

LET THE STONES CRY OUT

LET THE STONES CRY OUT

DOUGLAS WILSON



*This book is dedicated to the session of
Christ Church, a true band of brothers.*

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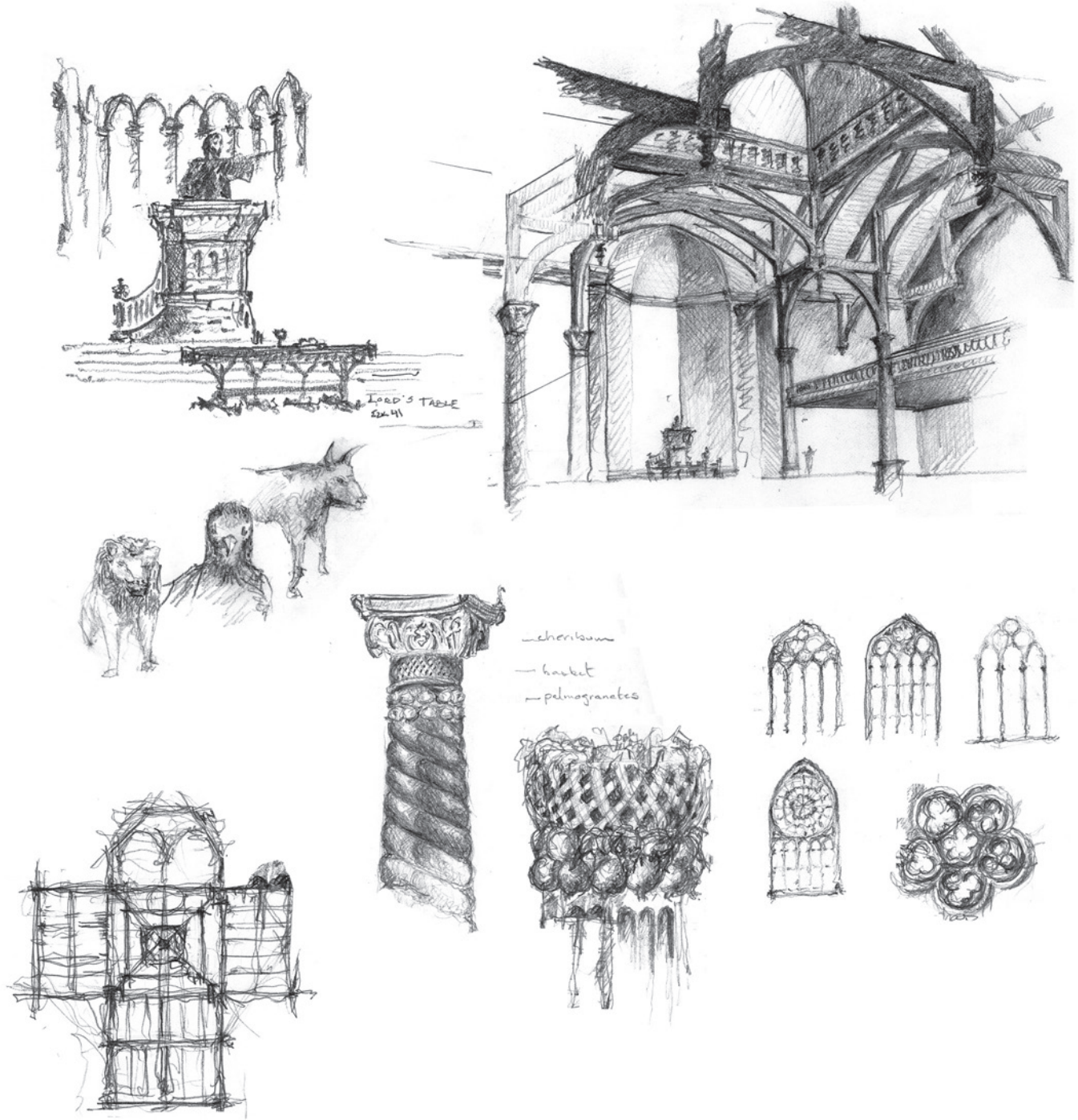
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SKETCHES FROM THE CHRIST CHURCH PLANS



PREFACE

January 2021

Dear Friends of Christ Church,

As some of you know, we are in the process of building a sanctuary where our congregation can meet in one place, all together. We have the property, we have the architectural drawings, and we have quite a bit of the money. Our long-standing desire has been to build a place to worship God without going into debt to do it, and this has meant that the “pilgrimage phase” of our church’s development and growth has been a good forty years or so—meeting in schools and gyms and so on. That said, we are not yet ready to give the order to the bulldozers, but we can certainly see it from here.

