



News and Current Events :: Churches get thumbs-up at theaters

Churches get thumbs-up at theaters - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2005/7/26 17:53

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The "Grand Theater" of the AMC Union Station 9 is typically the place where moviegoers gather to see the latest blockbusters and feast on popcorn or hot dogs.

But on Sunday mornings, the theater becomes a place of worship for National Community Church, a local 900-member nondenominational congregation, where its parishioners pray, listen to sermons and receive Holy Communion.

Holding services in movie theaters is "so contemporary, so out of the norm, something that Jesus would do," said Tony Snesko, a member of National Community since it was founded in 1996. "If He was here today, I don't think He would go into a usual church for a service. He would find an unusual place where He normally wouldn't go."

National Community is one of several churches in the D.C. area that are turning neighborhood movie theaters into makeshift sanctuaries on Sundays. At least 70 churches nationwide hold their Sunday services at movie theaters, said officials at National CineMedia LLC, a theater-owned cinema programming company that represents about 1,100 theaters and nearly 12,000 screens in 43 states.

Movie theaters are perfect church venues because the facilities successfully combine location, convenience and comfort, area pastors said. Holding services in movie theaters has been going on for years, theater company officials said.

"There is a growing trend in new ministries and churches that need to have room for expansion. Churches are very expensive to build," said Tom Galley, chief operations and technology officer for National CineMedia, which is owned by AMC Theatres and the Regal Entertainment Group.

In 2002, National CineMedia created a division to recruit churches and businesses to hold services, meetings and special events in its theaters -- mostly as a service to the surrounding communities, officials said.

For churches, renting a movie theater once a week is cheaper than owning and maintaining a church building. It costs about \$2,000 per month to hold services in local theaters, church officials said.

Nine of the 70 churches that hold services in National CineMedia-owned theaters are located in the D.C. area. The company this year saw a 25 percent increase in its number of clients, Mr. Galley said. For Summit Trace Church in Frederick, holding worship services at the nearby Regal Westview Stadium 16 makes sense.

"We're not trying to be hip for hip's sake," said Bill Craig, pastor of Summit Trace. "We're just trying to meet people where they are and take them where God wants them to be."

Mr. Craig said the comfortable setting of a movie theater is perfect for those who feel intimidated by more traditional religious settings.

"We get to see them on their own turf, in their own place, yet there's still a sense of anonymity," he said, adding that people often stumble in expecting to see a movie and end up staying for church. "There's the smell of popcorn, and there's no hint that this could be a church other than the people there demonstrating God's love."

Mark Batterson, lead pastor at National Community Church, said he views the movie screen as one of his church's greatest assets. "To us, the screen is like the 21st-century version of stained glass -- it tells the story of the Gospel with moving pictures," he said.

"For the average person coming in, it feels less churchy and less traditional," said Outreach and Community Care pastor Darin Brown of the facility the church has rented since October 2001.

"It feels like a kind of Christianity where you'd like to get comfortable and invite your friends," he said. More churches are expected to come soon to a movie theater near you. National Community Church plans to begin another congregation next fall in a theater in Northwest, and Journey's Crossing expects to open one at the Majestic 20 in Silver Spring.

(<http://washtimes.com/metro/20050718-120338-9682r.htm>) FULL ARTICLE

Re: Churches get thumbs-up at theaters - posted by ZekeO (), on: 2005/7/26 18:12

Unfortunatley the design of theatres in general tends to make the congregation observers of the services instead of active participants in seeking God. KJ's article on this can be found here, it has some good stuff in it: The Universal Priesthood of All Believers.

That I feel is the one big draw back.

Re: - posted by deltadom (), on: 2005/7/26 18:43

To me it is not a suprise!! Has anybody read Dr Edward R Millers Book on the Argintina Revival!!

(<http://www.peni-el-argentina.org/articles/book.htm>) Edward Millers Books

(http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/187136700X/qid1122417675/sr1-2/refsr_1_3_2/202-5867320-7545463) Edward millers book

We have a cinema culture !! forgive me if I have been angry

Re: - posted by groh_frog, on: 2005/10/30 6:33

I understand that it's a different approach, but I believe it to be something that works.

I'm using the example of Calvary Baptist Church in Chico. A few years ago, one of the local cinemas went out of business, and was bought by Calvary Baptist to make into a local church.

Now, Chico is a college town, housing a junior college and a California University in close proximity to the cinema. This makes it automatically an "interesting" twist on a church, helping it to reach out to the community.

