

“Camping out”:

Seizing the opportunity for liturgical renewal

Somewhere near you, there is likely to be an historic home or country house where a past era is lovingly preserved, and, moreover, is brought to life with the help of people in period costume going about their daily tasks. Sometimes these flesh-and-blood historical characters will even enter into dialogue with the visitor, says Richard Giles, albeit in archaic language to which there is no easy response.

We enjoy these fascinating insights into the past (they might even help the kids' history grades), but we never

for one moment mistake them for places in which we would want to live. They are lovely to look at, but life without central heating and modern plumbing doesn't bear thinking about.

This common-sense conclusion, however, does not seem to apply within mainstream Christian churches today. There are vast numbers of 'churchgoers' who regard church as they would an historic house of which they were card-carrying supporters. They delight in the antiquity of their worship space, in its reliable immutability, and in the engaging way in which characters in period costume will occasionally emerge from behind a screen and address them, also, in archaic language.

Such worship spaces, like those country houses, will have their Sunday devotees, but they are no fit places for people seeking to be formed in the pattern of Christ by word and sacrament and by interaction

with a vibrant community of faith. In both environment and language such spaces severely handicap and indeed dis-able the worshipper, for they replace reality with nostalgia.

traveling light through this world, in the footsteps of he who had nowhere to lay his head. It is also so unlike us, in historical terms. In all previous generations of the Church's story, the fixtures and fittings of

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our worship spaces were the first things to go whenever the Holy Spirit breezed in with a fresh unfolding of the vision of God's glory. Earlier still, we enjoyed 300 years without any furniture at all,

The design and layout of the rooms in which the people of God assemble, and the movement and language in which they engage with God and one another, are not effete questions of aesthetics but vital issues which cut to the chase of the Christian religious experience. Go to any well-established church community and you will find that one issue, and one only, will set the bees a buzzing: the rearrangement of the furniture. Beside this issue, the most outrageous views on theology or social ethics will pale into insignificance.

This is a most puzzling phenomenon. Fixation with furniture strikes at the heart of the New Testament emphasis on

nor permanent rooms in which to rearrange it. What has happened to us that we should be so obsessed with screwing down furniture, as if maintaining the status quo was the most important Christian verity?

An unholy alliance between the preservationist lobby and our own nesting instincts is probably to blame. There are plenty of people out there ready to tell us that the Church's vocation is to maintain shrines to a forgotten religious experience, and plenty more people in here, ready to seize on the excuse to mothball our sanctuaries and stultify our patterns of

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by David Harrison

After being ordained in the spring of 1999, I was assigned to a curacy in a small town. For our family, this meant relocating from Toronto. It also meant finding accommodation for the two years we would be in our new community.

We rented a small post-war bungalow. Although our Toronto house was not large, our new house was even smaller. Cherished items were stored away. While we had always enjoyed entertaining friends for a meal, now there was no dining room, making this form of hospitality impossible. Virtually all of our life happened on one floor, which was an advantage for our one-year-old twin girls as they toddled around. We worked in a make-shift office space carved out of a damp, cold, unfinished basement. The living room was the centre of almost everything – piano, play, hospitality, relaxation. There was no place where the four of us could sit around a table for a family meal. When we were home, we were never more than 20 feet from one another.

Two years later, we moved into the rectory where we continue to live. And there was space! – although certainly not anything like the 3500-square-foot monster homes a few blocks away. After two years of being cramped and making do suddenly we had space: space to entertain; space to sit around a table as a family; space to be in different parts of the house without intruding on one another. Dedicated office space. I vividly remember the first night in our new home, standing in the kitchen, and realizing that there were two paths I

could take to get to the stair leading to the second floor.

Both houses, which became our homes, shaped us. They shaped our family rituals – how we ate, how we offered hospitality, how we worked, how we played, how we interacted, how we moved.

In the same way, our houses of worship shape our liturgical life. In this issue of *Liturgy Canada*, we explore the ways in which architecture shapes liturgy, and how liturgy, if it is freed from the constraints of inherited architecture, can fashion fresh approaches to liturgical space. **Richard Giles** is known for his creative refashioning of liturgy and space, described and defended in his books *Repitching the Tent* and *Creating Uncommon Worship* (both of which are reviewed in this issue). Here we will look at his idea of “camping out” as an approach to refashioning architecture and liturgy.

As we explore liturgy and architecture in this issue, we also hear from architect **Elizabeth Davidson**, who has developed a particular specialty in designing parish space. (Both John Wilton and I, of the *Liturgy Canada* Editorial Board, have had the pleasure of working with Elizabeth in the design of new spaces in the parishes in which we serve.) In her article, Elizabeth relates her experience to three foundational principals of architecture, and invites us to consider not just liturgical space but the entire “household” of parish space and how it is used.

We also include two case studies. East London Anglican Ministries (ELAM) is an

amalgamation of different parishes which have fashioned new space from commercial space. Their story is told here by **Sandra Coulson**. And the story of the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury, told here by **Elizabeth Nelson** and **John Hill**, deals with what Richard Giles identifies as the trickiest of all questions when it comes to liturgical space: pews! Their story is one of careful, successful change.

It is our hope that this issue will whet your appetite – not only to think about liturgy and architecture but also to attend a special June conference being organized by the Trinity College Divinity Alumni and *Liturgy Canada*. Richard Giles will be the keynote speaker, and his ideas promise to be compelling and challenging. The details of the conference (June 26 to 28, 2006 at Trinity College, Toronto) are in the brochure included with this issue. We look forward to seeing you there!

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"Camping out"

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worship. So what is to be done?

Firstly we need to disengage, to stand back, from our buildings and from what we do in them, in order to see them for the first time. The classic means of achieving this is the parish weekend away from home with as many of our core community as we can muster. The liberation experienced in such events has to be seen to be believed. Perhaps using an outside voice to widen horizons and to focus on essentials, a faith community finds itself able quite naturally to think theologically and to begin at the beginning. On Sunday, away from home, the community is also free to make eucharist as never before, dreaming new dreams of what liturgy can become. People may go away to parish weekends clutching bibles and prayer books, but they arrive back at their church building armed with screwdrivers and singing new songs not found in the hymnal.

Secondly we need to understand who we are. Not only do we have preservationists telling us we are merely caretakers and moralists, that we are guardians of tablets of stone, but we are also prey to all kinds of pressures from within the Church narrowing our vision and sapping our hope. Central to these constraints is the weight of the building with which we have come to be associated, and which we have allowed to become the core of our identity. Rediscovering that we are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, ambassadors of Christ, and fellow pilgrims with the saints of God, puts the building in perspective once again. The building is the place where we have, for the moment, rested the altar of God as we move through uncertain

territory. It is the room where, for the moment, we are free, in sorrow and in joy, to be ourselves before God.

Thirdly we need to recognize the historic ambivalence felt by Christians for our buildings, our love-hate relationship with them. The Christian Church has littered the surface of the planet with incredible architectural masterpieces, the pride and joy of humankind. We adore our liturgical nests, and burrow ever more deeply into them, snug and safe. At the same time we know, deep down, that church buildings are slightly naughty things, in which we may never put our trust. They can be destroyed overnight; they are a spiritual snare and delusion; they entomb us. We can never, in our right mind, allow such transient things to be confused with the real McCoy. The Church is more than a church building.

Let the building we occupy therefore be built and reshaped around us, around

a community's worship space flows from the heart of its life. It is simply being itself.

A good way for a community of faith to begin this process is to move for a temporary period out of the worship space (the traditional sanctuary) into an alternative space – perhaps the parish hall – which allows flexibility of layout and liturgical movement. Sometimes such a relocation is forced upon a church by the failure of a heating system or by repair work, or it is embraced for a liturgical season, but if we don't have a reason, let us invent one. This experience of 'camping out' has proved a transformative one for countless faith communities.

Despite the absence of familiar things and treasured architecture, 'camping out' liturgically brings with it a discovery of the true nature of the community itself, no longer dependent on a particular stage setting, and of the energy released among its members in creating a new home for

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our theology. The Anglican parish of St. Gregory of Nyssa in San Francisco is the most notable example of this process in North America. It has created a new worship space unlike any church building you have ever seen, simply because it was built to clothe the congregation's particular pattern of worship. It is a building designed outwards from the heart of the worshipping community's liturgical life.

