

## LESSON 9

### PROVIDING ADEQUATE FACILITIES FOR THE CHURCH'S PROGRAMME

#### Introduction

##### Aim

To become aware of how the worship and education of a church relate to its building and to determine the type building needed by a church.

##### Thought questions

1. How does the type building affect the worship service?
2. Why are pulpits placed in the centre at the front of places of worship?
3. What factors should be considered in finding a good church building location?
4. What type and how much educational space does a church need?
5. What architectural styles should be selected for church buildings?

##### The origin of the word church

The New Testament Greek word *ekklesia* (the called out) is translated church in English Bibles. However, the word church did not develop from *ekklesia* but from *kurios* (lord) and *kuriakon* (belonging to a lord or master). *Kuriakon* was first applied by Christians to the house of worship. In Old English it was *cirice*, in Middle English *chirche*, and today is church. At an early date, the "called out" people of God became inseparably identified with their place of meeting, "the Lord's house." The house of worship and study is not the *ekklesia*, but it significantly affects the life of the church. Little distinction is made today between the called people of God and their place of meeting. Church can refer to either.

##### The activities of the church

The Temple in the Old Testament was "the house of Yahweh," that is, His dwelling place. Pilgrims journeyed to Jerusalem several times each year in order to draw near to the Lord: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: . . . let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Ps. 95:1-2). Apparently this psalm was written for pilgrims to sing as they approached the Temple—"come before his presence. . . ." Jesus changed the concept in His instruction to the Samaritan woman that one did not have to journey to Jerusalem to encounter God, for the Father is worshipped in spirit and in truth. Nevertheless, people continue to

Give the literal meaning of the following:

1. *ekklesia* \_\_\_\_\_
2. *kurios* \_\_\_\_\_
3. *kuriakon* \_\_\_\_\_
4. *cirice* \_\_\_\_\_

(1. called out, 2. lord, 3. belonging to a lord or master, 4. house of worship)

The Temple represented God's p \_\_\_\_\_;  
it was where the people approached \_\_\_\_\_.

(presence, God)

seek God in a special place. The auditorium of a church building serves the purpose of providing a conducive atmosphere for meeting God during the worship service.

The Jewish synagogues combined worship and study. The Law was considered the Word of God. Those who could not travel to Jerusalem each Sabbath to approach the presence of God could hear His Word by attending the synagogue services where the Law was read and studied. While the temple services emphasized sacrificial ceremonies, the synagogues emphasized the study of the Law. Jesus placed further emphasis on study by spending the majority of his time instructing the disciples and by commanding them to make learners (disciples) of all nations and to teach the disciples to observe all that He had taught (see Matt. 28:19-20). The early disciples continued together in the study of the doctrine taught by the apostles (apostles' doctrine), in fellowship, in the breaking of bread (probably meals eaten together), and in prayer (worship—see Acts 2:42). From the Old and New Testament examples, there have developed two primary activities of the people of God who meet together at a particular place (the church): worship and study.

### The relation of the role of the church and its building

During the Middle Ages, the church was the dominant influence in the community, and the priests who performed sacramental functions were leaders of society. Church buildings were designed to symbolize the dominance of the church and the importance of priests. Imposing church buildings were constructed on hills or mountains, overlooking villages whenever possible. The bishop or priest spoke to the people from an elevated pulpit. In recent years the progress of science and the emphasis on materialism have greatly diminished the importance of the church and of the priestly functions in the community. The pendulum appears to be swinging back now towards a medial position. The present emphasis is to recognize the importance of the spiritual life of the church in human experience, but the church must accept itself as servant rather than master of society.

Personality theories of psychology have contributed to a new emphasis concerning the nature of the church. This new emphasis is on the relation of persons instead of the old emphasis on sacramentalism. The new trend is good because it focuses attention once again on the teachings and activities of Jesus concerning love in action. The new trend will bring about new patterns in church life and activity. The new activities will require church buildings and facilities which are adapted to the needs of training the elect for the ministry in the world.

The synagogue was where the people went to  
h \_\_\_\_\_ the Word of \_\_\_\_\_.

