

Church swims upstream by moving downtown

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WACO—Migration from downtowns to the suburbs doesn't seem to be slowing down. And because families are moving to the suburbs, churches are moving there too. But one church in Waco is swimming upstream by relocating downtown.

[Acts Christian Fellowship](#), a Baptist church, recently began renovation of property in downtown Waco where the church plans to turn a warehouse into a sanctuary.

Pastor David Booker explained when the church began to outgrow its suburban location, the congregation considered two options—add on or move.

Acts Christian Fellowship has a burden for the homeless and needy in Waco, so moving downtown seemed like the right thing to do, Booker said.

Last year, for example, instead of holding a traditional Christmas Eve service in their building, members of the church met in a parking lot downtown and gave out hot meals to the homeless. They fellowshiped with

them and celebrated the true meaning of Christmas with a spirit of giving.

“We preach about God’s heart for the needy all the time from the pulpit,” Booker said. And now, the church had the opportunity to move down to the location of the heart of their ministry.

Acts was able to sell its suburban church property in just two weeks, much quicker than the two years they had expected. Booker immediately began to look for a location downtown, and he couldn’t stop thinking about the first building he saw.

The only problem was, the building wasn’t for sale. Booker approached the owner, who agreed to sell the building if the church would lease back to him the necessary parts. They agreed to gradually reduce the space leased until the property houses only the church.

Renovations quickly began, and the congregation showed up ready to work. During workday Saturdays and several evenings during the week, church members helped build walls, paint and clean the space in preparation for the big move.

The new location also will make other established ministries more effective. Acts offers a sack lunch Friday program to the homeless in Waco, as well as a hot lunch two other times during the week.

Acts has a long-term goal for the new downtown property as well. They hope to work with the City of Waco to provide supportive housing for the homeless in a building across the street.

“We want to keep the church and ministries together but separate,” Booker said. And the property downtown will allow them to do just that.

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