MATERIALITY

Concrete, glass, & steel

FIG. 76-PARISH CENTRE, HYRYLA, FINLAND
KIRMO MIKKOLA & JUHANI PALLASMAA, 1965-67

FIG. 77-PARISH CENTRE, HYRYLA, FINLAND
KIRMO MIKKOLA & JUHANI PALLASMAA, 1965-67

An Orthodox Celebration

57
MATERIALITY

Concrete, glass, & steel

FIG. 78-PARISH CENTRE, HYRYLA, FINLAND
KIRMO MIKKOLA & JUHANI PALLASMAA, 1965-67

FIG. 79-PARISH CENTRE, HYRYLA, FINLAND
KIRMO MIKKOLA & JUHANI PALLASMAA, 1965-67

An Orthodox Celebration

58
With all these opportunities occurring, it seems as if the modern church is progressing and embracing change to better meet the needs of today's society. One aspect of modern church design which is certain is that each congregation seems to desire a sense of tradition within their religious architecture. Historically, religion was a tool used to interpret mysteries and was mainly rooted in principles of the unearthly, the unexplained, and the secrets of life. Many people believe that a church should exhibit the inexplicable and ever present domination of religion. To these people the venerable basilicas and cathedrals of a time long past illustrate what a modern religious edifice should embody (Lindstrom, pp. 57). Of course this does not mean that today's churches and chapels should be direct duplicates, instead an identifiable relationship is what's preferred. In this respect, the modern church design can interpret history, yet address today's society, its needs, and its desires.

In contemporary times, the architect is faced with the demanding problem of designing a suitable religious building for a modern society without the loss of the numerous symbols which have, over time, become identifiable with the very idea of a "church". These symbols, in the minds of many, carry with them the idea of religious belief and they give foundation and strength to the myriad of religious institutions. The problem is that the architect must respect and preserve the essence of these symbols with the language of his time. In this way, the society is given a design that
CONCLUSION OF EXPLORATION

Modernism, religion, & society

is identifiable with them and religiously, it is an emotional continuation, which lies at the heart of religion itself (Clausen, pp. 189).

The solution to the problem can be derived by using the idea of community, form and layout, symbolism, materials, and traditions that speak of, to, and for the society in which it was created, much like as in previous times. As in the past, when the Church was at its peak virility, it seldom failed to interest the greatest visionary spirits of the time because it allowed them to discover fresh solutions and a fresh voice to declare its brilliance. The remarkable styles of history, which were rarely passive, were also the outcome of an exploration for renewal, a want to give contemporary responses to the timeless mystery of man and his God (Clausen, pp. 190). It is from here that the modern architect needs to leap and bound to express his society's notion of a church.
This idea of a modern church form with a sense of tradition, is also the implication for my thesis design of an Orthodox celebration space. Before a discussion of the design can occur, one must understand the basic principles that underwrite the basis and render the strength of Orthodoxy. Eastern Christian worship is very different from that of the Christian West. Not only is the worship distinct, but the architecture, the interior decoration, the form of the liturgy, the placement of the clergy, and the behavior of the congregation are all aspects unlike in the East and in the West.

The religious buildings in the East are usually small, rounded, and constructed in the form of a Greek cross. The altar faces East and the entrance is traditionally on the West. The most unique element on the interior is the great Ikonostasis, a solid screen which contains 3 doors, that separates the eastern end from the remaining portion of the church (Figures 80-81) (Zernov, pp. 238). The central door is known as the "Royal" door with the deacon's door to the south and a door reserved for other servers on the north. The entire screen is faced with holy pictures (Figures 82-87). The function of the screen is to veil the sanctuary and the altar. At certain points within the service, the doors remain closed and the clergy are not visible to the parishioners, creating the sense of heavenly mystery (Fortescue, pp. 403-04).
Beyond the Ikonostasis lies the sanctuary where the laity are not allowed. In the center, stands the altar, a massive square table of either stone or wood, with an overlaid intricate linen cloth. On this table are placed a few elements of the Holy Liturgy, otherwise, it is simple and void. On the north and south of the altar are placed respectively, a credence table and sacristy for the storage of holy vestments and vessels. The Orthodox never have any reredos; the altar is never thrust up against a wall; and the altar is not cluttered with candlesticks nor flower pots. The presence and effect of such an austere altar is dignified and restrained (Fortescue, pp. 403-04).

