

Unique Church Network Keeps Inner-City Ministries Thriving

The organization started by Fred Price has for 12 years been a model for leaders who are called to urban ministry

Inner-city ministries across America often struggle to stay in “the ‘hood” or to effectively complete their urban missions because they lack sufficient networking and financial support from organizations in the suburbs.

To address the need for support of urban ministries, Frederick K.C. Price, pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center in Los Angeles, created an organization in 1990 that has helped to propel thousands into inner-city service across the country.

Price founded Fellowship of Inner City Word of Faith Ministries, an organization that, according to the ministry’s publication, comprises “Bible-teaching, Bible-preaching, Bible-believing churches whose primary sphere of ministry” is to people in America’s inner cities. Among other things, members “share information and learn how to apply the biblical principles of excellence in ministry and moral lifestyle.”

Price said he started the network after observing that inner-city ministries were “kind of left to themselves” amid larger associations and conventions.

“Many organizations did not understand us in the inner city,” Price said. “The Lord dealt with me about setting up an organization that would meet their needs, letting them know that God is interested in the inner cities and that they don’t

have to move to the suburbs to be successful in ministry.”

Participating churches share information on church growth, pastoral development, staff training and more. Membership is overwhelmingly African American but includes multiethnic, multicultural, international and nondenominational members. There are several white and Hispanic members. Others come from Brazil, New Zealand, Japan, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, Canada and the African countries of Nigeria, The Gambia and Kenya.

Members pay annual dues of \$100 and must be active in one or more of the five ministry offices described in Ephesians 4:11. About 5 percent of the 330 members are women. Pastors’ spouses are honorary members and may attend all functions.

An annual summer convention that occurs at Price’s church provides three days and nights of ministry sessions and workshops. The network is divided into eight regions, each of which may have their own gatherings during the year.

Tales of the ministry’s success are broad and varied.

Pastor Marvin L. Duke joined in 1991 when his own church was just getting off the ground. Three years later his Chesapeake Christian Center in Virginia was struggling for finances to build a new sanctuary.

Duke credits Price’s organization with providing “the ministry tools and a wealth of practical hands-on knowledge our church to another level of excellence. It was the driving force that enabled us to take a handful of members in build a \$2 million sanctuary in the heart of the inner city in less than six

years.”

Alfred D. Harvey of St. Louis (Mo.) Christian Center (SLCC) said the network had exposed him to the variety of work being done by pastors and ministries across the country.

“Through the fellowship and interaction, I’ve learned things to implement at SLCC,” he said. “I’ve gained ministry friends.”

Price’s leadership of the group is a major drawing point. His Crenshaw Christian Center, with its 10,000-seat FaithDome, is surrounded by inner-city harvest fields. Many of the ministers have followed his preaching on his Ever Increasing Faith TV broadcast for years.

Rowe said he was impressed with the emphasis on financial integrity.

“Because of the way Dr. Price operates when it comes to financial integrity, it causes you to check yourself,” he said. “His record-keeping is impeccable. He leaves no question that cannot be answered when it comes to finances. It made us take a look at what we do and make the necessary changes.”

Stanley O. Williford in Carson, Calif.