



**CB NORTH CENTRAL**

*Connecting Churches Who Love God and the Gospel*



December 2015

## THE CENTRAL CONNECTION

*"We are an organization of churches that is committed to the mission of Christ to multiply disciple-making churches through evangelism, leadership training, and connection with other like-minded churches."*

**From the Director**

*"Making Cents Out of Christmas"*

According to ShopperTrak, consumers spent an estimated \$10.4 billion in stores on Black Friday and \$1.8 billion on Thanksgiving. There is more. CNN just released figures that online sales on Cyber Monday most likely will reach \$3 billion for the first time, making it the largest single day for digital sales in history.



Hearing the "good news" (my sarcasm) of historic sales, I wanted to scream, "What about Christmas?" We all know 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 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. The miracle we call the Incarnation. How will this amazing truth change your life?

I am having the privilege of discipling a young Millennial right now. He recently came out of church with us and said, "I just got kicked in the stomach!" Curious about what he was processing, I asked for clarification. It was quite simple really. God spoke to him, he was under conviction and he needed to make some changes. I love what I saw in this young disciple as he wrestled with life-changing truth.

Truth. The Incarnation of Christ 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 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 to the National Federation of Retailers.

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 us this Christmas is that our celebration would go far beyond traditional cultural symbols such as profit margins, 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 for all who sincerely seek Him. I enjoy the thought that the Eternal One loves this broken world more than I can even imagine.

I am so blessed to serve as your Regional Director for CB North Central. Karen and I would like to wish you and your family a wonderful Christ-filled Christmas. We look forward to serving you for years to come.

*Pat Phinney*  
*CBNC Regional Director*



**WorldVenture**

**"JOIN GOD, CHANGE THE WORLD"**

Many historians have told us that in 1943 most of the teenage boys in America were in a panic about one thing. They were afraid that the war would end before they could get into it! For those of us who grew up well after those days, this attitude is stunning. But such was the spirit of the day - the whole country was all in to win this battle against tyrants and imperialism. Recruiters were kept busy with young men who wanted to enlist in all branches of the armed forces. Some of these eager teens were more than willing to lie about their age so that they could go with their friends and their brothers. One of them was a high school star athlete from Shenandoah, Iowa who decided to jump a couple of years and convinced the Army Air Corp to let him go to flight school in Yuma, Arizona. After ninety intense days they made him a second lieutenant and the pilot of a B-24 and sent him off to Palawan to fly combat missions in the pacific - and he was just 18 years old. No price was too high to pay in the effort to preserve our freedom.



In like manner, the Great Commission is on the clock. Each moment brings us closer to the end of our opportunity to make disciples. One day the Lord will say, "That's it. Time's up." Wouldn't it be awesome if the followers of Jesus Christ had the same mindset as teenage boys did seventy plus years ago. What if believers today would say, "I don't care what it might cost, let me into this battle." "I may not be the most qualified person, but the stakes are so high, please let me go!" After all, this engagement is not to determine democratic freedom but final eternity in either heaven or hell. Around the globe there are still so many people who have never heard of the love and forgiveness of God, and they have no idea that the clock is ticking. Yet we know both of those things. Will we therefore be mobilized into action or continue as mildly interested spectators?

Something else of major significance happened in 1943. Courageous men and women with no money, no missionaries, and strong opposition created a new mission agency, one dedicated to the unapologetic and uncompromising proclamation of the inerrant Word of God. Today that same organization is determined to ratchet up its efforts to find and deploy more missionaries than ever before from all walks of life to make an impact for Jesus Christ in previously unreached societies and individual hearts. Missions is no longer just for those with theology degrees. We want to send the whole body of Christ to reach the whole of a society. There is a great need for artists, for teachers, for media people, for business skills, and farmers. What can you do well? That is what we need! The Mobilization Ministries Department at WorldVenture is thrilled to be asked to lead the charge in this endeavor. May the Lord bring us passionate men and women who will skillfully and effectively take this message to all those who need to hear.

P.S. I knew about the kid from Iowa because he was my father.

