

A NEW CONNECTION

Surprisingly, during the conference Pastor Danny met two other pastors who had recently started churches in Florida: Pastor Bob Coy of Calvary Chapel Ft. Lauderdale, and Pastor Kent Knottingham of Calvary Chapel Tallahassee. He also discovered that another pastor had left Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa in 1984 to pastor an existing church in Florida: Pastor Malcolm Wild of Calvary Chapel Merritt Island. Pastor Danny was amazed to learn that three other like-minded churches already existed in his own state. He felt confident that God had led him to the unique ministry of Calvary Chapels and was blessed to find a fellowship of churches with whom he could closely align himself. Calvary Chapel St. Pete soon became an affiliate church of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa.

Since that time, God has tremendously blessed the ministry of Calvary Chapel St. Pete. It has grown steadily from a handful of mostly young single adults to a church full of families where all ages are represented; from a small, one-room bingo lodge to a large, beautiful facility; from one weekly meeting to multiple Sunday services and various meetings almost every day of the week; from a fledgling piano player to several complete praise bands; from one volunteer secretary to a staff of several pastors, secretaries, and other employees.

Calvary Chapel St. Pete has been faithfully committed to sharing the gospel and teaching through the word of God. It has been exciting to see God's spirit bring many to salvation through Jesus Christ, to see lives change and mature in Christ, to see relationships bloom and grow, to see ministries evolve and prosper, to see a hunger for the word of God, and to see a passionate desire to win the lost to Jesus. May God continue to build His church!

Pastor Danny and his wife, Wendy, consider it an honor and a privilege to serve this growing body of believers, together with their four children, Tanner, Hayden, Jairus and Audra.



Address:

8900 U.S. Hwy. 19 N. Pinellas Park, FL 33782

Phone:

727-577-7705

Web:

www.ccstpete.com

E-mail:

stpetersburg@calvarychapel.com

Office Hours:

Tues. & Thur. 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.,

Wed. & Fri. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Service Times:

Wed. 7 p.m., Sat. 6 p.m., Sun. 9 & 11 a.m.



To learn more information about Calvary Chapel and its ministries, please refer to the following brochures:

Statement of Faith

Church History

What We Teach

Calvary House

Life Groups

Get Plugged In

Calvary Kids Care

Men's Ministry

Missions Ministry

Music Ministry

Women's Ministry

Youth Ministry



In August 1982 a small group of believers in St. Pete, FL gathered together in an apartment with a young single pastor to form a new church. This group gradually grew and called themselves “Calvary Chapel.” The pastor and a few others in the church had attended the same Christian college. One of their college friends, Danny Hodges, came down for a visit to play drums in a church-sponsored concert and was asked to consider joining the church to work with junior high students.

A NEW PASTOR

Danny had just graduated in the spring of 1982 with a bachelor’s degree in Youth Ministry. Confident that God had called him into full-time Christian work—perhaps with youth, but unsure of a specific calling—Danny sought the Lord’s direction for full-time ministry. Having prayed about several opportunities, and eager to gain the experience of working in a ministry from the ground up, he felt a confirmation to take part in this young church that had only been meeting for one year.

In August 1983 Danny moved from Lynchburg, Virginia to St. Petersburg, Florida with dreams of starting a junior high ministry in this new church called Calvary Chapel. Several months later, through an unexpected turn of events, the pastor was led to return to his home town, and Danny was asked to become the pastor of this small group that wanted to continue meeting together. After much prayer and consideration, and believing this to be that specific call of God, Danny accepted the position and became the new pastor of Calvary Chapel in April 1984.

Over the next few years, through his own personal study of Scripture, Pastor Danny felt personally challenged in three specific areas.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

First, he began to discover that some of the teaching he had received in his traditional church background did not line up with his understanding of the Scriptures, particularly in regard to spiritual gifts. He believed

the Bible clearly taught that all spiritual gifts are available to believers today, just as they were in the early church, but that they should be exercised appropriately according to scriptural guidelines. Pastor Danny felt a sincere desire to teach through the word of God and avoid extremism, particularly concerning areas often left to private interpretation.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP

Second was the area of praise and worship. Not only was he personally challenged to truly worship the Lord “*in spirit and in truth*,” but he sought to have a church service where believers could openly and freely express their praise and worship to God in a heartfelt way that was real and uncontrived. While he appreciated traditional hymns, he enjoyed the more contemporary praise music and longed to one day have a praise band that would inspire and facilitate genuine worship.

BEING “REAL”

Third was his desire to be “real,” and to have a fellowship of believers whose faith in Christ was real—not phony, plastic or simply religious. As a result, his style of dress for church services gradually became more casual, as he wanted those who attended (especially unbelievers) to feel comfortable just as they were without feeling it was necessary to get dressed up. He wanted all to feel equally welcome and accepted, from the homeless to the wealthy professionals, and understand that dress does not determine godliness.

With this approach to ministry, Pastor Danny began to feel somewhat out of place among other churches. Although he enjoyed fellowship with other local pastors, he wasn’t sure who he could identify with in terms of his style of ministry. He was also seeking a balance between the extremes of Pentecostalism and Fundamentalism without compromising the word of God.

During those first few years, Pastor Danny was puzzled by numerous visitors who were from other Calvary Chapels across America. One such visitor, who had attended a

large Calvary Chapel in California and was surprised by the striking similarities in the style of teaching and worship, urged Pastor Danny to attend a Calvary Chapel pastors’ conference. In the summer of 1987 Pastor Danny attended his first Calvary Chapel Pastors’ Conference in Costa Mesa, California and was introduced to Pastor Chuck Smith and the history and philosophy of ministry behind the Calvary Chapel movement. He immediately felt right “at home.” Suddenly, he had come upon a ministry that taught and practiced the very things that God had personally been teaching him in his early years as a pastor. This was a ministry that exemplified the balance he was longing to achieve.

Pastor Chuck Smith had founded the non-denominational Calvary Chapel in the late 60’s, during a time when most traditional churches were turning away the “hippies” of the day because of the length of their hair and their counter-culture lifestyle. Driven by a burden for those young people, Pastor Chuck reached out to them with love and understanding without compromising Christian principles. A result of this outreach was the birth of the “Jesus Movement,” when thousands of young people turned to Christ. Some of these converts later became pastors and started other Calvary Chapels patterned after their mentor, Pastor Chuck.

At the conference, Pastor Danny was impressed by Pastor Chuck and the other pastors who seemed so real and ordinary, yet demonstrated such a genuine love for the Lord and others. He easily identified with many of the Calvary pastors who were former hippies, drug addicts, alcoholics, etc. as he, too, had been a hippie in his teen years and had also experienced drugs and alcohol. Moreover, he appreciated the simplicity and humility which was evident in their teaching and approach to ministry. In addition to an obvious love for the lost, Pastor Danny valued two outstanding characteristics for which Calvary Chapels are best known: 1) their strong emphasis on teaching through the word of God, verse by verse, and its application to every day life; 2) the high importance placed upon worship, which included a contemporary style of music designed to put believers in the place of intimate communion with God and ready their hearts for His word.

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27