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Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship

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SPACES OF FAITH: AN AFFECTIVE GEOGRAPHICAL EXPLORATION OF HOUSES OF WORSHIP

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To Ian and Ryan

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ABSTRACT

Religious experience is highly personal, and is often comprised of affectual encounters and emotional responses, both within personal space and through ordained sacred spaces. Geographers have continually ignored the role of personal experience in developing our understanding of and experience of being in sacred spaces, despite repeated calls for its examination. Additionally, although research into the emotive elements of religious practice has burgeoned in other academic disciplines, these investigations are decidedly lacking in an understanding of the role of space in mediating religious encounters. This research posits that sacred space can, and should, be spatially explored, and that affectual, spiritual encounters can inform our broader understanding of the transformative nature of sacred space.

Expanding on recent geographical research, this dissertation seeks to provide a progressive theoretical framework for conceptualizing the affective capacity of sacred space. Traditionally, affect has been conceived of as solely non-representational, and geographic studies of affect have remained distinctly separate from studies of emotion. However, affect continues to be pragmatically engaged in decidedly represent-able ways. Furthermore, the current conceptions of affect and emotion as static and unrelated entities contradicts a humanistic understanding of the two as fluid and linked. Seeking to advance research on these topics, this dissertation postulates that approaching affect from a *more-than*-representational perspective and understanding affective-emotive spiritual encounters as a cohesive unit would allow for a more complete understanding of the lived religious experience.

Building on this theory, this dissertation provides a series of empirical case studies which explore how personal affect and emotion are experienced by members from three houses of worship using semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. This fieldwork was carried out in Tallahassee, Florida in order to allow for an adaptive and in-depth research process, and the three case study locations selected were Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, the Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee branch, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee 5th ward. These locations differ in terms of both the members' religious ideologies and the site's geography. A total of 36 interviews were conducted with members and representatives at each location in order to better understand participants' emotional and affective experiences at these sites.

The responses from interviewees highlight the unique capacity of sacred spaces to elicit powerful emotional experiences and inspire affectual-spiritual encounters in participants. Participants consistently felt more peaceful and content when at their chosen place of worship, and they also often likened the feelings of familiarity they experienced with a sense of being "home." In addition, although the particularities of each member's experience predictably varied, there was a commonality to this experience that extended beyond denominational lines. Moreover, this study demonstrates that spiritual experiences are often spatially grounded and can be geographically explored in meaningful ways.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Sacred spaces often have a transcendent quality (Eliade 1957) which can elicit powerful emotional responses (Otto 1958). They are geographical locations that instill and perpetuate a variety of feelings that affect human experiences and activities. And yet geography has often overlooked the spiritual nature of both affect and emotion, despite repeated calls to explore emotional and performative aspects of religious practice and sacred space (Buttimer 2006; Holloway 2006; Kong 1990, 2001). In other fields, like religious studies, psychology, history, and sociology, the study of religion and emotion is experiencing a reawakening (Corrigan, Krump, and Kloos 2000). Geography, however, was decidedly absent from the first annotated bibliography of interdisciplinary research on religion and emotion (Corrigan, Krump, and Kloos 2000).

While the aforementioned disciplines can offer significant insight on the formation of our emotions and our unique emotional responses, there is no attention to the spatial context within which these responses arise. Kilde (2006), for example, explored religious experiences in megachurches from an architectural perspective, and while the author's approach to "reading" sacred spaces is a beneficial methodology and builds off of geographical work by Barnes and Duncan (1992), there are no interviews with worshippers and little attention to the multiplicity of meaning that is so often found in these spaces. As Davidson and Milligan (2004) note, emotions are situated within particular places, they "are understandable – 'sensible' – only in the context of particular places" (p.524). There is a spatial element that is clearly absent from current investigations of research on spirituality and emotion in other disciplines, and it is an avenue that geographers are well-equipped to explore. Corrigan (2004) notes that "the most promising exploration of these themes are those that fashion interpretations responsive to the current debates about the nature of emotion, its relationship to culture… and its variability across time and space" (Corrigan 2004, p.14). Certainly, there is room for geographers in such a discussion.

Traditional studies of spirituality within geography have focused on broad questions of religious distribution and practice and have utilized a wide range of theoretical approaches. However, an interest in the religious and spiritual landscape has remained at the forefront. Sacred sites, to include houses of worship as well as other, "unofficial" religious locations,

represent perhaps the clearest indication of a religious presence on the landscape. Most of the geographical examinations of sacred sites have focused on the politicization of the sacred, and notion that "sacred space is contested space" (Kong 2001, p.213). At these sites, there are politics of position, of property, of exclusion, and of course, the politics of the physical construction of the sacred site itself (Kong 2001).

Certainly the politics of religious experience and spiritual life is an important avenue of research, but there is now a movement within the geography of religion to consider the "poetics" of place, to attend to the role of personal experience in the formation and perpetuation of sacred spaces. Holloway (2006) finds that research into the geography of religion and belief systems has ignored the role of affect, embodiment, and performativity into the production of these sites. He argues that "to ignore, for the most part, the role of affect, emotion, and corporeal practice in the realization of these spaces is to sideline both a key aspect of these spaces themselves, and a key element in the circulation of religious-spiritual discourses…" (Holloway 2006, p.182). Without the "poetics" of religious experience, the religious landscape would lose its transformative quality. Furthermore, through the construction of both officially and unofficially sacred sites, religious identity and feeling is reproduced and maintained. Sociologist Emile Durkheim found that symbols and rituals give stability to social feelings and further noted that these "feelings are very strong so long as men are assembled, mutually influencing one another, but when the gathering is over, they survive only in the form of memories that gradually dim and fade away if left to themselves" (Durkheim 1995, p.232). However, he also asserts that if these feelings can "become inscribed on things that are durable, then they too become durable" (Durkheim 1995, p.232). In this way, emotional experiences within religious spaces help *create* and *re*-create these sites.

The research outlined in this dissertation seeks to answer the continued call for geographers of religion to investigate personal religious experiences (see Kong 1990, 2010), and further to expand on work by Holloway on this topic. Holloway (2006) represents one of the few geographers to investigate the affectual and performative dimensions of personal spirituality, and while his work advances our understanding of affectual sensations and the ways in which these sensations help construct sacred space, this research seeks to more concretely examine the role of sacred space in mediating these encounters. Furthermore, although the notion of the affective capacity of various places has been implied on a conceptual level, there has been little pragmatic

engagement with this notion. Sacred spaces shape affectual encounters in a discernible way, and these spatial-affectual events can help shed light on the affective capacity of these unique sites. Furthermore, by conceptualizing affect and emotion as dualistic, rather than in a dichotomous arrangement as has previously been the case, geographers can more fully understand the breadth of individual experience within religious sites and the spatial context within which these experiences occur.

If we accept that religious places inspire emotional experience in participants, then the geography of religion seems to be an excellent field to cultivate studies of religion and emotion related to the spaces of worship. Although humanistic geographies spurred an interest in these topics, the human element, particularly with regards to spirituality, has continued to be marginalized. As Howe (2003) wrote, "The history of our churches, temples, and shrines – the houses of worship – is the history of America. These walls can talk, if we only stop to listen" (p.6). Geographers of religion, historically concerned with broad, formalized religious systems, have often missed the critical information that can be gained by examining these narrower processes and spaces. This research represents an attempt to "stop and listen," to allow members and houses of worship to tell their own story, and to understand the role of affect in these sacred spaces. Corrigan (2004) asserts that promising examinations of religion and emotion will both connect with current theoretical debates and will craft their own unique interpretations. This research seeks to do both, by providing a much-needed theoretical framework upon which future explorations of affect, emotion, and religion can proceed and an empirical, geographical examination of individual religious experience within three houses of worship in Tallahassee.

Studies of "affect" and "emotion" have experienced a recent resurgence in geographic literature, with current examinations likely stemming from work on humanistic and psychoanalytic geographies (Pile 2010). Anderson and Smith's (2001) editorial on emotion and affect, according to Pile (2010), further inspired many of the current investigations of these topics. However, the lingering delineation of affect and emotion on the basis of their representability has resulted in an unhelpful dichotomy and geographic studies of affect have remained distinctly separate from studies of emotion. Furthermore, studies have largely ignored the role of space in mediating affective encounters and inspiring emotional experiences. This dissertation presents a new theoretical position by not only asserting that the emotive and affective elements of sacred spaces can be geographically examined in a meaningful way, but

also by explicitly focusing on the *affective capacity* of various sacred materialities. Chapter 2 explores key themes in geographic research on both emotion and affect, and further investigates research into these topics in other disciplines, positing that geography can offer a much-needed spatial perspective to such studies. It also explores this notion of *affective capacity* as a useful alternative to traditional conceptions of affect as solely non-representational.

Following from this theoretical grounding, I lay out my methodology for conducting the empirical portion of this research in Chapter 3. Broadly speaking, this dissertation is situated within the phenomenological approach with a focus on how emotion and affective experiences are engaged by individuals. Three case study locations were chosen in the city of Tallahassee, Florida: Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, the Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, and the 5th ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. At each of the three case study locations, I conducted in-depth interviews with members and religious officials, as well as engaged in participatory research. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present the results of the case study findings at each of these locations. While religious beliefs and experiences are highly personal, it is clear from my interviews with participants that there is a level of commonality to the way we experience houses of worship, and further that this experience is often spatially mediated. Chapter 7 expands on this topic and offers suggestions for future research.

Certainly, many spaces can be considered meaningful to our lives, to include homes, natural settings, and even athletic facilities. However, since sacred spaces are by their very definition conceived of as breaks from the everyday world we occupy (see Eliade 1957; Otto 1958), they provide the unique opportunity to explore how geography can transport us somewhere wholly different. Moreover, if geographers of religion continue to overlook the role of affect, emotion, and the performative religious experience, we risk missing a critical aspect of the broader religious discourse (Holloway 2006) and will continue to be absent from an emerging, interdisciplinary discussion of these central facets of religious life.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1990, Kong noted that "geographers of religion have been caught up overwhelmingly, though not exclusively, with formalized systems of religions, particularly institutionalized, canonical religions of the text… There is no doubt that insufficient attention has been paid to… the personal religious experience" (Kong 1990, p.373). Although research on the geography of religion has experienced a tremendous growth since Kong's 1990 survey, explorations into the personal experience of the sacred have still remained virtually unexplored, with the exception of Holloway's work (Kong 2010). This lack of attention to the level of the individual might have been due to the fact that, for some time, the geography of religion has been criticized for its lack of theoretical coherence (Tuan 1976; Stump 1986). In their quest to delimit the boundaries of the sub-discipline, geographers like Sopher (1981) and Levine (1986) maintained that "geography cannot and must not deal with the personal religious experience" (Kong 1990, p.373). Religion and religious experience is highly personal, and regardless of where or what one chooses to worship, the feelings and emotive experiences of sacred spaces depend on the individual; as Kong (1990; 2010) continues to maintain, it is an area worthy of further exploration.

2.1 Sacred Space

If it is clear that geographers of religion should seek to incorporate studies of people's *emotional*, religious experience and the *affective* qualities of *sacred spaces*, then it is important to define what we mean by these terms. The notion of "sacred space" is quite problematic; certainly numerous places could be considered sacred, from ornate cathedrals to quiet cemeteries to a carefully decorated shrine in a home. Eliade (1957), in his pivotal work *The Sacred and Profane* notes, "When the sacred manifests itself in any hierophany, there is not only a break in the homogeneity of space; there is also revelation of an absolute reality…" (p.21). Otto (1958) similarly notes that sacred spaces have an ineffable quality, eliciting a feeling he labels as *mysterium tremendum*:

> The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude

> of the soul, continuing, as it were, thrillingly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away and the soul resumes its 'profane,' non-religious mood of everyday experience (p.12).

Traditionally, then, sacred spaces are thus seen as breaks from the standard, ordinary spatial planes in which we operate on a daily basis.

For Chidester and Linenthal (1995), Otto's (1958) and Eliade's (1957) definitions of sacred space can be categorized as *substantial*, in that they explore the experiential qualities elicited by these particular places. *Situational* definitions, however, following from Durkheim and van Gennep recognize that nothing is inherently sacred: "the sacred, from this perspective, is an empty signifier" (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, p.6). Sacred sites are thus sacred not because of any inherent "holy" quality, but rather through the process of sacralization, a place *becomes* sacred. "Not merely an opposition between 'insider' and 'outsider' perspectives, this clash between substantial and situational approaches to definition and analysis represents a contrast between what might be called the poetics and the politics of sacred space" (Chidester and Linenthal 1995, p.6). As Chidester and Linenthal (1995) explore, the production of sacred space has continued to be explored by geographers, and is certainly an important avenue of study. The poetics of sacred space, however, has historically been marginalized, and while research in this area is growing, personal experience, as previously mentioned, remains almost entirely ignored by geographers of religion (Kong 2010). Furthermore, investigations into the poetics of sacred space can help inform our understanding of the politicization of such sites. Chidester and Linenthal (1995) acknowledge that "the human body plays a crucial role in the ritual production of sacred space" (Chidester and Linenthal 1995 p.10), but the focus, for many geographers, remains on the site itself, rather than the corporeal, affective encounter.

Additionally, as Holloway (2003) notes, the substantial definitions of sacred space further emphasize the dichotomy between the sacred and profane, when in fact the two are often interrelated. "[I]n the depiction of the profane as 'formless,' 'nonreal,' and 'homogenous,' the everyday becomes an inert force that has little impact upon sacred space other than through its denial" (Holloway 2003, p.1962). The problem with completely abandoning the Eliadean sacred/profane distinction, however, is that it risks overlooking the sense of wonder that these unique spaces often have: "The postmodern approach significantly downplays (or obliterates) ineffable aspects of the spiritual experience of sacred space, which is what makes it distinct in

many respects" (Dora 2011, p.167). Recognizing that the sacred/profane distinction is much more complex than Eliade suggested, there is still an aforementioned need for an exploration of personal religious experience within the field of the geography of religion, and this personal experience often occurs at places that are generally recognized to hold some inherent religious meaning.

For this research, my scope will thus be limited to established meeting sites of various religious groups, broadly labeled as "houses of worship," though this by no means implies that I feel that geographers of religion should solely concern themselves with the "officially" sacred. Quite the contrary, I agree with Kong's assertion that "[o]ther religious places fully deserve research attention, such as indigenous sacred sites… memorials and roadside shrines, domestic shrines, and religious processionals and festivals" (Kong 2001, p.226). Though perhaps not as prominent as temples, mosques, or churches, these sites can have a profound effect on the landscape, particularly at the local level. Furthermore, the existence of these sites points to the multiplicity of religious worship. It is the meaning individuals place on sacred space that gives them their "sacred" quality, and this incorporates both the experiential, and thus substantive, definition of sacred space as well as the constructive, or situational, understanding. For this project, while the definition of "sacred space" remains broad, incorporating both a situational and a substantial understanding of the term, in order to understand how architectural and design aspects of a space encourage emotional responses, the scope will remain fairly limited. In future research, I hope to examine the lived religious experience at a variety of sites, to include those which might traditionally be considered "ordinary."

The broader concepts of both "religion" and "spirituality" are far more difficult to define. Religion, drawing from its Latin roots *re-*, meaning "again," and *lig-*, meaning "join," has a clear element of a communal connection, and while no all-inclusive or universally agreed upon definition of religion exists, many religions include a belief system, community, myths, and rituals (Molloy 2010). Religions also often include a distinction between the sacred and the ordinary, and frequently this distinction includes an understanding of space as either sacred or profane (Molloy 2010). Spirituality, on the other hand, is far more individual, making it even more challenging to define. Sheldrake (2007) suggests "that the word 'spirituality' refers to the deepest values and meanings by which people seek to live" (pp.1-2) and involves a transcendence beyond our material selves. Our spiritual understandings often, but not always,

intersect with our doctrinal religious values. Analytically, then, Sheldrake's (2007) definition provides a useful framework for approaching spirituality. However, it is important to remember that because our understanding of spirituality is highly individuals, the participants interviewed for this project likely understand spirituality and what it means to be spiritual in different ways. For this reason, the term "spirituality" was left undefined in the interview guides so as not to lead respondents, instead allowing them to convey their own understandings of what spiritual and spirituality mean.

Additionally, it is worth noting that the very label "house of worship" is itself problematic. This term is generally used to describe various kinds of religious structures, from churches to synagogues to mosques, but this traditional designation might be fairly antiquated to describe today's modern religious society. In ancient Judaism, the term "Bethel," (or *bt il*) described the "House of God," which in this case was specifically the Temple of Solomon (Bleeker and Widengren 1988). Of course, once the Temple of Solomon, and the subsequent Second Temple built by Herod, were destroyed and the concept of the synagogue evolved, "Bethel" came to describe "Houses of God" more broadly, even though historical temple worship and synagogue services differed greatly (Smith 1991). One can see clear parallels between the label "House of God" and the classification of "House of Worship," and I would argue that the latter has also seen an evolution in meaning and form over time as well. As Howe (2003) notes:

> The modern world strongly challenged communities of faith to find symbolic forms that would preserve the fundamentals of traditional belief and yet respond to the challenges of modern science and history. This is most strikingly seen in the range of creative expression found in churches and synagogues (pp.16-17).

Moreover, so-called "houses of worship" are commonly used for more than just traditional religious services, and are often used as meeting sites for religious study groups and organizations (see Corrigan and Hudson 2010). Some sites even have exercise groups, book clubs, or knitting circles. It is apparent that many modern "houses of worship" are used for much more than just a weekly "worship" service.

In addition, there are other spiritual sites which are used in very similar ways as conventional houses of worship but have little or no explicit religious affiliation, as in the case of the Taoist Tai Chi society. Unfortunately, no other term exists to capture this specific group of

religious or spiritual meeting places aside from the label "house of worship." "Sacred site" could certainly be used to describe these places, but this, as previously mentioned, includes a number of other untraditional sites like shrines, burial places, or sites of historical religious importance. As such, while the designator "house of worship" will be used throughout this research paper, there is an understanding that its historical definition does not capture the multiplicity of spiritual practices found in our society today.

2.2 Emotional Geographies

2.2.1 Early Explorations of Emotion within Geography

According to Davidson and Milligan (2004), geographers have increasingly engaged with studies of emotion over the past few years. On the surface, the study of geography might seem to be "an emotionally barren terrain… [and] this apparent absence is hardly surprising since emotions are never simply surface phenomena, they are never easy to define or demarcate, and they [are] not easily observed or mapped even though they inform every aspect of our lives" (Bondi, Davidson, and Smith 2005, p.1). However, it is clear that various places and landscapes can inspire strong emotional responses, and perhaps this recent engagement with the subject within "geography results as much from positive recognition that emotions *already have* an important place [in geographical research,] as from any sudden appearance of a shiny new 'object' of study" (Bondi, Davidson, and Smith 2005, p.1).

While there are several theories on the basis and experience of emotional responses, a prominent theory in the field of psychology positions emotions as involving a combination of thoughts and feelings (Myers 2004). According to Schachter, who theorized this "two-factor theory" (Myers 2004), "an emotional state may be considered a function of a state of psychological arousal and of a cognition appropriate to this state of arousal" (Schachter 1964, pp.50-51). Although researchers are by no means in agreement over Schachter's conceptualization (Myers 2004), it can provide a useful framework for thinking through our emotional responses. Furthermore, while the actual origin and definition of emotion are rarely discussed in geographical literature, emotional geographies seem to position emotion as a physical response arising from a particular experience and consisting of some level of conscious awareness. Furthermore, there is an acknowledgement within geography that emotions are more than just *feelings*:

> [E]motion has the power to *transform* [emphasis added] the shape of our lives, expanding or contracting our horizons, creating new fissures or fixtures we never expected to find (Bondi, Davidson, and Smith 2005, p.1).

2.2.2 Emotions and Health

Historically, much of the work on emotions within geography fit within a number of broad categories, as Davidson and Milligan (2004) discuss. In each of these areas, Davidson and Milligan (2004) "suggest that much current writing has benefitted substantially from previous geographical and other spatially nuanced 'body work.' After all, our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately *felt* geography is the body" (p.523). Not surprisingly, then, one of the major areas of emotional exploration concerns its relationship to health and illness. "Our sense of who and what we are is continually (re)shaped by how we *feel*" (Davidson and Milligan 2004, p.524), and in the case of those who are chronically ill or who are assisting those with debilitating diseases, there is a definitive connection between the physical and the emotional. I would further argue that the causal relationship between the embodied experience and the emotional response is perhaps most apparent in these cases.

Butler and Parr's *Mind and Body Spaces* (1999) surveyed a collection of work on the topic of health and illness with a particular focus on the connections between disabilities or chronic illnesses and emotions. Particular contributions included an examination of the role of disabilities in the workplace (Hall 1999), the effects of a disability on feelings of masculinity (Valentine 1999), as well as the experience of disabled persons within the gay community (Butler 1999). Twigg (2000) also explored the intersection of health and emotion in *Bathing – The Body and Community Care*. For Twigg (2000), bathing represents a concrete and intimate example of how caregivers attend to the needs of older and disabled people and his research further connects with Davidson and Milligan's (2004) assertion that we engage with and experience geography through our body. In his exploration of the role of emotion in the careworker's experience, Twigg (2000) notes that "[c]areworkers felt most deeply for those clients who were most reliant on them" (Twigg 2000, p.167). However, this closeness can, of course, create the capacity for negative emotions; "Among the hardest things for workers to bear was the unhappiness of a client" (Twigg 2000, p.167).

More recently, English, Wilson and Keller-Olaman (2008) explored the role of emotions and place in creating landscapes of healing for breast cancer survivors. The notion of therapeutic

landscapes, "locations associated with treatment or healing," presents an interesting connection between health and geography in that these places "not only have the potential to enhance health but also contribute to healing" (English, Wilson, and Keller-Olaman 2008, p.69). In this way, healing can be spatially mediated. After conducting several in-depth, semi-structured interviews, the authors concluded that a multitude of various landscapes, from the home to parks to community groups all contributed to the overall well-being of breast cancer survivors (English, Wilson, and Keller-Olaman 2008). Moreover, the authors found that emotion plays a prominent role throughout the healing process:

> The physical experience of cancer diagnosis is tied up with emotions (fear, anger, depression, blame, etc.) and thus the process of healing also becomes inherently emotional… [H]ealing among breast cancer survivors is not just physical but also psychological and emotional – it requires *feeling* better, *feeling* supported (English, Wilson, and Keller-Olaman 2008, p.76).

It is clear from the authors' research that the emotional geography of a particular place helps transform it into a landscape of healing (English, Wilson, and Keller-Olaman 2008).

2.2.3 Emotional Geographies of Domestic Spaces

Clearly, certain places have strong emotional ties encapsulated within them, and this is especially apparent when one examines the home, another historical focus of emotional geographers. Bachelard (1958), of course, pointed to the importance of the home and the emotions that various niches within the home engender. For Bachelard (1958), the house is "our little corner of the world" (p.4) and simply recalling our childhood home, and the various spaces within it, can foster profound feelings of nostalgia or security, or even boredom. According to Bachelard (1958), "[m]emories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of the home…" (p.6), and I would add that the same is true of feelings and emotions more broadly.

Following Bachelard (1958), it is clear that the home has the ability to stir up strong emotions within us, and it is not surprising that geographers have continued to engage this topic. Blunt (2005), in her survey of recent work on the home within cultural geography, notes: "The home is a material and an affective space, shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions" (p.506). Within this broad heading of "home," geographers have engaged a variety of topics (Blunt 2005; Duncan and Lambert 2004). Holloway and Valentine's (2000) *Children's Geographies* included contributions on the spatial

and emotional experiences of children. Contributors Christensen, James, and Jenks (2000) explored the construction of the notion of "family time" from a child's perspective, noting that homes, and the material spaces within them, help to mediate our identity. However, this identity is not fixed, but in this case, "it is precisely through the dynamic and fluid movement of children in, out and around the home that their own sense of belonging to the family and the home is constituted" (p.153).

Pennartz (1999) engages in a similar exploration of home, using a phenomenological approach to investigate "on the interaction between architectural and (socio)psychological factors in the experience of atmosphere in the home" (p.95). Essentially, Pennartz (1999) set out to uncover if there were certain areas within the home that have particular feelings of a pleasant or unpleasant atmosphere. He notes that the relationship between our experience of a place has a dualistic relationship with the space itself: "the atmosphere of a room works on an individual, and conversely an individual projects his or her specific mood on the room" (p.95). It is theorized that this same transformative relationship might exist in religious spaces, as well. Pennartz (1999) conducted in-depth interviews of twenty-five households in the Netherlands, and had participants describe their emotions and feelings relating to different areas and experiences within the home. Ultimately, Pennartz (1999) found that both architectural factors (such as the size and shape of rooms), as well as sociopsychological forces (like being relaxed after finishing work) contributed to overall feelings of pleasantness within the home.

As previously mentioned, homes and our feelings of belonging are connected to our memories, and these memories can often foster a variety of strong emotions. Rose (2004) explores this notion further by interviewing women about their family photos. "Family photos – photos taken by family members, of family members, for viewing mostly by family members – are indeed extraordinarily important, emotionally resonant objects" (Rose 2004, p.549). At the same time, though, women in Rose's (2004) study seemed to regard the photos as somewhat trivial. After all, most of our family photos are generally of "happy family members at leisure" (Rose 2004, p.550). Particularly in this era of digital photography, pictures of unhappy family members can be simply deleted. Despite their apparent triviality, however, it is this mix of emotions aroused by the viewing of family photos that should be of particular interest to emotional geographers. Rose (2004) maintains that "thinking about the emotional in this kind of way implies thinking about the geographies produced by emotionality as similarly complicated,

eruptive and ambivalent" (p.550). So many events and experiences in our lives engender a complex and unpredictable mix of emotions, as Rose (2004) discusses, and geographers should be attentive to its fluid and multiplicitous nature.

Other key areas of emotional geographic research on the home and domestic life include examinations of parenting, such as Aitken's (2000) examination of the constructions of "fatherhood." Aitken (2000) details the challenges of fathering, particularly exploring the performance of being a father and the spaces where those performances occur. Gabb (2004) surveys another dimension of parenting in her investigation of the intimate and emotional relationship between lesbian mothers and their children. She notes that while maternal love is theoretically differentiated from sexual love by the absence or presence of passion, this distinction is not as clear as it may seem (Gabb 2004). Her research, though self-admittedly "tentative and exploratory" (Gabb 2004, p.412), helps to shed light on the complexity and fluidity of our emotions.

2.2.4 Geographies of Marginalized Communities

Another notable area of emotional research within geography, connected with Gabb's (2004) aforementioned work, includes a broader examination of gay communities. "These geographies have also been inextricably bound up with the politics of AIDs and its public expression of grief and loss…" (Davidson and Milligan 2004, p.525). Other work has included the connection between body and place, such as Johnston's (1997) study of the HERO gay pride parade in New Zealand and Valentine's (1993) survey of lesbian perceptions and experiences within everyday space. Highlighting the performative dimension of emotions, Kawale (2004) explores the social construction of emotions, noting that these culturally accepted guidelines help to institutionalize heterosexuality as "normal" behavior. Most of Kawale's (2004) research participants, which consisted of lesbian or bisexual women in London, engaged in an emotional performance that varied depending on their location. Kawale (2004) notes:

> The majority of my research participants negotiated and managed sexual identities at work and performed emotion work to avoid, for example, fear, anxiety and embarrassment of being found out or rejected by their colleagues (p.569).

Recent research into emotional geographies has turned an even greater attention to marginalized communities and previously disregarded topics. One area of engagement in particular has involved a more critical analysis of emotions and emotional responses, such as

Lobo's (2010) investigation of the place of emotions in face-to-face research and the subsequent emergence of the Self/Other binary (see also Moser 2008). Feminist geography provided a foundation for the politicization of the emotional experience (Pile 2010) and continues to be engaged in emotional geographic literature (Sharp 2009). Pile (2010) notes:

> By taking seriously women's experiences of space and place, and treating the personal as political, feminist geographers were alert *not only* to the emotions and feelings that women experienced in particular places and space, *but also* to how emotions framed and circumscribed sexed and gendered experiences of places and spaces (p.7).

2.2.5 Current Trends in Emotional Geographic Research

Health and illness continue to be at the forefront of emotional geographic research, but geographers are starting to expand their focus, particularly highlighting individual emotional experiences and the dynamism of emotional responses. Ryan's (2010) insightful exploration of parents of autistic children, for instance, highlighted the challenges of taking children to public places, trying to manage their children's own distress while at the same time attempting to limit the discomfort of others. In broadening our understanding of the emotions experienced by caregivers, Milligan (2005) explored the role of emotions within the transition from home to care-home settings, such as assisted-living or nursing homes. Previous research, as in the aforementioned examples, had examined illness and disabilities, as well as conceptions of home, but little research had explicitly examined the changing emotions experienced by a caregiver when a friend or relative was moved to a care-home facility (Milligan 2005). Milligan (2005) noted that the emotional attachments that develop between the elderly and their caregivers are complex:

> On the one hand they can bring feelings of satisfaction and immense reward to what is often a frustrating and difficult job, on the other, it exposes care workers to the feelings of sadness and loss… (p.2108).

Furthermore, Milligan (2005) conceptualizes emotions "as a set of interrelated reactions," (p.2108), and this notion is reinforced by empirical examples of the lived experience of caregivers, many of whom noted the senses of abandonment and loss they experienced after the transition of care. "For many caregivers, then, the care transition can be seen as akin to the physical and emotional experience of bereavement, but without the finality and closure of death" (Milligan 2005, p.2112).

Clearly, the act of caring for an aging loved one and the transition from home to care-home is an emotional experience. However, one respondent noted that there is a societal expectation to "perform" only the acceptable emotions related to the caregiving experience. Caregivers are situated within a larger societal framework, and while "emotions of anger and frustration [are] an inevitable part of the caregiving experience," caregivers often only express "emotions viewed as 'morally worthy'" (Milligan 2005, p.2109).

It is clear that there is some element of performativity in our emotional expressions, and this "filtering," so-to-speak, of emotions is rooted within our human biology (Turner 2000). For early hominids, gaining control over emotions was critical to the success of the social unit. "The rewiring of the hominid brain to gain control over emotions could become a preadaptation for stronger emotional ties, which, in turn, allowed those early hominids in the human line to build higher levels of social solidarity" (Turner 2000, pp.19-20). It is also important to remember that humans, at our very base, are apes, and unlike other mammals who rely on a keen sense of smell, "higher primates are visually dominant" (Turner 2000, p.3). We use our sense of sight to interpret our surroundings, to engage and respond to space, and it should be clear that many of the emotions we experience as a result of spatial interaction often stem from a visual medium, a notion that will be explored in this study.

Despite this broadened understanding of emotion within geography, geographers of emotion have continued to largely disregard the role of spirituality and religious spaces in shaping our emotions. Corrigan, Krump, and Kloos (2000) recently surveyed interdisciplinary research on religion and emotion, noting: "The study of religion and emotion is a highly visible part of the current renaissance in the study of emotion currently taking place across the arts and sciences" (p.19). The authors included comprehensive, annotated bibliographies of work on religion and emotion from a number of fields, including history, sociology, anthropology, theology, and philosophy. Unfortunately, though, geography is not even mentioned in his review. Corrigan (2008) notes:

> Emotion is a fundamental part of human experience. To study religion without reference to it is to strip religion of one of its central components, and in doing so, render it motionless, inert, and monotonous (pp.12-13).

While geographers have been largely absent from an emerging discussion of religion and emotion in other disciplines, research into this topic is beginning to expand. Slater (2004) took a

unique approach and examined religion and emotion from an autobiographical perspective, but while this research richly contributed to our understanding of personal religious experience, the emphasis on emotive experience left no room for a discussion of the affective capacity of the spaces the author encountered. Certainly, as the author notes, there is a "complex layering of time and place in the lived world of an individual" (Slater, 2004, p.251), but the autobiographical perspective of the study shed little light on how these collective, spiritual experiences are layered within a spatial context.

More recently, Megoran (2010) explored the notion of 'pacific geopolitics,' citing Holloway's (2006) insistence that geographers pay more attention to "emotional and corporeal practices in specific spaces" (p.394). This notion of peace presents an important avenue for geographers, who have previously focused more on the politics of war, but as evidenced by the case studies presented here, feelings of peace don't just occur within space, they are often shaped by them, particularly within spiritual settings.

Furthermore, as Davidson and Milligan (2004) note, emotions are situated within particular places. "We can, perhaps, usefully speak of an emotio-spatial hermeneutic: emotions are understandable – 'sensible' – only in the context of particular places" (Davidson and Milligan 2004, p.524). While the aforementioned disciplines like history and philosophy can offer significant insight on the formation of our emotions and our unique emotional responses, there is no attention to the spatial context within which these responses arise, and geographers could contribute to this needed discussion.

2.3 Affect in Geography

2.3.1 Conceptualizing Affect

Studies of emotion, as previously mentioned, have experienced a recent renaissance in a number of academic fields, to include geography (Pile 2010; see also Corrigan, Krump, and Kloos 2000), but emotion only provides one perspective on the personal experience of various spaces. Thus, geographers often speak of "affect," or the idea, in simple terms, that objects (to include spaces, people, etc.) affect other objects, and these examinations have experienced a parallel resurgence within geography. Affective experiences are a critical facet of the lived religious experience, but understanding and exploring affect has been problematic for geographers, and many have ignored its investigation completely (Thrift 2004).

Overall, developing a coherent definition of affect has proven difficult; although "[t]he notion of affect can be found scattered through the work on emotions in geography… its meaning remains elusive" (Pile 2010, p.8; see also Thrift 2004; Lorimer 2008). While emotions, as previously discussed, can be fairly clearly understood and engaged in research, affect has proven much more problematic to both define and to examine, particularly because of its traditional conceptualization as a non-representational. Anderson (2006) offers a brief definition, stating that affect is "a transpersonal *capacity* which a body has to be affected (through an affection) and to affect (as the result of modifications)" (p.735, also cited in Pile 2010, p.8).

