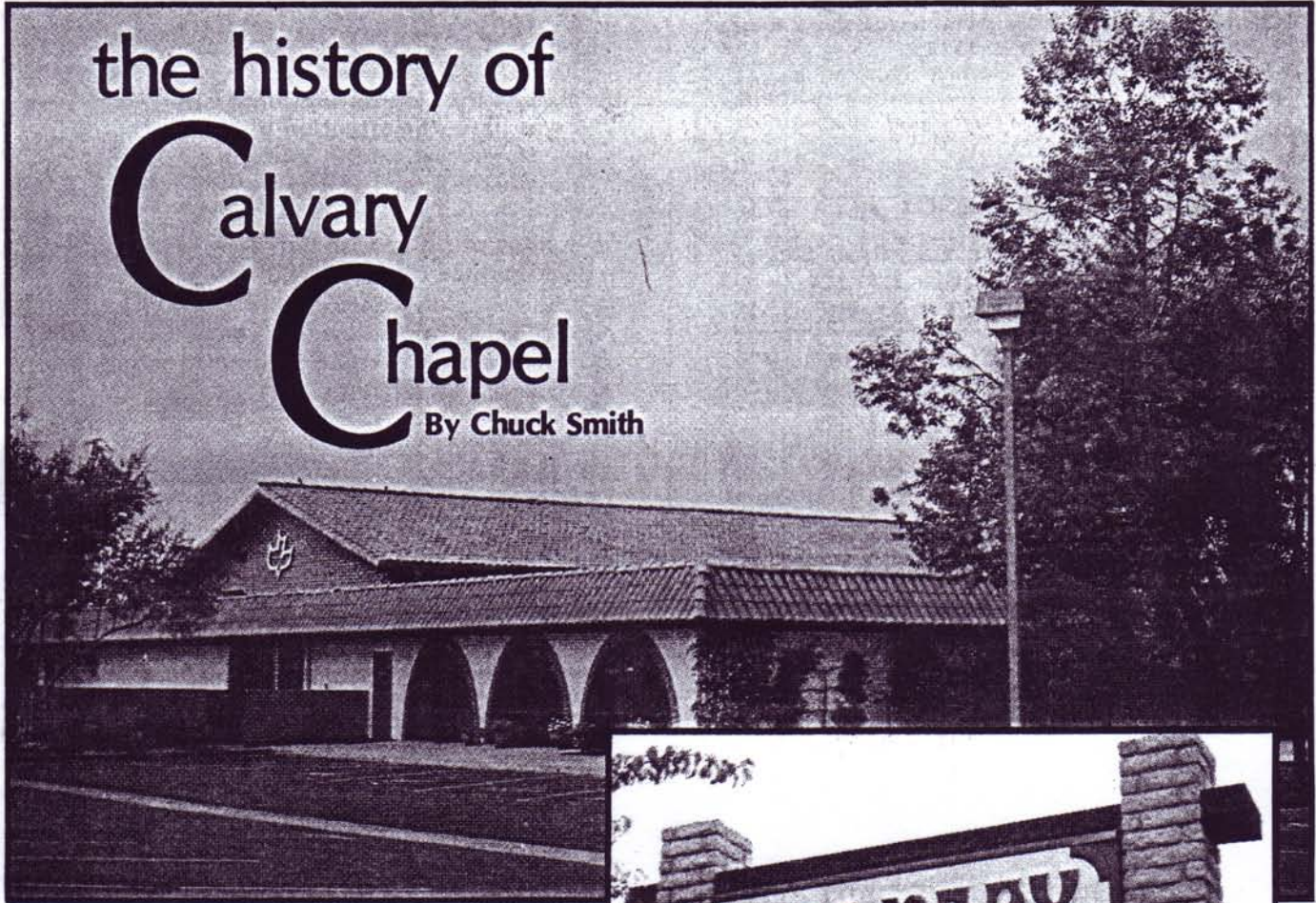


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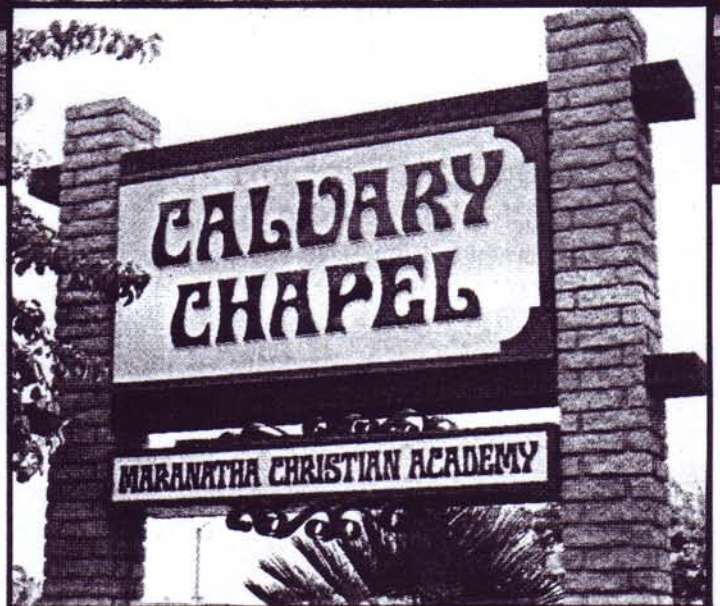
By Chuck Smith

