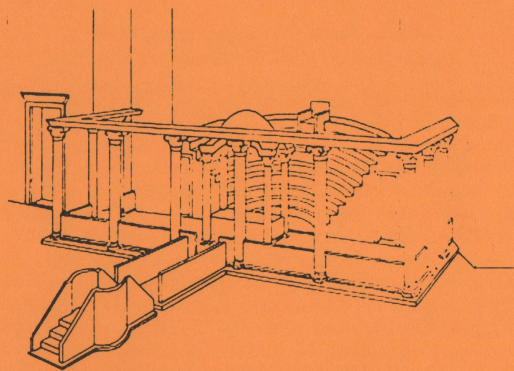


KOINONIA



*The Journal of the
Anglican & Eastern
Churches Association*

New Series No. 54, All Saintstide 2008
ISSN No. 0012-8732

THE ANGLICAN & EASTERN
CHURCHES ASSOCIATION
Founded 1864

Orthodox Patron: The Ecumenical Patriarch

Anglican Patron: The Archbishop of Canterbury

Orthodox President: The Archbishop of Thyateira and Great Britain

Anglican President: The Bishop of London

Chairman of the Committee:

The Revd William Taylor
St John's Vicarage
25 Ladbroke Road
London W11 3PD

General Secretary:

Janet Laws
The Bishop of London's Office
The Old Deanery
Dean's Court
London EC4V 5AA
Tel. 020 7248 6233
email: janet.laws@btopenworld.com
or bishops.secretary@london.clara.co.uk

Treasurer:

Mr David Powell
32 Westminster Palace Gardens
Artillery Row
London SW1P 1RR
Tel. 020 7222 3604
email: dp@dpcca.co.uk

Koinonia

THE JOURNAL OF THE ANGLICAN &
EASTERN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION

Editorial

THIS number of *Koinonia* brings together articles from a number of leading scholars and practitioners touching on the architectural setting of the liturgy. We are living through a time of transition, when western habits and assumptions formed in the wake of modernism and the Second Vatican Council are increasingly being challenged by the laity, scholars, and (in the case of the Roman Catholic Church) by Pope Benedict himself. Although the Orthodox churches have not been so dramatically affected as western ones, they too have been influenced by western customs (most notably in the introduction of pews into previously open naves). For both east and west, this transition is notable for a new *ressourcement*, a return to the Scriptures and traditions common to the whole Church, a re-examination of first principles.

At the heart of the Biblical study supporting a reassessment of our contemporary liturgical position is the 'temple theology' of *Margaret Barker*. Her contribution here, along with that of *Bishop Basil of Amphipolis*, reflects the way her work and the Orthodox liturgical tradition have informed one another. Together they challenge the received orthodoxy in the western church that the origins of the Eucharist are in the Passover meal. The ordering and re-ordering of western church buildings in the last fifty years has been based on the assumption that the Eucharist is essentially a communal meal. If, however, as Dr Barker and Bishop Basil argue, the original setting of the Eucharist was in the Temple liturgy of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, and the essential trajectory of the Eucharist is (as in the Orthodox tradition) that of the high priest entering the holy of holies, behind the veil, and emerging again, what impact might this have on the understanding of the liturgy in the West and on its architectural setting? It should at the least encourage a renewed understanding of the Eucharist as sacrifice as

well as meal – indeed as a feast upon a sacrifice. It should also prompt a reassessment of the use of chancel screens in the West (typically dismissed for dividing the clergy from the laity and interrupting the east-west vista) aided by an understanding of the Orthodox iconostasis such as that offered here by Stéphane René.

The American scholar Richard Kieckhefer in his groundbreaking study *Theology in Stone* has given an important lead in the reassessment of the principles behind what he calls the 'classic sacramental church': he shows how the contemporary church and its liturgy would benefit from a renewed understanding of this form that mirrors the identity of the church as a pilgrim people. In his contribution here he lays bare the fallacious reasoning which underlies the common assumption that traditional church buildings are only about a 'transcendent' God out of touch with our human needs while contemporary settings for worship emphasize the 'immanent' God in our midst.

Alexis Vinogradov, an American Orthodox priest and architect, offers a challenging overview of the challenges facing Orthodox church building within American culture. He discusses the ways in which Orthodox churches can, through a preoccupation with ethno-cultural identity, become oblivious to the transforming power of the inbreaking eschaton, of Christ's kingdom disturbing our religious certainties in the celebration of the holy mysteries. For both east and west, this is an essential challenge. How in the midst of our comfortable religious and cultural certainties can we find the courage to allow ourselves to be challenged by the reality of God's future erupting in our midst, a reality that demands we seek unity and reconciliation with Him and one another? This number of *Koinonia* suggests that a greater openness to our common tradition in the Scriptures and a greater attentiveness to what our architectural traditions are saying to us can be important elements supporting us on our way to the Kingdom.

– PETER DOLL

Contents

'NOW I SEE' (<i>John</i> 9.25)	Margaret Barker	p. 4
'FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS': EUCHARIST AND ATONEMENT		
Bishop Basil of Amphipolis		p. 10

THE ICONOSTASIS IN THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Stéphane René p. 25

IMMANENCE AND TRANSCENDENCE IN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE

Richard Kieckhefer p. 29

THE ARCHITECTURE OF EASTERN ORTHODOX CHURCHES: CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND POSSIBILITIES

Alexis Vinogradov p. 41

Contributors

MARGARET BARKER is a former President of the Society for Old Testament Study and author of numerous works, including *The Great High Priest*, *Temple Theology: An Introduction*, and *Temple Themes in Christian Worship*. She is also a lay preacher in the Methodist Church.

BISHOP BASIL OF AMPHIPOLIS is responsible for Great Britain and Ireland within the West European Exarchate of Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition under the Ecumenical Patriarchate. He is the author of *The Healing Word: Finding our Place in God's Creation*.

STÉPHANE RENÉ is an iconographer of the Neo-Coptic School. He studied under the school's founder, the late Prof. Isaac Fanous, at the Institute of Coptic Studies, Cairo. He received his PhD from the Royal College of Art, and his work can be seen in many places, among them in the extension of the iconostasis in the Coptic Cathedral of St Mark in London.

RICHARD KIECKHEFER is Professor of Religion and History at Northwestern University and the author of many works, including *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley*.

ALEXIS VINOGRADOV is a parish priest in the Orthodox Church in America. Trained as an architect, he has continued to consult on the design and construction of Orthodox churches and interior church renovations and furnishings since 1978. His work in architecture includes the Vermont facilities of newly-deceased Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn. The writer's large studio building incorporates a small basilican two-level family chapel complete with clerestory windows, altar, and icon screen.

'Now I See'

(John 9.25)

Margaret Barker

IT IS almost ten years since I first experienced an Orthodox Liturgy, and what I saw and heard on that occasion changed the whole course of my research and understanding of the Jerusalem temple. I had been in Oxford on Saturday, 6 February 1999, at the invitation of the Fellowship of St John the Baptist, to lead a study day on temple themes. I still have the pink folder with the spare handouts. One session was entitled 'On Earth as it is in Heaven' and the other 'For we have a Great High Priest.' It all seems a very long time ago, because, looking at those handouts now, I realise just how far my thought has developed.

In the first session I described the shape and significance of the tabernacle and temple: the veil, the priests who functioned as the angels, the high priest who passed between heaven and earth. In the second I described the Day of Atonement as I had begun to reconstruct it from texts contemporary with Christian origins, texts such as the *Assumption of Moses*, *1 Enoch*, and the slightly but significantly different version of Deuteronomy found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. Atonement in temple tradition was not appeasing an angry God – familiar to me from my very Protestant upbringing – but the act of divine self-giving that renewed and restored the creation, human society, and each individual. It restored the bonds of the eternal covenant. The high priest took blood into the holy of holies, offered it at the throne, and then emerged again and used it to heal and restore. This blood represented the life of the LORD, his self offering.

The ritual of the temple could, I had come to realise, be discerned in several Old Testament texts that had somehow lost their context. One of these was Deuteronomy 32.43, which describes the LORD coming to heal the land of his people on the Day of Judgement, that is, on the Day of Atonement. It was used by the early Christians to identify the role of Jesus (Hebrews 1.6), but part of this text has disappeared from the Hebrew used today. The vital line quoted in Hebrews is in the

Greek text and in the Dead Sea Scrolls text; there is no question that the Christians 'added' it, as had formerly been supposed. It describes the LORD coming with his angels on the Day of Atonement. One possible explanation of the discrepancy between the texts is that this verse was dropped by the rabbis, along with several others, because it was an important prophecy for the Christians. Justin Martyr was complaining about this in the mid second century, in his *Dialogue with Trypho*.

My instinct was that this temple ritual of Atonement was the original setting for the Eucharist. The gospel accounts all set the Last Supper at Passover time, and this has led to an almost exclusive emphasis on Passover symbolism for the Last Supper. The New Testament, however, interprets the death of Jesus as the true Day of Atonement sacrifice (Hebrews 9.11-14), and there are many places where early Christian writers used Day of Atonement images to describe the Eucharist. Was it possible, I wondered, that the original understanding of the death of Jesus and the Eucharist had been rooted in the Day of Atonement and not just in Passover?

There were many arguments against the Passover context, despite the setting of the Last Supper. Passover was not a sacrifice offered by a priest, let alone the high priest. Passover blood was not taken into the holy of holies – in fact the Passover ritual took place in the temple courtyard and in people's homes – and Passover was not for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of the covenant.

After the first session one of the participants – alas I cannot remember who – asked if I knew anything about the Orthodox Liturgy, because what I had been saying sounded familiar to him. I admitted to complete ignorance, and so he suggested that I stay until the Sunday and attend the Episcopal Liturgy at the Church of the Annunciation in Oxford. I did, and 'things' have never been quite the same since. It is not easy, trying to think back nearly ten years, to recover what happened in my mind that morning. I found my old diary and looked in that – nothing there except the times of the sessions and a reminder to make the photocopies. I have to try to reconstruct my thinking as it was ten years ago.

First, some personal background. I had been fascinated for many years with the world of the Jerusalem temple and how it related to the Dead Sea Scrolls and other non-canonical texts that were becoming more and more important in biblical studies. These 'pseudepigrapha'

that are missing from the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy: 'When he brings the Firstborn into the world, he says "Let all God's angels worship him"' (Hebrews 1.6). This was St Peter's sermon in Solomon's porch as St Luke reconstructed it, the earliest exposition of the faith: Jesus returning from heaven on the Day of Atonement to bring times of renewal, that is, the Kingdom (Acts 3, esp. 17-21).

It was as though the beads in my kaleidoscope had been moved. I had already accumulated a fair amount of material about the temple and its world, trying to enter the 'mind' of the temple priests, rather than just recovering the practical aspects of running the huge operation that was the temple. I often quote the standard (and very useful) work of reference on Judaism in the time of Jesus⁴, that deals with the temple only in terms of the hierarchy and priestly families, their rights and revenues, management of ceremonial, security and the duties of Levites. The *Mishnah* itself, our major source of information about the temple in the time of Jesus, deals with practical matters like clearing the ashes from the altar and wood chopping, but has nothing of the theology. My quest was, and still is, for the theology, the mind set, the world view, of the temple priests. This has to be reconstructed from other texts, which may or may not have had a temple provenance. There is no way of knowing. It is a process not unlike trying to make up a jig-saw puzzle, with many pieces missing, many pieces mixed in from other puzzles, and no surviving box lid with the picture. I had never dreamed that this world of the temple had survived in the liturgy of the Church.

