

Principle based Architecture

A Christian service, sermon or ceremony can be held anywhere: in the veldt, under a tree, in a temporary structure or a building. The only requirement is that God finds the congregation gathering in sincere worship and prayer. There are thus no rules that a sermon must take place in a specific space. Thus the danger of Churches being erected without the influence of principle based Church architecture.

In the 19th century and start of the 20th century, church architects found safety within certain historical building styles such as the Gothic and Neo-Classical styles. No questions were asked since these were naturally seen as the correct application for any church design. With the dawn of the modern movement and technological, economical and social development, the historical styles became unpopular. Structure becomes the architectural expression with 'form follows function'. With this new movement away from the secure historical styles, Church designers are left in a vacuum. Only in 1934 is the first book, concerning this problem, released: 'The Church Architecture of Protestantism' by A.L. Drummond. (Koorts. 1974:2)

To produce a set of principles guiding protestant church design, two sources can be used:

1. The Holy Bible.
2. The history of Church design.

From a Christian viewpoint, everything taken from the Bible is seen as the norm, and lessons learned from history will be viewed critically.

Architectural principles

Peter Hammond: "The form of the Church must spring from its liturgical function." It is the task of the designer to create architecture from stone, brick, concrete and timber while visualizing the Christian sermon. (Koorts. 1974:12)

Where architecture and Theology meet

The Church is the body of Christ. Christ is the head of the church and the church consists of all the reborn Christians. John 4:23,24 'Yet a time is coming and is now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and His worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.' (NIV, 1985: 1600) The place of worship is irrelevant, because true worship must be in keeping with God's nature, which is spirit. Truth is associated with Christ, a fact that has great importance for the proper understanding of Christian worship. John 14:6 'Jesus answered: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."' (NIV, 1985: 1625)

In the Old Testament God 'visited' His people within 'the most holy place' of the Tabernacle. The Ark served as the sign of God dwelling among His people. At the end of the Israelites' journey they built a temple where worship took place.

In the New Testament the meeting between God and man takes place in the church building, also built with human hands. Similar to the Temple and Tabernacle, the Church building serves not only as a place of worship, but also as the symbol of the body of Christ. The visible structure is a reminder of that which is invisible. Many authors agree that the Church form must be the bearer of the Christian message. Just as liturgy is theology in action, so architecture is theology in material structure. Church architecture expresses theology. (Bruggink & Droppers.1965) Architecture has the inbuilt ability to create mood, portray a certain idea and radiate a certain spirit. In Church design, architecture must express the Christian message. Hence the physical structure surrounding the worshiper, must direct the thoughts to everything which is holy. It must facilitate true worship. (Koorts. 1974)



The Primary Source of Principles:

According to Koorts (1974), the architecture emanates from the understanding of the Christian sermon. The word is brought forth from the liturgical centrum and the response comes from the congregation in the congregational space.

The meaning and purpose of the sermon goes hand-in-hand with the relationship between God and man. God created humans with a free will and so Adam and Eve committed sin. Eventually God saw that the human race had become so corrupted with sin and has no love for their God anymore that He decided to destroy everything on the earth and start all over. On all the earth there was only one righteous man, Noah. God saved him and his family and breeding pairs of all animals and birds. He sent a great flood. Genesis 6:17-12. 'For 40 days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. . . . all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than 20 feet.' (NIV, 1985:1912)

God is righteous but also love and He mended the broken relationship between Himself and man with salvation through His only Son. Man finds himself in a position of pure grace. Man is undeserving of eternal life and can offer nothing in himself to obtain it. This is why the reborn Christian comes in awe and wonder when he stands before God in His house. Man is humble and submissive in his/her awareness of sin and imperfections. Man is overwhelmed and grateful for the sacrifice and atonement of Christ. Man is bursting with joy for the salvation through Jesus. The focus is on God: the absolute, the totally different, the eternal one, raised above space and time. Why not then reflect this in the architectural space of worship? (Koorts. 1974)

The holiness of God is indeed reflected in creation. Romans 1:20. 'For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.' (NIV, 1985: 1707) Psalm 19:1,2. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech, night after night they display knowledge.' (NIV, 1985: 803) It is thus not a far fetched idea of the artist creating something that reflects the glory of God. God is in the end the Master Architect and giver of all creativity. Isaiah 28:29 'All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, wonderful in counsel and magnificent in wisdom.' (NIV, 1985: 1055)

The various elements of the sermon go together with certain actions asking careful planning from the architect. These elements include reading from the Bible, evangelism, baptism, communion, prayer, praise and worship and sharing.

In conclusion. The Bible is the foundation whereupon the sermon stands. The sermon, as a function in the church building, will influence the architectural form. From the Bible principles are drawn leading to architectural formation. The Church stands in physical form as the symbol of the body of Christ. (Koorts. 1974)

It is however, important to add at this point, that the design of the Church space is not solely related to the sermon. This would be forced Protestantism. Later in this document, Protestant guidelines for church buildings are discussed. Presently subjects like art, rituals, symbols and mystery are becoming more and more sought after by the believers. These would also then greatly influence the design.



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Exploring landmarks in earliest Christian history is a very difficult task. Church historian Kirsopp Lake essayed a self-critical sentiment towards such a task: 'At first sight the historian of religions appears to be faced by a number of clearly distinguished entities, to each of which he feels justified in giving the name of a separate religion. But on further consideration it becomes obvious that each of these entities has been in a condition of flux throughout its history.' (White, 1996)

The following discussion on Church History will start with the Tabernacle and Temple and then continue with Christian Architecture after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



The Tabernacle

First House of God...

The Tabernacle is the first habitation that the Living God caused to be built for Him. God gave Moses divine instructions for this unique construction during the forty days and forty nights spent on the holy mountain, Mount Sinai.

God's people could bring a freewill heave offering in the form of materials such as acacia wood, animal skins, spun yarn and various metals and precious stones. Fourteen different kinds of materials were used. The Tabernacle was erected at the base of Sinai in one year. For about 500 years priests from the family of Aaron performed services. These services comprised the presentation of the many offerings and worshipful homage through the burning of incense before the Lord. The tent was also the place where God manifested Himself and where He proclaimed His thoughts and council through Moses. Exodus 25:22. 'There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the testimony, I will meet with you and give you all My commands for the Israelites.' (NIV, 1985: 123) God's desire for fellowship with man was to find its fulfillment there. Through the Anointed one of God, Jesus Christ, it was and will be a reality. (Kiene, 1977)

Exodus 35:20-29. 'Then the whole Israelite community withdrew from Moses' presence and everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the Tent of Meeting, for all its service, and for the sacred garments. All who were willing, men and woman alike, came and brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches, earrings, rings and ornaments. They all presented their gold as a wave offering to the Lord. Everyone who had blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins dyed red or hides of sea cows brought them. Those presenting an offering of silver or bronze brought it as an offering to the Lord, and everyone and anyone who had acacia wood for any part of the work brought it. Every skilled woman spun with her hands and brought what she had spun blue, purple or scarlet yarn or fine linen. And all the woman who were willing and had the skill spun the goat hair. The leaders brought onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breast piece. They also brought spices and olive oil for the fragrant incense. All the Israelite men and women who were willing brought to the Lord freewill offerings for all the work the Lord through Moses had commanded them to do.' (NIV, 1985: 139)

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FIGURE 54: The Tabernacle (Batchelor, 1993: 26)

The Spiritual meaning of the dwelling place of God:

The Tabernacle speaks of God as something yet greater. God gives a very detailed description for His dwelling place on earth. The construction and arrangement of His dwelling in the wilderness, as well as all things pertaining to the priesthood, the sacrifices and the worship service, are extremely significant and important to Him. (Kiene, 1977)

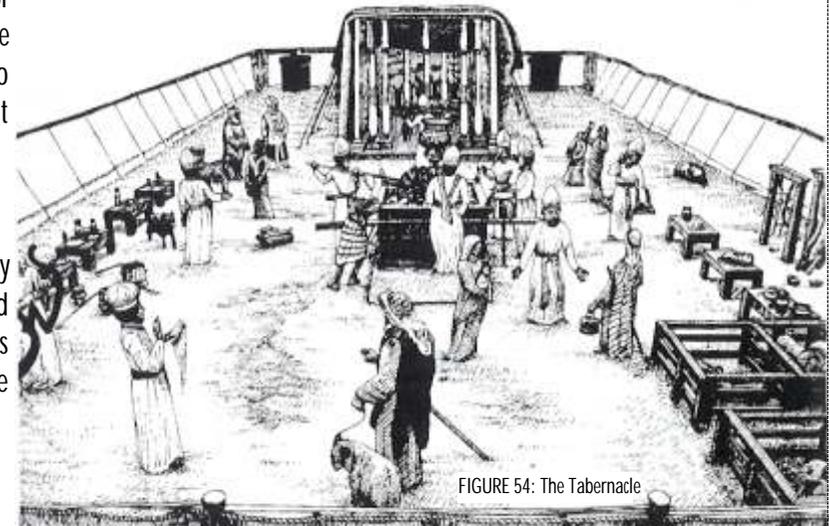


FIGURE 54: The Tabernacle

The Israelites gave with happy hearts for this work. Jesus Christ, who has freed us from eternal death, is worthy of such voluntary support for His work from us also today. The Israelites brought more than enough and then they were restrained from bringing. It should also be our desire today to bring all to the House of God. (Kiene, 1977)

Through the heave offering the construction materials of the Tabernacle was gathered. To fashion these materials required divine wisdom. The Spirit of God filled two gifted men with this wisdom: Bezalel and Aholiab. They instructed each one whose heart God had made willing to aid in the construction of His House. What an impressive picture: multitudes of people compelled by their hearts to help.

Moses and his co-workers erected the Tabernacle according to the plan and thoughts of God. They experienced that most holy moment when the cloud of the glory of God filled the dwelling place. (Kiene, 1977) Exodus 40:34,38. 'Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. So the cloud of the Lord was over the Tabernacle by day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel during all their travels.' (NIV, 1985: 144)

For the first time since the creation of the world there was now erected for God a dwelling place on this earth, built according to the heavenly example. (Kiene, 1977)

Every part of the shrine was supplied with carrying poles and rings because the people were on the move. Israel's God was not like the gods of the people around, whose power was confined to the territory where their tribe lived. While His people journeyed as pilgrims, God promised to travel too, continuing to live among them. Only appointed

priests were allowed to serve in the Tabernacle and when the camp was pitched, the tents of the priests were closest. The tabernacle not only signaled God's presence, but also protected the Israelites from the close contact with the awfulness and holiness of God's presence. (Batchelor, 1993)



FIGURE 55: Mount Sinai.

It is most astounding to investigate the detail design, construction, materials and colours of the Tabernacle. Nothing is done without some symbolism or definite meaning. All the details of the Tabernacle constitute a glorious, impressive, pictorial language of God. They point prophetically to the coming Savior and salvation. To understand the Godly intention of all of these elements it is necessary to have a closer look.

The Tabernacle

Elements of the Tabernacle

Symbolism and meaning:

Ark - Symbol of God's covenant with the Israelites.

Curtain in the tabernacle - symbolizing sin separating man and God.

