11-21-2008

Redefining What Is Sacred

Sarah A. Sisson

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Redefining What Is Sacred

by

Sarah A. Sisson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture
School of Architecture and Community Design
College of Graduate Studies
University of South Florida

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Date of Approval:
November 21, 2008

Keywords: church, ecclesiatic, gradient, multi-use, light, scale

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this document and the hard work that went into the final design product to my husband, John H. Sisson. The time and moments that I have missed while working long nights in studio will be repaid. I could not be the person without your belief in me. Without your support and understanding, there is no way I could have done any of this without you. Thank you.
Acknowledgements

Thank you for the continuous support from my father, Ronald E. Williamson, and my Mother-in-law, Brenda B. Sisson. Thank you to my family- especially my brothers Nathan, Austin, Zack, and Craig.

Thank you to my thesis chair, Steve Cooke. Your teaching style promotes self-confidence and a self-taught awareness.

To my fellow students that have been through this with me- Epic Win! It has been an awesome journey full of endless nights and glue covered finger tips. You have taught me so much. Thank you.

I would, also, like to acknowledge Reverend Geoffrey Lentz of the United Methodist Church, who has been my religious consultant. Thank you for your time. Spiritually, I have been inspired by First Methodist Church of Pensacola and the work that they do for the community.
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Redefining What is Sacred

Sarah A. Sisson

ABSTRACT

Within the last twenty years, Evangelical Protestants, primarily in the southeastern United States, transformed the functions of their churches from a traditional sacred gathering space to an open outreach resource for the community. Architectural form did not follow these new functions and the complexity of their modern spatial usage has never been resolved. Modern typologies, such as the mega-center or its smaller counter-part the metal building chapel, ignore their responsibility to the community as a symbolic presence.

Protestant churches began community outreach programming like life wellness series and youth enrichment programs. Once viewed as secular, these programs increased accessibility of the church to the public. Also, long-established welfare programs like soup kitchens have gained visibility.

Churches facilitate these programs with large, non-descript multi-use spaces. Typically the main worship hall is given prominence, though it is only occupied for formal worship. To strengthen the modernization, ecclesiastic design must pay tribute to both service types: secular and sacred.

For my study, I chose the First United Methodist Church of Pensacola and considered its daily usage. Acting as a house of God, the church is vibrant center for its members and the community. Due to its historic location in downtown Pensacola, the
church expanded for its community outreach programming into adjacent properties. As a result, secular daily events disengaged from the main worship hall.

This thesis is a design solution for the modern church; that respects traditional liturgical elements of the denomination while allowing spatial flexibility for the use throughout the everyday life of the church. Program elements are based on the site’s need for permanent locations; a soup kitchen and an activities center for an inner-city youth. The design also intertwines the journey of every person with awareness of each program’s significance, and it rests on concepts of light and spatial usage in traditional sacred spaces in conjunction with an analysis of modern functions to determine emotive quality of each space.

By understanding the intertwined relationship between the place of worship and the compassionate act of communal support, the architectural response will redefine what is sacred.
Site Selection

The selected site is located in the Old East Hill historic district of downtown Pensacola, Florida at the intersection East Wright Street and North Alcaniz Street, on the 2000 block. The neighborhood east of 1-10 interstate boundary edge has changed in the last several years due to the aftermath of hurricane Ivan which hit Pensacola on September 16, 2004. Before the hurricane, the neighborhood was mixed with some homes well-maintained and some that were dilapidated already. The storm demolished numerous homes. In the images provided, blue-tarps can be seen that were used for roof covering in the interim of rebuilding process.

Jewel Canada-Wynn, the district six city representative, explained that previous to hurricane Ivan there was a twenty percent poverty level in that area. When the homes and businesses were damaged, they were required to be renovated or rebuilt to the standards

Figure 1: Effects of Hurricane Ivan
of the Old East Hill historic district guidelines and codes. Residents that were already struggling financially in the area were forced to abandon, sell, or relinquish their homes or businesses. Consequently, there are more vacant lots, abandoned buildings, demolished homes, or under-sold properties in the neighborhood particularly to the east of interstate 1-10.

West of the interstate was not effected in the same manner because many of the historically significant structures, large affluent homes, and well-established businesses have remained.

The neighborhood to the east of the interstate is in a transitional state. The gentrification process is occurring with the homes that were abandoned or the vacant lots that remain. Wynn mentioned that she believed that the majority of people displaced were senior citizens without home insurance or the income to repair their homes.

The Site Practically Defined

The selected site is 48,244 square feet or 1.17 acres. At the southeast corner of the site, a CSX railway track crosses at a diagonal motion while interstate 1-10 merges one way above. The site slopes downward from the north end of the site to the south for an elevation of about six feet in height. In the center of the site are the archeological remains of an historic home. The red brick retaining / foundation wall remains, and further to the center of that is the brick remains of an outdoor fireplace, perhaps the location of an original kitchen.
Civic Usage

The civic center is located diagonally across East Wright Street from the site. The location of the Civic Center to the site will be an important connection element because people who are visiting Pensacola to attend functions at the Civic Center will be able to understand the culture of the area more appropriately. While this connection is an important element to the city, it also requires a great deal of parking for events which are located across Wright Street beneath the interstate. The Pensacola Grande Hotel is across the street from the site to service the civic center. It is a single vertical element for several blocks. Within several blocks of the civic center are several hotels and restaurants.

Residential

Condition of the homes that remained varies. There were three homes, within three blocks of the site, which were historic homes moved from previous sites to the vacant lots. Several homes were in the process of being renovated, while a small percentage of the homes were in need of repair. Overall, about half of the historic homes were in good condition. There is also a unique element of historic homes from other locations that are being moved or have already been moved onto the vacant lots.
Commercial

The neighborhood is mixed-use with the existing historic homes, but zoned commercially. The commercial consists of small offices in refurbished homes, a retail strip along Wright Street, and mixed businesses along Wright Street and Davis Avenue frontage. Some older homes have been converted to businesses or work/live units. There are also several businesses that remain vacant from hurricane damage or simply from the economic decline of the current recession.

Churches and Main Street

Along North Palafox Street, there are several churches that are symbolic to the city of Pensacola. First Baptist Church of Pensacola is over a hundred years old, and sits vertically high on the hill and looks a beacon. While the First Methodist Church and the First Episcopalian Church are also over a hundred years old, but are nestled several blocks down in the walking area of downtown. These churches congregations are made up people from all over the area, but symbolically represent “old money” of the small city. They are known to be populated by the wealthiest in town.

Palafox Street is the main attraction for the historic elements visited in downtown Pensacola, and also serves as a main artery for pedestrian and vehicular traffic into downtown. Palafox Street runs through the entire town, but changes names to Highway 29 in the more industrial area north of downtown.
Conclusion

There are both dynamic and problematic elements to enrich the design solution of this project. The heaviest problematic element is the looming interstate 1-10’s. The exit swoops over the corner southeast corner of the site, and is approximately 26 feet in height. While at the same point below on the ground sits the railroad tracks. They are line for freight that runs east to west once a week, on Wednesday, according to residences of the area. Unfortunately, CSX denied the availability of the train schedule when they were contacted. Dynamic elements of the site are the physical context of its location between the prominent elements of historical and proud Palafox Street and the civic center, and the residential neighborhood mixed with the retail and business areas that keep the area always filled with people.
Figure 8: Usage Map Indicating Variations on Site
Program Analysis

Demographics and Denominations

Conceptually, the church is the center for the rites of passage in the presence of the divine: birth, coming of age, marriage, and the burial of the dead. “Worship spaces are places of commitment, where individuals commit to a faith and join a community, where couples commit to one another, and where a family and the wider family of the

Figure 9: Conceptual Drawing Interpreting One’s Life Cycle in the Church
church commit to raising a child."\(^1\) Therefore, the intent of the sacred community place is for people of all stages of their life to take part in faith.