Our elders recently authorized us to make this need known to the broader Christian community. We are not practitioners of “hard sell” giving appeals, as you all know, but our thought was that there might be a number of our friends around the country who would be pleased to donate to something like this, and who would be distressed if they found out later that they had missed an opportunity to participate. That said, to echo the words of Paul, every man should only contribute as he has determined in his heart to give, and not a penny more.

A number of years ago, our elders made a commitment that we were not going to break ground on the building itself until we had crossed a threshold of 60% of the needed funds raised (in hand or in receivables), and until we had pledges for 60% of the remainder. If we decide to build the sanctuary first (instead of the temporary solution of building a large fellowship hall that could house us), we are basically 1% shy of that first 60%. We were able to hit that goal because our members here were so diligent in fulfillment of their pledges that most of it moved over to the cash column. But this means that the needed pledges are currently in the neighborhood of 3 million. That is what we are currently looking at. Our deadline for making our decision on which structure we are going to build first is this coming Spring, 2021.

We do not want a “tall steeple” church for the sake of show. We honestly believe that having such a sanctuary will greatly expand our opportunities for ministry, both locally and nationally. We believe that it would be a resource greatly used. If you think the same, we cordially invite you to participate together with us.

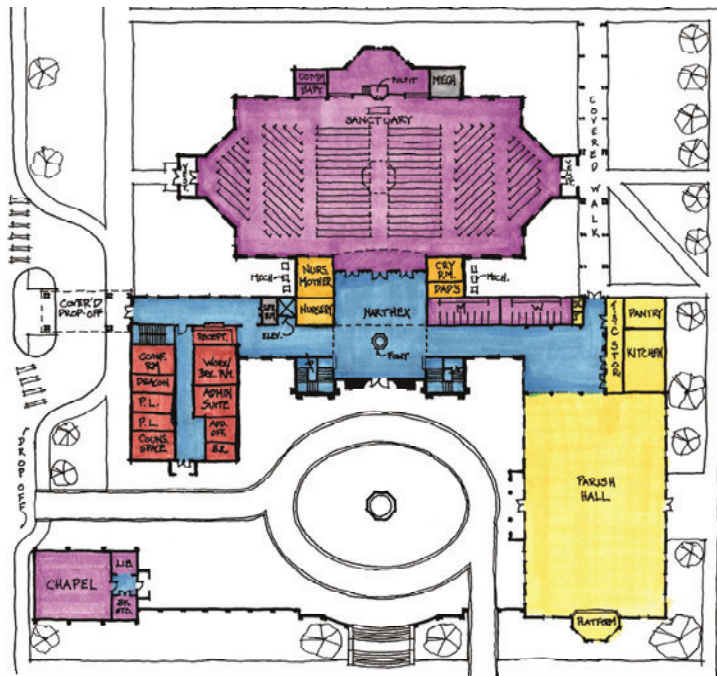
There are two things you can do to help us out. The first is if you would like to give, and the second would be if you know of someone who is in a position to give, but who may not have heard of this need. If that is the case, please pass this information on to them.

We do not want a “tall steeple” church for the sake of show. We honestly believe that having such a sanctuary will greatly expand our opportunities for ministry, both locally and nationally.

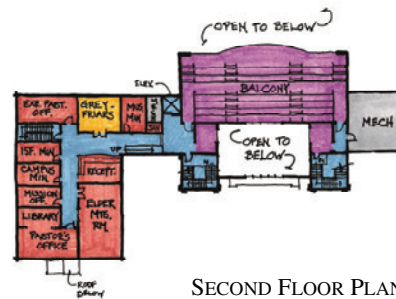
For those who would like to give, this is how to do it. It is possible to donate to our building fund online with a one-time or a recurring gift (christkirk.com/fundraising), and if you would like to pledge a certain amount, that is possible also (pledges@christkirk.com).

