

**The untold story of modernism:
a critical analysis of the post-war church
in Victoria, Australia,
1950-1970**

Elizabeth Anne Richardson
[0000-00032727-7985]

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THE UNTOLD STORY OF MODERNISM

Abstract

In the post-war decades, places of worship were radically transformed from a building type adhering to time honoured architectural traditions to one that became increasingly diverse and individualistic. Social change, coupled with new architectural ideas and the broader advent of modernity created a setting in which long held continuities with historical traditions were challenged.

This thesis investigates how the church became modern after the Second World War through a critical examination of the architectural design of church buildings in Victoria, Australia, c.1950-1970. Offered herein is an understanding of modernism in post-war places of worship as a nuanced, locally inflected and diverse movement moderated by the particularity of its social setting and agency of local clergy and congregation to determine the innovation or conservatism of designs.

The early colonial churches in Australia were constructed in historicist styles and as late as the 1940s, all were derived from models of predominantly British origin. Only after the Second World War did modernism in places of worship arise in the Australian context, as religious organisations responded to a wave of demand due to a 'baby boom' population and expanding suburban conditions, coupled with economic austerity. The unique circumstances of the post-war setting are substantiated by the number of places of worship constructed in the Melbourne metropolitan area of Victoria during the 1950s and 1960s far outweighing the number constructed in any other decade or period of the twentieth century. Under these circumstances, a wider spectrum of architectural language began to be expressed and accepted. Formally, new materials and techniques of construction paved the way for unobstructed interiors, non-load bearing walls and unlimited formal and aesthetic possibilities. Spatially, the modern church became single volume and a fan shaped seating arrangement evolved to accommodate the modernisation of liturgical ritual and worship. In their designs, Australian architects were informed by their international experiences and increasingly looked to Europe and America for precedents, in addition to British traditions. Artistically, the return to hand crafted work by practising artists as the only artistic works appropriate for worship, alongside the twentieth century shift away from figurative representation towards abstraction, was supported by the architectural profession promoting the integration of art and architecture as a way of generating symbols of contemporary life. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were unique years of dynamic change in religious and social practices and the acceptance of architectural modernity.

Using a wide range of primary source material, including images and architectural drawings, journals of the day, parish archives and site visits, statistical and spatial data on the number, location and style of church buildings constructed in Victoria during the post-war period, this study demonstrates a wide spectrum of design responses were produced: from innovative modern buildings to buildings designed in continuity with historic precedents as well as a swath of buildings that were nuanced in their combined use of innovation and tradition. Using a thematic framework, this thesis explores the complex and overlapping influences of society, architecture and modernity upon the design of places of worship in Victoria during the 1950s and 1960s. Findings are supported by detailed case studies woven across thematic chapters to demonstrate how a common range of post-war conditions moderated the design of places of worship in different ways to produce a wide spectrum of results.

This is to certify that:

- this thesis comprises only my own original word towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy;
- due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used;
- this thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices;
- no editorial assistance has been provided in the preparation of this thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: Research design and discovery

1.1 Introduction

*"A church is two things in one: it is a building with a purpose, and it is a symbol."*¹

German American philosopher and theologian, Paul Tillich 1961

*"Architecture articulates and presents meaning, and values; it expresses these things."*²

British architect, Robert Maguire 1962

More than any other building type, places of worship, in their conception and use, come to embody the aspirations, shared collective endeavours and ritual experiences of a community of people.³ Places of worship are a class of building with a distinct representational purpose and a unique connexion with a history of religious ideas. In the decades after World War II, the place of worship was radically transformed from a building type that adhered to time honoured architectural representational traditions to one that became increasingly diverse. As architects attempted to find new ways to express theological function using the modern language of architecture a broad spectrum of design responses resulted.⁴ The designs were further impacted by the changing societal conditions in which sentiment shifted away from the conservatism of the 1950s towards a new individualism and liberal lifestyle pursuits of the 1960s⁵ and a 'suburban way of life'.⁶ In response, religion was fostered as an antidote to the complexities of modern life, moral guardian of family values and a cohesive social order.⁷ In Australia, these shifting architectural, social and modern concerns were impacted by large scale immigration combined with a rapidly increasing 'baby boom' population generating an urgent requirement for new church buildings in both urban and regional locations. The combination of these interdependent yet shifting and locally distinctive factors characterised the post-war conditions under which the design of modern places of worship arose in Australia. Conflicting desires and expectations for both the comfort of tradition and the excitement of new socio-spatial environments were played out in the construction of the religious buildings of the post-war period.

¹ Tillich, Paul. 'On the Theology of Fine Art and Architecture' in *Art and Architecture*, John Dillenberger in collaboration with Jane Dillenberger (Eds), (New York: Crossroad: 1987), p.212.

² Maguire, Robert. 'Meaning and Understanding' in Peter Hammond (ed), *Towards a Church Architecture*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1962), 69.

³ Clark, Jennifer. "'This Special Shell': The Church Building and the Embodiment of Memory", *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 31, No. 1, March 2007, p.59.

⁴ Williams Goldhagen, Sarah. 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', in Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Rejean Legault (eds.), *Anxious Modernisms. Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), 312.

⁵ Brown, Nicolas. *Governing Prosperity: Social change and social analysis in Australia in the 1950s*, (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.2-3.

⁶ Buggeln, Gretchen. *The Suburban Church. Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), p. xxi.

⁷ Hilliard, David. 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol 16, No.2, 1988, p.235.

1.2 Research aim and questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how post-war church designs were transformed by modernity in Australia after the Second World War. This aim will be achieved through a critical examination of church designs in the state of Victoria, Australia, between 1950 and 1970. A further aim of this thesis is to identify and describe the causal conditions which triggered change in the design of post-war church design. This second aim will be achieved through a critical examination of the conditions of post-war society, architecture and modernity in the Australian context with a specific focus upon aspects which impacted upon church designs. In addressing these aims, this thesis will add the little-known story of the post-war church to the more extensive prevailing discourse of architectural modernism within the Australian setting.

Using a thematic framework to consider the multifaceted influences of society, architecture and modernity, this thesis is supported by detailed case studies which demonstrate how post-war church designs were moderated by the same set of factors in different ways to produce a variety of results.⁸ In the context of this thesis, modernity is understood as the condition arising from the processes of modernisation in which traditional ways of the past were challenged and replaced by new ways of thinking and doing. The terms modernism and modernist describe the philosophical position supporting the project of modernisation.⁹

This thesis is not intended as an exhaustive study of every church building in Victoria. Nevertheless, the aims raise a number of important areas for investigation. Practical questions such as, in Victoria, how many churches were built in the twentieth century and more specifically, the post-war period (1950-1970)? How many of those were modern? Where were they located? What denomination were they? And what criteria might be used to identify and distinguish a modern church? And also, questions concerning architectural modernism such as, how did modern influences affect the designs of places of worship? To what extent were church designs in Australia moderated by Australian conditions and what role did international precedent play? What were the effects of new materials and technologies? Where do I find key examples of the modern church? Who were the designers of the post-war churches and were there theoretical and practical influences that shaped the practice? And were the designs moderated by denomination? To address these questions, within a thematic framework, I have used the tools of historical research to investigate the specific ways in which architectural modernism and social aspirations for the modern acted as catalysts for change in the design of places of worship.

This research project commands considerable significance because it constitutes the first critical analysis of the development of post-war church design in Victoria, Australia.

⁸ Wang, David, and Linda N. Groat. *Architectural Research Methods*, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/unimelb/detail.action?docID=1166322>, p.432.

⁹ Heynan, Hilde. *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: MIT Press, 1999) p.4, pp10-11.

1.3 Research Design

1.3.1 Preliminary research

To understand the scope and nature of the terrain, a large amount of data was initially collected using a combination of strategies: statistical and spatial data on the number and location of church buildings constructed during the post-war period was analysed; the architectural content of visual data was comparatively evaluated; parish archives investigated and physical sites assessed. My preliminary research identified three key intersecting themes specific to the post-war period which acted as catalysts for change in the design of church buildings in the Australian context. The influences comprised a range of socio-economic factors, the introduction of new architectural ideas and modes of construction and the broader advent of modernity across all levels of society. The intersecting themes generated a spectrum of design responses moderated to varying degrees by the same set of post-war circumstances:

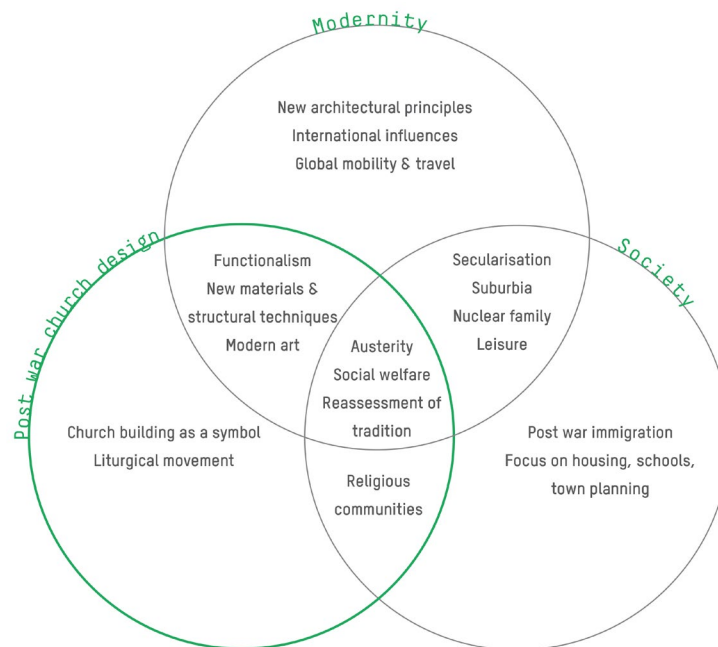


Fig 1.1: Themes: Society, Architecture and Modernity

1.3.2 Thematic framework

Based on the preliminary results, a research design centred on a thematic framework to consider the complex and multiple influences of society, architecture and modernity was determined. This framework provided a multi-focal lens through which to understand, order and attribute the causality of the data and to build and yield conclusions. A study of the architecture alone would not have the capacity to understand the setting holistically. This thesis understands architecture as a social artefact, inseparable from the multitude of complex social dynamics from which it arose, and conversely the context as inseparable from the outcome. Within the thematic framework, the continued use of a combination of research strategies enabled the integration of multiple sources of evidence.¹⁰

¹⁰ Wang, *Architectural Research Methods*, p.431.

1.3.3 Case study

Focused case studies support the thematic framework, exploring the themes in detail at a different scale to illustrate how the specific complex circumstances of post-war conditions determined the architectural outcomes.¹¹ Individual focused case studies embedded in their context have the ability to demonstrate the complex nature of the themes, providing a way to understand, order and attribute the causal factors which led to the multitude of places of worship constructed across Australia. Considered together, the case studies not only elaborate the themes already identified, but most importantly demonstrate how post-war church designs were moderated by the same set of factors in different ways to produce a variety of results.¹²

1.3.4 Spectrum of design responses

To make sense of the range of design responses in a systematic way, each building was considered via a categorisation of attributes. At one end of the spectrum, buildings that are categorised as innovative demonstrate modern attributes. At the opposite end of the spectrum, buildings that are categorised as traditional demonstrate a continuity with historical precedents. However, the complex nature of design could mean a building conceived with modern architectural ideas and materials might yet conform liturgically to historical precedents. A great swath of buildings sat in a middle ground and were nuanced in their combined use of innovation and tradition.

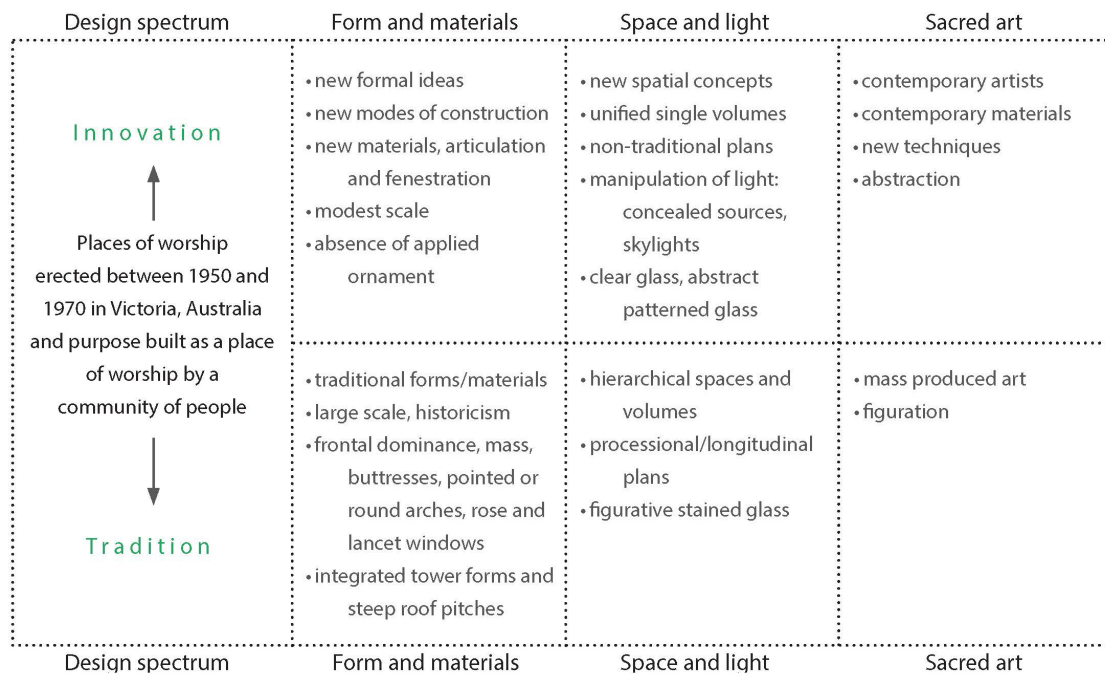


Fig 1.2: Spectrum of design responses

¹¹ Wang, *Architectural Research Methods*, p.415-421.

¹² Wang, *Architectural Research Methods*, p.432.

1.3.5 Research design and outcomes

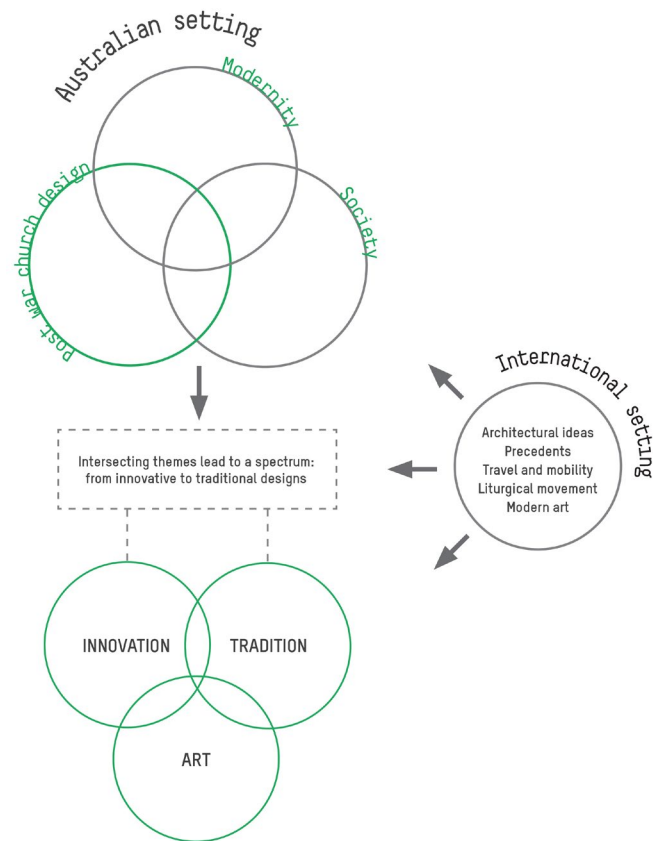


Fig 1.3: Research design and outcomes

Mirroring the thematic framework of the research design, research outcomes are organised to reflect the spectrum of design responses: from the Innovative to the Traditional. A further theme arising from the intersecting conditions of architecture and modernity was found in the revival of the historically significant relationship between art and architecture. Authentic works of art, hand made by artists, represented a modern response to the continuing requirement for devotional and ritual items in the context of the modern church. Twentieth century art movements also impacted the church. As secular interests shifted away from representational imagery towards abstraction,¹³ tensions between the traditional and the modern and between the desire for figuration and acceptance of abstraction were key themes played out in the aesthetics of the modern church.

The thesis is structured to reflect the Research design and outcomes. The first three chapters aim to provide the reader with sufficient background and context to understand the research topic through an integrated discussion of the three key intersecting themes of society, architecture and modernity. The second three chapters focus in detail on the research outcomes: Innovation, Tradition and the Art of the church.

¹³ Apostolos-Cappadona. 'The artistic journey', in Rosemary Crumlin, *Beyond belief: modern art and the religious imagination*, Exhibition publication, Exhibition dates 24 April – 2 July, 1998, (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1998), pp.21-25.

1.3.6 A note on heritage recognition

While the heritage status of places of worship was initially investigated as a possible tool to identify significant post-war church buildings, this activity revealed a substantial absence of information specific to the post-war period. The intention of local councils appeared inconsistent with a relative bias towards buildings dated earlier than 1945. In relation to buildings constructed after 1945, no clear evidence was apparent for the specific reasons for selecting one building before another. The lack of critical attention specific to post-war places of worship at the local level is reflected on the Victorian Heritage Register, which recognises only eight twentieth century places of worship erected after 1937, while the approximate number of church buildings constructed before 1937 recognised on the Victorian Heritage Register is in the vicinity of 160 buildings.¹⁴

Of the eight 20th century places of worship included on the Victorian Heritage Register, only four were constructed during the post-war period and of those, three are Anglican.¹⁵ The post-war places of worship included on the Victorian Heritage Register are: St Faiths Anglican Church, Burwood (1956-58) by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell [H2254]; All Saints Anglican Church (former Christ Church), Mitcham (1958) by Ray Berg [H2302]; the Precinct of St Andrew's Church of England, Brighton (church building by Louis Williams, 1962) [H0124]; and Monash University multi-faith Religious Centre, Clayton (1968) by Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell [H2188].

1.4 Research methods

1.4.1 Collecting and analysing data

A 1996 study commissioned by the Historic Buildings Council of Victoria titled *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria*¹⁶ is the only document to have recorded 20th century places of worship in Victoria. Although originally proposed as a state-wide study, due to financial constraints, it was limited to the Melbourne metropolitan area. Additionally, although the study provided a short social history of religion in Victoria, it did not extend to an architectural or typological analysis.¹⁷ However, recorded by the report were images of approximately one thousand church buildings in the Melbourne metropolitan area erected between January 1900 and June 1995.¹⁸ Of the recorded buildings, approximately 70%¹⁹ were dated and the architects identified. Based on these details, I developed a primary set of data from which I could begin to draw broad conclusions.

¹⁴ Author's assessment of Victorian Heritage Register, <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/>. Accessed 13/03/2016.

¹⁵ The other twentieth century church buildings included on the Victorian Heritage Register are the notable *Second Christian Scientist Church* designed in the moderne-classical mode by Bates Smart & McCutcheon (1937) and beyond the post-war period are the post-modern H2293 *Catholic Church of the Resurrection*, Keysborough (1976) and H2351 former *Chapel of St Joseph*, Balwyn North (1978) both by Edmond & Corrigan; and the later H2301 *St Michael and St John Catholic Church*, Horsham (1987) by Greg Burgess. The *Catholic Church of the Resurrection* and *Chapel of St Joseph* are no-longer in use for their original purpose.

¹⁶ Ian and Roslyn Coleman Conservation Consultants with Eleanor Bridger and Joanna Wills, *Twentieth century Churches in Victoria. A study for the Historic Buildings Council*, January 1996.

¹⁷ Coleman, *Twentieth Century Churches*, p.iii.

¹⁸ Coleman, *Twentieth Century Churches*, p.iv.

¹⁹ Author's assessment of the data.

The first and most significant observation was that in the Melbourne metropolitan area, the greatest number of church buildings built in the 20th century were constructed during the 1950s and 1960s. The church buildings constructed during this period far outweighed the number constructed in any other decade or period of the 20th century. During the 1950s and 1960s, the Anglican and Catholic faiths were revealed to be the dominant church builders, but collectively the construction of Protestant churches far outweighed those built for the Catholic faith. Analysis also revealed the percentage of non-mainstream Christian places of worship erected had increased from 7% in 1900-1919 to approximately 15% during the 1950s and 1960s (Judaic, Eastern Orthodox, Islamic, Scientist, Churches of Christ, Assembly). Between 1986-1993, against a marked decline in the building of Christian places of worship, 40% of all places of worship erected were non-Christian or non-mainstream (Eastern Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Coptic, Latterday Saints). These observations depict a predominantly Protestant religious landscape becoming increasingly diversified over the course of the twentieth century. The number and type of places of worship corresponding with the diversification of the Australian population through immigration commenced during the post-war period. These results are illustrative of a strong correlation between places of worship and their social context.

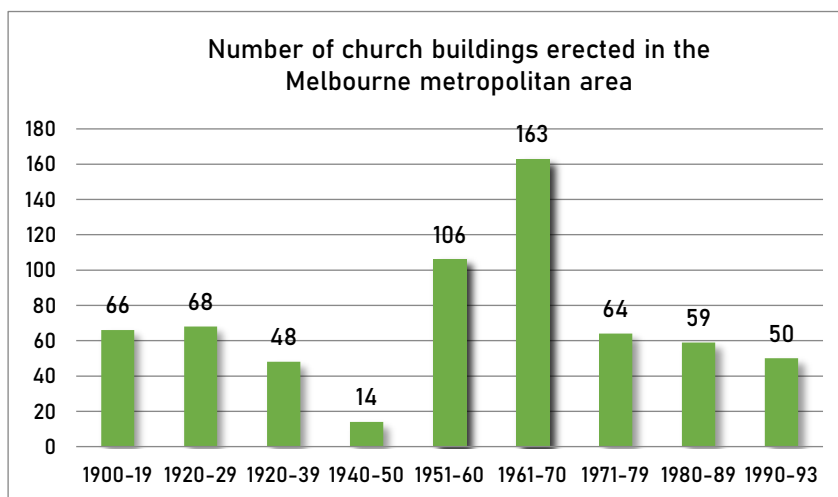


Fig 1.4: No. of new churches erected in the Melbourne metropolitan area

The greatest number of church buildings erected in the Melbourne metropolitan area in the 20th Century occurred in the post-war period (1950-1970).

Source: Analysis of data sheets of buildings that were dated and architect identified from: Coleman, *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria*, 1996.

Taking the *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria* study as my starting point, I supplemented the metropolitan data with regional data: images from the Peter Wille Collection of Architectural Slides and Rose Stereography Co. Collection were sourced from the State Library of Victoria; a handful of post-war places of worship were identified by the *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage 2*²⁰; images of regional buildings from denominational publications were included as well as details of additional metropolitan buildings as they came to my attention. The data I accumulated became *Appendix A: Places of Worship in Victoria c. 1950-1970*. *Appendix A* provided me with source data for comparative reasoning²¹ a key visual research strategy used

²⁰ Heritage Alliance, *Survey of Post-War Built Heritage in Victoria: Stage 2*, study prepared for Heritage Victoria, October 2008.

²¹ Gunn, Simon and Lucy Faire (Eds), *Research Methods for History*, 2nd Ed, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p.45.

throughout my research process.²² *Appendix A* became an important reference document against which observations could be tested across denominations and decades, initiating and underpinning many of the observations, extrapolations, visual narratives and themes that I subsequently went on to explore.²³

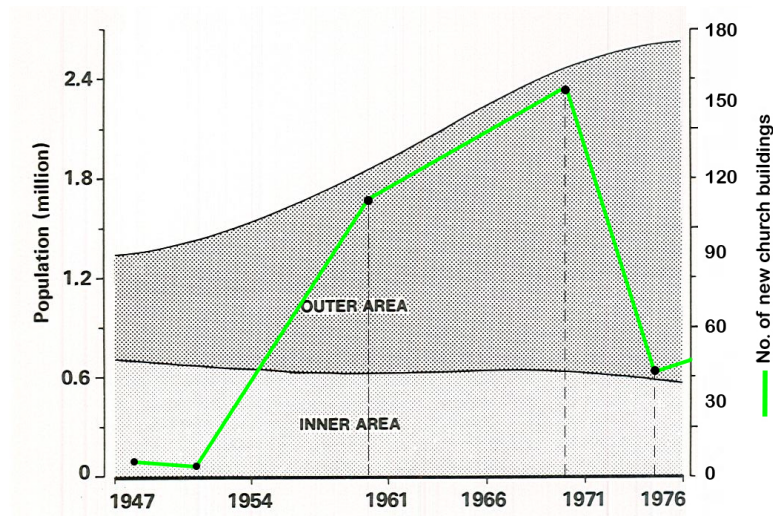


Fig 1.5: Population expansion versus no. of new churches

The rate of church building in the Melbourne metropolitan area correlates with metropolitan population expansion caused by large scale immigration and the 'baby boom' population of the 1950s and 1960s. Post 1970, a sharp decline occurs. Source: Population graph depicting inner and outer area population growth: Clive S. Beed, *Melbourne's Planning and Development*, (Melbourne: Clewara Press, 1981), p.132. Overlaid with Fig 1.4.

The same collection of data allowed me to identify designs by architectural practice and location. This information appears in *Appendix B: Victorian post-war churches by practice*. *Appendix B* enabled me to identify which architects worked for particular denominations and which architects were key instigators of modernism in ecclesiastic design. It became evident that although there were architects who were preferred by particular denominations, usually due to an alignment with their personal faith, it was just as common for architects to work across denominations. Remarkably, nor was it uncommon for architects with no prior experience in ecclesiastic design to be selected on the basis of their proficiency in modern design, suggesting the design of places of worship were also instrumental building types in the practice, realisation and application of modernism by Australian architects.

1.5 Primary sources

American anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes the research methods of the social sciences as tools which generate data, but he locates the real activity of knowledge production as being embedded in the interpretive act of thinking and reflecting; 'of the kind of intellectual effort it is.'²⁴ Similar thoughts are expressed by Australian historian Jennifer Clark when she observes that although the act of recording history is endemic to most church organisations, these publications rarely cover sufficient ground – there is much that is inferred and much that requires interpretation.²⁵

²² Gunn, *Research Methods for History*, p.32.

²³ Holliday, Adrian. *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, 2nd Ed, (London: Sage Publications, 2007), p.6.

²⁴ Geertz, Clifford. 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p.6.

²⁵ 'This Special Shell', p.63-64. Clark writes "Congregational life is not well recorded. Minutes of congregational meetings might register decisions taken. Membership rolls, especially if only irregularly updated, provide rubbery statistics about growth or decline. Collection

1.5.1 Site visits and archives

The process of visiting churches enabled me to broaden my personal experience of the buildings to gain a deeper understanding of the field. Numerous road trips and site visits to church buildings throughout metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria were made as a key method by which to confirm buildings were extant, still in use and not substantially altered from their original form. Physical site visits enabled me to gain an understanding of relationship of plan to form, spatial qualities, light and use of materials, scale and presence in the urban context. In many cases, historical images were no-longer representative of current conditions due to evident alterations or additions and there were many buildings that had been demolished. Still more buildings had been encroached upon by the urban environment, particularly those located in close proximity to shopping precincts. Conspicuously, many Catholic churches stood out as enduring centres of community due to a policy of co-locating the church building alongside the parish school in close proximity within the same precinct.

Access to individual parish archives on site was instrumental to my selection of focused case studies and highly significant to informing the broader themes and conclusions I drew about the post-war church in Victoria. Typically, parish archives might include newspaper clippings, photographs of construction, parish publications and literature including photographs of significant events in the life of the parish, parish histories, correspondences and vestry or building committee meeting minutes, and sometimes but not always, specifications and architect's drawings. Archives came in various states of organisation, some were treasure troves, others were incomplete, still others non-existent. Trawling through parish archives allowed me to develop an understanding of the social role of the church in the lives of individuals as well as the role played by the clergy in procuring the design and construction of a new church and the operative constraints of post-war austerity.

Denominational archives, architectural drawing collections held by the State Library of Victoria, and public building records held by the Public Records Office of Victoria were also invaluable repositories of materials that assisted me to uncover a richer narrative of the development of the modern church. Complementing my research, I visited interstate and international places of worship as and when I could.

1.5.2 Professional and denominational journals

Locally, denominational journals such as *The Catholic Advocate*, *Methodist Spectator*, *Lutheran Herald*, *Australian Lutheran*, the *Church of England Messenger* and *Presbyterian Life* provided valuable insights into religious community life. Denominational journals demonstrated strong evidence of a social desire to participate in the modern world architecturally through the construction of new places of worship. Even the smallest parish communities went to great lengths to express modernity in their place of worship. In remote East Gippsland, when the Methodist congregation relocated the old Omeo church of

records offer insights into financial conditions, but the life of the congregation, the day to day affairs of the group, the interaction of the people, the impact, understanding, and application of the spiritual message is lodged in memory and although best extrapolated from oral histories, few existing oral accounts are deeply reflective. When congregational memory is recorded it is usually in the pages of little booklets, pamphlets, and roneoed sheets, produced to celebrate anniversaries and commonly hagiographical (lives of the saints) in style."

1888 to Swift's Creek, with limited funds it was 'renovated [into] a most attractive building'²⁶ to look modern. Modernity was expressed in the new shallow roof line, achieving a shift in visual perception of form, from a 19th century mode to a modest contemporary building.

*Illustrations have been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 1.6: The new Swift's Creek Methodist Church, 1961

(L): The original 1888 Omeo building. (R): The 1888 building transformed into a modern church.
Source: (L): 'The old Omeo Church', [The Methodist] *Spectator*, (May 24, 1961), p.9.
(R): 'Things New and Old', *Spectator*, (Jun 21, 1961), p.12.

Contemporary journals offered a significant and rich source of Australian wide material in accounts written by architects, critics and theologians.²⁷ *Architecture in Australia* (1931-), *Architecture Today* (1958-74), *Building Lighting and Engineering* (1952-68), *Architecture and Arts* (1952-67) as well as local industry publications regularly contained coverage demonstrating an active interest in ecclesiastic design and an ongoing critical discourse on the architecture of the modern church. Similarly, international journals known to be available in Australia, and subscribed to by Australian architects, such as *Architectural Review* (UK); *Architectural Record* (USA); *Arts and Architecture* (USA) and *Liturgical Arts* (USA), showed the same interest in the design of modern churches internationally. In Victoria, reports appearing in the monthly newsletter *Cross Section* (1952-71) issued by the Department of Architecture of the University of Melbourne and mailed nationally to members of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects and the Master Builders' Association demonstrated church designs were specifically being looked to as examples of the application of modernism. Local and international journals were infused with information about the excitement of new formal possibilities enabled via new materials and technologies as well as social aspirations for modern ecclesiastic environments. These journals provided a snapshot of the contribution made by ecclesiastic buildings to the dissemination of architectural ideas during the post-war period. However, while this was important to consider, during the research process there were also revealed equally compelling buildings that did not gain the same public recognition. For example, St Bernard's Catholic Church, Coburg (1955) by émigré architect Grigor Hirsch, confidently

²⁶ 'Things New and Old', *Spectator*, (Jun 21, 1961), p.12.

²⁷ Johnson, Donald Leslie. *Australian Architecture 1901-51: Sources of Modernism*, (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1980) p.8, pp.85-89. According to Johnson the "three decisive factors... in the development of modernism in Australian architecture... were immigrants, travellers and magazines. [...such that...] Internal and overseas magazines became paper platforms to educate the profession and public about new architectural idioms." p.86.

designed with semi-circular seating around the altar did not garner the same attention as St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1956-58) by local modernist architects Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell. These circumstances illustrate a disparity of access and privilege, highlighting the advantages of using a combination of strategies to evaluate the complex nature of the Australian setting.

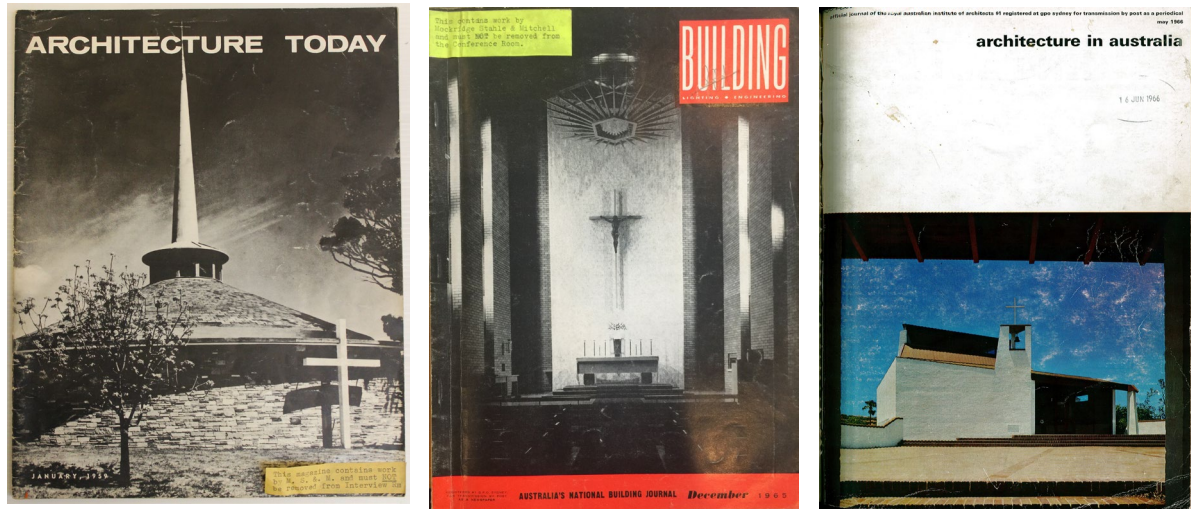


Fig. 1.7: Professional journal covers, 1959, 1965, 1966

(L): St Faith's Church of England, Melbourne. Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell. *Architecture Today*, Jan 1959

(C): *Building, Lighting and Engineering*, Dec 1965

(R): Wentworth Memorial Church of England, Sydney. Clarke, Gazzard and Partners. *Architecture in Australia*, May 1966

1.5.3 Supplementary oral histories

My research was informed by a number of informal interviews conducted with Victorian architects and members of parish communities who were present or participated and contributed to the design of places of worship during the post-war period. These conversations were invaluable sources of first-hand information, allowing me to gain a richer understanding of the social significance of the buildings and the social processes²⁸ that brought them into being, beyond that based on the 'official records and documents' of history.²⁹ Also inherent to this method, I experienced the biases attached to interviewee and interviewer in relation to their own perspectives. This became evident through the frequency with which architects implied their own work to be 'the first of.' Still others declined to be recorded, and thus the conversation was inevitably transformed by my own capacity for memory and interpretation.

²⁸ The methodological idea of actively seeking to interpret the social significance of events, actions and human behaviours arose in the writings of American anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) who argued the complexities of cultural phenomena necessarily needed to be understood through the lens of human behaviours and their systems of meaning; For further reading see Geertz 'Thick Description: Toward an interpretive Theory of Culture' published in his selected writings *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973); and also Melissa Freedman, 'The Hermeneutical Aesthetics of Thick Description' in *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol 20(6), 2014, pp.827-833, published online April 7, 2014. DOI: 10.1177/1077800414530267

²⁹ Melbourne academic Professor Naomi Stead proposes oral history can offer specific insights that address a "sociocultural milieu: who studied and worked with whom, how social and professional interactions conditioned the context in which professional work could take place, how networks of patronage affected who had the means and opportunity to build, as well as how questions of influence condition the development of architectural ideas." Stead, Naomi. 'Architectural Affections. On Some Modes of Conversation in Architecture, Towards a Disciplinary Theorisation of Oral History', *Fabrications*, 24:2, p.159. Published on line Nov 12, 2014. DOI: 10.1080/10331867.2014.961230.

1.6 Secondary sources

No critical literature specific to the architectural design of the post-war church in the Australian context has been written. There have been numerous publications centred on religious denominations with a focus on episcopal achievements and institutional hierarchies, but they do not cover issues of architectural stylistic concerns or architectural modernism.³⁰ Casting my net across the international conversation as a body of knowledge allowed me to expand my historical and contemporary understanding of the changes occurring in church design across the 20th century. The international conversation assisted me to differentiate the international circumstances from Australian conditions to identify the features unique to the Australian condition and gain a better understanding of the complex relationship between religion, society, architecture and modernity.

1.6.1 The Australian conversation

In the face of the advent of modernism and the production of modern architecture being the subject of many contemporary Australian publications and later histories of Australian architecture, descriptions of the post-war church are limited to small sections and tangential mentions in a modest selection of established texts which examine twentieth century Australian architecture. J.M. Freeland's notable 1972 *Architecture in Australia. A History* acknowledges modern ecclesiastic designs as the 'most interesting of the new buildings' but a discussion is absent; Donald Leslie Johnson's 1980 *Australian Architecture 1901 – 1951, Sources of Modernism*, contains no discussion of ecclesiastic design; Jennifer Taylor's 1990 Sydney centric *Australian Architecture since 1960* published by the Royal Australian Institute of Architects includes just a handful of church buildings and omits the generally inconsistent, but creatively inspiring and formative decade of the 1950s. Recently, the contribution of church design to the development of modernism in Australia is acknowledged by Goad and Willis (eds) in *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture* (2012), while *Community. Building Modern Australia* (2010) by Lewi and Nichols (eds) examines the changing social conditions of post-war society and new municipal building types of modernity, but avoids examining places of worship. On the other hand, the writings of social historians such as David Hilliard provide compelling accounts focussing on the important social aspects of the church in Australian post-war society and the role of its architecture.

1.6.2 The international conversation

Conversely, the number of publications which examine post-war places of worship in the European, British and American settings is voluminous. The texts were written contemporaneously with developments and have continued to be released throughout the twentieth century, either as histories of modern church building, bibliographies of modern church designers or more complex examinations of the socio-cultural settings from which the modern church arose. Many international texts were

³⁰ For example: Ian Gillman, *Many Faiths, One Nation: A Guide to the Major Faiths and Denominations in Australia*, 1988; Marjorie Newton, *Southern Cross Saints: The Mormons in Australia*, 1991; Kenneth John Newton, *A History of the Brethren in Australia with particular reference to the Open Brethren*, 1990; Barbara Bolton, *Booth's Drum: The Salvation Army in Australia, 1880-1980*, 1980; Roman Pavlyshyn, *Ukrainian Churches in Australia*, 1993; James Grant, *Episcopally led and Synodically governed: Anglicans in Victoria: 1803-1997*, 2010; James Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, 2009.

extremely influential globally, were readily available in Australia and were known to be held in the libraries of Australian architects.³¹ These publications include illustrations of the modern churches designed in Europe before the Second World War in response to the first wave of architectural modernism and European Liturgical Movement, effects not fully felt in Australia until the post-war period.

The seeds of early modern church design were propagated in France and Germany through the buildings of French architect Auguste Perret and German architects Rudolf Schwartz and Dominikus Bohm before the Second World War. As a consequence, French and particularly German designs feature strongly in historical perspectives of the development of 20th century church architecture. In 1958, an English translation of German architect Rudolf Schwarz's 1938 *The Church Incarnate, the Sacred Function of Christian Architecture*, a manifesto-like offering of sacred plans derived logically from nature (the human body and the cosmos) for the contemporary age became available. Other texts addressed specific aspects of modern church design such as *Contemporary Church Art* by Anton Henze and Theodor Filthaut, translated from the German and published in New York in 1956. Intriguingly, in the 1960s, the German Consulate distributed the 1964 Munich Exhibition booklet '*German Church Architecture of the 20th Century*' to the students of Australian schools of architecture.³²

Internationally, a swath of publications discussed the functional requirements, use and purpose of church design in the context of modernity. In the English setting were *The Modern Church* (1956) by Edward D. Mills which set out a call, and instructions, for contemporary architecture of the day to play its part in the revitalisation of the church. *Liturgy and Architecture* (1960) by Peter Hammond and *Towards a Church Architecture* (1962) edited by Peter Hammond were seminal text aimed at establishing a set of architectural principles for the design of places of worship. On the one hand examining the symbolic and liturgical function, and social role of the church, and on the other, approaches to architectural designs in a contemporary architectural language. There were also survey publications *The new churches of Europe* (1964) by G.E. Kidder Smith and *Modern Churches* (1965) by Robert Maguire & Keith Murray which provided pictorial essays elucidating the development of modern church designs of the 20th century across Europe. There was also *The Secular Use of Church Buildings* (1968) by John Gordon Davies which alluded to the broader role of the church as a centre of community.

From America came similar survey publications such as *Modern Church Architecture: a guide to the spirit of 20th century religious buildings* (1962) by Albert Christ-Janer and Mary Mix Foley and in 1984 *Tradition becomes innovation: modern religious architecture in America* by Bartlett Hayes. The philosophical writings of German émigré theologian Paul Tillich in *Dynamics of Faith* (1957) were read by both the general public as well as the religious. There continues to be international interest in post-war church design. Meredith Clausen's '*Spiritual Space: The Religious Architecture of Pietro Belluschi*' (1992) and

³¹ For example, Edward D. Mills' influential *The Modern Church* (1956) in which images of the modern designs of Oscar Neimyer, Basil Spence and Marcel Bruer appeared was found in the library of Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell.

³² Information and booklet provided by A/Professor Greg Missingham, University of Melbourne.

Anat Geva's *'Frank Lloyd Wright's Sacred Architecture'* (2012) explore in detail the designs of places of worship as a unique typology within the 20th century setting.

*Illustrations have been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 1.8: The diversity of the modern church

(L): Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, USA. Saarinen, Saarinen and Associates (1948)
(R): St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Pampulha, Brazil. Oscar Neimeyer (1943)
Source: Edward D. Mills. *The Modern Church*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1956), p.43. p.90.

Recently, writings exploring the broader contradictions and complexities of modernism have been written which provide insights beyond architecture. Historian of religion, Jeanne Halgren-Kilde's *Sacred Power Sacred Space: An introduction to Christian Architecture and Worship* (2008) outlines the significant role of power dynamics within sacred spaces, the increasing privileging of social power over the course of the 20th century, and the symbolic function of architectural form and space. Essays contained in *Sanctioning Modernism: architecture and the making of postwar identities* edited by Vladimir Kulić, Timothy Parker and Monica Penick (2014) shine a rare critical light upon religious architecture within the context of modernity, taking into account a multiplicity of socio-political influences enacting upon the institutional church. The critical analysis in *Anxious Modernisms. Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture* edited by Sarah Williams Goldhagen and Réjean Legault suggesting a wide range of responses to the advent of modernism, associated with the particular ideologies of the architect, confirmed my findings in the Australian setting.

'*Building the Modern Church: Roman Catholic Church Architecture in Britain, 1955 to 1975*' by architectural historian Robert Proctor (2014) provides weighty insight into Catholic church building in Great Britain, the impact of the Second Vatican Council and the different strands of modernism adopted. Social historian Gretchen Buggeln's expansive '*The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Post-war America*' (2015) as the title suggests examines the complex phenomena of religion, architecture and community within the context of modernity. Through an examination of the work of three prominent protestant church building architects, *The Suburban Church* critically examines the entangled phenomena from a wide range of vantages including the social and cultural significance of the church building in the everyday lives of religious communities. 'Places of Worship' in architectural historian Elain

Harwood's *Space, Hope, and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945-1975* (2015) discusses post-war church designs within the settings of modernity, new town suburbia and liturgical change. Harwood also explores the importance of sacred art within the church for which in 1948 the British War Damage Commission provided funding for the replacement of stained and unstained glass and ornamental fixtures.³³ These texts which critically situate the modern church within society provide a more nuanced and complex understanding of the church and its relationship with modernity, architecture and the community were key to informing the scope and nature of my research and my understanding of how church designs in Australia were moderated by local conditions.

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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 1.9: The social dimension of the church

(L): Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Church Bulletin cover, 1957 in Buggeln, *The Suburban Church*, p.xiv.
(R): Dancing in the church: Black and White Minstrels rehearsing in Coventry Cathedral, 1967 in J.G. Davies. *The secular use of church buildings*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1968), plate XIII.

1.7 Visual analysis

A comparison of images of post-war places of worship assembled in a time-line highlighted when and how ecclesiastic designs had begun to be affected by the new ideas of architectural modernism and the impact of new materials and technologies. Important questions, such as whether there were ideas specific to architectural modernism that were influential and identifiable in places of worship, and the relative distribution of these ideas across denominations, architects and locations, could be addressed through the strategy of comparative reasoning. These observations were supported by physical site visits and tested against the Spectrum of Design Response criteria (Fig.1.2). Analysis of architect's drawings also illuminated the architect's intentions in a way not possible from an analysis of the building as built. Architect's drawings illustrate how Australian architects imagined the modern rather than how the

³³ Harwood, Elain. *Space, Hope, and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945-1975*, (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2015), p. 435.

modern was subtly translated into the reality of the Australian setting, which was often moderated by budget, practical concerns or conservative attitudes.

*Illustrations have been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 1.10: Visions of modernity: a futuristic spire at St John's Anglican Church, Bentleigh, 1962. Architect: Gawler, Churcher, Boardman

Source: Courtesy St John's Anglican Church Archives.

The process of comparative analysis revealed places of worship designed and constructed before 1950 were characterised by the continuance of a traditional ecclesiastic language in their architectural details, plan forms and historical associations. However, after 1952, there appeared a handful of churches with fewer traditionally characteristic details and some demonstrably innovative forms that did not conform to the image of a traditional church. After 1955, an increasing number of buildings express architectural modernism in their form and through an absence of non-traditional details. These buildings arose via new construction techniques and materials coupled with avant-garde architectural concepts, illustrated by the concrete awning of Mother of God Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1956), the vast glass windows of St Brigid's Catholic Church, Mordialloc (1956) and Methodist Church, Pascoe Vale (1959), the curved walls of St Leonards Presbyterian Church, Brighton (1956) and the steel belfry at All Saint's Church of England, Mitcham (1958). After 1960, a great many new buildings came to fruition, peaking in the mid-1960s, marking a turning point after which traditional ecclesiastic designs receded to become atypical. The 1960s saw a wide spectrum of unconventional forms such as St Christopher's Catholic Church, Anglesea, Vic (1968) and many geometrically conceived buildings such as St Paul's Church of England, Kew (1960) and St Raphael's Catholic Church, West Preston (1963) as well as some highly experimental forms such as Methodist Church, Katamatite, (1961) and St Peter's Catholic Church, Clayton (1967).

The method of visual analysis in combination with physical site visits and testing against the Spectrum of Design Response criteria uncovered insights such that rather than any neat categorisation, in Victoria and throughout Australia, a defining characteristic of the new churches was found in their diversity across a broad spectrum of design responses. Places of worship had become heterogeneous with a plurality of

forms and materials rather than a standardised type. What began as a small handful of places of worship standing out against the crowd through their use of new materials, technical processes and construction techniques, soon became a dominant group of buildings in the 1960s resulting in new formal expressions and innovation in design. On the other hand, over time there also remained, to a lesser degree, places of worship which appeared to adhere architecturally to ecclesiastic tradition.



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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig 1.11: Modernist and traditional churches were built

All Saints (former Christ Church) Anglican Church
Mitcham, Ray Berg 1958
(Source: Cross-Section, No.69, July 1958)

Uniting Church
Sunshine, unknown architect, 1959
(Source: Coleman, *Twentieth Century Churches*, 1996)

Appendix A was used as a tool enabling me to differentiate between buildings. (L) A modern church: innovation using non-traditional form, new materials and methods of construction. (R) A traditional church: pared back historic plan form with integrated tower, solid masonry, terracotta tiles, pitched roof, gable end, arches, lancet windows.

1.8 Chapter overview

This dissertation is structured to reflect the research design illustrated in Figure 1.3: *Design research and outcomes*. The opening chapters aim to provide the reader with context to support them in their understanding of the development of the post-war church: firstly in relation to the international conditions contributing to architectural discourse of the first half of the twentieth century; and secondly, in relation to the unique Australian historical social and architectural setting. Subsequent chapters focus in greater detail on the research outcomes: Innovation, Tradition and the Art of the church.

Chapter 1 *Introduction* has introduced the topic and explained how based on my preliminary research, three intersecting themes, society, architecture and modernity, were identified as catalysts for change. These results led me to employ a thematic framework as a multi-focal lens through which to understand and order the data and to build and yield conclusions. To understand the multifaceted nature of the problem, a combination of research strategies was utilised which enabled me to integrate multiple sources of evidence. Research strategies were broad, involving statistical data, collection of visual records for comparative analysis, investigation of primary and secondary documentary sources, a raft of physical site visits, supplementary interviews, and archival research. A combination of research strategies allowed me to produce focused case studies as an important aspect of the research which allowed the

thematic framework to be explored at a different scale to illustrate through real life examples how post-war church designs were moderated by the same set of factors in different ways to produce a variety of results.

Chapter 2 *Modern architecture and the church* examines the prevailing international discourse and design discussion surrounding the advent of architectural modernism and its transmission to church design in the first half of the twentieth century. The contentious themes that arose through the advent of modernity in relation to monumentality, representation and functionalism, and the long standing liturgical and worship traditions of the church are discussed and related to the development of the modern church. Interspersed across the chapter, a selection of influential twentieth century church buildings, identified with the development of modern architecture and also church design are illustrated. The selection narrates the tension of implementing modernism in ecclesiastic design while simultaneously highlighting significant moments in the growth of modern church design.

Chapter 3 – *Australia: Charting the place of the church in Australian society* aims to provide a concise synopsis of the key issues that were instrumental to the moulding of religious identities within Australian conditions. Chapter 3 expands upon the key intersecting themes highlighted in *Diagram 1.1 Themes: Society, Architecture and Modernity*. These themes were found to be specific to the post-war period, acting as overlapping catalysts for change in the design of modern church buildings. Chapter 3 describes the historical presence of religion in Australian society and the continuing implications of a strong sectarian division between the Protestant and Catholic sectors of society. In the 1950s, religion as a central institution of society was widely expected to continue and was bolstered by the demands of the ‘baby boom’ population. However, the decades of the 1950s and 1960s were dynamic years of modernisation in the political sphere, and in religious and social practices, which came to challenge the domination of the church as an institution of power and influence within Australian society.

Chapter 4 – *The architectural response: reality versus the dream* discusses the broad ranging effects of post-war austerity upon the construction of places of worship and the psyche of Australian architects who were widely travelled and actively seeking to implement their experience and knowledge as engaged participants of an international network within the Australian setting. In Australia, the 1950s and 1960s evolved as a heady mix of economic constraint coupled with the introduction of modern materials and construction techniques and new freedoms in design. These factors in combination with a strong culture of creativity and experimentation led to the construction of a wide spectrum of design responses in the designs of post-war places of worship.

Chapters 5 *Innovation: Embracing modernism* and 6 *Tradition: Keeping comfortable and steady* examine in detail the spectrum of church designs produced in Victoria described in Figure 1.2 *Spectrum of design responses*. Chapter 5 is divided into two parts. Part I examines how the early post-war economic conditions of austerity stimulated innovation through the uptake of new structural materials, technical processes and construction techniques which in turn led to a greater acceptance of modernism in the design of places of worship. Many experimental forms were justified as practical responses to post-war

austerity measures and validated by the search to express the theological function of a church in a new architectural language. In the absence of Australian precedents in modern church design, many architects sought to use their experiences garnered while working or travelling overseas and looked to international examples. Part II of Chapter 5 discusses how new formal and spatial ideas and modes of construction were implemented to produce a diverse range of innovative design responses in which unusual expressive forms and geometric concepts were justified by their capacity to express symbolic function or modern liturgical concerns in their plan arrangements. The broad range of results covered throughout the chapter illustrate the strong agency of parish communities, in particular the clergy, to determine design outcomes and to support buildings that could be achieved within extremely limited budgets.

Chapter 6 *Tradition* seeks to explain the continuing presence of traditional church buildings within the rapidly modernising landscape. Through-out the post-war period, traditional buildings continued to be designed in a variety of revival styles with stripped back features, clean lines and bare reductive wall surfaces that distinguished them from 19th century buildings but did not yet launch them into the modern world. In addition, the post-war influx of a large migrant population led to a swathe of ecclesiastic buildings designed in architectural forms and styles foreign to Australian conditions. These buildings showed fidelity to the churches of the migrant home countries to serve new communities as strong symbols of identity and representations of cultural continuity. Chapter 5 also explores how a new architectural tradition was established in the appearance of the fan-shaped church, in response to the 20th Century Liturgical Movement and directives of the Second Vatican Council.

Focused case studies support Chapters 3 - 6 to illustrate how the specific complex circumstances of the post-war period determined a spectrum of architectural outcomes. The case studies aim to illustrate the key intersecting themes of society, architecture and modernity in the retelling of the real-life circumstances of specific parish communities. The case studies illuminate a more nuanced and complex narrative of post-war conditions to deliver a deeper interpretation of how post-war church designs were moderated by the same set of factors in different ways to produce a variety of results.

Chapter 7 *Sacred Art: New expressions of faith* looks to the art of the modern church and the changes wrought by modernity. A diversity of influences generated change: the re-evaluation of liturgical practices by the church; a return to original work by practising artists as the only artistic works appropriate for worship; significant stylistic changes in the secular world of art in which representation was shifted away from figuration towards abstraction; and attempts by the architectural profession to seek the integration of art and architecture. Chapter 6 examines how the use of contemporary art was promoted in the Australian context by the Blake Prize for Religious Art, and the continuing prevalence of traditional aesthetic features most commonly associated with ecclesiastic architecture: stained glass which continued as a key signifier of religious architecture; and the production of sculpture, focusing on the strong contribution by émigré artists in the Australian context.

Chapter 8 *Conclusion* summarises the major findings of this dissertation.

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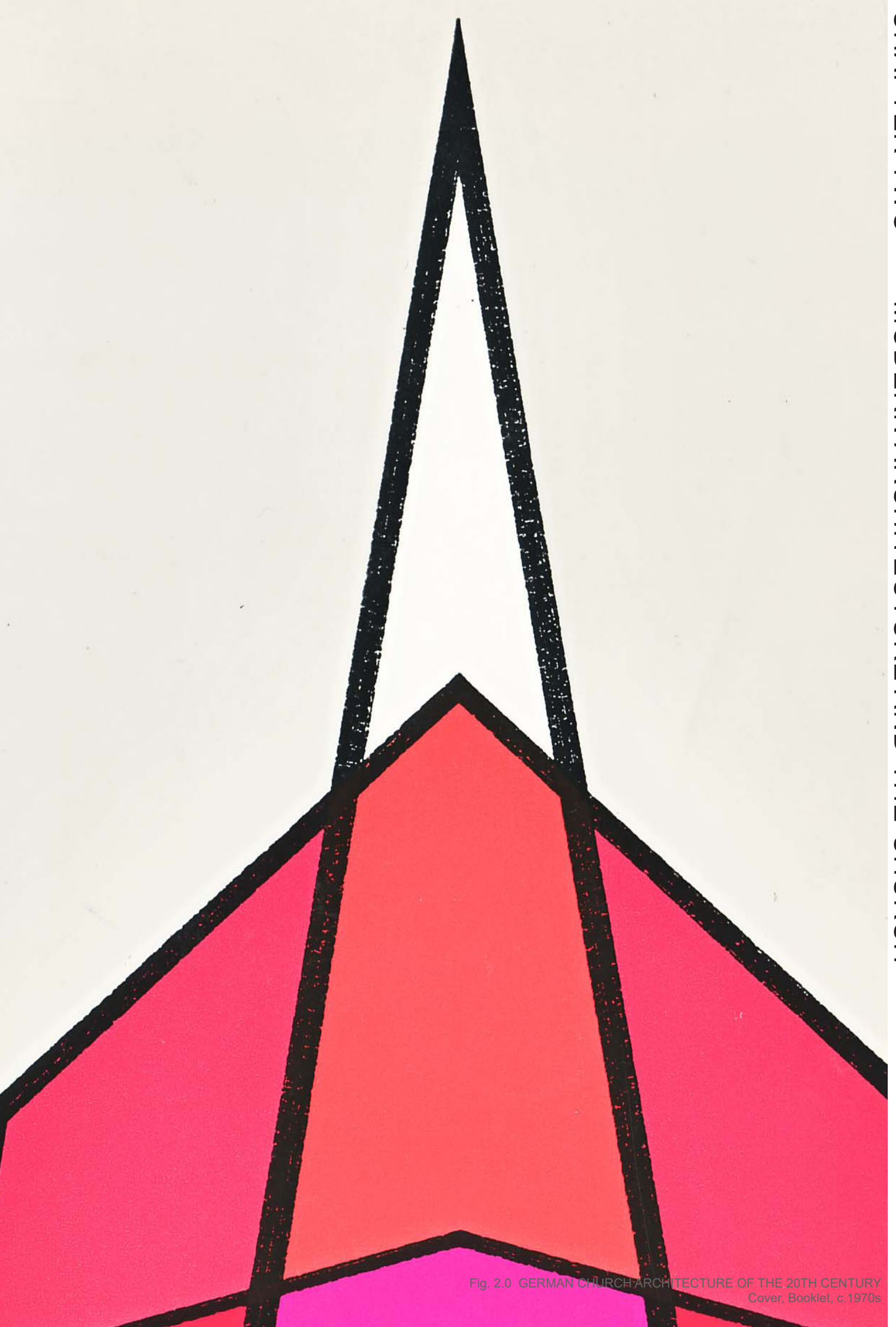


Fig. 2.0 GERMAN CHURCH ARCHITECTURE OF THE 20TH CENTURY
Cover, Booklet, c.1970s

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CHAPTER TWO

Modern architecture and the church

“Modern architecture, as most people now appreciate, is based on the idea of simplicity and “functional” organisation of the occupiers’ requirements. This is accepted invariably for factories and hospitals, and often for houses. But can the same principles apply to such buildings of higher purpose as churches?” [...] “All over the world men of religion and of architecture are asking if modern design can rise above utility and answer the challenge to express a spirit beyond the desire for shelter.”¹

Melbourne architect and critic Robin Boyd, 1954

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to foreground the important prevailing architectural discourse and design discussion surrounding the advent of modernism and its transmission to church design in the first half of the twentieth century. The initial wholesale rejection of ornament and repudiation of style, and subsequent crisis of modernist architecture’s inability to express meaning, led to wide-ranging discourse within the architectural profession about whether the signifying attributes of traditional architecture, should or could be imparted through the new idiom. Called into question was the ability of the strictly functionalist method of design to produce meaningful buildings and environments capable of meeting modern society’s psychological and emotional needs.² Within this milieu, the place of worship, which had traditionally played the role of a monument and symbol within the city, was expected by religious communities to continue to communicate its special purpose through architectural means.³ Architects of all calibres were grappling in a variety of ways to interpret and implement modern architecture. With specific reference to the modernisation of the church, Chapter Two discusses the contentious themes that arose through the advent of modernity in relation to monumentality, representation and functionalism, and the long standing liturgical and worship traditions of the church.

Interspersed across the chapter, a selection of influential twentieth century church buildings, identified with the development of modern architecture and also church design are illustrated. The selection narrates the tension of implementing modernism in ecclesiastic architecture while simultaneously highlighting significant moments in the growth of modern church design. Each of these buildings marks a new development in modern architecture and ecclesiastic design: Notre-Dame Catholic Church, Raincy, Paris (1922) is widely considered the first example of modernism in ecclesiastic architecture and was designed by innovative modern architect August Perret; St Fronleichnam Catholic Church, Aachen,

¹ Boyd, Robin. ‘Church builders are in a dilemma’, *The Herald*, (Nov, 23, 1954), p.16.

² ‘In Search of a New Monumentality, A Symposium’, *Architectural Review*, Vol 104, (Sept, 1948), p.117.

³ Cross Section reported in December 1956 on church authorities in N.S.W. insisting that even vestries must have a roof pitch of 50° “like a church.”

Germany (1928) illustrates a church designed in accord with functionalist principles by prominent ecclesiastic architect Rudolf Schwarz; St Paul's Church of England, Bow Common, London (1956-60) designed by young modern architect Robert Maguire is celebrated as an exemplar of modern liturgical principles; and Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France (1952-55) demonstrates a definitive break with architectural traditions by well-known modern architect Le Corbusier. Sacred art in religious settings is also explored by touching upon a range of influential examples and events to highlight the changes simultaneously occurring in the art of the church. The themes explored in this chapter set the scene of the international context, the timbre of which coloured the Australian setting and was reinforced by strong links which existed between the international and Australian settings.

2.2 Modernism

2.2.1 The monument: monumentality and modern architecture

*"In the whole Compass of the Art of Building, there is nothing in which we ought to employ more Thought, Care and Diligence than in the laying out and adorning a Temple; because... a Temple well built and handsomely adorned is the greatest and noblest Ornament a City can have"*⁴

Leone Battista Alberti, c.1485

A vexing issue permeating modern design thinking of the first half of the twentieth century arose from the inability of functionalism to produce buildings able to carry and articulate meaning; attributes associated with monumental buildings as a physical manifestation of society's social and cultural values.⁵ In the early decades of the twentieth century, in Europe the term 'monument' and its association with traditional architecture, was used in architectural criticism negatively.⁶ Monumentality was associated with traditional representations of power, understood as the province of the 'church, state or ruling classes'⁷ rather than democratic society and therefore was not seen as a desirable attribute of modern architecture. The understanding of monumentality⁸ and of monumental buildings as no longer representing the 'impulses of our [modern] civilization'⁹ became a fundamental thread in the ideology of the modern movement. These ideas were best expressed in Lewis Mumford's 1937 essay, 'Death of the Monument'¹⁰ which asserted the monument was a product of a bygone attitude to life, one that in a Christian sense, culminated in death and remembrance conveyed in stasis via the monument. Monuments were built of durable materials, produced permanence and culminated in an urban environment representative of a past civilization.¹¹ Modern architecture was expected to result in a new physical environment, one that would not be monumental or permanent, but adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of contemporary society. Modern architecture promised new modes of living in environments that were open and coherent,¹² flexible, functionally responsive and capable of symbolising contemporary civilization, which was considered forward looking rather than fixated on the past. The *Architectural Review* asked in 1948 "Is the quality of Monumentality *desirable* in buildings of the twentieth century?"¹³

⁴ Rykwert, Joseph (Ed). *Leone Battista Alberti. Ten Books on Architecture*, translated into English by James Leoni, (London: Alex Tiranti, 1955), p.136.

⁵ Gideon, S., J. L. Sert and F. Léger. 'Nine Points on Monumentality' in Ockman, Joan, and Edward Eigen, *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: A documentary anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation, 1993), p.29.

⁶ Forty, Adrian. *Words and Buildings: a vocabulary of modern architecture*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000), p.113.

⁷ Roth, Alfred. 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.128.

⁸ Collins, Christine C. and George R.. 'Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture,' in *Harvard Architectural Review IV: Monumentality and the City*, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1984) p.19.

⁹ Mumford, Lewis. 'Death of the Monument' in *Circle: International Survey of Constructive Art 1937*, Eds. J.L. Martin, Ben Nicholson, N. Gabo, (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), p.264.

¹⁰ Mumford, 'Death of the Monument', pp.263-270.

¹¹ Mumford, 'Death of the Monument', p.265.

¹² Buggeln, Gretchen. *The Suburban Church. Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), pp.xx-xvii.

¹³ 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.128.



Fig. 2.1 : The monument: St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Rome, c.1667-69
Façade by Maderno (1607-14), Bernini's colonnade (1660), engraving by Giovanni Battista Falda.

Source: Alberto Lombardo. *Vedute delle Piazze di Roma attraverso i secoli*, (Rome: Palombi Editori, 2005), p.10.

And yet, while monumentality no-longer held currency, simultaneously the buildings and environments created via the 'objectivity' of functionalism were also increasingly falling under scrutiny. This was due to their inability to provide for the psychological needs of human kind, such as the need for spiritual and symbolic content in architectural production.¹⁴ By the end of the 1930s, "modern architects in Britain were distancing themselves rapidly from the cold, hard look of 1920s European Modernism, introducing curves, organic forms, 'natural' materials, irony, ornament, and symbolism."¹⁵ The difficulty of producing buildings of cultural significance in the modern idiom was exposed as early as 1927 in relation to the design competition and subsequent building of arguably the most important and symbolic architectural commission of the interwar years, the Palace of the League of Nations, Geneva (1927-35).¹⁶ The acquiescence of the jury to select a design, and subsequent appointment of a team of architects, produced a backward looking, classically inspired building with a materiality, articulation and appearance of traditional monumentality. At the time, the building was considered by modern architects as out of sync with the spirit of the age, an 'embarrassingly permanent structure' of monumental expression¹⁷ and a missed opportunity to develop a new form of monumental language.¹⁸ Embedded in this argument was the understanding that the wholesale use of revival styles in the nineteenth century had devalued the

¹⁴ Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, p.29-30.; 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, pp.117-128.; Forty, *Words and Buildings*, pp.112-113; Boyd, 'The Functional Neurosis', *Architectural Review*, (Feb 1, 1956), pp.84-88.

¹⁵ Benton, Tim. 'The myth of Function' in *Modernism in Design*, edited by Paul Greenhalgh, (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), p.49.

¹⁶ The rejection of the Corbusier-Jeanerret submission (the submission generally favoured by modern architects at the time) purportedly led to the impetus for the founding of CIAM in 1928. Source: Collins, 'Monumentality: A Critical Matter in Modern Architecture,' in *Harvard Architectural Review IV: Monumentality and the City*, (Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press, 1984) p.23.

¹⁷ Hitchcock, Alfred. 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.124.

¹⁸ Giedion, Sigfried. 'The need for a new monumentality' in Paul Zucker (Ed.) *New Architecture and City Planning: A symposium*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p.556-557.

role of the monument as a compelling manifestation of the society that had produced it.¹⁹ Mumford proposed, “the very notion of a modern monument is a contradiction in terms: if it is a monument, it cannot be modern, and if it is modern, it cannot be a monument.”²⁰

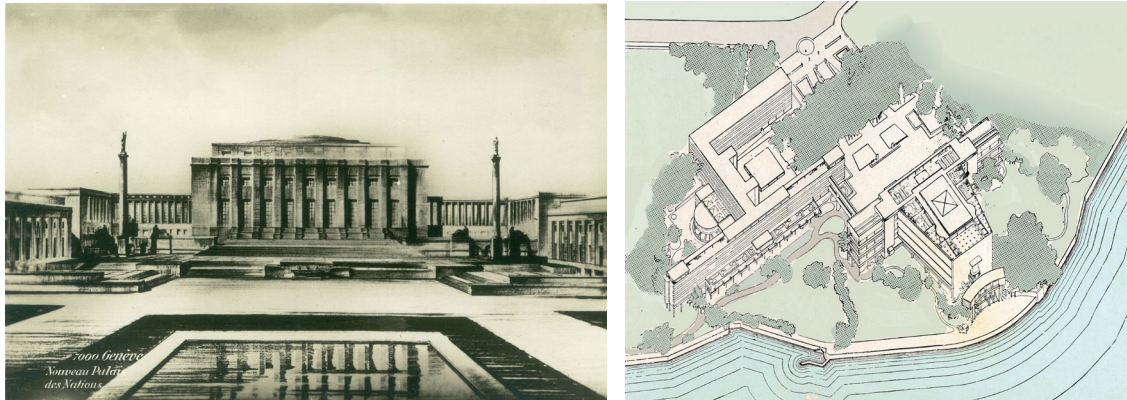


Fig. 2.2 : The Palace of the League of Nations

(L): Postcard: drawing of the commissioned design. (R): Le Corbusier entry: axonometric view.

Source: (L): Flickr.com/photos/photolibrarian/37189981235. Accessed 20/04/2020.

(R): thecharnelhouse.org/2014/03/19/hannes-meyer-and-le-corbusier-alternative-visions-for-the-palace-of-the-league-of-nations-1926-1927/. Accessed 20/04/2020.

Swiss architectural historian Sigfried Giedion was instrumental in promoting the need for contemporary buildings to represent modern society's social and cultural values. Together with architect José Luis Sert and artist Fernand Léger, Gideon composed 'Nine points on Monumentality'²¹ which outlined the need for symbolic representation.²² 'Nine Points' asserted 'monuments should constitute the most powerful accents in [the] vast schemes [of the city]'²³ and moreover could be produced in the modern materials and methods available to appropriately represent the spirit of the age. By 1946, Gideon²⁴ was advocating for buildings capable of expressing 'social conceptions'²⁵ primarily through the collaboration of the artist and architect.²⁶ Gideon declared "everybody is susceptible to symbols. Our period is no exception",²⁷ "the people want buildings representing their social, ceremonial and community life"²⁸.

¹⁹ Gideon, Sert, Léger, 'Nine Points on Monumentality', p.29.

²⁰ Mumford, 'Death of the Monument', p.264.

²¹ 'Nine Points on Monumentality' was originally composed for publication by the American Abstract Artists Association with the aim of highlighting new cultural developments which were seen to express a common spirit and new unity in the arts.

²² Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, p.30.

²³ Giedion in Ockman, *Architecture Culture*, p.29.

²⁴ Giedion presented his lecture 'The Need for a New Monumentality' to the Royal British Institute of Architects.

²⁵ Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', pp.552-553.

²⁶ Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', p.564.

²⁷ Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', p.568.

²⁸ Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', p.552.

*Notre-Dame Roman Catholic Church, Raincy, Paris (1922)*²⁹

Architect: Auguste Perret

An important early modern church constructed in 1922 demonstrates the cusp of change implied by Mumford. Auguste Perret was not a designer of churches, but a pioneer in the use of concrete and his appointment came from a parish priest with a limited budget.³⁰ The economical building utilised modern materials and construction techniques, but for some critics it was 'bereft of imaginative beauty or devotional expression'.³¹ Notre-Dame du Raincy represented a fundamental break "with all preceding ecclesiastic building".³² Primarily, it was admired for its technical mastery in the radical application of reinforced concrete frame construction used in its raw state through-out; in the tall slender columns; shallow vaulted ceilings spanning just shy of 10 metres; and walls of prefabricated concrete 'breeze-block' units filled with coloured glass designed by artist Maurice Denis. Perret achieved a new spatial effect of light and space in an all-encompassing interior volume washed with colour from every expanse of wall so that the building, to this day, glows. However, in its architectural character, Notre-Dame du Raincy stands primarily as a monumental building, in its siting and immense scale and the dominating 145 metre tower which looms above its neighbourhood in the tradition of a Gothic cathedral. Notre-Dame du Raincy obeyed an architectural language of traditional monumentality. It was described by Hitchcock as 'a contemporary engineer's version of a Medieval church'³³ due to its structurally rational concrete frame.

