



# **"MISSION"**

Bronze, 2003

## **“Mission” Bronze 2003**

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**Associate Professor of Art 1985-**



## **Artists Statement**

This piece illustrates the development of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and other belief systems, through archeological and architectural art and monuments they have created through out their histories. “Mission” was not conceived with the total representation of all faiths. Rather, it briefly and in general demonstrates major historical developments that we have come to recognize as important to our Faith System.

There are two major components that determined the overall shape of this work and the organization of its contents. I selected the oval because it is a symmetrical continuum of flowing line, never ending but bending so to speak. Additionally, it seemed the most interesting way to compliment the hard edge nature of the fireplace and mantle as well as the room where it is now exhibited. The oval is a calm form and draws you into it as you enter the room. In the center of the composition is a circle. A circle’s psychological impact is different from an oval. For me it rings of a wheel with a central hub and it is bit different from the oval in that it is centered in an unbroken continuum of motion and all of its parts from it’s center point are the same. It also reminds us of our planet and a lot more...just use your imagination.

Between the oval and the central circle is the area of religious thought development we are familiar with. It starts with a generic god figure blowing on the fires of creation in this case a volcano. The scientific explanation and the mythological mix in the lower left of the piece to form an interesting composition of wind, sky, fire, water and earth. They are the elements that play an important role in early religions as they still do in contemporary thought processes. It seems to me that among the many wondrous things religions satisfy our human needs for am their connection to the unknown. Not only have religions given us direction but also they attempt to explain the unexplainable. This reference is symbolized with the inclusion of several types of ancient burial customs, which appear in the composition with the first archeological structure of organized religion early pagan symbols of a bull, and Ibis stationed right below. Out of this area of the composition springs a tree of life with it’s leaves growing and flowing in and about the rest of the historical arrangement up, around and down again to Luther’s Center For Faith and Life intermingled with the hair of God. This historical composition flows outside the inner circle; however, the connecting forces between the inner and outer worlds are first symbolized by an old commercial sailing vessel common to the ancient world of the Mediterranean. This boat represents former LC president Jeffery Baker and Mrs. Shirley Baker’s mission of reaching out religiously and educationally to the world around us. This symbolism further connects within the “Great Obis” where the three crosses of the crucifixion illustrating the importance of religious thought in guiding us spiritually through these separate but connected entities of human thought.

When I was modeling “Mission” my ears were ringing with the joy that I was given the opportunity to create something special and long lasting. During the years of construction when I was at wits end about my own continuing saga in life and even later when deciding how and where to cast the piece... answers and strength kept coming. I hope “Mission” becomes as meaningful for you.



## Artist Insight to “Mission”



**Note:** Next to each section title is a close-up ('s) taken from the original wax model pictured above.

### Creation



In the beginning God created the earth...

This section starts at the lower right of the composition with the generic face of God blowing a great wind of fresh air toward a volcano, which in itself has been important to some early cultures if only by association. At Catal Huyuk (located in Turkey) the power of the volcano seems to have been worked into their belief system (Fig. 1). In “Mission”, God’s wind intensifies the volcanic fires creating bellowing smoke from the eruptions which turn the waters of the earth and together eventually create landholdings of sand, pebbles and rock.

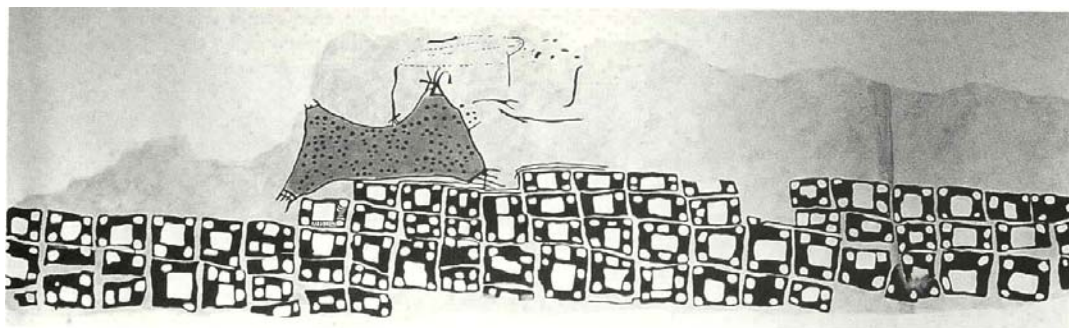


Fig. 1

2-8 Landscape with Volcanic Eruption (?), detail of a copy of a wall painting from Level VII, Çatal Hüyük, c. 6150 B.C.

## Ancient and early pagan



To the far left of the rocky shoreline is a clay pot interred with a plant extending upward into a woman's figure modeled after what is generally called "Venus Figures" (Fig 2). These ancient carved or modeled figures represent some of the earliest archeological indicators of ancient societies. Their presence implies organization, technological advancement, the need for sustenance and ritual. The robust women figure depicted is quite likely a symbol of fertility, plenty or wealth. Most archeologists believe these figures are related to ceremony, perhaps workshop or early pagan religions. No one really knows but we do know that these kinds of figures have been made in many parts of the world beginning around 30,000 BC.



1-4. Woman from Willendorf, Austria. c. 30,000-25,000 BCE. Limestone, height 4 1/8" (11 cm). Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna



1-5. Woman from Ostrava, Czech Republic. c. 23,000 BCE. Hematite, height 1 1/4" (4.6 cm). Archeological Institute, Brno



6. Woman from Brassempouy, Grotte du Fau, Brassempouy, Landes, France. c. 22,000 BCE. Ivory, height 1 1/4" (3 cm). Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St.-Germain-en-Laye



