



# CB NORTH CENTRAL

*Connecting Churches Who Love God and the Gospel*

December 2014

## THE CENTRAL CONNECTION



### From the Director

#### "When God Came"

Just over a week ago I was listening to the evening news when I heard this jingle, "Deck the malls with crowds of shoppers . . ." Clearly 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", "Small Business Saturday", "Cyber Monday" and how much money retailers were expected to profit before Christmas. 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. The miracle we call the Incarnation. But what does that mean?

It is the ultimate and final disclosure of the eternal God. It answers 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 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 our 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 we can even imagine.



I am so privileged to serve you as the Regional Director of CB North Central. In these last three years, I have been so blessed in connecting with dozens of churches and hundreds of leaders. Thank you so much for all you do as a pastor, leader and member of the CBNC family. I 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

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## **New Director of Chaplaincy Appointed for CBAmerica**

Al Russell, current Director of Chaplaincy for CBAmerica, announced his plans to retire by mid-2015. As a result Andrew Meverden has been named by the Board of Directors as the new Director of Chaplaincy. To read more details [click here](#).

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## Pastor's Wives. . . Just for You "The Power of Christmas"

I saw something on TV recently about "The Sound of Music". That has to be one of my favorite musicals of all time and I do like musicals. It's hard to think about "The Sound of Music" without having those wonderful songs begin to invade your mind. Before long I was singing "These are a few of my favorite things." It seems appropriate to reflect on "favorite things" during this season - Christmas music, all the lights, the excitement on children's faces, family gatherings, the smells coming from the kitchen and the list goes on and on for each of us.



It is always fun to see Christmas through the eyes of children. Our daughter recently told me about a conversation she had with her 5 year old son. Lincoln said "Santa Claus and Jesus are both magical." Andrea explained to him that Santa is magical, but Jesus is powerful. The things that Jesus does are not magic. He can do those things because he is powerful. That made me think about all the times we hear

about the "magic" of Christmas. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with that, but this year I want to focus on the "power" of Christmas.

When we focus on that power we can have courage. This month as we pray for our husbands, let's pray that they will have the courage they need to do the things that God has called them to do. Here are a few verses to get you started ...

"I pray that You, the eternal God, are my husband's refuge and that You will thrust out the enemy from before him."

- Deuteronomy  
33:27

"I pray that when my husband passes through the waters, You will be with him; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow him. When he walks through the fire, he shall not be burned, nor shall the flame scorch him."

-Isaiah 43:2

"I pray that my husband will be of good courage, and that You shall strengthen his heart, for his hope is in You, Lord."

-Psalm 31:24

"I pray that my husband does not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try him, as though some strange thing happened to him; but that he will rejoice to the extent that he partakes of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, he may also be glad with exceeding joy."

-1 Peter 4:12-13

Last month one of the recipes that we received was inadvertently missed in the newsletter. We want to include that one this month. It sounds like a yummy one!

**[Pumpkin Chocolate Chip Cookies - click here](#)**

This month marks the end of the first year of my contributions to this newsletter. My desire is to encourage pastors' wives. I would love to hear from you. Let me know if you have any ideas of how we can improve. My email address is [kjphinney@gmail.com](mailto:kjphinney@gmail.com).

I want to wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas season. I pray that you will find some quiet time in the midst of the busyness to reflect on that baby in the manger.

Merry Christmas!  
Karen Phinney, Wife of Regional Director



It's time to start planning for the next Moody Pastor's Conference. Yes it's a few months away, but before you know it you'll be wishing you had registered early!

*For more information about speakers, musicians and the 2015 schedule [click on the picture above](#) to go directly to the site.*

Register by **February 28, 2015 through CBNC** for the Early Bird discount.

Conference Registration  
\$200 per person. Includes all sessions and breakout sessions.

Early Bird through Moody is \$230.

x

Conference Registration with Meals

\$300 per person. Includes all sessions and breakout sessions and 10 meals and evening snacks.

Early Bird through Moody is \$330.

x

Conference Registration with Housing and Meals

\$400 per person (double or triple occupancy). Includes all sessions and breakout sessions, a four-night stay in campus housing and 10 meals plus evening snacks.

Early Bird through Moody is \$430. Single occupancy is \$480.

As this event is designed for men in the pastorate, registration for housing and meals are available only to men. Pastors' wives may attend the general sessions (not breakout sessions) without charge or registration.

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## Developing a Healthy Congregation **What Is Really Urgent and Important?**

Calvary Baptist Church, Eau Claire, WI

February 7, 2015, 10am-2pm



Is it your desire to have a spiritually healthy church that is able to make committed disciples of Jesus Christ? Do you desire to have a church that is able to experience a level of reproduction that will impact your community for Jesus Christ? Come to a "Developing a Healthy Congregation" seminar that will be in your area in

2015. Here is your opportunity to take the first step to developing spiritual health in your own church.

For more details and how to register [click here](#).