(hear, God)

Draw lines to match the emphases of the following:

- |              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Temple    | a. the Law                |
| 2. synagogue | b. sacrificial ceremonies |

(1--b, 2--a)

In the Middle Ages, the church was the dominant influence in the c \_\_\_\_\_; it ruled society.

(community)

## Determining the Facilities Needed

### Educational facilities

A church must determine the nature of its programme and activities before it can plan an adequate building. Progressive churches plan for both educational and worship facilities. Preaching in worship services does not provide sufficient Bible teaching for the members. On the other hand, the study of the Bible in an educational programme does not provide the type of challenge which comes through a worship service. Both teaching and worship are vital in meeting the spiritual needs of people.

An extensive programme of Bible teaching needs to be housed in a building designed for pedagogy (instruction). More effective teaching is achieved through small groups. Classes need to be small enough to permit more personal and direct relationship between the teachers and the students and individual participation by the students. Because of the formal element in worship and the less personal relationship of the speaker to the listener, preaching is not effective as a method for teaching. The listener in a preaching service does not respond to the material being taught as well as he does in a small, less formal classroom situation. Also, the material in a sermon is more general usually since it is addressed to people whose needs differ greatly.

A Christian educational building needs to provide for the teaching of various age groups. To place pre-school children in classes with those who have been in school several years reduces the effectiveness of teaching for both groups. The teacher, addressing the lesson to the school child who can read and write, overshoots the understanding of the pre-school child. If he directs the lesson to the pre-school child, the older child loses interest. Children who have finished five years of school will have little interest in lessons planned for those in the first or second year of school. When attention is lost, children become preoccupied with things other than the lesson and tend to disturb. High school boys and girls have different needs, interests, and abilities from those who are much younger. Because of these differences, many young people begin to lose interest in Sunday school and worship if they are required to meet with younger groups.

Once young people complete their school work, they enter another stage of life with new interests. After they marry, their interests and needs change again. Family and work responsibilities consume much of their attention, and their needs centre in these areas. Adults with children at home have different interests from adults whose children are grown. Consideration of the different stages of life will reveal that different Christian education classes are needed for people in each stage. A church which is

In planning an adequate building, a church must determine its p \_\_\_\_\_ and a \_\_\_\_\_ which should include both e \_\_\_\_\_ and w \_\_\_\_\_.

(programme, activities, education, worship)

Preaching is not effective as a method for teaching because:

1. The worship service is f \_\_\_\_\_;
2. There is not a personal relationship between s \_\_\_\_\_ and l \_\_\_\_\_;
3. There is no opportunity for r \_\_\_\_\_ to the material;
4. The subject matter is more g \_\_\_\_\_ and addressed to broader n \_\_\_\_\_.

(1. formal; 2. speaker, listener; 3. response; 4. general, needs)

The provision of classes for different age groups is important because they have varying

n \_\_\_\_\_  
i \_\_\_\_\_  
a \_\_\_\_\_

(needs, interests, abilities)

seriously attempting to teach the Bible and trying to apply biblical truths to the daily lives of its members and prospects must provide the most adequate facilities possible for each age group.

The educational building does not have to be elaborately decorated and expensively designed. The classrooms do need to be adequately lighted and comfortable. They should be designed to prevent as many external distractions as possible. The rooms should be equipped with furniture, maps, and chalk boards. The height of chairs and tables should be designed for the age group which is assigned to the room. Smaller children find adult chairs uncomfortable.

Since church buildings are expensive, the church programme should utilize the educational and auditorium space to the maximum each week. Some churches have elaborate educational facilities with some parts used only forty-five minutes per week. The expense of construction and maintaining the building requires that every room be used as much as possible; otherwise, the church is guilty of poor stewardship.

#### Worship facilities

Worship is the experience of a person becoming aware of the presence of God; it is the central activity of a church. The importance of symbolism in worship has already been mentioned, but its appearance in the architectural design of the building needs some attention. Beauty speaks of the perfection and goodness of God; therefore, a beautiful sanctuary implements worship. Since worship involves becoming aware of the presence of God, some thought should be given to the type of building which will be conducive to an awareness of His presence.

