

# Seeking God's Will

on our knees

CALVARY CHAPEL FORT LAUDERDALE

*As it is written, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

*J Corinthians 2:9*

"God wants every pastor to have a heart for the world because the Lord has a heart for the world. For God so loved the world," said Bob Coy, senior pastor of CC Fort Lauderdale. "For that reason we have to be aware of what is happening around the globe. Even if we don't feel called to participate directly in missionary opportunities, we should at least be people of prayer for overseas ministries. When you pray for the lost, the prayer itself is participation."



Pastor Bob Coy, his image projected onto a large screen during a dedication service, is senior pastor of CC Fort Lauderdale.

Pastor Bob looked around the amazing facility with which God has blessed his fellowship—75 acres in northwest Fort Lauderdale, 300,000 square feet, and a sanctuary seating 3,500. Over 200 employees run the many ministries, a Bible Institute, and a Christian school.

"The Lord is using people here; their gifts and talents are simply glorifying God," said Pastor Bob. "But God doesn't need any of this," he said. "The people that came to the Lord were just as sanctified in 1985 when we were only a few individuals meeting at a funeral home, with a lousy sound system and a worship leader that could barely play the guitar."

Bob had been an assistant pastor at CC Las Vegas when he felt the Lord calling him to start a work in the untested fields of Florida. People moving to Fort Lauderdale made a prayer request that caught his attention. It asked for a Calvary Chapel ministry to begin in the town known for its college antics during spring break. Malcolm Wild had the only other Calvary Chapel in the state at Merritt Island. Currently, there are 35 Calvary Chapels in Florida. Pastor Malcolm's help was instrumental. He served as a board member and encouraged the young pastor.

*And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there. Acts 20:22*

Bob's call was confirmed through Scripture and a prayer partner of Bob's wife, Diane. In 1985, the young couple packed a moving van and were followed across the country by deacon Fidel Gomez and his family, who had felt God's leading to assist the Coys.

The owners of a funeral home allowed them to hold Sunday services free of charge. From there, they moved to an elementary school and to several different buildings over the years before purchasing the current property. Both Bob and Diane worked secular jobs for two years, refusing compensation from the ministry until the church needed his full-time participation.

Solid teaching through the Bible coupled with Bob's entertaining teaching style facilitated the work of the Holy Spirit as the church grew to the 14,000-member congregation of today. Like many pastors, Bob had aspired to lead 200 people. In hindsight, he is thankful the Lord chose to bless this work and enjoys seeing God's Word reaching many.



CC Fort Lauderdale after Sunday service.

*The end of a thing is better than its beginning; the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, for anger rests in the bosom of fools. Do not say, 'Why were the former days better than these?' For you do not inquire wisely concerning this. Ecclesiastes 7:8-10*

Though occasionally discouraged when the church stayed at 50 members, Bob felt overwhelmed when it reached 1,000 members. He confided this to John Michaels,

an assistant pastor at CC Las Vegas. John is presently senior pastor at CC Spring Valley, a church outside Las Vegas known for its missionary focus. John exhorted Bob that it is as much a sin to be frustrated over a growing church as it is to covet a larger one. That admonition released Bob to allow God's will to prevail.

"Following the pattern established by my senior pastor, Chuck Smith, my first responsibility is my home church, my Jerusalem, you might say. From there, my focus goes to Judea, Samaria, and then to the outermost parts of the world. My heart is for Fort Lauderdale. I caution pastors not to become more focused on the foreign field than the ministry to which they were first called," said Bob.

"For this season in my life, I don't feel called to do missions work myself. That is disappointing to my wife. She would love to participate in the work overseas. Right now, my focus is here, but that doesn't mean the church itself doesn't do its part. I do believe that every pastor, if he is in a relationship with God through prayer, will have a burden in some form for a place beyond the four walls of his church. That gives us God's big



The new sanctuary, dedicated in May 1999, seats 3,500 people.

# "PRAYER IS NOT A NICE -

PASTOR BOB COY



Young children eagerly participate in the Kids' Live Service.



A giant aquarium, donated to the church, is a favorite location for the children.



Students at Calvary Christian Academy, a ministry of CC Fort Lauderdale, learn volleyball techniques during gym class.



Roman Williams, director of the Bible Institute, teaches a Friday evening class.



Pastor Bob Coy teaches the Word of God in the new sanctuary.

picture. If we become pastors with blinders on, then we fail to see the whole body of Christ, and that can lead to erroneous teaching."

Bob took his first missions trip in 1987 after meeting a missionary from Haiti. "I didn't drink anything for two days after I ran out of bottled water. All I ate were granola bars. But I had never been more blessed in my entire life. You are outside your comfort zone and dependent on God. Prayer is not a nicety; it's a necessity. Faith is no longer a noun; it's an action verb."

"God becomes more real and relevant, and you want more people to experience it. So you start telling other people, and they go to the mission field, and you see the incredible effect it has on their lives. The church gains a global view and a heart for the lost."

A need for a missions pastor was realized, and Bob called upon Stephan Tchividjian. The day Stephan was ordained in the ministry his grandparents sat in front of the pulpit. Pastor Bob comically relates the anxiety of teaching with Stephan's grandfather, the Reverend Billy Graham, listening.

With Stephan's family heritage and strong Biblical background, he established a missions board, bringing a well-networked viewpoint for reaching the lost on a worldwide scale.

"One of the areas that we at CC Fort Lauderdale struggle with is how to engage the entire congregation in missions," comments Stephan. "I strongly encourage smaller churches to become missions-minded when they are small by continually making it a focus of their church and to

integrate missionary concerns into their prayer life and church vision. When the church is already large, it almost becomes an oversight, and the congregation never makes a strong connection." Stephan's strong influence remains, but he concentrates on other areas of responsibility. Kelly Lyon took over the leadership of the department in 1998.

Bob Coy's ministry began by teaching third graders Bible stories just after he had learned them himself. The enthusiasm he generated transferred to an adult Bible study and then on to pastoring.

"I'll never lose excitement over sharing the Word of God," concludes Bob.

"I learned from Jon Courson that you have to minister in obedience to God's calling to your ministry, rather than trying to minister to the needs, which will always be there," said Bob. "We have pastors' planning meetings where we seek God's will on our knees." ☺



Left: Kelly Lyon (right), missions director, uses games to train aspiring students for the mission field. Stephan Tchividjian, oldest grandson of the Reverend Billy Graham, is in the background.