

Case Report

The Production of Sacred Architecture: Intersection Between Human Innovation and Claims of Transcendent Truth

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Abstract

This paper explores the production of sacred architecture as a profound intersection between a human innovation and transcendent truth. Religious communities talk about ‘the sacred’ as eternal and transcendent. Religion, the content, values, and teachings, are taken to be eternally unchanging, yet, religions are practiced by humans who exist in history. Furthermore, humans encounter and communicate their religious experiences, values, and identities through cultural forms: religious architecture, music texts, and ritual activities that are beatified into religions cannon. This paper revelas how religious actors have approached the intersection between human innovation and claims of transcendent truth, particularly in relation to architecture and the production of space. Through design, spatial organization, symbolism, and technology this paper examines how architectural innovation becomes a vessel for expressing transcendent truths across traditions. Exploring potential distinctions between Protesant and Catholic traditions, a case study reveals various sacred and cultural meanings expressed in architecture. Sacred architecture is not simply a reflection of belief, but an active agent in shaping human encounters with the sacred. Examining how human innovation, cultural forms, and claims of religion transcendent truth produce the space/place, an emphasis is placed on how religious spaces are places in motion effected by culture and religion. The power of sacred architectural lies in its capacity to mediate between the finite and the infinite, making the invisible visible through build form.

Keywords

Sacred, Religion, Transcendent Truth, Production of Space

1. Introduction: Religion and Culture

The ‘sacred’ refers to those representations set apart from society or everyday life and have revered association with holiness the profane is everything else connected with human association [16, 35, 17, 8, 40, 7, 3, 30]. ‘Religion’ is the unified system of human beliefs with practices making and keeping boundaries between the sacred and the profane [16]. Religion and its “set of force relations and discursive prac-

tices”, order human life [18]. Durkheim explains that religion differs from private belief as it is something eminently social [16]. Early on, Durkheim uses a ‘totemic religion’ saying social cohesion is one of religions binding qualities [2]. Durkheim says social interaction is actually the source, the very cause of religion [16]. Durkheim connects religion as the most fundamental social institution of humankind and one

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that gives rise to other social forms [1].

Foucault studied religion and culture from a variety of anthropological and sociological angles [18]¹. Foucault explains, “Religion is a part, a central part, of the cultural conditions of knowledge. In this sense it is very difficult to separate religion and culture; they are interconnected parts of each other” [18]. While trying to understand the relationship between human innovation and claims of transcendent truth, it is important to realize that religion originated within collective social human beings who sought to separate the sacred and profane. These social groups make up a part of culture that touch many lives through a variety of forms, including art and architecture. Casey says the building condenses a culture in one place [11]. Through cultural forms, people come to know and communicate with an expanded form of their religion [33]. It is through these built forms that people have an avenue to encounter the sacred.

There is a unique relationship between the sacred and this *macro* — the structure — in which religion separates the sacred from the profane and the *meso* — the institution or culture — which influences the *micro* — the individual social groups — through creative ways of thinking, behaving, and way of life [15]. A cause-effect relationship has developed through matching attributes of god, god’s power, god’s overwhelming presence, and god’s status as the source of values and institutions, with attributes of the group whose god it is [41]. Figure 1 illustrates how religion/beliefs and their transcendent/eternal truths are inversely proportionate to culture and the collective human temporal achievements. Religion is communicated through people, who exist in space, over time. Through culture, creative communications are released that explain and expand religion and vice versa.

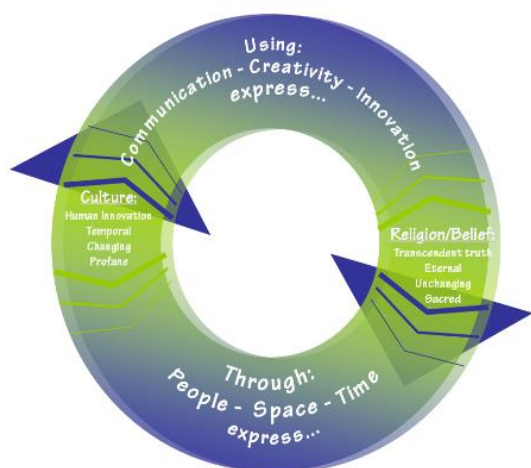


Figure 1. The relationship between religion and culture.

This work adds to the scholarship connecting human innovation and claims of transcendent truth by examining the intersection of religion and architecture; specifically examining the unique creation of space/place through religious

traditions and actions that denote “sacred space” and religious architecture. By focusing on the shift from the Roman Empire to the emergence of Protestant Reformation, with a more specific look on the cultural and religious avenues in America, distinctions between Roman Catholic and Protestant religions reveal various biblical (eternal) and cultural (temporal) meanings expressed in architecture. Looking at how human innovation, cultural forms, and claims of religion transcendent truth produce the space/place, an emphasis is placed on how religious spaces are “places in motion” effected by culture and religion.

2. A Historical Review of Cultural Effects on Religion and Religious Buildings

2.1. From Secular to Sacred: The Rise of the Roman Catholicism

The title of “pope”, originally developed as a reaction to social-political tensions of the time, of Rome was used as equivalent to the title “emperor” [9]. This title was given to the local church father who presided over local churches, thus elevating his importance and status not only through title but also through the location of the church in Rome. With the location for the church in Rome, the church as an entity had its privileges in position, finance, and power and positioned itself by the second century as a dynamic force that grew in stature and force in the imperial courts of Europe. As the early Christian church developed they used the design of Roman secular basilicas, public halls built for business and legal purposes (some of which were previously used for pagan worship) to house their ministry [13]. This language of classicism allowed the church patrons to have a familiar understanding of the space. These buildings used discussions from Plato and Pythagoras, Aristotle, as the patterns of harmony and proportion that are found in nature; created using mathematics and geometry to shape the architecture. This was done to not only use an imitation of nature, but “reveal the mind of God imprinted in created things” [31]. Architects such as Alberti (1404-1473), Palladio (1508-1580), and Michelangelo (1475-1564) utilized Vitruvius’s (born c. 80–70 BC, died after c. 15 BC) work *De architectura*, which provided guidelines to create proportion, harmony, and simplicity in architecture. Through “firmness, commodity, and delight” the architecture was to be sturdy, useful, and beautiful. Leonardo Da Vinci’s, Vitruvian Man, showed the proportional and geometric patterns of the human form, the classical column with a capital², pedestals³, and the circle and the square reveal the geometric underpinning of the body created in the image of God thus deemed acceptable for early Christian space [31].

Wherever the disciples were located (as evident in Ephesus, Samaria, and other places) regional hubs or episcopacies were formed around their missionary work. Every church west of Rome (including West and North Africa) were daughter

churches of the Roman church and whenever problems occurs they went to appeal to their mother church in Rome [9]. From a very early time, the church in Rome according to the scripture Matthew 16:18⁴, tried to assert their understanding to the disciple Peter that they should be the presiding church and the major city. However, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries other major hubs in the East formed (in Alexandria, Egypt, Jerusalem, Anitoch, Asia Minor, and eventually Constantinople) and thus the church became intertwined with political realities as several cities, with major bishops, were competing for prominence. Through this segregation various tensions in religious history occurred⁵ as the West and East were contending for rights.

