

North Central CBA  
E-Central E-mail



Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

December 2011

## The Real Meaning of Christmas

Recently, I was listening to the news while plodding my miles on the Elliptical machine when I heard this jingle, "Deck the malls with crowds of shoppers . . ." I want you to know this is not the way Loretta Lynn sang it. Shouldn't it be, "Deck the halls with boughs of holly, fa la la la. Tis the season to be jolly?" The news bite was all about "Black Friday", "Cyber Monday" and how much money retailers have already made "for Christmas". Did you catch my sarcasm? We all know that when it comes to our society celebrating Christmas, it is not about the miracle of Christ's birth. In reality it comes down to whether or not the retailers can get out of the "red" and into the "black".

It is no surprise for you to understand that Christmas is not defined by money or retail goals, but by the incredible miracle of Christ's birth. Christmas is much more than just the birth of a baby. It is when God became a man, which is a miracle we call the Incarnation. But what is the meaning of the Incarnation?

Simply, it is the ultimate and final disclosure of the eternal God. Can you grasp that? It answers for us the mystery of who God is, what God is like, and what God wants. The Incarnation is the self-revelation of God Himself, the pre-existent Son of God and the second person of the Trinity taking human form. Jesus is the "fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9). In the Incarnation, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we

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### Natural Church Development

#### How Healthy is Your Church?

This is a proven tool that can help your church with growth, not just in terms of quality but in terms of evangelism.

NCD will help you identify the eight qualities and six growth factors for a healthy church.  
**Healthy NCD is seeing a steady growth through conversions and the ongoing discipleship of those who are part of the**

beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth " (John 1:14 NKJV). The Word here is the name of the Eternal God and the flesh is the designation of a time-bound human being in contrast to God. God sent His Son born of a woman. Yet the Word, who is God, continues to be what He was before becoming flesh (John 1:1). Try to explain all that on talk radio.

I always like to ask the question after hearing something profound, "So what? How does that impact my life?" You know, there is a result to this incredible intervention of God into the world who was "made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:7). First, the eternal love of God is revealed to the entire world in its fullest expression so all that believe will have eternal life (John 3:16). Second, He who shared of flesh and blood (Hebrews 2:14) causes those who believe to share in the same divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Third, Jesus who committed no sin was made sin that those who believe might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21). Lastly, Jesus who came to reconcile the world unto Himself has given to those who believe the work of reconciliation to a lost world (2 Corinthians 5:19).

My prayer for all of us this Christmas is that our celebration would go far beyond traditional cultural symbols such as decorative lights, festive parties and lavish gift-giving. May your focus be upon the celebration of the "Gift of God" that is meant to provide eternal life through Jesus Christ. "Tis the season to be jolly", then has nothing to do with the decked halls of holly. It is about the Eternal One who loves this broken world more than you can even imagine.

I am so blessed to serve in the capacity as your Regional Director for the NCCBA. This is a new opportunity for us and we look forward to serving you for years to come. Karen and I would like to wish you and your family a wonderful Christ-filled Christmas. God bless you!

*Pat Phinney, Regional Director*



church.

Give us a call at 715-538-2298.

**Valuable Information About Your Church's Area**

Customized demographic information available about your church location. This is a free service for all NCCBA churches. Call Pat at his home office 952-322-7173

**Ministry Quick Links**

[CBAmerica](#)

**NCCBA**

[www.nccba-gc2.com](http://www.nccba-gc2.com)

WEBSITE

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING laws by State on our website under RESOURCES**

**New Staff Background Checks**

NCCBA is now able to perform background checks for member churches. Call Jean at the office, 715-538-2298.

**From the Truth Project: DOES GOD EXIST?**

This is an outstanding series that will help prepare your high

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## From our Cluster Leaders

Recently I sat down to write a short article for our church's newsletter. I thought about that article for a couple of weeks before I sat down to write, and it still took me over 5 hours to complete. When I had finally finished, the article covered about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a page. Despite the brevity of my words, I was glad that I was finally done, and I was satisfied that I had expressed myself in a thoughtful yet succinct manner.

When Pat asked me to write for the region's Newsletter, I thought about this writing process. It reminded me of a lesson I am learning in my current years of ministry, "The value of thoughtful and intentional patience." I have been in my current ministry for 5  $\frac{1}{2}$  years, but we did not introduce any major changes until year 4. Coming from a Type A driven world on the East Coast, this was an important lesson to learn. Supporting this thoughtful and intentional patience is a better understanding and acceptance of the temporary nature of my ministry. Periodically I have the privilege of ministering with one the church's former pastors. He served the church for over 30 years. Despite his longevity, he was still temporary. I do not know the length of my tenure, but regardless of my duration, I am temporary.

Accepting my temporary status is helping me to lay the groundwork for change differently and, yes, with more thoughtful and intentional patience. I no longer just want agreement or support; I want my leaders to understand why change is necessary and to become initiators in the process. I no longer want the leaders to support my vision. Instead, together we need to own and intentionally pursue the church's vision. We are seeking to establish leadership routines that embrace regular evaluations so that we can stay on track with our vision. I want to lead a ministry that succeeds while I am here, but that also flourishes after I am gone.

