

*I'm wondering,
when do I
select a
Building
Committee
for new
construction?*





*Churches growing new churches..
who grow new churches...*

I'm wondering, when do I select a Building Committee?

by Bob Crossman

EACH ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROVIDES A UNIQUE ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION.

- If you are the kind of pastor who loves church construction projects... you've already starting sketching out the floor plan of your future phase one construction... and you have collected photographs of "the look" you have in mind for the exterior... **YOU ARE PUTTING YOUR ENERGY IN THE WRONG PLACE!**
- As a potential church planter, looking at the possibility of a future appointment to start a new church - your primary focus needs to be on people not bricks - reaching new people, developing your launch team, multiplying the size of your launch team, developing ministry work groups, designing and forming a discipleship system, securing a site for launch worship, designing and holding taste-and-see events, designing and holding preview worship. Do not spend your creative energy planning and daydreaming about "bricks and mortar." This advice has something to do with "keeping first things first" and "keeping the main thing the main thing."
- In response to the rapidly escalating cost of land and construction across the country, it may be time to recover a piece of our Methodist heritage – following the example of the church planting pastor in Jonesboro, Arkansas.
In 1861, the first Protestant sermon was preached in Jonesborough (*later shortened to Jonesboro*) when Methodist circuit rider Rev. W.R. Foster (*appointed to the Gainesville Circuit*) held the first worship service in Fergus Snoddy's livery stable. In the fall of 1861, Rev. Foster returned to Jonesboro and held a revival in the courthouse, witnessing twenty-four conversions. Through the following twenty-two years, Methodist worship services (*and Sunday School*) were held first at Snoddy's Livery Stables, then moved to the Craighead County Courthouse, in the summer months meeting in the open air of Courthouse Square, and were later welcomed to share the facilities of the Bethany Baptist Church in town. The congregation waited twenty-two years (*until November 10, 1883*) to purchase land on the corner of Main and Matthews Street. Actual construction on the wood frame structure Methodist building started in 1884, and on Easter Sunday of 1889, the building was dedicated by Bishop Charles B. Galloway.
- In the following article by Bill Easum and several related articles from Circuit Rider, you may come to discover an interesting thought - **YOU DON'T NEED A BUILDING TO BE A CHURCH.** If the Lord provides you wonderful rental space that meets your ministry needs - don't be in a hurry to trade that space for \$1,000,000 in debt.

• for pastors starting new churches • for churches starting new churches • for resourcing our newest churches •

The Nomadic Church

Bill Easum
and Pete Theodore

A remarkable thing began happening in the final years of the twentieth century. God began directing more and more pastors to bypass the traditional method of planting churches and instead start “Nomadic Churches”—congregations that meet for years in temporary facilities without the cumbersome burden of huge debts incurred from buying land and property at the outset. They focus on building lives and communities instead of building with bricks and mortar. They are shackled to the majestic Builder, not chained to mere buildings.

The Nomadic Church

The Nomadic Church, sometimes called a portable church, is a local church that meets in someone else’s space, which is not a traditional church building, for an extended period of time in order to conduct corporate worship and other ministries.

The Nomadic Church is no longer the face of a few; it’s a growing trend. Thousands of churches are started in the United States each year, and the vast majority of them rent meeting space, many for ten years or longer. That is more than twice as long as a decade ago, and a growing number say they never plan on purchasing property. Consider the comment of Todd Wilson, executive pastor of New Life Christian Church (www.newlife4me.net) in Chantilly, Virginia: “We will consider getting our own property when the costs for renting begin to approach the cost of owning our own property.”

According to a comprehensive 1998 survey, almost 14 percent of all congregations in the United States rent space in a school or other public facility. An even broader study in 2001 found that 10 percent of churches meeting in a church building rent that space from another church. That study also reports that of all faith communities begun since 1945, nearly half of them began in the 1990s. Because of the upsurge in the cost of construction

and because of modifications in ministry philosophy, most of these churches remain without their own campus today. Our observations and networks indicate that this buildingless trend is only increasing since these recent surveys were published.

Two decades ago, some thought that these Nomadic Churches were smaller and catered to the lower half of the income structure. But no more. Today, they come in every size and reach every strata of American culture. In fact, with good reason many former negative perceptions of Nomadic Churches have begun to be shed in recent years.

New Hope Christian Fellowship (www.enehope.org) in Honolulu, Hawaii, is one of the premier examples of a congregation choosing to remain in rented facilities. As of 2003, the average weekend attendance exceeds 1,500 people, including seven satellite sites, and the church still rents worship facilities for all its

locations. They see their group of Levites, the crews who set up and break down each weekend, as one of the basic training grounds for future leaders of the church. Every Sunday morning from 2:00 to 5:30, a team of over a hundred people gather to

set up for services in the rented Farmington High School, which accommodates up to 8,500 people.

In a 1999 interview with their pastor, Wayne Cordeiro, we asked why they were still in rented facilities even though at the time around five thousand people were worshipping with them each weekend. Cordeiro replied, “We did a study of what it would cost to purchase our own worship space. If we did that, we would not be able to spend the amount of money we need to spend on leadership development.” The odds are that New Hope may purchase facilities sometime in the distant future, but they have still set a precedent that is hard to ignore.

And what can we say about influential churches like Bill Hybels’s Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, Illinois (www.willowcreek.org)? They spent their foundational

Christian leaders of the emerging world aren’t as tied to property and space as are the leaders of earlier generations. Many pastors are eager to take the gospel to the streets and don’t have the money or patience for bricks and mortar. They’re not willing to wait to tell the story, so the Nomadic Church is a Godsend to them and the countless people they reach.

years in rented movie theaters and are again renting meeting spaces for their expanding campuses. Or what about Saddleback Community Church (www.saddleback.com) in Lake Forest, California? That congregation shuffled between seventy-nine different places and reached more than 10,000 in regular attendance before erecting their first building. Legend is that it got to be a joke: people could attend, if they could find the church!

Because of churches like New Hope, Willow Creek, Saddleback, and many other thriving congregations, the Nomadic Church is no longer viewed as a second-class way to do church. Christian leaders of the emerging world aren't as tied to property and space as are the leaders of earlier generations. Many pastors are eager to take the gospel to the streets and don't have the money or patience for bricks and mortar. They're not willing to wait to tell the story, so the Nomadic Church is a Godsend to them and the countless people they reach.

It's our belief that the percentage of churches renting facilities will continue to grow and that more and more churches will opt to rent nontraditional facilities as long as possible. If that's the case, more research needs to be done to learn how to fortify these mobile congregations.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, \$7.3 billion was spent on religious construction in 2000, up to a hefty 89 percent from 1994. Every year the costs of land and construction increase. To fulfill the Great Commission, the number of new churches that must be planted requires a method that demands less initial capital than in the past. When we ask denominational leaders why they aren't starting new churches, they inevitably mention their lack of money. But money is a major hindrance only if you're eager to buy land and construct a building. In talking with dozens of leaders in charge of church planting for their constituencies, we've learned that it costs between five hundred thousand and a million dollars to plant a church the traditional way!