Even when we don't have the privilege of a new start, the process is the same. Begin with who we are as a community of faith, and what we want to be, and how we wish to express the essential nature of our being. The fact that we have to do the reshaping in a building given to us by past generations simply makes it more fun. The Jesuit community at St. Beuno's in North Wales has achieved this reshaping inexpensively but powerfully by the simple expedient of rigging up large sheets of sail cloth under the rafters of their Victorian chapel. The effect has been to create a tent – a place transitory and temporary – in a building of solidity and permanence. That's what a retreat centre is for all who pass through it, so once again the design of

themselves, however temporary. The impact on the liturgy itself can be enormous, and after such an experience the traditionalists have an awfully hard time putting the toothpaste back in the tube.

When a faith community 'camps out' it may of course simply grit its teeth and reproduce as closely as possible the 'real church' it has temporarily vacated, or it may seize with both hands this opportunity for liturgical renewal. If so, what issues can be addressed?

Firstly, the seating of the assembly can be transformed, moving the people of God from passive audience mode into a configuration indicative of participation and shared ministry. Seating can be arranged on three sides of a central platform, or in a half circle, or in two blocks facing one another across a central liturgical axis. However we arrange things, the members of the congregation will, perhaps for the first time in their lives, look as if they are in relationship with one another. Furthermore, the number of seats can be adjusted to fit the size of the assembly; no longer is a congregation scattered across acres of half-empty pews, but instead members are

Now it's your turn

If you have been touched, stimulated, informed, angered, inspired, confused or otherwise affected by the issues raised in this issue, we would love to help you share your work with others. Your responses are most welcome!

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seated close to one another, even jammed in tight (what a shock!). Once we have rearranged the seating in such a way, the 'lurkers in the back row' have to join the family (or find a new church), because there is no back row more than a short distance from the liturgical action.

Secondly, liturgical movement is made possible, in which we rediscover our ancient heritage as spiritual nomads, wanderers in the desert, God's pilgrim people who, by the nature of their vocation, never quite arrive. We are not talking here, of course, of watching processions, but of the whole people of God getting up from their seats and moving as a body between font, ambo, and table. If there is no space to do this in a single room, use two or three. Movement not only enlivens the liturgy and stirs our collective memory, it is an embodiment of a theology which values

as and when required to help the assembly reach its full potential.

Fourthly, when we 'camp out' we can the more easily articulate our theology. The yawning gap between theological theory and liturgical practice needs to be closed, and urgently, if we are to have any credibility before those who are seeking God among us.

We can take two examples: Baptismal Covenant and the Priesthood of the Holy Community. The 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* of the Episcopal Church was a ground-breaking liturgical resource notable chiefly for its emphasis on the Baptismal Covenant. But visit the average Episcopal church 25 years later and you will be hard put to find the font, let alone stand around it at the Sunday assembly, there to confess sins or affirm faith as we recall our baptismal vocation.

Each faith community will know how best to make 'camping out' happen. Whether in another building or our own, whether at a retreat centre or at home, our task is to release ourselves from bondage to the past, and create spaces which reflect and hone our identity, and worship which transforms and energizes the people of God. In these ways may we embrace the present moment in which God's eternal glory is revealed.

The Very Reverend Richard Giles is Episcopal Dean of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He has degrees in both town planning and theology, and served in a number of parishes in the United Kingdom before becoming Canon Theologian in the Diocese of Wakefield. A leading authority on the design of liturgical space and the re-

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the questions as much as the answers, and affirms that in the seeking and yearning is the finding and being found.

Thirdly, in 'camping out' we help reclaim the liturgy for the assembly. In being a little more relaxed and informal, we begin to understand the liturgy as more akin to sharing stories 'round a camp fire than to giving after-dinner speeches at a state banquet. Although we shall maintain, as before, an honoured ritual, it will be one with less hierarchical distinctions, less standing on ceremony or pomposity. Because the assembly is seated in a configuration gathered around the liturgical 'hearth' it is all the more natural for its members to step forward and play their part without fuss or undue ceremony. This arrangement is particularly significant in how the assembly makes music. Let the singers and musicians be seated clearly as part of the assembly, not seated (nor distinctively robed) in a special compound from which they perform for the rest of us, but dispersed among us, coming forward

When in the first Letter of Peter we read that the body of believers is called 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation' (1 Pet 2:9) we note that the writer addresses not the individual but the community. At every liturgy, therefore, let us find ways of expressing visibly and powerfully this shared priesthood, of which the ordained presider is the interpreter and articulator. At Philadelphia Cathedral, the presider's stole is used in a similar way to the talking stick of Native American communities. Anyone addressing the assembly – reader, cantor, preacher, intercessor – first receives the stole from the presider as a sign of shared authority. At the altar table, the whole assembly is invited to adopt the orans posture of prayer (usually associated with the priest alone) to proclaim that the Eucharistic prayer is the offering of all God's priestly people. At Communion, all the faithful are invited (having received the bread) to come themselves to the altar table, there to take a cup into their own hands.

Weaving a vision together

It's an Anglican church so unusual in its design that one bishop visiting from overseas was prompted to ask, "Is it Anglican?"

Sandra Coulson writes that, while it is indeed Anglican, the worship space at one of the newest Anglican churches in Canada took shape based on the wishes of parishioners who undertook much study and thought about liturgy before deciding what they wanted their new building to look like.



East London Anglican Ministries (ELAM) was formed from the amalgamation of four smaller churches in London, Ontario in the Diocese of Huron: St. Barnabas's, St. Matthew's, Resurrection, and St. Timothy's—St. David's. The process of amalgamation started in 1996 and required extensive work by members in envisioning a larger and more active faith community, managing the change, selling old buildings, and transitioning to new clergy—all the while keeping the faith. Although the support of clergy was important, the process was largely led by the lay people of the parishes. The work culminated in the opening of the new church facility in September 2002.

The visioning process was summarized in a report titled "Weaving a Vision Together" and its second-part follow-up. The groundwork laid during this visioning stage was critical to the eventual design of the entire church facility, including

its worship space. For architects Richard Hammond and Alison Hannay of Cornerstone Architecture in London, "Weaving a Vision Together" was crucial to understanding the dreams for ELAM.

"We start [with a new client] with that big question: 'Why are you doing this?'" Hammond explained. "What I really appreciated about ELAM was the 'Weaving a Vision Together' documents that [members] took the time to produce. They didn't tell us how to design a building, but they really helped us understand why [they] were doing this." Cornerstone's approach suited ELAM well because members were determined to develop their ministries and programs first and then design a building around them.

"Frankly, it's the type of group we like to work with because there's no pre-conceived notion of what it's going to look like," Hannay said. "I don't think any one who worked on it had thought this was going to be the outcome, but it makes complete sense to them that this is the out-

come, having gone through the process."

For worship matters, the visioning was helped immensely by the work of a priest in the Diocese of Huron who had done a master's degree in liturgical styles. Early in the amalgamation process, the Rev. Jay Koyle volunteered his services to help ELAM members shape their liturgical ideas. Koyle ran a four-week program in which he shared his knowledge of liturgical history, presented floor plans of churches throughout the ages, and showed videos of worship services in modern churches. His program opened the eyes of ELAM members to a wide range of possibilities.

This visioning work seemed slow-going for some members of the congregation who wanted to roll up their sleeves and get to work right away. But Hammond, among others, encouraged the process. "Some people get uncomfortable with the whole touchy-feely end of the spectrum: How should this feel? What does it mean? But obviously when you're talking about worship and spiritual issues, if it isn't important in this case, I don't know when it gets talked about."

Jack Baskey, chairperson of ELAM's building committee, also found the ideas generated at this stage helpful as a starting point for design. "Everybody had their wish lists of what they wanted and they put it all together and said, 'OK, here's what we would like to have.' And then we sat down and said, 'What can we afford and what's really practical?'"

In 2000, ELAM purchased a 720-square-metre (8000-square-foot) commercial building with offices and a warehouse with the intention of converting it into a church. The expectation was that the building would accommodate the entire church, but it soon became apparent to the architects that it would be a difficult fit and they proposed a 360-square-metre (4000-square-foot) addition.