In its 2000 years of existence, Christianity has developed an extraordinary breadth of and variety of practice. The denominations vary in their forms of liturgy, precise interpretation of Christian doctrine, and the role of their clergy. Their churches or chapels share common elements in regards to architectural spaces: a gathering space (at entrance that signifies a journey to the chapel), a sanctuary (with an altar, lectern, and pulpit), congregational seating is in a space known as the nave, a baptistery, a music area (can range from simply a choir and piano to the more modern elaborate of a live rock band), and the ancillary supporting spaces (offices, storage, audio-visual equipment, etc.).\(^2\) With that spatial architectural understanding in mind and a collaborative viewpoint on religious sects as described by Baptist minister Reverend William Caldwell, “as rivals but as friends” to combine these denominations would only make a community stronger. Major considerations that will be accommodated are the denominational liturgy acts of Roman Catholic approaches to the Episcopalian and Lutheran and the Protestant approaches for the Methodist and Baptist. For the Roman Catholic Eucharistic celebrations, there must be provisions for a space for the communion table and its services. For the Protestant approach, the service itself is more theatrical based with an oversized pulpit and a baptism font that allows full immersion for the Baptists.\(^3\)

Literal Description of Spaces

\(^1\) See Roberts, Nicholas W. *Building Type Basics for Places of Worship* p.1
\(^2\) See Roberts, Nicholas W. *Building Type Basics for Places of Worship* p.35
\(^3\) See Bennett, Vicki. *Sacred Space and Structural Style: The Embodiment of Socio-Religious Ideology* p.58-62
The gathering space is the spatial allocation where the visitor or congregant enters the church precinct. Design approaches sometimes treat this spatially as a threshold or historically it has been the indicator as the end of one’s journey or pilgrimage. Some exterior possibilities consist of a garden walk from parking area, courtyards, or a covered transitional area to an interior gathering room. Some interior functions are members congregate before service to greet each other, must say “all are welcome”, overall concept is that this is the space that the congregation experiences themselves a community. The size must be at least one-third the size of sanctuary. The area can be calculated by: 5 sq. ft. per worship space seat X 300 seats = 1500 sq. ft. Some other considerations are a comfortable environment, an informal seating for elders, a “cry room” for mothers to leave service, a notice boards and literature, and a welcome center. Some ancillary services to be considered are bathrooms, kitchenette for pastries and coffee, storage for ushers, small bible study rooms for individual meetings or prayer, and can be used for service overflow.

The sanctuary is a liturgical space for performance of the service and seating of the congregation. The seating area is 15 sq. ft. per worship space seat X 300 seats = 4500 sq. ft. The first case study of Lake Magdalene United Methodist Community’s multi-use space that housed the “progressive service” was 56’ wide X 72’ deep = 4032 sq. ft.
and seats 300 to 350 people. Area is further dependent on seating arrangements and pew sizes.

For comfortable participation of audience, a distance of 75’ is the maximum standard for view of speakers face recognition and sound of the human voice. For circulation of seating, one may not be comfortable crossing more than 5 seats over in either direction with large aisles between at least 5 feet in width. The stage and service performance area are the alter, pulpit, lectern, and the seats for priests/ pastors.

The communion preparation area needs to be at least 8’X10’=80 sq. ft. The sound equipment at the case study example was two side spaces at 8’ X 10’ each (providing 160 sq. ft.).

The dining hall space can be a combined with other spaces. For example, the gathering space and the nave, but there must be a fully operational kitchen. Service kitchen size should be 25’X18’= 450 sq. ft.  

Community Outreach Programming

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Figure 11: Choir and Music Spaces Needed (Graphic from Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.17)

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The two main community outreach programs that are going to be the focus of the project are the Milk & Honey project and a permanent soup kitchen facility. The Milk & Honey project is for inner city children that will be left alone after school or during the summer. The program currently has no facilities. There will be 4-6 classrooms offered requiring 225 sq. ft. each. They will also need a learning resource center that has computer stations and studio desk for a varied application of learning facilitation. Exterior components will be athletic courts and a playground for the children to play. The soup kitchen will require a large enough kitchen, indoor dining area and a covered outdoor eating area.

Local Zoning Codes

The site selected is zoned as C-1, which means neighborhood commercial. Other considerations are to the Old East Hill District historic committee.

Florida Building Codes: A religious facility that holds up to 350 people falls under the building code assembly occupancy as ‘Group A-2’. Group A occupancy is defined by
code as the use of a building or structure, or any portion thereof, for the gathering
together of 50 or more persons for such purposes as civic, social or religious functions or
for recreation, or for food or drink consumption or awaiting transportation. Assembly
occupancies also include special amusement buildings regardless of occupant load.
Abstract

The multi-use facilities of the modern church are not a generic gathering space. There are rules and standards used for these spaces. However, design decisions are made pastors not architects. While these professionals have good intentions and far more knowledge on how the church operates, a design professional could strengthen modernization efforts of the church by providing them with a space that functions appropriately.

The investigation was made in a multi-use space at a traditional Methodist Church (Lake Magdalene: A United Methodist Community). The massive room has a separate entrance, a kitchen or service area, and a small open plaza outside. Originally built in 1981, renovation of the space was made two years ago for the use of progressive worship space, but since the renovation was so successful, it is also used as a public gathering space. Used to generate additional income for the church, the space is rented for public usage. As a result of its popularity in the community, the room is transformed almost daily.

Literal Description of the Space

The main meeting hall room size is 56’ wide.

Figure 13: Removable Altar
X72’deep with a 15’ ceiling height. The capacity varies depending on the event in a theatre setting it holds 300 to 350 people, but for dinner service seats 250. Furniture is a key element to the transformation to the space. Simple chairs, made of a steel frame and nylon covered foam, are placed in different arrangements depending on the type of meeting that the space is accommodating. The chairs are covered with a fabric for more formal events. Simple round tables are also removed, reordered, and covered depending on the event. There are four movable altars that remain in the space, but only one is moved to prevent public access to the stage which all of the musical equipment remains for all events. These altars are simply activated during the progressive service by lighting candles and applying spotlights. There are large interchangeable art pieces that speak of the sermon changes. There is no natural light in the space, but there are false windows that were removed from an original chapel that has been removed from the site. These windows are artificially illuminated from the back for dramatic effect. There is also a full service kitchen that is used for dinners and ceremonies.

The stage was the primary design driver for the renovation efforts. The performance space size is about 15’ deep X 40’ wide. The remainder of the width of the room is used for the sound system. Shape and sectional qualities are based on the ban shell design or choral shell for its acoustical quality. The shape is simply framed inward from the original mass. The walls and ceilings of the stage area are painted black for theatrical effects while a light, sheer, draped fabric decoratively hides fluorescent
lighting. Giant projection screens flank each side of the stage that provides an
interactive source for the church service. They are strategically placed at eye level of the
crowd.

Three analytical spaces are generated from actions of the stage: performance
space, transitional space created by steps or pulpit (used for kneeling for individual
prayer and collection plates), the speaker’s performance space generated by podium
and table placement. Because the service is true to its evangelical roots, it is about the
spoken word of the pastor. The speaker’s space is the most hierarchical element of the
Sunday service. The podium in below the stage located at the same level as the crowd
creating a relationship between the speaker and the audience.

Investigation: The investigation technique used consisted of the spatial usage and
programming for this multi-use space on four different days during one week.

Wednesday (5-14-08) - “The Last Supper” congregation service

The configuration for this event is
based on density. The seating capacity
is 250 for a dinner service, and the
space was at full capacity. The simple
chairs were used, but dressed in a
fabric cover. Tables were 5’ diameter
round tables that set about five or six,
and were also covered for the event. Main
circulation was around the perimeter of
the room, and was also used by for food service. Circulation between the tables was
narrow and sporadic. The exterior edges of the room were used for food service where fold-out tables were used for the patrons to choose their meal. The room was full, and loud with the sound of people gathering to socialize. Entrance fee was $6 per person.