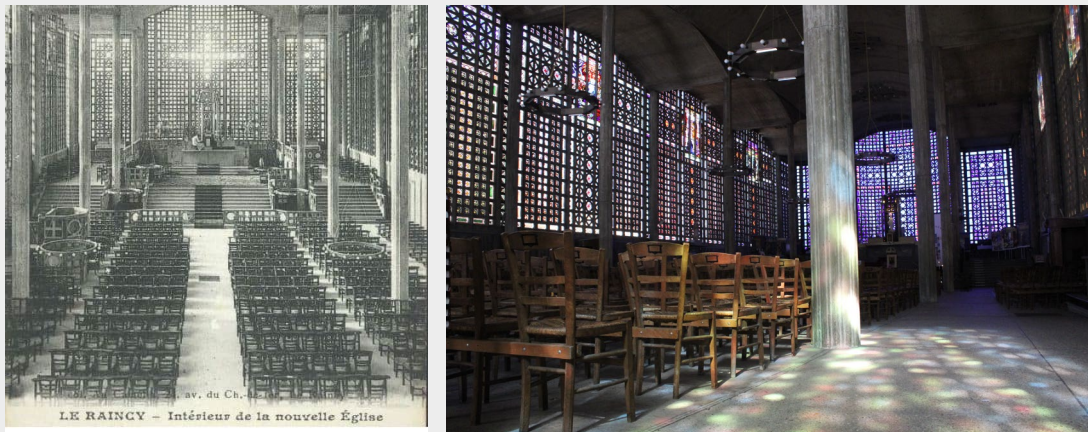


Fig. 2.4 : View of the altar c.1923. View of the nave and stained glass, 2016.

Source: (L): Notre-Dame du Raincy, www.notredameduraincy.fr/histoire, accessed 21/04/2020.

(R): Libby Richardson, July, 2016.

²⁹ Notre-Dame du Raincy appeared across a broad section of the Australian Press as a radically modern church in the following articles: 'Permanent Exhibition of Building Materials', *The Age*, (Oct, 1927), p.9; 'Concrete section modernist church design reflects the materialism of the age', *Building: the magazine for the architect, builder, property owner and merchant*, Vol. 45 No. 268, Sydney, (Dec 12, 1929), pp.121-124; 'The New Architecture: What's it all about', *The Age*, (Jan 12, 1935), p.5; 'Catholic Australia and the Fine Arts', *The Advocate*, (July 11, 1935), p.6.

³⁰ Blyth Johnson in *It Seemed Good. History of St Paul's Anglican Church, Boronia*, (Melbourne: Knox and Mountain District Free Press, 1971), p.57; Kidder Smith, G. E.. *The New churches of Europe*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1964), p.9.

³¹ 'Concrete section modernist church design reflects the materialism of the age', *Building: the magazine*, p.121.

³² Kidder Smith, *The New churches of Europe*, p.9.

³³ Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1987), p.144.

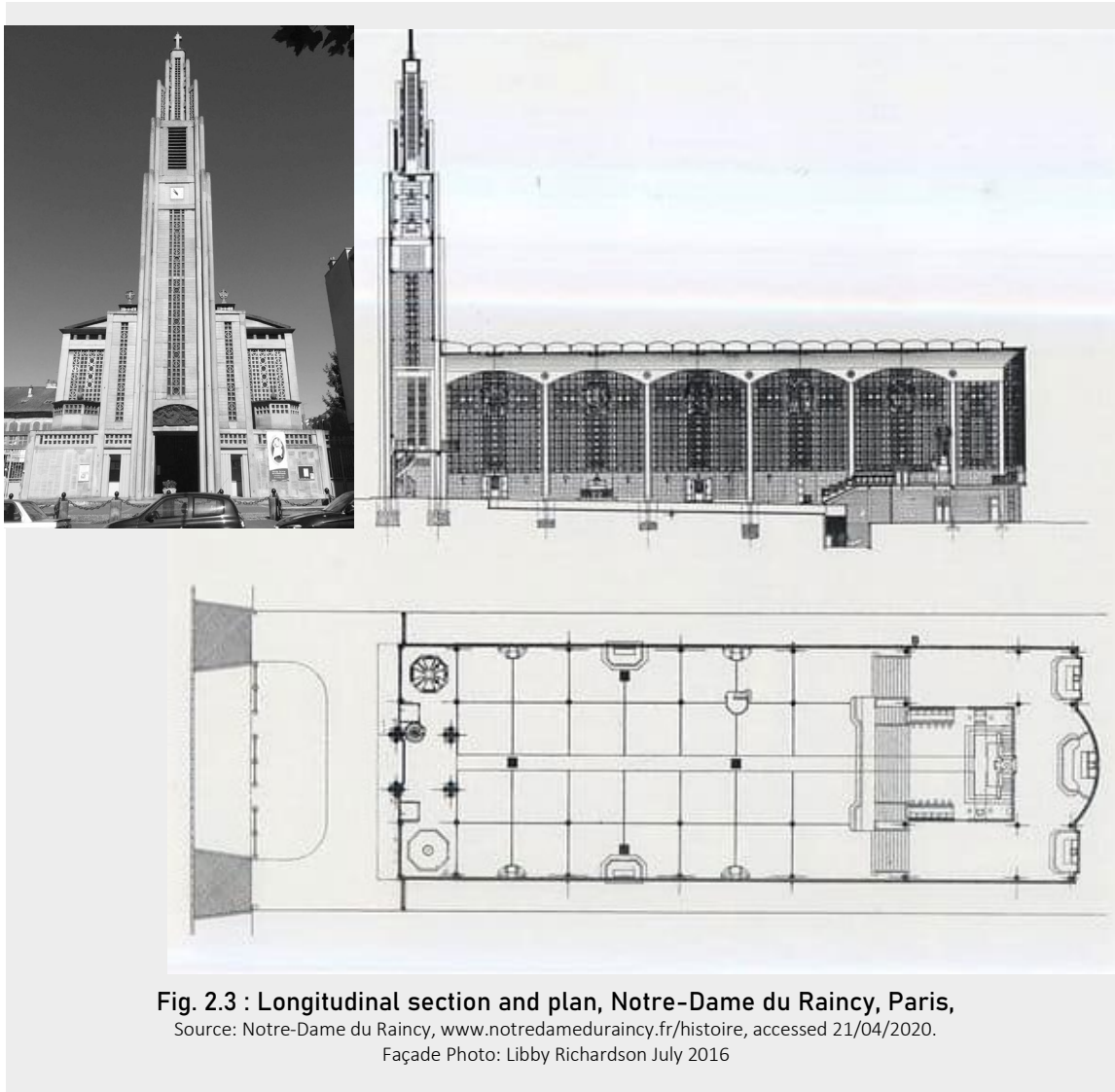


Fig. 2.3 : Longitudinal section and plan, Notre-Dame du Raincy, Paris,

Source: Notre-Dame du Raincy, www.notredameduraincy.fr/histoire, accessed 21/04/2020.

Façade Photo: Libby Richardson July 2016

2.2.2 In search of a new monumentality

Responding to what had now become a widely held view that the modern functionalist process of architectural design was incapable of expressing anything other than utilitarian ideas³⁴ the British *Architectural Review* invited leading architects and architectural thinkers of the day³⁵ to debate the issue. The 1948 symposium was described as one of the most significant contributions to contemporary architectural criticism in the twentieth century.³⁶ The symposium explored how modern architecture could potentially express “all the ideas that architecture – especially representational architecture – ought to be capable of expressing” over and above its material function.³⁷ Walter Gropius defined a traditional monument as a ‘memorial of huge size, symbolizing something worth being remembered –

³⁴ Ockman, Joan. *Architecture Culture, 1943-1968*, p.27-28, ‘In Search of a New Monumentality’, *Architectural Review*, pp.117-128.

³⁵ Participants were Gregor Paulsson, Professor of History and Theory, Uppsala University; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Professor of Architectural History, Wesleyan University, Connecticut and lecturer at MIT; William Holford, Professor of Town Planning, University of London; Sigfried Giedion, Professor of Art History, University of Zürich; Walter Gropius, founder of the Bauhaus, Dessau, Germany and Professor of Architecture, Harvard University; Lucio Costa, leader of the modern movement in Brazil; and Alfred Roth, editor of *Werk*.

³⁶ ‘In Search of a New Monumentality’, *Architectural Review*, p.117.

³⁷ ‘In Search of a New Monumentality’, *Architectural Review*, p.117.

religious faith, a great man, an important event or a social accomplishment'. Gropius emphasised the monument's primary purpose as 'spiritual' which had been characterised in the past through static form, a construct which no-longer represented contemporary society. Contemporary society required flexible public buildings capable of responding to growth and change.³⁸ Henry Russell Hitchcock questioned society's very understanding of a monument, explaining that although a 'predominance of temples and cathedrals'³⁹ had come down to us through the ages, it did not necessarily indicate man's dedication to religion but rather simply that the buildings had endured.⁴⁰ At an early stage of modernism, it was not yet clear what buildings were intended as representations of society, for perhaps the celebrated buildings of the past would not be equally valued in the future.

By 1949, Mumford also was expressing the opinion that the modern language of architecture did not sufficiently produce qualities associated with society's broader human needs and intentions.⁴¹ Mumford argued 'we must ask for a margin [...] above the necessary, the calculable, the economic' in order for architecture to go beyond utility to 'express the human spirit'.⁴² Similarly in 1956, Australian architect and critic Robin Boyd, writing for the British *Architectural Review* suggested functionalist theories were being used by architects as a substitute for artistic imagination. Boyd described functionalist design thinking as an 'ethic and a technique' rather than a method capable of generating architectural 'character'.⁴³ He suggested functionalism could not produce symbolism or represent ideas and creative concepts.⁴⁴ True architectural character was the product of artistic intention applied to the manipulation of 'space and enclosure'.⁴⁵ The notion of artistic intention had been lost through the dominance of functionalist ideology. Modern architecture's ability to express meaning would only be achieved when the architect and artist started working together again, from the inception of a project, which would reinstate the human spirit through artistic and symbolic expression.

At the same time as architects, critics and historians were questioning the conceptual, artistic and social purpose⁴⁶ of architecture in response to the marked changes in socio-cultural conditions, Christian churches and their leaders were seeking a renewed understanding of their position within the modern world.⁴⁷ The churches were openly seeking new ways of expressing theological belief in architectural forms commensurate with modern society. In 1962, British theologian Peter Hammond in his publication *Towards a Church Architecture*⁴⁸ implored "we must recover the conception of a church as a house for a

³⁸ Gropius, Walter. 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.127.

³⁹ Hitchcock, Alfred. 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, pp.124.

⁴⁰ Hitchcock, 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, pp.123-124.

⁴¹ Mumford, Lewis. 'Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style' in *Architectural Review*, Vol 105, no. 628, (Apr 1949), p.173.

⁴² Mumford, 'Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style', p.178.

⁴³ Boyd, 'The Functional Neurosis', p. 85.

⁴⁴ Boyd, 'The Functional Neurosis', p.85-88.

⁴⁵ Boyd, 'The Functional Neurosis', p.88.

⁴⁶ Forty, *Words and Buildings*, p.190.

⁴⁷ Hammond, Peter, 'A Liturgical Brief', *Architectural Review*, Vol 123, No. 735, (Apr, 1958) p.242.

⁴⁸ Peter Hammond's *Towards a Church Architecture* (London: The Architectural Press, 1962), plays on Le Corbusier's title *Towards an Architecture* (or the English version title *Towards a New Architecture*). Hammond aligned his book with the tenets of modernism and its functional approach: "The best modern buildings – schools, for example – have grown out of a profound understanding of what takes place inside them, and of how it takes place [...] this is a co-operative study by architects and clergy of several denominations and it aims to do for churches what has already been done for other buildings.", jacket cover entry.

community [...] It is not a shrine or a monument to some abstract concept of religion but a liturgical and pastoral instrument for the furtherance of the Church's apostolic task."⁴⁹ The existing conditions that Hammond rallied against were evident in the Australian setting where the understanding of a church building as a monument to religion, particularly in religious circles, was tangible. In 1954, the new Catholic Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Deepdene, designed with a 'massive central tower [to] dominate the front' was promoted as 'another of the many monuments that would be practical reminders of Archbishop Mannix's remarkable episcopate.' The new church was the parish's gift to Archbishop Mannix to mark his 90th anniversary.⁵⁰

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

**Fig. 2.5 : Our Lady of Good
Counsel Catholic Church,
Deepdene, Melbourne, Australia,
c.1955.**

Source: Photographer Lyle Fowler, Harold
Paynting Collection, State Library of Victoria,
Accession no. H92.20/5395-5397

The search for modern architecture to develop a 'rich and flexible' idiom capable of expressing a multitude of meanings and multivalent associations, traditionally associated with representational architecture⁵¹ resulted in a continuing process of re-evaluation of the operative purpose of architecture and its ability to create meaning through-out the twentieth century. The tensions and inherent contradictions of the 'modern monument' identified by Mumford, were uniquely borne out in the design of places of worship. The institutional need for a church to give form to symbolic function, which had always been understood in the context of continuity with a monumental tradition, was at odds with contemporary thought in architecture and society. The challenge for the church was to develop an architectural language capable of communicating meaning within the changing architectural and social landscape. To do this the church focused on the reconceptualization of liturgical ritual and worship which required new forms of architectural expression.

⁴⁹ Hammond, Peter. 'A Radical Approach to Church Architecture' in *Towards a Church Architecture*, p.29.

⁵⁰ 'Handsome modern Church for Deepdene Parish', *The Advocate*, (Mar 18, 1954), p.22.

⁵¹ 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.117.

2.2.3 Shifting sands: function, functional, functionalism

*"It is not enough for a modern building to be something and do something: it must also say something."*⁵²

Architectural critic Lewis Mumford 1949

As architects attempted to situate the ideology of functionalism over the course of the 20th century, functionalist ideas were transformed from their early Bauhaus origins of design as building⁵³ with a limited concern for aesthetics and symbolism.⁵⁴ Symbolism and meaning in architecture were relocated away from monumental conceptions and rationally static building towards an act of artistic creation⁵⁵ paradoxically as it had long been understood in the past. The idea of functionalism was so broadly disseminated in association with architectural criticism that the term 'functional' quickly became synonymous with modern architecture,⁵⁶ and although widely considered the most important concept in architectural theory of the first half of the twentieth century,⁵⁷ the idea of functionalism became nuanced as it was redefined, reinterpreted and 'humanised'.⁵⁸ By the 1950s the terms 'function', 'functional' and 'functionalism' were being used to describe an ever-widening spectrum of meaning ranging from biological analogy, structural articulation, and association with social purpose arising from the relationship between buildings and their specific programmes for social betterment.⁵⁹ 'New Empiricism' was the term coined to describe the Swedish attempt to 'humanise' functionalism via natural materials and the science of psychology in architectural design.⁶⁰ These sentiments⁶¹ were expressed by Professor Walter Gropius in May of 1954 in his keynote address 'Is there a Science of Design' presented at the 4th Australian Architectural Convention in Sydney.⁶² Gropius suggested in addition to the practical requirements of building, the psychological requirements of society were also primary functional concerns.⁶³ Echoing Giedion and Mumford, Gropius proposed spiritual richness in architecture could develop only through the imagination of the architect⁶⁴ and intuition of the artist, which would humanise the 'impact of the machine upon society.'⁶⁵ In the same year, Robin Boyd repeated Gropius's ideas stating 'the 'psychological functions' of a church building are quite as important as the physical

⁵² Mumford, 'Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style', p.173.

⁵³ Hannes Myer quoted in Ligo, Larry L. *The Concept of Function in Twentieth-Century Architectural Criticism*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1984), p.14.; Goldhagen Williams, Sarah and Réjean Legault (eds.), *Anxious Modernisms: Experimentation in Postwar Architectural Culture*, (Cambridge, Mass., London: MIT Press, 2000), p.17.

⁵⁴ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p. 14.

⁵⁵ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p.98.

⁵⁶ Forty, *Words and Buildings*, p.187

⁵⁷ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, pp.7-19.

⁵⁸ Kollar, Peter L. 'Four Lectures: The Problem of Duality: Function or Beauty', *Architecture in Australia*, (Oct-Dec, 1958), pp.78-80; Forty, *Words and Buildings*, p.187.; Goldhagen Williams, Sarah. 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.301.

⁵⁹ Harwood, Elaine. *Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945 – 1975*, (London: Yale University Press, 215), p. xiii.; Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.304.

⁶⁰ 'The New Empiricism: Sweden's latest style', *Architectural Review*, Vol 101, Jun 1947, p.199.

⁶¹ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p.98.

⁶² Gropius, Walter. 'Is there a Science of Design?', *Architecture Australia*, (Jul-Sept, 1954), p.132

⁶³ Gropius, 'Is there a Science of Design?', p.132.

⁶⁴ Gropius, 'Is there a Science of Design?', p.140.; 'Total Architecture, Professor Walter Gropius addresses architects', *Construction*, (May 12, 1954), p.2.

⁶⁵ 'Total Architecture', *Construction*, p.2.; Gropius, Walter. 'Build Community Centres First, Authority Advises', *Sydney Morning Herald*, (May 11, 1954), p. 4.

functions.’⁶⁶ Boyd linked the psychological function to the ‘atmosphere created by the shape – if the idea of the building – is suitably expressive’.⁶⁷ Over the course of the 20th century the scope of functionalism was constantly re-characterised as a fundamental architectural principle in modern design thinking, for buildings of all types.

The shifting international discourse is apparent in the Australian context in the way Australian architects of the twentieth century described their work and their design processes. Australian architects were working in an atmosphere informed by international ideas and in full cognisance of architectural and also theological discourse and debate. Prolific church designer Keith Reid,⁶⁸ described his design thinking in terms of making a new solution to a problem. “Instead of relying on any style, classical or any other type [...] The idea was something new, [...] not governed by any architectural precedent.”⁶⁹ Reid’s ethic echoes common aspects of early modern design thinking associated with the rejection of ornament and repudiation of style. Later, Peter McIntyre⁷⁰, 20 years Reid’s junior, reflected upon functionalist design ideologies and his subsequent awareness of a greater need to produce qualities associated with human comfort in addition to utility when he stated “architects in my era were all trained in what we call the functional school, and function meant [...] physical function [...] buildings had to express themselves functionally, if a building required a certain shape to be functional then that had to be expressed [...] but never ever in my training were people talking about how people *feel* in the building.”⁷¹ The expanding interpretation of functionalism is illustrated by the theme of the 1962 Australian Architectural Convention; Architecture and Human Behaviour. Chairman of the Convention, Reyner Banham, described the programme as featuring ‘non-architects speaking as experts in different aspects of the relation between men and buildings.’⁷² By 1966, Rex Patrick described the primary requirement of church design as being one of understanding its function, but he added the architect’s parallel responsibility “to shape forms which will [...] communicate to people appropriate emotional qualities” through the creation of the church as a “symbolic structure to contemporary society”.⁷³ The theological imperative for a church building to function both as building and symbol remained a defining characteristic of modern church design, shaping its development in a variety of ways throughout the changing architectural circumstances of the first half of the twentieth century.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Boyd, ‘Church builders are in a dilemma’, p. 16.

⁶⁷ Boyd, ‘Church builders are in a dilemma’, p. 16.

⁶⁸ Reid (1906-1999) designed some 50 church buildings with 20 churches designed between 1953 – 1966. This passage relates to Reid’s description of Reid & Pearson’s 1935 design for MacPherson’s Hardware Sales Shop on Collins Street in Melbourne.

⁶⁹ Keith Reid interviewed by the Society Art Deco Victoria Preservation Committee Members, Helen Graham, Sally Shrimpton, Cliff Skinner, August 23, 1997.

⁷⁰ McIntyre (1927 -) is well known for his expressive architecture of the 1950’s including the co-design of the 1956 Olympic Swimming Pool Stadium in Melbourne with Kevin Borland, John and Phyllis Murphy and engineer Bill Irwin, all recent graduates of the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier.

⁷¹ Modern Melbourne: Peter McIntyre interview. Directed and produced by Bart Borghesi and Emma Telfer.

<https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/built-environment/modern-melbourne/peter-mcintyre/peter-mcintyre-modern-melbourne-video/> Accessed Nov 23, 2018.

⁷² Banham, Reyner. ‘Men and Buildings’, *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 51, No.3, p.63.

⁷³ Patrick, Rex. ‘An unusual brief for a church design’, *Building, Lighting and Engineering*, (Dec, 1966), p.41.

⁷⁴ ‘A modern church on liturgical principles’, *Architectural Review*, Vol 128, No.766, Dec 1960, p.400.

Corpus Christi Roman Catholic Church, Aachen, Germany (1928)

Architect: Rudolf Schwarz

The church of Corpus Christi, Aachen, Germany (1928-1930),⁷⁵ designed by architect and author of *The Church Incarnate*, Rudolf Schwarz, demonstrates the outcomes of architectural modernism based on early functionalist principles which had produced buildings perceived as 'barren and lacking in spiritual richness'.⁷⁶ Corpus Christi is a large white building, volumetric in form and no different in appearance to a modern factory or other utilitarian building. Its interior is austere: a black marble floor and altar; industrial aluminium details; stark white walls; and dramatic lighting. In fact, these modernist architectural features led Corpus Christi to be characterised in church circles as 'the factory'.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, there were two ways by which Schwarz achieved, radically at the time, a modern theological arrangement of function: liturgically, the presence of the sanctuary and nave within the same double height single-volume interior demonstrated a non-hierarchical relationship between priest and congregation, and secondly, so simple and vast was the interior volume that the 'emptiness could be filled by that which only the holy can make meaningful'⁷⁸, the spatial quality of 'numinous character'.⁷⁹ Despite the cold functionality of the building, in the subsequent development of modern ecclesiastic design, these two characteristics; the single volume interior and creation of transcendence demonstrated at Corpus Christi were highly influential.⁸⁰

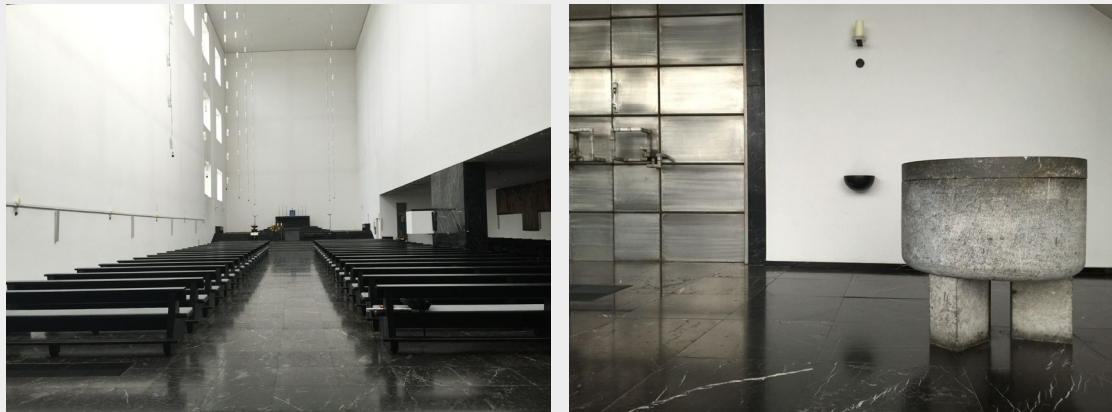


Fig. 2.8 : View of the sparse single-volume interior. Materials: aluminium, marble, stone.

Source: Libby Richardson, July, 2016.

⁷⁵ In 1886, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was born in Aachen.

⁷⁶ Pietro Belluschi quoted in Clausen, Meredith L.. *Spiritual Space: The Religious Architecture of Pietro Belluschi*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), p.23.

⁷⁷ Maguire, Robert and Keith Murray, *Modern churches of the world*, (London: Studio Vista, 1965), p.22.

⁷⁸ Maguire and Murray, *Modern churches of the world*, p.23.

⁷⁹ Tillich, Paul. *On Art and Architecture*, edited by John Dillenberger in collaboration with Jane Dillenberger, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987), p.217.

⁸⁰ Maguire and Murray, *Modern churches of the world*, p.22.

2.3 Liturgical function, architectural form

“the task of the modern architect is not to design a building that looks like a church. It is to create a building that works as a place for liturgy. The first and essential requirement is radical functional analysis.”⁸¹

Peter Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, 1960

2.3.1 Liturgical function

Peter Hammond’s influential 1960 publication *Liturgy and Architecture* was instrumental in promoting a re-interpretation of the liturgy through the lens of functionalism, and its corollary architectural ideas. Originating in 19th century Europe, the Liturgical Movement sought reform through a return to first principles, involving a greater lay participation in ritual and rite. By the mid twentieth century, architects and clergy alike were using the ideology of functionalism to justify changes to the way liturgical rituals and worship were enacted and embodied in architectural form and space.⁸² In the Catholic world the liturgical movement culminated in the Second Vatican Council 1962-1965 which signalled the church’s participation in the modern world. The Liturgical Movement it did not advocate formal or stylistic concerns but rather a functional approach to the spatial and ritual interactions between the priest and congregation,⁸³ which become the (re-) organising lens through which modern church designs were conceived.

Church organisations in post-war Australia held similar concerns in which theological meaning became located primarily in the spatial relationships engendered by the liturgy, which was interpreted as a functional concern more important than how the architecture looked. The essential function of the post-war church was widely understood as a place set apart for the gathering together of a Christian community, clergy and laity as participants, equal together, to celebrate the eucharistic ritual ‘to which everything else is subordinate.’⁸⁴ In Australia, architects, clergy and patrons of all denominations reiterated the need for liturgical design based on spatial and functional relationships in the way they spoke about the design of modern places of worship. In 1959, Victorian Anglican architect Blyth Johnson⁸⁵ suggested “a more liturgical church offers greater scope for interesting architecture.”⁸⁶ Similarly, Lutheran émigré architect Eric von Schramek⁸⁷ proposed “the first points on the agenda of the building programme should be: What is the purpose of the building? Whom do we worship and what is

⁸¹ Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1960), p.9.

⁸² Proctor, Robert. *Building the Modern Church. Roman Catholic Church Architecture in Britain, 1955 to 1975*, (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), p.135.

⁸³ ‘A modern church on liturgical principles’, *Architectural Review*, p.400.

⁸⁴ Hammond, ‘A Liturgical Brief’, *Architectural Review*, p.242.

⁸⁵ Blyth Johnson had worked for prolific church designer Louis Williams since 1958 but after 1965 Johnson entered private practice and went on to design 10 church buildings between 1965 – 1970.

⁸⁶ Johnson, Blyth. ‘Recent Victorian churches’, *Architecture in Australia*, June 1959, p.76.

⁸⁷ In 1981 Eric von Schramek, prolific church designer in Victoria and South Australia, was knighted in 1981 for his contribution to architecture and the Australian community. In this excerpt von Schramek is referring to an American Lutheran publication called *This before Architecture* where *This* is taken to mean *Theology*.

worship? What do we really believe?”⁸⁸ These sentiments were also expressed by Melbourne Archbishop Codrington in the *Church of England Messenger* when he emphatically declared “before we start planning a Church, there is one important question to answer, and that is: ‘What is a Church?’ The answer to this is primarily theological and only secondarily architectural.”⁸⁹

St Paul’s Church of England, Bow Common, London (1956-60)

Architect: Robert Maguire and Keith Murray

In 1956, St Paul’s Church of England, Bow Common, London became a highly influential model of Liturgical Movement design principles.⁹⁰ Designed by a young architect and member of the New Churches Research Council in Britain, Robert Maguire, the interior of Bow Common appeared on the cover of Peter Hammond’s *Towards a Church Architecture*. Maguire used extremely simple, modern architectural means⁹¹ of space, enclosure and light to create architectonically ‘a pattern of [functional] relationships’⁹² based on the liturgical rituals enacted within the building. In a square plan, the free-standing altar is placed in near central position; the space of the sanctuary is defined overhead by a tall lantern; the nave, with moveable seating arranged around three sides of the altar, is circumscribed vertically by a clerestory⁹³ and at ground level by a processional ambulatory with a ‘bounding wall and encircling colonnade’⁹⁴ as well as changes in material. To create a ‘harmony of all parts’ the building was ruled by a governing principle of three by four proportion to order the ‘principal relationships between elements in the building’.⁹⁵ The distinguishing achievement at Bow Common was Maguire’s use of historically traditional architectonic devices in an entirely new way to produce a modern setting for worship; liturgically and architecturally as ‘One Body’⁹⁶ whereby architectural structure, form and space express the function and theological meaning of the building.⁹⁷ Bow Common was widely understood as a new exemplar of modern liturgical design and a centralised eucharistic space.

⁸⁸ Von Schramek, Eric, *Reminiscences: Eric von Schramek and his churches*, compiled by Helen Gordon, Bowden, S.A.: Lutheran Archives, 2007), p.58-59. Von Schramek is referring to the book *This before Architecture* by Dr Edward S. Frey, Executive Director of the Commission on Church Architecture of the Lutheran Church in America.

⁸⁹ ‘The Archdeacon of Brighton asks: What is a Church?’, *The Church of England Messenger: The official organ of the Diocese of Melbourne*, No. 3032, (May 26, 1961), p.78.

⁹⁰ ‘A modern church on liturgical principles’, *Architectural Review*, p.400.; Kidder Smith, G. E., *The New Churches of Europe*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1964), p.30.; Hammond, ‘A Liturgical brief’, *Architectural Review*, p.241.; Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, p.114.

⁹¹ Hammond, *Liturgy and Architecture*, p.114.

⁹² Maguire and Murray, *Modern Churches of the World*, p.90.

⁹³ Kieckhefer, Richard. *Theology in Stone: Church architecture from Byzantium to Berkley*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.280.

⁹⁴ Maguire, Robert. ‘Church design since 1950’, *Ecclesiology Today*, Issue 27, (Jan, 2002), p.11

⁹⁵ Maguire, ‘Church design since 1950’, p.11.; Note: Maguire claims there “is nothing pseudo-sacred” about the use of a proportional system.

⁹⁶ Maguire, ‘Church design since 1950’, p.13.

⁹⁷ ‘A modern church on liturgical principles’, *Architectural Review*, p.400.

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**Fig. 2.9 : St Paul's Church of England, Bow Common, London (1958-60)
Plan and Elevation [photograph].**

Source: Church at Bow Common, *Architectural Review*, Vol 128, No.766, Dec 1960, p. 403.

2.3.2 Architectural form

*"the spirit of a building is in its shape"*⁹⁸

Melbourne architect and critic Robin Boyd, 1954

The unique representational purpose of the church building to embody both purpose and symbol justified the conception of new forms. In Australia, as internationally, after the second World War, an array of new materials and technologies enabled architects to pursue a range of architectural conceptions with imaginative form making and unique artistic vision.⁹⁹ New freedoms in plan and form in the design of modern buildings coupled with the institutional church attempting to represent a modern theological vision through architectural means, led to a wide spectrum of design responses. As modern architecture became pluralist¹⁰⁰ rather than a uniform culture or condition, architects were accepted for their divergent responses rather than their adherence to the rules.¹⁰¹

The post-war period was one of great social and architectural change which witnessed a growing acceptance of a wide diversity of forms and the design of buildings that no-longer conformed to historical precedent.¹⁰² These conditions allowed the modern church to evolve as a unique and bespoke response to the circumstances of each parish and community, architect and location. Not only did the

⁹⁸ Boyd, 'Church builders are in a dilemma', p. 16.

⁹⁹ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p.99; Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms* p.306-307.; Proctor, Robert. 'Uncertainty and the modern church: Two roman catholic cathedrals in Britain' in Kulic, Vladimir and Timothy Parker, Monica Penick (eds), *Sanctioning Modernism, Architecture and the Making of Postwar Identities*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), p.113.

¹⁰⁰ Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.308.

¹⁰¹ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p.99; Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.306-307.

¹⁰² Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, p.99.

freedoms lead to diversity in form but also highly original conceptions. The capacity for the building to embody, or at least provide a narrative of, symbolic meaning was an important justification for the bold expressive and geometric forms that arose during this period. These buildings communicated theological purpose conceptually rather than through a traditional representational language of architecture. The variety of designs that arose not only illustrate the broad agency of parish communities and their leaders to negotiate and determine the suitability of architectural scale, style and form for their specific community, but also demonstrates the ongoing importance of symbolism in the design of modern church buildings. Symbolism in modern church design served an important higher objective. Architects strived to achieve a unity of structure, form and space to achieve buildings capable of operating as ‘two things in one: [for] it is a building with a purpose, and it is a symbol.’¹⁰³ The uncertain and changing social conditions of modernity that characterised all aspects of post-war life¹⁰⁴ on the one hand led to a diminishing expectation for buildings to conform to historical representational formulae and on the other fostered an expectation for buildings to provide psychological comfort and conceptually engage with the human experience of architecture.¹⁰⁵

Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France (1952-1955) *Le Corbusier*

The critical reception of Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp focused on Le Corbusier’s abandonment of functionalist principles in what seemed like an arbitrary and irrational structural and spatial arrangement confusing to modern architects.¹⁰⁶ It was reported in Melbourne that Le Corbusier’s chapel was ‘shaped to match the landscape [and] to improve the acoustics its interior has the shape of a musical instrument.’¹⁰⁷ *Architectural Record* described Ronchamp as a sculpture, but as a building it lacked unity and showed ‘too much personal caprice’.¹⁰⁸ Maguire and Murray concurred: ‘Ronchamp has provided a justification for architects to ignore any discipline, to pursue private whimsy without concern for function [...] seen as a folly it is outstanding; but in the development of church building, it is a blind alley’¹⁰⁹ and ‘as a place for liturgy any barn would be better.’¹¹⁰

As transgressive as Le Corbusier’s Ronchamp was as a modern building that had broken the prevailing rules of architecture, the result was fully acceptable in the service of religion¹¹¹; as an artistic conception it was both building and symbol. Ronchamp sanctioned the freedom to sever ties with ecclesiastic traditions and to reject the modernist principles developed in the first half of

¹⁰³ Tillich, Paul. “Art and Architecture” by Paul Tillich – ed John Dillenberger in collaboration with Jane Dillenberger. 1987, p.212.

¹⁰⁴ Goldhagen Williams, ‘Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern’, *Anxious Modernisms*, p.309.; Proctor, Robert. ‘Uncertainty and the modern church: Two roman catholic cathedrals in Britain’, *Sanctioning Modernism*, p.135.

¹⁰⁵ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, pp.99-100.

¹⁰⁶ Stirling, James. ‘Ronchamp, Le Corbusier’s Chapel and the Crisis of Rationalism’, *Architectural Review*, Vol 119, No.711, (Mar 1956), p.160.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Church to Fit the Landscape’, *The Age*, (Dec 28, 1953), p.2.

¹⁰⁸ Burchard Ely, John. ‘A Pilgrimage: Ronchamp, Raincy, Vézelay’, *Architectural Record*, (Mar 1958), pp.171-178.

¹⁰⁹ Maguire and Murray. *Modern churches of the world*, p.51.

¹¹⁰ Maguire and Murray. *Modern churches of the world*, p.48.

¹¹¹ Bunning, Walter R.. ‘Book Review. *The Chapel at Ronchamp*’, *Architecture Australia*, Vol.47, No.2, (April-June, 1958), p.68.

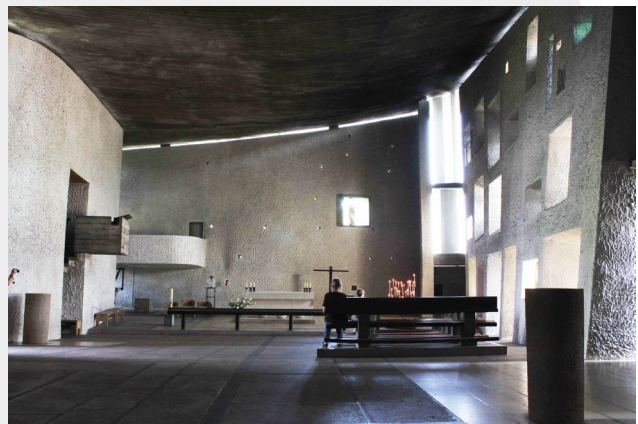
the twentieth century.¹¹² Ronchamp justified originality by giving architects permission to search for new forms and symbols of society.¹¹³

But it was Le Corbusier's adept orchestration of light and shadow using concealed light sources in combination with walls punctuated in an abstract pattern of windows that were variously coloured, clear and etched which was widely adopted as a new element in modern ecclesiastic buildings.

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**Fig. 2.10 : Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France, (1955)
Axonometric of structure and interior,
external pilgrimage chapel at left.**

Source: 'The Chapel at Ronchamp', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol.47, No.2, (Apr-Jun 1958), p.68.



**Fig. 2.11 : Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France, (1955)
(L): Impression of the building on approach, (R): interior view towards altar**

Source: Libby Richardson, July 2016.

¹¹² Heathcote, Edwin and Iona Spens. *Church Builders*, (London: Academy Editions, 1997), p.46.

¹¹³ Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.312.

2.4 Religious art, modernity and the artist

The complex and intersecting conditions of modernity stimulated a reassessment of the production and style of sacred art in the church. A number of influences came into play: the re-evaluation by the institutional church of all aspects of liturgy and ritual with a view to creating worship environments responsive to modern society; the clergy, reacting to the mass production of sacred art, fostering the idea of a return to hand crafted sacred art by practising artists as authentic works appropriate for the context of worship; and significant stylistic changes in representation as 20th century artistic movements shifted away from figuration towards abstraction. These influences were supported by the architectural profession promoting the integration of art and architecture as a way of reinstating meaning in architectural production. The artist's involvement in architecture, to create symbols of contemporary life, was endorsed as an integral component of design for modern buildings to achieve 'emotional as well as its practical' functions.¹¹⁴ Critics such as Gideon exposed the industrialised nineteenth century as one in which "*architects, sculptors, and painters* had become unaccustomed to working together. *They had lost contact with each other*".¹¹⁵ In the twentieth century, architects and clergy alike sought to enlist contemporary artists into the service of the church.

In Europe, French Dominican friar Marie-Alain Couturier (1897-1954) became widely influential in his advocacy for contemporary church design and his railing against mass produced sacred art.¹¹⁶ Couturier was both artist and priest and had worked with Maurice Denis on the abstract windows of Le Raincy, Paris.¹¹⁷ Couturier argued the spiritual dimension of modern abstract art was based on the intuitive genius of the artist which he interpreted as analogous to religious faith¹¹⁸, despite the fact many modern artists were unbelievers and therefore not considered appropriate by the church. Alongside Friar P-R Régamey, Couturier founded and edited the influential *L'Art Sacre* journal to argue for contemporary art by the finest practicing artists of the day as the most appropriate form of artistic work for the church.¹¹⁹ At the same time, in the United States, German Philosopher Paul Tillich (1886-1965) and American art scholar Maurice Lavanoux (1894-1974) were also publicly calling for the acceptance of contemporary church design and contemporary artists to produce authentic works of religious art. In 1931, Lavanoux established in America *Liturgical Arts Quarterly* a journal devoted to the arts of the Catholic Church which became internationally well regarded.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Fiene, Ernest. 'Figurative Arts and Architecture: mural and architectural sculpture' in Paul Zucker (Ed.) *New Architecture and City Planning: A symposium*, (New York: Philosophical Library, 1944), p.603.

¹¹⁵ Giedion, 'The Need for a New Monumentality', p.556.

¹¹⁶ 'Noted Priest-Artist dies', *The Advocate*, (Feb 25, 1954), p. 8.

¹¹⁷ O'Meara, Thomas F.. and Paul Philibert. 'Marie-Alain Couturier: Ministry and the Arts' in *Scanning the sign of the Times*, (SA: AFT (Australia), 2013), Accessed March 1, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt163t8tt.p.125.

¹¹⁸ Couturier, M.A. 'The Lesson of Assy', n.p.

¹¹⁹ O'Meara, 'Marie-Alain Couturier', p.128.

¹²⁰ Young, Victoria M.. 'A ministry of art: The decorative program of the Abbey Church', in *Saint John's Abbey Church: Marcel Breuer and the Creation of a Modern Sacred Space*, pp.111-112. (University of Minnesota Press, 2014). Accessed April 29, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctt1287nr1.8.



In France, Couturier's work led to the design of Notre-Dame de Toute Grace, Plateau D'Assy (1937-46) for the Dominican Order to serve the patients of a tuberculosis sanatorium in a small town in the French Alps. Couturier commissioned fifteen leading contemporary French artists to fulfil an ambitious artistic programme;¹²¹ incorporating a façade mosaic by Fernand Léger; a contemporary abstract bronze sculpture of the Crucifixion by Germaine Richier; tabernacle by Georges Braque; stained glass windows by Georges Rouault and others including Couturier; in the baptistery, a ceramic mural by Jewish artist Marc Chagall; as well as work by Henri Matisse and Jewish sculptor Jacques Liptchitz. Although Assy offered the idea that contemporary art was acceptable in the modern church, the overwhelming effect produced a cacophony. Nevertheless, the main criticism of the artistic programme was that many of the artists were non-believers, 'some were even known to be Communists'.¹²² The subsequent design of Sacré Coeur in the industrial town of Audincourt (1950-52), by the same architect Maurice Novarina, produced a more acceptable modern outcome. At Audincourt, Fernand Léger designed a simple altar tapestry and colourful strip of abstract stained-glass windows to followed the curve of the building surrounding the nave and sanctuary. Painter and stained-glass artist Jean Bazaine was responsible for the abstract mosaic mural of the façade and the vibrant abstract window-walls of the baptistery using a new technique called *dalle de verre*. The new technique involved chipping slabs of glass into small chunks and setting them into concrete frames which allowed the windows to become structural elements, and intense visual statements. Thereafter, the use of *dalle de verre* became widely synonymous with post-war church design as a sign of modernity.

¹²¹ 'The Assy Church', *Life Magazine*, (Jun 19, 1950), p.72.

¹²² 'The Assy Church', *Life Magazine*, (Jun 19, 1950), p.72.



Fig. 2.13 : Church of the Sacred Heart, Audincourt, France. (1950–52)

Abstract façade mosaic and baptistery *dalle de verre* by Jean Bazaine

Source: Libby Richardson, July 2016.

In England also there were circles of clergy and artists expressing similar sentiments.¹²³ In 1943, Walter Hussey, Vicar of St Matthew's Church of England, Northampton (1893), commissioned sculptor Henry Moore¹²⁴ to produce a contemporary Madonna and Child sculpture for the Lady Chapel. Moore's sombre response was influenced by medieval British tomb sculpture, interpreted by Moore as having a timeless quality appropriate to the traditions of the church.¹²⁵ However, the reception of the sculpture raised objections on a number of fronts. Firstly, the sculpture did not adhere to historical rectitude in how the Virgin Mary ought to be portrayed.¹²⁶ Secondly, questions arose regarding the capacity of a non-believing artist to produce a truly sacred work of art.¹²⁷ And thirdly, it was questioned whether Moore had 'sacrificed mastery of form by putting himself at the service of religion.'¹²⁸ Despite the thorny controversy, Hussey stood firm in his support of contemporary art in the church and went on in 1946 to commission painter Graham Sutherland to depict a portrait of the Crucifixion in modern abstract style. The 1951 competition for the design of Coventry Cathedral in its building and artistic programme, and subsequent lengthy completion to consecration in 1962, also raised issues of how contemporary art could be satisfactorily incorporated in modern church design. Just as at Notre-Dame de Toute Grace where the artistic programme was applied rather than integral, Coventry attracted criticism, particularly for the monumental tapestry which was said to visually overwhelm and obscure the liturgical focus of the

¹²³ Webster, Peter. 'The 'revival' in the visual arts in the Church of England, c.1935–c.1956', *Studies in Church History*, Vol 44, 2008, pp. 297–306. ISSN 9780954680947 School of Advanced Studies, University of London, <https://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/>

¹²⁴ Australia's Ola Cohn studied under Moore in London in the late 1920s. In 1952–54 Alan Ingham assisted Moore, and in 1955–56 he was followed Lenton Parr. Source: Stringer, 'Two decades of innovation', p.51.

¹²⁵ Curtis, Penelope and Fiona Russell (Eds.). *Henry Moore. Critical Essays*, (Aldershot, England, Ashgate, 2003), p.130–131.

¹²⁶ Webster, Peter. *Church and Patronage in 20th Century Britain*, p.80.

¹²⁷ Webster, Peter. *Church and Patronage in 20th Century Britain*, p.83–84; Grigson, Geoffrey. 'Henry Moore's Madonna and Child', *Architectural Review*, Vol. 96, No. 569, May, 1944, p.139.

¹²⁸ Newton, Eric. 'Henry Moore's Madonna and Child', *Architectural Review*, Vol. 96, No. 569, May, 1944, p.140.

interior, the altar. At Coventry, the artworks were seen as dominating and decoratively deployed, resulting in 'a jewel casket' rather than a liturgical vessel.¹²⁹



Fig. 2.14: Christ in Glory altar tapestry, Coventry Cathedral, 1951-1962

Artist: Graham Sutherland, 1962, woven in France.
Source: Libby Richardson, July 2016.

Illustration has been removed due to Copyright restrictions.

Fig. 2.15: Madonna and Child, St Matthew's Church of England, Northampton

Sculptor: Henry Moore, 1944
Source: J.P. Hodin. *Modern sculptors: Henry Moore*, (London: A. Zwemmer, 1958), plate 9.

The relationship between art and architecture was widely debated in Australia. As early as 1953, Audincourt was featured in the Sydney based professional journal *Construction*.¹³⁰ The *Australian Women's Weekly* followed the development of Coventry Cathedral, featuring articles on the glass engraving of angels by New Zealand artist John Hutton and the design of Sutherland's tapestry, 'the largest tapestry in the world',¹³¹ and in 1958, the Audincourt baptistery appeared in a seven page lift-out titled 'Revolution in the Churches'.¹³² A constant back and forth of dialogue between artist and architect occurred in the professional journals of the day, as a concern affecting modern buildings of all types. Architect Tom Heath declared "If the artist [subordinates] his work to the architecture, he produces decoration."¹³³ *Cross Section* opined "Sculpture applied externally to building becomes meaningful only if it [...] expresses a symbolism both self-evident and apposite to the building's function [...] but above all it must be a genuine work of art in its own right; only when architects and artists respect each other's demands and work in an atmosphere of co-operation rather than interference can works of art enrich our buildings and our lives."¹³⁴

In France, the Sacred Art movement led to the creation of a number of influential buildings which demonstrated the idea of sacred art in contemporary styles produced by practicing artists as appropriate

¹²⁹ Stancliffe, David. 'Liturgy as Art', *Art & Christianity*, Vol 63, Autumn 2010, p.3.

¹³⁰ 'Illumination in the modern French church', *Construction*, (Dec 2, 1953), p.14.

¹³¹ 'Artist's Home. How they live', *Australian Women's Weekly*, (Apr 30, 1958), p.28.

¹³² Scott, Fr. Michael. 'Revolution in the churches', *Australian Women's Weekly*, (Dec 16, 1959), p.33.

¹³³ Tom Heath, *Architecture in Australia*, Sept, 1959, p. 103.

¹³⁴ *Cross Section*, Issue 101, March 1, 1961, p.2.

in the context of the modern church. In addition to Sacré-Cœur, Audincourt (1950-52), the movement led to the Dominican Chapel at Ronchamp (1955) designed by Le Corbusier and the Rosary Chapel, Vence (1947-51) for which Henri Matisse was commissioned to produce a total unified design, including the vestments. These buildings were widely held as signalling a new direction in Christian art.¹³⁵ Elsewhere, in England, Coventry Cathedral became maligned as a ‘capricious’ attempt to stimulate an emotional response,¹³⁶ perhaps due to its long gestation over a decade of significant social and cultural change. In 1960s America, Couturier’s work and *L’Art Sacre* influenced John and Dominique de Menil’s decision to construct the non-denominational Chapel in Houston, Texas (1971) to house the work of abstract colour-field artist Mark Rothko.

2.5 Conclusion

Chapter Two has discussed the contentious themes that arose with the advent of modernity in relation to the ability of modern buildings to express and represent contemporary society’s social and cultural values, which in the past had been a key purpose of monumental buildings. Architects of all calibres grappled with issues of monumentality and functionalism as they attempted to implement modern architecture. Within this milieu, the place of worship, which had traditionally played the role of a monument and symbol within the city, was confronted with significant change. The first attempt to design a modern ecclesiastic building occurred at Notre-Dame du Raincy, France (1922) when August Perrett produced a structurally rational concrete frame building that was economical, but still adhered to a monumental tradition. Later, Rudolf Schwarz’s Corpus Christi Church, Aachen, Germany (1928) meticulously applied a functionalist ideology, producing a spartan building of monumental proportion that yet conceived of a new spatial condition in the relationship between the clergy and congregation located together within a single volume.

As the churches sought architectural forms commensurate with modern society and new worship practices, the Liturgical Movement encouraged the spatial and ritual interactions between the priest and congregation to become the (re-) organising lens through which modern church designs were conceived. St Paul’s Anglican Church, Bow Common, Britain (1956-60) was widely held as the first representative of modern liturgical design expressed in architectural and spatial terms whereby architectural structure, form and space all express the function and theological meaning of the building.¹³⁷ The uncertain and changing social conditions of modernity that characterised all aspects of post-war life¹³⁸ on the one hand led to a diminishing expectation for buildings to conform to historical representational formulae and on the other fostered an expectation for buildings to provide psychological comfort and conceptually engage with the human experience of architecture.¹³⁹ New freedoms in plan and form in the design of

¹³⁵ O’Meara, ‘Marie-Alain Couturier’, p.132.

¹³⁶ Richards, J.M. ‘Coventry’, *Architectural Review*, Vol 111, No.66, Jan, 1952, p.7.; Harwood, Elain. *Space Hope and Brutalism*, p.438-443.

¹³⁷ ‘A modern church on liturgical principles’, *Architectural Review*, p.400.

¹³⁸ Goldhagen Williams, ‘Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern’, *Anxious Modernisms*, p.309.; Proctor, Robert. ‘Uncertainty and the modern church: Two roman catholic cathedrals in Britain’, *Sanctioning Modernism*, p.135.

¹³⁹ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, pp.99-100.

modern buildings, coupled with the institutional church attempting to represent a modern theological vision through architectural means, led to a wide spectrum of design responses. These conditions allowed the modern church to evolve as a unique and bespoke response to the circumstances of each parish and community, architect and location. Le Corbusier's Notre-Dame du Haut, Ronchamp, France (1952-55) which broke away from traditional and also modernist design principles gave architects permission to search for new forms and symbols of contemporary society.¹⁴⁰ As transgressive as Le Corbusier's Ronchamp was as a modern building, it was fully acceptable in the service of religion.¹⁴¹ As an artistic conception it was both building and symbol. At the same time, the inadequacies of mass produced sacred art fostered the idea of a return to hand crafted work by practising artists as the only artistic works appropriate for the context of worship. Changes in sacred art were also influenced by 20th century artistic movements shifting away from figuration towards abstraction and supported by the architectural profession promoting the integration of art and architecture to create symbols of contemporary life.

The search for modern architecture to develop a 'rich and flexible' idiom capable of expressing a multiplicity of meanings and multivalent associations, traditionally associated with representational architecture¹⁴² resulted in a continuing process of re-evaluation of the operative purpose of architecture and its ability to create meaning in the twentieth century. The tensions and inherent contradictions of the 'modern monument' identified by Mumford, were uniquely borne out in the design of places of worship. The institutional need for a church to give form to symbolic function, which had always been understood in the context of continuity with a monumental tradition, was at odds with the contemporary architectural culture and changing socio-cultural situation.¹⁴³ Speaking at the 6th Australian Architectural Convention held in Adelaide in 1956, Dean of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Pietro Belluschi proposed:

*"architecture no longer glorifies the power of the church or the splendour of kings [...] Architecture has [...] changed its purpose, and, thereby its scale; it no longer creates monumental patterns as in the Renaissance period but is bent on shaping a warmly human environment on a scale that can be comprehended."*¹⁴⁴

It was this sense of the humble, small scale that would be adopted in Australia, partly through sympathy with Belluschi's ideas and partly through the modest, financially straitened settings of the Australian suburb and country town.

¹⁴⁰ Goldhagen Williams, 'Coda: Reconceptualizing the Modern', *Anxious Modernisms*, p.312.

¹⁴¹ Bunning, 'Book Review. The Chapel at Ronchamp', *Architecture Australia*, p.68.

¹⁴² 'In Search of a New Monumentality', *Architectural Review*, p.117.

¹⁴³ Ligo, *The Concept of Function*, pp.77-78.

¹⁴⁴ Belluschi, Pietro. 'Contemporary Architecture', *Architecture Australia*, Vol 45, No.3, (Jul-Sept, 1956), p.61.

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Fig. 3.0 ST JOHN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, MITCHAM, 1952
Architect: Alan G. Robertson. Image: Parish pledge pamphlet c.1958, Parish archives

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CHAPTER THREE

Charting the role of the church in Australian society

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three provides a concise synopsis of the key issues that were instrumental to the formation of the religious landscape in the Australian setting. The aim of this chapter is to build for the reader an understanding of the unique development of the origins and role of the church within Australian society. Australia's religious landscape was borne of the specific conditions of the early colony of New South Wales and the further settlement patterns of penal colonies and free settlers across the continent. By the mid-nineteenth century a competing range of Protestant denominations inherited from the British Isles and a vocal Irish Catholic cohort arrived via transportation created a diverse range of demands. The Australian colonies developed differently from their British origins such that to the outside observer in the 19th century, Australia lacked the depth of British religious traditions and also the public displays of piety of the United States.¹

In the 20th century, a continuing strong sectarian division between the Protestant and Catholic sectors of society led to separate education systems. The education divide elucidates the extent of division of parallel religious cultures within Australian society and the social structures which held them apart. Denominational affiliations and identities shaped one's social world in the spheres of church, school, recreation and marriage. In post-war society religion was expected to continue and religious organisations rode a wave of demand due to the 'baby boom' population and the perceived future requirement for children to be schooled in the homogeneous values of a Christian society. However, the changes wrought by post-war reconstruction in government policy, bringing social welfare under its purview and modern notions of urbanism with the secular community at its centre, indelibly weakened the influence of the church as an important local source of community. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were dynamic years of change in religious and social practices which came to challenge the authority of the church as an institution of power and influence within Australian society. Despite the extraordinary optimism of the churches, the far-reaching influences of modernity incrementally but significantly changed the daily lives of Australians as the social practices which had once been tightly bound together began to unravel.² By the end of this dynamic period, as the 1970s emerged, the position of religion in Australian society was changed forever.

¹ Davidson, Graeme. 'Religion', *Cambridge History of Australia*, Vol II, (Port Melbourne, Victoria: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.218.

² Davidson, 'Religion', p.221.

3.2 The early colony: the social role of the church

The early history of the church in Australia set a pattern of development that continued into the twentieth century. The Australian colonies inherited a remarkably pluralist religious landscape from the British Isles, representing a spectrum of Protestant denominations which largely co-existed and often overlapped.³ Many colonial leaders were members of the Church of England which dominated the social hierarchy, but there were also many in the fledgling society who were Presbyterian Church of Scotland, Methodist and also Baptist, Congregationalist, Quaker, and English Jews. Before 1850, when free emigration from Ireland commenced, an Irish Catholic presence was represented in the colony through convict arrivals, representing a quarter of the convict population.⁴ The Church of England was understood as part of the civil establishment, as it had been in England, and funds were provided for it to fulfil this role. The first religious service to take place on Australian shores was conducted under the auspices of the Crown through the Church of England, on January 28, 1788.⁵ In the early years of the colonies of New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land⁶, the colonial administration relied upon the Church of England to play a structuring role within the penal colony, as an agent for 'social stability and the moral reform of convicts'.⁷

Such was the reliance upon the Church of England that in 1826 the British Government endowed it one-seventh of the new lands of the colony of New South Wales⁸ for 'its sole use and benefit' through the short lived (1826-1833) *Clergy and Schools Act 1826*.⁹ The Act was designed to encourage the establishment of churches, parochial schools, orphan schools and schools for aboriginals through the Church and Schools Corporation.¹⁰ However, with such a pluralist religious landscape, the hegemony of the Church of England was vehemently challenged until it became no longer feasible for colonial authorities to exclusively patronise the Church of England.¹¹ In 1836, *The Church Act (NSW)* was introduced to subsidise 'the three grand divisions of Christianity'¹² in the form of equal support via a pound for pound subsidy system to the Church of England, the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church (and later the Wesleyan, Baptist and Jewish denominations). *The Church Act* stated a clear vision for the benefit of colonial society:

³ Jupp, James (Editor). *Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, (Port Melbourne, Australia: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.8-9.; Hilliard, David. 'God in the suburbs: The religious culture of Australian cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, 24:97, p.401.

⁴ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.223-229.

⁵ The State Library of New South Wales archive, Religion, church & missions in Australia: The Early Years. [www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/history_nation/religion] Accessed 9/9/2016.

⁶ The first Church of England jurisdiction established in Australia covered New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land. The jurisdiction was led by Archdeacon Thomas Scott (1826-1828) and subsequently Archdeacon William Broughton (1829-1833) and fell under the Diocese of Calcutta.

⁷ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.128.

⁸ Until 1951, Victoria was a district of New South Wales known as the Port Phillip District of the Colony of New South Wales.

⁹ The land was granted to the Church of England operating independently as the 'Church and School Corporation'. Campbell, C. 2018. Church and Schools Corporation. *Dictionary of Educational History in Australia and New Zealand (DEHANZ)*, 30 January. Available: <http://dehanz.net.au>

¹⁰ N.S.W. Government State Archives & Records, Cash Vouchers [Clergy and School Lands Corporation] Accessed online <https://www.records.nsw.gov.au/series/803> 18/02/2018.

¹¹ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.129.

¹² Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.129.

*"...for the advancement of the Christian Religion and the promotion of good morals in the Colony of New South Wales, it is expedient to encourage the observance of Public Worship, and for this purpose to authorise.... sums to be applied in aid of the building of Churches and Chapels, and of the maintenance of Ministers of Religion."*¹³

The Church Act (NSW), 1836

Inevitably, *The Church Act* came to challenge the privileged position of the Church of England, reducing the institution to an equal status in their relationship with the colonial government alongside several other denominations.

The population of the early colonies brought with them strong religious identities reflective of the class structures, institutions and values of British society. Where settlements occurred, so also did the construction of church buildings as a defining feature of a Christian society, signifying progress and [European] civilisation through the settled presence of a moral community.¹⁴ There was also a cultural nostalgia for the pastoral scenes of home, represented largely through a tamed landscape dotted with the monuments of civilization as a concrete link with British origins. The early churches in Australia were constructed in Georgian, Gothic and later Revival styles, many were modest and plain timber buildings unless significant resources were available for their construction in stone or brick, such as St John the Evangelist Church of England, Toorak, Victoria (1862). All were derived from models established at home and sometimes modified to suit local materials and skills. The Church of England remained strong amongst the early pastoralist and wealthier settlers and has always represented the upper strata of society in the Australian context.



Fig. 3.1: St John the Evangelist Church of England, Toorak, c.1863

Architect: William Wardell.
Source: City of Stonnington History Centre, Ref: PH9105.
Postcard, Lawson & Pearson lithographers, 1863.

¹³ Introduction to 'The Church Act' (1836) in *The acts and ordinances of the Governor and Council of New South Wales Sydney*, Volume 3, (Sydney: Printed by E.H. Statham, 1938) p.719. Accessed via The State Library of New South Wales archive [www2.sl.nsw.gov.au/archive/discover_collections/history_nation/religion/places/act.html]

¹⁴ Bremner, G.A. and Louis P. Nelson. 'Propagating ideas and institutions: Religious and Educational Architecture' in *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, edited by G. A. Bremner. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Oxford Scholarship Online, 2016. doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198713326.003.0006, p.160.

Missionary activity followed in the wake of colonial settlement patterns, with only limited success in the conversion of souls.¹⁵ In Victoria, the most successful missions were those established by the Moravians who were expressly invited to mission to the aboriginal people by Governor Charles La Trobe, a Moravian himself.¹⁶ The Moravians had some success because they attempted to learn the aboriginal language. Missions were established at Ebenezer in 1859 in the Wimmera district of Western Victoria and Ramahyuk in the Gippsland district of Eastern Victoria in 1861.¹⁷ Contemporary images of mission settlements depict orderly arrangements of slab huts and fences structured “around a central green, and prominently, the church and school house”.¹⁸ Yet, by the early twentieth century, mission settlements in Victoria had either disappeared or were converted into government-run institutions. The conversion of the indigenous population to Christianity was difficult for a number of reasons; in the early colonial years the indigenous population had been dispossessed, abused and violently massacred;¹⁹ indigenous spiritual beliefs, which were at the core of indigenous life, were not considered; the apparent tendency of the indigenous population towards a nomadic²⁰ lifestyle made it difficult to establish permanence and continuity; the aboriginal race was hard for the Europeans to comprehend because it was not cohesive but composed of many peoples and languages; and governmental attitudes were variable towards missionary activities because it was a widely held belief the aboriginal population would “die out”.²¹

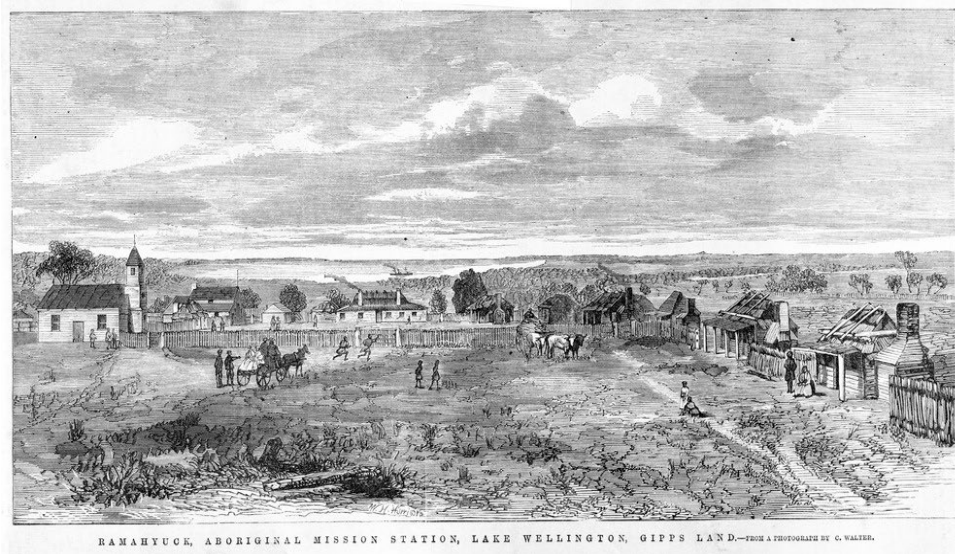


Fig. 3.2: Ramahyuck Aboriginal Mission Station, Lake Wellington, Gippsland

W. H. Harrison engraver [from a photograph by C. Walter], 1869.

Source: State Library of Victoria, La Trobe Picture Collection, *Illustrated Australian News*, (Jan 4, 1869), p.5.

Accession no. IAN 04/01/69/5.

¹⁵ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.96.

¹⁶ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.99.; La Trobe was not a military man but an intellectual. The La Trobe family were prominent British Moravians. La Trobe's grandfather, father and brother were leaders in the church.

¹⁷ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.98-100. The Ebenezer mission existed until 1904.

¹⁸ Lydon, Jane. 'Watched over by the indefatigable Moravian missionaries': Colonialism and Photography at Ebenezer and Ramahyuck', *The La Trobe Journal*, State Library of Victoria, No 76, (Spring 2005), p.31. (Accessed online: <http://www3.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/index.html>)

¹⁹ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, pp.107-08. The last documented massacre of indigenous peoples occurred in 1928. The Coniston Massacre occurred in the Northern Territory. At the time, aspersions were cast upon a female missionary witness of the massacre for "living among traditional people and teaching [them] to expect equality." At Federation (1901) aboriginal people were not included in the population because of the belief they were "dying out." Aboriginal people did not have voting rights until 1962 and were not recognised in the Australian constitution until 1967.

²⁰ The notion of the indigenous population as nomads has latterly come under question. For a comprehensive understanding of indigenous settlements see Paul Memmott's *Gunyah, Goondie and Wurley: The aboriginal Architecture of Australia*, 2007.

²¹ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.96-97.

3.3 The church in the early Melbourne

Through-out Australia the religious landscape of its capital cities is characterised by the unique settlement and immigration patterns associated with each city. Sydney, N.S.W. and Hobart, Tasmania were established as penal colonies in 1788 and 1803 respectively and therefore the Church of England dominated. However, with a large convict population, N.S.W. had 'more Catholics than elsewhere'.²² In South Australia, Adelaide was declared in 1836 as a free settler colony with explicit ideals of religious freedom that accepted many Methodist and Lutheran settlers, both devout denominations which made their mark on the city. Similarly, in Western Australia, Perth was initially freely settled in 1829. In Victoria, the founding of Melbourne arose through private enterprise after John Batman purportedly negotiated treaty²³ with the local Wurundjeri peoples in 1835. As a commercially oriented colony, there were 'rather more Presbyterians'.²⁴ In the 19th century, Melbourne was shaped by land boom and bust and in 1851, the discovery of gold transformed the city into a major urban centre, earning it the title 'Marvellous Melbourne'.²⁵

In 1836, the Pioneer Church was the first place of worship erected in Melbourne. It was an 'all denominational chapel', a temporary structure, 'low roofed and severely plain' located at the corner of Williams and Little Collins Streets intended for both worship and Christian education.²⁶ By 1837, surveyor Robert Hoddle had established a grid plan for the streets of Melbourne in which Governor Bourke safeguarded the 'desirable areas, usually on high and commanding corner sites' for church grants. The grants provided two acre allotments to accommodate a church, residence and school. However, indicating the continuing dominance of the Church of England within colonial society the Anglicans were allocated five acres, a favouritism for which the government was lambasted.²⁷ Over the next 15 years, 33 permanent places of worship were constructed in Melbourne encompassing the Church of England (9), Presbyterian (5), Wesleyan (8), Jewish (1), Baptist (2), Independent (4) and Roman Catholic (4) churches²⁸ in a population of approximately 23,000 people.²⁹

The physical characteristics of early land grants and city planning, and the manifest social character of Melbourne are imprinted on the city through the location and style of its two cathedral buildings. While the Church of England was allocated 5 acres of land within Hoddle's city grid, the Catholic Church strategically requested a parcel of land on higher ground at Eastern Hill, beyond the city grid. Here they constructed St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral (1858-1897, spires 1936-40), an ambitious bluestone Gothic

²² Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.8.

²³ Freeland, J.M. *Melbourne churches 1836-1851. An Architectural Record*. (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 1963), p.5.

²⁴ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.8.

²⁵ King, Stuart and Julie Willis, 'The Australian Colonies', in *Architecture and Urbanism in the British Empire*, ed. G. A. Bremner, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p.320-326.

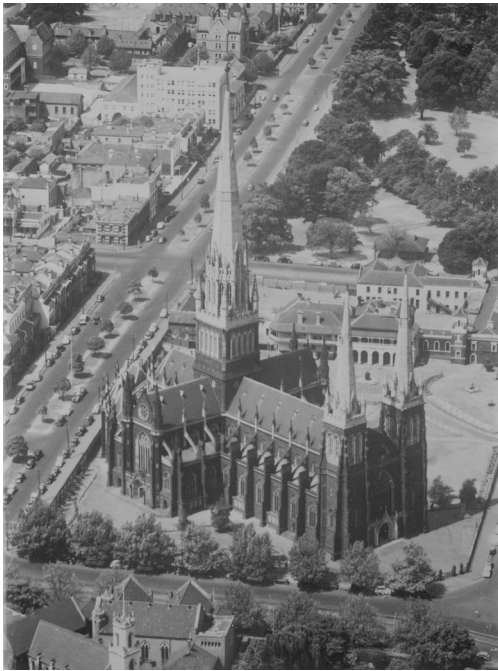
²⁶ Freeland, *Melbourne churches*, p.46. Note that this building was claimed by the authorities in 1838 as the property of the Church of England which Freeland describes as "a first-rate piece of state-supported ecclesiastical hijacking."

²⁷ Freeland, *Melbourne churches*, p.45.

²⁸ Freeland, *Melbourne churches*, pp.146-47; Of the 33 churches: 60.6% represented various Protestant denominations; 27.3% were Church of England; and 12.1% Roman Catholic.

²⁹ Demography, emelbourne.net.au/biogs/EM00455b.htm, accessed 4/6/2020. Equates to approx. 1 church per 700 persons.

Revival building of large scale designed by the recently arrived British architect William Wardell.³⁰ On the land allocated to the Church of England at the corner of Swanston and Flinders Streets a bluestone parish church (1852-1885) was constructed but later replaced by the present-day St Paul's Anglican Cathedral (1885-1891, spires 1926), designed in the High Victorian Gothic Revival style. St Paul's Cathedral stands as an architectural representative of the British Empire³¹ designed by the important British architect William Butterfield³², who never set foot on Australian shores.³³ These buildings demonstrate the symbolic role of the church building through their association with a continuity of architectural ideas and culturally through a social identity grounded in religious traditions.



**Fig. 3.3: (L): St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Eastern Hill, Melbourne, c.1940-54
(R): St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, corner Swanston and Flinders Streets, Melbourne, c.1935.**

Source: (L): State Library of Victoria, Rose Stereography Co. Collection, Airspy Photo, H32492/294. <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/65977>
(R): State Library of Victoria, Digitised postcard, H99.42/7, <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/365138>

At the time, the granting of prime land close to the city at Eastern Hill to the Catholic denomination caused 'an outbreak of sectarianism [...] Arguments, charges and counter-charges heated the blood of the population while press and town councillors carried the controversy to white heat'.³⁴ The strength of

³⁰ Born in England, William Wardell (1823-1899) emigrated to Australia in 1858. An established architect in his own right, Wardell was immediately appointed Chief Architect in the Department of Works and Buildings, later becoming Inspector-General of Public Works. Wardell was prolific, he had the right to independent practice and the responsibility for the construction of all public buildings in Victoria. As well as the design for St Patrick's Roman Catholic Cathedral he designed St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in Sydney and numerous Gothic revival churches throughout Melbourne including St John's Anglican Church, Toorak (1860) in the heartland of affluent Melbourne. (Source: Australian Dictionary of Biography: adb.anu.edu.au)

³¹ Bremner, G. A. *Imperial Gothic. Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire c.1840-1870*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 5.

³² William Butterfield (1814-1900) was a somewhat idiosyncratic but notable architect of the Gothic Revival style with an interest in materials, colour, texture, patterns and polychrome brickwork. Butterfield was connected with the Cambridge Camden Society. His notable buildings include All Saints Church, Margaret Street, London (1849-59) and Keble College, University of Oxford (1870-76).

³³ Despite designing the building, Butterfield never visited Australia. Instead the project was supervised by Crouch and Wilson and then Reed and Barnes.

