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Contemporary Architecture in the Lutheran Church of America

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CONTEMPORARY ARCHITECTURE

IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study has been to report on the state of the so-called "contemporary" (or "modern," or "functional")[1] architecture in American Lutheran circles. Special emphasis has been placed on describing how Lutherans have accepted modern design and the forms which it has taken in the churches they have built.

A definition of modern architecture which is well suited to the purposes of this paper is that given by Albert F. Heino at a symposium on Traditional and Contemporary Architecture: "Contemporary architecture is the expression of our life and times in the forms of existing materials and technology, adapted to the purposes of the building."[2]

The writer arrived at his interest in this field first of all by

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[1]These terms (especially the first two) have been used more or less interchangeably throughout the thesis. Writers in the field have apparently not yet achieved unanimity in the matter of a name for the new architecture, and it would be folly for the present writer to presume to make a definitive choice. Modern has not here been used in the limited sense referred to by Leopold Arnaud, dean of the school of architecture at Columbia University. He stated (in "Architecture Today: A Symposium," Liturgical Arts, November, 1950, p. 24) that the word contemporary is preferred by many, because modern has come to denote a specific stylistic expression in architecture largely based on the "International School" of the 1920's. It was felt by the present writer that the word would not have this connotation for most readers of this study. Concerning the third term employed above to designate the new architecture, one of the pastors who offered material for this thesis declared, "I hate the use of the word functional" (E1; see infra, p. 4, fn. 8, for explanation of this symbol), and used contemporary instead, although he gave no reasons for this reaction.

[2]Edward S. Frey, "Thoughts on the Church and Contemporary Architecture," The Lutheran Brotherhood Bond, February, 1955, p. 9.

way of occasional literary brushes with the contrast between the superficiality of style-copyists and the genuineness for which modern architects strive. Then he was impressed by several churches of modern design which he was able to visit. Matters were brought to a more practical focus when during his interneship as a theological student he found himself the leader of a very small mission congregation with the need for a chapel, but with extremely limited means for filling that need. In time the problem broadened out for him into an awareness that modern architects had been trying to fill such needs in many different situations, and a desire to become better acquainted with their solutions.

It soon became apparent that little had yet been written on the subject of the new architecture as applied to churches, Lutheran churches in particular. A bibliography was gathered, but was found to be insufficient by itself as a basis for research. It would obviously have been out of place for the writer of this thesis, a layman in the field of architecture, simply to propound his own unfounded theories on church architecture.

The only course that remained, therefore, was to base the study on a number of concrete cases. Simple reporting would be the chief objective of the research. And what was it that could be reported on in the field of contemporary Lutheran church architecture? It seemed that three areas in particular lent themselves to this type of reporting. The scope of the study was therefore limited to these three areas, and they became the basis for the three chapters of the body of the thesis.

The three areas are the following: (1) How has it come about that various Lutheran congregations have chosen a contemporary idiom for the building of their new church? What were the factors that influenced their choice? (2) How do the Lutheran churches built in a contemporary mode differ from the older churches, and in what ways are they similar? (3) What have been the reactions of church-members, community, and visitors toward the new churches after they are built and put into use? Have they been considered successful or not? Chapters II, III, and IV, respectively, offer answers to these questions.

First-hand material in each of these areas was gathered chiefly by means of personal correspondence on the part of the writer with representatives of various congregations that have built contemporary churches. A schedule was set up whereby about forty-five modern churches would be selected for study from the six largest Lutheran bodies in America, a number from each in proportion to its total number of congregations. As this was worked out, fourteen churches were to be chosen from the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, thirteen from the United Lutheran Church in America, six each from the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church, three from the Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church, and two from the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. A total of fourty-four was thus arrived at.[3]

The issues of the official periodicals of each of these bodies for the last five years or more[4] were then skimmed through and all the

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[3] This figure was later raised by two, when two more Missouri Synod churches were added to the list.

[4] In all cases covering at least the years 1950 to 1955.

churches of contemporary design pictured on their pages noted down.[5] The appropriate number of churches for each body was then selected, giving first choice to those that seemed to the writer to be the most "modern" in appearance.

At this point a questionnaire was drafted and printed.[6] It contained seven questions concerning the first and third of the areas under study. The intention of its wording was to allow a busy pastor to answer with a minimum of words and time, while encouraging those who were so inclined to answer more fully. This questionnaire was sent out via air mail to the pastors of the forty-six churches chosen, together with a typed letter[7] explaining the project and requesting the sending of any available printed materials describing the churches. The latter materials were to provide the main body of data for the second area of study mentioned above.

Thirty-nine replies[8] were received from these forty-six requests--

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[5]It may be interesting to note in passing that the pages of the United Lutheran Church's weekly, The Lutheran, contained far fewer pictures of churches than the Missouri Synod's biweekly Lutheran Witness, for example, or the Lutheran Companion of the considerably smaller Augustana Lutheran Church.

[6]See Appendix A.

[7]A sample is reproduced in Appendix B.

[8]The churches on which data was received in this way are listed in Appendix C, together with the periodical reference(s) and a symbol for each church. These symbols (e.g., A3, M12), instead of oft-repeated church names and locations, have been used in the body of the thesis to designate the buildings themselves or the congregations which erected them. The same symbols have also been used to refer to the questionnaires, together with supplementary correspondence, received from the respective churches. These symbols appear in the body of the text itself. All printed materials, however, such as brochures, dedication programs, or articles in periodicals, are identified by complete references in the footnotes.

a response for which the writer is deeply grateful to all who helped.[9]

"Church architecture," reads a statement in a professional journal for architects, "is probably the most backward field of architecture in the United States, because behind it is the most confused thinking."[10] The writer's hope is that the material offered in the following pages may be found useful, if even in the smallest degree, toward dispelling this unfortunate confusion.

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[9] In four cases (A4, M10, S1, U1) the written information was submitted by persons other than the pastor of the congregation. The source of such information has been noted when it is used in the text, in cases where this fact appeared to have a possible bearing on its interpretation.

[10] F. H., as the opening statement of a negative review of W. W. Watkin, Planning and Building the Modern Church, 1951, in Progressive Architecture, February, 1952, p. 146.

CHAPTER II

HOW CONGREGATIONS COME TO CHOOSE THE CONTEMPORARY APPROACH

Who First Suggests This Approach?

In the adoption of contemporary architecture by a congregation, a significant role, no doubt, is that of the person who makes the first serious suggestion that this approach be considered. In order to find out who that person most often was, the first item on the questionnaire sent to pastors of modern Lutheran churches was this: "From whom did the initial impulse toward a modern, functional approach to your architectural problem come?"

According to the answers which correspondents gave to this question, it was the pastor himself who most often made the first suggestion for a contemporary style. The architect was next in order of frequency, while it was least common for the move toward a modern approach to be initiated by lay members of the congregation.

In the thirty-nine cases under study, twenty-five times it was the pastor, either alone or in conjunction with others, who began the move for a modern style. In many cases (A2, A3, A4, E2, E4, M2, M7, M8, M9, M12, M13, M16, S2, U2, U3) the pastors who so replied enumerated others besides themselves as furnishing the initial impulse, but it is possible that this was often due to a modest unwillingness on the pastors' part to claim all the credit. In ten (A5, E3, E5, M4, M6, S3, U4, U6, W1, W2) out of the thirty-nine situations, however, it was the pastor alone who furnished the initial impulse. One pastor wrote, "[The initial im-

pulse came] from myself, I would have to say. Having had a long-standing interest in church buildings, I visited new ones whenever possible. Modern churches impressed me" (M1). And another said, "For years I dreamed of the church that would hold on to the past and leap out to the future" (U4).

But it is also noteworthy that eighteen out of the thirty-nine replies listed the architect as the initiator, or one of the initiators, of the functional approach. In many cases (A2, A5, E4, M7, M8, M12, M14, M16, S2, U2, U3, U5, U8) it was the pastor and architect together who made the first suggestion, according to the replies. But in five instances (A1, E1, M5, M10, U1) the architect was remembered as the sole originator of the idea. In one place, "the people of the congregation had little or no idea of the possibilities of a functional approach," and in this situation it was the architect who was the prime mover (A1). Concerning another case the pastor wrote:

> I'm afraid that it must be admitted that the initial impulse toward adoption of a contemporary style . . . came as a result of popular acceptance of the architect himself. Pietro Belluschi had become a word that meant "the best" and a congregation that wanted the best was impelled to seek him out (E1).

Sometimes the viewing of several previous works of the architect sold the congregation on modern. Students or instructors from the local engineering or architectural school were influential in at least three cases (A3, M14, U7).

In only two instances (M11, U7) did the initial impulse come solely from lay people of the congregation (in both cases, members of the building committee). One of these (U7) was in a student congregation whose building committee included several engineering college students. This

was one of the two instances[1] in which the correspondent who answered the questionnaire was displeased with the resulting building. The pastor[2] writes of these students,

> When their fresh and rather wild suggestions went through, local members resigned in protest, and thus provided us with a personal problem which exists along with the beautiful building. . . . The local people . . . have felt that something was "put over" on them (U7).

In the other ten cases in which lay members of the congregation contributed to the initial impulse for modern (A3, M2, M7, M8, M13, M14, M16, S2, U3, U8), the pastor and/or architect were also counted in. One pastor, who listed the architect, the pastor, and the building committee as all furnishing the initial impulse, wrote that "the congregation was enthusiastic from the beginning" (M7). In the majority of cases, however, the lay members of the congregations were not from the very beginning identified with the move toward a contemporary architecture for their new church.

The pastors, therefore, contributed most often--64 per cent of the time--to the initial impulse for a modern architectural style. In 46 per cent of the cases, the architect first made the suggestion, either by himself or in conjunction with others. Lay people of the congregation were included in only 31 per cent of the reported instances. This distribution is visualized in Table 1.

From this it might be inferred that Lutheran lay people are generally not as well acquainted with modern ecclesiastical architecture as

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[1] The other was A4, submitted by the church's janitor, in the absence of a resident pastor.

[2] A successor to the pastor under whom the chapel was built.

are the clergy. But, on the other hand, the fact that in a high percentage of cases the pastor initiated the movement toward a modern architecture may be chiefly due to the leadership which the pastor naturally exercises in his congregation. At any rate, the pastors have apparently played a very significant role in causing congregations to consider the possibility of building in the contemporary mode.

TABLE 1

WHO FIRST SUGGESTS THE ADOPTION OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN?

	Pastor	Architect	Member(s)
Alone	10 times: 26%	5 times: 13%	2 times: 5%
With Others	15 times: 38%	13 times: 33%	10 times: 26%
Total	25 times: 64%	18 times: 46%	12 times: 31%

The Influential Factors in the Choice of the Contemporary Approach

The Rev. C. Harry Atkinson, executive director of the Bureau of Church Building, National Council of Churches, told a conference on Christian Education and Church Building why he thought the contemporary design of churches is becoming more and more widespread. According to a report in the Lutheran Witness,

> these are his reasons for the trend: (1) Young architectural students are no longer schooled in classical styling. (2) New building materials and constructions are available today. (3) Churches are now planned as functional meeting places, not "as huge monuments into which the functions are forced." (4) Architects in the U. S. yearn to produce ecclesiastical architecture "reflecting American democracy and religious enthusiasm." (5) The cost of skilled craftsmen required for classical building is prohibitive.[3]

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[3] "Religious News," Lutheran Witness, February 1, 1955, p. 49.

No doubt all these factors have been important in the rising acceptance of contemporary design.

Have Lutheran congregations felt the influence of these same factors when they have been considering the possibility of a contemporary approach to their architectural problems? What was it that caused the pastors, congregations, and architects here under study to select a modern design for their churches, instead of building in one of the traditional styles? This is the question taken up in the following pages.

The second item on the questionnaire was intended to provide data on this subject. It read: "What were the factors that influenced the choice of this approach? (If you can, please indicate which appealed most to the pastor, the congregation, and the architect, respectively.)" The next item on the questionnaire was directed specifically to one of these factors: "How much more, proportionately, would it have cost to construct equivalent facilities in a traditional style?"

Nearly all the replies offered useful information on these questions. This data is arranged on the following pages under various headings. Each one describes one of the persuasive factors that has led many Lutheran congregations to choose a modern, functional approach to their architectural problem.

The Church with a Message for the Present Day Prefers a Contemporary Architecture

This is a basic, if rather intangible, factor in favor of choosing the contemporary idiom in architecture. It appeared in various forms in a number of the replies received. It will be best to begin by simply

quoting.

"Contemporary expression" is what one pastor calls it (U3). Another pastor wrote that one of the purposes for which he chose the modern style was "to use the contemporary to communicate the eternal Gospel" (E3). An architect saw in it "the expression of the Eternal Faith in contemporary structural idiom" (M12). A brochure describing one of the new churches states, "The church is contemporary in architecture, with the thought that Christianity must speak to the present age."[4] The pastor of the same church explained on his questionnaire, "This approach appealed to me because a church should truly live in her generation" (U4). One pastor who made the initial suggestion for modern in his parish did so "because he believed that the church should proclaim even in its architecture that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is as modern and contemporary as today" (A5). Another congregation came to the conclusion, under the influence of its architect, that "our building was to be an expression of our faith in our day and in our setting" (E1). The architects of a small-town church explained to the congregation,

> Your church edifice is . . . a tangible expression of your faith in God. . . .
>
> In this wood, steel and stone we have tried to capture the feeling of Christianity--changing, but unchanged, appearing to each generation fresh as a vital part of their very being. It is our hope that you will feel yourselves in the great tradition of Christian people who have expressed their faith in a tangible way in the language of their time.[5]

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[4] Messiah, A Great New Church for a New World (printed brochure, U4), p. 1.

[5] Dedication Day for the New Bethel Lutheran Church, May 15, 1955 (printed brochure, E4), p. 7.

Architect Pietro Belluschi, in his "Dedicatory Words" for one of the churches under study, points up the contrast between dead, style-bound formalism and the vital faith that expresses itself in fresh, contemporary forms:

> The design of a church is a very great challenge; unfortunately, until recently most of us have met such a challenge timidly and by relying more on the creative ingenuity of past generations than in our own ability to produce appropriate temples of worship.
>
> Modern society has been accused of materialism, and critics have linked this creative hesitancy to the ebbing of our spiritual faith. However, the recent religious revival has produced a more vital approach to church architecture; among the many others, the Zion Lutheran Congregation has shown the faith and the courage to explore and to prove to the world that in building their church it was possible to achieve emotional fulfillment without copying the externals of past architectures.[6]

A vital Christianity, reflected in a "vital approach to church architecture," apparently will also welcome the use of present-day materials and techniques of building--even when these differ from those of the classic periods of church architecture, and bring about a church edifice that differs in appearance from the traditional. One congregation's attitude toward the use of modern methods and materials in church architecture is summed up in the dedication booklet:

> The churches of old were designed and built according to the then-prevalent designing and construction methods. . . .
>
> We . . . have faithfully followed in the footsteps of our predecessors. We, too, planned and built according to prevailing designing and construction methods.[7]

In the message he wrote for the dedication of another of his churches,

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[6] Dedication, Zion Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, M5), p. 12.

[7] Dedication, 1952, Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin (printed brochure, W2), p. 12.

Pietro Belluschi also spoke of using modern means:

> If there is any conscious striving for beauty it must come not from cut-rate imitation of the fruits of past civilizations as developed in alien lands, but from our own methods with our own materials, and from a judicious and sensitive use of space, color, and texture.[8]

The pastor of this church reflects his architect's words as he writes,

> When we were so indoctrinated by the architect as to grasp that the emotion of reverence was resultant from the judicious use of light and space and color and texture, and was not dependent upon towering spires alone, we became thrilled at the possibilities before us. Our church could be a symbol of faith in our day (E1).

Another pastor described his experience in arriving at the opinion that our churches should make use of modern means:

> Having had a long-standing interest in church buildings, I visited new ones whenever possible. Modern churches impressed me. I was distressed by the drab sameness of churches being built on traditional lines. To see one is to see them all. I feel that an age which produced its own design in houses, cars, furniture, etc. should also be able to produce its own church architecture (M1).