Disadvantages of a Permanent Building

Many church planters eagerly await the day when they cut the ribbon on a new church facility. That desire is

understandable and there certainly are benefits to a building. We're not trying to suggest otherwise. But it is equally important to consider advantages of the portable paradigm and disadvantages of owning a permanent church facility. Here are a few major drawbacks to owning church property that you need to be aware of.

Cost. The capital needed to acquire land and then design, build, and maintain a permanent facility is astronomical. The closer you are to a population center, the higher the costs. And because land is a limited resource, its expense will only increase. Financial bondage is not uncommon for stationary churches.

Focus. The massive amount of limited resources that must be expended on land and facilities may produce more lasting results—spiritually and eternally—if invested elsewhere. Buildings too easily drive the direct the energies of a church.

When we ask denominational leaders why they aren't starting new churches, they inevitably mention their lack of money. But money is a major hindrance only if you're eager to buy land and construct a building.

As long as you can meet somewhere, purposefully putting your money into more people, programs, and pastors will out-produce funding a building any day.

Limits. As much as buildings can initially boost a congregation's size, they can just as quickly limit it. Future growth is always limited by the present size of a facility, available parking, and zoning laws. In *When Not to Build*, Ray Bowman explains how church buildings can actually kill church growth.

Definition. Buildings can shape—or misshape—a church by communicating an inadequate image. Even the best designed building today can mis-define the essence or emphases of a church in a relatively short time. Then, you either suffer the consequences or go back to the drawing board and the money pit cycle.

Affections. Church buildings can foster misplaced affections. They can produce unhealthy territorialism, a conviction that certain things ought never to be done in the building and certain others can be done only in the building, and even thinly veiled idolatrous building worship and ego stroking (consider the tower of Babel!). Sacred buildings are virtually universal in human religions, but Christianity does not require or endorse them—maybe for more reasons than meet the eye!

Outreach. Perhaps Stuart Murray (in *Church Planting: Laying Foundations*) expresses this one best: "Having their own building may encourage churches to operate with a centripetal ('come') rather than a centrifugal ('go') mentality in mission, inviting non-members on to church territory at times convenient to church members, rather than going into society to meet people on neutral territory, reversing the apparent thrust of mission in the New Testament."

Multiplication. Churches that have invested enormous amounts of money in buying land and building on it may warily view a proposal to use the building less in order to start a new church elsewhere. After all, redirecting financial assets may mean less ability to upkeep the present building. Mission can be minimized by maintenance.

Effectiveness. A building can't solve nonbuilding problems, and mortar won't accomplish what ministry should accomplish. This is because buildings do not minister; only people do. Leaders too frequently expect a building to do things it never can—and they and their ministry suffer for it.

Churches that have learned to be effective without a permanent home are more likely not to be sucked into these pitfalls if and when they do build. That's why it is so critical to immerse a young congregation in a prudent, biblically balanced perspective on mission, people, buildings, service, and finances. It also helps for Nomadic Churches to know that it's not all rosy on the other side! □

Adapted and excerpted from The Nomadic Church by Bill Easum and Pete Theodore. (Abingdon Press, 2005) Used with permission. Please see page 19 to order.

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Wasted Space Wasted Opportunity

Dan R. Dick

A church that attracts a large number of people, offers a wide variety of programs, is financially sound, and provides engaging worship is generally considered to be a “successful” church. Common measures of success are full pews and parking lots on Sunday morning, relatively full collection plates, a full slate of hired and elected congregational leaders, and a growing—if not stable—membership roster. Each of these factors contributes to the measure of a church’s effectiveness, but there is another factor—much less obvious—that reflects deep and significant vitality: the use of space.

American Protestant churches are among the greatest space wasters of all public-use facilities. The vast majority of sanctuaries—huge open spaces—are used only two or three hours a week. The majority of rooms designated for Sunday school classes are used one hour each week. Fellowship halls stand empty 90–95 percent of the time. Church parlors are often used once or twice a month, and many church libraries haven’t seen any action since the late 1970s. In churches with declining involvement, once trafficked rooms now serve as storage areas. In a recent survey conducted by the General

Board of Discipleship, two of every three churches (64 percent) report having rooms that stand empty on a regular to constant basis. Paradoxically, almost half of these churches are planning to expand or relocate to create more space for ministry. One church with fourteen empty Sunday school

rooms just completed construction of a four-million-dollar Christian Life Center that is used approximately twelve hours a week on average. Of all the practices of congregational stewardship, our understanding and use of space is perhaps the worst.

Churches that provide a powerful and healthy usage model do so by overcoming five critical limiting factors. Each factor poses a unique constraint causing church facilities to be underutilized and ministry potential to remain unrealized. These factors are:

- territorial protection of space;
- an “us/them” mentality that prevents sharing space with those outside the congregation;
- a lack of vision for missional ministry and outreach;
- a strong sense of “church” happening only on Sunday;
- pride of architecture and status.

American Protestant churches are among the greatest space wasters of all public-use facilities.

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Territorial Protection of Space

In almost every church in existence, different segments of the congregation claim for themselves discreet, exclusive, and private space. Kitchens, parlors, Sunday school rooms, meeting rooms, and fellowship halls are just some of the areas that can become battlegrounds in local churches. Heaven help the poor person who dribbles punch on the parlor rug or fails to put the coffee urn back in the “right” place. Youth and young adults are often relegated to less-favorable spaces in the church, and they are expected to stay “where they belong.”

Until a congregation’s members can learn to share, facility space is a limiting factor instead of a resource for ministry and service.

Leaders in many congregations relate that territorial issues are generally hidden, unspoken, and unexplored until there is a violation. Then they become a trigger for conflict. The best time to explore the use of shared space is when there are no controversies. One church navigated a re-visioning of space usage by referring to the whole church facility as “God-space.” This allowed them not only to learn to share within the congregation but also moved them to see new possibilities of sharing their facility with their community.

An “Us/Them” Mentality

Many congregational members view their church building as . . . their church building. The only people who have any right to use the facility are church members. Overcoming this divisive, noninclusive mind-set is a huge hurdle to clear for many local churches. A large number of churches define their ministry as what they do for, provide for, and offer to others. Occasionally, a church may open space to a daycare center, a thrift shop, or a soup kitchen, but even in these cases there is a clear “landlord/tenant” relationship rather than a true partnership in ministry. The goal of many growing congregations is to expand the number of ministries they can provide, but they only consider those that they own and control as “ministry.”

Every community has a wide variety of social, relief, crisis, and assistance agencies with limited resources. Space—adequate facility—is usually one of the greatest needs. The services and programs these agencies provide align very clearly and closely with the mission and ministry of most churches. The opportunities to marry skills, knowledge, and expertise to underutilized church space are almost limitless. Churches with strong, workable partnerships in their communities create these relationships from a strong vision for ministry with the community.

