Freedom and the Cage contributes enormously to the literature on hospital architecture produced in the past twenty-five years, complementing excellent work by scholars such as Thomas Markus, Christine Stevenson, Jeremy Taylor, and Carla Yanni, with whom Topp explicitly engages in her book. Most obviously, Topp covers a geographical area and a range of primary sources not previously covered by English-speaking scholars. Like Markus’s Buildings and Power (1993), Topp’s book tackles the relationship between power and the plan. Like Stevenson’s Medicine and Magnificence (2000), it shows that hospital design was often counterintuitive: if fresh air was key to healing, as miasmatists believed, why did it make sense to contain the sick in an inward-turning building? As Taylor does in his work on the pavilion-plan hospital typology, The Architect and the Pavilion Hospital (1997), Topp posits hospitals “in conversation,” viewing each of the seven institutions she discusses as a different position on the challenge of designing a cage that appears to support free movement.1 “I have seen these plans not as mute technical diagrams to be deciphered by the architectural historian but rather as positions in a debate,” she says (157). Carla Yanni’s 2007 book The Architecture of Madness, on American asylums, shares with Freedom and the Cage a deep understanding of how psychiatry and architecture were entwined in this period.1

Unmentioned by Topp but significant in this literature is Jeanne Kisacky’s Rise of the Modern Hospital, also published in 2017, making this a banner year for the architectural history of hospitals.4

Additionally, Freedom and the Cage serves as an excellent model for research on institutions beyond hospitals, such as schools, prisons, convents, summer camps, day-care centers, dormitories, long-term residential care facilities, and any other typologies that comprise multiple buildings and complex, mixed functions designed to keep people in. The book’s lessons come from broad and clear arguments about institutional design: that building design is often a critique of past buildings, propelling the evolution of the building type; that specialized buildings often work in conversation with each other, almost as if they were participating in an architectural debate; that architecture holds tremendous power in setting the “impression” of how a place works, even from the curb or from the air; and, perhaps most important, that institutional architecture controls its users but not its historians.

ANNMARIE ADAMS
McGill University

Notes

Vincent L. Michael
The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe

 Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2013, 248 pp., 11 color and 99 b/w illus. $60 (cloth), ISBN 9780252023753

Jane King Hession and Tim Quigley
John H. Howe, Architect: From Taliesin Apprentice to Master of Organic Design

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 232 pp., 157 color and 55 b/w illus. $49.95 (cloth), ISBN 9780816683017

In a bitter diatribe published in the May 1914 issue of Architectural Record, Frank Lloyd Wright harshly criticized former employees for plagiarizing his architecture. While the accusation may have been justified in the cases of some of Wright’s draftsmen, Barry Byrne and, later, John Howe stepped out of the master’s shadow and successfully developed their own personal interpretations of organic architecture. Byrne worked in the Oak Park studio during the early days of Wright’s independent practice. Howe, years later, became the “pencil in Wright’s hand” at Taliesin. The positions of these two men in the story of midcentury modern architecture have remained largely overlooked until now.

While a generation separated Byrne and Howe, numerous parallels connect them. Both came from relatively poor families in the Chicago area and developed their interest in architecture as young boys, spending free time visiting modern buildings. Both talked their way into Wright’s office as teenagers without any formal training and then quietly learned the trade by listening and observing, eventually rising to become central members of the studio staff. Both were industrious and diligent workers, “lacking the architectural ego” of their employer, as Vincent L. Michael observes of Byrne in The Architecture of Barry Byrne (2). And both went on to have successful independent careers, producing their own aesthetically accomplished, functional architecture. Two recent monographs provide new insights into the careers of these designers. Both books are valuable resources for anyone interested in gaining a deeper understanding of midcentury modern architecture and, more specifically, the work of these former Wright employees.

