

Church Executive

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IT'S ALL ABOUT ALIGNMENT

A *unified* approach to church building & capital stewardship just makes sense

Presented by:

Master's Plan Church Design & Construction &
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Nobody wins.

But thinking differently — by coordinating the design and capital fundraising efforts — can pay big dividends, not just in terms of project efficiency and cost containment, but for a pastor's peace of mind.

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No matter what type of construction project a church is planning — from renovation to expansion, or even a new facility — it will take a great deal of team players doing their part to provide a win for the church. There will likely be a lender, a capital campaign partner, an architectural team, your staff and ministry leaders, a team of engineers, an AVL integrator, a builder, furnishing vendors, security integrators, and many others.

That's a lot of moving pieces! So ... who's the "coach"?

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A 3-STEP PROCESS FOR IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL CHURCH BUILDING PLAN 8

As a pastor, the financial health of your church is always a priority in your future plans. You might even be facing a significant building project, which often creates a sense of uncertainty.

Those approaching this for the first time (or the first time in a long time) can get lost in the sheer enormity of such a project.

Countless church leaders have found themselves in the same position, wondering, *Where do I start?*

Before you ever break ground, you need to assess your church's needs and create a professional team to come alongside you during this momentous process.

By Chuck Klein

IT'S ALL ABOUT ALIGNMENT

By RaeAnn Slaybaugh

We've all heard of church building projects that go like this: hire an architect, design a building. Find out the building you want is more than your church can afford. Hire a capital stewardship consultant to raise the difference. Find out the money can't be raised.

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But thinking differently — by *coordinating* the design and capital fundraising efforts — can pay big dividends, not just in terms of project efficiency and cost containment, but for a pastor's peace of mind.

Two church executives who know this firsthand are Pastor Rod MacIlvaine of Grace Community Church (GCC) in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, and Pastor Rick Lineberger of First Baptist Church in Glen Rose, Texas. For both of them, it all started when they enlisted the help of Rodney James, a former pastor who's now president and founder of Master's Plan Church Design & Construction in Tulsa, Oklahoma. [www.mpchurchdesignbuild.com]

James was recommended to MacIlvaine by a respected non-profit stewardship consultant in the congregation. GCC's \$3.5-million building project was the third undertaking of its kind, and MacIlvaine was previously involved in two others at different churches as an elder and staff member.

For Lineberger's part, he reached out to James after he and the long-range planning committee at his church spent a year identifying the most pressing needs: specifically, additional Sunday School and education space, as well as a 'grand connect room' to replace the church's small foyer. After interviewing three different architects and a few design-build firms as well, they decided that the latter approach made the most sense for their project.

While reliable recommendations and a steep vetting process obviously factored into their selection of a building partner, both MacIlvaine and Lineberger said their ability to see a little bit of themselves in the former pastor was key.

During James' time in church leadership, he oversaw three major building projects. This informed his design expertise, of course; it also enabled him to be uniquely transparent, open and able to share relevant, credible examples of problem-solving with potential church clients.

At one church, for instance, a full evaluation of the client's needs (and all its current facilities) resulted in a complete change of course. The church had already engaged another builder and planned to build 50,000 square feet of additional space. Instead, James and his team came in, built 32,000 square feet of new space, renovated 50,000 square feet of existing space and saved the church \$6.5 million.

"That built confidence, for me, in [James'] ability not only to understand our needs, but to understand ministry at the same time," Lineberger said. "He talked about the present need but also helped evaluate and maximize our existing space. To me, that was really a plus."

James acknowledges that his own "pastor side" is instrumental in helping church leaders effectively cast the project vision. "You don't show [the congregation] pictures of something you can't afford," he cautioned. "I come in and say, 'Let's make sure that we design this facility, first and foremost, so that it facilitates your ministry. And let's make sure you're 99% certain you're giving the congregation the right information when you stand in front of them.'"

"Having people with you who clearly exude a warm and infectious walk with Christ is a big deal, and [Klein] and [James] do that. The technical proficiency is there; that goes without saying.

But knowing their hearts makes me feel like we're on the same page."

— Pastor Rod MacIlvaine

We've got your (quarter)back

While a major building project is a blessing, it's also a challenge. The potential for a pastor to become overwhelmed is real.

This was certainly true for Lineberger.

"Unless you've got an administrator who's going to handle the project, the pastor is going to be inundated," he said. "It's going to take away from study time, from sermon preparation, from ministry."

MacIlvaine, too, was wary of being swamped by his church's building project, based on prior experience. On four separate occasions, he'd taken a more traditional, decentralized approach.

