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The Bid Process – Part II

In the previous column we discussed bidding the project when a builder had been selected prior to completion of the architectural plans. The church normally will negotiate a management fee and work with the builder under a construction management agreement. The primary advantages include the assistance of the builder in soliciting bids and the flexibility and cost savings that result from using performance specifications. Another big advantage to the church is that it receives some actual budget pricing from subcontractors and suppliers before the plans are completed. The builder can continue to solicit bids even after ground break with the hope of reducing the overall project cost.

A secondary method is to offer completed construction plans to a few builders who will submit a competitive lump sum bid for the project based upon the specifications included in the drawings. While this allows the church to consider the bids "apples to apples", and usually saves design and bid time, it limits any cost-saving alternates the bidders may want to offer. The architect can include a few requests for alternate bids for certain items of work. A simplified example of an alternate bid might be: "Alternate Bid #1 – Substitute 2'x4' ceiling tile for the 2'x2' reveal edge ceiling tile specified in the Base Bid."

The architect can assist the owner in evaluating the bids and selecting a builder. The architect should know in advance how the project will be bid since this will affect his duties, how the drawings are prepared, and his fee.

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