

North Central CBA

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Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

April 2009

A Challenge From the Trinity

Bruce Ware has written the book Father, Son & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles and Relevance. The first chapter deals with the importance of this doctrine. He gives ten reasons why it is important. The first is: it is one of the most important distinguishing doctrines of the Christian faith. The tenth reason is that the doctrine of the Trinity - one God existing in three Persons - provides one of the most important and neglected patterns for how human life and human relationships are to be conducted.

One of the distinctives for CB's is the autonomy of the local church. However, over the span of our history autonomy has come to mean independence to the point of ignoring each other. Ware would and does strongly point out that while each member of the Trinity has his own unique role, they never act independently of each other nor do they ever ignore each other.

For some reason, statements that challenge independence are seen as attempts to take away autonomy. Rather than being suspicious of the motives of others, we should ask ourselves why are we fearful of coming together and complementing one another with our individual resources?

The Trinity and the Word of God reveal he has never intended for humans to be alone; he provided Adam with Eve. Solomon in Ecclesiastes records that "two are better than one" and "threefold cord is not easily broken." Jesus never sent the disciples out one by one.

It has been a real blessing to see the birth of Imago Christi in Cedar Rapids. The blessing is not just seeing a new church but seeing Calvary Baptist, Noelridge, Squaw Creek Baptist and FBC Colfax coming together, without threatening their autonomy, each with their own resourcing to help

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Imago start and be sustained. It is also a blessing to see a group of North Central CBA churches in northern Minnesota begin to dream, without threatening their autonomy, about how they can work together to minister to the American Indian population in Red Lake. It is a blessing to see the development of the Bethany Fellowship of churches in Peoria, without threatening their autonomy, and the resourcing that is provided for the churches in this community of churches.

In several of the articles this past year it has been pointed out that Christianity in our culture is facing a major challenge of not just reaching the unsaved but also retaining those who are connected. What is it that we as leaders and local churches can do by modeling the Trinity to advance the Great Commission and Great Commandment?



Don Shaw
Regional Director

donnccbba@triwest.net

Pastor Care: "Ears to Hear--Hear"

Jesus echoes in the Newer Testament (Matthew 11:15; Matthew 13; Mark 4:9, 23; 7:16, etc.) what God the Father, the Psalmists, and the Prophets say in the Older Testament about listening well with the ears a person has been given.

I have been paying a lot of attention to my ears lately. In mid-February, both of my ears "closed"-the left worse than the right-do to a drainage problem. For awhile, I just waited for them to open again. When I finally decided I needed help, it took a week to see the Doctor. A diagnosis of infection, a 10-day medication cycle and a two-week follow-up appointment, produced the news that the infection was cured but the fluid remained. By now it was early April. And I still could not hear well.

The only next step, the Doctor said, was to see a specialist. When I called a specialist, the first answer was that late May was the first new-patient appointment. I protested on the basis of my need. The second answer was April 21st. My expectations for that visit are high-probably too high to actually be realized.

The point of all of this is simply to acknowledge how vitally important it is to hear well from a physical perspective, and more importantly from a

of the church.

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NCCBA

spiritual and relational perspective. The Older Testament is filled with invitations, instructions, and pleadings from God to His people to turn, or tune, or incline, or open their ears to Him.

The history of the Hebrew people is stark evidence of how hard it is to get the hearing back once the ears are blocked or turned away, listening to another voice. I suspect that each of us has experienced this in real time in our lives, either or both, with God and with others who are important to us.

What are the things that block our hearing, or close our ears? There are as many answers to that as there are people reading this article. It can be any experience, any circumstance, any situation that seems to say that God is not present. Or that God does not care for me. Or that God is not fair. Or that God is busy with somebody more important. Or that others have hurt me too much. Or that they never really loved me...and the list goes on ad infinitum, it seems. Actually, these are only the negative things that can block our ears. Many good things can have the same effect. The praise of people can block our ears. Or the offer of a "better" position, at a bigger church, or in a better location, or with more income. Again, the list goes on and on.

