

My impressions of CBF West Meeting and Dawnings Retreat

by Joyce Reed

Three of us from The Church at Cactus in Peoria, Arizona drove north to attend the CBF West Annual Meeting and *Dawnings* Retreat at Pole Line Road Baptist Church in Davis, California. What a joy it was to see old friends and make the acquaintance of some new ones! Going to a CBF meeting is always a time to appreciate the comfort of being around so many like-minded folks. I was particularly encouraged to meet and interact with several 20-something CBFers from Spokane, Washington, who brought a certain forward-thinking energy to the gathering.

CBF West is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and as it turned out, my mother, Merle Bauer, was the only one present at this meeting who had also been there for the very first CBF West formational meeting in South San Francisco in 1996. She was thrilled to be so honored and was asked to make the ceremonial cut of the Anniversary Cake!

Bo Prosser and Harry Rowland from CBF National were there to present the *Dawnings* Retreat. It was a “taste” of the 10-week program groups can arrange through CBF to help them through a journey of decision. In small groups, we interacted in ways which emphasized the process of discerning and discovering God's will for ourselves or our churches. We were reminded that rather than making our own plans and then asking God to bless them, we need to spend time in prayer and preparation as we listen to God and others to discover what God's goals and dreams are for us. This concept fits in so naturally with CBF's emphasis upon spiritual formation as being foundational to our personal Christian growth, and the concept is just as valid for growing our churches. We must remember that sometimes God might lead our churches in ways that don't necessarily mean we will add members. And we must always be in process in a never-ending cycle of clarifying our vision, deepening our formation, and focusing on engaging in whatever we discern to be God's will.

All in all, the fellowship was top-notch, the teaching was inspirational, and the meals were delicious. I was encouraged to go back to my own church to share and implement what I had learned! See you at the CBF General Assembly in June in Greensboro and CBF West next May in Spokane!