

New RiverWorks CDO receives grant  
page 2

A busy summer around the NWC  
page 3

Book Review  
page 4

Calendar  
page 4

## Time to execute

How many seminars have you attended this summer? How many books have you read about leadership and our changing culture? Is your pastor constantly suggesting changes that would “really advance our ministry?” Do you have lots of ideas that should be implemented to really help your church? Has your church been to a VERITAS or EPIC seminar?



We are blessed to live in a time when there are unlimited opportunities for growth. Think

what we have: the Internet plus countless books and seminars that are readily available to us. We have never had so many resources!

Friends, it is fall. Summer is over and it is time to put what we have learned and decided into action. Harold Geneen writes, “In business, words are words, explanations are explanations, promises are promises, but only performance is reality.” Is this not true in the Church as well? Execution is vital!

We have prayed, studied, debated and come to some decisions. I hope they are not lost on a shelf in your library but are actually being executed in your ministry. There are some who love the

*continued on pg. 4*

### MINISTRY SHARING



## Partnership develops between Crosstown and Verbo en Accion

In early 2007, someone from Iglesia del Verbo en Accion (Church of the Word in Action) knocked on the door of Crosstown Covenant Church in Minneapolis and said, “We are a church like Mary and Joseph—we are looking for a ‘room in the inn.’”

“In the providence of God, this knock on Crosstown’s door was answered by Deb Laws, who is fluent in Espanol,” according to John Jacobi, lead pastor at Crosstown. “This began a conversation on ministry compatibility that led to Crosstown inviting Verbo en Accion to hold weekly meetings in the Crosstown building.” What has developed in the years since that first meeting is more accurately described as “ministry sharing,” and this relationship between congregations led to Verbo en Accion becoming a Northwest Conference church plant on April 1, 2009.

“Our relationship has truly been an organic move of the Spirit between our two congregations. Originally there was no great vision to share ministry together,” Jacobi said. “Instead, the Holy Spirit led us to a friendship that is declared in the Spanish expression, ‘Somos Companeros’ (We are Partners). This is the language used to describe our shared ministry in Jesus Christ.”

### Combining strengths

The two congregations have learned over time to bring their strengths and passions together to create what Jacobi described as an “infectious synergy.” Crosstown has a “first-rate” physical plant, an established ministry and strong financial stewardship. Verbo en Accion has passion for the lost and a profound gift of congregational hospitality.

Every Saturday morning from 8 to 10 a.m., the congregations host a free breakfast.

“We supply the food and all we ask is to bring whom you know would like to come,” explained Juan Ovando, pastor of Verbo en Accion. “Our purpose is to evangelize during the breakfast.”

Members of both congregations invite people to the breakfasts.

“Crosstown takes care of the English speaking, and we take care of the Spanish speaking,” Ovando explained.

In July, Crosstown and Verbo en Accion shared Vacation Bible School together. Verbo en Accion brought strong numbers of children, and Crosstown contributed strong numbers of VBS staff.

“This was the first exposure that Verbo

*continued on pg. 2*

# New RiverWorks CDO receives grant

RiverWorks, a Community Development Organization founded by members of Riverwood Covenant Church in Rockford, MN, was recently awarded a \$7,500 grant through the Initiative Foundation. RiverWorks, which became a 501 (c)(3) in July, will use the funds for capacity building.

"This grant is a great opportunity to get RiverWorks organized in the best way possible so that we can grow and serve more of our neighbors in the Rockford/Greenfield area," said Denise Kesanen, executive direc-

tor of the new nonprofit.

The Northwest Conference provided coaching and the seed money for the group to hire the lawyer that would process formal paperwork needed to be granted 501(c)(3) status. RiverWorks plans to open a food shelf in Rockford by Jan. 1, 2010. Other programs the group plans to provide are a community nursing program, personal counseling, youth programs, seniors programming, and the capacity to respond to emergency needs as they arise.

"We wanted to touch the lives of individuals in our community with the love of God in a way that meets real needs of people, and we felt that the best way to do that was in partnership with local businesses, churches, individuals, and groups, separate from the actual ministries of our church," said Keith Robinson, pastor of Riverwood.

RiverWorks hopes to mobilize community resources to deliver solutions addressing emotional, physical and spiritual needs—bringing hope leading to life transformation.

## Ministry Sharing

*continued from pg. 1*

has had with this ministry," Jacobi said. "It was a glorious week together as a culturally diverse staff and child population shared in this ministry together."

### A heart for the lost

Focusing much of its energy on evangelism, Verbo en Accion is working hard to meet the physical and spiritual needs of those transitioning off living on the streets. Ovando and others from the congregation demonstrate a profound heart for the lost by reaching out to the needy.