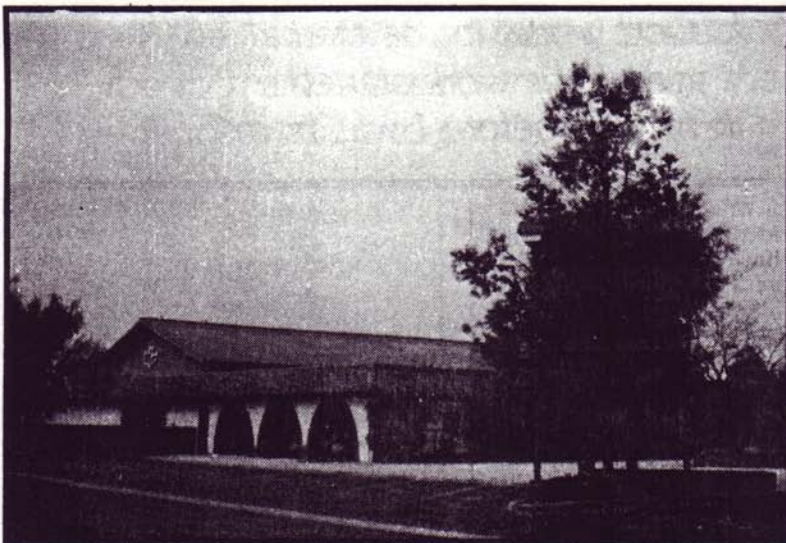


Rapture! By Chuck Smith
Is Jesus Coming Soon?

**Answers to
Tough Questions**

By Josh McDowell and Don Stewart
Answer the Skeptic!





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By Chuck Smith

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." I wish I had learned that a long time ago. I wish I would have learned that earlier in my ministry. I tried so long and hard by might, by power, by program, by human devices and methods to build the church of Jesus Christ— until I was so sick and tired and worn out that I was ready to quit.

When Zerubbabel came back with the children of Israel from their Babylonian captivity, the city of Jerusalem was in rubble. They had the awesome task of rebuilding the city. With a handful of people and the task so monumental, it was extremely discouraging. When you've got a million rocks to move, where do you start? After moving rocks all day long, it doesn't look like you've done anything. It's so discouraging that the tendency is to say that it

can't be done. There's no way. So, the word of the Lord came to Zerubbabel, the leader. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." (Zechariah 4:6).

FAMILY

It's hard to know where to start. God works in the eternal, and His work started in my life before I was born. A few months before I was born, my sister for all practical purposes had died. As far as anyone knew, she was dead. She had stopped breathing, her pulse had stopped, her eyes had rolled back in her head, her jaw had set. There were no signs of life.

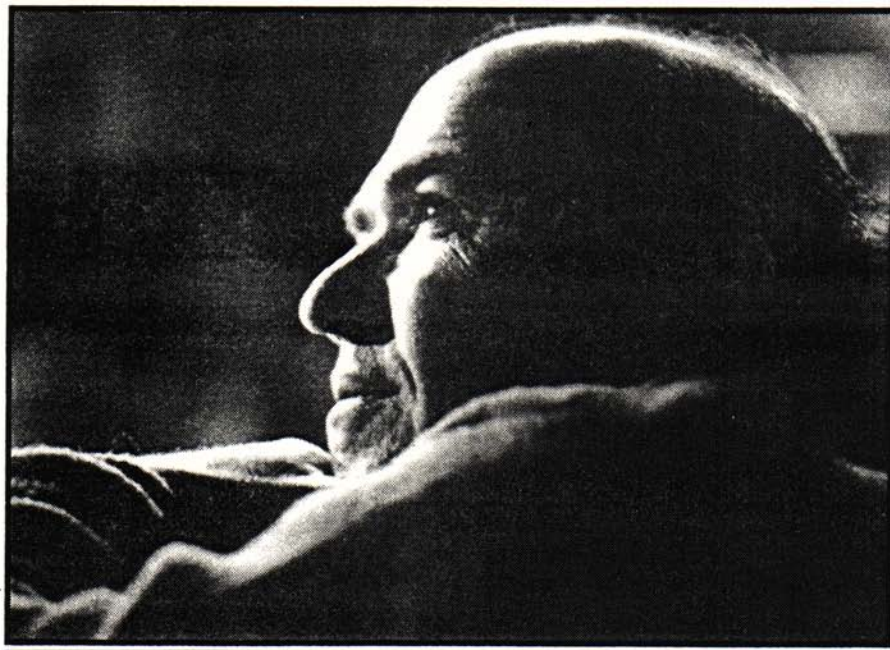
My mother, who had recently committed her life to Jesus Christ, grabbed my sister and ran to the church a few blocks from home. In the parsonage next to the church she laid out that limp, lifeless body. The pastor began to pray, and he told my mother, "Mrs. Smith, get your eyes off your little daughter. Get your eyes on Jesus." Hard to do in a situation like that. But she looked up to the Lord and said, "Lord, if You will give me my daughter back, I'll serve You all of my life. I'll give myself to You. I'll go in the ministry. I'll do anything You want me to do, Lord. Just give me my little daughter back." God touched my sister and healed her instantly.

