

# California Pastors' Retreat

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One of the things I appreciate most about my work with the General Conference (both in my present role as well as my past role) is the opportunity that I have to meet and work with a lot of great folks from across the country. This past week took me to California to work with some of our pastors in the California Eldership.

Early in 2015, Pastor Timothy (T.J.) Welsh from our Manteca congregation contacted me about helping with a retreat for our California pastors. This was the first attempt to make an intentional investment in their leaders and I gladly agreed to help facilitate the weekend. Early Thursday morning I made the trek to Detroit Metro Airport to begin the journey west. Once I landed in Sacramento I began the two and half hour drive to Jenness Park Christian Camp (<http://www.jennesspark.com>) near Cold Springs, CA.



We had five of our pastors representing four of our congregations (we have eight congregations in CA that cover the length of the state – from San Diego in the south to north of Sacramento in the northern part of the state - it's about an 11 hour drive from one end of the eldership to the other). Pastor Bradley Taylor of the Farmersville Church, Pastor Rob Lopez of the Fallbrook Church, Pastor T.J. Welsh of and Pastor Pat Welsh of the Manteca Church and Pastor John Burns of the Wheatland Church were waiting on me when I arrived Thursday evening (pictured below, l to r).



I walked them through a leadership development experience similar to what we offer through our Missional Leadership Initiative. We spent some time on Thursday evening understanding our current culture and the challenges facing the church in a post-Christian, pluralistic society. On Friday morning we devoted our time to understanding the shifts we must make today: 1) from an internal focus to an external focus, 2) from program-driven to people development and 3) from church-centric leadership to

kingdom centered leadership. While we took a quick overview of these three important shifts, we focused primarily on the first shift from an internal focus to an external focus and what that means for the ministry of the local congregation.



We designed the time to include some free-time on Friday afternoon and Pat Welsh took us farther up the mountain and showed us some of the more interesting views and locations nestled off the main road. God's creation is truly awe-inspiring and I enjoyed the time we had to hike, talk and take in the beauty of creation with my brothers.



Friday evening's focus turned personal as we examined the skill of self-awareness and why it's so important for those who lead to grow in their own self-awareness. We wrapped up the evening with a time of prayer for one another and our ministries and took some time to enjoy the view of the starlit sky sans artificial light – again, just marveling at God's creation and his appreciation for beauty. Saturday morning wrapped up our time together with a closing session and then departing for our various homes.



I was so grateful for this time with some of our California brothers and I look forward to the next time we get together for a time of discipleship and development. You can pray for our brothers and sisters in California as they are one of our smaller “regions” and the great distance from the rest of us can be discouraging at times, but there is tremendous opportunity for them across their beautiful state. Let’s be praying that our brothers and sisters there would continue to grow and take risks to do the work that our Lord Jesus has called them to do!

## ***Lance***



If you're looking for something that will help you as a leader to navigate our changing world, I highly recommend [Q Commons](#). There are many locations across the U.S. nearby collections of CGGC churches and it's very affordable (\$20-\$30 for most locations).

This one-evening event is coming up on September 24th and I'd encourage you to go to their [website](#) to learn more about how you might benefit from the [Q Commons](#).

