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CWRD UPDATE

Covenant World Relief and Development
80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

THE COVENANT WORLD RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2026

Celebrating 80 Years

A central theme of the gala that kicked off Covenant World Relief & Development's 80th celebration revolved around the question, "*Who is my neighbor?*" Jesus responds to this question with the well-known parable of the Good Samaritan, an important call to love others generously and sacrificially, especially those who are different from ourselves. The Samaritan crosses deep social and religious divides to show compassion where others do not.

What strikes me most is that the hero of the story is not the insider—it's the outsider. The Samaritan, the "*other*," becomes the model for how to love one's neighbor as oneself. Jesus ends the parable by inviting the listeners to, "*go and do likewise.*"

That re-frames the question for me. It's not only about how I love my neighbor, but also about what I might learn from my neighbor. How are people who are different from me loving well? Where do I see courage, generosity, or faith expressed in ways I might not expect?

I believe that CWRD, together with its rich network of global partnerships, is uniquely positioned to live into the practice of serving others while also learning from those with whom we serve around the world. May this posture continue to shape our response to Jesus's call to *go and do likewise!*

NILS CLAUSON, DIRECTOR

On January 25, 2026, more than 600 friends braved Chicago's winter weather to celebrate **80 years of Covenant World Relief and Development**. This gala celebration was more than a year in the making, and it did not disappoint. From the moment guests stepped onto the red carpet and into the art gallery, the evening felt both celebratory and deeply meaningful. Filled with diverse pieces, the art gallery set a reflective tone as people made new connections, shared stories, and took in visual expressions of CWRD's work around the world.

The program wove together gratitude and vision. **Erik Anderson** served as emcee as we honored the past through powerful vignettes delivered by **Grace Shim**, executive minister of Serve Globally; **Eugene Cho**, president of Bread for the World; and **Jyotirmaya Deep**, project manager for the Hindustani Covenant Church of India. Together, they traced CWRD's beginnings and enduring values. Throughout the evening, we also celebrated the partnerships, global leaders, families, and donors who have made eight decades possible. A special moment of thanks recognized **Bryce and Bonnie Nelson** for their manuscript, ***For Neighbor's Good***, which captures CWRD's story and reminded us that this evening was made possible by faithful witnesses who preserved the journey.

Dinner conversations gave way to the premiere of the documentary film ***Go and Do Likewise***, directed by **Dillon Rahill**, which vividly brought the impact of CWRD's work to life. As the evening drew to a close, guests were invited not only to reflect on what they had seen and heard, but also to invest in what is yet to come. It was truly a night of honoring the past and joyfully stepping into the future together.

The CWRD Team

***Go and Do Likewise* is a documentary film that premiered at Covenant World Relief and Development's gala on January 25, inviting viewers into the heart of CWRD's mission and global impact.**

The film captures how partnership brings restoration to communities facing profound challenges around the world. **Rooted in the values of compassion, collaboration, and long-term transformation**, the documentary celebrates what is possible when faith is lived out through action.

While the film highlights three partners and three personal stories, it represents a much broader movement. **Covenant World Relief and Development works with more than 30 partners in more than 20 countries, supporting more than 40 projects that address human trafficking, access to clean water, and more.** The stories featured in the film offer a powerful look at the realities of gender-based violence and compassionate projects that are bringing healing, community, and justice for survivors.

India

One featured story comes from India through the Hindustani Covenant Church. After years spent in Pune's red-light district, an epicenter of human trafficking, Pooja began her journey toward freedom through the Home of Hope. Adjusting to stability was challenging, but with skills training and steady encouragement, her life slowly began to change. She discovered a talent for jewelry making, learned tailoring, and micro-business skills, and has been able to build a sustainable income. Today, Pooja can cover her medical expenses, support her child's education, and has recently moved into a home of her own. Her story reflects resilience, dignity, and the power of partnership.

Ecuador

In Ecuador, the film highlights the work of FACE through the story of a mother and daughter whose lives were shaped by fear, isolation, and trauma caused by abuse. Through SUMAK, a comprehensive care program for women and families affected by violence, they found a safe place to begin healing. With the support of social workers, psychologists, and a caring community, trust was slowly rebuilt and relationships restored. Through jewelry-making workshops and entrepreneurship training, both women gained skills, confidence, and a path toward economic independence. Their journey reflects the power of hope rooted in community and restoration.

Kenya

The third story comes from Kenya through Jitokeze Wamama Wafrika, a longtime CWRD partner serving women in West Pokot. Faith grew up facing deep hardship, limited opportunity, and the threat of harmful cultural practices. Through Jitokeze's holistic program, she received psychosocial support and was trained in tailoring and sustainable agriculture. As her skills and confidence grew, Faith began earning an income, gaining independence, and contributing to her household. Today, she is able to help support her mother and is able to serve her community through tailoring. Her story reflects empowerment and resilience.

Across India, Ecuador, and Kenya, these stories share powerful common threads found in all of our partnerships. Each reflects the **dignity of individuals** who were given the opportunity to **heal, learn, and rebuild with grace** provided by our partners and your support. Each shows the strength that emerges when local partners walk faithfully alongside those facing crisis. Together, they remind **us that transformation is not a moment, but a journey** made possible through relationship, trust, and hope.

Learn more about how you can host a screening.

Covenant World Relief and Development

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The Evangelical Covenant Church

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