Hannay said the existing building "behaved better" as space for offices, meeting rooms, and a parish hall, but it didn't have the characteristics desired by members for a worship space. So the decision was made to use the addition for worship. Consideration was given to putting the addition on the back of the building, where most of the property's empty land was. Ultimately, however, it was placed at the front. "The decision was made to put it out front almost as a sign that something new was

going on here,” Hannay said.

Fortuitously, both partners in Cornerstone are Anglicans, attending other churches in London. As well, they had previously designed churches for other denominations. So they brought a wealth of personal and professional knowledge to the ELAM project. “What I respect about Anglicanism is that it isn’t really doctrinaire,” Hammond said. He also cited as an inspiration Richard Giles’s book *Re-Pitching the Tent*, in which Giles writes about rethinking church spaces. “It really opens people’s minds to what’s possible,” Hammond said.

He and Hannay found room to explore different patterns of worship than those used by most Anglican churches in the area. “I don’t know if we came at it with any desire to blow apart all the traditions but to take our cues from where [ELAM members] were at,” Hannay said.

During design and construction, the work of ELAM’s building committee was supplemented by input from the entire congregation and from groups most likely to have an interest in specific areas of the building. “What I found really beneficial when we had something come up was to get a night and sit down with the people involved and see what they really needed,” Basky said. “We wanted people to be supportive of it, so we wanted to have their opinions.” Decisions related to the worship space were sometimes taken to the entire congregation and sometimes to the music and worship committee.

Tours were organized of other new churches in London. This was an opportunity not only to get ideas but also to see whether some theories worked well in practice. For instance, some members had advocated for theatre-style seating to allow for better sight lines. However, once members saw the auditorium-style setup of one church, they realized it wouldn’t be conducive to Anglican worship. Ultimately, a gently sloped floor was incorporated into ELAM’s sanctuary.

The use of the term “sanctuary” to describe the entire worship space is unusual among Anglicans. The name East London Anglican Ministries itself works as an umbrella over all activities and as a reminder that the vision called for a program- and ministry-oriented church. But recognizing the centrality of worship among church ac-

tivities, the worship space was given its own name – the Sanctuary of the Ascension. For Anglicans, “church” is usually the term applied to the worship space. However, members of ELAM argued that in popular language, “church” has come to apply to an entire building. And yet during amalgamation, it was essential for ELAM to remember that “church” is also, and more importantly, the people. So it was felt another word was needed to describe the worship space. “Worship space” itself sounded rather blandly functional. “Sacred worship space” was better but wordy. “Chapel” usually refers to a small facility, which this was not. “Sanctuary” seemed to be the best description.

Hannay credits the music and worship committee for the direction the sanctuary design took. “They drove the ideas around the worship space and how it was going to be configured,” she said. “There was a desire within that group to be able to see each other during worship and that’s why we began to develop in the round rather than the long aisle.”

Congregational seating is arranged on three sides of a central area where the altar sits; the choir sits on the fourth side. With that layout, almost everyone in the 300-seat sanctuary is visible to everyone else. Members of the music and worship committee today continue to identify the ability to see the faces of others as one of their favourite features of the sanctuary. “I think with the open concept you can see everybody,” said Jean Lightfoot, who is also a member of the choir.

“It’s an acknowledgement that communion is community,” Hannay said. “They have the same root word. I think way religion has evolved in the last 20 to 30 years, those are things that have become more important to people when they come to church.”

The layout changes other aspects of worship. The flow of congregants coming forward for communion no longer has the feeling of approaching a reserved or foreboding spot. The altar is not on a raised dais; in fact, the congregational seating has a gentle slope down toward the altar. There is no communion rail, although centrality is given an east-to-west line through the centre of the space where the choir, altar, and baptistry are located. “It’s everybody’s sacred space, not just the minister’s,” said committee member Donna Thompson.

Nancy Chapple, another committee member who is also a former teacher, has noted its effect on children. “When we watch children just roaming, you get the sense they feel really safe and welcome and it’s not a frightening kind of place for them to be. I think that’s partly because it’s all at one level. It’s [also] the attitude of the congregation, but the space promotes it.”

The original layout put the organ console between the altar and choir, but the choristers found it difficult to see their director from there. The console has now been moved to the side. And the altar and credence table have been moved a bit closer to the centre of the room – which allows the choir a better view of proceed-



Having the community as a whole take ownership of the project is the ultimate success of the building committee/consultant team.

ings in the centre of the sanctuary.

ELAM’s rector, the Rev. Michael Johnson, said clergy have to think about all four directions when preaching, giving absolution or offering the greeting of peace. “I do try to tell [ordained] folks that they do have 360 degrees of people. They do need to include all those people. It’s a learned thing. I certainly didn’t know how to do that when I started here,” he said.

Many new churches have chairs instead of pews. ELAM, however, stayed with pews. Hammond credits Janet Marshall of the church development consultants Potentials, who was assisting ELAM with amalgamation, for prompting a second look at pews. “She was the first to raise the realization in my mind that as much as pews are a very traditional element and a confining form of seating, they’re great for families because the little kids can kneel [backwards] and colour and lie down and snuggle up to mom or dad.” And after ELAM spent 18 months worshipping in temporary space in a funeral home chapel that used chairs, members also realized that pews can be more comfortable for large people. As well, chairs would have been difficult to position on the sloping floor. The choir, however, is seated on chairs.

ELAM’s pews and choir chairs are cushioned, which Hammond pointed out seems deluxe but is in fact cheaper than wooden seats because the wood under the cushions is not expensive finished hardwood.

During Cornerstone’s consultations with church members, it became apparent that the congregation was split over whether the



pews should have kneelers. The final decision was to put kneelers on the pews in the first three rows only, so that parishioners who wanted to kneel would not face the backsides of those who are standing. “It gave some options, but we’re also intentionally moving toward a more contemporary style of worship that incorporates standing rather than kneeling,” Johnson said.

The central, flat floor in the sanctuary is carpeted and none of the furniture on it is bolted down. That includes the altar, ambo, credence table, and the first two rows of pews. This was done so that the

sanctuary could be rearranged for events besides Sunday worship. ELAM has hosted concerts by a jazz orchestra, the Sweet Adelines and the Three Cantors as well as an annual Christmas story-telling and carolling night and a twice-yearly gospel music service with other churches. All of these events have necessitated the moving of several pieces of furniture. The central area is also conducive to small, meditative gatherings that are usually held in Lent and Advent and to the placement of a portable labyrinth. Skits and liturgical dance are occasional features of Sunday worship in this space.

ELAM brought along a pipe organ from one of its founding churches to allow for a wide range of musical styles, from traditional to contemporary. But Hammond noted an “interesting debate” develops when a pipe organ is installed. He said the organ consultant on the project, Ross Doddington, advocated for a very resonate space with lots of hard surfaces. “On the other hand,” Hammond said, “it creates headaches for sound systems and amplified sound” – and that was one of the items on members’ wish lists. Hammond praised ELAM’s audio/visual team for working hard to balance the two visions. Added Hannay, who occasionally visits ELAM, “I find it an amazing place to sing in because you hear singing all around you and it makes you want to sing.”

The sanctuary’s 300 seats have been a comfortable size based on attendance so far, but there is room to expand. During construction, footings and beams were put in place for a balcony should it be needed. As well, overflow seating can be set up in the Gathering Space (ELAM’s name for its large narthex), the parish hall, and in the Family Room, all of which are equipped for closed-circuit video feeds from the sanctuary. The small Family Room was created for various reasons, including giving a bride a place to make last minute adjustments before a wedding or providing a bereaved family with a place for private time before a funeral. It has also been used by nursing moms and as a place for parents to take children who have become disruptively bored with a worship service.

A major challenge for the architects was the incorporation of stained glass windows into this modern design. Three

of ELAM’s four founding churches had these windows – a total of 60 works of art – and wanted to bring that heritage with them to the new building. “It was a challenge, for sure, to have so much stained glass,” Hammond said. But he added it was a good problem to have because that much stained glass would have been prohibitively expensive for a new church to commission.

