Stockackerstrasse, Reinach, a village near Basel, Switzerland.[14] This concrete and brick church is a powerful

---

[14] G. E. Kidder Smith, The New Churches of Europe (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964) pp. 274-275.

statement of interpenetrating spaces. In plan (Plate XXI), entry into the church is through the base of the sculptural concrete bell tower leading to a low space under the balcony which wraps around one side and the rear of the sanctuary. The sanctuary seats approximately 400 in moveable chairs on the flat main floor with approximately 100 more seats available in the balcony. This balcony contains the organ and is used by the choir and for overflow seating.

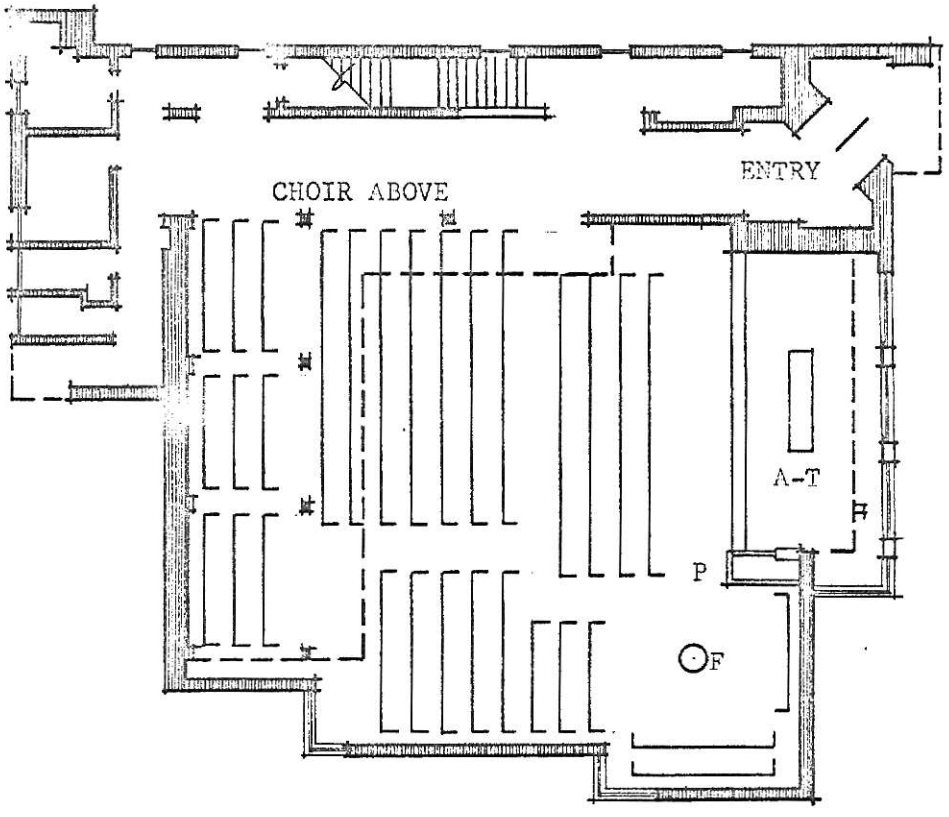
The baptismal font is placed in a partially defined subspace at the front of the sanctuary opposite the entry. The font itself is a strong concrete block standing on the flat brick floor. The pulpit is a concrete box that projects out into the sanctuary space from the brick wall that defines the font subspace and acts as a spatial divider between the font and the altar-table. The altar-table subspace is defined by a concrete wall opposite the pulpit, a brick floor raised two steps above the sanctuary floor, and a dropped overhead light well. The concrete and wood altar-table is centered in this space with a row of chairs placed behind it.

The sanctuary receives natural light in several ways. Corner windows and a few holes punched into the entry wall provide accent light. A high band of windows next to the concrete roof structure wraps around three sides of the sanctuary providing overall illumination as well as giving a floating quality to the roof. The dropped overhead light well in the altar-table subspace floods indirect light over the altar-table. Artificial lighting is provided by rectangular copper light fixtures which are attached to the bottom

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XXI

Floor plan of a Reformed Church off Stockackerstrasse, Reinach, Basel, Switzerland, Ernst Gisel, architect. An example of the liturgical centers in subspaces of a main space. (Smith, The New Churches of Europe, p. 275.)

