

his first year. The former Church and Society Committee, which was concerned with "outreach," was combined with the Stewardship Committee to form the Stewardship and Service Committee. This committee was active during 1979 until further changes were made with approval of new bylaws on November 4, whereby committee duties were shifted and reorganized. At this time responsibilities for outreach and interpretation of mission were placed under the Service and Evangelism Committee. In 1980 this committee attempted to provide information to the congregation on the use of both financial and human resources in the interpretation of the church's mission. A "Fact File" box, designed by Mike McCoy, was set up to contain information folders on many relevant programs. In his Annual Report for 1980 Bill acknowledged accomplishment of the goals and objectives of the church's long range plan and declared it was time to turn to "...new ventures in growth, inwardly by means of the Spirit, outwardly in terms of service to our fellow human beings."

The emphasis on service has continued to be accommodated in the committee structure of the church. In 1982 the Deacons assumed responsibility for evangelism, and the Service Committee then concentrated on activities involved with mission. With the major restructuring that took effect in 1988 the mission of the church was overseen by the Outreach Council through support of local service organizations, national causes, and international medical missions. In the Stewardship and Interpretation Council the Human Resources Committee helped to coordinate the volunteer interests and needs of the church.

Resettlement of Iraqi Refugee Family

In May 1979 Covenant Church was asked to consider sponsoring members of an Iraqi family who were coming to this country because of religious persecution in Iraq. The family, consisting of Karken Bagdasaryan, his wife Wamiba, and three sons Kartion (15), Fikin (13), and Shant (7), had left Iraq and were living in Greece, awaiting the opportunity to come to the United States. An Iraqi Refugee Resettlement Committee was formed upon presentation of the need by the Stewardship and Service Committee. The resettlement committee of a number of volunteers under the co-chairmanship of Ralph and Betty Anslow made arrangements for an apartment, household goods, clothing, food, and a job for Karken, who was a welder. In order to provide them with money to help them through a

Wisconsin winter, a "Friendship Fund" with an initial goal of \$2,500 was established to be provided through gifts from the congregation. A letter of information over the signature of Bill King, and of Oliver Williams representing the Friendship Fund, was included with the *Caravan* on October 5.

The family arrived in Madison on October 11, 1979, and all members were present for a reception in their honor in Bradfield Hall hosted by Covenant's Women's Association after church services on Sunday, October 14. Unfortunately, Karken died in February 1981. In June 1982 the family moved to California.

Sanctuary for Refugees from El Salvador

In response to the continuing political upheaval in El Salvador, in 1980 the General Assembly recognized the critical nature of developments in that country, reaffirming the rights of the Salvadoran people to self-determination and urging the United States Government to halt all assistance to the military and the police of El Salvador. The situation attracted the interest and concern of Covenant's Service Committee in 1981. A statement of concern submitted to the session was approved on April 28, 1981, and transmitted to the General Assembly and to the Presbytery with the hope that it would contribute to peaceful and constructive solutions to problems in El Salvador and the shaping of public policies based on Christian values. The statement essentially supported the affirmations made by the General Assembly the previous year. This was followed by a session vote on December 22, 1981, to support the National Council of Churches in an effort to protect the safety of Salvadoran refugees in Honduras by calling for the presence of American, Canadian, and European Christian volunteers to deter further raids by the Army of El Salvador.

