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Tribute to Covenant Martyrs Renews Call to Discipleship

This year's Annual Meeting in Minneapolis will pay tribute to the sacrifice and devotion of missionaries, pastors and lay people whose lives of discipleship and obedience—in some cases at the cost of their own lives—have inspired generations of Covenanters.

Along with remembering the martyrdom of Covenant medical missionary Dr. Paul Carlson—this year marks the 40th anniversary of his death—the “Bearing the Marks” emphasis also will honor three Covenant missionaries killed in China and scores of others who over the years have paid a heavy price to follow God’s call to ministry in various areas around the world.

The Annual Meeting will be held June 20-23 at the Hyatt Regency in Minneapolis, with the opening worship service on Sunday evening commemorating missionary martyrs. A new 90-minute documentary on the life and work of Dr. Carlson will be unveiled during the meeting, formally launching a new initiative designed to encourage Covenanters everywhere to renewed lives of discipleship.

“This is not a one-year emphasis, but rather a call for an ongoing commitment to support ministry throughout the world,” reads an informational message recently sent to churches. The effort initially will focus on needs in Congo, where Carlson served at the time of his



ECC President Glenn Palmberg and former CEUM President Gbuda Luyada place wreath at gravesite of Covenant missionary martyr Paul Carlson in Karawa, Congo.

death in 1964, but over time will extend to other Covenant ministry areas.

Churches will receive a packet of worship and discipleship resources developed for children and adults as part of a four-week discipleship emphasis this fall. The material includes a multi-generational Sunday school and/or small group curriculum and “sermon seeds” to assist pastors in sermon preparation.

The initial focus on Congo is a timely one, says President Glenn Palmberg who led a five-member delegation there last November. Palmberg saw first-hand the devastation

wrought by seven years of civil war—some 3.5 million Congolese died during that conflict. A more complete report on that visit will be found on the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org.

“Paul Carlson died because he loved Jesus and because he loved brothers and sisters who are also children of God,” Palmberg said during a ceremony at Carlson’s grave in Karawa. “It is our calling and responsibility to never forget the sacrifice that Paul Carlson made, or to forget the incredible loss to his family and friends. The needs that brought him to the Congo and

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ECC Records 12th Year of Growth

The Evangelical Covenant Church experienced record attendance during its 12th consecutive year of growth, with attendance on any given Sunday exceeding 148,000—a 5.5 percent increase over the previous year.

The growth reflects a decade of expansion during which attendance increased 51 percent, making the Covenant one of the fastest-growing denominations in North America, according to Gary Walter, executive minister of church growth and evangelism.

Four components contribute to this growth, Walter believes:

- **Strength of the established church base.** “Year in and year out, our established churches faithfully reach out—we have a missional heart,” says Walter.



- **Church planting.** “New churches allow us to reach into new populations,” says Dave Olson, director of church planting. From 40-50 new churches are under development at any given time with nearly 48,000 people attending churches new during the last decade. Olson directs church planting efforts in the Western region—associate director Don Davenport focuses on church planting efforts east of the Mississippi and urban church planting throughout the denomination.

- **Rapid growth of ethnic ministries.** The ECC ministers among African American, Hispanic, Native Alaskan, Asian American, Korean, South Sudanese, Chinese, Haitian and Vietnamese populations. Nearly half of new churches in the past four years are ethnic or multiethnic—to total 19 percent of all Covenant churches.

- **Trend of large churches growing larger.** There are now 12 churches with an average attendance of 1,000 or more (the largest being

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Delegates to Consider Bylaw Amendments, Resolution

The 119th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) will be held June 20-23 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and will include a special tribute to Covenant martyrs.

Business sessions will be conducted at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. First Covenant Church has offered its facility for the three evening celebrations. More information will be found under the annual meeting link at www.covchurch.org.

Delegates will vote on six proposed amendments to the Covenant Bylaws that address the number of world mission delegates to the Annual Meeting, removal or reinstatement of a suspended Executive Board member, approval of salaries for the presidents of Covenant Ministries of Benevolence, Covenant Retirement Communities, Emmanuel Medical Center, Life

Center on the Green, and Swedish Covenant Hospital, as well as three from the Executive Board proposing that ECC become a corporate member of Covenant Bible College International (CBCI) together with the Evangelical Covenant Church of Canada.

The Christian Action Commission will seek approval of a "Resolution On Beginning of Life Issues

in Biological Technologies" that was discussed during the year. It is extended by two clarifying corollaries—"Assisted Reproduction Technologies and Procreation" and "Biomedical Research and Nascent Human Life." A paper on "Global Citizenship" also will be discussed.

The Department of World Mission will host an opportunity for delegates to meet newly elected Congo

Covenant Church President Dr. Mossai Sanguma and hear important ministry updates. No advance registration is required.

Register online for this year's Annual Meeting, save postage and avoid delays. Visit the Covenant website, select the "Register Online" link and follow the step-by-step instructions to complete the online form. Hit "send" and you're done.

NCP Loans \$44 Million to Churches in 2003

NATIONAL COVENANT PROPERTIES (NCP) posted record performance results in all areas of its 2003 activities. Total assets now exceed \$211 million, up from \$198 million. During 2003, more than \$44 million in loans was provided to local Covenant churches and institutions representing 63 different projects. Loans are supported by the investments of individuals in interest-bearing instruments—some \$25 million in new investments came from Covenanters during the year. The expectation is that 2004 will prove to be another record year in terms of new loans to support growing Covenant congregations. For more information about NCP and its work, call 800-366-6273.

Covenant Estate Planning Services Marks 25 Years of Service

Celebrations and changes characterize last year's activities for Covenant Estate Planning Services (CEPS) and Covenant Trust Company (CTC) as CEPS celebrated 25 years of service to members, friends and ministries of the Evangelical Covenant Church.

Since its establishment in 1978, CEPS has distributed more than \$112 million to Covenant churches and ministries. Those dollars represent the generosity and stewardship of many individual donors who used their estate plans to accomplish their charitable dreams.

The year 2003 also marked the 15th anniversary of the charter of Covenant Trust Company (CTC).

Now managing more than \$318 million in trusts and more than 1,600 individual accounts, CTC continues to serve both individuals and Covenant ministries with trustee and investment management services.

Change was also in the air last year as several new Covenant Estate Planning officers joined the CEPS/CTC staff. Rich Rodriguez works full-time in the Midwest and Midsouth conferences. Paul Peterson and Ralph Johns on serve in part-time roles in southern California's Mt. Miguel Covenant Village and The Samaritan in Santa Barbara, respectively.

