

REMEMBERING PASTOR CHUCK

by Tom Price, editor



On the 20th year anniversary of *Calvary Chapel Magazine*, I felt it appropriate to share about Pastor Chuck Smith from my perspective. As you read the story starting on page 33, we remember that Pastor Chuck was instrumental in launching the magazine in 1999. The Calvary Chapel founder was an advocate for this ministry as we documented the work of Christ around the world in the Calvary family. In the first issue, Pastor Chuck stated his reasons for endorsing this publication in the letter below:

“I believe that Jesus was declaring a pattern for the church when He said to the disciples that when they were empowered by the Holy Spirit, they would be His witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth.

“It is so exciting to see how the Holy Spirit has followed that same pattern with Calvary Chapels in such a supernatural way that we now have missionaries in all the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, believers first became Christ’s witnesses in Jerusalem, then in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth. Those who are on the mission field are in the front-line trenches and need much prayer support. We feel by establishing a quality magazine that will profile the different missionaries and various mission fields, we can help create a strong prayer base for our missionaries. Also, we feel that people will become aware of what God is doing through their support and prayers in reaching our lost world for Jesus Christ. We can thus better fulfill the great commission of taking the Gospel into all the world.”

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” MATTHEW 28:19

Pastor Chuck was a risk taker. Not only did he take a big risk on people like me, but he

also embarked on many other ventures of faith. Like Jonathan and his armor bearer in 1 Samuel 14, Pastor Chuck was open to attempt different approaches in ministry. “Let’s try it and see what the Lord might do!” he would say. To some, he seemed a contradiction. When other leaders suggested that the magazine could be produced more economically—using more black and white pages, reducing the page count, and releasing it less often—Pastor Chuck would ask, “So we should cheapen our publication that glorifies the Lord to save a few bucks?” At the same time, he kept track of the price of lettuce purchased at the CC Bible college

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in Austria. Others voiced that the entire magazine operation should be moved to Costa Mesa. Pastor Chuck replied, “I like the fact that our publication comes from a little church on the East Coast that doesn’t have a lot of resources.” He continued with a smile, “That way we know it is truly a work of God and not man.” He later added, “Now that it was begun in the Spirit, should it be perfected in the flesh?” That ended those conversations and I silently praised the Lord under my breath.

Chuck pioneered the concept of churches purchasing radio stations to broadcast Bible teachings and live call-in Bible answer shows. He began Bible colleges in the U.S. and Europe and encouraged others in different locations. He started a publishing arm (The Word for Today) and was instrumental in launching Maranatha Music!—the genesis of modern worship songs that we know today. He invested in young people; pouring into them and then ordaining young men into the ministry. Pastor Chuck was also an

early advocate for the state of Israel—he visited the Holy Land over 50 times with huge teams, impacting the country’s economy.

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.
2 TIMOTHY 1:7

He disliked accolades and was quick to redirect all praise to the Lord. He would remind everyone that he was a sinner, simply saved by God’s grace. On his last trip to the East Coast Pastors’ Conference, Pastor Chuck thrilled everyone with his visit. His body laced with cancer and death looming, he braved the cross-country trip to be with “his men” one last time.

After Chuck spoke, the speaker doing the evening session asked for a time of repentance. The speaker specifically asked the senior pastors to come forward. Despite painful joints, Pastor Chuck came and knelt. Nearby pastors couldn’t help but overhear the Calvary Chapel founder cry out to Jesus, begging for His forgiveness. Several were moved to tears themselves by his sincere cry to the Lord.

Pastor Chuck would quickly tell anyone that he wasn’t a saint. But for many of us who were so greatly impacted by his trust to see what the Lord might do, we thank our Savior for Pastor Chuck’s witness, leadership, example, kindness, and love for God’s Word. He left a lasting impression on so many of us and we are eternally grateful. 🙏

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” JOHN 14:12

This quarter’s edition of Simply Teaching the Word Simply by Pastor Chuck Smith is available online at the Calvary Chapel Magazine website. We will continue with Pastor Chuck’s Bible study next issue.