



Your Presence Matters

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

Your presence matters in your family. But it's more than physical presence; there's a heart attitude. In Malachi, Israel has the temple built and their worship is lackadaisical. What does the Lord say in Malachi 1:10? To paraphrase, "Just lock the doors if you can't worship Me with your whole heart. You're there physically, but you're not there with your heart."

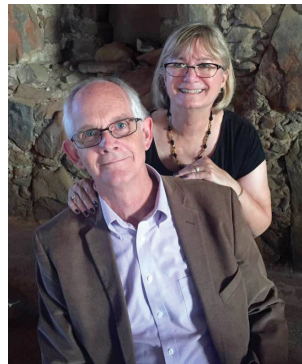
Your presence does matter. Be tender like a nursing mother (1 Thess. 2:7). Be like a disciplining father (1 Thess. 2:11). But if you only discipline and don't show love and affection, you're going to fail.

I love my people. I love the Word of God. My people understand that when I say something, they know I say it with all my heart. I met with two parents from my church; after listening to them, I told them, "Stop treating your children like employees; treat them like your children." The husband dropped his head and began to weep. Then he said to me, "I would not take that kind of thing from anyone but you, because I know you mean it from your heart and you love me."

Here are a few suggestions:

1. *Understand that your family is as important as your congregation.* This is so important; it's one of the qualifications for pastoring a church (1 Tim. 3:4-5). If we're not effective in our families, we're not going to be effective in our churches. Let your church family know that your own family is important to you.
2. *How you live before your family will affect your ministry.* If you have little kids at home, you know they don't keep secrets. If you live two different lives, eventually it will show.
3. *As you set time for your church family, also set time for your family.* We like having fellowship at church, plan for fellowship times, and encourage people to attend. What about your family? Make sure that time with them is quality time. Each one of my kids is unique, and I need to spend time with each of them in a unique way.
4. *Live before your family like you do before your church family.* It's a consistent life.
5. *Be approachable, both at home and at church.* Let people be able to share with you.

By Pete Austel



Southern California Retreat

By Bruce McLain

Beautiful Dana Point was the setting for the annual retreat for Christian workers in Southern California on Sept. 18-20. The first evening began with a potluck dinner, followed by worship and a challenging and encouraging video. Tuesday was relaxing, with morning fellowship and then lunch together at a local restaurant. After an afternoon of free time, we were blessed by another wonderful time of worship and a second timely video. On Wednesday morning we gathered for sharing and praying together before heading home. This was the first time Margie and I have been able to attend this retreat, and we were blessed by the fellowship with our coworkers in Southern California. We are thankful for the leadership that Robin and Diane Montgomery have given to this ministry for many years.



16th Anniversary of Sovereign Grace Baptist

On Sunday, Aug. 20, 2017, Sovereign Grace Baptist Church in Modesto, Calif., celebrated its 16th anniversary. The day started with a brief history of how the church began on Pastor William Heinrich's front lawn. Next Pastor Heinrich, who "planted" the church, spoke on "The House of God," pointing out that the church today is where God meets with His people to be worshiped and enjoyed.

At the end of the service, Pastor Johnnie Sloan brought forward all who had signed the church charter in 2001. Then he invited those who had asked to join the church that Sunday to join them, and the church voted unanimously to accept them. The charter members were the first to give the new members the right hand of fellowship.

After the service a potluck was held in the social hall, with every seat filled. God's decree for Sovereign Grace Baptist Church is providently prospering by His sovereign grace.



Ministry Perspectives:

Preparing For Death

by Marcie Mendenhall

I've been watching my mom, Dee Wilcox, die. She was recently diagnosed with PSP (progressive supranuclear palsy), and daily, steadily she declines. But the truth is, I've been watching her die my entire life. In a recent effort to express empathy and create solidarity, I told her everyone suffers from PD (progressive death). Each day that passes inches us closer to the grave.

So I've been watching her. I want to learn whatever I can about how it looks for a woman who loves Jesus to face her own death. What might we shift toward as disease and death breathe down our necks? I asked her a series of questions hoping to glean some answers. What surprised me the most was my lack of surprise as she slowly, tearfully responded. Her answers were the same that she would have given if I had asked them 10, 20, or even 30 years ago! I was a little disappointed. Where were the godly keys of life that I had hoped to take from her hand? Where was the fresh insight, the bombshell of realization that she embraced in the middle of her diagnosis?

Then I realized the slightly unromantic truth: there is no earth-shaking shift in her mindset and purpose as she ages and tiptoes toward the grave. And do you know why? Because she was already living like she was dying 40 years ago! Let me summarize a few of the questions and responses:

- What do you regret? "I was never able to go to the foreign mission field and share the gospel there."
- What are you glad you focused on? "Raising my family. Telling them about Jesus. Teaching other children about Jesus, the gospel, and missions."
- What is hard about your disease? "Not being able to serve at church and teach about Jesus."
- What is most important in life? "Accepting Christ as your Savior."
- What do you want people to remember when you're gone? "That I loved Jesus, that I loved my husband and family."

