

IMPRINTS



Winter 2009, Vol. 7 #1

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Ministry in turbulent times

Cornelius Plantinga writes of a woman who came out of a sick room in a hospital where a loved one was dying and asked, "Is there a room anywhere in this hospital where I can go to scream?"



The current state of our economy has many looking for that room.

Yet, God is still in control. Our ministries continue and God has

promised to be with us come what may.

Let us make decisions based on our local situation. Who needs help? What resources are available? Are there new ministries that God is directing you to?

Much of what we hear or read in the media could cause us to pull back and do very little. Yet, this might be the right time for you to bring the good news of Christ to some who have never heard!

Don't panic! Some decisions can wait, others cannot. If we must make them, let us call on our churches to pray, to seek God's direction for issues that must be dealt with. Let us be sure we have taken all necessary steps before we launch ahead.

Ministry is always risky and never safe.

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ANNUAL MEETING



First Covenant Church of Red Wing, MN, will host the 2009 NWC Annual Meeting April 23-25.

Dear NWC churches,

The members and friends of First Covenant Church of Red Wing, MN, are delighted to invite you to attend the 125th Annual Meeting of our Northwest Conference. The dates for this special anniversary gathering of our churches are April 23-25, 2009. We hope that each local congregation will be able to send one or more delegates to this special event.

Red Wing is a beautiful community located on the banks of the Mississippi River approximately 50 miles SE of the Twin Cities. Every year we welcome thousands of visitors to our city, many of whom come to enjoy the beautiful fall colors along the river. Others come to visit our gift shops and stores in the historic downtown area.

First Covenant Church is among our Conference's oldest congregations. Organized in 1874, we met for many decades in a church in the downtown area of our community. In 1978, the decision was made to relocate to the south end of Red Wing, where our congregation had purchased 3 acres of land several years before.

Our present facility was a huge improvement over the old building, but it

was recognized early on in our time at this location that we were short of space for classrooms, fellowship opportunities, and youth ministry needs.

In 2006, our congregation made the decision to double the usable space of our facility by adding new offices and adult classrooms, an enlarged lobby area, a spacious Family Life Center, with attached youth meet-



ing areas, and new bathrooms. People from our church significantly remodeled parts of our old building. We dedicated these new facilities in the fall of 2007 and have seen significant growth in children's and youth ministries in the months since.

Our congregation is celebrating its 135th Anniversary in 2009! We are excited to be able to host our Conference Annual Meeting, and we cordially invite all conference churches to share in the decision making that will impact our shared ministries for the year to come.

*Yours in Christ,
Tim Anderson, Senior Pastor*

A front-seat view of church planting ...

NewDay Covenant Church, Rochester, MN

Welcome to our journey of faith ... Early in 2008 my wife and I were invited to attend the Church Planters Assessment. During that process God planted a seed in our minds that He was calling us to plant a new church.

This fall the NewDay team met to dream and pray together. Our vision is to reach those who have not yet experienced a life-changing difference that comes from knowing and following Jesus. We want to be real people, expressing real love, living a real faith.

Our mission is to be a community of real people from all walks of life, ignited in our commitment to reach children, youth and families with the message and love of Jesus. It's the reason our name is important to us—NewDay Covenant Church is about helping people experience a transforming relationship with our Lord. In November the doors opened for us to be able to meet at the YMCA. They offered to let us use the whole facility (minus the pool)! We are prayerfully working towards beginning once-a-month worship services in May!

Over 30 people have felt God's call to join us in this adventure of following His leading. I believe the harvest is still ripe. Our Lord is the one who is orchestrating conversations and opportunities for us to share His message and mission of compassion. We are NewDay ... and we are just beginning.

*Living for Jesus,
Pastor John DuBall*



Veritas and EPIC workshops

Veritas: Telling the Truth about Revitalization

Over the past few years, the Northwest Conference has sponsored a number of leadership forums in which John Wenrich, Covenant Director of Congregational Vitality, has shared his work in the area of church health and revitalization. At these Veritas events, John has met with leaders from numerous churches as they have come together to gain insights that will benefit each church at the local level.

