

NEXT STEPS AT NORTHWEST

(From Todd Havekost)

PROPERTY STORY

In Children's SS, we recently studied the event (from the book of Joshua) when God miraculously parted the Jordan river so His people could cross over into the promised land.

This was the moment that represented the fulfillment of God's promise - a promise that had been delayed by 40 years of wilderness wandering.

But, after the entire nation had crossed the Jordan River, there they were, standing in the Promised Land for the first time, eager to move forward to take and experience the long-awaited "land flowing with milk and honey."

God told them to pause, to take a moment to reflect on His faithfulness.

He instructed them to take twelve stones out of the middle of the river and build an altar at a place called Gilgal (Joshua 4:3) so that they would remember, and so that they could point to the stones and tell their children of God's miraculous provision enabling Israel to cross the Jordan River on dry ground. (Joshua 4:6,7)

These stones would be there so "that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty..." (Joshua 4:24)

This is a night when we are spending most of our time looking forward, and appropriately so.

Dave just spoke about Mission, Strategy, Values and Vision and Jeff will speak about our way forward seeking to faithfully steward the land sale proceeds.

But, we are going to pause and spend a couple of minutes reflecting back on one of the many aspects of God's faithfulness here at Northwest. Specifically, we're going to think about His incredibly generous and miraculous financial provision for His church.

God's generous hand was seen through the original provision of this property at 8900 Guilbeau Road

For most of the first 10 years of Northwest's existence, we met on Sunday mornings in a Seventh Day Adventist church on Bandera Road, and we rented a house across Bandera from that church that served as an office and a place to meet during the week.

But we knew that owning a meeting place of our own would enable a much-expanded ministry and God worked through a huge downturn in the Texas real estate market to provide that meeting place.

This structure and its lighted parking lot, sitting on 2.2 acres was a shell, intended to be a shopping center. But, it was empty except for two nominally-finished small spaces at the upper end. (occupied by a cleaners and video arcade)

Before going into bankruptcy, it was valued on the tax rolls for \$1.2M. We were able to purchase it for \$210K. So, for those of you doing the math along with me, God provided this facility to us at a cost \$990K below what it had been valued shortly before.

I think it is fair to round that amount and say that "deal" represented God's first million-dollar miraculous provision for His ministry through Northwest.

We have sought to be faithful stewards of His provision of this property.

We finished out the upper end over the years in four increments on a cash basis. And we were able to pay off the mortgage for the property and the finish-out of the lower end about two years ahead of schedule.

We have been debt free now for over eight years. (since 4/2009)

Soon after we began utilizing this facility for ministry, we sought additional adjacent land to have the potential for facility expansion should it be warranted by the scope of God's ministry here.

And again, we have repeatedly experienced God's gracious, generous provision.

In 1994, we purchased the adjacent two acres to the east along Guilbeau, across the power line easement, for \$40K.

In 2004, when the owners of the twelve acres behind us were having trouble developing it, they offered us the property at the significantly reduced price of \$125K.

In 2006, we sold the original two acres to the east along Guilbeau for \$130K. (cleared \$120K after closing costs)

And 2 months ago, we learned that the sale of ten of the twelve acres behind us for \$2.5M would go through.

So, netting out all these land transactions...
...we still have two adjacent acres (behind us along Old Tezel), preserving the potential for facility expansion should it be warranted by the scope of God's ministry here; and
...as in Jesus' parable of the soils, God has multiplied our initial land investment of \$40K by sixty times, into a net amount that will significantly exceed \$2M.

This "deal" represents God's second million-dollar miraculous provision for His ministry through Northwest.

A good friend texted me this week "God is certainly exceptionally faithful and generous".

He demonstrates that in countless ways in our lives. Tonight, we have reflected on and we celebrate one of the ways He has demonstrated His faithfulness, and that is through His financial provision for His ministry through Northwest.