After that Sunday, excitement took over. I quickly wrote a piece 'Parousia and Liturgy' which became an excursus at the end of my Revelation commentary that was about to go to press. This appeared the following year, 2000. When I outlined my ideas to the late David Melling, he introduced me to the Akathist Hymn, and another familiar world appeared before me. I knew those images of Mary as descriptions of Wisdom, the lost Lady of the original temple. They had survived in this great Byzantine Hymn, but addressed to Mary. How this happened was to become another fascinating quest.

⁴ Emil Schürer *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, rev. Geza Vermes and Fergus Millarm (Edinburgh: T&T Clark) 1973.

Since that Sunday in February 1999, a lot of work has been done and there is so much more to do: fields to be re-ploughed and sifted, ancient cupboards to be turned out and their contents scrutinised, foundations of many current assumptions to be uncovered and tested. I often recall the words of Bulgakov, written about the Wisdom tradition, but applicable, I think, to the temple tradition as a whole.

All this wealth of symbolism has been preserved in the archives of ecclesiastical antiquities, but, covered by the dust of ages, it has been no use to anyone. The time has come for us, however, to sweep away the dust of ages, and to decipher the sacred script, to reinstate the tradition of the Church, in this instance all but broken, as a living tradition.⁵

⁵ S Bulgakov, 'The Wisdom of God' (1937) reprinted in *A Bulgakov Anthology*, ed. J. Pain and N. Zernov (London: SPCK) 1976, 144-56, p. 146.

'For the Remission of Sins': Eucharist and Atonement

Bishop Basil of Amphipolis

The Constantinople Lecture 2004

YOUR Grace, friends, I have agreed to speak to you this evening on an aspect of the Eucharist that puzzled me for some time, until I began to look at background of our eucharistic prayers in another manner.

You will all be aware that there is a serious discrepancy in the Gospels concerning the date of the Last Supper. In the Synoptics the Last Supper is a Passover meal. In the run-up to their last meal together the disciples ask Jesus, 'Where do you want us to go and make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?' (Mk 14.12). And he gives them directions, directions that we shall look at later. The effect of this is that the Crucifixion itself takes place on the following day, Friday, on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

In the Gospel of John, however, the Passover meal takes place after the Crucifixion, since when Jesus is taken from Caiaphas to Pilate, those who take him there do not 'enter his headquarters, so as to avoid ritual defilement and to be able to eat the Passover' (Jn 18.29). According to John, the Passover meal had not yet taken place, and the Crucifixion was carried out at the same time that the paschal lambs were being slaughtered.

These two chronologies cannot be reconciled, and in the 1950s a French scholar, Annie Jaubert, suggested that at the time two Jewish calendars were in use, one the 'official' lunar calendar, according to which Passover did indeed fall on Saturday that year, and another, older solar calendar, represented by calendrical texts found in certain passages of the Old Testament and in the materials from Qumran. According to this older, solar calendar, Passover fell on Wednesday every year, and it was on this day, in the evening, that Jesus and his disciples ate together in the Upper Room.

It is unlikely that we will ever know exactly what happened during those days, but the directions given by Jesus for locating the place where he and his disciples would share the Passover meal do give cause for reflection. In a lecture I heard in Moscow, Sergei Averintsev pointed out how strange they are. Christ says to two of his disciples: 'Go into the city, and a *man* carrying a jar of water will meet you; follow him' (Mk 14.13). But in the Middle East *men* never carry water! It is exclusively a woman's task, as it is in Albania, for instance, today. Just think of Christ's meeting with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well: even *he* doesn't think of drawing water for himself. If a man carries water, it is because there are no women present to do the job. Averintsev concluded, not unreasonably, that the man in question belonged to an all-male, celibate brotherhood similar to that whose existence seems to be confirmed at Qumran. If this man was not utterly taken aback at the disciples' question about preparations for the Passover, he too must have been following the 'old' calendar.

I have begun in this way because I wish to underline that we probably know much less about the origins of the Eucharist than we normally think we do. For example, what are the links between the Eucharist and the Passover as liturgical celebrations? We have already seen that it is not possible to be sure that the Last Supper was a Passover meal. This is not the only problem, however. The tradition in its developed form considers the Eucharistic Liturgy to be a sacrifice carried out by a priest, ultimately by Christ, our Great High Priest. But the Passover is a sacrifice carried out by a *layman*, originally in family units wherever the family happened to be, as in Exodus 12, and later, after the reform of Jewish worship following on the Exile, 'at the place where the Lord thy God shall place his Name', i.e. in Jerusalem, as prescribed in Deuteronomy 16. These sacrifices would presumably have taken place in the courtyards and streets around the Temple proper. It is interesting to note that Philo was aware of this anomaly within Judaism, and synthesizes his understanding by saying that 'on this day the whole nation performs the sacred rites and acts as priest' (*On the Special Laws*, 2, 145).

Another problem with the connection between the Eucharist and Passover is the fact that the tradition of the Church is unanimous in associating the Eucharist with forgiveness, with 'the remission of sins'. The phrase occurs in Matthew's account of the Last Supper (Mt 26.28),

linked with the blessing of the Cup, and is usually extended in the Eucharistic Liturgy to the breaking of the Bread as well. The Passover meal, however, is simply a memorial of a past event, celebrated to commemorate the fact that when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain, the Lord 'passed over' the houses of the Israelites that had been marked with the blood of the Passover lamb (Ex 12.26). I don't think there is any reference in the Passover *seder* to the forgiveness of sins.

What I would like to do this evening is to approach this question from another angle entirely, by starting from the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy as it is celebrated today.

Let me begin by looking at the church building itself, which forms the architectural context for the celebration of the Eucharist, as this is understood in the Eastern tradition. For a start, the building is not in the first instance called a 'church', but a 'temple' (*naos* in Greek, *kbram* in Slavonic). The Septuagint uses *naos* regularly to translate the Hebrew *beikhal*, or 'temple', and we should note that *ekklesia* in the New Testament is used exclusively to refer to people, and not to a building. We might note in passing that the word 'synagogue', *synagogi*, which refers in the first instance to the 'gathering' of the people, is already used in the New Testament of the building in which the gathering takes place, and so the development in the meaning of *ekklesia* is quite understandable. Perhaps we should also note that the synagogue excavated at Dura Europos in the 1920s and 30s, which dates from before ca. 256 AD, contains wall paintings that deliberately recall the Jerusalem Temple. Clearly the notion that a place of meeting outside Jerusalem could mimic the Temple was available at an early date.

The architecture of a Byzantine church, however, also mimics the Temple. You will all be familiar with the use of space in an Eastern church, how you generally enter what is called a *narthex*, a long narrow space across the western end of the church, through which you pass into the nave, or body of the church, only to find in front of you the icon screen that separates the body of the church from the sanctuary in which is located the altar. A prominent feature of the icon screen is the curtain that is drawn across behind the central doors and kept closed except at certain times during the services.

This structure replicates the structure of the Temple, in that it provides for gradual access to the most holy place of all, the sanctuary. In the Jerusalem Temple the Temple building itself was surrounded by

courtyards, the outermost for the gentiles, the next for Jewish women, the next for Jewish men, the next, still outside the Temple, for the priests and the altar for animal sacrifice, after which you entered the Temple proper, or *beikhal*, and saw in front of you the curtain that separated the *beikhal* from the *dvir*, the Holy of Holies itself, into which only the High Priest could enter, and that only once a year.

This pattern of gradual access to what is 'most holy' was the architectural norm in the ancient Middle East, and indeed is found throughout the world. What is significant here is the use of the curtain in a Byzantine church, which recalls quite clearly the veil of the Temple. And just as the veil of the Jerusalem Temple was rent in two at the time of Christ's crucifixion, representing the access gained to God by Christ's self-sacrifice on the Cross, so the veil in the icon screen of a Byzantine church is pulled aside at significant moments in the Liturgy to give liturgical expression to our increased access to God through the revelation of the Gospel and gift of sacramental communion.

Let us look now at other aspects of the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy. The Byzantine altar is square. It may be called the 'holy table', but it does not look like a normal table. In a Russian church today, it can be so large that a short man can hardly reach to the middle of it. In Exodus 27 the altar of sacrifice outside the tabernacle is also square, five cubits by five cubits and three cubits high. In the Second Temple it was much larger. The Byzantine square altar, however, is located inside the sanctuary, behind the icon screen, and not outside the temple in the open air, where it had to be originally because of the flames on the altar and the smoke generated by burning flesh. The move is possible because the sacrifice of the Eucharist takes place 'without shedding of blood'.

There has been a certain spatial compression here, as there has been in the case of the seven-branched candlestick or lamp stand, which originally stood in the *beikhal* on the north side as you entered, but is now placed behind the altar in a Byzantine church. The practical reason for this seems clear: it is out of the way, outside the body of the church, which is now filled by a congregation of lay people who would not have had access to the Temple in Jerusalem. But we need to bear in mind also the vision of St John as described in Revelation. A door is opened in heaven and he sees the heavenly sanctuary in which there is a throne and 'one seated on the throne'. In front of the throne are seven 'lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God' (Rev 4.2-5; cf. Is 11.2).

In a classical Byzantine church the bishop's throne is behind the altar, against the east end of the apse, and the seven-branched candle stand is directly in front of him behind the altar. Thus today, looking through the holy doors at the bishop on his throne behind the altar, you will actually see him 'in the midst of the seven lamp stands', just as St John saw 'one like the Son of man' (Rev 1.12f.). The effect of moving the seven-branched candle stand into the sanctuary is to create a scene that is closer to heavenly sanctuary seen by St John than was the Jerusalem Temple.

Another form of compression has taken place in the case of the 'table of shewbread', now generally referred to as 'the table of the bread of the Presence' (*lehem panim*). This was originally in the *beikhal* opposite the seven-branched candle stand, and in the early Church seems to have remained in the nave to which the *beikhal* corresponds as the table on which the gifts to be offered during the Eucharistic Liturgy were collected before being presented for consecration. In the Septuagint of Exodus 39.36, in the expression 'the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence', the word 'table' is translated as *tin trapezan tis protheseos*, 'the table of the offering'; and the shew-bread can simply be called *oi artoi tis protheseos*, 'the breads of the offering'. The latter expression appears in Matthew 12.4 in connection with the conflict over plucking grain on the Sabbath, and in the form *i prothesis ton arton*, 'the setting out of the bread' in the description of the tabernacle in Hebrews 9.2. Origen already connects the bread of the Presence with the self-sacrifice of Christ and with its commemoration in the Eucharist (*Hom. in Lev.* 13.3,5), while with the passage of time the term *prothesis* itself came to designate both the place where the preparation of the gifts takes place and the table on which it is done. That place and its table seem to have moved first to a side chapel, as in the Great Church of the Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, and then into the sanctuary itself, as is the practice in most places today. Once again, the reasons for this move are probably of a practical nature: it gets the work of preparation out of harm's way.

The point I wish to make here, however, is simply that the connection between the Eucharistic Liturgy and the furnishings of the Jerusalem Temple have been part of the Eastern tradition since at least the beginning of the third century.

Let us now look at another aspect of the Liturgy, the entrance of the bishop. We tend to forget that the Byzantine Eucharist is designed to be celebrated in the first instance by a bishop. The episcopal Liturgy is the normative form and that celebrated by a 'presbyter' or 'priest' is an adaptation and diminution of that form. By the way, even those of you who have seen an episcopal Liturgy celebrated in this country are unlikely to have seen it fully done.

