



A JOURNAL OF ORTHODOX FAITH AND CULTURE

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REFLECTING THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

Building New Churches with Dignity and Grace

In the second-half of a compelling interview on how church design, materials, and liturgical furnishings support or detract from the iconicity of worship, Orthodox church designer Andrew Gould of Charleston, South Carolina reflects on church buildings around the world and advises large parishes and small missions on incorporating traditional patterns into a beautiful, fitting, and prayerful house of worship.

I. ORTHODOX ARCHITECTURE: SUPPORTING THE ICONICITY OF WORSHIP

Building Holy Ascension Church in Charleston

RTE: Andrew, in Part I of our interview you emphasized the importance of incorporating local building traditions when designing a church.¹ Can you describe how you did this while building Holy Ascension Orthodox Church in Charleston?

ANDREW: Holy Ascension was a particularly interesting opportunity because it is located in Charleston, which in many ways is the most historic city in

¹ Andrew Gould, "On Earth as it is in Heaven" and "Mass Transfigured By Light," *Road to Emmaus Journal*, Fall, 2015 (#63)

Opposite: Looking across the nave. Holy Ascension Church, Charleston, SC. Photo: A. Gould.

America. It has the largest historic district of any city in the country and its historic district was established as legally protected before any other. The older buildings are mostly masonry and it has a mixture of historic influences, primarily English Caribbean, but some Spanish and French colonial influence also. When I began the project of designing Holy Ascension, I felt very strongly that I wanted the church to look like an historic and urban Charleston building.

The historic fantasy that I operated by (and I tend to feel that almost every project requires a historical fantasy to define the design concept) was: What would it have looked like had Russian immigrants to Charleston constructed a Russian Orthodox Church in the 19th century? That historical fantasy is not far-fetched. There are a variety of old churches in Charleston built by different immigrant groups in various styles and for different liturgical rites, so it is relatively easy to imagine how Russians could have done the same had they been here at the time.

Looking at these old churches and houses, we can identify that there are certain materials and details that are common to all of the old buildings in Charleston. These, we might say, are the canon of Charleston architecture, the materials and detail that are universally used by all. There are also details and forms specific to particular housing types and church denominations, and those are the changeable details. So, we can identify a sort of canon of local architecture in the same way that we can identify a canon in historic iconography.

I used these traditional Charleston construction patterns wherever I could make them fit the needs of Orthodox church design. The first instance is masonry construction with a stucco finish. Most of the masonry buildings in Charleston are built like this, and of course, so are many Russian churches. But it goes even further, because there is a particular cornice detail that is quite common on 18th century Charleston buildings: three courses of brick stepping out from the wall with the middle course of bricks turned at an angle to make a sawtooth profile. It so happens that this exact same cornice detail is quite common in both Byzantine and Russian medieval architecture, so I identified immediately that this is something we must use. Then Charleston buildings often have metal roofs, sometimes copper, and the roofs are beautifully hand-crimped to follow the various gables and hips and

Opposite: Exterior and detail of portico. Holy Ascension Orthodox Church, Charleston, SC.

Photos: A. Gould.



valleys of the roof. They sometimes have turrets and finials. So, because the metal roofs with their cupolas and crosses are such a prominent feature in Russian architecture, I decided that this would be a major visual element of our building: an ornately formed roof with a hand-crimped copper surface.

Another connection to the materiality of Charleston buildings in Holy Ascension is our extensive use of southern heart pine. We used reclaimed heart pine for the doors and for the iconostasis, both of which were hand made by parishioners, and we used southern yellow pine for the floors. Charleston also has particularly beautiful bricks, taken from old buildings during foundation repairs, which are available from salvage companies. So we bought several pallets of these salvaged bricks and used them for paving all of the porches and garden paths, and for details in the masonry walls. Then we painted the building a rich yellow ochre color because Charleston buildings are typically painted in strong pastel colors. And this is another one of those happy alignments with Russian building patterns—Russian buildings, especially in St. Petersburg, are painted very similarly.

Charleston is especially famous for her beautiful courtyard gardens, so we took particular care to design the gardens around the church and plant them with the traditional plants that one sees in downtown Charleston. We have gardens along the sidewalk that look public, and we have a walled forecourt garden that looks more sacred and liturgical. I think these intimate gardens are one of the most Charlestonian things about our church. And I suppose Russians might see them as one of the most Russian.

All of these things taken together result in a building that feels very much at home here. With two onion cupolas and five enormous three-bar crosses, there is no effort whatsoever to disguise its Russian Orthodox heritage, but at the same time the building looks completely Charlestonian. I think this achieves the goal I set out with my historic fantasy—that is, how it would look had Russians built a church in Charleston in the 19th century. We have found that the building is extremely satisfying, both to the members of the parish who use the building and to the community at large. We receive comments in equal measure remarking on how beautifully it expresses Orthodox tradition, but also how much it looks like an old Charleston building. People unfamiliar with the neighborhood often express shock that it is a new building at all, thinking that a building like this could only be an historic structure.

RTE: I know that you and your wife Julie became Orthodox after you began

the designs for Holy Ascension. Clearly you were already immersed in Byzantine and Roman design, so how has your conversion influenced your work?

ANDREW: When I began designing Holy Ascension I was not yet Orthodox, although I had recognized for some years that I had a calling to design Orthodox churches and had made an extensive study of Byzantine and Russian architecture. I had a very good understanding of the architectural forms in those traditions, although my understanding of the ethos of Orthodox liturgy was not yet well formed. Eleven years later, having spent much of my life in prayer in Orthodox liturgies, I have an ever-increasing appreciation of the importance of liturgical furnishings, and how formative they are in the liturgical experience and ethos of an Orthodox church. I've put more artistic effort into considering proper designs for iconostases, chandeliers, liturgical furniture and the general coordination of these things with the iconographic scheme. The building itself is really only a small part of what needs to be gotten right in order to have an Orthodox temple with the proper liturgical ethos.

RTE: We sometimes read of the medieval idea of the "golden ratio." Is that a traditional building calculation that you used in building Holy Ascension?

ANDREW: In Holy Ascension the proportion of height to width in the nave and the chancel is the golden ratio, and there are other particular geometric ratios throughout the building defining its proportional system. I use this in all of my work, not because I consider these ratios to have a mystical significance that makes them especially important in an Orthodox church, but because they are a practical system for defining proportions and dimensions in the design of any building. A designer is constantly faced with the need to make decisions about the heights and widths of each part of a building and it can drive one mad to draw out every possible variation and look at them all in an attempt to judge which is best.

So, in order to limit my choices to those most likely to be attractive, I tend to draw all of my proportions using these harmonious geometric ratios that have been favored for millennia. The modern architect, Le Corbusier, was also well-known for using geometric ratios to proportion every detail of his buildings. He was once asked to what extent this helped him in his design work, and I very much like his answer: "It makes the easy part easier, but it doesn't really help with the hard."



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RTE: When I first stepped into Holy Ascension, the church had a quality I've very rarely felt, as if the building itself was just right and that, although a visitor, I too belonged there. The dome is tall but not overwhelming, as if the viewer has been invited into a space that is extraordinarily comfortable.

ANDREW: I think what you are describing is partly a matter of human scale. That is to say, all of the elements of the building that one physically relates to, such as the doorways and the columns and low arches that we stand among, are not oversized. They reveal a scale of craftsmanship and ornamentation that is appropriate and traditional. One of the most common mistakes with modern buildings is that they are overscaled and underdetailed. That is to say, the architectural features are very large and they do not have enough detail for that large size.

If we look at the most satisfying buildings we will find that the larger they are, the more detail they have—ornamental detail and also structural texture, like joints between blocks of stone. This means that even a very large building that is built by hand out of very small pieces still conveys a sense of human scale and human craftsmanship. On the contrary, a building that seems to have been built by giants, where the blocks of stone are enormously large and the details are few and far between tends to be quite uncomfortable to enter. Such a building is also disappointing in that from a distance it does not appear to be as large as it really is.

The most satisfying large cathedrals are those that are covered with ornament at a very fine scale, or are built of very small blocks of stone. From a distance, this makes these large buildings look even larger than they actually are, which is highly satisfying. In my own work I always strive to make buildings that seem like they could have been bigger, but are charmingly small, and avoid the modern tendency to make buildings that seem overscaled and look like as if they might have been better had they been smaller.

The Problem of St. Peter's: the Majesty of St. Paul's

RTE: When you speak of monumental scale, I immediately think of St. Peter's in Rome, which seems colossal and overwhelming. Of course, the historical significance of the church, the relics of St. Peter, and Michelangelo's Pieta make it an inspiring pilgrimage destination, but what can you tell us about the architecture?

Opposite: St. Peter's Basilica, Rome.

ANDREW: St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican is a classic example of this problem of scale. The architectural forms and the scale of ornamentation at St. Peter's would be perfectly suited to a church about one-third that size. When we are there we get a sense of overwhelming size, but we do not get the sense of sublime beauty that we feel in the great Gothic cathedrals which, although they are not as large, are carved with such intricate ornamentation that they seem to reach further and more vigorously into the heavens. Saint Peter's Basilica is a somewhat disappointing experience, even compared to other Renaissance churches in Rome, because the lack of detail in the architecture to convey a sense of scale or distance makes us struggle to appreciate its truly colossal size. It is only if we look down from the gallery towards the floor, and consciously consider how small the people appear, that we are able to convince ourselves that the church really is as uncommonly large as the guidebook tells us.

If we go across town to the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls, a church that is a bit smaller than St. Peter's, but which has truly hundreds upon hundreds of stone columns supporting the roof, we feel immediately moved by an impression of inconceivable vastness mingled with shadow and mystery; an architectural space that seems truly like an icon of the infinitude of God.

The other problem with St. Peter's is that there is not a lot to see. Even though it took a long time to build, it looks as if it were completely designed and finished all at once, even down to the mosaic 'paintings', and there has never been anything else added since, which is so unusual for a Catholic Church. Most of the churches in Europe are full of old chapels and shrines and have walls hung with hundreds upon hundreds of paintings and things that accumulated over the centuries, giving them so much interest. I don't know why St. Peter's has so purposely been kept devoid of any such additions since it was built.

It's the quality of a liturgical space that it must accumulate shrines and lamps and holy things and feel like a place for people to worship. A place that never changes doesn't make sense as a temple for the worship of God; it makes more sense as a monument to an abstract philosophical concept, like the Pantheon in Paris, for instance. Any of these Classical "Valhallas" has that static quality of just being a vast, marble-paneled echoing room. Your presence there does not seem to be of any importance to the building, and these rational monuments seem to have an existence of their own that we

Opposite: Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, one of Rome's four major ancient basilicas.



cannot really participate in. A good church building needs you to be in there. When you enter to pray, you complete it.

And, as you mentioned, isn't it interesting about the Pieta? It's so small compared to the space it's in, and yet it radiates a significance that is almost able to fill the entire cavernous church with its light. It's a phenomenon that I don't think I've ever seen elsewhere, and beautifully iconic in that it mirrors the redemptive power of Christ's death reaching out through the vastness of creation. And yet it's so strange that it was Michelangelo who designed the whole church. It baffles me because most everything he touched was a work of genius, but his great basilica is disappointing. There was an earlier version of St. Peter's designed by Donato Bramante, whose church would have looked much more like Hagia Sophia, complicated with side rooms and little colonnades. As it turned out, Michelangelo received the commission instead.

Saint Nicholas Church at Ground-Zero, NYC

RTE: What are your thoughts on the new St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church at Ground Zero?

ANDREW: It's a puzzling project. It has been problematic from the initial program advertised by those in charge of the rebuilding project. When the idea was first discussed it was clear that the client would be looking for a building that was recognizably cutting-edge and modernistic, yet also recognizably Greek and Byzantine. And so right here we have a problem because the quality of Byzantine architecture is its extreme conservatism and resistance to change, and the quality of modernism is its insistence that everything must be completely new in every way. And, of course, a quality of Byzantine architecture is that it must be massive and introverted, yet the quality of modernistic architecture is that it must be light and transparent. It is fundamentally impossible to create a building that is simultaneously Byzantine and Modernist and have that building speak with a pure and unadulterated voice.

And so I believe the project was doomed to a certain degree of artistic failure from the very start, and I lament that those in charge felt so unconfident in the tradition of Orthodox architecture that they felt it was necessary to build a modernistic structure in order to be taken seriously. How much greater a witness it would have been if they had had the boldness to build a truly Byzantine church here, one that has no pretence to Modernism at

all—the finest Byzantine church, all marble and gold mosaics, that we could possibly build—a monument that could stand alongside any of the ancient churches of Constantinople in its beauty. That would have been a bold thing to do, indeed, because in such a progressive city as New York it would have appeared to most people as insanely backwards and no doubt there would have been many critics writing in to the newspapers deriding the Greek community for still living in the Dark Ages. But of course we should take a comment like that as utmost flattery from the world, and this is exactly the derision we should seek.

So, having accepted that this building would be a sort of fusion of modernistic and Byzantine architecture, I'm not unimpressed with the design that Mr. Calatrava has conjured. Santiago Calatrava is undoubtedly one of the best modern architects working in the world today, and so it is no surprise that his design solution is impressive considering the impossible program with which he was presented. The exterior of the building will undoubtedly have a certain beauty to its materiality, like all of Mr. Calatrava's buildings. It has a sculptural elegance to its forms and a refinement in its details. We can see from the renderings that it is to be clad in marble and in glass, and will no doubt look quite precious because of these fine materials. But unfortunately the material beauty that it has is not of a welcoming and organic sort. When we look at an ancient Byzantine church all made out of red brick, carved marble, tile roofs, we see a building that seems hand-made at a completely human scale, and one which we would almost wish to run up to and hug. But the beauty that we see in the proposed St. Nicholas church is one of formal perfection, standoffish pretence. It is the same kind of beauty that we see in a neoclassical courthouse or bank lobby, or in the haughty sanctity of an art museum.

On the interior, the quality of lighting is entirely anti-Byzantine. The light seems to glow out of every corner and crevice of the walls with no visible source, and with absolutely no shadows. And furthermore there is no sense of scale in the architecture, so it is absolutely impossible to tell looking at the renderings without people present, whether the interior of the church is very large or very small. The iconography seems to have no relationship to the architecture whatsoever, but is merely pasted on here and there with the distinct appearance of being an affront to the crystalline purity of the architecture.

I am never one to be narrow-minded on the matter of beauty, and I try to be as liberal as possible in judging beautiful things according to the terms



with which their maker intended for them to be judged. And knowing that Mr. Calatrava's architecture always strives towards this sublime crystalline aesthetic of pure whiteness and elegant sinuosity, we can easily see that he has achieved his aesthetic goals with this interior. However, judging it according to the standards of an Orthodox liturgical ethos it is wholly problematic in that it completely fails to achieve any focus on the altar or the iconography and it fails to achieve any sense of depth and mystery in its quality of space. Rather, we see a rationalistic modern vision—a vision in which everything can be fully understood in a single scientific glimpse, and where the purity of the architecture is at its best when the building is empty of people and empty of furnishings. And I struggle to imagine how it will feel for a pure and fragile building such as this to have imposed within it the chaos of a congregation and the bright gaudy colors of Orthodox vestments. The irony is this: if you try to look sophisticated by building a perfect house, you only make yourself look vulgar when you step inside, for your presence undermines the perfection.

Degraded Iconicity and Spiritual Profundity in Modern Church Architecture

RTE: In light of this, can we go deeper now into the question of where we stand with Orthodox church buildings in America?

ANDREW: It's hard to assess Orthodox church architecture because the quality varies so much depending on where we look, as do the mistakes. Here in America, the biggest problem with new Orthodox churches is that they convey a purely superficial rendition of the tradition. From a distance the buildings have the trappings of Orthodox architecture, with details like domes and cupolas and arched windows, but up close we find that they do not have the material reality of Orthodox architecture. That is to say, they are not built out of masonry or logs, but rather they are built out of light frame construction covered with superficial materials like brick veneer and sheet rock which only very casually and half-heartedly give the impression of being in a traditional building. We might look at these buildings in the same way that Fr. Silouan Justiniano speaks of the degraded iconicity of printed icons.²

² Fr. Silouan Justiniano, "Beauty a Double-Edged Sword: Icons, Authenticity, and Reproductions," *Road to Emmaus Journal*, Summer 2013 (#54).

Opposite: Artistic pre-construction rendering of St. Nicholas Church at Ground-Zero, NYC.

Although there is no one characteristic that can be defined as critical for an icon to be an icon, we can nevertheless imagine a theoretical ideal icon which has all of the characteristics that make an icon iconic. And we can look at less ideal examples of iconography and say that the lack of some of these characteristics degrades their iconicity. In particular, Fr. Silouan speaks of printed icons as having only the most superficial quality of iconography which is the actual colors and composition—the image alone—but none of the material qualities, the hand-made reality or the material symbolism that gives them a deeper connection to the prototypes that they represent.

We have a similar case of degraded iconicity with these church buildings that are built with flimsy modern construction. At best, they have only the superficial appearance of mass, but they don't have a convincing feel of mass; they don't have the sense of permanence and solidity and the acoustical reality of a solid masonry building. They have neither the quality of serenity and stillness that an actual heavy masonry building has, nor do they have any symbolic connection to the New Jerusalem as described in St. John's Revelation.

Saint John describes the New Jerusalem as having twelve foundations made out of gemstones and he describes the walls as having gates made out of pearls and the streets as being made of gold. The rich and beautiful materials of the ancient Byzantine churches iconographically represent these fine materials described in the New Jerusalem and they symbolize them through a very direct and natural sort of material relationship. Although it is obscure precisely which gemstones St. John was describing when he saw the foundations of the New Jerusalem, his description most importantly conveys the idea that these gemstones are precious and beautiful and used on a massive scale. So in the ancient Byzantine churches we see that the walls are paneled in the most beautiful marbles that the Roman Empire could procure. And in his description that the buildings and the streets are made of gold, we see these churches filled with gold mosaic that convey this extraordinary richness of glow, with everything radiating the divine light from God.

In particular, the doors of churches were treated historically with special care because doors are the things we humans actually touch when we encounter the building. And so, just as the gates of the New Jerusalem are described as being especially precious and made of pearls, the doors of ancient churches were often made out of bronze or perhaps carved. And so

Opposite: Fourth-century Church of Hagia Irene, built by Emperor Constantine the Great. Photo courtesy J. Bogaerts.

PHOTO COURTESY JORGE BOGAERTS



we see in these ancient churches a symbolic connection to the spiritual and physical reality of the kingdom of God. It is very hard to perceive this while looking at a modern church that is framed in steel, clad in brick veneer or synthetic stucco, and finished on the interior with sheet rock. These materials are intensely dull and mundane to our perception, regardless of their technological merits or lack thereof.

We look at these materials and we dislike them intrinsically because we know how ordinary they are and we dislike them especially when used to imitate finer materials, when they are used to give an unconvincing veneer of Byzantine styling to a modern steel building. If we are sensitive and if we had seen the original buildings that these modern structures are modeled upon, we may actually find these modern materials outright disgusting. In that they are used as a lie we see them as even more dishonorable than they might be when used in an ordinary modern building and used more honestly. And so, I think the biggest problem with American church building is a degraded iconicity. The buildings are not conceived as true icons of the kingdom of Heaven, but rather they are conceived as stage sets of the kingdom of Heaven, a sort of Potemkin village of Byzantine architecture. The only purpose of these superficial Byzantine forms is to show people that there is an idea of Orthodoxy somehow present in the building, so that it would be recognizably Orthodox. But 'looking Orthodox' is, I believe, the least important quality of Byzantine architecture. The most important quality is that of authenticity, solidity, permanence. But it is not in the nature of most contemporary architects and builders to think in those kinds of terms.

As an example, it happens quite regularly that when I present my drawings of a church to a construction company that may be preparing to bid on executing the work, they typically look at my plans and my intention to build out of solid masonry or out of solid log construction, and they immediately tell me that they can offer me the very same "look" at much lower cost if they do it in some other way, such as if they build it out of steel and cover it with stucco, or frame it in wood and cover it with imitation log siding. They tell me with great pride that they know some modern product that will give me the look that I want at a reduced cost. And they always tell me this as though it will be a great revelation to me and that I will surely jump at the chance to save money so long as I can achieve a certain look.

Invariably I reply that I don't really care about the look of the building, I care about the actuality of the building. I don't want the look of masonry,

I want the masonry. I don't want the look of logs, I want logs. They then look at me like I'm frankly insane because they have spent their entire career as builders thinking about construction in terms of achieving a certain look. For instance, in building houses they ask a client, "What kind of house do you like?" and the client says, "I like French Provincial architecture," and they say, "Oh, we can frame it in wood, put a lot of styrofoam and stucco on the outside of the building, use concrete roof tiles that look like terra cotta, and you will have your French Provincial house. Or they say, "I like colonial architecture, and the builders say again, "Well, we can frame it out of 2x4's, put some HardiPlank siding on it, use some vinyl windows that have grills between the glass, and if you stand back 100 feet it will look just like a colonial house. You will have the look you want." And the entire building trade from the architects to the contractors to the clients who commission the buildings think only in these terms. So I find this an extremely difficult battle, both with contractors and with building committees, to convey the idea that there is actually some value to authenticity and reality in construction.