Cordially in Christ,

Douglas Wilson

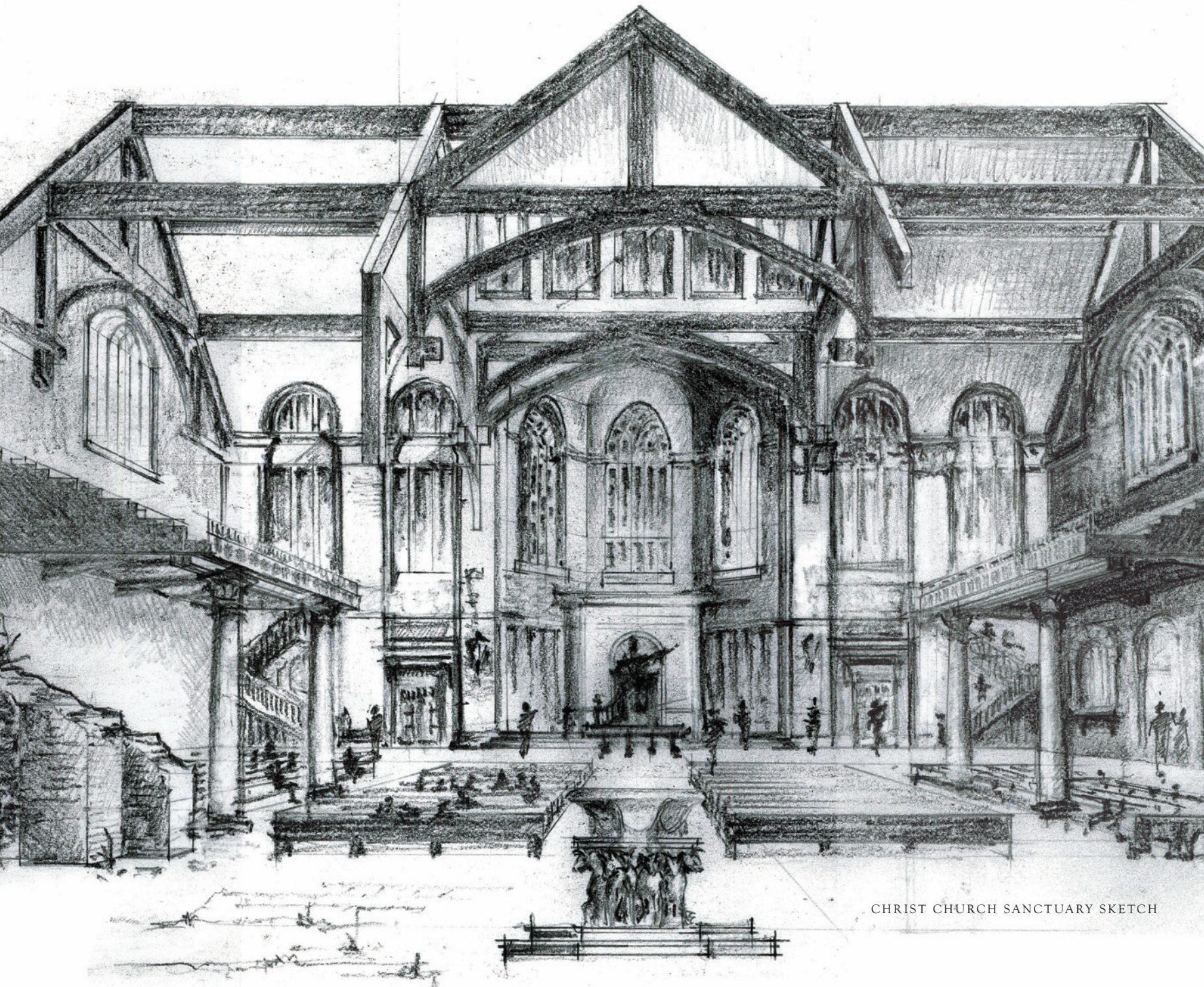


FIRST FLOOR PLAN
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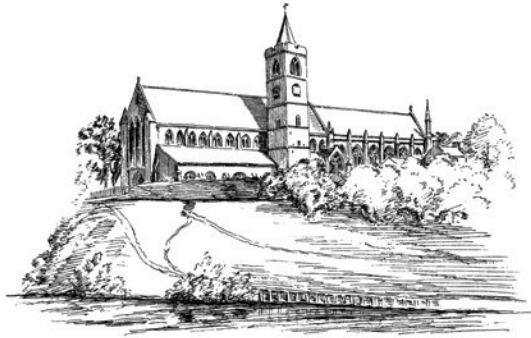


