

PREFACE

As I describe what can only be called a “growth explosion” among the Calvary Chapel ministries, I speak as a spectator. If there is room for boasting it belongs to the Lord. And when I describe my difficult “desert years,” you will learn why I now stand awestruck by what God has done with Calvary Chapel and with my life. Grasping this perspective will then allow us to celebrate the astonishing symmetry of God’s design.

Pictures of mass baptisms in the Pacific Ocean featured in *Life*, *Time* and *Newsweek* magazines can only be viewed as a virtual human harvest field. Thousands of people crowding the shores waiting for Calvary Chapel pastors to immerse them in the sometimes shocking cold waves presents a stirring scene of God’s Holy Spirit moving in the hearts of His people. Scholars such as Dr. Peter Wagner (Fuller Theological Seminary) and Dr. Ron Enroth (Westmont College) have observed this phenomenon and noted that it is unlikely anything of such colossal proportions has occurred in American history.

One estimate has put the total number of Calvary Chapel (Costa Mesa) baptisms performed over a 2–year period during the mid–1970’s at well over 8,000. Additionally, over 20,000 conversions to the Christian faith took place during that same period. According to church growth experts, Calvary Chapel’s 10–year growth rate was almost 10,000 percent! But even more staggering is that when Calvary Chapel first started in 1965, only 25 people showed up for the Sunday morning service! Calvary Chapels have grown to nearly 800 affiliates in the United States with several hundreds more around the world. From humble beginnings, more than twelve thousand families now call Calvary Chapel their home church. Calvary Chapel has become the third largest Protestant church in America and the largest in California.

Some critics have tried to dismiss the impact Calvary Chapel has had, calling the teaching “production line religion.” They have said Calvary only caters to what people want to hear by “diluting” the message for mass appeal. Apparently these critics believe they have a clear understanding of just what God can and cannot do in the lives of believers. Other critics who belong to small churches with little or no growth seem to adopt an attitude of “spiritual elitism.” In their definition, *small* equals *spiritual*. They believe they are the faithful few, unwilling to compromise their beliefs. Such thinking is tantamount to saying, “quantity diminishes quality” of the Christian experience.

Christ taught about the man who was given money (talents), only to bury them for “safekeeping.” This man ended up empty–handed when the Lord chastised him for his failure to increase the value of this investment, and indeed He even took the talents away from the man. Christ went on to describe the servant who through careful investment multiplied his talents a thousandfold. This servant, we are taught, was richly rewarded by his Lord. From this teaching we can see that faithfulness to Christ does not result in limited growth, but rather, explosive growth occurs within ministries that allow God to work. Who can forget the Day of Pentecost when 3,000 people on the streets of Jerusalem turned to Christ? “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were to be saved” (Acts 2:47). Just as the Jews soon discovered the Good News was not to be kept among themselves, but would be sent among the “despised” Gentiles, much of what God has done through Calvary Chapel can be traced to an interesting shifting of gears. The Good News was shared by a cross–section of 25 faithful believers who were willing to share the love of Jesus with youths formerly seen as “counter–culture” kids of the sixties. The act of reaching out to others with the Gospel took nothing less than a miracle of love and acceptance. As members of each group accepted the other, both sides grew in number. There was a

vital sense that God had stepped in and was changing lives: a sense of witnessing and participating in an unfolding drama, a miracle from God. Watching as a hopeless drug addict throws his heroin needle into the trash and return to the beach, to witness and lead three people to faith in Jesus Christ, faith can only be considered a miracle.

What follows is the story of an incredible work wrought by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is my prayer that this account will only serve to stir your heart toward an ever-increasing appreciation and faith in His power to transform lives.

THE HISTORY OF CALVARY CHAPEL

“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). I wish I had learned that a long time ago. I tried so long and so hard by force, by program, by human devices and methods to build the church of Jesus Christ until I was so worn out I was ready to just quit.

When Zerubbabel returned to Israel with the Jews that had been held captive in Babylon, the city of Jerusalem was in ruins. They faced the daunting task of rebuilding this once great temple. With such a monumental task and only a handful of people, it would have been understandable if Zerubbabel was discouraged. With a million rocks to move, where should you start? And even after moving rocks all day long, it was difficult to detect improvement. Many began to say, “It cannot be done; there simply is no way.” The Word of the Lord then came to Zerubbabel, the leader of the reclamation team—“Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit saith the Lord” (Zechariah 4:6).

IN THE VERY BEGINNING

God had a plan from the beginning for that the work He wanted to accomplish through Calvary Chapel, and when God has a plan, a significant portion of His work is spent in the preparation of the people He has chosen to accomplish His will. Long before the first conversion or baptism in our ministry the Lord was actively preparing lives for the good works He would accomplish through His people.

FAMILY

It’s hard to know just where to begin. Since God works within an eternal realm, His work on my life started before my birth. A few months before I was born my sister became ill—perilously close to death. In fact, she appeared to actually have died. She had stopped breathing, her pulse was gone and her eyes had rolled back in her head while her jaw firmly set. There were no visible signs of life left in her little body.

My mother, who had only recently committed her life to Jesus Christ, grabbed my sister and ran to the church a few blocks from the hotel where they were living at the time. There she laid the limp and lifeless body on the floor of the parsonage next to the church. As the pastor prepared to pray for my sister, he spoke firmly to my mother,—“Mrs. Smith, get your eyes off your daughter and look to Jesus,”—hard advice in such a tense, desperate situation. Even so, my mother looked up and cried, “Lord, if You will only give me back my daughter, I will serve You the rest of my life! I will give myself to you completely and will even go into the ministry. I will do anything You might want me to do. Lord, just please give back my little girl.” God touched my sister and healed her in that very hour. Her recovery was immediate and complete! A couple of months later when I was born, and the doctor announced to my mother that she had a baby boy, my mother vowed to fulfill her vow through her newborn son.

My mother never told me of her promise to the Lord, until she was on her death bed, and I had been in the ministry seventeen years.. My childhood years were no different than most little boys with interests in sports and a goal to someday become a doctor. One summer while at a Christian youth camp, God spoke to my heart and I made the decision to discontinue my present schooling in the pre-med courses to instead pursue a career in the ministry. After sharing this decision with my mother at home, she only said, “Fine son, I think that’s good.” Later I went to Bible school and on to the ministry to which God had called me.

EARLY MINISTRY

For as long as I can remember, sports were a major part of my life: I surfed, played tennis, and was captain of the football and baseball teams. I was strong, full of energy and never out of ideas. I was certain that I could go out and turn the world upside down for Jesus. The Lord patiently waited for me to spend my energy, ideas, talents and abilities over the next 17 years.

Unfortunately, I saw no fruit coming out of 17 years of hard labor I had invested in my new ministry. I was discouraged and defeated. Watching as my strong youthful years passed and energy began to wane, I finally abandoned my bright ideas. I had tried every program and every contest that could be devised and had failed miserably.

At a minister's conference we were getting details of a new spring program and contest that we were to introduce to our churches. The Bishop introduced the new contest by declaring that we know that motivating people by competition was carnal motivation, but we needed to recognize that the majority of the people in our churches were carnal, thus carnal motivation was necessary. However by this time in the ministry I was sick of promotional gimmicks and had long since tired of the hype necessary to promote contests. So when asked for a "vote of confidence," in support of the latest contest, I didn't even have the energy to stand. As I remained in my seat, unable to commit to struggle through yet another "Blues versus the Reds," Many of the young ministers who had looked up to me, when they saw that I had not stood, began to realize that they had been duped into standing, and began to sit down. The Bishop observed what was happening and immediately after the meeting was dismissed came up to me and invited me out for coffee.

While in the coffee shop, he began to lecture me, he pointed that the scriptures declared that rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft, and I needed to give full cooperation to the programs. As I returned to my room that evening my heart was heavy and I fell to my knees in prayer. Searching to know my soul, I cried, "God, I don't want to be a rebel, although I've now been marked as uncooperative. You know my heart, Lord, and how tired I am of promotions and contests." The Lord spoke to me from His Word, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). I responded, "Thank you Lord—I really needed that!" Then came the scripture, "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord" (Zechariah 4:6).

Shortly after returning home the contest materials began to arrive at the church. I filed them away in a drawer and continued to pray. I didn't bother to tell the congregation about this contest, the "spring enlargement campaign" that would end one week after Easter. So as the other churches hotly pursued their contests, eager to be winners, our church pursued the Lord.

Following our usual submission of monthly reports indicating church attendance, I received a beautiful congratulatory letter from the Bishop's office. "Your church has won 1st Place, having experienced the greatest numerical growth during the contest period!" I was asked to speak at the next ministers meeting for twenty minutes on the subject of mobilizing your people to their greatest efforts to win. I was to be presented with a large trophy to be displayed in the church for being the first place winner. I wrote to the Bishop declining the invitation to speak, and also the trophy, I said it would be embarrassing to display a trophy for winning a contest that no one in the church participated in or was even aware took place. The Holy Spirit had just added to the church daily such as should be saved!

TRIALS OF FAITH

Over the period of 17 years in the denomination, we served where the governing body directed our ministry. The third pastorate to which we were assigned was located in Corona, California. Our first

Sunday we had 52 people in attendance, two years later when we had resigned we had only 17 people, and 5 of the 17 were members of my own family. While pastoring there in Corona, it was necessary to get an outside job in order to meet the needs of the family. God provided an excellent job working in an Alpha Beta market.

As Produce Department Manager, I started work at 4:00 A.M. and was finished by 2:00 P.M., leaving afternoons and evenings for my ministry.

One day we received word that my wife's mother died. After finding someone to take over at the church and notifying my manager at Alpha Beta, we left for Phoenix to handle her funeral and wind up her affairs. After getting back to Corona and returning to the market, the manager told me that I could not come back to work until I got a clearance from the Union. The union had removed my name from the active list because of delinquent dues. They kept me from working until I could pay a \$50 late fee as well as get my union dues current. My reason for being away was apparently not enough to evoke sympathy and get the fine waived.

Without that steady income it wasn't long before "late payment" notices began to show up in the mailbox. Fortunately Alpha Beta wanted me back at work—in a management position. They pointed out that I need not belong to the union as a part of their management team. Although the offer was attractive, it stipulated that I must give up my pastoral responsibilities at my church. They pointed out that the present president of Alpha Beta marked chain, Claude Edwards, was a former minister himself, and had made a successful change from the ministry to a marketing career. They told me of the excellent salary that I would make in a marketing career.

Since my bills were mounting, I thought perhaps God was calling me to be a businessman instead. After all, my success at pastoring had been something less than stellar! Maybe I should just forget the ministry and push out into a new marketing career. The family would benefit from the added income and the added security.

Very early one morning I woke up worrying about the bills and how I would be able to pay them. I was tossing and turning and was afraid that I was going to wake my wife up so I slipped out of bed and went into the living room to pray. Opening the desk drawer I began to total the outstanding bills: \$416.00. "Well, that's it," I thought to myself, "I cannot continue in the ministry. Today I will go into Alpha Beta and discuss the marketing career opportunity."

When the rest of the family got out of bed and Kay was making our breakfast, the phone rang. The caller asked how I was doing, and I responded, great. I had long ago made a covenant with the Lord concerning personal financial issues. When I started the ministry I committed to never, ever pressure people to give their money to the church. No second offerings. "Lord, I'll never make money an issue; I'll never let people know even when my personal financial needs are great." I wasn't going to insult my Boss by complaining about wages!

"We sent a check to you air mail special delivery," the caller went on. "The Lord has been bringing you to our hearts during prayer, so you can expect a check this afternoon for \$426."

"Praise the Lord, that's really wonderful of you to do that, thank you very much!" I was ecstatic! I hung up the phone and grabbed Kay., and waltzed her around the kitchen praising God. "It's all right, honey! We'll be able to pay every bill we have! Lord, you are so great! Thank You, Lord. Thank You! How good You are. How much You have blessed us!"

