Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED NOV 14 1975
DATE ENTERED MAR 16 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Grace Episcopal Church

AND/OR COMMON: Same

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: 820 Broadway — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Paducah — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: First

STATE: Kentucky — CODE: 021

COUNTY: McCracken — CODE: 145

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
—DISTRICT	—PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	—AGRICULTURE	—MUSEUM
X BUILDING(S)	X PRIVATE	—UNOCCUPIED	—COMMERCIAL	—PARK
—STRUCTURE	—BOTH	—WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	—PRIVATE RESIDENCE
—SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	—ENTERTAINMENT	X RELIGIOUS
—OBJECT	—IN PROCESS	—YES: RESTRICTED	—GOVERNMENT	—SCIENTIFIC
	—BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	—INDUSTRIAL	—TRANSPORTATION
		—NO	—MILITARY	—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Grace Episcopal Church

STREET & NUMBER: 820 Broadway

CITY, TOWN: Paducah — VICINITY OF

STATE: Kentucky

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Property Evaluation Office, McCracken County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: Sixth and Washington

CITY, TOWN: Paducah

STATE: Kentucky

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Survey of Historic Sites in Kentucky (Supplement)

DATE: 1975 — FEDERAL X STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Kentucky Heritage Commission

CITY, TOWN: Frankfort

STATE: Kentucky

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	X UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	__ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Grace Episcopal Church is located on Broadway, the main street of downtown Paducah; it runs southwestward from the Ohio River, perpendicular to the shore line at this point. The church is fact faces northwest, but is oriented as closely as possible in the "correct" direction (the usual ecclesiastical terminology will be used here). The parish house and other additions to the rear of the church form an ell, allowing for an attractively landscaped courtyard along the street north of the nave (photo 3). A sense of removal from the street and of enclosure within the courtyard is provided by a late 19th-century castiron fence. The church is approached through a wide porch, rather than the usual enclosed narthex or vestibule. This porch provides an effective transition between the busy street outside and the tranquility within.

The great southwest tower is a landmark of downtown Paducah (photo 1). Its strongly vertical upper stories, with its polychrome roof rising above the steep diapered roof of the nave, can be seen from a considerable distance, even with several highrise office buildings nearby. The elongated pyramidal roof of the tower has a saddle-ridge on an east-west axis. (One wonders whether there was not originally cresting rather than the present large plain cross.) The surface, which flares out slightly at the base, has three horizontal bands of lighter slate, divided by six-pointed stars. Both the main roof of the church and the hipped dormer roofs sport tile diapering, a rare survival. On the sides, the clerestory dormers alleviate the change in slope between nave and aisles. The prominent gabled transepts balance the emphasis on the west end.

Each side of the tower has two tall recessed arches linking the over-scaled upper two stories. The top story is an open belfry; there are smaller diamond-paned lancets set in the bottoms of the recessed arches, which are linked by stone capitals--perhaps Romanesque rather than Gothic in character--at the impost level. The top openings have still-further recessed frames, creating a layered effect repeated in the main entrances within the porch below. There is a brick pointed-arch cornice on corbels under the eaves of the tower roof. The overall effect of the tower is very grand indeed.

The lower surfaces of the tower are flat, with modest openings piercing the substantial brick planes. The facade of the church itself seems subordinate to the tower, and set almost retiringly back behind the porch (photo 4). Nevertheless, there seems to be a careful and conscious principle of design at work: there are three major angles defined by the slopes of the roofs silhouetted against the sky. The roof of the tower is the steepest; the slope of the main gable of the nave is median, and the slant of the visible left (north) aisle is still lower. The octagonal stair-turret between the nave and the back corner of the tower is transitional between them. There is also an increase in plasticity from the blank brick wall of the aisle above the porch roof; past the forward-projecting stepped buttress dividing aisle and nave; through the nave's west wall pierced by a row of five lancets, a large traceried rose window, and tiny roundel above; forward through the turret to the livelier three-dimensional treatment of the upper part of the tower described above (photo 6).

(continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	X RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1873-74 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Henry M. Congdon

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Grace Episcopal Church is the oldest house of worship still in use in Paducah, the metropolis of western Kentucky. The cornerstone was laid on April 26, 1873, during the flush of post-Civil War prosperity. The downtown congregation has not only survived but thrived, particularly under the impetus of the location of a billion-dollar atomic energy plant in the area after World War II. The superb original church building, an important early work of a major High Victorian Gothic architect, Henry M. Congdon of New York, has been supplemented by an harmonious complex of later structures, forming a charming courtyard that functions as a contemplative oasis in downtown Paducah.

The history of the congregation and church buildings was summarized by Edwin J. Paxton, Jr., in a brochure published by the Parish Life Commission on the occasion of the centennial of the laying of the cornerstone of the present building (the text is slightly edited here):

> First mention of Paducah in Kentucky's Episcopal records was made by the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Bosworth Smith, who moved from New York in 1830 to become rector of Christ Church, Lexington, and was there elected the first bishop of the Diocese of Kentucky. Commenting to the Sixth Diocesan Convention held at Henderson, June 12, 1834, he said that he had visited a number of locations in the sparsely settled western portion of the diocese, including Paducah, "where as yet we have comparatively few friends." He called it "a place a missionary would find a wide and most promising field opening before him."
>
> The Rev. Francis Burdette Nash, a young deacon ordained by Bishop Smith in 1837, cultivated the first interest in the Episcopal Church here in 1838 by organizing a temperance society and Sunday school. At the Tenth Diocesan Convention held that year in Lexington, Mr. Nash reported: "During the few months I have spent in Paducah, I have had services regularly. . . . Congregations have, in most instances, been quite respectable in point of numbers." His temperance society had 80 members, and his Sunday school "100 scholars." He had found no Episcopalians here, but was hopeful that "a favorable impression has been made." Mr. Nash was transferred later in 1838 to Paris, Kentucky, and shortly thereafter the entire Paducah business district was destroyed by fire. "The seed thus sown lay dormant for eight years."

(continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Comparative material in The New-York Sketch-Book of Architecture (1870-73), and The American Architect & Building News, I-II (1876-1877), and later.

Herbert Wheaton Congdon, "Building a Church for a Small Congregation," The Architectural Record, XXVII, 2(February 1910), pp. 161-73.

H[erbert] W[heaton] C[ongdon], "Obituary: Henry Martyn Congdon," The Journal of the American Institute of Architects (April 1922), p. 134.

(continued)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1.98

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	16	357465	4105200
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: James "Bob" Gresham (W.E.L.)

ORGANIZATION: Grace Episcopal Church

DATE: May 2, 1975

STREET & NUMBER: 820 Broadway

TELEPHONE:

CITY OR TOWN: Paducah

STATE: Kentucky 42001

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

[redacted] SIGNATURE Eldred W. Melton

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE 11-7-75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION DATE 5/16/96

ATTEST: Robert B. Kelly DATE 3-14-76

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Form No. 10-300a
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A bricked-in roundel over two lancets in the base of the tower is intermediary in size between the circles of the nave wall.

The placement of the buttress between nave and aisle might awkwardly over-articulate the facade if it were not for the slate-roofed porch that provides a horizontal linking them. This porch is an especially charming and characteristic feature of Congdon's early work (photo 5). The central gable frames the large opening to the main entrance to the sanctuary and its timbering prepares for that inside. There is a less prominent opening without gable leading to the aisle entrance (as well as an entrance directly into the base of the tower). The porch has a high brick parapet with a conspicuous stone coping, again emphasizing the horizontal. Between it and the low roof is a series of pointed frame arches between posts with open triangular spandrels.

The interior of the porch is plain except for the sculptural forms of the base of the buttress and the octagonal turret (photo 7). The central door has a series of parallel cut-backs but is otherwise unframed. Handsome hinges are probably original and form the only adornment of the massive doors. Throughout the exterior there is a daring play of blank brick surfaces, especially in the face of the left aisle, and a discreet use of ornamental brickwork that suggests a possible German Gothic inspiration, especially in the tower.