During 1983 a major focus of concern was Sanctuary, a church-organized effort to provide temporary shelter and support to political refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. A Madison Sanctuary Committee was formed of representatives from Madison Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish congregations. In the April-May module an Adult Education class dealt with Central and South America, including the sanctuary issue. In the meantime the Episcopalian parish of St. Francis House was providing sanctuary for a small group of refugees. After hearing from members of their sanctuary committee and from a Salvadoran refugee the session passed a resolution in

support of their position on sanctuary on June 28. Work on the issue continued by the Service Committee, including consideration of a proposal that Covenant in cooperation with several other Madison churches establish an off-site sanctuary for refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. The session passed an enabling resolution on September 27, 1983, authorizing such an action, and with our members working in concert with members from Bethany Methodist, Temple Beth Israel, and John the 23rd congregations, a second sanctuary site was developed as a temporary refuge (not resettlement). An amount of \$3,000 was included in the budget for 1984 to support the Second Site, and a discussion of the various legal aspects of the Sanctuary movement appeared in the *Caravan* before the Annual Meeting of the congregation on January 26, 1984. The vote at this meeting on the decision to commit these funds to the Second Site project was close with 76 in favor, 64 opposed, and one abstention.

The refugee family of Rogelio and Maria Gonzales and four children given sanctuary at the Second Site arrived in February 1984, and a Declaration of Sanctuary Service for them was held on February 19 at Bethany United Methodist Church. To update knowledge on the Central American issues the Sanctuary Committee organized a series of five educational programs for members of the four Second Site congregations. Rogelio and Maria took part in this series, and Rogelio participated in a number of other speaking engagements.

To learn more about the sanctuary program Bill and Mary King visited Tucson, Arizona, in late January 1984, where they interviewed refugees and talked with people from the Southside Presbyterian Church who were the progenitors of the Sanctuary program. He gave an account of his trip to an Adult Christian Education class on Sunday morning, May 13, 1984.

Continuing their concern about the threat of military escalation in Central America, the Service Committee gave an opportunity on Sunday, November 25, 1984, for members of the congregation to sign a "Pledge of Resistance" to further military involvement.

Antipathy toward the sanctuary movement continued to increase in official government quarters, and finally indictments were made in 1984 against the Rev. John Fife and others who initiated the program in Tucson, Arizona, as well as other workers in Texas.

Because of anxiety about their safety the Rogelio Gonzales refugee family was moved to the St. Benedict Center in January 1985, and they applied to emigrate to Canada, since that nation

would recognize their status as refugees. By February the Sanctuary Committee moved into a new phase of involvement by having at least one member of the group with the family twenty-four hours a day. More than 24 Covenant members served as monitors in this phase. On Sunday afternoon, April 28, a special ecumenical affirmation and welcoming service was held at Covenant in support of the refugee family and the many Sanctuary workers involved from the four Sanctuary Congregational Committees and the 23 Madison-area supporting churches. In May 1985 the Gonzales family was granted permission to emigrate to Canada. On October 5 Rogelio wrote a letter of thanks from Winnipeg, Manitoba, for taking care of them while they were "illegal aliens" in this country. In October 1986 we were informed that Rogelio had been awarded, as one of 18 from a field of 400, a four-year scholarship with a stipend for living expenses to obtain a degree in social work at the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg.

With the departure of the Gonzales family to Canada, Covenant's support of the Sanctuary movement shifted to support for those on trial for assisting refugees and advocacy for a change in the policy in Central America. One way in which this was done was to sponsor a concert on June 19, 1986, by Marsha Lee Cutting, singer, songwriter, and Presbyterian minister. Proceeds from her concert and sales of her recording, "Songs of Sanctuary," went to the National Sanctuary Defense Fund.

Finally, in 1988 the emphasis toward helping refugees from El Salvador was a shift from sanctuary to "accompaniment." By this time many El Salvadoran refugees were going home, returning to the land from which they were driven by deliberate government military force. These people needed "accompaniment" by European and North American supporters to ensure that they would not be driven out again. Covenant contributed to the Wisconsin "El Salvador Accompaniment Project," and John Hickman, a member of the Service Committee, participated in a Wisconsin church delegation that worked for ten days in the Mesa Grande Camp in Honduras and in discussions with government and U.N. officials in El Salvador. Refugees were accompanied back to Guarjila, El Salvador, under the Madison-Arcatao Sister City project. The Service Committee continued to support work with Central American refugees, especially in the Texas border area.