About an hour after finally settling down, the Lord began to speak to my heart. He said, "What are you so excited about?" I just kept bubbling over in my thanks to Him. So then He said, "How do you know they are going to send that money?" I responded, "Come on Lord, You've got to be kidding. These people have been friends for a long time. They are good people. I trust them. They wouldn't just call me up and tell me something like that unless they had really sent the check. I trust their word."

"This morning you couldn't sleep," said the Lord, "you were moping around although you had My Word that I would supply your needs. You weren't waltzing through the kitchen with that knowledge. I didn't see you exuberant and full of praise with that truth. But now that you have the promise of a man you are full of happiness and excitement. Whose word do you really trust?"

What a great lesson! "Lord," I said, "I am sorry for not trusting in your Word." Had I trusted God at 4:00 A.M., I would have announced to Kay, "Look here at Philippians 4:19! God's going to supply all of our needs according to His riches in glory. Praise the Lord!"

God was not being harsh, but in profound love He was teaching me a lesson that would change my life. Unless God is here for us always, moment-by-moment, our lives are futile, and after some time the fantasy will melt away and we will stand alone in this universe. Trust cannot be partial. It is an "all or nothing at all" proposition. Christ's lessons on faith were identical. There is no room for half-hearted commitment when we are called to walk on water. God calls us to have the simple and direct faith that can be found in a child. This lesson was sound preparation for the future God had planned for me, although I obvious did not know this at the time. I was learning to be faithful in the little things. I had to learn, as Abraham did, that what God has promised, He is also able to perform.

My eyes had moved from God to my personal financial problems, and the monetary hurdles had become staggering. If I had kept my eyes on God, those problems would have seemed trivial. Abraham's faith enabled him to give glory to God before he saw any sure evidence. It was crucial that this truth be grasped.

As you may have already guessed, I'm guilty of hard-headedness, since I never did bail out of the ministry even though the times were tough and by all appearances the effort had failed. But God had placed us in Corona for several purposes. One was for the tough lesson of faith and trust in Him even when the church could not support our needs.

HUNTINGTON BEACH

Following the Corona ministry, God next moved us to pastor a denominational church in Huntington Beach, California. It was here that the ministry took a radical turn. It was in Huntington Beach that I began to be a teacher not a preacher. I discovered my calling as a pastor-teacher. How the Lord accomplished this radical change I will explain later.

THE HOME BIBLE STUDIES

Our ministry in Huntington Beach had become so successful that it came to the notice of the Bishop who asked us to move to one of the largest churches in the denomination which had fallen on hard times because of some sins of the previous pastor that had become known in the community. So we reluctantly moved from Huntington Beach after five years and began to pastor the Los Seranos Community Church. It was in Los Seranos that I first began home Bible studies. In addition to a home Bible study in Clarmont, we also taught one in Upland and one in West Covina. This method of informal teaching in a home setting was a very effective and important part in the development of my ministry.

From Los Seranos we moved on to Costa Mesa which was our last pastorate in a denominational church. During this period I began to have friction with the denomination. I started looking for an independent avenue after 17 years of denominational discomfort, I simply knew I was never going to be a good fit for any denomination.

While living in Costa Mesa, another home Bible study was started in Laguna Beach and shortly after this, the Corona home Bible study also began to take root and they formed a Non-profit corporation so that they could begin to tithe. God began to bless the ministry in Corona and as the funds grew it They decided to sponsor a broadcast on the local radio station using the tapes of the study. It wasn't long before I could barely get into the house where we gathered for teaching, God had so blessed and multiplied the faithful. people were overflowing out on the lawn, listening through open doors and windows.

CALVARY CHAPEL LOOKING FOR A PASTOR

The Spirit of God began to move in a way that made it clear it was time to break with the denomination. While at the Corona Christian Center we resolved to start trusting the Lord to build His church. After only one year the growth could only be called phenomenal! As the Holy Spirit added daily to the church such as should be saved, we were moving into ever larger quarters.

During this period, the home Bible studies continued in Laguna Beach, and in Costa Mesa. Additionally, I was building a motel and office complex in Idyllwild, California, trying to meet the financial needs of our family. The business of burning the candles at both ends—and the middle too—would have been draining had it not been for the sustaining energy and strength provided by God.

The Idyllwild project was owned by a man named Floyd York. Floyd was on the Board of Directors of a church called Calvary Chapel. One day Floyd said to me, "Our pastor is planning to resign and is going to work for Farmer John's to prepare for retirement. This company will provide Floyd the financial security the church never could. We will need a new pastor."

The congregation was discouraged and considered shutting the church doors. Division among the churchgoers seemed to be too great to continue services. As a last possible hope the church came to me and asked me to become their pastor.

Coming home one evening from Idyllwild, I told Kay, "Honey, Floyd told me Calvary Chapel needs a pastor, and he hoped we might be interested." But Kay said, "Don't be ridiculous. Just look at how God has blessed our ministry here. We're growing and we haven't stopped growing yet! These people love you and you'd walk away? Don't even consider it!"

Floyd never stopped talking and as he continued, the Spirit of God stirring my heart. I became convinced that God wanted me at Calvary Chapel.

People at the Costa Mesa and Laguna Beach Bible studies had increasingly mentioned how wonderful it would be if I would start a church in their community. Recognizing the great work the Lord was doing in Corona, they hoped their community could also experience this tremendous blessing. Their hearts were set on my move to their community.

As Floyd continued to tell me about Calvary Chapel's need for a pastor, Kay would not even discuss the matter any longer. This quandary weighed heavily on me since I felt certain the Lord wanted this transition to happen and had me in mind as His pastor for Calvary Chapel. Meanwhile Kay continued,

“Don’t be ridiculous, don’t even think of such a thing, God wouldn’t move you from teaching a large, growing group to teaching a small, divisive one.” These things were in conflict and I was in turmoil.

One night after coming home at about 11:00 P.M. from the home Bible study in Laguna Beach, Kay met me at the door crying. If Kay ever meets me at the door it’s generally because something is very wrong. So my first thought was, “Something has happened to the kids!” “The kids are fine,” she said, “but God has been speaking to me.” “The Lord says I have been wrong resisting what you have felt He wants you to do. He has shown me, in Scripture, that as your wife I should submit to, rather than fight against, your decisions. As God’s minister He leads you, and He showed me that I am to submit to you as you are submitting to Him.”

“Honey this is thrilling, because Floyd said the Board met and wants a decision no later than tomorrow afternoon!”

“Don’t talk to me about it, don’t tell me a thing. I didn’t say I was ready to make this move, I said I was ready to submit. Please don’t push me beyond that yet.”

We gave the Board our answer that we would come. A Spirit-filled Baptist pastor who was looking for a church came into our lives and to him we entrusted the Corona fellowship. With mixed emotions we announced the congregation our decision to move.

Oddly, some of the Costa Mesa people who had prayed for us and encouraged us suddenly called and said, “Don’t come. We decided to just close the doors. It just isn’t right to ask you to pastor in the midst of such a difficult situation.” But I responded, “My bridges are burned behind me and I’m on my way!”

BACK TO COSTA MESA

The year was 1965 when we began pastoring in Costa Mesa at Calvary Chapel. About 2 years earlier the Holy Spirit had spoken to me, indicating I was to become a shepherd over many flocks, that He would bless and enlarge my ministry, to the point where our gathering place would not be adequate to contain all of the people. Hiding these things in my heart, not really understanding the full intent of God’s message, I purposed I would wait and watch how the Lord would bring about His plans for my life.

During the prayers of the faithful at Calvary Chapel, the Holy Spirit spoke to them through prophecy. Praying about the issue of whether to close the church doors, the Holy Spirit spoke to their hearts saying He would persuade Chuck Smith to be the new pastor. He said Chuck Smith would be unhappy with the current facility and would want to remodel most of the building, including the platform area. Furthermore, God would bless the church, the messages would be broadcast over radio, and the church would soon be bulging at the seams unable to hold the people. The church would move to a new facility on the bluffs overlooking the bay and would become world renowned.

For the 25 discouraged churchgoers, 12 of which were faithful in prayer for the future of the church, this prophecy seemed at best unlikely. That the little corner church could ever even be full, much less world renowned, seemed almost too incredible to believe. So the parishioners didn’t bother to even share this prophecy with their pastor-to-be.

We went to a restaurant following that 1st Sunday service. It was in the restaurant that I remarked, “You know, the church really needs some remodeling, the back doors open immediately into the

auditorium, the lights are unappealing and the old pine floor creaks ominously as people walk around the church.”

I reached over and grabbed a napkin to sketch ideas upon: “The platform could be improved by placing a removable wall over the baptistery and building walls that would cover the door leading into the back of the church. I suggested that we replace the ugly light fixtures with indirect lighting. If we nailed down the floor and put carpeting down, we could get rid of the creaking and a fresh coat of paint would do wonders in improving the looks of the church.”

The excitement initially came as a surprise to me. Everyone enthusiastically supported the initiative: “Great, let’s start tomorrow night!”

We started the remodeling almost immediately without benefit of financing or money saved for that purpose. Somehow the Lord sorted out the financial roadblocks and within a short period of time we all stood and looked at what had become a beautiful little chapel.

Along with the services in the church, we started home Bible studies in the various communities adjacent to Costa Mesa. On Sunday and Thursday nights, we met in the Church, on Saturday nights the men met at the church for a prayer meeting. Monday evening we had a Bible Study in Newport beach, on Wednesday night in Huntington Beach, and on Friday night in a home on Lido Isle. We also started a home Bible study for the ladies in Bayshores. On Wednesday afternoon the ladies met for prayer. Meeting each evening together for prayer and the study of the word developed a great fellowship among our group, and the Lord was adding daily to the church such as should be saved. We had now outgrown our little chapel and we started looking for larger quarters for the growing family.

OUTGROWING THE LITTLE CHAPEL AND LOOKING FOR A NEW CHURCH

Looking for property for the bigger chapel led us to a site on Bay Street in Costa Mesa. The property was located immediately behind the Theodore Robbins Ford agency which was owned by Mr. Robbins. Mr. Robbins agreed to sell 2/3 of an acre for our church building, then he agreed to let us use his employee’s parking lot in the evenings and on Sunday.

The Costa Mesa Planning Department treated the proposal so favorably we offered our church property for sale. Within three days the old property sold for cash. Fortunately we ordered a long escrow to allow for all the planning that would be required in order to build our new chapel on Bay Street.

One day one of the ladies in our congregation came to me and said unexpectedly, “Chuck we’re not to move to Bay Street.” I said, “What do you mean, it is an ideal location, it is in a central part of town, and the seller is going to repave his parking lot and allow us access...do you have any idea how much we will save by not having to build a parking lot?”

“But Chuck, the prophecy said our church would move to the bluff overlooking the bay.” It was then she

shared with me the prophecy that had preceded our coming to Costa Mesa. I said to her, “Do you know what property on the bluff costs? There’s just no way we could afford to move to such an expensive location. Besides, prophecy can be a curious thing. It’s impossible to separate the human element in prophecy. The Lord expresses His desires upon the heart and mind of an individual who in turn expresses these impressions in his or her own words. What about the fact that our newest plan

puts us in a place that overlooks Bay Street?!" She was and unpersuaded. "Nope, that's not what the Lord said."

We sought our permit from the Planning Commission but they suddenly had concerns. "What if Theodore Robbins changes his mind about letting your congregation use his parking lot? This would put too many cars on the streets." With this they rejected our proposal.

We appealed to the City Council and they appeared more gracious. "We'll grant the permission provided you purchase sufficient adjacent property so that in the event Theodore Robbins in the future wishes to no longer allow you to use his parking lot, you will be able to put in your own parking facilities. own parking lot."