"I've been pastor of this church for 25 years, and one of the reasons why I resisted doing another stewardship campaign was because of the headache between the fundraising process and the design process," he recalled.

So, the ability to have the builder act as a sort of 'quarterback' for the project was, understandably, very attractive for both pastors. James was able to take a 20,000-foot view of the process and how all the pieces fit together. From that, he developed and followed a game plan from beginning to end.

And what's essential ➤





A rendering for the new facility at First Baptist Church in Glen Rose, Texas, and the church's capital campaign logo: "Forward for those yet to come"

to any game plan's success? The right partners — from subcontractors to (key and critical) capital fundraising expertise.

Minding momentum, building strategy

To this end, Chuck Klein, the president and principle owner at Impact Stewardship Resources, Inc., [www.impactstewardship.com] is a crucial link in the chain — not only for MacIlvaine and Lineberger, in this instance, but for a variety of other pastors as well.

"In terms of a sports analogy, you're thinking about going on offense or defense — being proactive or reactive," Klein explained. "Churches can get real reactionary when it comes to capital fundraising. If they slow the process or put the project on hold for a few years based on their fundraising capacity or performance, that slows momentum."

This momentum curve is something Klein and James pay very close attention to, collaboratively. As James explains, the curve usually starts well before he and the pastor have their first conversation, with the identification of the need to expand, remodel or build new. But that momentum curve inevitably starts to swing.

"We want to catch it right at the top, before it crests, to keep it on the upward slope," he said. "When Chuck and I are working together in this process, we don't allow that to happen because it's pretty steep on the other side. Going back uphill again is extremely difficult for pastors."

To illustrate, James revisits the quarterback analogy.

"If the pastor is a running back, Chuck and I call the play. We're putting the ball in the pastor's hands at the right time, at the right place, for him to get through the hole. We organize the people around him to block in the right way so he can score, because we want him to have a win."

Lineberger, for one, considers his church's building project a decided victory. He credits the coordinated approach — combining the building and capital fundraising processes — with ensuring he was never "caught flat-footed" or "blindsided" along the way.

He also said it shortened the process, which generated bottom-line cost savings.

For MacIlvaine, the turnkey element of this collaborative approach was most attractive. "It's great to work with people who already have a relationship with each other," he said.

Though many of the logistics of this approach might be turnkey, every other element is decidedly customized. That's because James and Klein share a critical mindset: when it comes to church building and fundraising, one size does *not* fit all.

This became especially evident for MacIlvaine when determining fundraising capacity. At the helm of his first capital campaign in nearly two decades, he was intent on raising 100% of the building costs, at first. James and Klein advised him this was a rarity in the current climate and that most churches required two campaigns. MacIlvaine pushed back. He called a dozen pastors around the country and asked about their experiences.

"I look at [James and Klein] as servant leaders. Despite their vast experience, neither came across like they knew it all and we needed to just follow; they were more than willing to customize the plan to fit our church."

— Pastor Rick Lineberger

"Every pastor except one told me, 'Yes, we realized that we would maybe raise two-thirds in the first campaign — in some cases, only half — which would necessitate a second stewardship campaign,'" he recalled.

With a clear path forward, James and Klein were able to offer MacIlvaine very specific ideas on how to seamlessly transition from the first stewardship campaign to the second one. As James and Klein explain, a big part of getting that transition right is understanding "who" the church is first.

For example, is the church committee-driven? Team-driven? If so, the solutions can, in effect, be crowdsourced from all team members to build the most comprehensive and relevant strategy possible.

On the other hand, if an entire game plan is being built on the pastor's vision alone, James cautions that there are likely a lot of pain points not being exposed. "If we can uncover those, we can marry our processes and have a successful building project," he said.

"We have to protect [pastors'] bandwidth"

For James and Klein, a pastor's need to focus on spiritual leadership and ministry, not project management, is a driving force behind their integrated approach.



"We have to protect their bandwidth; they didn't go to seminary to be fundraisers or builders," Klein pointed out. "So, if Rodney and I come in and take that off of them — while using their influence in the areas in which they do need to be involved — they don't feel overwhelmed."

James agreed and cited a few alternate scenarios.

"If Chuck and I *aren't* partnered together, I'm asking the pastor, 'How much money can you raise? How much will you borrow? How much do you have in the bank?' He doesn't always know, and he might not even know that the capital stewardship consultant can provide those answers."