Francis Xavier Ignatius Loyola Walter Barry Byrne (1883–1967) came to Wright’s Oak Park studio with no previous training in architecture or construction. Having experienced the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition as a child, Byrne later recalled, he would have been “desperately unhappy” had he not become an architect.1 Impressed by the large display of Wright’s work exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1902 as part of the annual show presented by the Chicago Architectural Club, Byrne sought employment with the architect. Wright hired him as an office boy, and after several years of hands-on training, the bright young apprentice became a full-fledged member of the practice, spending much of his time producing working drawings and supervising construction. While Michael’s book The Architecture of Barry Byrne: Taking the Prairie School to Europe touches on Byrne’s time with Wright, most of the monograph addresses his later, independent career. Michael focuses mainly on Byrne’s innovative, ecclesiastical building designs and his writings on modernism and developments in progressive Catholic church architecture.
during the first half of the twentieth century. As Byrne’s grandson-in-law, Michael had unprecedented access to family stories, photographs, and various documents that allowed him to build on the work of previous Byrne scholars. The book also benefits from photographs taken by Byrne’s granddaughter, Felicity Rich. These include the stunning color plate of Christ the King Church in Cork, Ireland, that appears on the book’s jacket cover.3

As Michael informs the reader, Byrne “believed in modernism” and throughout his career remained “dedicated to the principles of ‘organic’ architecture espoused by Wright and Louis Sullivan” (2). Like many of his progressive European counterparts, Byrne believed a major component of modernism was the rejection of past styles, and unlike many others who had worked in Wright’s Oak Park studio, he avoided the popular historical forms of the 1920s and 1930s. At the same time, he did not eschew all ornament, siding in debates with those who believed that modernism was a process and not something distinguishable solely by formal characteristics. The expressionist nature of much of his architecture shows close ties to the work of progressives in Chicago and those in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. In addition to a discussion of Byrne’s 1924 travels in Europe with artist Alfonso Iannelli. Through letters Byrne wrote during that time, Byrne met and found acceptance as the “first overtly modern church to be built in Ireland” (95). These included seating accommodations, placement of the high altar in a dominant position close to the congregation, acoustics, and economy of construction.

The Architecture of Barry Byrne begins with a brief discussion of the architect’s early life and career, including his role in the design and realization of Wright’s Unity Temple, which gave him a strong foundation for creating innovative church designs. In addition to a discussion of Byrne’s time at the Oak Park studio, Michael explores his early partnership with former studio colleague Andrew Willatzen in Seattle, his time with Wright’s sons John and Lloyd, his exposure to the work of Irving Gill in Los Angeles, and his working relationship with Walter Burley Griffin back in Chicago. Griffin, in particular, played a significant role in Byrne’s architectural education during his days in the Oak Park studio and shortly afterward.

In the early 1920s, Byrne began designing buildings for Catholic institutions, including the all-girls Immaculata High School and Saint Thomas the Apostle Church, both in Chicago. He strove for a sense of clarity and openness in his designs, particularly in plan. Michael discusses how Byrne learned from his work on Unity Temple and incorporated that building’s emphasis on unity into the designs of his Catholic churches. Byrne dismissed the traditional basilica plan, with its columnar divisions and sense of hierarchy, and attempted to integrate Catholic clergy and parishioners within one unifying space by pulling the altar forward into the auditorium—an innovation that anticipated reforms adopted at the Second Vatican Council (1962–65) by forty years. Through his architecture and his later writings, Byrne played a key role in the modern liturgical reform movement.