The multiplicity of the things that block our non-physical hearing indicate that getting help to unblock it is essential. Whether the help is directly from God through His Word and Holy Spirit, or mediated through another human being, seeking and receiving it as soon as possible is profoundly important. As soon as you know that your hearing is impaired, get help. Find someone who will listen to you, who has some insight into listening to God and others, and who can offer you advice on how to move toward reopening your ears. As one hearing aid advertisement put it: "You should hear what you're missing."

God desires that you might hear all of what He wants to say to you. That is why His Word consistently and constantly declares that His ear is inclined toward you, waiting to hear from you. Why keep Him and yourself waiting? Even if you are afraid of what you are going to hear, get on with it now. To paraphrase another advertisement, for engine oil this time, "You can hear me now, or you can hear me later." The obvious implication is that the costs of not hearing continue to increase.

"He who has ears, let him hear." (Matthew 11:15; 13:9). Jesus is listening.

Nicholas D. Bell LMFT

Stillman Valley, IL

www.nccba-gc2.com

WEBSITE

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RESOURCES**

GOOD IDEA section:

Pasta Palooza

We have been providing a free meal for our community each Thursday night - we call it Pasta Palooza! The turn out has been really good and we get to sit and talk with people who would otherwise not set foot in a church. We went to the local trailer parks, newspapers etc. to advertise. We accept no donations - it is absolutely free!



Also, I just finished doing a six week parenting conference for the community. The local county-sponsored youth association asked me. It was held in the public library and we had 14 families where the parent(s) came every week. Three of those families now attend our church! God is granting us favor in our community - times are tough but the light of Jesus is really shining forth!

*Kevin Shorkey
Hillside Bible Church, Ortonville MI*

YOUTH SECTION:

Here is a story that I am sure any youthworker can relate to...

It's the first Sunday in February and I skipped my usual afternoon nap because today is Superbowl Sunday. Last night I made a run to Wal-Mart and purchased ten bags of chips, eight twelve packs of soda, six bags of pizza rolls and five pounds of ground beef in preparation for the mammoth event. If you asked the 40 students coming to my home the names of the teams playing in the big game, over half of them would have little to no idea who. They don't care and ultimately neither do I. This is just another day - a day in the life of a youth worker.

Before the kids arrive I run down the checklist of things I need to have ready. Food - check. Beverages - check. HDTV - check. Guitar Hero - check. Everything is in order. The doorbell begins to ring and slowly but surely kids begin to arrive. The first thing that they go for is the food. One of my volunteers has brought homemade cheesecake which seems to be the most popular menu item of the day. Next, people begin to assume their positions upon various couches, chairs, pillows and floor space. Soon, some wrestlers arrive and they try not to look at the food on the table. This

is because they need to keep weight and avoid all temptations of gaining even one little pound. As the football game begins, it is not hard to recognize that there are very few people interested in the game. After a boring first half, other events begin to ensue. Some students bust out various board games such as "Apples to Apples" and there are a few more who head downstairs to see who the master at "Guitar Hero" is. There are also those who find contentment in throwing a "hackey sack" 60 MPH across the living room.

Half time is my cue to put the pizza rolls in the oven. When they come out piping hot I dare a middle schooler to put an entire one in his mouth as fast as possible. His reaction as he spits the blazing hot ball of fire into his hands was well worth the free price of admission! When I come back and sit down on the couch, I notice that something seems to be protruding from behind the cushions. It's a middle school girl who has wedged herself deep within the confines of the couch, trying to be the last one found in a mass game of "hide and seek." As the third quarter rolls on, student after student looks around the couch, behind the couch and after a few fake coughs and dramatic gestures later, the girl emerges in a victorious sweaty mess. Minutes later, she would prove her hiding dominance again, as she folds herself into a suitcase for over fifteen minutes.

