

World Mission

NEWSLETTER

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At the 124th Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church next month, project missionaries Lisandro and Patricia Restrepo and Bob and Grace Shim will be presented as candidates for long-term missionary service. The Restrepos plan to serve in Mexico, and the Shims plan to serve in Thailand. In February the first World Mission Conference, which was held in Rosemont, Illinois, brought together international speakers, church representatives, and missionaries on the subject of “the holistic mission of the church.”

Lisandro and Patricia Restrepo

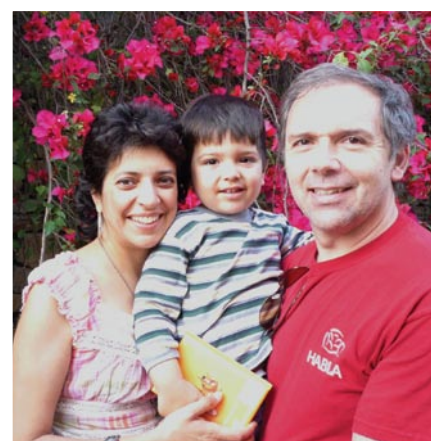
Lisandro and Patricia Restrepo are currently serving as project missionaries with the Evangelical Covenant Church in Monterrey, Mexico. Project missionaries serve between three and six years and are project-focused. Commissioned at the 2003 Annual Meeting, the Restrepos have been working in the areas of family and community development and discipleship.

Lisandro was born and raised in Bogotá, Colombia, and became a Christian when he was fifteen. He was involved in local church leadership as a teenager. In college he led an InterVarsity group, and felt called to ministry. For four months Lisandro was a short-term missionary in one of the universities of Pereira, a city close to Bogotá. Following

came a Christian when she was sixteen years old and was very involved in her local church. As a student at the National University of Colombia preparing to become a dentist, Patricia participated in an InterVarsity group. There she met

Lisandro. To fulfill her certification requirement as a dentist, Patricia worked with the poor in the mountains of Tuluá, a city three hundred miles from Bogotá. During her time there she decided to prepare for ministry. Patricia came to the United States and earned a master's degree in public health from the University of California–Berkeley. Then she worked for five years in a community health center in Oakland, California, serving low-income immigrants through a domestic violence prevention program, before attending North Park Theological Seminary.

For the past five years, Lisandro and Patricia have been serving as project missionaries with the Founda-



Patricia, Lisandro, and Samuel Restrepo



Patricia calls people participating in classes.



Lisandro teaches a class with Erika Clauson.

graduation from the National University of Colombia with a degree in animal husbandry, he worked with Food for the Hungry International for two years in Sonora, Mexico. Then Lisandro came to the United States to prepare for ministry, earning a degree in Bible and theology at San Jose Christian College. After graduation, he worked for four years as a health educator and HIV counselor at La Clínica de la Raza in Oakland, California, before attending North Park Theological Seminary to prepare for missionary service.

Patricia was also born and raised in Bogotá. She be-



Distributing food in a nearby community through ministry that the Restrepos support

tion for Family Development. In Monterey they serve their community through parenting classes, support groups for parents of children with special needs, marriage counseling, leadership training, community development projects, and discipleship. They say, "Our vision is to present the gospel, which is relevant to all aspects of our humanity: spiritual, physical, and emotional."

The Restrepos' home church is Berkeley (California) Covenant Church. □

Bob and Grace Shim

Bob and Grace Shim were commissioned as project missionaries at the 2003 Annual Meeting. The Shims have worked in the areas of medicine, public health, and community development in Central Asia, and are now currently serving in Thailand.

Bob's journey of faith began at age five when his family emigrated from Korea and moved to South America. Born into a generation of predominantly Confucian and Buddhist traditions, he had little exposure to Christianity. Bob considers it God's grace that in Brazil he began attending a Korean immigrant church. He says, "I believe God used this time of adjustment and turmoil to inject faith into my life, and it defined my life's direction and calling. I recall a slow process of accepting Christ as my Savior through Sunday-school attendance, reading the Bible, and being disciplined. I was moved by hearing missionaries speak

at our church, and I was eight years old when I made the commitment to someday be a missionary for Christ. My deepest desire is that I would be able to glorify the God of Psalm 33 and 34 in every context of my life."