One noteworthy section of Michael’s book is his discussion of Byrne’s 1924 travels in Europe with artist Alfonso Iannelli. Through letters Byrne wrote during that trip to Chicago artist Annette Cremin, whom he was then courting and later married, Michael retraces Byrne’s footsteps to sites of architectural significance in France, Germany, and the Netherlands. In doing so, he sheds new light on the architect’s important role as a link between progressive designers in Chicago and those in Europe. Byrne’s letters reveal that he was completely taken by the “emotional clarity” of the medieval churches he visited, particularly Chartres Cathedral, whose stained-glass windows he called “dreams of heaven” (72–73). He found kinship in the expressive work of the Amsterdam School and the designs of Mendelsohn and Hans Poelzig in Germany, and he was impressed by the work he witnessed at the Bauhaus in Weimar, then undergoing a transformation from its expressionist roots to the rationalism of New Objectivity. Throughout his travels, Byrne met and found acceptance as a peer among some of the most prominent avant-garde designers in Europe, including J. J. P. Oud, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, and Mendelsohn. The impact of the trip on Byrne is revealed in the increased presence of expressionistic masses and volumes in his work, including in the broad and undecorated expanses of wall in his design for the Church of Christ the King in Tulsa, Oklahoma (1926), and in the designs of his later, more streamlined churches for Kansas City, Missouri, and St. Paul, Minnesota, with their smooth walls and symbolic fish-shaped plans.

In 1927 Byrne received his most significant commission and his only European project: the reinforced concrete Christ the King Church in Cork, Ireland. Lewis Mumford had discussed Byrne’s ecclesiastical work earlier that year in an essay for Commonweal magazine titled “A Modern Catholic Architect.” The piece may have caught the eye of Bishop Daniel Cohalan, who commissioned Byrne soon after the article’s publication. In a letter to the bishop, Byrne laid out the practical considerations that informed the design of what became recognized as the “first overtly modern church to be built in Ireland” (95). These included seating accommodations, placement of the high altar in a dominant position close to the congregation, acoustics, and economy of construction.

While the basic concept of the plan recalled his earlier ecclesiastical designs (a unified open space with a forward-projecting communion rail and altar), Byrne increased in scale the serrated edges of his previous brick churches, transforming the zigzagging forms into dramatic setbacks in both plan and elevation. These changes reflected new forms in American skyscraper design and a melding of Byrne’s personal interpretation of expressionism with the Jazz Age energy reflected in contemporary art deco designs. On the front of the church, the flat planes of the façade dramatically step back and down from a soaring bell tower. An abstract bas-relief of Christ with outstretched arms, created by artist John Storrs, welcomes parishioners into the central entrance portal beneath it.

Byrne considered Christ the King his best building, viewing it as “practical

BOOKS 99
functionalism imaginatively treated” (95). The church received positive notice in contemporary publications, including American Architect, but its influence on modern architecture (beyond other religious designs) was minimized, as Michael observes, by a number of factors, including the onset of the Great Depression. While Byrne’s buildings revolutionized the design of modern churches in ways that his progressive European contemporaries’ architecture did not, particularly in plan and in the use of natural light, his religious work did not receive the attention it deserved from architecture critics. Ironically, Byrne’s ecclesiastical buildings looked too much like churches and not enough like machines or factories to fit the idiom of modernism codified by the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne and promoted by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their Modern and promoted by Henry-Russell.

...attention it deserved from architecture critics. Great Depression. While Byrne’s buildings revolutionized the design of modern churches in ways that his progressive European contemporaries’ architecture did not, particularly in plan and in the use of natural light, his religious work did not receive the attention it deserved from architecture critics. Ironically, Byrne’s ecclesiastical buildings looked too much like churches and not enough like machines or factories to fit the idiom of modernism codified by the Congrès Internationaux d’Architecture Moderne and promoted by Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their influential 1932 exhibition at New York’s Museum of Modern Art. As Michael observes, for Byrne, beauty was not simply structure, and function was not simply space defined by need.

