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PRAYER EFFORT FOCUSES ON FINDING CURE FOR CANCER

With 9 million people living with cancer in the United States alone and another 10 million worldwide diagnosed each year, Christians are uniting to pray one of the world's most feared diseases.

Intercessors from all 50 states and more than 100 nations are expected to participate in the Worldwide Cancer Prayer Day held annually on June 5. In addition to individual prayer efforts throughout the day, a special service will be held that evening at Crystal Cathedral in California.

Among the participants will be Dr. Francisco Contreras, a noted oncologist who specializes in holistic and alternative cancer treatment. A committed Christian who leads the Oasis of Hope Hospital in Mexico, Contreras helped found the day of prayer in 1997 with Dr. Daniel Kennedy, executive vice president of Oasis of Hope, and Robert A. Schuller, son of Crystal Cathedral senior pastor Robert Schuller.

Author of *The Hope of Living Cancer Free* and *The Coming Cancer Cure* (both by Siloam Press), Contreras said he plans to pray for a breakthrough in cancer research. "I do believe God heals people, and I believe that He can prevent the occurrence of cancer in people, but I have a very special prayer that I lift up every year. I pray, 'God, please grant wisdom to the doctors and scientist and help them find the cure for cancer'", he said. "I believe that God will answer this prayer, and though the glory for the cure for cancer may be given to researcher in some university, I know that it will be God who will give the enlightenment to that researcher."

While praying for a cure, participants will also pray for those living with cancer and for the families of those who have died of the disease. Among this year's participants are people who know firsthand the pain that cancer brings, including Paul Finkenbinder, a well-known evangelist in Latin America who is living with cancer, and the younger Schuller, whose mother battled the disease.

Kennedy said he receives prayer requests all year from as far as Kuwait, South Africa and Hong Kong at the Worldwide Cancer Prayer Day Web site (www.cancerprayerday.org). The petitions are compiled into a book, which he has carried as far as Israel to have people pray over them.

Kennedy said the idea for the prayer day was birthed out of a series of visions he had over 11 days in which he saw "people uniting for one cause-prayer-for healing of those who have cancer." Contreras funded the inaugural event in 1998, which was broadcast internationally.

Adrienne S. Gaines.