

Covenant Players Ivan Grindlay

If you are new or visiting; *a special warm welcome to you.* We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

ON THE FRONT LINES OF MINISTRY

From the time Charles M. Tanner founded CP in 1963, the stated goal was simple: "To turn the world upside-right for Christ in our time". And that's always formed the core of our work. It was in 1988 that the present Mission Statement was formulated (you can read it to the right of this article), as a means of encapsulating the specific aims of our ministry. Here we hope to give you a view of those, borne out through comments from our audiences and from touring and non-touring CPers.

Covenant Player Kevin Gourlay writes from South America in 2005. "Encouragement and rest are vital, and trusting each member of the unit to live their call is vital. People fail constantly, but we are perfecting our failures. Life is learning how to fail correctly. I am slowly learning how to let God be God and just listen to Him. I have found myself wanting to get all swept up in the idea of spiritual warfare. I still have this deeply rooted desire to be a hero, but the battle I have to fight is shutting my mouth to listen. I don't win that one very much. It seems like the whole mission has been finding the blessing at the end of the day when we are all tired and longing for rest. There is that little push and we can begin to see the eagle's wings."

Lessons such as these are common fare for CPers. Day by day dependence on the Lord is the hallmark of our mission. Jesus calls His followers to "go and make disciples of all people". That call can take many different forms. In our case as Covenant Players, it's to travel the world over, bringing powerful, life-changing drama to challenge Christians and non-Christians alike to think more deeply about how they live their lives.

Let's take a look at CP's mission statement in detail: "To communicate the Lord Jesus through the medium of drama..." From a member of the congregation at Fall River Baptist Church, Fall River, MA. "I want you to know this was a direct blessing from God, especially that play on forgiveness... I really needed that this morning. Just yesterday I was hurt very badly by someone... and I'm really struggling to forgive her. I didn't want to get up this morning, didn't feel like coming to church, but I'm so glad I did. I needed to hear that message."

The plays of Charles M. Tanner, 'Chuck', cover a wide range of themes, allowing us to serve in settings that are inaccessible to 'church' groups, such as public schools, military facilities, nursing homes, even business seminars. Performing as we do, without backdrops, elaborate furnishings or costumes, the focus is on the relationships - people interacting with one another and with their faith. Chuck's vision was to make it possible for four Covenant Players to come together from different corners of the world and be able to perform together in a moment's notice.

That vision is a reality today. As Chuck once put it: "We are here for Christ's sake; drama is what we do." "To go where the people are..." CPer Joe Medley writing from northern Germany in 2003. "We had a great Easter Sunday performance - very unique. It was a Pentecostal church with an American pastor and a congregation made up of people from more than a dozen countries! The service was bilingual, and they also had an interpreter over headphones into Portuguese! For the service, we performed two plays in English and one in German, with bilingual introductions and summaries in German and English. It wasn't easy keeping track of which language we were using then, but it went great. It was our first time here - I'm sure the first of many!"

Today, CP is blessed to be able to perform in over 50 countries and in 10 different languages. Hours spent on the road, in vans, small planes, ferry boats, buses, trains, even on foot - it's all done with one thought in mind: to bring the challenges of the plays wherever they are needed.

CPer Jan McGinnis wrote from Virginia in 2005. "We had been praying about Thanksgiving, and the thought came to me that we needed to be seeking some place to serve the community - a soup kitchen or something like that. So we contacted the Salvation Army, where we were to be that week, to see if there was any way we could serve them. The officer in charge, whose name (I kid you not) was Major Miracle, was excited about the idea - they do a Thanksgiving dinner from 11 am to 1 pm, and he invited us to do an hour's program during that time. They couldn't sponsor the program themselves, but we phoned one of the Methodist churches we know in the area and asked if they would be willing to. The pastor didn't even hesitate, and said that the check would be ready for us whenever we came by to pick it up - and offered office and rehearsal space as well. So we're excited to see the Lord guiding and providing!"