Perhaps the greatest change was the relocation of the corporate offices of CEPS and CTC in mid-

December to the northern Chicago suburb of Skokie. The continued growth of Covenant Retirement Communities made it necessary for those offices to expand into space formerly occupied by CEPS and CTC. The new address is 5215 Old Orchard Road, Suite 725, Skokie, IL, 60077. Telephone numbers include Covenant Estate Planning Services, 847-583-3205; and Covenant Trust Company, 847-583-3200, (fax) 847-583-3210, (toll-free) 800-483-2177.

Financial and estate planning have a direct connection to stewardship, both at the individual and the ministry level, observes Chuck Walles, president of CEPS and CTC. Much is said and written about the

use of current gifts and resources to help the ministries of the Covenant, Walles says. "Covenant Estate Planning Services tries to help people understand that they can also exercise stewardship of accumulated resources through their estate plan. Covenant ministries also need to exercise responsible stewardship in the management of their own resources, and Covenant Estate Planning Services can provide assistance there as well."

Other 2003 highlights include:

- Covenant churches, conferences and conference ministries received more than \$2.1 million from wills, trusts and other charitable deferred gifts last year through distributions facilitated by Covenant Estate Planning Services

- Approximately \$2.89 million in future gifts from deferred gift agreements and wills were designated for Covenant churches, conferences and conference ministries

The month of May is designated as Charitable Gift Annuities Month—information will be available on using a charitable gift annuity to designate a deferred gift to one or more Covenant ministries. (More than \$2.4 million in future dollars for Covenant ministries was designated through charitable gift annuities written in 2003.) October is Estate Planning Month, with em-

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Did You Know?

THERE ARE 1,705 PARTICIPANTS in the Covenant clergy/missionary pension plan, according to Mary Miller, vice president of administration. A total of 460 receive monthly benefits. As of January 1, the pension fund had \$111 million in assets. Thanks to the generosity of Covenanters, bequests have formed a supplemental fund that provided \$34,650 to support an additional holiday check for qualifying applicants. A new volume containing certain official documents of the denomination has been distributed to local Covenant churches. It includes the text of the Covenant pension plan, the rules for ordered ministry, the denominational constitution and bylaws, as well as three model constitutions for use by local congregations. It contains answers to questions concerning how to become a credentialed pastor, how to update local church constitutions and whether or not an individual is vested in the clergy pension plan, among others. To learn more about the Covenant pension plan, call Mary Miller at 773-907-3368.

Lilly Grant to Encourage Pastoral Excellence

A five-year \$1.67 million grant has been awarded by Indianapolis-based Lilly Endowment, Inc., to the Evangelical Covenant Church to participate in a national program called Sustaining Pastoral Excellence (SPE).

The program's goal is enabling ministers from various Christian traditions to professionally grow through biblical study, theological reflection and spiritual renewal, among other things.

More than 700 proposals were submitted, said Craig Dykstra, Lilly Endowment vice president for religion. SPE projects, including a second round of 16 new projects, total \$84 million with the first 47 of these projects announced last year.

The grant will be administered through the Department of the Ordered Ministry and North Park Theological Seminary (NPTS), according to David Kersten, execu-

utive minister of the ordered ministry. The Covenant program will focus on character (pastoral spiritual direction), constancy (restorative & replenishment) and competency (academic/education certification).

The proposal for the Covenant grant, which was announced by Lilly on November 27, was "written by pastors for pastors," according to Kersten. It was drafted over an eight-month period with assistance from representatives of the North Pacific, Central and Pacific Southwest conferences, Kersten, Carol Lawson (director of staff ministry), NPTS president and dean Jay Phelan and Sally Johnson of the ECC president's office.

Over five years, endowment funds could help more than 300 pastors pursue spiritual direction, assist 150 pastors in some form of theological training and enable 300 pas-

tors to explore restorative & renewal activity for self-care. It also would allow NPTS to develop a center for Christian spirituality and train spiritual directors to monitor the progress of pastors and future pastors.

"If we're going to talk seriously about self-care and collegial care, it is one thing to talk about it, but another thing to actually do something," Kersten said. "It's an extraordinary source (of funding)." To learn more about the grant, call Kersten or Lawson at 773-583-3211.

The Department of the Ordered Ministry serves (as of August 2003) 1,869 individuals, including 1,263 ordained ministers, 73 commissioned staff ministers, 177 individuals licensed for pastoral office, 178 licensed for local ministry, 19 licensed theological students, 121 licensed lay ministers and 38 licensed consecrated missionaries.

Paul Carlson

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caused him to fall in love with the people... are just as urgent to day. We show our true respect for him by picking up the same cause that motivated him."

There are six major areas requiring early attention in areas of Congo where the Covenant serves, Palmberg says, including:

- medical: staff, training, equipment and medicines
- education: teachers, supplies and improved facilities
- economic development: helping market local products to generate income
- infrastructure: develop roads, electricity and good water sources
- construction: build schools, repair hospitals
- food: expand supply and improve distribution

"At first it overwhelmed me,"



Paul Carlson appeared on the cover of *Life* in December 1964, shortly after his murder by rebels in Congo.

Palmberg said during a February interview for *The Covenant Companion*. "I felt a sense of despair—the task is too large and hopeless. However, the more time I spent there, the more I began to realize that small things make a difference. I became energized and compassionate about the opportunities in Congo to do great things for God."

A focus on Congo is a starting point for a renewed emphasis on the dual mission of evangelism and compassion around the world, Palmberg says. "It is not the only place where God is calling the Covenant to work, but given the strong relationship... with the Congo church and the church in North America, it is an important place to begin.

"The people in the Covenant church have the passion—they care deeply," the president says. "They need to be connected with the need in a way that makes a difference, and that's our calling. These are our brothers and sisters. We cannot walk away from them."

Programs Focus on Racial Righteousness

TWO DISCIPLESHIP TOOLS are available to assist local Evangelical Covenant churches interested in matters of racial righteousness, both available through the Department of Christian Formation:

- The Sankofa Journey is an intentional cross-racial prayer journey that travels to historic sites of the Civil Rights movement, present-day locations where injustice and oppression still exist, and a number of Covenant ministries actively living out the kingdom vision.
- The School of Racial Righteousness challenges participants to move beyond the language and knowledge of racial righteousness to a deeper place of personal awareness, responsibility and action, leading to personal and community healing and obedience to the will of God.

For more information or to schedule one or both of these experiences, contact Debbie Blue, director of adult ministries, or another Christian Formation staff member at 773-583-0220.

ECC Growth

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Life Covenant Church in Edmond, Oklahoma, with more than 8,000 attending). There are 41 churches with an attendance of more than 600 each Sunday.

Evangelism is the driving motivation for all of this activity, Walter observes. Covenant congregations reported approximately 11,500 commitments to Christ last year, reflecting in part numerous initiatives including "Bringing My World to Christ" materials, denominational seminars, Alpha discipleship training courses and a network of volunteer evangelism associates under the leadership of Art Greco, director of prayer and evangelism.