PLATE XXI



of the concrete roof. This variety of illumination lends emphasis to the variety of interpenetrating spaces in this church.

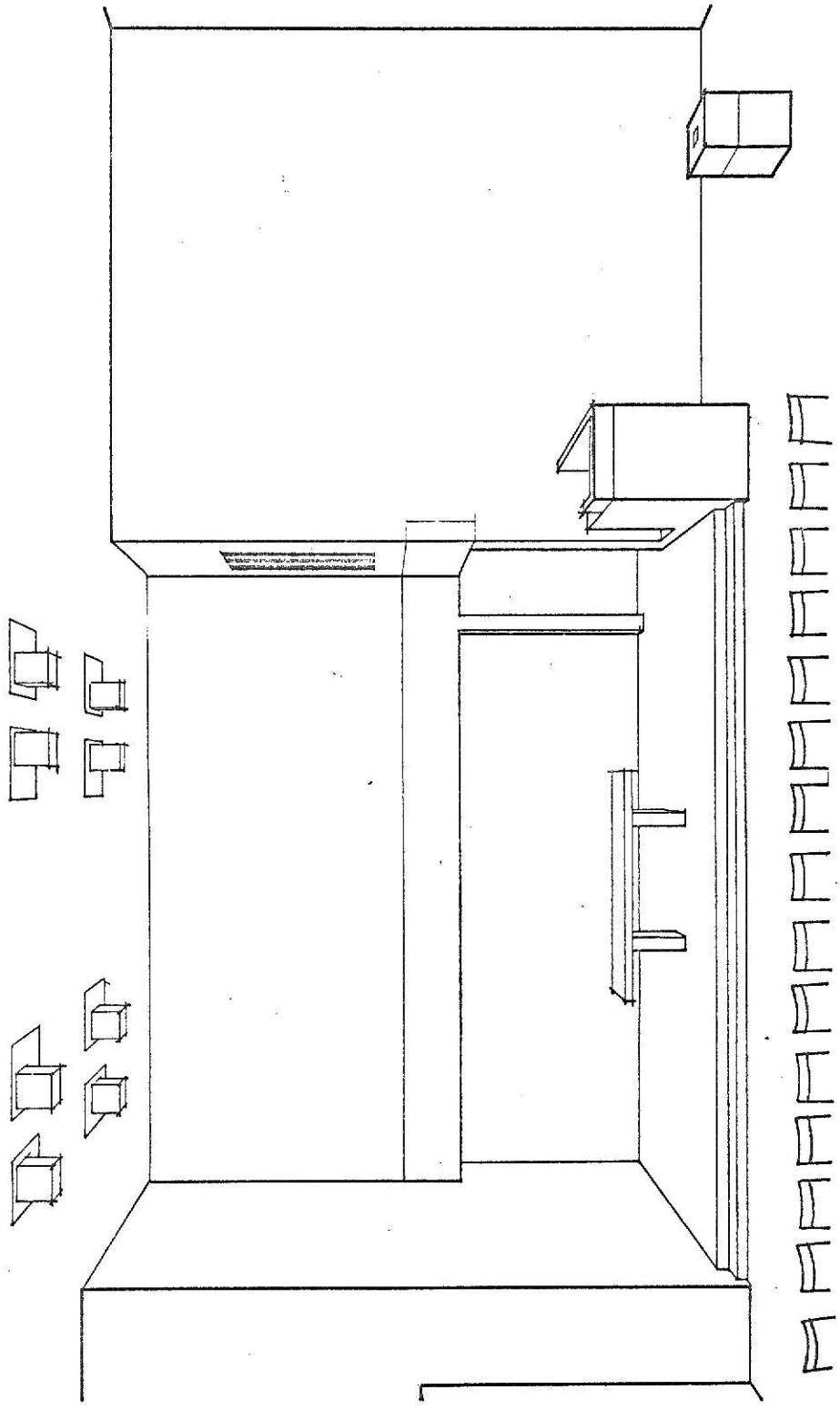
The concrete and brick interior of this church, striking in its simplicity of materials and careful detailing, forms an expressive spatial setting for the liturgy. The liturgical centers are visually strong and well balanced with each other so that none dominates the others (Plate XXII). The altar-table subspace is particularly successful as a subtle definition of an interpenetrating space that sets itself apart while still contributing to the total symbolic expression of the sanctuary. The baptismal font area could have easily been a stronger subspace by dropping the floor a few steps below the sanctuary floor level. But, this church is overall an excellent expression of the symbolism of Protestant worship.