From the commentary on the Liturgy by Maximus the Confessor (+662 AD) we can see that the Eucharist in his day began with the entry of the bishop into the church through the west door. This is still the case, when the episcopal Liturgy is properly done. In present practice, after he has said the entrance prayers, he stands in the middle of the church and lets himself be divested of all his outer garments. Then, while the choir sings appropriate verses from the Psalms, he is formally vested for his role in the service as the *arkhiereus*, the 'high priest' of the community. In the liturgical books that are used he is regularly referred to as the 'high priest', *arkhiereus*, and not as the 'bishop', *episkopos*. Already in the first Epistle of Clement, at the end of the first century, the functions of the Jewish high priests, priests and Levites are brought into relation with the various ministries of the Church, and by the fourth century the term *arkhiereus* can be used without hesitation of any bishop, though in the earliest years of the Church it was used only of Christ.

What has happened here, of course, is that the bishop has come to be understood as a 'type' of Christ. The true celebrant of the Liturgy is Christ, but the bishop represents him liturgically. This is what Maximus has in mind when he says that the entry of the bishop into the church represents the entry of Christ into the world: 'The first entrance of the bishop into the holy church is a figure and form of the first appearance in the flesh of Jesus Christ the Son of God and our Saviour in this world' (*Mystagogia* 8). It is not difficult to conclude, though Maximus does not say this, that the removal of his outer garments and any outer splendour represents Christ's 'taking the form of a servant' (Phil 2.7), while his vesting in his robes represents his becoming 'a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of his people' (Heb 2.17).

Let us look at what happens next. According to present practice the bishop remains in the centre of the church while the choir sing the

appointed psalms and hymns. Then the Gospel Book is brought from the sanctuary by the deacon, who then precedes the bishop as he enters through the holy doors into the sanctuary for the first time. In earlier practice it seems that these psalms and hymns would have been sung on the way to the church, and that the bishop would have entered the sanctuary almost immediately. In any case, Maximus assumes that after further singing the bishop ascends to his throne behind the altar: 'After this appearance, his [i.e. Christ's] ascension into heaven and return to the heavenly throne are symbolically figured by the bishop's entrance into the sanctuary and ascent to the priestly throne' (*Mystagogia* 8). In other words, *before* the reading of the Gospel the Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ have symbolically already taken place, and the reading from the Gospel that follows the bishop's ascent to his throne represents the preaching of the Apostles after Pentecost.

Having taken his place on the heavenly throne, however, the bishop soon descends. For Maximus this represents the Second Coming, and the dismissal of the catechumens that takes place before the Great Entrance and the presentation of the gifts corresponds to the separation of the sheep and the goats that will take place at the Last Judgement (*Mystagogia* 14): 'After the divine reading of the holy Gospel the bishop descends from his throne and there takes place the dismissal and sending away of the catechumens and of others unworthy of the divine vision of the mysteries to be displayed.'

At this point there follow, in the Byzantine Liturgy, the presentation of the gifts and their consecration on the altar behind the icon screen. In other words, the liturgical *anamnesis* of all the God has done for us, including the celebration of the Last Supper, takes place symbolically *after* the Second Coming and therefore in the world to come. Then, after the consecration, the curtain is drawn, the holy doors are opened, and the bishop emerges with the deacon to give communion to the faithful. As he gives communion to each person he says: 'The servant of God, N., receives the most precious and holy Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins and life eternal.'

Now the fundamental movement here, and the fundamental purpose, is the same as that associated with the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus 16. On that day, once a year, the high priest, by himself, enters into the holy of holies, bearing with him as an offering

the blood of a bull with which he purifies first the holy of holies itself and then the *beikhal*. This he does for himself and for his family. He then repeats this action using the blood of one of the two goats that have been offered (the other being the so-called 'scape-goat' that will be sent out into the wilderness 'for Azazel'). Then he purifies the altar of sacrifice outside the temple using the blood of both animals, and finally ends up by purifying the courtyard of the temple. In doing so he carries out the process of atonement for himself and for all the people, thereby restoring them to a proper relationship with God. The process is not just one that forgives sins, however, but one that conveys life. As God tells Noah in Genesis 9.3f: 'Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you ... Only, you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.' Blood is life, and blood that has been carried into the holy of holies, into the very presence of God, and then brought out again bears with it the divine life, capable not only of wiping away sin, but of conveying to those who are touched by it, even indirectly, the blessing, the grace, the life of God.

We have striking testimony to this effect in the Bible itself. Let me cite the passage from Ecclesiasticus (*The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*) that describes the appearance of one particular high priest when he came out of the Temple on the Day of Atonement: 'The leader of his brothers and the pride of his people was the high priest, Simon son of Onias, who in his life repaired the house, and in his time fortified the temple. He laid the foundations for the high double walls, the high retaining walls for the temple enclosure. In his days a water cistern was dug, a reservoir like the sea in circumference. He considered how to save his people from ruin, and fortified the city against siege. How glorious he was, surrounded by the people, as he came out of the house of the curtain. Like the morning star among the clouds, like the full moon at the festal season; like the sun shining on the temple of the Most High, like the rainbow gleaming in splendid clouds; like roses in the says of first fruits, like lilies by a spring of water, like a green shoot on Lebanon on a summer day; like fir and incense in the censer, like a vessel of hammered gold studded with all kinds of precious stones; like an olive tree laden with fruit, and like a cypress towering in the clouds. When he put on his glorious robe and clothed himself in perfect splendour, when he went up to the holy altar, he made the court of sanctuary glorious' (Ecclus 50.1ff). It is no wonder that, according to the tractate

Yoma, after the sacrifices on the Day of Atonement the people sought to greet and touch the high priest, often keeping him from his home until midnight.

The basic point I want to make here, however, is that the liturgy of the Day of Atonement, its movement and its purpose, is repeated in the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy. The high priest, the bishop, representing Christ liturgically, proceeds through the temple proper, through and beyond the curtain separating the holy place from the holy of holies and effects atonement through the consecration of the Bread and Wine. He and his clergy are the first to partake thereof. In this way God and man are reconciled through the forgiveness of sins and the gift of life. The bishop, as high priest, then comes out of the holy of holies, following the deacon who bears the Body and Blood, and, through the distribution of the gifts, effects atonement for the people, who are now, of course, the true and living temple, both individually and as the corporate Body of Christ. Christ is indeed the Passover lamb, slain in Jerusalem (according to the Gospel of John) on the very day that the Passover lambs were slain. But the thrust of the Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy does not reflect the Passover celebrations. It reflects the liturgy of the Day of Atonement.

How can this be? What is the link that joins a liturgy that developed under the kings of Israel (and would seem to go back even further, into the period before David and Solomon) with the Liturgy celebrated today in the Byzantine Church?

We have already seen that links and points of contact can be found in the early Church Fathers, and indeed in the Book of Revelation. But the real connection becomes clear when we look at the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we find a combination of Temple tradition and the world-view of antiquity that will enable us to understand how the Eastern Church could have developed the Liturgy it celebrates today.

The first thing to note is that the author of Hebrews is convinced that there are two temples. (At this point I should point out that he is writing at a time when the Second Temple was still standing, i.e. before its destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. This is made clear in Hebrews 8.4: 'Now if he [i.e. Christ] were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law.' The letter could, in theory, have been written at any time between Pentecost

and 70 AD.) Christ himself, he says, is now 'seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up' (Heb 8.1f.). This invisible and true tent or tabernacle was shown to Moses on Mount Sinai, and he was asked by God to model the earthly tabernacle on what he had seen. 'The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the Lord was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights' (Ex 24.16ff.). While Moses was in the cloud God gave him instructions as to the worship he expected would be offered him by the children of Israel: 'And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. In accordance with all that I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle and of all its furniture, so shall you make it' (Ex 25.8f.). The instructions are then conveyed in verbal form, but it is clear that the writer intends to tell us that Moses actually saw the heavenly tabernacle whose copy he was to construct. In it were the mercy-seat, the ark of the covenant, the cherubim, the seven-branched candle stand, the table for the bread of the Presence, or 'shew-bread', the altar of incense and all the utensils needed for their use.

Now according to Hebrews Christ, at his Ascension, actually entered the tabernacle that Moses saw. 'For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made by human hands, a mere copy of the true one, but he entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf' (Heb 9.24). 'But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things to come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption' (Heb 9.11f.) (Here we might note that the phrase 'not of this creation' tells us that there have been two creations, one perceptible to the senses and the other imperceptible and invisible. As we say in the Creed: 'maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible'.) From this we can see that the author of Hebrews thinks of Christ's Ascension as his entry into the heavenly holy of holies, the eternal created pattern established by God on the basis of which the earthly tabernacle and temple were built.

In this particular passage the author speaks of Christ's obtaining 'eternal redemption (*aeonian lutosin*)', but a few lines later he speak of his having won for us 'remission (*aphesin*)' [of sins], as he does later on in Heb 10.18.

The connection between Hebrews and the Byzantine Liturgy is provided, as we might have suspected, by Maximus the Confessor. In his explication of the Divine Liturgy, before he deals with the service itself, he addresses the hidden meaning of the church building. He notes, for a start, that the church building carries on the activity of God 'by imitation and in figure'. For God, 'who made and brought into existence all things by his infinite power contains, gathers and limits them and, in his Providence, binds both intelligible and sensible beings to himself and to one another' (*Mystagogia* 1). The church building itself can thus 'be shown to be working for the same effects as God, in the same way as the image reflects its archetype', for 'men, women and children who are distinct from another and vastly different by birth and appearance, by nationality and language, by customs and age, by opinions and skill, by manners and habits, by pursuits and studies, and still again by reputation, fortune, characteristics, and connections' are all 'born into the Church' and 'are made one by it through faith'. Though Maximus does not say this specifically, the church as a building performs this function liturgically by bringing the faithful 'together in one place' (*omou epi to auto*: Acts 2.1), thus realising God's purpose for the world and for mankind. For Maximus, however, the church building is also 'an image of the perceptible world as a whole, since it possesses the divine sanctuary as heaven and the beauty of the nave as earth. Likewise the world itself is a church, since it possesses a heaven corresponding to the sanctuary, and for a nave it has the structured beauty of the earth' (*Mystagogia* 3).

Maximus goes on to interpret the structure of the church building in a variety of ways that don't concern us here. But he does say, and this is important for us, that the church, as divided into sanctuary and nave, corresponds to 'the entire world of beings produced by God in creation', since creation is 'divided into a spiritual world, filled with intelligible and incorporeal beings, and into this perceptible and bodily world that is ingeniously woven together of many forms and natures' (*Mystagogia* 2). This weaving together is done in such a way that 'the whole of one enters into the whole of the other, and both fill the same

whole as parts fill a unit ... For the whole spiritual world is mystically imprinted on the whole sensible world in symbolic forms for those who are capable of seeing this, and conversely the whole sensible world is spiritually explained in the mind in the principles (*logoi*) which it contains' (*ibid.*).