As the result of this miracle, my father came to Jesus Christ. A few months later when I was born, my dad went down the hallway of the hospital saying, "Praise the Lord! It's a boy!" My mother prayed, "O God, I will fulfill my vow to You through this son You have given me." Then and there she dedicated my life to the Lord.

I didn't know about this. I grew up as a normal boy, doing the normal things. I had a great interest in athletics and decided to be a doctor. I started taking my college prep courses. One summer while at a Christian youth camp, God spoke to my heart and I decided to enter the ministry. I came home and shared it with my mother. I said, "I'm going to change direction in my life. I'm going to go to Bible school." She smiled and said, "Fine, son. I think that's good." So I went to Bible school and entered the ministry.

EARLY MINISTRY

I had always been athletic—captain of the football and baseball teams, played tennis, loved to surf. I thought I had a lot to offer. I was strong, athletic, full of ideas, and had all kinds of energy. I was certain I would go out and turn the world upside down for



our Lord. The Lord let me labor for 15 years, as I used up all my ideas, energy, talents, and abilities.

I had nothing to show for it. I became so discouraged. I was defeated. I had passed the prime of my youth, losing a lot of my energy and giving up on most of my ideas. I had tried every program that I could think of to get people into church. Name the contest and I've tried it.

I went to a ministers conference. They were giving us the details of the new fall program and contest that we were supposed to introduce to our church. I was so sick of contests and of trying to hype the people for this

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*"God works in the eternal,
and His work started
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kind of thing. When they asked for a vote of confidence for this new contest, I didn't have the energy to stand. I just sat there. I couldn't go through another contest. I couldn't face another Blues against the Reds.

The bishop saw me sitting, so he came to me after the meeting and gave me a lecture on rebellion and the need to cooperate with the program. I went back to my room and got down before the Lord. I was soul-searching. "God, I don't want to be a rebel. Now they've got me marked as uncooperative. Lord, You know in my heart that I'm not rebelling against You. Please,



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God, You know I'm so tired I can't push another contest."

The Lord spoke to me and gave me the Scripture, "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." I said, "Thank You, Lord. I needed that." Then He gave me the Scripture, "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord."

I returned to my church. When I started receiving all the materials for this new contest, I just filed them away and prayed. I didn't even let the people know about the whole denominational thing going on. The Spring enlargement program that ended the

"The Spirit of God began to lead me to make a break from serving the denomination to serving the Lord."

week after Easter. All the other churches were getting involved in the contest, and we were getting involved with the Lord.

Our secretary sent in our monthly reports. At the end of the contest period I received a beautiful letter of congratulations. "Your church has won first place with the greatest increase in attendance during the contest period." I was supposed to attend a rally and pick up a trophy. I wrote to the bishop, "I thank you for the honor, but it would be embarrassing to bring a trophy to the church, inasmuch as none of them knew a contest was

going on. The Holy Spirit added to the church daily such as should be saved."

CORONA

The Spirit of God began to lead me to make a break from serving the denomination to serving the Lord. So we started in Corona at Corona Christian Center, trusting the Lord to add to the church and to build the church. We had been there about a year, God had been blessing in a beautiful way, and the church had grown phenomenally. We had to move from one building to another to accommodate the increasing attendance, because the Holy Spirit was adding daily to the church such as should be saved.

About this time we received a call from some people in Costa Mesa. They told us of their church and how they were very discouraged and thinking about closing. They thought they would try one more time to ask if we wanted to come and pastor. They had 25 members, and they were equally divided.

I suggested to my wife that I thought maybe the Lord was leading me to Calvary Chapel. She said, "Honey, don't be foolish! Look what the Lord is doing for us here. God is blessing us and these people love us so much. It's so beautiful here. You couldn't think of leaving these people." She was so insistent that I thought I couldn't be, but I was—because the Lord was really speaking to my heart.

The idea of moving to Calvary Chapel became quite a touchy family issue. In fact, my wife thought that I had been working too hard. While starting the church in Corona I was also building a motel in Idyllwild (to support our family). Although God's call was really burning inside of me, I couldn't share it with my wife because we weren't in agreement about it.

One night I came home from a Bible study and my wife met me at the door. She had been crying. She said, "Honey, I've been in prayer and God has really spoken to my heart. The Lord has made it clear that I'm to submit to you. You're the pastor, you're my husband. Wherever you feel God wants you to minister, I must submit to you... though I think you're crazy to even think about it. Surely you've forgotten about it by now. But even if you decided to go, I would have to submit to you."

I said, "Honey, that really touches me, because I got a call this afternoon from the board down there. They want

a decision tomorrow, and I was getting ready. . . ."

She said, "Don't tell me! Don't talk to me about it. I'm not ready to move. I'm only to submit at this point."

COSTA MESA

So we came down to Costa Mesa and started pastoring Calvary Chapel in Dec. of 1965. Two years prior to our coming to Calvary Chapel the Holy Spirit spoke to me. He said that He would make me a shepherd over many flocks. He would bless and enlarge the ministry, and the place where we gathered wouldn't be adequate to handle all the people. The Lord gave me a spiritual name. He said that it means "shepherd" because "I am making you a shepherd of many flocks." We put these things away in our hearts, not really understanding.

