



IMPRINTS

SUMMER 09 VOL. 7 #3

The NWC welcomes two new churches page 2

MA South Campus hosting World Vision Experience page 2

EPIC Workshop coming Aug. 15 page 3

Book Review page 4

A time of gorging

Summer is a time of getting things done—it is a time to find a few days of vacation. Nature is exploding all around us with the plants sending out a profusion of flowers and new growth. Sigurd Olson calls summer “a time of gorging.”



The Northwest Conference staff is your partner in sending out new branches of ministry in your community. Just as in nature, some growth is obvious. The new flowers, the growth of the crops, the trees extending their branches, are all things we celebrate.

Other growth is less obvious, but just as significant. Root systems are growing deeper and plants are becoming more substantial. While it is not always obvious to the naked eye, it is happening.

We delight in walking with you to observe your ministry as we would a forest trail to observe the new seedlings, the height of the corn, the explosion of color. We are committed to healthy leaders and thriving churches. It is a delight to meet believers who have been a part of your ministry for years—the mature forest. These people

continued on pg. 4

ESPERANZA 2009



Mike Brown, NWC Director of Church Planting, led a group from La Bendición, Redeemer Covenant, Monticello, and Verbo en Accion. In this photo: Juan Humberto Lopez Perez, Martha Luna, Steven Larson, Norman Ovando, Mike Brown, Javier Carrillo, Connie Carrillo, Maria Ovando, Juan Ovando.

It was truly my privilege to travel with nine people from the Northwest Conference in June to participate in the 2009 Esperanza National Hispanic Prayer Breakfast and Conference in Washington D.C. The Covenant Church had the largest delegation present this year with 54 pastors and leaders in attendance.

As the Lead Pastor of Redeemer Covenant Church in Brooklyn Park, MN, I was at the conference representing one of the most diverse cities in Minnesota. This spring, new demographic reports show that Brooklyn Park has passed both Minneapolis and St. Paul in percentage of Hispanic and Latino residents. It has been in the midst of these demographic changes that God has been answering prayer.

Redeemer Covenant Church has opened its doors and entered a partnership with Pastor Juan Lopez, and the people of La Bendición Covenant Church, to reach this community. When you open your doors, God calls you to open your heart too.

The Esperanza Conference gave me that opportunity. Esperanza is one of the largest Hispanic faith-based evangelical networks in the United States, with a focus on helping advocate for comprehensive immigration

reform. The goal is to provide an answer to the question of what we do with the 12-20 million people who are here and undocumented, no matter their nationality.

A training session gave us the tools needed to converse with legislative representatives. Being in Washington, D.C., we had a firsthand opportunity to directly put into practice the things we were learning. Mike Brown, NWC Director of Church Planting, opened each of our meetings with staff members in Rep. Erik Paulsen and Sen. Amy Klobuchar's offices. However, it was the personal story shared by Pastor Juan Ovando of Verbo en Accion Covenant Church that had the most impact. The Ovando's adult son was sent back to Guatemala. While his children are here in the U.S., he awaits the opportunity to reapply for entrance to America.

The true highlight of the three days in Washington, D.C., for me was being able to stand at the foot of the Washington Monument, the nine of us holding hands and praying together. We were living out the words chiseled in stone at the peak, “To the glory of God!”

*Rev. Steven P. Larson
Redeemer Covenant Church*

The NWC welcomes two new churches

We are excited to announce the birth of two new churches in the Northwest Conference. On June 1, the new churches were born as church planting pastors signed Covenant Agreements. Please extend your best wishes and prayers to Pastor Brad Kindall at the Gallery Covenant Church, which will be meeting in the Grand Ave. area of St. Paul. Also extend your warmest wishes and prayers to Pastor Terry White at The Exchange Covenant Church in Duluth. God continues to work to grow the Kingdom, and the Northwest Conference, through new church development as we reach out through church planting.

NWC: Why have you chosen to become a church planter?

Kindall: The words “redemptive potential” had become very important to me. God had allowed me to lead a very exciting Sunday night worship service at my mother church, Crossroads Church (www.crossroadchurch.cc).

As this ministry matured, I began to ponder the redemptive potential of what we were doing. After four years of leading this ministry, we pondered and prayed and began to see the redemptive potential for what God was doing among us would be best achieved as a church plant in a strategic location in St. Paul, MN.