In this scheme the sanctuary corresponds to the unseen but intelligible world, while the nave corresponds to the visible, perceptible world. Thus the universe 'is like another sort of church not of human construction which wisely revealed in this church which is humanly made, and has for its sanctuary the higher world assigned to the powers above, and for its nave the lower world which is reserved to those who share the life of the senses' (*ibid.*). At this point Maximus clearly has in mind the two tabernacles with their differing forms of worship that are spoken of in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And he explains that in one of them, the higher, worship is carried out by 'the powers above', *i.e.* the angels, while in the other, the lower, worship is carried out by men. Their unity is maintained by God, who 'realizes this union among the natures of things without confusing them ... in a relationship and union with himself as the cause, principle and end' (*Mystagogy* 1).

Thus for Maximus the relationship between the sanctuary and the nave is the same as the relationship between the invisible and the visible world, and is therefore the same as the relationship between the heavenly tabernacle and the earthly temple or tabernacle, the physical church. To move from the nave to the sanctuary is to move from the visible to the invisible world and to enter the heavenly tabernacle. It is to reproduce liturgically what is described by the author of Hebrews when he says that 'we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens' (Heb 4.14), who is 'exalted above the heavens' (Heb 7.6). It is also the same movement as is described in Peter's speech before the Sanhedrin: 'The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus ... [and] exalted him at his right hand ... so that he might give repentance to Israel and remission of sins' (Acts 5.31). The difference is that for Maximus, and for the Byzantine Liturgy, this ascent is followed by a descent, by the return of Christ 'in his kingdom'. It is as if in the Liturgy the ancient prayer, 'Maran atha', 'Come, Lord Jesus', found in St Paul and the Apocalypse, had been answered liturgically (1 Cor 16.22; cf. Rev 22.20).

Perhaps at this time we should take a sideward glance at a contemporary of Christ, Philo of Alexandria, a leader of the Jewish

community in that great city. On several occasions when he writes about the Passover, Philo translates the name of the feast, *pesakh* in Hebrew or *paskha* in Aramaic, as *ta diabateria* or *i diabasis*, i.e. 'the offering made at crossing over [usually a border or river]' or simply 'the crossing over' or 'the passage' (cf. R. Cantalamessa, *Easter in the Early Church*, p.120). He does this because he understands the deeper meaning of the feast, which at one level commemorates the escape from Egypt, in relation to the individual, and in particular to the soul: 'This is the real meaning of the Pascha of the soul: the crossing over from every passion and all the realm of sense to the "Tenth", namely, to the realm of the mind and of God. For we read: "On the tenth of this month let every man take a sheep for his house" (Ex 12.3), so that from the tenth day there may be sanctified to the "Tenth" [i.e. to God] the sacrificial offerings which are kept in the soul (cf. Ex 12.6)' (*On the Preliminary Studies*, 106). To understand this passage fully, we should bear in mind that the Hebrew letter 'yod', which is used for the number ten, is also the first letter of the Tetragrammaton, the Divine Name.

What a passage like this shows is how widespread in the first century AD was this fundamental cosmological picture of a perceptible realm of the senses and an invisible realm of the spirit. And not just in the Greco-Roman world. It is built into the oldest strata of the Hebrew Bible, not just in the story of Moses on Mount Sinai, which has probably been subject to post-exilic revision, but also in the undoubtedly early texts in Ezekiel and Isaiah. The visions of Ezekiel and Isaiah are visions of a world that is normally hidden and can only be seen through grace and by eyes that are purified.

What has happened is that Philo, who lived in both the Jewish and the Hellenistic worlds, has drawn them together into a single whole. But there seems to be no indication that the author of Hebrews knew Philo, and so we can probably infer that others had previously been engaged in the same activity.

Let me summarise. The Byzantine Eucharistic Liturgy assumes a cosmology that can be found in Exodus, in Hebrews and in Philo. It represents this cosmology spatially in its use of a sanctuary and nave that are separated by a curtain and screen, and in this way reproduces the spatial configuration of the Temple in Jerusalem. Understanding the sanctuary as the invisible creation that lies behind the visible creation, it plays out the Incarnation and return to the Father through the

Ascension against this background through the entry of the bishop as high priest into the church, and his passing through the holy doors to take his place on the throne behind the altar. In this respect it follows closely the Epistle to the Hebrews. The bishop's descent from the throne to stand before the altar then indicates, however, not only that the action that follows takes place in the unseen world, but also that it takes place at the end of time. At this point the consecration takes place, as the elements are taken up into eternal tabernacle in which Christ himself celebrates eternally. They are then returned to the people as his Body and Blood – 'for the remission of sins and eternal life'.

This movement into the sanctuary and return to give atonement to the people through the gift of forgiveness and eternal life reproduces in outline the liturgy of the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus 16 and explicated by the Tractate *Yoma*. Its only connection with the Passover is derived from the fact that the so-called 'words of institution' are assigned in the Synoptics to a paschal meal that took place before the Crucifixion, with the result that the Crucifixion itself would have taken place on 15 Nisan, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It seems to me more likely that Jesus, as we read in the Gospel of John, was crucified on 14 Nisan, while the paschal lambs were being slaughtered. This is the fundamental connection between the Eucharist and the Passover. Otherwise the fundamental movement is a 'passing over' from this world to heaven. The link between the two was perhaps facilitated by the way in which Philo (and no doubt others) understood the Passover in a spiritual sense as a 'passing over' (*diabasis*) from the world of the senses to the invisible world of the angelic powers and God, in which was found the eternal tabernacle 'not made with (human) hands'.

Finally – and this must certainly be taken into account – in the Liturgies of St John Chrysostom and St Basil the Great neither the Passover nor even the Exodus from Egypt is ever mentioned, in spite of the fact that St Basil passes in review the great things that God has done for Israel. It is we who make the connection.

The Crucifixion thus appears as the ultimate *rite de passage*, fulfilling in a definitive and unrepeatable way the Liturgy of the Day of Atonement as described in Leviticus. Through the Crucifixion and Christ's subsequent Resurrection our human nature is taken up into God by the incarnate Son of God. The Eucharistic Liturgy exists in or-

der to enable us to experience in some way that movement by enabling us to share in the life of the One who has gone before us as the 'pioneer and perfecter of our faith' (Heb 12.31). The prerequisite for our sharing in his life is the Atonement that he has accomplished, and which he passes on to us through the forgiveness of sins. In the final analysis, the Old Testament Day of Atonement is fulfilled and relived in the Church every time we celebrate the Eucharistic Liturgy.

The Iconostasis in the Coptic Orthodox Church

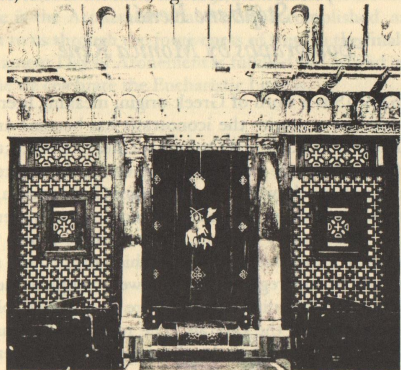
Stéphane René

Photographs by Monica René

ICONOSTASIS is a word of Greek origin, meaning literally icon-stand. Over the centuries the iconostasis has become an integral part of Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Church architecture. One of the main functions of the iconostasis is to divide the sanctuary from the nave. In Egypt, as elsewhere in Orthodox Christendom, the iconostasis, as we know it today, is a relatively recent development, dating to the 17th or 18th century at most. From earliest times, Christian buildings possessed a low wall or chancel, which divided the sanctuary from the rest of the congregation, but allowed complete view of the officiating clergy. Free standing columns were later added, followed by an architrave attached to the capitals. The rood screen found in old English churches is a remnant of the chancel screen that, perhaps due to the violent iconoclasm of the Reformation, never evolved into an iconostasis proper in the British Isles. In the East, the chancel screen gained height and evolved, over time becoming a wall upon which icons were hung, eventually forming the iconostasis as seen today in all Orthodox Churches.

This fact is easily verifiable when observing the rows of 18th century icons surmounting the screens in the most ancient Coptic churches of old Cairo and elsewhere in Egypt. The icons indicate by the way they are placed, *i.e.* on top of the screen, that they are indeed a later addition, as in the case of the main screen in the church of St Mercurios, old Cairo, commissioned by Pope Marcos VII in AD 1745. The wooden screen upon which they are fixed date back to the Fatimid period, 9th–11th centuries. The screens from this period were made of small wooden panels assembled together without the use of nails or glue. These small panels were often inlaid with ivory, ebony and mother of pearl and exquisitely carved by the Coptic craftsmen who excelled at this craft and were known for it far and wide in the ancient world, working not only for Christian patrons, but also for Muslim ones. These screens usually have only one door in the centre, the Royal Door,

through which only clergy may pass. There are normally two small windows on either side through which the communicants received the holy sacraments, left for the men, right for the women.



Central Screen, Church of St Marcurios, Old Cairo

Liturgically the iconostasis stands at the threshold between heaven and earth, that is between the spiritual and sensual realms. The area of the sanctuary is the most sacred space in a church, the equivalent of the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem temple, the closest place to the kingdom of God on earth and one is required to take off one's shoes before entering it, as it is written: 'Put off thy shoes for thou art standing on holy ground' (Ex. 3.5).

Icons found on the iconostasis usually follow a specific order, unveiling the whole scheme of salvation to the worshipper. A typical contemporary iconostasis should include the icon of the Lord and the Theotokos enthroned, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, the twelve apostles and evangelists, church hierarchs, saints, martyrs or ascetics, as well as the twelve major feasts. Directly above the Royal Door, the image of the Last Supper is often found, with the disciples gathered around Christ; this is the icon of the Eucharist. The icon of the

crucifixion is always placed on top of the iconostasis, usually mounted on a small plinth symbolizing Mount Golgotha.

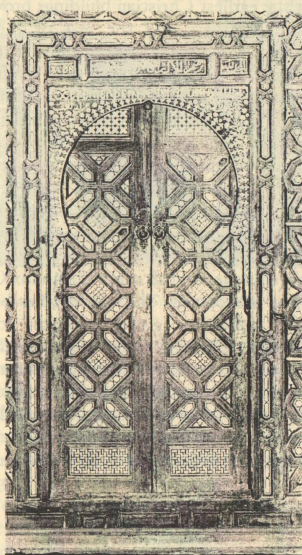
The use of a partition or curtain to isolate the sanctuary goes back to the Exodus period and the making of the tabernacle in the wilderness of Sinai – itself a blueprint for the temple at Jerusalem. The pre-Christian temples of Egypt and Greece also isolated their most sacred place, the naos, which only the high priest was allowed to enter. It would appear that the earliest Christian buildings provided for a separation between the sanctuary and the rest of the building. The catechumens, non-baptized members, were allowed to stay only until the reading of the gospel, after which they were required to leave the church, leaving the baptized congregation to take part in the holy sacraments. The need for the protection of the sacraments is alluded to by St Basil when he writes, 'How could it be proper to publicly proclaim those things which no unbaptized person may so much as look upon?' Although he was referring to the writings and doctrines concerning the holy sacraments, the latter part of this statement directly refers to the necessity to protect specially the sacred elements from the gaze of the profane and ignorant.

Today, Coptic churches and all other Orthodox Church buildings are designed with an iconostasis. The concept has been fully assimilated by modern architects, giving rise to some interesting developments in design, reflecting a new willingness by the church to make the liturgy more accessible to the congregation who are able to see what goes on inside the sanctuary and participate more fully in the liturgy. This is particularly true in America, where thriving Christian Orthodox communities, both Eastern and Oriental, commission imposing new buildings, thus fostering new developments in liturgical art and architecture.