Thursday (5-15-08) – Private meeting place for the Boy Scouts of America

The Boy Scouts meeting held 50-75 people. One-third of these were adults. Only half the room was used for seating which the first two rows were for the children. The central circulation space between the rows was used by parents taking photographs and making memories. The area in front of the stage was used for ceremony, the speakers, and awards reception. The empty rear of the room did have several fold-out tables with food and paper work, but the remainder of the empty space was used by unoccupied children to play and talk as they waited.

Friday (5-16-08) – Interview with Joey Herres

The meeting with Herres was at 3:00 in the afternoon, so the space was unoccupied and empty of all seating. Herres walked me through his design solutions for the space to be transformed into the new service hall. He explained that the majority of the money was spent on sound and lighting equipment that transformed the service into a theatrical event.
Sunday (5-18-08) “Garden Café & Genesis” or the Progressive Service

The Garden Café is primarily a half hour before the service, and wrought iron bistro tables are placed in the open plaza area at the entrance of the facility. Food service is located inside the hall. The progressive service is true to its evangelical roots by primarily being the spoken word of the pastor, but combined with intermissions of contemporary Christian music played by a live band followed with video and scriptures on the projection screens.

Visits consist of participation during events, talking to members, measurement of space, diagramming spatial usage, sketches of interpretation, and an interview with Joey Herres, pastor of the progressive service, musician, and designer of the space that informed me of his design decisions and a walk-through of the space is used.

Lessons Learned:

Several significant lessons from the case can be used to design a more appropriate design solution for a multi-use typology development. The primary conceptual concern is an issue for most modernizing churches, the absence of natural light in these sanctuary halls is acceptable to the churches that rely more on technological accessories used in their services. The massive projection screens are an integral part to the progressive service because they
are used to display the message of the service, the words of the hymns and for the application of video and images that strengthen their spoken word sermons. Natural light competes with and acts against these tech devices and the theatre lights used for the stage. However, the connection between divinity and nature is still sought after. This progressive service has the applied stain glass windows that give the impression of the light behind, and the room is filled with flowers and candles that give the participant a slight impression of an open chapel. This attempt is still just a reminiscent memory. An interview with Joey Herres revealed how other services handle natural light with mechanically operated shading systems that control the use of natural light in the service. These systems are unfortunately out of the budget of most community sized congregations, and typically used in a mega-center application.

Architecturally, we are taught to understand and acknowledge human scale. This factor is absent in the design of the massive open space. Through multiple visits, it was made apparent that if spaces are not defined for an individual, or an intimate space for two that people using the space will try to create one. A mother and child used an alter seat to be alone during the last supper act while a shy young boy and his father sought a space to connect during their boy scout meeting. Two boys ate alone at café table in the corner to talk alone while a group of four young girls stood in circle in the rear of the room. Herres agreed that the congregation would like to rework areas now used for storage at the rear of the facilities for smaller gathering spaces, and mentioned that when members of the service wanted to pray alone must use the kneeling space that is
located in the front of the entire production. How many others seek out a private prayer space, but do not have the courage to kneel before the entire congregation?

The scale of the space is governed by the sectional qualities created by the 15’ ceiling heights and shape of the stage. Herres mentioned that he did not feel that the ceilings were high enough for a worship service, but already had problems with cooling the room during the progressive service. Architecturally, this concern can be interpreted to a definition that speaks of grandeur through the room’s height, but not just at a single plane. The absence of definition of light, scale, and sectional qualities that relate from floor to ceiling leaves the hall incomplete.

Herres also mentioned that there is a problem defining public access boundaries. Currently during public meetings, the stage, where all of the music equipment is stored, is blocked only by furniture. There are space dividers or movable walls that are pocketed inside the wall, but due to their massive size and antiquated technology, they are not used. The screens were purchased for around $8,000 in 1981, but the dividers are too cumbersome for the elder women that are primarily responsible for spatial arrangement.

The furniture use is simple and function-able, but if a system could be developed that utilized the transformable characteristics of the facilities, the space could be used with less labor for each event. Lack of information or awareness on the subject prevents
innovation to take place. If the transformability of the space depends so much on the arrangement of furniture, then shouldn’t the element be integrated with the design?

Conclusion

There are a set of ideas or design guidelines that are used in the design of the church’s multi-use space, but there is a lack of architectural acknowledgment. For example, the interview with Joey Herres revealed that he was responsible for the design of the space investigated because he is the expert on the development of the progressive service and what they need as a church for the service to be successful. If the space has been redesigned by an architect, attention to human scale and natural light may have been more of a priority. Unhappiness with 15’ ceilings, pastor wanted more, but unable to keep space cool during main service already is a sectional design problem. These professionals are developing their own typologies without even the knowledge that they are doing so, and leaving the architects out of the proverbial loop.
Vicinity Survey

The most effective way to find out what a community needs is to spend the time there and speak to the people that represent that community. During the site visit to Pensacola, a survey was completed of the historically significant five churches within the vicinity of the selected site in the Old East Hill District of downtown Pensacola. Of the five churches in the area, three in-depth interviews were made with the church representative to find out what community programs that they offered and what they felt the area was still in need. The five churches studied were all varied denominations which offered another variable of denominational tendencies or focus enriched the study. In chronological order the churches evaluated were: First Baptist Church of Pensacola, A.E. Allen Chapel of African Methodist Church, First United Methodist Church of Pensacola, First Presbyterian Church, and Immanuel Lutheran Church of Pensacola.

First Baptist Church of Pensacola stated that the majority of their public service was in the form of missionaries abroad instead of locally oriented. However, their volunteer program “Samaritan Hands” has worked Pensacola for hurricane aid and relief. They also focus on food and clothing orders locally.

The focus on food service was mentioned by all of the churches interviewed because the homeless population is a new problem for Pensacola. Since hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans and the surrounding communities in August of 2005, many people were displaced and left homeless. Many vacated to the Pensacola area, and never left. Suddenly, the city had a serious problem that they still are not prepared to
handle. Many churches sponsored soup kitchens because they do not have the facilities themselves.

The second church surveyed was A.E. Allen Chapel of African Methodist Church. This church is closest to the site, and is the only one not located on the historically significant Palafox Street. The church has less income than the other churches that are located on Main Street. In fact, many of the stain glass windows that were damaged in hurricane Ivan of 2004 were not repaired, and they been covered with a stucco veneer. Only the windows located in the main sanctuary were replaced. The facilities of the church simply consist of the main sanctuary hall and the basement where dinners less formal meetings occur. The community service program called the “Milk & Honey Outreach Ministries” is primarily run by the church. Because the churches facilities are so limited, the program must be ran through different locations to which the ministers and church staff attend.

Milk and Honey Kids Club was established in 1992, as a weekly neighborhood after-school homework club to assist elementary age children in a low-income inner-city housing project. By 1996, the program was incorporated as a community-based non-profit organization and children received daily after-school care, tutoring, mentoring, and nutritious snacks. Summer Camp programs providing an opportunity for children to continue to improve their reading skills during the summer months as well as develop physical skills such as swimming, horseback riding, skating, and appreciation of arts through field trips to museums and various other cultural experiences. A Computer Lab opened in October 2000, in partnership with the City of Pensacola and the Department of Juvenile Justice allowing internet access and the ability to use technology to increase reading and math skills. In 2001, a pilot program was completed for Girls Embracing a
More Excellent Way, a program geared toward “at-risk” African-American girls between the ages of 10-17.

