In the fall of 1970 a lone woman walked the cornrows near her home outside of Guymon, passionately crying out to God with a prayer birthed from years of struggle and longing.

“Lord,” she pleaded, “We need a church here in Guymon that will teach people how to be strong in faith. A church that teaches the same message that helped me believe for my healing years ago when I was on my deathbed. Father, send us a pastor who loves to study your word and one who will spend time in prayer.”

Day after day, week after week that same prayer echoed through the portals of heaven. Outwardly there seemed to be no response, but Vancey Elliott was a great woman of prayer who was stubborn and persistent in the spirit, and wouldn’t give up. (Picture of Vancey)

Little did she know that at the exact time she started bombarding heaven with her request, God had begun preparing someone to send. A hundred miles away, hidden on a secluded ranch, twenty miles north of Pampa, Texas, God had a man. (Picture of Pampa ranch) He seemed to be just an ordinary cowboy. (Picture of Charlie as a cowboy) In the eyes of man, there probably couldn’t have been a more unlikely candidate. Here was a cowboy who would rather ride the range than go to town; a man who loved being around his horses more than people. How could this man be the one God had chosen to become a pastor? However, God does choose the foolish things of this world to confound the mighty! His ways are always higher than our ways, and His thoughts higher than ours. To the human mind it may have appeared to be absurd, but God had a plan!

Charles Mendenhall had been raised in a Pastor’s home. His father, Roscoe Mendenhall pastored Friends churches in Kansas and Missouri. (Picture of Roscoe and Pauline) As a young man, Charles had become disillusioned with the ministry, so he had set his sights on becoming a cowboy and someday running a ranch. During high school and two years of college, Charlie attended Friends Bible Academy and Friends Bible College at Haviland, Kansas. (Picture of Friends Bible College) While he was there he met and later married one of his classmates, Margaret Paris. (My senior picture)

In the fall of 1965, Charles saw what he thought was his life’s dream come to pass. He, Margaret, and eighteen month old Quentin, had the privilege of moving to a large 19-section ranch, twenty miles north of Pampa, Texas. (Picture of ranch) There, as ranch manager, for the next five years Charlie put his heart and soul into ranch work, little suspecting what was going on in the plans and purposes of God.

Suddenly, in 1970, the ranch owner announced he was going to sell the ranch and because he owned another ranch twenty miles south of Perryton, Texas, he offered Charlie the position of manager of that ranch. Brokenhearted to have to leave the ranch he had developed into a showplace, he reluctantly moved his family to Perryton. (Picture of Perryton ranch) Unknown to him, he was taking what was to be the first step into God’s ultimate plan.

The little family, now expanded to three children, (family picture of when kids were small) had scarcely gotten settled into their new location, when there came a knock at the door. The neighbors from the adjoining ranch – who incidentally were Full Gospel – came to pay a visit. (Picture of Donald and Vivian) Over the next three years this
couple played an important role in God’s plan for the Mendenhalls. Subtly, through the influence of this relationship, walls and longstanding barriers they had against the Baptism in the Spirit and especially speaking in tongues, were broken down.

Since they had moved to Texas five years before, Charles and Margaret had been faithful and very active in a Nazarene Church in Pampa, but on Easter Sunday night in 1973 the next phase of God’s plan was unveiled. In the bedroom of their ranch home, lying beside her sleeping husband, Margaret had a supernatural visitation from Jesus. That night she was gloriously baptized in the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues. One year later, just before Easter, Charlie recommitted his life to the Lord, and shortly thereafter at a Full Gospel Business Men’s meeting in Spearman, Texas, he also received the Baptism in the Spirit. God’s divine trap had been laid. The first phase was complete and Vancey prayed on!!!

For the remainder of that year Charlie devoured the Word of God every free moment he had. As a result, he started feeling the fires of the Holy Spirit burning in his bones. Finally, in 1975, Charles and Margaret realized the call to the ministry was too strong to be ignored any longer. They loaded up their furniture, their kids, and their cat, Cocoa, waved goodbye to ranch life and drove headlong into a new life.

