

Donald Meyer, Editor
Stan Friedman, Reporter
Steven Luce, Designer
Evy Lennard, Editorial Assistant

THE COVENANT REPORTER

SPRING 2008

WWW.COVCHURCH.ORG

ECC to Elect New President

Election of a new president, action on resolutions addressing racial righteousness and human trafficking, and a number of proposed bylaws amendments are among highlights of the 123rd Annual Meeting that will take place June 24-26 in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

The Annual Meeting immediately follows The Feast celebration, with more than 1,000 individuals expected to participate in that triennial praise gathering.

Gary Walter, 53, the nominee recommended to succeed retiring President Glenn Palmberg, currently serves as executive minister of the Department of Church Growth and Evangelism, a position he has held since 1999. Previously he served as director of church planting.

A graduate of the University of California-Berkeley and North Park Theological Seminary, Walter served as pastor at Newport Covenant Church in Bellevue, Washington, and Clairemont Covenant Church in San Diego, California.

Walter was the unanimous choice of a 27-member Presidential Nominating Committee that concluded its work in January. If elected in June, he will assume his new responsibilities on September 1. There has been no formal announcement of plans to consider a replacement for Walter.

The Resolution on Racial Righteousness, proposed by the Commission on Christian Action, calls on the church to “reflect on its own history of implicit and complicit participation in racial injustice” and to “open up dialogue about



Gary Walter, executive minister of church growth and evangelism, has been nominated to succeed retiring president, Glenn Palmberg.

racial sins by inviting members, beginning with Native and African Americans, to give voice to their stories of harm and suffering.” It then invites churches and individuals to become involved in a number of multicultural experiences and to be intentional about the planning and content of worship that reflects all voices and experiences.

The Resolution on Global Slavery and Human Trafficking, also proposed by the Commission on Christian Action, draws attention to the plight of the estimated 27 million men, women, and children worldwide who are enslaved and exploited daily in the commercial sex industry, domestic servitude, and other forms of forced labor. It calls on the church to pray for abolition of this injustice and the equality of

all humanity, to partner with collaborative efforts on the part of several Covenant ministries to biblically respond to modern-day slavery, to increase the level of awareness, and to proactively engage in efforts to persuade elected leaders to enforce and/or enact anti-human trafficking legislation.

The first of a series of Covenant Resource Papers will be presented for consideration by delegates—this one focusing on The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Bible. The development of resource papers was approved by delegates attending last year’s Annual Meeting in Portland, Oregon.

More information on both The Feast and the 123rd Annual Meeting will be found on the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org.

Veritas Nurtures Church Health and Vitality

The new church vitalization initiative, introduced last year by the Department of Church Growth and Evangelism, has stimulated intense interest among established Covenant churches, reminiscent of the highly successful church planting initiative of the past decade.

Requests from local churches for the new Veritas presentation, developed by John Wenrich, have increased so rapidly that additional field consultants are being trained to accommodate the demand.

This vitalization focus addresses one of the four components that drive the continuing momentum of the Evangelical Covenant Church, as reflected in the continued growth in overall attendance last year.

Gary Walter, executive minister of the department and the nominee for the presidency of the denomination, identifies the strength of the base of established churches as the first of the four components.



Nearly a third of all Covenanters, like those at Quest Covenant Church in Seattle, Washington, attend churches less than a decade old.

“Year in and year out, our established churches faithfully reach out. We have a missional heart.” To insure that established churches have state-of-the-art planning, evaluation, and coaching resources available, the Covenant developed a vitalization initiative directed by John Wenrich that focuses on congregational health and momentum. Wenrich, who began his work in March 2006, offers a workshop called *Veritas: Telling the Truth about Revitalization*. Pastors and lay leaders from more than 200 Covenant churches have participated in this seminar of-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Veritas Nurtures Church Health and Vitality

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ferred in 18 locations.

Second is church planting, which remains a critical component of the Covenant's mission at home. "New churches allow us to reach into new populations," says Dave Olson, director of church planting. At any given time, 40-50 new churches are under development. More than 55,000 individuals attend churches that are new within the last decade. Associate director Don Davenport focuses on church planting efforts east of the Mississippi and urban church planting.

Third is the rapid growth of ethnic ministries, a significant factor in the overall growth of the Covenant family in the United States and Canada. The Covenant now ministers among African American, Hispanic, Native Alaskan, Asian American, Korean, South Sudanese, Chinese, Haitian, Mien, Filipino, Laotian and Vietnamese populations. Twenty-two percent of all congregations in the Covenant are ethnic or multiethnic.

Fourth is the trend of large churches growing larger. There are now several churches with an average attendance of 1,000 or more. There are more than 40 churches with an attendance of more than 600.

Evangelism is the driving motivation for all of this activity, according to Walter. Congregations benefit from resources such as "Bringing My World to Christ" materials and seminars, Alpha evangelism training courses, and a network of volunteer evangelism associates.

This summer, the department will host The Feast, a multiethnic, intergenerational, spiritual life conference for the entire Covenant family. It will be held at Green Lake Conference Center in Green Lake, Wisconsin, from June 21-24, just prior to the 123rd Annual Meeting of the Covenant.

For more information, contact the department by telephone at 773-784-3000 or by email at cge@covchurch.org.

The Covenant Reporter is a product of the Department of Communication of the Evangelical Covenant Church. Copyright © 2008 The Evangelical Covenant Church. Additional copies are available for free from www.covenant-bookstore.com. To download a printable version of The Covenant Reporter, please visit www.covchurch.org.

Covenant Trust Company Funds Local Ministries

More than 37 percent of new monies earmarked for Covenant ministries through wills, trusts, and deferred gift plans were designated for local church and conference ministries, Covenant Trust Company's 2007 report shows.

Those new charitable agreements translate into \$5,693,370 in future dollars for local ministries, with the total for all Covenant ministries in excess of \$15 million. Including last year's new designations, the cumulative total of all future dollars designated for local ministries

now stands at \$52,930,561.

Last year, nearly \$8.5 million was distributed to all Covenant ministries from estates and trusts. An interesting report footnote observes that while one-third of all Covenant churches have hosted at least one Covenant Trust Company workshop, those same churches are expected to receive three-fourths of all currently known future dollars designated for Covenant churches.

Covenant Trust Company was chartered 20 years ago and has grown from the initial \$80 million under management to the current

\$415 million. Its central emphasis is effective stewardship through estate planning and financial management, incorporating the familiar banner: "Everyone has a charitable dream—what's yours? Everyone leaves a legacy—what's yours?"

To schedule a workshop or receive estate and financial planning information, call Covenant Trust Company at 800-483-2177 or visit the website at www.covenanttrust.com where free information on financial and retirement planning, charitable giving, and asset management is available.

Sellout Crowds Expected for "The Feast"

OPENINGS REMAIN FOR THE FEAST, to be held June 21-24 in Green Lake, Wisconsin. A sell-out crowd is expected for the intergenerational, spiritual life conference that has attracted members of the Evangelical Covenant Church from across the country.