See Preparing cont.



Stronger Conference

By Jay Underwood

On Oct. 20–21, the northern churches of the CARBC were blessed by the Stronger Church Conference, a ministry of Regular Baptist Press. Attendees were encouraged to participate in one of three tracks designed to promote stronger churches: Church Discipleship—

Maturing Stronger Churches, Church Revitalization—Maximizing Stronger Churches, and Church Planting—Multiplying Stronger Churches. Since everyone was encouraged to stick with one track,

multiple leaders from several churches fanned out, and everyone covered a separate track. Materials for all three tracks were made available to take home with the sincere offer from conference leaders that they would be more than willing to help through calls or email. I chose the Church Revitalization track, which was tailored toward churches that feel like some of the vitality of ministry has been diminished or that may be in a season of complacency. Over four sessions, John and Daria Greening walked us through how to evaluate our own church and ministry, assess its assets, motivate the team, and create a plan. John Greening pointed to the Epistle writers, who both positively and negatively evaluated the different churches they were writing to. Add to this Jesus' assessment of the churches in Revelation 2–3, and it makes good sense that we would do the same within the contexts of our own ministries.

I found this conference to be of tremendous value for my ministry at First Baptist in Weaverville. I was very pleased both with the content of the material and with those teaching it, and I learned a lot. I am looking forward to walking my church's leaders through these materials. My wish would be to invite the Stronger Church folks back for more.



Preparing cont.

The thematic thread became clear. Her life was wrapped up in desire to spread the gospel and to love others. So, also, is her death. Much of her angst these days is that her limbs and her voice fail her in this pursuit. But her heart still beats for it.

She filled her days with things that had already begun to swallow up her death in victory long before she was diagnosed with this heartbreaking condition. God has been robbing the grave's curse and removing death's sting throughout my mom's life. Her focus on loving God and others weaves a consistent pattern of grace throughout her days. The gospel drives her in life and will be her literal saving grace in death.

May I indeed take heed to all she has taught me. Perhaps it's earth shaking after all.

Marcie Mendenhall attends First Baptist, Windsor. Dee Wilcox is the daughter of Pastor Maurice Wilcox (First Baptist, Windsor). She has actively served at Clear Lake Baptist Church, Lakeport.

Churches Seeking a Pastor:

Western Avenue Baptist, Brawley; First Baptist, Ducor; First Baptist, Petaluma; Community Baptist, Red Bluff; First Baptist, San Dimas; Deaf Baptist, San Jose; First Baptist, Wilmington.

Pastoral Changes:

Gary Barker to Grace Baptist, Paso Robles. First Baptist Church of Clayton Valley in Concord, Calif., ordained Andrew Sanders, their associate pastor of music and student ministries, on Nov. 4. Pastor Chris Oliveri oversaw a thorough examination process that began in 2016 and included several pastors.

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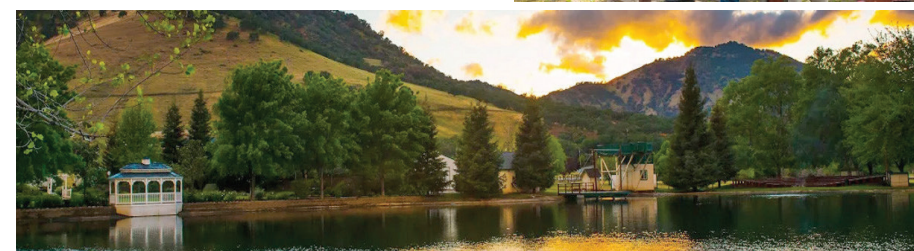
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2018 Christian Workers Retreat January 15-17 at Wonder Valley Ranch Resort

The 2018 Christian Workers Retreat will be held at Wonder Valley Ranch Resort and Conference Center in Sanger, Calif., about 40 minutes east of downtown Fresno off Highway 180 (6450 Elwood Road, Sanger). Cost per couple will be \$353, which includes five meals and two nights' lodging. Registration will be through Grace Baptist Church, Yuba City, Calif. Look for more details to be posted soon at www.carbc.org. The conference center's website is www.wondervalley.com.

Pastors, missionaries, Christian workers, and spouses of our association value the annual retreat. Skyrocketing costs for such events limit those on a tight budget. We ask that God may direct those who have the means to underwrite the retreat for our workers. The CARBC Council has established a special gifting fund enabling workers to attend. If God leads you, consider giving to help underwrite the fees for pastors and missionaries of the CARBC. Please send monies to CARBC, P.O. Box 2697, Santa Maria, CA 93457-2697 and designate the gift to the Retreat Fund for Pastors and Missionaries. Thank you for your kind consideration of this important ministry.



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