and finishing those abandoned centuries earlier. *Great Spires* ends with a discussion of modern constructions, from the Eiffel Tower to the World Trade Center. Here the generalization of the type works better, as Bork argues that these modern spires continue to signal communal identity as well as social and commercial prominence.

Because the study ranges from France, Germany, and the Low Countries to Spain and Italy, with brief discussions of England, we can chart the engagement between workshops and patrons in a wider geographical context. This geographical scope reflects the true nature of the evolution of Late Gothic in general, avoiding the national focus that earlier studies favored. Although spires may have originated in the French Romanesque and were first seen in Gothic France, German architects and patrons were the first to fully exploit the possibilities of large, openwork construction. These experiments were met with considerable enthusiasm by builders throughout Europe. Bork takes us through this history in a series of case studies that clearly demonstrate the conceptual and artistic strategies of the architects, the desires of the patrons, and the needs of a changing public.

The heart of the book analyzes spire construction in the Holy Roman Empire, attending to the architectural, economic, and political conditions that formed them. While all the buildings discussed in this section—from the cathedrals of Prague and Strasbourg to smaller churches like those at Esslingen—will be known to scholars of the period, Bork presents them in a new light. Briefly summarizing construction histories, he gives necessary context without repetition. For the nonspecialist or student, this rehearsal is a crucial introduction to well-known works and problems of the period. Projects are grouped by type and region. Bork pairs "princely projects" with those supported by the burghers of the empire, illuminating the varying successes of each model. At Prague, Peter Parler was engaged by Charles IV to create an imperial emblem in a restive part of his realm. Parler's asymmetrical tower claimed the burial site of St. Wenceslas for the Empire much as Norman cathedrals claimed those of English saints after the Conquest. Bork reevaluates Parler's artistic evolution within the complicated requirements of the site, providing a clearer picture of Parler's artistic maturation as well as the spot Prague occupied between French Rayonnant and the projects that followed, like that at Freiburg Minster. With typical insight, Bork reads the abandoned south tower not simply as a victim of the political chaos of the period, but of the cathedral's ideological failure to become a civic monument.

Following a careful consideration of a similarly imperial project by Rudolph IV at St. Stephen's in Vienna, Bork turns to burgher initiatives at Ulm, Strasbourg, and Esslingen, with shorter sections on Constance Cathedral, Bern Minster, and others. In these projects, well-informed members of the fabrics, backed by wealthy citizens, succeeded in building exceptional structures. While others, most notably Henry Kraus, have detailed the sociological and economic dimensions of Strasbourg's cathedral construction, Bork demonstrates how those conditions came to bear on the most elaborate parts of the project. In this case, the failure to complete a two-towered façade is not read as a defeat, but as further evidence of the burghers' esteem. Concern about cracks in the façade may have given pause. Extraordinary expense had been incurred, and one tower suited the needs of the citizenry as well as two. This period of exuberant experimentation was ended by the loss of prestige of the free cities, the chaos of the Reformation, and the growing preference for Italianate forms.

The central section ends with the diffusion of the spire form in Western Europe and continues to tease out the multifaceted dialogues their presence represented. In the Lowlands, secular powers appropriated the spire for market and city halls, in addition to church tower terminations and belfries. In France, the postwar revival of the Flamboyant, prompted by and reflective of national and urban renewal, elicited support for church reconstruction at all levels. This resulted in projects as diverse as the north spire of Chartres, the "Tour de Beurre" at Rouen, and the spire of the parish church at Caudebec-en-Caux. Bork also follows the spire's use in England, Italy, and Spain, but these countries found less sustained enthusiasm for the form.

Based on the author's dissertation, the book contains some repetition of phrasing and heavy documentation that a more streamlined version might have avoided. But in its ambitious scope, deft handling of the technical, economic, artistic, and social issues, *Great Spires* constitutes an important contribution to the field and a model for integrative and synthetic scholarship.

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**Note**

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**Richard Kieckhefer**

**Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley**


**R. Kevin Sealsoltz**

**A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art**


Modern religious architecture presents distinctive challenges to the historian. One major methodological problem stems from a historiographical poverty: religious buildings barely appear in histories of modern architecture, and when they do, their modernity is typically examined on grounds extrinsic to religious pur-
poses. At least since Paul Frankl's inclusion of "purposive intent" among the historian's objects of concern, scholars have sought to study buildings in light of an ever-expanding notion of their context. The history and theory of religious architecture has yet to reap the full benefit of this interdisciplinary framework. Furthermore, the question of how a given liturgical practice or theological idea is manifest in or inflects the meaning of a building is especially problematic. The relation is subtle and complicated; texts are insufficient guides; popular practices are diffuse and difficult to localize; interpretation is prone to generalization and caricature. These are standard dangers of interdisciplinary research. However, they are exacerbated for modern religious architecture because theology and liturgy have internal histories of struggle with modern identity, which remain subject to much debate within their respective fields. Thus, the challenges of interdisciplinary research are put into sharp relief in the case of modern religious architecture.