Cornerstone set windows in the sanctuary in tall columns that allowed for two levels of stained glass windows. But that still did not accommodate all the windows. Sunrise Stained Glass, the consultant on the project, came up with ways to incorporate other windows into interior doors and exterior windows of other rooms. Sunrise then grouped the windows so that the look would be largely consistent from room to room.

Besides its column windows, the sanctuary had additional wall space to give a place of prominence to a triptych window from the only one of the founding churches that had a stained-glass window above its altar. Unfortunately, the gothic arch of the triptych could not be removed and reinstalled because of its age and fragility. But the window has nevertheless become a source of wonder to members of ELAM because it wasn’t until after vestry voted in favour of choosing the Sanctuary of the Ascension as the name of its worship space that someone remembered that the scene depicted in the centre panel of the triptych was that of the Ascension.

Even as it incorporates some traditional elements, ELAM continues to keep an air of experimentation around the use of its sanctuary. Furnishings are tried out in different positions, decorations are changed, and the flow of people is choreographed in various ways. Increasingly, ELAM members are discovering that the intentionality they put into the design of not only the sanctuary but the entire facility brings to life their vision – as it’s summed up in the “Weaving a Vision Together” documents – of being a vibrant faith community where “all can come to worship God, find community, build healthy lives, and find abundant hope.”

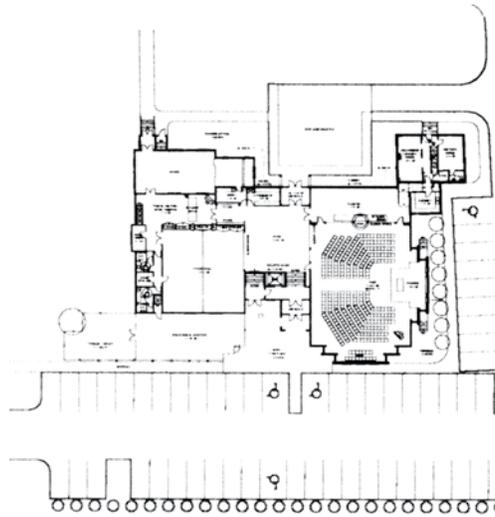
Sandra Coulson was one of the lay leaders during the amalgamation that created East London Anglican Ministries (ELAM). She is also a copy editor at the *London Free Press* in London, Ontario.

FIRMITAS·UTILITAS·VENUSTAS

Firmness, commodity, and delight – the three fundamental principals of architecture, established by Vitruvius in the first century BC in his Ten Books on Architecture – have, for over 2000 years, remained powerful influences in not only the education of architects, writes Elizabeth Davidson, but also in the design of buildings.

Broadly interpreted, these principles relate to

- Firmness: “Is it true?” Is the building durable, strong, well placed?
- Commodity: “Is it good?” Does the arrangement of the spaces answer the programme needs of the congregation?
- Delight: “Is it beautiful?” Does the building answer the spiritual, psychological, and aesthetic needs of the worshipping community?



Above: St Thomas Anglican Church, Brooklin, Ontario: elevation and main level plan.

Opposite page: St George’s Anglican Church, Toronto, Ontario: elevation and lower-, and main floor plans

How appropriate are these principles in the design of places of worship? While many buildings are able to satisfy the first two, and are deemed successful, a place of worship must fundamentally be inspirational to surpass the merely functional level of success.

As an architect whose primary practice is the design of churches, I find that keeping these elements in balance with the external forces of time, secular and non-secular approvals, and finances remains the fundamental challenge even today. Perhaps there were no budget or time constraints when Vitruvius was practising, since he mentioned neither! As well, I expect there was no equivalent of the Ontario Building Code, Committee of Adjustment, Public Works Department, Health Department, Ontario Municipal Board, Site Plan Approval: Well, I could go on.

Firmness, while seeming to be the simplest of the elements (now that we are beyond the death-defying gothic structures), has a special role in the design of churches. While the average building in Canada has a life span of only 20 years, the average church is designed to serve generations. In our practice, we are actually renovating two churches designed by my great-grandfather in the mid-1800s. One must think “long-term” in the design of churches.

This, in itself, provides a conflict between budgets (which are chronically tight) and the cost of quality materials to perform with little maintenance over long periods of time. Slate, copper, stone: These materials were designed to withstand the elements for decades, yet are seldom seen today on church building sites.

Maintenance itself is a significant influence on the choice of materials for places of worship. The architect must keep in mind the need for upkeep, given the fact that, in the future, much of the repair and

maintenance work may be done by volunteers. Churches rarely have funds for a regular schedule of repair and replacement, and, sadly, often operate in crisis mode by dealing with only the most critical items as they arise. Keeping this in mind, materials need to be of the highest quality the budget will permit, and as easily and conveniently maintained as possible: For instance, how high the ceilings are for changes of light bulbs, and how high windows are for washing, need to be taken into consideration. These fundamental and practical concerns tend, unfortunately, to be in direct opposition to “delight.”

Ecological impact is, and should be, a significant issue in the design of churches. Not only is the architect aware of the loftier concern of stewardship of the environment but also the more practical concern of capital versus operating costs. This push/pull is a challenge given the higher cost of the environmentally friendly mechanical systems and products—an area where government support through grants could be vastly improved. However, the orientation of the church, the construction of the exterior walls and roof, etc., all have significant impacts on long-term energy efficiency.

Satisfying the principle of commodity is the architectural skill that is likely honed over the longest period of time. Oddly enough, this is the area of design where many non-architects feel most confident! Understanding the needs, the challenges, the constraints, and the opportunities of the project and bringing them together, as Vitruvius suggests, “when the arrangement of the apartments is faultless and presents no hindrance to use, and when each class of building is assigned to its suitable and appropriate exposure,” is to bring clarity to the design. Listening, questioning, observing, and listening some more lead to the distillation of the programme needs. The best solution becomes almost instinctual, yet is the sum-total of years of experience in responding to similar needs.

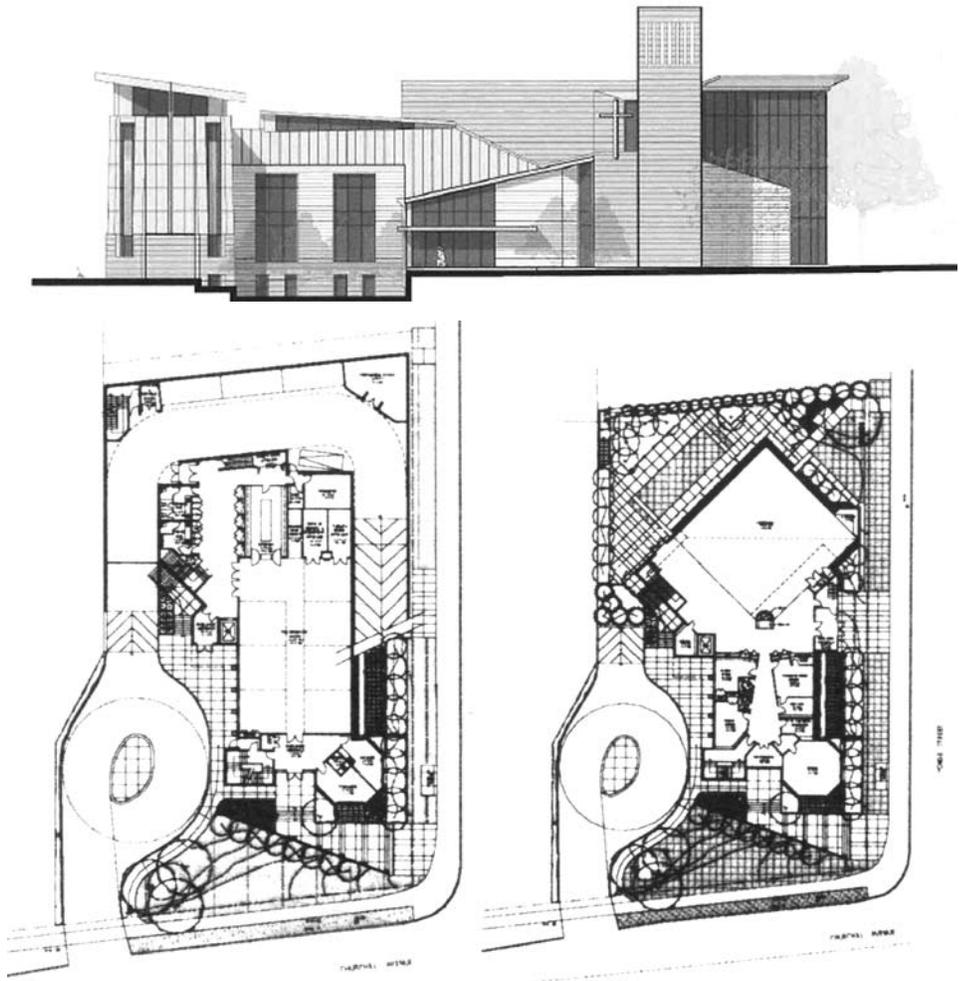
In our practice, my colleagues and I always strive to express the personality of the congregation in the design of their church. While there are basic design elements that are consistent from project to project (in our case the aversion to interminable corridors, amongst other

issues), it is the individual congregation, site, orientation, views, etc., that are key in the development of the design. This is not a case of buying a universal building design or style that is transferable to any site or any parish.

