



January 2011 Special Edition

Midwest Conference Vitality Ministries...NAVIGATE



Navigate leader J. Wenrich

June 3, 2007...just three and a half years ago...the Midwest Conference hosted our first *Veritas* workshop. Since that first workshop, over 80% of our churches have sent delegations to regional *Veritas* workshops, and almost 40% of our churches have experienced the deeper impact of presenting a workshop to their own members. *Veritas* has provided an avenue for conversations about vitality that didn't exist before, and it has given congregations a powerful new vocabulary for these conversations.

But, *Veritas* isn't the movement. Vitality is the movement, and in the days since *Veritas* rolled out, a **Vitality Pathway** has emerged that includes Vitality Teams, EPIC (Empowering People, Inspiring Change), and PULSE (a vitality assessment tool). We're finding churches that intentionally embark on the **Vitality Pathway** are making steady progress toward a new season of vitality (and churches that don't follow *Veritas* with an intentional strategy get stuck.)

NAVIGATE is the next step as we try to broaden and deepen the Covenant's Vitality Movement. The idea is simple: **work together**, as a denomination, as conferences, as congregations. Each year, three churches from each conference (all within 100 miles of each other) will be invited to follow the Vitality Pathway in an intense partnership of vitality development consisting of three additional elements; 1) a national gathering involving pastors and teams of lay leaders, 2) two conference retreats, and 3) a monthly cohort gathering for the pastors. Our hope is that, over time, this combination of synergy, coaching, and intentionality will begin to transform churches with real and lasting vitality.

NAVIGATE 2010 Hosted by Midwest Conference!

The very first NAVIGATE gathering was held in Kansas City this past November at Hillcrest Covenant in Prairie Village, KS. Twenty-seven teams from nine conferences participated, with pastors arriving on a Wednesday for workshops and breakout sessions, and lay teams joining them on Friday evening, wrapping up at noon on Sunday with a powerful time of worship.

The three MWC churches invited to be our "guinea pigs" for the first year of NAVIGATE are all from Kansas: Brookwood (Topeka), The Journey (Wichita), and New Gottland (McPherson). In addition to the national event, the three churches are planning weekend retreats for March and October. And, the three pastors are meeting with MWC Director of Congregational Vitality Dave Benedict monthly throughout the year.

Invitations to become the next three MWC NAVIGATE teams will go out this spring. The requirements for being considered are: 1) *Stable or Critical Moment* on the *Veritas* architecture, 2) willing to commit to following the Vitality Pathway, 3) will hold both *Veritas* and EPIC workshops, and 4) within a two hour drive of other cohort churches.



Dave Benedict leads workshop



New Gottland (McPherson) team



Brookwood (Topeka) team



The Journey (Wichita) team