

The Church Building – Its Purpose in Focus

1. The budgets of many Christians have often to be heavily committed to a church building, so it is particularly important to get into focus what a church building *is*, and what it is not.

2. We might think that the *main* reason a church is built is to bring glory to God, in other words that its job is primarily *spiritual*. There are things, like, say, the immense statue of Christ overlooking Rio de Janeiro that may indeed have such a spiritual purpose and little more.

3. But a church building, by contrast, has a strong people-purpose. It exists first and foremost to protect 'the Church' (i.e. people – from whom it derives its name) from the weather! Your Church is **primarily a shelter!**

4. Our weather-shelter may be historic or new, imposing or impoverished, temporary or permanent.

The worst thing that can happen to it is when it can no longer fulfil its **purpose**, i.e. when it no longer shelters a worshipping Christian community.

5. Years ago when I first visited the theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon, I bought a postcard of it as a souvenir, and hoped it would catch the essence of *theatre* for me. It didn't – just an empty stage and hundreds of empty seats! It conveyed nothing about drama or theatre.

6. In the same way much church **publicity** misleadingly depicts its local worship-shelters *empty!* This conveys nothing about the Church, except to confirm wrong ideas that it maintains old and unused buildings!

7. This widespread error comes, I think, from not keeping on focus what your church really *is* – a glorified **umbrella** - to help shelter the **CHURCH!**