³⁴ Freeland, *Melbourne churches*, p.126.

sectarianism that infected the Australian context, religious and political, was to characterise ongoing tensions and a continuing British opposition to Catholic access to wealth, power, education and status.³⁵ Under these circumstances, Catholicism, already a strongly conformist religion, developed a uniquely strong identity and political will, assisted by the predominantly Irish born clergy who encouraged political action.³⁶ There were key issues in Australian society that the politicised Catholic voice contested; the First World War conscription referendums of 1916 and 1917³⁷; public funding for Catholic schools³⁸; involvement in Unionism³⁹; the Australian Labor Party⁴⁰ split of 1931⁴¹ and 1955.⁴² The 'Catholic Action'⁴³ movement led by Bob Santamaria⁴⁴ arose to politically mobilise lay activities around public issues and allegedly had its origins in the Campion Society, a Catholic organisation created in 1931 by Catholic students of the University of Melbourne.⁴⁵ In the post-war years, the effect of animosity between Catholic and Protestant groups 'ran through Australian urban society'⁴⁶ and the impact of the segregated school system could mean that a Protestant (or Catholic) child could spend their childhood without ever meeting a Catholic (or Protestant).⁴⁷

³⁵ Cahill, Desmond. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.233.

³⁶ O'Brien, Anne. *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.235; Liana Giorgi states two discrete cultures are represented by Protestantism and Catholicism and that the sociological nature of the clash of cultures 'encourages a community identity of strong religiosity', p.645 in Giorgi, Liana. 'Religious Involvement in a Secularized Society: An Empirical Confirmation of Martin's General Theory of Secularization', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 43, No. 4 (Dec., 1992), pp. 634-652. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/591342> Accessed: 03-03-2017

³⁷ Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne became the driving force behind the successful 'No' vote against subscription. The Catholic vote indicated the reluctance of Catholic support for Britain after the unsuccessful Easter Rising in Dublin of 1916, a fight for an Irish Republic that was quashed by the British who had the leaders of the movement executed. Separately, the issue of conscription caused a ruction and split the Australian Labor Party (ALP), after which Catholic membership came to dominate. Thereafter, an average of 50% of Labor Ministers elected to Parliament were Catholic. Common concerns for social justice attracted the unionised working classes naturally to the ALP regardless of denomination. Nevertheless, twentieth century Australian politics and religion became entwined through the ALP which since its inception had attracted large numbers of Roman Catholics, mainly Irish working-class people who had emigrated due to poverty and famine. (Source: Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.255-59.)

³⁸ A nineteenth century concern that continued well into the mid-twentieth century, cementing bitterness and segregation. Equal funding for State and Catholic schools was not granted until 1963 by the Menzies Government.

³⁹ Ethnicity, class and religion associated Catholics with unionism. Catholics tended to be Irish and working class and Catholicism tended to support the notion of trade unions and social democratic traditions (but anti-communist) on social justice grounds.

⁴⁰ Reeves, John H.. 'Church and State and the crisis in the Australian Labor Party', *The Australian Intercollegian, Journal of the Australian Student Christian Movement*, Vol 61, No.2, (May, 1958).pp.18-20, 32.

⁴¹ The Labor party split over economic policy in the aftermath of the Great Depression.

⁴² The split of 1955 was strongly associated with B.A. Santamaria's attempts to control the ALP by infiltrating the communist-dominated unions. However, the Liberal and Country Parties were able to successfully portray the ALP as pro-communist especially in relation to the 1951 referendum to ban the communist party which was unsuccessful by a small margin. In 1954, Dr Evatt denounced Santamaria's Catholic Social Studies Movement. In 1955, a mainly Catholic (and anti-communist) contingent split from the ALP to form the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). Thereafter until 1972, when Gough Whitlam of the ALP gained power, the DLP were effectively able to hold a balance of power position within the parliament. (Source: National Museum of Australia, www.nma.gov.au)

⁴³ The aim of Catholic Action was to "re-establish in society that Christian concept of life which modern pagan forces are openly seeking to destroy [working] under the guidance of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, outside of and above political parties, for the purpose of restoring Catholic life in the family and society". Catholic Action was a call to the "entire world" by Pope Pius XI. (Source: Quotation from 'National Secretariat of Catholic Action', *The Advocate*, (Jan 20, 1938), p.11.)

⁴⁴ B. A. Santamaria (1915-98) born in Brunswick, Melbourne, to poor Italian migrants, became a lawyer and one of Australia's most influential Catholic lay people through his leadership role in the Catholic Action movement.

⁴⁵ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.260.

⁴⁶ Hilliard, 'God in the suburbs', p.402.

⁴⁷ Author's personal experience.

3.4 The Australian Education System and the church

*"...it could perhaps be said that schools have been more truly the founders of Churches than Churches of schools. A hundred souls in town or country, agreeing to build a schoolhouse, could, in the early days in Victoria, claim from the Government a land grant, a building grant, a school grant, a stipend grant and then ask for a resident clergyman. Many of the parishes originally arose from the schools."*⁴⁸

Following British models, education in the early colonies was undertaken via a range of denominational schools, reflected in the early land grants being allocated for the erection of a church, clerical residence and school.⁴⁹ However, because it was thought education was being unevenly administered,⁵⁰ after 1872 in Victoria, the *Education Act (Vic)* was introduced to established free and compulsory⁵¹ education via a non-religious system of State schools for children between the ages of six and fifteen. The *Education Act* stated "in every State school secular instruction only shall be given and no teacher shall give any other than secular instruction in any State school building."⁵² The secular nature of the education system had a long-lasting impact over the context in which religious buildings were conceived. For Protestant denominations, the secular system allowed religion to be separated from education. On the other hand, because Catholic leaders would not countenance their people being educated in a secular environment, Catholic churches were integrated with Catholic education through the co-location of the school and church buildings in close proximity as the central hub of the religious community.

The Catholic populace were expected to attend Catholic schools and were warned that to do otherwise would be a 'serious moral offence' leading to their exclusion from the sacraments.⁵³ However, a majority of the Catholic population were socio-economically disadvantaged, and Catholic schools, although funded in part by the church, were not free. As a consequence, 'rather than allow their children to attend the public schools, [parents] preferred to keep them at home.'⁵⁴ There were large numbers of Catholic children who either did not attend school, or did not attend school for as long as the Protestant population.⁵⁵ These circumstances severely curtailed and compounded Catholic social status, putting paid to social mobility within the broader community.⁵⁶ The Catholic denominational school system was stridently organised for the protection of 'both its pupils and its organisation from the inroad of unwanted [Protestant] ideas, beliefs and norms.'⁵⁷ Catholic denominational education followed a

⁴⁸ Nunn, Harry W.. *A Short History of the Church of England 1847 – 1947*, (Melbourne: Editorial Committee of the Centenary Celebrations, Melbourne Diocese, 1947). Project Canterbury: anglicanhistory.org/aus/hwnunn_victoria1947/03.html. Accessed online 31/04/2016.

⁴⁹ Freeland, *Melbourne Churches*, p.45.

⁵⁰ Mol, Hans, *The Faith of Australians*, (Sydney London Boston: George Allen & Unwin, 1985), pp.84-86.

⁵¹ Fogarty, Brother Ronald. *Catholic Education in Australia 1806-1950*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1959), p.464.

⁵² Education Act 1872 (Vic), transcript, p.3. (Source: www.foundingdocs.gov.au)

⁵³ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.107.

⁵⁴ Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, p.19.

⁵⁵ Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, p.265.

⁵⁶ Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, p.266.

⁵⁷ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.106.

traditional understanding of education whereby its teachers were members of religious orders⁵⁸ and theology was central to its framework of meaning. In 1915, Archbishop of Melbourne Daniel Mannix referred to catholic schools as the “ante-chamber of the Church.”⁵⁹ On the other hand, the Protestant population was not bothered by sending their children to any sort of Protestant denominational school or generally to a free secular State school.⁶⁰ Protestant systems of denominational education were largely established as institutions for maintaining the standards and values associated with (higher) social class and ‘achievements, such as leadership’ rather than the protection of theological belief.⁶¹

The long-term consequences of segregation in the education system, along with the antagonisms that arose, influenced the way church building was approached after the Second World War. Many Protestant churches were constructed in suburban locations, as small islands surrounded by housing, largely reflecting the suburban status quo and the confidence of entitlement. On the other hand, Catholic identity was reinforced and strengthened through the imposition of the church building into the heart of the parish community alongside the parish school, often in a prominent location. In 1961, Bishop Fox stated “We are proud of the fact that we are prepared to pay as much as possible to obtain decent school buildings. The Pascoe Vale South church and school are on a hill. Near-by in a hollow [...] there is a State school. It is an ugly building. [...] “Look at what the State Education Department can get away with” [...] Our buildings are superior to many new State schools”.⁶²



Fig. 3.4: St John's Catholic Primary School children. Confirmation day, c.mid-1950s

Source: St John's Catholic Church, Mitcham Archives

⁵⁸ Due to the shortage of teachers in Australia, Catholic priests, brothers and nuns from Europe and Ireland were recruited, adding to the ethnic diversity of the Catholic population.

⁵⁹ Archbishop Mannix c1915 quoted in Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.108.

⁶⁰ Fogarty, *Catholic Education*, p.137.

⁶¹ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.106.

⁶² “Remarkable Progress” in Lalor-Thomastown, Bishop Fox Blesses Church-School, *The Advocate*, (March 2, 1961) p.7.

The position (both figurative and literal) of the Catholic parochial church, embedded within the educational and religious framework of its community, served to reinforce and legitimate the social and cultural values of its members.⁶³ The benefits of co-locating the Catholic church and school to the ongoing survival of Catholic church buildings is borne out in the size and number of Catholic churches which remain intact and in use today, at the centre of inter-generational communities that appear to be cohesive. “Without its enormous and costly effort in education the Catholic Church in Australia would be much weaker and would have decidedly less hold on its membership.”⁶⁴ As a consequence of the secular State school system, Protestant churches over time have come to be separated from the hub of their communities and distanced from the traditional integration of religion, a moral undertaking, and education, a technical and knowledge-based undertaking.⁶⁵ Protestant churches today have dwindling congregations with no ‘ante-chamber’ for succession and its church buildings are consistently under threat of closure.

3.5 Religion in the lives of Australians

In the mid-nineteenth century, religious belief featured in the lives of the vast majority of the Australian population. In 1851, almost 70% of the population identified as adherents of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations, while 26.1% identified as belonging to the Catholic Church.⁶⁶ Over the next 100 years, as Australian society underwent demographic, cultural and social change, particularly in the middle years of the twentieth century, the percentage of Australians identifying as adherents of religion declined substantially. By 1971, only 42.5% of the population identified as adherents of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations, while a consistent 27% identified as belonging to the Catholic Church, representing a relative rise in Catholicism against a relative (and real) decline in the major Protestant denominations. Even more compelling are statistics indicating church attendance. In 1954, 75% of the Catholic faithful attended church regularly while those of the major Protestant denominations attending church services on a regular basis ranged between 19% to 33%. By the 1970s, religion across all denominations occupied peoples’ lives far less that it had in the past: “almost half the adult population rarely or never attended church except for weddings and funerals.”⁶⁷

	1851	1901	1947	1961	1971
Anglican	52.7%	39.7%	39.0%	34.9%	31.0%
Presbyterian	10.3%	11.3%	9.8%	9.3%	8.1%
Methodist	5.6%	13.4%	11.5%	8.6%	3.4%
Catholic	26.1%	22.7%	20.9%	24.9%	27.0%

Fig. 3.5: (Table) Affiliation of major religious denominations as a percentage of the Australian population

Source: Hans Mol. *The Faith of Australians*, (North Sydney, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.6.

⁶³ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, pp.108-119.

⁶⁴ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.120.

⁶⁵ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, p.84.

⁶⁶ Mol, *The Faith of Australians*, pp.6-7.

⁶⁷ Hilliard, ‘God in the suburbs’, p.401.

	1947	1954	1962	1970
Anglican	19%	19%	13%	11%
Presbyterian	31%	21%	19%	20%
Methodist	34%	33%	33%	21%
Catholic	63%	75%	55%	51%

Fig. 3.6: (Table) Percentage of each major religious denomination attending church on a weekly basis

Source: Hans Mol. *The Faith of Australians*, (North Sydney, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 1985), p.6-7.

These ongoing statistics, indicating the declining influence of religion over the course of the 20th century, have encouraged the amalgamation of smaller denominations and caused relative changes in the dominance of particular faiths. Since Federation of the colonies in 1901, the Methodist and Congregationalist denominations had sought reunion but it was not until 1957, in the spirit of ecumenism that they were joined by the majority of Presbyterian congregations to subsequently form the Uniting Church of Australia in June 1977. Through this union, the churches were able to bring together their belief systems and combine their infrastructure to become the third largest denomination behind the Catholic and Anglican churches. Today, the Uniting Church of Australia is widely regarded as a uniquely Australian institutional religion.⁶⁸

3.6 Religion in post-war society

“The period of the 1950s was one of discontinuities [...] the 1950s bear a particular weight as a point of separation between an old and a new Australia. [...] associated with a ‘fundamental break’ from a society structured by class and ruled by notions of empire and traditional values to a society that was culturally diverse and preoccupied with ‘quality of life’ issues.”⁶⁹

The catastrophic events and ramifications of the Second World War were confronting to humanity’s understanding of itself as a race. In part, these sentiments seemed to fuel the search for a renewed truth through religious conviction. The media reported “‘new vistas’, a ‘new era’ in world affairs, a ‘revolution’ in daily life and the fact that the atomic bomb had ‘severed the old world from the new with guillotine-like decisiveness’”.⁷⁰ For the religious, the events of the war were seen as a significant crisis, “Rev. Dr C. N. Button warned his Ballarat congregation: ‘Humanity is at the crossroads’”.⁷¹ In the early post-war period religion was popularly expected to continue to be central to the lives of most Australians and growth across all denominations was anticipated to continue. The religious and social upheavals of the

⁶⁸ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.21, 486, 540.

⁶⁹ Brown, Nicolas. *Governing Prosperity*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.2.

⁷⁰ Sherratt, Tim. ‘Frontiers of the future: science and progress in 20th century Australia’ in Bird Rose, Deborah and Richard Davis (eds), *Dislocating the Frontier*, (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2005), p.130. Accessed via JSTOR, Sept 28, 2017, URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2jbjbt.11>.

⁷¹ Sherratt, ‘Frontiers of the future’, p. 130.

1960s remained beyond the radar of religious communities.⁷² Australian society was concurrently awash with spiritual concern as religious leaders attempted to cast Christianity in the role of moral guardian of family values and a cohesive social order.⁷³ Religion was fostered as an antidote to the complexities of modern life: 'the problems met by our community and individuals cause more mental, nervous and spiritual strain than ever before, [the church] can become a vital centre of community service.'⁷⁴ The expectation of continuity was expressed in the religious literature of the day and in the extension of church building programmes designed to meet the demand of a rapidly expanding post-war population. Literature of all denominations expressed these sentiments through depictions of children in whom the future of Christianity was to be vested. And although a secular youth culture arose during this period, alongside well known films with contemporary content such as *Rebel without a Cause* (1955), *Dial M for Murder* (1954) and *Westside Story* (1961), religious narratives persisted and were available to those who sought them out: Cecil B. De Mille's *Samson and Delilah* (1949); the spectacular remake of De Mille's 1923 silent film *The Ten Commandments* (1956); *The Robe* (1953) starring Richard Burton; *Quo Vadis* (1951); and the remake of De Mille's silent 1927 film *The King of Kings* (1961).⁷⁵

The British colonial origins of Australian society also remained strong well into the twentieth century. According to Barry Humphries⁷⁶, "I grew up in a Melbourne which pretended it was in the home Counties in England. The first kangaroo I ever saw was in the London Zoo, I never saw an aborigine, or an indigenous Australian, the tin of biscuits on top of the fridge had a thatched cottage on it. The music we listened to was always English music, songs about glorious Devon, Somerset, Kent."⁷⁷



Fig. 3.7: Advertisement for the film King of Kings

Source: *The Methodist Spectator*, (Dec 6, 1961), p.13.

⁷² Hilliard, David. 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol 16, No.2, 1988, p.235.

⁷³ Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia', p.235.

⁷⁴ 'Our Christian Development Program', St Faith's Church of England, Burwood, June 1961, p.4 & p.11.

⁷⁵ Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia', p.231.; American Film Institute Catalogue, catalog.afi.com. Accessed Feb 5, 2019.

⁷⁶ Humphries (1934 -), a prominent Australian comedian and satirist, performs in the guise of Dame Edna Everidge & Sir Les Patterson.

⁷⁷ Barry Humphries, *The Menzies Years*, ABC Television Broadcast, 2016.

Religion in post-war society continued to play a significant public role as a vehicle of the ruling class and indication of social status.⁷⁸ This is demonstrated by the reception of the Inland Mission Church of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, the John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs, N.T. (1956).⁷⁹ In 1954, the foundation stone was laid by the [Presbyterian] Liberal National Party coalition Prime Minister Robert Menzies. Afterwards, upon its completion in 1956, Governor General Sir William Slim performed the opening ceremony which was broadcast throughout Australia by the A.B.C.⁸⁰ and the scriptural lesson of the first Sunday service was performed by Prime Minister Menzies.⁸¹

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 3.8: Postcard: The John Flynn Memorial Church, Alice Springs, N.T. c.1960

Source: SLV, Accession H84.427/1/56

3.7 Post-war reconstruction and the diminishing role of the church

In response to the uncertainties of the depression years and Australia's involvement in the Second World War, the Labor Party Curtin Government (1941-1945)⁸² instituted broad new economic and social initiatives which challenged the role of the church in Australian society. In 1942, the Income Tax (War-time arrangements) legislation was enacted to increase federal powers over the collection of a uniform personal income tax, a power previously dispersed between the Commonwealth and State governments. The Act allowed greater certainty during the war for the government, but also greater control over the instruments and processes of social policy. By October, the necessary powers to undertake post-war

⁷⁸ Giorgi, 'Religious Involvement in a Secularized Society' pp. 634-652; Harwood, Elaine. Space, Hope and Brutalism: *English Architecture 1945 – 1975*, London: Yale University Press, 2015), p.421.

⁷⁹ Designed in 1953 by Arthur Philpot (1915-1984) of Evans and Bruer, Philpot and Partners. Philpot was born in Western Australia but moved to Adelaide, South Australia where he was married in 1943 at the Presbyterian Scots Church. Philpot's design commemorated the life and achievements of John Flynn, Presbyterian minister and a founder of the Royal Flying Doctors and sought to incorporate local and national symbolism in the material choices of the design.

⁸⁰ 'Tribute to man of vision', *Presbyterian Life*, (May 18, 1956), p.22.

⁸¹ Born in Bristol, Slim (1891-1970) was a lapsed Catholic who had a remarkable war record serving in both World Wars. Menzies (1894-1978) was of Scottish and non-conformist heritage, he attended Wesley College, Melbourne and was Australia's longest serving Prime Minister between the years 1949-1966.

⁸² Prime Minister John Curtin died in office, six weeks before the end of the war in the Pacific, on 5 July 1945.

reconstruction for a five-year period after the war was delegated to the Commonwealth.⁸³ Thus in January 1943, the Department of Post-war Reconstruction was established under the direction of economist Dr H.C. Coombs and John Dedman, Minister for Post-war Reconstruction.

The Department of Post-war Reconstruction implemented social policy through an engagement⁸⁴ with contemporary and internationally favoured ideas about the provision of social welfare as a basis for equity and social justice. Internationally, the post-war economic and political environment was one that supported the provision of social welfare and the agenda of architectural modernism was aligned with these sentiments in its emphasis on social purpose. Alongside the broader goals of improved housing and education, and full employment⁸⁵ the Curtin government introduced extensive welfare measures: 'child endowment; widows' pensions; unemployment, sickness and funeral benefits; and a spouse's allowance for invalid and old age pensioners.'⁸⁶ In Australia, prior to post-war reconstruction, government urban considerations had not included social factors.⁸⁷ In the absence of systematic government assistance, welfare and ministering to the poor had been the exclusive domain of religious institutions. Moreover, these aspects of the church's engagement within the community at large had always served to generate its broad base of social support and political power.

The Post-war Reconstruction Department's social policies reinforced the notion that security lay in improved housing conditions and home ownership as an ideal family environment in which a new generation of young Australians could be raised.⁸⁸ These strongly emphasised values ensured that housing, and urbanism, became the dominant architectural discourse of the post-war years,⁸⁹ a theme that has continued to dominate architectural discourse to this day. The Commonwealth agenda was promoted via three key war-time publications: *We must go on: a study in planned reconstruction and housing* (1944) by F. Oswald Barnett, W.O. Burt and Frank Heath; *Homes in the sun: the past, present and future of Australian housing* (1945) by Walter Bunning with a foreword by Dr H.C. Coombs; and *X-ray the City! The density diagram: basis for urban planning* (1946) by émigré architect Ernest Fooks, with a foreword by Dr H.C. Coombs published by the Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction. These publications described new ways of living in a modern society and expressed a new focus on the individual who had the freedom of leisure.⁹⁰ *Homes in the sun* explained the individual was no-longer bound to traditional 'connection[s] with organisations which gave them their former outlets'⁹¹ such as "Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, church organisations, working men's clubs and similar groups."⁹² *X-ray the City!* declared 'the social needs of man [are] the main determining aspects of to-days [sic]

⁸³ Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia. Vol 5, 1942-1995: the middle way*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1996), p.28.

⁸⁴ Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia*, p.28-29.

⁸⁵ Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia*, p.54

⁸⁶ Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia*, p.42

⁸⁷ Fooks, *X-Ray the City! The density diagram: basis for urban planning*, (Canberra: Ministry of Post-war Reconstruction, 1946), p.3.

⁸⁸ Bolton, *Oxford History of Australia*, p.54

⁸⁹ And led to the creation of the Commonwealth Housing Commission (CHC).

⁹⁰ Bunning, Walter. *Homes in the Sun: The past, present and future of Australian housing*, (Sydney: W.J. Nesbit, 1945) p.82.; This idea is also expressed in Gosseye, Janina. 'Leisure Politics: The Construction of Social Infrastructure and Flemish Cultural Identity in Belgium, 1950s to 1970s', *Journal of Urban History*, Vol.38, No.2, 2012, pp. 271-293.

⁹¹ Bunning, *Homes in the Sun*, p.82.

⁹² Bunning, *Homes in the Sun*, p.78.

urban order, whose primary aim is to provide adequate and well-distributed facilities for the fulfilment of the four functions of visible human life: Living, Working, Recreating and Distributing'.⁹³

The Commonwealth promoted community centres as meeting places for all family members to participate in social and recreational pursuits, a policy that was aligned with the new town housing estates in Britain⁹⁴ as part of the re-building of a democratic post-war society.⁹⁵ In Australia, *Homes in the sun* and *We must go on* recommended a suburbia based on 'Neighbourhood Units',⁹⁶ areas of housing accommodating 10,000 persons surrounding a principal Civic Centre, Commercial and Shopping district.⁹⁷ American suburbia similarly evolved along an internationally endorsed understanding of post-war urban environments and planning strategies. In 1954, Walter Gropius speaking at the Fourth Australian Architectural Convention held in Sydney, recommended for every new development 'it is the community centre that should be built before the housing for it is herein that the social being of the community is created and sustained'.⁹⁸ The notion of a community centre was a secular construct that was not concerned with a like-minded faith community.

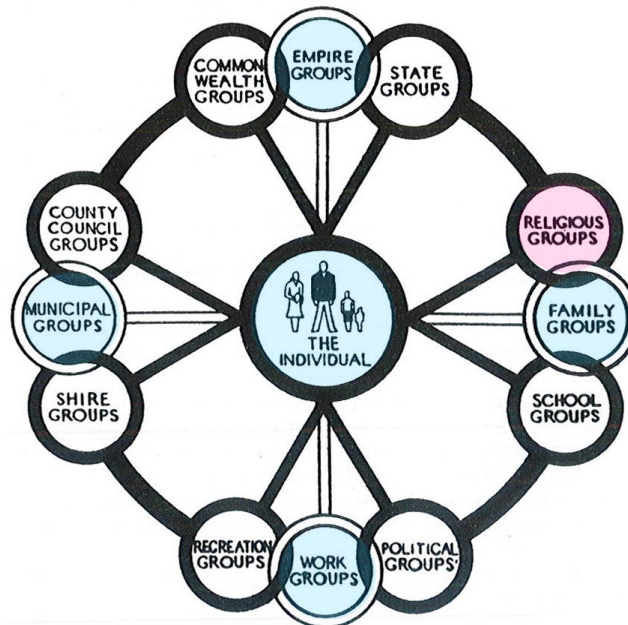


Fig. 3.9: The 'community atom' with the individual as the central nucleus

Source: Ulrich Ellis, *An introduction to Atomic politics*, (Canberra: Office of Rural Research and Development, 1947) p. 6.

Although the creation of community centres was a primary policy concern in Australia, due to acute shortages of materials after the war and lack of municipal funding many were built as smaller, less comprehensive versions than planned.⁹⁹ Economically it was never on the agenda to account for the

⁹³ Fooks, *X-ray the City!*, p.6

⁹⁴ Bunning, *Homes in the Sun*, p.82.

⁹⁵ Maunders, David. *A study of the Community Centre movement in Australia 1943-1955, its contribution to education and an evaluation of the effect of government policy*, Unpublished manuscript, Master of Education of Latrobe University, (June, 1980), p.xi-xii.

⁹⁶ Bunning, *Homes in the Sun*, p 82.; F. Oswald Barnett, W.O. Burt, F. Heath, *We must go on*, (Melbourne: Book Depot, 1944) p. 45.

⁹⁷ Barnett et al, *We must go on*, p. 74.

⁹⁸ 'Total Architecture, Professor Walter Gropius addresses architects', *Construction*, (May 12, 1954), p.2.

⁹⁹ Darian-Smith, Kate, David Nichols and Julie Lewis, 'The community can do it! Planning for the new civic centre' in Lewi, Hannah and David Nichols (Eds), *Community: building modern Australia*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), pp.190-195; Troy, Patrick.

needs of religious organisations in the context of the pluralistic Australian religious environment. *We must go on* was clear on this point. If religious organisations wanted to be located within the new community centres, it would be under their own steam. For, although a church was a 'natural centre of a Community [...] one asks "Which Church?"'¹⁰⁰ In this context, it was suggested (contentiously) that multiple denominations might share facilities as had been done during the war, and as occurred in goals and hospitals, where services could be co-ordinated perhaps in a 'well-planned and beautiful Community Hall'.¹⁰¹ These sentiments and practical solutions did not take into account the social role of the church, nor its important symbolic function. *Homes in the Sun* illustrated examples of the new urban landscape that did not include places of worship.¹⁰² While the concept of the multi-purpose Community Hall reflected modern architectural concerns for flexible environments capable of accommodating society's future needs, this option was not acceptable to religious organisations.

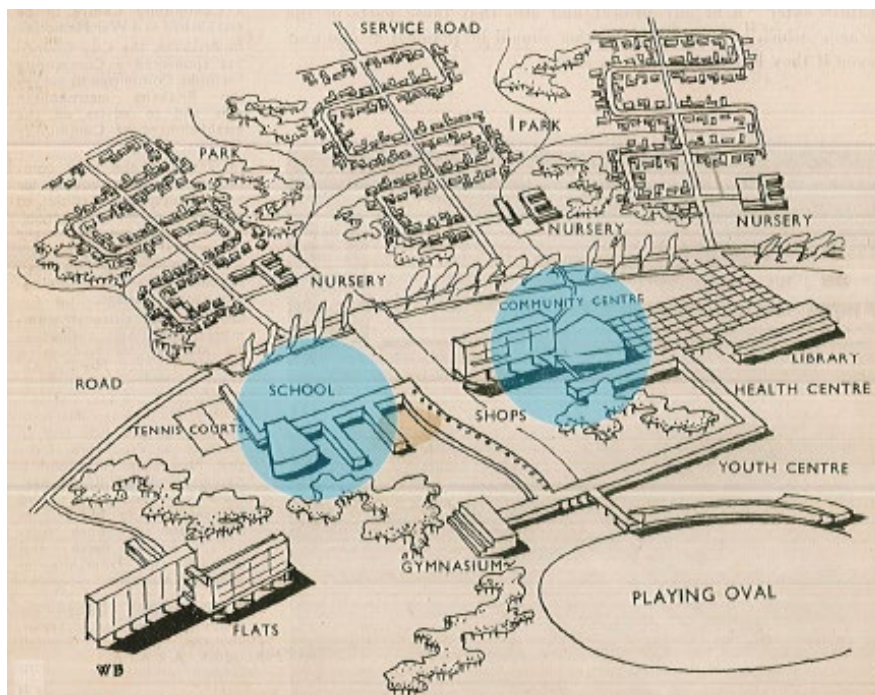


Fig. 3.10: No religious buildings appear in the 'Neighbourhood Unit' design to accommodate 10,000 people with facilities for Living, Working, Recreating & Distributing

Source: Walter Bunning, *Homes in the sun*, (Sydney: W.J. Nesbit, 1945), p 86.

The disengagement of religious organisations from the systems of state after World War II resulted in a gradual, but clear, dilution of the influence of the Church within modern Australian society. Increasingly,

Accommodating Australians, (Sydney: The Federation Press), pp.95-98; The *Commonwealth State Housing Agreement 1945* (CSHA) was created to provide low-cost housing as a shared funding model, funded by the Commonwealth and constructed and administered by the States. Initially the CHSA sought to include community centres for the housing projects. However, the acute shortage of materials meant the aim was never achievable other than the possible provision of land so that community facilities could be added later. Ultimately, the Commonwealth withdrew its offer of funding for the building of schools and hospitals, which it saw as a State responsibility and deemed the facilitation of church building as a non-governmental responsibility. According to Troy, "In the process of bargaining and compromise to seal the Agreement, the integrated structure of housing, land use planning and community development advocated by the Commonwealth Housing Commission was lost."

¹⁰⁰ Barnett et al, *We must go on*, p. 74.

¹⁰¹ Barnett et al, *We must go on*, p. 76.

¹⁰² Bunning, *Homes in the Sun*, p. 86.

the focus of community life, and the role of the individual within society, was promoted as changeable and determined through personal preference rather than an adherence to norms that had provided social cohesion in the past, such as the tight-knit like-minded community of the parish. A focus on the 'democratisation of leisure' at this time led to the instigation of alternatives to the church: youth organisations, youth hostels, camps and the community centre movement were provided with funding by the Commonwealth.¹⁰³ Sydney architect Milo Dunphy in 1958 compared the increasing competition with which the church had to contend for attention with "the hotel, the club and the cinema" in the new freedom of post-war leisure.¹⁰⁴ This tension was described by English migrant Stella Kline when she recalled why her family changed denomination in the early 1950s because 'my father wanted to play golf on Sundays, and at St Faith's Church of England, Burwood, you could go to communion at 8 o'clock and get it over and done with. Before that, we were at the Methodist church.'¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, in the post-war years religious organisations largely continued along the path of a vision of future development as unchanging, believing in the centrality of their position within the community and their potential for influence over the political processes that governed society. During the war, Archdeacon Robertson, Church of England Rector of Canberra exclaimed 'We are facing a wondrous time of reconstruction [...] After the war, we will have the opportunity of moulding the life and conditions of the new world [...] rebuilding our world both socially and spiritually.'¹⁰⁶

3.8 Suburbia: a new frontier for evangelism

A 1959 Anglican survey of the Melbourne metropolitan population in Victoria serves to illuminate the extent and nature of suburban expansion effecting all religious organisations across Australia in the post-war years. The survey confirmed the rapid social and demographic changes already visible in the landscape. The new outer areas of Melbourne were expanding rapidly with young families,¹⁰⁷ high birth rates and low death rates while the older inner suburbs were experiencing population decline.¹⁰⁸ In some cases, parishes were forced to accommodate their burgeoning congregation outdoors (Figure 3.11). Problematically, religious organisations had fewer resources to provide ministry in the expanding outer suburban areas. In 1958, the established middle class suburb of Malvern with a population of 46,000 was served by six Anglican church buildings and eight clergy, while the new industrial area of Broadmeadows with a population of 42,000 was served by three Anglican church buildings and two clergy.¹⁰⁹ Comparatively, older established parishes contained on average 60% more church buildings and

¹⁰³ Maunders, *A study of the Community Centre movement*, p.10-11.

¹⁰⁴ Dunphy, Milo. '4 Aspects of church design', *Architecture Australia*, Vol 47, No.2, (Apr-Jun, 1958), p.60.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Stella Kline a member of the St Faith's congregation, Feb 4, 2016.

¹⁰⁶ 'In Canberra Churches,' *Canberra Times*, (Jul 5, 1943), p.3.

¹⁰⁷ For example: Broadmeadows, Keilor, Moorabbin, Sunshine, Dandenong, Mulgrave, Nunawading.

¹⁰⁸ *Diocesan Survey 1959*, Church of England, Diocese of Melbourne, Planning and Development Committee, report prepared by University of Melbourne, Department of Town and Regional Planning, June, 1959. This survey utilised Australian Census data from 1954 compared with 1958 data available from the government statist. A survey was again undertaken in 1971 (this time including areas in country Victoria). Each survey provided a detailed demographic analysis of parish populations based on age, sex, background, nationality, sort of house they lived in and religious denomination. The survey was undertaken by Josephine Johnson (nee Coombs) who later married Blyth Johnson. Johnson worked for Louis Williams (1958-1961) and Louis Williams, Paul and Johnson (1961-1965). Blyth and Josephine were devout Anglicans who formed their own practice in 1965 through which they gained many ecclesiastic commissions.

¹⁰⁹ 'Comparative church figures for new and older-established areas', Synod Charge, *Diocesan Survey 1959*, n.p.

remarkably 200% more clergy than in the new suburbs.¹¹⁰ This pattern was generally replicated across denominations most of whom were also seeking to evangelise the new suburbia. Patterns of settlement were changing so rapidly that it was impossible for the churches to keep up with potential demand. In the Anglican case, allowing for one parish with one priest for every 10,000 people, a total of 40 new parishes were immediately required. Furthermore, if the predicted population of Melbourne increased in line with expectations, the Church of England would require an additional 65 new parishes and 106 clergy over the next 20 years.¹¹¹ Throughout the post-war years, the churches were 'expansionist in outlook' and confident of their significance to society and thus church buildings continued to be planned for and constructed.¹¹² In the 1960s, the Catholic, Methodist and Baptist denominations doubled the number of new church buildings under construction.¹¹³ It was under these expanding conditions that religious organisations across Australia sought to construct new buildings as quickly as possible to keep up with what they saw as a continuing demand.



Fig. 3.11: "No room in the church for the congregation of 300". Mothering Sunday at St Faith's Church of England, Burwood, c.1955.

Source: *Their Finest Inheritance*, combined funds canvas brochure, 1955, p.8.
St Faith's Anglican Church Archives.

3.9 Discontinuities: the church and modernity

Despite the extraordinary optimism of the churches, the far-reaching influences of modernity incrementally came to significantly change the daily lives of Australians. Individualism, changing work patterns and the entry of female participation in the work force, new options for self-improvement through education, new entertainment options such as cinema and television competed with the church

¹¹⁰ 'Some facts and figures covering Urban Melbourne only, Some Comments', Synod Charge, *Diocesan Survey 1959*, n.p.

¹¹¹ 'Some facts and figures covering Urban Melbourne only, Some Comments', Synod Charge, *Diocesan Survey 1959*, n.p.

¹¹² Hilliard, 'Popular Religion in Australia', p.235.

¹¹³ Based on authors assessment of Coleman, *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria*, 1996.

as a source of social activity, loosening the traditional 'generational renewal of the church'.¹¹⁴ The car rose as a symbol of modern life to become 'a key site of family togetherness, with the Sunday drive threatening to replace church attendance as a core family activity.'¹¹⁵ Between 1945-1965 two million immigrants¹¹⁶ arrived in Australia under the government's 'populate or perish' strategy from an increasingly diverse range of countries, adding a further dimension to the changing conditions of Australian society and culture. Gradually, the institutional church became marginalised from its pivotal position within the local community.¹¹⁷ The post-war decades of the 1950s and 1960s were full of contradiction as personal belief and social practices which had once been tightly bound together began to unravel.¹¹⁸ Economically, the austerity of the 1950s was gradually transformed into one of prosperity, sustained economic growth, high employment and social mobility: a 'golden age of economic performance'¹¹⁹ that came to an end with the first OPEC oil crisis of 1973 and subsequent recession.¹²⁰ Moreover, the transition into the new decade of the 1970s was marked by significant socio-political changes: equality between British, European and non-European immigrants through the Migration Act of 1966 and in the same year the switch from pounds to a decimal currency (Figure 3.12); Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam (1972); the inclusion of indigenous people in Australia's population count (1971); the abolition of the White Australia Policy (1974); the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (1976); Gough Whitlam's short lived term in government (1972-75) and architecturally the opening of the Sydney Opera House (1973).



Fig. 3.12: Training film for the new decimal currency, c. 1965.

Source: A1200, L52609 © Commonwealth of Australia (National Archives of Australia) 2019

¹¹⁴ Davidson, 'Religion', p.221.

¹¹⁵ Swain, Shurlee. 'Society and Welfare', *The Cambridge History of Australia*, Vol II, (Ed.) Alison Bashford and Stuart Macintyre, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p.298.

¹¹⁶ National Museum of Australia, Defining moments in Australian History, www.nma.gov.au.

¹¹⁷ Swain, 'Society and Welfare', p.298.

¹¹⁸ Davidson, 'Religion', p.221.

¹¹⁹ Marglin, Stephen A. and Juliet B. Schor (Eds). *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.40.

¹²⁰ Marglin, *The Golden Age of Capitalism*, pp.1-3.

By the late 1960s, Australian society was rapidly transformed from a society in which religion operated as an agent of social cohesion and a shared moral code, to a society in which individualism and rationality prevailed. In the emerging secularised society, an increasing number of individuals no longer chose to mediate the world and their own lives through the lens of religious interpretation.¹²¹ The results of incremental change came into full force in the 1970s, after which the strong correlation between population expansion and number of church buildings constructed in the Melbourne metropolitan area came to an abrupt halt, marking out the post-war period as a unique period in Australian history. By the 1970s, Australia's post-war condition was changed forever: subsequent Anglican surveys revealed its population was in a process of decline. By 1976, the number of those professing no religion had 'increased by more than 100%' and an extraordinarily worrying result¹²² was that "the largest single Christian denomination is now the Roman Catholic."¹²³

However, with the future as yet unknown, in the 1950s and 1960s, the institutional churches persisted with remarkable optimism in the belief that religion would continue to be central to the everyday lives of Australians, and thus they attempted to meet the perceived future demand through the construction of the greatest number of church buildings erected in the 20th century – far outweighing the number constructed in any other decade or period of the 20th century in the Melbourne metropolitan area. The following Chapter discusses on the one hand, the conditions under which religious communities rose to the challenge to construct new places of worship, and on the other examines the flourishing of the architectural profession as participants in the international conversation through the influence of international travel and transmission of ideas.

¹²¹ Berger, Peter L.. *The Social Reality of Religion*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973), p.108; Warner, Rob. *Secularization and its Discontents* (London, New York: Continuum, 2010), pp.22-24.

¹²² In conversation with Josphine Johnson, May 2016.

¹²³ *The Synod Charge 1976*, The Archbishop of Melbourne, 1976, p.25. Partial pamphlet provided by Josephine Johnson.

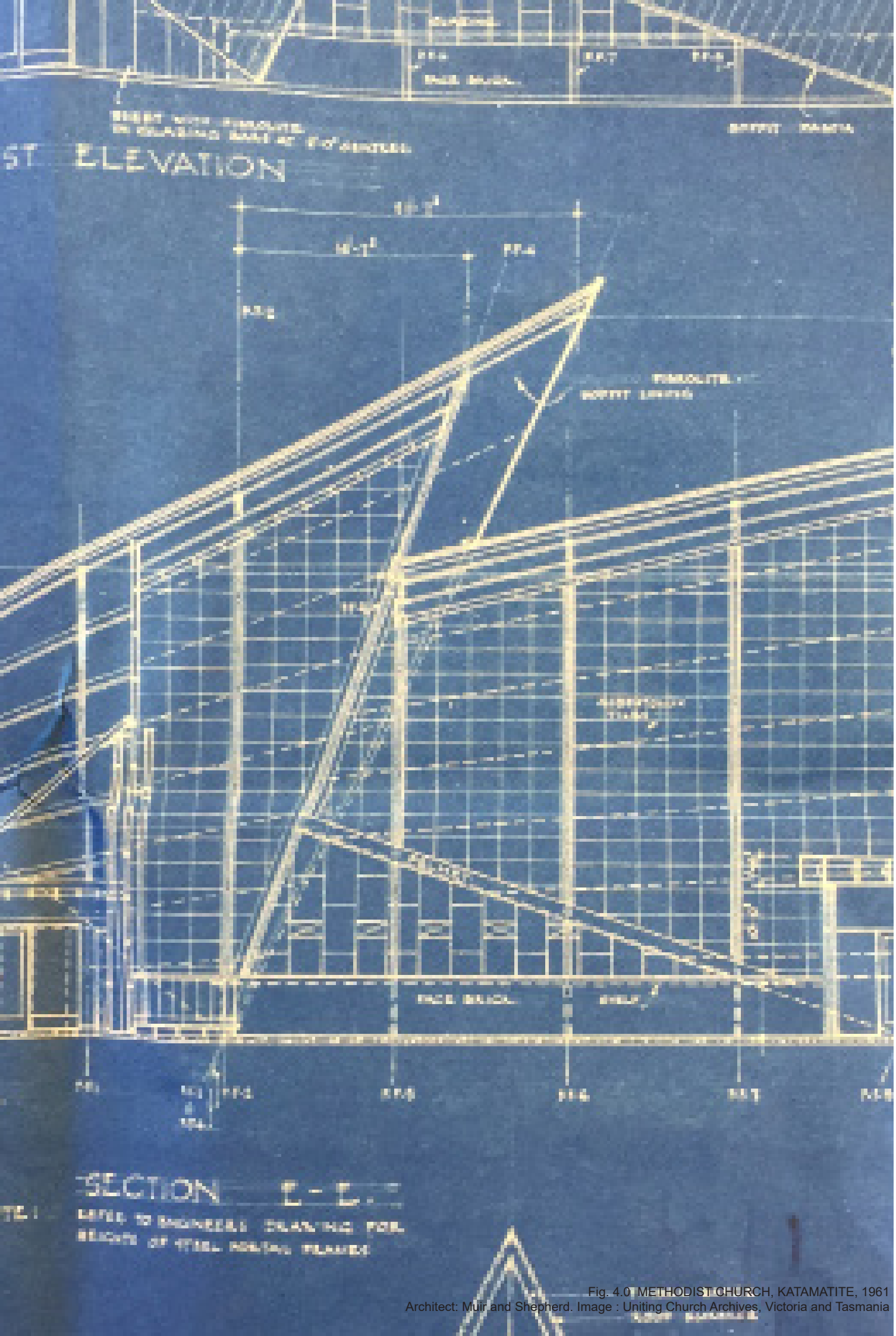


Fig. 4.0 METHODIST CHURCH, KATAMATITE, 1961
Architect: Muir and Shepherd. Image : Uniting Church Archives, Victoria and Tasmania

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CHAPTER FOUR

The architectural response: reality versus the dream

“The churches stayed staunchly Gothic or stolidly brickish until the beginning of the building boom of the middle nineteen fifties. Then, all of a sudden, the international change of attitude burst upon us.”¹

Melbourne architect and critic Robin Boyd 1962

4.1 Introduction

Chapter Four discusses two significant themes that shaped architectural production in the 1950s and 1960s in Australia. Firstly, the conditions of austerity which directly contributed to the scale and choice of construction methods of the Australian churches. Secondly, the experiences of returned [architect] soldiers and an enthusiasm for international travel within the architectural profession, who were seeking first hand experiences of not only the monuments of civilisation but also contemporary examples of the new architecture, encouraged greater architectural ambition on the part of Australian architects.

After the Second World War, a dramatic increase in church building occurred across the western world. Europe had been the theatre of war and the building of new churches and reconstruction of damaged buildings in the European setting was linked to the suffering, memorialisation and rebuilding the fabric of the city in order to facilitate the reconstruction of society itself.² This did not reflect the Australian experience. Australia, nor America, had been a theatre of war, with the exception of the attack on Pearl Harbour, Hawaii in December 1941, and the bombing of Darwin on February 19, 1942.³ In Europe, as a direct result of the damage caused by war, many significant modern religious buildings arose.⁴ In Britain, an estimated 13,895 churches had been damaged and some 500 completely destroyed.⁵ In the Cologne district of Western Germany alone, where architect Rudolf Schwarz served as Director for Reconstruction⁶, more than 350 churches were built or radically reconstructed after the war.⁷ Although

¹ Boyd, Robin. ‘Seeking Image in Vital Church Design’, *Walkabout Magazine*, Aug 1962, p.21.

² Campbell, Louise. ‘Architecture, War and Peace’ in *Reconciling People: Coventry Cathedral’s Story* Christopher A. Lamb (ed). (Norwich & London: Canterbury Press, 2011), p.1.

³ The Japanese launched over 200 air attacks across northern Australia between 1942-43. The last enemy aircraft was shot down in June 1944. The Japanese successfully dropped bombs on Townsville, Katherine, Wyndham, Derby, Broome and Port Hedland. Source: <http://www.naa.gov.au> Fact Sheet 195, The Bombing of Darwin.

⁴ The 1951 competition for the design of Coventry Cathedral, Coventry, England brought forward a spectrum of design responses. Basil Spence’s competition winning modern design replete with its unified artistic programme was constructed in 1956-62; in Berlin, the former tower of the Kaiser Wilhelm Evangelical Church was completed with a set of geometrically conceived concrete block and glass buildings by Egon Eiermann (1959-1963) which recalled August Perret’s use of concrete at Notre Dame Catholic Church, Raincy, Paris 1922. The resurrection of these buildings through design competition was subject to controversy surrounding their style of design and the emotional significance of the ruins of the previous building which in both cases were retained for incorporation within the broader design.

⁵ Harwood, Elain. *Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945 – 1975*, (London: Yale University Press, 215), p.424.

⁶ Ockman, Joan in collaboration with Edward Eigen. *Architecture Culture 1943-1968: a documentary anthology*, (New York: Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation: Rizzoli, 1993), p.129.

⁷ Hammond, Peter, ‘A Liturgical Brief’, in *Architectural Review*, Vol123 No. 735 (Apr, 1958) p.241

the American setting superficially appeared culturally and politically similar to Australia, American industry had prospered during the war. The buoyancy of the post-war years in America allowed the construction of hundreds of substantial places of worship. In 1947, an estimated \$126 million was spent on church building in America. By 1958, that figure had increased to \$863 million⁸ and it was expected that a further 70,000 new places of worship would be constructed during the 1960s at a cost of 6 billion dollars.⁹ In 1960, in the American setting, the construction of church buildings accounted for 13.2% of all public building¹⁰ and reflected a substantial increase in religious membership from 35% of the population in 1900, to 60% of the population in 1958.¹¹

In Australia, churches appeared in the urban landscape in response to the growing and expanding suburban population due to the baby-boom and post-war immigration. In existing parishes, many church building programmes had been postponed first by the depression and then the war, followed by post-war material shortages. These economic considerations added to the unique social circumstances in Australia, leading to very different results to the European setting where religion was often seen as an institution of the state. For example, in Britain the building and rebuilding of post war churches was funded by the Treasury as well as local authorities through the War Damage Commission (1941-1964).¹² Fixed price grants were also available for the replacement of stained glass and could be used by architects to commission alternatives such as murals or mosaics.¹³

In Australia, despite the perceived urgent need for church building programmes, due to an 'acute shortage' of housing for its expanding population it was impossible to divert labour and material to church building work.¹⁴ As a consequence, Australian post-war churches were generally modest and many were small in scale. This chapter explores how Australia's post-war churches were constructed through the imagination of the architect and the sacrifices of hardworking Australians in the belief they were creating a better future. Included in this chapter is a Case Study of St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk (1958-63) in country Victoria which demonstrates in finer detail how the conditions of economic austerity and the flows of international networks were key factors in post-war church design in Australia.

⁸ Buggein, Gretchen. *The Suburban Church. Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, (Minnesota: University Press of Minnesota, 2015), p.xxii.

⁹ Belluschi, Pietro. 'The churches go modern', *Saturday Evening Post Magazine*, Indianapolis, USA. (4 Oct, 1958), p.36.

¹⁰ Belluschi, Pietro. 'The new churches', *Time Magazine*, Vol 76, Dec 26, 1960, p.28.

¹¹ Belluschi, Pietro. 'The churches go modern', *Saturday Evening Post Magazine*, Indianapolis, USA. (4 Oct, 1958), p.36.

¹² Harwood, *Space Hope and Brutalism*, p.424.

¹³ Harwood, *Space Hope and Brutalism*, p.434.

¹⁴ 'Big Building Programme Is Waiting Normal Conditions', p.18.

4.2 Austerity

In Australia, the vast majority of parish communities had been forced to delay building maintenance, construction and expansion programs, firstly due to the depression years when 'church finances at all levels remained crippled throughout Australia'¹⁵ and afterwards due to the Second World War and its impact upon the availability and cost of materials. In the post-war years, religious organisations emerged weaker than before the economic disruptions and with a backlog of building work to be completed. Many new churches had been delayed for more than a decade, some congregations had patiently waited twenty years or more to be able to accumulate the funds required for the construction of a new building.¹⁶ Parishes that had been able to finance buildings in the 1920s were already in debt and struggling as denominational income from investments had diminished. The tight financial situation faced by all denominations during this time was further exacerbated after the war by demographic change: a growing population expanding outwards across a range of new suburban locations impinging upon the capacities of existing parishes. Bigger buildings were required to accommodate increasing congregations and the feasibility of maintaining or extending what were often small timber structures (that may have been standing for over 100 years) frequently led to the decision to demolish the old in favour of commissioning a new building. At the same time, there were many new parishes established which led concurrently to a high demand for new places of worship.

In addition to the effects of instituted government policies and changing social conditions affecting the reception and support of church organisations, the conditions of post-war austerity influenced architectural production and design. The shortages of building materials in the post-war years in Australia was acute and effected all aspects of society. Few building materials were produced during the war years and those that were, were allocated to the war effort. After 1945, raw and manufactured materials continued to be scarce, their production being reliant on skilled labour and a return to normalcy after the return of demobilised soldiers.¹⁷ There were chronic shortages¹⁸ of framing timber, weatherboards, bricks, tiles, glass, fibrous plaster, piping, roof guttering and fittings until at least the early 1950s.¹⁹ Brick kilns lay idle and pitifully unable to meet demand.²⁰ As a result, the cost of labour and materials 'sky-rocketed'²¹ such that between 1947-1952²² construction costs rose 100%. In 1946, the cost of building an average²³ brick veneer house was £1,500 and by 1955 that cost had reached £6,000 in the face of working-class wages averaging less than £12 per week, or £624 per year.²⁴

¹⁵ Kaye, Bruce (Ed). *Anglicanism in Australia: A History*, (Melbourne, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p.101.

¹⁶ Wuthnow, Robert. *The Restructuring of American Religion. Society and Faith since World War II*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), p.26-27.

¹⁷ Frost, Lionel. 'An outer suburban house of the 1950s', www.environment.gov.au/heritage/ahc/publications/our-house-histories-australian-homes/vic. Australian Heritage Commission, 2001. Accessed 03/10/2017

¹⁸ Freeland, J.M. *Architecture in Australia*, (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire Publishing, 1968), p.265; Boyd, Robin. *Australia's Homes*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1987), p.83.

¹⁹ Frost, Lionel. 'An outer suburban house of the 1950s'.

²⁰ Troy, *Accommodating Australians*, p.104-105.

²¹ Freeland, J.M. *Architecture in Australia*, p.265; Boyd, *Australia's Homes*, p.82.

²² *Cross section*, No. 21, (July, 1954), p.2.

²³ 1,200 square feet (111.48 square metres).

²⁴ Frost, Lionel. 'An outer suburban house of the 1950s'.

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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 4.1: Gloucester Road, Ashburton after heavy rain. c.1955.

Source: State Library of Victoria, Digitised Image, 'Floods in Melbourne Suburbs', Image H2004.101/200.
<http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/74149>

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 4.2: Newly constructed houses in Cyrus Street, Lalor, 1960.

Source: John & Barbara Woods, English Assisted Migrant Collection, Museums Victoria, Item MM136741.
<https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/2026060>

As Melbourne's suburbs continued expanding rapidly in all directions, the price of housing and land reflected the economic circumstances. Similar prices were experienced in the established South-Eastern suburbs such as East Malvern and the working class inner North at East Brunswick.²⁵ In the expanding outer areas of Blackburn and Burwood, housing estates rapidly replaced farming properties and established orchards.²⁶ Sunshine was transformed from a semi-rural area to a suburban centre with a population of 40,000 where many of the homes were housing commission and many vacant blocks did not yet have water and electricity. In West Sunshine the price of land jumped from £35 in 1947, to £75 in

²⁵ 'Terms lift home prices', *The Argus*, (July 4, 1955), p.10.

²⁶ 'Balckburn goes ahead as homes oust farms', *The Argus*, (Dec 8, 1956), p. 33.

1949 and in 1955 land was selling for £200-300²⁷ reflecting the parallel rise in buildings costs during this period. “Ex-service men were all trying to get houses and borrowing their 2,750 pounds which enabled you to build a house, a very modest house, and you weren’t allowed to build more than 10 squares [...] it was very hard to design a house for a family of that size and with that amount of money.”²⁸

Housing lot sizes were also affected. After the war they were more likely to be an eighth of an acre or less in size rather than the pre-war standard of a quarter acre or greater in size²⁹ and substitute materials such as concrete block and brick-veneer replaced double brick³⁰ as the shortage of materials and frugality ‘ruled every detail.’³¹ These same factors affected the building of churches. Just as compromises began to be made in the design of the home which became 30% smaller³² so with church buildings every effort was made to reduce costs. Consequently, buildings of the immediate post-war period were modest in size with simplified plans and many were built with low cost, often low-quality materials and the local church building, despite its sacred nature, in many cases became extremely modest as the government moved to prioritise building materials for housing, hospitals, schools and factories.³³ When materials were produced they were distributed through government approved merchant networks. The situation was chronic and the effects were widespread. In the newly formed outer suburban area of Lalor, the Peter Lalor Co-operative Housing Society was severely affected by the material shortages of 1948 leading to its collapse.³⁴ The Co-operative could not get “cement in Victoria. The cement they’re able to buy in Tasmania, they can’t get shipped. They can’t get railway trucks for timber they are buying in Victorian country mills, and they’re not allowed to get it [...] by diesel trucks they bought to circumvent the railways hold-up. The Transport Board bars their trucks as timber transports, yet allows individual owners of petrol-driven vehicles, including southern Europeans, to do the hauling – at £60 a load. They are stuck for galvanised iron and plaster [...] Wherever they turn, they’re running into brick walls!”³⁵ It was not until well into the 1950s that building permits were issued to build ‘anything larger than a tin shed.’³⁶ In 1953, ‘a tiny mauve and yellow magazine kiosk by Muir & Shepherd at 10 squares was the largest new city building’ constructed in Melbourne since 1941.³⁷

²⁷ ‘Footscray and Sunshine boom’, *The Argus*, (Oct 7, 1955), p.20.

²⁸ Modern Melbourne: Phyllis Murphy interview. Directed and produced by Bart Borghesi and Emma Telfer. <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/built-environment/modern-melbourne/phyllis-murphy/phyllis-murphy-modern-melbourne-video/> Accessed Nov 23, 2018.

²⁹ Troy, Patrick. *Accommodating Australians*, (Sydney: The Federation Press, 2012) p.73.

³⁰ Boyd, *Australia’s Homes*, p.82

³¹ Boyd, *Australia’s Homes*, p.84

³² Boyd, *Australia’s Homes*, p.82

³³ ‘Trade and Commerce, Secondary Industries Conference, February 1945’, *Digest of Decisions, Announcements and Important Speeches by the Prime Minister*, Nos 83-95. (May 10 1944 - Feb 21 1945) (Conference address pages 10 -18). <http://john.curtin.edu.au/1940s/house/speech.html>, Accessed 23/01/2018.

³⁴ The Peter Lalor Co-operative, set up under the leadership of Leo Purcell with 200 returned servicemen in 1947, grew to have 1600 members. Homes were to be co-operatively built. A portion of the homes were to be constructed in concrete from component parts produced in a factory built by the Co-operative, but this plan was stymied by shortages of concrete. The Co-operative was named after Peter Lalor, Irish born leader of the Eureka rebellion at Ballarat, a fight for gold miners rights in 1854.

³⁵ ‘Who is blocking diggers’ self-help plan?’, *Truth*, (Sept 18, 1948), p.1, published in Scollay, Moira. *Lalor : the Peter Lalor Home Building Co-operative 1946 – 2012*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2012).

³⁶ Robertson, Alan G.. *St Oliver’s Parish and People*, St Oliver Plunkett Parish Booklet, p.57.

³⁷ ‘This month’s smallest building’, *Cross Section*, (Jan, 1953), p1.

4.2.1 We need a new church, how much will it cost?

“...they have little option. In nearly every case the break from tradition in design has been dictated by economic as well as by spiritual demands.”³⁸

The cost of a new church building could vary wildly and was determined by size, style, materials, fittings and furnishings. However, ultimately, the wealth of each individual parish and their ability to raise funds was a key determinant of the outcome. In 1954, the first church constructed at the Snowy Hydro-electric Scheme, Kiewa was erected by voluntary labour to accommodate 200 for the cost of materials, £4,000.³⁹ In 1957, the ultra-modern Mother of God Catholic Church, East Ivanhoe was designed to seat a congregation of 450 for the cost of £40,000 exclusive of furnishings.⁴⁰ In the same year, the large scale traditional building of St John’s Church of England in the wealthy suburb of Camberwell was constructed for a reported final cost of ‘appreciably over £120,000.’⁴¹

Church buildings designed and constructed using traditional materials and techniques were patently more costly than construction that utilised modern materials and methods. This was also observed elsewhere. In the United States, Pietro Belluschi reported the “greater complexities of modern church functions, the high cost of making reasonably good copies of old styles, the disappearance of the old dedicated craftsmen, the changing techniques of our builders”⁴² were all contributing factors to the higher cost of building in traditional styles. Notwithstanding the difficult economic conditions, the rate of building churches rose in Australia as they also did across Europe and America in the decades after the Second World War. In Victoria, in the 10 years to 1955, the Catholic Church spent £750,000 on new buildings in the Melbourne Diocese alone while the Church of England spent more than £500,000 and other denominations were seen to be spending in proportion.⁴³ Permits for new church buildings of all denominations issued between 1948-1955 increased dramatically even in the face of building costs increasing twelve-fold in the same period. In order to defray the cost of building it was necessary for the churches to resort to organised methods of fund raising.

Permits issued for new church buildings		
Year	No. of Permits	Value of Permits
1948	10	£21,940
1949	7	£28,875
1950	2	£2,600
1951	6	£19,515
1952	21	£68,942
1953	36	£262,934
1954	28	£367,742
1955	44	£279,457

Fig. 4.3: (Table) No. of permits issued and total value of new church buildings constructed in the Melbourne metropolitan area 1948 – 1955.

Source: ‘New look churches. Symbolism expressed in design’, *The Herald*, (Sept 20, 1956), p.12.

³⁸ ‘New look churches. Symbolism expressed in design’, *The Herald*, (Sept 20, 1956), p.12

³⁹ ‘Church at Kiewa Nearing Completion’, *Advocate*, (Feb 4, 1954), p.18.

⁴⁰ ‘Church of the Mother of God, East Ivanhoe, Victoria’, *Architecture and Arts*, Vol 52, (Dec, 1957) p. 29.

⁴¹ ‘The New St John’s Rises from the Ashes’, *Church of England Messenger*, (Dec 20, 1957), p.186.

⁴² Belluschi, ‘The churches go modern’, p.39.

⁴³ ‘New look churches. Symbolism expressed in design’, p.12

4.2.2 The War Memorial church

Many churches were dedicated as War Memorials to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the Second World War. This was a financially advantageous arrangement for diocesan authorities as it allowed 'tax deductibility on the construction'.⁴⁴ Moreover, within religious communities, the memorialisation of the church propagated further symbolic capital in the alignment of the sacrifice of men with the sacrifice of Christ. At the opening and dedication of All Hallows Catholic Church, Balwyn, (1962), Father Perkins expressed these sentiments, "Here we unite the sacrifice of those who gave their lives in defence of their country with the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross, daily renewed in our midst in the sacrifice of the Mass".⁴⁵ The memorialisation of the church also signalled a civic relationship with the State, uniting the idea of the State and the social responsibility of the church. At the opening of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Horsham (1962) in country Victoria, Senator Harrie Wade expressed what was a commonly held view that "The hope and future of the world depended on Christianity".⁴⁶ Conversely, the War Memorial subsidy system also facilitated the construction of civic buildings and a range of new social outlets with the potential to direct attention away from the church, such as swimming pools, sporting ovals and maternal health centres.⁴⁷

4.2.3 The Wells Organisation

In 1953, the American-based fund-raising company, the Wells Organisation was introduced into Australia.⁴⁸ What became known as the 'Wells Way'⁴⁹ was a highly successful systematic method of fund raising. Wells Way involved direct face-to-face canvas visits from members of the parish to every family connected with the church to ask them to sign up to a pledge system. A pledge was an undertaking by the parishioner to pay regular sums for the support of their church for a period of three years. Through the application of the Wells Way, the 1954 annual revenue of St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton⁵⁰ was reported to have risen from £3,000 to £15,000.⁵¹ In 1956, £550,000 was pledged by Presbyterian congregations across Victoria using the methods of the Wells Organisation. Not only did the Wells Way raise monetary capital, it generated social capital by bringing the parish community together in a common mission through a series of orchestrated social fund-raising events. Individuals worked together in a 'new atmosphere of fellowship'.⁵² Central to the strategy was to encourage important community leaders to participate⁵³ in the promotion of the church as a steward of Christian values. So spectacular

⁴⁴ Frame, Tom. 'Local Differences, Social and National Identity, 1930-1966' in Kaye, *Anglicanism in Australian*, pp.114-115.

⁴⁵ 'All Hallows Church, Balwyn, A Dream Come True', *The Advocate*, (Aug 2, 1962), p.7

⁴⁶ Hobbs, Pastor Susan (ed). *Foundations to Build On. Celebrating the 50th Birthday of the St Andrew's Uniting Church Building, Horsham. 1963-2013*, 2013, p.23.

⁴⁷ Inglis and Brazier, *Sacred Places. War memorials in the Australian landscape*, p.333-336; Lewi and Nichols, *Community*, p.207-208.

⁴⁸ 'Claims Revenue Up 400 Per Cent.', *The Age*, (Oct 25, 1954), p.8.

⁴⁹ Wells Way was developed by American Mr Lewis Wells. The Wells Organisation operated in Canada, the United States and Australia, charging a fixed percentage of the money raised in pledges.

⁵⁰ St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton was purportedly the first Anglican church to use the Wells Way in 1954. (see James Grant's Episcopally led). *The Age* article 'Claims Revenue Up 400 Per Cent' states 'a Melbourne church'. I have concluded this to be St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton.

⁵¹ 'Claims Revenue Up 400 Per Cent.', p.8.

⁵² 'Over half-million pledged in stewardship campaigns', *Presbyterian Life*, (May 18, 1956), p.5-6.

⁵³ Hilliard, David. 'Popular Religion in Australia in the 1950s: A Study of Adelaide and Brisbane', *Journal of Religious History*, Vol 16, No.2, 1988, p.230.

were the results that other parishes quickly followed.⁵⁴ The Wells Way was even reported in local country papers. The Morwell Church of England in country Victoria reported ‘the financial position of the Church again caused concern, and the secretary was instructed to write for information to the Wells Organisation Pty. Ltd. which has worked with such marked success in Parishes in Melbourne.’⁵⁵ Although the Wells Organisation was non-denominational, “we will raise funds for any denomination”⁵⁶, it was used almost exclusively by Protestant denominations. Catholic congregations avoided outsourcing their fund-raising activities, but generally used similar methods framed as ‘regular giving’. Nevertheless, requests for regular financial contributions to the church, whether Protestant or Catholic, were expressed as an essential demonstration of spiritual support for the church and a demonstrable commitment to future generations.

The 1955 fund-raising pamphlet in aid of St Faith’s Anglican Church, Burwood depicts dual images on the cover: two joyful children looking skyward and a traditional church building in revival style. These images represent the simple future aspirations of the parish: the continuing growth of the parish through generational renewal; and a building of permanence and stature in which to cultivate the spiritual and moral needs of its community. Similar aspirational pamphlets and images were produced by all denominations. On the cover of the *The Australian Lutheran*, Lutheran children also looked heavenward, representing their future guided by the church. Catholic fund-raising literature erred towards the expression of literal biblical themes. St John’s Catholic Church, Mitcham depicts Christ crucified as the central symbol of parish life. Despite the changing nature of Australian society, religion persisted as a compelling social commitment. These images reinforced the social and cultural norms of the day for religious communities in which the church held a central and pivotal position.

The conditions of post-war austerity influenced the architectural production and design of the new churches. Despite the churches in Australia staying ‘staunchly gothic or stolidly brickish’⁵⁷ before the war, Australia emerged after the war into a new post-war setting. Alongside the great social demand for the new churches, the conditions of economic austerity in many instances prevented the building of substantial traditional buildings. In addition, the experiences of returned [architect] soldiers and an increasing involvement by the architectural profession on the international stage shifted the focus towards a greater acceptance of modern solutions.

⁵⁴ Grant, James. *Episcopally led and synodically governed: Anglicans in Victoria: 1803-1997*, (North Melbourne, Vic.: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), p.216.

⁵⁵ ‘around the Churches’, *The Advertiser*, (Dec 9, 1954), p.4.

⁵⁶ ‘Professional will help church fund here’, *The Argus* (July 5, 1954), p.8.

⁵⁷ Boyd, ‘Seeking Image in Vital Church Design’, p.21.

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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 4.4: Aspirational images

(Top L): *Their Finest Inheritance* fund raising pamphlet, St Faith's Church of England, Burwood, 1955

(Top R): *The Australian Lutheran*, cover page, 1961

(Bottom L): Taking stock, three years of fund raising using Wells Way, St George's Church of England, East Ivanhoe, c.1959

(Bottom R): *Our Parish* fund raising pamphlet, St John's Catholic Church, Mitcham, c.1958

Source: The archives of: St Faith's, Burwood; St George's, Ivanhoe East; St John's, Mitcham, and
The Lutheran Church of Australia Archives, Adelaide

4.3 Bringing it home – International travel, transmission and transference of ideas

“What used to happen, is that architects when they graduated immediately went on a tour, they would get on a boat and sail to London and get a job in London and then tour around Europe and then when they’d finished that, they would travel across to Canada and get a job there and then they would illegally come down to New York and hopefully get a job down there. And then they’d come back [via] the west coast [of America] and sail back to Melbourne.”⁵⁸

Melbourne architect Peter McIntyre, speaking in 2018

4.3.1 International travel

In the immediate post-war years, Australian architects travelled purposefully, visiting contemporary and historic buildings across Europe and soaking up a legacy which seemed impossible to fathom if one stayed within Australian shores. Sydneysider Don Gazzard (1929-2017), architect of the Wentworth Memorial Church, Vaucluse (1966)⁵⁹, had “read my way through [Harry] Seidler’s library [...] Siegfried Gideon’s bible of the rise of modern architecture *Space, Time and Architecture* and all the rest, and was indoctrinated in the history of the modern movement and even felt, with the arrogance of youth, that I was part of it”.⁶⁰ In 1954, still in his early twenties, Gazzard and his wife left Australia for Italy where he stayed for six years becoming “a student of the great buildings of history, mining them for their lessons without imitating their styles.”⁶¹ Similarly, Melbourne architects John and Phyllis Murphy resided in London before 1950 from where they visited Sweden to look at modernist buildings which was an “absolute eye opener. A lot of the new buildings had such simple interiors and modest way of living, it impressed us greatly.”⁶² Neil Clerehan spent one year in America in 1952, visiting the recently completed United Nations Secretariat in New York and staying as a guest at Taliesin.⁶³ Rex Jones who had studied with John Hipwell, typically “hitch-hiked through Greece, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, France, U.K., Sweden and Denmark” in 1949-50⁶⁴ and Dione and Peter McIntyre travelled to Japan in 1959 even before McIntyre had visited Europe in 1960.⁶⁵ Jim Earle studied at the Swedish Institute, Stockholm, later visiting the 1951 Festival of Britain and the United States to see Pietro Belluschi’s Central Lutheran Church, Portland, Oregon (1948-50).⁶⁶ John Mockridge⁶⁷ also experienced the Festival of London first hand and later visited Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Italy.⁶⁸ As a recipient of the Haddon

⁵⁸ Modern Melbourne: Peter McIntyre interview. Directed and produced by Bart Borghesi and Emma Telfer. <https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/built-environment/modern-melbourne>. Accessed Nov 23, 2018.

⁵⁹ The Wentworth Memorial Church is of heritage significance to the state of N.S.W. as one of the most significant ecclesiastical examples of the Sydney School style of architecture, which came to prominence in the 1960s. The church also houses purpose designed pews, furniture, artworks and metalware by significant twentieth century artists. Source: NSW Dept. of Planning, Industry and Environment. <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=5056283>

⁶⁰ Gazzard, Don. *Sydneysider. An optimistic life in architecture.*, Boorowa, N.S.W.: Watermark Press, 2006, p.29.

⁶¹ Gazzard, Don. *Sydneysider*, p.12

⁶² Modern Melbourne: Phyllis Murphy interview. Directed and produced by Bart Borghesi and Emma Telfer.

⁶³ Cross Section, No.10, (Aug, 1953), p.2.; Goad, Philip. ‘Neil Clerehan’, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p.154.

⁶⁴ Unpublished personal reflection by Rex Jones, friend of John Hipwell, courtesy Pamela Hipwell.

⁶⁵ Modern Melbourne: Peter McIntyre interview.

⁶⁶ Reeves, Simon. ‘Memories of Modernism. The role of oral history in the assessment of post-war heritage’, ICOMOS *Unloved Modern* conference paper, Sydney, 2009, p.1.

⁶⁷ ‘The Life of Melbourne’, *The Argus*, (Mar 25, 1950), p.11.

⁶⁸ Callister, Winsome. ‘Mockridge, Stahle & Mitchell’, *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p. 461.

Travelling Scholarship, Robin Boyd was in Europe in 1950, and in 1956-7 held the position of Visiting Bemis Professor of Architecture at MIT,⁶⁹ travelling via Europe again on his way home.⁷⁰ Alan G. Robertson, as soon as being admitted to the RVIA in 1935, had departed for Europe where he gained considerable experience in the first wave of modernist architectural practice, working on all types of projects for Wimperis, Simpson & Guthrie in London.⁷¹ In Dublin he worked with well-known ecclesiastic architects, Robinson Keefe, before returning to Australia in 1939.⁷² The post-war generation were following in the footsteps of earlier generations, in a tradition of Australian architectural students travelling abroad as an educational experience, an activity that is still encouraged today. Travel spawned aspirations for participation in the wider international scene and ideologies dictating new architectural styles in the modern idiom which belie a sentiment of Australia as an outpost of the main current of architectural ideas.⁷³ Architects sought to bring home their new knowledge and participate in the transmission and transfer of ideas.



