

Report of the Superintendent

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.’”

Matthew 9:37-38 (NASB)

“And as you go, preach, saying, ‘the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. Freely you received, freely give.”

Matthew 10:7-8 (NASB)

Our theme for this year’s Celebration is “Beloved.” In Chapters 9 and 10 of the Gospel of Matthew we see Jesus as the embodiment of God’s gracious and transforming love. This love brings mobility to a paralytic, grace to a man participating in a corrupt economic system, healing to an outcast and diseased woman, and new life to a girl left for dead. This love of God shown in our Lord and Savior travels from city to city, bringing the Kingdom of God up close and personal to lost and hurting people. Next, Jesus looks upon the multitude with compassion and gives His disciples a command. The command is to go into the city and do the work of Jesus that they had witnessed. God still desires today to use His beloved children to advance His Kingdom.

In its 109th year of ministry, the Pacific Southwest Conference (hereinafter referred to as PSWC) is truly about the work of Kingdom advancement and extending the love of God to the lost and the hurting. We are a regional partnership of the Evangelical Covenant Church with 161 churches serving over 43,700 worship attendees. Our vision is to be, “a mosaic of churches working interdependently to transform lives and communities.”

We live into this vision through the mission priorities of church planting, congregational vitality, and compassion, mercy, and justice ministries. In my first year as Superintendent, I have had the opportunity to see first hand the impact of church plants, the renewed passion of churches that have existed for a long time, and leaders who are willing to grow in their ability to minister effectively to the marginalized and disenfranchised.

We are living in an ever-increasing multiethnic, multicultural, urban and economically challenging reality. These realities are comprised of tough issues such as immigration, healthcare, unemployment, housing foreclosures, violence, and broken families. Above all the political debate there is a need for ministries that will address these complex issues from a biblical foundation, led by the Holy Spirit. Our churches are ministering to the homeless, rescuing children from sex slavery, standing with our brothers and sisters caught in a system that needs reform, tutoring children in public schools, and seeing many people come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

As we gather together for fellowship, worship, and planning at Newsong Church in Southern California, I’m also excited about the opportunity we have to extend the love of God and advance His Kingdom among homeless mothers and children in downtown Los Angeles.

THE IMPACT

Church Planting

*with Wayne Carlson, Director of Church Planting
and Walter Contreras, Director of Outreach and Hispanic Church Planting*

Our intentional commitment to church planting goes back seventeen years. We continue to seize the opportunity to advance the Kingdom of God in our five-state region through planting new churches that reflect the mosaic of our mission field. In 2010, four new churches were added to this movement, sending additional “workers into the harvest field.”



Amistad Covenant Church Service, Las Vegas, NV

Two of the four churches launched in 2010 are Hispanic congregations – Renacer Covenant Church in San Jose, California, and the first PSWC church in Las Vegas, Nevada – Amistad Covenant Church. The US Census indicates that 50 million Hispanics are part of the fabric of our nation. As we look to the future, the PSWC is well positioned to continue planting churches among the Latino community.

One of the four churches begun in 2010 is intentionally multiethnic (in the San Jose area), and a fourth new church plant was started in Tustin, California. Additionally, groundwork was done in preparation for several new 2011 church planting projects, including our second church in Las Vegas – Advance Covenant, which launched February 2011. Late in 2010, first steps were also taken for planting our first Covenant church in the Salt Lake City area. Throughout the year, twenty-two church planters received regular coaching to increase their capacity to lead new and growing ministries, while other planters within the first five years of planting still received coaching but with reduced intensity.



Consecrating new church planters at PSWC Celebration 2010

Church planting continues to be a pivotal strategy in reaching more people in more places within our region. This is made possible in part by churches willing to participate in the parenting and partnering of churches in the planting process. Prayer, funding, and the development of leaders are key elements of healthy church planting. Within the PSWC we are now starting to see the grandparenting of churches; churches that began as church plants are now planting churches. This family tree has led to many people coming to know Christ – changing lives for all eternity.

