

North Central CBA

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Great Commandment Passion, Great Commission Focus

September 2008

## Chicago & Minneapolis to Host Seminar With Ron Susek

On October 28 in Glen Ellyn, Illinois, and again on October 30 in Edina, Minnesota, Ron Susek, author of *Firestorm: Preventing and Overcoming Church Conflict*, will be addressing pastors, leadership staff and lay leaders regarding church conflict, staff burnout and other topics. For more information and to register for either seminar, please visit our [website](#). Registration can also be mailed with a check for \$39 to: North Central CBA, PO Box 568, Whitehall WI 54773.



If you did not receive a flyer to promote this event in your area, it is available on our website under [Events](#) or call the office at 715-538-2298.

### God's Chosen Servants

By Ron Susek

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.*

*Ephesians 6:10*

God works through weakness. Nothing else. Carefully think through the words of the Apostle Paul: Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Notice what he did not say-Finally, be strong for God.

Dr. Norman Geisler puts it this way, "It's not hard to live the Christian life . . . it's impossible!" He's dead right. Anyone who thinks they should be used of God because of their grand talents is

scratched off the list. Why? Because they are sure to fail. [More of Susek's article](#) at end of newsletter.

## Where Has Heaven Gone!

When was the last time you sang a song at worship that focused on heaven? That question was first put to me last year by J.I. Packer in his book *Praying*. To be honest I cannot remember how long it has been since I sang a song about heaven in public worship.

This leads me to the question, why? Packer suggests the reason we are not singing about heaven is, we are too interested in having heaven on earth. The Emergent church does not share Packer's concern. In fact they assert that one of the problems with evangelicals is a preoccupation with heaven.

Erwin McManis in an interview printed in the latest issue of "Outreach" magazine states this, "I don't talk much about heavenly reward and to be honest, I've been a follower of Christ almost 30 years, and I don't think I've ever spent five minutes thinking about my heavenly role. It doesn't even attract me! I hear, "Well you're going to get all those crowns." It's kind of weighty and kind of gaudy, and it doesn't inspire me in any way whatsoever, I just want to be able to go to bed at night and go - "I've tried to be the best human I can be, and I reflected who Jesus is, and I've made the world a little better." I don't know what's going to happen when I die or how this whole thing will play out."

I understand the criticism that one can be so heavenly oriented you become no earthly good. However if you look at church history when the gospel is clearly declared and people are truly born again positive cultural impact is a real outcome. There are many examples. One that truly demonstrates this involves John Wesley. England was in social turmoil and on the verge of its own French Revolution. As he went out to the masses and proclaimed the gospel, society was transformed and a bloody revolution avoided.

However, what drove Wesley was not trying to meet the felt needs of people. Rather, unrepentant sinners are under the wrath of God and each day they live they are one day closer to hell. To put it another way he truly desired that people would have a better eternal outcome - heaven.

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### Valuable Information for Your Church Growth

*Customized* demographic information now available about your church location. This is a **free** service for all NCCBA churches. Call Don at 715-538-2298 or visit [www.Link2Lead.com](http://www.Link2Lead.com)

### Natural Church Development

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.**

**Give us a call at 715-538-2298.** Significant improvements have been

No matter how positive the benefits that come with the transforming power of the gospel, having the good life here is not the end. Several years ago I took a class that was an in-depth study of Job. The professor presented the following question as an introduction to a main theme in Job, "Are you willing to serve God for no other reason than to know him?" He called it disinterested righteousness.

He pointed to several very significant things about Job as the class progressed. To begin with, the obvious fact that Job had everything a person could want plus God considered him the most righteous person on the face of the earth. Next, as we know, Job not only lost all of his possessions, family, health and position in the community, God became silent and Job suffered for who knows how long.

In Job's suffering he is "comforted by his friends" who continually tell him to repent of his sin and all will be well. Job insisted he knew of no sin in his life. If he could have an audience with God this could be fixed. To make a long story short God does end his silence and speaks to Job. He confronts him with two series of rhetorical questions. When God finishes with the first series Job realizes who he is dealing with and ceases his complaints. When God finishes his second series Job replies, "You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my counsel without knowledge?' Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know."

