

Spotlight on Church Planting: Grover Beach

By Bruce McLain

In the early 1990s Baptist Church Planters missionary Gale Smith met with a group of CARBC pastors on the central coast of California and shared his vision for a church plant in Grover Beach. His goal was to establish a church with both English and Spanish services. The local pastors embraced the idea, and their churches began financially supporting the



new ministry. As Gale and Sharron Smith poured themselves into the work, they found that the real need was for a Hispanic ministry, which their time as missionaries in Chile had prepared them for.

What began as Shorelife Baptist Church is today Iglesia Bautista De La Fe Fundamental. The church

and has a full-time pastor, Noe Vasquez. Noe's family came to the United States from Mexico when he was 12 and settled in the San Diego area. After graduation from high school in 2003, he attended Instituto Práctico Ebenezer in Hermosillo, Sonora, Mexico. A year after graduation, he married his wife, Minerva. They immediately settled in San Quintin in Baja California, where he pastored a church. After six years in San Quintin, he accepted the call to become the pastor in Grover Beach in 2018. His goals include organizing and strengthening the church, supporting missionaries, and helping to establish churches in the United States and Mexico.

Over the years Iglesia Bautista De La Fe Fundamental has met in various locations and is now sharing a church facility in the heart of Grover Beach. In February, they held their first missions conference and launched Faith Promise giving. CARBC Representative Bruce McLain was one of the speakers.

He states, "This growing congregation of about fifty believers is a warm and gracious group of fellow believers and is committed to being involved in the Great Commission on the Central Coast and around the world."



A Five Year Report

By Bruce McLain

January 1. A time for reflection and goal setting. A time to make changes. Jan. 1, 2015. A time for a major change for Margie and me as we left the ministry at Pine Grove Baptist Church in Santa Maria and I assumed the role of CARBC representative. As I begin my sixth year as your representative, I want to report on my ministry.

I have driven over 100,000 miles and have made Sunday visits to 71 of our churches. I have counseled with pastors and church leaders about church health, finances, building programs, tax matters, family matters, and various other topics. I have met with several pastoral search committees. I have tried to encourage those who were discouraged. I have rejoiced with those who were rejoicing. I have tried to affirm those visionaries who shared their plans with me. My goal has been to be a pastor to our pastors and a trusted friend to our lay leaders.

In conjunction with the CARBC Council, the CARBC Benevolence Fund has been established to provide immediate help to churches and pastors with pressing needs. Over \$55,000 was given through this fund to Calvary Baptist Church in Paradise after the Camp Fire. The Council has also established the Church Revitalization Fund to give grants to churches that are working on a plan for revitalization and need funds for fulfilling that plan. Several of our churches have been blessed by these gifts as they pursue a new vision for their ministries.

Our 90th Anniversary celebration this year allowed us to look back on our rich heritage, which is our foundation for the future. I am burdened that the CARBC Council and I involve ourselves in prayerful, strategic planning in areas such as church planting and revitalization, leadership development, and financial stability.

I have been blessed by each church I have visited, each pastor whom I have met, and each person who is part of the CARBC family. This association of churches that has been so much a part of my life since I was a boy has given me the great privilege of serving it in this position of leadership. I am thankful for these first five years and look ahead with great anticipation to the next five years.

Christmas Fellowships

Christmas fellowships were held in December for pastors and wives and others in ministry. The Southern California group met at the Hometown Buffet in Santa Ana. The evening of warm fellowship was highlighted with a white elephant gift exchange. Another group on the central coast met at the Apple Farm in San Luis Obispo for lunch and browsing the decorated gift shop.

Ministry Perspectives:

Serving and Staples

By Laura Bowling

Tables laden with salads and desserts. Water balloons. A model rocket launch. A softball game. Tired kids. Exhausted adults. Conjuring up childhood memories of the annual church picnic requires little effort. The event was a staple in the church calendar, a marked transition from summer to fall.



Often my siblings and I headed to the picnic grounds early with my dad to help set up. Our main job was to help cover the picnic tables. We'd unroll the tablecloth paper, cut it, and staple it to the wood. At one point I was finally old enough to use the staple gun, not just help hold the roll of paper. I quickly learned how to refill it and unjam it. However, the church picnic taught me more than amazing staple gun skills. It taught me to serve.

Yet this wasn't a once-a-year lesson on serving. Being a part of a smaller church (and being a PK) meant bulletins needed to be folded and pews needed to be cleaned each week. Children's church needed to be taught. Awana verses needed to be listened to.

Learning to serve was part of our church's culture. By junior high, most of us were serving in some way. And then by the time high school came around, almost all of the teens were serving in multiple ways. We learned from the adults who unofficially disciplined us as we worked alongside them. They challenged us to give the devotion during Awana, to play a musical instrument on the worship team, or to teach children's church with a peer. We were welcomed and accepted as a vital part of ministry teams.

What I learned about service from the women who cleaned the kitchen after each potluck and from the men who tore down the tables and chairs are lessons I haven't forgotten. Lessons about sacrifice. About church family. About a willing heart.

We can't expect kids to suddenly start serving others when they turn 18. They are a part of the church now. If they are valued now for what they bring to the Body of Christ and are challenged to use their gifts and abilities to serve others, they'll be more likely to continue to serve as adults. So whether we're stapling paper to a picnic table or singing on a worship team, let's serve alongside each other.

