



THE COVENANT REPORTER

SPRING 2010

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"THE WHOLE MISSION OF THE CHURCH"



There are few places like the Covenant Annual Meeting, June 24-27, in St. Paul, MN, to fully comprehend the scope of who we are and what we do.

THE EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH CELEBRATES 125 YEARS OF MINISTRY TOGETHER, JUNE 24-27, IN ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Covenanters from around the world will gather this summer in St. Paul, Minnesota, to celebrate what God has done through our movement during the past 125 years and reaffirm our commitment to making more disciples among more people for a more just and caring world.

The meeting will be held June 24-27 at the Saint Paul RiverCentre. Appropriately the theme for this year gathering is "Living Our Affirmations: A Commitment to the Whole Mission of the Church." The theme is a reminder of what it means to live the full gospel in reaching lost and hurting people around the world.

Speakers include:

Thursday—President Gary Walter will deliver the opening night sermon.

Friday morning—Curtis Ivanoff, an Inupiaq Eskimo originally from Unalakleet, Alaska, who has a passion for helping young people live out their identity in Christ and their unique cultural heritage. He is the director of admissions and an instructor at Alaska Christian College in Soldotna.

Friday evening—Kris Causton, an adjunct instructor of Bible and theology at Bethel University and associate pastor

at Excelsior Covenant Church in Excelsior, Minnesota, will speak. She served as a CHIC council member in 2003, 2006, and 2009.

Saturday morning—Tomás Ivens, who planted Esperanza Covenant Church, the first Hispanic congregation in the Great Lakes Conference. He previously was pastor at Primera Iglesia del Pacto in Bell Gardens, California.

Saturday evening—Mossai Sanguma, president of the Evangelical Covenant Church in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sunday morning—Peter Cha, an associate professor of pastoral theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, where he has served since 1997.

Efrem Smith will be installed as superintendent of the Pacific Southwest Conference. Departing superintendent, Evelyn M. R. Johnson, also will be honored.

All worship services will be broadcast live on the Covenant website. Last year's Annual Meeting drew a record number of viewers across the world.

The Annual Meeting is the highest legislative body of the Evangelical Covenant Church. During business sessions, delegates will welcome new congregations,

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CGE WELCOMES DIRECTOR OF CHURCH PLANTING

The Department of Church Growth and Evangelism continues to plant new vibrant congregations in 2009 and expand its work of enhancing the vitality of existing congregations.

New director of church planting Peter Sung has continued his life's vocation of "Growing in courageous leadership, cultivating confessional communities, and preaching Jesus as the focal point of everything in life."

Sung spent much of his time at the recent Midwinter Conference talking with ministers whose congregations are interested in helping plant new churches. The Covenant now starts an average of twenty churches per year, and roughly one out of three people in the Covenant attend a church started in the past fifteen years.

The denomination also continues to be more reflective of the kingdom of God. One-half of all new churches are congregations of color or intentionally multiethnic. As a result, 24 percent of all Evangelical Covenant churches are now congregations of color or multiethnic.

More churches are also participating in Veritas, a revitalization workshop designed to help churches evaluate their spiritual health. To meet the demand, the teaching team has been expanded and a DVD has been released to churches. One pastor noted, "In my thirty-five-plus years of ministry, Veritas is the single most important strategy to come down the road."

Many churches that participated in Veritas have attended the follow-up workshop, EPIC (Empowering People/Inspiring Change). EPIC equips pastors and lay leaders to guide change in a way that is civil, compassionate, and Christ-honoring. 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. **CR**

STUDENTS AT CHIC'09 REACH OUT TO THAI FAMILIES

More than 5,000 people who attended CHIC 2009 at the University of Tennessee last July seized the opportunity to make a difference in the world even as they grew spiritually themselves.

Students and adults raised \$109,327 for Covenant World Relief. The funds helped to complete a food mill providing jobs and nutrition for many Thai families. They also packed nearly 430,000 meals in partnership with Feed My Starving Children.

Students employed their creative skills to share the gospel as they painted a large graffiti wall, produced films, and wrote songs. Hundreds of stu-

Students helped complete a food mill providing jobs and nutrition to Thai families.

dents made first-time commitments to Christ, and thousands more renewed and rethought their relationships with God and others.

"So much has changed for me this past week," one student said at the time, echoing oft-repeated sentiments. "I know my relationship with God has grown so much. This is one of those events that I will never forget, and I never want to forget."

CHIC will return to the University of Tennessee in 2012. **CR**

COVENANT WORLD RELIEF FUNDS REACH HAITI WITHIN HOURS OF EARTHQUAKE

DONATIONS FROM COVENANTERS PROVIDED FOOD AND WATER TO SURVIVORS IN PORT-AU-PRINCE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

In less than a minute, the 7.0 earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12 killed more than 200,000 people and left more than one million homeless in Port-au-Prince and the surrounding area. As was the case when a similar-sized earthquake struck Indonesia earlier in the year, Covenant World Relief (CWR) funds were used within hours to provide food and water to survivors.

World Relief International (WR) drew upon funds CWR provides each year to enable the international organization to provide its initial emergency assistance. The generosity of Covenant churches and individuals makes the grant possible.