Fig. 4.5: Dome of Discovery, Festival of Britain, 1951

Source: Tuck's Post Card, <https://tuckdbpostcards.org/items/8352/pictures/132916>, accessed 19.04.2020.

There were also scholarships and awards to encourage travel and the transmission of ideas. Buchan, Laird & Buchan inaugurated their own in-house American travel and research programme after John Buchan returned from a study tour to America in 1947.⁷⁴ In the mid-1950s, Peter Staughton was

⁶⁹ Goad, Philip. 'Constructing Pedigree: Robin Boyd's "California-Victoria-New Empiricism" Axis', *Fabrications*, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand, 22:1, (June 2012), p.21, p.24.

⁷⁰ Reeves, Simon. 'Gromboyd goes Hawaiian: Roy Grounds, Robin Boyd and the "Exclusive Pacific Fellowship of Talent"', *Fabrications*, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand, 22:1, (June 2012), p.64.

⁷¹ Robertson worked with Leonard Rome Guthrie (1880 – 1958) who had been educated at the Glasgow School of Art. *Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Architects*, http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=203712.

⁷² *Advocate*, (Mar 2, 1939), p.6.

⁷³ At age 23, Osborn McCutcheon travelled and worked in Europe and the USA for four years before returning to take up a partnership with Bates Smart & McCutcheon in 1926. Roy Grounds travelled to England in 1929 and then onto the United States before returning in 1933 and was back in England again in the late 1930s. Grounds continued to travel to Europe and the United States numerous times.

⁷⁴ Hogben, Paul. 'Architecture and Arts and the Mediation of American Architecture in Post-war Australia', *Fabrications*, The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand, 22:1, (June 2012), p.33.

awarded the Rome Prize and afterwards relocated to America where he spent a year working for Eero Saarinen.⁷⁵ Sisalkraft Ltd created a £1,000 scholarship for travel and research for Graduates of Architecture under the ages of 35 to "obtain training [and] experience for the better management [and] organisation of building projects."⁷⁶ Paul Archibald, architect with Smith + Tracey, was awarded the inaugural bi-annual Stramit Architectural Research Scholarship in 1966 (then worth \$2,000) to assist with overseas research and first-hand international experience.⁷⁷ Archibald wrote that his intentions in Europe were "to stay for at least one year. I would tour most countries, particularly United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland, Scandinavia and Northern Italy for Educational and Domestic Architecture, and these countries plus Spain and France for Church Architecture."⁷⁸ In preparation, Archibald had written to Marcel Breuer & Associates, architects of the Benedictine Abbey of St. John in Collegeville, Minnesota (1958-61) in the (unsuccessful) hope of securing a position.⁷⁹



Fig. 4.6: Stramit prize for research and study overseas

Source: Newspaper cutting provided by Paul Archibald, n.p., c.1966

4.3.2 Transmission and transference of ideas

With few local examples of modernism in church design before 1955, early church buildings in Victoria drew directly upon international examples. International influences arose via intradenominational networks and the direct experiences garnered by architects and clergy in international contexts, reflecting an increasing global mobility of individuals and the transmission of ideas across all aspects of society. A further source of internationalism arrived directly from the cultural centres of Europe in the

⁷⁵ Goad, Philip. 'Peter Staughton', *Encyclopedia of Australian Architecture*, p.651.

⁷⁶ Cross Section, No.50 (Dec, 1956), p.1.

⁷⁷ 'Architectural Scholarship', *The Stramit News*, No.4, 1966, p.1.

⁷⁸ Archibald, Paul. Letter to the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects, (April 4, 1966). Courtesy of the architect.

⁷⁹ Archibald, Paul. Response from Robert F. Gatje of the offices of Marcel Bruer, (Dec 13, 1966). Courtesy of the architect.

figure of the post-war émigré architect. Émigré architects made significant contributions to the development of modern architecture in Australia but did not always appear in the journals of the day. Émigrés sat somewhat outside the local networks of architectural production, with some exceptions, but most ‘struggled to infiltrate the architectural scene in Australia.’⁸⁰ Nevertheless, just as many Australian architects⁸¹ were called upon by their faith community to produce designs for their congregation, émigrés architects served their faith and cultural communities. Jewish émigrés Anthony Hayden and Kurt Popper completed a number of religious commissions for the Melbourne Jewish community, the churches for the Italian Scalabrian Order in Victoria were designed by Italian Ermin Smrekar, and for the immigrant Catholic community by Romanian Grigor Hirsch. Latvian architect Uldis Merits designed for the Latvian community and Czech architect Eric von Schramek produced religious commissions widely across Australia for the Lutheran denomination. International émigré architects operated further networks of international and migrant influence beyond the local players. In the field of church design, cultural and denominational networks and connections were significant and extensive in the international sphere.

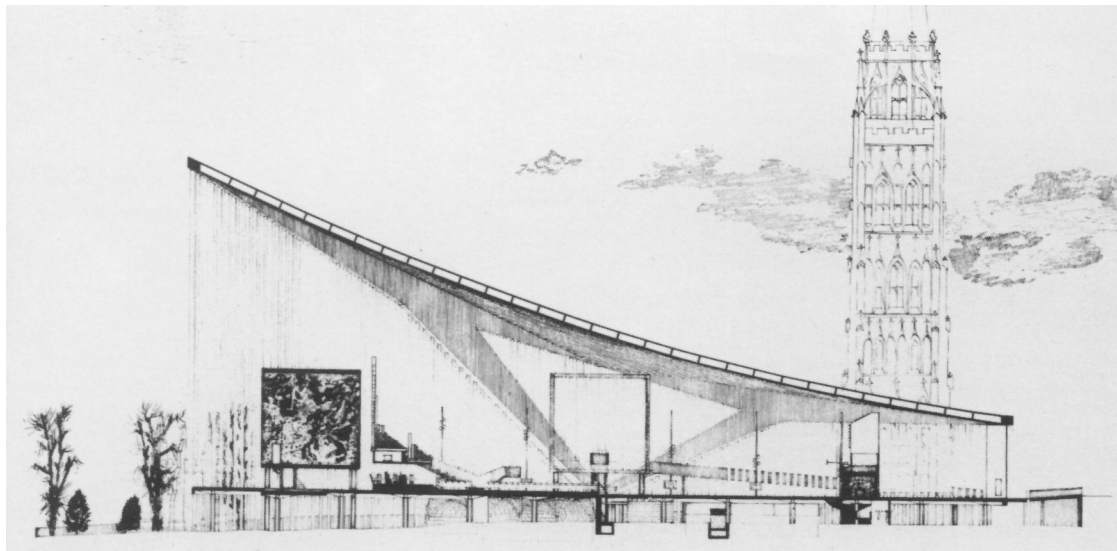


Fig. 4.7: Smithson's Coventry Cathedral competition entry, section, c.1950-51

Source: Louise Campbell. 'Towards a New Cathedral: The Competition for Coventry Cathedral 1950-51' in *Architectural History*, Vol. 35 (1992), pp.208-234, Fig: 18. JSTOR URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1568577>, Accessed: 26-01-2017

A number of Victorian churches were indirectly based on international precedents. In relation to St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church, Pascoe Vale, (1961) Alan G. Robertson said “Yes, I could say it was unique although it might have been influenced by a photo in an American magazine.”⁸² Others were quite literal. At Coburg, St Bernard's Catholic Church (1955) designed by Hungarian émigré architect Gregor Hirsch, was reportedly commissioned by the priest to replicate Christ the King Church, Seattle, USA (1950) by Paul Thiry.⁸³ Direct parallels can also be drawn between Pietro Belluschi's Trinity Lutheran Church,

⁸⁰ Lozanovska, Mirjana and Julia McKnight. 'Émigré Architects and the Australian Architecture Establishment' in *Proceedings of the Society of Architectural Historians Australia and New Zealand: 32, Architecture Institutions and Change*, (Eds) Paul Hogben and Judith O'Callaghan, (Sydney: SAHANZ, 2015), p.352.

⁸¹ Louis Williams, Osborne McCutcheon, David Chandler, Rex Patrick, David Caldwell, John Hipwell.

⁸² Robertson, Alan G.. *St Oliver's Parish and People*, St Oliver Plunkett Parish Booklet, p.57.

⁸³ In conversation with Father Leo at St Bernard's Catholic Church, August 2018.

Walnut Creek, California (1956) and St Pauls' Lutheran Church (1963) at Natimuk in country Victoria. In 1958, Sydney architect Milo Dunphy⁸⁴ recommended "Denmark, Switzerland, Sweden and Italy" as countries to look to for innovations in modern church design, and this was also "partly true of the U.S.A."⁸⁵ Dunphy brought attention to the hyperbolic paraboloid roof form of the Smithson's competition entry for Coventry Cathedral, which abandoned the longitudinal nave for a square plan, as an example of the opportunities presented by the new materials if architects were prepared to reconceptualise church designs in Australia.⁸⁶

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Fig. 4.8: International modern church designs

Source: (L): Michael Scott. 'Revolution in the Churches' in *Australian Women's Weekly*, (Dec 16, 1959), pp.33-39.
(R): Pietro Belluschi. 'The New Churches' in *TIME Magazine*, Vol 76, (Dec 26, 1960), pp.28-33.

Architecture in Australia was an important source of international news for the local architectural community. In 1957, architects Ian McKay and Phillip Jackson reported for *Architecture in Australia* as participants of the CIAM X International Conference held in Dubrovnik⁸⁷ and in 1960 Hungarian émigré architect George Molnar reported on the International Union of Architects held in London.⁸⁸ A special issue of *Architecture in Australia* 'Churches and Temples' of 1958 included Walter Bunning's review of Le Corbusier's new Chapel at Ronchamp⁸⁹ and in 1965, Don Gazzard reviewed *The New Churches of Europe* by G.E. Kidder Smith⁹⁰ which illustrated sixty new European churches.⁹¹ In addition, the new churches were brought to the attention of the general public through the local press and state-wide broadsheets.⁹² In September 1956, the Melbourne *Herald* featured Muir and Shepherd's Murray Road church in an article titled 'New look churches' which included images of new churches encompassing the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist denominations. In December 1959, *The Australian*

⁸⁴ Milo Dunphy was a partner in Loder and Dunphy, designers of a number of important church buildings in N.S.W..

⁸⁵ Dunphy, Milo. '4 Aspects of Church Design', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol, 47, No. 2, (April-June, 1958) p.59.

⁸⁶ Dunphy, Milo. '4 Aspects of Church Design', p.59.

⁸⁷ 'The 10th C.I.A.M. Conference', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 46, No. 3, Jul-Sept 1957, pp.82-84.

⁸⁸ Molnar, George. 'The impact of technology on architecture', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 50, No. 4. 1961, pp.74-77.

⁸⁹ 'The chapel at Ronchamp: The Programme of Patient Research', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 47, No.2, Apr-Jun, 1958.

⁹⁰ G.E. Kidder Smith (1913- 1997), a notable American architectural writer, historian and photographer of modern architecture, published several books on architectural modernism, notably *Brazil Builds* (1943) to accompany a MOMA exhibition of the same name, but also *Sweden Builds* (1950), *Switzerland Builds* (1950) and *Italy Builds* (1955). Kidder Smith made a valuable and broad contribution to the global dissemination of architectural modernist thought.

⁹¹ Gazzard, Don. 'Book Review', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 54, No. 2, (June, 1965), p.139.

⁹² 'New look churches. Symbolism expressed in design', p.12

Women's Weekly published a seven-page colour feature titled 'Revolution in the churches' penned by Australian Jesuit Priest Michael Scott who was recently returned from an international tour of modern church designs sponsored by the American Carnegie Foundation.⁹³ The widely distributed *TIME Magazine* featured an illustrated article by Pietro Belluschi in 1960 titled 'The new churches',⁹⁴ and in August 1962, Robin Boyd (1919-1971) wrote acerbically for the Australian National Travel Association's *Walkabout* magazine of the new churches 'attracting newcomers' with the 'flashiest fashionable taste'.⁹⁵ Beyond the architectural profession, the appearance of modern church designs in the everyday lives of the general public helped to sway opinion towards a greater acceptance, and perhaps even expectation for, modern church designs.

Case Study 01

St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk, regional Victoria 1961-63

Architect: Wolfgang A. Kuellmar



Fig. 4.9 : Sketch design for St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk

Source: Drawing by Wolfgang A. Kuellmar, St Paul's Lutheran Church Archives

Creating identity: constructing a modern church in country Victoria

The proliferation of religious buildings in Australia during the post-war years is most often recognised as the result of rapid population growth in the 'long decade' of the 1950s which saw suburban expansion intensify. The number of houses being erected in the outer areas of Melbourne had soared since the

⁹³ Scott, Father Michael. 'Revolution in the Churches', *The Australian Women's Weekly*, (Dec 16, 1959), p.33.

⁹⁴ Belluschi, 'The New Churches', pp.28-33.

⁹⁵ Boyd, Robin. 'Seeking Image in Vital Church Design', *Walkabout*, pp.20-22.

Second World War.⁹⁶ The average distance travelled on the suburban train system had increased 60% from 5 miles to 8 miles between 1919 and 1950⁹⁷ and in areas of outer Melbourne the effect was described as ‘houses [...] coming up like mushrooms.’⁹⁸ Most commonly, the proliferation of modern religious buildings is set against the backdrop of these well known facts – the cause and effect of immigration, rapid population growth and the processes of modernisation within the urban context.

The appearance of modern places of worship in country and regional locations and the narratives that led to their construction remain relatively unexamined. Why, for instance, was the architect of the Natimuk Lutheran Church selected and how was it possible for a small farming community, declining in numbers, to embark upon such a major financial project. If the answers do not lie in the facts of rapid population growth and its urban context, are there other equally important reasons to which we can ascribe the process of building a modern place of worship, no matter its location?

This case study investigates the driving socio-cultural factors that led the small rural community of Natimuk to commission and construct a modern and unusual church in country Victoria during the middle post-war years. It will be argued that it was the close kinship networks, lived in proximity and with a common faith and an expectation of a cohesive and continuing ‘way of life,’⁹⁹ which bound the members of the Natimuk congregation together to make possible the production of their church building. Furthermore, such endeavours achieved not only a physical structure, but also – through the process of construction which was a shared financial struggle and significant voluntary contribution of time, materials and labour – created a rich pool of collective experiences. More than simply another building, “religious, congregational, individual, and community memories are embodied in church buildings”¹⁰⁰ and in the process imbue the ‘spiritual hope of generations,’¹⁰¹ by connecting the “building with the congregation over time and through generations.”¹⁰² These experiences of collective endeavour moreover, resonate with the broader narrative of a pioneering spirit in the face of adversity;¹⁰³ narratives such as were prevalent (and very real) during the post-war era.

⁹⁶ ‘The Warrandyte Story’, *The Age*, (Oct 17, 1950), p.5.; Rickard, John. *Australia. A cultural History*, 3rd Ed., (Clayton, Victoria: Monash University Publishing, 2017), p. 212.

⁹⁷ ‘£5½ Million for new trains’, *The Age*, (Jan 17, 1952), p.1.

⁹⁸ ‘Building booms up and down the bay’, *The Argus*, (Jan 7, 1954), p.27.

⁹⁹ Buggeln, Gretchen. *The Suburban Church: Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, pp. xx-xxi.

¹⁰⁰ Clark, Jennifer. “‘This Special Shell’: The Church Building and the Embodiment of Memory”, *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 31, No. 1, March 2007, p.59.; Forty, Adrian. *Words and Buildings. A vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p.219.

¹⁰¹ Clark, “This Special Shell”, p.59-60.

¹⁰² Clark, “This Special Shell”, p.63.

¹⁰³ Portelli, Alessandro. Chapter 2: ‘Oral History as Genre’ in *Narrative and Genre*, edited by Mary Chamberlain and Paul Thompson. (London, New York: Routledge, 1998), pp.23-45.; Murphy, John, and Belinda Probert. ‘Anything for the House: Recollections of Post-war Suburban Dreaming’, *Australian Historical Studies* 36, no. 124 (October 2004), EBSCOhost (accessed July 8, 2018) pp.275 - 293.

A modern design for St Paul's Lutheran congregation, Natimuk, 1963



Fig. 4.10 : Exterior view, St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk

Source: Richardson, Dec 2017

When the Wimmera's landscape was carved up for settlement in the 1870s,¹⁰⁴ its farmers sowed their wheat with a horse drawn single-furrow plough. They reaped their crops with a sickle and threshed it with a flail before transporting it 100 kilometres to Stawell for sale. In the 1890s a railway was built East of Natimuk, enabling them to transport their wheat by train. Primitive vehicles gradually gave way to cars and the Sunshine Harvester engendered the mechanization of agriculture. The German-speaking Lutherans of Natimuk farmed the land then as they do now. Their first church was built in 1874 and for a long time church services and records, as well as school lessons were held in the German language, until the advent of the First World War, when services in English were instituted and continued thereafter.¹⁰⁵ By 1920 the aspirations of a modernizing farming community had turned to the desire for a new church, one that was more serviceable for the new century. But it wasn't until after the height of the Great Depression years, in 1937, that parish minutes record the establishment of a separate fund for the building of a new church.¹⁰⁶ And it would be still later, in 1963, that the Natimuk Lutheran Church would materialise, after a long financial struggle, several communal fund-raising schemes and multiple architectural proposals. Ultimately, the Natimuk Lutheran community unwittingly commissioned, through connections within their close-knit community and far-reaching denominational networks, a modern building with demonstrable international origins.

The recommendation of prominent Adelaide émigré Lutheran architect Eric von Schramek¹⁰⁷ came through the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA) via Dr Lohe, its President-General.

¹⁰⁴ SLV digitized collection, *Jubilee of the Lutheran Church in the Wimmera District of Victoria 1874 – 1924*, compiled at the request of the Pastors of the Wimmera District by J.F. Noack, [Natimuk, Vic.: J.F. Noack, 1924] p.3., <http://handle.slv.vic.gov.au/10381/154699>

¹⁰⁵ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record published in connection with the dedication & opening of the new church, Sunday, March 24th, 1963.*, pamphlet, n.p..

¹⁰⁶ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record*, n.p..

¹⁰⁷ Von Schramek (1921-2010) had arrived in Australia in 1948. According to his memoir 'Reminiscences', von Schramek was Lutheran and spoke Czech and German equally well. He was born and educated in Prague at the German Technical University where he gained the degree of Diploma, Engineer in Architecture. In 1951 von Schramek joined Evans & Bruer & Partners of Adelaide, becoming a director in 1953,

With a letter of introduction from Dr Lohe, Von Schramek had travelled to Europe and America in 1958 meeting with prominent architects Pietro Belluschi and Edward Sövik.¹⁰⁸ Revealingly, Dr Lohe had 'spent his boyhood days in Natimuk' as the son of Pastor Loehe,¹⁰⁹ minister of the Natimuk congregation (1902-1922) and instigator of the call for a new church building.

A meagre building fund

But the congregation's financial situation was precarious. At the end of 1958 the Building Fund held the meagre sum of £1,838 pounds¹¹⁰ and by 1960 when the subject was again raised 'to erect a new church as soon as possible'¹¹¹ the fund had increased only £500. In one of what was to be a succession of collaborative efforts to alleviate a straitened financial situation, farmers were asked to 'give thought to sowing from ten to twenty acres of wheat [...] by working bee.'¹¹² In March 1960, von Schramek's sketch plans were favourably received and accepted in principle 'as being suitable for this town and congregation.'¹¹³ Thereafter a promissory survey was taken and at a special meeting in April, the treasurer reported the sum of £6,022 had been subscribed or promised.¹¹⁴ On this basis, 'guided by this obvious show of faith in the building project, the congregation decided to proceed with the venture to build a new church at the cost of £12,000.'¹¹⁵ However, when tenders arrived in September of 1960 they shockingly ranged from £15,000 to over £20,000,¹¹⁶ well outside the budget and beyond the means of the small Natimuk congregation.

In October 1960, members of the congregation were invited to purchase a calf each for agistment until they were ready to be sold at market for the church building fund.¹¹⁷ In January 1961 the building fund stood at £3,600 and a further £250¹¹⁸ was anticipated because 610 bushels of wheat co-operatively planted by the congregation had been delivered to the silos. Finally, in June 1961, when it became clear that the small farming community could not afford the design by von Schramek, a special meeting was held to 'discuss the advisability to employ a new architect for the proposed new church'¹¹⁹ and at that same meeting the congregation accepted in principle 'sketch plan no. 1' submitted by Wolfgang A. Kuellmar.¹²⁰ Unfortunately, very little is known of Kuellmar other than he was a German émigré architect trained in Cologne,¹²¹ then resident of Geelong. His recommendation is assumed to have come via the

senior partner in Bruer, von Schramek & Dawes in 1960 and Senior Principal in 1963. The firm subsequently became von Schramek and Dawes. Von Schramek remained with the practice until his retirement in 1989. Von Schramek designed some 56 churches during his practice years.

¹⁰⁸ Pietro Belluschi (1899-1994) and Edward Sövik (1918-2014).

¹⁰⁹ The spelling of the name Loehe was changed to Lohe.

¹¹⁰ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record*, n.p..

¹¹¹ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record*, n.p..

¹¹² Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Annual Meeting, January 24, 1960, U.E.L.C.A. 1960-1966, Lutheran Archives, Bowden, Adelaide, n.p.

¹¹³ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Meeting, March 4, 1960, Bowden.

¹¹⁴ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Special Meeting, April 27, 1960, Bowden.

¹¹⁵ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record*, n.p..

¹¹⁶ Helen Gordon's publication *Reminiscences. Eric von Schramek and his Churches* indicates von Schramek prepared a number of designs for the Natimuk church, p.75.

¹¹⁷ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Meeting, October 14, 1960, Bowden.

¹¹⁸ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, U.E.L.C.A. 1960-1966, Lutheran Archives, Bowden, Adelaide, n.p.

¹¹⁹ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Meeting held after service, June 18, 1961, Bowden.

¹²⁰ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Meeting held after service, June 18, 1961, Bowden.

¹²¹ Public Records Office of Victoria. Public Building Files, *Lutheran Sunday School St Paul's Main Street Natimuk Churches*. Series VPRS 7882, Consignment P0001, Unit 728.

German Lutheran network. However, the name Kuellmar is not recorded in the Geelong Lutheran congregational records of the time and business correspondence suggests Kuellmar was employed at the General Motors Factory, Geelong. Immigration records reveal Kuellmar's wife Erna joined him in June 1955, arriving from Bremerhaven as a German assisted passenger.¹²²



Fig. 4.11: Wimmera farmer c. 1940-50, Lutheran Ladies Guild, Natimuk

Source: (L): State Library of Victoria, State Rivers and Water Supply Commission photographer, Rural Water Corporation Collection, Accession RWP/1855

(R): Newspaper clipping, Natimuk Lutheran Church archive collection.

By January 1962, the building fund had only increased £51 but nevertheless tenders were called in June. The lowest tender of £11,835 was accepted and through their various endeavours, the Ladies Guild were able to offer £420 towards church furnishings. In October, on the day of the laying of the foundation stone, a collection of £39 was taken and £22 was reported as being 'received from wheat advances.' At the end of 1962, the year's profit from income was a mere £2 and although the church was successfully opened in April 1963, by the middle of 1964, it was again necessary to entertain co-operative share farming to raise funds for the congregation.¹²³

Impetus for an important merger

The extreme financial hardship experienced by the Natimuk congregation and their dogged commitment to the project of building a new church is remarkable, perhaps even inexplicable to some. It would appear that the existence of the new church was far more important than its style. Keith Lockwood (at that time a child) of the Natimuk congregation has suggested that, after cost, the architectural style of the building was not a primary consideration, "If the architect said it was a modern design and it looked good in the sketches, who were we to argue?"¹²⁴ It would seem the socio-cultural conditions were of greater significance to the community: bound up in the sentiment of the new building was the transference of a history of 89 years in which the lives of the congregation had been marked by the rituals that had been 'administered regularly within the walls of the old building.'¹²⁵ If the new church could not be built, the central place of religion within the community would be compromised, reflecting an inability of the new generation to show their commitment to their faith – via the presence of a suitable

¹²² National Archives of Australia, *Fremantle Passenger Lists: Western Australia 1897-1963*; National Archives of Australia, *A1197 Incoming Passenger Card*. <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=11619500&S=2349> (Jul 11, 2018).

¹²³ Natimuk Church Council Minutes, Annual Meeting, July 19, 1964, Bowden.

¹²⁴ Email correspondence with Keith Lockwood, Elder of the Natimuk congregation, June 25, 2018.

¹²⁵ St Paul's Lutheran Church U.E.L.C.A., Natimuk, Vic. *Historical Record*, n.p..

edifice – which had been the pillar of previous generations of German Lutherans. But also, the new building represented a spiritual hope for the future not mentioned thus far – that the *two* Lutheran congregations existing within the town of Natimuk, torn apart by schism 74 years previous, might reunite.¹²⁶ According to Joan Uebergang, “The new Natimuk church was well received because both of the two old Lutheran churches in the town were old [...] it was a blessing for both congregations to move into one big new church.”¹²⁷ Thus the new church fervently embodied and connected a mix of expectations passed down through generations as well as a wealth of community aspirations for the future. Due to the building of the new church, the Natimuk congregations were the very first in Australia to merge the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (ELCA) into the Lutheran Church of Australia.

The new church is built



Fig. 4.12 : Interior view, St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk

Source: Drawing by Wolfgang A. Kuellmar, courtesy St Paul's Lutheran Church Archives

The Natimuk Lutheran church is sited on the main street and stands as Natimuk's tallest building apart from the prominent grain silos. The trapezoidal form is constructed of six steel portal frames supported on a concrete slab and is clad in Lysaght 'Kliplok' sheeting. The symmetrical facade contains a central panel of aluminium cladding on which an impressive five-metre tall black anodised aluminium cross is backlit. The lower third of the building is constructed of non-load bearing walls of cream bricks from Stawell. Projecting walls create the entrance portal and also a small narthex area beneath a choir loft. The interior is austere: the structural steel frame and timber ceiling battens are expressed internally, and the interior volume is eight metres high, conceived as a unified space yet traditionally planned with longitudinal nave. The sanctuary wall is lined in vertical pine timbers with a molded profile and the rear

¹²⁶ These sentiments were regularly expressed in the Council minutes in relation to the building of a new church.

¹²⁷ Email correspondence with Keith Lockwood, Elder of the Natimuk congregation, June 25, 2018: The United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (UELCA) was aligned with the South Australian synod. The Natimuk Lutheran church described in this paper was aligned with the South Australian UELCA. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (ELCA) was aligned with the Victorian synod.

windows contain fixed glass panes shaded 'Amber Cathedral.' An unusual feature of the building is created by offsetting the steel structure from the enclosing walls to create a void between the brick walls and the steel members. The void creates a covered walkway on each long side of the building, above which 'horizontal windows' of wire-cast glass are installed. Their purpose is to allow a diffuse light to be caste upwards into the interior. The orchestration of light within the building is atypical, as it does not focus upon the altar or altar cross.

On the day of it's dedication, Dr Lohe invoked a pioneering narrative that connected the Lutheran congregation to their generations past. He exclaimed, "that this church should occur is a miracle in our eyes."¹²⁸ The original church had been built by "pioneers of the land – men who had little [...] men of conviction – of substance [...] I say without fear that our pioneer fathers and grandfathers – the people who came from Mt Gambier or Europe with little more than a bible [...] made this area – be true to them [and] Jesus Christ [...] their foundation." Of the contemporary style he said "How the church was made, of its materials, of the fact that it had no cornerstone as in old-style buildings [...] mattered not for Jesus Christ is the true cornerstone."¹²⁹

International denominational networks

Demonstrating the extent to which international networks were at play in the design and conception of the Natimuk Lutheran Church, it seems certain Kuellmar had seen Pietro Belluschi's¹³⁰ 1956 design for Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, California. Conceivably, the design could have been recommended to Kuellmar, by von Schramek or others, as affordable for the Natimuk congregation based on its use of the cheaper modern materials. In any case, Kuellmar's design is remarkably similar to the Walnut Creek Lutheran Church. Belluschi's building is also trapezoidal in form, but clad in timber. The interior is comprised of gray Sonoma stone walls and laminated timber portal framework with closely spaced purlins of stained light ash in contrast with a prominent reredos of redwood and altar rails of walnut. Spatially, the focus of the interior is anchored by the heavy stone altar, above which the central cross is embellished with mosaics of blue-green, deep blue and red.¹³¹

While Belluschi's design seems to produce clarity in which all elements work separately and in unison, Kuellmar's design is revealed in cheaper materials and at a lesser scale. Kuellmar's elements seem perfunctory, the purlins create structure rather than surface and the sanctuary is located by the rear wall rather than being identified as an especially architecturally denoted ritual space. The greater height of Belluschi's walls is effective in enclosing and containing space, whereas the dominance of Kuellmar's roof form seems to deny the walls their enclosing function.

¹²⁸ '400 Attend Opening of Natimuk's New Lutheran Church,' *The Mail-Times*, (March 25, 1963)

¹²⁹ '400 Attend Opening of Natimuk's New Lutheran Church,'

¹³⁰ Belluschi was born in Italy and received a degree in engineering from the University of Rome in 1922. Soon thereafter he travelled to the United States where he remained. Although raised a Catholic, he designed many religious buildings across all denominations, including many well-known Lutheran churches. Belluschi became Dean of MIT in 1950.

¹³¹ Christ-Janer, Albert and Mary Mix Foley. *Modern Church Architecture. A guide to the form and spirit of 20th century religious buildings*, (New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p.159.

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 4.13 : Interior view, Trinity Lutheran Church, Walnut Creek, California (1956), Pietro Belluschi

Source: Christ-Janer, Albert & Mary Mix Foley. *Modern Church Architecture*,
(New York, Toronto, London: McGraw-Hill, 1962), p.158.

Shared memories and creating community

Not merely a functional building, St Paul's Lutheran Church represents a specific community, built through and upon the collective spiritual aspirations of generations connected across time.¹³² The bringing into being of a contemporary building, against all odds, served as a physical reminder and visible expression of the congregation's faith and identity; an identity powerfully connected to their pioneering origins, and visibly a clear demonstration of the congregation taking their place in the modern world. Such endeavours achieved not only a physical structure, but also – through the process of construction which was a shared financial struggle and significant voluntary contribution of time, materials and labour – created a rich pool of collective experiences. The building itself is an “active participant in the production of a shared memory”,¹³³ of ‘culture and tradition.’¹³⁴

The marked proliferation of modern church buildings in the post-war period was not solely due to the often cited well-known facts of the post-war period – of immigration and rapid population growth in an urban context – and nor were they simply rudimentary indicators of congregational pride. The post-war churches were principally expressions of collective endeavour based on strong belief systems that were expected to endure. Viewed as the product of the socio-cultural conditions that prevailed, no matter the location, the process of building a new church provided not only the physical structure capable of accommodating the next generation of children, but also a rich pool of experiences through which connections both past and present were made.

¹³² Clark, Jennifer. “This Special Shell”, p.59-63.

¹³³ Misztal, Barbara A.. *Theories of Social Remembering*, (Maidenhead, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 2003), p.7 & 158.

¹³⁴ Juhani Pallasmaa, ‘Space, Place, Memory and Imagination: The Temporal dimension of Existential Space’, in *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, Marc Treib (Ed), (London: Routledge, 2013), ProQuest ebrary, p.24.; Proctor, Robert. *Building the modern church: Roman Catholic church architecture in Britain, 1955 to 1975*, (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014), p.257.

Across all denominations, church ministers and their building committees were allowed remarkable independence in selecting and commissioning an architect. In many cases, architects were recommended via the networks of familial ties that often extended across Victoria and Australia, even internationally. In other cases, congregations were referred to specific architects by their clergy, many of whom were extremely well informed and experienced in the commissioning and building process.

The construction of St Paul's Lutheran Church, Natimuk, a shared financial struggle and significant voluntary contribution of time, materials and labour, demonstrates what sociological research suggests are consistent narratives of 'triumph over adversity'¹³⁵, of undertakings which are "both about an individual sense of self, as well as about connecting personal experience with a larger more public narrative of Australian pioneering identity; ...a way of ordering one's memory, a way of telling a story about what one has built... and of being part of a new age of hope."¹³⁶

4.4 Conclusion

As Australia became strategically linked to the United States, as is well known, architects increasingly looked across the Pacific for inspirations to be drawn from a modern corporate and consumerist culture.¹³⁷ However, these same influences are not as strongly in evidence in the design of places of worship. Church building in Australia was slower to shift away from its ties with Britain after the war and was far more likely to be influenced by local factors such as access to materials, economic circumstances and a bespoke approach to the needs of a specific community. Nevertheless, Australian architects travelled widely and actively sought to implement their experience and knowledge of the broader international scene within Australian conditions. Australian architects were much more likely to consider themselves not solely as colonial architects on the periphery, but as engaged participants of an international network.¹³⁸ The very condition of distance encouraged a desire and openness for international connections.¹³⁹ In Australia, the 1950s and 1960s evolved as a heady mix of economic constraint coupled with the introduction of new materials and construction techniques and new freedoms in design. In Victoria, these factors in combination with a strong culture of creativity and experimentation of its architectural community led to the construction of a wide spectrum of innovative church designs in the post-war period.

The first three chapters of this thesis have aimed to provide the reader with context to support them in their understanding of the development of the post-war church in Australia in relation to its unique historical social and architectural setting and also the prevailing international architectural discourse of the first half of the twentieth century. The chapters that follow now focus in greater detail on the research outcomes categorised as Innovation, Tradition and the Art of the church.

¹³⁵ Murphy, John, and Belinda Probert. 'Anything for the House: Recollections of Post-war Suburban Dreaming', p.280.

¹³⁶ Murphy and Probert, 'Anything for the House', p.280.

¹³⁷ Goad, Philip. 'Importing Expertise: Australian-US Architects and the Large-scale, 1945-1990', *Fabrications*, Vol26, No.3, pp.357-391.; Rich, Paul B.. 'British imperial decline and the forging of English patriotic memory, c1918-1968', *History of European Ideas*, Vol. 9, Issue 6 (1988), p. 659.

¹³⁸ Willis, Julie. 'Architectural Movements: Journeys of an Inter-colonial Profession', *Fabrications*, Vol26, No.2, p.173.

¹³⁹ Willis and Goad, 'A Bigger Picture: Reframing Australian Architecture History', *Fabrications*, Vol 18, No. 1, p.12.

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FIG. 5.0 ST FAITH'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND, BURWOOD, 1958
Architect: Mackridge, Stottle & Mitchell. Image: St Faith's Anglican Church Archives

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CHAPTER FIVE

Innovation: Embracing modernism

5.1 Introduction

The aim of Chapter Five *Innovation: Embracing modernism* and Chapter Six *Tradition: Keeping comfortable and steady* is to examine in detail the spectrum of design responses produced in Victoria (Fig 1.2 *Spectrum of design responses*). At one end of the spectrum are the innovative modern buildings discussed in this chapter. At the opposite end of the spectrum are buildings designed in continuity with historic precedents which are discussed in Chapter Six.

This Chapter, *Innovation: Embracing modernism*, is divided into two parts. Part I discusses how the early post-war economic conditions of austerity in the 1950s stimulated innovation through the uptake of new structural materials, technical processes and construction techniques which enabled innovation and led to a greater acceptance of modernism in the design of places of worship. Many experimental forms were justified as practical responses to post-war austerity measures and validated by the search to express the theological function of a church in a new architectural language. These conditions cut across all aspects of church design and were further stimulated and moderated by the concurrent social climate specific to each parish, period, place and congregation. In the absence of Australian precedents in modern church design, architects looked to international examples often via the influence of clerical and denominational networks. In this environment, a younger generation of architects skilled in modern design surfaced to become the architects of choice.

Part II of Chapter Five discusses how new formal and spatial ideas and modes of construction were implemented to produce a diversity of innovative designs. There were a number of distinctive ways in which architects approached their designs: through an innovative use of structure leading to a raft of unusual expressive forms; a concern for platonic form characterised by geometric compositional strategies; and although few, a handful of important designs conceived directly through the lens of a rational international modernism. There were also churches linked to international precedents and the experiences of architects garnered while working or travelling overseas. In many instances, unusual forms were justified by their capacity to express symbolic function or modern liturgical concerns in their plan arrangements. The broad range of results covered throughout the chapter illustrate the strong agency of parish communities, in particular the clergy, to determine design outcomes and to support buildings that could be achieved within extremely limited budgets. The continuing importance of symbolism touched upon all aspects of church design, expressed in the rhetoric use of structure and form as a meeting point of theological symbolism and architectural modernity.

The erection of a new church represented a significant event in the life of a parish. It required mutual endeavour and financial backing and was a sign of progress and growth within the parish community. A modern architectural language was furthermore seen as an important indicator of a progressive and relevant social community. The archives of almost every modern church constructed in the two decades after World War II contain images and documents recording the drama and excitement of raising all manner of steel framed structures; spires being cautiously lifted into place without the benefit of safety precautions and the laying of foundation stones witnessed by congregations dressed in their Sunday best: ladies in floral hats and gloves and suited gentlemen, occasionally captured on the increasingly popular Eastman Kodak 16mm film. In the fledgling suburban parishes and also in rural locations, a hunger for social change was frequently expressed in the desire for a modern religious building.

Four case studies interspersed throughout the chapter illustrate the intersecting themes discussed herein. St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1956-58) illustrates the extent of attitudinal change towards modern architecture and a preference for young architects versed in modern design rather than experienced in ecclesiastic design. St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte (1962-63) examines a small geometrically conceived church building constructed on a microscopic budget, and St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill, Bendigo (1964) in country Victoria is a rare example of international modernism in church design in the Australian setting.

5.2 Austerity: the 1950s, making do and the early innovators

*"..there is today one inescapable fact which is bringing about the end of 'traditional' church architecture. This fact is cost."*¹

Architect, Milo Dunphy 1958

In Australia, modernism in religious design was in the first instance supported and justified by economic imperative in combination with the urgent requirement for new church buildings. New church buildings were required for two purposes: to facilitate expansion of the parish system in parallel with the growth of suburbia; and in the established parishes, to replace the increasingly inadequate small scale nineteenth century building stock. In this environment, aspirations for traditional church buildings were moderated by what could be achieved with new structural systems and technologies combined with prosaic materials to produce economical buildings. In the early 1950s, with few local examples of modern places of worship, architects drew upon their experiences working overseas or drew directly from international examples. In many instances a younger generation of architects experienced in modern design rather than ecclesiastic design began to be preferred. By the late 1950s, modernism in ecclesiastic design was becoming acceptable not only as an economical choice but as a legitimate way forward in the provision of worship environments compatible with a modernising world.

5.2.1 Budgets lead to modern buildings

As Australia emerged from the 1940s, an optimism for building a better society² was expressed by many religious communities in their desire for new worship environments. In most cases, the new churches were almost entirely funded by their congregation and therefore in the Australian setting financial capacity often led to a greater acceptance of modern designs. A key motivation for accepting the steel-framed modern cream-brick design by Alan G. Robertson³ for St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Frankston (1953-54)⁴ was economic, as well as perhaps an act of faith by a parish priest willing to engage with architectural modernism. (Fig. 5.1) The potential cost of the building, an estimated £60-£80,000⁵ for traditional construction to accommodate 600 parishioners, was mitigated by a modern design which allowed the building, including its furnishings, to be constructed for £34,000.⁶ Using a modernist language, Robertson explained costs were cut by simplifying the structure and avoiding all superfluous ornament. The building would "derive its beauty from the simple geometry of its structure and the inherent qualities of the materials used", natural brick colours in contrast to stained glass, and a low pitch roof "more pleasing in

¹ Dunphy, Milo. '4 Aspects of church design', *Architecture Australia*, Vol 47, No.2, (Apr-Jun, 1958), p.58.

² Lewi, Hannah and David Nichols (eds). *Community: Building modern Australia*, (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2010), p.5.

³ Robertson (1908-c.1980) attended the Melbourne Technical College School of Architecture, joining Stephenson and Turner in 1927 and was admitted to the RVIA in 1934. In February 1935, Robertson departed for Europe where he gained considerable experience working on all types of projects for Leonard Rome Guthrie of Wimperis, Simpson & Guthrie in London, and also in Dublin for well-known modern ecclesiastic architects, Robinson Keefe.

⁴ 'Building booms up and down the bay', *The Argus* (Jan 7, 1954), p.27.

⁵ 'Communism Still Very Great Danger In Australia. Archbishop Mannix Deplores Sectarian Strife', *The Advocate*, (Nov 4, 1954), p.3.

⁶ 'Communism Still Very Great Danger', p.3.

appearance” and “equally satisfactory from the functional point of view and less expensive than other forms.”⁷ Structurally, the serrated side walls of the nave were self-supporting while at the same time providing a new way of lighting and ventilating the interior. The serrated walls bear a striking likeness to those designed by Basil Spence for Coventry Cathedral (1951). However, Robertson’s design was almost certainly informed by his experiences working in the offices of Irish firm Robinson O’Keefe, where he would have been exposed to Christ the King Catholic Church, County Cork, Ireland (1927),⁸ a building reported by the *Irish Builder* as the ‘greatest break from conventional church architecture yet made in Ireland’.⁹



Fig. 5.1: St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Frankston 1954
Architect: Alan G. Robertson

Source: State Library of Victoria, Peter Wille collection of architectural slides, Identifier: H91.244-4177

Robertson was an early advocate of modernism in ecclesiastic design. He had worked for the progressive Melbourne firm Stephenson and Turner and after 1934 had gained five years experience working in the United Kingdom. On his return to Australia he stated “Holland, Sweden, Hungary, and even Germany are far more advanced in church architecture than [are] the English-speaking countries. They have thrown aside tradition and precedent and attacked the problem in the light of modern inventions.”¹⁰ Robertson quickly became an architect of choice for the Catholic Church, designing at least nine new Catholic churches between 1951–1956 throughout Victoria.¹¹ He was resourceful and inventive in response to the prevailing austere economic conditions. It was perhaps the unusual prefabricated ‘rigi-frame’¹² of St John’s Catholic Church, Mitcham¹³ that first brought Robertson to the attention of a wider audience in 1952. (Fig. 3.0) Robertson’s economical solution for the new church had arisen through the agency of the Parish

⁷ ‘New Church at Frankston Will be Very Modern’, *The Advocate*, (Jun 11, 1953), p. 8.

⁸ Barry Byrne had trained with Frank Lloyd Wright in his Oak Park Studio 1902-1908. Byrne is said to have drawn upon P.V. Jensen Klint’s Grundtvig Church, Copenhagen (1913-26) as inspiration for Christ the King Catholic Church, Ireland.

⁹ Rothery, Sean. *Ireland and the new architecture 1900-1940*, (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1991), p.162.

¹⁰ Robertson, Alan G.. ‘Church Architecture’, *The Advocate*, (Nov 23, 1939), p.24.

¹¹ Robertson designed at least a further 3 church buildings between 1961-1966.

¹² Not a ‘Nissen hut’ the ‘rigi-frame’ was a polygonal arch structure, clad in galvanised iron sheeting manufactured by Australian company Standard Steel and distributed by A.J. Anderson Pty Ltd. (source: ‘Church frame not “Nissen”’, *The Herald*, (Nov 8, 1952), p.7.)

¹³ Replaced in 1980 by a fan-shaped design by Paul Archibald which retained the 1952 belfry tower as a free-standing structure.

Priest, who had seen a similar structure illustrated in an American magazine. Nevertheless, beyond the building's structure, which was largely economical, predetermined and utilitarian, St John's was lauded as 'ultra-modern' due to its 'startling' interior features: the 'huge glass wall' in the façade, 'indirect lighting' and a striking "pastel coloured ceiling with chrome spotlights focused on the altar".¹⁴ In addition, the building was equipped with a public address system and 'modern' confessionals.¹⁵ These reactions speak not only of a novel form but indicate the extent to which the new churches such as St John's represented new environments for worship, environments that were light and transparent via the use of expanses of glass, colour instead of ornament, and the orchestration of natural and artificial light to direct attention. Robertson's later church designs include the small seaside¹⁶ Catholic church of Our Lady of Fatima, Lorne (1954) constructed for £16,000 featuring unusual waterproof plywood side walls that could open upwards on pivot hinges to accommodate an 'unlimited' summer-time congregation while simultaneously providing ventilation and shade.¹⁷ In the remote Victorian alpine region, Robertson laminated local reclaimed floor boards into structural arches for the design of the Mt Beauty Catholic Church (1955).¹⁸ In Melbourne, at St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church, Pascoe Vale (1960), the substantial concrete appearance of the ceiling girders was created through the use of light weight truss construction covered with steel mesh and then sprayed in a new cement cum fibre, blown on to give a solid appearance and economical solution.¹⁹ In the early post-war years budgetary constraints frequently drove experimentation and innovation in the design of modern church buildings which led to all sorts of practical designs being accepted by religious institutions and their congregations.

5.2.2 International influences

With few local examples of modernism in church design before 1955, the early church buildings in Victoria drew directly upon international examples identified via denominational networks and the direct experiences garnered by architects and clergy in international contexts. Commissioning clergy were often familiar with the changes taking place in church design and well apprised of the range of modern solutions to the problematic increasing need to provide for swaths of new church buildings to meet the development of new parish communities. St Bernard's Catholic Church, East Coburg (1955) designed by émigré Romanian architect and town planner Grigor Hirsch²⁰ represents a radical break from traditional church designs in Victoria and a new response to modern liturgical thinking. The steel framed building is

¹⁴ 'Mitcham Church ultra-modern', *The Herald*, (Nov 7, 1952), p.3.

¹⁵ Wright, Syd. *The History of St. John's Mitcham*, (Mitcham: St John's Parish, 1990), p. 25.

¹⁶ As a population of 'beach lovers', expanded congregations at seaside locations during the summer months was a very real problem in the post-war years. Serious consideration of how to accommodate an overflow congregation was particularly essential for the holiday churches and was also a key consideration at the Anglican Church of the Transfiguration, Anglesea (1957) designed by Earle and Bunbury, and also at Christopher's Catholic Church, Anglesea (1968) designed by Paul Wallace.

¹⁷ 'An attractive seaside church', *The Age*, (Dec 18, 1954), p.9.; 'New "Expanding" Church at Lorne', *The Advocate*, (Dec 23, 1954), p.2.

¹⁸ *Cross-Section*, Issue 28, (Feb, 1955), p.3.

¹⁹ Robertson, Alan G.. *St Oliver's Parish and People*, St Oliver Plunkett Parish Booklet, p.57.

²⁰ Grigor Hirsch (1906-1987) was a Romanian émigré who arrived in Australia in December 1949 with his wife Sylvia and two young children. Hirsch had left Europe in 1938 and worked in India where he converted from Judaism to Catholicism enroute to Australia. Hirsch immediately gained work with Frank Heath but soon formed his own practice Contemporary Architecture Group [CONARG] in 1953. Notable works by CONARG include Mirama Court Shopping Centre, Mitcham (1957), Sandringham Hospital (with J.H.E.Dorney) (1957) and high-rise apartments in Lansell Road, Toorak (1962). (Source: Simon Reeves, Built Heritage: <http://www.builtheritage.com.au>)

semicircular with a free-standing altar located at the centre of its diameter. (Fig. 5.2) The steel members converge to create strong visual sightlines concentrated on the altar.²¹ The design accommodated 600 parishioners for an estimated cost of £30-35,000²² and had been suggested to the architect by the parish Priest. The design was almost certainly modelled on American architect Paul Thiry's²³ semicircular Christ the King Catholic Church, Seattle, Washington DC (1948), which in 1950 had appeared in the American quarterly journal *Liturgical Arts*.²⁴ These facts underscore the influence and agency of local clergy, as well as global denominational networks, in fashioning and informing modernism in ecclesiastic design within the Australian context. St Bernard's is the earliest example of a fully modern liturgical arrangement in Victoria, with its semicircular seating it significantly pre-dates the Catholic Second Vatican Council directives of 1962-1965.

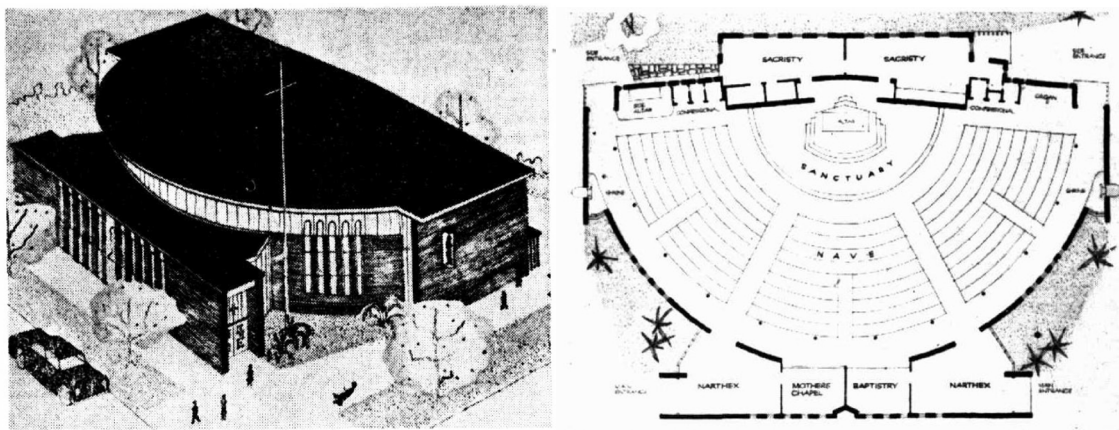


Fig. 5.2: St Bernard's Catholic Church, East Coburg. 1955
Architect: Grigor Hirsch, CONARG.

Source: 'Functional Plan for Coburg Church', *The Advocate*, Nov 4, 1954, p.12.

Nevertheless, there were also instances of local examples of modernism in ecclesiastic design being influential, particularly the early Presbyterian churches. The Presbyterian Church was firmly established in Victoria. In 1955 alone, Victoria had received approximately 1,300 mainly Scottish Presbyterian migrants, "the second largest denominational group [from] the United Kingdom."²⁵ In response, a number of early modern Presbyterian churches were built in Victoria. The modest low-cost rectilinear building St Margaret's Presbyterian Church, Balaclava (1953) by K. Murray Forster²⁶ was erected for £8,439 to accommodate 200 parishioners. The church was lauded as 'Swiss style' based on the architects' recent studies abroad. The cream brick building featured a modern 12 foot (~3.5m) wide covered way from pavement to entrance²⁷ supported on thin tubular steel columns, signalling an 'advanced contemporary

²¹ "Arc' plan for new church. Break from tradition', *Herald*, (Sept 24, 1954), p.13.

²² "Arc' plan for new church.', p.13.

²³ Paul Thiry (1904-1993) was born to French parents at Nome, Alaska the United States where his father was a mining engineer. Thiry graduated from the University of Washington, Seattle in 1928. By 1955, Thiry had travelled to Europe at least three times and met with Le Corbusier in 1935.

²⁴ 'Church of Christ the King, Seattle, Washington', *Liturgical Arts*, Vol 18, pp.38-39, Feb 1950.

²⁵ 'New migrants challenge church', *Presbyterian Life*, (Mar 9, 1956), p.34.

²⁶ 'Swiss Style', *The Argus*, (Aug 1, 1953), p.9.

²⁷ 'New church at Balaclava', *The Age*, (Apr 24, 1954), p.17.; 'Swiss Style', *The Argus*, (Aug 1, 1953), p.9.

style' which achieved simplicity and a 'modern feeling'.²⁸ This early Presbyterian building was looked upon by other protestant denominations as an early example of modern design for a place of worship.²⁹ The wide diversity within modern church designs during this period was due partly to available parish resources, resulting in the construction of more substantial buildings in the wealthier suburbs. In the more socially desirable suburb of Brighton Beach, St Leonard's Presbyterian Church was erected in 1956 for £40,000 to accommodate 380 parishioners. The design by Bruce F. Kemp was a highly unusual curved plan in the shape of an aureole,³⁰ derived from two segments of a circle taken from the traditional Presbyterian crest.³¹ The church was constructed in orange clay bricks and the curved side walls were serrated and interspersed with aluminium framed 'huge plate glass windows'³² while the tower form was shaped by concave surfaces. St Leonard's was constructed in brick not steel, although in a highly unusual modern form, indicating a concession of sorts to create a contemporary yet solid and substantial building for a wealthy conservative parish.

5.2.3 Changing of the guard

The relative absence of modern Anglican places of worship in Victoria in the early 1950s is striking and suggestive of the extent to which Anglican identity continued to be steeped in a connexion to the home country via various associations promoting continuity with the spiritual and architectural forms of the British Empire.³³ Anglican strongholds were invariably located in the wealthier, exclusive suburbs, reflecting their dominance within the existing socio-political power structures of the State. In the immediate post-war years, for Anglican communities, there was neither imperative nor profit for change. Prominent ecclesiastic architect Louis Williams³⁴ continued to be the architect of choice for most Anglican churches, not only in Victoria but also for important Anglican commissions interstate,³⁵ even after 1950. It was not until the late 1950s that modern Anglican places of worship burst upon the scene with the much heralded arrival of St Faith's, Burwood (1958), the small



Fig. 5.3: Christ Church, Mitcham, 1958
Architect: Ray Berg

Source: Cross Section, No. 69, July 1958.

²⁸ 'New look churches', *The Herald*, (Sept 20, 1956), p.12

²⁹ The vestry committee of St Faith's Anglican Church, Burwood, visited this building to examine and assess the possibilities of a modern style for the design of their own church.

³⁰ The shape of the radiant light surrounding the head or body of a person to signify their holiness.

³¹ 'Brighton Church in Modern Design', *Presbyterian Life*, (Sept 7, 1956), p.12.

³² 'Melbourne's churches go modern', *The Herald*, (May 11, 1959), p.13.

³³ Bremner, Alex. *Imperial Gothic: religious architecture and high Anglican culture in the British empire, c. 1840-1870*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p.432.

³⁴ Williams (1890-1980) had been articled to ecclesiastic architect and Yorkshireman Alexander North in Tasmania, becoming his junior partner in 1912 producing the drawings of Trinity College Chapel, Parkville (1916), a chapel designed in a mix of Gothic and Arts and Crafts traditions.

³⁵ St Edmund's Anglican Church, Wembley, W.A. (1953); St George's Anglican Church, Parkes, N.S.W. (1956); St Boniface Cathedral, Bunbury, W.A. (1962); as well as a number of smaller commissions in N.S.W., W.A. and Tasmania.

round building designed by the young modernist firm Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell (Fig. 5.4), alongside All Saints (former Christ Church), Mitcham (1958) by architect and academic Ray Berg (Fig. 5.3) and St James', Glen Iris (1958) by architects and designers Bogle and Banfield and Associates designed in the international style. These early Anglican buildings, designed by young architects skilled in modern design rather than experienced architects trained in ecclesiastic traditions, bucked denominational trends and demonstrated the shifting social expectations of the day. In a reciprocal arrangement, a new generation of young architects "began to be favoured by the younger clergy".³⁶ In the case of St Faith's, Burwood, Louis Williams had prepared a set of sketch designs in 1941 which did not come to fruition. Williams had also designed the 1922 masterplan and sketch design for a complex of buildings at St James', Glen Iris, of which only the hall was built, and in 1961, after submitting a masterplan for St George's, Ivanhoe³⁷ Williams wrote in frustration that he was:

*"disturbed to hear [...] a number of Architects have been asked to submit their ideas for the development of the site for St. Georges. [...] It is improper for an architect to submit any ideas regarding a particular problem knowing that another architect has been invited to do so. [...] The correct way to go about engaging an architect is to inspect [their work] and decide on the one to whom you have most confidence. If the architect's first scheme has missed the mark, tell him where you think it has failed so that the scheme may be modified to suit your needs. [...] As it appears that you may wish to engage another Architect [...] We are enclosing our statement of outstanding fees."*³⁸

The development of these early modern religious buildings across all denominations within Victoria and Australia, set the scene for the acceptance of new materials, construction techniques and technologies as well as a modern aesthetic of unobstructed single-volume interiors and expressed structural frames. By the late 1950s, modern places of worship were beginning to multiply across all denominations throughout Australia as they gained a new acceptability, encouraged via denominational journals depicting images of prominent local, interstate or international examples. These modern buildings were perceived as a legitimate way forward in the provision of worship environments compatible with a modernising world.

³⁶ Grant, James. *Episcopally led and synodically governed: Anglicans in Victoria: 1803-1997*, (North Melbourne, Vic.: Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2010), p.268-69.

³⁷ St George's Anglican Church, Ivanhoe (1964) was designed by Frederick Romberg of Grounds, Romberg and Boyd.

³⁸ Letter dated March 29, 1962 from Louis Williams to H. Snellman, St George's Vestry. Courtesy St George's Anglican Church Archives.

Case Study 02

St Faith's Church of England, Burwood, 1956-58

Architects: Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell



Fig. 5.4: Model of St Faith's Church of England, c1956

Courtesy Alison Alexander

How should we express the spirit of the age?

An examination of St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1956-58) highlights the extent to which religious communities and their architects engaged in a negotiation between traditional and modern form, aesthetics and ideas to achieve new places of worship commensurate with the modern era. While traditional ecclesiastic designs were historically legitimated, their inability to express the spirit of the modern age was becoming problematic for religious organisations. Edward D. Mills expressed the impasse in his influential text *The Modern Church* (1956) "If we do not build churches in keeping with the spirit of the age, we shall be admitting that religion no longer possesses the vitality of our secular buildings."³⁹ The episodic design of St Faith's Church of England is representative of the multiplicity of design responses being negotiated within various parishes by religious communities and their architects, leading to the production of a diversity of formal and aesthetic outcomes in church designs in the post-war era in Australia.

Three schemes for the realisation of St Faith's Church of England

Three sketch designs for St Faith's Church of England (St Faith's) are powerful reminders of the relative rapidity with which the process of modernisation occurred in the Australian context, demonstrating the extent to which post-war society was changed.

³⁹ Mills, Edward D.. *The Modern Church*, (London: The Architectural Press, 1956), p.16.

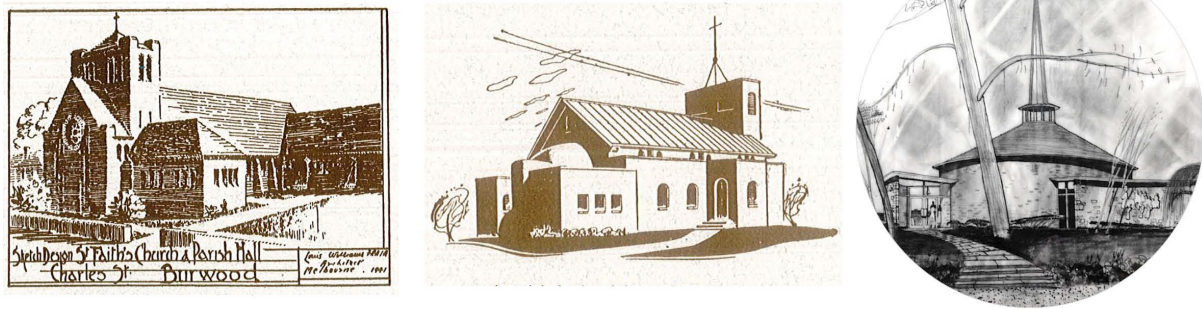


Fig. 5.5: Three schemes for the realisation of St Faith's Church of England
(L): Louis Williams 1941. (C): Wystan Widdows 1952. (R): Mockridge Stahle and Mitchell 1956

Source: St Faith's Church of England Archives

In the mid-19th century, St Faith's parish was a rural area occupied by a collection of settler houses set amongst market gardens and flower farms within a network of dirt roads. By the early 20th century, and after the Second World War, with the influx of predominately English migrants the area become suburban. Between 1941 and 1956, as the parish continued to grow, a series of new church designs were commissioned to replace the small and modest St Faith's timber building of 1892. The land upon which St Faith's stood had been purchased in 1891 and unusually the land was not located on a main road but within a residential area at 51 - 52 Charles Street, Burwood.

The first design 1941

In 1941, the first design for a new St Faith's was conceived when the Vestry Committee approached the most prestigious and prolific Church of England designer in Melbourne at the time, architect Louis Williams (1890-1980).⁴⁰ Williams produced a concept for a fine church building in an Arts and Crafts manner, replete with crenelated tower and buttresses, a steep roofscape, prominent rose window facing the street and a traditional longitudinal plan in a bucolic setting. (Fig. 5.5) This type of stolid ecclesiastic design, with 19th century revival characteristics, predominated in Australia before the second world war. The language of ecclesiastic traditions was reliant on a specific re-presentation of accepted forms and stylistic vocabularies⁴¹ inherited via the British origins of the Australian colonies. However, with the war continuing, no building works were possible and the Williams design for St Faith's was not built. During these years, parish resources were meagre, prompting the Vicar to suggest to parishioners that they "might remember their Church when making their will. Perhaps some might even hand over a war certificate now and again."⁴²

⁴⁰ St Faith's Anglican Church Archives, Box 5 – Vestry Minutes Book, Meeting held 26 March 1941: "Moved Mr Tucker seconded Mr Evans that the Vicar interview Mr Lewis [Louis] Williams to discuss details of new Church and arrange for plans etc".

⁴¹ Leach, Andrew. *Manfredo Tafuri, Choosing History*, (Ghent, Belgium: A & S Books, 2009), p.6.

⁴² Vicar's Annual Report 1941, St Faith's Archives, Burwood.

A second design 1952

By 1952, with some distance between the war years and the new decade, the issue of building a new church was once again raised and at this point the Vestry Committee reconsidered the original Williams design. By August of that year, English born architect Wystan Widdows, having been interviewed by the Vicar and Church wardens, was present at the Vestry meeting, he was equipped with plans and drawings for a modern church building.⁴³ Widdows' 1952 design depicts a building stripped of decorative detail, with plain wall surfaces, presented in a modern graphic style. (Fig. 5.5) Yet, the Widdows design presents a recognisable ecclesiastic building. In form and mass the building appears similar to the Williams design: the presence of a dominant frontal tower form, the pitch of the roof, the customary longitudinal nave and apsidal sanctuary, while the materials are indeterminate. The 1952 design reads as a kind of hybrid creation in which traditional requirements are being negotiated alongside an attempt to convey an authentic new reality, the image of modernity. The Widdows design indicates the extent to which, by the 1950s, a modern aesthetic had become an important means by which religious buildings attempted to communicate an image of modernity, to indicate their continuing relevance, and compatibility, within a changed society and urban landscape. By December of 1952 the St Faith's Vestry agreed in principle to adopt the plans.⁴⁴

The arrival of a young Vicar 1954

In 1954, the arrival of a young Vicar, the Rev. Gordon Brown, inaugurated a fresh look at the issue of a new church building. The new Vicar seems to have been unhappy with the proposed design by Widdows, although the Vestry Committee had authorised the design to proceed in February 1953. By September 1954, it was resolved that "further plans be viewed and considered before we go on with our present building plans".⁴⁵ To this end, in 1955 the Vestry Committee arranged to visit a new Presbyterian church, St Margaret's, Balaclava designed by K. Murray Forster in the modern idiom, "to have a look at the style of architecture".⁴⁶ Although Widdows was subsequently invited to submit further plans, it is not clear if those plans were produced.⁴⁷ By May of 1956 the new Vicar, through the authority of the Vestry Committee, commissioned⁴⁸ fresh sketch designs from the young firm of architects and designers of modern buildings Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell, who had recently completed Mother of God Catholic Church, East Ivanhoe (1956) in the modern idiom.

⁴³ St Faith's, Vestry Minutes, Meeting held 24 April 1952: "...the Vicar and Churchwardens had interviewed Mr Widdows..."; Meeting held 25 Aug 1952: "The architect Mr Widdows was present at the meeting with plans and drawing..."; Meeting held 22 Dec 1952: "Vestry adopts the preliminary plans...".

⁴⁴ St Faith's Anglican Church Archives, Box 5 – Vestry Minutes Book, Meeting held 22 December 1952: "The Vestry adopts the preliminary plans of the church building without the outer buildings and to finish at the third pillar."

⁴⁵ *In Good Faith*, St Faith's Parish publication, n.d., p.5.

⁴⁶ St Faith's, Vestry Minutes, Meeting held Oct 1954.

⁴⁷ St Faith's, Vestry Minutes, Meeting held 22 Nov 1954: "The vicar advised the meeting that he had spoken to Mr Widdows re: some further plans but so far he had not heard anything."

⁴⁸ St Faith's, Vestry Minutes, Meeting held 27 Feb 1956: The Vicar introduced Mr Mitchell who talked to the Vestry..."; Meeting held 23 Apr 1956: "The secretary to write to Mr W. Widdows advising him that we have decided not to retain him as our architect."; Meeting held 28 May 1956: "...engage Messrs Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell to act as our architects.... Vicar will call on them to discuss certain aspects of sketch plans."

The final design 1956

The new Mockridge, Stale and Mitchell sketch design for St Faith's Church of England was surprisingly unusual in its complete departure from traditional ecclesiastic design; the building was round with a tall central spire instead of a tower and there were areas with floor to ceiling glass walls. Some parishioners were shocked by the radical design.⁴⁹ Furthermore, when the drawings and plans for the small round building of St Faith's were put to the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne there was some concern that modern forms were not as compelling as the quotation of historical forms for the building of a church. The Diocesan Registrar's response to the parish's request for financial support for the new building stated:

*"The Archbishop feels that you should know something of the long discussion which took place [regarding] the unusual design of the Church [...] the Diocesan Building Committee [...] while not totally disapproving of the plans, feel that something less modern might be provided for your parish."*⁵⁰

The Diocesan response to the design illustrates the tentative nature of the Anglican Church's encounter with modernism and its reluctance in 1956 to accept the capacity of a non-traditional building to function theologically within the suburban landscape. Ultimately, the avant-garde design was approved, purportedly based upon its location, for St Faith's church was located "in a side street, hidden from the general public".⁵¹ The three sketch designs for St Faith's illustrate the relative rapidity with which the process of modernisation occurred and the extent to which post-war society was changing. In 1941, quotation of tradition was expected, because it was through the re-presentation of its historically bound architecture that the building was understood as a church. By 1953, an increasing recognition that a modern aesthetic was necessary to produce a building of currency, one that was compatible with the advancements taking place in the broader society, led to the increasing prevalence of church buildings designed in the modern idiom.

A modern church for St Faith's

In the realised design of 1956, a radically modern building was achieved which utilised innovative structural techniques and new materials. St Faith's was constructed upon a concrete slab with a structural steel frame welded on site, materials include fawn-pink silica bricks and natural field stone, there are circular skylights above the sanctuary and floor to ceiling stained glass in an abstract pattern. All interior furnishings as well as stained glass, were designed to a unified scheme by the architects, who also prepared the surrounding landscape design. The interior is comprised of a single-volume and the structural frame expressed internally which, combined with 'Copenhagen' acoustic timber batten lining the interior walls, served to emphasise the circular nature of the building, creating a sense of spatial unity.⁵²

⁴⁹ *In Good Faith*, p.9.

⁵⁰ Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, Parochial Church Lands File, Parish of St Faith's, District of Burwood, packet No. 359: Letter from the Diocesan Registrar to Mr. A. E. Hall, Honorary Secretary, St Faith's Burwood, dated 21st December, 1956.

⁵¹ *In Good Faith*, p.16.

⁵² Blyth Johnson, 'Recent Victorian Churches' in *Architecture Australia*, Vol48, No.2, 1959, pp. 76-77.



Fig. 5.6: Interior view looking towards the altar, St Faith's Church of England

Source: image by Mark Strizic, provided by Alison Alexander

Also integral to the design of the building was the use of associative symbolism at St Faith's which influenced the architect's attempt to create a building of meaning and continuity with a history of religious ideas. Initially, in plan St Faith's was intended to be truly circular, expressing in its perfect geometry the symbolism of eternity and unity.⁵³ But also the design was said to replicate the form of the twelfth century round churches of the Crusaders.⁵⁴ In the final iteration, the building was altered to a ground plan directly associated with the earliest Christian symbol, ichthys, the sign of the fish,⁵⁵ resulting in "a twentieth century church, grounded on an ancient tradition, as new today and tomorrow as it was then".⁵⁶

Within the fish-shaped plan, St Faith's reflects the new liturgical thinking in its arrangement to bring the congregation into close proximity with the sanctuary within a spatially unified interior in which the choir is unusually located within the body of the congregation.⁵⁷ The very shape of the building of St Faith's and the interior expression of its structure contributes to a physical sense of centralization. Nevertheless, the visual emphasis at St Faith's is concentrated upon the altar which is raised three steps above the sanctuary and set against the western wall, giving equal prominence to a traditional liturgical arrangement. In the design of St Faith's, it is evident that John Mockridge was testing new ideas with some degree of experimentation, perhaps ideas that he had encountered while travelling in Europe in 1951 and in the internationally published journals of the day, in his effort to grapple with the challenge of implementing new liturgical thinking while creating a functional building.

⁵³ *In Good Faith*, p. 16.

⁵⁴ *The Church of England Messenger*, (Mar 20, 1959), p. 47. [The official organ for the Diocese of Melbourne, reporting on the State of Victoria, 1870 - 1966].

⁵⁵ John Mockridge quoted in *In Good Faith*, p. 16. "The final shape of St Faith's can be likened to a fish which I assure you was by accident not design – a happy accident though because the fish is an early Christian symbol".

⁵⁶ *The Church of England Messenger*, (Mar 20, 1959), p.47.

⁵⁷ Similar abstract stained glass patterned windows as well as the placement of the choir within the nave was a strategy used at John Keble Church of England, Mill Hill, London by D.F. Martin-Smith published in *Fifty Modern Churches* 1947.

