Stained Glass: Parallels in Preservation

Jim Lindner

Tuesday, November 9, 2010
All this Digital Work leads to Sensory Deprivation!
I Bought a Church
The Church was a "Fix-er-up-er"

Maybe I should have known better....

Maybe I did not need another project....

Maybe I should have known better....

The Church was a "Fix-er-up-er"
Beautiful stained glass windows!
Who Could Resist?

So I bought the building and decided to "repurpose" the building - essentially preserve aspects of it but not a "restoration"

Not me!
After the initial rush I started to look much more carefully. I did some research and found out that these were not just any old windows - they were signed.

Tuesday, November 9, 2010
The Windows were also damaged.

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I also knew that this was a country church, not Notre Dame, and that these were just outstanding windows for a country church.

While unique, these windows were typical of those valued less than those in higher profile churches. Not many others from the same artist and as such were less valuable than those from the same artist and as such were...
Cost to preserve is likely to be more than the financial value.

The sad reality is that many churches are closing and many of the stained glass windows are being removed and sold on eBay.

While the value in that church building is high "in situ" - the absolute value is very low.

The sad reality is that many churches are closing and many of the stained glass windows are being removed and sold on eBay.

VALUE

THEN THE FINANCIAL

LIKELY TO BE MORE

COST TO PRESERVE IS
I found myself in the same situation as some Archives!

It lasted for 100 years - likely it will last for another 30 or so during my lifetime.

Do I really need to fix these windows?

The windows are just part of the building. The cost of restoration is likely greater than the value of the windows.

I have other financial priorities.

The windows are just part of the building.

Archives!

SAME SITUATION AS SOME I FOUND MYSELF IN THE
Now I owned the archive and the project!

I was the customer!

I knew very little about stained glass windows.

I had to evaluate vendors.

I had to make a purchase / no purchase decision.

This was MY money not some client's money.

PROJECT

ARCHIVE AND THE

NOW I OWNED THE
I even got to experience the same Sticker Shock!
Not Preservation but "recreation"

Window

Paint previous repairs to match rest of

Divide window into smaller panels

Replace Broken Glass with Matching Color

"Inappropriate to me"

Included treatment plan that seemed

Was not even for all the windows!

$34,000
This clearly is not a "digital Project"

I thought that everything I knew about preservation was inapplicable - but I was wrong about that....

Provenance is important and a reproduction is of little if any value

The world is an Analog place and physical objects in Windows will remain analog for the foreseeable future

Digital Migration is a meaningless concept for glass

Digital Preservation is NOT for everything

"Digital Project"
THIS CLEARLY IS NOT A
What did I do?

Decided to get educated - read articles, spoke to other vendors, emailed pictures to other vendors, and found that they have been doing it longer than we have, and we can learn some things from them.

I found that there were remarkable parallels between stained glass and AV preservation despite different media types.

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Technology of Stained Glass

Goes back at least to the 10th Century

Process to make it described by Theophilius in 1100 AD

They have been fixing it for a very long time!
The central medallion shows the communion chalice that holds wine, representing Christ's sacrifice that facilitates the forgiveness of sins. To the right of the chalice, is a bunch of grapes from which wine is made and to the left, a sheaf of wheat from which bread is made. Bread represents Christ's body and wine, the blood of Christ, is consumed during Communion to remind people of his sacrifice that facilitates the forgiveness of sins. (Matt. 26:26-29)

Christians believe that Jesus' death atoned for peoples' sins and his resurrection was symbolic of God's forgiveness of these sins. (Matt. 26:26-29)
Alternate Interpretations

While this is not incorrect, it is but one of many interpretations of the chalice which focuses solely on the role of Jesus as an "atonement sacrifice" for humanity's sins. While this atonement theology is central in the minds of many Christians, it is certainly not the case for all.

For example, for some, to share in the bread and cup, is to share in the life of Christ, not just as a remembrance of a past event but as a present reality. "Christ is still alive," such would say, in any human action which is an expression of self-giving love. To share in the bread and cup, is to share in the life nurtured in that life-orientation.

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Come Christians, it is certainly not the case for all. While this atonement theology is central in the minds of humanity's sins, while this focuses solely on the role of Jesus as an "atonement sacrifice" for which this is not incorrect, it is but one of many interpretations of the chalice which

INTERPRETATIONS

ALTERNATE
NOMENCLATURE

Anatomy of a Leaded Window
Stained Glass Windows Are Flexible!
11'2" x 17'2"
Aspect Ratio
Aspect Ratio of Gotic Windows similar to HD - but in the other direction!

- Windows 17'2" x 11'2"
- 1.54
- HD 16 x 9
- 1.77
Stained Glass

Stained Glass

Gets its colors from Metallic Salts and Oxides

Some colors very hard or expensive to create

Made in many different ways

Damage can explain how it was made

STAINED GLASS
Damaged Flashed Glass
Painted Glass was not "baked" on properly.
Cracks pose interesting problems.
What is the appropriate treatment?

- Leave it the way it is - potential of catastrophic loss?
- Remove it and replace with blank glass - destroys the context of the entire Nave?
- Repaint?
- Cement?
WHAT WE DID!
Many of the issues that we are now discussing are parts of standard practice in other fields and have been so for hundreds of years.
What can we learn?

Extensive Documentation before, during, and after treatment.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Decision of Damage</th>
<th>Photographed By: Penny Bedell</th>
<th>Date: January 5, 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1 - Lower</td>
<td>Excellent condition</td>
<td>Photographed By: Penny Bedell</td>
<td>Date: January 5, 2010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Details of Damage:**
- Glass missing or broken.
- Any paint peeling or chipping.
- Any cracks or holes in the wood.

**Initial Dimensions:**
- W 23 5/8" H 29 1/2"
- W 27 1/4" H 33 3/8"

**Exterior Dimensions:**
- W 23 5/8" H 33 3/8" Slanting to 34"

**Examinined By:**
- Penny Bedell
- Date: January 4, 2010
Solutions must be reversible. Preservation techniques used in other fields. Similar processes of deterioration occur in many objects; we can learn from the.

Just because you have a technology does not mean you must use it. Solutions must be appropriate to the need – without losing a competitive advantage.

No more “secret sauce” or “proprietary technique” – one can reveal the process.
Thanks To!

Lori Nason, Penny Bedal
Craberry Glass, Nova Scotia, Canada

Rev. Guenter Dahle, Rev. Dr. Mark Harris
Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada