

A hand is shown in silhouette, reaching out from the left side of the frame towards a bright sun in the center. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that fills the sky and illuminates the blades of tall grass in the foreground. The overall mood is one of hope, care, and reaching out.

Covenant Mission & Ministry 2012

Making a difference

REAL PEOPLE. REAL PLACES. REAL IMPACT.

Greetings in the name of our Lord!

These are important days of partnership among our more than 800 congregations in this movement known as the Evangelical Covenant Church.

We are impacting more lives, through more churches, with greater diversity than at any point in our 126-year history. Even greater opportunity awaits because even greater need in the world awaits.

In the pages that follow, you will see what you are accomplishing not only in North America, but also in nearly forty countries of the world.



Gary Walter surveys the destruction caused by the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

Together, we are making a real difference in real people in real places with the good news of Jesus Christ as we pursue five strategic priorities:

- Make and Deepen Disciples
- Start and Strengthen Churches
- Develop Leaders
- Love Mercy and Do Justice
- Serve Globally

These pages highlight each priority.

I am convinced that God has critically important things for us to accomplish in a world of great need. It will happen as we live into this mission together. Pray. Engage. And see the back page for how you can invest in the financial opportunities that support our common mission.

On behalf of a grateful church, I thank God for your faithfulness and pray for your continued fruitfulness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary B. Walter".

Gary B. Walter, President
The Evangelical Covenant Church

WE MAKE & DEEPEN DISCIPLES

WE ARE COMMITTED to reach people with new life in Christ, and then to help them grow deeper in Christ. It is a lifelong journey of faith.



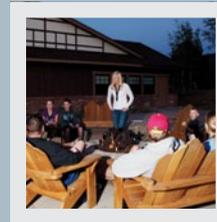
Every night at CHIC, students gather for worship.

- Last year more than 12,000 commitments to Christ were reported by Covenant churches and ministries.
- We are impacting more lives than at any other point in our 126-year history. We have grown for 19 consecutive years, nearly doubling in size during that time.
- CHIC, which prepares a whole new generation to follow and serve Christ, will be held July 15-20, 2012, at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.
- Approximately 22,000 children and youth will attend summer camp at our 21 affiliated conference centers, making deeply meaningful decisions that will shape their faith.
- The Covenant develops a wide variety of resources to help churches and individuals cultivate a deeper life with God. They are available for download or purchase on the Covenant website.



“The Covenant church taught me about the love of God. I have met Jesus and even through some mad-crazy circumstances, he has walked with me. The Lord is truly my strength.”

Chef Mike Martinez on the impact of Fountain of Life Covenant Church in Long Beach, California, on his life



“I was able to focus on the unfathomable love God has for his people. I was reminded from where my help, my hope, my strength come.”

Patricia Smith Adaranijo on the Feast, a spiritual life experience for the whole Covenant family

WE START & STRENGTHEN CHURCHES

WE ARE COMMITTED to start and strengthen healthy, missional churches, much like the Apostle Paul started and continued to strengthen churches in the New Testament. We believe the local church is God's basic strategy to carry out mission in the world.

- On average we start one new church every two to three weeks in the United States and Canada.
- Of our 841 congregations, 25 percent are among populations of color or intentionally multiethnic, making the Covenant more reflective of the entire kingdom of God. This represents 17 percent of attendance.
- We offer personal mentoring opportunities for worship leaders; children, youth, and adult ministries; spiritual direction; and more.
- This year, more than 200 congregations benefited from targeted seminars and experiences related to such areas as prayer, disability ministries, racial righteousness, and Christian formation planning.
- Currently there are more than 70 new churches in development.
- Nearly half of all congregations have benefited from Covenant congregational vitality resources, which offer training, coaching, and evaluative resources to help congregations attain and sustain healthy, missional ministries.



Members of RedeemerLIFE Church, a recent church plant, gather for prayer and worship.



"The Covenant really is multicultural. Most denominations mean black and white when they say multicultural, but the Covenant has all kinds of people. I've never seen anything like the Covenant."

Semmeal Thomas, pastor of City Covenant Church, the newest church in Detroit



"There is a lot more positive spirit about our direction, and there's also a lot more openness and trust. People are making new commitments to Christ, they're participating in groups, and they want to serve others."

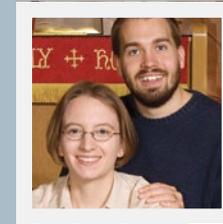
Greg West, pastor of Clairemont (California) Covenant Church on the Covenant's church vitality process

WE DEVELOP LEADERS

WE ARE COMMITTED to our clergy, through investing in their ongoing personal and professional growth. We also see very real opportunities to expand the training of our laity. In multiple venues we seek to develop all leaders of the church—both clergy and lay.



- The Covenant ministerium continues to grow, with 1,700 credentialed clergy now serving as lead pastors, staff ministers, missionaries, military chaplains, institutional chaplains, and in other ministry settings.
- North Park Theological Seminary is a primary source of clergy leadership. Each year, 20 Presidential Scholarships provide full tuition for gifted individuals preparing for Covenant service.
- The number of women clergy has grown from 76 to 384 in the past decade, a 505 percent increase.
- CHET, our Hispanic center for theological education, has more than 450 students enrolled each semester.
- More than 1,000 young adults will receive firsthand ministry training as they serve as camp counselors and staff.
- More than 1,000 Covenant pastors have been strengthened for ministry through Sustaining Pastoral Excellence, a Lily Endowment grant sponsored by the Department of the Ordered Ministry.
- The Covenant sponsors networks and training for lay and clergy leaders in worship, children, youth, adult, compassion/mercy/justice, and other specialty ministry areas.



