

Canaan 25th Anniversary Booklet Submission

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I looked out the small window of the Southwest plane, holding back the tears in my eyes. Memories of the good-bye party my friends threw for me filled my mind. It was only an hour, but I already missed them. I didn't want to leave my friends and the church I grew up in, but my family had just moved down to San Diego and college summer school was starting the next Monday. Those first few weeks after the move was difficult for me, but God sustained me.

Eight years later, those same feelings of sadness filled my heart as I slammed down the large door to the U-haul and drove out of LA for the Bay Area. The 6 hour drive was filled with memories of the good times I'd experienced. It was hard leaving what I had grown to love: the people, the church, the place I called home. And yet it was a different feeling knowing that I was going back to the church I grew up in. I was going back to the church my dad started. I was anxious and nervous about the pressures and challenges I would face, yet excited and optimistic about what God was going to do to and through me.

It's been almost a month since I moved back to the Bay Area and while Canaan certainly is different from what I remember, there are still many similarities. I see people who are dedicated to growth in all aspects of their lives. I see leaders who want to see the church expand and reach the surrounding neighborhood. I see a church sending people to the mission field. I see community being formed. I see lives being changed. I see God moving.

As I walk around the church campus, memories of my childhood fill my mind. Days of the "Meatball Club" bring smiles to my face. I remember wearing a scratchy suit and holding a small pillow with a



ring sewn on it as I prepared to walk down the aisle as a ring bearer. I remember hiding in little cupboards in the foyer of the old Sanctuary waiting for my parents to finish their meeting. I remember running around the high brush pretending to be G.I. Joe members with my best friend, Basil, on Wednesday nights as my parents were in prayer meeting. I see the children choir singing a song and I am reminded of my own days in the choir performing "The Enchanted Journey" and other Psalty and Colby musicals. This triggers memories of the youth group days of Music Trips to Oregon, Seattle, and Vancouver or Los Angeles and San Diego. Nights of "lock-ins" and other youth group activities such as graduation banquets all are memories that I will continue to remember whenever I think of Canaan.

It is exciting to be back at the church I grew up in. I know that God has something special planned for our church and I am glad that I can be a part of this ride. Let's look forward to the future with expectation of bigger and greater things knowing that God has wonderful things planned for us!