

## REFLECTION AND TESTIMONIES

I was blessed to be a part of a Reconnect Retreat sponsored by the SCBC. Words can't even come close to describing what I experienced at this retreat. What a joy it was to hear Francois Carr, "The Henry Blackaby of South Africa", share about intimacy with God and the importance of sitting at Jesus' feet. I left the retreat with a much deeper understanding of the importance and absolute necessity of God's people being intentional about spending time fellowship and listening to God. I left that two day retreat thinking I wish someone had shared that information with me twenty-six years ago when I surrendered to full-time Christian ministry. I learned that God is saying to each of us "Come sit with me and listen to me." I discovered the importance of listening to His voice and learning from His Word. This morning I shared (as a Director of Missions) with our Pastors from Exodus 33 concerning Moses and his "tent of meeting." Our pastors were challenged and they left our time together this morning with a much better understanding of what it means to "sit at Jesus feet". As a Director of Missions I would wholeheartedly recommend the Reconnect Retreat to any Pastor or fellow Director of Missions. I promise you, as it did for me and the others who attended, attending a Reconnect Retreat will change your life!

David Shirley  
Director of Missions, Beaverdam Baptist Association

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I had no preconceived notions as to what I was to experience during the retreat. If I had them, they would have been well short of the mark. Francois Carr spoke with a confidence and sincerity of heart that immediately drew you in to his world. He shared of his experiences with the Lord and how intimacy and fellowship with the Father could be for me. He challenged my understanding of "The Quiet Time" and showed me how to look at my relationship with the Lord through a completely different lense. God used Francois to change me.

The coaching aspect of the retreat gave me the opportunity to digest, reflect, and work through the things the Lord was saying through Francois. It also helped to know if the other participants were hearing what I was hearing and to see how they were responding to what God was saying.

T. Jason Moss  
Eureka Baptist Church

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The Reconnect Retreat was more than I could have asked for. I truly was able to preach from the overflow the following Sunday. I can say that the information was applicable to a broad range of Pastors. As I talked with and listened to the various guys from various age groups and backgrounds we all walked away with help, but it all seemed to be in different areas.

It at first seemed odd to stay in a hotel in my hometown. Thanks for that aspect of the Retreat. This was some slow-down time that allowed me to focus and digest the material covered. The cost of the retreat was do-able, the meals were great, and the schedule was heavy... yet achievable. The networking was also an added benefit.

I would recommend this retreat. I would attend this retreat again if given the opportunity. Brother Carr did an outstanding job.

In Christ  
Travis Dyar  
Southside Baptist, Honea Path

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Good morning Joe,  
I wanted to send you an email to say a word of thanks for the Reconnect Retreat. I am truly blessed to be a part of a convention that is concerned for the spiritual well-being of its pastors and leaders in the state of South Carolina.

Having just moved to Cross, SC last year, I immediately attended my first Reconnect Retreat with Francois Carr. I questioned why am I doing this, leaving boxes upon boxes for my wife to unpack while I go to a seminar? But had I missed the event, I would have truly missed a blessing while kindling a spiritual fire within me to begin my time of ministry at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

This year's quality time with the Lord and Francois proved to be just as valuable. It helped me to center all that I do at MOBC with the fundamental principle of my time with the Lord Jesus and hearing him speak (Luke 10:38-42).

Again, thank you and all involved in making the Reconnect Retreat a reality. I pray that I can share the blessings I have received with others. May God richly bless you.

In Christ Alone,  
Pastor Steve Boley  
Mt. Olivet Baptist Church

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"As I attended the Reconnect Retreat, I was not sure what to expect. I had been told by previous attendees how God had used the retreat to touch their lives. I was not disappointed. The teaching of Francois Carr was the most meaningful I had experienced since my days of study in seminary many years ago. Through Francois' teaching, God spoke to my heart and I received a fresh perspective that gave me an experience with God I had not enjoyed in a very long time. To those who might consider attending a Reconnect Retreat, come expecting God to speak and be prepared to walk away with a fresh perspective on God's direction in your life."