Building from Anderson's (2006) brief definition, Pile (2010) notes several key features of affect, including the notion that it is "both within and between bodies," and that it "has potential" (p.8). The problem with examining affect relates to its very nature, in that it remains beyond representation. "Like emotions, affects matter - but they cannot be grasped… This would appear to leave affectual geography with a problem: its archetypal 'object of study' - affect - cannot, by its own account, be shown or understood" (Pile 2010, p.9). In other words, if one was to examine the affective nature of a painting, for instance, he or she can only measure the emotional changes the painting elicits in its viewers, but not the actual *flow* of affect from painting to subject.

Current examinations of affect, as well as emotion, within geography likely stemmed from the work on humanistic geographies during the 1970s and 1908s, as well as the later psychoanalytic geographies of the 1990s (Pile 2010). "The terrain being mapped out by affectual and emotional geography is ever expanding, but also woven out of many threads: a short list includes phenomenology, feminism… psychotherapy, Marx, and even Darwinian evolutionary thinking…" (Pile 2010, p.5). The geography of religion, however, is notably absent from his review.

Despite this recent engagement with affect, the topic has long been neglected in geographic research, and even today, remains a fairly small aspect of geographic study. Why has this been the case? Thrift (2004) offers several possible explanations. First, there is an ongoing perception that "affect is a kind of frivolous or distracting background to the real work of deciding our way through the city" (pp.57-58). Similarly, geographers of religion, who have continued to pursue an understanding of the politics of religion and religious interaction in doing

so have marginalized the poetic (Kong 2001), favoring instead more scientific explanations of religious phenomena.

Another explanation "is that affect figures mainly in perceptual registers like proprioception which are not easily captured in print" (Thrift 2004, p.58). In other words, affect is firmly rooted within our subconscious, as is our understanding of our body within space, or proprioception. When I consider where my hand is in relation to my foot, for instance, I use a solely internal referencing system, and the same seems to be largely true of affect. However, simply because affect is difficult to examine does not mean it should be completely disregarded, and Thrift (2004) notes that "neglecting affect is, as much now as in the past, criminal neglect" (p.58).

Still, some geographers have acknowledged the importance of both affect and emotion, and Anderson and Smith's (2001) editorial on these topics, according to Pile (2010), provided a catalyst for many current examinations. "Their paper… weaves together a humanist concern for the lived experiences and emotional lives, and their representations, with a concern for doing and performing…" (Pile 2010, p.6). Indeed, humanism, while not explicitly grappling with emotions (Pile 2010), facilitated its inclusion in research by calling a greater attention to the "subjective dimensions of human life [which] stimulated a substantial body of research that attended to how people feel and experience places and spaces" (Bondi 2005, p.435). As previously mentioned, geographers of religion, too, are calling for a greater attention to the *lived experiences* of religious individuals (Holloway 2006; Kong 1990), and thus affectual and emotional geography seems to be an appropriate place to cultivate such a discussion.

Following Anderson and Smith's (2001) conceptualization, geographers have tended to delineate between *emotional* and *affective* geographies on the basis of their representability. "Emotional geography emphasises the significance of expressed emotions while non-representational theory emphasises the importance of inexpressible affects" (Pile 2010, p.7). Emotional geographers have thus examined an extensive list of *specific* emotions, from disillusionment to love to hope, even to "'Star Wars affects,'" (Pile 2010, p.6).

In contrast to representational theory, which might attempt to display or convey details of our experience, non-representational theory "is concerned with the ways in which subjects know the world without knowing it" (Nash 2000, p.655) and was principally developed by Nigel Thrift (2007). "Non-representational theory takes the leitmotif of movement and works with it as a

means of going beyond constructivism" (Thrift 2007, p.5). In this way, the guiding focus of non-representational geography is largely connected with performativity (see Nash 2000), but explores movement and experience in a way that goes beyond empirical thought. Thrift (2007) further notes that "the most effective approach values the pre-cognitive as something more than an addendum to the cognitive" (p.6), a notion which has been promoted by Anderson (2006) and others.

Much of the work on affect has also been greatly influenced by research on psychoanalysis (Pile 2010); after all, these studies rely on the introspective thoughts of a subject. Bondi's (2005) examination of psychotherapy reveals an approach to emotion and affect that is relevant for geographers. She notes that "[o]ne of the key challenges for, and debates within, emotional geographies concerns the relationship between feelings themselves and representations or accounts of feelings" (Bondi 2005, p.443). Psychotherapy understands emotions and affects relationally, and further, it facilitates the engagement with unconscious processes (Bondi 2005). Bondi (2005) notes:

> At the heart of psychotherapy lies the idea of holding open a space for processes of symbolization into which people come to make new 'sense' of themselves, their lives and their interpersonal relationships (p.444).

Drawing from this, emotional geography "privileges people's expressed emotional experiences, and treats their accounts as open, honest, and genuine" (Pile 2010, p.8). Bondi (2005) also criticizes the supposed binary of representational/non-representational connected with emotion and affect, "suggesting that these are unhelpful dualisms that detract from geographers' capacity to engage with the ubiquitous and pervasive presence of emotion" (p.445), and I agree with her critique. Other perspectives on affect include those that are "associated with psychoanalytic frames and [are] based around the notion of drive" (Thrift 2004, p.61). These examinations understand emotions as essentially vehicles for deeper drives and desires, and these drives are understood as affective.

Finally, the last perspective is largely influenced by both Spinoza and Deleuze, and understands "affect [as] naturalistic and hinges on adding capacities through interaction in a world which is constantly becoming" (Thrift 2004, p.61). In this way, affect becomes "the property of the active outcome of an encounter" (Thrift 2004, p.62). All beings are constantly encountering both other beings as well as other things, and in this way are both *doing* and

becoming. "Affect structures encounters as a series of modifications arising from the relations between ideas which may be more or less adequate and more or less empowering. In other words, the issue is the composition of an affective relationship" (Thrift 2004, p.62).

Building upon this notion of the affective relationship and the psychoanalytic understanding of emotion, this research seeks to more fully integrate our geographic understanding of both emotion and affect, and how spiritual experiences are shaped by the spaces we encounter. As mentioned, there has consistently been a lack of pragmatic engagement with the personal experience of sacred space; studies have often relied on autobiographical narratives or researcher interpretations rather than first-hand accounts of participants. Furthermore, the spatial context of these experiences has continually been overlooked, particularly within other disciplines. This dissertation draws upon and advances previous work on emotion and affect by broadening our understanding of the ways in which sacred spaces shape our affective, spiritual encounters and by presenting an empirical, in-depth investigation of individual religious experiences within these sites.

2.3.2 Exploring Affect in Geography

Despite the fact that emotion and affect remain conceptually different for many geographers, they do have several key similarities: most notably that they are "fluid… mobile… unbounded…" (Pile 2010). Pile (2010) further notes:

> Although emotional geographers want to talk directly to people about their personal feelings and affectual geographers don't, each prefers forms of knowledge that deliver a sense of the intimate, especially where this is normally hidden (p.10).

The core difference, according to Pile (2010), between geographies of affect and geographies of emotion is the relationship to thoughts. "In emotional geography, even with its focus clearly on expressed emotion, thought is related somehow to affect;" however, in traditional affective geography, "[a]ffect cannot be attached to, or emerge into, a thought; that is, it cannot become an object of consciousness" (Pile 2010, p.12).

Geographic explorations of affect are wide ranging, but Pile (2010) notes that all include three key assumptions: "a specific ontology of relation, mainly involving a concern with fluidity; a valuation of proximity and intimacy; and a methodological emphasis on ethnography" (p.5). Anderson's (2006) study of hope certainly fits this conceptualization. Here, Anderson (2006) acknowledges that the presence of "hope" is intuitively understood, but the process of becoming

hopeful or losing hope is much more difficult to understand: "[H]ope anticipates that something indeterminate has *not-yet become*" (p.733). Furthermore, according to Anderson (2006), the relationship between various events or objects and resulting affects is nonlinear. "There is not, first, an 'event' and then, second, an affective 'effect' of such an 'event'" (Anderson 2006, p.736). Anderson (2006) further asserts that geographers must unravel the traditional dichotomy between subject-object "and instead attune to how affects inhabit the passage between contexts through various processes of translocal movement" (p.736).

In exploring hope, Anderson (2006) conducted an interview with a recently unemployed man, noting that he experienced a "set of diminishment within the present that take place through a series of bodily affections (bored, lonely, no energy)…" (p.742). It is clear throughout the empirical portion of Anderson's (2006) study that although affect is positioned within the nonrepresentational sphere, the bodily affections he explores are clearly *re*presented by and reduced to the terms bored, lonely, and no energy. Furthermore, hope is clearly connected with particular feelings, and although the exact mode of transfer of the affection remains elusive, one can clearly see that hope resulted from some sort of interaction. Although one cannot say that every time X event happens, a body will experience feelings of hope or hopefulness, there is an understanding that geographers can explore hope, or any number of other affects, without implying a direct causal relationship. "[H]ope emerges from a set of qualitatively distinct relations between bodies and therefore from *specific types of encounters* [emphasis added]" (Anderson 2006, p.747). One might say that certain events are *likely* to coax feelings of hopefulness in a subject, or conversely, likely to diminish feelings of hope.

Moreover, Anderson (2006) notes that hope relates to and is a product of both space and time: "the disappointment of hope can deplete space-time just as the realization of a hope can reanimate space-time" (p.747). What about affects that are engendered by particular spaces themselves? Surely hope is related to space (how differently does a room feel when one is hopeful versus when one is feeling depressed?), but could it be the case that particular spaces have the potential for affective change?

Like Anderson (2006), a number of other geographers like McCormack (2003) in his examination of Dance Movement Therapy, have attempted to examine affect by surveying a person's experience. In these studies, "[T]here is a close description of events, which focus attention on what bodies are doing: dancing, smiling, gesturing, playing, laughing, and so on"

(Pile 2010, p.9). Watkins (2010), for example, examines the tearful reactions of teachers in interviews, noting that their emotions were decidedly situated within their classroom experiences, and thus space served to mediate various affects. She notes:

> [The tears] were an embodiment of each teacher's specific investment or interest in teaching which had accumulated through the process of the pedagogic exchange enacted in schools and classrooms… (Watkins 2010, p.6).

In addition, Bhatti et al. (2009) explored people's experiences in gardens, and noted "that everyday life is full of enchanting encounters" (p.62).

Cloke, May, and Johnsen (2008) set out to uncover the "'neglected' spatialities of the city'" (p.241; see also Amin and Thrift 2002) in their investigation of homeless people in Bristol, United Kingdom. There is a functionality, and a *rationality* as the authors note, to the movement of homeless people within a city, but to reduce these movements to solely the products of necessity is to miss an important facet of their journeys (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008). "Different performativities crosscut the notion of tactical agency, and leave different traces of homelessness capable of reinscribing the city in different ways" (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008, p.246). As homeless people move throughout the city, they affect the people and places they encounter, perhaps "engendering feelings of charity, fear, avoidance, or loathing on the part of the housed public" (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008, p.246). The authors further explore how homeless people, through performative actions, can transform the spaces they occupy: "[M]oments of preconscious and unplanned outbursts of anger, fear, and laughter [can] remake, if only for a moment, the spaces in which they burst forth" (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008, p.260).

The authors' emphasis on performativity will be echoed in this study, as it is a key component of religious interactions. They note:

> By emphasising questions of performativity we seek to draw attention to some of the ways in which homeless people themselves, rather than others, make sense of and in turn remake the homeless city (Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008, p.242).

This utilization of performativity allows the authors to better understand how meanings are ascribed to, derived from, and transformed in various spaces, and while the authors admit that it represents only a fragment of the performative activity of homeless people as a whole, it can certainly shed light on deeper urban issues Cloke, May, and Johnsen 2008).

Connecting with recent debates over controversial airport security practices, Adey (2008) investigated the affective nature of airport security, and how bodily gestures and expressions can be used to profile potential terrorists. He notes, "[A]irport security personnel are systematically reading the *faces* of passengers in order to discover not identity… but, rather, intentions and emotions…" (Adey 2008, p.280). Our feelings are often subconsciously brought to the surface by 'micro-expressions,' and it is exactly this unintentional response that transportation officials are interested in identifying (Adey 2008). "[A]gents are trained to look for how feelings surface in minute and instantaneous gestures" (Adey 2008, p.281), essentially linking feelings and emotions with deeper, affective processes. Additionally, by utilizing this method, transportation agents hope to avoid issues of discrimination that plagued other profiling techniques, such as those based on cultural or racial characteristics.

Kraftl and Adey (2008) engaged in a unique exploration of the role of architecture in mediating affects. They begin by noting that "[f]or architects and their buildings to be taken seriously, buildings must be imbued with the power to make a difference to their inhabitants" (Kraftl and Adey 2008, p.213). In their research, Kraftl and Adey (2008) take a decidedly architectural perspective, with the focus on "how affects should and could be achieved (but not how they are achieved)" (p.215). Thus, most of the interviewees are architects, builders, and the designers of rooms, rather than those who actually inhabit these spaces.

Certainly, Kraftl and Adey's (2008) work offers an important perspective on how particular buildings are designed to elicit various affects, an understanding that has been largely missing from geographic literature, but as the authors specifically mentioned, it sheds little light on the *experience* of being in buildings. They suggest that future research "should attend to the ways in which… affective potentialities are negotiated in and through practices of inhabiting buildings" (Kraftl and Adey 2008, p.228) and this project seeks to do just that.

Thrift (2004) engages in a broader examination of affect, looking at cities as a whole. He notes that while "affect is a vital element of cities," (p.57) the study of affect as it pertains to the cityscape has largely been marginalized, a problem that is echoed in the geography of religion, as well. Thrift (2004) notes that when we consider the city, it is clear that its design has a distinct element of intentionality, and much of this intentionality is rooted in the generation of affective responses. Moreover, the mobilization of affective responses is a highly political process: "what might have been painted as aesthetic is increasingly instrumental" (p.58). Thrift (2004) further

notes that "[i]ncreasingly, urban spaces and times are being designed to invoke affective responses" (p.68). It is clear, then, that if affective responses can be orchestrated, surely they can be studied with some level of clarity.

While some understandings of affect, as previously mentioned, have directly related it to particular, individual emotions, Thrift (2004) argues that these approaches do not work very well, and instead offers alternative approaches that have a much broader understanding. One such approach "conceives of affect as a set of embodied practices that produce visible conduct as an outer lining" (Thrift 2004, p.60). This understanding is positioned within the phenomenological tradition, and "[i]ts chief concern is to develop descriptions of how emotions occur in everyday life…" (Thrift 2004, p.60).

Understandably, though, exploring embodied practices from a phenomenological perspective leads to difficulties of representation. As Thrift (2004) maintains:

> Very often, the source of emotions seem to come from somewhere outside the body, from the setting itself, but this setting is cancelled out by such methods as questionnaires and other such instruments (p.60).

However, is it necessarily the case that questionnaires and surveys remove the context within which affective experiences occur? Surely a simple checklist of emotions would remove the broader setting that fostered an affective experience, but I believe it is possible, especially from a geographical perspective, to reinsert the setting into affective examinations paying particular attention to the spatial context within which these experiences occur. Kraftl and Adey (2008) also note that there is a need to integrate a variety of methods into affectual studies, and the authors themselves utilize in-depth interviews, participant observations, photography, and a variety of other qualitative methods.

While, as Thrift (2004) notes, affects can certainly be "engineered," in a sense, this intentionality is not limited to the cityscape. In fact, as Ash (2010) explores, affect can be deliberately shaped in a virtual environment, as well. Ash (2010) "argue[s] that videogame designers actively manipulate spatiotemporal aspects of the game environment in an attempt to produce positively affective encounters for users" (p.654). Furthermore, videogame designers must achieve a consistent, affective result if a game is to be successful:

> Skilled game designers aim to mechanically produce and design contingent outcomes reliably; they want to produce an alluring and captivating spatiotemporal image by staging, managing, and controlling events… (Ash 2010, p.655).

Although affect as it pertains to religious environments might not be designed with such a calculated outcome in mind, Ash's (2010) article points to the malleability of affect and the clear patterning of affective experiences that can be identified in participants.

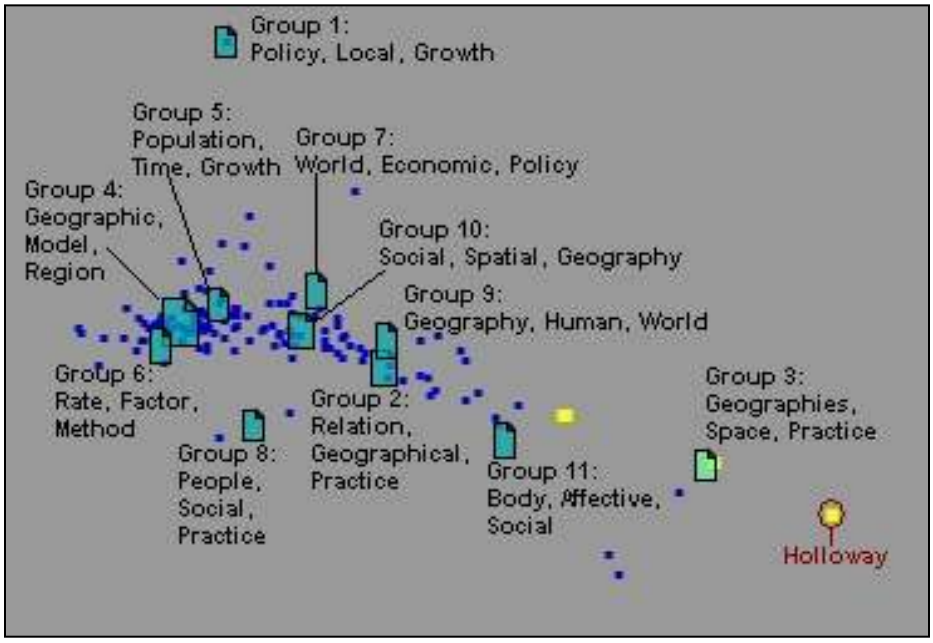

Figure 1: Reference visualization of "affect" literature within geography using RefViz software.

A visual examination of literature on affect within geography clearly reveals the marginalization of both religious and spiritual aspects of affect, as well as the emotive aspects of affective experience. The visualization shown in Figure 1 above includes ISI Web of Knowledge literature on affect within the field of geography[1], which, after several outliers were

[1] Two distinct searches were conducted of ISI Web of Knowledge. The first searched by Title: Affect AND Topic: geog*. The results were then refined by General Category: Social Sciences, and yielded 63 results. The second searched by Topic: affect*. These results were refined by Topic: geog* and then by Subject Area: Geography, and yielded 88 results. Once duplicates were removed, there were 144 unique results. These were imported into RefViz, where 6 references were automatically eliminated due to missing or incomplete information. Two extreme outliers were then removed: Chagnon's (2009) "Impacts of the Floods on Railroads in Illinois and Adjacent States" and You's (1993) "Does the Gender of the Child Affect Acceptance of the One-Child Certificate?"

removed, yielded 136 unique results. These references were then mapped using RefViz, which presents a 2D "map" of related literatures by conducting an automated analysis of related literature and grouping references based on key themes. Group 3, highlighted in Figure 1, includes Holloway's (2006) "Enchanted Spaces" study, Kraftl and Adey's (2008) "Architecture/Affect/Inhabitation," and Bennett's (2009) "Challenging Emotions." Not only is this group significantly smaller than other major research areas, but Holloway (2006) is clearly an outlier.

Additionally, the literature is roughly arranged along a horizontal axis. References situated on the left side of the figure generally pertain to more scientific or technical aspects of affect (such as, "How does process A affect system B?"). Here, of course, the term affect is used in a much more causal sense. On the right side of the figure, there is a far greater focus on the human and bodily aspects of affective experience, and it should be clear from examining the figure that additional research is needed in this area. While this visualization is not all-inclusive, it does help shed light on the major themes of affect in geographic research and the clear neglect of spiritual and performative topics.

Thien (2005) critiques the burgeoning work on affect within geography noting that geographers have approached the concept from a decidedly 'transhuman' perspective. "This model of affect discourages an engagement with everyday emotional subjectivities, falling into a familiar pattern of distancing emotion from 'reasonable' scholarship…" (Thien 2005, p.450). She is critical of McCormack's (2003) and Thrift's (2004) aforementioned approaches to both affect and emotion, noting that the transhuman positioning of affect depersonalizes it:

> In the desire to push past the humanity of emotional experience, the valorization of affect through mechanistic metaphors of pipes and cables builds over a rich field of potential understanding. 'Affect' as a term and a concept is employed here in masculinist, technocratic, and distancing ways (Thien 2005, p.452).

Thien's (2005) mention of "pipes and cables" stems from Thrift's (2004) article, "Intensities of Feeling." In it, he notes:

> Affect is more and more likely to be actively engineered with the result that it is becoming something more akin to the networks of *pipes and cables* [emphasis added] that are of such importance in providing the basic mechanics and root textures of urban

> life… a set of constantly performing relays and junctions that are laying down all manner of new emotional histories and geographies. (Thrift 2004, p.58)

For Thien (2005), the clearly mechanistic language used to describe human activity is evidence of a distancing from personal, performative experience. She notes that the way affect has been characterized has "direct[ed] attention to the virtual and transhuman. This move to get after or beyond humanity in all our diversity also pushes us past the emotional landscapes of daily life" (Thien 2005, p.453).

While I agree with Thien (2005) that positioning affect as transhuman could lead a researcher to deemphasize the very lived experience that makes affectual geography so engaging, she seems to be setting up a straw man argument. Simply because Thrift (2004) uses terms like "networks" or "mechanics" in his discourse on affect does not mean that his intention is to be masculinist. Furthermore, her understanding of affectual geography as "'transhuman' – a state of being after or beyond human" (Thien 2005, p.450) implies that our work has become *in*human, and this is simply not the case. McCormack's (2003) examination of dance movement therapy is not limited to physical, bodily responses. Rather, he looks at *more than* chemical and physical responses, *more than* a direct, causal relationship between emotions and affect, and his work, in this way, represents a *more-than*-human approach that expands beyond materiality.

This idea of more-than-human can certainly inform examinations of spirituality within geography. Here, geographers are explicitly turning their attention to the realm beyond (see Eliade's 1957 discussion of sacred spaces.) Thien's (2005) reading of work on affect assumes that "beyond human" equates to a loss of the human element, and while this could certainly be the case, we might also turn to a more-than-human approach that effectively incorporates this key element. McCormack (2006), in his response to Thien (2005) explores this notion of a more-than-human approach, noting his concern with "'empathically human' accounts of the emotional complexities of lived space and place" that might follow Thien's (2005) understanding. He notes:

> I do wonder about the costs of nailing one's colors so firmly to the mast of an exclusively human-centered emotional geography – one that disavows and distances itself from any attempt to think the human in terms of its more-than-human elements (McCormack 2006, p.330).

Perhaps what might be most appropriate is a "middle path" for researchers (to borrow from Buddhist thought). Affectual encounters, by their very nature, result in human responses. That said, to reduce affect to merely chemical reactions is to miss a key component of how affect serves as a driving force of experiences and emotions. "At the very least it should be recognized that asking people how they feel - and demanding that they articulate this feeling - is not the only way of being ethical, political or relational" (McCormack 2006, p.331).

Thien's (2005) critique of affect within geography not only raises questions about how we should explore and elucidate affective encounters, but also again brings to the forefront the unhelpful positing of affect as solely nonrepresentational. McCormack (2006), in detailing his background, explores how the metaphor of pipes and cables is not, as Thien (2005) posited, wholly inhuman, impersonal, and separate from the world. As a worker for Intel, McCormack (2006) "was responsible for the storage, cataloguing and distribution of the high-purity piping necessary for the construction of a water-fabrication plant in Leixlip, Ireland" (p.331). Thus, McCormack (2006) envisions these as "*of* rather than separate from the world" (p.332). He further notes:

> My inclination is to take seriously the possibility that these things do not distance us from life as it is lived, but allow us to become caught up in, apprehend and amplify the rhythm of its diverse and moving materialities (McCormack 2006, p.332).

It is clear that the metaphorical nature by which affective encounters are conveyed leaves room for misinterpretation, as evidenced by Thien's (2005) critique of Thrift (2004) and McCormack (2003). Pipes and cables, for McCormack (2006), are at the heart of some of his formative experiences and are firmly positioned *within* the world, and the same might be true for Thrift (2004). For Thien (2005), though, they represent a cold, masculinist, dehumanized vision of affective encounters. Without sufficient context, the metaphors utilized by affective geographers will remain susceptive to misinterpretation. Certainly metaphors can carry significantly different meanings for different people, but with sufficient context, particularly an explicit spatial context, affective explorations need not be reduced to the masculinist, dehumanized visions feared by Thien (2005).

But how can we re-enter this contextual element? If we cease approaching affect from a solely nonrepresentational position, perhaps moving beyond our metaphorical bent, we might begin to speak of "affective experiences" within a spatial context. However, if we instead adopt

an approach to affect following solely from Thien's (2005) understanding, I am apt to think that the spatial context will remain marginalized, as it is positioned as a more-than-human element. Tolia-Kelly (2006) asserts the importance of exploring positionality and avoiding universalist language in affectual and emotional geography, noting: "Missing in both approaches is an engagement with the act of writing itself as an experiential and emotional activity" (p.213). In Thrift's (2004) mention of "pipes and cables," there was little contextual grounding, and McCormack's (2006) contextual understanding was only added after Thien's (2005) critique. Further, Tolia-Kelly (2006) asserts:

> The literature on affect is particularly inattentive to issues of power… To put this simply, affective registers have to be understood within the context of power geometries that shape our social world (p.213).

While this is certainly a worthwhile aim, why limit the focus simply to power geometries? If, as affectual geographers are wont to do, affect is often understood using metaphorical language with little context, re-entering the contextual element need not be limited to explorations of power. Rather, spatial metrics more broadly need to be incorporated into these studies.

2.3.3 New Perspectives on Affective Experiences

Because of its non-representational nature, examinations of affect, following Anderson's (2006) conceptualization, tend to avoid tracing emotional responses directly back to affect. When considering hope, for example, Anderson (2006) examines how hope relates to specific events, such as unemployment, as well as to certain feelings and experiences. Examining his article further, Pile (2010) summarizes Anderson's (2006) characterization of emotions, feelings, and affect as a mind-body "layer cake" model: Layer 1 consists of the non-cognitive (affect), Layer 2 is the pre-cognitive (feelings), and Layer 3 is comprised of the cognitive (emotions). In this way, "[l]ayers and borders remain assumed within affectual geography: assumed and universal…" (Pile 2010, p.10).

While on a theoretical level, I agree with the layered mind-body model of the relationship between affect, feelings, and emotion, there are several key problems with Anderson's (2006) conceptualization. First, as previously mentioned, both affect and emotion are conceived of as static, which "conflicts with the humanistic and psychotherapeutic models of emotions and affects as fluid and relational that can be found in emotional geography" (Pile 2010, p.10).

I also disagree with the assertion that emotion can never be relationally linked to affect. Recognizing that a complete understanding of affect remains out of reach, the three seem to, at least in many cases, be related. As Pile (2010) notes: "Hope… appears in three distinct ways [in Anderson's (2006) model]: as an affect, in flows of hope; in feelings, as a sense of hopefulness; in emotion, as actually expressed in hopes" (p.9). Thus, while there is no way to physically measure how hope flowed from one body to another, understanding the emotional responses of the subject can at least *begin* to shed light on the affective nature of the object. Indeed, on a practical level, "both emotional and affectual geography share a default methodology – best termed 'ethnography,' deploying variations on participation and observation" (Pile 2010, p.11). Even in Anderson's (2006) own examination of hope, his interview methods are not unlike those undertaken by emotional geographers. Although affect is characterized as non-representational, it is clearly represented here by relatable experiences, and as previously mentioned, many other geographers have engaged in similar experiential explorations.

Throughout the geographic literature on affect, the problematic dualism of representational/nonrepresentational returns to the forefront, and it is clear that while affectual geographies firmly place "affect" in the non-representational sphere, the ways in which they discuss moments of affect are clearly representational. Pile (2010) calls this "straightforward hypocrisy" (p.17):

> It continually does what it says cannot be done: it cannot help but re-present and represent *affect*… Ultimately, the non-representational theory's approach to affect demonstrates two things: first, that it is fundamentally a representational practice that is, importantly, unable to represent itself… second, that it is not a theory, but a chain gang of metaphors" (Pile 2010, p.17).

Furthermore, emotional geography is criticized as simply adding to a massive "shopping list" of emotions (Pile 2010, p.17). Emotional geographers might study happiness or fear or pain, or any number of other *distinct* emotional responses, but again this method overlooks the dynamic and multiplicitous nature of human expression.

Additionally, if Anderson's (2006) model is correct, and "feelings lie between affects and emotions" (Pile 2010, p.9), then it seems intuitive to approach affect *through* emotional experiences of subjects, as seems to be the current trend in affectual geography, recognizing at the same time that any supposed "understanding" of affect would be an approximation. Thus,

rather than posit affect as solely non-representational, but reduce it to representable expressions, I will attempt to elucidate the details of *affective experiences*, recognizing that, as with any experience, representations will remain approximations, rather than a direct, causal relationship. This research will also seek to avoid reductionism, either in the sense of reducing emotional responses down to a single term (e.g. joy, sorrow, awe), or in concluding that affect is equal to the sum of emotions a body produces.

Overall, it is clear that a new theoretical position is needed, one that conceives of affect as something *more-than*-representational, and explicitly takes into account the spatial context within which emotional, religious experiences occur. Additionally, while affect and emotion are indeed quite different, the two need not be so isolated from one another in geographic studies. As previously mentioned, Thrift (2004) pointed to the existence of an affective relationship; if this relationship exists between objects and agents, between *doing* and *becoming*, then it exists between affect and emotion as well. Rather than conceive of the two in a dichotomous fashion, with affect positioned as solely non-representational and emotion as able to be represented by particular feelings, it would be beneficial to speak of the *affective capacity* spaces have to facilitate emotive encounters. Spiritual traditions produce a variety of sacred materialities, and these entities become entwined in the lived religious experience: As Keane (2008) notes:

> As objects, they persist across contexts and beyond any particular intentions and projects. To these objects, people may respond in new ways. To the extent that those responses become materialized in altered or new semiotic forms, those responses build on and are additive to responses of other people in other contexts. These materializations bear the marks of their temporality (Keane 2008, p.S124).

The danger is to take a reductionist approach to the affective capacity of these sacred materialities, and to strip away individual religious experience to uncover the core theological belief these material features represent. Keane (2008), approaching materiality from an anthropological perspective, cautions against this: "To try to eliminate the materiality of religion by treating it as, above all, evidence for something immaterial, such as beliefs or prior experiences, risks denying the very conditions of sociality, and even time itself" (p.S124).

If affect and emotion are indeed relationally linked, as Bondi (2005) and others have noted, then the ways in which geographers approach these concepts must go beyond the static, "layer-cake" model conceived of by Anderson (2006). Anderson's (2006) model presents a

helpful starting point to begin to uncover the differences between affect, feeling, and emotion, but it leaves little room for researchers to begin to uncover how these concepts are understood and interpreted by individuals. Emotions, existing in the cognitive realm, are comprised of both thoughts and feelings and, as evidenced by numerous studies in geography as well as other disciplines, can be represented in various forms by researchers. Affect, on the other hand, is often left isolated, solely positioned in the non-cognitive realm, unable to be represented or engaged. The theoretical perspective taken in this dissertation is to return to a basic understanding of affect from the psychoanalytic prospective of *drive*, referring to the performative act of bodies both doing and becoming as well as to the notion that our emotions serve as vehicles for deeper drives and desires. According to Thrift (2004), these very drives, perhaps better imagined as "pushes," then influence our emotional responses. These drives are thus essentially affective in nature and while we as individuals might not be able to fully understand them, since they're indeed beyond our cognitive realm, we can certainly understand an essential relationship between affect and emotion.

In this way, the relationship between affect and emotion can be conceived of as *more-than*-representational (see Lorimer 2005), a notion that underlies the empirical investigation of this study and could apply to investigations of the poetics of religious experience more broadly (see Dora, 2011). Geographers should begin to move away from the representational/non-representational dichotomy that has prevented a more thorough understanding of the deeper relationship between affect and emotion. Since affect is traditionally conceived of as non-cognitive, it is placed in the realm of the non-representational and thus beyond our realm of understanding. In actuality, though, we continually *re*-present affect, as has been previously discussed. It is clear that for affectual geographers, while we speak of affect as though it's non-representational, that doesn't mean that it's *not* representable or understandable. Rather, the combined relationship between affect, emotion, and feeling is *more-than*-representational in that while they are not easily representable or identifiable in a traditional sense, they are certainly not beyond our understanding entirely.

Moreover, if affective spiritual encounters are conceived of as strictly non-representational, they are often left isolated from the emotional experiences of religious participants, as has consistently been the case in geographic literature. However, approaching affect from a *more-than*-representational perspective and paying particular attention to the

affective capacity of sacred spaces and to the affective-emotive spiritual encounter as a cohesive unit allows for a greater attention to individual experience. Furthermore, as previously mentioned, Thrift (2004) noted that a problem with studies of emotion and affect is that they often have little context, and that the setting of affective experiences is rarely explored. This dissertation critically explores the affective capacity of sacred materialities as a way to begin to uncover the affective drives and the spatial context behind our emotional experience. However, even within other fields, like religious studies, where a discourse of affect and emotion has been more readily engaged, there is a spatial element that is clearly absent. Geographers are well-positioned to contribute to an evolving dialogue of the role of affect and emotion in religious experience.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Methodological Approach

This dissertation project is primarily situated within the phenomenological approach, which "involves the description of things as one experiences them," (Peet 1998, p.37). In phenomenological research, the specific phenomena being examined could be "anything that appears or presents itself to someone," (Peet 1998 p.37), and might include studies of sensory experiences, beliefs, memories, or physical activities. At the heart of phenomenology, though, is an individual's experience, which researchers like Holloway (2006) and Kong (1990) have repeatedly called for a greater attention to within the geography of religion. In my study, the particular phenomena that are examined are emotion and affect, situated within the house of worship. However, the focus is not on broad patterns of emotion or on universal conceptions of affect, but rather emotion and affective experiences as they are engaged by individuals. Thus, humanistic geography, which "privileges people's expressed emotional experiences…" (Pile 2010, p.8) provides a foundation alongside phenomenology upon which this project can proceed.