As you can imagine, the demands on his time have been significant. Therefore, Dr. Wenrich has trained others within the denomination to be presenters of the Veritas material. Within

the Northwest Conference, associate superintendent Mark Stromberg is one of the designated presenters.

It is our hope that there will be opportunities for this workshop to be offered throughout the Northwest Conference, as requested. We also hope that it will filter down beyond primary local leadership to others within the congregation.

A Veritas workshop will be held on Saturday, May 2, at Oak Heights Covenant Church in Hutchinson, MN. It will be from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and led by Mark Stromberg. Please RSVP to the Oak Heights church (320-587-8483) by Monday, April 20. The seminar is open to all Northwest Conference churches at no cost. A free lunch will also be provided to those in attendance.

EPIC: Empowering People, Inspiring Change

As a follow-up to the Veritas workshop, EPIC equips leaders with tools for leading healthy, missional change within the local church. While Veritas provides the language, EPIC provides the "how-to."

Many pastors and lay leaders lead change from the seat of their pants. EPIC helps them to think through the process of change sequentially—from beginning to end. EPIC does not tell churches what to change, but how to change ... and how to do that in a way that is civil, compassionate and Christ-honoring. EPIC is for clergy and lay leaders alike.

An EPIC workshop will be held on Saturday, May 16, at the Evangelical Covenant Church in Roseau, MN. It

will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Attendance at a Veritas event or watching the Veritas DVD is an important step prior to attending EPIC. The workshop will be taught by Dr. John Wenrich, Director of Congregational Vitality for the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Please RSVP to the Roseau church (218-463-3420) by Monday, May 4. The seminar is open to all Northwest Conference churches at no cost. A free lunch will be provided to those attending this event, as well.

If you are interested in hosting either a Veritas or EPIC workshop at your church, please contact Mark Stromberg at the NWC office.

Engstrom leaving Minnehaha for South Korea

John Engstrom, president of Minnehaha Academy, has announced his resignation effective the end of June 2009 to head a Christian school serving international students in Seoul, South Korea.

Engstrom has been at Minnehaha for 15 years. The private school serves 1,200 students in preschool through 12th grade and is owned and operated by the Northwest Conference.

Seoul Foreign School also serves preschool through 12th grade students. Fifty nationalities are represented among the 1,500 students. Many of the students' parents are diplomats or are involved in international business.

"It was one of the first international baccalaureate programs in the world," says Engstrom, who previously served at schools in Germany, India and Switzerland. He decided to pursue a new position because he was seeking new challenges, but had not initially planned to go overseas until the opportunity arose in South Korea.

Over the last eight years, Engstrom has overseen more than \$25 million in new construction and renovation—the largest in the school's history. The work included the addition of a 350-seat chapel, offices and classrooms at the south campus.

Engstrom said he has appreciated his 15 years at the school. "The parents are very committed to helping the students



achieve. The faculty and staff are like family. They're committed to serving in a Christian environment."

What's next?

The MA board will soon appoint a search committee that will include NWC Superintendent Jim Fretheim, a NWC

board representative and others from the school community.

A search firm will be hired to review the school's Strategic Plan, and interview members of the MA community to develop a profile of the school.

The MA board and search firm will agree on attributes and abilities the next president must possess. The hope is to have a new president in place by late summer 2009.

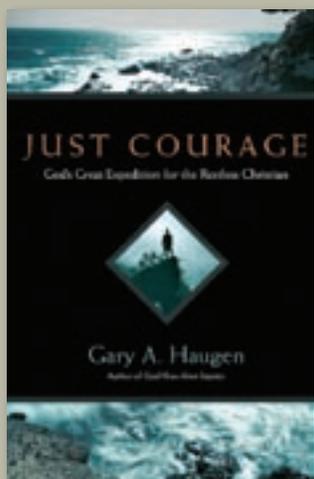
"The Northwest Conference of Covenant Churches is blessed to own such a wonderful school as Minnehaha Academy," Fretheim said. "We know God will guide us to the right person who will serve as our next school president. We call on our entire constituency to commit this process to prayer."

