

SABBATICAL??

Are you interested in Church History? I love it—especially the book of Acts. God works in marvelous ways and reading the stories compels me to keep on task.

This article on church history is more on the personal side. I would like to share with readers how the RED (Regional Executive Director of CBNorthcentral) saved my hide back in 1995. Here we go!

My wife and I joined three families from the community to plant a church in 1978 with the support of New Churches Now, a Conservative Baptist Home Mission (now Mission's Door) church planting effort. Our home church was First Baptist Church of Chippewa Falls (now called Crossroads). We immediately associated with CBAmerica and CB of WI.

Our hometown had had two Baptist church plants fail in the previous couple of decades and there was concern that another attempt would fail as well. In three years, we became self-supporting. Our setting is rural and full of main line denominational churches, with no evangelical witness at the time. God blessed us, however, and the Spirit granted steady growth over the next couple of decades. We went through three building programs and were debt free at the time.

One Sunday evening after a full weekend of ministry, my wife and I looked at each other and said we had such a loving congregation. We felt we could stay there for the rest of our careers! The next morning a man showed up at our door telling us there was a group of six men who met the night before and decided I should take a sabbatical. None of these men from the church was in leadership; the sabbatical was not to be a paid sabbatical; and, after a year, there would be a vote if we should return. My wife and I were devastated.

Side note: I have always been a bit skittish about sabbaticals ever since—I am not sure why. Side note 2: The six guys were our good friends. I had either led each of them to the Lord or had mentored them. Side note 3:



Five of the six have come back to apologize—one did so 21 years later!

The leadership of the church decided to call our Regional Executive Director (RED) of CBNorth Central at that time to come and counsel us. Dan, the RED at that time, came a number of times. He prayed and counseled us through the crisis. I owe him a debt of thanks for walking us through a valley. God was good, and my wife & I stayed on for a total of 39 years.

I am a huge fan of CBNorth Central and the purpose of our association. “The mission of CB North Central is to nurture and connect churches who desire to make disciples of Jesus Christ.” Pat Phinney our RED is faithful and equipped to serve you now. Also, being in a Pastor’s Cluster is an important aspect of being a part of something BIGGER! Encourage your pastor to join a cluster this month.

Pastor Eldon Carlson

CB North Central, Regional Cluster Group Director