As previously stated, this research project does not seek to find a definitive, causal link between *affect* and *emotion*. Rather, it seeks to uncover patterns of affective and emotional experiences, and to shed light on the individual, lived religious experience. This examination is principally descriptive in nature, following on from the theoretical perspectives taken by many early geographers, most notably Hartshorne (1939). When answering the question "What is geography?" Hartshorne replied that "it studies the world, seeking to describe, and to interpret, the differences among its different parts, as seen at any one time, commonly the present time" (Hartshorne 1939). Clearly, this definition is quite broad, and Hartshorne admits that geography brings together ideas from other fields, but it is this feature which makes geography a distinct discipline (Hartshorne 1939). "Geography must integrate the materials that other sciences study separately" (Hartshorne 1939). Hartshorne's position could be described as regional geography, and those who advocate this viewpoint maintain that "geography is basically a regional study dealing with unique combinations (interrelations) of characteristics in specific areas of the earth's surface; it is also largely descriptive" (Peet 1998, p.17). In other words, rather than

attempting to generalize phenomena or events, regional geographers maintain an importance of the *uniqueness* of places.

Epistemologically, this research draws from the hermeneutical and critical realist approaches. Hermeneutics, traditionally the study of the interpretation of problematic religious texts, has been extended beyond the realm of textual analysis and has been conceived as a way for researchers to understand how people understand and make sense of the world around them. Jones (2000) explores how hermeneutics could be utilized to better understand the deeper meanings behind material culture, to include architecture. "Because objectivist descriptions of architecture… err in presuming a lock, or a constancy, between buildings and their meanings, historians of religion would be well served by pursuing an alternative interpretive course, especially one that appreciates the 'universal aspect of hermeneutics'" (Jones 2000, p.36). This notion of the universality of hermeneutics stems from Gadamer's assertion that every productive, experiential interaction we have with the world around us is "an occasion of hermeneutical reflection" (Jones 2000, p.10).

Though Rorty (1979) positions hermeneutics as a replacement for epistemology, hermeneutics conceived of as a holistic, pragmatic, and multiplicitous understanding of truth is itself an epistemological position (Westphal 1999). As Westphal (1999) notes:

> It is no longer limited to the interpretation of texts but interprets all cognition as interpretation… It is a species diametrically opposed to foundationalist epistemologies, but it belongs to the same genus precisely because like them it is a meta-theory about how we should understand the cognitive claims of common sense… (p.416).

Epistemologically, then, the hermeneutical approach provides an alternative to traditional, foundationalist positions of empiricism and rationalism. For empiricists, knowledge is derived out of sensory experiences (Schwandt 2007), which is certainly a key feature of this study. For rationalists, these sensory experiences arise out of external sources; "a priori ideas (concepts, theories, etc.) provide a structure for making sense of experience" (Schwandt 2007, p.87). As previously stated, houses of worships not only evoke affective experiences, but also in turn serve to reflect the beliefs and understandings of parishioners. Thus, an epistemological positioning at either the empirical or the rational extreme would result in a very limited understanding of sacred space.

In addition, following from Ferber (2006), I adopt a critical realist approach, which theorizes that all knowledge is fallible, though not equally so. "The defining feature of all versions of realism is 'the belief that there is a world existing independently from our knowledge of it' and 'independence of objects from knowledge immediately undermines any complacent assumptions about the relation between them'" (Sayer 2000, p.2, as cited in Ferber 2006, p.177). Critical realism as an ontological perspective has recently been utilized in various examinations of religion and theology and provides a way for researchers like myself to privilege interviewee's responses as valid, while acknowledging that their own understanding as well as my interpretation does not represent an "ultimate truth."

In any study of this nature, a researcher relies on participants to accurately convey the details of their affective and emotive experiences, and this task could certainly be fraught with difficulty. On the outset, we face the difficulty of conveying our experiences within the bounds of language. My understanding of feeling "peaceful" might be quite different from an interviewee, for instance, though we both might use the same word to describe our emotive experience. Furthermore, semi-structured interview responses could be subject to misinterpretation by the researcher. To help address these issues, I had participants answer similar questions throughout the interview that were worded slightly differently to help validate their responses. In addition, the fluid nature of the interview allowed me to ask a variety of probing questions, rather than simply have participants note a feeling of "peace," without elaborating on what triggered that feeling and describing the feelings further.

Overall, I take a pragmatic approach to research, which Denzin and Lincoln (2000) also share. Creswell (2007), in defining pragmatism, writes that "[i]ndividuals holding this worldview focus on the outcomes of the research – the actions, situations, and consequences of inquiry – rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism). There is a concern with applications – 'what works'…" (p.22). When deciding between qualitative and quantitative research, it seems that a pragmatic approach would be the most useful, and would help us to avoid being led into a methodological corner based on our worldview. If someone rejected qualitative research because, like Schaefer (1953), they believed the world to be orderly and able to be explained in scientific terms, he or she might overlook a type of method that might effectively answer their research objective. Similarly, if a person rejects quantitative research from the very outset, he or she might miss an excellent research opportunity.

Following Denzin and Lincoln's (2000) characterization of the very essence of qualitative research, it is clear that qualitative methods, such as interviews and participant observation, would be the most practical for this study. Specifically, I utilized in-depth, emergent interviews, which allowed for individuals to convey their own ideas and experiences with little guidance from the researcher. These interviews are also referred to as semi-standardized or semi-structured in some literature, and their purpose is not to get the definitive answer to a question or provide the over-arching meaning behind a particular object, (again in line with the critical realist approach) but rather to better understand people's lived religious experience and make sense of it (see Seidman 2006).

In addition, semi-structured interviews, because of their relatively fluid nature, help researchers see the world from the participant's point of view, and thus remind us that we all see and approach the world differently (Berg 1995). As Ferber (2006) noted, religious beliefs shape our world view in a profoundly unique way, and these beliefs, or non-beliefs, have the potential to interact and influence geographic research. We all, researchers and participants included, bring to the table various assumptions, ideologies, and worldviews, and especially in a research project of this nature, there is a danger of making subjective judgments about respondents. However, in semi-structured interviews, participants are largely able to tell their stories in their own words.

Within the geography of religion, and geography more broadly, in-depth interviews are commonly used as a qualitative technique. Holloway, in his article "Make Believe: Spiritual Practice, Embodiment, and Sacred Space" (2003), conducted in-depth interviews with members of the new age movement. In his study, participants kept a diary of their experience, and Holloway's (2003) interview was crafted based on the diary entries. His interview schedule, which he generously provided for me, was quite broad, and included main topic headings followed by several possible questions (Holloway 1998). On a practical level, however, much of his interviews consisted of very few direct questions, and focused instead on the participants being able to tell their own stories. Often, Holloway (2003) simply offered a brief question or statement, but much of the interviews are guided by the participant's ideas and responses. My in-depth interview was similarly structured, in terms of the interview schedule as well as the actual interviews themselves.

Additionally, personal experience is not limited to one particular sensory experience, although landscapes are often considered in a strictly visual sense (Oakes and Price 2008). Michael Bull (2000) explored auditory readings of the landscape, utilizing interviews with users of personal stereos. Bull's interviews are highly emergent, consisting of the participants ruminating on the soundscapes they create. Often these soundscapes had a transformative quality and could change the moods of participants. Music taste and selection is highly personal, but Bull's (2000) research focus is not on the particular music listened to, or on the specific nuances of the participants' responses. Rather, Bull (2000) is able to draw conclusions from his interviews based on similarities in the ways in which the experience is described. Similarly, my interviews of religious experiences had a range of responses, but often the ways the experiences were described was similar; Bull (2000) presents a helpful example for bringing together a broad collection of in-depth interview responses.

In addition to in-depth interviews, continued participant observation was conducted at each of the study locations. While I approached each of these three locations as an "outsider," having been raised Roman Catholic, it would be difficult to understand the experiences of members without having had my own set of experiences at each site. Furthermore, it was beneficial to compare my experiences to those of "insiders" to see if affective experience is dependent upon your relationship with the religious group in question.

Throughout this research project, it was my intention to allow the interview and fieldwork process to be as emergent as possible. Each site had different peculiarities, and provoked different emotional responses in both myself as well as its members. In addition, because of my aforementioned pragmatic approach to the research process, from the outset I recognized that each site and, more narrowly, each interview would cultivate different questions. Emotion and affect are both difficult to academically examine, but through careful field observations and progressive interviews, I was able to uncover geographic and religious aspects of these important concepts.

3.2 Study Area

Tallahassee, Florida has a population of 171,922 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2009) and is home to numerous churches from a variety of faith traditions (see Figure 2). Due to its close proximity to Florida State University, and wide variety of houses of worship, both in terms of size and

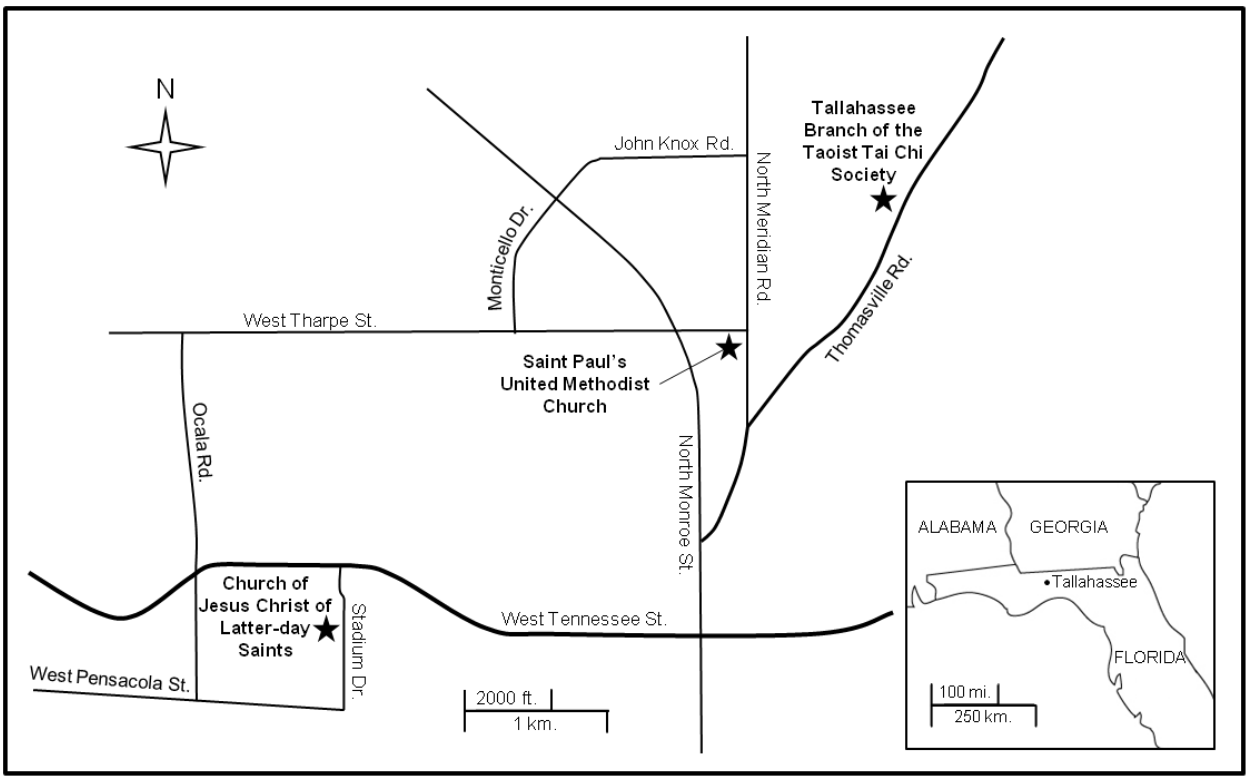

Figure 2: Study area. Map by author.

affiliation, Tallahassee was an ideal location to examine the affective qualities of sacred space. Most importantly, since this project required extensive fieldwork, conducting research in Tallahassee allowed for poignant, in-depth interviews, as well as an adaptive and pragmatic research process. Extensive participant observation would simply not have been possible at a distant location.

Within Tallahassee, I specifically examined three different houses of worship. To reiterate, the poetics of individual religious experiences are highly personal and idiosyncratic, and thus although this research incorporates a variety of houses of worship, both in terms of the structure itself as well as the religious beliefs and values shared by its members, outcomes are not meant to be representative of denominations, nor are they necessarily amenable to generalization to any broader scale. That said, care was taken to ensure that houses of worship differed significantly from one another, both in terms of the actual, physical sites themselves, as well as the members' religious ideologies. In addition, these differences presented a useful

opportunity to determine if sacred materialities engender emotional responses in participants in ways that cut across denominational lines.

The first case study location is Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, one of the largest United Methodist Churches in Tallahassee, with an average worship attendance of 472 (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011), which occupies a prominent location in Tallahassee along the banks of Lake Ella. According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, Mainline Protestant Churches, to include the United Methodist Church, are among the most moderate churches politically in the United States (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008). Saint Paul's United Methodist Church was founded in 1952 and currently has over two-thousand members. The second site, the Tallahassee Taoist Tai Chi Society, represents a diverse collection of members from a wide array of religious backgrounds; some would consider themselves to be religiously Taoist, while others attend classes solely for health benefits. Taoism as a religious practice would be categorized as "Other Faiths" in Pew's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey, and this category is among the most liberal politically within the United States.

The Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society is unique in that it is the headquarters of the society within the United States and thus is a fitting location for examination. Conducting research at this location allowed me to interview a number of leaders of the international organization, gaining great insight on the society's mission and objectives, as well as members who were involved in the founding of the society. Its location is an intimate gathering place at a former home, surrounded by natural landscaping at 2100 Thomasville Road. In this way, the Taoist Tai Chi Society could be considered one of the "unofficial" religious places discussed by Kong (2001). In fact, neighbors opposed the center being located at this site, maintaining that the Taoist Tai Chi Society was not a legitimate religious organization, but the society eventually reached an agreement through mediation (Dr. Karen Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Interview 2011). For members of the society, however, there are clear spiritual connotations to the practice of Tai Chi, and to the center as a whole, from the indoor high shrine to the outdoor garden and gazebo area. This unique site thus presents the opportunity to explore if the affective capacity of the sacred materialities found at the center is diminished because the site is not a traditional church.

Lastly, I examined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee 5th ward, located at 314 Stadium Drive in Tallahassee across the street from Florida State University. Several different wards meet at this location, but the 5th ward is unique in that it is comprised entirely of single students. I was particularly interested to see if experiences within the church differed significantly across this homogenous demographic group. Latter-day Saints, also often categorized as Mormons, are considered to be the most politically conservative in the United States (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008). Additionally, while Latter-day Saint meetinghouses resemble traditional Christian churches and are open to visitors, Latter-day Saint Temples are restricted to members of the faith possessing a recommend card from his or her local bishop. However, the Latter-day Saint Temple in Atlanta was recently opened to the public for a brief period after it was renovated, and thus a description of the Temple is also included in this study, as well as a comparison and contrast of affective experiences in meetinghouses as opposed to Temples.

3.3 Interview Criteria

The aims of this study are to theoretically explore how geographers can better understand affect and emotion, particularly within religious contexts, and also to pragmatically investigate both affect and emotion as a part of the lived, religious experience. Thus, interview findings are not meant to be representative of either the larger body of members at each location, or of that religious denomination's ideology as a whole, but are predominantly descriptive in nature. To reiterate, the poetics of individual religious experiences are highly personal, but these lived religious experiences and the geographic components have rarely been explored. In-depth interviews offer a helpful way to uncover the nuances of spiritual experiences within sacred spaces and further provide a foundation upon which to carry out a hermeneutical analysis, uncovering layers of meaning that individuals attach to spaces of worship. At each location, the interview process began by meeting with church/religious leaders to help determine the degree of intentionality that is present in the design of the house of worship, as well as to learn more about each denomination's background and history. In addition, religious leaders were often able to put me in contact with individuals who contributed to the site design, such as architects or other church administrators. This "snowball sampling" helped shed light on how decisions regarding the house of worship's design were made.

Once these initial interviews were completed, at least ten in-depth interviews were conducted with members to determine how certain design elements in the house of worship encourage various emotional responses (such as a cross, a statue, a stained-glass window, etc.) These interviews were used to determine how the experiences of members differ depending on the particular geography of the house of worship, as well as how individual experience varied even among members of the same religious community. Because each interview is in-depth and semi-structured, it would not be feasible to interview every member of every location, but interviewing a very small number of members might not be able to yield any patterns of affective and emotional experience. However, it was immediately clear even after conducting a small number of interviews that there was a discernible patterning of interview responses. Follow-up interviews were also conducted whenever necessary.

A representative from each location agreed to serve as a gatekeeper to prospective interviewees by providing either a list of members who might be willing to be interviewed and their contact information or by making announcements about the study and providing the researcher's contact information. In order to be interviewed, participants had to be between the ages of 18 and 65, following Florida State University's Human Subject Committee guidelines and be willing to participate in the study. Gatekeepers were instructed to provide a mix of both males and females, though again the exact ratio did not have to be representative of the larger congregation, as well as a mix of both new members and long-standing members. Gatekeepers were also asked to provide a range of age groups within the aforementioned guidelines if possible. Other potential interviewees were identified through personal contact by participating in activities at each of the three locations. The entire interview process is displayed on the following page in Figure 3.

The interview schedules for this project were approved by the Human Subjects Committee at Florida State University, and are included in the appendix. This interview structure builds on Seidman's (2006) approach to in-depth phenomenological interviewing. However, rather than have three, separate interviews, as in Seidman's examples, these interviews occurred during a single session, but followed the same progression of topics that Seidman suggested. The interview schedules in the appendicies are also reminiscent of the interview schedule Holloway (1998) used for his investigation of members of new age communities. By conducting a series of in-depth interviews of this nature, geographers can not only investigate the

specific emotional responses of participants, but also the spatial context where these responses occurred, and it is this very context that can provide the foundation for affective encounters. Additionally, while these interview schedules were helpful in ensuring that all main topic areas

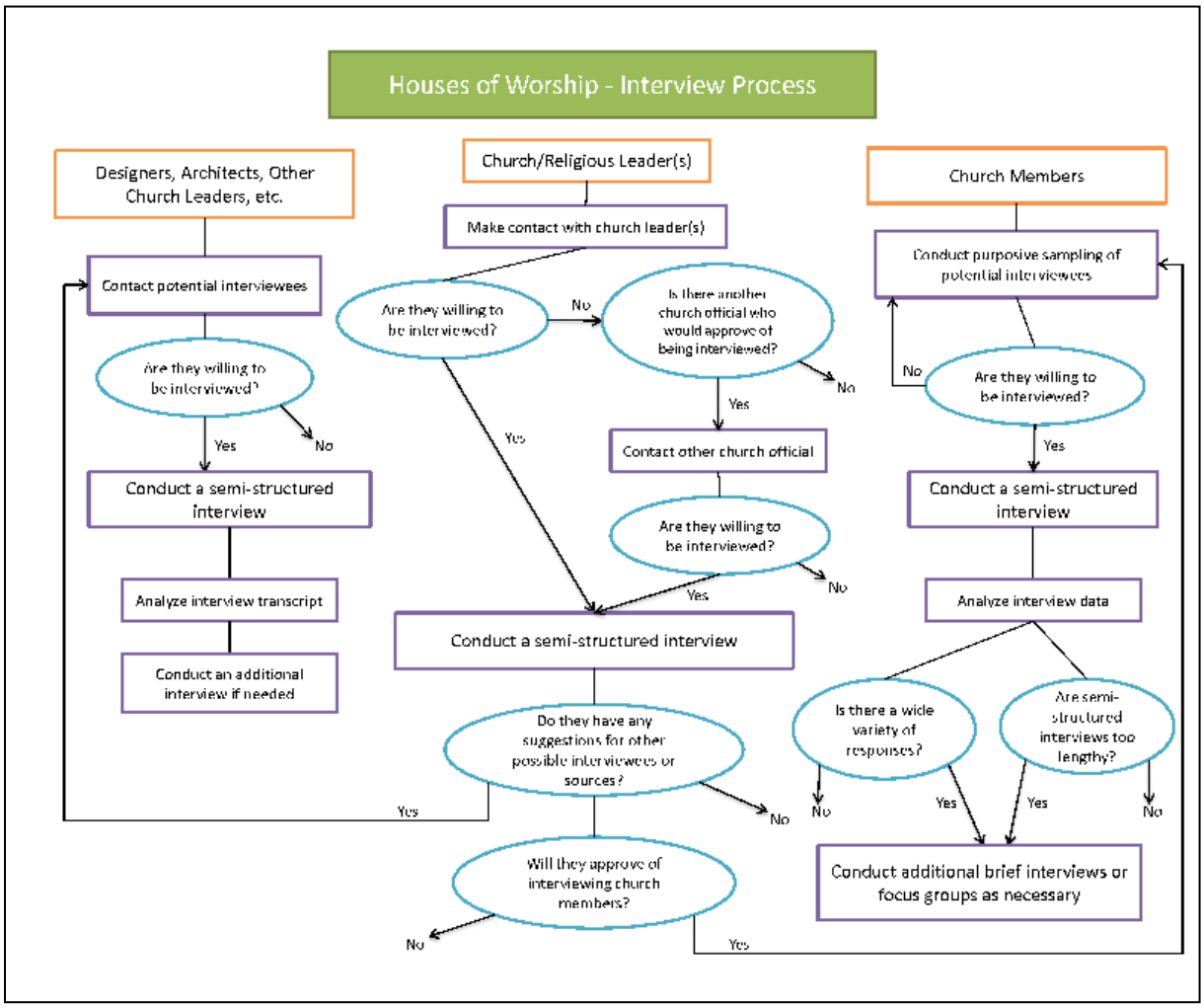

Figure 3: Interview process. Diagram created by author.

were discussed, the actual interview questions largely emerged from the participants' responses, as is often the case in in-depth interviewing (other examples, Holloway 2003; Bull 2000). Several pilot interviews were completed prior to the interviews with members. The in-depth interview had four key areas: *aims of the interview*, to include a discussion of the research topic; *background and history*, including questions that examined how long each participant had been a member of the particular house of worship and why he or she decided to join; *current involvement*, such as service activities with the church; and lastly, *emotional experiences*, which

began by having the participants imagine they were walking into the house of worship, and then describing the sights and feelings they experience. To reiterate, the interview schedule served only as a guide, and the actual questions were emergent based on the participant's responses.

Additionally, while each case study's interview guide focused on the same primary themes, each location had its own particularities, and thus slightly different questions were asked at each site. For instance, at the Taoist Tai Chi center, the practice of tai chi often takes places outdoors, and thus the outdoor area essentially becomes an extension of the primary "space of worship." Thus, it seemed appropriate for members to consider the entire property, including the outdoor area, when considering their favorite areas of the center. At Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, on the other hand, with the exception of a children's playground and an outdoor prayer area that is generally only utilized at Easter, the vast majority of activities take place indoors, so here it was more appropriate to focus interview questions on the inside areas of the church.

3.4 Interpreting and Evaluating Interview Responses

Religious experience is highly personal. And although there might be a wide range of distinct responses to interview questions as was the case in Bull's (2000) study, the ways respondents discuss these experiences are often similar, as is evident from the case study findings. Furthermore, instead of discussing a causal relationship between an object in space and an emotional response, it would be much more helpful to uncover the *patterning* of emotional experiences on spiritual spaces. Hermeneutics, which is the study of interpretation, is useful for this objective, since individuals will likely interpret and experience houses of worship in different ways. Traditional hermeneutics, which is believed to have been founded by theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher, began as a decidedly religious pursuit as a way to help translate the meanings of the Bible from the ancient world to the lives of modern Christians (Jones 2000). Wilhelm Dilthey built upon Schleiermacher's foundation, and noted that the human experience of making sense of the world around us leads to the interconnectedness of all knowledge, and furthers the idea that while we experience the world around us decidedly differently, we can still understand one another (Jones 2000). In this way, knowledge for Dilthey was not limited to scientific advances, but rather could emerge from human thoughts and feelings (Jones 2000).

Similarly, this study posits that knowledge of religious spaces can arise out of the thoughts and feelings we experience in those places, and can further shed light on the importance of geography in crafting our emotional world. Additionally, hermeneutics leaves room for multiplicitous understandings of space, an important notion for geographers (see Massey 2005). Traditional studies of art and architecture approach knowledge and interpretation from the standpoint that there is some real, authoritative meaning behind an object that can be deduced with careful study. Hermeneutics breaks free from this Cartesian model of subject/object interaction, however, and provides a far more flexible approach by searching for commonalities between individual interpretations. While this approach might have been originally focused on examining problematic texts, it is clear that it can undoubtedly help uncover the varied and often entrenched meanings we attach to spaces.

Following the hermeneutical approach, interview transcripts were carefully coded and analyzed to determine if there were any consistent patterns of affective experiences, either architecturally-inspired or otherwise. While each individual noticed and was affected by different aspects of the worship space, there was a general patterning of interview responses and participants often described these experiences in the same way. Furthermore, interviews with leaders of each of the case study locations helped to uncover the degree of intentionality, if any, to which affective experiences are engendered. Interview coding was completed using NVivo 9 qualitative analysis software. NVivo allows for the integration of audio, visual, and textual data and thus proved useful for this study. This project's focus is on the emotive and affectual aspects of religious experience, with an attention to the ways in which space helps shape these events. Even after conducting a small number of interviews, there were several key themes that began to emerge, particularly feelings of peace, the transformative nature of sacred space, and a sense of being "home," and these categories, and others such as building descriptors and emotions, were hand-coded using NVivo. This software package allows users to create "nodes" or themes and highlight terms or quotes that pertain to that theme. Users can then click on "nodes" and explore all of the references that have been highlighted, an invaluable tool for combing through and organizing hundreds of pages of in-depth interview transcripts.

According to Turner (2000), human emotions fall within four primary categories: happiness, fear, anger, and sadness. Though we experience a wide range of emotions throughout our lifetimes, each of these emotions is simply a variation in magnitude of the primary emotions.

Annoyed, for example, is a low intensity feeling of anger, while bliss would be considered a high intensity experience of happiness (Turner 2000). This conception of emotions was useful in categorizing interview responses. For instance, one person might experience feelings of contentment, another feels peaceful, and yet another feels more cheerful, but all of these responses could be coded as feelings of "happiness." When coding the spaces that people either notice or are seemingly affected by, again similar responses were grouped together. Preliminary coding of members' experiences at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church revealed that many participants were struck by the brightness of the sanctuary, and while it was described in a number of different ways, such as "bright," "light," "sunny," all of these responses reflected a similar theme and were thus coded as "bright." Lastly, codes were created for various expressions of spirituality and how the space of the house of worship connected with, reinforced, or reflected members' spiritual beliefs. Additional codes were also created that helped group responses pertaining to church history, the general geography and layout of the building, involvement in the religious organization, and so on. A full interview coding guide is included in the appendix.

As interviews were coded and patterns emerged, subcategories were created in order to analyze responses. Automated coding, such as word searches and word frequency queries, was used to validate the initial results from hand-coding. NVivo, as mentioned, provides a way to dynamically code and group responses, and again was useful in this regard. Once interview data was coded in NVivo, patterns of responses were analyzed, both within particular congregations, and as a whole. Additionally, cluster analysis was completed using NVivo to determine if responses are more closely related to members of the same religious community, or if members of different houses of worship actually had similar patterns of responses. Lastly, NVivo includes visualization capabilities, such as identifying words that are frequently used by interviewees and was used to help disseminate interview responses. This analysis often helps to uncover more subtle details of responses that manual coding might miss. Word frequency diagrams of the terms most commonly used to describe the case study locations are included in each of the case study chapters. However, while these diagrams are a useful visualization tool, they are meant to be illustrative and are not intended, in this case, to be used as a way to analytically draw conclusions from the data. These types of visualizations do provide a helpful way to convey overall themes and since they're automated, they also provide a way to corroborate the

conclusions reached by coding. I could code all of the interview responses and perhaps miss a deeper, more subtle theme that might only have been apparent by conducting an automated word frequency analysis, for example.

Since in-depth interviewing is a decidedly qualitative pursuit, it is perhaps more difficult to evaluate its scientific merit. However, Baxter and Eyles (1997) reviewed numerous papers by geographers engaging in in-depth interviews to try to uncover how qualitative research can be properly evaluated in an effort to enhance scientific "rigor" and provide for significant insights. The authors first examined 31 empirical research papers within social geography to uncover how researchers established "rigor" in their studies, from using multiple methods to conducting lengthy fieldwork (Baxter and Eyles 1997). The authors also examined Lincoln and Guba's (1985) conceptualization of the criteria for evaluating qualitative research, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Baxter and Eyles 1997). While these suggestions, as the authors state, are simply guidelines and not rules, I agree that they provide a useful starting point for creating insightful and scientifically valid research, and I took them into consideration as I crafted my interview schedule and conducted my fieldwork. Additionally, using qualitative analysis software like NVivo allows researchers to synthesize both primary data and analysis, providing a clear link between findings and evidence. When I created the automated frequency diagrams using Nvivo, for instance, I reached the same conclusions developed from my own coding. This type of software allows you to add rigor to your analysis and to justify your findings with evidence. For example, you could click on a word in the frequency diagram and it would display the list of quotes and sources that referred to that particular term. In this way, I these types of software packages are quite useful for any sort of interview analysis, whether those interview samples are purposive or representative, provided the researcher fully understands the limitations of his or her data and the limitations of the software package.

3.5 Participant Observation

As a confirmed but non-practicing Catholic, I approached Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the Taoist Tai Chi Society of Tallahassee as a curious outsider, eager to experience my own feelings and emotions at these religious spaces. At each location, I attended a service or session from the perspective of an outsider, taking

careful notes on the first things I noticed and emotions I experienced in these "new" spaces. After this initial engagement, however, it was important to try and become more a part of the religious community, not only to gain the trust and respect of participants, but also so I would better understand interview responses. At the Tai Chi Society, I became a member and took two beginning Tai Chi classes. Frequently, interviewees would refer to particular Tai Chi moves, or ask if I'd taken any classes, and it was beneficial to be able to relate to participants on more of an "insider" level. At Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, I attended a range of services to better understand the differences between the services offered, as well as classes during the week. After the conclusion of the study, I also became a member. Lastly, attending the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is more than simply going to a one-hour Sunday service – it includes meetings for women and men, Relief Society or Priesthood, respectively; Sunday school, which was divided into an introductory class and a more advanced class; and lastly service in the main sanctuary. I attended all three sessions, again to better understand the experiences of members. I also attended a live broadcast of the general conference, which features talks from various guest speakers and leaders in the church. The field notes from the various participant observations were compared with the experiences of members to determine the differences, if any, between the experiences of "insiders" and the experience of an "outsider." Furthermore, as a geographer with training in religious studies, it was interesting to note any symbols or rituals that members did not mention, but which hold particular meaning or reflect the core beliefs of those communities.

Additionally, to assist in the dissemination of interview findings, as well as my own field observations of each site, pictures of the interior and exterior of each location were taken. An interactive, panoramic model was also created of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church and the Taoist Tai Chi Society. Unfortunately, photographs are prohibited in the chapel of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but I was able to take numerous pictures of the exterior and interior of the meetinghouse. These models and photographs are essential in presenting research conclusions to those who have never visited the case study location and further allow researchers and other interested individuals a unique way to experience each site for themselves.

3.6 Reflexivity

Critical reflexivity, throughout the research design and implementation process, is essential regardless of the methodological approach a geographer chooses. Baxter and Eyles (1997) concluded that there is a continued call for critical reflexivity, thinking critically and reflecting on our own assumptions, in qualitative research, as well as a heightened awareness as to how knowledge is produced. Creswell (2007), in describing the various facets of qualitative research, clearly states his emphasis on reflexivity, and proceeds to describe his theoretical approach to geography, and how that influenced his work. Furthermore, while quantitative geography is often painted as objective and value-neutral, it too is subject to research bias. As Winchester (2003) notes:

> It is arguable that researchers who define their own position in relation to their research could be more objective than their colleagues who hide behind the supposed objectivity of quantitative methods without revealing the many subjective influences which shape both the research question and the explanations that they find to be true. (p.13)

Of course, critical reflexivity, like all other introspective pursuits, is often difficult. When conducting research on religious groups, for example, it is no simple task to delve into our personal theology and often deeply-entrenched ideas about other religious beliefs to uncover our own preconceived ideas. However, by situating our own research, whether qualitative or quantitative in nature, within our own philosophy and experience, we can eliminate, or at least make apparent, personal subjectivity and bias.

Geographers of religion face the unique task of describing a set of religious landscapes, beliefs, and practices within which they might be intimately tied, or distantly removed. The question must be addressed, then – can a geographer who is part of a religious group, an "insider," conduct his or her research with more clarity than an "outsider," or will his or her research be clouded with subjectivity? Perhaps the dichotomy of insider/outsider should be re-imagined as a continuum: "Outsiders consider themselves to be objective relative to insiders, but insiders do not consider themselves to be *merely* [emphasis added] subjective" (Ferber 2006, p.176). Neither the quantitative nor the qualitative researcher lies at either extreme of the spectrum. Although an "insider" might appear to have an inherent subjectivity, the very concept of "outsider" is simply an "attempt to create an artificial detachment in order to construct an illusive objectivity and in turn generate authority" (Ferber 2006, p.176).