Meanwhile, on the capital fundraising side, the consultant is asking the pastor for renderings or floor plans. *What's the scope of the project? Can you explain it to me?*

The cumulative result, of course, is a pastor who's inundated.

"The reality is, when it's done right, I get the information I need from Chuck, and he gets what he needs from me," James explained. "I can ask, 'Chuck, how much money can the church really raise? How much of a budget do I realistically have?' That way, I don't over-design their project. And Chuck can get the design documents and details he needs to help generate excitement, understanding and clear objectives for the project fundraising."

"We're walking parallel in this journey rather than walking perpendicular to one another, and letting the church be the intersection."

A culture-sensitive, customized approach

It takes a unique meeting of the minds to collaborate in this manner — a rare dynamic — the value of which isn't lost on Lineberger. Accordingly, he considers both James and Klein "kindred spirits."

"I look at both of them as servant leaders," he explained. "Despite their vast experience, neither came across like they knew it all and we needed to just follow; they were more than willing to customize the plan to fit our church."

MacIlvaine agreed, and said it was very important for GCC to enlist a stewardship consultant who meshed with its four core values: honor, hospitality, courage and celebration. "I talked to one pastor whose culture and consultant didn't mesh, and he and his peers were always having to go back and reinterpret things," he recalled. "We didn't want to feel awkward within our own culture."

Klein is all too familiar with this and other reasons why pastors are reticent to enlisting capital fundraising help.

"They're worried that it's all going to be about the money. And if it is, then it's going to be like an institutional fundraiser," he explained. "So, when I talk to them, they quickly understand that I won't try to cram a square peg in a round hole. It's got to be about spiritual growth and growing your people. In that context, there's nothing to be scared of — because people *want* to be a part of something successful. You already have their hearts."

Having done five capital campaigns before, Lineberger said he especially appreciates this approach. To ensure its effectiveness, Klein visited each church several times to train the staff on their roles in the capital stewardship process. This had the added effect of helping the pastor feel supported by his team in the fundraising effort.

"I'm a big proponent of getting the leadership team to buy into the vision; otherwise, the pastor can feel like he's out on a limb or pushing a rock up a hill by himself," Klein said. "When other leaders in the church are bought in, they're helping the pastor carry the challenge."

Based on previous experiences, Lineberger also knew enough to be wary of consultants promising to raise a certain amount.

"I know some companies will get commitments for X amount," he said. "But getting those monies in — and building the trust along the way to get that done — takes a very special sensitivity, a temperament and just a real connection."

For this reason, Klein says he and his team always use the term "pledge fulfillment" when talking with pastors. While many are happy to receive

50% to 70% of the amount committed, Klein says that's not aiming high enough. Using a strong follow-up component, his team (many with pastoral leadership experience) have collected between 90% and 100% of the pledged amounts for the nearly 80% of their clients.

Walking the walk

Combining the building and capital fundraising processes makes sense, sure. The benefits are clear. But when you're working with churches, it can't (and won't) be successful without the right motivations.

"Our heart really is to help the church," James emphasized. "Yes, we're in business; but the business is secondary to what we all feel called to do."

Klein agreed: "Ultimately, we're responsible for serving the church well. We've got to make sure we're giving them good, sound advice and helping them get to that next level."

But don't just take their word for it — both Pastor MacIlvaine and Pastor Lineberger say they've benefited from this dynamic and shared guiding spirit.

"Having people with you who clearly exude a warm and infectious walk with Christ is a big deal, and [Klein] and [James] do that," MacIlvaine said. "The technical proficiency is there; that goes without saying. But knowing their hearts makes me feel like we're on the same page."

Lineberger agreed. "I really feel like they're true servant leaders, and they're rare," he said. "They're not trying to outdo each other, and they're not trying to get in each other's way. They're just trying to help the local church and the ministry of Christ go forward."

Unity drives success — now and for the future

The net effect is a project finished on time, on budget and with an energized pastor at the helm.

The capital stewardship consultant raises the funds he said he could, because he was realistic. The builder can design and build the building within budgetary parameters, because he knows exactly what those are. The church wins because the pastor has leadership equity. He moves into the next phase of building, or the next step he wants to take in ministry, with the congregation's confidence.

"They say, 'Man, look what God did,'" James said. "They think, 'We trusted Pastor, and he led us through. God provided, and here we are at the other side.'"

