

Missional Ecclesiology in Church Facility Design

by

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## INTRODUCTION

Holy Cross Lutheran Church is located in Overland Park, Kansas, a rapidly growing suburb in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Holy Cross held its first worship service on February 21, 1988, and was officially organized as a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on December 3, 1989 with 131 charter members. The congregation's charter reads:

As a people called by God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we proclaim the Gospel of Forgiveness in Jesus Christ through The Word and Sacraments.

In partnership with the Missouri-Kansas Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the mission of Holy Cross Lutheran Church is:

To worship, pray and give thanks to God  
To witness, serve, love and forgive  
To be faithful, humble, patient and gentle  
To teach and learn the Word of God  
To advocate for justice and peace  
To be open-minded and receptive to all  
To share talents, responsibilities, resources and time  
And to be joyful in fellowship.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after organization, the congregation turned its sights on the procurement of land and the construction of a new church facility. On February 20, 1994, the congregation began worshipping in a newly constructed facility. The process leading up to construction reveals much about the congregation's ecclesiology and missiology. This paper will be a critical reflection of the process that Holy Cross used to design and build its first church facility. Following this reflection, I will propose a model for designing a

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<sup>1</sup> Charter of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1989.

church facility that supports a congregation's vision for ministry through a process of theological reflection.

## FACILITY DESIGN PROCESS AT HOLY CROSS

From the outset of the congregation's life together, the goals of procuring land and constructing a church facility were at the forefront of the church's ministry. By 1991, Holy Cross had grown to a baptized membership of 184, and felt ready for a building program. On March 5, 1991, the Rev. Gerald Shaft, Region 4 Mission Director for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, presented to the Holy Cross Executive Committee the steps required for an initial church building program. Following preliminary approvals from the Division for Outreach to proceed with a building program, step two in the process reads:

### II. Capital Funding and Proposal Development

- A. Congregation in formal meeting authorizes a capital fund campaign.
- B. Capital fund raising campaign is conducted. Mission Director is informed of results.
- C. The Staff at the Division for Outreach in Chicago requests the Church Building Consultant to visit the congregation and develop Phase I of the Church Building Proposal (CBP).
- D. The Staff at the Division for Outreach in Chicago approves the CBP and returns it to the Church Building Consultant for approval by Synod, Mission Director and Congregation.<sup>2</sup>

On March 11, 1991, a motion was presented to the Congregation Council to ask the congregation for formal approval to begin a Capital Funds Campaign to begin in the Fall of 1991. In October of that same year, the Lutheran Laity Movement (LLM) conducted a joint general stewardship campaign and Capital Funds Campaign. The

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<sup>2</sup> "Initial Church Building Programs, Steps in the Building Process," ELCA Division for Outreach, January, 1990.

stated ‘Challenge’ goal of the building campaign was \$99,000. This goal was determined by surveying 16 members of the congregation. In the survey, “they evaluated themselves as to the sacrificial gift they might be able to give to [the] building fund on a weekly basis, and then made a ‘best judgment’ estimate for other member households (only those they knew). These estimates were averaged and reviewed.”<sup>3</sup> The Campaign director used the information from the surveys to arrive at the campaign goal. At the conclusion of the campaign, the congregation had received \$91,589 in pledged commitments.

In January of 1992, Holy Cross received the Church Building Proposal (CBP) from the Division for Outreach of the ELCA. The proposal provided for the construction of a 6,000 square foot facility at a total cost of \$660,000. This cost included \$71,172 for the purchase of a tract of land on which to build the facility. Following approval of the CBP, the congregation began the process of design development and construction as presented in the “required steps” from the Division for Outreach.

The completed 6,000 square foot facility had a worship space that seated roughly 200 persons and made no accommodations for a variety of worship styles other than traditional Lutheran liturgical worship. There was a small kitchen, office space, a fellowship hall, two classrooms, a small nursery and men’s and women’s restrooms. The congregation had achieved its goal of constructing a permanent facility for worship and congregational activity.

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<sup>3</sup> “Questions and Answers,” Holy Cross Lutheran Church Capital Fund Campaign brochure; October 1991.

