

# Here For Good Mortgage Burning Celebration

*1 Chronicles 29:1-18*

*Psalms 37:3*

**1. Activated by the king.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:1-5*

- **Right perspective.**

- *Colossians 3:23*

- **Right effort.**

- *Ecclesiastes 9:10*

- **Right heart.**

- *Matthew 6:21*

- **Right example.**

- *John 3:16*

- **Right challenge.**

**2. Answered by the leaders.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:6-9*

- **Willingly.**

- *1 Samuel 15:22; 1 Corinthians 9:7-8*

- **Sacrificially.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:7-8*

- **Wholeheartedly.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:9*

**3. The action of the people.**

- **They rejoiced.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:9*

- **They gave generously.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:9, 14-16*

- **They gave continuously.**

**4. Acclaim by the king.**

- *1 Chronicles 29:16-18*

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**West Valley Church  
July 11, 2021  
Michael O'Neill**

**Here for Good:  
*Mortgage Burning Celebration*  
1 Chronicles 29:1-18**

It has been over twenty years since West Valley Church has been debt free. Those of you who have been around over the eleven years since I arrived here, you know that this has been a major goal for us. Let me just remind you of the timeline. Nine Years ago we refinanced our debt for a lower interest rate. We also renovated our foyer space with a \$110,000 project that we completed and paid for within a year. We then prioritized global missions, with our five-year partnership to build the church and community center in Guyana – determining first to others ahead of ourselves in our giving. Three years ago, we put together a facility renovation team to begin examining the spaces of our building that we knew were seriously needing renovating if they were going to continue to be effective. Two and a half years ago, Alex Robertson (stand) and I met for lunch at a great Mexican restaurant in Toppenish to discuss his being the chairperson of a new effort to finally eliminate our debt and to raise funds for these needed renovations. Gratefully, he agreed, and your elected Leadership Team approved. Then Alex, Jim Cunningham (stand – who was the Leadership Team Lay-Chairperson at that time) and I began to interview consultants to help us plan for and launch this incredible effort. After multiple emails and phone calls, we interviewed three different consulting firms, and presented our results and recommendations to the Leadership Team. They unanimously agreed to contract with Jennifer Perrow (stand) from Generis. Two years ago, we began meeting and planning. We put together our team, made up of (stand as I call your name) Alex Robertson, Jim Cunningham, Jennifer Perrow, Melissa Peart, Lois Frazier, Pastors Jason, Roger, Casey, Dan, and April (and Pastor Arden), Eva Lounsbury (prayer lead), Tricia Worthington (graphic publications), and Pam Stump, Shelly O'Neill, (events). Not all those folks are here, as you know – the Worthingtons and Wilkersons are on sabbatical for a few more weeks, and Shelly is in Arizona with her mom after her mom's surgery.

We brought these names to the Leadership Team and they approved all these folks. Then two years ago, about this time we began our work and planning. The Here For Good team and our Leadership Team set an ambitious goal of raising \$1.6 million dollars over three years – \$1.1 million to eliminate the remainder of our debt, so we could move \$100,000 a year in our budget from mortgage to ministry, and raise at least an additional \$500,000 – if not more – for our needed renovations. In February of 2020, we all launched together “Here For Good!” with the theme verse that God calls our church with:

**Trust the Lord and do good; live in the land, and farm faithfulness.  
(Psalm 37:3, ceb)**

God has called us to trust him, to do good in this community in which he's planted us, and to be a blessing to our community in order to show them the Good News of how much God loves them.

We held a series of services to share the vision and begin our effort. There was an incredible spirit of unity and enthusiasm in the church; remember that? Our Leaders all stepped forward and pledged a huge amount to start our effort, and then all of us began to pray about how much we would all give, and we all made our commitments. We planned our first big day to kick off our giving in March.

And then Covid happened. We were shut down for what we thought would be a couple weeks. It turned out to be 15 months. We held pre-recorded services until we could build our online worship abilities (thank you to the Leadership Team and to Nathan and his team). And in May – two months late – we began our giving toward Here For Good without even being in the room together. Everyone has given what they could so far, as God has led each of us.

That was over a year ago.

Incredibly – incredibly! – after just over a year of giving to Here For Good, we have already eliminated the \$1.1 million in debt! In a little over one third of our three-year plan, we've met nearly two-thirds of our goal! After the service this morning, we will go outside and burn the mortgage and have our cookout celebration.

For our time together in here this morning, I'd like to compare what you have done, West Valley Church, with the building of God's Temple in the Old Testament. As we do, I think you will see why God is blessing our efforts with Here For Good.

We're going to look at 1 Chronicles 29. Preparations have been made by King David to build the Temple. Remember that in 2 Samuel, David offered to build a Temple for God, and God basically said, "That's a nice gesture; thank you, but I'm going to build a dynasty from you." Then God promised that the Messiah would come from his offspring. Then remember that God told David that he would *not* be the one to build the Temple because of his sin, so instead it would be his son, Solomon.

But in the meantime, God gave David the go-ahead to make preparations, so David determined to give sacrificially to the effort, and challenged his leaders and the people to do the same.

So first, see that the effort was...