That's all it took to initiate escalating property prices on all of the adjacent property around our would-be church. Needless to say, we did not end up with a church on Bay Street. Having already sold the old church property we were in a quandary. I concluded my job was in jeopardy at this point. I thought the people would be thinking, "What kind of a pastor is this, we have a growing congregation, but he sells the property right out from underneath us."

When we went back to the city planning commission office to retrieve our plans a woman who worked in the Planning Department offered a suggestion. "Why don't you check with my pastor? Our church has been purchased by the State to build a new freeway, and we will be moving to a new facility, and it is possible that you might be able to worship in our old facility until the freeway is built we hope to be in our new church in six months."

"That sounds great," I said, "where is this church?" She said, "It's the Newport Harbor Lutheran Church...you know, the one on the bluff overlooking the bay."

After talking to their pastor and writing a letter to their Board of Directors, we began to make our plans. Quite simply, we would move in when they were able to move out. Somehow, however, their building program stalled and put the transition date in question. I asked the pastor if we could possibly use their church on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday nights. My concern was that escrow was soon closing for our old church and we needed to get moving. He agreed on the plan for sharing the church, their Board agreed and we gave a donation to their building fund. Regular services started on a Sunday afternoon.

Dwight Moody warned against Sunday afternoon services: "People are full of beef and unbelief by Sunday afternoon." But I hoped we could soon get to Sunday morning services again, and once again experience the phenomenal growth of 5% a month. If the growth could just hold even on Sunday afternoons, we hoped it would resume once we could hold Sunday morning services and remodel the church.

The Sunday afternoon services were a success however. God blessed the ministry and soon the church was full and overflowing. Soon the people to sitting in the choir loft, in the back of the church and on the floor around the pews. It was becoming difficult to accommodate the crowds.

THE GREENVILLE PROPERTY

During the time we were looking for property, we saw an old school house in Santa Ana, on the border of Costa Mesa. It was the last one room school house in Orange County and was not being used. I went to the Santa Ana unified school district office and asked if the school was for sale, they said no, but if I wanted to leave my name and number, should it ever come up for sale, they would

notify me. While we were meeting in the Lutheran church, I received a letter from the school that the property had been declared surplus property, and would be sold on a sealed bid basis, with a minimum of bid of sixty thousand dollars. However since it seemed that we were going to be able to get this beautiful facility on the bluff, we did not consider the possibility of buying it. At the close of a board meeting, after we had adjourned, I said, "Oh I forgot, I received a letter from the Santa Ana School district that they were going to sell the old Greenville country school property. One of the board members suggested that we offer the minimum bid plus one dollar, since that was a very reasonable price for the property. Who knows we might get it. We voted to offer the low bid.

When we took our bid into the office, the lady said that they had a lot of interest in that property, and it would probably be bid up pretty high, for the school district was to open the sealed bids, then open the bidding to oral bids. When the night of the board meeting came, we did not even attend the meeting as we figured that we probably did not stand a chance of getting the property. We had pretty much put it out of our mind, until the phone rang the next morning and the lady on the other end of the line announced to me that we had bought a school building the night before. They could not understand it, but ours was the only bid they had received. By this time, the Lutheran's had become stalled in their building program, and the church was getting too small for our growing congregation. So we had plans drawn up for a new chapel on the Greenville property out in the country in the middle of bean fields. We had about forty thousand dollars in the bank, which left us twenty thousand dollars short. I went up to the mountains to pray and seek God's leading, and a Jewish man who owned one of the largest breweries on the West coast, had come by out of curiosity to see the church where all of the hippies were going, and he was amazed how they were getting off of their drug addictions. He volunteered to loan us the twenty thousand dollars interest free. With a lot of volunteer help, we started to build our new chapel. A skilled contractor named Jim Diemer who had attended our home bible study in Laguna Beach, helped to oversee the project, and we were able to use many of the materials from the old school house in the construction of the new chapel. We had dismantled the old school building as it did not pass code to be used, there were several good timbers that had been used as floor joists in the school building, we pulled the nails out of them and stacked them at the side. We designed the Sunday School building so as to use the former floor joists as ceiling joists. As we were framing the roof, it turned out that we came up short one joist. I jokingly said to Jim, "It looks like the Lord miscounted, we are one joist short." Jim answered, "Last Sunday when it was raining, I took one of the joists and put it across a puddle over in the side yard, I think it might still be there." Sure enough, there in the mud was the last joist, the Lord had it all figured out in advance.

I had helped in the design of the new chapel, it was my dream chapel. Glass walls on the side, an overhanging roof with a garden under the outside overhang, so that you had the feeling of sitting in a garden worshipping the Lord. We designed it to seat 300 for in my pastoral theology classes, I had been taught that your attendance cannot rise above 5/6 of your seating capacity, and since I felt that 250 was the ideal size for a church, by building for 300, we could maintain an attendance of 250. To our amazement the very first Sunday in our new chapel, the church was packed to capacity. My thought was, "It is grand opening, and everyone likes to attend grand openings. Next week, we should be down to the magic 250 mark." To our continued amazement, the following Sunday, not only was the Sanctuary packed, but the young people were sitting on the floor, and chairs were placed in the aisles. When on the following Sunday, we could not get them all into the sanctuary, we decided that we would go to two services. Before long both services were over crowded, so we went to three services. Then we moved the glass walls into the garden area almost doubling our seating capacity, and still we were

not able to get all the people in. We then began to set up chairs in the patio, until we had 500 people sitting in the patio all three services.

Hippies and Houses

It's important that I confess my initial revulsion at the hippie movement. Long-haired, bearded, dirty kids on the streets were miles away from me in their thinking and attitudes. What they appeared to stand for I was certainly standing against. Our philosophy and lifestyle could not have been more different.

But many began to accept Jesus, and as their numbers grew, God created a desire in our hearts to minister to them. My wife and I used to drive to Huntington Beach, park downtown and pray for these kids. We had the heart to reach them, but we didn't know the way. Laguna Beach was no different, as we watched hippies walking up and down the streets, we prayed.

Around this time our daughter was in her first year of college. One evening her date, John, arrived to pick her up. Running late, our daughter gave us the opportunity to spend time getting to know John. This young fellow had been a hippie, taken LSD, and been a part of the Haight-Ashbury scene. But Christ had come into his life now and he was attending the same Christian college as my daughter.

John's enthusiasm for the Lord was contagious. He would relate his experiences to us: "I was in Huntington Beach, met a couple guys high on acid and started to tell them about Jesus Christ. After they began to weep, we fell to our knees on the street and prayed to the Lord. The Lord brought them down from their LSD high and became their Savior. When I left them they were excited but sober and straight. God's work was so beautiful that day!"

A few days later John was back in our home saying, "Chuck, last night I was in Laguna Beach. Ten guys were walking down the street stoned out of their heads. I stopped them and began to share the love of Jesus Christ to them. The Spirit of God came upon them and every one of them knelt in a circle right then and there. We prayed the sinner's prayer and all of them accepted Jesus as their Lord!" At this point I said, "John, my wife and I just have to meet a hippie!"

One evening there was a knock at the door and here was John with a long-haired, bearded young man with bells on his feet and flowers in his hair. A real, live hippie!

"Chuck meet Lonnie." "Hi Lonnie." I extended my hand and welcomed him into the house. As we began to talk, I was not at all prepared for the love that this young man would radiate. His love of Jesus and his Spirit-filled personality lit up the room. We asked him to please stay with us for a few days.

John had met Lonnie as John was driving down Fairview past Orange Coast College he spotted this hippie hitchhiking and stopped to pick him up, for John had a practice to pick up all hitchhikers that he might witness to them about Jesus. As John began to witness to this hippie, the hippie confessed that he was not really headed anywhere, but he just hitchhiked so that he might witness to anyone who would pick him up. John said to Him, there are some people that want to meet you, come with me over to their place, that is how we met our first true hippie.

Lonnie was needing a place to stay, so we invited him to move in with us for a time. Within a few days he brought a couple friends to join him to live in our house. Soon it became clear that the house was getting too full. I said, "Honey, this isn't going to work. We're not prepared to establish a hippie pad in our home." But it was our Lord that persuaded us to keep them. After all, they had no alternative place to go since accepting Jesus Christ. It would be dangerous to send them back into drug hangouts where the temptations could be overwhelming.

In May 1968 we rented a little 2-bedroom house on 19th Street in Costa Mesa. John Higgins and his wife, along with Lonnie, moved in and started The House of Miracles. Within a week 21 young men and women accepted Jesus Christ and had moved into the little house. By the second week there were 35 new, young Christians living in the house. Sleeping was wall-to-wall and extended to bunk beds in the garage. One young man was even sleeping in the bathtub.

As “elder of the house,” John Higgins called a meeting after the second week. “All right everyone! House meeting! You’ve been sitting around getting fat on the Word. Time to get the Word out on the street. Besides, we need room for new believers!”

The week-old believers were the first to go. Some went to Tahquitz Canyon to try out evangelism. There they found a young girl sitting on a rock reading a Bible. Also in her possession was a box of oats and two “hits” of acid (LSD). As the discussion came to Jesus Christ and Him crucified for their sins, she began to weep. “You know,” she said, “this really blows my mind! I came here two weeks ago to find God. I brought my oats, my acid, my book on oriental religions, and this Bible. Yesterday I finished the book on oriental religions and today I started the Bible, but I found I could not understand what was being said in the Bible. I said, ‘Oh God, if You are real, bring someone along to explain this to me.’ Here you guys are now and you’re talking about Jesus!”

They said, “Please come with us. There’s a place in Costa Mesa where you can pray and accept Jesus as your Lord and Savior.” So young in the Lord themselves, these new Christians didn’t know how to bring the message of salvation to a satisfactory conclusion. They could sell fine; what they lacked was the ability to close!

Back to the house she went with her two new Christian friends and there accepted the Lord. Because she was female, she stayed with a church member who lived in Newport Beach. Later we discovered she was a runaway so we called her mother in Riverside. She was returned to Riverside and her mother.

The next Saturday the girl was back at the House of Miracles with 10 kids from Riverside in tow. These were the kids who had introduced her and supplied her with drugs and were now looking for something more important, something lasting, something that would make sense. All 10 accepted Jesus into their young lives, and a week later returned with 35 more young men and women from Riverside. They told us that they had gone around and gathered the leaders of the drug scene in Riverside because they seemed to have the greatest need for the Lord. They announced, “They’re here to get saved.”

“We need a place like this in Riverside,” they said. “This house is fabulous; let’s pray that the Lord will open something like this in Riverside!”

One of the young men had a mother who worked at the Bank of America in the trust department. She had been talking with a judge about the unusual, sudden and complete change in her son’s behavior. “You remember him, Judge, he’s been in trouble and through the courts so many times,” she said, “but you wouldn’t recognize him today! He walks with his Bible, saying ‘Praise the Lord,’ and is talking to me again. It’s amazing to see such a major change. He’s become a beautiful son, full of love!” Her discussion moved to the “Little Chapel” in Costa Mesa and the need for something similar in Riverside.

The judge said, “I have an old condemned motel on Van Buren. It doesn’t have electricity, but if these kids want it, they can move in!”

Two young men, one 19 and the other 17, Christians for only 5 weeks, became the Riverside house "elders." During the second week of their ministry they baptized 65 young converts in a fish pond near the motel. They would have the faithful sit in the fish pond, then lay them backward into the water. The first summer in Riverside saw more than 500 people accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior through this house ministry.