## CRITICAL REFLECTION

“What is the church trying to accomplish? It is a place for families, worship, fellowship, education, meetings, and ministry.” This statement from the February 10, 1992 Schematic Design Committee notes reveal much about the congregation’s embedded ecclesiology, theology, and missiology. In many ways, the Holy Cross congregation viewed itself as a very traditional, family-sized congregation. Even though Holy Cross was a new mission start, its worship styles, organization and approach to mission were akin to that of a well-established, family-sized, Midwestern Lutheran congregation. One is left with the impression that those involved in the early years of the congregation’s life together sought to establish a congregation that preserved church memories of the past. A brief overview of the congregation’s charter sighted at the beginning of this paper reveals a purpose that is much more inward than outward focused. The old adage: “form follows function” is proved correct when one applies a critical lens to the facility that was constructed.

Early on in the design process, the staff architect from the ELCA Division for Outreach encouraged the congregation to design and construct a multi-purpose facility that could accommodate many different functions and better serve the needs of a growing congregation. The proposed design could also be easily expanded upon in future phases of construction. However, the Holy Cross Design Committee rejected the proposal from the ELCA staff architect, and chose to design a facility that more adequately met their preferences. It was the opinion of the design team that the proposed design from the

ELCA architect was too bland. Working with an architect chosen by the congregation, a new design that remained within the required 6,000 square feet of the CBP was created and approved. I often refer to the original structure as a “church in miniature.” The facility had everything that a traditional church has, yet was much smaller because of size constraints placed upon the congregation in the CBP. The impression that I am left with after reading through various minutes of the design committee meetings is that those serving on the design committee brought to the process their own personal preferences and past experiences to the design process.

I hesitate to say that there was no vision for mission in the design and construction of the first facility. It is my opinion that the congregation ultimately built a facility that met their embedded ecclesiology. Their sense of what it means to be the Church was inwardly focused as opposed to outwardly focused. The congregation, in many ways, was turned in on itself. As a result, Holy Cross constructed a facility that met those inward felt needs.

That inwardly focused vision, however, was second to the primary directive for the project: money. In his July 8, 1991 report to the Congregation Council, Pastor F. Mark Walters wrote:

Last Monday Church Council voted to call a special congregational meeting to vote on LLM’s proposal to conduct a capital funds drive this Fall. We are about to take another major step in the life of our congregation. It’s not too early to start emphasizing the following:

The size of our first building will be determined by the results of the capital funds drive.

The amount of debt we will need to service will be determined by the capital funds drive.

We will not be able to build using spare change. It will take commitment and sacrificial giving.

Our first building will not meet everyone's every desire. It will be a quality, energy efficient, useful structure that can be expanded to meet our expanding needs.

Once the Division for Outreach of the ELCA deemed the congregation ready to begin taking formal steps toward the construction of a new building, the first consideration was the existing congregation's ability to financially support a building construction project. Even before an architect's pen could possibly begin to bring shape to the congregation's vision for a facility and how the facility would support the ministry, the process laid out by the Division for Outreach required a Capital Funds Campaign. This requirement divorced the process from the congregation's sense of mission. Congregation members were to financially commit to an idea, in this case the perceived need for a building, rather than to a concrete vision for ministry that would be supported by a particular facility. Instead, the financial commitments received during the capital funds campaign would determine the size of the facility; not congregational vision, mission, or context for ministry.

### *Contextual Analysis*

Overland Park, Kansas is a rapidly growing suburb of the Kansas City metropolitan area located in Johnson County. Holy Cross Lutheran Church is located on a major thoroughfare on the northeast corner of a major commercial real estate development. A "Trade Area Profile" from 1991 that uses data derived from a population model formulated by The County Economic Research Institute, Inc., (CERI) provides information regarding demographics of the area surrounding Holy Cross.