### **1. Activated by the king.**

It began with the vision that God gave David, who obediently began the work. Let me read the first five verses of 1 Chronicles 29. Would you stand with me as I do? Thank you!

Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. With all my

resources I have provided for the temple of my God--gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble--all of these in large quantities.

Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?" (1 Chronicles 29:1-5, niv)

Remember, I want us to see in this an example of what we've done here at West Valley Church, and what we still need to do. And there are some things we can see in this example, and what we can learn from it. Look for these in your leaders here at WVC. First, see that David had the...

**- Right *perspective*.**

David wasn't doing this for his own glory or for his own name. Did you see what he said: "This palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God." I can tell you that your leaders – myself, the pastoral team, your leadership Team, and the Here For Good Team, are not in this for any other reason but to follow the Lord's purposes for West Valley Church and our community, for his glory. The Apostle Paul said:

"Whatever you do, do it from the heart for the Lord and not for people."  
(Colossians 3:23, ceb)

I can say in all honesty that is true for your leaders, and I know it is true for you, too. We have all gone into this with the right perspective: we are doing it for God's purposes and glory, and that is why he is blessing it.

I want you to see, too, that David launched the giving with the...

**- Right *effort*.**

This was not a half-hearted effort; David was willing to give God everything. In verse two, David said:

"With all my resources I have provided for the Temple of my God." Solomon, David's son, learned to follow the example of his father. (1 Chronicles 29:2, niv)

In Ecclesiastes, Solomon wrote:

"Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might." (Ecclesiastes 9:10, niv)

That's the kind of effort the Lord expects from leaders and from his people. You have those, and you have responded!

Then, notice that David began the effort, just like your leaders here, with the...

**- Right *heart*.**

David's heart was for the Lord. He said in verse 3:

"In my devotion to the temple of my God I now give..." (I Chronicles 29:3, niv)

We, as your leaders, and you, as West Valley Church, as we have given, we are showing where our devotion lies. We've shown what our heart is set on. Jesus said:

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21, niv)

By your giving, you have shown where your heart is – and it is after the things of God for West Valley Church – for God, each other, and our community!

Your leaders showed the proof of their love as we began this effort by giving an incredibly generous amount. And you responded, following their lead. You have done what Jesus said – your giving is the proof of your love.

For David's leaders and the people, David set the...

### - Right *example*

...of commitment. David said, "I have given over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure." David was following the example of His God by being generous, because that's exactly the kind of commitment God has made to us – a very generous one. The Bible says:

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life." (John 3:16, ceb)

God gave everything for us, and he wants us to give everything for him and his purposes for this world. I am so grateful that God has given us that example to follow – how can we not be generous with him?!

Finally, see that David launched his giving effort with the...

### - Right *challenge*.

David challenged his leaders and the people, calling their attention to what was most important: committing themselves completely to God. He said, "Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?" I'm telling you, church, starting with the leaders to everyone who has given so far to this effort: we have consecrated ourselves to the Lord. We cannot give up now; we must remain consecrated fully to him as we continue.

You have leaders who have the right perspective, effort, heart, example, and challenge, and you have followed their lead.

Now, after King David launched the giving effort, look at how King David was...

## 2. *Answered by the leaders.*

We'll pick it up in verse six of 1 Chronicles 29. Would you stand with me again? It's good to keep the blood flowing!

“Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.” (1 Chronicles 29:6-9, niv)

No one had to coax or prod the leaders or the people; they stepped forward and gave...

- ***willingly***

...to the project of building the house for the Lord. Just like you!

The Bible is very clear; God doesn't need our money – he wants our obedience. In God's Word, the prophet Samuel was chewing out David's predecessor, King Saul, for his greediness and lack of giving to the Lord, and he said:

“Listen to this: obeying is better than sacrificing, paying attention is better than fat from rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22, ceb)

God wants us to give our obedience willingly to him, and that's what you are doing! The Bible says:

“Everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give with hesitation or because of pressure. God loves a cheerful giver. God has the power to provide you with more than enough of every kind of grace. That way, you will have everything you need always and in everything to provide more than enough for every kind of good work.” (1 Corinthians 9:7-8, niv)

You are giving what you've decided in your heart to give and you've done it cheerfully. God loves that! And that's a big reason why we are now debt free, and why we will reach and even exceed the rest of our goal!

Like the people under David, you have given...

- ***sacrificially***.

I know it hasn't been easy – it hasn't been for Shelly and me either. But we keep giving toward our commitment, and so do you. The passage said:

“They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD.” (1 Chronicles 29:7-8, niv)

They were willing to sacrifice deeply and greatly for the cause of the Lord. So are you!

See also that they gave...

- ***wholeheartedly.***

“The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD.” (1 Chronicles 29:9, niv)

We give with our whole hearts because we’ve given our whole selves to the Lord.

I realize, too, that there are some of you that haven’t joined us in giving yet – please don’t miss out on this great thing God is doing! (*card*) Join us and commit to giving willingly, sacrificially, and wholeheartedly to the Lord through Here For Good! We have much to do yet!

Join the rest of us, just like in this story where we see...

