

# Faith project in Oak View

Dan Nelson

2006

Ojai Valley News

What is faith to you? For many, the concept of faith speaks of a particular religion. This is reflected in comments like, "They don't like me because of my faith." For others, faith is a reflection of tenets and creeds, doctrine that one holds to within a particular branch of adherence. Thus, one might speak of a "Statement of Faith" describing a particular belief system. And for some, faith is a choice to trust and believe in the promises of God when there are opportunities abounding to doubt. You might hear someone say, "I have faith that God will provide for all of my needs." So what do you mean when you say you have faith?

The Bible says that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Some people read right past that amazing statement and miss the point because of its depth. Others don't catch on because, to them, the statement seems to contradict itself. To describe faith in terms of "substance" and "evidence" seems to run contradictory to the way many people think of faith. This description of faith tells of concrete and hardened proofs in one's life that their "faith" is more than mere lip service. This kind of faith affects the decisions that you make and transforms the way you live.

I am in a faith journey right now; a venture in faith. Together with a number of others, we are moving forward into an unknown area because we believe God has directed us to. In this case, we are making a purchase and acquisition of the chapel building in Oak View on Mahoney Avenue where we have been doing different kinds of ministry activities for the past five years. We are agreeing to the purchase but we do not have the money. Does that sound a bit scary? Maybe even a little foolish? You have to laugh with me for a minute as I am asking people to believe God is going to shock us in providing what we need, but contrary to what someone might assume, I don't even know how to collect an offering. We put a box in the corner, that's it. Even more, my bachelor's degree is in business and management, and I guarantee you, there are no university-level classes in business school on "Ventures in Faith."

Until now, we have been known as a mobile church in the Ojai Valley. Most Sunday morning services take place at the Oak View Community Center. Although it is not easy to set up and take down each week, we have been doing it for almost six years and have gotten pretty good at it. It would be easier for us to just continue on. We believe, however, that God wants us to buy and remodel this old church building.

The chapel was originally built in the 1930s and has been a place of worship ever since. It has gone by different names over the years and has had a rich, diverse history with a lot of stories to tell. We have been in partnership with the former congregation since 2000 doing different outreaches and worship services there together. When they disorganized last year, we were approached by the main office of their

denomination and given an exclusive offer to purchase the property. Because of their heart for us in what we are doing, they were very generous. I thanked them and gave God the glory; this was a blessing from him. What a wonderful opportunity this would be.

As one of the newer churches in the Ojai Valley, we have a desire to stay and be a long-lasting blessing to the community. One of the ways we can do that is by staying true to the calling of reaching into people's lives with the power of God to change. Another way we hope to bless the community is to help keep a house of worship such as this alive and reaching out. It is so tragic to see churches fold. What a wonderful purpose if we can be part of keeping this place of worship useful for a few more years.

But we all know the way of real estate in the Ojai Valley, and even with the generosity of godly people offering it to us at half its appraised value, it is still a whole lot more than we have. But here is where faith comes in. And here is where the bigger vision of God puts the narrowness of man in his place. This is not meant to be merely the meager efforts of a relatively small group of people in an obscure little corner of a small-town community. This is meant to be bigger. I believe God intends to use people who don't know us, or the chapel, or its history, but they know God and have a heart for doing something great. And, you are invited to be part of this. If together we change the life of one youth; that is something great.

If we save one more marriage, that is something great. If we train one person for a life of service and purpose, we have done great things. And it is worth it. And, you know, I believe there will be a whole lot more than just one. As we honor God together, we will produce much fruit. For me that means putting it out on the line in saying, "I believe God wants to use me to be part of a miracle in the Ojai Valley." How about you? Isn't that what faith is all about? And as we act on this, it is more than a venture in faith, it is an "adventure in faith," and it is exciting.

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. This article was published in 2006. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



P.O. Box 1443  
Ojai, CA 93024  
(805) 640-9498  
[www.calvaryojai.org](http://www.calvaryojai.org)

## **Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave, Oak View

## **Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View