They settled in Bixby, Oklahoma, a suburb of Tulsa, and there the little family of confirmed country folks tried to blend into the big city as Charles attended Rhema Bible Training Center, founded by Kenneth Hagin. (Picture of house and family in Bixby) During those next ten months, Charlie took some odd jobs here and there while Margaret worked as a receptionist for Cameron Corporation. Even though money was scarce, God met their every need. Never did their bills go unpaid, and there never was a lack of food. Life was truly an adventure of faith.

As soon as Charles graduated from Rhema, they found themselves once again back in the panhandle of Texas. This time they were asked to help in the Full Gospel Church in Perryton. The next year proved to be their wilderness, or testing time. Half way through that year, they moved from the employment of the Full Gospel Church into a house south of Perryton, only one mile from the original ranch that they had left just over a year before. (picture of Elrick Wilson’s house) During that season of their training they had no guarantee of an income from anywhere or from anyone, but again God met their needs. Charlie held a few bible studies around, but God had instructed him to study the bible for six hours a day, so he was obedient.

While waiting for God’s plan to develop in their lives, occasionally Charles and Margaret had the opportunity to hold some weeklong seminars in various churches. During one such meeting in the Collinsville Friends Church, just north of Tulsa, God spoke a word of prophecy given to them by Billye Brim. (Picture of Billye Brim)

God said, “You will go to a place of unplowed ground. There you will plow and plant the seeds of God’s word. Don’t be afraid of stony faces or be moved by them, for God will be doing a work in their hearts that may not show on their faces. Someday, you will stand before the Master and say, ‘Master, here is the fruit from the unplowed ground.’ Then the Master will look at you and say, ‘Well done thou good and faithful servant.’”

Charlie and Margaret went back to Perryton asking, “Where in the world is that unplowed ground that God was talking about?”
They knew they were going to have to move out of the house before the summer was over where they had been, but they had no idea where they were to go. They fervently sought God.

One evening, while Margaret was getting ready to leave for a Full Gospel Businessmen’s Meeting in Guymon, Oklahoma, where Charlie was to speak, she heard a still small voice whisper unmistakably, “Soon you will be living in Guymon.”

Because she was not absolutely certain that the voice she had heard was God, Margaret hid that tidbit of information away in her heart and pondered it for several weeks. Over those next few weeks, when she witnessed doors starting to open toward a move to Guymon, she hesitantly shared what she had heard with Charlie. The following Sunday afternoon, they decided to make a test run to Guymon. As they arrived in town – passing on their way a certain cornfield on the outskirts of Guymon – the peace of God flooded their hearts, and for the first time they felt that they had come home.

After some supernatural manipulations by a few of God’s choice angels, and a generous amount of favor by the Holy Spirit, a financial miracle occurred making it possible for them to purchase a house. (Picture of house 123 Paul Ave.) Once again they loaded up their furniture, their kids, and by this time a bunch of cats – Cocoa had (picture of cat) multiplied many times over and now she had her whole family with her – they set out for Guymon. They didn’t know exactly why they were going; they just knew they were supposed to be in Guymon.

The first Wednesday night after they were settled, they started a bible study in their home. Three people showed up. After a month, the bible study was changed to Thursday nights, and it began to grow. One couple that slipped into the bible study was none other than Delmer and Vancey Elliott. After two months of a steadily growing bible study it was finally decided that it should become a church. The first Sunday of November 1977, Victory Center held its first service as a bonafide church and Victory Center was born! That first service may have been insignificant to some but not to one person present. To Vancey it meant that seven years of prayers had been answered! Amazingly enough, from the first day that she began to pray, her prayer had been heard. That was the day when God reached down, apprehended a cowboy and began to turn him into a preacher.

November 1977, something new and exciting had been birthed, and every week excitement grew as Victory Center met in the little building across from the south Pizza Hut on highway 54 in what used to be a filling station. (Picture of first building) From the very beginning, God had Victory Center’s vital parts in place. Michael McClenagan, a gift of music from God, (Picture of Michael) became the first praise and worship leader and Delmer and Vancey Elliott assumed the position of Children’s Church directors—a position they were faithful to fulfill for over nineteen years.

The first couple that received the baptism in the Spirit was Ronnie and Mary Durman who pastored Shekianiah Fellowship in Homer, Alaska for many years. (Picture of Ronnie and Mary) Now Mary resides in Heaven and Ronnie lives in Austin, Texas. The first special speaker to come minister at Victory Center was none other than Billye Brim, (Picture of Billye) who had one year before prophesied about the unplowed ground—now she came to visit it.