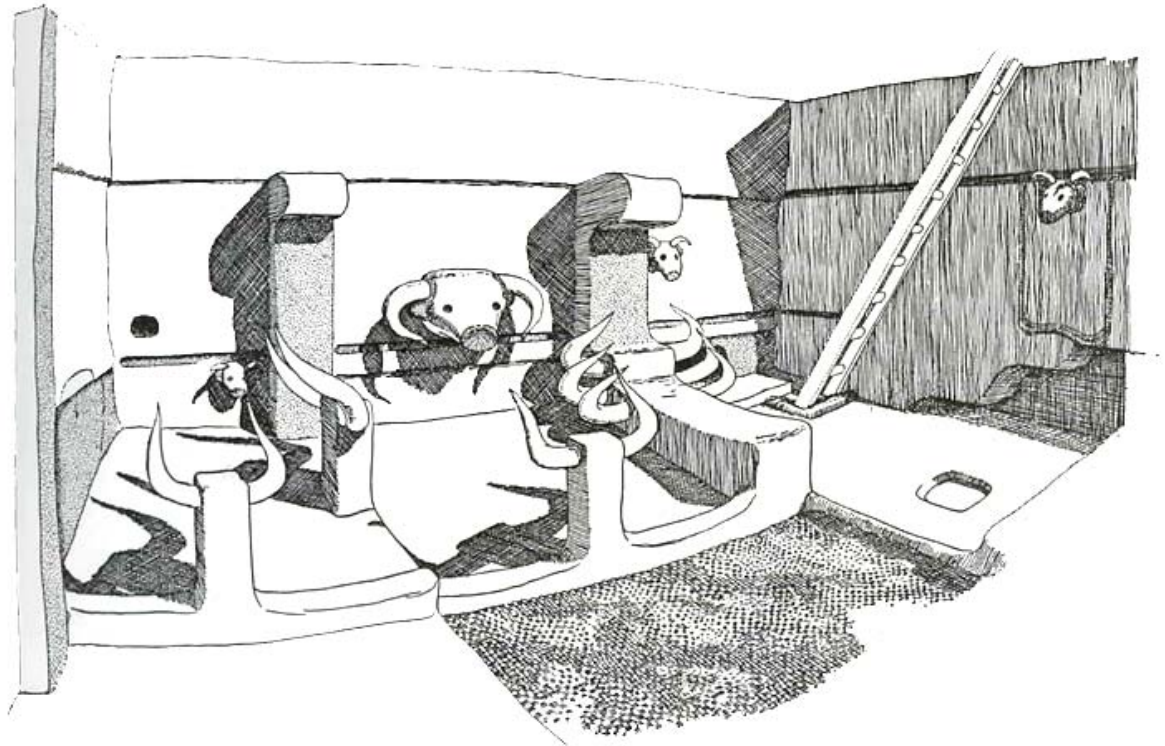
1,18 Mother Goddess from Catal Huyuk, c. 6000 BCE. The head is a restoration. Terracotta, 7 1/2" (20 cm) high. Archeological Museum, Ankara.

Fig. 2

Next to the "Venus" figure atop the domesticated plant is a very small spring coming out of the cliff. At the beginning of the spring and directly above it is an Ibis, to its right a bull. Both are some of the images associated with early pagan belief systems. They are symbolic of animal worship or sect symbols around the world in different cultures and at different time. (Fig's. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) This has been clearly depicted again in the ancient town of Catal Huyuk, located in southern Turkey and dating back to 6,000 BC. (Fig.



3) The other two are called Knowth and Dowth. They are comparable in size and stature. All are within view of each other. Newgrange is particularly interesting because it lines up with the winter solstice. On the dawn of December 21 the sun shines down a long stone slab lined hall and illuminate a central chamber. The chamber and its entrance form a long cross.



1,17 Restored view of the Third Shrine, Çatal Hüyük. Drawing by Mrs G. Huxtable.

Fig. 3



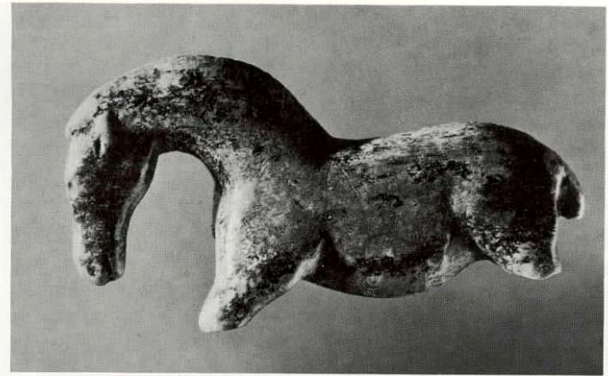
1,8 Horses, rhinoceroses and aurochs, c. 25,000–17,000 BC. Pigment on limestone rock. Chauvet cave, Ardèche valley.

Fig. 4



38. *BISON*, from La Madeleine near Les Eyzies (Dordogne).  
c. 15,000–10,000 B.C. Reindeer horn, length 4" (10.15 cm).  
Musée des Antiquités Nationales, St.-Germain-en-Laye, France

Fig. 5



36. *HORSE*, from Vogelherd Cave. c. 28,000 B.C.  
Mammoth ivory, length 2½" (6.4 cm). Shown 120 percent actual size.  
Private collection (Photograph copyright Alexander Marshack)

Fig. 6

2-9 Kneeling Man-Bull, from Jamdat Nasr, c. 3000 B.C.  
Silver, 6½" high. Metropolitan Museum of Art,  
New York (Joseph Pulitzer Bequest).



Fig. 7

Just above the stylized waves of water and intermingled with the pebbles, rocks and sand you will find a spring coming out of the rocks and an intermingled root system connected to the "Tree of life". This tree is important for many reason, however, the tree branches and clusters of leaves continue to grow upward where they flow in and around the architectural structures depicted in the rest of the piece. For me it represents a connection between human existence and the need to believe in a religious sensibility for whatever the reason. As the root structure transforms into the tree one of the roots continue up and into the trunks mid section where it converts into a serpent coiled gently around an apple, which is nested in leaves.

To the left of the tree of life and just above the spring feeding its roots and near the bull and Ibis are several ancient tomb mounds and a long barrow burial structures. They represent the human need to explain the unknown about death and afterlife-two topics most religions, sects or belief systems address. Nestled above these tombuli is one of at three major structures located in the River Boyne Valley north of Dublin, Ireland, that were early religious and burial centers dating back as far as 4,000 BC. The one I chose to model was Newgrange, which is on the average 103 meters in diameter (Fig. 8).

The other two are called Knowth and Dowth (not shown). They are comparable in size and stature. All are within view of each other. Newgrange is particularly interesting because it lines up with the winter solstice. On the dawn of December 21 the sun shines down a long stone slab lined hall to illuminate a central chamber (Fig. 9). In front of the entrance to the sanctuary is a huge stone with petroglyphs reminiscent of others found in many parts of the world at different times throughout the ancient world (Fig. 10). Above the stone is a rectangular opening that allows the sun to enter for only a few minutes on the shortest day of the year perhaps marking the coming of spring, etc.





Fig. 8



Fig. 9

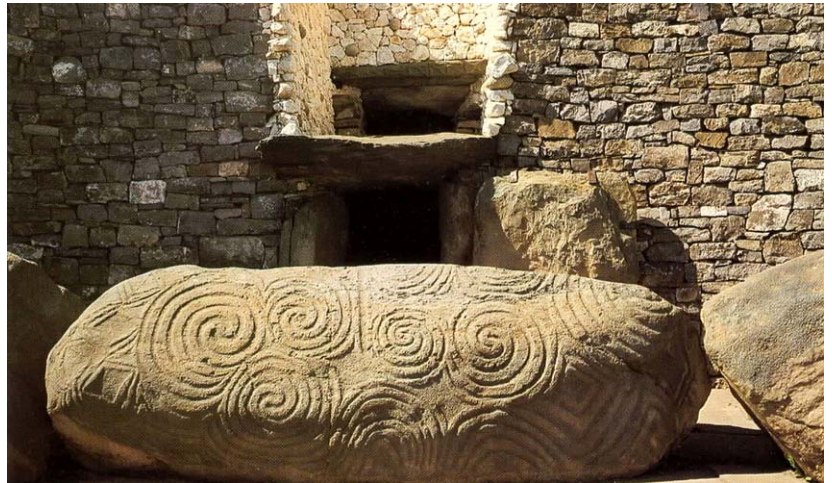


Fig. 10

To the left and next to Newgrange is a composite rendering of equally old architectural structures that exist on the Island of Malta, in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea. The façade of the temple I created is based on the Hagar Qim temple complex (Fig. 11). The interior shapes and currently roofless chambers are typical of these structures dating as far back as 4,000 BC (Fig. 12).

