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Newsroom

Danley Sound Builds Attendance At Abundant Life Church



CLARKSVILLE, TN — Gospel-centered Abundant Life Church needed to fit a growing congregation into what seemed to be an ever-shrinking sanctuary. With no room to expand, the church leaders opted to build a new 450-seat room adjacent to their existing facility.

Church officials also called in Scott Oliver of Pro Audio Solutions, Nashville, to design and install audio for the new sanctuary. Despite budgetary challenges, he gave Abundant Life a Danley SH-50/TH-115 centered system that effectively delivers two stereo fields, one on either side of the aisle, with clarity and volume that is calling new members to the church from the neighborhood.

"In a lot of my church designs, I'm forced to make compromises due to imperfect structural features," Oliver said. "At Abundant Life, everything was straightforward. They have a centered stage at one end of a reasonably large room with no balconies. It's metal prefab that's finished off with standard carpeting and drywall. The ceilings are tall enough that I was able to use whatever speakers I wanted in any arrangement I wanted. It was a good opportunity to push things to the next level."

When Oliver shared his idea to deliver a "dual stereo" system for Abundant Life, it met with skepticism among others in the pro audio community. "They said I couldn't do it, and they said it with enthusiasm," he laughed. "I wanted to give Abundant Life a nice, tight stereo image from anywhere in the house. I figured that I could put one stereo pair on one side of the aisle and a second stereo pair on the other side of the aisle."

What the naysayers weren't counting on, Oliver added, was Danley's well-defined pattern control. "I can stand anywhere in the room and do the clap test with reflections bouncing all over the room. When I ping the room with a short tone through the Danley loudspeakers, there are no reflections. This proves that the speakers have an extremely tight pattern control and that the system is properly designed and installed keeping the energy on the seating area and off the walls. The test is a rather bizarre thing to witness first hand, but it is so cool I could probably sell tickets."

He continued, "The specifications that Danley publishes are refreshingly honest. They claim that the SH-50 has a 50-degree beam width. Sure enough, if you walk anywhere within 25-degrees on either side of the midline, the SH-50 sounds loud, with a full, even frequency spectrum. But as soon as you hit 26 degrees, the SPL drops off like a rock, even at low frequencies where other manufacturer's supposedly 'directional' loudspeakers have no directionality at all!" It was that well-defined beam that made it possible to fit two stereo images into one room without crosstalk destroying the imaging.

Oliver used a modest rack of Crown XTi amps to power what, to unknowing eyes, might appear to be a LCR array of Danley SH-50s and SH-100s. The far left SH-50 provides left channel information to the seats on the left hand side of the aisle, whereas the left SH-50 in the center cluster provides right channel information to those same seats. That arrangement is mirrored on the other side of the aisle. Three SH-100s provide mono-summed downfill for the front seating area, but Oliver is quick to point out that those seats receive stereo imaging as well. The downfills simply kick up the volume a bit. Two Danley TH-115 subwoofers drive it all home. "It has been said that the Holy Spirit resides in the bass cabinet," laughed Oliver.

Within the first week inside the new sanctuary, a police officer showed up with a noise complaint. "He said that he sat outside for a little while to assess things for himself," recalled Leonard Porter, head sound engineer for Abundant Life. "Then he drove down the road and said he could still here the music clear as a bell five blocks away. I invited him in to hear the music from the inside, and he was impressed by the fact that it didn't seem deafening — that's the benefit of low distortion. He basically let us be, and that volume and clarity has actually been a boon to attendance." After several months, the neighbors stopped complaining and instead joined in the worship. Attendance is up, and the sound system is thought to deserve much of the credit. On off-nights, record labels and independent artists rent the room to take advantage of its sound.

"Abundant life is a great installation," summarized Oliver. "There's no more than 3dB difference anywhere in the room — and that's without a line array. Since I come from a studio background, I'm proud to say that you could mix an album in there, seriously. And that level of quality is not just for audio professionals. The congregation hears it and loves it. In fact, that congregation keeps getting bigger and bigger because of the sound system."

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