

IN THE
Hands
OF
God

*The history of the first 20 years
in the life of Christ Covenant Church*



Mary Burke

CHAPTER 1

THE MISSION CHURCH

They would have their church at last! Charles Wilson was coming! The Lord had opened the way.

It was the fall of 1974. Three young couples living in the southeastern part of Charlotte, North Carolina had been attending Westminster Presbyterian Church, located in Rock Hill, South Carolina. It was the closest Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) around. For months these men and women met with the Elders of that congregation to discuss their vision: the establishment of a PCA church of their own.

A NEW DENOMINATION

The PCA denomination itself was scarcely a year old, having formed officially on December 5, 1973, and from what these young couples had discovered, it was a denomination rooted in basic Bible teaching, with a heart for impacting the culture of the day with the vision of spiritual transformation. It held a vision brimming with spiritual vitality as it sought to minister to the whole person, strengthen families, search out non-believers, and support the work of missions throughout the world — a church for fulfilling the great commission!

So the “Pat” Vernon Pattersons, the Jasper Wilsons, and the Jake Wrays met with some of the originators of that PCA vision to talk about how to extend its reach into southeast Charlotte. Then they approached the Elders of Westminster. God was moving, and these couples followed His leading.

In turn, the Elders of Westminster initiated discussions with their own presbytery, Calvary Presbytery of South Carolina. In response, the Reverend Charles Wilson was called to head up this determined group who believed God had a glorious plan for reaching the Charlotte area. At the time, Rev. Wilson was the 32-year-old pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Aliceville, Alabama. One of the original organizers of the PCA, he was Stated Clerk of the first presbytery and was approved by Missions United States (MUS) in church planting.

It was a match made in Heaven. At the request of the Calvary Presbytery, Charles Wilson agreed to come to Charlotte. Originally from Burlington — near Greensboro, NC — it was not a difficult decision for him. He was coming “home” to Carolina.

“It was in God’s province,” he said, “and a blessing to my family. Our young children were having some allergy problems — something in that area of Alabama. The move cleared up that problem!”

Once in town and settled, Charles — together with these three to four couples — went to work. Praying for guidance, knowing the formidable task before them, they began to establish their mission church.

It was unusual to begin a church plant with so few people, but it was agreed that

the fast-growing southeast area of Charlotte was the ideal location to plant a church. Not just a church, but what came to be viewed as a “flagship” church for the future. It would be one of the denomination’s first works. PCA leadership, together with those early congregants with their new pastor, prayed fervently for its success!

The seed was sown, and the story of how this small, faithful group was blessed with bountiful growth is evidence of the very “hand of God” in action. It is a story of a visionary leadership — working with laypersons — to construct a ministry framework able to weather the inevitable challenges of a new church, as well as to carry out the vision of that work for years to come.

In the beginning, the group met in the Patterson home for mid-week Bible study. The remaining weekdays, however, were reserved for identifying the names of those likely to be interested in a Charlotte-area PCA church. Area members of “Concerned Presbyterians,” an organization that helped birth the Presbyterian Church in America, were among the first to receive written invitations and personal telephone contacts. In addition, a list of local subscribers to the *Presbyterian Journal* was obtained; these too received invitations to worship at the new plant. Ads were designed and placed in local newspapers to get word out among the general populace.

FIRST WORSHIP SERVICE

A month later, in October of 1974, the church — named Alexander Road Presbyterian — held its first worship service in the Beverly Woods Elementary School. About 20 to 25 adults and children gathered there.

Among those attending were Warren and Helen Pylman, who 25 years later, were still members of Christ Covenant, though the three original couples had moved on. The transient nature of Charlotte’s suburban population was one of the foremost challenges of the young church, one that would continue to plague its growth throughout its early years.

“We would have people move in and get involved,” Wilson commented, “and then they’d get transferred by their company. That hit us hard every year, especially at the beginning.”

EARLY ARRIVALS

But the area was growing rapidly. Demographics showed that young couples, in particular, were moving into the area. Among them was a young man in data processing, Ted Spangler, who came with his family to Charlotte from Charleston, West Virginia. In November of 1974, Ted spotted the ad in the newspaper about Alexander Road Presbyterian which he discovered was meeting nearby. It was just before Christmas when Ted, his wife Letha and their children attended worship service there for the first time. Only 15 people dotted the school auditorium-turned-sanctuary that Sunday.

“There was another ad and another church we were going to visit the next Sunday,” recalled Spangler, “but we were running late the next Sunday morning, and this was closest, so we went back again.”

And that is where they stayed — later to become charter members of Christ Covenant.

Progress, it seemed, moved at a snail’s pace. Within the first months, two of the organizing couples had already left the church. The small congregation needed strong leadership, but the rules of the Calvary Presbytery stated that an Elder could not be elected until he had been in the church one full year. Early losses hindered the effort to build a strong, proven leadership for the long-term.

Meanwhile, the slow and laborious task of educating worshippers about the beliefs of Presbyterians was initiated. It began with the teaching of the Westminster Confession in Sunday school, which would continue for a full year, as required for every PCA church plant. In the minds of many among this transient membership, the process of getting established was far too slow, but God would accomplish all things in His timing.

MOVE TO OLD PROVIDENCE SCHOOL

By the time the church made a second move to what seemed a better location at Old Providence School on Rea Road, it had built attendance to between 50 and 60 people — the largest number to date. But it wasn’t time to settle in yet. In a surprise move, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School system changed its policy, and churches were no longer permitted to use school property!

There were other problems too. The fact that two different churches convened for worship at Old Providence at the same time on Sunday morning made for less than ideal circumstances for the many families coming and going. So, once more, the church was forced to search for a new meeting place.

AN AILING PASTOR

“That’s when we started at Mutual Savings and Loan across from SouthPark shopping mall,” Wilson explained. “They had a community room upstairs they allowed us to use. We would meet there on Sunday mornings and then meet in my living room on Sunday evenings.”

Just as one solution was found, another obstacle followed on its heels; this one, undoubtedly, the most difficult challenge yet to face the young church. The health of its pastor, Charles Wilson, began to fail, as his chest pains became more serious.

“The work was going up and down like a yo-yo,” Wilson stated.

Could the young church survive? What plan did God have for them?

CHAPTER 2

THE MISSION CHURCH STRUGGLES

The Reverend Charles Wilson, pastor of the mission church, was finding it more and more difficult to meet his commitment. His health was failing.

UNSTABLE GROWTH

He was hospitalized and “laid aside for a time,” as he put it. “We’d have to bring in someone to fill the pulpit and to take over my duties — Jack Baset, Phil Henderson.” In 1975, the Alexander Road Presbyterian Church was transferred to the Carolina Presbytery, and Bob Wilcox, as Chairman of the Mission North America Committee, took an active part in helping to supply these pastors.

When Charles recovered for a while, the work flourished, only to drop off again as his heart again worsened. But even his health struggle brought with it an unexpected blessing — a feeling, a family. “I remember the close relationships that we developed during that time,” he stated.

NURSE PAT

Even in the midst of his illness, Wilson was always reaching out to others. While a patient in Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, he began visiting with one of his nurses, Pat Kohnle. A native of Granite Falls, North Carolina, Pat earned her BA degree in nursing at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. At the time, the young nurse was a new believer and, as Wilson expressed it, he was able to “establish a beach head” in her life.

After Wilson was discharged from the hospital, Pat began to attend worship services regularly at Olde Providence Elementary. In time she became a member and was disciplined by the Wilson family as she served alongside them. But God had still more blessings in store for Nurse Pat. One year later, after the move to the savings and loan building, Ted Spangler brought a young co-worker along with him to evening Bible study at the Wilson home. The newcomer had come to Matthews to work at PCA International Corporation. His name was Bernie Lawrence.

BERNIE, HIS STORY

Bernie Lawrence, born in Richmond, Virginia, raised in the tidewater country, had accepted Christ while on his last tour of duty in the Air Force during the time of the Vietnam War. While in Fort Walton Beach, Florida, at Eglin Air Force Base, Lawrence was introduced to a young man in the Navigators who showed him a “whole new way of life.”

Lawrence left the service in 1975 and finished his BS degree in Systems Science at the University of Florida in Pensacola. It was there that he became involved in the Intervarsity Christian Fellowship. While engaged in that campus work, Lawrence had opportunity to meet with pastors of the new denomination. He wasn't, however, ready to commit to any particular theology. At the forefront of his mind was the pressing need to find a job.

After graduation, Lawrence says he "saturated the country with resumes, set out on interviews, ended up coming to Charlotte for the first time, and fell in love with it." He accepted the position offered in Matthews and — as only God could have planned it — began working in Ted Spangler's department.

Before long, Ted learned that Bernie was looking for a church. He took that opportunity to describe the "little mission work" that met in a (savings and loan) building and invited him to come worship with them. Imagine Bernie's surprise when he heard it was a PCA church — the upstart denomination he had been introduced to in Florida! Bernie agreed to attend their Bible study that very night, and his life was changed forever.

THE SINGLES GROUP, "WIPE OUT"

It was a balmy June evening in 1977. Bernie parked his car and walked toward the house. At the front walk he met an attractive young lady, Nurse Pat Kohnle! "We met that night," Bernie said. "I remember it just like it was yesterday. For me, it was a night that began not only a marriage to this church, but — within two years — a marriage to Pat. At the time there were only two members in the Singles group, and when we got married that eliminated the group. There were no other single folks."

Theirs was the first marriage performed at the mission church.

FROM SYSTEMS ANALYST TO CHURCH ADMINISTRATION

Little realizing the enormous role he would play in the development of this Servant/Resource church, Bernie threw himself into meeting the many needs of the mission with passion. Over the years, he held every "job" in the church, even as he continued to advance in the corporate world. But in the 90s, he would make an employment move — and a life move — that would usher in a great number of changes for the young church. Lawrence left his position in the corporate world as a systems analyst at Rexham to be on full-time staff as Executive Director for Administration at Alexander Road Church.

"I guess my work helped prepare me for church service," he commented. He added, "God blessed this church with godly leaders over the years. The pastors and Elders teach and model obedience to the Scriptures.

"Our purpose — then and now — is to be available and serve God in our generation. To persevere, be steadfast and committed, modeling what it means to be a loyal leader."

Thus, the example was set.

THE COMING OF THE TERRELLS

Soon after Lawrence added his name to the membership roll, another couple arrived who would, through the years, commit heart and soul to strengthening the work God had begun. The newlyweds had come in search of Pastor Wilson, who had served as their Youth Pastor at the North Side Presbyterian Church in Burlington, NC. They were Mike and Jenny Terrell, both excited about the new Presbyterian Church in America, and searching for affiliation in Charlotte.

Mike graduated in engineering from NC State in Raleigh in May of 1977 and came to work at Duke Power the next day. High school sweethearts, Mike and Jenny married a month later in June.

During the early months of their transition, the Terrells spent most weekends back in Burlington. Then, as they established their home in Charlotte, they became more involved in the Alexander Road Church. Meeting in the savings and loan bank, the struggling mission increasingly felt the need “to have their own identity,” Mike commented. For Mike and others, that meant having “our own building.”

LAND WITHOUT A BUILDING

It was a tremendous opportunity! Members were of one mind when 3.79 acres of land became available at the corner of Alexander Road and Shaftsbury in the southeast area of Charlotte. The purchase was made, but the prospects of actually being able to build on the property anytime soon seemed remote at best. While the growth of the church was slowed by its lack of a “home” location, it was also not in a position to support a building project. But as they would discover, good things come to those who wait.

For instance, Harry and Mary Martin visited the worship service at Mutual Savings and Loan near SouthPark. They had come from the Granada Presbyterian Church in Miami, Florida, where Martin served as a Deacon.

“It was suggested to us that we look up the Alexander Road Church in Charlotte,” Mary said. “There weren’t many people there — I’m not sure we went more than once or twice. I kept saying they didn’t have any Sunday school classes, and they really didn’t have anything at all for the children.”

Despite the couple’s reluctance, Charles Wilson continued to pursue them. Mary recalled, “When Charles used to call us, I’d tell him that when they got a building and when they got some programs, to call us back.”

The Martins’ words summarized both the problem and the prayer of the struggling church: that it would have a permanent place of worship of its own and that there would be no more moving from school to school, from this building to that building. The land on Alexander Road was theirs at last. Now, they

wondered, how could they build a house for the Lord there — a “home” where they could further the vision they’d long pursued for Alexander Road Presbyterian Church?

A HELPING HAND

Then, as is so often the case in the history of a church, the women came to the rescue! The PCA Women in the Church (WIC) from all over the nation, hearing of their plight, offered to purchase a modular unit to place on the land at Alexander Road!

CHAPTER 3

THE CHURCH IN A MODULAR UNIT

“This is it! God is going to move this church forward!”

That was the reaction of the small congregation of Alexander Road Presbyterian Church when the PCA Women in the Church offered to purchase a temporary building for them.

Bernie Lawrence and Mike Terrell poured over specifications as they designed the interior of the 28 x 65-foot, double-wide unit.

“We referred to it as a modular building,” Mike said, “but the neighborhood and everybody else called it a trailer.”

POSSESSING THE LAND

In the unit, there was a worship area with central columns, a kitchenette, restrooms, and two Sunday school rooms — one of which would serve as a nursery during meetings.

Working with chain saws was a new experience for Mike and Bernie, but eventually the land was cleared. Gravel was hauled in for the parking area, and the modular building was rolled into place.

It poured rain on the Saturday clean-up day before the first service, but no one minded. It was a time of high spirits as they prepared for the future.

MODULAR UNIT: YEAR ONE

That first worship service in June of 1978 was a memorable one. The timing couldn't have been better. The PCA General Assembly was in Session that weekend in Charlotte, and men in positions of leadership from all over the country came to meet with the mission church. Phil Clark, Director of Mission in the United States (MUS) at that time, preached the first message in the modular unit that was Alexander Road Presbyterian Church. The worship area was filled to capacity, as many of the out-of-town visitors came to show their support.

But it would be a while before worshippers from the immediate area would fill those seats. During that first year there was only moderate growth in membership. The young families prayed that the Lord would lead people to the church, yet watched on Sunday mornings when cars slowed down as though to enter the parking lot, only to speed up and drive away.

"There were only a few cars parked out front, so you figured it wasn't a going church," one remarked.

Some families spoke of driving two cars to church in order to swell the number of cars in the parking lot.

Pastor Charles Wilson remembered the close relationship between these few members.

"There was a lot of spiritual growth at that time," he said, "although not a lot of numerical growth to go with it. But those who were there, I remember their closeness, and their zeal for the Word, and their desire to have an outreach.

These people would make phone calls and go out walking up and down the streets with me. They were very evangelistic minded. We went knocking on doors, inviting people to church, and witnessing when we had the opportunity. And if they came to church, then we would use the Evangelism Explosion program, sharing the Gospel with them."

They visited many homes in the area.

"Bernie Lawrence was very active in that," Charles added, "together with the Spanglers. That was a good time. It was slow growth in numbers, but the growth

happened in individuals — in spiritual growth, and in understanding the church, how the church works. Also they became very interested in missions.”

A HEART FOR MISSIONS

It was during this time of outreach that the missionary family of Don and Terry Williams returned from the field and visited in Pastor Wilson’s home. Don spoke at the worship service that Sunday morning. Afterwards, they were eating lunch at the Wilson’s when the phone rang.

It was Letha Spangler, moved by what they had seen and heard. In particular, their little girl, Kristi, had noticed that the missionary children’s shoes had holes in the soles, gaps where socks poked through. Kristi wanted to know how she could help them.

The Williams had spent four years in Brazil where the cost of living and inflation had sky-rocketed. There were six small children in need of new clothes, haircuts, dental work, medical care — so many things!

God was showing the church their first missionary family! Letha telephoned the other couples, and the small mission church on Alexander Road began the support of their own missionaries.

“Everybody gave sacrificially then,” Charles recalled. “It was a very real awakening for them to see the needs of this family — what happens to missionaries in the field sometimes. And everybody in that group, to this day, is very much committed to foreign missions. That was the first missionary that the church really, truly supported. They’ve been supporting them ever since!”

PASTOR WILSON RETIRES

Charles was still phoning the Martins regularly. At last, Harry and Mary joined the church in October of 1979. Soon after, it became clear that Pastor Wilson would need by-pass heart surgery. His health had reached the point where he felt it was “truly hampering the work of the church.”

He decided that he had to let it go so the work could move forward and flourish. He would have to take medical retirement!

And the core of four couples — the Spanglers, Lawrences, Terrells, and Martins — would have to decide whether to continue the work or not.

“When Charles resigned, it was like God had just ripped the rug out from under us,” Mike Terrell said. “We thought maybe this isn’t what He wants to do after all.”

Did God want this church to continue? What direction did God want them to take?

These were the questions they faced when Bob Wilcox, Chairman of the Mission North America committee, called a meeting with the four families. What would be their commitment?

CHAPTER 4

A NEW BEGINNING

Could the mission church on Alexander Road be salvaged? There were four discouraged families questioning whether there was a future for their church and wondering what that future might look like. What was God's will for them?

Besides his commitment to missions as Chairman of the Mission to North America Committee, Bob Wilcox was also a gifted evangelist. Named to the post of Evangelist for the PCA Central Carolina Presbytery, Bob couldn't help pondering these same questions. He had a heart for the new mission work, for those who labored to keep it alive — and those it could affect in the future.

From Bob's seasoned perspective, it was time for focused — and inspired — planning. He knew those four families were going to have to really dig in and circle the wagons of faith to make it. What they needed was a fresh start, a new format, and an innovative organization!

THE DECISION TO PRESS ON

So in January 1980, Wilcox met with the families. Their first decision: Would God have them persevere or disband? It was the opinion of Wilcox that the work needed to continue. In fact, he was so convinced that God wasn't finished with Alexander Road Church that he offered to serve as Interim Pastor for a year.

Ted Spangler recalled, "We were willing to stay there and see what God had in mind with Bob Wilcox's new effort."

Mike and Jenny Terrell agreed, saying, "As long as the doors are open, we're going to be here."

The Martins also announced their intention to stay.

So, after some discussion, the small group decided to give it “one more chance, one more year.”

“We were still a mission church,” Bernie Lawrence commented on that decision. “We had no idea how quickly one year would turn into two, which turned into three. We just kept at the work before us, following God’s leading.”

It would be three intensive years during which a committed congregation would reexamine what it meant to be a church — and emerge, at last, at a place only God could have prepared for them.

A NEW START – A NEW NAME

With a tentative decision for a yearlong commitment, Bob Wilcox accepted the challenge and agreed to serve as Interim Pastor. He came in 1979, fervent in the Spirit and convinced of God’s timing, giving hope to the four families. His leadership gave direction to their efforts, as they worked to verbalize the vision then to write out a “Wish List” for the church to present to God. The results were significant and enduring. During his time of service, Wilcox managed to reorganize the group — “changed the name, changed the format, the order of service, and redid the whole thing,” as one summed up.

Together, the group developed a new approach indeed. The revitalized work combined the distinctives of Reformed Theology together with an appealing philosophy of ministry, one with a focus on outreach and worship services characterized by contemporary elements.

“We started using Scripture songs,” Bob said, “and had more congregational participation — getting the people involved in the prayers, in the worship, and in running the church. We would still have good basic Biblical theology and doctrine, all that sort of thing, but as far as procedure, the style was more contemporary.”

This new image would require a new name as well. In those days, the word “Presbyterian” was synonymous with “liberal,” so it was decided to leave this designation out of the name and to “tell who we were” in the church literature instead.

As Mike Terrell recalled, “We were just sitting around brainstorming, throwing around a bunch of different names like ‘Covenant — Grace — Christ.’ Suddenly, Bob came up with the compound name ‘Christ Covenant,’ and everybody shouted ‘Yeah! That’s it!’”

Bob had suggested this name “because of the thought of Christ being preeminent in the church, and because we were of a covenant theology.” The name reflected Christ as the foundation and focus of the church’s ministry.

With a new format and a new name, a very intensive campaign was begun!

IN SEARCH OF WORSHIPPERS

Together, this core congregation wrote the copy for the very first Christ Covenant brochure. As many as 8,000 pieces were prepared for each mailing, a time-consuming process that required that Wednesday nights be set aside for the tasks of folding and stuffing envelopes. Those who responded to this mail invitation also received follow-up visits and telephone calls. It was demanding work, and Bob was to say later that he would never undertake such a major promotion again.

“That is a very difficult thing to do — to go from four families and build it up; you really shouldn’t start worship until you have 35 to 50 people involved. We usually start them off with a Bible study. But here we were already in a worship mode when I took over.”

By Easter time of that year, there were 25 to 35 people attending worship services. Wilcox prepared the very first Easter sermon to be preached at Christ Covenant. With excitement, he and his wife arrived at the modular unit to conduct the Resurrection Morning service. He unlocked the door, straightened the room, and waited. No one came!

Several folks had “gone home” for Easter. Others had driven to larger churches to hear the Easter music. None of the young couples realized that everyone would go somewhere else, too. Another lesson learned!

THE MUSIC MINISTRY MOVES FORWARD

From the start, Christ Covenant sought a strong music ministry. One day in 1980, Herb and Jo Miller walked into the modular unit to attend the worship service at Christ Covenant Church. In greeting Jo, Bob Wilcox learned that she could play the piano and, without hesitation, asked her to take her seat at the piano bench.

After the service, Jo was told that Jenny Terrell had been accompanying on the piano when possible, but that the church was seeking a full-time “Music Director.”

The Millers had been attending First Alliance Church on Sharon Amity, but Herb had been looking for the “conservative Presbyterian church” he had heard was on Alexander Road. “He drove up and down the road on other occasions, but couldn’t find it,” Jo said. “I guess he was looking for a church building, not a double-wide trailer.”

With newspaper ad in hand, Jo had telephoned the number listed, getting an answering machine with a friendly message recorded by Bob Wilcox. When Bob returned the call, Jo asked about the Youth program — their youngest at home was a teenager.

Yes, Bob told her, there was a Youth Program, and he gave her directions to the church. When the Millers walked in the following Sunday, they discovered that the “Youth Program” consisted of the three Tarte children, and that the church needed Jo and Herb’s music and choir expertise! They stayed on to help build this ministry.

THE FIRST ELDERS ELECTED

Membership and attendance gradually increased. At last, three Elders were elected: Bernie Lawrence, Harry Martin, and Bob Tarte.

By 1981, they were ready to petition to become a “particular” church. There were 39 members with 65 to 70 attending worship services. They had the qualifications of a maturing church, including Elders, a membership that could support itself, and, above all, the commitment of everyone to make it happen.

Thirty-two names appeared on that petition.

The petition was accepted on December 5, 1981. It had not been an easy journey, but the vision was finally a reality. They were now a very “particular” church — Christ Covenant Church — with duly elected officers. No longer a mission work!

Bob Wilcox invited the new leadership to a retreat at his home on Lake Norman. It was in that joyful assembly when the new leadership of Christ Covenant drew up what was referred to as the church “Wish List.” After all, wasn’t anything possible with God?

“In fact,” Bob said later, “when we look back now, about everything we said — including the school — has come to pass. We also wrote a criterion of what the pastor would have to look like.”

And so they went searching.

TO BECOME “A PARTICULAR CHURCH”: THE RESOLUTION

BELIEVING that all Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires the human mind whole-heartedly to subject itself in all its activities to the authority of Scripture as complete as the Word of God, standing written in the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible, all therein being verbally inspired by Almighty God, and therefore without error; and

BELIEVING that the Westminster Confession of Faith as adopted by the Presbyterian Church in America and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set forth the system of doctrine taught in Scripture, and therefore is to be learned, taught and proclaimed for the edification and government of Christian people, for the propagation of the faith and for the evangelization of the world by the power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; and

ACCEPTING the Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America as setting forth a reasonable and practical formulary for church organization; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED:

1. That we, who are listed below and have signed the attached covenantal agreement, do covenant together to form an association to be known as Christ Covenant Church of the Presbyterian Church in America; and
2. That this association shall have as its purpose to perpetuate the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as it is proclaimed in the Scripture and declared in the Westminster standards; and
3. That we do hereby petition the Central Carolina Presbytery to organize us as a 'Constituted Church according to the Word of God and the faith and order of Central Carolina Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America' (BCO Chapter 5).

Ward Bursley

Jody Bursley

Mike Gill

Nancy Gill

Jack Farris

Bernard Lawrence

Pat Lawrence

Harry Martin

Mary Martin

Herbert L. Miller

Robin Jo Miller

Robert Tarte

Lynn Tarte

Lee Tarte

Mike Terrell

Jenny Terrell

Elizabeth White

Ruth Ann Wilson

Michael Tulp

Kathryn Tulp

Joan C. Miller

Ed Sweeten

Vicki Sweeten

April Stollmack

Robert Tarte

Terry Tarte

Stephen Spangler

Frank Underwood

Susan Underwood

Mary Wright Ferguson

Ted Spangler

Letha Spangler

CHAPTER 5

THE SELECTION OF A PASTOR

The providence of God brought together three visionary parties in the selection of a pastor to lead the new Christ Covenant church: a Christ Covenant pulpit committee, THE PCA Mission to North America (MNA) — which was actively seeking to plant a Resource Church — and a pastor.

Those who were members of the church at that time still speak in awe and praise when they remember how the “hand of the Lord” directed all who were involved in the process.

THE PULPIT COMMITTEE SEARCH

The first step towards calling a pastor was a retreat at Lake Norman in 1982 that brought together the Elders of Christ Covenant. They appointed a pulpit committee, comprised of Bernie Lawrence and Bob Tarte.

The committee stepped out in faith, believing that the Lord had a particular man chosen for the church.

“We looked at man after man,” Bernie recalled. “We came very close to bringing in a pastor at least twice. One got right up to the point of saying ‘yes’ when he changed his mind. It was very hard!”

They would realize later why it had been impossible to place these men. God had His own man lined up for the job.

A FORWARD THINKING DENOMINATION

While Bernie and Bob were diligently searching, the PCA was working on a plan of its own. The General Assembly had directed its outreach arm, the Mission to North America, to develop a process for actively planting “Resource Churches” throughout the country. The goal of each of these plants was to establish a “significant ministry in a significant population area.” Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama had made a commitment to provide funding for the initial “Flagship Planting Project.” A number of potential locations were identified. The next step: locate a pastor for one of the proposed churches.

“And so they came,” recalled Harry Reeder III. “We were in Florida at Pinelands Presbyterian Church at that time, and Terry Gyger — who was the MNA Coordinator for Church Growth — came and talked with me and asked me to consider one of about 10 cities. In our conversation, Charlotte was mentioned. I told him I was really very happy where I was. The Lord was blessing the ministry at Pinelands, but the idea of returning to Charlotte certainly attracted my attention. I told him I’d pray about it.”

THE PREPARATION OF THE PASTOR

There had been many steps in the process that moved Harry Reeder from Charlotte, where he was born, to Florida, where he ministered as a pastor.

His father, Harry Reeder II, was in baseball as a professional umpire, and the family moved often — to Atlanta, Waco, Greensboro, Raleigh, Charleston, then back to Charlotte. During his growing up years, young Harry was primarily interested in athletics — baseball in particular. However, by the time he graduated from East Mecklenburg High School in 1966 and started college at East Carolina University in Greenville, he had switched to golf. He left college in 1968; it was that summer that he met Cindy.

A COMMITMENT

Cindy, born and brought up in Charlotte and home from UNC-Chapel Hill, was working a summer job in the Ladies' Department of Sears. One evening, Harry came to pick up his mother, Cindy's "boss." They met, began dating, and by October were engaged. They were married in January of 1969.

Both were from strong Christian families. Cindy had become a Christian at the age of 10, but Harry had never actually committed himself to Christ. All he was thinking of then was finishing his college education and breaking into professional golf. He was driven to succeed as a married man, and there were a few matters that he felt needed attention including the finding of a church that would be "theirs." So, they visited some congregations, and he picked "a little Presbyterian church on East Seventh Street," Faith Presbyterian Church, where he could sit back and feel comfortable — he thought.

They walked into the church that next Sunday, Harry recalled, "and everyone had their Bible." A second surprise came when one of the Elders recognized him. It was Harold Jones, who had played football, baseball, and basketball with his dad. The pastor was Dick Tevebaugh, who years later would become associated with Christ Covenant!

THE CALL TO MINISTRY

In the fall of 1969, Harry accepted Christ and joined Faith Presbyterian Church! Two weeks later he was leading the Youth group

The months that followed, however, were anything but smooth for Harry, as God began to deal with him, a new convert, struggling with his call to the ministry.

Determined to complete their educations, Harry and Cindy faced some difficult challenges as a young couple. Harry worked odd jobs, while attending summer school. Cindy was busy finishing school as a chemistry major. During that time, Harry was considering studying for a degree "maybe in criminology, law enforcement, or law" — while continuing to pursue golf since he had one year of athletic eligibility remaining. Making the golf team was the thing. It was a plan

that would mean a move from Charlotte back to Greenville. But almost at once, things began to point Harry away from a career in sports.

That summer, Harry took courses at East Carolina, while working with the Trinity Freewill Baptist Youth group. At that time, he became convinced of his call into full-time ministry. Cindy was “thrilled,” admitting later she had always hoped to serve as either a missionary or a minister’s wife.

Harry wholeheartedly accepted the call and enrolled at Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia.

COVENANT COLLEGE DAYS

“We pulled into Covenant College in 1971,” Harry said. “I didn’t have a job. We didn’t have a place to live. We were expecting our first child, Jennifer, and I had \$75 in my pocket.”

“The Lord blessed” as the young pastor-to-be finished his undergraduate schooling. But the journey was a difficult one. To make ends meet, Harry worked three part-time jobs, and Cindy taught chemistry at Lookout Mountain High School. Harry served as the Youth Pastor at Simpson Memorial Methodist, later filling that position at St. Elmo Presbyterian Church. During his senior year, he agreed to assist a group as they started an independent Bible Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

FURTHER STUDIES

After graduation, Harry felt he should stay in the area for a while longer since his ministry demands were growing in proportion to the flourishing Bible Church. In the meantime, he also began classes at the local Baptist seminary, Tennessee Temple. Two more children were born, Harry IV (Ike) and Abigail.

By 1979, Harry realized his need for a change. He later explained that “the Lord moved him” toward the Presbyterian Church in America, and he decided it was time to finish seminary. So the family moved to Miami, and he enrolled at Westminster Seminary’s southern campus at the Florida Theological Center.

PINELANDS IN MIAMI

The following summer, Harry became pastor of Pinelands Presbyterian, engaging in a revitalization ministry. By 1982, when he graduated from seminary with a M.Div. degree, the church had grown from 60 attendees to a congregation of 400. As Harry explained it, the church grew not through marketing or his use of the Spirit’s gifts but “because of the power inherent in the Gospel itself.”

And now Terry Gyger, who was from the Miami area and knew Harry personally, had come to him and asked him to plant a “flagship” Resource Church for the General Assembly of the PCA, and he had mentioned the Charlotte area.

Should he return to Charlotte to plant a “significant” ministry? It had been his home prior to his conversion; there would be old friends who had not yet met the “new man” he had become, not to mention the God-sized mission many hoped he would agree to move forward. The urge to return grew in his heart until, in 1982, Harry agreed to visit his old hometown and, together with Terry, to look over the changing city.

Harry saw clearly from the demographics that the ideal site for the plant was in southeast Charlotte.

AN INVITATION TO CHARLOTTE

But there was already a PCA church there — Christ Covenant — “a small work of about 38 people.”

After being told of the “Flagship Project” opportunity in Charlotte, Harry became concerned about interfering with the small church already in the area. So he sent a letter back to Terry to express his concerns, writing, “I really feel like it would be inappropriate for me to come and plant a church next to this struggling congregation. What needs to happen is this church should expand its vision and really try to move ahead and be the church that Charlotte needs it to be.”

In the meantime, Terry was in communication with Christ Covenant Interim Pastor Bob Wilcox and had excited him with the story of Harry Reeder and the revitalization at Pinelands. The result was that Christ Covenant “went after Harry,” Bob recalled. “We were very aggressive.”

It was with great conviction that Bernie boarded a plane and flew up to Michigan, where the General Assembly was in Session, to meet and talk with Harry Reeder. The offer he laid before Harry seemed preposterous — in the flesh. Harry’s “opportunity” was this: to leave the healthy, well-appointed Pinelands Presbyterian Church in Miami to come to Charlotte to pastor 38 people meeting in a trailer!

CHAPTER 6

“FIRST THINGS FIRST”: THE VISION

Once again, the PCA leadership took a turn to discuss the Charlotte work with Harry. Even before Harry could return to Florida from General Assembly, MNA Coordinator Terry Gyger was engaging the young preacher in discussions, since so many were convinced Harry was hand-picked by God for the job.

Ted Spangler, one of the four-family core of Christ Covenant, recalls how the denomination labored to let Harry know how much they were going to support the work there. “Harry had a strong driving church in Florida, so they had to do a real selling job,” commented Spangler. “Because there was a strong desire to plant this Resource Church, Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama offered support for Harry in Charlotte — and committed \$25,000 a year for three years” to the work.

A BIBLICAL PARADIGM

When the Reeders next visited Charlotte, Harry was invited to stop by Christ Covenant and preach at its Sunday evening service.

As it turned out, this was a key point in the revitalization — or remaking — process for the small church. Elder Bernie Lawrence remembers this sermon well, stating that it “hit home,” addressing one of the church’s main worries: Did Christ Covenant want to be the “large” Resource Church that the denomination envisioned?

“We had been a very small group for so many years,” Bernie recalled, “that while we had given a lot of thought to what we wanted to be as a church, I think there was this sense of not wanting to lose our smallness.” And that night Harry’s sermon was from Acts 2, focusing on this very issue!

“His challenge to us from Acts 2 was not to concentrate on size, but rather to focus on faithfulness and let the Lord determine whether we would be a large church or a small church. I remember the sermon well because it crystallized for me what we needed to be giving our attention to as a church.”

That night, reading from Acts 2, Harry drew a picture for the congregation of what a Servant/Resource church should be. To summarize, when disciples, through a life of service and devotion, commit themselves to the teaching of the Word, and to fellowship, worship, and prayer — both in the large group (temple courts) and in small groups (house to house) — the result will be fruitfulness. At Christ Covenant, this text was referred to again and again as leadership sought to communicate what a Servant/Resource church looked like as it lived out its mission.

THE CALL ANSWERED

But what of Harry himself? What would he do? The Reeders had dreamed of planting a church in Charlotte one day. Nevertheless, was this the one and this the time? Cindy had already put down roots in Florida. And now an established pastor, Harry would have to take a significant cut in salary in this new position. Yet, as they talked and prayed about it, they held to a vision of the kind of a church that the Lord had long since lain upon their hearts.

Though Harry's message had served to answer the doubts and questions of the people of Christ Covenant, more research was required to convince Harry that God had given him the go-ahead. So, while the Charlotte church family was set to begin the work of a Servant/Resource church, under Harry's leadership, their would-be pastor was making visits to other pastors in the area. Those discussions would be key to his own decision-making, particularly a meeting with Ross Rhodes of Calvary Church.

"We did not want to duplicate what was going on," Harry said. "That was a significant leading of the Lord."

As he talked with these pastors, Harry realized that his approach to ministry would be different from those of any of the other churches in the area. He could complement what God was already doing, without duplicating efforts.

"Ours would be a distinctly different ministry," he determined. "Our commitment would be to small groups, expositional preaching, and a functional philosophy of Presbyterian leadership."

So the decision was made. The invitation was given. Harry Reeder and his vision had the full support of the small congregation, and Harry agreed to candidate to become their pastor!

THE MATCH IS CONFIRMED

"I was on the pulpit committee and an Elder," Bernie Lawrence recalled. "And I had a lot of dialogue with Harry. In those first conversations with him, I saw that he was very much at peace. He knew who he was — he knew his strengths and his weaknesses. And he laid them on the line for us, up front."

His strengths?

"Obviously, preaching the Word. Then add a strength in vision, in being able to lay out a picture and to draw people to that vision," Bernie explained. "As for weaknesses, he's really better at most everything than he gives himself credit for, but he thought he had a weakness as a counselor, and as an administrator. But I especially know him to be a strong administrator."

So Harry Reeder came to Christ Covenant in February of 1983. He left his "nice" sanctuary in Florida and walked into a "fixed up" trailer in Charlotte. His new job did not come with a church secretary — only an "office" which was outfitted with the basics: a telephone, a desk, a chair, three steel book shelves, and a pencil.

The family, still looking for a house to buy, moved in with Harry's sister Vicki Reeder — five more people into her three-bedroom apartment!

And on that first Sunday, it snowed! A special welcome to the Floridians!

THE BIRTH OF A CHURCH PHILOSOPHY

Despite the snow, excitement was high in the modular unit on that Sunday morning, as Harry presented to the faithful 38 members a philosophy of ministry outlined from Ephesians 4. At this time the “flagship” church was re-designated as a “Servant/ Resource” Church.

Harry told them, “My philosophy is that my calling as a pastor/teacher is first to equip the saints to do ministry, to focus on the public ministry of the Word (the preaching and teaching of the Word in other settings), and prayer. Second is the vision of Christ Covenant as a Servant/ Resource church, to cast the vision for the congregation. Third is leadership development, to encourage and to move leaders on into leadership positions, multiplying leadership. And fourth would be the Pastor's Class, working with new members of Christ Covenant — their relationship to the Lord and to Christ Covenant.”

He encouraged them, reminding them that they already possessed a very real asset in the three men who were their Elders, committed to the Lord and Christ Covenant — Bernie Lawrence, Bob Tarte, and Harry Martin, and also in the church Treasurer, Ted Spangler.

As he began to draw the picture of the years ahead, the excitement mounted.

Following that sermon, it was arranged for Harry and the Elders to go on a retreat to the beach. There was a lot to pray and talk about.

“We laid foundational statements at that time,” Bernie said. “We laid out strategies of the church, the guiding principles for the church that are still on target today.” The goal was to establish “first things first.”

Together, the leadership developed the philosophy, vision, foundation, and direction for Christ Covenant.

The group drew from Colossians 1:18, “...that in all things Christ might have the preeminence.” To this they added a statement of summary: “to glorify God by worshipping God in spirit and truth and faithfully witness to all who dwell on the earth.”

Then “What will be our commitment?” was the next question addressed. There were five principles Christ Covenant would affirm:

1. The inerrant Word of God, our only rule of faith and practice;
2. True worship, our primary concern;
3. Making disciples through evangelism of the lost and equipping believers;
4. The Westminster Standards as most faithful to Biblical Christianity;

5. The Presbyterian form of government as ordained by Scripture for the rule of Christ's Church.

At the retreat, the leadership of the church also drew up "10 Strategies" they planned to implement to accomplish their purpose.

THE FIRST ANNUAL SERMON "SERIES"

Upon their return from the retreat, Harry preached a series of sermons on "Ten Principles To Build Christ Covenant for Christ." And every year thereafter, he always included a sermon series on this philosophy and vision — the very foundation and direction of Christ Covenant. This allowed newcomers to get on board with the vision and to find their role in it.

The "10 Strategies" decided on by leadership, further detailed how Christ Covenant, by God's grace, would seek to develop the pulpit ministry, education, small groups, evangelism, missions, and general ministry:

1. To effect worship services that are regulated by God's Word for His praise and for the edification of His people.
2. To develop a pulpit ministry that accurately expounds God's Word so that hearers would be clearly challenged to examine themselves, edify the saints, and evangelize the lost.
3. To develop an educational ministry that effectively presents the Gospel, matures believers in their understanding and obedience to God's Word, and provides help for parents to bring up their covenant children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
4. To provide a discipling ministry that encourages the identification, development, and use of individual gifts in the body of Christ.
5. To develop a small group ministry for in-depth Bible study, intimate fellowship, and intercessory prayer, and that promotes obedience to God's Word.
6. To develop an evangelism ministry that equips believers with a lifestyle that effectively reflects that Gospel and saturates our local communities.
7. To develop a missions program that encourages the Lord's people to go to the ends of the earth in spreading the Gospel as well as faithfully providing prayerful, financial, and personal support to those who are sent.
8. To develop ministries of mercy first of all within the household of faith and then to the truly poor and needy in the community.
9. To develop a ministry to the youth that Biblically meets their spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and recreational needs.
10. To develop a ministry that compassionately supports the elderly and involves them in the life and ministry of the body of Christ.

Goals for the year ahead were set, the baton they could take and "run with." And when Harry presented these to the church in his sermons, "run" they did! Within

just three months of Harry's arrival, the congregation outgrew the modular unit — the 38 quickly became 100 plus!

CHAPTER 7

A NEW DAY

When Harry Reeder came to Christ Covenant in February 1983, he gave it new life and purpose. Whether the work qualified as church “replanting,” or a “revitalization,” it was a new day, and things began to happen. The 38 who were faithful to this new work caught the vision he brought and, in three short months, the congregation mushroomed — tripling in size — and overcrowding the Alexander Road facility.

PULPIT MINISTRY LEADS TO GROWTH

What was responsible for this sudden growth? In short, it was vision and teaching. In those early months, the visionary leadership of the pastor and Elders led to the establishment of the organizing principles that still guide the church today. The church vision was clearly communicated to all who came. It was a powerful vision that served to anchor the church and to attract new worshippers. It was, however, the dynamic, expository preaching of the Word at Christ Covenant that produced disciples willing to labor, to shepherd, and to pray as God revealed His will for the people of Christ Covenant. Indeed, there was something new happening in southeast Charlotte!

“Harry is extremely gifted in the pulpit,” Bernie Lawrence explained it, “and his distinction, in terms of theology, was in the reformed faith, Bible based. People were just hungry for that.”

For example, there is the story of Bob Pappenroth, Sr. and his wife Rose.

“We had moved down here from a Christian Reformed Church in New York, and for several years we actively searched for a church home here in Charlotte,” Bob recalled. “We hit a lot of churches before we heard of Christ Covenant. It was our son — he and his wife were attending — and he said, ‘Dad, this is really a great church. You’ve got to come and listen.’ We came and heard Harry’s preaching and found what we had been looking for. I think the rapid growth of Christ Covenant was largely due to Harry’s preaching.”

Mike Terrell, one of church founders said, “It seemed that the bigger we got the more comfortable people felt about coming. We had several people tell us that when they first drove up and saw only four to five cars in the lot, they thought, ‘This is too small for me,’ and they moved on.”

Now the parking lot was overflowing.

If the preaching/teaching of the Word brought them in the door, what held them? Why did they stay to join the young church?

“EQUIPPING THE SAINTS”

In the tradition of reformed theology, Harry stressed evangelism and leadership training. He often spoke of “equipping the saints.” And in regard to church growth, even from the beginning, Harry taught three consecutive dynamics: spiritual growth, functional growth, and then statistical growth, but there was no mention of numerical goals.

“What we did was set spiritual and functional goals for what we would like to accomplish as a church. We just let the Lord deal with the numbers issue,” commented Harry. These measurable function goals included such efforts as church planting, an aggressive missions program, an education and youth ministry, discipleship and evangelism, small groups, and balanced, God-centered worship services.

Within a short time, the church ministries began to reflect these emphases. In the adult Sunday Bible school program, classes followed these themes, and the first Pastor’s Class was initiated. The children’s Sunday school flourished. And a new program was started that had a tremendous impact on the life of the congregation and the church as a whole — the Small Group Ministry.

THE COMING OF SMALL GROUPS: K&GF

In addition to his preaching, teaching, and prayer ministry, Harry immediately began developing leadership within the church via the Small Group Ministry. He led the very first small group, which consisted of four families. These committed themselves to a 13-week training program, under the pastor’s leadership, after which each couple would go and start another small group. At this time, these groups were called “Knowing & Growing Fellowships.”

Bob Pappenroth called the small groups “a real blessing.” Bob and Rose hosted one of the first generations of small groups. He expressed what many of the participants were also feeling. “This was something new to us,” he said. “We were not used to a small group like this, and it made a strong impression on us. We enjoyed it very much. There were five couples in our group in the beginning and, by the following year, we had grown to eight couples — about as large as a small group should get.

