

## AN INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTINE REINHARD On Consulting with Lutheran Communities

**INSITES:** How long have you been working with Lutheran communities?

**CHRISTINE:** I've been working with Lutheran and Episcopal communities for over 10 years. Both denominations are experiencing a liturgical renewal that is reflected in reordered worship space.

**INSITES:** Is the renewal different for these two communities?

**CHRISTINE:** Yes, I think so. Many Episcopal churches are dying, some living on endowments. The ones who are thriving are looking to the Roman Catholic church experience of the last 40 years to give them wisdom and energy to rediscover their sacraments and reform their communities. To quote an Episcopal priest, "Your Vatican II was our wake up call." The Lutheran church is looking seriously at the freedoms Luther gave them over 400 years ago that they have not embraced. They are also looking at how their church in its various forms has evolved and are making an effort to restore an understanding of baptism, eucharist, and symbol.

**INSITES:** Is this done in directives that come from their bishops?

**CHRISTINE:** Not exactly. Saying you must do something is like waving a red flag at a Lutheran. However, last year a group of 45 people from various disciplines met over several months and produced a book called *Principles for Worship* [published June 2002]. It is divided into four parts: language, preaching, music, and worship space. I was privileged to be a part of the worship space task group. This book is preliminary and is intended as a study tool for the individual community. These are recommendations for consideration with references to scripture, works by

Martin Luther, and *The Use of the Means of Grace*. This book will be revisited in 5 years. It will hopefully be improved by the experience of using it. It was written with the intention that Episcopal and other communities would use it also.

**INSITES:** Is there a great difference in working with Lutherans and Roman Catholics?

**CHRISTINE:** Yes and no. The spirituality is the same once they understand their sacraments. There must be more of a widespread understanding of the theology of why you are reordering the worship space in the larger Lutheran community outside the committee. Lutherans vote on changes. The lighting rods are the same in both churches: the font, altar location, communion rails, kneelers, etc. It just varies from church to church which it is. The Lutherans are very willing to look to the Catholic model and learn. They have no desire to reinvent the wheel. Lutherans and especially Episcopalians seem more willing [than Roman Catholics] to make long-term financial commitments to their building projects.

**INSITES:** Do you use a different process with Lutheran and Catholic churches?

**CHRISTINE:** No. I use exactly the same process, large committees, larger advisor groups, study of liturgy and space prior to design, and much communication in different forms.

**INSITES:** What advice would you offer to liturgical design consultants wanting to work with Lutheran communities?

**CHRISTINE:** *Principles For Worship* recommends the use of consultants, so there is an increased awareness and opportunity. Read your base materials first and then enjoy the journey. Lutherans are fun to work with.