Russian Churches: Profound or Grandiose

Interestingly, in Russia I think we see a very different situation with Orthodox architecture. My observation of new churches in Russia is that they tend to be very finely built, very expensive affairs; however many of them reflect an attachment or desire for grandiosity. We see for instance in the famous competition that occurred recently for a new *katholicon* at Sretinsky Monastery in Moscow. This competition resulted in dozens of highly professional proposals from church architects, many of which were magnificent and staggeringly profound works in medieval style, works that were a great inspiration to me personally when I looked through them. Then we see the entry that won the competition—a building that is perhaps taller and more impressive at first glance than the other entries, and perhaps makes more of a show of expensive marbles and other fine ornamentation on the façade, but which unfortunately seems utterly devoid of spiritual profundity and only an expression of great cost on the part of the donor. It will be very interesting to watch how things will unfold in Russia, whether people take the time to compare these new buildings to the medieval cathedrals that have been so beautifully restored and observe that there is something disappointing about the new structures, despite the lavish cost endowed upon



them. Perhaps they will even call for a revival of something more spiritually pure in its expression. Maybe we see this already in the works of the Russian architect Andrei Anissimov, whose churches have a truly medieval sensibility, and even a whimsical charm. They are wholly authentic, but don't seem to take themselves too seriously.

Another interesting example is the newly-built pilgrimage church at Yase-nevo, on the outskirts of Moscow. This church was financed by hundreds of thousands of small donors and the very extensive marble and mosaic decoration was crafted by hundreds of volunteers. Inevitably, a church built in this way is not perfect, not a masterpiece, but there is an astonishing beauty in the sheer quantity of sumptuous ornamentation, and it absolutely exudes a spirit of love and sacrifice on the part of those who made it. Thus we see a monument where Imperial-style richness has been created by ordinary, and very humble, people, and it does indeed glorify God.

So I think we see that in Russia, all the pieces are in place to have truly great liturgical art. There are master architects and painters, there is money, and there is a great love of God. If only these pieces can be assembled in the proper order, there is no reason that new churches cannot achieve the artistic and spiritual perfection that we experience in medieval Russian art.

RTE: Yes, in Russia it's the older churches that you feel drawn to. I've often wondered if this is because they are so beautifully built, or because they have been prayed in for so many years?

ANDREW: I think that the difference is the purpose of the richness and ornamentation. Of course the old Russian churches were often sparsely ornamented; many of the finest ones such as the ancient Great Novgorod churches are virtually devoid of carved or sculptural ornamentation, either inside or out. So they are quite plain: the inside walls were frescoed and they held iconostases that originally consisted of icons just placed one next to the other with almost no framework in between. So in these pure medieval Russian churches the architecture has almost nothing to say for itself, it's there only as a support for frescoes and icons.

This is in contrast to Byzantine architecture which was very often heavily paneled in marble and used marble columns. The finer Byzantine churches always had much more emphasis on the building and much less emphasis

Opposite: Newly-built chapel at the Moscow Children's Hospital of Immunology, Oncology, and Hematology, Leninsky Prospekt, Moscow, Russia. Architect Andrei Anissimov, 2012. Photo: A. Gould.

on the iconography. Nevertheless these buildings seem spiritually profound and iconographic because it is so apparent that the precious marbles that were used in the revetments and the columns were there to further this iconographic representation of the New Jerusalem and to make one feel entirely surrounded by the benevolence and grace of God. They seem to suggest the words of our Lord that, “In my house are many mansions,” and the Church bestowed such beauty into these houses of worship that they would be paneled with marble and gold mosaic, like the finest Roman palaces.

Likewise, if we look at the later Russian churches, such as the 17th century ones, when the influence of the Italian Baroque resulted in Russian churches being filled inside and out with sculpted ornamentation and carved and gilded iconostases, even this ornamentation seems to further the liturgical ethos of God’s glory within the church. It maintains a sense of mystery and of divine beauty apart from the costly things of the mundane world.

However, this quality is lacking in some of the Russian cathedrals that were built in the early twentieth century such as those that have a suggestion of Art Nouveau styling. Although some of these churches are intensely beautiful and intensely interesting as art, it is often hard to look at that ornamentation and to understand in what way it furthers a vision of the kingdom of God, or in what way it supports the liturgical function of the church. For example, Viktor Vasnetsov’s painting in the cathedral in Kiev is a work of genius and strongly mystical in many ways, but just not in quite the right way.

RTE: Although well executed, Vasnetsov’s Kievan church paintings evoke the same feeling as late 19th-century theosophy.

ANDREW: Yes. It’s funny how art can express the mind of the times, the *zeitgeist*, no matter how hard people try to avoid it. The 19th-century Church of the Saviour on the Spilled Blood in St. Petersburg with its incredible ensemble of mosaics doesn’t amount to something that feels like a vision of heaven. It just seems like a whole lot of individual pieces that almost give an intoxicated dream-like impression, like a Maxfield Parrish painting. It doesn’t have the sobriety of a medieval fresco scheme.

RTE: Coincidentally, it was also decorated by Vasnetsov, along with Mikhail Nesterov and a third painter, Mikhail Vrubel. Another church frescoed by Nesterov is at the Convent of Sts. Martha and Mary in Moscow, built by

Opposite: Christ the Saviour Cathedral, Moscow.



Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna. It also is very much in the Art Nouveau style although it mimics a medieval Russian church. Although beautiful as an art piece, the overall impression is a little disquieting. As one priest said of the frescoes, “These are not icons, they are beautifully painted pious renditions,” and the same could be said for the architecture.

ANDREW: Yes, it’s more of a secularized, sensual beauty. Likewise, I think we see this even more in Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow, which is decorated inside and out in a strange fusion of Neoclassical aesthetic with vaguely medievalist details that comes across as grandiose and yet cold. The architecture and ornamentation would be more suited to a state receiving room in a government palace than a liturgical space.

RTE: The Russian Orthodox Church rebuilt the cathedral precisely on the same 20th-century pre-Revolutionary pattern because it had been so brutally destroyed by the Soviets. After it was blown up, the Soviets used part of the marble to build a nearby subway station and filled the foundation with a swimming pool. The new cathedral is a symbolic re-establishment of what was lost.

ANDREW: I was struck when I saw it. The exterior was actually much better than I expected. If we look at Christ the Saviour as a civic monument, as an ornament to the city of Moscow, I actually think the exterior is very successful. The white marble and the brilliant gilded roof shine in the sun, and overlooking the river I couldn’t help but compare it to the Taj Mahal. It makes a statement of civic triumph. But the inside, despite having some icons incorporated into its ornamental scheme, does not altogether amount to anything I would consider mysteriological or iconographic art.

Interestingly, when the St. Petersburg iconographer Philip Davydov was here in Charleston, we were discussing how many Russian saints were iconographers. When I remarked that there must have been many among the 20th-century Russian new-martyrs, he replied, “No, there were none.” I asked, “What do you mean?” “Because,” he said, “at the time of the Russian Revolution there were no iconographers—there was no such thing. There were two kinds of people who painted icons—there were the academic fine artists like Nesterov and Vasnetsov, who were primarily painters of official portraits and secular decoration that were occasionally commissioned to do church decoration schemes, and then there were villages that manufactured copies of icons that were done by assembly lines of villagers, like in Palekh. They turned out

copies of icons and sent them off by the cartload to be sold in the cities. Neither of those types of people would have been considered iconographers. The one was considered a kind of fine art, and the other a peasant craft, but the sort of person whom we now call an iconographer did not exist at that time.

RTE: When did the line of real iconographers end?

ANDREW: I didn't ask him that, but the last highly skilled artists who were exclusively iconographers probably worked in the 18th century. Certainly the icons that were commissioned for important cathedrals such as Peter the Great's Cathedral in St. Petersburg were painted in the western Baroque style. They look like beautiful Reubens, and clearly the painters were trained in western art schools.

RTE: What would you like to see Russian church builders return to? Less ornamentation?

ANDREW: It's not a question of the amount of ornamentation, but whether the ornamentation is used in such a way as to further the iconic vision of the kingdom of Heaven, or whether it is used to express the wealth and pretence of the donor who paid for it. It is possible for those two motivations to happily co-exist because ornamentation that is truly liturgical and mystical in its expression can also convey appropriate honor to the donor who paid for it. However, ornamentation that seems to have the express purpose of showing wealth and pretence will inevitably be a distraction from the spiritual vision. Of course, this is one of the paradoxes intrinsic to Christianity: although we seek to detach ourselves from the passions, from material things, we also use beautiful material things to help us come closer to God.

The most beautiful irony is that the loveliest and most ornate art ever produced has been produced by the most ascetic monks in monasteries. So we see that true asceticism and the true vision of theology that is granted the saints through that asceticism leads them to a proper relationship with the material things of the world, and thus everything that they make, everything that they touch becomes endowed with intense richness and beauty. These holy craftsmen lost all fear of being seduced by the beauty of the material things that they made, for having seen a vision of theological truth, they have an exact understanding that all of the beauty in the material world is only a reflection of divine grace that cannot ultimately be found in the world.



This is not just in Christianity, but in other monastic religions also. People who have chosen to leave the world and own nothing live amidst the most intense splendor of beauty, and this beauty just naturally flows out of the ascetic lifestyle. This idea would seem so perverse to Protestants (Calvinists especially), and I think perhaps it was the inability to understand this phenomenon that led to the Reformation. For a thousand years, Europeans had worked to beautify their churches. They spared no expense, giving every bit of surplus money they had to beautifying their churches, their cathedrals, their monasteries, and always considered this the most virtuous thing that could be done with their money. Then somehow in the 16th century, they looked at those cathedrals and saw only worldly corruption and hypocrisy. They lost the understanding that true material beauty is only a reflection of the grace of God and nothing else.

II. Parishes and Small Missions: Building a New Orthodox Church on Traditional Patterns

RTE: Bringing these wonderful reflections together, what sort of advice would you give a small mission, or a slightly larger parish that wants to build its own church? They may not have a large budget, but still want to do something beautiful.

