

# CWR Ministry Update

Issue #3, Fall 2010

## MORE THAN RELIEF...

**W**hen disasters like the earthquake in Haiti, the tsunami in Southeast Asia, and Hurricane Katrina strike, there is an immediate need to respond with food, water, shelter, and medical care to help people survive. This is what relief is—keeping people alive. While disaster relief is vital, relief by itself does not bring about lasting change in the lives of people and in communities.

Covenant World Relief has been responding to disasters for more than sixty years. However, Covenant World Relief is about far more than just relief.

The truth is that most of our time, energy, and funds are spent on transformational community development projects around the world. During the past sixty plus years, CWR has developed partnerships with Covenant churches and Covenant related organizations around the world that seek to bring about transformation through projects that address systemic issues. Rather than simply distributing food and water, CWR and our partners work with local leaders to facilitate sustainable food production and access to clean water. In addition, CWR focuses on sustainable income generation through micro-finance and micro-enterprise development. Rather than just providing curative medical services, we seek to address the overall health of the community through training in nutrition, HIV/AIDS awareness, sanitation, and hygiene.

A major component of transformational community development is empowerment. People and communities are empowered to address the systemic issues that keep them poor, powerless, and marginalized. Transformational community development is never a quick fix. It requires a long-term commitment to work together with our partners and with the people they serve. This is what Covenant World Relief is all about.



**In Colombia, a small community-run poultry business is bringing change.**

## CWR UPDATES AND BULLETIN INSERTS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Did you know you can receive these CWR updates by email four times each year? By receiving the updates electronically you are able to stay connected to the work of CWR and help cut down on postage and printing costs. To subscribe, just email us with the subject line "CWR updates electronically."



**A woman and child in India benefit from holistic community development in partnership with the Hindustani Covenant Church.**

## WE'RE VISITING CHURCHES!

Covenant World Relief staff and advocates are available to come speak at your church. This is a great way to help your church learn more about the needs of the world and the way your church can be involved. If you are interested, contact us at 773-784-3000.

*"Speak up for the people  
who have no voice, for the  
rights of all the down-and-  
outers. Speak out for jus-  
tice. Stand up for the poor  
and destitute."* PROVERBS 31: 8-9

## MORE THAN THE FALL CAMPAIGN...

Covenant World Relief receives the majority of its support and attention in the fall and early winter. Though it is great that this attention and support is raised, CWR's work continues throughout the year and **we need you all year long**. There are several ways you can stay connected throughout the year:

**Connect.** Stay connected to our projects and disaster response throughout the year via our Facebook page, website, blogs and e-newsletters. You can even schedule one of our staff or advocates to come and visit your church.

**Pray.** You will find specific prayer requests on our website and blogs, but you can always pray in the following ways: for the beneficiaries and communities involved in CWR projects, for the leaders who are implementing the programs, for CWR staff and advocates, for peace and justice.

**Give.** You can now more easily give online to projects or causes—if you or your church want to be involved in a specific cause, like education, you can now designate your gifts online easily. Or, if you want to be directly connected to a project you are able to do so more easily. You can also give monthly through automatic withdrawals from your account.

For more information, visit our website at [www.covchurch.org/cwr](http://www.covchurch.org/cwr).

## EVER CONSIDERED ADDING CWR TO YOUR ESTATE PLAN? NOW IS THE TIME.

For more information, please contact Covenant World Relief at 773-784-3000 or Covenant Trust Company at 800-483-2177

## INDIA: EMPOWERED TO SERVE OTHERS

**D**eep in the forests of Gujarat State in India live an indigenous tribal group of people who have been forced to change their traditional ways of life. In the past, the people of Dang have been able to survive from the resources in the forests, but in recent years the Indian Department of Forestry has greatly restricted their use of forest products. Most of the people, both men and women, have been forced to work as agricultural day laborers. The daily wage is about 90 cents. Unfortunately, they are only able to work about 15 days a month.

This is the fourth year of the CWR project in Dang in partnership with the Hindustani Covenant Church. The work of HCC is always comprehensive and this project includes day care for pre-school aged children, education, micro-finance, vocational training, medical care, and self-help groups. Each member of the group has their own personal savings book and each saves between 40-60 cents per month. When asked about how their lives have been affected by participation in the self-help groups, one woman responded, "Before I had no say in family matters, but now my husband respects me more and I participate with him in decision making." Because of the group savings, the women are able take out small loans at low interest. Some have received loans for micro-businesses like flower ornament making, vegetable sales, and basket making.



**Through a small loan, a woman is able to begin a business selling flower ornaments.**

All of this is encouraging, but what is most impressive is that the women said that one of the great benefits of the groups is that now they are able to help others in need. Each group looks for at least three families in need that they can help. These women are being empowered to improve their own lives and the lives of their families, but ultimately they see their empowerment as a means of empowering others.

