LAKWOOD CHURCH of GOD
ELKHART, INDIANA

A SPACE FOR COMMUNITY WORSHIP

RICHARD A. STUMP
ARCHITECTURAL THESIS 1987
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My parents, Richard and Joni Stump. Without your love, encouragement, support, and prayers I could have never accomplished what I have. May I never fail to make you proud of me. I love you both very much.
This thesis will investigate the importance of a quality setting for worship. Questions to be considered will include: what is a church building and how does it relate to worship, where are the elements of worship located and how do they relate to the space, and how should the design of the spatial setting relate form and volume when looking at exterior and interior?

To test this thesis I propose a master plan for a new church facility for the Lakewood Church of God, Elkhart, Indiana. The development process will consist of schematic designs derived from gathered data in such a way to relate to and answer questions raised in the Thesis Statement.
My interest in church architecture started long before I decided to deal with a church as my thesis. This interest began when I worked for John S. Kane and Associates, a church architect for the Church of God Movement head-quartered in Anderson, Indiana. After coming to the College of Architecture and Planning at Ball State University, the interest increased with trips to Columbus, Indiana to see the various churches by Eliel Saarinen, Eero Saarinen, and Harry Weese. After the recent Polyark 8 trip to Europe, my interest was peaked. I then decided, in some capacity, to deal with a church as my thesis statement and project.

As part of an architectural firm designing churches, I realized that the church I grew up in, and the church I was attending at the time were poorly planned. The buildings did not function well and they lacked a quality that was significant, in my opinion, to worship. They failed to meet the needs of the worshiping body. Thus creating the desire for something more aesthetic and functional in regards to planning and design.

As an architectural student visiting Columbus, I was able to see what other architects did when planning and designing church buildings. It also made me aware that there is no
perfect or ultimate example of how a church design should be dealt with; Each architect evaluates the needs of a congregation in different ways and gives his individual response.

Travelling through Europe I also discovered, as mentioned earlier, the item that so many of today's churches lack. That item is a quality interior space that inspires a sense of awe and reverence, whether in a small scale such as the Chapel at Avebury, England or in large scale as Salisbury Cathedral.

With this new discovery, I decided my thesis would investigate that quality of space that invokes awe and reverence. However, before I could start I had to understand, for myself, what a church was and how it related to worship.
The church building is the house of the church. Pre-eminently the Christian church is the symbol of Christ, the house in which all, believers and non-believers, may find peace and refuge; the house of the people who are themselves the temple of the Living God. It is not only a house in which to pray, it is a house built of living stones. The church is first and foremost a building in which the people of God do certain things: to perform the various communal activities known collectively as liturgy and ministering to those in need. This is what a church building is for. It is a building for the corporate worship. Above all, a room for the preaching of God’s Word. Reduced to its bare essentials, the church is a building to house a congregation gathered to worship God.

Liturgy, or worship, is the very heart of the Church’s life. While personal devotion and private worship are not denied, worship in the Christian community is a communal act. Therefore, a church building should not be designed for the worship of the individual alone with the Alone, but for the corporate fellowship called to a purpose in the world. The church building should be shaped by worship, and not worship by architecture.

If the primary function of a
church building is to provide a convenient space for a congregation to worship God, it should also be an embodiment, a visible manifestation, of what the church is and believes. In the words of Thomas Aquinas, "the church building is itself an image of the mystical body of Christ." In the last resort it is impossible to consider either of these functions in isolation from the other. But again it is a matter of first things first. A church will take on the nature of a symbol only in so far as it’s plan and structure are informed by a genuine understanding of the nature of the Christian community and it’s worship.
Earlier Christians churches, which some find so perfect they consider it sacrilegious to compare them to our own, seem to have best suited different concepts during the changes of the Christian era. The Early Christian church has a distinctly ceremonial character. The Romanesque church is best suited to the passer-by and to individual prayer. The Gothic church is first and foremost the ultimate temple to the glory of the Living God. Today an architect must choose a portion all of these for a church to satisfy all equally.

As a place for ministering to the worshiping body, a church must be functional. As a monument to God, it must inspire a sense of the religious. As an expression of man, it must achieve a certain amount of artistic beauty, and it can only succeed in doing this if it is permeated with religious significance. In the same way, it cannot assume religious significance if it fails to fulfill its function.

