Modern architecture's birth was fundamentally rational; based on logic and economy, its elements first evolved for worldly purposes. Thus a problem is immediately posed when the design of a religious building has to reflect fervour and emotion, rather than the mind and the intellect.

The question of religious expression in our own time is rendered more difficult by the comparative lack of religious fervour. The medieval cathedral held the allegiance of farmer and tradesman, learned and sophisticated; but today religion no longer holds the central position that it held several hundred years ago. Today's office towers, shopping centers and stadiums are mundane, but they strongly affect the character of our towns and cities, at the expense of the ecclesiastical building which in almost every previous phase of architectural history had, along with the occasional palace, commanded the greatest degree of technical ingenuity and sincere creative effort, as well as prime location.

Many functions assumed by today's church are no longer tied to a church building but are found in other aspects of daily life, and thus cannot be expressed in a single edifice or even at all in building materials. For such reasons, we in the twentieth century cannot expect to design, build and use houses of worship as full a reflection of our minds and spirits as were the cathedrals of Chartres and Canterbury of our forefathers.

Thus architects, traditionally afforded their greatest opportunities by a cathedral, now find that their present outlook and background generally render them unfit for today's equivalent. At a very early stage in the church program, analysis has to be forsaken; symbolism must be invoked, or alternatively reliance placed on intuition. Nonetheless it is not simply a matter of finding the means to stimulate an emotional response in the spectator, since without a fundamental message to communicate, architectural ingenuity merely becomes arbitrary and capricious. (Many submissions to major competitions held in the U.K. several years ago for Coventry and Liverpool Cathedrals were vulgar stunts, banal or historically derivative.)

To compound this situation, strong differences of opinion

Architect: Etienne Gaboury. Associate architect: Denis Lussier. Contractor: Bockstael Construction. The critique was written by Professor Jonas Lehman.
often exist among even those who commission the architect and are of the same denomination. For example, the relative importance of ceremonial and sermon (with subsequent raised emphasis on altar and pulpit) is often disputed.

It may be argued that a fundamental principle upon which today's architecture rests is that of function. In itself (and even applied to religious buildings) this is not new. The synagogue used to be only a communal centre and place of instruction, and the Friends' Meeting house is still little more than its name implies. Though minor requirements vary between denominations, it could be stated that a function of the religious building is to convert its occupants into worshippers and to provide an atmosphere conducive to receiving the religious message. Unfortunately, this particular function cannot be achieved in a purely rational manner. Many of today's buildings, their designs based on the simple structural function of shelter, go far in achieving a highly satisfactory quality, but by itself this is inadequate. The use of movable seats and altar to suit the position of the sun and purpose of meeting, the placing of windows primarily with regard to particular external views (or the sky), and the use of a vertical feature solely to contain mechanical equipment and observation rooms, though admirable ideas in themselves, are obviously insufficient. As Geoffrey Scott pointed out in *The Architecture of Humanism*, "the Art of Architecture studies not structure in itself, but the effect of structure on the human spirit". Or to adapt Robert Lancaster's wise remark, a machine for praying in presupposes a battery of spirit which we have not yet quite attained.

Enduring criteria, common to every period of architecture, have been plan, mass and surface. Often these have been enhanced by dramatic exaggeration and adornment of the structure, and occasionally by decorative splendour; or with particular reference to religious building, by such means as the manipulation of volume and spaces, axes, heavy beams on massive columns, delicate vaults on slender shafts, lighting, and painted glass, which led to a desirable spiritual quality.

But as we have pointed out, the cozier and detached use of doors, spires, arcades and other attached spires, although reminiscent, are insufficient. Clearly, the inspiration to be derived from an ecclesiastical building would be lacking until the building itself, in addition to enclosing, allowing for and expressing its purpose, further participates (as does today's junior school), in the activities it shelters.

Since function alone is insufficient, the religious building should be designed in the spirit of the faith, even as part of the worship itself. It seems essential that the design of such a building should require of the architect his fullest convictions, in addition to his ability. As Albert Schweitzer once wrote in connection with music: 'every great work of art, like every great idea, needs an atmosphere of enthusiasm for the revelation of its perfect beauty'.

