

The Calvary Connection

Winter 2006

Published by Calvary Baptist Church

COME O COME,
EMMANUEL

A Season of Hope, Anticipation & Preparation

The "Christmas Season" is upon us. For Christians it is "Advent." The term Advent comes from two Latin words – Adventus & Redemptoris, which mean "the coming of the Saviour." This is the time of year when two interconnected occasions for celebration come together. The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. From the 8th century, Western Christianity (Roman Catholics, Lutherans and Anglicans) has observed this season by praying and fasting. Eastern Orthodox churches refer to this time of year as the Nativity Fast, Winter Lent, or the Christmas Lent.

For far too long many of us (Christians) have understood the Christmas Season simply to be the time of year when businesses (particularly those who sell and manufacture things that could be given as gifts) offer sales in anticipation of the massive buying rush that the holiday generates. Most of us have gone along with the world

in accepting that the Christmas Season begins the day after Thanksgiving (Black Friday) and ends the Sunday after New Year's Day.

This year let's take note that "Advent" begins on December 3 and ends on Christmas Eve. Let's allow the double focus on past (Nativity) and future (Second Coming) heighten our sensitivities as individuals and as a congregation that we are "between the times." Rather than being consumed with thoughts of gift giving and receiving, let's be sure to celebrate the season by living with a profound sense that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power.

To help us stay focused on the real meaning of the season, our Christmas celebration is entitled, "Jesus, He's Coming Back Again." Together, on Sunday, December 17 at 5 p.m., we will take a look back to Bethlehem and a look forward to the day when Jesus reappears as reigning Lord.

In remembrance of Christ's arrival (Christmas) and in antic-



ipation of the Second Coming, the season of Advent is marked by a spirit of hope, anticipation and preparation. It is that hope that once anticipated and now anticipates anew, the reign of Jesus, the Anointed One, the Messiah, who will bring peace and justice and righteousness to the world. Part of our expectation also anticipates deliverance from the evils of this world, a final judgment on sin and a calling of the world to accountability before God.

Our prayer during this Advent season should be: Come, O Come, Emmanuel.

– Pastor Jerry M. Carter

Walking By Faith in South India

Saint Paul says that we walk by faith, not by sight. This is easier said than done for most of us. But when we see a person who truly walks by faith, it can be uplifting and inspiring. In the summer of 2005 it was my privilege to meet a person who truly walks by faith: Pastor Abraham Samuel, the founder of Faith Gospel Church Ministry in Andhra Pradesh, India.

Andhra Pradesh is on the southeastern coast of India. I visited Pastor Samuel there to survey Sharon Children's Home, an orphanage operated by the church he leads and built with support from Calvary Baptist Church. The story of his life is a striking example of God's grace and power.

Pastor Samuel became an orphan at a young age, but he managed to put himself through college. He became very ill and wound up in the hospital with failing kidneys. His doctor told him that he was not going to make it through that night. A nurse came to visit him that evening, and told him about Jesus. Born a Hindu, Pastor Samuel did not want to hear this, and yelled at her to get out and leave him alone.

Later that night, Pastor Samuel could not take the pain anymore, and he called out to Jesus to help him. He had a vision of a hand with five drops of blood. The pain ended, and immediately he was cured. In the morning, the nurse rejoiced with him, and his doctor converted to Christianity upon seeing the miraculous recovery.

That night was the beginning of Pastor Samuel dedicating his life to serving Christ. He enrolled in bible college and was eventually consecrated a bishop. He started Faith Gospel Church Ministry in his backyard in Karapa, India, and he now has 70 pastors serving under him.

Faith Gospel Church Ministry cares for people of every caste and every faith tradition with a special focus on widows and orphans. By late in 2004, the members were caring for two dozen orphans who slept on the floor of the church. Pastor Samuel and his congregation prayed earnestly for help, and his prayers were answered in 2005. Members of Calvary Baptist Church gave generously to help him build Sharon Children's Home and medical clinic across the street from Pastor Samuel's home. Today 40 orphans are fed, clothed and cared for by the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The children are clean, healthy and happy, and they all are attending school. Children who demonstrate good character and aptitude are sent to bible college to become pastors.

Pastor Samuel has paid a dear price for honoring his calling. He has been beaten for preaching the Gospel, and the Hindu majority in Andhra Pradesh often discriminate against Christians. Despite all this, he continues to declare God's word, and he has made many friends through his love and generosity.