ANDREW: The problem that I most frequently observe in hearing about a parish building program is that the church chooses to build far more than they can afford to build well. That is to say, they believe that they need parish halls and classrooms and offices, along with a church that can comfortably hold a great many people. These are all good things for a parish to have, of course, but once they add up their funds they find that to build all of this is only possible if it is built cheaply and poorly. This pathology seems to be virtually universal among American parishes—the expectation that what they need to build far exceeds what they can afford to build well.

So, I think the first thing we need to do is to step back and really consider our mission and our mandate when it comes to a building project. Is it more important to have all of these para-liturgical amenities that American churches are used to, or is it more important to build a temple that is worthy

Opposite: Church of the Holy Trinity, Wilkeson, Washington, consecrated 1902 by St. (Patriarch) Tikhon.

of the Divine Liturgy that is celebrated therein? This is a difficult challenge that I present to parishes, because how does one compare the practical benefits of things like a parish hall, classrooms, or copious room to stand, with the benefits of liturgical beauty?

I don't have the answer to that; however I do point to tradition and suggest that perhaps parishes that cannot afford everything they want might look at examples from Orthodox history, where poor villages tend to have very beautiful churches, but no parish halls and no classrooms, as opposed to looking to examples from Protestant America which tend to have no liturgical art to speak of, but extensive parish campuses.

Regardless of the scope of work of a given building project, the question still stands: With a limited budget, in what way should a parish build its temple? I would say the first thing is to figure out the best construction technique the parish can afford in order to build authentically, and then to define a style and appearance for the building that reflects that construction technique honestly. If a church can afford to build out of masonry, that is very good, but if not, then the church should consider building out of logs—the best and most solid way of building out of wood. But when considering logs, the church should consider only the most authentic and appropriate log construction system; that is to say, square-edged solid logs with dove-tailed corners, the system that we see used in the medieval log-built Orthodox churches.

If the church cannot afford to build with that very fine construction system, then we can always fall back on the construction system that is most prevalent in America, which is stick-frame construction, meaning construction out of 2x4 or 2x6 lumber—the way a typical house is framed. This construction system is in no way debased or dishonorable, and it is simple and inexpensive. The great mistake that parishes make when resigning themselves to stick-frame construction is to think that this is somehow an embarrassment or somehow un-Orthodox, and that it therefore needs to be disguised to look like a different construction technique. They think it needs to be covered with styrofoam and synthetic stucco so it looks like masonry, or covered with faux-log siding. This theatrical mindset has no place in liturgical art.

If we build out of stick-frame construction we merely need to identify an appropriate way of cladding and finishing the structure that will be honest and authentic, yet embody an appropriate liturgical ethos. In fact, we can see

Opposite: Holy Apostles Orthodox Church, Toyohashi, Japan.



many historical examples of Orthodox churches that were built with stick-frame construction. The Russian Empire built hundreds of such churches from the 1890's until the Russian Revolution. There are examples in Alaska and the Canadian Midwest, and several historic Russian Orthodox churches in New England, such as St. Nicholas Church in Salem, Massachusetts, and a very beautiful example built in 1900 in Wilkeson, Washington.

We can also see dozens of much grander examples if we look at eastern Europe. Hundreds of Russian churches were built around 1900 in Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania using stick-frame construction, lap siding, simple wood windows, and typically, interiors paneled in tongue-and-groove wood. There is a spectacular example in Toyohashi, Japan, built in 1913, which has the form of a Russian church, with siding and trim reminiscent of an American Victorian house, and oriental patterns in the windows reminiscent of Japanese architecture.

These early-modern Russian churches should embolden us to consider stick-frame construction with an essentially American Victorian trim package, that is to say, lap siding, cornice molding, decorative window and door surrounds. These are the very same details that we see on a typical historical American house or Protestant church from the early twentieth century and were considered by the Russians themselves to be quite appropriate for an Orthodox church. Indeed they are, because they are the natural and traditional way of finishing off the exterior of a stick-framed building in a time when modern machine-sawn dimensional lumber and machine-made nails are abundant and affordable.

Parenthetically, we should remember that the older wooden churches made out of logs reflect a more primitive technological context in which boards would have been sawn by hand at tremendous cost of labor, and where nails made by a blacksmith were exceedingly expensive. Therefore it was rational to build walls out of entire logs, with joints that could be hewn easily with an axe.

So when I am asked to design an inexpensive Orthodox church I use stick-frame construction. I give the exterior an attractive traditional American trim package, using siding and moldings that are readily available at American lumberyards, and structure the roof using the sort of timber trusses that are widely used for spanning the living rooms of the large houses built nowadays. In order to make the exterior recognizably Orthodox, little more is necessary than an attractive cupola on the roof, or perhaps a front porch bearing an icon.

RTE: What about parishes that move into already constructed spaces? Would you recommend adding a dome or a cupola to make it obvious from the outside that a church is Orthodox?

ANDREW: The agenda that you imply with that question is more of a pastoral matter than it is a matter of liturgical art. Certainly a mission church in America will have good cause to make itself recognizable as such to the wider community, and therefore it is going to be appropriate to spend some significant funds on something like a cupola or an exterior icon to achieve that recognition. But given that this feature is going to be specifically the thing that expresses Orthodoxy to many thousands of people who will never even enter the church, it is all the more important that any such decorative feature be well considered and well made to give a good impression of what lies within. I find it especially tragic when I see an Orthodox parish which has purchased an existing building in a community and placed on top of it a fiberglass onion dome. To take an historic building of which the community inevitably feels some sense of ownership and make it Orthodox by placing a plastic dome on top is not only a shame and an embarrassment to our faith, but may even be seen as an insult to the community.

Finishing the Church Interior

RTE: What can you tell us about the interiors?

ANDREW: On the interior of such a church I would recommend avoiding sheetrock for two reasons: sheetrock performs poorly acoustically, and will never give the warm resonance that is so important in Orthodox liturgy. Secondly, sheetrock in its blankness demands to be painted with iconography, and yet it is far too ephemeral a material to be worthy of painting iconography upon, because sheetrock will suffer immediate deterioration from even a single occasion of water damage from a leaking roof. So it strikes me as irrational to go to the great expense and artistic effort to paint an extensive iconographic scheme upon sheetrock walls and ceilings, which are only a single heavy rainstorm away from being utterly destroyed.

There are two options that I like to use for the interior of a frame-built church. The first follows the example of the early modern Russian churches I described: to clad the entire interior in tongue and groove wood paneling. This is not a very expensive material and it can be very beautiful painted or



unpainted. Traditionally, there is no need to paint it with iconography. A church finished in this way needs only an iconostasis and a few large panel icons hanging on the walls to look complete. This ease of completion may relieve a small parish of the burden of raising great funds for an extensive and unnecessary scheme of iconographic murals. However, if murals are felt desirable, then I recommend the second option: to clad the walls in cementitious board, the type of board that is used behind tile in a shower or bathroom. These boards can then be coated with a special cementitious plaster and painted using silica paint—a very fast and durable way of painting iconographic murals. This will provide a wall surface that has acoustics that are almost as good as solid masonry construction, and the water resistance and washability to last for centuries, so long as the structure of the building is maintained.

In addition, I would specifically advise parishes not to paint the inside of the church blue. I see this often and it always shocks me because blue is the most cold and depressing color that a room can be painted. Blue backgrounds can work as part of iconographic murals (so long as the area of background showing is modest), but a church painted completely blue inside will inevitably be a gloomy and depressing space. An interior that does not have a complete iconographic mural scheme should be painted a warm color, like a light yellow ochre.

RTE: And what about floors? Would the best variant be something natural, such as wood, marble, or flagstone?

ANDREW: I don't think that floors are usually a problem. Most new commercial buildings have good solid floors. I like wood, for its warmth. Stone and terra-cotta tile are good too. Even concrete with a good finish can make a very suitable church floor.

Doors and Windows

RTE: What do you suggest for doors and windows?

ANDREW: Doors and windows need not be elaborate, but they should be beautiful and handmade according to the traditional patterns of American craftsmanship. It is very appropriate to use hand-made wooden doors, finely

Opposite: Holy Ascension Church, Charleston, SC.

varnished, with good solid brass or bronze hardware. These small touches will lend a sense of quality and craftsmanship to the entire structure. We should always be especially sensitive to those parts of buildings that we come close to and touch because these details of the building will be the ones that give us our impression of the quality of the structure as a whole. For this reason, the handle on the front door should be among the finest details in the building. Likewise, the doors themselves, the treatment of the paneling on the lower parts of the walls, and any columns in the nave that people might come very close to and lean against, are the kinds of things that must be especially well made.

Details higher up, such as windows in the cupola, can be of more modern construction. If it's a small church and the windows are down low, it's nice for them to open, but in a larger church the windows are out of reach, so more practically one would just open the doors for ventilation. It is also appropriate to use wood windows with true grills separating the panes of glass like one would see in an historic American structure.

RTE: You touched on this earlier, but is stained glass ever appropriate in an Orthodox architectural setting?

ANDREW: Stained glass can be very beautiful on its own terms and of course, is very flattering and, indeed, critical to the Gothic architecture with which it historically evolved. However, stained glass represents an exactly opposite quality of liturgical light to the quality that is embodied in Orthodox icons. That is to say, the transmission of light through a transparent icon is, in a sense, opposite to the reflection of light from an opaque icon. I could speak on theological grounds as to why stained glass windows are problematic as iconography, but for now suffice it to say that in a practical sense, they are visually problematic co-existing with iconographic murals.

I mentioned that it is desirable in an Orthodox church for the windows to not be the most prominent visual feature of the architecture, for the very reason that, iconically, we need to see the light as glowing from within the church, as opposed to coming from the outside. Stained glass windows emphasize that the light is coming from the outside and make this external illumination the primary visual expression of the architecture. Likewise, the light that comes through a stained-glass window becomes confused with color and becomes

Opposite: Hanging silver vigil lamp from New World Byzantine Studios. Photo: A. Gould.



unsuitable for the illumination of painted icons. There is nothing more peculiar looking than to see a sunbeam that has passed through a stained glass window land upon a gilded Byzantine icon and have those strange colors reflecting off of the gold and changing the colors of the paint in unpredictable ways. Looking at the history of church architecture, it is obvious why the practice of plastering and frescoing the interior of a church ended in western Europe at precisely the same time stained glass windows appeared. You can have one or the other, but it is not good for the two to co-exist.