While the tiny group at Calvary Chapel was praying about closing the church and not knowing what to do, the Holy Spirit spoke to them through prophecy. He said that He would lay a burden upon the heart of Chuck Smith to come and pastor. The Spirit said that Chuck wouldn't be happy with the church building. He would want to remodel it immediately, the platform area and all. God would bless the church and it would go on the radio. The church would be overcrowded. They would have to move to new quarters on the bluff overlooking the bay. And the church would become known throughout the world.

Well, for 25 discouraged people—actually there were only 12 in the prayer meeting—nothing seemed more unlikely in all the world. The idea that the little church on the corner of Church Street in Costa Mesa would ever be full, much less known around the world, was incredible. They didn't tell me about this prophecy.

On the first Sunday we began to pastor, we went to the Sizzler restaurant after the service. I said, "You know, that church really needs remodeling." I took a napkin and began to draw a plan to remodel the platform and the church itself. The guys got all excited. "Great! Let's start tomorrow night!" I thought, boy, what an enthusiastic group.

We started immediately on the remodeling of that church. God began to bless. We began to get an excess of money coming in. They asked, "What should we do?" I said, "Why don't we go on the radio?" After we were on the radio for a few weeks, the church got so crowded it couldn't hold any more. We went off the radio so no one else

would come, because we couldn't hold any more people. But we had to get new quarters or do something, because we were overcrowded.

We started looking for property to build a new church. We located some property on Bay Street in Costa Mesa behind the Theodore Robbins Ford agency. Mr. Robbins was very cooperative. He would sell us two-thirds of an acre in the back and put in a parking lot. We were going to work out an arrangement with him. We'd use the parking lot in the evenings and on Sundays, and he'd use it during the day for his employees. This way we wouldn't have to buy the extra acreage for a parking lot.

We went to the planning department in Costa Mesa. They looked over the plans and said, "This looks like an excellent plan. Buying the extra property for parking is always a problem for churches." They were so encouraging that we went ahead and put up our old property for sale, and in three days we sold it for cash. We tacked a long escrow on to give us enough time to build our new church on Bay Street.

... we had to get new quarters. . . , because we were overcrowded."

Then one of the ladies came to me and said, "Chuck, we're not to move over to Bay Street."

I said, "Look. Central location. Not very far to move. Just a few blocks from where we are. This parking lot situation. We don't have to buy it. He's going to pave it and put it in. Do you know how much it's worth to have a parking lot?"

She said, "But Chuck, there was a prophecy. The prophecy said that we're going to move onto the bluff overlooking the bay."

I said, "Do you know what property on the bluff costs? There's no way we can move over to the bluff!"

"You know," I continued, "prophecy is an interesting thing. When you get into prophecy you always have the human element. The Lord gives you the thoughts, and you express them in your words. However, this is quite interesting, because the area where we'll build will be overlooking Bay Street. Isn't that neat?"

She said, "Nope, that's not what it was."

"I said, 'I'm sorry, but that's the way it's going to be.'"

We went before the planning commission to get our conditional use permit. They said, "What if Theodore

Robbins changes his mind and doesn't allow you to use the parking lot anymore? Then we've got a problem, you know. On-street parking for churches isn't good." So, they rejected it.

We appealed to the city council. They were more gracious. They said, "We'll pass it, providing you buy enough other property. In case Theodore Robbins ever rescinds the agreement, you'll be able to put in your own parking lot." All the neighbors were at the meeting to find out whether or not they were going to get a church in their neighborhood. When they found that condition tacked on us, all of the prices doubled. So, we realize that we weren't going to build on Bay Street.

Here we were. We had sold our church. We had a growing congregation. I thought, "Man, they're going to fire me for sure! Selling the church right out from under them and now no place to go." A lady in the planning department said, "Why don't you check with our pastor? Our church has been bought by the state for a freeway. We're starting our new build-

ing program and hope to be finished in six months. Perhaps you can move into our old church when we move out."

I said, "That sounds great. What church do you go to?"

"I go to Newport Harbor Lutheran Church. You know, the one on the bluff overlooking the bay."

We went down and talked to the pastor. He suggested that we write a letter to his board. So, we wrote them a letter about our desire to use their church. They said, "Fine." We made the arrangements. We were going to move in when they moved out. But then they got stalled in their building program and couldn't get it going again. So, I went back to the pastor and said, "Do you suppose we could use your church on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday nights? Our escrow is closing and we've got to move out. Maybe we could have joint use until you move out and we move in?"

"He said, 'That sounds good. Why don't you write the board?' So we wrote the board a letter. They agreed. So, we gave them a donation for their building fund and moved in on a Sunday afternoon and started Sunday

afternoon services.

Dwight Moody warned against holding Sunday afternoon services. He said, "People are full of beef and unbelief by Sunday afternoon." I figured that if we just maintained our attendance on Sunday afternoons then, when we had the church to ourselves and started Sunday morning services again, we could continue our growth pattern. We had been experiencing about a five percent weekly growth, and we thought we could get back to it once we had this facility to ourselves. We also planned to remodel the church once it was ours alone.

We started Sunday afternoon services and God continued to bless. After a time the church was full, and we were putting people up in the choir loft, in the back, and on the floor. We couldn't contain the crowds there in the Lutheran church.