The laity participate in the worship through their support in prayers, pious gestures, bows, and continuous use of the Sign of the Cross. They may join in singing but the choir usually portrays them (Zernov, pp. 238). The two kinds of music within the church are similar to the Catholic's versions of plain song and figured music. No Orthodox Church under any condition has allowed any musical instrument to be played within the church. As a result, the choir's requiem is very dignified and ecclesiastical. The composition of the choir is a very carefully chosen and trained group of people that sing in eight or sixteen parts. They have been taught to command a vast range. The singing is exceptionally beautiful and it is some of the most elegant church music in the world (Fortescue, pp. 409).
EAST & WEST

A distinction

FIG. 80-IKONOSTASIS EXAMPLE

An Orthodox Celebration

63
A distinction

An Orthodox Celebration

64
A distinction

FIG. 82: ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

An Orthodox Celebration
65
A distinction

FIG. 83-ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

An Orthodox Celebration

66
EAST & WEST
A distinction

FIG. 84-ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

FIG. 85-ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

FIG. 86-ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

An Orthodox Celebration
67
EAST & WEST

A distinction

FIG. 87-ICONOGRAPHIC IMAGERY

An Orthodox Celebration

68
The liturgical worship of the Eastern Christians appeals to all the senses and is a great source of inspiration. The worshipper's eyes observe the beautiful and sublime icon paintings, his ears take in the captivating and moving choir music, his nasal passages are filled with the aromatic incense, his palate relishes the fruits of earth, and his body reveres and adores the Creator through symbolic movements, deeply held admiration, and wonder. Although the liturgy retains an unchanging nature and setting it is still dynamic, warmhearted, and mysterious (Zernov, pp 264-65).

Generally speaking, the main characteristics of the Orthodox liturgy can be summarized as follows (Bratsiotis, pp. 51):

1. It is of a genuinely ancient character recalling the oldest forms of Christian worship.
2. It keeps a biblical character through its rich use of texts from the Bible.
3. It extends from a powerful theological background.
4. It is also deeply rooted in symbolism and contains elements of the mystagogical, transcental, and cosmic.
5. It retains a communal character.
6. The celebration in general has an agreeable quality by its use of poetry, vocal music, and painting.
7. Finally, the liturgy is also meant to be enlightening.
There are also 7 sacraments which the Orthodox Church observes. They are (Meyendorff, pp. 95-101):

1. *The Eucharist* or Holy Communion.

2. *The Baptism* which is conferred on infants in the form of a triple immersion in the water as the three names of the Trinity are invoked. This requires no permanent place in the church, instead a small movable font is brought out for the service.

3. *The Confirmation* which is generally conferred along with the baptism occurs in the front of the nave between the sanctuary and the seating and has no special design considerations.

4. *The Penance* or Confession requires the penitent to stand in front of a small table upon which the book of the gospel and the cross are placed. The Priest stands at the penitent's side and becomes a consultant.

5. *The Holy Unction of the Sick* usually takes place at a sick person's house or hospital room and rarely within the church. Therefore no special design conditions are required.

6. *The Ordination* or Holy Orders includes the orders of Episcopate, Priesthood, Diaconate, Subdiaconate, and Lectorate.

7. *The Marriage* or "Crowning" is carried out within the nave and has no special design considerations.
Now that the basic characteristics of Orthodoxy have been aforementioned, a brief history, the causes of the Schism in 1054, and the eventual split in the Church need to be addressed and recognized. The split with Rome came about over several issues. The major theological issue in question was that of whether the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father or from the Father and the Son. Other points of contention included the celibacy of the clergy, liturgical differences, the use of which calendar (Gregorian or Julian), and architectural forms and symbols. The Eastern Church also never acknowledged the primacy of the Pope and had no need or use for the elaborate choirs and chancels prevalent in Western designs.

