

CALVARY CHAPEL BIBLE COLLEGE

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)

Since it began in 1975, the school's influence has spanned the globe with more than 1,000 graduates taking God's Word to the nations.

*Story by Christmas McGaughey
Photos by Geraldine Wilkins*



Bible College Director Dave Shirley teaches and oversees a staff of 50.



Students have access to extensive resources at the campus library to aid them in their study of the Bible.

Palm trees tower over the campus Prayer Chapel. The 47-acre grounds in Murrieta, CA, serve as both a Bible college and a conference center.



Many classes are recorded for the school's expanding distance-learning program.



Microbiologist Dr. Lu Wing, known for his expressive style, teaches about Genesis.



In the popular class on the book of Hebrews, several students lined the back of the classroom floor. Many use laptops and tape recorders to take notes.



Dave Shirley uses PowerPoint slides for his History of Redemption class.

Graham Wathen strode across the Calvary Chapel Bible College grounds toward the library. Around him the sunlit campus in Murrieta, CA, was quiet. His head was whirling with the commitment he was about to make: *How can I be an intern and teach anything? I'm still learning. What if I look like an idiot?* Again he recalled the classes he was taking—studying the Word in depth, verse by verse; Jesus' teaching methods; the role of a pastor/teacher. It seemed obvious the Lord was pointing him in this direction, but what if he was mistaken? He took a deep breath to clear his head and remind himself of all the prayer times, all the circumstances, all the encouragement that seemed to point clearly in this

direction. He would not head to Tokyo but to Austria to intern for a year.

He nervously typed the email to the Bible college director in Austria. After he clicked 'send,' a peace settled on his heart and mind. "I knew that it was God's calling on my life to teach the Word and that I had to surrender to Him no matter what. He says it; I do it. That's it." In his personal Bible study the next day, Graham felt God confirm his calling through John 21:15-17: "Feed My sheep." Not only did Graham spend the year 2002 in Austria and then Hungary when the Bible College moved, he also went on to England for six months to help serve with Creation Fest. Later he

journeyed to China to teach the Bible to a group of Chinese college students for just over a year. Now he's praying about serving in Malaysia.

A young Canadian couple, Terry and Lindy Martens, packed up all their earthly belongings and headed to Southern California. They didn't know where they would live or how long they could stay, but they clearly felt God's calling to attend Calvary Chapel Bible College (CCBC) in Murrieta, CA. Once they arrived, God provided an RV trailer for the duration of their study. Going through the Bible classes and encouraged by several godly examples, Terry felt God calling him to be a pastor.

"When we came, we didn't know what we wanted to do, but we knew we should take the time to prepare ourselves for a life of ministry," Lindy recalled. "At Bible College, the Lord gave us a real vision for His church—that the church is the primary tool He uses to do His work." Going through the book of Acts in class, Terry felt called to plant a church in a place where solid Bible teaching was scarce.

Terry began specifically praying about Newcastle, Australia—a place he'd been to years before he was saved. Pastor Brian Brodersen confirmed Terry's calling by suggesting the same place for a church plant. Then Bible College Director and



Summer Williams, center, from Missouri, moves into her dorm room with help from her sister, Cierra, left, and her mom, Melody.

“Everything—the staff pouring themselves out for us, the fellowship with other students, the Holy Spirit speaking to you—there’s something special about this place.”

Sarah Baker



First-semester students filter in for the spring semester.



New students get their pictures taken for photo IDs.

Pastor Dave Shirley offered to support the Martens to plant a church in Newcastle and to send Bible College students to help start the new work.

“The simplicity of Chuck’s verse-by-verse teaching and the exposure to different teachers with different styles made me feel there was freedom to just be myself as a pastor,” Terry said, “and especially having those mature men of God confirm and support us in His calling for our lives.” The Martens planted a Calvary Chapel Fellowship in Newcastle, Australia, where they have continued to serve the Lord for the past four years.