CERI was established in 1986 as a department of Johnson County government and subsequently privatized in 1994 as a non-profit corporation . . . Its mission is to support the economic development of Johnson County, the Kansas City metropolitan area, and the state of Kansas through the provision of data and technical assistance.<sup>4</sup>

CERI, offers these demographic estimates for the three-mile radius surrounding the church property in 1991:

Population:	51,378
Households:	21,391
Median Age:	35.1
% Of Population 25 and Under:	34.7%
% Of Population 65 and Older:	9.1%
Average Household Income:	\$51,127.00

The same report estimated that the trade area's population would increase to 57,195 persons by 1996.<sup>5</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Congregation Trend Report for Holy Cross indicates that the 66213 zip code, in which Holy Cross resides, experienced a population increase from 695 persons in 1980 to 5,944 persons in 1990.<sup>6</sup> Overland Park was quickly expanding southward as new housing subdivisions were being constructed.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cerionline.org/>

<sup>5</sup> "Trade Area Profile, Metcalf Avenue and 119<sup>th</sup> Street," Report prepared at the request of the Overland Park Chamber of Commerce, 1991.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.elca.org/cgi-bin/fa/fi.dll/trendnet.search?congrno=07821>; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Congregation Trend Report for Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Department for Research and Evaluation.

The population trends at the time in which Holy Cross was researching, proposing and designing the first facility construction indicate that the future growth of southern Johnson County would be rapid, steady, and large. While the information is presented in hindsight, the Trend Report from the ELCA indicates that the population growth for the 66213 zip code from 1980 to 2001 marked a 3037.8% change.

The rapidly growing population surrounding the church property in and around 1990 was young, upwardly mobile, and young children comprised a large percentage of the population. An elementary school was located immediately next door to the church property. In fact, the congregation was meeting and worshipping in the school prior to the construction of the church facility.

Key to any contextual analysis conducted by a congregation is the question: “What is God doing in this place?” A second question is like it, “What is God calling us to do in this place?” A cursory review of population trends would indicate the ministry needs and opportunities in the local community. High on that list would be ministries to children and young families. And yet, the facility that was designed and constructed by the Holy Cross congregation contained only two hard-walled classrooms. Portable partitions would be used in the small “Fellowship Hall” for other children’s Christian education programs. Reflecting on the constructed space, how could the facility have been designed so as to meet the needs of a growing number of young families in the community? Could there have been better space utilization? Of those families moving into the area, how many were unchurched? How could the worship space have been designed so as to facilitate a variety of worship styles that would appeal to a non-Lutheran and non-Christian population? These questions, and many others could be

derived from good contextual analysis combined with a missiological ecclesiology.

Craig Van Gelder writes:

The church never exists in a vacuum. Every ecclesiology, therefore, is developed within a particular cultural context. There is no other way to be the church except within a concrete, historical setting. This means that all ecclesiologies must be seen as functioning relative to their context. This does not mean that they cannot be accurate interpretations of the biblical materials. It does mean, though, that the specifics of any ecclesiology are a translation of the biblical perspective for a particular context. New contexts require new expressions for understanding the church.

We need to develop a missiological ecclesiology that addresses the contextual character of the church. The church is catholic, or universal, in the world. That is, it can exist within any and every culture. The church has the inherent ability to translate the eternal truths of God into relevant cultural forms within any context. In missiological circles this process is referred to as contextualization.”<sup>7</sup>

All evidence seems to indicate that the demographics of the growing community did not come into play throughout the process. In Constructing Local Theologies, Robert Schreiter writes:

Ideally, for a genuinely contextual theology, the theological process should begin with the opening of a culture, that long and careful listening to a culture to discover its principal values, needs, interests, directions, and symbols. Only in this way can the configurations of a culture become apparent of themselves, without simply responding to other kinds of needs extrinsic to the culture.<sup>8</sup>

Holy Cross Lutheran Church built a church facility that matched an ecclesiology that seems to have been rather out of step with the community in which it existed. The facility was an end in itself, and not a part of the congregation’s mission within a particular context. As I will now show, the years that followed show a disturbing trend that indicates a “mission accomplished” mentality following construction.

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<sup>7</sup> Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) 41.

<sup>8</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985) 28.

### *Worship Attendance Following Building Completion*

I am of the opinion that worship attendance, as opposed to baptized membership, is a much better barometer to gauge congregational health and vitality. In the years following its organization, Holy Cross' average attendance growth was slow and steady. The largest period of growth was experienced from 1993 to 1994 during the construction phase of the new facility. However, following the completion of construction, average attendance actually decreased and then reached a plateau until 1998 when I was called as Senior Pastor and the church system was changed.