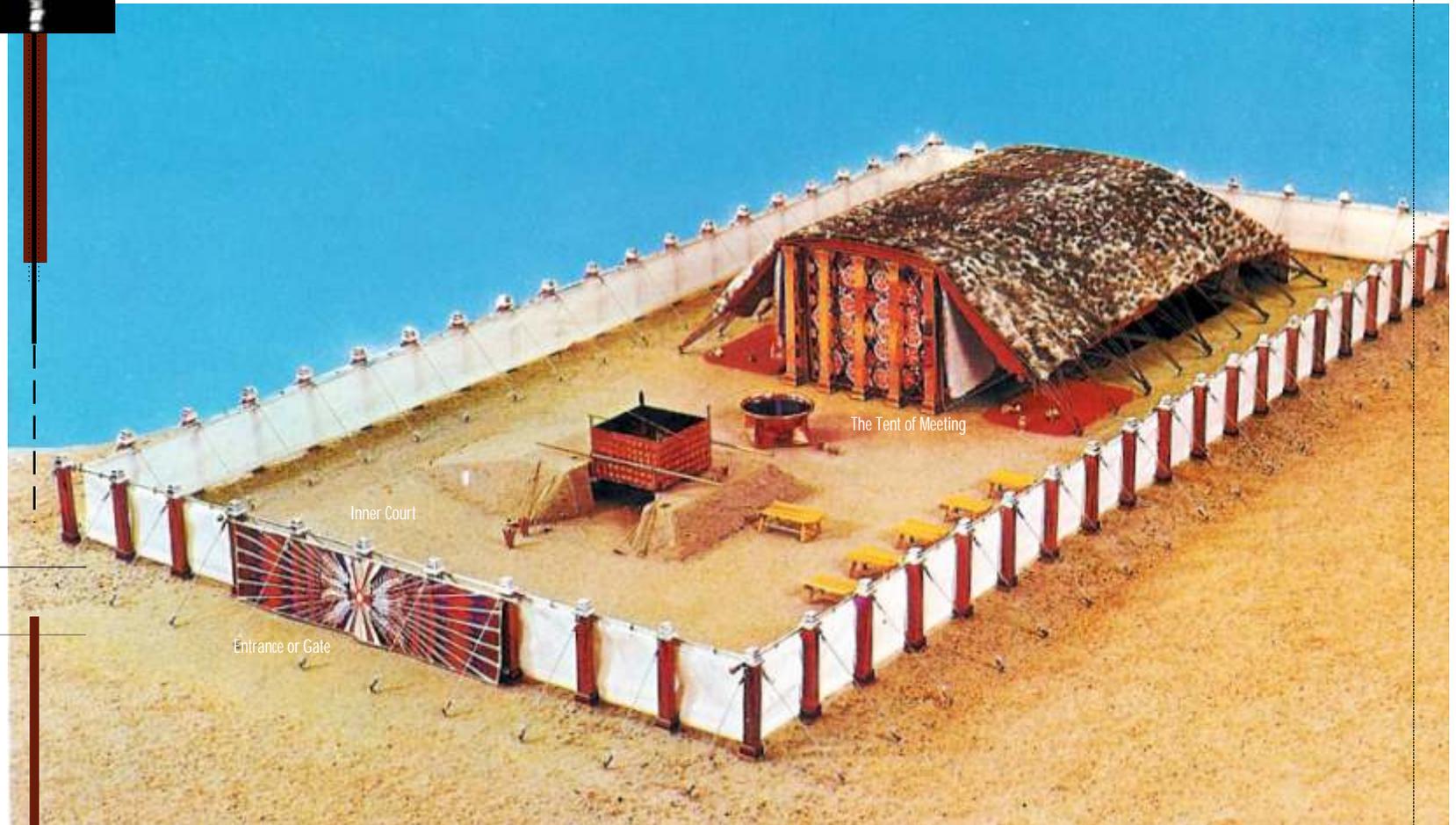
Table for bread offering - twelve loaves of bread one for every section.

Bread for offering - symbol of spiritual food.

Incense altar - burning incense symbolizes the prayers of the people.

Olive anointment - to symbolize that every part is segregated for God.

Offer altar: means by which men mended their broken relationship with God (Vosloo & v Rensburg, 1993:142)



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FIGURE 56: A representation of the Tabernacle. (Kiene, 1977: 19)

FIGURE 56: A representation of the Tabernacle.

Elements of the Tabernacle

The Outer Court

The Gate or Entrance



FIGURE 57: The entrance.

The only entrance is located on the eastern side. Illuminated by the morning sun, it is a splendid sight to the eyes of the passerby. It is a wide and inviting entrance to the Tabernacle.

The colours of the gate may correspond to the four evangelists and remind us of the wonderful characteristics of Jesus. The four colours are red (scarlet), purple, blue and white byssus. They also appear in the three entrance hangings and the cherubim covering. They are also found in the belts of the high priest and priest's sons.

The Object or Element	Meaning (M) and Symbolism (S)
 Red / Scarlet	M: Scarlet is the colour of blood and reminds us of the suffering Servant of God. It also proclaims the earthly and Messianic glory of Jesus. The Gospel of Mark is represented by this colour. (Kiene, 1977:36) S: The red colour symbolizes the blood giving life and love when losing your life for someone else. It also points to the Holy Spirit. (Bronswijk, 1987:67)
 Purple	M: Purple reminds us vividly of the glory of Jesus Christ, who is the King of Kings and Messiah of Israel. The purple robe is one of the coronation robes of many kings. It is the colour of the Gospel of Matthew. (Kiene, 1977:36) S: Purple is the holy, godly and kingly colour. (Bronswijk, 1987:66)
 Blue	M: Blue represents the Gospel of John. The Son of God comes from heaven. We hear in his own words almost forty times that He was the one sent of the Father as the Heavenly messenger of divine love. (Kiene, 1977:34) S: Blue is the colour of heaven and the heavenly. Blue, together with white, is also a symbol of purity and sinlessness. (Bronswijk, 1987:56)
 White	M: Byssus is the finest white cotton wore by King David. The task and intent of the Gospel of Luke is to present our Lord Jesus as the Son of man in His sinless and holy life. The white represents His life without sin. (Kiene, 1977:37) S: White is the colour of light, joy and festivity. The colour worn by priests. It is the colour of glory, innocense and virginity. (Bronswijk, 1987:71)

TABLE 9: Elements in the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle

The height of the pillars and the height of the white hanging were five cubits, corresponding to the height of the four coloured gate. Five is the number of Christ, the Man dependant upon God. The distance between the pillars are likewise five cubits. (Kiene, 1977:45)

Within the Outer Court there are offerings from the people to God. Animals are slaughtered and burned on the brazen altar. The Brazen altar in itself has several symbolic elements and materials. The offerings and related rituals are not important for this study and will not be discussed in detail.

The Outer Court The Hangings



FIGURE 58: The Hangings of the outer court

Anyone entering the courtyard finds himself totally surrounded by Byssus. He sees shining white everywhere, the colour of purity. A totally new sight in contrast to what he has been used to: the desolate unclean desert. (Kiene, 1977:39)

The Pillars

All sixty pillars were made of the same materials. Their bases were of brass, the capitals overlaid with silver and the posts of acacia wood. (Kiene, 1977:41)



FIGURE 59: The Pillar

Elements of the Tabernacle

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FIGURE 58: The Hangings of the outer court (Kiene, 1977:39)

FIGURE 59: The Pillar (Kiene, 1977:41)

The Object or Element

The Material or Colour

Meaning (M) and Symbolism (S)

The Hangings

White Byssus

M: The visitor experience a blessed change: once outside and far from God and now inside in the realm of the blessing of the Highest. (Kiene, 1977:39)

Acacia

Wood

M: The acacia wood is a very beautiful picture of the true humanity of the Son of God. He is the branch out of David's tribe, the sprig and the shoot, as the prophets described Him. (Kiene, 1977:41)
S: The acacia symbolizes the immortality of one's soul. (Bronswijk, 1987:38)

Silver

Metal

M: The silver overlaid capitals remind us that 'He gave Himself a ransom for all'. (Kiene, 1977:41)
S: In the Bible silver is linked with white to be a symbol of purity and correctness. (Bronswijk, 1987:73)

Brass

Metal

M: The bases of brass reminds us of the voluntary suffering of the Lord Jesus. This extremely fire-resistant metal is a symbol for Him as the one who suffered, was tested and withstood the judgement. (Kiene, 1977:41)

TABLE 10: Elements in the Tabernacle.

The Temple

God's Temple

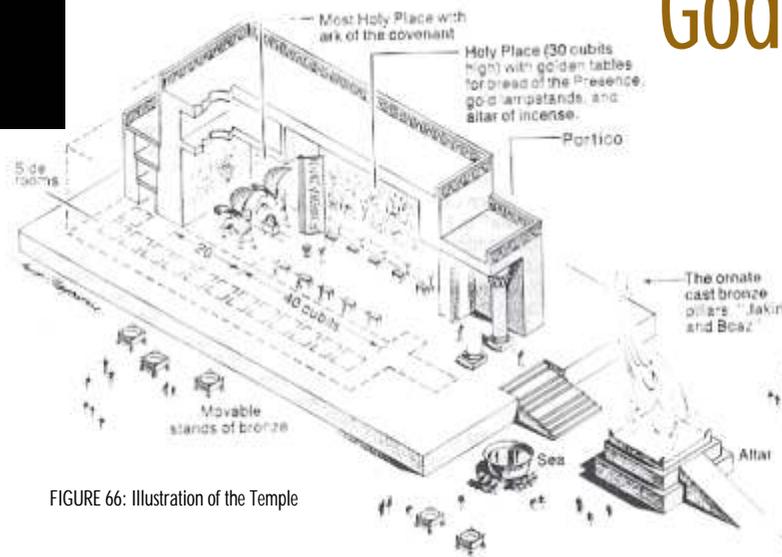


FIGURE 66: Illustration of the Temple

1 Kings 4: 29,20. 'God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. (NIV, 1985:478) 1 Kings 5: 5. 'I intend to build a temple for the Name of the Lord my God, as the Lord told my father David, when he said: "Your son whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the temple for my Name." ' (NIV, 1985:479)

Solomon's Temple consisted of a porch, the House and the Holy of Holies. This was built some thousand years before Christ, restored or rebuilt by Zerubbabel around 500 BC, and the Third Temple was built by Herod 1 only to be destroyed 70 AD. (Curl, 1991:80)

Solomon's Temple is a magnificent piece of architecture decorated with gold, silver, bronze and cedar wood from the Lebanon. It took seven years to complete. (Vosloo & v Rensburg , 1993: 480) The temple is located adjacent to the king's palace and functioned as God's royal palace and Israel's national center of worship. (NIV, 1985: 481)

Solomon builds the Temple:

1 Kings 5:13-17. 'King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel thirty thousand men. He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stone cutters in the hills, as well as thirty three hundred foremen who supervised the project and directed the workmen. At the king's command they removed from the quarry large blocks of quality stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple.' (NIV, 1985:480) 1 Kings 6:12-14. 'As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel. So Solomon built the temple and completed it.' (NIV, 1985: 481)

God answers to Solomon:

Solomon dedicated the temple to God and prayed that he would accept it. 1 Kings 9:2,3. "I have heard the prayer and plea you have made before me; I have consecrated this temple, which you have built, by putting My name there forever. My eyes and My heart will always be there.' (NIV, 1985: 489) By its cosmological and royal symbolism, the sanctuary taught the absolute sovereignty of the Lord over the whole creation and his special headship over Israel. (NIV, 1985: 481)

The Temple

The functions and meaning of the Temple:

1. it prevented the formation of numerous small gatherings where people could easily lose track of the truth.
2. The Temple kept the Israelites together as a nation. Everyone shared the same religion and history.
3. Israel's history was written down and kept at the Temple. It is here where the stories of old were told and traditions passed on to the new generation. Therefore the Temple has part in the formation of the Bible as we know it today.
4. The Temple was a constant reminder that God was in their midst.
5. Because God was experienced in the Temple, it naturally became a sanctuary for the down hearted and sick. People went there to declare their sorrow before the Lord Almighty.
6. This is also the place where confessions of sins took place by means of offerings. Thus it also serves as a place of reconciliation.
7. The temple cannot contain God. It is a merely a symbol of God's presence on earth and in the midst of the Israelites. God's presence on earth emphasizes the responsibility of Christians to live a holy life in thanksgiving to God's grace.
8. God is not only the God of Israel, but wants to reach the rest of the world through Israel and the Temple. (Burden & Ferdinand, 1986:143)

Israel made terrible mistakes. After some time they started to believe that God was only in the Temple and dependent on the Temple space. They thought that humans had created a habitation for God and that Jerusalem will continue to exist as long as the Temple existed. They forgot that nothing can contain God and that God's plan stretched much further than the Israelites. Because the Temple was part of the palace complex, political issues started to govern religion.