Summary

The use of the iconostasis in the Orthodox Church seems to emphasize separation and divorce. Its spiritual meaning however is quite the opposite. Although, on the one hand, it divides the spiritual world from the sensual, on another level, the iconostasis also unites the two into one perfected creation – separation, loss and death, are overcome and

reconciliation is achieved between creator and creature, and within the creature itself. Standing as it does, on the boundary line between the divine and the human realms, the iconostasis reveals by means of sacred images, as fully as possible, the way of this reconciliation.⁽³⁾ The Royal Door is a symbol of Christ Himself who said 'I am the door' (John 10.9).



Royal Door, Church of St Marcurios, Old Cairo

Immanence and Transcendence in Church Architecture

Richard Kieckhefer

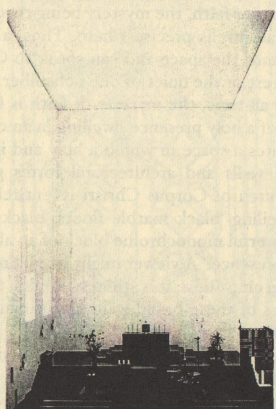
WHEN the Church of Corpus Christi was newly built at Aachen in 1930, the theologian Romano Guardini wrote a meditation that could apply in principle to any church but referred to this one in particular. At the outset, Guardini declared that a church is a mystery of faith, the mystery being that the God who created and sustains all dwells precisely here. Thus, a person entering a church is *received* into the space and can speak to God in a church as one cannot in a forest or the quiet of one's chamber. While no form of church is valid for all time, the mystery of faith is indeed valid across time: the mystery of a holy presence dwelling in an earthly structure. A true architect creates a space in which a holy and inconceivable presence enlivens the walls and architectural forms give voice to that presence. The Church of Corpus Christi is 'entirely light', with pure white walls and ceiling, black marble floors, black pews, black steps leading up to a powerful monochrome block of an altar. 'In this church there lives a holy presence.' A viewer might be inclined to call it empty. But no, 'It is not an emptiness; it is stillness! And in the stillness is God. Out of the stillness of these broad walls an intimation of God's presence can blossom forth.'¹

To grasp the significance of these words, one must know that the church in question is one of the great monuments of early twentieth-century minimalist architecture. The architect, Rudolf Schwarz, was a close friend and associate of Guardini, who was among the foremost early exponents of liturgical reform,² but he was also a friend of Mies van der Rohe, and in his early work one can see the theology of

¹ Romano Guardini, *Die neuerbaute Fronleichnamskirche in Aachen* (*The Schildgenossen* 11 (1931) 266-68; reprinted in Peter Mühlenborn, et al., *St. Fronleichnam, Aachen, 1930-1980* (Aachen: The Church) 1980, 16-18.

² See Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. Ada Lane (New York: Crossroad) 1998, and *Sacred Signs*, trans. Grace Branham, rev. ed. (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazer; Dublin: Veritas) 1979.

Guardini wedded to Mies's aesthetic of minimalist purity.³ The interior of the church is dazzlingly pure luminosity, without distraction. It is precisely the sort of space that Paul Tillich, decades later, would have seen as a fitting sign of the divine absence, a sacred emptiness appropriate to an era in which we must wait 'for the return of the hidden God who has withdrawn'.⁴ For Guardini, however, the purity of the space was a sign not of divine absence but of God's presence. It is God who speaks in the stillness of that space. What Tillich might view as an architecture of radical transcendence, Guardini sees rather as an architecture of radical immanence.



Church of Corpus Christi, Aachen

³ On Schwarz and his work, both architectural and theoretical, see especially Wolfgang Pehnt, *Rudolf Schwarz (1897-1961): Architekt einer anderen Moderne* (Stuttgart: Verlag Gerd Hatje) 1997.

⁴ Paul Tillich, in his essay on 'Honesty and consecration in art and architecture,' *On Art and Architecture*, ed. John and Jane Dillenberger, trans. Robert P. Scharlemann (New York: Crossroad) 1989, 228.

The categories of immanence and transcendence not infrequently make their way into discussion of church architecture, with the suggestion that churches can symbolize and call attention to the immanence or the transcendence of God. Robert W. Jenson commented in 1967, 'The transcendence of God can be provided for by establishing a distance, the nearness of God in worship by arranging this distance as one that is in some way overcome in the action of worship.'⁵ James F. White contrasted the Episcopal and Roman Catholic cathedrals in Burlington, Vermont. The first has a distinct chancel, while the second has its altar in 'the midst of the congregation.' The first therefore 'suggests that God is remote and transcendent'; the second, 'that God is near and immanent.'⁶ Pointing to other dimensions of church design, Paul Tillich suggested that the 'sacred emptiness' of a modern church might fittingly give expression to the transcendent deity: 'It's not an emptiness where we feel empty, but it is an emptiness where we feel that the empty space is filled with the presence of that which cannot be expressed in any finite form.'⁷ For E.A. Sövik it is the beauty of architectural space that evokes the holy and serves as the only possible symbol for the transcendent.⁸

Two recent writers have taken immanence and transcendence as key categories for analyzing church design. Mark Allen Torgerson has written about a mode of church-building, done between around 1920 and 1990, which he refers to as an 'architecture of immanence'.⁹ His study is historical; it is appreciative and largely sympathetic, not highly polemical, yet at the same time critical of what Torgerson sees as an 'overemphasis' on the immanence of God.¹⁰ By the 'transcendent' quality of God he understands God's being 'beyond creation' and 'wholly other'. The notion of God as wholly other is found both in the phe-

⁵ Robert W. Jenson, 'God, space, and architecture,' in *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans) 1995, 11-12.

⁶ James F. White, 'Liturgical space forms faith', *Reformed Liturgy and Music* 22 (1988), 59-60.

⁷ Tillich, 'Honesty and consecration in art and architecture', 221-28.

⁸ E.A. Sövik, 'The place of worship: environment for action', in Mandus A. Egge, ed., *Worship: Good News in Action* (Minneapolis: Augsburg) 1973, 107-08.

⁹ Mark Allen Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence: Architecture for Worship and Ministry Today* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans) 2007.

¹⁰ Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence*, 23-24.

nomenologist of religion Rudolf Otto and in the theologian Karl Barth, but Torgerson seems more indebted to Otto for the formulation.¹¹ The 'immanent' aspect of God is the divine presence 'with us' or within the worshipping community.¹² Seeking biblical foundation for the distinction, Torgerson finds it in the contrast between the tabernacle that followed the Israelites in the desert and the Temple to which they had recourse in Jerusalem. He suggests that the divine immanence is more evident in the cultic use of the tabernacle, while divine transcendence is dominant in Temple worship, although the distinction is not absolute: there are suggestions of transcendence in the tabernacle, and of immanence in the Temple.¹³ In church architecture, immanence and transcendence are expressed through scale, lighting, lavish or sparing use of ornament, and spatial organization.¹⁴ A church built on a grand scale, with dim and mysterious lighting, an abundance of symbolic ornament, and sharp distinction between spaces for clergy and laity will accentuate the transcendence of God. One built on a more modest scale, with clear lighting, little ornament, and integration of space will suggest the immanence of God to the worshipping community.

While Torgerson's work is retrospective and historical, balanced between appreciation and critique, Moyra Doorly's book *No Place for God: The Denial of Transcendence in Modern Church Architecture* is intensely polemical.¹⁵ Doorly finds in modernist architecture an expression of relativist value-systems, which are grounded in subjectivity rather than in objective and transcendent reference.¹⁶ Her definitions, however, do not differ markedly from Torgerson's. For her too the 'transcendent' is equivalent to Otto's 'wholly other,' and 'immanence' again means the presence of God in the worshipping community.¹⁷ For Doorly, rather as for Torgerson, these theological

¹¹ The notion is fundamental to Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1958.

¹² Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence*, 3.

¹³ Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence*, 7-9.

¹⁴ Torgerson, *An Architecture of Immanence*, 4-5.

¹⁵ Moyra Doorly, *No Place for God: The Denial of Transcendence in Modern Church Architecture* (Seattle: Ignatius Press) 2007.

¹⁶ Doorly, *No Place for God*, 4, 15-16.

¹⁷ Doorly, *No Place for God*, 14.

emphases correlate with modes of architecture and art: the churches she values are those with specifically Catholic symbolism, an emphasis on the extended Christian community rather than only the present congregation, and spatial organization that accentuates a sense of the sacred.¹⁸ All of these qualities she finds lamentably lacking in recent church design, with its overemphasis on the immanence and its denial of transcendence.

While both of these writers and others take for granted the distinction between immanence and transcendence, it is a distinction surprisingly recent in its origins. It is not grounded in the classical literature of Christian theism. Writers such as Augustine and Thomas Aquinas were of course well familiar with the notion that God dwells within creation while remaining independent of it, but they did not express those insights in terms of immanence and transcendence. For Thomas, as for Scholastic philosophy more generally, the *transcendentia* were the being, unity, and goodness that could be predicated for all of Aristotle's categories.¹⁹ In the classical articulations of theism, the terms 'immanence' and 'transcendence' did not have the meanings we now ascribe to them. Indeed, when John Richardson Illingworth wrote in 1907 that God is 'transcendent', meaning 'above and beyond all relative and finite existence', he explicitly referred to this as a 'modern phrase'.²⁰ The distinction as we know it is natural to a culture which has wrestled on the one hand with Deism and on the other with pantheism and wants to oppose both extremes by insisting on the duality of the divine nature. The distinction represents the long arm of the polemic against the Deist and pantheist alternatives. Indeed, the earliest listings in *The Oxford English Dictionary* for both the noun 'transcendence' (1852) and the adjective 'transcendent' (1877) in the theological sense

¹⁸ Doorly, *No Place for God*, 60-61.

¹⁹ Jan Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden: Brill) 1996.

²⁰ J. R. Illingworth, *The Doctrine of the Trinity, Apologetically Considered* (London: Macmillan) 1907, 194. See also Illingworth's books *Divine Immanence: An Essay on the Spiritual Significance of Matter* (New York: Macmillan) 1898, and *Divine Transcendence and Its Reflection in Religious Authority: An Essay* (London: Macmillan) 1911.

refer explicitly to Deism as the movement whose version of the doctrine gave rise to the modern use of the term.²¹

Because the distinction is not a classical one and can claim no authoritative grounding in commonly accepted theological texts, it is used in diverse ways and sometimes without clear reference.²² To speak of God as transcendent may mean that God is remote, or radically other, or free from the limitations of creation. To speak of the divine immanence may mean that God is near, or can fittingly be thought of in familiar terms, or is manifested within the particularities of creation. It might make sense to say that an architecture of immanence emphasizes the nearness of God, while an architecture of transcendence underscores God's remoteness. Alternatively, it could be meaningful to say that an architecture of immanence suggests God's capacity for entering into the created order – becoming present to us in beauty and in bread – while an architecture of transcendence reminds us that God remains ultimately other than creation. But while nearness and remoteness are correlative categories, and so too are likeness and otherness, nearness

²¹ J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds., *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon) 1989, s.vv. 'transcendence' and 'transcendent'. The noun occurs in Robert Isaac Wilberforce, *The Doctrine of the Incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in Its Relation to Mankind and to the Church*, 3 (London: Murray) 1852, 32; the adjective, in D. Patrick's article on Deism in *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, 7 (1877), 36 col. 1.

