

World Mission

NEWSLETTER

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In this issue, we honor Covenant missionaries Jerry and Vicky Love, who recently retired after thirty-one years of missionary service in Mexico. We praise God for their faithful service as many have come to Christ through their ministry. We also highlight the expanding work of Covenant Merge Ministries. Finally, we invite you to consider the short-term mission (one to three years) opportunities that are available around the world.

Jerry and Vicky Love: Called to Ministry in Mexico

Jerry and Vicky Love were called to long-term/career missionary service to Mexico at the Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Covenant Church in June 1977. During their thirty-one years in Mexico, the Loves were active in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting in Mexico City, Monterrey, and Puebla.

Jerry recalls his original call to ministry, "During high school I began earnestly seeking God's will for my life. One evening God spoke specifically and personally to me about obeying what I already knew to be his will. I repented in tears, rededicated my life to him, and shortly thereafter his call became crystal clear."

Vicky reflects on her own story: "Shortly after my conversion at age sixteen while living in Alaska, I began sensing a possible call of God on my life. I attended a city-wide revival and signed a decision card pledging my own life to go south for full-time Christian service in Mexico or Central America."

The Loves' first assignment was in Mexico City, where they planted new churches until 1988. In 1989, they moved to Monterrey in the northeast part of the country, where they were again involved in church planting.

In 1994, the Loves started their work in Puebla in central Mexico. Challenged to start a Covenant church, Jerry disciplined men, conducted home Bible studies, taught in various settings, and preached regularly at Sunday meetings to the infant congregation.



Jerry and Vicky Love



Jerry (left) participates in a baptism.

Vicky's ministry included reaching out to children through Bible clubs and Christmas pageants, Sunday school, and vacation Bible school. She also produced materials for summer Bible schools in the central and south districts of Mexico. She taught bi-monthly Christian education workshops, courses in piano and hymnology, and developed a six-year cycle of vacation Bible school programs. She also spoke at conferences, organized children's programs for national events, and cooperated in the development of the Covenant

Sunday-school curriculum *El Pacto Con Dios*, designed by Margie Swenson, who is currently serving as co-director of missionary personnel for Covenant World Mission. These materials were designed for Spanish-speaking Covenant churches and continue to be used throughout Latin America.

The Loves also had a gift for hospitality. In their home adjacent to the University of the Americas, they hosted many guests over the years, including students and missionaries. Their home in Puebla also served as the meeting place for the church before the congregation purchased property.

The Loves were very involved with children in Puebla, and that ministry made an impact on the



The Loves in Mexico City in 1987

pastors for the first time. This included discipling leaders for their future ministries, helping the church develop its constitution, and preparing the founding members for the future, when they would select their new pastor and leadership team. Their goal was to see the Puebla church well

established before concluding their work in the city.



Vacation Bible school participants in Puebla

After more than thirty-one years in their beloved Mexico, Jerry and Vicky are now living in Portland, Oregon, where both of their families live. They have been traveling, representing Covenant World Mission and reconnecting with supporters to thank them for all their years of prayer and financial support. Without these many

mission partners, their work in Mexico would not have been possible.

We praise God for the Loves' many gifts and for their desire to serve God internationally and cross-culturally. We honor their faithful service in Mexico as they begin this next chapter in their lives. □



A Christmas pageant

entire community. Ten years ago, the Puebla church decided to focus on children's ministry as its primary outreach. They focused specifically on Agua Santa (Holy Water), a community of more than 32,000 people living in a five-block concentration of high-rise, low-income housing units. In 2001, the Covenant World Mission vacation Bible school project was dedicated to help find land for children there who had only the play space between their buildings as a meeting place. That launched an entire series of events that resulted in the Puebla congregation obtaining land and a building in 2003. This ministry has brought many children, and through them, their families to faith.

Beginning in 2003, the Loves found themselves in the role of development



Some of the parents of children who participated in the kid's club

Beginning in 2003, the Loves found themselves in the role of development

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Covenant Merge Ministries Sees Growth in Mission Trips

By Stan Friedman

Dale Lusk, Covenant project missionary and executive director of Covenant Merge Ministries, says he is excited by the trends he sees developing in congregations.

Covenant Merge Ministries, a ministry of the Department of World Mission, coordinates one- and two-week mission trips throughout the world.

"Teams want to develop long-term partnerships with communities and focus more on development projects," says Lusk. "Fourteen of the churches we worked with this year either have developed a partnership or are developing an international partnership with Merge as their guide."

Teams are also going to more places. In past years projects outside of Mexico accounted for just a quarter of Merge's trips. This year, however, about 40 percent of teams have gone to countries other than Mexico, including the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, and Jamaica.

Churches throughout the denomination are sending teams. This year Alaska sent a team for the first time.

The involvement by the teams has been increasingly creative, Lusk says. One group taught taekwon do. Another took fifty children on a weekend retreat and had a balloon ministry with them. A team even ministered in a juvenile prison.

Teams are also working with local schools. "We had teams work with more than 2,300 students this year teaching conversational English, science, art, Bible, and physical education," Lusk says. Other types of ministries also saw an increase in participation. "We had more medical personnel than usual, including a dental team, first-aid training, and optometrists," Lusk says. "A couple of teams taught quilting, knitting, and sewing to women in the community."



A mission team works with Covenant Merge Ministries in the Caribbean.