CHURCH PLANTS ON COVENANT AGREEMENT AND RECEIVING APPROPRIATIONS IN 2010

1. **Edgewater Covenant Church** – Pittsburg, CA
Started: August 2007. Church planter, John Fanous
Attendance: 117
2. **Hope Community Church, An Evangelical Covenant Church** – Pasadena, CA
Started: September 2007. Church planter, Rodney Walker
Attendance: 37
3. **Bayside of Plumas Lake** – Plumas Lake, CA
Started: October 2007. Church planter, Randy Sherwood
Attendance: 244
4. **Comunidad Familiar Cristiana** – Redwood City, CA.
Started: October 2007. Church planter, Rolando Luna
Attendance: 67
5. **Convergence Covenant Church** – Oakland, CA.
Started: May 2008. Church planter, Bobby Lee
Attendance: 66
6. **Nueva Esperanza Covenant Church** – Antioch, CA
Started: July 2008. Church planter, Fil Nesta
Attendance: 162
7. **The Bridge Community Church, An Evangelical Covenant Church** – San Jose, CA
Started: October 2008. Church planter, Andy Fitzgerald
Attendance: 71
8. **Bayside Citrus Heights** – Citrus Heights, CA
Started: January 2009. Church planter, Craig Sweeny
Attendance: 788
9. **Rio de Vida Covenant Church** – Surprise, AZ
Started: April 2009. Church planter, Patrick Brandlin
Attendance: 78
10. **Bayside in Galt** – Galt, CA
Started: August 2009. Church planter, Jeff Carl
Attendance: 94
11. **Covenant Grove Church** – Modesto, CA
Started: September 2009. Church planter, Scott Nelson
Attendance: 149
12. **Real Life Covenant Church** – La Habra, CA
Started: October 2009. Church planter, Eddie Ledesma
Attendance: 70
13. **MasterPiece Covenant Church** – Laveen, AZ
Started: October 2009. Church planter, Brad Boydston
Attendance: 26
14. **Renacer Covenant Church** – San Jose, CA
Started: January 2010. Church planter, Mario Romani
Attendance: 23
15. **Amistad Covenant Church** – Las Vegas, NV
Started: April 2010. Church planter, Arturo Salas
Attendance: 55
16. **Jesus the Recreator Covenant Church** – San Jose, CA
Started: April 2010. Church planter, Abel Orozco
Attendance: 35
17. **Emmanuel Covenant Church** – Northridge, CA
(Revitalization—not a church plant)
Started: July 2010 Pastor, Abraham Bejarano
Attendance: 61
18. **Mission Hope Covenant Church** – Tustin, CA
Started: August 2010. Church planter, Erin Kerr
Attendance: 30

PRAY FOR THESE PSWC CHURCH PLANTS



Congregational Vitality

with Alan R. Forsman, Congregational and Leadership Coach
Greg Yee, Associate Superintendent

Congregational vitality is really about advancing God's Kingdom and extending God's love in our region and in the world. For vitality to be realized churches must have a deep passion for evangelism and discipleship, as well as focus on local and global missions. In other words, congregational vitality is about being a healthy and missional church. This is only possible to the degree that pastors and lay leaders are healthy.

Healthy is defined as pursuing Christ and *missional* is defined as Christ's priorities in the world. Major components of the vitality pathway involve coaching of pastors, facilitating vitality teams, providing resources, and conducting workshops. **Veritas** and **EPIC** (Empowering People, Inspiring Change) workshops are available for those churches that want to enter the vitality process. **Navigate**, a new component this year, is a cohort learning group that provides a year-long process of training, coaching, and resourcing for churches that have chosen to pursue the vitality pathway. There are 12 churches currently in some form of vitality process, including two in Navigate. Veritas, Epic, and Navigate are offered in partnership with the Covenant's Department of Church Growth and Evangelism.



Stockton Covenant Church team at Navigate

An opportune time to address a church's vitals is amidst transition. The time between the old and the new offers a unique window to evaluate and define current reality. During this time, a transition pastor (interim) is often called to bring a fresh voice to speak into the church, and fresh eyes to help guide the church toward the next chapter. This year, PSWC staff assisted with pulpit fill, formation of transition teams, interim searches, and 18 pastoral search committees.



Installation of Pastor Bryan Murphy, South Bay Community Church – Fremont, CA, search process supported by PSWC staff

Compassion, Mercy, and Justice

*with Walter Contreras, Director of Outreach and Hispanic Ministries
Greg Yee, Associate Superintendent*

In order to see more fruit in the advancement of God's Kingdom, we must be willing to grow in our capacity to minister in an ever-increasing multiethnic and multicultural reality. Our focus on compassion, mercy, and justice is about resourcing local churches and leaders to engage in transformational community ministries. This begins with developing the cross-cultural competencies of our pastors and leaders. We accomplish this through the Journey to Mosaic, Journey to Mosaic Squared, Camp Mosaic and our partnership with the Fred Jordan Mission in downtown Los Angeles.



J2m² participants – Summer 2010

To more effectively equip us with tools to address these profound shifts, we continue to see the strategic importance of the **Journey to Mosaic (J2M)** and **Journey to Mosaic Squared (j2m²)**. In 2010, we led two J2M's including one in partnership with Alpine Camp and Conference Center to pilot a new Southern California version. Since the birth of the Journey to Mosaic in January 2005, nineteen J2M experiences have involved hundreds of leaders throughout the PSWC, the wider Covenant, and other partner groups, including the Reformed

Church of America and Bethany University (Santa Cruz, CA). In addition, we continue to focus on shaping emerging leaders. In July 2010, two facilitators and nine participants from Alaska, Georgia, Chicago, and Southern and Northern California also journeyed through three powerful weeks in Oakland on our fourth j2m². Several PSWC pastors helped lead Bible studies and hands-on experiences to create deeper Kingdom categories in these young leaders.