There was a long gap between the first encounter of the Serbians with Christianity to the creation of their national church. This was the period from the immigration of the Serbs into the Balkan Peninsula in the 6th and 7th centuries, until the beginning of the 13th century, when St. Sava founded the independent Serbian Orthodox Church. St. Sava, the brother of St. Stephen the "First-Crowned," was consecrated as the first Serbian Archbishop at Nicea in 1220 and from then until the Turkish conquest in 1389, at the Battle of Kosovo, the Serbian Church experienced a prosperous period. With the defeat at Kosovo by the Turks, long centuries of slavery lay ahead for the Serbs. The Serbians were the first of the Slavic people to rebel against the Turks and in 1830 secured their autonomy. In 1831, the
ORTHODOXY & SERBIANS

A brief history

Patriarch of Constantinople granted autonomy to the Serbian Church and in 1879 the Serbian Church became autocephalous, meaning self-governing.

The first Serbian-Orthodox Church in the United States was located in Jackson, California in 1894 due to the missionary efforts of Very Reverend Sebastian Dabovich. He convinced the local Serbians working in the local goldmine to build the church and to dedicate it to St. Sava. From there, Father Sebastian visited Serbians in Chicago in 1892-1904 and was instrumental in organizing an Orthodox Church there. From then on, wherever there was a great number of Serbians, a church was sure to be built. Eventually, the Serbians created churches spreading from coast to coast and into Canada. Today, there are 3 Dioceses: 1 for Eastern America and Canada, 1 for Midwestern America, and 1 for Western America. Currently, the Orthodox Church includes some 15 autonomous associations and a total membership of nearly 100 million. The greatest Orthodox concentration is based mostly around the Eastern Mediterranean and Eastern Europe (Purdy, pp 97).
The model Byzantine Orthodox Church takes the form of a Greek cross and has a dome at its core which represents heaven (Figures 88-89). The church therefore envelopes a holy space, a near representation of heaven on earth, and it rests on sacred ground for all time (Purdy, pp. 97). The Byzantine form exhibited many variations but essentially, its traditions and fundamentals were to endure a long period of time much like Orthodoxy, which has remained fixed for over a millennium and a half. Originally, the basilica was a gathering place for the devoted and where they could practice saving themselves through the mystical enactment of the Eucharist. The church stood for the divine mysteries that were occurring on its interior and the wide central dome was the realization of this symbolism. The Byzantines employed great skill and effort to give the impression that the dome had practically no support from the earthly world, instead it was to give the impression of being suspended from the heavens above, embracing the beings within a holy and yet simple space.

The greatest and most perfect example of a Byzantine structure would have to be the Hagia Sophia, built for the emperor Justinian and completed in 537. So magnificent and "breathtaking in its daring effects," the style and form of the Hagia Sophia can be recognized, to some extent, in every Orthodox church later constructed (Norman, pp. 51-53) (Figures 88-89). Subsequent examples of the Serbian-Orthodox Church complexes,
both in the United States and in Europe also exhibit this longevity of unaltered traditional design and form, regardless of physical and cultural context, community, technology, desires, and needs of the contemporary world (Figures 90-93). It is with this premise that the design of my thesis will develop.
FIG. 90-ST. SAVA COMPLEX, MILWAUKEE, WI

FIG. 91-HOLY RESURRECTION CATHEDRAL, CHICAGO, IL

An Orthodox Celebration

75
IDEAL ORTHODOXY

Form & function

FIG. 92- ST. LAZARUS CATHEDRAL, DETROIT, MI

FIG. 93- ST. GEORGE, SCHERERVILLE, IN

An Orthodox Celebration

76
The church within the Serbian-Orthodox community is where people of the same faith and heritage can associate with one another. The church is often part of a larger complex of buildings that comprise a religious, cultural, and social center. This complex serves as a place to conduct religious services as well as a place that hosts social events like festivals, public gatherings, christenings, and weddings.

