Haggai - what does he say to our churches today?

The prophet Haggai in the Old Testament is talking to people about 2500 years ago about how slow they are to rebuild the temple to the glory of God. Has such a book, or rather a short prophecy of just two chapters, anything to say to us?

Many people today in the church read only their favourite New Testament passages, if they even read the Bible at all. It can take a big effort to dig into stories and writing that is so unfamiliar to the way we live today. But as I read Haggai lately, I realised it doesn't take a huge jump to apply his message to us.

The people of Jerusalem were busy building their own houses, their own security, their own farms and so on, while leaving the rebuilding of the damaged temple for another day. God's command and promise was to rebuild the temple first, so that they then would experience his blessing on their labours. (That is an over simplification, but adequate for this brief article.)

> *"The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house," says the LORD Almighty. "And in this place I will grant peace," declares the LORD Almighty.' Haggai 2:9.*

Try reading the whole book yourself: it only takes a few minutes!

My sense of God's message to us today is that we need to (and continue to) focus efforts on building God' church - his spiritual house, not the buildings per se - so that our fellowship truly brings glory to him. The temple God speaks about (in 1 Peter 2:4-10) is the people of God, not the places where we meet. By all means use the buildings to glorify God as best we can, but ensure the gatherings of the people do that first.

> *As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ 1 Pe 2:4-5.*

How would you interpret the chapters?
SHL