

IMPRINTS



FALL 2008, Vol. 6 #4

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The Church and its mission

"As the Father has sent me, so send I you" (John 20:21).

The church of Jesus Christ is a group of people who have been sent on a mission. God's mission is to call us and to send us. We are to go to the world with the message of the gospel.



There are times when a local church forgets this and simply focuses on its own needs and wants.

Cornelius Plantinga observes: "A church turned in on itself is like people who shut themselves in a closet and try to live by breathing their own carbon dioxide."

It is exciting to hear of the mission activity in our conference.

Our churches are giving away food to the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and bringing the gospel to jails and prisons. Our churches are responding to needs in their communities in powerful ways.

We are "Mission Friends."

What is the mission of your congregation?

What is God sending you to do?

In His service and yours,

Jim Fretheim, Superintendent

MINNEHAHA ACADEMY



Renovated South Campus strengthens Minnehaha Academy's ministry

Minnehaha's newly renovated South Campus is being called "a blessing for the future." As the Academy celebrated the completion of a \$13-million renovation of its South Campus with a service of dedication on Oct. 5, it looked beyond the bricks and mortar to the growth and expansion of its shared Covenant ministry of preparing students to be followers of Jesus Christ—a future consistent with its founding almost 100 years ago.

The event on Oct. 5 culminated three years of sustained effort on the campus at 4200 West River Pkwy. that has been home to the Academy's Lower and Middle School programs since 1981.

During the South Campus capital campaign, Foundation for a Lifetime, over 700 donors have given \$9.3 million in gifts and pledges towards the first phase goal of \$10 million. Highlighted by the addition of a 350-seat chapel, their support has transformed the former "tired facility" into a bright and open environment for 600-plus students. Virtually every area of the now 150,000 square-foot school build-

ing was included in the renovation. All classrooms were refurbished and four new ones added. Other major improvements include a new entry, enlarged lunchroom and administrative offices, energy saving windows, a new parking lot, and bus lane.

The South Campus campaign is Minnehaha Academy's second major capital undertaking in the past eight years. It was preceded by the Academy's North Campus (grades 9-12) campaign that concluded in 2003. During this period, Minnehaha has invested over \$25 million in new construction and remodeling—the largest building effort in the school's 95-year history.

Minnehaha Academy was founded in 1913 and is owned by the Northwest Conference. The school's mission is to provide a high quality education integrating Christian faith and learning. With an enrollment of approximately 1,200, Minnehaha attracts students from more than 50 metro communities. In addition to its two Minneapolis campuses, Minnehaha has a third campus at 10150 Xerxes Ave. S. in Bloomington for preschool through grade 5.

Friendship Place readies for residents

On Sunday, Oct. 12, Friendship Place hosted an Open House for those interested in this new collaborative ministry of Covenant Enabling Residences of Minnesota (CER-MN), Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, Rice Creek Covenant Church, the Northwest Conference, NWC Women Ministries, and members and friends of Covenant churches throughout the Northwest Conference.

Friendship Place is a supportive Christian home for vulnerable adults where the love of Christ is given and received. This ministry of compassion reflects obedience to Christ's call to serve those who are vulnerable (Matthew 25:35-40). It is the third Covenant Enabling Residence in Minnesota, and like the homes in Duluth, Our Place and North Place, it is administered by Covenant Enabling Residences of Minnesota (CER-MN), a branch of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence.

The home was completed in mid-September, and staff was hired and trained following its completion. Residents are



Friendship Place, a Christian home for vulnerable adults, was completed in September. Residents will begin to move into the new facility shortly after the Oct. 12 Open House.



scheduled to begin moving into Friendship Place shortly after the Oct. 12 Open House.

Target Corporation built the garage on the premises. Moreover, Target has provided interior design services and household items for Friendship Place at its cost! We are so grateful for their partnership in this ministry endeavor.

We are also grateful for the generosity of many individuals who have helped achieve the initial fund raising goal for the construction and opening of Friendship Place. However, ongoing funding will be

needed in order to provide a strong financial base for programming and operations because of the potential for continued cutbacks in state funding for individuals with disabilities. Therefore, contributions for the ongoing needs of the residents will be much appreciated.