As the Serbian society assimilated to life in the United States they brought with them their traditions and customs. They have held on to this heritage with great admiration but as the society evolved, the connections with its traditions and customs became somewhat diluted in time. The church architecture of Serbian-Orthodoxy is deeply rooted in tradition and design. It reflects the community’s language of architecture through images, symbols, motifs, and ceremony. Most recently, the church complexes built within the United States seemed to have lost some of the vitality present in earlier facilities. As a result, the Serbian community becomes even further distanced from its heritage. Throughout the United States, the mixing of heritages is what makes this country culturally diverse. If, like the Serbian community, the heritage of all such communities is slowly being lost then, the end result is a less dynamic and less unique American society. Essentially, ethnic diversity and American sub-cultures, which have made the United States unique, lose their strength.
In order to sustain this rich mixing of heritages, each community must reaffirm their heritage. The religious and social architecture of the Serbian community is what this thesis proposal will address. The use of the church as a focal point within the community is the ultimate expression of the Serbian Community’s heritage. At present, this seems absent in modern Serbian-Orthodox church architecture which is virtually a duplication of basic Byzantine forms that have been unchallenged for centuries. Since it is at the church complex that the congregation gathers to communally exercise and express their religion, traditions, customs, and beliefs, a design that reflects tradition is needed, yet it must be interpreted without the loss of meaning to serve the modern Serbian society within the United States.
In order to test my thesis topic the actual project that was undertaken was the design of an Orthodox celebration space that included a church and an accompanying cultural center. A church was chosen because it is still a focal point within the American-Serbian community and from it extends all traditions and customs of the Serbian people. The main church program includes a narthex, a nave, a high altar, choir loft, Sunday School, and several other supporting spaces that create a holistic design for modern Serbian ceremonies. The accompanying cultural center program would include interior and exterior spaces for gathering to celebrate events vital to the church such as holidays, festivals, and social events. Other major spaces that surround the gathering spaces include kitchen facilities, offices, a restaurant, and a lobby/gallery for the display of contemporary and historical art works within the Serbian community and also within the community at large. Basically, the cultural center would compliment the church in that the church is where religious and ceremonial events occur and within the cultural center social functions are celebrated, both of which involve Serbian tradition and culture. The design was meant for the use of not only the American-Serbian community but also the surrounding community which may participate in the social events or community events such as an outdoor play performance. They may even enjoy the restaurant and art gallery.
THE PROGRAM & SITE

Requirements and context

The location of the site is in Merrillville, Indiana on the current church property. The property, 8700 Taft Street, is readily accessible from Interstate I-65 and includes approximately 20 acres of land. The rectangular site measures roughly 650 feet by 1300 feet with the smaller dimension fronting Taft Street. The overall site has an East-West orientation and is relatively flat with some trees and greenery. Suburban developments surround the site with the location of the town center, Crown Point, about 3 miles due South on Taft Street. The social/cultural context that surrounds the property includes several residential areas, 3 other nearby church complexes, 3 reception halls, a mental health hospital, a large public library, and several commercial developments. The people within the area are of middle to upper middle class and generally work in the surrounding cities with some commuting to Chicago, 45 minutes to the Northwest. The general Northwest Indiana and Chicago region is generously mixed with several ethnic groups that include Serbian, Russian, Mexican, Greek, Ukrainian, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Chinese, and other smaller groups.
The goals of this church complex are to better meet the needs of its users than has typically been accomplished. The design requirements include a space and atmosphere that is conducive to the Orthodox worship and its celebrative events. It must also be identifiable as an Orthodox complex with its roots in tradition. The desire is to create a space that is a modern interpretation, addresses the American-Serbian community, and reflects tradition without the loss of meaning.

The procedure that was involved in order to accomplish the above objectives included research into the history of the Serbian Church and specific congregation, the assessment of needs, and context evaluations. The methodologies that were employed were to establish a hierarchy within the architecture of the church complex with respect to form, layout, symbolism, materials, and traditions. Other significantly related considerations included sequence of space, lighting design, and the study of choral music structure and the configuration of ethnic dance. These components are extremely important within Serbian-Orthodox church design since Orthodoxy is a very processional religion (hence sequence), contains precisely lit spaces (hence lighting), and is a religion that delights itself with hymn music that is void of the use of instruments (hence hymn music structure). The complex design, as a whole, is likewise critical in that the American-Serbian community becomes very identified with its church and
social program. Therefore the form, layout, symbols, materials, and traditions must express and relate to the modern society located within the United States.
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

With the vast background of information that has been presented above, a discussion about my specific design solution can legitimately begin. To begin, the final drawings will be viewed and described which may seem to be contradicting, but these drawings represent the entire process of the design from beginning to conclusion. Within these renderings one can abstract ideas and concepts that have directed and lead the design to its fruition. As a result, the first two boards are abstractions of the initial concepts and studies with which this project began.

Board 1 (Figure 94)-The church architecture of Serbian Orthodoxy is deeply rooted in tradition. The design reflects the community's language of architecture through images, symbols, motifs, and ceremony. This image represents the balance I hope to achieve between tradition and a modern interpretation of Orthodoxy.