When all the pieces come together, everybody wins. **CE**

QUICK FACTS ABOUT GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH

Year established: 1995

Location of main campus: Bartlesville, Oklahoma

Number of staff — full- and part-time: 10 / 6

Combined weekly attendance: 600

2019 budget: \$1.2 million

QUICK FACTS ABOUT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

Year established: 1879

Location of main campus: Glen Rose, Texas

Number of locations: 2

Number of staff — full- and part-time: 5 / 8

Combined weekly attendance: 600

2019 budget: \$1.04 million

THE RIGHT "COACH" MATTERS

By Rodney James

No matter what type of construction project a church is planning — from renovation to expansion, or even a new facility — it will take a great deal of team players doing their part to provide a win for the church.

There will likely be a lender, a capital campaign partner, an architectural team, your staff and ministry leaders, a team of engineers, an AVL integrator, a builder, furnishing vendors, security integrators, and many others.

That's a lot of moving pieces!

WHO'S THE "COACH"?

Who is calling the plays and making sure the team plays well together? Issues usually arise when the coach is chosen by default. Unfortunately, that responsibility and burden too often falls on the church administrator, executive pastor, or even the pastor himself. I've seen it over and over, with devastating results in both the build and the ministry.

Why? Because it's a full-time job.

The church hires an architect whose focus is programming and design. The architect will likely bring some of the players into the game, but not all of them. That leaves the church to find the lender, capital campaign partner, and others. If the church brings in its own AVL or security integrator, for example, who's managing all their needs, scope and budgets? The church!

That begs a question: When the leadership of the church takes on that additional responsibility, what portion of their ministry will be left lacking? What will fall or fail?

SO, WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

A church make sure its pastors aren't completely sidelined as ministers as they try to oversee a construction project by partnering with a leader who has a ministry-focused approach and has successfully managed many other projects. A coach who has developed relationships, recruited the right players for the team, and led them to work together to a successful project completion on budget.

In short, *bring in a ringer!*

There is power when you bring in a design builder whose focus is purely ministry facilities, has a ministry background, and has a proven track record of finishing on budget, on time, and on vision. When considering who to bring in as a partner to lead your project, be bold. Ask them about their relationships, strategic partnerships, and ministry

experience. These relationships within the entire ministry design, development and construction realm are invaluable to you.

This type of partner will:

- Be trustworthy in ministry, not just in business
- Bring *relationships* to the table, not just connections
- Be able and willing to help you create those relationships with vendors, organizations, resources and people — because your partner has the same mission as you!

If forged over time and multiple projects together, these relationships can only benefit your church and add peace to your team as you navigate all the various aspects of your complex Kingdom-building journey.

IT CAN BE A GAME-CHANGER

The synergy gained when the same players come to the table for every project is a powerful force. When the lender trusts the builder, the capital campaign partner and designer are communicating, the AVL team is being led and assisted by your builder and design team — all these connections bring the team together with one common goal: to provide the best outcome for your church.

Significant potential for conflict is a danger when each individual player is brought in by the church and hasn't worked together. That might place your church in the middle to resolve ... or to lose.

That's no place for any pastor to be caught. Their work is too important for them to get caught in the details and relationships of a building project! It can be draining at the least; worse, it can completely derail a project, costing the pastor and staff leadership equity.

LOOK FOR A KINDRED SPIRIT

Find a design builder whose team members have walked in your shoes as ministers and church staff. It will bring a powerful perspective that will help the design be functional, and they will serve your team by guiding you through the entire process as trustworthy partners.

Imagine the advantage of having former staff members of a healthy church who completely understand the design and construction process, have the church's best interest in mind, and have relationships with every partner you'll need leading your project — coaching the same amazing team, just in a different game. You'll have a team that looks at your project through the eyes of a pastor, but with the skills and relationships that provide for every project need with excellence.



Rodney James

There is so much positive power in good partnerships, and they're built on trust and relationship. I've watched this powerful force create synergy in projects that saves money, time, energy — and most of all, heartache and pain — for the church staff and building team. We believe in this model because it delivers successful projects and builds leadership equity for your team.

Find a great coach and partner for your next project in a design build firm that has the relationships, the partnerships, and a history of success. Then, follow their play-calling, so you can carry the ball across the goal line and win! **CE**

Rodney James is president and founder of Master's Plan Church Design & Construction in Tulsa, Okla. [www.mpcchurchdesignbuild.com] He has more than 20 years of ministry experience as a pastor, leading his church through three building projects, and many successful projects delivered on time and on budget.

