

North Central CBA

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Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

July 2009

Play To Our Strength

In two books I am currently reading, they have both referred to Surprising Insights from the Unchurched by Thom Ranier. What both authors have cited is: "More than 85 percent of the unchurched people surveyed by Ranier said that a church's theology and doctrine would be their primary consideration in choosing a church. Not music, not entertainment, but theology - truth."

My first reaction: "this is not what we have been led to believe."

My second reaction: many of the music wars have been an in-house conflict rather than about reaching the unchurched/ unsaved.

My final reaction: this should be good news for us as CB's because one of our core values has been the love of theology and doctrine.

Tullian Tchividjian in unfashionable states this, "New generations are thirsting for truthfulness, not trendiness. They long for someone to speak to them truthfully about a time and a place other than their own, about something and someone other than themselves. They want to know that there are different people out there with their sights set on a different world."

One of the reasons I find Tchividjian's comments significant is the fact that he is in his mid-thirties (He is the new pastor of Coral Ridge where James Kennedy pastored). In other words, he is not some old cranky fundamentalist nor is he enamored with the emergent crowd. He is about the value of Biblical truth and the fact that is what people need. Jesus put it this way, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'"

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Available for Your Church

This is a proven tool that can help your church with growth, not just in terms of quality but in terms of evangelism.

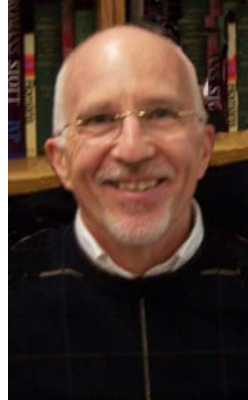
NCD will help you identify the eight qualities and six growth factors for a healthy church.

Healthy NCD is seeing a steady growth through conversions and the ongoing discipleship of those who are part of the church.

If Ranier's research has any merit at all then we have a strength that we should build upon that has an appeal to a significant number of people. Our challenge as CB's is not to find the latest new method but to take the Word of God with the anointing of His Spirit and proclaim without apology. We may think that our world is facing new and different challenges but "there is nothing new under the sun." Each generation faces the same basic issues that sin creates and that God's word ultimately is the only satisfying answer.

So let us play to our strength for the sake of the unchurched/ unsaved.

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PASTOR CARE

"Following The Process"

The last two months, I have focused on hearing, both physically and spiritually. The process of being treated for a physical hearing problem has taken me down some unexpected paths, with some unexpected spiritual applications.

The physical part has resulted in the implanting of a ear tube and the purchase of a hearing aid. The ear tube stops fluid from collecting behind my eardrum and impeding the transmission of sound waves. The hearing aid compensates for the damage to the nerves that transmit to the brain the sound waves transformed into nerve impulses. We are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). With the Psalmist, let praise our Creator/Sustainer/Redeemer.

However, the doctor was convinced, and so was I, that the hearing problem came from something else. We had only treated the obvious symptoms. Of course, the hearing loss is the result of continued overload and damage to the nerves by loud repetitive noises, such as 26-ton diesel-powered artillery guns and the 100-pound shells they fire. Chainsaws and lawn tractors are part of the cause as well.

Give us a call at 715-538-2298. Significant improvements have been made in how to interpret and implement findings.

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WEBSITE

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING laws for your State on our website under RESOURCES

But the cause of much of the trouble was an ongoing sinus infection. The surgery to clear that up has been done, and the doctor's original suspicion has been confirmed-allergies are the culprit. Although the healing from the surgery is still in progress, I can now breathe through my nose with my mouth closed most of the time, for the first time in over 20 years. Hopefully, allergy treatments will help reduce the open-mouth breathing even more.

Beside the obvious physical applications, is there any spiritual point to all of this self-focused story. The answer is a resounding YES!

Being able and willing to hear what God has to say to us can be hindered by many different things. We may have difficulty hearing Him because something is in the way, like the fluid in my ear. Maybe we are listening to the wrong things, or there is some specific part of our life that has been traumatized and is swollen, blocking our hearing God's love, grace, mercy, and peace. On the other hand, perhaps our nerves have been damaged by the noise of the world system and its attitudes and motives.