When the church building is viewed as the center and location of ministry, leaders do all they can to draw as many people as possible into the building. However, when the field of opportunity for ministry is located in the community, the church building pales in comparison; it is seen as a resource for ministry rather than a key focus of ministry.

Too many congregations offer most—if not all—of their ministries and programs to the existing membership. This inward vision for ministry may be powerful and comprehensive, but it is still one-dimensional. Until a congregation develops a broad vision for ministry—not only for others and to others, but with others—it is limited in the way it envisions the use of space.

“When we started thinking in terms of sharing ministry—doing ministry with other people—it freed us to dream much bigger dreams,” one pastor reflected. “There are so many needs that we cannot begin to fill by ourselves, but when we link our resources with those of others, virtually nothing is impossible to us. I’m not sure why nobody ever taught us this in seminary.”

This is a simple, rational, and sensible idea—together we are capable of much more than we are on our own. This is as true of congregations—and their community counterparts—as it is of

individuals. Many congregational leaders claim that the turning point came by asking, “What does God want us to be doing” instead of “What can we do for God?”

Church Happens Only On Sunday

The lay leader of a midwestern United Methodist Church tells the story of a congregational epiphany when a new member asked the congregation’s leaders what it would take for every room in the church to be used every day of the week:

“We never thought about the church building being used seven days a week, fifty-two weeks a year. It changed our entire way of thinking about church.”

The vast majority of Protestant churches in North America hold one (or possibly two) services in the sanctuary in a given week. Most Sunday school rooms are dedicated space, for use only by the class that meets there. The myth is that large churches are seven-day-a-week churches; activity depends on size. However, a growing number of smaller congregations—

one hundred members or less—offer worship services every day of the week and hold multiple classes and studies throughout the week. Additionally, they offer tutoring, health screening, counseling, skills training, and a host of other services every day.

Pride of Architecture and Status

Among the most perplexing stewardship issues concerning the use of church space are the number of churches that are considering expansion, building, or relocation at a time when they are not using the space they already have. The pastor of a growing southeastern church provides a representative opinion when he says, “We want big, new, and beautiful. An old, failing church does nothing to honor God. People in our culture, especially baby boomers, will not settle for anything but the best. If we want to grow we need the biggest church, with the latest equipment, a state-of-the-art nursery, and

Equipping leaders with both knowledge and skills to move toward successful church starts.

abundant parking close to the building. The only way to be the best is to keep ahead of the competition.”

This is a matter of values. When the church building is viewed as the center and location of ministry, leaders do all they can to draw as many people as possible into the building. However, when the field of opportunity for ministry is located in the community, the church building pales in comparison; it is seen as a resource for ministry rather than a key focus of ministry. There are church buildings—big and small, old and new, in prime locations and out of the way places—that are excellent stewards of space, using what they have to the utmost.

There is one other powerful argument against using church buildings for ministry: insurance and liability. Conversations with lawyers and insurance agents lead to one simple response—baloney! If there is a ministry need and a partnership opportunity—even in this litigious and contentious age—there is a viable way to provide adequate protection.

The church exists for one purpose: ministry. The more ministry we can do, the better we can honor and glorify God. The best way to expand our ministries is to open our doors and use every resource at our disposal, including the church building, to serve the greatest number of needs. An important function for leaders of every congregation is to explore space considerations: territoriality, the “us/them” mentality, the vision for ministry, the use of the facility seven days a week, and the importance of architecture versus stewardship and service. □



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congregational leadership, his latest title is *Beyond Money: Becoming Good and Faithful Stewards* (Discipleship Resources, 2006). See page 19 to order.

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Shaping Welcoming Spaces

Susan Eaton Mendenhall

We shape our buildings and afterwards our buildings shape us.” These words of Winston Churchill continue to teach by example as we enter public buildings, churches, and even our homes.

Anyone new to a space instantly asks three questions. These questions move through us very quickly and often are not recognized by our rational mind, but are definitely experienced in our bodies.

Do I feel safe? Safety may be physical and/or emotional. Am I able to see well enough to navigate the space? Does the space look/feel safe for me to enter? Why is no one here? This is not what I expected when I saw the exterior sign—it does not match what is inside.

Do I feel welcome? Are the people happy and engaging? Does the décor look inviting and well maintained? Does the space allow me to engage it as I am ready—giving me space to breathe and adjust?

What is expected of me? I’m here! What is next? Am I to check in with someone, help myself? Are there signs that direct me in my decisions/questions?

If we are not able to navigate through these three questions easily and effortlessly, we may choose to leave. If we stay, our general nature may be tentative or protective. Abraham Maslow created a pyramid called the Hierarchy of Needs, suggesting that human beings are motivated by their unsatisfied needs. Our very first need is to feel safe and secure. Until this is satisfied it is difficult to explore community and spiritual growth. Perhaps another way to engage these three questions is by **creating an environment for people to feel safe, included, and informed.** Have we thought of this as we create and shape our church spaces?

First Impressions

These days first impressions often start with the church web page. More and more “church guests” are doing their homework on the Internet. Here is where they might see a view of the

building, pictures of the staff, and a list of activities. A great impression is made if the web design is engaging, allows for easy navigation, and has a clean look. Put things on your web site that a new person would want to know. Perhaps a blueprint of the church and directions to the site. This allows someone new to know where to park, where to enter the building, and how to locate rooms. Too many bells and whistles on a site can be annoying and may feel invasive to some people. Keeping the web information up to date is one way a church says, “We are alive, vital, and ready for YOU”.

New people notice everything! We may no longer “see” what is truly there because it is now familiar. New people are looking for ‘clues’ to this unknown place and its people. Everything speaks. Look at your facility with the eyes of someone new.

*Buildings speak a language.
What is your building saying?*

- Is the **main door** clearly known? Do the doors encourage one to enter? Through what door do the members enter? What door would someone new be

likely to enter? Being able to see into a building through glass paneled doors assists a person in early navigation.

- Once inside, what **first catches the attention**—coat-rack, bulletin board, artwork, clutter, smells . . . ?
- What three **signs** are first seen? What do they communicate? In what condition are they? Are they important to someone new?
- List **what is located in the first 10 feet** of entering the main door. Name all that happens in this area.
- **Where do people gather?** What causes them to gather? Is there enough space? What might be needed to enhance this experience?
- What parts of the building appear **cluttered?** Why? Are there items that are broken/past their prime or could be thrown away?
- **What about the building embraces the present and says that it is moving into the future?** What indicates that the facility and ministries might be living too much in the past? Are artwork and furnishings up to date? Is signage uniform and easy to read?