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### Thoughts From a Cluster Leader

## "Are We Teaching Sound Doctrine?"

Throughout 2014, I have read several articles about the declining view and understanding of the Bible in our country. According to the 2014 "State of the Bible" report by Barna Group and American Bible Society, a majority of U.S. adults (81%) said they consider themselves highly, moderately, or somewhat knowledgeable about the Bible. Yet less than half (43%) were able to name the first five books of the Bible. What's more, though 88% of households own a Bible, only 37% of Americans read it once a week or more. Even worse, the number of those who are Bible engaged, who believe the Scriptures are the Word of God and read the Bible at least four times per week (19%), is equal to the number of Bible skeptics, those who believe that the Old and New Testaments are just books of teaching written by men containing stories and advice.

In the Spring issue of Biola Magazine, Kenneth Berding, professor of New Testament at Talbot School of Theology penned a piece entitled, "The Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy and What We Can Do About It." He writes, "Christians used to be known as "people of one book." Sure, they read, studied and shared other books. But the book they cared about more than all others combined was the Bible. They memorized it, meditated on it, talked about it and taught it to others. We don't do that anymore, and in a very real sense we're starving ourselves to death."

Then this fall, Ligonier Ministries released the findings of a study by Lifeway Research to measure the theological awareness of adult Americans. The State of Theology report revealed significant confusion regarding the doctrine of God, heretical views regarding human nature and sin, that less than half of Americans think the Bible is the Word of God and true, that while 6 out of 10 believe in a literal heaven, less than half polled think you need to believe in Jesus to get there, and that many believe worshiping alone is just as valid as attending corporate worship in the church.

All of this honestly makes me wonder, "What are we pastors and churches doing wrong in our preaching and teaching?" Are we more concerned about being contemporary, cool, or clever, than effectively communicating the

authority and axioms of God's Word. Have we stopped contending for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints because we think people are no longer really interested in theological truth.

More than ever, I believe we spiritual shepherds need to hear and respond to Paul's teaching on the primacy of Scripture. The Apostle wrote Timothy, "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Timothy 4:16), and "For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear" (2 Timothy 4:3). Paul told Titus that an elder "must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it" (Titus 1:9). He also instructed his fellow worker, "You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1).

Over the last eighteen months in our congregation, we have renewed our commitment to teaching sound doctrine. New believers or those eager to learn the basics of Christianity are encouraged to spend half a year learning the fundamentals of the faith. At the same time, older saints have the opportunity to invest two years studying eight courses of systematic theology. And believe it or not, we are finding that many people are hungry to know what and why they believe. These new classes are not only well attended but full of relevant questions and discussion.

We also emphasize the application of theological truth, the "So What?" question. The teachers understand that what a person believes will ultimately impact how they behave. As John MacArthur has written, "Doctrine matters. What you believe about God, the gospel, the nature of man, and every major truth addressed in Scripture filters down to every area of your life. You and I will never rise above our view of God and our understanding of His Word."



The discouraging articles and statistics about the downturn in Bible reading and knowledge may cause some pastors to become cynical about the future of the church. But I refuse to throw in the towel. In spite of cultural trends, "The Word of God is (still) living and active. Sharper than any double-

edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). May our flocks see that you and I are still convinced of this truth each and every opportunity we have to teach sound doctrine.

Pastor Jay Jentink  
Calvary Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA

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## Youth Pastor to Youth Pastor

### "Wise Men Still Worship"

Have you ever opened up Facebook, and after a few short minutes found yourself having a mental seizure? All you wanted to do is connect with a few young people. As you start reading some of the posts, or take a peek at a few pictures, or watch a video or two, before you know it, you are saying to yourself "why did they post that?"

You see a post that seems to have spurred quite a discussion so you scroll down and to your surprise, the 'wisdom' being shared sounds more Kardashian than Christian. And to top it all off, the 'wisdom' being offered has been endorsed by 32 'likes' reinforcing the insanity. What is often noticeably missing is God's perspective on the matter.

It is not a stretch to say the world is not brimming over with godly wisdom. Yes, mankind has made tremendous advances in medicine, technology, etc. that have helped mankind, yet our basic human problem remains unsolved. All the wisdom of the world has not curbed sinful appetites, lessened fleshly desires, or put a stop to rebellious hearts, let alone reconcile mankind to our Creator. What human achievements have given us is more opportunity to give expression to that which is our most basic problem, our sin nature. Yet, God has spoken and has given us wisdom to counter the foolishness in our hearts: it is found in the Bible, God's Word, the Holy Scriptures.



