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TPC Architects, Inc.

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Planting In a Time of Famine

Genesis 26:1-5 tells the story of Isaac, who found himself in tough circumstances. As with his father Abraham (Gen. 12:10) there was famine in the land. Although God instructed Abraham the patriarch to head for Egypt for sustenance, He told Isaac to stay put. In Genesis 25:12 it states that that Isaac "planted crops in that land and *the same year* reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him."

Isn't that interesting? Isaac could have left, and was inclined to do so, but God said to stay and to invest in the future there. It must have seemed ridiculous to him and to his neighbors to plow the fields, watching the dust fly, right in the midst of the famine. But God had him preparing for a future blessing.

What about your church? Are you in the midst of a famine? Has God given you any options or direction to uproot or change your ministry? If not perhaps He is encouraging you to stay where you are and invest in His future for you. Here at TPC Architects we are watching some churches "plant in a time of famine" through wise planning and a determined faith. God is at work! Nothing will stop him from building his church!

MULTI-USE SPACE

Not that long ago most church assembly spaces had fixed seats, and in many cases sloped floors. The "Fellowship Hall", "Social Hall" or "Parish Center" was the venue for all non-worship as well as community activates. If a church constructed a gymnasium it was the automatic venue for "youth concerts". Public schools, especially elementary and middle schools commonly have "multi-purpose rooms" designed for similar purposes. What about today's church?

Our current economy underscores the need for churches to maximize the use of their facilities. In previous TPC newsletters we've emphasized the importance of keeping ministry planning, facility planning, and financial planning in sync. A church must not build what they don't need, nor spend more than is necessary or than they can afford. And so the design of space that can serve more than one ministry function should be seriously considered.

The community use of church facilities is also on the rise, which is a good thing! Integrating the needs of the community, from scouting programs to emergency response training to educational seminars to kid's festivals, as well as recreational leagues is appropriate for many churches. We are even seeing partnerships between city and county government organizations and the church in developing joint use facilities. While this may not be common, the motive is present. Other organizations such as the *Community & Sports*

Recession Perspective

The Great Recession is trying the optimism of many Americans, but the mayor of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., isn't one of them. Mayor Tom Leighton says, "I think most of the shops are holding their own." The new \$28 million James F. Conahan Intermodal Transportation Center is expected to help drive the local economy. Other downtown projects are also underway. "When businesses are opening up and development is taking place during a recession, that is a sign of a town running in the right direction," Leighton says. Pointing to each of the downtown projects built over the course of his six-year tenure as mayor, Leighton says, "You add up all those projects, that's jobs and that's investment during a tough time."

'Kind of sounds like "planting in a time of famine", doesn't it? (DMK)

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Development Council (CSDC) <http://www.csdouncil.org/> promote the community use of religious facilities.

Multi-use design is not limited to the assembly room of a church. Sure, we are encouraged to use these large gathering spaces for more than fixed seating venues, but your multi-use thinking should begin with site entrance, parking lot layout, lighting, and overall image. Without compromising your church's sacred character you can present a persona to your community that invites them to join you, even catering to their needs.

FIGHTING BLAND DESIGN



They began by planting a cross on their site as a symbol of their purpose. A common perception is that multi-use space design is inherently bland and cost-driven. Certainly economy is a part of the formula, but it need not subtract from good architecture. Consider **Rolling Hills Christian Church** in El Dorado Hills. Their need was for a Phase 1 worship facility to seat 500 to 600 people in a flexible, community friendly, multi-use building.

The building's design integrates a very functional rectangular multi-use room into a soft, inviting, community center style package. While there is no mistaking its purpose as a place of worship, its posture is at the community level. Parents find a friendly teaching environment for their children, youth have a blast with indoor basketball and other activities, and the worship environment is acoustically correct and visually alive.



