

North Central CBA

E-Central E-mail



Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

August 2009

A Financial Pandemic Is Sweeping the Country

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By Church Mutual Insurance Company

There is an employee at your religious organization you have known and trusted for a long time. She is a delight to work with and is an excellent representative of your office to the entire congregation and community. What happens when it is discovered she has been quietly embezzling thousands of dollars from the organization's funds?

"It was absolutely horrible," said the Rev. Larry Scharmann of Oak Meadow United Methodist Church in San Antonio, Texas. Scharmann is all too familiar with that scenario.

"The person was such a wonderful woman with the church. She opened her heart and knew everyone and everything going on," Scharmann said. "I thought her enthusiasm for the church was genuine."

In 2006, an employee of Scharmann's organization was silently writing checks to herself and purchasing items from a national club retailer for her and her husband with Oak Meadow's credit card. In the end, she had bilked the religious organization out of \$30,000.

Embezzlement and employee dishonesty are a harsh reality for the majority of religious entities in the United States. A 2007 study by researchers at Villanova University found 85 percent of religious organizations surveyed had discovered embezzlement activity within the previous year.

John Peters from Peters & Associates, a forensic accounting firm in Brookfield, Wis., has witnessed Scharmann's situation time and time again over the years.

"The problem is more frequent than you think it is," Peters said. "It's not an isolated occurrence, and there are many, many church-related institutions that consistently suffer financial losses. It's a pandemic."

Warning signs of embezzlement

A review of fraud claims filed with Church Mutual Insurance Company revealed that 42 percent of the time the treasurer is the person involved in the embezzlement and/or fraud. Accounting experts say there are signs to look for if embezzlement is suspected in a religious organization.

- o Excuses by the person in charge of the finances to avoid an audit
- o Failure to keep the check register with the checkbook
- o Failure to provide financial reports at meetings
- o Very protective of his/her job

Peters also points out that hiring staff at a religious organization should be approached with caution.

"You should be wary in the hiring process - especially if someone seems to be too eager to get the job," Peters said. "Some people apply at churches because they know they'll have easy access to money and the trust of the staff. My advice would be to conduct background checks even if it's a voluntary position."

When Scharmann found out about the embezzled money, he realized that trust is a valued commodity in this world.

"You never know what someone is going through or what they're capable of," Scharmann said.

And speaking from experience, Peters has seen astronomical embezzlement amounts.

"Getting to \$15,000, \$20,000 or even \$100,000 is no problem," Peters said. "I've seen others take well over \$1 million."

What can be done to prevent employee theft or dishonest practices when it comes to the finances of the organization? Here are 10 prevention steps to take immediately:

1. Use a check-and-balance system - Do not allow one person to have control of financial transactions.
2. Reconcile bank accounts every month - Examine canceled checks and bank statements.
3. Restrict credit card use - Limit the number of credit card users, set account limits and require original receipts for all purchases.
4. Provide oversight of the financial activity to be reviewed by a committee.
5. Create specific policies for cash disbursements, expense reimbursements and petty cash.
6. Ensure assets are used only for business purposes - Vehicles, cell phones and equipment.
7. Create a standardized document for all cash handling - Document specific reasons money changes hands.
8. Protect checks against fraudulent use - Require two signatures on all checks.
9. Protect cash and check collections - Reconcile cash receipts daily.
10. Restrict online bank account use - If possible, require all transactions be done with hard copies.

Lessons learned

Scharmann learned many valuable lessons from his experience with a dishonest employee three years ago.

In fact, the experience changed the way his entire religious organization conducts business.

"Now we require two signatures on every check, and we keep closer tabs on the financials," Scharmann said. "We have monthly meetings, and we've set up a separate committee to take a detailed look at everything. It's made us more aware of the policies we need to have in place-and we've strengthened those policies 100 percent."

Consider electing a board of directors to establish financial policies. The board should be responsible for overseeing the following activities:

- o Monitor financial activity
- o Monitor and review any variation from budgeted amounts
- o Review if payroll taxes are paid promptly
- o Approve financial procedures
- o Work with auditors to explain financial statements annually

The current poor economic environment has no influence on employee dishonesty and embezzlement.