### 3. The ***action*** of the ***people.***

David and the leaders led the way, and the people took specific action in following their lead. That’s exactly what you’ve done here. In the story from 1 Chronicles, the people took action in three ways. First of all it says that...

- ***they rejoiced***

Verse nine says that...

“The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD.” (1 Chronicles 29:9, niv)

They were so thrilled to see what God was up to, especially in the example of their leaders, that...

- ***they gave generously***

Would you stand with me again? David said:

“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.” (1 Chronicles 29:14-16, niv)

Did you notice that everything we have comes from God in the first place? Then notice David said that this generous giving was made not only by himself but by the people, too. I’m grateful for the generosity of our leaders, but it wouldn’t be enough unless everyone gave as God has led them to. And we aren’t through yet! But it takes all of us, not equal amounts, but equal obedience.

And, like God's people in this story, you and they not only have given generously, but you and...

***- They gave continuously***

They didn't stop giving generously, but continued to do so!! David prayed, "O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you."

For how long was their desire to give generously? Till the mortgage was paid off? No. Till the goal was reached? No. Forever! Continually. That's what your leaders have committed to, and I know you have too. Even in a pandemic, and now as we come out of the pandemic into this new normal – whatever that might be.

Thank you for prayerfully following the example of your leaders, and for faithfully following what God has told each of us to do.

Now, because we've paid off the mortgage, what next? What do we do now? Let me take a minute here to explain a little bit.

**Mortgage to Ministry:**

- **Member Care** *increased investment in ministries – children, youth, worship, discipleship, small groups, men's and women's. Reorganization of staff and their priorities in order for our church to better care for each other.*
- **Multigenerational** *We must not only meet needs of all ages, but do better at helping all generations interact with and value each other.*
- **Multisite** *We now have a fully online community; we need to provide discipleship opportunities for folks who join us online. That was something we planned to do as a part of our renovation, but we had to do it right away, and we are so thankful that we did.*

*We've also begun this work with our small groups at Mountainview; it's past time that we start growing more locations of our physical campuses as well, so we can reach more people with the Gospel.*

- **Multiethnic** *We'll talk more about this in the months to come, but God has not called his church to be separate; in the new heaven and earth we're told every tribe and nation and tongue will worship God together; where will we learn that if not here? How can we expect racism in our community to be addressed, if we as a church won't worship together as brown and white; if we won't accommodate each other so we can be one church together? Our church and staff must be as diverse as the community God has placed us in, or else we are not obeying the Great Commission. We've been nudging ourselves toward this for several years; it's time we openly invested in this and pursue it.*
- **Meaningful evangelism** *This will come as a result of the things we've said already, but it also means we must invest in greater service to our community and more intentional focuses on reaching the unchurched/unsaved.*

Finally, throughout all of that: **we must renovate the older spaces of our church – especially our worship center, foyer restrooms, and children's areas, as well**



**as other spaces, in order to meet the needs of today and tomorrow, and for our building to better facilitate all that I've just shared.**

That's why Here For Good is about WAY MORE than the mortgage! We set a priority to get out of debt, but only so that – an even bigger priority – we could begin investing in ministries and in this facility, in order to glorify God and accomplish what he's called West Valley Church to do.

This is what we mean by moving money from mortgage to ministry!

So finally, see...

#### **4. *Acclaim* by the *king*.**

David's response to the leaders and people giving generously was to pray a prayer of praise to God. And what a prayer it was! This is a perfect way for us to conclude today, because the best response to this significant time is to pray and praise the Lord. Stand with me and listen to what David prayed as I read it from the Message Bible:

“God, our God, all these materials—these piles of stuff for building a house of worship for you, honoring your Holy Name—it all came from you! It was all yours in the first place! I know, dear God, that you care nothing for the surface—you want *us*, our true selves—and so I have given from the heart, honestly and happily. And now see all these people doing the same, giving freely, willingly—what a joy! O God, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep this generous spirit alive forever in these people always, keep their hearts set firmly in you.” (1 Chronicles 29:16-18, tmt)

*Prayer*

The campaign was activated by the King, their leader. It was answered by the leaders. The people followed that lead and took action, which led to great acclaim for God. Folks, this is an incredible celebration today, over twenty years in the making. But you understand, this isn't a finish line. This is only the first event. This was only so we could be free to really pursue what God wants us to do. So let's continue to pray and give willingly, sacrificially, and wholeheartedly.

Let me pray David's prayer for our time:

“God, our God, getting West Valley Church out of debt after over twenty years, and finally accomplish it by doing it in a year – during a pandemic – honoring your Holy Name—Lord, our ability to do it all came from you! It was all yours in the first place! I know, dear God, that you care nothing for the surface—you want *us*, our true selves—and so we have given from the heart, honestly and happily. Our leaders have done this, and see all these people doing the same, giving freely, willingly—what a joy! O God, God of West Valley Church that's been here for sixty two years

and that is HERE FOR GOOD, oh God keep this generous spirit alive forever in these people always, keep their hearts set firmly in you, as we see all of our Here For Good goal accomplished, and as we carry out and achieve all the ministry you've set out for us to do. And all the people said amen, and affirmed it with a clap offering to the Lord!"