“People brought their kids — I remember working out the baby sitting. We sang some songs, but it was mostly Bible study. Bernie Lawrence was our facilitator. He was a Navigator, and he used the Navigator Series as a source. We met once a week, and there were refreshments afterwards — people took turns bringing something. It was a real good time of fellowship and blessing. You really did draw close to one another, and lasting friendships were made.”

By the end of 1983, there were five Knowing & Growing Fellowships: Cotswold, hosted by Rick and Terry Jacobs with Ed Ouimette, facilitator; Bob and Rose Pappenroth’s Mint Hill group, Bernie Lawrence, facilitator; Alexander K&FG, hosted by various choir members with facilitator, John Royster; South Park, hosted by Ted and Letha Spangler, Harry Martin, facilitator; and Eastland with Mike and Jenny Terrell, Mike facilitating.

The purpose of the K&GF was to provide a discipling small group Bible study where teaching, dialogue, and close relationships promoted in-depth Bible study, intimate fellowship, and intercessory prayer. From these groups, many developed deductive Bible study habits.

“Relationships and prayer lives were noticeably benefited,” Harry recalled, “and new believers had a good environment to begin their adventure of growing in Christ. By God’s grace, we saw the purposes of these groups walked out and impacting whole families.”

Unquestionably, the Small Group Ministry made deep impressions upon lives, and, as the church grew, became even more important in helping members get — and stay — connected.

Long-time member Kimberlie Carrick tells of one small group that even after they were scattered — two to the mission field, one to youth ministry, one to the choir fellowship, and two to other close-by fellowships — they still met for dinner once a month.

“Small groups are extremely important,” Kimberlie stressed, “especially as a church grows larger.”

The Knowing & Growing Fellowships not only nurtured friendships and allowed for one-on-one ministry, they proved to be valuable training grounds for developing disciples and also for evangelism. Elder Dick Osman later made this point in the forward of his *Manual for Small Groups*, which he developed specifically for his Sunday morning small group facilitator training class.

FISHERMAN BIBLE FELLOWSHIPS

Just after Harry Reeder's arrival at Christ Covenant, still another ministry with a leadership focus was expanded. An early morning discipleship class augmented the existing Evangelism Explosion (EE) program for men. The first Fisherman Bible Fellowship (FBF) quickly grew to two: one meeting at the Wachovia Bank Building that Mike Terrell organized with Duke Power employees; and one of Southern Bell workers, coordinated by Harry Martin.

In time, six to eight FBF groups met in homes, later evolving into Knowing & Growing Fellowships.

THE MAKING OF CHURCH LEADERS

Christ Covenant's leadership emphasis was central to every ministry area and foundational to future church growth. There was discipleship training for facilitators; leadership training for Elders and Deacons; the Lifestyle Evangelism and Discipleship (LEAD) programs in which "new believers were nurtured in the Word"; and there was training in how to share Christ, including how to identify spiritual gifts to use in ministry "for the cause of the Gospel."

Dedicated young leaders, anxious to be about the business of extending the Kingdom, found an oasis of learning and serving at Christ Covenant.

Harry Reeder acknowledged the rapid growth of Christ Covenant during that first year after his arrival. "There was a hunger for the Word of God," he commented. "We were filling a need for expository preaching, and people were responding to the Small Group Ministry. There was a real spirit of openness to new people when they came — a real heart for people. There was a genuine desire to reach people for Christ, and the Lord was honoring that."

MINISTRY PROGRAMS GET THEIR START

The choir was growing and feeling the strain of overcrowding. Jo Miller, Director of the Music Ministry, recalled how on Sunday mornings the choir "warmed up" in a second mobile unit that was purchased for Sunday school classes, then walked outside — in all types of weather — across to the sanctuary unit for the service. Despite its many obstacles, the choir, 21-voices strong, performed their first Christmas Cantata, "Come To The Manger," in the Alexander Road mobile unit.

Many significant programs had their beginning in those first months of Christ Covenant's new day. With hearts of compassion, Chip and Brenda Trigg headed up The Barnabas Ministry, a new ministry to assist those in need. Even in the early planning stage of its development, families had physical, emotional and spiritual needs met there. Day to day needs such as fuel, food, and rent were provided, along with encouragement and advice in such areas as financial planning and job-hunting.

A myriad of ministries recorded their beginnings during this time. Shepherding

Groups were organized by Elder Bob Tarte; A restocked Singles Ministry was headed up by Rick and Chery Locke; *The Courier* newsletter hit the press, edited by Vicki Sweeten; on the airwaves, the nationwide Radio Ministry had its beginnings, managed by John and Stelle Snyder; Pulpit audio tapes became available, thanks to Larry Cothorn; and the Welcome Our Visitors Committee was coordinated by Letha Spangler.

Meanwhile, the women at Christ Covenant were busy finding creative ways to provide ministry. The Women in the Church (WIC) ministry served as the umbrella organization for a number of programs in which women used their spiritual gifts to impact lives for Christ. At its inception, WIC was led by Vicki Reeder and Pat Lawrence; Vice Presidents were Beverly Mosbacker and Marsha Metts. Terry Tarte was Secretary-Treasurer; Kathy Tulp, Historian. There were two daytime Bible studies for women and a “circle” meeting one evening a month. Committees were formed for various projects: goodie boxes for college students; meals for families in crisis; covered dish dinners, receptions, and the first Thanksgiving Praise Service breakfast. With faithfulness, women made arrangements for guest speakers to the church — housing, meals, and transportation; they organized a flowers and card ministry; and they took on special projects — the making of the Chrismon tree decorations, for example.

Other chairpersons and officers of WIC during 1983-84 were Letha Spangler, Debbie Royster, Nancy Gill, Vicki Sweeten, Marni Halvorson, Brenda Trigg, April Stollmack, Susan Underwood, Mary Martin, Jody Burlkey, Amy Reeder, Jane Elliott, and Elaine Cothorn.

Youth Ministries reflected the growth — and demographics — of the young church. Hugh and Lisa Elder were the first to accept the challenge of developing and overseeing programs for various age groups. Youth met with the Elders weekly for Vine Fellowship, with Andy and Kathy Pickens assisting. In addition, there was a Great Fall Getaway; sleep-in; Bible study; and a puppet ministry, referred to as “Witnesstime Productions,” used to add interest to children’s Bible teaching and missions education.

At Christ Covenant, “enfolding” was a term folks became familiar with as they found their own place and, in turn, helped others feel at home in this body of believers. The area of Enfolding Ministries benefited from the able leadership of Bernie Lawrence.

The style, quality, and direction of the music that was so integral to the church’s ministry approach fell under the Ministry of Exhortation. Bob Tarte, with Music Director Jo Miller, coordinated this key area. Jo’s philosophy of music emphasized the goal of worship in music. First, she sought to continually remind worshippers that God is the One to whom they raise their voices; also, she held strongly to the perspective that “the music ministry must always enhance the preached Word.”

A CHURCH SERVICE FOR THE CHILDREN

A minister's wife serves in many ways — last minute substituting when a Sunday school teacher needs to be away or taking on the many tasks in the church office until a permanent position can be filled. But this minister's wife, Cindy, made it her ultimate goal to discover the niche God had planned for her. For Cindy, need and passion met in the organizing of a Sunday morning "church" for small children.

When Cindy Reeder first came to Christ Covenant with her pastor husband, she found many opportunities waiting.

"I was Harry's secretary for the first two or three months," she said. "But we knew that doesn't work, so that's the first thing we looked for — someone to run the office."

So April Stallmack came, and later Debbie Royster and Sherry Lott, to manage the church office. Meanwhile, Cindy sang in the choir, taught Sunday school, took part in leadership of Women In the Church, but when she started the Youth Church, she knew she had found her place.

Youth Church met during the "regular" worship service, and was geared for pre-schoolers, later expanding to include kindergartners through second grade.

By design, Youth Church was unlike Sunday school. In fact, it was patterned after the adult worship service. A song leader, accompanied by guitar or piano, led the children in a time of praise. This was followed by prayer time and a brief sermon prepared for little ears and energetic bodies. Typically, the fathers of the children would rotate this responsibility. Cindy wanted the children to feel as though this worship time was truly "theirs," with its own distinctive quality and its own worship leaders.

Then Cindy organized and directed a Children's Choir, which included their own three children — Jennifer, Ike, and Abby. Yes, Cindy had found her place, and she stayed with the Youth Church as it grew and flourished.

That first Annual Report of Christ Covenant, dated 1983-84, was 50 pages in length, brimming with the inspiration and innovation of 24 new ministries and opportunities for service — as well as realistic plans for the future.

The congregation's young leaders, still in training, caught the vision. With anticipation, they looked to the years ahead and committed themselves wholeheartedly to the work of fulfilling Christ Covenant's call.

And the developmental years began.

CHAPTER 8

BACK TO SCHOOL: The Years at Charlotte Christian School

In the four short months following Pastor Harry Reeder's first sermon to the 38 members of Christ Covenant Church, the congregation outgrew the modular unit on Alexander Road.

"Now there were probably between 85 and 100 people attending," Elder Bernie Lawrence recalled. "When we first designed and bought the unit, we figured we could literally squeeze 100 people in there — that was with everybody inhaling," he laughed. "So by the time we hit 85, it was beginning to get uncomfortable."

A MOVE IS MADE

"What do we do now? Where do we go from here?" The questions facing leadership were difficult, and time was short. Clearly, the Alexander Road property was too small and too confining for what the Lord had in mind for Christ Covenant. So, while vacant land was sought, the search began for a meeting place that would immediately accommodate the rapidly growing church. Soon an agreement was made with Charlotte Christian School, a few miles away on Sardis Road.

These were years of rapid change.

In June of 1983, the move was made, first to the school's chapel room, then to its larger multi-purpose room. And by the fall of that year it was evident that even more space would be required.

For a time, Pastor Harry's office was maintained in the modular unit. It was then that seminary graduate Edward Ouimette, 36, came to help as Assistant Pastor. At Christ Covenant, Edward was able to fulfill his one-year internship requirement to become a PCA Pastor/Teacher. He took over the role as ministry director for the Knowing & Growing Fellowships and other duties as assigned, including visitations, assisting at the morning worship services, and preaching when Harry was out of town. A year later, he was called to serve at a church in Albemarle.

FIRST DEACONS ORDAINED

Opportunities to see God moving the church forward were evident almost on a daily basis. On a Sunday evening in January of 1984, Christ Covenant's first

Deacons were ordained and installed. They were Hugh Elder, Chairman; Mike Terrell, Secretary; Larry Cothorn, Ed Sweeten, John Royster, and Henry (Chip) Trigg.

Meanwhile, the Administration and Pastoral offices were moved to the second floor of a building situated in a Matthews office park, next to what was, at that time, the Harris Teeter Headquarters.

The modular unit on Alexander Road was sold to a church for the intention of planting a new fellowship. Likewise, the proceeds from this sale helped Christ Covenant start a new PCA church in Harrisburg — Grace Presbyterian Church. Then, in God's perfect timing, the 3.79 acres of land was sold and the money placed in a special fund for future development. All of these changes occurred in a single summer — the summer of 1983, as the church sought to find its "home."

Again the questions plagued leadership. Where can we go to meet the pressing need for space on Sunday mornings, yet maintain the sanctity of a place of worship?

SUNDAY MORNING SET-UPS

This would take some serious brainstorming. A Sanctuary Relocation Committee was formed with Ed Wright as Chairman. A reasonable — though challenging — solution was determined, and it was agreed that the congregation would continue to expand on the campus of Charlotte Christian School. It then became the awesome responsibility of the committee to manage the details of "relocating our present sanctuary to the gymnasium of Charlotte Christian School to accommodate our current growth trend temporarily until such time that we locate land and begin building a permanent sanctuary, and to provide the appropriate atmosphere of worship in order to give our Lord all praise, honor, and glory during worship services."

Mike Terrell, who had been with Christ Covenant since its earliest days and had seen move after move made, said, "We were scared to death to move into the gym because it was so big. We even bought this huge, heavy blue curtain and partitioned off half the gym so we wouldn't get lost in it."

On February 5, 1984, the move was made.

But that curtain was short-lived, since it was only months before the congregation filled the gymnasium! The years of setting up the gym each Saturday night and taking it down again every Sunday night were in full swing.

Stelle Snyder, who arrived in 1980, remembers when the curtain was no longer needed. She also remembers the half dozen experiments with seating arrangements attempted in order to make use of every square foot of space. Chairs were set up the length of the gym, then the width of the gym sideways, then in curves. No configuration would, ultimately, meet the ongoing need for more space.

"It was like the children of Israel when they were in the wilderness," Mike Terrell

said. "Every Saturday we would unfold a couple hundred chairs, then hang the curtain backdrops, set up the sound equipment and the elevated platform (which was in four, 4x8-foot sections). Carpeting was laid down on the platform, the aisles, and at the entrance."

Coordinating this weekly transformation was Chris Mapes. Together he worked with the men of the church who willingly rotated duties to produce an acceptable place of worship. Even as chairs went up and down, choir director Jo Miller and her husband hauled hymnals and musical scores from their car, back and forth each Saturday and Sunday. The piano, however, was left in the corner of the gymnasium. Since it needed to be protected during the week from enthusiastic school children, Mike Terrell and Harry Martin built a box for the piano! Stelle Snyder always referred to this time as "church in a box."

"We really learned to work together," Stelle added. "I believe the thing that marks Christ Covenant, that is so important to our congregation, is our spirit of unity. It's so 'us'. We've just never had division grow up. And that's what keeps us healthy, keeps us going."

As if the process of turning the gymnasium into a sanctuary each weekend wasn't overwhelming enough, the weekly transformation was made even more complex by the need to also create "Sunday school" rooms for various age levels.

In all, it required four teams to pull off this effort. The Worship Coordinator, John Gordon, organized these teams, which were headed by Mike Terrell, Frank Underwood, Ed Sweeten, and Buzz Wooten.

Desks were pushed aside and chairs set up in room after room. In the "nurseries," cribs and playpens were brought in. For the toddlers, toys were added. There were three adult classes, then four, and finally six that year. Soon there were seven youth classes. John and Debbie Royster tried to keep ahead of this rapid growth as they led the Sunday Bible School Ministry.

With Charlotte Christian School's permission, a storage shed was erected behind the building, and these Sunday furnishings were "stuffed into it" each week.

DAWN COMES

Even as the church worked to meet its weekly physical needs, men and women at Christ Covenant were also feeling challenged in their spiritual lives. There was a growing excitement about the things of God, as evidenced by an increased interest in the study of God's Word. For instance, Barrett Mosbacker came to Pastor Harry with questions on the principles of Biblical interpretation. As their discussions progressed, some of the other men asked if they could join in that learning time. Thus began a weekly study that was opened to all men of Christ Covenant and their friends. It was called DAWN, an acronym for Discipleship and Weekly Nurture. In time, 18 to 22 men were meeting together on Tuesday morning for study, breakfast and fellowship. But still others wanted to participate. Eventually there were four such groups meeting throughout the week, including

one co-ed group.

THE SEARCH FOR LAND

At the Session meeting of February 1983, a Ministry Expansion Committee was formed, chaired by John Royster. Its stated purpose was to locate 15 to 20 acres of land, if possible, within a three to five mile radius of the intersection of State Highways 51 and 16 (Providence Road).

“We were looking for vacant property,” Mike Terrell said. “It needed to be on a major corridor. We didn’t want to be a neighborhood church because we didn’t want to be a burden to a neighborhood with the size and traffic problems.”

There was, in fact, acreage at the corner of 51 and Alexander Road — 38 acres at \$13,500 an acre, but negotiations broke down, and efforts to find an alternative there failed to materialize.

The committee had heard of a second tract of land that met all the requirements, 31 acres on Highway 51 between Sardis Road and John Street in Matthews, but the parcel was optioned to another buyer, and — even then — the asking price was “way beyond us.” So the committee kept searching. But as they looked, their thoughts kept returning to this 31 acres — the Funderburk property.

Pastor Reeder recounted the exciting story: “Then one of our Deacons, Mike Terrell, suggested that the Elders and Deacons spend a special time in prayer and fasting concerning this property.

“We did,” as Harry summed up, “and two weeks later we were signing the contract for this land at a price we could meet! This was the tract that the Lord wanted us to have. He made it available in really miraculous ways.”

As John Snyder wrote in the Annual report, “1984 will always be remembered in the life of the church as the year we found the land which the Lord had saved for us. We praise Him for the evidence of His specific intervention in this purchase and His provision of funds and people to make it possible.”

CONFERENCES BEGIN

Larger group focuses on The Word, Christian Living, and Missions marked 1984 at Christ Covenant as it introduced a number of “Conference Ministries.” These were times of special emphasis on topics and concerns that leadership believed were churchwide in nature. These events were still another aspect of extending the Kingdom of God as outlined in the church’s early vision statements. 1984 was the first complete year of Conference Ministries. The Discipleship Conference was held that year, as was the first Mission Conference with Walford Thompson, President of Ministries in Action, focusing on the Caribbean.

From the beginning there was a strong missions ministry as the Knowing & Growing Fellowships “adopted” missionaries and helped support 12 missionaries in 10 countries on five continents. Joanne Sato served as Missions Coordinator

with committee members Dennis and Pat Carter, Jane Elliott, Chip and Brenda Trigg, Evelyn Ribí, and Steve and Karen Fox. Later, several of these committee members were to make decisions to go into the mission field themselves.

A NEW PROBLEM ARISES

A year earlier, there was a 224% growth in church attendance. However, the challenge had been met with a move into the school's gymnasium; there was no seating problem. By 1984, however, the problem was parking. The school parking lot could not accommodate all the cars!

GOALS FOR 1984

Yet matters of ministry — not parking — topped Christ Covenant's "Goals for 1984." The church leadership boldly listed 24 areas they believed God would have them give concentrated focus and effort in the coming year. Clearly a priority, by necessity, the list indicated the need to initiate a building master plan — once the land site was secured. Other focuses included adding an assistant pastor; completing the move of the "worship center" to the gymnasium of Charlotte Christian and create a worshipful atmosphere; finding lay Coordinators for the LEAD (Lifestyle Evangelism and Discipleship) Ministry and the Knowing & Growing Fellowships; adding two Fisherman Bible Studies to increase the total number to five; starting the Barnabas Ministry from the approved proposal; increasing the Knowing & Growing Fellowship groups by 10 to a total of 15; developing a ministry to and for the elderly; planning for an attendance of 350 in the morning worship service; establishing a 1985 budget goal of \$285,000; providing adequate office space and office equipment; organizing a functioning senior high youth group with leaders; initiating a Faith Promise Giving Program in the church for missions; accumulating \$100,000 in the building and land fund for the purchase of the land; and finally, adding three ruling Elders and six Deacons.

Many of these goals were quickly met.

CHAPTER 9

A TRAINING GROUND

In 1984-85, the organizational chart of Christ Covenant was dominated by a series of “E” words. These were the Ministries of Exhortation, Edification, Equipping, Education, Evangelism, Enfolding, and Encouragement. The leadership of each ministry was comprised of an Elder or Pastor with two Deacons. Specific programs fell under Ministry areas, which were headed by Coordinators.

For instance, Ministry of Edification leaders included newly arrived Associate Pastor Tom Henry, with Deacons Hugh Elder and Rick Locke. Other programs under the heading “Edification,” included Youth, coordinated by Hugh Elder; Singles by Rick Locke; and the K & G Fellowships by Dennis Carter. The Ministry of Education, led by Elder Rick Mosteller, and Deacons John Royster and Brad Shelby, was divided into three rapidly growing areas: Sunday Bible school, with Coordinators John and Debbie Royster; Youth Church, Cindy Reeder, Coordinator; and Nursery with Nora Sherrill.

The Music Ministry fell under Exhortation Ministry; Shepherding appropriately under Enfolding; the ministries Men of the Covenant, Women in the Church, Diaconal (Hugh Elder, Diaconal Chairman), and Barnabas were all under the Ministry of Encouragement with Elder Bernie Lawrence and Deacons Chip Trigg and Charlie Hoffercker. Missions was central to the Ministry of Evangelism.

THE TRAINING UP OF MISSIONARIES

In 1985, the first missionary couple to go out from Christ Covenant went to Haiti. They were Chip and Brenda Trigg.

Soon after, a second couple, Steve and Karen Fox, were sent to St. Lucia in the Caribbean, and their long-time dream of entering the mission field came to pass.

Christ Covenant now had its own missionaries. How do you train for such an undertaking?

Steve and Karen had joined Christ Covenant in the spring of 1984. In their membership interview, they told Elder Bernie Lawrence of their strong interest in missions — of their sense of God’s calling them to go out as missionaries.

In the meantime, Pastor Harry Reeder and the first Elders of the church were sharpening the vision of Christ Covenant as a Resource church, the term referring to the commitment to use the church’s resources people, prayer, and support — to meet the needs of the Church worldwide. That commitment included the development of “an aggressive missions program.” And that spring the first Missions Conference of Christ Covenant was held with two goals in mind: to support the various mission agencies of the denomination; and also that the Lord might rise up missionaries from among its own membership.

THE FIRST SUMMER MISSION PROJECT

The Conference speaker was Walford Thompson, President of Missions in Action (MIA). At that time, he was primarily focused on the Caribbean area, and it was his suggestion that a short-term mission team go out from Christ Covenant under MIA guidance, so the first Summer Missions Project was initiated.

In conjunction with the conference, the first Faith Promise Giving Program was begun, and over \$19,000 was pledged. This was in May, and by August, eight church members were ready to go on a short-term mission trip to Jamaica. Steve and Karen handled the organizational details.

When the group returned, the entire team was appointed as Christ Covenant's first Missions Committee.

Already, Steve and Karen were planning to return to the mission field as soon as possible. As they talked with MIA personnel and studied Church Growth Strategy, they discovered that what they were hearing was identical to the model used to establish Christ Covenant. Only God could have known that the young church — with its challenges, joys, and setbacks — would prove to be the ideal training ground for the work before the Foxes on the mission field.

THE FOXES BECOME MISSIONARIES

The church had become actively involved in missions, and soon Steve and Karen began their work in St. Lucia.

"God had prepared us with a lot of hands-on experience here," Steve said. "We had enjoyed small groups and practiced friendship evangelism with Salt Shaker dinners. As it turned out, all the different aspects of the door-to-door evangelism type things we had been doing at Christ Covenant, we did in the Caribbean.

"We were here at the right time," he summarized. "God led us to Christ Covenant in time for a small Missions Conference, then we went out right away, eight of us, and Harry drafted us for the first Missions Committee. Then we returned to the Caribbean as the church's second missionary couple — so that first Summer Mission Project had a strong impact on us."

THE FOREIGN MISSIONS TEAM

Harold and Dot Driver came to the area from California to serve at JAARS with the Wycliffe Bible Translators in Waxhaw. Harold was on what he thought was a short-term assignment as an assistant in the Computer Department, but the couple soon decided they were "home" and wanted to remain here the rest of their lives. They joined Christ Covenant and were a source of ideas and strength for the Missions Program, as well as on the Welcome Our Visitors Committee. Over the years, the couple also offered valuable leadership to the small groups organization, Youth groups, and the shepherding effort.

Another missionary couple that chose a life work in missions was Don and Terry

Williams. Also with Wycliffe-JAARS Bible Translators and Mission to the World, the Williams were “adopted” by Christ Covenant during those early years and served in Bogota, Columbia, and as the years went along many more were added to the “roll.”

HOME MISSIONS GROW

Even as interest and involvement in foreign missions grew, a balance was maintained in home missions and mercy ministries. In January of 1984, the Barnabas Ministry was proposed and became a functioning ministry of mercy. As with all new programs at Christ Covenant, a training seminar was held for those desiring to serve as team leaders; also, a Sunday Bible school elective was initiated to offer teaching on the outworking of such a ministry. With Elder Bernie Lawrence directing, the Barnabas Ministry served families and individuals in need, both inside and outside the congregation.

THE PULPIT MINISTRY TAKES OFF

1984 was also a “landmark year” for the Christ Covenant Pulpit Radio Ministry. The initial goal was to move the preaching of Harry Reeder beyond the confines of the gymnasium onto the airwaves with the radio program, “Perspective.” Under the leadership of Larry Cothorn, a Pulpit Tape Ministry team was assembled to tape weekly sermons, to deliver tapes for airing on local radio station WHVN-AM, and then to expand the program into other markets. A whopping 385 tapes were reproduced in its first year of organization!

Other members of the team included: Harry and Cindy Reeder, Harry and Mary Martin, Harold and Dorothy Driver, John and Stelle Snyder, and Elaine Cothorn. The Word of God was spreading.

“Dot Driver had worked closely with the Bible Broadcasting Network while she and Harold served in California,” commented Stelle Snyder. “She understood the possibilities for the growth of a radio ministry.”

In the beginning, a single sermon was edited by John Snyder to build four “Perspective” programs aired locally. In addition, Stelle Snyder produced a “live” program on Friday evenings on WHVN-AM, featuring Harry who would participate in an interview, take questions from callers, or simply address a topic of interest. “I was so impressed with his ability to deal with the time constraints of the media,” added Stelle. “I’d give him the signal that he had two minutes left, and he’d bring it from left field to home plate with amazing ease and accuracy.”

Sermons were eventually carried nationally on the “Family Radio Network.”

The “live” audience that turned out to hear Harry teach on Sunday mornings also continued to boom. News of the ministry of the Word was spread by word-of-mouth as people invited other people to Christ Covenant until every available chair in the gymnasium was filled: a growth of 224%! Teams were setting up and taking down several hundred chairs each weekend, and even though the school

had expanded the parking lot, it was still not large enough to accommodate all the cars! Finally, two morning worship services became necessary, primarily because of parking limitations.

TO COOL THE CONGREGATION

Too many cars outside — too many bodies inside! The gymnasium of Charlotte Christian School was not air-conditioned, and in the summer that became a real problem. Cindy Reeder recalled the various ways they attempted to cool down the gym.

“It would be over 100 degrees in there,” Cindy recalled. At those temperatures, fans — even huge fans that were brought in to ease the problem — brought little overall relief.

Mike Terrell remembered setting up those huge fans, “If you sat near the fan, you just about got blown to the other side of the room.”

There were Sundays when it was suggested that pregnant women not attend the worship services because of the heat.

So the church put in air-conditioning and later gave it to the school! A shared blessing!

One of those especially in need of cooler air was Hilda Ryan. Expecting her second child, she was playing the small spinet piano, working to produce enough sound for the choir and a congregation of 300 people to hear — and feeling the heat.

INNOVATION IN THE MUSIC MINISTRY

Hilda first came to Christ Covenant as pianist in 1984. As Special Music Coordinator, she later organized and led the Covenant Singers, a small ensemble of voices designed to sing sacred classical literature. Also, she added a Men’s Quartet and a 14-piece orchestra for “lots of special music.” Indeed there were various combinations of voices and instruments. She had even hoped for a quartet of Reeder “sisters” — Cindy, along with Pastor Reeder’s sisters, Beth, Vicki, and Amy — since all three were in the choir.

Music Ministry Coordinator Jo Miller led the full choir that was growing rapidly in size. There were Cantatas for Christmas and Easter. In the beginning, the singers met in Janice Elliott’s home for rehearsals, later moving to a classroom at Charlotte Christian School Wednesday nights. On Sunday morning, their “warm-up” room was in the physical education storage closet — in and amongst the basketballs — their voices intermingling with the smell of sweat and rubber, and no piano!

Joy Inc, a youth choir directed by Yvonne Musterman, began rehearsing and sang occasionally with the adult choir.

BECOMING A FAMILY

A particular challenge that faced the church during its years at Charlotte Christian School was keeping the membership connected to one another. Breaking the larger body into smaller congregational units was crucial to maintaining a feel of family.

With Dennis Carter as Coordinator, the Knowing & Growing Fellowships grew from five groups in 1984 to nine groups in 1985, and 50% of the adults attending Sunday morning worship were in one of these small groups.

Bob Tarte coordinated the Shepherding Ministry, which formed eight shepherding groups led by Elders and Deacons. Each group then “enfolded” twelve families each.

In the meantime, keeping track of the names of all those who came to Christ Covenant would take more than Harry’s good memory. This was the time when the church began to take advantage of some new technology. As Administrative Coordinator, John Snyder understood the importance of managing growth. In order to “keep accurate control of the records, publications and communications of the church,” John led an effort to purchase two personal computers for the church, as well as a quality printer, a high-speed copier with enlarging and reducing capabilities, and a multi-line telephone system.

It seemed the job of preparing for the future had moved to the forefront of the church’s goals. It was time to call upon the dedication and expertise of the newly formed Ministry Expansion Committee. The job before them was daunting.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

A Ministry Expansion Committee was organized to work on behalf of the church in examining possible property sites, investigate financing options, studying the anticipated size requirements of the fast-growing body, and arriving at guidelines for the search. As it happened, John Snyder was also Chairman of the Ministry Expansion Committee.

He wrote in a letter to the congregation, “In the providence of God the 31-acre piece of property, which met all of our guidelines that existed on Highway 51 between Sardis Road and John Street, was optioned to another buyer when we first became aware of it. God solved that problem and removed every roadblock to make it possible for us to option to buy. We praise Him for the evidence of His specific intervention in this purchase and His provision of funds and people to make it possible.”

To assist in preliminary building plans, all Ministry Coordinators were asked to fill out an extensive survey of their space and equipment requirements, along with their estimates of ministry growth. Such information was crucial in the process of formulating a comprehensive plan for future building and development.

THE CALL FOR AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR

During 1984-1985, there were 35 different ministries listed in the Organizational Structure of the Church. Overall membership had increased over 100%. Pastor Reeder, in addition to Sunday preaching/teaching, was filling speaking engagements, teaching nine groups, holding positions in the PCA Church, counseling privately seven times a week, making pastoral visitations, and writing for publication. It was obvious that he needed an Associate Pastor.

“First, I just needed some help,” he said. “Second, I needed help in the areas that weren’t my strengths — that is, in small groups and on-going counseling.”

And that is how Tom Henry came to Christ Covenant. Tom was trained in both small groups and in the ministry of counseling.

CHAPTER 10

TOM HENRY ACCEPTS THE CALL

In March of 1985, Tom Henry came to Christ Covenant as Associate Pastor.

Here was a church “dynamic with a lot of potential,” as Tom described it — yet a church meeting in a school gymnasium, growing rapidly and, literally, out of parking space. It was a church under the vigorous and magnetic leadership of Harry Reeder with a worldwide vision as a Servant/Resource church — yet with church offices in an industrial park in Matthews. This aggressive body presented four different conferences a year; offered a Sunday Bible school program that was spilling over into an ever-expanding number of schoolrooms; had recently acquired land and now had leadership at work on a contract to build.

The organization of the congregation was equally astonishing. Here was a church organized with Ministries of Exhortation, Edification, Equipping, Education, Evangelism, Encouragement, and Enfolding, and in the continual process of training leadership. It was a church and a pastor that excited Tom in many ways.

“Harry impressed me,” he said, “especially in terms of his intellect and his heart

for the ministry. His vision and philosophy of ministry was based on Acts 2, in which small groups weren't just a program, they were structure, and I strongly believe that.

"The second thing that impressed me was the spirituality of the people and of their leaders in the church. They really loved God and wanted to grow in grace, and I was moved by the commitment not to gossip included in the membership vow of loyalty. I had seen in the past what gossip could do in a church."

Tom had been introduced to Christ Covenant through his friendship with Rick Mostellar, one of the new Elders of the young church. Rick had told the Session of Tom Henry, his training and experience.

THE TOM HENRY STORY

Tom was born in New Jersey and reared in Pennsylvania, an only child from a family of educators. His father was Assistant Superintendent of Schools in Trenton, his mother a professor at Temple University and a psychologist working in the field of Special Education for a large school district in Bristol Township near Philadelphia.

With a desire to attend a small liberal arts college in the South, Tom enrolled at Furman University in Greenville, S.C. While in college, a time when many young people question their faith, Tom was converted. In his freshman year, he met and began to date his future wife, Toni, a dedicated Christian. That relationship would have a tremendous impact on his spiritual life and his future, as would the friendship of Rick Mosteller, who invited him to the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and to Campus Crusade meetings. It was at that point that Tom knew he wanted to do full-time Christian work.

He and Rick graduated, and in 1978 went on to Covenant Seminary in St. Louis. Tom chose this seminary because Francis Schaeffer was one of the teachers, and one-third of the student body came from Schaeffer's L'Abri Fellowship in Switzerland. Schaeffer had a strong influence on Tom's life, and Tom stayed to do the course work on his Master's degree there, teaching the basic counseling course as a graduate assistant in counseling.

"My early excursion into Christianity was one that was very cognitive," Tom said. "But when I went to seminary, a whole new dimension of the emotional opened up — the heart, I call it. I had learned discipleship through the campus small groups. That interest led further to an interest in people's souls, to discernment, to understanding people, and on to counseling, which is simply applying the truth to where people are at a particular time in their lives."

In 1982, Tom was called to a church in Ocala, Florida, and a few years later came to Charlotte and Christ Covenant. Here, with his expertise in Pastoral Counseling, Youth Ministry, Singles, and Small Groups, he would complement Harry Reeder's ministry.

"I praise the Lord for the way He was teaching me that when I relied on myself

alone, I failed,” commented Tom, “but when I depended on Him, He turned failure into success.”

THE “NEW” DEACONS

In January of 1986, the Session at Christ Covenant was enlarged to six Elders with the ordination of Harold Driver, Rick Mostellar, and Mike Terrell. Bernie Lawrence was Clerk of the Session.

At the same time, the Diaconate grew to 12 Deacons with the installation of Rick Locke, Brad Shelby, Dane Hazelgrove, Ed Thorne, Charlie Hoffecker, Andy Pickens, and Ed Wright. Hugh Elder was the first Chairman of the Diaconate.

“Those were real exciting days,” Hugh recalled. “First of all, we had these guys who had never been Deacons before. We had a lot of energy in being new, but also there was a lot of learning we had to go through. Harry kept us steered in the right direction. It was a challenge to the Deacons that first year to coordinate with the Session because the Elders had never worked with Deacons before either.”

In the years that followed, Hugh played a large part in the leadership of the church — a church he had not chosen of himself, but one that God intended for him. Hugh chuckled as he told of God’s sense of humor in the events that led to his arrival.

HUGH ELDER: THE MAN WHO WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH A MISSION CHURCH

When Hugh and his wife Lesa moved to Charlotte, they knew they definitely wanted to join a “permanent,” established church.

“We had been in a mission situation for some time,” Hugh said, “and there’s a lot of work that goes into being in a mission church — a lot of moving, a lot of setting up and taking down. So our goal was to be sure we found an established church.”

In looking for a PCA church they saw a large, prominent ad in the Charlotte Observer about the Alexander Road Presbyterian Church. It was Hugh who suggested they go there, because with “such a big ad it must be a big church.”

As they approached the corner, they found no church building — just a doublewide mobile “trailer” with a church sign in the yard. Hugh quickly drove on past.

“No, we’re not going through that again,” he said. So that Sunday they visited somewhere else.

A few weeks later they saw another very large and prominent ad in the paper for a church called “Christ Covenant” and decided to go and check it out. When they arrived at the site it was too late to go anywhere else, so they went in to worship

at a school gymnasium. Harry was away that Sunday, but they met and talked with Cindy Reeder and the core group of the church, and immediately “fell in love” with it.

“God made us eat our words about not being involved with another mission church,” Hugh said. And they stayed to become a part of the vision.

Hugh was discipled by Harry in a visitation/evangelism program. He and Lesa then developed the Youth Program, called the Vine Group, and organized the first youth retreat to Ridgehaven with the help of Dane and Debbie Hazlegrove, along with Andy and Cathy Pickens.

DIACONATE MINISTRIES ESTABLISHED

With the arrival of Tom Henry and his work with young people, Hugh devoted more time to the Diaconate. By this time, it was divided into three sub-committees: a Mercy Ministry, a Budget Committee, and a Property Committee. Hugh agreed to head the Mercy Ministries. God made his calling clear after Bernie Lawrence and Chip Trigg took him out to work with people in distress, and Hugh witnessed the great need firsthand. His passion ignited, Hugh arranged for the Deacons to attend a retreat on Mercy Ministries led by Tim Kellar, the Mercy Coordinator for the PCA denomination.

Three years later, when Hugh rotated off the Diaconate for a sabbatical year, he became Chairman of the Building Commission. The Christ Covenant campus was taking shape at last.

GROWTH IMPERATIVES

Soon the construction process would begin a process that was becoming more imperative as the church continued its rapid growth of young families. In the church year of 1985-1986 there were 25 baptisms, but only one funeral.

Hugh Elder was Chairman of the Diaconate in 1985-86.

“1985 has been a great year at Christ Covenant,” he communicated to the membership. “God has blessed us with large numerical and spiritual growth.” For this reason, in 1985, the primary objective of the Diaconate was to organize the administrative structure of the church so that we could faithfully manage the finances and property that God has entrusted to us, and to plan for its future growth.

“The second objective,” he continued, “was to maintain the mercy ministries, which was quite a challenge. Then in looking ahead to 1986, the primary direction of the Diaconate is to involve every member of the church in mercy ministry. So we will expand the Barnabas program, the STEP program, and develop a ministry for unwed mothers that will include both pre-birth and post-birth needs to the mother and child.”

The following is some history on these and other active officers, as well as the

women leaders in the church and their particular duties at that time.

Ed Sweeten was Property Chairman for the Diaconate and worked with a Shepherding Group; Larry Cothorn was Secretary for the year, oversaw a Shepherding group and was in the Ministry of Equipping; on the Budget Committee for the Diaconate was Brad Shelby, with his added duties in Sunday Bible school and DAWN groups.

Deacon Ed Thorne served with Elder Harold Driver in Shepherding and in the Ministry of Evangelism and helped on the Property Committee; Dane Hazelgrove was involved with the Ministry of Evangelism and also on the Mercy Committee; Charlie Hoffercker took part in the Ministry of Encouragement and served as Chairman of the Diaconal Mercy Committee.

Larry Kirkman and Bob Moore were co-leaders in the Ministry of Adult Education; Cindy Reeder with Kathy Madsen had begun the Youth Church Service; Nora Sherrill, the Nursery Ministry; The Pioneer Girls were organized with Elder Harold Driver helping to form the Youth Clubs; Herb Miller was Coordinator of the Men of Covenant; Vicki Reeder, the Women In The Church with Miriam Jones, President and Stelle Snyder, Vice-President.

Elder Mike Terrell headed Shepherding with Deacon Ed Wright assisting, as the entire church membership was divided into Shepherding Groups. Each Deacon and Elder was assigned a group for spiritual oversight, "to make sure that the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of each member of our body were met." During that year there were 13 Shepherding Groups formed.

It was Ed Wright's first year as a Deacon, and a very busy one at that. For in addition to the Shepherding supervision, he was elected Treasurer and Finance Committee Chairman by the Diaconate. He was responsible for setting up a new financial accounting system on a new computer and for issuing monthly financial reports and maintaining the church's banking accounts. Also, he participated in the Ministry Expansion Committee and assisted with the sacraments. He was active in the Ministry of Enfoldings.

And in his year end report, he said, "I feel the Lord has blessed me and my family this past year, and I am looking forward to serving Him in 1986."

Mike Terrell and Ed Wright worked with members of the Ministry Expansion Committee on their stated objectives for 1985. The first was to raise the necessary funds to make the second payment on the 31 acres purchased under God's providence. The funds for this \$155,000 payment were almost completely made up of contributions from the congregation.

The other equally important objective of the Committee was to finalize the Master Plan and First Building plans. This effort was slowed when they found it necessary to reject the plans that were being developed by the first architect and employ the services of Cogan Inc., a company which specialized in building churches.

"The Committee moved very well then," Mike said, "and anticipated the completion and submittal of the Master Plan and First Building plans to the

Session by May of that year. The goal for the year was to start the necessary fundraising so that we could break ground on the first building by the end of the year.”

Phil Summa took over chairmanship of the Committee, serving alongside its members: Mary Martin, Ted Spangler, Texie Shelby, Bob Dyar, and Dick Givens. John Snyder, Rod Cousar, Craig Rohrer, and Buzz Wooten rotated off the Committee that year.

Tom Henry began to implement the principles of small group dynamics into the Knowing & Growing Fellowships. He met with the facilitators periodically and sent out a survey asking for feedback as to how each group was progressing. Then he organized training seminars in small group dynamics and a facilitator’s training Sunday Bible school class. In August 1985, he brought in Dick Wulf, who led small group seminars nationwide, to ensure that Christ Covenant groups were moving in the right direction.

There were 12 Knowing & Growing Fellowships with an average of 15 per group. Five new groups were added that year.

Tom expressed the goal of the K&GFs: “It is our prayer that our groups will be as powerful and effective as that first Biblical group in order that, as Paul declares, ‘...they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding so that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ.’”

THE CONCEPT OF A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL INTRODUCED

In 1986, a church member was asked by the Session to form a committee to “explore the possibility of opening a Christian school at Christ Covenant.” That member was Barrett Mosbacker. His studies regarding Christian schools eventually led to an unexpected opportunity as Christ worked in Barrett’s life, leading him in an entirely new direction.

CHAPTER 11

THE WISH LIST

As is frequently noted by guests or newcomers to Christ Covenant — from its earliest years to the present — this congregation has been particularly blessed by dedicated leadership.

The church's beginnings were indelibly marked by the work of young officers and laymen who were trained to disciple and take active roles in the church, under the guidance of Harry Reeder. For, as many of the first visitors found, here was a church worshipping in a school gymnasium, yet a church completely organized with a strong pastoral staff and with over 20 solid, growing ministries. These ranged from local small groups to worldwide missions.

Harold Jones, who had served as an Elder prior to coming to Christ Covenant, marveled as he recalled the "spirit of dedication and faithfulness" of these young men and their families.

That early momentum, together with a strong, growing leadership, would lead to the fulfillment of the church's "wish list" — drafted long before there was a single building, even before there was land on which to build.

PLANS FOR A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

From the very beginning, when they first organized this new PCA church as a Servant/Resource church in the Charlotte area, a "wish list" was compiled and prayed over. That first manifest prominently mentioned the plan for a Christian School at Christ Covenant — a school that would provide both a Christian learning environment for children, as well as a quality academic education.

Now with land for building acquired, and the likelihood of a church campus soon to be under construction, the time had come to seriously consider the school.

How do you go about establishing a school? Do you start with a teacher, someone in the field of education with organizational skills? Where do you find such a person, willing and able to found the type of school Christ Covenant envisioned? And was it wise — or even possible — to begin such a complicated project at this time in the church's growth? As always in this developing church, guidance through prayer was actively sought.

BARRETT MOSBACKER'S EARLY LEADERSHIP

So in late 1986, Barrett Mosbacker was asked to head up a Feasibility Study Committee to explore the possibility of opening a Christian School.

Barrett was educated in Business Administration. In 1982, two weeks after marrying his wife Beverly, Barrett was transferred to Charlotte by his employer, M&M Mars Company. They joined the Alexander Road church one year prior to

Harry Reeder's arrival. Then, in 1986, Barrett left M&M Mars to become president of the Christian Action Council for North Carolina. During this time, he also served as management consultant for the Legal Services Corporation of Washington, DC. He led teams of specialized attorneys as they traveled across the nation checking law offices for good management practices.

With this background, Barrett approached the question of the school much as he would have in his role of corporate consultant — coordinating for efficiency.

He simply sub-divided the committee into the various components of school operation. These included: Faculty and Recruiting, headed by Pat Carter; Policy and Procedures, Jan Mackey, Chairman; Legal and Administrative, John Kephart, Chairman; Finance, Paul Stack, Chairman; Curriculum, Jane Jordan/Cindy Stack in charge; and, finally, Promotion and Marketing, chaired by Vicki Reeder.

“So those were the basic groups,” he recalled. “We assigned people to the various sub-committees, and then we would come together in executive Sessions to review policies. We traveled the country and gained a lot of information from well-established, existing schools in other states; in particular, we were impressed with Westminster in Florida, the school associated with Coral Ridge Presbyterian church — James Kennedy's church — a fine school. They were quite helpful.”

IN SEARCH OF A HEADMASTER

For over two years the study continued. During that same time, in January of 1987, Barrett was ordained an Elder in the church. In the meantime the Personnel Committee of the Christ Covenant Session was looking for a headmaster for the Day school, and as Harry Reeder explained it: “Barrett Mosbacker had done such a good job on the School Feasibility Study that we decided to move ahead and ask him to take the position of headmaster, and he did.”

