

Wednesday, April 23

1 Corinthians 3:1-15

A foundation for life

*Or, to put it another way, you are God's house. Using the gift God gave me as a good architect, I designed blueprints; Apollos is putting up the walls.*

1 Corinthians 3:9 Peterson

The Forbidden City – what a design! The third emperor of the Ming Dynasty decided that the capital of China had to move north to block effectively the entrance of enemies from the north. On the ‘prime meridian,’ at the center of the earth, the north-south axis of the home was located. In a bow to the gods in heaven, it was planned to have only 9999 ½ rooms, since Heaven alone could have a dwelling with 10,000 rooms.

He began in 1406 and the numbers of workers and materials are legendary. The development and expansion of the Grand Canal allowed materials to be brought in from all parts of the Yellow and Yangtze River basins. Gate after gate protected the living quarters and throne room from outsiders. Even those deigned to be inside got to the emperor only through gate after courtyard after gate after courtyard after . . .

The quarters were sufficient for the emperor and up to three thousand concubines. The facilities supported all the central core of government plus ten thousand eunuchs to manage the household. In 1420 all was finished.

When the empire ‘fell’ in 1911, the last emperor, Puyi, retained living rights in the most private areas, but with the chaos of the mid-1920’s one local warlord invaded his quarters and drove him away. In 1933 with the Japanese threatening, all 19,557 crates of belongings were moved to Shanghai – then to Taiwan by 1949. And on the steps of front gate, at the Tian’an Men, Mao announced the people have arisen. All can enter the most forbidden areas. *Eventually there is going to be an inspection. If you use cheap or inferior materials, you'll be found out. The inspection will be thorough and rigorous. You won't get by with a thing. If your work passes inspection, fine; if it doesn't, your part of the building will be torn out and started over.*

In 2003 work began to renovate all before 2020 – remove and replace so it is beautiful again. And what am I building, God? Will it last? Will it be worth keeping? Will it leave beauty for others to enjoy? Will it lift hearts and inspire spirits?