Together, we will explore the six attributes of the kingdom of God: 1) A multi-ethnic community, Ed Lee, Mosaic Community Covenant Church, Houston, Texas; 2) Of forgiven people, Neil and Sharol Josephson, Bayside Covenant Church, Granite Bay, California; 3) Growing in devotion to the king, John Martz, Arvada Covenant Church, Arvada, Colorado; 4) Serving wholeheartedly, Lisa Orris, Department of Church Growth and Evangelism; 5) To extend the king's grace, Darrell Griffin, Oakdale Covenant Church, Chicago, Illinois; 6) With compassion, mercy, and justice to all, Daniel Anabalon, Encino Covenant Church, Downey, California.

The registration fee includes all meals and programming. Family is defined as a parent or parents and any unmarried children whose primary residence is still with their parents.

To register by mail, download the form from the registration website at www.covchurch.org/feast/ registration and mail it to the Evangelical Covenant Church, Attention Feast Registrar, 5101 N. Francisco Ave., Chicago, IL, 60625. The form also may be faxed to 773-784-4366.

Registration does not include housing. Housing reservations must be made directly with the Green Lake Conference Center by calling 920-294-3323.



New Starter Kit Takes Fear Out of Stewardship

It's hardly a secret that many churches are perplexed about how to best encourage giving within their congregation, observes the Commission on Stewardship in new resources it has developed for local church use. The subject seems intimidating and the "audience" for the message seems resistant.

It is with those observations in mind that a new resource, the Stewardship Starter Kit, was recently sent to every local Covenant congregation. This packet of materials contains helpful information on everything from how to organize financial campaigns to how to structure stewardship committees—and much more. Information and resources are also available on the stewardship

web page at www.covchurch.org/stewardship.

"God's people are looking for help in resolving some of life's most basic and most important questions," says Bill Clark, director of stewardship and strategic giving.

"Can we live by faith and not by fear when it comes to money? Can we really see ourselves as stewards rather than as owners of what we possess? Can we live life with an open hand, trusting that the God of unlimited resources will provide for our needs? The Commission on

Stewardship exists to provide resources to our churches to help encourage positive answers to these questions," Clark notes.

Those interested in learning more or obtaining additional copies of the starter kit should contact Emily Ross, stewardship and strategic giving coordinator, by email at emily.ross@covchurch.org or by telephone at 773-907-3375. Questions and requests also may be directed to Clark by email at bill.clark@covchurch.org or by telephone at 918-688-5276.



Compassion, Mercy, and Justice: Laying a Foundation for Ministry

Injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere." These words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. still ring true today, says Debbie Blue, executive minister of the still fairly new Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice (CMJ).

Blue sees special significance in the denomination's launch of this new department this year—the 40th anniversary of King's death—with an intentional focus on the search for justice everywhere through ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice.

"I am so proud to belong to a denomination that has taken up the banner to continue the work of MLK through the creation of this new department," says one grafted-in Covenanter, who likens the Covenant to the Quakers—a small group who did a great work in helping to abolish slavery.

"As we write this first chapter of the department, the call is clear: we, the church, are to live out fully the work of Christ—work that he has charged us and given us the au-

thority to do—as modeled through Dr. King, the Quakers and others," Blue says.

So, what is the new department all about? Blue explains.

We're about connecting people of like mind and heart, regardless of geography and differences. The first pre-Midwinter Connection—called 2X2—brought pastors and lay leaders together from across the country and Alaska, many already on the front lines of ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice and those at the beginning stages of assessing community needs.

Participants said they were motivated by the words of Christian Community Development Association founder Dr. John Perkins, inspired by site visits to local ministries, stirred by the shared testimonies of ordinary people obedient to the call, and encouraged and supported through the opportunities to network with others.

"My wife and I attended the CMJ Connection and left inspired and encouraged," writes one participant of



Participants discuss different ministry models for the Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice at a Think Tank during the Midwinter Conference.

the event. "I've heard John Perkins speak on numerous occasions, but he was more passionate and prophetic than ever. The testimonials of those serving in the trenches, plus the site visit, were equally inspiring. It's amazing how the fragrance of

Christ is being spread in big cities and remote villages by humble folks who can't help but be salt and light in their communities."

We're about collaborating with other Covenant ministry areas. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Covenanters Work Together to Tackle Issues of Race and Injustice

IMMIGRATION and affirmative action. The "Jena 6." Hurricane Katrina. Don Imus. O.J. Simpson. The Chinese Exclusion Act. Japanese internment. Racial profiling. Interracial marriage. What do all of these have in common? "Common threads that link these together are issues of race and injustice, both past and present," says Debbie Blue, executive minister of the Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice.

The Evangelical Covenant Church offers several experiences designed to heighten awareness and deepen understanding on the part of participants, including the Sankofa Journey, the Invitation to Racial Righteousness, the Journey to Mosaic in both the Pacific Southwest and North Pacific conferences, and the Mamowe-et-tiak Journey in the Canada Conference.

"There is new hope as we experience together racial healing and radical transformation in how we see ourselves, how we see others, and how we understand and respond to systemic injustice in our society based on the biblical imperative to love our neighbors as ourselves," Blue adds.

Comments from participants reflect the transformational impact:

"The journey opened our hearts...and brought a sense of consciousness on social

justice. It brought a new sense of what God demands from our lives. We are not able to fight for justice if we do not know what happened to our brothers and sisters in the past...and what is still happening to them in the present."



"I didn't want to go back to a time and place that was born out of suffering. I had to see, hear, and understand how God would move all of us toward a Sankofa experience. Thanks be to God we saw, we heard, and we understood...with our whole hearts!"

"The middle school had an assembly about making choices. I discovered myself taking a look at the messages that were below the surface—the messages were that persons of color made more bad choices

than whites. The Invitation to Racial Righteousness weekend helped me to begin to look through a different pair of eyes."

"I am astounded that God has brought each of us together, not just across divides of race, age, education, and paths of faith. I believe I have truly had a taste...of the kingdom of heaven. I've gained a greater desire to own my story...and to tell it well."

The Sankofa journey was attributed for changing one man's life. Reading news stories in the *Seattle Times* that focused on one local Evangelical Covenant Church and its members' reflections of their Sankofa journey to the South, the man began a search for a local Covenant church in which he could belong. He found Monroe Covenant and immediately signed up for the next Sankofa. "It transformed me," the man writes. "It was way beyond my imagination—way beyond what I expected." After returning from his journey, his employer (Microsoft) invited him to give presentations to his division of 200 employees and a human resource group, and write stories before and after his journey for an in-house publication.

To learn more about these experiences, visit the CMJ website at www.covchurch.org/cmj. The next Sankofa Journey is being planned for sometime in August.

World Mission Expands Effort to Rebuild Communities, Spread Gospel

A new Bible training center in Africa, new micro enterprise projects in several countries, food and shelter for hungry people, refurbished schools, new Bibles, sandals, and songbooks—Covenant World Mission embraces an amazing array of activities as it seeks to help the hurting while building relationships that allow the Good News of Jesus to be shared.

Following are brief recaps of key activities in some of the countries where Covenant World Mission has a presence.