These are just two of many stories that fulfill CCBC’s original purpose when it began 30 years ago with a staff of three men and a group of 60 students. Since then the college has grown to nearly 600 students per semester with another 250-300 students abroad at international campuses. Estimates for how many have graduated

from CCBC over the past three decades range well into the thousands.

Recalling the initial vision, CCBC President Pastor Chuck Smith said, “We saw the need for young people to have a place where they could go and get established and founded in the Word of God, especially before they went to secular colleges where their faith would be challenged.” He added, “[It’s for] young people who want to know the will of God for their lives and have a place to study the Word of God and seek God for direction of their lives and for their future.”

Director and Pastor Dave Shirley agreed. “The main thing here is still 2 Timothy 2:15,” he said. That verse says: “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (KJV).

CCBC started in 1975 at a conference center in Twin Peaks with three pastors—Don

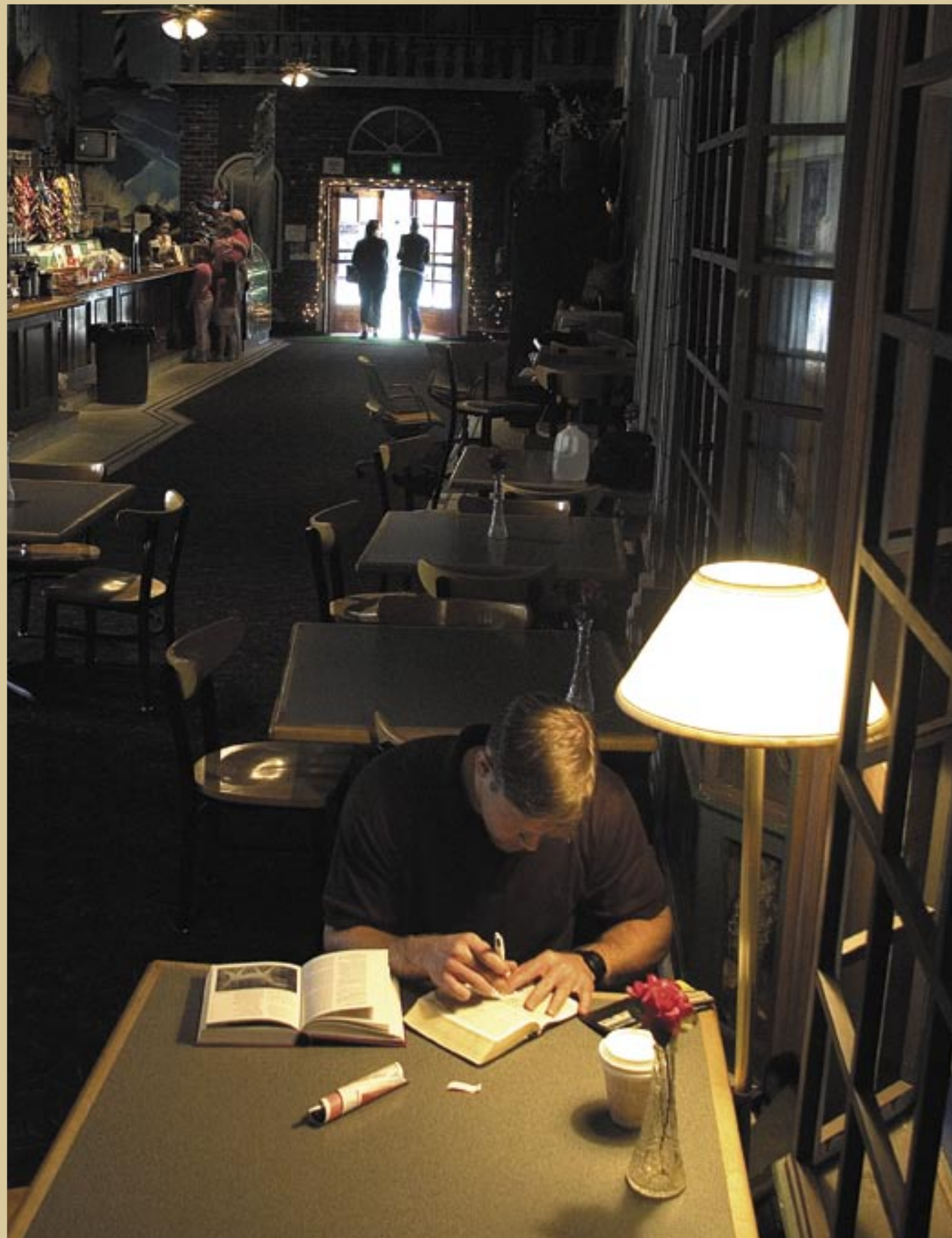
McClure, Jon Courson, and Guy Gray—teaching a small body of students. After two decades on the mountain, CCBC moved to its current location in 1996.