I believe there are two important things we should note. First, the implication of Job's response is, "Okay God whatever you do is just." Second, Job never asks for any of what he lost to be returned. To put in the framework of the question my professor presented, "Are you willing to serve God for no other reason than to know him?" As for Job it seems to me the answer was a contented yes.

In the world we live and seek to minister there is a great challenge to stay on track. I do not know of a CB pastor who does not want to see people come Christ and see lives and our culture positively impacted. The question is how to do it? I firmly believe this involves clearly explaining the gospel message which includes eternal consequences and does not include a guarantee of anything near heaven on earth. The words of this old song remind me of what I believe Job truly understands

When all my labors and trial are o'er, And I am safe on the beautiful shore,

made in how to interpret and implement findings.

#### Ministry Quick Links

[CBAmerica](#)  
[Link2Lead](#)  
[\(demographic info\)](#)  
[Illinois State Youth Fellowship](#)  
[Worship Summit in Iowa](#)

#### Microsoft Software and More

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

#### NCCBA

[www.nccba-gc2.com](http://www.nccba-gc2.com)

WEBSITE

**CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAWS for your State on our [website](#) under "Resources"**

Just to be near the dear Lord I adore, Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

When by the gift of His infinite grace, I am accorded in heaven a place,

Just to be there and to look on his face, Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

Friends, will be there I have loved long ago, Joy like a river around me will flow.

Yet, just a smile from my Savior, I know, Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

Refrain: Oh that will be glory for me, Glory for me, Glory for me!

When by His grace I shall look on his face, That will be glory, be glory for me!

*Don Shaw*

*Regional Director*

[donnccba@trivest.net](mailto:donnccba@trivest.net)

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## Youth: **FACING TRIALS**

So far this year has been difficult for me. I have been praying for God's guidance. Where does God want me? Should I be looking for a full-time Youth Pastor position? Should I find a full-time job doing something else while I volunteer with a youth group in the area? Life seems so uncertain. I have been facing a trial. Money is getting real tight and I don't have much direction in the job area. Recently God has led me to volunteer with the Jr. High ministry at my new church, but I'm still uncertain about the job He has for me. Where do we turn when we face trials? Trials test our faith but if we keep our focus we learn to trust God more.

I have been studying the book of James and God has taught me some things about dealing with trials. James 1:2-12 talks about how to face trials in our lives.

First James states that we are to have joy when facing trials. Does this mean we are to be happy when things in life are going horribly wrong? No, but it means that we should realize that God is using this tough time to draw us to Himself and that should bring us joy.

We need to realize that God uses trials in our lives to mature us, to refine us, and to make us into the men and women that He created us to be. God is more concerned about our character than our comfort.

The second thing I learned was that when we are going through tough times we must keep our focus on God. We are to seek wisdom from God as James states in 1:5-7. Who do we turn to when life seems hard? Do we go to God first with our problem or do we go to God as a last resort? We sometimes doubt God when we don't go to Him first with our problems, but if we keep our focus on Him, He will give us the wisdom we need to get through the trial. Simon Peter walked out to Jesus on the stormy water, but when he took his eyes off of Jesus and looked at the waves, he began to sink. When we are going through trials, do we focus on the problem itself and begin to doubt God or do we keep our focus on Jesus who has the power to change our circumstances and build our character?

The third and final lesson I learned when facing trials is to be patient. We live in a society that expects immediate results and wants instant gratification. Trials sometimes last a long time and we need to be patient and trust that God will use this trial to mature us and to use us to reach others. It's not easy being patient in the midst of a trial, but if we are patient God will honor that and will reward us. James 1:12 states that we will be rewarded for persevering under trials.

I know that God is using tough times in my life to make me the man of God that He created me to be. All I have to do is rejoice because He is using this trial to make me a mature believer, keep my focus on Him, and grow my patience.