Therefore, the three requirements are respectively mystical, functional and visual in their nature. The minister is more likely to stress functionalism, the architect beauty, and the congregation a fundamentally religious character. Although they are all different, they must co-exist side by side.
Today a group of Christians meeting to discuss plans for a new church building has a difficult task. Not only is it cumbersome to agree on delicate matters of budget, but it is nearly impossible to be in total agreement about form and function of a new church building. There are just too many options.

Unfortunately, many modern-day church buildings have been designed to look impressive, and indeed they do (i.e.: Le Corbusier’s Chapel of Notre Dame de Haut), instead of meeting the requirements of a particular worshiping body. Churches have been designed and built in various shapes from that of a fish to a crown of thorns. These symbolic forms, however, do not relate to the practical function of space.

Part of the problem stems from an idea of worship which suggests that going to church is like going to a theater or lecture hall. Indeed, the word auditorium is often used to refer to a church. Yet designing practical, attractive new churches in any style is possible and does occur. Of course, a modern, functioning church building is the result of a meticulous review by the worshiping body of what the church means and what elements of their life together are important.
The role of the church is changing in today's society. There is a wonderful renovation occurring, often in unanticipated ways. This renewal is bringing the sense of community forward to be considered in many new church building designs.

This thesis will investigate the importance of creating a quality setting for worship, as a result of: focal elements within the worship space, and the relation to form and space when establishing a setting that will create a sense of awe and reverence.

Questions to be considered in this project are: what is the church and how does it relate to worship, what are the general elements of worship and where should they be located, does natural light place an important role in the design of the church building, and should there be elevation and/or hierarchy between the pastor and congregation in communal worship?
To test this thesis, I propose a master plan for a new church facility, including sanctuary and educational units, for my client, the Midtown, or soon to be called Lakewood Church of God in Elkhart, Indiana. The objective is to meet the program needs of the congregation by giving them the community worship experience they desire. The development process will consist of schematic designs developed from gathered research data until an appropriate solution is found relating to, and answering the questions raised in the thesis statement.
When I began to look for a building site, I discovered my client had already purchased property on which to build a new church facility. Although the site was, and is not the most idealistic nor in the best location, I decided to go ahead and use it for this thesis project. My intention was to take the challenge and prove that it could be redeveloped into something that would compliment the building I was to design.
The site is located in Elkhart, Indiana, in the extreme northern part of Elkhart County. North of Interstate 80 on Indiana State Road 19, the site is situated opposite Simonton Lake well out of the metropolitan city limits. In fact it is south of the Michigan border by approximately three miles.
The site is relatively square and sloped from the road frontage to the southwest corner of the property. In the same corner there lays a retention pond. It is an open site with trees bordering the property lines save the road frontage line. The context is suburban with a small amount of commercial development in the area. The possibility of a high water table would discourage any basement construction. However, the site, approximately four acres, is of adequate size for a new church facility with limited, future growth.
A: View of the site from the farm to the north.
B: Surprise view of the site from the northern approach.
C: Minor views from residential areas.
D: View from passing traffic on State Road 19.
E: Major view of site from southern approach.
F: View of site from boat service area to the south.
A: View of neighboring farm. Screened by foliage.
B: View of houses along tree lined road. Use berming to minimize view of houses - elevate view to trees.
C: View south along road. Use berming and foliage to minimize view.
D: View to boat service area. Use berming to minimize unpleasant views.
E: Existing limited view of pond due to vegetation. The proposal is to open this area up to view and expand the area of water.
F: Pleasant views of foliage at west end of the site.
A: Noise from farm machinery. Most intense during spring and fall months.

B: Traffic noise - cars and tractor-trailers. Peak times: 6 - 9 am and 3 - 6 pm.

C: Noise from service area. Peak times: 8 - 5 during summer boating season.
The Lakewood Church of God is a church on the move; growing - not static. Therefore, items that need to be considered in the programing are:

-- A sanctuary exclusively for worship or worship type activities.
-- A multi-purpose area: fellowship/recreation room.
-- The building should be appealing and inviting in appearance.
-- A design that follows function.
-- An entry/narthex large and inviting.
-- The facility should have southern exposure for the entry.
-- Natural lighting to create different moods; a sense of awe.
-- A baptismry in the sanctuary.