Overall, critical reflexivity has been critical to this study, and was incorporated throughout the research collection and dissemination. Because I was examining religious groups which I am not a member of, I had to ensure that my own religious outlook did not influence how I viewed or portrayed others' religious practices. So often, people treat other religious practices as foreign or strange, particularly with regard to historical customs. However, it is imperative to set these biases and presuppositions aside. Researchers should continually ask themselves not simply am I conducting research appropriately and ethically, but *why* am I asking the questions I'm asking? What assumptions have I brought to the table in developing my research? For geography of religion research in particular, it will be helpful, both for the researcher themselves and for the reader, if the researcher states these motivations and assumptions at the outset of his or her report, and explains why qualitative methods were chosen over quantitative methods, or vice versa. As a researcher who has had extensive training in both religious studies and geography, I am well-equipped to conduct a study of this nature and was sensitive to the religious views and ideologies of my study participants.

For my project, then, while I approached these spaces as a religious "outsider," simply meaning that I was officially a member at the outset of this project of any of these congregations, I attempted to make the interview and field observation process as fluid and emergent as possible, so that participants had the opportunity to convey their own experiences. Moreover, it is clear from completing this project that the notion of insider/outsider is highly dynamic. I certainly approached each of these three locations on the "outsider" end of the spectrum, having never been to a Methodist Church, a Latter-day Saint Church, or knowing much about Tai Chi much less entering a Taoist Tai Chi center. However, after spending time attending services, meeting members, and speaking with representatives, it would be fallacious to say that I didn't edge closer to being "insider," and while my knowledge is certainly different than a member who was raised in the Methodist church, for instance, it has certainly been enriched by this experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDY 1: SAINT PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Saint Paul's United Methodist Church is located in central Tallahassee, on the shore of Lake Ella, a city park and stormwater retention facility ("Lake Ella Stormwater Facility" 2010). The church was founded in 1952 as a mission congregation of Trinity United Methodist Church (Yates 1999). At the time, this area had very little development and was considered to be on the outskirts of town (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). The original sanctuary was Sanders Hall (see Figure 4), named after Fred Sanders, the first pastor, but Saint Paul's grew rapidly and it was soon clear that Sanders Hall, and the few attached classrooms, were far too small for the burgeoning congregation (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). In 1964, the current sanctuary was completed (see Figures 5 and 6 on the following page) (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Figure 4: Sanders Hall, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

Figure 5: Exterior of main sanctuary, northwest view, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

Figure 6: Exterior of main sanctuary, southwest view, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

The rapid growth of Saint Paul's, even during its early years, can be attributed to the rapid spread of Methodism in the south in the 1940s and 1950s (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). Considering the size of Tallahassee, the city has a number of large Methodist congregations in addition to Saint Paul's, including Trinity United Methodist Church downtown, Killearn United Methodist Church in northern Tallahassee, and Deer Lake United Methodist Church located on the northern outskirts of Tallahassee near the Florida-Georgia border (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). In 2000, there were more United Methodist congregations in Tallahassee than any other denomination except Baptist (Association of Religion Data Archives 2000). Saint Paul's itself has a unique history within the larger Methodist movement. Marjorie Matthews served as the pastor of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church before being elected as the first female bishop of the United Methodist Church, and many historians believe she was actually the first female bishop in any Christian denomination

(Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). Reverend Clarke Campbell-Evans is currently Senior Pastor at Saint Paul's and has been serving in this capacity for the past seven years.

Considering Saint Paul's United Methodist Church is located on the banks of Tallahassee's Lake Ella, and the significance of this geographical situation should not be underestimated. Lake Ella receives a significant number of visitors owing to its well-maintained landscape and central location, and according to Reverend Clarke, contributes significantly to the number of visitors who come to Saint Paul's:

> "We just have an incredible exposure to a large number of people who are not in vehicles, but they're walking or they're running around the lake. Lake Ella is used heavily in the fall and the spring, and of all the public spaces in Tallahassee, it may get the heaviest use… And as a result of it, the number of people that tell me in the new member class, 'So how did you wander into worship here? How did you find us?' And they'd say, 'I was walking around Lake Ella'" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

When Reverend Clarke first arrived at Saint Paul's, the church did not have a sign by the lake, but the current staff has recognized the importance of the church's visibility to visitors of Lake Ella. Today, when signs are posted to advertise an event or service, they are posted on the Lake Ella side of the church first (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). As Reverend Clarke explained:

> "The reality is we will get more eyes reading the sign on Lake Ella than we will any other place. Just because people driving, frankly, are driving too fast to really read a sign" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Architecturally, the design of the current sanctuary bears evidence of the Grecian influence that was common in the United States in the early 1800s (Howe 2003). The four, ionic capitaled columns along the front entryway in particular are reminiscent of the classical Greek tetrastyle temple (Howe 2003). This Grecian architectural style is in stark contrast to the simplistic, folk-style Christian churches that had been built previously in early colonial America (Howe 2003). Saint Paul's, with its column-lined front entryway and sanctuary and running-bond brick exterior, presents a unique mixture of the Greek Revival and Colonial Revival styles. Today, the church has over 2,000 members and offers three services, two more traditional and

one contemporary, with an average service attendance of 472 (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). In addition to Sunday worship services, Saint Paul's has a robust Sunday school program with a variety of age-specific and inter-generational small groups, as well as programs for small children and youth (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). Many classes are offered throughout the week, including yoga, cooking lessons, prayer groups, and even a program specifically designed for mothers of preschoolers. The church has also continued to expand and is working on completing a lakefront "Generations Park," with age-appropriate playgrounds and activities for both children and adults (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

4.1 The Space of Worship

Figure 7: Interior sanctuary, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

Saint Paul's United Methodist Church bears evidence of the classical Greek style and in many ways, to use a quote from a participant, Saint Paul's is a "classic church up on a hill" (NH[2] United Methodist Church Interview). Most members noted that the white columns lining the interior of the sanctuary stood out as particularly impressive (see Figure 7). For some, like ZM, a member of Saint Paul's, the columns represented classical church, and this notion of classical architecture had clear theological connections, connecting with da Vinci's famous drawing:

> "The Vitruvian Man who stands there and the proportions of the human body in relationship to the proportions of the columns and the tablature… everything is about the human body that God created, and then our buildings should reflect that. I feel like Saint Paul's architecture does that… So that's why the classical architecture to me is appropriate architecture for houses of worship" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

For others, however, the columns inspired a different sentiment:

> "I notice that there's [sic] a lot of different kinds of columns, which don't really go together technically but they're there, and I think I often think that the sanctuary reminds me of a Greek or Roman temple… I sometimes think about how that [Greek or Roman] god has been torn down and the cross has been put in its place… And I wonder, would this happen the other way around?" (SF United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

It's indeed interesting that the columns, although distinctly Grecian in influence, could be effectively utilized in a Christian house of worship. As Howe (2003) notes, "Greek temples were originally constructed as houses or shrines for the gods, not for the worshipers. The temple interiors contained statues and offerings to the gods, while the public worshiped out of doors. The classical style was [thus] associated with prestige and power from the very beginning…" (Howe, 2003, p.31). This would seem to contradict the architectural preference of Protestant Reformers, who emphasized simplicity and rejected the grandeur of cathedral architecture and décor (Kieckhefer 2004). But while the columns could easily be accented with gold or perhaps constructed from marble – as is the case in the cathedral I attended throughout my childhood and early-adulthood – Saint Paul's simply painted white columns seem to walk the line between

[2] Initials of participants have been changed to protect confidentiality. Identifying information has also been removed.

simplistic and grand, pointing to the vastness of the space of worship (and thus the vastness of the heavens, perhaps) while not presenting an obvious distraction from the worship experience.

Overall, the color scheme more generally in Saint Paul's sanctuary, with its light blue walls, white ceiling, and blue carpets and pew cushions, seemed to have a particular capacity to inspire feelings of peace and comfort in participants:

> "I love the softness of the blue, and the clean, crisp white, and that it's very, even though there are different colors, it has a very monochromatic feel to it. It just looks cloud-like, sky-like, with the blue and the white" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

PE further expressed that these colors and the sense of being surrounded by sky led to feelings of happiness, and that it was reminiscent of a bright, sunny day. Another member of the church noted:

> "It was calm. The paint on the wall, I painted my bedroom the same color" (IW United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Reverend Clarke similarly noted the sky-like quality of the sanctuary's design and decoration, and in addition conjectured that the vast, open ceiling might elicit thoughts of the story of Jesus' death and resurrection:

> "…This church in its design really has a sense of the empty tomb, that the bright lightness of the sanctuary, with the lights on the chancel area, reflecting off of the tile, it used to be carpet, you get this sense of a bright, open space… There's the sense of the slight dome and the sense that it's representing the sky. When I first got here, I was quite struck by how beautiful this place is, especially how beautiful it is when it's not as bright outside" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

For another member, the simplicity of Saint Paul's cross, which is unadorned and back-lit, brought about feelings of peace:

> "You can have something very simple and the austerity of it can bring forth peace…" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Yet another member's emotions were shaped by the windows in the church, which are clear, leaded glass, as opposed to the stained glass found in many other houses of worship. PE noted that the church is:

"beautiful and it's serene and it's peaceful and welcoming all at the same time. It, to me, is the way the light filters into that church" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Figure 8: Kneeling pads, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

Aside from the color scheme, several other decorative elements stood out to interviewees. PE, for instance, mentioned the cushions around the altar area (see Figure 8), which would not be immediately noticeable to first-time visitors to the church:

"I love the kneeling pads that the women in the church did. I think that's beautiful. I think that just adds to the tradition. I love the fact that it was not just purchased, that people in our church participated in that" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

The symbolism of the vine on the kneeling pads is reminiscent of John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (New International Version). Further, the combination of wheat and grapes could symbolize communion, which is certainly fitting since many attendees kneel and pray in this area after receiving communion during services. What stood out to PE, though, was the significance that these decorations were handmade – not surprising given PE's later comments that community was of critical importance to the church experience.

Figure 9: American flag in Saint Paul's United Methodist Church sanctuary, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

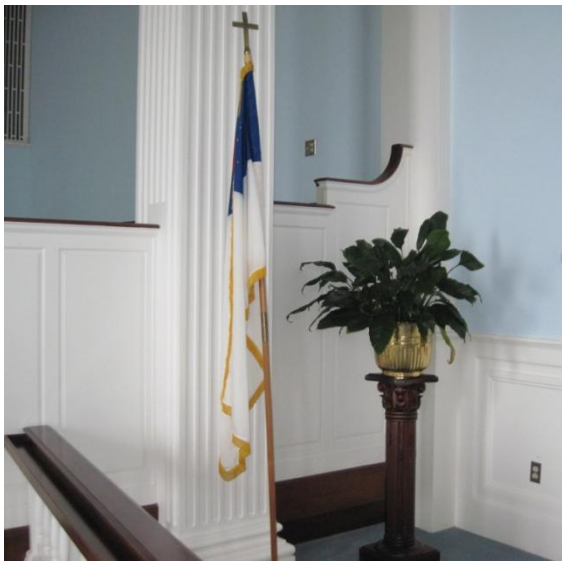

Figure 10: Christian flag in Saint Paul's United Methodist Church sanctuary, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

As an outsider to this particular religious community, one of the first things I noticed in the sanctuary, aside from the impressive architectural design as a whole, were the American and Christian flags to either side of the altar (see Figures 9 and 10). NH mentioned the Christian flag during our interview as well when describing the decorative elements of the sanctuary. The "Christian flag," found in many mainline Protestant churches, was designed in 1897 by Charles C. Overton and displays the distinctly patriotic colors of red, white, and blue, representing the blood of Christ, purity, and truth, respectively (McTavish 2005). The addition of the American flag to houses of worship first occurred in 1917 after the entry of the United States into World War I (Cairns 1996). At the time, there was a sentiment among American churchgoers that while Germany was undoubtedly responsible for the war and the subsequent casualties, the secular values and general immorality of Europeans more broadly contributed to the instigation of war (Cairns 1996). "A strong America, it was believed, could help extend democracy when peace came" (Cairns 1996, p.446) and undoubtedly could help spread American spiritual values, as well.

It was clear from my interviews that the staff at Saint Paul's are keenly aware of the affective capacity of the space of worship, as illustrated by the installation of the projector system and screens which occurred fairly recently. Saint Paul's added a contemporary worship

service featuring a band and contemporary Christian songs, as is common in many churches today, but this required some changes to the sanctuary.

> "I think that beauty comes in little things. Big things are important too, but you can very quickly take away from its beauty by just stubbing your toe big time. It really is the small things that I think you pay attention to. And one of the big concerns that went on in the life of the church was when we put in the screens and the projectors… Some people feared that it would take away from the beauty of the sanctuary" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

One simple challenge was grappling with the brightness of the sanctuary, which of course could make it difficult to read text on a screen depending on its placement. The more pressing challenge, however, was installing the screens and projectors (see Figure 11) in a way that did not detract from the simplicity of the sanctuary design:

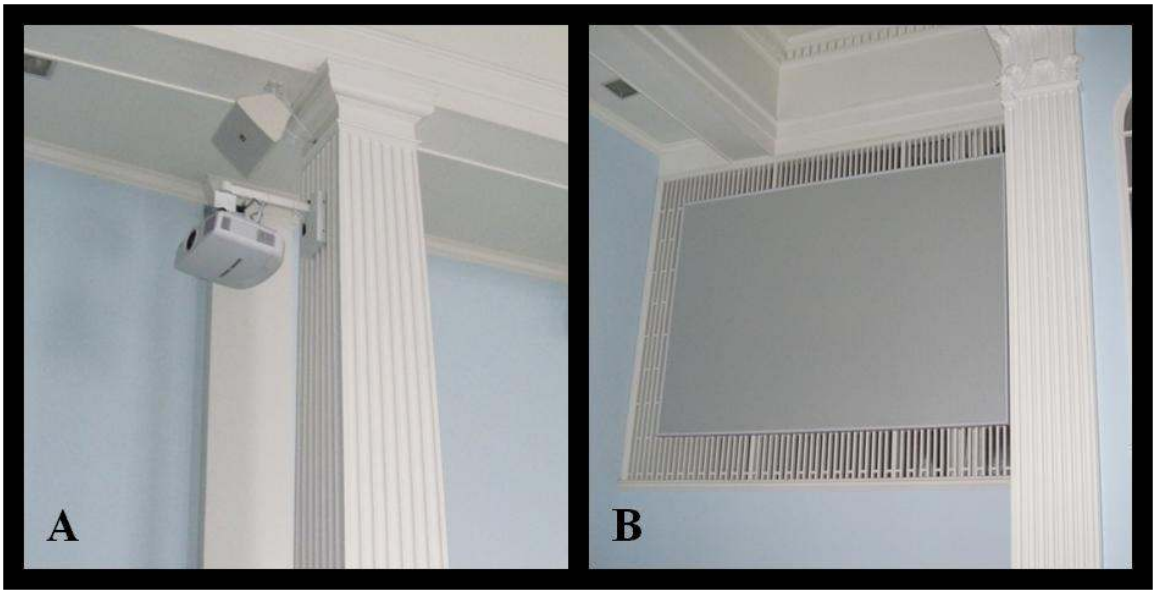

Figure 11: Projector (11A) and screen (11B) at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

> "We tried to do it so that the additions to help make that happen were as unobtrusive as possible… And so we intentionally hid them on the back side of the column, and we worked very hard at the positioning and size and dimensions of the screen" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

PE appreciated this careful attention:

> "I think the church has done a very good job of updating the technology but keeping the overall aesthetics of the church very traditional" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

As shown in Figure 11, both the design and placement of the projectors and screens, which are situated on either side of the altar area, blend well with the overall look of the sanctuary, and it's actually difficult to notice the projectors when sitting in the pews. The screens were actually placed in front of the organ pipes and were thus crafted from sound-permeable material (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

It is clear, from my own experiences as a researcher and from the interview responses, that the design of Saint Paul's sanctuary inspires distinctive affective encounters in participants. Some members actually noted feelings of unease and distraction in churches that were located in strip-malls, or locations that were ornately decorated. However, if members of an intricately ornamented Gothic cathedral were interviewed, they might feel quite the opposite, and have their worship experience enhanced by the complexity of their church's design. Furthermore, these feelings were not surprising given the theological foundation behind Protestant church designs. Rather than focus on crafting grand spaces to inspire feelings of awe in congregants, medieval Protestant Reformers took a pragmatic approach that emphasized preaching (Kieckhefer, 2004). A high pulpit became the focus of the altar and pews were included, again reflecting an emphasis on the important of preaching (Kieckhefer, 2004). Moreover, many Reformers viewed the elaborate decorations of Catholic churches as vain (Kieckhefer, 2004), and thus the simplicity of Saint Paul's sanctuary can be seen as a reflection of centuries-old Protestant theological values.

4.2 Affective Encounters in Saint Paul's Sanctuary

While many spaces at Saint Paul's seemed to connect with participants on a personal level, spiritually, the sanctuary consistently held the greatest meaning. Interview participant SF noted that in the sanctuary:

> "the sun comes into [the windows] from the southern side and shines across… And when it's cloudy and sunny and it comes and goes, that's sort of a talking with God kind of feeling sometimes… You just have this impression that God's looking in" (SF United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Indeed, the leaded glass windows in the church consistently inspired strong feelings in participants. One participant said, quite succinctly:

> "The leaded glass windows are absolutely gorgeous" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Reverend Clarke was also struck by the simplistic beauty of the window design:

> "I have to admit that when I first saw it, I thought, 'Wow, these windows are really beautiful.' And they have kind of grown on me… I liked them fine but they have grown on me over time. I've become [even] more fond of them as the years have gone by" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

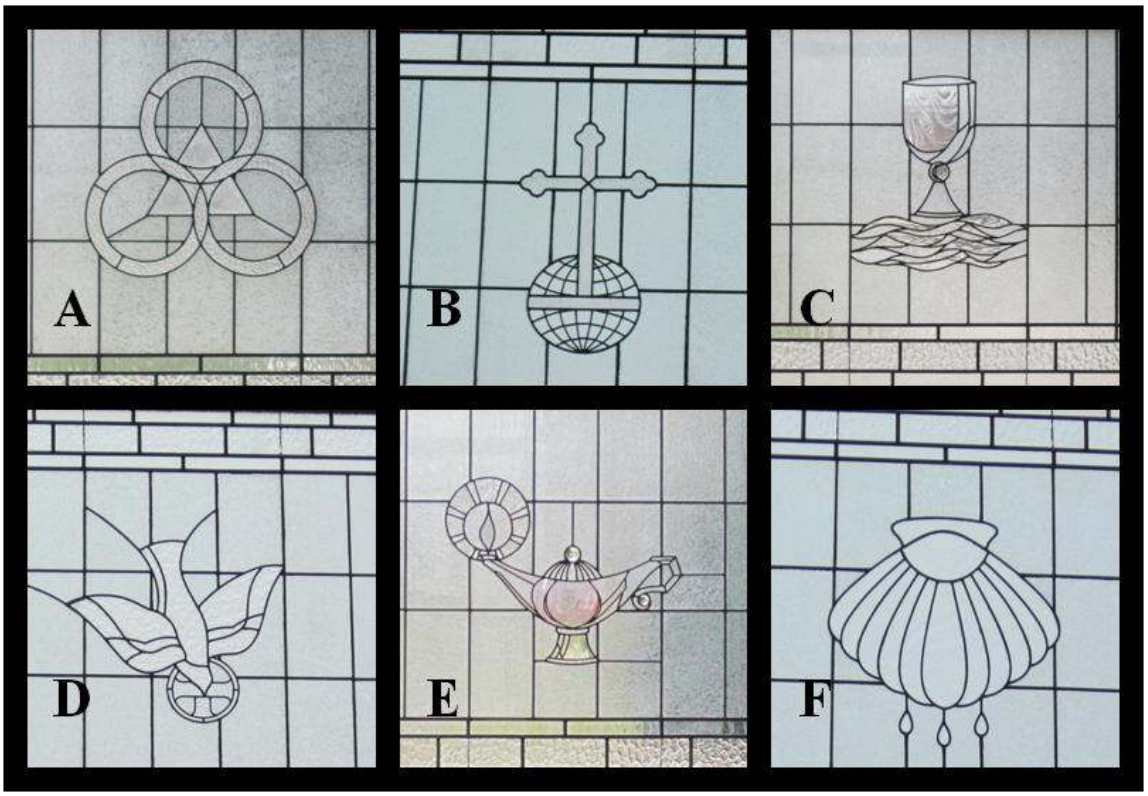

Figure 12: Selected leaded-glass windows at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

The windows are quite an interesting contrast to the stained-glass windows that are more commonly used in church sanctuaries, but their affective capacity and connection to theology is no less apparent. As Reverend Clarke notes:

> "All of the symbols here have theological and biblical significance, and sometimes they relate to direct Biblical stories or Biblical characters. Sometimes they relate to a theological concept" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

While the clear glass windows at Saint Paul's are certainly impressive even to an outsider such as myself, the poignancy of the symbols and images used becomes even more striking when one learns of what they represent. Several of the windows are highlighted in Figure 12. Some symbols are fairly recognizable, such as the chalice (Figure 12C) which is understood as a symbol of communion; the meaning behind others is less familiar. The burning lamp (Figure 12E), for instance, "is a sign of both knowledge and wisdom" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). The triangle with three interlocking rings (Figure 12A) represents the trinity, the cross and globe (Figure 12B) represent "Christ for the world," and in Figure 12D, "the descending dove is the Holy Spirit" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011). Lastly, the shell (Figure 12F) symbolizes baptism and some churches use shells in their baptismal ceremonies, although Saint Paul's does not (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

The theological significance of the window designs connects with the larger cultural geographic concept of the symbolic landscape. Even our landscape of the "everyday" is dotted with symbols, from billboards to buildings, and the notion of "reading" the landscape, in the same way one might read a text, is a common theme in cultural geography literature. Landscapes, like texts, have an "inherent instability of meaning, fragmentation or absence of integrity, lack of authorial control, polyvocality and irresolvable social contradictions" (Barnes and Duncan 1992, p.7). Certainly "reading" the landscape and understanding its deeper, ideological significance is a worthwhile pursuit, but one has to consider who is *doing* the reading. Historically, cultural geographers tended to limit their methodology to historical-materialist approaches, drawing mainly from fieldwork and archival research (Peet 1998). For Duncan (1990), though, this approach eliminates the possibility for the critical reflexivity that is found in many literary studies (Peet 1998). "The meaning of landscape was addressed only from the interpreter's point of view, with interpretive authority assumed to flow from an unmediated relation between field-work, archival research, and landscape" (Peet 1998, p.233). However, all research is imbued with inherent subjectivity and bias, however unintentional, and furthermore,

Duncan (1990) asserts that any attempt to describe the landscape is limited by our language itself (Peet 1998).

Moreover, the researcher-driven reading of the cultural landscape would likely miss the affective significance of various cultural materialities. For instance, Kilde (2006) "argue[s] that we must learn to read the buildings themselves; that is, we must approach them as texts that embody, document, and bear witness to the religious experiences of their builders and users" (p.229) and provides an empirical study approaching megachurches from this perspective. However, while Kilde certainly presents a thorough exploration of American megachurches, and how the various symbols and structures serve to promote a religious ideology, there are no interviews with worshippers and little attention to the multiplicity of meaning that is so often found in these spaces. If this is purported to be a pragmatic approach to the understanding of sacred spaces, from an architectural standpoint or otherwise, the component of individual religious experience is grossly overlooked. When considering the cross, Kilde (2006) notes: "The crucifix speaks directly to the belief in Christ's persecution, execution, and resurrection, placing a visual reminder of the creeds of atonement and the route to salvation through Christ as the focal point of the church" (p.232). While this is certainly correct in a theological sense, there is no exploration of how that particular cross engenders various affects in religious participants. We must go beyond linking symbols with theology and truly explore the lived religious experience. How does a crucifix, ornately decorated and depicting Jesus' final moments, differ from a simple cross? What message do participants gain by looking at it, do they even notice it in the first place, and what emotions does it engender?

At Saint Paul's, the cross, as previously mentioned, bears little decoration (see Figure 13) and is back-lit during services. Interviewees mentioned that they appreciated the simplicity of this design and it certainly has a different affective capacity than the often graphic crucifixes used in many Catholic churches. As JP explained, describing the crucifixes found in many European churches:

> "Well, see, your instinct is 'Ooo, look at that. It's so intricate and carved and beautiful and exotic and everything.' But then I got to thinking, 'I'm sitting here and that's what I'm thinking about.' And that's not what I'm supposed to be thinking about when I'm here. So I think that's really kind of a distraction… I'm thinking about whether I like it or I don't like it or how carved it is, or is that realistic or what. And so I have all these

questions and I don't think it's as conducive to worship… You can have something very, very simple and the austerity of it can bring forth peace…" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Figure 13: Cross at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

Whether members connected with the cross or the designs of the windows on a theological level, each seemed to have a marked capacity to affect the worship experience. The windows in particular were one of the members' favorite features of the sanctuary:

> "The natural light of the windows just adds so much to the experience" (CJ United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

JP had a similar sentiment:

> "I love the design. They let light in but they don't distract you. They're very calming" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

The brightness of the sanctuary more broadly, certainly assisted by the design of the windows, had a particularly strong affective capacity for participants, and contrasted with other churches,

and even other spaces within Saint Paul's, that were noticeably darker. SF, for instance, noticed a distinctly different feeling in Saint Paul's sanctuary than in the smaller, considerably darker chapel:

> SF: "I like the light coming in. I don't like the little chapel because it's so much like a down in a hole kind of a place. I don't know how you'd get around that, though. I guess you could think of it as being down in the, what is it, the Roman place where the Christians hid –"
>
> *Caitie Finlayson [CF]: "The catacombs?"*
>
> SF: "The catacombs. Sort of a catacomb-y feeling to it" (SF United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Other churches of various denominations use a darker wood scheme with stained glass, which lets in noticeably less light. JL noted that these types of churches elicit feelings of "doom and gloom" (JL United Methodist Church Interview 2011). The affective experience facilitated by the design of houses of worship with a distinctly different architectural style didn't necessarily have to be negative, however, as NH explained:

> "Being in a bright place just creates a different mood for me than being in something with the earth tones or something like that" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Certainly, many European Cathedrals feature dark wood and are more dimly lit, and from experience, could inspire feelings of reverence and solemnity.

The fact that the sanctuary was bright was consistently mentioned by interviewees, as evidenced by the word frequency diagram shown in Figure 14 on the following page, which displays the keywords most frequently used in participants' descriptions of building at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church. For parishioners of Saint Paul's, the brightness of the sanctuary significantly contributed to their mood and the overall experience of being in the space:

> "I like the light shining through. And when it's cloudy and sunny and it comes and goes, that's sort of a talking with God kind of feeling sometimes" (SF United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

ZM noted simply:

> "It's just bright and airy" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

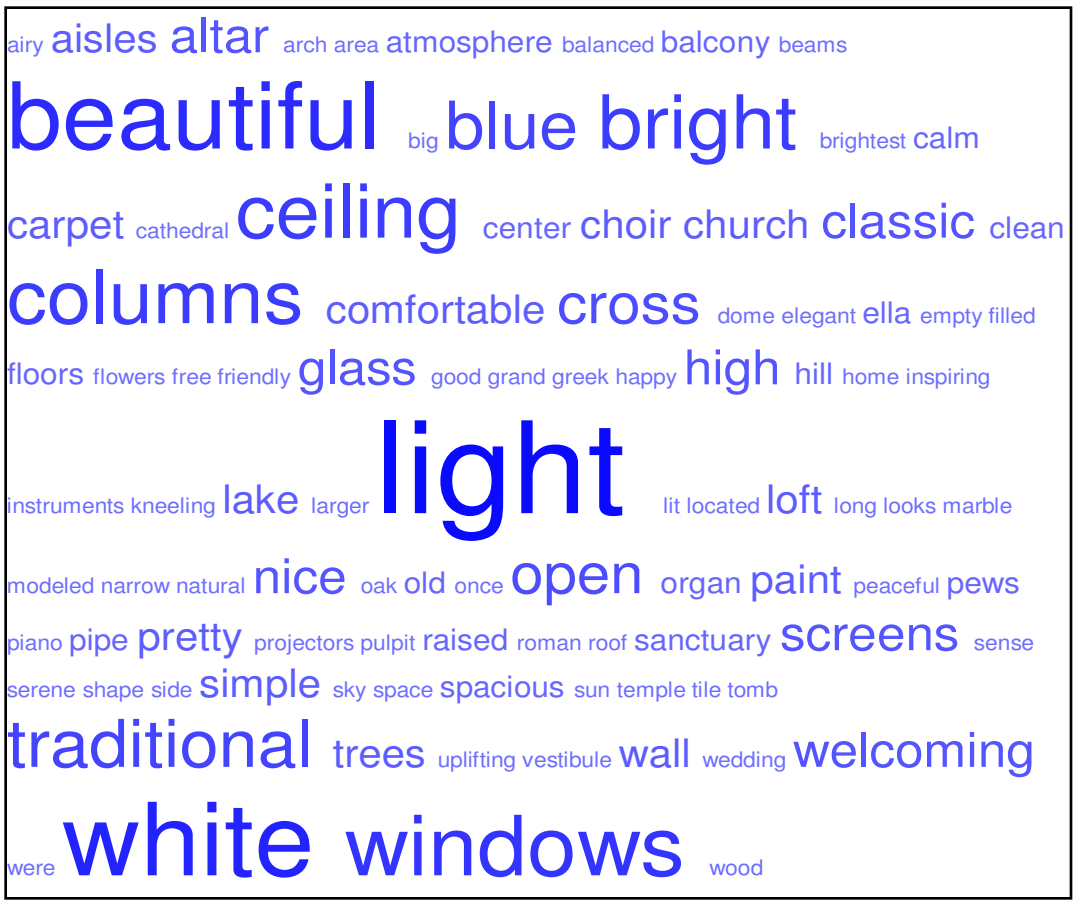

Figure 14: Word frequency diagram created from parishioners' descriptions of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, Florida.[3] Diagram created by author.

Reverend Clark had similar feelings:

> "I've been in lots of churches in my life and this is probably the brightest church that I've ever been in… It's a very light-filled sanctuary without a single light on, and then you start adding lights, that only enhances it." (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Since the windows are clear glass, they let in a significant amount of light into the sanctuary even on a cloudy day, and as I walked throughout the sanctuary taking pictures of the various

[3] This diagram, as well as the word frequency diagrams in the following two case studies, was created in Nvivo9 using an automated process. It displays the 100 keywords most frequently used in members' descriptions of the building at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church and is arranged alphabetically, with a font size in proportion to the word's frequency.

decorations and symbols, I was quite surprised to note that I didn't need to use the flash on my camera.

Overall, the cumulative affective experience crafted by the brightness of the sanctuary, the white columns, and the light blue paint often connected with participants on a theological level.

> "While some churches have a cruciform design, a sign of the cross, this church in its design really has a sense of the empty tomb… I have always taken that and this is my conjecture, not any knowledge… There's the sense of the slight dome and the sense that it's representing the sky" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Church members made similar connections between the architecture and color scheme of the sanctuary and notions of the sky or heaven:

> "How would I describe the sanctuary? Well, it's blue. It's very blue. It's very light blue and it has a ceiling that looks like it's the sky that's over your head" (SF United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Participant RK explained that the vaulted ceiling created "a soaring space" (RK United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Perhaps just as important as what is *in* a space, what decorative and architectural elements are featured, is what is *not* in the space, as NH notes:

> "Truthfully my favorite part is actually, shall we say, the non-part. The openness. I just like the big, open feeling" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

For me, the high columns and sky-like color scheme of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church served to enhance this feeling of openness, particularly when I was alone in the sanctuary one afternoon taking pictures. The space, though markedly different from the Cathedral church I grew up in or the secluded and woodsy church that I was a member of for some time, had a distinct affective capacity. As evidenced by the interview responses, this capacity was clearly enhanced by the sacred materialities featured within the sanctuary itself, but also, as NH noted, by the relative absence of adornments as well.

Additionally, while some parishioners noted that they perceived the entire property of Saint Paul's as "the church," feelings of spirituality and spiritual connectedness seemed to consistently be enhanced in the space of the sanctuary. As RK noted:

> "Places where I feel a strong spiritual connection. I guess probably more in the sanctuary than anywhere else" (RK United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

CJ also remarked:

> "The classrooms are classrooms. I can just as easily be in there for some tax seminar. I don't feel any great, deep sense of religiosity in them" (CJ United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Although approaching Saint Paul's on the outset as an outsider, I also noticed a heightened sense of spirituality in the sanctuary, perhaps related to my Catholic upbringing. Growing up, our cathedral sanctuary was certainly conceived of as a holy place, and parishioners were expected to make the sign of the cross with holy water upon entering, as well as genuflect before taking a seat in the pews. Even after attending services as Saint Paul's for over a year, the urge to genuflect before taking a seat is still very present, and while that urge is partially related to habit, it's also reflective of the deep sense of reverence that I feel when entering the sanctuary. Other interview participants had similar sentiments. One even noted in the interview that she didn't feel different in other spaces of the church, but upon further reflection, she actually did experience different emotions in different spaces, noting the atmosphere of the education buildings was noticeably different from that of the sanctuary.