The Greenville School came up for sale. The Santa Ana school board had declared it surplus property. Previously, when we were looking for property, I had left my name and address in the school board office. I told them, "If you ever decide it's surplus property and want to sell it, I'd like to be notified." We were planning to take over the Lutheran church when I received a notice from the school district that the Greenville School was surplus property. They gave the terms for the building and we took it to the board.

One of the board members said, "Why don't we put a minimum bid in? That's a good price, and you can't buy property that cheap. You've got a building there. It's a good investment."

So we submitted a minimum bid. They were to open the bids and then take oral bidding at the board meeting. We didn't even go to the meeting. We thought minimum bid, that's it for us. We were certain someone would come in with a higher bid or take it at the oral biddings. So, we just forgot about it. I got a call one morning and the lady said, "You bought a school last night."

We prayed and felt that the Lord had given it to us to build our church there. So, we started building Calvary Chapel. Around this time, God began to expand our ministry with the young people.

HIPPIES & HOUSES

Actually, at the time of the hippie movement, these long-haired, bearded, dirty kids going around the streets repulsed me. They stood for every-

thing I stood against. We were miles apart in our thinking, philosophies, everything.

As their numbers began to grow, God began to lay a burden upon my wife's heart to reach these kids for Jesus. My wife and I used to go over to Huntington Beach and park downtown to watch the kids and pray for them. We wanted somehow to reach them, but we didn't know how. We would drive down to Laguna Beach, watch the kids going up and down the streets, and pray for them. Again, wanting to reach them but didn't know how.

About this time our daughter was in her first year of college. She started going with a young man and we got acquainted with him. My daughter was often late for her dates, and my job was to entertain her boyfriends until she got ready. It was a good deal, because I always got well acquainted with the boys she was dating.

This young fellow, John, had been a hippie, taken acid, and participated in the whole Haight-Ashbury scene. He had accepted Christ and was now

... and we knelt right there in the street, and they accepted the Lord as their Savior."

attending the same college as my daughter. John was really turned on for the Lord. He would come over to pick her up and tell me, "Chuck, last night I had the most glorious experience. I was over in Huntington Beach and met a couple of guys that were high on acid. I started witnessing to them about Jesus Christ, and they started crying. So, we knelt right there in the street, and they accepted the Lord as their Savior. The Lord brought them down off their highs. Boy, when I left them they were really right on, sober and straight. God just did a beautiful work!"

John would come over in a few days and say, "Chuck, last night I was down in Laguna Beach. There were ten guys walking down the street, stoned out of their heads. I stopped them and started to share Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God came on them, and all of them knelt in a circle right there and followed me in the sinner's prayer and accepted the Lord."

My wife and I said, "John, we've got to meet a hippie!"

One night I opened the door and here was John with a long-haired, bearded kid with bells on his feet and flowers in his hair. An honest to goodness hippie! John said, "Chuck, I want

to meet Lonnie."

I said, "Hi, Lonnie." I put out my hand and welcomed him into the house. As he began to share, I wasn't prepared for the love that came forth from this kid. His love for Jesus Christ was infectious. The anointing of the Spirit was upon his life, so we invited Lonnie to stay with us for a few days.

John had been driving down Fairview Road past Orange Coast College and saw this hippie hitchhiking. John always picked up hippies so he could witness to them. As he started to witness to this hippie he had picked up, the kid said, "Hey, I'm not going anywhere, man. I'm a Christian and I'm just hitchhiking to witness to whoever picks me up."

John said, "I want you to come over and meet some friends of mine. You'll blow their minds!"

Lonnie moved in with us. In a couple of days he brought a couple of friends to stay with us. Pretty soon the house was getting pretty full. I said, "Honey, this isn't going to work. We're not ready for a hippie pad." But the Lord caused us to realize that one of the

big needs was a place for these kids to live. Having accepted Christ, they really had no place to go. The only ones who would have them were the hippie pads where the drugs were so prevalent that they were soon back into it.

So, in May of 1968 we rented a little two-bedroom house on 19th Street. John Higgins and his wife moved in with Lonnie and started our House of Miracles. By the end of the first week, 21 young fellows had accepted Jesus Christ and moved into the house. By the end of the second week, 35 had accepted the Lord and moved into the house. We had built bunks out into the garage, and they were sleeping wall to wall through the house. One kid was even sleeping in the bathtub.

John Higgins, the elder of the house, called a meeting after the second week. He said, "All right, you guys! We've got to have a house meeting. Some of you guys have been Christians now for two whole weeks. You're sitting around here getting fat in the Word. Go out and evangelize! Everyone that's been a Christian more than a week, split! Get out because we need room to bring in the new Christians."

drop down to the number we'll be more used to and live with." The following Sunday we ran out of extra chairs and people were sitting on the floor. I didn't know what to do. We went out and bought 50 more chairs to set up in the foyer. The following Sunday we ran out of chairs and people were sitting on the floor. I said, "I guess we'll go to double services." So, we went to double services. Within a few weeks we were bringing in extra chairs, people were sitting in the aisles, we were setting up chairs in the foyer, and again people were sitting on the floor and in the side rooms.

"Well, we'll go to triple services." It wasn't long until we were pulling up the extra chairs and sitting people in the foyer and in the side offices. Then we doubled the seating capacity of our auditorium by moving the walls out to the side. After a while, the church was filling up again. We were setting chairs on the floor and in the foyer. Then we started setting chairs up in the patio, and by the end of the summer we had 500 chairs set up in the patio every Sunday. Then we started running out of room in the patio. But at this point we were facing another dilemma—winter. The people couldn't sit out in the patio in the wintertime. "What are we going to do, Lord?"

