Calvary Chapel Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
A Christian school building designed to inspire tomorrow’s leaders

Changing Colors:
Green building strategies to update your existing facility

Portable Church Advice:
Getting it right the first time

Of Bricks and Dollars:
Finding funds in tough economic times
“We all saw this as an amazing opportunity to be part of a project that would impact lives for years to come. It’s much more than a typical school. It’s a house for discipleship, used seven days a week, sometimes 15 hours a day.”

— Ray Jackson, project engineer, Balfour Beatty Construction, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

CONCRETE SOLUTIONS
Calvary Christian Academy in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, is constructed of cast-in-place concrete with structural tilt-wall exterior panels built to withstand hurricane winds. Four stucco textures and five exterior paint colors blend to create a geometric pattern that’s anything but old-school.
BY RACHEL ALLEN

Focusing on the Journey

Calvary Chapel Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, builds a one-of-a-kind Christian school to intrigue and inspire tomorrow’s leaders

The road to discipleship is challenging, ever-changing, and for Calvary Chapel Ft. Lauderdale, it is a journey renewed daily.

Eight years ago, an audible call for a Christian education ministry was answered by the 20,000-member church, which already had widespread community-focused ministries. The conversation was not a new one, church leaders had discussed a school before, but felt their expectations far surpassed their abilities. Nevertheless, Calvary Christian Academy (CCA) was eventually born, serving 500 Kindergarten through 6th grade students its first year and adding a grade each following year. CCA is now Pre-K through 12th grade, serving 1,300 students and graduating its first class of 55 seniors last year.

The school possesses a simple philosophy—blend a superior education with Biblical principles to send prepared disciples into the world. This approach is not unique, according to Calvary Chapel’s executive pastor, Mark Davis, but simply relevant. “If we are unique it’s because Jesus has decided to use us in ways beyond what we could have ever hoped or imagined.”

CCA quickly outgrew retrofitted areas of existing campus buildings as well as newly constructed space, to the point that families had to be turned away. This reality, combined with growth in other areas of the church, prompted church leadership to invest in the ministries that had been blessed, and today the campus is proud of a four-story, 168,182-square-foot Christian Discipleship Building. Secondary school by day, adult continued education building by night, children’s ministry space on weekends, every inch of this facility was built to be used by God in whatever way He ordains. “Some may see the building as merely eyewash or flash,” says HH Architects Project Manager Gary Kirchoff, “but as one walks in, they experience the building, the mission behind the building, and more importantly, the people behind the mission.”

CALVARY CHAPEL FT. LAUDERDALE AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination:</th>
<th>Non-denominational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance:</td>
<td>Approximately 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style of Worship:</td>
<td>Contemporary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministries:</td>
<td>89 in all, including Calvary Christian Academy (CCA)</td>
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</tbody>
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SEE A VIDEO WALK-THROUGH OF CALVARY CHAPEL AT: www.worshipfacilities.com
Dallas, Texas-based HH Architects partnered with Calvary Chapel to design and build the vision. Every team member praises the unity of the team and how smoothly operations went as a result of it—not an easy feat when construction documents were needed in 45 days. As the documents neared completion, Balfour Beatty Construction of Ft. Lauderdale was introduced to the team. Ray Jackson, project engineer for Balfour Beatty, says the purpose behind the project kept everyone inspired. “We all saw this as an amazing opportunity to be part of a project that would impact lives for years to come,” Jackson comments. “It’s much more than a typical school. It’s a house for discipleship, used seven days a week, sometimes 15 hours a day.”

Building the Journey

The building is constructed of cast-in-place concrete with structural tilt-wall exterior panels, engineered under hurricane codes. But as one draws closer, concrete and steel are not what they see, instead before them is a fascinating geometric pattern created by four stucco textures and five exterior paint colors that cause people to ask, “Is this really a school?”