## THAILAND: THICK VS. THIN

**T**here is a temptation in community development projects to try and achieve big results with a lot of people in a short period of time. Unfortunately, these kinds of projects usually result in minimal long-term impact.

Covenant World Relief is partnering with The Sustainable Development Research Foundation (SDRF) in a remote area in northern Thailand just a few kilometers from the Laos border. Jim Gustafson and Bob Shim are Covenant missionaries working with SDRF. When it comes to transformational community development, Jim, Bob and the rest of the SDRF staff understand the importance of depth over breadth and a comprehensive versus a single issue approach. After four years working with the Lua people group in the Baw Klua District, SDRF has become deeply involved in education, community health, agriculture, leadership development, church development, and environmental issues.



**Though they are marginalized, these women find community and are empowered through a CWR project.**

In many ways SDRF is just getting started in the Baw Klua District, but because of their thick, comprehensive approach to community development, we are confident that genuine transformation of individuals, families, villages, and the SDRF itself will be evident for years to come.

# EAST ASIA: WATER FOR LIFE

It is difficult to imagine living in a place where an essential resource such as water is scarce. Unfortunately, having a lack of water is a reality for many communities throughout the world. More than one billion people do not have access to clean water. One of those communities, a small village in East Asia, knows what it means to live without easy access to water. In the past, their only water resource was a small spring two kilometers away. Retrieving water on a daily basis was not only inconvenient but also difficult, especially for the elderly.

The women's federation of the village saw this need in the community and decided to take action. Through funds provided by Covenant World Relief, the federation was able to work with the community to construct 100 individual rainwater catchment systems.

As a result, the lives of 500 people in the village have improved. Community members worked together to construct the cisterns and now they have water to irrigate small vegetable gardens, provide for their farm animals, and to use for washing clothes and bathing.

It is clear that God is at work improving the lives of the people in this village in East Asia, and though there are many communities that are still in need of access to water, it is encouraging to know that one more community is able to experience the Good News of the Kingdom through something as basic as water.



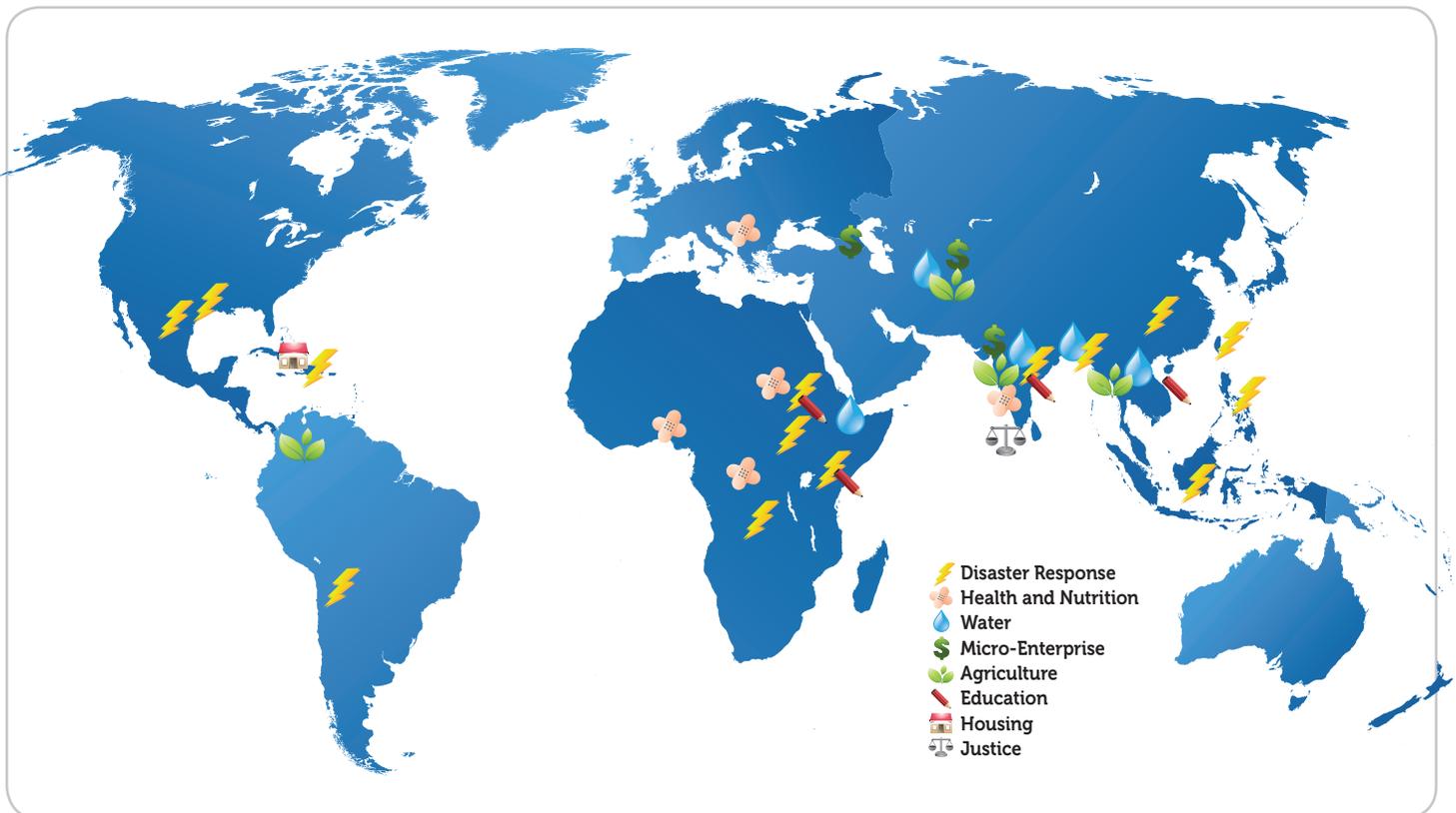
A rural community now has access to water and has clean water for washing and bathing, small gardens and caring for their farm animals.