The use of subspaces for each liturgical center would seem to offer the greatest possibilities for the development of a symbolic expression of liturgical practices in which each individual worshiper becomes a contributor to the worship service. If fixed pews can be discarded and less rigid and formal seating provided for the liturgy of the Word, and if the spatial design makes it necessary for the worshipers to move to the altar-table and baptismal font for the liturgy at these centers, then the possibility exists that the worshipers will cease to think of themselves as passive spectators and see themselves as involved in the worship services: which is what Protestant worship is all about.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE XXII

Interior of a Reformed Church off Stockackerstrasse, Reinach, Basel, Switzerland, Ernst Gisel, architect. (Smith, The New Churches of Europe, p. 275.)

PLATE XXII



CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The development of Christian church architecture has paralleled the development and changing theology of the Faith from the early Church to the present time. This architectural development has extended from private homes used for worship services to the great cathedrals that reflected the institutionalism of the Middle Ages to the present searching for a form that expresses the new theological concepts. Protestantism, as a branch of this overall Christian development, has, at times, built churches that expressed the unique Protestant beliefs. At other times Protestantism has built church buildings that neither fit the Protestant liturgy nor expressed the symbolic meaning of Protestant beliefs. There are today many within Protestantism who feel a new reformation may be in the making and welcome, if not demand, such an overhaul. They feel that the Church has once again become too institutional and has lost sight of its primary need to serve in the world. These changing concepts and beliefs within Protestantism today need new church forms to express their symbolism.

Protestant worship is centered around God's Word as the inspired source of knowledge of God's salvation for mankind. This reliance on the Scriptures as read and understood by each individual gives Protestantism its "priesthood of all the believers" character. The central

belief of a personal God and personal salvation is the cornerstone around which a symbolic church form for Protestantism must be built.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of Protestant worship. The liturgy centered around these sacraments and the reading and preaching of the Word is the basis of Protestant worship practices. These liturgical practices are rich in symbolic content that can and must be spatially expressed in the Protestant church form.

Baptism as a symbol of the death and resurrection of Christ is symbolic of a new relationship between the individual and God. It also signifies entrance into the Church and a new relationship with the community of believers. This complex symbolism can be expressed in a baptistery that is a low dark space, a place of water. This baptistery should be related to the church entry in such a way that it always confronts those entering the church. The baptistery should also be visually related to the space where God's Word is read and preached.

The Lord's Supper is a sacramental meal based on Christ's commandment. It is shared by the believers around an altar-table. This altar-table is symbolic of both God's gift of salvation to man and man's giving of himself as acceptance of God's gift. The liturgical space for this symbolic meal can and should be expressed as a dining room where the worshipers can gather together around the altar-table and share the bread and wine.

The reading and preaching of God's Word as the central purpose of Protestant worship services requires a place where teaching can

take place. This must be a space of dialogue, not a rigid space conductive to the issuing of orders. An informal space where teaching, listening, thinking and questioning can take place would be ideal. For if Protestantism has no priests, then the pastor is but a man, a teacher, and the correctness of what he teaches can only come from the Scriptures, not from some superior powers which are his alone. The emphasis must be on the message, not the speaker. Therefore, the space of God's Word must symbolically express the importance and power of the Word. The space needs a focus for the Word, the pulpit, and room for the worshipers to gather in front of this focus. The pulpit space cannot be a dark, gloomy space but must be rather a light and cheerful space that fairly explodes with joy; for such is the message of the Word.

The Protestant liturgical centers can be arranged in many ways for worship. Whatever arrangement is chosen it must meet several criteria if it is to be a symbolic expression of Protestant beliefs and worship practices. The first requirement is that all the liturgical centers must be accessible to the worshipers. None must be set aside as the private preserve of the priests. In Protestant worship the worshipers are their own priests and each individual must participate in the liturgy. Another requirement is that no one liturgical center can overdominate the others. To do so would destroy the balance of the worship service. So the liturgical centers must be so designed that they achieve spatial equality with each other.

