

7

Ways to Protect Your Ministry before Building



COSCO & ASSOCIATES, INC.
DESIGN • CONSTRUCTION • FINANCING

**Designing for His Kingdom
Building for the Master**

7 Ways to Protect Your Ministry before Building

01

Set Your Expectations Correctly

There is no such thing as a perfect set of plans or a construction project without problems. What matters is how you and your professionals handle the challenges that make the difference. When a crisis hits, we must respond quickly, generously, and gently.

This process can be an emotional roller coaster with highs and lows. You may not even like the process at times. Understand that building programs usually cost more than you desire and take longer than you would like. Remember, this is a process of give and take, not an event. You will be constantly making decisions to maximize the ministry return on your investment.

You must also make an honest assessment of where you really are. Assess and study your growth patterns. Please commit to counting heads, not eyeballs. Ask your team members: "Is our ministry healthy and balanced?" If not, "Where is it out of balance?" Discover your needs, not just wants and wishes.

We encourage you to study the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Haggai. You will find incredible insight from God in regard to what you can expect during a building program. Some of the wisdom from these books include:

- how to prepare
- how to celebrate victories
- what not to do that will stop the program
- how to deal with resistance from the enemy inside the church and outside the church
- how to stay focused on God's vision and trust Him
- how to give Him all the glory when the facility is complete

The bottom line is that you need to get your house in order. Warning: any problem that exists in your ministry - people, leadership, or team unity - will be magnified several times during a building program.

Expect the enemy to show up. Anytime you step out to do something great for God, the enemy will rear his head. Remember, God loves you, Jesus is Lord, and we win!

02

Prepare Spiritually

The first thing God's people did when they returned to a desolate Jerusalem after 70 years of Babylonian captivity was re-establish the sacrifices and Festival of Booths. Simply put, they got back to the basics of spiritual discipline as we must do: worship, reading the Bible, prayer, fasting, and fellowship. As we learn in Ephesians 5:18-21, we must walk in the Spirit with a worshipful, thankful, submissive, and prayerful heart.

We recommend applying the following principles attained from "Who Moved My Pulpit" by Thom Rainer.

Stop and Pray.

- When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)
- Pray for God's wisdom. You are facing a spiritual battle with critics and naysayers. You are asking God to lead you through this unknown future. (James 1:5)
- Pray for God's courage. There will be days when you wonder if it is worth it. Change can be difficult. (2 Timothy 1:7)
- Pray for God's strength. (Isaiah 40:29-31).

Leading your church through a building program without prayer will not work, nor is it very smart. "I have never seen successful and sustaining change take place in a church without prayer. Never. Not once." Thom Rainer, "Who Moved My Pulpit".

You must remember what got you to the point of needing to build. As leaders, you must put on the full armor of God daily. Consecrate yourself to a continual dependency upon the Holy Spirit. In addition, stay outwardly focused. Remember, the purpose of the church is to "go and make disciples." (Matthew 28:19)

In addition, become a student of healthy church growth. There are great resources available to help you discover how to create a healthy, balanced ministry.

Shabbat. Cease. Stop. Don't forget to take a Sabbath yourself. You must revive, restore, and recharge yourself. "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10) Take time to enjoy life and delight in the Lord. Do not neglect your family. Do not neglect your health. Appreciate the journey. Relax - it's God's work. God's work, done God's way, never lacks God's blessing.

Do not forget that your ministry also involves a relationship with your professionals. Develop a culture of trust and transparency with your designer / builder. Additionally, you will have the opportunity to minister to numerous people who will be a part of your project, that may otherwise never step foot into your church. Love on the workers, share the gospel, and watch them get saved or grow in their faith. The end result will be that they will work harder for you, and finish strong.

03

Prioritize Your Ministry Needs

This begins by developing a Dynamic Strategic Master Plan. It is dynamic, because it must be ever changing and flexible. It is strategic because it informs that we are moving in a specific direction. It is a plan indicating that we are going to be a wise steward of what the Lord has given us. “Motivation, momentum, and morale are often shaped by clear vision and direction.” –Rainer. This is one of the most important parts of the project and the least expensive. Take your time and get this correct.

Your designer must first understand your ministry, and then wrap the building around it, rather than trying to fit your ministry into a building. We recommend you begin this process by meeting with each ministry team to fully understand the needs for their area of ministry. Begin by understanding the good, the bad, and the ugly. Discuss where each particular area of ministry is strong, where it is weak, and what issues exist. The meetings should include brainstorming everything you think are essentials to grow the ministry. Then prioritize those needs in each ministry by listing them in order.

Always keep your ministry in mind. As Winston Churchill said, “We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us.”

After this, the leadership team should prioritize the essentials of the entire ministry. Take the various ministry needs and determine what is most important to provide a healthy ministry. Identify what part of your ministry is most out of balance. This will likely be the area that is most hindering your growth.

Please don't forget to consider first impressions: the website, parking, welcome and greeting, preschool and children ministries, youth ministry, worship quality, preaching the Word, connecting commons space, small group space, tithe and offering, concluding the service, bathrooms, signage, and outreach. Consider how each of these areas communicates to a guest who is seeing them for the first time.