The illusion was established that as long as there is a king in Jerusalem, God would protect His people. But the King was taken in exile and the Temple destroyed. (Burden & Ferdinand, 1986:144) Ezekiel 43:7-8. 'He said: "Son of man, this is the place of My throne and the place for the soles of my feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The house of Israel will never again defile My holy name neither they nor their kings by their prostitution and the lifeless idols of their kings at their high places. When they placed their threshold and their doorposts beside My doorposts, with only a wall between me and them, they defiled My holy name by their detestable practices. So I destroyed them in my anger.'" (NIV, 1985:1288)

Jesus and the Temple:

Jesus spent a lot of his time in the temple and the synagogues. Jesus was not negative about the temple but questioned the current uses for it. The temple had separate parts for pagans, women and then the men. The Jews also believed that the temple symbolized the future of the Jewish identity. It was symbol of the forgiveness for sin; a symbol of the end times and a symbol of the distance between man and God. (Burden & Ferdinand, 1986:146)

The Temple today:

The crucifixion and resurrection of Christ changed the whole outlook of the temple. Until the death of Jesus, the Temple curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the rest. Luke 23:44,45. 'It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two.' (NIV, 1985:1587) The death of Jesus, the perfect offer for the sin of the world, removed the distance between God and man. He is our route of salvation. Now there is no difference between people: pagan, man or woman. The temple is not the only dwelling place of God. Each person becomes a temple of God. Every Christian is now a symbol of God's living presence. The temple is no longer the direct symbol of reconciliation but Jesus is now the image of salvation. (Burden & Ferdinand, 1986:146)

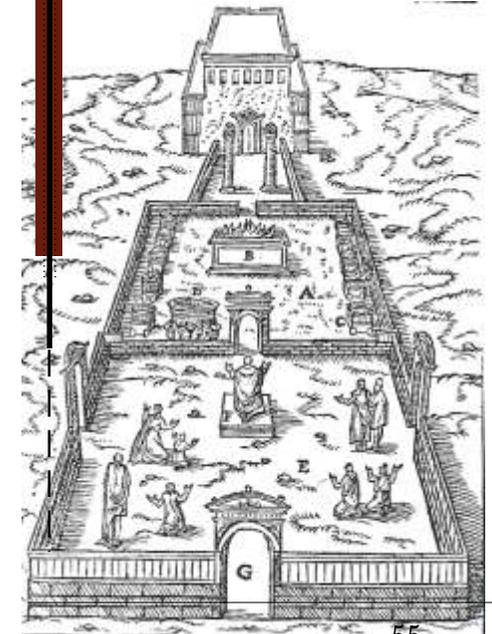


FIGURE 67: Illustration of the Temple

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FIGURE 67: Illustration of the Temple (Curl, 1991:84)

Early Christian Architecture

The coming of the Messiah during the Hellenistic Roman Era is the fulfillment of God's promise that he will send his only Son to earth to live as God on earth in a human body. Jesus Christ will then become the perfect offer for the sins of the world because He himself is without sin. (White. 1996)

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (NIV:1598)

2 Corinthians 5:21 "God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (NIV:1769)

After Jesus had died on the cross at Calvary and rose from the dead three days later, He ascended to heaven and the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples. It was only some time later that the first Christian Churches were being built.

Religion is more than a message, and the appeal of the early Christian movement did not lie in its offer of salvation alone. There were many savior gods in the Greco-Roman world. By the fourth century, Christianity had become an official religion of the Roman state. (White. 1996)

In the beginning of the movement, the followers of Jesus met in the homes of members. Acts 5:42 "Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ." (NIV:1653) The home is the only place to meet and later during the persecution, meetings are held in catacombs. (Koorts. 1974)

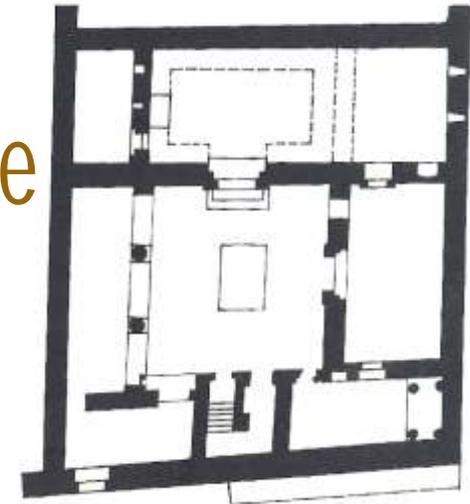


FIGURE 68: Plan of House Church Dura-Europos

Yet, the earliest Christian sources confirm the basic elements. Paul regularly addressed letters to and from 'the Church in the house'. The 'House Church' setting conditioned the nature of assembly, worship and communal organization. It is most significant that the place of assembly was unchanged from its original domestic function. There were as yet no church buildings. (White. 1996)

Within three centuries the situation and character of assembly radically changed, from the 'House Church' to the monumental Church building. From the fourth century onwards the Basilica became a norm of style. In the history of Christianity two landmarks stand out from the architectural tradition: on the one side the 'House Church' from the Pauline period; on the other, the Basilica of the Constantinian Age. One marks the period of primitive beginnings and sectarian identity, the other, an age of emergence into the main stream of Roman society and acceptance as a state religion.

Both the process and the time period of development from House Church to Basilica are crucial in understanding the history of earliest Christianity. It was the period of formation and crystallization of most aspects of worship, Theology, ethics, and organization, during which the Christian movement came to have its recognizable shape and identity.

As to the general course of development of Church building, Krautheimer concludes: 'Until A.D. 200, then, a Christian architecture did not and could not exist. Only the State Religion erected temples in the tradition of Greek and Roman architecture. The savior religions, depending on the specific form of their ritual and the finances of their congregation, built oratories above or below ground, from the simplest to the most lavish but always on small scale. Christian congregations prior to 200 were limited to the realm of domestic architecture, and further to the inconspicuous dwellings of the lower classes. This limitation and particularly the evasion of the architecture of official worship, is something that becomes decisive for the early development of Christian architecture.' (Macon. 1985)

'For the distinction between Christians and other folk is neither in country nor language nor customs. For they do not dwell elsewhere in cities of their own, nor do they practice a conspicuous manner of life. . . Yet while living in Greek and barbarian cities, as each one has been allotted, and following the local customs, both in clothing and in food and in the rest of life, they show forth the wonderful and admittedly strange character of their citizenship. They dwell in their native lands, but as if sojourners. . . They pass their time upon the earth, but they have their citizenship in heaven.' Unknown (White. 1996)

In the early days of Christianity it was seen as one of the many mystery cults, but eventually it is the only one to survive. Early converts are mainly from the dispossessed and downtrodden masses and some from the educated classes. The Christian force gained momentum but not without persecution. Trying to stem the rising tide of their ranks, the emperor Diocletian launched the final official suppression in 303 AD. And ten years later his successor, Constantine, issued the Edict of Milan recognizing Christianity as one of the official State Religions. It was now possible for the Christians to worship openly, and with Constantine's support, an extensive building programme was undertaken. (Fleming. 1995:123)

Basilican Church Architecture

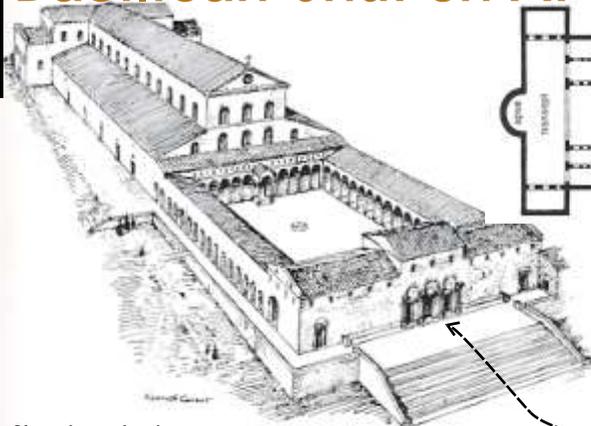


FIGURE 69: Old St. Peter's Basilica, Rome 333 AD

Short introduction:

4th - 12th Centuries

There are various theories whereupon the early Christians based the first Church buildings. The most acceptable holds that the architecture is based on law courts. Basilica means 'royal', fit to be the house for the King of kings. (Koorts. 1974)

Examples:

1. S.Clemente Basilica 4th century
2. Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna 493 526 AD
3. Old St. Peter's Basilica, Rome 333 AD

Characteristics:

The building had a rectangular plan form with a strong vertical axis. The interior space is divided into three parts: the nave and two side aisles. There is a linear axis from the narthex to the apse with rhythmical architectural elements: columns and clerestory windows. The floor plan is very simple. There is a division of space into a vestibule entrance, known as the narthex. The nave is the larger space in the middle of the assemble of the congregation. The nave is separated from the side aisles by rows of columns.

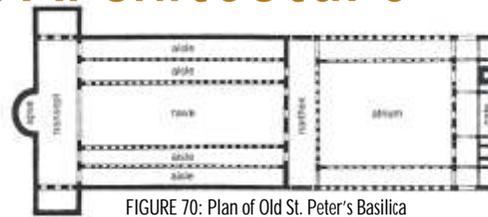


FIGURE 70: Plan of Old St. Peter's Basilica

At the far end of the Basilica is the apse, which frames the altar and provides seats for the clergy. (Fleming. 1995) Some Basilicas had an additional atrium with roofed colonnades to become an extra gathering space before entering the Church through the narthex. (Koorts. 1974)

The experience of the procession:

The one space flows into the next space along the linear axis towards the apse. Church members would enter the atrium. The narthex is entered and one proceeds along the linear axis to the nave. The person finds himself looking straight at the liturgical space. All the architectural elements inside the nave create the impression of movement along this linear axis. All the lines flow in the same direction. When the believer reaches the nave he or she can take part in the communion bread and wine or offer the thanksgiving. Then the member moves to his/her place in the side aisles. A real personal procession towards the presence of God took place. (Koorts. 1974)

FIGURE 69: Old St. Peter's Basilica, Rome 333 A (Fleming. 1995:129)

FIGURE 70: Plan of Old St. Peter's Basilica (Fleming. 1995:129)

FIGURE 71: Sant' Apollinare, Classe 530 AD (Fleming. 1995:155)

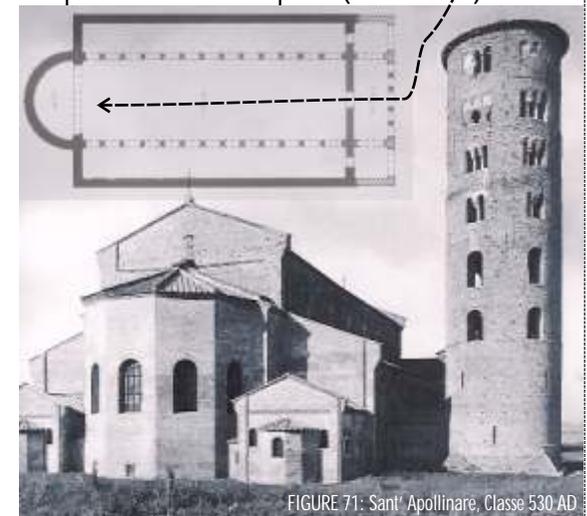


FIGURE 71: Sant' Apollinare, Classe 530 AD

Further comments:

In Basilican Church architecture, the liturgical and congregational space are within the same church space. The clergy and congregation take part in the service. Later in the 5th century a division between the clergy and the congregation is established. Basilican Church architecture reveals something of Christianity. The darkness in the side aisles reflects the search and strive for the unseen. It leaves the impression of infinity. There is a bit of mystery in the air. (Koorts. 1974)

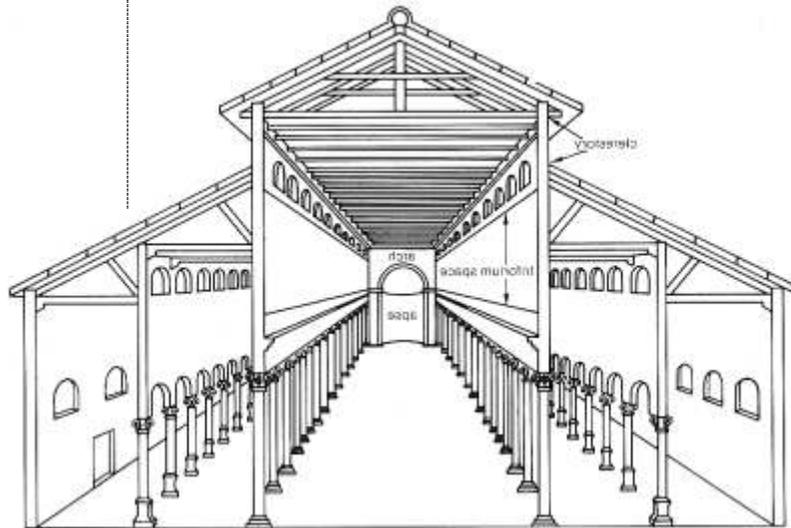


FIGURE 72: Section view of typical Early Roman Christian Basilica.