Growth creates additional demands on facilities and Steve Dawson, director of technical serv-

ices, and associate director Rob Hall, work with congregations to address land and facility issues. Dawson reports an unprecedented \$100 million of activity in various projects. Don Fensterman is available to help coach churches through

fund-raising campaigns for land and facilities.

For information on resources available to assist local congregations, contact the department by telephone at 773-784-3000 or by email at cge@covchurch.org.

Our Growing Covenant: Attendance and Giving, 1995-2003

| | Attendance | Giving | |
|------|------------|-------------|--|
| 1995 | 103,318 | \$5,852,315 | Footnote: Over an nine-year period, church attendance increased 43.5% and church giving to the denomination increased 41.2%. The compound annual growth rate for attendance has been 4.6% and for church giving 4.4% |
| 1996 | 108,090 | 6,106,750 | |
| 1997 | 113,763 | 6,402,756 | |
| 1998 | 117,314 | 6,790,633 | |
| 1999 | 123,912 | 7,292,608 | |
| 2000 | 128,542 | 7,624,377 | |
| 2001 | 135,343 | 7,912,060 | |
| 2002 | 140,617 | 8,187,547 | |
| 2003 | 148,296 | 8,266,256 | |

* Local church giving to the denomination.

World Mission: An Overview of Global Covenant Ministries

While the Paul Carlson Foundation and upcoming events for this year's Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) have been a focal point for the Department of World Mission recently, world mission sites around the world have been as active as ever. Following are brief updates from various countries.

AFRICA

Cameroon. Rain Forest International School, a secondary school in Cameroon, continues to educate many Covenant missionary kids (MKs) in Africa. Short-term missionaries are needed to teach during the 2004-2005 school year. Interested individuals should contact Lana Heinrich, short-term mission program manager, by email at lana.heinrich@covchurch.org or by calling 773-907-3350.

Central African Republic. Following several months of civil

unrest, peace has returned to Central African Republic (CAR) and some Covenant missionaries have returned to their areas of ministry following evacuations. Returning missionaries include Bob and Karen Andrews, Roy and Aleta Danforth and Keith and Florence Gustafson, who entered Congo through CAR. Additional Covenant missionaries are expected to return this year as missionaries repair and refurbish mission stations looted during the civil unrest. The future of ministry to the Fulani in CAR also is being

evaluated, following a change of government leadership. **Congo.** President Glenn Palmberg led a five-member delegation on a November visit to churches of the CEUM (Congo Covenant Church) as well as clinics and several memorial sites for martyr Paul Carlson. The trip reaffirmed the denomination's covenant of friendship with the CEUM and affirmed ECC's intent to explore ways to partner with CEUM in areas of relief, rehabilitation and redevelopment work, says Curt Peterson, executive minister of world mission and a delegation member. Extensive news coverage of this trip can be found in the online Covenant news report at www.covchurch.org in the November news archives section.

Covenant missionaries Keith and Florence Gustafson and Nancy Jo Hoover, now in Congo, are the first Covenant missionaries to return following a seven-year absence due to civil war. Keith is serving as liaison



Two girls among the thousands of people who greeted President Glenn Palmberg during his November 2003 visit to CEUM ministries in Congo.

to the CEUM and providing pastoral care, while Florence is involved with AIDS education, a women's prayer group and other tasks. Hoover completed French language study in Belgium and has joined the Gustafsons as additional support. She has experience in development work and will work with the CEUM in areas of ministry and relational projects.

The CEUM General Assembly elected Reverend Mossai Sanguma as president during its January meeting. He received his Ph.D. in Mis-

siology from Fuller School of World Mission last summer and returned to Congo to teach at the Protestant Seminary. Also elected were two vice presidents: Reverend Mawe Sema, head of the Life of the Church Department, and Reverend Eleng, head of the Biblical and Theological Education Department.



Students attend an English class in Taiwan.

Equatorial Guinea. Tim and Helen Smith, Covenant missionaries to Equatorial Guinea, are on home assignment and residing in Tulsa, Oklahoma, visiting churches and continuing to process the loss of their son, Tim Jr.

Sudan and Ethiopia. There is encouraging news on the political front in Sudan. The Sudan government and a major rebel group have signed a ceasefire agreement and are continuing talks to resolve the long civil war.

ASIA

India. A seminar on spiritual leadership was conducted in January for about 50 leaders from India in Christ Ministries Covenant Church. The four-day event, held in Bangalore, focused on how leaders can develop new leaders using Jesus as a model. Many Asian leaders see this as one of the greatest issues needing to be addressed.

Japan. A mission trip of Japanese youth to Thailand was held March 25 to April 3. This was the first trip of its kind for the youth or any other group from Japan Covenant churches, an outgrowth of a cooperative movement among Covenant churches of Asia to work together in mission.

The Isesaki Church, where

Covenant missionaries Tim and Andrea Johnson serve, is growing and is seeking additional space. The Nakahara Church, where Covenant missionaries Gary and Pauline Carlson serve, is considering the purchase of land and construction of a facility where the church currently rents space. The Nakahara Church is involved in ministry at three group homes for mentally challenged women. A new group home for mentally challenged men is scheduled to open in April.

Philippines. A leadership development seminar was conducted in January with leaders of the Jesus Evangelical Covenant Church (JECC), the Covenant church of the Philippines. This seminar focused on training new leaders. One of the Covenant churches in the Philippines is developing a shoe factory to provide jobs as well as financial support for JECC ministries.

Thailand. The first meeting of the newly formed Mission Committee for Asia took place in Bangkok, Thailand, October 6-8. In 2002, representatives traveled to India from the Covenant churches in Asia to explore ways to more effectively cooperate in common mission. A joint mission committee was formed and creation of a jointly owned mission fund is in progress.

David Husby, regional coordinator for Asia, joined representatives from Taiwan, India, the Philippines, Laos, Japan and Thailand to consider ways in which a joint fund can be effectively used to support cross-cultural mission endeavors in Asia. The committee also dis-

cussed ways to facilitate new mission ventures. Representatives from Taiwan and Japan both reported plans to send mission teams first to Thailand, followed by other countries such as India and the Philippines.

In northern Thailand, the fish hatchery in Chiang Mai has been expanded. Nine additional ponds were constructed, aiding 13 families operating nursery farms with more than 30 ponds. These families receive small loans to help grow fish.

In October, CCENT (the Center for Church Enablement in Northern Thailand) conducted an evangelistic music camp that brought together 80 kids from the many groups that are studying Thai music.

CHINESE MINISTRIES

Taiwan. A first-ever Asian Covenant youth camp will take place in Taiwan in August, bringing together youth from Covenant churches in Taiwan, Japan, Thailand, the Philippines and India. Several Taiwan Covenant churches are also preparing to host North America mission teams from July 8 through August 8. Teams will assist churches to reach young people in their communities through teaching conversational English.

