



Enter Rehab Projects with Caution

I offer the following comments and observations on the article "Urban-Suburban Partnerships" (February 2). As an ex-real estate agent/urban house owner, I would caution anyone with little or no experience against trying to buy property, especially property that needs extensive renovation and/or rehabilitation in an urban setting. Take the advice of the Scriptures and become "wise as serpents, innocent as doves" by "counting the costs" (known and unknown) and seeking wise legal counsel.

Find an attorney from the municipality where the property you might purchase is located. Your attorney will help you understand and comply with multiple codes and ordinances with respect to building, fire, and safety issues as well as tenant-landlord rights.

In partnering with an urban church, the suburban church should come with the attitude, "What are your biggest needs?" You might discover that your money would accomplish more by helping urban church members catch up on back rent or pay their utilities.

Should the house rehabilitation project proceed, make sure a general contractor comes along to estimate the costs of bringing the structure up to current codes. Expect surprises and cost overruns. A cheap house can become an expensive proposition when the cost of materials and paid professional help is needed.

Any church or ministry interested in such a ministry should probably consult the best organization in this field, Habitat for Humanity.

—Craig Gillhaus
Hackettstown, New Jersey

Providing a Vital Service

In the past year or so I have delighted to read the witty, insightful, and well-grounded articles written individually by Richard Koffarnus and Daniel Schantz. It was my pleasure and honor to have studied briefly under Mr. Koffarnus during my time at Central Christian College of the Bible, and to have had the opportunity to see both him and Mr. Schantz at their work.

Frankly, the letters of complaints regarding their articles have almost been more amusing than the articles themselves!

God bless these men in the vital service they provide to the undenominational Christian churches.

—Adam Gonnerman
via e-mail