Between January and August, 1,028 people participated in trips. "This is exactly in line with the previous pre-CHIC year of 2005 when there were 1,025 participants at this time," Lusk says. The fifteen-year-old ministry set a record last year with 1,324 participants. "What is remarkable to us is how we were able to maintain our numbers in a year when economics have caused many other mission organizations and camps to have huge drop-offs in numbers," Lusk says. "Many teams were smaller than they originally thought, and some cancelled. However, we still did well."

So far this year, forty-nine churches have participated in fifty-four trips. A college ministry, a private high school, and two parachurch ministries also have worked with Merge.

The teams worked in Texas and ten countries: Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Chile, Argentina, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Spain.

They ministered at sites that included forty churches, eight community ministries, which included drug and alcohol rehab programs, six children's homes, six schools, two church plants, and two prisons. The teams also



A mission team member works on a wall.

worked alongside Covenant ministries in Monterrey, Mexico; La Plata, Argentina; and La Coruña, Spain.

More than 11,500 people have participated in trips coordinated by Merge since the ministry began, Lusk says.

Working with Merge ensures that trips benefit both host communities and church groups, Lusk says. Merge staff train teams from each church on how to work with different cultures, as well as on other aspects of the trip. The ministry also works with hosts on how to best work with the church groups. □

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Tammi Biggs, a short-term missionary serving with Covenant Merge Ministries, interacts with people in the Dominican Republic.



Dale Lusk plays with children in Jamaica.

About Covenant Merge Ministries

The mission of Covenant Merge Ministries is to share and experience God's love through an ongoing physical, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual exchange; to use a group's unique gifts, talents, and abilities; to enhance lives; to share the gospel of Jesus Christ; to build the international body of Christ; to glorify God.

Each mission experience is customized. Each group chooses where they will go, when they will go, and how long they will be there. Covenant Merge Ministries will match a group's goals with existing needs. Mission trips are offered year round.

Currently, Merge has ongoing mission work in Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and Spain.

To learn more about Covenant Merge Ministries, visit www.covmerge.org, send an email to info@covmerge.org, or call 956-458-9568. □

Short-term Missionary Opportunities 2008-2009

BELGIUM

- Pastor to youth and families
- Refugee ministries

BRAZIL

- General administration assistant
- Media technician: website, video, computer
- Printed media director: flyers, posters, brochures, newsletters
- Sports assistant to work with children
- Fine arts program: theater, music, dance, etc.
- English teacher/tutor—ESL programs

BURKINA FASO

- Nurses for two medical centers
- Computer training/outreach
- ESL teacher
- Missionary children's teacher
- Bible-school teacher (French required)
- College-age and youth worker with sports emphasis

CAMEROON

- Rain Forest International School (two-year commitment preferred)
- Middle/high-school teachers (various subjects)
- Hostel assistant (beginning July 2009)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

- Fulani ministries

COLOMBIA

- Social project development
- Communications/media development
- Christian education/discipleship/youth
- Mission team coordination

COVENANT MERGE MINISTRIES

- Two area directors for Central America
- One area director for Northern Mexico

EAST ASIA

- English computer applications teachers
- Conversational English and related subjects teachers

ECUADOR

- Facilitator/activities coordinator at Covenant camp in Santo Domingo (Spanish required)
- Webpage designer/developer (some Spanish required)
- Mission team coordination

EUROPE/MOSAICS

- Outreach via community and refugee centers
- Tutor for students
- Youth ministry
- Language classes
- Outreach to immigrant groups (second language required)

FRANCE

- Administrative assistant (French required)
- Webpage developer (French required)
- Event planner/hospitality
- Junior- and senior-high youth leaders (two-year commitment and French required)

GUAM

- Information technology maintenance and development
- Teachers (master's degree required): English, science, math, philosophy, Bible
- Campus maintenance person on remote Chuuk Islands

JAPAN

- Friendship evangelism
- Conversational English teacher
- Music ministry (keyboard skills)
- Youth ministry (especially high school)
- Handyman/carpentry skills at Akagi Bible Camp

MEXICO

- Youth/children's ministry
- Accountant
- Webpage developer
- Grant writer
- Community development
- Mission team coordination
- Health work in the isthmus
- Church planters (Spanish required)

SOUTH AFRICA

- Orphan academy high-school teachers (two-year minimum, bachelor's degree required)
- Community development workers (five-year minimum)

SPAIN

- Artists (music, dance, theater)
- Piano instructor (degree in music and some Spanish required)
- Administrator/accountant
- Athletic coaches/trainers for outreach ministry
- Sports outreach/administration at a health club
- Church planting team members
- Evangelism, discipleship, and theological education
- Technical support for video, computer use, websites
- Office manager/assistant
- Counselors/therapists (Spanish required)
- University ministry
- Alpha course coordinator

TAIWAN

- Middle school English teacher

THAILAND

- Business facilitator for handicraft ministries
- English teachers/tutors

For more information, please contact Lana Heinrich, associate director of missionary personnel, at 773-907-3350, or by email at lane.heinrich@covchurch.org.

**We're always
looking for
more friends!**



Friends like you empower the ministries of Covenant missionaries and our international ministry partners. By becoming a Friend of World Mission you allow us to send you information about six different projects a year. You decide which projects you want to support and how much you want to contribute. These projects provide funding for leadership training, church planting, medical work, and various types of construction in support of ministry. To learn more, call 773-907-3316, email fowm@covchurch.org, or visit www.covchurch.org/mission/fowm.