“Calvary Chapel was not interested in [merely] constructing a school, but in facilitating the church’s ministry vision in education. The end product is an eye-grabbing and graphically intense structure,” says Jerry Halcomb, HH Architects’ principal-in-charge.

Kirchoff elaborates, “It was important to Calvary Chapel that students attending the facility be excited about being there, excited about learning, and excited about their learning environment.”

Sheer size aside, the school is unrivaled in its aesthetics. (Designers used 58 interior paint colors.) Leaders and designers used ingenuity to capture milestones of the discipleship journey within the structure itself. “The building has a thematic tone, which is about the spiritual journey. A roadway is carried throughout the building and on each floor that road continues..."
The first floor of CCA marks the beginning of the journey motif that is carried throughout the school’s design. Cityscape graphics and hallway highways carry over into the lavatories.

The fourth floor science area has a look all its own. A seismic crack runs the length of the hallway ceiling and helps add visual interest. Touches like these are a testament to the school’s commitment to create a space where children can be excited about learning. Polished concrete floors help extend the theme and add durability.

for the building’s activities and circulation,” adds Kirchoff.

The second floor boasts traditional classrooms and hallways painted with the colors of water. The airy colors are complemented by an open ceiling that contributes to cost-effectiveness, as well as to the design theme.

The third floor holds the media center and art classrooms. “The media center windows are high, low, and sideways with a purpose. We wanted interest, intrigue, and creativity,” says Senior Pastor Bob Coy. In addition, the floors have a poured-paint pattern on the art side and sunbursts on the media side. All of the corridors have hanging shapes and convex lighting to further the inspiring quality of the space.

Finally, just like the rest of CCA, on the fourth floor, or science floor, it’s done differently. Apart from the seismic crack running the length of the hallway’s ceiling, there is an area devoted to the celestial, with hanging planets and stars soon to come.

“We wanted to express the way God creates,” says Coy. “God is exciting and enthused over a daily walk with us. We should illustrate that architecturally.”

rooms, a dance studio, a black box theater arts classroom, and the 700-seat theater, complete with a full backstage area, fly loft, and an entrance inspired by the Art Deco movement. The theater is also used as a children’s ministry and Bible study venue throughout the week. Joining this area with the rest of the first floor is the commons, which drives home the cityscape motif used throughout the rest of the building. “This commons area is the focal point not only of the design efforts, but the focal point to take you into different areas of life,” says Davis.

The first floor is the beginning of the journey and is adorned with streetlights, road signs, manhole covers, and hallway highways. It houses administrative offices, children’s ministry space, and most impressive, the fine arts wing. This single-story appendage holds choir, band, and orchestra classrooms and practice rooms, a dance studio, a black box theater arts classroom, and the 700-seat theater, complete with a full backstage area, fly loft, and an entrance inspired by the Art Deco movement. The theater is also used as a children’s ministry and Bible study venue throughout the week. Joining this area with the rest of the first floor is the commons, which drives home the cityscape motif used throughout the rest of the building. “This commons area is the focal point not only of the design efforts, but the focal point

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THE ROAD MOST TRAVELED
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SEISMIC SCIENCE
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Many Points of Planning

When planning the cutting edge discipleship building, the staff at Calvary Chapel and designers at HH Architects didn’t stop at appealing artistic elements, but went much deeper and were influenced by many perspectives. “Our priority was to provide classroom space that could be utilized not only by the school, but by the children’s ministry, adult ministry, and [others],” says Davis. “So, we designed a facility that is thematic in nature, fun and inviting, but could facilitate the basic needs of the church and school.”

And although the discipleship building is already built strong enough to withstand a hurricane, it faces a force even stronger every morning—teenagers. To endure, polished concrete floors were placed in high-traffic areas and in the art and science classes, carpet tiles were used in traditional classrooms for easy and efficient replacement, rubber flooring and recessed lockers were utilized in the hallways, and all epoxy flooring and tiled walls were installed in the bathrooms. To accommodate the multi-use personality of the facility, built-in cabinetry was a must in all meeting and classrooms, while larger lobby areas were planned for ease of gathering.

