



North Central

Connecting Churches Who Love God and the Gospel



July 2016

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."

[Visit Our Website](#)

New Photos On Our Website - Are You There?

From The Director

"When Things Go Wrong"

Yesterday was a typical night at the Mall of America. I say typical because every month we meet all of our grandkids to enjoy a pilgrimage to Lego Land where they can build to their heart's content. As we were pulling out of the parking ramp in our normal Phinney caravan fashion, I was quickly greeted with these thoughts, "Something has gone terribly wrong here!"



I kid you not. There were patrol cars everywhere and officers had their weapons drawn shouting, "Get your hands up!" No, I didn't raise my hands. I wanted to cruise slowly through the scene to watch the drama unfold, but I was brought to reality when I heard these words come from my passenger, "Drive through quickly. Let's get out of here!"

Let's face it. Everyone has times when things go wrong. I have noticed that when it is someone else's trouble, we want to slow down and catch all of the dramatic details. When it is our own trouble, we want to run from the scene. We have had some things happen recently in our own extended family that have gone terribly wrong. Similarly, I have also watched things go wrong with close friends. Here is what I have learned. When troubles come, it's not what happens, but how we react that counts. Troubles destroy some people, but others they make. As I look back, the only times I have truly grown have been during those times of adversity. You know, when the pressure is on. Who wants to change when everything is going well? While I don't believe in quick fixes or simplistic solutions to life's complexities, I know God can teach us many lessons during challenging times.

Do you remember what I said earlier? The difference between troubles building or destroying God's people lies in how we respond. I am also convinced that how we go about resolving our problems is what matters. Allow me to share a couple things that could help us deal with such things as leaders.

ATTITUDE. If we respond to our difficulties positively, determined with God's help to overcome, then we will. If we react in a negative fashion and with a defeated attitude, we will be beaten no matter how smart we are. As Zig Ziglar once said, "Attitude is much more important than aptitude." A study by Harvard University revealed that 85 percent of the reasons for success were because of attitude and only 15 percent because of our technical expertise. Are you ready for your own "attitude check"? John states that we are "overcomers" in 1 John 5:4. The author of Hebrews in 12:2 tells us where to look when times are tough. That is UP. In James 1:2-4 the writer emphasizes that a joyful perspective makes a difference in facing your difficulties.

REALISM. What is it to be realistic when things go wrong? It is simply knowing and doing what is best in the situation. Because we know that God's will is best for us, we must seek His will above ours. Our selfish way is to determine what we should do, whereas God's way is to direct man's heart. Proverbs 16:9 says, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.". And then in Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; he directs it like a watercourse wherever he pleases." If we are unrealistic in our expectations for what we want when hard times hit, then most likely we miss God's will.

ACCEPTANCE. A typical person may respond naturally to difficulty with worry, doubt, indecision and unbalanced emotions. Is it not God's ultimate desire to bring us to a point of accepting His best in the midst of trouble? Peter wrote, "And the God of all grace . . . after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast." (1 Peter 5:10) Restore speaks of "completion" in Christ and when that occurs, we become spiritually mature. Accepting God's outcome is to experience joy and peace in the suffering. Peter wrote, "Do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed." (1 Peter 4:12,13) The moment you accept your difficulties as opportunities to grow and ask God to show you what you can learn, then you will be greatly enriched.



I have already accepted the hard reality that not only will things go wrong in our lives, but they will also go wrong in the church. It is natural. The enemy wants to destroy our Christ-like attitude, which will give us complete hope. He wants us to be unrealistic in our expectations by compromising God's best. Our enemy does not want us to accept God's joy and power that can come as we face trouble. So the next time he says, "Raise your hands!" You can say, "I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength." AND HE WILL.

Pat Phinney
CB North Central Regional Director

WorldVenture

Renewing a Partnership with WorldVenture

Over this past year, CBAmerica has been enjoying a renewed relationship with the WorldVenture family in Littleton, CO. We have witnessed God do some amazing things

in restoring our commitment together towards the mission of making strong disciples for Jesus Christ. Over the past months, we have put in numerous articles that have defined the purpose of this fine organization. It is our blessing and privilege to partner with them in a very strong future. Enjoy some of the recent updates regarding their ministry.

Pat Phinney
CB North Central Regional Director

"In the space between full calendars and numerous responsibilities, eight CBA Regional Executive Directors and the five executive leaders of WorldVenture gathered together on June 22-23, 2016, to seek deeper relational connections among us. Through times in the Word and prayer, sharing, laughter, and meals together, we enjoyed a fellowship together that has been missing in recent years. Together, we expressed our mutual affirmation to the work of healthy relationships, our mutual concerns for making disciples of Jesus Christ in an ever increasing globalized world, and our mutual commitments to the work of Christ in building His Church. We also expressed our desire to take additional steps to improve the communications, the coordination, and the cooperation among us. We prayed for and sensed the smile of God on our time together. These were days and discussions consecrated to the Lord for His glory!"