While sacred spaces are generally considered in a primarily visual sense, as in the interview excerpts describing the color of the sanctuary, the transformative quality of these places includes other sensory experiences, as well. JP mentioned a fondness for the traditional organ music played at Saint Paul's, noting:

> "It tends to evoke more of a worshipful experience… It takes you away from the ordinary" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Michael Bull (2000), in his exploration auditory landscapes created by personal stereos, noted that soundscapes had a transformative quality and could change the moods of participants. It is clear that the hierophany described by Eliade, and the feeling of entering somewhere wholly different, can be invoked by a variety of media, including our auditory experiences. That's not to say, however, that the accessory buildings do not hold any meaning for participants, particularly because one such building, Sanders Hall, was as previously mentioned the original sanctuary. Thus, for long-standing members of the church, Sanders Hall is at once a gathering place for coffee and snacks before or after service, while at the same time, a poignant reminder

of past events. However, these memories are not necessarily inspired by visual media; for one participant, the seemingly simple creak of the wooden floors in Sanders Hall stimulated an affectual encounter:

> "You just right away get that feeling of, 'Boy, how many spaghetti dinners has this place seen? Or, how many receptions, funerals, gatherings?' It's just the creaking of the wood floors is a gathering… a history" (JL United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Other areas, such as the kitchen, did not represent traditional "sacred" spaces like the sanctuary, but still connected with participants and had their own, distinct affective capacities.

> "Not that I spend a lot of time there, but my second favorite place is in the kitchen. Every time I've ever been in the kitchen, it's always been around an event or something like that and there's just nothing like breaking bread. When you're cooking with people and you're eating with people… Food just makes people happy" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

For Reverend Clarke, his office, in addition to the sanctuary, represented a space where "meaningful moments" happen. Others, like SF, felt a strong sense of connection to the Sunday school rooms as well as the fellowship hall. Saint Paul's, as previously mentioned, sits along the banks of Tallahassee's Lake Ella and for many people, the lakeshore area had its own particular affective capacity. IW noted:

> "When you get out onto the lake, it's a beautiful area there. And [it's] where we had our Easter sunrise [service], as well, by the lake" (IW United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Reverend Clarke also felt a strong sense of connection to the lakefront area:

> "For me that property next to the lake, it's a very special place for me, I guess… It's so peaceful. There's something about being with the lake right there and the wind blowing through the trees. Sometimes when I've got a lot going on, I'm busy, I will walk down there just to kind of process it" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Interestingly, as much as participants noted that they thought the lake area was picturesque and inspired serene feelings, only one regularly walked around Lake Ella before or after services. For myself, an apartment-dweller, the lake represented a welcome retreat to a natural setting and I would often go for a stroll before or after conducting my field research, so I was quite surprised that the area was visited so infrequently by parishioners. Many, though,

noted that their church attire, particularly their dress shoes, were not conducive for a Sunday stroll around the lake which is certainly understandable. Still, participants consistently remarked that they liked that the church was situated along the lakefront. As JL perhaps put it best:

> "I may not want to walk around it, but I like to know that it's there for me to walk around" (JL United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

4.3 Feelings of Peace

While the geography of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church inspired a number of emotions in participants, most emotive experience centered around feelings of peace and contentment. RK, for instance, noted succinctly:

> "…I think I get a serenity and a peace from the space" (RK United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

But what brought about these feelings of serenity and contentment? At Saint Paul's, the reasons for these feelings varied. As in the interview responses previously mentioned, many respondents felt a sense of peace from the open and airy design of the sanctuary, while others, like IW, were moved by the sanctuary's soft color palette. NH noted:

> "The openness [of the sanctuary] really is, for me, it's a combination of calming [and] it's actually welcoming. And it really just, it makes me feel comfortable. It makes me feel more comfortable" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

When considering the sanctuary as a whole, PE noted:

> "It's beautiful and it's serene and it's peaceful and welcoming all at the same time" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

RK expressed similar feelings:

> "I think Saint Paul's has a really pretty sanctuary. It's just a really attractive sanctuary and I think I get a serenity and a peace from the space" (RK United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

For other participants, though, it was more of the people within the space than the space itself that inspired serene feelings:

> "You don't feel like you're being judged in any way. You go out into the world and the world is not an easy place. You get frustrated or angry at times, and you do whatever, and you come back and whatever you're feeling, certainly other people have had those

experiences out there over the last week or month or whatever it is, but that's put aside in terms of being judgmental and what the priority is is to make everyone feel at home and at peace" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

NH attributed feelings of calm to a combination of the openness of the space, as discussed above, as well as to the message being conveyed in the service and the people sharing in the worship experience.

NH: "I find that I tend to go more to the church when I'm maybe feeling a little stressed out or down. It's a focusing mechanism, [it] makes me step back from what I'm doing and stressing out… When I go, I'm a little more relaxed and it's like, 'Okay, I just need to calm down. Not allow myself to get distracted by these things that I really don't have control over,' things like that. It's calming. It's calming."

CF: "And what about the church is calming, do you think?"

NH: "I think it's the people, the message. I haven't ever walked in there and ran into people arguing. Or even if someone is having a bad day or a bad time, it seems like it's a lot easier to comfort someone while there, or get comfort for yourself" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

4.4 A Sense of Community

The feelings of peace that ZM and NH described connected with a sense of communal identity that was described by many participants:

"The whole atmosphere at Saint Paul's is very nice. It's well done. And then the reason that you're there, obviously, is for the spirituality and the fellowship that a congregation brings. And it has all of that, so it's nice" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

It is this very dual emphasis on spirituality and community that seemed to make many participants feel so connected to Saint Paul's. JP was drawn to the church in the first place because of the feelings of comfort and familiarity in the space itself, but after attending for some time, the feelings of community serve to enhance the overall experience:

"Now, of course, I love it all the more is because I know so many people that sit there and worship there and attend so it's hard now to segregate family and friends with the buildings. It's like your home" (JP United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

IW similarly noted that the church as a whole represented "the feel of family" (IW United Methodist Church Interview). Most of the members interviewed were involved in a variety of activities at Saint Paul's in addition to attending Sunday services and this also contributed to a sense of community.

From my own experience, even after only attending services for a little over a year, I've been bowling with the church, played in a kickball game, taken cooking lessons, and "Trunk or Treated" with children from the church and local community, which involved decorating car trunks for Halloween and passing out candy. Other members serve on planning committees or sing in the choir, and still others volunteer at local community organizations. PE noted that these activities were important:

> "I think a lot of people underestimate the importance of being involved in a smaller group, even if it's not a Sunday school class, being in a committee. I have met so many people of different generations that normally I would not have had the opportunity to meet… It's just so easy, I think, when you go to church on Sunday and that's your only connection is sitting in a pew with hundreds of other people and not having that personal connection with anyone in the church to feel lost or to, for me personally, I think I would feel – it just would be like taking the cap off of a drink but not really drinking it. You just don't really involve yourself in it" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

One participant, NH, was not involved in these various church activities, but remarked:

> "I really should because that would probably strengthen my attachment" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Overall, it seems that a sense of familiarity with the space, extending to both the physical space itself as well as the people in the house of worship, contributed to a members' sense of community. RK noted: "It all just feels like home… because that's my church family," (RK United Methodist Church Interview 2011) and was close to tears, clearly moved by the strength of the connection with fellow members of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church. As members become better acquainted with their fellow parishioners, there is a shared sense of values, a shared sense of purpose that could certainly be found in domestic settings, as well. Furthermore, this notion that religious organizations provide a strong sense of home and of community for their members might help explain why the United States remains a highly religious nation, bucking secularization trends found in other industrialized countries. According to

secularization theory, as the world becomes increasingly modernized, the influence of religion upon a society will decrease and ultimately become irrelevant (Stump 2008). It appears that as societies become more focused on issues of social welfare, another effect of modernization, religious affiliation declines, as is the case in Sweden, the Netherlands, and France (Norris and Inglehart 2004).

However, while there is a general downward trend in religious adherence as a country becomes more economically advanced, the United States clearly remains an outlier, with Americans consistently citing religion as important in their lives (Wald and Calhoun-Brown 2006). Many of the participants interviewed noted that a sense of community was one of their favorite things about their religious organization. While there are undoubtedly other possible explanations for the continued importance of religion in the United States, it is clear from this study that the reason why many participants returned to their church week after week is the sense of togetherness they experienced. In such a mobile, suburban society, it is a feeling of community that is not often experienced in our daily lives.

Furthermore, the experiences of participants reinforces the notion that "home," and our feeling of being "at home" extends beyond our legal address and is a much more dynamic notion than it might seem. To ZM, for instance, the kitchen at Saint Paul's was highly reminiscent of a home kitchen, creating a feeling of the "bonding of the family" (ZM United Methodist Church Interview 2011). As Tolia-Kelly (2004) explores, the notion of "home" is often linked with material artifacts; she further asserts that our understanding of "home" can be shaped, contested, and changed (Tolia-Kelly 2004) (see also Blunt 2005; Milligan 2005).

For the parishioners of Saint Paul's, the church really represents an extension of their biological family, and from the activities to the décor to the surrounding area, they felt a deep sense of connectedness to the house of worship as a whole. As PE noted:

> "The space itself, I think it encourages me to come every week and then some because I feel so at home there, and it's a pleasant experience for me and I enjoy being there… I think that religion for me is very personal and I would like to think that I would have that connection wherever I was, regardless of the aesthetics, but that is important" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Saint Paul's architecture and color palette inspired feelings of calm in participants and connected with their personal theological views, and at the same time, the people within the space only served to enhance their spiritual experience.

CHAPTER FIVE

CASE STUDY 2: TAOIST TAI CHI SOCIETY, TALLAHASSEE BRANCH

The Taoist Tai Chi Society is an international volunteer organization that aims to make Taoist Tai Chi classes available to all, promote the health-improving qualities of Taoist Tai Chi, promote cultural exchange, and to help others ("Our Aims and Objectives" 2011). The Society has grown considerably since its early days, and now has almost 40,000 members (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview) with 500 locations across 25 different countries ("The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA" 2011). Members of the Society have access to a wide array of activities, from beginning and continuing Tai Chi classes to international dinners to meditative chanting sessions. The Tallahassee branch of the Society is the national headquarters of the Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA ("The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA" 2011) and occupies a quaint location in a natural setting at 2100 Thomasville Road in Northern Tallahassee (see Figure 15).

Figure 15: Exterior of Tallahassee Branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee, Florida. Photo by author.

The International Taoist Tai Chi Society was founded in Canada in 1970 by Master Moy Lin-shin, who had studied the Taoist arts extensively in China and Hong Kong before emigrating ("Our Founder" 2011). Master Moy developed the 108-move set used by the Society today as a way to help others achieve mental, physical, and spiritual wellness ("Our Founder" 2011). The first branch in the United States was founded in Buffalo in 1974, and the Society subsequently spread through the United States following a relocation pattern of diffusion, as members moved to Denver and Tallahassee in the 1980s, and later to additional cities ("The Taoist Tai Chi Society of the USA" 2011). Dr. Karen Laughlin, President of the International Taoist Tai Chi Society as well as the Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Florida State University, was one of Master Moy's first students and began teaching Tai Chi classes to a small group of students and faculty at Florida State University after moving from Toronto to Tallahassee (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). Although the classes started small, attracting around twenty people, the Society's Tallahassee branch now has a robust membership of around 250 members (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Taoism as a religious tradition is unique in that it does not embody many of the qualities "traditional" religions (arguably, "Western" religious traditions) seem to posses. Early Taoism in particular has no explicit deities, no creed, and a vague and mysterious notion of the "Tao" as a natural force or "way" (Molloy 2010). In fact, many ancient Taoist practitioners lived alone, and thus the communal element which so often distinguishes spiritual traditions was not even present (Molloy 2010). As Taoism grew and spread, however, it was heavily influenced by the Buddhist model of development, and eventually monasteries and monastic communities arose (Molloy 2010). The religion also produced a number of sacred books, including guides to meditation and breathing, and further developed a wide array of deities, to include Laozi (or Lao Tzu), the legendary founder of Taoism (Molloy 2010). Of these sacred texts, the Tao Te Ching is generally accepted to be of central importance, and its poetic eighty-one verses leave much open to interpretation (Molloy 2010). Its opening verse, for example, addresses the nature of the "Tao" in typical paradoxical fashion:

> The tao that can be told
> is not the eternal Tao
> The name that can be named
> is not the eternal Name (Tao Te Ching, Chapter 1).

The poetic simplicity of the Tao Te Ching is echoed in many of the Taoist arts, to include Tai Chi, one of several Taoist disciplines aimed at transforming the life force, or *ch'i*, of the practitioner and uniting a person with the Tao (Molloy 2010). Tai Chi "gathers calisthenics, dance, meditation, *yin/yang* philosophy, and martial arts that… was designed to draw *ch'i* from the cosmos and dislodge blocks in internal flow" (Smith 1991, p.201). Although certainly considered by many to be a spiritual practice, particularly in China, the practice of Tai Chi is not explicitly spiritual and members of the Society are not necessarily practicing Taoists. Investigating the Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society thus presents an opportunity to explore a non-traditional house of worship, and one of the perhaps "unofficial" religious places discussed by Kong (2001).

5.1 Neighborhood Dispute

In 1985, as interest in the Tallahassee branch of the Society grew, the group moved into a rental facility off Monroe Street, a prominent and high-traffic street in Tallahassee (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). Unfortunately, though, the rental space was located next to a car stereo installation garage (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011), and many long-time members lamented that the noisiness of their neighbors was not conducive to the quiet, meditative practice of Tai Chi. In 1998, the property on Thomasville Road was purchased (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011) (see Figure 16), and the southern-style home on a large, wooded lot was certainly a far cry from their previous location. In order to develop the site, however, members of the Society had to be granted a development permit from the city, which is when the neighborhood dispute began (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). Neighbors opposed the center being located at the Thomasville Road site, maintaining that the Taoist Tai Chi Society was not a legitimate religious organization (Dr. Karen Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

The area surrounding the Thomasville Road property was first established in the 1940s and is an affluent, residential community (Stansbury 2003). The Durward Neighborhood Association, an organization of nearby homeowners, was formed in response to the Society's purchase of the property and their desire to develop the site as a non-residential location (Stansbury 2003). Though the Society's property was on the edge of the neighborhood's boundary, residents feared that the site would be commercial in nature, and the lighting,

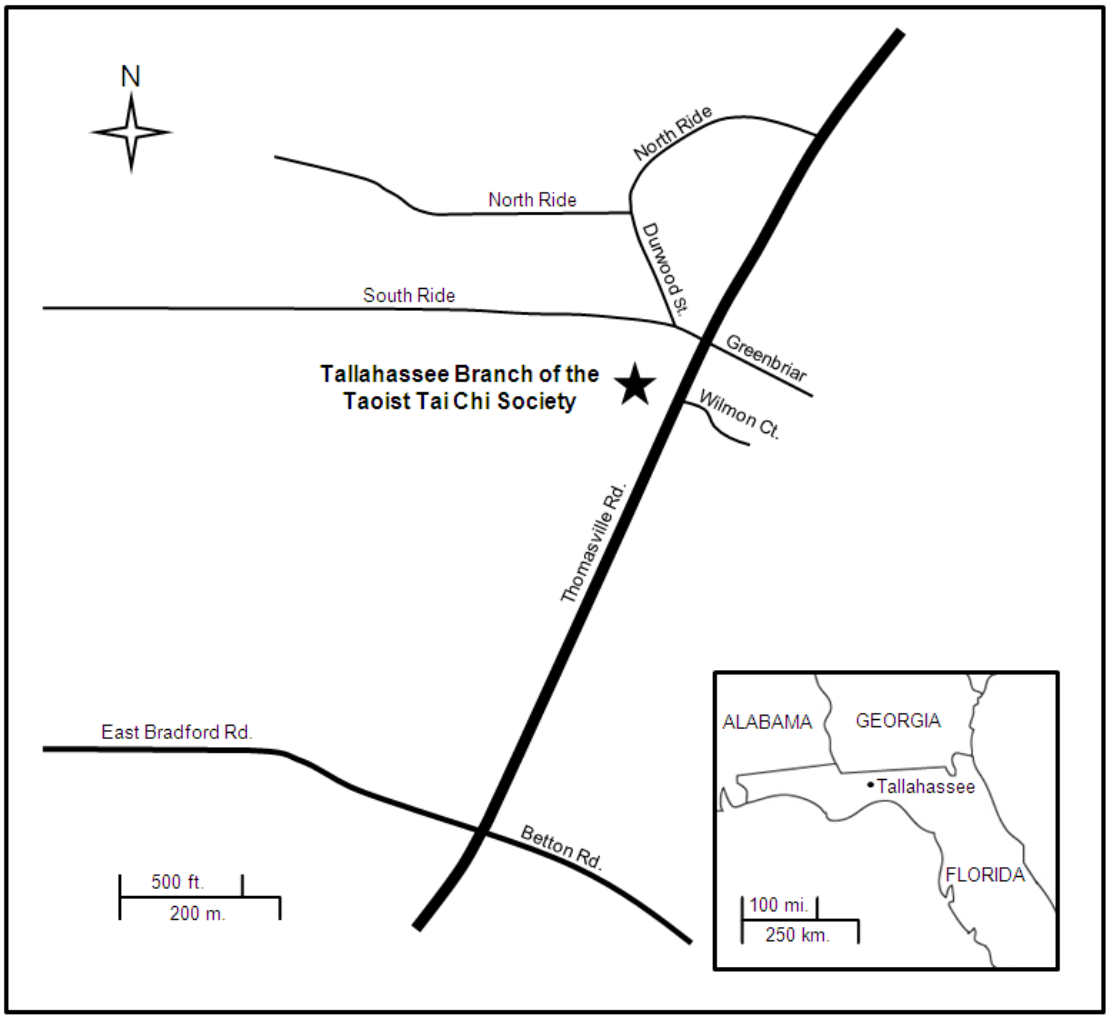

Figure 16: Current location of the Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, 2100 Thomasville Road. Map by author.

additional traffic, and parking areas would not only change their neighborhood dynamic, but their property values, as well (Stansbury 2003). As Dr. Laughlin explained:

> "It was hard for people to understand how [the Taoist arts] could be construed as a religious activity. They thought we were Gold's Gym, and there was a real concern that we were going to destroy the character of the neighborhood by moving this commercial enterprise there, and in that sense, they in some ways felt we were misrepresenting who we were, and that would of course get people upset" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Furthermore, neighbors worried that the Society would ruin the natural beauty of the lot

and cut down most of the trees to make room for parking and driveways. From the Society's standpoint, however, it was the very beauty of the site that attracted members to the location in the first place (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). Initially, Tallahassee's Development Review Committee approved the development permit, but the Planning Commission later overturned the Committee's approval (Stansbury 2003). That decision was subsequently appealed, and the case went to mediation (Stansbury 2003). Even early on, the Taoist Tai Chi Society offered to work closely with the Neighborhood Association to ensure that the site would not be disruptive to the community, but the Association was not interested in compromising and offered to buy the property outright, which the Society declined (Stansbury 2003). The key issue concerning local residents was the notion of the Taoist Tai Chi Society as a "religious organization," which would grant the Society an exception to develop the property as a non-residential location (Stansbury,2003). As Dr. Laughlin noted:

> "Some of it, I'm sure, was just the classic, 'We don't want something different in our backyard'… and you can understand that people care about their homes, they care about their neighborhood, so to a certain extent, that wasn't all that surprising, but it was frustrating not to have people be able to understand that you could be a religious organization that didn't fit the traditional Judeo-Christian model of such an organization" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

After a lengthy appeals and mediation process, the Society and the Neighborhood Association reached a settlement agreement (Stansbury 2003). Though some details of the mediation remain confidential, the Taoist Tai Chi Society agreed to certain conditions regarding lightning, hours of operation, signage, and so on (Stansbury 2003). The Society also agreed not to utilize the additional driveway on South Ride (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011), a residential road on the north side of the property, and would instead only have a single entrance on the much more trafficked Thomasville Road. The Society was able to move into the current location in 2002 (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

As mentioned, while the various Taoist arts do not fall within the "Western" model of traditional religious practice, for members of the Society, there are clear spiritual connections:

> "We are a charitable, religious organization, where everything that we do is Taoist training…" (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

During the court proceedings, a professor from the religion department at Florida State

University was actually asked to define religion, as YR explained:

> "And the definition that she gave was, 'A path to ultimate transformation'" (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Certainly, Taoism and the Taoist arts could be considered a religious practice under such a definition.

After the Thomasville Road location was purchased, members of the Society sent literature to neighbors discussing the organization and emphasizing the health benefits of Tai Chi, which might have contributed to the community's assertion that the Taoist Tai Chi Society was primarily a workout center rather than a spiritual site (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). However, the fact that the performance of Tai Chi has documented health benefits does not exclude the notion that it is also a religious practice as well. As Dr. Laughlin noted:

> "I always felt myself, from the beginning, that there was something spiritual about this practice, but I also recognized very early that in Master Moy's tradition and culture, this was purely something that you came to if it was in your heart to do that, and that if people wished to practice for health benefits or for social reasons or for all kinds of reasons, there was absolutely nothing wrong with that. There's a depth and a richness to this training that, to me, is phenomenal…" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

5.2 Delimiting the Boundaries of Sacred Space

As previously mentioned, part of the settlement agreement between the Taoist Tai Chi Society and the Neighborhood Association called for closing the property's second driveway on South Ride and instead having one entrance on Thomasville Road (see Figures 17 and 18). Interestingly, while this might have initially been seen as a concession on the part of the Society, having a single entrance allowed for a clearer demarcation between the sacred space of the property and the surrounding area, as MT noted:

> "There is something about the way the parking and the entrance, the entryway – you feel like you're going into a different space, and I think that was totally serendipitous in a sense, because they used to enter from the side of South Ride, and then as part of the lawsuit and the settlement, the neighborhood forced us to close that. Actually, for good

Figure 17: Entrance of Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch, facing east. Photo by author.

Figure 18: Driveway of Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch, facing west. Photo by author.

or for bad, but I think entering the way we do, where what you see is the roadway and then you get a glimpse of things, it really sets aside the building in a way so when you come to it, it's always a little bit fresh. It's popping out of the driveway in a way that if you just entered directly and saw the building in full force, it wouldn't have quite the same impact that it does" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Furthermore, this boundary consistently evoked a sense of being somewhere *different* in participants:

"...As you enter from the street, you right away begin to see the gardens, you see the gazebo, and you see the gravel driveway, and already this is putting you in touch with something different from life in the city. The gravel driveway and the gardens suggest something a little bit rustic, a little separation from the concrete jungle of the city. The gazebo suggests some tranquility. So it's not a gate, a formal gate, which you might find in a more traditional Chinese Temple, but it is an entry, an entry into something that's a little bit different pace than your busy life... So even before you walk in the door, you've had several cues that introduce you to a little slowing down, calming yourself, opening yourself" (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

WK had similar feelings:

"The first thing I notice is that it's kind of secluded. That when you turn in the driveway, Thomasville is behind you, so it's kind of an enclosed space... Pulling up in there, I generally know that I'm going to be feeling pretty good. Maybe I start to relax in the anticipation of relaxing" (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For YR, and other participants, the spiritual space of the Taoist Tai Chi Society extends well beyond the boundaries of the building's walls. The sacred space is delineated by a gravel driveway and a high fence covered in vines, creating the hierophanic space conceived of by Eliade (1957). This feeling of entering a distinctly different space seemed to transcend how long a member has been a part of the Society, or whether the member is attending as an instructor or a student. Dr. Laughlin noted:

"I find that I just sigh when I drive in, and even if I'm going to teach a class where my mind is going, 'What will we work on tonight?' It's just like stepping in a little bit to a different realm, which I find is very calming to my mind and my spirit..." (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Although I've only been a member for a little over a year, I also experienced a distinct sense of calm when pulling into the Society's driveway. It is clear that for many members, including myself, the "space of worship" extends beyond the Society's building:

> "I guess I begin to feel like I'm at the center when I come down the driveway. I don't know if the driveway per se triggers it, but I guess in a sense, seeing the sign and seeing the Taoist Tai Chi logo in some respects triggers it. And then the general setting, the trees and everything, and the fountain as you're approaching is kind of a – I don't know if you'd call it a foyer, but an entryway as you're coming in..." (DL Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

In addition, during the in-depth interview, members were asked to describe the first thing they noticed when arriving at the center. For KF:

> "I guess the first thing I notice is pretty much when I pull in the driveway. Either just an association of all the times I've been here or the actual energy, it just feels like, 'Oh. [Sighs.] I'm at Tai Chi. Awesome.' [Laughs.] 'I made it'" (KF Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Many members responded similarly. The visual impact of the front area was not the only feature members noticed. Members like KF also noticed auditory elements as well:

> "I think it's a combination of everything. It's a combination of the, apart from the traffic, the silence here, the fountain… I'm very sensitive to sounds and to the auditory environment of wherever I'm at… Even church when I was younger didn't have that calm feeling like I feel here, and I think a lot of that has to do with the auditory environment" (KF Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Dr. Karen Laughlin noted that even the "crunch of the gravel in the driveway" has a strong effect on her when she arrives at the center (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011). In my own experience, I was drawn to the smell of the sandalwood incense that burned just outside the entrance to the practice hall, likely because it reminded me of the incense used in the Catholic church I used to attend.

KB's favorite area of the center was the entire front area, consisting of a pond, gazebo, butterfly garden, and statues (see Figure 19), and many other members expressed similar sentiments. KB noted that this space elicited feelings of peace and happiness:

"Because it's beautiful. Because it's beautiful and it's well-kept, and you can tell that there's some TLC in it" (KB Taoist Tai Chi Interview 2011).

Figure 19: Outdoor area, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

Member's attachment to the front area seemed to transcend the length of time he or she had been attending the center, or whether the member was attending as a student or as an instructor. Dr. Laughlin noted:

> "I find that I just sigh when I drive in, and even if I'm going to teach a class where my mind is going, 'What will we work on tonight?', it's just like stepping in a little bit to a different realm, which I find is very calming to my mind and my spirit…" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

GC knew the person, a Chinese instructor, who designed the pond area, and said that it was "so peaceful to hear the water" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Interview 2011). MR experienced similar feelings:

> "You know when you first come in there, you see the backyard. I guess that's what I notice first. And I think a lot of that has to do with the calming nature of the whole. To

me, the property is very relaxing and very peaceful… I think a lot of it had to do with the fact of who we are. We're an organization that tries to take care of ourselves, and our members. We try to be good neighbors…" (MR Taoist Tai Chi Interview 2011).

For the Taoist Tai Chi Society, then, the outdoor area serves as a way to reflect the beliefs of the organization. KF remarked:

> "I'm very drawn to water and the properties of water, so the fountain out there is very nice. And also, to digress a little bit, the Tai Chi set feels like water. It's supposed to be very fluid…" (KF Taoist Tai Chi Interview 2011).

Tai Chi is meant to be flowing, in harmony with nature, and it is not surprising that the grounds surrounding the physical building reinforce this notion.

5.3 Sacred Materialities at the Tai Chi Center

Within the Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, the architectural and decorative elements of the building had clear spiritual connections for participants and served to enhance members' feelings of peace and contentment. The center has a unique blend of southern charm and Chinese culture, from the rocking chairs on the front porch to the calligraphy prints hanging on the walls. While not all Taoist Tai Chi centers are located in such idyllic surroundings – some are located in warehouses or rent space from local churches – the Tallahassee branch is also of particular interest in that it has one of the only high shrines located outside of China (BZ Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview); many interviewees, particularly long-standing members, commented on the beauty and spiritual significance of the shrine (see Figure 20 on the following page).

The plastic fruit and vibrantly-colored lamps found in the shrine might be considered "gaudy" at times, as one member noted, but the tradition and spiritual significance behind the decorations was still discernible, particularly for members who were responsible for opening and closing the shrine, as LS noted:

> "There's a real peace within, a sense of commitment, a sense of dedication that's renewed each time" (LS Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For members like DL, the ritual of opening and closing the shrine, which includes offering a full meal to the deities depicted, served as a way to acknowledge the long tradition behind the

practice of Tai Chi. The shrine also reminded members of the Taoist virtues embodied by the figures:

> "Well, of course, I'm drawn to the shrine because I take care of it. I close it on Tuesday nights when I'm there, and I personally love the quality that it brings to the space. Some people might find the decorations garish; I've gotten used to them and so I love the tapestries and the color that it brings, and all the symbolism that's there – the pictures. It's kind of nice to look over there and look at Guanyin and say, 'Oh yes. Compassion is something I really try to practice and that's a big part of this.' So I think those reminders are really important" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Figure 20: High shrine, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

There is also a particular significance in the notion that the figures depicted on the shrine were real people:

> "[The shrine] represents our understanding that there have been people living on earth, these three people, out in their earthly beings, who have decided to live their life a certain way… Guanyin in particular I have a fondness for, because she attained immortality and

chose not to take that route, to try to help others so they don't suffer so much. So that's a nice story, but it's also a nice way to live by just thinking, 'Well, how can I help other people? And how can I make it easier for somebody to continue with what they have to do in their life?' The shrine to me provides me with a bit of an opportunity to have a religious touch with things…" (MR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

In this way, the figures in this shrine are positioned within this world, and their achievements, while certainly extraordinary, are within our realm to attain. Interestingly, the location of the shrine, tucked in a corner of the practice hall, evokes a subtle sense of spirituality that is reflected in the beliefs and practices of the society as a whole:

"There's an aspect of spirituality to it, even though it's not real in-your-face, because the shrine is kind of covered up and in a corner. I think most people who go there don't pay much attention to it. It's not necessarily what most people think of when they're doing Tai Chi" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

The spiritual aspects of the Taoist Tai Chi Society might not be outwardly apparent, particularly for new members, one of whom noted disappointment that Taoist teachings were not included in the beginning Tai Chi class. This is not surprising, though, given the nature of Taoism as a religious tradition. Taoism as a whole has never emphasized missionary activity and instead is much more focused on helping others.

Figure 21: Chinese calligraphy in the Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

There are Chinese characters adorning many areas of the center, as shown in Figure 21, and for me, the characters were attractive but not distracting. Since I can't read them, they almost take on the quality of instrumental music, serving to provide a pleasant background without being focused on what message the characters are trying to convey. TN noted that the characters and Chinese phrases: "seems somewhat exotic but very peaceful" (TN Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview). Other members, like GC, were drawn to the characters particularly because they could read them:

> "I'm fascinated with languages and I actually, for about five years, was pretty good about studying Cantonese on my own in my car, but I was just doing the auditory part of it. Lately I've gotten interested again in the written part, so I really enjoy the fact that there are all these Chinese characters all over the place" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Overall, the space of the practice hall had a strong affective capacity for participants. Some members, like KF, were drawn to the wood floors:

> "They feel really warm. [Laughs.] I mean, they have a warm color; they have a warm feeling… Somehow it just helps it feel a little more natural" (KF Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Figure 22: Practice hall, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

Other members, like myself, were struck by the openness of the room (see Figure 22 on the preceding page), accentuated by large windows on either side of the hall, skylights in the ceiling, and the reflective quality of the wood floors. As GC noted:

> "It's light and airy, so it's nice looking out into the beautiful front yard and seeing the birds at the bird feeder, and having the skylights. I do feel closer to nature there than I do probably anywhere else I am during the day, except at home…" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Many other members similarly commented on the "airy" quality of the practice hall.

For one member who was involved in the renovation of the property after it was purchased in 1998, the openness of the practice hall in its current arrangement stands in stark contrast to how the room was initially designed:

> "I think part of what I love about the space is the openness, and the lightness, really more than any particular decoration. I could tell you exactly what's on all the walls, but I think it's really partly the structure of the place, and then I think also, partly knowing where it used to be. I went to the place when it was divided up. That room that we practice in was divided up into about five different rooms… There's really a sense of transformation that's both metaphorical but also in terms of the space. I think it represents, to me, some sense of what the practice does: it transforms you into an open, lighter person" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Thus, for MT, the transformative nature of Tai Chi is reflected in the transformation of the practice hall itself.

In addition to the visual materialities present within the practice hall, there are other sensory elements that contribute to the overall affective experience. There is a bird feeder located next to a large, bay window, and I often heard birds chirping as I practiced Tai Chi. Contrasting with the sounds of nature, one can often hear traffic going by on Thomasville Road, but with the exception of a passing semi-trailer truck, the sounds of traffic often faded into "white noise:"

> "It's gotten to the point where I don't notice the traffic sounds any longer. That's disappeared. My brain has subtracted that out, and that's kind of nice, too. Just like people that live next to railroad tracks don't hear the trains any longer" (BZ Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Figure 23: Administrative office, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

Figure 24: Living area, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

As with the previous case study, the Taoist Tai Chi Society has a variety of other rooms in addition to the main practice hall, including a large kitchen, administrative areas, and living spaces (see Figures 23 and 24). The living spaces in particular have a cozy, home-like feel to them, and in fact are often used by members of other branches who stay overnight at the center during workshops and other events. GC noted:

> "I like being in the back. It may have to do partly with the fact that the ceiling is not as high. It's a little more enclosed. Maybe a little warmer or something. There's something more like living-room-ish, a little cozier" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For DL, these areas enhance the feeling of community at the center and are much like a "backstage," where instructors or councils meet (DL Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For some members, like TN, feelings of community were particularly strong in the kitchen (see Figure 25):

> "Just because the teamwork and all that goes into it. It seems a little cramped, and it is I guess at some level, but when you look at all of the equipment that's in there and what you can do out of it with an organized group of people working in concert together, it's pretty impressive" (TN Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Figure 25: Kitchen, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

Proper nutrition is important in Taoism, as it is believed that eating certain foods can increase one's *ch'i*. Many, but not all, Taoists are vegetarian and there is a general idea that as Taoist training continues and "the body has attained an awareness of its health, it will naturally reject foods that are unhealthy for it" (Wong 1997, p.228). The Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society hosts a variety of banquets throughout the year including multicultural dinners. I

had the opportunity to attend a traditional Irish dinner at the center which, although delicious, presented an interesting contrast with the Chinese symbolism and décor found in the practice hall.