Listening to the building committee and distilling the needs and goals of the community into an architectural “programme” are fundamental steps in coming to an understanding of the core values of each individual church. In our experience, a key element of the design development is to reach out to the broader congregation in town hall forums and small “user” groups, as well as using questionnaires, comment sheets, and Web sites, among other things. For us, the ultimate compliment is to overhear a congregant (while pointing to the plans or

model) telling another member that “this was my idea.” Having the community as a whole take ownership of the project is the ultimate success of the building committee/consultant team.

It is clear, however, that the congregation will grow, change, recede, and/or age over time. The focus of the worshipping community will change. For example, volunteers, primarily women, who used to make large church meals or bake for fund raising events, are now predominately in the work force. The design of kitchens, therefore, changes accordingly to being “catering” or “reheat” kitchens. This societal change has had a direct impact on church design. Flexibility in the design is key to taking this evolution into consideration. There is a fine balance, however, between designing a space that is so



flexible that it does not really work well for its primary function.

The financial challenges of building and maintaining a church often lead to the inclusion of tenant space, day care, or other revenue-generating uses. These, in themselves, often have their own specific programme needs that will significantly affect the church and surrounding landscape designs. While day care and Christian Education programmes are very compatible, leading to “child-centred” rooms and gardens, it is important from the outset to establish the capacity for sharing, which is not only about time commitments, but about colours of walls, artwork, ownership of toys and furniture, and the all-important issue of storage. Clarity at the outset about sharing arrangements is key to the success of the church/tenant relationship.

To respond to our understanding of a rapidly changing society, spaces are primarily multi-functional – even the sanctuary itself. Efficiently building, maintaining, heating, and cooling the largest “room” for the fewest hours of use has become a harsh reality. This fact, in combination with the requirement for flexibility in worship, has led to a fundamental change in the design of the heart of the church. However, the level of flexibility – whether just for worship or extended to all forms of assembly – is a key element of the overall design of the church, and is clearly a fundamental part of the congregation’s tolerance for change. The design of the ancillary spaces simply cannot move forward until the comfort level about the use of the sanctuary is established.

Sadly, security is a significant issue in the 21st century, both from the point of view of theft and vandalism and, more importantly, the safety of the congregants. Design can either mitigate or cause problems. Grouping uses in the building, such as administration, meeting, and multipurpose rooms, not only allow for a safer environment but also for a more energy-efficient one as well. Reviewing the schedules and needs of the different groups who use the building (church, community, and tenants) should lead to a solution that accommodates meeting rooms, washrooms, and coffee areas that are compartmentalized and that allow for a compact use of the building: one floor,

one wing, etc. Long corridors, again, are a security hazard in modern churches, as are dark or hidden entrances and convoluted circulation pathways.

Designing churches is not only about flexibility, security, maintenance, efficiency, and convenience, it also includes building a sense of occasion into the design. Churches are special buildings which need to foster a sense of both the wonder and worship of God.

Delight is the most elusive of the principles. From the moment the spiritual seeker approaches the building, is there a sense of sanctity, goodness, and celebration? These qualities are a way of identifying a place of worship – but do not have to be expressed as gothic arches! A welcoming, translucent, and easily accessible approach will support these needs. Being in its visual design an integral part of the community but, at the same time, transcending it – through traditional means of height or style, or less traditional measures such as meditative gardens or inspired lighting, both inside and out – serves to identify the building as a place of worship, not a shopping mall or a police station.

Entering the church building should not be a confusing experience. The front door should be identifiable, accessible, and safe. The key elements in church life, bulletin boards (!), and greeting desks, need to be visible to the casual visitor as well as to the regular congregant. Creating a sense of community, congeniality, and welcome is a sum of its parts: Smaller elements like the bulletin boards, washrooms, coffee counters, and coat areas are all supported by the broader architecture, the volumes, the lighting, and the finishes.

Even with a central narthex, which serves as the hub of the church, it is still clear that a transition is required between ordinary life and spiritual life. Using elements such as a fireplace or a central font at the entrance to the sanctuary, the design must relay the message to the person entering that they are to “quiet down” and to open their mind to a sense of wonder, awe, and sanctity. What an exquisite challenge for the architect!

And as for the heart of the church itself: Does it inspire? Does it support

the spiritual, psychological, and aesthetic needs of the seeker?

What is the first thing you see? Is there a focus and is it clear? What do you see when you look out the windows? Are the views/vistas distracting or calming? Are the colours soothing and uplifting? Is the flooring durable but beautiful? Can a labyrinth be subtly incorporated into its design? Is the lighting overpowering or does it serve to highlight and support the service? Is it flexible enough to provide mood and scene changes? Is the volume of the space simple yet awe-inspiring?

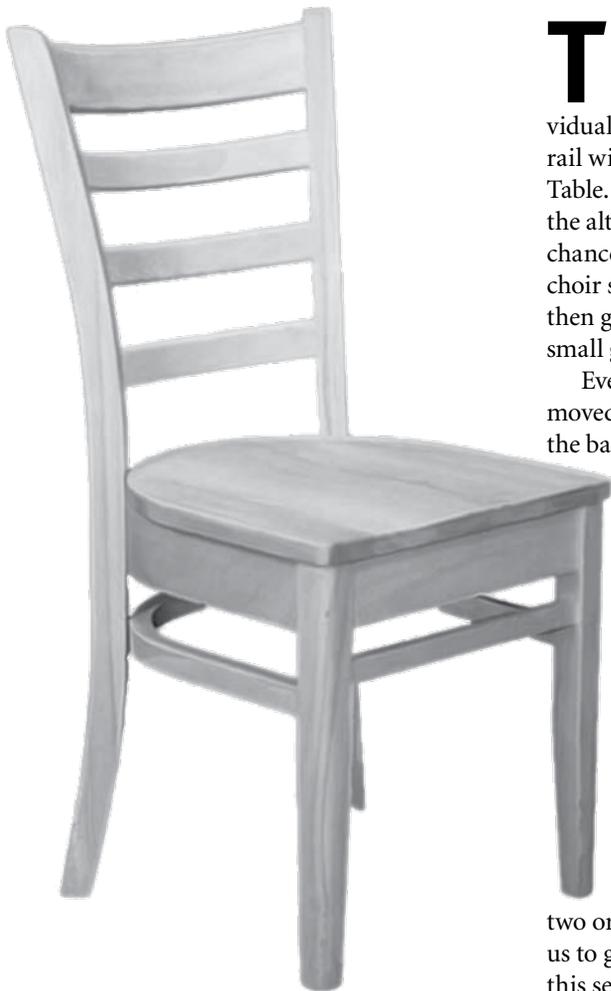
In our designs, we strive for clarity and focus through clean lines and consistent detailing. There often is the opportunity to incorporate an antique piece, whether a reredos, altar table, or font, which today could simply not be replicated, especially at a reasonable cost. It is striking how these elements, when reused perhaps in an entirely different way, become cherished additions to the modernity of the new building. The blending of clarity of design, dramatic lighting, and dynamic liturgical arrangements of the new space will often be enhanced and warmed by the inclusion of elements from the past.

