

FAMILY REUNION

CCA'S INTERNATIONAL PASTORS & WIVES CONFERENCE BRINGS TOGETHER A FAMILY OF CHRIST-CENTERED CHURCHES

Story by Tom Price

Photos by Tom Price unless otherwise noted

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. COLOSSIANS 1:17-18

At the conference this past July, Pastor Jack Winkle of Calvary Chapel Golden Valley, CA, and his wife Julie prayed intently for their son, 19-year old Noah, who is autistic. “We pray that he would continue to grow in his love and understanding of God,” said Jack. The setting was a time of special prayer at the Calvary Chapel Association (CCA) conference held at CC Golden Springs, CA. They were also seeking the Lord about a vision of Jack’s. He shared, “Recently, I have had a dream of having a spe-

cial service for families with autistic children together—with simple and quiet worship music, a short teaching, and then fellowship.” For many autistic children, normal times of worship overload their sensory capability, and they lack the capacity to sit for extended periods of time.

Jack is thankful for CCA conferences where ideas like this can be lifted up to the Lord and have consideration by others. He appreciates the heart of the CCA council: “These are godly, humble men who are dedicated to equipping leaders to simply teach God’s Word.” Since a distinctive belief of Calvary Chapel is to declare the entire counsel of God by teaching verse-by-verse through all of the Bible, the CCA board members taught through



Above: Pastors Ed Taylor (left) and Joe Mendez greet at the CCA International Pastors and Wives Conference this past July.

Bottom left and center: Attendees welcome each other at the conference held at CC Golden Springs, CA.

Bottom center right: Pastor Sandy Adams prays with people during an afterglow.

Bottom right: Attendees come together for a time of corporate prayer.



Photo by Gary Apodaca



the entire Book of Colossians through the conference. Seasoned pastors lined the front during the afterglow, welcoming others to join them to seek the Lord together. Many husbands and wives came to unburden themselves, praying for deep personal concerns as well as for requests from their own fellowships. “You could feel God’s presence throughout the conference,” commented Joe Focht, the senior pastor of Calvary Chapel Philadelphia, PA. Joe reflected, “I have known many of these men for so long, it is a reunion—but now we have the added joy of watching younger pastors experience that same sense of family. There is great excitement as we all return home, taking back to our separate ministries what we received through the week, to return home with a fresh vision.”

The three-day event was attended by 1,500 senior pastors, assistant pastors, and their wives. Dozens of pastors from Central and South America came. The teachings were translated into Spanish simultaneously through headphones. Laughter abounded as long-time friends reunited and embraced. Several orators confessed their greatest verbal blunders and bloopers in the pulpit from their years of public speaking, to the delight of those attending.

“For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.” ACTS 20:27

Pastor Raul Ries, whose church hosted the event, had every staff member and hundreds of volunteers manning every potential station so that guests felt welcomed. Raul stated, “I sensed joy as so many people journeyed from around the world to attend. They can now be certain as they depart, totally convinced that Calvary Chapel has



Photo by Gary Apodaca

a bright future as we continue Pastor Chuck Smith’s vision of simply teaching the Word simply.” Raul noted, “As shepherds we need to make sure that Christ is the center of the church while never forgetting we are to be servants to the people.” Months of planning went into the event.

Viewers from more than 100 countries tuned in while CC pastors from a dozen different countries attended. Between teaching sessions, live interviews were broadcast.

Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. 1 TIMOTHY 4:13



Pastor Bill Stonebraker

Bill Stonebraker journeyed with his wife, Danita, from Calvary Chapel Honolulu and was overjoyed that so many of his fellow Hawaiian pastors were able to attend. Bill, a CCA board member, said, “A lot of pastors feel isolated in their ministries. When you make the effort to come to a CCA conference, we are spiritually encouraged and made ready to rejoin the [spiritual] battle, knowing that others struggle as well. The fields are white for harvest and the laborers are few, but a gathering like this makes us realize that we are not in this fight alone. In Calvary Chapel we are a band of brothers and sisters who are dedicated to taking the Gospel to the entire world.”