Overtime, as the doctrine of the Western Roman church developed and formalized, the papacy formed. It was in 400 – 461 when Pope Leo I began to bolster and exercise the role. He was the first one to use the term, Pontifex Maximus, supreme/chief priest. As this occurred, the doctrine continued to develop into the Medieval Period when in 1059, the Pope was preserved from the possibility of error, and claimed infallible.

This history shows part of the church that began developing its doctrine around the magisterium, the traditions coming alongside the scripture, to develop the mechanism and hierarchy of the church. As the development of papacy of Roman Catholics occurred, the Pope was considered the Bishop of Rome who had primacy over the rest of cardinals and thus inherited his authority⁶, an eastern theology also developed. This Greek speaking eastern sector eventually became known as Eastern Orthodox. They acknowledged the importance of the bishop of Rome yet never accepted the supreme and infallibility that came to the course of history. The Eastern Church recognized the Pope as head of Western Church but did not accept he had authority in their area. In the east, they contended for equality and used a similar hierarchal system of the original church before the formalized papacy; it was a more regional system with multiple leaders where not one person was seen as the head.

Religious diversity was imprinted on the ancient world through its buildings. Eventually, in the fourth century, once the imperial authorities had decriminalized Christianity with

the 313 Edict of Milan⁷, the Christians grew strong and independent enough and they were building churches with careful plans to make their ‘houses of God’ in shape and dimension suggestive of what they believed [36]. As the church desired to grow the public class through worship a critical questions arose: should churches have a long aisle and basilica form (later established as a cruciform, a cross like shape with a short axis) or a centralized form (a more square layout with a circular dome)? This question had little to do with function and majority to do with style and transformation of society [24].

As the East and West Empires in Christianity began to diverge from each other theological, the architecture also began to differ. The basilica, a long aisled hall with an apse at one end, was the most common form in the West (Rome) (see Figure 2)⁸ and the more compact centralized domed-style became predominant in the East (Byzantine) (see Figure 3). The basilica’s long hall emphasized the approach toward the altar and served as interexchange between supernatural and sociological power. The hierarchical arrangement along the path symbolized the character of the episcopacy. The long approach also provided the perfect architectural metaphor allowing the worshippers faith to metaphorically ascend on procession to the sanctuary with the final destination at the altar where the Eucharist occurred; “the sacramental relationship between humanity and God” ([43] p. 49-50). The eastern centralized domed-style churches were designed as memorials with areas for devotions and places of pilgrimage ([43], p. 46.) They were designed less for the altar and Eucharist, as a means through which one could know God, but instead fostering an individual relationship with the divinity linking directly to their beliefs that individual could access God by themselves rather than go through a intermediary. The centralized dome otherwise known as, *dome of heaven*, was the focus of the building and the worshipper eye was led upward, “to the heavens — God’s domain itself” (frequently having images of Jesus looking down upon the people) thus facilitating an environment to which the individual could reach God ([43] p. 56.)

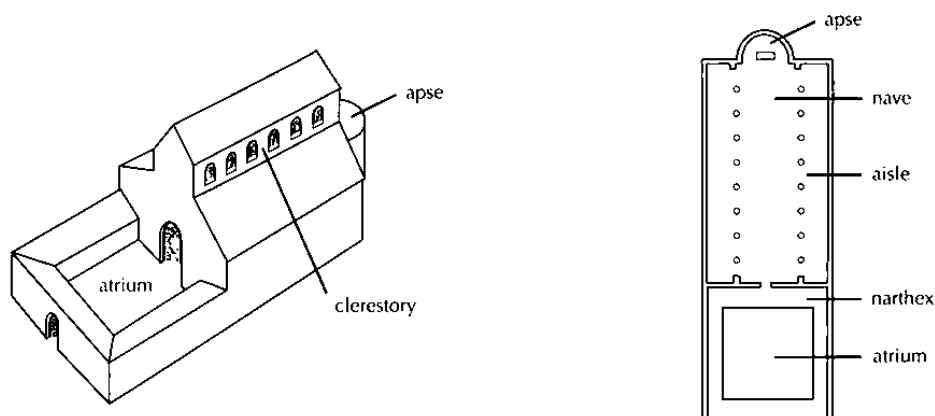


Figure 2. Basilica Plan Church.

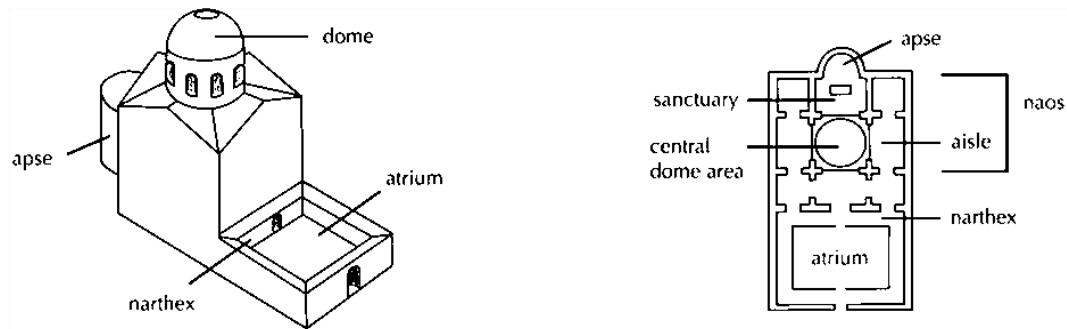


Figure 3. Central-Plan Church.

These early eastern and western Christians built their own spaces for the purposes of their worship adapting them to their uses as best they might. Yet, even through the theological and socio-political realities, some elements were still taken from the earlier secular spaces [14]. The vestibule which originated from an ancient architectonic symbolism giving access to the dwelling of the gods or of divine emperors typically symbolized the “Palatium Sacrum”, the source of divine wisdom, was carried over into sacred architecture [34]. The Eastern Church shape focused on the tombs of the saints and martyrs who had died during the persecutions and copied pagan tombs that were roofed over by a dome which symbolized heaven. One example, Hagia Sophia used the Roman Pantheon as precedent while designing [5]. The Western Church hierarchical arrangement in the basilica was borrowed from the imperial courts of Rome and they also used the triumphant arch. This arch was previously used by Roman emperors to celebrate military victory, and eventually became known as the “Porta Coeli” ([56] p. 248). In Figure 4 Santa Maria Maggiore, the second largest church in Rome reveals this symbolic technique, taking the profane arch (see Figure 5) and making it sacred through placement and symbolism revealing the celebration of Christianity, Christ’s triumph over death, and the broken gates of hell.



