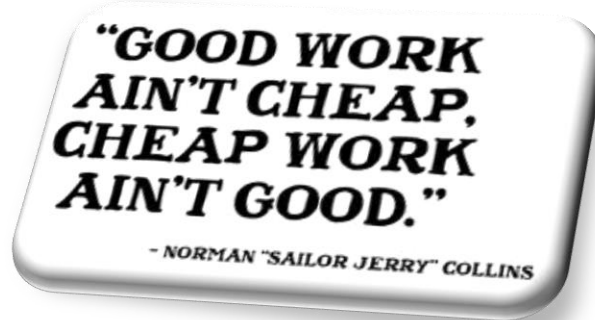# THE BEST ALWAYS COSTS LESS

By Thomas H Walker

Making an "apples to apples" comparison between the interviewing firms is challenging for most building committees. The difficulty comes in trying to sort through the variety of benefits and services offered by the competing firms. Many benefits and services can appear similar, but due to inexperience among most of the building committee members, an informed decision is difficult. This can cause the church to make a fatal error – hiring the firm with the cheapest fees. The experience that follows is a hard lesson to learn: "The bitterness of poor quality lasts long after the sweetness of low price has been forgotten."

The only way to get a quality facility for less is to hire the most qualified of personnel. This usually will cost more up front, but will always cost less in the end. A shorten version of the prior explanation is, "The Best Always Costs Less." To get the best value for every dollar spent, it will take a team of the best experts in each discipline. A quality firm will never be the cheapest; however, they will never be the most expensive. The cheapest firm will always end up being the most expensive as well as a cheaply built building. By Calculating Life Cycle Cost of systems, products, and materials over a 40-year-period, we find that the utility and maintenance expenses make up seventy-five of the total cost.

Working together as a team, instead of independently like the design/bid/build system, is why the Design/Build Delivery System is making its necessary come back. With the disconnection of these key principals (architect and builder), you create strict separations of responsibilities or gray areas that become a matter for contention and defensive posturing (finger pointing). An Attorney in the construction industry said this about the Architect /General Contractor delivery system:

The construction industry, which is so fragmented and disjointed that the typical construction project is like a dysfunctional family – James Groton, Attorney