WORSHIP SPACE REQUIREMENTS

-- Worship seating: 200 - expandable to 400
-- Overflow seating: 200 - the expandable area
-- Choir seating: 40
-- A baptismry is needed, but it is not used weekly. It should be located near the front of the sanctuary. The baptismry should access changing rooms. Baptism is by submersion.
-- A majestic and full sound should be acoustically possible from the choir's location. A soundproof choir room with piano should be adjacent to the sanctuary.
FELLOWSHIP SPACE REQUIREMENTS

-- There should be table seating space for 200 people, and chair seating space for 200 – 300 people.
-- Special functions will include: wedding receptions, dinners, banquets, and community activities.
-- There should be ample storage for chairs, tables, and sporting equipment.

ADMINISTRATION SPACE REQUIREMENTS

-- Pastor’s study with toilet and shower facilities.
-- Assistant Pastor’s office.
-- Secretary’s office located between the two Pastor’s offices.
-- Work room.
-- Conference, media, and library space.
**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

Class and attendance:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tr>
<td>-- Nursery</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Beginners</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- K-Garten</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>-- Middler</td>
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<td>-- Junior</td>
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<td>-- Youth: Jr. Hi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Youth: Sr. Hi</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Adults</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-- Electives</td>
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These facilities will also be used for community group meetings, youth fellowships, mens and womens groups, and scouting activities.
Before starting the design process for the new church facility, I had to evaluate the questions in the thesis statement. The questions, to refresh your memory, dealt with the elements of worship and their location, the importance of natural light, and the hierarchy or elevation between the pastor and the congregation.

The following pages are the conclusions to those questions. One question that was not discussed concerned the elevation difference of the pastor and congregation. In my opinion, there needs to be some elevation given to the pulpit and pastor. This is so individuals in the congregation can see better. I am not saying the pastor should be sat on a pedestal, rather the platform should be of sufficient height so the events taking place on it can be seen by those who are sitting near the back of the worship area.
SANCTUARY...when people gather in activities of conversation and interchange, the normal shape of the group is a circle. Likewise, if there is a moderator or presider, the shape is usually a half-circle. From these observations one can make some generalizations about a good sanctuary space. It should be one space. It should not necessarily be a space absolutely clear spanned, however, if there is internal structure it should be thoughtfully located.

PERCEPTION:
--a holy place, as a building set aside for the worship of God
--a place of refuge
--a place of study

ARCHITECTURE:
--respect to proportions
--the organization is to suggest there is no longer a nave; it is all chancel

WORSHIP:
--should avoid the scheme in which one has the sense of a stage, audience, or an arena
COMMUNION TABLE...is not simply the principal symbol of Christ: it is also the table around which the assembly of Christians gather for the Eucharistic banquet. It cannot function if placed against any wall; it is a table and not a side counter. The communion table should not be the climactic focus at the end of a great linear procession. It should aesthetically close the vista of the surroundings and yet be considerate of what it signifies. It should be free standing.

PRECEPTION:
--know the significance of the table
--understanding the location of table

ARCHITECTURE:
--pleasing to the sight
--compliment the surroundings
--stand apart without being distasteful
--hi-lighted
--human proportions and portable

WORSHIP:
--not the center of worship, but still important in the liturgy
--it stands for unity, fellowship, and the intimate companionship of the family
CHOIR: A choir and/or music is likely to be part of the church service. How then, are these singers related to the common body of worshipers? This question is difficult to answer because at times the choir member is a worshiping part of the whole, and at other times they are the leaders in worship.

PERCEPTION:
--a group of singers organized and trained to sing together

ARCHITECTURE:
--located where voices can be heard well
--ideally the choir should sing toward the people

WORSHIP:
--a worshiping group within the whole
--a worship leader
--leaving the seat during special parts of the service should not be ignored

PULPIT: The style of oratory appropriate to the grand lectern or pulpit seems to have passed. When the President of the country speaks to the nation from a chair behind a desk, it seems senseless to build towers for preaching. Sanctuary furnishings should be flexible and allow for ad hoc arrangement solutions.