SECOND FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 1/16" = 1'-0"

CHRIST CHURCH FLOOR PLANS



CHRIST CHURCH SANCTUARY SKETCH



INTRODUCTION

When you undertake to build a building, one of the first questions to answer has to do with what the building is *for*. There are times, of course, when a building can be retrofitted to a different purpose than the original architect had in mind, and remodeling can be an enterprise filled with adventures.

Usually the question of purpose is forefront in the minds of the owners and architects. What is this structure for? When the structure is a church, the answer should obviously be that it was built to glorify God. But even this has to be connected to subordinate functions. A church building glorifies God in the architecture itself, but also in how it houses the singing acoustically, and whether it is obvious that preaching occupies a central place, and so forth.

And so we begin by emphasizing some of the basic distinctive that Christ Church has sought to establish in our worship and in our parish life. What are we about? What are we trying to emphasize? This in turn will relate to the kind of edifice that we build.

“Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe” (Phil. 3:1).

Like every church, the church at Philippi had particular challenges, and Paul addressed them all by urging them to rejoice in those challenges. This is a

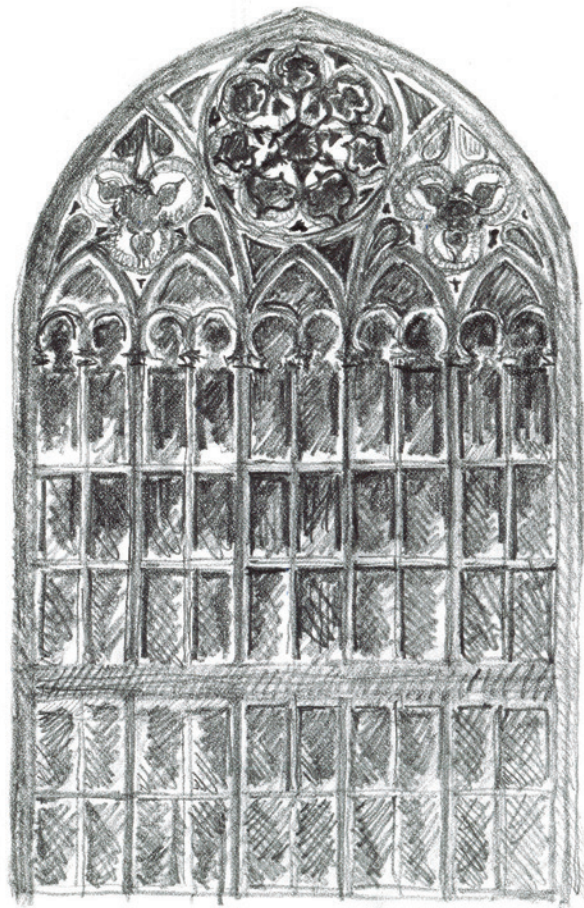
response that is *always* appropriate because God is always sovereign and God is always good. Not only is it appropriate for Christians to rejoice all the time, it is appropriate to bring to them repeated reminders to do so. To repeat the same exhortations should not be a grief to ministers, and it should be received as a means of keeping us all safe.

But before we repeat the distinctives, we must distinguish two kinds of distinctives. One kind of distinctive arises from what we believe the Scripture teaches and requires of all believers. We focus on it because we believe that all believers should focus on it. This would be a *principled* distinctive, coupled with an ecumenical invitation to all believers everywhere.

A second kind of distinctive would arise from our particular circumstances. These are *tactical* circumstances, tailored to the life and situation of each congregation. Are we in an urban setting or in a small town? Should we build this kind of building or that kind? Should we build a Christian school or is there already a good Christian school? These are tactical questions.

A third kind of distinctive is sinful. This is what happens when a group tries to separate itself from other Christians through various kinds of doctrinal vainglory or ministry showboating. This is what the disciples were arguing about on the road (Mk. 9:34). We are not immune to this temptation (why *would* we be?), and so we want to resist it everywhere we find it. The place to look is under your breastbone.