Montgomerys Honored for 40 Years of Ministry



When a young man whom God had called to ministry finished his service in the U.S. Army, he returned to his home in Riverside, California, and began working with the youth and music ministries at Grace Baptist Church in Home Gardens. After the church had four pastors in two years, the people unanimously called him to be their pastor in July 1979. Four years

into that ministry, a merger was begun between his church and Crest Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside. As part of that merger plan, he would continue as pastor of the combined churches. On Nov. 9, 2019, Pastor Robin Montgomery and his wife, Diane, were honored for their 40 years of ministry in those two churches, as family, friends, church members, and fellow pastors and wives gathered at Crest Avenue Baptist Church for a time of grateful celebration.

Here are some of Robin's and Diane's reflections on ministry.

Diane: *You never know what life is going to throw at you. We have been through a lot of trials, a lot of illnesses, a lot of expectations from people, but it's been a very great joy to see people come to Christ, to see people grow in Christ. As people have come and gone, we have been able to see a second generation of children grow up in the church that are serving the Lord. That is very exciting. It is a great burden to have the care of people in your hands and to weep with them and let them get angry at you sometimes. I think our greatest joys are our three children and now our grandchildren. That our children are now all serving the Lord and love the Lord is probably the greatest joy in ministry. I am very grateful for what God has done in keeping us together and helping us to maintain that devotion to Christ amidst the trials and problems of ministry. I think my advice to a new pastor's wife is to just trust the Lord in everything, because it won't be what you expect. It will be joys, sorrows, hardships, as well as gratifying experiences.*

Robin: *There have been a lot of challenges over the past forty years. We have gone before the Lord and seen answers to prayers in many peoples' lives. We have watched people grow in the Lord. So we are very grateful to the Lord for the blessing of ministry He has given to us. One of the things that I have always been impressed with is from a pastor who encouraged me to go into the ministry, who said, "All you need to do is preach the Word." And so that has been my theme throughout our life of ministry here at the church, to just bring the Word to the people. We have been so blessed over the years with the way God has provided for us. God has blessed us abundantly more than we could ask or think.*

A lot has changed since 1979, but we are grateful for those whose faithfulness has not changed. Their commitment has deepened. Their steadfastness has been evident. We are thankful for the example of Robin and Diane Montgomery in the CARBC.

GARBC Conference Coming to Sacramento



It's time to make your reservations for the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches annual conference in Sacramento, June 29—July 2. The response from around the state has been very positive, so we are expecting good participation from the CARBC family. To promote and prepare for the GARBC conference, the 2020 CARBC Annual Meeting—normally held in April—

has been canceled. The CARBC will, however, have a short business meeting during the week in Sacramento.

The GARBC Conference is vital to our state association, because most of our CARBC churches also fellowship with the GARBC. We need to be aware of new ministries and meet the new GARBC leadership. Many of our CARBC pastors and churches have had minimal contact with the GARBC, and this is the best opportunity to learn firsthand what God is doing in our Regular Baptist fellowship. There are a multitude of conferences you can attend, but since it has been 17 years since the GARBC Conference was in California, please prayerfully consider making the 2020 GARBC Conference your top priority.

This conference can be a family affair. The conference includes programming and activities for children and teens as well as adults. It is also for the entire church family, with a program that will minister to all who attend. The conference is especially for us here in the West who need the fellowship of both our brothers and sisters on the West Coast and across the country.

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CARBC Christian Workers Retreat

By Chips Ross



The fellowship of believers has a sound and feel all to itself. Forty voices lifting to sing "Great is Thy Faithfulness" in unison is a powerful sound. One voice speaking with passion the Word of the faithful God is also powerful. But the sound of fellowship is unique. In groups of two, three, or four, Christian workers talk, laugh, nod, and share deeply of their lives with each other.

I conducted an informal survey of those gathered at the Christian Workers Retreat at Wonder Valley Resort, asking, "What was the most beneficial to you during this getaway time, January 20–22?" Though I asked different people from different churches and of different ages, the resounding answer was "fellowship":

"Being with my brothers and sisters in Christ."

"Seeing how others are facing similar trials."

"Enjoying how God is blessing my sister churches."

"Seeing the bigger picture of what God is doing in our fellowship."

"Meeting someone for the first time and quickly developing deep friendships."

Wonder Valley Retreat creates a distraction-free context that encourages conversations. Around the table, in the conference room, on the sidewalks and paths, Christian workers are sharing with each other. Those new to the retreat and/or the CARBC are quickly immersed into the fellowship.

Preaching and singing play a vital role in encouraging this fellowship. This year, the theme of "Our Faithful God"—as preached by Chris Hurton, Mark Reeves, Bruce McLain, and Ekkie Tepsupornchai (sounds like Tech Support Guy)—lifted eyes off of burdensome problems and onto a powerful, loving God. Music led by Randy Pollard and Christchanna Ross called to mind our great salvation in Christ. As our fellowship with Christ is strengthened, the fellowship of Christ's followers is also strengthened.

Christian workers come into the retreat facing a large number of problems. Those problems don't disappear during the retreat. Instead the fellowship puts those problems into the proper perspective: Our God, Who is calling you, is faithful. He will always do what He has promised to do!