The most striking quality of the interior of the church is its lightness and openness, in spite of the still-dark timbering and tongue-in-groove panelling of the high ceiling (photo 2). This is achieved above all by the unusual (particularly in a church of this size) use exclusively of wood for the side elevations of the nave, and also by the breadth of the pointed arches not only of the aisles but also of the openings into the chancel and flanking chambers. These interior openings contrast to the tall narrow lancets of the polygonal apse and paired along the sides. Although contained within a long rectangle that incorporated even the porch and tower (see the sketch-plan, photo 8), there is spatial variety inside. The nave has three wider western bays; the fourth bay is treated as a transept with a single higher opening. Only the apse projects eastward of the rectangular chancel and side-chambers.

The timbering is itself very light, the most interesting feature being the five-arched open "tribune" between the main arched openings and the triple clerestory dormers above. The triangular spandrels of the aisle openings and the profiles of the curved corbels at the base of all the wood arches match those of the outside porch. All the members are extremely slender; only the colonnettes that support the transept arches and those of the tribunes have rings at their bases, capitals, and approximate midpoints. (Somewhat

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similar colonnettes and corbels occur in St. Luke's, Baltimore, a church whose Ecclesiological interior was designed by Congdon's mentor, J . W. Priest, about the time of Congdon's apprenticeship.)[1]

The chancel has no doubt been somewhat altered, particularly after the 1937 flood. Many of the fittings from the earlier church were only gradually replaced. The chancel, sanctuary, and altar are each raised several steps, with handsome tiled floors. The altar rail has 19th-century brass supports. There is a tongue-in-groove dado under the lancets of the apse that may be original. (One suspects that there may have been a rood-screen originally, if Congdon had his way.) All is exceptionally well-maintained and harmonious with the basic fabric of the church.

The windows display a wide representation of fashions in ecclesiastical glass over the last century, from early stencilled geometric patterns through opalescent "Tiffany" (one with a startlingly naturalistic waterfall as its main feature) to various architectonically-framed pseudo-medieval narrative scenes. Like the fittings of the sanctuary, these provide a sense of the history of the congregation without interfering with the intact concept and structure of Congdon's building.

The various added wings have all been compatible in character, picturesque in grouping and detail, and relatively plain in the functional interiors. A Parish Hall was added to the south in 1906; Fletcher Hall to the east of the Parish Hall in 1956 (see site diagram).

1. See Figure VI-47 in Stanton, The Gothic Revival, she also provides a short biography and extended discussion of the short-lived Priest's influential Ecclesiological writings.

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In 1846 the Rev. Nathaniel Newlin Cowgill came to Paducah from Hickman /Kentucky/ and set about organizing a parish. Taking L. M. Flournoy with him as lay representative, at the annual convention Mr. Cowgill asked for union with the diocese. There were then two communicants. He was succeeded in 1848 by the Rev. Caleb Dow, who reported 13 communicants in 1849 and 20 in 1850. Mr. Dow was Paducah's first Episcopalian rector in residence, staying here until 1852 and leaving a new rectory to be occupied by his successor, the Rev. W. W. Dodge.

The Rev. Cowgill had formed the congregation at a meeting held in the home of Adam Rankin, at which there appears to have been some discussion of plans for a future church building. Services were held for some years in the McCracken County Court House, but on March 27, 1850, a lot was purchased on the west side of Market (now Second) Street between Washington and Clark, and by April 27, 1851, the first church had been built, paid for and consecrated.

"This building, which was built in Louisville and sent down the river by boat, was 30 by 60 feet," Fred G. Neuman related in his "Story of Paducah." "The windows were diamond shaped and beautifully colored by Gen. Lloyd Tilghman, who was a member. . . .

"During the Civil War the Federal troops used the church as a hospital, the rector, the Rev. Thomas Pickett, meanwhile having cast his lot with the South. To make room for hospital cots it was necessary to put the plain little wooden benches in the yard, where army mules 'sharpened their teeth' upon their crude backs. The rectory adjoining the church became quarters for doctors and nurses.