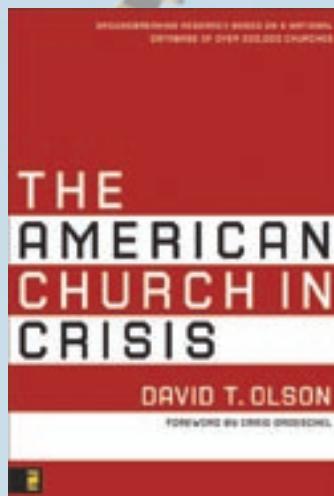
Please pray for Friendship Place as staff is hired and the residents adjust to their new home. We are confident that God will provide all that is needed for Friendship Place in the future, even as He has provided for Our Place and North Place in the past.

Leadership Forum with Dave Olson

We believe that healthy, missional churches are led by healthy, missional pastoral and lay leaders empowered and guided by God's Spirit.

One way in which your conference equips these leaders is through our Leadership Forums. These are one-day events where we bring in a presenter to challenge you and encourage you in your ministry.

Our next Leadership Forum will be on Jan. 24, 2009 at Excelsior Covenant Church.



Olson. Dave is the Director of Church Planting for the Evangelical Covenant Church. Dave will reflect on his book, "The American Church in Crisis." He will bring us real numbers and information from his research to both encourage and stimulate us in our work.

Excelsior Covenant Church has just completed a beautiful addition to their campus and it is an ideal setting for our forum.

A free lunch will be provided.

Plan to attend along with a group from your church!



The oldest and the youngest: A single day in Parish Nursing

It was not planned, but on a single day we visited the oldest and the youngest members of our congregation. The oldest, a centenarian, was a woman with delicate skin, eyes that no longer saw, white angel hair and a body that thrashed about, restless for heaven.

Please come, had been the word, for she is near the end.

She happened to be alone in her room, when Carolyn Lundgren and I arrived. We are parish nurses hoping to follow in the tradition of the early deaconesses. Parish nursing allows us a ministry of physical and spiritual health, in the name of Christ, as a part of the congregation.

Our friend, a dear and faithful Christian, was dying. Her agitation concerned us, just then.

One of us stayed by her side while the other went to find the nurse. More medication seemed indicated by what we observed. Dying can be, and often is, hard—filled with unexpected turmoil and even travail.

It is surprising, when the only desire is to go to be with Jesus. Some battle is waged between time and eternity, and finally the dear one is released. Unexpectedly almost, we needed to arm for battle and when the family member came, he was glad to pray. We joined together in

prayer for the peace that we've seen God give at these times and for a swift release.

The nurse was coming with more medication when we left. We said goodbye.

A quick drive across town followed, to greet a brand new person. If the last book was on the final page, this book was just opening with pages fresh and unbent.

The eyes, similarly unseeing for all we knew, were clear and bright and beautiful. The skin, also very soft was brand new, delicate but radiant with health.

Diapering, nursing, parenting, siblings and other topics were discussed. Baby was held and admired. We were awed with the perfection and promise of it all. We prayed this time for all that lies ahead.

The story is just beginning, and the family of God will hopefully always be there for this tiny one.

We hoped our presence was representative of the Lord's desire for every child to be well accompanied through life by His body, the church.

Our older friend never met our younger friend, for she went on to heaven the next day. We were grateful that our hands and heart formed a kind of bridge that day, because of the parish nurse ministry of our church.

Mary Gardeen

Parish Nurse

First Covenant Church, Minneapolis

125th Anniversary of NW Conference

2009 marks the 125th Anniversary of the Northwest Conference! One hundred and twenty-five years of God's blessings. We are in the process of forming an *anniversary committee* to plan a series of activities and events to celebrate what has been and to look ahead to the opportunities of the future. It is

hard to contemplate the incredible number of changes in the world since our conference was founded. We continue to be a series of mission stations scattered throughout western Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and northeastern Iowa.

**THE
NORTHWEST
CONFERENCE**

The God who led us in the past will continue to do so in the future!



