

From Temple to Meeting House  
*The Phenomenology and Theology of  
Places of Worship*

HAROLD W. TURNER

*University of Aberdeen*

# Contents

PREFACE .....	VII
---------------	-----

## PART ONE: PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS THE SACRED PLACE AND ITS BIBLICAL VERSIONS

1. METHODS OF APPROACH .....	3
1.1 Different starting points .....	4
1.2 Need for a theology of space .....	6
1.3 The phenomenological approach .....	7
1.4 Phenomenological analysis of sacred space .....	9
1.5 The two main types discovered .....	11
1.6 Relation between phenomenology and theology .....	12
2. THE SACRED PLACE .....	13
2.1 The spatial reference in religious language and worship ...	13
2.2 The earliest sacred places .....	15
2.3 Their divine origins .....	16
2.4 Their four functions .....	18
2.4.1 The sacred place as centre .....	19
2.4.2 The sacred place as meeting point .....	22
2.4.3 The sacred place as microcosm of the heavenly realm	26
2.4.4 The sacred place as immanent-transcendent presence	31
3. THE TEMPLE TYPE .....	34
3.1 The temple as centre .....	34
3.2 The temple as microcosm .....	35
3.3 The temple as meeting point .....	37

3.4	The temple as immanent-transcendent presence . . . . .	38
3.5	The temple type, or <i>domus dei</i> . . . . .	42
3.6	Examples: Syria, China, West Africa, United States . . . . .	43
4.	THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM . . . . .	47
4.1	Religious inheritance of Solomon's temple . . . . .	48
4.2	The divine sanction . . . . .	52
4.3	The function as centre . . . . .	54
4.4	The function as microcosm . . . . .	57
4.5	The function as meeting point . . . . .	60
4.6	The function as immanent-transcendent presence . . . . .	62
5.	THE PROBLEM OF THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE . . . . .	68
5.1	Ambivalent attitudes: criticism and support . . . . .	69
5.2	Efforts to relieve the tension . . . . .	71
5.3	Radical opposition: Nathan . . . . .	73
5.4	Radical replacement: the holy community . . . . .	75
5.5	Modern discussions: in defence of the temple . . . . .	78
5.6	Conclusions . . . . .	87
6.	NEW FORMS: TABERNACLE AND SYNAGOGUE . . . . .	88
6.1	The tabernacle or tent . . . . .	88
6.2	The synagogue . . . . .	96
6.3	Synagogue and temple . . . . .	101
7.	THE NEW TEMPLE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT . . . . .	106
7.1	The practice of Jesus . . . . .	107
7.2	The teaching of Jesus . . . . .	108
7.3	The early Church: the temple old and new . . . . .	114
7.4	Radical opposition: Stephen . . . . .	116
7.5	A theology for the new temple: Paul . . . . .	118
7.6	The consensus of thought: Peter, Luke, Hebrews, the Revelation of John . . . . .	122
7.7	Conclusions . . . . .	128

8. PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF NEW TESTAMENT CONTRIBUTIONS	131
8.1 Divine origin of the new sanctuary	131
8.2 The new temple	134
8.2.1 As centre	134
8.2.2 As meeting point	138
8.2.3 As microcosm	140
8.2.4 As immanent-transcendent presence	143
8.3 The tent of meeting in the New Testament	147
8.4 The transition from place to person and its symbol	149
8.5 Non-sacred places of worship: the meeting room	151

## PART TWO: HISTORICAL APPLICATION

### PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF

### PLACES OF WORSHIP IN THE SEMITIC RELIGIONS

9. CHURCHES IN THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CENTURIES	157
9.1 Worship in a domestic setting	158
9.2 Back to the <i>domus dei</i> .	160
9.3 Funerary influences.	164
9.4 The cult of the saints	168
9.5 Further influences of the temple tradition	172
9.6 Conclusions	176
10. A THOUSAND YEARS OF THE <i>DOMUS DEI</i> .	178
10.1 The return of the sacred place.	180
10.2 Churches as sacred buildings	185
10.2.1 The gradation of sanctity	185
10.2.2 Symbolism in churches	187
10.3 Gothic: a new and Christian form?	189
10.4 The Renaissance: a new theory of church architecture	195
10.5 Other forms in the Middle Ages	200
10.6 The Orthodox church of Ethiopia.	203
11. REFORMATIONS AND THEIR AFTERMATHS	205
11.1 Protestant statements	206