“Your gift of Presidential Scholarships enabled us to pursue preparation for full-time ministry without the great burden of educational debt. Thank you for supporting this vital effort to strengthen the future of the Evangelical Covenant Church.”

Sharon and Chris Nelson are recent North Park Theological Seminary alumni and former recipients of Presidential Scholarships.

WE LOVE MERCY & DO JUSTICE

WE ARE COMMITTED to pursuing compassion and justice throughout our world. From our inception the Covenant has been concerned with helping hurting people (love mercy), and addressing the causes of that hurt (do justice). From a biblically rooted perspective, we provide tangible ways of extending the love of Jesus in deed as well as word, and speak as an advocate.

- Through our network of two hospitals, 14 retirement communities, and eight group homes for adult handicapped individuals, more than \$43.5 million of free care was provided last year in addition to other support.
- Twenty-six community development projects were supported through Covenant World Relief for the poorest of the poor around the world, in places like South Sudan, India, and Colombia.
- The Farmers to Market program of Paul Carlson Partnership connects small farmers to markets in DR Congo, with 1,775 farmers participating, 53 percent of whom are women.
- Break the Chains, a Women Ministries initiative to fight sex trafficking, supports a safe house that provides long-term harbor, counseling, and job-skills training to teenage girls in an undisclosed United States location.
- Hundreds of Covenant pastors and lay leaders have participated in racial righteousness experiences such as Sankofa and Invitation to Racial Righteousness seminars.
- AVA (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse) provides congregational resources related to domestic violence.
- The Covenant Disabilities Resource Committee networks and provides information to churches ministering to people with special needs.



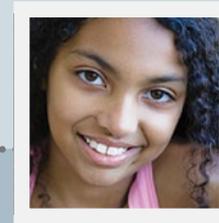
“Schoolteachers who were present were assured that the most vulnerable children who had dropped out of school would rejoin school.”

President of Kenya Covenant Church on funds from Covenant World Relief providing relief for severe drought



“It gives people like me hope that I can get medical care even if my employment doesn’t give me the option to have health coverage.”

Client of Covenant Community Care clinic in Detroit



“The biggest surprise is that they are doing much better than we expected. They really love each other. They’re forming bonds with each other.”

One of the founders of New Day for Children, talking about girls rescued from prostitution

WE SERVE GLOBALLY

WE ARE COMMITTED to a global gospel—extending the whole gospel to the whole world. Through global partnerships and our own missionary team, we make and deepen disciples, start and strengthen churches, develop leaders, and love mercy and do justice.

- The Covenant partners with national church leaders in 38 countries on five continents. More than one million lives are impacted.
- Our missionary team continues to expand. This year, 130 short-term, project, and long-term missionaries will serve on your behalf.
- Last year, more than 110,000 people in Congo received medical care from hospitals and clinics supported by Paul Carlson Partnership.
- Disaster relief efforts continue in South Sudan, Ivory Coast, Somalia, Libya, Japan, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and other places serving the poorest of the poor.
- Refugee services are provided in places like Burma, Somalia, Kenya, and Ecuador.
- Through coaching and training seminars, the Covenant supports direct initiatives by local congregations in additional global locations.



“I saw the DNA of the Covenant played out before my very eyes. There was a deep fellowship and bond shared by brothers and sisters united by Christ.”

Gary Gaddini, who spoke at the pastor and spouse conference in Congo



“We could not have saved the lives of nearly 9,000 cholera patients if it had not been for Covenant World Relief giving us the money to operate the clinics. These people would not have had any other medical care.”

Ted Steinhauer, Haiti country director for Medical Teams International, a frequent Covenant partner

Together, for God's Work

The Covenant is able to undertake an ambitious mission and ministry vision because our more than 800 congregations in the United States and Canada stand together in making it happen. Since 1885, we have lived out a spirit of being "mission friends," following the heart of God into the world *together*.

Congregations often ask for practical guidelines on how to be generous and supportive in financial partnership with both the denomination as a whole and the regional conference within which they reside. The following guidelines were affirmed by both denominational and regional leadership for your consideration. It takes good personal stewardship principles and applies them to your congregation's membership in the ECC and conference.

PERCENTAGE GIVING

Percentage giving is the biblical principle of proportionality. If your church is currently giving a fixed dollar amount, we encourage you to convert to percentage giving in your next budget year. For example, if your total church budget is \$100,000 and you give \$10,000 to the mission and ministry of the Covenant and \$5,000 to your region, your respective percentages would be 10 percent to the Covenant, and 5 percent to your conference.

PRIORITY GIVING

This is the biblical principle of giving of the first fruits of the harvest to God. Forward the determined percentage amount to both the Covenant and conference on a monthly basis, calculating from the previous month's budget income.

PROGRESSIVE GIVING

This is the biblical principle of increasing faithfulness over time. Our hope is that every congregation would be able to target 10 percent to the Covenant and 5 percent to the conference. If you are not already there, we recognize this might be a multiple-step process. Until then, without cutting back on either, the combined recommended ratio is two-thirds of your giving to the Covenant, and one-third to the conference.

Adopting these guidelines will result in even greater kingdom impact in your region, throughout the United States and Canada, and all over the world.

Mission & Ministry Budget. Contributions from local congregations are *the most important* element to advancing our mission and ministry.

