Lessons from the Sydney Opera House

David d'Lima - July 2020



Looking at the history of the Sydney Opera House, which was opened by Queen Elizabeth in 1973, we can find several illustrations of biblical principles which may encourage our Christian ambition to share the message of Christ and the blessing of God.

We see Danish architect Jørn Utzon dreaming and sketching a building so breathtaking in scope that those who judged the designs felt compelled to reject his brilliant proposal as impossibly ambitious - until one judge who arrived late to the adjudication insisted the design be reconsidered. We see Utzon as a dreamer and craftsman, made in the image of Almighty God (the Author of all visionary workmanship). We may also note how often the plans of God are rejected by unresponsive humanity!

The contracted engineers tried calculating the complex specifications for the opera house. But those experts were completely stumped and concluded it was impossible to build. Utzon immediately solved their problem. Again we see a principle of pressing ahead into the realms of what seems unachievable - *"For nothing is impossible with God"* (Luke 1:37).

Sadly, Utzon supervised the initial stages of construction but had to resign, following disagreements with the government of New South Wales. He never saw the completed masterpiece. Utzon received no recognition during the official opening in 1973. He was not invited, nor was his name mentioned. But as Paul taught, it doesn't matter whether we receive glory for our efforts: *By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it* (I Corinthians 3:10).

Let us pray that all who follow Christ would be willing to receive visionary ambitions from God, as we communicate the Gospel and commend all of its implications to build and enrich the people of Australia and beyond. So may we be thoroughly astonished by the results and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ - of whom the Scriptures declare: *People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said* (Mark 7:37).

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