Two recent books that address the relation between architecture and Western Christianity help to illustrate the limits and opportunities of interdisciplinary research in this area. Each is directed toward the modern world, but the approaches of a historian and a liturgist highlight different aspects of similar subject matter. Richard Kieckhefer's *Theology in Stone: Church Architecture from Byzantium to Berkeley* is a superb and detailed reflection on the problem of understanding churches liturgically and theologically. It is part hermeneutic proposal, part historical analysis, and the "theory" and "history" are nicely interwoven throughout the text. Kieckhefer seeks "to clarify people's perceptions by articulating them, by bringing them to the level of conception" (4). Therefore, he asks two basic questions about how Christians relate to a church: "How is it used?" and "What sort of reaction is it meant to elicit?" (10) Each question gives rise to two factors that together set up the first half of the book: "Spatial Dynamics," "Centering Focus," "Aesthetic Impact," and "Symbolic Resonance." The second half comprises three extended case studies: late medieval Beverley, England; late nineteenth-century Chicago; and the work of German architect Rudolf Schwarz. Kieckhefer closes the book with a thorough consideration of continuing issues in church architecture. Throughout, he uses a threefold designation of types of churches—"classic sacramental," "classic evangelical," and "modern communal"—as basic variations on how the four factors typically behave (11–13). He acknowledges that neither the four factors nor the three types are exhaustive; they are heuristic tools for following obvious points of departure.

Kieckhefer develops distinct yet historically nuanced frameworks by investigating each interpretive factor in light of the three church types, illustrated by case studies and producing occasional lists of guiding principles. Thus, "spatial dynamics" concerns not some general spatial feeling but the actual motion through space in the liturgy. The main issue in classic sacramental churches is understanding the principles of kinetic dynamism informing processional space. Through disparate case studies, the author articulates the manifold ways longitudinal space evokes movement. He demonstrates how experiential barriers enable alienating distance between clergy and people, but not always: reciprocal movement and other subtle variations abound. Similarly, he analyzes the auditorium space of classic evangelical churches—from which he derives principles of verbal dynamism—and the fluid space of modern communal churches, outlining how it supports ideas of social dynamism. For each set of principles he displays a range of viable readings, and he also notes potential abuses.

One of Kieckhefer's key findings is that classic sacramental churches are focused on a "central paradox: an unbloodyd altar." These churches present an aesthetic of an intersecting transcendence and immanence, and are richest in Christian symbolic resonance. Classic evangelical churches, on the other hand, are centered on the pulpit and pro-
innovation; it demonstrates the instability of any judgment. This book is a model of reasoned argument, fruitful analysis, and careful reflection that should prompt much further research.2

In _A Sense of the Sacred: Theological Foundations of Christian Architecture and Art_, R. Kevin Seasoltz aims at a better understanding of how art and architecture may inform Christian theology and liturgy. Seeking to ground his study in history, he begins by outlining a range of distinct cultures, anthropologically described, as a key to understanding cultural shifts and, especially, how post-Enlightenment shifts presented new problems. The first two chapters include these reflections and a summary of how the churches responded to such shifts. The middle part of the book is a historical survey of Christian sacred architecture and art from antiquity through the nineteenth century. Seasoltz devotes the final third of the book to the twentieth century, addressing liturgical reforms and other developments in art and architecture up to the present. He has an elevated view of the arts as sacramental embodiments of theology, suggesting that they be interpreted “as revelatory texts themselves” (63).

If Kieckhefer’s approach is more purely that of a historian, Seasoltz’s is conditioned by his work as a Roman Catholic Benedictine liturgical scholar. This background gives the book certain welcome points of emphasis, such as the separate attention given to monastic art and architecture, in both the historical survey and the modern context. Seasoltz also includes careful consideration of liturgy’s dramatic, literary, and musical aspects, including summary theoretical frameworks for each. The long tradition of Christian mysticism is likewise not ignored. Furthermore, the author rightly notes that the biblical clues regarding land and place demonstrate that the relation between theology and architecture has been problematic from the beginning. Finally, he has a solid grasp of the fairly broad scope of the modern liturgical reform movements and highlights their relation not only to history (pointing out, for instance, that the major scholars tended to be historians) but also to Roman Catholic theological modernism and other early engagements with modernity. Thus, the book is a relatively thick treatment of art and architecture from the standpoint of liturgical theology and practice.

While the aspects mentioned above are worth careful attention and warrant inclusion in ongoing research, Seasoltz’s book is uneven overall. A major weakness is a superficial treatment of the architectural thread throughout, aggravated by a lack of concrete discussion of buildings and an overly simple notion of how architecture relates to theology and liturgy. Hence, there is a questionable reliance on style to characterize buildings and some glaring lacunae concerning sources.3 The result is that with the twentieth-century examples, modernism is reductively presented and discussions of buildings often merge description, criticism, and analysis. Nevertheless, while the methodology is inadequate to the interdisciplinary and perhaps overly broad subject matter, Seasoltz has written much here that is worthwhile in the service of an important project.

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2. A similarly fertile notion of orthodoxy is found in T. J. Gorrin, _A Theology of the Built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption_ (Cambridge, England, and New York, 2002). While not addressing churches as such, this book should be required reading for any scholar working on the relationship between religion and architecture in a Christian context.