In the design of Winnipeg's Precious Blood Church, Etienne Gaboury certainly has this enthusiasm. His deep involvement in the meaning and symbolism of the Roman
Catholic liturgy is quite apparent, his organization of space in relation to the ceremony it shelters thoughtfully integrated. The desired relationship between entry, font and altar led the architect to a spiral plan, and as he has pointed out, the structure evolves from this. The expression of the laminated fir beams, with their cladding of cedar shakes, is inherently logical; the seemingly random twist at the apex where the roof turns in on itself whilst disappointing those looking for a more pure and structurally logical form, allows for light, without which the lofty interior could not be adequately revealed.

Concern for light and texture is also apparent in the manner in which daylight is allowed to enter at various locations under the eaves, revealing the rough boarded texture on the wall immediately above, which becomes progressively smooth as it reaches towards the apex. Although plan, space, structure, light, materials and texture are carefully considered and closely integrated, the quality of the interior fortunately stops short of the demanding logic of traditional Gothic and Renaissance church construction, and is therefore sufficiently at ease for the unforeseen event and detail which human beings are apt to introduce.

We have described how this church has resulted internally from a great familiarity with liturgical principles. On the outside, naturally continuing to intrigue the passer-by, the powerful roof with its cladding of rough hewn cedar shakes, meets a smooth dark brick base at a varying level several feet above the ground. It is here that one feels that the strength of the roof would have gained so much more had the ground been contoured and brought up to meet it. As it is, the junction of rough textures, strongly contoured wood at an angle meets smooth hard vertical brick, both powerful forms and materials, but questionably related.

But in truly assessing the Precious Blood Church we have to return to its context. The fundamental problems of the meaning of religion in our own time, whether it be its social context, details of the service, or the nature of God, are far from being resolved and universally accepted.

If we look for the attitude described by Rudolph Wittkower in his *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism* in relation to S. Maria delle Carceri, with its "majestic simplicity, the undisturbed impact of its geometry, the purity of its whiteness... designed to evoke in the congregation a consciousness of the presence of God—of a God who has ordered the universe according to immutable mathematical laws who has created a uniform and beautifully proportioned world, the consonance and harmony of which is mirrored in His temple below", or if we look for the approach to form that leads to the serene simplicity of the chapel at Otaniemi, or the crematorium at Givle, we will find little of it here. Against this background, it would be unfair, and even irrelevant, to assess this building. What would be more to the point would be to ask whether the architect has expressed his building in a manner that has meaning to the members of this particular Roman Catholic congregation and their clergy in St. Boniface, Manitoba. Yes, he has.

*Jonas Lehrman*
The lengthy search for the appropriate solution to the Precious Blood Church was complicated by two main factors: (1) The difficulty of the initial site and eventual recognition of the need to change it. (2) The changing mood of the church and its liturgy and the resulting conflict (or contradiction) in program requirements.

The initial program entailed the erection of an 800-place church over the existing basement and foundations. This basement had been constructed as the first stage of a two-stage church building program typical of the time. The basement was designed to receive a superstructure, but was by then much too small to satisfy the requirements of the expanded parish.

A rectory was also built on the south-west corner of the site, thereby blocking one-half of the site and dominating it by its sheer mass to the extent where the new church was a counterpart to the rectory. Immediately south of the existing site across a service lane and at the corner of Kenny Street and Enfield Crescent were four old houses facing the crescent. After four tentative solutions on the restricted site, the clients saw the need to either purchase the four houses or relocate their parish corner.

Our first studies for the Precious Blood Church began in 1961 and the building was not erected until 1967. The studies therefore began before the Ecumenical Council and continued during the tumultuous period of change in theology as well as in basic liturgy.

The whole concept of the church was undergoing at that time a considerable change, and in fact the very program change from the first sketches to the completed building reveals a fundamental change of concept of the church—from the monumental, formal, and impersonal scale of 800 places to a more intimate, personal scale and concept of a church for 550 places. The paradox of it all (and in no way simplifying the problem) is that there was much reticence towards "modern" architecture and considerable concern at the outset about ending up with a building that would not be endowed with the comforting traits of good traditional church architecture.