Calvary’s financial approaches tell an extraordinary story, too. The church had never conducted a capital campaign before, but accomplished much through the three-year pledges of an excited and devoted congregation that chose to “give with impact.” Calvary Chapel also employed the resources of professional stewardship consultants, RSI Church Stewardship Group of Dallas, Texas.

An additional financial boon came when the church choose to utilize the in-house expertise of Joe Castiglione, director of facilities at Calvary Chapel. His role as construction manager enabled the church to shop around for materials and buy out large contracts throughout construction instead of having to borrow money upfront. HH Architects Interior Designer Betsy Wilbanks recalls that sometimes donated or less expensive materials were substituted by Calvary Chapel’s design team to keep costs low. The outcome was original design accomplished at a lesser cost and without jeopardizing the integrity of the overall theme.

The downside of the arrangement was the lack of nailed-down contracts with suppliers. Midway through the project the economy began to struggle, which impacted financial contributions to the project. Then materials such as copper, PVC, and concrete escalated. As a result, construction had to slow down to allow the church to catch up financially.

**RESOURCES**

**ACOUSTICAL PANELS:** PSI; **CARPET:** BIGELOW, INTERFACE, MILLIKEN, SHAW; **DANCE FLOOR:** HARLEQUIN CORPORATION; **LAMINATE:** WILSONART, FORMICA, NEVAMAR, ADVANCE TECHNOLOGY; **LOCKERS:** Penco; **MAINTENANCE SYSTEMS:** EXPRESS TECHNOLOGY INC., JOHNSON CONTROLS INC., INTELLIGENT LIGHTING CONTROLS; **PAINT:** SHERWIN WILLIAMS; **POLISHED CONCRETE:** SHOT BLAST; **PORTABLE STAGE:** VERSA WYND – WENGER; **RUBBER FLOORING:** NORA RUBBER FLOORING, LONESEAL; **SOLID SURFACES:** SILESTONE; **STACKING CHAIRS:** BERTOLINI; **STAINED CONCRETE:** SCHOFFIELD CHEMSTAIN FLOORING; **THEATRE SEATS:** SERIES USA; **TILE:** DALTILE; **VINYL FLOORING:** ARMSTRONG; **WALL CARPET:** TRI-KES – MASTERWEAVE; **WALLCOVERING:** SEABROOK; **WALL GUARDS:** ACRYOVYN; **WINDOW TREATMENTS:** HUNTER DOUGLAS

**A/V/L EQUIPMENT:**

**DESIGNER/INSTALLER:** ACOUSTIC DIMENSIONS AND CALVARY CHAPEL A/V TECH TEAM; **AUDIO CONSOLE:** YAMAHA M7CL; **LIGHTING CONTROLS:** ETC, MARTIN; **SPEAKERS:** D&B
Inspired Operations

Now that the facility is effectively complete and in daily operation, creativity and progressive thinking haven’t ceased. To ensure good fiscal and environmental stewardship, Calvary uses four different computerized maintenance software programs. Express Request and Express Maintenance from Express Technology Inc. of Fairhope, Alabama, work in concert to report maintenance problems, purchase equipment and supplies, and produce work orders. Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based Johnson Controls Inc.’s Metasys system programs the A/C in all areas for maximum efficiency, and a system from Intelligent Lighting Controls Inc. of Minneapolis, Minnesota, runs all lights on a pre-programmed schedule.

When it comes to building, many churches question whether the money could be put to a more worthy cause. In Calvary Chapel’s case, as in any ministry’s, there is nothing more worthy than finding better ways to serve man and educate the Christian leaders of tomorrow.

“This has never been about a building, it’s always been about relationships, changing lives, and reaching others for Christ,” says Davis. “It is our responsibility to make disciples, and to challenge and equip others to complete the work He has begun.”

Rachel Allen is a freelance writer and marketing consultant. She can be reached at racheld_allen@yahoo.com.