The next church interviewed was First United Methodist Church of Pensacola. They offer an awe-inspiring amount of community service programs, and also sponsor financially other churches and community programs. They absorbed a separate building acquired across the street from the main chapel which was originally a tavern that provides facilities for Alcoholics Anonymous meetings that are permanently held there twice a day, and also provide a meeting place for Narcotics Anonymous twice a week. Also, at this facility is an opening made in the back that provides for feeding the homeless twice a week. The small adjacent outdoor area is managed by the youth group as an organic garden which provides food for the homeless dinners. The same building also holds a clothing donation service for their work-force program that provides job / interviewing skill promotion for women that are looking for jobs for the first time. Some of these women are recently released from prison and some are from abusive relationships. They also sponsor other soup kitchen programs and the “Milk & Honey Project”. There are other programs that were less highlighted by need based which were the older adults’ ministry, health ministries, and Stephen ministries that focuses on one and one relations with people in need.

First Presbyterian Church also sponsors the “Milk & Honey Project”, a soup kitchen known as “Loaves and Fishes”, and Habitat for Humanity. Other hunger relief projects that they are associated with are Two Cents a Meal and Manna Food Pantries which again point out the need for a permanent facility for a soup kitchen for the homeless. Destination Housing is a program that is also focused at the homeless providing shelter. They are involved with numerous other churches with the program with
Hurricane Recovery Assistance. Faith in Action is a program focused on people in the community living with AIDS or HIV. They are also associated with two different ministry programs that provide outreach programs for outside the community. They also provide a program that workforce oriented that teaches people below the poverty line to work through computer based training.

Lastly evaluated was the Immanuel Lutheran Church of Pensacola. Every Saturday morning they provide hot breakfast to the homeless. This ministry, begun in 1999, has served over 7,000 meals to those in need. Clothing is also offered.

In conclusion, all of the churches surveyed or interviewed expressed the need to help the homeless with food, clothing, and shelter. Perhaps due to their downtown location, they feel the need of the assistance of the homeless. Secondly, the needs for inner city children programs are need of their own facilities because the programs are already in place. It will only strengthen the focus that the community has placed on this need. Perhaps, thrice is the need for job market assistance for the low income people of the community. This survey has provided a more educated response to the programming of the project for a church that is used as a community center. It has also strengthened the idea of “Redefining What is Sacred” by the churches reaching out to help the people of the community in God’s name.

Figure 23: Immanuel Lutheran Church of Pensacola
Figure 24: Churches Selected for Project and Their Proximity to Site
Understanding Liturgy

Liturgy is simply defined as “prescribed form of public worship”. By understanding the physical elements needed for the worship service and their dynamic purposes, a designer can begin to respect and respond to the act of worship. An in-depth understanding of liturgy will bring a more enriched, multi-faceted level of design to worship centers.

For this exercise, the first component evaluated was the history of the liturgical movement. Then the common components of Christianity, Protestant, Methodist, and African American Christianity were composed to understand how specifically each practice participates liturgical. Finally, the main physical elements of the church were broken down and defined both as a single unit and how these pieces work together.

The Liturgical Movement

originated in the nineteenth century continental Europe. Worship became a passive experience. The inspiration for the movement lies in the belief that worship should be shared and communal act. The root idea is that Christianity should infuse a person beyond the attendance of a formal service. The
Liturgical Movement suggests that the relationship between the congregation and the focus of worship should be a shared gathering rather than a rigid assembly.

Because of the natural time lag between the movement and an architectural response, there are few examples of a physical expression architecturally between the two world wars.

Eventually, the desire for active participation in worship opened up the wider questions of interaction between the church and society and the whole “society of mission”: God’s action in the world. The architectural corollary of this view led many Christians towards the “multi-purpose” or now the ‘community-centered’ church, designed not only as a sympathetic setting for worship, but also as a service to its neighborhood.¹

The diagrams below show the effect of how this community involvement eventually affected the architectural form of the religious facilities.

Common Components of Christianity

and Their Churches:

The vast majority of Christians practice two rituals or sacraments, baptism (the entry rite) and the Lord’s Supper / Eucharist (the consuming of bread and wine, which represent the presence of Jesus Christ). Common denominators that Christian churches should contain are described by Ralph Adams Cram (a Catholic theologian who studied worship centers):

1. The church is the house of God, the place of his early habitation.
2. The church is to be a house set apart, where the mysteries of the Christian faith are to be solemnized. This means the building will be built around the altar. The sacramental nature of the church is second only to its recognition as the earthly habitation of the living God.
3. The church must create the spiritual emotion through the ministry of all possible beauty of environment.

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4. (a specialized component to the Protestant denomination of Christianity- the first three are shared between Catholics and Protestants) Preaching must be recognized in the architecture of the building. ³

To the community, a religious building’s roles are as an external and visible symbol of the faith of the community. Worship spaces stand as landmarks; they play a central role in the life of the community. Mircea Eliade describes their image to the community as “breaks in the homogeneity of the profane world, where believers make contact with the divine”.⁴ On the more individual role in a person’s life, the church is involved in every category of an individual’s life. This relationship is better described by the cycle defined in Places of Worship, “In the worship space, the most moving rites of

³ See Leach, William H. Protestant Church Building p.85
⁴ See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.1
passage in human life are celebrated in the presence of the divine: birth, coming of age, marriage, and the burial of the dead. Worship spaces are places of commitment, where individuals commit to a faith and join a community, where couples commit to one another, and where a family and the wider family of the church commit to the upbringing of a child.⁵

Some common physical elements of the Christian church are the orientation, size limitations, and ideas of the sacred place. Traditionally, a church will orient itself on the site from east to west, and faces the east. In a church, there are typically three levels: the nave, the choir, and the sanctuary. A common critical dimension that govern the spatial relationship of the worship space is the effective distance from alter to last row of seats being less than or equivalent to 75°.⁶ People can recognize facial expressions up to that distance only.

As far as typical Christian church layout, the section of the church where worshipers are accommodated in pews or chairs is known as the nave. At the other end- typically the east end- the space is usually raised, is the chancel which is located between the altar and the nave. Next to the nave is the choir; at the east of the chancel is the sanctuary, is where the altar is located. The sanctuary from the choir may be raised by several steps and separated by a railing known as the communicant's rail. The height of the communion rail is important so that it does not block the view of the altar. Finally, at the west end of the chancel -nearest the worshipers -is the lectern (also known as the reading desk or the pulpit).⁷

⁵ See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.1
⁶ See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.42
⁷ See Anson, Peter F. Churches: Their Plan and Furnishing p.96
Common Elements of Protestants

Protestants are the most recent branch of Christianity began in Western Europe in the sixteenth century as a protest against perceived abuses in Roman Catholicism and now includes numerous subdivisions.⁸

In regards to Eucharist ritual, some Protestants believe that the sacraments are the sources of divine grace, while others believe them to be memorials of the redemptive work of Christ. A brief description of the denomination is that they are an orderly organization in which living is combined with emphasis on direct religious experience. They believe that all people can receive the grace of God and are eligible for sanctification or freedom from sin.⁹

Their weekly worship service usually includes: congregational and choral singing, prayer, Bible readings, preaching, confession of faith, sacraments, and collection of tithes and offerings.

Methodists

Historically, when Methodist began they originally met in private homes, so as response early Methodists churches where quit simple. As the denomination developed, the method in which Methodists understood church building was closely linked to the Methodist perception of their own role in a complex interrelation of Divine favor and moral duty. Just as God gave generously of spiritual and material blessing, so was it the duty of Christians to give generously to God. Part of this Christian duty was to build a place where God could be properly honored.\textsuperscript{10}

More problematic for design, is the Methodist stand between a grey area that still holds on to similar Liturgical acts of the Catholics, like the Eucharist celebration. First Methodist Church of Pensacola currently has a small alter and sacristy that is only used\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10}See Bennett, Vicki. \textit{Sacred Space and Structural Style: The Embodiment of Socio-Religious Ideology} p.223
once a month, but they would like to have the Eucharist every week. Their stance on the Eucharist act is also in between the Catholic and Baptist. As mentioned before, some Protestants believe that the Eucharist is the divine grace (that the bread and wine turn into the body and the blood of Christ- known as the “real presence”) while others believe that the Eucharist is a simply a memorial service of the event. For their baptism entry rites, Methodist Reverend Geoffrey Lentz stated “because our church uses the effusion technique of baptism, it is more important that the baptism font is simply an appropriately size and proportion to the worship hall”, which was a response to the description of their small font which they have now.