In still another parish, it was "the new type of material and construction used in present-day building" that helped bring about the decision for modern (M10).

In a more general way, other pastors and congregations felt the influence of what one pastor called "the modern trend" (M3). The pastor of a mission congregation, for instance, "was an admirer of Eliel Saarinen, the Finnish architect, who had pioneered the modern style in church architecture" (U6). One interesting reply lists two ways in which the trend toward modern design became apparent to the members of a congregation:

> Texas A. & M. College has a School of Architecture. When we were

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[8] 1950, Dedication, Central Lutheran Church (printed brochure, E1), p. 14.

> beginning to think in terms of possible designs, we contracted with the School of Architecture to use our building program as a class project. The result was each of 31 members in the 4th year design class presented his solution to our needs. Each one of these 31 solutions was very contemporary in design. About this time, the Lutheran Standard was publishing pictures of many new Lutheran churches throughout the states. Many of these were of contemporary design. Our members recognized this trend in Lutheran church architecture and began thinking in terms of this type of design for our church (A3).

Another college-town church had a similar experience: "Since we are located in the same town with Kansas State College we were also motivated by the staff and other personnel connected with the department of architecture" (M14).

A good way to acquaint the members of a congregation with the modern trend when they are preparing to make the final decision is exemplified by this action of the building committee in another parish:

> The next objective was to decide as to the type of building we wanted. To prepare ourselves for this decision we obtained four speakers who spoke on various forms of architecture and all of them stressed the trend towards modern design. Another vote was taken and about 60% of the communicants voted for a church of modern design.[9]

Evidently, therefore, many Lutheran congregations have felt that it is desirable to follow the present-day trend in architecture. Some have done this in the conscious realization that if the Church really has a message for the modern world she can and should express this fact by using modern materials and techniques in her architecture. Part of the Church's responsibility is to christen every area of contemporary life and culture--architecture not excepted--and to use it in the service of her Lord.

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[9]Martin J. Ittner, et al., Final Report on Activities of the Building Committee, St. John's Lutheran Church, Midland, Michigan, January 8, 1956 (mimeographed brochure, M13), p. 1.

Modern Architecture is More Likely to Fulfill the Requirements of Functionality

This factor was second only to economy in frequency of mention. The word "functional" is, of course, a broad term, and many of the factors to be treated later are simply aspects of it. But since many of the replies spoke of functionality in general as an important factor, some of the typical expressions are here indicated.[10]

First, however, a general definition of the term "functional" may be in place. The functional way of designing and constructing a building is that way in which the most suitable materials available can be combined most simply, strongly, and economically, for a given purpose and at a given location.

In one parish, "The pastor and members of the building committee visited a number of new churches and were impressed by the fact that a modern, contemporary design could be so much more functional than other styles" (A2). Another congregation placed "great emphasis upon functional approach" in making its decision (M9).

Since a functional building is one that is as practical as possible, it is to be expected that this feature would be especially persuasive to the practical American mind. Wrote one pastor,

> It was sensible to go functional. This approach appealed to me because all of the space would be usable and flexible in its use. . . . It appeared to be a sensible, attractive, practical, and economical thing to do (A1).

Out of the thirty-nine replies, fourteen (A1, A2, E2, E3, M2, M3,

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[10]But with these compare the negative reaction to the term "functional" expressed by one pastor (E1), quoted <u>supra</u>, p. 1, fn. 1.

M6, M8, M9, M10, M12, M13, S2, U3) explicitly mentioned functionality as a factor. Many more mentioned specific functions which they wanted their building to serve and which led them to choose the modern, functional approach. Hence it seems quite apparent that the functionality of contemporary architecture was one of the most important factors contributing to its acceptance in the parishes studied.

Many of the following factors will be seen to be related to, and even to be aspects of, the factor of functionality (as already mentioned). Suffice it here to say that among architects the principle that "form follows function" has already long been a common axiom. The functional approach is taken for granted, even if it may not always be consistently applied. As one pastor expressed his architect's attitude, "The only solution to an architectural problem is to study the needs, the site, and the problems, and then to express that solution in the simplest, [most] economical solution possible" (E3).

Modern Architecture Better Meets Special Needs

A variety of special needs and problems prompted the adoption of the contemporary approach in individual instances. In all these cases the conclusion was reached that the modern pattern of building offered a better solution than any traditional style. "The need for future expansion" (A2) was cited several times. In one case a small mission chapel was required, which "must be expandable into a major church that would be an architectural credit to the synod," and at the same time "must serve worship, Sunday School, church dinners, recreation, and administration"--all on a very strict budget. Only a modern, functional

plan, it was seen, would provide the solution.[11] Likewise, another congregation chose its architectural style partly with an eye to

> the future use of the building--it had to serve the needs of the congregation as a church (since there are few buildings here which even look like a house of worship) and also as the educational arm of the church. It had to have a dual purpose (U2).

A city parish which was converting its former church into a parish hall and was building the new church next door found that

> a traditional type of architecture would have necessitated a high building, much higher than the parish hall. Anything less than that would have given the impression of a small building on the corner beside a high and large parish hall (S3).

So this congregation needed a church which "because of its unique design . . . immediately attracts the attention of the passerby, [so that] the large parish hall to which it is attached recedes in importance" (S3).

One of the special problems which congregations most frequently confront in building a church is that of limited space. Many congregations found their solution in contemporary architecture. One pastor wrote, "Because of the limitations of the lot size, and because of the location of other structures on the lot, . . . it seemed we needed a tailor-made building" (A1). In a similar situation, it was the "small lot--practically no lawn space" that gave the architect his main argument for urging a functional approach (S4).

An unusually vivid example of this space factor (and other special needs as well) coming into play is furnished by one downtown church (S1). This congregation "realized that the greater the strides an historic church makes toward stable maturity, the more it becomes a mission."

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[11]Culver Heaton, "A Mission, a Message, and $25,000," Lutheran Companion, March 10, 1954, p. 9 (S2).

The responsibility of their church, they recognized, was to the people of the area in which it was located--an area which

> seems to be exchanging the definition "fringe" for "solidly city center." It goes without saying that this will intensify an already considerable social and referral ministry, for it is in precisely such an area as this that the community's disinherited and psychologically sick find their sad solace. For just such people as these did Christ suffer and die, and to these must Gethsemane urgently minister. This adjustment--from a constituent ministry to a community ministry--is what was really implied in the decision to build to the glory of God in a location where too many are too bewildered and too busy to give Him a second thought.[12]

But the very location that gave them this responsibility also placed great restrictions on the space available for the needed facilities. This was what made the choice of a contemporary approach imperative, as related in a paragraph from a very helpful letter written by the congregation's office secretary:

> After Gethsemane Church decided to remain in the heart of the city, the building committee met and decided what facilities they thought we needed to carry on a downtown church program. They made a list of these and called in some architects. The problem was we had a lot of 113' by 120' with no adjacent property available, and the list of requirements were a main worship unit, small chapel, church school rooms, office space, choir rooms, social rooms for both large and small gatherings, caretaker's apartment and heating plant. Since we are in the downtown area and we have many visitors we wanted one part of the building that could be available at all times for people who were only spending a few hours in the city. If they wanted to come in and read, we wanted a library available to them. If they wanted to visit with friends, the fireside room should be easily accessible. Or if they wanted a snack, a hot plate, coke machine, refrigerator or sink should be easily available, and then something for recreation like ping pong. Of course the chapel and offices are to be in a prominent place. As you see, with limited property and a large vision we couldn't bind our architect by making demands as to the type of architecture we wanted. Modern functional was the only thing that could meet our demands (S1).

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[12]James R. Anderson, "A Ministry to Multitudes," Lutheran Companion, February 16, 1955, p. 9.

This drastic limitation of space, since it was not accompanied by a similar limitation of the architect to traditional styles, was met by the architect (a member of the congregation) with a beautifully appropriate solution, having a remarkably spacious effect. Our correspondent testifies that "the additional property we would have needed to build in a traditional style would have cost us approximately another $100,000.00."

Yet, in order to ward off the possible rejoinder that where space is not limited we might perhaps do well to imitate old styles, the following example should also be quoted: "Another factor," wrote a pastor in an urban residential area, "is that we have over two acres of land and it seemed better to spread the buildings ranch type" (U8).

The functional approach applies to any set of needs, and offers an individualized solution for each. Many Lutheran congregations have come to realize this new adaptability and to choose the contemporary approach on this account.

The Simplicity of Modern Architecture Appeals to Many

A number of replies indicated the appeal which "simplicity of design" (M9, M10) and "simplicity of construction" (M7) hold for modern people.

One pastor expressed his liking for "the simple and clean lines" of modern architecture (A1). Another wrote that he "found in its simplicity a reverence missing in churches of conventional design" (M2). An architect was represented as holding that the best solution to any architectural problem is, among other things, "the simplest . . . solution possible" (E5). "Traditional church architecture," said an award-

winning architect in a newspaper interview, "is a victim of . . . a growing desire among people of all faiths for strength, simplicity, and utility."[13] Another architect expressed the conviction that not only he himself, but also the pastor and members of the congregation with which he had worked, had built their church "in the belief that spiritual quality is more forcefully achieved by simple means than by badly built and pompously designed monuments."[14] The simplicity of contemporary architecture, therefore, appears to be an appealing factor for many of the people involved in building churches today.

Modern Architecture is Considered to be More Honest

> The modern architect has found that his integrity will prevent him from building with the tools of the past, or to use deception in forcing old architectural forms onto modern materials. . . .[15]

This statement by an architect expresses part of what is meant by the honesty of contemporary architecture. An architect's honesty will not allow him to make something seem to be that which it is not. This attitude is directed against the deceptive practices that have long been common in architecture--especially, it would seem, in church architecture, where richness and grandeur are often simulated when they cannot be afforded in their genuine form. This dishonesty may take the form of wood-and-plaster rib vaulting, plaster walls painted to resemble stone,

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[13]Quoted by Dan L. Thrapp, in "Tiny Church Wins Award for Design," Los Angeles Times, January 16, 1954, part II, p. 3 (S2).

[14]Dedication, Zion Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, N5), p. 12.

[15]Pietro Belluschi, in "Architecture Today: A Symposium," Liturgical Arts, November, 1950, p. 21.

or false display pipes in front of the organ chamber, to mention only a few examples. In such ways, "a building can be the visual expression of a dishonest action," as it was put by l'Abbé Nègre, the priest who commissioned the famous modern church of Notre Dame du Raincy in Paris. "Many priests," he wrote, "complain of the poor results from their preaching--no wonder, if the word of truth is heard in a monument of falsehood."[16]

Something similar seems to have motivated several of the Lutheran congregations under study in their choice of modern architecture. In answer to the question about the relative cost of the contemporary style, one pastor emphasized, "The cost was NOT the main consideration that directed us toward the contemporary pattern. The stress always was upon the honesty and not upon the economy of the contemporary form" (E1). "It almost seemed dishonest to consider pseudo-Gothic," he added. This is reflected by another pastor's assertion that he was influenced in the favor of modern architecture partly by the fact that it is "honest" (E3). And in the following passage a new church is extolled for its honesty of design:

> Here, then, is a building that is an unashamed confession of its plan. This expression has been made by the honest use of good materials, and with a sincere attempt to exploit the natural texture and color of the materials. Thus a simple and chaste back-drop is provided for the religious drama of God's meeting with man in Word and Sacrament.[17]

Although the explicit references to the honesty of modern architecture were found to be few, it is to be noted that the more luridly dis-

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[16]Quoted by Jean Labatut, ibid., p. 24.

[17]A Guide to Our Church (printed brochure, E2), p. 1.

honest practices which were once common are now falling into healthy disuse. The completed churches studied by this writer show that the virtue of honesty is now quite generally, if tacitly, honored. According to Jean Labatut, this is as it should be: "If the triumph of courage, honesty, and truth over timidity, ignorance, and fraud can be expressed visually, it should certainly be done, first of all, in church architecture."[18]

Modern Architecture Appeals to Many as being More Beautiful

Already there are a number of people who think highly enough of the new architecture to report that they were influenced in their choice for modern by its "appearance" (M4), its "beauty" (M13, S3), or the feeling that it is "attractive" (A1). A pastor wrote that he was impressed especially by its promise of "a fresh beauty for a new day" (S2).

An architect furhished us with the beginning of an analysis of this new kind of beauty when he wrote that he and his clients "acted in the belief that beauty emerges not from stale ornament but from such simple, basic things as light, space, texture, and color."[19]

The conviction that such things can produce real beauty is one that will no doubt become more and more common as examples of the new architecture become more numerous and better known.

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[18]Jean Labatut, op. cit., p. 23.

[19]Pietro Belluschi, in Dedication, Zion Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, M5), p. 12.

Modern Architecture Offers Greater Distinctiveness

Some have evidently seen in contemporary architecture not so much its beauty as the fact that it is different and distinctive. One reply stated that their architect preferred the modern, functional approach because it offered him "the opportunity to do something different" (M3). In another case, "a desire to be different," among other things, "played a part in the choice of the modern design" (A2). A pastor gave as his personal reason for choosing contemporary the feeling that "our setting here in the [Black] Hills seemed to call for something striking and different" (E4). A desire for distinctiveness is also implied in the experience of the pastor who "was distressed by the drab sameness of churches being built on traditional lines. To see one is to see them all" (W1). He evidently felt that modern design could give his church something different from the rest.

One congregation was "sold" on modern when it requested of its architect, and received, "an exterior that would be distinctive to the point of attracting people and their attention" (M14). This congregation evidently felt that in the university town in which it was located the public notice which a modern church would attract might have a definite publicity value. Similarly, the possibilities for distinctiveness must have been in mind when the pastor of a large city congregation wrote that for himself the "promotional value" of the contemporary type of architecture was an influence on his choice (E2).

It is inevitable that as long as churches of contemporary design are still in the minority they will seem to be "different," perhaps strikingly so, to the ordinary person. Some congregations have found

this to be a valuable factor in its favor.

A Church in a Modern Architectural Idiom Fits Better into a Community in which Other Structures Employ this Idiom

In a number of cases it was felt that the style of architecture used in nearby buildings or in the community as a whole influenced the choice for the church building. One reply read: "In keeping with modern homes and office buildings, it was felt that the church might also have possibilities in modern designs" (M2). In another case both pastor and members tended toward the modern approach "probably partly because it was felt that since Midland is a city of unusual churches and houses, ours should not be an exception" (M13). The pastor of a congregation in the Southwest listed as the second factor in the choice of contemporary design "the pueblo style of architecture in residences in the immediate community, i.e., a low, flat-roofed construction. Modern architecture, it was felt would blend with the pueblo" (U6). Another reply stated simply that "the setting in the community" played a part in the choice of modern design (A2), while still another cited the opinion that such a style "fits in with the area better" (U8). A pastor chose modern partly because it "fits in to the architecture of the community" (S2). A final example shows the direct influence of an adjacent complex of modern buildings:

> The fact that the Pottstown Hospital announced its own building program at this time influenced the design of the new church and parish building. The architecture for the new hospital was to be of contemporary design. Mr. Mansell, with the consent of the building committee, determined to make the church's buildings harmonize with those to be erected across the street.[20]

This type of reasoning, however, convincing though it may be in certain cases, is not basic and cannot be defended in the opposite situation, namely, where all the adjacent buildings and those of the entire community are constructed in a style of the past. In such cases historic precedent can be appealed to in the way in which it is done in the following excerpt from a dedication booklet:

> The churches of old were designed and built according to the then prevalent designing and construction methods. The length of time it took to erect many of the old world cathedrals extended through several centuries. Each progressive step is clearly defined in the change in architectural styling and construction prevalent at that particular time. As many as four distinct styles of architecture can plainly be traced in many of these European structures.
>
> We, through our building committee, have faithfully followed in the footsteps of our predecessors. We, too, planned and built according to prevailing designing and construction methods.[21]

The Influence of an Architect May Help Bring About the Choice of Modern Architecture

In several cases the architect himself was stated to have been a prime factor in the congregation's choice of the modern approach. The following example is worth quoting at length:

> Frankly, the whole concept of such an approach floored the majority. Even the building committee had its misgivings. But they had the opportunity and the willingness to give the idea full consideration. It was new. Once the initial shock had passed it became easier to accept the principle. The architect (a member of the United Lutheran Church) had a sensible and patient approach. He had a calm and sensible answer ready for every question. Though few of the con-

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[20]Edgar S. Brown, Jr., Guide to the Parish Church and School of Grace Lutheran Church, Pottstown, Pennsylvania (printed brochure, U1), p. 10.