I left India amazed at what God can do through just one faithful person. Pastor Samuel had no idea how he was going to feed the orphans who wound up under his care. He improvised and made do, and let God work on a long-term plan. Pastor Samuel's walk of faith has taken him further than he ever could have imagined. And he's still walking.

– *Min. Robert Martorana*

The Women's Ministry

God has blessed the Women's Ministry in doing wonderful works at Calvary Baptist Church to edify His people. This past summer, one member enjoyed a special experience as a member of the cast of the play Talitha Cumi. She shared her thoughts with The Connection:



Talitha Cumi, produced by the Calvary Women's Ministry and directed by Torina Armstrong, was a work two years in the making. Early in the Spring of 2006, I auditioned for both "Lena" and "Veeda." I really wanted to portray Lena, but Torina cast me for Veeda. I didn't recognize her value – a night club singer who helped raise Lena. Veeda brought to life the ills of Lena's past in Lena's subconsciousness.

I got involved in this production simply because I love all aspects of the theatre, but I learned a great deal about myself and others on the journey to opening night. The relationships birthed during this production were invaluable. Just like in a family we had issues on all levels. We spent several hours a week together. We prayed together; we had disagreements; we corrected one another. Ultimately, we were just people coming together for a common good...doing the work of the Lord.

The audience gave us such a positive response, but I think

people were surprised about how Talitha Cumi was presented. The feedback was amazing and let us know that our work was worthwhile. I guess we are surprised sometimes to learn that so much talent – God-glorifying talent – exists among us, which is why it's so important to be available to be used by God. I think our cast did a great job, but really, the audience saw the hard work of Torina and the gift God has placed in her. It's always interesting to see another person's vision come to life. Often times we don't see what the leader or director sees – just like I didn't see me playing the role as Veeda. Once Torina gave us the vision, it was up to the actors to bring the characters to life. We were a committed cast, set on giving the audience a great show and a performance pleasing to the Lord.

I think dramatic arts are important to our ministry because it imitates life. Do we not all know someone or know about someone who has the same issues as those portrayed in the play? Talitha Cumi was a deep play because we tried to shine a light on issues that are the real fabric of our lives – alcoholism, neglecting our children, grown men having relationships with young girls, pregnancy, older women and young boys – the list is long. Talitha Cumi forced us to look at ourselves. Even if you didn't have the same challenges portrayed in the play, there are certainly other issues that must be faced head on then left at the cross. Talitha Cumi reminded us to let our faith move us to do just that...to leave it at the feet of Jesus.

– *Renita Bourgeois*

Ministry Spotlights

Church Of God Mt. Assembly Dias District, Dias PD. Hanover, Jamaica West Indies

September 11, 2006.

Calvary Baptist Church M.L.K. Ave
10 Morris Town NJ
07960 USA.

Dear Pastor and Members,

Greetings in the mighty name of Jesus Christ our soon coming King; we the pastor and members of the Dias Church of God Mt. Assembly in Jamaica want to thank you for the gowns that were given to us. We greatly appreciate this donation. We pray that God will bless your ministry as you minister to the needy. We asked that you pray for us as we pray for you.

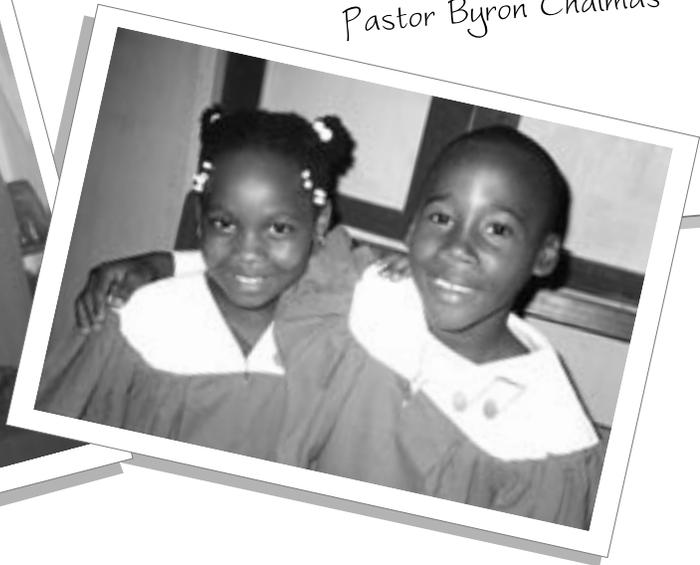
God bless you all and again we say thank you.

Attached are photographs of our choir members wearing the gowns.

