



Regenerating Places of Faith 2019

Sacred spaces

Community wellness, sanctuary & windows into the fulness of life



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Notions of being 'sacred'

Separated from the mundane & common

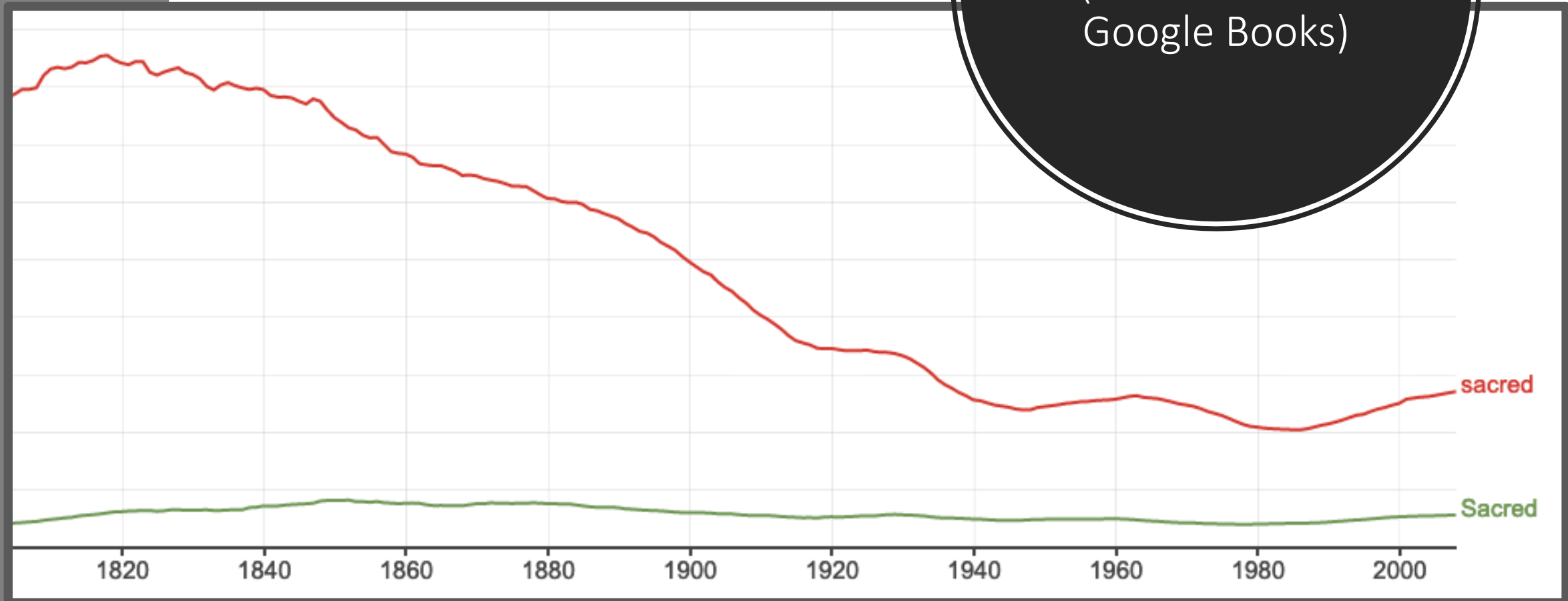
Set apart and dedicated to a particular use

Tells a story (past, present & future)

Something treated with great respect; honoured

Place of protection, rest and sanctuary

Word frequency
(as reflected in
Google Books)



'Sacred' in common usage

A sacred day (compare 'holiday' from 'holy-day')

A sacred service – of particular importance and value

A sacred place – set apart for special remembrance or use

A sacred moment or experience



Shalom in the sanctuary of God

Shalom

The fulness and flourishing of God's creation: wellness, wholeness, prosperity, peace, a world where all is right and in harmonious rest.

Shalom in the sanctuary of God

“In the Bible, shalom means universal flourishing, wholeness and delight – a rich state of affairs in which natural needs are satisfied and natural gifts fruitfully employed, a state of affairs that inspires joyful wonder as its Creator and Savior opens doors and welcomes the creatures in whom he delights. Shalom, in other words, is the way things ought to be ”

(Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Supposed to Be* .10)

Sacredness & the mission of God

The goal of creation:

And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. (Genesis 2:4)

The defining characteristic of the dwelling place of God:

You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain—the place, O Lord, reserved for your own dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, that your hands have established. (Exodus 15:17)

Tabernacle & temple as symbolic sacred space

Our thesis is that Israel's temple was composed of three main parts, each of which symbolized a major part of the cosmos: (1) the outer court represented the habitable world where humanity dwelt; (2) the holy place was emblematic of the visible heavens and its light sources; (3) the holy of holies symbolized the invisible dimension of the cosmos, where God and his heavenly hosts dwelt.

G.K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 32-3

Sacred space revisited

Church sites as **signs, instruments** and a **foretaste** of the kingdom of God

Church sites as creatively rich 'windows' into greater realities

Church communities and sites as 'set apart' places of refuge and sanctuary

Sacred space revisited

Church sites as serving the flourishing of community

Church sites as locations of cultivation and culture-making

Church sites and the separation of the mundane/common from dedicated spaces of respect, shalom and

Church sites and the narrative of the gospel history, presence and hope: 'on earth, as it is in heaven'