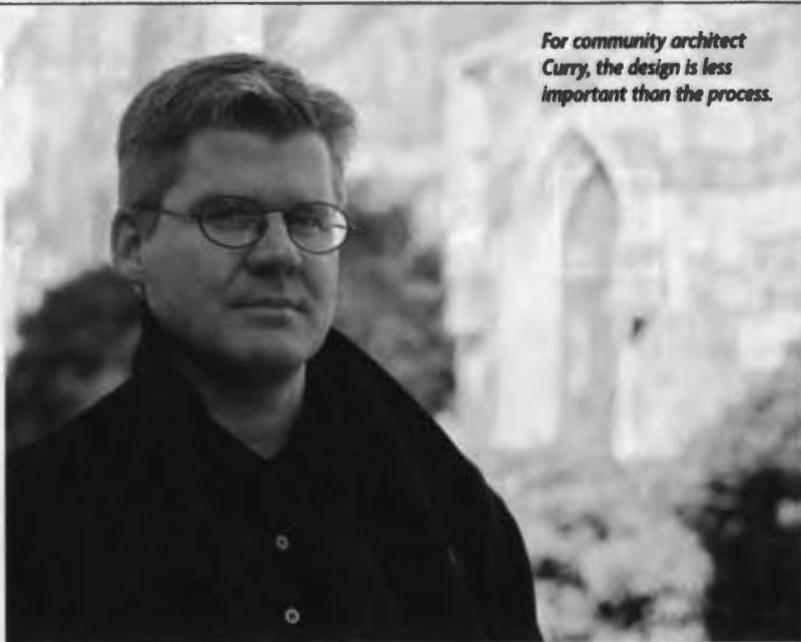


SCIENCE FOR SALE

It appears that industry now exerts such influence over scientific research that even the most reputable organizations can't seem to find scientists without conflicts of interest. As reported in **Onearth** (Fall 2002), published by the Natural Resources Defense Council, even the prestigious International Agency for Research on Cancer in Lyons, France, may have fallen prey to the trend. After inviting a scientist with ties to PepsiCo, Coca-Cola, and the maker of Sweet 'n Low to serve on one of its highly respected review panels, the IARC favorably revised the status of the sweetener saccharin from a "possible" carcinogen to a substance whose risk was undetermined. Other recent IARC panels have favorably reassessed the pesticide atrazine and the manufacturing chemical 1,3-butadiene. These revisions come on the heels of the *New England Journal of Medicine's* loosening its rules against publishing articles by authors with ties to companies manufacturing the products being reviewed. (The journal claimed it was getting hard to find authors without conflicts.)

GROUND ZERO GARDEN

Michael Ableman wants to grow more than buildings on the World Trade Center site in lower Manhattan. The Goleta, California, farmer and author is thinking apples and herbs and vegetables. His vision of a two- or three-acre urban farm at Ground Zero would include orchards, greenhouses, food markets, space for gardening and cooking classes, and soil and seeds collected from around the world. The farm, he explained in *The New York Times*, "would show that we know how to bring forth life and nourishment from the rubble of hate and destruction."



For community architect Curry, the design is less important than the process.

JASON MESSER

Divine Design

Detroit architect and priest Terrence Curry helps inner-city people rebuild their own communities

BY JOSEPH HART

IN 1968 National Urban League director Whitney M. Young Jr. gave a tongue-lashing to members of the American Institute of Architects. Speaking at their 100th annual convention, he took the designers to task for contributing to segregation, redlining, and concentrated urban poverty. "You are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights," he said. "You share the responsibility for the mess we are in."

As a direct result, several organizations sprouted to help impoverished inner-city neighborhoods. The community design movement was born—a grassroots, neighborhood approach to urban planning that brings the users of buildings into the process of designing them.

"That was back when I was, like, 3," says Terrence Curry, one of the leading lights of community design today.

After languishing in the get-rich decade of the '80s, the movement has experienced a slow resurgence and now is poised for a major comeback. Curry, an architect and Jesuit priest, founded the Detroit Collaborative Design Center on the campus of the Jesuit-run University of Detroit Mercy in 1995. It's a model for the new form of community design.

Curry couldn't have picked a better city. While most large American cities suffer problems, Detroit has been all but crushed by them. Crime, poverty, and homelessness are endemic. Declining population and a steady atrophy of industry and jobs have left its urban core in ruins. The Design Collaborative, with the help of students, community leaders, and rank-and-file citizens, is in the business of rebuilding. And they're not building big public housing projects—or trendy suburban-style "in-fill" townhomes.

THE WARM NORTH

The 10 most "caring" states, based on measures of economic and financial well-being, education, health, volunteerism, charity, civic engagement, safety, and protection of the natural environment, according to the United Way State of Caring Index:

1. Minnesota
2. New Hampshire
3. Connecticut
4. Massachusetts
5. Maine
6. Iowa
7. Vermont
8. Wisconsin
9. South Dakota
10. North Dakota

THE CHILLY SOUTH

The 10 least-caring states:

50. Louisiana
49. New Mexico
48. Arizona
47. Mississippi
46. Arkansas
45. Nevada
44. Texas
43. South Carolina
42. Florida
41. Tennessee

LITTLE GREEN PILLS

The rise (sorry) of Viagra as an alternative to exotic aphrodisiacs may be having a measurable effect on the survival of certain endangered animals. According to **The Economist** (Nov. 16, 2002), the harvest of harp seal penises and hooded seal penises, once prized for their alleged ability to stiffen a man's resolve (sorry again), has plummeted since 1998, when Viagra first became available. The harp seal harvest between 1998 and 2000 dropped to less than 100,000 from 250,000, and only 10 hooded seals were killed in that same period.

Their projects have ranged from an apartment building for homeless men to a 40,000-square-foot community service center housing a thrift store, a child care center, a clinic, employment services, and a food shelf.

But don't judge his work by its outcome, Curry insists. The truly radical concept behind community design is how it gets done. "I do beautiful design work," he says, "but for me what is most important is the process." Curry and other architects in the movement don't work for a client in the traditional sense. Instead, the community itself is their client. The apartment project in Detroit, for instance, was initiated by a group of homeless activists who sought help in untangling a maze of City Hall code specifications and site requirements. Over the course of five years, Curry's organization helped the activists develop their organization and clarify their proposal, then gain design and site approval from city officials. The Design Collaborative hooked them up with a local developer and helped find tax credits to ease the financial burden of the project.

"What we're trying to do is establish a sense of ownership and identity with a place," Curry explains. "To have an impact on the built world is something most people don't get a chance to do. It gives them an ontological power

a basic sense of being. They become a co-creator with God. That's power."

Fresh from a fellowship at Harvard, where he studied conflict resolution, Curry is currently taking a sojourn as artist in residence at Fordham University, another Jesuit institution. But he's anxious to get started on his next projects—a national center for community design and a wood shop for inner-city kids where he can "engage them one-on-one with creation." He's hopeful that the community design movement is catching on, and that a national center can help galvanize it. For one thing, the up-and-coming generation of architecture students at universities like Detroit Mercy are demanding a more meaningful education. For another, the professional community seems to be taking notice of his work. Before he left Detroit for Harvard, he won the American Institute of Architects' prestigious National Young Architect award, and his Detroit Design Collaborative has won accolades too.

"I'm not saying 'change architecture and it'll change the world,' but it does have a huge effect," he says. "Our world could use a few more places that make people feel comfortable, places that promote a feeling of community." **U**

CAFÉ UTNE: Discuss Terrence Curry's architecture in the Cities forum at cafe.utne.com