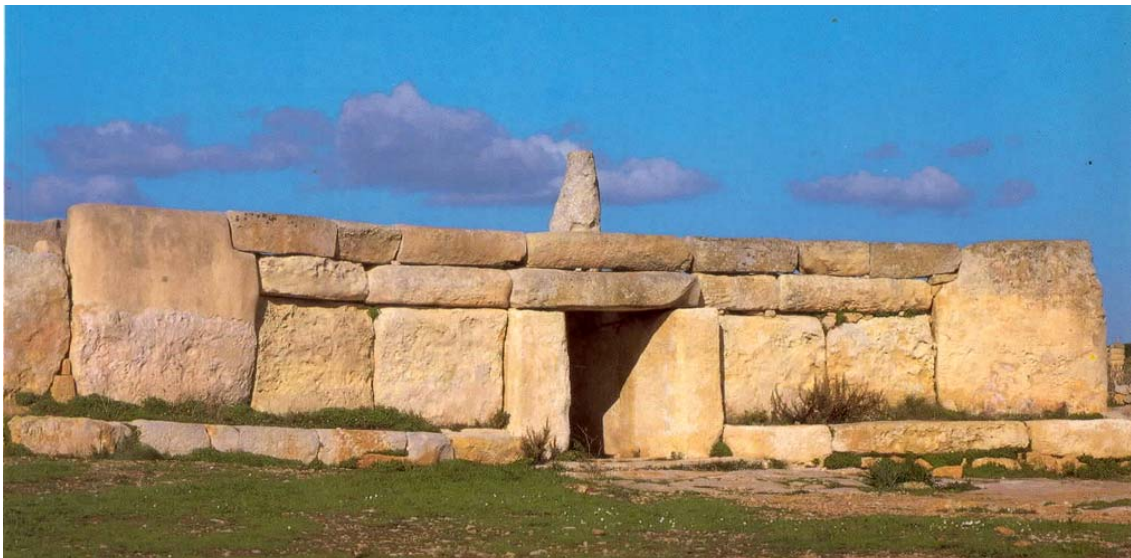


Fig. 11



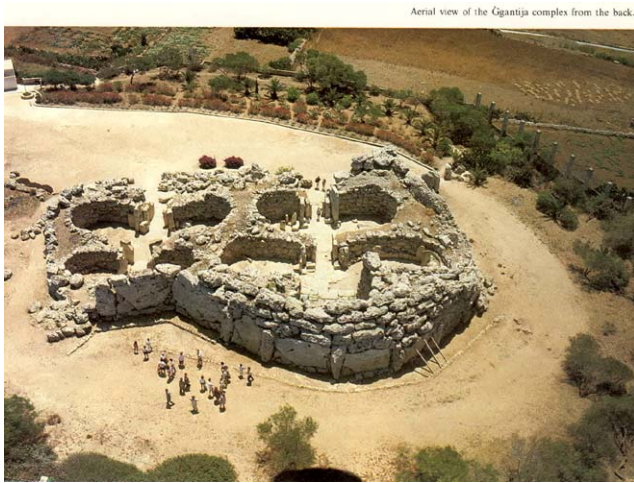


Fig. 12

Modeled just in front of Hagar Qim temple is another robust women figure. It was located in a small “Oracle” hole inside one of the chambers where it was found. The Maltese call it the “Sleeping Lady” (Fig. 13). In reality it is only about one foot long but a powerful work in clay that speaks to us silently of another time and place we know little about.



Fig. 13

The last structure I place in the religious world of uncertain clarity is located directly above the Malta temple. It is called a Ziggurat.



Fig. 14



Ziggurats were conceived as holy mountains, built to bring the temple priests up nearer to the gods, if not into their actual presence. These temple complexes were not just a place of worship but were the center and hub of the city. This is strikingly apparent in the Ancient Sumerian Cities of Mesopotamia. The Ziggurat not only embraced a shrine but also workshops, storehouses, scribes quarters and houses all clustered around it. The Ziggurat was at the center of the town. Occupying a hector of ground, it was overwhelmingly the tallest and largest structure dominating the landscape. The Tower of Babel was a ziggurat, however, not the first. Archeological evidence points to 3,500 BC and the White Temple as one of the oldest (Fig. 14)

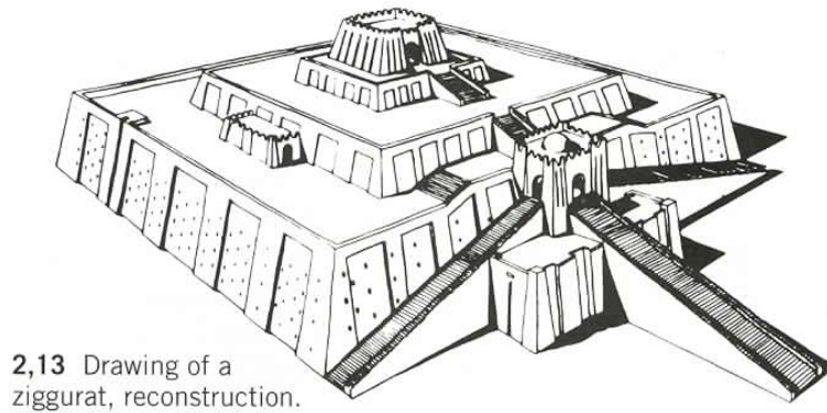


Fig. 15

Ziggurats are older than the pyramids of Egypt. The temple I reconstructed is at Ur in Iraq and dates back to 2,500 BC and is one of the tallest with its first of three platforms rising 50 feet (Fig. 15, also view next photograph)

**Note:** As you look carefully at the entire outer architectural structures of “Mission” you will notice connecting stairways intermingled throughout. This seemed important to me.

## The classical world



There are many temples to choose from between 2,500 BC and 600 AD. I choose to limit my choices to the ancient Greek and Roman Empire because of space limitations and because they are the most commonly known. The Roman temple like the Roman house evolved by skilful and innovative blending of Etruscan and later Greek elements. The Maison Carrée at Nimes in the south of France is the best surviving example. (Fig. 16) These were built in many areas of the Roman Empire. (Fig. 17)



Fig. 16, France 1<sup>st</sup> c BC



Fig. 17, Italy 2<sup>nd</sup> c BC

I chose to represent Greek theology with one temple and one sanctuary. The temple in “Mission” is based on the elements of two other Greek structures. One being the Temple of Hera I, Queen of the Greek Gods, located at Paestum, Italy, 550 BC. (Fig. 18)



Fig. 18

The second is located at the Acropolis in Athens and is a temple dedicated to Athena Parthenos, better known as the Parthenon, 447 BC (Fig. 19). Athena was the honored Goddess because she had helped the Greeks defeat the Persians in 480 BC after they had destroyed the original Acropolis building complex called the Agora. It was important to me to select these two religious centers because they were dedicated to Women Deities who had great power.