[21]Dedication, 1952, Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin (printed brochure, W2), p. 12.

gregation could visualize what the finished building would look like, yet they went along with confidence in their committee and in the architect (A1).

A second example is perhaps even more vivid, since it is corroborated by testimony from both sides. The pastor wrote:

> I'm afraid that it must be admitted that the initial impulse toward adoption of a contemporary style . . . came as a result of popular acceptance of the architect himself. Pietro Belluschi had become a word that meant "the best" and a congregation that wanted the best was impelled to seek him out. The architect was the primary salesman. A single meeting "sold" the building committee on the possibility and even the advisability of expressing reverence through contemporary idiom. From that time and on, it almost seemed dishonest to consider pseudo-gothic (E1).

He terms it an "indoctrination" on the part of the architect. From the other side, the architect himself expressed his views on the relationship between congregation and architect in his "Dedicatory Words":

> It is important that the plans progress in such a way that each step is understood and approved by the congregation. It is a mistake to assume that the architect may force the members of the congregation to his way of thinking; he must rather try to find within himself the power and wisdom to interpret their wishes and guide their decisions by logic and persuasion. He should know their various intimate problems and the scope of their activities; he must have the ability to integrate all needs into significant forms, even in the knowledge that there is no perfect answer to any problem, and that he is a fallible and limited human being.
>
> The Central Lutheran Church has been a moving example of cooperation between church members and architects.[22]

Cooperation such as this is certainly to be desired in every church building project. When such close relationships are set up it is inevitable that the architect himself will become a highly influential factor in bringing about the adoption of good modern design on the part of the members of the congregation.

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[22] 1950, Dedication, Central Lutheran Church (printed brochure, E1), p. 15.

Modern Architecture is Usually Found to be More Economical

The relative economy of the functional approach to architecture, as compared to traditional approaches, was the subject of a separate question on the sheet sent out. Question three read: "How much more, proportionately, would it have cost to construct equivalent facilities in a traditional style?" No doubt even without such special prompting, the factor of relative economy of construction would have been a very commonly given reason for choosing the modern approach. The fact that the point was specifically raised made this factor even more prominent and turned up some interesting replies, besides making possible some revealing statistics.

A total of thirty-one of the questionnaires returned offered a direct answer to the third question. Only one correspondent thought that the cost of his church would have been "probably less" if it had been done in a traditional style (M13). This was a large church and educational wing complex, of unusual design, costing just over $600,000. Two more thought that in their cases the cost of the two approaches would be about equal. One wrote, "I should think a traditional style church would cost the same" (U4). The other, who was generally negative in his attitude toward the completed church, wrote, "I cannot guess. . . . I believe that the cost . . . is not proportionally less than traditional." The reason for this, he suggested, was that "the contractors are always quite a bit behind [the architects] in their abilities, and thus we are meeting ever-increasing repair bills--in several cases we will be unable to make up for big 'goofs'" (U7). But these were the only three out of

the thirty-one who were of the opinion that they had not saved money by building in a modern style.

Among the other twenty-eight there was a wide range of answers. Estimates of how much more a building in the traditional style would have cost over the actually completed one ranged from 9 per cent to 600 per cent. Leaving out of account the church which has been valued at 250 to 600 per cent its actual cost by those who had not been told it (A3),[23] the average reply was a fraction under 44 per cent.[24] This means that the average pastor thought that if traditional had been chosen, instead of modern, the cost would have been 44 per cent greater than what it actually was. It should be noted that this figure represents the average estimate of all those who thought that their modern church was more economical to build than one in a traditional style. To take into account also the three who did not regard this to be true in their case, a median of all the estimates could be taken. This median reply would be 33-1/3 per cent (i.e., one third). At any rate, it is apparent that the average Lutheran congregation in the United States which has built in a modern idiom is confident that in so doing it saved a very sizeable amount of money.

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[23]When this case is also included, the overall average soars to 64 per cent.

[24]This figure was arrived at thus: since many of the replies indicated a range of figures instead of a single figure (e.g., 20 to 30 per cent [M2], or "at least half again as much--perhaps two times the actual cost," i.e., 50 to 100 per cent [M9]), both the upper and lower figures were taken into account in determining the overall average, as if they were two separate estimates. If, instead of this procedure, only the lower of the two estimates in such cases would have been taken into account, the overall average would still have stood at slightly over 40 per cent.

Regarding this point, it will be interesting here to quote directly from a few of the questionnaires.

First, several remarks were made by pastors who declined to venture a specific estimate of how much more a traditional style would have cost. One answer to the question "How much more?" read thus: "I have no idea. To build a true gothic church, I do know, would have been out of our reach financially. Cheap imitations of traditional style might be had at approximately the same cost as that involved in the church we did build" (W1). Another replied: "Cannot answer this correctly since everything depends upon what style of traditional is used" (M10). Both these replies hint at the ungenuineness of building in a traditional style, at least in cases where not enough money is spent on it.[25]

Similarly, after offering his estimates concerning the comparative economy of the functional manner ("I would say that Colonial would have cost one third more and that Gothic would have been at least double"), one pastor made a telling thrust at ungenuineness: "These figures depend upon how Colonial or how Gothic the structure would have been made" (U8).

Interesting comparisons were made in several of the replies. A report from a church whose actual cost was $47,000 stated:

> It would have cost us from $25,000 to $50,000 more to have used the traditional style for the equivalent facilities. We can seat 240 in our chapel, which is very churchly and attractive, whereas a sister congregation in Denver, organized on the same day, had to spend over $20,000 more to get a chapel that will seat 125. Theirs is traditional (U6).

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[25] Among those who did not offer an estimate of the difference in cost must be included this rather cryptic reply: "I have no idea and we were not interested. We surely did not choose this type of architecture because of the lower cost--for it is generally assumed that our type of church is cheaper in cost per cubic foot" (U5).

The spokesman for a church in a downtown environment reported that

> the additional property we would need to build in a traditional style would have cost us approximately another $100,000.00,[26] and it was estimated that the building cost would have been approximately one half more than it cost us building in the modern functional style (S1).

Another reply offered a revealing comparison with the congregation's previous place of worship:

> Our old church was destroyed by lightning and fire. It was traditional, with a high steeple. In obtaining information for the insurance company we discovered that it would have cost us at least $110,000.00 to replace and furnish the building, possibly more. The functional building we constructed seats a few more people, has an additional 54' by 18' Sunday School unit, and is well furnished (including a Moller Pipe Organ), and cost $85,000.00 (A1).

It is readily apparent from all these figures and quotations that the comparative economy of a modern over a traditional method of church building has proved to be one of the most convincing factors of all in leading Lutheran congregations to choose a modern, functional idiom.

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[26]The total cost of the church as actually built was $360,000.

CHAPTER III

THE EXTENT TO WHICH CONTEMPORARY LUTHERAN CHURCHES DEPART FROM THE TRADITIONAL

It is the intention of this chapter to show, within the limits of the present study, how much and in what ways the completed church buildings under consideration differ from the older, more familiar type of church. To this end, many of the important details of a modern church building are here described and compared with the old.

While the data made use of in the preceding chapter came chiefly from the questionnaire sent out to the churches, the principal source of information for the present chapter has been the fund-raising brochures, dedication programs, etc. which were so kindly sent to the author by many congregations at his request, as well as the descriptions of these churches which have appeared in church and architectural periodicals.[1]

Basic Shapes

Under the heading of "basic shapes" we include both ground plans and elevations. Rather than going into either of these in elaborate detail, however, let it be our purpose here simply to indicate in broad

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[1] In referring to various parts of a church, the following customary terminology has been used: "east" means liturgical east, i.e., toward the end of the church in which the altar is placed, regardless of actual geographical orientation (for a report on orientation of modern Lutheran churches, see the second part of this chapter); "west," then, is the opposite end of the church, where the main entrance is usually located; "north," or "Gospel side," is to the left of a worshiper facing the altar, "south," or "Epistle side," to his right.

outline the basic forms of spatial organization in the churches under study, and to compare them with churches of the past.

By far the most common ground plan (as was to be expected) is still that based on the rectangle. In its simplest form this plan calls for four straight sides, forming a single rectangle that encloses within it all the main elements of a church: nave, chancel, and often narthex or entranceway in addition. (For our present purposes we are disregarding such secondary elements as sacristies, educational wings, offices, etc. --necessary though they may be.) Of the thirty-nine churches under consideration, five (M7, M11, M12, S2, S3) make use of the simplest floor plan of all, including even the narthex within the basic rectangle.[2] Most of these are quite small, seating from 150 to 250 persons. Another commonly used plan is to combine nave and chancel within one rectangular space, but with a somewhat narrower narthex or entranceway added on the outside of the basic rectangle. Such a ground plan is used by eight churches (A1, A5, M2, M3, M9, U1, U5, U6). Both of these plans result in a spacious chancel that extends the full width of the nave.

Variations on this simple basic plan include a chancel that is either wider or narrower than the nave. In three churches the chancel was made narrower: M6 and U4, in which the narthex is the same width as the nave, and U2, in which the narthex too is narrower.[3] One of the best-

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[2]At least two of these (S2, S3), however, have rooms inserted on both sides of the chancel, within the rectangular outside walls. This results, of course, in a chancel which is narrower inside than the nave, even though on the outside they appear to be continuous.

[3]The two churches mentioned in the previous footnote might also have been put into this classification, although as far as outside outline is concerned they belong in the first group.

known churches included in this study, however, adopts the opposite variation: a chancel wider (also higher) than the nave (E1). Furthermore, the chancel of this church is not rectangular but in the form of a broad semicircle (see Figure 1). The added width in the chancel on either side is used for choir seating, and the narrow strip of wall in the offset that connects the wide chancel to the narrower nave on either side is glazed, furnishing the chancel with a source of natural light outside the congregation's line of sight.

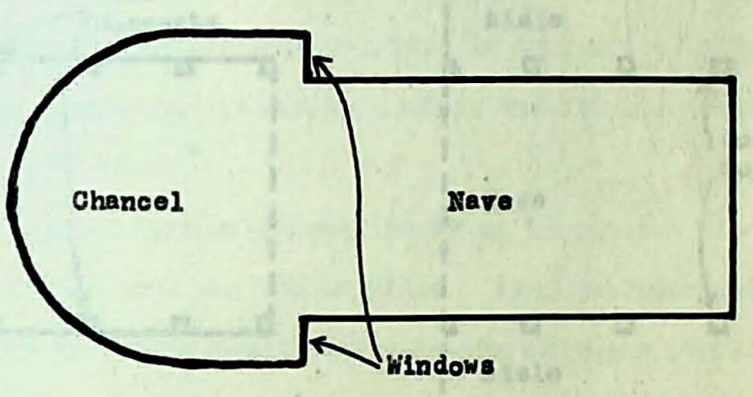

Figure 1. Ground Plan of E1.

Still another variation to the basically rectangular layout is the cruciform plan, used in M10. Here likewise chancel, nave, and narthex form a simple rectangle, but to this are added transepts, so that the ground plan is in the shape of a Latin cross. This plan, as is well known, was much used during the Middle Ages, but M10 is the only one of the thirty-nine modern churches under study here which uses it.

The church M5 will provide us with a link between the kind of church discussed so far and the basilican style to be considered presently. The nave of the former type of church consists of a single room,

with simple walls to the right and to the left (Figure 2). In the basilica type of church, however, the side walls are built farther out to the sides, and in their place a row of pillars or piers is introduced on either side to support the roof over the main part of the nave (Figure 3). The space along the sides, then, between these free-standing supporting members and the outside wall, becomes the "aisle"--a structural feature of very long tradition in Christian church building.

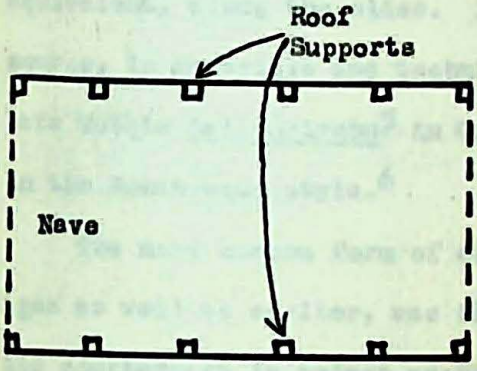

Figure 2. Ground Plan of Single Room Type of Nave.

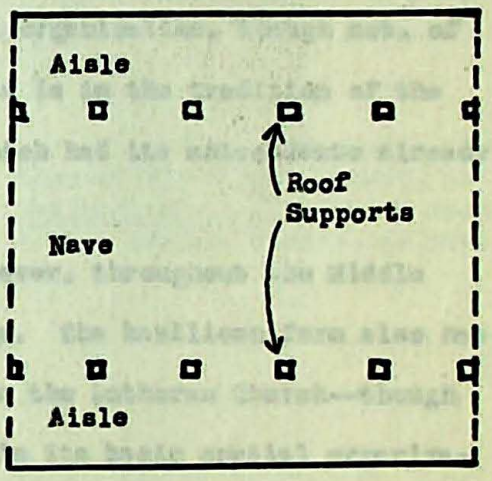

Figure 3. Ground Plan of Basilica Type of Nave.

MS is such a "three-aisled"[4] church. Yet it does not strictly follow the basilica pattern, because the entire nave plus aisles is roofed

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[4]Counting the nave proper as one aisle. "Three-aisled" is the designation used in the article "Aisle" in Encyclopaedia Britannica (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., c.1951), I, 479, and elsewhere. Dom E. Roulin, in Modern Church Architecture, translated from the French by C. Cornelia Creigie and John A. Southwell (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., c.1947), pp. 366 and 372, prefers to describe such a church as having three naves, and the type of Figure 2 as having one nave.

as a single unit. Hence the aisles are as high as the nave itself (except as this is modified by the slope of the roof; see Figure 5). In this church, incidentally, the aisles do not continue into the chancel, and so the latter is only as wide as the span of the arches (i.e., only as wide as the nave proper, without aisles).

Although this church does have structural side aisles, the effect of the single roof over both nave and aisles is definitely that of a single large room--a "hall," even though there are pillars, or their equivalent, along the sides. In spatial organization, though not, of course, in materials and techniques, this is in the tradition of the Late Gothic Hallenkirche[5] in Germany, which had its antecedents already in the Romanesque style.[6]

The more common form of church, however, throughout the Middle Ages as well as earlier, was the basilica. The basilican form also has its counterpart in modern architecture in the Lutheran Church--though again not in its technical details, but in its basic spatial organization.

The basilica has the same ground plan (Figure 3) as #5, described above, but its side aisles are lower in height than the nave itself. The walls of the nave proper, therefore, rise above the level of the aisle roofs, forming what is called a clerestory (Figure 6). The effect of this is to detach the aisles more completely from the nave proper,

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[5]In contrast to the Saalkirche (Figure 4), as the church with a nave consisting of a single room, unaisled, is called by Ferdinand Pfammatter, Betonkirchen (Einsiedeln: Benziger Verlag, 1948), p. 126.

[6]Nikolaus Pevsner, An Outline of European Architecture (4th edition, revised and enlarged; London: Penguin Books, 1953), p. 96.

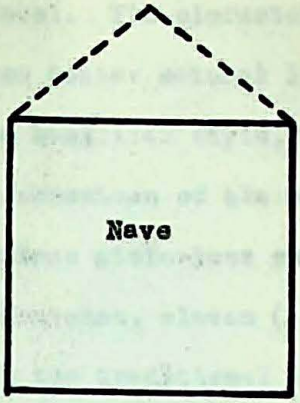

Figure 4. Transverse Section of a Typical Single Room Church, or Saalkirche.