"At the close of the war," Neuman continues, "the dilapidated building was returned to the congregation, now a scattered remnant. The benches were brought in and the congregation prepared for the first Easter services in three years. Consecrated women were decorating the neglected interior with a profusion of apple and cherry blossoms when the clatter of hoofs and the arrival of soldiers stopped them. They were told that President Abraham Lincoln had been assassinated and black draperies would have to be substituted. Whereupon trembling hands laid crepe over the gay colors."

By the late Sixties Paducah was growing fast, and in 1868 the Grace church vestry bought a site for a new and larger church building. It is the lot on which the main structure now stands, since added to by acquisitions to the east, west and south.

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In 1869, the congregation got as its rector a man with the energy and determination to build the new church. He was the Rev. William Montrose Pettis, a Mississippian described by Neuman as "a man of vision, faith and consecrated devotion." Letters written by parishioners and their children at the time describe Mr. Pettis as making frequent trips in the next several years to Louisville, Lexington and other richer places in the diocese "begging money for the new church."

A New York architect, Henry Martyn Congdon, was employed to draw plans for the new building. He was an early member of the American Institute of Architects, a designer of many notable church structures in the East, and a devotee of the Gothic Revival style.

An issue of the long-dead publication "Tobacco Plant" describes the next notable event in Grace parish: "On Saturday last [April 26, 1873] the cornerstone of the new Protestant Episcopal Church on Broadway was laid with the most appropriate and interesting ceremony. The services were conducted by the Rt. Rev. [George Davis] Cummins of this diocese, assisted by the Rev. Wm. M. Pettis. . . .

"A platform had been erected for the use of those who took part in the services, and on which was placed an organ for the use of the choir. Long before the time for the commencement of the ceremony a large crowd of ladies and gentlemen had assembled on the ground, and at about three o'clock the procession made its appearance. This consisted of the city police in their new uniforms, the Mayor and City Council, Judge, Attorney and Clerk for the City Court, Vestrymen of the church and Bishop Cummins and Rector Pettis. All ascended the platform, and the services were commenced by the singing of a most beautiful hymn by the choir, after which they were continued with the printed form.

"The laying of the stone was a most solemn and impressive ceremony. A box was placed in an excavation in the stone. This box was sealed, and contained the following articles: a Bible, a Book of Common Prayer, journal of the Diocesan Convention of 1872, list of communicants of the parish, the names of those persons who were to be confirmed by the Bishop on the following day, names of the Bishops of the Diocese, names of the rector and officers of the parish, copy of the printed form of service used on the occasion, names of the architect, superintendent, builder and workman, a German coin [a groat] bearing the date 1472, a copy of the 'Paducah Tobacco Plant,' 'Kentuckian,' 'News,' and 'Journal,' church almanac and clergy list for 1873, the names of the Mayor, Councilmen and other officers of the City of Paducah."

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By mid-summer of 1873 Paducah was in the grip of a deadly cholera epidemic, which caused as many as 15 deaths daily, kept people away from Sunday services and slowed construction of the new edifice. Many who could afford to travel fled the city.

But enough had been done by June 21, 1874, to permit the first services to be held in the present structure, although it looked nothing like it does today. "A noble building planned to seat more than 600, without tower and without a porch, the handful of worshippers gathering together with nothing but the old pews still bearing the marks of the army mules' teeth, no plaster on the walls, no ceiling overhead, no glass in the windows, boards and sacking taking the place of glass, and $11,000 in debt." (From the notes of Miss Harriet Boswell.)

In order to have a building of the desired size and beauty, the congregation of that day had "gone overboard" in their spending, and were willing to make do with the old furnishing and with a half-finished church. It was heated then by two big pot-bellied stoves, one at each end of the transept.

Mr. Pettis went elsewhere in 1876, and in the following seven years Grace Church was without a pastor oftener than not. Yet by the Diocesan Convention of 1883 it was noted that the entire indebtedness had been paid and Grace Church could be consecrated, which was done on November 29, by the Rt. Rev. Thomas Underwood Dudley.

With the building paid for, the devoted parishioners and generous donors soon began to provide the fine features so lovely a building deserved--glowing stained-glass windows, ceiling and wall plaster, communion vessels and altar cloths. It was a far cry from "the little church /that/ stood on an eminence on the riverfront and was approached in ordinary times by a /foot/ bridge over a slough but in times of high-water by a pontoon of coal barges anchored by their owners across the street."