"Physically, we offer them a way to stop living in the streets and direct them to where they can live. We offer clothes, food and the needs of medicine. This way they will not have to worry about anything," Ovando said. Members of the church host prayer

meetings in their homes three times a day, and Bible study is offered twice a day.

Verbo en Accion also hosts three-day retreats at Covenant Pines Bible Camp for new believers and those who are not yet saved. Participants are required to hand over car keys, radios, cell phones, electronic games, and anything else that might be a distraction during the retreat. Throughout the weekend, the group explores themes like regret, forgiveness, media influence, cleansing of the soul and sexuality.

"These humble people come to get released from drugs, alcohol, pornography, homosexuality, lesbianism ... lonely souls, rejection, the desire for vengeance, destroyed self-esteem," Ovando said. "All of this and much more has been broken in the name of Jesus Christ and set free."

At a recent retreat, Verbo en Accion baptized 18 people. On Sunday during the retreats, the newly baptized gather to create

a vision for change, explore the meaning of change, and they leave with a new direction because of the presence of God in their lives. By the end of 2009, Verbo en Accion will have hosted four of these retreats. Their goal for 2010 is to do six retreats.

"We do these retreats because we believe that when we come to faith in Jesus with a lot of pain in our souls, it is necessary that God heals to receive the work," Ovando said. "We have noticed that the brothers that have been here change a lot. They look more for God, they feel free, and they take it upon themselves to reach the goals they have and get closer to God."

### Spirit-filled friendship

Ovando praised the Crosstown congregation for making many of the church plant's activities and outreach possible. "They are always there to help when in need," he said. "Not only do they give us advice, they work with us to teach us how to do things."

This ministry sharing arrangement has also forged a strong friendship between the two pastors.

"We share lunch together on a regular basis, and I find myself endlessly amazed at Pastor Juan's leadership wisdom and heart for the lost. In fact, most of the times I'm with Juan I find myself thinking, 'This is like the book of Acts,'" Jacobi said. "I can say with strong certainty that the Verbo en Accion congregation has given Crosstown Covenant much more than we have given them!"

This story featuring the relationship between Crosstown Covenant Church and Verbo en Accion Covenant Church is just one piece of a larger story. Many of our churches are currently engaged in strategic ministry partnerships that are positively impacting both the new church and the host church. For example, Redeemer Covenant Church in Brooklyn Park, MN, shares its facility and ministry with La Bendicion Covenant Church. Brookdale Covenant Church in Brooklyn Center, MN, has opened its doors for the last several years to Laotian Covenant Church. Hope Covenant Church in St. Cloud also hosts a Laotian congregation. Nueva Vida Covenant Church just celebrated 3 years of worshipping at Monticello Covenant Church. Prairie Hills Covenant Church in Sioux Falls, SD, has hosted a Sudanese congregation for many years. Fridley Covenant Church also has opened its doors to a Sudanese congregation. If God is calling your church to engage a ministry sharing opportunity with another congregation, call the Northwest Conference office today.

# A busy summer around the NWC

## Adventures in Leadership

On June 12, 19 high school students from churches throughout the Northwest Conference traveled to Adventurous Christians/Covenant Wilderness Center in the BWCA for a one-week immersion experience in leadership. Adventures In Leadership camp is an annual collaborative ministry of the NWC and AC/CWC where select student leaders are guided from a biblical framework in a focused journey of self and group discovery on critical issues and dynamics of leadership. One student captured the experience as follows: "The whole week was instructive and a great learning experience. I look forward to applying the things I've learned back home."

ALL is structured to integrate a balance between learning, doing and reflection in order to maximize the outcome of the experience for each student. It continues to cast vision and prepare students for roles of leadership in their churches and communities.

## CHIC

The Evangelical Covenant Church hosts a national gathering of high school students every three years. CHIC 2009 was held at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN, the week of July 12-17. The event featured great music, outstanding seminars and speakers, and a chance for our students to meet other Covenant students from all over North America.

The Northwest Conference had 1,280 students in attendance. In addition, we provided a number of key leaders for the event. Most importantly, God spoke and lives were changed at CHIC. We want to extend a special word of thanks to our churches for their prayers and financial support that made this event possible.

## MUUUCE

On Aug. 13, 740 middle school youth and adult leaders from 50 NWC churches gathered for three days at Faith Covenant Church in Burnsville for the Most Unbelievable Ultimate Urban Camping Experience



*Clockwise from top: MUUUCE 2009 drew 740 middle school youth and leaders from 50 churches; four teams of volunteers from around the NWC rehabbed the parsonage in Unalakleet, AK; over 100 people from 31 churches attended an Aug. 15 EPIC Workshop led by Dr. John Wenrich.*

(MUUUCE). The 2009 theme was "More Than Meets the Eye" and was based on 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The Josiah Smith Band led the students in worship and Kris Causton of Excelsior Covenant Church was this year's speaker. The students raised \$1,459.84 for Minnesota Teen Challenge throughout the weekend. The 22nd MUUUCE event provided many of the memorable experiences of past events including Valley Fair, water parks and CHAOS (Crazy Humans Attempting Outrageous Stunts). New this year was a tailgate dinner and St. Paul Saints game.