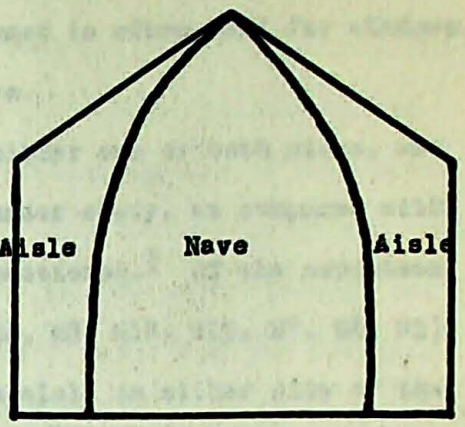

Figure 5. Transverse Section of M5, a Hall Church, or Hallenkirche. (Laminated wood arches between aisles and nave.)

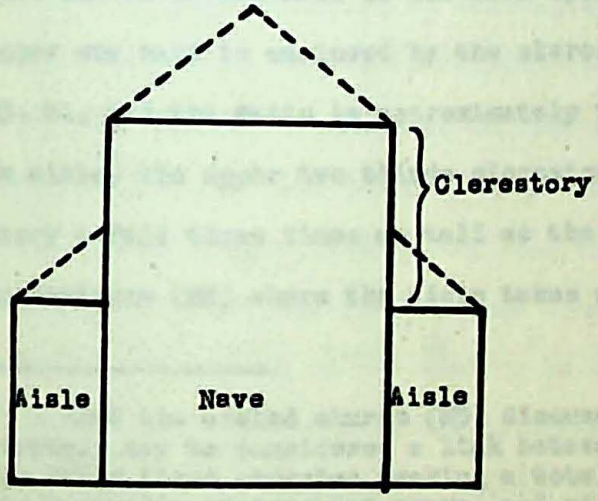

Figure 6. Transverse Section of a Basilican, or Clerestory Church.

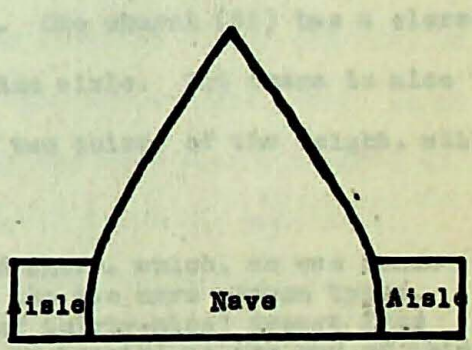

Figure 7. Transverse Section of Basilican Church Without Vertical Clerestory Walls.

which results in a tall, narrow nave that directs all attention toward the chancel. The clerestory wall thus formed is often used for windows, to proved better natural light for the nave.

The basilican style, with aisles on either one or both sides, was used in seventeen of the modern churches under study, as compared with the nineteen aisle-less churches already mentioned.[7] Of the seventeen aisled churches, eleven (A2, A4, E5, M1, M4, M8, M14, M15, U7, U8, W1) maintain the traditional symmetry, with an aisle on either side of the nave.[8] The other six (E2, E4, M16, S1, U3, W2), however, introduce an asymmetrical element by having an aisle on one side only.[9]

The proportionate height of the clerestory as compared to the height of the aisle varies widely among these basilican churches. In five cases (A2, E4, U3, W1, W2) the two are about equal in height, so that the lower one half of the nave opens out into the aisle, while the upper one half is enclosed by the clerestory. In four more cases (E2, E5, M1, U7) the ratio is approximately two to one: the lower one third is aisle, the upper two thirds clerestory. One church (S1) has a clerestory a full three times as tall as the side aisle. But there is also an instance (M8) where the aisle takes up two thirds of the height, with

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[7]And the aisled church (M5) discussed above, which, as was demonstrated, may be considered a link between the two more common types. The other three churches (making a total of thirty-nine) depart from the basically rectangular shape, and will be treated at the end of this section.

[8]Nevertheless, two of these (M4, M15) depart from strict symmetry by making the aisle on the Gospel side much wider than the other, which is of ordinary width. In the case of M4 this was called the "social aisle," perhaps referring to its use either as a meeting room and game room or simply as a place to greet friends before and after services.

[9]S1 and U3 on the Gospel side, the others on the Epistle side.

the clerestory adding only one third at the top. And then (just, it would seem, to prove that contemporary architects do not slavishly follow the patterns of the past) six (A4, M4, M14, M15, M16, U8) of the aisled churches do not have enough of a vertical expanse of wall above the level of the aisle roof even to qualify as a clerestory in any traditional sense (Figure 7). This is because in many cases (though not in all) a laminated wood arch begins its curve away from the vertical already immediately above the roof level of the aisle, so that one might say that here already the wall ends and the roof begins.

In the matter of chancel width as related to nave width, the aisled churches display a more uniform practice than do the unaisled examples. Out of the seventeen basilica type churches, eleven (A2, A4, E4, E5, M1, M14, M15, M16, S1, W1, W2) have chancels whose width equals that of the nave proper, exclusive of the aisle(s). This appears to be the most natural way of making the transition from nave to chancel. In three cases (M4, U3, U7) the chancel is made somewhat narrower than the nave minus its aisles. But instances also occur in which either one (E2) or both (M8, U8) aisles continue all the way into the chancel area. In at least two of these cases, the space thus gained next to the chancel is used for the seating of the choir. In many of the other basilican churches, that space alongside the chancel which corresponds to the space taken by the aisle(s) alongside the nave is enclosed and designated as the sacristy (or for other purposes).

The aisled churches also appear to have greater uniformity in the placement of the narthex than do the simple, one-room Saalkirchen. A full fifteen of the seventeen devote a section all the way across the

west end of the main body of the church to the narthex, and do not deem it necessary to add a separate wing for this purpose, as many of the Saalkirchen do. Some of these do, however, have a small, separate entrance vestibule in addition to, and leading into, the narthex itself. But A4 places the narthex in an auxiliary wing adjoining the church on the Epistle side near the west end, while A2 places the narthex in a large wing wider than the main body of the church itself and placed against its west end like the crossbar of a "T".

All the churches thus far discussed are based on a ground plan that is fundamentally rectangular in outline.[10] But three of the thirty-nine churches included in this study depart quite radically from this traditional plan.

M13 is a widely-publicized example of the central plan in ecclesiastical architecture. Such a building is planned around a central point (radial symmetry), rather than a longitudinal axis (axial symmetry). It may be circular or polygonal, with or without an ambulatory round about, or it may be in the shape of a Greek cross, i.e., with the four arms of equal length. Churches in such designs have appeared occasionally throughout the history of Christianity, and especially in the Byzantine era. These were usually "baptisteries and memorials or mausoleum chapels, for which, on a Roman precedent, centrally planned buildings were preferred."[11] Even these often had a longitudinal motif

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[10]Although M16 is actually somewhat coffin-shaped, since the church is slightly wider at its east than its west end, and the east wall is pushed out into a shallow triangle instead of being straight across.

[11]Nikolaus Pevsner, op. cit., p. 30.

in addition to the central one (as by the adding of a chancel and apse at the east end and a narthex at the west). M5, however, probably is as close to being a completely consistent central plan as it is possible to attain in a church. An octagonal altar forms the center of the entire plan; it is surrounded by an octagonal chancel, then an octagonal nave, then an octagonal ambulatory (corridor), which serves as a narthex. The final touch is a series of meeting rooms jutting out from the ambulatory, one from each of the eight sides. The roof system will be explained here, since it has little relation to that of the other churches in this study. Eight separate gable-roof units radiate from a central point above the altar (marked by a fleche)--one to cover each segment of the octagon. Thus there are eight roof ridges and eight valleys between them, producing an effect reminiscent of the petals of a flower. Each of these eight roof units is, in turn, divided into three levels, with steps between: the ridge of each roof slopes upward from the central point to a point above the edge of the chancel, where a vertical drop occurs; from there the ridge rises again over the nave to the point where the ambulatory begins, where it drops once more and continues horizontally over the ambulatory and one of the radiating meeting rooms. The space in each of the vertical drops is filled with glass, thus providing clerestory lighting for the nave and chancel, which otherwise have no windows because they have no outside walls.

The other two churches which depart from the rectangular plan are based on a triangle motif. In the case of E3 a wedge shape was dictated by the shape of the lot. The chancel is placed in the narrow end of the wedge, with the very tip reserved for a small chapel. The narthex is in

the opposite, wide end of the wedge, and auxiliary meeting rooms around an open court continue the wedge shape still farther to the west. The roof of this building is flat, but slopes upward from the narrow east end to the wider west end.

Another triangular plan is put into effect in A5. Again, the chancel is placed in the apex of the triangle and the narthex along the base. In this case, however, the roof slopes in the opposite direction, from its lowest point over the narthex to a dramatic high point above the altar. A sacristy is added as a smaller and lower triangle east of the chancel-apex of the main triangle.

From this description of the basic disposition of space in the thirty-nine churches under study, it is readily apparent that there is no lack-luster uniformity in contemporary Lutheran architecture. Yet there has been no wholesale departure from the basic shapes that have long been regarded as the most suitable for church bodies in the main stream of the Christian tradition. About forty-four per cent of the churches studies (seventeen out of thirty-nine) have adopted or adapted the plan of the Christian basilica in some form; this is probably a higher percentage than at any time in the recent past. Most of those which do not follow the plan of the aisled basilica do at least retain the form of the long and relatively narrow hall, which is certainly in the best tradition. There was not a single example of the square or longer-than-it-is-wide type of church which was once so popular, but which is now regarded as unfortunate by most persons of ecclesiastical taste. While deferring to good tradition, however, contemporary architects have been willing to adopt modern techniques and materials. As

individual details are taken up, this will become more apparent than it has been under the heading of basic shapes.

Orientation

For many centuries it had been traditional to place the chancel end of the church toward the east. In fact, our terminology in denoting the various parts of a church is still based on that assumption. But it would appear that almost all trace of that tradition has now been lost, or at least is being ignored, in contemporary Lutheran architecture.

The writer feels that he has ascertained the orientation of thirty-four of the churches under study with a respectable degree of probability. Of these, no more than nine are oriented toward the east, and two of these are uncertain. About an equal number faces in each of the other directions. Hence it appears probable that there is now almost no adherence to the old rule any more. In one case (M12), however, eastern orientation was explicitly required because of "liturgical considerations."[12] This may have been true in one or two other cases in addition.

Techniques and Materials

Certain building materials are available in modern times which the builders of the historic ecclesiastical styles did not have at their disposal. These include such materials as steel, concrete, and the laminated wood arch. Each of these makes possible, even necessary, methods

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[12]"Lutheran Church," Progressive Architecture, December, 1952, p. 103.

of building which are different from those practiced in previous centuries. As is to be expected, these changed methods of building usually affect the appearance of the churches now being built.

One of the most interesting of these developments is the now widespread use of the laminated arch in church building. Such an arch is glued up from separate pieces of wood, shaped and fitted together in such a way that a one-piece, curved framing member is formed, which is able to serve the function both of a vertical post in the wall and of a roof truss. Thus the entire weight of the roof is transmitted to the ground by these arches. The side walls, since they need support no more than their own weight, can be moved outward, leaving a space for the aisle between the arch and the outside wall. Furthermore, well-designed laminated arches can add much to the beauty of a church's interior, rising as they do in a long graceful curve from floor level to the ridge of the roof.

Eleven of the churches under study make use of the laminated wood arch in their construction. Three of these (A1, E1, U5) are built as aisle-less churches, but the rest of them conform to the basilican plan at least to the extent of having structural side aisles. But only two of the latter group (U3 on one side only, and W1) have an actual, vertical clerestory wall, while in the remainder (A4, M4, M5, M14, M15, M16) the arch begins its curve immediately above the level of the aisle roof.

In other respects, too, there is opportunity for considerable variety in building with the laminated arch. The shape of arch used is determined by the individual architect. Hence some may be tall and grace-

ful (M5), others very much flattened out (S1).[13] Two examples of a parabolic arch occur among the churches studied (M15, A4). In another church (U3) a lean-to effect is achieved by using half-arches only, with the free upper end resting upon brick piers in the opposite wall of the church.

The so-called "A" frame type of construction is somewhat related to the laminated arch plan. In this type, too, the principal framing members rise all the way from floor level to the ridge of the roof in one continuous unit. But in this case those framing members are straight rather than curved. The basic shape of the elevation, therefore, is that of an isosceles triangle--all roof and no walls. (Short walls are usually added, however, leaving the lower ends of the framing timbers out in the open, resembling miniature flying buttresses.) The roof pitch required in the "A" frame method of construction is comparatively steep. Two (M7, M11) of the three examples of this type show a pitch of approximately seventy degrees from the horizontal, and the other (S2) sixty degrees. This steep pitch can be a definite advantage, since the dignity of height is thus achieved even in a very small church. An architect wrote of one such church which he had designed: "The simple 'A' frame construction not only added to the economy but provided a vertical motif, lifting the worshipers above the squat proportions of the conventional mission church."[14]

The steel frame is another modern development now often used in the

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[13]Both, incidentally, designed by the same architect.

[14]Culver Heaton, "A Mission, a Message, and $25,000," Lutheran Companion, March 10, 1954, p. 9.

construction of churches. But only three of the churches here under study allow the steel framework to be exposed to sight in any appreciable degree. In M13 the slender steel posts that support the low roof all around stand in the open, unhidden. The architect of M12, a modified "A" frame type of structure, allowed the large, built-up steel roof trusses to remain fully exposed on the inside. And in A3 (with a triangular ground plan), the complex network of steel beams in the walls and roof is entirely visible, and forms an interesting element of the total design. It is interesting to note that all three of these churches are among those which differ most radically from the traditional patterns.

It happens more often, however, that the steel skeleton, all-important though it is in the structure of the building, is in no way expressed or even hinted at on the surface of walls or ceiling. For instance, it is a very common practice, especially in flat-roofed buildings, to install a smooth and uninteresting ceiling, which in no way expresses the means by which the roof is supported. Again, in W2 the horizontal roof trusses of steel are overlaid with wooden boards in such a way that at first sight the roof appears to be supported by wooden beams instead of steel. No doubt as the new architecture matures the potentialities for beauty inherent in steel itself will be more widely realized.

Reinforced or prestressed concrete is used as a basic structural material in several of the churches under consideration. U1 is built around massive trusses of reinforced concrete, poured in place and then ground to a fine finish and polychromed. In the preceding paragraph M12 was cited as an example of the use of a steel framework; it also is note-

worthy in that the roof which is attached to the steel modified "A" frame consists of "overlapping, hollow-core, precast, prestressed concrete" planks laid up on the saw-toothed upper edges of the steel trusses.[15] The same church also makes use of concrete pylons to mark the main entrance and to serve as a tower. S1 is built almost entirely of reinforced concrete, faced with brick inside and out. In the more prosaic form of plain concrete blocks this material is used in at least four more churches (M10, A4, U1, W1), in all cases left exposed on the interior but covered with brick or stone on the exterior.

Probably it is in large part due to the use of modern materials that the roofs of contemporary churches have flattened out to the extent that they have. A full nineteen examples have roofs pitched at an angle of fifteen degrees or less from the horizontal, as opposed to eighteen with a steeper pitch.[16] Eight of these are virtually flat--a plan not ordinarily seen in the styles of architecture formerly used in the Lutheran church. In addition, ten out of the seventeen basilican churches employ the flat roof for the side aisle(s). At the other extreme, of course, are six churches in which the main roof has a pitch of sixty degrees or more.[17]

The use made by modern church architects of several more traditional materials might also be mentioned. Brick (either solid or as a veneer) appears as an important material for the walls in thirty-four

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[15]For details see "Lutheran Church," Progressive Architecture, December, 1952, pp. 101-03.

[16]A4 and M15, being parabolic, are not included in this tabulation.

[17]Three of these are those built on the wooden "A" frame principle.

of the thirty-nine churches. Furthermore, in all but five of these the brick is left exposed, uncovered by plaster or anything else, also on the interior walls. Stone, on the other hand, is used to any great extent in less than five of the churches studied. In U3 a slate floor throughout produces a pleasing effect.

Concerning two of the churches, material available to the present writer shows that the effective use of color was a matter of special concern to the architects. A description of the employment of color in M14 is found in the dedication booklet:

> The arrangement of color in the glass and solid panels was executed by Artist Betty Dickerson, of Wichita.
>
> The panel walls were planned to produce an ever changing pattern of light and color. When viewed from the outside during the day the solid panels carry pattern while the glass becomes relatively neutral. As seen inside during the day the color is provided by the glass and the solid panels become neutral. At night this is reversed by the solid panels providing a subdued color pattern inside under artificial light and the glass presenting its color to the viewer outside. Incorporated in the design of the chancel wall are the five liturgical colors: White, symbolic of Epiphany and Easter; Violet, Advent and Lent; Red, Pentecost; Green, Trinity; Black, Good Friday.[18]

In the case of S2, a small mission chapel built on a very strict budget, the architect himself tells us the story in a newspaper interview:

> "Color became a prime factor with simplification of the architectural form," said Heaton, "and I insisted upon approval of my selection of colors."[19]

And in a magazine article he describes the result:

> The colors radiate from the sanctuary, with a ceiling of soft blue-

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[18] The Dedication, Saint Luke's Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, M14), p. 10.

[19] Dan L. Thrapp, "Tiny Church Wins Award for Design," Los Angeles Times, January 16, 1954, part II, p. 3.

gray, beams of dark blue, and the wood walls of the chancel warm redwood. The chancel furniture is a blending red mahogany, with the dossal curtain natural and gold, the large cross of aluminum, and candlesticks of brass. The walls of the nave are yellow ochre, and the floor tan.[20]

The science of acoustics has also had its influence on the design of modern Lutheran churches. The following quotation from the dedication booklet of E5 applies with equal force also to M1 (after which, in general, E5 is patterned) "A slanted ceiling and curved wall surfaces contribute to an almost perfect acoustical setting, both for the speaking from the chancel and for the music from the loft."[21] In addition, one of the side walls of the nave in M1 is deliberately made wavy, so that no two walls are parallel (thus reducing echo). To heighten this effect still further, several panels of brick in that wall are so laid that the surface is broken up instead of remaining flat. A similar technique is the "punctuated brick" effect used in S1.

The Chancel

We now turn our attention to certain of the individual components of a contemporary Lutheran church building. The first of these will be the chancel, with its furnishings.

Lutheran churches built in the recent past commonly had a very small chancel. It was often built on as a separate little room added to the east end of the nave. But of the thirty-nine churches here under study, only ten (A3, E3, M4, M6, S2, S3, U2, U3, U4, U7) have a chancel

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[20]Oulver Heaton, op. cit., p. 10.

[21]Dedication Week, Trinity Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota (printed brochure, E5), p. 5.

whose inside width is less than that of the nave.[22] And even among these there are almost none with a chancel as small as once was quite common. This enlarging of the chancel may be due to a heightened liturgical awareness in the Lutheran churches of America.[23]

Modern architects have succeeded, perhaps better than many previous ones, in directing all attention toward the chancel with its alter. An important part in this achievement is due to the many ways developed by contemporary architects of setting the chancel area off from the nave and making it more conspicuous. One commonly used method is to provide wood paneling for the walls of the chancel, while in the nave the bare walls (usually of brick) are left exposed.

A technique which can lay more claim than this one can to being a truly modern development is that of flooding the whole chancel, or the altar-space in particular, with natural light, usually from windows that are hidden from the worshipers' eyes. Ml is a famous example of this technique: a tall, narrow, clear glass window, reaching from floor to ceiling, is placed in the chancel wall on the Gospel side, directly abutting the east wall. This throws a bright stream of light across the altar-space and the east wall, with its sixteen-foot wooden cross. The nave is relatively dark, with no windows at all in the clerestory walls. The source of light beside the altar is hidden from the view of the nave by a tall screen in the form of vertical louvers, projecting

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[22] I.e., the nave proper, not including the side aisles, if any.

[23] One link between the two is perhaps to be found in the increased importance now given to the communion rail, which tends to require a wider chancel.

from the side wall immediately in front of the window.

This idea of accenting a part of the chancel with daylight is repeated in some form in at least seventeen of these churches (A3, E1, E4, E5, M1, M4, M5, M7, M15, S1, U1, U2, U4, U5, U6, U7, W2). This seems almost enough to qualify as one of the distinctive motifs of contemporary church architecture. It assumes various forms, of course, although many examples resemble the treatment of M1. In U1 the windows flanking the alter are made of glass block, sandblasted with ecclesiastical symbols, but hidden from the nave by vertical concrete fins. A different working out of the same idea is found in M7, where a portion of the steep, "A" frame type roof above the altar to one side is replaced by a sheet of greenish, translucent corrugated plastic. In M15 the entire easternmost bay between the parabolic laminated arches is roofed with a similar plastic material.

Other methods of setting off the chancel as the special center of interest in the church are the following: a gable end filled in with patterned ceramic tile (A1); a higher roof and lighter-colored walls in the chancel than in the nave (E1); richer colors in the chancel (S2); elaborate polychroming of the concrete arches in the chancel area and especially of the ceiling above the altar, "in keeping with the ancient tradition that the altar must have a fit covering"[24] (U1); a facing of white marble on the east wall (S3); a diaper pattern painted on the east wall (M6); a ceramic mosaic (M15) or a tall stained glass window (M10)

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[24]Edgar S. Brown, Jr., Guide to the Parish Church and School of Grace Lutheran Church, Pottstown, Pennsylvania (printed brochure, U1), p. 40.

in the center of the east wall; a floor covering different from that of the nave, whether it is ceramic tile (W2), marble (M16), or carpeting (A1, E1, and others); and, finally, planter boxes to provide greenery (used in at least six cases: E2, E4, M1, M15, S1, W2).

The altar itself is of wood in about half of the churches studied, and in the other half stone. At least seven (A3, E1, E2, M1, M14, U3, W2) of the stone altars are of the tomb style (i.e., a solid, or apparently solid, rectangular mass), and eight (M8, M12, M15, M16, S1, S3, U1, U7) of the table type. The latter type exhibits a considerable variety in design of the stone pedestal(s) upon which the mensa rests. In two cases, in fact, there are no pedestals at all, and the slab which forms the mensa is simply cantilevered out from the chancel wall(S1, S3).[25] The altar of M5 is sheathed in copper and topped by a stone mensa. W1 has a large "tabernacle"[26] built into its altar, with doors of cast bronze exhibiting a wheat and grapes design in relief. Many of the wooden altars, however, appear to be stock designs, not designed to the architect's order.

The use of a dossal curtain or a reredos with the altar appears to have lost in popularity among contemporary church architects. Of the thirty-three on which data could be obtained, only seven examples of the

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[25]The correspondent for S1 writes: "Perhaps the most criticism we've had is of the altar itself. Some people don't like it because it looks too much like a shelf. They feel it would be better if it had some connection with the floor. It undoubtedly will look much better when we get our paraments made."

[26]Dedication, Peace Lutheran Church, Green Lake, Wisconsin (printed brochure, W1), pp. 5 and 7.

dossal curtain are to be found (A2, M2, M8, S2, U6, U7, W1). There are no more than three occurrences of a reredos of any description whatever: A3 and U1, where the reredos consists of a plain marble facing applied to the altar niche, and E1, which has a very wide wooden screen behind the altar and extending to either side.[27]

A new motif, however, which has become very commonly accepted in contemporary Lutheran churches, is that of the very large cross placed against the east wall of the chancel, above the altar. Of those churches for which the writer has information on this matter, twenty-five (A1, A2, E1, E2, E3, E4, E5, M1, M3, M4, M5, M6, M7, M12, M15, M16, S1, S2, S3, U1, U3, U4, U5, W1, W2) have a large cross of the sort described, in contrast to a mere four (M8, M13, M14, U7) which have no more than the traditional cross standing on the altar.[28] Such crosses are usually fastened to the east wall of the chancel, often in such a way that they stand off a short distance from the wall, thus casting a prominent shadow when lighted by the side windows. Sometimes neon or fluorescent tubes are installed behind a cross thus mounted, for a back-lighting effect. Occasionally the cross is hung from the ceiling instead of being fastened to the wall. Materials vary, wood (redwood, mahogany, etc.) being the most common. Several are made of aluminum (A1, S2), one of copper (M5), another of wood and heavily silver-plated brass (E2). The height

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[27]Not only in this connection but also elsewhere it may be kept in mind that the writer had no detailed information at hand concerning the interiors of some of the churches under study. This must at times be taken into account when determining the proportionate number of churches that exhibit a given feature.

[28]Three (M1, M3, M15) of the twenty-five with large crosses have an altar cross in addition.

of these crosses ranges upward from about three feet, which is unusually small, to fifteen (M15), sixteen (M1), eighteen (M16), or even nineteen feet tall (M5).

The great majority of these are simple crosses, without the corpus. A crucifix is used in only three cases (M4, M12, U1), the first two of them relatively small in size. The first and last of these three are of the Christus Victor type, the description and significance of which are well set forth in the guide booklet published by U1:

> Unlike the traditional crucifix which depicts our Lord in His eternal Sacrifice, the style employed here is somewhat different. . . . In front of the Cross, yet attached to it is the hand-carved figure of the Saviour of the world, His arms outstretched, not in pinioned agony, but in invitation. His body is covered with a long white robe, with colorful ornamentation, and in His hands and feet the print of the nails are plainly visible. This type of crucifix is commonly called the Christus Victor, or Christ the Victor, and is designed to show at the same time both the Sacrifice of Christ and His Victory over death and the grave. Historians and theologians are well agreed that this type of representation is of an earlier origin in the Church's practice than the more common suffering crucifix. The celebrated Lutheran theologian, Gustaf Aulen, in his famous book Christus Victor (Macmillan, 1951) says: "We have already alluded to the disappearance of the triumph-crucifix in sacred art. But, even if this type was ousted by the other, we must not forget that the crucifixes of the older type date from the finest period of medieval art, and that they portray exactly the classic idea of the Atonement. They show Christ as at once the Sufferer and the Victor who gains His triumph by the sacrifice of Himself. It is further to be remembered that these works both of poetry and art, which date from before the fourteenth century, remained in existence in the later period to bear their witness to the idea of redemption which they expressed." (Page 99). The use of this particular form is most appropriate in Grace Church as it harmonizes with the words of Christ which are carved upon the Altar. Our Lord's promise to lift up all men, if He is lifted up, recalls to mind His own three "liftings-up": on the Cross, from the Tomb, and into Heaven. Thus we have before us a most pleasing reminder of all that our Saviour has done for us and also of the Hope that is ours because of Him.[29]

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[29]Edgar S. Brown, Jr., op. cit., pp. 42f.

Almost all contemporary Lutheran churches, apparently, are equipped with a communion rail. The only exception known to this writer among the thirty-nine churches studied is A3. In most cases the rail is built of wood (twenty examples), although several are in brass, wrought iron, or other metals (six examples). More than half of the examples which could be studied showed a very simple form of construction, consisting of plain upright members supporting a plain horizontal rail. Others, of course, are more elaborately adorned, often by means of an abstract grille-work filling in the spaces between uprights, less often by carvings or other decoration. In at least twenty-two of the churches the rail is built in a straight line across the width of the chancel. But eight times or more the rail is not straight (E1, E2, E4, M8, M13--in this centrally planned church, the rail consists of eight kneeling benches, one at each corner of the octagonal altar space--, M16, U8, S3). Usually in such cases it extends around the sides of the altar, as well as being in front of it.

Several other items might also be mentioned briefly in connection with the chancel. At least two of the churches under consideration have a sanctuary lamp hanging in the chancel. The pastor of one of these churches wrote, "We have a sanctuary lamp; but nobody seems sure why it is in the church" (M5).[30] The other, however, was more sure, and inserted an entire paragraph in explanation, saying that the sanctuary

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[30]Written by a successor of the pastor under whom the church was built. The congregation's dedication booklet, Dedication, Zion Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, M5), p. 14, had explained the sanctuary lamp as "signifying God's abiding presence in His temple."

lamp "symbolizes the presence of God in His Church."[31] The chancel of the latter church contains another item, too, which has its traditional place but is no longer often seen--the aumbry, a safe placed behind an ornamental door built into the chancel wall, in which the consecrated elements for communicating the sick and shut-in are kept.[32]

Windows

The matter of windows, as might be expected, is one in which there is considerable departure from the forms of older architectural styles. Glass is now far more easily obtainable than it was in the periods when the historic styles were developed. Furthermore, modern construction materials and techniques leave more of the wall space available for use as window area. One expects, therefore, to see large expanses of glass employed in modern church architecture.

This expectation is borne out in a great many cases. There are examples where glass fills the entire west wall (A1), east wall (M11), north wall (M12), or south wall (A5, U5). In many more cases a good deal more than fifty per cent of a wall is used for window area. In A3 no brick is used above the level of about seven feet from the floor --the steel framework above that level is filled entirely with glass, all the way up to the roof. In not a few cases the entrance vestibule is built with one or more walls almost entirely in glass (e.g., A4, M3, M8, U6, W2). Often the doors themselves are also glass.

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[31] Edgar S. Brown, Jr., op. cit., p. 43.

[32] Ibid., p. 41.

But apparently many architects have concluded that too much uncontrolled light, or too much of a view through the windows, may tend to distract the attention of the worshipers from the altar area. It is interesting to note the various devices that architects have invented for overcoming this difficulty. These usually consist of some variation on the louver idea, so designed as to shield the eyes of the worshipers from the bright light or the view, unless they turn around and look toward the rear of the church. M1, for instance, has vertical wooden louvers between the aisle windows, which direct all light in the direction of the chancel end of the church. In E3, M2, and S3 the walls themselves are built in the form of vertical strips set at an angle, like louvers. The clear glass windows are then placed in the openings between the strips, and cannot be seen by a person facing the east end of the church. U1 has a somewhat different variation: the nave windows are in the form of tall, narrow, rectangular bay windows, having a blank wall instead of glass on the easternmost side.

Windows are not in all cases inserted in great profusion, even where modern construction techniques make it possible to do so. An example is given us by those churches built according to the basilican plan. While sixteen out of the seventeen such churches do assign windows to the side aisles, a full eight have no windows at all in the clerestory wall. In six of these cases this is probably due chiefly to the type of laminated arch construction used, with the roof beginning almost immediately above the level of the side aisles; but two (M1, E5) have tall vertical clerestory walls, and yet no windows. Five more ba-

silican plan buildings have windows at the clerestory level on one side only, and four have them on both sides.

The fact that some churches may have windows in one wall and none in the opposite side points to another characteristic of modern building. The freedom of asymmetry allows windows to be so placed that they will not disturb the worshipers with too much sunlight during the time when services are usually held. This is pointed out in the dedication booklet for W2:

> Windows were eliminated from this high east wall [Epistle side] for a very sensible reason. Most services being held in the morning, the rising sun would cause a blinding day-light problem that would be difficult to control. The continuous band of windows along the east wall of the low portion of the nave [i.e., the side aisle] will allow the admission of sufficient natural light without the glaring sunlight problem, due to the overhanging roof protection.
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> . . . The west wall of the nave has large, serviceable windows designed primarily to handle successfully the natural light problem without the necessity of controlling the glare from the bright morning sunlight. This is but one of the advantages of modern planning. Traditionally, both long walls of the nave would have to be similarly designed regardless of orientation. Due to proper planning in this direction, the use of artificial light is done away with, except under extremely dreary daylight conditions.[33]

In many cases, apparently, stained or colored glass in the windows is no longer considered to be a necessity for making the church look like a church. It was used in at least fifteen of the churches under study, but the use of clear glass seems to be just as common, with at least eighteen churches containing no colored glass at all. Sometimes a window will contain several panels of tinted or figured glass, and the remainder will be left clear (A2, A3, M10, M13, U8). No doubt a

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[33] Dedication, 1952, Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin (printed brochure, W2), p. 13.

tendency in modern church architecture is toward lighter interiors, but perhaps the chief reason for the less extensive use of stained glass is its cost. One church (U4) has 171 little square windows in art glass; the cost was $38,080![34] This, of course, is an unusual example, in an unusually large and expensive church.