When you walk in before a service, you'll enter the snack area. The snack shop is still running, but selling coffee. The video game room has been turned into a library full of books that you can check out or buy.

It's a multi-theater building, so there's space for different sunday schools, or any other activities that they may run.

Now, I don't believe you should change church in any way that waters down the message in favor of attracting any group of people, and I don't think that this church does that. It does, however, help set the atmosphere that makes college students comfortable, whereas many churches generally look at youth as simply that: kids. It is a predominantly high school and college aged church, and I think they're doing just fine.

Tell me what you think.

Grace and Peace...

Re: Churches get thumbs-up at theaters - posted by JFEggar (), on: 2005/10/30 11:29

Quote:
-----Unfortunatley the design of theatres in general tends to make the congregation observers of the services instead of active participants in seeking God.

I agree, unfortunately however, it seems that this most often the case with the "traditional" church settings as well. My pr

blem isn't with where or how you meet, but with the misconception of what "church" is. This is a really good article relating to that;

“Community”?? “House Church”??
NO!! NO!! NO!!!!

It's about ZOE LIFE!!!

The Tree of Life...Isaac...Zoe!

This must seem obvious! Life in Christ Together is not about “how to have meetings.” It is not about house church, home church, community or small cell groups. What Jesus brought to Earth with the Herald of the Angels could never be so shallow and external as all of that. “Meetings” where more people get to “participate”—is THAT what Jesus died for? NO WAY! Now here's a question: “How do we approach and befriend God?!” How do we experience a Relationship and Encounter tangible change into His Image? Where do we find this God who is not approachable through the five senses, good deeds, proper doctrines or techniques or wording, hard work, or any such thing?

Most try doing things “for Jesus” and that certainly salves the conscience on some humanistic level. But, let's face it: that really misses the root issue by ten thousand miles. Another way to put it, for you who are willing to spend more time on your knees: What is the Real difference between those two Trees in the Garden?? That is the Issue of issues.

The magnitude of the difference between simply reforming denominational religion, and living in the reality of the risen, living JESUS...is staggering. Whether we are creatively modifying “meetings” and “structure” (in a religious facility, or in a house...“home church”) isn't really all that important, compared to the Opportunity He places before us today. He's not calling us to a “new and improved” structure, but He is calling us into eating together in daily relationship from the Tree of Life, with the Anointed One! Oh, YES, that will change our “meetings”—but that is the Fruit, not the goal. Just switching to new and improved doctrines, techniques, meeting dynamics, how close people live together, the unbiblical “common purse,” or any number of new folkways and mores is meaningless, in reality.

If Not House Church Or Community...Then What

What we are really after (if we desire what He Desires!) is a Habitat where JESUS can dwell and “circulate” (Rev.1-2) unhindered, as Living, Reigning KING. This alone is the ZOE LIFE: SUPERNatural, Heavenly Life, of Indestructible and Eternal nature, all-encompassing Reality of an unseen Realm of Power and Truth and Love and Life. Jesus brought this “Life to the full,” “Rivers of Alive Water” Life to His People from another dimension, a Universe that cannot be seen with human eyes and in earthly light frequencies. In the Bible, this Holy Place (this Place that surrounds and invades and encompasses all in all) is referred to as “heavenly realms”—the Life of Jesus. And, as our Messiah demonstrated, in Him time and space and mass and gravity and Newtonian laws don't exist as we have known them. They are merely “after the flesh”—and only “mere humans” allow their vision to be clouded by such limited things. Jesus lived in that place of ZOE, in our present age, mastering all the “laws” of nature and of man. And more, He mastered even sin and death itself. Now here's the amazing part: He has Gloriously bequeathed that ZOE LIFE to us!

Jesus didn't come to this earth to bring us a new way to have meetings or “have church” or some “movement.” That is so lame compared to “His Intentions, now through the Church!” (Eph.3:10). He wants to publicly annihilate, decimate, and humiliate the enemy—and transform life after life after life, into the character and Life and Wisdom and Strength of the Son. He is “bringing many sons to Glory”—not simply to Salvation. He is building His CHURCH, which the gates of Hell CANNOT prevail against. By the Grace of Jesus Christ and on His Authority, we're taking back our sons and our daughters and families and neighbors from the seduction and slavery of satan. Lives are changing. He brought us an entirely new Realm to inhabit by His side, new air to breathe, new eyes to see, new ears to hear, and a new heart to feel and love. This difference affects everything in life, including “meetings”! It is not about being a little more relaxed and flexible in having our planned or unplanned meetings, and labeling that as “led by the Spirit.” Just because we don't know in advance what we're going to do does not mean that things will then be “Spirit led.” Hardly. It is NOT HING like that—although the Real things always, “like Jannes and Jambres,” seem similar to the counterfeits, viewed from earthly perspective.