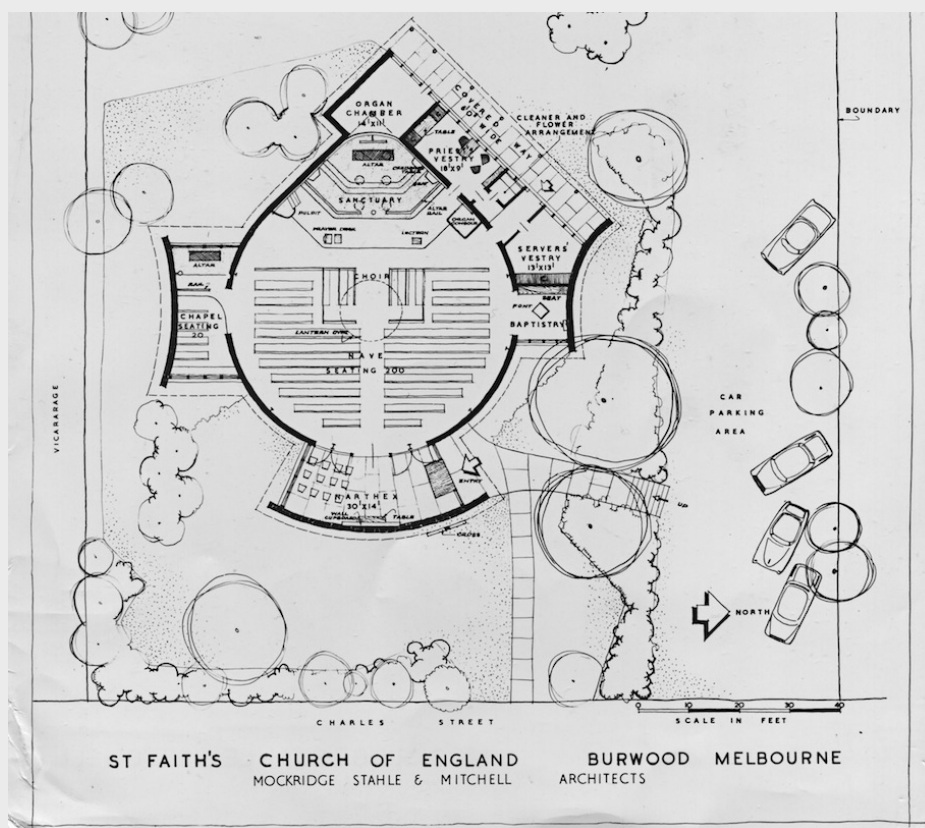


Fig. 5.7: Plan drawing of St Faith's Church of England

Courtesy: Alison Alexander

The wide spectrum of ecclesiastic buildings produced across Victoria and Australia emerged through a negotiation of the unique situated circumstances within each parish by religious communities and their architects as they attempted to create meaningful places of worship commensurate with the rapidly modernising landscape. Conflicting desires and expectations for both the comfort of tradition and the excitement of new socio-spatial environments were played out in their construction. Speaking in 1982 at the 25th anniversary of the laying of St Faith's foundation stone, Mockridge described the church and its context as:

*"a new building in a very consciously modern style; it served an expanding suburban community, part of which was newly settled; very conventional dress and behaviors were the norm; church-going was still very much a social act."*⁵⁸

⁵⁸ In *Good Faith*, p.19.

5.3 New materials present new possibilities

The experimental forms of the 1950s and 1960s took advantage of the structural possibilities of steel which enabled a conception of space and a moulding of form in hitherto unimaginable ways. In parallel, the (theological) functional need for a place of worship to act as a symbolic marker in the landscape justified the new churches to be designed in all sorts of aspirational and symbolic shapes and sizes, tempered only by the skill of the architect and the courage of the congregation.

5.3.1 Steel

The new methods and materials of construction changed the character of building and its perception. The fabric of modern church buildings become thin, open and more transparent (and hence sometimes environmentally uncomfortable) rather than solid and enclosed, leading to a significant change in spatial conditions and phenomenological experience. Welded steel frame and truss systems enabled shorter construction times and permitted large spans, paving the way for unobstructed interiors, non-load bearing walls and unlimited formal and spatial possibilities. “Where a timber roof truss over a church once required [a depth of] fifteen feet [...] the same space can now be covered in a reinforced concrete vault three inch thick or a flat slab of pre-stressed concrete twelve inch thick, or in light steel trusses a fraction of the weight of timber.”⁵⁹ The new industrial, light-weight, thin modern materials reduced the structural depth of architecture to produce buildings composed of unobstructed interiors enclosed by surfaces and planes.

Throughout Australia, architects engaged in structural experimentation with irregular plans, soaring A-Frames, symbolism in form and perfect geometries conceived in round, square and octagonal forms, many with floating all-encompassing expressive roof forms enabled via their steel structures. Steel construction also gave rise to freestanding towers, tall copper fleches and large-scale freestanding Crosses as an economical way to create a prominent landmark and characteristic feature to identify

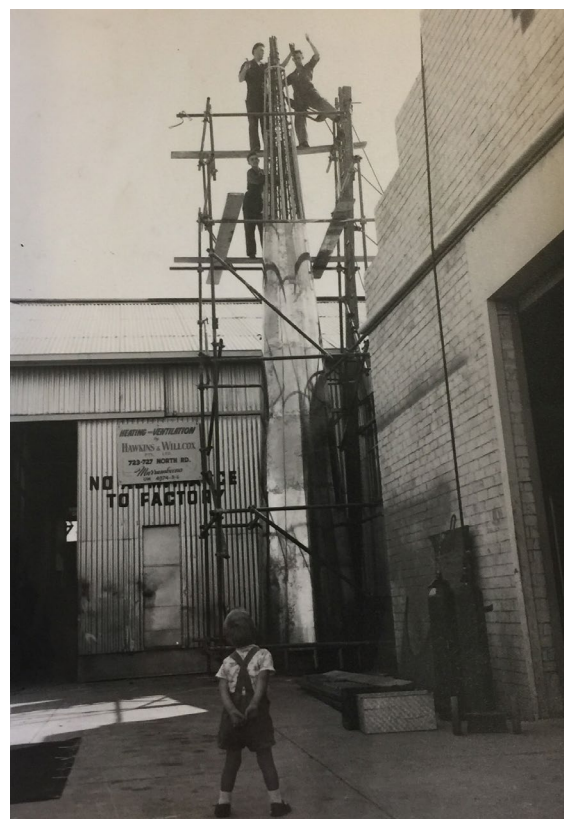


Fig. 5.8: *Herald Sun* photograph of young boy watching St Faith's copper clad spire under construction, c.1958

Source: State Library of Victoria, Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell Photographic collection
LTA 2462, H2016.389/129-157

⁵⁹ Dunphy, '4 Aspects of Church Design', p.58.

an otherwise modern-looking building as a church. The 60 ft (~18m) tall bell tower at St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Frankston (1953), was constructed of steel girders surmounted by a cross encased in stainless steel.⁶⁰ In other applications, thin tubular steel was used to support large scale canopies, the most impressive at St Benedict's Catholic Church, Burwood (1958) by Alexander Harris and Stuart McIntosh. There were also a range of space frames and innovative truss systems used to support flat roofs. Smith + Tracey at St Raphael's Catholic Church, West Preston (1964) used a centralised truss system, expressed on the interior, to support a monumental flat roofed form with a square lantern supporting a large steel cross above the roof. The use of steel frame structures was the most significant development contributing to the evolution of new form and space in the modern church.

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 5.9: Steel frame structure supports the roof form and lantern at St Raphael's Catholic Church, West Preston c. 1964

Source: University of Melbourne, 2015.

5.3.2 Concrete and concrete bricks

Concrete became increasingly popular for a variety of applications, it could be precast, pre-stressed, post-tensioned, shaped or embellished with formwork. The diamond shaped plan of Mother of God Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1957), the first religious building completed by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell, used precast concrete panels with a steel frame as well as pre-cast column casings to create its unobstructed interior volume. In other instances, the cheaper steam-cured concrete block masonry alleviated demand for timber framing⁶¹ and replaced traditional brick as a material of choice for the non-load bearing walls⁶² of the new steel framed structures. Concrete masonry was aesthetically associated with the traditional ecclesiastic building material of stone⁶³ but came in a variety of sizes and colours and could be randomised or constructed in modular patterns to create interest in otherwise unadorned expanses of wall. Ray Berg used smooth faced grey concrete masonry veneer for the side walls of All Saints (former Christ Church) Church of England, Mitcham (1958), laid in running bond,⁶⁴ while the small steel framed hexagonal St

⁶⁰ 'New church at Frankston Will be Very Modern', *The Advocate*, (Jun 11, 1953), p.8.

⁶¹ Harris, Richard. 'To Market! To Market! The Changing Role of the Australian Timber Merchant, 1945–c.1965', *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol 40, Dec 2002, p.23.

⁶² Concrete blocks were not recommended for load-bearing walls unless laid in running bond in units of 16 x 8 x 4.

⁶³ 'Cement blocks and the modern church', *Building, Lighting, Engineering*, (Dec 1965), p.24.

⁶⁴ VHD H2302 states the side walls were 'clad with grey concrete tiles', it is likely these are units of 'masonry veneer'.

Paul's Church of England, Kew (1960) by Arthur Bunbury utilised grey concrete blockwork laid in a modular pattern, rough cast on the exterior and smooth faced on the interior. The concrete parabolic arch was not a form taken up in Victoria, but as early as 1954, parabolic concrete rib arches were designed by Curtin and Cameron for St Bernard's Catholic Church in Botany, New South Wales (1955).

Aluminium window frames began to be produced and were better able to accommodate a wider range of larger or unusual window sizes that were beginning to be specified. Plywood and compressed fibreboards were viable alternatives for what would previously have been constructed in timber or plaster lining boards.⁶⁵ The introduction of these new materials presented unprecedented opportunities that were yet to be fully realised.



Fig. 5.10: Advertisements for new architectural materials

(L): *Architecture Today*, July 1964, p.2. (C): In 1959, Jaywoth commenced production in Victoria at a factory in Dandenong which was able to turn out 50,000 blocks a day. Cover, Jaywoth Besser catalogue c.1960. (R): *Architecture Today*, Aug 1961, p.16.

5.3.3 Using materials to create pattern and texture

The use of brick patterns cut across all denominations to become a feature of the language of the new churches. Unadorned expanses of wall could be embellished with raised, indented or polychrome brickwork patterns or given meaning via literal symbols of Christianity (crosses and chi-rho symbols) expressed in the fabric of the building. Corner details of oblique designs and geometrically conceived church buildings were commonly resolved without cutting bricks, resulting in prominent cross-laced corner details giving the appearance of the building being stitched together. More complex patterns are a feature of All Soul's War Memorial Church of England, Edenhope (1965) where structure and decoration successfully merge. Textural almost cloth-like brick patterns are also a strong feature at the unique Ukrainian Catholic Church, North Melbourne (1963) and at Carey Baptist Grammar School Chapel, Kew (1971) where the walls are constructed of snapped header brickwork, symbolic of the intrinsic fallibility of

⁶⁵ Harris, 'To Market! To Market!', p.23.

humanity.⁶⁶ As the 1960s advanced, a preference for abstract and textural qualities became popular, signalling the creative use of materials (rather than pattern making) as an acceptable mode of adornment.



*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig 5.11: Sanctuary 'reredos' (L): Smooth stone construction offset against rubble walls, St Thomas Church of England, Langwarrin (1963). (R): Rough brick painted white, side lit, St Joseph's Catholic Church, Black Rock (1963).

Source: (L): Libby Richardson, May 2016. (R): University of Melbourne, 2018.

Pattern and texture were also used to highlight significance. (Fig. 5.11) Sanctuary walls could be distinguished with economy and clarity through a change in material or technique, or both. The rear wall above the sanctuary of St Thomas' Church of England, Langwarrin (1963) is clearly distinguished from the rubble and concrete walls via a change of material and technique: materially signifying its sacred significance. At Monash University Religious Centre (1968) the ambulatory wall encircling the main circular worship space is constructed as a rocky surface, bagged and painted white. The interior of the worship space is lined with timber battens of limed Victorian Ash to Scandinavian effect, while the 'dome' over the worship space is constructed of pre-cast prestressed concrete panels (with cast-in ventilation outlets)⁶⁷ finished in a crushed quartz aggregate texture.

5.3.4 The surprising use of colour and decorative detailing

Despite the prevalence of using materials to enrich the atmosphere of the new churches, colour continued to be used to highlight moments of spiritual and liturgical significance and to counter the perceived visual harshness of modern materials. Colour through painted surfaces represented a cost-effective means of softening modern conditions. Surprisingly, the Methodist Church, Ashburton (1961) by Bates Smart McCutcheon, a modern design in brick, steel and timber with 'simple lines' and 'chaste reredos', also featured a painted ceiling in gradations of 'blue to provide colour and to enhance the sanctuary and its setting.'⁶⁸ Colour through the application of paint was also a feature of the early Mother of God Catholic Church, East Ivanhoe (1957) where the side walls of the nave were painted deep blue-green and the altar wall was bagged and painted white. Italian glass mosaics in grey-green, blue-green and copper clad the

⁶⁶ Wright, Alan F.. *A Chaplin Remembers*, (South Kingsville, Victoria: Westgate Publishing, 2006), n.p.

⁶⁷ 'Religious Centre, Monash University', *Constructional Review*, (Nov 1969), p.49.

⁶⁸ 'Ashburton Opens Splendid Church', *Methodist Spectator*, (Nov 15, 1961), Cover page.

columns of the Lady Chapel⁶⁹ and the narthex was dimly lit by small slotted windows and by two ruby red plastic domes in the roof”.⁷⁰ Gold was frequently used to add luminescence (and signify God’s light). The triangular side chapel ceiling coves at St Faith’s Anglican Church (1958) were painted gold while the ceiling of St Andrew’s Anglican Church, Brighton (1962) was clad in gold anodised aluminium panels. The free-standing columns of Ray Berg’s Christ Church (1958) are said to have been painted gold, whereas Keith Reid’s concrete encased steel columns at Blackburn Presbyterian Church (1959) were painted blue.⁷¹ Sky blue was considered suitable for the sanctuary wall of Katamatite Methodist Church (1961) as the only concession to ornament. At St John’s Anglican Church, East Bentleigh (1962) Gawler Churcher and Boardman surrounded the building exterior with Christian symbols in green mosaic tiles. These examples evidence the continuing attempts by architects to signify the special nature of the church building through ornamental means.

Modernity was also signified as crying rooms for mothers appeared, car parks became a feature of prosperity and new ways of representing the symbolic were explored, along with concerted attempts to integrate art and architecture. Most significantly, interiors were enabled to become unobstructed single-volume spaces through the use of steel portal frame or concrete structures. These single-volume spaces encompassing the nave and sanctuary, represented a new beginning for the creation of entirely new spatial environments for modern worship.



Fig 5.12: Interior view, St Benedict's Catholic Church, Burwood, 1957-58

Source: Postcard, St Benedict's Catholic Church Archives.

⁶⁹ 'Church of the Mother of God, East Ivanhoe, Victoria', *Architecture and Arts*, (Dec 1957), p.29.

⁷⁰ 'Church of the Mother of God', p.30.

⁷¹ Uniting Church Archives, Blackburn Presbyterian Church file.

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CHAPTER FIVE

Innovation – Part II

5.4 Form

“The inability of congregations to raise sufficient funds has led to [...] all sorts of compromises between ‘tradition’ and ‘reality.’”¹

Architect, Milo Dunphy, 1958

5.4.1 Introduction

In addition to the acceptance of modern religious buildings for economic reasons, the capacity for the building to embody, or at least provide a narrative of, symbolic meaning was an important justification for new expressive architectural forms and geometrically conceived designs. Such narratives highlighted theological purpose conceptually rather than through a traditional architectural ecclesiastic language. The distinctive buildings that arose not only illustrate the broad agency of parish communities and their leaders to negotiate and determine the suitability of architectural style and form for their specific community, but also demonstrate the ongoing importance of symbolism in the design of modern church buildings. Symbolism in modern church design served a higher objective of theological meaning to ensure the church building operated as “two things in one: it is a building with a purpose, and it is a symbol.”²

5.4.2 Structural expression

The development of structurally expressive form in church design also reflected broader developments in the public sphere. There were prominent examples to follow of innovation utilising new materials and techniques in construction: in Melbourne, the 1956 Olympic Swimming Pool design³ and the 1958 construction of the Sidney Myer Music Bowl⁴; and in Sydney, Jorn Utzon’s unconventional competition winning entry for the Sydney Opera House demonstrated the new acceptability of unusual form and its ability to elevate a building to a level of poetic expression.⁵

The unusual designs of Ivan Anderson’s Catholic churches are characterised by structurally expressive features deployed and justified as symbolic ideas. At St Peter’s Catholic Church, Clayton (1967), so unusual was the design, it was described by Anderson himself as a ‘Space Age’ church,⁶ illustrating the explicit symbolism embedded in the building when viewed from space. The structure is composed of four space frame truss elements interlocked over the centre of a lozenge shaped plan. The arrangement creates four ‘arms’ in the shape of a cross, each with a prominent central ridge clad in ‘Vinlon’ translucent plastic

¹ Dunphy, Milo. ‘4 Aspects of church design’, *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 47, No.2, (Apr-Jun, 1958), p.58.

² Tillich, Paul. *On Art and Architecture*, edited by John Dillenberger in collaboration with Jane Dillenberger, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1987), p.212.

³ John and Phyllis Murphy and Peter McIntyre with Kevin Borland.

⁴ Designed by Yuncken Freeman

⁵ ‘The Sydney Opera House competition’, *Architecture in Australia*, (Jan-Mar, 1957), pp.45-55.

⁶ ‘Clayton’s new ‘Space Age’ Church’, *The Advocate*, (Dec 1, 1966), p.13.

sheeting. (Fig. 5.42) The new plastic material allowed daylight to filter into the building from above, in the prominent shape of a cross.⁷ This symbol was further highlighted by continuous fluorescent lighting fixed to the interior to enable illumination at night to bring “the space frames [...] to life externally and from the air [to be] read as a large cross.”⁸ Over the entrance to the church, the prominent roofline cantilever is supported by a large steel framed cross, 30 feet (~9 metres) high, floodlight at the base by a regulated timer. Further ultra-modern features included “plug in points for hearing aids and [carpeted] aisles”.⁹ In combination with the ultra-modern features of the building, mosaic glass pieces imported from France but designed locally in an abstract pattern over the entrance and sanctuary walls were installed to create a sense of continuity with “the theme of the ancient cathedrals with dominating east and west windows.”¹⁰



Fig. 5.42: St Peter's Catholic Church, Clayton. 1967
Architect: Ivan Anderson

Source: State Library of Victoria, Peter Wille Collection of Architectural Slides
Accession no: H91.244/209

Architect Keith Reid was also presented with the freedom to produce an unusual building in 1962, when the Horsham Presbyterian congregation was faced with the need for a larger church to accommodate its growing congregation. (Fig. 5.43) Reid provided the building committee with three design proposals described as conventional, modern and ultra-modern.¹¹ The ultra-modern scheme won the day. The unique feature of the Horsham design is its raised hexagonal clerestory with spikey steel-framed butterfly roof structure projecting steeply upwards, echoing the gentler incline of the flat roof of the nave, which also projects forward to a sharp point at the centre of the façade. The angular roof form was said to suggest the symbol of “a hand raised in benediction over the people with God in their midst”.¹² Reid's design

⁷ However, the vinyl has since been removed. ‘Clayton's new Church is a Landmark’, *The Advocate*, (Jun 15, 1967), p.5.

⁸ ‘Clayton's new Church is a Landmark’, p.5.

⁹ ‘Clayton's new ‘Space Age’ Church’, p.13.

¹⁰ ‘Clayton's new ‘Space Age’ Church’, p.13.

¹¹ Nomination: (individual) HO place: St Andrew's Uniting Church, *Horsham Rural City Council Heritage Study Stage 2*, prepared by Grieve Gillet Architects, 2013.

¹² Hobbs, Susan. *Foundations to Build On – Celebrating the 50th Birthday of the St Andrews Uniting Church Building, Horsham 1963-2013*, Wimmera Design and Print, 2013, p.31.

achieves a futuristic form, even now, yet also a medieval atmosphere in the juxtaposition of overt structural expression combined with the earthy stone of the previous 1875 Gothic revival building. Interestingly, the Wimmera area in Western Victoria is host to numbers of structurally interesting post-war church buildings, perhaps suggesting a rich respect for the importance of church buildings to isolated communities, or perhaps an interdenominational rivalry for notoriety through prominent modern church design.



Fig. 5.43: Presbyterian Church, Horsham, Victoria, 1962
Architect: Keith Reid

Source: State Library of Victoria, Rose postcard collection of negatives, Rose series P14865,
Accession no: H32492/9569

Striking a similar accord of theological symbolism and modernity, the remarkable form of the Methodist Church, Katamatite (1961) designed by Muir and Shepperd also was based in symbolism. The building is said to be based on the appearance of hands held in prayer after the 1508 drawing by German artist Albrecht Durer, purportedly at the architect's suggestion. (Fig 5.44) The image is loosely achieved through the twin triangular roof forms projecting upwards. Like many of the post-war modern church designs, the roof provides both form and is conjoined as part of the steel framed load bearing structure, allowing the Mt Gambier limestone walls to perform the pure function of enclosure. The expressive structure and apparent absence of overt Christian symbolism belies how this simple modern building achieves its theological purpose: through the selection of materials and their integral function in the fabric and design of the building. The eye-catching external Oregon timber cross, 13 metres high, stands both as a physical and metaphoric support, symbol of the mainstay of the church. The altar cross is life size, signifying its meaning is more than merely in the mind, but palpably real, moreover, it is waxed to represent the natural condition of Christ's original cross of rough-hewn timber. The colour of the sanctuary wall is representative of the 'Vault of Heaven' and coloured glass was unnecessary for "it would only take away from the abundant symbolism already embedded within the building!"¹³

¹³ In conversation with Building Committee Chair at the time of construction, Neville Horsburgh. Bendigo, Aug 2018.

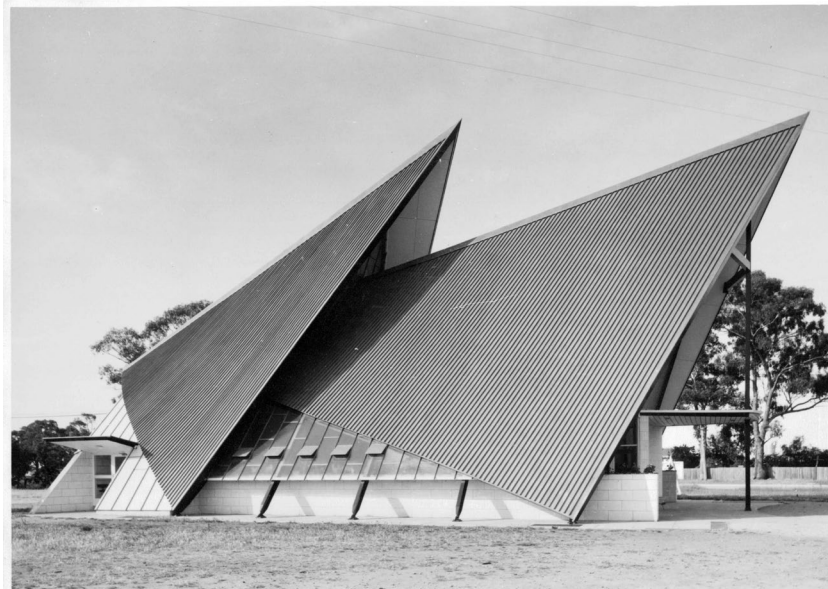


Fig. 5.44: Methodist Church, Katamatite, Victoria 1961
Architect: Muir and Shepherd

Source: Courtesy Fred Pendlebury, Katamatite Uniting Church

Structurally expressive modern church buildings, often justified by a symbolic narrative, were constructed for parish communities of all denominations, in the city and in country locations, effecting change in the religious landscape across Victoria. The collective needs of the Katamatite Methodist congregation were simple and reflected the concerns of a great majority of people in urban and rural locations living through the post-war generation. According to Fred and Iris Pendlebury,

“we needed a bigger church... [for] we were young marrieds, having children. The church was the only entertainment. We’d had the depression, the war and we were all married in the 1950s, we needed a Sunday school.”¹⁴

5.4.3 Unrealised designs

Although the design of the modern church provided a fertile seed bed of innovation, there were many designs that did not reach fruition, for although modern construction was acknowledged to be cheaper than traditional construction methods, non-standardised structural designs rarely left the drawing board. Unusually, in 1957, Stephenson and Turner submitted a highly adventurous proposal to William Carey Baptist Grammar School for a modern building combining two functional types: a Chapel and Swimming Pool Building in which the Chapel was located on the upper level and the swimming pool below, as one building.¹⁵ It was a suggestion inspired by the seemingly limitless structural possibilities of using new materials for all types of buildings to produce a cost-effective outcome.¹⁶ Peter and Dione McIntyre also tested their limits when they produced drawings for a round Baptist Church Hall illustrating a dome shaped building with its structural skeleton expressed externally. (Fig. 5.45)

¹⁴ In conversation with Fred and Iris Pendlebury at Katamatite, July 22, 2018.

¹⁵ *Forward Carey Appeal Brochure*, Carey Baptist Grammar School, Kew (1957).

¹⁶ The William Carey Chapel, a beautiful small pyramid-like building, was eventually completed in 1971 by architect brothers Cecil and Graham Lyons with the assistance of Rev. Alan Wright.



Fig. 5.45: Sketch design for Baptist Church hall, Kew, 1955
Architect: Peter McIntyre

Source: State Library of Victoria, Collection of architectural drawings by Peter McIntyre and associated practices, Baptist Church Hall Kew, 1955, 4 sheets, package 15.

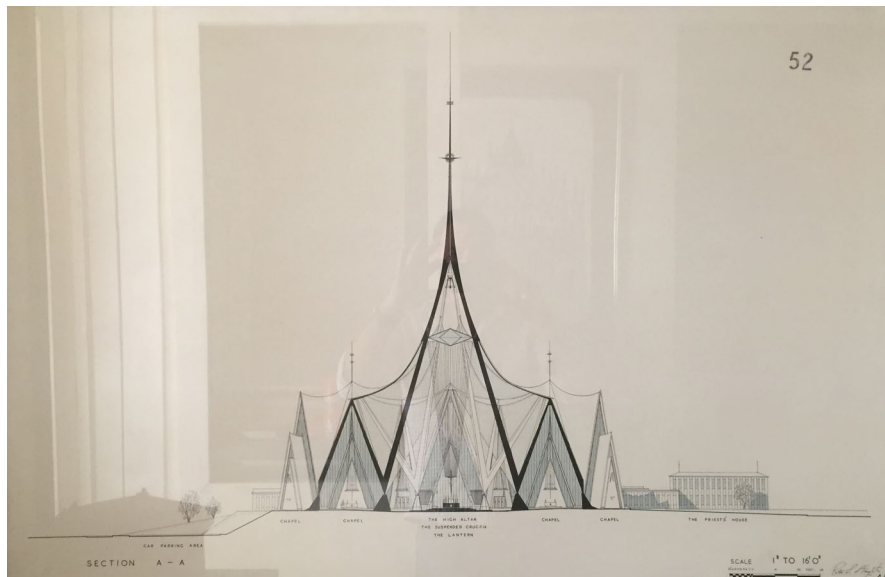


Fig. 5.46: Section: Competition entry for Christ the King Catholic Cathedral, Liverpool, UK, c. 1959
Architect: Peter S. Staughton

Source: Courtesy James Staughton.

In 1959, Peter Staughton¹⁷ who had worked in the office of Eero Saarinen, designed an ambitious competition entry for the Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool, England.¹⁸ (Fig. 5.46) Staughton's centralised plan symbolically represented a canopy draped over a hexagonal sanctuary with high altar, surrounded by six lower hexagonal naves. The canopies were created as catenary arches, to be fabricated in thin shell reinforced concrete 4-6 inches (~10-15 cm) thick and "sheathed in copper sheeting at the outer face"¹⁹, supported by columns of post-tensioned reinforced concrete in light weight

¹⁷ Born in Melbourne, in the early 1950s, Peter Staughton (1926-) was awarded the Rome Prize. He subsequently worked and travelled extensively in Europe and spent a year working in the offices of Eero Saarinen in the United States before his return to Australia in 1958.

¹⁸ The winning entry was submitted by Frederick Gibberd and the building was completed in 1967 upon foundations originally designed by Edward Lutyens in 1933.

¹⁹ 'Australia's Entry in Liverpool Cathedral Competition', *Architecture Today*, (Feb, 1963), p.15-16.

aggregate.²⁰ Above the high altar, a figure of Crucified Christ was suspended on “a spray of thin wires [designed to] channel the bright light into a soaring upward shaft making the Crucifix appear to rise through the church as a symbol of our lord’s ascension”.²¹

The costs associated with non-conventional or experimental form limited the development of structurally expressive designs. In 1962, before arriving at the conventional and economical rectilinear design for Templestowe Presbyterian Church, Keith Reid and his son John Reid had proposed a design with curved walls. “It was a radical proposal, and we built a model. However, it became evident that the cost of the building to this design would exceed the budget.”²² Nevertheless, there was also evidence that expressive designs were sometimes less acceptable than conventional designs. Architect Francis Collings claims his design with centralised plan for St Alban’s Catholic Church was circular at the request of the parish Building Committee. However, “George Pell (of the Catholic hierarchy) who was in-charge of approving church design, had rejected the idea without a moment’s notice”.²³ This occurred despite the precedent of Frederick Gibberd’s centrally planned, competition winning design for the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral (1962-1967).

5.4.4 Perfection in Geometry

Rather than relying solely on the abstract potential of new materials and structural techniques, some architects turned to geometry as a rational method to derive new expressions for religious buildings. The post-war period saw architects of all persuasions design church buildings in geometric plan forms in parallel with the broad interest in designing geometrically conceived plans in the domestic and public spheres. Roy Grounds designed for himself a square, concrete block-walled dwelling with circular courtyard, Toorak (1950) and the round Henty House, Frankston (1953) as well as the domed Academy of Science Building, Canberra (1958). In 1959 Oakes and Parkes designed the futuristic circular Brighton Municipal Offices and in 1962 the unusual Altona Council Chambers appeared. The most public expression of the new ability of structure to create form, both expressive and geometric, was to be found in Grounds’ masterplan and design of the National Gallery of Victoria alongside the Arts Centre and Concert Hall (1960-1984). There were similarly churches designed in perfect geometries that were further enhanced by the relationship with a higher order of meaning.²⁴

It is widely recognised, in the post-war period a generation of architects was influenced²⁵ to consider the potential of mathematically derived compositional strategies through the writings of architectural historian Rudolf Wittkower in his 1949 publication *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*.²⁶

²⁰ ‘Australia’s Entry in Liverpool Cathedral Competition’, p.15-16.

²¹ ‘Australia’s Entry in Liverpool Cathedral Competition’, p.15.

²² John Reid, quoted in *Fruit of the Spirit, A history of the Uniting church, Templestowe, Victoria, Australia 1895-1995*, Uniting Church Templestowe, (1995), p.44.

²³ Interview with architect Francis Collings by Bhargav Sridhar, Measured Drawing, University of Melbourne, April 19, 2017.

²⁴ Harwood, Elaine. *Space, Hope and Brutalism English Architecture 1945-1975*, (London: Yale University Press, 2015), p.449.

²⁵ Banham, Reyner. ‘The New Brutalism’, *Architectural Review*, Vol 118, No. 708, (Dec 1955) p.358.

²⁶ *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* was first published in Great Britain in 1949 and subsequently variously revised and reprinted in the years 1952 and 1955, 1962, 1965 and 1967, 1971, 1973 and 1977, 1988 and 1998.

Wittkower's critique of Renaissance architectural aesthetics underlined an historical framework with unexpected synergies with modernist tenets regarding the ability of form and structure to express a higher order of meaning.²⁷ The application of geometrically conceived designs, specifically via the centralised (religious) building²⁸ could legitimate the concord between art and science²⁹ and the mathematical 'cosmic order'³⁰ of the natural world. The use of geometry offered an alternative design ideology and ordering system to modernist utilitarian reasoning. Similarly, there were post-war churches designed in perfect geometries. John Mockridge reiterated these ideas when speaking about his design for the small round St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1956-58) "the circle [...] a round square [...]. is appropriate for a church as it symbolizes eternity and unity"³¹.

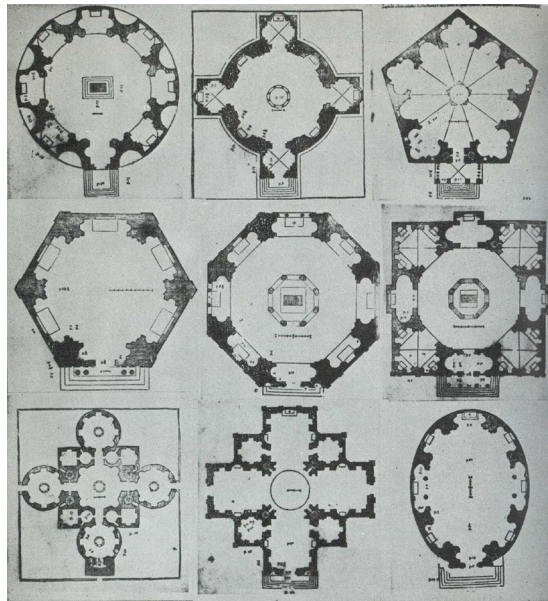


Fig. 5.47: Centralised ecclesiastic plans from Serlio's fifth book on Architecture, 1547

Source: Wittkower, Rudolf. *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, (New York and London: Alec Tiranti, 1971), Plate 6.

Post-war churches were designed in a range of geometric forms. Arthur Bunbury's small hexagonal St Paul's Church of England, Kew (1960) is a steel framed structure, expressed on the exterior, supporting a floating hexagonal roof form. The non-load bearing walls are constructed of grey split-face Besser concrete masonry blocks in Patterned Ashlar No.23, a popular selection in modern church design. The single volume interior is enclosed but illuminated by a ring of clear glass clerestory windows and an unencumbered timber-lined ceiling extending to the soffit. The simple and austere interior is conceived in a limited palette of materials; smooth-faced concrete masonry, Victorian mountain ash and clear glass. (Fig. 5.48) Although

²⁷ Payne, Alina A. 'Rudolf Wittkower and Architectural Principles in the Age of Modernism', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 53, No.2, (Sept, 1994), p.327-332.

²⁸ Wittkower, Rudolf. *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, (New York and London: Alec Tiranti, 1971), p.3-10.

²⁹ Payne, 'Rudolf Wittkower', p.325.

³⁰ Geva, Anat. *Frank Lloyd Wright's Sacred Architecture: Faith, Form, and Building Technology*, (London and New York, Routledge, 2012), p.62.

³¹ *In Good Faith*, St Faith's Church of England publication, p.16.

these features emphasise the rational elements of faith, the interior is also marked by two simple modern stained-glass windows and a striking three-dimensional abstract altar reredos of unusual design.

Wystan Widdows also designed in hexagonal form St Stephen's Church of England, Highett (1967) (no longer in use). At St Patrick's Catholic Church, Murrumbena (1963), Robert O. Ellis designed an elliptical form with a traditional longitudinal plan and for the post-Vatican II St Martin of Tours Catholic Church, Rosanna (1973) Stan Moran designed an octagonal building with a fan shaped plan. There were also many cubic forms; St Mary's Church of England, Chadstone (1967) by Blyth and Josephine Johnson (now demolished) and Mountview combined Methodist and Presbyterian Church, Mitcham (1966-67) by James Earle. In 1964, Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell designed St George's Church of England, Reservoir to a square plan with a diagonal aisle, effectively creating a fan-shaped seating arrangement around the altar. The roof of the building is supported by a space frame structure, its depth and structure expressed and painted gold on the interior. Many of these small rational buildings were Protestant, highlighting that Protestant churches tended to be built for smaller congregations or combined congregations, rather than the Catholic proclivity towards more substantial buildings capable of accommodating large congregations and engendering a dominant urban presence.



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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig 5.48: St Paul's Church of England, Kew 1960
Architect: Earle & Bunbury

Source: (L): State Library of Victoria, Peter Wille collection of architectural slides, Identifier: H91.244/847
(R): 'Churches by Earle and Bunbury', *Architecture and Arts*, April 1960, pp.45-57.
(below): Interior view.

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due to Copyright restrictions.*

5.4.5 Shifting international perspectives and precedents

In parallel with an economic and social shift in popular culture, some Australian architects looked increasingly to the United States³² for precedent in modern church designs.³³ The religious buildings of Wystan Widdow and David Caldwell strongly recall the organic design strategies of American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, deriving oblique and non-rectilinear form with spatial juxtapositions composed in 30, 60 and 120 degree relationships.³⁴ Widdows and Caldwell's St Thomas Anglican Church, Langwarrin (1963) was one of a number of designs in this vein. Alexander Harris used similar compositional strategies that can be observed in his designs for the Methodist church across Victoria in which he experimented with the use of interlocking geometric patterns in plan and form. Harris' experimentation with geometrical configurations is fully demonstrated in the plans of his small country churches at Corack (1961) and Wycheproof (1961). In an early example of the work of Chancellor and Patrick the unusual St Luke's Church of England (now Presbyterian), Dandenong (1957) was originally sketched as a dynamic plan featuring a series of conjoined hexagonal shapes in a triangulated scheme. However, as with many ambitious designs of the period in the Australian context, St Luke's evolved in the final resolution into a rationalised rectilinear building with a prominent exposed roof truss system that could be simply produced in a cost-effective way to meet the essential needs of a worship space. (Fig. 5.49)

*Illustrations removed due to
Copyright restrictions.*

Fig 5.49:
St Luke's Presbyterian Church
Dandenong c.1956
(top) Preliminary sketch design
(bottom) Final sketch design
Architect: Chancellor and Patrick

Source:

(top): Winsome Callister. *Anchoring Identity: The architecture of Chancellor and Patrick 1950-1970*, Monash University, unpublished PhD thesis, 2007, Fig. 135.

(bottom): 'St Luks's Church Dandenong', *Architecture and Arts*, July 1957, p.29.

³² Goad, Philip. 'Importing Expertise: Australian-US Architects and the Large-scale, 1945-1990', *Fabrications*, Vol26, No.3, pp.357-391.

³³ Hilliard, David. 'God in the suburbs: The religious culture of Australian cities in the 1950s', *Australian Historical Studies*, 24:97, p.414

³⁴ Geva, Anat. *Frank Lloyd Wright's Sacred Architecture*, p.85.

Few places of worship designed in Victoria in the post-war years ascribed to the orthodoxy of international modernism although it was rapidly becoming evident in the functional secular buildings and rising corporate structures within Australia's urban environments. Most architects sought to distinguish their religious buildings, in plan, form or symbolism, as being different from the secular and looked to intra-denominational examples. Although few, there were a number of important church buildings designed as minimal buildings using a universal modernist vocabulary. These few designs stand out against the sea of unique, experimental and geometric designs by which church buildings of the period are most usually characterised. The first religious buildings in Melbourne to be strikingly designed in accord with international modernist principles as a stark minimalist conception were Ray Berg's All Saints Church of England, Mitcham (1958) (Fig. 5.3) and St James Church of England, Glen Irish (1959) by Bogle and Banfield and Associates.³⁵ (Fig. 5.50) St James' was an outstanding design in its original form and voted one of the Ten Best Buildings (1959-60) constructed in Australia by the editors of *Architecture and Arts*.³⁶ Similarly, the previous year, the Rose Bay Synagogue, Sydney, N.S.W. had been voted one of the Ten Best Buildings of 1958-59 indicating the ability of religious buildings to garner attention when designed in the modern idiom. St James' utilised a minimal palette of simple materials wherein both structure and materials are integral elements of the building's aesthetic scheme. Although clearly influenced by the modern designs of Mies van der Rohe, in particular the Illinois Institute of Technology Chapel (1952), unlike a typical (thin) curtain wall effect, St James' has a depth of structure created through a layering of material planes to create a robust and substantial modern building. Its few expansive walls of glass were originally screened by outer walls of concrete blockwork. Each block was perforated by a Greek cross shape and set in rows to form a striking symbolic pattern through which light was filtered into the interior of the building. The cruciform concrete blocks,³⁷ (unfortunately now entirely removed) were a crucial aesthetic feature of the original design. The external screen prominently announced the building's function while creating a diffuse and ephemeral quality of light on the interior, filtered through reeded translucent glass imported from Germany. Functionally, the interior of St James' conformed to strictly traditional liturgical expectations, achieved within one volume, skilfully demarcated by materials and the marshalling of space.

³⁵ Alan Bogle (1902-1976) was articled to Louis Williams between 1918-1925 until graduating from the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier. He then worked with Irwin & Stephenson before forming his own practice in 1933 alongside Arnold Bridge (1904-1980). Bogle's clear commitment and ambition for modern design is evident in Bridge & Bogle's Williamstown Dressing Pavilion (1934). In the 1940s Bogle joined Harry Norris & Partners who later designed the TAA Terminal, Essendon North (1957). In the late 1950s Bogle and Gordon Banfield (1922-2007) formed an architectural practice working collaboratively with the skilled designers George Kral and Bernard Joyce. It is probable the commission for the design of St James Anglican Church was based on Bogle's previous experience working with Louis Williams, who, as North and Williams had designed the original St James Anglican Church-hall in the Arts and Crafts style, yet using reinforced concrete in 1922. Bogle and Banfield are well known for their design of Total House (1964), a combined carpark and commercial building. (Information sourced from Harriet Edquist. 'George Kral (1928-1978): graphic designer and interior designer', *RMIT Design Archives Journal*, Vol 3, No.2, 2013; Fay Woodhouse. *Alan Bogle. A Brief Biography*. Spirit of Progress, Vol 7, No.2 2006, Art Deco Society of Victoria; VHR H2329 Total House)

³⁶ 'Ten Best Buildings 1959-60', *Architecture and Arts*, (Oct 1960), pp.55-67.

³⁷ Removed c2000 due to deterioration in the concrete. Unfortunately, the c.1980s the Anglican church choose to replace the eastern glass wall with coloured glass after fire damaged this portion of the building. The removal of these significant features has had a detrimental effect on the integrity of the building.

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig 5.50: Exterior & interior view looking towards baptistery, St James Church of England, Glen Iris 1959
Architect: Bogle and Banfield

Source: State Library of Victoria, Wolfgang Sievers Collection, Identifier: H2003.100/273 and H2003.100/272.

The following Case Study 03 illustrates the intersecting themes discussed throughout Chapter 5. St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte (1962-63) examines a small rationally conceived church building constructed on a microscopic budget.

Case Study 03

St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte, Victoria, 1963

Architect: Hipwell, Weight and Ross

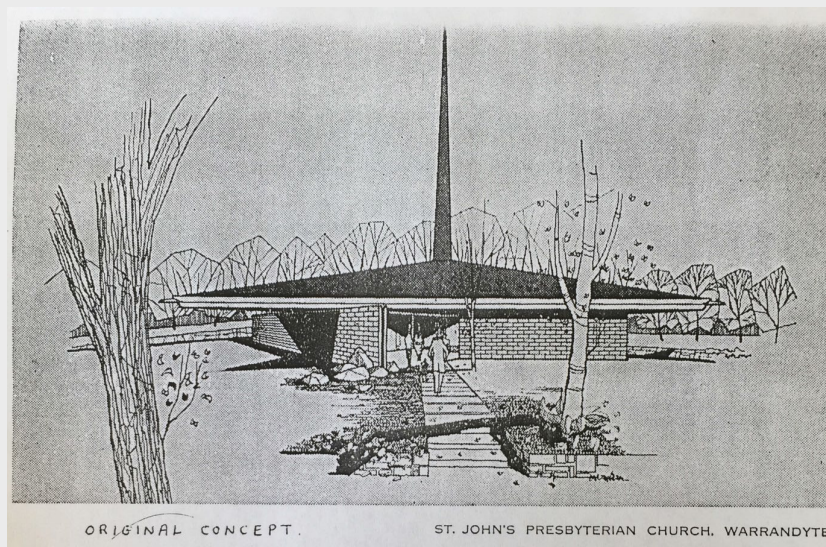


Fig. 5.51: St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte. 1963
Architect: Hipwell, Mason and Ross

Source: Courtesy John Hanson and Pamela Hipwell

A Presbyterian congregation is resurrected

In 1955, at a public meeting held in the local hall of the small picturesque township of Warrandyte, local Presbyterians, who had not met since their previous church was destroyed in the Black Friday fires of 1939,

voted to re-establish their community. A Board of Management was subsequently elected unopposed in January 1956 at the home of Mrs Scott who offered the use of her verandah as a temporary Sunday School. Elected to the board as Secretary was architect John Hipwell (1920-2007).³⁸ Soon thereafter, two old timber buildings were obtained from the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Box Hill to establish a place of worship for the congregation. Devastatingly, their efforts were thwarted in January 1962³⁹ by bushfires which swept through the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, burning the second Warrandyte Presbyterian church buildings to the ground.

Plans for a new church building

Remarkably undeterred, the congregation pressed on in the aftermath of the fires. Within two months a new parcel of land had been identified for the re-building of the church and by April an "examination and discussion on several church plans resulted in Mr Hartman being requested to prepare sketch plans [...] submitted by Mr Bird."⁴⁰ After discussing plans and costings, the Board voted to refer the matter to "Mr Hipwell for his views and to ascertain if his firm would be interested in drawing up final plans".⁴¹ It is not clear from the information available, the content of the materials provided by Messrs Hartman and Bird. However, as Mr Hipwell's own family home⁴² had burnt to the ground in the same Black Friday bushfires, it may have precluded his close involvement in the initial planning stage. Nevertheless, by June of 1962 it was reported Mr Hipwell had produced plans for a small modern building for an estimated cost of £5,000 to accommodate 60 persons, and council approvals were expected by the first week of July.⁴³ In November, private tenders were called from a select list of builders, including Alistair Knox⁴⁴ who was especially permitted to submit a late tender.⁴⁵ In January 1963, the architects recommended Mr Alex Edwards whose price of "£5,200 [was] the lowest and we recommend acceptance of this price."⁴⁶ The remarkable persistence and voluntary contributions of the members of the Board of Management to rebuild St John's Presbyterian Church are indicative of the extraordinary importance of the Church in the lives of the parishioners.

John Hipwell, architect (1920-2007)

Son of a Presbyterian Minister, John Hipwell was a talented designer and artist. He was schooled at Scotch College and studied at the University of Melbourne Architectural Atelier. During World War II, like many young men, Hipwell enlisted and served in the R.A.A.F. as Commanding Officer of 30 men at Radar Station 334, Papua New Guinea. Hipwell returned to study after the war, working for Fritz Janeba⁴⁷ before

³⁸ Uniting Church Archives (Synod of Victoria and Tasmania)(UCA), Warrandyte Uniting Church (fmr Presbyterian), Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 16 Jan, 1956.

³⁹ 'Suburbs in peril as deadly bushfires shocked Melbourne in 1962', www.heraldsun.com.au/news/victoria, 12/11/2017.

⁴⁰ UCA, WUC, Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 30 April, 1962.

⁴¹ UCA, WUC, Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 10 May, 1962.

⁴² The proportions of Hipwells' original 1953 dwelling, as well as his second 1964 dwelling were derived from the Golden Mean.

⁴³ UCA, WUC, Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 14 June, 1962.

⁴⁴ UCA, WUC, Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 28 Nov, 1962.

⁴⁵ UCA, WUC, Letter dated 24th December 1962 from Hipwell Weight and Ross to St John's signed by John Hipwell.

⁴⁶ Letter from Hipwell Weight and Ross dated 2 January 1963, Uniting Church Archives.

⁴⁷ Frederich Janeba (1905-1983) emigrated to Australia in 1939. He had studied at the Vienna Academy of Formative Arts under Peter Behrens and Clemens Holzmeister and was "steeped in the new humanism of the modern movement." Janeba taught Design at the

graduating in 1948 and subsequently for Horace J. Tribe before entering private practice in 1953. In 1958, Hipwell (along with artists Reg Preston, Phyl Dunn, Artec Halpern, Gus McLaren and Charles Wilton) was a founding member of 'Potter's Cottage', a collective of local artists advocating for handmade Australia pottery.⁴⁸ In the 1960s, Hipwell was in partnership as Hipwell, Weight and Mason and subsequently as Hipwell, Weight and Ross. However, after the untimely deaths of Mason, and then Weight, Hipwell chose to work at the Commonwealth Works Head Office until his retirement in 1972.⁴⁹

As a student, Hipwell commenced a subscription to the British journal *The Architectural Review* which he read 'cover to cover'.⁵⁰ Moreover, he is said to have been inspired by the proportional systems found in nature, and symbolically in the divine.⁵¹ The design of St John's Presbyterian Church is in large part derived from the mathematical relationships inherent in an equilateral triangle: a circle inscribed within the triangle denotes the centre of the structure and determines the location of the altar; the extension of bisecting lines determine the central aisle of the nave and the approach to the church; the placement of the transverse wall generates the deep cantilever which in plan is itself an equilateral triangle. One can speculate that similar proportional relationships exist in the vertical. More importantly, however, is the implied relationship of the triangle to the divine, through its consonance with the religious concept of the trinity, but also its consonance with the fundamental mathematical proportions found in the natural world through Phi (the Golden Ratio) and Pi (π).⁵² Furthermore, the inherent relationship of the equilateral triangle to the circle connects the building form with a set of divine ideas held in the relationship of the circle to the ideal proportions of the human body, expressed by Vitruvian man, a proportional system used since the Middle Ages for the design of church buildings.

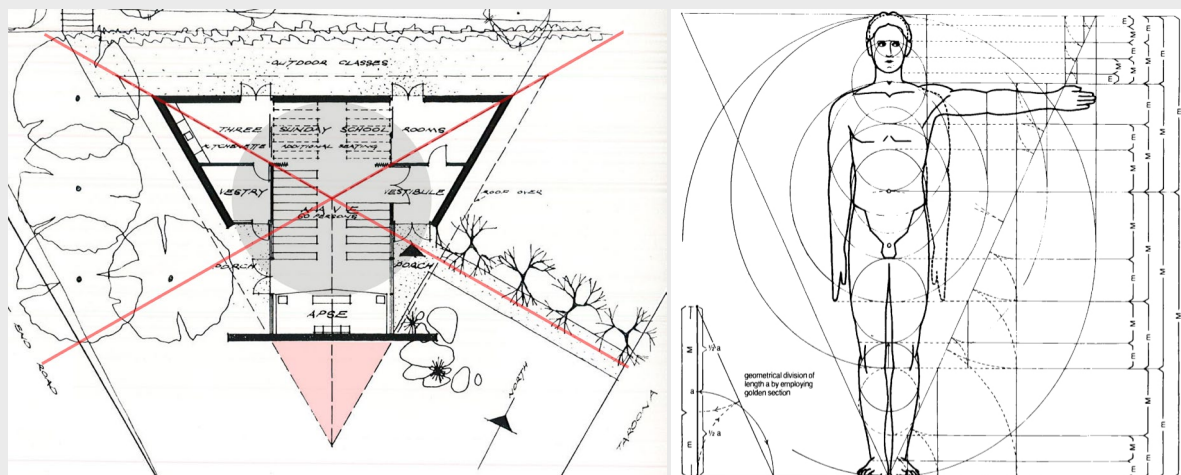


Fig. 5.52: Internal geometries of the plan, Dimensions of Neufert's man.

Source: 'St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte', *Architecture in Australia*, No.55, May 1966, p.104. Modified to show geometry. Ernst and Peter Neufert. *Architect's data*, (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Science Publishers, 2000).

University of Melbourne 1947-1962 but returned to Europe as Foundation Professor of Architecture and Design at the United Nations Technical University, Ankara, Turkey and after 1967 as Head of Architecture at Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Vienna.

⁴⁸ In 1961, Sylvia Halpern, Elsa Arden and Kate Janeba joined the collective. (Source: www.mclaren-pottery.com)

⁴⁹ Information provided by Pamela Hipwell.

⁵⁰ Horrocks interview with John Hipwell (1999), Horrocks, Toby. "'...a pretty tough mass of house...'" Hipwell House I 1953 & Hipwell House II 1964', *Formulation Fabrication*, Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Conference of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, (Wellington: SAHANZ, 2000), p.180.

⁵¹ Horrocks, "'...a pretty tough mass of house...'", p.180.

⁵² π is derived by computing the perimeters of circumscribed and inscribed polygons (a triangle being a polygon). The Golden ratio is found by dividing a line into two parts such that the total length divided by the long part is equal to the long part divided by the short part.

Hipwell was concerned with a set of timeless ideas, canons that have managed to inform art and architecture even in the modern period. “At University a hotly debated question was whether beauty lay in the eye of the beholder or was an essential scientific truth. Hipwell, armed with his belief in divine proportion... [argued]... the two could co-exist. An architecture in consonance with the human scale could still be mathematical, and composition (mathematical or not) always involved the subjective will of the individual. His motto was “beauty lies in relationships””.⁵³

A modern building

Sited in a bush setting on a triangular corner allotment on Taroona Avenue, just off the main Heidelberg-Warrandyte Road, St John’s Presbyterian Church is a small, triangular steel frame structure supported on a slab-on-grade foundation with non-load bearing grey ‘Cindcrete’ concrete block walls. A copper-clad fleche anchors the composition as it rises from the centre of the dominant triangular⁵⁴ roof form with a deep horizontal fascia creating the impression the roof is hovering above the angled walls. The ceiling and soffit are lined with naturally finished weatherboards which rise in rows from the line of the eaves to a triangular apex at the centre of the ceiling beneath the spire. A pivotal feature of the design is a long wall laid transverse to the structure, projecting beyond the eaves, which forces a deep triangular cantilever of the roof, giving the impression of a ship’s prow. The transverse wall creates a parallel relationship with the ‘base’ of the triangle, which enables the internal space to be configured orthogonally as a single volume rectangle within the triangular form. The side walls of the apse and part of the nave contain timber framed floor to ceiling clear glass windows which enabled transparent sightlines through the building. Clear glass is also installed in the ‘clerestory’ above the walls, adding to the impression of a floating roof. Liturgically, the internal arrangement is traditional and simple, despite the dynamic form of the building.



Fig. 5.53: View of the original orthogonally laid out interior.

Source: ‘St John’s Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte’, *Architecture in Australia*, No.55, May 1966, p.104.

⁵³ Horrocks, “...a pretty tough mass of house...”, p.180.

⁵⁴ An equilateral triangle: 60ft x 60ft x 60ft.

With a meagre budget, the materials of the building are of the everyday, found and hand crafted. It is in the quality of design and creative use of materials that St John's Presbyterian Church at Warrandyte is remarkable. The simple apse is defined as a raised platform of bluestone pitchers obtained gratis from the Fitzroy City Council, all for the cost of cartage.⁵⁵ The copper clad spire is fashioned from a standard television mast, allegedly the top section of one of the steel wireless transmitting masts used for two-way taxi-cab communication,⁵⁶ its total cost an economical £100.⁵⁷ Apart from the Pulpit which was constructed of concrete block,⁵⁸ all fittings and furniture (pulpit, altar, font, pews) were designed as moveable units consisting of square section steel frames painted black, with horizontal bands of timber, dark stained to match the oiled parquet floor. Lighting was contemporary; the apse cross was back lit; fluorescent lights concealed by pelmets; and spotlights in the ceiling focused on the pulpit and organ.⁵⁹ A feature of the Eucharistic service were the white bespoke pottery communion cups, produced by local potter Charles Wilton,⁶⁰ held within bespoke steel and timber communion trays produced by Board member Mr Lyng,⁶¹ and triangular collection plates designed by John Hipwell,⁶² all in keeping with the unique design scheme of the building.

The small triangular St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte was opened on 11 August 1963.



Fig. 5.54: View of the transverse wall and clear glass walls marking the entrance.

Source: 'St John's Presbyterian Church, Warrandyte', *Architecture in Australia*, No.55, May 1966, p.103.

⁵⁵ Uniting Church Archives, WUC, Box 4 - MEL02186428, File 2, St. John's Church Board of Management Meeting Minutes 1956 – 1971, Minutes 6 Sept, 1962.

⁵⁶ 'Out of ashes comes a 'budget' church', newspaper clipping provided by John Hansen of the Warrandyte congregation.

⁵⁷ The spire stands 25 feet high (approx. 7.6m) and tapers from a three-sided base with 2 ft 3 inch sides, to a top with 6 inch sides (approx. 100cm at the base to 15 cm at the top).

⁵⁸ Uniting Church Archives, Minutes 18 April, 1963.

⁵⁹ Uniting Church Archives, Minutes 14 June, 1963.

⁶⁰ In 1958 Wilton "joined forces with other local potters, Reg Preston, Phyl Dunn, Gus McLaren and Arthur Halpern, plus architect John Hipwell and his wife, Betty, to set up a co-operative called 'Potters Cottage' with the aim of promoting Australian handmade pottery." Prince, Gary and Lawrence, 'Ken. Charles Wilton, Potter (1916-2000)', *Ceramics Technical*, No. 23, 2006: 98-100. Accessed online 13 Nov 2017: <http://search.informit.com.au>.

⁶¹ minutes 11-10-63

⁶² minutes 10.7.63

Postscript

Many of the original features have since been altered: interior walls have been removed creating a somewhat amorphous spatial effect; coloured glass in an abstract pattern has been installed above the apse; carpet has been laid over the parquet floor; the exterior of the transverse wall has been embellished with a colourful mosaic mural; and beyond the base of the nave a large church hall with kitchen and toilet facilities now adjoins the original church, indelibly altering the form and character of the original small, perfect, triangular building.

5.5 Space

“the key-note of this modern tendency could be described as the desire to achieve beauty and dignity through simplicity and spaciousness. One feels there is room to move in this type of church without being hemmed in and cluttered up.”⁶³

Vicar of St Agnes’ Church of England, Glenhuntly

5.5.1 The centralised single volume space

The new churches were simple, spacious and minimal with interiors literally heightened by the ability of the structure to encompass the nave and sanctuary, as well as the roof space, within one well-lit spatial volume, unobstructed by decoration and supporting columns. In the modern church, to conform to the new liturgical thinking, attention was focused upon the altar and the seating arrangement generally involved attempts to distribute the congregation physically around the altar, or, if not in the round, the congregation was at least placed closer to the sanctuary. Choirs were re-located from their traditional position between the nave and sanctuary to the side of the church or above the congregation at the rear of the church. Modern churches were conceptualised as single-volume spacious interiors contained within the building’s enclosure which represented a significant change from the tight cluttered interiors of the past. “Many of the same concerns shaped the architecture”⁶⁴ across all denominations in Australia in their attempts to re-conceptualise and modernise their worship environments.

In the early new churches, although it was possible to observe the presence of the nave and sanctuary within a single-volume space, their relationship to each other liturgically often remained relatively unchanged, despite the creation of a unified single volume interior. The plan of Ray Berg’s All Saints Church of England, Mitcham (1958) was typical of many of the early modern churches. In plan it was a basilical building with the choir located in its traditional position between the nave and the sanctuary which was raised three steps with the altar located against the west wall. Architecturally All Saints was ultra-modern but liturgically it conformed to tradition. (Fig. 5.55) The more resolute schemes were those with truly centralised configurations with the altar in the centre of the room. These designs represented a radical

⁶³ ‘Modern Church Architecture’, *The Church of England Messenger*, (Dec 22, 1961), p.187.

⁶⁴ Buggeln, *The Suburban Church*, p.xx.

shift in spatial experience, away from the longitudinal nave plans of the past.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, as Wittkower observed, centrally planned churches presented difficulties from a liturgical point of view⁶⁶ and even in the modern era that was true.

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due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 5.55: The traditional longitudinal nave and sanctuary contained within the single volume space of the ultra-modern All Saints Church of England, Mitcham c.1954-1964. Architect: Ray Berg.

Source: University of Melbourne, 2016.

The planning of the early circular St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1958) by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell, reflects the impact of the new liturgical thinking. The circular shape of the building and expression of its structure as radiating sightlines from the central lantern contributes to a physical sense of centralization, although the true visual emphasis at St Faith's is concentrated upon the altar against the west wall. (Fig. 5.6) The small compact design achieved a compromise of sorts, in plan the choir was positioned within the body of the congregation, without partition, a novel arrangement that followed the seating plan of John Keble Church, Mill Hill, England.⁶⁷ St Faith's was an important example of a new conception of space in which the interior was experienced as a spatial volume encompassing the sanctuary, nave and choir that achieved a feeling of centralization which was reflective of the new liturgical thinking.

The idea of designing a physically round building as an expression of the new liturgical thinking was not new.⁶⁸ Effectively however, a 'centralised' plan came to mean that the altar could be easily comprehended from multiple locations, often via a fan shaped seating arrangement. Very few churches were truly centralised with the altar placed in the physical centre of the building. In Melbourne, a unique example

⁶⁵ Reyner Banham, 'Church at Bow Common, London' in *Architectural Review*, issue 766, vol. 128 (Dec., 1960): 400-405; Kathleen James-Chakraborty, 'Reconstructing Faith' in *Architectural Review*, Issue 1430, Vol. 239, (Apr 2016), pp. 77-90.

⁶⁶ Wittkower, *Architectural Principles*, p. 2.

⁶⁷ *Fifty Modern Churches*, (London: Incorporated Church Building Society, 1947), pp. 34-35.

⁶⁸ The earliest modern circular churches were built predominately in Germany, such as Otto Bartning's Evangelical 'Church of the Resurrection', Essen (1929-1930) and St Engelbert Catholic Church, Cologne by Dominikus Böhm (1930-32).

was All Saints Church of England, Greensborough (1960) designed by Blyth and Josephine Johnson. (Fig. 5.56) In its original form, the altar was located at the centre of a lozenge shaped interior with seating surrounding it on all sides.⁶⁹ In the designs of St Faith's, Burwood and All Saints, Greensborough, it is evident the architects were testing new spatial ideas with some degree of experimentation as they grappled with how best to meet the requirements of the new liturgical thinking while creating a functional building, one that conformed to new religious conventions and was modern.



**Fig.5.56: (L):Altar and sanctuary at the centre of the church, All Saints Church of England, Greensborough, c.1960
Architect: Blyth and Josephine Johnson.**

**(R): Original All Saints timber building with choir seating between the nave and chancel
and the altar located in the apse beyond the rood.**

Source: Greensborough Uniting Church Archives.

5.5.2 Moderating space: reinterpreting tradition?

One way by which architects achieved multiple functional requirements within the single volume space of the modern church, was through the design of architectural elements that were permeable. This strategy was used primarily to delineate baptisteries and choirs, and sometimes also side chapels. At Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, a glass and steel frame reredos in abstract pattern was designed as a dividing screen through which a view to the Lady Chapel was visible from the nave. There were also smaller strategies used to moderate single volume interiors, arguably to mitigate the perception the space was empty, most commonly with pendulous light fittings as spatial moderators and a counterpoint to the scale of the interior. (Fig. 5.57) The use of spatial dividers was not a modern notion but stemmed from the historical language of ecclesiastic architecture. Cathedrals of the Middle Ages contained a rood screen⁷⁰ which stood beneath the chancel arch between the chancel and the nave to delineate the space of the clergy from the space of the laity. The word 'rood' was an Anglo-Saxon term for cross and a rood screen usually supported a large cross.⁷¹ Sometimes the rood screen was called a choir screen when placed

⁶⁹ The altar was later moved to a conventional position against the eastern wall where it remains.

⁷⁰ Rood screens, developed from the Rood Beam located in the chancel arch designed to support a large crucifix. Most rood screens were constructed of timber and have not survived. Many were destroyed during the reformation. Some were reinstated during the 19th century during the Gothic revival period. Alec Clifton-Taylor, *The Cathedrals of England*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1967), p.21, p.279.; Richard Taylor. *How to read a church*, p.51.

⁷¹ Taylor, *How to read a church*, p.21.

alongside the choir. These means were used at St James Church of England, Glen Iris (1959) where the single volume interior is layered with transparent and architectonic devices. The deep sanctuary is defined by steps rising towards the altar and on both sides by a non-structural 'colonnade' of slender white fin-columns separating the sanctuary from the every-day chapel.

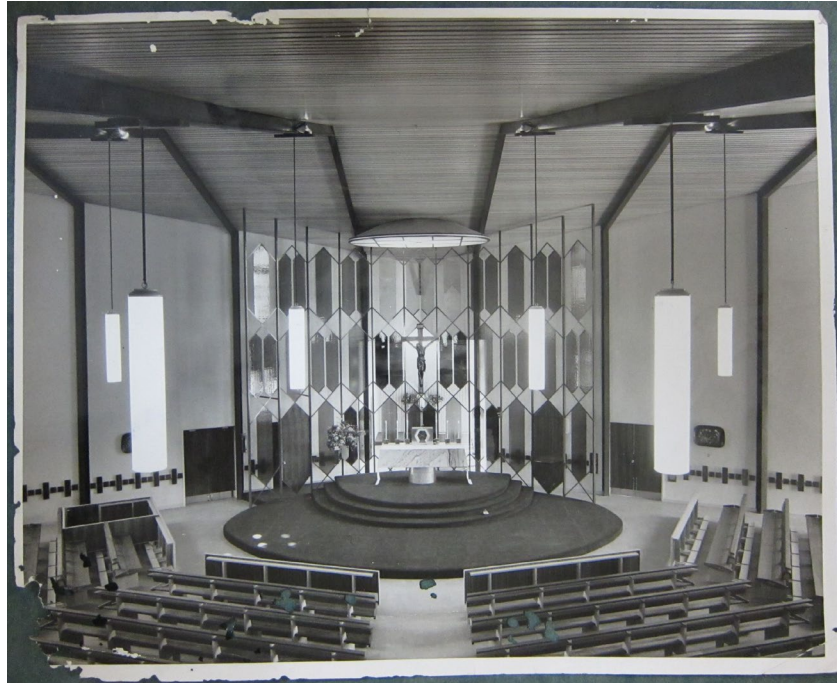


Fig. 5.57: View of the permeable glass and steel screen separating the sanctuary from the Lady Chapel beyond. Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe, c.1962. Architect: Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell

Source: Mary Immaculate Catholic Church Archives.

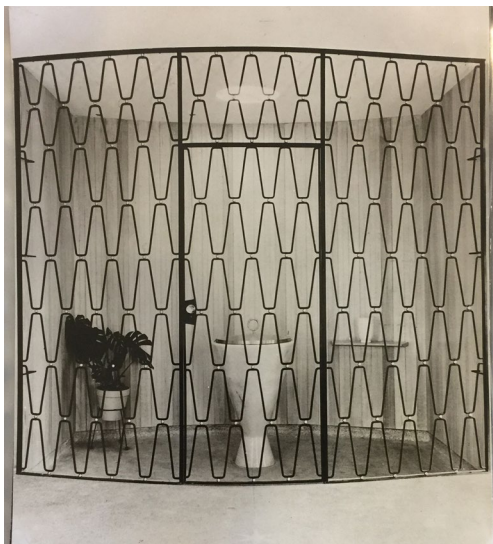
The churches of St John's Church of England, Bentleigh East (1962) and St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill, Bendigo, Victoria (1962) contain screens placed between the choir and Lady chapels in steel and timber respectively. The liturgical emphasis upon proximity to the altar in the modern church presented a particular problem in relation to the location of the choir. A position advocated by Blyth Johnson and illustrated at St Matthew's Church of England, Glenroy (1965) was to locate the choir in a loft above the nave at the rear of the church. This also had the advantage of allowing the congregation to join with the choir rather than being led by them.

*"The new church had to seat 340 in such a way that all might participate fully in the liturgy. This was achieved by means of an open sanctuary with seating on three sides so that the remotest person is not more than 50 foot from the altar. The choir was placed in a gallery over the narthex in order that it might re-inforce rather than lead the congregation in singing."*⁷²

⁷² Johnson, Blyth. *St. Matthew's, Glenroy*. A statement by the architect 1965. Courtesy of Josephine Johnson.

There were also unsuccessful attempts to remove the choir. At St Joseph's Catholic Church, Black Rock (1963) the choir was completely hidden from view in a room accessed externally. However, due to a resulting lack of clarity in sound, the choir was soon moved back into the nave of the church.⁷³

Baptisteries were at the time commonly located at the entrance to a church (signifying one's entry into a Christian life through baptism). For the Catholic churches of Mother of God (1958), Ivanhoe and Mary Immaculate (1962), East Ivanhoe, architects Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell created chapel-like alcoves within the narthex delineated by open patterned steel and timber screens respectively. (Fig. 5.58) Perhaps the most widely circulated example is Bogle and Banfield's St James Church of England, Glen Iris (1958) where to striking effect the baptistery is defined by a low semi-circular wrought iron screen which effectively signifies location rather than separates space. (Fig. 5.50) In other instances, perhaps due to larger budgets, or to create forms for specific functions, baptisteries were designed as discrete elements separate to the main building. These can be seen at St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church, Pascoe Vale (1960) (Fig. 5.14) and St Joseph's Catholic Church, Black Rock (1963). (Fig. 5.58) This form of baptistery had precedents in ancient Roman buildings such as the 5th century octagonal Baptistry of Neon, Ravenna, Italy and the early modern European Catholic churches of St Maria Konigan, Cologne, Germany (1954) by Dominikus Bohm and Church of the Sacred Heart, Audincourt, France (1950-52) by Maurice Novarina. The externalised geometric baptistery was a particularly Catholic expression in Australia, although it also appeared at Basil Spence's Cathedral of St Michael, Coventry, England (1956-62) in the form of centralised chapels expressed externally to the main building akin to the Chapter Houses of English Cathedrals.



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Fig. 5.58:

(L): Screen separating the baptistery from the narthex, Mother of God Catholic Church, East Ivanhoe Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell c.1956.

(R): Drawing: external circular baptistery with concrete fins, St Joseph's Catholic Church, Black Rock McCarthy Collings c. 1959.

Source: (L): State Library of Victoria, Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell Photographic collection LTA 2462, H2016.389/129-157.

(R): University of Melbourne, 2017

⁷³ Collings, Francis (Frank). Interview with Bhargav Sridhar, Stephanie Antonopoulos and Dimitri Blazos, April 19, 2016.

In a particularly skilled modern example, Don Hendry Fulton designed for St Joseph's Catholic Church, Springvale (1962),⁷⁴ a timber screened circular baptistery in conjunction with a geometric rectangular plan. Henry Fulton defined the baptistery with a timber screen in the shape of a circle which projected into both the interior volume and exterior of the building. In this case, within the circular symbolism of the baptistery, the font was located within a smaller area circumscribed as a sunken circular floor above which a circular skylight directed light. Hendry Fulton's volumetric design created an unencumbered and unified interior while also providing functional distinctions through transparent means in the vertical and horizontal planes.



Fig.5.59:
St Joseph's Catholic Church, Springvale. Timber screened baptistery to the right, c. 1966
(now substantially altered and re-ordered)
Architect: Don H. Fulton

Source: State Library of Victoria, Peter Wille collection of architectural slides, H91.244/1989

The following Case Study 04 examines St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill, Bendigo (1964) in country Victoria by the notable modernist firm Bates Smart as a rare example of international modernism in church design in the Australian setting.

⁷⁴ Since 1962, this church has been re-ordered twice, most recently in 2016. The circular baptistery no longer exists.

Case Study 04

St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill, Bendigo VIC, 1964

Architect: Bates Smart McCutcheon



Fig. 5.60: Sketch design for St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill c. 1961

Architect: Bates Smart McCutcheon

Source: St Joseph's Catholic Church Archives.

Catholic connections

Through their association with the Catholic Church via their work on the spire and chapels of Bendigo's Sacred Heart Catholic Cathedral (1896-1977),⁷⁵ the Melbourne firm of modern architects Bates Smart McCutcheon⁷⁶ were appointed to design St Joseph's Catholic Church in the newly formed parish of Quarry Hill, a suburb of the rural Victorian City of Bendigo. Although Bendigo had been administered as one parish since 1852, to accommodate the rapid expansion of population in the city since the war, four new parishes had been created: Sacred Heart Cathedral Parish (1951); Golden Square Parish (1951); Kennington Parish (1957); White Hills Parish (1957); and Quarry Hill Parish in 1961.⁷⁷ The new parish of Quarry Hill had been anticipated through the purchase of land in 1958 for the erection of a new building to eventually replace the local weatherboard church, built originally as a Baptist chapel c.1915, but used by the Catholic congregation since 1918.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ This Reed, Smart and Tappin building was commenced in 1896. The foundations, nave and side aisles were completed by 1901. The narthex and towers were complete by 1908 but work ceased for lack of funds thereafter. Construction recommenced in 1954 with completion achieved in 1977. (VHR H1340, <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au> accessed 11/10/2017)

⁷⁶ Formerly Reed, Smart and Tappin, known today as Bates Smart. The practice was established in 1852 by architect Joseph Reed.