About this time we were told of 11 acres a block away from us. A group of investors had bought it five years previously for \$400,000. They were planning to make a good profit off it, but every plan they had was rejected by the Santa Ana planning department. These investors finally lost the property, as the owner foreclosed on them for the note of \$343,000. Someone suggested that we buy it. I said, "Eleven acres? We don't need eleven acres. What would we do with it?"

He said, "We can sell half of it, but that's a good piece of property."

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

The fellow said, "I think that if I offered \$300,000 cash, she'd take it."

I said, "Well, try it."

He offered her \$300,000 cash. He came back and said that she accepted it. I said, "You've gotta be kidding! Where in the world will we get \$300,000?"

I would drive along Sunflower Avenue from the church and look over those big eleven acres. I'd say, "Lord, what are You doing?" I was really concerned and worried.

The Lord would speak to me as I'd



look over the property and my heart would fail. He would say, "Who's church is it?"

I'd say, "Lord, it's Your church."

He'd say, "Then what are you worried about?"

By the time I'd get to the San Diego freeway, I'd have the victory. "Glory! It's His church! So we fail? So we fail? It's His church, praise the Lord. He got us into it, He can get us out!" We were able to come up to \$60,000 cash. The man who negotiated the deal gave us a loan of \$90,000 for one year, interest free. Mariners Savings and Loan, because of the value of the property, gave us a \$150,000 note for two

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"... by the end of the summer we had 500 chairs set up in the patio every Sunday. Then we started running out of room in the patio."

years. I thought, "The Lord has two years."

So we went ahead and purchased the 11 acres. We immediately put in the parking lot and bought a big, old circus tent to accommodate the people before winter. We set 1,600 chairs in that circus tent and planned double services. The Saturday night before opening on Sunday morning, we had a prayer meeting. After the prayer meeting some of the fellows went over and stood on the platform. The men were finishing the lights and getting everything all set. I looked out

at that sea of folding chairs. I had never seen so many folding chairs in all my life! I turned to Duane and asked, "How long do you suppose it will take the Lord to fill this place?"

He looked at his watch and said, "I'd say just about eleven hours."

Eleven hours later every seat was filled and people were standing on the fringes of the tent in both services. So, we bought more chairs. As the summer came on, attendance continued to grow, so people sat outside the tent. Then winter came again and we didn't know what to do with the

Those who had been Christians for over a week had to split. Some of them went out to Tahquitz Canyon and began to witness there. They came across a young girl sitting on a rock reading a Bible. She had a box of oats and tabs of acid. As they started to share Jesus Christ with her, she began to cry. She said, "You know, 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 the Bible. I finished the book on Oriental religions yesterday and started the Bible today. As I started reading, I didn't understand. I said, 'Oh, God, if You're for real, bring someone along to tell me about it!' Here you guys come up and start telling me about Jesus."

They said, "You'll have to come with us. There's a place down in Costa Mesa where you can accept Jesus." These kids were so young in the Lord they knew how to sell, but they didn't know how to close. So they brought her back and she accepted the Lord. Because she was a girl, we put her in a church member's house in Newport Beach. Then, after a couple of days we found out that she was a runaway. Her mother was in Riverside. We called the mother, told her about the change in her daughter, and sent her back to Riverside.

The following Saturday the girl was down at the house and had ten kids from Riverside with her. She said they were the kids who had turned her on to dope and they really needed Jesus. She brought them down so they could get saved. Those ten kids accepted the Lord. The following week they brought 35 kids with them from Riverside. They said, "We went around and gathered up all of the leaders in the dope scene out there, and they really needed the Lord. We brought them down to get saved." And they accepted the Lord.

Then they said, "We need a place like this in Riverside. It's fabulous down here at this house. We need something in Riverside." We said, "Let's pray that the Lord will open something like this in Riverside, too."

A mother of one of the young men who had just been saved worked in the trust department of the Bank of America. She was sharing with a judge about the change in her son. "You know him. He's been in trouble so many times. But, Judge, you'd never know him now. He walks around the house with a Bible. He says, 'Praise the Lord!' And we're talking again. It's just marvelous to see the change in

his life. He's so beautiful. He's so filled with love!" She was telling the judge about the house in Costa Mesa where he had accepted Jesus. She told the judge that the kids needed something like that in Riverside.

The judge said, "I have an old motel on Van Buren. It's been condemned. It doesn't have any electricity. But if the kids want to move in, it won't cost anything. They can move into the motel and take over."

We had a couple of guys who had been Christians for five weeks. One was nineteen and one was seventeen. We said, "You guys are going to be the elders of the house in Riverside." In the second week of their ministry, they baptized 65 young converts in a fishpond beside the motel. They sat them down and bent them over backwards. In that first summer in Riverside more than 500 people came to Jesus Christ.

A motorcycle gang from Fontana came over to the motel and accepted the Lord. They started a house in Fontana and another one in Corona. We started another house in Santa

"A motorcycle gang from Fontana came over to the motel and accepted the Lord."

Ana, Garden Grove, Buena Park, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa and Huntington Beach. The ministry began to expand among the young people.

