

New Year New Focus

New starting points provide new opportunity to re-envision our purpose. We have many new beginnings this year.

CB America is now Venture Church Network. This is both recapturing our roots and recasting our vision for the gospel. The “Venture” component of this new title recaptures the heart of CB as a kingdom movement centered on taking risks for the sake of the gospel. One of the foundational elements of CB is mission and our desire is to recapture and recast our vision for the gospel as the heart-beat in all our churches. Peter captured this in his second letter when he said “I shall always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them and have been established in the truth which is present with you.” We have not changed our doctrine; we have not changed our beliefs; we have not changed our distinctives – but we are recapturing the gospel in an ever changing world as God’s message of hope and grace for a broken humanity.

I am now the permanent Regional Director for Venture Church Network Midwest. This is old news for some, but a transition we made this past year. Yes, in keeping with our national entity and like-minded regions, changes have been made to our regional title. We are constructing a whole new paradigm for our ministry to you. We are here to serve, enrich and empower churches to what God has called you to do. We are seeking to listen and respond to those needs and concerns that you would like us to address so we can add weight to your vision to encourage next bold steps for Christ.

In order to do this our entire leadership model has changed. I still am a full time pastor at Oak Grove Church in Golden Valley, MN, but I also have the privilege to connect, coach and serve about 100 churches in our region (10 states from the Dakotas to Ohio). We have moved from a full time director to a full time responsibility as an adjunct model to our pastoral role in the church. This is quite a privilege for me and the weight of this responsibility has been greatly lightened by an outstanding staff with Wendy Jonassen and Eldon Carlson. I am working to build greater connections to our churches and working to serve you. Amy Jo has transitioned out of our finance department and Karen Meyers is now caring for our financial concerns.

The Purpose of our Regional Board is to help churches take their bold next step of faith for Christ. We are not here to tell churches what to do, but to cultivate and curate the resources of our regional churches to empower and encourage one another to the ministry of the gospel. We believe that every church is unique and ministers to a unique context God has called them to. As we move alongside pastors, leadership teams and churches we want to add resources and energy to all that God has called them to be and do in that community.

We are not writing a new vision and mission, but reminding you of an old vision and mission that Christ gave to us to make disciples. Sometimes we need to simply spur one another on to love and good deeds and that is our test for the new horizons that we face in an ever changing world. We need to continue to be innovative, creative and intentional to keep on communicating the gospel full of grace and truth.

I am reminded of a threefold challenge from **Zephaniah**:

The Danger (Zeph. 1:12) - *At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the men who are complacent, those who say in their hearts, ‘The LORD will not do good, nor will he do ill.’*

The Directive (Zeph. 2:3) - *Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land, who do his just commands; seek righteousness; seek humility; perhaps you may be hidden on the day of the anger of the LORD.*

The Deliverance (Zeph. 3:9) - *Then I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD and serve him shoulder to shoulder.*

I look forward to His work in all of us, that all our people will call on the name of the Lord to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

In His grace,
Brad Little