AFRICA

Burkina Faso. The Gampela Fulani Center for Bible training is nearing completion just 10 miles outside the capital. Nine grass huts were built for the January Fulani Women's Conference, with the simple meeting hall and dormitory/storeroom soon to be joined by student housing and classrooms. Fulani throughout Burkina Faso will soon be able to go to this site to study the Bible and gather in fellowship. Short-term missionary Ben Steel will soon begin recording Fulani

summer. In 2007-2008, five short-term missionaries served at RFIS. There are many needs for next year, both as teachers and in other staff roles. To learn more about the need for teachers and staff for next year, email Lana Heinrich at lana.heinrich@covchurch.org or call 773-907-3350.

Central African Republic. Karen Benson, who lives in Bangui, recently experienced the joy of having a close Fulani friend come to faith in Christ. Roy and Aleta Danforth have conducted agricultural seminars and encouraged agricultural cooperatives in many villages. Contacts with Fulani Jesus followers in the north have been put on hold because of unrest in that region, however. They also assisted with translation of lessons about health and God into the Fulani's written language. Their home assignment ends this August.

Kenya. Two micro enterprise projects have been started by the Evangelical Covenant Church of Kenya with help from Covenant World Relief grants—a sewing and tailoring business on Lamu Island



The Hindustani Covenant Church in India is providing education and hope to street children in more than 20 villages.

raised last year for Bibles, sandals, and songbooks for Sudan, involving the participation of children from Covenant churches throughout the U.S. and Canada with children in the Sudan Covenant Church. Short-term missionary James Tang already has traveled to Sudan to purchase some of the items with plans for an additional trip to purchase more.

Congo. Dr. Mossai Sanguma was re-elected president of the Congo Covenant Church (CEUM) at the January General Assembly in Bumba, with Liwawa Elenga re-elected vice president. At least 350 delegates from the 38 CEUM regions/conferences attended. David Wood spoke each day—his first trip to Congo since he retired as a Covenant missionary in the mid-1990s.

Equatorial Guinea. Missionaries Tim and Helen Smith met in December with the newest congregation in Malabo, the island capital. In January, Helen helped lead the first women's conference for the region, and both taught a course to six new students at the discipleship school in Bata earlier this year. They will be on home assignment this spring.

ASIA

Japan. Covenant missionaries in Japan work with the NSKK (Japan Covenant Church) in church planting, evangelism, theological education, and holistic ministries. Missionaries are involved with the Odawara Christian Center, which serves the community, and one missionary serves as a faculty member in the Covenant Seminary, which trains Japanese pastors. Mission-

aries also are involved in camping ministries as well as the ministries of local NSKK churches.

Bangladesh. Leaders have focused much of their energy organizing relief projects for those who suffered from the devastating cyclone last year, providing many opportunities to share the gospel in word and deed.

India. The Hindustani Covenant Church (HCC) with headquarters in Pune has seen phenomenal growth in church membership—from about a 1,000 individuals 10 years ago to more than 15,000 today. Much of the growth comes from the communities where HCC is caring for the poor and the marginalized. The Truth Seekers in Delhi are proclaiming Jesus as the ultimate truth and the true liberator to the lower caste peoples of India. India for Christ Ministries has significantly increased its after-school ministry to poor children in more than 20 villages.

Philippines. The Jesus Evangelical Covenant Church (JECC) is opening a community center in a squatters community near the Pasig City Church. JECC leadership met in December to make final preparations for the center as well as plan the 2008 ministries for the three locations in Pasig, Mindoro, and Infanta.

China. More than 100 people participated in January's Beijing Connection, an English immersion camp for first-year students at the Oasis Training Center in Gansu Province. About 50 Chinese young people toured the famous Beijing sights with Covenanters from North

America, the first trip to Beijing for most of the Chinese students and the Americans. The group was able to view many of the buildings created for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Guam/Micronesia. The ECC works in partnership with the Liebenzell Mission and Pacific Islands Bible College (PIBC) to develop leaders for ministry in the Pacific Islands and along the Asian Pacific Rim. Last fall, project missionaries Eric and Karyn Sorenson joined Brad and Cheryl Boydston, also project missionaries, on the Guam campus. Eric teaches Bible, theology, and ministry skills classes, while Karyn teaches counseling skills. Brad serves as the vice-president of academic affairs and teaches, while Cheryl works in the business office. Students come from Bangladesh, China, Chuuk, Guam, Japan, Korea, Marshall Islands, Palau, the Philippines, Pohnpei, and Yap.

Central Asia. In November, community development workers purchased 120 sheep and goats to supplement the animal program. The herd now has more than 350 animals serving almost 70 families. This year the program hopes to enlarge the herd further and expand to serve three additional villages.

Laos. A phase of ministry has come to an end for Peter and Ruth Dutton. Over seven years, Friend of the Upland Farmer (FUF) became a viable enterprise and made a big difference in the livelihoods of more than 1,400 families. Now, FUF is being sold to Lao friends who share this concern to help upland families—those who are the poorest in one of the poorest countries in the world. The Duttons plan to remain

close by, in Thailand, to support the work, while starting a new ministry called Mekong Valley Trading and Training. Says Peter Dutton, "We hope we can take the same approach to helping tribal families in Thailand that worked so well in Laos."

Taiwan. The 2,500-member Hsin Tien Covenant Church in Taiwan conducted a fund-raising Christmas fair on the plaza of the Taiwan Freedom Memorial in downtown Taipei with approximately 35,000 visitors. It was hoped that the 150 booths could raise \$220,000 to support the New Hope Foundation, as well as the Covenant's Great Open Door initiative that is providing assistance to relief and development projects in Mainland China.

Thailand. A new house church was born last year in a village of Northeast Thailand, using one room in a local home that eventually was enlarged by knocking down one of the interior walls. In August, more than 125 Covenanters from all over Asia participated in the fifth Asian Covenant Consultation in Bangkok. Discussions and teaching focused on "Developing Tomorrow's Leaders."

EUROPE

Belgium. Covenant missionaries are now present on both sides of the language barrier in a small country that boasts to be "the Capital of Europe." Johnna Hayward, after completing four months of intensive French study, is working as a pastor of outreach and youth in a Congolese church in Waterloo. This church has a vision for reaching outside of their ethnic church and is focusing on the Belgian community. Barbara



Johnna Hayward (far right) celebrates Christmas with Congolese youth from a Belgian cross-cultural congregation.

Boca Swanson is working among immigrants and refugees/asylum seekers in the Dutch-speaking city of Antwerp as part of the Mosaics Project, hoping to begin Bible studies with the women in 2008.

France. Francisco and Stephanie Ramos have returned to Paris after a year of home assignment, work-



Covenanters from Wisconsin and Minnesota added a second story to a church in Rio Bravo, Mexico, as part of developing a long-term relationship with the community.

ing with La Fonderie, a ministry of discipleship and encouragement to Christian artists in Paris. Weekly Bible studies and monthly worship services began in November. Regular artistic events provide a point of contact with non-Christian artists. Ken Satterberg was scheduled to return to France in February after completing home assignment where he will continue working with the Mosaics Project. John and Letha Kerl, European regional coordinators, also make their home in Lyon, France.