Being in the kitchen and preparing food for fellow members and guests presents an opportunity for members of the society to help others, which is one of the society's aims and objectives ("Our Aims and Objectives" 2011). As YR explained:

> "…There were times when Master Moy made a specific point of calling me to the kitchen and training me, or talking to me about the importance of if you're going to have a shrine, if you're going to have people training seriously in the Tai Chi, you have to take care of them in terms of providing good nutrition, good food" (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Members of the Society also prepare a meal for Tallahassee's homeless once a month, which again fulfills the Society's mission to help others. For YR, this emphasis on helping others is a core part of the Taoist spiritual tradition:

> "It's… an important part of the culture of the organization, that we mark special celebrations with banquets, and banquets are of course people gathering together over food, which builds community naturally, but also in a more formal way, helps us build our reputation… There are opportunities both for education, for celebration, [and] the kitchen is the heart of that process… It's an important component, and… it connects me to the tradition that I come from, as much as the Tai Chi, as much as the rituals and ceremonies" (YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Members' personal histories also contributed to the overall affective experience of *being in* the center, as illustrated by the experiences of GC:

> *CF: "Are there any places within the center that you feel a very strong connection to?"*
>
> GC: "[Pause.] This is weird. Just maybe some particular areas of the room where I have memories of where I got a correction, usually from one of the visiting instructors from Canada or something."
>
> *CF: "In the practice hall?"*
>
> GC: "In the practice hall, yeah. Or a memory of where I saw someone demonstrating something in that particular spot in the room" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

One member also teaches classes at the Tallahassee Senior Center, and thought it was curious that one student kept moving around the room during class:

> "I had another student at the senior center, she was moving around and I asked her after class, 'Why are you moving around?' And she said, 'Well, I didn't want to be by the squeaky floor' – because they have a wooden floor. And I said, 'You know I hear that noise and it makes me smile inside' – because we used to hold workshops at the Senior Center and Mister Moy was the leader of those workshops, and when everybody moves together, the creaking goes [makes noise], and it just brought back very pleasant memories to hear the wood creaking like that. So I said, 'I love to hear that sound, so don't think you need to stop because of me'" (MR Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For many other long-standing members, experiences and interactions with Master Moy and other teachers left a lasting impression, and memories of these emotional experiences were triggered by the surrounding space. Master Moy's photograph, for example, which hangs in the practice hall of the center, was significant for WK:

> "I often look up and see that [the picture of Master Moy] and think he's watching me, [and it] kind of steers me to question myself, 'Am I doing right?'" (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Another member described an interaction with Master Moy in the kitchen, who told the member quite simply, "You can do anything." This simple phrase had a powerful effect, and the member described a subsequent increase in self-confidence and an increased openness to spirituality.

While meaningful experiences occurred in a variety of areas at the center, the energy in the practice hall was noticeably different for members:

> "There's an energy, so to speak, in the training hall. When you go into the office, that energy's not there. The office is for a different purpose" (VI Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For WK, being in the practice hall and performing Tai Chi was a "time to be involved in the movement, where the other places are just a lot quieter [and] isolated, especially upstairs" (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview). Members described a level of focus and intensity in the practice hall, facilitated by the communal performance of Tai Chi as well as the space itself.

5.4 Performance of Tai Chi

While the building and surrounding gardens at the Tai Chi center certainly reflected Taoist beliefs and consistently elicited an emotional response in participants, the corporeal practice of performing Tai Chi had significant affective capacity, frequently inspiring feelings of peace and contentment:

> "I feel just more relaxed… I like that I'm doing something for my body. Something a little special that I do just for my body to send that message, 'Hey, I like you'" (KB Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

The act of performing Tai Chi itself is intended to help the participant transform his or her *ch'i*, to become more centered and at peace, but Tai Chi's capacity to produce these intended affects is heightened within the space of the practice hall. Many members noted that they practice Tai Chi at home, and while it could still be a relaxing activity, they felt quite differently practicing Tai Chi in other locations:

> "I think it exaggerates the feeling of serenity and peace when I'm at the center. I don't know if that the space is so much nicer, or also doing it with multiple people. I think that sort of unity of energy is really a part of what comes through, that obviously when you're doing it on your own you don't feel... I can't say it's radically different, but definitely, it's a more intense feeling when you're at the center?" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Members seemed to achieve a level of detachment at the Tai Chi center that was often not possible at home:

> "You'd be a little bit more stressed [at home], because you'd be thinking about things related to the house. You often get interrupted. You're a little more aware of time. You're always thinking, 'Okay, I've got to finish this so I can get ready to go to work'..." (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Furthermore, for members in the continuing classes as well as instructors, the sheer level of exertion experienced when practicing Tai Chi at the center far exceeded that of home practice:

> "When you do it every morning [at home], there's a certain routine to it, and it is a very nice way to start the day. And it is a way of being quiet and being mindful... When we come here, I know that I'm going to work hard, so I have an expectation that that's why

> I'm here. I'm here to physically do some good – [as another member] says: 'some good sweating'" (BZ Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Undoubtedly, the people within different spaces help transform and shape our experiences, and this is certainly evident in the practice of Tai Chi. Members, like VI, often noted that the energy in the center's practice hall was enhanced by the communal performance of the Tai Chi set. GC felt more at ease practicing Tai Chi at the center because there was no risk of feeling self-conscious:

> "I know at the Tai Chi center, nobody is going to tease me about my Tai Chi" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

For myself and other members it was the combination of the physical space of the practice hall and the communal energy of practicing the set in unison that simply couldn't be duplicated in a home setting.

The affective experience facilitated by the performance of Tai Chi was, not surprisingly, different for instructors and students, as MT explained:

> "I think you have to be a little bit more high energy when you're teaching. There's an expectation that I've got to help others figure this out…" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Other instructors, like DL, expressed similar sentiments:

> "…When I come through the door, it's like, 'What hat am I wearing today? Am I wearing my instructor hat or am I wearing my chanting hat?' As I come in, I have a different feel, a different approach to it…" (DL Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Approaching Tai Chi and Taoism as an outsider, I was surprised by the transformative capability of the performance of Tai Chi. Admittedly, I had an impression that Tai Chi wouldn't be particularly difficult and that I would lose interest in learning the set after attending a few classes. However, my experience was quite the opposite. Often, slow, measured movements are just as hard, if not more difficult, than more vigorous exercises. Tai Chi can also be conceived of as a moving meditation, and the positive effects of meditation in any capacity have long been documented. Furthermore, there is a clear element of spatiality and spatial awareness to the performance of Tai Chi that might be difficult for those who have not practiced it to fully appreciate. Participants are simultaneously aware of their own bodily geography, their relationship to others within in the room, and their physical positioning within the room itself.

5.5 Spiritual Connections

The Taoist Tai Chi Society, unlike many other religious organizations, draws members from a variety of religious traditions. Many interviewees considered themselves Taoist, but others were affiliated with Buddhism, Christianity, and New Age spiritual traditions. The performance of Tai Chi, as well as other Taoist arts like chanting, seemed to have a rather unique capability to connect with and enhance a member's personal religious beliefs, as varied as those beliefs might be. One member approached the center as an agnostic, and initially felt uncomfortable discussing religion, but has since become deeply spiritual.

As previously mentioned, spirituality is not overt at the Society, as KF explained:

> "…Whenever any of the religious parts of it are presented, it's always like, 'You can come to this if you want to. Totally optional. Whatever you want to do.' They make it available if you want to get involved, but there's never any pressure to do any of that…" (KF Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

It is evidenced from the interviews that this lack of pressure to be Taoist or to embrace Taoist philosophy was very appealing to members, and for me, made me more curious about Taoism than I might have been had the spiritual connections been more explicit.

Even members who were not affiliated with any religious tradition found a spiritual significance to the practice of Tai Chi:

> "It's very much an intellectual religion in the sense that there are things that I see in science, in nature, that have resonance. The whole tension between reductionism and holism is a large part of what Eastern philosophies grapple with. In the practice of Tai Chi, I see everything I do in a day has relevance" (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

As evidenced by WK's remarks, there is a practical aspect to Taoism that can easily apply to any religious tradition. DL noted:

> "…What attracts me to the Taoist Tai Chi Society… was that it was supposed to be very much a part of being in the world. It wasn't a sense of going off to the mountain and living like a hermit. While there are many strains or schools of Taoism, at least the one that we practice, it's much more practical. In some respects, it seems simplistic, but it's more living a good life. It's not a lot of dogma, not a lot of doctrine, although there are

aspects of that that you can pursue if you'd like to…" (DL Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

5.6 A Sense of Being "Home"

Many participants at all three case study locations relied on metaphors to explain their complex experience of being in a sacred space. For a large number of members of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, like GC, being at the center gave them a sense of being "home:"

> "Sometimes if they've been cooking rice [in the kitchen], it just feels like home to me. I can't really explain it. I remember one time when [I had been working and] I was still exhausted and I came and I laid down on one of the futons in the back room… and I just drifted off to sleep. It was just a very comforting kind of atmosphere to be in" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

When asked to describe the center as a whole to someone who'd never seen it before, DL commented:

> "I was going to say it seems like home, but I would not say that to somebody who's never been here, because it wouldn't make any sense" (DL Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

The Tallahassee branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society is unique in that it actually is, as previously discussed, a former home, and though many of the rooms and the arrangement of the space have been changed, it still has a distinct "home-like" feel. Dr. Karen Laughlin explained that this sense of familiarity was part of the property's appeal:

> "When we were looking for a property, I said several times, I would love to find a house, because I knew that that would give that feeling of home. We could have easily bought a storefront or a warehouse and made it into a beautiful center, too, and many of our buildings around the country, around the world, are in fact more industrial kinds of buildings, but I was really excited when we found this place because it has that homey feeling to it, too" (Dr. Laughlin Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Furthermore, as evidenced from my interviews with participants, this sense of home only increased with the length of time a member had been involved in the Society. WK, a long-standing member, felt very at ease at the center:

"I've been there for a good while, so I feel pretty comfortable. If I'm hungry, I'll go look in the fridge. If I want to take a nap, I'll lay down somewhere upstairs and take a nap" (WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Members' feelings of home were also enhanced by the communal activities engaged in at the center. On one evening when I was conducting an interview at the center, members of a continuing class took a break mid-way through their practice to thoroughly clean the building, and I was struck by the eagerness of every member to lend a hand and the sheer organization of such a large task. GC noted:

"…One of the big things at the center is everybody pitches in, and over time, I won't say I'm perfect yet, but I've gotten better about being able to find something to do to contribute. When it's our turn to clean, I pitch in somehow" (GC Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

Figure 26: Front porch, Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Photo by author.

The front and back porches on the building (see Figure 26) also contributed to the congenial relationship between members, and to the sense of familiarity and ease members had at the center, as MT explained:

"That back porch is such a wonderful area for people who are coming and going to stop and talk with each other. It's a real meeting place that allows you to chat in a way that if

you're inside, particularly if there's a class going on, you don't want to chat. I think that informal space that's the boundary between entering and leaving is really a very special space, and represents a lot of things. I really like that, and I think everybody does…" (MT Taoist Tai Chi Society Interview 2011).

I would often find myself eager to get to the center early for an interview or class simply because I enjoyed my time spent relaxing on the porch. Even after only attending a handful of classes, the building as a whole and the porch in particular took on a very familiar and home-like quality.

Figure 27: Word frequency diagram created from members' descriptions of the Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch. Diagram created by author.

It is clear from interviews with members of the Taoist Tai Chi Society that the spiritual space of the center has a transformative quality. As shown in Figure 27, members consistently commented on the beauty of the site, as well as the airy and home-like feel of the building. Although the shrine was not the focal point of the practice hall, it represented a meaningful spiritual connection for members. Furthermore, the various areas of the center, from the gazebo to the practice hall to the kitchen, facilitated different affective interactions. For some, these emotio-spatial encounters triggered the recollection of past events, while for others, the performance of Tai Chi itself had a palpable affect. Lastly, although Taoism represents a distinctly non-Western religious tradition, its spiritual significance and the sense of community the Taoist Tai Chi Society gives its members is no less meaningful.

CHAPTER SIX

CASE STUDY 3: CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, TALLAHASSEE 5TH WARD

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) is a uniquely American religious tradition, whose geographical underpinnings are woven into the fabric of the faith. The Book of Mormon, one of several sacred texts used by the LDS church, details an ancient history of the Americas. In addition, the migration of Saints[4] westward to the Great Salt Lake Basin has enabled Salt Lake City, Utah to become a beacon for members of the church. However, despite these distinctly American foundations, more than half of LDS members today live outside of the United States. The organization of the LDS church is highly geographical, as well. Worldwide, the church is divided into several large areas (such as "Europe," "Central America," and so on) ("How the Church is Organized" 2011). Areas are further divided into stakes, each consisting of five to twelve congregations, which are known as "wards" or branches, depending on the size ("How the Church is Organized" 2011). Members are assigned to a ward or branch based on where they live, and often several wards meet in the same meetinghouse, but use the chapel and the classrooms at different times.

In the Tallahassee Florida Stake, there are 5 different wards, two of which meet at a location on Thomasville Road, in the north of Tallahassee, and three of which meet at the meetinghouse, which is also the stake center and contains several stake offices, directly across from the Florida State University Campus (see Figure 28). Tallahassee's 5th ward is unique in that it is comprised entirely of single adults, many of whom are students, aged 18 to 30. Young single adult (or YSA) wards have recently undergone a transition within the LDS church ("Young Single Adults" 2011). Many have been geographically realigned, and student wards have been discontinued ("Young Single Adults" 2011). Furthermore, young adults now have a choice whether to attend the YSA ward or the conventional, family ward assigned to their geographical area ("Young Single Adults" 2011). Once members become married, they switch out of the YSA ward and attend the traditional family ward assigned to their geographic area.

[4] Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are commonly called Mormons, although they prefer the term "Saints"

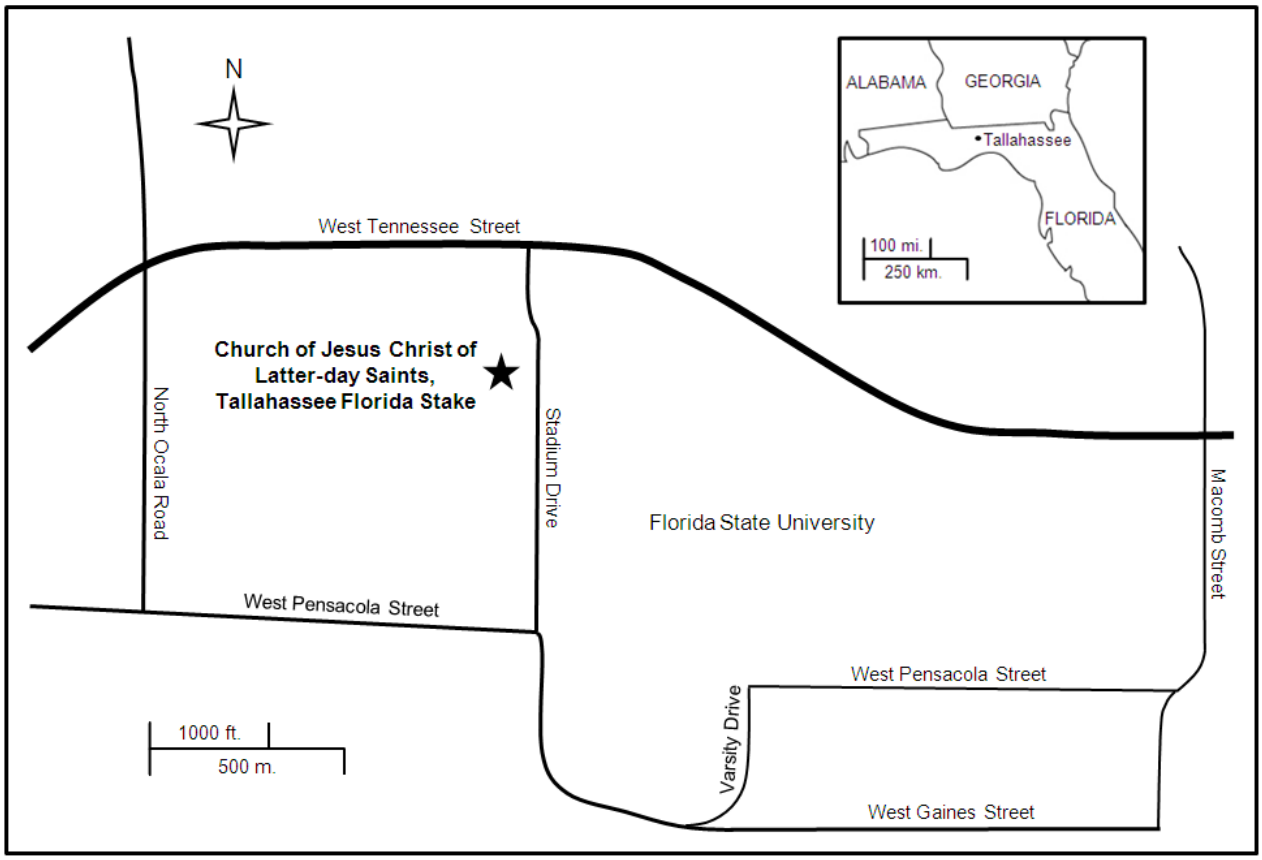

Figure 28: Tallahassee Florida stake meetinghouse location, 312 Stadium Drive, Tallahassee, Florida. Map by author.

Though the average age of marriage has increased in recent years, Mormons still marry approximately 4.5 years earlier than the national average of 28 years for men and 27 for women (Weaver 2008). As such, there is a high turnover rate within the YSA wards and several of the members interviewed were recently married and had since transitioned out of the YSA ward. Currently, Tallahassee's 5th ward has 110 members, but that number increases with the start of each school year (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

From the very beginning, Latter-day Saint meetinghouses were built with a focus on functionality. Many early meetinghouses, like the first constructed in Farmington, Utah in 1849, were fairly crude, log buildings that were often built in less than a day (Roberts 1975). These buildings often consisted of one room, which could be converted from chapel to multi-purpose room as needed (Arrington and Bitton 1992). Today, Latter-day Saint meetinghouses are built in

distinct stages, still with a focus on practicality. When a new meetinghouse is constructed in an area with relatively few members, a chapel is built with an adjoining multi-purpose room (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). Over time, as membership increases, additional rooms, such as classrooms and offices, are built around the chapel and multi-purpose room (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). As Roberts (1975) explains, "Each stage was intended to be aesthetically pleasing by itself, or as a whole completed building" (p.327). Thus, the basic layout of the LDS meetinghouse remains fairly standard (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview). Furthermore, though meetinghouses differ architecturally depending on the time period in which they were built (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011), these differences are relatively minor and meetinghouse design is standardized within the church (Arrington and Bitten 1992).

In the United States, this standardization of church design generally blends well with the surrounding landscape (Arrington and Bitton 1992). However, as the LDS church has spread worldwide, meetinghouses often stand out as distinctly American religious buildings (Arrington and Bitton 1992). "Voices pleading for greater individuality, for local initiative in design and materials, have been drowned out by the sounds of the construction of chapels from 'cookie cutter' plans" (Arrington and Bitton 1992, p.266). For some, though, this continuity is reassuring: "'Coming up on a Mormon meetinghouse in a strange town is like finding your favorite food franchise when you are traveling… Once you've located the church and Colonel Sanders it's as if you never left home'" (Arrington and Bitton 1992, p.266).

There is a broader standardization of programs and committees within LDS as a whole, and this also makes the standardization of church designs appealing (Arrington and Bitton 1992). At the Tallahassee location examined, as in most other LDS meetinghouses, there are rooms for the Relief Society women's organization, Primary children's space, Priesthood meeting rooms for men in the church, as well as other offices. There is also a large culture hall, which is used as overflow seating for the chapel when needed, as well as space for performing arts events, and a gym. As with many other churches today, the Tallahassee stake center also has a kitchen and various multi-purpose classrooms.

All of the church leaders within stake areas of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are unpaid clergy (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). Stake presidents are in charge of each larger geographical area, and bishops are in charge of individual wards (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). With the exception of YSA wards, bishops are chosen from within the

ward's geographical boundary (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). Once the stake presidency determine a candidate for bishop, they then get approval from the First Presidency of the church in Salt Lake City before "issuing a call," that is, giving the job assignment to the new bishop (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). Bishop Gary Knudsen has been the bishop of Tallahassee's 5th ward for two years (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). His responsibilities are slightly different from that of a bishop in a traditional ward, since YSA wards don't have youth or children's organization (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011). In general, as is the case for all bishops, he serves as the High Priest of the ward and is responsible for the security of the building and the welfare of the ward members (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

Members of YSA wards have a unique opportunity to serve in leadership positions in various organizations, such as Relief Society or Priesthood, that are generally held by older members in family wards. Several interviewees mentioned that this opportunity was an important benefit of YSA wards and it allowed them to better understand the structure and organization of the church. In general, all church members receive a "calling," or job assignment, from their ward bishop. These callings might be a leadership position within a particular organization, or other volunteer assignments that assist with church operations.

Many of the interview participants were raised within the LDS church, but some were fairly recent converts. All expressed a deep appreciation for their religious denomination and a firm belief that the teachings of the church were true. This is not surprising given the findings of the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's U.S. Religious Landscape Survey (2008), which found that 90% of Mormons were absolutely certain about their belief in God, compared to 71% of the U.S. as a whole. Interview responses were also consistent with the Pew Forum's finding that 83% of Mormons believe that religion is "very important" to one's life (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008), as OG noted: "…My religion is probably the biggest thing in my life" (OG LDS Interview 2011). GH expressed similar feelings:

> "A lot of denominations, you could just sit back and chill… That's not how we are. You live your religion. You work in this religion" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

Though personal experiences in worship services certainly varied to some degree, there were broad similarities to the strength of the member's personal religious conviction as well as to the importance of the LDS faith in the lives of each member.

6.1 Tallahassee Florida Stake Meetinghouse Design

As mentioned, LDS meetinghouses are generally built according to standardized design plans, and the Tallahassee Florida stake is no exception (see Figure 29). The building follows the familiar pattern of having the chapel and culture hall located in the center surrounding by a ring

Figure 29: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee Florida Stake Center. Photo by author.

of classrooms and offices. In addition, the Tallahassee meetinghouse was built in stages to accommodate the growth of the community and one can see evidence of the former brick exterior of the chapel lining what is now the interior hallway. Many members who did not grow up in Tallahassee, like Bishop Knudsen, found a familiarity to the church's design:

> "It was very similar to the one I grew up in. The churches [that were built] all in that time period… seem to be patterned quite the same, so it was very familiar" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

Even the interior decorations are fairly similar across LDS meetinghouses, as DR explained:

> "There's always a foyer with a couch and a table and a lamp and Jesus pictures everywhere. They all have about the same vibe, which is nice when you're in a new place and everything is foreign and you walk into a church building and you're like, 'I can find the bathroom. I know where I am, I know who these people are; I know what I'm doing'" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

Another member noted that the consistency with the meetinghouse design also applies to the names of the rooms (see and their general location as well as to the overall architecture):

> "…There's a lot of similarities which is nice because it provides a consistency. It was an easy transition from where I went [back home] to here [in Tallahassee] to [other locations]. It's not like it's all new places or names of rooms or anything. They all pretty much have a baptismal font next to the children's room and usually it's in a hallway, and there's a chapel in the front with gym right behind it" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

Interestingly, the similarity of meetinghouse designs, while encouraging emotional feelings of familiarity and comfort, might have a peculiar effect, as AC explained:

> "At first it was weird because [the Tallahassee location] felt like every other stake building I've been to, but then the people are different. So [at] the stake building here, I felt like I could run into my friends from back home, my brothers and sisters from back home, but you get down here and it's different people, which makes it kind of strange…" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

Certainly, as evidenced in the previous two case studies, spaces and the sacred materialities found within them can trigger memories of particular events or experiences, but if there is a marked similarity between various sacred spaces, this might trigger memories that are tied to a different locale. In addition, the similarity of LDS meetinghouses extends beyond the architectural and decorative elements to the broader church curriculum. Sunday school lessons follow the same calendar across the United States and the rest of the world, and while languages used in services certainly differ, one would receive the same gospel lesson in Tallahassee as he or she would in Paris (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

The walls of LDS meetinghouses are lined with pictures, and Tallahassee is no exception. Most paintings are of Jesus but others are of events in the church's history or LDS church leaders, both current and historical. Several members were particularly struck by the beauty of

the paintings and often had a strong connection to them. Several members, like FV, had one picture that stood out as their favorite (see Figure 30):

> "There's [a] picture of [Jesus] in a cloud and He's got his arms stretched out… That's exactly how I picture when we all go to Heaven and [He has] open arms, saying, 'I've been waiting for you to come back'" (FV LDS Interview 2011).

Figure 30: Painting of Jesus, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee Stake Center. Photo by author.

Unlike many mainstream Christian denominations, LDS meetinghouses do not use the symbol of the cross, and thus the church steeple has a simple spire and the altar area in the chapel has a flower arrangement where a cross might otherwise appear. As Bishop Knudsen explained:

> "We celebrate the life and resurrection of Christ rather than concentrate on his death, his crucifixion, though we understand that to be important because without that, the other couldn't be…" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

For members who were raised within the LDS faith, not utilizing the symbolism of the cross wasn't unusual:

> "It never seems odd to me when I'm there, but [it does] when I'm somewhere else. I didn't grow up with any crosses in the home. I don't wear any crosses. I didn't wear any crosses growing up" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

The emphasis on the life and resurrection of Jesus rather than Jesus' crucifixion applies to the paintings as well, none of which depict scenes of Jesus' death. Though a few are scenes in the life of Jesus, including Jesus teaching children or praying, many are celestial in nature, depicting Jesus as a heavenly being.

LDS services are also fairly unique in the length of the time allocated for Sunday services, which is a three-hour block consisting of a Relief Society meeting for women or Priesthood meeting for men, Sunday school, and a sacrament meeting in the chapel. The focus of the sacrament meeting is to partake of bread and water in remembrance of the Last Supper and Jesus' sacrifice and also includes speakers, most often the bishop or other members of the ward. During the general conference of the church, held every April and October, members attend a live broadcast of the conference rather than the traditional Sunday services.

Additionally, as mentioned previously, three wards meet in the Tallahassee location, and thus Sunday services are arranged so multiple groups can use the same meetinghouse at the same time. One ward might be conducting a sacrament meeting in the chapel while another has Sunday school in a classroom. At most wards, Sunday services generally consist of the sacrament meeting followed by Sunday school and then Priesthood or Relief Society, but since so many wards must utilize the same space in Tallahassee, the 5th ward actually has Priesthood or Relief Society, then Sunday school, and lastly the sacrament meeting. Several members mentioned that although the church building was similar to that in their hometown, this unusual arrangement of services seemed strange at first and took some getting used to.

Members also noted that 5th ward is unusual in terms of the silence during the sacrament service. FV mentioned that family wards are "really loud with all the kids" (FV LDS Interview 2011), whereas 5th ward, consisting of all unmarried young adults, is "insanely quiet" (DR LDS Interview 2011). DR explained further:

> "…When we say loud, it's loud in conjunction with absolute silence. It's still very very reverent. It's still very quiet as opposed to most churches… [But] every now and then, you get the [whining] and the kids who are in trouble who are screaming as they're pulled out the door, you know?" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

For some, the lack of distracting noises helped create a deeper spiritual experience, while others missed the noises of children that they were used to in a traditional ward. GH found an appeal to both:

> "…The sacrament [is] dead silent in student ward, but in a family ward, it's noisy. Babies are crying, babies are talking. But there's something beautiful about that, too… To hear babies crying or little kids talking or parents just saying, 'Shh. Be reverent. It's time for the sacrament,' there's something special about that. There's a different kind of special that you get when the sacrament is just silent. When it's just silent, it allows more time for personal reflection, it allows more time for introspection, but when it's noisy, you think about how great it is to have a family… It's different, but they're both beautiful" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

The noticeable lack of children in the 5th ward is compounded by the fact that wards overlap, so often adults and children in the family wards are seen in the hallways between classes and services.

Cleanliness is valued in the LDS faith, and this is certainly apparent at the Tallahassee meetinghouse. One night, as I was conducting interviews at the church, members of the church building committee were meeting to clean up the meetinghouse, and in addition to cleaning the floors and bathroom areas, engaged in a thorough cleaning and dusting of all surfaces. I was struck by the cheerful attitude of the volunteers as they cleaned, and by the care they took to make sure absolutely every surface was attended to – and quite honestly, I felt a bit bad about my own lack of attention to dusting in my apartment, which I promptly though not as cheerfully did when I went home that evening. Many members discussed how important the cleanliness of the church was to the overall experience.

Another LDS value discussed by members is health and wellness, and this is evidenced by the gym, which is located in the center of the church next to the chapel and doubles as a cultural hall (see Figure 31 on the following page). NS discussed the importance of this room:

> "People think it's weird we have a gym, but we're very athletic-type, sport-oriented type people, and health is a big thing. We also have a stage, because we love the whole scripture about talents…" (NS LDS Interview 2011).

Members often played indoor soccer or basketball in the gym, and many noted that they enjoyed having the opportunity to play sports and other activities with their church community.

Behind the Tallahassee meetinghouse is the Institute building, where members both young and old can take religious classes, many for college credit. There is also a pool table and televisions, and many members of the 5th ward spent most if not all of their free time at the

Figure 31: Gym and Culture Hall, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee Stake Center. Photo by author.

Institute building relaxing with friends. There is also a large park area next to the church, with picnic tables and even an axe throwing target, and this space is used by both members and community groups such as the Boy Scouts.

Members seemed to feel quite differently at the church depending on which room they were in, as HP explained:

> "We have Priesthood meetings… in this room called the High Council room… I've always associated that room with being trapped in an endless discussion that I can never escape. [Laughs.] Because there's something about that table, where if you get at the head of it, you get this need to just talk and talk and never let someone go, or they must have that feeling because otherwise, what justifies it?" (HP LDS Interview 2011).

One member noted that the nursery, not surprisingly, had a chaotic feel to it:

> "We love our little ones, but they're nuts" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

The Institute building, on the other hand, seemed to foster an affective experience related to learning:

> "When I'm in the Institute, I have this sense that I'm there to gain knowledge and to learn, which is actually true for the chapel, too, but… the chapel is more for worship, so I

get that feeling that I'm there to worship. It's a bit different…" (BN LDS Interview 2011).

Overall, member responses varied when they were asked which area in the meetinghouse was their favorite, and this was a bit surprising given the striking similarity with which each member described the building itself as well as the worship experience. Several members noted that the chapel was their favorite space, for a variety of reasons. For BN, it was the whole experience of being in the chapel, particularly receiving the sacrament:

> "…The sacrament is basically like an equivalent to communion, except we don't drink wine so we bless water, but it's symbolizing the blood of Christ and the body of Christ, so there's a big similarity to communion, and when I take it… it's very symbolic that I'm doing this to ask for forgiveness and to offer promises…" (BN LDS Interview 2011).

FV expressed a similar sentiment:

> "My favorite place would probably be the chapel, just because… being able to hear your own thoughts and being able to commune with Heavenly Father, to be able to talk to Him and to be able to repent of your sins when you're taking the sacrament, and just feeling like He's actually there sitting next to you" (FV LDS Interview 2011).

For Bishop Knudsen, one of his favorite places at the church, in addition to the chapel, was his office:

> "I'd have to say my favorite part, outside of that sacrament ordinance which is just so important, is probably being able to interview people here in this office behind closed doors. To be able to get to know them and to understand what they're about, and to see how good people are. I have a unique opportunity that way. I know what's going on in their lives, and to help them through their issues or just share their joys with them, that's a wonderful experience" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

Other members' favorite space was the culture hall. For OG, different spaces were important for different reasons:

> "Okay, the culture hall, which is like the gym, is my favorite for activities and things like that where you can go in there, hang out with people, do different things. It has that connection with doing those things, but then the chapel is also my favorite because you think of it spiritually…" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

Another member preferred the Institute building, and yet another had an entirely different favorite space:

> "…There's this one little room off to the side [and] I don't know what they use it for, I think it's an office that they use for the work specialist… It's got nicely upholstered chairs in it, as opposed to sitting in more mass-produced chairs, it's kind of nice, and because it's not used too much, it's clean. So if I have to have a discussion with somebody about something or we're having an organizational meeting and are trying to coordinate, I always try and make sure that we can zip into that room so we can sit down and be comfortable. If you need somewhere private, that's good, without it already being somebody's office that's used on Sundays" (HP LDS Interview 2011).

Several members noted that they didn't have a favorite area in the Tallahassee location, but had a strong attachment to several rooms in the LDS meetinghouses in their hometowns.

6.2 Simplicity and Reverence in the Latter-day Saint Chapel

Meaningful experiences certainly occurred in a variety of spaces at the Tallahassee meetinghouse. However, the simplicity of the chapel as well as the spiritual significance of the sacrament seemed to inspire strong emotional experiences in participants and represented one of the spaces they mentioned most often (see Figure 32). One member, HP, explained that the lack of decorations within the chapel helped create a more attentive experience:

> "There's not really decoration inside, so that serves to keep us focused on the service itself. I know that if there was a picture up there somewhere, I would just stare at that and zone out" (HP LDS Interview 2011).

