Rev. Jose Marcelo Sanchez
1932-2010

Rev. Jose Sanchez, 78, one-time Cuban journalist and radio official and tireless pastor to Latin American immigrants, died from complications of prostate cancer.

Sanchez initially trained at the University of Havana as a journalist. But he always felt drawn to the ministry, and graduated from Matanza Seminary in 1962.

Sanchez served with the Cuban Interior Mission, in which the Christian Reformed Church played a prominent role, and was ordained in the Cuban CRC in 1972, serving the Emanuel congregation in Havana.

The Sanchez family immigrated to the U.S. in 1981, where Sanchez led two congregations in Hialeah, Fla. He retired in 1995.

Sanchez was widely loved for his empathetic service to Latin American communities in Florida. He was as adept at preaching and teaching as he was at counseling and writing.

Sanchez was predeceased by his first wife, Mercedes. He is survived by his wife Josefina, two children and their spouses, and five grandchildren.

—Louis M. Tamminga

Further information on recently deceased ministers is available each year in the front pages of the Christian Reformed Church’s annual Yearbook.

IN MEMORIAM

Michigan Church Celebrates Church Growth in Japan

When the Shin Urayasu Reformed Church in the Tokyo area celebrated becoming a full-fledged congregation with its own elders and deacons, a church on the other side of the ocean in Grand Rapids, Mich., also celebrated.

Woodlawn Christian Reformed Church has a special relationship with the Japanese congregation and its pastor, Rev. Takayuki Ashida. When Ashida attended Calvin Theological Seminary, he and his family worshiped at Woodlawn. The relationship has been maintained since his return to Japan four years ago.

So when the Shin Urayasu church celebrated in June, among the 200 people in attendance were Rev. Richard and Sandy Sytsma, members at Woodlawn and former missionaries to Japan. Richard Sytsma said, “God has really blessed that church with dramatic growth. Average attendance has grown from 10 to 70.”

Shin Urayusu Church was started in 1994 by retired Christian Reformed missionaries Rev. Michiel and Trudy De Berdt.

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung

California Teens Travel to Japan for Summer Missions

Rev. Charles Oh and seven Korean American teens from the TtoKamsa Mission Christian Reformed Church in Los Angeles traveled further than most for a mission trip: they spent a month in Japan sharing the gospel.

Team members prepared for months, studying basic Japanese, learning praise songs in Japanese, and preparing their testimonies.

Once there, they were led by Rev. Ken Lee, a missionary in Japan with Christian Reformed World Missions. They led worship using the songs and pantomimes they had learned, and shared their testimonies with translation assistance.

The teens led three vacation Bible schools and two camp ministries, staying in Japanese homes as part of their cross-cultural experience.

Lee said, “This ministry can be fulfilled by anybody. However, it is more effective for Korean Americans because their similar appearance and somewhat similar culture makes it easier to approach the Japanese.”

Lee noted that, through the Korean American teams, “God wants us to heal the broken relationship between Korea and Japan and lay down the foundation for developing future Christian leaders for Japan.”

—Ruth Moblard DeYoung

Teens from Los Angeles at the Tokyo airport, embarking on the summer mission trip of a lifetime.