In evangelical churches, preaching is central in worship. These churches plan their sanctuaries with pulpits in the centre, at the front, symbolizing the centrality of the Word of God in worship. The table used in serving the Lord's Supper is usually in front of the pulpit.

The sanctuary should be comfortable and attractive. It should be designed to honour God and to fit the tastes of the people.

#### Facilities for other activities

A church programme may include activities that provide for physical and social needs of people as well as their spiritual needs. Organizations are necessary. Since organizations for mission study and social ministries do not usually meet at the Bible study hour, they may utilize the facilities used for Bible study, but they will need additional supplies and equipment adapted to their own needs. In many areas, no public recreational areas are available to the youth. If a church has sufficient property,

List three characteristics of an adequate educational building.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Worship is becoming aware of the presence of \_\_\_\_\_.  
Beauty speaks of the perfection and goodness of \_\_\_\_\_.  
Therefore, a beautiful sanctuary implements \_\_\_\_\_.

(God, God, worship)

For what other needs--besides spiritual--may a church provide? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(physical, social)

it can develop an effective recreational programme which provides both for the recreational and social needs of youth and establishes a contact for spiritual ministry. Young people need a place to gather for recreation where they will be supervised according to Christian principles. Whenever circumstances permit, the church is encouraged to purchase sufficient land to enable it to provide a playing field.

A church needs to decide on the purpose of its programme and the nature of its activities before it can wisely plan its facilities. Adequate facilities usually cannot be provided in the beginning years of a church, but a long range plan will enable it to add additional facilities from year to year. Most churches have to build in stages.

### Planning for the Future

Churches in heavily populated areas should not be satisfied with providing facilities adequate only for the present. With a rapidly increasing world population, churches must plan to reach more people for Christ. A church does not remain static; it either grows or declines. If it is not winning new people to Christ, it is in the process of dying. With greater competition for the attention of people, it must work harder in maintaining its membership. People do not naturally go to church today. They must be born again and brought into fellowship with God's people. A church must plan for the type of programme which will reach more people for Christ. Adequate facilities are not indispensable for future growth, but they are desirable when they can be provided.

In looking to the future in the planning of facilities, a church should consider its responsibility to minister to the non-Christians in the community as well as to its members. If it is in an area which is growing, its responsibility increases every day.

A church should estimate the potential growth of the community as it plans for adequate facilities. It should strive to have at least sixty per cent of its own members in Bible study. It should plan for facilities which will accommodate not only the sixty per cent already in Bible study but fifteen per cent more of its members and forty per cent of the non-Christians in the community. A church will not automatically reach the non-Christians simply by providing adequate facilities, but it is limited in reaching them if it does not have comfortable accommodations for them when they come for Bible study. Few spiritual and progressive churches find themselves with sufficient facilities. Those which are active and doing the work of God under the leadership of the Holy Spirit are constantly improving and expanding their facilities.

*When you have finished reading the topic Determining the Facilities Needed, list four programmes which a church should consider in planning its facilities.*

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*(worship, Bible study, training, mission outreach and social ministries)*

*In planning its facilities, a church should consider the purpose of its programme, the nature of its activities, and f \_\_\_\_\_ expansion.*

*(future)*

*Finish reading Planning for the Future, which continues on the next page, before doing the following activity.*

*The factors a church should consider in planning for the future include:*

- 1. Its responsibility to the \_\_\_\_\_ in the community*
- 2. The potential \_\_\_\_\_ of the community*
- 3. The possible increase in the size of the field of ministry brought on by the increased use of the \_\_\_\_\_.*

*(1. non-Christians, 2. growth, 3. automobile)*

A church should attempt to secure enough land to meet its future needs. Not only should it plan for its buildings to be expanded but it should also consider the possible need for future parking space. Increasing prosperity in many countries is enabling more people to drive automobiles to church. The church should also recognize that automobile transportation enables people to come from greater distances; therefore, its field of ministry is expanded to include a larger community. A primary concern of a church in planning for future growth should be to have sufficient land for development. Additions can be made to buildings, but land is becoming more and more difficult to purchase.