Gathering Spaces

I call gathering spaces (frequently the first place we enter) the “room of introduction.” Here is where the personality of the church is first explored. How do you wish to introduce yourself? Notice how people move through this space. Remember that people—their attire, gestures, and voices—make a room seem full. Keeping all furnishings and displays at a minimum allows the energy of the people to be the accessory. Gathering spaces hold the diversity of people’s lives. Tasks and emotions happen in this space. This is where people are trying to find a person, allow a child to move more freely, greet a visitor, have a conversation, or pass through to another part of the building. Laughter, joy, concern, anxiety, and frustration accompany these tasks. To allow emotional space for these many tasks and emotions, take care that the area is not filled with excessive furnishings.

People are also looking for information in gathering spaces. Signage is very important. Directional signs for restrooms, nursery, offices,

and the sanctuary are best positioned above the heads of people so they can be seen when the space is full. Try to keep all signs throughout the building with a similar look. Not only does this provide a harmonious feel to the building, but gives confidence to a new person of knowing what to look for as he moves through the building. Where possible use the international signage as this is very well identified and understood.

Gathering spaces are also places of waiting. Providing comfortable chairs as room allows and adding a complementary table to rest a beverage is welcomed hospitality. Having a variety of lighting possibilities allows for different moods and uses of this space. A combination of table lamps, overhead, wall sconces all invite this area to be public as well as more intimate for personal reading or visiting with a friend.

Hospitable Worship Space

Worship space that offers flexibility is another form of hospitality. Think through the many ways the space will and could be used. What appointments would be appropriate when the space is used for a concert, a dinner, or a business awards event? Consider the varied uses of the space in each liturgical season. How could the space be changed to allow the congregation to experience the season anew? Give thought to how technical images will be projected and make sure that art and symbols are not limiting this possibility. Maintain a rule of thumb that all furnishings in the chancel and sanctuary space are moveable, which allows for varied expressions in worship style, congregational size, and multiple usages.

Spiritual Welcome

Our spiritual sides are drawn to beauty and the natural world is beauty. Creating spaces that use and accent the natural woods, fibers, minerals, sounds, and lighting will open the spiritual dimensions and provide welcome for the soul. Use of healthy floor plants with sufficient space around them offers a restful expression. Eliminate plastic and artificial as much as possible.

Cluttered Versus Empty Spaces

One of the greatest tasks is keeping clutter to a minimum as well as discernment in accepting donations. Members will offer furnishings that are “used but in great condition” throughout the church’s history. Usually these add to the element of clutter. Clutter depresses any space and us as we move through it. The description of the Upper Room prepared for the disciples is a good reminder of how to keep our church spaces . . . “spacious, furnished, and all in order.” Clutter often happens because our culture is not comfortable with empty space. We want to fill it with “something.” Be slow to add to empty places. Hallways might seem like empty space, but we forget that the movement of people takes room and creates energy. Hallways are also for

spiritual, emotional, and physical transitions. As we move from one space to the next we change our intentions. Moving from worship to study to fellowship all requires a transition in thought. Allow the hallways to be simple and uncluttered to give people space to rest

and re-group their thoughts. Use the rule of minimal appointments in as many places as possible. What makes the space in many monasteries so sacred and spiritual is that they have included only what is needed—nothing more. The simplicity of the space welcomes and offers room for our cluttered lives while at the same time helping us to focus.

Buildings speak a language.

They tell us whether they are loved or ignored.

They tell us of the energy and spirit of those who use them.

They easily invite or distance someone new.

They encourage or complicate new ideas.

Buildings speak a language.

Some buildings look tired and out of date.

Some buildings feel refreshed and vital.

Some buildings have no place for silence to reside.

Some buildings invite the soul to explore.

Buildings speak a language.

What is your building saying? □

Susan Eaton Mendenhall, of DeForest, Wisconsin, has worked with the development of church and nonprofit ministries for thirty years. In 2002 she started Spatial Impact: Interpreting the Language of Space, a consulting service for businesses, churches, and homeowners at www.spatialimpact.com. Susan’s articles on facility space have been published by several conferences and *Net Results* magazine.





Rodney Thomas Smothers

A ride through any city or town will reveal ministries that now occupy spaces that we once referred to as storefronts. Today these storefronts have grown from former stores, offices, and mom and pop businesses into mega ministry centers that are now found in former theaters, big box stores, schools, and factories. The once easily recognizable facade of a church has been replaced by creative designs born out of convenience, zoning laws, and creative accommodations. Practical facility use and function are also driving this new look of ministry facilities. Vital churches today are so much more than Sunday morning worship centers only. The seven-day-a-week church provides space for worship, education, small group ministries, child care, senior care, youth activities, family athletics, and other ministries and services like Christian schools, bookstores, banquet facilities, and, in some

cases, retail outlets that often provide additional streams of income to the ministry.

New ministries are particularly attracted to these multiple use buildings because they often come with ample off-street parking, an affordable lease arrangement that provides for additional space as the ministry grows, and zoning that is easier for church start-ups than acquiring new property. Often these spaces are found in locations where the infrastructure is already in place so that scarce start-up funding can be utilized for the greater ministry needs. For a new ministry, the more flexible the space—the better the facility. For many years in church development our goal was to define a successful new church start by the speed at which the first unit was built. Today our thinking has evolved. We understand that by leasing space we can grow into or move away from the rented space if growth

The once easily recognizable facade of a church has been replaced by creative designs born out of convenience, zoning laws, and creative accommodations.

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CIRCUIT RIDER

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exceeds the capacity of the present facility. Other factors that favor facility flexibility are the changing socioeconomic conditions that may shift the demographics of a new church start in such a way that its starting location may not be the best location for its permanent facilities. Another benefit of beginning new ministries in nontraditional spaces is the psychological impact that nontraditional spaces have on people who are not familiar with the church. Flexible creative space that is high on hospitality and low on tradition makes church a less imposing place for newcomers to new faith communities. Innovative facilities that provide for open access, emerging technology, and space where people can gather before and after the worship settings invite people to interact and build new community.

Mothering and Multi-Site Models

Nontraditional facilities are also becoming popular among existing congregations that are “mothering” new congregations or launching multiple ministry sites.

Congregations that pursue the birthing of a new congregation must be spiritual healthy, financially viable, and missionally minded. They see the expansion of the kingdom of God as a calling that can be met through their commitment of resources, knowing that they have been chosen and equipped to bring multiplication to the Body of Christ. This approach to kingdom expansion has various approaches. Daughtering, satellites, multicampuses, and adoption are just a few of the methods that have been used successfully.

Multicampus ministry is often used to extend a congregation’s current capacity. Though the additional site might have as its primary target group another demographic or seek to extend capacity to the same demographic by physically replicating itself in another location, its central administrative control remains with the mother congregation. Mothering new congregations, however, has as its long-term goal the sponsorship of a new congregation that will become healthy

enough to become a fully self-sustaining ministry on its own.

First United Methodist Church and Windsor Village, both located in Houston, Texas, stand as models that are working well. In First Church’s case, a new campus in an outlying area was sponsored and has become a fully self-supporting congregation. In Windsor Village’s case, it has used the multicampus model and the adoption model of daughtering a church. These approaches have also provided great models for kingdom expansion.