We still have a lot to figure out, and we are still far from where we

school kids for college. It is produced by the same group that did the Truth Project. It includes ten sessions on DVD and ten student books. Our price is \$50.89 plus \$10.00 for shipping.

Retail for the same set is \$110.89. If you would like to get a preview of why you should consider this go to [www.trueu.org](http://www.trueu.org) and check out: The Toughest Test in College.

### Antioch School of Evangelism & Church Planting

#### Go to College at Your Home Church

(Accreditation by [DETC](#))

Would you be interested in being able to offer college level material in your local church? Would you be interested in being able to facilitate in providing a bachelors degree from your local church? Are you interested in being able to develop your current and next generation leadership?

If you answered yes to any or all of these we encourage you to look into this resource. **Antioch School of Evangelism and Church Planting** is a resource that will help equip your church for all of the above. We have three churches in the region that have become certified--Forest City Baptist, Rockford, IL; FBC Jackson, MN; and FBC Whitehall, WI. For further information contact the NCCBA office at 715-538-2298 or by email [nccba@triwest.net](mailto:nccba@triwest.net)

### Software Discounts

## BIG savings on software!

Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2010, Windows 7 Professional, Photoshop, Dreamweaver, Acrobat and other Microsoft

need to be. Since my days of seminary I have understood that change and continual personal growth are essential. Now I more fully understand the importance of thoughtful and intentional patience. As I write this, I smile, because after 25 years as a pastor, I am still learning and trying to figure out how to do leadership and build effective ministry.

Resting and Rejoicing in Jesus,

*Andrew Brown*  
*NCCBA Board Chairman*  
*FBC, Long Prairie MN*

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## Youth Pastor to Youth Pastor:

My wife and I just had our third child, and whenever you are at any medical facility they are always asking you questions, having you fill out forms or asking you questions about the forms you just filled out. The question about occupation always comes around and without fail every person who hears that I am a youth pastor responds with some form of "That is great, youth need role models". Working with teenagers is a "good deed" no matter what faith background you have. My question is, am I doing the same good that any other organization that works with teenagers is doing? Last night at Youth Group we were watching a video from the Francis Chan "Surrender" series, and he got to talking about how sometimes when we go on missions trips we can take with us this attitude of distinction between us and them. Like how great it is of us that we would go to help them. When that happens, we are no longer fulfilling our privilege to lovingly work in response to the one who loved us, but simply fulfilling the demands of the "good deed" placed in front of us at that moment. Do you see the distinction here? We can replace the value that God has given the person for the value the world has given the deed. So here is the big question that I have been struggling with lately:

***Do I truly love the families and teenagers that I minister to?***

Yes, yes, yes I know, another admonition to love our brothers and our neighbors: "I have heard it all before". Then you can stop

and Adobe products are available for lease to member churches. [Click here](#) for an order form.

reading, but for anyone still with me: I am not asking "Do I act lovingly towards them". I am sure I am doing that, but you could hear that about any organization that works with teens. As Christ followers are we not privileged to expressions of love that hearts that do not know Jesus could not express? And if we are, how am I showing that? 1 Corinthians 13 (you knew I was going there) is one of the clearest tellings of the kind of love that is available to Christians. It speaks of what Christian love is and what it is not. In verse 3 it talks about the value of the ultimate "good deeds" without this kind of love:

*"If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."*

This is not talking about the celebrities or athletes whose philanthropy is highlighted right along with all their X rated exploits. This is talking about people who are sacrificing all they have to God, even their own health, but still missing the mark because they did it without this deep God given love. It is my prayer this holiday season that God will awaken my stiffened heart to the crazy love that he wants to share with the world through me, and if you connect with looking to see something more than any other "good deeds" organization can offer, I invite you to pray that for yourself as well.

*Dan Norman, Associate Pastor of Youth*

*FBC - Whitehall, WI*

## ENGAGE

"Encouraging young people to confidently communicate and defend the gospel"

Deadline for applications: January 6, 2012. For complete details, call Bethany Baptist Church at 309-692-1755 or visit their [website](#)

5th Annual Youth Apologetics and Preaching Competition Hosted by Bethany Baptist  
Edwards, Illinois  
February 4, 2012

[Website](#) for Application & Information

**Purpose:** The purpose of Engage is to promote and encourage churches to mentor and develop young people to effectively learn, communicate and defend Biblical truth.

**Who can participate?:** The apologetics competition is open to young men or women from 7th through 12 grade and the preaching competition is open to young men 9th through 12th grade. Winners will be awarded up to \$200.



It is the Christmas Season again. This brings many challenges to our chaplains. There is pressure from the politically correct crowd to greet others with "Happy Holidays" or "Seasons Greetings" rather than Merry Christmas. We joyfully celebrate the birth of Jesus and are glad to include His name in our greetings. For our military chaplains deployed they will have many opportunities to share

Christ's birth with members of the military at Bible studies, candlelight services and worship times. Mess halls are decorated with lights and special cakes for the Christmas season. Often the cooks will include Bible verses on these desserts to make Christmas special. They too get criticized for not being sensitive to the non-Christian members. Pray for them and our chaplains as they celebrate Christmas away from home.