The Taiwan government recently directed that English be taught from first grade through high school. Parents reportedly search for non-public school opportunities for their children to learn conversational English to supplement what they learn in the classroom. Church leaders in Taiwan have responded to this need, with several organizing English summer programs for children.

EUROPE AND RUSSIA

Czech Republic. Covenant missionaries Fred and Kelly Prudek continue to work in Prague. In November, Kelly completed a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course for use in her outreach efforts. Fred teaches seminary students from all over Europe and the former Soviet Union about mission movements throughout history. He is also leading a Bible study at a Czech evangelical publishing house.

France. Covenant missionaries Francisco and Stephanie Ramos are working in evangelism ministry in Paris. They have been building relationships with people who are unchurched and finding ways to bring

the gospel to them, including Bible studies. Francisco has also been working with a church ministry that clothes the poor.

Germany. Regional coordinators to Europe Richard and Jan Epps-Dawson have launched the Mosaics Project, a ministry that hopes to reach marginalized people in European and Mediterranean regions.

This ministry will engage in evangelism, discipleship and ministries of compassion and justice to marginalized people who have immigrated to, or seek asylum in, European countries. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of people who fall into this category in Europe in the last few years, they report. For more information on volunteering assistance to this ministry, email the Epps-Dawsons epps.dawson@t-online.de.

Russia. Covenant churches with mission initiatives in Russia continue to build relationships in the country. One goal is to build relationships with Russian Christian leaders of influence. Keith Tungseth, facilitator for Russia ministries, and Leonid Regheta of North Park Theological Seminary traveled to St. Petersburg in January where they met with pastors, heads of theological institutions, publishers and developers of youth ministries.

A highlight of the trip was participating in worship at Dr. Sergei I. Nikolaev's church, which has common roots with the Covenant. Dr. Nikolaev is president of St. Petersburg Evangelical Theological Academy. Covenant representatives have been invited to meet again with Pastor Nikolaev to explore partnerships with the academy.

Spain. In La Coruña, the church with which Covenant missionaries Rob and Nancy Reed serve averages more than 70 people on Sundays and has 50 people attending cell groups during the week. Many churches in Spain are small, averaging 20 people. The church seeks a larger meeting space as the present location limits growth.

In Malaga, where Covenant missionaries Eugenio and Pia Restrepo serve, a ministry to area gypsies is developing. Eugenio Restrepo is meeting with two groups of gypsy pastors and has been invited to preach at their churches.

LATIN AMERICA

Colombia. There has been much work in the development and estab-

lishment of the Wings of Hope Foundation, a ministry to the poor near Bogotá. This foundation offers health clinics, classes on home economics and craft businesses. Through the weekly ministries of Bible studies, prayer, and counseling, new people are attending the Covenant church in the area.

In Medellín, Covenant churches of Colombia, Covenant Kids Foundation, Covenant World Relief and the Colombia missionaries worked together with a community in response to an arson fire in March 2003.

Fire swept through a neighborhood destroying 710 homes and leaving 3,500 people homeless. Cen-

works with the English program at Anderson School and is developing an English club, an English library and an English computer class. Erin Michealsen coordinates the English program at Ciencia y Fe Covenant School in Guayaquil. Wayne and Mary Ann Weld are in their second year of a two-year term, teaching at the Covenant Seminary. Herb and Elaine Clauson are assisting CBC-Ecuador with mission teams that are renovating the new property for the permanent campus.

Mexico. The first phase of construction of a new Oaxaca Ministry Center for the South District of the Iglesia Evangelica Misionera del Pacto (IEMP) was inaugurated in



Delegates to the sixth triennial meeting of CIPE (Confederation of Hispanic Covenant Churches) gathered in Ecuador.

ters operated for several months out of three Covenant churches located near the destroyed neighborhood, providing washing facilities, showers, daily meals, recreation and counseling. Through these centers, many of those displaced by the fire found a church home. Soon after, Compassion International established a ministry for 300 children in each location.

Ecuador. Covenant missionaries continue to be a part of the ministry of CBC (Covenant Bible College)-Ecuador. During the Christmas season, Covenant missionary Jenell Pluim helped CBC-Ecuador students present the Christmas story through song, drama and puppetry to about 400 people in the central park in La Merced, Ecuador. The students also presented the Christmas story to 1,500 students at Covenant Anderson School and more than 500 people at two Covenant churches in Quito.

Short-term missionaries are also making an impact. Yonchu Song

December, with workshops for various pastors and church leaders. Support for development of the Oaxaca Ministry Center came in large part through a Friends of World Mission (FOWM) appeal and voluntary labor provided by a number of churches.

In December, the Covenant group that meets in Puebla purchased property following nearly 10 years of searching. They had met in the home of Covenant missionaries Jerry and Vicky Love, but space quickly became an issue. The new building was dedicated on January 18.

In Monterrey, the Foundation for Family Development is expanding its ministry as the staff grows. Covenant project missionaries Lisandro and Patricia Restrepo have joined missionaries John and Letha Kerl in their work at the foundation. They remain committed to planting one or more churches in Monterrey based on the creation of cell groups

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World Mission

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formed, in large part, with contacts made through the foundation.

CONFEDERATION OF HISPANIC COVENANT CHURCHES (CIPE)

CIPE continues to grow—there are now more than 19,000 attendees in Covenant churches in Latin America. Last July's CIPE triennial gathering included 86 delegates and observers from six CIPE countries (Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Ecuador and Hispanic churches in the U.S.) as well as international guests such as Ketty Soogard, the executive secretary of the International Federation of Free Evangelical Churches.

CIPE consecrated Wilfrido Velasquez as a CIPE missionary and agreed to help financially support the new missionary work in Uruguay sponsored by the Covenant Church of Argentina.

Plans have been made for the CIPE Bible School to take place in Ecuador in the summer of 2004. This program brings together young people from Covenant churches throughout Latin America and Spanish-speaking churches in the United States for the summer. There have been 68 students in the three CIPE Bible schools to date.

In December, Eliseo Balbi, pastor of the largest Covenant church of Argentina, visited churches in Ecuador for a month. He was invited to speak 45 times in two weeks while in Guayaquil.

CHURCH RELATIONS

Two World Mission publications have been redesigned. "The Catalyst" is produced by Covenant Mission Connection (CMC) and lists mission trip/work team opportunities available to Covenant groups along with contact information for CMC representatives.

Also available is "HELPS"—and with a new look. This publication is produced for pastors, mission committees and those interested in getting involved in mission. It contains information on resources, a listing of mission events suitable for local church participation and innovative ideas for mission in the local church.

For more information about Covenant World Mission, call 773-907-3316 or 3321.