Who Will Do Ministry With Us?

In the Baltimore-Washington Conference, we are approaching facility use with a different model in mind. We are inviting existing congregations that are geographically close to one another to share creative ministry options that utilize their existing campuses and all of the pastoral leadership in shared mission and ministry. In the past, a single pastor was assigned to a single charge and served multiple congregations; this new model

that our small- and medium-size congregations’ greatest obstacle to growth is lack of expandable ministry space. What options are available? We begin our quest for additional ministry space by asking the question, “Who will do ministry with us?” Are there other congregations willing to share space? Are there potential partners in the community that are willing to share space like educational and civic organizations or county, city, or state-sponsored facilities? There are food establishments in our communities that would welcome our use of their meeting rooms and there are professional offices including funeral homes that are usually willing to partner with us to share space. And don’t forget other religious organizations that don’t use their worship or ministry space on the same days and times where we might wish to expand our ministry. And please don’t underestimate the value of empowering house church meetings in your community.

Our creativity and focus on the changing landscape of ministry provides us with more options for ministry than we’ve had in the past. No longer is the church defined by its buildings alone. Affordable, user friendly space where relevant life-changing worship takes place, effective small groups can meet, and efficient systems of nurture and care are enabled, works for most ministries. Rapidly changing ministry conditions make temporary space a good option for growing ministries. Some

of our existing churches should consider sharing current sites or swapping ministry sites so that vibrant and growing ministries can be expanded. Any permanent new building should be developed with projected ministry needs in mind so that future ministry needs can be met at that location. Birthing new faith communities in nontraditional spaces requires strategic visioning, creative implementation and courageous commitments to try new methods. Every large ministry has used creative temporary ministry space to expand its ministry—it’s good for evangelism and good for missional outreach.

In mainline denominations, Anglo new church developments have a much better track record of starting in temporary facilities while African-American new church developments seem to do better in established facilities while Korean and Hispanic new church developments thrive in house church models, but expand rapidly once facilities are made available. The point is one size does not fit all.

promotes sharing of pastors and resources around shared vision, spiritual gifts, competencies, and joint use of facilities in an extended campus arrangement where facility use is determined by ministry need rather than a single congregation’s desire alone. The benefits are numerous. The congregations benefit from the shared leadership of a team of pastors, and the laity begin to think about ministry as something that they do with others rather than something that they do with a silo-type mentality.

The congregations that need additional space most are not just large congregations. In fact, it could be said

Needs-Based Evangelism

Becoming New Churches for a New Generation



Planting a Garden: Growing the Church Beyond Traditional Models, by Linda S. McCoy. Offers church leaders insights into how to think outside the box—not just a different way to “do” worship, but an entirely new way of being the church.
UZ6-0687343143.
Paper, **\$15.00**

Needs-Based Evangelism: Becoming a Good Samaritan Church, by Robert D. Pierson. By meeting the needs of people, churches will fulfill their biblical mandate to care for those who are hurting and suffering.
UZ6-0687332486.
Paper, **\$14.00**

Published by
Abingdon Press

Cokesbury



store, web, phone
Cokesbury.com | 1.800.672.1789

CIR76610067 PACP00354159-01

WHERE TO LEARN MORE

Some recommended sources are:

BreakOut Churches by Thomas S. Rainer (Zondervan 2005)

Church Marketing 101: Preparing Your Church For Greater Growth by Richard L. Reising (Baker 2006)

Inside The Organic Church by Bob Whitesel (Abingdon Press 2006)

Starting A New Church by Ralph Moore (Regal 2002)

The Multi-Site Church Revolution by Geoff Surratt, Greg Ligon, and Warren Bird (Zondervan 2006)

The Ripple Church: Multiply Your Ministry by Parenting New Churches by Phil Stevenson (Wesleyan 2002).

See page 19 to order.

Cultural Contexts

Changing ministry needs, changing demographics and changing socio-economics are not the only factors that influence a congregation’s decision to stay at its present location or move to another location. While we talk a great deal about multicultural and multiethnic congregations, we still have a long way to go in mainstreaming our congregational response to this reality. With our communities becoming more diverse every day, opportunities for us to minister to people from multiple cultural contexts is going to drive greater understanding of how new faith communities can thrive in the midst of diversity.

In mainline denominations, Anglo new church developments have a much better track record of starting in temporary facilities while African-American new church developments seem to do better in established facilities while Korean and Hispanic new church developments thrive in house church models, but expand rapidly once facilities are made available. The point is one size does not fit all. Cultural, economic, social and political contexts also play a significant role in the

birthing of new faith communities in nontraditional spaces.

The growing conversation around the “organic church movement” would suggest that purpose, passion, and innovation are more important than specific spaces. More than mere marketing, nontraditional ministry space should be first and foremost mission-responsive, hospitality-attractive, and Christ-encounter intentional. □



Rodney Thomas Smothers is the Associate Council Director for Congregational Development in the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church.



Church Construction?

A summary from ¶ 2543, 2004 Discipline

STEPS FOR A BUILDING PROJECT IN THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1. Establish a “Study Committee” to analyze the building needs of the church and community. Project the potential membership with average attendance, and write up the church’s program of ministry.
2. Secure the written consent of the pastor and district superintendent to the building project. The study committee presents their study to the District Board of Church Location and Building for its consideration and preliminary approval.
3. After securing these approvals, the charge conference (made up of all members of the church council along with retired ordained ministers and diaconal ministers and presided over by the district superintendent) approves of the building project and elects a building committee.
4. The Building Committee uses the information from the study committee to establish carefully the building facilities needed, develop preliminary architectural plans, secure an estimate of the proposed construction, and develop a financial plan for defraying the total cost of the building project.
5. The Building Committee submits a report to the District Board of Church Location and Building for its consideration and preliminary approval.
6. After preliminary approval by the District Board of Church Location and Building, a church conference (made up of all members of the church and presided over by the district superintendent) shall meet to approve the preliminary architectural plans, cost estimate, and financial plan submitted by the building committee. A majority vote of those present is required for approval.
7. After approval by the church conference, a capital funds campaign is held.
8. After completing the capital funds campaign, with sufficient pledges in hand, the building committee develops detailed plans and specifications, secures a reliable and detailed estimate of cost, and presents these to the District Board of Church Location and Building for approval.
9. After approval is received from the District Board, then this is carried to the charge conference for its consideration and approval.
10. **ONLY after all the 9 steps above are completed, the ground breaking and actual construction may begin.**

2004 Book of Discipline

The United Methodist Church

¶2543

¶ 2543. *Planning and Financing Requirements for Local Church Buildings*

If any local church desires to:

- a) build a new church, a new educational building, or a new parsonage;
- b) purchase a church, educational building, or parsonage; or
- c) remodel an existing church, an existing educational building, or an existing parsonage where the cost of the remodeling will exceed 10 percent of the value of the existing structure,

then the local church shall first establish a study committee to:

- (1) analyze the needs of the church and community;
- (2) project the potential membership with average attendance;
- (3) write up the church's program of ministry (¶¶ 201-204); and

All building construction, site purchases, or building purchases must go through this process. Remodeling must go through this process if it exceeds 10%...

