Jury Comments
Thorn crown Chapel is a building that is also an astonishing formalization of the forest setting into which it is placed. Great care was taken to preserve its wooded site. A cage of small wood and glass pieces carried through the woods stands among the trees. Its wood pieces have been hand-rubbed with grayish stain to blend with the bark of the surrounding trees. The roof beams form a canopy reminiscent of the trees, reminding us of Ruskin’s observation that being in a Gothic church is like being in a verdant forest.

Yet the precision and intricacy of its geometric form and its interior finishes set the building apart as well. The cool blue of the bench cushions reinforces the serenity and peace appropriate for a place of worship and meditation.
Architect's Statement
Thorn crown Chapel, set on an eight-acre wooded hillside site near Eureka Springs, Arkansas, is a nondenomi-
national Christian chapel for the wayfarer.

In selecting the site there was an early realization that heavy earth-moving equipment or massive
construction materials could not be used without destroying the wooded setting; and that the whole
design must hinging from using anything too big for
tow men to carry along a
narrow hillside pathway. This
limitation was the key to the
structural concept. It became
a building of many small
pieces—one two-by-fours
and two-by-sixes linked
together into modular,
angular structural elements,
that formed a larger cage-
like structure infilled with
clear glass.

In its structural expression,
it is a kind of reversal of Gothic cathedral
architecture, which has
repeated external flying
butresses pushing the
structure upward and
inward. Thorn crown Chapel
has this repetition of
structural elements, but
stability is achieved by
wooden tensile members
pulling from within. This
stabilizing web of braces,
under a ridge skylight,
receives a constantly
changing play of light and
pattern—a natural
ornamentation of the
structure and the space.