Another requirement is that the physical distance between centers must be governed by the number of worshipers to be accommodated at the services. This is necessary to allow for the liturgy at one center without the other centers getting in the way of the worshipers. And finally, each liturgical center must be expressively a part of the whole. This requires that a definite spatial relationship between the centers be established in the design. All of these criteria can probably be best met by a spatial arrangement that places each liturgical conter in its own subspace of the total sanctuary space. X

One of the biggest problems facing Protestantism today is its self-centered institutionalism. This institutionalism is expressed most strongly in this country in the desire for and pride in bigger and bigger congregations with their attendant bigger and bigger church buildings. However, bigness is not necessarily a virtue. In fact, due to the nature of Protestant liturgy a rather small group is necessary if true corporate worship is to be at all possible. No definite size for a congregation can, of course, be set. But when a congregation gets so large that each person cannot get to know all the other members, then true fellowship is obviously impossible. The physical limitations of the liturgy also tend to set a practical limit on the number of individuals that can be accommodated at one worship service. Perhaps 100 people can gather together around the altar-table and feel that they are a corporate entity sharing the sacrament with each other; but 1,000 surely cannot. So if Protestantism is to make worship relevant and meaningful as a corporate sharing in

the liturgy, it must learn to think in terms of and plan for smaller church buildings.

The desire of some Protestants who demand that a church must look like a church is to maintain the Church without change or growth. But the church must change, must become more relevant to today's problems. The monumental symbols of a self-serving institution that have been and too often still are being built by many Protestant congregations fail to express the central purpose of Protestantism. The church buildings built by Protestants must express welcome to all and service for all. In the final analysis the church building is more than a place where people come together to corporately worship. The church building must express the symbolism of the place from which the individual goes forth to serve in the world. For the going forth in service is the ultimate reason for the Church.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Bruggink, Donald J., and Carl H. Droppers. Christ and Architecture. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965.

Christ-Janer, Albert, and Mary Mix Foley. Modern Church Architecture. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n. d.

Collingwood, R. G. The Principles of Art. New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Book Edition, 1958.

Dahinden, Justus. New Trends in Church Architecture. New York: Universe Books, Inc., 1967.

DeWolf, L. Harold. Present Trends in Christian Thought. New York: Association Press, Reflection Book Edition, 1960.

Dunstan, J. Leslie (ed.). Protestantism. New York: George Brazillier, 1961.

Fletcher, Sir Banister. A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Seventeenth Edition, 1961.

Frey, Edward S. This Before Architecture. Jenkintown, Pennsylvania: The Religious Publishing Company, 1963.

Halverson, Marvin P. "Symbology in Religion," Symbology, Elwood Whitney, editor. New York 22: Hastings House, 1960. Pp.

Hamlin, Talbot. Architecture Through the Ages. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953.

Hammond, Peter. Liturgy and Architecture. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960.

Meyer, Paul. Architects on Architecture - New Directions in America. New York: Walker and Company, 1966.

Incorporated Church Building Society. Fifty Modern Churches. London: Incorporated Church Building Society, 1947.

Langer, Susanne K. Philosophical Sketches. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1962.

Maguire, Robert, and Keith Murray. Modern Churches of the World. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., Inc., 1965.

Richardson, Cyril C. "The Foundations of Christian Symbolism," Religious Symbolism, F. Ernest Johnson, editor. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1955. Pp. 1-21.

Robinson, John A. T. Honest to God. Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1963.

Smith, G. E. Kidder. The New Churches of Europe. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

Thiry, Paul, Richard M. Bennett and Henry L. Kamphoefner. Churches & Temples. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1953.

Tillich, Paul J. "Contemporary Protestant Architecture," Modern Church Architecture, Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley, editors. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, n. d. Pp. 122-125.

_____. "Theology and Symbolism," Religious Symbolism, F. Ernest Johnson, editor. New York and London: Harper & Brothers, 1955. Pp. 107-116.

White, James F. Protestant Worship and Church Architecture. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Wright, Frank Lloyd. A Testament. New York: Bramhall House, 1957.

Zevi, Bruno. Architecture as Space. New York: Horizon Press, 1957.

B. PERIODICALS

"A Brilliant Canopy for Worship," Architectural Forum, CVIII, No. 4 (April, 1958), pp. 104-107.

Barry, David W. "Aesthetic Responsibilities of the Church," Your Church, VIII, No. 3 (July/August/September, 1962), pp. 20-21.

Clark, William S. "The Architectural Captivity of the Church," Your Church, XI, No. 5 (September/October, 1965), pp. 36-37, 56-62.