*Jason Wilson  
State Youth Fellowship, Illinois*

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## **Church Plant and Parent Church Partner for Missions Trip to the Dominican Republic**

A missions team from two churches in Southeast Minnesota recently returned from a 10-day trip to the Dominican Republic. The 21-person team was composed of adults and teenagers from

New Life Church in Wanamingo and Faith Community Church in West Concord. The team from the two churches was a natural since ten years ago Faith Community Church planted New Life Church.



The team left Minnesota on August 3 and returned on August 12. While in the Dominican Republic, the group was involved in leading two Vacation Bible Schools, building two houses, working on a school, doing neighborhood evangelism, participating in various church services, distributing food, and conducting leadership training.

Partnering with First Baptist Church of Hato Mayor, D.R., the team worked in the city of Hato Mayor and also in a more remote village called Bate Jalonga. The Dominican Republic is in the Caribbean, and shares the island of Hispaniola with the nation of Haiti. Hato Mayor, an inland city, is far from the coastal tourist areas and is in an area marked by poverty, especially among Haitian refugees.



A strong bond of partnership has developed with the church in Hato Mayor. According to Pastor Pat McBride of New Life Church who led the team, "Everyone on our team was moved by the needs of the people in the D.R. We particularly found ourselves challenged by the love and commitment of the church leaders there. We have found the mission trips to the D. R. to have a significant impact on our people who participate. It's been especially

worthwhile to take a multigenerational team."

This was the second year Faith Community Church and New Life Church sent a combined team to the Dominican Republic. The team went in cooperation with Impact Lives, an organization headquartered in the Twin Cities. Two years ago, several people from New Life Church went to the D.R. with a group from Woodridge Church in Medina, Minnesota.

*Pat McBride  
New Life Church  
Wanamingo, MN*

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## **CHAPLAINCY in IRAQ**

This summer in July, while our Regional Executive Directors and their boards met in Fort Collins, CO, our chaplains held a conference along with them at First Baptist Church. We had the opportunity to share a chaplain story at each session and give a report on the types of ministries we have and the scope of our influence. The senior chaplain in Iraq, Chaplain Richard Garrison, is one of ours. Several military installations have a CBAmerica chaplain as the installation chaplain - Steve Cook at Fort Rucker, AL and Dennis Newton at Fort Irwin, CA. Seven states have a CB chaplain as the leader of chaplains in those states. The senior chaplain at Arlington cemetery who oversees the daily funerals is a CB chaplain, Harry Rauch.

We have added to our ranks a number of hospital and hospice chaplains this summer. Several more have joined the active duty military and several were added to the Reserves and National Guard. We now have some 240 chaplains serving around the world and we keep growing. At present we have a dozen men serving in the Iraq environment. Please keep them in your prayers.



I have added this picture sent to our office by one of our chaplains in Iraq. I have not seen this nor have I heard it mentioned in the news. Remember this is a volunteer military. We have hundreds of servicemen and women in our military who choose to reenlist even while serving in Iraq. This is a picture of a reenlistment ceremony that took place in one of Sadaam's palaces. Our chaplains have the privilege to minister to these and many others serving their country in Iraq. Please keep them in your prayers.

For more information about chaplaincy contact Al Russell at [chapruss@earthlink.net](mailto:chapruss@earthlink.net) or by phone at 218-776-2813.

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## Iowa Flood Fund Sent

On August 28 we were able to send **\$6,000** to our four churches in the Cedar Rapids area. Thank you everyone for your generosity in this time of need!

### Ron Susek Article Continued

Perusing the Bible fully illustrates this fact. It was a man with a speech impediment, a man who lacked stage presence, a man who lacked an army, who led Israel out of Egypt-Moses. It was a man fearfully crippled by his inadequacy who God used to rebuke Israel and advise her how to handle the Babylonian captivity-Jeremiah. It was a man who admittedly lacked natural boldness who shaped the church for two thousand years-the Apostle Paul.

