

## North Central CBA

## E-Central E-mail



Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

December 2007

## CHRISTMAS: THE SEASON FOR GIVING

Christmas is a time when we especially think of tangibly expressing the love and compassion of Christ. CBAmerica maintains two accounts for crisis situations. The "*Compassion Fund*" is used to aid those in ministry. Sometimes it is unexpected medical expenses; other times it is loss of property from natural disasters. This fund also assists ministers with uninsured losses and uninsured medical expenses.

The other account is the "*Aid To Churches In Tragic Situations*" (*ACTS*) that assists churches damaged by hurricanes, fires, floods, hail storms, tornadoes, typhoons and hail. In 2005, the appeal was sent out to the churches to build up a fund for response to Hurricane Katrina. Over \$600,000 was generously given, and storm relief has been sent to the Gulf area through partnership with DELTA, to the Philippines, Indonesia, Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

These accounts need to be replenished or they will soon be depleted. With the fires and storms wreaking havoc across the country, many of the CB churches and ministers have been impacted. **Would you consider a special offering to allow CBAmerica to continue relief efforts?** Contributions can be sent to **CBAmerica, 3686 Stagecoach Road, Suite F, Longmont CO 80504** marked "**Compassion**" or "**ACTS.**" Or visit the [CBAmerica website](#)

## Christmas Missiology

Two years ago the Christian community was excited during the Christmas season because the film version of "The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe" was released. Even though the story was a fantasy, it clearly had a Christian perspective.

This Christmas season a new film is being released: "The Golden Compass." It too is a film version of fantasy. However the author of this fantasy despised C.S. Lewis because of his Christian worldview. It is my understanding that the underlying premise of this fantasy is that God must be done away with in order for mankind to enjoy true freedom. I think if one is at all familiar with the account of Eve and the serpent regarding the

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forbidden fruit in the Garden a similar assertion was made, "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God knowing good and evil."

While this film is a cause for concern I believe there is something else that we should be concerned with. Recently I have been reading Listening To The Beliefs Of Emerging Churches. In reflecting on what I have read, it seems to me there are two streams of thinking.

Both sides agree that the Church in our culture has a missiological challenge. In light of this, one side is saying that in order to meet this challenge we need to rethink our theology and doctrine. I would hope and expect that those who align with CB's would realize that rethinking theology and doctrine as a missiological strategy is not an option. This is particularly true if the core tenets of Christianity are up for grabs. Unrepentant sinners are currently under God's wrath and each day they live they are one day closer to hell. This may sound harsh but it is an absolute truth that must be declared.

The other side is saying that we must keep our core theology and doctrine but address our methods. In this segment of the emerging church there is a passion for the Church to leave the fortress and come alongside the unchurched. To put it another way, they want to find ways in which to win the unchurched not just by the power of the argument, but by the power of the loving lives of professed believers.

Christmas is not only a time to show the accuracy of the Biblical prophecies concerning the birth of the Messiah. It is also an ideal time to show the unchurched what knowing the Messiah does in our lives. In an effort to show the difference in a constructive way one of the CB churches in Portland, Oregon, last year asked those who were part of the church do something radical. Rather than spend money on gifts, offer only gifts of service to family and friends and give the money ordinarily spent for a special offering to be used to impact their community. The people gave in excess of \$50,000. The church is relatively new and was planted in the inner-city. It was decided that a significant portion of the money be given to an underfunded neighborhood public school.



Showing the unchurched what knowing Jesus does is not just limited to Christmas. It is a daily challenge for all of us who passionately love God to love all those who come into our sphere of influence. As we know, love is a verb. We know this by the fact that God the Son became a servant who willingly died on the cross for sinners such as us.

As we celebrate the good news of Christmas, let us

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**Ministry Quick Links**

be the good news to those who we meet.

Merry Christmas

*Don Shaw, Regional Director*  
[donnccbba@triwest.net](mailto:donnccbba@triwest.net)

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## Pastor Care: THE TENSION

Fully absorbed! That is what we are right now, absorbed in all the wonderful activities of the Christmas-shopping, baking, writing Christmas letters and cards, cooking, children's programs, wrapping presents, planning gatherings, being with family and friends-not busyness as usual-unusual busyness. It is exciting and fun and exhausting and wonderful and draining. And then, too soon and not soon enough, it is all over.

We pause to catch our breath, to rest and regain our strength and our equilibrium, and stark reality bursts upon us-2007 is coming to an end and 2008 is about to rush in to fill the empty place. The moment of rest and peace is shattered by the incessant demand that we, as well as time, move on into the future.

The turning of the calendar to a new year always carries some tension with it. That tension needs to be acknowledged and handled well. There are both healthy and unhealthy ways to deal with those really important issues that cause us tension.

