



SADDLEBACK CHURCH

When Dr. Rick and Kay Warren first arrived in the Saddleback Valley in December 1979, they could fit their possessions in the back of a U-haul trailer.

Fresh out of seminary, the young pastor and his bride dreamed of starting a church that would be “a place where the hurting, the depressed and the confused can find love, acceptance, help, hope, forgiveness and encouragement.”

With many good Bible-teaching churches already in Southern California, Warren turned his attention to people who didn't attend church regularly. Two weeks after he and Mrs. Warren arrived in the Saddleback Valley, they began a small Bible study, meeting with one other family in the Warrens' small condominium.



On Easter 1980, Saddleback Valley Community Church held its first public service, and 205 people, most of whom had never been to church, showed up. Today, the church is one of the biggest in the country, and its influence is felt around the world.

Saddleback celebrated its 25th anniversary on April 17, 2005 with a crowd of 30,000 people at Angel Stadium in Anaheim, Calif. At the service, Warren launched his P E A C E Plan to slay the global giants of spiritual emptiness, self-centered leadership, extreme poverty, pandemic disease and illiteracy/education through their initiative to Promote reconciliation, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick and Educate the next generation.

Also in 2005, Saddleback began its annual Global Summit on AIDS & The Church. In 2007, Outreach magazine ranked Saddleback as the fourth-biggest church in the United States, with 22,000 in weekly attendance. The church has more than 300 ministries serving the church and community. One in nine people in the area call Saddleback their church home.

Today, the church has more than 3,600 small groups – at least one in every city in Southern California – and they meet as far as 100 miles away from the main campus, which is located in Lake Forest, Calif. About 30,000 people – more than attend weekend services – meet in the small groups each week.

Warren says the church offers more than 20 different worship styles at its campus on weekends but everyone hears the same sermon. There are six services – two on Saturday and four on Sunday.