The Depression had a severe impact on Byrne’s practice. With few commissions coming in, he moved to New York City in December 1932. He supplemented his income by working as a building inspector and supervisor for a government agency and by writing articles that appeared in both religious and design publications; these included a regular column on the arts in the Catholic magazine America and occasional pieces for Liturgical Arts and Commonweal. Byrne had no qualms about penning his opinions on the current state of modern architecture, and in doing so he helped to shape the discourse on the topic. Near the end of his life he reflected on his architectural roots and early relationship with Wright in several articles. One, a detailed discussion of the design process in Wright’s office and, more specifically, Howe’s role as the chief assistant. This process, according to Howe, often began early in the morning with a sketch from Wright, who then left the young architect to flesh out the design while he headed out for a walk or horseback ride. Upon Wright’s return, the two men would go over Howe’s drawings before further work ensued. Once the design met Wright’s approval, Howe would painstakingly lay out a three-point perspective that served as “the armature, or underlay” for the final drawings, which he or another apprentice would complete using color pencils (34). Details, including landscaping, clouds, automobiles, and people (Howe particularly hated drawing people and cars), would be incorporated, and shading was added to simulate the impact of daylight, using stippling or a hatching technique. Finally, the drawings received lettering. Wright then reviewed the renderings, sometimes adding vegetation and other landscape features. While his name did not appear on any of the drawings that came out of Taliesin, Howe deserves significant credit for many of the fine, frequently published presentation drawings of Wright’s later work.

One of Howe’s first steps out of Wright’s shadow came during World War II. As Hession and Quigley discuss, the war had a major impact on Wright’s office and on those who worked within it. In March 1941, twenty-six members of the Taliesin Fellowship signed a petition expressing their intent to become conscientious objectors to the compulsory military draft, arguing that their architecture was their service to America. The request for a collective exemption was denied by the draft board, which viewed the petition as subversive. As a result of his refusal to go to war, Howe—along with Taliesin fellows Allen Lape “Davy” Davison and Marcus Weston—was tried, convicted, and sent to the Federal Correctional Institution in Sandstone, Minnesota. Away from Wright, Howe used his time in prison to develop his own architectural ideas and design forms. His paper architecture included a summer house for a fellow inmate and his “Big Project,” a large-scale mixed-use complex designed with the automobile in mind.

The second half of John H. Howe, Architect provides an overview of the architect’s independent work, which began in 1967 and consisted primarily of residential designs. Howe had continued working at Taliesin even after Wright’s death in 1959, until 1964, when Wright’s widow, Olga-vanna Wright, made conditions there unbearable for him. He then spent several years in San Francisco, in the office of former Taliesin apprentice Aaron Green, before moving to Minnesota and opening his own firm. The output of his successful office included approximately 120 projects completed over the course of twenty-five years. More than Byrne’s work, Howe’s mature architecture recalled that of Wright, particularly in its use of materials and relationship to site. As Hession and Quigley note, Howe was clearly conscious that the organic principles he absorbed during his time at Taliesin permeated his independent work, but he repeatedly stated that he had no intent to merely imitate his mentor’s style. He informed architecture students at Catholic University that “true followers search for new expressions, realizing that the solution for any problem must come from within the problem itself” (150).

Like Wright, Howe designed using an inside-out process, beginning with the
plan. He took to heart his mentor’s view that a building should “take inspiration from and be in harmony with the land on which it stands” (2). He started each of his designs with an underlay of a topographical map of the site and then identified the cardinal directions and locations of trees before selecting a geometric module that could generate the best plan for the conditions given, which often included hilly, lakeside, wooded landscapes and harsh winters. Howe favored using a triangular module, as it made possible the projection of rooms out into the landscape, as well as dramatically sloping roofs and flowing interiors. Even more than Wright, he developed complex interwoven spaces in his designs that took full advantage of outward views. The results were often strikingly situated buildings of wood, brick, stone, and stucco, such as Sankaku, Howe's own home built south of the Twin Cities along the shores of Horse Shoe Lake. While some of Wright’s former employees and apprentices did go on to design inferior copies of his architecture after they left his office, Howe, like Byrne decades earlier, embraced the lessons of organic architecture and incorporated them into his own midcentury designs.

