

church (one lasting fifty minutes, the content of which I've forgotten, and much shorter ones that stirred me then and that I still remember), some of our more interesting ward members who bore their testimony of global conspiracies instead of the gospel; a visit by a Massachusetts congressman (if I'm remembering rightly; I think Linda may have arranged that—please correct me if I'm wrong); a memorable gathering during the blizzard of '78 when Cambridge shut down and we shared food storage treats in the cultural hall; dances, service projects, firesides, musical events, institute classes, crushes, long talks about the meaning of everything, and much, much more.

Especially the friends. It's as if we clung to each other, many of us far away from the homes we grew up in, others not that far from their geographical homes but having moved to a new spiritual home. I remember being delighted at one home evening to realize that I was one of the few "non-converts" there.

My friends from the ward constituted most of my life at that time. My Church experiences were far more important, really, than my graduate classes (though a few of my fellow graduate students became friends, too), and many of my friends from church remain intensely dear to me still.

Something that struck me while reading the responses to the fire: Though the years I spent there seem a magical, unrepeatable time, it appears that many of those who came later feel the same way about their time there. And how about those who came before me? I know of some of them by reputation, and they seem legendary.

One of those who preceded me, Carlfred Broderick, has spoken evocatively of his student days there. (See his "The Core of My Belief," in *A Thoughtful Faith*, edited by Philip L. Barlow [Centerville, Utah: Canon Press, 1986]), 85–101 and listen to some of his tapes.) I can picture the stories he tells in those rooms and hallways that are now in ruins.

But my own time there—and the people I know—have taken on something of that legendary stature in my mind, too.

Matzoh for Sacrament—Steve Rowley

I first entered the Longfellow Park chapel on September 4, 1977. It was fast Sunday. I was a new physics grad student at MIT and a convert, baptized only about six months previously. This pair of

circumstances very quickly convinced me that everybody knew more, felt more, read more, did more, understood more, *was* more than I would ever be.

Fortunately, the building was full of fascinating nooks and crannies. For example, there was a trap door in the ceiling of the second floor restroom by the balcony—at that time the only passage into the attic above the chapel. Do you know how quiet the attic above a chapel is between meetings on a winter Sunday afternoon? Since I had no social skills to speak of, it was good to explore the building and try to figure out what the different rooms were for, how they felt, what people did there, why they cared. As it happens, they cared a lot. And I learned a lot trying to figure out why they cared so much.

Everybody loved the rose window. At various times, the glass was various colors—even violent orange for a year or so, until unanimous objection to the color led to fears that a “midnight maintenance” team would perform an unauthorized vitrectomy. My favorite was the pale green shade of glass that changed with the sunset during our late sacrament services.

Over time, I found some measure of community there. Another ponytailed, bearded, hippie liberal intellectual, more or less, was just fine. I had no real idea how unusual that was, since the limits of this building were nearly my only experience of the church. But in Cambridge, it was kind of normal; the extraordinary tolerance of the community reflected the gospel quite well. This was the place where I spiritually came of age, watching the examples of wise, kind people. And, of course, observing the occasional counterexample of a few non-wise or non-kind people. And being non-wise or non-kind myself, on occasion, and meeting forgiveness.

Once, somebody brought matzoh for sacrament, during Passover. Everybody was cool with that, which made a big impression on me. Okay, there was the after-church meal of bagels and ham, but everybody had the grace to laugh about it.

I went to church there for twenty-three years—twenty-three years in a singles ward. I probably drove several bishops nuts. For no particularly obvious reason, they made me a Sunday School teacher for fourteen consecutive years. I could never quite figure

out how that happened, other than that maybe they could keep an eye on the weird folk. Kept me out of the attic, anyway. Maybe they could confine to one classroom those who wanted to talk about the documentary hypothesis, nuances of *almah* versus *bethulah*, the Pauline themes of Alma, or Campbell's hero cycle in the Book of Mormon and the D&C. Whatever. It was a place in the community, with meaningful work to do, acceptance by others. In some ways, that's how I imagine the celestial kingdom. It's also where I got to know my wife.

Yes, I know it wasn't the building that did all this. But the sense memories are hard to separate from the things that really matter: the community of crazy, mostly kind people. I still miss it terribly, even years after marrying and finding another ward. Yes, I hope we rebuild a nice, funky building. But even more, I hope maybe someday we can rebuild a nice, funky community. Maybe someday.

An Anchor for Me—Paula Kelly Caryotakis

I am so sad about this tragedy and cannot stop thinking about it! This building became a home away from home for me after I moved to Massachusetts from California in 1988 to work in Boston. For three and a half years, it was an anchor for me; jobs, addresses, and housemates changed several times, but my membership and participation in the Cambridge University Ward always stayed consistent. Before moving east, I had never lived more than fifty miles from home, so my move to Boston was the true beginning of my adult life. The Longfellow building was where my testimony solidified and my spiritual adventure truly began.

I have so many memories of both the building and the many friends I met there. I remember Jenny Atkinson's fantastic Sunday School music instruction (where I learned that a hymn is not always a hymn because sometimes it is a chorale or a gospel song) and I also remember your cheesecakes, Kristine, and thinking you were crazy for going shopping on the bus!

I remember volleyball on Monday nights in the gym, Sunday district dinners, and how stinky the bathroom was by 3:00 P.M. because of all the diapers left in the trash by Cambridge I Ward mothers.

I remember men knitting in church, new freshman women