**Stewardship – Our Church Building**Doug Aden

A couple of months ago I was reading a book, I do not remember the name but, in the story, it had a comment about a church building and for the purpose of the story it was not a favorable comment. I thought I disagree with that; I think the church building is especially important.

There are many different types and styles of churches. From the cathedrals in Europe which are magnificent structures and I wonder how they were built. Today the styles of church buildings range from large complex structures to small buildings.

I have been a part of seven different church homes that range from a country church, small town church. college campus, and metro churches. They were in old buildings, new buildings, and remodeled buildings. But each of these buildings had a community of believers, a purpose, and a mission.

 I believe the church building and the grounds are an especially important part of our religion’s heritage.

In Exodus God gives specific instructions on what the first formal place of worship should look like and even how it is to be financed.

Today these buildings as well as Lord of Love have several different functions.

Witness. This church building is a witness to the community. It is a witness to the people that are passing by either in a car or on foot. And on Sunday morning they will notice that there are cars parked in the parking lot and people inside will be worshiping.

This building provides a place where we can educate both adults and children through Sunday School, confirmation, adult education, and Bible studies. A place where we can grow our faith and pass it on to the next generation.

This building provides a place where we can be a community where we can meet and worship. Where we can share our joys and sorrows. Where we can greet visitors, say hello to new members through baptism and say our final goodbye to friends at their funeral. We have watched a young child be baptized and follow their growing and maybe see their children be baptized.

We can get together for breakfast, dinners, programs, and maybe even a root beer float and be in fellowship with members and visitors. Two different occasions.

The building provides a place where we can be of service to the community and a place for doing mission. Where we can do projects that help those in need such as quilting, gardening, and Loads of Love. The building provides a place where we can support missions through special offerings and the Endowment fund.

Last but most importantly this church building provides a place of worship, a sanctuary. A holy space where you can worship, spend time in prayer, or thanking God or arguing with God. We can participate in a worship service with different liturgies. A place where we can celebrate the sacraments of baptism and communion. A place where we can gather weekly and sing Alleluia, the Hymn of Praise, the Kyrie and old and new hymns. A place where we can sing:

Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world today,

Have mercy upon us and grant us your peace.

I believe that if we did not have this building most of these activities would not take place.

This church building with this empty cross and alter provides meaning and purpose to our life. And like all important things It also requires our time, our talents, and our treasurers.

Henri Nouwen says They come to the awareness that the intimacy of God’s house excludes no one and includes everyone.