Jeff Denlinger, President of WorldVenture

-WorldVenture Is Moving Board Decisions Regarding Defined Benefit Pension Plan

To best align their stewardship needs with the WorldVenture standards, the WorldVenture board of directors unanimously approved the following actions at their meeting in April 2016:

- To file with the IRS to terminate WorldVenture's Defined Benefit Pension Plan (DBPP), and



- To authorize the sale of select WorldVenture properties, including the Littleton office property, to infuse proceeds into the DBPP distributions.

[Read More](#)

Pastor's Wives . . . Just For You

"Always Encourage Each Other"

What fun we had over the Fourth of July weekend! We spent three days at my sister and brother-in-law's new 5,000+ sq. foot log home near Huron, SD. It is located on 26 acres with its own pond. Twice a year we join our two families together for a weekend. This time there were twenty four of us (We were missing two). Between my sister and I we have ten grandchildren - ages 12, 11, 11, 11, 10, 9, 7, 7, 6 and 5. That should give you some idea of the activity level. It is always a great time of reconnecting. We played games, went on walks and enjoyed fireworks. There were lots and lots of conversations and we did more than our share of eating.



I think what we experienced this weekend is what fellowship looks like. It was sharing with each other and showing care for one another. Some of us had gone through some extremely hard times since we had been together last. A marriage ended. Two of the children are now living between two homes. Others had experienced some great times. New homes were purchased. There were job promotions. It was a time for us to encourage and rejoice and love.

I'm pretty confident that everyone left that weekend feeling completely loved. Wouldn't it be great if every day could be like that? It can! We should always encourage each other and rejoice together in God's great love for us. This month let's pray that our husbands will always experience that love. Here are some verses to get you started

"I pray that my husband totally understands that as You, God, loved Jesus, He also loves him and he is to abide in His love."

John 15:9

"I pray that my husband has known and believed the love that You, God, have for him and that he who loves You must love his brother also."

1 John 4:16, 21

"I pray that my husband will realize that You, God, demonstrated Your own love toward him in that while he was still a sinner, Christ died for him."

Romans 5:8

As I mentioned earlier, there was lots of food this weekend. We all take turns making meals and providing food. It's a great opportunity to pick up some new recipes. Here are a couple I added to my collection this weekend.

Mexican Corn Salad

1 can yellow corn (drained)

1 can white corn (drained)

1 green pepper (chopped)

2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

1 cup mayo

Chili Cheese Fritos (crushed)

Mix everything together except the Fritos. Add them just before serving.

[Click Here To Print Recipe](#)

Super Popcorn

Fill a big bowl with popped white popcorn.

Melt 1 bag of white chocolate chips and 1 Tbsp. of butter

Stir and then pour over popcorn.

Stir again.

Put sprinkles on popcorn and stir again. (You can use any color. Ginny used red, white and blue for the 4th of July.)

Once it is all mixed, lay it out on waxed paper to dry/harden.

That's it! Enjoy!

[Click Here To Print Recipe](#)



*Karen Phinney
Wife of Regional Director, Pat Phinney*

Thoughts From A Cluster Leader

What is the Basic Character of a Disciple?

One way to think about discipleship is in terms of content, character, and conduct. As followers of Jesus Christ we place an emphasis on what we know, who we are, and what we do.

The foundational content we must know to be disciples of Jesus Christ concerns God, His Word and His salvation. We must know that God exists based on reason, experience, art, faith and extrapolations from science. We must know about His divine nature, His will and his ways as revealed through the creation, the scriptures and His Son, Jesus Christ. We must know the riches of His grace that brings us into union with Christ as His power completes the salvation that was started within us.

The basic character of disciples is to be Spirit-led Servants like Christ. We must experience the filling and the leading of the Holy Spirit that transforms us into servants of God and others and, over the course of a lifetime, makes us more like Jesus Christ. The conduct of Jesus' disciples includes worship, witness and service. We worship the Lord individually, in small groups and corporately as a body. We give a witness with a verbal profession and a lifestyle demonstration of faith. We can give a verbal testimony of our salvation as we live out our faith each day. We serve those in our biological families and our church family, as well as others in our communities, in our country and in the world.

As pastors and ministry leaders, we are disciple-makers. But we are still being made into disciples ourselves. Who are we personally building up as disciples? Who are the people that are forming and shaping us into disciples?

The cluster groups are one place we can meet together for discipleship. As pastors we can support one another, build one another up, encourage and challenge one another. We can strengthen one another in what we know theologically. We can build one another in Christian character and hold one another accountable. We can challenge one another existentially, to live out our lives in faithful obedience. Let's make connections that matter in our area cluster groups of pastors and leaders.

In an article on the website "ChurchLeaders.com" Mike Foster warns that accountability won't work without grace or a suitable meeting place. Too often the results are inadequate because participants can "game the system," using the right words to hide the real issues. Foster insists radical grace must be the foundation for accountability



Wade and Lori Duroe

fueled by saying "yes" to what is good, healthy and beneficial in our lives much more than saying "no" to what isn't. He advocates multiple layers of transparency and connection. He has a group of 10 for accountability, 4 that make a deeper connection and 1 who has full access.

Our fellow pastors in our cluster groups offer an important layer of accountability. Make the most of every opportunity to meet together.