Ishmael Despises Isaac (Gal. 4:29-30)

Again, I refer you to 1 Corinthians 2 and following to make the distinction between “mere men” and living out of the very Mind and Spirit of the Godhead. True men and women, “Born of the Spirit,” live (daily with one another, and yes, when they're all together, too) using a different means of understanding than the five senses. We live “not by the seeing of the eye or by the hearing of the ear” if we are filled with HIS Spirit. The “rulers of this age” must use the five senses, and are fairly adept at doing so. And still, Zoe is “foolishness to them, they are incapable of understanding.”

So, I say again. This is not about “house church” or not-house church, “community” or not community, “cell group” or not cell group...or any “meeting” style preference, called or uncalled, rehearsed or unrehearsed. (Although, perhaps a Hearse should be parked outside of every meeting place where the “band” or the “pastor” has to “re-Hears

e!Â” If they must re-hearse their Sunday morning music or Â”sermonÂ” product in order for the show to work, something is seriously amiss. Surely no one believes Paul practiced sermons, or pre-planned Â”servicesÂ”!) Often, when men have something to lose (esteem, ego, money, worldly convenience, or people and money they are Â”usingÂ” to advance themselves and their so-called Â”ministriesÂ”) these truths are met with great resistance and heated name-calling. What a loss of true Life for those who prefer the Â”traditions of men.Â” The Together-Life of God (1Cor.12), manifested in the daily Glory of a Risen Lord, dwelling amongst a daily, Â”joined and knit togetherÂ” People— is a scandal to those who love themselves and this present age. This whole matter is infuriating to those who are filled with pride and who are fiercely and sinfully independent— a law and life unto themselves. What a shame it is when Â”leadersÂ” and the worldly who claim to be Christians easily dismiss that which can radically change their lives, and those around them, into the image of Jesus. Â”The stone the BUILDERS rejected...has become the Cornerstone.Â” Those with something to lose are generally those who will name-call against Truths that will REALLY lead His People into the Eternal Realm— to sit with Christ and be enveloped by Him.

The Substance of the New Covenant!

This Zoe Life together is nothing less and nothing more than the ESSENCE of the New Covenant! Â”A hundred mothers, brothers, sisters!Â” But, of course, the Reality of Christ’s Realm, the place where angels see the Face of God, cannot be defined by earthly wisdom. Zoe Life cannot co-exist with, or be Â”incorporatedÂ” into, borrowed worldly paradigms. Â”What’s so wrong with ____!!!!????? How could that be bad!!!!????? That’s a good thing!!!!Â” Â”The old is better, the old is better.Â” Unfortunately, many will need to go on in Â”their wayÂ” until they see it’s still not going anywhere, after all these years. Some will have to watch another thousand teens be seduced by the world and another thousand marriages fail— Â”doingÂ” church Â”their way.Â”

This issue of daily ZOE, Together-Life is the very definition of the heart and soul of what Jesus brought to earth, the New Covenant. THIS is Â”the Mystery revealed.Â” Is this something we can just smile at, and put aside? Not any more than the virgin birth. It is that big. Â”CommunityÂ” versus Â”House ChurchÂ” versus Â”Cell-BasedÂ” versus Â”Program-BasedÂ” versus whatever fad comes next? No way. Build a new building, start a new program, do more good deeds, hire a new Â”staff memberÂ” or Â”sermon-speaker,Â” or start a new Â”contemporary music bandÂ”?? Yucko! True Life goes WAY past that irrelevant, man-created stuff!

If you don’t quite see it right now? Perhaps on down the road you’ll be able to see WHY, but for now, just know it’s True. Watch and pray. If someone without a real experience of Zoe is commanding you that Life beyond Â”attendanceÂ” and Â”my personal life and biological familyÂ” doesn’t exist, what will you say? Â”Okay, then. Sure, Â”Rev.Â” Smith, your way is as good as Zoe.Â” We can’t do that! The Experience of Daily Together-Zoe is just too fundamental to the purpose of New Covenant Testimony of Christ. Â”Tasting the Powers of the Coming AgeÂ” and participating in Â”the power of an indestructible LifeÂ” and Â”making known the manifold Wisdom of God to the Principalities and Powers, NOW, through the CHURCH,Â” and the experience of Â”a hundred mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, and possessions, and in the life to come, Eternal LifeÂ”....are not optional extras.

