

BIM Technology Replacing Computer-Aided Design



*By
Earl Myler
President/C.E.O.*

Buildings are seldom constructed without having some sort of design issues, especially when using the traditional drafting process. And, these design issues cause commercial projects, including churches, to run over budget and be completed behind schedule. To validate this, a 2008 survey from the American Institute of Architects found that 33% of projects are completed behind schedule and over budget. These are pretty dramatic figures when most churches can barely afford to finance what they need to build, let alone come up with more money when projects go over budget. So, what is being done about this problem?

Well, a new method of drafting has come on the scene. The technology, known as building information modeling, or BIM, represents the biggest change in the design and construction field since the advent in the late 1980's of computer-aided design, or CAD. While CAD brought drafting processes into computers, BIM will mesh building models from architects, engineers, and subcontractors into integrated information about the multi-faceted building parts and systems, which can be then be synchronized and checked for design conflicts or errors. Where most drawings are completed in a two-dimensional setting, BIM will incorporate 3-D modeling. Supporters of BIM state that by detecting design discrepancies before construction, architects and designers have a better chance of completing the projects on time and on budget.

Though the origins of building information modeling have existed for most of the past decade, more and more architects and design-builders are beginning to embrace the BIM technology. A recent study from McGraw Hill Construction, a research firm, forecasts that in 2009 approximately 45% of architects and design-builders will be employing BIM on 60% of their projects, up from 35% in 2008.

For those churches contemplating building programs, it may cost a little more to go with the BIM technology, but it may also save you several thousands of dollars in budget overruns.