Indeed, the inside of the chapel is decidedly unadorned, which is in stark contrast to the Catholic churches I was more used to. The walls of my hometown Cathedral are decorated with marble statues of the stations of the cross, which tell the story of Jesus' crucifixion, and while I didn't consider them to be distracting necessarily, I would often find myself pondering them if my mind wandered during mass. In the LDS chapel, however, there simply aren't any materialities within the space that could capture your attention during the service. GH noted the importance of the chapel's simplistic décor:

> "It's not about having giant stained-glass windows and crosses everywhere and stuff like that. You should have no distractions in a church when you walk in except for thinking

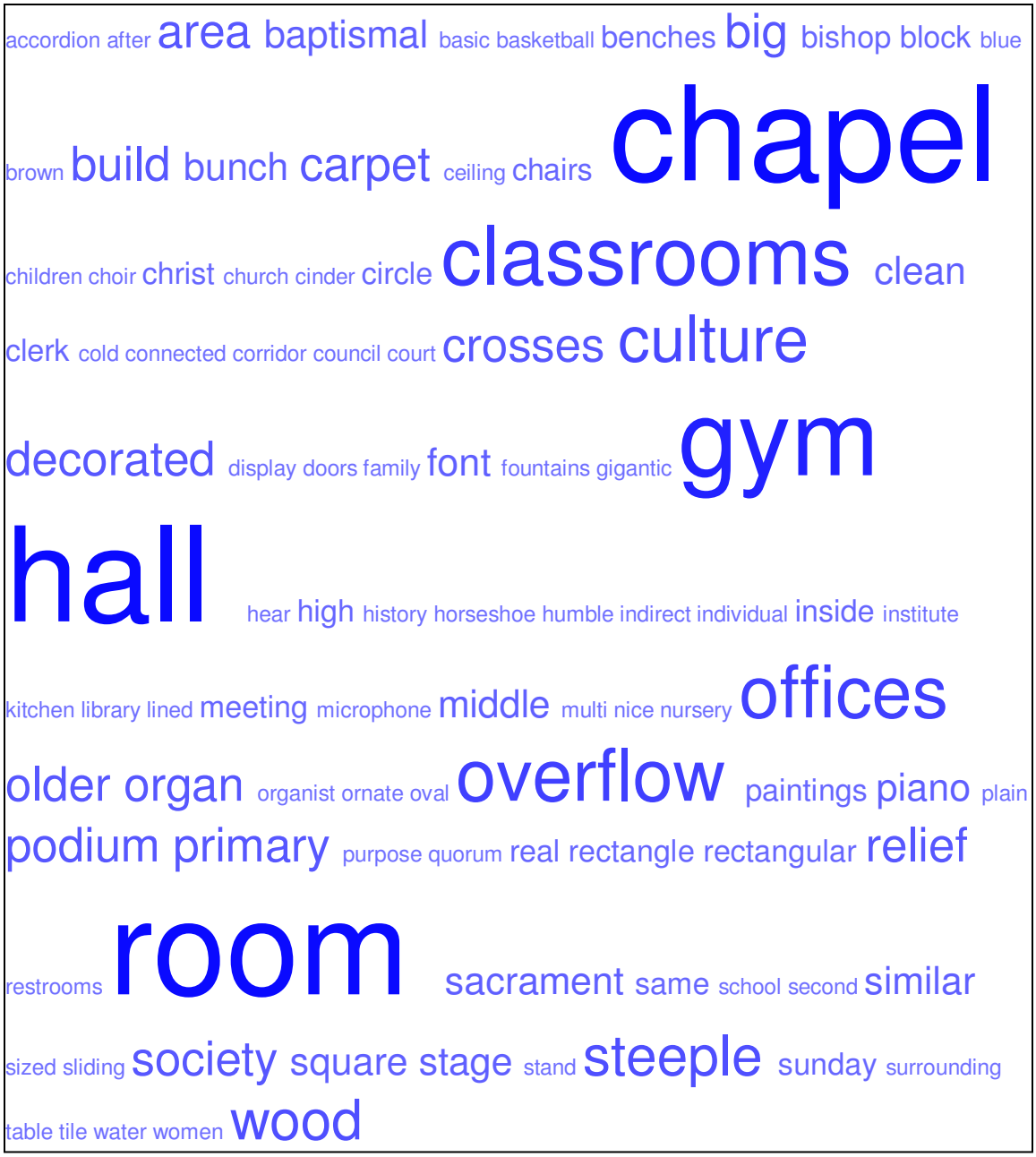

Figure 32: Word frequency diagram created from members' descriptions of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Tallahassee 5th Ward. Diagram created by author.

about God and thinking about your spirit and thinking about where you are" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

There is, interestingly, a clock on the wall, which I found to be quite surprising when I first entered the chapel. Far from having any spiritual significance, the clock is imperative in a

congregation that must keep a strict time schedule in order to allow other wards to utilize the space. On one occasion, during a Sunday service that was reserved for members of the ward to share their own testimonies, the service leader glanced at the clock and reminded the congregation and those who wished to speak that there were only a few minutes left in the service.

Apart from the lack of spiritual symbolism and, perhaps, the addition of the clock, the chapel looks similar to many other mainstream Christian churches. The bishop and his counselors are seated in the front area of the chapel along with the organist and choir, if the choir is singing at the particular service. There is also a table, covered in a white cloth, where the sacrament is prepared, as well as a piano and organ. For many members, the organ music was a pivotal part of the chapel experience and helped shape the overall mood. In addition, the quietness of the chapel, particularly compared to the surrounding halls and classrooms, further enhanced the space's capacity to elicit an affective spiritual experience:

> "They ask when you come in [to the chapel] to try and not do your talking, to try and do it outside, to try and keep the spirit of it… Their idea is that it gives you some time to just sit there and think about things while the organ's playing. That's always a real nice time. It's definitely, to me, the most spiritual of it. I can really focus in there…" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

As was the case at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, often what is *not* in a space can be as affective as what *is* in the space, and this extends beyond visual media. BN detailed the experience within the chapel:

> "I feel the spirit of God. I feel at peace. I feel like I can rejuvenate from my week and any sort of way that I've transgressed. I feel like I can find a way to ask God for forgiveness… When I get into the quiet area… that's where He's going to speak the loudest is in the quietest place" (BN LDS Interview 2011).

OG similarly felt a strong spiritual connection in the chapel related to the simplicity of the chapel's décor:

> "…It's not magnificent. There's no huge stained glass, there's not those different things that can make it this gorgeous area. But yet, especially during sacrament, when they're passing it out and everyone's quiet and contemplative, it's definitely a spiritual time

where you can think about the savior and what He's done for you and what you can try to do to better yourself" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

The simplicity of the chapel also extends to partaking of the sacrament itself. Members of the church abstain from alcohol, but rather than use grape juice as a substitute, the church simply uses water passed out in small, plastic cups, as well as bread. Bishop Knudsen explained the use of water rather than grape juice:

> "…You don't want to detract from the spirit of the service or from the ordinance… If it was grape juice or something like that, there may be somebody who has an allergic reaction to it that couldn't take it. Sometimes there are people, as far as the bread, who can't have gluten, so sometimes they'll substitute some sort of gluten free [bread], [and] they'll make the arrangements ahead of time to make sure that that's in the tray that they would receive. But I think water can be for everybody without detracting from the spirit of what's going on there" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

Again, there is a focus on simplicity, practicality, and reverence.

Undoubtedly, the ritual performance of breaking bread and drinking water in remembrance of the Last Supper contributes to members' feelings of reverence in the chapel, and much like the Catholic mass, this sacrament is the central event in the Sunday church service, as Bishop Knudsen explained:

> "…The whole layout of the chapel and the reason we do what's called 'sacrament service' is to partake of the ordinance of the sacrament, the bread and the water. So the focus of sacrament meeting is that, that fifteen minute event during the seventy minute sacrament meeting" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

In addition, LDS members generally dress in formal church attire, including dresses or skirts for women, and suit jackets and ties for men, again to create a spirit of reverence when in the chapel (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview). Taking pictures of the chapel is not allowed to maintain the sanctity of the space (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview).

Furthermore, in the absence of prominent religious symbolism, the ritual of the sacrament served as a way to delineate the chapel as a particularly sacred space, as OG noted:

> OG: "I can really focus in there [in the chapel]."
>
> *CF: "And why do you think that is?"*

OG: "I think it's because it's really supposed to be… a more sacred room. The chapel is where we pass the sacrament and we partake of the bread and water… If you're doing those things, it needs to be a holier area and we need to keep it sacred."

CF: "Is there anything about the room and its design or decoration that helps you feel like that?"

OG: "I don't know if it's the decoration, but I think it's just the spirit that's there… If you treat it like that, then it feels like that. If you treat it like it's a normal room, then it's going to feel like a normal room" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

This notion that ritualization and collective performance contributes to the sacralization of space is pertinent for geographers of religion, many of whom have explored the politicization of sacred space to the exclusion of individual religious practices.

For many members, partaking of the sacrament is a deeply spiritual experience that invokes memories of past rituals and ordinances:

"During the sacrament, you can renew your baptismal covenants you made when you were baptized, and that's something that you can do for yourself every single week… There is that connection where you know that you're doing something to help yourself" (FV LDS Interview 2011).

GH expressed similar feelings:

"I love the chapel… because that's the location where I get my most spiritually centered. That's where the sacrament happens… We have classrooms and stuff, but we're just meant to be educated in those classrooms. Personal reflection and the taking of the sacrament happens in the chapel. So the feeling I get in the chapel is a special feeling from any of the other rooms in the church" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

The length of the Sunday service also seemed to foster emotio-spiritual experiences, since members had a significant amount of time to reflect on church doctrine and principles, time that young adults, many of whom are students, don't always have:

"A lot of times, I feel like I carry stress with me when I'm going to church. You have to get into a mindset because it's like you're leaving everything behind, and you're trying to focus on, not just God, but just trying to relax… and just feel free. When I first walk in, I've still got tons of stress usually during that first meeting, the Priesthood meeting. I'm not focused. I don't know why, I just can't ever seem to focus there. But then, as the

three hours go on… I'm a little bit more focused. I'm a lot more calmer when I'm there. I'm normally a very outspoken person, but once I go in, it just calms me. I really don't talk" (CD LDS Interview 2011).

Many members expressed similar feelings of peace and contentment when in the chapel, and one saw the sacrament service as a way to "rejuvenate" after the week's events (BN LDS Interview). In addition, the relatively homogenous demographic composition of the congregation, for some, further created the sense of a close-knit spiritual community, as NS said simply:

"I don't ever feel alone. I think a lot of people, especially in college, feel alone" (NS LDS Interview 2011).

6.3 Communal Experiences at the Latter-day Saint Meetinghouse

As with many churches, the strong sense of community identity experienced by members of the 5th ward cultivated feelings of spirituality and fostered a sense of connectivity. In fact, several members, like member FV, noted that the warm and hospitable atmosphere was the feature of the church that many outsiders noticed first:

"The thing that I tend to hear is they say that when they walk in the doors, they just feel the Spirit, or they feel differently. I honestly think it's the Spirit that touches them. I think that they sometimes can feel a sense of familiarity" (FV LDS Interview 2011).

As an outsider to the LDS community, I was immediately struck by the welcoming nature of every member, each of whom seemed genuinely pleased to see new visitors like myself as well as old friends. On several occasions, members knew I would be attending a particular Sunday service, and several would be waiting for me outside before I arrived to ensure I felt welcome. During the Relief Society meeting, the women of 5th ward were quick to introduce themselves and all seemed to have a good rapport with one another. For some, like BN, this distinctive spirit of friendship and familiarity within the church was an important factor in deciding to convert:

"When I started visiting the church as an investigator, the thing that really struck me was just the way that the people were so welcoming and they were so open and nice. I really got a sense that they cared about me and that they loved me. So it wasn't a theological thing at first, it was really… how these people were making me feel. I felt their love and if I had to describe God, I would say, 'God is love"… So if God is love, and I'm feeling

this love from these people, I felt like there was a connection there" (BN LDS Interview 2011).

While YSA wards certainly present opportunities for leadership positions and friendship, members also noted that clustering young adults together in a ward has the potential, not surprisingly, to create social drama as well:

> "…There's a high school aspect to when you get a group of 18 to 25 year olds, mostly, in one place and they're all trying to date each other" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

One member experienced a level of unease in the 5th ward after a failed relationship with another member. DR initially had difficulty finding friends in the 5th ward:

> "…There's a lot of people in Tallahassee 5th ward who are from Tallahassee, so they've all known each other since they were like five… There were already a lot of cliques and set groups, so it took me about six months to feel comfortable there, because it took me about six months to find a friend…" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

Other members similarly noted how the 5th ward had distinct, established friend groups. However, for members of the church who were the only members of LDS in their family, YSA wards presented an opportunity to attend church alone without *feeling* alone, since all members of the YSA, by definition, are single and are attending church on their own.

Still, most interviewees, both recent converts and long-time members of LDS, commented that the first thing they noticed when they entered the church was the hospitable atmosphere:

> "Typically, the first thing I do when I get into church is I shake someone's hand, so I'm definitely reminded of the welcoming spirit and the friendliness that everyone has when I get in there. I become calmer. My head becomes less crowded with thoughts and I become more focused and spiritual and reverent. It's just a total transformation" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

Certainly, sacred materialities play a role in mediating affective encounters, but the personal interactions that occur within sacred spaces can similarly foster strong emotional experiences. For DR, it was the people that distinguished the church as a sacred space:

> "If you've ever been in one of those church buildings and it's completely empty, it's very bizarre… Those church buildings feel empty when there's nobody in them. They're dark and they just feel like they're not being used, like they're empty. It's nice to go in the chapel sometimes when it's empty; it's reverent and you sit, but those churches are

meant to have people in them. When there's no people, it's just a building" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

In addition, several members noted that every meetinghouse they'd attended had a foyer in the entryway, with a couch, chairs, and a lamp, and this feature seemed to further encourage a welcoming, familiar atmosphere.

6.4 Latter-day Saint Temples

Figure 33: Inscription on the outside of the Atlanta Georgia Temple. Photo by author.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints generally attend services every Sunday at their local meetinghouse, and as evidenced by the interview findings, view their church, particularly the chapel, as a sacred space. However, in addition to traditional Sunday services, special services such as marriages and baptisms for the dead are held in Latter-day Saint temples, which are closed to non-Mormons (Molloy 2010). As of late 2011, there were 135 temples in operation worldwide, with an additional 31 either announced or under construction ("Temples" 2011).

Temples are considered by members to be the "House of the Lord," which is also inscribed by the entrance of each temple (see Figure 33), and as the current Latter-day Saint

President Thomas S. Monson noted: "To members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the temple is the most sacred place on earth" (Monson 2010, p.13). According to LDS doctrine, temples were erected in the ancient Americas and after the call to build temples was restored by LDS founder Joseph Smith, the first modern temple was completed in 1836 in Kirtland, Ohio (Talmage 2010). After abandoning the location because of persecution, LDS members built a temple in Nauvoo, Illinois in 1846, only to have to again abandon the structure due to persecution (Talmage 2010). Eventually, Mormon pioneers established a community in present-day Salt Lake City, Utah, and after a 40-year construction period, completed the Salt Lake Temple in 1893 (Talmage 2010).

The notion of the temple and the rituals practiced within connects the LDS church with its Judeo-Christian heritage, recalling the temple practices of ancient Israel (Hinckley 2010). Central to the "ordinances" – which is the LDS term for religious rituals representing one's covenant with God – performed within the temple is the notion of one's eternal relationship with our family, both present-day and celestial. As the late LDS President Gordon B. Hinckley (2010) explained: "For the most part, temple work is concerned with the family, with each of us as members of God's eternal family and with each of us as members of earthly families" (p.23). Members of the LDS church believe that before we were born on earth, we existed in a celestial realm as children of God, where we will return after we die (Hinckley 2010). Furthermore, the church believes that those who have died without being baptized or receiving the various temple ordinances can do so by proxy, with living members standing in for those who are deceased (Hinckley 2010). As such, the church has some of the largest genealogical facilities in the world so members can trace their family histories and assist deceased relatives (Hinckley 2010). These genealogical archives and family history centers are open to all Mormons and non-Mormons alike (Hinckley 2010).

Temples, on the other hand, are only open to Mormons who have been found worthy by their local bishop and stake president (Hinckley 2010):

> The person must certify that he or she is morally clean and is keeping the Word of Wisdom, paying a full tithing, living in harmony with the teachings of the Church, and not maintaining any affiliation or sympathy with apostate groups (Hinckley 2010, p.31).

Furthermore, the specific features of the rituals and ceremonies performed within the temples are carefully guarded and members are urged not to reveal details in order to protect the temple's

sanctity (Packer 2010). The discussion of the temple experience and ordinances in this case study will thus be limited to those details that have been made public by LDS church officials.

Overall, both the architectural design of the temple and the rituals practiced within are highly symbolic. After entering the temple, for instance, members change out of their street attire into white, temple clothing, meant to evoke a sense of oneness and equality with all of the other members present (Hinckley 2010). Changing out of "ordinary" clothes further enhances the feeling of being somewhere distinctly different, as one member, a contractor who had worked on the Atlanta Georgia temple explained:

> "…As I walk in the doors, it's just like letting go of what's going on outside of doors. As you change clothes and put on your white clothing, it is literally like taking off the cares of the world, putting them in the locker for a while – we don't carry a telephone inside the Temple, nobody's calling me. I don't have to think about my job. I can just focus on my relationship with God…" (Joey LDS Interview 2011).

Members are instructed to ponder the deeper meaning the different symbols used within the temple in order to deepen their spiritual understanding ("Commonly Asked Questions" 2010), and it is clear from talking with members that they found a deep level of spiritual significance in the temple's various materialities.

In addition, all of the areas of the temple are very carefully and attentively maintained in order "to preserve a spirit of reverence" ("Commonly Asked Questions" 2010, p.79). For Bishop Knudsen, this attention to detail enhanced the notion that the temple is, for Mormons, the holiest place on earth:

> "It's equivalent to Solomon's Temple, so what you're paying tribute to and what you're recognizing is [that] this is the House of the Lord. When you walk the halls, you wonder if He's walked those halls. And so you want it to be nice…" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

Many members noted that the quietness of the temple further enhanced the spirit of reverence and the overall affective quality of the space. Member AC described how the design of the Washington D.C. temple reduced noise from the outside:

> "The Temple is just very peaceful. D.C. is a great example. The beltway is all around the thing, and you're outside and you can hear a little bit of it, well you hear a lot of it, but you walk through the doors and it's just quiet… There are nine story tall waterfalls

on each side of the place, so you go in there, and it's just this quiet, serene place" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

HP further described how this level of noise distinguished the temple as even more sacred than the LDS meetinghouse:

> "There's more of a feeling of reverence. It's very quiet. The church, if you go into the chapel, most of the time people are talking… It's also more of a social aspect [at the church], whereas [when] you go down to the temple… there's a sense of purpose and a reason to be there" (HP LDS Interview 2011).

As in the LDS meetinghouse, temples have a variety of paintings adorning the walls, further serving to focus members' attention on Jesus and the broader LDS faith:

> "I think when you build a place of worship, what you put in there is going to reflect how people feel. If you put in a cross, people might feel guilty, to me. But if you put in a picture of Jesus Christ helping the people that he loves, it might make you feel like helping others. It might make you want to live by his example" (BN LDS Interview 2011)

As previously discussed, sacred spaces are traditionally conceived of as breaks within the homogenous realm of everyday space (Eliade 1957). For Mormons, temples present clear evidence of this notion:

> "…The temple's just this place where you just escape the real world and you enter and the lobby's always very ornate, but then you go through the check-in area, and you change into your white clothes and you just – I don't know, everybody just looks so peaceful and perfect in there" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

While meetinghouse chapels are certainly considered to be sacred and are spaces where important religious rituals take place, temples represent a clear break from *this world* in both a spatial and a temporal sense. As GH explained:

> "It [the temple] just takes aspects of time as bounded by what we know empirically and just destroys them, but builds up this eternal perspective of time which is huge and almost incomprehensible. Comprehensible only by God" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

Members continually commented on how the distance between earth and heaven is reduced in the temple, and this notion has been reinforced by President Monson (2010). Members often go to the temple to contemplate difficult decisions (Hinckley 2010). "In the temple we can receive

spiritual perspective. There, during the time of the temple service, we are 'out of the world'" (Hinckley 2010, p.35).

There is significance to the fact that the temple is conceived of as the *House* of the Lord. As mentioned, the core theological underpinning behind the temple ordinances regards the eternal relationship of the family, and both home and family are central LDS values. Homes themselves are considered to be sacred, as member OG explained:

> "…There's such an emphasis on the family and one of the most sacred places is supposed to be the home. You're supposed to make your home almost like the temple… There should be a spirit of love in your home…" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

Another member, NS, had strikingly similar sentiments:

> "I strive to make my home feel that way [like the temple]. And I've had comments from nonmember friends who come to my home, my little apartment… where there are pictures of the temple and of Christ… That's my sanctuary away from the world when I can't drive four hours to get to the temple… I strive so hard to make the Spirit in my home mimic that of maybe a church building or the lobby of the Temple" (NS LDS Interview 2011).

Indeed, the sheer task of getting to the temple seemed to help set it apart as somewhere different from the space of our everyday lives. While there are numerous temples around the world, many Mormons have to drive several hours to visit the temple closest to them:

> "When you're going, you have to plan a trip to go. It's not like going to the church building… There's a different process that goes into going to the Temple, because you're not going to take the sacrament and you're going there to do life saving ordinances for those who've passed on…" (ES LDS Interview 2011).

For FV and other members, this long drive was well worth the experience of being in the temple:

> "I would live at the Temple if I could. I absolutely love being at the Temple. I have gotten some answers to questions that I've prayed about that I feel like I can only receive at the Temple, because the Temple is the Lord's house… It's a place where you step out of the world for two or three hours. It's kind of silly because people think it's crazy that I drive to Orlando for four hours, spend just a few hours down there, and then drive back, but to me, it makes all the difference in the world" (FV LDS Interview 2011).

Members also often described the importance of getting into the proper mental state before entering the temple, which was also enhanced by the lengthy drive.

In Eliade's (1957) conception of hierophanic space, certain spaces were conceived of as ordinary and others as *extra*-ordinary or sacred. It is clear from my discussions with members of the LDS faith that there is further differentiation of sacrality in sacred spaces themselves. That is, certain spaces are conceived of as *more* sacred than others, and this is the case with the LDS temple. Bishop Knudsen compared the experience of being in the church with being at the temple:

> "There's a significant difference in the way that you feel. It's a much greater level of reverence there…" (Bishop Knudsen LDS Interview 2011).

OG expressed similar feelings:

> "It's a lot more spiritual [than the chapel]. The chapel is the closest we can get; it's supposed to be sacred, but the temple in itself is so much more sacred. It is one of the closest places we can be to heaven on earth, and it feels that way when you go in there…" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

For GH, just entering the temple for the first time was a profoundly affective experience:

> "I cried. Because to go to the temple is a goal for all of us, because it's a marker of personal worthiness and it's also a marker of spiritual understanding… There's no greater place to center yourself spiritually than the temple…" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

Within the temple itself, certain rooms in particular appealed to members and seemed to have the greatest affective capacity. Most members noted that the celestial room was their favorite area of the temple. For member NS, the celestial room cultivated a deeper sense of spirituality than the other spaces in the temple because "what matters is what matters in the celestial room…" (NS LDS Interview 2011). Many members, like AC, felt that the lack of time constraints in the celestial room, in contrast to other rooms where particular ordinances take place rather quickly, enhanced the spiritual experience:

> "My favorite place to escape to is definitely the celestial room, because there's no time limit in there…" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

For other members, like OG, it was the beauty of the celestial room's décor that set it apart:

> "It's beautiful… It's one of the most peaceful rooms because you can just sit there and you're quiet and we might just be sitting there talking a little in whispers. [In other

> rooms], you're doing stuff and you're moving around, but there, you can just sit and contemplate, 'Why I am I here? What am I doing? What do I need to be doing? What can we improve on?' And so it's there that we really feel the Spirit most strongly…" (OG LDS Interview 2011).

Other members similarly discussed praying about decisions or problems in the celestial room and gaining answers they had not previously received.

The spiritual significance of the temple's symbols applies to the site of the building in addition to the building's interior design. Temples are often built on higher elevation locations, and many members, like DR, described the deeper religious significance of this fact:

> "They spend a long time looking for somewhere where it's higher and you can see it and it's above most of the things around it… When we drive to the Temple, it feels a bit like a beacon… You're like, 'I can see it. If I can just keep going that direction, we'll get there'" (DR LDS Interview 2011).

The heightened level of spirituality experienced by LDS members at the temple is visibly reflected in the height of the building and its location often overlooking the surrounding area.

6.5 Atlanta Georgia Temple

As previously discussed, temples are closed to all non-Mormons, as well as to Mormons who do not hold the temple recommend from their bishop. However, temples are open to the public after they are newly constructed, before they are dedicated, and before rededication if a temple undergoes renovations. The Atlanta Georgia Temple (see Figure 34 on the following page) was open to the public in April of 2011 after undergoing major renovations, and I was able to tour the temple facilities with an LDS representative, Joey, who was also a contractor on the project and agreed to sit down for an interview after our tour. Though I approached the temple as an outsider, I still found the experience to be quite moving and was struck by the beautiful simplicity of the temple's design and decoration.

According to a pre-tour informational video, Latter-day Saints first settled in northwestern Georgia beginning in the late 1800s, building the first LDS house of worship in Georgia in 1879. When the Atlanta Georgia temple was originally built in the early 1980s, the area surrounding the temple property was relatively undeveloped. The temple originally covered approximately 150,000 Mormons in the surrounding area. Today, however, the temple covers

Figure 34: Atlanta Georgia Temple. Photo by author.

500,000 members and there are numerous shops, apartments, and condominiums in close proximity (see Figure 35). Renovations on the temple were originally proposed in order to bring the outdated sprinkler system up to code (Joey LDS Interview 2011). However, after evaluating

Figure 35: Viewshed of Atlanta Georgia Temple, facing northeast. Photo by author.

construction plans for a number of years, LDS officials decided to embark on a full-scale renovation, including enlarging the sealing room, where marriages take place, a complete renovation of the baptistry, and heightening the ceiling in the celestial room to allow in natural light (Joey LDS Interview 2011).

In all temples, the front lobby area (see Figures 36 and 37) is open to both members and visitors, and visitors often wait in a side room particularly if they are non-members attending a

Figure 36: Entrance and reception desk, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

Figure 37: Front lobby, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

wedding ceremony or are under age. Volunteers working at the front desk verify that members indeed have a temple recommend card before directing them into the temple. Also common to all temples, the various rooms, including the lobby, of the Atlanta Georgia temple integrate features of the geographic area. Dogwood trees, commonly found throughout the southeastern United States, were planted around the property, and the tree's leaves and flowers and depicted throughout the temple (as shown in the stained glass panel in Figure 36). After entering the temple and presenting their recommend card, members proceed to the dressing room. Pictures of various biblical figures including Jesus and Mary line the halls of the temple, and as is the case in the LDS meetinghouse, there are no crosses nor depictions of Jesus' death. Along our tour, volunteers were stationed throughout the halls in case visitors had questions or needed help finding their way, and members noted that this is also the case after the temple is dedicated and closed to the public.

All of the rooms within the temple are designed for a particular purpose, and members thus visit different rooms depending on if they are attending the temple for an endowment ceremony – a symbolic ceremony where a member makes covenants with God – a baptism, marriage, or other ordinance. The first of two instruction rooms a member might enter features dark wood accents and a beautifully painted forest scene on the walls (see Figure 38). While the specific instructions members receive in this room are kept private, the room is meant to

Figure 38: Instruction room, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

symbolize the creation of the world. Members then move on to the second instruction room, which featured lighter colored wood and white walls, representative of a member becoming "brighter" as he or she gains spiritual knowledge (Joey LDS Interview 2011). In these rooms:

> "an overview is given of God's plan for His children. Latter-day Saints learn of their premortal and mortal lives, the creation of the world and the fall of man, the central role of Jesus Christ as the Redeemer of all God's children, and the blessings they can receive in the next life" ("Things Pertaining to This House" 2010, p.62).

The baptistry in the temple is highly symbolic, and like all other rooms, there is evidence of fine craftsmanship and careful attention to detail. As shown in Figure 39, the baptismal font in all temples is positioned on the backs of twelve oxen, representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and is meant to be reminiscent of the ancient Temple of Solomon ("Things Pertaining to This House" 2010). Members frequently attend the temple to conduct baptisms by proxy for the dead and thus visit this room quite often.

Figure 39: Baptistry, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

For Mormons, marital bonds do not end with death. Rather, if a husband and wife are "sealed" in a temple wedding ceremony, they are connected together "for time and all eternity" (Nelson 2010, p.45). In a sealing ceremony, a husband and wife kneel at an altar and are sealed together ("Your Path to the Temple" 2010). Children, both biological and adopted, can also be sealed to their parents. Mormon youth are taught the importance of a temple marriage from an early age, and the sealing ceremony is considered to be "the greatest blessing of the temple," ("Your Path to the Temple" 2010, p.74).

Figure 40: Sealing room, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

Atlanta's sealing room (see Figure 40) was very bright, with natural light coming in from leaded glass windows reflecting off a large chandelier in the center of the room. Again, the local geography is reflected in gold dogwood leaves that border the ceiling, and dogwood flowers positioned in each corner. The floor also featured the same intricate design of dogwood leaves and flowers that had been hand-carved into the carpet. Growing up, my family business was floor covering, and thus I likely tend to notice the quality and craftsmanship of flooring more than most people. While it might seem unimportant compared to the grandness of the chandelier and the beauty of the upholstery, the carpet in the sealing room was the nicest I've ever seen, and

to me, reflected an incredible level of care and attention that was common in all the temple's spaces. Perhaps more impressive and spiritually moving to members are the two mirrors, positioned directly across from one another. After a husband and wife are married, they gaze into the mirrors which reflect their image infinitely. According to members, this is a powerful experience and is meant to reflect the eternal nature of the marriage.

After receiving various sacred ordinances, members enter the celestial room (see Figure 13), which, as previously discussed, was most of the member's favorite room in the temple and was mine as well. "The celestial room symbolizes the exalted and peaceful state all may acheive through living the gospel of Jesus Christ. This room represents the contentment, inner harmony, and peace available to eternal families..." ("Things Pertaining to This House" p.65). My tour guide simply instructed me to take a seat in the celestial room and enjoy the space as long as I'd like. While I am not a member of the LDS faith, even for me as an outsider, there was something deeply spiritual about being in the celestial room. The quiet reverence of the room combined with the brilliance of the room's décor gave me the distinct feeling that this space was sacred. I felt peaceful and relaxed, and would have enjoyed simply sitting in that room for the remainder of the day.

Figure 41: Celestial room, Atlanta Georgia Temple. © 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc. Used with permission.

What struck me about the powerful capacity for affect in the celestial room was that the room itself was fairly simple. There weren't large sculptures or ornate stained glass windows, and although there were gold accents in the room, the primary colors used in the room's decorations and furnishings were white and natural wood tones. Overall, the level of craftsmanship that was apparent in the celestial room, as well as every other space in the temple, was unlike anything I'd ever seen. For Joey, who had completed some of the work on the refurbished temple, this level of perfection reflected the spiritual significance of the building and he sometimes found himself recalling different events in the building's renovation as he entered particular rooms:

> "You always evaluate your own work, and so sometimes I would sit down and remember, 'Ah, that's where I messed up something. I had to pull that apart.' But also, it's a sense of satisfaction to see the beautiful work…" (Joey LDS Interview 2011).

The symbolic significance of the room's brightness had clearly been apparent to LDS church officials, who, as mentioned, heightened the ceiling during the temple's renovation to increase the amount of natural light entering the room. For members, this brightness symbolized heaven, and many described the celestial room as the closest place to heaven on earth.

In contrast with the LDS meetinghouse, LDS temples emphasize religious symbolism and are, themselves, symbols of Mormon theology. Furthermore, while partaking of the sacrament during Sunday church service is an important reminder of one's faith, the spiritual significance of this ritual pales in comparison to the various ceremonies and ordinances performed in the temple. As the late LDS President Howard W. Hunter (2010) explained, "All of our efforts in proclaiming the gospel, perfecting the Saints, and redeeming the dead lead to the holy temple. This is because the temple ordinances are absolutely crucial; we cannot return to God's presence without them" (pp.37-38).

CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Sacred spaces hold significant meaning for individuals, although experiences are dependent on one's own spiritual perspective. Affect has traditionally been conceived of as nonrepresentational, and the affective nature of sacred space has thus been positioned as something beyond the realm of exploration. However, as this study has demonstrated, even though participants might not be consciously aware of the affective capacity of sacred space, in-depth interviewing provides a way for participants to reflect on their experiences and to recognize the emotional potency of these places.

7.1 Understanding the Affective Capacity of Sacred Materialities

Undoubtedly, religious experience is highly personal, but it is clear from this study that there is an element of a communal, emotional experience. To summarize the findings in this study, it is clear from the interviews of three different religious communities that there is a shared sense of contentment, peace, and comfort when members entered their space of worship. Members might select a house of worship based firstly on the denomination of the religious community. However, when choosing between two churches that are the same denomination, participants often noted that they simply felt more at ease in one church over the other, as one member of Saint Paul's noted:

> "There was really only one [other church] in the selection process that we physically visited, and it felt greatly different. Very… dark and less open… So the structure itself felt different. Didn't feel as much like a church… It felt much more closed in" (CJ United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

While there are several fairly large United Methodist churches in Tallahassee, each has a distinct "feel" to it, and members often noted that their worship experience was quite different when they visited one of the other churches. That said, members of other, "darker" churches that participant CJ referred to would likely feel more at ease in their church than in the stark brightness of Saint Paul's sanctuary.