Learn more about Minnehaha Academy online at www.minnehahaacademy.net.

125th Anniversary Celebrations

2009 marks the 125th Anniversary of the Northwest Conference. We celebrate 125 years of faithful ministry. The anniversary committee has been selected and is in the process of planning a variety of events. The celebration begins at our NWC Annual Meeting this April 24-25, 2009, at First Covenant Church in Red Wing, MN. There will be displays and a special service commemorating 125 years of ministry.

Additional celebrations will be held throughout the year in a variety of locations around our conference. Look for forthcoming details! Thanks be to God for his faithfulness!



Book Review by Jim Fretheim

"JUST COURAGE: God's Great Expedition for the Restless Christian" by Gary Haugen

I was privileged to hear Gary Haugen at the Willow Creek Leadership Summit this year. Haugen is president and CEO of International Justice Mission.

This book is a strong call for every Christian to deepen their walk with God.

Haugen writes, "There comes a time in the life of every believer and of every church where a voice

inside us simply asks, 'Now what?'"

This is a book for our time! The author has modeled what it means to follow Christ in this world. In chapter two he argues, "We who have been rescued by Christ come to understand that our rescue has not been simply for ourselves but for an even more exalted purpose."

I encourage you to read this book and seek God's direction for the next step of service in your life!

NWC hires Director of Communications

The NWC is pleased to announce that Bryan Malley will join our staff in January as our new Director of Communications.

In his new role, Bryan will be responsible for developing content and managing conference e-mail, print and web communications.

"I look forward to increasing the effectiveness of the NWC's ministry by working to make our communication efforts consistent and more appealing to those we serve," Malley said.

Bryan has a long history with the Covenant that includes growing up at Redeemer Covenant Church in Brooklyn Park, attending Covenant Pines Bible Camp, and serving on staff at Covenant Pines for four summers and one fall season. He currently serves on the CPBC board and on the church council at Edina Covenant Church.

Reflecting on the hiring of Bryan Malley, Associate Superintendent Mark Stromberg stated, "The Northwest Conference staff and executive board are very pleased to have Bryan join our ministry team. His communications and technological expertise will greatly enhance our communica-



tion with conference churches. Further, he helps provide a generational perspective that is presently lacking."

Bryan graduated from Northwestern College in St. Paul. He has served as editor of the Minnesota Christian Chronicle—a local Christian newspaper with a monthly circulation of 38,000—for the past six years. His graphic design company, malleylnorman, has been instrumental in bringing professional design to many NWC communication pieces including the IMPRINTS newsletter, the NWC Web site, e-mail newsletters, Second Miler print pieces, and church planting promotional materials.

Welcome Bryan!



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Facebook

Become a fan of the Northwest Conference on Facebook to receive important updates. Simply use Facebook's search feature to find us and join today.

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The Northwest Conference is a regional conference of the Evangelical Covenant Church. We are approximately 130 churches in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, North Dakota and South Dakota.



CALENDAR

April 3-4 MOVE – First Covenant Church, Minneapolis

April 23-25 Northwest Conference Annual Meeting – First Covenant Church, Red Wing, MN

May 2 Veritas Workshop – Oak Heights Covenant Church, Hutchinson, MN

May 4-6 Youth Pastors Retreat – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

May 16 EPIC Workshop with Dr John Wenrich – Evangelical Covenant Church, Roseau, MN

June 13-20 Adventures in Leadership – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

July 12-17 CHIC – University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

October 5-7 Ministerial Association Retreat – Superior Shores, Two Harbors, MN

Ministry in turbulent times

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Deric Bakker reminds us that Nehemiah didn't check the market value of his 401(k) before quitting his prestigious job in the court of Artaxerxes and embarking on his quest to rebuild the walls of the city of

Jerusalem. These are tough times, yet we serve a great God who has called us to follow him regardless of the climate or the economy.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should

ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

*In His service and yours,
Jim Fretheim, Superintendent*