### Selecting a Good Location

The location of a church influences its effectiveness. If it is located near a main thoroughfare, more people will be able to see the church building, and it will be more accessible to the members. Locations in areas of excessive noise should be avoided for the sake of a more worshipful atmosphere.

The locating of facilities in residential areas enables a church to minister more directly to the needs of the people in that area. Day-care centres for the children of working mothers, recreational programmes for young people, and home Bible studies can be parts of the out-reach ministry.

### Considering Available Finances

Several plans are followed in meeting the costs of building. Churches finance the expansion of facilities by: (1) appealing for donations to a special building fund; (2) designating an amount in the church budget to be set aside in a savings account for future building; (3) using volunteer labour from the membership in the construction of a building; and (4) borrowing money. Some churches still use fund raising events such as bazaars and bake sales to acquire building funds. Many are realizing, however, that the church building is a symbol of gratitude to and respect for God; therefore, the members should give sacrificially to provide a building rather than depend on the community to provide funds for one.

Most churches are not wealthy enough to construct all of the facilities needed at one time. The size as well as the quality of the building programme depends on the amount of money available. A church can compensate to a degree for insufficient funds by planning to expand its facilities in stages. A master plan should be drawn up before the church begins construction of any part of the building; otherwise, later additions to the structure may appear to be afterthoughts. A church then will need to

*After reading all of the topic Selecting a Good Location, list some factors to consider in selecting a good location for a church.*

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*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

*List four possible plans for financing a church building.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

*(Compare your answers with the text.)*

decide how much of the plan can be financed at the present time. It will also need to determine which part of the facilities is most urgently needed in providing for the immediate programme and ministry.

### Planning the Building

In the past, churches have tended to construct the auditorium or sanctuary with little thought and planning being given to educational facilities. More recently, many churches have discovered the effectiveness of the Bible study organization or Sunday school in reaching new members. The well-organized Bible school with trained leaders has become an effective evangelistic organization. Trained leaders, elected to teach different age groups, are also given the responsibility of reaching the non-Christians of that age group. These teachers multiply the ministry of the church. More people are reached with the gospel when more members are involved. Involvement of many members in ministry can be accomplished best through an organization like the Bible school. This multiplication of ministers is a strong reason for providing educational facilities before the auditorium is built.

An assembly room used by the Bible study organization can also be used as a temporary auditorium for worship. A church which builds its house of worship in a heavily populated community may be uncertain as to the size auditorium needed in the future. The auditorium is a more permanent structure and is more difficult to enlarge if the membership increases. Constructing an educational building and using an assembly room temporarily as a place of worship permit a church to plan an auditorium more suited to its needs at a later date. An enlarged congregation provides greater financial strength for building the auditorium. Some churches may already have an adequate place of worship and be in need of additional educational space. A church will make greater spiritual progress when it plans and provides for an adequate Bible study organization.

In addition to Bible study and organizational meetings, the building could be planned for use in a social ministry. One church permits its educational facilities to be used as a medical clinic during the week. Another church carries on adult education classes at night. Some churches have met an important need by opening their recreational facilities to the community. A church should determine its total programme of ministry before constructing the educational facilities.

A number of factors should be considered when a church plans an auditorium. Future growth and needs should be anticipated. Doctrine should have an influence on the arrangement of the auditorium. The word

*An advantage for building educational facilities before the auditorium is--*

*Trained teachers working in a well-organized Bible school will multiply the ministries of a church and reach more p\_\_\_\_\_.*

*(people)*

*Two additional advantages of building educational facilities before the auditorium are--*

- 1. A temporary auditorium can be provided in the educational building until the size auditorium needed in the f\_\_\_\_\_ can be determined.*
- 2. Allowing more time for growth provides greater f\_\_\_\_\_ strength for the building of the auditorium.*

*(1. future, 2. financial)*

auditorium is most frequently used to describe the building because the preaching of the Word of God is the central element of worship. An audience is a listening group; an auditorium is a place where people come to listen. The planning of the building should provide for ease in hearing what is said. Unless an amplifier is used, a speaker is not as easily heard in a long building as in one that is not much longer than it is wide.