Though I expected some level of similarity across interview participants, I was surprised by the extent to which affective and emotional religious experiences cut across denominational

lines. Almost every interviewee, for instance, mentioned feeling a sense of home in his or her house of worship, but of course, the cause of these feelings of "home" differed depending on the location. Interestingly, though members of the Taoist Tai Chi Society represented the most diverse array of spiritual beliefs, an analysis of the interview contents revealed that this group had the most similarity in responses, as shown in Figure 42. At the Taoist Tai Chi Society,

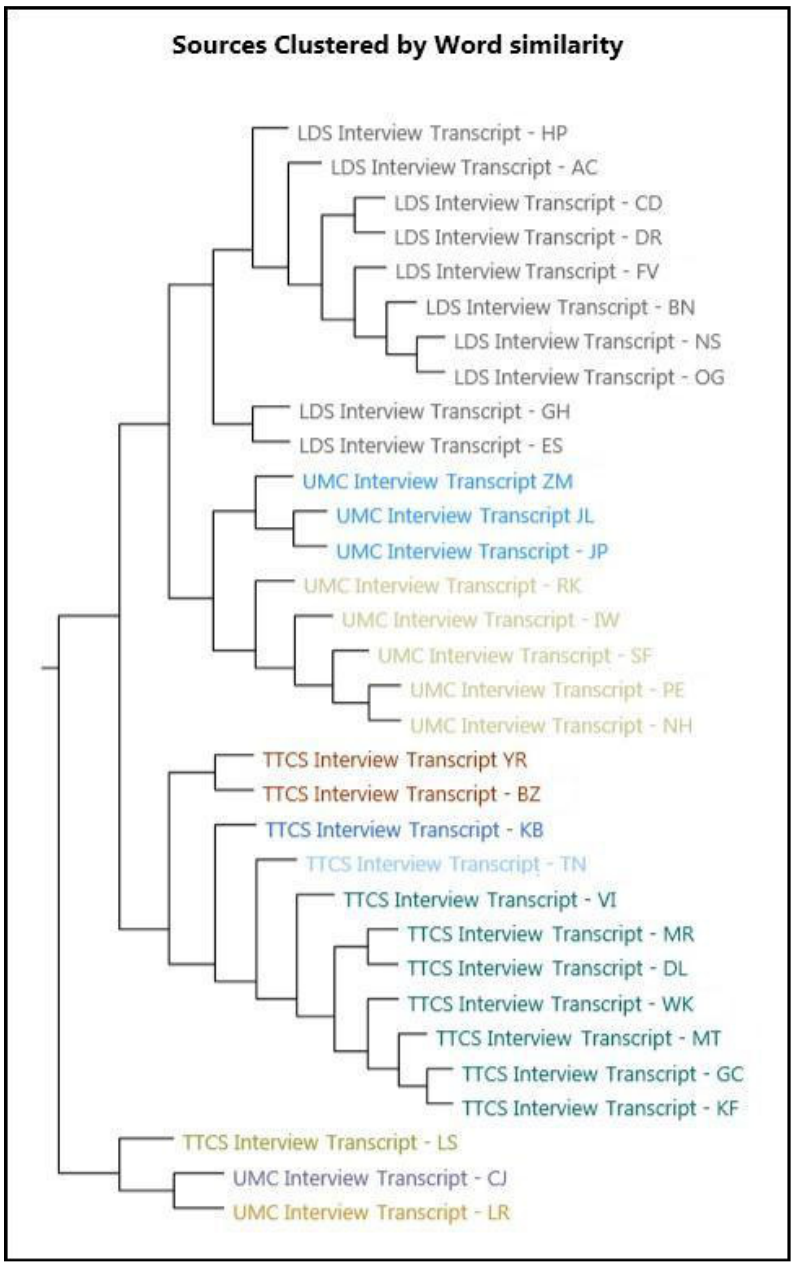

Figure 42: Interview respondents clustered by word similarity. Cluster analysis carried out using NVivo 9. Diagram created by author.

though members represented different faith traditions, each seemed to notice and be affected by the same sacred materialities, to include the surrounding grounds and the architectural and decorative features of the practice hall. Furthermore, even though members might connect with these elements spiritually in different ways, participants repeatedly noted a fairly universal feeling of peace and contentment while being at the center and performing Tai Chi. Additionally, although members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' 5th ward represented the most demographically homogenous group, overall interview patterns and communal, emotional experiences were evidenced at all three case study locations. Thus, the capacity of sacred materialities to inspire affective encounters and the patterning of these experiences transcended differences in the respondent's age or life situation.

It is clear that the affective experience of religious performance is, in part, shaped by the spatial dimensions of the particular house of worship. Latter-day Saint member GH noted a "total transformation" when walking into the church, and elaborated on the cause of this powerful experience:

> **"**I think it's a three-fold thing. One, I think it's just the atmosphere. You see pictures of Jesus Christ. You see religious and spiritual pictures around… You see all of these things that are just beautiful, and spiritually beautiful. Then, the second thing is just kind of my reverence that I hold for the church. It's a sacred building. You shouldn't be walking in there thinking about a football game… The third thing is just something that happens. It's like the feeling you get when you see a flag at half mast. Your feelings are automatically changed. You automatically start to get somber and more reverent just because of what that means. The symbol of walking into a church – it transforms you when you walk in there" (GH LDS Interview 2011).

Certainly, as GH noted, the materialities found within our sacred landscape are imbued with meaning, and often seeing these features, such as paintings, stained glass, or crosses, helps inspire an emotional and spiritual connection. Reverend Clarke Campbell-Evans of Saint Paul's noted succinctly:

> "…Space does play a pretty vital role in the sense of what happens within the space" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Sacred spaces are certainly not unique in their ability to shape our emotions and arouse affective experiences. Sports fans, for instance, might equate being in a sold-out stadium to a

spiritual experience of sorts, and would note a distinct difference between viewing a game in person and watching a televised broadcast. One interviewee, a member of Saint Paul's, likened the experience of being in a church to dining at a restaurant:

> "I think we do underestimate what that [the design of Saint Paul's] does for our comfort level… I think about it, it's like going to a restaurant. The food may be great but if it just doesn't seem clean or it doesn't seem comfortable or if it seems old and unkempt, you're going to have a completely different experience as opposed to going to somewhere that had all the bells and whistles" (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Still, sacred spaces are unique in that their very Eliadean conception sets them apart from the everyday spaces we occupy. As evidenced from the interview findings, spaces of worship are transformative in distinct ways. In the sanctuary of Saint Paul's, for instance, the transformative nature of the space was discernibly greater than that of the other, supplemental church areas. As Saint Paul's parishioner NH noted:

> "When I'm in other buildings, it feels more like I'm not in the church as much as I'm just in a social environment… And this is something that carries over from my youth. All the social events occurred in the out-buildings, and then whenever you went into the sanctuary, that was always the service time. So, I have this kind of delineation in there and I still think of it that way. It's kind of like, there are things you do – chat on the phone, text messages, things like that – I'll do those things out in the other buildings. As soon as I go into the sanctuary, the phone goes off. So it's kind of, okay, this place has a higher level of meaning than the other buildings" (NH United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Members of the other two religious communities expressed similar sentiments. LDS member AC, for example, noted how being in the Temple transcended everyday experience:

> "The Temple's just this place where you just escape the *real world* [emphasis added]… [I feel] just so small in this grand scheme of anything… You just feel insignificant because your little problems are nothing compared to the grand scheme of life and everything that it involves" (AC LDS Interview 2011).

Houses of worship and sacred spaces more broadly are, perhaps paradoxically, both within the world and yet positioned as distinctly apart from the world, consistently crafting a transformative

experience for participants. These sites represent, for some, a microcosm of the cosmos and, returning to Sheldrake's (2007) definition of spirituality, connect with something greater than ourselves.

Over half of all U.S. adults hold that religion is "very important" to their daily lives (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life 2008), and thus the variety of sacred sites that dot our landscape serve as reminders of the potency of religious belief in this country. For too long, the experience of *being in* sacred spaces has been virtually ignored by geographers. These sites often unite or divide communities in profound ways and thus a more complete understanding of our spiritual landscape can lead to a better understanding of social interaction more broadly (see Kong 2010). Furthermore, if there is an element of social construction to the ways in which we sacralize space, as geographers have noted, then understanding individual attachment to these sites is imperative to understanding the collective meaning we ascribe.

It is evident from the interview responses that while sacred space undoubtedly reinforces various religious ideologies, our understanding of them is connected to our personal histories. Reverend Clarke, for instance, recalled various "meaningful moments" that occurred in Saint Paul's sanctuary, whether at the altar rail praying with parishioners or standing before a couple about to be married. He further noted:

> "…The space develops this attachment to my own sense of being able to minister hope and love and joy in places where it's needed most" (Rev. Clarke United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

Other members recalled getting married in Saint Paul's sanctuary, or attending banquets in Sander's Hall. Similarly, members of the Taoist Tai Chi Society could recall a poignant moment with Master Moy at the center, and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints recollected conversations with loved ones or receiving answers to prayers in the Temple. Often, these memories were recalled simply by returning to the space in general or by noticing a decorative element found within.

The space of a particular house of worship has a powerful ability to transform our spiritual experiences, and not always positively. Some members of Saint Paul's United Methodist Church, for instance, noted feelings of unease and distraction in churches that were located in strip-malls, or locations that were ornately decorated. For PE, a member of Saint

Paul's, simply being in a church with chairs as opposed to pews conveyed a sense of impermanence:

> "I know I've been to churches where they don't have wooden pews and that always seemed; it just seems different to me. It gives me a different feeling… It seems contemporary to me, even though it's not necessarily the case. It doesn't seem as grounded… It just doesn't seem to have the same heart… You just can't create tradition. (PE United Methodist Church Interview 2011).

If I conducted interviews at a contemporary church that happened to be located in a nontraditional location, it would be interesting to see if members felt more comfortable in a church that didn't have the more conventional pews and, perhaps, imposing columns and architecture. What these interviews illustrate is not that there is one particular type of church or arrangement of a house of worship that has the greatest affective capability, but that all spiritual spaces have a significant capacity to affect our emotions and to shape our religious experience.

7.2 Future Directions

Although this work takes an important step in understanding the affective and emotive nature of sacred spaces, much more research is needed in these areas. While the Taoist Tai Chi center represents a non-traditional house of worship, there are many other sacred spaces that defy conventional definitions, including domestic shrines, religious monuments, and ancient burial grounds. Furthermore, as the U.S. religious landscape has changed, more churches are now located in the non-traditional settings mentioned, such as in movie theaters, gymnasiums, or strip malls, but these places have yet to be explored with an attention to their affective capacity. It is also clear from my work that outdoor locations, like the grounds of the Taoist Tai Chi center, have a strong capacity to elicit emotional responses, and it is likely that other natural locations, even nonreligious locations like national parks, will evoke similar responses in participants. In addition, many religious groups have a wide array of sacred spaces, which was confirmed when I experienced profoundly different sets of emotions from entering a local Catholic church than when walking into Saint Peter's Basilica. Just as sacred spaces are differentiated from "ordinary" spaces in Eliade's hierophany, it appears that there could be a multiplicitous dimension to the "sacredness" of sacred space itself. For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for instance, although both the meetinghouse and temple were considered

"sacred," there was clearly a higher level of sacredness ascribed to the latter, and this conception could be further explored in future research.

In addition, geographers are well-equipped to explore how personal histories shape our experiences within both sacred and secular spaces. Many of the participants interviewed cited numerous examples of how various spatial features evoked recollections of past events and memories. These memories, as Durkheim (1995) noted, point to the durability of symbols and rituals, particularly within houses of worship. The layering of personal experiences in the context of sacred spaces goes beyond a simple list of feelings, and it would be useful to more thoroughly examine the role of memories in the production of affects within these spaces. Future in-depth interviews could be conducted that specifically point to participant's memories within the space, and what, if any, particular materialities inspire certain recollections.

Much of the current work on emotions within geography "has benefitted substantially from previous geographical and other spatially nuanced 'body work.' After all, our first and foremost, most immediate and intimately *felt* geography is the body" (Davidson and Milligan, 2004, p.523). Geographers interested in spiritual issues could turn their attention to the physical practice of spirituality, and to the physical performance of spiritual rituals like communion, baptism, or meditation. A primary area for my future research is the role of performance in shaping our experience of *being in* sacred sites. While performativity related to the practice of Tai Chi has certainly been alluded to in this dissertation, I intend to carry out a future project which examines performance more explicitly. As has been shown in this study, sacred materialities shape the way we experience space, but rituals and religious practices, too, reflect and reinforce our spiritual beliefs in similar ways and have their own capacity to inspire affective encounters. "A ritual object or action becomes sacred by having attention focused on it in a highly marked way" (Smith 1987, p.104). This focusing of attention is essentially an affective spiritual encounter, and thus by exploring affect in a religious setting, geographers can more fully understand the process of sacralization. "From such a point of view, there is nothing that is inherently sacred or profane… Ritual is not an expression of or a response to 'the Sacred'; rather, something or someone is made sacred by ritual…" (Smith 1987, p.104). An affectual exploration of rituals can thus inform the broader discussion of the politicization of sacred space.

Lastly, while in-depth interviewing provided a useful way for members to articulate their affective and emotive experiences at sacred sites, they offer just one way for these experiences to be expressed. In the future, I could have participants create a mental map of their house of worship, adding symbols, colors, and other artistic elements to highlight their experiences within the space. As mentioned previously, a constraint of interviews is that both participants and researchers are bounded by language, and thus mental mapping presents an opportunity to convey the details of our experiences in a different way. Additionally, this project represented my first attempt at conducting interviews as a researcher, and while the knowledge I've gained from talking with participants has been invaluable, I have also learned a great deal about the interview process in general. For instance, I would take greater effort to transcribe interviews as they are completed – which is not always possible when conducting a large number of interviews in a small time period – but this would allow me a greater level of reflexivity since I could immediately start to see patterns emerge that might not have been highlighted by my interview notes. Even after a small number of interviews were completed, there were distinct patterns to participant responses, and while this lends credence to the conclusions reached in this project, I could have probed more deeply in future interviews to better understand why such patterns existed. In addition, future explorations of geography and spirituality could further explore the degree of intentionality to which architectural elements or decorative items elicit particular responses. While this study focused on members of religious communities, conducting a greater number of interviews with architects, interior designers, and religious leaders would shed much needed light on ways in which affective responses are engendered, and the degree to which the intended response is elicited.

In closing, conceiving of affect as *more-than*-representational, and paying particular attention to the affective capacity of space allows this concept to be pragmatically engaged. Affect and emotion are relationally linked, and are each a part of the *lived* religious experience. As I have demonstrated in this study, by exploring the affective capacity of a sacred space, geographers can more fully understand not only the emotional experiences of *being in* these places, but also the sacred materialities upon which these experiences are patterned. In-depth interviewing provides a way for participants to convey their own affective and emotional experiences, and through a hermeneutical approach that acknowledges the multiplicity of meanings we attach to spiritual spaces, geographic researchers can begin to explore these

experiences more fully. Emotional responses and the performance of various religious practices are critical to a full understanding of the geographic dimensions of sacred space, and geographers are well-equipped to explore these topics.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SUBJECT AFFILIATIONS

AC	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
BN	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
BZ	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
CD	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
CJ	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
DL	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
DR	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
ES	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
FV	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
GC	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
GH	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
HP	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
IW	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
JL	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
JP	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
KB	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
KF	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
LR	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
LS	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
MR	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
MT	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011
NH	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
NS	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
OG	Member, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011
PE	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
RK	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
SF	Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011
TN	Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011

VI Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011

WK Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011

YR Taoist Tai Chi Society Member: 2011

ZM Saint Paul's United Methodist Church Parishioner: 2011

Reverend Clarke Campbell-Evans Senior Pastor, Saint Paul's United Methodist Church: 2011

Bishop Gary Knudsen Bishop, 5th Ward, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011

Joey Member and tour guide, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 2011

Dr. Karen Laughlin President, International Taoist Tai Chi Society: 2011

APPENDIX B

LETTER OF CONSENT

FSU Behavioral Consent Form
Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship

You are invited to be in a research study of religion and emotion within houses of worship. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a member of [state name of church/house of worship] or attend services here regularly. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by Caitlin Finlayson, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Geography at Florida State University.

Background Information:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the emotional experiences that take place within houses of worship. By conducting this interview, we hope to specifically learn more about how certain architectural and design elements in houses of worship encourage various emotional responses.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview, which will last 45 minutes to 1 hour. A second interview of the same length may be added with your permission if it seems necessary. During the interview, you will be asked questions about your experiences as a member of your church or house of worship, and will be asked to describe which architectural and design features of the church appeal to you and why. Your interview will be audio taped with your permission.

Risks and benefits of being in the Study:

The study has several risks. First, you may be vulnerable to someone's determining who you are and what you've said, but I will protect you from this possibility as much as possible by using a pseudonym for your name. Second, you may feel uncomfortable answering questions about your religious beliefs and experiences, but you have the right to decline to answer any question. If you do not wish to be audio taped, you may still participate in this study.

You will not benefit directly from participating in this research study.

Compensation:

You will not be paid for participating in this research study.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential to the extent permitted by law. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely and only researchers will have access to the records. The audio tapes of the interview will only be accessed by the principal investigator, and will be stored as a password-protected digital audio file on a secured computer. These files will be erased approximately three years after the completion of this study.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Caitlin Finlayson. You may ask any question you have now. If you have a question later, you are encouraged to contact the researcher at , Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2190, @fsu.edu. This research is being supervised by Dr. Lisa Jordan, @fsu.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the FSU Institutional Review Board at 2010 Levy Street, Research Building B, Suite 276, Tallahassee, FL 32306-2742, or 850-644-8633, or by email at humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had those questions answered. I consent to participate in the study.

_____ _____

Signature Date

_____ _____

Signature of Investigator Date

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF COOPERATION – SAINT PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

St. Paul's United Methodist Church
1700 North Meridian Road
Tallahassee, FL 32303
(850) 385-5146

7/13/10

Florida State University, Institutional Review Board
2010 Levy Avenue
Suite 276-C
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2743
(850) 644-7900

Please note that Mrs. Caitlin Finlayson, a Florida State University graduate student in the Department of Geography, has the permission of St. Paul's United Methodist Church to conduct research at our Tallahassee, Florida church for her study, "Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship."

As the Senior Pastor of St. Paul's United Methodist Church, I am authorized to grant permission to have Mrs. Finlayson recruit research participants from our church. Mrs. Finlayson will contact church attendees to recruit them for her study by approaching them as they leave a church meeting or service. She will hand them a packet of information on the study and will arrange an interview date and time. During the interviews, participants will be asked various questions, including information about their own religious background as well as their emotional experience in our house of worship. Mrs. Finlayson is also permitted to collect field notes and observations at our church, as well as take photographs of the interior and exterior of our facility. Mrs. Finlayson's on-site research activities will be completed by December of 2011.

Mrs. Finlayson has agreed not to enter any of our buildings without permission, and she will not interfere with the flow of pedestrians or vehicles. Mrs. Finlayson has also agreed to provide to me with a copy of the Florida State University IRB-approved, stamped consent document before she recruits participants, and will also provide a copy of the completed study.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Signed,

Rev. Clarke Campbell-Evans
Senior Pastor

APPENDIX D

LETTER OF COOPERATION – TAOIST TAI CHI SOCIETY

美國道家太極拳社
Taoist Tai Chi Society of the United States of America, Inc.
2106 Thomasville Road • Tallahassee, Florida 32308 • Phone: 850/224-5438 • Fax: 850/383-1353
E-mail: usa@taoist.org • www.taoist.org
A Charitable Organization

9/10/10

Florida State University, Institutional Review Board
2010 Levy Avenue
Suite 276-C
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2743
(850) 644-7900

Please note that Mrs. Caitlin Finlayson, a Florida State University graduate student in the Department of Geography, has the permission of the Tallahassee, Florida Branch of the Taoist Tai Chi Society of the United States of America to conduct research at our Tallahassee, Florida location for her study, "Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship."

As the President of the International Taoist Tai Chi Society, I am authorized to grant permission to have Mrs. Finlayson recruit research participants from our society. I will assist Mrs. Finlayson in contacting members to recruit them for her study. She will hand potential participants a packet of information on the study and will arrange an interview date and time. During the interviews, participants will be asked various questions, including information about their own religious background as well as their emotional experience in our house of worship. Mrs. Finlayson is also permitted to collect field notes and observations at our site, as well as take photographs of the interior and exterior of our facility. Mrs. Finlayson's on-site research activities will be completed by December of 2012.

Mrs. Finlayson has agreed not to enter any of our buildings without permission, and she will not interfere with the flow of pedestrians or vehicles. Mrs. Finlayson has also agreed to provide to me with a copy of the Florida State University Institutional Review Board-approved, stamped consent document before she recruits participants, and will also provide a copy of the completed study.

If there are any questions, please contact our office.

Signed,

Dr. Karen Laughlin
President, International Taoist Tai Chi Society

APPENDIX E

LETTER OF COOPERATION – CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Tallahassee Florida Stake
Tallahassee 5th Ward
312 Stadium Dr.
Tallahassee, FL 32304
(850) 681-2331

9/16/10

Florida State University, Institutional Review Board
2010 Levy Avenue
Suite 276-C
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2743
(850) 644-7900

Please note that Mrs. Caitlin Finlayson, a Florida State University graduate student in the Department of Geography, has the permission of the Tallahassee 5th Ward, Tallahassee Florida Stake, of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to conduct research at our church on 312 Stadium Drive for her study, "Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship."

As the Bishop of the Tallahassee 5th Ward, I am authorized to grant permission to have Mrs. Finlayson request participation in her study from members of the Tallahassee 5th Ward congregation. Mrs. Finlayson will contact church members to ask them to help study by approaching them as they leave a church meeting or service. She will not solicit or conduct interviews on Sunday. She will provide potential participants a packet of information on the study and will arrange an interview date and time. During the interviews, participants will be asked various questions, including information about their religious background as well as their emotional experience in our house of worship.

Mrs. Finlayson is also permitted to collect field notes and observations at our church, as well as take photographs of the interior and exterior of our facility. However, no pictures are permitted to be taken in the Chapel, during Sunday services, or during any baptismal service. Mrs. Finlayson is aware that the Tallahassee 5th Ward congregation meets on Thursday evenings and on Sundays from 1:00pm to 4:00 pm. (Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings at the Church are occupied by other congregations.) Mrs. Finlayson's on-site research activities will be completed by December of 2011.

Mrs. Finlayson has agreed not to enter any of our buildings without permission, and she will not interfere with the flow of pedestrians or vehicles. Mrs. Finlayson has also agreed to provide to me with a copy of the Florida State University Institutional Review Board-approved, stamped consent document before she requests participation, and will also provide a copy of the completed study. Mrs. Finlayson's on-site research activities will be completed by December of 2011.

If there are any questions, please contact me at my home at

Respectfully,

Gary Knudsen
Bishop, Tallahassee 5th Ward

APPENDIX F

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

Use of Human Subjects in Research - Approval Memorandum

Human Subjects <humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu> **Tue, Sep 21, 2010 at 10:02 AM**
To: @fsu.edu
Cc: @fsu.edu

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 9/21/2010

To: Caitlin Finlayson

Address:
Dept.: GEOGRAPHY

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship

The application that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 9/19/2011 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Lisa Jordan, Advisor
HSC No. 2010.4887

APPENDIX G

HUMAN SUBJECTS RENEWAL REQUEST APPROVAL

Use of Human Subjects in Research - Approval Memorandum

Human Subjects <humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu> **Thu, Aug 4, 2011 at 10:22 AM**
To: @fsu.edu
Cc: @fsu.edu

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 · FAX (850) 644-4392

RE-APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 8/4/2011

To: Caitlin Finlayson

Address:
Dept.: GEOGRAPHY

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Re-approval of Use of Human subjects in Research
Spaces of Faith: An Affective Geographical Exploration of Houses of Worship

Your request to continue the research project listed above involving human subjects has been approved by the Human Subjects Committee. If your project has not been completed by 8/1/2012, you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the committee.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your renewal request, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this re-approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting of research subjects. You are reminded that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report in writing, any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor are reminded of their responsibility for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in their department. They are advised to review the protocols as often as necessary to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

Cc: Lisa Jordan, Advisor
HSC No. 2011.6708

APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – SAINT PAUL'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Interview Schedule – Key Topics and Possible Questions

St. Paul's United Methodist Church

This interview schedule will be used as a general guide, but the interview process will be semi-structured and fluid depending *on the participant's responses.*

1. **Aims of the Interview**

   Discuss research topic and briefly explain study
   Describe general topics we'll be discussing during the interview session.

2. **Background and History**

   I'd like to ask you a few questions about your involvement in the church. How long have you been a member of St. Paul's United Methodist Church?

   How did you initially decide to become a member of St. Paul's?
   ((Possible Probing Questions - Can you tell me a little more about that? Were you a member of any other religious group before joining the United Methodist Church?))

   How long have you been attending church at this location?

   What were your initial impressions of the church?
   ((Has that changed at all since you've been attending?))

3. **Current Involvement**

   Are you a member of any other religious organizations or committees here? ((e.g. Bible Study, Missionary Work))

   How often do you attend services?

4. **Emotional Experiences**

   I'd like you to think about walking into your church. What's the first thing you notice?
   ((Might be a decorative element, might simply be a more general emotional response.))

   ((How does that make you feel? What does that feature represent to you?))

   Could you describe the inside of your church? What stands out to you when you walk inside? ((Could be decorations, architectural elements, images, etc.))

((How does that make you feel?))

Imagine you're talking to someone who's never visited your church. How would you describe the building and its architecture? ((e.g. lighting, exposed beams, layout))

What is your favorite part of the inside of your church?

((How does that feature make you feel?))

Are there any places within your church where you feel a strong spiritual connection?

Thinking about your entire church and not just the sanctuary, what other spaces do you visit while you're here? ((e.g. study rooms, dining areas))
((Do you feel differently in those places than you do in the worship hall?))

((If they don't specifically bring it up, ask about Lake Ella – Do you generally spend any time outdoors after services? Or, could you describe the surrounding area where your church is located?))

Have you attended services at other United Methodist Churches?

If so, how did that church differ from St. Paul's?

Your church is one of the largest United Methodist Churches in Tallahassee. How does it make you feel to see so many other people in your church each week?

Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your church that you haven't already?

APPENDIX I

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – TAOIST TAI CHI SOCIETY, TALLAHASSEE BRANCH

Interview Schedule – Key Topics and Possible Questions

Taoist Tai Chi Society, Tallahassee Branch

This interview schedule will be used as a general guide, but the interview process will be semi-*structured and fluid depending on the participant*'s responses.

1. **Aims of the Interview**

   Discuss research topic and briefly explain study
   Describe general topics we'll be discussing during the interview session.

2. **Background and History**

   I'd like to ask you a few questions about your involvement in the Tai Chi society.
   How long have you been a member here?

   How did you initially decide to become involved in the Tai Chi society?
   ((Possible Probing Questions - Can you tell me a little more about that?))

   What about Tai Chi first interested you? Would you say that you're Taoist in a religious sense?

   Were you a member of any other religious group before joining the Tai Chi society?

   How long have you been practicing Tai Chi?

3. **Current Involvement**

   Are you involved with any other activities at the Taoist Tai Chi society?
   ((e.g. international dinners, teaching classes))

   How often do you visit the Tai Chi center?

4. **Emotional Experiences**

   I'd like you to think about walking into the Taoist Tai Chi center. What's the first thing you notice?
   ((Might be a decorative element, might simply be a more general emotional response.))

   ((How does that make you feel? What does that feature represent to you?))

Could you describe the inside of the Tai Chi center? What stands out to you? ((Could be decorations, architectural elements, images, etc.))

((How does that make you feel?))

Imagine you're talking to someone who's never visited the center. How would you describe the building and its architecture? ((e.g. lighting, exposed beams, layout))

What is your favorite part of the center, either inside or outside?

((How does that feature make you feel?))

Are there any places within the center that you feel a strong connection to?

Thinking about the Taoist Tai Chi center's entire property, and not just the main practice area, what other spaces do you visit while you're here? ((e.g. study rooms, upstairs area))
((Do you feel differently in those places than you do in the main hall?))

((If they don't specifically bring it up, ask about the garden area – Do you generally spend any time outdoors while you're here?))

Have you ever practiced Tai Chi at other centers?
((Could you describe the location?))

Do you ever practice Tai Chi at home? Does it feel different to practice Tai Chi at the center than at your home?

Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about the Taoist Tai Chi society that you haven't already?

APPENDIX J

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE – CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS, TALLAHASSEE 5TH WARD

Interview Schedule – Key Topics and Possible Questions

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

This interview schedule will be used as a general guide, but the interview process will be semi-st*ructured and fluid depending on the participant's responses.*

1. **Aims of the Interview**

   Discuss research topic and briefly explain study
   Describe general topics we'll be discussing during the interview session.

2. **Background and History**

   I'd like to ask you a few questions about your involvement in the church. How long have you been a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?

   How did you initially decide to become a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?
   ((Possible Probing Questions - Can you tell me a little more about that?
   Were you a member of any other religious group before joining the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?))

   How long have you been attending church at this location?

   What were your initial impressions of the church?
   ((Has that changed at all since you've been attending?))

3. **Current Involvement**

   Are you a member of any other religious organizations or committees here?
   ((e.g. Relief Society, Missionary Activity))

   How often do you attend services?

4. **Emotional Experiences**

   I'd like you to think about walking into your church. What's the first thing you notice?
   ((Might be a decorative element, might simply be a more general emotional response.))

   ((How does that make you feel? What does that feature represent to you?))

Could you describe the inside of your church? What stands out to you when you walk inside? ((Could be decorations, architectural elements, images, etc.))
((How does that make you feel?))

Imagine you're talking to someone who's never visited your church. How would you describe the building and its architecture? ((e.g. lighting, exposed beams, layout))

What is your favorite part of the inside of your church?
((How does that feature make you feel?))

Are there any places within your church where you feel a strong spiritual connection?

Thinking about your entire church and not just the sanctuary, what other spaces do you visit while you're here? ((e.g. study rooms, dining areas))
((Do you feel differently in those places than you do in the worship hall?))

Have you attended services at other Churches of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints?

If so, how did that church differ from the Tallahassee location?

Is there anything else you'd like to share with me about your church that you haven't already?

APPENDIX K

INTERVIEW CODING GUIDE

Node and Description Report

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
Activities	Other activities participant is involved in at the case study location	32	65
Attendance	How often participant visits the case study location	24	35
BuildingDescription	General description of house of worship building	34	124
BuildingDescription_Brief_LDS	Keywords participants use in describing the case study location	11	137
BuildingDescription_Brief_TTCS	Keywords participants use in describing the case study location	10	123
BuildingDescription_Brief_UMC	Keywords participants use in describing the case study location	10	130
BuildingDescription_Decorations	Description of decorations found in building	25	50

Name			Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
	BuildingDescription _FrequentSpaces		Other rooms (aside from the main area or chapel) participant frequently visits at case study location	16	25
		BuildingDescription _FrequentSpaces _Feelings	Feelings experienced in other rooms participant visits, and how these feelings might be similar or different to feelings experienced in main area	23	40
	BuildingDescription _MainArea		Description of chapel, sanctuary, or practice hall	12	36
FavoritePlace			Participant's favorite place or feature at the case study location	31	41
	FavoritePlace _Feelings		Feelings experienced in participant's favorite place or evoked by favorite feature of the case study location	21	24

Name		Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
FirstImpression		Participant's first impression of the case study location	28	51
	FirstImpression _Changes	Discussion of how participant's impressions of case study location might have changed after continuing attendance	11	11
	FirstImpression _Feelings	Feelings experienced when participant first visited case study location	2	2
FirstNotice		What the participant first notices at the case study location	32	53
	FirstNotice _Feelings	Feelings evoked by what the participant first notices at the case study location	30	44

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
GeneralInfo	General information and background about case study location	11	67
Home	Feelings of home or family experienced by participant at case study location	14	34
LDS_GeneralChurchFeelings	Participant's general feelings and comments about LDS	9	29
LDS_Temple	Descriptions and general information about the Temple	12	39
LDS_Temple_Atlanta_Construction	Details regarding the construction and renovation of the Atlanta Temple	1	2
LDS_Temple_Differences	Differences between experiences at the Temple and experiences at the meeting-house	8	10

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
LDS_Temple_Feelings	Feelings experienced by participants when at the Temple	11	30
LDS_Temple_Spaces	Participant's favorite spaces within the Temple or spaces where participant feels a strong spiritual connection	11	22
LDS_WardDifferences	Differences between the LDS 5th ward and other wards/ stakes	9	17
Membership	How long the participant has been a member of the denom- ination/ religious group	33	40
Membership _Continue	Why the participant continued to be a member of the particular denomation or religious group if he/she was raised in that faith	32	46

Name		Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
	Membership_Tallahassee	How long participant has been a member or attending services at the Tallahassee location if he/she began membership at a different location	22	24
OtherSenses		Emotive experiences elicited by non-visual means, or nonvisual features of case study location described by participant	13	25
Peace		Feelings of peace experienced by participant at case study location	20	34
SpiritualSpace		Spaces or design/decorative features at the case study location that participants have a strong spiritual connection to	23	35

Name		Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
	SpiritualSpace _Feelings	Feelings experienced in spaces at the case study location that participants have a strong spiritual connection to	11	15
TransformSpace		Participant's discussion of the transformat- ive nature of sacred space	17	28
TTCS_Dispute		Discussion of neighbor- hood dispute over the Tallahassee Tai Chi Society's Thomasville Road location	3	15

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
TTCS_Garden	Details about the garden area at the Tallahassee Taoist Tai Chi Society, and whether or not participant visits the garden while at the center	6	7
TTCS_GeneralFeelings	Participant's general feelings and comments about the Taoist Tai Chi Society	11	33
TTCS_HomePractice	Discussion of whether or not participant practices Tai Chi at home, and how home practice differs from practicing at the center	11	18
TTCS_LocationDifferences	Differences between the Tallahassee branch of the TTCS and other locations	7	8
TTCS_Orangeville	Description of TTCS inter- national center in Orangeville	6	9

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
TTCS_PerformingTaiChi	Discussion of how participant feels when performing Tai Chi	10	17
TTCS_PersonalBeliefs	Discussion of how participant's involvement at the TTCS connects with his/her personal religious or spritual beliefs	6	12
TTCS_Taoist	Discussion of whether or not participant is religiously Taoist	12	17
UMC_ChurchDifferences	Differences between Saint Paul's United Methodist Church and other churches	9	24
UMC_GeneralChurchFeelings	Participant's general feelings and comments about Saint Paul's United Methodist Church	4	7

Name	Description	Number of Sources Coded	References
UMC_LakeElla	Discussion of Lake Ella, including the effect of the lake on church visibility and whether or not participant visits the lake when at Saint Paul's United Methodist Church	10	15

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