

Inside the Box

As the Master stood upon a hill
He gave a mission to fulfill.
Shine the light into dark spaces,
Markets, parties, and unusual places

These early disciples were hard to stop
As they witnessed in ships, houses, and shops.
Go and show not come and see.
Nothing was done conveniently

A church with no walls, pulpit, or steeple;
To them it was clear that the church is God's people.
Since visiting yourself is a most foolish lesson,
Going to church was out of the question.

But this wild horse received a trainer
As they placed the bright light into a container.
The graves of martyrs a place to meet
To remember their lives, pray, and eat.
And if these great people reside in great places,
The light must be brightest in these sacred spaces.

Constantine believed this as head of the nation
So he already had the perfect location.
A temple named Peter and one for Paul;
Even over the tomb of the Greatest of all.
These buildings were patterned from pagan design
And morphed into 'churches' with the passing of time.
From park bench to pew box from nursery to nave,
From armchair to altar and storefront to stage.
From porches to pulpits the light was contained
As this type of thinking was fully ingrained.

Though centuries later I still can attest
That with brick and mortar we are quite obsessed.
So much of our time is spent raising cash
To keep up with maintenance and things that get smashed.
We fight over carpet and pest control plans,
But the real fun begins when we decide to expand.
Why let our lights shine at the park or the beach
When we all know the 'church' is the place for outreach.
If mission will grow through our money and time,
Then the enemy thrives on this paradigm.

As some of you read this you're cheering hooray
It's about time we move past traditional ways.
From steeples to sofas and screened-in lanais
From three-piece to short-sleeves without a necktie.
And, yes, it is true that in building a fire
If you rearrange the logs the flame can go higher.
Yet our ultimate goal is not configuration
But to carry the light that brings transformation.

So if you're a church that's inside the box,
Have you the courage to be unorthodox?
It's fine if some think that you're headed for disaster,
For such is the call to follow the Master.

- Anthony WagenerSmith