*Worshiping God is not a means to another end.
Worshiping God is the highest calling that any
human being has, or that the entire human race
has. It requires no other justification.*



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HORO ARCHITECT
WINDOW STUDY
3.26.2019

Jesus is Lord, and this means that He is relevant to all things. No area of human endeavor lies outside His authority.

That said, what are our principled distinctives?

The first has to do with corporate worship. We worship God because He is *worthy*. We do not do it for any of the results that might come about from it. Rather, we do everything else for the results it might have in helping us to glorify God. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12).

Worshiping God is not a means to another end. Worshiping God is the highest calling that any human being has, or that the entire human race has. It requires no other justification. Whatever we do, it should drive us to this great end. Whatever you do, it should culminate here, in the glorification of God. There is great wisdom in the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism here. This is our chief end.

There are of course dangers. One danger is that you make something you *call* worship into a great big deal, but it is not spiritual worship at all. Another danger is that of trying to get worship to “do” other things, like evangelism. But this is backwards.

What are the components of this worship? They would include learning the structure of covenant renewal worship, growing in our musical wisdom and literacy, teaching our families the importance of worship, weekly communion, and practical Bible teaching.

A second distinctive is basic discipleship in community. We want to emphasize basic and foundational issues in our teaching—*personal* piety as meas-

ured by *relational* piety (1 John 4:20). We want our doctrine to revolve around practical Christianity, Christian living that is meant to be *lived*. This is why there are recurring themes in the sermons, conferences, books published, and so on. We emphasize things like confession of sin, dealing with bitterness, maintaining relationships, how to read your Bible, the importance of Christian education, and so on.

Any danger here? The danger is the temptation to reduce everything to a moralistic or legalistic approach—to a simple formula. But the biblical approach is always *credenda* before *agenda*.

The components here would include things like: understanding the Apostles' Creed, true Christian education for Christian kids, parish studies, having our lives intertwined in *koinonia* fellowship, and being driven by an eschatological optimism.

And third would be worldview evangelism, outreach, and cultural engagement.

Jesus is Lord, and this means that He is relevant to all things. No area of human endeavor lies outside His authority. Our evangelism is not an attempt to helicopter victims out of a disaster area, but rather is the work of rebuilding a disaster area. Everything is relevant, and everything is related to Jesus.

The Christian faith has cultural ramifications. The Christian faith is political. The Christian faith is public. We have no business taking this light of His and putting it under our own little bushel.

