



Remembering a Dear Partner in San Francisco: Lou Nancy Bell

Recently, members of our staff sat around the table and shared our memories about Lou Nancy Bell. This Spring, our sister Nancy went on to be with the Lord, ending a long bout with cancer. Her life of faith was evident to the end. Nancy served as the director of *Our Kids First*, another church-based nonprofit with whom we've enjoyed rich company and common concern for the children of our city.

Indeed, our own ministry has been inspired and challenged by Nancy's leadership and model of servanthood. Nancy gave her life to young people. She loved every child that entered her doors, desiring that each would grow in Christ-like maturity. She served the kids by expecting *them* to become servants. She didn't just minister to them; she insisted that *they themselves* owned the ministry. She went beyond welcoming kids in. She expected *them* to welcome the newcomers in their midst. And she raised the bar for their parents as well. She wanted *them* to want more for their kids, and when she didn't see this happening, she loved them enough to speak the truth..

Lastly, when she was hit by disease, Nancy did not flinch. She kept serving and loving, knowing that what God called her to, He would enable. May we also have such faith, that God's glory may be made known. We praise God for the life of Lou Nancy Bell!

- Craig Wong & Pam Chao

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The Good News of Vulnerability?

- Craig Wong, Grace Fellowship Community Church & Grace Urban Ministries

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. - 2 Corinthians 12:9

A simple walk to the car with my dad, recently, was particularly poignant. I held my dad's right hand while my brother-in-law, Greg, took hold of his left. My nephew Michael took the rear, ready to support from behind should wobbly knees prevail. My mom led the way, positioning herself squarely in her husband's line of sight, issuing gentle encouragement forward, even if only baby steps. My brother Kevin pulled up the car to shorten the distance between start and finish. Utterly dependent, this man - who used to leave me in the dust in foot races to establish his athletic superiority - now took over a half hour to travel a mere six yards.

As I write this, I am slowly losing my father to Alzheimer's Disease, a progressive form of dementia that compromises the brain's patchwork of →

Cultivating Partners Through Gardening

- By Sylvia Terpstra, Grace Fellowship Community Church

Through our participation in the Sanchez School Health & Nutrition Fair for the past couple of years, we made contact with the school gardener, and learned about their active school garden program. In fact, Sanchez Elementary is a model for the Slow Food in Schools project, the first in the city to receive a soil-less "vertical garden." There are now two of them on site, one entirely operated by solar panels and a wind turbine, and the other nourished by a built-in fish pond. Students actively participate in both the traditional and vertical gardens, from planting, tending, to harvesting and cooking the bounty in the school's tasting kitchen. This is a great way to teach about where our food comes from and cultivate the appreciation and taste for fresh local produce. With GUM providing coordination with the school, an opportunity to serve arose. Thus, on a blue and gray Sunday afternoon, sixteen of us from Grace Fellowship's gardening group headed for Sanchez Elementary full of enthusiasm. Athena Barouxis, the garden coordinator, greeted us warmly and showed us the area along Sanchez Street that was formerly a "native California plants" area, now overtaken by weeds. She was very appreciative and worked alongside us the whole time. It was amazing how our team just fanned out and got to work. Several times we asked Athena to point out which were the real weeds, and stumbled upon the remains of a potato patch that yielded a nice little harvest. Some of the spuds are now transplanted in our gardens. It was good to get our hands dirty, work alongside and chat with each other. The slow, deliberate pace also afforded a chance to reflect on the wonder of God's good creation and provision. The children were wonderful helpers, transporting bundles of weeds to the compost area with the wheelbarrow, and later watering plants with the nifty plastic tubs with the "holey" bottom. In about three hours, we transformed and restored the area. Passers-by stopped and commented on the improvement. Athena was very appreciative of our partnership, and we all look forward to working together again.



The Good News of Vulnerability? (continued)

cells needed to retain information and perform cognitive functions. The long march downward likely began a decade ago, but the past year has seen the greatest decline. Today, a harsh and painful reality has prevailed: my Dad's needs have exceeded that which even my mother's unquestionably heroic care-giving could meet.

Seeing my dad in such a helpless state has caused my mind to wander to more youthful days. I remember the Marlboro-smoking man who taught us always to "take the bull by the horns" the way he (and John Wayne) did. Indeed, returning from the Korean War, he worked his way through one of the nation's most prestigious art schools, becoming a gifted and industrious designer. He fashioned the interior spaces of countless buildings ranging from big department stores to high-rise corporate offices and even nuclear power plants. Beyond aesthetics, however, my dad's craft was about optimizing physical environments for human collaboration, creating the spaces where people worked interdependently to solve problems and execute shared objectives. For my 50s generation "self-made" dad, the glaring reality of dependence, and *inter*-dependence, had become graciously inescapable. In caring for my dad, I've become more keenly aware of my own vulnerability, seeing in his physical frailty what will one day be mine. I've felt vulnerable in other ways as well. What do we do? Are we making the right decisions? Do we have all the right information? How is Mom doing, and are we doing what's best for her? Are we putting our relationships at risk? What are the long-term implications?

But, with such vulnerability came grace. It came from all sides. The rallying together of my siblings. The senior care specialists that helped us navigate the landscape of institutional support. The nurses, physicians, social workers, janitors and food service providers during his hospitalization. The in-home providers, physical therapists, ambulance drivers, and medical equipment suppliers. The restaurant manager who came to my Dad's aid. The police officers who joined the search when he wandered astray. My fellow congregation members who watched my kids so that I could watch my dad. The prayer group that prayed for my family regularly. Sister Beverly, who got my mom out the house for conversation, laughter and perspective. The wisdom of the saints who've gone before us in the care of aging parents.

Through it all, I have come to more deeply appreciate the gift of each other. We learn this best, I'm coming to realize, in those places of deep vulnerability. To be reconnected to each other, that is, to be restored to life as God originally intended for humankind, is the very power of the gospel. Realizing that Christ, His own body broken for us, graciously exposes our brokenness to draw us back to Himself *and* to one another is indeed good news. ✚

Seeking the Health of Daly City

- By Janet Sun, Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Chinatown - Daly City Campus

An answer to prayer, the vision of having a health fair was inspired by our experience with the GUM-coordinated Mission Street Health Fair three years ago. We'd been asking God to bless Cumberland Presbyterian Church to be a blessing, expanding His presence by strengthening local ministry in our community. So last year, we geared up our planning team and hosted our own diabetes fair on our Daly City campus, along with Primera Iglesia Bautista de Daly City, Grace Fellowship Community Church (GFCC), and Redeemer Community Church (RCC). That day, we served over 70 people, with about a fifth receiving a consultation from a physician. There was one person who *had* insurance and regular access to healthcare but said, "None of my doctors have the time to listen to me! I came here so I could find someone to listen! I came here to vent out how broken healthcare is!" We also prayed for people and, praise God, three accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord. The fair indeed challenged and mobilized our congregation to reach out. In the end, we all felt blessed by the experience of working together in one purpose...to serve God and His love with our community.

After this experience, we sensed God wanted us to serve in this capacity again this year. With desire this time to "bring the Church to the community," we are planning a health fair at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School. Why there? God has been opening doors for us and we've developed a good rapport with the principal and teachers. They've let us rent space for our Sunday School class. And it is the "community" we want to serve.

Please pray for God's wisdom as we plan; for the provision of volunteers and community resources, for our partnership with GFCC, RCC and GUM, for our relationship with the new principal, and for good weather on October 15th! ✚