"Good economy or bad economy; Thursday or Friday-it doesn't matter. It happens all over the country any time of the year or any year. It's a problem that's been around for decades," Peters said.

Trust is such an important part of our social connections to friends, families, communities and congregations. Unfortunately, that trust is broken all too often in religious organizations.

"Trust is nice," Peters said. "But 'trust me' is not a good philosophy when it comes to financials."

Assessment Team Ready to Go

In the May issue of the North Central CBA newsletter I presented the concept of developing ministry teams that would be available for helping to resource churches to be more effective in reaching the unsaved and to plant new churches.

We are pleased to announce the Assessment Team is trained and ready to go. This July, Andrew Brown, First Baptist, Long Prairie, MN; Phil Butler, First Baptist, Colfax, IA; Eldon Carlson, Bloomer Baptist, Bloomer, WI and Bruce Kalish, Sparta Baptist, Sparta, MI completed training with Natural Church Development (NCD). Additionally Art Cotant, Discovery Church, St Cloud, MN and Doug Bytwerk, First Baptist, Spring Lake, MI are in the final Stages of another assessment option. All of the members of the team have been in an assessment or will be. They are experienced pastors who have a deep love for the Word of God and for His church.

The concept of an assessment has a Biblical foundation. The apostle Paul in effect assessed the churches he wrote both commending them and pointing out areas of real concern. In Revelation 2-3 we have God the Son speaking to seven churches. He either commends, condemns or both each church as well as giving a prescription as to what they must do. Having an assessment does not mean you will suddenly become a better

In This Issue

PASTOR CARE
YOUTH PASTORS
CHAPLAINCY
GOOD IDEAS: Mission Team
Leadership Change
Attn: MN Pastors
Giese Retreat
Ministry Quick Links
Microsoft software
Upcoming Events
Contact Our Office

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

church and that you will automatically see the unsaved being converted in massive numbers. However it will help you to see where there are areas that could be roadblocks to both growth through conversion and growth in spiritual maturity as a body of Christ.

We would encourage you to prayerfully consider utilizing this resource. If you would like to know more about NCD and the process contact our office.

Don Shaw
Regional Director
donnccba@triwest.net



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 church.**

Give us a call at 715-538-2298.

Valuable Information About Your Church's Area

PASTOR CARE: **Family Milestones: Guide to the Future**

The Old(er) Testament is filled to overflowing with information about families and the milestones in the lives of those families. A large portion of it is about prominent families such as kings and military leaders. To a lesser degree some rather common "unimportant people" are also told about, marking periods of transition, stress or unusual blessing. In either case, we discover that significant events become the moments that are remembered with stories repeated for generations. Those stories become the guide for future generations to follow.

Sometimes the guidance is negative. Many of the Old(er) Testament kings are described as being evil like their father or grandfather. Unfortunately, some are reported to be more evil than their ancestors. One the other hand, some were commended because he followed in the path of his predecessor who was godly.

Our family has had the joy in the last week to mark some significant family milestones that hopefully will guide us and our children to make choices similar to those of our predecessors. One of those events is the 70th Wedding Anniversary of my wife's parents. Her father celebrated his 91st birthday the same day. Her mother celebrated both her 89th birthday and the 70th anniversary of their engagement to be married on the same day in June. What a privilege and honor to gather together as a family to celebrate God's blessings on them through the years.

The day after that celebration, the annual reunion of my father-in-laws family took place. Family members from various places made the effort to

Customized demographic information available about your church location. This is a free service for all NCCBA churches. Call Don at 715-538-2298 or visit:

www.Link2Lead.com

Ministry Quick Links

[CBAmerica](#)
[Link2Lead](#)
[\(demographic info\)](#)

[Illinois State Youth Fellowship](#)
Microsoft Software and More

Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2007 is \$127 plus \$30 for the installation media.

