



mandate

...he gave them power and authority...and he sent them out to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

Luke 9:1-2

CHALMERS CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

God's Plan Clear

BY JOSHUA HINMAN '00

Have you ever had your mind set on a goal, thinking that there was nothing that could curb your desire to accomplish that goal? I did, four years ago when I came to Covenant College...that is, until the fall of my sophomore year.

I was going to be a corporate lawyer. I was on track to finish Covenant with a double major in History and Business, go straight to law school, and be financially set for life. I am not going to say that if I had stuck with my former plan I would have been unhappy or unfulfilled, but I do think God had a different calling for me than I previously had for myself.

So getting back to my sophomore year...I took a course called Principles of Macroeconomics. A new professor, Dr. Brian Fikkert, was teaching it, and everyone was a little nervous about what to expect from him. Throughout the semester, despite many admonishments from Dr. Fikkert

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Regional Planning Agency, Chattanooga

Typical area of Chattanooga in need of industrial revitalization

Chalmers works with Harvard Team

To work alongside internationally renowned Michael Porter, professor at Harvard Business School, would be an unexpected opportunity. Yet, that is what God has provided. Dave Shideler, research associate at the Chalmers Center, is working with Porter and his team of analysts as they aid the formulation of a regional economic development growth plan for Chattanooga, Tennessee, called the Chattanooga Regional Growth Initiative.

Shideler has been serving on a local technical assistance committee (the "Core Team") to collect and contextualize economic and demographic data for the Harvard-based team to use in their analysis of the Chattanooga region.

In addition to providing Shideler with a crash-course on Chattanooga's economy, this opportunity has allowed the Center to demonstrate its capacity for analysis relevant to economic

development before prominent government and business leaders in the region.

Once the Initiative moves from the research phase into implementation, the Center hopes to

mobilize local churches to participate in this process to ensure that empowering the poor to self-sufficiency is a concern of the plan. Please pray that God will raise up the church in Chattanooga so that this city will see the body

God, in His goodness, has graciously provided numerous opportunities....

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Welfare to Work: Can it Work?

BY CHARITY THROENER '00

Three years on the job and he is still coming back for more. That is the experience of Tracy Knight, a graduate of the Jobs Partnership of Chattanooga, a “welfare-to-work” program conducted by Hope for Chattanooga, a ministry of New City Fellowship of the Presbyterian Church of America (PCA).

With generous support from “Women in the Church” of the PCA, the Chalmers Center provided me with a paid internship with the Jobs Partnership this year. I have been assisting the Job Partnership’s new director, Reverend Everett Hobson. Reverend Hobson’s vision for the Partnership is “to reach every church and every business in the city to help empower those less fortunate or who have been displaced.”

The Jobs Partnership is a true partnership because it joins churches, businesses, and pastors in helping the unemployed and underemployed find sustainable work. The Partnership conducts a 12-week program that meets twice a week. Local pastors teach biblical truths for life and work, such as dealing with relationships, attitudes and authority. In addition, human resource development classes focus on the practical side of finding a job, such as writing a resume and interviewing. At the end of the program, and in some cases during the program, students look at the jobs provided to the Partnership by local business partners.

The goal of the Jobs Partnership is not only to help the participants find a job, but also to teach them how to keep it. To help the participants, the churches provide mentors who follow them throughout the program. Mentors and trainees meet once a week to talk about any difficulties the student is having with the class material or to discuss questions about life in general. Mentors continue to



Tracy Knight (left) with Lewie Card

work with the participant for the next year, providing support and guidance.

Last December the Partnership graduated its second class of students. Six of the seven students graduated with employment and the seventh returned to his wife and family in a different city.

One of the Partnership’s success stories is Tracy Knight. Since graduating from the Partnership three years ago, Knight has been working for the Card-Monroe Corporation in Chattanooga. Knight said that the “big problem between companies and employees is attitudes.” He added that the Partnership taught him what it means to be submissive to the

Compared to secular welfare-to-work programs, this is an astounding success rate, and gives testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit to work through Christ’s Church to transform lives.

authority God put over him in the workplace.