This brings another challenge. Many of our chaplains and service members are gone from their families this time of year making it hard for some to celebrate with joy. Remember to pray for them as you celebrate with your families.

Some of our chaplains will spend time in nursing homes, hospital rooms and prisons to bring the Christmas message to those they serve. Loneliness prevails in many of these places and many will not get family visits over the holidays. Invite someone you know who has no family nearby to join with your family this year. It can bring a lot of joy to both homes.

One year, while living in Wisconsin and ministering at the local nursing home, we invited a young lady with advanced MS to join us for Christmas. Her family had abandoned her to avoid medical bills and her children no longer visited her. We had several other friends and their families join us as well. This woman's name was Mary. One of the children present kept staring at Mary during our meal and a number of times the mother said, "honey, don't stare." This little girl couldn't keep her eyes off Mary sitting across the table from her. Suddenly she blurted out, "If that's Mary where is baby Jesus!" Our table erupted in laughter, and Mary was overjoyed that she was mistaken for Jesus' mother. We talked about that incident for many years and still laugh about it. It made the day for all of us.

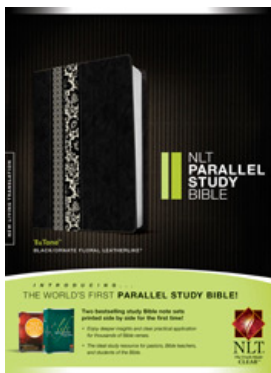
While we served in Hong Kong with our foreign mission we would invite servicemen to join us for Christmas dinner. What a great time we had. After the meal they would invite us to visit their ship, and our kids were able to board aircraft carriers and other naval vessels. We have pictures of our son sitting in an attack helicopter on board the USS Tripoli. Christmas is a time for sharing. Open your hearts and home this year to others and watch God bless you and your guests.



In His grip,  
Allen Russell, Director of Chaplaincy

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[chapruss@cbamerica.org](mailto:chapruss@cbamerica.org) .

The NCCBA office will be **CLOSED** from December 24 through January 1. Regular office hours will resume on January 2, 2012.



### Bibles At Case Lot Prices

NLT Parallel Study Bible (Hardcover)  
Was 44.99 NOW 24.00 each in cases of 8

Available from the CBAmerica on their website, [www.cbamerica.org](http://www.cbamerica.org) or toll-free 888-366-3010 in CASE LOTS ONLY

The NLT Study Bible is also available, plus other versions and editions at discounted case lot prices. Order directly from [CBAmerica](http://CBAmerica)

### END of YEAR Financial Reminders

- 1) Church donors **CANNOT deduct donations until** a written receipt is received from the church. (Tax return cannot be filed)
- 2) **Contributions received in the offering plate after December 31, must be deducted in 2012.** EXCEPTION: if the donation was mailed and **postmarked** by December 31. Credit card donations are deductible on the date of the transaction, not when statement is paid.
- 3) **Housing allowance** for pastors must be in the form of a resolution by the Board or congregation **every year**. Contact NCCBA if you need a sample resolution.
- 4) **CHRISTMAS GIFTS** must be included as taxable income, in most cases, and included on the W-2 or 1099 for 2011.



5) For a sample Church Insert regarding congregational charitable giving, [click here](#)

These can be ordered in tear-off pads of 100 for \$12.95 at [YourChurchResources.com](http://YourChurchResources.com) or by going to this [link](#).

### Upcoming Events

## AREA CLUSTER MEETINGS:

### Wisconsin/Northeast MN Cluster

January 22 & 23 Retreat Oak Forest Center, Frederic WI Contact Eldon Carlson 715-568-1979  
or Wade Duroe 715-723-1054

### SW Minnesota/NW Iowa Cluster

January 10, 11 AM-1 PM Contact cluster leader, Doug Noonkester for location: 712-754-3310

### Illinois Cluster

January 17 & 18, Retreat will be held once again at Camp Mennohaven  
Begins at noon with lunch and ends Wednesday at noon with lunch on your own. \$55 per person  
Tiskilwa, IL Contact Scott Boerckel or Lyall Sutton 309-692-1755

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## 2012 Pastors' Seminar/Pastors & Wives Retreat

Pastor's Seminar April 26  
Pastors & Wives Retreat April 26-28  
NCCBA Annual Meeting April 27

The Abbey Resort in Fontana WI on Lake Geneva

***Reserve on your calendar NOW-registration begins in January***

### NCCBA Churches In Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- Cornerstone Community Church--Manchester IA SENIOR PASTOR
- Hillcrest Baptist Church--Muscatine IA SENIOR PASTOR
- Wildwood Baptist Church--East Moline IL SENIOR PASTOR
- Ganson Street Baptist Church--Jackson MI YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Pekin IL-- CHURCH PLANTER
- First Baptist Church--Worthington MN WORSHIP LEADER (part-time)

### Contact Our Office

North Central CBA - Jean Wright - 715-538-2298 - [nccba@trivest.net](mailto:nccba@trivest.net)

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