¶ 201. Definition of a Local Church

The local church provides the most significant arena through which disciple-making occurs. It is a community of true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redemptive fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit, the church exists for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.

¶ 202. The Function of the Local Church

The church of Jesus Christ exists in and for the world. It is primarily at the level of the local church that the church encounters the world. The local church is a strategic base from which Christians move out to the structures of society. The function of the local church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is to help people to accept and confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to live their daily lives in light of their relationship with God. Therefore, the local church is to minister to persons in the community where the church is located, to provide appropriate training and nurture to all, to cooperate in ministry with other local churches, to defend God's creation and live as an ecologically responsible community, and to participate in the worldwide mission of the church, as minimal expectations of an authentic church.

¶ 203. Relation to the Wider Church

The local church is a connectional society of persons who have been baptized, have professed their faith in Christ, and have assumed the vows of membership in The United Methodist Church. They gather in fellowship to hear the Word of God, receive the sacraments, praise and worship the triune God, and carry forward the work that Christ has committed to his church. Such a society of believers, being within The United Methodist Church and subject to its Discipline, is also an inherent part of the church universal, which is composed of all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and

Savior, and which in the Apostles' Creed we declare to be the holy catholic church.

¶ 204. Care of Members

Each local church shall have a definite evangelistic, nurture, and witness responsibility for its members and the surrounding area and a missional outreach responsibility to the local and global community. It shall be responsible for ministering to all its members, wherever they live, and for persons who choose it as their church.

- (4) develop an accessibility plan including chancel areas.
 - The information and findings obtained by the study committee shall:
 - (a) form the basis of a report to be presented to the charge conference (¶ 2543.3);
 - (b) be used by the building committee (see ¶ 2543.4); and
 - (c) become a part of the report to the district board of church location and building (see ¶¶ 2543.5, 2520.1).

¶ 2520. Standards for the Approval of Building Proposals

1. The board shall review the plans of any church in the district which proposes to construct or purchase a new church or educational building or a parsonage, or remodeling of such a building if the cost will exceed 25 percent of the value of the building. Such proposal shall include a statement of the need for the proposed facilities, preliminary architectural plans, cost estimate of the project, and a financial plan for defraying such costs. Before finally approving the building project, the board shall determine that the preliminary architectural design and financial plans have been evaluated and approved by proper authorities. Where readily achievable and financially feasible, renovation plans shall provide for equal access to persons with disabilities.

- 1. After the study committee finishes its work, the local church shall secure the written consent of the pastor and the district superintendent to the building project, purchase proposal, or remodeling project.
- 2. In the case of a building project or purchase proposal, the local church shall secure the approval of the proposed site by the **DISTRICT BOARD OF CHURCH LOCATION AND BUILDING** as provided in the Discipline (¶ 2519.1).

¶2519.1 Duties and Responsibilities of the District Boards of Church Location and Building - 1. Local Church Building Sites and Plans - the board of church location and building shall investigate all proposed local church building sites, ascertaining that such sites are properly located for the community to be served and adequate in size to provide space for future expansion and parking facilities. (See ¶¶260.1, 2543.2)

- 3. The charge conference of the local church shall authorize the building project, purchase proposal, or remodeling project at a regular or called meeting. Notice of the meeting and the proposed action shall have been given for not less than ten days prior to the charge conference (except as local laws may otherwise provide) from the pulpit or in the weekly bulletin.
 - a) After approving a building project or a remodeling project, the charge conference shall elect a building committee of not fewer than three members of the local church to serve in the development of the project as hereinafter set forth; provided that the charge conference may commit to its board of trustees the duties of the building committee.

- Done, Date_____
- Both letters attached
- Does Not Apply

First meeting with District Board, Site approved?

- Done, Date_____
- Copy of study attached
- Does Not Apply

Charge Conf. approval?

- Done, Date_____
- Copy of minutes attached
- Does Not Apply

Building Com. Elected?

- Done, Date_____
- Copy of minutes attached
- Does Not Apply

- b) After approving a purchase proposal, the charge conference shall be deemed to have authorized and directed the board of trustees to proceed with the purchase. In the case of the purchase of a parsonage, the board of trustees shall either:
- (1) purchase a parsonage that has on the ground-floor level:
 - (a) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability;
 - (b) one fully accessible bathroom; and
 - (c) fully accessible laundry facilities; or
 - (2) purchase a parsonage without the accessible features for persons with disabilities specified above and remodel it within one year's time, so that it does have those features.
4. The building committee shall:
- a) use the information and findings of the study committee and any other relevant information to estimate carefully the building facilities needed, as the case may be, to house the church's program of worship, education, and fellowship or to provide for the present and future pastors and their families;
 - b) ascertain the cost of any property to be purchased; and
 - c) develop preliminary architectural plans that:
 - (1) comply with local building, fire, and accessibility codes;
 - (2) clearly outline the location on the site of all proposed present and future construction; and
 - (3) provide adequate facilities for parking, entrance, seating, rest rooms, and accessibility for persons with disabilities, but providing for such adequate facilities shall not apply in the case of a minor remodeling project;
 - d) provide on the ground-floor level of a newly constructed parsonage:
 - (1) one room that can be used as a bedroom by a person with a disability;
 - (2) a fully accessible bathroom; and
 - (3) fully accessible laundry facilities;
 - e) secure an estimate of the cost of the proposed construction;
 - f) develop a financial plan for defraying the total cost, including an estimate of the amount the membership can contribute in cash and pledges and the amount the local church can borrow if necessary.
5. The building committee shall submit to the **DISTRICT BOARD OF CHURCH LOCATION AND BUILDING** for its consideration and preliminary approval:
- a) a statement of the need for the proposed facilities;
 - b) the preliminary architectural plans, including accessibility plans;
 - c) the preliminary cost estimate; and
 - d) the preliminary financial plan.
6. After preliminary approval by the **DISTRICT BOARD OF CHURCH LOCATION AND BUILDING**, the pastor, with the written consent of the district superintendent, shall call a **church** conference, giving not less than ten days' notice (except as local laws may otherwise provide) of the meeting and the proposed action from the pulpit or in the weekly bulletin. At the church conference, the building committee shall present:
- a) the preliminary architectural plans;
 - b) the preliminary cost estimate;
 - c) the preliminary financial plan; and
 - d) the building committee's recommendation.
- A majority vote of the membership present and voting at the church conference shall be required to approve the preliminary architectural plans, cost estimate, and financial plan and the building committee's recommendation.