²² Theological explorations of the distinction include A. Oosterheerdt, 'The transcendence of God in its relation to freedom and immortality', *American Journal of Theology*, 14 (1910) 253–65; Claude Beaufort Moss, *The Christian Faith: An Introduction to Dogmatic Theology* (London: S.P.C.K.) 1943, Pt. 1, Chap. 4, 'The transcendence and immanence of God'; John M. Frame, 'God and biblical language: transcendence and immanence', in John W. Montgomery, ed., *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship) 1974, 159–77; and Chin-Tai Kim, 'Transcendence and immanence', *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55 (1987) 537–49. The terms have also been taken up in the philosophical literature: John Wright Buckham, 'Immanence-transcendence', *Journal of Philosophy* 28 (1931) 204–11; Philip Leon, 'Immanence and transcendence', *Philosophy* 8 (1933) 77–86. Where they have been applied to aesthetics, the issues are of little direct relevance to the theological questions explored in the present article; see especially Wilhelm Worringer, 'Transcendence and immanence in art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 12 (1953) 205–12, and Gerard Genette, *The Work of Art: Immanence and Transcendence*, trans. G.M. Goshgarian (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) 1997. R. Kevin Seasoltz, 'Transcendence and immanence in sacred art and architecture', *Worship* 75 (2001) 403–31, which one might expect to bear closely on the themes of the present article, in fact does not.

and otherness are not. To say that an architecture of immanence underscores God's nearness, while an architecture of transcendence signals God's radical otherness, is to draw one term from column A and one from column B. This is a problem both in Torgerson's book and in Doorly's. It is the sort of difficulty that arises only because 'immanence' and 'transcendence' are terms without firm classical grounding and definition, and often without clarity or precision.

A second and no doubt more serious difficulty is that of arbitrariness in correlation between theological categories and architectural modes. Writers since the mid-twentieth century have assumed that height is a sign of transcendence, but it need not be. A high roof or vaulting does not 'naturally' invite the viewer to think of what lies *above* the roof. More immediately, it creates an expansive space for the viewer to enter into, inviting a sense of participation in a world of experience beyond the ordinary. We may be schooled to think of height as signaling the transcendence of God, but it can just as well be a sign of God's immanence, the presence of a God whom we experience more fully by entering into a more expansive space than we normally inhabit. Again, writers since the mid-twentieth century have assumed that a longitudinally complex space, with clearly distinct chancel and nave, is a sign of the transcendence or remoteness of God. But that assumption holds true only if we ignore the fact that in medieval churches God was equally present at masses celebrated in multiple nave and chapel altars. Even apart from the possibility that clergy and laity alike moved in procession from one end of a longitudinal church to another, laypeople and clergy together could participate at a mass celebrated at the east end of the nave, or in a chapel on the north side of the nave, or even in a tower chapel at the far west end of the nave, and God was equally present in any of these locations.²³ It is only because we have limited notions of how churches are used liturgically that we are misled into thinking that a longitudinal church signals divine transcendence.

²³ On the experience of the laity at nave altars see especially Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c. 1580*, 2nd ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005), 109–16. On the processional function of churches see my book *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press) 2003, 24–32.

A third difficulty arises from the suggestion that the biblical tabernacle is mainly a place of divine immanence while the Temple is one of divine transcendence. This correlation is difficult to reconcile with biblical evidence. Rather, in almost every relevant biblical passage the transcendence of God is a problem that the Temple solves by providing a place of immanence. In I Kings 8.27, 9.3, Solomon poses the urgent question, 'Will God indeed dwell on the earth?' God's answer is, 'I have consecrated the house that you have built, and put my name there for ever; my eyes and my heart will be there for all time.' In the Psalms (perhaps most clearly Psalms 63.1-2 and 42.2), the problem to be resolved is that the psalmist yearns for God, thirsts for God, urgently desires experience of God, and it is in the sanctuary of the Temple that he beholds the 'power and glory' or the 'face' of God. In Ezekiel 43.2-5, again, the prophet foresees that when the Temple is restored 'the glory of the God of Israel' will come from the east and enter into the Temple by its eastern gate, and 'the glory of the Lord' will fill the Temple.²⁴ In each of these cases, the Temple is the one place in which God's presence is most keenly sensed. One has recourse to the Temple because *elsewhere* God seems remote. The Temple may be grand and glorious, but it is precisely for that reason that it conveys the splendour of the living and present God.

The difficulties here are ones that Torgerson and Doorly share, but they are not specific to them. They arise from habits of language widespread in our culture. It may be that immanence and transcendence remain useful categories for interpreting church architecture, but toward that end it may prove helpful to reconceive them, and three considerations may be helpful in this process of reconception.²⁵

First, it may be useful to bear in mind that divine immanence is manifested in various modes. God can be experienced present within the world as a source of consolation and empowerment, or as a threatening judge, or as a centre of light and glory, or as a subtle and mysterious being. All these modes of presence are manifestations of

²⁴ It might be argued, of course, that the 'glory' and the 'face' of God are not quite the same as God himself, but the relevant point remains unaffected: even if the Temple does not afford a full vision of God, the access to God's presence is greater there than elsewhere.

²⁵ I have made these arguments more briefly in *Theology in Stone*, 102 and 113-14.

divine immanence, not transcendence. When Uzzah reached out to grasp the Ark of the Covenant and keep it from falling, and when he was struck dead as if by an overpowering surge of spiritual electricity (II Samuel 6.6-7), this too was a manifestation of divine immanence. A hospitable environment for worship, in which people gather together and sense God's intimate and comforting presence, is by no means the only sign of divine immanence. An architecture that calls attention to the power, the glory, the splendour of God is just as much a sign of immanence, not transcendence.

Secondly, it may be helpful to recall that the transcendence of God, conceived either as radical otherness or as freedom from creaturely particularity, cannot be expressed in artistic or architectural form. By definition, God *as transcendent* goes beyond the conditions of representation. A corollary to this point is that any effort to represent divine transcendence can in the end be only a representation of some mode of divine immanence. If we set out to create a building or a painting expressing the mystery of God, we are expressing the mystery of God's presence, not absence. If we design a starkly minimalist space, Paul Tillich may read it as a sign of God's withdrawal, but Romano Guardini will with at least equal right take it as a place of God's still presence. Even if we perversely mean by that space to convey the message 'God is not here present', that intent will be overridden every time the prayer of consecration is uttered, or every time the liturgy evokes a sense of the Spirit quickening the assembly. Architecture and art *cannot* declare the remoteness of God, and no artistic form can convey that radical otherness which is uncontainable in created forms. The transcendence of God – and this is the heart of the matter – is what is left over when all efforts to convey the divine immanence have reached their limits.

Thirdly, what *can* be represented in art and architecture is the human striving for self-transcendence, or for transcendence of ordinary life precisely through heightened awareness of God's presence. This is one function of what I have elsewhere called the 'classic sacramental' church, one with longitudinal space designed for processional movement, with an altar as its visual focus, with a richness of symbolic reference, and with an aesthetic meant to evoke the transcendence of ordinary human experience precisely through consciousness of God's presence. Augustus Pugin writes of such a church:

It is, indeed, a sacred place; the modulated light, the gleaming tapers, the tombs of the faithful, the various altars, the venerable images of the just, – all conspire to fill the mind with veneration, and to impress it with the sublimity of Christian worship. And when the deep intonations of the bells from the lofty campaniles, which summon the people to the house of prayer, have ceased, the solemn chant of the choir swells through the vast edifice, – cold, indeed, must be the heart of that man who does not cry out with the Psalmist, *Domine dilexi decorem domus tuae, et locum habitationis gloriae tuae* [Psalm 26.8, 'O Lord, I have loved the beauty of your house, and the place where your glory dwells'].²⁶

The classic sacramental church, I have argued, more than an evangelical preaching space or a modern gathering space centered on the worshipping community, has about it the richness and density of poetry; unlike other types of church, which bear the familiarity of prose, it requires thoughtful articulation.²⁷ This is perhaps nowhere more the case than in the interplay of immanence and transcendence characteristic of the classic sacramental church, which (*pace* both Torgerson and Doorly) is not meant to evoke the transcendence of God, but rather the immanence of God and the transcendence of ourselves and of our ordinary experience.

It could be objected that I am doing what I find problematic elsewhere: using the terms in such a way that they are not correlative, drawing one in effect from column A and the other from column B. In fact that is true. But doing so is a problem only when the terms are meant to be disjunctive, and my point is precisely that they can usefully be taken as conjunctive. In other words, I am not saying that a church should be viewed as emphasizing immanence *or* transcendence. Rather, as I am proposing to use the terms, the more a church manifests divine immanence, the more it *also* achieves human self-transcendence. The more it calls attention to the presence of God in whatever mode – in splendour, in mystery, in the enlivened gathering of a present community linked with a broader community, extended in space and time –

²⁶ A. Welby Pugin, *Contrasts: Or, a Parallel Between the Noble Edifices of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries, and Similar Buildings of the Present Day, Showing the Present Decay of Taste, Accompanied by Appropriate Text* (London: Pugin) 1836, 5.

²⁷ Kieckhefer, *Theology in Stone*, 16–19.

the more it invites and enables a keener attention to the divine. The choice is not between architecture of immanence and architecture of transcendence, but between architecture of transcendence-in-immanence and architecture which does not strive for this effect, perhaps in the expectation that the liturgical action or the preaching or other factors will provide for a heightened sense of divine presence and heightened awareness.

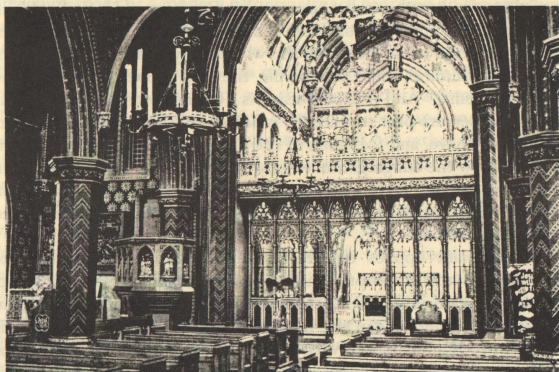
One might also protest that some churches surely do attempt to convey a sense of the divine transcendence, most markedly an Orthodox church, with its iconostasis (or icon-screen) sharply dividing the nave from the altar, with its striving for a 'dematerialized' interior, and with the urge of the builders to convey a sense of heaven on earth.²⁸ So it might seem, but the earliest descriptions we have of Hagia Sophia in Byzantium, the prototype of these 'dematerialized' Orthodox churches, are emphatic in their praise of the wondrously beautiful *materials* of which the church is made, the marble, the tiles, the vessels of gold and silver, the gems.²⁹ And the iconostasis is a boundary through which the clergy and servers pass repeatedly; much of the liturgical action takes place in the nave, and for much of the liturgy the Royal Doors are left open to allow the congregation to view what is taking place at the altar. Orthodox worship gives a strong sense of the mystery and the splendour of God's presence, in an environment built to mediate the sacred to all those present.

This point applies equally to the churches of Pugin and to Schwarz's church of Corpus Christi, without regard to stylistic idiom. What may seem self-evidently true of Pugin's church of Saint Giles at Cheadle, for example, can also be said of Schwarz's work at Aachen. It too is a processional space with a clear focus on the altar. While the church at Cheadle is a dazzling feast for the eye, replete with symbolic associations, that at Aachen is visually minimalist and yet in the architect's mind invested with a richness of symbolic meaning: Schwarz

²⁸ On these themes see Robert Ousterhout, 'The holy space: architecture and the liturgy', in Linda Safran, ed., *Heaven on Earth: Art and the Church in Byzantium* (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press) 1998, 81–120.