So Barrett went on staff as headmaster of the school and also as Director of Christian Education for the entire church.

“I came to education differently than the majority. Most people come up through the general rank of teaching, then administration. This has its advantages, but I think it also has disadvantages. Having worked in the legal area and the corporate environment for a number of years, I have a different perspective on management, operations, marketing, and the like, that have been assets to the school.”

THE COVENANT DAY VISION

Once the school was underway, Barrett began his graduate degrees in education. The move made sense as he took on his new role. In addition, teaching was clearly one of his spiritual gifts, particularly in understanding and

communicating educational issues. Barrett is quick to add that he also recognizes the importance of surrounding himself with outstanding faculty.

“We never want parents to have to choose between Christian education and an excellent education,” he wrote in the 1987-1988 Christ Covenant annual report. “We want to ensure that when classes begin, our covenant children will be able to attend an affordable school characterized by uncompromising excellence in its academic program and comprehensive adherence to and integration of Biblical truth throughout the entire program.”

Mike Terrell, a member of the first school board, described the process succinctly, “Barrett personally birthed the school himself from scratch. He came up with plans, and he had everything organized before the first school board ever got started. The school began with grades K-4, and then we added and made it grades K-8.”

The school enrollment expanded rapidly. Barrett was soon being asked to speak at education seminars around the country, and a few years later, he was listed in “Who’s Who In American Education.”

THE PROSPECTUS

As the church grew and defined itself, each year the leadership wrote a Prospectus.

There were now 8 Elders and 16 Deacons. Those ordained and installed as Elders in January 1987 were Bob Dyar, Barrett Mosbacker, and Ted Spangler. The Deacons elected were: Dick Givens, Dave Hollingshead, Chris Madsen, Bob Schuster, Ron Stewart, Ed Thorne and Tom Van Beek.

The Prospectus for the years 1986-87 stated the principles and strategies that comprised the “unique image” of Christ Covenant:

“The purpose of Christ Covenant Church, PCA, is to glorify God by the establishment of a covenant body of believers who seek to worship God in spirit and in truth and faithfully witness to the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all who dwell on the earth. Our church verse is Colossians 1:18b: ‘...that in all things Christ might have the preeminence,’ and our church motto is: ‘Developing Disciples for God’s Glory.’”

The Prospectus also emphasized the necessity of reverent and enthusiastic worship; an accurate pulpit ministry; a balanced ministry program in education, discipling, small groups, evangelism, missions, mercy, and youth; and developing a loving and relational church family.

TALENTS FOR PRAISE

In 1987, with over 600 people attending the morning worship service, it became necessary to add a second service. God used this shift to provide new opportunities for members to get involved — to discover and use their gifts and

talents. This was especially evident in the Music Ministry. In January of that year, the Brass group began rehearsals. It was initially named the “Jeremiah Brass” from Jeremiah 4:5: “Sound the trumpet throughout the land.” Tim Cool, with his clear powerful trumpet, was the leader and Instrumental Music Coordinator. Others in the brass band included Frank Owen, Richard Price, and Herschel Smith. They played at the worship services and for the special groundbreaking ceremony.

Hilda Ryan, with her extensive musical background, had been Music Director in 1985-86 and now served as the pianist and arranger. Dan Williams had arrived in July of 1986 with the dual function of Music/Administration.

Meanwhile, music became an anchor in the children’s ministry as talented and dedicated volunteers worked to organize children’s choirs. Joy, Inc, the elementary-aged choir, was directed by soprano soloist Yvonne Musterman, with pianist Sherri Smith accompanying. Anna Gooch organized the 2-3-year-olds’ choir; and Kathy Madsen led the 4-5-year-olds, together with Kristi Spangler at the piano. At a later date, the first grade was added, taking the name King’s Kids Choir, with 30 children performing.

The Adult Choir now had over 30 members with Ron Stewart, President; Jo Miller, Vice President; Cindy Reeder, Secretary-Treasurer; and Toni Couch, Librarian. Dee Owen was the Music Ministry secretary and receptionist for the church.

THE “ARISE AND BUILD” STORY

While Barrett was organizing the school, others were working on the “Arise and Build” campaign, and here the challenge loomed: to provide building funds for construction of the Christ Covenant Church campus from the financial support of its young membership.

The church goals of 1987 included: expanding to two worship services on Sunday mornings; growing total attendance at the worship services to 750; and beginning construction on Phase I of the new church building, with 50% completion by the end of the year.

The master plan at this time included the construction of two buildings. The first was an auditorium-gymnasium, often referred to as a “sanctorium.” The second was an education wing (one half of the proposed educational building). Phil Summa was serving as Chairman of the Ministry Expansion Committee that formulated these early plans.

In a report to the congregation, Phil stated, “Three long years of loving labor have gone into the presentation of a Master Plan for our church property. As God provides, we are now ready to “Arise and Build” so that the impact of Christ Covenant’s ministry might expand God’s Kingdom, both here in Charlotte and around the world.

“During 1986, the Committee took our church’s building plans from their start as

a list of needs and concepts to a floorplan and architect's drawings from which we will initiate our actual building program. The Committee also held the first few exploratory meetings, which have now grown into our "Arise and Build campaign."

Elder Mike Terrell and Deacons Brad Shelby and John Sherrill were other key supporters during this building phase of ministry.

Then a Building Commission of three was appointed from the Session to refine the plans, monitor costs, and select a building contractor. Chairman of this Commission was Hugh Elder, working alongside Harold Jones and Brad Shelby.

Hugh recalled how they approached their assigned task not only from a business perspective, but also from a spiritual one.

"Harold always provided nurturing leadership in the church — and in helping me mature," he said. "I remember we had a big congregational meeting planned when we were to make the decision whether to build or not. We were going into the auditorium when Harold took me back into a side room and suggested that we get down on our knees and pray. We just turned it over to God and then went on into the congregational meeting, and that evening there was a real sense of unity, and the project went very smoothly."

THE DECISION TO BUILD

So the decision was made to go forward with the building, and Harold Jones and Larry Kirkman were named co-chairmen of the first fundraising effort called "Arise and Build." A fundraising professional was hired to assist the process, and a kick-off banquet was planned. In the end, what the professional predicted would happen at that initial event and what actually happened, by the grace of God, differed greatly.

"The fellow that was heading it up called me," Harold said. "This was the week before we were supposed to have our banquet to find out what kind of money people would commit. He said that there were three levels of expected money, and he picked the lowest level for us. At that time there were only about 105 to 110 family-giving units in the church. But what happened? As people gave, we went way over the top level."

Mike Terrell, member of the first Building Committee, recalled how gratified everyone was. "We had \$1.2 million pledged right off the bat and could go ahead with construction immediately."

THE "CONSTRUCTION WORKER MINISTRY"

McDevitt Street Bovis was selected as the general contractor, and the work got underway. Groundbreaking for the first permanent buildings on the Christ Covenant campus was held on September 20, 1987 — a service of land dedication and thanksgiving at the site of the new facility.

The congregation committed to daily prayer for the workers throughout the construction period. In addition, the Christ Covenant ladies served refreshments every day at the site, and there was a Christmas banquet for the workers. Hugh Elder recalled the very real results of ministry that occurred during the building phase. “In talking to the Project Manager, Bob Hillis, who started to come to Christ Covenant regularly, and Superintendent Cecil Thompson, now attending Central Church, both spoke of the profound effect on their lives as this congregation’s ministry brought them closer to God.” As an additional bonus, the project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget!

CHAPTER 12

ON CAMPUS: THE MOVE IS MADE

It was the spring of 1988 when Christ Covenant Church moved into the first buildings of its comprehensive ministry center on its own 31-acre tract of land in Matthews — Phase I of the Servant/Resource church. The roving church was home at last!

CUTTING TIES TO THE PAST

That Sunday evening when the congregation met in the Charlotte Christian School gymnasium for the final time, they marked the moment. At the close of the worship service, they cut down the nets from the basketball goals. “With God’s help,” they had won! From now on they would be in their own facilities — though not yet to a sanctuary; that would come later when the church was larger and had a deeper financial base. But the joy was for more than a building. It was for the vision and for the ministry that was beginning to take shape.

When moving day came, a call went out for volunteers. The Property Committee members, who had been making decisions regarding everything from telephone systems to cleaning companies, were there — including Chairman Tom Van Beek, as well as Ron Gillespie, Dick Givens, and Joe Spencer. Bob Fultz, who Pastor Reeder called the church's "moving man," was asked to orchestrate the event and coordinate the 25 volunteers. Bob, who worked for Duke Power, was a big guy, a sort of "muscle man," as he described himself, and he had often helped with pastoral moves.

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK

The first consideration was to transport the church offices from an Industrial Park in the center of Matthews. Perry Brown, a member who owned a large furniture outlet, donated the use of his trucks.

But it would require strong backs to get the job done. First, Bob and a few "hand-picked" men carefully manipulated Pastor Reeder's large oak desk down the two flights of stairs. Next, a human chain was formed "so that a person wouldn't wear himself out running up and down steps," and coded boxes of books and office supplies were passed hand-to-hand to the trucks. Careful hands moved boxes with staff necessities, including those of Dan Williams, Worship Director; Kathy Woolner, Youth Coordinator; Mary Catherine Moshos, Administrative Assistant; and Dee Owen, secretary. Strong backs and able hands managed boxes that contained the libraries of Pastor Reeder and Associate Pastor Tom Henry. Their destination was the first-floor rooms behind the "sanctorium" in the multi-purpose building.

Next stop: Charlotte Christian School. There, volunteers gathered to load the Sunday school and nursery equipment that was "stuffed" in the storage shed. From the gymnasium of the school, they moved 600 folding chairs and the chair carts. There were folding tables, the heavy platform sections, and the "piano in a box." At the end of the day, there were no reports of strained backs or pulled muscles — only tired ones.

Bob Fultz and his moving team had witnessed the beginning of a new era for their church. In the early 80s, Bob had come from his "cathedral-type" church in Charlotte to join the small, struggling mission church. Now as the 80s were closing out, the vision of the future was taking focus.

As Ron Stewart wrote in his Diaconate Report: "I have seen and experienced many changes at Christ Covenant. One of the most significant, of course, is moving our church family into our new ministry center. It was like moving into a new home. Once things were situated and settled, you could see everyone actively involved in their areas of ministry with zest. These people are not afraid to get involved and sacrificially give of themselves to honor the Lord."

CARVING A PULPIT

Another example of giving of oneself was Jack Coobs, a master joiner in woodworking, maker of fine furniture. He and his family were members of Christ Covenant. The story of the making of the church's new pulpit even made the Charlotte Observer newspaper.

In 1986, Jack's wife and business partner, Caydea, became seriously ill with pancreatitis. Church members prayed and visited the hospital, brought meals to the Coobs home, helped with the children, showing their loving care. The night of her crucial surgery, Pastor Harry Reeder stayed with Jack through the wee hours of the morning.

Soon after Caydea's recovery, plans were underway to move the church to its first permanent home. Now Jack wondered what would be done for a permanent pulpit. Up to that point, they had been using one of the school's lecterns, and here he found a way to show his appreciation to the Lord and to this caring congregation.

Jack spoke with Harry about constructing a sturdy, multi-wood pulpit. At the conclusion of several such conversations, Harry had a pulpit design in mind. It featured the Celtic cross between two columns.

After the design consultation with Harry, Jack drove to West Virginia where he acquired four-inch thick cherry lumber. He added padouk wood from Malaysia, with a circle of tiger maple. The result was a uniquely beautiful church pulpit, an expression of Jack's thankfulness as well as his giftedness.

A DEDICATION AND A GROWTH SPURT

In May 1988, the formal dedication of the building took place with the Rev. Leighton Ford as speaker. In addition, a special "family" time of thanksgiving and appreciation was shared one Sunday evening when Pastor Reeder asked all of the original member families to come forward. Of these 38 people only one family had been transferred out of town. It was an especially memorable time for them, Harry recalled, "because they had prayed and labored very hard, and they were thankful for what the Lord had done."

With the move, Christ Covenant experienced an immediate spurt of rapid growth. Now there were 12 serving Elders and 16 Deacons. Pastor Reeder continued to expand his ministry as he spoke at gatherings and conferences both locally and nationally.

Tom Van Beek, Chairman of the Property Committee, said of that period, "It was a challenging and exciting year with the move. What struck me was the way the Property Committee changed to address the changing needs."

In the beginning, the Committee was charged with planning for the new building and grounds, making endless decisions about critical matters. Then came moving day. The congregation came together as a team and moved the office and worship furniture and set up for the following day's services as the construction workers laid the last carpet. Suddenly the Committee shifted their

focus to pressing post-move concerns.

"After the move," continued Tom, "the Property Committee entered a maintenance mode, and as usage of these facilities continued to increase, they realized that the Committee could not do a complete job of keeping up with the day-to-day, on-site needs. So a full time Facilities Manager, Robert Powell, was engaged.

"Next, the Property Committee changed their focus to longer range planning and policy making."

Adjusting to continual expansion was just part of doing ministry at Christ Covenant during the months that followed the move. Sunday Bible school attendance increased by 36 percent. Tim Cool's Jeremiah Brass began "sounding the trumpet throughout the land" (Jer. 4:5), adding instrumentalists even as they expanded their role in worship services and other musical opportunities both on and off the church campus. Dick Osman served as Coordinator of the Covenant Groups, a ministry that saw a whopping jump from 15 groups in 1987 to 25 in 1988.

"The challenge was to offset natural attrition," Dick said, "and to train enough new leaders and start enough new groups to keep pace with the growth of the church."

A new Facilitator Training Manual was prepared by Dick and used in three SBS classes held in 1988, turning out 75 graduates. The goal for the year ahead: to form 10-15 new groups at a rate equal to congregation growth, develop a sign-up system to channel people into the groups, and to start a good library for small groups.

Men of Covenant (MOC) led by Marq Ryan emphasized prayer among the men of Christ Covenant. MOC meetings took place the first Saturday of each month in the form of "prayer breakfasts." In September, Marq stepped down, and Rob Veerman took over as Coordinator of these breakfasts, which consisted of three 30-minute segments: breakfast and fellowship; sharing and prayer requests; and closing prayer.

1987 was the start-up year for the Pro-Christian Life and Issues Ministry, referred to as ProCLAIM. Carson Daves was acting Coordinator in 1988. Its stated purpose was to encourage church attendees "to become involved in social and political issues as Christ calls us." During the year, ProCLAIM participants attended precinct meetings, worked on behalf of Christian candidates, and studied and communicated issues in order to educate the voting congregation, and "God blessed richly," he reported. Their primary focus area was in the pro-life arena and involved picketing abortion clinics.

The Church Education Committee was formed with Coordinators Ilah Williams, nursery; Nora Sherrill, Children's Sunday Bible school; Barbara Spencer, Youth Choir; Kathy Woolner, Junior and Senior High; and John Williams, the Adult Sunday Bible school.

AN ELDER WITH A PASSION FOR MISSIONS

The Missions Committee was strengthened as they looked to the future, making strategic plans that in a few years time would involve Christ Covenant with some 75 missionaries and benevolences. During 1987-89, a newly ordained Elder with a heart for missions helped to broaden and deepen this program.

Mike and Yvonne Moore had gained a “missionary awareness” while attending a small mission church in France. They had been studying and reading books on missions, when Mike’s business took him to Paris for a time. Once there they were shocked by the spiritual condition of the people they met. While in Europe, they saw a great need for world evangelism.

When they returned to the States, they struggled with the question of whether they should give up their home in Tallahassee and go into the field. Where should their sphere of service be? God led them to Charlotte and to Christ Covenant and the PCA church. It was then, Mike said, “that the Lord showed me the office of Elder.”

How does God prepare a man for ministry as an Elder at Christ Covenant?

The first Sunday that Mike and Yvonne attended the Pastor’s Class, Harry Reeder was there in his shirt sleeves “being straight-forward in a lot of things that were vital to us,” Mike recalled, “and we just soaked it right up.”

Mike started going to the Discipleship and Weekly Nurture (DAWN) early morning classes taught by Pastor Reeder to promote Biblical and theological accuracy and to train men in the Word of God, leadership, and effective witnessing for Christ. It was then that Mike began studying the office of Elder.

“As soon as I started learning about the office,” he said, “I felt the Lord was calling me to it because of my gifts and the way things had developed in my life. I was excited by the opportunity.”

Then Mike was incapacitated for about a year with cancer and a resulting disability to his leg. It was during this time that the location for the new church building was determined. So the Moores bought a lot a half-mile from the church site and built their home there, knowing that “the church would be important to our personal lives, our children, and our activities.”

THE MIKE MOORE FAMILY MISSION

At this point in his life, Mike was at peace with his vocational calling to be effective in his work in Charlotte, in the business of construction. It was his heart’s desire “to have an impact in the community and in the industry of construction, rather than going to another country.”

Missions was still on his heart, however, and he soon became Chairman of the Missions Committee. Mike Couch was the Elder with oversight in Missions, and when Mike Moore was ordained as an Elder, the two Mikes sat down and began the strategic planning that became Christ Covenant’s Mission Program for the

years that followed. Included in that early vision were the Missions Conferences, the Sunday evening missions testimonials, and a decision to present a balanced focus between foreign and local missions work.

“Missions is one of our key objectives in the church,” he brought out. “We’ve had a good balance at Christ Covenant of personal ministry encouragement, of exhortation, and community involvement (like ProCLAIM) — all impacting our culture here in missions. I’m excited about our not being strictly foreign missions. There is an increasing challenge because our culture is changing rapidly. Our country is becoming almost like a mission field as far as agnosticism and the different kinds of liberal thought there is today. As Harry says, it’s almost an atheistic view you find, and that’s the basis on which you must prepare for work here in our own country.”

CHAPTER 13

THE MINISTRIES SOAR

The late 80s were exciting years of growth in the development of the philosophy and direction of the Servant/Resource church. Pastor Harry Reeder, who considered himself a “developer and enabler,” was preparing God’s people for the work of service, “...so the body grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Eph. 4).

One of the ways this love manifested itself was in the Mercy to Members and Barnabas ministries, the latter named after the apostle, a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith — Barnabas, The Encourager.

“PLEASE HELP US! I LOST MY JOB!”

The Christ Covenant Barnabas Ministry gave encouragement to those in need, addressing the many calls for assistance that came into the church office. As the church had grown, word got around that Christ Covenant would help those in need or crisis; as a result, calls had greatly increased. More often than not, the needs expressed were immediate.

“I lost my job,” the plea would come. “I have a wife and child and no money to pay the rent, and there’s no food in the house. We need help right away — today, or we’ll be out on the street hungry! Please help us!”

In the early years of ministry at Christ Covenant, Pastor Reeder and his secretary fielded these calls themselves. Then Bernie Lawrence joined the effort, even taking some calls from his workplace in order to answer the growing number of requests.

“There was a lot of pressure on us,” Bernie recalled, “and what we realized we needed was to formalize that ministry, put some things in place that would help us manage the situation rather than being managed by it.”

THE TRIGG FAMILY OFFERS LEADERSHIP

The idea was proposed that perhaps Chip and Brenda Trigg, a young couple who had recently joined Christ Covenant, might be willing to help.

In college, the Triggs had been active with the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. They were also involved in mercy ministries at their former church in Richmond where Chip served as a Deacon. It was only natural then that the Triggs inquired about mercy ministries when they spoke with Pastor Reeder shortly after coming to Christ Covenant. Their show of interest did not go unnoticed. It wasn’t long before Chip Trigg and Bernie Lawrence sat down together to develop a comprehensive ministry called Barnabas and to set the criteria for helping those in need outside the church.

“For instance,” Bernie explained, “we would never give money to an individual

outright. They had to be willing to meet with two people from our church, to sit down and discuss their situation. If they weren't willing to do that, we couldn't help them. That screened a lot of calls."

So callers received a needs assessment, and if the need was determined to be legitimate, the ministry purchased groceries for them. If rent had to be paid, that was done as well. But this was not the end of the process for those who requested assistance.

MINISTRY WITH A LASTING IMPACT

"Folks had to be willing to commit themselves to changing their situation," added Bernie. "We might help them once, but for continued help they needed to be accountable to someone from the church. We would meet with them periodically and help them work through the problems that led them into difficulties in the first place."

In many cases, budgets were set up; in others, marital problems addressed. "But the key element of the Barnabas Ministry," said Bernie, "was to share the Gospel with each person. That was foundational."

A MINISTRY PLAN IN PLACE

Charlie Hoffecker was Chairman of the diaconal Mercy Committee that year, and a pivotal year it was. The future course of mercy ministries at Christ Covenant was charted, and the Barnabas Ministry was approved that January of 1985. Presentations of the program were made to the congregation to raise awareness of this ministry area. Thereafter, weekend seminars and Sunday Bible school elective classes were offered to train the team leaders.

By 1988, when Dr. Chris Madsen was Chairman of the Mercy Ministries, he reported that the Deacons, working through Barnabas, had helped 17 families in the community, allocating \$6,000 toward that effort. Mercy-To-Members had ministered to the financial needs of 12 church members in the amount of \$12,000. However, Chris urged the congregation to become more involved still, for the simple reason that the ministries had been able to assist only about one-third of the people who had called and requested help.

These became growing vital ministries that worked quietly and confidentially: encouraging the downcast; providing for the hungry; giving direction to the wayward. In short, it was the church "building up of itself" in love. Christ Covenant was learning that the need for such care was immense and ongoing — but that the opportunity to serve as vessels of God's provision was indeed a blessing.

BOB DYAR'S MINISTRY VISION

Still another outreach ministry of an entirely different nature came to fruition in

the late 80s. Bob Dyar's vision of Sports Outreach and Recreation (SOAR) led to a ministry that truly lived up to its acronym and "soared" to success.

At the time, Bob Dyar was Church Administrator and Director of Ministries. He had come from a seasoned background of working with youth. As far back as his high school years, Bob was involved in Young Life. Once in college, he participated in Campus Crusade and the Navigators. While doing graduate work in Business Administration, he was on the youth staff at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, one of the founding PCA churches. There he met Connie, and they were married in 1980.

The following year Bob served as a ruling Elder in a church plant in Melbourne, Florida, beginning his years of pastoral ministry. A company transfer brought Bob and Connie to Charlotte in 1984. They joined Christ Covenant shortly thereafter. In a matter of a few short years, Bob's pastoral gifts once again were recognized. This time he made a career change that reflected his calling and accepted the position of church Administrator. Serving as a lay pastor, Bob took on the task of bringing organization and focus to the many ministries that were forming. To summarize, his job was to give direction to what this budding Servant/Resource church wanted to accomplish, and he believed that this was the time to really emphasize outreach. How could they reach more people in the community? Where could they find a common meeting ground with their neighbors, both the saved and unsaved?

An idea began to take form.

THE SOAR MINISTRY TAKES OFF

In February, Bob attended a meeting of the International Sports Coalition in Dallas, Texas. His idea had developed into a strong desire to use sports as a vehicle to reach people who were not involved in the church. After returning from Dallas, he asked the Deacons if he could start a sports ministry for this purpose. What they wanted to know was how much it would cost to operate such a ministry.

"I said I would do it for nothing," Bob recalled. "I'd do it on a zero budget. 'Can you do that?' they asked, and I said, 'Sure!'"

So it began. Together with his coaches, such as Steve Walker and Jeff Ulatowski who were on board with SOAR from the beginning, Bob prayed that at least 50 kids would come to participate. But on that first Saturday morning in the spring of 1988, 130 enthusiastic boys and girls signed up for the new baseball league!

A FIELD OF OPPORTUNITY

With proven support for the SOAR ministry, a field was cut and a backstop was built. Church members volunteered as coaches. The year-long program was to include baseball in the summer, soccer in the fall, and basketball in the winter.

SOAR became known as a “League of Encouragement,” to reflect its purpose. Rather than emphasizing competition or “winning,” SOAR games were offered to encourage youth and to develop sports skills. Yet the primary objective of SOAR was to extend the Gospel through evangelism and discipleship. At some point during each team practice of the 10-week season, the coach would circle his 12 or 15 youngsters, usually within earshot of parents, for prayer and a short devotional message about the person of Christ and what Scripture says about “how we treat one another.”

VOLUNTEERS DOING THE WORK OF MINISTRY

SOAR teams were divided into age groups. In baseball, there were t-ball, coach-pitch, and kids-pitch levels. The coaches worked hard to give attention to each child.

Bob Dyar described these volunteers: “Those coaches were a ministering team that really had a heart to do this.”

Complimentary to the SOAR emphasis on encouragement, godliness, and character development in the youth, was the ministry’s sensitivity to the health of the whole family. It was an element that proved especially meaningful to single parents. Each season a social event brought all the families together — a team dinner where friendships were made and bridges built.

The end-of-the-season Awards Banquet grew to be another highlight. Soon there were as many as 1000 in attendance at each of the banquets, which featured well-known Christian sports figures as speakers.

This was the beginning of SOAR.

CHAPTER 14

GOD’S FLOCK

From the beginning, when Christ Covenant was renamed and the “flagship” church was designated a Servant/Resource church, one the strategies of the leadership was to develop a shepherding ministry. It would be “proactive in contacting the members of the church while compassionately reactive in assisting them in their specific points of need.”

SHEPHERDING GOD’S FLOCK

Based on 1 Peter 5:1-4, the Elders accepted their call as shepherds of God’s flock. They believed it to be a serious responsibility — perhaps even their chief responsibility — to carry out this function. It was the goal of this ruling body to make sure that the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of each member of

the church were met. To accomplish this, they would ask God to make them aware and sensitive to these needs and thus able to act as encouragers. So when the Shepherding Ministry was formed in the Session under the Ministry of Enfoldings, each Elder was assigned oversight of a number of church families.

In 1984 when Bob Tarte was Chairman of the Shepherding Committee, three Elders were assigned 15 families each. The following year there were 8 Elders shepherding groups of 12 families each.

By 1988, it became obvious that with the rapid growth of the church it would be impossible to keep up; the membership grew tremendously — doubling in size from 842 members to 1582. The Elders were overwhelmed and particularly challenged during the first three years after the church moved to its home campus. It seemed to them that shepherding as it should be done was always just out of reach. What could they do to assure the effectiveness of this ministry?

THE “NEW” SHEPHERDS

It was evident that some reorganization was necessary. Bernie Lawrence was Chairman of Shepherding, one of the permanent Session committees. It consisted of two Elders and two Deacons, since the Deacons had also been asked to partner with the Elders in the shepherding role. By this time there were 14 active Elders and 18 Deacons; but still there were not enough shepherds. In order to be able to minister to every member of the rapidly growing church, more were needed, so Bernie and Pastor Tom Henry met to work out a new system

“We recruited mature, godly men from our membership,” Bernie recalled. “We trained them, examined them, so they would be competent and mature enough to care for families. It was like a mini-officer training program, with a final examination given by two Elders.”

Each new shepherd then was asked to take responsibility for at least five families, to be available for them and to pray with and for them. A shepherd would stay in touch with his families on a regular basis; even invite them into his home. In this way, the wives of shepherds became involved in offering hospitality. The plan called for each Elder to be accountable for approximately seven shepherds. Together they would meet once a month to discuss and work out any problems the families might be facing. The congregation was informed that under the new structure they would be seen or called frequently and, as needed, they could call on their shepherd for support.

PRAYERS FOR THE MEMBERSHIP

The Committee also instigated a monthly Session meeting devoted entirely to prayer for the membership. As stated in the Annual Report of that year, “The highlight of these meetings was an extended time of prayer on our knees before the throne of grace.”

This was the make-up of shepherding for several years, but soon the Elders were

to be plagued by the same old problem — the church growing faster than they could recruit new shepherds.

The expectation communicated to the congregation that they would be contacted frequently and that any problem they might have would be addressed quickly, simply could not be met. Leadership committed to testing yet another approach. This reorganization was to come later when the Shepherding Ministry would become the Contact Ministry, under the direction of David Russ.

“MAKING DISCIPLES”

In 1988 when the move was made into the new buildings on the home campus, Barrett Mosbacker was not only headmaster of the soon to be opened Covenant Day School but also Director of Christian Education for the entire church. This was a full-time ministry, which included Nursery, Children’s Sunday Bible school, Youth Church, and Adult Sunday Bible school.

In an interview, Barrett stated the goal of the education ministry of Christ Covenant: to “make disciples and teach them to observe all that Christ taught.” He was also careful to add, “Such a lofty goal is, of course, never fully realized, and is a continuous process.”

INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

The first step was to expand the education ministry. Sunday school was rapidly growing in numbers with an average attendance of nearly 450 in 1988. At the end of the following year, the Education Committee was formed consisting of Coordinators of the various education departments: Ilah Williams, Nursery; Nora Sherrill, Children’s SBS (4 years to grade 6); Barbara Spencer, Youth Church; Kathy Woolner, Junior and Senior High; and John Williams, Adult SBS.

They worked to develop innovative curriculum and means of instruction that would enhance learning. 1988-1989 were exciting years of dynamic change, and, as often was the case, the immediate need was to train and maintain teachers.

In addition, an adult class was organized that highlighted a different church ministry each Sunday. This became known as the “Connecting Class,” designed to inform those coming out of the Pastor’s Class regarding opportunities for service.

NEW MINISTRY: ASSIMILATION

“Connecting,” or assimilation, was an area of particular concern as the church continued its rapid growth. While the “Connecting Class” was informative, leadership knew they needed to explore other ways to get new members actively involved in worship, fellowship, and ministry. So, in 1988, the ministry of Assimilation was organized, with Ken Samuelson, Coordinator. During that year, new members of the committee came on board, including Ken Carrick and Tim

Richardson. The stated purpose of this ministry was to communicate the needs of the church and to match the gifts and interests of the people with the various service opportunities.

In the Connecting class, participants were asked to answer a series of questions to help guide and identify their interests. The purpose was to match persons with a ministry that would draw on those interests and utilize individual gifts. To keep participants informed and involved, each received a “follow-up” phone call within the three months following the class. New members were introduced to Covenant Groups, Salt-Shaker dinners, and the like.

YOUTH CHURCH

Youth Church was unique; patterned after the adult worship service — complete with praise songs, prayer, and a “sermon.” It was a special time for children to actively participate in a worship service of their very own. The stated objective was “to evangelize children, so they would grow in grace, through Bible truths, praise songs, prayer for children, Bible memory work, and to prepare children for meaningful worship with adults in the sanctuary, for fellowship, and for missions.”

Assisting Barbara Spencer in building this ministry was Reneé Coleman, Cindy Reeder, and Doug and Sandra Suits. Each Sunday, men serving in this ministry area presented the children’s sermons.

As Jennie Defreitas, who later served as Coordinator of Elementary Age Ministries, recalled, “We wanted to see something of the same quality for our children that we see in our inspirational adult worship.”

Almost immediately, the Youth Church became too big for the small team to handle. There were now two morning services and an evening ministry of music during which young children needed loving attention. A re-organization became necessary, and the team approach was adopted to meet the challenge. Coordinators Susan Rice, Kathy Madsen, and Texie Shelby took charge, with the assistance of service directors Joanne Nabb, Renee Coleman, and Hal Jordan. Other team members at the time included teacher trainers, Doug and Sandra Suits; curriculum advisor, Cindy Reeder; and children’s ministry secretary, Connice Dyar.

SUNDAY BIBLE SCHOOL REORGANIZED

A similar revolution was underway in Children’s Sunday Bible school. A 10-member team, working under the leadership of Coordinator Nora Sherrill, was assembled. The team was divided up to cover specific areas of responsibility. Good leadership together with the aid of dedicated volunteers made it possible to begin the process of addressing immediate concerns, setting goals, and training teachers.

Perhaps the greatest concern for the team at this time was managing the staggering number of children and the acute lack of space to properly minister to

them. By the following year, there were 62 adults involved on a regular basis in this ministry of Biblical instruction, discipleship, fellowship, evangelism, and service to children, with the aim of making “God’s truth more real in their lives.”

Adult Bible school classes were opportunities to delve deep into God’s Word and to apply it to family life, vocational life, and to the culture. Jeffrey Levinson served as Coordinator of the Adult SBS, which was experiencing a boom of its own. Week by week, more chairs were crowded into rooms offering courses designed to lead men and women “to better know the Word of God and to put understanding into day-to-day application.” Old and New Testament books were the subjects of study, as was the Westminster Confession of Faith, Small Group and Leadership Training, evangelism, the holiness of God, eschatology and doctrine studies, and Understanding and Responding to “Battles” in our society (abortion, pornography, etc.). By 1990 there was an average of 550 adults attending these classes.

TEACHING & LEADING: A TEAM APPROACH

The team approach proved so successful in meeting the many and varied needs of the growing church that in 1989-1990 a church-wide shift to this approach to ministry was made. Teams, rather than individuals, would lead ministries.

The larger church shift continued, as it was applied to the leadership structure. Recalled Harry Reeder, “We started in the pastoral staff.”

Working together on the Pastoral Staff with Pastor Harry were Bob Dyar, Director of Administration and Ministries; Tom Henry, Associate Pastor and leader of Shepherding, Counseling, and Small Groups; Barrett Mosbacker, Director of Christian Education and Covenant Day School; and Scott Thompson, Director of Youth.

They developed their own Purpose Statement. It read:

“The Christ Covenant Pastoral Staff/Team is committed to equipping believers at Christ Covenant, thereby enabling them to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ; and also to implement ministry so that the body of Christ throughout the world is built up spiritually, functionally, and statistically.”

Bob Dyar recalled this time of reorganization, “I think the most exciting thing was getting teams of people to work together on a project. That was something that we as a ministry had not done before. We had been oriented to individuals because we had been so small. The team concept really began to be emphasized in 1988. Now we no longer heard the ‘I’ as in ‘I did this’ in the reports. Instead it was, ‘We did this.’ Actually one person can’t do a whole lot. That’s why we need to always emphasize that the church is not built around any one person, but it’s always built around a body of believers that work together for a common cause.”

A supreme example of team teaching was the Connecting Class. Organized as an SBS class, it highlighted various church ministries — as many as 30

represented. This required that a different Coordinator address the class each Sunday regarding their particular program, service, or ministry area. Under this organization, a newcomer could enter the class at any point in the SBS quarter and learn about virtually every aspect of the church — from worship/music to children's ministries. Team teaching provided an ideal learning experience for congregants, even as it freed up ministry leaders to talk about their passions without committing to a full quarter of teaching.

YOUTH MINISTRIES WITH SCOTT

In May of 1989, Scott Thompson joined the pastoral staff of Christ Covenant Church as Youth Director. It was a busy year for Scott, his wife Melodie and their two very young children, Allie and Chapman. During a period of five months, while Scott was developing new relationships with students, parents, and families of this new ministry, the Thompson family moved twice.

But God prevailed in readying Scott and Christ Covenant students for big ministry changes and even bigger faith challenges. In a mere 12-month period, the list of youth related events and activities grew extensively.

To promote Missions awareness, there was senior high training and a trip to Granada in southern Spain; for junior high students, there was training and experience within the states. There were the "Big Events" — Lock-ins, Ski Retreats, and a New Year's Bash, each offering non-threatening atmospheres where friends could introduce friends to Jesus Christ. Senior high students were challenged in their Christian walk at weekly YAK (Youth Advancing the Kingdom), a discussion-oriented time on Wednesday evenings. "Friday Night Live" was an exciting alternative to the mall scene for the junior high set. Small groups were formed as a personal and engaging avenue toward growth and discipleship, as Scott described it. In addition, the Student Sports Outreach effort incorporated athletics and the Gospel in order to reach peers for Jesus Christ. On Sunday, Sunday Bible school classes for youth were offered to address the spiritual needs of junior and senior high students.

The Youth Ministry was well on its way to accomplishing its purpose: to introduce, equip, and unleash junior and senior high students for the Kingdom of God.

CHAPTER 15

RESTRUCTURING THE CHURCH

From 1983 to 1991, Christ Covenant grew at an average of over 30% each year. In 1991, three years after the church moved onto its home campus, the membership had doubled in size from 842 members to 1582. Yet in many ways, Christ Covenant still operated in the same manner that it had in the early years. It was clear that major changes needed to be made to the infrastructure of the church. Just how to proceed wasn't nearly so clear.

A PLURALITY OF LEADERSHIP LAYS THE FOUNDATION

It's important to note that from the outset of Harry's ministry at Christ Covenant, he emphasized the need for a "plurality of leadership" in the church. According to Scripture, God ordained two specific offices in which men exercise leadership in His church: Elder, both teaching and ruling; and Deacon. In addition to these leaders, a church the size of Christ Covenant also had non-ordained leaders — men and women called to accomplish ministry in accordance with their passion and giftedness. This plurality would be key to accomplishing the church's vision.

THE RESOURCE/SERVANT VISION LEADS THE WAY

It was time again to stress the importance of building leaders, of sharing responsibilities, and of identifying individual callings. Harry did just that, from the pulpit and with his existing leadership. Again, the Servant/Resource church model was presented to the congregation; it was a model that would accomplish much for the Kingdom, but not without many prayers and many hands, and not without a structure where ordained and lay leaders could work together to manage the decisions and demands facing the church's growing ministries.

THE VISION RATIONALE

By following the example of the Lord's servanthood, Christ Covenant's desire

was to be a “servant” church, for individual members, the community, the region, the nation and, ultimately, the entire world. In serving, the church would make all its resources available for the proclamation of the Gospel, the planting of vibrant churches, and the ministry of church revitalization — and so the Servant/Resource church was visualized.

THE VISION PHILOSOPHY

Christ Covenant expressed its philosophy of ministry, using an illustration referred to as the Four Doors of Discipleship: Upreach, Downreach, Inreach, and Outreach. These four areas were outlined from the pulpit, incorporated into church communications and calendar and, perhaps more importantly, used as a springboard for the restructuring process. The Four Doors provided an organization of ministries and a structure for building teams with a common passion and purpose. Enthusiastic teams, led by committed leaders, would be key to the success of the restructuring of Christ Covenant.

Upreach

The door of Upreach, emphasized during the winter quarter, focused on worship as Exaltation and Encouragement. At this time, communications reminded congregants that it is the privilege of God’s people to assemble for the purpose of giving acceptable worship to the Lord in spirit and in truth and, consequently, to receive encouragement. When the Lord’s people gather for worship, whether in large assemblies or small groups, both of these ministries are to take place. Worship is also to be a part of personal and family life and identify the ultimate way and reason for living.

Outreach

In the spring, The Door of Outreach was highlighted, which included the ministries of Evangelism and Extension — the effort to reach the local community and, ultimately, the world with the proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This called for an aggressive missions and church-planting strategy.

Inreach

The Door of Inreach implemented the ministries of Enfolding and Enabling. Enfolding spotlighted the importance of shepherding in bringing individuals and families together into significant relationships. It also encouraged finding ways for the Lord’s people to know and care for one another. Enabling described the effort to communicate ministry areas, in order that members could contribute to the building up of the church through service. Inreach was the focus for the summer quarter when people were more likely to be available for gatherings.

Downreach

The Door of Downreach came in the fall and included the ministries of Education and Equipping — to make disciples by teaching. This required a concentrated effort to help people grow the deep roots of a knowledgeable walk with Christ through Education ministries, to expose believers to the “whole counsel of God”

from His inspired and inerrant Word. Equipping, then, is “discipling” God’s people to apply knowledge in the pursuit of a deeper, closer relationship with Christ and with others.

The discipleship aspect of this ministry, according to Harry, could be compared to two tap roots. One was knowing the truths from the Word of God by the Holy Spirit working through ministries of Christian Education; the other was walking in love with Christ — on behalf of others — in ministries of Equipping (Ephesians 4:11-16).

PUTTING HANDS AND FEET TO THE VISION

With the vision and philosophy of the Servant/Resource church before them, the process of restructuring got underway. Though it would not be the last, it would be a significant shift that would blaze the trail for all future efforts to keep this living, body of believers following after the God who had lovingly — often miraculously — called them together.

On December 17, 1991, the Session assigned the task of an organizational study to the Personnel Committee.

What do we do next in becoming the resource church for revitalization in our region and in the PCA denomination? How is the shift made to a large-church format? How can Christ Covenant improve its ability to minister to the surrounding communities? These were the questions that faced them.

The Session divided the assessment process into three categories: survey, recommendations, and implementation.

As a first step, a questionnaire was sent out to about 50 key individuals followed by personal interviews. The areas surveyed included administration, infrastructure, internal and external communications, and staffing.

CHANGES IN STAFF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Following a year of research, Dick Van Halsema presented a matrix structure to the Session, a team concept for consideration. They had called larger PCA churches throughout the country, studied new organization structures, and in January of 1993, the Session approved and implemented the new system.

Several changes were made. For instance, by 1991, Christ Covenant was adding staff very rapidly. This put more and more responsibility on the Senior Pastor in the area of managing staff. A pressing need for a plurality of leadership was apparent in this area.

At that time, three people reported to the Senior Pastor at the executive staff level: the Associate Pastor, the Executive Director of Ministries and Outreach, and the Executive Director of Administration and Inreach. To this point, roles and duties shifted between these men with no clear job descriptions. It was, at times, confusing and, as some have stated, the gifts of those involved were not being

utilized to their potential.

So a newly formed Reorganization Committee began by examining the Senior Pastor's gifts and ministry to establish the areas in which he was most valuable. They determined that Harry Reeder's greatest talents were his visionary leadership, his preaching/teaching, and his discipleship. However, his effectiveness was being diluted by the time required to manage this large staff and the growing ministries.

As a result of these findings, the Reorganization Committee clearly defined the role of Senior Pastor and created a job, narrower in its focus. To make this possible, the position of Executive Pastor was introduced to handle the day-to-day management of staff. Tom Henry, the Associate Pastor, moved into this position, taking on the duties of staff management together with the Senior Pastor. Both roles were fine tuned and detailed job descriptions compiled.

New job descriptions were also outlined and given the titles of Director of Administration and Director of Outreach/ Mission. These positions then were placed under the leadership of the Executive Pastor.

THE PASTORAL MINISTRY

Following those initial changes, the Christ Covenant staff greatly expanded. The boom came as a result of the increased need for ministry oversight, as well as for pastoral shepherding. Two pastors simply were not enough.

Then came the question — how can the pastoral gifts of our ministry directors be utilized for shepherding?

A shift began to occur that represented a renewed focus on pastoral ministry, especially for the staff. It was determined that Directors over functional ministries would move into the role of Pastors of their program ministries, as well as for particular Congregational Communities. Assistant Directors then advanced into the role of Directors over a functional area of ministry. Thus, the "new" Pastors were now on the Pastoral Ministry Teams for their areas and the Directors on the Ministry Teams for their areas.

For instance, Mike Miller was named Pastor of Singles/Global Outreach with a team comprised of the Directors of Missions, SOAR, and Visitation. Bernie Lawrence, now took the title Pastor of Administration, which included shepherding of the Adult Family Community. His ministry team included the Directors of Finance, Management of Information Systems (MIS), and Publications/Communications. And the "new" Pastor of Empty Nesters/Operations, Wiley Brown, was assisted by the Directors of Property and Maintenance and the Cemetery.

CHANGES IN ORGANIZING NORMS

Also as a result of the 1991 survey, the Reorganization Committee developed

structural and procedural norms, which provided underlying values that guided the church as they restructured the teams. The goals were to keep the team structure as simple as possible (yet to be expandable as the size of the church changed); to match personalities and talents to the ministry needs; to enhance efficient and streamlined communication between all parties; to draw church members into effective ministry, recognizing the individuals' spiritual, emotional, and physical limits; and, whenever possible, to keep decision-making at the team level.

A CHANGE IN STRUCTURE

Now teams — effective teams — could be built. The structural changes created teams comprised of at least one representative from each of the four leadership areas: an Elder, a Deacon, a member of the Ministry Team, and one from the Pastoral Staff. Leaders were assigned teams in accordance with their gifts and callings. Each member then would act as the liaison between their team's ministry area and the leadership group to which they belonged.

Also, a distinction was made between pastoral ministries (Discipleship Teams) and program ministries (Ministry Teams). Pastoral ministries were organized into Congregational Communities Teams, i.e. Seniors, Student Families, Singles; Ministry Management Teams included Worship and Music, Global Outreach, Christian Education, Administration, among others.

