

Calvary Connection

December 2017

Beginnings

In 1975, Ray and Margie moved to the Farmbrook Subdivision in Farmington, New York. Margie and her sister had always had a dream of living in the same neighborhood, so when her sister bought a home at Farmbrook, Ray and Margie soon followed.

The inspector for the homes in the subdivision, Dave Jones, was a born-again Christian. So, when he arrived at Margie's sister's home, they visited casually. The conversation ultimately led to her personal struggles, and before long, Dave was witnessing to her about the saving power of Jesus Christ.

During the conversation, she excused herself to call Margie, who was home with their toddler Ryan while Ray was at an evening class. Once Margie and Ryan arrived at her sister's house, the Holy Spirit ministered the truth of the gospel to the two sisters and another friend. Ultimately, they all accepted Christ's love and forgiveness. The transformation was powerful and immediate. Margie still finds it interesting that the specific verse that ministered to her was from Isaiah 64:6 - *But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is like filthy rags.* (continued)

Personal Testimony is Often Not Enough

During a recent trip to the Far East, I saw the convicting power of the unpromising truth of the gospel. In India, wherever I presented my testimony, the predominantly Hindu crowds would nod and smile in approval. At first, I was startled; How could they be so agreeable to what Christ had done in my life? But as a Delhi pastor reminded me, Hindus believe all roads lead to God. If Jesus was my guru, fine. They all had their gurus too.

I realized then that personal testimony often is not enough, particularly in Eastern cultures. Though we Western Christians often use personal testimony as the primary formula for our evangelism, we must never forget that Christianity rests upon the historic truth of Christ's rising from the dead. Whenever I presented the Resurrection and the evidence that proves it, people's expressions changed. They listened intently. Such a message demands a choice; it reduces all other religions to abstract philosophies.

He told me that as a Muslim, he believed the same things I did.

For example, at a luncheon in Bombay, after I had presented the case for the Resurrection, a large, round-faced man introduced himself as the editor of the *Islamic Times*. Smiling broadly and thrusting out his hand, he told me that as a Muslim he believed the same things I did.

I hesitated. This man seemed so friendly, and I was a guest in his country; perhaps I shouldn't disturb our rapport. But then, almost irresistibly, the words rushed out: "But we don't believe the same thing, for I believe that Jesus was bodily raised from the dead."

The man's grin vanished. "I know," he said soberly, "and you've made a very strong case. I must think about it." With that, he turned and walked away. I learned later that he immediately visited a group of Christian businessmen, saying that he had to "examine the evidence."

We must not dilute the gospel by ignoring the Cross.

I returned from the trip with a renewed appreciation of why the great evangelist Paul staked the entire case for Christianity on the Resurrection – and the grave

consequences of stripping this central truth from the gospel.

I wonder if when, in our efforts to attract the multitudes, we do damage when we preach primarily of what God will do *for us* – whether it be personal peace or the healing of broken relationships.

We must not dilute the gospel by ignoring the Cross – or from the seeds of our evangelism will sprout followers attracted to Christianity for what it will give them, rather than out of love and service for a risen Lord. We follow Christ, not because of his blessings, but because he is truth.

If indeed Jesus was bodily raised (and he was!), that is the most important fact of human history. It establishes the deity of Christ, validates what he taught, and demonstrates that he was and is the only true God. It not only undermines every other religious claim, but it crosses all ethnic, religious, and cultural barriers.

The Resurrection is not, then, just an event we celebrate at Easter, but rather the heart of Christian evangelism – the message for all seasons to a needy world.

by Chuck Colson, Founder of Prison Fellowship





Our Ushers

They are more than just friendly faces! They serve us in many different ways. Here are just a few....

They welcome us – always warmly - and distribute the weekly bulletin. If need be, they will gladly find you a seat. For first-time visitors, they familiarize them with the building, children’s programs, etc. They serve communion and take the weekly offering. If the chairs need to be rearranged for special events, they are the go-to guys!



These are the ‘visible’ actions that the ushers perform. As important as they are, they don’t compare with what *isn’t* as visible. The behind-the-scenes services that they offer include ministering to someone that they discern is in need. They are also the ‘gate-keepers’ of the sanctuary, watching for safety issues and disruptions. And while we are looking, they are behind us, always ready to minister to the needs that arise.
First Service: Randy, Ron, Darrell, Chuck, Marc, Doug Second Service: Paul, Joe, Ben, Tom



Dave quoted the Scripture in response to her question about the purpose of Jesus' death on the cross.

The next morning on their drive to work, the transformation in Margie was obvious to Ray. Whereas in the past, Margie would have likely used ‘colorful’ language to their fellow commuters, on that morning she was saying 'Praise the Lord'. She only had time to give a brief explanation of her salvation experience to Ray, to which he indicated that they would need to talk about it further when they got home that night.

For the next few Sundays, they attended Dave and Kate Jones' church - a Pentecostal (outwardly expressive worship and emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit) group of believers. It was, to say the least, a very different church service from their Catholic church experiences. Once the services would end, Ray would want to leave as quickly as possible. But by the time he reached the back of the church, he couldn't deny that the people's relationship with God was real. They showed genuine love to Ray and Margie, seemingly demanding nothing in return.

On his own, Ray started researching this new experience, while Margie attended Bible studies without him. She was deeply concerned that Ray wouldn't accept what she had embraced, and that it would negatively impact their marriage. As she prayed for Ray, she also asked a Christian friend, 'What am I going to do if he doesn't choose salvation?' The lady's explanation, 'Well, you got saved, right?', seemed to make sense and helped Margie as she prayed for her husband.

In the meantime, Ray was asking God the heartfelt question: "God, if you're real..." (*This is the first installment of the beginnings of Ray and Margie's Christian testimony, one that ultimately led to the formation of our church.*)

First in a series of stories of the beginnings of Calvary Chapel of Webster.



Enriching Your Bible Vocabulary

hades (Greek) – the underworld, the abode of the dead (Hebrew: Sheol); the original purpose of hell and its fire was for the ultimate destruction of Satan, sin, and his angels. *"Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."* (Matt. 25:41)

hand, right hand - the hand of God is a place of salvation, strength, refuge, and protection; Jesus sits at the right hand of God. *It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.* (Rom. 8:34) In Hebrew, the direction "south" is designated by the word for "right hand" (yamin [im"Yim]). Jacob named his youngest son Benjamin, meaning 'son of my right hand'.



heretic - one who causes divisions. *A man that is a heretic after the first and second warning reject; knowing that he that is such is disruptive, and sins, being condemned of himself.* (Titus 3:10,11)

Herod - son of a hero. *Examples are Herod Agrippa I and II, Herod Antipas, Herod Archelaus, Herod Philip I and II, and Herod the Great.*