Yours in Christ

B. Chalmas

Pastor Byron Chalmas



A Fresh Perspective

As a new member of Calvary Baptist Church, I am BLESSED to have you as my church family. I joined Calvary on October 1, 2006, approximately one month after moving to the Jersey area. When asked why I joined Calvary in such a short amount of time, I would have to answer, because I could feel the Spirit of the Lord moving within the church.

I LOVE MY NEW CHURCH FAMILY AND I AM PROUD TO SAY THAT I AM A MEMBER OF CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH. When I am at Calvary Baptist Church, I am free to worship and praise the Lord in my own way. I also love the fact that, at Calvary Baptist Church, I am surrounded by positive, motivating Christian individuals who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ

and who strive to be more like him each and every day. Throughout my journey here at Calvary, whether long or short, I am hoping that I will be able to grow in faith and in my knowledge of the Lord and that I will be able to discover the gifts that God has blessed me with and use those gifts to make this church and even better place.

– *By Kimberly Betts*

Higher Learning

What's up Mom and Dad,

This letter is just to let you all know how everything is going. I'm 20...it's crazy that I've been here so long, although others might not see that as a long time. I've just been thinking about what I have done in the past 20 years and the man I am to become in the next 20. It will be great if the man who God wants me to be and the man that I want to be meet and become friends.

Classes are tough, and my schedule is as well. I'm tired. One of the main reasons is because in addition to my classes, I am a teacher's assistant at an elementary school. I am seeing how the "No Child Left Behind Policy" is great in theory, but the implementation is quite smelly. The lack of parental guidance, discipline and interest in their child's educational well being is amazing, but there is hope. Along with teaching, I have petitioned to be a member of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta Collegiate chapter. Don't get me wrong however; I have been having fun. I believe it is NECESSARY in the middle of all the stress and burning the midnight oil to balance work and leisure. Oh, and there are so many beautiful women, Praise God from whom all blessings flow. But, I won't be foolish. I promise.

I also have been attending Trinity Baptist Church in Atlanta. I had the privilege of hearing Rev. Gardner Taylor and Rev. Clay Evans preach. In My Life: Bill Clinton, Rev. Taylor, is mentioned on page 475 as the man who said the opening prayer at President Clinton's first inauguration and the closing benediction at his last. Think about that. And he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest award a civilian can receive in this nation.

I have taken part in a literati to analyze Norman Kelly's book, Head Negro in Charge, and it has been an excellent read and call to action. By the way, why has it been so long since we've had a major Black History play at Calvary? I think that the less we educate children about our history and origins, the greater the chance that they won't know

where they're going, and more so, that our people won't know when we are going backward. It seems that we have forgotten the intangibles, like a work ethic. Dad, I told a teacher the other day, "I might not be the hardest working person in the world, but I'm in the top three, and my parents are getting old."

Jesse, James and I had a great meal on \$3; it was some Black-eyed peas, corn bread, and rice. It was bangin. Oh, and let it be known, I don't know these things because I go to Morehouse, I learned this because of Jesse and Belinda, and I appreciate it.

Booz Allen Hamilton and McKinsey may be interested in hiring me. I was planning on going to Oxford next semester; however, that plan has changed. And I still want to take intensive language courses in Costa Rica and France. The business department might be sending me and 15 to 18 other students to China, Beijing, and Hong Kong for Spring Break for free.

School is moving very fast, and quietly, I don't want college to end, because getting a job seems like it stinks. So I'm going to stay for another four years and just have fun. So I need a lot of money. Often. I'm joking – a little. But one thing that I have discovered in college is that I want to learn and experience as much as I can. I am now interested in how I can use my degree beyond making money. I want to be in a history book one day. I want to be significant. I want to fulfill my life's purpose. I want to make image and substance walk hand in hand. I want to move from the level of the mundane to the plateau of the majestic. I want to be 10 times better. I want...I want... I want to go get a cheeseburger, I'm out.

Love,
Chris

– *Christopher Alexander,*
Morehouse College Class of 2009

Brick by Brick

Following Traditions of Yesterday, Making History Today

A site for building our new Place of worship and service has been identified!

