

God's Building Project

1 Chronicles 28

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The Sagrada Familia is a large church building located in the city of Barcelona, Spain. Construction began on the 19th of March, 1882, 135 years ago. After the original architect resigned from the project, a young man named Antoni Gaudi took over. His engineering style transformed the project combining Gothic and New Art styles.

But construction went slowly. In fact, people started talking about the length of the construction period. When someone asked Gaudi about this he is said to have remarked, "My client, meaning God, is not in a hurry." By the time of Gaudi's death in 1926, the basilica was between 15 and 25 per cent complete.

Yet work continued until the 1936 Spanish Civil War. During that time parts of the basilica and Gaudi's notes were destroyed. The project remained inactive until sometime in the 1950's. Construction reached the mid point in 2010 with some of its greatest challenges remaining.

Yet the work has progressed. The current Chief Architect, Jordi Fauli, announced in October 2015 that the project is 70 per cent done. The goal is to complete construction of the church's structure by 2026 on the 100th anniversary of Gaudi's death. The project currently receives no government or church funding. It is solely funded by admission fees to visitors which bring in around 25 million euros each year.

If it is finished in 2026, it would have taken 144 years to build. Now would we accept that timeline in our day and in our part of the world? No. We would think it completely inefficient and ineffective. After all the church sanctuary you sit in took just around a year to construct. If we had to wait 144 years to complete it, I think we might get somewhat frustrated.

Yet, in a way, we are in the middle of a building project just like the Sagrada Familia. We're no longer part of a physical building project. But we are part of God's spiritual building project called Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church that started nearly 41 years ago and will continue as long as God serves as chief architect. The question we face today is "what role is God calling each of us to play in the next phase of His building project here at SVBC?"

To ponder this question, we're going to look at another building project found in the Bible. This one didn't last quite long as the Sagrada Familia. But it did span some significant time and required adjustments by the people to God's plans for this project. As we look at the events surrounding this building project, I'd like you to think about this

question. What is God doing through this episode? After we find that out, we're going to further consider the question "what role is God calling us to play in His ongoing building project at SVBC?" Our text is 1 Chronicles 28.

1 Chronicles 28: 1-12; 19-21 ESV

28 David assembled at Jerusalem all the officials of Israel, the officials of the tribes, the officers of the divisions that served the king, the commanders of thousands, the commanders of hundreds, the stewards of all the property and livestock of the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the mighty men and all the seasoned warriors.² Then King David rose to his feet and said: "Hear me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD and for the footstool of our God, and I made preparations for building.³ But God said to me, 'You may not build a house for my name, for you are a man of war and have shed blood.'⁴ Yet the LORD God of Israel chose me from all my father's house to be king over Israel forever. For he chose Judah as leader, and in the house of Judah my father's house, and among my father's sons he took pleasure in me to make me king over all Israel.⁵ And of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) he has chosen Solomon my son to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel.

⁶ He said to me, 'It is Solomon your son who shall build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father.⁷ I will establish his kingdom forever if he continues strong in keeping my commandments and my rules, as he is today.'⁸ Now therefore in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, observe and seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever.

⁹ "And you, Solomon my son, know the God of your father and serve him with a whole heart and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches all hearts and understands every plan and thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.¹⁰ Be careful now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong and do it."

¹¹ Then David gave Solomon his son the plan of the vestibule of the temple, and of its houses, its treasuries, its upper rooms, and its inner chambers, and of the room for the mercy seat;¹² and the plan of all that he had in mind for the courts of the house of the LORD, all the surrounding chambers, the treasuries of the house of God, and the treasuries for dedicated gifts;

¹⁹ "All this he made clear to me in writing from the hand of the LORD, all the work to be done according to the plan."

²⁰ Then David said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous and do it. Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed, for the LORD God, even my God, is with you. He will not leave you or forsake you, until all the work for the service of the house of the LORD is finished.²¹ And behold the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and with you in all the work will be every willing man who has skill for any kind of service; also the officers and all the people will be wholly at your command."

It is near the end of King David's life. He has reigned 7 years over the southern tribes of Israel and 33 more years over the united kingdom. So he has been king for 40 years. After his early conquests and establishment of his reign, he

had in his heart to build a temple for the Lord. David loved the Lord. He was called a man after God's own heart. God sent a prophet to anoint him king even though he was the youngest of 7. God then empowered David to become king. God blessed David's reign even through David's missteps.

But David kept this dream of building the Lord's house in Jerusalem. So he began to collect funds and materials for the temple. He skillfully uses his position as king to prepare for this great building project that will replace the tent where Israel had worshipped God for about 300 years. The temple would serve as the gathering place for the people of God and the dwelling place of God when He would touch the earth with His presence. It would also serve as a constant reminder that God and this people were much more permanently connected. They now dwelt together in the land He promised them. They would worship Him in a permanent location. It was the next step to further strengthen Israel as a nation.

But at some point, God intervenes to alter David's plans. God announces that David will *not* be the one to build the temple. David was a man of war. He himself had killed many others including his most famous kill – the giant Goliath. God determined that such a man of blood would not be the one to construct a temple. Instead, God ordained that David's son Solomon would become king and build the temple.

Now if you were David, how might you have taken that news? You've had it in your heart to build this temple. You've saved and managed the nation's resources. It looks more and more possible like this dream may become a reality. But then God intervenes and says "You are not the person to do this." David could have taken his toys or his savings and provisions and gone home. He could have redirected them to a different purpose out of frustration. I'm not aware of any passages that reveal to us really what David thought about this or if he even struggled with it.