I was unable to find any documented, statistical based research related to average worship attendance following the construction of a church facility. However, Dr. John Ellas at the Center for Church Growth in Houston, Texas told me that his observation is that churches normally experience a 15% increase in attendance following the opening of a new facility. In addition, this increase will not be sustained if there are not sufficient programs to minister to the new attendees attracted by the new church facility.

The growth in attendance in 1994 followed by the decline and plateau in attendance in 1995-1997 appears to be a significant reflection on the community's vision and goals related to the building construction project. Completion of the project meant fulfillment of the vision. Missiology was not the main purpose behind the construction of the facility; the building was a goal in and of itself. Once the church facility was complete, the congregation felt as though its work was done. The congregation had constructed a church facility out of an embedded ecclesiology that had nothing to do with

missiology.<sup>9</sup> The community had a permanent structure in which to worship and to conduct ministry programs. The facility was not intended to support the mission, per se, but rather to support a desired identity as an established Lutheran congregation. In interviews with several members of the congregation who were present during this time, I discovered that the pastor had indicated that the congregation needed to rest and to adjust to the new building after completion of the building process.

### A MODEL PROPOSED

The first step in the process of developing a functional design for a church facility that supports ministry is for the local congregation to come to an understanding of what it means to be “church,” from both a biblical and confessional perspective. In other words, the local congregation must grapple with its own ecclesiology in order to gain a proper sense of identity. “An *ecclesiology* is a summary of what the church, working within a particular historical context, believes the Bible to teach about the character and purpose of the church in relation to that setting.”<sup>10</sup>

Scripture provides a wide variety of images pertinent to the nature of the church. Chief among these is the account of the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2); often cited as the “birth” of the Church. Martin Luther, writing in the Small Catechism, gives expression to the biblical understanding of the nature of the Church in his explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles’ Creed:

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.easum.com/FAQS/architectureandmission.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000) 29.

I believe that by my own understanding or strength I cannot believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to him, but instead the Holy Spirit has called me through the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, made me holy and kept me in the true faith, just as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and makes holy the whole Christian church on earth and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one common true faith.<sup>11</sup>

Just as God's Spirit brought life out of chaos at Creation (Gen. 1:2), the Spirit continues to create and bring forth life in and through the Church. A congregation, as a member of the Church catholic, is a community that is called, formed, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As such, the local congregation participates with God in God's purpose of creation, forgiveness and reconciliation. This is the congregation's mission. Everything that the local congregation does should be as a result of this mission. The question that the local congregation needs to ask itself is, "How do we live out that missional identity in this particular place?" If the local congregation does not have a sense of mission that arises out of Biblical and historical understandings of what it means to be "Church," the congregation will be driven by opinion, personal preference, money, or any number of factors that have nothing to do with God's purpose.

Sin is often defined as "life turned in on itself." Sin is much more than the act of individual wrongdoing or misdeed. Sin, at its essence, is the inability to trust God.

At the heart or essence of all sin is the failure to trust God. Sin is our unwillingness to acknowledge our creatureliness and dependence upon the God of grace. We pursue sin in the illusory and vain effort to establish our own lives on an independent and secure basis.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas sin is self-serving, a missiological ecclesiology seeks to trust and to participate with God in God's purposes of creation, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

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<sup>11</sup> SC The Creed 6, in *BC*, 355-56.

<sup>12</sup> Ted Peters, *Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1994)8.

In its early years, Holy Cross had an ecclesiology that was rooted in the common experience of those from a traditional Lutheran background. This ecclesiology was heavily centered on a pastoral understanding of the church as a community of believers who gather for care, nurture, and worship. The purpose of mission was to bring more members into the community, to give them a sense of belonging and to help the congregation grow in numbers. As Van Gelder describes in The Essence of the Church, the Holy Cross congregation had a “functional” understanding of mission. Mission was an additional ministry of the church that ultimately served the church’s needs by helping it to grow.

By examining the Biblical, historical, and confessional resources of the Church, the local congregation can develop a sense of mission that is rooted in a sound ecclesiology. “Mission” then moves from being something that the local congregation does, to become the essential nature of the local congregation. In that respect, mission does not belong to only the evangelism committee, but is what the congregation does through its educational, worship, and community service ministries.