“This is a place to get to know the Lord more intimately,” Dave said. Several elements at the school help facilitate a believer’s growth: Bible-centered classes and assignments, daily Christian fellowship, practical service on campus and in the community, and a retreat-like atmosphere. From the lakeside benches and paths to the small prayer chapel, there are many places to seek God one-on-one.

“Everything—the staff pouring themselves out for us, the fellowship with other students, the Holy Spirit speaking to you—there’s something special about this place. It’s not about academics or theology here,” said fourth-semester student Sarah Baker, 19, of Modesto, CA. “It’s about growing in your personal relationship with the Lord and learning that He’s all you need.



Kadee Stoltzfus, 21, of Virginia, gets help in selecting classes. Students take the same core Bible classes and choose electives.



The Overflowing Cup campus coffee shop can be a quiet place to study, play chess, or enjoy fellowship over a hot beverage.



Students and visitors enjoy the bookstore and gift shop which offers many Calvary Chapel resources.

“There’s no way you could come here and not be radically changed,” Sarah added. “When I came, my deepest desire was to know God. As I studied, I realized all I had needed was to be in the Word.” Sarah served as an intern in Oahu, HI, where she learned ministry is not glamorous but challenging and that God is faithful. Gearing up for graduation, she said, “I’m still learning about intimacy with God. He’s a consuming fire; He wants our whole hearts.”

Jasmine Alnutt, teacher and dean of women, said many staff members mentor students. “A lot of full-time staff live nearby and open up their homes to students.” She added, “Sometimes it’s just meeting some of the girls for coffee and talking about what’s going on in their lives.”

Sean Housman, teacher and dean of men, agreed. “I had a student say to me, ‘All my life I’ve heard that I should be a godly man, but I don’t know how. Will you show me?’ Like Paul: we try to be a godly example up-close to those we’re teaching,” he said. “We each try to invest in a handful of guys or gals. Like Jesus: He was always spending time with his 12. There were times to teach to the multitudes and times for individual discipleship.”

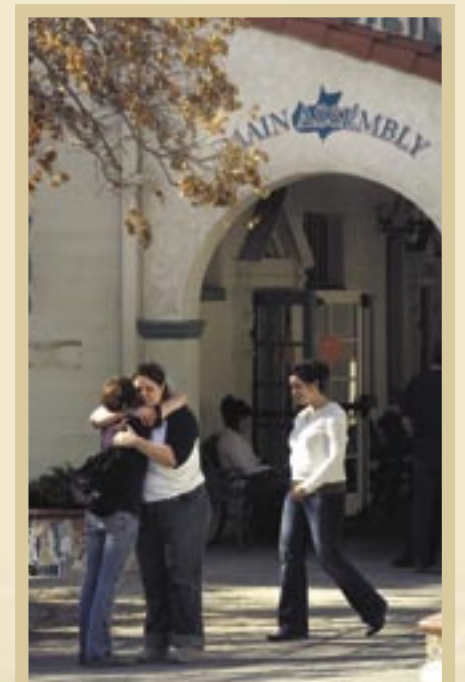
With nearly 50 full-time staff members at the college, students have a wide pool to draw from for mentorship. Many say the school has been a training center, a retreat, and a testing ground for their Christian faith. Students are required to serve at the on-campus conference center directed by Jimmy Pompoco.

