

Churches by Daniels

Rodney James Pastor and Church Builder joined the Churches by Daniels team in 2012. He is now the Vice President of Business and Design. For 20 years Rodney served as Executive Pastor, then Senior Pastor at Tulsa Sequoyah Hills Baptist Church. During his ministry God allowed Rodney to lead and complete multiple building and renovation projects. After a full career in the pulpit Rodney has had a front row seat to watch hundreds of churches go thru the building process, he is in a unique position to understand what the coming generation looks for in a church. If your church is not growing, part of the problem could be your building. Our culture has changed! Has your church building?

Things have changed and church members have changed as well. People no longer attend church based on principal. They go, seeking a purpose. Rodney explained "People want to make sure the church experience provides value for them as a person. They must find value in the message being taught and in the ministry being offered. Today's millennials and generation Z's walk thru the door asking themselves if this church values kids. As soon as they drive by your building, they are already assessing whether the church offers value for them and their children. If there is no theming and the walls are painted white, guest will not believe you place a high value on their children. I am not talking about how we do the ministry once we get them in the door. I am talking about ... what are those impressions people see when they drive by and walk thru the doors of your facility. Make an impact and you have passed the first test," he explained.

It is important to understand what the coming generation looks for in a church. Everything has changed about church and every church in America is wrestling with it. Churches often defensively answer that we are not here to entertain. However, as culture changes, our methods need to change in order to communicate the same basic message. Rodney understands the Gospel Message is the most important thing Pastors have to offer for a lost world, but the reality is, if you can't get them to come in the building, there is little opportunity to share the message. The first impression people have of your church is critical.

Every successful business understands the importance of perception given by modern clean facilities. Look at other organization that are continually updating facilities. For example, McDonalds and Wal-Mart are always redesigning and even building new structures in the place of old ones. The perception and first impression is the key to a successful business. Unfortunately, the church often believes they don't have to update . . . that our message is still the same and that we still have the same things to offer. If a church doesn't update like the others around them, they won't be successful at bringing people in and ultimately reaching the lost of this culture.

Addressing the needs of this culture and reaching the younger generation does not mean you have to build a new building. There is a lot of things you can do that allows the 20-somethings to enjoy a very contemporary service. Bridging the gap with some technology, yet keeping the traditional elements allow churches to facilitate the



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way this generation wants to worship. Perception is more than half the battle. The challenge is to create a facility that meets the needs of our culture and that drives people into our facilities, communicating that there is purpose and the church understands their needs.

Today's church design are influenced by the businesses around us. Churches need to think about curb appeal. Ask yourself does the outside of my church communicate the true mission and ministry? People of today's culture and generation don't want to park and ask someone where the front door is. The 3rd space or gathering space that is incorporated into many churches come from Starbucks. They understood it was all about "the feel" of the room. So now, churches put coffee shops and areas for people to gather and have a conversation with someone. Over the last couple of decades, we have become very visual people. So, the changes don't have to be wholesale and huge, but they do have to incorporate the things that help our

culture receive the message. Using some lighting differently than we did before, and adding some additional video during service will help better communicate the message to the culture of today. Having visual elements help keep people connected. All of those things are how we communicate today.

At Churches by Daniels, we have walked hundreds of pastors through these transitions and we understand the cultural challenges with making these changes. Most churches are realizing that they must make changes. The pastor must cast the vision for their church. It is our job to provide the right tools, the right information and the right visuals to help them so they will be successful at reaching the future generation.

Churches By Daniels Construction, Inc. is a nationwide design-build company specializing in church facility design and construction. The greatest value we bring to churches is the unique process we have developed to help churches take the right steps when considering a facility renovation, expansion, or new construction.