Ensure that executing your planned project will protect your ministry during the process of construction. Protect your people from the hazards of construction in every way possible. Sure there will be inconveniences; however, make sure that the construction sequence will not destroy your ministry in the process of building.

04

Prepare Financially

The worst thing you could do is take on so much debt, that you put your ministry in a financial quandary. We recommend studying your financials, with the understanding that you cannot take on so much debt, that it will prevent you from being able to do ministry effectively.

Determine how much discretionary income you might direct to debt service. You need to build the debt service into your current operating budget and pay yourself that amount (savings) every month. This will do several things:

- increase your cash into the project
- reduce your total principle of debt
- show you and your team that you can handle that debt service and not affect ministry
- allow everything you raise to go against the loan principle
- afford you better lender terms and conditions because you demonstrated your ability to handle the loan.

05

Build Excellent Teams

(This process comes from “Who Moved My Pulpit” by Thom Rainer)

Build an eager coalition for the church project.

This is the place where most leaders fail. It takes a lot of time and patience to get a team of key people to buy in to the vision. These people need to have good chemistry with you, hold key positions in the church, along with the influence and expertise to back your vision.

First, the process is usually informal. Perhaps meet with key people over a meal, coffee, or in the office, where the leader can present the idea and spend time listening and receiving input from the key person.

Second, the process is individual. This step is usually a one-on-one meeting to ensure clear communication.

Third, the process can be lengthy. The bigger the change and project, the more time it may take to get complete understanding and buy in. Typically, short-term leaders take more time to build the coalition than longer-term leaders.

Keep your building team small. If you have more than 5 - 7 people on your decision making team, you will have a lot of prolonged discussions and be frustrated by the inability to make decisions quickly. These leaders must have a desire to understand the forward ministry of the church. It is not just having a knowledge of design, construction, or financing. You are hiring a professional with expertise in church design and construction that exhibit a track record of integrity. Choose individuals that are involved in the church body to be on your team: that can understand, communicate, and live out the vision.

06

Be A Leader of Hope and Vision

In spite of all the critics and multiple issues in the church, you must be the voice of constant vision and hope. We have never seen a successful building program where the lead pastor was not sold out to the vision and had confidence that God was leading them in that direction.

Ps. 38:15, Ps. 62:5, Ps 147:11, Lam. 3:24, Acts 26:6, 2 Cor 3:12, Heb 10:23

A healthy church has a hopeful and visionary pastor!

Three traits of leaders who embody hope:

- 1.They read the Bible daily.
- 2.They choose to communicate hope in all communications.
- 3.They look for low-hanging fruit. Find small wins to build momentum and celebrate the victories.

(Excerpt “Who Moved My Pulpit” Thom Rainer)

07

Work Hard to Communicate with your church

We encourage you to develop momentum along the way by sharing (often) the top three things you are excited about. If possible, attempt to communicate this on a regular basis – perhaps monthly. This could be carried out with a testimony from a layperson and/or staff member who have influence and respect from the congregation.

Examples:

- *“I’m thrilled that our committee is taking the time to study our financial positions and make sure we are being good stewards of resources.”*
- *“I’m excited that our leadership team is working diligently to take care of our young families’ needs, by looking at ways to give them the best tool for their ministry.”*
- *“I’m confident that our representatives are exploring all ways to make accessibility for our senior saints a priority.”*

These testimonies should be authentic and passionate.

Do not present information to the congregation until you are 100% sure you are moving in that direction. Your team must prevent information leaks such as: possible costs, space allocation, or renderings of the building. Share dossiers only when your team is convinced of the plan and unified on the direction. This will save many headaches and a lot of confusion.

As you develop the next phase site and floor plans, renderings, and budgets, make sure to put the vision in front of the people in a variety of ways. Share in small group spaces. Place pictures in high traffic areas of the campus. Post material on the website and social media. Do not forget to communicate to the community that we are building for those yet to come.

Recommended Books:

1. "Good to Great" – Jim Collins
2. "Leading on Empty" – Wayne Cordeiro
3. "Simple Church" – Eric Geiger
4. "The Advantage" – Patrick Lencioni
5. "Change Your Space, Change Your Culture" – Rex Miller
6. "The Unstuck Church" – Tony Morgan
7. "Autopsy of a Deceased Church" – Thom Rainer
8. "I am a Church Member" - Thom Rainer
9. "Who Moved My Pulpit" – Thom Rainer
10. "Replenish" – Lance Witt

About COSCO & Associates, Inc.



Designing for His Kingdom Building for the Master

COSCO & Associates is a complete design/build company dedicated to the ministry of providing churches with quality architecture, engineering, fundraising, financial and construction services at a guaranteed fixed price to facilitate the needs of the church at the best value possible. Since 1969, our professional staff has completed over 1,000 projects. Because we have a complete support team, we are able to do any project. Our staff are professionally trained and highly experienced with one common objective: **To protect the ministry and give the church a great building experience!** We are dedicated to the singular ministry of helping the Body of Christ fulfill the Master's Great Commission.

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