Figure 4. The Santa Maria Maggiore altar with triumphal arch above.



Figure 5. The secular arch of Constantine, Rome.

Even through the use of secular Roman motifs in some of the new sacred spaces, many more deep symbolisms were originated and carried out in the plan and construction of the various churches. Kilde explains the period from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century demonstrates an important feature of religious architecture, “Cultural and social change frequently play a greater role in spurring architectural change than do evolving liturgical requirements...function to which a church was to be put was not necessarily the driving force behind the design...the architectural disputes that arose during this period were more frequently ideological and cultural than theological” ([43] p. 92.)

2.2. The Protestant Reformation: The Counter Reformation

In the late Renaissance, the Roman Catholic Church entered a period of internal reflection, reorganization, and transformation [24]. With this, the church doctrine was again confronted and the Protestant Reformation formed. As the Reformation began, the authority of the pope was rejected and the bible was solely recognized as the basis of faith [43 p. 98]. John Wycliffe (1320-1384), John/Jan Huss/Hus (~1369-1372), Martin Luther (1483-1546) and eventually John Calvin (1509-1564) responded to socio-political ideas and began to restructure religion with their doctrine and

practices. The essential Roman Catholic ritual and belief was:

1. The institutional Church, with its highly organized hierarchy topped by the pope in Rome, was the sole source of spiritual nurture, divine authority, and final salvation;
2. The sacraments—religious rituals like the Mass and confession—were the main means of human contact with the divine; and
3. The saints—who, like Mary, the mother of Jesus, were holy people held up as examples by the Church—could be called upon in prayer to "intercede" for Catholics with the Father and the Son. [10]

On the other hand, the reformers of the Protestant Reformation objected, insisting instead on:

1. Less hierarchy in church structure,
2. The Bible rather than sacraments as the source of revelation from God, and
3. Jesus himself as the only necessary intercessor with God

the Father. [10]

During the Protestant Reformation churches were as sensitive as humans. When Martin Luther, publically nailed his Ninety-Five Theses⁹ on the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral, “the wounded building, with nail in door, signified the physical metonym for the wounded body of the church” [43], p. 112. These actions as, “effort to reform the Christian church from the inside grew into a division between Protestant and Catholics that has divided Christianity ever since, one marked by frequently different theological, worldviews, worship practices, and aesthetics” [43], p. 112. This act triggered new understanding of the divine, social and personal empowerment, and new emphasis of preaching the Word of God. This action inspired new approaches to religious architecture and space. After this bold declaration, the first Protestant spaces were erected.

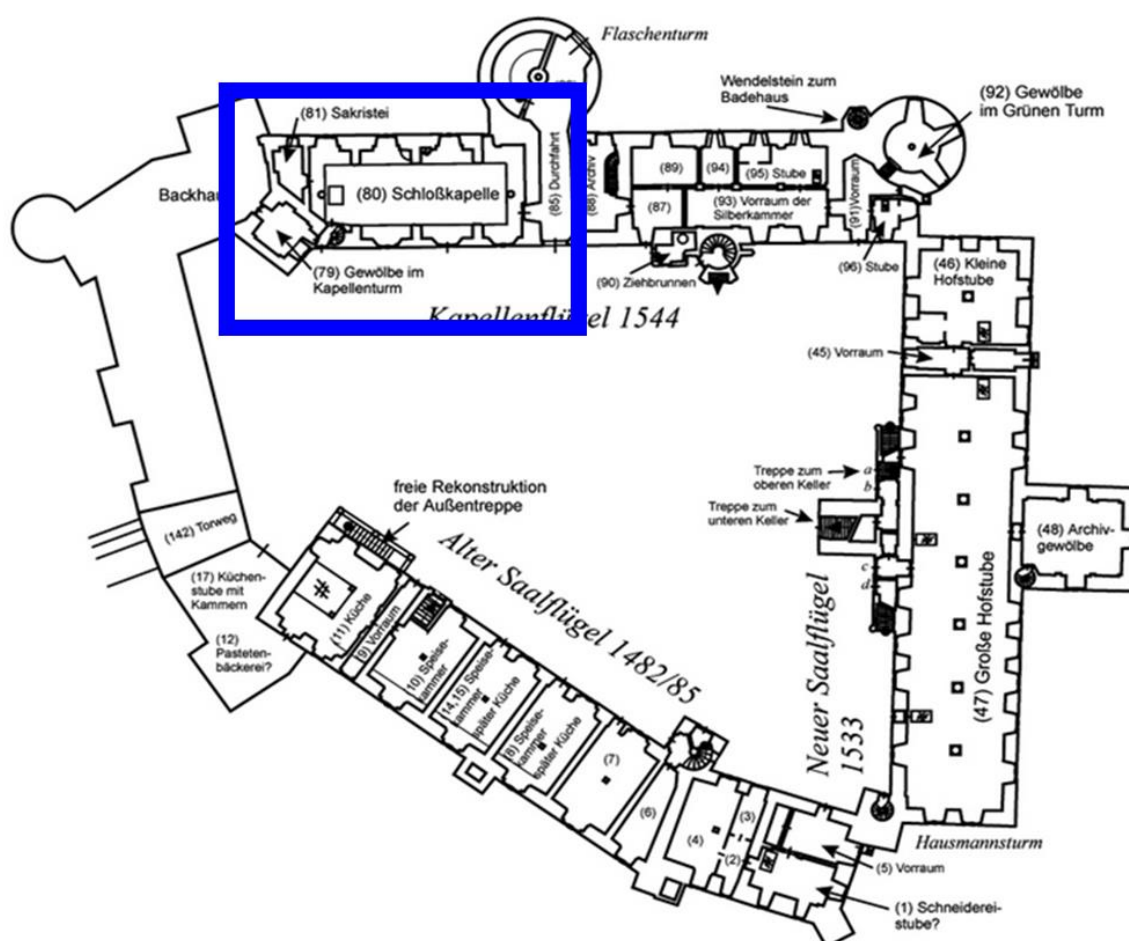


Figure 6. Site plan of Schlosskapelle at Hartenfels Castel in Torgau, Germany of 1544 [20].

