



central conference of the evangelical covenant church

February 2015

From the Superintendent: CHURCH



I have heard it said that the only thing wrong with the church is that it has people in it. I must admit that there are times when it seems that way to me too. But then I remember that the Church is the living body of Christ, the organism of which He is the living and eternal head. The Christian Church is the means by which God calls out sinful human beings from every tribe nation, tongue, and walk of life, to be His people. The mystery of the Church is that these called-out ones are only required to be born-again, and baptized with the Holy Spirit.

When I think of the church being in conflict or having problems, I think about Paul and what he must have been going through in dealing with the Corinthian church. They almost split over a controversy over the leaders. At least one of their members was practicing sexual immorality. They were having arguments over the proper way to worship. They were quarreling over which spiritual gifts were the best to have. They were confused about the differences between the Christian teaching on the resurrection and the Greek philosophy of immortality.

The fact is that every church or denomination has problems. There will be problems if we change and there will be problems if we don't change. In the church today, problems exist across generational lines; we have builders, baby boomers and millennials serving Christ in the same congregation or denomination, which can create tensions. In addition, some people are even questioning whether the Bible is even true, confused about Christian doctrine, confused what it means to live a holy life and struggle to practice Christian morality. The issue is not whether there will be problems, but it's how we are approaching our problems, or the manner in which we deal with them. When dealing with problems in the church I think we can take a lesson from Paul. He teaches us principles about how to tackle problems in the church.

We must always remember that we are members of one another. We must treat each other as brothers and sister in Christ. We are brothers and sister because we have the same Father. We were born into the family by the birth from above, and God gives us all of our Christians family on earth. (Romans 12:5) Most of us have gotten pretty good at being courteous to one another and just acting nice. But Paul tells us not to pretend to love one another but to really love one another. And that we should take delight in honoring each other. (Romans 12: 9-10) We should live in harmony with each other-each with the attitude of Jesus Christ toward the other. And then all of us can praise the Lord together with one voice, giving glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6) We are also to warmly welcome each other just as Christ has warmly welcomed us, then God will be glorified. (Romans 15:7) We are to encourage one another and build each other up. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) We are to share one another burdens. (Galatians 6:2)

And finally, Galatians 5:13-15 tells us, "For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sister. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead use your freedom to serve one another in love. For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another." When we no longer have the motivation to love, we tend to become critical of others. When we stop looking for the good in others and only see their faults. When we start focusing on the shortcomings of others instead of their strengths. When we stop addressing problems in love. We soon lose our unity and that's a bad thing!

By: Rev. Jerome Nelson



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 129th Annual Meeting of the
Central Conference
of the Evangelical Covenant Church

S start & **C**hurches
t strengthen

April 23-25, 2015

Batavia Covenant Church in Batavia, IL

More information will be coming soon!



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Central Conference Compassion Mercy and Justice Award

Each year at the Central Conference Annual Meeting an award is given to a member of a Central Conference Covenant church who has given outstanding Christian service in the area of compassion, mercy and justice to his or her church and community. Please see the guidelines below and send your nomination to the Conference office by March 15, 2015.

For this award, the Commission on Compassion Mercy Justice seeks candidates who participate in ministries of the Central Conference with the following qualifications:

- Someone who has played a major role in initiating, supporting or carrying out a ministry which deals with compassion or justice.
- Someone who has shown outstanding leadership in a long term or short term Compassion Mercy Justice Ministry.
- Someone who works either in the church or in the community to assist people in need.
- Someone who inspires and encourages others to participate in Compassion Mercy or Justice Ministries.
- Nominations should include illustrations of outstanding Christian service
- Candidate may be laity or clergy.

This award represents the J. William Fredrickson Urban Ministry Award and the David A. Larson Town and Country Award that have been given out since 1996.

By: Rev. Debbie Griffith Samuels



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God is Doing a New Thing: Isaiah 43:18-19



Iglesia Del Pacto Evangelico Peniel in South Chicago, IL celebrated their fourteenth anniversary on Sunday, December 28, 2014, where Rev. Javier and Rev. Yacid Cardenas are co-pastors. It wasn't many years ago there was talk of closing this church. But now the church is growing, with many children and adults coming from the surrounding neighborhood and community.

Pastor Javier preached encouraging everyone to continue to trust God and look to Him for the future. Do not remember the past. For God is doing a "new thing" and nothing is impossible for Him. Special guests included Rev. Jerome Nelson who gave remarks praising God for how far the church has come and Rev. Luis Retamal who talked about God's faithfulness in the church's journey to where they are today. Through faith, perseverance, commitment and hard work, the church has grown spiritually and numerically. They have also been able to do some needed repairs to the building and remodeling.



There were praise dancers and lots of melodic and enthusiastic praise and worship to the Lord! Norma Ramos graciously translated the service into English. After the morning service, a wonderful lunch was served and a delicious cake was enjoyed by all.



God is good!

By: Joanne Nelson