Striving to meet all of these architectural goals, while listening to the voices of the members of our church congregations, creates a partnership of success. Firmness, commodity, and delight in the design of new worship spaces is a worthy goal to which our partnership aspires!

Elizabeth Davidson is President of Davidson-Langley Incorporated Architects (DLIA), founded in 1985. DLIA’s practice includes extensive work with parish communities, both in building new space and adding to existing space. Elizabeth continues a long family tradition of architectural design. Her great-grandfather, Henry Langley, was one of Toronto’s, and the Province of Ontario’s, most distinguished architects at the turn, and during the early years, of the 20th century.

The chairs have it!

The worship space at the Church of St Augustine, North Toronto, has been in a process of transformation for over 20 years. Founded in 1946, the building followed soon after, but contemporary practise required a major change. Elizabeth Nelson and John Hill suggest that the removal of pews in favour of chairs presented both a challenge and an opportunity.



The early changes to the space were attempts to strengthen the act of Communion, replacing the individualistic pattern of kneeling at an altar rail with some form of gathering at the Table. In the late '80s, this meant moving the altar into the middle of the (raised) chancel space and removing the front choir stall to each side of it; people could then gather around the Table in successive small groups.

Eventually, the choir stalls were removed, and the choir sat on chairs near the back of this elevated space. This permitted the entire congregation to gather around the Table at one time, provided some of them completed the circle at the lower level (which was a boon for those challenged by the chancel steps). For the last few years, this gathering at the Table has begun with the Procession of the Gifts, everyone joining the procession and standing in the great circle for the Great Thanksgiving as well as for the Communion.

Throughout many of these years, two or three people had been agitating for us to get rid of the pews. For most of us, this seemed unthinkable. But the issue began to receive greater attention when we faced the fact that the carpeting in the nave had worn out. Removing it would create the best occasion for refinishing the hardwood floor; refinishing the floor would necessitate removing the pews; and removing the pews would be the opportunity to repair and refinish them. But then we discovered that refinishing the pews would cost as much as replacing them with chairs!

In 2001, the first discussions about renewing the nave took place, and a proposal

was approved at the 2002 Vestry meeting. Fund raising and further investigations took place over the next three years. A final proposal was ratified at the 2005 Vestry meeting. This involved the removal of the pews, the sanding and refinishing of the floor, and the purchase of 85 chairs.

The scheduling of the operation was on a tight timetable. The work had to be complete in ten days following Sunday worship in late June. The parish picnic (with outdoor liturgy) was scheduled to take place at the end of June, so we planned that this would be the only Sunday we would not be in the Worship Space.

There were – not unexpectedly – disagreements about the proposal as a whole and then about the style and fabric for the chairs. The congregation was involved with each major decision. Sample chairs were considered. Several fabric patterns and colours were on display and parishioners were asked to vote for their top two choices. We acknowledged the need for some kneelers and have had 20 individual kneelers made. They are available at the entrance to the Worship Space and are easily carried by a looped strap.

What effects has the nave renewal had on the liturgy at St. Augustine's?

We have had to deal with new sightlines and changed acoustics. We were concerned that the removal of the pews – the “barriers – ” would be disconcerting for the congregation. Instead, it has become more freeing. On the last Sunday with pews, the Rector invited people to share good memories of worship experiences. We realized that there would be a sense of loss of the traditional space. When the chairs arrived, they were arranged in a similar pattern to the pews: two side aisles and a centre aisle. The chairs were spaced with approximately eight inches between them and curved in a slight arc. Minor adjustments occurred over the next four weeks, bringing the chairs closer to each other; currently, the rows of chairs are ‘ganged’ together. The pulpit was shifted about two feet toward the centre. The clergy and acolytes now sit together with the people in the nave. The organ console and choir were moved from the chancel, down three steps on the right side. Bringing the musicians closer to the congregation has strengthened the music leadership. The centre aisle is wider than the formation with pews had been, as the

second photograph reveals. We have an artist-in-residence who is a dancer, and there is now a greater space for such movement, including the wider area at the front and centre aisle. The leader of the prayers of the people now stands at the bottom of the chancel steps and that change, along with the relocation of clergy and choir, allows for an almost circular gathering of the people for the Liturgy of the Word.

The acoustics changed with both the removal of the pews and the relocation of the choir. One notices the beauty of the stained glass windows and the brightness of the space.

Holy Week this year brings new challenges and new opportunities for adapting the space to the unique nature of each of the Great Three Days.

Some observations by members after the first six months: “The space is more personal.” “The back of the space is closer than it was before!” “The pews were barriers so now it seems more open.” “Bringing the choir down [from the chancel] means we are closer together and more like one



Above: The church-going habits of that post-war period which have changed enormously since then. More recently, we have become familiar with the sight of sparsely filled pews. (Average Sunday attendance in 2005 was approximately 70 at two services.)

Below: The new arrangement which involved the removal of the pews, the sanding and refinishing of the floor, and the purchase of 85 chairs.



big circle.”

The move to a renewed and transformed worship space has been met with positive reactions. We are looking forward to the new challenges and opportunities now available to us.

Elizabeth Nelson has been a member of the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury since 1995, serving most recently on the Nave Renewal Committee. She is also the Administrative Associate at Little Trinity Anglican Church in Toronto. **The Reverend Canon John Hill** is Incumbent of St. Augustine’s and a member of the *Liturgy Canada* Editorial Board.

Book Reviews

Richard Giles: Creating Uncommon Worship – Transforming the Liturgy of the Eucharist. (Liturgical Press, 2004)
218 pages plus appendices

Reviewed by Peter Wall

Richard Giles, the Episcopal Dean of Philadelphia, is a delightful, elfin Englishman, with a twinkle in his eye and a wry and wonderful sense of humour. During a successful career in parish ministry in England, he became well-known for his work in church design and architecture, with a particular focus on how we create and recreate spaces for Christian worship. This work became known through Giles’s book *Repitching the Tent*, which quickly became one of the standard ‘texts’ for all those looking critically and creatively at the renovation, rejuvenation, and construction of spaces for Christian worship.

In 1999, Giles was lured to America, to become Dean of the recently designated Philadelphia Cathedral. He was faced with three things: a parish which was, to say the least, in mortal decline; a Bishop who was deeply committed to the creation of a dynamic and ‘new’ Cathedral for his diocese; and, fortunately, a bank account of considerable size which had been put aside many years before for construction of a new Cathedral.

And so, the people of Philadelphia, with Richard at the helm, dramatically refashioned a worship space to suit worship which was distinctive and authentic. In the course of that work, this important book, *Creating Uncommon Worship*, was born. It is an uplifting and engaging ‘how to’ on the structure, shape, flow, and movement of liturgy. With the use of many photographs, both in colour and black-and-white, and a writing style which encompasses both the theory as well as the practicalities of reshaping such a space, it is a book which should be included in every liturgist’s bookshelf. Giles’s introductory material is very helpful, and includes examples of excellence in liturgy from many different places.

Giles’s sense of honour and his sense of reality come shining through: This book

involves itself not at all in the ‘this-is-the-way-it-must-be-done’ school but rather in a style which says “This is how we knew we needed to worship; this is how we managed it; here is how you can try it yourself.” In the introduction, Giles says: “The Sunday Liturgy at the Cathedral in Philadelphia is not all that uncommon, certainly not to us who participate in it, but it is uncommon enough to raise a few eyebrows if not hackles. It tends to be loved or hated, rather than leave one unmoved.”

Giles himself declares that this book is offered as a practical guide, not as a scholarly text. After confessing that he once thought of liturgists as clever academics inhabiting important libraries, he goes on to say: “Now I have come to see things differently. Liturgists I now realize are the people who get things changed on the ground floor; artists, dreamers, musicians, choreographers, craftspeople, and pastors who wrestle with the fascinating and fun problem of translating theory into practice on the parish front line.” His writing is accessible and unambiguous; he orders the book in sensible and easy-to-follow ways. The use of photographs is highly commendable.