Other Microsoft products, Adobe and hardware are also available. Call Jean at the office, 715-538-2298, for price quotes and to order.

gather to renew and strengthen relationships damaged by the separations of time, space, busy-ness, and diverse interests. It was our joy to have all of our children and grandchildren "home" to join in these significant events.

During the anniversary celebration a CD of pictures was shown. One of those was of Gammie Maas, my mother-in-law's mother. She had passed on to the family the tradition of always standing outside to wave good-bye to those who were leaving. What a wonderful expression of care and honor for visitors and friends who have graced our lives with part of their time and energy. Grammie Maas is famous in the family for such a simple and yet powerful act.

My point is simple, take time to mark and celebrate the milestones in your family. It lifts up the value and significance of each family member, and it serves as a guide to those who follow in future generations. Perhaps I value such events more because my family of origin did not observe the milestones-they just slid by without notice. My parents' birthdays and anniversaries were never celebrated. I look back on that reality with sadness and a sense of loss.

Take time to make people and the significant developments in their lives important in your families so that the heritage can be passed on and God's blessings can be multiplied generation after generation.

Yours in Christ's love,

Nicholas D. Bell, LMFT
Stillman Valley, IL

YOUTH PASTORS: New Year

The 2009 - 2010 school year is here and of course the big question is "Are you ready?!" If you are anything like me you have been dreaming since the end of last school year of many changes and tweaks that you just knew you would have time to look into over your relaxed summer. How did you do on that one? For myself, I am looking at the calendar and wondering where the summer went. I thought I would jot down a few things that might help us all make the most of what's left of our prep time for this coming year.

One of my favorite sayings is this, "The main thing is the keep the main thing, the main thing". In other words don't let the stress and concern of kicking off this new year well, keep you from tapping into the only resource that will help you kick this new year off well. Keep your

NCCBA

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 Don at the office, 715-538-2298.

**Father, Son & Holy
Spirit:
Relationships,
Roles & Relevance**

This book by Bruce Ware is available from the NCCBA office for \$10.

Highly recommended. Email the office at nccba@triwest.net

personal devotional time strong, maybe even amp it up during this time. No matter how well we plan we won't know exactly what this year will bring, so it's good to keep in touch with the God who does.

Second, invest in your leaders. Before you go investing all of your money (insert chuckle here) in the latest greatest curriculum, video or get-to-know you game, stop and ask what would help the adult leaders of my group be better leaders this year. Design a get together for training, sharing and planning of the year. This way they can feel better equipped, recognize their growth as a leader and feel like they are a part of the process. There is nothing worse than a leader receiving all the information just before the teens do (unless of course they get it after - oops). Investment in the adult leaders in your group is a replicating investment that widens the influence you can have with the teens God has put in your care.

Next, hit the school campuses even before the teens get there. Typically I just go in to get reacquainted with the staff and pick up the academic, sports and extracurricular calendars, but I'm gonna try something new this year. I'm thinking of bringing in donuts or some other goodie to say thank you to the staff for the investment that they are making in teenagers. Even though we may not always agree on material or method, there is no denying that the school staff has significant influence on the teen scene in our circle of influence. Why don't you take some time with me this year to recognize them with me?

Ok now let's try and get a handle on teaching for the year. I am not going to recommend any one curriculum to you because there are so many great resources out there, but I do want to offer a caution. If you are the kind of person who likes to have the years topics lined up in advance that is great, but for the first several nights it might be wise to check out the pulse of this new group. I know that it might seem like you see the same kids every year, but we really should get to know these teens fresh from their older siblings. We can't assume because the group of the past was very verbal that this group will immediately be answering questions. We can't assume because no one wanted to sing last year that music is still not going to fly. While not all our faces change, many do so let's get a pulse of the new group before we plan too much detail into our year. We might have to scratch it all and go a whole new direction anyway.

Lastly, and probably most importantly, let's talk about parents. One of the most common complaints from parents is a lack of communication. There are ways that we can set things up from the beginning of the year to better our communication with parents. How far could we go with our calendars? We could start with offering the dates of the events that you

attend every year and any other dates that we know already. Could we have a quarterly parent meeting for explanations and questions? We might be able to recruit many more parents to support, participate or help if they heard some of our stories and better understood the method behind our ministries. The point is that you get much further when you enlist parents as allies, rather than just trying to avoid them like obstacles.