The first space for specifically Protestant worship, as shown in [Figure 6](#), was Schlosskapelle at Hartenfels Castel in Torgau, Germany of 1544 [\[24\]](#). This space was designed by Nickel Gromann with input from Martin Luther and artist Lucas Cranach (1472-1553). Many fundamental elements

common in future Protestant churches of the sixteenth century were exhibited in this original space. Much emphasis was placed on the pulpit with ornamentation and location; the elevated and decorate space attracted worshippers attention [24]. The artistry of the space was not to be worshipped as

previously done in Catholic spaces. Artistry was integrated and used in teaching moments throughout sermon but not worshipped as an idol [24]. Throughout time, two focal points became characteristic of the Protestant churches- the elevated pulpit and the altar at the end of the nave [24]. Kilde says, "Indeed one could argue that the spatial tension created in the early churches ...in which the altar and the pulpit are both distinctly elaborated parallels the ideological tension between the primacy of the Eucharist and that of the Word, which lay are the theological heart of the Reformation" [43], p. 116. The baptismal font was another area of difference, where Catholic facilities placed them in adjacent rooms, Protestants placed the baptismal basin in the front of the church. Seating was another element that characterized spatial organization in the church. Seating was originally just for the wealthy in the Catholic Church, however as time progressed, and the church messages were lengthened, pews were brought in and occupied by women and the elderly. Men were stationed randomly between the bench and pulpit and further in the nave. One distinct characteristic of the Protestant church is the gallery. The purpose "grew out of the theological and liturgical transformation of reformation thought: they brought worshippers closer to the two liturgical centers, pulpits and table". [43]

Shortly after the public declaration of the Protestant Reformation, a Counter-Reformation rose. This counter drew a clear line between Catholic and Protestant doctrine and split Europe and other parts of the world into opposing camps. By 1600, the advance of Protestantism had almost been halted and in 1660 it was reversed [14]. However, by this time, Reformed churches had been established in northern Europe, Scandinavia, Scotland, England, the Netherlands, and most of Germany; and Catholicism had been restored to Poland, southern Germany, Hungary, Austria, Bohemia, and much of France [14].

During this period of change, architecture was again also affected. The architectural layout of the centralized plan was no longer used in spaces for worship. As a result, the cruciform plan in combination with the centralized form took shape. Figure 8 showcases Donato Bramante's plan (1506) for St. Peter's Basilica which had the most classical integration of the Greek cross and central dome. This facility was designed to pay homage to martyrdom of Saint Peter, the first bishop of Rome. As time passed, Bramante passed and the building lay in ruins. Michelangelo then took over and again Vitruvian and the harmonious circle and square surfaced (1546), "emphasizing both horizontal and vertical axes, dividing attention between the sanctuary and the dome, between earthly ecclesiastical authority and heavenly divine authority" [43] (see Figure 9). However in 1595 Muncante wrote, "the new church of St. Peter's is really unsuited for the celebration of Mass; it was not constructed according to ecclesiastical discipline; the church will therefore never become apt for celebrating any sort of holy functions decently and conveniently." Thus the length of the nave increased, cruciform developed, and form

followed function, once again. [43] (see Figure 10).

Later, Gianlorenzo Bernini was commissioned to add sculptural and architectural additions to St. Peter's to capture the devotional spirit of the Counter-Reformation [14]. These additions along with the additions in 1656, the open-air piazza (see Figure 11), added in front of the basilica made Italy the cultural center of the Counter-Reformation.

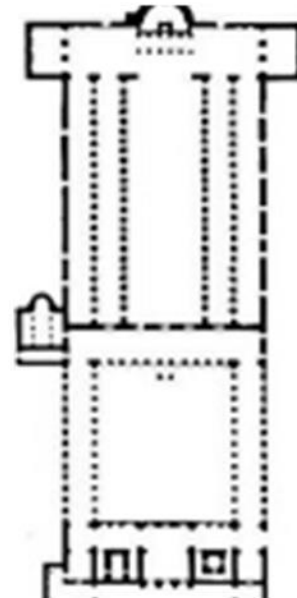


Figure 7. Plan of Old Saint Peter's (4th Century).



Figure 8. Bramante's plan for New St. Peter's (1506).

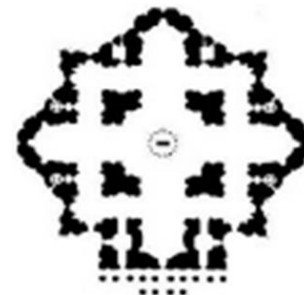


Figure 9. Michelangelo's Plan for New St. Peter's (1546-1564).



Figure 10. Madero's plan for New St. Peter's (1607-1612).

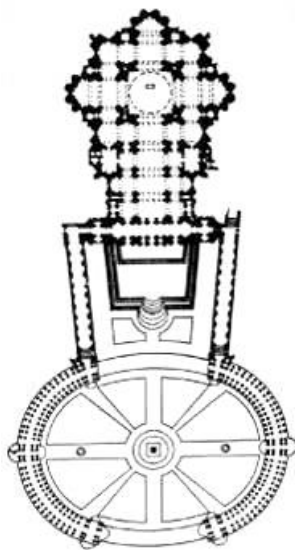


Figure 11. Bernini's additions to New St. Peter's (1656).

As seen, religion and culture (including the socio-political aspects) affect the “motion” of society and the overall ethos of sacred in the built form. Kinnard explains the “motion” can also be called fluidity or hybridity and occurs as religion transfers to religion, space transforms to space, and symbol meaning change overtime [25]. Important to note, some “fundamentalist” actively resist the theological hybridity, but the fluidity stills shows up in the architecture (e.g. vestibules, Santa Maria Maggiore arch, etc.).

In the following section the religion and sacred space of Roman Catholicism and Protestant Evangelicalism are focused to America. This notion of hybridity becomes even more apparent as a result of the contemporary cultural cues on contemporary religion. Foucault asserts, A culture cannot understand itself without first understanding its implicit connection and development with the constructs of religious belief and practice...contemporary culture is born out of religious traditions and the conditions of our knowledge are therefore embedded in religious discourse [18]. The so-called *secular space* is itself a hybrid of past religious traditions... (p.

33)

3. Culture and Religion in American Sacred Spaces

As America emerged, the differences between Catholics and Protestants continued. This conflict was evident in 1831 when Alexis de Tocqueville made his visit to America. While visiting, deTocqueville, an aristocrat from a Catholic family, believed Catholics would be excellent citizens of the republic while Protestant neighbors disagreed and believed the worst of their new Catholic neighbors [2]. Anti-Catholicism was official government policy for the English who settled the colonies along the Atlantic seaboard [23]. Things soon changed when several years of devastating potato famine led millions of Irish Catholics to flee to the United States in the mid-1840s. In the span of fifty years, the Catholic population in the United States suddenly transformed from a tight-knit group of landowning, educated aristocrats into an incredibly diverse mass of urban and rural immigrants. These diverse immigrants came from many different countries, spoke different languages, held different social statuses, and emphasized different parts of their Catholic heritage [10].

As America transitioned into modernity both society and the sacred were forecasted to be affected. Culture, politics, and economic change through the industrial revolution were to affect the strength and character of religion. As sociologists explained, modernization was the transformation from a traditional, rural, agrarian society to a secular, urban, industrial society [27]. The writing of French social theorist and philosopher Henri de Saint-Simon (1760-1825) and Auguste Comte (1794-1859), stated that modernity and religion do not mix which led the way as religious scholars developed the ‘Secularization Theory’ [19]. The theory explained that religion will lose its authority in all aspects of social life and governance and that the modernization of society would include a declining level of religiosity and the significance of religion would decrease in modern times. Mills explains, “Once the world was filled with sacred-in thought, practice, and institutional form [32]. After the Reformation and the Renaissance, the forces of modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process, loosened the dominance of sacred. In due course the sacred shall disappear all together except, possibly, in the private realm.” Peter Berger says, by secularization we mean the process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols....As there is a secularization of society and culture, so is there a secularization of consciousness [9]. Put simply, this means that the modern West has produced an increasing number of individuals who look upon the world and their own lives without the benefit of religious interpretations. (p. 107).