Russia. Leonid and Leanna Regheta, project missionaries in St. Petersburg, are focusing on various Covenant projects: a youth camp in Estonia (Russian, Swedish, and Estonian youth groups working together), a mission outreach Orthodox conference in Moscow, teaching a leadership course in southern Russia, leading a spiritual formation seminar in Latvia, and participating in a senior leadership meeting of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization at Budapest. Leanna participated in the Chicago-based Triennial XII and visited a dozen churches prior to the conference.

Spain. Long-term missionaries Eugenio and Pía Restrepo, Roberto and Nancy Reed, and project missionaries Andy and Carol Larsen

serve in Spain with numerous short-term missionaries. The Larsens, now on home assignment, serve with the Mosaics Project based in Barcelona. The Reeds work in church planting in La Coruña as well as Barcelona and Valencia, with sights set on Madrid and Santiago. Roberto helps coordinate the Alpha course in

Spain. The Restrepos work with the FIEIDE denomination in the Málaga area, focusing on the Roma (gypsies) and diverse immigrant populations from Northern Africa and Latin America.

Czech Republic. Fred Prudek travels weekly to Milovice to support a new church in that area, while also teaching practical theology classes at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague and assisting the Evangelical Theological Seminary. Kelly Prudek continues to participate in monthly prison visits to a women's prison where they pray, sing, and share Scripture. She also supports Project Hope, an outreach to women and men working on the streets of Prague. They have been joined by C.J. Espinoza, Covenant short-term missionary serving in outreach and teaching English and sports ministry.

Sweden. Short-term missionary Aaron Thompson is serving as the pastor of student and university ministries.

LATIN AMERICA

Colombia. Long-term missionaries Cathy Campobello and Gary and Mary Lou Sander, along with Norwegian Covenant missionaries, have encouraged the Colom-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Pastors of the Congo Covenant Church and their spouses celebrate at the 2008 national conference, where Dr. Mossai Sanguma was re-elected president.

believers as they read translated portions of the Old and New Testaments for later use with village listening groups.

Cameroon. Land has been purchased and a new facility is being constructed for the Rain Forest International School (RFIS) serving missionary children in Cameroon. A security wall and major electrical and water installations are complete—construction of classroom buildings should begin by

and a goat-raising project in Mpeketoni. Another coral building block project on Manda Island also is doing well, providing seed money for a vegetable stand project. The projects provide income to local church members who then are able to support the local church. The ECCK has located land for permanent church buildings, anticipating support from a 2008 Friends of World Mission appeal.

Sudan. More than \$50,000 was

World Mission

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

bia Covenant Church to form an association—the Asociación Pacto Colombia—to unite ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice offered by churches, foundations, and corporations. Working with Covenant World Relief, leaders of these ministries will be brought together for their first workshop in late February and early March.

Ecuador. Cheryl Clark has been pastoring a church in Guayaquil, the largest city in the coast, while Lisa and Kurt Peterson have been serving in Alliance Academy, a Christian international school in Quito, Ecuador. Joan and Paul Spjut have received numerous work teams from North American Covenant churches to support the local Ecuadorian Covenant churches in areas of construction, Vacation Bible School, and community development. Yonchu Song serves as country coordinator, connecting missionaries with Ecuadorian Covenant leadership and teaching ESL part-time.

Mexico. In Monterrey, the Foundation for Family Development offers parenting courses, marriage enrichment classes, and facilitates the Down Project. In Oaxaca, missionaries work with Semillas de Salud, offering community health programs, health screenings in schools and prisons. The Fuentes Libres project provides micro enterprise loans to marginalized women in Oaxaca. Missionaries also preach, disciple, counsel, and teach at local and district levels and host mission groups and individuals to strengthen ministry partnerships between churches in North America and national Covenant churches. In May last year, missionaries organized the first retreat for pastors and spouses to provide encouragement, training, and health care for leaders in new and existing congregations.

Argentina. This year marks the inaugural year for CBCIPE in Argentina and Chile, a six-week post-high school Bible training school for 18 Latin American youth from Spain, Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico, and Colombia. Several new churches are to be added this year.

Brazil. Project missionaries Wainer and Magui Guimaraes are serving in Brazil. A core group in Rio de Janeiro is meeting for worship and prayer.

Spiritual Directors: Companions for the Journey

Spiritual direction—what is it, and who needs it? Spiritual direction is a ministry of listening, discernment, and prayer in a confidential setting of encouragement and compassion. Through this ministry one finds a spiritual companion who can listen to the stories of one's life and help discern the presence and work of God's Spirit.

Being formed into the likeness of Christ cannot be done in isolation, a reality that provides the genesis for regional networks of spiritual directors currently being developed throughout the Covenant.

"We need companions for the journey to help guide and nurture our faith, to help us discern God's movement in our lives," says Doreen Olson, executive minister of the Department of Christian Formation. Spiritual companions—or "soul friends"—are evident throughout Scripture, she notes, including Moses and Joshua, Ruth and Naomi, David and Jonathan, and Paul and Timothy to name a few.

"In this life movement we call the Covenant, soul care has been central to our life and thought," Olson observes. "Since our inception we have been prone to ask one



In August, the first class of students graduated from the Center for Spiritual Direction's three-year program.

another, 'How goes your walk?' or 'Are you still alive in Jesus?' We've held strongly to the notion of the priesthood of all believers, knowing that as spiritual companions we are to spur one another on to lifelong growth in Christ."

Currently, there are 50 trained spiritual directors, with the first class of 20 students recently completing the certificate program at the Center for Spiritual Direction at North Park Theological Seminary. Twenty new students enter the program each year.

Each regional network will differ

according to the needs and culture of the various regions, Olson says. Spiritual direction has been available to Covenant pastors in the Pacific Southwest Conference for a number of years.

"The ministry of spiritual direction provides a means of significantly deepening our spiritual life as a church," Olson adds.

"It offers hope for cultivating communities that are vibrant and alive and missional. As our Covenant Affirmations convey, 'It is through transformed people that God transforms the world.'"

New Series Combines Best Covenant Resources

SEASON TO GROW is a six-week multi-dimensional initiative for spiritual growth focusing on four themes: God's word, Relationships, Obedient Living, and Worship.

This new series developed by the Department of Christian Formation brings together some of the best of Covenant resources. More than 200 Covenant churches already have obtained the material, which can be ordered through the online Covenant Bookstore, with others indicating they will use the resources during Lent because of the emphasis on discipleship.

The program, initially developed by Kirsten Nelson Wagenius for use in her home church, was expanded for broader Covenant application and introduced last fall.

"The *Season to GROW* materials make sure that when people are in small groups talking about the truth of Jesus Christ... they also go out and do the words of Jesus, by caring for the poor in their community or even in our own congrega-

tion," says pastor David Greenidge of Tigard Covenant Church in Oregon.

Becky Manseau Barnett of Pilgrim Covenant Church in South Plainfield, New Jersey, used the materials for their church's fall kick-off. "The materials were laid out in such a way that they could easily be adapted to suit the needs of a smaller congregation."

Having all of the materials in one place pleased Marc Eix, pastor of Faith Covenant Church in Manistee, Michigan. "It makes my job that much easier, combining all the denominational resources and

Covenant ideology into a large-scale program like this one, because I don't have to work to make it fit what we're already doing."

