

Sven Sterken and Evan Weyns (eds.), *Territories of Faith: Religion, Urban Planning and Demographic Change in Post-War Europe*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2022. 362pp. 99 figures (b/w). Bibliographies at end of each chapter. €55.00 pbk. doi:10.1017/S0963926822000438

This edited collection focuses on the extraordinary flourishing of religious architecture in European cities between roughly 1945 and 1975. We are reminded throughout the volume – which concentrates largely on the Roman Catholic church – of the astonishing pace of building in this period: Giovanni Montini (1897–1978), archbishop of Milan and later Pope Paul VI, built no fewer than 123 churches in his diocese in just eight years. His contemporary in Bologna, Giacomo Lercaro (1891–1976), blessed 11 sites for new churches on a single summer's day, touring the fields at the edges of his city with an entourage, planting crosses among the crops (a remarkable photograph of which appears in the editors' introduction). Reading the essays in this volume from the perspective of our post-modern, more secular era, there is a sense of immersion into many worlds now vanished: the agricultural hinterlands of European cities that were consumed by rapid (sub-)urbanization in the post-war years; the confidence of so many bishops to forge a strong physical presence in these new suburbs – and to raise the money needed to do it; and more generally the self-assurance of the sociologists and urban planners who assisted religious leaders in the carving out of new scientific, rational urban worlds that they believed would enrich the (religious) lives of the modern citizen. As each of the authors note, questions of how to build have now given way largely to how to manage decline and to protect architectural heritage. 'It is difficult', the editors Sven Sterken and Eva Weyns comment, 'for us now to fully appreciate the notions of identity, collectivity and spirituality embodied by these buildings' (p. 30).

Territories of Faith is not so much an architectural history of churches in post-war urban Europe – though there is substantial commentary on architects, styles and design – as it is an urban history that weaves together, as the editors note, 'pastoral theology, religious sociology and urban planning' (p. 10). Through use, for example, of material in diocesan and municipal archives, we gain a rich understanding of the sociological mechanics behind so many architectural masterpieces of this era – churches celebrated at the time in volumes such as G.E. Kidder Smith's *The New Churches of Europe* (1964). This collection of essays began as a conference hosted by the Faculty of Architecture at KU Leuven in 2017, which set out to explore the 'closely knit, technocratic elite at the edge between the clerical and academic milieus' (p. 21), who were preoccupied with questions of how to form (religious) 'community' in the new suburbs. As the editors comment, the answers to these questions can be traced across national boundaries in these years as 'actors, ideas and concepts travelled across the continent' (p. 22). Nowhere is this clearer than in the 'Rethinking the urban parish' chapter, which focuses on the work of the Belgian cleric François Houtart (1925–2017), who held a degree in urban planning and who founded the Centre de Recherches Socio-Religieuses de Bruxelles (CRSR) in 1956. The Centre produced no fewer than 45 reports in just three years. Its thinking on the parish structure in Brussels, along with what services

the church there should provide (churches, pastoral centres, schools, etc.), were in time adopted in other cities across Europe, for example, as Jesús García Herrero notes, in the 1965 Plan Pastoral for Madrid, drawn up by Archbishop Casimiro Morcillo (1904–71).

The ten case-study essays in the volume take us to England and Ireland, Belgium, France, Germany, and Finland, Spain and Portugal, and Italy. As noted above, with the exceptions of Sofia Anja Singler's chapter on Seinäjoki in Finland, and Marina Wesner's chapter on Berlin, the collection focuses on affairs within the Catholic church, something that is justified both by the sheer extent of activity in this church in these years, and the opportunity that such a focus provides to identify links between different national contexts (for example post-Vatican II changes). As is the case in any edited collection, some of the chapters speak more directly to the thematic focus than others. Angela Connolly's essay on urban planning in the Wythenshawe suburb of Manchester, for example, is rich on the empirical detail of the 'processes' and the 'actors' that lay behind urban planning decisions in the vicinity of Adrian Gilbert Scott's landmark church of St Anthony's (built 1960). Connolly notes issues of freehold vs. leasehold ownership of sites for churches, and of how issues were resolved in a 'harmonious' (p. 59) way through 'collaboration' (p. 60) between both sacred and secular bodies. High-level co-operation between church and state is set out lucidly in João Alves da Cunha and João Luís Marques' chapter on the Lisbon Master Plan of 1959. Manuel Cerejeira (1888–1977), archbishop of the city, worked with Salazar, his priests and local planning/sociology experts to 're-Christianise Portuguese society – and the urban masses in Lisbon in particular' (p. 196). We learn of Cerejeira writing privately to Salazar on the back of a postcard, asking for 'decisive support' (p. 196) – financial backing – for his many new churches. Umberto Bordoni *et al.*, in their chapter on Milan, demonstrate how Montini entrusted the building of new churches to the colourful figure of Enrico Mattei (1906–62), chairman of the Italian state oil company ENI, who 'had a reputation as an efficient (and sometimes ruthless) business manager, but equally as a guardian of Christian values' (p. 256). The chapter demonstrates how high-level co-operation between the church and the Italian state-business complex meant local voices – for example of parish priests – were often side-lined.

The essays are divided into three themes: negotiation, expertise and authority. As so often in edited volumes, this carving up is difficult to carry off in practice. In general, there is a wealth of expertise and authority on show in all of the chapters, but much less negotiation, with case-studies showing broadly similar processes and discussions in different geographical contexts: powerful bishops, well-equipped experts, co-operation from local and national authorities. If there is one theme that runs through the entire volume it is that of pragmatic cordiality. By contrast, contestation is less often on display, though more emphasis on this theme might have revealed more about how churches had to compete in their new urban environments. One further avenue for future research could be to expand the meaning of 'Europe' itself in these years: while the volume offers a comprehensive overview of post-war religious urban planning across the continent, many of the key actors were active in planning parishes and churches in European colonial cities in these years, and on establishing missions in far-away countries (for example the Irish church

had a significant architectural footprint in cities in South America and throughout Africa). Such a study might further illuminate the theme of negotiation, in particular, in religious urban planning.

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