BridgePointe and Crossroads merge

We are excited to announce the merger of BridgePointe Covenant Church in Eagan, MN with Crossroads Covenant Church in Cottage Grove, MN (soon to move to their new campus in Woodbury, MN, pictured above).

After much study, meetings and prayer, both congregations voted to pursue this strategic merger. This is an historic situation as BridgePointe Covenant Church has now become Crossroads Covenant Church of Eagan. This merger provides a greater opportunity to impact the Eagan community through the increased ministry muscle that Crossroads is able to bring to the Eagan campus. This is the first satellite campus for the churches in the Northwest Conference, although we have several other churches considering this as one option for reaching surrounding neighborhoods and communities.

Reproduction is the normal and natural process for healthy churches and *multi-site* is one growing way of accomplishing that. Multi-site churches are increasing rapidly around the country with statistics showing that many churches are considering a multiple site approach. Some estimates say there will be 30,000 multi-site churches in the next few years across the U.S. This is only one way for churches to reproduce themselves, but many believe this will be one of the primary ways the American church will thrive and grow.

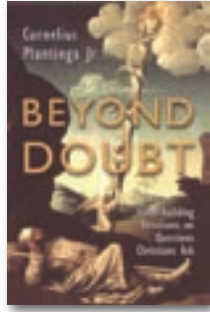
Book Review

By Jim Fretheim

“Beyond Doubt, Faith-Building Devotions on Questions Christians Ask” by Cornelius Plantinga Jr.

This is an outstanding guide to spark lively discussions concerning the Christian faith. The author raises questions like these: What is God like? If the Lord is with us why do we suffer? Why Pray? How do we face the future? How do we face death?

These and other questions are key to understanding the Christian faith. The answers



to these questions are given in the form of a brief meditation that includes a key verse from the Bible. In a portion of his answer to the question of suffering the author says, “On the day he died, our Lord shouted, ‘My God my God, why have you forsaken me?’ Two days later he appeared to his disciples and said, ‘Peace be with you.’”

The answers are brief but thorough. This is a devotional book that will make the reader think, but also bring comfort. I highly recommend it to you.

CALENDAR

January 10, 2009 RECHARGE – A one-day conference for those serving children and youth, Colonial Church of Edina, Edina, MN

January 24, 2009 Leadership Forum with Dr. David Olson – Excelsior Covenant Church, Excelsior, MN

April 3-4, 2009 MOVE – First Covenant Church, Minneapolis, MN

April 23-25, 2009 Northwest Conference Annual Meeting – First Covenant Church, Red Wing, MN

June 13-20, 2009 Adventures in Leadership – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

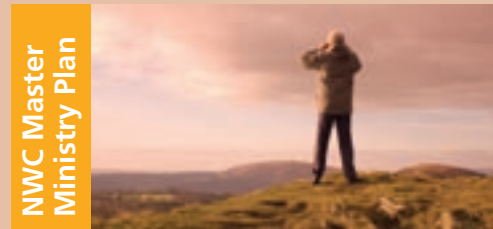
July 12-17, 2009 CHIC – University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

Throughout the past year, Northwest Conference leadership has been working to develop a ministry plan intended to help our churches grow in their overall health and effectiveness. This planning process is still underway, but the following highlights several key elements, which inform our conversations.

We believe that our NWC churches are called to be healthy, missional churches—by “healthy,” we mean pursuing Christ; and by “missional,” we mean pursuing Christ’s priorities in the world.

We believe that healthy, missional churches are led by healthy, missional pastoral and lay leaders, empowered and guided by God’s Spirit.

We believe that the efforts of Northwest Conference leadership should focus specifically on engaging, empowering, and equipping pastoral and lay leaders, know-



ing that our congregations are best served when pastoral and lay leaders, in turn, focus on developing the health and mission-focus within their local church.

Therefore, we are committed to establishing a healthy, missional leadership culture in which we identify, develop, resource and support pastoral and lay leaders. We believe that this should be the primary focus of our regional work. You will hear more about the ministry plan in the months to come. Meanwhile, please keep conference leadership in your prayers as they work on your behalf in this endeavor.

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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.