Emmanuel Rodriguez, 20, of San Antonio, TX, was greatly impacted by his first dorm steward and now encourages other new students. “He really helped me with practical things, like what a Christian relationship should be versus what we learn in the world,” Emmanuel said. He came to Bible College to learn how to study God’s Word; he didn’t expect God would also build his character. “When I first came here, I was like a child, so spiritually immature. But I’ve put childish ways behind me, like it says in 1 Corinthians 13:11.” He added, “There’s been an unexpected change in my desires; instead of pleasing myself, I’m learning how to please God.” After graduation, Emmanuel plans to marry his fiancée, whom he met at school, and minister to youth at Calvary Chapel San Antonio.

As they study God’s Word under several experienced pastors and missionaries, many

students feel called to serve in missions or in full-time ministry.

In fact, so many have gone on to full-time ministry that youth pastors’ and missionaries’ conferences at the campus often



Lauren Hutchins and Dena Templeton reunite after winter break.



The Church Planting class requires attendance at a home fellowship every Wednesday night. Many staff and nearby families open up their homes to students.

“Pastor Chuck doesn’t want us to be a fully accredited school so that we can be free to follow the Holy Spirit.”

Bible College Director Dave Shirley



Students take a break to play a game of chess in the coffee shop.

seem like CCBC reunions where former classmates often meet up again. “We had a youth workers’ conference where the speaker asked how many people had gone to school here, and about three-fourths of them raised their hands,” said Dave.

“Many of our mission-minded students go to the international extension campuses for a semester or more,” said Rod Thompson, missions overseer. “They grow in their maturity here, then they go overseas where they learn another culture and what the spiritual needs are in that country.” Rod previously served as director of the Bible College in Europe for 15 years; he called the campus in Vajta, Hungary, a “Bridge into Europe and Beyond.”



Students stop to pray together after morning devotions in the main assembly room.

Mike Neglia, who now pastors the Calvary Chapel fellowship in Cork, Ireland, was called into full-time missionary work during his last semester in Germany. “We had missionary teachers and guest speakers,” he said. “It made me see that missionaries weren’t guys living in grass huts wearing pith hats, but regular people like myself serving the Lord in a different place.” Mike added that David Guzik, director of the CCBC in Germany, mentored several students and encouraged him to step out in faith. The Cork fellowship recently sent a young man to the campus in Germany.

Some graduates intern at Calvary Chapels in the U.S. “So far, 12 students have gone out to internships in the last two years,” said Josh Turansky, teacher and coordinator of community services. He is compiling a program manual of guidelines. “We want it to benefit both parties: where students are mentored and given opportunities to use their gifts as well as be a blessing to the church body.”

CCBC’s non-accredited degree program includes four semesters over two years with a per-semester cost of \$2,750 for on-campus students or \$1,450 for full-time, off-campus students. Students may take their third semester at one of eight campuses overseas: Hungary, England, Germany, Peru, Brazil, Jerusalem, Spain, or Wales. A Bible college in Moscow instructs Russian nationals.

“Pastor Chuck doesn’t want us to be a fully accredited school so that we can be free to follow the Holy Spirit,” Dave explained to a group of parents during orientation. However, he added, many have transferred

some CCBC course credits to accredited Christian colleges and universities on a case-by-case basis.

Off campus, more students are enrolling through online education and correspondence courses. Nearly 100 students have joined the online program since it began in October, with 350 enrolled in correspondence courses. “It’s really been a great asset to military people, stay-at-home moms, and those already serving in ministry,” said Joe Holden, director of distance learning education. He oversees live chat forums in which students may discuss class material. The online school is a Web-based study program with audio-visual recordings of class sessions, while the correspondence program sends recordings and materials through the post. Both programs offer the same classes at the same cost, \$80 per credit hour, with additional fees for shipping. The programs accept new students year round.

Editor’s Note: Calvary Chapel Magazine staff writer Christmas McGaughey graduated from the CC Bible College in 1996. She served as a missionary in Ireland after working as a newspaper reporter in Alabama. She joined the magazine staff last fall.

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