One day a motorcycle gang from Fontana, known as the Diablos, drove into the drive way at the motel in Riverside. They began to bully themselves around, and started getting fresh with the girls. Our young 17 year old elder of the house went up to the leader of the gang, and told him that this was a Christian house, and that their actions were unacceptable that they would have to leave. The leader of the gang, pulled out a switch blade knife and began to approach the elder in a very menacing way. He said, "Look kid, nobody tells me what I can and can't do. I am going to carve up your face until it looks like hamburger. Jim reached into his back pocket and pulled out his little New Testament and said, "I have something here that is much sharper than your knife and I am going to cut your heart to pieces with it. Don't you know that God loves you and He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for your sins. The Bible says that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The gang leader began to back away from Jim as Jim waved the New Testament in his face, when he got to his bike, he went roaring off with his gang following him. About three hours later, the Motorcycles were roaring back, the gang came in and informed the kids in the house that they had gone off for a meeting, and they decided that they digged what the kids were doing and voted to be the protectors of the house, for it was a rough neighborhood, and they need protection. Jim thanked them for the offer, but said, "Jesus is our protector, and He is always with us, you guys are welcome to come over any time and eat our food, and attend our Bible studies, but if you don't mind, we will just trust in Jesus to protect us, for He is always here. This entire group ended up receiving salvation and went on to start a similar house in Fontana and later another in Corona. We started houses in Santa Ana, Garden Grove, Buena Park, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach. The ministry was rapidly expanding throughout Southern California.

After listening to a group from Oregon bemoan the drug problem at the University of Oregon, 60 kids from houses in Southern California moved to a 10-bedroom house on the campus. All expenses were paid and the ministry was so tremendously blessed that after just a few short months they came back to California to ask for help. They suggested a ranch for the newly converted so they could be removed from the influences of the city. "There's a guy in Oregon with 70 acres he will sell for \$50,000 but he doesn't want cash. He'll take a note at 6% interest." I asked about the term of the loan. "One year," they said. I asked them, "do you realize that in one year's time you'll have to pay \$53,000?" "Sure," they responded, "and that gives the Lord an entire year to come up with a way to pay off the note!" Their faith was inspiring.

One afternoon some people brought three fresh fish to me and we took them to one of the houses. As we walked in, a young woman said, "I bet you've brought some fish and there's three of them, because that's what we've been praying for. We decided upon fish for dinner tonight and decided to ask the Lord for just exactly three fish. He had already supplied two and we needed five to feed everyone, so we prayed for the three more that we needed." This simple trust in the Lord was at once so amazing and so sweet.

The lack of electricity in the Riverside house began to create serious problems. With 65 young people in the house and no refrigeration, milk soured overnight. After yet another morning with sour milk, the faithful joined hands to pray for a gas refrigerator. Before finishing their prayer, a truck pulled

into the driveway. The driver was honking his horn so they went outside to see what was happening. In the back of his truck stood a large commercial gas refrigerator. He said he noticed a couple old electric refrigerators in the back of the house and wondered if they'd be willing to trade for the gas refrigerator. if he would connect it up for them. We these exciting experiences, prayer became the major means of getting life's necessities, as well as seeking the Lord for personal direction.

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS OF PREJUDICE

Ironically the only resistance movement that arose against the hippie-become-Christian movement was within the four walls of our Calvary Chapel. The "straight society," those from traditional backgrounds, simply found these excited young believers too far outside the norm to be welcomed with open arms and hearts. The resistance began to be apparent and the problems it began to create were divisive and counterproductive to the church.

We recognized the need to deal with the expectations of the traditional churchgoers: conformity, respectability, appearance of cleanliness, decency, and right attitudes toward authority. The zeal of our newly converted hippies was met with equal fervor on the part of the older, more traditional church members.

Our congregation did indeed begin to look more like a field of wild flowers arrayed in diverse color than congregations of days gone by. American Indian and even Asian tribal styles were sported in wildly creative ways. But the darker side to all this gaiety was the apparent threat to tradition. The traditional church members began to be concerned about this influence upon their own children.

God's love became the adhesive and the solution to our dilemma. Duane Hart, who was one of the church elders, was one man that probably typified the hippie resistance within our church. He was suspicious of the young converts' motivations, certain that they were merely insincere freeloaders, manipulators who would not change. He felt it would be unlikely this group would join the ranks of productive society and find work to support themselves.

One afternoon while Duane was working with some of the hippies dismantling the old school building, he suddenly became aware of a change in his own heart. He noticed these lean, muscular men seemed to work tirelessly, sweating in the summer sun as they pulled off old roof tiles. They never slowed and by the end of the day Duane noticed some of them had hands worked so raw they now bled. With bleeding hands, these young workers continued well into the night, singing songs about their love for Jesus. This night Duane was convicted by God's Holy Spirit. His judgmental attitudes had been wrong and from this night forward Duane became an ardent defender of their sincerity and commitment.

Similarly, a renowned surgeon came to Calvary Chapel at the invitation of his future son-in-law, Don McClure. Dr. Anderson said later he found the hippie Christians utterly contemptuous and was uncomfortable sharing a packed pew with these young rebels. They seemed to be everywhere he turned in Calvary Chapel.

Inflexible and incredulous in his circumstances, the illustrious surgeon mouthed hymns and kept one eye on the clock. When it came time to read Scripture, the surgeon was ill-prepared with no Bible to open and read aloud. Nearby a tall, shaggy and straggle-haired hippie lent him his worn and well-read Bible. Reluctantly, even condescendingly, the surgeon accepted the Bible almost tentatively, maybe concerned about its lack of cleanliness. He couldn't help but notice these worn pages were a result of avid devotion. Scriptures were underlined, starred, colored with felt-tip highlighters and inspirational

notes adorned the margins. Suddenly the surgeon was overwhelmed by this revelation and felt pangs of guilt. By the end of the service the Holy Spirit had changed this man's heart for better.

Though God was actively changing the hearts and attitudes of the more traditional church members, it became necessary for me to address the group at a crucial meeting. "I don't want it said that we preach an easy Christian experience at Calvary Chapel, but neither do I want to see us fall into the mistakes made by the Holiness Church 30 years ago. They unintentionally drove out and therefore lost an entire generation of young people with their philosophies: no movies, no dancing, no smoking, etc. Their brand of gospel yielded disastrous results. We won't make this mistake at Calvary. We will instead trust God and place the emphasis on the work being accomplished in individuals by the Holy Spirit. This approach is both exciting and natural if the Spirit is given the opportunity to direct change in people. We need to avoid demanding conformance to a Western Christian lifestyle of short hair, clean shaven, appropriate dress. The change will occur—from the inside out. We can stand on the knowledge that other gods: drugs, pursuit of money, even sports if all-consuming, will not result in a meaningful existence or true fulfillment. In the end these things will only bring disappointment, emptiness, and despair."

Interestingly the last stronghold to give way was the issue of "bare feet" in the church. The incident that led up to the relinquishment of the "final stronghold" of tradition involved a wide area of new carpet that had only recently been installed in the church. Those that continued in their resistance to the hippies settled upon this issue as their campaign platform. Dirty feet soil carpets, carpets cost money, and soiled carpets are unsightly besides.

So early one Sunday morning a band of traditionalists hung a sign at the church entrance which read, "NO BARE FEET ALLOWED."

Fortunately, I happened to get to the church early that Sunday morning. I tore the sign down, saddened that serious division can result from apparently trivial differences such as this one. But sadder was the underpinnings of the division, a specific line had been drawn to separate two groups that should be united in love. This episode led to a call for the Board to meet.

At the board meeting I was determined and spoke from my heart: "We, the older established Christians, are on trial and our judges are this next generation of young people. We quoted 1 John 4:7 and James 2, yet the actions we took today, as James aptly said, creates a question mark stamped across our faith. In times like this we need to ask ourselves and search for those motivations that are controlling and guiding our actions."

"If our plush carpet leads to closed church doors to even one bare-footed young Christian, then I believe the carpet should be removed. If dirty blue-jeans worn by the new believer are offensive to us and cause us concern about transferring some of the dirt to the pristine pews, let's get rid of the upholstered pews. Instead, we can substitute benches or steel chairs that can be easily washed after services. No, let's never, ever close our church doors because of someone's appearance—never!"

Calvary Chapel managed to leap this last hurdle and we all moved ahead as a result.

EXPANSION

During the building phase of the chapel on the Greenville School property one of the members mentioned that although beautiful, it looked much too small. My seminary training taught that maintenance of 5/6ths of capacity is optimal congregation size. We planned to give Calvary Chapel 300 person capacity in order to expect to work with a congregation of about 250 members.

But the very first Sunday, the grand opening of our new chapel, found us with packed pews. We fully expected less turnout in subsequent weeks since grand openings bring out the curious along with the returning churchgoers. The following Sunday we ran out of extra chairs and people were sitting on the floor.

After buying another 50 chairs and still being short of seating, the following Sunday we doubled the number of Sunday services. Yet within a few weeks people were back on the floor and in side rooms trying to hear the message.

Three services each Sunday and the overflow still continued so we doubled the seating capacity in the auditorium by moving the side walls outward. Still the church attendance continued to grow, chairs were set up on the patio and by the end of summer 500 chairs were set up for all three services each Sunday. The patio was packed as we headed for winter. We asked the Lord for help.

About this time we learned of 11 acres of property just a block away. Five years earlier a group of investors had purchased this property for \$400,000. Though their goal was to make a profit on the disposition of this property, The Santa Ana Planning Department rejected every proposal they submitted. The property was finally lost through foreclosure with an unpaid balance of \$343,000. Someone suggested we purchase this property.

“Eleven acres!?! We don’t need 11 acres. What would we do with it?” I asked.

“We could sell half, but that is a good piece of property.”

I said, “How in the world would we ever buy that? The owner foreclosed for \$343,000?”

A Man in the church named Wally Koshman said, “I think if I offered \$300,000 cash, they might take it.”

I responded, “Rediculous the property is worth well more than that, and they had forclosed on a \$343,000 note. He said, “Will you authorize me to offer \$300,000 on behalf of the church?” I responded “Well, go ahead and try,”

The \$300,000 offer was made and accepted, but now the concern centered on where to get \$300,000!

This property was only one block from our present facility, and I had to drive past it every evening on my way home. There was a signal on the corner and as I would be parked waiting for the left turn green arrow, my heart would begin to race, and fear would grip my mind as I looked at this huge expanse of property, I would ask myself, “What are you doing? You own the present property free and clear, you have money in the bank, but now you are obligating the church to this huge financial commitment.” As I would begin to panic the Lord would speak to me would speak to my heart and ask. “Whose church is it?” “Lord it’s Your church.” “Then what are you worried about?”

By the time my car reached the San Diego freeway my heart was at peace. “Praise the Lord, it is His church! So what if we do fall or so what if we do fail! Since it is His church and He got us into it, He can get us out! Praise the Lord!”

At this point we were only able to come up with about \$60,000 cash. The man that negotiated the deal loaned another \$90,000 for one year interest free, and a local savings and loan gave us another

\$150,000 two year note on the strength of the property's appraised value. I thought, "The Lord has two years to provide for us."

The purchase of the 11 acres was finally completed. We paved a new parking lot and bought a big, old circus tent to accommodate the people before winter. 1,600 chairs were lined up in the tent for double Sunday services. The Saturday night before the grand opening of the tent, the men had their prayer meeting, and afterwards we drove over to the tent. We had men who were putting in the last of the chairs as everything was set for Sunday morning. As we stood there on the platform looking out over the sea of folding chairs, in awe I turned to one of our elders, Duane Hart and asked, "how long do you suppose it will take the Lord to fill this place?" Looking at his watch he said, "I'd say, oh, about 11 hours."

Eleven hours later at the 9 o'clock service the chairs were filled and people were standing on the edges of the tent. My thought was, "How foolish, you go from three services to two, and everyone comes to the first service. The tent will probably be half full for the second service." How wrong I was, and how much I had underestimated the Lord, for at 11 o'clock every chair was filled again and people were again standing around the edges. We left the tent flaps up so that people could sit on blankets as they surrounded the tent.