White: Ever since we moved to Duluth, I have simply recognized the large need here. I went on a number of prayer walks and began to notice church after church that have closed their doors and become apartment buildings, businesses, or simply a broken down vision of the Kingdom that does not represent the life and hope that comes through Christ alive in us. This community is in need of vibrant communities of faith.

When it comes to discovering God’s will, I have always been more of a quilter than



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one who responds to the dramatic vision. Our choice to move into church planting is the result of hundreds of interactions that became an undeniable call to plant The Exchange.

NWC: What will be unique about the new church you will lead?

Kindall: We often state it this way: “We are a community of players called to stage scenes from the Kingdom of God for a watching world” (Theologian Kevin Vanhoozer).

We now live in a time where today’s teens to 20-somethings are the most biblically illiterate generation in the history of our country. People simply do not know the story of God. I have a Master of Fine Arts in acting, so my ministries have always held a high value of the performing and visual arts. My background in the arts and ministry, coupled with the great need for hearing God’s story, provide this new community with a very unique and creative voice.

White: A number of years ago, as a Youth Pastor, I was challenged with the statement that youth ministry is not about doing ministry to youth, it’s about getting youth to do ministry. I would love to take that same philosophy to every avenue of church ministry. Men’s, women’s, children’s, youth, senior’s ministry are not about all the programs we have for them, it’s about finding ways for them to be in ministry—equipping people for ministry to our community.

Small groups form around ministry happening outside the walls of our church. Seeing the three blocks around our house as our mission field. We don’t have to fix the whole community, just love your neighbor (which means you have to know their name). The other piece to this puzzle is the number of organizations in Duluth that are already doing great ministry—they just need volunteer help—sounds like a great opportunity!

NWC: How did you choose the location for your new plant?

Kindall: The Grand Ave. area in St. Paul is one of the most popular neighborhoods in the Twin Cities for creative people. Near Grand Ave. we found Steppingstone Theatre, a building that for most of the last century was actually a church. Steppingstone is uniquely located in the midst of great wealth and great poverty. It sits in a community racially and economically mixed surrounded by five great college campuses with great need for a creative expression of God’s amazing grace.

White: We are too young to have that nailed down yet, but we’re close. Keep praying! We will be on the east side of Duluth.

It is amazing how much of our identity is found in location. The church is never a place, it is His body; being the hands, feet, and voice of Christ. I want Jesus, Bible, Mission, and Obedience to the Spirit to be our identity. In the mean time... where do we meet?

MA South Campus hosting World Vision Experience

Step into Africa is a FREE interactive exhibit coming to Minnehaha’s South Campus, Oct. 3-10. This walk-through village takes you on a virtual journey to Africa, where you’ll walk in the steps of a child affected by the AIDS crisis. The interactive exhibit features a stirring audio tour combined with captivating photography that will transport you to the heart of Africa. To reserve your free tickets, or to sign up to volunteer, please visit www.worldvisionexperience.org/minnehaha.



RSVP soon for Aug. 15 EPIC workshop

Dr. John Wenrich, ECC Director of Congregational Vitality, will lead EPIC: Empowering People, Inspiring Change at Crosstown Covenant Church in Minneapolis on Saturday, August 15. The day begins at 9 a.m. and will conclude at 3:30 p.m.

EPIC talks about the spirituality, chemistry and strategy of leading healthy missional change and equips leaders with the necessary tools. EPIC also explores the inner life of the leader and how to be a non-anxious presence while leading through the turbulent waters of change.



Many pastors and lay leaders lead change from the seat of their pants. EPIC helps us 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 change in a way that is civil, compassionate, and Christ-honoring.

Please RSVP by e-mail or phone (612.721.4893 or 1.800.756.6692) to Cheryl at the NWC office if you plan to attend this seminar.

Friendship Place residents adjusting well to new home

Dear Friends,
Greetings from your friends at Friendship Place!

Almost nine months have gone by since the first residents began moving into Friendship Place, the home for developmentally disabled adults in Lino Lakes that you helped make a reality. Words cannot fully express our continued sense of gratitude and appreciation for the important part that you have played in creating a home for the eight residents who reside there.