CWR is working through its partners, WR and Medical Teams International (MTI), in Haiti. The organizations are familiar with working in Haiti. WR, for example, has been

helping people in the country for seventeen years and had a staff of forty people there when the earthquake hit.

When the earthquake struck, both organizations immediately sent additional expert disaster response staff and began providing food, water, and medical care. Each organization has expressed gratitude to the Covenant for the denomination's generosity that has helped make the response possible.

CWR is pleased to be able to work with such capable and trustworthy partners who are working together in Haiti. That partnership will continue long after the relief phase is over, as WR and MTI will remain in the country to help the Haitians rebuild their country.

As of this writing, more than \$1 million





Farmers to Markets staff spent a week in training in Loko as they prepare to connect small farmers in the Ubangi with profitable markets in Kinshasa.

PAUL CARLSON, USAID PARTNER TO CONNECT CONGO FARMERS TO MARKETS

HISTORIC PROGRAM BRINGS CASH INCOMES BACK TO FORMER "BREAD BASKET" OF CONGO, THE WAR-TORN UBANGI REGION

The Democratic Republic of Congo is the second poorest country on earth, and the people living in the northwest corner are among the poorest in Congo. Once the "bread basket" of the country, eight years of civil war devastated the Ubangi region, which now is home to subsistence farmers who live on less than a dollar a day and are unable to pay for medical care, schooling, or other basic needs.

The Paul Carlson Partnership (PCP) is working to change that. In September 2009, USAID provided a \$658,000 grant to PCP to begin bringing cash incomes into

the Ubangi again. The program, called Farmers to Markets, will connect the small farmers of the region with profitable markets in Kinshasa.



The farmers will receive loans in the form of seed, implements, and help in growing good crops. Local entrepreneurs will receive loans in the form of bicycles to

enable them to carry the products from the farms to port cities for transport downriver. Experienced wholesalers will receive loans to expand their capacity to buy the goods from the farmers and sell them in Kinshasa,

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has been donated to the CWR Haiti Relief Fund. That money will be distributed through our partners, which reduces costs and increases the effectiveness of each dollar.

For more than sixty years CWR has been collaborating with partners around the globe in providing relief in times of disaster, and even more so in carrying out transformational community development among the poor, the powerless, and the marginalized. **CR**

FORMATION EXPLORES NEW WAYS TO CONNECT COVENANTERS

The Department of Christian Formation is expanding opportunities for Covenanters to connect with one another so they can share ideas and resources, as well as draw closer to God. The department's new Facebook page is another way that we are fostering connections among people interested in Christian formation and discipleship. The "Discussions" page provides the opportunity to read prayer requests as well as submit your own. Readers also can seek and share advice about various aspects of ministry.

The Department of Christian Formation and the Commission on Worship began a pilot project of gathering and redistributing music written by Covenanters.

Songwriters are asked to submit original songs that reflect the themes of denominational events. Songs selected by the committee will be featured at the event and distributed to all participants for use in their local church.

The theme for the 2010 Annual Meeting and 2011 Midwinter is "The Whole Mission of the Church." To learn more about the breadth of this theme search the website at www.covchurch.org/affirmations. Send original songs flowing out of that theme to worship.connect@covchurch.org

In other Christian Formation news: At least six Evangelical Covenant churches are beta testing the use of an online assessment tool for individuals called Monvee. The

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The university markedly outscored 10 benchmark and about seventy peer institutions in the Enriching Educational Experiences category.

NATIONAL SURVEY AFFIRMS NORTH PARK'S "GOOD PRACTICES"

REPORT CAPS OFF YEAR HIGHLIGHTED BY TWO FULBRIGHT RECIPIENTS AND MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL DRAFT PICK

A national advertising award, two Fulbright recipients, and a major league draft pick—these are just some of the items that made headlines at North Park University in 2009.

North Park's "distinctively Christian, intentionally urban, and purposefully multicultural" identity was affirmed by the results of this year's National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The university markedly outscored 10 benchmark and about seventy peer institutions in the Enriching Educational Experiences category.

In the survey, between 50 to 75 percent of North Park students reported they "frequently have serious conversations with students who are different from them

in terms of religious, political, or personal beliefs," "frequently have serious conversations with those of a different race," and "engage in spiritually enhancing activities such as worship, meditation, or prayer."

According to the NSSE website, the survey represents empirically confirmed "good practices" in undergraduate education. This provides important evidence that our mission and identity are truly reflected in our students' educational experience.

To extend conversations of diversity and multiculturalism beyond campus, North Park hosted a half-day Student Diversity Leadership Conference on October 23. The event drew more than 500 students from

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PAUL CARLSON PARTNERSHIP

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600 miles away. As the loans are repaid, the funds will turn over in new loans to more people.

Partners with PCP in implementing this program include the Covenant Church of Congo (CEUM); HOPE International of Canada, a nonprofit faith-based development agency; and IMA World Health, a nonprofit faith-based organization that provides health care services and supplies to vulnerable and marginalized people. Each has extensive experience in Congo and in microenterprise.

Since our founding in 1966, the Paul Carlson Partnership has been committed to the welfare of these people. Our original focus on health care is still a significant part of our mission, along with the assistance we provide to schools. Farmers to Markets, though, addresses the root problem that creates the needs in those systems—the deep poverty of the people.