Based on the Biblical principle of shared leadership, teams were now empowered in a way that enabled them to focus on planning, developing, reviewing, and overseeing each area. The heart of this structure was Spirit-filled leadership that serves God's people with the love of Christ, thereby equipping the body for works of service; in short, this was servant leadership.

TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Discipleship and Ministry Teams were spelled out. They were to develop a long range plan for their area and update it annually; to develop their annual objectives and budget; to lead the people in that ministry area to establish and apply a specific vision for that ministry; to collaborate with the other teams to enable believers and families in all areas to glorify God in life and ministry; and to communicate to the Session and Diaconate on a monthly basis.

VISIBLE BENEFITS OF THE RESTRUCTURE

This reorganization worked to strengthen the vision of Christ Covenant as a Servant/Resource Church. The ministry purpose was always before them: "For God's glory, Christ Covenant is committed to developing disciples in the Charlotte-Metrolina area and throughout the world so that in all things Christ might have the preeminence."

Bernie Lawrence in Administration detailed the advantages of the restructure that quickly became apparent:

1. There were no more bottlenecks in moving ministry initiatives forward:
 - Approvals by the Session and Deacons were made quickly since Elders and Deacons participated on the teams, enabling leadership to stay informed of issues and articulate needs;
 - Authority was delegated and responsibility given at the team level of the structure.
2. Teamwork was refined:
 - Staff was connected to leadership in moving initiatives along and solving problems;
 - There was a greater “labor pool” with officers on every team;
 - Better decisions were made due to more leadership focus;
 - There was greater unity among the leadership. For example, the Session had previously met without pastoral staff (except Harry and Tom, who were still on Session). Now Elders and pastors met jointly.
3. There was a greater trust among leadership, an essential ingredient for the success of the matrix.

(For further details on the restructuring of the church, see “Christ Covenant Case Study: The Revitalizing/Replanting of a Servant/Resource Church,” by Tom Henry and Harry Reeder III.)

CHAPTER 16

“A BETTER PLAN”

The church had been on its new grounds only a short time, the first buildings in place according to the Master Plan, when an outside threat arose. A threat that could tear the campus apart!

The Town of Matthews wanted to doze out a connecting thoroughfare road that would short-cut around the main streets of Matthews. Traffic from a busy county road leading into town would be able to connect directly to State Highway 51.

But the Town's plan would slice right through the middle of Christ Covenant's land — exactly where the Worship Center was to rise! It would cut through woods and fields bordering developments, skirt houses, and then curve through the campus, leaving three acres stranded on the other side of the road.

Larry Kirkman, Chairman of the Long-Range Planning Committee, arranged for Tom Van Beek of the Property Committee, along with Elders and other key individuals, to meet with the mayor and councilmen in an upstairs room of the education building. Prior to the meeting, the church leadership prayed, asking the Lord to bless the time, the meeting, and give a solution to the problem.

The road would greatly affect the plans of the church, and "we were nervous about it," Tom recalled.

The meeting went well; maps were reviewed and various options thrown out on the table for discussion. There were two houses up on the highway where the new intersection would occur, and the plan was to skirt these houses by curving the road into Christ Covenant's land. The dilemma was that the town had never condemned private residences in order to construct roads and did not want to do so now.

It was an anxious time. Other neighbors met with the town council to voice opposition to the plan as presented, but the Town insisted, the road was coming!

"We were praying for no road," Tom Van Beek said. "Instead, the Lord worked out a better plan and provided us with a road that we did need. We needed Fullwood Road just as much as Matthews did, but we had no idea of this at the time."

For four years, Tom and Larry, the Session, the Diaconate, and the Planning Committee stayed with the road problem, meeting with city officials and the Department of Transportation, "working the road around, so it would not destroy the sanctuary site or the land value."

"Even when it seemed hopeless, when it looked like we would not be able to resolve the road issue, by God's grace we finally worked things out, so that both the Town's and our needs were met," Larry recalled.

This "better plan" was that Christ Covenant would purchase the corner house. This would allow the city to condemn land straight up the church property line. The church would then have frontage on Highway 51 and on Fullwood Road, providing additional access to the campus. An ideal solution!

Once more, the people saw that when man cannot find the answer, God is able.

THE LONG RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

In 1990, there were four standing sessional committees: Personnel, Shepherding, Administration, and the eight-member Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by Elders Larry Kirkman and Harold Jones.

As Christ Covenant's vision of a Servant/Resource Church continued to develop, a priority objective was to provide a strategic plan for ministry expansion, facility needs, and staffing — complete with a timetable for implementation. So Larry Kirkman was a man with his eye to the future. He was excited, as were others, when he considered the depth and breadth of what this Servant/Resource church of believers could become.

In the meantime, the Session was forced to consider the need for a third Sunday morning service to accommodate the increasing number of visitors. Of those visitors, over 200 joined the church annually. "Just think," commented Larry, "two hundred! Why, that's larger than many churches!" Larry continued, "There is a tremendous ministry coming out of this church. It's incredible."

VISION 2001

The 10-year plan for Christ Covenant began to take form.

Harry Reeder recalled when the Elders came to him in 1990 and asked him to initiate a 10-year vision and strategy plan for the church.

"Prayerfully, I considered what that plan ought to include," he wrote later in a letter to the church members. In the months that followed, leadership refined, adopted, and presented a finalized plan to the congregation.

"Vision 2001 was then implemented, focusing upon being a Servant/Resource church committed to evangelism, church planting, church revitalization, and cultural initiatives consistent with the Gospel."

The designation "Vision 2001" was first suggested one day when Bob Dyar, then Administrator and Director of Ministries, was talking with the Committee about long-range planning. This was the year following the PCA's mission effort called "Vision 2000," in which 2000 PCA churches were envisioned by the turn of the century. And now, a year later, Christ Covenant — earmarked to become a regional Servant/Resource church in the PCA — began a long-range program of facility and ministry development. It was only fitting that the plan be dubbed "Vision 2001"!

Actually, some of the objectives of the plan were already under way.

Following the return of Steve Fox from three years on the Caribbean mission field, four missions "epicenters" were established. Steve was hired to oversee and develop the church's burgeoning missions ministry. Those "epicenters," or centers of ministry focus and "sending out," were Quito, Ecuador; Uganda; Madrid, Spain; and the Caribbean. But these weren't the only regions receiving missions support from Christ Covenant.

In 1990, two new missionaries were approved — John and Lynn Lehn, Taiwan; and David and Marcia Jones, Ivory Coast, Africa. Five new churches were planted within the Central Carolina Presbytery, and there was resourcing to key church planting efforts in metropolitan areas throughout the nation. Also, there were plans for bringing pastors and leaders from other churches to Christ

Covenant for a week of study, prayer, and seminars on church planting and revitalization. In addition, right on campus, Covenant Day School grew vigorously with a new commitment through middle school, as did the SOAR program.

Barely ten years old, this young congregation had not been together long (75% of the members were not here when the first building was constructed). This church, Larry Kirkman felt, would continue to flourish as it remained committed to Christ and his Word.

“When you have God’s Word faithfully being preached and people being ministered to, the church will grow,” Larry said at the time. “And we must act now — and for two to three years — or we may not be able to handle the opportunities for growth,” he explained. “Space is the large issue. Right now we could not seat all the church members in one general meeting.”

Larry spoke for the Long-Range Planning Committee. No longer seeking short-term solutions, the group was “picking up momentum for proactive long-term answers in facility and ministry planning.”

A MAN AND THE FUTURE

Larry was well positioned for future planning, having arrived at Christ Covenant with a storehouse of church building and leadership experience already under his belt.

A graduate of Campbell College, Larry went to work for Proctor and Gamble in 1967. He served as a Deacon at Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, where he was involved in three church building campaigns. This was the very active church which helped support the new PCA church plant in suburban Charlotte, namely Christ Covenant. Then in 1982 he was transferred. He and his wife Mart, and their two children Sandy and John, moved to Charlotte where he became district manager for P&G.

The church that they had encouraged from Birmingham now became their new home church!

It wasn’t long before Larry was elected Elder, bringing his experience at Briarwood to help Christ Covenant manage its growth for the long term. He was whole-heartedly committed to the Servant/Resource church model and took a leadership role in the development of its strategic plan.

CAMP

As they began to look forward to a new building and the Worship Center, a real concern of the leadership was that they did not want to be a “slave to debt.”

“The Scriptures don’t forbid debt,” Bernie said, “but they warn against being in debt to the extent that you are a slave to it. So what we wanted to do was to make debt an ally, and the only way to do that was to set some limits.” The goal

became to outline a Capital Asset Management Policy — what simply became known as CAMP.

This was the job of the Finance Committee. At that time, the Committee was headed up by John Sherrill and benefited from the expertise of committee members Brad Shelby and Ken Samuelson. Together they devised a formula, which met the need. In fact, its usefulness extended — or “resourced” — still other churches.

“It’s been wonderful! We’ve shared it with many churches,” commented Bernie.

In short, CAMP stated that Christ Covenant would never have more than 20% of its operating fund income committed to debt service.

Bernie continued, “We’ll never amortize a loan for more than 15 years, and we’ll never project future income growth at more than 10% a year (which for us is very conservative). And we will only go into debt for appreciating assets — not depreciating ones such as church buses.”

With a 20% ceiling on debt, they would not “suffocate the other ministries of the church.”

“So we called this our house payment,” Bernie said, “and that probably is what most families are accustomed to.”

These guidelines were completed by 1992, and CAMP became a necessary part of the “hows” of building a Servant/Resource church.

PASTORAL STAFF GROWTH

As Larry Kirkman and the Long Range Planning Committee continued to hammer out the details of Vision 2001, Pastor Harry Reeder was envisioning a shift in ministry emphasis. He said of that time that he had been thinking of how to bring more of his energies “to bear upon prayer and the public ministry of the Word.” That would require the assembling of a solid executive pastoral team — one that supported the extension of Harry’s ministry beyond Christ Covenant and that was filled, as he was, with a passion to shepherd the flock in their care. So together, Harry and the Session sought God’s men for the job

Bernie Lawrence moved into the position of Executive Director of Administration and Inreach. Bob Dyar was promoted to Executive Director of Ministries and Outreach. Steve Fox was added to oversee and develop the growing Missions Ministry as Director of Missions. John Haines had “brought tremendous blessing in the worship and music ministry.” Rev. Richard Tevebaugh had retired and would come on staff as Director of Pastoral Care and Seniors.

And so the Pastoral Staff grew with the times.

DICK TEVEBAUGH ARRIVES

Still another man God prepared beforehand for his role at Christ Covenant was Dick Tevebaugh. In 1991, after retiring from their suburban church in St. Louis, Dick and his wife Nell came to serve on Christ Covenant's pastoral staff.

The journey that carried Dick from his birthplace in the Oklahoma panhandle at Alva to the doors of Christ Covenant was clearly blazed by God. The son of a hoisting engineer working in construction, Dick remembers first a move to the busy Chicago area, then on to East St. Louis, where Dick graduated from high school.

In the perilous times of 1943, Dick was in his late teens and entered World War II, joining with the 82nd airborne combat engineers. In Europe, he was in the major campaigns in France and Belgium, in the Battle of the Bulge, then in Germany and Holland. The engineers would parachute into an area from glider planes. Their assignment was to ferry an army across a river or to lay or clear mine fields with only their "burp" guns as defense — a miracle of survival for Dick.

After the War and not yet a Christian, Dick was restless, trying to "find himself." He took his mustering-out pay to travel to Florida to visit his sister. When he returned home — his money spent — he "happened" to attend an evangelical meeting at his home church. That evening, as Dick told it, he was converted, gave his life to God, and found a purpose!

With new enthusiasm, he enrolled in Bryan College in Dayton, Tennessee. After four years, he continued his studies at Grace Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana.

In the meantime, he had met Nell who was active in the youth group at his home church. They were married in 1949. Nell had attended the Kansas City Bible College for three years, taking missionary courses. Now her "mission" was to become Dick's mainstay and to raise a family of four children. Dick worked his way through seminary with after-class jobs at filling stations, a foundry, and construction sites.

He graduated in 1953, and his first church was an independent Bible church in Overland, a suburb of St. Louis. Nine years later they moved to pastor a church in west Chicago. Four years later, after much study and prayer, Dick changed his doctrinal position to that of the Presbyterian Church and was called to Faith Presbyterian Church in Charlotte.

This was the place where he met the young man, Harry Reeder III. Dick remembered visiting the family — coming in the front door as young Harry made his way out the back door. It wasn't long though before Harry converted and became Youth Director of the church.

In 1978, Dick and Nell moved their family back to Hazelwood, Missouri to serve a Presbyterian church there. In the meantime, Harry had also become a pastor, and often the two men met and talked at the General Assembly meetings — Dick following Harry's career, and Harry thinking of the time when Dick could retire and join him at Christ Covenant as Director of Pastoral Care.

And as in all good stories, it all came to pass.

Once at Christ Covenant, Dick immediately found his area of service. He visited in hospitals, nursing homes, and those of the congregation who were homebound.

“I pray as I enter to bring comfort, joy, or what is needed,” he said, “and to stand back and let God work through me.”

He served the older members of the church in the Hosannas class, teaching the popular “Through the Bible in One Year” course. He shepherded this particular flock, also facilitating a covenant group in the north central area of the city. He attended Monday staff meetings, counseled individuals who came to him, and took an active part in the Sunday worship services. He planned for further involvement of the Seniors group in volunteer grandparenting, tutoring, and volunteering at JAARS and SIM – missionary organizations headquartered nearby. Nell proved to be the strong support that made them a team, doubling their fruitfulness in ministry.

As some members quipped, “The pastoral staff seemed to be complete now with Tom, Dick, and Harry all serving together.”

JOHN HAINES: MUSIC BASED ON BIBLICAL TRUTH

When John Haines came to Christ Covenant in 1990, he came with a background rich in music and anchored in the Bible. His father was a pastor and his mother a former missionary with SIM in Nigeria. He had a degree in music and piano performance, as well as a master’s degree in conducting from Eastman School of Music.

Early in his career, John headed the choral department in a private school in Tennessee. It was during this time that he met Jenny, who had completed her graduate work at the University of Tennessee and was a school psychologist. After the two were married, John went into church music leadership, and the family moved to Columbia, South Carolina, where he became Minister of Music at Cornerstone Presbyterian Church.

A mutual friend told Harry that John might be the “music man” he was looking for — one who would be “like minded” in pursuing the vision of Christ Covenant.

At first, John hesitated; he was content in Columbia, but in a few months he sensed that God had other plans. As John said, “I wrestled with the Lord one day, and the decision was made to come to Charlotte and Christ Covenant.”

Though real estate was in its slow season, the Haynes home in Columbia sold for the asking price on the first day it was listed. Then Tim Cool, Orchestra and Choir Director, successfully guided their search for a home in Charlotte. The process was virtually seamless it seemed.

So in August of 1990, John began working on the goals for Christ Covenant, using the gifts and ministry of the leadership already in place. Dan Williams, who had been the Director of Worship and Music, had moved on to other ministry opportunities, and a 13-member Worship and Music Operations Committee —

chaired by Pastor/Teacher Harry Reeder — was guiding the ministry.

The sheer numbers of persons already involved spoke volumes about the importance of music in worship to this young congregation. Committee members included: Sherry Smith, church pianist; John McMurray, Sound Ministry Director; trumpeter Tim Cool who directed the orchestra, the Jeremiah Brass, and the choir as needed; his wife, Lisa Cool with Dave and Vannie Keeling, leading the children's choirs Joy, Inc. and Jubilation Choir; Yvonne Musterman, Ladies' Chorale Director; Miriam Jones, Men's Chorale Director; Nancy Hulett, organist, assisted in the early worship service by organist John Alexander; Dane Hazelgrove, Ensemble Director; Jim Henderson, Worship Leader; and Susie Austin, support staff.

One of the first tasks John tackled was to increase the choir size. Soon there were 90 members, well on the way to the 100-voice choir he envisioned, and two years later there were as many as 600 men, women and children involved in the music ministry.

But John wasn't just about building a "big" ministry; he wanted a "Biblical" ministry. His "number one priority" was "to establish a worship and music philosophy based on Biblical truth and to put that philosophy to practice in the service."

What was that philosophy of music? From John's perspective, music is only a tool that God has given us through which we express much of our worship of Him, a tool to proclaim the Lord, a tool to minister in people's lives.

Sunday morning worship, as John explained it, is a time to focus on the transcendental aspects of God, the vertical aspect of worshipping the sovereign, Almighty God. This included a "solemn confession of sin and a lofty expression of praise" and, for John, it meant hours of working together with the pastors to achieve this harmony between the spoken word and the songs. The music flowed from the 90-voice choir, the brass, percussion, organ, piano, guitars, and the chorus of the congregation.

A different use of the "tool" was used for the more casual Sunday evening service. This he referred to at the horizontal aspect of worship — "our relationship with our Savior and with each other, a fellowship of believers." And because of this, the style was more contemporary, with the Jazz Band, congregational singing of choruses in rounds, and joyous hand-clapping.

Each week as the worship services were planned, John looked for music that would complement the Scripture readings. If he could find none that seemed appropriate, he composed his own music.

"Music is our common ground," he said. "But more important than performing is pastoring the people."

And so each member of the team, drawn from around the country, gathered to participate in the building of a Servant/Resource church. Together they would labor and watch as God made mountains and removed others as He revealed His "better plan," again and again on the journey of Vision 2001.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (WIC)

Another significant part of God's plan for the growing membership of Christ Covenant was an expanded ministry to women. The influx of new members brought in more women, providing them with increased opportunities to serve and to be served. The Women in the Church, referred to as WIC, was energized in its goal to connect women to each other and to effective, fulfilling ministry. WIC leadership at that time had much to do with that infusion of energy.

In 1990, Connie Brown served as Coordinator of WIC. A visionary with the heart of Christ, Connie witnessed the "tremendous growth" of Christ Covenant and saw the many opportunities to impact the lives of women. Connie acknowledged this time as a "wonderful challenge for WIC to reach out and meet the needs of the women, to encourage them to know Christ as their Lord and Savior...to be 'rooted and built up in Him' (1 Peter 1:3)...and to 'stimulate one another to love and good deeds'" (Heb. 10:29).

Four focus areas were organized to accomplish that vision.

Inreach, which referred to "one anothering," was chaired by Bonnie Buckingham, Ruth Samuelson, and Mary Sarrells. This ministry effort was responsible for church social activities/receptions, hospitality meal ministry, emergency care ministry, babysitting co-op, cards and flowers ministry, and a 24-hour prayer chain.

In the area of Outreach, Mary Tarillion led a team of women in organizing evangelistic coffees, children's special events — also making hospital visits where appropriate and distributing baby gifts for new mothers.

Small Group Bible Studies was a key area of ministry, headed by Ann Grignon. Typically, study groups met weekly at the church, though two groups met in homes: one at the home of Mary Soos, the other at Nora Sherrill's. Pastor Harry led one of those groups. A common desire to discover God and His Word and to support one another made these well-attended gatherings.

As WIC Coordinator, Connie was in charge of the fourth focus area: Programming. Her creativity which invariably included inspirational music served to bring women together — old friends with new friends — for retreats and other gatherings for women.

To quote her: "WIC is a ministry that has so much to offer and so much to give. We have had a wonderful year...and we hope to see a true meshing of kindred hearts striving to please God in all we do and say."

CHAPTER 17

VISION 2001:

PHASE II: THE POSITIONING PHASE

1991 marked a time in which the vision of “what could be,” moved steadily, practically toward “what is.”

The buildings “A” and “B” of Phase I had been occupied, and now was the time to begin the work of moving to fulfill the larger long range program of facilities and ministry development of its “Vision 2001.” It was the time referred to as Phase II, the Positioning Phase.

Bob Dyar stepped in to chair the Long Range Planning Committee, which was called on to address the urgent space needs brought on by tremendous growth. As one of the Sunday school teachers said, “It seemed we were always moving into buildings we had already outgrown.”

The plan was to build an 8,000+ square-foot Christian Activity Center — one with a fellowship hall, classrooms, and office space. Building “C” was to be constructed with the help of as many volunteers as possible, working alongside the professionals.

God rose up a man to lead them. Wiley Brown, a church member with his own design-build firm specializing in large, custom houses, was “hired on a fee basis — under a very tight budget” — to construct the building.

THE CALL OF WILEY BROWN

Wiley had come a long way from the young man who graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with a degree in Business Administration.

He was born in Greensboro, NC and attended both Wingate Junior College and Carolina. Before his senior year in 1969, he met and married Connie, a sociology major there. After graduation, during the Vietnam conflict, Wiley entered the Air Force and was stationed in Denver, Colorado. Following the service, he went into business as a retail jeweler, working, opening stores at various locations in North Carolina, and finally moving to Charlotte.

Though Wiley held a degree in Business Administration and was in retail merchandising, the Lord had other plans for him. In his heart, Wiley had “a strong desire” — to plan and construct homes.

“I wanted to move into a field where I could create,” he recalled. “So I just started knocking on doors.”

And knock he did. While still in the jewelry business, he persistently approached, and was repeatedly interviewed and tested by, almost every home builder in Charlotte.

There was a “special innovative builder” who caught Wiley’s imagination, and Wiley knocked on that door every month for a year until finally a position opened. When he heard they needed a construction superintendent for a new subdivision, Wiley picked up a phone and made an appointment with the president of the company for that afternoon.

Now, with no construction background, Wiley must find the words to convince the builder that he was the man for the job.

“I told him that I had a strong desire to do it; that I would work twice as hard as anyone else he employed; and that I really wanted to enter the construction field. I reminded him that I had interviewed with his company for a number of different positions the preceding year, had taken their battery of tests to measure potential and compatibility — and that all had pointed toward a strong inclination for the construction industry, and he hired me!”

His drive and competence was immediately evident. From supervisor of the subdivision he moved on to Construction Manager for the company; then, in two years, he made Project Manager; and, finally, Vice President in charge of Sales and Marketing. It followed that in the early 80s he teamed up with a designer and formed his own home-building enterprise — the design-build firm of Brown-Phelps.

In the meantime, Wiley and Connie and their three children had joined Christ Covenant Church. He had no idea of the ways God planned to use his gifts to further the vision of their new church home. When the Steering Committee made up of Bob Dyar, Walter Hendrix, and Ken Samuelson interviewed Wiley, they saw a fit right away. The committee asked him to come to work at the church as a contract employee to build the new building. Wiley admits he was, at first, reluctant. His job description called for him to negotiate and facilitate the construction process — which included working with about 200 church volunteers, but he was in business for himself, had his life charted out, and the church was now asking him to agree to a full-time — though short-term — job.

Bernie Lawrence spoke to him. “We think you would be good at this particular job,” he said. “Pray about it and see what the Lord would have you do.”

Wiley did, and in February of 1992 he made the commitment.

“So the Lord had prepared me all along to do this,” Wiley said.

BUILDING “C”

In 1992, the building was underway. Wiley employed subcontractors for certain technical portions of the process, and these were to use volunteer church members as laborers when possible. In other words, the building was to be built in tandem, professionals working with untrained volunteers. These volunteers were what Wiley called his “sweat equity.”

A sign-up sheet was posted for those willing to help. Wiley asked Barbara Guth to take the list, organize and categorize the people who had offered their help, and to plan a series of working Saturdays.

Barbara telephoned each of these businessmen, bankers, housewives, physicians, real estate brokers, retirees, mothers, and singles who had volunteered and listed their particular interest and expertise. Then she formed groups: a tile group, roof group, paint group, trim, landscaping, and clean-up groups, scheduling them accordingly. There were 20 or more persons in each work group.

Barbara would see what jobs were needed on a particular Saturday and then alert the appropriate group or groups. Volunteers brought their own tools and equipment to the site as needed.

It was a unique arrangement. As Barbara expressed it, these church members felt a sense of ownership, a commitment to the project, as they contributed their time and energy, grateful for the opportunity to physically do something for the church that had given so much to them. It was also an opportunity to meet others in the church over the three months of construction weekends. Lasting friendships were made.

The work was hard — scrubbing cement floors to be tiled, picking up construction debris, real labor. For example — the roof. Imagine putting on a roof — with excellence — in the heat of summer. It took two Saturdays to complete the job. But as the “roofers” reported, anything is possible with God.

The summer was unusually hot, so the “roof group” started early. With little or no prior experience, the volunteers received instruction from Larry West, roofer and fellow church member. In the first 15 minutes after their 6 a.m. call-time, Larry outlined the tasks and chalked out assignments. Then the work began and continued as the sun rose higher and higher.

Wiley operated the forklift, boosting shingles up along the eaves, together with ice water and Gatorade. The workers watched each other for signs of over-exertion, kept up their fluid intake, and wiped the sweat from their foreheads. Even as the sun beat down, and the workers began to droop, Wiley Brown could be heard sending up much-needed encouragements to them.

“Only 20 minutes more,” he counted down at the close of each morning.

By midday, shingles began to soften in the workers’ hands and perspiration ran into their eyes. Finally, they were forced to quit for the day.

Not only was the roof completed in two Saturday mornings — it was water tight!

“Most unusual,” Wiley recalled. “That’s the only shingle roof I’ve ever been responsible for constructing that never had a single leak! Never had to be corrected!”

It was a unique and memorable experience in the history of God’s people at Christ Covenant Church.

GOD'S OVERSIGHT

There was no job too big or too small for God's direct supervision, and there were startling instances that drove this truth home again and again.

One day, Wiley saw that his decision to go with volunteer work on the exterior boxing of the building had been overly optimistic. He admitted that he would, after all, need some professional carpenters on the job. There were cornices, angles and corners too complicated for the untrained. But what could he do? It was too late to schedule others. Such labor had to be booked well in advance, and this work needed to be done the following week.

It was on a Friday afternoon that Wiley shared this problem with his electrician who stood looking out the office window. "I think that's your regular boxing carpenter just driving into the parking lot," the electrician said.

"Come on! You're kidding!"

Wiley was in no mood for jokes. But he came to the window and looked down into the parking lot. Sure enough, there was the carpenter, the one Wiley had not seen in two months.

"I was just driving by and thought I'd look in on you," the woodworker greeted him.

Again, Wiley explained his problem. The carpenter then pulled out his calendar and found he had a 3-day window starting Monday, and they worked out a deal!

The next week presented still another obstacle. A reexamination of the scope of the indoor painting he had assigned to church volunteers brought new concerns. He would need a professional crew to paint the metal door jambs, to stain and varnish the wooden doors, and do other difficult finishing. Once again he was visiting with the electrician.

After hearing of the need, the electrician pointed, "Well, isn't that your painter, Sonny, just driving up in the parking lot?"

Wiley grinned. "You pulled that last week, but you're not going to get me again!"

But looking down, Wiley caught sight of a blue pickup truck and Sonny! Wiley was thanking the Lord when Sonny walked into the office, an answer to prayer. The building needed to be ready for school opening. But when he asked Sonny for some painters, Sonny shook his head. "We're all scheduled."

He did, however, agree to look at his time slots again; so together he and Wiley walked down to the truck.

"I don't understand this," he said as he studied the sheet. "This morning I was sure it was solid, but now I see there is a 10-day hole starting August 10."

The exact time needed! God's providence once more! The building was the smoothest project Wiley had ever managed, he recalled, finished on time and within budget.

This was the beginning of a deeper commitment to Christ Covenant for Wiley Brown. Within a few months of project completion, he joined the staff as Director of Operations. At the urging of Bernie Lawrence, the church hired Wiley to superintend this area, to oversee the many, varied, and ongoing facility enhancements that were part of keeping up with growth. Wiley would be responsible for facilities maintenance, planning, and construction.

In the meantime, Connie Brown was hired as the Associate Pastor's administrative assistant.

Phase II of Vision 2001, the Positioning Phase, was completed. The Christian Activities Center was named the Wilcox Building in honor of Christ Covenant Organizing Pastor Bob Wilcox, who died of cancer in March of 1993.

Along with the building, expanded parking had been added, and a new entrance from Fullwood Road opened. Additional sports fields were developed. Office space was renovated. There were new classrooms for Children's Sunday Bible school, and six acres with two houses fronting on Highway 51 were purchased. Both houses were immediately put to use as administrative office space for several ministries. God had provided in abundant — and surprising ways.

MINISTRIES FLOURISH

It was an exciting time as God met the challenge of phenomenal growth. The 38 adults who called Harry Reeder as pastor in 1983 had increased in number to over 1700 adults and children by 1991! And there were more to come; the population of the greater Charlotte area had grown by 27%, while the Town of Matthews had surged by 728%!

As the facilities took shape, the ministries of Christ Covenant were growing and flourishing. During 1991-1992 with Steve Fox as Director of Missions, the epicenter focus on foreign missions expanded. Seven short-term mission trips to the centers were organized. Also, effective missionaries were added to the missionary family: Mel and Charlotte Jewett to Spain; Jack and Sherrie Campbell, Spain; Roger and Dianne Smalling, Ecuador; Scott and Linda Sieben, Italy; Stephen and Karen Baldwin, Ireland; and Paul and Sarah Taylor, the Philippines.

The Home Mission Committee was created to focus on church plantings and on reaching international students in this country. David Sewing served as Coordinator for the Committee, working together with campus ministries and Mercy Ministries, Paul Joyce, Chairman.

Also at this time, a church renewal/planting ministry was undertaken by Christ Covenant at Faith Presbyterian Church in downtown Charlotte on East Seventh Street. In addition, five church planting efforts were started; among them was one in the Sandhills area of North Carolina at Southern Pines, Bill Bivens Organizing Pastor; then there was the first "flagship" church-planting in a key metropolitan area in Irvine, California, at Dana Point. This was Church On The Point with Organizing Pastor, Rev. Rick Hagler.

At Christ Covenant, leadership teams were strengthened as important ministry positions were added. Jennie DeFreitas accepted the position of Elementary Age Ministries Manager. Jennie worked along with Laura Walker and Leslie Carmichael, Coordinators for the Children's Sunday Bible school, and with Susan Rice, who served in the area of Children's Church. Susan Shepherd became the Pre-School Ministries Manager, a role dedicated to training children in spiritual growth, while encouraging social maturity and physical development.

The support staff was enlarged and reinforced with highly qualified individuals such as Connie Pratt as Administrative Assistant for Worship Ministries; Connie Brown as Executive Administrative Assistant to Associate Pastor Tom Henry; and Rita Mayes, receptionist.

Barrett Mosbacker, who had previously directed all Christian Education in the church, would now focus on his ministry as Headmaster of Covenant Day School and as Director of Christ Covenant Conferences.

AN OLYMPICS OF THE MIND

Covenant Day School was growing in size and excellence. With 326 students, there were 15 full-time and eight part-time faculty members. An eighth grade and a second fifth grade class were added. Academic programs were further strengthened by a focus on enabling the students to improve their research and study skills; enhance communication and interpersonal abilities; and develop critical thinking techniques.

With a Biblical world and life view, excellence was the hallmark of the entire academic program and the educational philosophy of the school. As Headmaster Mosbacker expressed it:

"Since the chief purpose in life is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever, Covenant Day is committed to leading each student into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, training the student to serve Christ in every area of life — family, church, nation, and the world. So the aim of Covenant Day is to achieve excellence throughout the entire educational program — in mathematics, science, history, geography, music, fine arts, and physical education — everything."

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR COUNSELING

In 1991, it became evident that it was time to develop and implement a ministry plan for a Counseling Center. By this time, church counselors were seeing an average of 55 families a week and making a large number of shepherding calls. Pastor Tom Henry, educated and experienced in the field, was sharing his expertise and leadership in these ministries, working to integrate counseling and shepherding. He initiated some ministry goals, including the appointment of a study committee, responsible for developing an overall plan and pulling together a board to oversee the ministry.

The standing Counseling Committee was coordinated by Steve Halvorson and included Harvey and Beth Harrelson and trained counselor Judy Huckaby. Together they selected a team to further develop the ministry and to outline a definitive ministry structure and associated goals for counseling that would be Biblically sound and professionally competent.

Those named to the group were: David Dickson, Rod Huckaby, David Hollingshead, Tommy Belk, Ken Bodwell, Gayle Bookout, Buddy and Susan Cook, and Larry and Elaine Cothorn.

It was at this time that the services of Dr. David Russ as a professional counselor at Christ Covenant were secured.

DR. DAVID RUSS

It was indeed a unique arrangement that brought Dr. David Russ together with the Counseling Ministry at Christ Covenant in 1991. At that time he was probably the only licensed psychologist on a church staff in the PCA.

“Christ Covenant is very unusual in this,” he said. “They took a pretty good risk in developing a really substantial Counseling Center — the cutting edge, so to speak.”

As a young man in high school, David had felt a call to the ministry. So he went on to major in Bible at a Christian school, Belhaven College, in Mississippi. During the summer months, he worked as Youth Director in various churches. He was at Grace Presbyterian Church in Ocala, Florida, when he met Linda, and they were married in 1983. As God would have it, Tom Henry had been called to Grace Presbyterian the year before, and it was there that their friendship began.

After his marriage, David began his graduate studies in counseling, moving to Atlanta to attend Georgia State University. Later, when his course work was completed for his PhD degree, he began to consider a move. In the meantime, Tom had been called to Christ Covenant. Also in Charlotte was Linda’s sister, a medical doctor and a member of the church. So David phoned Tom to talk to him about his future and to inquire as to whether Charlotte would be a good place for a Christian counselor. Tom answered “yes” and immediately thought of the church’s own ministry.

When leadership saw an opportunity to strengthen Christ Covenant’s Counseling Ministry, they asked David to come talk with them. As they met together, they found a mutually agreeable arrangement: David would serve as a counselor for the church, and at the same time, conduct a private practice in his church office.

A year later, David came on staff at Christ Covenant, hired full time as Director of Pastoral Ministries. It was a big job, which included not only counseling, but also Small Groups; Shepherding; Women’s Ministries, with ministry Coordinator Judy Rodgers; Mercy to Members; and the Shepherdess Ministry, under the leadership of Miriam Jones.

Under David's leadership, the Counseling Center and ministry grew in size and reputation. At six-foot six-inches, a lock of hair tumbling down over his forehead, David greeted those seeking help with a ready smile. In time, the staff was expanded to include other called and gifted personnel: Linda McGrew, Director; two full-time counselors; and two interns. It would seem a tremendous need was met through this ministry, as evidenced by the work load which increased to as many as 350 client-hours a month in a few short years.

"We approach things from the distinctly Christian point of view," David said, "making a point to share the Gospel — and for believers, helping them back into the fellowship they are a part of. On occasion, we work with the Elders, connecting with Deacons, interfacing with other ministries, while at the same time keeping a certain amount of privacy — or often very private communication."

Yes, this was indeed a unique ministry for this — or any — church.

CHAPTER 18

NEW HORIZONS IN MINISTRY

Phase III: The Worship Center

The ambitious "Vision 2001" had made great strides. In Phase I, the multipurpose building was completed; Phase II, referred to as the Positioning Phase, included construction of the 8000-plus square foot Wilcox Building, the expanded parking, and a new entrance at Fullwood Lane.

Now the time for Phase III of the vision had come. On October 27, 1991, the congregation voted to launch "New Horizons in Ministry," which would give Christ Covenant a Worship Center. Anticipation grew as the possibilities of how such a structure might be utilized for ministry. It was an excitement that spurred on the many diligent laborers who worked to make this dream a reality.

The organization that was required to accomplish Phase III was extensive to say the least and effectively drew on the involvement of an inordinate number of congregants. This was not a feat to be pulled off by a handful of core church leaders. Rather, it was a reflection of a church body — scores of members — working together toward a common goal, to glorify God and to build up His Church.

PHASE III: COMMITTEES AND STRUCTURE

THE DESIGN COMMITTEE

The Design Committee, headed by Walter Hendrix, included Reid Castordale, Dan Pisano, Max Stallings, Wendy Burroughs, Ruth Samuelson, Ken Carrick, Phil Cohn, Danks Seel, Ken Bodwell, Jay Stewart, Tom Waters, Bernie Lawrence, John Haines, and Harry Reeder. For months, these committee members visited churches throughout the South and as far away as Texas, evaluating different types of Worship Centers, establishing criteria for the initial Worship Center design. They interviewed a number of people at each location, took photos and videos, and finally developed the appropriate criteria to meet the needs of the church. This information was presented to the Architect Selection Committee to pass along to the two architectural firms named as finalists in the selection process.

THE ARCHITECT SELECTION COMMITTEE

The process of selecting an architect had been arduous and drew on the time, energies, and expertise of staff persons, lay leaders, and members. Phil Summa served as Chairman of the Architect Selection Committee. Other members included Harold Jones, Dick Givens, Ken Samuelson, Carol Bodwell, Vicky Reeder, John White, Wiley Brown, and Ted Spangler. In the beginning, ten firms were brought for consideration and six selected for the interview process. There were several requirements: experience with the size and type of structure needed; locally based with the willingness and ability to develop a quality working relationship; and active involvement, as a firm, in church life. Only two applicants made the cut.

CAMPAIGN ORGANIZATION

While this was going on, 10 groups, comprised of six members each (often couples), were assigned specific tasks integral to the success of Phase III.

The campaign Leadership Committee was made up of three couples: Larry and Mart Kirkman, Skip and Nancy Hulett, and Dick and Desire Osman. In the Committee's letter to the congregation, Dick Osman quoted Harry Reeder's recommendation that members give "systematically, sacrificially, and supernaturally" — the supernatural referring to a suggested 33% giving pledge above and beyond the tithe.

Serving as congregational communicators for the Leadership Committee were the Campaign Directors, many of whom had a passion for and/or expertise in their area of service.

The Ministry Visitation Directors developed a visitation organization that would call on every one of the over 800 homes of church members. The couples

leading this effort were: Jerry and Rita Maye, Doug and Sharon Smith, and Howard and Keeter Pope.

Follow-up Directors kept the program before the people and worked with new families, giving them an opportunity to participate. They were Richard and Janet Gaebe, Morgan and Colleen Smith, and David and Jane Reams.

Responsibility for communicating the vision and status of the campaign in print — whether for the media or the membership — fell to the Publicity Directors. These able laborers included David and Patti Raplee, David and Peggy Forrest, and Ray and Cass Cromer.

Campaign Secretaries who prepared materials, coordinated mailings, and assisted in communications were: Bob and Marge Long, Lyndon and Diane Kelly, and Bill and Lori Spies.

Advance Commitment Directors who coordinated the major effort of working with potential larger commitments were: Britton and Martha Harper, Harold and Miriam Jones, and Tom and Zoe Elmore.

The Prayer Emphasis Directors who enlisted and directed a 24-Hour Prayer Emphasis and a Stewardship Bible Study were: Tim and Fran Roberts, Ken and Ruth Samuelson, and John and Peg Connell.

The Celebration Event Directors determined a location suitable for a large worship service and took responsibility for making sound, video, and special music arrangements. These directors were: Rick Nelson, Ken and Sue Carrick, and Allen and Kimberlie Carrick.

The Hostess Directors were responsible for organizing hostessing for the Celebration Event, a job that included calling and inviting every family to the Celebration Event, also meeting and greeting attendees. Directors named were: John and Karen Smith, Howard and Jocelyn Estep, and Jerry and Barbara Guth.

Commitment Visitation Directors were responsible for home visitations and the receiving of commitments following the Celebration Event. These were: Mike and Susan Woodall and Ray and Teresa Gillis.

ARCHITECT PRESENTED AT FIRESIDE CHATS

From the researched design criteria, the architect was selected, and on January 26, 1992, the congregation got its first glimpse of the preliminary design of the new Worship Center. They also had the opportunity to meet Graham Adams, principal of The Adams Group Architects.

During the weeks that followed, eight Fireside Chats were held in the Fireside Room of the Wilcox Building. The purpose of these informal meetings was to introduce the architect, present detailed information, give a close up view of the model and plans for the Worship Center, and provide an opportunity for questions and suggestions. A progressive site model was encased for viewing and included the current property layout with finished Worship Center, Family

Life Center, Fellowship Building, Administration Building, and additional education buildings. Deacons and Finance Committee members Ken Samuelson, Brad Shelby, and John Sherrill presented financial information.

COMMUNICATING THE VISION

During the month of January, Pastor Harry gave a series of sermons entitled "Vision 2001: Christ Covenant – a Resource Church," in which he presented the following: Our Paradigm — Who we are; Our Principles; Our Purpose; Our Philosophy; and Our Plan.

Communications initiated from the Capital Stewardship Program kept information flowing to the congregation. News was sent out in the form of Horizons bulletins, which featured a question and answer section. In one of those publications, a commonly asked question was addressed. The question was, "Exactly how much money are we trying to raise in this program?" The answer was:

"We are not asking for one-time cash offerings during the campaign. Our goals fall into three categories: Challenge Goal of \$3 million; Celebration Goal of \$3.5 million; Victory Goal of \$4 million. Our prayer is that our church will reach its full potential in what is committed."

THE CELEBRATION EVENT

In the spring, the invitation was issued! For the first time in years, the entire congregation would be together in one worship service. Every Christ Covenant family received an invitation to the special Celebration Worship Service. It read:

The Vision 2001 Leadership Committee, on behalf of the Christ
Covenant Session, cordially invites you to a Celebration of Worship

Sunday, April 5, 1992

Ovens Auditorium

2700 East Independence Blvd.

Charlotte, NC

10:00 a.m. Fellowship and Refreshments

11:00 a.m. Worship Service

On that morning, the congregation gathered in the large auditorium, but where was Pastor Harry Reeder? He was nowhere to be found. Then at the last possible minute, Harry arrived to conduct the service. Following a conference he had conducted at the Cove in Asheville, Harry had caught the last plane out ahead of a fast approaching storm front! Once in Charlotte, he was escorted directly to Ovens, arriving just as the prelude began.

God's hand was evident in the teamwork that made the event possible, as well as in the sweet time of fellowship and worship as the entire church gathered together in one place — at one time, and He continued to lead the way to the next steps of this huge undertaking: the building of a Servant/Resource church.

Consecration Sunday was held April 26. Plans for the Worship Center were complete and the stewardship campaign in motion. Each family in the church was contacted as visitation teams went out to discuss the vision and the commitments that would make it possible.

In mid-summer, an informal groundbreaking ceremony was held as the wooded area was cleared and site preparation began.

THE EBENEZER STONES

On October 24, 1993, Christ Covenant's congregation raised an "Ebenezer" at the construction site of the new Worship Center. After the last hymn was sung that Sunday, church members and families left the worship service in the multi-purpose building and walked out to a pile of loose river stones that had been especially selected for this purpose.

Together, each family chose a stone — one smooth enough to write one and large enough to accommodate all their names. The names were penned on the stone, some including a Scripture reference as well. Then, with reverence and thankfulness, each family placed their stone in a designated area. The pile grew layer upon layer until everyone had taken part.

The story of the first Ebenezer, which translates, "the Lord has helped us," is found in 1 Samuel 7:12. Samuel set up the Ebenezer, a stone of help, after the defeat of the Philistines as a memorial to the aid secured from Jehovah.

Ebenezer stones were laid as a reminder of God's providence as the campus developed, acknowledging the church's dependence upon Him, and as a memorial for the purpose of teaching the children of God's faithful provision. A white picket fence was built around the stones and the memorial still stands today.

GOD'S QUIET PROVIDENCE

All went well for a while, but gradually the momentum began to slow. The campaign languished for lack of adequate finances. The Elders placed the building project on hold while they sought the Lord for wisdom and direction. This lasted for many months.

It was as though God had raised his hand to stop building. But why? What happened?

Then one morning, God's quiet leading penetrated the heart of a man named Hap Core. It was time.

“I just felt that the Lord wanted to have the campaign moving forward, wanted someone to get it started again,” Hap recalled.

So he phoned Dick Van Halsema. Hap’s questions were, “What’s being done? Can I help in some way?”

Dick suggested that they meet with Ken Samuelson and Jim Coleman, also involved in the process. They gathered at an early-morning breakfast and heard Hap’s feelings and discussed his background. Hap had served as a Sunday Bible school teacher but never in church campaigns or operations. He was a businessman, running his own company, selling his own product.

He boldly told the leadership, “You need to let the Lord have an opportunity to work this for you!”