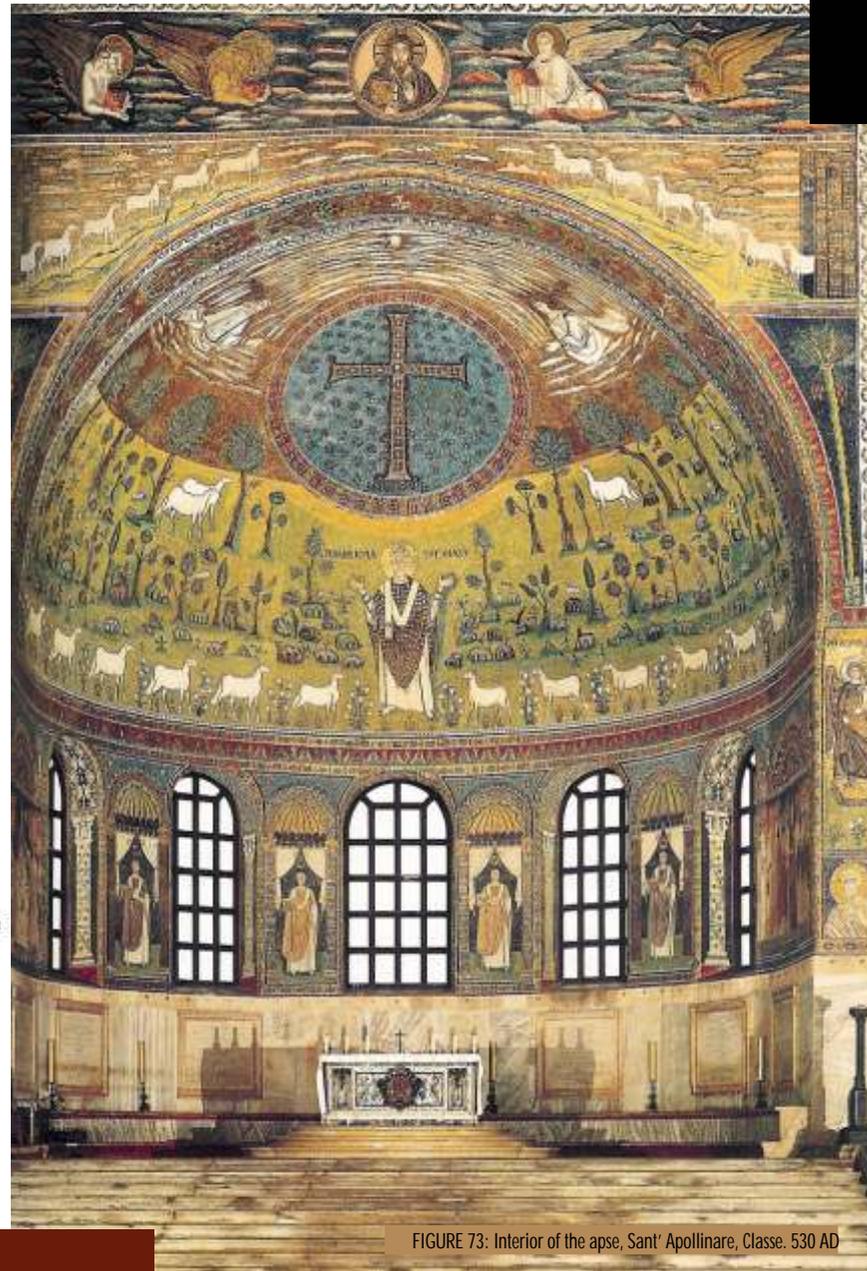


FIGURE 73: Interior of the apse, Sant' Apollinare, Classe. 530 AD

FIGURE 72: Section view of typical Early Roman Christian Basilica. (Fleming. 1995:129)

FIGURE 73: Interior of the apse, Sant' Apollinare, Classe. 530 AD (Fleming. 1995:156)

Byzantine Church Architecture

Short introduction:

325 AD - 15th century

When Constantine declares the Christian faith as a state religion in 326 AD, the faith spreads to Byzantine, the new capitol of the Roman Empire (later known as Constantinople). Church buildings are erected for this new faith. The main feature of a Byzantine Church is the centralized plan form. (Koorts. 1974)

Characteristics:

The plan consists of geometrical figures with a definite midpoint or center. These include the square, hexagon, octagon, circle and Greek cross or a combination of these. There is a big dome in the middle of the central figure, often with secondary domes on the sides. (Koorts. 1974) Although differing quite radical architecturally, Byzantine Churches have all the usual features of a basilica: a narthex entrance, circular nave, surrounding side aisles and a triumphal arch leading into a sanctuary with an apse and two side chambers.

The striking difference between an oblong Basilica and a centralized Church is the direction of the axis. The axis is vertical, leading the eye upward from the central floor space to the dome. (Fleming. 1995)

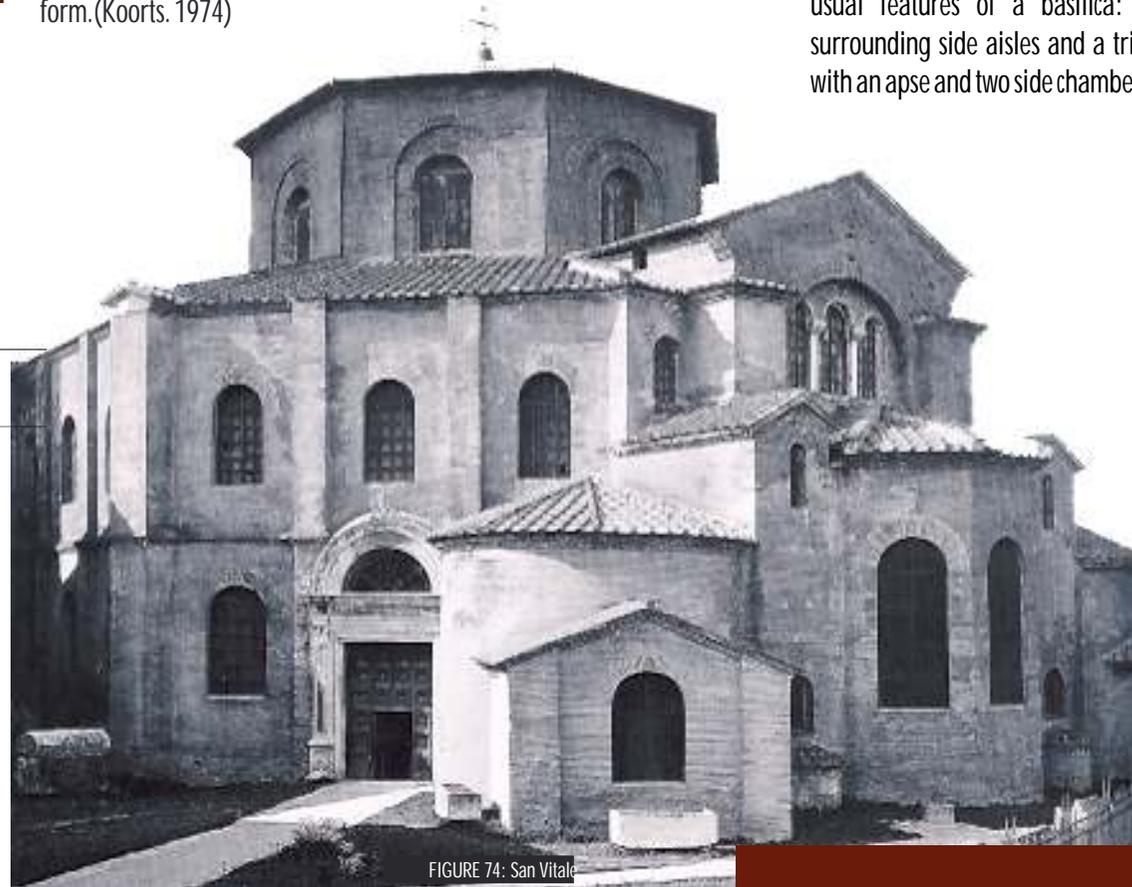


FIGURE 74: San Vitale

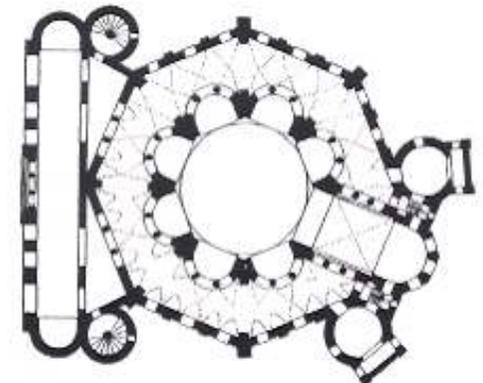


FIGURE 75: Plan of San Vitale, Ravenna. 527 - 547 AD

The experience of the procession:

The interior space is divided into two:

- The dome and
- The space between the core and the outer walls.

With the eye being lead upwards, the dome creates a mystical atmosphere. For the worshipers this is a symbol of heaven.

Further comments:

The Byzantine centralized plan facilitates the division between the congregation and the clergy, making it a clericus church. There is an unnecessary emphasis on the clergy. Contemporary Church architecture questions this.

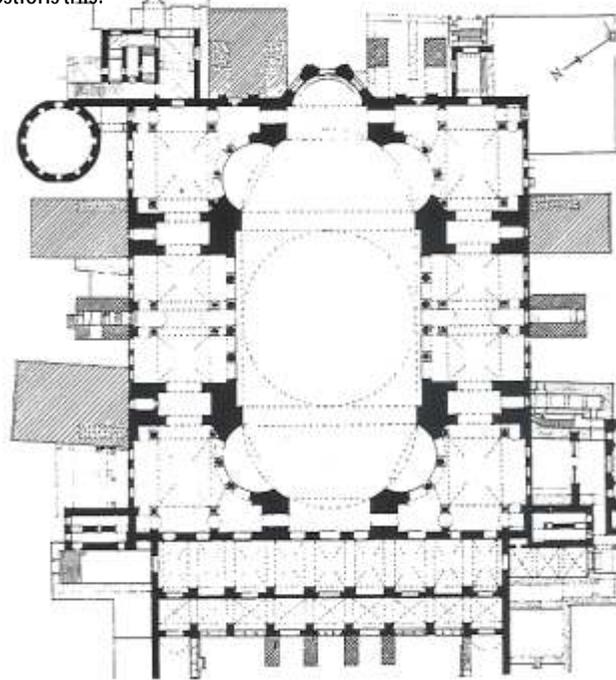


FIGURE 76: Plan of Hagia Sophia. Constantinople. 532 - 537



FIGURE 77: Hagia Sophia exterior.

