

# July 4<sup>th</sup> kicks off summer success

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

It's been another exciting week of action-packed adventure around our beautiful valley within the world of Christian outreach and local missions. The Fourth of July was bustling with parade floats and picnic fun from Oak View to the East End. I saw pictures that were uploaded to Facebook of New Hope's barbecue afternoon event as well as our own teens leading the Vacation Bible School truck that was jam-packed with kids in the Independence Day downtown procession. Monday kicked off the second annual Christian Horse Camp that also brought four teen-missionaries and their creative coach from New York to help 10 of our own teens plus adults co-lead. I am hearing reports about the awesome sports camps happening at Church of the Living Christ. And this week was the summer launch of "Groovy Movies" on Wednesday mornings at Calvary, bringing children from every corner of the valley into one cool sanctuary (I mean movie theater) for life lessons, Pixar and popcorn. I happen to know that behind the scenes, there are others moving quickly to get ready for yet more awesome activities next week at Ojai Valley Baptist, CLC, and Calvary. Meanwhile, we are midstream through "Community Life" on Wednesday nights, a joint venture of five churches, our community Recreation Department, and the Police Department. All that and I bet I still left a few out. And in the final analysis, for many, this is a great hope for the community.

Our children are growing up and, with or without a plan; they will continue to take on new roles, responsibilities and relationships. Whether these are the positive kinds or not depends a lot on learning opportunities, options and personal choices. Let's face it, the No. 1 influencing factor is proactive parenting, not programs.

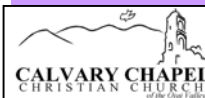
From September through June, there are forces that push down the psyche and spirituality of our kids from almost all directions. Formal lesson plans and curriculum designed to ensure that there is a deep sense of purposelessness requiring complete allegiance in the "from goo to you by way of the zoo" version of the godless universe. And various forms of "sensitivity training" that are merely a thinly veiled recruitment effort into diverse "lifestyles" which are strategically and aggressively fighting to get in at the most impressionable ages. It still fascinates me that we punish our best learners. Those that "buy in, hook line and sinker" to the idea of our existence as a

random series of mutations in the great cosmic accident, with no creator, divine plan or ultimate purpose, but instead part of a system of survival of the fittest where the strong dominate the weak, are ultimately punished for their loyal homage to the mantra. We put these guys and gals in jail. They get repeated lessons along that way that instills their essential core existence as mongers of pleasure and self-gratification getting their cues from the animal kingdom, which is why condoms and STD vaccinations are distributed to minors by the millions. But when they perpetrate these values, society responds in condemning the ones that listened and obeyed their message the best. I have found more hypocrisy in secular humanism than I have ever seen in any church.

Yes, it seems that summer is getting busier and busier, but there is so little time to reclaim our kids from peer influences that are less than desirable, as well as the media mayhem on these still forming young minds. I have found that most well meaning parents are completely oblivious to the life that their kids are leading. There are tremendous pressures from every angle to reduce their thought life into something fit for the garbage can. But opportunities are being offered this summer that send a message of ultimate value and divinely created worth, love, kindness, respect, and self-control, are in high demand. Thanks to all of you who are reaching out to the youth in our community with the love of Jesus — this does bring great hope and real answers to so many that need this.

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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. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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## **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

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