

A Building Program: Now or Later?



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With the economy in the pits, many churches that were planning on a church building program are holding up. They are delaying their building programs. There are many reasons stated for doing so. Among these are:

- We want to wait and see what happens with the economy.
- Our leadership is scared to move ahead with a project that will require our congregation to come up with more money at this time.
- A couple of our people have lost their jobs.
- It's hard enough conducting a building program in good times, let alone in bad times.

There is no question that prudence needs to be taken into consideration with the current economic situation. But, prudence does not mean staying in a permanent state of paralysis, not doing anything. Being prudent means moving ahead wisely and carefully, taking all factors into consideration, and moving ahead with God's work in a positive, decisive manner.

There are a couple of things churches that are holding up on their building programs need to consider:

1. Most churches grow in attendance during difficult times. So, any church contemplating a building program prior to the economic downturn undoubtedly is needing additional space now. Any additional growth will put a strain on already inadequate facilities. And one thing about recessions, depressions, etc. is that God's work never stops or is impacted by economic conditions. Turning away unchurched, unsaved people because of inadequate facilities is akin to "no more room at the inn".

2. Warren Buffett says that when other people are getting out of the stock market, that is when he is getting in. At this point in time in the construction industry, now is the best time to build something. Construction activity is hitting an all time low, so it will be a buyers market for a while; i.e., better values will be out there for the church dollar invested.

Another consideration is that church building programs take a considerable amount of time to get ready for construction. So, if a church is just getting started with a building program, it will take a year or more just to get to the construction phase. Most economists are predicting a turnaround in the economy in the 3rd or 4th quarter of 2009. Churches that get started now will be in a prime position to take advantage of being in on the beginning upturn of the economy, which is where most of agree would be a good place to be.

Though a few have, all churches have not stopped plans for starting and completing their building programs. FMI, a reporting agency for construction put in place activity, is predicting more than \$7 Billion dollars of church facilities will be built in 2009. This is about \$1.5 Billion less than was built in 2007 and 2008. But, there is still a lot of construction going on with churches.

What does this mean for your church? It simply means you are not the Lone Ranger out there if you need to build.

