

## What Can You Do When Your Building Is Deteriorating?

**T**he signs have been apparent for some time: a leaking roof, an undependable boiler, masonry falling into the courtyard or (heaven forbid) the street. Something has to be done. But what? Who will do it?

The staff is already overworked. Money is tight. In recent years it has been a struggle just to balance the operating budget. Now it appears that major capital repairs cannot be postponed much longer. How will the congregation manage?

Does this situation sound familiar? If so, you are not alone. Congregations throughout the country are facing similar scenarios as their properties fall victim to age, pollution, escalating repair and operating costs, and demographic changes in both memberships and the greater community. What can you do?

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### Four Choices--It's up to you...

As congregations struggle with these common problems, four basic options are emerging:

1. Dispose of the property;
2. Patch and pray;
3. Announce the problem and embark immediately on a fund raising campaign;
4. Carefully assess the situation and develop a coordinated approach to raising funds, repairing the building and perhaps even fully restoring its historic appearance.

If you are reading this book, you are obviously trying to avoid Option #1. Good for you! America needs her distinctive and beautiful religious properties!

For most churches and synagogues, Options #2 and #3 are the most attractive, at least at first glance. There is a real temptation to make minor repairs and hope for the best or to move full-speed ahead, announcing the problem, raising the money and repairing the damage. Both options, however, ignore a cardinal rule of older buildings: *"The problem you can see is only the tip of the iceberg."*

As anyone who has worked with older buildings knows, a seemingly simple matter such as peeling paint or crumbling plaster can signal a host of problems ranging from unsound masonry to plumbing leaks to deteriorated downspouts. Opening the wall can reveal frayed electrical wiring or (worse yet) asbestos. Many institutions have found their plans short-circuited when the originally announced fund raising goal proved embarrassingly insufficient to cover the cost of the actual work.

A coordinated approach to fund raising and building repair and restoration —Option #4— can prevent experiences like this. Such an approach can also ensure that true priorities are addressed in building restoration rather than the problems that are the most visible or seem to be the most immediate. A coordinated approach can also ensure that the congregation reaches its full potential in fund raising, that it gets the greatest return on all its expenditures, and that it is energized—not drained—by the fund raising and restoration efforts.



## A New Approach to Building Restoration and Fund Raising

*In addition to the gifts which have traditionally come from a Congregation's own membership, new support is coming from organizations and individuals willing to help care for buildings and institutions they recognized as vital to the places in which they live or work.*

Fund raising for the repair and restoration of religious properties has changed dramatically in recent years. Donors are more sophisticated; the competition from other charities is more intense; and there are many more tools available to savvy fund raisers. In most cases, an appeal from the pulpit is no longer enough to raise operating support, much less the major monies needed to repair, restore and maintain old buildings. Religious institutions must be prepared to compete—and compete well—for the contributed dollar.

On a happy note, interest in the maintenance and preservation of religious properties is widening. More and more individuals, foundations, corporations and municipalities are coming to see the preservation of important religious properties as a *community* priority, not just a congregational one. Community organizations such as preservation and historical societies, chambers of commerce and civic groups are banding together in partnerships unimagined only a few years ago. New preservation programs and partnerships are emerging to provide technical assistance.

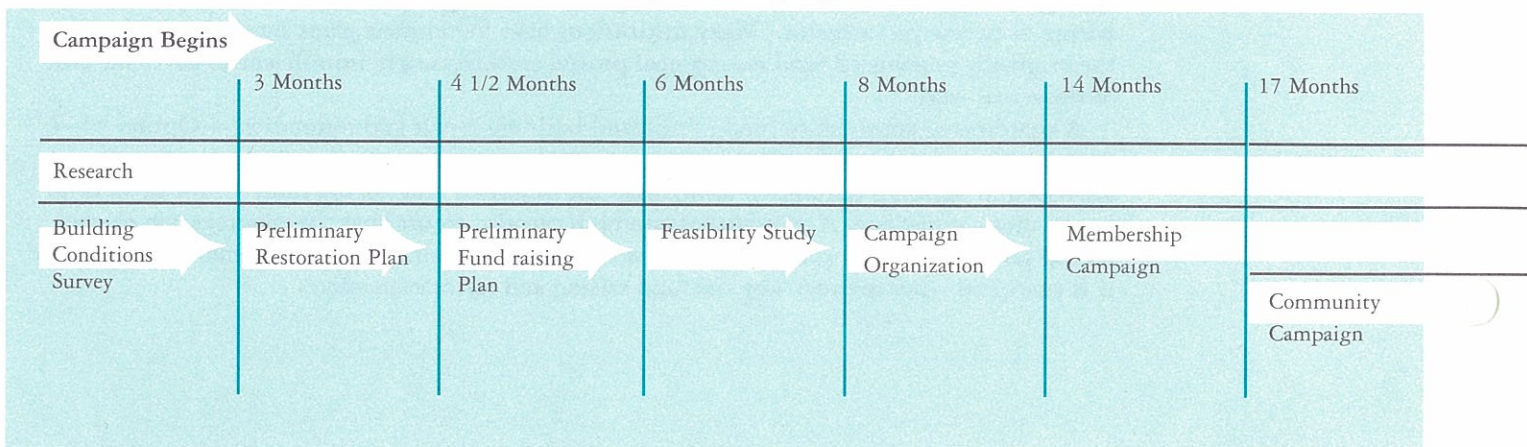
These developments indicate that a new pattern of support is emerging across the nation for the repair and restoration of America's historic churches and synagogues. In addition to the gifts which have traditionally come from a congregation's own membership, new support is coming from organizations and individuals willing to help care for buildings and institutions they recognize as vital to the places in which they live or work. Reaching out and involving members of the greater community is opening new avenues of financial support for many congregations and providing the opportunity to make new friends or partners who can become long-term supporters. It is an exciting time to be involved in raising funds for your historic property!

