

Dream to Dedication Day: Developing a Destination that Lifts the Spirits

I've learned repeatedly that the Kingdom is built on relationships, rather than bricks and mortar. One key relationship that God has been nurturing is my friendship with John Cissel, SIOR since he gave up his personal ownership of a major real estate brokerage firm in the Northeast US to focus on Kingdom building.

If you don't know John yet, you will be blown away at his thought leadership. He is not only a licensed real estate broker, but also holds a General Contractor license, because doing real estate in an urban context requires a detailed understanding of how buildings go up, go down, and what it takes to renew them. This is the guy who helped Tim Keller figure out how to do multi-level urban church in a Manhattan parking structure. According to Tim (Senior Pastor at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, NY),

John is uniquely positioned to help churches and faith-based organizations in undertaking larger-scaled real estate projects - a service that is so desperately needed. I don't know of others who possess the background, expertise, and success in so many facets of both commercial and kingdom-centered real estate, and who are doing this work through a Christian organization that is solely focused on the faith-based non-profit community.

I'm pleased to announce that John has joined our team as President of Visioneering Real Estate. As we've discovered in over a thousand faith-based developments around the world, it is not enough to have competent design and building teams. As our mission field is increasingly diverse and urban, the traditional suburban church building model of buying cheap farmland and developing out a campus has gone the way of the "Mall of Generica"...the economics and demographics just don't make sense any more, and no-one is building them. Adding strategic real estate advisory services to our team of urban planners, architects, interior designers, branding gurus, and technical consultants is truly a needed and exciting addition to support pastors who want to pastor, rather than play "Monopoly" with the church offering.

We've learned the hard way that when trying to develop Christ-centered community, churches often get a cold shoulder because they are perceived as a LULU (Locally Undesirable Land Use). They are often seen by the city as a black hole in the city, taking away the ability of a site to generate sales or property taxes. They are seen by neighbors as a parking and noise problem. Gone are the days when the highest and best site was reserved for sacred space. John has discovered that our shared client base can be strategic anchor tenants for active, mixed use urban space that connects people horizontally, as well as vertically, just as sacred spaces in traditional settings, such as European cathedrals on the city's piazzas, always have.

However, it does take sophisticated financial modeling, due diligence, and clear vision-casting.

If you'd like to explore how your mission might align with our vision of helping you "develop a destination that lifts the spirit" let's talk!

>> [Read more from Mel.](#)