Mr. Lewis Card, part owner of the Card-Monroe Corporation and member of New City Fellowship, has been with the Jobs Partnership since its beginning and is calling churches and businesses into action in the realm of poverty alleviation. Card quotes Matthew 25:40 to call people from all realms of society into action: “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

Throughout the program, churches play a vital role in providing students,

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CHALMERS CENTER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Covenant College, 14049 Scenic Highway, Lookout Mountain, GA USA 30750
706-820-1572 ext. 1805; chalmers@covenant.edu

Cathy Dreger
Editor

Mike Parker
Director of Constituent Relations

The Chalmers Center for Economic Development assists the Church in declaring the Kingdom of God in word and in deed by training college students, pastors, missionaries, churches, and Christian ministries in the implementation of holistic, church-based programs to bring spiritual transformation and economic development to the poor.

Covenant Class Makes a Difference

BY KARA STANLEY '00

How does a history major help the poor? I wanted to find out, so I enrolled in a course at Covenant College in microenterprise development, the provision of training, mentoring, and credit to low-income entrepreneurs.

From the start, it was clear that this course was unusual. First, the class was held at the Bethlehem Community Center (the "Beth") in Alton Park, one of the worst sections of Chattanooga. Second, as a class project, we designed a microenterprise development program for the Center, giving us real-world experience in applying the concepts from the course to help the poor.

I soon realized that the course was a unique opportunity to learn what it means to equip low-income entrepreneurs with vital skills through the word and deed ministry of a spiritually-based, microenterprise development center. I learned a lot about the technical assistance, training, and financial expenditures necessary for the opening of a microenterprise development program, and I fell in love with the vision of helping low-income entrepreneurs.

Most importantly, I developed a heart for the people of Alton Park. As part of the course, I had the opportunity to go out into the community to conduct interviews with potential entrepreneurs. During several of these interactions I was invited into the homes and lives of

Most importantly, I developed a heart for the people of Alton Park. As part of the course, I had the opportunity to go out into the community to conduct interviews with potential entrepreneurs.



From left (back row): Sherry Gilchrist, President, African-American Chamber of Commerce, class members Jordan Ross, Tim Marshall, Greg Anderson, Warren Trice
Front row: Kara Stanley, Professor Steve Nikkel, Lurone Jennings, Paige Nelson and Jim Dickens

"potential customers" of the microenterprise development program. My overwhelming response to these interviews was gratitude. I was grateful to be part of an endeavor to make dreams into realities, changing lives in a practical and spiritual way.

Perhaps one of the most exciting parts of this course was its conclusion. As consultants for the Beth, our team was given the opportunity to present our proposal for the microenterprise program to the Beth's Chief Executive Officer, Lurone Jennings, to Chief Operating Officer, Jim Dickens, and to other invited guests. This was a very exciting time for the team because the presentation and business plan represented our semester-long efforts to construct a

plan uniquely suited to the Beth and the prospective entrepreneurs of Alton Park. The presentation covered everything from a description of the mission and vision of the program to practical suggestions for management and operations.

Our team is excited about the future of the Bethlehem Center for Economic Development and its work in Alton Park. The customer base seems to be overwhelmingly receptive to the idea of holistic ministry and the work of the Beth. Plans are currently underway to hire an executive officer for the Economic Development Center, and the Beth looks forward to the implementation of the microenterprise development program soon.

As for me, I am planning to go to law school, and am considering providing legal assistance to low-income entrepreneurs and to the Christian ministries working with them. ❖

KARA STANLEY '00 is majoring in history, with a minor in English. Her home is Orlando, Florida.

Chalmers Collaborates With International Relief Agency

The Chalmers Center is working closely with Food for the Hungry International (FHI) to develop overseas pilot projects for missionaries and church workers. FHI, a Christian relief and development organization with operations in 27 countries, trains local churches in poor communities to practice word and deed ministry. As part of this initiative, FHI has a high need for viable models of microenterprise development (MED) that local churches can understand and implement.

The collaboration between Chalmers and FHI focuses on three central ideas that will be a strong tool for local churches:

- That the *savings* of poor people are one of the best resources for them to use in changing their economic situation. The evidence from most countries is that poor people do save whenever and however they can. When the savings of one person can be combined with that of other people in savings and loan groups the members can receive loans to meet their emergency needs or expand their businesses. These savings and loan groups are not dependent on outsiders to keep the group going financially.
- That biblical worldview training is crucial for helping poor people, local churches, and the members of these savings groups to overcome poverty.
- That God calls his church to be the body, bride, and fullness of Christ by ministering in word and in deed (Ephesians 4:11-13). Unfortunately, churches are often unequipped to engage in holistic ministry, and most large "Christian" MED programs do



Smita Donthamsetty

not have the time or resources to work with the local church. Chalmers and FHI want to equip the church to be all God intended. Chalmers and FHI have developed

"We are attracted to Chalmers because Food for the Hungry needs different models of practicing microenterprise development on a small scale with the local church. We intend to take the models developed by Chalmers and replicate them in the countries where we operate."

