

North Central CBA

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Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

March 2007

Henry Spicer Scholarship Applications

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS This scholarship is available to high school seniors who will be attending college this fall. The student must also be a committed Christian and a regular attendee of a NCCBA affiliated church.

For more information or an application, call our office or go to our website and click on "Spicer Scholarship."

DEADLINE IS APRIL 2.

[Link to Spicer application.](#)

Gospel Reminders

In the book *A Work of Heart* by Reggie McNeal he presents a numbers of factors that he believes help to shape the heart of those who pastor. There are six: culture, call, community, communion, conflict and commonplace.

When he speaks about communion he talks about developing an ear for hearing God. When it comes to God speaking I think we all would like to experience what Moses did. We would like to have God come and speak to us face to face. I have never had that kind of opportunity, and I do not know of anyone who has had that kind of experience.

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Valuable Information for Your Church Growth

Demographic information about your church location is available as a free service. All NCCBA churches are listed. Call Don at 715-538-2298 if you have questions.

www.Link2Lead.com

Ministry Quick Links

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Because of this we have to learn how to discern the voice of God. One of the ways that I believe we can hear the voice of God is to become sensitive to themes that begin to repeat over a period of time. When I speak of themes here I want to be clear that these are matters that truly pertain to Biblical truths. Let me give you an example.

Lately my mind has been drawn to the gospel. In a recent article an author was wondering what the gospel really was. He has some interesting suggestions that the gospel is more than just praying the sinner's prayer. Not long after I read that, I attended The CB Northwest pastors' retreat. Their theme this year was the gospel.

There were three speakers, and from them there are two thoughts that I believe I am hearing. These are not new thoughts but reminders of things that I believe are vital to the gospel.

First, in our world we are looking for quick easy steps that will make our lives better, happier and more successful. This is not just limited to our personal lives but carries over to our professional lives. People like Dr. Phil and Dr. Laura are very popular because they give people formulas that can and do lead to success. I think it is also interesting that many of the things that they suggest are not at all at odds with things we find in Scripture.

One of the speakers at the retreat spoke of attending a different evangelical church each Sunday for fifteen months. It was his conclusion that the gospel was not being preached. He related that there were a lot of sermons on how to be better, happy and successful but little or no gospel. What he meant by gospel was the declaration of Jesus Christ crucified for sin; that we are all sinners in need of a savior and that savior is Jesus Christ. He declared that unless Christ is the focus in our preaching we are really no different than Dr. Phil or any other self help guru or religious moralist.

Another of the speakers made this observation in conjunction to the gospel. He referred to the bumper sticker "Christians are not perfect just forgiven." He asked a rhetorical question, "Does that mean we can flip off a driver who cuts us off?" If the gospel is only about forgiveness than we probably can. However, his point was that the gospel is about bringing the kingdom of light (God) to the kingdom of the darkness (this world).

As I listen, I am trying to discern God's voice. Initially I want to make certain that in my efforts to address felt needs people still need to hear in very clear terms that they need a savior because they are sinners. Rico Tice in presenting Christianity Explored

Now available from the NCCBA office. The new Microsoft Office Pro Plus 2007 is \$122 plus \$35 for the installation media. Adobe, Norton, and hardware are also available. Call Jean at the office, 715-538-2298, for price quotes and to order.

NCCBA

www.nccba-gc2.com

NEW WEBSITE and ONLINE
retreat registration

states that people need to understand that if they are unrepentant sinners they are currently under the wrath of God and each day they live they are one day closer to hell. The good news is there is another option even if life here does not get better, happier or more successful. Additionally the gospel is about transformation. It is about a transformation that should help repentant sinners bring the character of Christ to every area of life.

As an association of churches let us be known for being true to the gospel and seeking to have ears that are continually seeking to hear his voice.

Don Shaw, Regional Director
donnccba@triwest.net

PASTOR CARE- "Keep the Windshield Clean"

It seems like Spring is finally beginning to break out of Winter here in northern Illinois. Just yesterday we experienced record high temperatures for the day, and the same thing is predicted for today. This means that it is very likely that the worst of the snow and ice is over. However, I decided that I better refill the windshield washer fluid anyway. It was almost empty. I have been driving a lot and washing the windshield a lot.

