



Facility Stewardship Today

"Improving church health through Facility Stewardship"

www.facilityministry.org

Jim Rodgers—Architectural Pastor

Fall, 2017

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Nursery Blind Spots is the theme for this installment of Facility Stewardship Today—a newsletter about “Improving church health through Facility Stewardship.”

For His Service & Yours,

Blind Spots: Why we sometimes can't see problems with our facility

Our youngest is a junior in college... Sigh... And my mind drifts back to her days of infancy—which in turn reminds me of the following true story from 20 years ago and printed in an article I wrote for Leadership Journal (Fall, 2009).

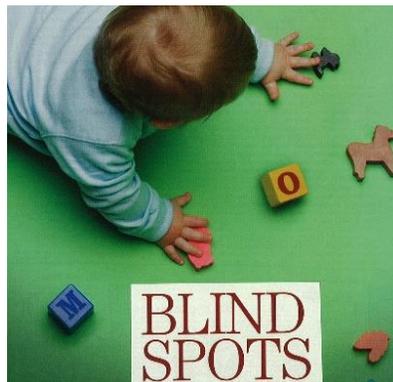
My daughter was reaching out to Daddy. What a joy to see our nine-month-old longing for me from the arms of the nursery worker following our mid-week service. Hannah was being gently rocked by the wife of one of our elders, but it was clear she wanted down. I thanked the woman for watching our daughter while I led a prayer group and my wife taught some of the older children. She assured me that she held Hannah the entire time, except when Hannah was sleeping in one of the stacked cribs. While I appreciated her diligence, I let her know that Hannah enjoyed crawling.

"I'm not comfortable with her crawling on this floor," the worker replied.

The floor was carpeted and vacuumed regularly, so I asked why. With a look that conveyed a terrible secret, she confessed, "The carpet may look clean, but it's laid on a wood floor that was built on top of the original tile floor because we have a water problem. I'm sure you smell the mustiness."

I acknowledged the damp smell. She continued, "I don't want to get anyone in trouble, but look at the wallpaper." She pointed out some dark spots that crept up from below the carpet level. "I don't let any babies crawl on this floor."

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Verse for Today (vft):

"Concerning this thorn, I earnestly prayed three times that it might leave me. However, He said to me 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness'"
(2 Corinthians 12:8-9).

Ministry Encouragement:

"John Broadus stood and repeated, 'Mighty in the Scriptures...mighty in the Scriptures...mighty in the Scriptures.' That is how we ought to be! As Spurgeon once said, our very blood ought to be 'Bibline.' This is where success begins and is sustained" (Kent & Barbara Hughes, *Liberating Ministry from the Success Syndrome*, p. 38).

Link Highlight:

BGW—Building God's Way:

www.bgwservices.com

Having designed churches in 47 states, Dan Cook and Don Mahoney lead a staff of highly trained architects, MEP engineers, designers, drafters, project managers, as well as personnel in the areas of building supply, business development, accounting, and administration.

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[Blind Spots: Why we sometimes can't see problems with our facility \(continued\)](#)

About that time my wife joined us in the nursery. When I showed her the marks on the wallpaper, she said she knew about them and also tried to keep little ones off the floor. The elder's wife explained that they had moved the nursery downstairs to create a church office upstairs. Since water often leaked in that corner of the basement, they built the wood floor to allow for carpet on the floor of the new nursery.

On the way home, I asked my wife why she didn't tell me about her concerns sooner. With the look of a supportive spouse, she gently responded: "We've been here less than a year, and I know you have several other areas of ministry that need changing first. Since Hannah is the most consistent baby in the nursery, it will look self-serving if you try to change something they just built the year before we arrived."

Ouch. Talk about feeling convicted.

I realized changing the nursery was not just a facility issue, but really a ministry issue. I'd heard the clichéd facility priority list—take care of the nursery and the women's restroom above everything else. But in this case, I felt the issue personally. Though I overcame my guilt—thanks to a supportive wife—I intensified my zeal to address the nursery issue.

With a nursery that smelled musty and had mold marks on the walls, we were sending a terrible message to visitors: "Your babies may not be safe here, and we aren't doing anything about it."

Why did I miss this clear message? I love my children. I look out for their best interests. I had a child in the nursery. So why did I miss something that should have been so clear?

As I reflect back on that situation, I realize several issues commonly cloud our perspective of our facilities. Now, as an Architectural Pastor, I find myself working with church leaders to pull back those clouding issues to understand the messages our facilities send.

Blind Spot #1: [Not discerning when a facility issue becomes a ministry issue.](#)

Blind Spot #2: [Miscalculating the leadership chips involved with Blind Spot # 1.](#)

Blind Spot #3: [Beginning to accept the negative results from overlooking Blind Spots #1 & #2.](#)

To learn more about Blind Spots,
read the rest of this Leadership Journal article here: www.facilityministry.org/about/