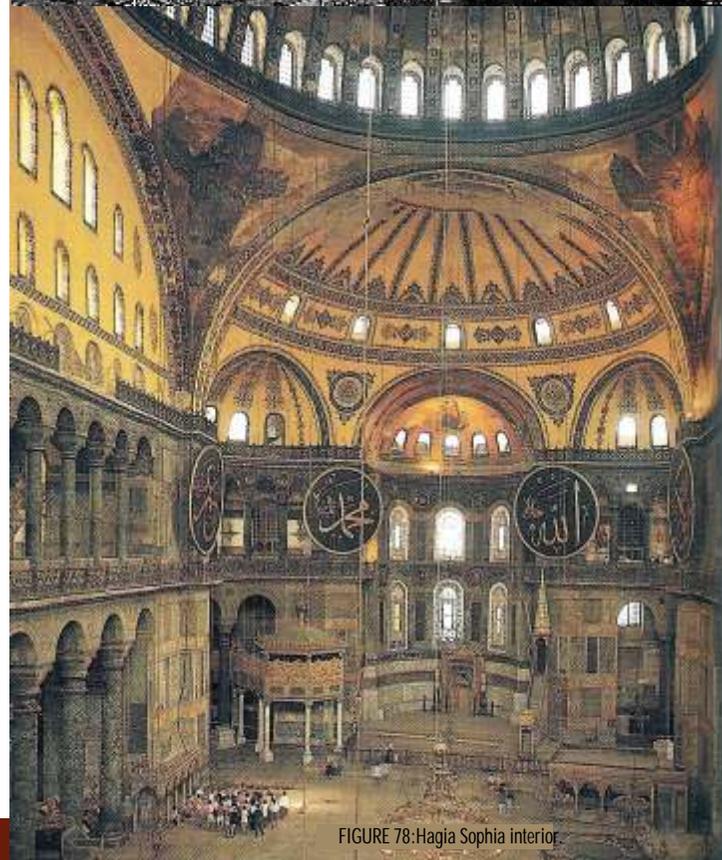


FIGURE 78: Hagia Sophia interior.

Romanesque Style Church Architecture

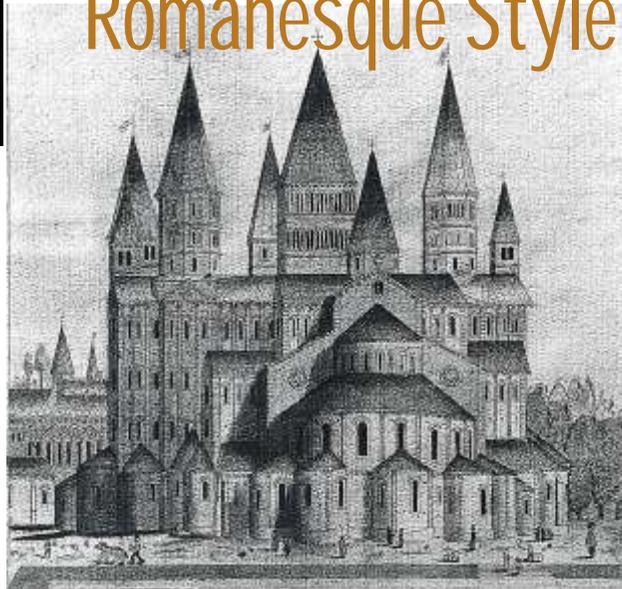


FIGURE 79: Third Abbey Church of Cluny. 1120 AD

Short introduction:

8th - 12th centuries

the style develops three centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. There is a new spirit and creative drive among the western people. There is still a tremendous influence of superstition from the pagan forefathers. There are representations of the spiritual world where half-human and half-animal like spirits exist.

The Church is seen as a secure sanctuary where one is protected and out of reach of these evil spirits and demons. The commoner's approach to God is one of fear and awe. In their frame of reference the grace, blessing and forgiveness had to be earned. But the salvation of the Christian faith is based on God's grace. (Koorts. 1974)

Examples:

1. Third Abbey Church of Cluny. 1120
2. St Sernin, Toulouse. 1080
3. Paray-le-Monial, Burgundy. 1100 AD

Characteristics:

In contrast to the simpler earlier Christian Basilicas, Romanesque Abbey Churches show remarkable extensions before and beyond the nave. The three-aisled narthex has grown to the size of a large Church itself; called 'Church of the Pilgrims' or 'Minor Nave'. The narthex serve also as the assembly place for clergy. The spacious five-aisled nave itself allows pilgrims and townspeople to gather for religious services,

While the space beyond expands for the large monastic community. There are now two transepts with chapels, dedicated to various saints. The apse is enlarged to accommodate the huge high altar. An ambulatory is provided for the passage of pilgrims and processions to reach the apsidal chapels. (Fleming. 1995)

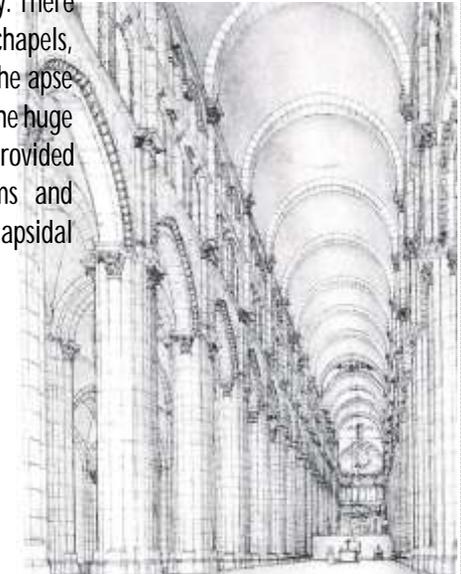


FIGURE 81: Third Abbey Church of Cluny Interior. 1120 AD

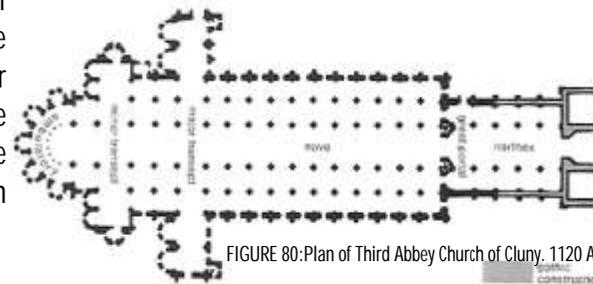


FIGURE 80: Plan of Third Abbey Church of Cluny. 1120 AD

Similar to the early Basilicas there is a strong linear axis from the narthex to the apse. The forward movement is assisted with the rhythm of the columns and double row of windows in the clerestory. The new intervention of the groined vault leads to new possibilities. This enables larger spaces and interesting articulation. The building is orientated such that the apse is on the eastern side and the entrance on the western side. The believer will then be facing east while sitting in Church. This orientation is probably inspired by the expectation that Christ will come out of the East. (Koorts. 1974)

The experience of the procession:

The worshiper enters the narthex and sees the nave ending in the apse. He/she progresses along the outstretched route with eyes to the front and with the rhythm of the columns facilitating the movement. Then under the transept new spaces are perceived. With a lantern in the middle of the crossing, the lighting effect creates a glimpse of heaven. But this is where the route ends because the choir space is out of bounds. (Koorts. 1974)

