

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Hearts Lifted To Heaven

by Dr. Edward Hoffman

I came upon this story in the book *Gates of Prayer*, and it reminded me of an experience I had a couple of years ago. In the story, a spiritual leader of a community refused to enter a House of Prayer. He said, "I cannot enter, it is crowded with teachings and prayers from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling. How could there be room for me?" He could see that those around him were unable to understand, so he added: "The words of those whose teaching and praying does not come from hearts lifted to heaven cannot rise to heaven; instead, their words fill the house from wall to wall and from floor to ceiling."

This reminded me of when I was with a team visiting industry leaders to see what we could learn from benchmarking. I was escorted to a large conference room and asked to make myself comfortable as we waited for some people who were about to join us. I was struck by all the colorful charts, graphs, and reports crowding the walls. I walked up close to several and laughed at their complexity. Obviously much effort had gone into their creation and maintenance, and certainly they held deep meaning for someone, but for the life of me I could not understand what they were trying to communicate.

When my host returned, I mentioned that I was impressed by the wall of measures but could not decipher their meaning. Could she explain how they were used? She chuckled and whispered to me, "please don't say I said this, but the wall is used because we have a major organizational emphasis on metrics, so we've put together any measures that we can think of and placed them on the wall. When our senior leader wants to see evidence of our commitment to metrics, we take him into this room and so far that has satisfied him. In terms of their usefulness, our people don't do anything with them."

Instead of hearts lifted to heaven, here we find metrics from wall to wall.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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