5-42. Kallikrates and Iktinos. Parthenon, Acropolis, Athens. 447–438 BCE. View from the northwest

Fig. 19

The sanctuary represented is a round building and is titled, Tholos, Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, Delphi, c. 400 BC (Fig. 20). Often the term after the name (Athena in this case) is an epithet, or title, identifying one of the goddess's many roles in ancient Greek belief. For example, as patron of craftspeople, she was



referred to as Athena Ergane (Athena the worker). As guardian of the city-state, she was Athena Polias. In this title Pronaia simply means in front of the temple.



Fig. 20

In addition to temples there were other places where large groups of people gathered for worship. To the left of the Roman and Greek structures is the theater Epidauros. (Fig. 21) Built in 350 BC, it was 387 feet in diameter with 55 tiers of marble benches. It sat 14,000 people who experienced wonderful acoustics. The Epidauros style expanded on, regularized and embellished the earliest type of theaters, which were previously large hollowed out hillsides adapted for rituals connected with the cult of Dionysus. It was out of these rituals that drama, as we know it evolved.

4,44 Theatre, Epidauros, begun c. 350 bc.

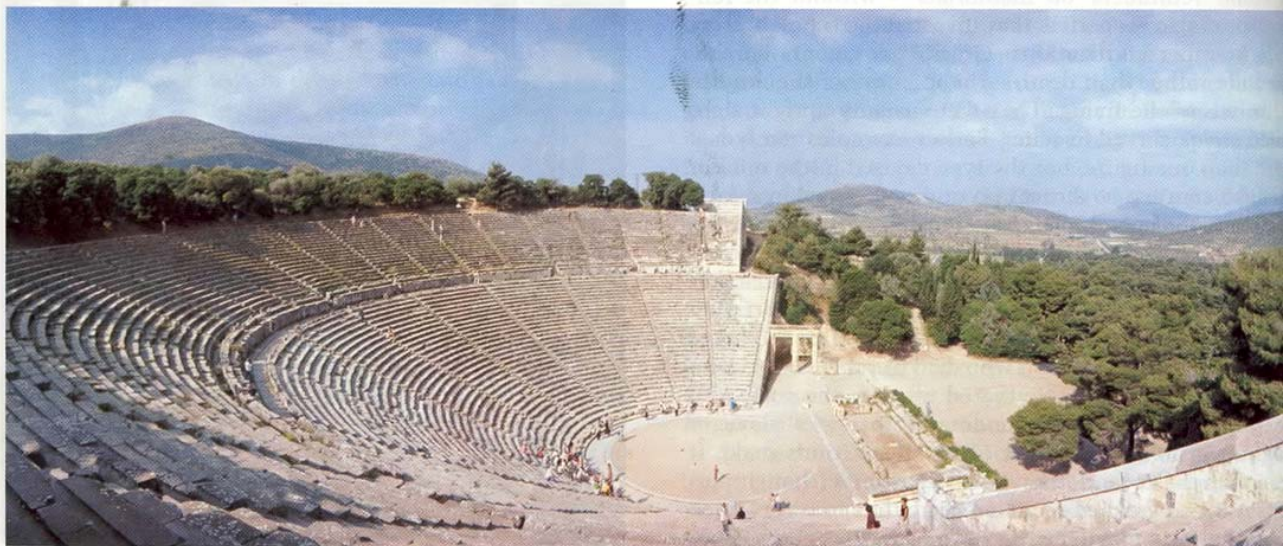
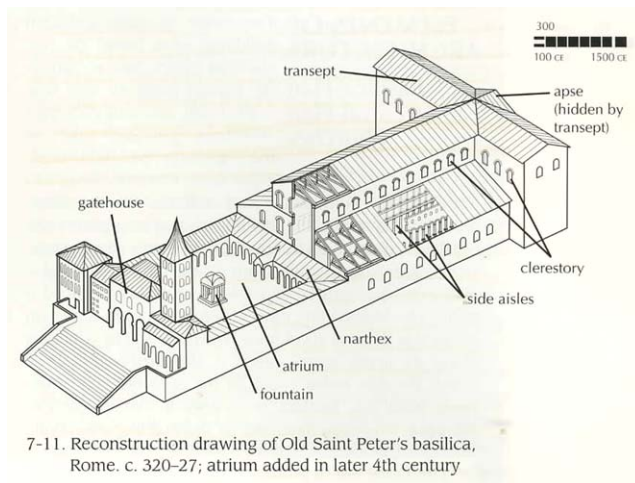


Fig. 21

## Early Christian



In 313 the Roman Emperor Constantine helped formalize the Edict of Milan which granted all people in the Roman Empire freedom to worship whatever god they wished. I believe he also declared the official religion of Rome to be Christianity shortly thereafter. Though Constantine was not baptized until shortly before his death he declared himself leader of the Christian Church and remained a central part of its development until his death. In 324 he began a vast building plan that included many religious structures. Among them was the largest Basilica ever built now called "Old St. Peter" (Fig 22, 23). It is located where Christians believed St. Peter (the first bishop of Rome) was buried after martyrdom by upside down crucifixion. The basilica was dedicated in 354 and it has been estimated that it could house 14,000 worshippers. Devout pilgrims from every corner of Christendom would travel to this site second only to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Its foundations are under current day St. Peter Cathedral in Rome. (You will see the Basilica prominently at the top center of the composition.)



Fig, 22



Fig 23

Above and along side the Old St. Peter Basilica is an Eastern Orthodox Church called San Vitale, Ravenna, Italy (Fig. 24). It was built in a new style between 540-547 as a Byzantine Christian church filled with beautiful symbolic mosaics that are political, historic and religious. (Fig. 25, 26, 27) Ravenna was conquered by the Ostrogoths in 540 and served as a base for further conquest in Italy, San Vitale was finally completed and dedicated by Justinian I in 553.



