



The Need Always Comes Before The Money

By Thomas Walker

Growth is vital to a church, and for the membership to grow there has to be adequate facility space. Typically, the impetus for a building program happens when the church has out-grown their facilities. If ignored, the lack of room will cause people to go elsewhere to worship. Irreversible damage is inevitable when the lack of adequate ministry space reaches critical mass.

Many church leaders resolve space limitations by implementing “Band-Aid” solutions. By adding more services or bringing in mobile units, you can maintain and even increase membership temporarily. The main reason for these interim fixes is that *the need always comes before the money*. Many times Church leaders have said that they need to expand but the funds are not available.

Every ministry I have personally worked with over the past 13 years experienced the same financial challenges in the beginning. Those ministries that successfully expanded their facilities did so by deciding on who would provide them with professional assistance. Understanding the different delivery systems available and the importance of church specialists will help churches in selecting the right firm. When the right firm is selected, 80% of the battle is won.

A firm that specializes in church design and construction will first ascertain the programmable space requirements, church's financial affordability, and a list of specific project goals. Tools, such as a color rendering, fly-around, master site plan, are needed to raise money. The purpose for these tools is to maintain unity among the members as well as to instill a sense of ownership in the project. A sense of proprietorship is what motivates members to give financially. Without the proper graphics to cast the vision into the hearts and minds of the church members, the action from the leadership is futile. A successful capitol campaign is the result of writing "the vision, and make *it* plain upon tables, that he [They] may run that readeth it" (Habakkuk 2:2).

Furthermore, it is Biblical to develop a plan of action, "For which of you desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke 14:28-30).

Any ministry needing to build should to seek counsel. "Where there is no counsel, purposes are disappointed; But in the multitude of counselors they are established" (Proverbs 15:22). These professionals will provide a roadmap that gives precise directions to the ministry leadership. Strategic planning identifies the size, scope, and budget for the project and its feasibility.