For more information about Farmer to Markets, visit www.paulcarlson.org. **CR**

WOMEN MINISTRIES HEADS TO D.C. FOR TRIENNIAL XIII

LYNNE HYBELS TO SPEAK ON "REFLECTING GOD'S GLORY"

More than 1,000 women from around the world are expected to gather at Triennial XIII, to be held July 22-25 at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. The theme for this year's event is "Reflecting God's Glory."

More than 1,000 women are expected to gather at Triennial XIII, July 22-25, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C.

Obtaining visas has been especially difficult since 9/11, but a representative from Sudan will be present for the first time. Welcoming the international guests is often a highlight of the event.

Speakers include Lynne Hybels, author of *Nice Girls Don't Change the World* and



coauthor of *Rediscovering Church* and *Fit to Be Tied*; Elizabeth Conde-Frazier, dean of Esperanza College of Eastern University; Kirsten Haglund, 2008 Miss America who continues to raise awareness about eating disorders; Brenda Salter McNeil, who works

with companies to transform them into reconciling communities; and Ruth Hill, executive minister of Women Ministries.

The event also includes opportunities for tours and an interactive experience on justice. Visit www.triennialXIII.org for more information and to register. **CR**

NEW OPPORTUNITIES AROUND FOR CHURCHES TO PARTICIPATE IN MISSION PROJECTS

COVENANT WORLD MISSION INVITES CHURCHES TO PARTICIPATE IN SHORT-TERM, LONG-TERM, AND PROJECT MISSION WORK



From helping to build a church in the Amazon to starting a multiethnic outreach in Sweden, the Department of World Mission has continued to extend the work of Christ around the globe. The department has more than 120 short-term, long-term, and project missionaries who work with partner organizations in twenty-seven countries. It also has helped coordinate the opportunities for churches to participate in mission projects around the world.

Africa

BURKINA FASO. The church in Burkina Faso has a new outreach tool to the Fulani—a playground. A team of seven people from the Selah Covenant Church of Selah, Washington, built the playground and visited adjacent Fulani villages, and now thirty to sixty children come every Thursday to play and hear Bible studies. Earlier this year, another Selah team constructed a building for the production and distribution of outreach and radio materials to be used throughout the nation. The work has encouraged Fulani leaders to move ahead with plans for the formation of a Bible school to train leaders. The Selah congregation also has committed to build-

ing a water well for the site.

SUDAN. The power of the assistance given by the Evangelical Covenant Church of Sudan is seen in the story of a former deputy imam of the region. The man had been told in a series of dreams that he needed to change his ways and attend a local congregation. That turned out to be a local congregation of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Sudan. After hearing the preaching, the man asked for forgiveness. A leader in the church embraced him. A team of church members then began to teach and disciple the entire family. On January 1, he was baptized along with his entire family as well as another seventy new believers. The man, who also had held multiple government positions, now works as a lawyer defending people who have been held in prison without charges for a long time.

Europe

SWEDEN. Missionary Aaron Thompson, who is working at Fiskebäcks Missionskyrka (Fisher's Creek Swedish Mission/Covenant Church), started "The Well," a multicultural outreach to young adults. Thompson was able to start the ministry due to the as-

sistance of other missionaries from around the world, including the United States, who help serve youth and young adults in other capacities at the church.

Latin America

ECUADOR. Chris and Jenny Hoskins arrived in September to coordinate mission teams working here, including several Covenant churches from the United States and Canada. One Canadian church led by Jenell and Andy Pluim, former missionaries in Ecuador, helped paint the guesthouse of the Covenant Church of Ecuador in Quito. They also fixed some plumbing issues in the house and replaced an old water heater. Since the Covenant Church of Ecuador has more than sixty-five churches throughout the country, many leaders come to Quito several times for meetings and the guesthouse provides them a place to stay. A Korean-American team from a church in Orlando, Florida, helped lay the foundation of a church for the people of Sinangue in the Amazon region of Ecuador.

COLOMBIA. Leadership materials from the Department of Women Ministries have been translated into Spanish and are being used in Colombia. The Colombian Covenant Church also has initiated a Human Rights Project that focuses on women and children's rights.

Asia

THAILAND. Newsong Covenant Church, Los Angeles, partnered with the Sustainable Development Research Foundation (SDRF) to bring a group of health-care workers to remote mountain villages in Northern Thailand. Their effort to bring basic healthcare to impoverished hill-tribe residents helped SDRF gain favor in the eyes of these communities and the Thai government. The women obtaining new job skills at Abundant Life Center (ALC)

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COVENANT WORLD MISSION

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make bags that provide them with income as well as support the work of the ministry. The bags will be available at Covenant Annual Meeting as well as Triennial XIII this summer. Rolling Hills Covenant Church of Rolling Hills Estates, California, partnered with local staff and sent mission teams to help at the Chiang Mai fish hatchery. They also built community centers in the slum areas where the Thai Faith and Music Foundation ministers.