Soon the little remodeled filling station across from the Pizza Hut was too little. It could hold only about sixty people comfortably, so it became evident that if Victory
Center was going to continue to grow, a bigger building was needed. Nothing seemed available except an old flower shop, which had been vacant for several years; it had become a playground for all the homeless cats and mice in the neighborhood. (Picture of second building)

But eyes of faith see things that are not revealed to the senses. The men and women of Victory Center looked beyond the mice, the dirt, and the debris, and saw a sanctuary. Day and night, men and women of faith worked and sweated until a beautiful meeting place was created. Victory Center had been in existence for only a little over a year, and they were now in their second building with the capacity to seat 200 people.

By this time, Sunday school had been added and Victory Center continued to grow. After two years of steady growth, it once again became evident that if the vision God had given was to be carried out, a bigger building was needed. Again, nothing seemed to be available.

While Margaret was praying one day, God spoke to her and said, “Victory Center is the heart of Guymon!” A few days later she heard God say, “I have a building that man has prepared for another purpose, but I have prepared it as a place to house my ministry.”

Not long afterward, Pastor Charlie came up with the harebrained idea of looking at the Chevrolet dealership building (picture of present building) that had just recently gone on the market as a possible location for Victory Center. Margaret balked at the idea, however, because she had visions of their next building looking like a real church, not a converted car shop. However, after being persuaded to at least look at the building, she remembered the two messages the Lord had given her. This building was definitely built for other purposes than that of a church building – the look and the greasy smell was evidence of that – and of all things, it was located almost in the very heart of Guymon. Also it was laid out in such a manner that it would take very little rearranging to make it fit Victory Center’s needs.

When the decision was made to purchase the Chevrolet building a $43,000 down payment was required against the purchase price of $150,000. Raising that kind of money seemed like a giant task, but within only a few months, the $43,000 was raised and the remodeling began. It took a lot of hard work and many hours of donated labor before the former Chevrolet body shop was converted into God’s “Spirit, Soul, and Body Shop!” The approximate $100,000 that was needed to remodel, spruce up cosmetically, and furnish the new facilities was miraculously provided, and Victory Center finally owned a home. God continued to prosper the project and the $150,000 indebtedness to purchase the building was paid off several months early.

As Victory Center continued to grow, a project came available in the fall of 1983 that had been started a few years before by some local businessmen and ministries. It was a plan to build a low-power Christian TV station to broadcast from Guymon into the surrounding areas. Much of the preliminary paper work had already been done and a license had been obtained but it had never progressed any farther than that. However, time was running out. A tower had to be erected and a signal on the air by May of 1984 or the license would be withdrawn. If Victory Center took on the project, the question was: could they make the deadline? With only a little over eight months to go, could they raise the $150,000 that it would take to complete the job? Not only could they do it, but should they do it?
Because a television ministry had always been part of Victory Center’s vision, the decision was made to go ahead. Days of great struggle and intercession lay ahead. Step by step, God faithfully led, as plans to finance and erect a tower began to unfold. In May of 1984, the impossibility that there could ever be a 24-hour Christian TV station became a possibility as the first Christian television signal pierced the airways over Guymon, and CCTV became a reality. Channel 53 was on the air! A year later Victory Center purchased their own television cameras and production equipment in order to televise their weekly church services. Six years later the television ministry expanded to include a station located at Bryan’s Corner, with the intention of broadcasting into the Perryton and Liberal areas. Brad Mendenhall served as a skillful broadcasting manager for over nine years, and during that time the name CCTV was changed to Victory Broadcasting Network. (Write update on the television ministry) is continuing under the capable hands of Mik Simpson and Emmanuel Deherrerra.

Now the years have come and gone and several churches have been birthed from the womb of Victory Center, including Shekiniah Fellowship planted in Homer Alaska, pastored for many years by Ronnie and Mary Durman, and in 1998 Brad and Tamy Mendenhall were sent out from Victory Center to pioneer World Harvest Church in Enid, Oklahoma. They now have a dynamic, flourishing congregation, and a vigorous youth program there. (Picture of Brad and Tamy and World Harvest)

Victory Center has now expanded to accommodate a children’s department, directed by the creative and capable hands of Toni Easterwood and Debbie Walker, (pictures of Debbie and Toni) who oversee the older division, and for about 18 years Debbie Brown (Picture of Debbie Brown) gave loving guidance to the younger children’s ministry. She retired just this year and now, (information about who leads little children’s church) In 2001, Royal Rangers and Missionettes were added to our children’s department. They meet on Wednesday nights and are presently being led by Vincent Leaming. That ministry has exploded in growth with up to ninety children in attendance.