Two weeks later, Hap found himself in front of the Session, learning more about the building situation, and in turn, sharing his faith with them. Consequently, he was appointed Chairman of the Vision 2001 Steering Committee. It was a large talented committee of Jim Coleman, Wiley Brown, Bernie Lawrence, Ken Carrick, Dale Thompson, and Mike Moore. Mike was also Chairman of the Building Committee, working with Wiley Brown, Nora Sherrill, Tom and Claudia Waters, Gary Brown, Max Stallings, Larry Schropp, and Dick Givens.

Together they took a second look at the design and felt that the building needed to be reworked.

We prayed through a lot of issues,” Hap Core recalled. “We kind of scratched our heads, wondering if we were doing the right thing. Sure enough, something would pop up, and the answer would be clear as a bell. The Lord just really opened up some doors for us in financing and in the design for more space.”

God had slowed the stewardship campaign so that the church leadership could take a second look at the design! The plans needed to be redrawn; the building turned around!

The church’s original design used the concept of “flex space.” That is, the sanctuary was only to be partially complete with the back fourth walled off for education space. Likewise, the balcony area was to be sectioned for classrooms depending upon available funds.

With a second look — and additional months of rapid church growth — it became obvious that there was not enough room designated for worship. Even the planned temporary educational space would be inadequate. Church leaders needed to think bigger as a Servant/Resource church, dedicated to expanding the Kingdom. So the new design turned the building around, accomplishing more floor space and seating in the sanctuary. Also added were more classrooms, nurseries, and toddler rooms. Best of all — the revised plan would not require demolition or remodeling in the future.

The plan was back on track. Hap Core informed the congregation, presented the facts, showing them the positive changes in the new plan. There was prayer and the people responded.

A WATERSHED TIME AND EXPERIENCE

Sunday, July 10, 1994 was “a watershed night,” recalled Elder Jim Coleman. “This date was an important point of transition and decision. The congregation gave its support.”

It was decided that Christ Covenant’s sanctuary, with balcony, would seat 2500; there would be 13 to 15 permanent classrooms in the Worship Center, and items that were on the original presentation were removed at this time to decrease cost. Items to be added “later” included additional parking, pew kneelers, a covered drop-off, a steeple, and a bride’s room. There was immediate receptivity to the changes.

In addition, the Capital Assessment Management Policy (CAMP), the financial guidelines set to supervise the church’s debt service, was explained: The mortgage debt would amount to \$4 million, 20 percent of the operating fund was for the debt. There would be a 15-year mortgage, 6.89 percent interest paid on the NationsBank loan, allowing for a 10 percent growth per year for further finances. The people were reassured that the policy would be carefully followed.

The financial support by the congregation was incredible. The goal of 43 percent funding was expected, but 48 percent was paid!

The committee members involved in this phase of the campaign were: Hap Core, Chairman, Mike Moore, Wiley Brown (Building), Bernie Lawrence (Administration), Jim Coleman and Ken Carrick (Finance).

TITHING A BUILDING FUND

It had been a time of rethinking, a pause in plans under God’s providence. No more was there a sense of fear or striving. The congregation had seen a new dream take hold; their sights were enlarged. Doubt changed to hope as the design for the Worship Center was “let out.” Church leaders had been challenged to think bigger — “to expand the Kingdom.”

Filled with thanksgiving, praise, and adoration, the leadership made a joint decision. In response to God’s goodness, they would “tithe” from the building fund to advance similar efforts being made by other PCA churches.

Their desire was to give the first 10 percent of building funds to a mission. In particular, they hoped to learn of a mission that was in need of a church building, and Pastor Reeder knew of just such a need!

One of Christ Covenant’s mission centers was in Quito, Ecuador. The central — or home — church planted there, San Marcos Presbyterian Church, had grown to include seven scattered mission churches of its own. As its leadership and influence in the area grew, the need for a larger Worship Center became immediate, and San Marcos had begun their building fund.

So it was decided that Christ Covenant would send a check for \$50,000 to San

Marcos Presbyterian Church in Quito, contributing to this purpose!

But there was still another twist in the tale. What the leadership of Christ Covenant later learned was that the people of San Marcos had gifted their original building fund to one of their small, poorer mission churches in the inner city. The city mission was, unexpectedly, given an opportunity to purchase land and build a Worship Center. So the San Marcos congregation, a larger church in a middle-class section of Quito, gave their \$25,000 (a substantial amount of money in Ecuador) to the Presbytery for the purpose of buying land and building the much-needed church — a sacrificial act of benevolence. San Marcos planned to start over on its own fund drive.

But the Lord had already moved on behalf San Marco! Only two weeks after giving away what funds they had, the congregation of San Marcos received a \$50,000 check for their Worship Center from Christ Covenant! Their \$25,000 had returned to them a two-fold measure!

With this support, and work teams sent down from Christ Covenant and other churches, a large, beautiful church was built in 1994. The San Marcos Presbyterian Church of Quito, Ecuador was constructed on a bustling, vital street corner there.

Still this was not the end of the story. It continues still today. It happened that one of the teams that went down to Quito to help build the church was from Briarwood Presbyterian Church of Birmingham, Alabama. It was the same church that supported Christ Covenant in the beginning — our own “mother church.” When they heard about Christ Covenant’s tithing of the building fund for the Quito mission church, they went back home and tithed off the money they were raising for an educational building. With this capital they built a church building for still another of the seven churches of Quito.

The idea spread. Since then many churches in the States have constructed buildings for missions around the world by tithing building funds.

So God led his people at Christ Covenant to rethink their position, then to praise and glorify Him by tithing their building fund, thus leading to a succession of much-needed church buildings in the mission field.

To God be the glory.

A GROUND BREAKING CEREMONY

On the Sunday evening of July 24, 1994, as the sun set and dusk crept under the loblolly pines in the wooded area beyond the bulldozed clearing, 700 church members gathered at the site of Christ Covenant’s Worship Center. They were preceded by the church leadership, the Building Committee, and by representatives of the architectural group, general contractor, and lending institution, and by various civic leaders — all invited for the groundbreaking celebration.

Pastor Harry Reeder spoke into the microphone, explaining that the ceremony

consecrated the facility to the glory of God and committed the congregation to prayer for the safety of the many workers who would be involved in the project.

“Expanding the Kingdom has been the theme of our 10-year directive for Christ Covenant,” he said. “The Worship Center is a physical manifestation of a movement, by God’s grace, to reach our community and our world with the good news of Jesus Christ.”

Then came Wiley’s turn. As Director of Operations, Wiley told the group that “the design is consistent with our current architecture, red brick with white accents — pleasing to the eye and yet very practical.”

Director of Administration Bernie Lawrence spoke of the sanctuary featuring a raised semi-circular interior worship area with immediate seating for 1,800 worshipers and a future capacity of 2,800. “This will allow us to cut back from three morning services to two,” he said, “and it will open up the seating and parking that we have needed for two years now to accommodate our growing congregation.”

“This has been a successful and exciting master planning process,” Graham Adams of the Adams Group Architects said. “We have been exposed to a dedicated and enthusiastic group of worshippers with great plans for the future.”

As recorded in *The Matthews Record* newspaper, Graham continued, “As beautiful and functional as the building will be, the real strength of this project will be these very people who occupy and use it. It truly will become an instrument of God’s people and not merely a monument.”

Tom Hatfield, Senior Vice President of Rodgers Builders, Inc., general contractor for the project, remarked that, “The relationship that has developed between the church, the architect, and the contractor puts the foundation in place for a successful project.”

At the signal from Pastor Reeder, over 20 gold-gilded spades in the hands of pastors, Elders, Deacons, and Building Committee members broke into the red earth, and the building was underway!

“THE CORNERSTONE CELEBRATION”

Then on Sunday, October 16, 1994, a second, formal groundbreaking was held, featuring the placement of the “cornerstone.” The cornerstone referred to an engraved limestone memorial, which would be prominently placed in the foundation of the new Worship Center.

This “Cornerstone Celebration” was a service of thanksgiving and dedication that was broadened to include the membership as well as members of the wider community. Cement blocks and tape lines marked a visual, life-sized “blueprint” of the proposed building on the cleared ground, the exact location of sanctuary and rooms.

The service, held on the site, began with an invocation by Elder Harold Jones.

After a hymn, Elder Larry Kirkman read the Scripture, Ephesians 2:14-22, “the household of God, having been built...Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” Senior Pastor Reeder made the dedication, with Elder Jim Coleman offering the prayer.

As quoted from the local newspaper, Pastor Reeder said, “We are looking forward to repeating the exciting experience we had during the construction of the other buildings on site. In particular, we want to use this time as an opportunity to minister to our construction personnel. As a congregation, we are committed to daily prayer for these workers and their families — and to honor them with some special events.”

Guests invited to the celebration were introduced. They included city and county representatives, state officials, those from Rogers Builders, Inc., NationsBank, and the Adams Group Architects. The Steering Committee and Building Committee members were presented, and committees who had been working on different phases of the campaign since 1991-92 were acknowledged. Wiley Brown, Director of Operations, explained the site layout, and the cornerstone was laid.

A hymn of consecration was offered up, and Executive Pastor Tom Henry pronounced the benediction.

GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL HAND

Almost at once, God’s providential hand was seen in the construction of Christ Covenant’s Worship Center.

A basement was excavated for a boiler room. Bulldozers and backhoes groaned, removing tons of heavy clay earth. The next morning, men getting ready to move into the hollow were shocked to find that during the night seepage had begun, and the hole was full of water!

How could this be? Borings had been made previously. Shortly after, there came good news, however. The source of the seepage was discovered to be ground water, not a spring or a stream, and ground water, it was explained, was not unusual for this area.

The entire construction site lay like an enormous, shallow bowl and — with the unusually wet winter weather — water moved across the property. Maybe heavy rains would never be a problem again — but maybe they would. It was determined that a permanent solution to the problem was imperative. A drainage system would have to be installed, requiring a redesign of footings. The cost: \$50,000! A significant — and unbudgeted — sum.

Wiley Brown determined a team approach would be necessary to find a solution. The architects, soil engineers, structural engineers, and general contractor all met to discuss the problem and identify options. The meeting was held during the Thanksgiving holiday.

“I prayed that the Lord would bring a solution to it,” Wiley said. “This was a

project dedicated to Him, and I searched for wisdom, prayed for an answer that would be equitable. We wanted to preserve the project team's unity."

Two days after Thanksgiving the architect called.

"He is a man of integrity and Christian character," Wiley explained. "The architect had considered the problem, and after deliberation and prayer on his part, he told us that his firm was going to take care of the whole thing."

And true to his word, the Adams Group Architects redesigned and installed a changed system for a permanent solution to the ground water that would be moving under the structure, and all at no added expense to the church. Truly it was a time for thanksgiving!

BUILDING WITH PRAYER

The Worship Center building rose, and the scaffolding that lined the walls of brick served as a constant reminder of the enormity of the project and the bigness of God. Men walked along the apex of the roof, dwarfed against the sky on the vast roof. The danger to construction workers became very real to the people of Christ Covenant. As during previous campus building projects, faithful church members prayed at the site. Women organized worker rest breaks with coffee and doughnuts.

Weeks went by. Sign-ups at the prayer bulletin board went up week after week and sometimes dwindled. One day, a carpenter slipped and fell 8-10 feet from the building's steel structure. In God's mercy, the worker was not seriously injured.

Pastor Reeder checked the prayer sign-up sheet to see who had been on prayer duty that morning — and found it blank! No one had taken the assignment that morning!

During the following Sunday service, Pastor Reeder informed the congregation about the fall and injury. He asked people to renew their prayers to cover the men as they labored. The people responded, filling all the time-slots.

The many steps of the building construction moved on for weeks and months.

The workers themselves saw that this was no ordinary building project. When the scaffolding was finally removed inside the sanctuary, the beauty of the immense room with its design became evident. Construction Superintendent John Walsh told how the rowdy repartee of workers changed. They were hushed as they entered and moved about in awe under the high cruciform in the ceiling.

When it was deemed safe, tours of the Worship Center were offered on Sunday evenings. The congregation filed in to see the yet unfinished Worship Center, to feel the wonder, and to sing a hymn of praise. It was a common theme in word and in song that "The Lord is good," as those who came sensed that God was about doing great things as His people prayed and worked together.

TURNING PROBLEMS INTO OPPORTUNITIES

But a few weeks later, God raised another STOP sign. This time He worked through one of the contractors.

One day in the fall of 1995, the engineer who designed structural systems for the building reviewed a subordinate's figures. He found design deficiencies resulting from miscalculations. Much additional bracing would be required with a strengthening of the columns!

The structural engineer went immediately to his insurance carrier and told them of the potential problems, the danger in the construction as it stood. The carrier hired a well-respected outside firm from Greensboro to make an independent analysis of the complete structural system for every possible deficiency. Then they determined how to correct the problem — how to make the building completely safe, yet preserve the aesthetics and beauty as it stood.

In the completed study, places throughout the building were noted for further strengthening. Initial reinforcing began in the ceiling.

A platform scaffold was re-erected, 20 feet above the floor. Sections were removed from the ceiling and steel beams hoisted into place through the hole using sheer muscle power, pulling and forcing. A crane could not be brought into the nearly finished sanctuary. It took up to 12 men to hoist a single beam into place.

Steel diagonal braces with anchors were installed in the wall between the lobbies and the sanctuary, two on each side. To do this, a large footing was excavated — a 10x12-foot hole, eight feet deep with 80 yards of concrete piped in to embed and hold fast the anchors.

Columns were altered to support the extra load. Sheet rock was removed; steel plates were welded to the I-beam flanges, tripling their strength.

The holes in the walls and ceiling were then repaired, and a much stronger, safer building resulted — all with the beauty preserved and insurance covering most of the cost.

The completion and occupancy, however, was delayed over eight months due to these structural problems, but God's faithfulness in providing a better, safer place of worship was cause for rejoicing and heightened the anticipation of a congregation that had seen God intervene on their behalf time after time.

CHAPTER 19

MAKING BIGGER BETTER: AN OVERVIEW

During the time that the Worship Center was under construction, many changes took place at Christ Covenant.

A review of the period, beginning in 1992, shows the church underwent two major shifts in organization. The first of these was the reorganization of staff and leadership into ministry teams in order to provide more efficient and effective ministry. The second change was in the fiscal year, from the calendar year to an

August to July fiscal year, which leadership believed more accurately coincided with the ministry calendar of events for the church.

Then after a yearlong wait for God's direction and timing, the leadership and congregation revisited the capital stewardship emphasis of Vision 2001. As a result, there were critical design changes in the building and an overwhelming increase in capital commitments of God's people. On September 26, the congregation approved the final design and funding to proceed with the new Worship Center. As Hap Core, Vision 2001 Team Chairman said:

"The vision in Vision 2001 has taken root in God's people. The Lord's hand has directed the past year of trials and triumphs, starts and stops, and the hearts of the congregation of Christ Covenant. By God's grace, we move closer to our vision of a Servant/Resource church, and we continue to expand the Kingdom of God."

A CAMPUS COMPUTER NETWORK

Another capital expense approved during this time was one that would allow for a campus-wide computer network to enhance communications between the ministries.

Bob Dyar began what would be an electronic revolution at Christ Covenant, when he started upgrading computer hardware and software resources. There was a major push to acquire additional computers and to replace the handful of outdated systems then in use. Only two of the seven working computers were considered useable: state of the art IBM 286s!

Greg Plough and Craig Summerville, both working for Microsoft, were involved in purchasing software programs for the church. As the number of computers and program compatibility increased, there arose discussions of networking, or connecting every computer on campus via fiber optics.

As Bernie Lawrence, Director of Administration and Operations, said, "All of the information we had about everyone, all our files, everything was in those two main computers," and after the move, the office work really increased. We had to add people and add four or five more computers. So we began to look seriously at trying to network our computers, connect them together, so the staff could access and share information and use e-mail.

"This was in 1992," Bernie continued. "So we were looking at all our options — and finding them expensive — until Greg Plough called me one day." We had lunch, and Greg said that he knew what we were talking about doing. Then he surprised me by asking that we not do it — yet. That was because Microsoft was about to come out with a new working software product that was still under wraps. The new product would be inexpensive, yet superior, to what we were thinking about doing.

"I was in a hurry to proceed with things, and I didn't want to listen to Greg, but he prevailed, and we did wait. And sure enough, the next month, Microsoft released

what was called 'Work Groups for Windows,' which became a leading networking product, and Greg got us the software at a very good price."

By that time, there were eight computers in the offices located on the enclosed balcony, second floor, of the gymnasium. It was clear that the need for computers was only going to grow with the church, so Greg Plough, with staff member Susie Austin, began the "network." Dale Austin, who was a representative for a fiber optics and cable company, offered his expertise.

It was a huge project and a key move.

Bernie commented, "Networking allowed us to be able to communicate with one another and share information even though we were sitting in different office locations. It took us to a new level in our whole data processing and communication function."

The addition of e-mail impacted every area of ministry. Memos were sent through e-mail, questions addressed, meetings called, and prayer requests shared. In particular, the weekly preparation of the worship folder was simplified. Rather than "keying in" information — from the order of worship to ministry announcements — the communications staff was able to receive these through e-mail. This proved to be a more efficient and more accurate process.

"Greg and Susie made it all happen," said Bernie, "stringing cable from computer to computer, adding software. It wasn't easy."

"The most difficult part," Susie said, "was when my husband Dale and I pulled the fiber optics across the street to the white house (executive offices) underground, all the way from the C-building to the white house. We pulled it through or underneath a pipe that was already in the ground."

Christ Covenant was "wired" at last. Even Covenant Day School was included with eight on the network.

By 1996, there were about 50 computers throughout the church on the network, and more being added each year. That meant each staff member could "access critical information the ministries required for efficiency and effectiveness," Bernie said.

A big step forward.

CHRIST COVENANT HITS THE AIR WAVES

In April of 1993, Christ Covenant went on the air! An opportunity came to develop a radio ministry on WCNT at 1480 AM.

"This was not to be just another Christian station with music and preaching," Mike Moore, Chairman of the Radio Committee explained. "We developed a different format."

The focus was on news information and the family with variety in the programming — an upbeat format with a focus on the culture. Moore and others

envisioned news with Christian commentaries, short five-minute spots with R.C. Sproul or Charles Colson. Perhaps Pastor Harry Reeder could teach apologetics on how to defend and give proof of Christian truths, present covenant theology, and explain the doctrine of God's sovereignty.

"And there were well designed music transitions throughout the programming."

Larry Schropp was head of the newly formed committee on programming. Others on the Radio Committee — in addition to Mike and Larry — were Bob Dyar, Harry Reeder, Sam Wilson, David Reams, Vicki Reeder, Steve Marion, Jay Harder, and Tom Lamprecht, consulting general manager.

The station was located north of I-85 on Pompano, a dead-end street off of Hoskins Road. The one-story, 3900-square foot brick structure housed four to five studios, with engineering and office rooms. The building was on a grassy knoll surrounded by trees, the 11 acres of land rising to a 760-foot elevation.

Behind the station were four radio towers reaching even higher. A cluster of satellite dishes tilted skyward near one corner of the building, ready to drink in signals from space.

A creek ran through the woods, and an elderly man appeared from time to time, panning for gold in the stream. Near the parking lot was a pile of tailings from the gold mining of a hundred years ago.

"Now," *The Courier* reported, "nuggets of inspiration and information will be the gold mined from this area."

The Radio Committee realized that they needed to "start small with low risk operations, and a short term focus beneath a longer term vision of what we believe the station can be...but the immediate concern is resources — financial and manpower," they reported.

They went on the air April 9, 1993 at 9:15 a.m. as "Charlotte's News Voice" WCNV — AM 1480. The programming included CNN Headline news, news and sports from the North Carolina News Network, Traffic Patrol reports, Charlotte Knights' baseball, as well as programs featuring John Whitehead of the Rutherford Institute, the Media Monitor's Cliff Cincade, the *Freedom Report* with Oliver North, and Pastor Reeder's *Perspective*, which aired daily at 5:30 a.m. Soon to be added were the *Forbes Report*, *Family News in Focus*, and Chuck Colson's *Breakpoint*.

Ted Spangler was Station Manager and Vicki Reeder, Marketing Director. Members of the Media Ministry included Sam Wilson, Mark Bass, Steve Marion, Bob Deaver and Kris Redwing.

"The vision was implemented and as an instrument of communication has been extremely effective," the Media Ministries later reported. "But such a format requires a large capitalization fund. Given the present needs of Christ Covenant on our sanctuary and educational space, we have placed a halt on developing the program further until we raise the funds from various foundations and individuals..."

In November of 1993, a lease arrangement was being sought with a reputable Christian radio network. In God's providence, a long term lease arrangement was not viable. But, within a few years, an interested buyer, affiliated with the Disney Radio network, made an offer for the station. This offer came at just the time the congregation needed to secure funds to enlarge the Wilcox Building for the growing needs of the school and youth ministries. What had seemed a disappointment was in reality a blessing in the making.

Pastor Harry Reeder's *Perspective* Ministry continued to grow. His radio program broadcasted the teaching of God's Word daily to the Metrolina area, through WHVN-AM 1240. Also he was heard in the Bristol-Tennessee locality. WFGW/WMIT-FM, Black Mountain, broadcasted *Perspective* on Sundays. The Family Radio Network aired the program internationally a "number of times each month." Tom Lamprecht of Atlantic Coast Communications, Greenville, North Carolina, produced the program.

As a result of the program, Harry received letters, often with prayer requests. Coordinator Kris Redwing and assistant Dianne Patti found a ministry niche in this worldwide ministry of the Word. Over the years, this dedicated team reproduced the program on audiocassette, filled orders, and themselves ministered to listeners by praying over their requests. *Perspective* materials were sent out to requesting pastors and churches, shipped to missionaries around the world monthly, and as many as 500 were hand-delivered by short-term missionaries to Haiti, Kenya, and Uganda. The ministry averaged 60 tape orders weekly during the year.

RAISING UP CHILDREN AND ADULTS AS DISCIPLES

In all areas of Christian Education, Christ Covenant "continued to flex, adjust and grow to keep up with the ever-increasing needs of this dynamic congregation." Beginning in 1993, Associate Director of Christian Education and Assimilation, Chris Hodge, regularly reported on the many areas of the church involved in discipleship: Sunday Bible school; Children's Worship; Children's Choir; Patch the Pirate Club; Boys Brigade; Pioneer Girls; Vacation Bible School; Puppet Ministries; Fun in the Son Days; Communicants' Class; Pre-School Ministry; and Adult Sunday Bible school, among others.

Building disciples meant starting with relationship. That was the impetus for the Visitor Dinners hosted by Pastor Reeder and wife Cindy in 1993. These gatherings took place in the Reeder's home for the purpose of welcoming and meeting with new people to the church. Dinner guests marveled at Harry's ability to remember names. After only a short time in the pastor's home, with only brief introductions, visitors were surprised when Harry greeted them by name at church or out in the community.

Pastor Reeder's Sunday Pastor's Class was a perfect place for those dinner guests to continue new friendships and to begin building their own relationship with Jesus Christ. Graduates of Pastor Reeder's class were directed into the

Connecting Class where they could identify their unique giftedness and learn how to best serve in the body of Christ Covenant.

The challenge of discipling children was met by loving hearts, plenty of prayer — and many hands. Sandy Tutton replaced Jenny DeFreitas as the Assistant Director for Christian Education, Elementary Age Ministries. Other members of the Education Team at the time were Joe Spencer, John Connell, Susan Shepherd, Laura Walker, Cherry Nyholm, and Gatha Schleicher.

REACHING OUT TO THE SINGLES

As the church grew, the number of single persons interested in community with other singles and in church membership also increased. Christ Covenant moved to meet the unique life and ministry needs of this group and, in June 1993, added Mike Miller to its ministry team as Director of Singles and Career Ministries. Other members of the team were Dick Givens, Gary Rice, and Bruce Kellogg.

The purpose of the Singles and Career Ministries was “to reach out to the college students and singles in the Charlotte-Metrolina area and to create an environment for personal growth in their walk with Christ and with one another.”

In order to encourage small group relationships, four singles-related Congregational Communities were formed, each with their own Sunday Bible school, ministries, and social functions. These included: College; Single Impact (age 22+); Single Focus (33+); and Singles Again (Genesis). In addition, these Communities began their own Covenant Groups, or small group Bible studies. For most of these Communities there were seasonal retreats to the beach or the mountains, local and international mission trips — each opportunity encouraging fellowship, accountability, and personal spiritual growth.

An annual seminar on divorce and separation called Fresh Start was held. This offering was designed to give hope to singles in the church and the wider community as they faced a difficult life change.

REACHING OUT — AT HOME AND ABROAD

Christ Covenant’s enthusiasm for missions and outreach, both locally and globally, continued to swell. The Sunday worship folder listed missionaries sent out from the church and agencies it supported with missions dollars. Twenty-five of those appearing were local or regional works, and as many as 38 international missions were included.

Four worldwide strategic sites or Epicenters were selected: Uganda, Ecuador, Romania, and the Caribbean, with Steve Fox Director of Global Outreach at the helm. The summer short-mission trips were introduced, over 100 Christ Covenant members experienced missions firsthand, many to one of the church’s Epicenters. Those who went witnessed tremendous needs as they took up various jobs such as painting, building, repairing — even instructing lay leaders as needed. Team members Bill Powis and Dave Krausse jointly led the Foreign

Missions Ministry, under the leadership of Steve Fox.

Friends Worldwide was an outreach led by David Sewing for internationals studying at UNCC. Cultural exchange dinners were held each month with the students. Other special events were offered, on occasion, and Christ Covenant members served as hosts to these students, demonstrating Christian hospitality.

This outreach fell under the area of Home Missions, directed by Dean Draddy, as did church planting, including ethnic churches. The City of New York was also selected as a ministry focus area for short-term missions trips at “home.”

Outreach continued to be the goal of the innovative SOAR program. By this time, 650 children were participating in basketball, baseball, and soccer each year. This “League of Encouragement” won over parents and kids with its emphasis on skills, character development, teamship, and role-modeling by godly coaches interested in each of the players — and their families.

Hal Jordan devoted his energies to developing the Prison Ministry. The ministry had three focus areas. The first was participation in Project Angel Tree, which connected members of Christ Covenant with more than 100 children of prisoners to present them with Christmas gifts in the name of their incarcerated parent. A second effort was made to expand the ministry of prison visitations in order to share the Gospel, and a third ministry involved signing up members for a Prisoner Pen Pal program.

In the meantime, love was extended through the diaconal mercy ministry, Barnabas, helping many in the community in physical and financial need. Ken Bodwell headed a team of lay people who organized to visit homes and present the Gospel, to meet immediate needs as well as examine long-term material and spiritual support needs. Reportedly, 8 to 10 persons were assisted each month at this time.

ProCLAIM PARTICIPATION

The work of ProCLAIM (Pro Christian Life and Issues Ministry) was well known to the members of Christ Covenant, as a spokesperson regularly informed the church about social issues and challenged them to a Biblical response. Carson Daves headed the ministry which encouraged participation in the annual Life Chain event, the regular picketing of abortion clinics, and ongoing support for the Crisis Pregnancy Center.

Of the Life Chain initiative, Carson said, “Life Chain is a prayer proclamation by the church about truth. That truth is that abortion kills children, and Jesus heals and forgives those who have been wounded through an abortion experience.” At this time, as many as 10,000 people from the Charlotte area participated in this national show of concern. The ProCLAIM ministry is credited with “resourcing” the Charlotte area community of believers by forming a “coalition of area churches to maximize community impact.”

One October before the general elections, Pastor Reeder wrote in his message

on the worship folder: “The Lord uses this ministry to alert us to various moral and social issues. ProCLAIM challenges us to fulfill our responsibilities as Christian citizens, registering to vote and voting; and to address issues from an informed, Christian world lifeview, Biblically and ethically. According to Session policy, Christ Covenant refrains from endorsing any candidate or political party.”

TALKING ABOUT THE LORD

Lucille Ruths directed Evangelism Explosion (EE), training people to effectively share the Gospel.

David and Lucille Ruths had been a part of Evangelism Explosion from its inception in 1963, while attending Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Ft. Lauderdale. Pastor Dr. James Kennedy had asked members to volunteer to be part of the very first group to be trained in presenting the Gospel. The Ruths had no idea that the invitation was from God Himself.

“We were asked the famous EE questions, and we gave the typical, very worst answers. We had gone to church all our lives and thought the way to Heaven was by quote, ‘keeping the 10 Commandments and doing good.’”

By the time the Ruths had completed the training program, they “came to know the Lord”! They also learned how to witness effectively. The training method was named Evangelism Explosion and, in time, began to be taught nationwide.

When they moved to Charlotte in 1980 and joined Christ Covenant in 1996, David and Lucille found the EE program idea was just underway. Lucille volunteered to help get it organized, encouraged church members to become trained, and started calling on people who had signed the Sunday Visitor Cards.

“It goes something like this,” Lucille said. “After getting acquainted, you say, ‘Could I ask you two questions?’

“First, have you come to the place in your spiritual life where you can say for certain if you were to die today, that you would go to heaven?”

“The answer is either ‘yes’ — ‘no’ — ‘I don’t know,’ or ‘maybe, I think so.’ So then I say, Good. I wonder if I might ask you a second question, and that is: Suppose you were to die tonight and stand before God, and He were to ask you ‘Why should I let you into my Heaven?’ What would you say?”

While answers vary somewhat, Lucille said that it usually comes down to reliance on works, faith, or faith plus works. Then, she went on to explain, “If you see that they don’t have a personal relationship with Christ, you say — ‘I have some good news for you.’” And then you go into the Gospel and share your testimony. The ‘good news’ is that Heaven is a free gift that is neither earned, nor deserved.”

During 1996, about 15 EE trainees from Christ Covenant, in teams of twos and threes, contacted about 125 homes.

EE training classes were held during the Sunday Bible school hour and continued on Tuesday evenings with visitations. David Ruths, Hal Jordan, and

Jeff Clayton were the training leaders. After the initial visit, contact was maintained, literature packets given out, and friendships established.

Lucille said she believed EE training had benefit for all Christians by empowering them to “talk to someone — whether a neighbor, or on a plane traveling, wherever you meet — about the Lord with just the basics.”

These were some of the key ministries that fell under the Global Outreach umbrella during these years. Also serving on this team were Tom Elmore, Gary Corwin, and Bob Dyar. Senior Administrative Assistant Alison Boseman, together with Administrative Assistant Marilyn King, supported the team as the field expanded and Christ Covenant’s reach extended still further.

HURRICANE ANDREW

The most devastating Category 4 hurricane in history came ashore in southeast Florida at 5:00 a.m., August 24, 1992. News came that in the area of the PCA church at Pinelands, there was heavy damage. Christ Covenant members wanted to help, so Director of Missions Steve Fox coordinated a group of 19 volunteers to go down to their aid.

Arriving at Pinelands Presbyterian Church, they found the sanctuary destroyed, a total loss. However, the rest of the church was relatively intact. So the Christ Covenant team rolled out their sleeping bags in a Sunday school classroom. A late picnic of food brought and food bought along the way was laid out for sharing, and together they set up “camp.”

“The next day,” Steve reported, “we started out, knocking on doors or wrecked walls, telling people we were there to help. Often they told us, ‘We’re okay, but see if you can help our neighbors.’ Yet they were living in windowless homes, roofs ripped away, with no electricity, and their possessions scattered all over the area or further.”

“It’s true,” team member Nancy Morris agreed, “they were almost stoical about it. Everyone thought other people were worse off than they were.”

“There were three brothers,” Glenn Morris said, “sharing what was left of their home. They told us they were doing just fine, but we could see part of their roof was gone, all their windows and a section of wall blown out. They had tried to patch it but couldn’t find any plywood, so we pulled out some plywood and a tarp we had brought from Matthews and helped them close it in.”

Later, the three men joined the team and worked alongside to help other people.

As far as the eye could see, there was debris — like a bombed-out scene from a horror movie.

“It was unbelievable,” team member Susie Austin recalled.

Nancy recalled meeting a “woman who had a tree in the middle of her house, but was more worried about an elderly couple who lived down her street.” The team helped the older residents to the doctor’s office.

It was the same everywhere!

The team, referred to as a disaster assistance team by the local paper, worked long hours. After their food ran out, they ate at the Army mess set up nearby.

Some of the men from Christ Covenant rigged up a shower at the church, so the team could clean up after their sweaty day in the blazing Florida sun. They had brought a generator along with them, and so restored light to Pinelands Church. One team member reconnected the phone line; two others repaired the church's computer; still others served as carpenters — learning on the job.

The day the Christ Covenant team left for home, Pinelands church held a celebration of faith service on the lawn.

In late October, a group of Christ Covenant youth returned to Pinelands to lend a hand, since the needs there were ongoing.

The local newspaper quoted Steve Fox: "We saw first hand what concern and the willingness to help means. We often talked of the reasons we were there and of the eternity in Christ we wanted everyone to share, and so we brought hope to them physically and spiritually."

A THIRD PARTY INFLUENCE

In his report that year, Student Ministries Director Rod Huckaby described that ministry: "As a third party influence in and on the lives of youth, Student Ministries serves as a valuable resource to parents and families to assist them in establishing the family as the primary source for building a knowledge of God's Word, Christian character, and an evangelistic outreach for the cause of Christ."

Another focus was that of equipping youth in their daily Christian walk through programs based on Biblical worship, Bible understanding, discipleship, service, and missions opportunities. This was done in Sunday Bible school, Wednesday Night Youth Groups with Junior and Senior High groups, Bible studies in Small Groups, special events and retreats, and in service and summer mission trips.

Other opportunities included Youth Choir, Winter Discipleship courses, Drama Team, and Sports Team.

The team working with Rod in Student Ministries included Ken Carrick, Frank Newell, and Marie Gathings.

CDS MIDDLE SCHOOL GOES INTERNET

An exciting development of 1993 was the installation of Internet Computer Services for the middle school students of Covenant Day School, as announced by Headmaster Barrett Mosbacher.

Once the system was fully functional, students were able to tap the vast resources of the Library of Congress, MIT, NASA, and hundreds of data-bases worldwide. They were able to track the Space Shuttle, view live satellite photos of

weather patterns, follow the paths of hurricanes, and were able to communicate via e-mail with students all over the industrialized world.

The school curriculum was supplemented with computer programs such as the IBM Writing to Read. Reading was the core of the school's academic program with particular attention given to developing reading skills in grades K-5. This reading program was phonics-based and offered in conjunction with other methods to encourage reading success. As the student progressed, literature was introduced at appropriate levels to foster a love of reading.

The mathematics program was further enhanced by both remedial and enrichment mathematics using the IBM Math Practice series in the computer lab.

As written by Barrett during those years: "Because learning is a lifelong process, the educational program at Covenant Day seeks to foster in the student a love of learning and a desire to know God more fully as He has revealed Himself in both nature and the Scriptures."

In the school year 1992-93, there were 344 students enrolled kindergarten through grade 8, with 27 faculty members. A full academic program was enriched by classes in Bible and Introduction to Philosophy, as well as four years of French, 3 years of Latin, and the computer lab for the lower grades. Music, art, and a comprehensive sports program rounded out the offerings. There were daily devotions and weekly chapel services.

IMPACTING LIVES THROUGH PASTORAL MINISTRIES

In 1993, Small Groups, or Covenant Groups as they had been called, became an integrated part of every ministry.

"Because of a desire for accountability and discipleship," David Russ, Director of Pastoral Ministries explained, "small groups were integrated into a comprehensive structure that included management by the Session, in accordance with the Presbyterian form of government."

So every Ministry team sponsored and developed its own small groups. These smaller groups gave an opportunity for members to make lasting friendships and have the closeness of a "small" church in a congregation ever growing in numbers.

With the oversight of Elder Terry Benson and Deacon Chris Madsen, the Pastoral Ministry Team was given administration of the Shepherding Ministry of Christ Covenant. This was primarily done through the Small Group Ministry where shepherding was carried out by the Elders with a focus on "making disciples." Shepherding was through direct contact with the family by the Elder and by various teaching ministries. A Contact Ministry was also implemented to insure a quarterly personal communication with each church member by an ordained or vocational leader.

Personal counseling was another growing pastoral ministry. There were now two professional staff counselors: David Russ, PhD; and Judy Huckaby, M.S. In the

fall of 1993, the Lay Counseling Ministry was instituted, and several members of the church were trained and prepared to serve. An increase in the number of calls coming into the ministry made the need for assistance immediate.

The building of the Women's Ministries team was underway. The team, at this time, consisted of Judy Rodgers, Ministry Coordinator; Char Loukes, Communications Coordinator; Betty Tucker, Special Events; and Danielle Benson, One-on-One Ministry. The focus of the ministry was on the formation of small groups, together with special church-wide conferences for women.

The Mercy to Members Ministry team was headed by Deacon Dale Austin. Assisting him were Jim Swanger, Ken Buckingham, Chris Madsen, John Bay, and Mike Crowell.

Pastor Dick Tevebaugh was anything but "retired" as his responsibilities with the growing Hosannas Ministry increased along with the many of hospital visits that filled his days.

"You can't imagine what it is like," one church member said, "to be waiting for surgery at six in the morning — the doctor was just in, and the nurse preparing a shot. You're feeling the tension, and in walks Dick. He nods to the nurse, walks up and takes your hand in a firm, warm clasp, and leads you in prayer and reads a line or two of encouraging Scripture. All the apprehensive thoughts just seem to fade away. What a blessing!"

Yes, no matter what time of day, early or late, Dick was there. He was developing this Visitation Ministry, and the Seniors of the church were benefiting from his ministry as well. This active group often hit the road together, traveling to Lake Lure, Chimney Rock, or Bryson City. There were prayer retreats at Bonclarken in Flat Rock, NC, and train tours. And on campus, there were luncheons and fellowship dinners.

While Dick encouraged good times together, he also stressed the importance of participating in ministry. Seniors were found giving of themselves through service in Children's Ministries, the choir, Pre-School Ministries, worship folder preparation, and in crisis assistance.

THE SHEPHERDESS MINISTRY

Another one of the Pastoral Ministries was the Shepherdess Ministry under the leadership of Miriam Jones. This was a new ministry area that grew out of needs expressed by many young women in the church.

In 1990, Connie Brown had attended a woman's (WIC) retreat. In the lectures and the small groups that were formed for discussions there, she saw the hurts and frustrations of the young mothers. She felt that there was a "need for a kind of ministry that would come alongside women for counseling and help."

She spoke to Associate Pastor Tom Henry, her "point person" for Women in the Church," and the Shepherdess ministry began to take shape. In order to identify women with the gifts of counseling and empathy that were needed, they enlisted

the help of Counselor Judy Huckaby and, later, Sally Smith, who had had previous experience along this line and with WIC.

Thirty-five women from the congregation were interviewed and selected as possible candidates for the ministry. Then, with the approval of the church leadership, and with Sally Smith as Coordinator, the Shepherdess Ministry was formed. (When the suggestion came that they be called a "Deaconess ministry," it was felt that often people thought of a Deaconess as being ordained. So to be clear about it, "shepherdess" was the designation given them.)

Meeting on a Saturday, 25 women came to the first "shepherdess" training session. Of those, 12 decided to complete the training. A paper was composed explaining the ministry. Judy, Sally, and Connie Miller led this first class, writing much of the material themselves.

The ministry grew rapidly, and a second training group was formed. Miriam Jones, who had been helping to organize the group, was appointed Coordinator. She used the Sunday school hour for training. Connie Miller and David Russ assisted with special presentations. Another group of women "graduated." There were soon over 25 shepherdesses available to "come alongside" women during a time of need.

"It was very successful at the start," Miriam said. "What we did as we went along, we gleaned from the woman whether she was willing to work with somebody on a short or long-term basis, whether she would identify well with a woman who had children when she didn't, or if she would prefer to be matched with a woman in circumstances similar to her own...We tried to match needs with the particular gifts of the shepherdess, and so provide care and discipleship when requested."

According to the 1992-93 Pastoral Ministries Report, the Shepherdess Ministry had grown "tremendously."

"THE YEAR OF PRAYER" THEME

"Our theme for this 1992-'93 year was 'The Year of Prayer,'" Director of Worship and Music John Haines said. Tall and slender, his eyes sparkling, John thought back over the year, "What an experience in spiritual growth! We were all challenged to greater things for the Lord in worship and in the evangelism outreach concerts."

He thought of the powerful, three-night presentation, "Life of Christ" musical, produced by the choral, drama, and instrumental ministries. "Hundreds of visitors attended, and the choir and orchestra committed themselves to praying for the scores of unsaved individuals who were present."

Then there was the Jazz Band and Contemporary Trio, both of which performed at the community-wide "Matthews Alive" festival that September.

"Taking into account the two performance times," he said. "They played and sang for thousands of people. And the Jazz Band continued to receive numerous requests for appearances — many of which involved prime evangelism

opportunities.”

Renee’ Driver was in charge of the Children’s Choirs. They presented two musicals. Directed by Jeff Gunderson, the Youth Choir led worship for several evening services and also made a successful summer choir tour.

Looking ahead, the focus will be on “The Year of Refinement.”

“We will see our energies used toward refining ourselves spiritually, musically, and technically,” John said, “as we continue to grow, adding new talent — novices and professionals.”

The Worship and Music personnel included choirs, worship Coordinators, instrumentalists, sound, and drama. Those on the overseeing committee were Jim Sutton, Connie Pratt, Tim Cool, Kathy Madsen, Dan Pisano, Sherri Smith, Craig Summerville, and Tom Van Beek.

THE COURIER

With the rapid growth in membership (for example, 66 new members joined the church in July of 1992), *The Courier* editor Bob Dyar announced that they would begin offering the publication monthly rather than quarterly. Its purpose was to inform readers and facilitate communications between the various church ministries; to publish relevant articles on ministry, also personal testimonies, upcoming events, birthdays and anniversaries, and other news items of interest to members. That first monthly edition was issued in August 1992.

Harriet Wilson soon took over duties related to *The Courier*. As a writer, she had edited several publications and was a partner in an advertising agency. She and husband Sam were members of Christ Covenant and had three daughters, Tricia, Joan, and Caroline.

Harriet put together a staff of writers and editors, asking one person from each ministry area to serve on the team. A “how to” seminar over lunch was held and guidelines distributed. Church members were urged to contribute news items, accolades, or thanks. It was a colorful, pictorial, 10-page magazine, including a packed calendar of events appearing on the back inside page.

Through the years, *The Courier* was altered with the times — from a heavy commercial, slick paper to smaller pamphlets inserted in the Sunday worship folder, and from seasonal quarterly editions to weekly, bimonthly, and monthly editions.

Stelle Snyder — who had worked to expand Harry Reeder’s radio ministry and “always” been involved in writing, in advertising and marketing — was also part of the pulling together of *The Courier* in those early years. About the time that *The Courier* went “in-house” in the mid-80s, Stelle left to work fulltime at Wingate College, but she would be pulled back into this key area in the years to come.

Editors of *The Courier* in 1991-92 were Bob Dyar, Harriet Wilson, and Stelle Snyder. In 1993, Cathy Plough joined the staff as Manager of

Publications/Communications, followed by Carl Shafer in 1996-97.

Each month, the Senior Pastor, leadership, lay leaders and members contributed articles, in an effort to make broad communications — from “thank yous,” to articles highlighting ministry areas, to reminders and announcements.

Contributing members through the years have included Thelma Kephart who often wrote missions-related pieces, homeschool mom Nancy Skipper, Gwen Petty of the Youth Ministry; and Andy Johnson, professional writer and editor.

“*The Courier* has proved its value,” Stelle said.

A NOTEWORTHY “SHORT” YEAR

1993 was only a seven-month fiscal year — a “short” year — yet a noteworthy one. Perhaps at the top of such events of significance was the renewed capital stewardship emphasis of Vision 2001 that had been put on hold in 1992. The result was a significant increase in capital commitments and congregational approval to proceed with the new Worship Center.

In 1993, the leadership also approved capital expenses for adding a computer network — the benefits of which were immediately measurable in terms of staff productivity.