Board 2 (Figure 95)-This represents my early studies and conclusions. I studied the traditional Orthodox Church and attempted to interpret the essence in a modern design. I drew 4 conclusions about Byzantine architecture in general and utilized some of the principles that were expressed, which were:

1. The process of dematerialization through:

An Orthodox Celebration
83
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

- concealed masses
- polished surfaces
- perforation
- curved surfaces

2. The emphasis of the length and the height of the building, unifying space

3. The use of sunlight

4. The application of symbology through Icons, gestures, and procession.

As far as the physical features were concerned I felt the dome and the Ikonostasis (interior solid screen containing holy imagery) were the most significant and distinct features that were worthy of exploration and were truly representational of the essence of an Orthodox Church.

The wheat field refers back to board 1 evoking an image of Yugoslavia (Serbian homeland) with its rolling valleys and vast plains lush with agricultural crops. Wheat is also a symbol of The Resurrection—the most importantly observed religious holiday.

The early conceptual models completed began to develop and to address the notion of combining church and socio-cultural center (a trend already long in existence in the United States and Europe) into a holistic design. Although the idea of creating such a holistic and community-based design has been prevalent, there seems to be a deficiency in modern Orthodox projects in regards to this.

Typically, within the United States, the Orthodox complexes tend to have separate and quite often unrelated structures as
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

can be noticed in the abstract model (Figure 96). The church is symbolically placed on its own pedestal with the distant cultural center completed in an approach that speaks somewhat to the church architecturally, yet there seems to be a strong "wall" dividing the two.

The next model (Figure 97) represents the occasionally overpowering and humbling effect certain religious structures seem to have architecturally and also dogmatically through religion. This model also represents the seemingly unmodifiable design of Orthodox churches because of their awe-inspiring legacy of tradition. The black dot in the center represents a person.

On the opposite end, there is the solitary meditation point nearly everyone enjoys escaping to (Figure 98). The scale and natural environment found here is inviting and relaxing. Although the Orthodox fulfill the communal requirements of religion, they usually fail to provide a space for individual retrospection and reassessment of transgressions unless one chooses to become a monk. Together with the previous model, these two forms represent the extremes between which lies the result I desire to achieve in my design.

The fourth model (Figure 99) is one of the first forms I conceived where the church is raised to create a type of exonarthex and needed outdoor shelter which is somewhat enclosed. The exonarthex is basically a pre-entry court that likewise can be found at the Hagia Sophia. The concept of raising the church was appealing for this reason, yet this model exemplifies the difficulty I had in breaking from the overtly traditional forms at the onset of my design.
A switch in focus can be perceived in the next model (Figure 100). The apsidal half-dome-like altar space represents the new focus of the church shifting from the traditional great and encompassing dome. Now, the church, at once, extends from and is indicative of the altar, creating an overall single focus within the interior as well as the exterior.

The introduction of the adjoining socio-cultural center can be observed in this next model (Figure 101). The circular shape represents the church as the obvious "center" of the complex with the socio-cultural center surrounding and "embracing" the church, symbolizing the friendly embrace Serbians customarily give one another when encountered. The serpentine form is also symbolic of the dance line formation commonly called the "kolo" which is a festive social custom (Figure 102). The row of transversely acting columns are an abstraction of the great Ikonostasis screen found on the interior of Orthodox churches. Another layer of symbolism for the "screen" would be the numerous church candles reflecting Christ as the Light of the World.

The final conceptual model is a development of the preceding one, yet contains an element of each of the earlier studies (Figure 103). The "screen" has now become an ordering device or datum line with each tower creating an entrance point to the complex, symbolic of the many ways to come to Christ. In fact, with the use of the towers, one is able to enter on either of two levels and on any of the four cardinal points. Once one enters the towers, they are placed on this datum that guides them through the complex with the various functions and spaces branching off it. The visitor, not only enters directly on this device but, can also use it to lead to other spaces, therefore, creating a recognizable orientating instrument.
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

Board 3 (Figure 104)-This site plan, with the north point of the compass towards the top, shows the complex completely immersed in the wheat field, surrounded on all four sides as much as possible to increase the effect.