Currently, Emmanuel DeHerrera directs of our youth department, and is using his expertise to build a One Eighty youth outreach in the building located just behind Victory Center Church. This building was purchased in ? and was renovated to include a well-designed game room, an out-of-the-ordinary meeting area, and of course a popular, functioning snack bar, decorated in early youth, 2012 style! (pictures of 180 building inside and out)

In January 2010, Kim and Eugene Like joined the Victory Center’s staff to help with administration and head up the Life Group arm of the church. (Picture of Like family)

Over the past 35 years, Pastor Charlie has not only carried Victory Center’s arm into several foreign countries, by ministering in Kenya, Nigeria, Mexico, Russia, Nicaragua, Belize and Guatemala, but Victory Center has been instrumental in supporting missionaries Rex and Wilma Parnell who minister in Belize, Mexico, Africa and other parts of the world; Frank Connors in Guatemala, and Meshack Ominde from Nairobi, Kenya. We also support Jacob Sangster in Haiti with Corluv ministries and Kelsey McMurray who travels with YWAM ministering throughout the world. (Pictures of any of these missionaries)

In 1999, Victory Center was able to purchase 232 acres of land, north of Guymon on highway 64, with the prospects of building new facilities there. However, in 2010 ? 50
acres came available north of the present Wal-Mart building. We were able to purchase it for $280,000 and in January of this year paid off the entire amount.

So Victory Center this is your life thus far. Looking back 35 years to your small beginning, through all of your struggles and growth, you have come a long way! Looking ahead, however, to the vision that lies beyond, Victory Center you have only just begun. In the days to come, you must reach more of Guymon for Jesus. You must win more people to the Lord in order to bring in the last great harvest. You must set more captives free through the Word of God and by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You must train more ministers for God’s use in His end-time army, and you must keep on prospering, so that you can continue to extend your hands to the poor and needy that come your way.

Yes, Victory Center you have done a lot, but your best days are yet to come!

Here is a poem, simply entitled “Victory Center!” written by a former member that sums up thirty-five years of ministry in poetic form.

**VICTORY CENTER**  
By Nickie Stipe

Thirty-five years ago God placed His hand,  
Upon a woman and a man,  
And said, “It’s time that you began…”  
And sent them on to Guymon

And so they came and saw the need,  
The vision started to proceed,  
They plowed and started sowing seeds  
Of faith here in Guymon.

And with exceeding love and care,  
Conceived by God and grown by prayer,  
They birthed the vision God put there…  
The child was Victory Center.

Times were hard, but undeterred,  
She grew on love and on the Word,  
And others came when they had heard  
The truth at Victory Center.

And still she grew, and still more came,  
The bruised and angry, sick and lame,  
They felt the power of Jesus’ name  
And stayed at Victory Center.

And more were healed and more set free,  
But still so many had yet to be,  
So they put the Word out by TV…
The tower of Victory Center.

She conquered trials and passed the tests,
And kept proclaiming Jesus’ best,
And many, many more were blessed
By the vision of Victory Center.

For thirty-five years, through love and pain,
Of small setbacks but larger gains,
She’s stood, and stands, and still proclaims
The Word at Victory Center

And still by faith she’s pressing in,
She cannot fail, she will remain,
She’ll fight and fight and she will win…
A conqueror, Victory Center.

She’ll keep her hands down to the plough,
Refusing to release it now,
For now she nears her finest hour,
Yet, as Victory Center.

For many more years she will stand,
Until she’s done all God has planned,
And gone in and possessed the land,
Given to Victory Center.

And all of us, her faithful parts,
Rejoice with her now in our hearts,
And we’ll stand firm and not depart,
From the vision of Victory Center.

Though she’s been through flood and through the fire,
She still stands high, and will stand higher,
For she speaks a truth that will not die,
The church of Victory Center.