Covenant churches can request one free *Season to Grow* Starter Kit by emailing Covenant Resource Center at resource.center@covchurch.org or calling 800-338-4332. The starter kit also may be purchased online at www.covenantbookstore.com.

Free Resource Offers Training in Spiritual Discipline

Spiritual disciplines. Spiritual practices. Holy habits. These are terms increasingly heard in today's church and even outside the church, observes Doreen Olson, executive minister of the Department of Christian Formation.

"Basically these terms refer to regular practices that help us lean into the transforming work of the Spirit," she says.

Classic spiritual disciplines include such things as Scripture reading, meditation, prayer, study, solitude, simplicity, service, worship, and even celebration. "Such practices neither earn our salvation nor automatically bring maturity. They do, however, have the effect

of training us in faithfulness."

Growing Deeper is a series of tools created to equip and guide Christians toward a disciplined life. Instruction in the practice of regular Bible reading and prayer is the focus.

"While leaning into the transforming work of the Spirit through these disciplines, we grow deeper in our relationship with God, learn to love our neighbor, and grow in self-awareness," Olson advises.

At a recent conference on spiritual formation, Dallas Willard delivered a significant challenge: "If we're going to see spiritual transformation in our churches, we need to change the way we teach. We need

to help people assess what is really true of themselves. We need to give practical tools to do that."

Congregations experiencing spiritual transformation are placing an intentional focus on spiritual growth—preaching it, teaching it, expecting it, and planning for it, Olson says. Instruction in the spiritual disciplines is a critical dimension of such a focus.

Covenant churches desiring a free copy of the *Growing Deeper* series may request it through the online Covenant Bookstore at www.covenantbookstore.com or download the material by visiting the resources section of the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org.



Retooled Orientation Reflects Growth and Diversity

The orientation process for pastors desiring to serve in the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) has undergone a major transformation—and is now known by a new name, Covenant Orientation (formerly the Covenant External Orientation Program).

The restructured program includes three major components: six Covenant life experiences, an advising relationship with a seasoned Covenant pastor, and completion of four courses.

The four include History of the ECC, Theology of the ECC, Mission & Ministry of the ECC, and Vocational Excellence in the ECC.

The courses, which now are longer in duration, reflect condensation of a larger number of classes, many of which were conducted during a

one-day period following the conclusion of the annual Covenant Midwinter Pastors Conference. Courses now will last from four to five days. They are presented during the Covenant Midwinter Conference, at regional conference locations, and during the summer at North Park Theological Seminary.

The new approach is designed to decrease the amount of travel for pastors, allow for more expeditious completion of the program, and increase a sense of camaraderie by keeping groups of pastors together for longer time periods. It is hoped most churches and pastors will plan on completing the program in two years.

"Revising the orientation process has been an energizing challenge," says a spokesperson. "We've

worked at matching the task of communicating who we are as a denomination, what we believe, and how we do mission with the very practical scheduling needs of our pastors. We have emphasized the desire of our participants to come out of Covenant Orientation having practical tools for ministry, having a network of relationships within the Covenant Ministerium, and having the self-knowledge and skills which can lead to a healthy ministry."

The need for restructuring also reflects the continued growth and diversification of the denomination over the years, providing a stark contrast to the situation in 1885 when the denomination was formed and pastors began to be registered as the church sought to help in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Formation Introduces Four New Resources

Many Covenant churches are looking for resources that will help adults grow deeper in pursuit of a lived-out faith. *The Prayer that Focuses Life* by Dr. Stan Nussbaum is the first of the new adult spiritual growth resources offered by the Department of Christian Formation. The booklet can be used for individual reflection or as a spiritual growth resource for small groups.

This resource, introduced in 2002, is based on the Lord's Prayer. It has been reformatted and expanded to include more questions and opportunities for reflection. The initial resource, which received wide acclaim when introduced, is considered to be especially helpful for small group ministries.

The department also plans to introduce *Spiritual Practices* and a new parenting resource, *Parents as Spiritual Mentors*. All resources are being designed for use by individuals, couples, or small groups in the hope that they will assist them in their spiritual pilgrimage of a deeper walk with Christ.

The *Children's Ministry Planning Tool* is the first in a new series of disciple-forming resources from the Department of Christian Formation.

This tool is designed both to help churches plan children's ministry using a formational approach, and evaluate existing ministries. Included are sections on Christian formation foundations, intergenerational ministry, developmental considerations, learning styles, staffing, discipline, and "helps" for church plants and revitalizing children's ministry. An accompanying CD provides a number of planning and evaluation forms and tools.

The *Children's Ministry Planning Tool* is available for purchase online at Covenant Bookstore by visiting www.covenantbookstore.com/pltoforchmi.html

Youth and Adult Ministry Planning Tools are scheduled for release later this year. They are designed to assist ministry leaders in the mission of making authentic disciples of adults, youth, and children whose faith is lived out within every context of life.

Covenant Camps Make Big Impact

ONE OUT OF EVERY 15 individuals involved in Covenant camping programs last year made first-time commitments to follow Christ. That statistic is one of many fascinating insights to be gleaned from camping surveys conducted in 2007:

- One-third of all campers rededicated their lives to Christ.
- Covenant camps encourage campers to return and continue growing in their faith.
- During the past 14 years, campers donated more than \$800,000 to World Mission initiatives, heightening awareness among campers of the spiritual and physical needs of the world.
- More than 1,000 people work at Covenant camps during the summer months, helping those individuals to develop and strengthen leadership skills.
- Covenant camps serve more than 24,000 summer campers during designated Covenant weeks, with an additional 24,000 served as part of non-Covenant groups renting the facilities.

Resource Center Has the Answers

WHO DO YOU CALL when you don't know who to call? The answer is Covenant Resource Center, which has been serving Covenant churches and ministries for three decades, providing free consultation, research, and customer service—or what the staff calls “high touch.”

The center helps connect Covenanters with various departments, offices, commissions and ministry areas—a “help desk” of sorts. “We provide consultation regarding program resources within a wide range of ministry areas, information about Covenant-produced publications, and respond to general questions about the Covenant,” says its director, Millie Lungren.

The center also contacts individuals who have ordered specific materials or who have participated in various Covenant initiatives, asking how they have used specific resources or if they have ideas or needs requiring attention.

For assistance, email Covenant Resource Center at resource.center@covchurch.org or call them at 800-338-4332.

Covenant News Service Spotlights Small Ministries

“I knew that the pastor that rode a Harley would be willing to talk to a guy like me,” the foreman said. That’s pastor Mark Andrews the foreman is talking about, who is planting Bridges Covenant Church in Taveras, Florida. Andrews rides a Harley Davidson motorcycle, hoping to use a more unconventional ministry approach to reach people who have either given up on church or who might not feel welcome anywhere else.



Bridges Covenant Church was featured on the Covenant website in October.

The foreman, who was helping renovate the worship facility, did not attend church, but said he felt comfortable asking Andrews to officiate at his wedding.

Covenant News Service ran an online feature story about the new Bridges church plant last October,

featuring a photograph of Andrews in his leather vest with his Harley. Andrews was in Chicago for this year’s Midwinter Pastors Conference and shared what happened after the October story was published.