In addition to our journeys, we also provided opportunities for experiential learning through service. The Apostle Paul wrote to church in Galatia, "Their only suggestion was that we keep on helping the poor, which I have always been eager to do." Paul's challenge is at the core of what **The Mosaic Center (TMC)** is doing on Skid Row in Los Angeles in partnership with the Fred Jordan Mission (FJM). TMC continues to develop a place to teach and model how evangelism and discipleship can work hand-in-hand with ministries of compassion and justice. Last year more than 1,000 Covenanters participated in ministries there. As opportunities are growing, TMC continues to pursue partnerships for the development of the 4th floor of the FJM. With this, there is eager anticipation for further growth opportunities that will stretch and shape people from across the PSWC who then return to the front lines in local churches more prepared to serve.



Ministering on Skid Row

Advancing the Kingdom is about salvation, life purpose, and a focus on the poor and vulnerable. This holistic approach mandates ministries of compassion, mercy, and justice.

Supporting Pastors

In my first year I have had the opportunity to attend a number of cluster gatherings. These communities of local ministers provide fellowship, support and development. Further, I was honored to speak at a number of retreats – for youth leaders; retired pastors; church planters; and the pastor, spouse and staff fall retreat. These initiatives are important in reminding us that we are not called to do ministry in isolation. I am grateful for all the pastor support and development opportunities that are provided in our Conference. The partnership with our Ministerial Association, Spiritual Directors, and cluster leaders make this possible.

Further, the PSWC staff supports pastors through administering the Covenant credentialing process in partnership with the Covenant's Department of Ordered Ministry and the PSWC Ministerial Association. Currently there are 437 credentialed persons within the PSWC including retired and inactive persons, 36 more than one year ago.

Other Ministries

Please see the General Ministry Report for information on the vital ministries of Alpine, Mission Springs, Women Ministries, and CHET within this region.

The Future

The Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) is in the midst of an initiative called, "Organizing for Mission." Through this process the ECC is seeking to advance its mission while bridging to the future. The process has been driven by three important questions:

- 1) What are we trying to accomplish in the lives of real people in real places?
- 2) What are the core ministries that will accomplish that mission?
- 3) What is the best alignment of personnel, structures, and resources to accomplish that mission?

The following language is used to answer the first question: "We join God in God's mission to see more disciples, among more populations, in a more caring and just world."

In answering the second question the following "five core ministry areas" have been identified:

- 1) Start and strengthen churches
- 2) Make and deepen disciples
- 3) Develop leaders
- 4) Love mercy, do justice
- 5) Serve globally

An “Organizing for Mission” Team has been convened by President Gary Walter with the authorization of the ECC Executive Board. This team has been given the task of developing potential answers relating to the third question. Its primary focus is structural.

Because of this work going on at the denominational level, it’s important that we look prayerfully and structurally at the future of our conference. To be aligned with the Evangelical Covenant Church and to serve our churches and pastors better, the PSWC is also launching a strategic development process. As a result, we are changing our major areas of focus to the five core ministry areas.

Last fall we sent out a survey to get an initial understanding of how well we are currently serving pastors and churches and how we can improve. I have also held focus groups across the conference to engage in healthy dialogue with pastors and lay leaders. Getting out and preaching at a number of our churches, I was able to get vital feedback about the current state of our conference. Information gathered from these experiences and initiatives will assist the development of a new PSWC strategic plan. Thus far, two things have emerged from this process.

First, we have identified three broad missional priorities to give further clarify and contextualize the five core ministry areas:

- 1) Developing and resourcing towards **Healthy and Missional Churches**
- 2) Increasing the **cross-cultural and reconciliation competencies**
- 3) Developing **pastoral health and innovative capabilities**

These three areas will drive how we live out the five core ministry areas and lead us to the development of measurable goals and outcomes in the future.

Secondly, the information gathered has affirmed that we do not currently have the staff size or organizational structure to serve the number of churches and credentialed pastors in our conference. This will be an even greater challenge in the future as we must continue to grow in order to leverage the Kingdom-advancing opportunities before us. One way to deal with this challenge is to develop best practice sites and training centers within churches across our region. Healthy churches will produce more healthy churches and healthy pastors will produce more healthy pastors. We hope that through this approach, we can better serve churches and pastors within this large region.

As I conclude my first year as Superintendent, I want to thank you for the way in which you’ve welcomed me and embraced me into this Christ-centered and multiethnic family. I’m so excited about our future together. I’m honored to be able to serve with PSWC staff, Executive Board and our churches as Kingdom laborers in the harvest field. I ask for your continued prayers, presence and participation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Efram D. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Efram D. Smith, Superintendent