

The Quest for Community

Someday I will hold up my Bible before a congregation, shake it, and yell at the top of my lungs, "This is not a book about propositions and programs and principles. This is a book about relationships."

The church, not Hollywood, ought to be the world's greatest image factory. The greatest image in the world, the image that draws people into real, life-giving relationship, is the image of God in Jesus the Christ.

I want my community

One of the favorite words used in the context of the Web is "community." eBay is in the business of building communities, they say; theirs is less an information source than a social medium.

The paradox is this: the pursuit of individualism has led us to this place of hunger for community, not of blood or nation but communities of choice.

More than buying and selling, the electronic emporium is about posting messages on bulletin boards, discovering new friends, and launching relationships at the eBay Cafe. One user said, "eBay is bringing people together to do a lot more than trading goods. We are trading our hearts."

Don't laugh.

eBay may just be the closest experience of small-town America available to postmoderns. Where else can they find people with similar interests (whale oil lamps, in my case)? Where else can they be drawn into community around a single purpose? Where else can they tell the stories most central to who they are and find people eager to hear them? **Where else can they participate so fully and have their lives changed by the experience?**

Nowhere else.

Except, perhaps, the church.

And isn't that what the gospel is all about?

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