And the size of this body of believers continued to expand. Christ Covenant had increased in size by 11.5% over the previous year, with 1185 communing members by year end. An average of 1217 adults attended the Sunday morning service. Through the obstacles, the influx of new faces, the expanding from without and within, and the waiting, God had shown Himself faithful, and God’s people were encouraged. It was an Ebenezer year.

As stated in the Financial Summary of the 1993 Annual Report: “The Lord has been most gracious to Christ Covenant in 1993. While He has sustained us, He has also taught us to rely upon Him more and less upon ourselves to meet our needs. For this we are grateful.”

CHAPTER 20

SEEING GOD’S PROVIDENCE

The congregation had seen God’s providence in the construction delay, but there was more to that lesson. Leadership saw firsthand the disruption caused when reconstruction was required within a building that was in full use. It was a hard

realization, but there was no question that to go back into the Worship Center in order to complete carpeting and pews and to “finish out” a balcony at a later time would mean months of displacement and confusion.

At the same time, it was already apparent that the need for parking space had not been adequately addressed. So during the pause, while the Worship Center building problems were corrected, the congregation met for a discussion on the matter.

Members agreed: now was the right time to complete the balcony and to find a solution to the traffic flow issues. Both proposals were approved at the congregational meeting. The balcony was contracted and the grading begun for a perimeter road around the campus. Then more parking was constructed.

“It was miraculous,” Wiley Brown said. “First, that the flaws were found in the engineering of the building prior to any possible damage or danger. We were within three weeks of occupying the Worship Center! Second, we saw that to build a balcony later, we would have to abandon the sanctuary for many months, then try to regroup and move back in.” Wiley shook his head in awe.

Now instead had come an opportunity to expand seating and parking. The Lord had His way once more!

Pastor Reeder referred to that congregational meeting, held Sunday, July 10, 1994, as a “signal moment in the life of the congregation,” as the members overwhelmingly voted to proceed with the building phase of the new Worship Center with educational space.

As one of the Elders said, “We will long remember the effects of this day in the life of our church.”

A week later, Harry addressed the membership on the cover of the worship folder, writing: “May I encourage each new member, or anyone who has not yet committed prayerfully or financially to Vision 2001, to ask how you can become a part of what is being erected here. You can help to aggressively retire the debt and add some key element of the Worship Center.”

Yes, the membership had rallied around.

While meeting immediate needs had, for a time, been the goal of Vision 2001, Harry saw this next phase of building as a time for looking forward as well. Even for dreaming. A “wish list” of what Harry called “essential unfunded items” was presented to the congregation. Topping the list was a church steeple, followed by items such as a covered drop-off area, kneelers, an elevator, and upgraded projection equipment. (By August 1995, both the elevator and upgraded projection equipment were operational.)

SINGING A NEW SONG

As the church continued its phenomenal growth, the ministries continued to develop. The Worship and Music Ministry’s theme for 1994 was “The Year of

Refinement,” as an abundance of talented worship and music leaders focused on raising the level of excellence in worship, presentation, accountability, and outreach.

The choirs presented a Christmas concert to about 2,500 people in three nights, and what had been called the Jeremiah Brass, became the Christ Covenant Crusaders. The group’s jazzy selections became regulars at summer concerts held at Matthews’ Stumptown Park — and were frequently featured at events at other churches.

“We’ll play for food – that’s our motto,” laughed leader Tim Cool.

In the meantime, the budding Drama Ministry at Christ Covenant presented the moving stage play, “Tilly,” under the direction of Kathy Madsen. It was so well received that it, too, was taken to other churches in North and South Carolina, “opening the eyes of people to the tragedy of abortion.”

As in the adult choir, there was continued growth in the Children’s Choirs, Youth Choir, and instrumental groups. Worship in music took many forms, including a wide variety of styles and presentations: solos, choir, orchestra presentations, instrumental performances by the Crusaders — even guitars with old-time Gospel hymns.

The 8:00 a.m. service emphasized a blend of traditional and contemporary worship styles. Brian and Ruth Howard led this earliest of the three morning services. Brian was a consultant and resource provider for worship leaders nationwide, and Ruth directed development of health fitness programs for Mecklenburg County. They came to Christ Covenant after having traveled the country, leading worship renewal workshops in a blend of traditional and contemporary music. Brian also composed church music, his best known, “Butterfly Song,” was an upbeat and energetic children’s song, which received a Gold Record on the Maranatha label, selling over 500,000 copies in 25 languages.

Now the Howards brought guitars and contemporary praise choruses to Christ Covenant.

The Worship and Music Team members for 1994 were: John Haines, Director of Worship and Music; Tim Cool, Director of Instrumental Ensembles; Elder Chris Dollar; Deacon Tom Van Beek; Sherry Smith, Marcie Harper, and Trish Wallin.

Then the news that John Haines was leaving! He was “answering God’s call” to serve at a church in his home state of Nebraska. Tim Cool was named Interim Director of Worship and Music with his wife, Lisa, assisting. Those serving in the music ministry during the interim period were: Brian and Ruth Howard, Larry and Connie Pratt, Marq and Hilda Ryan (Hilda was organist and Interim Choir Director), and Herschel and Sherri Smith.

Though the search for a Pastor of Worship and Fine Arts was conducted nationwide, the Lord had something closer in mind. Leadership was interested to learn that David German, Director of Music at Calvary Church, was a possible candidate.

DAVID GERMAN, HIS STORY

David German was brought up surrounded by music. Both his mother and father were church musicians, as well as music educators in both the public schools and Christian colleges.

After completing high school in the Chicago area, David graduated from Moody in 1975 with a diploma in Church Music. Then he attended Olivet College in Michigan to complete his BA; and later, Winthrop University for his graduate degree.

Immediately after Olivet, he answered a call to become the minister of Music at Highland Park Baptist Church in Southfield, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit. Joseph Stowell, later to be named president of Moody, was the pastor there. While serving at that church, David met his future wife, Kathleen, and they were married in 1983.

In January of 1984, Calvary Church in Charlotte asked him to consider a position with them.

David began his ministry at Calvary when it was located at Sardis and Randolph roads, with Pastor Ross Rhodes in the pulpit. Within a short time, the church headed for south Charlotte, raising an impressive crown-shaped sanctuary — a city landmark — on Highway 51, just a few miles from Christ Covenant.

David was at Calvary Church until June of 1995 when a mutual friend suggested to Pastor Tom Henry that he talk to David about considering a move down the road to Christ Covenant.

Christ Covenant's search committee, chaired by Elder Sam Wilson, had been looking for a Pastor of Worship and Music for some time. Twice they were ready to "sign on" directors who, at the last minute, withdrew. At last, they felt, the Lord's man had been found. Senior Pastor Harry Reeder spoke to Ross Rhodes before approaching David about the position. The Calvary pastor graciously agreed to the arrangement.

David German's ministry at Christ Covenant began in June of 1995. On June 18, a reception was held to welcome David and Kathleen and their two boys, Dominic and Dimitri.

"We were convinced that the Lord called us here," David said, "and so we knew it was His will."

His position was Pastor of Worship and Fine Arts. When asked what it meant to him to be Pastor of Worship, he replied:

"When I was hired at my first church, the concept then was that you were hiring musicians. The idea of the term 'worship leader' wasn't really prevalent at that time. But here at Christ Covenant, all the parts of the service are considered 'worship,' so music and message was coordinated each week."

THE WORSHIP AND FINE ARTS TEAM

In the meantime the choir continued to grow.

“God graciously increased our numbers as we prepared for a larger space in our new Worship Center,” David said.

And the instrumental ministry was filling a unique niche in the church and in the community. Tim Cool, with his brilliant trumpet, had begun this program nearly 10 years previous. The highlight of 1994-'95 had been their very special outreach presentation entitled, “Gospel and All That Jazz.” Together, these musicians extended the ministry of Christ Covenant as they received invitations to serve in churches and area events throughout the year. They also served as the church orchestra, playing for Sunday services each week.

Children would not be excluded when it came to praising the Lord through music.

“The Children’s Choirs are an important element of a strong music ministry,” David said, as he acknowledged the work of Lisa Cool, Children’s Choir Coordinator, at the close of his first year at Christ Covenant. Now she stepped down to take a leave of absence to complete her graduate degree.

Stepping up to take over that role was Debbie Whetstine. In all, there were five Children’s Choirs, ages ranging from pre-school to fifth grade. The purpose of these choirs was to use music to teach the truths of God’s Word and to provide quality instruction in the areas of singing technique and the fundamentals of music theory.

The Worship and Fine Arts team members were: David German, Pastor of Worship and Fine Arts; Tim Cool, Director of Instrumental Music; Elder Rob Veerman; Deacon Tom Van Beek; Sherri Smith, Pianist; Hilda Ryan, Organist; Connie Pratt, Administrative Assistant; Gwen Petty, Administrative Assistant; Debbie Whetstine, Children’s Choir Coordinator.

“Worship is to be the highest priority of every believer,” David wrote in his first annual report for Christ Covenant that year.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITIES ENCOURAGE MINISTRY

The shift to Congregational Communities had proved successful in aiding members to connect with one another. It had been key to the shift to a “big church” format. In time, the Communities developed a culture that took “connecting” to the next level: caring for one another — person to person — rather than pastor to person only. As Pastor David Russ described it, there evolved a lifestyle of loving relationships.

“We have become ministers of reconciliation,” he said. “In every way we are encouraged to love one another and ‘administer’ God’s reconciliation.”

The staff focus and Sunday format shifted to help encourage strong community. For example, the Young Families Community was referred to as “Homebuilders,” to reflect the common goal of the Community. Homebuilders, like other

Communities that met for Sunday Bible school and social events, developed lasting relationships and were trained for effective, one-on-one ministry.

This led to other ministries — many practical — designed to care for people in their particular situation or life season. Through the Communities, members could identify and meet the needs of those in crisis or organize a tea to encourage single parents. Small groups flourished as Covenant groups, Bible studies, even hobby groups. Each member of the body had opportunity to give and receive ministry.

The Seniors, or Hosannas, was also called upon to provide a myriad of volunteer duties. The duties and involvements of Pastor Dick Tevebaugh now required office space, which was provided in the White House on Covenant Church Lane, along with the office of the Senior Pastor and the Counseling Ministry.

Under the direction of Betty Tucker, the church-wide ministry to women continued to work to reach women in and out of Communities, offering relevant teaching and encouragement.

CHRIST COVENANT UPTOWN

The first church to be planted by Christ Covenant in Charlotte was Christ Covenant Uptown in the Dilworth-Elizabeth area.

On Sunday evening August 16, 1994, Tom and Ann Hawkes, church planters with Mission to North America (MNA) came to Christ Covenant and outlined future plans for Christ Covenant Uptown. This new church would target the 25-35-year-olds in the area, located near Charlotte's bustling uptown. Elder Bruce Johnson headed up a group working on the plant, with the hope that they would hold their first worship service in the Manor Theater on Providence Road on October 9.

Bob Dyar — a 10-year member of Christ Covenant, eight years an Elder, five years on staff — reported on the early work done for the start-up church: The Committee had telephoned 600 families and started with a mailing list of 25.

"Pray for the new church," he encouraged Christ Covenant members. "You can be involved without leaving home. From August 28 to September 2, we will launch another telemarketing campaign to call 20,000 homes. There are 200 people involved in this. Consider taking part. You will need to call 100 homes, which will take about four hours of your time." Thus volunteers were recruited.

Pastor Reeder then told the congregation that Tom Hawkes would plant this church, drawing on many of Christ Covenant's own music leaders and teachers. A Commissioning Service for all those involved in the plant would be held at the "home church" that September.

HISTORIC MATTHEWS CEMETERY

During 1994, Christ Covenant Church took over the management of 131 years of Matthews' heritage, the Matthews Cemetery.

The cemetery was established on October 12, 1862, when the young pastor, Rev. Joseph Calvin Forbis, of the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church died. He was laid to rest near that church beneath a towering oak tree. A white granite monument, topped by a carved wreath of flowers, marked the grave.

This 2.5 acre cemetery tract was gifted to Pleasant Hill Methodist by the Funderburk family. It was an interesting time in the history of Matthews. A town ordinance had been passed that prohibited the sale of whiskey within one mile of a church, and that left much of Matthews high and dry. A few years later, the church was mysteriously destroyed by fire and never rebuilt. Arson was suspected.

The cemetery, however, was maintained for a time. The markers carried the names of families prominent in the area. Until 1964, various individuals, church families, and organizations cared for the cemetery. In that year, the Matthews Cemetery Association was formed. Sixteen years later, the association members deeded the property to the town of Matthews.

Fred Funderburk, a descendant of the family, assisted by the various members of Christ Covenant, worked diligently to secure the cemetery for future care and development as a service to the community. After many months of planning, meetings, and presentations, the Matthews Town Council finally approved their proposal. Those contributing to this effort were Wiley Brown, Director of Operations; Jon Johnson; Bob Long; Max Stallings; and Gary Brown.

As Pastor of Administration, Bernie Lawrence announced, "All requirements to begin the ministry of the Historic Matthews Cemetery have been met. Mrs. Jackie Rice will manage the operation as Director, and Deacon Breck Bolton has been appointed Chairman of the Cemetery Committee."

"The response has been very positive from the community, indicating the value local residents place on the presence and upkeep of the cemetery."

Now it had come full circle as Christ Covenant took over management of the site. Besides the developed acres, the cemetery included another .75 acres that was undeveloped. Christ Covenant also owned about 1.5 adjacent acres that would be available for cemetery use in the future.

Fred Funderburk was quoted in the Charlotte Observer newspaper as saying, "I am very happy about it. It's the right thing to have happen."

Later, on May 5, 1996, the evening worship service was concluded at the Historic Matthews Cemetery with a dedication and benediction. A garden area in the burial grounds was set aside for a place of prayer and a memorial built to honor the unborn whose lives were lost to abortion — "a place to look to the Lord for both repentance and healing through prayer, as well as to remember how rapidly a nation can lose its moral bearing if believers do not function as salt and light," Pastor Reeder stated.

THE FUNDERBURK YOUTH CENTER

There were houses — once the Funderburk homes — on the church property adjoining Historic Matthews Cemetery. On March 12, 1995, the brick ranch on Covenant Church Lane that housed the Christ Covenant Youth Ministries was given a name in honor of that family that meant so much to the establishment and expansion of the church.

As Pastor Harry Reeder expressed it on that day of dedication, “We will memorialize the gracious and godly way in which Mr. and Mrs. Fred Funderburk have enhanced the ministry of Christ Covenant by setting aside the Youth facility, naming it the Funderburk Youth Center.”

And history repeated itself, for long ago there was a little church and school on this very tract of land. Now there is another church and school — though not so little — on the grounds.

The story begins with Fred’s grandfather, James B. Williamson, born in 1832. Grandfather Williamson was in the Fourth North Carolina Cavalry during the Civil War. He lived through the reconstruction years of four wars — the Mexican War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and World War I, dying in 1924 at the age of 92. He was a farmer and owned about 700 acres of land. Twice married — to his first wife and later her sister — he fathered 12 children.

In those years it was customary to provide your own school, so he built a two-room wooden schoolhouse that he called Williamson School, charged a fee, and invited the neighboring children to attend. By 1994, the school on that farm property was Covenant Day School with an enrollment of over 500 students.

Then in 1900, in his later years, Grandfather Williamson built a white frame house opposite the site of the schoolhouse. It sat along the wagon trail that ran through his farm and is today called Covenant Church Lane. Behind the house was a large barn for his horse and mules, and beyond that, the little church and its cemetery. This is the site of the Historic Matthews Cemetery, and there, 95 years later, across the road the new Worship Center towers three stories into the sky where the tall trees stood, the loblolly pine that Fred had set out years ago.

The Funderburks were a closely-knit family, and as the years passed, several houses were constructed on the property. In 1923, Fred’s parents built a one-story frame house next door to the Williamsons, and two years later, his sister and her husband, Johnnie and Marion Theiling, moved in. The Theilings added a wing to this home to accommodate mother Funderburk in her later years. After the purchase by Christ Covenant, the house was painted white, remodeled, and called the “White House” — home to the offices of the Senior Pastor and the Counseling Ministry of Christ Covenant.

When Fred’s Uncle Sam’s health began to fail, a small one-room house was built behind his sister’s home for him — more evidence of the goodwill and love shared in this family. This small residence later served as the cemetery office for Christ Covenant.

After World War II, Fred and his bride Martha moved into the Williamson house. Fred was employed at the Lance Company, but after-hours he “worked” the property. He planted fields for hay, raised cattle, and turned the horse barn into cow stalls. Their two children, David and Melissa, were brought up there with picnics under the tall oak trees.

In 1963, Fred and Martha built the ranch-style brick home in front of the old frame house, moved in, and then tore down the old one.

The barn no longer stands, but the dogwood trees that Fred dug out of the pasture and replanted in front of his new house bloomed wildly in the spring, above flaming azalea bushes. The surrounding oak trees grew mightier by the year. This is the site of the Funderburk Youth Center, and picnics were again held under the trees — full circle.

Fred and Martha agree, that though it was sad to sell the “old home place,” it was good to sell it to the church, where friends and community gather, where children’s voices are heard at a Christian school, where games are played in the fields, and picnics held under the oak trees once more.

As the dedication plaque reads: “Whereas Fred and Martha Funderburk have been godly citizens of Matthews and blessed the community and their own church and now Christ Covenant, and...whereas they have a heart for young people...So their home will be known as the Funderburk Youth Center.”

CARE – A RESOURCE TO CHURCHES

In 1995, it was the leadership of the Children’s Ministry that provided a significant “resource” for Christ Covenant, as well as many other churches.

In response to statistics showing a nationwide rise in the number of reported incidents of abuse involving children in churches, the Christ Covenant Children’s Ministry team took on the daunting task of preparing a policy that would protect children from harm and their caregivers and teachers from false accusation. “Children And Adults in a Responsible Environment” — CARE — was an apt name for the program which introduced clear guidelines for working with children on church property. Among other proactive safety measures, CARE instituted “key tags” used for identifying children. The move proved to be a source of encouragement for parents and teachers, as it heightened safety awareness with the result of a more secure environment for children.

Chris Hodge, Pastor of Christian Education/Children’s Ministries, working with Bernie Lawrence, Pastor of Administration, and their staffs, developed the CARE policy which required that all persons involved in ministries to and with children be trained and screened. In its first year, 200 volunteers moved through this process, which became a prototype for many other area churches and the PCA.

“It is our privilege to fulfill our calling as a Servant/Resource church in this way,” Chris Hodge said.

TRUE TO ITS NAME, SOAR — SOARS

By year end 1995, in his annual report as Pastor of Global Outreach, Mike Miller wrote that “by most accounts, our SOAR program is the largest sports outreach program by a local church in the United States!”

SOAR Director and team coach Hap Welty managed this “League of Encouragement” as they emphasized skill and character development over winning. During the 1994-'95 year, over 1300 youths between the ages of 5 and 14 years participated in SOAR baseball, soccer, and basketball, and 70% of the youngsters were from families outside the membership of Christ Covenant.

And what a coaching line-up! Olympian and U.S. national soccer team player Desmond Armstrong coached an under-6 soccer team. Additionally, Eagles' Soccer Team coach Brian Davidson brought innovative ideas to the game; namely, to “reduce the number of players on the field and shrink field size to allow for more contact with the ball.”

Baseball and basketball also had guidance and support from professionals. Paul Bard, catcher for such stars as pitcher Orel Hershisser, helped with baseball. Dale Layer, head basketball coach at Queens College, taught the youngsters techniques in basketball.

SOAR is an athletic program where “kids can dream big dreams at a young age, without pressure from parents and coaches,” Hap said.

GLOBAL OUTREACH, HERE AND THERE

1994 was a busy year for Global Outreach. In Foreign Missions, headed by Clarence Cedarholm and Dave Krausse, 46 missionary families received care and support. Still others were recruited, trained and developed to serve in selected worldwide sites, or epicenters, in the Caribbean, Uganda, Romania, Ecuador, and the Middle East. That year, over 150 people participated in short term missions that took them out of the United States.

In the local prison ministry, Deacon Anthony Pizutti coordinated the effort to involve Christ Covenant members in regular, ongoing ministry to prisoners in two areas. One was participation in the Angel Tree Program at Christmas, a program that allows individuals to give a Christmas gift to a child on behalf of an incarcerated parent. The other focus was on refining and expanding the Prison Visitation program, matching members with prisoners in need of encouragement, training, and discipleship.

ProCLAIM AND LIFE CHAINS

When the annual Life-Chain was organized for the Fall of 1994, Christ Covenant reserved one mile of the ten-mile long “chain.” When the day arrived, 1,000 church members stood shoulder to shoulder along the Matthews-Pineville Road (Highway 51)!

This was the largest group of members to respond to a single project at Christ Covenant. Many held up pro-life messages in demonstration of abortion. Signs read: "Abortion Kills Children"; "Adoption: The Loving Option"; "Abortion Hurts Women," and the pastors carried signs stating: "Jesus Heals and Forgives."

"We stood prayerfully, silently, and boldly," Pastor Reeder described the experience that was moving and meaningful to so many people.

Carson Daves, ProCLAIM Coordinator, said, "It's neat to have a pastor like Harry Reeder. Most churches wouldn't touch this (abortion issue) with a 10-foot pole. Harry is a trailblazer, courageous, right out on the cutting edge that revolves around the issue of life."

CAMPUS OUTREACH

An entirely new ministry that had its beginning in 1994 was that of Campus Outreach Charlotte — the COC ministry. Neal Gooch came on board as Director. In just six months, Neal and his wife Jennifer led their young team of collegiates, as they launched groups on two campuses: UNCC and UNCG. These groups focused on establishing Bible studies and, in time, discipleship relationships. COC was also busy working to establish a presence at Queens and Wingate Colleges. All in due time.

"The students have responded with great openness and interest when the Gospel was shared," it was reported, and at Christ Covenant, a College Sunday school class was now underway.

NOTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

Four new ministries were listed as "Highlights" in the 1994-95 Annual Report summary: the Historic Matthews Cemetery, Uptown Christ Covenant, Central Christ Covenant (an urban church plant effort), and Campus Outreach.

But there had been others as well.

Among the notable memories of 1995 were the tenth anniversary of ministry with Tom and Toni Henry; the arrival of David German and family; Chris Hodge ordained and installed as an Assistant Pastor at Christ Covenant and as a teaching Elder in the Central Carolina Presbytery; and Steve and Karen Fox called to establish an epicenter in the Caribbean.

AFTER-CHURCH TOURS

In the first week of August 1995, the final scaffolding inside the sanctuary of the new Worship Center came down. Though the building was far from finished, the area was clear enough for organized visiting. Congregational tours were conducted after the regular worship services. Following services, the congregation walked from the gymnasium, or multi-purpose auditorium, into the

rear doors of the large new building. Conversation ceased as the people gathered underneath the towering ceiling. In awe, they sang the final hymn, glorying in the acoustics that seem to transform them into a heavenly choir. Then without trying to stifle their enjoyment, faces smiled broadly as Pastor Harry pronounced the benediction. Yet there was a quiet reverence as they slowly walked from the building to Sunday dinners, thanking God for His great providence.

The Vision could now be seen taking shape!

CHAPTER 21

THE CROSS AND THE CIRCLE

As the construction of the Worship Center neared completion, the presence of the Celtic cross became more and more evident.

The entire new Worship Center of Christ Covenant was a symbol in itself, the shape and configuration designed to bring man closer to God through the person of Jesus Christ. For throughout the structure, inside and out, was the theme of the Celtic cross — the cross and the circle.

This traditional cross is in the heritage of the Presbyterian Church of America as the Reformation unfolded and came to the Celtic and the Scotch-Irish people. The predominant cross used, it centered on the person and work of Christ. The focus, as Paul stated in the book of Corinthians was, “on Christ, and Him crucified.” That the Son of God went to the Cross to make atonement for mankind’s sin.

“The circle on the cross points to the deity of Christ, the perfection of his life, the eternal life he gives,” explained Pastor Harry Reeder. “This is the eternal relationship we enjoy with Him and with each other in the Covenant of Grace.”

This same cross was depicted in the stained-glass window of the multi-purpose building. The flow of Biblical history was represented in symbols there, all pointing to the Cross. So the motif that began in the former worship area was carried over to the new sanctuary.

“The Celtic cross is theologically appropriate in preaching the centrality of the Gospel,” Harry added.

As you approach the Worship Center, there are three entrances dominated by massive Celtic crosses. The white cross and circle contrast against the red brick façade.

Entering the main doorway (facing Fullwood Lane), the frame above the entry doors to the sanctuary displays the Scripture that clearly states that focus, “... that in all things Christ might have the preeminence” Col.1:18.

Inside the sanctuary, members and guests note the pulpit, designed as a scroll opening with the Celtic cross in the center, because the “Bible properly preached always leads us to the Cross,” explained Pastor Harry.

Behind the pulpit there is a dominant Celtic cross going from floor to towering ceiling. The stained-glass window within the circle draws attention to the cross itself.

Besides this central cross, there are six more Celtic crosses, three on each side of the sanctuary front. With back lighting, they are designed to draw attention to the central, one. Together there are seven crosses — the number of perfection.

On the ceiling of the sanctuary, there is a Celtic cross configured as a cruciform with a circle on the ceiling, and were one to view the Worship Center from the air,

the entire roof line appears as a Celtic cross. So the cross dominates above and below as the major symbol of the Worship Center.

As one of the Elders remarked, "When I came to church this morning, beginning with the moment I drove into the parking lot, everywhere I looked I saw a cross."

The placement of the sanctuary pews forms a symbol of unity with an unbroken relationship. Pews in the balcony and on the lower floor circle around and flow into the choir in a sweeping curve. Thus all people assembled join in one body of worship.

The sloped floor under the pews opens the vista as worshipers look over heads, not around them. There is a clear view throughout for togetherness in the panorama of God-centered worship.

After the service, you leave by one of the seven doors.

All the symbols mentioned function to celebrate worship and the relationship with the living God through his Son, Jesus Christ by Sovereign Grace.

FAMILY HOSPITALITY MINISTRY

On June 10, 1995, the Reeder family had moved into their new home nearby on Lakenheath Lane. They named it "Cherith." After an Open House, Pastor Harry and Cindy were immediately entertaining church newcomers and "shepherding the flock." The first social in their new home was for the College Sunday school class.

Throughout the years, the Reeders hosted Sunday evening fellowships after the worship service. Serving coffee and dessert, they went through the roster, so the entire membership would have an opportunity to visit in their home.

Then for the Sunday visitors who signed the pew cards at the worship services, Harry and Cindy hosted a "Visitors' Dinner" once a month in their residence. This afforded an opportunity to meet, get to know, and welcome them to Christ Covenant.

Those interested in the church attended the 7-week "Pastor's Inquirers" Sunday school class that Harry taught. These were offered twice a quarter. At the conclusion of the class, the Reeders hosted eight 3-D nights for "Dessert, Doctrine, and Dialogue." Questions were answered, followed by prayer about membership at Christ Covenant.

Next, there were fellowship dinners in the Reeder home, one for Elders and their wives, another for Deacons and their wives, one for the Pastoral staff and their wives, in addition to a much-anticipated Christmas party for leadership and staff.

Needless to say, Cindy developed hospitality to a fine art. Harry called it "a hospitality center in God's Kingdom."

SENIOR PASTOR'S OUTREACH

In 1996, Pastor Harry Reeder's outreach ministries steadily expanded and multiplied. Speaking, teaching, preaching, writing, and serving on governing boards, his responsibilities were local, national, and international.

There were myriad responsibilities to organizations, to the Church — here and across the country — as well as other means of outreach that filled Pastor Reeder's schedule at this time. Among other roles, he served as board member and Executive Committee member for Westminster Theological Seminary; board member and teacher of doctoral classes for Reformed Theological Seminary; Chairman of Mission to North America and the Central Carolina Presbytery; committee member of 50 for the Billy Graham Charlotte Crusade. In addition, Pastor Reeder conducted 8 conferences a year and numerous Leadership Training Seminars; led the Christ Covenant Conference on Church Revitalization; pursued his doctorate dissertation; developed materials on the topic of Christian Manhood; presented a three-session video on the Biblical doctrine of Baptism; and wrote a Christian newspaper column to encourage believers to address contemporary issues and to stimulate readers to think "Christianly." Frequently, Pastor Reeder was asked to teach at conferences here and around the world.

As his schedule of writing and appearances increased, Harry developed a Senior Pastor's Team. What he had in mind was a group for prayer support, research on specific topics and texts, and reviews of appropriate articles from journals, magazines, and books.

Throughout the year he called on this team of 15 to 20 persons together to request research or other help as needed.

TEACHING GOES TO THE WELLSPRING

Two of Pastor Reeder's classes involved extended trips. Shortly after his arrival at Christ Covenant, he had included a tour as a part of his Biblical teaching.

This was "Learning the Bible in the Land of the Bible" journey. For 11 days the group traveled in Israel, studying the Word of God, visiting settings that were recorded in Scripture. Vivid memories were made as the Bible came alive.

The other area of focused ministry was in the Christian Manhood (or character) Study Series. This series was built around the Civil War era. The lives of three prominent Christian men of that period were studied, and visits were made to battlegrounds, homesites, and meeting places of note. The men considered were Robert E. Lee, Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson, and Joshua Chamberlain. This men's class looked at Biblical masculinity from two categories: one of strength and courage, the other, sensitivity and compassion. A long-time student of the Civil War, Harry was more than willing to share many insights and little-known facts to his dramatic presentations.

These Christian Character Study tours were always "sold out" and served to "equip men with the Scriptural principles of Biblical masculinity by using these historical examples."

THE BILLY GRAHAM CHARLOTTE CRUSADE

The Carolinas Billy Graham Crusade for Christ of September 27- 29, 1996, began for Christ Covenant in June of that year when Pastor Harry, a member of the Committee of 50 for the Crusade, asked for a commitment to intercessory prayer.

“As a church,” he wrote on the front of the Sunday worship folder, “we want to maximize our use of this opportunity to train people in sharing the Gospel and in reaching the region for Christ. How can we support this effort? The most important element is to pray. The second is to volunteer for ministry positions.”

The call went out for those who could help locally and at the stadium. The Christian Life and Witness training sessions, sponsored by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, were held June 3-29 at various locations. Pre-crusade rallies for men, women, and youth were held in May.

As it developed, 600 members of Christ Covenant were involved in various capacities at the Crusade. They were a part of the 6,000-voice choir; among the 5,000 counselors needed each night; serving as ushers; or meeting scores of other volunteer roles needed at pre-crusade events. Many others took guests to the services and participated in the neighborhood visitation for the Crusade.

It was a memorable time for the hundreds in Christ Covenant, and the thousands in the city, who focused upon reaching people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Harry noted.

Among those of Christ Covenant mobilizing members for participation in the Crusade were Mike Miller, Chairman with co-chairpersons Mike Folks and Dave and Marilyn Frucella. The team itself was comprised of Beth Thomas, Anne Stauffer, the Hamiltons, Abners, Paynes, Brocks, Vicki Hall, Donna Belk, Patsy Davis, Anne Tuttle, and as Elder liaison Dick Givens. Then the follow-up and discipleship began.

THE ROLE OF A SERVANT/RESOURCE CHURCH

All of these activities reflected the role of a “resource church,” Pastor Reeder explained. From time to time, Pastor Reeder reiterated the role of the Servant/Resource model. By 1996, there was significant activity to testify to the effectiveness of this approach. He stated the following regarding 10 years of pursuing this model:

“I think there are four major ways that we act as a resource church:

“One, of course, is in resourcing the work of Christ Covenant to reach this community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to equip our members to minister for Christ in their personal lives to their families and the community.

“Second is church planting. In the Charlotte region, we have had the opportunity in the past 13 years to participate in a number of church plants — Uptown Christ

Covenant, University Presbyterian Church, then a Korean Presbyterian Church, and in helping two African-American PCA churches, and assisting in Southern Pines. This is locally and regionally, and then there is planting on a national scale as we helped in California, and now in Stuart, Florida, and internationally on the mission field.

“Then the third thing, as a Servant/Resource church, is church re-vitalization — to revive and renew churches that are in stagnation and decline. Our Elders work as counselors to churches that ask for assistance in this, and we work closely with Archie Parrish, Coordinator of Church Revitalization with Mission to North America.

“A fourth area of focus is in establishing supportive relationships with other churches and para-church organizations that are extending the kingdom of God, and working closely with them. For example, we’ve been working with Wycliffe Bible Translators, JAARS, the Billy Graham Crusade, and Leighton Ford Ministries. Just look on the back of our bulletin at some 75 listings of agencies we’re working with.

“These four activities are done in four spheres. Church plantings, church revitalization, and kingdom extensions are done locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally — all modeled after Acts 1:8, where the early church was said to go from Jerusalem, the local area; to Judea, the region; to Samaria, nationally; and to the ends of the earth.

“All of these things define the Servant/Resource Church.”

THE CHRIST OUR SHEPHERD CENTER

In the Spring of 1996, Christ Covenant had still another opportunity to impact the area’s community life by “resourcing” a growing — and needy — segment of the Matthews population.

One of the most heart-wrenching, soul-searching decisions a working mother or a single parent has to make is where and with whom the children will stay after school or in the summertime.

For many mothers, the choices are less than ideal — either unacceptable or unattainable.

Where would a mother go to find a day care with beautiful surroundings, competent caring teachers, a double-A rating, family counseling, and, most importantly, a Christian foundation? Could there be such a place?

Yes, and Christ Covenant became a part of the solution in a nearby complex of gaily renovated buildings and playgrounds that once housed the Matthews Methodist Church.

For years, Ms. Aana Lisa Whatley had envisioned such a ministry geared especially to serve the single parent, but she needed help — lots of help. So when the location became available to her, she went to her son’s church, Christ

Covenant, with a plan. She would renovate the “empty” church property and make it available to Christ Covenant for its ministries of child development, family counseling, and special needs — such a place as the church itself had prayed about. Yes, it was an answer to prayer.

This was the Christ Our Shepherd Ministries, Christian Family Resource Center.

“It is designed as a community outreach,” Mary Dillon, Executive Director, said, “demonstrating the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ working in the lives of individuals and families who are facing the challenges of life.”

Mary Dillon moved to the Charlotte area from south Florida where for 17 years she had been active in child development at Coral Springs Christian School — 8 years a teacher of 3 and 4-year-olds, and 9 years as Director of Pre-School. She and her husband Jim had always enjoyed Charlotte, and with both of their children on the staff at Covenant Day School (Scott Dillon, Middle School Principal and Amy Wallace, kindergarten teacher) they moved north. The hand of providence was seen in this move and in the leadership Mary gave to Christ Our Shepherd.

Primarily, the ministry served as a Christian Child Care Center for infants and children up to 5 years of age, open from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. With many school scholarships available, tuition was scaled to fit the family’s budget. Carefully and prayerfully, Christian teachers were selected. Initially, there was a class for every age group (later doubling as enrollment increased) with teachers’ schedules overlapping to cover the long day. This was in the main building.

The Counseling Center moved offices and conference rooms into the unoccupied brick house facing Johns Street. David Russ, Pastor of Young Families/Pastoral Ministries, directed parent workshops from there. Parents were counseled in the evening. There were after-work sessions on matters of finance, marriage, divorce recovery, parenting, sibling rivalry, and other subjects especially geared for the single mom.

In the two-story education building, there was a lending library of books and tapes for parent and children. An attractive Christian Media Center was set up in the Chapel building with tapes, books, and CDs available. It was also a center for lectures, workshops, and writers’ conferences.

Another part of this ministry took place on the campus of Christ Covenant where an after-school program was offered. No more latch-key children as Suellen Aucreman directed the after-school fun. From a background of YMCA, Suellen supervised the children in three age groups, providing snacks and activities. The children were safe, supervised, and happily occupied on the first floor of the “B” (education) building.

Another program on the Christ Covenant campus was a part time pre-school for 3 and 4-year-olds. Offered during the morning hours, this was started for stay-at-home mothers. The concept was to benefit mother and child, allowing Mom time away from the house, as well as opportunity for children to play and learn in

preparation for the separation that would come at school-age — all in a nurturing Christian atmosphere.

Also, Joni and Friends (JAF) meetings were held at Christ Our Shepherd Ministries with Doug Vinex serving as Director. Founded by the quadriplegic author and international speaker Joni Eareckson Tada, JAF was a disability outreach devoted to raising awareness among churches regarding ways to assist and minister to the handicapped population. On September 25, 1996, when the JAF Ministry Center was dedicated, Joni Eareckson Tada addressed an enthusiastic crowd.

When Pastor Tom Henry met with Aana Lisa Whatley, he recalled hearing her “heart” regarding those facing the challenges of life. This dialogue, combined with the vision of Christ Covenant as a servant/resource church, led to the birth of a day care, an outreach to the disabled, a counseling office, and a child development center.

It was through the generosity and hard work of Mrs. Whatley and Director Mary Dillon, with Jim Mezzanote, the LAND team, Steve Onxley and the Board of Directors that Christ Our Shepherd Ministries became an outreach for evangelism, help, and healing to those in the Charlotte-Matthews area.

The Christian Family Resource Center grew rapidly with over 10,000 books in the library, countless videos, a computer lab, and offering many classes and activities.

COS board members were: Jon Johnson, Chairman; Sid Jacobs, Treasurer; Mary Dillon, Child Care Director; Kenny Norwood, Director of Christian Family Resource Center; David Russ, Pastor of Pastoral Ministries; Steve Onxley, Dana Rucker, Aana Lisa Whatley; staff members: Sandy Lawson, Becky Kornman, and Suzanne Arnett, receptionist.

LAND (Land Acquisition And Development)

A new ministry in 1996 was Land Acquisition And Development (LAND). It was made up of staff, officers, and lay leaders from numerous areas. Deacon Dale Thompson was Chairman, with members Wiley Brown, Pastor of Operations; Elder Scottie Lochhead; Barrett Mosbacker; Julie James; Bernie Lawrence, Pastor of Administration; Hap Welty; Susan Shepherd; Jim Mezzanotte; Jon Johnson; and Charlie Turk.

The LAND team had been charged with overseeing the structural redesign of the Worship Center. Of note is their labor in addressing the parking and traffic flow needs. The result of their many hours of meetings was a plan whereby the parking pavement was doubled and a loop road constructed around the campus to ease traffic congestion.

A busy year continued with another initiative for the LAND team — that of handling the acquisition by Covenant Day School of a tract of land across

Highway 51 from the Funderburk family. The land would be used in the long-term development of the school, SOAR, and other future ministries.

In addition, the LAND team provided oversight for the extensive construction and renovation of the buildings and grounds of the Christ Our Shepherd Ministries.

Wiley described the team as comprised of “a number of tireless and dedicated individuals with competencies in real estate law, construction, engineering, accounting, and resource management.

“As the Lord continues to bless Christ Covenant in so many ways and with so many new people, we will continually be challenged to meet many new needs,” he wrote in *The Courier*. “It is only by God’s grace, the wisdom He grants, and the unified spirit and commitment of this body that we will be allowed to accomplish much in His name. To God be the glory.”

STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

In 1996, the focus of the Youth Ministries turned to students in relation to their families. This followed the adopted church-wide reorganization that emphasized Communities within the church. So the Youth Ministries was restructured to become the Student Families Community.

Bruce Johnson conducted a ministry audit that helped to develop this new vision. The result: junior and senior high students and their families became part of the same Community. It was a family-based approach to youth ministry with Pastor of Student Families, Rod Huckaby, coordinating.

Elders Dale Austin and Sam Wilson, with Deacons Danny Church and Ray Gillis, and the recently added Senior High Director Chad Ellenburg, were members of this Student Families Ministry Management Team. Besides Chad, other youth staff leaders grew the ministry significantly. John Hazlett came on as Junior High Director, and Beth Childress was named Assistant Director of Women’s Youth Ministries.

“These leaders add depth and breadth to ministry to youth,” Rod said. “Also there is a strong support system developing between parents in this Community and those participating in the related adult Sunday Bible school class. This class focuses on the challenging task of raising adolescent children in a world that is competing for their attention and devotion.”

1,000 STRONG AND GROWING

The Christian Education Ministry grew in 1996. Their Congregational Communities expanded with challenging adult, youth, and children’s programs. One Sunday program reported attendance of over 1,000 children. For instance, unique and very popular were the Discipleship Courses that taught “practical holiness” to children in grades 3 through 5. Then there was the junior high focus on “Go Fish” — comprised of three unforgettable focuses: “Milk to Beef”

(teaching and equipping); “Ketchup” (relational evangelism); and “Breakfast Club” (leadership development).

Other changes marked the early part of that year, beginning with the decision of Pastor of Christian Education Chris Hodge and wife Karen to leave to plant a church in Palm City, Florida. Stepping in to manage Chris’ pastoral duties was Ron Coleman, a recent seminary graduate, who became Director of Assimilation and Pastor of the Young Marrieds Community. This was also the time at which Susan Shepherd, who had directed the Pre-School Ministries, assumed the responsibility for the entire Children’s Ministry. Coordinating this rapidly growing department were Colleen Smith and Miriam Londry.

Each Congregational Community developed its own curriculum and planned its own events. The pastors would shepherd and disciple those adults and youths in their own particular life-stage group. These six Communities were: Singles and Singles Again; Young Marrieds; Young Families; Student Families; Adult Families; and the Hosannas Community.

TEAMS CARRIED THE BALL

So in 1996, the church structure was described as Congregational Communities led by lay teams, who benefited from the leadership of Executive and Ministry Management Teams. The Communities were comprised of people who shared a similar life stage. These met together for Sunday Bible school and enjoyed the involvement and communications available to them from leadership teams which included the community pastor, an Elder, and a Deacon.

The Session, the collective body of ordained Elders, was divided into the Executive Ministry Team, the Executive Leadership Team, or the Executive Discipleship Team. The Executive Leadership Team that year included Pastor Harry Reeder; Executive Pastor Tom Henry; Chairman of the Session Larry Kirkman; Elder Paul Joyce; Elder Mike Moore; and Chairman of the Deacons Ed Thorne.

The Diaconate, the collective body of ordained Deacons, also served on teams. The Ministry Management Teams were those of: Worship and Music, Global Outreach, Pastoral Ministries, Administration/Operations, School Ministries, Christian Education, and Student Ministries.

The number and diversity of these ministries and their leadership reflected the growth of the church. The 1995-’96 church membership was now 1,621 communicant and 1,163 non-communicant members, totaling 2,784 members.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

So with three Executive Teams (Discipleship, Leadership, Ministry); six Congregational Community Teams; and seven Ministry Management Teams, the challenge became — how to keep it simple.

Executive Pastor Tom Henry devoted much of his time to developing leaders, focusing on areas of mercy and teaching, and in managing and organizing staff. He met one Monday morning a month with everyone on staff, pastors and directors; he held regular weekly meetings with pastors separately for encouragement and training; and one Tuesday every other month was set aside for a full day of sharing, discipling, staff development and prayer with each pastor.

In his report, Tom mentioned goals to focus on that simplified and streamlined operations and equipped the congregation to serve. He posed five questions to aid in attaining these goals: What is our mission? Whom do we serve? What does the congregation value? What have been our results? and What is our plan?

Thus, committees and teams had a clear mission/purpose — together with pastoral shepherding in all groups. In this way the ministries were streamlined — leaders developed at all levels, evangelism and outreach strategies supported, and discipleship and small groups encouraged and growing.

“As we continue to get larger,” Tom reported, “it becomes increasingly challenging to work together to accomplish our yearly objectives...these goals are not new ones. They are the same objectives we have been working towards for years — but in a simpler form.”

He asked the congregation to pray for them “as we work together to fulfill our calling in this community and in the kingdom of Christ.”

CHAPTER 22

THE NEW WORSHIP CENTER

“A CELEBRATION OF COMMITMENT”

In October of 1996, the excitement began to build at Christ Covenant Church. After numerous delays, the Worship Center was emerging in its final form.

Every now and then a car drove up to one of the doors, and a lone church member or a small family emerged to go up to one of the still-locked doors. Cupping hands around their eyes to cut the reflecting sunlight from the sparkling glass, they peered into the darker interior. What color was the carpeting? How wide was the circle hallway? Was the elevator in yet? Inside, a workman walked by, waved his hand, and smiled a knowing smile.

Then Sunday evening, October 20, was a time of preparation. As Pastor Reeder said, “preparing the family for our new Worship Center home.”

