

CB North Central
(aka Venture Church Network Midwest)
One Day Vision Conference
November 12, 2020 10am-3pm

Virtual Conference in lieu of an Annual Conference due to worldwide pandemic.

One thing: What is one bold step you need to take to move forward with bringing the gospel?

CBAmerica (aka Venture Church Network)

National Director (President) - Dave Whitaker

His dad pastored in Iowa where Dave was born. He grew up in the bay area. Spent 13 years in Phoenix, AZ and last 16 years at Morgan Hill Bible Church, Morgan Hill, CA.

History of CBAmerica

CBAmerica background and where we are going. CBA is made up of 8 regions, CB North Central is led by Brad Little. There are about one thousand churches affiliated with CBAmerica.

At the turn of the 1900's there was German enlightenment. Could there be miracles? Is prophecy legit? Cyrus the great, the prophecy happened after. This infiltrated the Northern Baptist churches. They no longer affirmed the divinity of Jesus, the resurrection and other core principals. Some pastors gathered and formed the Conservative Baptist Foreign Missions Society. In 1947 those same churches and pastors got together and decided to break off from the Northern Baptist Convention. They risked pensions and properties to move into this new denomination. Many churches don't want to have the label of "conservative" because of how it has been perceived in our culture.

The REDs (Regional Executive Directors) have prayed and have been seeking the Lord and came up with the name **Venture Church Network**. They wanted to reflect the core of our convictions. One of the core definitions of "Venture" is taking risk and advancing in the face of danger. We have played it safe and have not advanced the gospel as we should. Come alongside our pastors and churches. This reflects the heart and passion of the leaders of Venture Church Network to help every church take bold next steps. We are not the experts, in many denominations that is how it works to set agendas for local churches- this is not what we are doing.

How do we help you take next steps? How do we engage with you as you do that?

Strategy – We want to champion the strengths of our churches.

Help churches discover bold next steps.

Cultivate (plant) new churches.

Some pastors and churches don't know what their next steps are. Not just the next step... but a bold next step. We want to see gospel centered transformational churches.

1. **Gospel Driven**

The gospel transforms every life that it touches. We want to move toward a life giving faith that is impacting our communities. Boldly and strategically in the communities. Not only a truth, but a life. It needs to be lived out. Creating a culture that we are called to love God and love our neighbors.

2. **Biblically Focused**

- . The grace and truth of Jesus meets us in every situation, every context that we have. In the past we had something that was disintegrating.

- 3. Disciple Making
 - Empowering every generation. Empowering the next generation. The story of Acts is an example of making disciples. So much of our energy has been put into making a weekend event- COVID has forced us to ask, how we are making disciples?
- 4. Relationally Committed
 - Fierce cooperation that accelerated the mission of our churches is what we are trying to do. A Synergy of communication that is helping churches connect to each other. Read through the book of Acts and notice how people communicated.

Questions and Interactions:

We need to champion the strengths of our leaders. Pastors and churches have gone through some of the same issues you have and we can learn from each other.

We are going to measure how other churches are growing, evaluating how we are inviting others into the process.

Dave Whitaker is moving from California to the East coast (South Carolina).

When asked, why move from CA to East Coast? He said he is "Taking Bold Next Steps."

CB North Central is adopting a new name, Venture Church Network Midwest.

Experience that will be helpful?

Chaplain for the police force. Learned many things that do not work, can teach from those experiences.

What is the growth of the denomination?

It is stagnant. It's hard to know where things are at with COVID and churches going online. We are retooling and refocusing to connect those within our region.

Name change?

A name change doesn't fix anything. You can put lipstick on a pig, but it doesn't change the nature of the pig. We are not moving from doctrine, but we are moving toward taking some risky steps to better serve our churches. The real change we need to make is to make disciples.

Connections with WorldVenture?

We are not officially aligned, but have a partnership. Western Seminary is officially aligned in their organizational documentation. Dave has weekly meetings via Zoom with leadership of WorldVenture.

Interdependence and helping each church take bold next steps are welcome... is there anything that local churches can contribute to VCN to help get that ball rolling, or is this mainly a call to rethink/re-examine our ministries?

Dave-Good question. Let Brad know that you want to be connected. Make sure you are supporting your regions financially. CBAmerica is funded by the regions supporting us (Dave). Part of the reason for my role and the name change. We would serve our regions better if we were partnered in a strengthened way.

