

# quick connect

January 2012



In December a team of nearly 40 persons from **Rancho Vista Covenant Church** (Chula Vista, CA) traveled to Ensenada, Mexico to deliver more than 2,000 gifts to children. Nearly 6,000 people attended the event at Camp Hope and each child received a gift. Ensenada's mayor, Enrique Pelayo Torres,

attended the event and on the front page of the city's newspaper thanked the church for traveling down amidst current advisings against travel to Mexico.

**Mark your calendar for Celebration 2012**, the annual gathering of Pacific Southwest Conference churches

**April 19 - 21**  
**First Covenant Church, Oakland, CA**

On Thursday the Ministerial Association's gathering will focus on Emotionally Healthy Spirituality with pastor/author Pete Scazzero teaching and preaching. On Friday Celebration will continue with worship and prayer, an update on future PSWC ministry, the 110th PSWC Annual Meeting, crisp relevant workshops, and an evening of worship with Judy Howard Peterson preaching. On Saturday, we'll explore the story God is unfolding in our unique context for ministry. Watch for pre-publicity and delegate or advisory delegate credential cards coming soon!

In late November, pastor Jason Backlund of **Community Covenant Church** (Visalia, CA) challenged their church to bless **On Ramps Covenant Church** (Fresno, CA) with an "over and above" offering. When Phil Skei, church-planting pastor of On Ramps, preached at Visalia on December 4 the host church surprised Phil with over \$2300. "Our community needs to be reminded of what it means to be a church plant," Jason said. Phil adds, "Visalia Covenant's partnership has blessed us beyond measure. The gift enabled us to purchase desperately needed sound equipment to host our Community Worship Gatherings in the park and at a school. *However, the gift did much more than help us purchase equipment; it powerfully represented to us the great love of God that grafts us into the family of God* – in this case the PSWC."

Further, Phil expresses gratitude to all the Central Valley churches for welcoming On Ramps, "There is no greater feeling for a church plant than to feel welcomed and embraced by your older siblings."

**Agape Christian Covenant Church** (Gilbert, AZ) isn't a typical mix of people. Arizona State University Polytechnic Campus, Mesa, serves as the "hub" of missional activity for **Agape**, so not surprisingly, the church draws out college students and residents from the surrounding East Valley. The third group Agape draws is a pleasant surprise -- people who are homeless. Agape's location is uniquely positioned close to House of Refuge, a non-profit providing transitional housing and support services to people faced with homelessness. As a result, the church has experienced unique ministry opportunities. Read more at [pswc.org](http://pswc.org).



### A Word from Efrem, PSWC Superintendent

This New Year brings with it new kingdom advancing opportunities. Because this is a presidential election year, there is the potential that political division and tension could mark the year in a significant way. This reality could cause some to want to get through 2012 as quickly as possible. I believe this fear can be dealt with through God's church. The church as a transforming, reconciling, and healing force could be the true driving theme of this year. When I think of the many ministries of our mosaic, I am so hopeful for this. There is no question that our churches have been spaces for conversion, compassion, and connection to take place. Throughout our mission region people are coming to Christ, hungry people are being feed, and miracles are being reported.

I pray that this year will be marked by churches who live deeper into a collective kingdom approach to ministry. I was blessed in 2011 to attend not only some of our pastor cluster groups, but also what I will call, "Kingdom Networks" of Covenant pastors gathering with other pastors within their local communities from other denominations. The Leadership Connection, The Bay Area Learning Community, and Church Without Shoes are just a few examples of how our churches are connecting to missional movements within our region. I'm excited next month to spend a day with a group called, The Pastors of Oakland. God has a great call upon the Covenant and that call includes Kingdom Networks beyond the Covenant. I pray 2012 would not be marked by political division, but by kingdom unity.