*Dougg Custer*

*Vice President, Mobilization Ministries*

**WORLDVENTURE**

## Pastor's Wives . . . Just for You

*"I've Been Waiting for Months!"*



It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas at our house. I love this time of the year. What is it about Christmas lights that make everything look cozier? There is still more decorating to be done, but already it just feels like Christmas. We got our first snowfall here in the Twin Cities on Thanksgiving Day. I know many people think Minnesota is always cold and buried under snow, but that is simply not true. After that first inch of snow, our 9 yr. old granddaughter Nora was so excited. She said to her mom, "Finally it is all white again! I've been waiting for months for this." You need

to know that last year was Nora's first real experience with winter. They had lived in Portland, OR since she was born, so snow and all that winter has to offer was new to her. It didn't take long for her to realize that she loved it!

I can't help but wonder if it wasn't that same kind of excitement that the shepherds felt as they heard the news of Jesus' birth announced by the heavenly host. They had been waiting for His arrival. They quickly left the field and found Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus. After their time around the manger, Luke records "The Shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told." I can't help but wonder if somewhere in the conversation on their way back to the field one of the shepherds may have said, "Finally He is here! I've been waiting months for this!"

My prayer is that this Christmas you will be excited as you worship that little baby who grew up to be our Savior. Talk about a Christmas gift!

This Christmas season let's pray that our husbands will take time to reflect on that marvelous gift of salvation. Here are some verses to get us started .....

"I pray that my husband will remember that he has been saved through faith, and that not of himself; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest he should boast."

Ephesians 2:8-9

"I pray, God, that my husband will remember that it is not by works of righteousness that he has done, but according to Your mercy that You saved him, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, who You poured out on him abundantly through Jesus Christ his Savior."

Titus 3:5-6

"Father, I pray that this will be my husband's testimony: that You, God, have given him eternal life, and this life is in Your Son."

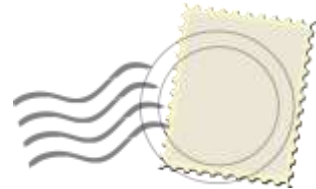
1 John 5:11

I recently came across this idea on Pinterest. I thought it was too fun not to share. Click on the "You've Been SOCKED" image below for more details.



*Karen Phinney  
Wife of Regional Director*





## **YEAR END GIVING**

*Gifts received by CB North Central postmarked on or before December 31 will be credited to the 2015 contribution records. Anything postmarked January 1st and after will go to your 2016 giving records. Thank you for your continued support and blessings to each of you as you begin a new year!*

**#ShareTheStories**

*"Then It Happened"*

As I share the following, my heart is overwhelmed with emotions. The last few weeks have been that way and I'd like to let you know what's been going on.

A couple of months ago Pat Phinney stopped by and my wife Susie and I enjoyed a great meal with him at our local Mexican kitchen. During this visit, Pat encouraged (actually exhorted) me in my lack of seeing people come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. His encouragement was warm and yet it stung. After he left, I began to really seek the Lord's face in our need to win the lost here in Muscatine. I began by going to our riverfront several days per week and praying that God would give me (and the church) a burning heart for the lost in this community. I begged God to give me opportunity to share the good news with people and that they would receive Him as Lord and Savior. We began to put some structure in place to train for and celebrate when people gave their lives to Christ.



Then it happened. I was able to lead a High School Senior in prayer as he confessed his sin and asked God to forgive him. A couple weeks later, a couple of six graders in our AWANA program accepted Jesus Christ as Lord. Then two young men in our youth group accepted Jesus Christ a couple of weeks ago. We have had 5 salvation decisions in the last 9 weeks. God is so good. I am hoping to baptize these new believers in the near future. I just wanted to say Thank you to Pat for challenging me. It has been good for me, those who have given their lives to Christ, and our church.

*Pastor David McIntosh*

*Hillcrest Bible Church, Muscatine, IA*

## *"Rejoicing In Sweet Joys"*

As I reflect God's blessing upon Jesus' church at Bethany Baptist, I rejoice in so many sweet joys that God gives to me as a pastor. Three specific gifts from God remind me of the privilege of my calling and strengthen me to persevere in the labors of shepherding God's flock: 1) His gift of granting repentance and faith to lost souls. 2) His gift of granting sanctification through the preaching of the Word. 3) His gift of growing love among the members of his family.

