

## PSWC ANNUAL CELEBRATION 2009

The setting – Lakehills Covenant Church, El Dorado Hills, California  
The time – April 16-18, 2009  
The theme – Who is My Neighbor?  
The participants – Over 400 attendees for one or more of the various activities

### Celebrating Church Planting in the PSWC, 1994-2008

Over two hundred eighty persons were present to share in a time of remembrance, giving thanks to God for His provision, and launching a next phase of church planting in the PSWC on Friday evening. Included among the banquet attendees were church planters and representatives from over 70% of the 68 church plants launched from 1994 to early 2009. A booklet, *Celebrating Church Planting, 1994-2008*, was distributed to each household present. The booklet features a story of the 15 year movement plus pictures and highlights from each of the 68 churches. The banquet meal was prepared and served in a “5 star restaurant style” by the host church.



Ron Short, pastor of Lakehills Covenant Church, and Ray Johnston, pastor of Bayside Covenant Church, hosted the program. Ron and Ray were among the first church planters in this recent fifteen year movement. A readers' theatre with visual background captured various ways in which God has changed lives through these church plants. Dave Olson, Director of Church Planting for The Evangelical Covenant Church, shared reflections on the movement with special honoring of all church planters, representatives of partner churches, and leaders of specific ethnic and multiethnic church plants. His message, *Pushed by the Gospel and Pulled by the Spirit*, captured the “why” of the movement and a challenge to go forth into the unknown with confidence in the future that only God can see. A glimpse of that future was evidenced in the consecration of five new church planters since May 1, 2008, and in a new Church Planting DVD featuring young emerging leaders representing the ethnic diversity of those planting churches in the PSWC.



John Notehelfer (Superintendent of the PSWC in 1994), Ted Smith (pastor of First Covenant Sacramento, the partner church for the first church plant of the movement, Lakehills Covenant Church), and Dave Olson (Director of Church Planting of the PSWC in 1994) were presented gifts in appreciation for their role in launching the movement and received words of blessing. The evening closed with a blessing offered by Superintendent Evelyn M.R. Johnson for each of the church planters and their role in sowing seeds and nurturing growth of churches that form the foundation for the future.

### Other Celebration activities included:

#### Thursday - A gathering of pastors and staff ministers at the PSWC Ministerial Association

- Business meeting led by acting chair, Greg West, including approval of changes in the Constitution and Bylaws to expand the Committee on Ministerial Standing to better serve the growing numbers, and election of MA chair, Greg West, new members of the Executive Team and Committee on Ministerial Standing
- Announcement of the Pastors' Retreat scheduled at Squaw Valley, North Tahoe - September 28-30, 2009, with Ray Johnston, pastor of Bayside Covenant Church, as speaker
- Testimonies of God's call to ministry by candidates for ordination, commissioning, and transfer of ordination in 2009 (a total of 18 persons were recommended)
- A challenge by Lisa Orris, Director of Evangelism, based on Jonah's story, emphasizing “quit moping or staying comfortable” and “go to our Ninevahs” followed by affinity group breakout sessions where participants reflected on the topic and areas of common interest
- Worship led by a team of PSWC worship leaders guided by Barry Anthony, Worship Pastor, Modesto Covenant Church, Modesto
- God's Word proclaimed by John Notehelfer, Interim Executive Minister of Church Growth and Evangelism and former PSWC Superintendent, as he reflected on the multiple chapters, God's assignments, in living out our call and embrace our neighbor as a natural flow from the reality of Christ living within us
- Fellowship with refreshments provided by Alpine and Mission Springs



### Friday morning – Celebration Worship Service

- Worship led by Bayside of South Sacramento's worship team
- Reflections on churches being good neighbors from Bill Scheppart, Dolores Park Covenant Church, San Francisco, and James Dangc, Mien Covenant Church, Sacramento
- A challenge given by our guest preacher, John Teter, church planter of Fountain of Life Covenant Church in the Long Beach/Compton area, to ask the key question, "Am I a good neighbor?" as we seek to live out God's call
- Ingathering of the Bringing My World to Christ lists from local churches



### Friday afternoon – 107<sup>th</sup> Annual Business Meeting

- Convened by Executive Board chair, Will Davidson, with 153 delegates and 31 advisory delegates from churches, institutions, the Executive Board, and Commissions
- Update on our shared mission as The Evangelical Covenant Church by John Notehelfer, Interim Executive Minister of Church Growth and Evangelism
- Recommendation of two churches seeking membership in The Evangelical Covenant Church: Fountain of Life Covenant Church, Long Beach and Great Exchange Covenant Church, San Francisco
- Ministry stories from church planting and Veritas
- Highlights from Alpine Camp and Conference Center and Mission Springs Camp and Conference Center
- Celebration of commitment of PSWC local churches in providing 70% of the PSWC operating income and overview of the income and expenses with almost 90% of the expenses in 2008 focused on our three mission priorities - 57% to church planting, 22% to congregational vitality, and 9% to compassion, mercy, and justice ministries.



- Overview of the budget revisions for 2009
- Recognition of partner churches for new church plants in 2008 – New Life Covenant/San Jose (for all four church plants) and Great Exchange Covenant/Sunnyvale (partnering with New Life to support The Bridge Community Church)
- Interviews focused on the support services of Covenant Trust Company
- A presentation on the contextual challenge in answering the question, "Who is My Neighbor?," followed by a time of sharing with persons "unlike ourselves" within the group present and table group reflection on the question, "What do you envision as ways in which your church can discover neighbors?"
- Presentation of the vision for church planting in Las Vegas with the goal of launching the first church by 2010
- Introduction of the PSWC regional "Taking Your Ministry Pulse" workshop being

launched by the Congregational Vitality Commission this fall

- Introduction of the Mosaic Center's speaker's bureau and overview of the upcoming Journey to Mosaic Squared summer intensive for young leaders, ages 18-24, in Oakland
- Approval of a balanced income/expense budget of \$2,087,300 for 2010
- Presentation the Covenant Enabling Residence projected for development on the site of Escalon Covenant Church
- Election of four Executive Board members – Pamela Christiansen, Bayside/Granite Bay; Brian Kim, Newsong North Orange County, Fullerton; Stanley B. Long, South Bay Community Church, Fremont; and Bill MacPhee, Rolling Hills Covenant, Rolling Hills Estates
- Expressions of appreciation by Max Villalobos, PSWC Executive Board member, to the host church, PSWC staff, and outgoing Executive Board members, Valerie McCann Woodson, Bay Area Christian Connection/Oakland, and Steve Wong, Grace Community Covenant Church/Palo Alto

**Invitation from Bryan Hayes, Executive Director of Mission Springs Camp and Conference Center, to the 2010 PSWC Celebration, April 22-24, scheduled at Mission Springs near Santa Cruz**

### Saturday – Leadership Equipping Seminars

Over 150 persons participated in eight equipping events on Saturday. Included among these events were five on-site equipping experiences focused on cross-cultural ministry, evangelism, breaking barriers of race and class, congregational vitality, and strengthening women ministries. The three off-site experiences included a service project, a Vision for Mission tour, and a miniJourney to Mosaic trip.



**GRAND FINALE** – The activities ended with a special BBQ rib dinner prepared by the men of Lakehills Covenant Church.

*To God be the glory. Great things He has done!*