⁷⁷ SJCC Archives, Notes sticky taped to photo album, accessed 17/08/2017.

⁷⁸ *St Joseph's Catholic Church Quarry Hill, 50th Anniversary booklet*, n.p.

The modern architectural practice

The selection of Bates Smart McCutcheon, one of Australia's largest and most successful firms, to design the new church at Quarry Hill guaranteed the acquisition of a modern church for the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst. The firm's work was increasingly characterised by a preference for an international modernism exemplified by the 1958 design of ICI House⁷⁹, a modern skyscraper, nineteen storeys high and the tallest building in Australia until 1961. And although the contract for the design of St Joseph's Catholic Church would have represented a very small commission in scale and programmatic complexity relative to the expanding range of corporate commissions attracted by Bates Smart McCutcheon, it also presented a testing ground for church design using a modernist architectural language. The final design for St Joseph's produced a building which crystallised a particular genre of modernism defined by Johnson and Hitchcock in their 1932 exhibition 'The International Style'.

St Joseph's Catholic Church



Fig. 5.61: Two views of St Joseph's Catholic Church, internal courtyard and exterior c. 1962

Source: St Joseph's Catholic Church Archives, undated photo album

In July 1961, the estimated cost of the building with accommodation for 480 worshippers was £46,200 and for furnishings a further £5,500.⁸⁰ On a steep site with a north-south cross fall, the building is composed of three principal volumes: a large enclosed forecourt; a large flat roofed nave; and a vertically prominent double storey tower. The volumes are contained within a rectangular plan (64 x 100 ft) delimited by a continuous bounding courtyard-church wall.⁸¹ ⁸² The lower level of the building is constructed of dark-brown smooth-faced manganese bricks while the courtyard-church wall is composed of charcoal grey split-

⁷⁹ Advanced modern features included a concrete encased steel frame supporting precast concrete flat panel floors; a flexible open plan office arrangement with partial glass partitioning; and an innovative glazed curtain wall system to all four sides of the building. For further information refer to the Victorian Heritage Database, VHR H0786. <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au>.

⁸⁰ Letter signed off by Hubert Banahan, dated July 5, 1961 in 'Building of Church. St Joseph's. Correspondence with Architect', Manila folder, SJCC Archives; Australia moved to decimal currency on February 14, 1966 at a rate of two dollars per Australian pound. The cost of the building was later reported in *Architecture Australia* (May, 1966), p.106. "the building contract, which was carried out on a Cost Plus basis was \$65,400; the furnishings and furniture, including the special ecclesiastical fittings, cost \$8,540; and the landscaping to the courtyard \$480."

⁸¹ Cross-Section Issue 134, December 1, 1963, p.1.; 64 ft by 100 ft, approximately equivalent to 20m by 30m.

⁸² The 'bounding wall design' later appeared Christ Church Grammar School Chapel, Claremont, Perth, winner of the R.A.I.A. (W.A.) Bronze Medal Award (1970), designed by Hobbs, Winning, Leighton and Partners: 'Christ Church Grammar School Chapel, Claremont, WA', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 60, No.3, (June, 1971) pp. 454-459.

faced Besser concrete blocks, smooth-faced on the interior.⁸³ A wall of glass windows and doors separates the companion volumes of courtyard and church. Free-standing steel columns support the flat roof of the nave and an uninterrupted clear glass clerestory makes the roof appear to float. The sanctuary is separate to the nave and illuminated via the prominent double storey tower, rendered white inside and out in contrast to the grey courtyard-church wall. At this time, no other church in Victoria was characterised by such a prominent and sophisticated international modernist sensibility as that shown at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill. St Joseph's was featured in *Cross-Section* just three months after its opening, described as having daylight flooding into the sanctuary, timbers with natural finish and the "skilful handling of few materials [...] is mindful of good recent Finnish architecture".⁸⁴ Closer to home, the *Bendigo Advertiser* reported "St Joseph's was designed with simplicity and austerity dominating [while the] materials used suggested solidity and endurance."⁸⁵

Original Sketch Drawings

It is evident the architect at least in the initial stages, was considering the plan-form of the building. Early sketch designs show jottings that toy with resolving the plan of the main worship space through consideration of a square, rectangular or circular design. The architects were also concerned with the modern use of materials, suggesting the circular baptistery (unbuilt) would "gain by being in another material [to the main building] and concrete off the form is being considered."⁸⁶ The early sketch designs illustrate a commitment to achieving ornament via materiality conceived in the choice of materials and abstracted design elements in the building fabric: the sanctuary tower windows with *brise soleil* in patterned brickwork (later changed to vertical timbers); the courtyard walls depicted in off-form concrete (later changed to brick); the bell tower an abstract sculptural element (later converted to a simple cross); and an interior of modern simplicity and natural materials in the form of timber choir screen; exposed steel columns (later partially timber clad); integrated modern light fittings; and floors specified 'in reinforced concrete [...] finished in linoleum squares' (later finished with timber floor boards).⁸⁷ The discrepancies between the original sketch plans and final resolution are typical of Australian conditions in which architects aspirations were not often fully realised due to economic factors.

The final design, a strikingly modern church is opened at Quarry Hill

In the final design, the building was conventionally constructed upon a brick substructure and finished with timber flooring through-out.⁸⁸ Despite the sophisticated application of international modernism, the internal planning of the building is conventional with a processional nave, a sanctuary raised three steps

⁸³ Besser blocks had become widely used in South Australia "since Jayworth Besser Ltd began producing the blocks in Adelaide in 1954." (The University of Melbourne, *Cross Section*, No. 80, (June, 1959). p.1.) The bricks for St Joseph's were supplied by Monier Besser (Letter to Fr. Curtin, July 18, 1962, 'Church' manila folder held in SJCC Archives). In 1959 the blocks became readily available in Victoria where they were produced in Dandenong – purportedly 50,000 blocks were mechanically produced daily. (The University of Melbourne, *Cross Section*, No. 80, (June, 1959). p.1.)

⁸⁴ *Cross-Section* Issue 134, (December 1, 1962) n.p.

⁸⁵ 'Quarry Hill New Church', *Bendigo Advertiser*, Aug 27, 1962, n.p.

⁸⁶ Letter dated July 5, 1961 in 'Building of Church.', SJCC Archives.; 12 ft diameter, equivalent to approximately 3.6m.

⁸⁷ Letter dated July 5, 1961 in 'Building of Church.', SJCC Archives.

⁸⁸ Assertion based on photographic evidence.

and high altar against the rear wall. The tower form above not only provides a wash of illumination but also helps to delineated the sanctuary as a zone separate to the nave.

On 26 August 1962, an estimated 1,000 people gathered in the forecourt⁸⁹ of St Joseph's for its opening. Parishioners recall 'granite rocks and instant lawn were brought in from Jack Drechsler's at Sedgwick to landscape the surroundings'⁹⁰, while *The Advocate* reported the event was one of Bishop Stewart's final engagements before leaving to attend the world-wide gathering of Bishops for the historic Second Vatican Council in Rome.⁹¹ Speaking at the occasion, the Bishop acknowledged the Institutional Church's need for connection with the modern world through the erection of such a demonstrably modern building:

*"The architect of the Church has expressed in contemporary style, man's reaching out to God [...] Every age produces new standards and new forms and our own is no exception [...] the tempo and drive of our times have been responsible for a great variety of architectural forms [...] the almost square shape of the Church [leaves] no one too remote from the central act of worship."*⁹²



Fig. 5.62: Sketch design view of the interior, St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill c. 1961
Architect: Bates Smart McCutcheon

Source: St Joseph's Catholic Church Archives.

International influences

That Bates Smart McCutcheon were looking to international precedent was expressed in a letter to the client stating "We are making enquiries about a contemporary Danish chair for the Prie Dieu"⁹³ and also

⁸⁹ 'New church Blessed at Quarry Hill', *The Tribune*, (Sept 6, 1962) p.3.

⁹⁰ *St Joseph's Catholic Church Quarry Hill, 50th Anniversary booklet*, n.p.

⁹¹ 'New church Blessed at Quarry Hill', *The Advocate*, (Aug 30, 1962) p.13.

⁹² 'Reach out to God', *The Bendigo Advertiser*, Aug 10, 1962, p.1.

⁹³ A piece of furniture for use during prayer, consisting of a kneeling surface and a narrow upright front with a rest for the elbows or for books. Letter dated Sept 11, 1962

in comments made by associates contemporary with the period: “Much of the modern design in Australia in the 1950s stemmed from the influence of Europe [...] The new interiors of buildings from the 1950s onwards demanded modern furniture and fittings with the clean and simple lines of Scandinavian design.”⁹⁴ Rather than explicit denominational ties, Bates Smart McCutcheon were specifically looking to modernist precedents, perhaps the work of the Saarinens in the United States as well as the humanised modernism of Finnish architect Alvar Alto. (Fig. 5.63) Eliel and Eero Saarinen had composed interlocking flat roofed rectangular forms and volumes of varying size and heights around courtyard spaces for the First Christian Church, Columbus (1942)⁹⁵ and Christ Church Lutheran Church, Minneapolis (1948-1962). Bates Smart McCutcheon’s design bears a strong similarity to these designs, the influence can be felt in the arrangement of form and mass, the relationships in scale and in the interior disposition and use of materials. Revealingly, while Bates Smart McCutcheon appeared to be looking solely towards modernist precedents on the international stage, the parish priest Father Curtin was looking to networks closer to home. As a guide for the location of the Consecration Crosses⁹⁶, the celebrated modern St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Frankston by Alan G. Robertson (1954) was recommended as a key precedent to the architect.⁹⁷

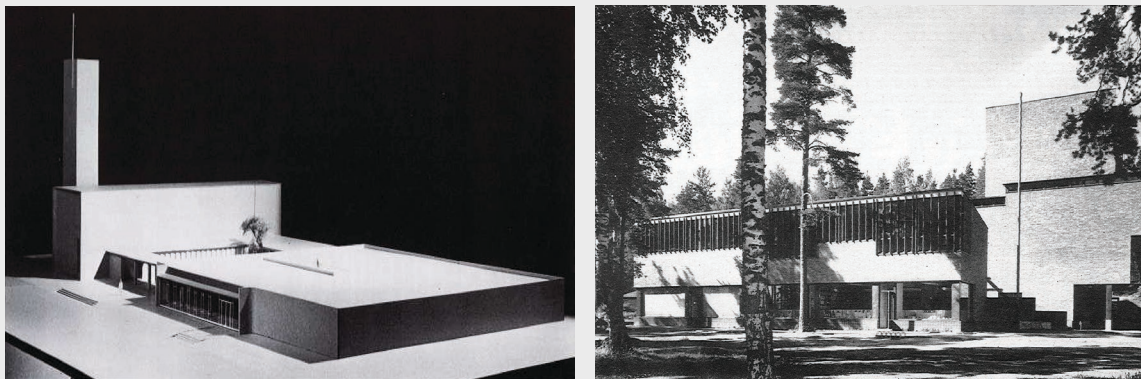


Fig. 5.63: (L): Architect's scale model for Christ Church Lutheran Church and Education Building, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Eliel Saarinen (c. 1948) (R): Säynätsalo Town Hall. Alvar Aalto (1951).

Source: (L): Christ-Janer, Albert. *Eliel Saarinen. Finnish-American Architect and Educator*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.131. (R): *Architecture Review* (UK), Vol. 121, No. 723, (Apr, 1957), p.249.

Postscript I

After the directives of the Second Vatican Council were announced, the wall behind the sanctuary was carved out to allow liturgical ritual *versus populum* (with the priest facing the congregation) because the altar was too heavy and impossible to move.

⁹⁴ Hitch, John. *Architect John Hitch. Record of a Life in Architecture*. Second Edition 2003. (Mt Macedon: John Hitch, 2003), p.104.

⁹⁵ Formerly the Tabernacle Church of Christ.

⁹⁶ Crosses on the interior and exterior architecture of a Christian Church, indicating where a bishop has anointed the church with holy water to consecrate it. The crosses signifying the sanctity of the church.

⁹⁷ 'Notes on Discussion at A.J.R. Residence 23/2/62', Bates Smart & McCutcheon Memo, Job No. 4191, 23 February, 1962, SJCC Archives.; Present were: Fr. J.J. Curtin, Mr. A.J. Ralton, Mr. L.G. Cahn.

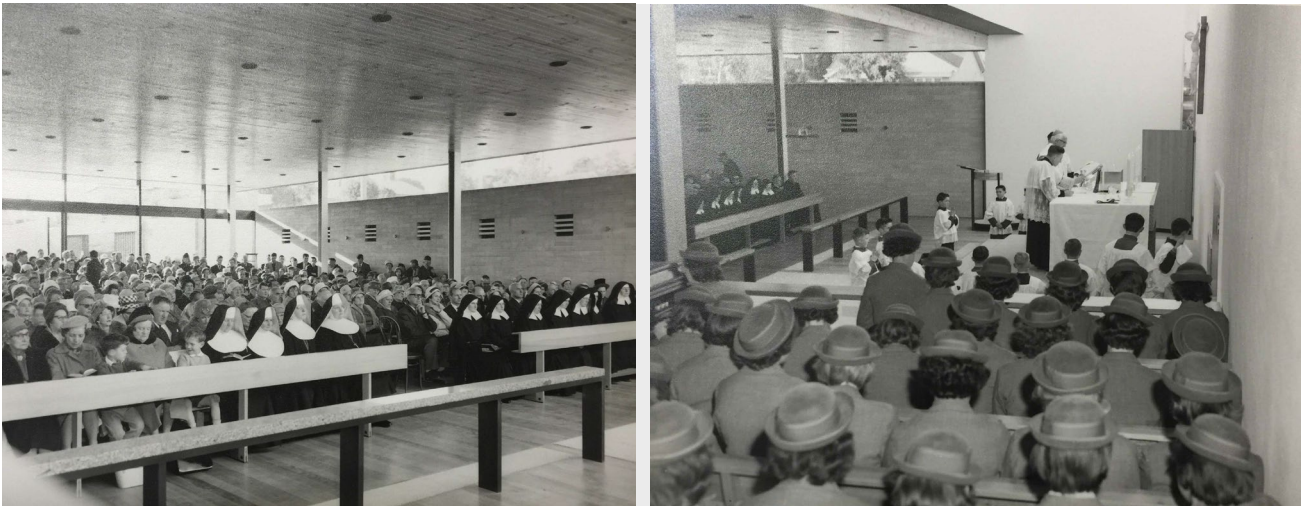


Fig. 5.64: (L): View of the congregation: in the foreground four Sisters of the Company of Mary including Sister Bernadette (Father Curtin's sister) and seven Sisters of Mercy.

(R): View of the sanctuary from the choir.

St Joseph's Catholic Church, Quarry Hill, Bendigo, Australia. Bates Smart McCutcheon. 1962.

Source: St Joseph's Catholic Church Archives, undated photo album.

Postscript II

Demonstrating the power of the formative experiences acquired through their involvement with the church within the lives of its parishioners, the following excerpt of a handwritten letter received by Father Curtin from Sir John Jensen dated 26 April 1962 encapsulates the experiences of the parishioners and the primacy of the culture of religion in the lives of the post-war generation:

*"I have thought since I was a boy that there should be a church at Quarry Hill; we always thought it a long way from St.Kilian's, and now that one is being built after these 62 years I would like to have a small interest in it; say in a couple of bricks. I therefore enclose a cheque; it won't go far but I am a retired public servant and my finances are very limited."*⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Miscellaneous letter found in the SJCC Archives.; Sir John Jensen (1884–1970) was knighted in 1950 for his services to Australia. Jensen served as assistant-secretary and secretary (1942–48) of the department of Munitions where he "presided from his office, flanked by a 'tin hat', Bren-gun and portable typewriter [...] he was identified in the press as the 'human nerve centre of munitions manufacture in Australia'. After 1949 he joined the Commonwealth Immigration Planning Council. (Australian Dictionary of Biography <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jensen-sir-john-klunder-10621>. Accessed 2/11/2017)

5.6 Conclusion

“...modern materials and modern techniques make it reasonably simple to produce [...] volume with a minimum of expense and thereby create some sort of drama which in olden days would have been difficult to do, or expensive to do.”⁹⁹

Architect John Mockridge, interviewed in 1973

A diversity of modern church designs arose during the post-war years enabled by the introduction of new materials, technical processes and construction techniques. These new structures were not only cheaper to build, but enabled new conceptions of form and space. The initial acceptance of modern church design for many parish communities was motivated by economic considerations.

The innovative modern churches were no-longer reliant upon precedent for legitimacy, leading to a spectrum of design responses ranging from experimental and unique structures to highly considered geometric constructions. Innovation in modern church designs was characterised by new formal ideas; unobstructed single volume interiors; non-load bearing walls; expressed steel structures; and prominent external crosses, fleches or abstracted tower forms. The interiors of the modern churches were characterised by a simple aesthetic of unencumbered surfaces and absence of applied decoration; the use of a limited palette of natural materials and the manipulation of light through a diversity of means to achieve an atmosphere considered appropriate for worship in the modern world.

A fundamental attribute of the new churches differentiating them from secular contemporary buildings was their dual purpose as a functional building and as a symbol. The capacity of the new churches to embody, or at least provide a narrative of, symbolic meaning was an important justification for the generation of new plan forms, both expressive and geometric. The new churches were also borne of the desire of religious communities to express their participation in the modern world. The construction of a new church represented a significant event in the life of a parish, requiring an enormous communal commitment and financial backing. The decision to commission a modern church represented a progressive community, producing bespoke outcomes unique to each period, place and congregation.

⁹⁹ John Mockridge interviewed by Hazel de Berg in the Hazel de Berg collection, 17 July 1973, 2327182: TRC 1/696 (transcript)

CHAPTER FIVE

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Fig. 6.0 ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, MENTONE, 1960
Architect: Fowell, Mansfield and McConnell in assoc. Stan Moran
Image: Pat Lane and Sheila Johnston, *St Patrick's the Mission of Mentone*, 1989

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CHAPTER SIX

Tradition: Keeping comfortable and steady

6.1 Introduction

“Human constructions [...] have the task of preserving the past, enabling us to grasp the continuum of culture and tradition [constituting] the most important externalization of human memory [...] we understand and remember who we are through our constructions, both material and mental.”¹

As well as permitting the innovative modern designs discussed throughout the previous chapter, the use of welded steel structures and modern technologies also permitted large scale traditional buildings to be produced economically. The use of new materials and structures thus also facilitated a preference for traditional styles to be justified for economic reasons and to prevail in some instances. Many of these buildings were designed by an older generation of architect adept at designing in historic styles, who were also engaging with new methods of construction. Traditional buildings were proscribed and promoted by institutional church authorities in publications calculated to influence the future of church design. These strategies led to acceptable plan forms that were traditional but clothed in a contemporary aesthetic. As Robin Boyd noted, in many instances ‘modern’ was often achieved by “injecting conservative forms with a judicious flavouring of new materials”².

This chapter reveals the nuanced ways in which ecclesiastic traditions continued to persist in the Australian context, despite the concurrent prevalence of modern innovative ecclesiastic designs. For some clergy and parishioners, the advent of the modern style had been so abrupt, that it was hard to see how it could express meaning, its vocabulary was limited and the “more subtle expressions [...] beyond it.”³ In other cases, the symbolic imperative for a church to be a recognisable landmark compelled some institutions to encourage the requirement for a roof pitch of 50 degrees.⁴ In these instances, aesthetic preferences focused on ecclesiastic and social traditions, rather than an engagement with modernity, were determining factors leading to traditional stylistic choices.⁵ There were many places of worship in the mainstream designed in accord with traditional values throughout the 1950s and into the mid-1960s.

¹ Juhani Pallasmaa, ‘Space, Place, Memory and Imagination: The Temporal dimension of Existential Space’, in *Spatial Recall: Memory in Architecture and Landscape*, Marc Treib (Ed), (London: Routledge, 2013), p.17. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 18 October 2016.

² Boyd, Robin. *The new architecture*, The Arts in Australia Series, (Melbourne: Longmans Green & Co, 1963), p. 5.

³ Gilbert Scott, Giles in Robin Boyd. ‘Modern or Medieval? Breeze of Argument over Coventry Cathedral’, *The Age*, (Sept 15, 1951), p.7.

⁴ *Cross Section*, No. 50, 1956 (Parkville: University of Melbourne Dept. of Architecture) p.2.

⁵ Hitchcock, Henry-Russell. *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1987), p.161.

Three focused case studies serve to highlight the themes explored within this chapter: Case Study 05: St Andrew's Church of England, Brighton (1962) illustrates the entrenched and expansive nature of clerical networks and their capacity to influence architectural outcomes; Case Study 06: St Anthony Shrine Catholic Church, Hawthorn (1962) examines the perpetuation of a distinctive cultural identity in a foreign land through the building of a place of worship dedicated to a specific community; and Case Study 07: St Clement of Rome Catholic Church, Bulleen (1971) demonstrates the fan shaped plan of a new tradition in the Catholic context.

6.2 Continuity: nuanced and incremental change

“...the probable duration of a church is longer than that of most other forms of building. It is perhaps by its churches that the architecture of a period is judged, and a church has an object far greater than that of serving the convenience of worshippers – it should be a spiritual aid to worship.”⁶

6.2.1 Revival styles

Continuity with ecclesiastic tradition was expressed in the retention of a longitudinal plan and built form founded on an arrangement of masses: bell towers; tall naves with central processional aisles; distant sanctuaries; side chapels for private devotions; hipped roofs and prominent gabled facades. Nevertheless, there were many ways in which a traditional plan form could be inflected to create an appearance of architectural modernity. Although explicit Gothic characteristics were avoided to produce simplified and abstracted structures articulated in a modernised idiom there were many buildings that were yet tied to tradition in their plan form.⁷ A contemporary appearance was primarily expressed through a palette of modern materials such as choice of brick (clinker, cream or light coloured), reductive surfaces⁸ and interiors with expressed structural steel frames. These elements are a feature of St Luke’s Anglican Church, Vermont (1962)⁹ designed by Wystan Widdows. St Luke’s is a hip-roofed, terracotta tile building in the contemporary cream brick, featuring cross-laced brick corner details, a sanctuary with dramatic side lighting and an internally expressed steel frame. But St Luke’s in plan was traditionally longitudinal with lancet windows and the exterior features prominent round headed archivols strongly bringing to mind a [pre-Gothic] undecorated Romanesque style. The inclusion of contemporary amenities also contributed to the idea of modernity: electric lighting in various forms, back-lit illumination; improved acoustics; crying room; pew heating and improved comfort. Such buildings could satisfy “the need for economy [while] expressing a traditional image without ostentation. This approach was entirely in keeping with the tendency of older established architects to proceed cautiously with an evolutionary style.”¹⁰ Church buildings designed with the nuance of historical continuity were uncontroversial and readily accepted as subtle versions of modernity, while conveying a strong connection with traditional values and religious practices. As Hitchcock noted, “the nuances of tradition could be detected in the buildings of even very modern architects and was often introduced in reaction to the new architecture, particularly in church designs.”¹¹

⁶ 50 Modern Churches, p.3.

⁷ Proctor, *The Modern Church*, p.39.

⁸ Rothery, Sean. *Ireland and the new architecture, 1900-1940*, p.169-170

⁹ St Luke’s Anglican Church (1962) appears to be a variant of Widdow’s earlier church, St Alban’s Anglican Church, Coburg West (1957).

¹⁰ Rothery, Sean. *Ireland and the new architecture, 1900-1940*, p.169-170

¹¹ Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p.534.

Churches of all denominations were built to this formula although the need for Catholic churches to accommodate larger congregations led to a greater propensity of Catholic examples. St Patrick's Catholic Church, Mentone (1957-60)¹² is one of several imposing designs of large scale and monumental character, demonstrated through the building form, height, scale and massing. (Fig. 6.0) Nevertheless, the rhetoric surrounding their design often addressed a liturgical concern for modernity couched in terms of functional design, balanced against a continuity with ecclesiastic tradition. In the case of St Gabriel's Catholic Church, Reservoir (1960)¹³, the institutional church focused on St Gabriel's functional liturgical design, describing the building as having a thoroughly liturgical altar, hexagonal baptistery, confessionals and pulpit, which together constituted the 'four features of a Catholic Church that were indispensable if it were to function properly'.¹⁴ Architecturally, prominence was given to St Gabriel achieving a statement of monumentality in scale and mass, with a double height nave and an eye-catching brick tower topped by an octagonal belfry in the style of a temple.¹⁵ The churches of St Patrick's and St Gabriel's are typical of the basilical style buildings that continued to be constructed even into the mid-1960s by the major Christian denominations, but particularly the Catholic Church. Such buildings were able to fulfil an institutional expectation for continuity of ecclesiastic form as well as a moderated modernised aesthetic. However, as an indication of the rate of change that was occurring in the post-war decades, St Patrick's which had been proudly announced in 1960 as "one of the largest churches in the Archdiocese"¹⁶ by 1965 at its consecration was presciently described as one of the "last of the great suburban churches".¹⁷

An exploration of how traditional buildings could be nuanced and clothed to appear modern can be observed in Keith Reid's 1961 probing design proposals to replace a small 1891 Gothic Revival brick church for the Baptist congregation in the conservative suburb of Canterbury. (Fig. 6.1) Reid's four designs show varying degrees of modernity ranging from a monumental building with abstracted, reductive surfaces and minimal decorative features reflective of pre-war monumental British designs, to a series of subsequent sketches that retain the core plan form of the first proposal but articulated in a variety of inflected modern styles utilising a modern architectural language.

¹² St Patrick's was designed by architects from New South Wales, Fowell, Mansfield Maclurcan in association with Stan Moran. Fowell, Mansfield Maclurcan designed similarly scaled buildings St Augustine's Catholic Church, Yass, NSW, (1954) and St Mary's Catholic Church, Warren, NSW, (1955).

¹³ Designed by Stan Moran. His church designs are similar and include: St Paul's Catholic Church, Bentleigh (1960), St Bede's Catholic Church, Balwyn North (1961), St Patrick's Holy Name Catholic Church, Mentone (1957-60) designed in assoc. with Fowell Mansfield Mclurcan.

¹⁴ 'New Reservoir Church "Beautiful and Functional"', *The Advocate*, (Oct 20, 1960), p.7.

¹⁵ 'New St. Gabriel's Church, Reservoir' *The Advocate*, (Jan 14, 1960), p.19.

¹⁶ '1500 at Blessing of Mentone's New Church', *The Advocate*, (Mar 17, 1960), p.7.

¹⁷ 'Last of the Great Suburban Churches', *The Advocate*, (May 20, 1965), p.15.

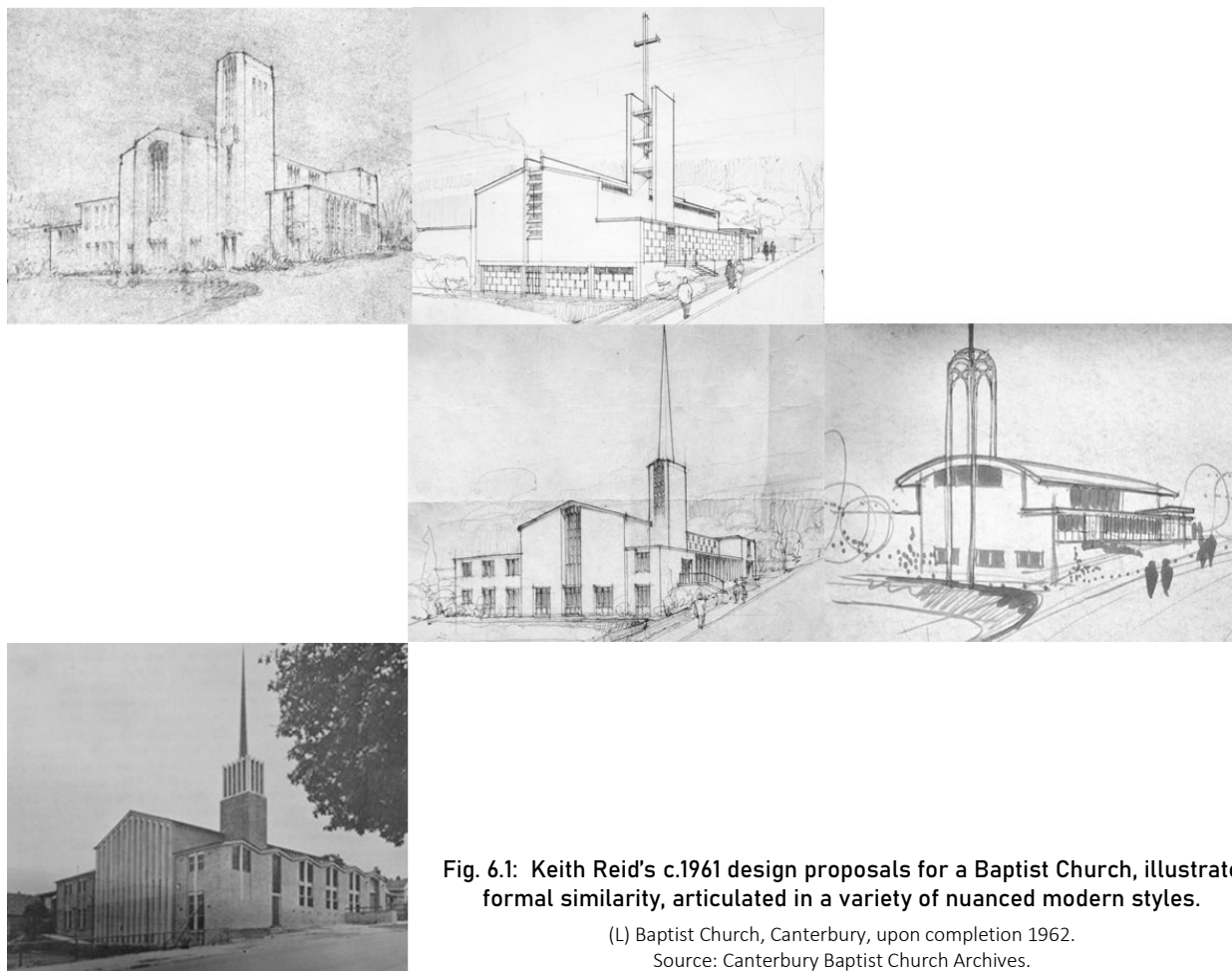


Fig. 6.1: Keith Reid's c.1961 design proposals for a Baptist Church, illustrate formal similarity, articulated in a variety of nuanced modern styles.

(L) Baptist Church, Canterbury, upon completion 1962.

Source: Canterbury Baptist Church Archives.

6.2.2 Promoting traditional values

The continuing desire for a return to a traditional pre-war society touched all denominations. In the first half of the twentieth century, a great majority of Anglican church designs in Australia followed English examples. In 1947, the Incorporated Church Building Society of London published *50 Modern Churches*, a compendium of photographs and plans illustrating the designs of 35 parish and 15 mission churches.¹⁸ The publication was aimed at church building committees and architects who would be tasked with the reconstruction of buildings lost during the war and the future construction of new buildings.¹⁹ Of the buildings illustrated, none were constructed after 1940. The selection of buildings exemplified inter-war modernity; the buildings were uniformly monumental in scale, conceived in austere unadorned surfaces and reductive volumes with traditional massing, rectangular naves and chancels and choirs located between the nave and sanctuary.²⁰ Essentially, *50 Modern Churches*, was a well-illustrated compendium

¹⁸ *50 Modern Churches* contained a compendium of photographs and plans illustrating the designs of 35 parish and 15 mission churches. The Incorporated Church Building Society of London was established in 1818 to promote the erection of Anglican churches against the rise of non-conformist religions and competition from Methodism.

¹⁹ *50 Modern Churches*, p.3.

²⁰ John Keble Church at Mill Hill by D. F. Martin Smith (1936) unusually placed the choir within the nave to an almost square plan, a format followed by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell at St Faith's Anglican Church, Burwood (1956-58). N.F. Cachemaille-Day's St Michael and All Angels at Wythenshawe (1937) demonstrates an early square plan with nave on the diagonal.

of English church designs of the 1930s, promoted as examples of appropriate modernism. This was a modernity of new construction technologies used in the production of time-honoured ecclesiastic forms, in the belief that a traditional building was better for worship.²¹ These values were reflected in the designs of ecclesiastic buildings in Australia in the early post-war years.

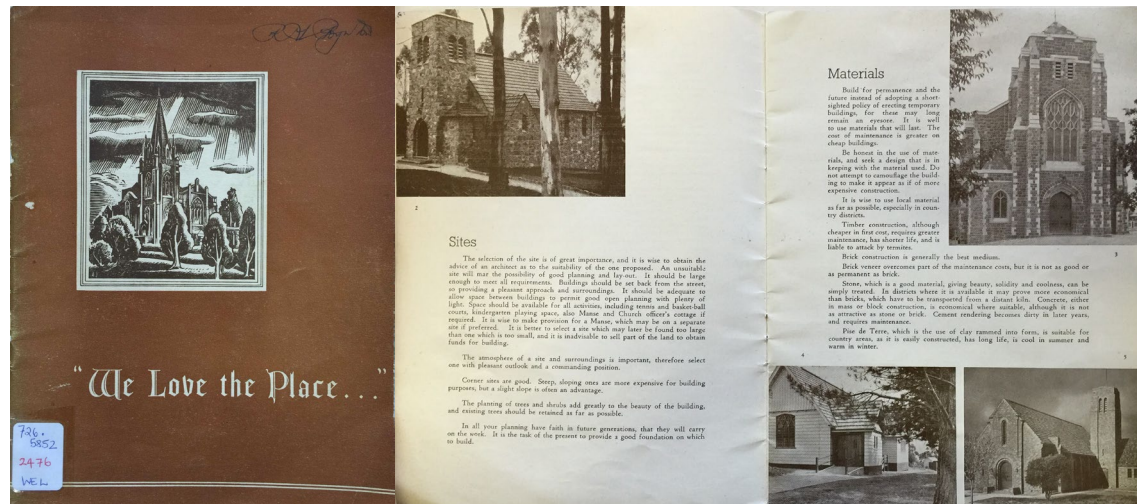


Fig. 6.2: *We Love the Place...* 1948

Source: Uniting Church Synod Archives Victoria and Tasmania

Similarly, in 1948, the Presbyterian Architectural Committee of Victoria produced “*We Love the Place...*”, a booklet illustrating examples of ‘simple’ and ‘beautiful’ buildings conducive to an “atmosphere of worship and rest.”²² Among the contributors were a pre-war generation of architects educated and trained in the Arts and Crafts and revival styles: Keith Reid (1906-1999), Scarborough, Robertson & Love, Marcus Martin and Horace Tribe (1908-1992), K. Murray Forster (1907-1967), Henry Hardie Kemp (1859-1946), but also the younger F. Bruce Kemp (nephew to Henry Hardie) and prolific Anglican architect Louis Williams. Ambiguously, a functionalist ideology was promoted in the booklet’s advocacy for no particular ‘style’ and “no desire to [...] impose a uniformity of design upon the Church”, and in the demand to ask “What is a church for? What shape and appearance must it assume to assist the purpose for which it is built?”²³ The functionalist design rhetoric was set against traditional examples recommended for reasons of “historical precedent and dignity of form”. Scots Church, Melbourne (1873-74) and Presbyterian Church, Toorak (1875-73) were cited as models²⁴ illustrating the equal importance of light and shadow in producing an appropriate atmosphere of “valuable dimness and mystery”.²⁵ *We Love the Place...* and its promotion of traditional values was predicated on a return to normalcy in anticipation of unbuilt designs of the 1930s being put back on the table for consideration after the war. In many instances, in fact this did occur leading to the construction of traditional buildings, well into the 1950s.²⁶ *We Love the Place...* did not anticipate

²¹ 50 Modern Churches, p.3.

²² Introduction, “*We Love the Place...*”, (Melbourne: Architectural Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, 1948), np.

²³ “*We Love the Place...*”, np.

²⁴ Both Presbyterian buildings were designed by Reed & Barnes in the Gothic Revival style in Barrabool sandstone with cream stone detailing, rich timber interior and stained glass.

²⁵ *We love the place...*, (Melbourne: Architectural Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, 1948), np.

²⁶ When Sydney’s Maritime Services Board building at Circular Quay was completed in 1953 it was the first significant office complex completed in Australia since 1941, but architecturally it was denounced as ‘irrelevant’. *Cross Section*, No.4, (Feb, 1953), p.2.

the rapid social and architectural changes that were to take place during the following decade. Within 10 years, the aspiration for Presbyterian churches to be designed with historical precedent had been set aside by a younger generation of architects who were engaged in the production of modern architecture, illustrated by the design by the young Bruce F. Kemp for St Leonards Presbyterian Church, Brighton Beach (1957) which became one of Melbourne's first innovative churches built in the modern style. (Fig. 6.3)

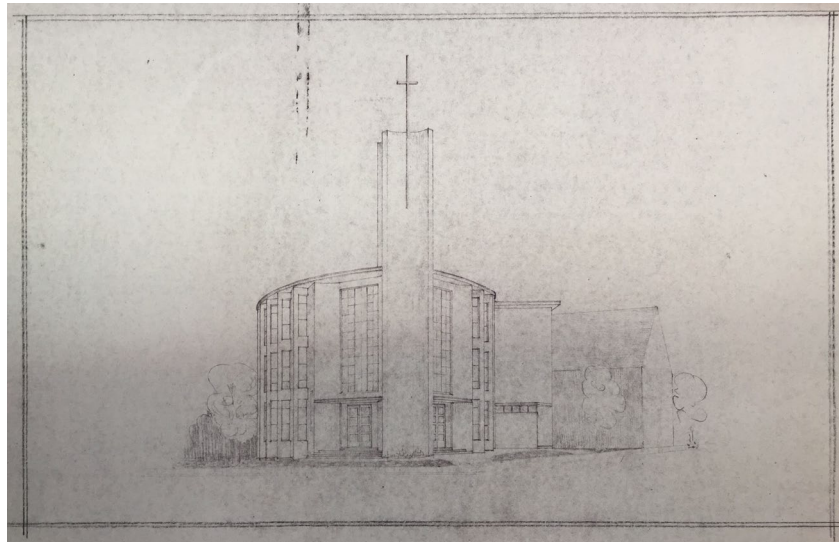


Fig. 6.3: Design for St Leonard's Presbyterian Church, Brighton c.1956
Architect: Bruce F. Kemp

Source: St Leonard's Uniting Church Archives

6.2.3 Melbourne's middle ring suburbia

As the city of Melbourne spread itself ever further afield in response to immigration and the 'baby boom' growth in population, it was in the already established middle ring suburbs that traditional buildings continued to be preferred. The 1958 survey by the Church of England to assess its future requirement for the construction of new churches and distribution of its clergy (Appendix 02: Church of England Survey Maps) demonstrates a close correlation between suburban location and style of building: traditional or modern. The demographic pattern of Melbourne's urban growth during the post-war period led to the development of three distinct areas: the densely inhabited inner urban area of the city; an outer ring of suburbs, rapidly developed with low cost buildings to address the expanding population; and a middle distance ring of established suburbs of high social standing, typified by an homogeneous character.²⁷ The survey illustrates the population of inner Melbourne²⁸ as having older and declining populations, already adequately served by existing building stock and consequently a limited requirement for the construction of new churches. On the other hand, in Melbourne's rapidly expanding outer suburban areas,²⁹ where a younger generation were attempting to establish themselves, the requirement for new church buildings was keenly felt along with economic hardship which often led to the construction of a modern

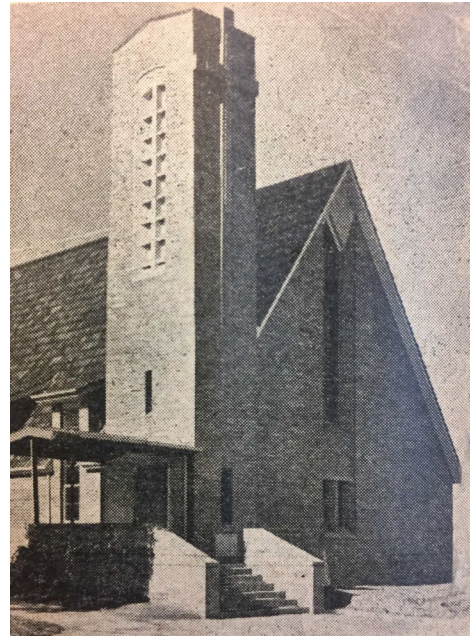
²⁷ Burnley, I.H.. *The urbanisation of the Australian population*, (Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.134.

²⁸ The municipalities of Melbourne, Richmond, Prahran, Hawthorn, Kew, Malvern, Caulfield, St Kilda and South Melbourne.

²⁹ Municipalities such as Moorabbin, Springvale and Noble Park, Mulgrave, Dandenong, Nunawading, Ringwood, Doncaster and Templestowe, Eltham, Heidelberg, Preston, Broadmeadows, Keilor, Sunshine and Altona Shire.

building. It was in Melbourne's middle ring suburbs, with stable and equitably distributed populations that there continued to be constructed new church buildings modelled on traditional examples. A number of these middle ring municipalities such as Camberwell, Brighton, Sandringham, Mordialloc, Essendon and Williamstown were relatively wealthy suburban areas established since the early years of the colony, while others less prosperous were represented by the working-class migrant suburbs Brunswick, Coburg and Oakleigh and the industrial areas such as Footscray.

In the post-war years, when churches were built in the wealthy middle ring suburbs, buildings compatible with the surrounding landscape of traditional churches and detached single-family villas³⁰ prevailed. Long established traditional values were compatible with Melbourne's middle ring suburbia, where there existed long standing serviceable church buildings erected in the nineteenth century gothic revival or early twentieth century eclectic styles. Designs such as St Mary's Church of England, Camberwell South (1957), St Alban's Church of England, Coburg West (1957) and St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bentleigh (1957) with eclectic historical detailing and steeply pitched roofs did not differ significantly from earlier buildings such as Thomson Memorial Presbyterian Church, Ormond (1940) or St David's Anglican Church, Moorabbin (1948) except for an occasional square headed window. (Figs. 6.26-6.29) There were also many Catholic churches in these areas constructed as large scale basilical designs such as St Joseph's Catholic Church, Brunswick West (1959), St Patrick's Catholic Church, Mentone (1960), St Paul's Catholic Church, Bentleigh East (1960), and St John Bosco Catholic Church, Niddrie (1960-66). These churches were recognised by their institutions as modernised hybrid entities that yet presented an appearance of traditional ecclesiastic design. In 1956, Keith Reid's now demolished Presbyterian Church, Hawthorn South was described by *Presbyterian Life* as having an "ecclesiastic atmosphere under modern conditions".³¹ (Fig. 6.4) However, by the architectural community it was (scathingly) described as a revival building in the "Dutch deformed style".³² The building of traditional styles in the wealthier middle ring suburbs demonstrates the agency and desire of parish communities and clergy for traditional buildings associated with social standing and generally, wealth.



**Fig. 6.4: Presbyterian Church, Hawthorn South 1957
Architect: Keith Reid**

Source: 'Illuminated Cross On New Church',
Presbyterian Life, (Jun 21, 1957), p.12.

³⁰ Chris McConville and Associates, Camberwell Conservation Study 1991, Vol II, pp. vii-xi.

³¹ 'Illuminated Cross On New Church', *Presbyterian Life*, (Jun 21, 1957), p.12.

³² *Cross Section*, No.50, Dec 1956.

6.2.4 Denominational rivalry: being better than the Jones'

Although location could provide a forecast, the design of any new church building was often the product of a thorny equilibrium, shaped by its role as a representation of the broader institutional aims of diocesan building authorities, balanced against the ambition of individual clerics, building committees and the collective desire of individual parish communities. These situated circumstances were further defined by the concomitant ability to provide the voluntary contributions required to build a church. While the attitudes of diocesan authorities, parochial clergy and building committees often held sway, in other cases parish communities won the day. In 1956, when the Church of England parishioners of Glen Iris requested a modern building that was affordable,³³ the Diocesan authorities did not agree, the Diocese preferred the pre-war design proposal, of which the hall and presbytery had already been completed.³⁴ (Fig. 6.5) A parish meeting subsequently held at the Malvern Town Hall achieved unanimous support for a contemporary design and Diocesan authorities were forced to concede.³⁵ The concession led to the ground breaking modern design of St James Church of England by Bogle and Banfield of 1958. Nevertheless, in many cases, clergy and parish authorities with conservative attitudes actively sought architects who had designed buildings in accord with traditional ideas in the past, a position in which experienced architect Louis Williams frequently found himself when he observed:

*"Up until the early 1950s, any proposals to make some marked change in planning and design often met with interference by those in authority, both clerical and lay. To suggest that a window or other opening be square headed could be met with strong resistance. It was felt that if there were not acutely pointed arches, the building would not convey a feeling of its being a church."*³⁶

In this way, the function of church buildings as strategic and historic edifices demonstrative of institutional status in their scale, style and location was sustained well into the second half of the twentieth century in Australia.



Fig. 6.5: Proposed 1920 design for St James Church of England, Glen Iris, hall and presbytery at left. Architect: Louis Williams

Source: Postcard, Stonnington History Centre, Ref MP420.

³³ HO-408, 'St James Church and Hall', Heritage Place Citation Report, City of Stonnington, p.3.

³⁴ 'St James' Church of England, Glen Iris, Victoria', *Architecture Today*, (Dec, 1959 - Jan 1960), pp.14-15.

³⁵ The modern St James Anglican Church, Glen Irish was subsequently judged by *Architecture and Arts* as one of the 'Ten Best Buildings in Australia'. 'Ten Best Buildings 1959-60', *Architecture and Arts*, (Oct, 1960), p.55.

³⁶ Williams, Louis. 'Church Architecture in Australia', *The Victorian Historical Magazine*, Issue 154, Vol.39, No.4, (Nov, 1968), pp.190-191.

The desire for a substantial traditional building came into play in the wealthy long established middle ring suburb of Camberwell in 1955, when fire destroyed the large Victorian bluestone building of St John's Anglican Church. An equally impressive traditional design was considered fitting and necessary as a replacement.³⁷ Interestingly, St John's was not the only monumental building located in the centre of Camberwell. In 1918, the large and impressive Our Lady of Victories Catholic Basilica³⁸ had been constructed, not 200 metres (uphill) from St John's Anglican Church. Our Lady was designed as a substantial stone building in Romanesque revival style, crowned by an imposing octagonal copper clad dome. At the time of its construction, the Catholic population of Camberwell was a mere one sixth of the Anglican population, and one twelfth of Camberwell's total population. These statistics reveal the important purpose of the scale, size and location of the building, as the institutional Catholic church vied for position and status in the wealthy and prestigious suburb of Camberwell in which the population was overwhelmingly Protestant. In this context, the decision for a competitive traditional design for the new St John's Church of England by established Anglican architect Louis Williams is unsurprising. It was a style perceived as able to compete with Our Lady in a conservative suburban context. Williams utilised modern steel portal frame construction to create a large church building with traditional massing (not unlike the original) built of brick but rendered in an austere manner reflective of British Anglican churches of the 1930s. The astonishing cost of construction was an estimated £120,000.³⁹

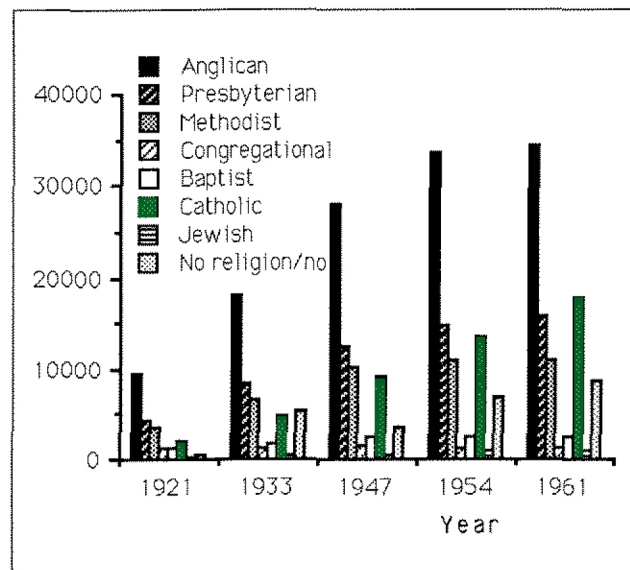


Fig. 6.6: Population of Camberwell by denomination.
Catholic population denoted in green.

Source: *Camberwell Conservation Study 1991*, Vol 2, p.108.
Chris McConville and Associates

In some cases, modern architectural style was used as a distinguishing factor as a mark of a progressive community, up and coming, rubbing against the origins of its more conservative elements. Two waves of church development in the suburb of Ivanhoe and the later growth of a local artistic community demonstrate the

³⁷ The conservative constituency of Camberwell's non-conformist religious organisations successfully banned all Sunday sport after World War II as well as drinking establishments across the 'Bible Belt' suburbs of Camberwell and Box Hill.

³⁸ Designed by ecclesiastic architect Augustus Andrew Fritsch (1866–1933), the building was proclaimed a minor Basilica by Pope John Paul II in 1996.

³⁹ 'The New St John's Rises from the Ashes', *Church of England Messenger*, (Dec 20, 1957), p.186.

distribution and architectural style across two periods of the early twentieth century. (Fig. 6.7) The first stage of development brought to fruition six new church buildings designed between 1908 and 1927 in the Ivanhoe area. These first wave buildings were designed in similar styles, traditional red brick forms in revival styles located along the central high-street of the developing suburb. In 1941, a sole Methodist church was constructed in East Ivanhoe, further from the train line. As the suburb began to expand with new residents during the post-war years, the Catholic Church was the first denomination to build in the East Ivanhoe area with the Mother of God Catholic Church (1956), designed by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell a firm of young modern architects. Subsequently, to facilitate the expansion of the Catholic population, St Bernadette's (1961) was designed by parishioner Robert O. Ellis also in the modern style, and in 1962, the old Mary Immaculate Catholic Church was demolished to make way for a modern building, again to a design by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell. These first Catholic buildings in the area were ultra-modern and still stand today as significant examples of post-war church design.⁴⁰ Soon the Anglican and Methodist denominations responded in kind through the construction of churches designed by the avant-garde modernist firm Grounds, Romberg and Boyd and conservative modernist firm Bates Smart McCutcheon respectively. This new wave of church building indicates the representational importance of architectural style as a signifier of the character of a progress and status of a social community.

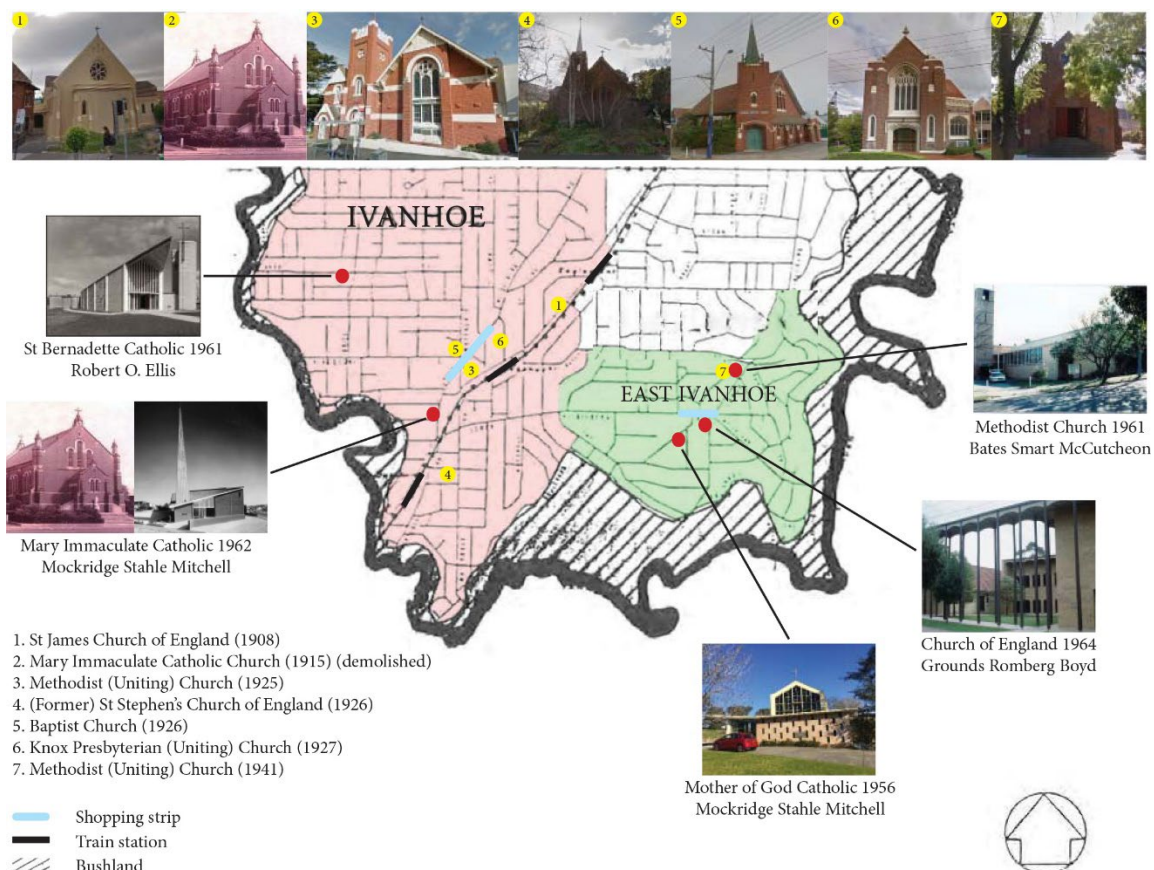


Fig. 6.7: Map: two waves of church development in Ivanhoe and East Ivanhoe

Source: Libby Richardson, 2020

⁴⁰ Mother of God has been significantly altered and plans are afoot to demolish or significantly redesign Mary Immaculate.

CASE STUDY 05

St Andrew's Church of England, Brighton 1962

Architect: Louis Williams



Fig. 6.8: Model for the new St Andrew's Church of England incorporating four bays of the 1857 bluestone gothic revival building with bell cote designed by architect Charles Webb. Building constructed 1962, final cost £185,000.

Source: Development Planned-Giving Programme May-July 1962 brochure, St Andrew's Church, np. State Library of Victoria, LTAD 82, VB MC1/5, St Andrew's Church Brighton, Misc. cuttings etc.

In the early nineteenth century, Brighton was a pleasant seaside township an hour from Melbourne, populated by wealthy and prominent citizens, predominately of English origin and the Anglican faith. The first St Andrew's Church of England (1850) was built on 10 acres of land set aside in the Brighton Estate under development by Henry Dendy and J.B. Were when the Parish of Brighton was created in 1841.⁴¹ As a relatively wealthy parish, the St Andrew's congregation were able to engage in a continuous program of improvements for their church building. The first church designed by local architect Charles Laing to accommodate 250 had very soon proved inadequate⁴², many parishioners "complained [...] there was no central aisle, no doors to pews and no pegs for hats."⁴³ This first building was quickly replaced in 1857 by a Gothic Revival bluestone church of seven bays and a bellcote above its western entry porch, designed by Charles Webb to seat 500. Thirty years later, the church was enlarged with the addition of a substantial transept and apsidal sanctuary beyond a rood screen. Incongruously, the addition was built of limestone, creating disjunction between the original narrow bluestone longitudinal nave and the broader limestone sanctuary area set far away from the congregation. By 1954, the parish community, eager to replace the narrow nave to a design compatible with the sanctuary, engaged the American Wells Organisation to establish a canvas system of fund raising and although a proposal by architect J.F. Scarborough was put forward, it did not come to fruition.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Victorian Heritage Register, St Andrews Church Precinct VHR H0124, p.2.; Bate, Weston. *St Andrew's 1942-1992*, p.7.

⁴² Joustra, Jan. *Anglican Parish of St Andrew, Brighton. A History in Celebration 1842-2012*, p.9.

⁴³ Bate, Weston. *St Andrew's*, p.7.

⁴⁴ Joustra, *Anglican Parish*, p.14.; Bate, Weston. *St Andrew's*. p.25.

In 1961, fatefully, St Andrew's was gutted by fire and all but destroyed, leaving only the bluestone nave standing. The very next day, Vicar George Codrington appointed well-known ecclesiastical architect and parishioner of St Andrews, septuagenarian Louis Williams⁴⁵ to conceive a plan for a new church.⁴⁶ Thereafter, the Vicar's ambition for a substantial traditional building was pitted against the modern desires of the parish community.



Fig. 6.9: Signing of the contract for the new church.
Front row left to right: Mr Bryan Linacre, the builder Mr Gardiner, Archdeacon Codrington, architect Louis Williams, seated are architects Blyth Johnson and John Paul.

Source: Bate, Weston. *St Andrew's Brighton 1842-1992. A Short History*, p. 29, St Andrew's Archives

A tension arises: what type of building is fitting and who gets to decide

Codrington and Williams were conservative in their views and headstrong in their opinions. In the face of suggestions from the Archbishop of Melbourne Frank Woods, that it was "a marvellous opportunity to build a new church with the liturgical reform ideas incorporated in it [...] and that the altar rail should be in the form of a semi-circle round the altar",⁴⁷ Codrington asserted the Brighton congregation "would not accept a modern liturgical arrangement."⁴⁸ He further opined, "by comparison 'contemporary' Churches that I have seen in Australia are too squat and horizontal. They are too subjective, too self-conscious of the effect on the congregation and are therefore insufficient offerings".⁴⁹ Interestingly, at the time, it was a popularly held belief that the new St Andrew's could feasibly become a Cathedral Church for the Peninsula region of the Diocese of Melbourne, serving as an alternative to Melbourne's St Paul's Anglican

⁴⁵ Williams, at that stage 71 years old, had been articled to Alexander North before entering into partnership with him in Melbourne (1913-1920) and subsequently forming his own practice. As his first Melbourne project, Williams completed the drawings for North's design of Trinity College Chapel (1911-1917) at the University of Melbourne. Williams became a skilled and interesting designer in the Arts & Crafts style, utilising its characteristic brick construction techniques, asymmetrical massing, tower forms, expressed natural materials and terracotta roofscapes to create a wide range of designs twinged with revival stylistic elements. In 1924 Williams designed the St Andrew's Parish hall, which still stand today and forms part of the heritage protected St Andrew's Anglican Church Precinct under VHR 0124.

⁴⁶ Joustra, *Anglican Parish*, p.16.

⁴⁷ Moore in conversation, and correspondence, with Archbishop Frank Woods, 15 May 1990 in Moore, Gladys M.. *Louis Reginald Williams*, Unpublished Masters Thesis, Master of Planning and Design, Faculty of Architecture Building and Planning, University of Melbourne, (August, 2001), p.52.

⁴⁸ Moore in conversation with Blyth Johnson, in Moore, Gladys M.. *Louis Reginald Williams*, p.52.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.31.

Cathedral, in times of need.⁵⁰ Codrington clearly saw the re-building of St Andrew's as an opportunity to erect a significant building capable of occupying a central position within the broader context of Anglicanism in Victoria. The English born and educated Codrington stated, "I believe intensely that the classic style of Christian architecture is to be found in the Gothic tradition [...] the Gothic style is amenable to modern treatment and modern building techniques as is evident in the magnificent new Guilford Cathedral"⁵¹ (1936-1961) designed by Sir Edward Maufe.⁵² According to Codrington, Maufe had "produced a modern form of Gothic [...] which embodies the Anglican spirit of intelligent restraint and good taste."⁵³

Are we to live in the past or the present?

Guildford Cathedral was England's first modern cathedral, conceived and built in the twentieth century⁵⁴ and would have been known to Williams. Williams himself had only recently completed St Boniface Anglican Cathedral, Bunbury (1952-1961)⁵⁵, the first Anglican Cathedral to be built in Western Australia in the twentieth century.⁵⁶ Demonstrating both the scale of global and local denominational connections, and architectural influences, the Bishop of Bunbury, Donald Redding, had served as Vicar of St Andrew's, Brighton 1949 – 1951 prior to Codrington's arrival.

The design of Bunbury Cathedral encapsulated the widening divide between how some Anglican clergy saw their mission in traditional (monumental) architectural terms and the increasingly modernised expectations of the broader population. In 1960, when the proposed design for St Boniface appeared in *Cross Section* it was reported the design had "attracted a mixed reception ranging from absolute admiration of the [Church of England] authorities to wholesale disapproval from [Australian Royal Institute of Architects] W. A. Chapter members."⁵⁷

⁵⁰ In conversation with Jan Joustra, Vicar of St Andrew's Anglican Church, April 28, 2017; Williams, Louis. 'Church Architecture in Australia', *Victorian Historical Magazine*, Vol 39, No.4, (Nov, 1968), p.195.

⁵¹ From The Anglican, in Joustra, *Anglican Parish*, p.29.

⁵² In 1933, at the age of 21 Edward Maufe won the design competition for Guildford Cathedral. Construction commenced in 1936 but was halted during the war and delayed after the war due to shortages of money and materials, construction recommencing in 1954. The cathedral was consecrated in 1961 although the tower would not be completed until 1966. The building is supported by 778 concrete piles driven to a depth of 50 feet into the clay soil. From 1943 to 1969 Maufe was the first principal architect for the United Kingdom. Maufe became renowned for his ecclesiastic and memorial designs and was knighted in 1954 for his work. Maufe sat on the design competition judging panel for Coventry Cathedral.

⁵³ From *The Anglican*, quoted in Joustra, *Anglican Parish*, pp.29-31.

⁵⁴ Guildford Cathedral, Surrey, UK. <https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/learn/history/maufes-vision>

⁵⁵ Although approval for the building was granted in 1952, construction commenced in 1961. *inHerit: Out Heritage Places: St Boniface Anglican Cathedral*, State Government of Western Australia, place number 05667. Accessed online at <http://inherit.stateheritage.wa.gov.au/Public/Inventory/PrintSingleRecord/ff0d578f-7e35-41e5-9016-21d039e74afd>.

⁵⁶ In 1960, the proposed design for St Boniface 'attracted a mixed reception ranging from absolute admiration of [Church of England] authorities to wholesale disapproval from RAIA's WA Chapter members,' *Cross Section*, No. 90, (April, 1960), p.1.

⁵⁷ *Cross Section*, No. 90, (April, 1960), p.1.



Fig. 6.10: (L): Guildford Cathedral by Edward Maufe, construction 1936–61, tower 1966. (R): St Boniface Anglican Cathedral, Bunbury, Western Australia (1952–1961) by Louis Williams.

Similar features appear at St Boniface and St Andrew's – large scale steel framed brick building; 'Tree of Life' west window, simple hall form, discrete sanctuary. St Boniface has square headed windows, cross shaped mullion and transoms in stone.

Source: (L): <http://freemasonry-cg.com/images/2014/07/Guildford-Cathedral-aerial.jpg>. (R): Photo by Weston Langford

In the same way, when the design for St Andrew's was published in the Melbourne *Age* newspaper on June 26, 1961, concern over its lack of modernity was subsequently played out in the Church of England journal *The Anglican*. Letters from parishioners voiced a desire for a modern church, a contemporary building similar to the striking examples of modern churches recently illustrated in *TIME Magazine*.⁵⁸ A junior cleric, who chose to remain anonymous, lamented "We will have another of those banalities [...] still well-loved [...] by many of our senior clergy and the Diocesan Building Committee".⁵⁹ The high cost of a cathedral scale building was also brought into question against the need for "modest church buildings in so many of the outer suburbs of Melbourne [...] must St Andrew's, Brighton, stand for so many generations to come [...] as a symbol of the fact that the Anglican Church lives in the past rather than in the present?".⁶⁰

Tradition and Innovation expressed in the design of St Andrew's

The new St Andrew's was a monumental building oriented towards the Brighton township and designed to a Latin Cross plan, a type favoured by ecclesiologists in the 19th century. Traditionalism was expressed tangibly through architectonic scale, proportion and stylistic features while utilising twentieth century materials and methods of construction.⁶¹ Four bays of the original bluestone church were retained and transformed into a long western transept chapel space while the shorter eastern transept contained a prominent rose window. For Williams, an 'offering of height' was an important experiential feature of ecclesiastic architecture⁶² and had continuities with medieval gothic proportions. The scale and proportion of the sanctuary was such that it could visually accommodate the altar, four metres in length. Exterior

⁵⁸ In conversation with Jan Joustra, the TIME article was included in a letter from an objecting parishioner: 'New Churches', *TIME Magazine*, December 26, 1960, pp.28-33.

⁵⁹ Anonymous letter to the parish by a junior cleric, reproduced in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.28.

⁶⁰ Anonymous letter to the parish by a junior cleric, reproduced in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.28.

⁶¹ Williams produced similar scale designs at St John's, Camberwell (1955-56), St George's, Parkes, New South Wales (1956), St James' Cathedral, Townsville, Queensland (1955-61) and St Boniface Cathedral, Bunbury, Western Australia (1961).

⁶² Williams, *Victorian Historical Magazine*, p.194.

bricks were 'ripple-tex' in autumnal colours⁶³ and oatmeal cream on the interior where the nave bays were demarcated by piers clad in Travertine marble, a traditional material of Roman church construction.⁶⁴ The design also featured arcaded brick cloisters surrounding a grassed quadrangle, uniting the new construction with the old.



Fig. 6.11: (L): The chancel showing the “great apse” lit from the side. (R): The ceiling faced with golden aluminium tiles.

Source: (L): Bate, Weston. *St Andrew's Brighton 1842-1992. A Short History*, p. 29, St Andrew's Archives. (R): Libby Richardson, April, 2017.

But there were also many innovative features: the ceiling was impressively clad in golden anodised aluminium tiles giving off a mysterious glow; stained glass windows, comprised of glass imported from West Germany, were abstract rather than figurative; in winter, tubular heaters beneath the pew seating provided warmth; and specific attention was applied to improved acoustics. New materials were also used: Rein Slagmolen's four evangelists relief sculptures surrounding the pulpit were attached to blue 'polylite' panels, an early polycarbonate plastic material; and curtains for the nave windows giving onto the cloister quadrangle were radically specified as fibre-glass.⁶⁵ Additionally, there were aspects of the liturgical arrangement that reflected contemporary thinking, such as the proximity of the lectern and pulpit to the altar, highlighting the equivalence of Word and Sacrament,⁶⁶ and a free standing altar to allow the Vicar to face the congregation during rite and ceremony. The choir seating was placed in a gallery above the narthex at the rear of the nave, rather than between the nave and sanctuary.

⁶³ Moore, *Louis Reginald Williams*, p.52.

⁶⁴ Williams and Codrington, in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.49.

⁶⁵ Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.50.

⁶⁶ Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.41



Fig. 6.12: Studies by Blyth Johnson for the abstract stained glass windows (1962)

Source: SLV, Collection of architectural drawings mostly churches and some schools for the Church of England, Louis Reginald Williams, LTAD 82.

Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the spacious sanctuary and nave was designed to demonstrate the rhetoric of liturgically modern design, or whether it was to support the Vicar's desire for distance. Codrington offered that he understood the desire for the congregation to be proximate to the altar, but his genuinely held personal views were retrograde: "We do well to remember that God is transcendent as well as immanent [...] But at the same time I do not readily approve of an altar set in the midst of the congregation [...] it is important for modern man to realise that God comes first and human needs second".⁶⁷ In Codrington's view, "familiarity [would] breed contempt of the Holy Mysteries".⁶⁸ The continuing appearance of traditional ecclesiastic buildings into the 1960s in Australia is indicative of the agency and dominance of individual clerics within the institutional hierarchy. These older clergy did not merely hold nostalgia for the past, but saw in the traditional church building a representation of ritual and continuity with a particular religious identity. When the Church of England in Australia gained independence as the Anglican Church of Australia in 1962, "even Australian-born-and-educated bishops [...] continued to adhere to British religious customs."⁶⁹

These traditional buildings rarely appeared on the radar of the architectural profession where attention had turned towards modernism, shopping centres and office buildings, innovation, new hotels and bowling alleys. Instead, they were held up as proof of Australia's "most backward building type"⁷⁰ by the architectural profession, recalling as they did the stark British churches of the 1930s and 40s.

⁶⁷ Codrington, quoted in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.31.

⁶⁸ Williams, quoted in Joustra, *Anglican Parish of St Andrew*, p.42.

⁶⁹ Frame, Tom. 'Local Differences, Social and National Identity 1930-1966', *Anglicanism in Australia. A History*, Bruce Kaye (Ed.), (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2002), p.117.

⁷⁰ *Cross Section*, (Dec 1, 1956.), p.2.

6.3 Transference: Migrant communities and the dream of home

“At the beginning of the post-war period the question of Australian national identity was not a contentious one. Effectively, Australian were portrayed as an offshoot of the British ‘race’ who had adapted the cultural tradition and the institutions of the British to antipodean conditions.”⁷¹

Post-war migrants of all nationalities were expected to quickly assimilate into Australian life without posing a threat to an accepted national identity of Britishness.⁷² As part of the Government’s ‘Populate or Perish’ strategy 2,080,000 migrants arrived in Australia between 1947-1969 comprised of 42.3% British Commonwealth citizens; 25% southern Europeans; 26.7% northern and eastern Europeans; and 6% from other locations.⁷³ However, in the absence of adequate Government services to assist migrants in their welfare,⁷⁴ many naturally came to rely upon their own community or on the pastoral care of religious orders connected with their cultural heritage.⁷⁵ A majority of European displaced persons arriving in Australia between 1947 and 1954 adhered to the Catholic or Eastern Orthodox faiths,⁷⁶ observing cultural mores and religious practices different to the origins of the Australian population who were mainly of British or United Kingdom origin. In the Australian religious landscape there existed a great divide between the dominant Protestant denominations and the Catholic Church. Moreover, the new Catholic migrants observed strong differences in religious practice, culture and language⁷⁷ to the established Australian Catholic population. The arrival of Catholic migrants simultaneously challenged the dominance of Protestantism and the coherence of Catholicism. The effects of large numbers of migrants led to substantial demographic change in the new suburbs. In the space of fifteen years, the Catholic parish of Lalor evolved from an Anglo-Celtic parish in the 1950s, to a multi-cultural parish by 1970 in which only 30% of the population were English speaking. These demographic changes added to the complexity of effective ministering, particularly for the Catholic Church.

Migrants from Christian Orthodox countries such as Greece, the Ukraine, Macedonia and Serbia observed a heritage of long-standing religious practices,⁷⁸ requiring particular architectural environments to successfully evoke remembrance and continuity. Just as British immigrants had done since the white settlement of Australia, the new migrant population set out to build traditional places of worship as

⁷¹ Castles, Stephen, Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis and Michael Morrissey. *Mistaken Identity. Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Leichhardt, (NSW: Pluto Press Australia, 1992), p.43.