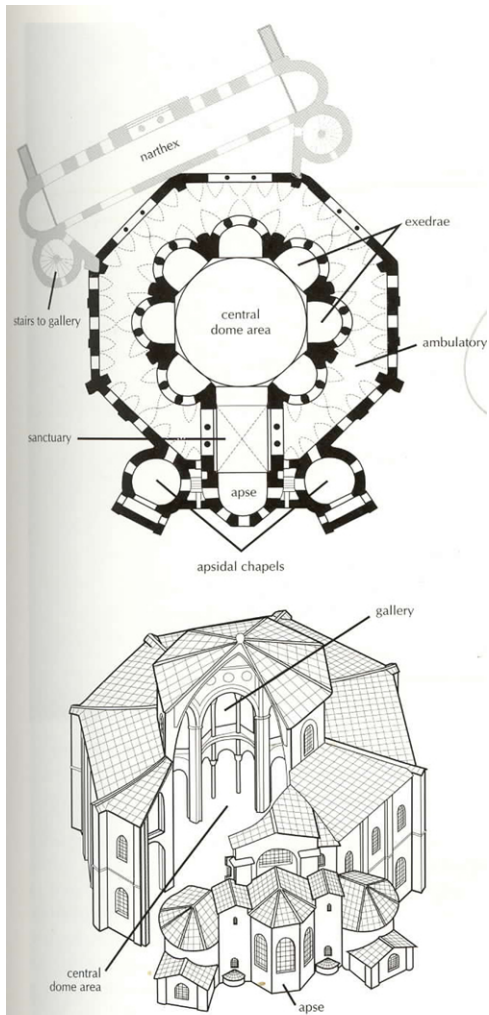


Fig. 24

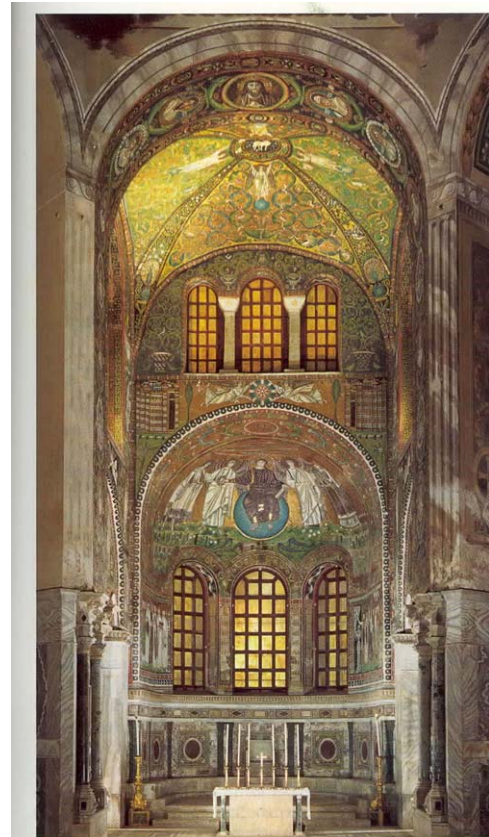


Fig. 25

7.30 S Vitale, Ravenna, c. AD 540-7.



7-32. *Empress Theodora and Her Attendants*, mosaic on south wall of the apse, Church of San Vitale. c. 547.  
8'8" x 12' (2.64 x 3.65 m)

Just like royalty today, Theodora was the subject of much comment and conjecture in her time. Described in a "secret history" by a contemporary, the historian Procopius, as a small-boned woman with sparkling eyes and a will of iron, she was said to have been an actress, considered a risqué profession. Her father was an animal trainer for the circus, where the young heir to the imperial throne, Justinian, met her. Although Theodora's background was unacceptable in high circles, Justinian remained devoted to her. He named a new province, Theodorias, for her and treated her almost as if she were co-emperor. Theodora died in 548, not long after this mosaic portrait was completed.

Fig. 26





Fig. 27

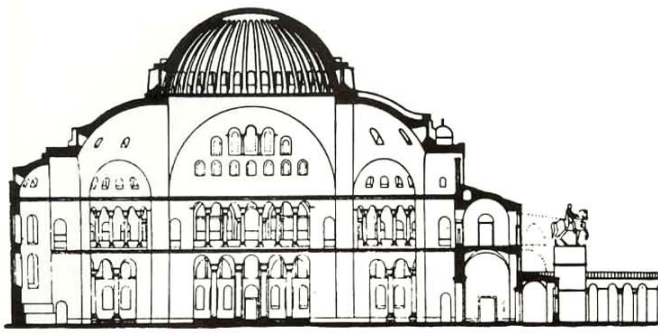
Shortly thereafter the Byzantine city of Ravenna was relinquished. Justinian moved back to Constantinople, which became the new citadel of Byzantine civilization. During his conquest of Ravenna, Justinian was also constructing magnificent structures in Constantinople (Istanbul, Turkey). Rendered to the right of the Old St Peters is an imposing structure called Hagia Sophia or the Church of Holy Wisdom (Fig. 28). Built between 532 and 537 it is one of the supreme achievements in the history of world architecture. It is about 270 feet long and 240 feet wide; the dome is 108 feet in diameter, and its dome rises some 180 feet above the pavement. I rendered the original structure, as it was when it was built as a Christian church (fig. 29,30). Later on, after the Turkish conquest of 1453 it became an Islamic mosque. It is now a museum and its many mosaics, many covered with whitewash when it became a mosque, are under restoration. This buildings dome is the largest in the world, amazingly it was built some 1470 years ago. Legend has it that Justinian himself, aware that architecture can be a potent symbol of earthly power, compared his accomplishment with that of the legendary builder of the first Temple in Jerusalem, saying, "Solomon, I have outdone you".



342. ANTHEMIUS OF TRALLES and ISIDORUS OF MILETUS  
Hagia Sophia, Istanbul

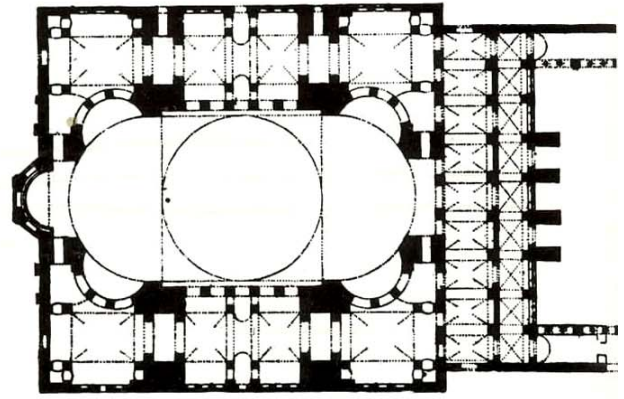
Fig. 28





340. Section of Hagia Sophia. 532–35 A.D. (after Gurlitt)

Fig. 29



341. Plan of Hagia Sophia (after v. Sybel)

Fig. 30

Between Hagia Sophia and the Old St Peters you will see a small structure that I was fascinated with during my travels and studies in Ireland. It is made of stone and resembles an upside down boat. All of its walls slope inwardly. I added it because of its theoretical use and because its date of construction is under dispute. Some say it was a church of the 8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> century's and others now say it may predate Christ. No one really knows what it was used for, however, the locals have always called it a church. It is called the Gallarus Oratory (Fig. 31).



Fig. 31

Right next to the Oratory is a series of beehive stone huts that monks lived out their lonely existence in (Fig. 32). They represent one of the few early Christian Monasteries (called Skellig Michael, St Michael being the patron saint of high places) in existence. They are on the side of the island of Great Skellig, which rises out of the Atlantic to a great peak off the coast of Kerry, Ireland. They are some 600 feet above the sea below, isolated though somehow connected to another oratory measuring 14 feet by 10 feet. It was cold and isolated and represents another fascinating theological development in the evolution of Christianity.