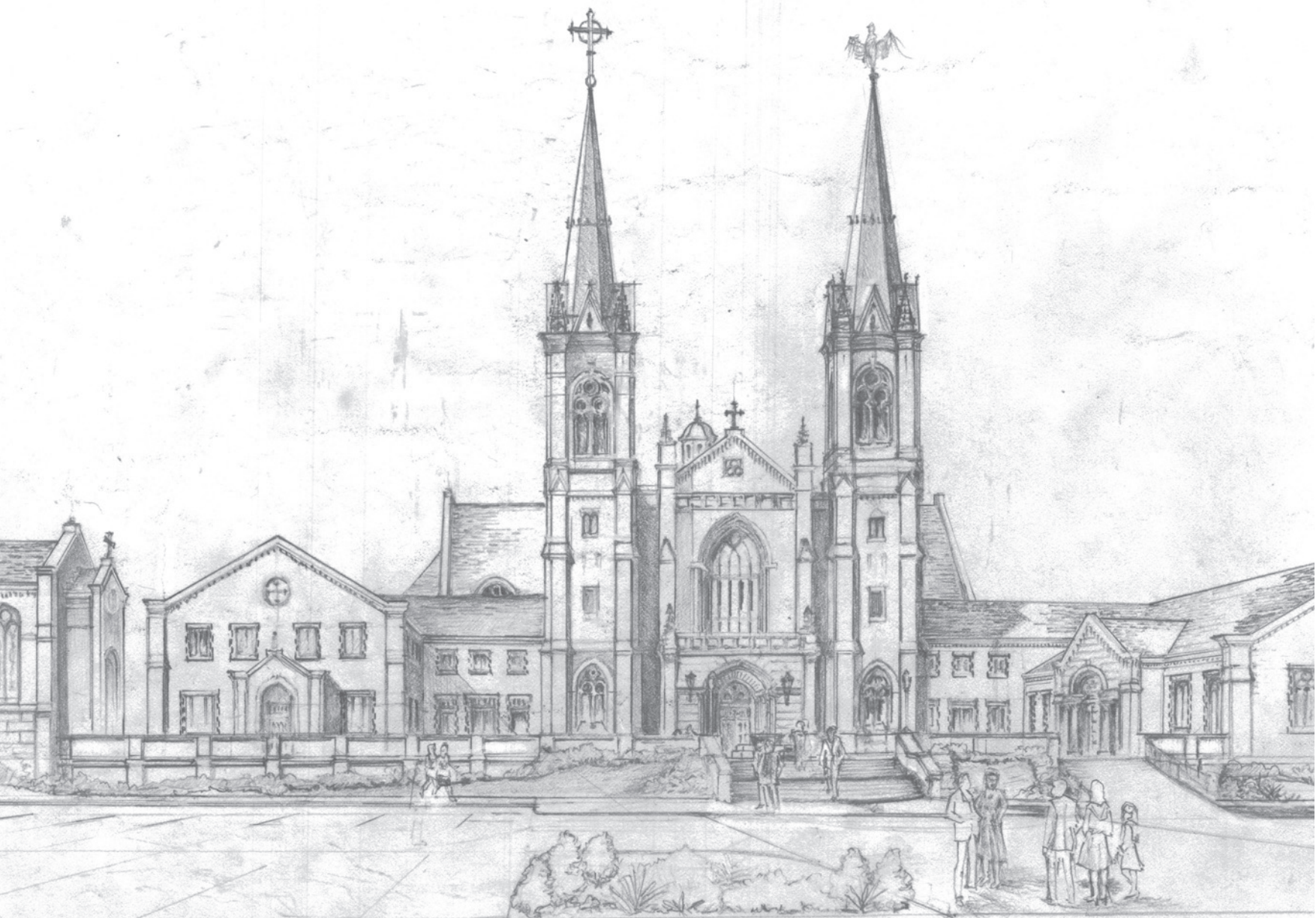
One danger is the obvious one of calling it cultural engagement when we are just drifting along with whatever it is the world is dishing up. Another is the cowardice of shutting up because of the PC police. Or that of using a Jesus stamp on all of your personal prejudices.

The components of this kind of endeavor would include real Christian education (again), and a willingness to get out of our comfy little ghetto. In order to learn cultural engagement, we have to engage. We must not capitulate, and we must not run away. We must *engage*. This means knowing, loving, and praying for non-believers—without trying to become like them.





CHRIST CHURCH SITE SKETCH



CHRIST CHURCH SKETCH

In the coming years, and in the times to come after that, there will no doubt be a number of times when we have practical and tactical decisions to make. A good example would be the issues surrounding the building of our new sanctuary, that we are now on the threshold of doing. We have been without one since this congregation was first established in 1975. We have a church here in town that we planted just fifteen years ago, and which has its own building now, and we still don't, which is the coolest thing in the world.

But when we come to build our own building (or if we do anything else), we need to make sure that everything is brought back to these three areas. How will *this* help us do *that*?

Unless we make a point of doing it this way, we will be like a crotchety bachelor deciding to get married in his late forties. And what could go wrong with that?

The first few chapters of this small book set down some of the basic theological principles involved in building a sanctuary. The remainder of the book is made up of a series of discrete exhortations having to do with the challenge of building, occupying, and using a building—and all to the greater glory of God. Each ends with the same exhortation: Let the stones cry out.

Let the stones cry out.





CHRIST CHURCH COLOR SKETCH



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MERCIER



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WHAT MONEY ALWAYS DOES

Our desire is to build a sanctuary that is more conducive to worship than the temporary quarters that God has graciously given us over the years and up to this point. Because we want every aspect of our lives to be governed by Scripture, this means that we must turn to Scripture for guidance and protection as we are preparing to undertake this significant project. When we look at the map that Scripture provides, there are both *zoom out* and *zoom in* features. This section, and the next two after it, are at the *zoom out* level.