Covenant Women Minister to Abuse Victims

Covenant Women Ministries (CWM) has launched its newest initiative—"Light for AVA (Advocacy for Victims of Abuse)"—and is seeking to add staff to support the new initiative.

"For two years God has repeatedly brought the issue of abuse of women to our attention," said Ruth Hill, CWM executive minister. "I was reluctant to think so many women in Covenant churches were victims, but abuse knows no boundaries. It became more and more obvious God was calling us to address this epidemic."

The initiative has three objectives: provide resources to bring healing to victims of abuse; equip the church to minister to victims; and promote measures to help prevent abuse. Funds are being sought to support a position of project manager, which will access existing and create new resources unique to the Covenant, heighten awareness, develop training opportunities and create a volunteer network.

Feedback from churches showing the promotion video confirms the need for this initiative, Hill says. Some used it as part of CWM Sunday activities, while others made the topic a focal point of the worship service experience. At Trinity Covenant Church in Manchester, Connecticut, two former victims of abuse shared testimonies while guest

speaker Karen Hearl preached on the John 10:10 text, "the thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy." A prayer team was available to minister to anyone in need.

A search process is under way and it is hoped a successful candidate can be recognized during this August's Triennial XI in Portland, Oregon, with the individual beginning new duties September 1. Individuals interested in obtaining a job application may visit the CWM link at www.covchurch.org or call CWM staff at 773-907-3332.

CWM continues its efforts to transition women ministries from an organization to a ministry. A new constitution, presented during CWM's annual meeting last June, will come for a vote during Triennial XI.

The new constitution will change the organizational structure from that of a membership of individual women to partnership with local women ministries, expand the leadership team to include CWM conference presidents and directors as advisors, streamline governance so that the leadership team manages the ministry with the triennial gathering overseeing policy changes, and change the organization's name to Women Ministries of the ECC—local churches will be free to use the most culturally appropriate name for their women ministries.

CWM sponsored two Sankofa Journeys—one traditional and one non-traditional—to heighten awareness of racial injustice. Last November, five European American women flew to Atlanta and joined five African American women on a mini-Journey led by Rose Cornelious and Hill. The two leaders and the five European American women then spent a week in Smithville, Georgia, painting the Neighborhood Freedom Center and traveling with John Cole Vodicka, director of the Prison and Jail Project. A second traditional Sankofa Journey included 12 women who traveled by bus from Chicago as far south as Cuthbert, Georgia, led by Catherine Gilliard and Hill.

The 2003 CWM annual project, "Our Next Step," raised more than \$14,000 to help equip Russian children when moving out of orphanages. Currently, 15 percent commit suicide within two years of leaving and 70 percent resort to crime or prostitution to survive, with 80 percent of marriages between orphans failing, in many cases leaving yet more offspring who eventually end up in orphanages. Part of the initiative included a trip to Russia by 15 women from six conferences last October where they toured orphanages for two weeks before participating in a rally attended by 110 young women.

Triennial XI: Meet Me at the River

HOTEL SPACE IS BECOMING LIMITED at the host venue for this year's Triennial XI in Portland, Oregon, reports Ruth Hill, executive minister of Covenant Women Ministries. The August 12-15 international spiritual adventure will take place at the Doubletree Inn's two-hotel complex. "Interest is unusually high," said Hill. "We have already begun negotiating for additional hotel space."

Hill attributes higher registration to the many innovative features of this Triennial, including a pair of noted speakers instead of only one keynoter. "No doubt the speakers are a big draw for many," she added. "Both Brenda Salter-McNeil and Judy Howard-Peterson are dynamic speakers with life-transforming ministries."

Other innovations for Triennial include: on-line registration; an evening concert featuring the Covenant's own Bob Stromberg and Christian music artist Sara Groves; a wide variety of pre-event options, including extreme sport options such as mountain hiking, kayaking and mountain biking; a pre-event compassion ministry component that allows women to minister in Irvington Village, a Covenant assisted living community, and Shepherd's Door, a shelter for victims of abuse; a "Raise the Flag" sponsorship whereby representatives from Covenant world mission countries are being invited to attend with help from conferences and churches—eight countries have already been sponsored.

Meeting on the banks of the Columbia River with majestic Mt. Hood in the background, the location of the Doubletree Inn is ideally suited to creating a setting for spiritual exploration and worship, Hill notes. The setting inspired the event's theme, "Meet Me at the River."

For more information about Triennial XI, visit the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org and select the Triennial XI link or call the CWM office at 773-907-3332.

Covenant World Relief Effort Tops \$1.1 Million in 2003

More than \$1.1 million has been allocated by Covenant World Relief (CWR) in 2003 for relief, rehabilitation and development projects throughout the world, according to director Jim Sundholm.

CWR, which began in 1946 in response to the devastation of World War II in Europe, allocated the majority of those relief dollars in three general regions of the world.

The first region, involving nine countries, received \$301,000. Congo received emergency medicines when the Central African Republic border was closing, the result of collaboration among CWR, the Department of World Mission and the Covenant Church of Congo (CEUM). South Sudan received food, mosquito nets and other supplies via a partnership with World Mission and Sudanese Covenant congregations in the United States.

A second region, encompassing four countries, received \$462,000. Along with assisting CEUM hospitals, Covenant World Relief funds helped in the reconstruction of seven schools and 35 homes as World Relief and an organization based in the Netherlands combined resources. CWR also helped hospitals in the regions of Black Lion, Addis Abba and Gambella.

A third region included 14 countries that received a total of \$358,000

in development funds. Contributions helped Colombian businesses involved in dairy and beef cattle production, along with poultry farms and small recycling ventures, as CWR received help from World Mission. Fish farms were developed in Bangladesh with the help of Global Mission and World Mission. CWR and First Covenant Church in Oakland, California, combined to help support orphanages in India. And CWR and a non-Covenant organization teamed up in Viet Nam

to develop micro-enterprise efforts and educational opportunities for street children.

Sundholm stated in a recent report that around \$250,000 of assistance was allocated for North American projects, including anti-hunger initiatives, food resource bank projects, and disaster relief projects to help those recovering from the World Trade Center attacks and large fires that occurred in southern California last fall.

Overall, more than one-half of

all Evangelical Covenant Church congregations have supported CWR in recent years (435 in 2002), said Sundholm. Nearly all of the funds collected (95 percent) go directly to designated projects. A total of 25 percent is allocated to help immediate human needs following an emergency.

For more information about CWR, including news stories and photographs, visit www.covchurch.org and select the Covenant World Relief link.

New Outreach Targets Kids in Colombia

CHILDREN IN EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCHES (Project CRENN) have an opportunity to learn about and care for children in Monteria, Colombia, through Project CRENN and the Center for Strengthening Education and Nutrition in the Child.

Project CRENN, offered by the Department of Christian Formation in cooperation with Covenant World Relief, offers food, education and recreation to children in targeted areas and works to strengthen families by improving living conditions and educational opportunities for children.