I just love this time of year because I feel like there is more room to consider new possibilities. You don't have to take a very long look around to see we have a very creative God. Five minutes with a class of Junior Highers should do it. Let's make the time this year to set ourselves up at the beginning for better success. I have been doing this youth ministry thing for over 10 years now, but I don't think I am some sort of Youth Ministry Guru or anything. The truth is I am really just making a list of all the things I have to do over the next couple weeks, and I figured I would take you along for the ride. God's best to you and to the youth ministry He is doing through you.

Dan Norman
Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries
First Baptist Church, Whitehall WI

CHAPLAINCY:

CBAmerica Chaplain Prays for the US House of Representatives

Air Force Chaplain Mark Campbell had the honor to open the session of the US House of Representatives. July 23rd, 2009. He was invited by Congressman Don Young of Alaska. Mark and his wife Shelly are stationed in Washington and Mark works for the Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense, (Military Community and Family Policy). He is the chaplain for Military One Source. Shelly is an Air Force nurse. We often hear chaplains are not able to pray in or mention the name of Jesus when they pray. If you go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7aLiSmxgNI&feature=channel> you can see Mark's prayer as he closes in the name of his Savior Jesus Christ. You can see Congressman Don Young's introduction of Mark on youtube as well at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqRPMakybKI&feature=channel_page

Mark said they received a special tour of the Capitol, went out on the

Speaker's Balcony, saw the Congressional Prayer Room (stained glass of George Washington praying Psalm 16 and open Bible on altar!), went into the Senate and heard debate on Air Force jet engines, and had some good time with their Congressman, Don Young, and his wife, Lu, and their staff.



Mark said he came away with a much deeper appreciation for a country that has chaplains in the House and Senate, daily prayers, frequent Bible studies and prayer groups, and shows in the many paintings and sculptures the unequivocal Christian foundation of our nation. He and Shelly are pictured with Fr. Coughlin (House

Chaplain), and Rep. Don Young. Pray for our chaplains. God gives them unique opportunities to speak for Him in places most of us can't go. Pray for boldness and clarity of message as they share. For more information about chaplaincy contact Al Russell at 218-776-2813 or at chapru@earthlink.net .



Mission Team from SE Minnesota Serves in

the Dominican Republic

A mission team of 23 persons from Southeast Minnesota recently served in the Dominican Republic. Being sent out by New Life Church in Wanamingo and Faith Community Church in West Concord, the team was in the DR from July 17-26. They were involved in teaching children, church construction, neighborhood outreach, and family training.

The team partnered with Primera Iglesia Bautista (First Baptist Church), a church in Hato Mayor, the capital of a province. The team stayed there and worked alongside its people. This church has established 8 or 9 mission churches in its region. One of the mission churches is on the coast in a town called Miches, about an hour and a half from Hato Mayor. About half the efforts of the team were focused on Miches.

The team led Vacation Bible School for children at three sites, involving about 300 children. Another focus was neighborhood outreach in three communities. A number of adults made professions of faith. Also, the team put in lots of hard work on 2 church buildings. At the Miches site, the foundation and several courses of block for the wall were laid. At another site, a floor was installed in an upper level for the pastor's living quarters.

In addition, a conference on the family was presented at the central church in Hato Mayor. Pastor Pat McBride from New Life Church led the conference, with about 300 in attendance. Several team members were involved in presenting a creative pantomime called "The Perez Family," which was used to introduce conference topics.

This was the fourth year a team was sent. "Being part of the team really challenges you to grow in your faith," says Pastor Pat McBride of New Life Church in Wanamingo. "When team members see God's working in a third-world culture, they realize that God wants to use them at home as well. It's a great lesson in humility and servanthood to flex and adapt to the Dominican culture."