²⁹ This is true of the *ekphrasis* by both Procopius and Paul the Silentiary, given in W. R. Lethaby and Harold Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia, Constantinople: A Study of Byzantine Building* (London: Macmillan) 1894, 24–29 and 35–60; see Kieckhefer, *Theology in Stone* 114–19.

wrote extensively about his churches, and even the absence of visual cues was for him symbolic of the community's presence before God, and the processional form inspired him to lengthy and eloquent reflection on the wanderings of a pilgrim people.³⁰ Corpus Christi stands perhaps most clearly within the classic sacramental tradition in that quality which Romano Guardini highlighted: no less than the churches of Pugin – or even Hagia Sophia – Corpus Christi was meant in its vastly different idiom to rouse the worshiper from any sense of ordinariness with a keen sense of God's presence, even if that presence is articulate not in a resounding peal but rather in a still small voice.



Church of St Giles, Cheadle

³⁰ On this point see Kieckhefer, *Theology in Stone*, Chap. 7.

The Architecture of Eastern Orthodox Churches: Contemporary Trends and Possibilities

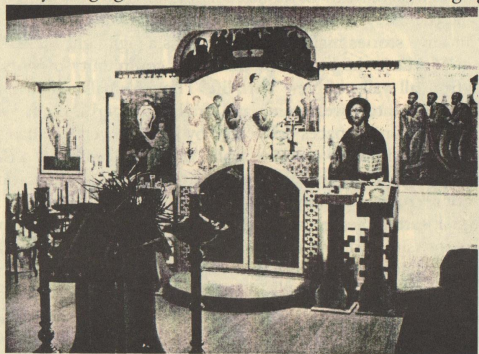
Father Alexis Vinogradov

IN the geographic centre of Manhattan Island, on 107th Street, there is a small sign declaring Mary Magdalene's welcome in English and Spanish to Orthodox services taking place behind a plain glass and tile entry of a typical New York City condo, twenty-four feet wide and five stories high. Behind the glass a vigil light flickers before an icon of Mary, the patron of this small community of worshippers drawn from all walks of New York life. Though small and intimate, the entry is deliberately welcoming and bright. Beyond the entryway one sees a succession of spaces delineated by invisible vertical planes. Each space is defined not by curtains, walls, or doors leading into the next, but rather by a differentiation in lighting, ceiling configuration, wall and floor textures, and furniture groupings.

Small card tables in the entry provide informational literature and candles to visitors. There are no seats here, so the visitor is drawn towards a further area, slightly larger, though a bit darker in treatment, a space with scattered settees and comfortable small couches. This is a kind of calm space towards which one would expect to arrive and stay, yet paradoxically, one can also move easily and unobtrusively through it as the eyes become accustomed to diminishing light and are suddenly drawn towards a magnificent array of large icons which are illuminated further along beyond a dim, low 'narthex' just past the sitting area. Arriving in this final space, into the Nave of this urban 'drawer', called a church, we are enveloped by the work of iconographer Xenia Pokrovskaya, a leading Russian artist working in America.

The Templon screen draws us immediately with its six large and principal images, but interestingly not because of the majesty and artistic beauty particularly of the faces of Christ and the Blessed Mother flanking the Royal Gates, but because, as we inevitably move through

this last space, the half-open screen lures our gaze towards the gathering of Apostles at the High Place, the furthest-most wall, reaching from both sides towards the center where Christ offers His Body and Blood to his expectant followers. With the traditional tools of inverse perspective, color, light, proportions and placement, Pokrovskaya has succeeded in mastering the physical space we are in, so that we are no longer determined by its boundaries, but are virtually brought into the iconographic schema as *participants* rather than onlookers. Here, the architecture opens as much as it can between two concrete floor slabs to a 'majestic' height of ten feet in the center. The Templon itself presents Christ and His Mother to us, and then bends backwards towards angled deacon entries, providing valuable inches of limited floor space, while visually bringing the Altar area 'towards' the center, bridging the



Visual progression between icon screen, High Place, and Nave establishes an important dynamic interplay which engages the faithful. Here shown as work in progress.

unfortunate historical divide between the distinct territories designated for clergy and laity. While the Altar and the eschatological consummation on the High Place invite us in, the plane of the open Templon clearly implies our life's dynamic progress in the direction of this consummation which is fully to be realized in the kingdom. There are no comfy chairs in this place of encounter of Earth and Heaven!

Not counting the small entry air-lock, this succession of five distinct spaces occupies all of a sliver of New York real estate measuring 23 feet clear in width by 94 feet in overall length. Because the pastor and pioneer of this community's unique architectural venture, Fr Yakov Ryklin, is himself a dedicated Manhattan maven, he has worked hard to ensure that the arrangements of this little church would be a faithful expression and sign of Orthodox life and worship—but a life, nonetheless, *contextualized* in the circumstances of its incarnate historical witness. While his iconographer, Pokrovskaya, succeeds in artistically bridging the poles of biblical and eschatological witness, Ryklin succeeds in setting all of this into the current cultural 'moment', and therefore achieves what Fr Alexander Schmemmann called the 'churching of culture'.

It would have been easy to slap some ersatz entry arch in the form of a large cupola onto the Miesian¹ rectangles of the façade, to hang Russian draperies over every icon and bookshelf, to pipe Kievan chant to the neighbours, and line the narrow entry walls with black and white portraits of sumptuous bishops decked in ancient Turkish liturgical pomp—this would have made for a very recognizable and unmistakable 'contemporary' Orthodox church—yes, such places are very much alive today! Instead, Fr Yakov restrained his Russian sentiments and used the language of the City to provide its residents sanctuary from its desecrations. A narrow flight of steps from the narthex brings worshippers into an intimate café complete with espresso-maker and *ameuses-geules* for antidoron (please don't be shocked, the liturgical *antidoron* is still presented in the traditional form in the church). In the opposite direction the faithful can rise one elevator flight to a bright space with floor to ceiling glass, featuring an array of café tables and another coffee machine, and on one side a grand piano! Here the faithful share the events of their week past, their hopes and urban anxieties, and during the week, this space becomes a musical studio for young Manhattan musicians. Behind this bright open space the Rector, Fr Yakov, has gleaned from the remaining space a tiny New York apartment for himself, sacrificing the light, the view, and the airiness for the parish, in

¹ American architect Mies van der Rohe pioneered the raw sufficiency of simple lines and planes.

return for little windows into the adjacent alleyway for his own dwelling.

If I deliberately take the first chunk of this essay on contemporary Orthodox architecture to describe an insignificant slot of urban space, it is with the purpose of suggesting that we have something here that deserves more than just our cursory attention or curiosity. The liturgical scholar, Aidan Kavanagh, in his study, *Elements of Rite*,² speaks of the Liturgy as the 'transaction of Death and Life', and not the act 'of being tucked in with fables and powder puffs'! Our concern cannot rest on the architectonic differences between East and West as a comparison of equivalent 'styles', but as is the very purpose of this publication, to plumb the theological underpinnings that these forms express or, sometimes more importantly, fail to express. When Kavanagh argues that placing pews in the Nave is the equivalent of having bleachers in the middle of a basketball court, he plainly says that we have changed the very nature of the 'game'. It's no longer a question of cultural adaptation or nuance, but of a radical shift in meaning, yet this shift is so insidious that it eludes both observation and commentary, the latter shifting precisely and innocuously into ecumenically safe categories of style and cultural preference.

Theologically, the *kingdom of God* does not de facto translate architecturally into physical grandeur. Despite massive literature to the contrary, the Gothic cathedral or the Hagia Sophia are not the *summa* of liturgical expression and achievement. The Orthodox philosopher Christos Yannaras demonstrates in fact that the Gothic cathedral strived to express man's domination over material creation, his talent to subdue and master its forces, to dazzle the human imagination and to dwarf man beneath the grandeur of his own achievements, or more insidiously, beneath the achievements and power of the monarchical church and its official papal authority.³ While one can justifiably accuse certain Eastern emperors of similar ambitions, it has been argued (as by Yannaras himself) that Orthodox architecture strived to allow the material to find its natural form, to distribute loads and weights without

tormenting the senses. The vertical architectural lines do not vanish into a spatial abyss, the residence of a distant and scary God, but rather these lines fold over in space, converging on a bright domical heaven in which God comes in His incarnate Son to encounter His creation and to share its life and fate. In the Orthodox temple, heaven is no longer 'out there', but in Georges Florovsky's well-known phrase, the eschaton has been inaugurated in the Church.

The challenge today, therefore, would seem to be one common to East and West—a challenge to rediscover common roots, a common consciousness about the *kingdom* whose presuppositions and biblical warrant lie at the roots of both architectural trends and historical incarnations. It can no longer be a question of who gets to build the grandest church in the town square—that challenge can end ironically in the middle of a sprawling commercial Galleria—yet one that we cannot afford to readily dismiss as laughable, or the last laugh may be on the institutional church. If in the midst of cultural plurality (here the distinction from 'pluralism' is worth a separate investigation) one can hardly longer presuppose monolithic cultural islands, then an architecture is bound to evolve to express this emerging reality, and that very architecture may have to assume an organic and living form if it remains faithful to what will be the liturgical and theological mandate.

This is a new venture for all of us, architects, theologians, liturgists, musicians, artists, simple people who love to pray in familiar ways. Our very familiarity with tribal antecedents is now called into question. I don't propose that all of this precedent can be jettisoned, and history demonstrates that there isn't a linear influence of philosophy upon form, but rather an interesting oscillation of forces, in which capricious or monumental forms can themselves generate cultural and philosophical shifts.

An excellent example of such interplay of forces is found in contemporary Japanese architecture. Fascination with Western *tschlack* has generated a profusion of the ugliest high-rise boxes one can imagine. From time to time, the eye is suddenly relieved by the simplest, purest amalgam of lines and proportions on the odd building here and there in which the architect and client clearly restrained whatever inclinations towards glitz that might have been lurking. These few buildings transmit to us all the calm and harmony of another age in which wood and stone achieved what is now possible with steel and glass. But for some

² Aidan Kavanagh, *Elements of Rite: A Handbook of Liturgical Style* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press) 1994.

³ Christos Yannaras, *The Freedom of Morality* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press) 1996, 231ff.

reason such beauty and sensual delight is not infectious, and a dazzled culture prefers what it mistakes for 'progress', continuing to churn out, with great technological wizardry, Hershey bars instead of Godiva chocolates. This architectural invasion has surely transformed Japanese culture, hovering over it like a sea of silent gigantic jukeboxes, too resilient to fade and die in the sun and rain, and merciful earthquakes.

For the Church, the question of architecture must first find its rationale in reference not only to the liturgical and spiritual underpinnings, as we suggested earlier, but it must be courageously truthful about both the reality and hopes for her spiritual/liturgical life today. Here is the domain where theologians part company, for at this point we encounter what the Orthodox theologian, Fr Alexander Schmemmann, called the polarization between Utopia and Escape.⁴ This conflict pits the needs of contemporary culture shaped to a perfect formal resolution (Utopia) against the preferred return to an idealized past (Escape). For him the only possible resolution was not in either direction or some temporary reconciliation of the two, but of an entirely different *referent*—that of the *kingdom of God*. But it is that very referent which presents the greatest challenge of all, and for all concerned. Some only see that kingdom viable and tenable in man's present needs and situation, others as the 'future' reality which can only be glimpsed now. Naturally, church architecture, art, music, prayer, rite in general, all hinge on these presuppositions and express them.