Some will argue that this book is too prescriptive, or that so much of what Richard Giles writes about is simply unattainable to the ‘average’ (whatever that means!) parish and its liturgical planners. There certainly is a temptation when reading this book – to which one finds oneself responding in envy bordering on awe – to simply discard it all, since so much of it seems impossible, given the immutability of so many of our buildings, to say nothing of the mindset of many of our congregations. And yet, I found myself, in my second and subsequent reading of the book (or at least great portions of it) adapting what I was reading, as theory and advice, into the ways in which the best bits could be translated and modified into my setting. While I can certainly agree with others that the circle is a sometimes inhospitable and unwelcoming shape for the Church, I also know that the principles which worshipping in a circle thrust before me are terribly important, and that I need in my parish to work with and hold onto those principles.

Giles calls us back to our roots as a eucharistic community, and calls us to examine our liturgies for authenticity, his-

torical faithfulness, acceptance, welcome, and joy. I think this is a good book, one which deserves to be read, discussed, and enjoyed.

The Very Reverend Peter Wall is Dean of Niagara, and is a member and Past Chair of *Liturgy Canada*.

Richard Giles: Re-Pitching the Tent: Re-ordering the Church Building for Worship and Mission

(Canterbury Press, Norwich, 1997)

Reviewed by Marion Jenkins

When you pick up this book, with a magnificent picture of an open, friendly, contemporary liturgical space on the front cover, you might think that you are going to read a book about church architecture and interior design. Open the book and you are in for a very big surprise. Inside, you will find the architecture and design that you are expecting, along with theology, church history, sociology, missiology, liturgical renewal, and photography. Although much of the setting for this work is English churches and consequently Anglican, *Re-Pitching the Tent* needs to be on the required reading list of every seminary in North America, regardless of denomination. It is a seminal work for the Church of the 21st century.

Giles divides the book into three distinct sections: “Where do we come from?” “Who are we?” and “Where are we going?” At the conclusion of each chapter, the author offers questions for reflection that focus on the central theme of the chapter and bring the reader to the heart of the matter. Often there are exercises that enable a planning group to consolidate their thinking and learning or to take practical steps in the decision-making process. Visually attractive sidebars and photographs break up the text and provide additional interest to the work. In the final portion of the book, Giles includes ten appendices of very practical steps and suggestions to get from design to a reordered church building.

Richard Giles writes with a sharp, acerbic wit which sometimes elicits a belly laugh, sometimes a profound “aha,” and sometimes catches the

reader up short about an assumption or misperception. The author challenges, inspires, and motivates us to reach and stretch for excellence in living as the Church of this century in and around buildings of the last several centuries.

Where do we come from?

“The fossilization of worship spaces is not confined to ancient buildings nor to England. Faith communities in the United States [and Canada], are equally prone to this disease, and the Episcopal Church (perhaps because of its links with the ‘Old Country’) is in imminent danger of drowning in varnish” (p.4). Thus, Giles begins to open our eyes to recognizing the problem. He points out that we are “the first generation to separate liturgical design from theology” (p.7). “... there can be no doubt that our spiritual ancestors were to be found hacking away at their church buildings before the ink was dry on the latest theological pamphlet” (p.7).

Giles takes us on a long walk through Church history. Beginning with Abraham and Jewish worship, with a God on the move, he journeys through early Christianity which was to be built from living stones. With Constantine, the hall of the king or basilica became the icon of the Church. Bricks and mortar replaced the stones and now we struggle with cathedrals and churches which have outlived their usefulness. The end of Christendom requires a new icon as we enter a new century.

Who are we?

The author asks us to focus first on our culture. He sets as the context for our reordering, the supermarket—or, for us in North America, the shopping mall—which is the community gathering place. He cautions that before we get “too self-righteous about being in a different kind of business...we would do well to ponder whether our zeal for souls matches the retailers’ zeal for success and for good service.” We must take stock of our church buildings in the context of our culture and in our circumstances and then ask ourselves how we might respond. “The context in which we take stock of our own building—the ‘local centre for worship and mission’—is one of a critical missionary situation in which

time is short” (p. 92). Giles reminds us of our mission as evangelists; that we must remember that not all who come to us will know the story, let alone our story.

Where are we going?

“The Christian church is neither a sacred monument built to express God’s glory, nor a simple gathering centre for biblical lectures or social proceedings. It is a Paschal meeting room, a place where the assembled community exercises the full impact of the Paschal mystery” (p. 143). This quote from Frederic Debuyst captures the essence of the vision towards which we are moving as we reorder our church building from outside-in.

The final chapters of *Re-Pitching the Tent* tackle each of the constituent parts of rebuilding the “house of the Church.” Giles uses the principles which he has articulated throughout the book to guide the reader step-by-step through the design or redesign process.

Richard Giles leaves the final word to Marty Haugen:

Not in the dark of buildings
confining,
Not in some heaven light years away,
but here in this place, the new light is
shining,
now is the Kingdom now is the day.
Gather us in and hold us for ever,
gather us in, and make us your own:
gather us in, all peoples together,
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

(Celebration Hymnal, 752)

Marion Jenkins is Coordinator of Henry Budd College for Ministry in The Pas, Manitoba and Secretary of *Liturgy Canada*.

Joseph A. Fitzmeyer: Spiritual Exercises Based on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans (Eerdmans, 2004), 235 pages

Reviewed by Ron Baerg

Joseph Fitzmeyer is well-known not only for his commentaries on Luke, Acts, Romans, and Philemon in the Anchor Bible series, but also for his studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls, Pauline theology, and the Aramaic language. With the re-release of this 1995 publication Fitzmeyer moves in a different direction from the typical

modern exegesis of texts. His intent in this book, he says, is to offer a “more reflective” treatment of Romans. It is, in effect, to be “a meditation on Romans” which is a “goldmine...for personal spiritual growth.”

In order to achieve this goal Fitzmeyer takes his inspiration from The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola (1491–1556). He finds a striking affinity between the fundamental questions that occupy Paul in Romans and Ignatius, but Fitzmeyer is careful not to press Paul’s argument into the quite different format of Ignatius’s exercises. Indeed, he notes that Ignatius’s method is quite concrete and almost tangible while Paul’s method is quite abstract (p. 56).

The format used by the author is consistent throughout the book. The Romans text is covered in 24 exercises. These 24 exercises would lend themselves to use in a typical retreat setting of three meditations a day over eight days. The format of each meditation is the same: A selection of text is given, that text is expounded, a series of reflective questions is addressed to the exercitant, and the unit concludes with a colloquy (an Ignatian term) that invites further reflection. The colloquy is often a psalm but not always.

Fitzmeyer is clear on what he considers the centre of this exercise: “If one should use these exercises for a shorter retreat, one should concentrate on the exercises based on Romans 1–8 (Exercises 1–8), since those that follow (Exercises 19–24) are of less importance; but in no case should Exercises 14–18 [covering Romans 7:7–8:39] be omitted” (p. 4). Consistent with this emphasis, Fitzmeyer devotes 138 pages to the first eight chapters of Romans and a mere 66 pages to the second half of Romans!

For those curious about the typical exegetical and historical questions that surround Romans they will be able to identify Fitzmeyer’s position on a number of these questions through a careful reading of the text. At a number of places I found myself helped and enlightened by Fitzmeyer’s insightful comments on the text, none more so than in his comments on the Aramaic background to the use of *abba* in Romans 8:15.

Two points, however, surprised me in his argument. First, while Fitzmeyer is Roman Catholic he opts for a very Lutheran

understanding of Paul’s position on justification, speaking positively about Luther’s view of “alien righteousness” (p. 60). Second, in his treatment of the Holy Spirit in Romans 8 Fitzmeyer finds Paul’s view of the “Spirit” more akin to that of the Old Testament which he describes as “a mode of expressing God’s outgoing activity and presence to the world and his people in a creative, prophetic, quickening, or renovative fashion.” He argues that Paul has not yet come to view the Holy Spirit “as a person in his theology” and, consequently, as distinct from the Father and the Son (p. 122). These developments occurred later in Patristic theology.

Fitzmeyer is to be commended for his concern to bridge the very modern gap between critical study of the biblical text and spirituality. It is to this task that we preachers address ourselves every Sunday morning. One could only wish there were more biblical scholars and theologians concerned with this task. In the end, it is often the preacher who stands between the work of the academy and the needs of his or her congregation Sunday by Sunday. Having said this, we need to ask if Fitzmeyer’s work is helpful in bridging this gap? It is here that I have several reservations.