**Randy Hoag
Executive Vice-President,
Food for the Hungry**

a virtual team using the Internet which will enable Chalmers and FHI staff in four locations to share ideas and experiences to jointly develop new models of church-based ministry:

Nairobi, Kenya

Sila Tuju and Jason Trimiew, Covenant College graduates, are networking with churches and missionaries in order to start several pilot projects.

Manila, Philippines

FHI has hired Smita Donthamsetty to develop sister projects to those being implemented in Kenya, enabling FHI and Chalmers to test their methodologies in Asia and in Africa. Charity Throener, who anticipates graduating from Covenant in May, expects to go to the Philippines to assist Smita later this year.

Lookout Mountain, Georgia

Drs. Russell Mask and Brian Fikkert from Chalmers' main office, provide technical support and research design for the teams in Kenya and the Philippines.

Scottsdale, Arizona

Steve Corbett, FHI's Regional Director for Central and South America/Associate Director of Training and a Covenant College graduate, and Dwight Vogt, FHI's Regional Director for Asia, provide valuable advice drawing on their expertise in working with churches in the Two-Thirds World.

It is humbling to consider God using this collaboration in a powerful way. The Chalmers Center receives requests from churches and mission agencies all over the world for help with models of holistic ministry. The Center's goal is for pilot projects with FHI to become valuable models for churches and mission agencies to emulate. ❖

Chalmers' Kenya Team Evaluates Challenges

BY SILA TUJU '96

I was returning home after living in the US for seven years. "Team Kenya," as Jason Trimiew likes to refer to the Chalmers Kenya staff, arrived in Nairobi on the December 2, 1999, eager to face the challenges and opportunities of ministry with local churches in Kenya.

This was Jason's first trip to Kenya, but since I had been away for so long, we both had significant adjustments to make. In the providence of God, the transition has been smooth, and we are thankful for the prayers of our friends and family.

Part of the adjustment to Kenya involves coming to terms with the widespread poverty and the challenges of holistic ministry in the slums and other impoverished areas. Perhaps a story could help illustrate these challenges.

Several weeks ago I attended a church in Mukuru, a slum in south Nairobi. The previous Sunday's offering totaled US\$2. Assuming that this is the weekly average, it is not hard to understand that this church faces tremendous budgetary constraints in funding its ministries. So in a sense I could understand why the pastor's new year's challenge to the congregation was, "After all that God has done for you, what will you do for Him in return this year?" I am accustomed to people sometimes using that phrase to produce guilt to motivate members of a congregation



Sila Tuju (closest to camera) and friend crossing bridge over open sewer in Mukuru slum, Nairobi

to participate in ministry. Involvement in ministry ought to be a joyful response to the grace and mercy God has shown each of us, not done out of guilt. However, with the meager financial resources at this church and with insufficient leadership to marshal volunteerism, this congregation needs help in catching the vision for serving in new ways. Perhaps these saints need to be shown their responsibility to the Kingdom, and how they can contribute significantly to its growth, rather than being given a guilt trip.

By God's grace, the Chalmers Center can help this congregation, and others, by addressing their chronic problems. The leadership training materials the Center is developing will help raise leaders to share the pastor's burden. The Center's holistic vision will help the leadership realize they must minister in word and also in

deed. Finally, the Center's training in microenterprise development will lead to steady incomes, resulting in a better quality of life for the families and the church.

What this congregation needs is training, within the context of mutual trust. Possibly, the lack of leadership and financial resources are symptoms of deeper problems needing to be addressed. That's why Jason and I spend time developing relationships in order to understand the state of the church before we step in to help develop a holistic vision of ministry. We are encouraged by the reception from various church leaders. We are excited to be here with the Kingdom agenda. ❖

SILATUJU '96 graduated from Covenant and received his M.B.A. from University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. He is the Project Manager for Chalmers in Nairobi.



The Chalmers Center is a research and educational initiative of Covenant College, a liberal arts institution operated by the Presbyterian Church in America. Covenant's motto—"In All Things Christ Pre-eminent" (Colossians 1:18)—is the touchstone of all college endeavors as it seeks to appropriate the mind of Christ in each academic discipline. The college offers a rigorous academic program in the Reformed tradition and strives to instill a biblical worldview in its students.