Once the congregation has claimed this missional ecclesiology, the second step in the proposed model is to engage in an analysis of the local context in which the congregation exists. Through the process of analysis, the question should be asked, “How is God at work in this place?” What are the cultural and demographic trends as well as the patterns, symbols, and stories of the local context that can help to point to God’s activity? Demographic data provide a wonderful resource for this kind of information. This data is available from the U.S. Census Bureau ([www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)) or from sources such as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Department for Research and

Evaluation ([www.elca.org/re](http://www.elca.org/re)). A number of for-profit organizations provide this data with analysis. Demographic data will show population trends as well as give data related to age, gender, race, income, and education for a particular area. Psychographic data gives information regarding opinions and attitudes of the local populace. The data provides information about cultural tastes and preferences.<sup>13</sup> In addition to giving a defined picture of the context, an analysis of this data provides an understanding of the ministry needs in the area. This data provides a wonderful picture of the creative activity of the Holy Spirit.

The third step in the process is to reflect on the ways in which God is calling the local congregation to relate to its context.

For example, if the demographic data show large numbers of households with young children, and in which both spouses are employed full time – and the psychographic data show an attitude of frustration with busy schedules and too few hours in the day – it may suggest opportunities for child-care programs, nursery schools, and family oriented ministries that will structure quality time for families to spend together.<sup>14</sup>

This type of reflection can result in the formation of mission and vision statements. These statements help the local congregation define the ways in which the congregation intentionally lives out its missional ecclesiology in that particular context. All ministries, programs, and decisions are determined using the lens of the mission and vision statements. When Holy Cross was chartered, it had a very broad and all-encompassing mission statement that spoke in very general terms about the purpose of the church. But there was not the necessary work done to connect that statement of purpose to the local context. For instance, how will the congregation “worship, pray and give thanks to God”

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<sup>13</sup> Mark D. Johns, *Our Context, Exploring Our Congregation and Community*, Congregational Leader Series (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2002) 58-62.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 62

in ways that speak to the local culture and context? The ecclesiology of the congregation dictated that the worship remain in traditional Lutheran liturgical forms using, as one member told me, “German dead-guy music.” This member feels that the worship forms used at the time were out of touch with the tastes, preferences, and needs of many in the local populace. For the purposes of this proposed model, a question that the local congregation needs to begin to wrestle with is: “How can our facility support the mission of the church in ways that will meet the needs, tastes, and preferences of the local populace while remaining true to our ecclesiology?” This is where the missional identity meets the context.

Once the congregation is clear about its missional ecclesiology, context, and how it seeks to live out its identity in that place, the congregation is ready to begin to determine how the church facility can be designed to support the missional ecclesiology of the congregation.

To make the building serve the liturgy requires serious consideration. From anthropologists and psychologists we learn how ritual and the ritual use of space express and reinforce people’s identity, an identity which is seriously threatened when changes are proposed. Changes in architecture for worship require pastoral care and sensitivity, serious study, and sound theological reasons; changes should not be made on the basis of personal tastes or of majority votes without prior study. Whether the objective is simply moving a few furnishings, renovating an older space, or creating a new building, the underlying theological issues deserve study, prayer, and informed decision making.<sup>15</sup>

This model for designing a facility takes seriously the role that architecture plays in the ecclesiology of the congregation. But it is important to understand that the building itself cannot become an idol. The facility, while designed with an eye to the semiotic

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<sup>15</sup> Walter C. Huffman and S. Anita Stauffer, *Where We Worship*, (Philadelphia, Board of Publication, Lutheran Church in America, 1987) 6.

importance of the structure, must ultimately support the mission of the congregation.

While the shape of the worship facility and the placement of particular worship furnishings can have tremendous theological significance, one must also take into consideration how those particular items hinder or enhance the congregation's mission.