54, 55 Beehive huts and one of the oratories on Skellig Michael, Co. Kerry, built at the latest in the 12th C. The oratory measures 4.25 x 3 m. (14 x 10 ft.).

neatory. These huts, in which the handful of monks passed their lonely existence, are some of the few surviving traces of the domestic buildings of Early Christian monasteries in Ireland. There are two small stone oratories built in the same style, 55 one just below the row of huts, the other (for single meditation) a little farther

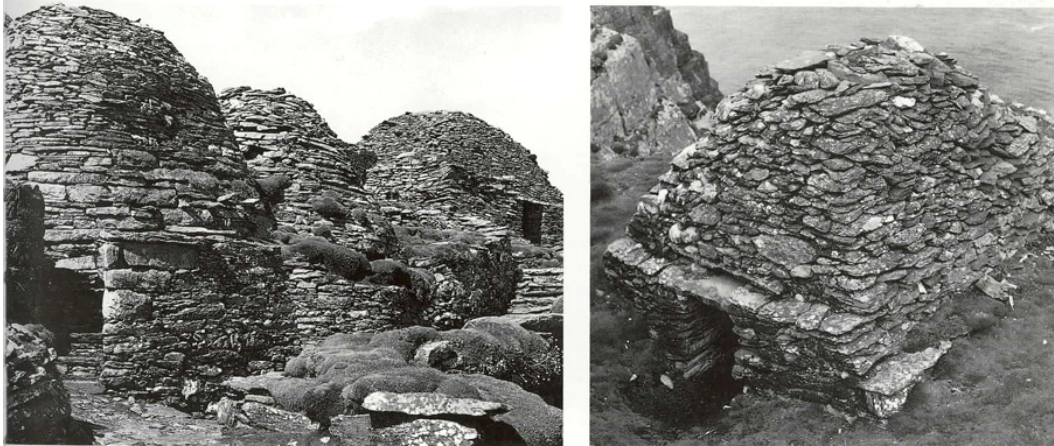


Fig. 32

## Islam



The Dome of the Rock is the first major architectural form to emerge from Islam. Previously the Muslims almost always adopted existing structures to their needs (Fig. 33, 34). It fascinates me because it was built between 687-691 by the Arab conquerors of Jerusalem to out shine the existing Christian structures such as the *martyrium* of the Holy Sepulchre. The aim was to create a prominent monument which would outshine the Christian churches of the city and even, perhaps, the Ka' ba in Mecca. The Dome of the Rock is actually an Islamic Sanctuary not a church and it was build to dazzle the eyes' of the Christian world and to teach them about Islam. There are long Inscriptions of passages from the Koran addressed specifically to Christians. The dome itself is located directly over the outcropping Christians considered the tomb and rock of Abraham where Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son Isaac. Jews, Christians and Muslims alike associate the site with the creation of Adam and the Temple of Solomon. Muslims also identify it as the site from which Muhammad led by the angel Gabriel, ascended to heaven in the Night Journey, passing through the spheres of heaven to the presence of God. Syrian artisans trained in the Byzantine tradition built the Dome of the Rock, and its centralized plan-octagons within octagons-derived from both Byzantine and early Christian architecture. For me, the development of this structure and Christian theology exemplifies the overlapping connections with other religious belief systems.





Fig 33

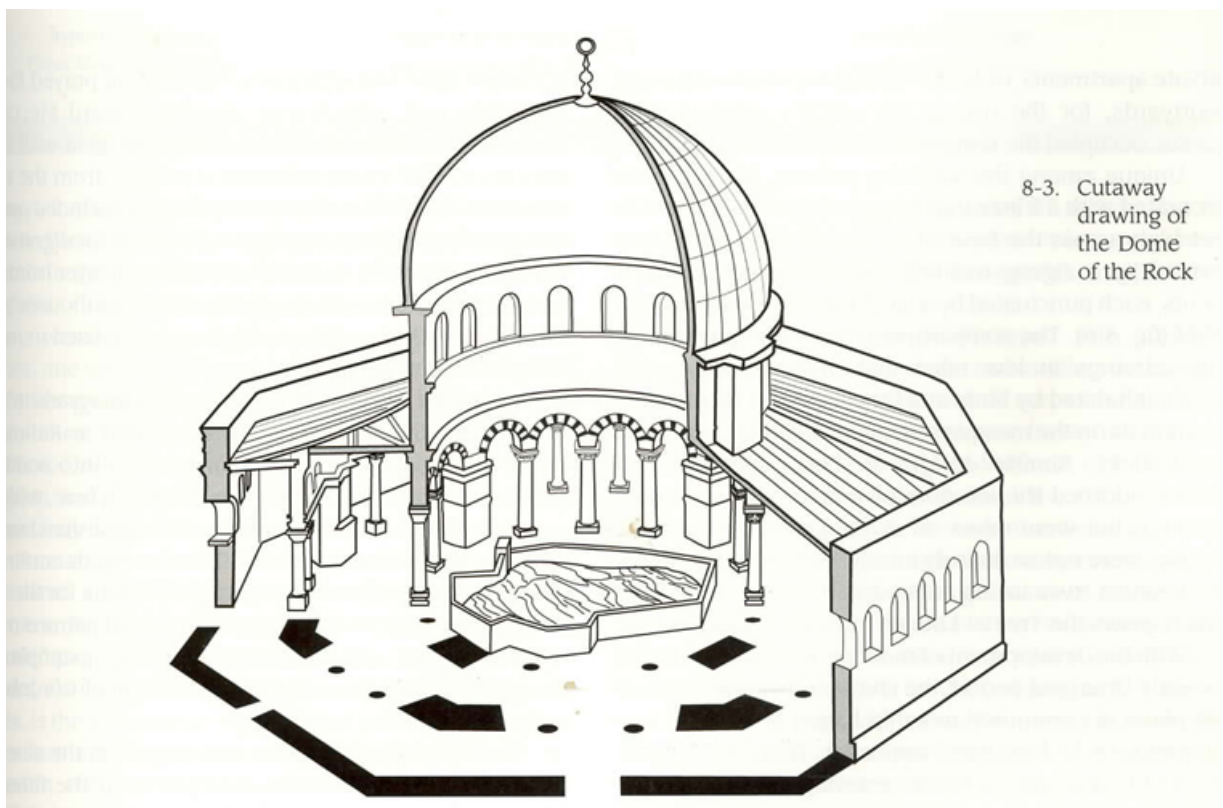


Fig. 34

## European Cathedral



The first major Cathedral (a Church with a Bishops seat) that I set foot in was Lincoln Cathedral in Lincoln, England (Fig. 35,36). It was the January before my directorship of Luther's Nottingham study abroad program begin. When I walked in the Cathedral the nave was empty and quite. I was humbled the tremendous volume of space and immediately began marveling at its construction. When I thought about the local artisans and lay people who cut the stone, hauled it, and installed it. Or, the roof beams of old hard English oak, long and strong...well I was so moved that it brought me to tears. Hear I was, at age 45, tears flowing down my face as I stood in the center of my first Cathedral.