Wade Duroe

Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI

#What'sGoingOnInYourChurch

I've just passed my one-year anniversary as Senior Pastor of Cityview Community Church in Elmhurst, IL. On anniversaries, you almost can't help but reflect on the concluded year. For us here at Cityview, it has been an overwhelmingly exciting season of God doing the unexpected.

Our church, like many hundred-year-old churches, had grown somewhat stale. Numbers were down, divisions were up, and new life was nowhere to be seen. Almost three years without a senior pastor had taken a devastating emotional toll on the remnant. Most of them were considering leaving too. Hiring a young pastor (two, actually, since we had an opening for our associate position as well) brought a certain amount of excitement, as you'd expect. But what really changed the church was a renewed emphasis on mission.

We adopted the motto #LifeOnMission almost immediately, and threw ourselves into a six-month series in Acts to see just what living life on mission meant. Not long after that, we entered into the murky waters of considering a name change. For us, in our cultural

context in the suburbs of Chicago, having the word Baptist in our name proved-time and again-to be a major hindrance to mission. Incredibly, considering the number of people in our church who have been here for decades, the church voted overwhelmingly to make the switch from First Baptist to Cityview. Not a single person left, because they understood the mission. (In fact, we chose Cityview not because you can see the Chicago skyline from our church, but to remind ourselves that our eyes should always be on the city. We are here to reach them!)



That's when the unexpected began to happen. Every week, we had guests in the service. Many were believers already who had moved into the area. But a few were seekers. One had just come to Christ, and desperately needed a community in which to grow. Her son just put his faith in Christ a few weeks ago. Word was-and is-getting out. Our community sees us differently now, because they see new life slowly budding on branches that looked long dead.

To God be the glory as we help people move from seeking Jesus to serving Jesus through the gospel! We are thrilled to be living #LifeOnMission for him!

Brandon Cooper

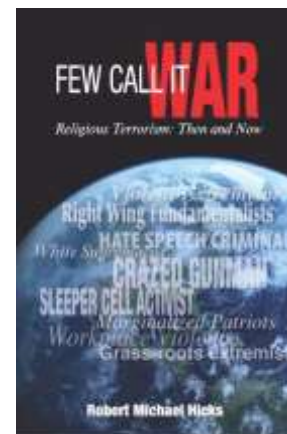
Cityview Community Church, Elmhurst, IL

Book by CBAmerica Chaplain

CBAmerica Chaplain Dr. Bob Hicks New Book:

'*Few Call It War: Religious Terrorism: Then and Now*' [Find out more](#)

Rev. Andy Meverden, Directory of Chaplaincy
Chaplain, Colonel, US Army, Retired



Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition:



Senior Pastor

x

Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL
First Baptist Church - Parkers Prairie, MN
Oak Park Community - Blaine, MN
First Baptist Church - Whitehall, WI
Bazetta Baptist Church - Warren, OH
First Baptist Church - Luverne, MN
First Baptist Church - New Richmond, WI
Wildwood Baptist Church - East Moline, IL



20 Things I Wish I Knew Before Becoming A Pastor

"Let's cut the fluff and get real for a moment. Being a pastor is incredibly difficult." - *Brandon, Higelmann*,
ThomRainer.com [Read More](#)

5 Ways Christians Can Approach The Rapidly Changing Moral Culture

"What's the key to responding when the world around you no longer shares your values or thinks you have anything to add to the cultural discussion?" - *Carey Nieuwhof*,
ChurchLeaders.com [Read More](#)

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What Community **Demographics Should a Pastor Know?

"Sometimes we have ministries that don't actually meet the needs of the community because those ministries are what we've always done." - *Hosted by Jonathan Howe*,
ThomRainer.com [Listen to Podcast](#)



As a **FREE service to the churches of the CB North Central region, we can provide your church with a comprehensive demographic report through MissionInsite. To inquire about a report for your church, email wendyj@cbnorthcentral.org or call the CB North Central office at 763-205-9330.

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How Pastors Should Respond To The Gender Neutral Bathroom Controversy

"One of the worst things you can do is to avoid or ignore difficult moral issues in your preaching." -*ThomRainer.com* [Listen to Podcast](#)

2015 Child Abuse Reporting Laws For Churches

Are you a mandatory reporter of child abuse? For a resource to current child abuse reporting laws for your state [click here](#). -*Church Law and Tax Store*

CB North Central Cluster Groups

North Dakota/Northern MN

To be decided - watch for details.

Steve Daggett, Cavalier Baptist, Cavalier, ND
701-265-8989

Central Minnesota

Monday, August 8, 10am to Noon

Meeting at River of Life Church, Hastings, MN

Steve Schoenwald, River of Life Church, Hastings, MN
651-437-3965

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Cluster Group is on summer break, but will begin in the fall with a Men's Retreat on October 7-9 at Arrowhead Bible Camp. Watch for more details.

Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI
715-723-1054

Illinois

To be decided - watch for details.

Art Georges, Living Hope Community Church, Bartonville, IL
309-633-0028 art@livinghopecentral.org

Michigan

To be decided - watch for details.

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.



CB North Central

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Stay Connected

www.cbnorthcentral.org

