2006

When God Builds a House

Carol Reid
Freewill Baptist Bible College

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit http://www.acl.org/

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl

Part of the Library and Information Science Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol49/iss3/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolfe@georgefox.edu.
“Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.” Psalm 127:1

Let me paraphrase: “Except the Lord build the association, we are wasting our time.”

The Bible has many illustrations about building. Proverbs 14:1 says, “Every wise woman builds her house.” In Matthew 7:24-27, Jesus talks about the wise man who builds his house on the rock. In Luke’s gospel, Jesus describes the man who builds the tower, but first sits down to decide how much it costs (14:28). The cornerstone is Peter’s construction metaphor in 1 Peter 2. Paul describes building materials in 1 Corinthians 3:12 – wood, hay, and stubble as opposed to gold, silver, and precious stones. I don’t know about you, but I’m not interested in being the first little pig with a house built out of straw.

So I asked myself, how does the Lord build a house? What should we know about His construction techniques? What house has the Lord ever built anyway?

Of course! He gave instructions and blueprints for the tabernacle – the Old Testament house of worship.

Boy, did He give instructions! He spends six chapters in Exodus giving detailed instructions and explanations about the building of the tabernacle (see Exodus 25-27 and 36-38). When God builds a house, He gives instructions in His Word. If we want to build like God builds, we must be saturated with Scripture. It must shape and direct who we are and how we act and how we think. We should be reading about our profession and about higher education and about the issues that touch our lives. But the real text – the one whose principles never fail – is God’s Word. That is essential to us.

When God builds a house, He pays attention to details. He gives exact dimensions. He cares about the curtain rings and the lamp wicks. Every part of the whole, every piece of the picture matters. This is a God who counts the hairs on your head, who knows when a sparrow falls, who clothes the grass of the fields. Sometimes we nitpick and worry and micromanage because we get consumed with the details. After all, we are librarians! But some of that expresses our great concern for the details, our joy in doing things well and thoroughly. If we can keep that in balance, I believe it pleases the Lord.

When God builds a house, He uses skilled workmen. Notice Exodus 31:2-3, “I have chosen Bezalel ... I have filled Bezalel with the spirit of God and have given him the skill, ability, and knowledge to do all kinds of work.” Verse 6 includes Oholiab – another skilled craftsman. The field broadens in Exodus 35 to include all the skilled workmen (see verse 10) and mentions their ability to teach others (verse 34). These are chosen workers, called out by the Lord to do His work. These are gifted workers, whose talents and abilities are returned in worship to the Giver of all good and perfect gifts. These are wise and understanding workers (Exodus 36:1) because of God’s provision for them. They aren’t Lone Rangers, but they are banding together to do as a group what they cannot accomplish alone. There’s Bezalel and Oholiab and other skilled workers too; woodworkers and metalworkers and weavers and seamstresses and people to sweep up the pegs and threads and sawdust after them. These workers are teaching their trades to those who follow after them as well, as wise stewards of their gifts.

When God builds a house, He uses voluntary gifts. The grateful hearts of God’s people, the children of Israel, responded generously and gave freely – so much so that Moses finally had
to say, “Stop! That’s enough!” We librarians understand about giving, volunteering, resource sharing. And as Christian librarians, we know that everything we have is from Him. When we give to Him, He will multiply our gifts and give back even more – “pressed down, shaken together, and running over” (Luke 6:38).

When God builds a house, He uses beauty and symbolism to reflect Himself. In the tabernacle, every piece of furniture pointed to Jesus. He was the center of the building, the point of every object lesson. He built a symbol for God's people and a symbol for the world outside – pointing to Himself. If ACL doesn’t look like Jesus to our members within and our publics without, we’ve missed the boat. We want to reflect Him in all that we do.

When God builds a house, He builds it to last, but He also builds it to move. We need to partner with God in building houses that stand the tests of time and circumstances. “God doesn’t make junk.” The real owner of the house is God. But also remember, the Tabernacle was a tent. It could be moved. When the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night started moving, it could be packed up and relocated. It was not afraid of change. It was going places. It marched forward (granted, there was some wandering in the wilderness) on to the Promised Land. Substance endured. Scenery changed. God’s building was both enduring and portable. That’s how we must allow God to build ACL as well.

When God builds a house, He moves in. In the concluding verses of the book of Exodus, when everything was set up and the work on the Tabernacle was completed, “a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.” God promises His presence and His pleasure when we build His way – when we join His construction company.

God is in the business of building. 1 Peter 2:5 states, “You also are like living stones, so let yourselves be used to build a spiritual temple.” And note 1 Corinthians 3:9: “We are God’s workers, working together. You are like God’s farm, God’s house.” When you get right down to it, God’s building is not going to be a library, but librarians. God isn’t building a college, but students. He’s not building a church house, but a Church. Let’s build with gold, silver, and jewels. Let’s allow the Master Architect and Builder to direct us. Let the Lord build the house. And 1 Corinthians 15:58 promises, “ye know your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” ✠