Furnishings Outside the Chancel

Pulpit

The pulpits of modern Lutheran churches exhibit a wide variety of shapes, but almost no variety at all in materials. As far as this writer could determine, the pulpits of all the churches under study are built of wood. Some stand in the old traditions of good joinery, others take advantage of the new possibilities offered by plywood, which can be bent to form rounded corners. A few (e.g., S1, S2) do not have solid sides, but are enclosed in wooden slats or in a simple open framework.[35] The most popular shape for the modern pulpit appears to be that of the square or rectangle, with at least eleven examples following this pattern. Next in frequency of occurrence is the traditional octagonal shape, with five examples. There are also two instances of cylindrical pulpits (E2, U1), one that is in the shape of a regular hexagon, with the two back sides lacking (M13), and at least two that are straight across and thus

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[34] The Memorialized Stained Glass Windows of Messiah Lutheran . . . (printed brochure, U4), p. 2.

[35] This seems to be particularly appropriate in the case of S2, a very small church, in which a more solid-looking pulpit might have detracted from the importance of the altar.

provide no enclosure for the preacher (A3, E4). One interesting pulpit (S3) is V-shaped in its floor plan, and looks very much like the prow of a ship pointing into the nave; its leading edge slants upward and forward, for a rather aggressive-looking effect. Both the cylindrical pulpits are worth describing in more detail. In S2 the front half of the cylinder is of bent plywood, but the half that is behind the preacher's back is of brick, laid up into a high semicircular wall, extending almost half the height of the tall nave. This is topped by a flat, circular tester, providing a canopy over the pulpit below. This device is very effective for emphasizing the pulpit (although it in no way detracts from the centrality of the altar), and probably has acoustical value also. The cylindrical pulpit in U1 is notable especially for its rich ornamentation. It stands on a four-foot-high fluted column, with the niches occupied by twenty-four statuettes of great teachers and preachers of the Church, from John the Baptist to Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and Charles Porterfield Krauth. The body of the pulpit is decorated with 1½-inch manila rope trimming along top and bottom edges, as well as restrained polychroming and a carved plaque depicting the ship of the Church. In two churches (U3, M2) the "center" aisle in the nave is actually off-center, so that about two thirds of the nave seating is on the same side of the church as the pulpit. In both cases this imbalance is partially off-set by having the altar and chancel centered on the "center" aisle of the nave.

Nave Seating

In almost all cases, pews of the ordinary variety are provided for

seating in the nave. Most have the standard rectangular pew-ends, a few have kneelers (M1, M5, M13, perhaps others), at least one (M16) has plastic-covered, foam-rubber cushions. S3 has an interesting custom-made design, consisting of molded oak plywood seats and backs, supported by black metal stanchions; the pew-ends are low and consist of a metal angle-iron frame, trapezoidal in shape, filled with wire mesh, over which a white cross is superimposed, repeating a motif established in the communion rail. In at least three cases (M7, M12, S2) seating is provided on metal folding chairs. The last of these, a small mission chapel, has acoustical partitions that fold out from the side walls of the nave, forming eleven small classrooms, into which the folding chairs are placed for Sunday School classes.

Baptismal Font

Data on this item was more limited than on most previous ones. The eighteen cases in which information was available again show a profusion of different designs. Two fonts are triangular in cross-section (A2, M15, the latter with a carving representing a Person of the Holy Trinity on each side), four are octagonal (A3, M5, M14, U3), one is square (W2), and two more have round bowls set on a pedestal of different design (M1, M8). Two are bracketed out from a wall instead of being set on the floor (A1, U2).

Equally diversified are the materials of which the fonts are made. A full seven are of stone (E2, M7, M8, M14, M15, M16, U1), the first one being granite, with a sterling silver bowl, the latter two marble. The font of M7 consists of a large, unhewn rock with a natural depres-

sion in the upper surface, for which a sterling silver liner was made, the whole being set on a heavy pedestal. Five more are made of wood (A3, M5, U3, W1, S3). The last one is a stock wooden "gothic" design, in shocking contrast to all the other appointments in the church, which were specially designed by the architect, even the pews; probably it is meant to be only temporary. Two more fonts are largely of metal (M1, U2), one of stoneware (A1), and one interesting example is built up of brick, with a stone top into which a bowl is sunk (W2). At least five fonts are equipped with a metal cover (A3, A2, M1, M5, M7, M8). Many have some sort of baptismal symbols carved in the sides or attached to the cover: E2, the "Tau" cross and a symbol for water; M8, a cross rising from the cover, with shield and shell superimposed; M14, a dove; M15, symbols for the Trinity, already mentioned above; U1, a series of eight carvings, representing the fall of man, reconciliation, and baptism. S3 has added a peculiarly modern touch--above the font hangs a mobile sculpture in wrought iron, depicting in a number of symbols the Trinity in creation, redemption, and sanctification. One of the churches (U1) has a separate baptistery, a room visible through a wide, open doorway on the Gospel side of the nave, just in front of the chancel arch. In two more churches (M1, E5) the blank front end of the aisle on the Gospel side is used for this purpose, and that area is made lower than the nave floor by one or two steps. In both these cases the font is still visible from all parts of the nave, as it is in every case except that of U1, just mentioned.

Organ and Choir

Provisions for the seating of a choir in the chancel (or, in U2, in the front pews of the nave) are made in fourteen of the churches for which such information was available (A1, A2, E1, E2, M3, M7, M12, S1, U1, U2, U4, U6, U7, U8). In sixteen churches choir and organ were placed in the rear loft or balcony (A4, E3, E4, E5, M1, M4, M5, M14, M15, M16, S2, S3, U3, U5, W1, W2).

Among the churches for which such data was at hand, there are sixteen pipe organs, as compared to eight electronic instruments.

Artificial Lighting

In the older churches built since the advent of the electric light, the most common means of artificial illumination was some sort of a hanging lighting fixture. Although they are no longer the most common source of artificial light, hanging or suspended fixtures are still being used in contemporary churches. Two churches (A3, M3) use large, simple glass globes suspended from the ceiling. Others are modernistic fixtures especially designed for the church in which they are used. Some of the most elaborate are found in U1; they are a hanging fixture consisting of a base of wrought iron and brass together with a tall top part of molded glass in the shape of a drinking tumbler, on the surface of which ecclesiastical symbols have been sand-blasted. S3 and U3 have fixtures consisting of a hanging horizontal bar, to which specially-designed reflector units are attached, some pointing upwards, others downwards. U6, U7, and W2 have other styles of suspended lighting fixtures.

But several newer methods of lighting are now more common in modern churches. One of these is the device called the cove light--a long trough, almost invariably placed along the lower edge of the clerestory wall, and containing a light source (often fluorescent tubes). The trough directs the light toward the ceiling and wall, reflecting a soft, diffused light into the pew area. This technique is used in at least thirteen of the churches under study (A1, A4, E4, N3, M4, M8, M13, M14, M15, S1, W1, W2, M16).

Another much-used method of artificial illumination is the use of modern sealed-beam spotlights at the level of the ceiling. Often these units are mounted flush with the surface of the ceiling, or else are hidden behind the wooden arches or beams of the roof. At least thirteen churches (E3, E4, E5, M1, M4, M5, M8, M16, S1, S2, U2, U4, U5) use this system of lighting throughout the nave and chancel (in a few cases this is in addition to other lights). Another four (A1, E1, M7, S3, and probably many more) use spotlights only in the chancel, in order to highlight the altar and other features. Perhaps an extreme example of the uses to which spotlights can be put in the church is given by U4, where the center aisle of the nave

> is dramatically lighted with marching lights, which bathe the processional in a pool of brilliance. Concealed lights within the walls of the alter space illuminate the alter in color to fit the attitude of worship.[56]

Another type of lighting fixture is used in the two similar churches,

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[56] Messiah, A Great New Church for a New World (printed brochure, U4), p. 3.

M1 and E5. This is the torchier, a reflector bowl mounted on an arm extending out from the clerestory wall and directing its light upward. The effect is a diffused light similar to that produced by the cove lighting system. In both of these churches such fixtures are supplementary to spotlights set into the ceiling.

The Entrance

The traditional position for the main entrance of a church is in the west facade, directly opposite the altar. This symmetrical disposition is retained in twelve (A3, A5, E3, E4, M5, M9, M10, M16, U1, U3, U4, W2) of the thirty-nine contemporary churches under study. Another four (E5, M4, M11, M15) have the entrance set into the western facade, but somewhere other than in the center. Four more (A1, E2, M14, S3) have a separate little wing in which the entrance is placed, added on to the main body of the church, and yet with the entrance facing the west. All the rest of the churches[37] have main entrances facing in a direction other than the west end of the church. Five churches are so constructed that the main entrance is toward the east (A4, M3, U5, U6, U8). This is accomplished by building a wing out to one side or the other at the west end of the church, and then placing the entrance in the east face of that wing. In most cases where this has been done it is because the chancel end of the church is closest to the street. Seven other churches have the main entrance facing the liturgical south

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[37] All but one of the thirty-nine churches have been taken into account in this tabulation. The sole exception is M13, which is built according to the central plan and hence could not be fitted into any of the categories used.

(M1, M2, M7, M8, M12, U2, W1), six the north (A2, E1, M6, S1, S2, U7). Some of these main entrances that are at one or the other side of the church open directly through the north or south wall of the church (E1, M1, M6, M12, S1, S2, U2, U7), but others are placed in an extra wing added as an entranceway (A2, M2, M7, M8, W1). It is quite apparent that in the matter of the placing of the main entrance there is little uniformity among contemporary churches, nor does there seem to be a very strong desire to follow the traditions of the past in this respect.

Two architects found it desirable to cater to the needs of those who come to church by automobile. Hence they included in their plans a covered driveway entrance (called a porte cochère in the dedication booklet of M2)[38]--either in addition to (M15) or in conjunction with (W2) the main entrance.

Many interesting techniques have been used by modern church architects to give architectural importance to the main entrance. Some of these have been very successful in emphasizing the entrance and making it inviting. Probably the most common method of achieving this effect is the use of a covered porch over the approach to the main doors. At least twenty-three of the churches studied have some such shelter over the doorway (A1, A5, E1, E3, M1, M2, M4, M5, M6, M8, M11, M15, M16, S1, S2, S3, U1, U3, U4, U6, U8, W1, W2). Very few of these are monumental in size;[39] instead, they are very human in scale--usually no more than

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[38] Dedication, 1952, Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin (printed brochure, W2), p. 13.

[39] One example, however, is U4.

eight to ten feet above floor level.

Another common method of giving emphasis to the main entrance is by associating it with the tower. The doorway may be placed either directly in the base of the tower (E5, M2, M12, U7), or in close proximity to it (so in at least fourteen cases: A1, A4, A5, E4, M6, M7, M9, M11, M15, S1, U2, U6, U8, W1).

There is a wide variety of other means available to the modern architect for emphasizing the entrance. The doorway can be more or less deeply recessed into the surface of the facade (E5, M4, M12). It may be given strongly vertical lines, in contrast to a horizontal motif elsewhere (A2). The surfaces immediately surrounding the doorway may display materials which contrast with those of the rest of the church (A1, E4, S5). A peculiarly modern manifestation of this latter technique is the use of large expanses of clear glass in the area about the entranceway (as in A4, M3, M8, M10, U2, W2). Often the doors themselves are glass. The entrance porch may be enclosed on one or more sides with a short wall of brick open-work (M4, M6). The doors themselves may be painted in a contrasting color for emphasis (E2, deep green; S2, medium blue). A sculpture, painting, stained-glass window, or other symbolic feature may be placed near the doorway to invite entry (A2, E4, M4, M8, M14). And finally, growing plants are sometimes used around the entranceway for the natural, inviting effect which they give (E4, M3, M5).

Thus it is readily apparent that contemporary architects have in their designing of Lutheran churches devised many effective ways of making an entranceway that "welcomes all to enter into the Beauty of Holi-

ness,"[40] as one dedication booklet phrases it.

The Tower

No tower of any description is to be found on seven of the thirty-nine churches (A3, M3, M4, M14, M16, S3, U5; M16 was originally planned to have a tower, but it has not been built). Among those which do have a tower of some kind, the most popular type is one of substantial bulk, which rises from ground level to a height usually greater than that of any other part of the building. A tower of this type occurs on nineteen of the buildings studied. Of these seven are square, or virtually so, in ground plan (S1, E5, M6, M8, M9, U4, and W1, which has a spire added on top), while eleven are basically rectangular (A5, E2, E4, M1, M2, M15, S1, U2, U7, U8, W2). One is L-shaped in cross-section (U3). One way in which these towers differ from those of some previous building styles is in the fact that nearly all of them retain the same cross-sectional shape from the foundation to the very top. In other words, if it begins square down at the bottom, it will be square at the top too, and of the same diameter all the way up. This simplicity is in contrast to the progressive narrowing toward the top and the transitions from one cross-section to another that characterize Gothic or Georgian-Colonial towers, for instance. Nor are any of the modern towers articulated into stories, as practiced by almost all earlier styles.

By far the most common material for such towers is brick (used in A5, E2, E5, M1, M2, M6, M8, M9, M15, U2, U3, U4, U7, U8, W2). As com-

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[40] Dedication, Zion Lutheran Church . . . (printed brochure, M5), p. 14.

pared with the fifteen towers of brick, there are only two of stone (S4, W1) and one of concrete (S1). One interesting example is made of wood (S1). It consists of a tall framework of rough-sawn timbers, enclosed with siding on two sides only, and left open on the other two. The reaction to this tower is described by the pastor:

> When under construction, we took a lot of "ribbing" and the open framework of our tower gave cause for our building to be branded "The Church of the Holy Scaffold." But by the time we had been in our building for a single year, the Oregon Journal gave us the front page in color, picturing our tower over the heading "An Invitation to Worship" (S1).

In place of a tower of good size rising all the way from the ground, five churches (A2, M5, M10, M13, U1) have a spire or fleche set atop the roof of the church. These are usually related quite closely in design to the spires of previous styles of ecclesiastical architecture, although the materials out of which they are now built are often modern (usually metal--steel, copper, aluminum).

A number of modern architects have devised new substitutes for the traditional tower. Connected with A4 by means of a canopied walk-way is a tower consisting of two free-standing brick piers, rectangular in cross-section, standing at right angles to each other, but separated by several feet. They are connected only by a beam near their tops, from which a bell is hung. M12 has two tall pylons of concrete, in the shape of right triangles, standing next to each other. The main entrance is placed in the space between the two pylons. They are connected near the top by several horizontal beams upon which bells may be hung. This gives something of the effect of a step-ladder. A notice in a news magazine calls it a "symbolic ladder, representing reach to heaven," and

adds that it has earned the church "the irreverent title, 'Johnny Rabbit Ears on the Desert.'"[41] An article on this church in an architectural journal refers largely to this tower in stating that "Its unusual appearance has earned for the structure such local epithets as 'Catapult to Heaven' . . . and 'Jacob's Ladder.'"[42] Another interesting example is the tall, detached "campanile" which stands in front of the entrance to A1. It consists simply of two steel channel beams set about three feet apart into a concrete foundation, and connected at regular intervals by seven horizontal members. The rectangular spaces thus formed are filled alternately with Latin and St. Andrew's crosses (the name of the church is St. Andrew's), which are also of steel. The tower for S2 is also formed of two upright members connected by several lighter horizontal bars. This time, however, the construction is of wood, and it is painted a light yellow. U6 has a large, free-standing cross made of concrete and placed near the main entrance. M11 has a similarly placed, but more slender, cross. For S3 there are three crosses, still taller, and made of slender poles (probably metal). These, too, stand apart from the building and in front of the entrance. M7 has a modern form of the simple bell-cote, of stone.