For example, Article VII of the Augsburg Confession states that the Church "is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel."<sup>16</sup> For a Lutheran congregation, this definition of the Church would give precedence to a worship facility that emphasized the centrality of the Word and the Sacraments. A prominently placed baptismal font and altar would provide a very rich theological presence. A missional ecclesiology would ask, "How do we do this in ways that speak to the culture around us?" "What styles of worship need to be supported, while at the same time remaining true to our identity as Christian rooted in the Word and Sacraments?" "How would the use of technology help or hinder the mission?" Additional questions derived from contextual analysis must then be asked: "What type of growth do we anticipate? Would we be better served to build a gymnasium that can be used throughout the week by the large number of youth in our area and then converted for worship usage on the weekend?" "How can the design of the facility support and enhance our educational ministries in ways that meet the needs of the context?" This may lead a congregation to design a facility that supports the use of technology in its Christian education program.

I am of the opinion that too many congregations get caught up in arguments over carpet color because there is not a well-defined missional ecclesiology that drives the process. When the local congregation and its members are clear about the congregation's

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<sup>16</sup> AC, Lat. 7:1, in BC, 42.

mission, and the building design supports that mission, a congregation can move beyond personal preference and opinion. In the process, greater support and excitement for the finished product are generated. This then leads to the final stage in this model prior to construction: the Capital Funds Campaign.

The model for design and construction previously used at Holy Cross was primarily driven by monetary concerns. With committed dollars in hand, the congregation then designed a facility that met a specified budget. Upon completion of construction, the ministry was then forced to fit the design of the building. Years later, when the congregation decided to add contemporary forms of worship, chairs needed to be removed in order to accommodate instruments and sound equipment. Even then, the equipment and wires provide physical obstacles for worshippers. The allocated space for Christian education was not enough to accommodate the rapid growth of the children's Sunday school program.

This proposed model turns that process on its head by waiting until the building design has been completed in order to raise funds for its construction. It is my opinion that this can result in greater commitment and participation on the part of the congregation when it comes to funding the building project.

## CONCLUSION

“Cheshire Puss,' she began, rather timidly, as she did not at all know whether it would like the name: however, it only grinned a little wider. `Come, it's pleased so far,' thought Alice, and she went on. `Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

`That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

`I don't much care where--' said Alice.

`Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

`--so long as I get *SOMEWHERE*,' Alice added as an explanation.

`Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, `if you only walk long enough.'"<sup>17</sup>

The purpose of this proposed model is to help local congregations discover how the building design process can support the mission of the congregation in its particular context. Often times, churches get so caught up in the need for additional space, or the need for a permanent structure, that they lose sight of the fact that church facilities are tools to support and foster the ongoing mission of the church. If the sole purpose of the process is to design more space, that is what will result. However, the space will be less than supportive or functional. By coming to a greater understanding of the missiological nature of what it means to be the Church, the design process becomes much more fruitful.

Jesus said:

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.<sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the

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<sup>17</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, The Millennium Fulcrum edition 2.7a (Duncan Research, 1991) <http://www.cs.indiana.edu/metastuff/wonder/ch6.html>

floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes. (Matt 7:24-27)<sup>18</sup>

## POSTSCRIPT

The impetus for choosing the topic of this paper is the current facility expansion program that Holy Cross has been involved with for the past year. The congregation is planning to build a new worship space along with new educational, administrative, and multipurpose space. When starting this project, the congregation’s leadership chose to repeat the model given to them by the Division for Outreach when they first built the existing facility. A Capital Campaign was conducted last fall that raised \$900,000 in commitments. Based on the amount of land available for construction, a rough estimate of construction costs was calculated. A loan of \$3.1 million was secured to pay off the existing mortgage and cover the estimated building expenses.

In the course of the design phase of the project, it was determined that there were not sufficient funds budgeted in order to construct a facility that met current and projected ministry needs. In fact, the estimated budget was putting serious constraints on the process. Desperately needed space would either be compromised or eliminated.

Through an analysis of the process and the discovery of our needs, it was determined by the design team that we move forward with the design of a facility that

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<sup>18</sup>*The New Revised Standard Version*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers) 1989.

meets ministry needs and to then approach the congregation for support of the design.

The chair of the building finance team summed it up appropriately when he said,

“Originally, we were building to a budget. But now, we are budgeting for a vision.”

In my opinion, the many people involved in the design process began to take a good hard look at what God is up to in this place, and decided to participate with God in this endeavor.

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