

Taking Up Space

Taking Up Space is an occasional column written on graphic design issues by Brian Grebow, BG Communications.

What does it take to design... A book

As a change of pace, I thought I would describe the process that I used to create some of the more memorable projects in my portfolio.

Every once in a while certain projects come along that challenge one's ability to design something important. Sure the business cards, newsletters, manuals can stimulate but when I was approached to design a full-colour book detailing the stained glass at St. Peter's Seminary in London, Ontario, I was excited, daunted, and felt up to the challenge. The resulting book, *Panes of Glory: Illuminations from the Stained Glass Windows of St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel in London, Ontario* is just recently off the press. It was an exercise in creating an inviting, clear design that was consistent with the importance of the contents. There was a need to have a lot of white space. It had to help the reader find each window in the sanctuary, as if they were there. It was essential to help the reader imagine this holy place, see its beauty, and feel the sacredness of its history.

The author (Fr. Michael Prieur), the book copy editor Krysia Lear, and I had many discussions as to how

the material should be presented. We had to maintain respect for the images, while asking questions about the biblical nature of some of the windows as well as explain the mysteries of faith and of the doctors of the church. We examined various elements such as page numbers, chapter separation pages, headline levels as well as type-face choice. It had to be clear. It could not confuse the reader, but lead the reader on a journey.

The resulting 216-page, larger sized book conveys, as Fr. Prieur states in his introduction, the "remarkable heritage of religious art which is almost unknown to our people" and "opened up a small window to this wonderful heritage of ours through *Panes of Glory*." Now that we have completed our task, the book was launched at the 75th anniversary of the chapel in the seminary. We let it go to the universe for others to examine the awe of the images and the wonder of its message.