The Methodist denominations are specifically the sub-denominations of United Methodists and African Methodist Episcopal. The two denominations split in 1818. They still share a joint annual conference.

African American Christianity

African slaves were introduced to Christianity by southern clergy and by slave owners. However, Africans interpreted the faith in unique ways to them by emphasizing:

1. The Exodus experience of the Hebrew slaves who finally gained their freedom (as black slaves hoped to), and
2. A distinctly African tradition in worship services through the use of songs, drums, and emotional intensity (particularly in sermons). Furthermore, African American Christians saw themselves as restoring the church to its original purity.
3. The Bible, however, is interpreted quite literally by most black Protestants, and the emotional aspects of worship are emphasized.
The celebration of Kwanzaa is a distinctively black holiday that is celebrated for seven days following Christmas. Each day focuses on a different theme which consists of: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith.11

Components of the Christian – Protestant – Methodist Church

The Journey

The first experienced space of the church is a representative of the “journey”. The journey from the everyday world of the street to the initial gathering space should be carefully designed. Simply put, the needs of the journey space should include a path, a canopy to provide shade and protection from rain, and in hot temperatures a water feature is common to welcome and refresh.

Gathering Space

The gathering space is where visitors enter the church precinct which is considered a transitional space, and sometimes used as a “cry room” (where mothers will sit with crying babies). Members congregate before service to greet each other, the space must say “all are welcome”, overall concept is that this is the space that the congregation experiences themselves a community. The size of this space should equal one-third the size of the nave because people are moving through, standing and not sitting.12

Sanctuary

12 See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.35
In the sanctuary, there must be an adequate amount of space for liturgical rituals like: a space provided for the congregation to join in a ritual meal of celebration, the Liturgy of the word (prayer, readings of the gospel, and a sermon), wedding ceremonies: room for bride and groom, other members of the wedding party, and funerals: casket in front of alter with room for candles and flowers.

Spatially, the most important of these considerations is the Eucharist. The manner in which this sacrament is carried out varies in placement and size per service. Here are several examples:

1. At the altar, in which congregant members come up the steps of the sanctuary and may receive communion standing or kneeling.

2. At communion stations in the seating area, where congregation members receive communion while standing.

3. In the seats, in which case trays of bread and cups are passed down the rows, or may have already been placed in the seat backs before the service.13

4. Congregants take turns to approach and sit at a long table to receive communion. Space is needed to serve the meal, for the Eucharistic prayer behind the altar, and room for two ministers in full vestments to pass and distribute.

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13 See Anson, Peter F. *Churches: Their Plan and Furnishing* p.35
Sometimes the sanctuary is referred to the entire worship space or specifically referred to as the part of the church which encloses the altar and extends to the communion rails. This is reserved for clergy and/or choir. Sanctuary (some designs do not distinguish between the sanctuary, nave, and choir but refer to the whole as a worship space) must be large enough to accommodate the altar, pulpit, candles, flowers, the crucifix or cross, and seating for the presiding ministers.

Altar

The Alter has been described as “a dignified table of noble proportions and of beautiful materials” or has even been referred to as “God’s Board”. While the act of Christian worship can be performed in open air, the Holy Sacrifice can never be offered up without an altar, no matter how simple, small, or unadorned the altar may be. As far as accessories of Christian worship, the altar is ranked first in dignity and importance. Symbolically the altar is the table for Thanksgiving meal, but also an altar of sacrifice that refers to the Temple of Jerusalem and to Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross. In a liturgical church where there is no altar, there is no church and no worship.

Quite simply, it provides a surface to place the elements of the service; the bread, the wine, and the book of service. Ideally, the alter should be made of natural stone, because it represents Jesus Christ, the living stone (1 Peter 2:4). Wood is now commonly also used.

The altar should be freestanding and should rise directly from the floor, allowing movements freely around alter. It should be an appropriate size in relation to the scale of

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14 See Anson, Peter F. *Churches: Their Plan and Furnishing* p.35
15 See Leach, William H. *Protestant Church Building* p.97
16 See Anson, Peter F. *Churches: Their Plan and Furnishing* p.67
the building. The shape should reflect the way the congregation is arranged around it. Because contemporary Christian worship emphasizes the congregation arranged around the alter, the altar should almost be square in plan, should not appear to have a front, back, or sides, and should not appear as a counter that separated the celebrant from the congregation (p.223). Size at a parish: 6’X4’, at cathedral: 10’X8’, height = 39 to 40 inches.  

Historically, the altar’s position in the church was located at the east end of chancel for an impressive view from seat of worshipers. While used as an opposing design decision, a divided or centered altar layout will split the sanctuary in the center for a dramatic layout effect.

Some accessories that may need to accompany alter are (near or in vicinity of alter for access or view): candles, flowers, cross or crucifix, table or shelf for empty pitchers or plates, bowl and towel for hand washing, and an incense and/or holder.

Pulpit

The pulpit is also known as the lectern or ambo. It must allow for the reader or the preacher to be seen by the congregation. The pulpit should be provided with a discrete reading light and microphone. It is located within the sanctuary.

17 See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.225
Baptistery / Font:

The Baptistery font is used for the ritual of Baptism, by which Christians enter into the community of the church. The font is also used for funeral services where the casket is sprinkled with holy water.

No definite position is assigned by denominations for the location of the font. It can stand in a baptistery separate from the church, in a chapel, within the church, or at the back of the church, close to the main entrance.

Three types of baptism are used: submersion where candidate is completely submerged into the water (Baptist and many Evangelicals), immersion where candidate is dipped under the water three times (Roman Catholic for adults), affusion, in which the water is poured or sprinkled over the candidate (Presbyterians and Roman Catholics).  

The design and location of the font is dependent on the type of baptism used and the role of the font in

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18 See Roberts, Nicholas W. Building Type Basics for Places of Worship p.165
the liturgy. There is a need for plenty of space for viewing of the ceremony by family members and congregation members. There is also the need for bathrooms and changing areas. A screen usually conceals the individual until the ritual.

1. Baptists- font in front of the church or near or in the sanctuary in full view of the congregation. Designed as a pool that has steps down on one side and steps up on the other side.

2. Episcopal, Presbyterian, and other Protestant churches- located in a separate baptistery or to one side of the nave. Sometimes it is as simple as an elevated bowl of water.

3. Roman Catholic- font at entrance, also use the holy water to bless them before entering the church. This font should be deep enough for the pouring of water over an adult body.

In conclusion, both the literal definitions of each liturgical component of the church service and the visual diagramming sequence of how these components work together define the physicality of the church service. Understanding liturgy holistically will create a dynamic definition for design while also providing the users, both the congregant and the clergy, with the needed function of the facility.
Research on Evangelical Protestants of the Southeast

Introduction

This initial research document was made to educate myself about the history and results of that history of the Evangelical Protestant churches of the Southeastern United States. The primary studies were done on the Southern Baptist Convention because this denomination has been more vocal with the public about their conservative standings; therefore, they are more commonly known. I did not chose for my thesis study to continue with this denomination choice, but did learn about the progress of Protestant churches through understanding their past, and the choices that they have made for their future.