Bob received his bachelor's degree in biology from Johns Hopkins University and went on to medical school at the University of Virginia, graduating in 1992.

Grace grew up in a very strong Christian home on the East Coast. Her mother's quiet and faithful care and her father, who was a pastor and professor, created a foundation for their daughter's faith.

While a student at Virginia Tech,

heart to reach the lost, and the lack of resources available to accomplish this task. I heard missionaries whose testimonies gripped me, and I began to ask if God would have me on the mission field someday. God used these missionaries' testimonies to open my heart to the world outside my insulated life."

Through the Urbana mission conferences and a short-term trip to China, Grace became more and more open to God's call to international mission. She admits, "I could easily settle into suburban life in the United States, but I sense God wanting our family to step out in faith and take the gospel to those who have not yet heard." She went on to earn a master's degree in counseling psychology from Trinity International University.

Bob and Grace's primary focus is to help churches gain inroads to villages where there is no Christian witness. They do this by creatively seeking to meet the spiritual, social, and physical needs of the rural poor. They have built relationships and provided resources for small communities to help better themselves. Bob has directed a community development center that provides medical care, public health education, micro-enterprise development, and sustainable development efforts. The Shims believe it is crucial to be in partnership with the national church.

Bob and Grace are members at Parkwood Community Church in Lombard, Illinois. □



Left to right: Kara, David, Grace, Bob, Amanda Shim

where she was studying to become a math teacher, Grace attended a conference for Korean leaders. She recalls, "My eyes were opened to the need for the gospel beyond my sheltered college walls. I began to see God's

able development efforts. The Shims believe it is crucial to be in partnership with the national church.

Bob and Grace are members at Parkwood Community Church in Lombard, Illinois. □



Grace (second from right) gathers with women in Central Asia.



Bob Shim (left) does a medical check-up in Asia.

The Holistic Mission of the Church

By Karen Hallberg and Patty Shepherd

Earlier this year, the first Covenant World Mission Conference gathered mission-minded pastors, church leaders, and missionaries together for a weekend of dialogue, education, networking, and worship. Participants were challenged to think about key issues and opportunities related to mission and ministries that address the needs of the whole person. These ministries seek to demonstrate the love of Christ through word and deed.

Sixty-six participants representing a variety of Covenant churches and ministries met January 31-February 2 in Rosemont, Illinois, to talk about healthy global relationships and to explore how to be catalysts for change in local communities. There were times for discussion, sharing ideas, worship, and prayer.

Four speakers shared their experience and knowledge of holistic ministries in international settings. Steven David and Shekhar Singh spoke about the ministries of the Hindustani Covenant Church (HCC) in India. HCC has 103 congregations with 15,000 members. Much of this church's growth has occurred in the past fifteen years. According to the HCC vision statement, "HCC draws its inspiration from the Bible toward [the] establishment of God's kingdom and to witness his love by becoming salt and light to the suffering masses."

Steven David, the moderator of HCC, and Shekhar Singh, who directs the community development department of HCC, talked about the many ways the church is involved in community development. Ministries include job training, education programs, farming projects, and medical programs to name a few. The church also assists villages with water harvesting, which allows farmers to collect water during the

Jim Gustafson (left) and a conference participant



Steven David and Shekhar Singh listen to a presentation.

rainy season in order to sustain crops year-round.

James Gustafson, the coordinator for international relationships for the Sustainable Development Research Foundation (SDRF), shared his insights on holistic ministry. Throughout Thailand this nonprofit development foundation directs projects in aquaculture, agriculture, agro-forestry, education, English classes, and various other ministries. SDRF initiates rural development projects that focus on churches and their surrounding communities, providing an opportunity to witness to God's love. The foundation has expanded its work into all four major regions of Thailand.

Dennis Wadley, co-director of Bridges of Hope and pastor of Community Covenant Church in Santa Barbara, California, spoke about the work of



Bridges of Hope, which was created in response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa. Partnering with other organizations and with survivors of HIV/AIDS, Bridges of Hope is working to transform communities, including training community health evangelist volunteers. As they make home visits throughout various neighborhoods in the township of Philippi, these volunteers are discovering many orphans and vulnerable children. Bridges of Hope also started Bridges Academy, a retreat center and boarding school for orphans and children at risk. Complete with dormitories, classrooms,



Pastor Dan Johnson takes notes at the conference.

recreation center, and a playing field, Bridges Academy provides leadership training and quality education to teenagers who were once at risk of becoming homeless or gang members.