While John H. Howe, Architect includes dozens of illustrations of the architect's renderings and built designs, the book's color photographs, although of high quality, do not do the work justice. Like Wright before him, Howe created architecture that emphasized space and connections to the landscape, design elements that do not easily lend themselves to the two-dimensional limitations of photographs. The book’s authors admit that, although “tranquil they may be, Howe's houses are complex and cannot be fully grasped on first encounter” (10). In fact, as with Wright's buildings, both Byrne’s and Howe's architecture must be experienced in person, ideally multiple times, to be fully comprehended. Unfortunately, this is not a realistic pursuit for most of us, but we can at least achieve a better understanding of their work through these excellent publications.

LISA D. SCHRENK
University of Arizona

Notes
2. Most notable among these scholars is Sally Chappell, who wrote her dissertation on Byrne and then coauthored the catalogue for a 1982 Chicago Historical Society exhibition on Byrne and John Lloyd Wright (cited in note 1, above).
3. Unfortunately, a few of the black-and-white photographs in the book, such as the one of Wright’s Oak Park studio in the snow on page 11, are of a poor quality, and several of the images show only small sections of buildings when full views are warranted. The book would also have benefited from a more thorough index and the use of citations.
4. Michael incorrectly identifies these works as having appeared in Architectural Record the previous year.

Gretchen Buggeln
The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 368 pp., 144 b/uv illus. $140 (cloth), ISBN 9780816694952; $40 (paper), ISBN 9780816694969

The postwar suburban American church is a complicated subject. Religious buildings occupy a typological history largely driven by the interpretation of monuments, yet these churches tend instead toward a kind of mainstream vernacular. Their unassuming modernity challenges presumptions both of a heroic modernism overcoming tradition and of a conception of sacred space reliant on drama and transcendence. That they were built by congregations often newly formed as part of the postwar flight from cities makes relevant the many sources of contemporaneous and later criticism of suburban culture, from racial segregation to alienating sprawl to housewife drudgery and reactionary conformity in the face of a growing counterculture. Without a doubt, sociopolitical critique of suburban culture is part of the story, yet on its own it risks obscuring the actual experiences of those involved in designing, building, and using these places. The full story must engage both.

In The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America, Gretchen Buggeln offers a solid, meticulously researched account of how these churches came to be, how their congregations understood and valued them, and (implicitly) how these experiences may complicate negative views of suburban culture driven by sociopolitical critique. Rich in detail, conveyed through lucid narratives and compelling anecdotes, and drawing throughout on archival documents and relevant contemporaneous discourses, this study approaches the subject with multiple frames and at changing scales. As the author clarifies at the outset, her aim is to produce not a “comprehensive history” but a “representative survey of architects, buildings, and congregations” (xxvi). To this end, the core of the book is found in six chapters that move among these topics with ease despite shifts in perspective and focus. In “The ‘Form-Givers’ of Suburban Religion: Three Midwestern Architects,” Buggeln introduces the three figures whose ideas and practices root her survey: Edward Sövik (1918–2014), Edward Dart (1922–75), and Charles Stade (1923–93). She demonstrates their relevance as exemplars in the larger context of suburban church design in the 1950s and 1960s with clear synopses of their careers, explications of their characteristic ideas, and analyses of key commissions. The following chapter, “From Dream to Dedication: The Shared Work of Church Building,” attends to the congregations themselves to explore in depth the common trajectory underlying the realization of these buildings, including local building committees, fund-raising efforts, collaborations in the design process, and the use of volunteer labor during construction. Of special note here are the background concerns about the status and future of religion at a time of increased secularization and social change, as well as the need to proceed in practical and flexible ways (e.g., by constructing multipurpose “first units,” to which additional buildings would be added when possible). Buggeln then presents an excellent minihistory in a chapter titled “The A-Frame Church: Symbol of an Era.” As a formal and material type, the A-frame, with its rapid yet short-lived popularity, illustrates how architectural solutions can be driven as much by expediency as by expressive potential. The too-near synthesis of tectonic clarity, theological symbolism, and constructive economy was soon regarded as dated and simplistic.

In the following three chapters, Buggeln pulls back by stages to consider first the sacred space of the sanctuary, then the fuller life of the congregation through church-campus education and fellowship facilities, and finally the broader