Research

Evangelical Protestants, primarily in the southeastern United States, transformed the function of their churches from a traditional sacred prayer space to a community gathering place of positive-influence. Unlike the cathedrals of the past, church designs have evolved incongruently to their function. After a 1970’s growth spurt, the Southern Baptist Convention became the second largest religious sect in the nation\(^1\). The SBC developed a disassociation to the public based on their outspoken conservative political views and condescending community presence. Southern religious fervor became a

\(^1\) See Garrett, Junior, James Leo Are Southern Baptists “Evangelicals”? p.87
cultural stereotype\(^2\). By the 1990’s, these factors contributed to the decline in all southern evangelical protestant church congregations, not just the SBC. In response, Baptists, Methodists, and non-denominational churches attempted a modernization process that began to reach the people of the community through wellness programs and progressive services. Although these modernization actions brought people back to the church, architectural acknowledgment is unresponsive. Definition of a new typology, based on the receptive concept of the non-denominational church, is necessary to strengthen their modernization process.

During the 1970’s expansion phase of the SBC, they developed two main church building typologies: the “mega-center” and the “metal building” church\(^3\). Mega-centers, which became a typology of the suburbs due to their enormous size, consisted of massive parking lots, sound-oriented auditoriums\(^4\). These churches are similar to convention halls meant to house 1,000 to 2,000 members. Modern pastors have developed a negative feeling to churches of this size and refer to the mega-centers as “Fort God”\(^5\). These pastors look at their congregation as their “flock”, and believe that if the flock is too large then they cannot care for them appropriately.

The other typology developed at this time was the metal building church in rural areas. This is a smaller scale church built from a rigid frame metal building package. These churches usually hold 100 to 200 people. This typology is reminiscent of the one

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\(^2\) See Wilson, Charles Reagan & Silk, Mark *South: In the Evangelical Mode* p. 195
\(^3\) See Williams, Peter W. *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* p. 122
\(^4\) See Williams, Peter W. *Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States* p. 122
room, wood frame, churches which are typically in rural areas. These metal buildings are the result of stringent fire codes and a low income congregation. While the development of this typology is easier to understand, it does not give way to the changes of modernization.

Both typologies ignore their responsibility to the community as a symbolic presence and to the culture as an icon, and this is their problem architecturally speaking. However, a more problematic issue arose socially from the SBC’s assertive involvement with conservative, republican political involvement. SBC had always struggled with its association to racism because of its origination stemming from its views on slavery and the civil war. When the SBC spoke out in the modern day (within the last twenty years), in opposition to homosexual civil rights and the “role of women” in the household, public favor for the southern church was diminished. SBC is also known for its anti-abortion stance. For example, in the early 1990’s, an abortion doctor was shot through his kitchen window in Pensacola, Florida in the name of the southern Baptist religion. This terrorist-like violence publicly plagued the church in national headlines.

Religiously, the SBC distanced themselves from the other denominations as well. SBC denied the ecumenism, the greater religious unity or cooperation, and became known as Baptist’s rebellious step-child. All of these factors began to build up for the state of religion in the south. By the early 1990’s began the decline in members for all

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6 See Williams, Peter W. Houses of God: Region, Religion, and Architecture in the United States p. 125
7 See Rosenberg, Ellen M. Houses The Southern Baptists: A Subculture in Transition p. 181
8 See Copeland, E. Luther The Southern Baptist Convention and the Judgment of History p. xii
9 See Copeland, E. Luther The Southern Baptist Convention and the Judgment of History p. xiii
10 See Copeland, E. Luther The Southern Baptist Convention and the Judgment of History p. 69
11 See Rosenberg, Ellen M. Houses The Southern Baptists: A Subculture in Transition p. 190
evangelical churches of the south. These factors contributed to their decline. Members were labeled for anti-modernity. The southern public, especially younger members of the community, wanted to distance themselves from traditional southern stereotypes of racism, sexism, and homophobia. The political or social status was not the only problem for the church. Many churches remained with the same formal Sunday service in a new fast paced, internet-enriched, more universal society. They realized that they had to change. As expressed by the pastor of Gonzalez United Methodist Church, a church on the historical landmark in the rural area of Gonzalez, outside Pensacola, Florida, “Our churches are beginning to die, and with that we will die to”. This was said with such conviction because the pastor was trying to convince the elders of his committee that the church needed to change to adapt to modern times.

In response, Baptists, Methodists, and non-denominational churches attempted modernization through progressive services, life wellness programs, and youth enrichment programs. In particular, non-denominational churches offer a non-discriminative approach to community outreach that enables a diversified congregation to operate with less restrictive guidelines. This reactionary approach is a response to the negative public image of the SBC and the subsequent decline in congregations.

Value is now placed on community outreach, wellness both physical and mental, and the “hands on” involvement with children through youth enrichment programs which all have not been typically associated with the church - redefining what is sacred by

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12 See Wolfe, Alan The Transformation of American Religion p. 2
13 See Brackney, William H. Baptists in North America p. 258
simply helping people of the community in the name of God. Progressive services have been developed in this modernization process. Many non-denominational churches offer this as their primary service while Methodists and Baptists have typically offered the progressive service in conjunction with or alternately to their traditional service.

The progressive service is a development aimed at youths or teenagers, young singles, and new families of the community. These services are usually later on Sunday morning, allowing people to sleep in on the weekends. Most services began at 11:00 a.m. The dress attire is casual. It is common for members to wear blue-jeans. The informal environment allow the visitors to come and go, and allows children more freedom to roam when they bore from the service. These services are more technologically advanced using large screens to view the pastor’s sermon, song’s lyrics posted on the screens (similar to karaoke). It is common to have young people playing live band instruments like drums, guitars similar to that of a rock band. The service is informal, upbeat, and entertaining.

The wellness programs are focused on physical and mental health assistance. Physically, they usually consist of exercise and eating programs, but some congregations have gone further providing medical assistance. The mental wellness classes vary dependent on need basis. Some group meetings noted are on marriage, parenting, divorce, and even on drug or alcohol addiction.

Typical children programs usually consist of daycares, day schools, or bible study classes. Through the modernization process, youth enrichment programs have

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14 See Bounds, Elizabeth M. *Together / Coming Apart: Religion, Community, and Modernity* p. 7
been added that allow the children to simply have fun in a positive environment. The non-denominational church, The Rock of Mobile, began a performance art program of music, dance, and theater\textsuperscript{15}. More commonly, sports facilities have been provided like soccer or dodge ball like the multi-use facility that Gonzalez United Methodist added. The facility has dodge ball games every week which are usually attended by young teens between the ages of fourteen and sixteen\textsuperscript{16}. The addition of an open community facility did bring the church back to the economic level needed to function within five years of completed construction of the new facility. Lake Magdalene: A Methodist Community simply added an open field which the community uses as a soccer field.

In an effort to decide which of the religious sects to follow through with development of a design typology for the modernizing southern church, two case studies were chosen for their adaption attempts. The first is a non-denominational church in Mobile, Alabama. Ron Williamson was the architect for their church which allowed a detailed explanation to their decision making process for their design. Detailed plans and working drawings of their facilities were available. The second church chosen is in North Tampa- Lake Magdalene: A Methodist Community. They have an existing site of a campus type plan that they have adapted and added to for the modernization process.

The first case study, The Rock of Mobile, is known for its integration of rock music with the church service. In addition to the rock music, it has a dance studio, an educational facility, a recording studio, and an art studio. The concept of the church was

\textsuperscript{15} See www.rockofmobile.org
\textsuperscript{16} See www.gonzalezmethodist.org
based on a non-denominational sect originating in Panama City, Florida\textsuperscript{17}. The loose affiliation with the original sect allowed the new church to develop its faith based on a focus on performing arts as an outlet for their faith. Their congregation is 300 to 400 people, which are mostly people under 40. Architecturally, The Rock of Mobile was handled as a campus plan with the ability to add to the church as the congregation grows. Initially, when the church was young, the direction was unsure; spaces were designed and built only as large multi-use spaces. Programmatically functions were undefined, and the use of the spaces suffers through. However, the non-denominational approach proved to be successful because the congregation grew by allowing flexibility. The pastor, Aaron Smith, understood his own passion for the people of the community, but allowed their interests to guide him on the journey of the church’s growth.