11.2 Frustrated insights . . . . .	212
11.3 Adapting and transforming the old churches . . . . .	214
11.4 Tokens of what might have been . . . . .	217
11.5 Other Reformations: left wing and right . . . . .	222
<b>12. ADVANCES AND RETREATS . . . . .</b>	<b>227</b>
12.1 Developing the Protestant plain style . . . . .	227
12.2 The new Anglican tradition . . . . .	230
12.3 The Protestant plain style in other areas . . . . .	233
12.4 The loss of the <i>domus ecclesiae</i> : the auditorium . . . . .	237
12.5 The return of the <i>domus dei</i> : the Gothic Revival . . . . .	241
12.5.1 Theories in the Gothic Revival . . . . .	243
12.5.2 Gothic Revival symbolism . . . . .	246
12.6 The new-old image of a church . . . . .	248
12.7 An international pattern . . . . .	253
12.7.1 Gothic Revivals in the United States . . . . .	253
12.7.2 Across all lands and denominations . . . . .	256
12.8 Conclusions . . . . .	258
<b>13. THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER TRADITIONS: ISLAM . . . . .</b>	<b>260</b>
13.1 Islam's ancient temple . . . . .	260
13.2 Muhammad's new form . . . . .	263
13.3 Return of the temple tradition . . . . .	266
13.4 Survival of the original forms . . . . .	273
13.5 Homogeneity of mosque history . . . . .	276
<b>14. THE EXPERIENCE OF OTHER TRADITIONS: JUDAISM . . . . .</b>	<b>278</b>
14.1 Synagogues in antiquity . . . . .	278
14.2 The inconspicuous thousand years . . . . .	283
14.3 Persistence of the meeting house: 16th to 18th centuries . . . . .	287
14.4 The spatial problem of the synagogue interior . . . . .	289
14.5 From meeting house to temple: the variant influence of modern Jewish denominations . . . . .	295
14.6 Rediscovering the Jewish norm . . . . .	301
<b>EPILOGUE: THE SEMITIC EXPERIENCE . . . . .</b>	<b>302</b>

## PART THREE: THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESIS

15. THEOLOGICAL ISSUES IN TWENTIETH CENTURY CHURCH BUILDING . . . . .	309
15.1 The second great age of church building . . . . .	309
15.2 Liturgical revival and current consensus . . . . .	311
15.3 The nature of the Church: hierarchies and sanctuaries?. . . . .	314
15.4 The structure of worship: word and sacraments . . . . .	316
15.5 The purpose of the church building . . . . .	319
16. MEETING HOUSE AND TEMPLE IN THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE . . . . .	323
16.1 Are buildings really necessary? . . . . .	323
16.2 Are church buildings merely instrumental? . . . . .	325
16.3 Derivative holiness by association? . . . . .	327
16.4 Representative holiness by sacramental function?. . . . .	328
16.5 Critique of sacramental holiness and autonomous witness . . . . .	330
16.6 Survival of the numinous house of God . . . . .	333
16.7 Temples for civil religion . . . . .	336
16.8 <i>Domus dei et ecclesiae</i> ? . . . . .	338
16.9 The function of the Christian norm . . . . .	341
16.10 The practical consequences in the building . . . . .	344
17. THE WIDER IMPLICATIONS FOR PHENOMENOLOGY AND THEOLOGY . . . . .	346
17.1 The phenomenological and historical procedures . . . . .	346
17.2 Procedural assumptions . . . . .	347
17.2.1 Religions as authentic phenomena . . . . .	348
17.2.2 Religion as universal phenomenon . . . . .	348
17.2.3 Religions as both ideal and actual . . . . .	349
17.3 Personal stance . . . . .	350
17.4 The interaction between phenomenology and theology . . . . .	351
17.4.1 Phenomenology's contribution to theology . . . . .	351
17.4.2 Consequent theological reworking . . . . .	353
17.4.3 Feedback for phenomenological reworking . . . . .	354
17.4.4 Beyond phenomenology to commitment . . . . .	354
17.5 A theology of other religions . . . . .	356
17.5.1 A common language of discourse . . . . .	357

17.5.2 Increased self-understanding for Christians . . . .	358
17.5.3 Self-understanding in all religions . . . . .	359
17.6 The Christian norm in a theology of religions . . . . .	360
17.7 Theological definition of the sacred place . . . . .	363
17.7.1 Ontological-Christological definition of temple .	363
17.7.2 The two analogies: models for, and models of . .	365
NOTES . . . . .	367
INDEXES . . . . .	391
1. Index of subjects . . . . .	391
2. Index of churches and chapels, individual . . . . .	397
3. Index of mosques and shrines, individual . . . . .	399
4. Index of synagogues, individual . . . . .	400
5. Index of temples and shrines, individual . . . . .	400
6. Index of personal names . . . . .	401