Churches, Missionaries Request Help

BY MIKE PARKER '97

Enter any office at the Chalmers Center for Economic Development and you will find computer screens brimming with e-mail messages and phone lights signaling calls that are awaiting replies. Add to this the hundreds of letters that arrive in our mailbox, and you can begin to understand the tremendous interest in the question of how the church can help the poor.

This correspondence can be inspiring and heart wrenching, chronicling the churches, missionaries, and Christian agencies as they struggle to find a balanced, effective approach to alleviate the physical and spiritual poverty facing them each

day. A recent letter from the Philippines tells the story of an exasperated church uncertain how to address the rampant poverty overwhelming the people to whom it ministers. This church, like many, is not lacking diligence, compassion, or sincerity in its efforts, yet finds itself short on the technical skills, experience, and methodologies that would offer effective solutions to a poor community crying out for answers. Unfortunately, this is a story the Chalmers Center hears from every continent in the world.

Why is your support of the Chalmers Center so critical? After a year of global research and develop-

ment, it is clear that few organizations offer training in economic development to churches throughout the world. The Center's goal is to supply churches with answers, strategies, and long-term solutions to the complex problem of poverty—empowering churches to minister in word and deed in the most economically depressed contexts. Please decide to give financially to the Center in support of what experts in the field of economic development consider to be truly groundbreaking work. ❖

MIKE PARKER '97 is Director of Constituent Relations for the Chalmers Center and a graduate of Covenant College.

We are grateful to God for providing financial supporters to enable us to implement our programs. Please join us in helping transform the lives of the poor.

Yes, I would like to support the work of the Chalmers Center.


- Enclosed is my gift of: _____
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Hinman

that we were not trying hard enough, he made an impression. He exhorted us to use our minds and to take action. He called us to be involved with those around us...no not other Covenant students, but those living down the mountain as well.

Several weeks into the semester a few of us started eating dinner at his house with one goal in mind: to start a lawn care business that would be self-sufficient and employ the poor. This goal became reality late in the spring semester. The Grass is Greener Lawn Care, a ministry of New City Fellowship (PCA), currently employs several low-income people who have recently been released from jail, been helped off drugs, or have never been employed.

This event is what spurred my interest in holistic economic development. In particular, I am interested in helping low-income entrepreneurs start their own businesses. Through Covenant's microenterprise development course, I have learned how to assist such

The Lord has given me a heart to aid the needy in a holistic manner...

Continued from page 1
 persons with loans, training, and mentoring as well as with their spiritual needs.

Now, as a senior with only weeks until graduation, I am seeking a job in economic development. The Lord has given me a heart to aid the needy in a holistic manner, affecting their emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

So was my decision worth it? Should I have added an economic development minor, or should I have stuck with my former plan? Well...I praise the Lord that I am now looking for a job in economic development, and I am grateful that He has given me a heart for this type of ministry. I think it is a unique and practical way to minister to those in the inner city, and I look forward to serving the Lord in this capacity in the future. ❖

JOSHUA HINMAN '00 majors in business and history, with a minor in economic development.

Chalmers Works With Mission Agencies

Life is busy on the international side of the Chalmers Center's work. Last fall, Dr. Russell Mask, Chalmers' International Microenterprise Coordinator, traveled to Thailand to address approximately 150 leaders from Pioneers, an international mission working in countries closed to missionaries. Pioneers is interested in developing models which demonstrate how missionaries can use microenterprise development (MED) as a tool for holistic outreach that results in churches being planted.

The Center is hoping to work with several Pioneers teams in the future, including one which is successfully using MED in a large Asian country.

Similarly, the Chalmers Center is grateful to God as He stimulates interest in and commitment to mercy ministries in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

In the past months the Center has both received advice from and provided assistance to Mission to the World



Russell Mask

The Chalmers Center is grateful to God as He stimulates interest in and commitment to mercy ministries in the Presbyterian Church in America.

(MTW), the PCA's mission board. In November, Karl Dortzbach, MTW missionary to Kenya, helped the Center to clarify a model for working with churches overseas during a visit to Covenant College. Dortzbach will organize a MED workshop for missionaries, which Dr. Mask will conduct in Nairobi this year.

