

Many Friends, One Mission

Through small and faithful gifts, Covenanters have built churches, hospitals, and schools—and more—throughout the world.



Everyone can make a difference with their life.

About seven years ago I was working at Covenant Offices in Chicago. My job was accounts receivable—I entered donation information into a computer and generated receipts. I didn't feel like I was making much of an impact, but the day I got a letter from a teenager named Athena, my perspective changed.

Every other month I would get a tide of donations for a program called Friends of World Mission. This was an account that sent out appeals to donors six times a year for world mission projects. From where I sat, though, it meant a massive increase in my workload for a few weeks. Usually I would bury my nose in my computer and fly through the stack of papers and checks as quickly as possible.

One envelope, though, had a letter inside that caught my eye. It read: "Dear Friends of World Mission, I'm sorry for not being able to give more, but I'm only fourteen and I can't give much. I'll try to get more the next time. I also want to thank everyone there for doing such a good job. Thank you! God bless you all!"

When I read this letter I stopped everything. I read it three times and a few tears welled up in my eyes. (An uncommon occurrence in accounting!) Here was a teenager who wanted desperately to give, and who went out of her way to apologize for not being able to give more. I realized that if a high-school student could have a heart for world mission, then so could I, even while

I did accounting. From that day on I began to give to FOWM.

Friends of World Mission was started in 1965 to fund special projects. The first project was building a hospital at Karawa in the Democratic Republic of Congo—\$43,000 was raised for this project. Since then there have been more than 170 projects, and through FOWM, Covenant missionaries have been able to build churches, schools, hospitals, and much more.

All told, more than \$7 million has been raised by FOWM since 1965. This money has not been raised by a few donors giving large gifts, but by many faithful donors giving small gifts over a long period of time.

Most checks that passed my desk were for between twenty and one hundred dollars. Some were for more and some were for less, with a few for as little as one dollar. Taken all together, those gifts made a difference. When I started giving to FOWM, I felt part of something bigger than myself, something that was impacting the world.

Today I am no longer in accounting. Now I am a youth pastor. In that role, I often invite students and their families to be a part of FOWM. It's a great way for students to learn to give. Students get to see that their gifts, even if they are small, do make an impact. They get to see one of the joys of being part of our denomination—the chance to work together to change the world for God. FOWM allows us to connect to the Covenant and the great work God is doing through our Covenant missionaries.

Now seven years later I want to say thank you to Athena. Your giving and your humility changed the way I think about my part in world missions. Thank you. You made a difference. □

Scott Nelson is pastor to students at River47 Covenant Church in Orange, California.

FOWM Fact File

Since 1965, Friends of World Mission has raised more than \$7.1 million for Covenant missionary projects. Among the more than 3,000 Friends of World Mission are individuals, Sunday-school classes, women ministry groups, and church youth groups.

FOWM gifts help out in many areas, including:

- assisting new Covenant missionaries as they set up in current and new areas of ministry;
- constructing churches, schools, missionary homes, and other facilities;
- training pastors and other leaders;
- providing transportation;
- providing resources for churches, radio stations, and mission projects.

The Department of World Mission sends out six FOWM project appeals each year. Each year, one Sunday is designated FOWM Enlistment Sunday, and information about FOWM is sent in advance to each Covenant church. This year it is November 5.

For more information or to become a Friend of World Mission contact:

The Department of World Mission
5101 N. Francisco Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625
773-907-3316
world.mission@covchurch.org
www.covchurch.org/mission/fowm