⁷² Peel, Mark and Christina Twomey (Eds.). *A History of Australia*, (London, Palgrave, 2018), p.215; Castles, Stephen, Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis and Michael Morrissey. *Mistaken Identity. Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Leichhardt, (NSW: Pluto Press Australia, 1992), p.45.

⁷³ Ricatti, Francesco. *Italians in Australia. History, Memory, Identity.*, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.28.

⁷⁴ There were no welfare services in foreign languages and no trained welfare staff familiar with migrant cultures. “When the Italian and Greek communities in Melbourne were given a grant-in-aid in the late 1960s, there was no qualified Italian-speaking social worker available.” *PastoralCare*, p.68.

⁷⁵ *Pastoral care*, pp.68-69.

⁷⁶ Of the 168,439 European migrants arriving in Australia between 1947 - 1954, 61% identified as being Catholic, while a further 9.65% identified as Orthodox. Only 12.65% identified as Protestant, represented by the Lutheran countries, Latvia, Estonia and Germany. Source: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p. 650.

⁷⁷ Pitarello, Adrian. “*Soup without Salt*”, p.47.

⁷⁸ Sydor Petkovic, Linda (Ed.). *Windows to Heaven: The icons of the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul in Melbourne*, (Melbourne: The Ukrainian Eparchy of Saints Peter and Paul of Melbourne, 2007), p.97-101.

permanent expressions of their cultural identity and religious practices.⁷⁹ In Victoria, there were numbers of unique buildings constructed by orthodox communities built as permanent expressions of national identity; St George's Serbian Orthodox Church, St Albans (1959), Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Footscray (1962); Protection of the Holy Virgin, self-governed Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Essendon (1961-66); and St John the Forerunner Greek Orthodox Church, North Carlton (1966). As early as 1954, *Architecture in Australia* included St Peter and St Paul Russian Orthodox Church, Sydney (1951-54) in its 'Buildings for Religion' commentary⁸⁰ and by October 1961, Gerd and Renate Block's Islamic Mosque in Canberra appeared on the cover of *Architecture Today* reflecting the continuously changing nature of migration to Australia. It was not until the mid-1960s that the government's policy expectation for migrants to assimilate shifted to reflect a more realistic expectation of their integration into Australian society. The construction of church buildings in traditional styles for new communities was one indication that "migrants would continue to have specific welfare needs beyond the immediate post-arrival period."⁸¹

Migrant communities established themselves initially in the inner working-class suburbs of Melbourne where rentals were cheaper due to rudimentary housing conditions.⁸² Anecdotally, "one may walk the length of a street and not hear one word of English spoken but may meet any one of 20 nationalities."⁸³ The inner-city suburb of Fitzroy was a melting pot of cultures and home to a large Macedonian community. In 1959, the Macedonian community commissioned Wystan Widdows to design the now demolished St George's Orthodox Church on Young Street. However, demonstrating the extent to which the post-war population was uncertain and shifting, St George's was designed as a modern building that could be repurposed as any other type of building; as a factory, a warehouse or offices. With considerable foresight, the express purpose of constructing the Macedonian Church in the modern idiom was to allow the Macedonian community to recoup their investment in the future, for the Orthodox community did not know where they would eventually establish themselves.⁸⁴ (Fig. 6.13)

⁷⁹ Pastoral care of Italians, p.69.

⁸⁰ 'Buildings for Religion', *Architecture in Australia*, April-June, 1954), p.95-96.

⁸¹ Castles, Stephen, Bill Cope, Mary Kalantzis and Michael Morrissey. *Mistaken Identity. Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*, Leichhardt, (NSW: Pluto Press Australia, 1992), p.54.

⁸² Birch, Anthony. *Framing Fitzroy: Contesting and (De) constructing Place and Identity in a Melbourne Suburb*, Unpublished thesis, Department of History, University of Melbourne, 2002, p.92.

⁸³ 'These refugees face tough problems of new existence', *Presbyterian Life*, (Nov 22, 1957), p.9.

⁸⁴ In conversation with Sophie Peters, daughter of members of the St Georges Macedonian Orthodox Church, Fitzroy congregation, Sept 1, 2018.

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Fig. 6.13: (L): Macedonian Orthodox Church, Fitzroy. (R): Opening ceremony, the congregation fills the street, terrace housing in the background, c. 1959. Architect: Wystan Widdows.

Source: (L): *Twentieth Century Churches in Victoria*, Coleman, 1996. (R): State Library of Victoria, Picture Collection LTA 2515, Box 91, H92.250/1265.

Other orthodox communities took a different approach. In 1959, the design for the Ukrainian Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul, North Melbourne (1961-63) was selected based on its culturally specific architectural forms in a medieval Byzantine style, barrel vaulted with a crowning dome over a Latin plan.⁸⁵ The design had been submitted by a member of the congregation, Orion Wenhrynovycz, and accepted by the Building Committee. (Figs. 6.14, 6.40 and 6.41) The construction of the building was important as a representation of the Ukrainian presence within Victoria. The building was funded by members of the Victoria-wide Ukrainian community,⁸⁶ a population of some 5,000 people,⁸⁷ and brought to fruition over the next several years by modern architects Smith + Tracey.⁸⁸ Innovation in the use of modern materials and techniques were utilised to construct the building and to achieve its traditional appearance, described at the time as “Byzantine lines in modern brick and glass”.⁸⁹ The distinctive barrel vaulted character of the building was realised in reinforced concrete and the structure of the dome was constructed as a thin light-weight concrete shell, 50mm thick,⁹⁰ allegedly the first light-weight concrete dome poured in Australia.⁹¹ The interior of the building contains a significant *iconostas*, a key narrative feature of the building signifying Ukrainian identity,⁹² and stained glass windows depicting the emblem of Ukrainian St Olga and King Vladimir

⁸⁵ Byzantine forms were considered appropriate because ‘the church life of Ukrainians is not derived from the north, from Moscow, but from the south from Constantinople’, Sydor Petkovic. *Windows to Heaven*, p.4.

⁸⁶ Sydor Petkovic. *Windows to Heaven*, p.97-101.

⁸⁷ Census of the Commonwealth of Australia, 30th June 1961, Census Vol II – Part II Victoria Characteristics of Population, Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra (1961), p.25.

⁸⁸ The interior was completed by parishioners and commissioned artists after construction.

⁸⁹ ‘Cathedral is a “Dream of Home”’, *The Australian Women’s Weekly*, (Sept 18, 1963), p.11.

⁹⁰ In 2018, when the building was measured, the dome was found to be approximately 50mm thick by University of Melbourne students Xiao Zhang, Cheng-yue Jia and Yue Zu.

⁹¹ Interview with Gerard Smith, 3pm July 2, 2016.

⁹² Sydor Petkovic. *Windows to Heaven*, p.xii.

in blue, purple and gold. A cruciform pattern cohesively integrated into the material expression of the building signals the modern hand of Smith and Tracey: in the patterning of pale grey concrete brickwork, timber doors and furniture, in the brick-clad cruciform columns, the bespoke light fittings and mosaic floor paving. Although the new materials and construction techniques were most prominent in the innovative and ultra-modern churches of the post-war period, the same strategies were deployed by skilled modern architects to produce exceptional buildings that were economical and yet could satisfy the most conservative and traditional requirements.

In 1967, upon its consecration the purpose of the building as a powerful source of continuity with Ukrainian culture was articulated by the President of the Building Committee:

*"This longing for our own church migrated with us to Australia. This church will be a memory of our art and our culture. It will assist our future generations adhere to our Church and our nation. It will testify to Australia about our high culture."*⁹³

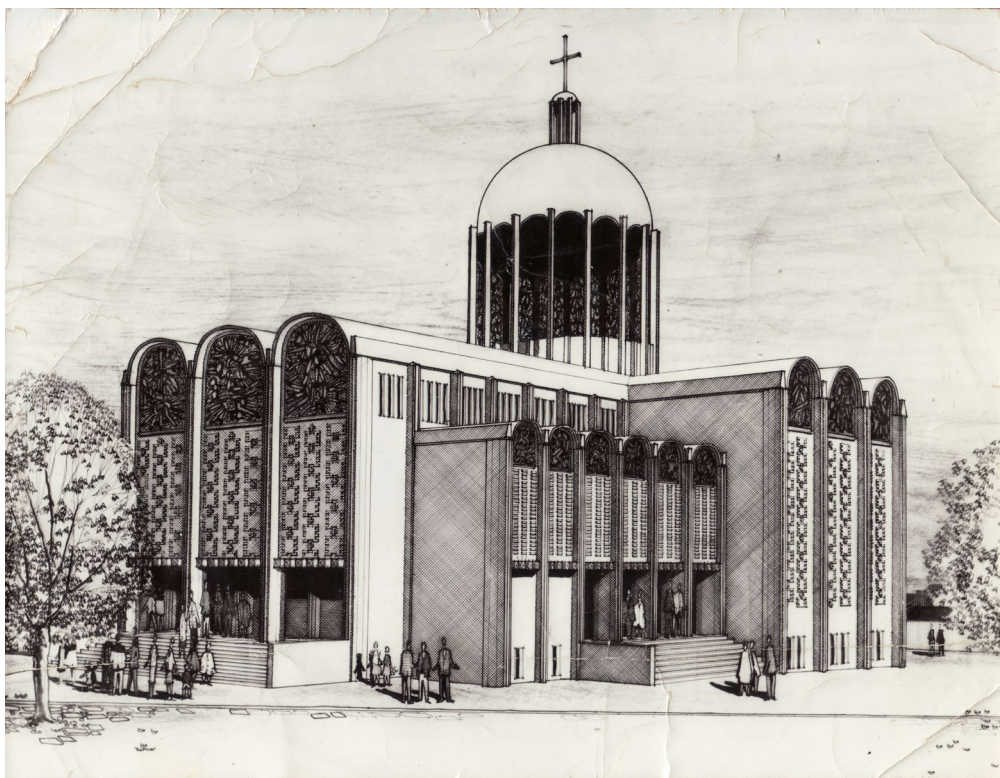


Fig. 6.14: Ukrainian Cathedral Church of St Peter and St Paul, North Melbourne (1961-63)

Architect: Smith + Tracey

Source: *Cross Section*, No. 117, July 1962.

The capacity of institutional religion to confer and mediate identity, acquired through the communal practice of religion, is well recognised.⁹⁴ Identity becomes an important component of the religious experience such that a person's identity is mediated through religion. This idea is particularly pertinent to the migrant experience in the Australian context.

⁹³ Sydor Petkovic. *Windows to Heaven*, p.101.

⁹⁴ See Proctor, *The Modern Church*, pp.257-260.

CASE STUDY 06

St Anthony's Shrine Catholic Friary Church, Hawthorn, 1965

Architect: CONARG (Contemporary Architectural Group)

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Fig. 6.15: St Anthony's Shrine Catholic Friary Church, Hawthorn, c.1965

Source: Bonifacio Zurli. *Ricordo del Santuario di S. Antonio e dei Fondatori*,
(Hawthorn, Victoria: Padri Cappuccini, 1969), p.13.

In the pluralistic religious environment of post-war Australia, there were many migrant communities for whom the experience of Anglo-Celtic Catholicism seemed baffling. Unlike their countries of origin, in Australian society, religion was not integrated into the communal life of the whole society. Instead, religion and society co-existed as parallel yet distinct entities.⁹⁵ Italian migration presented a challenge to the long-standing identity of an Irish dominated and homogeneous Australian Catholic Church hierarchy⁹⁶, which defined itself against a Protestant establishment.⁹⁷ With the arrival of Catholic migrants, not only were there nuanced differences in religious practice, but also in culture and language. Moreover, “the

⁹⁵ Pitarello, Adrian. *“Soup without Salt” The Australian Catholic Church and the Italian Migrant*, (Sydney: Centre for Migration Studies, 1980), p.53.

⁹⁶ Ricatti, Francesco. *Italians in Australia. History, Memory, Identity.*, (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p.107.

⁹⁷ Victoria received the largest percentage of the post-war immigrants, increasing from 8,305 in 1947, to 42,429 by 1954. In each Australian census since 1954, Victoria has recorded the largest number of Italian-born migrants. Paganoni, *The pastoral care of Italians in Australia*, pp.62-63.

mainstream Australian-Irish church [...] was critical of the way Italians practised their faith”.⁹⁸ The familiar social rituals and ceremonies associated with Italian Catholicism were “usually perceived by the Australian Church as expressions of paganism and superstition”.⁹⁹

The construction of St Anthony’s Shrine was a direct result of the difficult conditions experienced in assimilating Italian Catholicism, leading Australia’s Catholic hierarchy to enlist the help of religious sects of Italian origin to minister to the new population of Roman Catholics.¹⁰⁰ As a Friary church, St Anthony’s Shrine is not defined by parish boundaries, it functions theologically to provide continuity with a specific religious tradition,¹⁰¹ to allow the Italian community¹⁰² to continue to experience Catholicism in a way compatible with their cultural traditions through liturgical and cultural rite, and familiar architecture.

Capuchin Friars are invited to minister to Melbourne’s Italian community

In 1945, Archbishop of Brisbane James Duhig invited the first Capuchins¹⁰³ to Australia to look after the “spiritual interests of the New Australians, especially those of Italian descent”.¹⁰⁴ In the same vein, in 1949, Archbishop of Melbourne Daniel Mannix, invited the Capuchins to establish themselves in the middle ring suburb of Hawthorn on land owned by the Catholic Diocese. The location of the Shrine is not linked to suburban expansion but to the increasing demographic change being experienced by the Catholic Church¹⁰⁵ as a direct result of the influx of Roman Catholic migrants arriving from European countries.¹⁰⁶ Dedicated to St Anthony of Padua, Patron Saint of lost and stolen articles, the Shrine was designed to become a central representation of Italian cultural heritage for the many migrant families and their Australian-born children.¹⁰⁷ Processions and feast days in particular were uniquely significant to Italian migrants as representations of specific, culturally learned patterns of religious behaviour, so much so, that feast days were rendered meaningless if not performed according to those inherited religious behaviours.¹⁰⁸ Holy feast days in Italy were associated with an (often day-long) order of celebrations signified by a holiday and the participation of the whole of society. “In Italy, religion [took on] a social form, while society had taken on a religious expression.”¹⁰⁹ St Anthony’s Shrine was designed to provide the Italian community with an important building through which it was possible to express religion as a form of culture tied to social celebration.¹¹⁰ These social celebrations took the form of a cycle of festivities held

⁹⁸ Pitarello, *Soup without Salt*, p.47.

⁹⁹ Ricatti, *Italians in Australia*, p.108.

¹⁰⁰ Paganoni, Anthony. *The pastoral care of Italians in Australia: memory and prophecy*, (Ballan, Vic: Connor Court, 2007), pp.37-38.

¹⁰¹ Hervieu-Léger, Danièle. *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, translation by Simon Lee, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p.125.

¹⁰² St Anthony’s Shrine was designed to be a place in which a cultural and religious community could be shaped and in which special cultural celebrations and processions, and national folk games could be held. The Capuchins worked hard, meeting the migrant ships, hearing confessions, visiting hospitals, even produced a bi-lingual weekly Radio 3XY program called ‘Bells of Your Home Town’.¹⁰²

‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

¹⁰³ The Capuchin Order was created in 1529. They were followers of St Francis living humble lives.

¹⁰⁴ ‘The Capuchins come to Melbourne’, *The Advocate*, (Jun 30, 1949), p.11

¹⁰⁵ Context Pty Ltd. *City of Boroondara Municipal-wide Heritage Gap Study Vol.3. Hawthorn*, (Aug 2017), p.376-77.

¹⁰⁶ Coleman, 20th Century Churches, p.9.

¹⁰⁷ In conversation with Mary G., St Anthony’s Shrine was an important building remembered from her childhood as the place where significant family and public events were celebrated within the Italian community. May 2017.

¹⁰⁸ Pitarello, *Soup without Salt*, p.39.

¹⁰⁹ Pitarello, *Soup without Salt*, p.51.

¹¹⁰ Pitarello, *Soup without Salt*, p.24.

annually to celebrate the patron saints, “including processions outside the church with statues, bands and music”.¹¹¹ Architecturally, the image of St Anthony’s Shrine demonstrated and was a reminder of a shared collective chain of memories, made real for the Italian migrant community, and extended to successive generations operatively as a cultural and social tradition.¹¹²

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Fig. 6.16: Our Lady of Terzito procession, St Anthony’s Shrine, Hawthorn, c.1986

Source: Photograph by Elizabeth Gilliam. State Library of Victoria Pictures Collection, LTAF 734, Accession no. H87.105/2

The design of St Anthony’s Shrine

St Anthony’s Shrine was designed by the collective known as Contemporary Architecture Group (CONARG) led by émigré architect, Romanian Grigor Hirsch, the designer of St Bernard’s Catholic Church, East Coburg (1955), the earliest example of a fan-shaped plan arrangement in Victoria in response to modern liturgical thinking. However, the brief for St Anthony’s Shrine was for a traditional building that would “closely follow and capture the spirit of traditional church architecture”.¹¹³ CONARG’s basilical design incorporated modern building techniques via a steel portal frame and truss structure and ‘warm salmon-coloured’ brickwork,¹¹⁴ but for the representational schema, an abridged and modified Romanesque Revival style was utilised to connect the building with a specifically Italian religious culture. Simplified Romanesque and Lombardic details can be seen in the round arches echoed throughout the building, the stylised corbel table and stepped planes of the façade, the medieval couplet and triplet arched windows and the

¹¹¹ Paganoni, *Pastoral care of Italians*, p.69.

¹¹² Hervieu-Léger, Danièle, *Religion as a Chain of Memory*, p.121.

¹¹³ ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

¹¹⁴ ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

impressive veined marble portico with free standing columns. Modern brick patterns are also a feature of the façade, applied specifically to counter the ‘barren look’¹¹⁵ of the unadorned surfaces. A key feature of the façade is an imported marble statue of St Anthony which stands ten feet (3m) high above the central portico, and a 190 foot (58m) high bell tower¹¹⁶ with church bells, cast and imported from Reggio Emilia, Italy, paid for by the Italian Government. The bell tower was topped by a star shaped spire structure sheathed in copper, creating a prominent landmark on the local skyline (replaced in 2012).¹¹⁷ Above the bronze doors, which had been sculpted in Italy, is a colourful tympanum mosaic of a peacock signifying the “mystical vision of [God] eternally fixed over the entire cosmic arc of the universe”.¹¹⁸ But it is in the lavishly ornamented interior that the building surpasses expectation to connect most strongly to an Italian religious heritage. A hierarchy of lavish and precious materials is evident; marble aedicules imported from Italy and side altars “dedicated to various saints to whom the Italian people have a special devotion”¹¹⁹; a suspended ceiling, barrel vaulted and coffered painted with images of Saints and their respective symbols. The sanctuary floor features Italian marble and the extensive use of richly coloured and golden mosaic tiles, classical detailing and wall murals creates an atmosphere reminiscent of another time and place.

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Fig. 6.17: Interior view of St Anthony's Shrine looking towards the ornate marble altar

Source: *Ricordo del Santuario di S. Antonio e dei Fondatori*, p.33.

Religion as a social experience

Post-war immigrants of all nationalities were expected to quickly assimilate into Australian life.¹²⁰ However, Italian migrants found it difficult to understand the status of the Catholic Church in Australian society. In Italy, there was a larger ratio of priests to the community¹²¹ and the long-standing integration

¹¹⁵ ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

¹¹⁶ The Italian Government donated £500 towards the cost of the church bells. ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.; Context Pty Ltd. *City of Boroondara Municipal-wide Heritage Gap Study Vol.3. Hawthorn*, (Aug 2017), p.382.

¹¹⁷ ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

¹¹⁸ Bonifacio, Zurli. *Ricordo del Santuario di S. Antonio e dei Fondatori*, (Hawthorn, Victoria: Padri Cappuchini, 1969), p.15.

¹¹⁹ ‘Melbourne’s First St Anthony’s Shrine’, *The Advocate*, (Feb 15, 1961), p. 6.

¹²⁰ Peel, Mark and Christina Twomey (Eds.). *A History of Australia*, (London, Palgrave, 2018), p.215.

¹²¹ Pittorelli, *Soup without Salt*, p.19.

of religion in Italian society bestowed the church as an institution with a high social status as well as resources for the building of churches and wages of priests. In Australia, the Irish-Catholic Church was not integrated with society, it was subject to competing demands, a varied constituency, and was required to assert its importance.¹²² Compared to the migrant expectation of religion as primarily a social experience, the way Australians practiced their religion was perceived as “*primarily a private experience* and only secondarily a social one.”¹²³

The building of St Anthony’s Shrine in an architectural language, form and decorative schema reminiscent of an historic lineage of Italian church buildings provided the new migrant community with a familiar environment in which to participate in time-honoured ritual practices and cultural celebrations. St Anthony’s Shrine facilitated the wide spread community to experience a continuing engagement with religion as a shared social experience, regardless of time and place.

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Fig. 6.18: Important representatives of the Italian community launch an appeal for the completion of St Anthony's Shrine, 1964.

(L to R) Rev. Fathers Concas and Agliardi; Director of La Fiamma newspaper, Mr Guiseppe Bartolini; General Consul of Italy in Melbourne, Minister Vittorio Strigari; Superior of the Capuchins, Rev. Father Bonifacio Zurli; and Director of Il Globo newspaper, Mr Ubaldo Larobina.

Source: *Ricordo del Santuario di S. Antonio e dei Fondatori*, p.54.

¹²² Pittorelli, *Soup without Salt*, p.66.

¹²³ Pittorelli, *Soup without Salt*, p.66.

6.4 Modernity: A new tradition – the fan-shaped plan

“And when churches are to be built, let great care be taken that they be suitable for the celebration of liturgical services and for the active participation of the faithful”

Second Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, Article 124, 1963¹²⁴

The role of the liturgical movement and its later culmination in the directives of the Second Vatican Council¹²⁵ of 1962–1965, influenced all Catholic churches, steering them towards new standardised models. A crucial aim was to recover the full and active participation of all members of the congregation,¹²⁶ through a return to the (original) sources of the early Christian church in which the laity often gathered about the altar alongside the clergy. The Council also sought to reflect on its relationship to modernity, a notion expressed at the time as *aggiornamento*, an Italian term signifying a commitment to ‘bringing up to date’ the canons of the Catholic church.¹²⁷

After 1965, the liturgy became the primary concern and generator of Catholic church designs, transcending all “other integrant parts of church design including architectural style, building shape and structure, and cultural, environmental and geographical elements. These must [...] serve liturgical ordering.”¹²⁸ The new emphasis on the enactment of the liturgy necessitated ritual actions and items to be correctly performed and positioned within the church, as well as in their relationship to each other. In the liturgically correct modern catholic church, Christ’s presence is symbolically invoked and conveyed through the correct re-enactment of liturgical ritual,¹²⁹ rather than an architecturally orchestrated atmosphere of mystery. Functionally, the architecture of the modern catholic church is required to make visible and enshrine the ritual actions of the liturgy through architectonic means, even when those rituals are not being performed.¹³⁰ For those of the Catholic faith, the changes incurred after the Second Vatican Council were momentous. In social terms, the reconceptualising of the relationship between the laity and clergy, such that the clergy were to be seen as serving their communities rather than purely governing them, produced wide-ranging disquiet.¹³¹

¹²⁴ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

¹²⁵ The Council was announced on January 25, 1959 and subsequently opened on October 11, 1962 and concluded on December 8, 1965. Its purpose was spiritual renewal in the face of declining moral values and the advent of modernity in the twentieth century. The council produced 16 documents. The major changes are enshrined in the ‘Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy’.

¹²⁶ *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, Article #14; Liturgical Movement, I: Catholic. New Catholic Encyclopedia. *Encyclopedia.com*. (November 14, 2018). <https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/liturgical-movement-i-catholic>

¹²⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, p.219.; Vatican2voice.org. Lay website designed to promote the teachings of Vatican II.

¹²⁸ Hackett, *The Architecture of Liturgy: Liturgical ordering in church design; the Australian experience in perspective*, (Sydney: Unpublished thesis, The University of New South Wales, 2011), p. 11.

¹²⁹ Hackett, Stephen. ‘Postconciliar Church Design: Continuity and Contradiction’, *Vatican Council II*, (ATF Press, 2013), p.241. Accessed via JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt163t93f.21>

¹³⁰ Modern church architect as ritual anthropologist: architecture and liturgy at Clifton Cathedral’ in *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, vol.15, no. 4, 2011, p.365-366.

¹³¹ *Encyclopedia of Religion in Australia*, p.219; Lay website designed to promote the teachings of Vatican II, Vatican2voice.org.; http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html

The fan-shaped place of worship provided an acceptable new architectural form that could facilitate a spacious, open and visible sanctuary for the new style of liturgy.¹³² The fan-shaped plan was typified by a laterally broad unified interior space, without columnar obstructions, usually held beneath a sweeping roof plane rising to a crescendo above the altar. In a fan-shaped plan the pews or seating are arranged in an arc around the altar, resulting in a ground plan in the shape of a fan, with shallow aisles and non-rectilinear architectonic form. The spatial attributes of the design have the advantage of bringing the congregation as a whole, closer to the altar and providing a greater field of vision. Walls were generally load-bearing, often interspersed with swathes of stained glass and in some instances, industrial scale truss beams were expressed on the interior converging on the sanctuary, further emphasising the principal focus of the building. This type of centrally focused design offered fewer opportunities for side altars (for private devotions) which were discouraged after 1965 in favour of an emphasis on communal worship, although most parish churches retained a chapel for Marian devotions.

The fan-shaped style of Catholic church was widely adopted in the 1970s throughout Australia.¹³³ In Victoria, the designs of St Bernard's, East Coburg (1955) (Fig. 5.2) and Mary Immaculate, Ivanhoe (1962) had anticipated the impending change and thus had broken new ground. By 1964, Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Surrey Hills by Seabrook, Dale and Hunt was promoted as an exemplary model of the new type of design, expressing the "essential needs of a church: not traditional shape or ornament, but plain, unobstructed altar as the central focus, and a baptistery given a special place [...] There are often no statues, which are generally thought to be characteristic of a Catholic church. There are light and air, colour and warmth: a twentieth-century atmosphere, a departure from nineteenth century ideas."¹³⁴ Further churches designed to this formula quickly arose: Holy Name, Reservoir (1964) by J.P. Saraty and Our Lady of the Nativity, Aberfeldie (1967) by Stan Moran followed semi-circular plan forms; St Christopher's, Airport West (1969) by Max Chester was constructed with immense ply clad truss beams culminating above the altar. In Shepparton, Italian émigré Ermin Smrekar designed St Mel's (1970) for the Italian Scalabrian fathers, with a plan strangely reminiscent of a Barberini Bee.¹³⁵ Smrekar also designed St Luke's, Lalor (1977) for a multicultural, largely immigrant congregation in a residential street location to monumental scale in red brick and concrete. The interior volume was symbolically conceived as the void space representing hands raised in prayer. These modern fan-shaped churches were widely constructed by the Catholic Church as a new standardised form appropriate for post-conciliar worship.

6.4.1 *Negotiating a new tradition*

¹³² Hackett, Stephen. *The Architecture of Liturgy: Liturgical ordering in church design; the Australian experience in perspective*, (Sydney: Unpublished thesis, The University of New South Wales, 2011), p.1.

¹³³ Some notable examples include the monumental curved form of Holy Spirit Catholic Church, City Beach, Western Australia (1973-74) by Forbes & Fitzhardinge; St Joseph's Catholic Church, O'Connor, Australia Capital Territory (1971-73), by Kevin J Curtin & Partners, with its dramatic multifaceted folded roof form; and at Kingsgrove in New South Wales, Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church (1971) by Maclurcan & Brown which was designed with its altar at the true centre, surrounded by seating to accommodate a congregation of 1,750.

¹³⁴ 'Winds of Change in Liturgy and Architecture', *The Advocate*, (July 9, 1964), p. 8.; also quoted in Muirhead, p.15.

¹³⁵ The crest of the Barberini family dynasty of the 16th and 17th century Rome, also said to have influenced the shape of the dome at Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, Rome by Francesco Borromini (1642-60).

In architectural terms, the outcomes of Vatican II affected the spatial characteristics of many existing Catholic buildings, primarily in relation to the sanctuary, which was no-longer suitable for the enactment of the liturgy.¹³⁶ Innumerable reconfigurations of existing Catholic churches to accommodate the new style of worship ensued: altars were brought forward to enable Mass to be said facing the congregation in the local language rather than Latin, altar rails were removed and the full and active participation of the laity was encouraged in dialogical ritual. Sometimes alterations were difficult, at St Joseph's, Quarry Hill, Bendigo (1962) the three ton Harcourt granite altar was impossible to move and therefore a recess was carved into the sanctuary wall to afford sufficient space for the priest to move behind the altar.¹³⁷ In other instances, where the distance between nave and altar was substantial, it was possible to install a secondary altar closer to the congregation as had been done at St Patrick's Catholic Cathedral, Melbourne in 1970 when the new altar was placed beneath the crossing. But there were more extreme examples of re-ordering which effectively wiped away the integrity of the original design, such as occurred at St Benedict's Catholic Church, Burwood (1957) by Stuart McIntosh and Alexander Harris & Associates¹³⁸ and at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Springvale (1962) by Don Hendry Fulton where the interiors were stripped away multiple times and rearranged, epitomising the continuing search for an ideal liturgical arrangement suitable for contemporary practice.

Despite the trends taking place in Catholic church design after 1965, it should be noted, reforms towards a more inclusive worship experience was equally widespread across all denominations, before and after 1965. Many of the small protestant churches such as St Paul's Anglican Church, Kew (1960) and St George's Church of England, Reservoir (1964) (Fig. 7.4) were designed with fan shaped plans, giving the impression of surrounding the altar. Protestant churches were also subject to reordering: St James Anglican Church, Glen Iris (1958) by Bogle and Banfield placed a secondary altar close to the nave, leaving the original marble high altar positioned against the sanctuary wall; in 1970, and again in 1988, Keith Reid's Presbyterian Church, Templestowe (1962) was re-oriented from a longitudinal plan to a lateral fan-shaped seating arrangement. At St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Melbourne the rood screen was removed from the chancel in 1971 and a new 'nave altar' installed beyond the crossing in 1971-72.¹³⁹ Attempts to conform to new modes of worship indicate a level of uncertainty experienced by the institutional churches as they strived to remain relevant to contemporary society and new modes of worship. As the 20th century progressed, particularly in the Protestant context, the churches experienced a decline in membership as Australian society underwent demographic, cultural and social change.

¹³⁶ Hackett, *The Architecture of Liturgy: Liturgical ordering in church design; the Australian experience in perspective*, (Sydney: Unpublished thesis, The University of New South Wales, 2011), p.6.

¹³⁷ In conversation with Peter Young, Pastoral Assistant, St Joseph's Catholic Church, Aug 21, 2017.

¹³⁸ Re-ordered in 1977 by Michael B. Doyle and Associates, the altar was moved to the south side of the building to create a broad sanctuary around which the seating was arranged, changing the design from an east-west axis to a shallow north-south axis. In 2012, the church was re-ordered again by Law Architects. The interior reverted to an east-west orientation, but with the altar located at the west end, formerly the narthex entry off the main road.

¹³⁹ Moore, Gladys Marie. *Louis Reginald Williams*, unpublished Masters Research thesis, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, The University of Melbourne, 2001, Vol 2, p.1.

CASE STUDY 07

St Clement of Rome Catholic Church, Bulleen 1969–72

Architect: Smith + Tracey



Fig 6.19: St Clement of Rome Catholic church, Bulleen

Source: Libby Richardson, March 2016

In the 1950s, land sales carved up the picturesque river valley of farmland bordering the eastern side of the Yarra River known as Bulleen, 13 km north-east of Melbourne. With roads as yet unmade, no sewerage, no public transport and “no facilities at all except electricity and water”,¹⁴⁰ the urban development characterised the conditions of the outer suburban areas that arose during the post-war years. Demographically these areas were characterised by a rapidly expanding population of young families, high birth rates¹⁴¹ and in this case, a wave of Italian migrants who were also attracted to the area.¹⁴²

Gathering the people

When a vast new parish was created in 1960 encompassing the areas of Bulleen, Doncaster and Templestowe, Father Spillane¹⁴³ who had been assigned to the district set about door knocking to find his congregation. Remarkably, by June 1960, he had gathered together 260 catholic families living in Bulleen alone, and like the establishment of so many other religious communities, the congregation initially met in a make shift place, in this instance above the ‘Penguin Laundry’ where services were held until 1962. Almost immediately there were plans afoot for the building of a Church-School for the children of the

¹⁴⁰ Morrison, Leo. *25 Years Remembered, St Clements, 1963-1988*, (1988), p.2; Victorian Places, <https://www.victorianplaces.com.au/> accessed 29/06/2020.

¹⁴¹ *Diocesan Survey 1959*, Church of England, Diocese of Melbourne, Planning and Development Committee, report prepared by University of Melbourne, Department of Town and Regional Planning, June, 1959.

¹⁴² Context Pty Ltd, *Banyule Thematic Environmental History* prepared for the Banyule City Council, October 2018, p.45.

¹⁴³ Not the recently jailed serial paedophile priest Reverend Brian Spillane of N.S.W. who committed heinous crimes against children.

parish¹⁴⁴ and catholic architects Smith + Tracey were commissioned to establish a masterplan. The plan consisted of a central piazza bounded by the three identities of a Catholic community; the school, the church and the presbytery.¹⁴⁵

A Church-School

Although a public State school had opened in the area in 1957, because Catholic leaders would not countenance their people being educated in a secular environment, a Church-School was frequently the first physical expression of a Catholic community. Catholic denominational education followed a traditional understanding of education whereby its teachers were members of religious orders¹⁴⁶ and theology was central to its framework of meaning. Schools were an important vehicle of Catholic identity and cohesion and were built (often literally) by the people of the parish at significant financial and voluntary cost. At Bulleen, in addition to the existing weekly collection for the services of the [institutional] Church and parish priest, a second envelope system was instigated to pay for the new school¹⁴⁷ and to provide for teacher's salaries and running costs.¹⁴⁸ Each parishioner was asked to give unstintingly "to the point of sacrifice [...] for the Catholic upbringing of our children."¹⁴⁹



**Fig 6.20: The new Church-School
nearing completion, c.1962
Architect: Smith + Tracey**

Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.20.

The new school with its three classrooms for 120 students opened in January 1963 and for the next 8 years the building was both a school and a church. The dual function of the building necessitated foldable walls to enlarge the space, creating a hall-like interior at the weekends.¹⁵⁰ Like so many Catholic parishes that had come before, each Friday evening the men of the parish removed the desks and blackboards to install and arrange the heavy pews. The ladies of the parish cleaned and polished the floors and provided flowers and linen. On Sundays, the furniture and fittings were returned so that the building could again be used as a school. The ground work for the future of the parish had been set from this point on.

¹⁴⁴ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.9.

¹⁴⁵ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

¹⁴⁶ Due to the shortage of teachers in Australia, Catholic priests, brothers and nuns from Europe and Ireland were recruited, adding to the ethnic diversity of the Catholic population.

¹⁴⁷ Two loans were acquired: from the Catholic Schools Provident Fund (£12,000) and the State Savings Bank (£15,000).

¹⁴⁸ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.9.

¹⁴⁹ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.9

¹⁵⁰ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.21.

The parish finances a permanent church

In September 1968, plans commenced for the erection of a permanent church. As security for a loan from the ES&A Bank, a parish credit co-operative was formed and a loan of \$140,000 at 6.5% p.a. was offered. The parish credit co-operative operated out of the Church-School each Sunday after mass. “Members would queue up [...] to make deposits and withdrawals and to present their household bills for payment. In those days we were all struggling to meet our house repayments and educate the kids and one of the things the credit co-op did was made us budget.”¹⁵¹ By April 1969, the parish was in a position to engage their architect Smith + Tracey to draw plans for the new church.¹⁵²

The architects: Smith + Tracey

Modern architects Smith + Tracey were the architects of choice for St Clement of Rome. The practice was strongly influenced by the directors’ personal faith and since entering partnership in 1949 the firm had developed an association with the Catholic Church for the design of schools and religious buildings. Gerard Smith described his father’s philosophy as developed around a parish theme, “not education or religion but about community. The building needed to be a strong [centre] of community” and it was important for the building to provide an “image of strength and solidity”.¹⁵³ Through-out the 1960s Smith + Tracey produced Catholic churches designed in simple geometric forms which offered unified visual and physical symbols as strong permanent buildings¹⁵⁴ in a monumental tradition. However, the design of St Clement of Rome suggests a new underlying design philosophy. St Clement of Rome offers a new synthesis of form and contemporary materials orchestrated to embody liturgical ritual in the wake of the directives of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). St Clement of Rome demonstrates the centrality of liturgical ritual as a primary generator of design which in late 1960s became a new tradition in Catholic church design.

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Fig 6.21: Fan-shaped plan

Source: University of Melbourne, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.27.

¹⁵² Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.31.

¹⁵³ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

¹⁵⁴ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

The new tradition of a fan-shaped church

Plans were finalised in May of 1970 for a building with a seating capacity of 900 for the cost of \$150,000¹⁵⁵ with construction commencing in 1971. Although the original masterplan allowed for the church to face the future extension of Balwyn Road, as it happened, Balwyn Road was not extended and therefore unusually for a Catholic church, St Clement is located on a narrow suburban street.

St Clement demonstrates the new focus upon space as the primary generator of liturgically correct design. The fan-shaped plan facilitates a spacious, open and visible sanctuary within a laterally broad unified interior space, without columnar obstruction, held beneath a sweeping roof plane rising to a crescendo above the altar which is lit from above. The fan-shape is based on a maximum 135-degree angle extending from the sanctuary: “the total angle that a priest could ‘take people in’, [for] at 180-degrees the priest would have to turn to one side”.¹⁵⁶ In addition, using a fan-shaped plan allowed the rows to be maximised at fourteen deep, whereas a “traditional cruciform plan would require twenty rows at least” to accommodate the same congregation.¹⁵⁷ A further key aspect of the design is the graded floor which inclines 350mm downwards towards the sanctuary, which is raised two steps. The graded floor establishes a strong visual and physical linkage with the sanctuary as it locates the entrance to the church at the same physical level as the sanctuary. The spatial attributes of the design have the advantage of bringing the congregation as a whole, closer to the altar and providing a greater field of vision and sense of connection.

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Fig 6.22: Section demonstrating the floor inclined towards the sanctuary

Source: University of Melbourne, 2017.

Furthermore, a limited palette of natural textural materials was used in the construction of the building. The materials were in vogue at the time¹⁵⁸ and specifically offered an association with the materials of a residential setting, encouraging the idea that although the congregation entered a sacred space, “that

¹⁵⁵ Australia converted to decimal currency in 1966. \$150,000 equates to approximately 3 times £27,000, the cost of the Church-School.

¹⁵⁶ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

¹⁵⁷ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

¹⁵⁸ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.32.

space related to where they came from”.¹⁵⁹ The concrete structural columns were sand-blasted to reveal their aggregate and the selection of multi-tonal clinker bricks created textural walls on both the exterior and interior. Unprecedentedly, ply cladding was used as the ceiling material, purportedly to avoid distraction from a focus on the centrality of the altar and sanctuary. The crowning external cross was made of corten, although it was later painted white. A vast expanse of abstract stained-glass walls in a graded colour scheme function as a major architectural element. Their modulated colour scheme variously transforming the interior through-out the day and in the evenings produce a glowing light. The building achieves a simple and unified conception in the materials of the day. The form of the building rises to its highest point above the altar, an aspect which fulfils the continuing expectation that the building function as a place of worship and visible symbol in the landscape of the community.

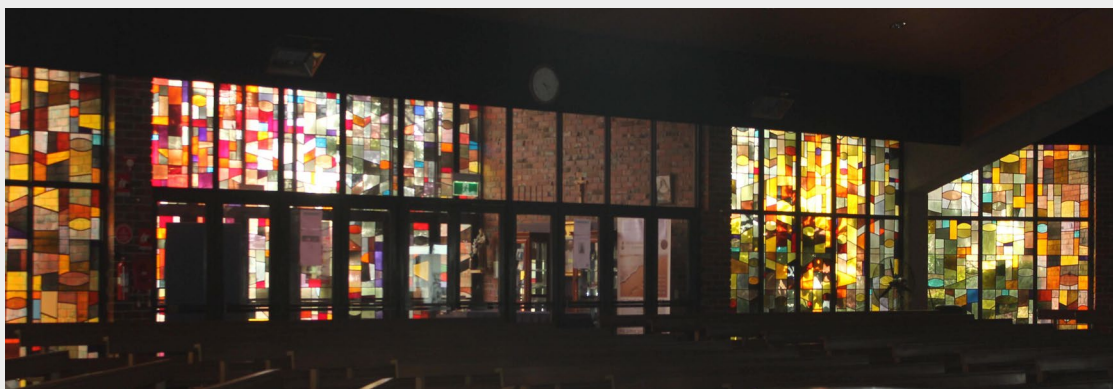


Fig 6.23: Abstract stained-glass windows in graded colour scheme

Source: Libby Richardson, March 2016

Although the fan-shaped plan had appeared before 1965 in Victoria and Australia, St Clement of Rome demonstrates an adept synthesis of liturgical concern, material language and monumental significance. Functionally, the design of St Clement of Rome enshrines through architectonic means the ideas of close proximity and participation advocated by the Second Vatican Council¹⁶⁰ and the centrality of liturgical ritual as the primary generator of Catholic church designs.¹⁶¹ St Clement of Rome deftly pointed towards the future in expressing a new tradition in Catholic church design in the materials of the day.

Post script

The large Italian population was assisted by the Italian Catholic Federation¹⁶² to organise mass to be conducted in the migrants' language. In 1974, a regular Italian mass was inaugurated which led to St Clement of Rome becoming an important location within the district for the Italian community.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁹ In conversation with Gerard Smith, Smith + Tracey, 19 June, 2020.

¹⁶⁰ Proctor, Robert. 'Modern church architect as ritual anthropologist: architecture and liturgy at Clifton Cathedral' in *arq: Architectural Research Quarterly*, vol.15, no. 4, 2011, p.365-366.

¹⁶¹ Hackett, Stephen. 'Postconciliar Church Design: Continuity and Contradiction', *Vatican Council II*, (ATF Press, 2013), p.241. Accessed via JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt163t93f.21>

¹⁶² A lay organisation of the Scalabrini Fathers. The Federation was formed in 1960 to support the Fathers in their mission to assist the Italian migrants in the maintenance of their religion and culture, most of whom were non-English speaking.

¹⁶³ Morrison, *25 Years Remembered*, p.41.

6.5 Conclusion

Traditional places of worship continued to be erected throughout the post-war years as recognisable representations of cultural identity associated with religious traditions. By the mid-1950s, the increasing availability of new materials and construction techniques, and their relative cheapness compared with traditional masonry construction, led to the ability to design prominent traditional buildings of large scale. Many of these buildings were designed according to precedent in a variety of revival styles reflecting an association and continuity with ecclesiastic traditions, expressed primarily in the formal and spatial attributes of the building via the retention of a processional longitudinal plan and dominating, monumental built form. Suggestions of modernity were expressed through a palette of contemporary materials and reductive undecorated surfaces, as well as modern conveniences. These buildings often appeared in the wealthier middle ring suburbs of Melbourne and were used to represent congregational identity through an association with historic traditions, and also as vehicles for denominational posturing. New migrant churches also appeared on the religious landscape. Migrant congregations sought to faithfully reproduce the architectural image of their place of origin, reflecting a strong sense of cultural identity grounded in religious tradition. Migrant churches added to an evolving multi-cultural religious environment in the Australian setting.

However, by the late 1960s, a wide spread demand for the modernisation of worship via liturgical change was instrumental in leading to new architectural solutions that were no-longer associated with architectural precedents such as the traditional longitudinal plan form. In response to the modernisation of the liturgy, a new standardised fan-shaped plan form arose. The fan-shaped plan with seating arranged in an arc around the altar delivered an acceptable modern liturgical solution capable of facilitating a spacious, open and visible sanctuary, with all participants located in close proximity to the altar. The fan shaped plan appeared across all denominations but was widespread within the Catholic church after the Second Vatican Council reforms of 1962-1965 which emphasised the centrality of liturgical ritual as the primary generator of ecclesiastic design.

The wide range of explicit as well as nuanced traditional ecclesiastic designs reflected the new freedoms made possible by the contemporary materials and techniques of the day and their ability to create a rich and diverse spectrum of traditional buildings that were yet structurally innovative. Commonly, aesthetic preferences were focused on ecclesiastic and social traditions, rather than an engagement with architectural modernity. The circumstances under which these buildings came to fruition were characterised by the tensions that arose between the entrenched views of local clergy and the institutional Church, the social identity and financial agency of each congregation and the concurrent demands for the modernisation of worship through liturgical change. A unique multiplicity of situated circumstances was negotiated ways within each parish by religious communities and their architects, leading to the production of a diversity of formal and aesthetic outcomes in church designs in the post-war era.

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CHAPTER SIX

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Fig. 7.0 LADY CHAPEL WINDOW, ST MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, BIRCHIP, 1967
Artist: Ferguson and Papas. Architect: Smith + Tracey. Image: Libby Richardson, Nov 2018

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CHAPTER SEVEN

Sacred Art: New expressions of faith

7.1 Introduction

In Australia, commissions for authentic sacred art proliferated in the new churches as architects and clergy alike sought to enlist contemporary artists into the service of the church.¹ The 19th century practice of using industrially produced sacred art and ritual objects was now considered incapable of engendering authenticity and genuine encounter with God.² The re-evaluation of liturgical practices had led not only to new forms of worship but also a unified aesthetic of simplicity and clarity.³ In Australia, the Blake Prize for Religious Painting was introduced with the express aim of promoting original contemporary sacred paintings, challenging the notion of what sacred art could be and who could produce it. In this climate, architects and clergy of all denominations sought to incorporate sacred art and ritual items produced by practicing artists and craftspeople. Working with artists, architects often designed not only the building but also its furnishings as unified works of art. Importantly, stained glass continued as a key feature in the aesthetic schemes of the modern church. While many Catholic churches continued to contain vast expanses of windows depicting biblical themes in figurative style, in Protestant settings abstract compositions of coloured glass, or clear glass, were preferred. Windows produced using the modern technique *dalle de verre*, a method of setting thick chunks of glass into concrete which transformed glasswork into a structural material rather than applied decoration, became an important signifier of modernity. Increasingly, as religious environments moved away from applied decoration towards contemporary aesthetics of abstraction and simplicity, the production of meaning shifted to a primary focus upon materials. Particularly in a Protestant setting, the new churches were likely to express symbolism through form and material expression rather than solitary works of art and to declare religious identity through the fabric of the building.⁴ The Catholic setting continued to require objects of veneration as an accepted and long-standing means of facilitating devotion⁵ and therefore sculpture, which in Australia was produced by the hand of the émigré artist, continued as a key feature in Catholic settings. The post-war period saw the transformation of aesthetics in the church as interiors became reliant upon natural materials and abstraction, and sacred art became authentic through the hand of the contemporary artist to create modern environments for worship.

Chapter Seven examines the principal themes of painting, stained glass and sculpture in religious settings to illustrate how sacred art in the church was transformed into new expressions of faith. In the Catholic setting, liturgical reform required iconography to be solely guided by sacramental mystery and moderated

¹ O'Callaghan, Judith. *Treasures from Australian Churches*, Exhibition Catalogue, (Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria, 1985), p.26.

² *Liturgical Arts*, Quarterly Journal of the Liturgical Arts Society, New York, Vol 28, No 4, (Aug 1960), p.69.

³ Hackett, Stephen. *The architecture of liturgy: Liturgical ordering in church design; The Australian experience in perspective*, University of New South Wales, Faculty of the Built Environment, unpublished PhD thesis, 2011, pp.421-425.

⁴ Proctor, *Building the Modern Church*, 260.

⁵ 'Holy See Issues Instructions on Sacred Art', *The Advocate*, (July 31, 1952), p.8.

in number.⁶ In the secular realm, significant stylistic changes in which representation shifted away from figuration towards abstraction, influenced the art of the church. The aim of Chapter Seven is to foreground the broad contribution made by contemporary artists of the day to the aesthetic environments of the new churches. Four short studies interspersed throughout the chapter examine the specific contribution made by prominent artists producing work for the churches in Victoria during the post war period.

7.2 Painting: the founding of the Blake Prize

An important character in the Australian religious and artistic landscape appeared in the 1940s in the person of Australian-born Jesuit priest Michael Scott⁷ (Fig. 7.1). Scott became a key figure in the movement for the renewal of sacred art through the foundation of the Blake Society for Religious Art.⁸ In 1951, the Society held the inaugural Blake Prize for Religious Painting in Sydney, with the express purpose of fostering the creation of modern works of sacred painting in contemporary styles. Judged by an ecumenical panel of clergy of the Catholic and Protestant faiths as well as art critics and artists, the Prize soon attracted hundreds of entries annually from major practicing artists. The founding of the Blake Prize was important in the Australian context as a forum for the interchange of ideas about the validity of sacred art produced in a contemporary manner. Just as the European Sacred Art Renewal Movement was largely a reaction to the widespread practice of using mass produced works of sacred art, the Blake Prize sought to improve the quality of sacred art in Australia by encouraging “our leading artists to paint religious pictures [to] get these pictures into our homes, churches and schools, to replace the

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Fig. 7.1: Father Michael Scott, 1968

Photograph: Mark Strizic, 1968
State Library of Victoria
Wilbow collection of Mark Strizic photographic prints
Accession no: H2008.142/12

⁶ Hackett, Stephen. *The architecture of liturgy: Liturgical ordering in church design; The Australian experience in perspective*, University of New South Wales, Faculty of the Built Environment, unpublished PhD thesis, 2011, pp.421-425.

⁷ A third generation Australian, Michael Scott (1910-1990) was educated at St Ignatius Secondary College, Riverview. After graduation Scott became a novitiate at the Society of Jesus at Greenwich, Sydney and in 1930 he travelled to Ireland and Europe where he studied mathematics, theology and philosophy. He was ordained into the Priesthood in 1940 returning to Sydney in 1941 where upon he took up a position at Riverview. Scott was a founder of the Blake Prize in 1949 and in the 1950s, as Rector of the University of Adelaide's Aquinas College, Scott installed sculptures by Voitre Marek and Stations of the Cross by Leonard French. In 1962, Scott became Rector of Melbourne University's Newman College where he purchased works, including the *Annunciation*, *Virgin Enthroned*, *Visitation* triptych by Justin O'Brien for the Newman College Art Collection. In 1967-68 he served as a Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria. Subsequently, in 1969 Scott obtained release from his Jesuit vows to travel to Dublin whereupon he married Mary Lavin. Lavin, friend and correspondent to Scott since 1934, was a widow and noted Irish short-story writer.

⁸ Scott founded the Society, named after British painter and mystic William Blake (1757-1827), in 1949 with Jewish businessman and art dealer Richard Morley who put up the prize money.

cheap prints and the sentimental mass produced travesties of religious art that are still, for the most part, the norm in this country".⁹ However, the Blake Prize was also in part a response to the growing global sentiment that traditional sacred art of the past was not only incompatible with modern church design, but also failed to resonate with modern society, and was thus incapable of communicating religious values to contemporary men and women.

Traditionally, sacred images and sculptural works depicted convincingly realistic images of biblical events, designed to be experienced through the construct of a belief in god as the supreme creator and understood through the lens of a shared history of religious imagery.¹⁰ Customarily, altarpieces were explicit figurative paintings positioned directly above the altar, designed to complement the altar and elaborately framed to assist a visual transition to the surrounding architectural environment.¹¹ Operatively, sacred paintings and sculpture 'made religious experience visible and comprehensible' for the religious person.¹² But in the world of 20th century modernism, artistic movements were rebuffing traditional figurative and representational imagery in a move away from figuration towards abstraction.¹³ Modern art was improbable and non-representational, the product of an individual artist's intuition expressed through abstract form, figure, colour and composition. The artistic milieu of the 20th century was one which witnessed the 'collapse of traditional religious aesthetics'.¹⁴ Already, by the early 20th century, superfluous ornament and sacred paintings in modern religious settings¹⁵ were becoming absent, particularly within the Protestant sphere. Moreover, in the Catholic setting, the focus of the Liturgical Movement upon the Eucharistic sacrifice had led sacred art in the sanctuary to become limited to works supporting the message of sacrifice (such as the Crucifixion), most usually in the form of sculpture.

In the early years of the Blake Prize, paintings were judged primarily for religious content. However, by the 1960s, in a direct reflection of the changing artistic milieu of secular society, the Blake Prize moved from being a vehicle for paintings with explicitly religious subject matter and symbolic content¹⁶ to being dominated by abstract paintings reflecting the private motivations and interpretations of the artist. Many of the entries were perceived to have no identifiable content 'in either figure or symbol'¹⁷ and so could not be understood as religious. Pressure ensued to judge the entries in contemporary artistic terms based on the power of abstraction to convey emotion¹⁸ rather than the production of explicit religious content

⁹ Letter of application to the Carnegie Corporation written by Michael Scott, 26 August 1956, in which he describes the Blake Prize. Carnegie Corporation of New York Records. Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Columbia University Libraries. [Series 111A, Grant Files, ca 1911-1988. Box Number 808, Folio 9, Scott, Michael M., Rev., S. J., 1956-1971]

¹⁰ Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. 'The artistic journey' in Rosemary Crumlin, *Beyond belief: modern art and the religious imagination*, Exhibition publication, Exhibition dates 24 April – 2 July, 1998 (Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria, 1998), 21-25.

¹¹ Humfrey, Peter. *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*, (New Haven and London; Yale University Press, 1993), 1-12.

¹² Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane. 'To Create a New Universe: Mircea Eliade on Modern Art', *Cross Currents*, Vol 34, No. 4, (Winter 1982-83), 408.

¹³ Apostolos-Cappadona. 'The artistic journey', 21-25.

¹⁴ Apostolos-Cappadona, 'To Create a New Universe', 411.

¹⁵ Henze, Anton and Theodor Filthaut. *Contemporary Church Art*, (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956), 19.

¹⁶ Crumlin, Rosemary. *The Blake Prize for Religious Art – the first 25 years. A survey*, Department of Visual Arts, Monash University Gallery Exhibition publication, 18 April – 23 May, 1984, 5.

¹⁷ Crumlin, *The Blake Prize*, 13.

¹⁸ Crumlin, *The Blake Prize*, 13.

to function as “adjuncts to liturgical worship or as devotional objects”.¹⁹ Sydney architect Tom Heath²⁰ in a 1959 review of the Blake Prize curtly summed up the situation thus: ‘the bad paintings have religious content, the good paintings have not’.²¹ Nevertheless, the Blake Prize served as a catalyst for a widespread engagement with contemporary sacred art and the participation of many highly regarded artists plying their hand to religious themes in the post-war years. (Figs 7.15-7.20) In the 1950s and 1960s important artists such as Justin O’Brien (1951), Donald Friend (1955), John Coburn (1960), Stanislaus Rapotec (1961), Leonard French (1963) and Eric Smith were all winners of the Blake Prize, Eric Smith winning 6 times (1956-58-59, 1962-69, 1970). Prominent artists also served on the judging committee: John Passmore, Lloyd Rees, Russell Drysdale, John Olsen as well as sculptors Tom Bass, Lyndon Dadswell and architects John Moore and George Molnar.



Fig. 7.2: Triptych: *Annunciation, Virgin Enthroned, Visitation*

Artist: Justin O’Brien, c.1962.

Location: Newman College Collection of Art, University of Melbourne.

Source: Fine Arts Network, <https://fanunimelb.wordpress.com/tag/newman-college/>

Despite the intentions of the Blake Prize, very few sacred paintings made their way into the new churches. The new churches were designed with an emphasis on light, materials and abstraction, and space, colour and form to achieve their numinous character rather than any singular devotional objects or works of art. The conditions of the new churches were designed by architects collaborating with artists (often a favoured network) as well as theologians to produce cohesive programmes, liturgically aligned with modern theological ideas. Many of the Blake Prize winners and entries were purchased for private or institutional collections (often religious) or public art galleries and were primarily valued as examples of abstract works of art and typically inaccessible for public viewing. Moreover, despite the wider impetus towards a new acceptance of contemporary art, evidence also suggests theologians were sometimes

¹⁹ Crumlin, *The Blake Prize*, 3.

²⁰ Tom Heath (1931–98), Sydney architect and educator, authored three books on Architectural education and became Editor of *Architecture in Australia* (1980-90).

²¹ Heath, Tom. ‘The Blake Prize 1959’, *Architecture in Australia*, (Jun 1959), 96.

instrumental in the rejection of contemporary art as irreverent.²² When commissioned by Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell to create a painting for the Lady Chapel of Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1962), Sydney artist Justin O'Brien produced a brightly coloured painting of the Virgin Enthroned in the traditional form of a triptych (Fig.7.2), the central panel flanked by depictions of the Annunciation and Visitation.²³ Parish priest Father Bernard Geoghegan, shocked by the painting's transgressive departure from traditional representation,²⁴ rejected the work because he was unable to 'come to terms with [it's] modernity',²⁵ particularly "the Virgin's legs [...] immodestly splayed even though covered to the ground and [the Visitation in which] Elizabeth was not present as an old woman."^{26 27} The tensions between the traditional and the modern and between the desire for figuration and acceptance of abstraction were key themes played out in the aesthetics of the modern church.

7.3 Murals

Although surface murals became increasingly popular in the civic realm²⁸ as symbolic representations of function,²⁹ the application of murals in religious settings was uncommon and when artworks in mural form did appear, they remained thematically aligned to religious traditions through their narrative depiction of religious events. There were a handful of notable mural artworks in religious settings.³⁰ At St George's Anglican Church, East Ivanhoe (1964), Grounds, Romberg and Boyd commissioned a ceramic mural composed of baked glazed bricks depicting the image of Christ in Resurrection to adorn the wall behind the altar.³¹ The glazed bricks are integral to the fabric of the building and thus in modernist terms an acceptable form of ornamentation. A further mural which operates similarly as a kind of modern altarpiece materially integral to the fabric of the building was completed in 1960 by Arthur Boyd.³² The mural, on the theme of the ascension, was designed for the refurbishment of St John's Church of England (1924) in the Victorian coal mining town of Yallourn³³ but in 1980 it was moved to St Mary's Anglican Church, Morwell,

²² In a similar instance, Norma Redpath was commissioned to produce a sculpture for Adelaide's Jesuit Aquinas College, c.1951. The wooden sculpture, titled 'Seat of Wisdom' depicting the Madonna, was rejected because no facial features were distinguishable. Redpath refused to change the sculpture. Source: Eckett, Jane. *Centre Five sculptors: the formation of an alternative professional avant-garde*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, School of Culture and Communication, The University of Melbourne, 2016, 829.

²³ The triptych bears strong stylistic similarities with O'Brien's *The Virgin Enthroned* triptych (1950-51), winner of the inaugural Blake Prize (1951) now held in the National Gallery of Victoria Collection. In 1980 the central panel was published as an Australian 15 cent Christmas stamp.

²⁴ Muirhead, Anita J. *Changes in the architecture and decoration of catholic churches in Victoria 1960-1980*, Master of Arts Thesis, School of Art history, Faculty of Humanities, La Trobe University, 1994, unpublished manuscript, 39.

²⁵ Muirhead, *Changes in the architecture and decoration*, 39.

²⁶ France, Christine. *Merioola and Beyond: Painters of the Sydney Charm School*, Exhibition Catalogue, (Brisbane: Philip Bacon Galleries, May 1999), 22.

²⁷ This important work by Justin O'Brien was purchased in 1963 by Father Michael Scott on behalf of the University of Melbourne's Newman College and remains in that collection today.

²⁸ Bush, Charles. 'Murals for Everyone', *The Argus*, (May 5, 1956), 36.

²⁹ Such as Douglas Annand's 1952 ceramic mural for the Mildura Base Hospital Nurse's Home (building now demolished) depicting a female figure pouring water from a pitcher over an ochre-coloured landscape of white inhabitation; Elaine Haxton's 'Mural on the Arts' at St Catherine's School, Toorak (1956); German émigré Richard Beck's graphic design for Hosie's Hotel (1955); Leonard French's mural at the Beaurepaire Sports Centre (1956) as well as Annand's important 'Man struggling from Chaos to the green of Enlightenment' for Wilson Hall (1956), both located at The University of Melbourne.

³⁰ Other notable murals include: a fresco mural in abstraction was designed on the theme of baptism by Max Birrell for the baptistery of St Peter's Church of the Holy Name, South Australia by Michelmores, Roeger & Russell (1963); In New South Wales, Eric Smith designed a mosaic mural for the Synagogue at South Head by Neville Gruzman (1957).

³¹ Attributed to local artist Jean Atkins.

³² Arthur Boyd (1920-1999) was a leading Australian painter of the 20th century.

³³ Yallourn was demolished to make way for an open-cut mine in 1976.

a building designed specifically to receive the mural. (Fig. 7.3) Unlike the figurative depictions of religious themes explored by Boyd in the 1940s and 1950s,³⁴ the Ascension mural is in the abstract. The mural is 7m wide x 5m high and painted in casein across sixteen masonite panels in a mosaic-like composition of small blue and white rectangular shapes depicting a dynamic figure of Christ ascending, arms flung upward against a blue shimmering background.³⁵ For the Yallourn Church of 1924 design, Boyd's mural demonstrated that contemporary works of art were not only acceptable in historic settings, but could also introduce features which were in themselves important elements in the emergence of modern religious environments.



Fig. 7.3: Detail: Ascension mural by Arthur Boyd, 1960.

Source: St Mary's Anglican Church, Morwell. www.stmarysmorwell.com/artwork

7.4 Stained Glass

The tradition of using stained glass as a major component of an aesthetic scheme designed to communicate meaning, signify theological belief and religious identity continued in the modern church. At one end of a broad spectrum, stained glass windows were used in a traditional way as a didactic tool with figurative depictions of biblical themes; at the other end of the spectrum the appearance of coloured glass windows that were abstract was a sign of modernity. In many Protestant schemes, clear glass was preferred to underscore the rational aspect of religion.³⁶ Although most stained glass windows in the post-war era in Melbourne and Victoria were products of local craft, imported windows continued to play an important role within the aesthetic schemes of the modern church for liturgically significant locations as

³⁴ In the 1940s and early 1950s Boyd completed a number of notable works with biblical themes in a variety of media: The Grange murals at Harkaway of *The Prodigal Son and Susannah*, (1948-49); *The Golden Calf* (1947) held by the Art Gallery of Ballarat, Victoria; *Christ Walking on Water*, (1950-52), private collection; *The Expulsion*, (1947-48) and ceramic *Christ Walking on the Water*, (1950-52) held by the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney; ceramic sculptures of *The Thirty Pieces of Silver*, (1952-53) held by the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra; and *Saul and David*, (1952-53) National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. Perhaps influenced by his experiences in the La Trobe Valley, in 1957, Arthur Boyd painted *Landscape near Yallourn* (1957) in oil on hardboard, a painting that was later purchased by the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

³⁵ Boyd was paid £800 for the mural with funds raised by the Ladies Guild. The mural was found to be too big at the time of its installation, consequently the bottom panels (including the artist's signature) were trimmed off. However, the trimmings were retained which enabled the mural to be installed later in full at St Mary's Anglican Church, Morwell.

³⁶ Tillich, Paul. *On Art and Architecture*, 218.

they signalled continuity with the origins of religious architecture, often interpreted as deriving from the medieval cathedrals of England and France. Furthermore, glass was an important element by which the atmosphere of an interior environment was controlled and orchestrated for a desired effect, often serving as a counter to the perceived starkness of the modern interiors of the new churches. In figurative, abstract and absent forms, glass continued to be used to great effect as an architectural material in modern religious settings throughout the post-war era in Australia.

In Melbourne, well-established stained glass manufacturing firms such as E.L. Yenken & Co and Brookes Robinson provided a fertile training ground for a new generation of stained glass artists. “By 1950, Melbourne was firmly established as the epicentre of Australian glass design”,³⁷ and by 1960 there commenced a vibrant period of glass design for the modern church “typified by the work of individual artists [and architects], rather than glass companies.”³⁸ The ground swell was the result of several factors: the independent nature of the Australian parish system, which enabled individual clergy of all denominations to determine preferences in both architecture and art; the great leap forward of church building due to the expanding Australian population; and the impetus for modernity in which the church not only called for contemporary buildings commensurate with the modern era but also emphasised the need for sacred artwork and aesthetics reflective of the contemporary situation.

The new acceptability of abstract compositions combined with economic constraints enabled the design of simple windows with an emphasis upon colour rather than figure. These windows provided simplicity without clutter while remaining unique and specific to each commission, permitting original designs, often by the architect, to be incorporated into a unified aesthetic schema of architectural design. The abstract windows of St Faith’s Church of England, Burwood, (1958), designed by the architect, were themed according to location, earthy multicolour in the baptistery, lively multicolour in the side chapel, and coloured as well as clear glass towards the memorial garden. At Nunawading Methodist Church (1960) the lead comes of the window behind the sanctuary radiate from behind the crucifix and colour creates a secondary pattern in an abstract arrangement of red, orange and yellow glass with outer panels of clear, purple and gold coloured glass.

The increasing use of abstract compositions led to an emphasis on colour as a form of religious symbolism: green could represent the triumph of life; blue the Virgin Mary or Heavenly love; red the Passion; or, amber the golden light of Purity and Innocence.³⁹ Colour could be strategically distributed throughout a church to denote function and meaning spatially, such as golden or red hues surrounding an altar or blue denoting the Lady Chapel. At Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Sorrento (1967), Smith + Tracey architect Paul Archibald bathed the interior of the church in a wash of blue light through the extensive use of blue coloured glass with the intention of connecting the building to its seaside location.⁴⁰ In another striking

³⁷ French, Peter. *David Wright: An Australian Religious Iconography*, unpublished PhD thesis, School of Culture and Communication University of Melbourne, 2013, 104.

³⁸ French, *David Wright*, 106.

³⁹ Taylor, Richard. *How to read a church. Pocket guide*, (London: Rider, 2007), 132-135.

⁴⁰ In conversation with Paul Archibald regarding his intention at Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Sorrento (1967), Nov 2017.

scheme (Plate 7.21) for the A-frame Methodist Church, Burwood Heights (1961), Alexander Harris used an abstract pattern in purple, a colour associated with the royalty of 'God the Father', and red, a colour associated with Love and Martyrdom, along with deep red carpet to create a dark and sombre interior effect.⁴¹

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Fig. 7.4: St George's Church of England, Reservoir (1964)
Red glass behind the crucifix indicates the suffering of Christ (The Passion).

Architecture and glass design: Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell.
Source: University of Melbourne, 2018.

Dalle de verre, a method of setting thick chunks of glass into concrete, or sometimes resin, developed in France during the interwar years, came to signify modernity as well as an historical association with the medieval cathedrals of France. The use of *dalle de verre* transformed glasswork into a vibrant structural material rather than decoration, representing an acceptable integration of ornament into the fabric of the building. (Figs. 7.26-7.28) These striking windows, or the glass pieces for these windows, were often imported from the French studios of Gabriele Loire at Chartres, France, for significant locations associated with liturgical ritual, such as baptisteries. St Aidan's Presbyterian Church, North Balwyn (1964) and Our Lady of the Nativity Catholic Church, Aberfeldie (1967) have baptistry windows imported from the Loire Studios. However, there were also fine local examples of these windows such as the baptistry window of St Raphael's Catholic Church, West Preston (1964) attributed to Ferguson and Papas, and the Catholic Chapel side windows of Monash Religious Centre, Clayton (1968), designed by artist Leonard French, designer of the vast *dalle de verre* glass ceiling of the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria (1967). Three of the most notable glass artists designing for modern churches in Melbourne in the 1950s and 1960s were Alan Sumner, John Ferguson and Nicholas Papas.

⁴¹ 'The Church in New Suburbia', *The Spectator*, Official organ of the Methodist Church in Victoria and Tasmania, Oct 4, 1961, Front page.

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 7.5: St Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church, Pascoe Vale. (1962)

Architect: Alan Robertson. Glass artist: Alan Sumner.
Source: University of Melbourne, 2016.

7.4.1 Alan Sumner, glass artist

The most significant glass artist working in a figurative style was Alan Sumner (1911-1994).⁴² Employed as an assistant to William 'Jock' Frater⁴³ at E.L. Yencken & Co. from the age of 15, Sumner was introduced to 'everything in the art game'.⁴⁴ Frater himself had honed his craft as an apprentice in the studio of Oscar Patterson in Scotland. Although Sumner took over as head of the stained-glass department in 1940, his role was curtailed due to the war and on his return in the late 1940s he established his own studio in Collingwood and went on to develop his own personal style.⁴⁵ Sumner was further influenced by his experiences touring Europe in the early 1950s when he visited the major cathedrals and contemporary galleries displaying modern works of art, an experience which is said to have signalled a 'turning point' in his personal style.⁴⁶ Sumner's work, although remaining painterly and figurative, became more abstracted and emboldened by pure colour. He predominately produced stained glass windows for the Catholic churches across Victoria.

Sumner's first major commission came in 1954 from architect Alan Robertson for the design of the windows of St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Frankston, which Robertson was designing in cream brick in a modern style to a tight budget. To produce the large expanses of glass at a reasonable cost, Sumner arranged for industrial glass to be stained which he interspersed with small amounts of expensive antique glass to add luminance, to 'catch and refract the light'.⁴⁷ Sumner's work created a wash of golden light throughout the interior of the building. These early windows contain painted central figurative images surrounded by colour fields of abstract patterns and textures. However, it was in his later commissions

⁴² Sumner was an accomplished artist with experience in silk screen printing, portraiture and landscape painting, stained glass and mosaic.

⁴³ Frater himself had honed his craft as an apprentice in the studio of Oscar Patterson, graduate of the Glasgow School of Art, in Scotland. E.L. Yencken was a former employee of Brooks Robinson. (Hughes, *Twentieth century stained glass in Melbourne churches*, p.34.)

⁴⁴ 'James Gleeson Interviews Alan Sumner', The James Gleeson Oral History Collection, National Gallery of Australia, 28 November 1978, transcript, p.28.

⁴⁵ Hughes, Bronwyn. *Twentieth century stained glass in Melbourne churches*, (The University of Melbourne: Masters Thesis, 1997), p.81.

⁴⁶ Hughes, Bronwyn. 'The Governor's Window', *La Trobeana Journal of the C.J. La Trobe Society*, Vol 12, No. 2, July 2013, p.14.

