

A “SEVEN HATS DISCUSSION” ABOUT THE PROPOSED BUILDING EXPANSION.

This was done in response to the Building Team’s inquiry about determining ministry space size on April 29, 2008.

The discussion went forward as follows. We determined to examine a clear question from 7 perspectives, with each elder being asked to give responses in each of the seven categories. The clear question was arrived at by meeting together for 2 one hour meetings and is as follows:

“Be it resolved that we build a facility with a maximum capacity of 1200 parishioners/service.”

The “hats” (discussion topics for investigation) were as follows:

- 1) Blue: establish ground rules and guide discussion*
- 2) Yellow: look for the advantages (every person names all the positives)*
- 3) Black: search for potential problems (every person names all the negatives)*
- 4) Red: Examine feelings about the proposal (what does each one “sense/feel” when we think about this)*
- 5) Green: Brainstorm options and alternatives (are there other avenues to explore before deciding)*
- 6) White: determine what information is still needed. (do we have enough information in front of us to decide well?)*
- 7) New Hat (Purple): What does the Bible say about this? (Are we in harmony with the Word). What comes to us when we pray?*

The final step in our process was, with all seven items in front of us to “decide now”, or “decide later”. Here was our process:

Ground Rules (the Blue Hat):

- 1) That we discuss only this question.
- 2) That we seek God’s agenda rather than ours—and that unity and peace be the identity markers that we have achieved this.
- 3) That we make an effort to truly listen to each other.
- 4) That the members present constitute the quorum—i.e. that we would not invite absent elders to amend our discussions.
- 5) That repeating ideas would be allowed only twice.
- 6) That we would root this question in previous decisions taken by the board, and use those discussions to establish the framework for this conversation.
- 7) That the conversation would take 1 ½ hours, or if not done, that we would reschedule (to avoid choosing when weary).

Advantages (the Yellow Hat):

- 1) This would double our current size.
- 2) This would double our room for ministry
- 3) This would enable us to hire higher quality people.

- 4) That this would attract new families.
- 5) That our visibility would be greatly enhanced and multiplied.
- 6) That this would accommodate our church to the growth of the town.
- 7) That this would stretch our faith.
- 8) That this would vary our different approaches to ministry (newer and different ministries would be birthed)
- 9) That we could host regional conferences and events with a larger worship center.
- 10) That this would give us more flexible building options.
- 11) That this would enable us to reduce the number of worship services while housing more.
- 12) That the presence of a larger church building would improve the town atmosphere.

Disadvantages (the Black Hat):

- 1) 1200 may not be large enough
- 2) The church becomes far more complex.
- 3) This idea limits future development.
- 4) The church would need to change its mindset (and might led to camps in the congregation)
- 5) We would lose the “small church” people
- 6) We might become program centered rather than life-style centered.
- 7) This would make it more difficult to maintain community.
- 8) Our Church community would change.
- 9) It is expensive to build.
- 10) Building is disruptive
- 11) This may crush faith
- 12) This may intimidate the poor
- 13) It could be distracting—we could become “building centered” rather than “Jesus centered”
- 14) This would take us out of our comfort zone.
- 15) This would limit ministry during the time of carrying the debt load.

Feelings (the Red Hat):

- 1) This is not big enough (9 of 10 present indicated this)
- 2) Fear of making the wrong decision (5 indicated this)
- 3) Excited (4 people)
- 4) Apprehensive (2 people).
- 5) Stretches my faith
- 6) Nervous anticipation (3)
- 7) Loss of intimacy
- 8) Not sure (2)
- 9) Concern that we are boxing God in—opting to build too small for the work God wants done (3)
- 10) Restricting God’s vision to our vision.
- 11) Tired of the indecision (2)
- 12) Fear of people bailing out (committing and then not following through).

Other Options and Alternatives (the Green Hat):

- 1) Investigate a building that houses 1500 to 2000 (4 people).
- 2) Do nothing—just stay status quo.
- 3) If the building option does not grow, then investigate church planting.
- 4) A three phase approach (5 people indicated this):
 - a. stay here and improve it marginally to accommodate some growth for 3-4 years or so and
 - b. buy land now for future decision making (and sell it later if this isn't working for us, and
 - c. use the time to decide how best to proceed.
- 5) Start raising money
- 6) Investigate the satellite idea again.

Other Information Needed (the White Hat):

- 1) Are we including a vision for:
 - a) a training center
 - b) a seniors complex
 - c) retail space
 - d) a medical complex
 - e) community inroads on a larger piece of land
- 2) Do we need 20+ acres?
- 3) We need input from the building people.
- 4) We need to clarify this vision to elicit God's call on our congregation.

What does the Bible Say (the Purple Hat???)

- 1) Psalm 127:1: Unless the Lord builds the house we labor in vain...
- 2) John 4:35: The fields are ripe unto the harvest...
- 3) James 5:7: Be patient, wait and the crop will grow...
- 4) Matt 28:16-20: Go and make disciples of all nations...
- 5) Proverbs 3:5-6: Let God be the guide
- 6) Malachi 3:10: "Test the Lord in this matter... and watch him open up the storehouses of heaven..."
- 7) Matthew 11:28-30: "come unto me... my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
- 8) James 1:5-8: Ask without doubting...
- 9) Mark 9:23: All things are possible to him who believes...
- 10) Matt 17:20: If you have faith like a mustard seed, you can move mountains...
- 11) Mark 11:23-24: If you say unto this mountain be removed and do not doubt, it shall be done for you...

The chair then called for the question: "Be it resolved that we build a facility to house 1200 parishioners/service." The motion was defeated. Then a decision was taken to have a follow-up meeting, tentatively set for May 15, rescheduled to May 27.

In Christ,
David Chotka

Addendum to the material:

Our consensus agenda from the discussion:

We are agreed that we need a facility to house 1500 + with room to expand.

We need a community impact facility and a parcel of land that will facilitate that.

We want to establish a training center.

We need a short term and a long term strategy (strategies) to stage the growth in phases.

We should consider buying land quickly.

We need to investigate with the District what financing options are available for land.