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construction management

General Contractor or Construction Manager?

There are two predominant methods of contracting with a builder for any church construction project. These two methods have the same end result: a completed church facility built in accordance with the Architectural Plans. However, the means at arriving at this end will differ greatly.

A General Contractor (GC) will offer the church a lump sum total cost to build the church project...subject, of course, to any changes to the design, or any surprises during construction such as buried nuclear waste on the building site or hitting oil when digging the footings (the worst and best surprises). The GC hires subcontractors (subs) and works with suppliers he is comfortable with. Usually, the church pays the GC each month one check for the value of the labor and materials in place. The GC in turn pays the subs and suppliers at his discretion. Any cost savings realized from later sub or supplier bids, or from substituting less costly materials, is kept by the GC.

A Construction Manager (CM) will bid the project from the Architects plans and offer the church an itemized construction budget. The CM will manage the project for a fee and handle all paperwork and record-keeping. (His duties are similar to the GC except the CM shares this information with the church). The CM will work with subs and suppliers suggested by the church and take bids from other qualified subcontractors. With the assistance of the CM, the church selects these companies and later pays them directly. The church keeps all savings from donated labor and materials, and any lower bids that may come in after the CM contract is signed.

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