When you think about driving in stormy weather, especially in the dark, keeping the windshield clear and clean is vitally important. There have been a number of times that just having washed the window made the difference in perceiving and avoiding a very dangerous situation. It strikes me that this perhaps is a modern metaphor for understanding Jesus' statement about the speck and plank in Matthew 7:1-6. Jesus uses this metaphor in the context of avoiding judging.

The problem for us as pastors is that we are constantly in the position of trying to discern the situations and circumstances of our people, to understand what is happening around them and inside them. We are responsible before God and accountable to those who have called us to do this well and to present God's truth in a clear and powerful way. The intended outcome is that we might be useable to the Holy Spirit as He instructs, corrects, disciplines and directs God's children.

However, there is a very thin line between discerning the situation and proclaiming the truth, and becoming judgmental. That line is like the center line or the side line on the highway. As long as we know where we are in reference to that line, we can stay on the road and out of trouble. But if our spiritual windshield is splattered with the dirt and grim of our sinfulness and humanness, it will be much harder to see that line and to stay on the proper side of it. Jesus clearly states that helping our brothers and sisters is dependent on our willingness to clear up our own vision by recognizing what is obstructing it and removing it.

How can we keep our spiritual windshield clean and clear? One way is to steer clear of mud-holes and snow drifts. As much as possible, avoid going places that will splash up and obstruct our vision-God's calling and purpose for us. Another way is to make sure the windshield washer is filled by filling our hearts and minds with God's Word. Then there is the preventive maintenance of making sure the windshield wipers are functioning properly. We must be willing to stay in God's presence through prayer and meditation so that the washer fluid can be applied and the grim can be wiped away. To me this speaks of repentance and confession and forgiveness. Unfortunately, we who call ourselves evangelicals often minimize repentance and confession by making it a cursory and isolating private matter. We say a few words about God forgiving our sins which are many, and leave it at that.

Perhaps if we would spend more time actually recognizing and acknowledging our sins, grieving over them and receiving God's cleansing and transforming power for them, we will be more able to discern without judging. Of course, we would also be made more in the likeness of our Savior.

The moral of the story is this: don't try to tell others how to drive unless your own windshield is clear and clean. Have a great Spring in ministry.

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

Illinois State Youth Fellowship

Winter Retreat Reports

The first two full weekends of 2007 were our annual winter youth retreats, attended by 10-12 churches. Each retreat was directed by a Youth Pastor from the State Youth Fellowship. Jr. High Blizzard took place January 5-7, followed by Sr. High SnoCamp January 12-14. Pine Trail camp (Michigan) was our host for both retreats. The primary purpose was for spiritual growth to take place in each of the students lives. Each church went home with 8x10 pictures of all who attended, as well as their own group!

Blizzard was directed by Jason Wilson who invited his college friend to speak - Andy Sabaka who is currently studying at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Andy took us back to the basics of Christianity, providing good discussions in small groups. The worship band comprised of mostly college students from Lorimer Baptist Church, many who attended retreats in jr. high and high school in the past! We had around 100 students & leaders join us.

SnoCamp was directed by Mike Severe and Gary Lisle. Our speaker was C.J. Hitz - who with his wife Shelley started "Proclaiming The Truth" in 2002. He spoke on the subject of "Purity - Mind, Body & Soul". We all

(not just students!) were challenged to think through what we allow into our minds, and good small group discussions & prayer times resulted! The Nathan Peterson Band led our music/worship times with "Crossfire" ministering via drama. Dave Pikel led a Concert of Prayer on Saturday Night - including a time for students & leaders to pray for one another specifically regarding purity in our lives.

FYI - in the fall each year we also have a college & young adult retreat at Pine Trail Camp with the purpose of Spiritual Growth. The weekend includes drama, break-out workshops, a Solitude/Prayer Time Sat PM followed by Bonfire, games & informal interaction times - more laid back than the winter retreats for jr. high and sr. high.

BREAKAWAY 07 - Our annual evangelistic outreach is March 17 & 18. Duane Keleman is directing this event. Last year we had over 600 students (Jr. and Sr. High) and leaders from 20-25 churches attend! It was estimated that 30% of the students attending last year were not yet Christians! Thanks for your prayers for a great spiritual harvest this year!

For more information go to the [State Youth Fellowship](#) (SYF) website.

HEIDEL HOUSE '07

REST, REFRESH, RELATE, & REFUEL!