Some people came down from Oregon and said they had a tremendous problem with drugs at the University of Oregon. They asked us to send some kids up and offer to pay their expenses. They promised a 10-bedroom house right on the campus to start a ministry. We went before the kids and called the houses together. We said, "There's an opportunity to move to Oregon and have your expenses paid." Sixty of them moved up to Oregon and started a ministry there.

After a few months in Oregon, they called me and said, "Chuck, we're being blessed of the Lord, but we need a ranch to take these kids and get them away from the influences of the city. There's a guy out here with 70 acres. He'll sell them to us for \$50,000. He doesn't want any cash. He wants us to sign a note for \$50,000 at six percent interest."

I asked, "How long is the note?"

"They said, 'One year.'"

I said, "Do you realize that in a year's time you have to pay \$53,000?"

They said, "Sure, but that gives the

Lord a whole year." These young people had been learning some tremendous lessons in faith!

One afternoon some people brought me three fresh fish. So, I took them over to one of the houses. As I walked in, a girl said, "I bet you've brought some fish. I bet that there's three of them. That's what we've been praying for. We decided to have fish for dinner tonight, and so we started praying for the Lord to send us some fish. He sent two, but we needed three more." Wow, just really trusting the Lord!

Being without electricity was a tremendous problem for the house in Riverside. We had 65 kids living in the house and feeding them became a real problem, especially without refrigeration. Milk soured overnight. One morning after soul milk on the cereal for breakfast, they joined hands and prayed. "O God, help us to get a gas refrigerator here." Before they could say, "Amen," a truck pulled into the driveway. The driver was honking his horn, and they went out to see what was going on. The guy had a commercial gas refrigerator in

the back of his truck. He said, "I notice you've got some electric refrigerators in back. Would you trade me two of those electric refrigerators for this gas refrigerator if I hooked it up for you?" After experiences like that, those kids could pray for anything.

EXPANSION

As we were building our new chapel on the Greenville School property, one fellow would come by and say, "Chuck, it looks beautiful, but it's too small." We planned to build Calvary Chapel to accommodate 300 people. I always thought that a church of 250 people would be an ideal congregation to work with. The rule book I studied in seminary said that you can only maintain a congregation five-sixths of the seating capacity of your auditorium. So five-sixths of 300 would give us a congregation between 250-275.

The first Sunday when we opened Calvary Chapel we didn't have enough room. All the pews were filled. I thought, "It's grand opening Sunday. Everybody likes to come out for the grand opening. Next Sunday we'll



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due, \$1,128. We have the money. There's no problem there. But I don't think that's a smart way to spend Your money. That's not buying anything. I think it's unwise to pay interest to a bank. That's not good management for Your money."

He said, "Who's church is it?"

I said, "It's Yours."

He said, "Okay, I'll take care of it."

When I got home my wife said, "Honey, Ed Riddle wants you to call him." I called. He said that he had gotten an interesting call from Shell Oil Company. They wanted to buy the corner of our property for \$150,000 cash. I said, "Well, Lord, it's Your business!"

*"Calvary Chapel isn't an ambition fulfilled. . .
It's not by my might, nor by power, but by the
Spirit of the Lord."*

people sitting on the outside. So we built an addition on the back of the tent and put in another 400 chairs. And God just continued to bless.

Incidentally, the interest payments on this note for \$150,000 were \$1,128 a month. I was driving toward the lot about a week before the first interest payment was due when I started to get that old, panicky, what-are-we-doing feeling. The Lord again said, "Who's church is it?"

I said, "It's Your church, Lord. But let me tell You something about Your business. The first interest payment is

We got a loan commitment from the bank for \$400,000 when we built our new church. We wanted to build on a pay-as-you-go basis, but we felt it would be wise to get a loan commitment. In case we ran out of funds we wouldn't be stalled in the building program. We didn't want to be forever in a building program.

We got an excellent loan commitment from the bank for eight and a half percent. Because the Lord had provided all the way along, we didn't have to take out the loan. But by the time we finished building, interest

rates were so high that we took the money anyhow. Then we loaned it back to the bank for ten percent.

We opened our new sanctuary in 1974. We could now seat 2,300 people. The very first service was packed. People had to sit on the floor again. After five weeks we had to go to triple services again. We were still having problems, so we built our Fellowship Hall to seat 700 people. We put in closed-circuit television. When our auditorium was full, we sent the people to the Fellowship Hall.

As the Lord continues to send in more people all the time, we're now considering a new auditorium to seat 5,000. We'll still need triple services, but we'll be able to seat them together in the same sanctuary and not have to turn hundreds away.

BY THE SPIRIT

Calvary Chapel isn't an ambition fulfilled. It isn't something where I thought, "I'd like to have a huge church." I was so worn out, tired, over-the-hill that I thought 250 was all I could handle. What happened has happened through the power of the Holy Spirit. It's not by my might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord.

Since we didn't have to strive to gain it, we don't have to strive to maintain it. That's beautiful, because I can still be relaxed and still be Chuck. I don't have to worry about anything, because it's His church. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." After realizing that it's His church and His work, I just sit back, enjoy it, and watch Him do the work. What a thrill to see God do what we couldn't do at all!