Ken McCaskill, pastor  
Pine Grove Baptist Church #1

# RECONNECT RETREATS

Joe,

Just a word of thanks to you, Jerry Sosebee, and SCBC for supporting the recent Reconnect weekend in Summerville. Every participant was blessed with the encouragement and teaching of Francois Carr. Let me share a specific example. One of the participants was a bi-vocational pastor in Colleton Baptist Association. He came for the Friday evening session, left and worked all night at his "other job" at Charleston Southern University, and returned for the Saturday morning and afternoon session. He did not want to miss any of the teaching. It was worth the inconvenience and effort for him to attend every session. Had no other participants attended the weekend, it was worth it for this young pastor.

Keep up the faithful work for the kingdom. It is worth it for the King of Kings.

Blessings,

Bobby Bailey

Director of Missions, Screven Baptist Association

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I was talking Saturday morning in the hall of Comfort Suites to John Jenkins and James Holliday about the previous session on hearing God's voice, led by Francois Carr. My statement was "fellows what we have just heard is like a foreign language to almost everyone who attends church on a regular basis. In my opinion, that is why 70 - 95% of our SC Baptist Churches are plateaued or declining". James Holliday spoke up and said "the reason our people in our churches are not getting it is because we as leaders are not getting it".

I think the above summarizes our challenge and that is why a retreat like we just experienced is so important.

I do not know of anyone in the USA that would be as effective as Francois Carr. Ten years ago Henry Blackaby could have done it, but not now because of health issues. Francois shares from the overflow of his life. I have been to four reconnect retreats and no two are the same. My prayer life has changed and is changing.

I kind of leaned on Andy Garrett, Pastor of Canadys Baptist Church, one of our Bi-vocational pastors, urging him to attend. In one of our testimony sharing times, he publicly thanked me. He worked all Friday night and came back Saturday for our whole session with no sleep.

Here is a text I received today from Dave Salvo, Pastor of College Park Baptist Church: "Pastor Mickey, Thankful for the time this past weekend. I have been listening to the waves and feeling the wind on my face. The motor on my sailboat has been thrown overboard and hopefully I will not be tempted to replace it. God bless you sir!" The session he is speaking of was about being still before the Lord.

The comments I am receiving are life changing.

So what happens now? I am urging everyone to take time to process everything, then to be obedient. I think with our

coaches following up, we have a great opportunity to see transformational changing from the inside out in many of our pastors.

In Christ,

Mickey

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I know you referred to brother Francois Carr as the Henry Blackaby of South Africa and, I must say, the Reconnect Retreat was so refreshing and certainly did make you feel like you were sitting at the feet of Henry Blackaby. The Reconnect Retreat Booklet that he taught from and given to each participant reminded me of an overview of Experiencing God. I don't know if this is stretching it too much or not- but it must have felt something like those who heard Jesus on the mountainside with his Sermon on the Mount.

I don't think we could have had anyone better other than Francois. It was a lot to absorb however, in the time allotment that we were working with. I would have liked to have had several more days with the same amount of material so I could reflect more in personal quiet time and after our coaching session without moving on so quickly. I understand how that would have been hard for everyone to make the additional time and financial expense to do so. Thank you for planning all this. I think it is great.

In Christ,

Wayne Watson

Long Branch Baptist Church

Anderson, SC

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Dear Joe,

I just wanted to share with you how grateful I am for Reconnect and the ministry of Francois Carr in my life. After one week of putting into practice those things the Holy Spirit brought to my attention through Reconnect, I feel I am starting on a journey to find the presence of God that will last a lifetime.

Once again, thank you! I know your leadership in the Church Health Team of the SCBC has been ordained by God if for no other reason (although I can personally attest to others) than that by bringing Brother Carr and Reconnect to this pastor's life you have been used by God to significantly impact my life and ministry as I seek His presence! May your sensitivity to the Spirit remain keen as you continue to lead others.

Love in Christ,

Rev. Kenny Pittman, Fork Hill Baptist Church

# RECONNECT RETREATS

Jerry,

It was great meeting you at the Reconnect Retreat. My response to the retreat is:

"The Reconnect Retreat with Francois Carr is a journey to a more personal relationship with God. It was not just teaching, but a shared time with Christ. His desire is that every man would have an intimate relationship with Him. I was certainly challenged to spend more time listening to Christ."