Likewise, do not ever use frosted glass in the windows. Frosted glass gives a cold and stifling light, and a building outfitted with frosted glass windows feels like the inside of a shower. Of course, a fine church might have beautiful and decorative windows made out of blown-glass rondels and even alabaster, but the rich light through these windows is in no way like the cold modern light that comes through frosted plate glass. If the church can only afford ordinary windows, by all means make them clear and enjoy the beauty of sunlight and the natural sunbeams that can shine through it. I spoke earlier of the transfiguration that can take place in an Orthodox church as it fills with smoke from the incense, thereby rendering the sunbeams visible, and making the very light inside the church seem to glow with divine grace. This phenomenon is impossible if the church has been outfitted with frosted glass.

Lighting the Church

RTE: How about lighting the church?

ANDREW: In lighting the church we must remember that the purpose of the light is to illuminate the icons on the iconostasis and on the analogia and to give a general warm golden glow to the liturgical space, with enough light for the clergy to be able to see what they are doing. There is no need or benefit to any light beyond that in a church. On the contrary, it is an obvious quality of the liturgical ethos of nighttime services that lights should be very dim to allow for the sense of profound mystery and depth that we feel in a dark church, where only the icons that are immediately near lampadas or candle stands can be seen. This gives us a profound sense of the divine radiance of God shining through the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

If a parish church does not have the practical resources to light the services by candlelight alone and wishes to use electric light, then it is important that

the electric lights light the church in exactly the same way that it would be lit by traditional candlelight. Therefore, electric light should be limited to chandeliers which hang down into the space and which hold electrified candles in the same sort of central positions where historical chandeliers bear real candles. The bulbs that are placed in these electric candles ought to be of a very low wattage and give off a very golden light. In the chandeliers that I manufacture I use 7½ watt miniature incandescent bulbs, and even 7½ watts is a bit brighter than a candle flame. If they are dimmed down a little bit they give a light whose brightness and color perfectly matches a candle and gives the most remarkably liturgical quality of light. Just very recently it has become possible to acquire LED bulbs which give off an amber light similar to candlelight.

Unfortunately, the limitless possibilities of modern electric lighting have seduced so many churches into using electric light inappropriately. The simplest example being excessively bright bulbs in the chandeliers; as soon as chandeliers hold bulbs brighter than about 15 watts the bulbs become simply painful to look at. And these chandeliers, instead of giving a sense of warm and comforting divine radiance to the space, place at the center of our liturgical vision a blinding brightness that forces us to look away. Secondly, churches frequently install spotlights pointing down at the iconostasis and pointing up into the dome, which only furthers the idea of the church as theatre and suggests that there is no room for mystery in our liturgical perception. Worst of all, churches are often built with canister lights recessed into the ceilings, a form of modern lighting whose purpose is to flood every corner of a space with an indistinct and perfectly uniform light. In a church this form of lighting completely destroys the mysteriological quality of the architecture, in that it leaves no shadows, no room for the unexpected beauty of a candle flame or a sunbeam to shine forth out of the darkness and startle us with the beauty of divine grace.

Byzantine churches particularly stand out in the history of architecture in that they have such an intense depth of light and shadow; an intense brightness of light at the center around the dome, and darkness at the perimeter in the side aisles and side chapels. And we see in Byzantine architecture a centrifugal layering of space whereby there are tiers of lower and lower ceilings, smaller and smaller windows, columns and arches that separate these from the central dome, creating an infinite depth of mystery, of shadow, the further we move from the painting of Christ Pantocrator. This



shadow gives us a sense of the infinite theological mystery of the Orthodox faith. We cannot ever see all of the icons and frescos at once, but rather the saints and the angels recede into the shadows as though there is no limit to how many of them might be lingering in the far corners of the church.

By their contrast, dark outer spaces behind the arches and the columns make the brightness of the sunbeams that fall from the dome much more intense and reveal to us the incredible radiance of the divine light as it shines into the darkness of the world. This quality of light is among the most important aspects of the Orthodox liturgical ethos, and in many modern churches I've felt that there was no more important thing that could be done to fix the architectural problems in that church than to simply turn off the canister lights and allow the corners of the church to recede into natural shadow.

Acoustics

RTE: Will you also say something about acoustics?

ANDREW: Yes. As much as I like to speak of the importance of proper architecture and liturgical furnishings, I will always be the first to acknowledge that a good choir is probably even more important to a satisfactory liturgical ethos. So, I take very seriously the role of the church building in assisting the choir by good acoustics. For the purposes of Orthodox liturgical music, good acoustics mainly means reverberant acoustics: a strong long reverberance across the full range of frequencies, from high pitched to low pitched sounds. To achieve this is a matter of two things: interior surfaces in the church that are acoustically reflective (ideally smooth hard plaster or secondarily, smooth wood paneling), and the volume of the space. The larger the volume of space the more reverberation there will be.

There are no technological tricks that can be used to achieve good acoustics if we do not have these two things, reflective surfaces and a large volume. It is essential that an Orthodox church have some reasonable height to its ceilings in order to achieve a large volume of space and that the surfaces be finished in a reflective material. This means that there should not be large areas of flimsy or porous material on the walls, nor extensive thick carpeting on the floors.

*Opposite: Mortised and pegged timber bell frame. Holy Ascension Church, Charleston, SC.
Photo: A. Gould.*

For the reverberation to sound warm and gentle, there also needs to be some amount of architectural complexity. The sound in a large box-shaped room is harsh, because the flat parallel surfaces cause intense resonance at specific frequencies. And a perfectly round room causes disturbing echoes. Ideally, the architecture would have a mixture of flat and curved surfaces, and a layering of connected spaces of different sizes. This will assure a smooth and pleasing reverberation.

If these simple guidelines are followed, a church of any size from very small to very large will have satisfactory acoustics and will have no need for artificial amplification.

RTE: In Greek country churches you often find little triangular or rectangular niches built into walls that sometimes hold candles. When I ask about them I'm often told that they are for acoustics.

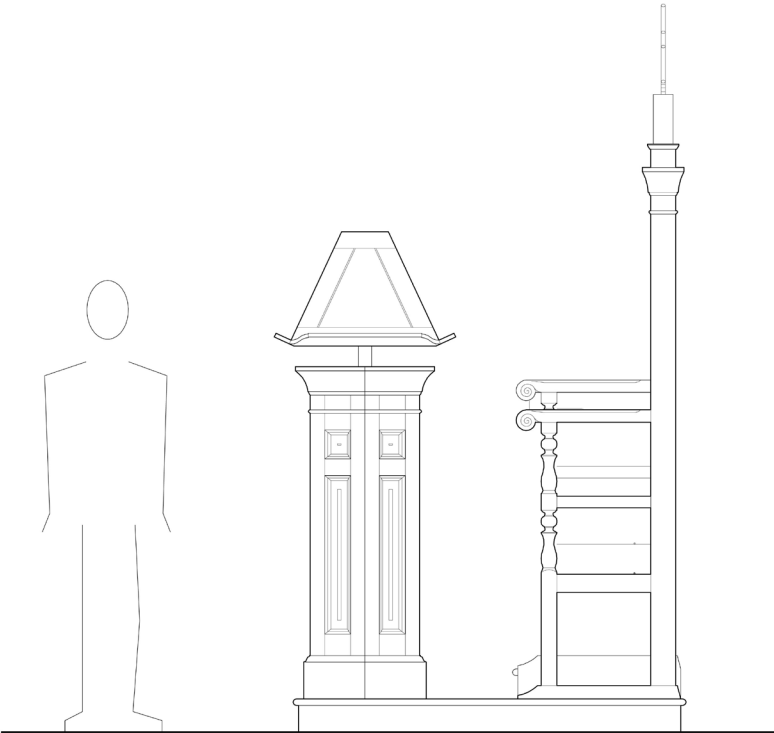
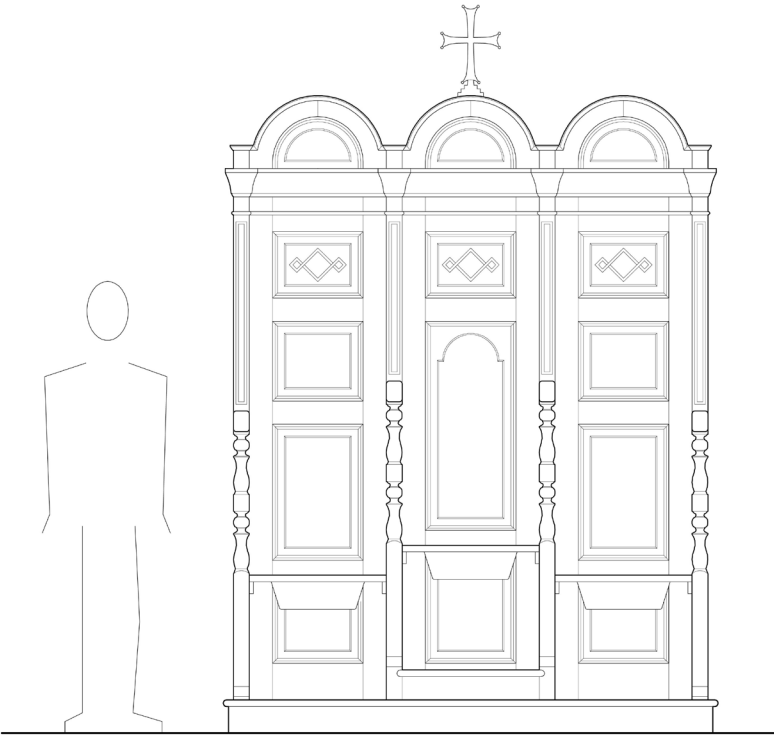
ANDREW: This is not true. I have also heard myths along those lines about recessed chambers and niches and hollow cavities and other such things in medieval churches. For instance, Russian churches often have round holes among the vaults and pendentives, and these holes are the mouth of hollow ceramic jugs that were built into the wall. Only the mouth was left visible as a small round hole in the wall that leads to a substantial hollow chamber beyond. There is a widespread myth that these provide some acoustic benefit to the building, but this is completely untrue. As a matter of acoustical engineering, a cavity recessed into a wall serves as an acoustic absorber and will cancel out any sound that strikes it. The actual purpose of these earthenware jugs recessed into the wall is to help the wall to dry out, by allowing moisture trapped deep inside the thick walls to evaporate into the vessel and ventilate out through the hole.

Liturgical Furnishings

RTE: What do you think of pews?