With a couple minutes left in the game, it appears that the Steelers are going to win. Shortly thereafter, headlights begin to bounce off the house and students filter out. Some say "Thanks," but most do not. I make the rounds and collect plates, napkins and pop cans that have only been 10% finished. I break out the vacuum and begin the cleaning process. Naturally, I don't get too over zealous because I know that middle schoolers will be back in less than 30 hours to drop various pastries and spill orange juice on my carpet during prayer groups. I turn the TV off, grab my Bible and begin to unwind and read from God's word. It's peaceful and still in my house once again.

A week later I called the Maytag repairman to see if he could fix my dryer. When he asked, "What happened?" I did not bat an eye nor lead him to believe that there just might have been a 150 lb high school student in there while playing hide and seek. That would have been just plain irresponsible. Can I get an AMEN?!?!?

Many would scoff that a Superbowl Party could actually be considered ministry. I'm sure a better youth worker would have turned the TV off at half time and "snuck" in a gospel presentation somehow. I can't say lives were changed for eternity but then again, who knows? What I do know is that each of us are called to love God and to love others the best that we can. There is not a single student who will remember the score of the game but I pray that they will always remember a tangible person who

loves and accepts them - a person who will double dare them to put a blazing hot pizza roll in their mouth right out of the oven. I'm sure that's what Jesus would do! May the Lord bless you and the calling He has placed on your life in the coming months and years ahead.

*Craig Sanborn
First Baptist Church, Long Prairie MN*

WHY 501(c)3?

Why is belonging to an association such as North Central CBA important? One of the benefits is 501(c)3 status--all our member churches are covered.

(Reprinted from Church Finance Today, September , 2008)

YOUR FINANCE QUESTIONS

Q: I am aware that churches risk the loss of their tax-exempt status if they participate in political campaigns. Several people in our congregation would like for our church to be more politically active. **As a practical matter, what difference would it make if we lost our tax-exempt status?**

A: Loss of your church's exemption from federal income taxation would have several consequences, including the following:

- The church's net income would be subject to federal income taxation.
- The church's net income would be subject to state income taxation (except in the few states not having an income tax)
- Donors no longer could deduct charitable contributions they make to the church
- The church would be ineligible to establish or maintain 403(b) tax-sheltered annuities
- The church could lose its property tax exemption under state law
- The church could lose its sales tax exemption under state law
- The church could lose its exemption from unemployment tax under state/ federal law
- The church could suffer an adverse impact on its zoning classification
- The church could lose its preferential mailing rates
- The church could lose its exemption from registration of securities under state law
- Nondiscrimination rules pertaining to various fringe benefits (including an employer's payment of medical insurance premiums) would apply
- In some cases a minister's housing allowance may be affected
- In some cases the exempt status of ministers who opted out of Social Security may be affected
- The significant protections available to a church under the Church Audit Procedures Act may no longer apply
- The exemption of the church under the state charitable solicitation law may be affected
- The exemption of the church from the ban on religious discrimination under various federal and state civil rights laws may be affected
- The exemption of the church from the public accommodation provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act may be affected

Upcoming Events

Pastors and Wives Retreat April 23-25

Heidel House Resort Green Lake WI

NCCBA Annual meeting April 24

Heidel House, Green Lake WI

Youth Pastors/Spouse Retreat April 24-26

Heidel House Resort Green Lake WI

WORSHIP SUMMIT May 1-2

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Conference for worship leaders

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

NCCBA Churches In Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- Squaw Creek Baptist Church--Marion IA YOUTH & WORSHIP
- Ganson Street Baptist Church--Jackson MI YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Colfax IA YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Streator IL
- First Baptist Church--Sibley IA
- Oak Grove Church--Golden Valley MN
- First Baptist Church--Worthington MN

Contact Our Office

North Central CBA - Jean Wright - 715-538-2298 - nccba@trivest.net

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