This year (2008) Dr. Geisler shared a small part of his personal testimony at our conference in Gettysburg. He was raised in such poverty that the family had to resort to eating their pet rabbits. The family was godless and uneducated.

Year after year, a local congregation picked him up in a bus and took him to church. At seventeen he placed his faith in Jesus Christ. When he told his mother, she picked up a poking iron from the fireplace and said, "If you say one more thing about Christ, I'm going to beat you to

death with this." He replied, "For me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

In the eleventh grade he was kicked out of school when the teacher asked the class how the Tale of Two Cities ended. He responded, "With a period." Even though he was illiterate at age sixteen and no longer in formal education, it was during this time of his life that he felt God say to him, "I'm going to make you a scholar." He went on to gain two master degrees and a doctorate. Today, at seventy-six years of age, the results of his life are staggering: He stands among the fathers who revived biblical apologetics, has written over seventy books, has debated countless atheists on collage campuses and remains in demand as one of Christianity's foremost speakers.

It all started when God chose a lad who clearly knew his inadequacies. The same is true for you and me.

Why are so few people used by God? Because we want to bring him our strength in order to impress people with what we can do for God. That glorifies us, not God. God is searching for those who are not afraid of their weakness because they learned to be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power.

Charles Lindbergh's wife was interviewed after his death. Knowing that he held strong political views, the reporter asked why he never went into politics. She replied that it was because he could never compromise with anyone. Then she made a profound statement: "His strength became his weakness."

That is exceedingly true in the Christian life. It is wonderful to be loaded with talent and ability. It is not until we fully realize that this cannot get God's work done, however, that we stand in line to be chosen for use.

Think about it: We had no hand in creation. We had nothing to offer the Atonement. We are powerless to orchestrate the flow of nations that will culminate in all things in heaven and earth being brought under one head-Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:9-10). We have no hand in the ability to ignite faith in another. We don't even have the strength to conquer our own sin nature. This is all the work of God. And he does his work through those who, knowing their weakness, learn absolute faith dependence upon him.

Thus, the Apostle Paul gloried in his weakness because therein he experienced the power of God. He embraced his thorn in the flesh. He gloried in his setbacks: imprisonments, beatings, losses through thieves, humiliations and more. It took a man of his experience to be able to write: "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things- and the things that are not-to nullify the things that are" (1 Corinthians 1:27-28).

We are all lovers of strength-our strength. That's natural to the sin nature. Walter Kerr said, "He had delusions of adequacy." John Right put it this way, "He is a self-made man and worships his creator." It is our love a self elevation that causes us to argue with God about our weaknesses, all the while failing to realize that they are there to lead us to absolute dependence upon God. They are there to enable us to be a demonstration of his power.

So, how do you apply this to your life? Don't pray, "O, God, please use me in light of the marvelous gifts you have given me." That won't work. Try this: "O, God, I come in my poverty [see Matthew 5:3] and ask that you demonstrate your mighty power through my weakness." This will arouse heaven's full attention. Then, and only then, are we in the position to be chosen for great use.

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## Upcoming Events

**Firestorm Seminars with Ron Susek** Oct. 28 & 30  
Glen Ellyn IL and Edina MN  
**DEADLINE** to register: October 21

[Register online](#)

## NCCBA Churches in Need of a Pastor

Please pray for the following churches and Search Committees:

- First Baptist Church--Lansing IL
- Grace Church--Mahomet, IL
- First Baptist Church--Streator IL
- Calvary Baptist Church--Missouri Valley IA
- First Baptist Church--Sibley IA
- Artichoke Lake Baptist Church--Correll MN
- Oak Grove Church--Golden Valley MN

THANK YOU for your prayers. **John Wodetzki** is the new Senior Pastor at Faith Fellowship Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, and **Justin Rowland** is the new Youth Pastor at Rockford Baptist Church in Rockford, Michigan.

## Contact Our Office

North Central CBA - Jean Wright - 715-538-2298 - [nccba@trivest.net](mailto:nccba@trivest.net)

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