

*The 1950s-1960s Boston Chapel workers gave generously of themselves -- selflessly giving of their limited time between classes and sundry jobs; devoting their considerable talents (ranging from music to carpentry and much, much more); giving of hard-earned finances beyond their tithes -- with the Chapel often at the center of their innermost and heartfelt prayers. Some of the Chapel needs also required physical prowess and strength: installing all those used pews, picking up and moving in the donated piano, cleaning and painting throughout, initially and PRN afterward. In this archival history report, muscles and brains combined as keys in solving the big Boston Chapel problem of the day on that sunny summer day...*

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We all stood puzzled and prayerful on the Boston Chapel rooftop, stories high above the Village Street side, pondering the present problem. Maybe being closer to heaven helped.

Usually at hand when a physical challenge was presented during my years at the Chapel there were 3, 4 or more of the Boston Chapel men right there to address the problem -- Merle Fetter, Walter Mullen, Don Brotherton, Don Green, Steve Rieder, Chuck Gailey, Tom Cahill, Walter Irons, Jim Stark, George Porter, Carlton Bowden, Bob Landers, Ray Stark, John Stark, Phil Huff, sometimes others...

One of these men had discovered the *we-have-a-seriously-crumbling-brick-chimney-on-the-roof-problem-situation*, and had urged the rest of us to go up on the rooftop to take a look at the eminent danger of the chimney falling over and crashing or cascading down onto the pedestrian sidewalk directly below. "*We have mortar failure, and also brick spalling,*" Merle Fetter diagnosed aloud. (I had no idea what the term "spalling" meant, or what "mortar" was.)

There were about 5 of us on the roof, staring at the chimney. It was obvious this failing chimney task was going to require some speedy brain work, as well as probable muscle and money. Get it repaired? Impossible. The Boston Redevelopment Agency had months earlier cut off issuance of all construction and repair permits, with their impending intention of leveling the South End area buildings under their renewal plan already underway.

After 52 years, I don't recall who conceived the solution, but we all agreed on it... With the chimney's pile of bricks already tilting streetward, we watched until the sidewalk and street below were clear of pedestrians and cars. Then, administering on the count of **"Three!"** a shove that Samson might have admired, we safely and successfully sent the crumbling red brick and mortar former Boston Chapel rooftop chimney crashing to the city sidewalk waiting quietly below.

Next day, the bricks were gone. Used bricks are still a prized commodity today. It was fun.



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