When winter arrived we put on an addition at the back of the tent to cover another 400 chairs and all of us were amazed as God continued to bless.

The \$150,000 loan that we had taken out carried interest expense of \$1,128 per month and as we made our first payment, the thought came to me, "That is \$1,128 dollars paid to the bank for which we really get nothing but a receipt. I said, "Lord, I know that you are austere, and you reap where you have not sown. It is your church, and you can spend your money as you wish, but I do not think that paying that much interest each month is financially prudent.

When I arrived home my wife said, "Honey, Ed Riddle wants you to call him." When I called he said he had received a call from Shell Oil Company and they were interested in purchasing the corner of our property for \$150,000 cash.

"Lord, it is Your business!" To the present day you will see the Shell station on the corner of our property.

We started to build our new facilities on our property on a pay as you go basis. Three times the architect had to redraw the plans for the auditorium each time increasing the size, as we continued to grow. The building project was moving along well, as God continued to supply the needs. However one of the businessmen on the board, felt that it would be prudent to get a loan commitment from the bank for \$400,000 dollars in case the funds ran out prior to completion of the project and we would have to wait on the finances to complete the project. The bank gave us the commitment for the \$400,000 for 7.5% however it was never necessary to take the loan, for the Lord provided completely, and by the time we opened the doors to the new sanctuary, it was fully paid for.

Our new sanctuary opened in 1974. We could now seat 2,300 people comfortably, yet the very first service was packed. People were on the floors again, and after only two weeks, we had to return to three Sunday morning services. Overcrowding continued, so we built the Fellowship Hall to contain another 700 people and we added closed-circuit television. When the auditorium would fill to capacity, the overflow would file into the Fellowship Hall. We now have a huge gymnasium, which can accommodate 900 people who watch the services on closed-circuit television.

The Lord continues to send even more people to Calvary Chapel and in each of the three services you will see hundreds of people sitting on chairs in the patios listening to the Word of God as it is being taught. Hundreds continue to accept Christ each month as Jesus continues His task of building His church. New believers are enrolled in a correspondence course designed for new believers and we have a continuing class on Tuesday nights for the new believers. To meet the growing need for quality Bible teaching, a vast offering of Bible studies are held throughout the week. In addition, a wide variety of fellowships, different Bible studies and Friday night movies in the sanctuary add to the depth and diversity of what is available to feed the spirit of the believer. Periodically on Saturdays we will feature an outreach concert with several different bands and an outreach-oriented message. On Monday nights, Greg Laurie exercises his gifts as an evangelist consistently bringing forth abundant fruit. The in-depth Wednesday evening Bible studies continue, as well as 3 Sunday morning services and a Sunday evening through the whole Bible study. The course is taken book-by-book from the beginning of the Bible to the very end then back to the beginning again. We are going through the Bible for the 7th time, at this writing.

Calvary Chapel never makes a plea for money, "faith pledges," or yearly financial commitments. No radio or television appeals for money are broadcast because our belief is that begging brings discredit to God. Financial integrity is central to ministry, to the extent that our staff salaries are low when compared to comparable secular positions. My own personal lifestyle is a simple one, although God has given me the responsibility of overseeing millions of dollars within this ministry. The money belongs to Him, not to me. My role is to be a steward of these funds, always aware that the distribution of the money is watched by believers and non-believers alike.

Calvary Chapel did not begin as a church the size of an aircraft carrier for which I was hired as an Admiral. The church was not bequeathed to me as a multi-national business. Rather, the obedience to the call from God, even though sometimes confusing and seemingly irrational, led to a growing work of God. The hard work and hard lessons were important, but more importantly was the need to yield to the will of God.

One of the secrets to this type of work, I am now convinced, was the so-called "desert years," the years of struggle, of trials and tribulations without apparent success or progress. In this crucible God prepared my character. He so often mocks outward circumstances and repudiates the impossible. At many and sundry times my own situation looked impossible, but God accomplished successful ends to all the situations encountered.

BY THE SPIRIT

Calvary Chapel is not an ambition fulfilled. It is not the result of an egotistical desire to pastor a gigantic church. I became too tired to imagine pastoring a congregation of more than 250 people. The results you now see happened through the power of the Holy Spirit; not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Since we did not strive to attain, we now don't strive to maintain. The beauty is that I can relax, I can just be "Chuck." No worries; it's His church. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build My church." After realizing this, I now sit back, enjoy, and watch as He does the work. Nothing can compare to the thrill of watching God do what we could never hope to accomplish!

THE PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY OF CALVARY CHAPEL

The philosophy of Calvary Chapel concerning the role and function of the church is found in Ephesians 4:9–13 where Paul speaks about Jesus Christ who has ascended into heaven, but He is the One who first of all descended into the lower parts of the earth. And when He ascended, He led the captives from their captivity. He gave gifts unto men: some to be apostles, to some prophets, some evangelists and some pastor/teachers. He then declares why these men were given: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ. We believe that the church exists primarily *for* Jesus; to bring pleasure to Him; that we might be to the praise and glory of His grace. The Lord has created the church for His own good pleasure, and thus, the church exists primarily for Him; it is His church. Christ said, “Upon *this* rock I will build *My* church.” I am a part of His church. There is only One Person who can say, “My church,” and that is Jesus. It is His church. The interesting thing about His church is that you can’t join it. You’ve got to be born into it. We are born again by the Spirit of God into the church of Jesus Christ. It is His church.

What, then is the purpose of His church? To bring glory to God; to be God’s instrument of ministry to the Lord. But also in the secondary sense, the church exists for the edifying or the building up of the saints; to bring the saints into full maturity so that *they* might engage in the work of the ministry.

When I was in seminary, Oswald J. Smith, pastor of the People’s Church in Toronto, Canada, which is noted worldwide for being a missionary–minded church, placed a tremendous emphasis on foreign missions. In the seminars I attended, I heard him say over and over that the primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world. I heard him say this so often that I accepted it as gospel truth. So, when I began in the ministry, I sought to evangelize the world. My sermons were always evangelistic. They were always followed by an invitation, “Bow your heads, close your eyes, and those who would like to receive Jesus Christ tonight, just put your hand up and down again.” Everything I did was geared toward evangelism. I sought to be an evangelist because I felt that the primary purpose of the church was evangelization of the world. That’s what had been drilled into my head.

I soon discovered, however, that the most difficult thing in all the world is trying to be something that God didn’t make you to be. Paul asked, “are all apostles, are all prophets, are all evangelists?” The answer is obviously no. Not everyone has the calling of an evangelist. Not everyone has the calling of a pastor/teacher. Not everyone has the calling of a prophet. Trying to be something that God didn’t make you is the most difficult thing in the world. I was trying to be something that I was not called by God to be.

Paul, opens his letter to the Ephesians, saying, “Paul, an apostle by the will of God.” I can buy that. I can say, “Chuck, a pastor/teacher by the will of God.” It’s important that we discover what we are *by the will of God*. For years I wanted to be “Chuck, the evangelist, by the will of Chuck.” It was not by the will of God. I was trying to conform myself to the mold of the denomination in which I was serving. It was a denomination whose emphasis was on evangelism. Exhortation was held in higher regard than exposition, thus, they did not encourage the pastor/teacher role. They expected *all* the pastors to be evangelists, so we endeavored to be evangelists. I was a miserable failure as an evangelist. My wife sought to help me. She saw my frustrations, and she said, “Honey, you’re just not dynamic enough.” She said, “Watch Billy Graham. He just doesn’t stand behind the pulpit, he moves around.” She said,

“You’re going to have to learn how to move around, be more dynamic.” I tried that, and it didn’t work. I was frustrated, because I was seeking to be something that God didn’t make me.

As I started reading and studying the Word of God, I could not find the Scripture that said the primary purpose of the church is the evangelization of the world; I still can’t find that Scripture. But I did find in Ephesians 4 that God has placed gifted men, apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastor/teachers for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, the building up of the body of Christ. This brought into my life a tremendous philosophical change as far as my concept of the purpose of the church was concerned. Rather than seeing the primary purpose as being the evangelization of the world, I saw that the purpose of the church was for the perfecting of the saints, making the believers strong, bringing them into maturity, feeding them, loving them, strengthening them so that they would be able to be engaged in the work of the ministry. I realized that God has called *all* of us and placed us into His body and He has a plan and purpose for *each of us*.

So, Paul said that the types of men listed in Ephesians 4 were for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, the building up of the body of Christ, until we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto the fully matured man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we’re no longer like babes tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ.

So, in changing my philosophy, I no longer preached evangelistic sermons per se, but began to teach the Word of God in a consistent way designed to produce growth within the believers.

When I first started out in the ministry, my sermons were all topical sermons centered around evangelism. I had 2 years worth of sermons, so every 2 years I would ask the bishop for a change of church and then I would move to a new area and preach my 2 years of sermons again. I did this in 4 communities until we finally ended up in Huntington Beach, California. By this time my older daughter had started school and, personally, I loved living in Huntington Beach. It was a lovely little beach community of only 5,900 people at the time. I began to really know and like the people. But I was running out of sermons because preaching topical sermons, it is rather difficult to find the text. When you’re searching through the whole Bible to find a text to preach on each week, it is difficult because the Bible’s a pretty good sized book. Every week, though, I found myself going through, reading until some text really hit me. Of course, I had to have three sermons every week and it began to get difficult for me to find my text, especially since it had to be in the area of evangelism. Once I found a text, I was able to develop it, but finding a text was always a problem.

I came across a book at that time called *The Apostle John*, by Griffith Thomas, and in the middle of the book he had outlined studies of the book of 1 John. I began to read his outlined studies of 1 John and found that they were great expository outlines of this little epistle. There were forty-three outlines, and I thought, “Wow, I can spend another year here in Huntington Beach if I just teach 1 John.” So I announced to the people on a Sunday morning, that the next Sunday we would begin a study of the First Epistle of John.

The very first thing that Griffith Thomas explained in his book is why John wrote his epistle in the first place: in chapter 1 he said, “And these things write we unto you that your *joy may be full*”; in chapter 2 he said, “These things we write unto you that *you sin not*”; and in chapter 5 he said, “These things we have written unto you that ye may *know that you have eternal life*.” So I announced to the people that we were going to begin a study on 1 John and I said, “Now, there are three reasons why John wrote this little epistle. By the next Sunday I want you to be able to tell me the three reasons. When I greet

you at the front door when you come to church, if I ask you three reasons why John wrote that epistle, I'm expecting you to be able to tell me." I had people calling me in the middle of the week saying, "We've read the thing through seven times and we can only find two reasons, are you sure there are three?" I said, "I am sure there are three; keep reading." My sermon that Sunday morning was the purpose of the book. I had three points: reading the book will give you *fullness of joy, freedom from sin, and assurance of your salvation*.

There are six places in which John points to Jesus Christ as our example. So that Sunday I said, "Now, next week I want you to find the six places where John points to Jesus Christ as our example, and the key words are "as he," or "even as he." Six places where he has pointed to Jesus as our example; find them." Again the people started reading through the book and it took them eight, nine, and ten times to find all six: if we walk in the light, *as He* is in the light, we have fellowship one with the other; if we say we abide in Him, then we ought also to walk *even as He* walked. He is our example in our walk. We ought to be walking as He walks, walking in the light as He is in the light, our example in righteousness and purity, for we are pure *as He* is pure, we are righteous as *He is* righteous. He said we should love even *as He* commanded us. Finally, *as He is*, so are we to be to this world.

The next sermon was "False Professions That People Make." John lists seven false professions with the key words "if a man says," or "if we say." I said, "Find the false professions that people are making." The congregation was reading through the book again. The following Sunday, we dealt with the phrase "to know." How do we know what we know? I had them reading through the book again. I then started an expository study through the book. Beginning with 1 John 1:1 and going straight through, I spent a whole year in the book.