The pastor noticed an unusually large number of visits to his church website home page—650 total—and wondered why the unusual interest. He used website analytical tools to track where those visitors obtained his home page link—and found that 620 had originated with the Covenant News Service story, which included the Bridges home page link.

“The daily online news stories play an important role in keeping Covenanters informed, sharing what God is doing through the hundreds of local Covenant church ministries,” observes Don Meyer, executive minister of the Department of Communication. The stories also connect ministry ideas, sparking interest on the part of other churches in starting similar ministries.

“But, I hadn’t thought much about the benefit to the local church when we publish a feature article



Pastor Mark Andrews of Bridges Covenant Church in Taveras, Florida, is also H.O.G. Chapter Historian.

about their ministries,” Meyer confesses. “That one story on the Bridges church plant stimulated 620 visits to that local church’s website—that’s just incredible.”

New stories are published online each day and can be accessed at the Covenant website, www.covchurch.org. Those not wanting to miss a single story can sign up for the free Covenant Newswire email service. It delivers one email daily containing the headlines and a few lines of copy for stories published the previous 24 hours. Churches desiring to send ministry information for use in online stories can do so at newsdesk@covchurch.org.

Compassion, Mercy, and Justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

important work of racial righteousness, begun by Covenant Ministries of Benevolence and further developed by the Department of Christian Formation, continues now in the new department.

We celebrate the increasing efforts of regional conferences as they contextualize the Sankofa Journey experiences under the banner of J2M (Journey to Mosaic), the ongoing Invitation to Racial Righteousness experiences (most recently in Minneapolis, Walnut Creek and Sacramento), and the upcoming Sankofa Journey planned for August. We also celebrate the courageous initiative of Women Ministries as they launch an effort to “Break the Chains” of human trafficking.

We’re about partnerships

outside the Covenant—Bread for the World, Food Resource Bank, Sojourners/Call to Renewal, and Paul Carlson Partnership are just a few of the organizations we join to fight hunger and poverty, domestically and internationally.

We’re about relief, rehabilitation, and development. Assisting the “poorest of the poor,” Covenant World Relief continues to represent Christ in times of need as the Covenant’s humanitarian aid and development arm. Through these initiatives, compassion and mercy is extended through immediate response to disasters and human suffering, while justice is reflected in empowering the powerless through microenterprise grants.

We’re about listening. Pastors, lay leaders, seminarians, conference superintendents, professors, and administrators recently gathered as part of a CMJ Think Tank to offer

wisdom, insight, and potential priorities for this first chapter of the department. For more information, visit the online Covenant news story (www.covchurch.org/cov/news/item6093).

We’re about serving you and your local church as you faithfully “make a place at the table” for the voiceless, the invisible, and the powerless.

“The Covenant may be a small denomination,” Blue notes. “However, God has purposed in us to do his will. We can make an incredible difference in our society as we “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”

Have an idea? Let us know how together we can write this first chapter in the department’s unfolding history. Contact us by telephone at 773-907-3301 or email chris.palmerlee@covchurch.org, or debbie.blue@covchurch.org.

New Benevolence Ministries Keep Pace with Today’s Evolving Needs

Outreach initiatives must continually change and adapt to keep pace with the changing needs of society—at least that’s the mantra at Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB) and its many affiliated ministries.

Covenant Enabling Residences (CER) address the needs of developmentally disabled adults and their families. Established residences in Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota provide the supportive residential setting, training, and encouragement developmentally disabled adults need to maximize their independence.

Five new initiatives are moving forward across the country:

- Covenant Enabling Residences of Minnesota will build a duplex residence to accommodate eight residents in Lino Lakes on the Twin Cities’ north side in cooperation with the Northwest Conference.
- Covenant Enabling Residences of Michigan is exploring the possibility of expanding its presence from Muskegon to Grand Rapids.
- CMB hopes to develop a new partnership between its retirement communities and enabling residence-

es by establishing an enabling residence in Chicago’s northern suburb adjacent to the Covenant Village of Northbrook retirement community. Covenant Village owns a single-family home, and the local committee is weighing the advantages of renovation or rebuilding to make the residence appropriate for developmentally disabled adults. “This is a model of what we hope to replicate in other locations,” says Ron Dixon, associate vice-president and national director of special needs housing. “We hope to take advantage of the synergies... in employment, volunteer opportunities, sharing resources and programs.”

• Escalon (CA) Covenant Enabling Residence completed architectural design of a 4,000-square-foot residence on land adjacent to and donated by Escalon Covenant Church, with construction scheduled for Spring 2009.

• Covenant Support Services in central Florida is offering in-home supportive services to adults with developmental disabilities and their families, hoping to expand services to include respite care and recreational programs.

The new Family Treatment Center at Covenant Children’s Home of Cromwell, built to resemble the original Hilltop tabernacle, includes seven counseling rooms, a room for group therapy and a reception area. The center offers Christian counseling and medication management to 75 families.

Children’s Home has refocused its residential treatment program from the juvenile justice system to clinical treatment of youths with significant histories of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse. With the shift, the Learning Center switched to an academy structure offering programs for young boys and high-school age boys and girls. The state-approved curriculum emphasizes vocational training, with local businesses providing on-the-job experience.



With its distinctive cupola, the new two-story Family Treatment Center at Covenant Children’s Home of Cromwell reflects features of the original tabernacle that was an icon on the hilltop campus.

Children’s Home operates three therapeutic groups homes for girls 17 to 21 years old who have histories of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse. Staff also provide training programs in child development to other social service agencies, in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

New Resources Available for Ministry to People with Special Needs

HELPING LOCAL CHURCHES more effectively minister to people with disabilities is the focus of a new segment recently added to the Evangelical Covenant Church website.

The purpose of the new content is to help educate local church leaders on the challenges involved in providing this kind of specialized ministry and provide much-needed resources to enhance the effectiveness of that ministry.

Helping to network churches engaged in this area of specialized ministry is another key objective of the new content, which was developed with guidance from a nine-member committee that included pastors and lay people.

An estimated 20 percent of individuals live with some kind of disability, research shows, with a large number of those individuals unable to enjoy a church home because so many of the church facilities are not easily accessible. Another challenge comes when parents of children with disabilities are unable to participate in worship services because of a lack of appropriate needs-related

care, or their children are unable to participate in Sunday school because of facilities that are not designed to accommodate the children’s special needs.

The committee hopes to raise awareness of these special needs, as well as provide resources for ministry and an opportunity to connect with other churches offering similar support. Some of the featured web content includes:

• **Disability Ministry Network.** Churches are divided into three categories: ministries to children with special needs, ministries to families of children with special needs, and ministries to persons with disabilities of all ages.

• **Accessibility.** Provides an overview of accessibility issues, including an “Indicators of Welcome” survey to help a local church evaluate how welcoming their facilities are to individuals with disabilities.

• **Tools.** Provides a collection of resources, including specialized forms, articles on disability ministries, and website addresses

for other organizations that offer good resources.

• **Startup.** A 12-step document outlining the basic steps to follow in establishing a special needs ministry in a local church.