The pulpit is usually centred at the front of the auditorium, symbolizing the centrality of preaching. The platform should be elevated only to the extent of allowing the speaker to be seen by those in the back or farthest away. Overly elevated pulpits symbolize separation of clergy and laity. The doctrine of the priesthood of believers is in contradiction to this distinction.

Christians participate in the worship service through singing and responding to the Word of God. Church buildings usually provide a place for a choir. The question has been raised whether a choir sings to the congregation or with it. The answer to this question will determine whether the choir sits behind the pastor and faces the congregation or is seated with the congregation, perhaps to one side of the auditorium. A problem with locating the choir behind the pulpit is the difficulty of maintaining the choir members' interest in the sermon since the back of the speaker is towards them.

Auditoriums of various shapes—square, round, and rectangular—have been constructed in the past. A recent trend is to construct rectangular buildings which are approximately twenty-five per cent longer than they are wide.

A church building committee is encouraged to study books written on planning church buildings before proceeding with construction. The titles of some books which should be helpful are listed in the bibliography of this study guide. Since buildings are expensive, the building committee should put forth great effort in understanding the building needs, in planning the most utilitarian and attractive building possible within the limitation of funds, and in supervising the construction process to see that durable materials are used. Thorough study and planning before construction begins are wise investments of time and effort. The primary purposes of the building should remain constantly in the minds of those who plan it: a place to meet God in worship; a place to study and train for more effective Christian service.

The placing of the pulpit in the centre of the front symbolizes the c \_\_\_\_\_ of p \_\_\_\_\_.

Overly elevated pulpits symbolize separation of c \_\_\_\_\_ and l \_\_\_\_\_.

(centrality, preaching, clergy, laity)

List two primary purposes of a church building.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

(Compare your answers with the text.)

## Home Study Exercise

Basic assignment (Levels 1, 2, and 3). Answer the following questions based on the study guide content.

1. Give the literal meaning of the following:

(1) *ekklesta*— \_\_\_\_\_

(2) *kurios*— \_\_\_\_\_

(3) *kuriakon*— \_\_\_\_\_

(4) *cirice*— \_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the significance of the Temple and the synagogue and the primary emphasis of worship in each?

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3. Contrast the role of the church of the Middle Ages to the contemporary church. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Why is preaching an inadequate method of Bible instruction? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Why should the teaching programme provide classes for different age groups? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Give three characteristics of an adequate educational building. \_\_\_\_\_

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7. List four programmes which the church should consider in planning its facilities. \_\_\_\_\_

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8. Name three considerations which guide a church in planning its facilities. \_\_\_\_\_

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9. How may a church determine its future needs? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. List four plans for financing a church building. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
11. Give three reasons why some churches build educational facilities before auditoriums. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
12. What does the location of the pulpit symbolize? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Supplementary assignment (Levels 2 and 3).** Read pages 203–217 in *The Churchbook* by Dobbins and answer the following questions.

1. What does the church building say about the spiritual values of the people?
2. Name three factors to consider in selecting a location for a church building.
3. What important committees are needed in planning and constructing a new building?
4. Should an architect be employed?
5. List four ways to secure satisfactory results in a building programme.

**Advanced assignment (Level 3).**

1. Describe the role of the pastor in a building programme.
2. From Dr. Dobbins' chart for evaluating items relating to church buildings and facilities, list the ten you consider to be most important.
3. What is a basic principle to remember in planning the dedication service for a church building?

### Seminar Discussion

1. Should building funds be solicited from people who are not members of the church? What is your opinion of the acceptance of contributions from liquor companies or gambling organizations?
2. Should a baptismal pool be constructed in the church building?
3. How important are adequate facilities in comparison to trained leaders in growing a church?
4. How important is ample money in developing a strong church?
5. How should the programmes of a church determine the design of the building facilities?