The interesting thing was that in a year's time, the church had doubled in attendance. I had not given invitations in every service to accept Christ, but we had more conversions and water baptisms that year than any previous year. And the most exciting thing was that the people had a greater joy in their walk with the Lord than they had ever known before. They were experiencing real power over sin. And they were assured of their salvation.

Why? Because Isaiah said, "As the rain cometh down from the heavens and returns not thither, but it waters the ground that it might give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so is My word that goes forth out of My mouth, saith the Lord, it shall not return unto Me void. It shall accomplish the purposes for which I sent it." If God sent us this little epistle of 1 John to bring us fullness of joy, to bring us freedom from sin, and to bring us assurance of salvation, that's exactly what's going to happen to the people as you teach them that book. God's Word won't return void. Our words probably will, but His Word won't. If you are faithful in teaching His Word, it will accomplish the purpose for which God sent it. That's why, when you read an epistle, it is always good to ask yourself, "What is the purpose of this epistle? Why was this written?" Find the purpose, and then you'll find out what it is that God is working out in your life and what you could be expecting to happen as you make a real study of that epistle or of that gospel.

I was able to stay another year in Huntington Beach, loved it, and now with new growth it was greater than ever. As I was finishing 1 John, I was beginning to develop my own style of expository teaching. I thought, "What book of the Bible could I tackle in the same way as 1 John?" In seminary, I had a professor who told us that the book of Romans would revolutionize any church. I had always heard what a glorious book Romans was but, I have to confess, I had read it many times and it didn't really turn me on. But I had a lot of confidence in that professor, and if he said it would revolutionize any church, I thought it would be fun to be a part of a revolution. So I announced to the people when

we came to the end of our study of 1 John, “Now, next Sunday we are going to begin a study of the book of Romans.”

I went out and bought all the commentaries I could find on the book of Romans and I began to develop outline studies similar to the outline studies I had in 1 John. I spent two years on Sunday mornings in the book of Romans. Again, the church doubled; we had more people saved and more people baptized than we ever had before. It was glorious; it was exciting.

I picked up a copy of *Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook*. In fact, I made a practice of giving one of these to every new convert. I've always said the first book you should have in your library outside of the Bible, is *Halley's Bible Pocket Handbook*. It's full of valuable, good, background information: cultural, archaeological, historical. For a little book, it's got more nuggets and more facts than any other book I know. So, they came out with a revised edition, and it had a new cover jacket on the front which said, “The most important page in this book is 814.” Now, I had so admired Mr. Halley that I thought, “I wonder what he considers to be the most important page in this book?” I had always gotten a lot of value out of the whole thing. So I turned to page 814 and there he said, “Each church should have a congregational plan of Bible teaching. And, the pastor's sermon be from the part of the Bible read the past week.” He gave a suggested reading, so you could go through the whole Bible in a year. I thought that was just a little strenuous, but I thought we could go through it in 2 years. Taking 10 chapters a week, 15 when we get to the Psalms, we could go through the whole Bible in 2 years. The thought then occurred to me: “You can stay in one church the rest of your life, if you just start teaching through the Bible.”

I discovered that it was much easier to get sermons when I was confined to one small area for my text, and the quality of the sermons were much better, for I was able to spend much more concentrated study on the text I was going to be speaking from, than I did when I was hodgepoding around the whole Bible just trying to find the text. When you have to find your text within a certain portion of Scripture, it makes you really push and do some concentrated and valuable studying. So I took up Mr. Halley's suggestion, taking the people straight through the Bible, and that's been my practice ever since.

In the 30 plus years I have been pastoring at Calvary Chapel, we have gone completely through the Bible many times and each time it seems to get richer. I have slowed down considerably from our early pace of ten chapters a week and I have only been taking one or two chapters a week. I'm loving it more this time than ever because I am progressively learning more. The last time I went through I slowed down to 5 chapters a week. By the time I'm through with the present systematic teaching, we will have a very thorough commentary on the entire Bible because I've made it a personal practice that every time I go through the Bible I read a new commentary, or sometimes 2 or 3 new commentaries, and as a result, I've been able to read most of the major commentaries on the Bible.

A valuable lesson that I've learned is that the greatest way to learn is to teach. Once you start teaching, you really start learning because you have to take in so much more material than what you can give out. You've got to take it in and sift through it. You've got to take in probably 10 times the amount that you give out. So, it's a great way to learn—start teaching.

In the book of Hebrews, chapter 6, the author writes, “Therefore laying aside the first principles of the doctrines of Christ: the repentance of dead works, baptisms, laying on of hands; let us go on into full maturity.” Having had an opportunity of looking back now on my ministry, the 17 years of struggling in the ministry, compared with the last 30 plus years of cruising in the ministry, the struggling years

were when I was endeavoring to be an evangelist, preaching topical sermons and building the church in the energy and ability of my flesh.

I don't know if the book of Romans revolutionized the church, but it did revolutionize me. I was never the same after that. I came into a new personal relationship with the Lord that was just greater than anything I had ever known previously. It revolutionized my whole spiritual experience. God just turned me upside down and inside out. I also realized an important truth through the book of Romans—when the people became strong and mature in the Word of God, they then began to be more effective witnesses for Jesus Christ. Christ became their life. We didn't have to have visitation nights and witnessing programs anymore. The witnessing became a natural extension of the Christian walk. A witness is not something that you *do*; it is something that you *are*. When your life is matured in Christ, your matured spiritual walk is a witness to others. When I was trying to be an evangelist I discovered that the most frustrating thing in the whole ministry was to have the Lord lay on your heart a dynamic evangelistic sermon, and then have no sinners in the church to preach it to. I used to get so excited over some of the sermons the Lord would give me—great, evangelistic sermons. I mean, they were so powerful in their logic that no sinner could possibly sit through them without accepting Jesus. I would go to church and my heart would be just overflowing with this dynamic message that the Lord had given me. I could hardly wait to deliver it. I could hardly wait until I got to the invitation so I could see every sinner in the house on their knees, for I surely knew that would be the case. But so often, with this kind of sermon burning on my heart, I would come to church, sit on the platform while the songs were being sung, look over the congregation and know them all by first name. Not a sinner in the house. I would get upset and would add a few points to my sermon: “You people are miserable failures. God is tired of you not witnessing for Him. If you folks were all that God wanted you to be, you would have had your friends here tonight with you. You would have brought your sinful neighbors to hear the Word of God!”

I was laying it on the saints because I was angry that there weren't any sinners there. The blessed dear saints, as I would take out the whip and begin laying it across their back, would just sink down deeper and deeper in the pew as the conviction was coming heavy on them. Instead of making an invitation for anyone to accept Christ, I would ask how many wanted to commit their lives to really being the kind of witness the Lord wanted them to be, because I was of the spiritual mentality that you've got to get someone forward praying at the altar or your sermon was not a success.

The problem, however, was not a lack of desire to be better witnesses. They desired to serve the Lord. The problem was that they didn't really know how because they were not taught. All they ever had was the baby bottle. All they ever heard was “repent from your sins” and “Jesus died to save us from our sins.” All they ever had was evangelism. They were never really *taught* in the Word to where they could mature and where they could grow.

When the saints were perfected for the work of the ministry, however, then they began to minister. They began to bring in their friends. Evangelism was the by-product of a strong and mature church. A church that is strong in the Word will automatically be an evangelical church. It is the natural function of healthy sheep to reproduce. It's very natural. You don't even have to teach them how. When you make the sheep healthy by giving them a good diet, a consistent diet that develops growth and strength, they will naturally reproduce.

I also discovered that in going straight through a book of the Bible, you avoid riding hobby horses. There are certain subjects in the Bible that I find more fascinating than others. There are some things that I love to preach about; there are others I don't like to preach about. Those things that I don't like to

preach about, I find ways of bypassing them. When you go straight through a book of the Bible from beginning to end, you can't bypass the rarely-addressed, unpopular issues that people need to hear. God would not have put them in the Word unless they were important subjects. If you go straight through a book in teaching, you will be declaring the whole counsel of God, and your emphasis will become a biblical emphasis. I believe that as you study the Bible you will discover that the biblical emphasis is what God has done for man: that God is the initiator, and that man is the responder. For the love of Christ is what constrains us. God initiated our relationship by His great love for me and I'm just responding to that love.

Looking back at my topical sermons, I realized that I was always emphasizing what man should be doing for God. They were sermons on the believer's walk; how we ought to be praying more; how we ought to be giving more; how we ought to be witnessing more; how we ought to be praising God more. It was always on what we should be doing for God. But that is frustrating, especially for the congregation. Yes, I know I should be doing these things for God, but I don't know how. You see, if you only pick those texts which begin with a therefore, and you do not go back and find out what the therefore is there for, you do not give them the basis for their being or doing. When Paul wrote to the Romans, "I beseech ye, *therefore*, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies as a living sacrifice," if you haven't gone back to that grace of God wherein we stand and discover all that we are and have in Christ Jesus, then the commitment can be just an emotional thing of the moment. With no true basis for commitment in is not apt to be lasting.

In the Scriptures, the exhortations to commitment usually begin with "therefore" or "wherefore." These words are never the beginning of a thought but rather, words that call for a response to the statements or arguments that preceded them.

Paul didn't begin the book of Romans with chapter 12, he began with chapter 1. There is a natural progression of thought through the book of Romans until you finally get to chapter 12 where, because God has called you and justified you and glorified you, "I beseech you, therefore, to present your bodies to Him." Look at Ephesians. Paul begins the first chapter by saying, "Thanks be unto God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ in heavenly places." God has blessed us, and Paul spends three chapters telling us of all these spiritual blessings we have in Christ. It's not until he gets to chapter 4 that again he uses the word "therefore." "Because of what God has done for you, therefore, walk ye worthy of the calling where you are called." It's not until you get to chapter 5 that Paul begins to exhort you how you are to walk in your relationship with your family, your wife, your servants, your employees, but again, only after he has given us the basis of what God has already done for us. If we are only emphasizing to the people what they should be doing for God, that is not a real biblical emphasis.

As I see it, the Bible teaches us that God is the initiator. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." God initiated His love towards me. God reached unto me. God initiated my relationship with Him. He chose me in Christ before the foundation of the world. God initiated the whole thing. What I am to do, then, is to respond to God. When you teach from this solid biblical perspective, you will discover that when the people really begin to understand God and what God has done for them, they will want to respond to God. You're not going to have to beg them to volunteer for work; they are going to volunteer on their own. You don't have to have all kinds of gimmicks to get them to give. They will want to give. They will want to respond to God. When they really know who God is and what God has done for them, they will respond to God.

I have been in services where people were encouraged to “praise the Lord,” so that God would bless them because they have been told that “the Lord inhabits the praises of His people.” In that case, you’re saying man is the initiator, that you can get things going between you and God. All you have to do is praise Him a little bit. He’ll respond and begin to bless you. The truest praise is not something that is done out of the motive in my heart to get a blessing. If I am praising the Lord just so I can get a blessing, that’s not true praise. That’s a self-centered attitude. The object for praise in that case is *me*, not God. The truest praise is that automatic response of my heart at the recognition of the grace of God to me when God has just done something fantastic for me, even though I have miserably failed, yet God just lays some rich blessing on me and my heart responds, “Oh, God, You are too much; I can’t believe Your love and goodness.” That’s the purest form of praise, that which comes spontaneously from my heart at the recognition of God’s grace in my life. I don’t praise the Lord so I can create an atmosphere in which God will come down and bless me. My praises are a response to the blessings that God has bestowed. God is the initiator. Man is the responder.

