

# Design of Baha'i Temple, Santiago, Chile

by Glenn Bell, PE, SE, C.Eng, SECB, F.ASCE, F.SEI, FIStructE



**Background:** Opened in September 2016, the Baha'i Temple north of Santiago, Chile, is the eighth and final continental "mother temple" of the Baha'i faith. The vision of architect Siamak Hariri of Hariri Pontarini Architects, Toronto, was to create an inspirational "temple of light". As a member of the design team, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger was structural engineering and cladding consultant.

Achieving Hariri's vision posed many challenges. The project is located in a high seismic zone in the foothills of the Andes Mountains. The exterior cladding uses custom slumped borosilicate glass panels developed specifically for this project. The combination of new materials in a high seismic environment required advanced performance-based design, seismic base isolation, extensive computer simulation of structural reliability, and comprehensive testing in SGH's laboratories to characterize the performance and durability of the novel materials.

The Temple has won numerous awards for architecture and engineering including the Institution of Structural Engineers Award for Structural Artistry in 2017.

**About the Speakers:** Glenn R. Bell is a Senior Principal of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger (SGH) a structural engineering firm headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Glenn has worked his entire 45 year career at SGH, in creative structural design and in leading major investigations of structural distress and failure. He was SGH's CEO from 1995 through 2016.

Glenn is President-Elect of the US-based Structural Engineering Institute (SEI) and a board member of the Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE). For his professional leadership Glenn received the 2018 SEI President's Award and the 2019 SEI Tewksbury Award.

**6.30pm, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

**ROOM: 2037, SL ROBERT EMMET THEATRE (A),  
Arts Block, Trinity College Dublin**

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