No Â”House ChurchÂ”. No Â”CommunityÂ”. And No Â”How ToÂ” Manuals!

CHRISTIANITY is not a technique, something to attend in a home or building, a philosophy of lifestyle, a belief system, or a social and do-good club. Â”CHURCHÂ” is not something we can attain with knowledge and effort and sincerity. It is a Sovereign issue of God’s Intent, Timing, and Gifts. Â”I praise You, FatherÂ” for that! :)

Zoe Life is supernatural. We can’t go back. ZOE together-communion with God must never be fettered by the Ishmael of systems, programs, planned and canned speeches and religion, and hierarchy (Saul, rather than Samuel). Counterfeits of Â”home church servicesÂ” (True Life certainly is squashed by the medieval concept of Â”church buildingsÂ”—but that certainly doesn’t mean there will be Zoe Life by moving the Â”serviceÂ” to a living room), Â”innovativeÂ” techniques, and cutesy stuff are not helpful.

True ZOE Life with God and one another is as essential to the future as the virgin birth. It is, in fact, the Inheritance of the virgin birth, the Atonement, and the Resurrection. It is the hope and the promise of the LIFE of the New Covenant. It is the only hope for changing us into men and women Â”of GODÂ”—rather than mice on the wheel of religious life. Â”I will build My CHURCH, against which the gates of Hell can no longer prevail.Â” Some Â”mere menÂ” with ambitions to use you for their Â”ministry,Â” with their truckload of borrowed ideas and teachings, have built Â”churchesÂ” that Hell prevails against every day. But our Destiny and Calling together is true Â”ChurchÂ”—to live in the womb of the GodHead.

This is Zoe Life—to live as the Son with the Father, for all of Eternity. This is Zoe Life—to Know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Zoe life is our Inheritance for both our personal lives in the secret places with Jesus, and also together with one another in the Church, without inconsistency and contradiction. Â”From the least to the greatest, they ALL know HimÂ” and Â”ALL the Believers were together, with every aspect of their lives intimately intertwined.Â” Â”Get the leaven out of the batch.Â” These are not only commands, but also God’s description of reality—not some Â”idealistic pipedream.Â” The radiant and spotless Bride Â”has made herself readyÂ” for the Return of her Beloved and Betrothed, Jesus of Nazareth! THIS is the Father’s Will and Heartbeat.

Different Life-Forms, Different Species

In Â”religionÂ” it is easy to mistakenly confuse true ZOE Life with Â”psucheÂ” life. Psuche life is life in the natural realm,

including one's personality, emotional makeup, intellect, and the like. This word is used in Luke 9:24-25, Mark 10:45, Acts 20:10, Matthew 2:20, Revelation 8:9, etc. Zoe Life must also not be confused with "bios" life. Bios is the organic nature of physical life, the duration of physical life, or similar external things. Bios is the root of the word "biology," of course. Understand that just as you have psuche life (a unique personality, intellect, and consciousness), and you will have a bios life (your physical existence as a carbon and water biological life form) for perhaps a few more years, there is still another kind of life. Zoe Life is a God-infused Life of another dimension, that is a free gift to all who will abandon themselves into Yesu, the Son of God. ZOE is the SUPERNatural Life that the Father has within Himself, that always was and always will be (Jn. 17:3) and is indestructible (Heb. 7:16). It is the very essence of God's Life (Jn. 5:26, 1Jn. 1:2). Even though we forfeited this Life in the Garden, and of our own doing we DIED to ZOE Life (Rom. 6:23, Eph.2:1-5, 4:18, Col. 2:13, 1Tim. 5:6), He again shares His very inner Life with those who lay everything down before His Son Jesus!! (1 Cor. 2, Jn. 3:15, Acts 3:15, Col. 3:4, 1Jn. 3:14) It is truly the exploration of light-years of beauty and power and glory. The forgiveness of sins, and "someday we'll go to heaven," is barely the BEGINNING! The Messiah shared in our much-deserved death—that we may share in His Life that is truly Life, LIFE to the FULL! ZOE! God's Intent is that we can now share His very intimate inner Life, together with His Son and one another! That is GOOD NEWS, to the millionth degree! God's Intent is now, through the Church clothed in daily together-Zoe Life, that we humiliate the principalities and powers (Eph. 3:10, 1Cor.2).