The sermon that evening was on the “10 Steps of Commitment” for the church family. These included a commitment to intercessory prayer, to teaching and preaching, to fellowship and assimilation, to evangelism, and to a God-centered worship. At the conclusion of the sermon, Harry asked the people to form eight groups to walk over to the nearly-finished facility “to pray over the rooms in the new sanctuary.”

Leaders were assigned to lead these groups. Pastor Dick Tevebaugh met with the Seniors and other in the North foyer, which was the entrance nearest the handicapped parking and, inside, the elevator. The South foyer was covered in prayer by a missions-minded group led by Pastor Rod Huckaby. Pastor Tom escorted a group to the main, front foyer. David German gathered with others in the upstairs Choir Room. Pastor Reeder prayed with members in the sanctuary, as well as the nurseries behind the sanctuary and the front classrooms. And out in the extended parking lot, Wiley Brown bowed his head with others.

Prayers of thanksgiving, praise, and devotion were voiced by those able to be a part. Afterwards, as the congregation strolled around, the work mostly finished, there were quiet expressions of wonder at the physical beauty of the building — but also the great anticipation for a future devoted to deepening the spiritual lives of people.

Bernie Lawrence, Pastor of Operations, summarized the happenings leading up to this final time.

“We originally planned occupancy for the new Worship Center for November of 1995, but by God’s grace, just prior to the move-in, a major structural deficiency was discovered. It took an entire year to correct, with enormous effort and time commitments from our team.

“The delay was disappointing, but because of it, the Lord allowed us to remedy two other major concerns: the parking and traffic flow expansion and the added unfinished balcony in the Worship Center.”

So the day finally arrived! November 3, 1996, the first worship service in the new sanctuary!

Pastor Reeder’s letter on the worship folder front read: “What a glorious day! The Lord is faithful. The Lord is good, and the Lord is greatly to be praised.”

At last! The colonial pews were in place, the burgundy carpet down, the hand-carved pulpit installed.

THE CROSS AND THE SCROLL

Bids had been taken, and furniture and cabinet-maker Roger Atkins of his Wood Design company built the larger, wider pulpit.

The architect (Adams Group) specified size and general construction in

proportion to the large curving sanctuary. Pastor Reeder designed the theme.

“It features a scroll,” Harry said, “a scroll that is opening up, with the Celtic cross, the cross and the circle, in the middle. This is because the Bible properly preached, leads us to the Cross. It represents the authority of the Word of God, with a focus upon the Cross of Christ.”

“It was fun to make,” woodcarver Atkins said, “challenging and difficult, following the grain of the wood, carving the tips of the scroll, creating the swirl.”

The scroll curves seem to be unrolling, opening up like papyrus, from either side of the pulpit. The proportioned size was further determined by Harry Reeder’s reach as he put his hand on each side as if he were holding the scroll.

Also, Harry asked that it be built and placed in such a way that he could easily step out from behind the pulpit and continue his sermon as he walked back and forth in front. In his manner of delivery, he occasionally moved back for a sip of water or a glance at his notes.

It took Roger four weeks to complete construction of the pulpit, carving, forming the cross and the circle, the curve of the scroll, gluing, blending mahogany and maple into a beautiful whole.

Then the pulpit was moved into place. The people were ready for the first service in the new Worship Center.

AT HOME AT LAST

There were two Sunday morning services now — 9:00 and 10:30. As they arrived, church members greeted each other in the wide foyer, the gathering place that circled the curved sanctuary. Entering the large worship room, there was a natural, though planned quietness, the acoustics attuned to song and praise yet muffled from bustle and chatter. The choir came down stairways on either side of the altar and filled the loft, 100-strong.

There was awe and praise for “what the Lord had done.”

Just before Pastor Harry Reeder’s Celebration of Commitment sermon, there was the “preparation” by violin and harp duo of Wolfgang and Bette Roth. The Roths, members of Christ Covenant and long-standing instrumentalists with the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra, played the Mallott “Lord’s Prayer.”

It was a time when hearts and minds were freed, and voices were lifted up “in praise of our God with thanksgiving for this house of worship and all of the opportunities that He will open up to serve Him with this facility,” Pastor Reeder said.

After three years of planning and two years of construction, they had moved from a large sunken room under construction to a building completed and “made sacred” to God.

DAY OF CONSECRATION AND THANKSGIVING

Then on November 24, 1996, the Worship Center was consecrated.

It was an in-house dedication of the new Worship Center with Thanksgiving and Consecration Services.

The morning message, "The Stones Cry Out" focused upon a theological explanation of the building. Pastor Reeder named Five Values in constructing the sanctuary. They were: excellence without extravagance; tradition of the past with the assets of the present; materials of substance without façade or opulence; acknowledging of the transcendence of God and at the same time involving the eminence of God's presence; and dedicating the sanctuary to true worship ("in spirit and in truth"), and the circle foyer to fellowship.

Sunday evening, Dr. Frank Barker, Pastor of Christ Covenant's "mother" church, Briarwood Presbyterian in Birmingham, Alabama, led a Dedication and Consecration Service. His message from Joshua was entitled "What Do These Stones Mean?"

A special issue of *The Courier* was given to each family. It was an attractive 28-page history of Christ Covenant with artist John White's drawing in color of the front entrance, the three-story white Celtic Cross brilliant against the dark red-brick background. On the last page, the booklet ended with the words: "This History is His-Story." A note in the worship folder suggested: "It's an issue that you'll want to keep and treasure as a memento of our special time together this evening — and to thank God for His gracious provision of the Worship Center."

It had been announced that a formal and public dedication service would be Sunday, January 12, 1997, including an Open House with local dignitaries and neighbors in the community invited.

A FORMAL DEDICATION

It was April 27, 1997, before a formal dedication took place. It was decided to delay the event until the parking lot could accommodate the large number of cars expected.

Then at last, Christ Covenant's 46,000-square-foot, \$6.3 million complex with seating for 2,500 was ready!

The events of Dedication Week, leading up to the day itself, were: Dr. Anthony Patterson, who spoke on "Coping With Anxieties in the 90's" at Christ Our Shepherd on Monday; then Tuesday, a Children's Concert featuring Puppeteer Andy Holmes and Gerbert in the gym; a mid-week Youth Coffeehouse with music by Ed Cash; and the Covenant Day School Spring Festival with entertainment, rides, games, food and fun on Saturday.

As the coverage for the events appeared in three local papers, the predominance of the cross in the architecture and the significance of the seating arrangement were explained by Pastor Reeder:

“We chose to use the Celtic Cross as the central symbol of our new building,” he said. “Because it shows not only the cross where Jesus died but a circle of never-ending life which He gave us by His death and resurrection. When you enter this building, you come into the cross and when you leave you go out by way of the cross.

“Then when the architect was drawing plans for the building,” he added, “we asked that the congregation be visually and physically connected to the pulpit area. This was accomplished with the walks leading down from the balcony and the curved seating to left and right of the podium.”

During the open house week of activities and before the service, people could see “one of the area’s most spectacular new houses of worship,” as the Charlotte Observer described it. Articles made mention of well-thought out and state-of-the-art features such as the 25-foot screen for visuals; the electronic paging system to summon worshipping parents to the nursery when needed; and the sloping sanctuary floor, designed so no one’s view is blocked. There was the special North entrance for the handicapped and elderly; sound-enhancing equipment for the hearing impaired; the small prayer chapel room on the right and, on the left, a room designated as the Bride’s Room; the missions-focused South Lobby where church members Bud and Barbara Speck created a wall-sized map of the world (complete with 50 colored tacks indicating Christ Covenant’s missionaries around the globe); brightly painted toddler rooms; infant rooms where each child has a white cradle; and the choir practice room with its baby grand piano.

And on that Sunday, April 27, the evening worship service was the Formal Dedication. The choir sang “How Firm A Foundation,” the Crusaders were on hand and a trumpet solo of “I Sing the Mighty Power of God” was performed by Tim Cool. Then just before the prayer of dedication by Pastor Reeder, the Roth Violin-Harp Duo played “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring.” Dr. Ludor Whitlock, president of Reformed Theological Seminary, gave the dedication sermon.

During that sermon, Dr. Whitlock spoke of Harry Reeder’s seminary years. Then he mentioned the various times he had spoken before this body over the years — from the gymnasium of Charlotte Christian School, to the multi-purpose building on their new 40-acre campus — and now in “this beautiful building.” He mentioned the service Christ Covenant Church had provided in its many ministries — highlighting SOAR and the worldwide missions, all directed from this “magnificent building.” He credited not men — but the power of the Gospel and Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.

With the benediction, as Pastor Reeder later said, “came the end to a defining moment in our church’s history.”

ANYTHING EXCELLENT

With the new and larger seating, improved acoustics, and “state-of-the-art full spectrum” sound, there came a flow of beautiful music. One outstanding

outgrowth of these enhancements was the concert series, “Anything Excellent.” This was an educational four-concert series where Christian musicians and dancers would explain who they are and what they do — “giving us insight into the beauty and discipline of fine art.” Developed by Anna Brock, the title was inspired by Philippians 4:8: “If there is anything excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.” She urged parents to bring their children to the free 7:00 p.m. performances.

Anna, with her husband Larry and daughters Sarah and Rebecca, had moved to Charlotte and joined Christ Covenant Church. Educated in Piano Performance with a master’s degree in Accompaniment, Anna also played the flute. She was on the faculty at UNCC full-time, teaching Music Appreciation, and was also piano accompanist for the Charlotte Symphony. Generous with her time and talent, Anna stepped in to help various ministries, from Children’s Choirs to special music.

Anna said she had always wanted to introduce music to audiences in a non-threatening manner — to promote the Arts and Art Education in a way that glorified God and brought pure joy to the listener.

At the time of the “Angels in America” controversy,” Anna was serving on the Arts Fund Task Force for Charlotte, representing Harry Reeder at his request. It was then that she felt the immediate need to pursue her long-held passion more than ever. So in 1997, she obtained permission to utilize Christ Covenant facilities to present excellent artists who were believers.

Artists for the first musical program in the series were no strangers to the audience. They had heard “teasers” of the music to come — the Roth Violin-Harp Duo. Even before Wolfgang and Bette Roth joined Christ Covenant Church, they had offered their ministry of music.

Bette met Wolfgang when she was a senior at Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. He had traveled from Germany to play a season with the North Carolina Symphony, and Bette had joined the group for a short tour.

Their friendship grew, but then was saddened when the season ended and they had to part as he returned to Germany. However, the Lord answered prayer, Bette said, in a thrilling way. She won a Fulbright Scholarship to study harp near his hometown! A year or so later they were married, and a violin and harp were joined together in beautiful harmony.

At that time, there came openings in the Charlotte Symphony. Wolfgang became Principal Second Violin, and Bette, First Harpist in the Billy Graham chair. Deciding to grow with the Symphony instead of moving to orchestras in larger cities, they stayed and raised their family, son Dieter and daughter Carla, in the Charlotte area.

During the summer, the duo toured in Europe, playing from castles on the Rhine to village concert halls. They were also a favorite at weddings and special events in the southeastern United States.

Their music ranged from the classical to folk songs and hymns. There were 400

people attending the “Anything Excellent” concert that first Monday night, September 22, 1997. After the music, Wolfgang demonstrated his instrument, and Bette explained the harp comparing it to the piano — the strings were the white notes, the foot pedals, the black. Then she invited youngsters to the stage to play a glissando on the harp, tiny fingers strumming up and down the strings.

Other concerts in that first Series were: November 10, the “Simply Sax” saxophones, playing American jazz and the Little Fugue in G Minor by Bach; January 26 (1998), the Banner Brass, which included two trumpets, a French horn, a trombone, and a tuba; and on March 23, the Just Rejoice dancers.

The Series became an annual event. There was jazz and bluegrass, mountain music, then choirs, and the dual pianos of Hilda Ryan and Anna Brock. All glorifying God.

HONORING GOD

The desire to “honor God” was a central theme that characterized the worship times on Sunday at Christ Covenant.

“Using God’s Word as our guide, and the wonderful gift of music and voice as our tool, our goal is to create a corporate atmosphere of worship that pleases God and leads everyone at Christ Covenant to honor Him.”

This was the goal of the Worship and Fine Arts Ministry as expressed by Pastor David German. During 1997, in the new sanctuary, there was more singing in the morning worship. More drama presented in the evening service.

Behind the scenes, there was a new sound and light man, Jim Deal. He and the sound crew brought new techniques into service, improving the sound projection. An increase in the number of ushers came with the enlarged seating. This was managed by Dan Pisano, Head Worship Coordinator.

Jeff Gunderson became the Coordinator of Worship Teams, leading the singing and praise at the Sunday evening service, adding voices and a new dimension to the worship.

There were expanded musical programs year around: the “Living Nativity” with orchestra and choir in three evening performances at Christmas; the new Christmas Celebration with in-house groups including a Men’s Quartet, 4 Praise, the Crusaders, the Men’s Ensemble, Women’s Trio and others; a new Easter Drama; a Spring Choral Concert; and an annual Children’s Concert led by Susan Shepherd.

Team Members in addition to those mentioned were: Tim Cool, Director of Instrumental Music; Sherri Smith, Administrative Assistant/Pianist; Hilda Ryan, Organist; Elder Rob Veerman; Deacon David Harris; and Rebecca Ritchie, Coordinator/Drama Team.

LEAPS AND BOUNDS

How could a church grow rapidly to reach a membership of close to 3,000 and still keep the intimacy and friendliness of the small church? A couple years before, the question was addressed by creating Congregational Communities, groups in similar lifestages, assigning these to the care of pastors and providing the support of one Elder and one Deacon. Was it working?

In 1997, pastors were able to report on the blessings of a shift designed to ensure “shepherding” continued even in an expanding congregation.

THE CONGREGATIONAL COMMUNITY MODEL BEARS FRUIT

As Bernie Lawrence said, “There had been a real need, because of the size of the congregation, to assign ruling Elders still more pastoral responsibilities. So, pastoral staff members were placed with Congregational Communities to pastor these communities in addition to their program responsibilities. Like a coin with two sides.

The plan had been a fruitful one. In the 1997 Annual Report, David Russ, Pastor of the Young Families Community, said: “I am very thankful for our Communities. There are a variety of positive relationships going on in our Communities. These gatherings of people make pastoral ministry more possible with the Elders, Deacons and laymen. At the same time, our pastors take increased ownership and oversight for our growing Communities.”

As for his own Community assignment, he added, “We connect people with people, and socials and special events are held on a regular basis.”

Community families numbered 360 and growing! The Annual Report called them “a church within a church.”

According to a report from Rod Huckaby, Pastor of Student Families Community, the structure was also effective in presenting individuals with opportunities to use their gifts in service.

“I think our 1997 biggest success has been our strategy and actions to carry out a family-based youth ministry. Parents and teens participated together in multiple ministries. We’ve made great progress this past year. A lot of people doing a lot of ministry in a large area!”

Congregational Communities were flourishing and furthering the growth of Covenant Groups as well. Overall, there were nearly 100 Covenant Groups.

In 1997, the Student Families Community staff led by Pastor Rod Huckaby was: Jan Adams, Administrative Assistant; Chad Ellenburg, Senior High Director; Jake Tassy, Junior High Director; Julie Welden, Intern; and Beth Childress, Assistant Director of Young Women. Officers and volunteers were: Elder Mike Moore; Deacon Larry Cothorn; Elder Dale Austin, Youth Community; Elder Sam Wilson, Youth Community; Deacon Danny Church, Youth Community; Deacon Dale

Hazelgrove, Youth Community; Karen Dansberger, Communications; Reed Bryant, Worship Committee; Darnell Manchester, Friendship; Steve Janes, SBS; Bruce Johnson, SBS; Judy Huckaby, Women's Committee; Barb Thorne, Women's Committee; and Roger Paules, Small Groups.

“THE BIG STORY”

It was reported that the big story for Christian Education in 1997 was “growth.”

Moving into the new Worship Center helped relieve congestion.

“We have children in every nook and cranny!” Susan Shepherd, Director of Children's Ministries said. “It has been a blessing to find space and utilize every inch faithfully.”

In the Children's Sunday Bible school classes, there were 56 classes with 130 adult teachers needed weekly. Only seven years before, there had been 17 SBS classes — less than half as many, so staffing had been a real challenge.

There were nine core ministries in the 1997 Children's mission: Sunday Bible school (SBS); Children's choirs; King's Kids (a special needs class); Children's Worship; Missions Minded Kids; Cub Scouts; Boy Scouts; Music, Art, and Drama Days; and Back Yard Bible Clubs.

The Back Yard Bible Clubs were a new and adventurous ministry for children. The emphasis here was on evangelism, providing opportunities for the covenant children to invite their friends and neighbors to hear the Gospel. That first summer over 300 children participated, with 23 professions of faith!” Susan reported. “Our own families were encouraged, and trained too.”

The Clubs were hosted at the homes of members, taught by teams composed of both youth and adults. It was a five-day club during a two-week period, meeting during the summer, with story-telling, music, games, and crafts.

Another innovation for children was the Junior Bible Quiz Ministries. Leaders met with a small group of eight to ten children for a two-week period during the summer. The “Coach” assisted students in memorizing both Scripture and catechism in preparation for in-church and inter-church competitions. This helped to develop within the child a solid foundation built on sound doctrine, learning to assimilate important truths about the Bible.

A new committee was appointed to provide leadership in Christian Education. They were: CDS Headmaster Barrett Mosbacker, Chairman, with committee members Biff Bracy, Chris Williams, Bill Thomas, Dave Auckermann, and Carl Shafer. They were to resource Adult and Youth Sunday Bible school, to plan class curriculum, recruit and train adult teachers, and serve as liaison with Congregational Communities.

In the Children's Ministry Leadership were: Pastor Barrett Mosbacker; Elder Bill Thomas; Deacon Jerry Youngblood; Susan Shepherd, Director/Children's Ministries; Colleen Smith, Manager/Pre-School Sunday Ministries; Miriam

Londry, Manager/Elementary; Gatha Schleicher, Ministry Administrator; Susan Randolph, Attendance Coordinator; Cynthia Carter, Childcare Coordinator; Margie Johnston, Puppet Ministry Coordinator; Sharon Lawing, Cub Scouts Coordinator; Chuck Gallant/Ron Stewart, Boy Scout Coordinators; Lisa Cool, Children's Choirs Ministry Coordinator; and Missions Minded Kids Ministry Coordinator, Nancy Stout.

SPECIAL NEEDS MINISTRY AWARD

An article by Dotsie Coleman in the September 14, 1997 issue of *The Courier* reported that Christ Covenant had received "The Residential Support Award for outstanding and significant contributions and dedication to the community."

The award recognized the Special Needs Ministry's monthly socials for mentally challenged adults. Every third Saturday, some 50 to 70 special guests attended an evening of games, crafts, music, evangelistic Bible stories, followed by dinner. Adults and teenagers from the Student Family Community helped host the gatherings.

Christ Covenant also has provided a "buddy" system for some of the church's special needs children. The buddy accompanied the child to Sunday Bible school or just "hung out" with them. The families of special needs children also gathered quarterly for supper and fellowship, and a mother's support group met regularly.

The article further detailed the addition of a Sunday Bible school class for the mentally challenged persons four years of age and older. With music, hands-on crafts and activities, Bible lessons, and Scripture memorization, this was the King's Kids Class. One of those helping with the program and enlisting other volunteers was Susan Woodall.

SHORT TERM MISSION TRIPS, LONG ON APPEAL

"Short Term Missions Trips are probably the most exciting thing we do in our church," Stelle Snyder, Director of Communications/Publications said.

She had seen the reactions of those returning from the three-week mission trips. It was also evident from the letters sent out by team members.

"Romania has become my heart," Hannah Guthman wrote. "It is the highlight of my year."

As high school student, she had spent three weeks in Romania where Christ Covenant church teams had worked with established missionaries in Bucharest, Arad or Vada Crisulu, and at the Children's West Camp.

She described her times there as "being on top of the mountain... It breaks our hearts for joy as we watch our young friends (there) truly understand the Gospel message and dedicate their lives to Christ for the first time! What an awesome, awesome, privilege!"

Tiffany Chin, another student team member, also called it an “awesome experience.”

“This country (Romania) is full of searching people, desperate to find a true meaning to life,” Tiffany wrote, and mentioned the repeat visit she planned. “I will have the opportunity to minister to these people, specifically the children and teenagers, and to share the love of Jesus with them.”

Michael Van Patter also understood the needs he saw in Romania, after the decades of communist rule. “Now as a free society,” he wrote, “the people in Romania are very open to the Gospel and have a hunger that can only be satisfied by the love of Jesus.”

These teams of students and adults, of parents and their children on Short Term Mission Trips, were running a youth summer camp, leading Vacation Bible Schools, Small Groups in Bible Study, performing a puppet team ministry, playing music, leading singing and drama, teaching camp crafts, games and sports, and in their spare time (spare time?) helping with maintenance and construction. Orphanages were visited, teenagers and older women ministered to — an incredible program carefully tailored to fit a three-week visit.

One summer, Short Term Mission Trips included: Puebla, Mexico (near Mexico City); Romania (Western Romania Orphanage, and village); Bucharest (and Arad and West Camp); Kampala, Uganda, and Kenya; and, in the States, a University Campus; then North Miami and Little Haiti in Florida; and Tucson, Arizona. In 1996, over 150 people participated on the teams.

To be a member of such a team, Susie Austin explained, a person must meet certain criteria. It all starts with a request from the missionary in place. The missionary designates the need and describes the type of team needed, i.e. youth or adult, etc. Then the Global Outreach office for Short Term Missions declares the trip.

A team of at least 10 people, more if requested, is selected from a list of those interested.

An application form is completed, and personal information is requested. An interview is scheduled, and it is determined where the applicant is spiritually.

There are several people trained to conduct these interviews. For instance, the Fellowship of Short Term Mission Leaders, who meet all over the nation, offer this training — as do, SIM, Wycliff, and International Missions.

At Christ Covenant, a staff of 15 volunteers handled the paperwork, the classes, and interviews. Each Short Term Team has a leader appointed, and the names of those asking to be a part of the team are passed on to them. Those selected depend on the nature of the trip, such as age and number of persons who can be accommodated at the mission site. Once a team is formed, guidelines are given to each member. These include what is required financially by the team as a whole and by each individual, shots needed, suggested clothing, and the like. Families are encouraged to go, and the parents are then responsible for their children.

Missions training includes a curriculum on international travel, safety, language, spiritual training, evangelism, music, drama, and any other specific skills needed, based on the country and the need.

Since its first Short Term Mission Trip to Jamaica in 1990, the number of teams increased. Several families and members made repeat trips, forming friendships with nationals overseas. The Jeff Gunderson family went annually, leading music, looking forward to renewing these contacts.

Elder Dale Austin and his wife Susie and family were very active in Short Term Missions, making three of these trips. At first, Susie handled the office work and financial books involved. Then the Austins led the teams to St. Vincent for three years.

“When we came back, I just started working in the office, organizing trips, learning more about it,” she said. Then she spoke of the reactions of returning team members.

“It’s a kind of mutual boost,” she said. “Missionaries are encouraged as they find team members have come with a mind-set of supporting them, and team members return spiritually refreshed.”

PROTECTING “A FRAGILE ORGANISM”

In 1997 there was a renewed emphasis at Christ Covenant on the effective administration of church discipline by the Elders. The Annual Report to the people stated that it was not a punitive process, but rather one aimed at restoration and healing, as well as that of “proactive discipling and edification.”

As the church developed, it was necessary to invoke discipline from time to time. Pastor Bernie Lawrence, an Elder from the beginning, elected when Christ Covenant first became a particular church, explained the steps that are taken.

“First, there are a couple of things everyone ought to know about church discipline,” he said. “One, the discipline that is the prerogative of the church is limited to the spiritual.”

The Session does not have the right to discipline people the way the State does. The approach is spiritual only. So the Church is not permitted to “bind anyone’s conscience” beyond what the Scripture allows.

“There’s a whole universe of privileges — “Christian liberties, in other words — that people have that we cannot encroach upon,” Bernie said.

“But where the Scripture does apply, adultery for example, the Scripture clearly states we are not to commit adultery. So when this occurs in the life of a church member, it is the responsibility of the Elders to pursue the person that has crossed that boundary (Matthew 18), and to reprove and correct (Hebrews 12). Or this may start with God’s people and the need to “admonish one another, reprove one another, and then call in the Elders if not listened to.”

In Matthew 18, Scripture instructs that one talks to the person, then if they refuse

to listen, take another person with you. And, finally, if they still do not heed, tell it to the church, the Elders.

“So most of the time when the Session conducts church discipline,” Bernie continued, “it’s the consequence of learning that a member has failed to hear spouse, or brother, or sister in Christ. Then the Elders intervene according to the Book of Church Order.”

Church discipline is conducted for several reasons.

“First, it’s to the glory of God,” Bernie said. “He is a holy God, and we want to rescue that glory when it’s exposed by a sinning Christian. So, it’s for the glory of God.”

“Then it’s for the reclamation of the sinner. Our job is not to punish. But rather, our job is to bring a brother or sister that’s in sin, back into relationship with Christ and His Church. That’s where Hebrews 12 comes in.”

“And third, it’s to preserve the peace and purity of the church. The church, which is the apple of God’s eye, is a fragile organism and is always susceptible to the consequences of sin — the disease of the soul. And the Elders’ job is to preserve the church, the peace, and security, and to be vigilant about that.”

So the Elders come alongside an individual, and with persistent and patient initiatives, speak with them. They investigate to be sure of the circumstances, and then “patiently call that person to account.”

This pursuing may go on for some time, and if finally there is no response, then the formal church discipline would result in ex-communication.

“There are only a few censors that we can impose upon an individual,” Bernie explained, “because it’s a spiritual form of discipline. The Elders can admonish. We can deny the sinner access to the Lord’s Table — the Lord’s Supper, and we can ex-communicate them. If they are an officer in the church, we can remove them from their office.”

The church would keep a person away from the Lord’s Table only for as long as it took for them to repent, and ex-communication basically says that they will be treated as a non-believer, tantamount to saying, “You are not a Christian, and we will put you outside the covenant body until you convince us you are broken and contrite over this matter.”

This happens very rarely — only when the person is incorrigible, very obstinate in their sin, and will not turn from it. The church is left with no choice.

“We either tolerate it, permit it, turn our heads and pretend we don’t see it, in which case it’s an offense to God and contagious in the body, or we deal with it, and that’s the means God has given us.”

CHAPTER 23

THE VISION TAKES ON FORM AND SUBSTANCE

From the 38 steadfast members of that first particular church to the 3,000 moving into the new Worship Center, the vision took form.

The struggles, the answers to prayer, and, yes, the miracles that occurred along the way, told the story of faith and God's covenantal care. The people were thankful in many ways.

As Bernie Lawrence described it, "The people were very pleased to have a formal sanctuary that was reserved primarily for worship — a place designed to create an atmosphere of worship. There had been so many impediments, barriers, or challenges to our worship in schools, modular units, gyms, that a lot of effort went into making this place especially conducive to worship. And folks really appreciated this and the availability of the building."

1997 CONFERENCES HELD

Occupying the New Worship Center opened the door to hosting large gatherings. On Friday, January 24, 1997, one of the first opportunities was that of hosting the annual Central Carolina Presbytery. The purpose of the Presbytery meeting is to review policy and ministry efforts, to encourage, uplift, teach, and to hold each other accountable.

At the worship service on that Friday night, Dr. Douglas Kelly, Professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Charlotte, spoke. His opening message was on "Brokenness and Glory."

There were 100 pastors and Elders and their wives attending from 40 churches and missions in the local Presbytery.

Saturday morning after doughnuts and coffee (lunch was served later), with decorations and hospitality provided by 17 Women in the Church (led by Renee' Coleman), Pastor Reeder enthusiastically welcomed the delegates. The commissioners from Christ Covenant were Paul Joyce, Bill Thomas, and Larry Kirkman. It is typical for Elders to rotate attendance at these quarterly meetings.

"It's a duty and an opportunity for us to represent Christ Covenant to this larger body," Paul Joyce said. "We discuss the various programs and actions taken in such things as missions, ordaining pastors, and in church discipline. The fellowship with these pastors and Elders is vital to maintaining the spiritual health of our congregation."

Following this gathering, the Revitalization Conference was held at Christ Covenant the first week of February. As RTS Chairman of the ministerial advisory board and Doctoral class instructor, Pastor Reeder led the Revitalization Annual Conferences. This year, pastors and Elders agreed on a common purpose — "to seek to be the Lord's instruments for an effective ministry to the churches which they serve." The Worship Center housed this conference, formally entitled, "From Embers to Flame." About 80 church leaders attended basic and second year seminars.

Then in the following weeks, Christ Covenant's Annual Mission Conference was held. Many missionaries returned from the field for this time of fellowship, personal communication, and re-commitment. Luncheons and dinners were held with a missionary at each table. They met with Sunday Bible school classes and small groups to give and receive encouragement.

The new Worship Center with its wide circular foyer was an adventure in world outreach as booths were decorated for the various countries represented. There was the African hut, the colorful Spanish and South American displays, European, Philippine, inner-city, and other missions featured.

A full week of activities focused on world evangelism from Feb. 22 to March 2 and ended at Sunday Worship services with Dr. Don Patterson, from Mission to the World, speaking.

Another exciting conference was the Fall Theological Conference with R.C. Sproul, pastor, teacher, writer and Chairman of the Board at Ligonier Ministries in Orlando, Florida. The weekend of Sept. 27-29, 1997 saw 1400 people from as far away as New York, Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, filling the Worship Center and "Renewing Their Minds."

Dr. Sproul has written over 30 books and conducted the radio program "Renewing Your Mind" which was broadcast nationally five days a week. He was professor of Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando. He also founded Ligonier Ministries, a teaching ministry that "assists the church in nurturing believers."

Seventy tables with display stands interspersed were arranged in the gym, making books, videos, audio tapes and teaching materials available for those attending.

As was reported in *The Courier*, it required two full-time Ligonier staff members and 11 part-time ones to arrange this conference. Organizers traveled from Florida to set up the event. Christ Covenant provided 18 volunteers who served 50 gallons — that's 3,000 cups — of coffee with snacks for all.

Following the conference, Pastor Harry Reeder recalled standing in the balcony looking down on the crowded sanctuary. He was overcome with a deep appreciation for all the folks who had labored, and those who had given to the building program.

"This is why we built this place," he mused, "for just such a gathering."

LOOKING AHEAD: LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Another area of emphasis for 1997 was in long-range planning.

"God has continued to bless us with numerical growth," Dick Osman, Chairman of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), reported. "This necessitated the on-

going expansion of our facilities. So a Master Plan has been developed (by Little and Associates Architects) with sequencing of the highest priority facility needs.”

These were determined by assessing and quantifying the needs of each church ministry. Next steps in the process were synthesizing these needs to reflect the space requirements for the church as a whole, evaluating all options, then coming up with a Master Plan “characterized by flexibility, financial integrity, and consistency.”

The Session agreed to move forward to develop a long-range plan for the church with a 7 to 10 year horizon to help “lead Christ Covenant into the 21st Century.”

In those years, there was a “serious commitment to writing long-range planning for each ministry,” Bernie Lawrence said. “We’ve got a cycle for that that moves through leadership in the course of the year and winds up directing our annual planning for the ministry. Once a year, Harry (Pastor Harry Reeder) proposes changes to our long-range plan. The leadership then reviews it, modifies it, and then adopts it, and that dictates our planning for the up-coming year.

“So long-range planning is in continual flux and reflected in the various ministry reports for a given year. And though we see what was accomplished one year and what is planned to the year ahead, the long-range plan goes a step further and looks beyond that 5 to 10 years.”

IN THE HANDS OF PROVIDENCE

As the church abides in the hands of Providence, the members are reminded of what has gone before. They have learned to have patience — God knows what He is doing — and to be thankful for his guidance in the past and in the days ahead. So, Christ Covenant moves forward with confidence. Her purpose, vision, and philosophy as a Servant/Resource church remain steadfast and fruitful.

Our Church Purpose

“For God’s glory, Christ Covenant is committed to developing disciples in the Charlotte-Metrolina area and throughout the world so that in all things Christ might have the preeminence.”

Our Church Verse

“...that in all things Christ might have the preeminence.”

Colossians 1:18

Our Vision Statement

Christ Covenant desires to be a Servant/Resource church that is committed to excellence and effectiveness for the extension and expansion of the Kingdom of God by:

- Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ here and throughout the world with a commitment to personal evangelism, church-planting and church revitalization ministries.
- Preparing the people of God with the Word of God so that we may live for the

glory of God, empowered by the Spirit of God.

- Penetrating the culture with ministries and members who effectively apply the salt and light of the Biblically-framed lifeview, a Spirit-filled lifestyle, and a Christ-focused lifelove.
- Producing a witness for Christ that is marked by truth (sound doctrine) and grace (sensitive relationships).

“O Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you and praise your name, for in perfect faithfulness you have done marvelous things, things planned long ago.”

Isaiah 25:1 (NIV).

EPILOGUE

Every book has a stopping point. For her wonderfully detailed history of Christ Covenant Church Mary Burke chose to end at a pinnacle moment in 1997. It was a moment that reflected on both exciting and difficult years of faith exercised, patience stretched and goals accomplished by the grace of God.

We already know that Mary’s successors will have much to chronicle as they take up the story from 1998 and publish a history of the recent past and days that have yet to unfold as God directs our steps and determines our length of years.

In our story “so far,” this record of what seems like just yesterday, we can clearly see God’s hand as we faced the challenges of the 1980s and the 1990s. For many of us, these are the roots of blessings we now enjoy — those that have shaped the persons we have become, the families we have raised, and the ministries we pursue. Mary’s account was able to put into the context of history the first 20 years of our “growing up unto Him.”

In the next account of *In the Hands of God*, we will witness the entrance of this

church body into “adulthood.” It will, undoubtedly, detail the construction of more campus buildings; the work of men and women who God called to this ministry and then, later, to other service; the growth of some ministries, dramatic changes in others and new initiatives that could not have been imagined in the last century. And we can be confident that we will then see with clarity the glorious impact of the extended time of challenge that God providentially allowed in the life of our church in our recent past.

Think of it, we are writing history — whether we realize it or not. Before we realize how many years have passed, a new generation will be reading about our years of stewardship of this church. May it please God to allow us to fill the pages that recount our time with good reports about what we did and how we did it. May our story reveal our love for one another and faithfulness to Christ and His Church.

I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he. ... Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Ask your father and he will tell you, your elders, and they will explain to you. ... For the LORD's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance. In a desert land he found him, in a barren and howling waste. He shielded him and cared for him; he guarded him as the apple of his eye, like an eagle that stirs up its nest and hovers over its young, that spreads its wings to catch them and carries them on its pinions. The LORD alone led him ...

From Deuteronomy 32

Stella Snyder, Catherine Plough, December 2006

APPENDIX 1

ADDITIONAL LEADERS AND COMMITTEES

1986-1987

Note: The new Church Purchase Authorization Procedure, (P.O. System), ready for use.

REPORT OF STATED CLERK: Harry Martin.

Total Membership: 337 Communicant, 192 Non-Communicant
(44% growth)

ADMINISTRATION MINISTRY COMMITTEE:

Rick Mosteller; Ed Sweeten; Tom Van Beek

SESSION MINISTRIES:

ASSIMILATION: Mike Terrell, Chairman

SHEPHERDING: Hugh Elder; Ron Gillespie

MEN OF THE COVENANT: Marquis J. Ryan, Peter Stollmack,
Coordinators

Note: This was a small group conversational prayer meeting at Charlotte Christian School cafeteria, held the first Saturday morning of every month to pray for the families and the church.

WORD AND DEED: Elder Mike Couch; Elder Harry Martin; Deacon Edwin Thorne, Jr.

Note: "Seeing God at work, linking word with action to respond to the hurts of this world." The Tape Ministry, the Perspective Radio Ministries, and The Courier, to assist in teaching, evangelism, and fellowship

PULPIT TAPE MINISTRY: Larry Cothorn; Janice Grey, assisting

Note: In 1986, this ministry provided 1,435 tapes (a 30% increase).

EQUIPPING: Elder Harold Driver

DIACONATE MERCY MINISTRIES: Hugh Elder, Jr.

Note: Six of the 12 Deacons were appointed to serve on a Mercy Committee, to develop and train workers and lead the various mercy ministry programs.

DAWN (Discipleship and Weekly Nurture): Pastor Harry Reeder

Note: DAWN expanded from one group of 9-16 men meeting Friday mornings at 6:30 a.m. in an upstairs room at Anderson's Restaurant, to add a second group of 8-12 men meeting in the Park View office building on Wednesday mornings at 6:00 a.m. A third group was organizing for location on Independence Blvd. The same lesson was taught at each for ease in changing locations as needed. Those who were able stayed for breakfast and fellowship.

FBF (Fisherman Bible Fellowships): Pastor Harry Reeder

Note: Two study groups offered — one at Duke Power and the other at Southern Bell meet "in your place of work during lunch hour." This ministry is for the purpose of evangelism, equipping, and challenging people to growth in Christ.

SUNDAY BIBLE SCHOOL

ADULT DIVISION: Larry Kirkman.

Note: In 1986, attendance up 25%.

CHILDREN'S DIVISION: Nora Sherrill

Note: Started a teacher's training class held during the SBS hour "so that we will have a pool of trained and willing individuals to draw from when the Children's Bible school grows in enrollment and needs more workers."

NURSERIES: Susan Underwood; Texie Shelby

YOUTH CHURCH: Cindy Reeder, Coordinator

Teachers: Joann Nabb; Kathy Madsen; Cindy Reeder; Debbie Rucker;
Toni

Couch

Seraph Choir: Kathy Madsen, directing

W.O.V (Welcome Our Visitors): Bob Long, Coordinator

Note: Ministry to provide Greeters for the a.m. and p.m. worship services and for Sunday Bible school. Also, to follow up on evangelism referrals.

SALT SHAKER DINNER FELLOWSHIP: Dick and Melissa Van Halsema.

PIONEER GIRLS: Becky Dornbush, Leader. (10-12 girls meet every week.)

HARVESTERS: William Spiess, Coordinator

Note: First full year of Seniors (50+) meeting. "A new ministry to meet needs and strengthen the faith of Seniors...seeking ways they can make a contribution to the lives of younger members.

LEAD (LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLESHIP): Mike Couch

Note: Purpose to introduce new evangelism ministries for Christ Covenant

Steering Committee: Jeff Clayton, teacher; Joe Ed Taylor, instructor and on-the-job trainer; Bob Palmer, neighborhood canvas leader; Chris Madsen; Johnny Adkins; Richard Price; Vickie Reeder; Dot Driver; Frank Newell

MISSIONS: Mike Couch, Coordinator

Note: 1) Faith promises increased 58% — over \$28,000;

2) 3rd mission trip with 10 church members going to Cotin, Haiti, to help MIA in their medical mission and at the home of Chip and Brenda Trigg, our first missionary couple.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: Miriam Jones, President; Stelle Snyder, Vice President; Vickie Sweeten, Secretary-Treasurer; Carolyn Cousar, Historian
Fellowship, receptions, banquets: Donna Wright, Lou Anne Anderson, Nancy Taylor

Hospitality, meals and transportation: Judy Roberts, Debbie Gillespie

SINGLES I MINISTRY: Dick Givens, Coordinator

Note: Meet every other Friday evening at the home of Harold and Miriam Jones.

SINGLES II MINISTRY: Jocelyn Philpot, Coordinator

Note: This ministry was organized as an outgrowth of the 1986 Divorce Recovery Workshop to provide support and fellowship for the older singles.

1987-1988

YOUTH MINISTRIES: Kathy Woolner, Director of the Junior and Senior Youth Programs

ASSIMILATION: Ken Samuelson, Coordinator

Note: The goal was to involve new members in meaningful worship, fellowship, and ministry.

HARVESTERS; Bill Speiss, Coordinator

Note: The designation was changed to "For 60 years and over." They had found that "50 and over" was too wide a range.

DAWN (Discipleship and Weekly Nurture)

Note: This ministry expanded when a third group was added, meeting at the Venus restaurant in Matthews. The other two groups were meeting at Anderson's restaurant and at the Park View office building. Conducted by Harry Reeder, the purpose was to challenge men for leadership at home, work, and church a leadership that was faithful to the Word.

LEAD (Lifestyle Evangelism And Discipleship): Joe Ed Taylor, Coordinator

Note: The ministry used the Evangelism Explosion training developed by Dr. James Kennedy. In 1987 the church sent Tom Henry, Jeff Clayton, and Joe Ed Taylor to Florida for instruction in this.

ProCLAIM MINISTRY (Christian Life and Issues Ministry): Bob Moore, Coordinator

Note: The Sanctity of Human Life and other social ills such as pornography, drug abuse, homosexuality, etc. were addressed. 1987 was the start-up year with emphasis on abortion and picketing abortion clinics, and providing shepherding homes for women in "crisis pregnancy."

SINGLES II: Jocelyn Philpot, Coordinator

Note: This ministry was to provide a caring environment for Singles inside and outside Christ Covenant Church. There were 35 on the mailing list.

MERCY MINISTRY: Dr. Christian Madsen, Chairman

Note: Barnabas Ministry administered mercy to those outside the church, helping 17 families with financial assistance that year.

Included on the committee were: Ross Dornbush, Barnabas Coordinator; Bob Shuster, Ron Stewart, Mercy Ministry Coordinator, Ed Thorne

SOUND MINISTRY: Ron Miller, Coordinator

Note: Primarily a ministry to the congregation. Recorded the services from which the Perspective radio broadcast and "Christ Covenant Pulpit" tapes were produced. Equipment was added to improve the recording quality.

Sound Technicians: Randy Carter; Jack Coobs; Tim Driver; Steve Musterman; Kris Redwing

ADVERTISING/COMMUNICATION: Coordinator, Chuck Robbins

Note: Purpose was to aid the ministries in advertising and other means of public awareness with brochures, ads, radio-TV, signs, and The Courier. Developed a new ad series, video, and materials on the ministry center, and upgraded The Courier, adding the "Update" communication.

Committee members: Trish Wallin, *The Courier* editor; Stelle Snyder; Bob Veerman; Gary Slavens; Joel Tevebaugh; John White; Dick and Melissa Van Halsema; Ray Cromer

CHRISTIAN SERVICE BRIGADE: Grey Dixon, Coordinator

Note: Purpose was "To promote fathering among men by equipping them in their roles as parents, as active Christian influences to youth, and as Christ-like examples to other men."

Grades 1-2: Tree Climbers — (father with son program) 18 boys with 18 dads.

Grades 3-6: Stockade — 20 boys with 4 leaders.

Brigade Chairman: Harold Driver

Stockade Chief Ranger: Grey Dixon

Stockade Rangers: Fred Ely, Bill Stockton, Peter Stollmack

Tree-Climber Coordinator, Ed Wright with Roger Koehler for '89.

PIONEER GIRLS: Elder Harold Driver, in charge of Youth Clubs

Note: Harold met with church members in February 1988 to organize the Pioneer Girls and the Boys Brigade. Purpose: "To help children and youth put Christ in every phase of life, form healthy relationships, and develop positive feelings about themselves."

In May, the leaders' kick-off meeting was held, and in June a training session offered. By October, 50 girls registered and afternoon meetings were held.

The Leaders were: Grade 1 — Jenny DeFreitas, Lori Pierce; Grade 2 — Danielle Benson, Joan Garrett; Grade 3 — Carol Hill, Nancy Hullett; Grade 4 — Vannie Keeling, Patti Brigman; Grades 5 and 6 — Yvonne Moore, Nancy Stockton; and, Assistant Coordinator, Susan Veerman

MISSIONS: Mike Moore, Coordinator

Note: In 1988 Faith Promise giving reached \$76,000, and with the regular percentage from the general fund, the total for missions and benevolences exceeded \$194,000, or 23% of the total general fund income for the year.

Missions outside the US:

Harry Reeder and Ed Wright traveled to the Caribbean to assist MIA; Senior High group spent 2 weeks in Mexico; two groups went to Jamaica to assist after hurricane.