First, what is the target audience of this book? Greek and Latin phrases, although transliterated, occur throughout the text. Distinctions are made between God’s “absolute and permissive will,” and terms such “uncreated grace, created grace, prevenient grace, and sanctifying grace,” are used and reference is made to the “ontological and psychological reality of Christian existence.” The nature of concupiscence is discussed several times. Reference is made to the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although I found these discussions interesting and helpful I cannot imagine any of my parishioners being able to follow them.

Second, I did not find the series of questions posed at the end of each exercise particularly helpful. The exegesis of the texts was solid and helpful as one would expect but the questions often fell short of their intent. I was also surprised to note, more often than not, the questions posed dealt with the individual. There was little, if any, concern for the church or the wider community. This tension becomes particularly apparent at the beginning of Romans 9 where Fitzmeyer writes, “Because

Paul is here reflecting on a historic aspect of that teaching, it may seem that there would be little in this part of Romans that would lend itself to our meditation. And yet there is more than a little, because what happened to Israel can be the lot of any human being” (p. 157). The problem is that Paul is dealing precisely with Israel and the nations/Gentiles and Paul’s argument does not lend itself easily to application to the individual – nor should it be forced to do so. To make it do so seems to me to force and distort the thrust of Paul’s argument.

In conclusion, “spiritual writing” must also explore the dynamics of the human soul. These dynamics are complex and need to be explored with skill and sensitivity if the reader is to grow spiritually. It is precisely at this point that exercises, such as those of Ignatius, are successful and, consequently, powerful. This book, while exegetically helpful, needs to pay more attention to this aspect of spirituality.

For those wishing to explore the connections between Romans and our contemporary context I have found the following helpful: Ben Witherington’s *Paul’s Letter to the Romans: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Eerdmans, 2004), N.T. Wright’s, “Romans,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Abingdon Press, 2002), and Wright’s more popular, *Paul for Everyone: Romans: Parts 1 and 2* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004) and finally, John E. Toews’s, *Romans: Believers Church Bible Commentary* (Herald Press, 2004). Each of these texts explores what Romans could mean in our lives today.

The Reverend Ron Baerg is the rector of the Anglican Parish of Battle River in the Diocese of Saskatoon. The parish includes St. Paul’s, North Battleford and St. George’s, Battleford.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Short book reviews by
John Hodgins, LC Review Editor

Turning Towards the Lord, Uwe Michael Lang (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2004)

Another voice is added to the liturgical debate developing in the 21st Christian century centred on what has been termed “the reform of the reform.” Fuelled by the growing influence of Ressourcement and the Communion movements, books and papers increasingly question many of the basic assumptions upon which reforms have been promoted and implemented in liturgical texts, music, architecture, and aesthetics over the past 40 years.

This time, an Oratorian from London, England offers an analysis of German and European texts as well as English sources from his studies in Vienna and Oxford. Lang discusses patristic as well as recent liturgical studies, lending his voice to the controversial call for a recovery of what he claims was the early and nearly universal custom for Christian worship: “facing east” for the liturgy of the Table. The author makes a case for a renewal of liturgical rites and the reorientation of church buildings for reasons both theological and sociological.

Questioning the received wisdom of the past century with regard to versus populum celebration of the Liturgy, Lang quotes recent scholarship and historical sources in his extensively footnoted book to establish a case for what he calls “turning to the Lord” both spiritually and physically in the worship of the Church (p. 221). Lang argues that this orientation, once dismissed as the argument of backward-looking traditionalists, needs another look, and he explores sources that have given new life to this question in a thoroughly secularized and individualized Western culture which hungers, once again, for a sense of transcendence in worship (p. 28–33).

Lang offers an extensively researched and challenging argument which will cause the reflective reader to reassess both the planning of spaces for liturgy and the ceremonies associated with Christian worship.

The Organic Development of the Liturgy

Alcuin Reid

(Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2005)

Dom Alcuin Reid offers us a comprehensive study of the principles of liturgical development and reform set out in what he holds to be the organic and inspired growth of the Christian Liturgy. A British Benedictine, Dom Alcuin displays a sensitivity for and deep understanding of English-language liturgical developments both Anglican and Roman. The first part of this work is an historical analysis of Western Christian rites with particular attention to the consolidation of the Roman canon.

The author then outlines the historical context for the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium* (S.C.), as well as the “Liturgical Movement” and its precursors which have contributed to the late 20th century reform of the Roman Rite and other Western liturgies. Examining first the earlier reforms of the Western liturgy, he goes on to note the positive as well as the inconsistent applications of S.C. in light of ressourcement scholarship.

Alcuin Reid joins a growing chorus of scholars and liturgists who question the orientation of many post-Vatican II churches, the exclusive use of the vernacular in liturgical texts, as well as musical and other ritual changes. In light of continuing architectural and aesthetic concerns with regard to buildings, rites, and ceremonial, this is a timely contribution.

Dom Alcuin delivers a cogent analysis of the history of what he identifies as the organic development in the Liturgy and its anomalies, shedding light on such 20th century issues as the versus populum-versus apsidem debate. He deals, as well, with the mid-20th century redevelopment of the *Liturgies of Holy Week and Easter* (pp. 219–237).

The book includes a consideration of John H. Newman’s 1831 *Ceremonies of the Church* along with a number of references to the development of Anglicanism, its rites, and ceremonies. Thoroughly conversant with both the historical and current British and European scene, Reid is a major contributor to the reassessment of reforms implemented following the Second Vatican Council, reforms which

have defined the face of the Church in the West since the 1960s.

The Mass and Modernity: Walking to Heaven Backward, Jonathan Robinson (Ignatius Press: San Francisco, 2005)

In his new work, Fr. Robinson, once an Anglican and a founding priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri in Toronto, offers a review of the principles and confusions which have marked the interaction between Catholic life and liturgy in the past century and more. To begin with, the author seeks to step outside the ecclesiastical framework which has implemented the reforms of Vatican II and, in so doing, examine how the Enlightenment-era philosophers – especially Kant, Hegel and their successors – have changed the way in which people in the West understand and perceive God, society, and religion.

The book is a re-examination of Catholicism's dialogue with modernity and a profound critique of the phenomena grouped under the heading "Postmodernism." These phenomena, Robinson claims, are used by the self-anointed inheritors of the Enlightenment as tools to destroy the authority of tradition, and to undo what Edmund Burke described as the partnership between the dead, the living, and the yet unborn, which, the author holds, is the only real guarantee of a freedom not based on the whims of the modern social sciences, pop culture, or the social engineering of high court judges.

Fr. Robinson discusses worship in the Church within the framework of the historical documents about liturgy and shows that there is an enormous gap between what is actually in the Documents of Vatican II and how these documents have been applied.

Many of the early reforms from the 1960s to the present sought to speak to the modern world by changing the liturgy of the Church. Robinson maintains that, in many ways, this was a misapplication of the documents. In attempting to adapt to what we are told are the aspirations of modernity and the promptings of post-modernity the Church has lost touch, in large measure, with its greatest gift: Revelation. The Church's mission, the author insists, is pre-eminently to bring something to the world, not to accommodate the Church's message to a confused world which, in its

post-modern form, allows that all views are relative and of equal validity. In light of this situation, there is a pressing need, he argues, for the Liturgy to return us to reflecting a God-centered approach – worship and awe in a world where people are soul-weary of looking at themselves.

Robinson responds to the question of how the Church can attract the multitude of religious "seekers" so prevalent today and who, in most cases, understand so little of the language of Christian faith and culture. He proposes that the "reform of the reform" should shape the Liturgy to become again a living expression of the Paschal Mystery, that is, the awe-inspiring worship of God, not merely a teaching moment but a sacred re-enactment of the saving passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Saviour of the world.

In principle, Robinson argues for overcoming false views about human nature and the meaning of life by a concerted effort to present Revelation afresh in our times – the numinous reality of the Paschal Mystery – in a more vivid, objective, and unsentimental – yet inspirational – way.

The Mass can be reinvigorated and renewed without constant upheaval and change, Robinson insists. However, for a variety of sociological and cultural reasons detailed in his book, the author has reservations about how renewal can be achieved in the early 21st century Western world.

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