The Disability Ministries Network is a place where churches can access information from other churches that are successfully ministering to and with persons with disabilities. The network is divided into areas of expertise and features churches with ministries to children with special needs, to parents of children with special needs, and with persons with disabilities of all ages. Here readers can learn how the ministries began, find out more information about the type of ministry, and email the contact person to request more information or assistance in beginning a new ministry.

The new website content is the result of a collaboration involving the newly formed Covenant Disabilities Committee and Department of Christian Formation. For additional information, call the department at 773-583-0220 or contact Covenant Resource Center at 800-338-4332.



Students Put Faith to Work, Follow Jesus

In response to a strong desire to challenge youth to be followers of Jesus Christ, a week-long experience called Feet to Faith has been created.

Feet to Faith challenges young people to consistently live out both the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, helping high-school students to focus on service opportunities in their communities.

This summer, the North Pacific Conference will pilot this new ministry, gathering young people to explore and be exposed to injustices in their own corner of the world. Students will be challenged to not only understand what is happening in the world, but also to work to bring about change in their local churches, schools, and communities.

"We want students to realize that God desires to use them where they are...and that they are called to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God," says Carolyn Poterek, senior high youth pastor at Trinity Covenant Church in Salem, Oregon. "Many students are not called to go across the world, but all are called to serve in whatever ways God can use them today," she observes.

CHIC 2009 will share opportunities available to students to engage in the work of compassion, mercy, and justice, hopefully encouraging them to embrace that area of ministry as part of their personal faith journey. It is our hope that the CMJ emphasis at CHIC would serve as a catalyst for students, allowing them the opportunity to make CMJ an intentional part of their faith walk.

"Our dreams and goals for Feet to Faith are to allow students and leaders intentional opportunities where they can begin to ponder what God is calling us to do as Christ followers—a call that can be seen in Mathew 25: 14-46," says Marti Burger, director of youth and family ministries. For more information, email her at marti.burger@covchurch.org.



North Park Students Prepare for Lives of Service

North Park University and North Park Theological Seminary continue to provide opportunities that will prepare students for lives of significance and service.

A multicultural experience helps describe the first Vive Conference offered by University Ministries last fall, which included 30 students of varying ethnic and cultural backgrounds representing numerous Covenant churches. Campus pastor Judy Peterson and Harvey Carey, pastor of Citadel of Faith Covenant Church in Detroit, Michigan, encouraged the students to become future leaders, with the young people joining in multicultural worship, two college preparatory workshops, and a trip to downtown Chicago.

University Ministries and the Vikings football team welcomed 75 at-risk youth from Chicago's Cabrini-Green neighborhood for Viking Kids Day, with university students serving as chaperones. The children attended a Vikings football game, received footballs, tee-shirts, and player autographs. "This is one of the ways University Ministries is seeking to embrace and serve our urban neighbors here in Chicago," says director Rich Johnson.

A special performance by Danish gymnasts entertained a group

of students from another North Park neighbor, Hibbard Elementary School. A few weeks later, Hibbard's reading and curriculum coordinator at Hibbard passed along numerous thank-you notes and drawings from the students expressing their appreciation. Since the 2006-2007 academic year, certain North Park faculty and staff have visited Hibbard one day each week to read with the school's third-grade students.

An accreditation team from the Association of Theological Schools visited the seminary campus last fall and recommended continued accreditation for the next 10 years. Accreditation review prepares the way for strategic planning focused on enhancing the seminary's effectiveness in a changing world.

The Kern Foundation is funding up to nine full-tuition scholarships to students attending North Park. The program also includes support for collegial relationships with Kern scholars around the country and funds for continuing education following seminary graduation.

The Making Connections Ini-



North Park University students hosted 75 at-risk children from Chicago's Cabrini-Green neighborhood for Viking Kids Day.

tiative, funded by the Lilly Endowment, is supporting visits by seminary faculty to Covenant churches, also covering travel and housing expenses. The program also brings Covenant pastors to the seminary to preach in Chapel, teach classes, and meet one-on-one with students.

The Center for Spiritual Direction graduated its first class. The program, which is funded by the Sustaining Pastoral Excellence program, admits 20 students each year. Its focus is preparing spiritual directors to serve Covenant pastors and staff, enriching their spiritual life and encouraging continued spiritual growth.

New DVD Explores Core of Covenant Identity

THE NEW DVD-BASED CURRICULUM, *Exploring Covenant Affirmations*, provides an opportunity for individuals to learn more about the six affirmations that are central to Covenant faith and identity, and to do so in an exciting new video-based format.

The material is ideal for both individual and small group use, as well as classroom settings.

The DVD contains three major sections: a two-minute segment suitable for advance promotion of the material, a 15-minute overview of all six affirmations, and a seven-session series of videos that explores each affirmation in much greater depth.

A Spanish subtitled version of the DVD is being developed and will be released as soon as it is available.

The project was funded by a grant from the Lilly Foundation. The material was developed by the Making Connections Initiative at North Park Theological Seminary in cooperation with the Department of Christian Formation.

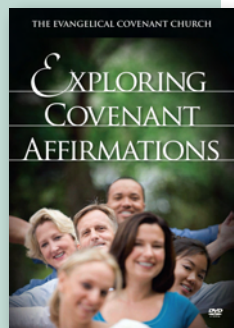
"I thought the video was superbly done," says Mark Nilson of First Covenant Church in Seattle, Washington. "The quality is excellent and the con-

tent is meaty without being too heavy."

Rick Carlson at the Covenant church in Roseville, Minnesota, observes, "The clarity of the script makes the Covenant Affirmations accessible to unchurched seekers, and yet provides great insight for people who are mature in Christ."

"We are just completing the seven-week series...in our adult Sunday school with 100 participating," writes Linda DeGrado of Faith Covenant in St. Petersburg, Florida, who says the series "has been so well received by our congregation."

The material can be purchased through the online Covenant Bookstore at www.covenantbookstore.com. For helpful consultation on the material and its potential use, contact Covenant Resource Center by telephone at 800-338-4332 or email them at resource.center@covchurch.org.



Women Ministries Fights to End Modern Slavery

To those who think slavery for the most part is a thing of the past, think again. Although slavery was officially abolished worldwide in 1927, it is estimated that today there are 27 million individuals forced to work as slaves with the human trafficking toll rising at an alarming rate.

It is with this stark reality in mind that the "Break the Chains" initiative was launched this year by Women Ministries in collaboration with the Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice. Using Isaiah 58:6 as its foundation, the project seeks to increase awareness and provide resources to local churches and others in the effort to respond to this tragic situation.

The urgency of the situation pushed human trafficking to a more prominent position of concern for Women Ministries two years ago when Executive Minister Ruth Hill participated in a peer forum

of women ministry leaders from several denominations. Of the estimated 600,000 to 800,000 people who are trafficked worldwide each year, some 80 percent of them are women and children, Hill notes.

"One leader's cousin was abducted from a northern Chicago suburb and enslaved for seven years before the FBI found her," she recalls. "Realizing human trafficking was in my backyard was shocking. Knowing the trafficking of people was third after drugs and arms made me feel overwhelmed. I wept to learn of little girls exploited 10 to 20 times a night, but what could I possibly do?"