Covenant churches received a booklet outlining the project last November, including 24 short stories focused on Colombian children. "It is hoped that each week as children give and as they hear stories of the faith and the character of the children in Monteria, they will be helped in their own faith development by being reminded of how their offering is helping others," says Steve Burger, director of children and family ministries for the Department of Christian Formation.

"Most children in North America would find it difficult to imagine a place where poverty is so profound that children are forced to live on streets where they are daily exposed to drugs, alcoholism and abuse," Burger notes. Monteria is the largest neighborhood of this type in the country, located in swamp-like conditions with sewage running between rundown shacks.

Project CRENN was established in August 1996 with financial support from the Colombian Social Welfare Agency, World Vision, the Colombia Covenant Mission and Monteria Covenant churches.

Growth in Internet Use Sparks New Communication Strategies

Expanded news coverage of major Covenant events and ECC website enhancements are among highlights of the Department of Communication activities.

A new record was established when on August 7, 2003, individuals requested more than 26,605 pages of online material in a single day. Much of that activity involved the CHIC2K3 celebration under way at the University of Tennessee. Three Communications staff members were on site helping with print and web design, online news reporting and photography.

Daily online news coverage of President Glenn Palmberg's first visit to the Congo Covenant Church is one example of the Internet's power to connect people in a timely way. Pete Ekstrand, regional coordinator for Africa for Covenant World Mission, worked with news

staff in Chicago via email to assemble daily news reports and photos tracking activities of the five-member delegation, attracting considerable online readership in the process.

A five-member Communications team will provide daily online news coverage of this year's Annual Meeting, including live Internet broadcasts of evening worship services. Coverage also will appear in August's *Covenant Companion*, which has received numerous awards from Associated Church Press, an organization representing all major U.S. denominations.

The awards are important as they reflect the considered judgment on the part of publishing professionals that *The Covenant Companion* is an excellent magazine and worthy of recognition. The *Companion* and *Covenant Home Altar*—the quarterly devotional guide written by

Covenanters for Covenanters—are available for subscription online by visiting the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org.

The online Covenant Bookstore is of particular help to churches in smaller markets that lack good Christian bookstore resources. With the convenience of secure online credit card payment, orders are processed and shipped quickly. Site content continues to expand, offering a wide array of books, curriculum, music and other resources. Sales volume on the site has doubled each of the last four years.

A new Internet-based tool—Covlink—provides secure interactive Internet access to a variety of Covenant resources. The first of these—the ability for pastors to go online and update Ministry Profile forms—has been implemented in partnership with the Department of

the Ordered Ministry. Covlink also offers ministerial and local church directories in Palm OS format, developed in partnership with the Department of Administration.

A relatively new Internet tool—Newsdesk—makes simple the task of emailing information for consideration in the online Covenant news report and the *Companion*. Information may be sent to newsdesk@covchurch.org and JPEG-format photos may also be attached.

Newswire is another new service designed for busy people who do not want to miss online Covenant news items. Individuals may select the Newswire link on the home page, fill in their email address and receive each day a single email containing headlines for all online news stories published during the previous 24-hour period. And, the service is free.

G.R.O.W. Program Encourages Discipleship Commitment

Researcher and author George Barna believes that Christianity in America is “a mile wide and an inch deep.”

That general assessment is in part responsible for development of the new G.R.O.W. initiative by the Department of Christian Formation, which provides tools for local churches to help encourage within individuals a deeper commitment to discipleship.

Barna's research found that while 80 percent of those surveyed reported a deep personal commitment to faith as a top priority, only 20 percent of those same people, when asked what was the most important thing to accomplish in life, said anything directly related to spiritual growth.

Author Dallas Willard, in his book *The Divine Conspiracy*, puts it this way: “There is, apparently, no real connection between being a Christian and being a disciple of Jesus.”

What does the church need to do in order to promote effective discipleship? Barna suggests the following:

- Provide detailed assistance and guidance for members and attendees

- Provide a method of assessing spiritual growth for members/attendees

- Develop a specific discipleship plan for each person in the congregation

G.R.O.W. commitment cards are available for adults, youth and children in Covenant churches. Through their use, people of all ages are given

the opportunity to commit to a few practices in each of four vital areas for spiritual growth, says Doreen Olson, executive minister of Christian formation.

Packets will be mailed to Covenant congregations in early May containing a sample of each of the cards as well as other tools to use in developing an intentional emphasis on spiritual growth. “Our prayer is that, within this movement we call the Covenant, we would be devel-

oping disciples of such depth and radical obedience that we can engage the current culture and address the profound brokenness within it,” Olson notes.

More information about G.R.O.W. can be found on the Covenant website at www.covenantchurch.org using the Christian Formation link on either the pull-down menu or the Departments tab on the home page, or by calling Covenant Resource Center at 800-338-4332.

Study Examines Youth Ministry Support

THREE YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS at Evangelical Covenant Church congregations are part of an Exemplary Congregations in Youth Ministry study involving seven mainline denominations.

The three Covenant congregations and leaders selected for site visits include Bill MacPhee at Rolling Hills Covenant Church in Rolling Hills, California; Steve Raisch at Thornapple Covenant Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan; and John Duball at Rochester Covenant Church in Rochester, Minnesota.

Two study team members will explore stories of youth ministry during onsite visits with the respective senior pastors, youth directors, volunteer leaders, young people and their parents. “The goal is to get a snapshot of the way the congregation supports youth ministry and to get a sense of the way the community works to mature faith in their young people,” says Marti Burger, director of youth and family ministries for the Department of Christian Formation and a study team member.

Study findings will be released during a November national conference. For more information about the study, call Burger at 773-583-0220.

Improvements Planned at Covenant Bible College Campuses

A total of 169 students from North America and beyond are completing studies at three Covenant Bible College (CBC) campuses, including 78 at CBC-Canada, 44 at CBC-Ecuador and 47 at CBC-Midwest, which includes two interns at the CBC-Midwest Worship Center.

Commencement exercises and worship celebrations are scheduled April 23-25 at CBC-Canada, May 7-9 at CBC-Midwest and May 21-23 at CBC-Ecuador.

“Our mission is motivated by a deep desire to obey Christ's great commission and to serve the

church,” says CBC President Neil Josephson, “and we hunger to do that more effectively and more broadly. That is why we are so pleased to announce campus enhancements at CBC-Canada and campus expansion at both CBC-Ecuador and CBC-Midwest.”

