

## *Significant Trends In Church Design And Construction*



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Probably the most significant trend we are seeing is the return to a higher quality building. A few years ago we saw a trend toward a less quality building. Churches were constructed with everything from wood pole structures and vinyl siding to all steel buildings that looked more like warehouses than places of worship. While these buildings certainly served the purpose and ministry took place, many churches have discovered that cheaper is not always cheaper. Life cycle costing suggests that in a church structure, the initial cost for design and construction only accounts for approximately 11% of the total cost of the structure over its 40-year life cycle. So, consequently, even though a particular type of building might save you some money in construction, it can cost you money in utilities, maintenance, etc. over the long run. This is especially true when we consider "seven day a week" churches. For instance, having high quality windows and doors, the proper amount of insulation and specific zoning of heating and air conditioning can save thousands of dollars a year in a church that is in use seven days a week.

As for the forward thinkers, we are beginning to see an interest in, for lack of a better term, Christian Gated Communities. We are beginning to see a few churches discuss purchasing hundreds of acres with the intent of building a Christian Community with retail centers, schools, senior adult housing, and private homes as well as the church facilities. It is going to be interesting over the next decade to see if this initial interest actually becomes a trend and the impact this trend could have on the Christian community.

In a similar shift, it was not many years ago that the primary purpose of the church was the Spiritual care of its members. About 10 to 15 years ago we saw a large influx of Christian Counseling and consequently, many churches added Christian Counseling centers to their facilities. Churches were now responsible for both spiritual and emotional care. In the past few years, people, searching for a place to belong, have turned to the church once again. In order to meet their social needs many churches have responded by adding sports complexes, daycare centers, adult daycare etc., thereby birthing the emergence of the "seven day a week" church.