ANDREW: I think we all understand that pews represent a foreign influence upon Orthodoxy, one that comes from Protestantism and, in a number of ways, is inconsistent with a proper understanding of liturgy. In my opinion,

Opposite: Stasidia and chanter's stand designed by A. Gould. Frame and panel construction with marquetry inlay details, to be made from quarter-sawn white oak.



the biggest problem with pews is that they give an impression that the nave of the church is a sort of theatre and that the altar is a stage. Pews imply that we are meant to come to church to sit and watch a show. Recognizing that many churches feel they must have seating as a pastoral necessity, I would recommend that churches choose seating that looks as little as possible like seating in a theatre or even seating in a Protestant church. I think the best kind of seating for a church consists of benches around the exterior perimeter of the wall, benches with no back.

In addition to this we can use some simple wooden chairs placed towards the back of the nave. Even if the entire nave is filled with rows of wooden chairs, simple wooden chairs are less of an imposition upon the liturgical character of the nave than solid pews. This is partly because wooden chairs are lighter and more transparent and have less of a physical presence in the space, but it is also because when we look at chairs with upright backs, we think of an old-fashioned school room as opposed to the comfortable chairs in a theatre. This gets us perhaps one step closer to a proper understanding of participation in the liturgy; to think of the liturgy as pedagogical is at least better than thinking of it as entertainment.

RTE: And the other church furniture?

ANDREW: For any of the other furnishings that are made of wood, such as icon stands, lecterns, choir desks, again these can be made with great simplicity, but they should be made with fine craftsmanship. Ideally they would be made out of American hardwoods, properly joined according to traditional furniture-making techniques, and finished with oil or shellac, not a shiny modern finish like polyurethane. Above all they should be practical, and exhibit a sort of natural and inevitable beauty. Most importantly they should not be debased with faux ornamentation such as little crosses or machine-stamped moldings glued on to the surface, or coloration done with gold spray paint. I see all of these things frequently in mission parishes, and I understand that such gestures were made as an act of love by someone with limited skill and limited resources wanting to imitate something of the rich beauty of ornate cathedrals.

Such gestures are misguided, however, because ornamentation is artistically meaningful only if it calls attention to the fineness of something that is actually fine. If it's calling attention to furniture made out of plywood, then it is working against the iconographic vision of the church, for it is calling

attention to something that is not fine. If this weak ornamentation is applied on top of furniture that is made of real wood and which would be dignified on its own without any ornamentation, then we see something that would have been beautiful on its own made less beautiful by pretending to be something more fine than it actually is—analogous to a beautiful child that has attempted to put on her mother’s lipstick and thereby made a mess of her naturally beautiful face.

RTE: Is there a place for plywood with a veneer over the top, or is that more of the faux construction that we are trying to get away from?

ANDREW: Like so many building materials, plywood has some technical advantages in certain contexts to which it is well suited. Even some very fine furniture makes use of plywood for certain structural purposes, and where it does not debase the authenticity of the craftsmanship in other areas. Personally in my own work I use plywood for very large icon boards and the doors on an iconostasis, because it is virtually impossible to make panels for that purpose out of solid wood that will last as well as plywood panels can. Solid wood expands and contracts quite substantially and this will most likely cause cracks in the gesso covering the icon board. If you are doing a big icon board whose purpose is simply to be a stable substrate for gesso and paint, there is no reason why plywood can’t be used.

If you have a special reason for wanting a large flat surface of wood veneer as part of your furniture design, using plywood as the substrate might be appropriate. Use of marquetry decoration would be such a reason. But typically, furniture is going to be much more attractive if it is made of pieces of solid wood joined together in frame and panel construction, the skilled craftsmanship of which is immediately apparent.

When it comes to furniture specifically, the important thing is to work according to the details and joinery techniques that are traditional for American craftsmanship. Because it is quite possible to make very good and sturdy furniture out of solid wood using traditional joinery, I think it would be hard to claim that one could make more beautiful or more practical furniture incorporating plywood to any great extent. Like other modern materials such as sheet rock and plastic, plywood does not have a beautiful material expression by itself and needs to be used as a substrate for veneer or paint in order to be aesthetically satisfying.



RTE: Will you then sum up your thoughts for mission parishes?

ANDREW: In summary, in building a church with limited means one should always prefer simplicity over half-hearted elaboration. America has a wonderful heritage when it comes to architecture and furniture. The craftsmanship of historic American buildings and furnishings is second to none in the world and simple colonial American buildings and colonial American furniture is admired the world over for its dignity and its refinement. Never has American architecture depended upon ornamentation for its beauty, but has often achieved a profound dignity with almost no ornamentation or elaboration at all. We see this celebrated especially in the craftsmanship of the Shaker communities and the Amish, who continued to practice this colonial American tradition of simplicity and fine craftsmanship all the way into modern times. Given this heritage, we should feel especially emboldened as American Orthodox to build our churches with practical dignity and simplicity, and should have no fear of doing wrong if we build churches that have an iconostasis that is made of plain hardwood boards with no carving at all, furniture that is just simple benches like one might see in a Shaker meeting house, or a church which is a simple wood-paneled affair with no more elaboration than one might see on an Amish schoolhouse. A church such as this does not require Byzantine or Baroque ornament to make it Orthodox—it requires only a few good icons and a tuneful choir to establish a liturgical ethos that is nothing short of perfect.

RTE: Can we incorporate these principles of traditional church building into making our homes more beautiful and inhabitable as well?

ANDREW: I think that most of the principles are very much the same. The only thing that is fundamentally different between a church and a home is the programmatic function of the building. That is to say, a church is for celebrating the services, whereas a home is meant for the liturgy of the household which is also sacred and equally dependent upon tradition. And so, I think there need be little difference between churches and houses in regards to structure, materiality, and even the general aesthetic. We can see this if we look at certain old country examples, where both the church culture and the home culture are equally intact. For instance, remote villages in Romania

Opposite: Andrew Gould welding New World Byzantine Studios chandelier.

Photo. M.N. McLees.

where people still live traditionally in houses built from logs and worship traditionally in ancient churches built from logs. The aesthetic of their home interior and the aesthetic of their church interiors are extremely sympathetic to one another; for example, both being dominated by woven textiles. There is no difference between the colors and the patterns that they weave into textiles to decorate their houses and the textiles that they use to hang over icons or to carpet their churches. In these cultures, the way things are made and how they are understood to be beautiful is innate; they would not see any distinction between beauty that is meant for church and beauty that is meant for home. So, in designing a house, which is roughly half of my work—I try to apply the same principles of simplicity, authenticity, and local significance.

III. The Craftsman Heritage: New Initiatives in Europe and America

Patronage and Schooling in Traditional Art and Building Techniques

RTE: Do you see an interest among architects and artists in returning to these traditional patterns?

ANDREW: With regards to architecture, there is a healthy movement towards the revival of traditional architectural design throughout the world right now. In many cities in America we are seeing occasional examples of not just houses, but churches and civic buildings being built with both traditional style and traditional methods. These examples remain comparatively rare, but they attract a lot of attention in the press and in academia, and I think their presence in contemporary America is only going to increase. There are now a few architecture schools, most notably Notre Dame, that train architecture students specifically in traditional design, and many of these students go on to work for architecture firms such as Duncan Stroik and Associates, which design Catholic churches in very good Italianate classical style.

Here in Charleston there is a prominent public debate regarding the construction of new buildings in the historic district. Until recently almost all of the building was modernistic and people of the city have always felt uncomfortable with the impact that these buildings have upon the historic city. But

Opposite: Holy Ascension Church, Charleston, SC. Photo: A Gould.



THE BREAD WHICH IS BROKEN FOR YOU FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS + DRINK OF IT THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WHICH IS DRUNK FOR YOU FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS

THE COMMUNION OF THE HOLY APOSTLES



recently, construction has begun on several very large traditional buildings in Charleston, including a tremendous new concert hall and performing arts center, which is being built in classical style out of hand-carved limestone and is every bit as fine as a 19th-century civic building in a major American city. So although academia, and to a large extent the media, maintain a strong bias against traditional architecture, the example of these magnificent new buildings is quickly eroding the authority of their position, and I think it will not be long before traditional architecture becomes rather mainstream.

In many ways, the revival of the specifically liturgical crafts is more challenging. At present, we do not have the market forces and the patronage that these crafts would require to sustain a significant body of masters and apprentices that could further the development of these crafts in America.

As an example of what can be done, The Prince's School of the Traditional Arts in England, founded by Prince Charles, is a fascinating graduate program that seeks to train artists in medieval liturgical crafts to an astonishing level of mastery. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this school is that the students study western Christian, eastern Christian, and Islamic liturgical design side by side. For instance, those students who concentrate in liturgical painting will begin by studying the techniques of working with egg tempera, and will be expected to practice painting illuminated manuscripts, Byzantine icons, and Persian miniatures in the first year of their study. Later the students will choose a specific religious tradition in which to concentrate. And so we see a school that involves pious students from these several backgrounds, some of whom are Orthodox, some Protestant, and some Moslem, who study one another's heritage while concentrating on the development of their own. In the work that comes out of this school we can see an extraordinary freshness and vitality that is uncommon in contemporary liturgical art, and indeed, many of the students seem to have truly learned to live the very ethos of the Middle Ages in their painting and decorative design.

I would even suggest that the interaction between Orthodox and Islamic art that takes place at this school is mutually beneficial for both traditions, and it is perhaps this very interaction that can explain this special quality that we see in the work there. In a sense, this interaction is a re-creation of the interaction that existed historically between the Orthodox and Islamic worlds because, if we consider the history of Byzantine and Russian art and the history of Islamic art, the two traditions were always drawing inspiration from one another. I think that in isolation we can observe that Islamic art tends

towards an extreme austerity and mathematical rationalism. In the purest Islamic art we see an excessive focus on the construction of geometrical pattern, but a neglect of more organic beauty and color. Likewise, the art of the Orthodox Church in isolation focuses almost exclusively upon iconography, and the Orthodox Church has never developed a language of decorative ornamentation that is exclusively her own. So historically we see that the most beautiful Islamic art, that of the Ottoman Empire, is that which has been infused with the love of color and organic forms that it inherited from Byzantine culture, and we see that the most beautiful Orthodox art, that of medieval Russia, has fused the iconographic vision of Orthodoxy with the ornamental patterns that the Russians inherited from their Islamic neighbors.

RTE: Do you think that Georgian and Armenian art might also act as bridges? Both countries are geographically close to Islamic central Asia, yet themselves were Christianized quite early.

ANDREW: Georgian and Armenian art is a bit of a puzzle. The architecture and sculpture has a primitive, almost barbarian vitality to it that is quite unlike the intellectual refinement of either Byzantine or Islamic art. Certainly we see in Georgian architecture and iconography an intuitive boldness which is nearly impossible for other nations to imitate. Probably the best liturgical metalwork and stonework in the world is being practiced in Georgia today.

