

## Church / Business Start-Up Paper No. OCCG-024

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** A member's start-up of a local business in conjunction with the starting of a Church of Christ can be a marriage made for Heaven. Each can be supportive of the other and can together do what is difficult for either of them individually to do.

### KEY WORDS:

Church of Christ, Day Care, start-up, evangelism posters

### REPORT:

It is difficult for a start-up congregation to make the transition from an idea to a large piece of real estate with a major capital improvement such as a church building. It can and usually must happen in a series of steps.

A first step can be to meet in a rented space such as a public school or a hotel meeting room as they require little capital investment and no long-term commitment. The offset to this convenience is that they do not give the congregation a real "home" where they can put up a sign. It does give the members a chance to learn if they can work together before making larger commitments.

A 24/7 physical sign presence and a feeling that this is really your place are not critical, but the lack of them can seriously inhibit

your commitment and your evangelism and growth. It seems to be less of a problem for groups which provide a rock and roll show with their services, but it seems to be an obstacle for a Bible based church.

A second step in congregational growth can be to rent a space in a commercial building such as a strip center. This can frequently have the advantage of a congregation's use of parking space on Sunday morning, which is when most business don't use the parking spaces.

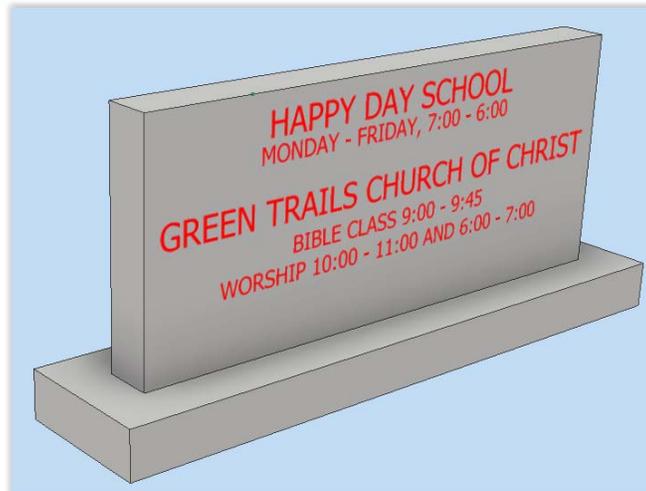
Rental of business type spaces is typically complicated with high rental costs, long term contracts, remodeling costs which are not recoverable, and landlords who don't want to deal with churches.

The question at this point is can you find a business which does not need the space on Sunday (or Wed. night) and can leave open floor

space. If such a business existed, the business could be the entity to engage the landlord and could time share the space with the congregation.

An arrangement like this can provide the location sign for the church 24/7, along with the 24/7 sign for the business as in the graphic on the first page.

One such business might be a Day Care or Pre-School. A Day Care or Pre-School facility can have a large open space for the



children to play in which can be converted into your “auditorium”. The Day Care or School and church can each have a reserved locked room which stores their equipment when not in use and acts as a classroom when they are active. A sample layout of that what this might look like is shown on the following figure.

This figure shows the room at the upper right being a classroom on Sunday and being used for storing the church furniture during the week. The class area below this room is always available for a classroom or office.

The upper left room shows the play school supplies and furniture being stored on Sunday and being deployed during the week.

There are obvious advantages of this symbiotic relationship beyond just saving money. Consider that the primary way to grow churches is through young families. Every customer for the Day Care or Pre-School is a young family. Every family is therefore an evangelistic prospect for your congregation which is brought to your facility multiple times every week. It is a deluxe Side Door Event (1). The premise of a Side Door Event is to bring prospects into your facility multiple times to give the personal evangelism process a chance to start. This program automatically delivers them to

you.