From the west elevation (Figure 105), the screen towers become one of the most prominent features—a type of advertisement billboard during the day and also at night when they become shafts of light creating an enchanting almost seductive atmosphere. The towers also reflect the traditional image of a European church and its bell tower rising above the horizon, dominating the skyline of a village or a city. Today, in Europe as well as America, those skylines are often dominated by industrial smokestacks or nuclear cooling towers. This is also particularly evident in Northwest Indiana which is heavily industrialized.

The parking surrounds the building in a sickle shape which seems to have been directly cut into the expansive sea of wheat. It also alludes back to the image on board 1. Visitors must pass through the wheat field on their way to the complex via narrow paths that converge around the building’s perimeter.

Board 4 (Figure 106)—The lower level plan provides (beginning at the top of the rendering):

- restrooms
- offices
- a sheltered pavilion with stage and open air theater for outdoor events, social dances, community plays, etc.
- 2 entrances at the base of each pavilion tower
- Sunday School classrooms
- a future development/expansion area which could be a

An Orthodox Celebration

87
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

restaurant/hightclub, daycare, or added dining facility

- mechanical space

**Board 5** (Figure 107)-The ground plan is similar to the layout of the lower level and it provides (beginning at the top):

- restrooms
- entrance points at the bases of all the towers which are also vertical circulation, bell placements, illuminaires, and at their peaks-solitary meditation points
- a gallery/lobby/narthex area for the display of artwork, lounging and quiet conversations, and a pre-entrance area for the church
- an entrance, directly beneath the raised seating, to the nave of the church, with flanking areas for coat storage and a preparatory room for baby changing or altar boy vesting
- a church plan which reflects the new focus of altar and congregation complete with fan-shaped seating in a stepped theater-like arrangement
- a church plan that contains abstractions of the Greek letters alpha and omega (which symbolize the Beginning and the End and that God is Eternal) seen in the choir loft and altar layouts respectively
- a reception hall complete with bar, restroom, and stage for social events, dances, christenings, weddings, bingo, etc.
- a kitchen and supporting mechanical facilities
- in essence 3 areas are created with offices being private, the gallery being semi-private, and the reception hall the most public
- an exterior walkway that surrounds the building and leads to the open-air theater, cafe, & fountain plaza

---

An Orthodox Celebration

88
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

Board 6 (Figure 108)-The second level plan provides:
- a balcony overlooking both the gallery/lobby/narthex and reception hall
- a possible retractable wall that follows the bottom edge of the choir loft for occasions when there is a smaller congregation, creating a more enclosed space
- a more secluded dining/bar balcony area with restroom
- an ability to close of the dining balcony, accommodating smaller functions

Board 7 (Figure 109)-The section through the nave portrays that:
- the altar is made the focus by the creation of the light well above it and also the creation of the halo effect above the nave with a single ring of high, continuous windows, much like the effect of earlier Byzantine domes
- the traditional central dome has become enlarged with the whole congregation placed underneath its "heaven on earth"
- the nave is now a large, single, open space with a longitudinal effect that focuses on the altar and still addresses the Greek cross plan on two levels
- the apparent darkness prevents the entire structure from revealing itself and welcoming rays of light, originating from above, penetrate the darkness
- the concrete walls of the nave, can be impressed with Orthodox iconography and imagery, create a sensual coldness that is warmed by the lightly colored wood pews
- the translucent glass towers can also be impressed with iconographic reliefs
- the seating design, which facilitates a more dynamic space, allows more visibility, creates a "gather-around" sense, allows for the space underneath to be utilized for a coat
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

room and a preparatory room for changing clothes, allows for more than one entrance to the nave (unlike traditional plans), and finally, creates favorable acoustics

- the sense of arrival is also exalted through the use of the long hallway that ends in the center of the nave at the crossing of the 2 major axis-exploding into a large volume with a dome that resembles the grottos and caves where man first lived and is also like the Mother’s womb
- there could be a retractable wall that follows the bottom edge of the choir loft for instances when there is a smaller congregation
- beneath the nave is the sheltered outdoor pavilion, which was provided by the raising of the church on to two piloti, complete with stage and open-air theater suitable for outdoor plays, gatherings, or speeches

Board 8 (Figure 110)-The section through the socio-cultural center portrays the that:

- the reception hall provides ample space for a variety of social functions with a dining capacity of about 500 that can be expanded in the future on the lower level to 1000
- the space is very open, allowing flexibility in furniture arrangement
- the space is also substantially lit naturally by the expansive walls of glass which also provide views into nature and the context

Board 9 (Figure 111)-The final perspective reflects that:

- the focus on the interior is now the altar
- the flanking glass towers, of translucent glass, can be impressioned with similar iconography as mentioned
earlier in this discussion

- the concrete walls can also be impressioned with similar imagery that can be completed using a contemporary artist's interpretation of the age-old Byzantine frescoes and paintings but in a new and different media
- the great Ikonostasis, at the forefront of the nave could be interpreted in a more modern sense employing the material of glass instead of traditional sculpted wood
- the Ikonostasis can also become etched, colored, and embossed with symbols of the faith and, in the end, create a screen that still functions to separate nave and altar, yet allows the silhouetted outlines of the clergy, located behind, to become a type of "motion-picture" scenery, similar in effect to the translucent glass towers that become animated by the users moving within them

Within the final model (Figures 112-120), one can visualize the 3 elements of church, "screen", and socio-cultural center interacting. The symbology can be further layered upon through the recognition of 7 towers that represent the 7 sacraments, or 7 corporal and 7 spiritual works of mercy, or the 7 branched candelabra, or the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. The towers can also be symbolic of the spears that pierce the ever-present evil serpent that seems to surround and tempt our world.

As seen in plan, the oval shape of the church is like the "eye" of God suggesting His omnipresence. It is also symbolic of the "seed" of life with its "arms" or "roots" extended into this world. In the north and south, elevations (Figures 112-113), the church begins to resemble an abstract bird or eagle, symbolic of not only the magnificence of the United States but also of the Liturgy of St. John, which is practiced at each Serbian Orthodox service. It is also a
symbol of unity and victory among Serbians.
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 95-BOARD 2

MODERN INTERPRETATION

NATURE

THE SCREEN

An Orthodox Celebration

94
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

An Orthodox Celebration

95
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 98

FIG. 99

An Orthodox Celebration

96
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 100

An Orthodox Celebration

97
FIG. 102

An Orthodox Celebration
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

An Orthodox Celebration

100
An Orthodox Celebration

101
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 106-BOARD 4
FIG. 109-BOARD 7

LONGITUDINAL NAIVE SECTION
1/16"=1'-0"
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

An Orthodox Celebration
108
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 114

FIG. 115

An Orthodox Celebration

109
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

An Orthodox Celebration

110
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

Fig. 118

An Orthodox Celebration

111
THE DESIGN

Concepts and observations

FIG. 119

An Orthodox Celebration

112
WITH the completion of this thesis I felt I had achieved the desired goal. Of course a project is never really totally finished and I regret not being able to develop the details more, but, it was to the point of allowing detail design to begin. I feel that I have legitimately tested the limits regarding such a strong Orthodox tradition while reflecting on the modern without a loss of meaning and identity. To me, that is what’s important. The identity with the Church is very strong within Serbian Orthodoxy and because of that relationship, the strength and loyalty of both church and patrons increases.

To just step in and rearrange the accustomed layout and form of the church may seem bold of me, but if the identity of the Church is slowly being lost among its followers because the unchallenged design spoke to a people of centuries earlier, then there is a need for change and readaptation. Of course, the change can not occur overnight. Instead, it must naturally occur over time and hopefully with this thesis as a “beginning”, the Church will once again be strongly identifiable with the society at the time of its construction, as well as a source of inspiration for future endeavors within a continuously evolving and complex society.

The lesson learned here is not necessarily for the Orthodox only. This situation could very well be applied to architecture in general. The idea of creating an architecture that speaks to the society of the time is far more
valuable than designing with a "flair for fashion" or in the "latest style". This seems to have very little relevance to the users and is a narrow point of view. What needs to occur is a holistic design approach that considers many variables. In this way, architects can begin to understand what society requires of them, proving their ability and worth to improve the environment. Then, architects can be seen as providing a valuable commodity, causing society to demand architects in every aspect of space design in order to produce a worthwhile result.
Bratsiotis, Panagiotis, *The Greek Orthodox Church*, University of Notre Dame Press, South Bend, Indiana, 1968.


BIBLIOGRAPHY

The sources


An Orthodox Celebration

116
THE END
AMEN.