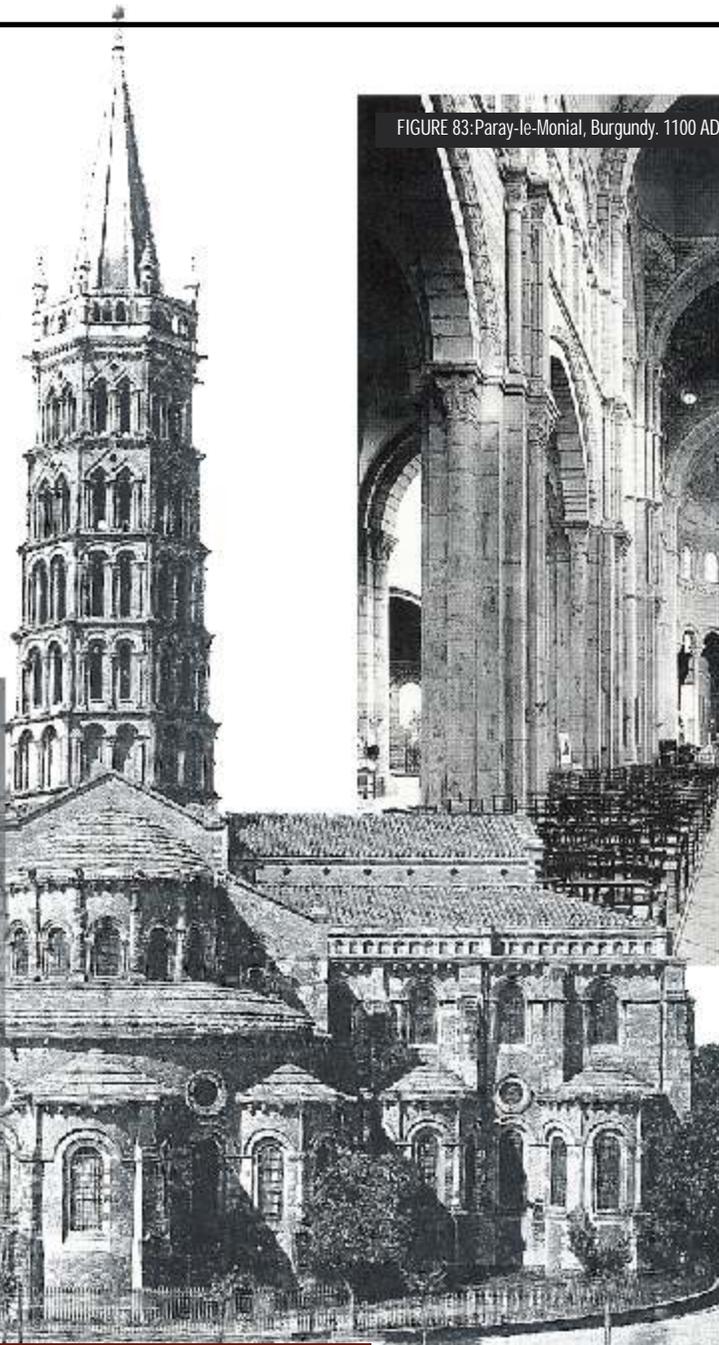


FIGURE 82: St Sernin, Toulouse. 1080 AD

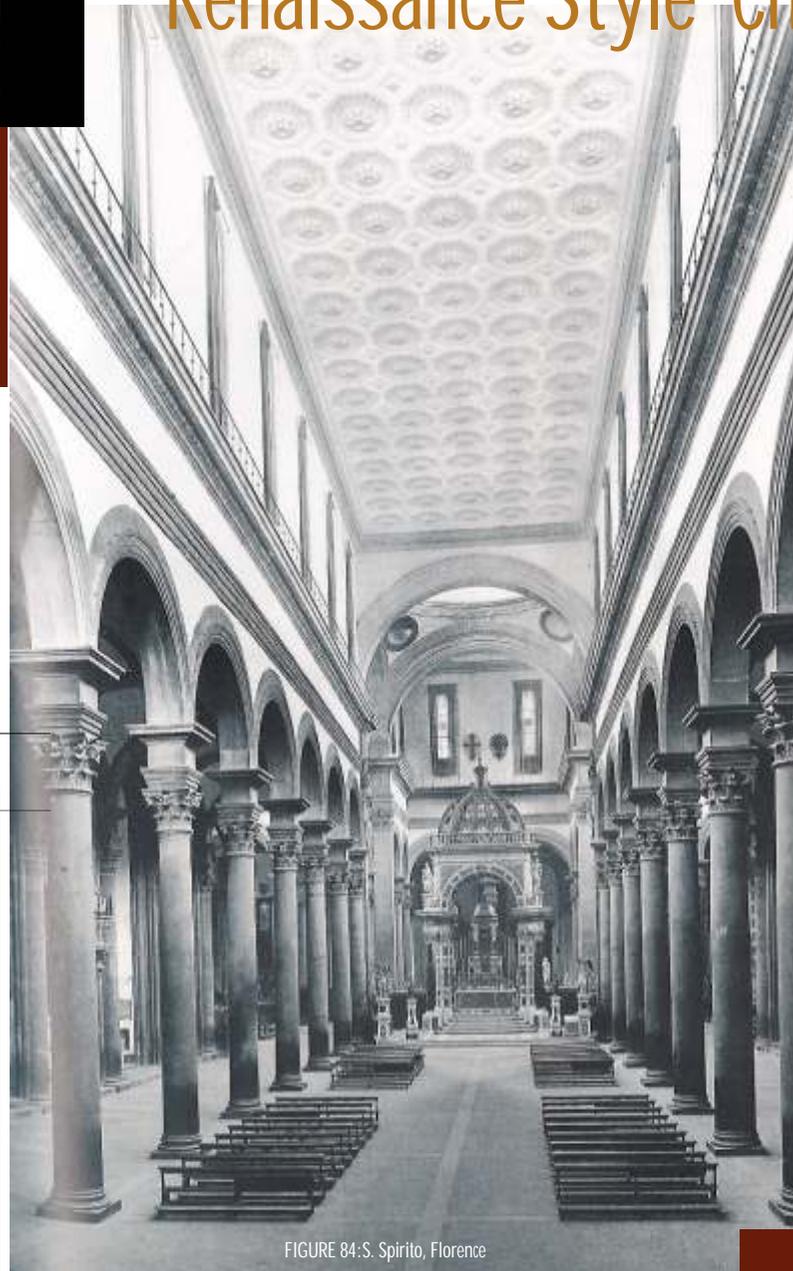


FIGURE 83: Paray-le-Monial, Burgundy. 1100 AD

Further comments:

As time progresses there is a tendency of the clergy to become more private and separated from the congregation. This result in bigger chapels for clergy use only and bigger choir spaces. Some churches are enlarged several times on the eastern side. The separation between clergy and members reaches its peak. This is then not a community Church, but a clerical Church. (Koorts. 1974)

Renaissance Style Church Architecture



Short description:

1420-1600

the position of the Church, both as a powerful political force and as an institution increasingly concerned with worldly affairs, came under close scrutiny. Abuses among the clergy in collecting worldly goods set the stage for the Reformation. As did the papal interest in winning victories on the battlefield rather than caring for human souls. Reformers rejected the central authority of the Church and the mediation of the priesthood. They held that by reading the Scriptures individuals could know and interpret the word of God for themselves. (Fleming 1995)

The Renaissance was a period of exploration in many new directions, the advancement of humanistic and scientific knowledge; the discovery of new worlds by navigating the globe; the continued growth of cities, with wealth in the hands of the merchant class and expanding national states; and an unparalleled outburst of productivity in the arts. (Fleming 1995)

How is this reflected in the architecture? We see new concepts, proportions, patterns and elements based on Greek and Roman styles i.e. Doric, Ionic, Tuscan and composite. Architecture is for the luxury and comfort of man. Churches are built not in honour of God but in honour of God and man. (Koorts. 1974)

Examples:

1. Florence Cathedral. 1296-1887
2. Brunelleschi's S. Spirito, Florence.

Characteristics:

The centralized Church is ideal for this era. Many Churches are built in the form of an octagon or Greek cross. Some buildings have an extending arm but the interior remains centralized. (Koorts. 1974)

The experience of the procession:

From the center of the Church the person can experience the full effect of the centralized plan. He stands in the focal point as observer; he is the master of the situation. The architecture reflects an undertone emphasizing the present instead of pointing to eternity. The influence of the Reformation is seen in the unity of the liturgical space and the nave. (Koorts. 1974)

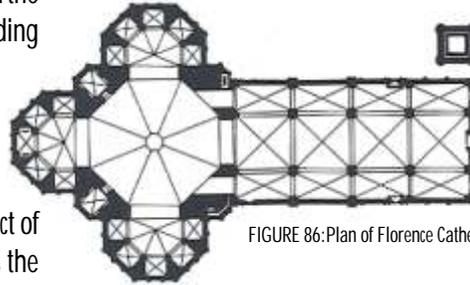


FIGURE 86: Plan of Florence Cathedral



FIGURE 85: S. Spirito, Florence

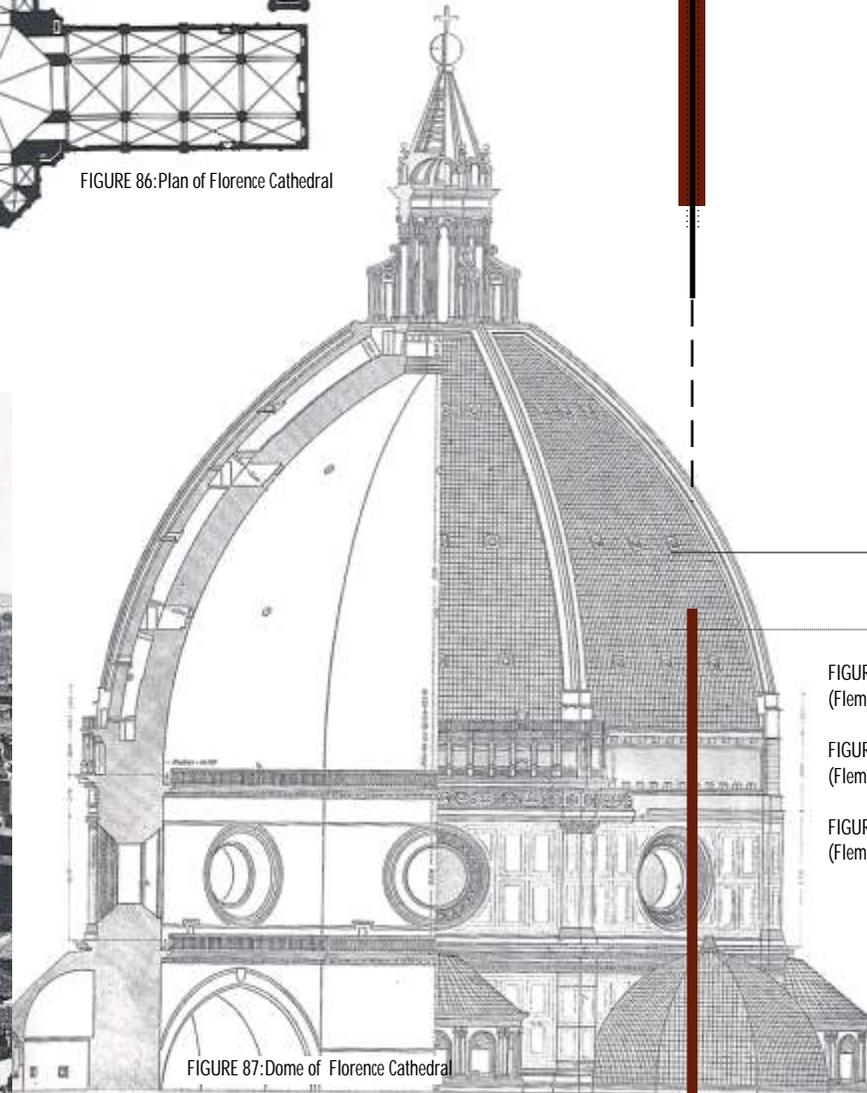


FIGURE 87: Dome of Florence Cathedral

FIGURE 85: S. Spirito, Florence
(Fleming 1995:256)FIGURE 86: Plan of Florence Cathedral
(Fleming 1995:256)FIGURE 87: Dome of Florence Cathedral
(Fleming 1995:256)

Gothic Church Architecture

Short description:

1150-1500

This architectural style is a prolongation of Romanesque Church architecture. Although the Gothic Churches reach an architectural culmination, there are elements in the liturgical space planning (also seen in the Roman Churches), unacceptable to the Protestant notion. The 13th century is known for the rise of the Pope. The clergy brings great fortune to the Church. The cities compete in raising magnificent structures. All of these contribute to the exalted Churches that appear. (Koorts. 1974)

Examples:

1. Abbey Church of St. Denis, Paris. 1140-1144
2. Chartres Cathedral. 1194-1260
3. Beauvais Cathedral. 1240
4. Reims. 1211

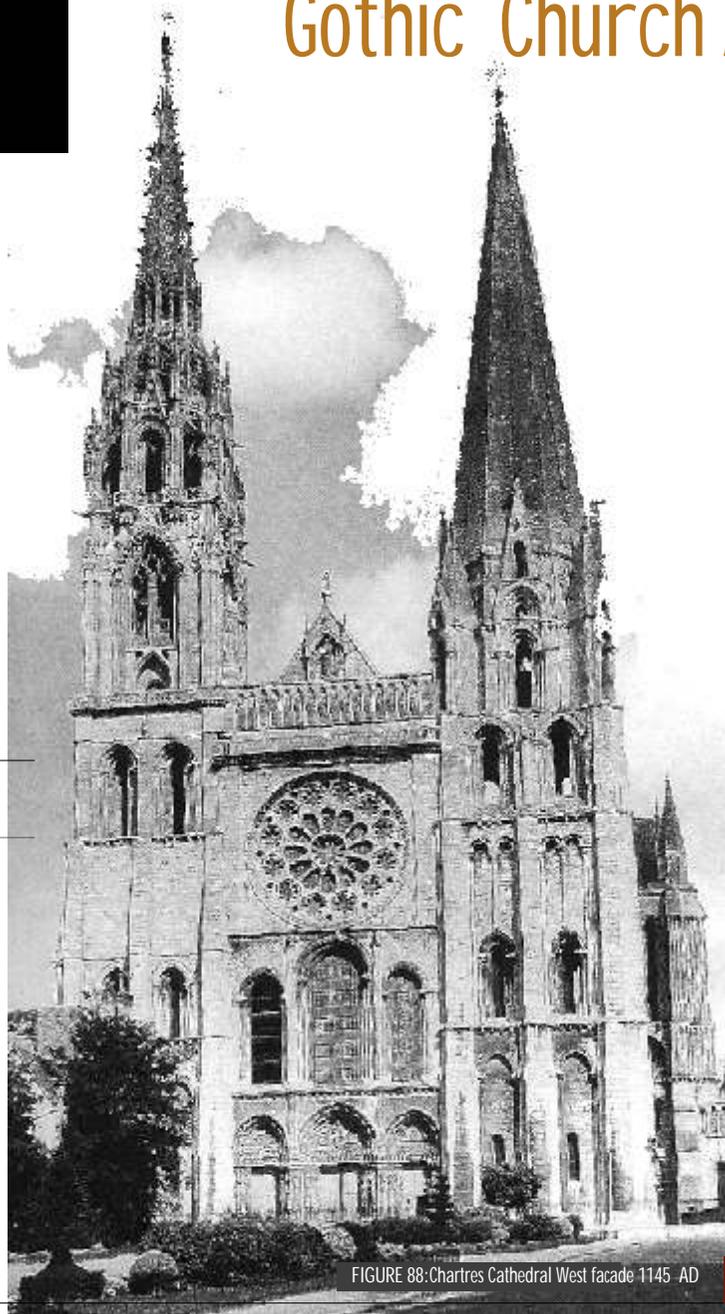


FIGURE 88: Chartres Cathedral West facade 1145 AD

FIGURE 89: Chartres Cathedral from South 1145 AD

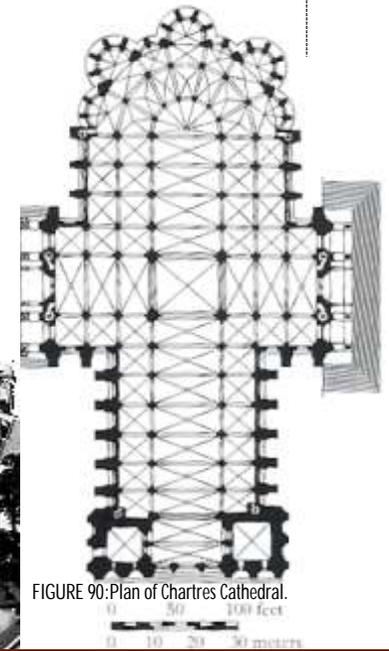


FIGURE 90: Plan of Chartres Cathedral.