However, perhaps our spiritual sinuses are infected, having been stimulated over and over by the damaging impact of allergens that are constantly producing puss and polyps. The outcome is that we cannot taste or smell properly, and eventually the infection spreads to other parts of our spiritual being.

Hebrews 12:1 says, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great crowd of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us." I know I should not change metaphors in the middle of an article, however it seems necessary to do so. The physical allergens, whatever they may be, certainly hinder my physical well-being and at time entangle me in situations that are damaging and destructive to my health. In the spiritual dimension, the application is that there are things that for me are allergens that have little or no effect on others. They are not, in and of themselves, sinful. But they clog up the usual process of breathing and become distracting. I can either complain and despair about them, or I can work toward diminishing their impact and influence on me.

There are also those allergens which are sinful, in and of themselves, that produce damage and destruction because they are contrary to God's plan and purpose. They produce a spiritual allergic reaction because the spiritual body recognizes them as harmful and dangerous. I can continue to entertain them and suffer the consequences, or I can decide to allow God the Holy Spirit to

remove them and put up His powerful barrier so that they do not draw me away from Him any longer.

God has called us to live under His authority in a world that has turned its back on Him, and is filled with all kinds of stuff that would diminish and damage our spiritual health. Whatever the spiritual allergens are that affect your life, my prayer for and encouragement to you is that you will allow the Breath of God, the Holy Spirit to fill you with His "clean air," allowing you to breath free and live well in Him.

*Nicholas D. Bell, LMFT
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YOUTH SECTION: Introducing New Faith "Perspectives"

There's a movement in this country that's making our work very interesting and uniquely challenging. This movement is trying to make relativism and multiculturalism the norm, demonizing fundamental Christianity for its claim to absolute truth.

With more and more people preaching that there are many paths to God, it's becoming increasingly less popular to even suggest that one religion can have all the answers.

It seems as though there are very few people who truly believe in their faiths deeply enough to stand and say, "This is what I believe!" Most American's would rather follow the broad road through the wide gate (Matthew 7:13) and believe whatever they want, taking pieces of their spirituality and worldview from whatever comes, from age-old religions to glossy magazines and Oprah.

Then there's us. Although many Christians have definitely gone down the path of "believe whatever feels good" relativism, followers of Christ often stand alone in their commitment to absolute truth. And we may even face criticism for not "tolerating" what others believe.

There was a cover story in the Northwest Herald (a regional newspaper) about a new "interfaith class" at a local church. This quote from one of the attendees really got to me:

"Different people, they encounter god differently, and if some people at a certain stage in their life need to focus strictly on Christianity, then that might be appropriate for them, as long as they don't take anything away from those of us who feel differently."

People cannot and will not find God through false belief systems. There is only one way to God, and He is Jesus (John 14:6)! If people think they are encountering a god or discovering truth through a séance, meditation, yoga class or a prayer session, and Jesus is not at the center of it, that experience has nothing to do with the one true God.

What really shocks me is what this quote implies, and what I think many people believe: That Christianity is a domineering, elitist religion because we're not willing to fold and say that what we believe is just one more option on the path to enlightenment. While we strive to show Christ's love, we're not willing to back down from the truth!

The "all paths lead to God" worldview is persistent and pervasive. Every teen and student in your church probably has friends that would openly and boldly tell them that Christianity is just one way to get to God, and maybe even criticize them if they don't believe the same.

I guarantee that your public school is filled with students that sincerely believe that they can figure out whatever they want to believe, and that for them, that "truth" is just fine.

And your students aren't protected just because they go to church a couple times a week. Some of them are probably even afraid to admit that they are followers of Christ or that they believe there is only one way to heaven. Some students in your youth group may even still be deciding whether they believe that there is only one way to God.

