

Sold

The Northwest District

MINDS ITS MISSIONARIES

The Northwest District missionary family, a little more than one missionary for every three churches, finds the support and help it needs, through a well-planned and efficiently executed program. In this District, there are from ten to fifteen missionaries home at all times.

The Missionary Itinerary

Upon returning home, the missionary interviews the District Superintendent, the Rev. Reuben J. Carlson, who also serves as Missionary Secretary, to make known his budgetary needs. These are determined by the Foreign Missions Department of the General Council.

Returned missionaries to this District find their deputational responsibilities considerably lessened in that the churches have an unusually stable record of maintaining their pledged support. With this low rate of attrition, the missionary can give himself to rest or education.

When his needs are known, the Missionary Secretary sends notice of possible itinerary dates to the District Presbyter of one of the twelve sections of the District. The Presbyter makes all the arrangements with the local pastors. About 50%-75% of the churches in any section are able to accept a meeting at the indicated time. When the itinerary has been arranged, the Presbyter

sends a list of the meetings to the missionary and a copy to the Missionary Secretary. Most schedules cover from ten days to three weeks.

At this point the missionary assumes responsibility. He writes to the pastors of each church telling them such things as the time of his arrival, how many are in the party, what accommodations are needed, if he is arriving for supper, the field he represents, and whether he has pictures.

When an itinerary has been completed, the District Missionary Secretary will arrange another. In 1966, sixty-two such itineraries were completed. Seldom does a missionary contact all of the sections. Superintendent Carlson believes that the fewer each has to contact, the better, that when the budgetary requirements are met, the missionary ought to discontinue his deputation activities and rest.

The District Commissary

The shelves of a large room in the District Office building are overflowing with sheets, pillowcases, towels, baby clothing, Tupperware, and much else. No food is included. "You wouldn't believe all we have," said Mrs. Ruth Crawford, District W.M.C. President, who supervises the Commissary. "We even have bunion pads and powder for fastening false teeth!"

All of it comes from the abundant donations of the W.M.C. groups across the District. Someone, looking

at the bulging shelves and crowded floor space, said, "You need a bigger place. "Oh, no," was the prompt reply, "We need to keep it moving. Things do no one any good just stored here." The women of the surrounding churches take turns helping to sort and disburse.

The donors are encouraged to provide items of good quality for they last much longer and cost no more to ship. Both home and foreign missionaries have access at all times to the Commissary.

The outfit for returning to the field is a special concern. The missionary presents a list of the items needed, preferably those with values of ten dollars or less. From this list, Mrs. Crawford makes twelve lists, which are presented in many novel ways at the twelve sectional W.M.C. rallies. She sees to it that when there are multiples of the same item that these are divided among a number of sections. It is also arranged so that there is variety in price so that one may choose without embarrassment something he can afford. These are sent either directly to the missionary or via the Commissary. She also seeks to arrange the lists according to the interests of an area, for some accept an article as a matter of course, while others [^]consider it non-essential.

In recent times, the women in urban areas prefer to buy things rather than make them. "They'll buy a can of peas every time before they'll give twenty cents for a can of peas." For this reason, articles are named.

The W.M.C.'s also continue their responsibilities in regard to the Adoption Plan while the missionary is home.

Workers Together

"We are all in this work together. This is our share of it." This is the continuing point of emphasis. Perhaps an explanation of the low rate of attrition in pledged support is due to the maintaining of an attitude of interest and concern.

The local churches hold their own yearly missionary conferences to stimulate interest. Sometimes smaller churches join and call a team of missionaries who circulate among those churches. This makes possible a variety of contacts. There are also W.M.C. sectional rallies in which a missionary wife is always the speaker.

By All Means

"What is your need?" This is the determining factor for the activities of this District in caring for its missionary family.

For example, the Seattle area is one of the high-cost living areas in the United States. Rent of \$225 - \$150 a month would be considered exorbitant in many states, but it is normal here. At least one church recognizes this problem, and provides an extra housing allotment for the missionaries it supports, while they are on furlough.

A missionary who has a special need for the field, such as some project for a foreign Bible School, may make known that need to the Missionary Secretary. He

sends a letter to each church about a month before the annual District Conference, so that the churches may come prepared for a special offering.

A missionary who is living in an apartment and has little storage space may store his outfit at the Commissary and pack his barrels there.

This successful program of the Northwest District is possible because of leadership with vision and understanding, cooperating churches with interest and warm hearts, and always a steady, continuing sense of responsibility as workers who are a part of missions around the world.