TAIWAN. The Taiwan Summer English Program continues to build bridges between the forty-two Taiwan Covenant Church congregations and local neighborhoods. The idea for the school developed in 2004 after the Taiwan government started emphasizing the need for children to focus on learning English in preparation for future jobs and increased ease in international communication. Covenanters from the United States and Canada spend two to four weeks each summer leading fun language activities.

Volunteers from more than twenty-five churches in North America have taught in the program. Many children who have never had an opportunity to be inside a church have come because of English and many have heard the gospel for the first time.

EAST ASIA. Numerous teams from Evangelical Covenant churches have helped provide training to an English and computer training center in East Asia. The church teams have been the core of some of our English immersion events for the students. These volunteers have been vital to the success of our programs.

MONGOLIA. Covenant World Mission is working with fifteen other Christian mission organizations as part of Joint Christian Services–Mongolia, a consortium of seventy missionaries from twenty countries serving together in Mongolia. Members of River Ridge Covenant Church of Olympia, Washington, also continue to assist our work here. **CR**

BENEVOLENCE EFFORTS RANGE FROM HIGH TECH TO HIGH TOUCH

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND PROGRAMS HELP COVENANT MINISTRIES OF BENEVOLENCE RESPOND TO TODAY'S NEEDS

From employing sophisticated robotic surgery to providing a safe place to spend the night, the outreach initiatives of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence respond to the practical demands of today's society.

Swedish Covenant Hospital (SCH) in Chicago is employing the latest robotics technology and has been recognized for excellence, heightening its status as a teaching hospital.

Robotic surgery may lead the way as the most effective, least invasive surgical treatment. SCH recently became the second hospital in the Chicago area to offer the latest daVinci Si HD robotic surgery technology.

SCH is in the forefront of digital imaging as well. The hospital is the only facility in North America with Fujifilm's FDR AcSelerate digital x-ray and is conducting a clinical study of the new technology.

The hospital expanded its medical residency program and hosts 40 full-time medical residents and 30 other students.

Emanuel Medical Center in Turlock, California, continues to expand its services.

In October 2009, the hospital opened the second Emanuel Physician Center to provide a full array of family practice and preventive medical services to individuals and families who were going without care, driving long distances for treatment or using hospital emergency departments because office care was unavailable.

Construction is also under way at the hospital. A new Invasive/Interventional Cardiovascular Services Department and multipurpose catheterization lab are projected to open in Spring 2010.

Covenant Retirement Communities (CRC) also expanded its services and the number of people they are able to serve.

CRC has received overwhelming posi-

NEW EVANGELISM PROGRAM EXPANDS ON "BRINGING MY WORLD TO CHRIST"

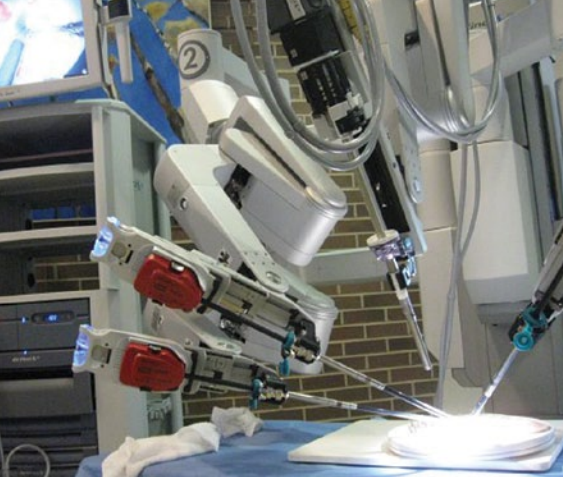
DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH GROWTH & EVANGELISM LAUNCHES "WHAT'S YOUR ONE STEP?" IN 2010

Lisa Orris, director of evangelism, introduced a renewed emphasis on natural evangelism called "What's Your One Step?" Building on the structure and ideas of "Bringing My World to Christ," this new emphasis helps each of us understand how we can be a part of the evangelism process by asking ourselves, "How can I creatively express God's love to people in order to bring them one step closer to Jesus?"

This expression may include our ongoing prayer for those people in our life who don't know him yet. It may be showing God's love in the flesh by mowing a lawn, advocating for abused women in our community, or providing food to the local food pantry. Or we can tell a friend how God has changed our life and offers that same new life to them as well.

"What's Your One Step?" hopes to encourage people to tap their unique gifts so God can use them in the evangelism process, give an opportunity to commit to "one steps" through prayer, care and share, and create a culture of evangelism in our churches by celebrating one-step stories, when a person has moved one step closer to Christ. **CR**





SCH is one of only two hospitals in the Chicago area to offer the latest daVinci Si HD robotic surgery technology.

tive response to the public service website it launched to help families have conversations with aging relatives. HavingTheConversation.com includes helpful articles and video that includes resources and spiritual insight on aging.

The home care subsidiary Covenant-Care at Home continues to expand. Since its launch in 2008, the company has established agencies in Geneva, Illinois; Golden Valley, Minnesota; Turlock, California; and Westminster, Colorado.

To help prospects sell their homes during the national financial downturn, CRC partnered with a national relocation expert to sell and/or purchase prospects' pre-qualified homes.

CRC is leading the industry in the move

to electronic health records. The goal is to be completely paperless by early 2013.

Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB) also is creating a new corporation to structure the diverse services it provides to a growing family of small affiliate ministries. The corporation may adopt the name used informally since the mid 1990s—Outreach Ministries of CMB.

The new structure will enable CMB to expand the resources available to the ministries; generate additional ideas for planning, funding, and operations; and provide systems to ensure that the ministries are both accountable and sustainable. Outreach Ministries will help local churches start or expand ministries and offer grants for small projects.

The people receiving our services also have been eager to help others. The young people at Covenant Children's Home of Cromwell in Cromwell, Connecticut, raised more than \$1,000 to assist the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. The students used their allowance or activity money, had a bake sale, sold Valentine gift bags, and collected donations. **CR**

NEW PROGRAM BUILDS HEALTHY, MISSIONAL PASTORS

John Wenrich, director of congregational vitality, is encouraged by the development of a new coaching system for Covenant pastors. "In the Old Testament, both Joseph and Nehemiah exhibited effective and efficient organizational leadership. Moses did not. That is why God provided a 'Jethro' for him," Wenrich says. "In the Covenant we want all of our pastors to be good in spirituality, chemistry with others, and strategy. Often it is the strategy piece that is weakest."

CO-OP (COaching Of Pastors) is "on the job training" for those pastors who want to grow in organizational leadership.

In 2008 and 2009, a cadre of twenty Covenant pastors completed eighteen months of organizational leadership coaching. They now coach twenty other Covenant pastors, who receive a weekly call from them. The response has been extremely positive.

"It has been great to have a ministry coach as a sounding board, brainstorm partner, resource person, and idea generator," said one pastor. "I appreciated the way my coach was able to adapt and help me in the context of what was taking place in the life of our church."

Another said, "I see CO-OP as being a critical tool to build healthy, missional pastors. Incompetence in critical areas is bound to happen because of how multidimensional the pastoral role has become. I think CO-OP is so 'Covenant' in that we value getting things done in relationship, not in isolation."

For more information on CO-OP, visit www.covchurch.org. **CR**

"MISSION FRIENDS" EXPLORES THE MEANING OF MEMBERSHIP

NEW SUITE OF MEMBERSHIP MATERIALS DESIGNED TO BE CUSTOMIZED TO FIT A CHURCH'S NEEDS

Mission Friends, the curriculum for new members, is now available for both purchase and download. This resource explores what it means to be a member in the Evangelical Covenant Church.

The Department of Christian Formation has designed the material so that it is Christ-focused, congregationally centered, and pedagogical. The curriculum uses four sessions focusing on the Mission of God, the Mission of the Evangelical Covenant Church, the Mission of the Local Church, and the Mission of a Member.

Pastors and church leaders have the option of using all the material or modifying it to fit the needs of their congregations. The leader and participant guides are available for online purchase through Covenant Bookstore or for free download from blogs.covchurch.org/missionfriends. The accompanying PowerPoint presentation also is available for download at the same website. **CR**



NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

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colleges and universities across the Midwest. Plans already are under way to hold a full-day conference in 2010.

North Park's "Do Justice" advertising campaign—based on the Bible verse Micah 6:8—received a bronze award in the 24th Annual Admissions Advertising Awards, the largest educational advertising competition in the nation. The competition drew more than 2,000 entries from more than 1,000 colleges, universities, and secondary schools from all fifty states and several foreign countries.

Among other achievements, 2009 graduate Riley Clark became the latest North Park recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Award, which is covering expenses for a yearlong professional business experience in Mexico. Clark is the third person from North Park to receive a Fulbright Award in the last two years. In addition, North Park professor of Spanish Linda Parkyn received a Fulbright Specialists Award, reserved for faculty and professionals.

The search is under way for a new president and dean of North Park Theological Seminary. Jay Phelan announced his decision to transition into a new role as senior professor of theological studies at the end of the academic year. Phelan's strong leadership is reflected by the successes of seminary faculty. Professor Soong Chan-Rah's book, *The Next Evangelicalism*, was named one of the top 10 books of 2009 by *Leadership* journal.

In athletics news, Viking pitcher Mike Giovenco was drafted on June 10 by the Minnesota Twins in the 2009 MLB First-Year Player Draft. A junior majoring in business and economics, Giovenco also earned a First Team selection for both the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin and the ABCA/Rawlings All-Central Region. Additionally, he set the single-season school record for strikeouts (84) and was named in NCAA rankings in several statistical categories.

For more information about news and events at North Park University, visit www.northpark.edu. **CR**

SUSTAINING PASTORAL EXCELLENCE EMPOWERS PASTORS TO RESPOND TO GOD'S CALL

The Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE) initiative provides resources to help Covenant ministers continue to obediently respond with vitality to God's call.

"I serve the 'spiritually homeless,'" says Linda Williams, solo pastor at Covenant Congregational Church in Waltham, Massachusetts, where she has served since the fall of 2008. "In the community in which I serve, there is a spiritual yearning and people don't even know what it is," she explains.

Williams hopes to help spiritually homeless individuals explore the head and heart connection in a caring setting, while remaining theologically rooted in the Christian tradition. "I'm trying to model a sense of vulnerability and openness," she says.



Women Leadership Cohort retreat, Fall 2009.

