

# GROWTH POINTS

With Gary L. McIntosh, D.Min., Ph.D.

## Enhancing Community Through Building Design

Growing churches build a sense of community through team work, small groups, and good communication. But . . .

an overlooked aspect that impacts feelings of community is the building design itself.

Consider how you might incorporate the following insights to enhance community in your own church.

### Open and Flexible Layouts

- **Encouraging Collaboration:**
  - Use open floor plans to remove physical barriers, while encouraging conversation.
  - Deploy flexible layouts to allow for reconfiguration of spaces for various group sizes.
- **Visibility and Accessibility:**
  - Transparent spaces, such as glass walls and open corridors, create a sense of openness.
  - Accessible space ensures that all members can engage with one another effortlessly.

### Common Areas and Social Hubs

- **Central Gathering Spaces:**

- Position common areas, like lounges, to serve as natural hubs for interaction.
- Provide informal settings for people to gather, share ideas, and build relationships.

- **Multi-Functional Zones:**

- Establish spaces to serve multiple purposes, such as meeting rooms that double as social spaces to maximize opportunities for interaction.
- Cater to various needs for versatile spaces offering quiet reflection to lively group discussions.

### Intentional Pathways and Flow

- **Designing for Encounters:**

- Design intersecting pathways at key points to encourage chance encounters and informal meetings.
- Plan flow patterns that guide people through central areas to increase the likelihood of spontaneous interactions.

- **Minimizing Isolation:**

- Reduce the number of isolated or secluded spaces to prevent

feelings of disconnection and promote a sense of community.

- Ensure workstations, offices, and communal areas are interconnected to foster a cohesive environment.

communication and information sharing.

- Embrace smart office solutions, like booking systems for meeting rooms, to streamline the use of spaces and reduce friction.

**Natural Elements and Comfort**

• **Incorporating Nature:**

- Enhance well-being and invite people to linger and converse by using biophilic design, which integrates natural elements like plants and natural light.
- Include spaces, such as gardens and terraces, to offer refreshing alternatives for interaction.

• **Comfort and Aesthetics:**

- Create comfortable furnishings and pleasing environments to invite people to engage with one another.
- Pay attention to color schemes and lighting to influence the mood and atmosphere, encouraging positive interactions.

**Technology Integration**

• **Smart Design:**

- Integrate technology, such as digital screens and interactive displays, to facilitate

• **Virtual Connectivity:**

- Provide robust infrastructure for virtual meetings to ensure that remote participants can engage seamlessly with those on-site.
- Offer hybrid spaces in support of physical and virtual presence to foster broader participation.

**Privacy and Focus Areas**

• **Balancing Interaction and Privacy:**

- Promoting interaction is important, but providing areas for focused work and private conversations is crucial.
- Balance the need for interaction with quiet zones and private rooms for reflection and one-on-one meetings,

Effective building design goes beyond aesthetics; it plays a vital role in enhancing personal interaction and fostering a sense of community.

By incorporating some of the above elements, You can create spaces that not only serve functional needs, but also enrich personal interactions, strengthen communal bonds, and help build strong disciples.

**Growth Points** is published twelve times a year. Individual subscription is \$29 (US Funds) per year. Permission is granted for use in a local church. Executive subscribers for wide distribution available for \$150 (US Funds) per year.

Copyrighted 2024 ISSN 1520-5096



Do you hunger to see  
**lives**  
**changed**  
 through the power  
 of God's Word?

Do you feel the weight of:

- “Rightly dividing the word of truth”?
- Communicating God’s truth with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit?
- Delivering the Bible message to people who came to church with very different backgrounds and concerns?

CrossTalk Global can help.



*CrossTalk Global provides the skill-based, results-oriented, continuing education you've been looking for.*

- Cohort-Based
- Spiritual Formation Focused
- Practitioner-Sensitive
- Culturally Aware
- Faculty-Mentor Led
- Remain in Ministry Context

Over three years, this unique hybrid program combines in-person and remote experiences.

Participants will attend six one-week sessions held twice a year.

In addition to high-quality instruction and peer learning, you will receive expert personalized coaching every month.

And you have the option of earning an M.A. in Biblical Communication in the process.

CrossTalk can help you preach God’s transforming Word with fidelity, clarity, and effect.

Want to know more? Click here: [www.crosstalkglobal.org/america](http://www.crosstalkglobal.org/america)

Want a ‘taste’ of what CrossTalk is like?  
 Click here for upcoming 1-day seminars: [www.crosstalkglobal.org/seminars](http://www.crosstalkglobal.org/seminars)