Only after completing all the above, may any land or buildings be purchased.
 Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

4.a thru 4.f:
 Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

Second meeting with District Board:
 Done, Date _____
 Copy of minutes attached
 Does Not Apply

Second Conference:
 Done, Date _____
 Copy of minutes attached
 Does Not Apply

- 7. After approval by the church conference, the building committee shall develop detailed plans and specifications and secure a reliable and detailed estimate of cost, which shall be presented for approval to the charge conference and to the **DISTRICT BOARD OF CHURCH LOCATION AND BUILDING.**
- 8. After approval by the charge conference and **DISTRICT BOARD OF CHURCH LOCATION AND BUILDING**, the building committee may begin the building project or remodeling project. Written documentation substantiating the approvals of the charge conference and the district board of church location and building shall be lodged with the district superintendent and the secretary of the charge conference.
- 9. In metropolitan areas, the building committee shall ensure that adequate steps are taken to obtain the services of minority (nonwhite) and female skilled persons in the construction in proportion to the racial and ethnic balance in the area. In non-metropolitan areas, the building committee shall ensure that racial and ethnic persons are employed in the construction where available and in relation to the available workforce.
- 10. The local church shall acquire a fee simple title to the lot or lots on which any building is to be erected. The deed or conveyance shall be executed as provided in this chapter. It is recommended that contracts on property purchased by a local church be contingent upon the securing of a guaranteed title, and the property's meeting of basic environmental requirements of lending institutions and of local and state laws.
- 11. If a loan is needed, the local church shall comply with the provisions of ¶ 2539 or ¶ 2540.

Third meeting with District Board:
 Done, Date _____
 Copy of minutes attached
 Does Not Apply

NOTE: Only after all 7 of the above requirements are met may the church begin the building or remodeling project.
 Copies of written documentation given to DS?
 Done, Date _____

Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

Done, Date _____
 Does Not Apply

¶ 2539. Unincorporated Local Church Property
 Sale, Transfer, Lease, or Mortgage—Any real property owned by or in which an unincorporated local church has any interest may be sold, transferred, leased for a term of thirty days or more (which shall include leases for less than thirty days if such a lease is consecutive with the same lessee), or mortgaged subject to the following procedure and conditions:

1. Notice of the proposed action and the date and time of the regular or special meeting of the charge conference at which it is to be considered shall be given at least ten days prior thereto (except as local laws may otherwise provide) from the pulpit of the church or in its weekly bulletin.
2. A resolution authorizing the proposed action shall be passed by a majority vote of the charge conference members (in a pastoral charge consisting of two or more local churches, the church local conference; see ¶ 2526) present and voting at a special meeting called to consider such action.
3. The written consent of the pastor of the local church and the district superintendent to the proposed action shall be necessary and shall be affixed to or included in the instrument of sale, transfer, lease, or mortgage. Prior to consenting to any proposed action required under this paragraph involving any United Methodist church property, the pastor, district superintendent, and the district board of church location and building shall ensure that: (a) full investigation shall be made and an appropriate plan of action shall be developed for the future missional needs of the community; (b) the transfer or encumbrance shall conform to the Discipline; and (c)

the congregation, if no longer to continue as an organized local United Methodist Church, does not sell but may transfer title of its facilities to another United Methodist church or agency. Certification by the district superintendent shall be conclusive evidence that the transfer or encumbrance conforms to the Discipline. The requirements of investigation and the development of a plan of action, however, shall not affect the merchantability of the title to the real estate or the legal effect of the instruments of sale or transfer to any congregation.

4. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct that any contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other necessary written instrument be executed by and on behalf of the local church by any two of the officers of its board of trustees, who thereupon shall be duly authorized to carry out the direction of the charge conference; and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the local church.

¶ 2540. Incorporated Local Church Property

Sale, Transfer, Lease, or Mortgage—Any real property owned by or in which an incorporated local church has any interest may be sold, transferred, leased for a term of thirty days or more (which shall include leases for less than thirty days if such a lease is consecutive with the same lessee), or mortgaged subject to the following procedure and conditions:

1. Notice of the proposed action and the date and time of the regular or special meeting of the members of the corporate body—i.e., members of the charge conference at which it is to be considered—shall be given at least ten days prior thereto (except as local laws may otherwise provide) from the pulpit of the church or in its weekly bulletin.

2. A resolution authorizing the proposed action shall be passed by a majority vote of the members of the corporate body present and voting at any regular or special meeting thereof called to consider such action and a majority vote of the members of the charge conference, if the corporate members are different than the charge conference members.

3. The written consent of the pastor of the local church and the district superintendent to the proposed action shall be necessary and shall be affixed to or included in the instrument of sale, conveyance, transfer, lease, or mortgage. Prior to consenting to any proposed action required under this paragraph involving any United Methodist church property, the pastor, the district superintendent, and the district board of church location and building shall ensure that—(a) a full investigation shall be made and an appropriate plan of action shall be developed for the future missional needs of the community; (b) the transfer or encumbrance shall conform to the Discipline; (c) the congregation, if no longer to continue as an organized United Methodist church, does not sell but may transfer title of its facilities to another United Methodist church or agency; and (d) the congregation, in case of relocation, first offers its property to a United Methodist congregation or agency at a price not to exceed fair market value. The district strategies or other missional strategies should include the ministries of both United Methodist congregations and the community where the existing facility is located. Certification by the district superintendent shall be conclusive evidence that the transfer or encumbrance conforms to the Discipline. The requirements of investigation and the development of a plan of action shall not affect the merchantability of the title to the real estate or the legal effect of the instruments of sale or transfer.

4. The resolution authorizing such proposed action shall direct and authorize the corporation's board of directors to take all necessary steps to carry out the action and to cause to be executed, as hereinafter provided, any necessary contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument.

5. The board of directors at any regular or special meeting shall take such action and adopt such resolutions as may be necessary or required by the local laws.

6. Any required contract, deed, bill of sale, mortgage, or other written instrument necessary to carry out the action so authorized shall be executed in the name of the corporation by any two of its officers, and any written instrument so executed shall be binding and effective as the action of the corporation.

q Done, Date _____
q Does Not Apply

12. The local church shall not enter into a building contract or, if using a plan for volunteer labor, incur obligations for materials until it has cash on hand, pledges payable during the construction period, and (if needed) a loan or written commitment therefore that will assure prompt payment of all contractual obligations and other accounts when due.
13. Neither the trustees nor any other members of a local church shall be required to guarantee personally any loan made to the church by any board created by or under the authority of the General Conference.
14. It is recommended that a local church not enter into a binding building contract without the contractor being properly bonded or furnishing other forms of security, such as an irrevocable letter of credit approved by the conference, district, or local church attorney.



Recommended Resource List:

From Cokesbury:

2004 Book of Discipline,

(¶2543 has the details of a 14 step process all UM churches must follow.)

“Extraordinary Money: Understanding the Church Capital Campaign” by Michael Reeves

(This book will help you understand why you may need to consider hiring a Capital Funds firm to direct your campaign.)