The speakers and the discussions that followed challenged conference participants to consider how they might engage in holistic ministries in their own communities. Each speaker described how specific ministries had opened doors to share the gospel in their contexts. Through people's willingness to share the love of Christ through their actions and the word of God, God has impacted entire communities. Participants expressed a desire to continue this important conversation after the conference had concluded. Covenant World Mission is prayerfully considering whether to hold another conference in the near future. □

INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

Covenant Merge Ministries

Team opportunities are available in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Spain.

Contact: Dale Lusk at dale@covmerge.org;
www.covmerge.org

China

Meet Chinese students eager to learn English and enjoy the opportunity to show Jesus's love at China Connection, January 2010.

Contact: Karen Hallberg at karen.hallberg@covchurch.org

Colombia

All types of groups are welcome. Children and youth ministry, adult ministry, and service projects are available.

Contact: Gary or Mary Lou Sander at mission@pactocol.org

Ecuador

Work and ministry teams are welcome to work with the national Covenant church.

Contact: Yonchu Song at yonchu@hotmail.com

Mexico

Children's ministries, construction, and community health projects are available in partnership with the Mexican Covenant church.

Contact: Jo Ellen Reaves at joellenreaves@yahoo.com

Construction and community projects are available in partnership with local churches in Valle Hermoso.

Contact: Jim and Barb Mikrut at jbse@juno.com;
www.freewebs.com/overthebordermissions

Russia

Christian Radio for Russia seeks help installing radio equipment in various areas of Russia.

Contact: Dan Johnson, New Life Radio, crfr@juno.com;
www.crfr.org

Cape Town, South Africa

Bridges of Hope is looking for work teams to work on a facility for orphan ministry.

Contact: Dennis Wadley at DennisW@bridgesworldwide.org;
www.bridges-of-hope.org

Johannesburg, South Africa

The South African Chinese Covenant Church seeks teams for vacation Bible school and other ministries for English-speaking Chinese children.

Contact: Dave and Judy Dolan at dave.judydolan@comcast.net

Taiwan

Teach conversational English in a Covenant church.

Contact: Karen Hallberg at 773-907-3318;
karen.hallberg@covchurch.org

NATIONAL PROJECTS

Center for Student Mission

Urban mission opportunities are available year round in Chicago, Toronto, Houston, Los Angeles, Washington DC, and elsewhere.

Contact: info@csn.org; www.csm.org

Covenant Bible Camps

Assistance is needed in remodeling, grounds work, maintenance, etc.

Contact: The camp nearest you or
www.covenantcamps.org

Covenant Mountain Mission Bible Camp

CMMBC seeks both summer staff and maintenance assistance year round.

Contact: Ellen Finkbeiker at 276-346-1013;
elfink@localnet.com

Covenant Youth of Alaska, Unalakleet, Alaska

Covenant Bible Camp volunteers are needed for summer 2009

Contact: Jessica Fondell at jessica@cyak.org;
www.cyak.org/camp.html

Volunteers are needed to minister to Native youth and young adults.

Contact: Byron Bruckner at byron@cyak.org;
www.cyak.org

Jesus People USA, Chicago

Opportunities are available for working with JPUSA's community and inner-city ministries.

Contact: Scott Ingerson at 773-561-2450 ext. 2310 or 2112; www.jpusa.org

KICY, Nome, Alaska

Work teams are needed for summer 2009.

Contact: Dennis Weidler at dennisw@kicy.org

Our Place/North Place, Duluth, Minnesota

Volunteers work with residents in various activities (Christian education, community integrations, etc.).

Contact: Dana or Shirley at 218-624-3097

Rebuilding in Phoenix, Louisiana

Volunteers are still needed for clean-up and home reconstruction following Hurricane Katrina.

Contact: Michael Gromer at 913-638-6839;
mgromer@everestkc.net; www.rebuildingphoenix.com

Are you interested in having a project included in this list, or do you have a question for Covenant Mission Connection? Contact Karen Hallberg at 773-907-3318 or karen.hallberg@covchurch.org.