I share three specific stories with you in hopes that you will be encouraged in your work of shepherding too. These stories are from three different individuals at Bethany. Their testimonies remind me of God's truth that our labor is not in vain. God uses our feeble efforts to work wonders for His glory in His church. God still loves to bring salvation to lost



sinners through the proclamation of the Gospel. God still loves to strengthen the faith of His people through the expository teaching of His Word. God still loves to set love in the hearts of His people for one another. Let us persevere in the work for the sake of His name believing that He will work His will in us and in His church!

**Story #1: A young woman is transformed by God's grace.**

*As I look back on my life so far, I can't remember ever not believing in God or in Jesus Christ as my Savior. I grew up in a Christian home, and from an early age, I was going to church with my parents, worshiping with them, learning bible stories, and memorizing verses. But there was something missing from my time spent on Sunday mornings, something that I would not fully understand until later on in my faith journey. Flash forward to high school, and all of my time was spent between school, sports, and sleep. I still went to church on Sundays, but it was more out of obligation than out of a desire for a deeper relationship with Christ. Sermons would remain in my head for the time that I spent in church and leave my head as soon as I got home. I understand now that at that point in my life, I lacked a true relationship with Christ; I was going through the motions in my faith and putting worldly things before God. Then, the summer before my freshman year of college, God led me to join a summer Bible study here at Bethany. We went through a book titled Idols of the Heart by Elyse Fitzpatrick, and it was through this small group that I came to terms with the current state of my faith and that school and sports, things that I had thought of as ways for me to glorify God, became idols, as I was letting them get in the way of my personal relationship with Him. One particular scripture God has shown me in my journey of faith is Proverbs 3:5. This verse tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your understanding." You see, before God changed my heart, I was holding on to things that I did not realize were true idols in my life. I used academics and athletics for well-being before realizing that only God provides us with the fulfillment that we desire. Along with this realization came a deeper understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God sent His only Son to live a life characteristic of holiness and love. Jesus served as our guiltless substitute and endured the ultimate penalty on our behalf by dying on the cross and then rising from the dead. Because of this sacrifice, my spiritual debt has been paid in full, and I am alive in Christ. It is with this understanding that I plan to dedicate my life to serving God first and foremost, putting my relationship with Him before all else.*

**Story #2: A soldier serving our country on assignment in South Korea is being strengthened through the preaching of God's Word.**

*Pastor Ritch,*

*It is a cold, rainy, beautiful Sunday morning here and I am so very thankful for the Romans podcasts I am able to enjoy while sipping on my morning coffee!*

*What makes my Sundays so special is that I get to start my day with a taste of home and words from home thanks to the podcasts. Our chaplain here hosts services every Sunday which has been a blessing and has helped build a stronger community for those who attend and allows us to encourage one another throughout the week, but I am truly thankful that I get to add to that through the words God speaks through you and your sermons. I love following along with my Bible app and reading the words of Romans as you talk through their meaning which allows me to study the words and not just read the words. I haven't gotten very far in the series, but again, I am so very thankful that I have it as a tool in my kit to challenge me in thought, word, and actions.*

*Thank you again and God Bless,*

**Story #3: A young man whose wife recently left him and is quite alone is loved by Jesus' church through a sickness.**

*Pastor Ritch,*

*Feeling pretty crummy. The way it's going I will probably miss work tomorrow too. My supervisor is pretty understanding. He was sick all week last week with the same thing.*

*I have had five different families from the church offer help to me. Three of them brought food/medicine over to help. Being home alone makes it pretty tough so their help was great. I believe just the way the church family should operate. Very encouraging.*

Friend, God uses the faithful labors of feeble instruments as we persevere in proclaiming the Gospel, teaching His Word and encouraging love within His family!

**"Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain." (1 Corinthians 15:58 ESV)**

*Pastor Ritch Boerckel*

*Bethany Baptist Church, Edwards, IL*

**-CBAmerica Chaplaincy**

***"I Have Controls!"***

The following is a weekly devotional that comes out of Navy Chaplain, Roy Fondren's recent training experiences.