My own professional work in consultation on Orthodox church design demonstrates the vital need for the engagement of as many disciplines as possible in this quest for a contemporary vocabulary that best expresses a vital liturgical language of worship. Today, even isolated professionals cannot avoid such engagement if only inadvertently by the abundance of internet resources and communication. We are simply more strongly aware of each other's work and trends. In the space remaining available to me here, I will venture to offer a preliminary contribution to this process from the perspective of Orthodox worship which I have thoroughly experienced and participated in both large pontifical cathedral settings, as well as in smaller suburban venues.

⁴ In a recorded lecture of that title delivered by Schmemmann at Lafayette College, and the common theme of his work in general.

Notwithstanding Malcom Gladwell's discoveries about cultural changes in his books, the *Tipping Point*, and *Blink*, liturgical change is a pensive elephant with a great deal of inertia. A case in point is a direct experience in my suburban parish, as architect and rector. For a newly-minted priest in the late seventies, it seemed to me both pastorally and architecturally self-evident, that the shifting of rows of metal chairs in my church off to the sides would dramatically open the space and liberate the straight-jacketed congregation to a new freedom of movement and assembly. I assumed they would accept this change as an 'aha' moment, something they intuited or recalled from their Orthodox past, but had forgotten over the decades of this foreign invasion of pews and chairs. A well-intended cadre of tradition keepers in my parish promptly reminded me that we were now in America and no longer in Mother Russia, and that if I liked the random chaos of unorganized space I might consider applying to a different denomination. Over the ensuing years, I managed at best to change the chairs from metal to wood, to have more at the perimeter and fewer in the middle, and to reduce them altogether for special occasions warranting processions or full prostrations. But this occurred with a certain amount of resistance, and while the majority develop a freer consciousness about worship and their own involvement, it is also clear that a certain type of worshipper will always need a more confined and defined space of psychological safety. In other words, the very freedom I was intending to provide by opening the cage door became for some the nightmare of a spiritual void into which they were not willing to risk a step. My own conclusion in this process is that pews or chairs are important *not* for the physical bodily relief they provide, but for the personal security they guarantee. In some churches where only a few seats line the outer walls, the faithful have easily learned to sit whenever needed without embarrassment or coaching. But that sense of ease is an attribute of the community, and demonstrates a level of intimacy that is itself a great pastoral achievement and effort. Our American cathedral church of the Holy Trinity in Boston functions on this principle, and most of the faithful, old and young alike, happily squat on the various area rugs during the priest's sermon, which is transformed into a cozy family chat, the shepherd gathered with his sheep, whose names he knows, as they receive words from the voice familiar and trustworthy to them. On the remote Pacific coast in Oregon, the same scene is played in the small suburban

parish of St. Nicholas, and such parishes slowly multiply, as the faithful tire of the formalism and anonymity of worship in a not-so-distant past. Nonetheless, even in open spaces, worshippers naturally seek some personal safety of walls and columns even if they don't need to sit, so it still remains a challenge to reverse a common taboo of assembly closer to the middle of the church.

It is that essential issue of pastoral familiarity, of communal intimacy and mutual care and knowledge which need today to be especially addressed, for both the rite and the space must be conducive to their development and realization. That fundamental aspect of the *synagoga*, the assembly, is critical, for it impinges directly upon the choice of axial or central plan, upon the placement of columns and suggestion of planes, lighting, and volumes within the overall space, the transparency of the icon screen, the height of the altar platform, areas for the choir or choirs to effect an atmosphere of a non-participatory concert or rather encourage involvement. In America, the Protestant notion of personal (read: individual) salvation reinforces the idea of the worshipper as 'client', in return for whose donation, his religious needs are satisfied by the local church institution, a natural reflection of every other social institution which services the individual. Orthodoxy has not escaped this plague, and an architecture which would contribute to its reversal and defeat must be prepared to confront a natural resistance of lonely souls culturally conditioned to safeguard their precious individuality.

When speaking of a central plan, for example, one which 'gathers' the faithful into a cohesive Body with the shepherd/pastor at its center, those responsible for Orthodox worship, nonetheless, remain powerfully aware of a necessary antinomy: that very gathering into which the incarnate Savior has descended, is nevertheless the gathering which is being liturgically *lifted up* and brought to the Father's kingdom, a kingdom which is not fully realized in the present moment, but rather a kingdom, which though *experienced* here, is yet to come! This antinomy has to be expressed architecturally. When everything in the temple focuses exclusively on the central area of the gathering, there is no longer an implied vertical or linear direction towards which the gathering moves—it can become self-absorbed, it can neither look up nor forward. It is for this reason that Orthodox architecture and iconography work in concert to resolve both the vertical space, and the linear orien-

tation of Altar and High Place. An architect formed in the Christian west attended worship in my Orthodox parish recently for the first time and commented that there was a good deal of movement and dynamism in the service. When I reminded him that basically the faithful stood relatively still and in place during the service, he observed that this 'movement' was not so much physical, but something he experienced liturgically as a spiritual movement in stages from the cares of the outer world: in the first lighting of candles, the personal prayers in the beginning, finding one's niche, the singing of processional Psalms, the procession of the Gospels, the hearing of Scripture, the bringing of offerings of names, breads, money, the procession of Holy Gifts, the movement towards the Cup of Life.

If physical grandeur is indeed not necessarily the kingdom's sign on earth—the Saviour comes as the humiliated and crucified man of sorrows—what of the nature and size of the 'two or three' gathered in the Saviour's name? If Simone Weil warned us of the dangers of the collective in contrast to the intimacy implied in the Lord's number, it poses for us an important problem about the physical size of the optimal local church community, and therefore, the space which it occupies. Whatever ceremonial and public functions accomplished by the medieval cathedral, it was clearly not a parish church. We will certainly continue the debate on optimal numbers to form community, but it strikes this author that two hundred households are far less likely to form a cohesive social unity than 75 families. The two hundred will simply and naturally devolve to smaller groupings, and the collective sense of responsibility for the whole will naturally diminish as well: "Surely, someone *else* can paint the church!"

One should add a word about style, simply because it is a natural question, which for most people categorizes a particular architecture in the way we have come to think of libraries, hospitals, office towers and gasoline stations expressed in identifiable architectural language. In a small New England parish, where I consulted on a new church, the local building authorities were faithful guardians of what was termed the 'Colonial imagery'. In sophisticated Connecticut this translates into a vocabulary of Doric columns and entablatures, various classical pendentives, and a pot-pourri of trim and cornice details. In faithful preservation of this idiom, the car parts store in suburban Connecticut now looks exactly like the Adventist Temple, and both look like they

came from a stage set in 'classical' Williamsburg! As a result, an artificial conflict arises between the popular Orthodox instinct to festoon any building shape with requisite cupolas, domes, and arches, and the demands of scrupulous local planning boards intent on Stepfordizing⁵ the American landscape.

At a recent national church convention I was lured to a computer graphic display by an architectural firm specializing in Orthodox churches. The salesman/designer was proud to demonstrate how easily, with a few clicks of the cursor, he could arrange and combine myriad architectural stylistic elements to satisfy any ethnic proclivities of the 'client'. The Greeks in your parish will feel happy beneath the curved dome, while the Slav contingent will be blessed to gaze on the familiar onion as they leave their BMWs and Nissans in the lot, on their way into church. His enormous display screen promptly showed me all this in great 3-D detail, with no apology for the swaying palm trees along the alleyway bringing the faithful to worship in this imaginary Detroit parish! I declined to embarrass him with a question about the palms, but I suspect that these could be furnished in life-like fibreglass at minimal cost.

An Orthodox temple is a cosmic icon that begins from the inside out. It is first and foremost NOT a pretty jewel, a Kizhi⁶ layer cake of cedar shingles set on a lonely steppe. As any proper Orthodox icon reveals the cosmological nature of man's salvation by being set *outside* (an icon of an interior scene is still set outside, with a curtain draped across buildings to indicate that it is inside), so the church interior *gathers* the world inside to offer it up to God. That is why in its exterior aspect it is unconcerned with style—it is empathically not a *particular* building, but in reality *every* building, as it draws the world into itself. Consequently, the arrangement of windows is neither to satisfy a disinterested architectural aesthetic nor to provide nice views for the worshippers, but to serve the iconographic schema within. That is precisely why the mod-

⁵ I am implying a kind of sterile standardization of form and culture dramatized by Ira Levin in his 1972 novel, *The Stepford Wives*.

⁶ A remote island in Russia which has become a museum of wooden churches known for their elaborate and dramatic external forms, at the expense of adequate liturgical space. The famous St. Basil's in Moscow is an urban example of this form over function approach, which sadly becomes synonymous with the quintessential 'Orthodox' temple for immigrant copyists in the west.

ern urban example with which this essay began, can reveal this intuition for us so well. Constrained to establish this 'interior icon' in the pit of an urban jungle, the challenge is particularly poignant. Here, we have no luxury for style and structural gymnastics to please aesthetic tastes. Here, Kavanagh's 'business of death and life' return to the forefront of the church's concern, and she is led to become what she is: from within a small architectural tomb the power of that small lump of yeast melting in the Cup of the Lord's Blood nourishes the faithful to depart back into the bowels of the City, and become His light to the hungry and the poor.

This does not imply that all efforts at a civic architecture, the harmonious assembly of buildings and monuments, bear no relation to the placement and form of the Christian temple. On the contrary, just as it gathers the world into itself as offering, so the Christian temple can organize its immediate environs and provide both an aesthetic and ecological consciousness and legacy by a judicious use of materials, resources, and energy. But those who shape these temples must never forget that the Church's witness will forever be within a plural cultural context, and that it proclaims a crucified Saviour, who saves the world in weakness and humility, not in worldly adornments of victory, power, and wealth. But just as the yeast is concealed within the proverbial lump of dough, it is also possible that the ecclesial architecture of the kingdom will ultimately reveal its sublime grandeur and beauty only to the eyes of faith, a revelation which, like the blowing of the Spirit, eludes all intellectual and formal criteria, in any event.

SACRED SPACE GALLERY
invites you to an exhibition of

Contemporary Icons from Mount Athos

20 November 2008 – 12 January 2009

This exhibition programme is organized to coincide with the Constantinople Lecture, which this year will take place at St John's Notting Hill, and delivered by the Most Reverend Metropolitan *Kallistos of Diokleia*.

The exhibition is a celebration of Byzantine Art as it is still practiced today in important centres of orthodoxy, such as Mount Athos and Romania. The exhibitors are iconographers *Pater Iakobos*, *Adrian Iurco* and photographer *Dragos Lumpan*.

St John's Notting Hill, Lansdowne Crescent, London W11 2NN

Pilgrimage Secretary:


The Revd David Bond
6 Denton Close
Maidstone
Kent ME15 8ER
Tel. 01622 202239
email: dwbond@blueyonder.co.uk

Editor of Koinonia:

The Revd Dr Peter Doll
39 The Motte
Abingdon OX14 3NZ
Tel. 01235 520297
email: peter.doll@ntlworld.com

The views expressed in Koinonia do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or of the Committee of the Association.

www.aeca.org.uk



Cover Illustration: Reconstruction of the Templon Screen,
Hagia Sophia, Constantinople