Church—A Lampstand

The Church can ONLY be understood in the way described above—and anything less may be well-meaning and dogmatic and religious, with some Saved people involved—but it is NOT the Church of Jesus Christ, a local Lampstand. Must the Church, or its individuals, then, be perfect? No way. But what IS required, according to the Word of God? Just this: One hundred percent of the "members" ... "love the Light" and "love the Truth" and have genuinely experienced God Himself in a way that "flesh and blood has not revealed." YES, this is required. That's what Jesus said He would build HIS Church upon, if it was to be HIS Church.

I need to say that again. The Church, as defined by Jesus and His Ambassadors, is comprised of ALL who have had a revelation of the Son "that flesh and blood did NOT reveal, but the Father in Heaven Himself revealed to them" individually. They now, as a result of a death and a second Birth, share SUPERNatural Life in the inner man, and "love the light," "love the Truth and so are saved." A True Lampstand, an authentic Church, is LIMITED TO (as in 100% of the "members") those who have had a revelation of the Son "that flesh and blood did not reveal, but the Father in Heaven Himself revealed to them." One hundred percent of its "members" have both a death experience to their previous self-lives, and a Resurrection Life experience in the Blood of the Son. One hundred percent "from the least to the greatest," not a "10% committed nucleus," now share SUPERNatural Life in the inner man, in the GodHead and with one another, and "like new-born babes, crave the pure Spiritual milk of the Word." Anyone else is just a "visitor" (1Cor. 14) and they, and everyone else in the Church, know they are visiting the Life, not participating in it. A person hanging around in the neighborhood for a decade, but still living for themselves, their jobs, their "us four and no more"—cannot be received and will still be known as a "visitor." Meanwhile, someone from another continent may be around but for a short time, and it is clear they are part of the Christ of God, and thus the Church. "Whoever claims to live in Him, must walk as Jesus walked." It's not about proximity or knowledge or "commitment" or upbringing—it's about a personal Encounter with Father God, in the Person of His Son, where death produces Zoe, out of nothing (Jn. 3:5-8; Jn. 12:24; Rom. 6:1-14; Gal. 6:14-17).

We either have SUPERNatural Life with Him and with one another, or it's NOT Christianity and NOT a legitimate Church. Surely there are some Saved people "attending" organizations that are not truly Churches. That's a different topic. We're simply saying, the monthly potluck doesn't cut it! Whether we "meet" in a "home" or in a "religious facility" is not the issue. Whether our meetings are "spontaneous" or the dry heavens of "Simon Says" (pre-programmed by the "pastor" or "music director") is not the deal. We won't touch His Throne (we'll only touch our "psuche" warm fuzzy emotions) if we do not live together in daily Together-ZOE—moment by moment connected to the Head and one another! A "service" that is "done in His honor," or to learn facts about Him, or to call down emotion from Heaven with our music—historically, these have changed very few lives into the Image of the Son.

Again, 1 Corinthians 2 is vital to our understanding, as it describes the difference between psuche life and Zoe Life. God speaks of the oh-so-bright and innovative—the "mere men" pagans and rulers of our age on the one hand. And on the other hand, He speaks of those who are currently connected to the very Mind of Christ—enveloped and saturated and permeated by the very Spirit that is currently alive within God Himself.

Forget this: "I believe the right things, am basically a good person, come from a 'christian family,' said a little prayer, or put my hand on the television set and bowed my head, or attend 'services' and 'tithe' regularly and want to 'live in community' or in 'a house church.'" We are either sharing in the Substance of the GodHead together daily, or it is not Eternal Life, nor a Lampstand and Church, as God means it to be.

Jesus died to bring ZOE back to this planet, in His Resurrection Power!

Defining Terms

What is a "Christian"? ONLY a person who has abandoned their self and life to Jesus, and have thus been Touched by Heaven and Indwelt by the Creator of the Galaxies is truly saved, and a "member" of His local Church (Rom. 8:9-11; Lk. 9:57-62; Jn. 1:12-13, 3:16-21; 1Jn. 3:8-10, 5:18-20).

This thing called "CHURCH"? It is made up ONLY of those who share this ZOE—and splash around together in the "rivers of alive water" on a daily basis (Acts 2:42-47; 1Cor. 12; Heb. 3:12-14; Gal. 6:2, etc).

THIS is ZOE! To the Full.

This is Christianity. This is Church.

THIS IS OUR INHERITANCE.

"A HUNDRED MOTHERS, BROTHERS, SISTERS, LANDS, and POSSESSIONS, and in the life to come, Eternal Life!"

Remember this from "Get the Real Thing"?