## EPIC

On Saturday, Aug. 15, over 100 people from 31 different NWC churches attended the most recent EPIC (Empowering People, Inspiring Change) Leadership Seminar at Crosstown Covenant Church in Minneapolis.

This six-hour workshop was sponsored by the NWC and led by Dr. John Wenrich, director of congregational vitality for the Evangelical Covenant Church. EPIC is a follow-up to the Veritas workshop and seeks to provide

resources to leaders navigating the adventurous and treacherous waters of congregational change. Stay tuned for other workshop opportunities within the conference.

## Alaska Project

The Northwest Conference sent 24 people—four teams of six—to Alaska this summer. Team members flew to Anchorage and then on to Unalakleet, where they worked for a week. The Covenant partnered with a ministry called Arctic Barnabas in scheduling and supervising the work projects.

The teams accomplished a good deal of work, transforming the parsonage. Crews repaired and shingled the roof. In the kitchen we installed new cabinets, new flooring and painted. In addition, new siding was installed, and much of the plumbing was repaired. The pastor and his family are very grateful for the work that was done. Our conference made a significant contribution to the ministry in Unalakleet. Thanks to those who went and for the many who made financial contributions. We plan to go again next year. Perhaps you will go with us?



## Book Review

By Jim Fretheim

**“Strategic Leadership for a Change: Facing Our Losses, Finding Our Future” by Kenneth J. McFayden**

The author offers a simple hypothesis: “The Church both yearns for and resists effective leadership, particularly transformational leadership.”

The uniqueness of this book is the attention that McFayden gives to the grief that the congregation experiences during periods of change.

He argues for change that will advance the kingdom of God but knows that it comes at a cost.

McFayden writes, “Rather than focus-



ing on positions and sources of resistance, we see others as individuals suffering loss. As we empathize with them in their loss we quickly see that each resisting person is a grieving person.”

This book is a helpful reminder to leaders who are advocating important but radical change.

Don’t underestimate the grief that people will experience. Troubled people seldom make good decisions.

The author argues that the best answer to the anxiety is caring and godly leadership. I recommend this book to all of our pastors and lay leaders.

## CALENDAR

**January 9, 2010** RECHARGE – A one-day conference for those serving children and youth, Colonial Church of Edina, Edina, MN

**January 16, 2010** Leadership Forum with Dr. Brenda Salter McNeil – First Covenant Church, St. Paul, MN

**January 23-25, 2010** ECC Connection 2010 – Sheraton Hotel, Denver, CO

**January 25-28, 2010** ECC Midwinter Conference – Sheraton Hotel, Denver, CO

**March 26-27, 2010** Women Ministries Annual Meeting – Alexandria, MN

**April 9-10, 2010** MOVE – First Covenant Church, Minneapolis, MN

**April 22-23, 2010** Ministerial Association Annual Meeting – Crossroads Church, Woodbury, MN

**April 23-24, 2010** NWC Annual Meeting – Crossroads Church, Woodbury, MN

**May 17-19, 2010** Youth Pastor Retreat – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

**June 12-19, 2010** Adventures in Leadership – Adventurous Christians, Grand Marais, MN

**June 24-27, 2010** ECC Annual Meeting – RiverCentre, St. Paul, MN

**July 22-25, 2010** ECC Women Ministries Triennial – Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.

## NWC Staff

- **Jim Fretheim**  
Superintendent  
jaf@nwc-cov.org
- **Mark Stromberg**  
Associate Superintendent  
mark@nwc-cov.org
- **Jon Kramka**  
Director of Mission Development  
jon@nwc-cov.org
- **Mike Brown**  
Director of Church Planting  
mike@nwc-cov.org
- **Cheryl Theilen**  
Administrative Assistant  
cheryl@nwc-cov.org
- **Bryan Malley**  
Director of Communications  
bryan@nwc-cov.org

### The Northwest Conference

3106 47th Avenue S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55406  
Web: [www.nwc-cov.org](http://www.nwc-cov.org)  
E-mail: [info@nwc-cov.org](mailto:info@nwc-cov.org)  
Phone: 612-721-4893  
1-800-756-6692  
Fax: 612-721-4895



### northwest conference

*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.*

## Time to execute

*continued from pg. 1*

debate, the analysis and the study but are never ready to execute. We are dealing with eternal matters—people need Christ! Let us not miss opportunities that the Holy

Spirit gives us because we are hesitant to act. There are people in our congregations that are waiting for past decisions to be implemented. I urge you to enter into this

fall season executing the fresh vision that God has placed on your heart!

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