New missionaries from Christ Covenant:

Joy Brown to Niger, Africa with SIM; Beth Hoagland, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship staff at NC State; Ron and Lizanne Johnson to train at Columbia, SC, for departure to Spain with MTW (missions board) in 1990.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (WIC): Amy Hadady, Coordinator

Note: 1988 was a year of growth and change as a reorganization began in April. Purpose: to "provide opportunities for women in the study of the Scriptures, prayer, fellowship, and serve the Lord together; to know Christ and extend His kingdom in her life, home, church community, and throughout the world."

A Steering Committee divided the group into four different ministry areas: Inreach (church social activities), Outreach (outside WIC), Downreach (included Small Groups with a new women's DAWN group taught by Tom Henry for working women), and Upreach, accomplished through a monthly gathering for the entire population of church women.

Committee members (1987): Miriam Jones, President; Linda Robbins, Secretary; Carolyn Cousar, Historian. Others, Carrie Fultz, Annie Burnette, Donna Wright, Julie Slocum, and Judy Roberts

WELCOMING MINISTRY: Bob and Ann Grignon, Coordinators

Note: The purpose was "to increase effectiveness as a body of believers by creating an atmosphere of warmth and friendliness that welcomes new visitors to Christ Covenant.

Objectives:

1. Greeters stationed at each door, a.m. and p.m. services and at Sunday school doors to greet and give directions;
2. To give information to visitors;
3. Prepare name tags for members and visitors;
4. Invite new visitors into members' homes for dinner and fellowship. (Two Hospitality Sundays a year; Salt Shaker Dinners for new couples; and singles each month).

During 1988 there was "tremendous growth." Since moving into the new building, there was an average of 26 new first time visitors each Sunday in 43 visiting families.

WORSHIP COORDINATOR MINISTRY: Bob Palmer, Coordinator

Note: In 1988, there were 8 teams on a rotational basis with 40 Coordinators (ushers), up from 32 the year before. Dress code: dark jacket, gray trousers, matching necktie, and a boutonniere, easy to identify, for help with worship folders, seating, or emergency situations. Motto: "To God's glory."

CHURCH OFFICE: Bob Dyar, Coordinator

Administrative Assistants: M. C. Moshos; Jo Miller; Amy Hadady

Weekly Volunteers:

Susie Austin, Marge Van Genderen, Linda Dixon, Pam Lanning, Melody Paules, Cynthia Carter and Becky Richardson

TREASURER: David Hollingshead

Total Assets Comparison as of Dec. 31, 1988

1986 = \$519,012.62

1987 = 1,659,564.72

1988 = 3,107,924.06

STATED CLERK'S REPORT: Harry Martin, Clerk of Session

526 Communicant Members; 316 Non-Communicant Members

1989

SHEPHERDING COMMITTEE: Bernie Lawrence, Chairman

Note: The Committee of two Elders and two Deacons identified, interviewed, trained, and sent out over 50 men as shepherds to be responsible for 5 church families.

MERCY COMMITTEE and BARNABAS MINISTRY: Rob Schuster, Chairman

PROPERTY COMMITTEE: Tom Van Beek, Chairman

Other members: Dana Rucker; Joe Spencer; Ed Thorne; Renee Coleman; Bill Spies with Robert Powell (everyday Manager of Facilities/Sexton).

ADULT SUNDAY BIBLE SCHOOL: Jeffrey Levinson, Coordinator

ASSIMILATION: Ken Samuelson, Coordinator

Note: The goal of this ministry was to ensure that new members were actively involved in ministry, fellowship, and worship.

CHRISTIAN SERVICE BRIGADE: Grey Dixon, Coordinator

Grades 1 and 2 — Tree Climbers, Mike Terrell, Coordinator

Grades 3 to 6 — Stockade, Grey Dixon, Chief Ranger

Stockade Rangers: Fred Ely; Gary Corwin; Andy Rawson; Roger Koehler; Dan Biddell; Don Hilgeman; Bill Hough; Howard Guthman (Assistant).

Grades 7 to 12 — Battalion

PIONEER GIRLS: Carol Bodwell, Coordinator

Leader staff: Kindergarten — Cindy Stack, Laura Walker, Kathy Klein, Linda Thompson; 1st Grade — Lori Pierce, Kathy Bonjour; 2nd Grade — Jean Garrett, Susan Veerman; 3rd Grade — Texie Shelby, Susan Underwood; 4th Grade — Anita Howie, Ann Hilgeman; 5th/6th Grade — Yvonne Moore, Joni Killough

Pioneer Girls Club Committee: Marion Palmer, Debby Kelly, Carol Hill, Carla Alden, Carolyn Cousar, Jenny DeFreitas, Miriam Laundry, Mary Bowles, Laura Bodwell, Alicia Garrett and Lisa Grignon

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY BIBLE SCHOOL: Nora Sherrill, Coordinator

Note: This was a year of building up staff with the goal of making God's truth more real to the children.

CHURCH OFFICE; Bob Dyar, Coordinator

Note: Almost 500 events scheduled each month!

Staff: Sue Carrick, full-time Financial Assistant (handling almost all of the church accounting/financial activities); Trish Wallin, full-time receptionist, then administrative assistant; Geri Ulatowski, administrative assistant; Susie Austin, permanent support staff

Assistance with facility needs: John VanGenderen and Phil Henderson.

COVENANT GROUPS: Dick Osman, Coordinator

Note: Ministry purpose was "to incorporate newcomers to Christ Covenant into groups. Pastor's Class developed, spearheaded by Lynn and Lisa Phillips. Three Covenant Groups were formed from the first Pastor's Class with "excellent results."

Ministry team: Tom Henry; Skip and Nancy Hulett; Dick and Desire' Osman; Lynn and Lisa Phillips; John and Nora Sherrill

THE HARVESTERS: Headed by John and Marge Van Genderen

Note: Ministry grew from 18 to 33 on the membership list.

HOSTING INTERNATIONALS MINISTRY (HIM): David Sewing, Coordinator;
and Alec Epting, Administrator

Note: Begun in July 1988, this ministry served as an outreach to encourage meaningful friendships between internationals in the community and Christians within the church and on local college campuses, in which the Gospel would be shared through lifestyle and verbal witness.

In this first year, six families from Christ Covenant served as host sponsors. In the second year, working with Prosperity PCA church, 21 families were involved.

LEAD (Lifestyle Evangelism and Discipleship): Acting Coordinator, Harry Reeder

Note: LEAD developed to promote evangelism, using the "Evangelism Explosion" material, plus on-the-job training.

Leadership team: Ron Gillespie; Jeff Clayton; Frank Newell; Steve Walker; Ken Buckingham

MEDIA/PERSPECTIVE MINISTRY: John McMurray, Coordinator

Note: Several upgrades to the audio system were added. Now there were four regular sound board operators with three alternates who also helped with equipment maintenance and technical problems. The Perspective radio broadcast now recorded and produced totally by members of Christ Covenant as an outreach ministry.

MEN OF THE COVENANT: Rob Veerman, Coordinator

ProCLAIM, (Pro Christian Life and Issues Ministry): Carson Daves, Coordinator

Note: "The Lord led me," Carson said, "to develop a SBS elective which dealt with issues of pornography, politics, the public school system, medical ethics, the judicial system and abortion...where and how to stand firm...and to make a stand for King Jesus as you speak the truth in love."

PUBLICATIONS: Stelle Snyder, Coordinator

Note: The Courier became a quarterly with less emphasis on events and more on people. The Update section added schedules with meetings and ministry opportunities. A transitional year.

Contributors: Dick and Melissa Van Halsema, Trish Wallin, John Baker and the staff of Baker Designs. Bob Dyar acted as Coordinator much of the year.

SPORTS OUTREACH: Jim Brown, Coordinator

Note: During the last few months of 1989, the sports program changed design and purpose. More emphasis was placed on evangelism within the community. Sports included a basketball league with plans for softball, T-ball, soccer, golf and others — involving men, women, and children.

WORSHIP COORDINATOR MINISTRY: Dan Pisano, Coordinator

Note: Men served as greeters, ushers, with a steward. There were eight teams of seven each (up from four), serving at the 8:30 or 11:00 worship services, and alternating the evening service.

A training manual is provided, and silk flowers are worn on jacket lapels as a means of identification.

COUNSELING: Tom Henry, Associate Pastor

Note: A counseling study committee was commissioned. Permanent Counseling Ministry Team is formed. The Session approves two counselors to work with Christ Covenant: Beth Bareiter and Palmer Trice.

DISCIPLINE:

Note: The Session reported, "As we grow in size and become better known in our community, we have been challenged with people who are at all points in the Christian walk. As a result, we have experienced numerous opportunities and also church discipline needs. These areas can be filled with both joy and sorrow and we have experienced a lot of both over this past year. What a joy it is to see the results of a changed life in one of God's children as they are reclaimed through the process of discipline."

TREASURER: David Hollingshead, Chairman of the Finance Committee

Note: John Sherrill became Church Treasurer in 1989. Sue Carrick came on staff for accounting duties.

STATED CLERK: Harold Driver

Total Membership on December 31, 1989:

652 Communicant Members; 463 Non-Communicant Members

1990

CHURCH MOTTO: "Developing Disciples for God's Glory"

CHURCH VERSE: "...That in all things Christ might have preeminence" Col. 1:18

COUNSELING MINISTRY: Tom Henry, Coordinator

Committee: Steve Halverson, Chairman; Marni Halverson; Harvey and Beth Harrelson; Judy Huckaby, Staff counselor; Gary Rice, lawyer

COVENANT GROUP MINISTRY: Tom Henry, Coordinator

Note: 34 Small Groups reported.

Ministry team: Jim and Loretta Harbin; Harvey and Beth Harrelson; Bruce and Mary Johnson; Dick and Desire' Osman; John and Stelle Snyder

SINGLES MINISTRY: Tom Henry, Coordinator

COLLEGE AGE: (No Coordinator recorded.)

SINGLES ONE: Bruce Kellogg, Ministry Administrator

Note: Leadership was in the process of establishing a permanent ministry.

SINGLES AGAIN: Jerry and Gwen Berry, Facilitators

Note: Ministry began in March of 1990.

CHURCH OFFICE: Bob Dyar, Coordinator

Administrative Support Staff: Sue Carrick; Trish Wallin; Geri Ulatowski; Susie Austin; Alison Bozeman (joined the Support staff in 1990)

Facilities needs: Robert Powell; Paul Yates; John VanGenderen, assisting

CONNECTING MINISTRY: Lynn and Lisa Phillips, Coordinators

Note: Ministry purpose to help those who are seeking to serve at Christ Covenant, enfolding, encouraging, and equipping them.

Team members: Walter and Frankie Hendrix, assisting; Jerry and Sandy Currin; Bob and Marge Long

PUBLICATIONS MINISTRY: Stelle Snyder, Coordinator

Note: Responsible for producing The Courier, worship folder, the Update, the Communicator, and inserts, conference materials, and mailers.

Participants: John Baker, design; Dave Raplee, Bob Dyar; Trish Wallin

ProCLAIM (Pro Christian Life and Issues Ministry): Carson Daves, Coordinator

Note: Primary role this year was leading a group of pro-lifers from Christ Covenant in picketing local abortuaries on Saturdays.

Participants: Tom and Cathy Greene led sidewalk counseling; Carolyn Coursar and Cindy Reeder led two groups of ministering women; Patty Marion coordinated participation in "Rally for Life" held in Washington.

HARVESTERS: Bill Powis, Coordinator

PERSPECTIVE: Bob Dyar, Coordinator

Note: This radio and tape ministry aired the Perspective program on WHVN in Charlotte, WHCB in Bristol, TN, and a national family radio program.

Team members: Kris Redwing, recording, copying, distributing; Diane Patti, sound ministry

WELCOMING: Bob Grignon, Ministry Coordinator; Ruth Samuelson, Coordinator of Greeters

Note: A new Visitor's Center was added, New Visitor Parking, and signs indicating buildings at campus entrances.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Barrett Mosbacker, Director

Note: Average attendance weekly was 550 adults in Adult Sunday Bible Study; 300 Tiny Tots (0-3 years); 320 in Children's Sunday Bible school; 270 in Youth Church. Shortage of teachers, sheer numbers of children and the acute lack of space has been the team's greatest concern in Children's Sunday school.

Participants: Keith DeFreitas, Coordinator Adult SBS; Susan Rice, Coordinator Children's Church

STATED CLERK: Dennis Carter

800 Communicant Members of Christ Covenant Church; 573 Non-communicant members

0 deaths, 74 baptisms, 3 marriages

1991 – 1992

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH: David and Angela Pacey, Ministry Coordinators

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH: Danny Church

COVENANT GROUPS: David Dickson, Ministry Coordinator

Note: Small Groups grew from 34 to 38 in 1991

Covenant Group Expansion Team (developing new groups): Bruce and Mary Johnson; Harvey and Beth Harrelson; Mark and Eva Massi

Covenant Group Support Team (support of existing groups): David Dickson; Dave Forrest; Buddy Cook

COUNSELING MINISTRY: Steve Halvorson, Coordinator

Note: David Russ added for counseling needs with Tom Henry and Judy Huckaby.

Standing Counseling Ministry Team: Steve Halvorson; Harvey and Beth Harrelson; Judy Huckaby

Ministry Development Team: David Dickson; Rod Huckaby; Dave Hollingshead; Tommy Belk; Ken Bodwell; Gayle Bookout; Buddy and Susan Cook; Larry and Elaine Cothorn; David Russ. (This team developed a comprehensive plan for staffing a Counseling Ministry whose mission is to provide Biblical counseling. The concept was for a lay counseling ministry that would team up with ordained church officers, shepherds, and leadership for a pastoral care program and provide an ongoing educational approach.

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH: Connie Brown, Coordinator

WIC Small Group Bible Studies: Ann Grigon, Director; Mary Soos; Judy Huckaby

- Inreach Ministry: Ruth Samuelson, Director; Beth Theiling. Church Social Activities/Receptions; Loretta Harbin, Hospitality Meal Ministry; Bonnie

Buckingham, Emergency Care Ministry; Fran Roberts: 24-hour Prayer Chain

- Outreach Ministry: Kathy Klein, Gifts for New Mothers; Susan Pizzuti; Kathy Bonjour
- Reformation Day Party for Covenant Children: Cindy Stack; Linda Thompson
- Shepherdess Ministry: Sally Smith, Coordinator

Note: The new Shepherdess Ministry developed for "a woman to 'come alongside' another woman in a tangible way because of need." The program was already playing a significant role in the lives of women who were paired together.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES:

Note: In 1991, an average of 270 students participated weekly in Children's Sunday Bible school. Due to crowding, the church leadership began to explore the possibilities of three worship services and two Sunday Bible schools.

Pre-School Ministries: Susan Shepherd, Coordinator

Elementary Age Ministries: Jennie DeFreitas

Children's Sunday Bible School: Leslie Carmichael, Laura Walker, Coordinators

Children's Church: Susan Rice, Coordinator

Pioneer Girls: Yvonne Moore, Club Coordinator

Note: In their fourth year, with steady growth, there were 93 girls and 20 guides enrolled.

The staff included: Marion Palmer, Secretary/Treasurer; Carolyn Cousar, Refreshments; Kathy Magee, Camp Cherith Liaison; Lisa Williamson, Jenny Bartscher, nursery

Pioneer Girl Guides were: Karen Drummond, Judy Vander Ploeg,

Kindergarten Scooters: Susan Veerman

First Grade Voyagers: Robbie Johnson, Lori Pierce, Pattie Raplee

Second Grade Voyagers: Joan Garrett, Karen Hearn, Cherry Nyholm, Lori Palamara

Third Grade Pathfinders: Pat Carter, Sharon Fryer, Texie Shelby

Fourth Grade Pathfinders Kimberlie Carrick, Sandy Currin, Betty Witteveen

Fifth Grade Trailblazers: Joni Killough, Barbara Speck

Sixth Grade Trailblazers: Chris Davidson, Sharon Smith

Christian Service Brigade: Mike Terrell, Ministry Coordinator

Vacation Bible School: Jennie DeFreitas, Barb Spencer, Coordinators

VISION 2001: POSITIONING PHASE

Positioning Phase Committee: Robert Dyar, Executive Director, Ministries & Outreach, Chairman

Committee Members: Walter Hendrix; Brad Shelby; John Sherrill; Ken Samuelson; Bernie Lawrence; Max Stallings; Wiley Brown

COMMUNICATION/ PUBLICATIONS: Stelle Snyder, Publications Ministry Coordinator

Note: Responsible for the church brochure, weekly worship folder, the Update, The Communicator, weekly notifications, and the Annual Report, among other publications.

Volunteers: Dave Raplee; Carol McCray, design; Mary Burke, writer; Trish Wallin; John Baker; Bob Dyar

PERSPECTIVE: Kris Redwing, Ministry Coordinator; Dianne Patti, assisting

Note: Perspective was the radio and sermon cassette tape ministry known as "Christ Covenant Pulpit," now averaging 150 tapes per month. The Perspective radio program brought in tape orders from all over the South. Locally it was heard daily on WHVN (AM), and Sundays on WMIT (FM).

ProCLAIM: Carson Daves: Ministry Coordinator

Note: Pro-Christian Life And Issues Ministry educated the congregation as to the spiritual battles in the community. They participated in the first Life Chain formed in Charlotte in January 1991, when 500 from Christ Covenant lined streets to show opposition to abortion.

SPORTS OUTREACH AND RECREATION (SOAR)

Note: 1991 was a year of growth with 600 youth participating in baseball, basketball, and soccer. Many were involved as coaches, scorers, team moms, etc. A SOAR Sunday school class was established, teaching the philosophy behind SOAR, that of a Christian perspective on winning and sports, and of leadership growth.

YOUTH LEAGUES: Chris Mapes, Coordinator

SOAR ADULTS: Max Helton, Coordinator

Team members: Dale and Susie Austin, Women's Softball; Scott Dorsett, Men's Softball; Leila Doughton, Aerobics; Jim Brown, Men's Basketball; Anne Warner, Coed Volleyball; Bob Palmer, Father/Son Camping; Tony Bozeman, Go-Cart Racing (There were six church-wide golf tournaments this year.)

CONNECTING: Tom and Jenny Applegate, Ministry Coordinators

Note: The team grew to over 20 people helping new people at Christ Covenant to connect. The ministry previously called "Welcoming" was folded into the larger ministry, "Connecting."

MISSIONS: Steve Fox, Director of Missions

Note: The former "Mission Committee" became the Foreign Mission Committee, and a new Home Mission Committee was created. Home Missions include church planting, international students, mercy, and campus ministries — those within the US.

The Foreign Missions group was focused on church planting, nationals, and strategic worldwide sites. Emphasis was on 1 to 2 week mission trips: two teams were sent to Ecuador, others to Romania, Haiti, Uganda, and Germany/Denmark. The "Vacation With A Purpose" program also sponsored short-term mission trips to Jamaica, Sweden, and Peru.

Six new missionaries were recruited: Jewitts, Spain (for the Epicenter Program there); Campbells, Spain; Smallings, Ecuador (Epicenter Program); Siebens, Italy; Baldwins, Ireland; Taylors, Philippines.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY: David Sewing, Ministry Coordinator

Note: This ministry began at Christ Covenant in 1988. The purpose was to encourage the development of meaningful friendships between internationals in their community and Christians within the church. This was done on local college campuses through sharing the Gospel in "lifestyle and verbal witness."

SUPPORT STAFF: Sue Carrick, Assistant Dir. Of Administration for Finance; Susie Austin, Sr. Administrative Assistant/Information Specialist; Alison Bozeman, Executive Administrative Assistant; Connie Brown, Executive Administration Assistant; Geri Ulatowski, Executive Administrative Assistant; Peggy Hoyle, Administrative Assistant; Connie Pratt, Administrative Assistant; Rita Maye, Receptionist; Robert Powell, Facilities Assistant

REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK: Dr. Thomas Roberts, Clerk of Session

The total membership for Christ Covenant as of December 31, 1991 is:

905 Communicant Members; 677 Non-Communicant Members

1992 – 1993

Note: In 1992, a lack of facilities at Christ Covenant necessitated a third Sunday Morning Worship service.

In December of 1992, the church acquired about 6 acres of adjacent property on the corner of Fullwood and 51 Highway with houses. This property immediately accommodated administrative offices for missions, SOAR, etc.

In April of 1993, the first phase of the Christian Activities Center was completed, and the new building was named the Wilcox Building in honor of Christ Covenant Organizing Pastor Bob Wilcox, who died of cancer in March of 1993.

1993 marked 10 years of Harry Reeder's ministry at Christ Covenant. With "the Lord's affirmation" of his call, and the support of the Elders, friends and colleagues, he concluded and announced in August (to the Session) and in September (to the congregation) that the Lord would leave him here.

The leadership adopted a philosophy of ministry call the "Four Doors of Discipleship," including: Downreach, Upreach, Outreach, and Inreach.

MINISTRY STAFF: Cherry Nyholm, Administrative Assistant, Elementary Age; Connie Pratt, Administrative Assistant, Worship & Music; Gatha Schleicher Administrative Assistant, Pre-School Age; Marianne Lambeth, Financial Assistant; Cathy Plough, Manager of Publications/Communications; Terri Theyson, Publications/Communications Assistant; Robert Powell, Facilities Assistant; Ann Lambrose, Receptionist; Rachel Cannada, Receptionist

SCHOOL MINISTRIES: COVENANT DAY SCHOOL: Barrett Mosbacker, Headmaster Ministry team: Jim Brown; John Heth; Harold Jones

From The REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK:

Total Communicant Membership: 1185; Total Non-Communicant Members: 906

1993 – 1994

Note: Steve Fox prepares to return with his family to the mission field, deciding to locate in the Caribbean Islands where he had served previously, now assisting with Ministries In Action.

Christ Covenant planted a “daughter church,” Uptown Christ Covenant. Tom Hawkes was approved as the first church planter and will pastor Uptown Christ Covenant from the Dilworth Elementary School. Some of the Elders and a core group from Christ Covenant assisted.

PASTORAL MINISTRIES: David Russ, Director

Note: Pastoral Ministries moved offices across Covenant Church Lane to the house next to the Youth Center. Teams developed around four areas: Small Groups, Women’s Ministries, Counseling, and Hospital Visitation.

SMALL GROUPS: There are 75-100 small groups meeting. New facilitators were trained by: Fran Payne; Dick Osman; Paul Joyce; Mark Massi

WOMEN’S MINISTRIES: Betty Tucker, Coordinator

Note: Two new ministries organized: Care Groups and Heart To Heart.

Women’s Ministry team: Danielle Benson; Chris Biddell; Connie Brown; Char Louckes; Jackie Rice; Elder Terry Benson; Deacon Tom Elmore

The Women’s Task Force: Formed to research and give input to begin the process of reviewing the roles and function of women in ministry. Members: Connie Brown; Aynn Gehron; Jeannie Heth; Judy Huckaby; Miriam Jones; Judy Rodgers; Sally Smith; Sharon Smith

MERCY TO MEMBERS: Dale Austin

HOSPITAL VISITATION/ HOSANNAS: Rev. Dick Tevebaugh

SHEPHERDESS: Miriam Jones, Coordinator; Connie Brown, Shepherdess Trainer

Note: There were 20 active Shepherdesses in 1993-’94.

GLOBAL OUTREACH: Steve Fox, Director

S.O.A.R: Hap Welty, Manager

Note: In the 1993-’94 year, 1,150 children from 5 to 14 years participated in soccer, basketball, and baseball where skill development and encouragement, rather than winning, was emphasized.

EVANGELISM EXPLOSION: Lucille Ruths, Coordinator

Note: People were trained to “effectively communicate” the Gospel. Weekly visits were made to the Sunday visitors by two or three-member teams.

BARNABAS MINISTRY: Ken Bodwell, then Hal Jordan, Coordinator

Note: In this Mercy to Non-Members ministry, the Deacons were assisted by many lay people. Eight to 10 families in physical or financial need were visited monthly by the team who shared the Gospel and helped meet the need.

Other GO Team Members: Elder Gary Corwin; Deacon Anthony Pizzuti; Alison Bozeman, Sr. Administrative Assistant; Marilyn King; Bill Powis and David Krausse, Foreign Missions; Dean Draddy, Home Missions Coordinator; Carson Daves, ProCLAIM; David Sewing, Coordinator Friends Worldwide

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & ASSIMILATION: Chris Hodge, Assoc. Director

CHILDREN’S MINISTRY: Sandy Tutton, Asst. Director of Elementary Age Ministries; Susan Shepherd, Asst. Director of Pre-School Age Ministries

Note: M.O.P.S. (Mothers of Pre-Schoolers) Ministry was started last year for the support and encouragement of mothers of young children. The response was great as the ministry reached “capacity” in four months.

ASSIMILATION:

Note: Every quarter another 40-75 people join Christ Covenant. At the completion of the new Worship Center, the leadership expected a 30-40% increase in attendance the first year.

Other CE Team members: Elder Joe Spencer; Deacon Joe Connell; Cherry Nyholm; Gatha Schleicher; David Dickson

COVENANT DAY SCHOOL: Barrett Mosbacker, Headmaster

Note: When the school began in the Fall of 1989, there were 145 students. In 1993, there were 465 enrolled.

CDS Team Members: Elder Harold Jones; Deacon Chuck Engstrom; John Heth, Chairman of the School Board; Bob Pierce, Chair of Public School Support Team; Mike Robbins, Chair Home School Support Team

SINGLES/COLLEGE MINISTRIES: Mike Miller, Director

Team Members: Elder Dick Givens; Deacon Breck Bolton

STUDENT MINISTRIES: Rod Huckaby, Director;

Youth Choir: Jeff Gunderson, leader.

Note: Growing to over 60 members, the Youth Choir began leading music at the Evening Worship Service on a regular basis.

Student Ministries Team Members: Elder Frank Newell; Deacon Danny Church; Marie Gathings, Administrator, 1993; Sandy Lavery, Administrator, 1994; Jon Payne, Intern

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS: Bernie Lawrence, Director

Wiley Brown, Director of Operations.

Team Members: Elder Jim Coleman; Deacon Ken Carrick/Chairman of Finance Committee; Julie James, Asst. Director Finance; Dale Thompson, Deacon/Chairman Property Committee; Susie Austin, Asst. Director For MIS (Management Information Services); Cathy Plough, Asst. Director Publications/Communications; Martine Smith, Sr., Administrative Assistant; Rosemarie Hiscock; Marianne Lambeth; Teresa Gillis; Ann Lambrose; Rachel Cannada; Darlene Richardson; Peggy Hoyle; Robert Powell; Clarence Cedarholm

From the Report of the STATED CLERK:

Total Communicant Membership: 1,316; Total Non-Communicant Members: 930

1994 – 1995

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM: Larry Kirkman, Chairman

Note: With the new church structure and the formation of the six Congregational Communities came a shift in responsibility. Directors moved to the role of Pastors and the Assistant Directors moved into the role of Directors of a functional area of Ministry.

PASTORAL MINISTRIES: David Russ, Pastor of Young Families/Pastoral Ministries

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES: Betty Tucker, Coordinator

SENIORS AND VISITATION MINISTRY: Pastor Dick Tevebaugh, Pastor of the Hosannas and Hospital Visitation

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION: Chris Hodge, Pastor of Young Marrieds/Christian Education and Assimilation

CE Team members: Elder Jo Spencer; Deacon Chris Madsen; David Dixon, Ministry Coordinator; Sandy Tutton, Director of Elementary Ministries; Susan Shepherd, Director of Pre-School Ministries; Cherry Nyholm, Administrative Assistant; Gatha Schleicher, Administrative Assistant

STUDENT MINISTRIES: Rod Huckaby, Pastor of Students and their Families

Note: The Youth Choir that started in 1994 with 14 students, in 1995 had over 70 voices. They lead the music at the evening worship services, and this summer went on a summer Youth Choir tour to Pinehurst and Myrtle Beach.

Student Ministries Team members: Elder Norm Petty; Deacon Danny Church; Chad Ellenburg, Jr. High Ministries Intern; Jon Payne, Senior High Ministries Intern; Sandi Lavery, Youth Administrator

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS: Bernie Lawrence, Pastor

Team members: Wiley Brown, Pastor of Empty Nesters/Operations; Elder Jim Coleman; Ken Carrick, Deacon/Chairman of Finance Committee; John Sherrill, Deacon/Finance Committee; Deacon Dale Thompson, Chairman of Property Committee; Deacon Greg Plough, Chairman of MIS Committee; Deacon Tom Elmore, Chairman of Personnel Committee; Julie James, Director of Finance; Cathy Plough, Director of Publications/Communications; Phil Sanders, Director of MIS; Martine Smith, Sr. Administrative Assistant; Rosemarie Hiscock, MIS Assistant; Marianne Lambeth, Financial Assistant; Suzanne Smith, Publications/Communications Assistant; Rachel Cannada, Receptionist; Darlene Richardson, Receptionist; Clarence Cedarholm, Facilities Assistant

COVENANT DAY SCHOOL: Barrett Mosbacker, Covenant Day Headmaster

Note: Covenant Day School began in the Fall of 1989 with 145 students. In 1994-95 were enrolled 507 students from kindergarten through ninth grade, with enrollment for 1996 expected to reach 550.

Board members: Bill Thomas, School Board Chairman; Elder Mike Terrell; Deacon John Sherrill; Hap Core; Barbara Schuster; Susan Rice; Marni Halvorson; Steve Walker; Mike Olive; Jon Johnson; Robert Rudder; Kevin Parsons; John Cedarholm; Steve Johnson

GLOBAL OUTREACH: Mike Miller, Pastor of Singles/Global Outreach

ProCLAIM: Carson Daves, Ministry Coordinator

Note: This year ProCLAIM teamed up with the Drama Ministry in presenting "Tilly" at several locations. This drama ministered to those contemplating or who have received an abortion.

Also, the ministry began a video lending library of over 100 videos on topics that deal with social issues.

EVANGELISM EXPLOSION: Lucille Ruths, Ministry Coordinator

Note: In addition to weekly visits made to Sunday visitors and their regular training classes, EE began several training programs through Covenant Groups and a women's group.

BARNABAS: John Bay, Ministry Coordinator

Note: Eight to 10 people or families in the community were assisted each month.

FRIENDS WORLDWIDE: Cindy Smith, Ministry Coordinator

Note: Some members enhance friendships made with international students by participating in the Friendship Partner program. Many internationals report that during their two to four years of college here, they never even visited an American home. FRIENDS WORLDWIDE reached out to these young people.

SINGLES & SINGLES AGAIN: Mike Miller, Pastor of Singles/Global Outreach

Note: This year, Singles saw growth in many areas. There are now 11 Singles Covenant Groups. There were many mission opportunities this year such as Ecuador mission trips, inner-city Vacation Bible School, Car Care Saturday, Prison ministry, and single parent assistance.

Team members: Elder Tim Roberts; Deacon Wade Byrum

From the Report of the STATED CLERK:

Total Communicant Membership: 1467; Total Non-Communicant Membership: 1038

1996

SENIOR PASTOR SUPPORT TEAM

ACCOUNTABILITY GROUP: Scotty Lochhead and Larry Kirkman

SENIOR PASTOR'S PRAYER AND RESEARCH TEAM

SUPPORT TEAM: Geri Ulatowski, Executive Administrative Assistant;
Alison Boseman, Administrative Assistant

ADMINISTRATION and OPERATIONS MINISTRY MANAGEMENT TEAM:
Bernie Lawrence, Pastor of Administration

Staff: Wiley Brown, Pastor of Adult Families/Operations; Julie James, Director of Finance; Phil Sanders, Director of MIS; Carl Shafer, Director of Communications/Publications; Charlie Turk, Director of Property and Maintenance; Jackie Rice, Director of Historic Matthews Cemetery

Officers: Jim Coleman, Elder of Administration/Operations; Ken Carrick, Deacon, Chairman of Finance Committee; John Sherrill, Deacon, Finance Committee; Greg Plough, Deacon, Chairman of MIS Committee; Tom Elmore, Deacon, Chairman of Personnel Committee; Tom Driver, Deacon, Chairman of Property Committee; Danny Smith, Deacon, Property Committee; Dana Rucker, Deacon, Property Committee; Dale Thompson, Deacon, Chairman of LAND Committee; Breck Bolton, Deacon, Chairman of Historic Matthews Cemetery Committee

WORSHIP AND FINE ARTS TEAM: David German, Pastor

Note: A new organ, an Allen electric four manual instrument, was ordered for delivery in the spring. The new piano was a nine-foot Concert Grand Steinway.

Team members: Tim Cool, Director of Instrumental Music; Sheri Smith, Administrative Assistant/Pianist; Hilda Ryan, Organist; Elder Rob Veerman, Worship and Fine Arts; Deacon Tom Van Beek, Worship and Fine Arts; Dan Pisano, Head Worship Coordinator

PASTORAL MINISTRIES: Chaired by Elders Jim Mezzanote and Carroll Killough; David Russ, Pastor of Young Families/Pastoral Ministries

Note: HOMEBUILDERS I and II taught by David Russ, Pastor, Young Families/Pastoral Ministries, are new classes this year. Team members "handle worship, outreach and assimilation, physical needs, and special events."

Team 1 members: Larry and Anna Brock; Johnny and Tina Caldwell; Barbara Givens; Terry and Martha Haines; Stan and Lynn Sewell; Deacon Jim Swanger and Julie Swanger; Mike and Peggy Wekall; Elder Tom Sittema, Elder Dick Givens

Team 2 members: Harvey and Beth Harrelson; Paul and Lynn Olson; Rick and Cindy Weatherman; Hal and Susan Owens; Dale and Ann Blackard; Elder Paul Joyce, Elder Tim Roberts

COUNSELING CENTER: Linda McGrew, Director

Note: Counseling moved into the Christ Our Shepherd property early in 1997.

COUNSELORS: Patti McMillan; John Liebner; Judy Huckaby

COUNSELING TEAM MEMBERS: Elder Scotty Lochhead; Elder Jim Mezzanote; Barbara Thorne; Deacon Chuck Engstrom

COUNSELING INTERNS: Sandy Lavery; Richard Shroyer

RECEPTIONIST/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: Faith Glaser

SMALL GROUPS: Steve Woody, Intern/Director; Deacon Ken Durham.

Note: Over 100 new people signed up to join a small group. Also, there were over 20 accountability groups for men started from the Men's ministry.

Liaisons (point persons for Communities):

SINGLES: Bruce Kellogg

YOUNG MARRIEDS: Will Ertel

YOUNG FAMILIES: Jim Edahl

STUDENT FAMILIES: Roger Paules

TRAINING COORDINATOR: Hunter Pugh

INFORMATION SYSTEMS COORDINATOR: Dan Biddel

DEACON CHAIRMAN OF THE MINISTRY TEAM: Ken Durham

ELDER OVERSEEING MINISTRY: Paul Joyce

SENIORS AND VISITATION: Pastor Dick Tevebaugh, Pastor of Hosannas and Hospital Visitation; Deacon Ken Compton

ADOPT-A-SHUT-IN MINISTRY: Lorrie Spiess and Margaret Johnson, Directors

THE SHEPHERDESS MINISTRY: Connie Brown and Miriam Jones,
Coordinators

Note: There are 38 shepherdesses serving.

Shepherdess Community: Deacon Chuck Engstrom

WOMEN IN THE CHURCH (WIC):

WIC team: Connie Brown; Renee Coleman; Nancy Fortson; Eliza Foster; Darnell Manchester; Connie Miller; Greta Orcutt; Lucille Ruths; Nancy Stout; Liz West

MEN OF COVENANT (MOC) LEADERS:

Note: This ministry also helped set up small groups of Promise Keepers.

Team members: Carroll Killough; Steve Onxley; Ken Bodwell; Chris Stunz;
Deacon Mark Massi

COVENANT DAY SCHOOL: Barrett Mosbacker, Headmaster

1996-97 Board members: Elder Bill Thomas, Chairman; Jon Johnson, Vice
Chairman; Mary Roberts, Secretary; Paul Norris, Treasurer; Deacon Paul Londry

Alternate Board Members: John Heth; Greta Orcutt

Others: Kevin Parsons; Steve Johnson; John Cedarholm; Robert Rudder; Susan Rice; Ron Infinger; Mike Olive

From the REPORT OF THE STATED CLERK:

Total Communicant Membership: 621; Total Non-Communicant Members: 1163

1997

ADMINISTRATION STAFF: Bernie Lawrence, Pastor of Administration

Tom Applegate, Senior Administrative Assistant; Effie Gerholt, Karen Stewart,
Rachel Cannada, Darlene Richardson, Receptionists; Phil Sanders, Director of
MIS; Rosemarie Hiscock, MIS/Financial Services Assistant; Carl Shafer, Director
of Communications/Publications; Bonnie Prior, Communications/Publications
Assistant; Julie James, Director of Finance; Marianne Lambeth, Senior Financial
Services Assistant; Lisa Williams, Financial Services Assistant

Officers: Elder Jim Coleman; Elder Biff Bracy; John Sherrill, Finance Chairman; Deacons Greg Plough/Daryl Tutton, MIS; Brad Shelby, Human Resources Chairman

OPERATIONS: Wiley Brown, Pastor of Operations/Adult Families Community

Property: Deacons Dana Rucker and Tim Driver

Property Assistant: Deacon Danny Smith

Property and Maintenance: Charlie Turk

Housekeepers: Marilyn Dreier and Team

Administrative Assistant: Sandy Lawson

HISTORIC MATTHEWS CEMETERY:

Note: With a team of volunteers, Jackie Rice restored and rebuilt records of all persons buried there since 1862.

Team members: Deacon Bob Deaver; Jackie Rice, Cemetery Administrator

ADULT FAMILY COMMUNITY:

Team members: Elder Scotty Lochhead; Deacon Dale Thompson; Chris Williams, Barrett Mosbacker, Norm Petty, teachers

LAND (Land Acquisition and Development): Deacon Dale Thompson, Chairman

Team members: Elders Biff Bracey, Jim Coleman

GLOBAL OUTREACH: Mike Miller, Pastor of Singles/Global Outreach

Team members: Lynn Williams, Administrative Assistant/Global Outreach; Scott Cook, Singles-Again Intern; Joe Sullivan, Pastor of Missions; Silvia Crimm, Administrative Assistant/International Missions; Cindy Smith, International Students Ministry Coordinator; Hap Welty, SOAR Director; Margee Keller, Administrative Assistant/SOAR; Neal Gooch, Separate cover for Campus Outreach; Lucille Ruths, Evangelism Explosion Ministry Coordinator; Deacon Don Harding, Barnabas Ministry Coordinator; Carson Daves, ProCLAIM Ministry Coordinator; Deacon Anthony Pizzuti, Prison Ministry Coordinator

CAMPUS OUTREACH STAFF: Neal Gooch, Director; Chris Duncan, Administrative Director/Campus Staff-Wingate; Jack Cunningham, Administrative Assistant/ Christ Covenant Collegiate Staff; Joe Naramore, Campus Director/UNCC; Tracy Thornton, Women's Coordinator, UNCC; Blair Burke, Campus Director/UNCG; Melissa Sargent, Women's Coordinator/UNCG; Kevin

Hudson, Campus Director/Burlington Area; Brannon Rice, Campus Staff/Burlington Area; Tessa Bell, Women's Ministry Coordinator/Burlington Area

ELDER REPORT: Dick Osman, Chairman of Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

The Elders worked together with Deacons, staff, and laypersons in Ministry Management Teams (MMTs). They also work with Congregational Community Teams (CCTs) that focus on different areas of ministry and the Congregational Communities of Christ Covenant.

From the REPORT of the STATED CLERK:

Total Communicant Members: 1743; Total Non-Communicant Members: 1261

APPENDIX 2

ELDERS AND DEACONS

YEAR ORDAINED	ELDERS	DEACONS
1980-81	Bernie Lawrence Harry Martin	

1984, January	Bob Tarte	Hugh Elder, Chairman Mike Terrell, Secretary Larry C. Cothorn Ed Sweeten John Royster Henry (Chip) Trigg
By 1986-1987	Ernie M. Couch Robert H. Dyar Harold E. Driver Harold F. Jones Barrett L. Mosbacker William R. Mosteller Michael S. Terrell Ted Spangler, III	Ross I. Dornbush Ron D. Gillespie Richard M. Givens Charles Hoffercker, III David Hollingshead Richard D. Locke Christian V. Madsen Paul L. Olson Robert W. Schuster Brad M. Shelby John L. Sherrill, Jr. D. Ron Stewart Philip Summa Edwin C. Thorne, Jr. Thomas J. Van Beek Edward L. Wright
1988-1989 (Add:)	Dennis Carter Scotty Lochhead Larry Kirkman Mike Moore Tim Roberts Ed Wright	Dane Hazelgrove Paul Joyce Anthony Pizzuti Dana Rucker Joe Spencer

1989-1990 (Add:)	Steve Halvorson Dick VanHalsema	Ken Bodwell Tim Driver Lynn Phillips Rodney Prichett Garry Rice Ken Samuelson Gary Slavens Max Stallings
1990-'91 (Add:)	Jim Sutton Rob Veerman	Dale Austin Jim Brown Ken Buckingham Mike Crowell Bob Deaver Hal Jordan
1992-1993 (Add:)	Chuck Ledford Terry Benson Frank Newell Gary Corwin Sam Wilson, III Chris Dollar Dick Osman Joe Spencer	John Connell Ken Carrick Jim Swanger Dale Thompson Tom Elmore John Bay
1993-1994 (Add:)	James Coleman Jim Sutton	Breck Bolton Danny Church Mark Massi
1995 (Add:)	Carroll Killough Norman Petty	Wade Byrum Ken Compton Ken Durham

Chuck Engstrom
Don Harding
Greg Plough
Danny Smith

1996 (Add:)

David Dickson
Paul Stack
Bill Thomas

Richard Gaebe
Ray Gillis
Terry Haines
Paul Londry

1997 (Add:)

Biff Bracy
David Dickson
Jim Mezzanotte
Thomas J. Roberts
Tom Sittema
Bill Thomas
Chris Williams

David Harris
Mark Hill
Kenny Norwood
Daryl Tutton
Jerry Youngblood

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: By Mary Burke

Thanks to Cathy Plough for her editorial expertise, to Lisa Burkhart for her proofreading, Stelle Snyder for her support and suggestions, to the long memories for names and dates of pastors Harry Reeder and Bernie Lawrence, and to all of the communications staff of Christ Covenant who had a part in this project. And most of all, thanks to the great God who led and managed not only the development of Christ Covenant Church, but the writing of this account.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mary Burke was born in Indiana in 1920. As the daughter of a Methodist minister, Mary moved with her family every two years. These frequent moves undoubtedly contributed to her great curiosity for the world and her interest and love of people. Trained as a Medical Technologist at the University of Missouri, Mary applied her sharp mind and tender heart to her field. Those years included a three-year stint with the Seventh Service Command Medical Laboratory of the US Army. While in the Army, Mary met John Burke, a man with a wit and an infectious smile that matched her own. They were married in 1944 by Mary's father. Two daughters followed. As of this writing, Bette Roth lives in Lake Wylie, South Carolina, and her younger sister Bobbie Pool resides in Key West, Florida.

Mary confesses she has enjoyed a lifetime love of writing. Over the years, Mary wrote various materials for children, including magazine pieces and Sunday school lessons. While living outside Kansas City, she even had her own column called *Toddler Topics* that ran weekly in the local paper. After she retired, Mary devoted even more time to her passion, taking jobs as a feature writer for various newspapers in Florida, including the *Miami Herald*.

Before Christ Covenant had a building of its own, Mary and John Burke decided to come to Matthews and settle near Bette and husband Wolfgang. But as soon as the building went up, the couple found a home at the growing church. And the writing continued there. Around 1993, Pastor Harry Reeder asked Mary to write the history of the church. She began to chronicle that history in the monthly *Courier* newsletter. Ten years later, she had accumulated an astounding number of files and audio cassettes that detailed the early years of Christ Covenant – the church and its people. For this we are indebted to her. “I found something special at Christ Covenant,” she stated in early 2007. “I’ll always remember the friendliness of Sunday mornings and the devotion to the Lord I saw in the people.”

Mary continues to bless others from her home at Plantation Estates in Matthews with her smile, her love of people – and her stories.