PERCEPTION:
--a raised platform

ARCHITECTURE:
--portable
--design should fit preacher as well as surroundings

WORSHIP:
--not a tower, rather an instrument from which to conduct the liturgy
BAPTISMAL FONT: Is the baptistry a pool or vessel? Is the act of baptism a full submersion or a light sprinkling? In this design the act follows that of Christ’s baptism by John the Baptist. In this situation providing a pool for submersion can be troublesome, since pools are not portable. Baptism can be a private act, but ideally it should be witnessed by the body of believers.

What about smaller pools; fountains? Some of the most pleasant amenities in a public space is a pool of running water. What then of locating a small spout and pool near the entrance in the church, thereby being a reminder of the act of baptism.
NATURAL LIGHT: In the past, natural light was handled with great dexterity. The architect plotted the shades and shadows on the massive masonry buildings. The buildings had depth and texture; it was alive with the play of sunlight and shadow. The massive walls, however, has been replaced with a transparent wall. This wall mirrors the sky and surroundings. The buildings of our age have become lightsome: lighted, luminous, and bright.

ARCHITECTURE:
- optical considerations:
  --- light is invisible - use surfaces to reflect the effect of light to the eye

- brightness considerations
  --- objective - control glare and brightness of surroundings
  --- reflection - scatter with rough surfaces
The next item needing to be considered is the form or shape the worship space wants to conform to.

During the research portion of this thesis, a survey was circulated asking various questions about the church in general. The survey included two questions that dealt with the external form of the church building/worship space and the internal functioning of the same space. The following are the results of these two questions.
Exterior... After evaluating the six major volumetric forms for the worship environment, the majority of people questioned chose equally the box, prism, and cube forms for the traditional shapes of a worship building.
Interior... When asked about the internal functioning of the worship space, 70% of the people chose the community organization of worship over the traditional organization. Most chose this because they felt that the space was more like a family setting; they were closer to the center of events; they felt little or no hierarchy.
In response to the survey questioning exterior form and interior function, my final design incorporates the box form of the traditional church with proportions that would give the interior the flexible space needed for a communal type worship space.

Keep in mind that this thesis is not conclusive in its solution to the problem. It is only one suggestion of many available options. The thesis also was not as concerned with the support portions of the church facility as it is with the worship space. Although the support areas are important, and were dealt with to some degree, the main intent was to create, as a whole, a quality reverent space in which to fellowship with other believers and to worship our Living God.

Enjoy the results...
4 main spaces: Random Placement (Dec. 86)

1) Worship service space → this should include narthex/entrance
2) Fellowship and/or recreation space
3) Administration space → should be located near narthex/entrance
4) Religious Education space

Diagram:
- Worship service
- Fellowship
- Administration
- Religious Education
- Narthex
- Entrance
- Counters
- Lobby
- Working area
- Recreation

Diagram shows the flow and connections between different spaces.
Design Scheme: "Church on a hill" (random placement)
Design Scheme: Linear Format
Jan.'87

1. Worship Space (144 x 205)
2. Administration
3. Recreation/Fellowship Space
4. Educational Space

- Flat roof scheme: orthogonal
- Horizontality → space within a space

Saamia's Cambridge Chapel
STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS TO DEFINE SPACE, ACTING AS VISUAL & TRAFFIC CIRCULATION DEFINERS, SUSPEND "MEMBRANES" WITH COLORED LENS

WELL NEEDS TO BE COOLER TO ALLOW FOR LIGHT TO "BREATHE" SPACES!
Low window framing coastal view to water.
"Position to proportion/ratio/..."
Throughout this past thesis year I kept asking the question, "what can make a church better?" The answer should begin by looking at the needs of the people using the facility. Again, the architecture should be formed by the worship and not the other way around.

What you have just seen is an attempt at answering that question. It is completely subjective whether my solution is the right or wrong answer. The point is I learned where to begin looking when wanting to make the church, in the general sense of the word, better for the worhiping body of Christ.

The things the church need remember when planning a new facility is proper location, a meticulous review by the worhiping body of what the church means and what elements of their lives together are important, and the basic requirements for designing a church building. It is also important to remember that good architecture does not cost any more than bad architecture. The church should always strive to find an architect who is willing to not necessarily give the least for most, but give the most no matter how much a church can afford.


