

COVENANT CHRONICLE

A NEWSLETTER FOR COVENANT CHURCH PCA OF FAYETTEVILLE, ARKANSAS

Pastor's Note

Dr. Paul Sagan

Thee Winter of Our Discontent

This is the hardest winter I can remember in 31 years of being a resident of NWA. I cannot recall a time when our services and meetings have been so disrupted by winter weather. It is good to remind ourselves in these times that God is in control of even the weather.

When Shakespeare coined the phrase “winter of our discontent” in his play *Richard III* he wasn't talking about the end of a harsh winter. He meant that discontent would end with the spring of change to come. God's promise of spring gives us hope in the midst of the difficulty of winter. While we wait, how can we practice contentment? Let me suggest four ways:

Trust in God's providential care. Romans 8:28, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (ESV)

Be content with what we have. I Timothy 6:6-8, “But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.” (ESV)

Love others as we love ourselves. Proverbs 11:24,25, “One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.” (ESV)

And finally, God keeps His Promises. Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” (ESV)

Spring will be here soon!

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*Our purpose is to glorify God by
loving Him and loving people.*

Christian Witness to Israel

Stephen Atkinson

CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL - Mission Update:

1. New CWI Evangelist: Michael Saunders

Michael's health is improving, and says he is 75% back to normal. He is doing some preaching in his present location in New England, and keeping up with his reading and essay assignments from his boss (me!). The planned relocation to Miami is now set for early March. He has had invitations to teach on Jewish evangelism both at the church he hopes to connect with, and at the Miami International Theological Seminary.

We have set a challenging budget for 2014 to include resources, and evangelistic events in Miami, for Michael to actively engage with the Jewish population there. He has had a lot of experience in the South Florida scene, and plans to be present at a variety of Jewish cultural events, with a view to making further connections. Some of his basic ministry will be walking the Boardwalk engaging in conversation with Jewish people.

2. Promotional & Teaching Materials

We've done a reprint of the M'Cheyne / Bonar / Spurgeon Leaflets. Five thousand of these important and historical leaflets have now been printed at a cost of \$5,000.

The trailer for our teaching resource-in-the-works, "Connecting with the Cohens" (a 10-week dvd and workbook for small groups) has been well received and is on the Facebook page. I have compiled about 50% of the text. And, I am also in the process of writing more music for it.

We've made progress increasing our on-line presence. We now have a Facebook business page - www.facebook.com/cwina. Please 'friend' us, and 'like' the CWI page. It has taken 11 months (!) for us to get our CWI charitable tax status, but it was approved literally just a few weeks ago. So, now we can process online giving. Head Office are helping in setting this up.

3. Conferences

CROSS Missions Conference, Louisville, KY (Dec 13) -

CWI had an exhibition booth at this conference. This was an amazing conference, with youthful passion such as I've never seen. It was attended by 3,500 young, restless, and reformed, all with a heart to give up on the American dream, and place their lives on the altar of world missions, and reaching the unreached. The fact that 1.5% of Jews are believers, means that the Jewish people are an 'unreached' people group! This is shameful to the Gentile Church.

At CROSS, I also gave our Board's letter to Al Mohler to officially invite him to be on our Advisory Board, and he has officially responded yes. And I also met up with Derek Thomas (a good friend from his UK days, and former Assistant to Ligon Duncan, and now in S Carolina). Derek was on the CWI Board in his earlier life. So, he has said he is willing to come onto the Exec Board (the working one!)

We have the Chancellor of Reformed Theological Seminary and the President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary on our Advisory Board. It is humbling to have such men of God standing with us.

Ligon also introduced me to Kevin DeYoung (another big name) and Elias Menderos (who teaches Missions at Reformed Seminary). Elias has asked me to come and teach a class on Jewish mission at RTS, Jackson. Big whoop! Ligon has certainly been very helpful in connecting, and giving his endorsement.

Lausanne Consultation on Jewish Evangelism (LCJE), Chicago is a kind of 'presbytery' of Jewish missions hosting a conference on March 14. There will be an interesting lineup including Phil Ryken, Michael Brown, and Gary Burge.