But in the end, David decides to go with God's plan. He embraces the reality that he will not see his dream come to completion during his lifetime. But he will equip and empower his son and the next generation to carry on the work.

So he first charges his son with the responsibility to walk closely with God. In verse 8 David declares "Observe and seek out all the commandments of the Lord your God, that you may possess this good land and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you forever."

Then in verse 10, he charges Solomon to take on the work. “Be careful now, for the Lord has chosen you to build a house for sanctuary; be strong and do it.” But David does not only encourage Solomon with words. The next verses describe all the provisions and savings David has done for this project. And they reveal something else.

God has designed this building. Somehow, God inspired David to come up with the blueprints for the building. He had dimensions, building design and different rooms. In verse 19 David says of the Lord “All this he has made clear to me in writing from the hand of the Lord, all the work to be done according to the plan.”

David then encourages his son again. He concludes with another gesture of empowerment. In addition to the savings of the nation’s treasury, David donates his own savings to the temple project. In 1st Chronicles 29 David donates 21000 pounds of gold, 50000 pounds of silver. Do you know how much 21000 pounds of gold is worth? Each pound is divided into 16 ounces. 21000 pounds is 336,000 ounces. On Friday morning Gold was trading at 1199\$/ounce. That means in today’s dollars, David donated 402 million 864 thousand dollars to this project. He calls other leaders to personally donate to this project. So by the end of David’s speech, Solomon and the next generation have received the plans, the funds and the materials to begin this massive building project. David then prays for the people. Solomon is anointed king. David soon dies.

Now the question I asked you to think about was this. What is God up to through this account? I believe that the answer is “**The Lord transitions His work from one generation to the next.**” We see the Lord doing this throughout the Bible. He transitioned his work from Abraham to Isaac to Jacob to Joseph. He saw Israel through the transition from Moses the deliverer to Joshua the conqueror.. Jesus prepared the disciples to carry on the work after his departure. The disciples who became apostles prepared to transition the work through their letters, lives and teaching to us today.

The Lord continues to do this transitioning work today in our lives. 40 years ago, a group of people gathered together and began a work called Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church. We celebrated those 40 years last year in April.

Many of you were part of those early years. You have seen this church through the building of phase one. You saw many people who came to Christ here; were baptized here; and have gone on to serve in other places. Some have completed their journey and gone on to heaven.

Then in March 2006, 11 years ago this month, the congregation at that time believed God called us to go ahead with the second phase of this facility. Some of you gave your time to the building committee. Some of you gave volunteer

hours to help in certain areas. You saw this structure go up through the spring and summer of 2006. We couldn't have VBS here that summer so we had to transition to backyard clubs throughout our church family because of the construction. Things continued through the Fall, Winter and into the next Spring. In May of 2007, we transitioned from worshipping in the gymnasium to this new sanctuary during a Sunday morning.

This facility has opened up many possibilities to minister to the community and connect with people throughout St. Albert. Yet there was the mortgage. Many of you faithfully participated in paying down the mortgage. This past December, it was paid in full.

Many of the dreams of 40 years ago have been fulfilled and provided for by God. But God's building project of this church family in this community is not done. It continues as long as God gives us grace to continue.

The question is will you join with the Lord as He transitions this work from the original generation that founded and established this church to the next generation that He is raising up. **The Lord's transitioning work from one generation to the next requires our joining Him in whatever role He gives us.**

If you're part of that first generation, or the older generation, you can rejoice in what God has done in and through you these past 40 years. Churches that survive and thrive for forty years don't just happen. Some churches are like mushrooms. They spring up quickly but seem to be gone just as quickly. Some churches are like old barns. They once served a noble purpose. But they're dying and need to be replaced. We have been given a legacy that continues to survive and thrive with young families like we've seen today. Many of you have persevered through some very difficult times to stay together. That perseverance by the power of the Lord is part of why we are all here today.

But you still have a role to play in the transitioning this work to the next generation. Will you embrace this transition? Will you spend whatever years God has left for you in passing on and building up the next generation for the next phase of ministry of Sturgeon Valley Baptist Church? How can you help? You can pray. You can mentor a young person. You can bring someone along with your current ministry and show them what it involves. We will be aiming for some specific actions where you can invest and participate in raising up the next generation.

If you're part of the younger generation or you are newer to this church family – will you embrace the calling of God on you to take up His work for the years ahead? Will you cherish and recognize the great gift you have been given of the past 40 years of ministry and establishment of this church?

The original generation has passed on a lot of resources, planning and effort. They have established a witness in this community through 4 decades. They have contributed a facility that is now debt free. That means the opportunity for more ministry and mission focus can now happen.

But it needs the energy and commitment of the next generation to carry this out. Your leadership is meeting in the next few weeks to engage in some strategic planning. We are prayerfully seeking the Lord for where we sense He wants us to focus over these next years. One area that seems to keep coming up over and over is investment in and raising up of the next generation. But will you older generation and will you younger and newer generation accept that call?

I've been thinking about transition in my own life and ministry for a while. I'm coming up on 30 years of pastoral ministry in 2019. That means I've likely finished more ministry than I'll yet do. I'm just over a decade away from official retirement age. I don't have forever. So I'm asking myself what I can do now to invest in the generation that will take over.

A decision made today can have an impact 10 or 20 years down the road if you decide to invest in the next generation. So what will you and I do? I need help. I need people who will come beside me so we can collectively work or engage the entire congregation in this transitioning work. If you feel called to that will you contact me?

God's work continues. God transitions His work from one generation to the next. Let us join Him in whatever role He calls us to play.