“Now, my son, the Lord be with thee; and prosper thou, and build the house of the Lord thy God, as he hath said of thee. Only the Lord give thee wisdom and understanding, and give thee charge concerning Israel, that thou mayest keep the law of the Lord thy God. Then shalt thou prosper, if thou takest heed to fulfil the statutes and judgments which the Lord charged Moses with concerning Israel: be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed. Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight; for it is in abundance: timber also and stone have I prepared; and thou mayest add thereto. Moreover *there are* workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner

of work. Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron, *there is* no number. Arise *therefore*, and be doing, and the Lord be with thee” (1 Chron. 22:11-16).

Near the end of his life, King David is entrusting the next big task to his son Solomon. That task was the building of a Temple, and in this passage we see some of the essentials that were involved. The first thing was the charge to build the Temple (v. 11). This was the mission.

David’s desire was that God give Solomon wisdom and understanding so that he would keep the law of God (v. 12). The result of keeping this law in wisdom would be prosperity (v. 13), not a truncated legalism. Wisdom and prosperity are given through adherence to the words of God. How could they not be? David then says that in the time of his “trouble,” he had nevertheless made a number of preparations for the building of the Temple (v. 14). Not only that, he had assembled the workmen for the task (v. 15). The gold, silver, brass and iron were gathered “without number” (v. 16). Therefore, David said, be “up and doing.”

This is the lesson of resources assembled. The principle is that you should take up the hard task of counting your shekels before undertaking the relatively easy task of spending them. Jesus teaches us this principle bluntly. “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” (Luke 14:28). Now if your response to this is that Jesus was making something called a “spiritual point” about the cost of

The principle is that you should take up the hard task of counting your shekels before undertaking the relatively easy task of spending them.

discipleship, I grant it. But the spiritual point is not one you can grasp if you don't understand the thing Jesus is comparing it to.

You can't afford what you can't afford, and this is something that needs to be determined *first*.

Now David was a king, which meant that he could assemble these riches, and dispose of them the way he does here. He gives these resources to Solomon, and says that *this* is for *that*. He didn't have to route any of this through committees. Our position is different. We are in a much more democratic setting—which has strong and weak points. There are virtues connected to this position of affairs, and there are vices. This means that our financial preparation has to include things like cost estimates, budgets, fundraising, etc. So much is obvious. But another thing we must do—and which I am doing here—is to prepare our hearts to understand money.

We need a big church, and you can't have a big church without big money. But you can't have big money without a big problem, and what is that? Whenever you have big money show up, more than a few people will start acting funny. Sometimes people start acting that way simply because of the *possibility* of big money. This funniness runs in two directions—and we need to learn how to mortify both these tendencies. They are *temptations*. Treat them in just the same way you would treat a temptation to perjure yourself, or commit adultery, or rob banks.

In short, we need to remember that money will do what money always wants to do.

I am not addressing the temptations that people with money face. The warnings of Scripture for them are well-known, and are pretty clear. We do not

Whenever you have big money show up, more than a few people will start acting funny.

need to rehearse them here. What we do need to do is go over the temptations faced by people who live in the *proximity* of money. Teaching on this is also found in Scripture, but we are not nearly enough on our guard about it. If someone in our congregation received a windfall inheritance of 100 million dollars, the chances are pretty good that this person would receive *scores* of warnings not to let it go to his head. All the people around that guy will not receive any warnings, and they are the ones who really need it.

They are, respectively, the temptation to be the rich guy's friend and the temptation to be the rich guy's enemy.

The first warning they need is to guard against unctuous flattery. "For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness" (1 Thess. 2:5).

The second warning is against envious carping. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's" (Ex. 20:17). "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. 14:30).

Consider a non-monetary illustration. Suppose someone in our congregation, out of the blue, won the Nobel Prize for carving a cure for cancer out of a bar of soap. Next Sunday someone walks up and says, "Congratulations... now don't let it go to your head." He should reply, "Thanks... and don't you get envious." Or someone else walks up, "Congratulations! I always thought you were wonderful! And it turns out you are *really* wonderful! Cousin!" The reply here needs to be more creative.

This is just another way of saying that before we assemble our financial resources to build, we need to take care that we assemble our heart resources. In order for us to handle this great task properly as a congregation, we must learn how to take financial information in *stride*. In order to do this right, we have to practice, practice, and practice.

And, of course, this has everything to do with Jesus.