The tower, or its equivalent, whatever its shape may be, is most often placed at or near the western end of the church. In this respect, contemporary architecture is following what is probably also the most common usage of the past. Nine churches have a tower which is directly

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[41]"The New Churches," Time, September 19, 1955, p. 80.

[42]"Lutheran Church," Progressive Architecture, December, 1952, p. 101.

in or above the western facade (A2, A5, E1, E3, M5, M9, U1, U2, U3). Ten more place the tower at or near the northwest corner of the church (E4, E5, M1, M6, M8, M15, S1, S2, U7, U8), seven at the southwest corner (A1, A4, M2, M7, M11, W1, W2). Two have the tower or its equivalent alongside the nave near its midpoint on the south side (U4, U6). The one cruciform church in the group (M10) has its spire in a traditional place for that type of church, over the crossing of the transept and nave. The remaining three have towers in the area of the chancel: E2, the north side of the chancel; M12 to the east; M13 directly above it (this is the centrally planned church).

Almost every one of the thirty-one churches with towers has at least one representation of the cross appearing prominently on it.[43] Often this cross is a very tall one and extends above the top of the tower itself. Otherwise it is placed against the side of the tower, and sometimes it is repeated on each of the four sides. The towers of E2 and U1 also have other Christian symbols applied to their surface.

Five of the towers contain bells (A4, M7, M10, U7, W1, perhaps several more; U4 has a set of electronic bells in the tower). This would seem to be a low proportion, in view of the fact that it has in the past usually been one of the chief functions of a church tower to hold bells. A number of the rest of the towers, however, do have provision for the accommodation of one or more bells when the time comes that they can be placed.

The functional purpose of most of the towers represented in this

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[43] The only exceptions appear to be A4, A5, M7, and S2.

study seems to be chiefly that of publicity. They are intended to call to the attention of passers-by that here is a church, and further, perhaps, to remind them of God and of their relation to Him. Perhaps this has always been the most important function of a church tower. At any rate, the other purposes to which they may be put in modern churches (e.g., to enclose stairways or entranceways) hardly seem to justify their existence in most cases.

Ornamentation

There appears to be a widespread dearth of surface ornamentation in modern Lutheran churches. The once commonly-used Christian symbols and figures are not generally seen in the new churches. The only universally-used emblem is the cross; and because of the lack of other symbols, this one is sometimes definitely over-used (compare its endless repetition on communion rail, pew ends, and lighting fixtures in S3, for instance). There are many churches in which no other ecclesiastical symbol or figure once appears (e.g., A1, A3, S1, M13, S1, S2, S3, U2, U3, U5, U6).[44] A number of churches do, however, have carved, embossed, or applied symbols on the front surfaces of altar, pulpit, font, etc. (e.g., E4, M5, M8, M12, M15, U7). Figured glass, too, appears to have dwindled in popularity (used by A2, E2, E4, M8, M10, M16, U4, W1).

Some of the persons connected with modern church architecture are aware of this relative deficiency. One pastor wrote: "There is very

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[44]Undoubtedly a number of others could be included in this list, if more information were available to the writer.

little symbolism in the church to be explained. Very possibly this is one of the failings of the architectural design, that it doesn't contain more symbolism" (M3). But another pastor considered this lack to be advantageous: "The symbolism is extremely simple. We have little difficulty explaining it. And that is a distinct advantage in Baptist and Methodist Texas" (E3). An architect included this among the limitations put on him for the project:

> It would be necessary to produce an architectural form so simple that it could be built at an absolute minimum of cost, and yet create a worshipful atmosphere, thus eliminating the need of expensive theological ornamentation which often is required to indicate that a building is a church.[45]

The economic factor is probably a very common reason for the comparative lack of ornamentation in present-day churches. Undoubtedly there are also other reasons, for example, those having to do with a return to functionalism and the development of a new architectural style.

Yet there are several exceptions to this general trend among the churches studied, and among these one is especially outstanding: U1. Throughout this church much use has been made of the skills of artists. In it there are many interesting examples of wood and stone carving, polychromy, and the sand-blasting of designs on glass. In M8 there is a large symbolic mural just inside the main entrance, which depicts the Triune God blessing the world. The clerestory wall of M2 has been left blank in expectation of a "biblical panorama" to be painted on it. Similarly, in M15 provision has been made for a tall mosaic panel to be installed in the east wall of the chancel. The dominating feature

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[45]Culver Heaton, op. cit., p. 9.

of the east chancel wall in E2 is not so much the cross (which is comparatively small) as a large outline figure in wood of Christ as the Good Shepherd (the name of the church). This church also has symbols for the apostles on the ceiling of the nave. W1 has an effective use of lettering on stone panels above font and pulpit, as well as the cast bronze tabernacle doors mentioned earlier,[46] with their symbolic representation of wheat and grapes. The mobile sculpture above the font in S3 has also been described already.[47]

But beyond these examples, the interior ornamentation in modern churches is largely structural and non-representational, rather than directly symbolic of theological ideas. Into this category fall the decorative brick-work which appears in M1 and S1, and the incised geometrical designs in the stone panels of the clerestory in E5. Such also are the decorative lighting fixtures found in M7, S3, U3, and U7. Other items which fall into the category of non-ideographical ornamentation are the linear design in ceramic tiles on the east chancel wall of A1, and the planter boxes already mentioned.[48]

When we move out to the exterior of the modern Lutheran churches, we find a similar situation. Sixteen have no further symbolic decoration on them than the cross(es) on the tower (A3, A5, E3, E4, M2, M5, M6, M8, M9, M11, M13, U2, U4, U8, W1, W2). Besides (or instead of) a tower cross, another fifteen (A1, A2, A4, M3, M7, M10, M12, M14, M16, S1, S2,

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[46] Supra, p. 51.

[47] Supra, p. 61.

[48] Supra, p. 51.

33, U3, U5, U6) have one or more crosses attached or built into the walls of the church, or rising above the roof level, but no other ideographical symbols. Subtracting these, only eight of the thirty-nine churches under study have any decorative symbols on the exterior, other than a cross (E1, E2, E5, M1, M4, M15, U1, U7). M1 has four stone plaques on its western facade, carved in a modern style and depicting faith, hope, love, and the teaching of Scripture. E2 is decorated with a large stone-carving of a shepherd boy on the west wall, another depicting the "grist-mill of God" high up on the tower, and others near the three entrances. M15 has a series of stone panels symbolizing the six chief parts of Christian doctrine according to Luther's Small Catechism; these, too, are placed on the western facade. Again, E5 has on its west face stone-carvings of a symbol for the Trinity (the name of the church), as well as a hand for the Father, a cross for the Son, a dove for the Holy Spirit, and Luther's coat of arms. "Thus the church's front confesses faith in the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, according to the Lutheran confessions."[49] In U7, symbols of dove, book, and chalice are set into the masonry of the east wall of the chancel, directly behind the altar. Flanking the main entrance of U1, and also scattered elsewhere over the exterior, are stone carvings of various historical Christian symbols. Worked into the masonry of the western facade there are also some cross-shaped designs done in vitreous tiles and glass blocks flashed with colors. M4 has a striking "sculpture" mounted on

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[49] Dedication Week, Trinity Lutheran Church, Yankton, South Dakota (printed brochure, E5), p. 5.

its facade; it is made of wrought iron and art glass, and symbolizes the Trinity. According to the architect's plans the main entrance doors of E1 and the panel above them were to display a decorative and symbolic surface design, but this has not yet been carried out. The doors of M5 are sheathed in copper, which is decorated very effectively with stylized angels in repoussé.[50]

It is undeniably true, therefore, that there is some art work being commissioned and executed for modern Lutheran churches. But the number of cases in which this is being done appears to be unfortunately small in proportion to the number of churches built.

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[50]For picture see Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett and Henry L. Kamphoefner, Churches and Temples (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1953), p. 54P.

CHAPTER IV

REACTIONS TOWARD THE COMPLETED BUILDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to report on the reactions of approval and disapproval on the part of (1) the pastors and members of the churches under consideration, and (2) the church's community and the outsiders who visit it. Information concerning these reactions has been gleaned almost solely from the questionnaires returned from the congregations. Three of the questions dealt directly with this subject:

4. Now that the church is built and in use, what criticisms of it do you and your parishioners have?

5. How extensive is any dissatisfaction among the parishioners?

6. What is the typical reaction of the community and of visitors?

Naturally, data compiled from the answers to these questions will not be one hundred per cent accurate. It is predictable that pastors and members will tend to see the work of their hands in a more optimistic light than would a completely disinterested bystander. Nevertheless, these are the people for whose use the church was built, and their own opinions about the church, whether colored or not, are the ones that matter most. Hence this chapter may yet have a certain degree of validity and, the writer hopes, usefulness.

Reactions of Pastors and Parishioners

Of the thirty-nine churches in this study, two did not report on this question (M1, M15), two expressed a predominantly negative reac-

tion toward their new church (A4, U7), eleven said that some dissatisfaction did exist among the members but was very limited (E3, E5, M2, M3, M6, M11, M13, S1, U1, U6, U8), and all the remaining twenty-four reported that (at the time of writing, at least) there was no dissatisfaction at all. There were some who voiced minor criticisms of certain features, but would not go so far as to say that there was real dissatisfaction. We shall quote statements representative of each of these categories.

The first of the two negative replies came from the pastor of a combination student chapel-parish church:[1]

> The inability of the contractor to make the walls, windows (glass brick), and drains leak proof has resulted in stained walls in a new building. I believe that contemporary architecture looks lousy when it ages a little bit. Our people have not yet admitted that it is good in any way. The students, however, are charmed. Biggest mistakes--poor facilities for church school; too small for student population; no parking space at all; not enough $ to furnish correctly; should have paid more and allowed contractor to finish rather than doing so much work ourselves--with result, it will never be finished (U7).

The other is written by the sexton of a church which was at the time without a local pastor:

> Since Criticism would do us no good, there is none heard, exept for a few errors the Architect made in design of the buildup roof which so far developed leaks evertime it rained. A heavy rain last summer developed a bad leak just above where the Piano stood and practicly ruined the piano. Also, the 10 candles placed into the brick wall just above the Altar, reaching out about 6 inches from the wall, is a bad error. When they are lighted and the furnace is on, the warm air being forced up to the cieling and following the cieling to the end and then coming down the Brick wall forcing the flame down thereby blackening them to look a fright and sometimes ruining them in one sunday.

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[1]The correspondent is a successor to the pastor under whom the church was built.

We just make up with it and that is all.

. . . I do not like the looks from the outside but the inside is nice and lets one forget the outside. . . .

. . . Personaly I believe this modern construction of churches can be carried to far. I believe, One should be able to tell a church from a distance rather then to wonder what kind of a building it is.[2]

The next category of replies is far more positive and also more numerous. These are the ones who reported no more than a limited amount of dissatisfaction with the new church. What each of the eleven wrote concerning the extent of dissatisfaction among the parishioners is here quoted in full:

Very little. Those who were very skeptical are now some of the most vocal in their praise (E3).

Very little (E5).

Criticism or dissatisfaction on the type of building among the members has been very small. There are a few of the older members who for several years could not get accustomed to it. I believe that even some of the few would now prefer this type (M2).

Not very extensive (M3).

Of the design itself almost none. People like it; are proud of it (M6).

Nihil. Like the common cold, complaints come and go, but nothing of great significance (M11).

Practically nil (M13).

Most of those who have worshipped here are very impressed with it. . . . Of course, you find people who will never accept anything but the traditional church architecture. They have nothing against the building other than [that] it isn't gothic (S1, by the office secretary).

Very, very limited (U1, by the secretary of the Vestry).

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[2]Spelling and punctuation are reproduced exactly.

> We here at Grace Church are very proud of our new buildings and are very well satisfied with them (U1, by the Parish Secretary).
>
> There is surprisingly little dissatisfaction among the parishioners. Most people like the church very much (U6).
>
> Very small. Our people are very happy with the building (U8).

Obviously, several of these replies could almost have been placed into the next category.

A full twenty-five replies reported no dissatisfaction whatsoever existing among the parishioners at the time of writing. Some of the replies that consisted of more than just a simple "None" to the question about the extent of dissatisfaction are here quoted:

> There is none that I am aware of. The people are well pleased. They even like their big glass wall. The feature hardest for them to understand and appreciate is the free standing tower. But if it were suddenly removed, they would soon have a greater appreciation for it (A1).
>
> None with respect to contemporary style (A5).
>
> I know of none--we all seem to like it more and more as we are in it. The simplicity seems to grow on us (A4).
>
> Everybody is on the bandwagon. . . . There is none (M5).
>
> None. . . . It has been more economical to maintain than originally anticipated (M7).
>
> None. All are very satisfied and agree it is most beautiful; highly conductive to worship; simple direct lines; much character. The modern stained glass windows enhance the structure. . . . Absolutely no dissatisfaction among the members. All are delighted with the magnificent design, beauty of line, and color blend (M10, by the pastor's secretary).
>
> Absolutely none. All are in hearty favor and are able to worship in a spirit of holiness and sanctity (M16).
>
> None thus far. Everyone is more than happy and pleased (S2).
>
> There seems to be absolutely no dissatisfaction among the parishioners. In fact, they are real proud of their building--they never hesitate to tell others about it (U2).

None--if you mean because of the type of architecture. The people love it (U5)!

None whatsoever. We are completely happy with what we have (W1).

A number of replies in this category, however, indicated that at first there had been some dissatisfaction and opposition among the members, but that this died down as the people became accustomed to its appearance and better acquainted with its advantages. Those replies are here quoted:

None at present. At least everyone seems to be very happy about their new church and what it is now helping to accomplish for them in the community. At first there was a good deal of criticism about the outside appearance. After being used to a traditional designed building, the new modern designed building did not look like a church to them. We had no or very little criticism about the interior. The beauty and usefulness of the interior of the church soon helped the people to overcome their criticism of the exterior design (A2).

While I did hear many criticisms during the time the church was being built, I have heard none from our parishioners since it has been completed. They are rather becoming more satisfied with it as we continue to use it (A3).

We are completely happy. . . . There were plenty of reservations at first. After all, we are a conservative group by & large. But by the time of dedication, there was not more than a 1% rumble and I haven't heard a word of dissatisfaction for the past three years (E1).

At the present time there is no dissatisfaction. However, at the beginning, there was adverse comment on the stark lines and "bare" appearance (M12).

None has lasted. A few initial, unspecified complaints--as to design (U4).

It is probably safe to conclude from this that as contemporary design in churches becomes more widely known and used, it will become generally accepted and appreciated by our people.

Among those who reported that there is little or no real dissatis-

faction with the churches as built, there were a number who nevertheless pointed out certain specific criticisms of one or another feature of their buildings. The most common criticism is the one exemplified by this quotation:

> About the only complaint [which we have] is the common complaint: we do not have enough room for our Sunday School classes. This we anticipated, but the state of our finances found deletions necessary (M11).

This criticism is, of course, not directed toward contemporary architecture as such.[3] A total of eight correspondents (A1, M3, M9, M11, M13, M14, U2, U6) referred to this complaint about insufficient space. Some needed the extra room for Sunday School classes, others in the parish activities wing, in the worship area itself, or just for storage space. Another complaint (the same one mentioned by both of the predominantly negative replies, A4 and U7)[4] is alluded to by one pastor's statement:

> The only criticism I have of the building has to do with the workmanship. Only a few people are aware of this, however. Parishioners generally do not inspect a church so thoroughly as have I inspected this one (A3).

One pastor dislikes the fact that "pillars bisect a few pews on each side, thus hindering good vision of the altar," and also has a comment on the arrangement of the basement (E5). Another felt, "We wish that we might have been able to spend more money on the air conditioning system" (E3). One reply, already quoted, said that some dislike the

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[3] That this is true is shown by the fact that most contemporary-style buildings offer more space per dollar than something in an older style would.