Gary Burge has written some material on Israel that many in LCJE find offensive. He has agreed to come into the lion's den of Jewish missions, and take part in this LCJE conference. My colleagues in England are already wanting me to tell them everything and hope he gets a grillin'!

4. Regular Ministry

February includes the Covenant Church Missions Conference (Feb. 2) and the First Presbyterian Jackson, Missions Conference (Feb. 23). I'm currently scheduled/scheduling ministry from February to

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Retreat (Continued From Page 2)

June, in Mississippi, Texas, Kansas, Chicago, Illinois, Northern Ireland, and London! It is going to be a crazy few months. Nothing new there.

5. Finances & Budget 2014

Total Budget needed for 2014 is approximately \$180,000, including salaries, ministry, promotional costs, office costs, conferences, administration, etc. We are most challenged in our support raising. Current support is around \$70,000 to \$80,000 per year! The hit we took from a major donor last Spring, Michael's illness, and slowness to gain support mean that we will struggle this year. Unless it rises considerably, we will quite simply run out early 2015.

But God has been in this from the beginning, and with the subsidy support from CWI London, we have been able to get a reserve to bring us through 2014. However, the subsidy ends in August. And CWI N America is supposed to be on its own from then. Please be praying with us ... God has graced us with 5 figure donations in the past 18 months, and can do so again...

We have seen God do some amazing things that are foundational for the setting up, developing, and progressing the whole ministry. We have made wonderful progress in a short time, and we are still at the 'investing' stage. Enabling the churches in the US who know little about CWI to catch the vision, and gain the burden, and give the dollar takes time!

PRAYER POINTS:

- (i) Recovery and ministry of Michael Saunders and relocation in March.
- (ii) Greater impact of our resources, and ministry on teaching the Church, and reaching Jewish people.
- (iii) Challenging budget demands.
- (iv) Praise for IRS approval.
- (v) A right balancing of my time: recruitment and training, teaching and promoting, conferences, seminary teaching, support raising, board matters, and CWI Head Office etc., etc.

Hope this all helps in stirring prayers for us.

Session Report

Dr. Paul Sagan

The following are significant actions resulting from the officers' retreat which occurred January 17 and 18 and concluded Tuesday, January 21.

- I. The Session revised our vision statement to reflect the current emphasis of our church and its ministries as follows:

Our vision is to be a church that, by grace:

1. Worships and glorifies God through the enablement of His grace.
 2. Equips its members to minister to their communities by being salt and light and engaging in specific ministries of outreach and mercy.
 3. Expands God's kingdom through church-planting and cross-cultural missions.
- II. The Session received a detailed financial report from Treasurer Dennis Smith, reflecting a large increase in designated giving to ministries such

as Covenant Ft. Smith, Faith Promise Giving, and building fund, yet a significant shortfall in the general fund.

- III. The Session moved to clarify the relationship with Stephen Atkinson and Christian Witness to Israel with an end in view of making it a more integrated ministry to Covenant Church.
- IV. The Session voted to end the current Youth/Educational ministry position effective the end of June 2014. The Session also voted to review the current status of our youth ministry program at our next stated meeting.
- V. The Session voted to start a small group Bible study on Sunday in Benton County to serve members in that area.
- VI. The Session approved the 2014 budget with no changes in salaries and operating expenses as presented by the Deacons. Every effort was made to produce a balanced budget based on the anticipated general fund giving.

Financial Summary

Dennis Smith

Accounts	Income	Expense	Under/Over
Tithes and Offerings (Operations)	\$ 15,065	\$ 20,297	(\$5,232)
Designated Funds to Operations	\$ 1,520	\$ 1,520	\$ 0
Missions (Faith Promise)	\$ 3,045	\$ 5,200	(\$2,155)
Other Designated Funds	\$ 10	\$ 10	\$ 0
Totals	\$ 19,640	\$27,027	(\$7,387)

Treasurer Notes:

1. This is not a complete report of the financial condition of Covenant Church PCA
2. This report is the actual contributions received and money paid for operating expenses and some but not all designated funds.
3. It does not include carried forward balances of accounts from fiscal year 2013.
4. The church is on an accrual accounting basis and therefore this report does not represent any accrued liabilities of accounts payable.
5. This report does not include any income or expense for CWI Designated Funds.

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