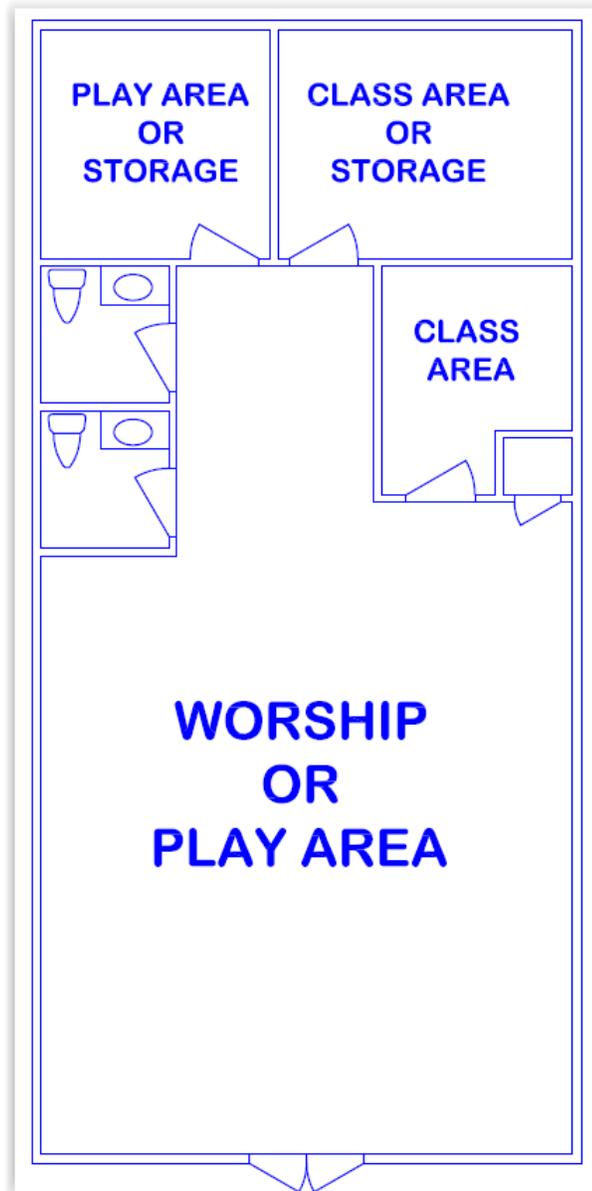
A particular benefit of a program like this on Day Care and Pre-School is that you can request that some of your member’s involvement time be spent working in the Day Care or Pre-School. Your members can work for free or at reduced wages to make the business a more viable start-up, while they make personal evangelism contacts.

Another advantage of this arrangement is that some of the decorations in the room can be evangelism related posters (2) such as on the following page. Some of these posters might be educational to some of the mothers bringing their children in, as well as some regular members.

Just imagine the probability that a young mother who trusts her children to a group 5 days a week, will also be inclined to bring them to Sunday School where the same teachers teach. If you can think of another program with a

better probability of success, please tell us and we will pass it on to others.

Other businesses/groups which might be a part of this program are an exercise studio,



study groups, coffee shop, or musical school. Any other of a number of businesses might be interested in cooperating such as a travel agency. Travel agencies tend to find it difficult to move furniture and files so that would need to be considered.

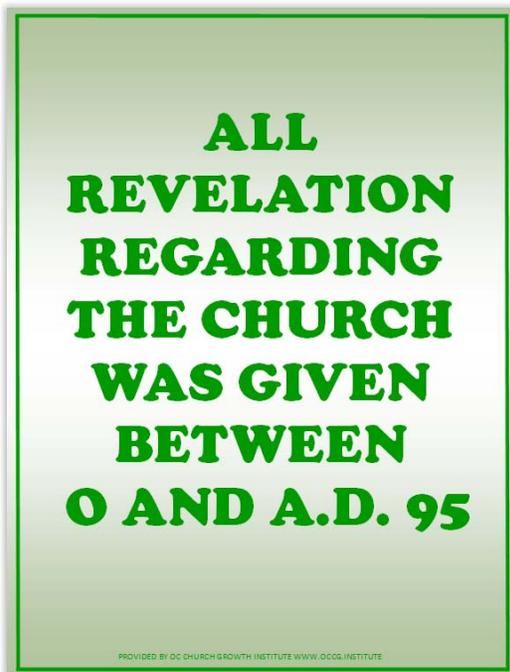
This is not a one size fits all idea. It needs to be tailored to match your area situation and your member's talents. Your members will be the best ones to tell you how to make it work in your area.

A second consideration is that if this is successful, it will have a lifetime limited by the size of the available space in your growing congregation. If you outgrow it and can independently afford a more conventional space, remember that this

was the engine which fueled your evangelism process. Do not then abandon this evangelistic work. Maintain it as an outreach method.

This paper is addressing start-up congregations. However, if you are an established congregation with no real mechanism for doing personal evangelism, consider this plan. If you have an appropriate facility, consider a day care at your facility. If it doesn't work at your facility, rent a space in a local strip mall and go to work.

What we simply can afford to do no longer is to keep doing what is not working and hope it will produce better results in the coming year.



Notes:

- (1) [www.occg.institute/PAPERS/MEMBER\\_INVOLVEMENT/SIDE\\_DOOR\\_EVENTS](http://www.occg.institute/PAPERS/MEMBER_INVOLVEMENT/SIDE_DOOR_EVENTS)
- (2) [www.occg.institute/PAPERS/TEACHING/TEACHING\\_POSTERS](http://www.occg.institute/PAPERS/TEACHING/TEACHING_POSTERS)

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