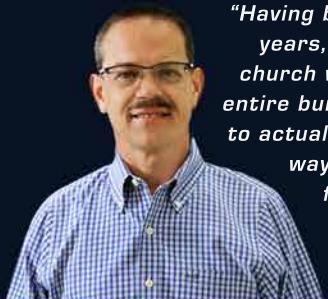


We are excited to invite you to our new, and FREE, resource for church leaders! MPU will have new content added on a consistent basis, from walking through the building process to interviews with pastors and contractors. All you have to join is visit our website at MPChurchDesignBuild.com. Our vision for MPU is simply to live out our mission...

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"Having been a pastor for over 20 years, my goal is to guide every church we work with through the entire building process from vision to actually being in the space, in a way that allows them to stay focused on their mission."

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Rodney James, Founder & President

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A 3-step process for implementing a successful church building plan

By Chuck Klein

As a pastor, the financial health of your church is always a priority in your future plans. You might even be facing a significant building project, which often creates a sense of uncertainty.

Those approaching this for the first time (or the first time in a long time) can get lost in the sheer enormity of such a project.

Countless church leaders have found themselves in the same position, wondering, *Where do I start?* If your church is planning a building project in the near future, it's crucial to understand what steps to take beforehand. Before you ever break ground, you need to assess your church's needs and create a professional team to come alongside you during this momentous process.

Step 1: Conduct a needs assessment

There are a variety of projects the church might need:

- Addition to current facilities
- Renovation
- Relocation
- Debt retirement

Sometimes, what church leaders perceive as a priority might *not* be what the rest of the church sees as the actual need.

One way to assess the priorities of the congregation is by conducting a professional study or survey prior to a campaign. Knowing what your members prioritize is a critical step prior to starting construction or a capital campaign.

Step 2: Create your support team

Usually, when approaching a building project, churches will hire an architect to design their project and establish rough cost estimates. After receiving this estimate, however, the church often determines that it's unable to afford the project or must significantly scale back. Unfortunately, the church might even abandon its plans or find itself unable to meet its needs.

Momentum is lost.

A better approach is a collaborative effort, in which a church jointly identifies a church design build firm and a capital stewardship consultant. Rather than working independent of one another, your church design builder and capital stewardship consultant are brought together as a team of trusted advisors early in the process. They can work together from the beginning to tailor a building project and capital campaign to the church's specific needs and abilities.

To get started with a collaborative effort, first identify your church design build firm. A great builder will go on an elaborate fact-finding mission to learn more about your church, building a game plan by assessing, identifying and prioritizing your areas of need.

Second, identify your capital stewardship consultant. An experienced stewardship consultant will add value to your building effort and give you creative ways to connect and communicate with your people.

The church's biggest fear is usually bringing in someone from the outside. The qualified consultant is aware of this and will take the time to build that relationship. They won't force a church to do things that aren't a part of their culture, but will help them understand best practices and how to adapt these to their environment.

The overlap of expertise and communication allow you to experience more security and confidence in the process from beginning to end. This collaboration improves the understanding of the process and the timeline for all involved.

Step 3: Process and timing

A capital stewardship consultant will help you determine your realistic giving potential in a campaign. This giving forecast will examine historical giving patterns of your congregation, including strengths and weaknesses in all areas of financial stewardship.

An accurate forecast is invaluable to a successful building project and will be shared with your design builder. This forecast will allow your design builder to better understand what you can expect to afford and allow them to build a practical plan that is cost effective and meets the most pressing needs of the church.

As your design builder designs options to your identified priorities, the capital stewardship consultant will work together with the church and builder to develop the best timeline to maximize your momentum. Most churches wait too long to engage capital campaign support, and this creates unintended negative consequences.

Numerous church leaders believe a capital campaign only needs a four-to six-week window. The truth is, if you do this, you're simply holding a fundraiser. When the campaign calendar is too compressed, you lose the ability to communicate. Many church members don't fully understand what's being asked of them. The effort becomes about the money instead of a spiritual process.

A fundraiser won't help you reach anywhere near your potential, nor will it grow your people like a capital stewardship program. The goal for your campaign should be to transform giving in your church, both tithing and sacrificial giving.

Implementing a church building program can seem like a daunting task — but it really doesn't have to be. By working with experienced design build and stewardship firms within a collaborative approach, this experience can be one of great growth and blessing for both the congregation and church leadership. **CE**



Chuck Klein

Chuck Klein is president and principle owner at Impact Stewardship Resources, Inc. [www.impactstewardship.com] in Franklin, Tenn. Klein has been involved in more than 250 campaigns over two decades. During this time, he has overseen the company as it has helped raise in excess of \$1 billion dollars for ministry and served 500+ churches in more than 30 states.



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