CBC-Canada, utilizing a core gift from Covenant Women Ministries, recently completed a much-needed expansion of classroom and worship space. CBC-Ecuador, after operating out of rented facilities since its inception in 2000, will move into its permanent home this fall, utilizing a 7.5-acre estate once

belonging to Ecuadorian painter Endara Crow. Existing buildings are being restored and renovated, with new construction also under way for student dorms and classrooms. The new campus will offer a much-improved living and learning environment that is capable of serving 72 students—an increase from the current capacity of 45. “We are especially grateful for the many volunteers from throughout the Covenant who have worked with us on the new CBC-Ecuador campus,” adds Josephson, “and for the financial partnership of National Covenant Properties.”

CBC-Midwest, begun in 1998 on a six-acre site gifted to the college, has launched a three-year, \$3 million capital campaign to purchase three adjacent acres and expand that campus to handle 88 students. More than \$1.1 million has been committed by two major donors, allowing construction to begin on a new chapel/classroom building and a second dorm. With completion scheduled for mid-August, CBC-Midwest is ready to welcome approximately 15 more students this fall. “While the dorm and chapel/classroom are designed for an end capacity of 88, until we complete the capital campaign and thus gain the food service and library space we need for 88, we will be working in the 60 to 65 student range,” Josephson noted.

A founding board has been created in the Pacific Southwest Conference to pursue planting of another CBC campus in the near future, and, a new affiliation relationship with the denomination is being crafted. For more information, visit CBC's website at www.covenant-biblecollege.ab.ca.

Did You Know?

ENROLLMENT AT CENTRO HISPANICO DE ESTUDIOS TEOLOGICOS (CHET) in Los Angeles reached another all-time high last year with 400 students enrolled for Fall 2003 classes. Enrollment reflects a full-time equivalent of 193 students. Between the main campus in Bell Gardens, California, and 21 satellite locations, a total of 60 classes were offered, with students representing 18 countries of origin and 17 denominations. More about CHET can be found by visiting the school's new website at www.chet.org or by calling either CHET President Jorge Maldonado or Academic Dean and Vice President Edward Delgado at 562-806-8325.

North Park University Enrollment Nears 3,000

By integrating faith with learning—as it has done since its founding in 1891 by the Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC)—North Park University continues to focus on the important task of preparing students for lives of significance and service.

In 2004, institutional enrollment increased to 2,889, due in part to an increase in the traditional undergraduate population (particularly transfer students) and strong retention performance. The presence of Covenant students on North Park's campus remains strong, as it has throughout the past decade. Covenant students comprise approximately 30 percent of traditional undergraduates.

Major campus improvements include the landscaping and green space initiative that has created a beautiful park-like setting in the center of campus. In February, the school transformed the former Commuter Lounge into the new Viking Cafe where students, faculty, and staff can eat, study and catch up on the news of the day.

North Park is finishing construction of the new Holmgren Athletic Complex, which includes new baseball and softball diamonds, new grandstands, an upgraded football field with state-of-the-art field lighting, dugouts, fencing and scoreboards. Upcoming projects include construction of a crew launch for racing skulls to support intercollegiate women's and men's club teams, as well as a campus recreational center and fieldhouse, which will house an indoor running track, batting cages, basketball/volleyball courts, practice turf, a climbing wall and a two-level fitness center.

The second year of the North Park Dialogue asks the question of first-year students, "Who am I?" Second-year students are addressing the question "Why Should I Be Ethical?" as part of their general education experience. An added enhancement to these initial courses is that nearly all sections are taught by full-time, tenured or tenure-track faculty.

At the graduate and continuing studies level, North Park is both increasing offerings and enhancing the quality of education offered. Building on the success of the Arlington Heights extension site, the school started an MBA class and a nonprofit management certificate

cohort last fall. There is also a cohort for adult bachelor's degree completion students in Lake County as a part of North Park's new participation in the University Center of Lake County. In addition, the School of Music was approved to offer a master of music in vocal performance, beginning this fall. It is one of the only programs of its kind among Christian colleges and universities.

Outside of the classroom, the campus has been exploring "What is Community?" as part of the campus theme program. Some program highlights include a residency by world-renowned violist Midori who came to campus for a week in November, a March performance by the Danish National Performance Team, and an April lecture and book signing by Anne Lamott, noteworthy author of *Traveling Mercies*.

Another aspect of the "What is Community?" campus theme program is Project Kuumba. Sixty-two students from metropolitan Chicago and the State of Illinois, as well as from other parts of the United States, attended a 10-day intensive experience to help incoming students adjust to the academic, social

specific realities critical to one's view of faith and the world: community, poverty, international mission, race, environment, and faith.

Chapel and College Life speakers have included Rev. Alise Barrymore, dean of University ministries and campus pastor at North Park; Rev. Harvey Carey of the Citadel of Faith Covenant Church in Detroit; Brian McLaren, published author and musician; and Tony Campolo, founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education.

Approximately 30 athletes attend Fellowship of Christian Athletes Huddle Group meetings every other week. This spring, five groups of students and faculty donated their time and resources to participate in mission trips to Appalachia, Atlanta, Honduras, Guatemala, and the Bahamas. And through Urban Outreach, North Park students continue to volunteer including feeding the homeless at Breakthrough Ministries, tutoring children in reading and math and building relationships with local youth through the After Hours drop in center.

The North Park Gospel Choir recently performed 10 concerts at

Did You Know?

NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY'S AXELSON CENTER for Nonprofit Management will host a symposium on May 12 addressing how to make better use of limited resources while reaching established goals in a changing environment. Scholars, researchers, and experts from nonprofits, foundations, and corporations will discuss the challenges associated with measuring and managing for high impact. The keynote speaker will be Roxanne Spillett, president of Boys and Girls Clubs of America. To register, visit North Park's website at www.northpark.edu/axelson or call 773-244-5747.

and cultural demands of university life. Formal instruction, two seminars and several social activities were part of the project.

Next year's campus theme poses the question, "What is Justice?"

In University Ministries, North Park continues to nurture a compelling witness with large numbers of students involved in one or more programs. The chapel program reflects different worship experiences - Latino, African American, Scandinavian, Middle Eastern and Korean/Asian included. North Park also set aside six weeks to focus on

nine different locations throughout Washington and Oregon as part of a weeklong tour of churches in the Pacific Northwest and North Pacific conferences. The 40-member Gospel Choir draws its repertoire from the great composers of sacred music of the spiritual and gospel genres. The Gospel Choir appears on North Park University's Worship CD entitled *Cry Holy*. Conductor Rollo Dilworth is a member of the faculty of the School of Music, where he serves as an assistant professor of music and director of choral activities.

Top Ten Reasons to Contact the Resource Center

10) It's a partnership involving Christian Formation, Church Growth & Evangelism, Communications, Covenant Women Ministries, World Mission, Stewardship and Covenant World Relief.

9) It provides program consultation to churches. (This is helpful when you don't have a Christian bookstore down the street!)

8) It allows you to obtain departmental publications for little or no cost.

7) It allows churches to obtain multiple copies of brochures and other materials (Bringing My World to Christ brochure, Prayer Week material, CWR Reporter).