However, as seen below, as America transitioned through modernity, culture, politics, and economics did begin affect-

ing the strength and character of religion, but not as expected. In the modern times a unique relationship between religion, the institution, and the individual social groups through creative ways of thinking, behaving, and way of life actually made religion more accepted. With an emphasis on a modern world, many new paradigms consequently developed out of the “fluid-hybrid” [25] and the synchronization of “religion and culture” [18] paradigms: Rational Choice, Religious Economies, Pluralism, and Lived Religion.

As the modern religious world emerges, ‘Rational Choice Theory’ emerges. This theory is best explained when people are attracted to, or turned off by, religious organizations on a cost/benefit basis [28]. People are weighing costs and benefits in light of individual preferences. Within the modern American culture, theories like rational choice, the demand for religion is met by a supply produced by religious organizations. The activities of the “customers” and “producers” constitute a market or religious economy. ‘Religious Economies’ is yet another facet of the rational choice theory ([28, 41, 12]). Experts say competition encourages both innovation (religious organizations have to find new ways to appeal to customers) and reinvigoration (organizations are continually reinventing both themselves and their services as a way of ‘keeping ahead of the competition’). “Pluralism” is yet another theory that encourages organizations to compete for ‘customers’ in the religious marketplace [43]. Monopolies, Schisms, and Sectarian Movements continue to represent a natural form of market adjustment breaking up declining, stagnating organizations and breathing new competitive life into the marketplace. The strength of these theories relates to supply and demand of religious organizations, if they are to survive and prosper, they have to meet the changing demands of their actual and potential customers. It is evident that within this open religious system in America, both Protestant and Catholics openly choose their niche.

Surveys released find one in four Americans call themselves Catholic, however this is more a cultural brand label for many than a religious identity [21]. Michele Dillon writes about emancipatory projects of marginalized Catholics [19]. She writes an analysis of Catholic church ‘members’ who connect through the Catholic faith even though their moral and cultural views do not adhere to overarching Catholic views. Dillon analyzes three groups: homosexuals, woman who are ordained, and those who are pro-choice. As the groups of individuals make their own rules in lieu of the corporate Catholic rules we see individual religious communities springing up and sharing faith, practice, and everyday life. Diana Ek (2001) shares her ideas of ‘Christian American’ saying, “religious traditions are dynamic not static” and as a result of immigration and freedom, religion and religiousness are changing America. Nancy Ammerman says, “No single powerful institution or culture defines the available range of religious beliefs and practices in the modern world [4]. The study of religion then, is a much more complicated (and interesting) matter of than simply measuring a given set of ideas

of counting places of worship and members...”. It will be interesting to see how the cultural labels affect religion symbols and architecture within these ever evolving religious institutions.

Loveland explains, “From curbside to carpeting, church architecture is being reshaped by changing lifestyles and ministry demands.” [29], p. 1. As evangelical denominations emerged distinctive architectural styles do as well saying, “modern church life calls for modern buildings which can adequately express and house the worship and activities of the churches of our day” (p. 45). As churches market themselves, the megachurch flourished. The megachurch is described as, “seeker churches”, “seeker-sensitive”, and “seeker-oriented” embracing the notion of religious markets (p. 127). The design of the megachurch was “developed to promote individuality and distinction and could and should be used to make an impression on the unchurched and unsaved that would lead them to attend worship service and become involved.” (p. 128). This “seeker-friendly” church environment seen most commonly in the Protestant/Evangelical setting has recently branched out in the Catholic sector. The Catholic ‘World Youth Day’ is event planned to reach out, to reverse a national trend of declining membership, as statistics revealed Catholics were lost to the Evangelical and Pentecostal denomination [9]. Herein lies an interesting take on the sacred, inserting it into culture and marketing the church “brand”.

In the late twentieth century megachurches used a lobby or atrium as a barrier to the worship center, thus visitors and members alike could fellowship before and after the church service. In size, the worship centers resemble the tabernacles and temples of the dissenter rather than the auditorium churches. Loveland says, “Megachurches builders modified the components they build from earlier evangelical structures (e.g. the platform and preaching desk) to accommodate changes in evangelical worship practices that occurred during the second half of the twentieth century...to accommodate the sight-sound-sensation generations” [29], p. 236. In an effort to add intimacy and keep up with technology, the large screens (e.g. Jumbotrons and I-Mag) were added to the church building. Today technology is a fundamental part of the church including the screens, sound systems, and lighting effects¹⁰ [29].

These notions of high-tech, are again, mostly in the Protestant Evangelical church however examples in the Catholic church are occurring; one such example is the Mother of God cathedral, in Brazil. The church houses 6,000 seats and has standing room for another 14,000 people, in addition the grounds outside have space for 80,000 as spectators watch Mass via outdoor video screens [44].

This idea of high-tech and use of media is formed from culture. Gordon (2012) explains the significance of public media: major global media corporations, public broadcasters, and niche media producers who are aimed at particular social groups and shares how public media has relation to the sacred modern world. He reveals,

1. In late modern society public media are the primary institutional structure through which forms of the sacred are experiences, reproduced, and contested.
2. Through engaging with public media, audience's recursively reproduce sacred forms, bound up with particular ways of thinking, feeling, and acting.
3. Diverse sacred forms are represented and reproduced across an increasingly segmented public media.
4. Actors shape the construction of sacred through public media for particular social, political, and economical means.
5. Entertainment media offers subjective positions for ways of being in the world, and allude to particular contemporary values, the sacred is typically experiences, reproduced, and contested through public media that represent 'actual' events. (p. 90)

This use of media is ideal for the emerging church building. Loveland give details, "Extending outward rather than upward, the megachurches signaled that 'the church's mission is to the world-not to itself...megachurch builders used modern, secular style architecture which communicated megachurches people's convictions that 'religion is not a thing apart from everyday life and the church is not a refuge from the world-it was not only in the world but of the world'" (p. 259); thus functionally and aesthetically keeping the tenets of religion on a much larger scale and within a culture more diverse than previously [29].