Williams' understanding of her call to 'making more disciples' comes out of Jesus's radical way of being invitational, not demanding. In John, Jesus invites the disciples to 'come and see,' which is

ALASKA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE NOW AN OFFICIAL POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTION

NEW STATUS A MILESTONE FOR SCHOOL, PROVIDES ADDITIONAL FUNDS TO HELP STUDENTS PAY FOR EDUCATION

Alaska Christian College (ACC) reached an important milestone in 2009, when the Alaska Commission on Secondary Education decided to authorize the school, which means it is now an official post-secondary institution within the state.

An educational ministry of the Evangelical Covenant Church of Alaska, ACC was developed to address a great need among the Native Alaskan culture. With suicide rates, alcoholism, sexual abuse, and chronic unemployment far exceeding the national averages, ACC is effecting positive change in the lives of many native students and cultivating native leaders.

ACC previously received the "candidate for accreditation" status from the Association for Biblical Higher Education. ACC is recognized as an excellent educational institution by this accrediting organization as well as the U.S. Department of Education.

The commission's decision paves the way in future years for the school to receive state funds, including grants and loans. The school is now eligible for Title 4 funding, which includes federal grant funds such as Pell grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity grants, and work study. It also enables students to qualify for federal student loans, receive Native corporation scholarships, and possibly transfer credits to other accredited institutions.

Currently, most of the students do not have funds to pay for college. It has been primarily through generous giving to the scholarship fund that has allowed many ACC students to graduate with minimal or no debt.

ACC's mission is accomplished through offering a Christ-centered and general studies education and providing a community that cares for the individual needs of



NEW RESOLUTION, RESOURCE PAPER ASK "WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?"

THE DEPARTMENT OF COMPASSION, MERCY, AND JUSTICE BUILDS
FOUNDATION FOR ADDRESSING DIFFICULT ISSUES

a very daring thing to translate into our privatized and individual lifestyles today, says Williams. "I think about my own life—am I inviting people along on the journey with me?" she asks.

Williams has found great support in the Covenant community and through opportunities provided by the Department of the Ordered Ministry. The department implements the Covenant Orientation program and classes, which are required for ministers who come into the denomination. She built lasting relationships with her peers as they learned together. She also is a member of the Women's Leadership Cohort, a learning community facilitated through the SPE initiative.

The Lilly Endowment Inc. contributes significantly to the funding of the initiative. **CR**

An upcoming resource paper as well as continuing experiences sponsored by the Department of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice (CMJ) are helping Covenanters consider the question put forth in Micah 6:8—"What does the Lord require?"—and respond to the prophet's answer, "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God."

The second Covenant resource paper, "The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice," will be presented this June at the 125th Annual Meeting in St. Paul, Minnesota. This important work, as discerned and developed by and for the church, will provide a biblical and theological foundation for addressing difficult issues that may carry the risk of being divisive, politicized, or neglected.

CMJ also has worked with the Commission on Christian Action to prepare a final draft of the criminal justice resolution, which also will be presented at the Annual Meeting. The final draft was written after a year of evaluating and integrating feedback from local churches and individuals.

The resolution calls the church to provide care and advocacy for victims, ex-offenders, families of both victims and the incarcerated, and those working in the system. In addition, it also helps the church to better understand what it means to be people who seek God's heart in bringing about restoration and redemption.

The Sankofa journey, which continues to expose cross-racial partners to the civil rights movement, is inspiring other denominations and churches to start similar journeys. The Invitation to Racial Righteousness also is making a difference in the local church. Bayside of South Sacramento is now preparing their sixth experience in three years.

The Central Conference, in collaboration with North Park Theological Seminary and CMJ, piloted their own Journey to Mosaic (J2M) in 2009 and will lead their next experience this August. The Pacific Southwest and North Pacific conferences already have led their own J2M experiences, which contextualize the Sankofa journeys.

CMJ also collaborated with the Department of Christian Formation to host a combined pre-Midwinter event, The Connection, for those serving in the areas of youth ministry, worship arts, and compassion, mercy, and justice ministries. The event focused on the theme, "The Beautiful Struggle," which connected clergy and lay people for training, equipping, renewal, and refreshment.

Jesus implores us to provide for the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick, the stranger, and the imprisoned, but caring even beyond offering a cup of cold water or providing the naked clothing. Our acts of compassion and mercy continue with advocating for justice until we have achieved God's *shalom* by making things right. **CR**



ACC provides access to higher education for students from Bush villages in Alaska.

each student. The school has a small staff to student ratio and provides individual care and mentoring so each student is encouraged toward a personal plan that promotes holistic lifestyles, education toward life goals, and service to God.

New Hope Counseling Center, which is located on the campus, provides free counseling to students who desire it. The center moved into a new 3,200 square-foot building last fall, doubling the number of offices they previously occupied on campus. Financial donations and volunteer labor made it possible to construct the facility without any cost to ACC. **CR**

The Sankofa journey exposes cross-racial partners to the civil rights movement.





New resources focused on slavery in North America are available online for individuals and churches at www.covchurch.org/humantrafficking.