Brad- trying to explore the resources that our regions have. We have churches that are reproducing in church planting- some are similar sizes and are doing the same things. I'm going to talk a little bit about that at the end of the day.

Break

Brad Little, CB North Central Regional Director-

Are we willing to relinquish for the sake of the Gospel? Dave was able to set aside his great position at a great church to help the future of the church. Brad mentions shoveling the driveway and surrendering to what was uncomfortable to cross the street and meet the new neighbors.

Who is Jesus? He sacrificed every convenience of the Godhead to fulfill the mission of the gospel. It can't be done from a safe place. Who are we? A holy people called out by God. Willingly sacrificing for the sake of the gospel. The framework is letting go. Constantly learning to let go of my own wants. Four core points:

1. Selflessness- He did not consider quality with God something to be grasped. Sometimes we are blinded by lights in seeing the fullness of the mission of Christ. Jesus was a prophet of God not speaking for his own Glory. He was speaking on behalf of the one who sent him. We are messengers of the gospel. Live for him who died and rose on our behalf. We often live for our own legacy. I'm way too worried about what people think. We live for his legacy, that will continue long after we are gone.
2. Sacrifice- This is a distinction of selflessness. There is nothing in the scriptures that guarantees success as we see it. Hebrews 11... some were conquering and others got their teeth kicked in. Some don't find any traction in their ministry. Romans 12- living and holy sacrifices regardless of the results. Normal, reasonable worship is living sacrificial.
3. Servanthood- He didn't have his own vision; it wasn't about personal dreams. I don't have to create a vision for God, he has already given it for us. Seeking first his kingdom and his righteousness as a servant of Christ. It needs to be modeled more than told. You weren't hired to clean tables, but your people need to see that there is nothing that is beneath you. I can never get to a position where helping and interacting with people is beneath me. If you really want to be great as a leader, you have to be a servant.
4. Surrender- Usually I want to skip the first 3 and say, who does God want us to be and what does he want us to be doing. Matthew 8-9 the centurion comes to Jesus and says I'm just like you... I'm a man under authority. He realizes that Jesus was sent by God to bring glory to the Father. We are under that authority and we are to go and make disciples. We don't want to get lost in managing internal things that we miss the authority of God in our lives to make disciples. We can give lip service to that and way overthink the process. Recapturing the zeal for good works as it reflects genuine faith. It can be as big as church planting and as small of a cup of water in the Lord's name.

Imagine... a 20 mile radius- you are the only viable church in the radius... if we keep doing what we are doing now, will we fulfill the mission of the gospel in our community? Are we going to give everyone in that sphere a chance to hear the gospel? Are we disciplining them to become spiritual parents?

Col. 4:2-4 "*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ... Pray that I may proclaim him clearly, as I should.*"

Lunch Break

TED Talks

Ty Thomas – Senior Pastor of Calvary Church, Muscatine, IA. Spent 4yrs as a missionary in Ecuador.
Honoring the past, taking new ground in the future without dishonoring the past.
Hire to reflect the community, not the church.
Find a person of color for a true friend.
Ty Thomas' cell 402-560-9119. Creating a racial mix in church. . . hire racial mixed leadership.

Brandon Cooper – Pastor of Cityview Community Church, Elmhurst, IL
Referenced a sign, “Gone out of business, didn’t know what our business was.”
Do we know what our business is? Why are we here?
Phil. 1:18-26
v. 20 “Christ will be exalted in my body” - Paul’s single purpose for life.
v. 21 “To live is Christ and to die is gain.” To live is Christ, to live for Christ’s glory – means fruitful labor for me.
Phil. 3:7-8 “Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ” ...everything is a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ.

Ritch Boerckel, Senior Pastor/**Josh Beakley**, Minister of Student Ministries
Bethany Baptist Church, Edwards, IL.
Are you pursuing the vision that you had when God called you? Goal – to grow followers of Jesus Christ into mature disciples.
Col. 1:27-29
v.28 “Present everyone mature in Christ that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”
Acts 2:37-47 What is distracting me from the mission? What is truly necessary?
Will the mission be compromised by my doing...?
Acts 6:1 a complaint arose...
The opportunity is to come to the interaction with the goal of making disciples
God’s main objective is much more simple.
The goal is discipleship.
How do we build disciples? Prayer, digesting the word, doctrine (understanding truth), witness (Prayer, Acts of Kindness, Authentic Relationships, Gospel Conversations)
Helping people grow as faithful followers of Jesus.