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ARE YOU PLANNING TO BUILD A NEW HOUSE OF WORSHIP?

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SPECIALIZING IN:
SOUND REINFORCEMENT
LIGHTING
VIDEO
AUTOMATION
SET BUILDING
ARCHITECTURAL
MECHANICAL
ELECTRICAL

DO YOU NEED AN AUDIOLOGIST OR AN ACOUSTICIAN?

To begin, let me start with the short version and then get into the more detailed explanation. Think to a time a few months or a couple of years after you have moved into your new House of Worship. What are the things going through your mind in this future moment? What are the, "I wish we would have done this different when we built" scenarios playing in your future mind's eye? I can tell you it's not the color of the paint, or the shade of the carpet, as in a short time, colors and shades have a tendency to grow on most people. The most troubling things are actually the things you can't see. Such as clean power sources, vertical instead of horizontal lighting and probably the most important of all in a House of Worship – the acoustics. Worship is both a visual and audible experience and you need to be sure and maximize the ability for your parishioners to enjoy both.

So in short, it is important to have a few specialists on hand and the contractual relationship with these specialists needs to be a direct contract with you or your designated contract manager – not as a sub-consultant to the Architect. Architects almost always sacrifice function for form. You want to make sure everyone seated in the Sanctuary has a clear view of every portion of the Worship Service and a clear sound from your Sound Reinforcement (PA) system. These items are of the utmost importance; yet require a variety of specialists to help insure everything is just right. The answer to the first question – Audiologist – probably not – Acoustician – definitely. But, there is more to the process.

ARE YOU OVERWHELMED?

I have worked on many very complex and sophisticated building projects including research and development facilities for Duke University, major pharmaceutical companies like Glaxo-Wellcome as well as government facilities for the National Institute for Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These projects are among the most difficult contracting environments imaginable. On a few of these contracts, I witnessed contracting firms go bankrupt and all manner of adverse personal relationships develop. But, there are two things most bad projects have in common – the finished product is less than what the Owner wanted and cost more than anticipated.

There are several reasons why a Building Owner may suffer in the contracting realm. Too much control given to the Architect or General Contractor, the Owner not construction savvy and an unclear vision of the end result by too many people in the loop are just a few worth mentioning. Actually the entire low bidder process can be circumspect if you think about what is entailed in the process.

As a Building Owner, whether you are a Pastor, Church Board Member or some other individual representing your Church, you are probably going to need more help than you realize. I hope the following will help you to getting on the right track.

First and foremost, you must remember that the undertaking of building a new Church is not that different than any other financial transaction you get involved with on a



daily basis except on a larger scale. As a native of Detroit, Michigan, I tend to make a lot of analogies with automobiles. When purchasing a car, a buyer's first criterion is usually color. No one goes onto a car lot and says, "I want a car with dual air bags, steel reinforced doors, an efficient yet powerful engine and I don't care what it looks like." However, a House of Worship needs to have those things, which are not seen, to function well.

The aforementioned example citing horizontal lights in lieu of vertical lighting is an excellent example. Let's say you intend to have retractable screens and LCD projectors to assist in your Worship Service. Unless, your Sanctuary uses directional lighting and accent lighting in the appropriate manner, your LCD projectors won't work as desired unless the room lighting level is darkened or at least dimmed. Such lighting fixtures will not be at the top of an Architect's list for illuminating his prized room. This is what I mean by an Architect almost always sacrificing function for form.

COMPROMISES THAT DON'T COMPROMISE

You are paying for what you want and you should expect to get what you want in the end. Unfortunately, in most cases you are working within the confines of a very strict budget. These confines will force you to make compromises.

Not all compromises should be considered bad. Occasionally an alternative method is as good or better than what is prescribed by the Architect or Engineer. Designers don't usually have any idea what the nuts and bolts of a project are worth. They just know the project should cost you about \$200.00 per square foot. Back when the Design-Build concept was new, Building contractors would hire Architects to draw things the way they wanted to build them because they knew what means and methods were less expensive and thus giving them a decided cost advantage over traditional building ideology. Even in this instance, the Building Owner was not afforded to have his vision brought to life. The only difference was the building was at least more affordable.

As an Architecturally trained Engineer, with extensive contracting experience, we want to assist you in helping define the roles of your building team. We want to make sure your General Contractor, Mechanical Contractor, Electrical Contractor, Acoustical Consultant, Structural Engineer and everyone else on your building team all help to see your vision come to fruition. Every specialist in the building process has something to offer and in the struggles of building design and construction, it is too easy for crucial elements to be overlooked and the team members to lose their focus.

As a Consultant, we can offer you the experience and expertise needed to help insure your new Church facilities are functional as well as beautiful. We can insure your vision is kept in sight at all times. We do not employ any special process, as there is no quick fix to correctly building a house of worship. We do, however listen to everyone's concerns, attend every meeting with all involved parties, and we never lose our focus. We are technically qualified to assist you in the decision making process especially when faced with having to decide on extra charges or make compromises. We know from years of experience not every compromise has to be compromising. Of course, this experience is available to you to keep your project on budget and on schedule and most important - we will keep your construction team on focus. After all, this isn't just another construction project but a House of Worship.



FORM VERSUS FUNCTION

I recall a Chevy Chase movie from several years ago titled “the Deal of the Century”. In this comedy, a large Defense Contractor had built a prototype un-manned aircraft. The night before the debut demonstration before many defense department officials, the Contractor’s people washed the unit. Unfortunately during the demonstration, the unit malfunctioned terribly and the culprit was “water had got into the electronics” during the aforementioned cleaning. The President of the company asked his technical people, “Water – Have you ever heard of rain?”

Too often form wins out over function - Like the beautiful house without enough closet space, or the fancy car without a cup holder, or my personal favorite, the beautifully tailored pants with no pockets. As previously stated, Worship is both a visual and audible experience. You need to maximize the capability for your parishioners to enjoy both without having to compromise the quality of your Worship Services. This is the function of a Church and the form of the building should be secondary to this requirement - Even if it rains.

If you’re planning on building a new House of Worship, or just considering upgrading or renovating your existing facility, we will be happy to assist you in this venture. Now is the time to get us involved as our extensive contracting experience can be of great value from the beginning until the end. We can and will assist you in preparing budgets, helping define goals for your building fund drives, helping develop a realistic construction schedule and all of those other items that are part of the pre-construction process. We hope to hear from you soon.

Respectfully Submitted For Your Edification,

By Another One of God’s Children,

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