Wrote Don Pepper in 1956: "These early churchmen of Paducah didn't build to suit their contemporary needs nor their pocketbooks, nor did they build it in the whimsical architectural style of the day. It was a remarkable accomplishment,for Grace Church today is even more beautiful for its age and history."

Congdon's design--whether High Victorian Gothic ecclesiastical architecture can still be considered "whimsical" or not--was indeed a remarkable accomplishment for its day, displaying that "sincerity and . . . picturesque charm of composition" that the architect's

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partner-son noted in his father's obituary. The ingenious use of fairly modest materials--brick and timber, with a minimum of stone trim--on a large building; the creation of a rural, parish church informality while recognizing the pressures and opportunities of an urban site, the combination of restraint with subtle unconventionalities of design, all make this one of the outstanding ecclesiastical achievements of its decade, not only in Paducah or Kentucky, but even in the United States. Congdon here provides a transition--as opposed to the fanciful and extravagant if often truly original and powerful High Victorian Gothic designs of many of his contemporaries--between the earnest Ecclesiological Gothic of Richard Upjohn and his colleagues in the mid-19th century, and the return to authenticity of sources spearheaded by Henry Vaughan and crowned by Ralph Adams Cram in the early 20th century.

Henry Martyn Congdon was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1834. His father, Charles Congdon, was keenly interested in architecture and the (Episcopal) church and was one of the founders of the Ecclesiological Society, an organization of those concerned with purifying the liturgy and architecture of the church by a return to the ideals of the medieval period. The chief figures of the Oxford Movement, as it was called in England, were John (later Cardinal) Newman and the brilliant Gothic Revival architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin. The latter's enthusiasm and architectural goals were imported to the United States largely through the efforts of Richard Upjohn, an architect whose most noted work was Trinity Episcopal Church, still standing at Broadway and Wall Street in New York City.

Among other devoted members of the Ecclesiological Society was John Priest, an architect associated with A. J. Downing in Newburgh, New York, with whom H. M. Congdon was apprenticed after his graduation from Columbia College in 1854. At Priest's death in 1859, Congdon opened an architectural office in New York with John Littell, and later with J. Cleveland Cady (with whom he designed the much-admired Brooklyn Academy of Design about 1875). For most of his 63-year career, however, Congdon practiced without a partner, although his son Herbert Wheaton Congdon joined him from 1907 until his father's death in 1922. H. M. Congdon was an early member of the American Institute of Architects, founded by Upjohn in 1857.

Congdon's work was primarily churches and associated structures, although he also designed several hospitals and, according to his son, "He also did a great deal of minor architecture, church plate, monuments, etc., as well as the usual grist of dwellings." A number of his designs were published, especially in The New York Sketch-Book of

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Architecture and the earlier volumes of The American Architect and Building News, a periodical published by the A. I. A. after 1876. He also competed in the nationwide competition for design of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. But the Congdons were equally at home in the design of more modest church buildings, as is witnessed by the son's sensitive yet sensible article in The Architectural Record, XXVII, 2(February 1910), "Building a Church for a Small Congregation." He here outlines what must also have been his father's concern for monumentality of character, suitability of siting and materials (including long-term maintenance), size (in relation to the expected congregation and growth of the community), acoustics, and architectural style. On this last, H. W. Congdon states, "it may be said that probably no one style will ever be evolved that will suit all conditions and locations. It is a subject often approached with a good deal of prejudice and even acrimony, by both clients and architects, who fail to remember that no style is sacrosanct. . . . Certain styles have historical connections, not only with localities, but with certain religious bodies, and these traditions should be respected and utilized with discretion. . . . A church must possess dignity, quietness or repose, and a religious aspect. Dignity it must have, as it is a temple for the highest aspirations and noblest thoughts; it must not be 'cunning' or 'cosey' or 'homelike'; these are qualities to be desired in other buildings. Again, if it is to be a building that is to last through centuries, it must have repose and quietness, and entire freedom from the fleeting fashion of the day; it should be a work of art and not an example of an artistic epoch. That it should have a religious aspect seems like a truism; but much has been done under the guise of church architecture that is not worthy of the name; the land is covered with churches that look like banks, office buildings, clubhouses, and almost everything but what they are. . . .