"When we build around cultural definitions of 'christian' and 'church' rather than around the Evidence of Supernatural LIFE, we will soon reap a harvest of half-bred and incestuous, mutant and diseased circumstances. This leaven will create whirlwinds and energy leaks and heartache and confusion galore. With all of that will come temptations to compromise and ignore Principles and Commands of God's Word in order to 'hold things together.' Hierarchy, program, choreography and other man-made intrusions and defiance of Command will enter in, to keep peace and 'order' in the meetings and method. 'A little leaven leavens the WHOLE batch,' according to the Master.

"Everyone is harmed by false 'definitions' of God's Stuff, and by unBiblical building practices—based on human traditions, human reason, and human organizational structure. When we build men's way, souls are lost, teens' lives are trashed (75%+), marriages are destroyed (60%+), and relationships are frequently left devastated. Beyond all of that, Spiritual babyhood is perpetuated forever in the majority of folks within man-made ways to 'have church.' Chaos, heartache, clergy hierarchy, and more...all of these flow from having mis-defined what a Christian is, what a Church is, and what a 'leader' is. And all of this occurs, whether in a 'house church' or an 'institutional church' when we define things improperly.

"The Call is then to function as Priests, 'admonishing one another daily' in life and love and liberty, with creativity and joy and peace.

"Let's look for the MIRACULOUS LIFE of GOD, 'the working of this same power that rose Jesus Christ from the dead!' as the definition of what GOD has Touched and Saved. It is far more than belief system (though this will need to grow to be Right as well) or lifestyle (though this also will be dramatically altered by the hand of God, if HE is involved).

"With True 'Zoe' Life in Christ, rightly defined and non-negotiable, we can then help others by serving our God well. We will live, as our big Brother does, to extend His Love and Truth, looking to HIM as Source, and Life, and Way.

"Zoe Life? It is the 'New Deal' ('New Testament'—'New Covenant') Father has made with His People in His Son. The gates of hell will continue to prevail against the impotence of all else. He has for us something better! The current, the tangible, the supernatural...the very Life of Jesus within: ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES!"

Zoe in YOU, Personally?

DEEP RICH LIFE—Life in Jesus that is REAL—is available to all of us who have, in a moment of time, given away our lives to Jesus, abandoning ourselves into Him in love and obedience. Having been swallowed in the Covenant that the Son made in the Father, Zoe Life is ours for the living—the Wonder of which far surpasses anything our imaginations can conceive. It is where all real discoveries, true excitement, and genuine fun begin. It is the gateway to an amazing new world. It is the shelter and abode of ZOE Life, and it can be entered into right now.

Every moment of every day we make a choice to live and experience life from within one of two different worlds. We can choose to dwell in the safety of the present moment of ZOE Life; OR we can remain in the weariness of the common life.

.....In the common life, people constantly think about themselves and how every event relates to them. Thus, a person's life becomes a continuous, small, enclosed circle of self-thought.

In ZOE Life, a person uses everything that happens as an opportunity to learn something about Jesus and him or herself, and the surrounding world. These individuals gladly yield themselves to living fully in the present, and do not waste energy dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Because they are not always busy thinking about themselves, they are acutely aware of everything around them, and are able to delight in the small pleasures of the moment: the dancing of dust particles on the sun's rays, or the fluffy white trail left by a passing airplane across a clear blue sky, or the sparkle of dew drops on pine needles.

.....In the common life, we always actively pursue our next want—what we think we need to make ourselves happy. "More!" is our motto, as we knock down whatever (or whomever!) gets in our way. Self-indulgence is our privilege, what we can control (our biological families and other "possessions") is where our kingship will not be denied.

When we live in ZOE Life, however, we quietly wait for the treasures life brings, having no expectations or plans except where they are practical for our everyday needs. The motto of that Higher Life is "Thy will be done."

.....In the common life, our reference point always revolves around what we expect from life. We are constantly searching for ways to avoid pain or make ourselves happy. We search our memory banks or our imaginations for a new position

or action that makes the most sense to us and enables us to have what WE want. Once we've found a way that we think protects us, we close our ears to any further information that is contrary to this new balance we've managed to establish (albeit temporarily).

In the ZOE Life—the Eternal Life—a person knows he or she is not God, and is willing to admit they haven't any clue as to what is really best. They relax and leave it to God's Choice, and live today in joy and self-abandonment.

.....In the common life, we always resist what is happening to us. Whenever we find ourselves in a new situation, or are asked to do something that isn't in the immediate realm of our understanding, up shoots a giant wall of resistance. This describes how we keep ourselves imprisoned by resisting change.

