

Why Do Seemingly Good Churches Crash in Building Programs?



By
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This is a good question. It is comparable to the question of "why do seemingly good pilots crash?" They have plenty of experience, attend recurrent training, have plenty of time in the type of airplane they are flying and have no record of prior incidents or accidents. They are not bravado or known as habitual risk takers.

So why do they take off one day and make a mistake that results in a fatal airplane accident?

I pondered this after hearing of a fatal accident in Hot Springs, Arkansas. It seems a pilot flying single-pilot Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) crashed after executing a missed approach to the Hot Springs airfield. He failed to clear a nearby mountain by a mere 50 feet. By reading the National Transportation Board preliminary report, it is tragically apparent that the approach to the airfield was not destined to end well. The pilot flew above the final approach fix more than 700 feet higher than the published Minimum Descent Altitude, and he chased the localizer needle and failed to execute the missed approach procedure. Many factors about the flight may never be known. What was the pilot's state of mind? Was he fatigued or stressed? Was fuel status a distraction? Was something else happening to the plane? Did he succumb to special disorientation in Instrument conditions?

There are those of you who might read the NTSB report and say "Well, he obviously made a series of poor decisions. I wouldn't make those mistakes if I were flying."

There is danger in that type of thinking. Anytime you or I start buying stock in "it can't happen to me," we become susceptible to the same mindset that leads pilots to trouble. We begin to make assumptions, which leads to complacency, which then creates an environment ripe for mistakes. The bottom line is that it "can happen to you or me".

Our advice to church building committees is the same for pilots, slow down. Take time to plan properly. Take time to determine what you can safely afford. Take time to investigate the right building delivery system for your church. Consider a "second pilot" or consultant that knows how to plan properly and knows what the different building delivery systems have to offer. Reduce your risks of failing to accomplish your goals.

The bottom line is that high quality training for pilots and your church committee is the most important insurance you can buy. If you have diligently trained for knowing what to expect in a building program and you learn how to identify and manage the risks you will be facing, there is less chance the workload will build up on you, resulting in you getting behind the eight ball and making a fatal mistake for your congregation. Proper training and education is your edge for having a successful building program. Unfortunately, this is the part that most church building committees skip. And, unfortunately this is the reason many churches fail in their building program. They are simply not educated and prepared to deal with the emergency situations that will invariably come up in building programs.