Members of the team included both adults and older teens. The multi-generational nature of the team allowed for some very positive interaction and discipleship. The team this year faced some challenging tasks and a demanding schedule. But working alongside Dominican believers, who demonstrate serious commitment to Christ, was a challenge to all.

*Submitted by Pat McBride
New Life Church, Wanamingo MN*

CBAmerica Leadership Change

On July 22nd I submitted my resignation as Executive Director of CBAmerica. The Executive Committee has asked me to continue to serve through our January Board meetings, if possible, to facilitate a smooth transition. Cathy and I are seeking God's direction for our next ministry chapter, and we are open to whatever He reveals to us. Our first inclination is toward local church involvement as Senior Pastor.

Regarding CBAmerica, the model that was created in the spring of 2004 is continuing to evolve, and I feel that the transitioning that I was called to lead has taken place. In the next phase there will need to be adjustments of structure and roles. I am stepping aside to empower that process. I celebrate the momentous change we have gone through, the power of godly relationships and shared vision that is permeating the regions, and the victories that have been won. Working with the REDs, we have transitioned toward the model proposed in 2004 to the Board and constituency. God has graciously allowed me to be a part of that process.

At this point I feel strongly that God has released me from the leadership of CBAmerica. It is increasingly clear that the task for which I was employed has been completed, and with that sense of accomplishment, it is time for me to distance myself from the next stage. We anticipate even more effectiveness between and among the member Regions as the relational model of trust and interdependence is further developed, and we will pray with you to that end.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you through these years of change and fresh vision.

Stephen LeBar

Attention: Minnesota Pastors

August 1, 2009, marriage licensing laws changed in Minnesota. Two items to note are: 1) a minister must be 21 to perform marriages, and 2) the Educator's Statement for reduced marriage license fees must be notarized and on letterhead. If you would like a summary of the law changes, contact us at 715-538-2298 or go to www.leg.state.mn.us for the full statute under Chapter 517 Marriage. This is HF695/SF548 of the 2009 Legislative Session.

Giese to Speak at Pastors and Christian Workers Retreat in November

Marty Giese, Senior Pastor at Faith Baptist Church in Park Rapids, MN and co-author of the book "Leading Through Change" will be the speaker for a Pastors and Christian Workers Retreat in northern Wisconsin, October 8-10.

Brad Eidsen of Camp Forest Springs lists "Three reasons why you should join this retreat."

- Rest and relaxation in a premier camp environment
- Fellowship and group interaction with peers that understand your context
- Leadership training that applies to your ministry setting.

You can expect:

- Presentations that respect the multiple challenges of ministry in Town and Country churches. The issue is not "pro small church/anti big church" nor "pro big church/anti small church." But "pro effective church." (Numerical size is a far less significant issue, and is typically a by-product of effectiveness + contextual potential.)
- Emphasis on effectiveness in leadership and ministry (not numbers) Develop a fresh perspective on your current ministry - see its potential and move from faithfulness to fruitfulness.
- Professional training and personal encouragement
Develop sensitivity to context, effectiveness in ministry, and find encouragement for your soul.

If you or someone you know would like to register for this event, visit the Camp Forest Springs [website](#) to register, or call the camp at 715-427-5241.

Upcoming Events

Youth Adventure Mission (YAM) Training for Youth Leaders

Wisconsin/Minnesota Labor Day Weekend
Contact Adam Zappetta 715-246-2700 (Wisconsin) [email for Adam](#)
or Craig Morris 218-927-2728 (Minnesota) [email for Craig](#)

Iowa CBA Annual Meeting October 12 & 13 Call Phil Butler 515-674-3752

Pastors & Christian Workers Retreat with Marty Giese [Info & Registration](#)
Camp Forest Springs November 8-10
Westboro WI

Cluster Leadership Training November 10 & 11 Lansing, Illinois
with Bill Hoyt

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--Jackson MN YOUTH PASTOR (part-time)
- First Baptist Church--Elk Horn IA

WELCOME to John Schmidtke, the new Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church in Streator, Illinois, beginning September 9.

Contact Our Office

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

North Central Conservative Baptist Association | P.O. Box 568 | Whitehall | WI | 54773