“BREAK THE CHAINS” ENTERS NEW PHASE, FOCUSES ON RESTORING LIVES

FUNDRAISING FOR LANDMARK PROJECT EXCEEDS ALL OTHER WOMEN MINISTRIES’ PROJECTS SINCE 1924

The third phase of the Department of Women Ministries’ “Break the Chains” initiative is focusing on restoring the lives of freed sex slaves. Funds raised through the initiative will help fund New Day for Children, a ministry birthed out of First Covenant Church in Oakland, California.

The ministry will provide a boarding home and school where girls 10 to 18 years of age can reclaim their lives. When completed, it will be only the fifth such secure facility in the United States. New Day, which has received the endorsement of local law enforcement officials, hopes to receive its first girls later this year.

Giving to “Break the Chains” has exceeded all projects since the first project

in 1924. More than \$178,000 was raised in 2009, making the two-year total nearly \$400,000. These funds were earmarked for International Justice Mission and the Hindustani Covenant Church for their work fighting trafficking in India.

New online resources focused on slavery in North America are available, equipping individuals and churches to help end trafficking close to home. The resources can be found at www.covchurch.org/humantrafficking.

The Covenant’s resources for observing Human Trafficking Awareness Day (January 11) drew the attention of Not For Sale, a leading abolitionist group, and are now available through their site as well. **CR**

125TH ANNUAL MEETING

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

elect officers, honor sacrificial service by individuals and congregations, and approve the budget. Delegates also will vote on the Criminal Justice Resolution. Churches and individuals studied the draft document and provided constructive feedback over the past year.

The second Covenant Resource paper, “The Evangelical Covenant Church and the Ministry of Compassion, Mercy, and Justice,” will be presented.

Opportunities for participants to engage and be equipped for ministry also will be provided at the meeting. For the first time bilingual hosts who speak a variety of languages will assist attendees with personal translation.

During free time, attendees can view displays honoring Covenant history, shop or enjoy coffee and tea at the World Marketplace, where they also can learn more about the work of the denomination around the world. **CR**

COVENANT TRUST COMPANY CONTINUES EMPHASIS ON GOOD STEWARDSHIP

LEGACY GIVING TO LOCAL MINISTRIES KEEPS GROWING DESPITE UNCERTAINTIES IN ECONOMY

As for every other segment of society, 2009 was a challenging year for Covenant Trust Company. Yet there were things to celebrate as we continue to move forward during these challenging times:

- At the worst point of the recession, Covenant Trust Company client accounts overall experienced *less than half* the decline in value of the overall market. This is the result of the disciplined investment strategy practiced by Covenant Trust Company. Many clients expressed the peace of mind they felt in knowing CTC was managing their assets.

- New charitable agreements written in 2009 carry a total of \$12,324,584 for Covenant ministries. Of that amount, \$5,131,968 in future dollars is designated for local ministries. This means 41.6 percent of all

dollars designated for Covenant ministries in 2009 are earmarked for local churches, conferences and their ministries.

- Total future dollars expected for local ministries from wills, trusts, and other asset management services equal \$57,716,772 at the end of 2009.

- Total future dollars expected for all Covenant ministries from wills, trusts, and other asset management services equal \$228,331,141 at the end of 2009.

- Covenant Trust Company launched a redesigned website, www.covenant-trust.com, in August 2009. It continues to provide information about financial planning, retirement planning, charitable giving, asset management and more. Does your ministry’s website have a link to this important resource?



STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES ENCOURAGE "LIVING TO GIVE"

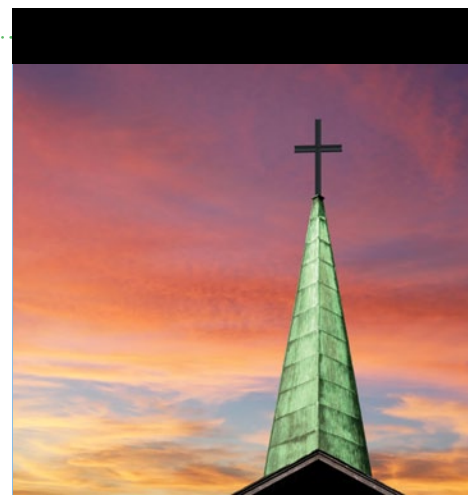
STEWARDSHIP STARTER KIT ASKS CHURCHES TO CONSIDER THEIR OWN PRACTICES

The Commission on Stewardship continues to update resources for churches to help transform all of us from people "living to get" into people "living to give." The stewardship website includes Scripture organized by topic, worship resources, stewardship of the earth resources, personal financial management events, seminars, and classes, as well as relevant articles and websites.

The commission also provides the Stewardship Starter Kit and updates, which help churches consider their own stewardship practices. All of the resources help people to better understand that stewardship is about far more than saving and spending money. Rather, God calls us to care responsibly for the earth and one another so we all can live in a more caring and just world.

Christians practicing whole-life stewardship are not only acting responsibly; they are leaders in showing the world what love looks like.

To learn more visit the website at www.covchurch.org/stewardship, email Kerry Staurseth, stewardship coordinator, at stewardship@covchurch.org or call her at 773-907-3375. **CR**



INVESTMENT ACCOUNTS HELP CHURCHES EARN ON SAVINGS

National Covenant Properties (NCP) began offering Church Demand Investment Accounts in May of 2009. Since then, more than \$10,000,000 in new accounts have been opened.