[4] Supra, p. 77.

shelf-like altar and feel that it should have some connection with the floor (S1).[5] The feeling that "certain features in the educational wing might have been improved, but these are not major," was expressed by the pastor of U3.

But in all, these criticisms are certainly not of any great importance, as many of the correspondents indicated. The common attitude may be summed up in the words of the pastor of M2: "There are several minor changes that would be desirable if it were to be done again. In the main, we would try to continue along modern type of architecture."

Reactions of Community and Visitors

Community

Eighteen of the replies (A1, A2, A3, E1, E3, M2, M4, M5, M7, M10, M11, M12, M14, M16, U2, U5, U8, W1) made reference to the reactions their churches had stimulated in the community in which they were situated--and all eighteen reported predominantly good reactions.

Almost the only community reactions reported that could imaginably be termed negative were the two cases, already mentioned,[6] in which the unusual styling of the church caused the local people to apply to it various epithets. In addition, one pastor is frank to admit that some few members of the community dislike the new church:

> The typical community reaction is very favorable. However, some individuals there are who simply cannot see it. I believe that it

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[5] Supra, p. 51, fn. 25.

[6] Supra, pp. 68 (E1) and 69 (M12).

can be said that people either like it or do not like it. The reaction is a very definite one (A3).

It seems to be true, however, that most of the community reaction that finds its way back to the pastors is favorable. Some have found the publicity value of the new modern church to be high.

> It has meant much to our church and its public relations in the community. The building has really made an impact on the community. A traditional church would have been just another little church in a city of many large churches. Now, though a comparatively small church of 500 seating, we are known and recognized (E3).

Another wrote,

> The entire community is proud of the church. It is one of the places to which people take visitors in touring the city (M14).

Others second these statements:

> In the community our church is singled out by the Visitors' Information Bureau as the one church they MUST see (M5).
>
> The community is very proud of this church and it has been featured in local papers, San Francisco papers, and photographers' magazines (M10).
>
> People in Fort Worth, many of them, consider it the show-place of the city (M16).
>
> The community, I think, is proud of this addition (N1).

Such statements could be multiplied considerably from the answers received in the questionnaires.

Some even found that the modern new church helped bring in new members; "We had 140 new members in the first year," one correspondent writes. Another makes the claim, "We have had a 20% increase in active adult membership since we dedicated in 1952--compared with a 12% increase in a comparative period before" (U5).

It appears that Lutheran churches of contemporary design are, in general, making a very favorable impact upon the communities in which

they are located--and that in many cases the contemporary design itself is a factor in making the church better known and enhancing its witness in the community.

Visitors

Most of the churches also reported on the impressions of the visitors who come to their new church. Their typical reaction, according to these replies, is "very good," "very favorable," "excellent," "very much impressed," or words of similar effect.

Even one of the two correspondents who were quite negative about their new churches admitted that visitors were impressed, although he was dubious about the permanence of this impression. To the question, "What is the typical reaction of visitors?" he answered,

> Excellent! Feel that church is contemporary. Reaction is in direct proportion to the amount of commitment and work we get from them. As visitors they love it; as workers, they are not too sure; as old residents, they are embarrassed by it (U7).

The other correspondent who was displeased about his modern church wrote similarly:

> Many have visited the church from near and far and if we can believe what they write into the guest register they are impressed with the new style and call it a beautiful church (A4).

A number of replies made special mention of the large number of visitors which their churches had attracted:

> We have visitors from all over the world, and our attendance shows about 24% visitors at Sunday Services--quite remarkable after five years in a suburb (E2).
>
> 1200 tourists and visitors signed our guest book during the summer. Very generous in comments (E4).
>
> Hundreds of people visit the church annually just to inspect the

building (M12).

> "Beautiful" is the description used by most of the many hundreds who have seen it. "Unique," "magnificent." Whole classes of architecture students from several universities have seen it. They like it (M13).
>
> Visitors from all over the United States have come to inspect our new church and parish school and have been very well pleased with them (U1).

This is not to say that there are no exceptions to this generally favorable reaction on the part of visitors. At A5 the reaction of visitors is said to be "very good as a rule." But "once in a while someone will remark that he likes the old style better." Similarly at M3: "The typical reaction is favorable. Some are a little depressed, but for the most part people like it." A specific reaction is noted by one pastor:

> One criticism that we have occasionally heard is that the brick interior gives a feeling of coldness, whereas many more people, some who are visiting it for the first time, claim that it is beautiful, churchly, and has a feeling of warmth about it (U6).

And another correspondent reports, "The first few years the reaction of visitors was about 50-50. . . . Now most of the visitors comment very favorably" (M2).

Perhaps the last quotation may even be taken as an indication that the climate of public opinion toward modern church architecture has actually become more favorable in the time since that church was erected (in 1950). As more people become acquainted with good modern architecture, this will almost inevitably happen. This comes about as described by the pastor of W2: "Frequently visitors come prepared not to like modern, but go away singing its praise."

We may close by quoting the words of two more pastors. The first

points out the need for good contemporary design when he writes that the typical reaction of visitors to his church is

> Very, very favorable. This is due largely no doubt to the fact that the building has a definite spiritual atmosphere about it. The design is not extreme but has real meaning and purpose. There is of course both good and bad design in any period of architecture. Even contemporary design must be good to be acceptable (82).

The second voices several challenging views:

> Personally, I think that those who always stick to the traditional lack vision and imagination. It takes vision and imagination to see beauty in new forms. . . . By and large, people do like modern architecture in a church. That has been our experience (86).

SOLI DEO GLORIA

APPENDIX A

COPY OF QUESTIONNAIRE

See next page.

REQUESTED INFORMATION CONCERNING NEW CHURCH

(Please go into further detail on reverse side, if you so desire.)

1. From whom did the initial impulse toward a modern, functional approach to your architectural problem come?

2. What were the factors that influenced the choice of this approach? (If you can, please indicate which appealed most to the pastor, the congregation, and the architect, respectively.)

3. How much more, proportionately, would it have cost to construct equivalent facilities in a traditional style?

4. Now that the church is built and in use, what criticisms of it do you and your parishoners have?

5. How extensive is any dissatisfaction among the parishoners?

6. What is the typical reaction of the community and of visitors?

7. What steps are you taking to explain your new church and its symbolism to new members or candidates for membership?

Thank you very much. Please return promptly to: Arlis Ehlen, Box 165, Concordia Seminary, 801 DeMun Avenue, St. Louis 5, Missouri.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF LETTER ACCOMPANYING QUESTIONNAIRE

Concordia Seminary
St. Louis 5, Mo.
January 14, 1956

Reverend and dear Sir:

St. Andrew's parish of Farmersville has built a church which, I believe, well exemplifies the modern trend toward functionality in church architecture. This places it within the scope of a study in "Modern Architecture in the Lutheran Church of America" that I am making in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Divinity degree at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, under the faculty guidance of Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn.

I know that you must be very proud of your new church. Hence I come to you with these two requests:

First, will you please lend me a copy of the brochure which describes your church? I enclose an address label which you can affix to the envelope with very little trouble. Upon receipt of the brochure I will immediately reimburse you for the cost of postage. I will return the brochure before July 1, 1956.

Second, will you please also answer the few questions on the enclosed sheet and return it to me in the envelope provided? I should prefer short answers to no answers at all, but I shall be very grateful if you make your answers as full as your busy schedule permits.

Thanking you sincerely for your interest and cooperation, I remain

Very truly yours,

APPENDIX C

LIST OF CHURCHES STUDIED

The churches concerning which information was received for this study are here listed under the six Lutheran bodies to which they belong. With each is given the symbol by which the respective church and the correspondence relating to it are referred to in the text, the name of the pastor who sent the information (if other than pastor, this is indicated in parentheses), page references to periodicals in which the church is featured, and the name of the architect.

Symbol	Name of Church	Information Sent by	Periodical Reference	Architect
American Lutheran Church				
A1	St. Andrew's Farmersville, Ohio	Carl Linder, Jr.	Lutheran Standard, May 7, 1955, p. 7	Marlin L. Heist
A2	American Gothenburg, Nebr.	R. Beckman	Lutheran Standard, Dec. 18, 1954, pp. 14f.	Donald R. Hollis
A3	Our Saviour's College Station, Texas	Thomas H. Swygert	Lutheran Standard, Nov. 20, 1954, pp. 7f.	Ernest Langford, Frank Lawyer
A4	St. Peter's Logan, Kans.	(by sexton, O. M. Schiller)	Lutheran Standard, Feb. 14, 1953, p. 19	Donald R. Hollis
A5	Prince of Peace Denver, Colo.	O. H. Hinkhouse	Lutheran Standard, May 10, 1952, p. 12	

Symbol	Name of Church	Information Sent by	Periodical Reference	Architect
Evangelical Lutheran Church				
E1	Central Portland, Ore.	Arne Christianson	Lutheran Herald, Nov. 14, 1950, p. 1110; Oct. 21, 1952, p. 970; The Lutheran, Feb. 3, 1954, p. 15; Architectural Forum, Dec., 1951, pp. 163-67	Pietro Belluschi
E2	Good Shepherd Minneapolis, Minn.	Theodore Heimarck	Lutheran Herald, Nov. 28, 1950, pp. 1166, 1184; The Lutheran, Mar. 23, 1955, p. 14	Hills, Gilbertson, & Hayes
E3	Trinity Fort Worth, Texas	John R. Groettum	Lutheran Herald, Nov. 23, 1954, p. 1095; Oct. 11, 1955, pp. 919f.	Arthur Fehr, Charles Granger
E4	Bethel Lead, S. Dak.	Paul B. Pierson	Lutheran Herald, June 14, 1955, p. 587	Thorson, Thorson, & Madson
E5	Trinity Yankton, S. Dak.	C. G. Lygre	Lutheran Herald, July 7, 1953, p. 653	William Beuttler
Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod				
M1	Christ Minneapolis, Minn.	W. A. Buege	Lutheran Witness, Oct. 3, 1950, p. 316; Walther League Messenger, Nov., 1949, pp. 12-15; Lutheran Companion, Feb. 8, 1950, p. 4; Architectural Forum, July, 1950, pp. 80-5; L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, Dec., 1950, pp. 79-83	Eliel Saarinen
M2	St. Paul's Clay Center, Kans.	A. A. Stolte	Lutheran Witness, Nov. 28, 1950, p. 382	

Symbol	Name of Church	Information Sent by	Periodical Reference	Architect
M3	St. John's Lawton, Okla.	Donald V. Hafemann	Lutheran Witness, Nov. 28, 1950, p. 382	Paul Harris
M4	Mt. Zion Minneapolis, Minn.	F. E. Geske	Lutheran Witness, Sept. 18, 1951, p. 317; Mar. 16, 1954, pp. 85f.; The Lutheran, Feb. 3, 1954, p. 16; Lutheran Companion, Mar. 10, 1954, p. 8	Armstrong & Schlichting
M5	Zion Portland, Ore.	Edwin C. Zschoche	Lutheran Witness, Mar. 6, 1951, p. 76; Lutheran Companion, Nov. 15, 1950, p. 4; May 26, 1954, p. 9; Architectural Forum, Jan., 1951, pp. 142-46; Lutheran Annual, 1956, cover	Pietro Belluschi
M6	Shore Haven Euclid, Ohio	Edwin C. Abendroth	Lutheran Witness, Mar. 6, 1951, pp. 76f.	Ward & Conrod
M7	Atonement Florissant, Mo.	Justus P. Kretzmann	Lutheran Witness, Mar. 30, 1954, p. 110; Reader's Digest, Mar., 1955, p. 70	Harris Armstrong
M8	Trinity Mission, Kans.	Harlan Hartner	Lutheran Witness, Apr. 15, 1952, p. 2	I. L. Roark, Jr. & David Mackie
M9	Community So. Burlington, Vt.	Rudolph H. Harm	Lutheran Witness Aug. 4, 1953, p. 2	
M10	Redeemer Redwood City, Calif.	John E. Marozik (by Lois Turner, secretary)	Lutheran Witness, Nov. 9, 1954, p. 382; California and Nevada Lutheran (District Supplement), Dec. 22, 1953, pp. 1f.	Jannsen, Daseking, Keller
M11	Grace Los Alamos, N. Mex.	Arthur Ledebuhr	Lutheran Witness, June 21, 1955, p. 15; Lutheran Standard, Feb. 6, 1954, p. 4	

Symbol	Name of Church	Information Sent by	Periodical Reference	Architect
M12	Faith Tucson, Ariz.	Raymond Buck	Progressive Architecture, Dec., 1952, pp. 101-03; Time, Sept. 19, 1955, p. 79	Arthur T. Brown
M13	St. John's Midland, Mich.	G. Walter Schoedel	Lutheran Witness, Nov. 8, 1955, p. 2; Lutheran Layman, Sept. 1, 1955, p. 3; Lutheran Standard, Sept. 17, 1955, p. 4; Architectural Forum, Dec., 1955, pp. 138-43; Time, Sept. 19, 1955, p. 81	Alden B. Dow
M14	St. Luke's Manhattan, Kans.	R. J. Schmidt	Lutheran Witness, Oct. 13, 1953, p. 344	Ramey & Himes
M15	Holy Cross Wichita, Kans.	M. Hartenberger (by Uel O. Ramey, architect)	The Lutheran, Feb. 3, 1954, pp. 14f.	Ramey & Himes
M16	St. Paul's Fort Worth, Texas	Walter E. Dorre	Lutheran Witness, June 7, 1955, p. 2	

Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church

S1	Gethsemane Seattle, Wash.	(by Alva Johnson, secretary)	Lutheran Companion, Sept. 5, 1951, pp. 2f.; May 26, 1954, p. 8; Feb. 16, 1955, pp. 8f.	J. Emil Anderson
S2	Christ the King Van Nuys, Calif.	David A. E. Sward	Lutheran Companion, Mar. 10, 1954, pp. 8ff.; Ford Times, July, 1954, p. 47	Culver Heaton
S3	Calvary Chicago, Ill.	John A. Melvin	Lutheran Companion, Apr. 20, 1955, pp. 12f.	

Sym-bol	Name of Church	Information Sent by	Periodical Reference	Architect
United Lutheran Church				
U1	Grace Pottstown, Penn.	(by Mrs. Hathaway K. Geyer, parish sec'y, and by sec'y of Vestry)	The Lutheran, Aug. 25, 1954, pp. 42f.; Church Management, Jan., 1956, pp. 8ff.	T. Norman Mansell
U2	Bethlehem Los Alamos, N. Mex.	Dale L. Knudsen	The Lutheran, Aug. 18, 1954, pp. 40f.; Lutheran Companion, Nov. 24, 1954, pp. 10f.	Stanley & Wright
U3	Messiah Cleveland, Ohio	Oliver A. Majala	The Lutheran, Jan. 28, 1953, p. 36; June 16, 1954, p. 41	David M. Ward, Wm. H. Conrad
U4	Messiah Philadelphia, Penn.	Ross H. Stover	The Lutheran, Aug. 30, 1950, p 44; Dec. 31, 1952, pp. 47f.; May 27, 1953, pp. 36, 38	Harry G. Stewart
U5	St. Mark's North St. Paul, Minn.	T. S. Rees	The Lutheran, Dec. 31, 1952, p. 44	
U6	St. Timothy's Albuquerque, N. Mex.	Matthew N. Lepisto	The Lutheran, Oct. 17, 1951, pp. 40f.	Ferguson & Stevens
U7	University Cambridge, Mass.	Henry E. Horn	The Lutheran, July 8, 1951, p. 35	Arland A. Dirlam
U8	St. Peter's Washington, D.C.	Donald F. Brake	The Lutheran, Jan. 12, 1955, p. 43	
Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States				
W1	Peace Green Lake, Wis.	C. E. Krug	Northwestern Lutheran, Feb. 7, 1954, pp. 43f.	A. H. Siewert
W2	Peace Sun Prairie, Wis.	E. Toepel	Northwestern Lutheran, May 17, 1953, p. 155	Steffen & Kemp

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