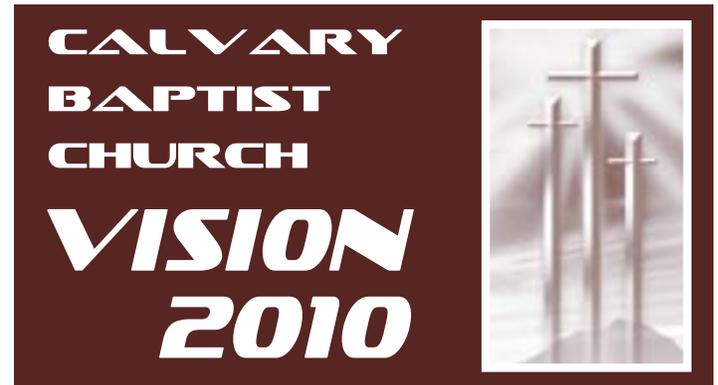
On Sunday, December 10, the members of Calvary Baptist Church adopted a resolution for our leadership to take bold steps toward one of the keys to fulfilling the Vision God has given us.

In March 1889, nine baptized believers in Christ met to consider forming a church, and under the leadership of Rev. Albert M. Lowery, they organized Calvary Baptist Church. They laid the foundation for a place of worship and growth. God added to the church and blessed the ministry with more believers, more workers to serve in his vineyard and to win more souls for Christ. Our generation's faithfulness to the Calvary tradition will not be demonstrated by maintaining the status quo; instead, we are eagerly moving into uncharted territory, trusting God to lead us into His vision of further growth and expansion.

Over the years, we've built new and improved facilities for worship and work, and found new ways to serve God and his people. Today, we continue cultivating the

legacy with a church that is more than a building where a congregation gathers on Sunday mornings, but a nest that nurtures believers and ministers to God's people in our local community and around the world. We are honored to have the opportunity to expose people to the Gospel in an inviting environment and humbly reach out to people in a variety of ways to meet them at the point of their need.

Through Vision 2010, we will not only expand our physical church, but broaden the scope of the ministry, extend community outreach and offer a place and space for the young and old to learn and live productive, enriched lives. Led by the Spirit and guided by God, we are "Building our Family & Community through Faith."



HOW WILL YOU BE A PART OF THE VISION?

As we move into a new year and closer to fulfilling Vision 2010, one of our prayers should be that more church members get involved in service. I've heard many people ask or ponder the reasons why more people do not volunteer. Of course, there are many unsung heroes, but often times the same people are carrying the load time after time. It's not just here at Calvary, but in our communities on various levels. According to a survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the proportion of the population who volunteered between September 2004 and September 2005 was 28.8%*. Yes, people are involved, but there is more work to do, and opportunities to get involved abound.

As Christians, we are instructed

to go out and serve God's people. True, our time is a precious commodity. How we spend it speaks volumes about us individually and collectively. How much time we spend praying and having a little talk with Jesus...How much time we spend with our families...How much time we spend studying and learning...How much time we spend with friends or at work or doing what ever we deem important and necessary...How much time we spend trying to make someone else's life better.

Vision 2010 is far more than just a new building campaign. We're on the verge of expanding our Programs, too, and that will require more service, from more people. We must find ways to use our gifts for God's glory. We

must be available to Him. We must keep our eyes open to needs that we can help fill.

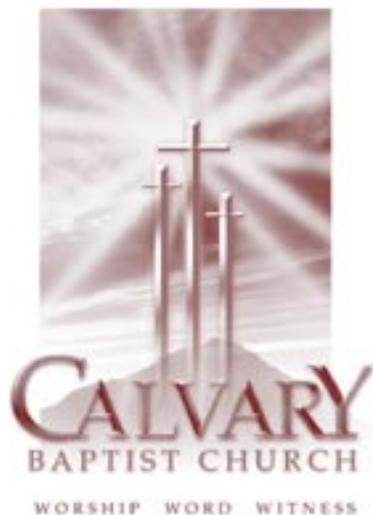
Whether you believe in making New Year's resolutions or not, let's remember that we've been blessed to be a blessing, and commit ourselves to being greater servants. Let's plant generously now, so the harvest is plentiful in 2010 and beyond.

– Renita Bourgeois

*Source: Data on volunteering were collected through a supplement to the September 2005 Current Population Survey (CPS). Volunteers are defined as persons who did unpaid work (except for expenses) through or for an organization.

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Submit your ideas and writings to
cbcnewsletter@aol.com or put them
on a disk and drop it in the C² mailbox.



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WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday Morning
7:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30 a.m.

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.
Wednesdays at Noon

Don't Miss



Sunday, December 17th
5:00 p.m.

Calvary Baptist Church

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SHARE YOUR SKILLS AND TALENTS WITH US!

We need your help with graphic design/layout, writing, reporting, editing, and photography.

E-mail us at cbcnewsletter@aol.com for more information.