## HAITI UPDATE

Seven seconds was all it took for the earthquake in Haiti to cause 230,000 deaths and leave more than a million people homeless. ECC churches and individuals have responded generously, donating more than \$1.1 million to provide relief, recovery, and long-term development for the victims of the earthquake. Your gifts have helped to provide:

- 400,000 meals
- 750,000 gallons of water
- 12 wells
- 184,000 people have received medicine and supplies and 23,000 people have received medical treatment
- 48,000 tarps
- 2,000 people participating in cash for work programs
- 2,7000 families participating in the *Plant with a Purpose* program to reduce food insecurity and provide for agricultural recovery.

# CWR PROJECTS AROUND THE WORLD



# EAST AFRICA: EXTREME POVERTY EXACERBATED BY DROUGHT

## HOW TO GIVE

Historically, the majority of funds for CWR community development projects have been given through local churches during the CWR Fall Campaign. However, there are now several additional options for giving, and more than ever we need your support and involvement year-round. You can:

- Give year-round online or by check
- Designate to a specific project
- Designate to a specific focus area (water, health, hunger, micro enterprise, justice/human rights, etc.)
- Designate to a specific country or region
- Include Covenant World Relief in your estate planning.

## STAY CONNECTED

Covenant World Relief is on Facebook! Become a fan today and receive regular updates about CWR projects around the world. Then, check out our blog for exclusive, in-depth news and information. We love to stay connected with you—if you have any questions or concerns at any time please contact Chrissy Palmerlee at 773-907-3301

## *Relief and development go hand-in-hand in Sudan*

**F**lying from the cool highland of Addis Ababa in central Ethiopia southwest to the hot lowland of Gambella near the border with Sudan, it felt like we were entering a different country. We had seen poverty in the highland areas, but it didn't compare to the poverty we saw in the Gambella region, especially in the village of Lare.

Drought has gripped this region and other low-lying areas of East Africa for several years. The people are very thin and have no access to clean water. The leaders of the Covenant Church of Sudan (ECCS) have identified eight areas in South Sudan and Western Ethiopia most affected by the drought and have been dispersing food purchased with CWR funds raised for the Sudan drought relief project. Most recipients are widows, but physically handicapped adults and orphaned children also received food aid.

Matthew, the project co-ordinator, introduced us to two widows who are recipients of the food aid—one has five children and the other has seven. They all live together in a very small hut. As we met them, the women were smoking pipes which seemed quite odd to us. Matthew explained that they smoke the pipes so that they will become thirsty. This thirst helps them to drink the dirty brown water which then gives them the feeling of a full stomach. They want to give what little food they have to their children.

In partnership with CWR, the ECCS is also focusing its attention on the most vulnerable children in these communities. The ECCS is carrying out a community development project that addresses the immediate needs of the identified children and their families (if they have parents) and through basic education and vocational training they are seeking to empower and equip the children and their families to rise out of abject poverty. —DAVE HUSBY



**Women from the Covenant Church of Sudan are able to provide food for their families because of emergency relief.**

## WE'VE MOVED!

We are pleased to announce that Covenant Offices has moved to a new home. Our new address is 8303 West Higgins Road, Chicago, Illinois 60631. All of our phone numbers are the same.



**COVENANT WORLD RELIEF**

*Loving, Serving, and Working Together.*

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**Blog:** [blogs.covchurch.org/cwr](http://blogs.covchurch.org/cwr)

**Haiti Updates:** [blogs.covchurch.org/haiti](http://blogs.covchurch.org/haiti)

**Give:** Online, by check, by electronic funds transfer