This is a tough time to be a Christian, and it's only getting tougher. The whole body of Christ-parents, pastors, youth pastors, adults- must unite together and do what it takes to raise this next generation in the truth of Jesus and His limitless love for us. We must:

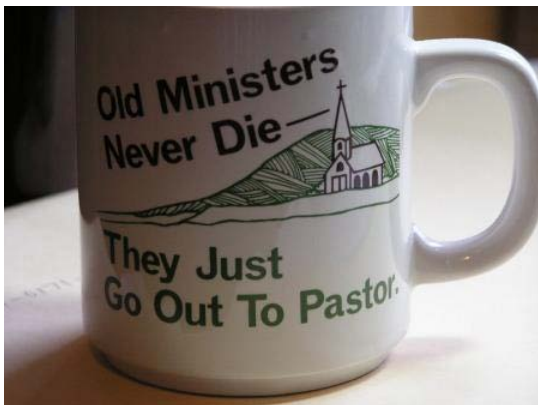
- **Teach absolute truth.** There is only one way to God. The truth of scripture is 100% true. Other "truths" are not.
- **Focus on worldview.** Our paradigm of existence determines everything else we believe.
- **Get dirty spending quality time with students.** We must listen to students to truly understand the journey they are in, and then carefully respond with questions and challenges to help them

discover the wonderful reality of Christ. Discipling students happens primarily through friendships, not just meetings and lessons.

· **Pray!** Faith is not something we can muster up in our students on our own. We need the Holy Spirit to work through us and even in spite of us to minister to students.

By Nathaniel Dame, President, Called to Youth Ministry
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CHAPLAINCY Retirement? Not Yet!

Someone gave me a cup years ago that had a caption on it "Old ministers never die - they just go out to pastor." The same is true of many of our chaplains. They retire from chaplaincy but continue in ministry.

Here are stories from two retired chaplains: Phil Smith and Ben Brown.

Phil is a retired Air force Reserve chaplain living in Carlsbad, CA. Along with other laymen from his church, Phil goes to the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego to minister with the Navy Chaplain. The Navigators are also involved. They average about 500 recruits each week. The recruits are given the first 15 minutes to be quiet, read the Bible, meditate, pray, or just be still. The NAV leader also tells them that if they would like to have someone to talk to or pray for them, there is a prayer team standing in the back of the chapel, get up and go to them at any time during this service. Immediately, there are usually 5-7 recruits that come back to talk. Phil says, "I have had marines come running to me, weeping from heavy burdens or problems. During the rest of the service young

marines will come back to one of us on the prayer team. We have the privilege to pray with them about their burdens, to counsel them, to encourage them with the Word."

The service is really geared to the young marines. They love singing the contemporary choruses, and oh how they sing. The chaplain conducts communion and baptism every Sunday. There is a baptismal right on the platform for Immersion Baptizing. There is any where from 5 to 25 men (New Believers) baptized each Sunday. Last week 22 marines accepted Christ. Three weeks ago there were 75 marines from one company who accepted Christ. Last summer there were two weeks in a row with over 100 decisions for Christ. God is doing some wonderful work in the lives of these young Marines. Please hold this ministry in prayer and encourage others to pray also.

Ben Brown recently retired from the Air National Guard. He also just resigned as Senior Pastor of International Baptist Church in Singapore. Ben is training pastors in Asia and is allowed by the Chinese government to legally distribute Bibles printed in China. Recently they arrived at a church to hand out Bibles and realized they didn't have enough Bibles for the crowd that gathered. They felt the Lord saying to go ahead and pass out what they had so they began. Ben would take Bibles from the box and hand them to the people one by one. When a box was empty his son would slide him another box. While giving out the Bibles Ben realized his son had not given him a new box for quite a while yet there were still Bibles in the one he was taking them from. He was afraid to look down lest the multiplication of Bibles by the Lord stopped. Everyone present received Bibles with three left over. Within minutes three more people came up asking for Bibles. This was repeated several days later at another distribution point. What is impossible with man is possible with God!

We appreciate the many ministries of our retired chaplains as they continue to follow the Lord's leading in their lives. If you want more information about chaplaincy contact Al Russell at 218-776-2813 or at chapruss@earthlink.net

GOOD IDEA

Section

Reprinted from the *Macomb Journal*

By Jodi Pospeschil

June 25, 2009
Bushnell, Illinois



Two area pastors have found a way to help their respective congregations battle bad economic times.