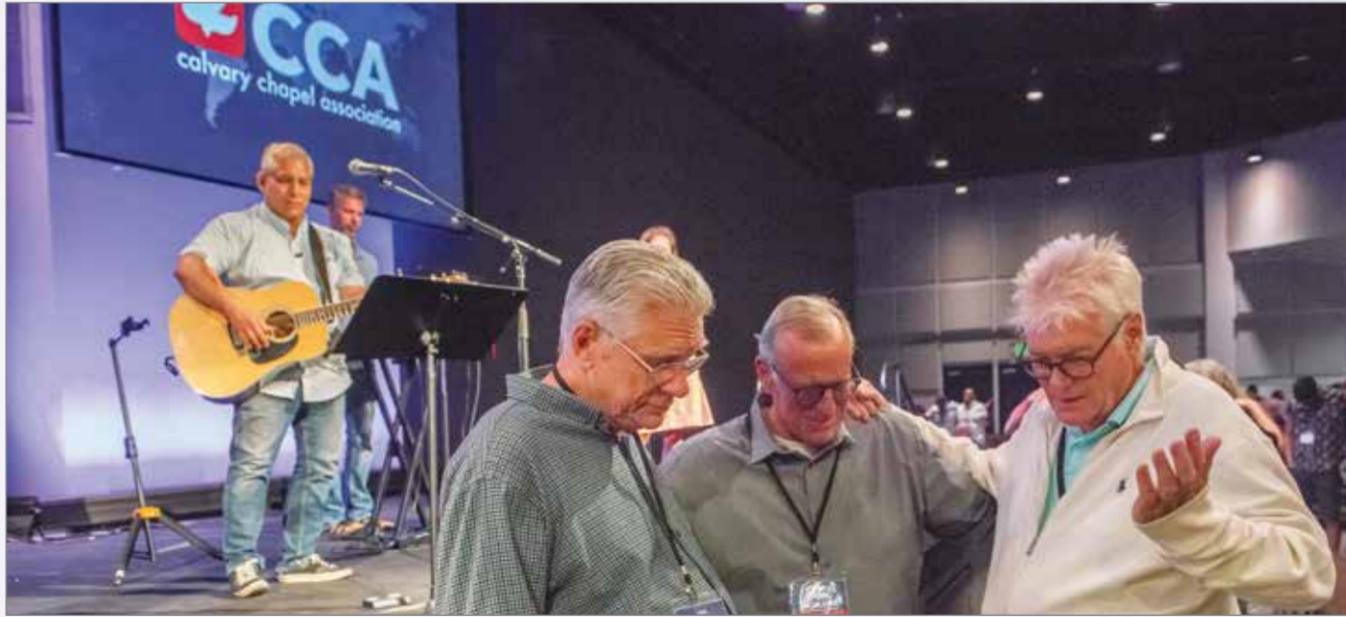
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Top right: Like any reunion, the Calvary Chapel family enjoys catching up with ministry friends made through the years from around the world.

Bottom left: Some churches sent ministry teams. They enjoyed spending time in prayer together.

Bottom right: Pastor Wes Bentley, the founder of Far Reaching Ministries, serves up burgers for lunch during the conference.





Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 PETER 3:18a

As of August 1, 2019, there are more than 1,800 Calvary Chapel fellowships worldwide, with over 100 in process. Pastor Don McClure of Calvary Way has been encouraged as Calvary Chapel has continued to increase in the U.S. as well as around the world. He commented, “We are a blessed family that has come through times and seasons, and by the Lord’s grace, Calvary Chapel is stronger than ever. We are living in both the Last Days and days of challenge.” Don noted that leaders are tasked to help hold a falling world together. “We know the answer, and that answer is Jesus Christ, and we long for one last revival before He returns for the Church. Please pray that the Holy

Spirit will continue to bring many to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and that they will find a church where they will be grounded in the Word of God.”



Top left: Pastors Joe Focht, Don McClure, and Malcolm Wild pray.

Middle left: Raul Ries (right) prays with Juan Domingo.

Bottom left: Pastors pray for others.

Right: Julie and Pastor Jack Winkle, CC Golden Valley, CA, pray that their 19-year-old autistic son would grow in his faith in Christ.



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