The second case study- Lake Magdalene: A Methodist Community made their modern changes through adaptive re-use of their site. The site has been converted to semi-campus plan that is less rigid and allows more upon community usage. The main sanctuary is formal, and can be used as an example of a consistent problem of the modernization of the church. Many church elders refuse to let go of their traditional ideas of the service. This formal sanctuary is only used for the main Sunday service, and the participants of this service are mostly over 50 years old. This church has handled a visible compromise with the site of the church spilt by a pedestrian street that runs between the main formal sanctuary and the hall that contains a generic meeting hall which hold the progressive services. The progressive service is called Genesis: a progressive approach and includes a garden café. The service is held in a non-formal

\textsuperscript{17} See www.rockofmobile.org/main/about_history.html
large open space with low ceilings, foldable chairs, and a modest stage. The pedestrian street that splits the two Sunday service areas theoretically calls out to the analytical observer “it’s us against them”.

Another witness to the divisions of the modern church is Ron Williamson; this architect specializes in churches primarily in northwest Florida and south Alabama. He begins his professional relationship by sitting in on the church committee meetings where he has witnessed the conflict between the committee of “what is sacred”. He recalled an example of this situation from a committee last year. An elder on the committee expressed concern that the current sanctuary was too simple and informal. He claimed that the place could never be considered “sacred” when children were allowed to circulate freely through the main sanctuary hall. “When I was a boy, you must have permission to walk through the sanctuary. It was not a place for children to enjoy. For this reason, the sanctuary had never even been blessed”. This began a quarrel between the committee members. Opinions of heavily tithed members that cling to the past compromise today’s values.

Although these combinations of these modernizing actions have began to bring people back to the church, architectural acknowledgment is still unresponsive. Churches build for their new programs wellness and youth enrichment programs with large, non-descript multi-use rooms or gymnasiums which are often the same place for formal dinners and ceremonies. Many churches are simply “making do” by adaptive re-use. Definition of a new typology, based on the receptive concept of the non-denominational church, is necessary to strengthen their modernization process. A design of a new
A typology approach for the modernized churches of the south will consider this shift in modern values, function, and economic constraints.

The south’s has always been steeped in religion, perhaps because of its rural nature, but regardless the church is a part of the south’s cultural identity. As described by the infamous southern writer William Faulkner, “I grew up with that. I assimilated that, took that in without even knowing it. It's just there. It has nothing to do with how much I might believe or disbelieve- it's just there.”18 The modernization of religion is occurring. Ecclesiastic architecture must also evolve to speak the same language that reflects the changes. These changes and the design of a new typology for the modern non-denominational church must consider its social impact to the culture and its historical responsibility to the rural community.

Conclusion

While I did not continue my studies of the Southern Baptist Convention denomination, I did learn a lot from their history, and how it affected the future of the churches in the southeastern region. Decline in churches caused a positive response by these churches. Perhaps, the negative brought the churches back to where they belong in the communities that they are engaged. New programming has brought a modernization to these churches.

18 See Crown, Carol Coming Home! Self-Taught Artists, the Bible, and the American South p.35
Precedent Studies

The first precedent study analyzed for the pre-design phase is St. Paul the Apostle in New York City, New York. Many influences were taken back from the massive cathedral. At the time of the visit, the cathedral was being used to display modern artwork for local artists. The infusion of the modern artwork on the decorative historic cathedral walls was quite a contrast, but successful. This proved another example of how churches are transformed for something more secular for community use. First, the scale and proportion of the cathedral was analyzed. While the cathedral is unique in many ways, this particular system was evaluated as a typical sectional quality for a cathedral. The width of the nave in comparison to the width of the side chapels results in proportionally how high the ceilings reach up. This proportion also effects light and the amount of interaction between the light and the congregant participants. The higher the ceiling height affects how the high windows and altar wall are fenestrated. As depicted in the photo collage in the next figure, the stain glass altar wall is by human scale very large, but the light that is created is muted, not intense. Another element considered when studying the cathedral are the physical elements that belonged to it. After speaking with Geoffrey Lentz (from First United Church of Pensacola), he informed me of the different style types of service performance. One of the more intriguing styles is the emergence style. Emergence is the return of physical elements like a lit candle providing a sight of memory or the smell. This cathedral is catholic and remains traditional. The site of the traditional physical elements of the service proved to the study the impact of
these elements. As previously mentioned light of the cathedrals are in low contrast, so when a slice of light is introduced. Its presence is intensified. The figure displays a slice of light that defines an altar in the side chapel that intensified by the dramatic light.

The next precedent study was also in New York City. St. Peter’s Lutheran Church has a traditional service type, but the facility is very modern architecturally. The form is referred to as the “granite tent”. Its simple triangular form is tent-like. The heavy granite is split down the middle to reveal a band of light that moves the entirety of the form. Perhaps one the components that the church is known for is it’s transformable furniture system. The church is furnished by a series of bleacher-like seating or wooden slat platforms. Each component can be removed easily to open the church up for community events or usage. Even though the forms of the furniture are modern, the clean lines provide an honest approach.

Conclusion

Both precedents studied brought new levels of interest to the project. Light, scale, proportion, and furnishings have all layered in these churches to intensifying the sacred space. By understanding these components, and how they work together, it has strengthened this thesis design.
Figure 31: Light Slice at St. Paul the Apostle Cathedral
emergence: return of the physical elements of ancient worship (sight & smell of the candles burning)
Figure 33: Light Components of St. Peter’s Lutheran Church
Figure 34: Band of Light that Runs through the Granite Tent
Figure 35: Removable Furnishings at St. Peter’s
Figure 36: Alternate Furnishings

- Chair alternative to pews at United Methodist sanctuary of transformable furnishing
- Bleacher-like seating
Figure 37: Analytical Sketches about Scale and Proportion
Final Design Solution

This thesis is a design solution for the modern church; one that respects traditional liturgical elements of the denomination while allowing spatial flexibility for the use throughout the everyday life of the church. Program elements are based on the site’s need for permanent locations; a soup kitchen and an activities center for an inner-city youth. Secondary design objectives are intertwining the journey of every person with awareness of each program’s significance. The third design component rests on concepts of light and spatial usage in traditional sacred spaces in conjunction with an analysis of modern functions to determine emotive quality of each space.

Based on the “House of God” belief system, my architectural interpretation of this concept is that this house lives every day through the community service of the church. Unfortunately, many of these outreach programs are simply viewed as secular and therefore set away from the sacred life of the main sanctuary, but these sacrificial acts of the members of
the church that serve the community in the name of God make these acts equally sacred as the act of worshiping. The final design of the church proves that it lives through the service of Christ by acting as a house that lives every day for Christ.

The Church: Physically Defined

The main design concept of the church is that provides a sense of heart or the strength of love. This is physically portrayed in the form of the church by its overwhelming size, simple rectilinear shape, and the thick solid base if its three feet wide walls.

The primary entrance to the church and the soup kitchen is located at the southeast corner of the site. Due to the corner location of the entrance, the journey is extends diagonally through to the entrance at the southwest end. This is a liturgical response to concept that one enters the church at the west end and moves towards the east. This represents one’s passage leaving death behind to the west with the setting sun while moving towards the east, or the rising sun, signifying one’s rebirth or the birth of Christ. The entry journey moves through a series of points that carries one into the church. The first segment of the entry journey moves through several planters of organic gardens that provide the homeless.

