



## Stoking The Flames

By Jay Underwood

*Taken from Jay's message at the 2017 CARBC Christian Workers Retreat*

Some people define romance as what people do to make their marriage a pleasant experience. Others believe romance is so important to marriage that if romance is missing, the marriage is dead.

A couple's spiritual life is vital to romance. Are both you and your spouse saved? Are both you and your spouse faithful in maintaining the habits of growing in Christ, such as Bible reading, praying, and serving?

Sin is the greatest problem that steals romance. The apostle Paul viewed himself as the chief, or foremost, of all sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). Jeremiah 17:9 teaches us that our own hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. Stop and consider that all your sin is, first and foremost, against God (see Psalm 51:4). If we first take the planks out of our own eyes (Matthew 7:4, 5) and accept our responsibility as the chief of sinners in our marriage, our spouse is no longer our biggest problem; we are. And *that* can be fixed by the grace and mercy of Christ!

My suggestion? Go on a date with your spouse to talk through these thoughts. Share what you find romantic with each other, and learn from those answers. The key is for each spouse to understand what their partner finds to be romantic and then put that into practice. Commit before God and each other specific actions you will take to start maintaining romance in your marriage.

Many times, as a husband or a wife sets out to love their spouse in an unselfish way, they themselves receive blessing. Make no mistake, any blessing you receive is from the Lord (James 1:17). If all husbands and wives were always seeking to do what is best for their spouse from a godly, Biblical perspective, think of how marriages would grow, be blessed by God, and give glory to God!

### Churches Seeking a Pastor:

First Baptist, San Dimas; First Baptist, Ducor; First Baptist, Petaluma; Grace Baptist, Paso Robles; Community Baptist, Red Bluff; First Baptist, Wilmington.



## What God Did at VBS

As Menifee Hills Bible Church prepared for VBS this summer, we trusted God to bring about the right team. In May, we brought on a summer intern with a desire to direct the VBS program. New in faith and actively growing spiritually, she was excited to see God at work. A week prior to VBS, we had a junior high group come from Arizona who were willing to go door-to-door, inviting kids to VBS. Then a group of VBS helpers came from Cornerstone Church of Hemet to complete our team. God provided.

Close to 60 kids attended, and 11 kids accepted the Lord. God had a plan. The intern watched God provide in more ways than expected. Her heart for serving the Lord is on fire. The church watched little lives receive an eternal gift. A junior high group from Arizona learned to serve in a way that brought others to the Lord. And two churches came together, going one direction for one eternal purpose. God provided. He continues to save the next generation of believers. As bystanders, we stood in awe of God's hand in action.

By Troy Ulmer



## Stronger Church Conference

Redding, CA October 20–21, 2017

“Stronger.” This word describes what many want their marriages, other relationships, and businesses to be. It's also how Christians want our relationship with God and our local church to be. Stronger.

The CARBC, in conjunction with the GARBC, is hosting the Stronger Church Conference on Oct. 20 and 21 at Shasta Bible College in Redding. The Stronger Church Conference includes three tracks, or zones, that attendees can choose to participate in. The first track offers instruction on a church's spiritual development; it is named the “Work Out” track. The second track, “Max Out,” specializes in church revitalization, while the third track, “Stretch Out,” focuses on multiplying strong churches through church planting. Speakers on these topics include John and Daria Greening, Clare Jewell, and David Gunn.

Registration is online at <https://learn.garbc.org/strongerchurch/>. For questions and more information, call Josh Carpenter at 530-518-1008. We hope to become stronger with you as our churches pursue Christ together.

## Ministry Perspectives:

## Why Vacation Bible School?

by Sharon Allen

What activity could possibly motivate 20+ reasonably sane adults, 15+ youth ages 12 to 18, and 40+ children and preschoolers to spend five consecutive evenings in heat ranging from 104 to 108 degrees? I'll give some hints. It wasn't a sports program, though lots of games were played, or a concert, though music was a large part of the event. Neither was it a science fair, though some eye-popping science experiments were demonstrated. Give up?

It was the annual summer event that our kids look forward to with tiptoe anticipation—Vacation Bible School. Now, hear me out before you toss aside this great tool for your “Getting the Word Out belt.” Many churches think VBS is archaic. I don't. In fact, I'm as eager as the kids for summer to come around so we can celebrate Jesus together in this shared experience.

Our kids are still singing the songs from VBS two years ago. Some of our Sunday School teachers incorporate the music in their Sunday lesson plans throughout the year. In fact (now don't let this get around to prospective VBS workers), we have identified potential teachers for other programs as they worked with our kids in VBS.

I never attended VBS as a child. So it is always a surprise to me when I hear how many adults heard about Jesus for the first time at a VBS. That's why I get so pumped when I see our families inviting neighbor kids who have never heard the name Jesus used in any way but as a curse word.