The Book of 1 Peter begins with a thanks to God who has “begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God.” This is all God’s part. We don’t have anything to do with this. He’s talking about what God is doing. Thanks to God who has caused *us* to be born again. Where do we come in? Peter says “we are kept by the power of God through faith.” That’s where we come in, by just believing that God has done all this for us. In John 6:29 Jesus said it is the work of God, that we believe in Him who He has sent. Yes, human response is important, but it is quite natural when I know what I am responding to. I have to know God and I have to know what God has done. A person will receive this naturally if you are teaching through the Bible and through the books of the Bible.

Paul said to the elders of the church of Ephesus, I want you to bear record, that I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare to you all of the counsel of God. A pastor cannot say that truthfully unless he has taken his congregation through the whole Bible book by book and verse by verse.

So, in essence, the philosophy of Calvary Chapel is to perfect the saints for the work of the ministry and to build up the body of Christ, instructing them in the Word until they come into the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God and into a full maturity, unto the stature of the measure of the image of Christ.

As you look at the church of Jesus Christ, you’ll find that there is a very broad spectrum. As you look at our society, you will see that there is also a very broad spectrum of people with many and varied tastes. So at one end of this broad spectrum there is the very formal liturgical church: the prayer book, the robes, the choirs with their chants, the incense, the candles, when to stand, kneel, sit, and respond. Everything’s worked out for you; it’s a very formal, ritualistic, liturgical form of worship. On the other end of the spectrum, there is no form, no program, a lot of screaming, a lot of shouting, a lot of utterances in tongues, people going all over and everybody standing up here and there. There’s no order, no form; you sort of sit there waiting to see what will happen next.

Now, there are some people who seem to be able to relate to God only in a very liturgical way. They like the rustling robes, the chanting choirs and the smell of incense, and they can sit there and have a sense of worship. When they walk out, they have a sense of having been in the presence of God and love to worship the Lord in that manner. I do not doubt that some people actually, truly worship and love the Lord in that environment and relate to Him in that liturgical way.

On the other hand you have people who are all emotion and unless they've had an emotional jolt and have gone through a wide variety of physical kinds of things, they don't feel that they have worshipped God properly. In fact, they'll often come out of a teaching church and say, "That was the deadest thing I've ever been in. I don't know how you get anything out of that old man; it was so dead. Why didn't they have utterances in tongues? Why weren't there miracles?" Their whole thing is an emotional kick. They live for an emotional high and in that emotional high, they have the sense of worshipping God. That's the way they relate to God, in an emotional way. God knows that there are emotional people; He also knows that there are people on the liturgical side. And God loves them all.

Because God knows that there are some people who can only relate to Him in a liturgical way, He has the liturgical churches so they can minister to those people who need the liturgy. Because He knows that there are people who can only relate to Him in a highly emotional way, He has the highly emotional churches where the people can go and relate to Him through emotional experiences. I thank God for these churches and I see their place in the body of Christ. The swing of the church pendulum, then, is marked by the highly liturgical on one side, and the totally non-conforming experiential on the other.

Coming down the spectrum from the liturgical side, you have those churches that teach the Word of God. Their services are somewhat a ritual, that is, every Sunday you know exactly what will take place. It's been the same for the last 100 years, and you can feel rather secure because you know you're going to have the call to worship, the opening hymn, the announcements, the offering, then their sermon, the benediction, and time to go home. The sermon is an exposition of the Word and there are a great many gifted teachers. Unfortunately, many of them deny the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit. So, as a result, you have a dead orthodoxy.

Calvary Chapel believes in teaching the Word of God through the power of the Spirit of God which changes the lives of the people of God. If you have just the Spirit with no Word and foundation in the Word, then you are leading the people into experiences only, which are shallow. If you have just the Word of God without the Spirit, then you are leading people into dead orthodoxy. It takes the power of the Spirit of God to make the changes, but it takes the Word of God to give the substance and to give the foundation. It is that blending of the Word of God being taught through the power of the Spirit of God that brings the changes in the people.

Calvary Chapel recognizes the need for the power of the Spirit, but we also recognize the need for the solid foundation and teaching of the Word. To effectively teach the Word, however, it takes the anointing and the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit can give the teacher the gifts of the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and prophecy. These gifts are in operation in the pastor's life as he is teaching the Word of God. This is where Calvary Chapel fits into the church spectrum.

Our society seems to exist in four quadrants which can be defined as, highly organized and dependent; highly organized and independent; casual and dependent; casual and independent. It would seem that most churches fall in the category of the highly organized and dependent. They have a very structured program, and seek to make the people feel dependent on the church for their salvation, to leave them is tantamount to leaving salvation. They let you know that the Lord and the church are depending on you. It would seem that Calvary Chapel fits in the casual and independent quadrant. It is interesting that today in the U.S. about 90% of the people fit into that quadrant, so here we are fishing in a large pond almost by ourselves, while the majority of the churches are fishing in the small pond.

Many come to Calvary Chapel to study the program and seek to discover the key to success. They want to know what we are doing, what our program is that draws so many people to the hundreds of Calvary Chapels around the country. They observe so many of the outward things, but fail to discover the real secret. What they fail to observe is that it's the *Spirit* of God *working through* the *Word* of God in the lives of the *people* of God; that is the key, not following or conforming to the traditional church. People do not feel threatened. They don't feel like they're going to be collared or given a Sunday school book and told, "Oh, thank God, brother, you've been here three Sundays, we need you to teach Sunday school now." You're not going to be pressured; your service is going to be something that's going to come from within you as you respond to the Lord.

The philosophy of Calvary Chapel is giving and ministering rather than taking and being ministered to. You will find that a lot of ministries exist in order to be ministered to. And they don't mind letting you know that: "We need your support to keep this ministry going. This ministry depends upon you." I've concluded that any ministry that depends upon man for its existence and operation *should* die, and the best thing we could do is let it die. Calvary Chapel, then, exists to minister and our emphasis is on giving: *giving* to the people; *ministering* to the people.

We had a very wealthy man who was vice president of a tool company from Texas, as well as being in the oil business. He attended Calvary Chapel quite regularly, and we became very close to him and his wife. All the while, though, he kept saying to his wife, "When are they going to hit us for the money?" He just kept waiting for our pitch for his money.

The Sunday before Thanksgiving I announced that we had so much to be thankful for and how God had been so good to us that year. "Unfortunately, though," I said, "there are some who are going through difficulties and they don't have much to be thankful for." As I started talking about the problems that some people were having and the financial difficulties they were going through, the man nudged his wife and said, "At last, he's finally getting there. I knew the pitch had to come some time." I concluded my statements, however, not the way he had been expecting. I said, "So, if you are in need this Thanksgiving and you are going through some real financial difficulties, just see our assistant pastor after the service and the church will be glad to give you a turkey and all that you need for your Thanksgiving dinner. We just pray that you'll have a glorious Thanksgiving." The man was absolutely dumbfounded. We were simply operating according to the truth of the Scriptures, as Jesus said it is more blessed to give than to receive. That is our philosophy: giving the Word of God freely to people; giving freely of ourselves in serving the people; going the second mile.

By the same token, the minister is to minister rather than be ministered to. Somewhere along the line there has been a tremendous flip-flop in terminology and idea in ministry. The word "minister" really means "servant" and Joshua was Moses' minister. It meant that he was Moses' servant, that is, he ministered to the needs of Moses. He was Moses' errand boy. That's what the word "minister" means. Yet, I am amazed at how upset some ministers get when someone asks them to minister to the needs of the congregation. "Can you believe he called *me* for a ride? Doesn't he know that I'm the minister here?" If you are the minister then he *should* have called you for a ride. Jesus said, "He that would be the chief among you, let him be the servant of all." The minister *is* a servant. Remember, it was Jesus who took the towel and girded himself, and went around and began to wash the feet of His disciples. That was the job of the servant, not of the master. Dusty paths, open sandals, made for dirty feet, so when someone would come to your home, the lowest servant in the house had the duty of coming up, taking off the guest's sandals at the door and washing his feet in the basin of water. That was the role

that Jesus chose and illustrated by His example at the Last Supper. Jesus told the disciples, "Do you see what I have done to you? If I, being the Lord, have washed your feet, so ought you to wash one another's feet."

In other words, the idea is that we are to be servants, and we should think of ministry as servanthood. The book *The Jesus Style*, written by Gayle Erwin, should acquaint you with what real Christian service is all about and what ministry should be about. The entire church, from the pastor on down, is here to minister to the needs of others. We are not here to be ministered to. We do not look to the people to minister to us; we look for ways to minister to them.

The philosophy of Calvary Chapel is to see the whole body of Christ, and we are filling one little niche of the spectrum that God has called us to fill and we want to be faithful to that calling. We strive to see the whole body of Christ and the purpose of the whole body and so the only place where we might be in conflict with others in the body of Christ is where they are not leading people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. That may sound bizarre to some but unfortunately, there are churches that have gotten to the place where they are no longer leading people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

We're not in competition with the churches that are leading people to Jesus Christ; we're not fighting them. We don't exist to fight them; we exist to fight the devil and proclaim Jesus Christ. Jesus said to His disciples, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Their witness for Christ was to begin in Jerusalem, and it was very effective in Jerusalem. A few months after the birth of the church, the disciples were brought to court and the charges against them were this: "You have filled the whole city with this man's [Jesus] doctrine." Now that was a successful church. Would to God that we could be brought to court and the charges against us are that we filled the whole city with the doctrine of Jesus Christ. I would say "praise the Lord."

Persecution had scattered the church of Jesus Christ throughout all of Judea and wherever they went, they preached Christ. We then read that Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ to the Samaritans, and many of the Samaritans believed and were baptized when they saw the miracles Philip was doing. Then we read that the Holy Spirit said, "Separate unto Me, Paul and Barnabas, for the ministry where I have called them." And they fasted and prayed and laid hands on them and Paul and Barnabas headed for the Island of Cyprus. Later, Paul took the gospel to Asia Minor, Rome, Greece and Macedonia. Thomas took the gospel to India. In just 30 years after the birth of the church, Paul wrote to the Colossian church, "The Word of the gospel has come to you as it is in all the world." In just 30 years the disciples had spread the message into all the world.

When we started at Calvary Chapel in 1965 with only 25 people, I was determined that I would make those 25 people the most knowledgeable people of God's Word in all the harbor area. I began teaching them 5 nights a week: 2 nights in the church; 3 nights in the home Bible studies. One night a week, Saturday night, I had a prayer meeting with the men. We took Acts, chapter 2, as our pattern: "They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer." And so we decided that these would be the essential elements of our worship and fellowship. The emphasis would be the teaching of the Word, the Apostles' doctrine. We would teach them solid doctrine. We would teach them about God. We would teach them about Jesus Christ. We would teach them about the Holy Spirit. We would teach them about man. We would teach them about sin. We would teach them about salvation, and we would teach them about the coming again of Jesus Christ. Solid doctrine. The Apostles' doctrine.

We began to develop the fellowship, the *koinonia*, where we really became an integrated unit and began to minister to each other both in the physical and in the spiritual sense, praying for each other, binding our lives together in prayer, helping out each other in a physical sense. If one in the group was in need, we would all go together to help him, creating a strong fellowship. We would also gather together in these Bible studies and break bread.

In the book of Acts it says that as they did these things, the Lord added daily to the church such as should be saved. As we began to teach the people, this fellowship began to grow into a union, a oneness, a sharing in prayer and in love and in support, and as we began to break bread together, worshipping the Lord together, remembering Jesus Who died for us, and as we started praying together, the group began to grow. My wife led a prayer meeting for the ladies in the neighborhood during the week and I led one for the men on Saturday nights. We also had a group of men we had designated as elders who would visit and pray for the sick. As we began to do these things faithfully, we found that the Lord began to add daily to the church such as should be saved.