Colleen McDannell says today there is, "little evidence that American Christian experience a radical separation of the sacred from the profane" [52], p. 4. Robles-Anderson says, "Megachurches take up the material conditions associated with the project of modernization, and thus secularization, in order to create a hyper-visible model of congregation [37]. In so doing, they reassert the legibility of a Christian cosmology within contemporary technological conditions" (para. 8). However as many critics judge megachurch architecture to be profane, "megachurch people do not believe their church buildings were intrinsically sacred, but they did invest them with sacrality" [48], p. 257. These megachurches moved into suburbs to capture the growing retail market — the "mission field" [48], p. 130. Many megachurches take on buildings that were formally warehouses or even entire strip malls, and yet others build more permanent tent-like structures (e.g. Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, California). And still others are completely individual, as that of the Crystal Cathedral (Garden Grove, California) designed to be a "22 acre shopping center for Jesus Christ" [48], p. 153.

In the following case, the "22 acre shopping center for Jesus Christ", a modern American religious church is presented. This specific case embodies the "motion" of both culture and religion as it exposes just how far culture has influenced the modern sacred buildings that house the religion. This example explores how a "modern church life calls for a modern building" [26]. As the sight-sound-sensations and use of technology are explored in the "extension outward rather than

upward" [29] the "fluidity" [25] of architecture through the lens of religion and culture is revealed.

4. A Case Study: The Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California

The Crystal Cathedral located in Garden Grove, California as a part of the Reformed Church of America exhibits a unique dialect between culture and religion in the modern world. The Reformed Church in America is a part of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ, a denomination history that can be traced to the Netherlands in the seventeenth century and to Germany and Switzerland during the Protestant Reformation stemming from the Roman Empire [38]. The visionary behind the Crystal Cathedral, Reverend Dr. Robert H. Schuller, understood the naturalistic qualities of God and the power behind God's creation as a result of his childhood beginnings on an Iowa farm [39]. In February 1955, as Schuller was searching for an empty hall for his new church to be planted in Southern California, a local drive-in accepted his offer for purchase and the drive-in church began. This construct paired seamlessly with his love of nature as the structure of the repurposed site shaped the preaching activity to exclusively outdoors. The idea of worshipping in a car fit the Southern California culture perfectly as marketing enticed parishioners to, *Come as you are in the family car....* Soon, the parking lot was full as Schuller preached in open-air from the top of the popcorn stand — the church was thriving.

By 1959 Schuller purchased property and paired with renowned architect, Richard Neutra to design the first building on the site of the Crystal Cathedral Ministry (then Garden Grove Community church). Neutra helped Schuller better understand his passion for nature as related to architecture. Neutra said, "Architecture should be realistic...in being shaped by the biology of the creature who will live in the structure. The structure you need must be tranquil..." (p.X) and soon after Neutra began designing a walk-in-drive-in church [39]. Schuller's theology progressed with the new church architectural concept as he realized, "these unchurched Orange Countians don't know the Bible, and furthermore, they aren't (and won't be) impressed with a lot of biblical quotations, I would have to simplify my messages" (Schuller, 2001, p. 225). Not willing to cheapen his faith, Schuller began develop uplifting messages that provided inspiration for listeners to make it through the week, this ultimately coined *positive-thinking theology*.

The walk-in-drive-in church was soon complete and the glass façade, vertical supports, and clean, modern design embraced nature as did the unique details. It seamlessly linked the outside with the inside; anchoring the pulpit along the inside of a long glass east wall, facing the drive-in church parking lot to accommodate seven hundred cars at one time (Schuller, 2001). Two 12-foot bays of glass could be rolled aside to expand and seamlessly connect the balcony allowing

one to experience ‘biorealism’ — the realm of the senses and inter-connectedness to nature that Neutra believed fundamental to human well-being. Here the indoors and outdoors could be felt at the same time as guests heard the “positive thinking” messages creatively orchestrated by Schuller. January 18, 1970 brought forth another vision that the revolutionary architecture paired with unique theology began. Evangelist, Billy Graham, suggested that Schuller take his messages to the television medium, explaining, “I have the Hour of Decision you should have the Hour of Power” (Wilkes, personal communication, 2014).

By February of 1970 the “Hour of Power” was on air. The television cameras added more excitement to the already popular walk-in-drive-in sanctuary of Southern California. Pastier explains “the most unusual” church scene, “camera-man on elaborate hydraulic booms tier in space to capture the minister’s mercurial expressions and histrionic gestures” [58], p. 52. This exposure attracted many notable religious men and guest to the church, further growing the ministry to thousands. Soon Schuller began to dream again, with his “possibility thinking’ leading the way. Schuller prayed, “Lord if we must build a new sanctuary, let it have glass walls and a glass roof. Let me see again the blue sky; the trees swaying, the birds flying — The way we worshipped in the drive-in theatre. Amen.” [67], p. 32. In 1975 Schuller partnered with another renowned pair of architects’, Philip Johnson and John Burgee. It was at this moment that the design of the Crystal Cathedral began. The architectural duo began working on a sanctuary scheme that Burgee explains was a “big effort” (personal communication, 2016). The first ideation was a stone, traditional church building with a cross plan; however Schuller’s reaction was far from satisfied and very silent.

As the architects revised their design to Schuller’s vision, they soon began to design a greenhouse Architect, John Burgee discusses his notion of the traditional church paired with such a distinctive vision, “Rather than being a crucifix

form with an extended nave and short transepts, the plan is reversed” (as cited in [35]). Burgee recalls the unique elongated pinched diamond-shaped floor plan: (See Figure 12).



Figure 12. Scaled architectural model of the exterior of the Crystal Cathedral [39].

While seemingly unconventional in its design, the plan (see Figures 13 and 14) it is not so untraditional, it’s distorted but it has a nave, it has a transept. The nave is brought in because he (Schuller) is a performer, besides being a minister... And he (Schuller) always said, and quite correctly I think, he wanted to be close and as near the people as he could get. So we tried to bring that long nave were you sit back 32 rows...we squeezed that down as tight we could. And then in the transept we put in those balconies.

The other thing that became apparent is that you maybe can put 3,000 people there when he is performing; but if there is another service and he is not in it you may have 500 people so...so you have this enormous cathedral with little tiny people. And that was the reason we tried to put those seats up in those balconies, so you just do not open them when he is not preaching, keep them all on the ground level....it was a way and try to accommodate both kinds of services.

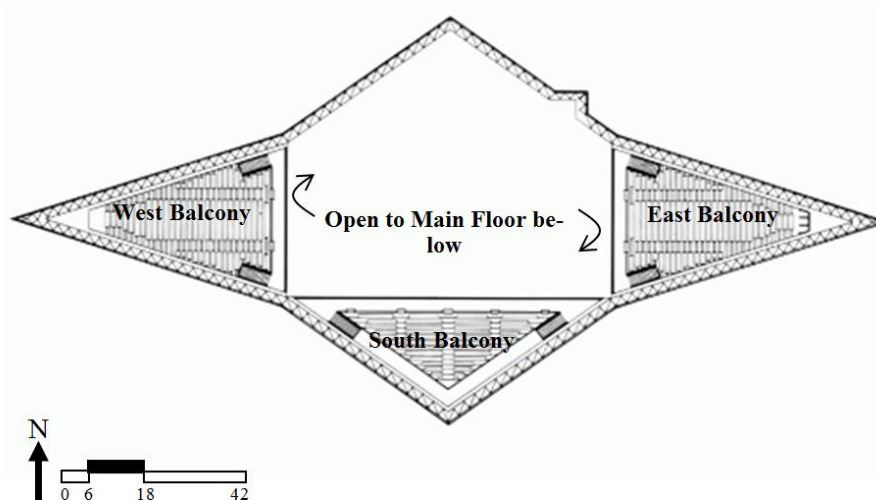


Figure 13. Floor plan of Upper Concourse of the Crystal Cathedral (balcony areas).