Perhaps the first issue that comes to heart and mind is how to deal with the failures of the past year. As we review what has taken place in '07 I suspect and hope that we will be aware of times and ways that we have made mistakes, done wrong, committed sins. Perhaps the worst condition would be our failure to recognize that this is true. Denial is the blindness of the soul that blocks our ability to respond to failure positively and allows the residual effects to fester and poison our lives continually. The second worst thing would be to attempt to minimize, excuse, defend, justify or disguise those sinful failures.

Some of the failures that we are aware of are perhaps not actually sinful; they are just the result of our limitations as human beings. We had hopes and plans and desires that did not materialize because we simply lack the ability and the resources to make them a reality. That is one of the dangers of setting lofty goals and dreaming grand dreams.

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**Microsoft Software and More**

Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2007 is \$122 plus \$35 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.

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[www.nccba-gc2.com](http://www.nccba-gc2.com)

WEBSITE

Although it is difficult to make the distinction between these sorts of failures, doing so is important. The ones that involve sin require a different kind of response. They require confession and repentance before God, and more likely than not, to those offended by our sinful choices. They may also require recompense and efforts to repair the damage done. On the other hand, we need to be careful of condemning ourselves for being limited. If we lacked the ability to make these things happen, we damage ourselves worse by "guilting" ourselves for being human. Yes, we do use this fact as an excuse for sin sometimes. However, its usefulness as an excuse exists only because it is a truth that needs to be acknowledged and accepted as reality in other situations. If we do not properly recognize this truth, we essentially put ourselves in God's place, believing that we should be all-powerful and in control. In any case, it is important to become aware of and grieve the losses that are involved in these failures. Grieving well the real losses we suffer is absolutely essential to our physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. Too often we try to escape or short-circuit grieving because it is painful and hard work. However, dealing with loss with honesty and integrity enables us to move ahead with joy and peace, as well as with energy and determination.

This brings us to the other side of the coin concerning the past year, and that is acknowledging and celebrating the successes and accomplishments of '07. Let me mention in passing that there is grieving to be done well here also, since every good change brings with it some loss. We are prone not only to ignore, forget, dismiss the failures but also the successes of the year. Thus we fail to give thanks to God, to other people, and in fact to ourselves for that which has been done well and produced good and lasting benefit. It is important to share this celebration with all those who are significant to us and to that which is celebrated. Perhaps one of the last "official" acts of the year should be specific and tangible celebrations of the contributions of others to the accomplishments achieved.

Dealing in a health-producing way with the past year is part and parcel of beginning the new year well. We set goals, we make resolutions (decisive commitments), and dream more dreams, concerning the year and years ahead. We look for what God is calling us toward. We listen to hear His quiet whisper. We look to see His hand at work so that we can join Him in what He is doing. The tension between that past and the future are often resolved by applying God's truths appropriately to the one so that we are free to embrace the other with wholeness and enthusiasm.

I trust that some of these musings will kindle helpful memories of things you doubtless already know. Perhaps others may open a vista that has been veiled until now, kindling a new understanding of something God would

like to bring into your life. In either case, I wish you both a wonder-and-joy-filled Christmas and profoundly blessed 2008.

*Nicholas D. Bell, LMFT*  
*Interim Pastor, First Baptist Church*  
*Streator, Illinois*

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## **A NEW YEAR'S PLAN**

Yep, it's almost that time of year again. You know, New Year's resolutions, goal setting, etc. Call it what you want, it's still the same greased gopher. This month I'm giving you some brain food to chew on and possibly digest or ruminate on or, if you want, just spit back out (for those of you on the Gold Coast in Chicago: expectorate). It's a time of year to review how things are going in ministry. Some years we hit the 1<sup>st</sup> of January flying high, going mach 3 with our hair on fire & some years we feel like the sucker's in reverse with the pedal to the metal and the rearview mirrors are all broken. If you're currently brain-fried and filling out applications for the local assisted care nursing home, the following ideas might give you a good starting point for making some much needed changes in your ministry during this coming year.

1. Start ministry with relationships: remember that all effective ministry starts with bridges being built, both between teens and their peers, and between teens and adults.
2. Make ministry a progression: student ministry isn't an isolated event, but an intentional series of steps that help teens become fully devoted followers of Jesus.
3. Provide a variety of entry points: ask ourselves not only how hard it is to get involved but how many entry points we have created. Different teens are attracted to different things.
4. Blaze a path for growing commitment: as we plan our program, ask whether or not we are making opportunities for the teens to grow in their commitment to Christ and our local church.
5. Decentralize: student ministry happens best out where the teenagers are at - on their own turf. Some of what we do needs to take place inside the walls of our local church, but much of what happens needs to take place out where they are.
6. Open a variety of service opportunities: develop a number of ways for young people to serve, with varying levels of skill and commitment needed.
7. Center on the Word of God: this is our playbook for life. Whether it's teaching in our large groups or discussions in our small groups,

focus on God's Word. It is what will change teenager's hearts, minds and lives!