These accounts are only open to churches (not individuals) and allow churches to earn reasonable rates of return on church savings funds. NCP currently is paying 3 percent on these accounts.

Statements are emailed every month. When churches need some or all of the funds, they let NCP know, and NCP sends the funds electronically to the church's account. If they want to add to the investment, NCP is able to take the funds electronically as well.

The system makes life a lot easier as the churches don't have to send the physical investment certificates back to NCP for partial redemption or to add more money. We have been pleasantly surprised by the strong desire of churches to use these accounts. We think the simplicity of the account and the rate of return to the church have made it very attractive compared to the paltry interest being paid by banks currently. **CR**



Covenant Trust Company client accounts overall experienced less than half the decline in value of the overall market.

- In 2009, over \$11.6 million was distributed to all Covenant ministries from estates and trusts. The stewardship and generosity of those whose legacies made these distributions possible should be celebrated and encouraged.

- Financial Services Representatives led a record number of workshops—121—during 2009. These workshops have demonstrated their effectiveness in generating future legacy gift dollars for churches, camps, and other ministries.

- Charles A. Walles, president of Covenant Trust Company since 2001, announced his retirement as of December 31, 2010. A search is currently under way for a successor. Randall S. Swenson, financial services representative in the Southeast Conference, announced his retirement as of June 30, 2010.

Covenant Trust Company is unique in its emphasis on stewardship. With a vision "...to awaken people to the significance of stewardship through estate planning and financial management...we show our commitment to this ministry by helping our clients find a way to honor God through their personal financial plan." Everything carries this stewardship perspective.

Call Covenant Trust Company at 800-483-2177 to schedule a workshop for your ministry or to receive financial or legacy planning information. There is a financial services representative in each conference. Check our website for names and telephone numbers. **CR**



A record number of viewers watched the live broadcast of the worship services at the 2009 Annual Meeting.

DENOMINATION EXPANDS EFFORT TO INFORM, CONNECT, AND RESOURCE

The Department of Communication continues to explore new means of communicating in the evolving digital culture while connecting with people who rely on print materials.

New director of interactive services Ben Eash has significantly raised the level of interactivity on the Covenant website. Ministries are taking advantage of new opportunities to connect with Covenanters through blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. This growing emphasis will help drive a planned overhaul of the Covenant website in 2010.

Visitors to the Covenant website continue to enjoy new features and breaking news. Within hours of the earthquake in Haiti, Covenanters learned how the denomination was making an immediate impact. Stories included reports from people who were on the island when the earthquake hit and highlighted how Covenanters were raising funds to help the recovery work. The department also set up a means for people to give online and helped push donation totals over \$1 million. To receive news daily by email, visit the Covenant website and click on the Newswire link.

Web broadcasts of worship services at major Covenant events enable people around the world to participate. A record

number of viewers watched the live broadcast of the worship services at the 2009 Annual Meeting. Beginning this year, Covenanters enjoyed live broadcasts of the worship services at the Midwinter Conference in Denver and will be able to join in the Women Ministries Triennial event.

In other developments:

New software was implemented by Covenant Bookstore manager Kevin Kempe to improve customer service.

Covenant Publications released *Housing the Sacred: What I Learned and Still Am Learning About Preaching*, by pastor Glen V. Wiberg, and *Prayers Public and Personal*, a volume of prayers and services by pastor Arthur A. R. Nelson that can be used for visitation.

The Covenant Companion earned six awards from the Associated Church Press, which judged a field of 200 religious publications. The publication earned third place in the Best in Class for Denominational Magazine competition.

The department also will begin work on a new suite of Covenant identity pieces in 2010.

The Media Center continues to increase the number of videos it is producing for the Covenant website. **CR**

CHRISTIAN FORMATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

system suggests readings, resources, experiences, and relational connections that will help overcome obstacles and spark spiritual growth.

The Feast will be held at the YMCA of the Rockies in Estes Park, Colorado, from June 25-28, 2011. Through ministry opportunities, activities and experiences, the Feast is designed to create space for people of all ages to draw closer to God and one another as we journey together in Christ.

More materials are being translated into

Spanish. The current annual theme focuses on the second of our Covenant affirmations: The Necessity of the New Birth. Wilson Herrera has written a booklet entitled *Nueva Vida en Cristo* (New Life in Christ) that can be used for discipling new believers. The booklet, which also is available in English, answers the question, "What does a person who is new to the faith need in order to grow in Christ?"

Herrera also will be the main speaker and teacher at a retreat in Mexico, where attendees will discuss the first of the Covenant's resource papers, "How the Covenant Reads Scripture." The retreat will be held April 29-May 3. **CR**

NEED HELP? CALL COVENANT 411



The Resource Center has served the Covenant for more than 30 years, providing free "high tech, high touch" consultation on

ministry resources, research, and customer service. Don't miss the new Instant Chat feature on the website. With no need to sign up or log in, users can usually expect an immediate reply during office hours. Need help? Email resource.center@covchurch.org, call 1-800-338-IDEA (4332), or visit www.covchurch.org/resource-center.