

THE PLACE OF THE CHURCH:

Exploring Revitalization and Reintegration of Churches

A CBU Architecture Symposium

October 20-21, 2023

Call for Papers or Presentations

Historically in America, the Christian church building has stood as the physical center and often the corresponding cultural center of many communities. With approximately 350,000 Christian church buildings across 3,000 counties in America, the regular physical presence of the church in the built environment is an ongoing reminder of Christianity and thus a cornerstone of the cultural plausibility of the faith.

However, a survey of contemporary church properties calls into question the success of the church's physical presence in supporting social imaginaries. Multiple developments in the church have led to church properties' diminished role in supporting the plausibility of the faith. Development trends during the last century in the Protestant church pushed campuses to the outskirts of town, separating the church from the communities it served. A sense of pragmatism and desire for comfort has resulted in austere, unadorned structures undiscernible as places of worship. Declining church participation of majority populations, alongside the rise of minority and immigrant church participation, results in observable mismatches between the use of existing structures and new cultural dynamics. And finally, a reduction in church attendance in historic mainline Protestant denominations have rendered centrally located buildings unused.

Acknowledging the important role that physical church properties have on validating the plausibility of the faith, and recognizing the contemporary situation, the 2023 CBU Architecture symposium explores the revitalization and reintegration of the church – ultimately asking, what is the place of the church?

Papers or presentations may include, but are not limited to, architectural, urbanistic, interior, theological, missiological, liturgical, sociological, and community development considerations of:

- *Revitalization of Existing Churches*
- *Integration of New Churches*
- *Architecture's Role in Christian Witness*
- *Design Considerations for Effective Plausibility of the Faith*
- *Design Considerations for Longevity of Christian Architectural Witness*
- *Regenerative Church Design*
- *Global approaches to the Place of Church*
- *Transcendence in Sacred Architecture*
- *Emerging Trajectories in Church Architecture*



Proposals are welcomed from scholars, professionals, and students. Student engagement is encouraged from undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels from all relevant disciplines.

Symposium URL

<https://cavad.calbaptist.edu/programs/arch-symposium-fall-2023/>

Submission Information

Interested individuals are invited to submit abstracts of a maximum of 500 words with a title, following the Chicago Manual of Style. Multiple abstracts may be submitted by an author or authorial team. Professional presentation proposals are included in the abstract review.

Abstracts will follow a blind peer-review process with at least two scholars considering each submission. The individual recommendations will be sent and studied by the conference conveners who will make the final determination regarding accepting or rejecting a proposal. Symposium abstracts will be electronically published prior to the meeting.

Format and Place of Submission

Abstracts should define focus and summarize its positioned approach or argument. All proposals should demonstrate engagement with the symposium's theme, though related subjects will be considered.

Proposals should include the following:

- Name, Title, and Organization of individual(s) submitting
- Title of paper or presentation
- Identification of Proposed Paper or Presentation Session Topic
- 500 word abstract
- Any necessary footnote / bibliographic information
- Five keywords

Please submit proposals at: https://calbaptist.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_emRKDJf10kcdCT4
Please direct questions to Professor Jacob Slagill (jslagill@calbaptist.edu).

Timeline

Submission Deadline: September 22, 2023

Notification of Acceptance: No later than September 29, 2023

Post-Conference Paper Submission: November 24, 2023

Steering Committee

Professor Keelan Kaiser, FAIA

Rev. Dr. Matthew Niermann, AIA

Dr. Karim Youssef

Professor Jacob Slagill, AIA