Anticipating that common response, Women Ministries created a website to help Covenanters answer that question and suggest numerous ways in which individuals and local congregations can become involved. The website at www.covchurch.org/humantrafficking contains basic in-



formation and resources, an extensive section on related Scriptures, links to organizations addressing modern-day slavery, and multifaceted ways to engage it.

Break the Chains also will raise funds to support the Hindustani Covenant Church and the International Justice Mission, both working with women and girls being sexually exploited in India, a nation considered to have the largest number of modern-day slaves.

Record Turnout Expected for Triennial XIII

A RECORD ATTENDANCE is anticipated for Triennial XIII to be held July 22-25, 2010, in Washington, DC, with planning for that event already well under way. That event will follow on the heels of a successful Triennial XII in Chicago that drew more than 1,100 women last August, reflecting a decided international flavor with 39 flags representing the international partners and nine special international guests in attendance.

One of those guests, pastor Corine Kikwiti who serves as president of Women Ministries in Congo, was on hand to express appreciation for the strong support of Congolese girls as part of Women Ministries' "Educate the Girls" initiative that raised more than \$265,000 for the program.

A number of resources have been made available for use in local churches and other settings, including Women Ministries' newest DVD, "Voices of the Vision," that shares the transition of Women Ministries into a ministry of the church.

Two new books also are available. *The Unfolding Mystery of Yes—Women Who Were Forces for Change* was developed by the Women's History Commission and shares the stories of women who influenced the formation and development of the Evangelical Covenant Church. *You Are Not Alone, Book of Prayers and Meditations for Women* is designed to offer hope to victims of abuse.

World Relief Brings Help and Healing to Victims

He was the leader of the Village Council and had been waiting in the rain for two hours for our group to arrive," recalls Jim Sundholm, director of Covenant World Relief.

"As I reached out to greet him, I realized that the rebels had cut off both of his hands. I simply grabbed his forearm and he smiled a knowing and accepting response. He had heard that a group representing a USA church might stop by. He welcomed us and in deep humility asked if Covenant World Relief could pos-

sibly assist his amputee village with water well parts and a tarp for their church roof.

"Your answer was yes!"

That was in August last year. Today Covenant World Relief dollars are at work in response to natural and man-made disasters in Kenya, Bangladesh, and Mexico, providing the means for Covenant people to help care for hurting persons and families facing extreme hardship in many parts of the world.

Covenant World Relief continues its assistance to Gulf Coast

communities still rebuilding following Hurricane Katrina, hosting volunteers and purchasing materials. One area that has gained national attention is Phoenix, Louisiana, where Covenant-related groups continue to minister. To learn more about those opportunities, visit www.rebuilding-Phoenix.com.

Support received during 2007 is expected to top \$900,000 in general undesignated donations, with an additional \$200,000 designated for specific projects.

Benevolence Ministries

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

cluding the state of Connecticut's Department of Children & Family Services.

In Princeton, Illinois, Covenant Children's Home and Family Services uses its former school building to house the Bureau County Health & Wellness Clinic. Staffed by 13 volunteer physicians, nurses, and a pharmacist, the clinic provides primary care for low-income families without health insurance, serving 1,700 annually in a county of 32,000.

Freedom House is a refuge for victim of domestic violence and sexual abuse, serving 25 women and children in areas of counseling, GED mentoring, and development of computer and other job skills. Nelson Chapel and the gymnasium are used by many groups to provide activities for disabled preschoolers, practice areas for sports teams, and worship services.

The WellSpring ministry has provided emergency housing, support, counseling, advocacy service, and education to victims of domestic violence on Chicago's south side since 1989.

Education is considered a key component in ending the cycle of abuse and assisting victims and families, recognizing that abuse and the reaction to abuse are learned behaviors. In addition to counseling 250 to 275 families per year, the WellSpring staff of four makes weekly, biweekly, or monthly visits to schools (elementary through universities), 15 area churches and employers.

CMB works with church conferences to help local churches plant ministries by providing up to \$30,000 per conference in matching funds. CMB-matched ministries range from after-school programs to teen outreach, meals on wheels, affordable housing, job placement, rehab, prison initiatives, and programs for ex-offenders.

In addition to these outreach ministries, the CMB ministry family includes the health and wellness ministries of Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock, California; Swedish Covenant Hospital and Galter Life-Center in Chicago; and 14 Covenant Retirement Communities across the country.

Retooled Orientation

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

development and placement of pastors.

In 1893, David Nyvall extolled the virtues of having such a small ministerium that “through ministerial fellowship and pulpit exchange alone the cause of unity and harmony is served in a more free and living way than would be the case through confessions or regulations.” In 1896, the church agreed to accept ministers from other groups “if they indicated loyalty to the Covenant idea.”

“Obviously we are no longer such a small uniform denomination that we can rely on ministerial fellowship and the pulpit exchange of the late 1800’s alone to keep us cohesive,” the ministry spokesperson says. “How, then, do we promote our value of unity within diversity and keep our pastors connected and sound? Part of the answer is a program of orientation to ministry—the orientation program is a requirement for credentialing in our church.”

Covenant Orientation is in its 11th year, starting with a trial class of two pastors in 1996 and today serving 419 Covenant ministers. More than 200 pastors participated in classes during the just-concluded Midwinter Pastors Conference in Chicago.

Paul Carlson’s Legacy Breaths New Life into Congo

School roofs, clinic walls, bridge decks, and the bricks and lumber to build them—these are among the major projects that the Paul Carlson Partnership (PCP) is mobilizing in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Following years of civil war and the accompanying destruction of the country’s infrastructure, there is much rebuilding to be done.

Micro enterprise projects are giving individuals the ability to support their families while also helping in the rebuilding efforts. Brick making and movable sawmills are among the small businesses now operating, along with women’s agricultural projects, soap making, palm oil production, and others.

Evangelical Covenant Church in Kent, Washington, has given money and sent work crews to construct sheet metal roofs on elementary and secondary schools in Congo—many currently have thatch roofs that are vulnerable to fire and prevent holding school on rainy days. Six schools have been re-roofed and nine others are projected.

The CEUM (Covenant Church of Congo), the primary on-the-ground partner, operates four hospitals and more than 80 village clinics offering primary and emergency care to thou-



The brick-making micro enterprise at Karawa, funded by Paul Carlson Partnership, supplies bricks for construction and income to the workers.

sands of people who cannot walk to a hospital. With the partnership of the Caris Foundation, four clinics have been rehabilitated and three others are in progress.

Rolling Hills Covenant Church in southern California—the home church of Dr. Paul Carlson—supports the hospital at Loko, which is named for Carlson. A new solar-powered pumping system soon will provide a sustainable source of clean water. A church work team traveled to Congo in February to paint and

upgrade the facilities.

Expanded availability of HIV/AIDS medications for pregnant women and their babies, a new dorm for girls in Karawa, ongoing support for the entire CEUM medical system, and computers and the training to use and maintain them are but part of the expanding Paul Carlson Partnership story. Churches interested in exploring ways to become involved should email Bill Clark, vice president for advancement, at bill.clark@covchurch.org.



The Evangelical Covenant Church
5101 North Francisco Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60625

PLACE
STAMP
HERE