OUTREACHES

As the Lord began to draw people to Calvary Chapel from all over Southern California, those who were driving many miles to the services here began to request that Calvary Chapels be opened in their own communities. As a result, we began to start Bible studies in many of the communities in Southern California. These Bible studies have subsequently developed into regular churches. Now there are several Calvary Chapels in the Southern California area with memberships of several thousand people.

People would move from Calvary Chapel to other areas of the United States. As they would look for a fellowship similar to Calvary in these other areas, they were oftentimes discouraged in their endeavor to find a

church. It seemed that their experiences at Calvary Chapel—receiving the warm, loving fellowship and the study of the Word—had spoiled them for any other kind of a church. They would start sending for tapes and many times begin to invite their friends to come over and listen to the tapes. Soon a group would be meeting together listening to tapes. Their fellowship would grow, and they would write and ask if we could send someone to pastor. So, gradually, the Calvary Chapels have been extended and expanded throughout the entire United States. Many strong fellowships have been formed throughout the entire United States.

Another interesting facet of the ministry of Calvary Chapel is the tape ministry. Several years ago, the front row used to be filled with people holding tape recorders in their laps and microphones in their hands. They were taping the Bible studies to listen to them again and study them during the week or, in some cases, sending them to friends. At that time Ed Plummer started bringing a quality tape machine, and he would set a mike on the podium to tape the Sunday services. People would ask Ed if they could purchase a copy of the Sunday services, so Ed started duplicating them in his spare time. The requests for tapes became so great that Ed no longer had spare time, and he began a tape duplicating business. As his business began to expand and diversify, it was necessary for Calvary Chapel to take up the task of duplicating tapes.

The Word for Today now duplicates and sends out more than 20,000 tapes every month to individuals and Bible study groups all over the world as God continues to expand the tape ministry. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians declaring how the Word of God had gone throughout the world from their fellowship. The same is true of Calvary Chapel, as tapes are being sent into Russia, Red China, all parts of Western and Eastern Europe, Sweden—and recently there has been a tremendous request for tapes from England and Canada where the tape ministry is growing rapidly.

Thousands of lives are being transformed through the Word of God as people listen to these tapes. They write and share with us the effect that God's Word has had upon their lives and their homes. It's a blessing to read the mail that we receive daily.

As God also continued to bless Calvary Chapel and we had surplus

funds, the Board, in seeking to spend these funds for the Kingdom, felt that one of the best ways would be to begin a radio ministry supported by Calvary Chapel. We started out choosing 25 of the major markets in the United States and putting The Word for Today radio program on in these 25 markets.

God began to bless immediately. The response to the program was overwhelming. The stations soon were writing and telling us that they were receiving more response and listener approval to The Word for Today than any other program. We then picked another 25 communities and expanded the radio ministry to 50 stations. Again, we received phenomenal



"The Word for Today now . . . sends out more than 20,000 tapes every month . . ."

reports of God's blessings coming to the people from the radio ministry. So, we expanded to the present 100 stations.

God continues to use the radio ministry to touch thousands of lives every day, helping them in their growth in the Word of God. Many of the messages have been put into book form. We have the commentary on the book of Revelation and have recently completed a commentary on the book of Romans which is now available.

Another exciting facet of Calvary Chapel is the music ministry that is handled through Maranatha Music. Several years ago, while I was in the little chapel, a group of hippies came in and announced that they were musicians. They had a rock group, and the Lord had been giving them some Christian songs with Christian lyrics. They requested an opportunity to play these songs at Calvary Chapel.

Since they had only been born again for a couple of weeks, I was a little dubious about the content of their lyrics. I requested, if possible, that they play some of the music first so I could hear it. They went out to their van and got their guitars, came in and began to play and sing. The music was so beautiful and touching that I began

to weep. I asked them if they would play that evening. At that Monday night study the Love Song played their first Christian concert, and the young people there responded in a very enthusiastic way to this new style of Christian music.

It wasn't long until the Lord began to raise up other groups. The Children of the Day, The Way, Gentle Faith, Country Faith, and many different music groups as well as those who were singles. We saw the necessity of helping to support the musicians in their ministry by making records. So with \$3,500 and a four-track tape recorder, we made the first Maranatha album, a sampler of all the groups, called *Maranatha 1*. This album was first distributed from the trunk of Mike MacIntosh's car as he went around to the bookstores in Southern California and sold this new Christian music.

Maranatha 1 was an immediate success among the young people. It created a tremendous interest in contemporary Christian music. It wasn't long before other groups were being

raised up—and we were producing *Maranatha 2*, and then many of the groups themselves. Maranatha Music has continued to grow and is a ministry presently dedicated to developing young musicians, as well as providing the Christian body with beautiful worship music in our Praise albums.

As we look at the phenomenal work of God, we're reminded of the time after the resurrection of Jesus when the disciples had gone fishing without success. In the morning when Jesus stood on the shore, He called to them and said, "Do you have any fish?" They answered, "No." He suggested that they cast the net on the other side. Immediately the net was full of great fish, so much so that they could not draw the net into the boat. When John saw that they could not draw the net into the boat because of the multitude of fish, he said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

As we have seen the nets so full that we cannot draw them in—with the hundreds of people that are coming to Jesus Christ here at Calvary Chapel week in and week out—we realize that there is only one explanation for it: It is the Lord. And we rejoice greatly in this marvelous work of the Lord.