RTE: When you say the students of the Prince's School are living the ethos of their design, what brings that ethos alive?

ANDREW: I'm only speculating here, but certainly the school's emphasis on natural materials and the medieval techniques of preparing those materials gives the students a connection to the medieval way of craft that most contemporary iconographers will not have had. For instance, Christabel Anderson, one of the iconographers at the Prince's School, has made a special study of the depictions of early British saints and is sometimes asked to paint icons of saints for whom no historical prototype exists. When she does this she not only researches ancient drawings and carvings that may suggest the appearance of this saint, but even travels to the places in Britain where this saint walked and lived, and will gather from those places earth from which to make the pigments with which she paints the saint's icon. And so we see in her work a truly medieval understanding of the symbolic connection between the



material from which a holy image is made and the saint himself. We also see an attempt to heal the tragic division between iconic image and artistic craftsmanship that Fr. Silouan Justiniano characterizes as degraded iconicity.

RTE: Is it possible to have a school like this in North America?

ANDREW: Colleagues in the field of liturgical art and I have long discussed how it might be possible to establish a school of liturgical art on this continent. It is our hope that someday this dream may come to fruition. At present it is somewhat difficult to imagine a program like the Prince's School flourishing here, mainly because of a seeming reluctance on the part of American clients to commission works of liturgical art of the highest quality and to pay the price that such works will inevitably cost. And so we see a situation among iconographers in our country where there are too few commissions for large projects of the finest caliber to sustain very many masters, and therefore little incentive for students to invest the time and cost in getting a higher degree in iconography and make a career out of it. Rather, the study of iconography is almost entirely the purview of hobbyists and dilettantes who wish to paint icons for their own enjoyment rather than as a career with which they could support a family.

Nevertheless, I believe this situation is improving, and it may be that the rarity of good commissions simply derives from ignorance on the part of donors and clients as to what options are available for doing things better. For instance, my colleague Jonathan Pageau has made a successful career out of carving stone and wood icons, and through his skills at marketing his work, is able to find enough commissions to sustain his livelihood. This example is especially interesting because carved icons are fairly obscure even within Orthodoxy, and very few of his clients would ever have thought to commission a carved icon before seeing his work and becoming aware of what beautiful art he has to offer. So, I think the future of liturgical art in America is by necessity going to be with artists who in one way or another learn a very fine craft, and have the wherewithal to show it off far and wide in the hope of inspiring people to commission pieces that they might not otherwise have ever considered.

In Charleston we have a very interesting college founded in 2004 called the American College of the Building Arts. This is a liberal arts college in which students major in such fields as timber framing, traditional plaster,

Opposite: Gospel cover. Collaboration between Andrew Gould and Jonathan Pageau.

historic masonry, stone carving, and blacksmithing. This college, though modeled upon certain traditional guild schools in Europe, is unique in the United States in offering an education in traditional building trades at a high level of instruction, united with typical liberal arts subjects. So the school produces well-rounded craftsmen who have a sufficient knowledge of art history and the building sciences, and skill in drawing and design in addition to the trade in which they major. These craftsmen come out of college with the ability to do very high level restoration work on historic buildings, or fine craftsmanship on new buildings in traditional style. The college has been very successful by any measure, with all of its graduating students finding immediate placement in well-paid jobs. Its students have proved invaluable to the building community here in Charleston, doing skilled work on construction sites that no one else in the city would be qualified to do. I serve on the advisory board of the college and I've gotten to know the staff and students well. The American College of the Building Arts shows that it is possible for the ancient model of guild apprenticeship to be united to modern expectations of academic education and degrees, and I hope that it may serve as an example for a future school of the liturgical arts.

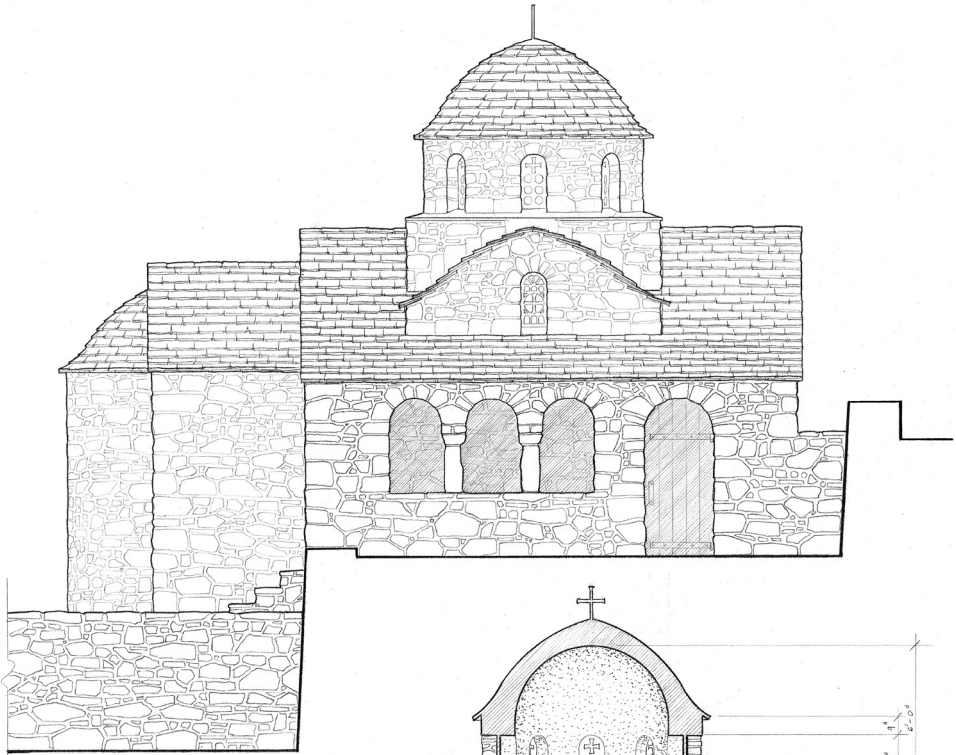
Andrew Gould: Work and Interests

RTE: Andrew, what are your own favorite buildings and why?

ANDREW: It's hard to give a short answer to a question like that. If I should limit my answer to Orthodox architecture, Hagia Sophia is the very prototype of perfection that all Orthodox architects have quite rightly looked to. It embodies the principles of our faith more perfectly than any other church that has ever been built. It was built using materials such as marble and porphyry that were the finest and most beautiful ever quarried in the history of the world. Therefore, in a very real sense, Hagia Sophia is an achievement that could never be surpassed or even equaled again.

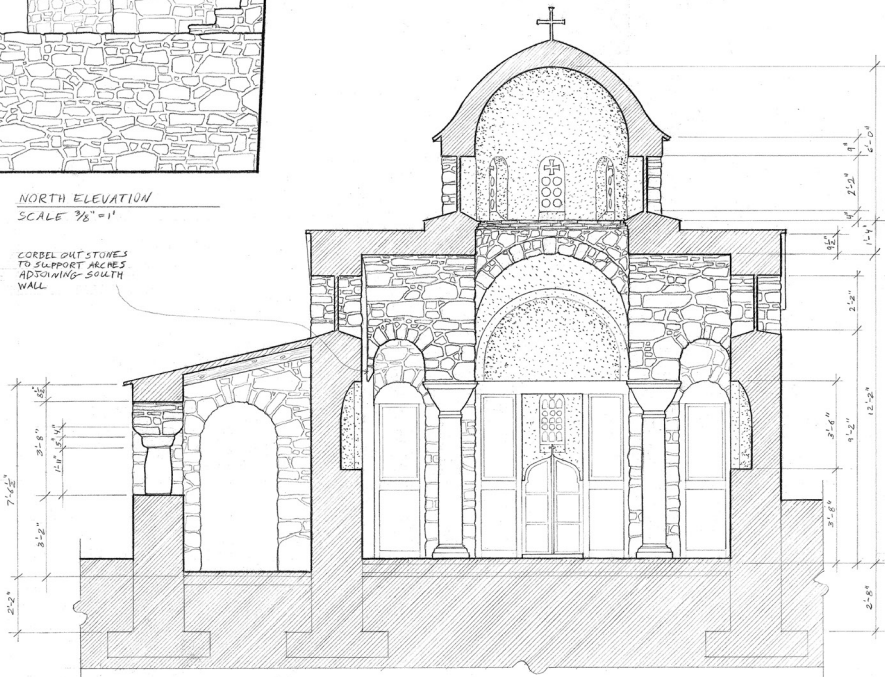
Other Orthodox churches that stand out to me as particularly formative in my understanding of Orthodox architecture are those rare buildings which still exhibit their complete array of medieval furnishings and decoration. Some examples would be the great *katholika* of Mt. Athos with their splendid marble floors and templon screens, ancient frescos, and innumerable

Opposite: Plans for Birchdale Chapel, British Columbia by Andrew Gould.



NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE $\frac{3}{8}''=1'$

CORBEL OUTSTONES
TO SUPPORT ARCHES
ADJOINING SOUTH
WALL



BUILDING SECTION 'A'
SCALE $\frac{3}{8}''=1'$

CHAPEL, BIRCHDALE, BC
ANDREW GOULD, DESIGNER
CHARLESTON, SC '8-08

hanging lamps from every age; the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity at Sergej Posad with its iconostasis painted by Rublev and the tomb of St. Sergius clad all in silver; and the Church of St. Elijah the Prophet in Yaroslavl, with its perfectly complete seventeenth-century decorative scheme from the carved and polychromed iconostasis to the colossal chandeliers.

These examples are infinitely valuable in that they are our only glimpse of the fullness of the liturgical and iconic vision of Orthodoxy. Only at these few churches can we really grasp the exquisite interrelationship of architecture, frescos, iconostasis, lamps and furniture that was the medieval vision of the Kingdom of God.

Speaking more broadly and personally about my own taste, I have always found myself especially drawn to English Gothic architecture, especially that of the fifteenth century, the perpendicular Gothic churches and Tudor domestic architecture. I also enjoy Baroque architecture, particularly the provincial Baroque churches that one sees in the far north of Europe and in Mexico, where Baroque ornamentation became a vehicle for simple craftsmen to demonstrate their skill and imagination with particular freedom and whimsy. As much as I enjoy these western styles, I am equally drawn to Islamic domestic architecture, the exquisite tiled palaces of Morocco, Persia, and the Ottoman Turks. Each of these styles of architecture reveals something different and something valuable about the beauty of man's relationship to the natural world.

RTE: What has been your own favorite project?

ANDREW: I'm usually consumed with enthusiasm for whatever project I am currently working on. However, among all of the churches I have designed, I think I most especially enjoyed the project to design a small stone chapel for an Orthodox retreat center in the wilderness of British Columbia. The land on which this chapel is being built is so isolated that almost all of the building materials need to be gathered locally and carried by hand. I went there and studied the sand, the gravel, and the stones that are available at that site and I allowed those materials to dictate the detailing of the stone walls and the thickness of the mortar joints.

The particular site for the church is on a steeply sloping hillside and I had to design a system of terracing that hillside into a cascade of gardens in which the church serves as part of the retaining walls, creating an organic and inevitable sort of landscape architecture of the kind that we see at the

ancient monasteries in Greece. Because the design of the church itself is almost completely driven by the sizes and shapes of the stones from which it will be built, I decided to draw the construction drawings for this church entirely by hand so that I could convey the particular ways in which the stones would naturally be embedded, how certain stones would be turned upright as columns, and describe which would be chosen for the arches. As I was drawing the plans, I felt I was almost participating in the construction itself by guiding the masons as they chose which stone would go where. This chapel is currently under construction in the hamlet of Birchdale, British Columbia, built solely by volunteer labor. In all likelihood it will take a great many years to complete although it is extremely small in size—only large enough to hold about twelve people at any given time.

RTE: If you could design anything on any location, what would that be?

ANDREW: I am torn between choosing an urban and a rural project to answer this question. Some of the churches that I have most enjoyed in my travels are those urban churches or chapels that open immediately onto a busy street in a big city and thereby offer an invitation and a refuge to a great multitude of people who would otherwise never find time to set foot in a church. I have often fantasized about building such a project in an American city—to find a small site on a busy street and build a little Orthodox chapel that would be paneled in marble and clad in mosaics so beautiful as to soften the heart of the most harried modern city dweller with the unexpected astonishment of a vision of heaven.

On the other hand I have a tremendous love for the design of gardens and for integrating a church into a natural landscape with paths and walls. Thus I would also like to design an extensive complex in a beautiful landscape on a large rural site, something that would include a church and domestic buildings framed by courtyards and gardens, and involve the surrounding topography and woods—maybe a monastery, a school, or even a museum of liturgical art. A project like this where I could be involved for many years designing every small detail of the architecture, the furnishings and the landscape would be a particular dream.

RTE: Andrew, tell us now about your design firm New World Byzantine, and how you work with clients who ask you to design a church or a house?



ANDREW: New World Byzantine is a design firm that I share with my business partner George Holt. We form a loose partnership in which we work together on certain residential projects in downtown Charleston, but we also have our own specialties and work independently on those. My own work in church design constitutes roughly half of what I do, the other half being the design of small houses, most often designed for the backyards of lots in the downtown Charleston historic district, and usually designed to look like historic houses themselves.

In my church work, I am typically contacted by a mission or a parish that initially seeks my guidance to help them frame the parameters of a building campaign. I help them analyze their needs, their budget, and the possibilities for the site in order to develop a program and scope of work. Rarely does a church have the financial ability to start building right away, so the first thing they need from me is a basic design and presentation renderings to show to the parish and to outside donors in order to raise funds.

Typically I start working with a client by visiting the land they have purchased and meeting extensively with the building committee until we settle upon a particular approach for situating the buildings on the site, and a consensus on the construction technique and basic form and style that the buildings are going to have. Often a church then hires me to develop that design and do detailed watercolor renderings for their fundraising campaign. After that it may be years before the church has raised enough funds to proceed towards construction, but when that happens I affiliate with a licensed architect in the state where the project is located, who can help meet the local requirements of code compliance and permitting in that particular jurisdiction.

I am especially careful never to give up too much control over the details in the project because the particular strength of my design work is in maintaining a rigorous authenticity in construction details, as well as deliberately considering all of the decorative elements, from the rooftop crosses down to the iconostasis and chandeliers. Even when working on a project that is hundreds or even thousands of miles away from my office, I still draw extremely detailed construction documents which show precisely how to build every aspect of the structure and specify every color, texture, and finish. If there are specialized parts of the construction, such as chandeliers and icon panels which cannot be sourced by an ordinary builder, I will help the church find

Opposite: Medieval Byzantine-style chandeliers from New World Byzantine Studios.

Photo: A. Gould.

appropriate artisans who can make these things, and in many cases I offer to make them myself.

RTE: What church articles do you make?

ANDREW: Most often I make chandeliers for churches. I have not found any source in the world for medieval Byzantine-style chandeliers that I especially like and that are affordable, so when we built Holy Ascension, I set out to make such chandeliers on my own. I developed a very efficient process wherein I draw the ornate Byzantine parts of the chandeliers in AutoCad, a computer drafting program, and send those files to a laser-cutting facility which robotically cuts them out of steel. I take these pieces to my workshop where I weld on the hardware, apply a special finish to give them the patina of old wrought iron and, if necessary, wire them for electric candles. With this process I am able to offer chandeliers that look very much like the ancient Byzantine examples that one might see in a museum, at an affordable cost.

RTE: And you do other articles as well?

ANDREW: Yes. I take a special joy in making things in my own workshop from time to time, as it gets me out of the office and away from my computer, so some years ago I decided to formally establish another business called New World Byzantine Studios, which is essentially a liturgical arts workshop and online store for ecclesiastical furnishings. Through this website I offer processional implements such as crosses, fans and candlesticks; various kinds of lampadas and polycandelons, wooden furniture, pectoral crosses and panagias; burial shrouds, gospel covers and reliquaries, and so on.

RTE: It is all interesting, but tell us more about the burial shrouds.

ANDREW: These are shrouds, rectangular pieces of cloth that cover the body in the casket. They have a picture of the cross and some text: "With the saints give rest, O Christ, to the soul of thy servant where sickness and sorrow are no more, neither sighing but life-everlasting," along with a headband bearing the *Trisagion*. They are used for the funerals of lay people and are laid over the body clothed in modern dress. I drew a design for one and I have them digitally printed on fabric. Some people ask to buy them unhemmed, and they hem the edges themselves, and then I have them sent directly from

Opposite: Andrew Gould carving pillar capital.



the fabric-printing company. Other people want them already hemmed, so I keep some in stock that have been hemmed by a tailor. Shrouds like this have been mass-produced in Russia from sometime in the 19th century. You can buy such shrouds online from Russian liturgical supply companies, but as they have over-complicated designs and a Slavonic inscription I designed one that is simpler and more dignified, with an English inscription.

I don't make all of these things myself. I partner with other artisans such as icon painters and silversmiths with whom I collaborate to execute my designs. The partner with whom I have the closest working relationship is Jonathan Pageau, who I mentioned earlier. Jonathan lives near Montreal and is a master of iconographic carving, particularly miniature pieces carved out of fine stone in low relief. It is my special pleasure as a designer and craftsman to design liturgical implements that can incorporate his carvings, such as reliquaries and gospel covers, and to craft inlaid wooden frames for his larger carved icons.

It is my hope that in the future we may be able to find some sort of patronage or grant for Jonathan that he can invest in the tools and time necessary to start doing his carvings in more precious materials. Jonathan's carvings, executed in such materials as amber, amethyst, or lapis lazuli, would, I think, be among the most beautiful and precious carved icons that will have ever been made in the history of Orthodoxy. And so I look forward to the day that a special patron may be found who is willing to sponsor such work.

The Orthodox Arts Journal

RTE: What else would you like to say to our readers?

ANDREW: I would like to encourage people interested in any aspect of liturgical art to read the *Orthodox Arts Journal*. This is an online journal that I founded in 2012 working in close association with my colleagues and editors, Scott Patrick O'Rourke and Jonathan Pageau. The mission of the *Orthodox Arts Journal* is to publish articles and news about Orthodox liturgical arts. We cover visual arts, music, liturgical ceremony and text, and relevant art history and theory. The journal presents these topics together to highlight the unified witness of the arts to the beauty of the kingdom of God, and to promulgate an understanding of how the arts work together in the worship of the Church.

At present we have seventeen contributors to write for the journal, all of whom write at a high level of academic expertise, and most of whom are themselves master artisans. So far we have published almost three hundred articles and I think that these articles constitute a more extensive and accessible body of writing about the Orthodox liturgical arts than can be found anywhere else. Many of the articles feature recent projects by the contributors themselves; other articles are interviews with artists that we feel we would like to call attention to. We also have articles which highlight contemporary trends in Orthodox art, such as contemporary Georgian metalworking or contemporary icon painting in Romania, for instance.

The *Orthodox Arts Journal* is undoubtedly the best place one could go to find pictures and descriptions of the very finest Orthodox art now being made throughout the world. In addition we have articles on the theory and theology of liturgical arts from which one can glean a very good education in the theoretical principles behind such work. My own contributions to the journal have been dominated by a lengthy series of articles called, *An Icon of the Kingdom of God: The Integrated Expression of the Liturgical Arts*.

I wrote this series because I have noticed an imbalance in the Orthodox Church today, whereby tremendous attention is placed upon correct translation and interpretation of liturgical texts, and also upon iconography and its pedagogical role in catechesis. However, there is a comparative neglect of the iconic role of architecture and nearly outright disbelief that there can be any theological meaning to the minor liturgical crafts or even to the melodies of liturgical music. This bias is unfortunate because, of all people, we Orthodox should understand that all things in the world are symbolic, that all things glorify God in their own unique way, and that it is not possible for us to experience the fullness of the vision of the saints within our churches if we emphasize only texts and icons, while neglecting the important symbolic contribution of the other liturgical arts.

My series suggests that every type of art and craft that was present in a medieval Orthodox church had a unique contribution to the iconic vision of the kingdom of God. I address the arts one by one, starting with iconography and distinguishing panel icons, frescos, and the iconostasis, and I proceed to describe the important roles of architecture, furnishings, chandeliers, vestments, linens, ceremonial implements, gardens, churchyards and cemeteries, and finally incense. This series explores the unique aesthetic contribution of each of these things to the liturgical ethos of a traditional

church and suggests how each of these arts, even the most humble among them, has a specific and representative connection to something real and glorified in the kingdom of Heaven. ✝

Website for Andrew Gould's design work: www.newworldbyzantine.com

Website for Andrew Gould's liturgical crafts: www.nwbstudios.com

Website for Jonathan Pageau's carvings: www.pageaucarvings.com

Orthodox Arts Journal: www.orthodoxartsjournal.org