Figure 39: Conceptual Perspective Drawing Depicting the Idea of the Journey
with food. This is also a reminder to church congregants of the community outreach programming that occurs during the week. The next series of elements that the entrance journey moves through are offices of the church where a receptionists and office workers can stand guard of the happenings of people moving in and out of the church, and can direct people. The formal entrance journey ends at the entrance door that is in shadow below a cantilever of the children’s space above. This shadow provides a solemn feeling before entering the oversized doors. The full service kitchen is beyond the entrance doors to remind congregants again of the services provided, but functionally also serve the crossing area that acts as the gathering space and the dining for the soup kitchen. Through the crossing space, one has a direct view of the sanctuary through the nave. Both side chapels on the north and south anchoring ends of the nave are a system consisting of layers of glass that are an abstraction of stain glass components of ancient cathedrals. At the northeast side chapel is the baptistery font that flows from inside to the outer gardens which connects the act of entering to Christianity to the exit journey of the homeless that occurs outside. Sectional qualities are based on historical cathedral design.

The church is designed for 350 occupants during the main service, but can flex open during holidays to seat up to 500 people. The gathering space is also known as the crossing has multi-purpose as a dining area, and is adjacent to the full service kitchen. West of the crossing are the utilitarian components of the church that make it

Figure 40: Conceptual Section Depicting Time and Usage of the Multi-Use Space
run efficiently- the gears of the machine: offices, open meeting rooms, bathrooms, storage, circulation, and mechanical rooms.

Soup Kitchen:

The main design motive in the element of the soup kitchen is that through light and movement a sense of hope is created while the idea that one’s most honest needs are being met. “Those that hope in the Lord will renew their strength” Isaiah 40:31 is an influential quote from the bible that help develop this sense of place.

The parti element in the overall design of the church is that the soup kitchen, or journey of the homeless, interacts physically as a void that moves through the church. This form was chosen to provide a strong embrace of the church as they move through the space and experience it as a member of the church. The soup kitchen facilities share the same main entrance of the church. As they enter, the kitchen is pulled away from the crossing to the south. When one enters the crossing, or now used as the dining hall for the soup kitchen, a halo of light above illuminates the space. The light above is a large skylight above that is tapered by a series of walkways above that programmatically belong to the children’s program. The view from the center of the dining area is of the altar of the church beyond. This is another carefully planned moment where the journeys of the participant intertwine. The dining area spills outside through a series of glass doors that can remain open which lead to outdoor eating area. From this point on, the path narrows to the exit. Along the path of the exit, one will first pass a series of food-
proving organic gardens again, and then over a small bridge. The water below is extended from the baptistery font from inside. One gets one last visual connection with the church and with the playgrounds beyond.

The Milk & Honey Project

The Milk & Honey Project is a program developed for inner city youth that provides them with a positive environment after school and during the summer. Most of these children come from single-parent homes or homes that are empty when they get off from school. Right now several churches are involved with the program. There is already set forth a sense of security and family that the program provides these children. With the design element for this program, the need for these motives would continue. The quote from the bible, “I have heard their cries. I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them to bring them into a broad land flowing with milk & honey.” is where the program gets its name, and portrays the importance of giving. With those ideas intact moving into the project, it also became important to formally portray a sense of energy and motion that one can sense from the exterior.

The bus drop-off is located on the northwest corner of the property, located in the neighborhood. The facilities for the children are broken down into two components. Both elements are design as a gradient effect. The activities on the ground the gradient in level of secular to sacred by moving from athletic court and playground, to the open studio and gardens, to a more
privatized space of gardens. The athletic courts and playground are open to the public and remain separated by a screen wall for security. In the same gradient motion the layers of activities change as the plan moves closer to and finally through the church. A child would enter to an area of a guardian, then through a supervised gaming room, and then into an open studio area for crafts. At this point, the element moves up to another level and creates a boundary between the children’s and soup kitchen space. Upstairs is an open room for group studies and research with a full computer lab. Then, the program moves again to another level to a quieter area for individual study spaces at this point the children are inside the church. A walkway or catwalk continues to another area of music practice and performance. These two areas are separated, and the musical space cantilevers outside of the building. From the two upper levels there is a sense of connection to the dining area of the soup kitchen below. While the children may not be directly experiencing the soup kitchen due to safety concerns, it is important that they are aware of the presence. At each step where the gradient makes a change,
there is a light well that is lit with color that each element of the project has inspired which will cause the child that journeys through that space to stop and take a moment before entering.

In conclusion, the design’s ability to work together through time usage and light, programming, and spatial integration became a sacred place. The most dramatic space is the crossing where all three programs collide creating a more sacred moment than the intense light wall of the altar. Other more intimate places were created along the journey, when one would view the other like the exit element of the soup kitchen last view of the baptistery font and altar as they move through. These moments provide a chance for reflection for each person.

![Figure 44: Lighting Diagram Depicting the Combination of Light and Interaction of the Church Participants](image)

**Conclusion**

At the end of the project, a building was fictitiously created that was 29,501 square feet. The design is simple and could be built with ease. Each program was designed for the optimum lighting of the times that it met: the soup kitchen at noon, the church at nine in the morning, the children’s program around three o’clock. No artificial lights were used in the creation of the computer rendered perspectives of each space,
but somehow one can see that the design of each space is created by the emotive qualities of the connections to the other programs that intertwine it.

By understanding the intertwined relationship between the place of worship and the compassionate act of communal support, the architectural response will redefine what is sacred.

Figure 45: Initial Concept Models Depicting How to Relate to Existing Context

Figure 46: Initial Sketch Model
Figure 47: Sketch Model Exploring Spatial Possibilities

Figure 48: Last Sketch Model that Diagrammed the Final Spaces
Figure 49: Sketch Model with Diagrammatic Site Components

Figure 50: Adjacency Diagram
Figure 51: Approach Diagram, Children’s Approach Perspective, and Perspective from Interstate

Figure 52: Aerial Perspective and Hurricane Ivan Diagram
Figure 53: Rendering View from Interstate and Site Plan

Figure 54: Context Section and Perspective View from Street Corner Approach
Figure 55: Site Component Diagram

Figure 56: Soup Kitchen Flex Diagram

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program for Soup Kitchen:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>seat 100 to 250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining area 1 (flex nave)</td>
<td>3620 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining area 2</td>
<td>1905 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining area 3 (outdoor/covered)</td>
<td>1315 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total dining</td>
<td>6820 s.f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kitchen</td>
<td>675 s.f.</td>
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Figure 57: Program Gradient Diagram

program for milk & honey project:
35 to 50 children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Area (s.f.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>athletic court &amp; playground</td>
<td>7485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaming room (needs supervision)</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(exterior) open studio spaces</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 classrooms @ 200 s.f. each</td>
<td>2400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 study spaces (flex side chapels)</td>
<td>1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multi-use space (flex nave)</td>
<td>1600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>music rehearsal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 58: Nave Extension Plan

program for church:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>traditional nave</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional + flex nave</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traditional + flex nave + side chapels</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

diagram: scale: 1" = 30'
Figure 59: Final Floor Plan at Ground Level

Figure 60: East Elevation
Figure 61: Final Floor Plan at Second Level

building section 'c'

Figure 62: Building Section
Figure 63: Final Floor Plan at Third Level

Figure 64: Building Section
level two transitional space

Figure 65: Perspective at Crossing on Second Level

level three at crossing

Figure 66: Perspective at Crossing on Third Level
Figure 67: North and South Elevations

Figure 68: Perspective View from Pulpit to Nave
Figure 69: Perspective View from Dining Area at Crossing toward Altar Wall

Figure 70: Section Perspective

building section ‘a’
Figure 71: Perspective View from Nave through Baptistery Font
Figure 72: Perspective View of Altar Wall
Figure 73: Perspective View from Crossing to Nave

building section 'c'

Figure 74: Section Perspective through Children's Crossing
interior at studio space

Figure 75: Interior Perspective View to Studio Outside

Figure 76: Perspective View of Dining Area from Entrance
Figure 77: Perspective of Entrance
Figure 78: Perspective View at Dining Hall up to Crossing
Figure 79: Perspective View through Outdoor Eating Area

Figure 80: Perspective at Exit
Figure 81: Overall Final Model

Figure 82: Entrance View of Final Model
Figure 82: Entry View of Final Model
References


