



Church Buildings

Missiv #49 To Pete Boardman, June 2004)

Pete -

U rote:

Is yur church commit'd tu owtreach and bilding community or is it commit'd tu bilding a bigger congregashen and a new edifase? Is it committed tu garnering a welthyer congregashen with a bigger collecshon plate or is it primarily interested in laying a fowndashen for parishon'rs lives and

influensung the rest of sosiety tu meet the needs of individuals?

U also stressd the need for a sense of pursenal responsibility, mentioning yur role as father of 9 and grandfather of 18. I hope u resévd my résent post in which I apéld tu aul my church frends tu take up the cauz of reforming the spelling, as part of their obligation as cristians.

U insult me and my church if u think welth is our main aim. We ar acuzed of that by the critics of relijen. Hoos welth? Tудay in particular that criticism duznt hold wauter. My church, for example, needs tu hav its héting sistem entirely rebilt, but we wunder ware in the wurld we ar gona get the munny for it.

Our rector gave up a lucrativ job as a bank auditor tu go into the ministry in the survis of God. He has tu be thankful that he made munny in banking, becoz he sure isnt making much now. But he continnues to serv, and we ar grateful to hav the church bilding stil available for us.

Of corse today's cristian church differs from that of Cryst's time in that his erly folloers met in homes. Meeting in homes is a beginning, but as the congregation groes, mor is needed. I'm sure u understand that. I think u ar, rather, being critical of the amount of munny spent on church bildings, saying it's too much.

One thing my sheolian corespondents tel me is that beutiful churches pleas God. They say that a beutiful church is a compliment that God personaly enjoys. Is this just vanity on his part? It turns out it's not just that. For one thing God himself is an architect and deziner of the first order. He enjoys inspiring an erthly bilder with his own enthusiasm. The sheolians tel me that God playd an activ part in dezining the soaring dome of the Church of Santa Sophia in Istanbul - a structure evryone sed cud not be bilt; yet the cristian emperor Justinian bilt it. It stil stands as a marvel today, 1500 years later.

We may refer to God's personal sponsorship of that dome as an exercise in self-centerdness, or mor kyndly, as a form of self-expression. Wel, there is sumthing the sheolians hav been at pains to make me understand about God's so-cald self-centerdness. [U can imagin the devil as the grait Accuser finding fault with God over this trait of his.] They explain, among other things, that God lookd into himself, and saw that dome as an important expression of himself, eeven a

grait gift to emboddyd mankind. God felt that those who contemplated this incredible structure wud lern sumthing valluable, wud be blessd by it. Was he rong?

Sure, we want big beutiful churches. Why shudn't we? For one thing a big beutiful sky-tuching church, with its pointed spire, directs the eyes of the vewer upward, and with luk his mynd may follo his eyes. We erthbound humans need a tangible object lesson wen a message is to be put across. No message is mor important to be conveyd to man than this, that God is abuv us. A church can make that message tangible. For us to be gided and blessd by God, for us to inherit his wizdom and power, it is necessary for us to respect him as beyond us - in wisdom, in intelligence, in responsibility, in luv. Not meerly our father - sum yungsters dont respect their fathers & for good reazon. No, he is beyond us all.

Let us feed the poor, & we may be surprized that wen it's time to bild a church, thoze poor who hav jointd us wil fynd ways of playing an important role in raising a sutable, God-onnoring bilding. They wil be rich in sharing ownership, with others, of sumthing grand.

Also a fine church makes outsiders say tu éch uther "Whot can this god of theirs be, that the people make such sacrificises of their pursenal welth in order tu pût up a structure which no wun of them oans? Then sum cum tu the church tu fynd out.

And when they get inside, whot du they hér? The Anglican church has a particular messaj for its prosperus successful members, beyond whot it sez tu the poor. Tu the rich, seated as a congregation in their ornate churches & partaking regularly of the Comunion, it sez, "U must be responsible not just for yur oan life and yur oan family. For u there is a hevvier responsibility. "Of him tu hoom much is given, much is expected."

If u hav forgotten, Pete, cum back sum time and lissen, and hér agen the church's pacient message. U of aul peepel, hu hav a hart for problem reeders and spellers, hav no bizness being so unsuportiv of us church members. Join me in helping tu persuade them that it is their responsibility as cristians to make the inglish language easier to read and rite, so that no one need be left behind. U ar rite in saying eletism is a plague. But let's not disonnor church bildings. They ar not the culprit. We church members must indeed not get caut up in pride. This wud be a misinterpretation of the church's glory, of its glorius bildings & of its glorius Lord. My favorit passage is this, from Micah 6:8: "Wot dus the Lord ask of thee but tu du justly, tu luv mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" Humbly, it ses. With God, it ses. So eeven God is humble



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