In pre-Facebook Corinth, Paul told the Corinthians that the message (or word) of the Cross is foolishness (moronic) to a world that is perishing, but to those of us who are being saved, it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:18) The "word of the cross," in contrast with the "word of human wisdom" in vs 17, highlights the choice laid out before us: to listen to the wisdom of God revealed in His Word, or be captivated by the wisdom of men. The Jews wanted a religious emotional experience and the Greeks wanted an intelligent new philosophy, but when God spoke the truth of Jesus, all the Jews saw was a scandal and all the Greeks saw was a foolish moron. (1 Cor 1:22-23) Yet Paul said, for us who believe in the Gospel, Jesus has become for us wisdom from God. (2 Cor 1:30)



Caught between a scandal and foolishness is nothing new. Two thousand years ago, some wise men came to Bethlehem looking for the one who was born king of the Jews. Oh what a scandal they created! What a bunch of fools! Why did they come? Matthew tells us they came to WORSHIP baby Jesus, the King. (Matt 2:2) When they

found the house where Jesus was, they bowed down and WORSHIPED Him. (Matt 2:11)

Can you imagine what it would have been like if the wise men had Facebook to upload a few selfies holding baby Jesus? Or someone capturing some raw video footage on their iPhone of these foreign dignitaries bowing down to a baby? I wonder how many 'likes' they would have received. Reading Matthew chapter 2, I do not think the wise men cared what Herod or the chief priests and teachers of the law thought of their quest. The truth was Jesus had come, Jesus is the King, and Jesus must be worshiped regardless of the scandal it might cause or how foolish they might look.

Where do you find yourself this Christmas season? Few people make it their hobby to create scandals and no one in their right mind enjoys looking foolish. Yet, to hold on to the truth of Jesus will put you at odds with a watching world. Jesus entered our world that He might save His people from their sins. (Matt 1:21) Jesus has become for us wisdom from God. Wise men still seek Him. Wise men still WORSHIP.

Matthew D. Slippy, D.Min.  
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P.S. So far this article has 32 'likes' :)

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**Church Law and Tax**



### **The Top 10 Church Management Articles for 2014**

Articles that drew the most interest on ManagingYourChurch.com

- by Michelle Dowell [Read More](#)

### **Church Housing Allowance Benefit Safe - For Now**

Seventh Circuit reverses 2013 decision, but explains how a future challenge could proceed. - by Richard R. Hammar [Read More](#)

### **IRS Announces 2015 Mileage Rates**

Track and report mileage for proper reimbursement. - The Editors [Read More](#)

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## **Please Pray for the Following Churches in Transition**

### **SENIOR PASTOR**

- Mason Township Baptist Church - Cassopolis, MI
- Delavan Baptist Church - Delavan, IL
- First Baptist Church - Elmhurst, IL
- First Baptist Church - Whitehall, WI
- First Baptist Church - Lake Crystal, MN

- First Baptist Church - Pekin, IL
- Palisade Baptist Church - Silver Bay, MN
- Monona Oaks Community Church - Madison, WI
- Cornerstone Community Church - Manchester, IA

#### STAFF POSITIONS

- First Baptist Church - Spring Lake, MI *Associate Pastor*
- First Baptist Church - Worthington, MN *Associate Pastor*

### CB North Central Pastoral Cluster Groups

#### North Dakota/Northern Minnesota

Thursday, January 15, 10am - 12pm Skype  
*Steve Daggett, Cavalier Baptist Church, Cavalier, ND*  
 701-265-8989

#### Central Minnesota

Monday, January 12, 10am - 12pm  
*Steve Schoenwald, River of Life Church, Hastings, MN*  
 651-437-3965

#### Southern Minnesota

To Be Determined  
*Doug Noonkester, First Baptist Church, Sibley, IA*  
 712-754-3310

#### Wisconsin

Thursday, January 8, Noon to 3pm  
 Meeting at First Baptist, New Richmond, hosted by Kevin Morris  
*Wade Duroe, Crossroads Church, Chippewa Falls, WI*



715-723-1054

**Iowa**

Tuesday, January 13th, noon

Meeting at Calvary Church, 501 W Bypass 61, Muscatine, IA

*Jay Jentink, Calvary Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids, IA*

319-396-3233

**Illinois**

Tuesday, January 27, 10:00 - 3:30

Meeting at Bethany Baptist Church, 7422 North Heinz Ln, Edwards, IL

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

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

**Michigan**

To Be Determined

*Mike Wetzig, Ravenna Baptist Church, Ravenna, MI*

231-853-6021

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*From the CB North Central  
Region  
to you and your families.  
May the truth of God's  
greatest  
gift be your assurance and joy  
everyday!*

**Merry Christmas!**

*Pat, Wendy and Amy Jo*

The CBNC office will be closed Dec. 25th - Jan. 5th.

## **CB North Central**

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Wendy Jonasen, Administrative Assistant

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

Office Closed December 25th - January 5th

**Pat Phinney, Regional Director**

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Pat's Cell: 952-500-3743

Stay Connected

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

