



Facility Stewardship Today

"Improving church health through Facility Stewardship"

www.facilityministry.org

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Church Mergers is the theme for this 4th installment of Facility Stewardship Today—a newsletter about “Improving church health through Facility Stewardship,” with blog highlights from the last six months at www.facilityministry.org.

For His Service & Yours,

A Great Adventure!



What an Adventure!

On May 25, we celebrated the building retirement for Zion Bible Church. It was an amazing service with God present in grand ways—how else can you explain a 3-hour service that everyone agreed was worth every minute and that the time flew by?

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Facilities and Kingdom Thinking

Buildings are not ministry.
People are ministry!
Buildings are a tool for ministering to people.

While I often deal with facility issues, my real passion is for the people and ministry impact that those facilities can enhance.

This point was highlighted during our recent Building Retirement Service at Zion Bible Church.

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Verse for Today (vft):

"This is what the LORD says: 'When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place. For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart'" (Jeremiah 29:10-13—NIV 84).

Ministry Encouragement:

"... mission-driven church mergers have tremendous potential to exponentially expand the impact of strong, vibrant churches as well as to revitalize plateaued and declining churches" (Jim Tomberlin & Warren Bird in Better Together: Making Church Mergers Work, preface—page xix).

Link Highlight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1iU1vaieoE> is the link to video about the original construction of the building for Zion Bible Church from the 1930's. You can also go to YouTube and search for "Zion Bible Church."

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[A Great Adventure! \(continued\)](#)

A year ago (May, 2013), I described my new role as interim pastor of Zion Bible Church:

“At my first service as pastor I suggested that I honestly don’t know where the future will take us—we have use of this building for another year. But with great conviction, I also believe God is leading our steps. I’ve called this season for Zion Bible Church, ‘The Great Adventure.’”

Then, on Sunday, May 25, 2014, Zion Bible Church retired the building and celebrated God’s work in the past, present, and future. Pastor Dave Denlinger, ZBC’s faithful pastor for 36 years, paid tribute to the heritage of more than 80 years of world-wide impact. As ZBC’s interim pastor, I described the recent Great Adventure as God clearly led the church to a merged future with NorthBridge Church. Pastor Mark Albrecht, NorthBridge’s lead pastor, cast the vision for the future as Zion Bible Church officially merged with NorthBridge the following Sunday, June 1, 2014.

That June 1 service was the culmination of more than six months of God’s clear leading for the future together. NorthBridge is based in Antioch, but is planning to build on 20 acres along Rt. 173—6 miles from Antioch High School and 6.5 miles from Zion-Benton High School. This property was well within the radius that Zion Bible Church plotted out for a future ministry location. Prior to the merger dialogue, NorthBridge was targeting the Zion area as part of their future ministry Jerusalem. The series of events for both sides seemed providential! Each meeting, Bible study, and joint ministry/service continued to confirm this is the right fit for the DNA of Zion Bible Church!

And if there were still any questions, the amazing service of May 25 erased all doubt!

There are still some unknowns about the future. But my conviction of God’s leading in May, 2013, is even greater today. And I would not miss this next Great Adventure for anything!

[Facilities and Kingdom Thinking \(continued\)](#)

During that final service, we played a portion of the video showing the construction of the church building from the 1930’s. It is an actual video, not just a collection of still photographs. Yes, it’s black and white and there is no sound (there is a musical background), but it is a fascinating documentation of the building progress. Those were forward thinking people who had the wisdom to document the process without any of the technology or social media formats that characterize today.

While it is interesting to see the progress of the building, please note that this video is really about people. Despite the teeth of the depression years, many faithful workers gave of themselves and contributed to the construction. They gave their best as demonstrated by numerous clips of men working while wearing ties and dress clothes. We smile at that practice today, but it should also make us pause to ponder the daily life dynamics that prompted such “work clothes.” I understand that often workers showed up during their lunch breaks or right after work. Many were unemployed, but they did not stop productive labor as they contributed to the church what they could.

And please note how often people are smiling. Now, maybe that’s because the cameraman told them to smile, but there seems to be more depth to the expressions of joyful service. They were not simply building a building, but they were contributing to Kingdom work.

The video about the building of the building is not really about the building, it is about the people. Although it was difficult to leave that facility after the Building Retirement Service, everyone realized it’s about people and not buildings.