Gary S Lee, PhD, M Div

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## **Making the First Thing the First Thing**

The Reconnect Retreat is designed to give pastoral staff some time to evaluate the way they approach ministry and spend their time. I benefited from the reminder that it is a tragedy to allow my ministry *for* Jesus to keep me *from* Jesus. This perverted alignment of priorities left unchecked can become a cycle with devastating consequences.

The Holy Spirit spoke through François Carr's presentations on the necessity of spending time with Jesus not just having a quiet time routine. The small group discussions helped drive the point home that every pastoral staffer can pursue God's call yet lose sight of the One who calls. I came away from the Reconnect Retreat with a renewed commitment to follow the Caller not the Calling.

Randy Keasler, Pastor  
Westminster Baptist Church

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Joe,

I wanted to thank you for the Reconnect Retreat in the Chester Association this past week. Many of the pastors who attended have shared with me this week how their personal devotion time has been changed. One pastor from our Band of Brothers told us not to hold him accountable for just reading the Bible but that God would speak to him personally as he spent time in the Word. One first time participant shared that it was the best thing he had ever attended.

The manager of the local Zaxby's was so impressed when I shared what we were doing for our pastors that she donated all the lunches for all the participants and Dr. Carr at no cost. For God to speak to her heart and she not receive any of the benefits of the retreat says that God is speaking to believers and how they respond in obedience.

From a personal note I want you to know how Dr. Carr ministered to me. He spoke on God giving us integrity check-ups. He shared how God will send integrity checks from the outside as well as when we make a promise to Him. I had made a promise to get up earlier so as to have the time I needed to allow God to speak to me. Ever since that Thursday session God has awakened me at 3:00 PM each day. The flesh says go back to sleep but my integrity check says that I made that promise. I have had the

privilege of hearing Dr. Carr on several occasions and each time God has used his teaching to speak into my life. My prayer is that I will have many more opportunities to share life with him.

Thanks Ted Hodges DOM Chester Association

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As I reflect on the Reconnect Retreat, I think about my initial expectations and what I revelatory received from God in reference to my thinking. I have had Spiritual Formation courses in seminary that focus on spending "Quiet Time" with God. I was given practical ways to do so and the emphasis was more so on as a needed discipline for pastoral ministry and personal growth. So I expected that I would receive more of the same and possibly some new insights and more practical disciplinary means to enhance my spiritual life.

What I received in the retreat was that and much more. I was impressed upon me the need for my connection with God to be so strong that out of our time, I not only hear, but understand His will and obey it. I was able to sense the urgency to reprioritize my daily life to intentionally listen to God, and not just for the next thing to do. I now understand that God wants that intimate time with me without an agenda, without a forced rote devotion, and without me just wanting to do what's right in ministry. He wants me, and that makes me want Him more! I bless the Lord for the ministry of Francois Carr and the efforts of the Spartanburg Baptist Network Association and South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Rickie Sarratt, Pastor  
Fountain of Life Baptist Church

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# RECONNECT RETREATS

Dear Joe:

I had the privilege to attend the Reconnect Retreat in Summerville last weekend as a participant and a coach. I must tell you that this is one of the best things that the SCBC has provided since the Blackaby Retreat a couple of years ago. We so often get bombarded with conferences and workshops on programming and mechanics when what we really need is to reconnect with God with a deeper intimacy. This retreat helped me with that and I believe that my churches and their pastors will benefit from it as well.

I am grateful for Francois Carr and his willingness to minister to us out the overflow of his walk with God. With his background and what the world might term "success," I was more impressed with his humility and servant spirit. I believe that he is one of the spiritual giants in our world today and I am so grateful to the SCBC for allowing me this opportunity to sit under his teaching. It is an experience that I will never forget.

I understand that the tentative date for our Colleton Reconnect is February 8-9, 2016. I am praying that Francois will be available to present so that our Colleton participants can be challenged not only by his presentation, but by his exemplary walk with God.

With much thanks,

Zane Brown, Associational Missionary  
Colleton Baptist Association

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