***“For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.” Hebrews 3.4***

***The Montana Synod House***

“For every house . . . “ These are compelling words—and they fit for the “building” of a synod house. The words do what we hope they might by providing incentive, focus and direction. The Montana Synod is about to build a new “house.” It will happen, but only by reliance upon collaboration (the church!)—and by the workings of God! Focusing on the verse itself, note that the verse in all newly translated texts is parenthesized. Interesting. Easy to lift out for our use? Is there something especially definitive in the reading that so sets it apart? Let’s see.

We need to step back. Consider the context of the book of Hebrews. The Greek word for house is *oikos*. Yes, that is the word used in Hebrews 3.4. But here it is “house” (or oikos) used metaphorically—not for a building with foundation and walls, but for “Israel.” The anonymous writer of Hebrews is making a theological argument. Israel as “house” will no longer be ruled by Moses but by Jesus (3.6). The Moses/Jesus argument was critical to the first century church.

OK, that’s alright. Let “house” be “Israel”, even for our use, for what is important is to identify house as God’s people. There is no disrupt. The truth for today, relative to matters of a synod house, compels us into a conversation not unlike that in Hebrews. The Synod “House” is about people!

John Caputo (Hoping Against Hope—2015) has recently captured my thinking, allowing me to think not just of a confessional faith but beyond to a cosmic faith. I use Caputo here as illustrative of who we are and what we are doing. Caputo pushes thinking to the borders of the universe and in fact speaks of the reality of “border breakers” and those who will push outward from the arenas of our past. I am convinced that the Montana Synod is a border breaker. Together we are breaking out to the edges of our hope to do something new, powerful and visionary. Before us is the prospect of a new “house” for God’s people. It will be a place where Jesus rules—and indeed the builder is God! Here we stretch beyond ourselves to be open and roomy (yes, enough space for all!), accessible, ecologically “green”, and technologically adaptable for our future—to include a spacious conference room and a chapel! The key is that we do it together so that the effort becomes, yes, an expression of our faith. God is the builder!

And, now the real border breaker! The Montana Synod Council is committing in these days to work with ELCA Mission Builders for the construction. Here the mission of the church takes on a new character with a deliberate collaboration of builders across the church and the synod. What an exciting possibility for sustaining our hope and our vision (*so very worthy of parenthesis!).* We save significant cost, we become more the church, and we get the project done. Wait for more information. Target date is 2017.

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