

## **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 Hoeffcker. 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 Mostellar, 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 disciplined 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 Hoffecker 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 Enfolding.

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 Mosbacher 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.”