In 6 months we had increased to 50 people. Within a year we had 100 people. In 18 months we were looking for another facility because we were packing out the little church that we were in. We continued growing for 2 more years until we had to move again into the "Little Chapel" we built and lasted there for 2 years until we were so packed and crowded that we had to move into a tent.

While we were building our new sanctuary, we had to enlarge the plans 3 different times. We were growing so fast, the architect couldn't get the plans drawn quickly enough to accommodate our expansion. We had actually outgrown the church 3 times while it was still on the drawing board and when we opened our doors, we began with 2 Sunday morning services, and that only lasted 2 weeks before increasing to 3 services.

To accommodate the every increasing attendance we found it necessary to begin live broadcasts of our services at Calvary Chapel. We did not have the room to build larger facilities, and our current facilities could no longer accommodate the people so we saw this as the best solution. We purchased a local radio station and began Christian broadcasting. This proved to be so successful and effective in ministering the word of God to the people, that we began to purchase and build other stations in the United States. Currently our services are broadcast on over 180 stations in our Calvary Satellite Network throughout the country, with new stations being added every week, so by the time you read this, only God knows how many stations will be bringing the good news found in the word of God to people all over the nation.

As we grew and covered Jerusalem, we began to spread to Judea. My son, Chuck Jr., Greg Laurie, Jeff Johnson, Mike MacIntosh, Raul Ries, Jon Courson, Don McClure and Steve Mays began Bible studies and fellowships all throughout California, which was our Judea. We then spread into Samaria with other effective Calvary Chapels springing up in Washington, Oregon, Florida, Kansas, New York, Pennsylvania, Arizona and New Mexico, Florida and all throughout the U.S. This was our Samaria. Now we are in the uttermost parts of the world—England, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Switzerland, Russia, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Philippines, Thailand, India, Egypt, Uganda, Peru, Chile, San Salvador, Guatemala and many other countries as well. The interesting thing about the growth however is that each of the churches established as our Judea, became a Jerusalem for the pastor there, who began to reach his Judea's and Samaria's. Each Samaria became a Jerusalem for that pastor, who then began to reach his Judea, and Samaria, and the uttermost parts of the world. So that every Calvary Chapel becomes ultimately a birthing place for new ministries.

If the Lord tarries, will we continue to see this exponential type of growth, this explosion? It can happen if we will just continue to let the Spirit lead, let the Spirit move; don't try to get things too organized. Let God take care of that. Just teach the Word, bring the people into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ and each other, and celebrate communion with them.

When God established the nation of Israel, the form of government was a theocracy, that is, they were to be a people ruled by God. They were not to be as other nations with a king over them. They were to be a nation that would be distinct in the fact that they would be ruled by God. It was a sad day in their history when they came to Samuel and said, "We want you to appoint a king over us like the other nations." As a theocracy, God established the nation of Israel, but He called Moses to be the earthly leader *over* the nation, and God, *through* Moses, led the people. When things became too heavy for Moses, the responsibilities too great, he gathered 70 of the elders of Israel, representatives from the 12 tribes, and the Spirit of God, who was upon Moses, came upon them also. And they began to rule with Moses.

However, there were times when the people would bring an issue to one of the elders that they were not able to resolve. In that case the issue was then brought to Moses and Moses, in turn, went to God and God gave Moses the answer to the problem. Reversing the process, Moses would then pass the answer to the elders, who passed it to the people.

Also under Moses' charge was Aaron and the priesthood from the tribe of Levi who oversaw the spiritual aspects of the nation. So, as the elders were overseeing the legal and business squabbles and differences of the people, the priests were overseeing the spiritual aspects of the people.

The following is a diagram of the type of government God established with His nation, Israel, and a diagram of what Calvary Chapel understands as the New Testament counterpart as God's government for the church:

Old Testament Theocratic Government



Church Government



We feel that this is the form of government God desires for His church: Jesus Christ is the Head of the body, the church; He established the *episkopos* or bishop, who we call the pastor, who is responsible to Jesus and bears the responsibility to guide and to direct the ministry of the local church,

guided directly by Jesus Christ. Under the pastor, in some cases, you have the assistant pastors, equivalent to the priests under Moses' rule.

You also have a board of elders. The board of elders discuss and decide the business aspects of the church, the spending of the church funds, and the requests for help that we have from various missionary groups and ministries.

The board meeting should always begin with prayer. When a voting situation comes up, you should go to prayer before the vote. You should ask the Lord to show you what He would have you to do. The Lord's guidance and direction are needed in all matters. The assistant pastors oversee various aspects of the church in the spiritual sense: Jr. High, High School, single adults, married couples—special interest groups. When they come against a problem that they don't know how to handle, they should seek the counsel of the senior pastor, who, like they, should be seeking counsel from the Lord.

If someone in the church comes to a board member about something they feel that the church ought to be doing, it is presented at the board meeting. We will discuss it and pray about it together, and often the board will say, "Chuck, what do you feel we should do?" The board recognizes that God has called me to be the pastor of the church, the shepherd. When issues come up at our board meeting, invariably before a decision is made, the board will ask how I feel about the particular issue because they respect the fact that God has called me and has raised up this ministry, and has used me as His instrument in so doing. But many times I'll say "Fellows, I really don't have an opinion; let's pray and seek the will of the Lord." I let them go ahead and make the decision without any input from me at all.

There are other times where I have very strong feelings and express them: "I feel this is what the Lord would have us to do. I've been praying about this and I really feel this is what God wants us to do." And invariably, because these men recognize God's anointing upon my life, the vote will go that way. I'm honest and above board with the men; I'm not trying to pull any shenanigans on them; I'm not trying to be a one-man show. We're open in our discussions and in the things that come up, and they respect the integrity and the leading that the Lord has placed upon my life. But without a question the Lord is definitely the head of the body of the church. I am only a servant to carry out his orders.

In Calvary Chapel the pastor is not a hireling. There are many churches in which the pastor is a hireling. He is hired by the board and can be fired by the board. He becomes a hireling and he's totally responsible to the wishes of the board as *they* govern the church. But these men are often businessmen and not the most spiritual men within the church. In that case, the church becomes governed by men rather than governed by Jesus Christ.

There are dangers, though, in a theocratic form of government, primarily because there are some pastors who disobey what the Lord said concerning the one who is chief becoming the servant of all. There are pastors who have abused their powers. They do not make a clear accounting to the board of the financial aspects of the church. They do not seek the advice and counsel of the board before they make important decisions that are relevant to the function of the church. They try to be a one-man show.

It is important to have a church board but not to assemble that board too quickly. In starting a new work, the Bible says to lay hands on no man suddenly. Know the men well. Whenever we are looking for new board members, I always look in the Saturday night prayer meeting for men who have prayed with me for years. I can trust them. I know that they are men of prayer; men who will seek the counsel and the guidance of God, even as I seek the counsel and guidance of God; men who were faithful in the Saturday night prayer meeting with me.

I mentioned that it is important not to appoint a board too quickly. A case in point illustrates one of the reasons why. The man who is in charge of the Korean fellowship at our church is a medical doctor. He does not get any salary for his ministry to the Koreans. He makes his living as a pediatrician and an allergist. The Korean fellowship was growing quite large, so they said, "We really need to get a board established for the Korean fellowship." So, the man appointed board members and asked me to come to the service that I might lay hands on these men that he had chosen for his board, and I did. The very same week that we laid hands on these men and prayed for them and appointed them as board members, they had a meeting and asked the pastor to resign. They said, "Either give up your medical practice or resign as the pastor. We feel that we need a full time pastor and your medical practice is taking you away from your ministry here." The man was devastated; he didn't know what to do. So he asked me what I thought. I said, "Fire the board. God has called *you* to pastor that fellowship; the *board* didn't call you to pastor it. Let them go."

So, we ordained them one week, and defrocked them the next. That's just one of the problems you can run into if you haven't really prayed together and really know the men who are serving on the board with you.

On the other hand, you need a board of dependable men for your protection because there are decisions that must be made that are not going to be accepted by everybody, decisions that will create divisions among the body if you make them yourself. Several years ago I was pastoring in Tucson, Arizona, where every year we had an annual picnic on Mt. Lemon on the 4th of July. There was a beautiful public campground up there; it had a baseball diamond, football field, and so forth. We would always go up and play ball and have a potluck; it was great church fellowship.

We had a fellow who came to the church, sort of the hyper, super-spiritual type, and a group came in with him. He had an acre of ground atop Mt. Lemon and he felt that it would be great to have the church picnic on his acre of ground. However, he did not have restroom facilities or running water, but, he suggested we could spend the whole day in prayer. Wouldn't it be better to spend the whole day in prayer and waiting upon God rather than doing such a frivolous thing as playing ball? So, this man talked some of the people into a *spiritual* 4th of July. We would all go up to his property and pray.

Other people, however, said, "If you go to his property, we're not going. We're not going to subject our kids to a place where they don't have any potties; if you go there, we're not going." The super-spiritual group replied, "If you go to the public campgrounds, we're not going. We're not going to expose our children to riff-raff this weekend."

So, everyone came to me and said, "Okay, Chuck, where are we going to go?" It was a catch-22 situation. Either choice I made I was sure to have a group of enemies. I said, "Well, let's pray about it and at the board meeting we will decide where we are going to go."

We had the board meeting and the board said, "It's foolish to go to the place where we don't have facilities; we can't have 150 people out there without a restroom; we'll just go to the public campground." The *board* then decided that we would go to the public campground. I happened to think this was the wisest decision, but the board *technically* decided it.

When I announced that the board had decided to go to the public campground, these super-spiritual types called me up, just as upset as they could be. I said, "You know, it *would* be exciting, wouldn't it, just to have a day of prayer – we should just plan that some time. But the board made their decision." You see, I was still able to minister to them. They didn't polarize against me. They polarized against the board.

So, the board is there as a protection for the pastor, a buffer to stand between you and the people when difficult decisions are made that are not always acceptable or agreeable to the entire body. Your board can keep you from being cut off from your congregation and allow you to continue to minister to them. It has a very important function and every church, I believe, as soon as they have qualified men, need to appoint a board to oversee the operations and spending and to make the decisions that must be made.

In conclusion, I believe Calvary Chapel has a biblically sound and balanced understanding of the church, its function in the world and its total dependence upon the leading and guiding of the Holy Spirit of God for its success as it faithfully proclaims the Good News of the cross of Jesus Christ and the hope of salvation through Him only.

There is one particular Scripture that comes to mind when thinking over the miracle of Calvary Chapel: "Now to Him Who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout the ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20).

STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Calvary Chapel Church has been formed as a fellowship of believers in the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Our supreme desire is to know Christ and to be conformed into His image by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We are not a denominational church, nor are we opposed to denominations as such, only their over-emphasis of doctrinal differences that have led to the division of the Body of Christ.

We believe that the only true basis of Christian fellowship is His Agape' love, which is greater than any differences we possess and without which we have no right to claim ourselves Christians.

WE BELIEVE: worship of God should be Spiritual.

Therefore: We remain flexible and yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit to direct our worship.

WE BELIEVE: worship of God should be Inspirational.

Therefore: We give a great place to music in our worship.

WE BELIEVE: worship of God should be Intelligent.

Therefore: We place a great emphasis upon expository teaching of the Word of God so that we might understand the character and nature of God, and know Him Whom we worship.

WE BELIEVE: worship of God is Fruitful.

Therefore: We look for His Love in our lives as the supreme manifestation that we have truly been worshipping Him.

WE BELIEVE IN...

...the tri-unity of the Godhead, that there is one God, manifested in the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

...the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture.

...the validity of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church today, when exercised within the scriptural parameters.

...salvation by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

...simplicity in church government, recognizing that Jesus Christ is Lord and the Head of His Body, the Church.

...the pre-millennial, pre-tribulation return of Christ for His waiting Church.

...teaching the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation with a focus on practical application resulting in growth and maturity in the life of the believer.