Pastor Dave Eden of the First Baptist Church of Bushnell and Pastor Aaron Keller of Prairieland Open Bible Church in Prairie City, have rallied their churches for a gardening project with a larger purpose.

Each congregation has planted a vegetable garden on church property to grow produce for local residents who have been impacted by the downturn in the economy.

The idea sprouted after Eden heard about a similar program on a Bible program.

"There are (local) people who have lost their jobs and we wanted to show them the church cares," Eden said.

Keller said he wasn't much of a gardener at the start, having grown up near downtown Des Moines, Iowa.

"My congregation was very excited," he said. "They'd been wanting to do something for the community."

Seventeen members of Keller's congregation of about 40 people, volunteered to help with the project.

"We had to decide what to plant; we wanted something with mass appeal," Eden said.

Both churches held a planting day when the ground was tilled. Eden said some of the plantings were staggered by time to make for a longer harvest period.

The planting process began with 100 tomato plants, started from seeds by the Bushnell FFA organization. Hart's Nursery in Bushnell then donated a five-pound bag of green bean seed to each church.

The plantings also included bell peppers, zucchini, butternut squash and cucumbers.

The tomatoes needed metal cages, which can be expensive. But one day, when Eden was on his way to preside over a funeral, he spotted some old fence in a farmer's field.

Later contact with the farmer resulted in not only the donation of the wire fence to make cages from, but an offer to grow an acre or two of sweet corn as part of the project.

"God led us to the farmer," Eden said.

Grass clippings from mowing the church lawn are collected and put on the gardens to keep the weeds down. Church members also rotate weeding duties.

The church is in the process of deciding how the harvest should be distributed. The produce will be given to local families and a process is underway to develop a list of those who could use the fresh vegetables.

Both pastors said the idea behind the project is to help local residents "ease the load."

"We're trying to help them make it through these tough economic times," Eden said. "And it may be something we still do after the economy turns around."

*Submitted by Dave Eden
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A "Must Read" **Father, Son, & Holy Spirit: Relationships, Roles & Relevance**

Review by Don Shaw

We are encouraging you to put on your "Must Read" list Father, Son and Holy Spirit by Bruce Ware. This book takes a look at the Trinity as the model for how relationships are to work. We have copies available for a donation of \$10 (retail is \$17.99). If you cannot afford the \$10, let us know. We believe that it is more important for you to have the book than

to cover the cost.

Call the NCCBA office, 715-538-2298 or send a quick email request to nccba@trivest.net .

New Service for NCCBA Churches

Hiring new staff? Credit checks and criminal background checks are now available for a nominal fee through NCCBA. Call the office, 715-538-2298, for details.

Upcoming Events

Youth Adventure Mission (YAM) Training for Youth Leaders

Wisconsin/Minnesota Labor Day Weekend
Contact Adam Zappetta 715-246-2700 (Wisconsin) [email for Adam](mailto:adam@nccba.org)
or Craig Morris 218-927-2728 (Minnesota) [email for Craig](mailto:craig@nccba.org)

Iowa CBA Annual Meeting October 12 & 13 Call Phil Butler 515-674-3752

Cluster Leadership Training November 10 & 11 Lansing, Illinois
with Bill Hoyt

NCCBA Churches In Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- Squaw Creek Baptist Church--Marion IA YOUTH & WORSHIP
- Ganson Street Baptist Church--Jackson MI YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Colfax IA YOUTH PASTOR
- First Baptist Church--Jackson MN YOUTH PASTOR (part-time)
- First Baptist Church--Streator IL
- First Baptist Church--Elk Horn IA

WELCOME to two new pastors in the region:

Jonah Beckermann will be Senior Pastor at First Baptist Church, Worthington, MN, in September.

Doug Noonkester has accepted the call to be pastor at First Baptist Church in Sibley, IA, beginning in August.

Contact Our Office

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

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