Things have gone amazingly well for the residents, as they have been adjusting to their new living situation. The parents of these young people have also been going through a time of adjustment, as they have had to entrust their precious ones to others. Moreover, the staff has come together very well. We are pleased with the quality of our personnel and the level of care that they are providing to those who call Friendship Place their home.

The residents are enjoying being together, and many new friendships are being forged. Further, they are growing in their sense of independence and are displaying a new confidence in making a life for themselves in this new environment.

The facilities are second to none. People who stop by are consistently impressed by the quality of the home. Clearly, the facility is a culmination of good planning and generous giving!

In the days ahead, Friendship Place will be purchasing a second van. It will also be considering ways to create a "park-like" atmosphere on the property for the residents and their families.

These are just a few of the good things happening at the present time. We are writing simply to let you know that your past generosity and participation is not forgotten.

Thanks again.

Sincerely,

The Friendship Place Advisory Committee



Gethsemane Covenant Church, Hermantown

Second Miler update

Gethsemane Covenant Church in Hermantown, MN, recently completed an exciting and much needed makeover, thanks in part to donation from the Northwest Conference Second Miler program. Second Milers contributed to a grant of \$2,597.50 for the renovation project.

Gethsemane is now handicap accessible. This has been an important goal, and an elevated lift now reaches all three levels of the building. The lift and a larger, more inviting narthex displaced some offices, so a new wing was added to the fellowship hall.

The sanctuary also received a "quiet room" for small children making a joyful noise during the service. And thanks to Second Miler friends, there is a new bathroom in the children's ministry area.

Second Milers support new churches and offer assistance for special projects to established churches and ministries in the Northwest Conference. By supporting each project (suggested donation is \$20.00) we're taking the next step ... going the 2nd mile ... all in an effort to reach new heights in Christian stewardship and service. Please contact the NWC (612.721.4893 or cheryl@nwc-cov.org) to receive information about the current Second Miler appeal.

Book Review

by Jim Fretheim

“It: How Churches and Leaders Can Get It and Keep It” by Craig Groeschel

Are the visions of our ministries clear? Most of us would say yes. We have published materials and offered seminars to clarify our vision.

Author Craig Groeschel argues that the vision is not really as clear as we believe. In this penetrating book Groeschel calls for churches and church leaders to find “it.” The author says that “it” doesn’t show up on its own. “It fol-



lows big vision.”

He discusses three levels of “vision buy-in.” Level 1: “The people believe in the vision enough to benefit from it.” Level 2: “The people believe in the vision enough to contribute comfortably.” Level 3: “People believe in the vision enough to give their lives to it.”

The author provides helpful examples and thoughtful questions to help us reflect on our commitment to the cause of Christ. This would be an excellent book for a church leadership team to work through together. I commend it to you!

CALENDAR

August 14-16 MUUUUCE – Faith Covenant Church, Burnsville, MN

August 15 EPIC: Empowering People, Inspiring Change – Led by Dr. John Wenrich, ECC Director of Congregational Vitality, Crosstown Covenant Church, Minneapolis, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

August 16 NWC 125th Celebration – Salem Covenant in Pennock, MN, Morning worship at 10:30 a.m. Lunch at noon (hog roast), 1 p.m. 125th Anniversary Rally with music and drama

September 27 NWC 125th Celebration – First Covenant Church, Minneapolis, MN, 6 p.m. service featuring children’s choir, historical review, message by Efrem Smith, pastor of The Sanctuary Covenant Church

October 3-10 World Vision Step Into Africa – Minnehaha Academy South Campus

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

October 6-7 Parish Nurse Retreat – Covenant Pines Bible Camp, McGregor, MN

January 9 Recharge: One day conference for those serving children, youth and families – Colonial Church, Edina, MN

January 16 Leadership Forum with Brenda Salter McNeil



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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.

A time of gorging

continued from pg. 1

have taught, given and provided long-term stability. In addition, it is exciting to meet new believers, the seedlings, who have just met Christ and who are sinking their roots

and growing in Him. A healthy forest is a mixed-age forest; it has a variety of trees. So is a healthy ministry.

Summer doesn’t last forever, and part of our work now is to prepare for the chal-

lenges of fall. Please let us know if we can help you get ready. “The grass withers and the flower fades, but the Word of our Lord endures forever.”

Jim Fretheim, Superintendent