6) It rents audio-visual aids (kits, posters, displays, table decorations) for world mission emphasis events.

5) It provides answers quickly or puts you in touch with someone who can help.

4) It can link you to books and resources via the Covenant Resource Center link at www.covchurch.org.

3) Nikki, Phyllis and Millie are nice to talk with and really like to hear from you.

2) It's a service that lets you decide what you want.

1) It's the best place to start when you don't know who else to call! Contact us by telephone at 800-338-IDEA(4332) or by email at resource.center@covchurch.org.

Estate Planning

Continued from page 2

phasis on various types of estate planning tools and their benefits for both individuals and Covenant ministries. Covenant Estate Planning Services will work with Covenant ministries to provide information and resources and encourage members and friends to use their estate plan or a deferred gift to include one or more Covenant ministries of their choice.

Call Covenant Estate Planning Services at 800-483-2177 to request camera-ready copy and other materials to publicize seminars, encourage bequests and provide Covenanters with information. For a list of Covenant Estate Planning officers in each conference, visit www.covchurch.org and select the estate planning services link.

Covenant “Passport” Engages Retirees in Mission Service

Covenant Ministries of Benevolence (CMB) brings God’s love to local communities through two hospitals, its 15 Covenant Retirement Communities, its services for children and families and residences for developmentally disabled adults.

Covenant Passport represents just one of the many programs and activities that help CMB fulfill its mission to extend compassionate service to those entrusted to its care.

Covenant Passport was created to encourage the nearly 5,000 residents of Covenant Retirement Communities to pursue their interests in mission service. The program waives residents’ monthly service fees while they are away from the community for at least one week through two months of approved mission service. Service missions sponsored by any recognized not-for-profit agency are eligible, but missions sponsored by the

Evangelical Covenant Church (ECC) or in support of Covenant ministries are given first priority.

A total of 18 residents from seven campuses took advantage of the program last year. They traveled across the country and around the globe to paint, plaster and repair

buildings on a Navajo reservation, teach English in Pakistan and treat sick children in Kenya, to cite just a few of the experiences.

In one of the very first Passport applications, Lighthouse Covenant Church in Tamarac, Florida, and Covenant Village of Florida in nearby Plantation created a ministry partnership with teens from Lighthouse Covenant to run a vacation Bible school for about 95 youngsters in Nassau, Bahamas.

The partnership energized both the church and the retirement com-

munity. Village residents who did not go on the mission trip raised funds to help underwrite the mission. Their \$1,400 covered some of the trip’s expenses and purchased enough Bibles so that each of the youngsters who participated could take one home.

“Growing the seed of service in others” is a primary objective of the Passport program, notes Covenant Retirement Communities President Rick K. Fisk. “The partnership between Lighthouse Covenant and Covenant Village of Florida exem-

plifies that perfectly,” he says. “From our retirement communities we’re extending the loving hand of Christ around the corner and around the world.”

To learn more about the Covenant Passport program or to explore ways to develop a ministry partnership with a Covenant retirement community, contact the campus administrator at a retirement community of interest or contact Ken Noreen by telephone at 720-870-8301 or by email at KD.Noreen@covenantretirement.org.

Did You Know?

EVANGELICAL COVENANT CHURCH CAMPS continue to be a catalyst for changed lives among children, teens and adults. On average during the summer of 2003, one out of eleven Covenant campers became Christians and one out of three campers rededicated his or her life to Christ. These statistics tend to reflect the dual purposes of the camping experience—evangelism and discipleship—camp leaders believe. The discipleship effort continues with intentional leadership development for the nearly 1,300 summer staff who work at Covenant camps as counselors and program leaders.

Over the course of the summer, Covenant campers contributed \$66,339 to assist construction projects at a Covenant camp in Japan. During the last 10 years, campers have contributed \$530,971 to help Covenant camps around the world.

To learn more about the work being done at Covenant camps, call Bruce Lawson at 773-583-0220 or visit the Covenant website at www.covchurch.org and select the camping link under the “directory” link on the home page.

Covenant Hospitals See Healing Value in Compassionate Care

While many healthcare providers are pushing public relations advertising that touts the latest in technological advancements, Swedish Covenant Hospital (SCH) in Chicago and Emanuel Medical Center (EMC) in Turlock, California, are pursuing a broader focus that also emphasizes an important element often overlooked—the need for compassion when ministering to the needs of patients.

That balanced emphasis on both technology and compassion is reflected in the approaches used by both Swedish and Emanuel, which are administered by Covenant Ministries of Benevolence. Swedish even reflects that dual role in its marketing program with the slogan: “Technology Changes, Compassion Does Not.”

Consumer research conducted by SCH late last year found that a remarkable 95 percent of participants felt that compassion aids in

the healing process, and 88 percent see it as an important or very important aspect of healthcare. Nine out of 10 stated they would recommend a physician to a family member or friends based on the level of compassion they had experienced.

“Medicine is both a science and an art,” says Dr. Bruce Silver, MD, president of the SCH medical staff. “The science is in the diagnosis, the treatments and the medications. The art involves the manner in which this care is personally delivered by doctors, nurses and others in our profession.”

The significant role compassion plays in healthcare is underscored by the finding that nearly six out of 10 consumers believe such caring behavior either speeds up the healing process (cited by 36 percent) or helps as necessary for healing (22 percent). Another 20 percent state that compassionate care improves the emotional state of patients, while seventeen percent believe it shows

someone cares and 10 percent feel it motivates an individual to feel better and improve.

Swedish Covenant Hospital has developed a unique training program that is derived from training used in the hospitality industry. The hospital calls it a “guest” relations program instead of a “patient” relations program. Every employee is required to attend courses.

One phase focuses on establishing meaningful human connections and highlights how important the first four minutes of interaction are when a caregiver meets a new patient. For example, it may not be a good idea for a caregiver to walk into a new patient’s room with their nose buried in the chart, the training suggests.

Phase two of the training program deals with “service recovery”—how to win a patient back after they have become unhappy or frustrated over service-related issues.

Compassion alone is not enough to satisfy patients—Covenant hos-

pitals offer the best available medical technology. However, it is reassuring to learn from studies and other experiences that the compassion that has always been an integral part of the culture at both Covenant hospitals is being recognized for the healing qualities it may provide.

“The findings in our survey reinforce in a very significant way why hospitals must always be committed to bringing the human touch to patient care, in addition to offering the remarkable technology available today,” says Mark Newton, Swedish Covenant Hospital’s chief executive officer. “Practitioners and facilities dedicated to listening to patients and treating them with the utmost respect will be the most successful in all aspects of care.”

To learn more about the Swedish Covenant Hospital study, call Newton at 773-878-8200. For other information, visit www.covchurch.org and select the SCH link.