FIGURE 88: Chartres Cathedral West facade 1145 AD (Fleming 1995: 203)

FIGURE 89: Chartres Cathedral from South 1145 AD (Fleming 1995: 201)

FIGURE 90: Plan of Chartres Cathedral (Fleming 1995: 203)

Characteristics:

The focus and procession still happen horizontally with an emphasis on the vertical. The Church space is divided into the nave and side aisles. There is still a mystical atmosphere when the light disappears into the darkness of the side aisles. (Koorts. 1974)

The Gothic style Churches have reached an excellent vertical height with its many vertical lines, planes and spaces reaching upwards like music. Beauvais Cathedral has a height of 48 meters, 16 storeys. The pointed arch facilitates these amazing heights. Although new technological development helped these impressive structures, it can not be ignored that this new style was influenced by the spiritual aspirations of the people. The Gothic church contains a mysterious ambience with the seeming infinite space and play of light and dark. The accent is on the vertical element and one's thoughts are directed to heaven. (Koorts. 1974)

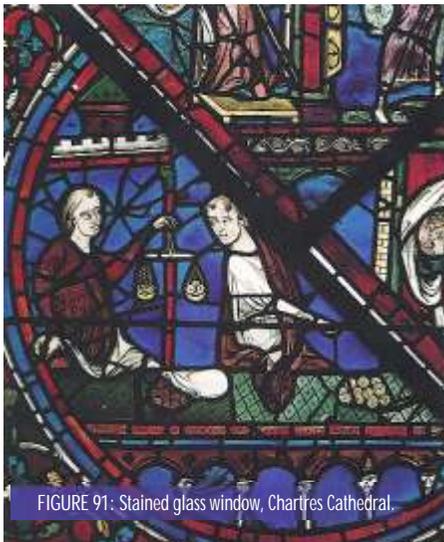


FIGURE 91: Stained glass window, Chartres Cathedral.

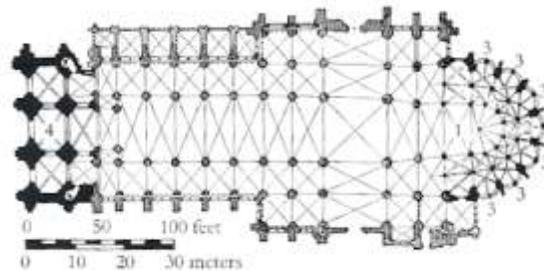


FIGURE 92: Plan of Abbey Church of St. Denis 1140 AD.



FIGURE 93: Reims Interior 1211 AD.

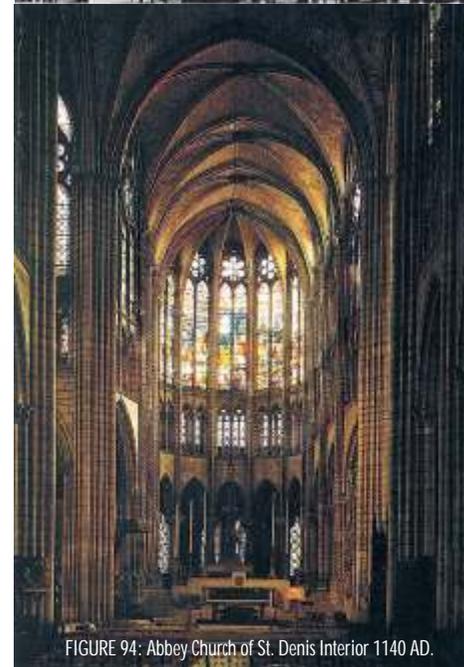


FIGURE 94: Abbey Church of St. Denis Interior 1140 AD.

FIGURE 91: Stained glass window, Chartres Cathedral. (Fleming 1995: 214)

FIGURE 92: Plan of Abbey Church of St. Denis 1140 AD. (Fleming 1995: 200)

FIGURE 93: Reims Interior 1211 AD.

FIGURE 94: Abbey Church of St. Denis 1140 AD. (Fleming 1995: 200)

Baroque Church Architecture

Short description:

1600-1750

the arts play a major role in religion, in statecraft, and in the enhancement of the good life. The Church rededicates itself to religious work. New orders are founded to carry on missionary work all over the world. The Baroque is the age of reason when minds and imaginations open up new worlds of scientific knowledge as well as artistic creativity. (Fleming, 1995)

Examples:

1. San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Rome. 1635-1667
2. Gesu, Rome. 1575-84
3. Vierzehnheiligen, Bavaria. 1743-72

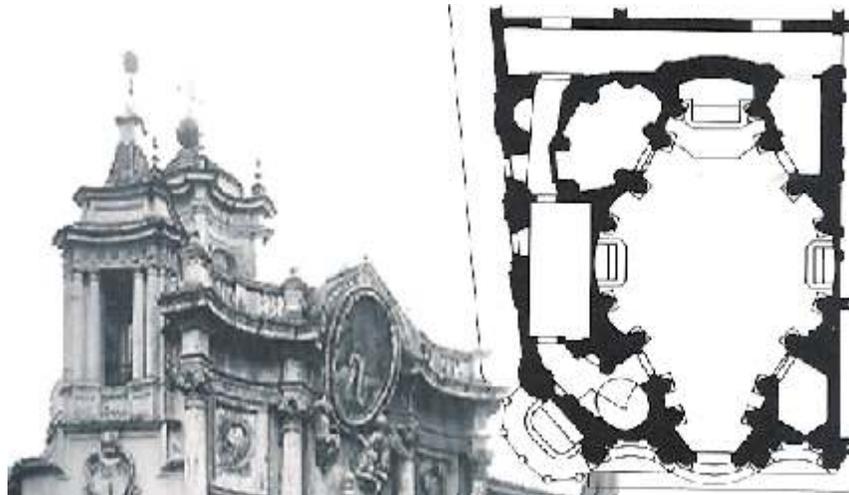


FIGURE 95: Plan of San Carlo, Rome. 1635



FIGURE 96: San Carlo, Rome. 1635

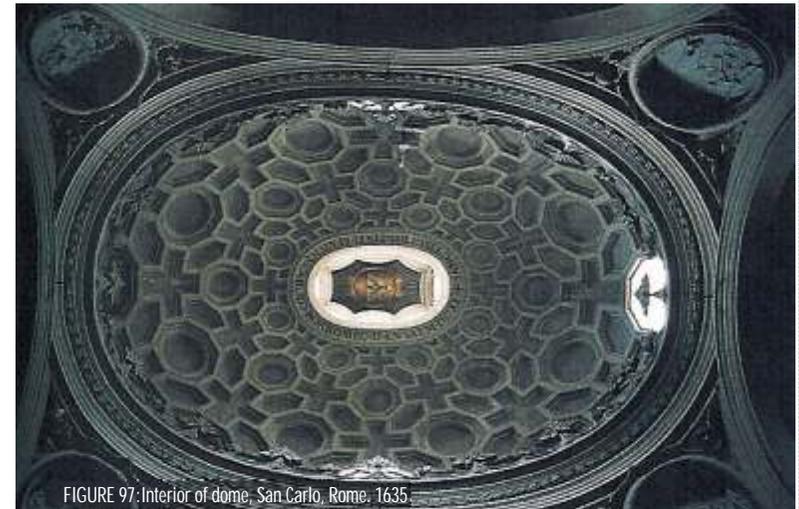


FIGURE 97: Interior of dome, San Carlo, Rome. 1635

Characteristics:

The Baroque Style is also based on historical building styles. Lines are curved and ornamentation applied extensively. The architecture speaks to the emotions through the senses. Art is used to dramatically overwhelm the person. Baroque Church architecture is a reaction of the Catholics against the Protestants. The architecture becomes sculptural and the interior is dynamic and rich in colours and textures. The painted ceilings create the illusion of the heavens opening up where heavenly beings and angels bring praises to God.

The plan form is not limited by any liturgical layout, and develops from the architect's vision of creating that three dimensional space. Sculptural elements take priority above function. Although the architecture is richly decorated and complex, it has definite geometric patterns. Together, everything harmonizes and merges in unity. (Koorts. 1974)



FIGURE 99:Vierzehnheiligen interior, Bavaria. 1743-72

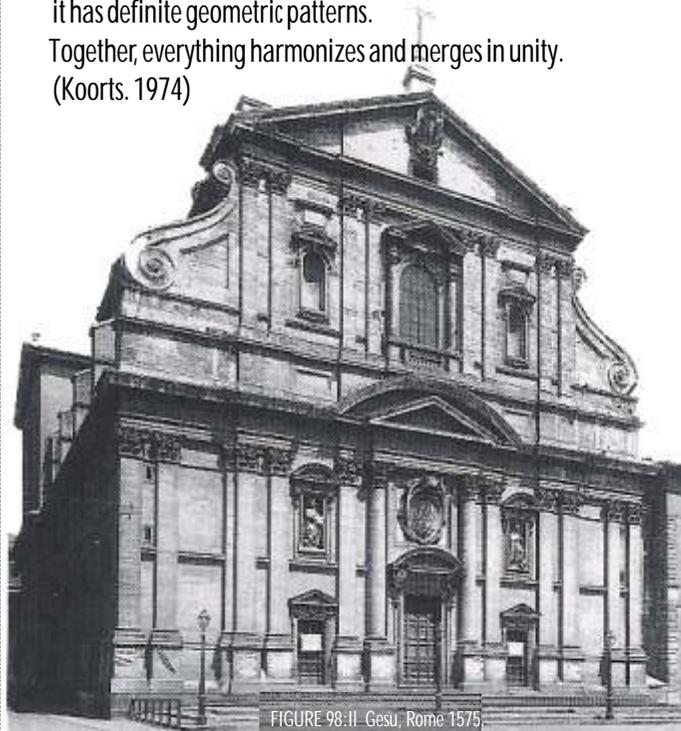


FIGURE 98:II. Gesu, Rome 1575



FIGURE 100:Interior Gesu

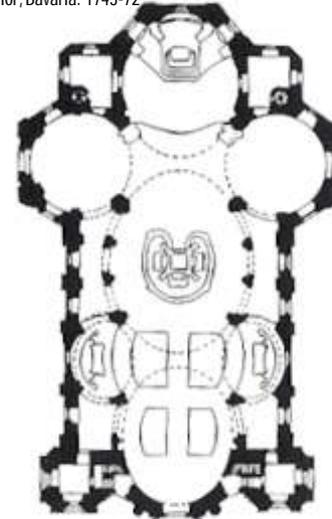


FIGURE 101:Plan Vierzehnheiligen

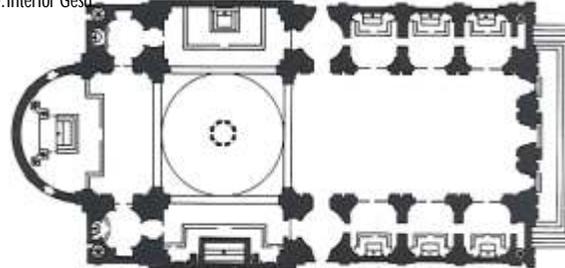


FIGURE 102:Plan Gesu.