This year a church member invited a neighboring family with three little girls. Because of prior commitments, the member could not bring the girls on two of the nights. The girls were so upset about missing the fun that their mother decided to bring them to VBS herself. She stayed for much of the program to observe. Only God knows the end of this story. Last year a family joined our church as a result of VBS. This year another family who has been attending sporadically is now attending on a regular basis. Does VBS make a difference in the life of a church? My answer is an emphatic yes!

See **VBS** cont.



## Unity Through Community

By Charlie Eldred

Combine 10 young people, 32 teens, 21 staff members, and one picturesque setting. Divide into seven cabins and two teams. Add a large dose of healthy, friendly competition. Season heavily with generous helpings of God's Word, and marinate for one week.

The result? Pilot Lake's CARBC summer camp!

Campers from six churches attended Pilot Lake Wilderness Camp this year, with the goal to achieve closer fellowship with one another. Pastor Mark Reeves (Orchard Avenue, Vacaville) challenged the teens each night on the theme "Living at the Speed of Light," while Dr. Roger McCarty, Pastor Daniel Sternquist, and Silas Naklick (First Baptist Community Church, Monte Sereno) spoke at morning sessions on the theme of unity and community. Pastor Ken Doan (Orchard Avenue, Vacaville) spoke several times daily to the junior campers, challenging them with God's Word.

Our young people enjoyed the scenic setting, many fun games, skits, good food, camaraderie, and times of worshipful singing led by teens and adults alike. Special thanks to Pastor Ken Campbell (Faith Baptist, Stockton) for helping with the music for both groups of campers. At least four salvation decisions were made, several received assurance of their salvation, and many more were challenged to live for the Lord when they left the mountain and returned home.

Next year's program is set for July 2-7. Campers left this summer encouraged to return next summer with a friend. Make plans *now* to send campers and staff next year! Camp is a vital ministry available to our churches; let's make good use of this effective opportunity!



## Easter Miracle cont.

John and Claudine's contacts with their dialysis family go on as they continue to visit those still in dialysis.

When confusion is our companion, God urges us to wait patiently for His story to develop. When despair holds us ransom, God remains firmly in control. We have no reason to fear; God remains by our side.

God is always near. Always.

## VBS cont.

At our VBS we don't sit around tables dryly reading from resource material, playing musical chairs, and doing a few stale crafts. We engage our kids in interactive Bible stories. We shoot wadded up sheets of paper from leaf blowers. We ask hard questions about daily living and let kids discuss their answers with trained adult leaders. The kids learn how the Bible is more than a big book. It has answers to the questions they are afraid or didn't know how to ask. Is it messy? Yes. Does it take an investment of resources—time, money, and people? Yes. Is it worth it? Yes! Yes! Yes!

*Sharon Allen currently serves in children's ministry at Orchard Avenue Baptist, Vacaville.*

## CARBC Calendar

Central Ladies Retreat, Oct. 19-21

Stronger Church Conference, Shasta Bible College, Redding, Oct. 20-21

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Shasta Bible College, Redding, California  
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# CARBC messenger

Serving churches in California, Nevada, and Southern Oregon

Edition 3 of 2017

## The Easter Miracle

By John Murray

*"When confusion is my companion and despair holds me for ransom  
I will feel no fear. I know that you are near."*

—For King and Country "Shoulders"

Claudine and John Ayers, members of Lighthouse Baptist Church of Brentwood, Calif., experienced a year of confusion and despair. Doctors diagnosed Claudine with the same kidney issues that had claimed her father a decade earlier. Friends and family were tested as organ donors, but no one qualified. In Claudine's final stages of kidney failure, hope diminished.

Meanwhile, Katie Garro Gomez (pictured below), also a member of Lighthouse Baptist, tested as a donor, but was ineligible because of substance abuse. Katie had been saved four years earlier while in a recovery program, although she continued to struggle at times.

Just hours before Easter 2017, Katie was involved in a minor traffic accident. Everyone easily walked away from the fender bender. As Katie moved toward a curb, though, a speeding car struck and fatally injured Katie. She passed away the day before Easter.

This would be two sad Easter stories for the same small church, except for the organ donor card Katie carried. Doctors harvested several organs from Katie, including the perfect-match kidney that Claudine received shortly afterward. The kidney began functioning immediately, and Claudine recovered well.

While this story appears to simply share the trading of lives, Katie's for Claudine's, that is only the beginning. During Claudine's treatment, she and John met many others struggling with death—what they call their dialysis family. Claudine and John shared God's mercy, grace, and love, bringing hope to those in similar straits. Claudine discovered a whole new mission field through her illness. God's plan for her and John's ministry was not short-lived though.

See **Easter Miracle** cont.