Fig. 35



Fig. 36



I have sense been in over twenty cathedrals in many parts of Western Europe, and the Mediterranean. Their resound of the Human commitment to God and the nature of Christianity has continued to move me. This early English Gothic structure, with elements of the Romanesque in its facade and interior décor, and Haga Sofia in Turkey were the most difficult architectural forms to model and reconstruct. Both had to satisfy my perspective objectives, which involved distortion to fit the rounded surface under them and alterations for the eye of the viewer looking up from below. Another important aesthetic consideration was how the images flowed together and how they changed for the viewer as they walked belowit and from one side to the other.

Additional thoughts were related to the theology of the period, like selling penance to the impoverished people the church served...well anyway you get the picture. My own personal statement about this theology is related to the tree of life and the fortified walls around the Cathedral. If you look closely you will note the leaves from the tree of life never quite make it over the walls around the church. Instead they get turned away and move single file down along side the inner circle, eventually arriving at Luther's Center for Faith and Life and a Norwegian Stave church and thus into the hair of God.

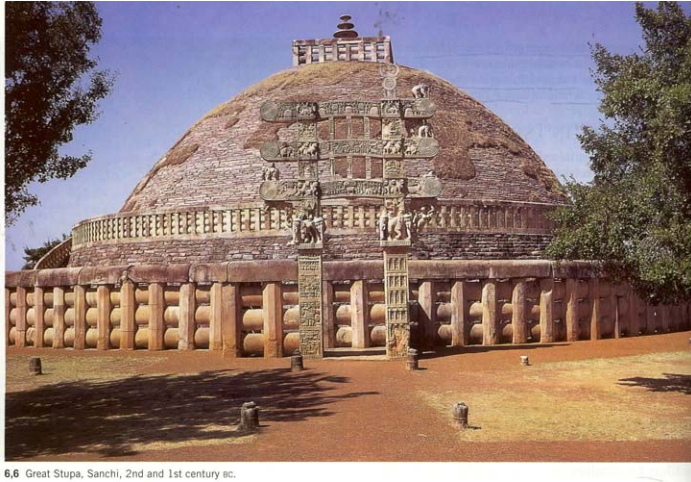
### Other Belief systems



As an inquisitive person I want to learn as much as I can about different belief systems. When I was a student at Luther College in 1969-70 I remember taking a course called World Religions. It was an eye opening experience because I had never really been exposed to any other dogma than that of the Christian Church. Regardless, that learning experience reinforced my own belief system and I was forever thereafter curious about the history of religions in general. Therefore, I thought it important to remind people of faith that there are many other belief systems that have served other cultures and still do today. They all have their "Missions" as well. Therefore, below and to the right of Lincoln Cathedral are four structures that serve to remind us, that learning about religion historically can, in my opinion, strengthen and reinforce our own belief system. It seems to me that we are at a time where human understanding and acceptance of differences is all important to humanity and our survival.

The Great Stupa, Sanchi, (Fig. 37, 38) was built between the second and first c. BC. It was likely a continuation of the large earthen mounds built to enshrine the bodily relics of the Buddha, which were constructed by the first great Buddhist ruler in third c. BC, India, Asoka. He was also the first major patron of the arts in India. This Stupa form was likely shaped after the large earthen mounds, which were also the chosen form of burial mounds for the Brahmins and members of the ruling families.

The Great Stupa, Sanchi is a symbolic structure. It served as a visible manifestation of the Buddha and an architectural diagram of the cosmos, precisely oriented and designed according to an elaborate system of proportion relationships with mystical significance.



6,6 Great Stupa, Sanchi, 2nd and 1st century bc.

Fig. 37

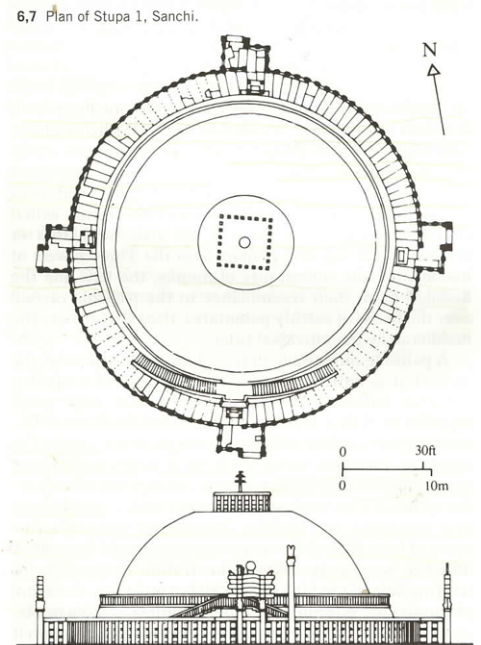


Fig. 38

Shinto Monument at Ise, Japan, 1<sup>st</sup> c. AD, rebuilt in 1993, (Fig. 39). This particular shrine embodies the typical Shinto architectural style. Its wooden and Thatch construction is rebuilt every twenty years along side the existing Shrine, by craftsman who are trained specifically for this important task. After the new structure is completed the old structure is demolished- a religious ritual in itself and also a means of maintaining pristine purity. These shrines already intimate that love of rusticity which was eventually developed by the Japanese into the most sophisticated of aesthetic cults. Recently I spent a summer in Japan carving a stone sculpture for a sculpture park and visiting many Shinto Shrines and Buddhist temples, I can attest to the religious cooperation and influences both Shintoism and Buddhism have maintained over many centuries.



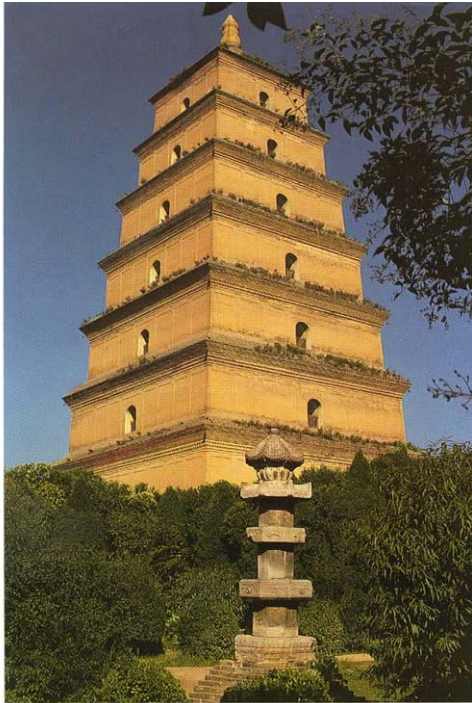
11-1. Inner shrine, Ise, Mie Prefecture. Early 1st century ce; rebuilt 1993

Fig. 39

Dayanta Pagoda, Xi'an China, 647 AD (Fig. 40). I think from my readings this structure is also called



the “Great Wild Goose Pagoda”. In early China these buildings were built of wood, however, few remain. A famous monk Xuanzang built this Pagoda on his return from a sixteen-year pilgrimage to India. It is seven tall stories high and is a typical East Asian Buddhist structure (known as a Temple Tower in China), which originated from the Indian Buddhist stupa and is built entirely in masonry. The pagoda is the only exclusively religious building type evolved in China. A purely symbolic structure, a signal of faith in the greatness of the Buddha, towering over the sacred relics buried in its foundations, it distinguished a Buddhist monastery from the temples of other religious cults. I put this monument in the composition of “Mission” because it further exemplifies the connections between religious dogma and the architectural style presented by them.



