

**Local Church Highlight**  
**First Baptist Community Church**  
**Kearns, Utah**

*Story by Pastor Gary Lehr*



Our church is located in a neighborhood that is transitioning from a white middle class neighborhood into a racially diverse working class neighborhood. Many of our families are struggling to meet their basic needs. Drugs, alcoholism and homelessness are also common place. It is an environment in which gang culture thrives.

Although the level of gang violence is generally much less here than in larger cities, turf disputes are common. During disputes, buildings and fences are “tagged” by spray painting gang signs and messages. The tagging marks territory or insults other neighborhood gangs.

Our church was highly visible due to the traffic generated by our food pantry, so we were tagged frequently. Tagging church buildings meant a lot of people would see it, including other gang members who would come with their families to our food pantry for assistance.

Among the taggers some are regarded as “graffiti artists” whose work is respected and is seldom re-tagged. One day one of these artists came into the pantry and asked if we would allow his team to do a mural on our building. So we decided to allow it provided we approved of the artwork. So we sat down with them and developed a theme.

The attached photo is of one of the resulting murals, painted two years ago. We have not been tagged since that time.



**CBF West's Texas Partnership**  
*by Glen Foster, CBF West Coordinator*

Two years ago, CBF West and CBF of Texas entered into a partnership of mutual ministry. This summer, First Baptist Church in Abilene, Texas became the first Texas church to travel West for a mission opportunity. A joint venture of three churches, FBC Abilene conducted a Literacy Connect Book Fair at Iglesia Bautista Amistad in Douglas, Arizona. Pantano Baptist Church in Tucson collected and provided the books. Children filled grocery sacks with books, painted personal bookshelves, and went home with a small library. Hot dogs brought even more joy!

The following morning, FBC led worship at Pantano before continuing their journey to Flagstaff for a one day mission opportunity in a city park. Children came, games were played, hot dogs were eaten, and Bible stories were told. We are grateful for the Texas partnership.

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**You Are Invited to the**  
**CBF West Annual Meeting**  
**May 17-20, Spokane, WA**

*by Exter Hardy*

"What a fellowship, what a joy divine" is the song that comes to mind when I think of our time together in April for our Dawnings retreat and our annual meeting. I am already looking forward to our time together next year! So put it on your calendar and plan to join us. The focus will be on doing missions as we assist Pastor Michael Mills and Inland Church in Spokane, WA. We will be involved in a variety of ministries helping them reach their community with the love of Christ. They will host us for our annual meeting as well. Watch for more details coming later. For now, save the date!

## *My Impressions* of the 2016 CBF West Annual 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 was celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> 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 engage a journey of decision. In small groups we dialogued about 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 next May in Spokane!

## Chaplains Gathering April 2016 Davis, California

by Kevin Park

On Saturday April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2016, some fifteen chaplains and pastoral counselors endorsed by CBF gathered for their first ever CBF West meeting. While CBF West has been in existence for 20 years, the chaplains and pastoral counselors had never met separately as a group. In addition to this very important meeting, the CBF West Council had just voted to add a representative chaplain/pastoral counselor as a sitting member of the council. During a short business meeting, Jeremy Wells, a chaplain in the Air Force, was nominated and unanimously confirmed as the first chaplain council representative. The chaplains were very excited to have representation on the CBF West Council.

The half day of training began with a session on "Spiritual Care During a Disaster" led by hospital Chaplain Cal McIver. This seminar offered great discussion on some of the best practices currently used by chaplains in disaster response. The next session on "Identifying Suicidal Idealization in Youth and How to Intervene Before Destructive Behaviors Ensur" was led jointly by Pat Coley, a Navy chaplain, and Dana Durham, a chaplain in the CA Army National Guard. This session generated an important conversation on the growing crisis of suicide among our youth.

In summary, the first official gathering of chaplains and pastoral counselors was a grand success! We were all grateful for the fellowship and grateful for the hospitality of Pole Line Road Baptist Church. We look forward to being a part of many meetings to come!

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### **CBF West Officers:**

**Coordinator:** Glen Foster (Tucson, AZ)

**Moderator:** Exter Hardy (Davis, California)

**Past Moderator:** Bruce Gourley (Bozeman, MT)

**Moderator-Elect:** Diann Whisnand (McAllen, Texas)

**Secretary:** Rick Sample (Fremont, California)

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