*Nate Schroder*

*Discovery Church, St. Cloud MN*

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## **I'll Be Home For Christmas!"**

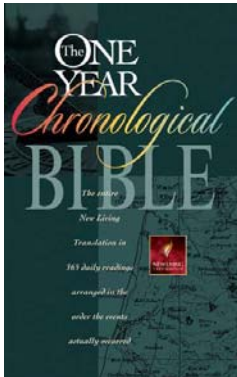
"I'll be home for Christmas" is a favorite song sung this time of year. For many of our chaplains and service men and women it will be "only in my dreams." Our military will have tasty dinners with all the trimmings. Some of our nations' present and hopeful leaders will visit many of them in the war zones. Pray for the special services our chaplains will be holding all over the world. Our chaplains will hold Christmas Eve specials, services Christmas Day and services over New Years. For many these services will be a turning point in their spiritual journey. For some it will be their first celebration of Christmas as a new believer and will hold special meaning for them. One of our Navy chaplains on a ship in the Middle East has seen some 27 people come to Christ in recent days.

Our prison chaplains, hospital and nursing home chaplains minister to many who will have no visitors or family around during the Christmas season and loneliness sets in. Pray as the message of a loving Savior who cares about them is shared. Some will hear the gospel for the first time.

Pray for family members who can't be with their loved one at Christmas. Dad or Mom is away at war. Pray for them as your family meets together. One of our Army Guard chaplains, Ben Yazzie asks prayer for a man in their church among the Pueblo Indians. Because of his faith in Christ and for his stand for the gospel he was expelled by the tribal leaders from the reservation and his home and is not allowed back. He is being disciplined and helped by the believers of the Christ Church of Hopah Koinonia in Albuquerque, NM. It is hard to believe this happens in America but it does. Pray for Ben as he works with this man.

We have just added another Army National Guard chaplain in Indiana, Jay Rhodes. We are sending paperwork for Eli Dowell of Springfield, Missouri, to the Navy Reserves. Pray for **Vincent Hokannan who is now serving full-time with the Minnesota Army National Guard** as the rear Guard chaplain while many are deployed to Iraq. He has a steep learning curve to get up to speed in this position.

For more information about chaplaincy contact Al Russell at 218-776-2813 or e-mail him at [chapruss@earthlink.net](mailto:chapruss@earthlink.net). Merry Christmas to all and God's blessings this coming New Year!



**TWELVE DAYS** until January 1 to start reading!

**One Year Chronological Bible is now available through CBAmerica for \$8 (when ordered in case lots of 20.)**

In September Tyndale House Publishing released *The One Year Chronological Bible* (New Living Translation only). The publisher describes this new version of the One Year Bible by saying, "*In The One Year Chronological Bible, prophetic books are interwoven with the historical accounts they accompanied. Psalms follow the events about which they were written. Proverbs are placed in the time frame in which they were compiled. The life of Christ is woven into one moving story. And Paul's letters to the young churches in the first century are integrated into the book of Acts.*"

To see a sample of this Bible or to order, go to the [CBAmerica website](http://www.CBAmerica.org). The *One Year Chronological Bible* is available in case lots of 20 at \$8.00 per Bible. These Bible have a suggested retail price of \$19.99.

CBAmerica is also again offering the

*One Year Bible* in the *New Living Translation* (case lots of 20), *New International Version* (case lots of 24) and *King James Version* (case lots of 24) at \$7.00 per Bible. The *One Year Bible for Kids* comes in case lots of 27 at \$5.00 per Bible.

For further information, you can go to the **CBAmerica** website - [www.CBAmerica.org](http://www.CBAmerica.org). If you are interested in ordering Bibles, contact the **CBAmerica** offices toll-free at (888) 366-3010.

## NCCBA Pastor ID Cards

Every Senior Pastor should be receiving their NCCBA Identification card in the mail this week. If you do not receive yours, please call us at 715-538-2298. We can also make cards for staff members as needed.

## Upcoming Events

<b>BREAKAWAY</b> overnite outreach for JR & SR High in Illinois	March 29-30	<a href="#">Info at SYF website</a>
<b>Worship Summit</b> , Cedar Rapids, Iowa	April 18-19	<a href="#">More info and registration</a>
Pastors and Wives Retreat and NCCBA Annual meeting	April 24-26	Heidel House resort, Green Lake WI
Youth Pastors/Spouse retreat	April 25-27	Heidel House Resort, Green Lake WI

## NCCBA Churches in Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- First Baptist Church--Whitehall, WI YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Lansing IL
- First Baptist Church--Sibley IA
- First Baptist Church--Parkers Prairie MN
- Palisade Baptist Church--Silver Bay MN
- Artichoke Lake Baptist Church--Correll MN

THANK YOU for your prayers! Devin Stabile is the new Worship Pastor at First Baptist Church in Pekin, Illinois.

## Contact Our Office

North Central CBA - Jean Wright - 715-538-2298 - [nccba@triwest.net](mailto:nccba@triwest.net)

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