North Central CBA - Youth Pastor/Leaders & Spouse Retreat

April 27-29, 2007

Sure hope you can join us for our annual weekend getaway at the Heidelberg House. If you haven't received a flier yet, be sure to contact the NCCBA office at 715-538-2298 or [register online](#). We will have our own schedule, separate from the Senior Pastors & Spouses. The purpose is for rest, relaxation & relationships. We have three sessions (Fri PM, Sat AM & Sun AM). Thus, a lot of time is left to rest, enjoy the surroundings, etc. For more info - contact Bill Badal at pastorbill@tbc.net

Grace n Peace,

Dave Pikel (Secretary - IL State Youth Fellowship) www.syfil.org

CHAPLAINCY - Thanks For Praying!

The other night I was watching CNN and a breaking news story suddenly appeared about the terrible tornado and storms that hit Alabama. They mentioned the city of Enterprise, and I remembered I had recently been in that city for dinner one evening while visiting Chaplain COL Barry Bowden, the installation chaplain at Fort Rucker. I also remembered the Bowden's daughter Courtney attended that

high school. I quickly called the Bowden home and talked with Barry's wife Melanie who told me their daughter was home, shaken and had been treated at the hospital for a head injury but she was alive. When Melanie heard of the tornado hit at the school she and a friend were shopping in another location and dropped to their knees in the middle of the aisle to pray. Eight of Courtney's classmates were killed in that storm as the brick walls of the classroom fell in on them. Two were close friends. Five of the students were from Fort Rucker. Chaplain Bowden gave the devotional at the memorial service for those from the Army Post and his message touched the hearts of the 700 plus people that attended. Pray for the Bowden family and for Courtney. They have been able to get away for a brief family vacation. School classes will resume March 14th at a local Junior College. The high school was damaged almost beyond repair. Pray for the grieving families who lost a student in the tornado.

Thanks for your prayers for our chaplains. God uses them in special ways to touch the lives of people. You will never know this side of heaven how much we need your prayers. (In the picture from left to right, Curtis, Barry, David, CarrieAnn, Melanie and Courtney).



For more information about chaplaincy contact Al Russell at chapruss@earthlink.net or 218-776-2813.



Pastors/Wives Retreat Heidel House, Green Lake, Wisconsin, April 26-28

REGISTRATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 13

This is always a refreshing time for pastors and wives at the beautiful [Heidel House](#) resort. The retreat starts in the late afternoon on Thursday, April 26, and ends before noon on Saturday. Dennis Henderson will speak at session times, and his wife, Billie, will host a ladies brunch on Friday. Matt Hoffland will entertain and minister on Friday night. More information is available on our [website](#).

Come for a wonderful time. If you did not receive your invitation in the mail, registration is available [online](#) and a registration form is also at the end of this newsletter.

Pastors/Wives Retreat Registration

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY APRIL 13

___\$320 couple

___\$250 single

Name _____ Spouse _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Church _____ City/State _____

Mail checks and the above form to: NCCBA, PO Box 568, Whitehall WI 54773

Questions? Call Don or Jean 715-538-2298

Credit Cards are accepted for [online registration](#) only.

Upcoming Events

Worship Summit - Marion, Iowa

April 20 & 21 [More info...](#)

Pastors and Wives Retreat - Green Lake, WI

April 26-28 [Register online](#) **DEADLINE**

APRIL 13

Youth Pastor/Spouse Retreat - Green Lake WI

April 27-29 [Register online](#) **DEADLINE**

APRIL 13

Annual Meeting of NCCBA, Green Lake WI April 27

NCCBA Churches in Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- First Baptist Church--Elmurst, IL ASSOCIATE PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Bradford IL
- Mont Clare Baptist Church--Chicago IL
- First Baptist Church--Lansing IL
- First Baptist Church--Elk Horn IA
- First Baptist Church--Sibley IA
- Ganson Street Baptist Church--Jackson MI
- First Baptist Church--Big Rapids MI
- First Baptist Church--Parkers Prairie MN
- Palisade Baptist Church--Silver Bay MN
- Eureka Baptist Church--St. Croix Falls WI

Thank you for your prayers! **Steve DeKok** is the new pastor at First Baptist Church, Jackson MN beginning April 1.

Contact Our Office

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

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