FIGURE 98:II Gesu, Rome 1575. (Fleming 1995:380)

FIGURE 99: Vierzehnheiligen interior, Bavaria. 1743-72 (Sutton. 1999:169)

FIGURE 100: Interior Gesu. (Fleming 1995:380)

FIGURE 101: Plan Vierzehnheiligen. (Sutton. 1999:169)

FIGURE 102: Plan Gesu. (Fleming 1995:380)

A Contemporary view

My interview with Architect Karel Swanepoel turned out to be of great importance and enlightenment. Ten years ago he designed the church building currently used by Moreleta NG Congregation.

I asked him to tell me about his approach towards church design and current view concerning this topic. This is the content of what he said.

“When I, part of a team, was asked to design this new auditorium and accompanying facilities for Moreletapark I looked at what has been done and where church architecture is moving to. In the past great emphasis was placed on the traditional way of Protestant Church Design. There was a specific defined form with the tower on the outside, and the congregational and spiritual leader spaces on the interior. The spiritual leader received word from God and communicated that message to the congregation during Sunday services. The Pastor, Elder or Deacon is raised above the rest of the congregation creating a visual separation. Refer to Figure 103: Model A. The spiritual leader is much more important than the individuals. The use of natural materials and symbolism in materials and architectural elements are crucial. Apart from the sometimes-successful aesthetics of these church buildings, the acoustics inside are not acceptable due to its layout and form. This type of church I call a 'Sunday-church'.

People realized that this is not the ideal situation and that the Spiritual Leader is not more important than the individual forming part of the congregation. Therefore the design changed to a stage where many people can take part in the preaching of the Gospel in the form of speech, music and dancing. But still the congregational space is impersonal; individuals can still feel lost and unimportant in the masses. There is still a problem with acoustics and proper sight lines to the stage. This is an improvement since individuals from the congregation can also have word from God and share with the rest of the Church.

Refer to Figure 104: Model B.

A paradigm shift came when Christians realized that the emphasis should no longer be on the actual building, but what happens on the inside. The well being of the congregation is much more important than the aesthetic appeal of the building. The traditional form made way for a modern, commercialized type Church building. This mind set creates architecture that is human-friendly and will encourage non-Christians to explore the possibilities inside. The traditional type of Church architecture could create an image of resistance to non-Christians. The form that came as a result of this breakthrough in church design is illustrated in Figure 105: Model C.

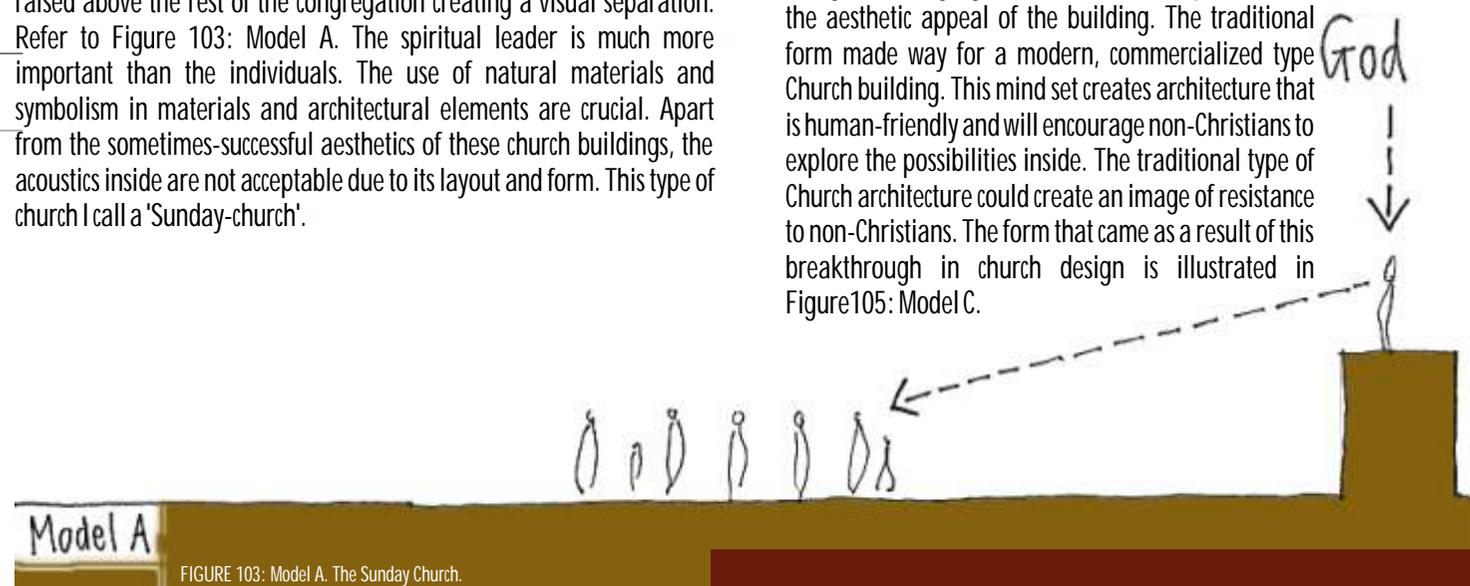


FIGURE 103: Model A. The Sunday Church.

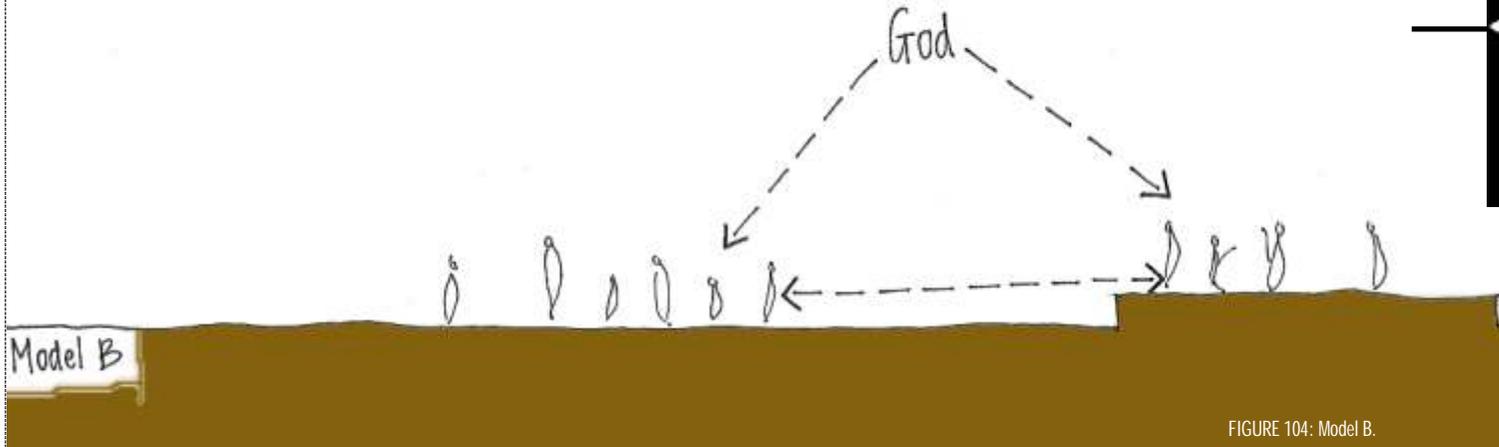


FIGURE 104: Model B.

The church consists of a stage for multiple uses and many people participating and a stepped congregational space. This design is a huge improvement in terms of acoustics and sight. It also creates the feeling for the individual that he/she is important and in contact with the stage. This layout also complements what the Bible says about Christianity and is then more sensitive to Biblical teaching than the old traditional form. Materials do not necessarily have to be natural. God is the giver of creativity and intelligence and therefore responsible for the advancing technologies. Symbolism is less important than the gathering of believers. It has taken some time for people to adjust to this new way of thinking.

Today, referring to Moreleta NG church, the people are wanting to move beyond this point. They are ready to go back to symbolism and have the desire to have God and His glory displayed in the Church architecture. This does not mean to recede back to the problems of traditional design, but to reinstate the encounter with God. The architecture should work inside out. The essence of the faith and the congregation should determine the design. There is a desire to be reminded of Biblical truths and principles through symbolism. People want to experience God." (Swanepoel, 2003)

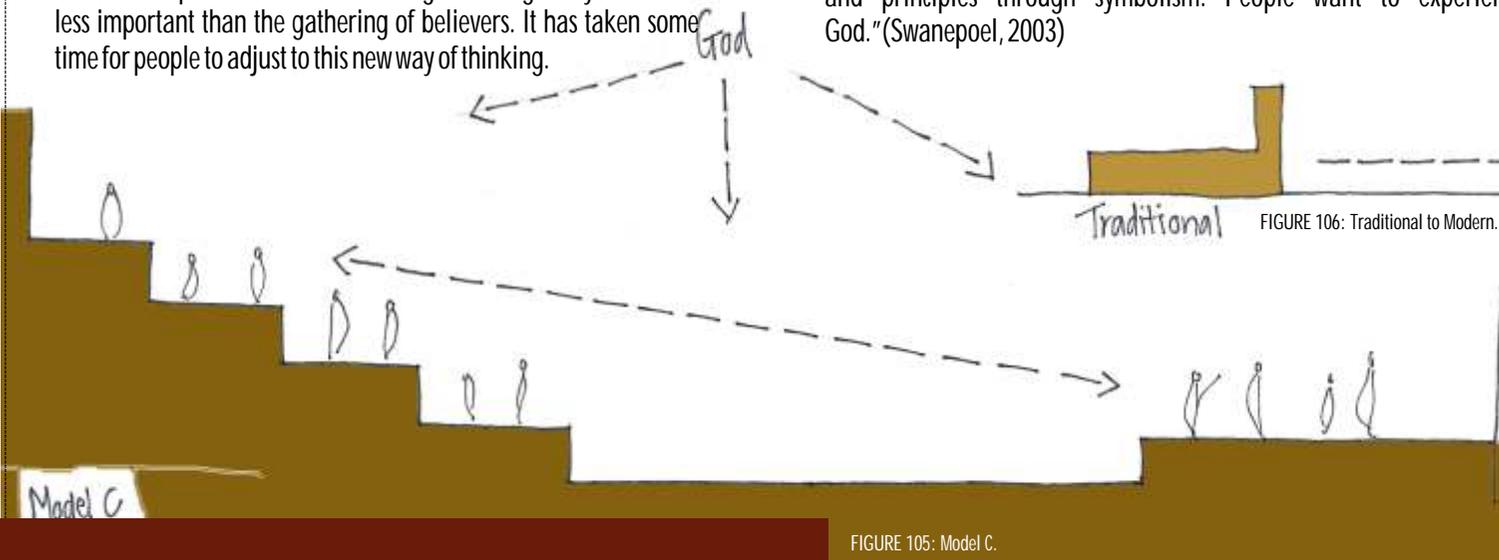


FIGURE 105: Model C.

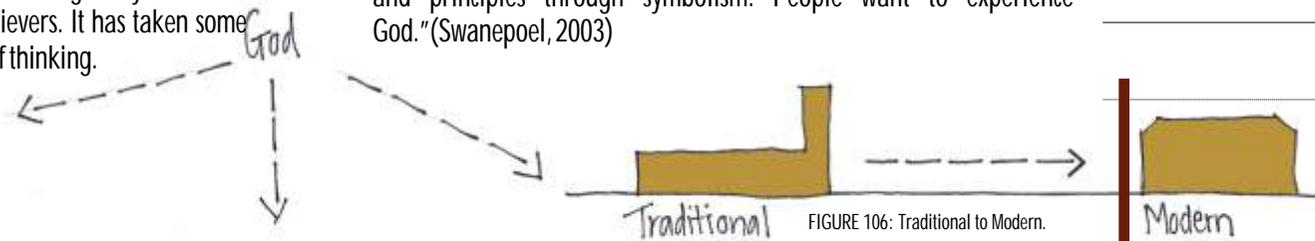


FIGURE 106: Traditional to Modern.

FIGURE 104: Model B. (Swanepoel, 2003)

FIGURE 105: Model C. (Swanepoel, 2003)

FIGURE 106: Traditional to Modern. (Swanepoel, 2003)