

When You Can't Afford To Build



By

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Regardless of how bad a church might need to build, there are times when a church just isn't financially ready to undertake a building program. If that is the case, what can a church do to try and continue to grow while they are raising funds for their much-needed building program. There are actually several things a congregation can do to continue to grow their attendance while waiting to build.

Perhaps the most obvious way to increase worship attendance is by adding an additional Worship Service. If the church is currently in a one worship format, they might add a second morning service. Many churches have had great success in what is often called a "double, single" format. This means that the church has two-worship service and one Sunday school hour. In most cases the Sunday school hour is sandwiched between the worship services.

If Sunday School space is also crowded to the point of stunting growth a second Sunday School hour can be added. In this "double, double" format a Sunday School hour is usually taking place at the same time a worship service is in session. The following hour those who were attending worship service go to Sunday school and vice versa. In this scenario, parking usually becomes the limiting factor to growth. There are other churches that have used a "double, double" format of Worship followed by Sunday school and then repeating Worship and Sunday school. While this may cause the Sunday morning services to carry over into the early afternoon it does alleviate some of the parking issues and it can also be a plus with younger families with small children because it allows the children to sleep in a little later on Sunday morning and still have time to catch the second service.

If a church already has multiple Worship Services on Sunday morning, they might try adding another Worship Service at an alternative time. Some churches have had success with a Sunday afternoon Worship Service. One church I know of promotes their 2pm Sunday afternoon service as a special service for families with small children. The family gets to sleep in on Sunday morning. They have plenty of time to get ready for church, go out and have a late Sunday morning brunch at their favorite restaurant and then head off to church. It has become one of this church's favorite services.

Other churches are finding success in Saturday evening contemporary services. What was once reserved for Catholic Mass is becoming extremely popular with many Protestant congregations. These Saturday evening contemporary services are becoming quite popular with the younger generation. Attending service on Saturday evening leaves Sunday open for family gathering such as a day on the lake or a family day at the park.

If, of course, a church has tried every possible solution and they are still maxed out to the point that they are impeding their growth, they can always seek out a school or other large area to rent so as to allow for growth. Many large churches have begun in schools, college auditoriums, movie theaters, hotel banquet room and even convention centers. While renting a space can sometimes be a logistical nightmare it can also be a great avenue for growth.

Whatever direction a church chooses in making room for growth while they are trying to raise funds for a building program, the mandate is clear. Nowhere in the Great Commission does it tell us that as soon as we have filled our buildings we can rest. Whether we are out of space or not, the Gospel must still be preached and people still need to be baptized and discipled.

How about you, have you overcome an obstacle to growth in a unique way? If so, send us your story to hankins@myler.com. so we can share it with your Brothers and Sisters in ministry.