In ZOE Life—the "Open Heaven" Life—a person knows there is always something that God has for us which does NOT fit into our agenda or logic—which means there are infinite possibilities. Because we KNOW this is true, since GOD is God, no one need ever be limited to his or her small scope of understanding. To experience ZOE Life, we must stay postured as humble LISTENERS, not "decision-makers." Zoe Life and Doulos Life (the Life that acts and thinks like a life-contract slave/ bondservant to Jesus Christ)—are inseparable!!

.....Those trapped in the tight prison of the common life don't understand that a Heaven-born Life exists. That is why they think it is necessary to defend themselves, resist life with its changes, accumulate for security, hide their shortcomings from themselves, seek approval, hide in cliques rather than break them down, and resist and restrain themselves from little to nothing.

Zoe Life is the DEFINITION of Church, of a True Lampstand

Where there is Zoe Life as the Substance of daily intertwined Life together, from the least to the greatest (Acts 2:42-47), there will be quality and wholeness beyond belief. Splits and schisms are non-existent. Power plays and ambitions are unheard of, decade after decade. While problems can and will come up, there is always the Ground to resolve and redeem these things, without fear or oppression or compromise. The Alpha and Omega "circulates amongst the Lampstands!"

Where There is Zoe Together-Life, a Lampstand...

The Word of God flourishes, and without a single "Bible Study" or "service" or "youth group" or assigned "teacher"—even the children surpass "scholars" elsewhere in their understanding of Scriptures. Jesus at age 12 was no accident or anomaly! He lived in ZOE!

Christ circulates and enlivens by His presence, in fresh new ways, year after year. Never conjured by drama, or man-made emotional exploitation in music or word—but simply by the Reality of His Life, ever-changing us.

Christ has free reign in the midst of His people, in all decisions, in how we build every moment, every day.

The truths of God are made fresh and alive, season by season, by HIS Choosing, and propagated among the current generation and the nations, without effort.

Those who had never known Christ enter into the King, AND into the expression of His Reign, His Kingdom.

The worst of sinners are transformed into Saints of the highest order, transformed more and more into the image of Jesus, day by day, unto the Full Day. The gates of Hell do NOT prevail.

Each life, in Zoe and in Together-Zoe in a Lampstand, is marked by a passion for Jesus. And most importantly—all, 100%, will demonstrate a Love for the Light. You will never hear, "Mind your own business," or "Get the log out of your own eye," or "That's just your opinion," or "You're just legalistic." Always and forever, "THIS is the Verdict," saith the Lord: My People are known, not by their perfect execution, but for their love of the Light of vulnerability, exposure, and clarity. "THIS is the Message."

The world is changed because of its Light.

The Holy Flame of a Lampstand inspires many across the nations whose light had grown dim...for lack of Oil, for lack of Vision, for lack of Fellowship, for lack of Direction.

The Flame of Together-Zoe is used to light new Lampstands, and give more Light to the world.

Though the individuals who share in the Light of this Lampstand may die, the light remains and burns brighter still. Father's lambs may die in obscurity, yet in peace. Their Savior pleased, His purposes well-served in their generation.

Where a Lampstand is, God makes His home. His Habitat,

His Life-Blood, His Hope, His Treasure, the Bride of His beautiful Son.

In a Lampstand, living in Zoe-Life, His Authority is indisputable. No man or woman claims an option of doing "what is right in his own eyes." Rebellion and independent spirits are aliens and easily recognized here. The stench of pride, independence, self-life, ambition, and the like are recognized and not embraced, even by the youngest in a true Lampstand. Because He "circulates amongst the Lampstands," His special presence in a Lampstand fosters a turning towards Him in crisis, and in joy, in far more than an intellectual way as may be the case elsewhere. Praise and Trust are birthed out of the Reality of His Life, rather than theology or external commitment.

In Zoe Together-Life, "normal" men and women with hungry hearts grow in the character and power of Christ Jesus. Twenty years of anything else (other than a singularly miraculous intervention of God, as with Paul) could not equal two years of growth (though by fire!) in a Lampstand.