"The special requirements of church planning are so varied and technical that they are beyond the scope of the paper; but a word may be said as to the use of symbolism in church architecture. A really good church design must have more than beauty of mass and detail and convenience of planning; it should embody, particularly in the case of the liturgic churches, some of the rich and varied symbolism of which the middle ages were so full. This symbolism had its rise in practical needs, probably, and it is always in danger of degeneration into sentimentalism, but, nevertheless, used with restraint and skill, it may add the touch of poetry to the design that differentiates the work of the architect from that of the engineer."

The earnestness characteristic of many aspects of the Victorian period, and particularly in the consideration of ecclesiological matters, is still conveyed in the younger Congdon's

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comments on the use of materials (as well as in the pronouncements and practice of his near-contemporary Frank Lloyd Wright): "There is no disgrace in poverty that is honest; and if the available funds will not permit of the use of handsome materials, then cheaper ones should be used, but always in a scrupulously honest manner. A veneer of masonry on a wooden wall is an abominable sham, and if the church is to stand for absolute truth and uprightness in the community, its building must preach the same doctrine as its preacher. . . . Absolute sincerity in material should prevail in the interior; there is no place in a church where artificial marble should be used, or grained wood, for example. If marble and quartered oak cannot be used, let cheaper materials be used, and frankly acknowledged."

H. M. Congdon's own style and design principles seem to have changed little through the many years of his practice, being in fact somewhat outside the changes of current fashion. And his concerns for sincerity and appropriateness were equally adaptable to large and small commissions. Although much of his known work was in the East, he was chosen for ecclesiastical commissions in places as far away as Faribault, Minnesota; Dubuque, Iowa; Topeka, Kansas; and Boulder, Colorado; as well as Paducah, Kentucky. The last embodies the best of the firm's characteristics, within the framework of Congdon's earliest known works. Although these buildings feature an astonishing variety of picturesque composition, Grace Church, Paducah, shares with them certain tell-tale features, such as the predominant tower with large-scale upper openings, no doubt meant to tell effectively from a distance; interesting use of buttresses and dormer-clerestory windows; and the contrast of frame porches and other details, as well as shingle or slate roofs, against the masonry of the main body of the structure, whether brick or stone or both together. The buildings of Faribault, Minnesota, are perhaps closest to the Paducah church, with similar treatment of the timber porch supports and masonry parapet, jerkin-headed dormers, and even the tracery of the rose windows.[1] The employment of polychrome roof slates also occurs in Trinity Church, Portland, Connecticut.[2] It would appear that most of Congdon's churches were simple in plan--everything contained within well-proportioned rectangles--but complex as realized in elevation. The different functional parts are articulated clearly both inside and outside with varied openings, heights, gables, and

1. "See House," The New-York Sketch-Book of Architecture, I, 3 (Boston: James R. Osgood & Co.; New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., March 1874), Pl. IX; "Divinity-Hall & Warden's Residence Seabury-Mission," American Architect and Building News, II (May 13, 1876).

2. "Trinity Church, Portland, Connecticut," New-York Sketch-Book of Architecture, I, 7 (July 1874), Pl. XXVI.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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degrees of openness between parts. When given the opportunity the Congdons provided elaborate liturgical sequences, with raised sanctuaries, rood-screens, subsidiary chapels, and the like. The handling of timber roof supports is handsome and inventive without being complex or enriched for its own sake, as was often the case with the Upjohns and most other High Victorian Gothic church architects. Although no comprehensive study of Congdon's work is known yet to have been made, it would appear that Grace Episcopal Church, Paducah, is not only fully representative of the architect's works, but probably one of the finest of those surviving. Its congregation's pride is well-deserved.

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Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased) (Los Angeles, 1956).

Phoebe Stanton, The Gothic Revival & American Church Architecture (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), on Congdon and Priest.

"Centennial Celebration of Grace Episcopal Church, 1873-1973, Paducah, Kentucky" (Paducah, 1973).