The very fact that we were in very unstable time (religiously speaking) and the fact that the site was so difficult at the initial stage permitted us to evolve the solution in close collaboration with the client. The search for the solution was really a series of trial sketches revealing various aspects of the problem, solving the problem only partially but thereby permitting the dialogue with the client and inviting him to join into the search. I believe it was very significant that the first considerations were primarily of technical and visual order while considerations at the last phase of development were basic concept, religious significance, liturgical order and the placing of the church in the community. The search for the solution was therefore done in close collaboration with the client and rather than attempting to submit 'The Solution' for the first meeting and making sure that it was 'sold' so that we could proceed with working drawings, we rather reversed the procedure presenting sketches and expressed concern while presenting them that the problem had not yet been resolved.

Extravagant Gaboury

This first solution was based on an 800-seat church built over the existing basement foundation. These foundations were 7 feet above the ground which gave us the first major problem. There was not enough space in front of the existing basement to allow for an enclosed and direct stairway to the second level. The entrance would therefore have to be indirect. Although inconvenient because we could not relate the second story to a liturgical use, a series of mood-oriented spaces were evolved, providing a dramatic transition from the transept to the sacred via the monumental and symbolic doorway. The exterior atrium, the dimly-lit centrally-aisled narthex which finally led to a horizontal nave at the confessio. The functional, the liturgical and the architectural were all somewhat strained in this entrance but at the bond that it established with the rectory made it almost worthwhile.

The lobed nave had an inherent difficulty in that it divided the congregation into two parts. However, in the light of the size of this church such a concept might have been valid.

Although technical problems such as the height of the basement wall and the length and width of the nave were greatly sensitized to this solution, it is interesting to note how all the ingredients (or concerns) of the final solution were already present in this first study (a) dynamic play with the altar as the centre and fulcrum of the composition (b) the amphitheatre-like seating of the congregation, suggested here but not resolved and (c) the baptistery at the front of the church to permit a communal action between the altar (celebrant), the congregation and the baptistry. This solution did not resolve the fundamental problem of the dual role of the baptistry as a communal sacrament which should be placed at the front of the church for full participation and as a long standing and very valid symbol of the entry to the church which would require it to be at the entrance. This entire exercise and the fine schemes that go with it was to a major extent an effort to resolve this basic problem in liturgical and architectural terms.
Considerable care was expended in selecting the materials for the structure that would harmonize with the environment. The materials chosen were large stones and wood. The structure is a combination of stone and wood. The stone is large, heavy, and rugged. The wood is light, flexible, and easy to work. The stone is used in the structure to add strength and durability. The wood is used to add flexibility and lightness. The combination of stone and wood creates a unique and harmonious structure.

The structure is designed to be self-sustaining. The stone and wood are chosen to be durable and to require minimal maintenance. The structure is designed to last for centuries. The stone and wood are chosen to be resilient and to be able to withstand the elements. The stone and wood are chosen to be strong and to be able to support heavy loads. The structure is a testament to the skill and craftsmanship of the builders.

The structure is designed to be energy-efficient. The stone and wood are chosen to be insulating and to be able to retain heat. The structure is designed to be warm and cozy in the winter and cool and refreshing in the summer. The stone and wood are chosen to be energy-efficient and to be able to reduce energy consumption. The structure is a model of sustainable design.

The structure is designed to be a focal point in its environment. The stone and wood are chosen to be visually appealing and to blend seamlessly with the surroundings. The structure is designed to be a landmark and to be a source of inspiration. The stone and wood are chosen to be aesthetically pleasing and to be able to enhance the beauty of the environment. The structure is a work of art.

The structure is designed to be a place of refuge and solace. The stone and wood are chosen to be soothing and to create a sense of peace and tranquility. The structure is designed to be a sanctuary and to be a place of rest. The stone and wood are chosen to be therapeutic and to be able to promote relaxation. The structure is a haven of calm.

The structure is designed to be a place of community and connection. The stone and wood are chosen to be social and to create a sense of togetherness. The structure is designed to be a gathering place and to be a source of shared experiences. The stone and wood are chosen to be inclusive and to be able to accommodate people of all ages and abilities. The structure is a community hub.