All this heightened interest and participation provides even more incentive for a congregation to tell its story effectively, to tap all available resources and to compete successfully in the marketplace.

### What is a coordinated approach to building restoration and fund raising?

*A coordinated approach to building restoration and fund raising is a process of reconciling total building needs with total financial resources.* This approach requires careful study of the needs of the building, the giving potential of the congregation and the community, and the development of two related plans: one for building repair and restoration and one for fund raising. Both of these plans are continually refined as circumstances change and new information becomes available during the course of the campaign.

### Capital Campaign Timeline



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**Isn't all this complicated?**

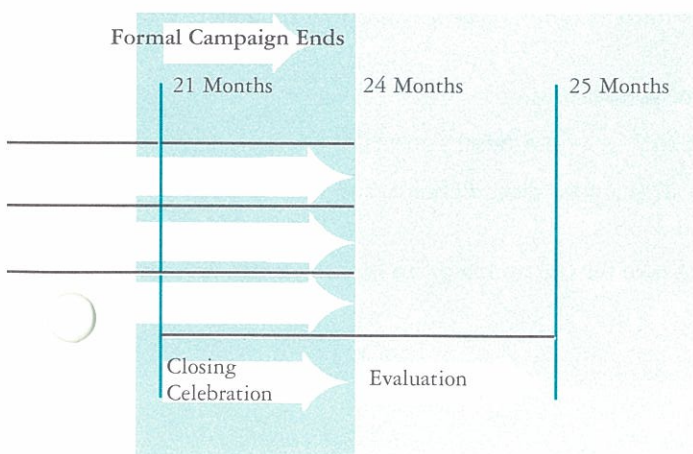
At first glance, it may seem so. However, it can be helpful to think of the process as a giant jigsaw puzzle. In the beginning, the “big picture” isn’t apparent; multiple pieces must be collected and examined. Often two pieces must be studied at the same time; sometimes a piece must be re-positioned several times to find its proper fit. Eventually, the picture does emerge, but woe to the institution that tries to complete the task without all the pieces!

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**What are the pieces that have to come together in a coordinated campaign?**

A successful campaign is an amalgamation of a thousand details. For the purpose of this book, the details have been compressed into twenty six major sections divided into eleven chapters. These are:

1. Developing A Preliminary Restoration Plan
  - A. Assessing Needs: The Conditions Survey
  - B. Setting Priorities
2. Developing Consensus
3. Do We Need Help in Developing Our Fund Raising Plan?
4. Developing a Preliminary Fund Raising Plan
  - A. Writing the Case Statement
  - B. Creating a Pyramid of Gifts
  - C. Identifying Potential Donors
5. Testing the Preliminary Plans — The Feasibility Study
6. Finalizing Campaign Plans
  - A. Leadership, Legal Structure and Campaign Policy
  - B. Options for Establishing a Separate Organization or Fund Raising Partnership
  - C. The Importance of “Advance Gifts”
  - D. Refining the Message
  - E. Determining the Campaign Structure and Recruiting the Campaign Team
  - F. Record Systems that Keep Campaigns on Track
  - G. Materials that Win Friends and Influence People
7. Implementing the Plans
  - A. The Solicitation Process
  - B. The Research and Rating of Prospective Donors
  - C. Implementing the Membership Campaign





8. Implementing the Community Campaign
  - A. Community Campaign Leadership
  - B. The Markets for a Community Campaign
  - C. What Publicity Can Do For You
  - D. The Role of Special Events in a Restoration Campaign
  - E. Frequently Experienced Problems and How to Solve Them
9. The Closing Celebration
10. Building on Success
11. Evaluating the Results

Do you notice an emphasis on *planning*? Successful campaigns are 70% planning and preparation and less than 30% active solicitation, with a few percentage points reserved for evaluation and celebration. *The most critical stage in any campaign is not after it is launched, but before it is announced.*

In the Preface, we've hinted at several general principles that apply to every campaign. What are they?

### Guiding Principles for a Successful Capital Campaign

1. There is no substitute for leadership. Every campaign must have a core of individuals willing to give sacrificially, to solicit enthusiastically and to provide consistent, committed leadership.
2. Your building and your history can lead you to unexpected sources of support. Be creative in preparing your case.
3. Expert help in building restoration and fund raising is available and, in some cases, can save time and money over the long run.
4. In any restoration effort, a conditions survey of the building's physical problems is an essential first step.
5. Few congregations can afford to address every need identified by a conditions survey. Clear priorities and a program for phased repairs must be established.
6. Consensus and commitment on the part of the congregation are prerequisites for a successful campaign.
7. Wise campaigners test their case and the strength of their "markets" of potential donors with a feasibility study.
8. "Advance gifts" will determine the success of your campaign.
9. A "Pyramid of Gifts" is the most important tool in a fund raiser's arsenal.
10. See your prospects in person. A telephone call is a poor second choice, and mail an even poorer third.
11. Never hesitate to tell a prospect what it will take for the campaign to be successful. Ask for a specific amount.
12. Don't forget to say "Thanks."