Cooley, William M. "The Historical Background of Church Building," Your Church, VIII, No. 4 (October/November/December, 1962), pp. 24-27, 42-43.

Cox, Harvey. "Revolt in the Church," Playboy, XIV, No. 1 (January, 1967), pp. 129, 140, 206, 209-211.

Frey, Edwards. "The Glory for Which We Build," Your Church, VIII, No. 2 (April/May/June, 1962), pp. 24-25, 40-47, and VIII, No. 4 (October/November/December, 1962), pp. 34-35, 60-64.

Golding, John T. "The Church Remembers Her Future-Liturgical Symbols for Today and Tomorrow," Faith and Form, I (April, 1968), pp. 20-21, 29-30.

Hamilton, William. "The Death of God," Playboy, XIII, No. 8 (August, 1966), pp. 79, 84, 137-139.

Sövik, Edward A. "A Portfolio of Reflections on the Design of Northfield Methodist Church," Your Church, XIII, No. 5 (September/October, 1967), pp. 16-17, 46-59.

_____. "Review-1967 International Congress on Religion, Architecture and the Visual Arts," Faith and Form, I (January, 1968), pp. 20-22, 29-30.

Tillich, Paul J. "I Decided to Build," United Church Herald, VIII, No. 12 (June, 1965), pp. 16-18.

"Worship Space in Five New Buildings," Your Church, XIV, No. 2 (March/April 1968), pp. 18-29, 38-56.

AN ANALYSIS OF SYMBOLIC SPATIAL EXPRESSION IN PROTESTANT CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

by

EUGENE GEORGE WENDT

B. Arch., Kansas State University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

Department of Architecture

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1970

The development of Christian church architecture has paralleled the development and changing theology of the Faith from the early Church to the present time. This architectural development has extended from private homes used for worship services to the great cathedrals that reflected the institutionalism of the Middle Ages to the present searching for a form that expresses the new theological concepts. Protestantism, as a branch of this overall Christian development, has, at times, built churches that expressed the unique Protestant beliefs. At other times Protestantism has built church buildings that neither fit the Protestant liturgy nor expressed the symbolic meaning of Protestant beliefs. There are today many within Protestantism who feel a new reformation may be in the making and welcome, if not demand, such an overhaul. They feel that the church has once again become too institutional and has lost sight of its primary need to serve in the world. These changing concepts and beliefs within Protestantism today need new church forms to express their symbolism.

Protestant worship is centered around God's Word as the inspired source of knowledge of God's salvation for mankind. This reliance on the Scriptures as read and understood by each individual gives Protestantism its "priesthood of all the believers" character. The central belief of a personal God and personal salvation is the cornerstone around which a symbolic church form for Protestantism must be built.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of Protestant worship. The liturgy centered around these sacraments and the reading

and preaching of the Word is the basis of Protestant worship practices. These liturgical practices are rich in symbolic content that can and must be spatially expressed in the Protestant church form.

The Protestant liturgical centers can be arranged in many ways for worship. Whatever arrangement is chosen it must meet several criteria if it is to be a symbolic expression of Protestant beliefs and worship practices. The first requirement is that all the liturgical centers must be accessible to the worshippers. None must be set aside as the private preserve of the priests. In Protestant worship the worshippers are their own priests and each individual must participate in the liturgy. Another requirement is that no one liturgical center can overdominate the others. To do so would destroy the balance of the worship service. So the liturgical centers must be so designed that they achieve spatial equality with each other. Another requirement is that the physical distance between centers must be governed by the number of worshippers to be accommodated at the services. This is necessary to allow for the liturgy at one center without the other centers getting in the way of the worshippers. And finally, each liturgical center must be expressively a part of the whole. This requires that a definite spatial relationship between the centers be established in the design. All of these criteria can probably be best met by a spatial arrangement that places each liturgical center in its own subspace of the total sanctuary space.

The desire of some Protestants who demand that a church look like a church is to maintain the Church without change or growth. But the

church must change, must become more relevant to today's problems. The monumental symbols of a self-serving institution that have been and too often still are being built by many Protestant congregations fail to express the central purpose of Protestantism. The church buildings built by Protestants must express welcome to all and service for all. In the final analysis the church building is more than a place where people come together to corporately worship. The church building must express the symbolism of the place from which the individual goes forth to serve in the world. For the going forth in service is the ultimate reason for the Church.