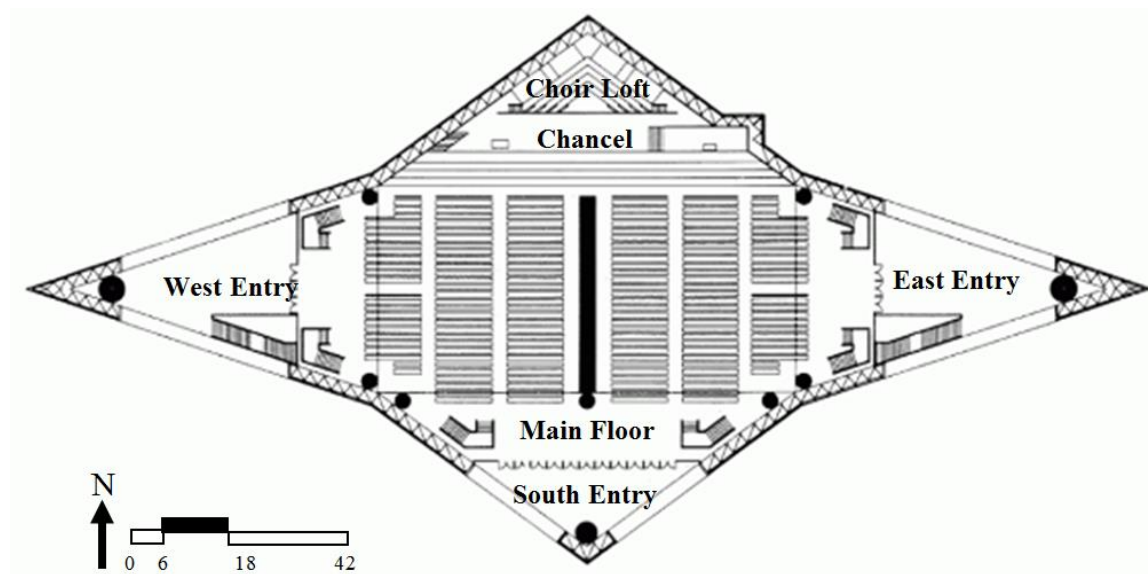


Figure 14. Floor plan of Main Concourse of the Crystal Cathedral (main floor).

In 1977 as architectural plans for this glass church were underway much impossibility turned into reality, further solidifying Schuller's possible-thinking theology. Schuller attributed God for His favorable outcome, and was constantly reminded of a sermon Dr. Raymond Lindquist, from the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, preached right before his drive-in ministry began. The sermon, "God's Formula for Your Self-Confidence" explained that being confident was one thing, however, God who has begun a good work in you, will complete it (based on Philippians 1:6¹¹)..."you many quit on Him, but He will never quite on you! You can trust Him!" As million of dollars were required to build, members, from both from inside the church and from all over the world made an investment to make this a building a reality¹²

On Sunday, September 14, 1980, twenty-five years after the start of Schuller's first drive-in, the Crystal Cathedral was dedicated at an estimated cost of \$7 million, inflated to \$17 million at the time of completion. This cathedral, which still stands today, is all glass expanding 414 feet long and 207 feet wide composed of:

- 1) a 127,320 square feet ceiling of glass and cooling louvers integrated to some of the glass panels hinging to allow natural circulation; a sanctuary seating 2,736 persons including 1,761 seats on the main floor, 346 seats in the East and West balconies, and 283 in the South balcony;
- 2) large glass doors sliding 90 feet tall behind the pulpit providing a seamless opening from the interior to the exterior (see Figure 15);
- 3) five-manual Hazel Wright pipe organ added to the interior auditorium, the five largest in the world, centered in the midst of the solid marble pulpit (see Figure 15);
- 4) more than 1,000 singers and instrumentalists could perform in the 185- foot wide chancel area;
- 5) a chancel area constructed of Rosso Alicante marble,

- quarried in Spain, and cut and polished in Italy;
- 6) an altar table and pulpit made of granite;
- 7) a 17-foot tall wooden cross was antiqued with 18-karat gold leaf (Crystal Cathedral Congregation, 2013) (see Figure 15);
- 8) a large 76 foot reflecting pool with 12 fountains representing the twelve apostles was placed down the center aisle of the auditorium;
- 9) added in 1994 the first interior Jumbotron screen installed by Sony was positioned in the auditorium (see Figure 15).



Figure 15. The interior of the Crystal Cathedral looking north [39].

This space was designed, and soon became, a modern icon. The sight-sound-sensations were exploding and the extension outward rather than upward reached millions as the 'Hour or Power' ¹³ broadcast from within the cathedral out to the world. At the opening ceremony Reverend Robert H. Schuller addressed the congregation (whom some were hesitant as the amount of money absorbed into the ministry) with a message asking, "Why did God want the Crystal Cathedral to be built?" His message was in parallel to Dr. Lindquist's, illuminating

why the evangelistic vision needed to come to earth in a tangible form (Pastier, 1981). Schuller, in his positive-thinking, possibility-mode released the ethos, “This building was created for the glory of the human beings, for the Greater Glory of God” [22]. Schuller declaring in 1980, that the emergence of the Crystal Cathedral was used by God to help people, “believe the impossible”, “believe bigger than oneself”, “you many quit on Him, but He will never quite on you!”, you can trust Him, “believe in the God who believes in you”!

From 1981 to 2005 the church auditorium/television studio broadcasting the weekly worldwide service, “Hour of Power” thrived. Church members had their names placed on the opera-style seats in which they sat proudly knowing their donated money helped to finish the building. The television viewers were given the opportunity to make their tithes and give offerings and to purchase memorabilia and collectables. Each year from 1980 on, the “Glory of Christmas” and from 1985 the “Glory of Easter” was produced in the Cathedral in which live animals (e.g. horses, camels, sheep, and donkeys) were brought in for the production and “living angels” were swinging in the air suspended from a barely visible wire. Each Memorial Day a 46’ x90’ American Flag hung honoring those serving for the country.