⁴⁷ Hughes, *Twentieth century stained glass*, pp.102-103.

that Sumner developed his masterful personal style, creating didactic narrative series of windows populated with ethereal figures immersed in a landscape of intricate detail and colour. Blessed Oliver Plunkett Catholic Church, Pascoe Vale (1959-62), in which he again worked with architect Alan Robertson, was possibly Sumner's largest commission, taking six years to complete. (Fig. 7.5) At Pascoe Vale, Sumner created a monumental figurative stained-glass cycle (visual story) of windows, signifying the building's theological function along the length of the building's façade. The windows represented at the time the "largest continuous area of stained glass in the southern hemisphere", measuring 1800 square feet in the west wall alone.⁴⁸ The windows depict 'The Deposition' (the taking down of Jesus from the cross), the 'Ascension' (the departure of Jesus from earth) and the 'Resurrection' (Jesus appearing to Mary), while a further wall of stained glass in the sanctuary depicts the Crucifixion. (Plate 7.29) Sumner's numerous windows represent a significant contribution to Melbourne's religious landscape. Notable stained-glass cycles by Sumner include: St Brigid's Catholic Church, Mordialloc (1956) which includes the rare instance of a secular thematic window dedicated to the 58th and 59th Australian Infantry Battalions in tribute to those who died during World War II in New Guinea and North Solomons; St Paul's Catholic Church, Bentleigh (1960); St Bede's Catholic Church, North Balwyn (1961) (Fig. 7.6); and Our Lady of the Nativity Catholic Church, Aberfeldie (1967).

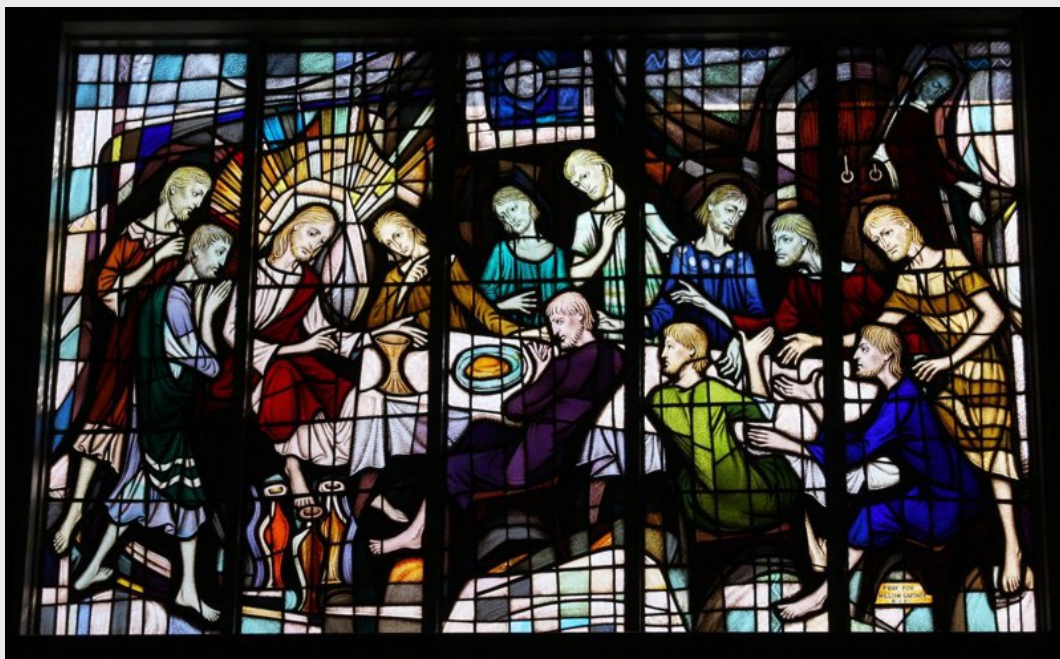


Fig. 7.6: The Last Supper, 1968

Glass artist: Alan Sumner.

Source: St Bede's Catholic Church, North Balwyn

⁴⁸ Hughes, *Twentieth century stained glass*, p.103.; 'James Gleeson Interviews Alan Sumner', The James Gleeson Oral History Collection, National Gallery of Australia, 28 November 1978, transcript, p.30.

7.4.2 John Ferguson and Nicholas Papas, glass artists

John Ferguson and Nicholas Papas worked in a modern style distinctly different from that of Sumner. They produced abstracted figures with simple but boldly coloured designs set within thick black lines, the central figures often strengthened by a background of clear glass. The bold figures and colourful *dalle de verre* windows of Ferguson and Papas appear consistently across churches of all denominations through-out Victoria.⁴⁹ Like Sumner, Ferguson and Papas were apprenticed in the local industry, having worked together at Brookes Robinson, subsequently establishing their own glass studio in 1951.⁵⁰ Fine examples of their work are located at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Frankston (1958) depicting 'Andrew, the Fisherman', where due to budgetary constraints, plain industrial glass was used to create the background,⁵¹ and St Paul's Church of England, Kew (1960), depicting Paul falling from his horse by a light suddenly appearing from the heavens on the road to Damascus. (Figs. 7.30 and 7.32)

Ferguson and Papas produced windows in a variety of modern styles, figurative and abstract, and in the 1970s were commissioned to design and construct in *dalle de verre* a 96 metre-long window for the historic St Michael's Catholic Church, Traralgon (1936). The window remains today the most impressive artistic work in the church, indicating the impetus for modernity in art and aesthetics regardless of building style. The later work of Ferguson and Papas became increasingly abstract as can be seen in the fine Marian windows at St Mary's Catholic

Church, Birchip (1967) (Fig.7.0)

and Holy Family Catholic

Church, Mt Waverley (1976)

(Fig 7.7). Ferguson and Papas

were the glass artists of choice

for Keith Reid's numerous

Presbyterian church designs.

They designed the stained

glass windows peppered with

Protestant symbols for Reid's

Coburg Presbyterian Church

(1960) and the striking *dalle de*

verre panels using imported

French glass at Croydon

Presbyterian Church (1966).⁵²

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Fig. 7.7: Madonna and Child, 1976

Glass artist: Ferguson and Papas.
Holy Family Catholic Church, Mt Waverley, 1976
Source: University of Melbourne, 2016.

⁴⁹ Brooks Robinson orders by denomination tables. (Hughes, *Twentieth century stained glass*, pp.138-140.)

⁵⁰ 'Shone in an ancient art form', *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec 24, 2010, www.smh.com.au.

⁵¹ Hughes, *Twentieth century stained glass*, p.104.

⁵² Keith Reid, interview, *Art Deco Society*, Saturday August 23, 1997. By Helen Graham, Sally Shrimpton, Cliff Skinner – Society Art Deco Victoria, Preservation Committee Members.

7.5 Sculpture

In the secular realm, the gathering momentum for the integration of art and architecture in the 1950s and 1960s was driven by a desire to reinstate the communicative capacity of modern public buildings through symbolic sculptural works⁵³ with a capacity to express community values.⁵⁴ However, in the context of the modern church, works of sculpture fulfilled a different role; one of worship, instruction and the production of transcendental qualities. The issues affecting the church differed from the broader debate about the role of public sculpture. Pressing concerns for the church included style and the capacity of non-religious artists to produce truly sacred works of art.⁵⁵ In Australia, the artists and crafts people who made a significant contribution to the aesthetics of the modern church were not drawn from the field of avant-garde artists engaged in the sphere of ambitious public commissions, but from a pool of émigré artisans and craftspeople from a diverse range of technical fields and backgrounds, although occasionally the players overlapped.

7.5.1 *The public debate*

Australian sculptors were active participants on the world stage as a consequence of the increasing global mobility of individuals and prevalence of touring exhibitions which acted as catalysts for the development of sculpture in Australia. In 1948, the British Council exhibited in Melbourne the controversial exhibition of modern sculpture and drawings by the significant post-war sculptor Henry Moore,⁵⁶ for whom local sculptor Lenton Parr went on to work as an assistant in Britain in 1955-56.⁵⁷ In 1959, local artist Clement Meadmore was in Japan when the Museum of Modern Art (New York) exhibited 'The New American Painting' en-route to Europe,⁵⁸ and in the same year the National Gallery of Victoria curated the first exhibition of modern sculpture⁵⁹ by local artists entitled 'Six Sculptors'. The exhibition consisted of Australian sculptor Norma Redpath and émigré Europeans Inge King, Julius Kane, Vincas Jomantas, Teisutis Zikaras and British immigrant Clifford Last.⁶⁰ Thereafter an Australia-wide sculpture competition inaugurated in Mildura in 1961 was a landmark which added to the range of opportunities for sculptors to exhibit their work.⁶¹ In 1964-65, 'Recent British Sculpture' toured Australia marking another important experience for Australian sculptors.⁶² By the 1960s, maturing Australian sculptors were able to benefit from an expanding field of opportunity to produce ambitious public sculpture and artistic works for education and the corporate spheres or in community settings, often exploring an Australian identity⁶³

⁵³ Eckett, Jane. *Australia Modern*, p.228.

⁵⁴ Garlake, Margaret. *New Art New World. British Art in Postwar Society*, (Yale University, 1998), p.213.

⁵⁵ Webster, Peter. *Church and Patronage in 20th Century Britain*, p.83-84.

⁵⁶ Stringer, John. 'Two decades of innovation: Highlights in Australian sculpture', *This was the Future... Australian Sculpture of the 1950s, 60s, 70s + Today*, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Bulleen, Exhibition Catalogue, 2003, p.70.

⁵⁷ Stringer, 'Two decades of innovation', p.51.

⁵⁸ Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture*, p.148.

⁵⁹ Eckett, Jane. *Melbourne Modern. European Art & Design at RMIT since 1945*, (Melbourne: RMIT Exhibition Catalogue, 2019), p.71.

⁶⁰ As a participant of the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, British immigrant Clifford Last attended the Melbourne Technical College where he commenced a course in sculpture within one year of his arrival (b. 1918 Ar.1947 d.1991).

⁶¹ Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture*, pp.150-151.

⁶² Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture*, p.155.

⁶³ Stringer, 'Two decades of innovation', p.9.; Lewi, Hannah and David Nichols (Eds). *Community. Building Modern Australia*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2010), p.202-203, 214-217.

rather than religious themes. In Melbourne, the 'Centre Five' collective⁶⁴ of modernist sculptors were influential in seeking to increase the opportunities to exhibit sculptural work conceived via non-traditional ideas and methods of making (such as constructed rather than modelled sculpture). The collective had its origins in the 'Group of Four' exhibitions held at the University of Melbourne School of Architecture in 1953 and 1955 (Fig 7.8).⁶⁵ 'Centre Five' was underpinned by a five-point manifesto seeking to actively promote sculpture to a broader public and advocate for a closer relationship with architects and the integration of architecture and sculpture.⁶⁶ Also contributing as a meeting ground for artists and architects was the establishment of Brummel's Gallery in Toorak by David Yencken of Merchant Builders Pty Ltd. In 1957, the exhibition 'Twelve Melbourne Sculptors' was opened by architect Neil Clerehan, featuring the work of Anita Aarons, Ola Cohn, Vincas Jomantas, Inge King, Julius Kane, Clifford Last, Clement Meadmore, Andor Meszaros, Lenton Parr, Guenther Stein, Tina Wentcher and Teisutis Zikaras⁶⁷ (Fig 7.8). However, despite the rising acceptability of modern sculpture as 'an ennobling and civilizing art' in a public setting,⁶⁸ abstraction was less acceptable in a religious setting for items of devotion. For this reason, the work of the avant-garde artists seldom made its way into the modern churches.



**Fig. 7.8: (L): Group of 4 Exhibition invitation 1955
(R): Brummel's Gallery invitations, c. 1957**

Source: (L & R): Australian Art and Artists file (AAA), Brummel's Gallery, State Library of Victoria.

Nevertheless, the work of Centre Five was not unfruitful. When work by a leading contemporary sculptor did appear in a religious setting, it was generally commissioned by a younger generation of modernist architects with ties to Melbourne's progressive artistic community.⁶⁹ Firms such as Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell were instrumental in commissioning a range of artists to provide sculptures, stained glass and

⁶⁴ The Centre Five Group were: Hungarian Julius Kane (1921-62), German Inge King (1915-2016), British immigrant Clifford Last (1918-91) and Lithuanians Vincas Jomantas (1922-2001) and Teisutis Zikaras (1922-91). These European members were soon joined by Norma Redpath (1928-2013) and Lenton Parr (1924-2003).

⁶⁵ The Group of Four were: Norma Redpath, German born Inge King and Guenther Stein, Hungarian Julius Kane and British immigrant Clifford Last.

⁶⁶ Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture*, p.137.

⁶⁷ Architect Peter McIntyre also opened an exhibition in which jewellery by Matcham Skipper was exhibited. Australian Art and Artists file (AAA), Brummel's Gallery, State Library of Victoria, Exhibition invitation.

⁶⁸ Sturgeon, *The Development of Australian Sculpture*, p.152.

⁶⁹ Source: Australian Art and Artists file (AAA), Brummel's Gallery, State Library of Victoria.

other creative work for their churches and public commissions.⁷⁰ John Mockridge approached Clement Meadmore⁷¹ to design the screen behind the altar for Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1962), but according to Mockridge, “Clem priced himself out of that particular job”⁷² and the screen was designed by the architect. At All Saints Anglican Church, Mitcham (1958) Clifford Last carved the elongated figure of ‘Christ in Majesty’ in American pine for architect and Melbourne University academic Ray Berg⁷³ (Fig 7.9) and at St George’s Anglican Church, Ivanhoe (1964) Vincas Jomantas (who shared a studio with Leonard French 1963-65) designed in bronze the unusual baptismal font for Grounds, Romberg and Boyd. Jomantas was regularly appointed by Eggleston, Macdonald and Seacomb for their public commissions⁷⁴ but at St Aidan’s Presbyterian Church, North Balwyn (1964) Clifford Last was appointed to produce the bronze door handles in the symbol of the Fish.



Fig. 7.9: Christ in Majesty sculpture by Clifford Last, 1959

Architect: Ray Berg. All Saints Church of England, Mitcham 1959

Source: Libby Richardson, May 2016

In practice, the most significant contribution to the artistic landscape of the modern churches of Victoria was made by a pool of skilled and versatile émigré artisans who were willing to work on religious commissions.

⁷⁰ Such as the commissioning of sculpture from Andor Meszaros’ at The University of Melbourne Zoology Building; Lenton Parr at Melbourne Grammar School Sports Building (1954) (now demolished); proposals to include architectural sculpture at St Mark’s Church of England, Sunshine (1959) and St Faith’s Church of England, Burwood (1958); the inclusion of animal sculptures at Downer Public School, Canberra; commissioning of the painted mural by Elaine Haxton at St Catherine’s Girls School, Toorak (1955).

⁷¹ Whether Meadmore’s intention was to evade a religious commission, or a small commission, is unknown. Meadmore moved to New York in 1963 to become an internationally acclaimed abstract sculptor.

⁷² John Mockridge interviewed by Hazel de Berg in the Hazel de Berg collection, 17 July 1973, 2327182: TRC 1/696 (transcript). National Library of Australia.

⁷³ Their association likely due to the ‘Group of Four’ exhibitions held at the University of Melbourne 1953 and 1955.

⁷⁴ Scarlett, Ken. ‘Journey’, *Vincas Jomantas Retrospective*, Exhibition Catalogue, McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria, 2003, p.18.

7.5.2 *The hand of the émigré artist and craftsperson*

The sculptures of Crucifixes, Holy statuary and Stations of the Cross produced for the modern churches throughout Victoria were created by a diverse range of creative and technical artisans who were new immigrants to Australia. These artisans were characterised by their ability and willingness to produce liturgical and devotional items using a wide variety of techniques across a broad range of materials. In addition, émigré artists held an affinity for the biblical themes derived from a Christian cultural framework which was based on a personal experience of religious traditions, and often a strong personal basis of faith.

As displaced persons arriving via assisted passage, many émigrés were required to participate in two years of indentured labour while attempting to create new lives in Melbourne for themselves and their families. The artistic careers of the émigré artists were often hard won. Ernst Fries⁷⁵, who had studied gold and silver smithing at Zurich Technical College, Switzerland and civil engineering in Germany,⁷⁶ worked as a civil engineer for the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works until 1965⁷⁷; sculptor Herman Hohaus⁷⁸ had studied at the School of Applied Art and University of Fine Arts, Munich, but worked in ‘a stonemason’s yard and a terracotta factory’, and later in the design department of a car factory, until he gained a teaching position at the Melbourne Technical College in 1961⁷⁹; and sculptor Leopoldine Mimovich⁸⁰ who had studied religious art in Austria, worked as an antique reproduction furniture carver for Myer Department Store before she could establish her career as a sculptor.

In the early years of the impoverished post-war economy, wood carving was a dominant medium in both public and religious spheres. It was the ‘cheapest and easiest way to create work in permanent materials’⁸¹ which led to a predominance of carved wooden sculpture in the post-war churches of Victoria. At the early St Bernard’s Catholic Church, East Coburg (1958), the first Victorian church designed in a liturgically modern fan-shaped plan by Romanian architect Grigor Hirsch, Hans Knorr⁸² carved the liturgical items in timber: the altar Crucifixion and statues of Jesus and the Madonna and Child as well as the Stations of the Cross in Victorian Cypress, while the Baptismal font was made of polished blackwood timber. (Fig. 7.10) It is notable that these figurative pieces demonstrate the continuing role of traditional devotional statuary in the Catholic church, despite the radical modernity of the building. Hand carved wooden statuary and sculpture continued to be favoured in the 1960s in Catholic contexts. For architects Smith + Tracey, German sculptor Alfred Schubert⁸³ carved the sanctuary statuary and Stations of the Cross for Star of the Sea Catholic Church, Sorrento (1967) and Austrian Leopoldine Mimovich carved those at St Mary’s Catholic Church, Birchip (1968). A progression from works in wood to works in bronze is reflected in the work of

⁷⁵ Fries: born Germany 1934; arrived 1959.

⁷⁶ Both projects were for John Mockridge.

⁷⁷ ‘Three Australian Sculptors’, *Australian Architecture & Design*, Vol.1, No.4, (July 1981), p.22.

⁷⁸ Hohaus: born in Silensia (Germany) 1920; arrived 1954; died 1990.

⁷⁹ Eckett, Jane. ‘Material studies and professional practice: European émigré sculptors at RMIT, *Melbourne Modern. European Art & Design at RMIT since 1945*, Exhibition Catalogue, (RMIT Gallery: Melbourne, 2019), p.74, p.143.

⁸⁰ Mimovich: born 1920; arrived 1949.

⁸¹ Lindsay, Robert. ‘Foreword’, *Vincas Jomantas Retrospective*, Exhibition Catalogue, McClelland Gallery + Sculpture Park, Langwarrin, Victoria, 2003, p.10.; In addition, ‘the absence of competent bronze-founders prepared to meet the needs of sculptors’ inevitably led to the use of other mediums. Sturgeon, p.151.

⁸² Knorr: Born 1916. Died 1988.

⁸³ Schubert: Arrived in Australia with his wife, also a sculptor, in 1954.

German sculptor Herman Hohauser in his commissions for architects Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell. Hohauser carved in timber the Altar crucifix and Stations of the Cross for the early Mother of God Catholic Church, East Ivanhoe (1956).⁸⁴ However, for the later Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1962) Hohauser produced two bronze Madonna and Child sculptures, one placed on the exterior of the building and the other in the Lady Chapel. These sculptures were produced one year after Hohauser had begun teaching at the Melbourne Technical College where he worked alongside Jomantas and Zikaras and had access to foundry facilities.⁸⁵ However, the range of bronze sculptures produced by Hohauser, while acceptable in a religious setting, were perceived as “conspicuously out of step with the prevailing vanguard [and] poignantly limited in scale (due to inadequate resources rather than any lack of talent or technical ability)”.⁸⁶



Fig. 7.10: Timber sculptures and font (at left) by Hans Knorr

Architect: Grigor Hirsch CONARG. St Bernard's Catholic Church, East Coburg, 1955

Source: Libby Richardson, Aug 2018

Gold and silver smith, Ernst Fries produced chalices, tabernacles and ritual items in silver, enamel and aluminium for churches through-out Australia⁸⁷ For Monash University Religious Centre, Clayton (1968) Fries produced in vitreous enamel a wall plaque of the 'Last Supper' and later, in cast aluminium, the Stations of the Cross for Holy Family Catholic Church, Mt Waverley (1976) and Resurrection Catholic Church, Keysborough (1976),⁸⁸ both sets unusually arranged in the silhouette of (the hill at) Calvary.⁸⁹ Italian émigré Ernesto Murgo was commissioned⁹⁰ by Italian émigré architect Ermin Smrekar⁹¹ to create the 19 metre high (62 feet) abstract sculptural spire in 'self weathering steel'⁹² for St Mel's Catholic

⁸⁴ Hohauser is represented in the State Galleries of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland and the Landmuseum Muenster, Westphalia Germany, as well as in institutional and private collections in Australia and overseas.

⁸⁵ Eckett, 'Material studies', p.74.

⁸⁶ Stringer, 'Two decades of innovation', p.9.

⁸⁷ 'Three Australian Sculptors', pp.22-26.

⁸⁸ Fries created all the ritual objects at Keysborough for Edmond and Corrigan. At Mt Waverley, Smith + Tracey used a group of artists - Ferguson and Papas (stained glass) and Leopoldine Mimovich (Madonna statue).

⁸⁹ 'Passion in the Suburbs', *Architecture Australia*, Vol 66, No. 1, Jan 1977, p.58.

⁹⁰ Ernesto Murgo arrived in Australia in 1957. He picked grapes in Mildura before completing a Diploma in Sculpture at the Melbourne Technical College where he commenced teaching in 1965. (Eckett, 'Material studies', p.74).

⁹¹ Smrekar arrived in Australia in 1956, set up his own practice in the mid-1960s. He frequently worked with Melbourne's Italian community.

⁹² 'A Regional Centre - Shepparton', *Architecture in Australia*, Vol 60, No. 5, Oct 1971, p.808.

Church, Shepparton (1969-70). The building itself is a strong material and sculptural statement for the Italian Order of Scalabrians.⁹³ Émigré artisans were the chief source of religious sacred art in the post-war period supplying Victorian churches with all manner of ritual and decorative items. In this way, the hand of the émigré artist and craftsperson can be felt in their contribution to the religious settings of the new churches though out Victoria and Australia.

7.5.3 Leopoldine Mimovich, sculptor

Leopoldine Mimovich was perhaps the most prolific sculptor working in wood on religious commissions in Victoria in the post-war period. Her religious work of the 1950s and 1960s was humble, authentic and hand crafted. These qualities were aligned with the demand for authenticity in sacred art and led to Mimovich's work becoming highly regarded. Churches of all denominations commissioned Mimovich to produce sculpture, in some cases historic churches⁹⁴ wishing to contemporise worship, as well as innumerable modern churches in which her hand carved wooden Stations of the Cross are instantly recognisable. (Figs. 7.52 and 7.53)

Mimovich studied portrait painting in Vienna 1939-1942 and attended the School of Religious Art, Hallstadt, Austria, graduating in 1947 before emigrating to Australia in 1949.⁹⁵ Mimovich produced numerous Stations of the Cross, Crucifixes, Madonna and Holy Family statues for churches throughout Victoria and Australia as well as receiving international commissions. Her work is greatly admired for the skill in depicting generally realistic figures with expressive faces and flowing robes which she continued to create throughout her long career, although abstraction entered her work in the later years.⁹⁶ At St Matthew's Church of England, Cheltenham (1966) the location and effect of a modest wooden sculpture of Christ Risen by Mimovich provides a rare example of sculpture and architecture in a complementary and unified relationship, one that is entirely modern. Rather than placed statically against the sanctuary wall, the sculpture of Christ Risen floats in an intermediary zone at the edge between the nave and the bright light of the sanctuary. This is a gentle figure with a gentle composure, modest in scale: Christ wears a crown indicating he has risen and the sweep of his robes are suggestive of movement, his arms are held in a relaxed position in an uplifting gesture. The colour and texture of the sculpture seem to be made of the same earth-bound materials as the building which cements an integral relationship with the architecture, and in its impression of movement the sculpture operates in a shifting engagement with the spatial and architectural aspects of the building.^{97 98}



Fig. 7.11:
Madonna and Child, 1968
Leopoldine Mimovich
St Mary's Catholic Church, Birchip
Source: Libby Richardson,
Nov 2018

⁹³ The Scalabrian Order was established in Italy to assist the diaspora of Italian migrant communities.

⁹⁴ For example, Mimovich's wood carving of Our Lady of Walsingham, St Peter's Anglican Church, Eastern Hill (c.1840s).

⁹⁵ Ihle, Ruth. *Memories guide my hands*, (Richmond, Victoria: Spectrum Publications, 1985), Foreword.

⁹⁶ Various newspaper cuttings, AAA File: Leopoldine Mimovich, State Library of Victoria.

⁹⁷ Curtis, Penelope. *Patio and Pavilion. The Place of Sculpture In Modern Architecture*, (London: Ridinghouse and The J. Paul Getty Trust, 2008), p.20.

⁹⁸ The Cheltenham Christ Risen relates well to its location in a similar manner to Jacob Epstein's 'Madonna and Child' installed at the Convent of the Holy Child, Cavendish Square, London, 1953.

7.5.4 Andor Mészáros, sculptor⁹⁹

Although the name of Hungarian émigré Andor Mészáros is synonymous with religious sculpture of the post-war period, his work is strangely absent in the modern churches of Victoria. Mészáros undertook countless religious commissions, mainly portraiture medallions and plaques cast in bronze bas-relief and works of prestigious significance in institutional settings.¹⁰⁰ Mészáros worked in his own practice as an architect for ten years prior to leaving Hungary in 1939 for Australia.¹⁰¹ He was trained at the Vienna Technical University in building-engineering and studied sculpture at the Académie Julian, Paris. Mészáros did not follow any stylistic trend; his output was expressive and realistic rather than abstract and he preferred to work figuratively with biblical themes. His persistence in working with realism in the post-war period was criticised at the time.¹⁰²

Mészáros' output and patronage was wide and varied. In the 1940s, Mészáros designed three carved life size figures in sandstone and marble for the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney and also gained important commissions for Canterbury Cathedral, England. In the 1950s, it was Mészáros who designed the 1956 Olympic Games Medals. Other works include the World War II Memorial column, Yallourn (1953)¹⁰³; the 'rood' (cross hanging between the nave and sanctuary) for St Peter's Church of England Cathedral, Adelaide, carved in Queensland maple; a Shakespeare Memorial Statue, Ballarat (1960); and 'architectural sculpture' for the University of Melbourne School of Zoology building (1964). As well as medallions for the Victorian Football League, Mészáros cast repeat issues of the bronze 'Canterbury Series' Stations of the Cross medallions for use in religious settings as well as a smaller repeat issue in silver for museums and collectors. Due to the unique and specific nature of Mészáros' work, his work is more likely to appear in institutional settings of religious organisations or corporate settings as well as in commissions for private settings¹⁰⁴ rather than in the modern churches. For this reason, Mészáros' oeuvre has not been acknowledged to have borne an influence upon the direction of Australian sculpture.¹⁰⁵

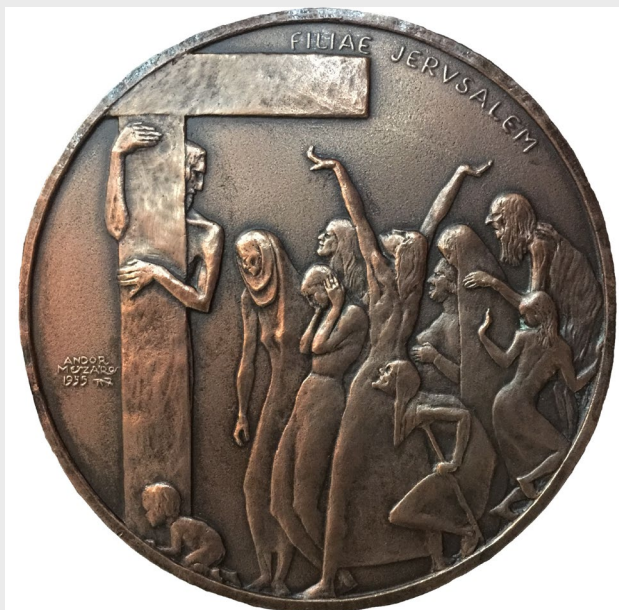


Fig. 7.12: Canterbury series Station of the Cross medallion, 1955

Andor Mészáros
Trinity College Chapel (1917), University of Melbourne
Source: Libby Richardson, Dec 2018

⁹⁹ Meszaros (b. 1900 Ar.1939 d. 1972).

¹⁰⁰ Meszaros gained the Canterbury commission via well connected British born Farnham E. Maynard, vicar at St Peter's Church of England, Eastern Hill, Melbourne (1926-1964) who held an interest in the arts. (*Anglicanism in Australia. A History*, p.262.)

¹⁰¹ Semmens, Kelman. Andor Meszaros, (Melbourne: The Hawthorn Press, 1972), p.3.

¹⁰² Semmens, *Andor Meszaros*, p.10-11.

¹⁰³ Eckett, Jane. *Australia Modern*, p.227.

¹⁰⁴ Architect Blyth Johnson commissioned Meszaros to produce a medallion on the birth of his first child.

¹⁰⁵ Semmens, *Andor Meszaros*, p.16.

7.6 Collaboration

The increasing emphasis upon the integration of art and architecture resulted in a progressively collaborative environment between architects, artists and the clergy in the design of modern religious environments. In 1968, architect Anthony Gilligan described O'Connor and Gilligan's holistic design intention for St Paul's Catholic Church, West Sunshine:

*'The church is unique for its total co-ordination of art and architecture. The architects commissioned the artist Rein Slagmolen in the early stages of design to have the art work as an integral part of the concept [...] the main source [of light] being the highlight windows [...] The glass used in these windows has been acid etched to provide a suitable surface for painting, and the artist has created a completely new dimension in church windows whereby black enamels and spray gun have been used to symbolise [various saints] in simple abstract form [...] to stimulate thought with graphic language...'*¹⁰⁶

Frequently, artisans were commissioned to produce the entire suite of sacred art and liturgical items. This was the case at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Brighton (1960-62) where émigré Dutch artist Rein Slagmolen¹⁰⁷ was commissioned by Louis Williams to supply the sculptural metalwork, crucifix, silver candlesticks and altar cross as well as the bronze cover for a marble baptismal font and the figures of the evangelists in brass relief to surround the pulpit, all largely to the architect's design. Slagmolen was also responsible for the construction of the abstractly patterned leadlight windows, most likely produced through Slagmolen's Vetrart Studios Pty Ltd to the specifications of architect Blyth Johnson's hand coloured drawings.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, Slagmolen produced for Ivan Anderson¹⁰⁹ at St Peter's Catholic Church, Clayton (1967) the altar candle sticks, tabernacle, baptismal font and Stations of the Cross as well as the glass windows in an abstract design, themed using the symbolism of colour.¹¹⁰

Architects collaborating with artists at an early stage of design produced the freedom and opportunity for exploration of new ways of making and representing religious themes in a contemporary style for a contemporary audience. Successful schemes were those that were integral to the nature and fabric of the building and complementary to the architect's vision. In other instances, clerical control sometimes led to disharmony in the application of sacred art as decoration rather than integral to the architectural programme which pushed the building design to the background while a plethora of ritual objects and didactic artworks dominated. In these instances, regardless of the explicit remonstrations of incorporating the artist in the process of design to achieve an integration of art and architecture, the outcome could produce dissonance between the language of architecture and artistic works applied as

¹⁰⁶ Gilligan, Anthony. Architect's statement contained in a letter to Neville Quarry, University of Melbourne, February 14, 1968.

¹⁰⁷ Slagmolen: Born Holland 1916. Arrived 1949. Died 1999.

¹⁰⁸ The drawings held in the Collection of architectural drawings by Louis Williams at the State Library of Victoria are initialled BJ Blyth Johnson.

¹⁰⁹ Slagmolen produced the *dalle de verre* windows for Immaculate Heart of Mary, Hampton (1973) designed by Ivan Anderson and it is reasonable to conclude Slagmolen also produced the similar *dalle de verre* windows for St James Catholic Church, Nar Nar Goon (1965) also by Anderson.

¹¹⁰ 'Clayton's new church is a landmark', *The Advocate*, June 15, 1967, p.5.

decoration. This is the impression at Our Lady of the Nativity Catholic Church, Aberfeldie (1967) designed by architect Stan Moran with artistic works by important South Australian artist Voitre Marek. The works of art in beaten enamelled copper are diminished by the scale of the building while simultaneously they compete with it. Further competition is posed by the bright didactic and figurative stained glass windows of Alan Sumner. These unsatisfactory results were not uncommon as Catholic churches were built to ever increasing scale to accommodate increasing populations; when Leopoldine Mimovich produced two modestly scaled, carved wooden sculptures for St Mary's Catholic Church, Birchip (1968) it was necessary to paint a white square onto the brickwork behind the sculptures for them to be seen.¹¹¹

But there were also successful Catholic worship environments where materials, art and architecture were integrated to achieve a unified aesthetic. At Mary Immaculate Catholic Church, Ivanhoe (1962), Matcham Skipper's Stations of the Cross, cast in silver and bronze, appear carefully considered to compliment in scale, colour and tone the simple material palette and scale of the interior scheme.



Fig. 7.13: Matcham Skipper's Stations of the Cross in situ.

Source: Libby Richardson, Jun 2016



Fig. 7.14: Station of the Cross

Artist: Matcham Skipper.
Mary Immaculate Catholic Church,
Ivanhoe, (1962)

Source: Libby Richardson, Jun 2016

¹¹¹ Interview with members of the congregation, Dec 2017.

7.7 Conclusion

As the institutional churches attempted to respond to modernity, religious art in the new churches was transformed from realistic factory produced items to unique works of art produced by the hand of the artist. The return to authentic works of art accompanied the aims of the liturgical movement which encouraged original works of art, produced through the genius of the artist, to engender genuine encounter with God. The new acceptance of contemporary works of art was in correspondence with the introduction of modern architectural environments and bolstered by the architectural profession's interest in the re-integration of art and architecture.

Although the introduction of the Blake Prize for Religious Painting promoted a broad discussion of the meaning, purpose and quality of sacred painting in contemporary settings across Australia, very few contemporary religious paintings were produced for, or placed in, modern churches. In the Catholic setting with private devotions discouraged because of new liturgical practices, no-longer were multiple works of art required. Nonetheless, the tradition of using stained glass as the quintessential aesthetic feature of ecclesiastic architecture continued through-out the post-war period. Modern churches of all denominations used stained glass windows to communicate meaning, signify theological belief and religious identity, and orchestrate an appropriate atmosphere for modern worship. Increasingly, abstract windows were used to signify modernity and communicate meaning via the symbolism of colour and emotion rather than figuration. Protestant churches frequently used clear glass to emphasise the rational aspect of faith. However, didactic and narrative windows depicted figuratively continued to be acceptable, and often preferred, in Catholic settings. In figurative, abstract and absent forms, stained glass windows continued to be used to great effect as an architectural material in modern religious settings.

The devotional purpose of religious sculpture continued to require a significant measure of figuration. Crucifixions and Stations of the Cross were important components of worship in Catholic settings and in the post-war period continued to appear as figurative representations typically carved in wood because it was easier to obtain and cheaper to produce. These sculptures were produced not by the avant-garde, but by a skilled group of émigré artisans educated in the universities and technical schools of Europe who acknowledged the legitimacy of the arts of the church. Although sacred art was generally absent in contemporary Protestant settings, the Catholic church continued to require objects and items of veneration to express and facilitate worship and thus the modern Catholic churches across Victoria represents a significant repository of sacred art works of the post-war period.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

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Fig. 8.0 ST AIDEN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND, STRATHMORE, 1960
Architect: Philip Garside. Image: Jack Work, Rebecca Jia Hui Toh, Tunli Pang
Wee Yan Qiu Rhoda, Measured Drawing Archive, University of Melbourne, 2018.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Conclusion

This thesis has sought to understand how the church became modern in Australia after the Second World War through a critical examination of the architectural design of church buildings in the state of Victoria between 1950 and 1970. It offers new knowledge to the history of modernism in Australia, but particularly Victoria, through its critical discussion of the way in which modernism in places of worship was negotiated and assimilated. It also offers insights into the social and cultural significance of places of worship and their contribution to the everyday lives of Australians. The findings of this thesis are supported by detailed case studies which demonstrate how a common range of factors moderated church designs in different ways to produce a wide spectrum of design responses.

In Australia, three key themes specific to the post-war period were found to have acted as catalysts for change, fostering church designs to evolve as unique and bespoke responses to the circumstances of each parish and community, architect and location, and available resources. Those themes were described in Research Methods Figure 1.3.1. as the themes of Society, Architecture and the advent of Modernity which were integrally woven across all aspects of post-war life to create a setting in which historical continuities were challenged.

To locate the post-war church in its immediate historical context, Chapter 2 examined how the dominant architectural discourse of the twentieth century which sought to develop a language capable of signifying meaning, resulted in a continuing process of re-evaluation of the operative purpose of architecture and its ability to create meaning in the twentieth century. Architects of all calibres grappled with issues of monumentality and functionalism as they attempted to implement modern architecture. Formally, the tensions and inherent contradictions of the 'modern monument' identified by Mumford were shown to be borne out in the rhetoric and design of places of worship, which had always been located within a continuum of monumental and didactic architectural traditions, and the requirement to be both a building with a purpose and a theological symbol. Spatially, as the churches sought to renew worship practices, the ritual interactions between the priest and congregation evolved as the (re-)organising spatial lens through which modern church designs could be conceived. Artistically, the return to hand crafted work by practising artists as the only artistic works appropriate for worship, alongside the twentieth century shift away from figurative representation towards abstraction, was supported by the architectural profession promoting the integration of art and architecture as a way of generating symbols of contemporary life. These conditions of modernity present in the international setting in relation to places of worship were also present in the Australian context.

In Australia, as social attitudes shifted away from the conservatism of the 1950s towards a new individualism and complexity of liberal lifestyle pursuits of the 1960s, a wider spectrum of architectural language began to be expressed and accepted. A central finding of this thesis contends the architectural response to post-war economic austerity was one of innovation, while global mobility further influenced aspirations for modernity, which in turn was enabled by the new, and cheaper, materials and modes of construction. Steel frame and truss systems enabled shorter construction times and permitted larger spans, paving the way for unobstructed interiors, non-load bearing walls and unlimited formal, spatial and aesthetic possibilities. Architects were empowered to conceive new arrangements in space and volume, plan form and aesthetics. Within this setting, the place of worship, which had traditionally played the role of a monument and symbol within the city, underwent significant change. Formally, the churches became heterogeneous as they were conceived via an evolving range of functional, economic and practical rationales unique to each parish community. Spatially, the modern church became a single volume within which both nave and sanctuary were contained. In plan, a fan shaped seating arrangement evolved as a standardised plan across all denominations to accommodate the modernisation of liturgical ritual and worship. In their designs, Australian architects were informed by their international experiences and increasingly looked to Europe and America for precedent, in addition to British traditions.

Further locating the post-war church in its Australian context, chapters three and four examined the historical role of the church in society. The population of the early colony had brought with it strong religious identities reflective of the class structures, institutions and values of British society which continued into the twentieth century. Strong sectarian concerns flavoured the Australian religious landscape as rivalry between the Protestant churches and Catholic populations led to separated social communities and educational systems. The early churches in Australia were constructed in historicist styles and as late as the 1940s, all were derived from models of predominantly British origins and sometimes modified to suit local materials and skills. It was not until after the Second World War that modern church designs emerged among the scores of places of worship erected in the post-war period. In post-war society, religion was expected to continue to be central to the lives of Australians as religious organisations rode a wave of demand due to the 'baby boom' population and expanding suburban conditions. In the Melbourne metropolitan area, the greatest number of church buildings built in the twentieth century were constructed during the 1950s and 1960s, far outweighing the number constructed in any other decade or period of the twentieth century. And yet simultaneously, the changes wrought by post-war reconstruction in government policy, bringing social welfare under its purview and the endorsement of modern notions of urbanism focused on a secular society, indelibly weakened the influence of the church as an important local source of community. The decades of the 1950s and 1960s were dynamic years of change in religious and social practices and despite the extraordinary optimism of the churches, the far-reaching influences of modernity incrementally came to significantly change the daily lives of Australians as the social practices

which had once been tightly bound together began to unravel.¹ By the end of this unique post-war period, the position of religion in Australian society had been indelibly weakened.

This thesis found that the uncertain and changing social conditions of post-war modernity resulted in a diminishing expectation for buildings to conform to representational formulae whilst also fostering an expectation for buildings to conceptually engage with the human experience of architecture.² To maintain their standing, the churches broadened their horizons to seek new architectural solutions and worship practices to accord with the contemporisation of society. The new churches were conceived via an evolving range of functional, socio-economic, architectural and practical rationales unique to each parish community, resulting in a wide spectrum of design outcomes. A significant finding of this thesis is the shifting agency of individual clergy, parish congregations and institutional authorities as agents capable of determining the innovation or conservatism of designs. The continuing importance of symbolism touched upon all aspects of church design and was often expressed in the rhetorical use of structure and form as a meeting point of theological symbolism and architectural modernity. Architects utilised their direct experiences garnered in international contexts and broad knowledge gained via international journals of the day to embrace modern innovations. Adding to the mix, cultural and intra-denominational networks and connections were significant and extended into the international sphere. A further source of internationalism arrived directly from the cultural centres of Europe in the figure of the post-war émigré architect. Émigré architects made significant contributions to the development of modern architecture in Australia but did not always appear in the journals of the day. Émigrés sat somewhat outside the local networks of architectural production. These various intersecting conditions resulted in the modern churches becoming formally heterogeneous.

This thesis makes an important methodological contribution through its breadth of source material and detailed case studies which allow multiple vantage points from which to understand how post-war church designs were moderated by the same set of factors in different ways to produce a variety of results. The analysis and case studies appearing in chapters four, five and six illustrate a spectrum of design outcomes from the highly unusual and innovative to the more nuanced and traditional. This thesis has found, in the established and often wealthier suburbs of Melbourne, places of worship were more likely to adhere to historical traditions, signifying denominational cultural origins or the trappings of the upper stratum of society in the Australian context. In addition, large scale immigration led to the appearance of places of worship with a fidelity to those of the migrant home countries to serve new communities as strong symbols of identity and representations of cultural continuity. In contrast, the cheaper to build modern churches were most frequently constructed in the new or expanding outer suburban areas surrounding Melbourne.

As well as being cheaper to build, these modern churches were used as signifiers of progressive social and theological values, creating a contemporary identity for religious communities. The same social,

¹ Davidson, 'Religion', p.221.

² Ligo, Larry L.. *The Concept of Function*, pp.99-100.

theological and economic influences were not solely an urban phenomenon but were equally influential in regional centres and remote settings, highlighting the importance of looking beyond the urban centres. Institutionally, modern church designs had the capacity to contemporise and sustain worship within a changing social and political landscape.

As twentieth century architectural and artistic sensibilities shifted away from representational didacticism, the effects were felt in the church. Sacred artworks in the new churches were transformed from figurative factory-produced items to unique artworks, often in the abstract, produced by the hand of the artist which were construed as authentic and spiritually truthful. The return to original work was aligned with the liturgical movement which encouraged the use of sacred art produced by the 'great artists of the day'³ as the only items capable of leading to a genuine encounter with God. The new acceptance of contemporary, often abstract works of art corresponded with the introduction of modern architectural environments and was bolstered by the architectural profession's interest in the re-integration of art and architecture. Architecturally, as the 1960s advanced, a preference for abstract and textural qualities became popular, signalling the creative use of materials (rather than pattern making) as an acceptable mode of adornment. Pattern and texture were used to relieve expanses of wall and to highlight significance such as sanctuary walls which were distinguished with economy and clarity through a change in material or technique, or both. Nevertheless, in Australia, the devotional purpose of religious sculpture in the Catholic setting continued to require figuration and the Crucifixions and Stations of the Cross continued as realistic sculptural representations of biblical events. These items were almost entirely produced by a skilled group of émigré artisans educated in the universities and technical schools of Europe. The Blake Prize for Religious Painting promoted a broad discussion of the meaning, purpose and quality of sacred painting in contemporary settings across Australia. However, very few contemporary religious paintings were produced for, or placed in, modern churches. Stained glass in figurative, abstract and absent forms, continued to be an important characteristic of the new churches as an acceptable mode of ornament and connexion with the time-honoured atmospheric experience of religion. Windows produced using the modern *dalle de verre* technique of setting thick chunks of glass into concrete transformed glasswork into a structural material rather than applied decoration, became an important signifier of modernity.

It is argued herein that the wide spectrum of design responses produced in Victoria and Australia emerged as the product of the unique negotiations within each parish by religious communities and their architects in their attempts to create meaningful places of worship compatible with contemporary society in the midst of a modernising social and architectural landscape. If, as Peter Hammond expounds, architecture 'articulates and presents meaning, and values', then our places of worship represent the most interesting and complex building type; full of multi-valence and cultural significance through the unique specificity of the requirement to express a continuing tradition in the new architectural language of modernism. The

³ Couturier, Marie-Alain. *Sacred Art*, selected texts from *L'Art Sacré* between 1950-1953. Translation by Granger Ryan. (Austin: University of Texas Press in association with the Menil Foundation, 1989), p.34.

combination of these highly interdependent yet shifting and locally situated factors characterised the post-war conditions in which the design of modern places of worship arose in Australia with the conflicting desires and expectations for both the comfort of tradition and the excitement of new socio-spatial environments. These conditions are writ large across the places of worship that arose in Australia during the decades of the post-war era.

8.2 Characterising the post war church in Victoria

The wide spectrum of experimentation and variety, rather than consistency, of post-war church designs leads to a particular conundrum in terms of their categorisation as representative examples of post-war places of worship in Victoria. To be categoric about these buildings is to understate their diversity. Nevertheless, a range of shared attributes can be identified which characterise the design of post-war places of worship within the Victorian context. Those attributes include:

Structure and form

- Steel frame construction. Steel frame structures enable unobstructed interiors. The structure is often expressed on the interior;
- Non-load bearing walls. Steel frame structures lead to a corresponding prevalence of non-load bearing walls. Sometimes frames function as structure, form and roof;
- New forms. Steel frame structures provide the ability to create new and unprecedented forms, many with a clearly articulated structure as a feature of the design;
- Symbolism. New forms are justified by symbolic narratives interwoven into the design;
- Austerity and Scale. Scale, monumentality, tradition, ornament cannot be afforded by the post-war purse. Architecturally, monumental scale is rejected in favour of a less stately, human scale. Protestant churches are more likely to be small and suburban. Catholic churches are co-located alongside catholic schools and more likely to retain a larger scale;
- Alternatives to towers. Free standing steel framed, sometimes brick clad, bell towers and giant free standing crosses appear;
- Diversity. A-Frames, non-rectilinear, square and geometric as well as longitudinal forms, flat and faceted roofs, diagonally raised roof sections, prominent verticality above the altar expressed in the roof form.

Space

- Single volume. Altar/sanctuary and congregation contained within one non-hierarchical spatial volume;
- Unified. An absence of side aisles, columnar interruptions and extraneous elements;
- Permeable. Functional delineations via level change or permeable screens rather than walls;
- Luminous. Pendulous light fittings moderate the flow of space, pale coloured ceilings float like canopies.

Materials

- Concrete. Various forms of reinforced concrete allow an unlimited range of plastic forms and structural possibilities;
- Timber. Laminated and moulded beams with new structural and formal properties allow economical solutions with visual warmth;
- Steel. Steel frames enable tall thin walls, increased spans, new forms. Space frames also emerge;
- New materials. The uptake of new materials in the 1950s: vinyl, aluminium, steel, mosaic tile, faux stone walling, brick veneer, concrete brick, steel frames and sheet roofing;
- Authenticity. By the 1960s, ornament via materials exposed in their natural condition emerges – timber, brick, concrete, stone, copper.
- Light. Orchestrated and strategic use of light and daylighting to create a mysterious atmosphere, illumination patterns and visual and emotional impact;
- Glass. Large expanses of glass windows (stained or clear), floor to ceiling non-load bearing walls of glass (stained or clear).

Composition

- Simplicity and restraint. Pared back interiors without ornament and in few materials;
- Unified designs. Architecture, furniture and ritual objects are designed by, or commissioned under the direction of, the architect;
- Visual strategies. Concealed lighting, skylights and architectonic devices emphasise the altar/sanctuary. Rich materials or colours are juxtaposed against utilitarian simple or natural materials. Visual interest via the play of texture, materials, patterns and light;
- New plans. Fan-shaped plans develop across all denominations but are taken up by the Catholic church as a new standard.

Liturgical change

- Liturgical change. In response to changing liturgical requirements, a clear and visible altar as the focal point of the interior and equitable access to the altar produces single volume interiors designed to promote a sense of the congregation seated in the round. However, very few designs positioned the altar in the physical centre of the building;
- Choirs. To accommodate a closer relationship between the clergy and congregation, choirs are relocated away from their traditional position between the clergy and congregation.

Sacred Art

- Integration. Ornament rejected in favour of integration of art and architecture at conception of design;
- Abstraction. Religious narratives are expressed through abstraction rather than didacticism.
- Authenticity. Sacred art is produced by the hand of the artist, émigré artist in the Australian context;
- Absence. Limited use of sacred art;
- *Dalle de verre*. Glass chunks set in concrete frames represent a new mode of integrated ornament and structure. Becomes a significant identifier of modernity in places of worship.

8.3 Differentiating the international setting

Although the timbre of the international context coloured the Australian setting as Australian designers of post-war churches engaged with similar strategies as their international counterparts, the Australian context rarely saw the erection of church buildings of the scale, nor robust materials of the international post-war churches. Nor were there instances, following British and American models, of extended community facilities and auxiliary functions. Even if designed for, these rarely occurred in the Australian setting.

In the European context, the re-construction and building of post-war places of worship represented an important step in reconstructing a devastated society and urban environment of fragmentation and destruction. In these European settings, many of the rebuilt places of worship, even if modern, aimed to replicate a similar urban scale and presence as the structure being replaced. This was the case in Germany with the rebuilding of St Anna Catholic Church, Duren (1951-56) to a design by Rudolf Schwarz. Although the design was entirely modern, the materials used were those salvaged from the ruins of the 16th century Gothic church and the new building was substantial in scale with a strong urban presence. In Berlin, the modern design and rebuilding of the war damaged Kaiser Wilhelm Church (1959-1963) by Egon Eiermann, used large scale geometric forms in concrete and glass block as a counterpoint against the remnants of a Romanesque tower ruin.⁴ In England, at Coventry Cathedral (1951-1964) Basil Spence's design also responded to the context and scale of the remains, and replacement, of a former cathedral building. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom, Treasury funds were used to establish a War Damages Commission (1941-1964) for the rebuilding of churches damaged or lost during the war. Applications could also be made for the replacement of stained glass or the introduction of modern artworks.⁵ In America also, church building was considered an important part of the urban fabric. When investments in the new suburban environments were made, churches were accommodated with a coherence and consistency of architectural language.⁶ Unlike the international setting, state sponsored financial support was absent in the Australian context. Australia had neither the European precedents nor the financial resources of America, a country that had profited through increased manufacturing during the war.

Victorian post-war churches of the 1950s were small scale thin concrete brick veneer buildings with expressed steel frames and floors covered in vinyl tiles. These buildings demonstrated the affordable use of modern materials and techniques to create new worship environments. Throughout the 1960s, the new churches were designed with a greater focus on authenticity which led to the overt use of few natural materials. These buildings were small scale clay brick veneer buildings, timber lined with carpeted floors in keeping with the suburban trends of the day. The distinguishing feature of the new churches was in their utilisation of steel frame construction to create a wide variety of striking cost-effective designs. In this way

⁴ *German Church Architecture of the 20th Century*, exhibition pamphlet, (Munich: The Council for the Care of Churches, 1964), n.p.

⁵ Harwood, Elain. *Space, Hope and Brutalism: English Architecture 1945 – 1975*. London: Yale University Press, 2015, p.423-4, 434.

⁶ Buggeln, Gretchen. *The Suburban Church. Modernism and Community in Postwar America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), pp.202-203.

it was a humble, small scale suburban building that was produced in the Australian circumstances, partly through the new architectural language and materials of modernism and partly through the modest, financially straitened setting of the Australian suburb and country town.

It is important to note that in the temperate Victorian climate, mitigation of climatic concerns such as humidity, ventilation and glare are not evident in Victorian design responses. The Australian climate is not the homogeneous, tropical climate that is popularly imagined. While much of Queensland and the Northern Territory sit within the Tropic of Capricorn, Victoria is located in southern Australia with a temperate climate. For this reason, climate issues such as humidity, ventilation and glare were not key factors in the design of the Victorian post-war church. The Victorian setting is more generally concerned with heating in the winter months. Heating tubes running under the first few rows of seating to keep parishioners warm were an important consideration, although often only affordable in the wealthier parishes. Furthermore, although there were churches built in seaside locations with an emphasis upon cross ventilation, such as the openable walls of Alan G. Robertson's Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church, Lorne (1956), generally these innovations were not a result of climate concerns. These churches were designed to be flexible in order to accommodate the surge of holiday congregations during the summer months. A prime example of this type of building is St Christopher's Catholic Church, Anglesea (1968) where the pews were located in a central square to allow "space for overflow crowds to stand [around the pews], both inside the building and under the wide eaves, outside open louvres".⁷ As public buildings, Victorian churches were subject to uniform building regulations which included ventilation requirements as specified by the Department of Health in accordance with the prevailing Victorian Health Act for all public buildings.

⁷ 'Wins ecclesiastic award', attrib. *The Advocate*, newspaper clipping, May 1968, St Christopher's Catholic Church Archive. Accessed April 19, 2017.

8.3 Change over time



Fig. 8.1 : All Saints Church of England, Greensborough (1966)
(L): Interior view looking towards the original baptistery, choir in foreground, c.1970 (Note: the red dot denotes the central altar table) (R): Interior view, baptistery removed, plaster covered brickwork, 2016.

Source: (L): All Saint's Anglican Archives. (R): Libbv Richardson. May 2016

It is worth remembering that many of the post-war churches no longer appear as they were designed. Many have been affected by a myriad of small alterations over time and in some cases, major renovations. The consequence of even the smallest material change has altered the nature and atmosphere of many post-war churches. These facts can be seen in a comparison of two images of Blyth and Josephine Johnson's lozenge shaped All Saints Church of England, Greensborough (1966) (Fig. 8.1). The image to the left depicts the opening and consecration of the new church. It shows a timbered ceiling with few strategically placed downlights. The textured walls and piers are constructed of rough cast concrete brick. Candles are affixed to the timber pelmets surrounding the centralised space. The baptistery is defined as an alcove ensconced by a wall of abstract multi-coloured stained-glass panels and overhead by a low timber ceiling. The altar table is located in the centre of the room. Today, depicted in the image to the right, the brick walls have been plastered over and painted white although the piers remain. The baptistery has been removed, leaving the font in no particular location of significance, a variety of intrusive modern lighting has been installed and the altar has been relocated against the eastern wall. These changes have altered the material quality as well as the spatial dynamics of the interior, making the interpretation of the architect's original intention difficult to understand. In another instance, to accommodate the re-orientation of the interior of the Baptist Church, Murrumbena (1962), all original fittings were removed and the key exterior feature breeze blocks replaced by solid brick walls. Materially as well as figuratively the original fabric and aesthetic intentions were utterly extinguished at Murrumbena (Fig. 8.2). The desire for 'updated' interiors continues today. In a recent conversation with the Vicar of St Faith's Church of England, Burwood (1956-58), one of only three post-war places of worship included on the Victorian Heritage Register, the Vicar lamented the listing preventing her from removing the 'dull' timber wall

battens in Scandinavian style surrounding the sanctuary (again, a key aesthetic feature) to have them replaced with white plaster walls.⁸

*Illustration has been removed
due to Copyright restrictions.*

Fig. 8.2: Baptist Church, Murrumbena, (1962)

Source: University of Melbourne, 2017.

In an increasing number of cases, modern light fittings have replaced original fittings that were purposefully few and dim and featured as an important component of the total design to create the atmosphere of the post-war church. New lighting schemes are often designed to flood the space with an even distribution of light and are accompanied by audio-visual equipment. In 2017, when new lights were installed at St Matthew's Anglican Church, Cheltenham (1966), the bright light behind the Christos Rex inhibited the sculpture from being seen.⁹ In other cases, churches that have been deconsecrated have had their bespoke sacred items arbitrarily redistributed. In the case of St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Prahran (1964), the whereabouts of a large wooden Madonna and Child sculpture by Leopoldine Mimovich and six fine beaten metal candlesticks is unknown¹⁰ (Fig 8.3).



Fig. 8.3: The octagonal St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, Prahran, (1964)

(L): Original interior, Mimovich sculpture at right. (Centre): Original interior, two prominent bands of *dalle de verre*.

(R): Interior view as the John Pierce Centre for the Deaf, low ceiling, additional windows, walls painted white.

Source: (L): *Kairos Catholic Journal*, Vol 25, No. 3, (Mar 2, 2014), p.23. www.cam.org.au/kairos

(C): Courtesy Paul Archibald. (R): *Kiaros*, *ibid*.

⁸ In conversation with Reverend Emily Payne, Aug 2018.

⁹ The light behind the Christos Rex has since been removed after architect Rex Patrick made an objection.

¹⁰ Akehurst, Christopher. 'St Francis Xavier's, Prahran', *Kairos Catholic Journal*, (Mar 2014), p.22.

8.4 Modern heritage: undervalued

Although this thesis does not aim to deliver an assessment of the heritage significance of the post-war church to the state of Victoria, practically, this thesis has implications for how we understand the heritage significance of modern buildings.

In Chapter Six, I described the expansion of church buildings across two waves of development in the suburb of Ivanhoe in the local council precinct of the City of Banyule. As an upper-middle class suburb that underwent expansion during the post-war period, the City of Banyule contains a microcosm of important post-war religious buildings by significant architects which as a group afford an excellent chronology of exemplar post-war church buildings: Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell's Mother of God (1956) and Mary Immaculate (1962) Catholic Churches; Methodist Church by Bates Smart McCutcheon (1961); St George's Anglican Church by Grounds, Romberg and Boyd (1964); and St Bernadette's Catholic Church by Robert O. Ellis (1962). Nevertheless, the City of Banyule's distribution of heritage recognition of church buildings reflects the broader state distribution which is weighted towards pre-war heritage. Of Banyule's seven early twentieth century churches, five have local heritage overlays and a further three nineteenth century churches have local heritage overlays¹¹ resulting in 10 pre-war churches recognised with heritage overlays in one locality. Of the group of five exemplar post-war church buildings only one has been recognised with a local heritage overlay despite the high quality of the buildings. Such lack of attention paid to ecclesiastic buildings of the post-war period in Victoria, at the local and state level, can only lead to the potential loss of these important buildings. Currently, the Methodist Church stands under hoarding, its stained glass windows by Alan Sumner removed and its future uncertain. Already the interior of Mother of God has been significantly materially altered and the demolition of Mary Immaculate, which is in substantially original condition, recently staved off in exchange for future significant alterations including material demolition to parts of its form and interior. These alterations are based on a non-specialist, present-day perception that Mary Immaculate is 'the least' accomplished of the Catholic Parish churches: "in terms of architecture [and] ambience [it is] 'hard' and 'sombre' [and] relatively bland as a worship space and lacks the quality and refinement associated with beautiful liturgical buildings."¹²

My hope is that the material covered in this thesis may in some way lead to a deeper understanding and recognition of modern heritage. There continues, due to lack of scholarship and interest in this building type, to be an inadequate understanding of the social, architectural and aesthetic significance of the post-war churches. These conditions are reflected on the Victorian Heritage Register and exacerbated by the changing nature of religion and notions of what is aesthetically acceptable, liturgically and within society. Moreover, the dwindling financial position of today's parish communities result inevitably to the selection of cheaper alteration and maintenance options. While many buildings have been lost or clumsily altered, there remain numbers of in-tact examples. A considered approach, one that recognises and respects the

¹¹ St John's Anglican Church of 1849 is also listed on the Victorian Heritage Register.

¹² FPPV Pty Ltd, *Facilities Master Plan*, Part A, Section 4.4 The Church, 2008, n.p.

original design intent and context, is warranted in the implementation of change so that appropriate judgements can be made in relation to aesthetic and architectural significance.

8.5 Where to from here?

This thesis constitutes a critical inquiry into the development of the modern church in the Australian setting at a specific point in time and place; the post-war decades of 1950-1970 in Victoria, Australia. While this study has been confined to the State of Victoria, its conclusions are pertinent to the broader development of post-war church designs throughout Australia where the same condition of modernity prevailed as a result of the processes of modernisation. An essential rationale for limiting this study to Victoria was to acquire a deep understanding of the material through a rich and thick description of the specific context under examination.¹³ A broader study of church designs across Australia would have been limited to a surface level investigation of identified notable buildings resulting in a thin description. The modern church buildings that arose across Australia during the post-war period were also borne of the specificity of their place and context, which in the Australian setting is finely but distinctly nuanced across its states. The output of this thesis, because of its comprehensive detail of a specific setting, offers a body of knowledge and framework that can be applied to the examination of post-war church designs in other Australian settings in the future. Furthermore, the outcomes of this thesis reflect a broader international discourse that seeks to re-evaluate modernism in order to better understand its broad architectural diversity and social foundations. The writings of Gretchen Buggeln and Robert Proctor have recently expanded our understanding of modern places of worship in particular international settings. My hope for the impact of this study is that it may bolster the international discussion of modernism as a nuanced, locally inflected and diverse movement moderated by the particularity of its social setting.

In the Australian setting, this thesis offers a contribution towards better heritage outcomes based on a deeper understanding of the social, architectural, aesthetic and historical significance of post-war places of worship in the state of Victoria. As the churches continue to divest of their properties, this thesis can assist in assessing appropriate strategies for management that offer a more nuanced and complete understanding of the value, originality and integrity of church designs and their relative position within the field. For future studies in this area, there are many ways in which the foundational ideas and information in this thesis could be developed as focused studies of the religious buildings of individual firms: the modest designs by Blyth and Josephine Johnson for the Anglican Church; Keith Reid's designs for the Presbyterian Church; Smith and Tracey's monumental designs for the Catholic Church; or the unusual designs of Wystan Widdows and David Caldwell whose architectural drawings have recently been added to the collection and made available at the State Library of Victoria. The present study while acknowledging some parallel developments and prominent architects in other states, has confined the discussion to the State of

¹³ Geertz, Clifford. 'Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture', *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p.15-17.

Victoria. However, further studies on a state by state basis could contribute to a regional understanding of the broader Australian setting.

To some extent this thesis has been limited in its discussion by the availability of evidentiary material. In this regard, the work of Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell has been oft cited based upon: the work of the firm being widely published and written about in the journals of the day (the natural result of establishment networks, but also based on the quality of the work); the availability of extensive architectural drawing and photographic collections publicly available via the State Library of Victoria; and the heroic present day efforts of Alison Alexander to keep her father's (George Mitchell) work alive. Certainly, the publicly available information on Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell is vast compared to firms such as Blyth and Josephine Johnson. The Johnsons designed eighteen new churches but did not make the same impact in the journals of the day, although the voice of Blyth Johnson is present as critique. The Johnsons were prepared to compromise to achieve economical buildings. As Josephine explained,

"... a lot of thinking at that time, was governed by cost [...] we were on the bottom rung of costs, we were very cheap architects in one sense. We were very conscious of the budget and a lot of the new parishes just didn't have much money and several of the churches were started off as multi-purpose [...] a hall church." As Josephine recalls, the buildings of Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell "were marvellous [but] expensive, nothing's too good for [the church] sort of thing." "On one occasion George [Mitchell] contacted us wanting to compare tender costs for a parish centre" [but when he grasped the gulf between clientele exclaimed] "Oh God, you're no help!"¹⁴

Beyond the 1960s, architectural thinking and discourse was once again transformed as new ways of ascribing and creating meaning in architecture were explored by a later generation of architects. For future researchers embarking upon the study of subsequent periods, I hope this thesis will be a mine of interest and information. The arguments put forward herein hold true today as the path carved out by modernism is reflected in an ongoing diversity in the design of places of worship as a consequence of a complex mix of social, architectural and contemporary milieux. After the 1960s, as religion came to occupy peoples' lives far less that it had in the past, the burgeoning requirement for new church buildings came to an abrupt halt. Other changes such as the creation of the Uniting Church of Australia in 1977 allowed the Methodist and Congregationalist and most Presbyterian congregations to combine their infrastructure to become the third largest denomination behind the Catholic and Anglican churches.¹⁵ Further transformations of the religious landscape have occurred through the establishment of a range of non-western religious traditions such as Islam and Buddhism as well as the birth in Australia of the Pentecostal and charismatic movements.¹⁶ Unique buildings continued to arise: the building of the Omar Bin el Khattabe Mosque, Preston (1976) by Bates Smart McCutcheon; the Catholic Church of the Resurrection,

¹⁴ Interview with Josephine Johnson, May 2016.

¹⁵ Today, the Uniting Church of Australia is widely regarded as a uniquely Australian institutional religion. Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.21, 486, 540.

¹⁶ Jupp, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, p.21.

Keysborough (1976), lauded for its theoretical post-modern stance but replaced in 2014 by a materially symbolic building with a fan-shaped plan arrangement¹⁷; the Catholic Church of St Michael and St John, Horsham (1987), recognised for its organic artisanal quality and symbolic plan derived from the geometry of overlapping circles.¹⁸ Many of the same themes have ensued in the later half of the 20th century. Negotiations and tensions are also present as the institutional churches continue to seek new ways to express their relevance in appropriate architectural form reflective of their theological position: in 1999, the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne requested architect Paul Archibald to “re-consider [and] avoid incorporating [pre-cast concrete water tanks] for any new Church Buildings that you may be involved with in the future”.¹⁹ The utilitarian function of the item, and prosaic nature of the material was unacceptable to the Institutional Church. Beyond the 1960s, there have been built many more places of worship that are worthy of study. My hope is that this thesis offers a framework and a body of knowledge from which to understand the social and architectural complexities inherent in the construction of a contemporary building for a faith community that is both a building with a purpose and a symbol.

¹⁷ The new Resurrection Catholic Church was designed by architect Mark Meaden.

¹⁸ These two unique later twentieth century buildings by significant architects Edmond and Corrigan at Keysborough and Greg Burgess at Horsham are recognised on the Victorian Heritage Register, H2293 and H2301 respectively.

¹⁹ Letter from David Vilchez of the Diocesan Building Advisory Service to Paul Archibald, in relation to Sacred Heart Catholic Church, Diamond Creek and St Elizabeth’s Catholic Church, Noble Park. Letter dated June, 24, 1999.

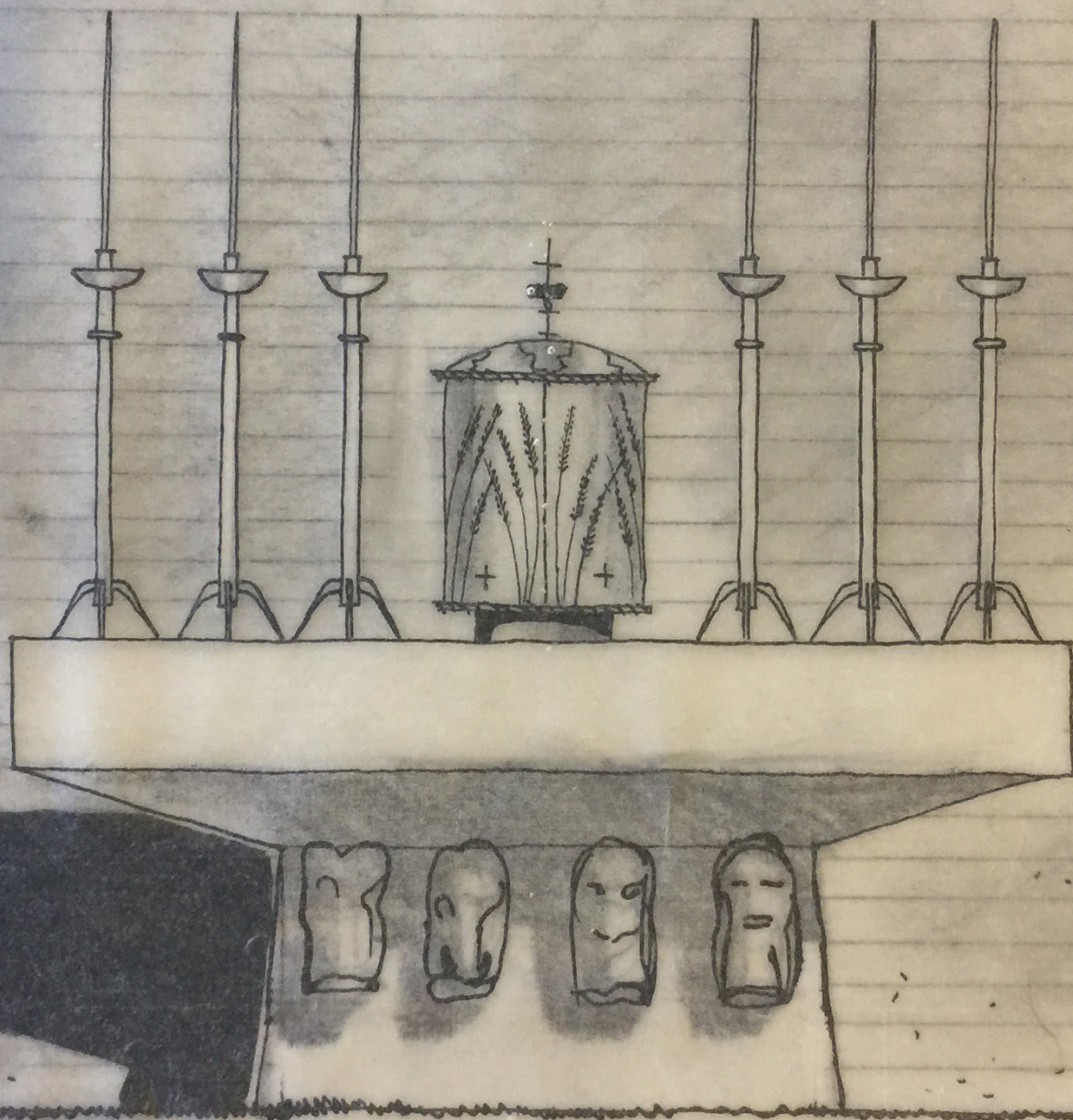


Fig 9.0 MOTHER OF GOD CATHOLIC CHURCH, EAST IVANHOE, 1956
 Architect: Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell. Image: Architect's hand drawing,
 SLV, Collection of Architectural Drawings of Mockridge, Stahle and Mitchell, LTAD 16/425

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Fig. 0.2 ST MATTHEW'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND, CHELTENHAM, 1966
Architect: Chancellor + Patrick. Image: Detail of exposed aggregate structural column
Libby Richardson, 2017

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APPENDIX A : PLACES OF WORSHIP IN VICTORIA c.1950 -c1970

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APPENDIX B: VICTORIAN POSTWAR CHURCHES BY PRACTICE

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APPENDIX C: ANGLICAN SURVEY MAPS 1958

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Fig. 9.12 Detail, CHRIST WITH THE DISCIPLES LISTENING, 1966
Artist: Dorothy Braund, oil on composition board. Photo: Libby Richardson, 2016
Location: Multi-faith Religious Centre, Monash University.

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