Other MTW visitors to the Center included Wallace Anderson, Peter Beck, and Mark Berry, each of whom participated in a project design meeting held jointly with Food for the Hungry International (FHI) and the Center. Finally, Paul Meiners, MTW Regional Director for East Africa and the Middle East, visited the Chalmers Center in the late summer. He is encouraging MTW missionaries in his region to contact the Center for training in mercy ministries.

Please pray that the Chalmers Center will be a useful tool for FHI, Pioneers, and missionaries from MTW and other organizations that seek to build God's kingdom through word and deed ministries. ❖

Throener

Continued from page 2

mentors, and teachers. The intention in this is that the church will be equipped to be the fullness of Christ, who ministered in word and in deed to the "least of these."

Tracy is not alone. *Christianity Today* (September 7, 1998) reports that 178 of the 190 graduates of the Jobs Partnership of Raleigh were holding full-time jobs two years after graduating from the program. Compared to secular welfare-to-work programs, this is an astounding success rate, and gives testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit to work through Christ's Church to transform lives. ❖

CHARITY THROENER '00 majors in history, with a minor in economic development. Following graduation this spring, she plans to work with the Chalmers Center and Food for the Hungry International in a collaborative effort in the Philippines (see related article on page 4).

Harvard

Continued from page 1

of Christ express His concern in caring for the weakest elements of society.

God, in His goodness, has graciously provided numerous opportunities like the Chalmers Center's involvement in the Chattanooga Regional Growth Initiative. In fact, the Center cannot keep up with demands from churches in such diverse places as Memphis, Kansas City, Atlanta, Peru, Kenya, Philippines, Ukraine and China. At the same time, the staff recognizes that to whom much has been given, much is expected. Pray with us that we would be faithful to His will in using these opportunities to equip and empower the local church to bring economic development and spiritual transformation to the poor of their communities. ❖

Students Inspired by Conference

BY AUTUMN FREDERICKS '00

Each fall since 1997, Covenant students have attended the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) conference. The first year, only a handful of students went. But this year, twenty-six students in two vans hit the road with directions to Chicago.

Each time, the group has been blessed by listening to great speakers, by learning from fellow conference attendees, and by spending time with one another. Also, each trip has been made possible by the graciousness of the church. Many students could not afford to attend the conference without the willingness of church families to host them in their homes. Additionally, a gift from a church in Chattanooga provided partial funding for each student.

The conference provides an opportunity to learn, fellowship and become renewed in attempts to meet the needs of community development.

However, CCDA would be nothing extraordinary if it were simply about meeting community needs as defined by "social responsibility." Rather, CCDA, like the Chalmers Center, focuses on the need to develop the communities through the gospel and the church. To aid the poor, Christians must not only address financial or physical needs, but also strive for a deeper need to know, understand and grow in Christ.

At the conference, I had the opportunity to attend several seminars on Health Care in poverty areas. I learned how to fund, maintain and run an inner-city clinic. But I also learned how to minister to the poor and sick in a Christ-like way. We engaged in meaningful dialogue about what it means to be a "Christian" doctor in a "Christian" clinic. Discussions revolved around how to share the love of Christ with the poor, while providing for their

physical needs. In addition to seminars and workshops, we visited many of the Christian community development ministries in the Chicago area.

Some of the ministries visited by Covenant students included Lawndale Christian Development Corporation, Jesus People International, and Sunshine Gospel Ministries. For many students, seeing these ministries in person gave them a greater zeal for and understanding of urban ministry.

Hearing and witnessing those currently involved in Christian community development, who are taking Christ's call to love the poor in word and deed was a blessing and encouragement to the students who attended the CCDA conference. ❖

AUTUMN FREDERICKS '00 is majoring in business and history with a minor in economics. Her home is Lake Mary, Florida.

Chalmers Center Staff
Brian Fikert
Director
David Hoover
Special Project Coordinator and
Advisor
Russell Mask
International Microenterprise
Coordinator
Steve Nickel
U.S. Microenterprise Coordinator
Mike Parker
Director of Constituent Relations
David Shideler
Research Associate
Jason Trimble
Research Assistant-Kenya Project
Sila Tjpu
Project Manager-Kenya Project
Cathy Dreger
Administrative Assistant

CHALMERS CENTER FOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Covenant College
1409 Scenic Highway
Lookout Mtn., GA 30750
706-820-1572 ext. 1805
706-820-2165 fax
chalmers@covenant.edu
www.chalmers.org



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