



New and big changes with our “NEXT STEP” project

A couple months ago (after asking our congregation to fast for our church, and pray the “Bless us and enlarge our territory” prayer) I found myself in an interesting conversation. A church that I have history with was about to undertake their own building project. As such, they had modular buildings they were ready to part with. Even though the modules were older buildings (and 3 trailers smaller than what we were approved for) the church was willing to donate them to us. This was great news and appeared to be something that could save us about \$300,000!

Needless to say, we held off placing the final order for the new trailers, while we explored the viability of this change. After various inspections of the building, meetings with the county, and reviews with the fire marshal, all appeared to be a God-send. This was particularly good because our contributions to NEXT STEP were still only around the half way point.

The only problem with that new scenario is that it lacked space for our offices (being smaller by 3 trailers). It is our current office space that we were vacating to make more room for kids’ space.

The possibility of those trailers took us down a new thought process, especially with the San Ramon campus launch now on the horizon. One advantage with the down economy was affordable office space. This was not practical 18 months ago. We began to consider whether having a presence in Alamo and in San Ramon was not only viable but an advantage.

At this point, let me add the most important aspect to this entire “Next Step” process. The most critical need that drove the Next Step campaign was to get extra children’s space in Alamo. That is unchanged. It is unchanged even with the San Ramon launch. We have staff members preparing to vacate their office space right now in order to accomplish this. That being said, our aim from the beginning was never new buildings, used buildings or offices. Those are a means to an end. They are tools for ministry. We’ve been committed to finding the most economical method for achieving our goal of maximize ministry. 18 months ago, the best solution was new module buildings. One month ago it was used and donated module buildings, and possibly moving offices off-site.

Now for the news ... as of a few days ago, the modular buildings that we were anticipating have had to be withdrawn. The church that was donating them has put their new project on

hold, which eliminates the ability for them to part with those buildings. They are striving to be wise stewards, just as we are, and they had some unexpected changes confront them.

Needless to say, that pretty much changes everything.

In this entire process, what has been most interesting to me is this: I have felt at peace. I'm never excited about delays, but have learned that sometimes the delays of life are from God. I was certainly at peace with what seemed to be a huge dollar-saving miracle. And I am still at peace even with the loss of that potential "miracle".

I said it this weekend, and I will say it again here, God expected Abraham to step out in faith, and leave where he was, without knowing the final destination or even the route to that unknown destination. We at least feel we know our desired destination; but we have had to hold loosely the route to get there. It's not the God didn't know where he eventually wanted Abraham to be. He just expected Abraham to trust the GPS (God's Positioning System). He expects the same from us.

As I said, sometimes our delays (and detours) are from God. Sometimes they are obstacles, from the enemy of our soul, put in front of us to discourage us or keep us from doing what God wants. Either way, God expects us to trust him. When we do, his outcomes are ultimately achieved.

So, where are we now? We are praying and evaluating. I hope to be able to share an update within 2 weeks.

Until then, be assured of these three important details:

- 1) What "Next Step" has accomplished is really important. It has helped us to raise a little over \$300,000. Those monies are not only set aside, until we have the most functional and economical solution we can find to direct them to, but we believe they will go further now than 12 months ago.
- 2) If you gave towards this project, and want those monies to only be applied to a new building in Alamo, we will gladly set them aside for that future purpose. Just email me that request. Otherwise we'll use them to reach the goal behind "Next Step," which was, and is, to provide more kid's space in Alamo (however that happens).
- 3) God is blessing and leading our church. These changes will not stop that, and in time will produce benefits for us that we couldn't see 18 months ago. God knows what we don't. He see's ways around the changes that are happening in our world. I can't imagine living without that!

Thanks for reading all the way to this point!

Looking forward to seeing you this weekend for our 10 Year Anniversary!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized name with a large initial letter.