"Last week I had my first dance with the T-57B and I was MIND BLOWN with both excitement and nervousness! ENS Heneveld and LT Ryan Ross (HT-18) were the SNA/IP Team I spent time with during the Brief, Pre-checks and Hot Seat. During the Brief, I was taking copious notes and asking clarifying questions of some of the confusing language much like I did during Hebrew class. I ended up picking up some foundational knowledge of the scheme of maneuver and functional operations of the helicopter and I was JUICED!! I left the Brief excited and repeating Ditty's such as "Tower, this is 187 and we are at Min Fuel," . . ." [Read More](#)



If you sense the Lord's leading into ministry that is sometimes "on the edge," contact Andy Meverden, Director of Chaplaincy at [chapandy@CBAmerica.org](mailto:chapandy@CBAmerica.org).

*Andy Meverden*  
*Director of Chaplaincy, CBAmerica*



### **"Seven Thoughts About Retiring Pastors Who Stay at Their Churches"**

"Why people should hear us talk more about generosity."

-ThomRainier.com, Oct. 26, 2015 [Read More](#)

### **"Why Some Churches Choose to Die"**

-ThomRainier.com Nov. 4, 2015 [Read More](#)

### **"Twenty Five Silly Things Church Members Fight Over"**

- ThomRainier.com, Nov. 11, 2015 [Read More](#)

### **"God WILL Allow More Than You Can Bear (Alone)"**

"Consistently, throughout the Bible, I read where God allowed more trials, more pressure, than His children could bear." -by *Ron Edmondson*, ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

### **"Do Your Staff and Volunteers Use Cell Phones While Driving on Church Business?"**

"Richard Hammar has suggested multiple times that churches consider requiring their volunteer and employee drivers to **download and use an app that would prohibit calls and/or texts while driving.**" - by *Michelle Dowell*, Church Law & Tax [Read More](#)



## Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition:

### Senior Pastor

Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL  
First Baptist Church - Lake Crystal, MN  
First Baptist Church - Pekin, IL  
First Baptist Church - Parkers Prairie, MN  
First Baptist Church - Detroit Lakes, MN  
Oak Park Community - Blaine, MN  
First Baptist Church - Whitehall, WI  
Squaw Creek Baptist Church - Marion, IA  
Bazetta Baptist Church - Warren, OH  
Lakeside Church - Worthington, MN

## CB North Central Pastoral Cluster Groups

### **North Dakota/Northern MN**

Thursday, January 21, 10:00 am  
Meeting at Faith Bridge Church, Park Rapids, MN  
*Steve Daggett, Cavalier Baptist, Cavalier, ND*  
701-265-8989

### **Central Minnesota**

Monday, December 14, 10am to Noon  
Meeting at River of Life Church, Hastings, MN  
*Steve Schoenwald, River of Life Church, Hastings, MN*  
651-437-3965

### **Wisconsin**

Thursday, February 11, Noon to 3 pm (Bring your own lunch)  
Security Issues for Churches  
Meeting at First Baptist, New Richmond, with Kevin Morris  
*Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI*  
715-723-1054

### **Illinois**





January 19, 2016, 9am - 3pm

Meeting at Wildwood Baptist Church, Moline, IL

*Art Georges, Living Hope Community Church, Bartonville, IL*

309-633-0028 [art@livinghopecentral.org](mailto:art@livinghopecentral.org)

### **Michigan**

Thursday, January 14, 10am

Location To Be Announced

*Leo Cumings, Bethel Baptist Church, Jackson, MI*

517-416-1247

For more information on a Cluster Group in your area please contact the CBNC office.



**Click on the picture**  
**to go to our Facebook page**  
**and "Like" CBNC for**  
**regular updates.**





*So many family traditions, so many activities . . .  
Blessings to each of you as you celebrate  
the birth of our Savior,  
Jesus Christ!*

*From all of us at the CB North Central Regional office  
to you and your families, Merry Christmas!*

*Pat, Wendy, and Amy Jo*

The CB North Central office will be closed December 25th thru January 4th.

## **CB North Central**

PO Box 490441, Blaine, MN 55449

### **Pat Phinney, Regional Director**

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Pat's Cell: 952-500-3743

Wendy Jonasen, Administrative Assistant

[wendyj@cbnorthcentral.org](mailto:wendyj@cbnorthcentral.org)

763-205-9330

Office Hours: Tues. thru Fri. 8am - 1pm

### **Stay Connected**

Website: [www.cbnorthcentral.org](http://www.cbnorthcentral.org)



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