This space, a national and world spectacle inserted theology, architecture, nationalism, and embraced culture. Williams says, The Crystal Cathedral of Southern California takes, “traditional religion into an alliance with worldly forces that promise escape from mortality and redemption from finitude in a ‘virtual’ reality of natural beneficence and human manufacture.” [77], p. 285. However, when the socio-economic demand outweighed the religious, not even the inclusion of contemporary technological conditions could triumph. Heath (2007) says “Buildings are not merely physical form but cultural and social constructs which relate to wider, changing ecological, economic, political and technical sensibilities and concerns” (as cited in [19], p. 354). In 2000 at the age of 80, Reverend Robert H. Schuller stepped off the platform and his son Robert A. Schuller, took over. In 2006, Robert A. assumed the role of senior pastor of the Crystal Cathedral. In 2008 Reverend Robert H. Schuller removed his son as preacher on the church's weekly "Hour of Power" syndicated TV broadcast. In 2010 Sheila Schuller Coleman, daughter of Reverend Robert H. Schuller, was appointed as the lead pastor of the Crystal Cathedral and in October of 2010 officially declared the ministry bankrupt, after battling financial difficulties for several years.

In February of 2012 the Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange purchased the property [6], and as this transfer occurred, the “fluidity” [25] of architecture through the lens of religion and culture was revealed; the motion of ministry and hybridity based on culture and religion in the modern world surfaced. Many asked, what will happen to the church? This question relates directly to the Secularization Theory, and this case attests against it. After filing bankruptcy Chapman University made a higher offer for the church however it was sold to the

Roman Catholic Diocese of Orange for a lower offer of \$57.5 million. The Crystal Cathedral Ministry said:

When it became clear that selling the property would be best for the future of the ministry, the board and Dr. Schuller decided to sell to the Catholic Diocese so the buildings and grounds would always remain places of worship as they were intended. Though other offers were greater, the stipulations within those offers did not guarantee that the campus would remain a site for Christian worship. (Crystal Cathedral Congregation, 2013, para. 4).

If sold to Chapman College, although a Christian university, the various other clubs and organization on the college campus would have access and would interact with the sacred space; with those interactions the Crystal Cathedral Ministry did not want the space to lose its sacredness. The ministry committee explained, by selling to the Catholics it would stay “sacred”. The Protestant leaders knew the Catholics rules and they understood future renovation would need to occur but in doing so, a Liturgical Design Consultant (LDC), would be hired as required by the Second Vatican Council [42]. As the space transformed from one religion to another the notion of sacred would be kept intact by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops document, Built of Living Stones and their Canon law which states that, “the term church signifies a sacred building destined for divine worship... encompassing the related concepts of *domus Dei* (house of God), *domus ecclesiae* (house of the church), temple of the Lord, heavenly banquet, and New Jerusalem” (p.X). This revolutionary view, choosing sanctification rather than currency, revealed the importance of the sacred to the people in the Protestant community thus prevailing over the secularization theory.

With the new name the Christ Cathedral was currently undergoing renovation with the Johnson Fain Architectural firm in conjunction with Rios Clementi Hale Studio and awaiting new faces and service times. Skeptics still contend that the interior of the auditorium-style church, designed to highlight Schuller’s indoor/outdoor positive thinking preaching, is unsuitable for Catholic liturgical worship. However, the Roman Catholic Diocese while designing Cathedral of Our Lady of Angles (a modern contemporary Roman Catholic cathedral nearby in Los Angeles, California) explained, “The Roman Catholic Church has never adopted one particular style of architecture. There has always been an appreciation for the creative spirit indigenous to the local community” [39], p. 67. This statement reveals the Catholic community is willing and excited to work with their new sacred space.

5. Finale

Religious buildings tell the continuing story of cultural development throughout the world. In the historical examples provided from Rome to the Reformation a unique relationship between the macro structure, the meso institution, and the micro people were established. These relationships between

the sacred, the religion, and the individuals create intersections between human innovation and claims of transcendent truth and reveal they are inversely proportionate. Religion is communicated through people, who exist in space, over time and through culture, creative communications are released that explain and expand religion and vice versa.

Merging culture, religion, and fluidity the American case study of the Crystal Cathedral also solidified the play between religion and culture. This case was specifically selected due to future study that will encompass sacred space and transformation as a result of socio-political and cultural influence. As transformation occurs between two sacred religious entities, a Protestant space turning into a Roman Catholic space, more will be discovered about the hybridity, and the 'art of becoming' through spatiality, sociality, and spirituality in this modern nation. Exploring the idea that place is not just 'frozen scenes for human activity' (as cited in [18], p. 35 but a dynamic embodied relationship with the world the experience an emphasis of place, change and process where, "Places are never 'finished' but always 'becoming'" (as cited in [18] p. 37, [61]. More can be understood about how a sacred place transforms over time through culture and how the built form, the mediator of a religion and sociology, impacts place. This continued story will tell more about cultural life and religious beliefs that define our national character.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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¹ Foucault leaned on the following classical studies of: Tylor, 1871; Frazer, 1922; Durkheim, 1912; Malinowski, 1925; Freud, 1950; Jung, 1938; Marx and Engels, 1957; Weber, 1963; and the contemporary studies of: Douglas, 1966; Turner, 1967; Geertz, 1973; Bellah, 1970; Berger, 1967; Erikson, 1958.

² From the Latin word *capita*, meaning head

³ From the Latin *pede*, or foot

⁴ Matthew 16:18 "And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it".

⁵ Various tensions in religious history include Victor in 190 rebuking Asia Minor because they don't celebrate Easter on the "correct" date and Steven from 254-257 trying to make a direct appeal as he interacts with North Africans who have heretics that are supervising the sacraments [9].

⁶ An unbroken lineage for Pope has occurred since the time of Peter.

⁷ The 313 Edict of Milan was a proclamation that permanently established religious toleration for Christianity within the Roman Empire.

⁸ The ground-plan of Christian basilicas in the fourth century was similar to that of this Neopythagorean basilica, which had three naves and an apse. The first basilicas with transepts were built under the orders of Emperor Constantine, both in Rome and in his "New Rome", Constantinople.

⁹ These 'Theses' were written in 1517 and are regarded as the initial catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. They protested against clerical abuses, and practices within the Catholic Church regarding baptism, absolution related to the Sacrament of Penance, and remissions of temporal punishment due for sins which have already been forgiven.

¹⁰ Some elements did however say the same: amphitheater arrangement, invitation stairway, and a prominent placed baptismal

¹¹ Philippians 1:6 "And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns".

¹² John and Donna Crean were the first to donate to the Cathedral building fund, giving \$1 million dollar to initiate. Seven years later in 1977 the groundbreaking ceremony was held. W. Clement Stone was the second to give a million dollar donation which kept the project alive after inflation. And again, after more economic problems, the church body on the "Million Dollar Sunday" gave \$1.4 million in one day to keep the project alive for the third time (Schuller, 2005, p. 40).

¹³ In 1989 Reverend Schuller delivered a sermon on Soviet television to 200 million Russian Viewers, in 1993 the Hour of Power aired in South America and South Africa and in 1997 it was broadcast on NBC Asia in China, Asia, Hong Kong and India.