From UM Board of Global Ministries: 1-212-870-3865

“Architectural Resources Packet” \$15 plus postage

“Manual of Procedures for Church Building Programs”

“Church Building Space: An Architectural Planning Guide”

“Planning Guide for the District Board of Church Location and Building” \$6 plus postage

“Selecting An Architect” \$4 plus postage

You might also need: “Parsonage Planning” \$2.⁵⁰ plus postage

“Asbestos In Your Building” \$1 plus postage

“Your Church Fire” \$1 plus postage

For Church Construction Loans, Publications, and guidance:

The UM Development Fund, 1-800-862-8633 or email loans@gbgm-umc.org

From Horizons Stewardship: has two documents available for free - 1-888-298-2020

“I Think We Need to Build: The ABC’s of UM Construction”

For Demographic Studies of your community:

GBGM, Office of Research, John Southwick, (212) 870-3840

**You will have to appear before your District Board
at least twice
(three times if your project also includes purchase of land).**

Questions to Expect From The District Board of Church Location and Building

MISSION

- What is the particular mission of your local church? How does this project help you to be more faithful to your mission?

FINANCIAL QUESTIONS

- What is the estimated cost of the total project, including all 'hidden' costs such as architect's fee, engineering, furnishings, permits, landscaping, telephone, utility connections, site preparation, contingency, etc.?
- Is a reasonable financial plan in place? What is it? *{Typically you need more than 60% of the total project cost in hand as cash or reliable three year pledges toward the building fund.}*
- How will increased operational costs (insurance, utilities, program expenses, custodian) be addressed?
- What has been the financial experience of the church for the past three years? What are the financial projections for the next three years?
- To meet the cost of the new project, will property currently held by the church need to be sold? If so, what is the plan for accomplishing that sale?

LAND USE QUESTIONS

- Is the site conveniently located to serve both present and future church membership?
- How have all local building codes and zoning requirements been met? How large is the site?
- How much on-site parking will be available? What is the auto traffic pattern?
- Is there grade level accessibility to each level of the building? Can the site accommodate future expansion?
- How do future land acquisitions or sales on adjacent properties relate to this specific building program?
- Has an environmental audit been performed? Has the property ever had a gas station on it, or storage facilities for agricultural chemicals? Are there any environmental concerns on adjacent property?

FACILITY QUESTIONS

- Will the new construction/remodeling meet the present and future ministry needs of the church?
- Has the architect done a master plan "maxing out" the use of your site, so that this building phase is in harmony with future building additions? *This is to limit future problems such as, 'If we had only made the hallway one foot wider, then we could have extended the building another 50 feet... if the building were only over five more feet, we could have added an access drive to the kitchen...'*
- Is the facility easily accessible from the parking area?
- Are there adequate signs for the building and grounds? Can people easily orient themselves once inside?
- Do room sizes meet code requirements? Is there room for future growth?
- Is there adequate and appropriate space for storage?
- Are rest room facilities adequate and accessible to all?
- Is there a kitchen? How will it be used? Is it adequate for its intended purposes?
- Is there a fellowship hall? Is it of adequate size? Does it allow for proper storage of tables and chairs? Does it have a stage? Does it support the use of AV equipment?
- Is the size of the sanctuary appropriate? Seating capacity? Chairs or pews?

- How high is the chancel area? Is it fixed or flexible?
- How high is the ceiling in the sanctuary? What is the position of the choir and organ in the sanctuary?
- Is the sanctuary designed for multiple uses? Is there adequate storage in the sanctuary?
- Are rest room and nursery facilities easily available from the sanctuary?
- How wide are the corridors? Are there any dead-end corridors? How wide are the doors?
- Does the facility enable rapid and safe emergency evacuations?
- Where is the mechanical room in relation to the other rooms?
- Has the fire department and city approved the building and site plans?

CONSTRUCTION QUESTIONS

- Who is your contractor? Does the contractor have positive previous experience working with churches? How many of the contractor's church references did you personally call? Do you have a fixed maximum 'not to exceed' contract? Will volunteer labor be used?
- Does the architect have previous experience working with churches? How many of the architect's church references did you personally call? Have you visited those churches?
- What is the contractor and architect's cost estimates or final bids for the total project cost?
- Will the architect provide detailed plans and specifications? Will the architect monitor the construction project?
- Will the contractor consult with the architect during the design phase?
- How will change orders be handled by the church?

based on material written by Sam Dixon, GBOGM

Counting the Cost... A Few Words About Cost & Debt

by Bob Crossman

What ever you build, consider the TOTAL PROJECT COST. If you ask your contractor or architect, "What is this going to cost?" they will tell you the construction cost - you need to know the TOTAL project cost.

The TOTAL Project Cost includes three things:

- 1) the construction cost" to actually build the building, AND
- 2) a 10% contingency fund, AND
- 3) approximately an additional 25% for architect fees, city fees, utility hookups, fund raising costs, landscaping, parking lot, furniture, and fixtures.

Also, enter into a contract with a FIXED MAXIMUM COST. You can't afford the risk of "cost plus." To be fair to your congregation, you MUST know a fixed maximum cost" to the dollar" before they vote to break ground.

Rules of Thumb About Debt:

- 1 Building payments should not require more than 1/3 of the church's annual income from all sources including building fund or capital pledges.
- 2 A minimum of 1/2 to 2/3 of the total costs of the proposed building should be secured, either by cash in the bank or in reliable 3-year pledges.
- 3 Another way to see this: you don't want to go into permanent more than three times your previous year's annual operating budget.
- 4 A capital funds program should be held to obtain pledges toward the support of the building project. These pledges should be collectible over a 3 year period. You could do 2 years, but don't try 5 years.
- 5 Established congregations should borrow for a maximum term of 15 years; new or younger congregations should increase the 'up front' cash or pledges (see #2 above).

Another 'rule of thumb' about debt:

What ever you build, YOU will have to pay for. Of course we hope your new facilities will attract new people. But they will be new, and new believers need time to grow in their commitment to daily prayer, faithful attendance at worship, giving their time to serve the Lord, and giving their financial resources to support the church's ministry.

New people will give to your building debt, but they will NOT give sacrificially. YOU will have to pay for what you vote to build. Hopefully the new families will help to cover any 'short fall' that may occur as your current members move from town, experience a medical crises, or loss of income.

Another 'rule of thumb' Concerning Debt Service Retirement

It is human nature that you will not receive 100% of the pledge amounts. You should be able to expect 65% to 75% collected within the pledge time frame. *{Your faithful members may be transferred by their company, experience major medical crises, loss of employment, or drift away from active participation in the church.}* Therefore, do not undertake debt greater than what 65% of your pledges will be able to cover on a monthly basis.

In order to make sure you are not beyond this 65%, you may want to consider a 20 year amortization, but as funds are given make additional payments toward principal in order to pay off your loan sooner than 20 years.