6,107 Dayanta pagoda, Xi'an, China, AD 647.

Fig. 40

Taj Mahal, Agra, India, 1632-48. (Fig. 41) One of the most celebrated buildings in the world, the Taj Mahal was commissioned by the Mugal ruler Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Mum-I-Mahal, who died in childbirth. Ethereal, weightless and perfectly proportioned, the building barely seems to touch the ground in the illustration. Its reflection shimmers in the four intersecting water channels of the Persian *chahar bagh* garden meant to evoke a vision of paradise as described by the Koran, the holy book of Islam.

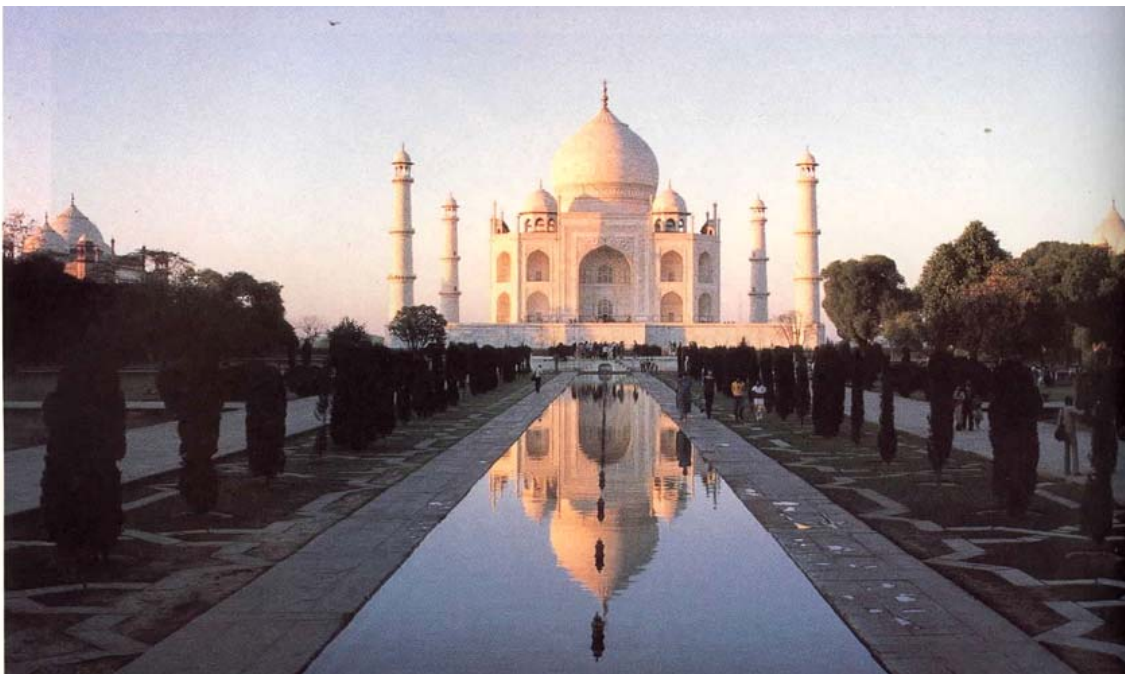


Fig. 41

The Taj Mahal touches the core of what the power of love and our dedication to religious life styles and each other can do when exemplified in the arts and in our hearts. Everything in the composition of “Mission” is intentionally placed including the position of this symbolic structure to the Center for Faith and Life just under it.

## Luther College



As a student at Luther I remember services in the old gymnasium, later in Koren Library, later on as a visitor and alum in the Center For faith and Life, and in 1985 till present as a professor of art at the college. One need only step across the street from the Shirley Baker Commons building in the Baker Village (where “Mission” is located) for a stroll through the main campus and you will realize the importance of this structure(Fig 42). It sits prominently in the center of the campus where it symbolically represents the hub of campus life as it is envisioned at Luther College. Indeed, as it is approached from any position in the central area of the college, it is an imposing structure. To further embrace its position in the social and intellectual strata of the college you will notice I have modeled the hair of God flowing into and under the building. Along the right edge of the inner circle, the leaves from the tree of life trickle down to it.





History is the footnote to Heritage. While “Mission” is rooted in history it is now part of that larger picture. It helps record a time and place and some of the special people in it; however, heritage at Luther College is linked to Norwegian immigrants who made it all possible. Their dedication and faith placed the foundations of the institution firmly on the grounds of the Oneota Valley in NE Iowa, a place of tranquility and uncommon beauty. What better way to symbolize their connection to their homeland than a Stave Church (Fig 43).



*Borgund stave church in Sogn—typical of Norwegian stave church architecture. Built like a basilica with a raised central portion. The external ambulatory encircles the nave and transept. From around 1150 A. D.*

Fig. 43

## The Inner Circle



If there is any mystery in belief systems I have attempted to represent them by the presence of the circular area in the center of the overall composition. The obvious would be to associate this prominent shape with that of the world we live in. You wouldn't be wrong. Also obvious is its texture elements implying an ocean or space like feeling. Again, you would be correct. However, you might take it beyond the obvious and let it symbolize the mystery of creation, or questions humans desire explanations for related to the human condition or the unexplainable. However you rationalize it, realize that all of the architectural elements referencing belief systems flow around it.

The sailing vessel floating in the central area is representative of one of the missions of the college as they were expressed by our late president Jeffrey Baker (Fig 44). That mission was to extend the message of Luther College out to the greater world. It was represented by a ship originally designed by my colleague, Harley Refsal, then placed on medallions handed out at the presidents inaugural celebration. In "Mission", I chose to visually represented our missions "vessel" with a Roman merchant ship that I discovered carved on the surface of a 4<sup>th</sup> c stone sculpture.



Fig. 44

Also located in the great obis are three crosses representing the crucifixion of Christ (Fig 45). They are, however, not the standard depiction. I chose to represent the traditional Christ figure on the central cross as a gender-neutral figure in an abstract manor. To it's right is another cross with a woman modeled on it and to the left, on a smaller cross, a male figure. Symbolically, for me at least, this arrangement represents the true purpose of the crucifixion story, which is to illustrate the philosophical power of human sacrifice and its ability to touch humans of all gender and belief systems.