Unbelievably, in a Lampstand, there is never a fear of someone smiling and nodding at you now, and later speaking som

the other opinion of you to their spouse or someone else. Honesty and Truth prevail—it is the air we breathe in a Lampstand. Gifts lay at the Altar until all things are resolved. Zoe-Life cannot abide with unanswered questions, dormant opinions and judgments, hidden accusations, separation between those who are “members of one another” due to prejudices, opinions, preferences, or cliques. Hypocrisy and lukewarmness are appalling to the Messiah, and cannot stand in His Presence, in a true Lampstand. But, those things abound in that which is not a true Lampstand, or in that which is about to lose its Lampstand. Every knee shall bow at the mention of His Name, in a Lampstand. But, in an unBiblical religious environment, some yawn or appear not to listen, or clench their fists.

WELL! There is much to think about, eh?! Focus. Demand “on earth as it is in Heaven”—HIS Kingdom come, HIS Life come down amongst men: ZOE. For you, for His Church, where you live. Dig in. You.

For as the song says,

“This is your time, this is your Dance,
Live every moment—leave nothing to chance.
Swim in the Sea, Drink of the Deep,
Embrace the Mystery of all you can Be.
This is your time.” -ms

“The Good Shepherd lays down His life (psuche) for the sheep....” that we “may have TRUE LIFE.” ZOE!!!!!! (John 10:10-11)

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Re: Theatre Design, on: 2005/10/30 14:02

Quote:
-----Unfortunatley the design of theatres in general tends to make the congregation observers of the services instead of active participants in seeking God.

I disagree.

We had a theatre in our city that two sisters from the south bought in the 1950's and they brought revival to our Canadian town, that lasted for decades until it wained in the early 80's in which it was sold back to the city and it was restored to it's original glory. All it now is just a memory. But that work is seen in the other churches round about that stemmed from thier work.

Theatre style atmospheres does one thing, it elevates the people so that the people are not looking up to the clergy but looking down. This was and still is a GREAT sin of the nicolation teaching that seperates the clergy from the laity, that elevates the clergy way up on high balconies while the people down below are getting whiplash for stretching their necks trying to see the pastor. This is wrong!

Jesus said, "any one of you who wants to be a master, let him become a servant". Jesus was speaking about Himself, but it's also a lesson for all those who follow after Him.

When you read "Azusa Street" by Frank Bartleman, he points this out when he was careful that no glory should go to man, but that he only elevated the stage by one inch. But ever since then, that inch has grown to several feet.

Karl

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2005/10/30 15:22

Quote:
-----Theatre style atmospheres does one thing, it elevates the people so that the people are not looking up to the clergy but looking down.

I remember visiting this one church that was in a theater in Times Square, New York city... ;-)

MC

Re: - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2005/11/2 11:11

It's only a theatre when you use it as a theatre. We should focussed on God's redeemed *people* rather than the *building*.

In China, some Christians do their devotions in the bathroom due to persection coming from the family. Are they defiled by the atmosphere? Or is the space made sacred by them?

Re: Churches get thumbs-up at theaters - posted by Thaxon77, on: 2005/11/2 21:55

"It feels like a kind of Christianity where you'd like to get comfortable and invite your friends,"

Cool! I totally agree.

Church in a theater --or very theater like building-- is only unusual to traditionally minded Christians. It's not at all unusual to the rest of society.

As for the big screen and using it to do ministry -- again, that's not unusual at all, unless your outlook is traditional vs. the average American.

But to all the other posters, who have said that this idea is "cutting edge" or "trendy" or "out of the box" etc. this concept is hardly new. Willow Creek, for example, started in a theater in 1975. They built a theater style building in 1981 because, for one thing, the toll on volunteers of doing "church in a box" as they called it (referring to the trailer that held all of their equipment as "the box") was getting to be too grueling (set up started at 4:30 AM every Sunday!). Besides all that, no theater seemed capable of supporting their growing childrens' ministry, Promiseland.

Today, Willow still has a very theater like facility. And talk about big screens! whoa!

As Rob Bell, of Mars Hill put it once, God is a very visual God. Look at all the examples in scripture: my favorite is Psalm 19.

On a similar note (since theaters today can be likened to community centers, sort of...)
The synagogs that Jesus spent much of his time in were much more like community centers than churches (see www.folowtherabbi.com for lots of good information on what the culture of Jesus' day was really like).

Re: - posted by groh_frog, on: 2005/11/3 1:51

I said earlier that I think using a theater can be a good thing. I've seen it used that way. It's definitely not traditional, though.

That's where you have to be careful. Some things are about tradition, or culture, and those can change. But when you start changing doctrine, and the essence of the church, you can get into trouble.

I think this theater thing is just a change in seating, no more, no less. As long as the church is doctrinally straight, with a leader who serves God, they'll be alright.

Grace and Peace...