

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 1963

# Gospel Mission Promotes 'Brotherhood' In Klamath

By JUNE A. JOHNSON

Working on the principle that all men are brothers, The National Conference of Christians and Jews sponsored Brotherhood Week, Feb. 17-24, for the 30th consecutive year. On the local scene, an effort to continually promote "brotherhood" has been carried on successfully for five years by the Klamath Falls Gospel Mission.

The non-profit shelter for unfortunate men, which celebrated its fifth anniversary Feb. 11, is dedicated to emphasizing the prime worth of each person as an individual, regardless of race, color, or creed.

The Mission was organized at a meeting held at Immanuel Baptist Church, Dec. 22, 1957. Thirty-two representatives from various churches were present to confer with an official of the International Union of Gospel Missions, and after lengthy discussion the group decided that such an enterprise would be beneficial to Klamath Falls.

The old Covenant Church at 823 Walnut was purchased as headquarters for the Mission, and a board of directors was elected from those attending the organizational meeting. On reference from the IUGM, John Pedersen, an experienced rescue mission worker from Fresno, Calif., was employed as superintendent, and the Gospel Mission opened its doors Feb. 11, 1958.

Although affiliated with the IUGM, the Klamath Falls Gospel Mission is a local operation controlled and governed by a board of up to 18 members in good standing in Klamath Basin evangelical churches. The six original board members included Reuben Larson, president; Leonard Burkhardt, secretary; and Gene Baile, treasurer. The directors have a permanent status, and if vacancies should occur, the replacement is elected by the remaining members. Sixteen men now direct the policies of the Mission.

**Mission's Function**  
The Mission is open to all transient men as a possible stimulus to rehabilitation and provides them with shaves, haircuts, meals, lodging, clothing, and spiritual counseling. The men are allowed to stay overnight for a maximum of three nights in the winter and two nights in the summer, but the rule is flexible and based on the needs of the individual.

The restriction was made so transients would not be encouraged to remain in the city. To receive the support of local authorities, the directors assured them that all necessary steps would be taken to guard against problems ensuing from the transient situation. On the average, the homeless men stay only one night and move on.

Many of the men do find temporary work and may remain in town several weeks, but the Mission does not solicit employment. However, the Mission receives numerous calls for workers for short-term jobs, particularly around the haying season and potato harvest, and will refer some-

one. Statistics compiled from the opening of the Mission to January, 1963, reveal the scope of the operation. Thousands of men have taken advantage of the services offered, including 73,534 who attended chapel services; 2,000 received spiritual counseling after the services; 62,245 received overnight shelter; 157,612 received free meals, and 30,078 received shaves. The articles of clothing distributed in this period numbered 50,158.

The building and equipment is valued at \$60,000, and \$12,000 is still owed on the original building. The cost of operating the Mission is approximately \$1,000 a month, with the biggest expenses listed as utilities and the monthly payments on the building.

Surprisingly, food is not a large expense, although an average 100 meals per day are served, including three daily meals for the staff. Approximately 40 men are present for both the breakfast and dinner meals provided each day.

Dairies, groceries, bakeries and pastry shops in the community donate food to the Mission regularly, and several Sunday School classes stage canned food drives periodically. With these donations, very few food items are purchased and it has not even been necessary to buy a pound of coffee in three years.

However, Mr. Pedersen said the Mission seldom knows from month to month where the money for operating costs will come from, yet when the bills arrive the expenses are always met.

Gifts of money from local individuals and businessmen who are interested in the type of ministry conducted at the Mission provide the largest source of income. A few of the churches voluntarily include the Mission in their yearly budgets and give a small amount each month, but this regular income does not cover a fraction of the expenses. Other churches contribute at various times, but it was decided when the religious groups helped organize the Mission that they were not obligated to support it.

**Church Assistance**  
Discounting financial aid, churches have an important role in the work of the Mission. Around 30 churches are scheduled to assist with the chapel services, with each minister conducting one service a month. Other churches, not regularly scheduled, volunteer to take the extra days in a given month. The chapel services, lasting an hour, are held before the evening meal at 7 p.m., seven days a week. An hour spent in the chapel has encouraged many men to find themselves and return to a normal life.

Women from the local churches also play a vital part in the operation of the Mission. The first Thursday of each month is designated as Ladies Aid day, and from 15 to 20 women attend each meeting to mend, sort, sew on buttons and generally prepare the articles of donated clothing for

distribution. The sewing sessions, conducted by Mrs. Pedersen, also include making gowns and bed sheets. The material for such items is donated by the church women.

Getting the clothing ready for distribution is a tremendous task in itself. So many garments are donated by individuals and churches that it is necessary to have two storage rooms. One contains women's and children's apparel, and the second contains men's clothing. Everything from undergarments to coats and shoes are available to those in need.

To facilitate distribution, hours for the clothing line have been established from 9:30 a.m. to 12

noon and from 1 to 3 p.m. Men asking for clothing receive anything they need, including a complete change, and can walk directly from the line into an adjoining shower room to bathe and discard their old garments.

The women's and children's clothing is stored as a service to the community and is available to anyone who phones or comes to the Mission during the hours set for the clothing line.

**Staff Duties**  
The duties of mopping and polishing, cooking, and doing the laundry are delegated to a staff of from six to eight rehabili-

(Continued on Page 2)

THE BED YOU WILL OCCUPY TONIGHT HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE THE CHRISTIAN PEOPLE OF THIS AREA CARE. YOU ARE BEING PRAYED FOR BY THESE SPONSORS THAT YOU MIGHT COME TO KNOW THE ONE WHO SAYS 'COME UNTO ME ALL YE THAT LABOUR AND ARE HEAVY LADEN, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST'

**CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE** — This sign hanging in the new 50-bed dormitory reflects the Christian atmosphere of the Gospel Mission and gives credit to the people of the community who have contributed to its successful operation. As well as providing food and lodging, the Mission offers spiritual counseling and guidance which have benefited many of the unfortunate men.



**MISSION HEADQUARTERS** — The Gospel Mission was formerly the old First Covenant Church on Walnut Street, but extensive improvements have been made to the structure since it was opened as a temporary home for transient men in 1958. The equipment and building are now valued at \$60,000, with a balance of \$12,000 to be paid on the original building. The Mission is a community project governed by a board of 16 local church laymen and affiliated with the International Union of Gospel Missions.



**CHAPEL PROGRAMS** — Hour-long services are conducted in the chapel of the Mission each night at 7:30 by ministers of local churches. The men particularly enjoy singing hymns, and many of them request individual spiritual counseling following the program. More than 30 churches are regularly scheduled to assist with the services which have been attended by 73,524 men in the past five years.



**LOUNGE AREA** — A place to gather and talk or to read a variety of magazines and newspapers is offered by the lounge located in the basement. Most of the furniture is worn, but the over-stuffed chairs and sofas still provide comfort to the men who have walked or hopped freight trains to get to the Mission. The sign in the background was painted by one of the talented travelers to proclaim the age of the establishment. Celebrating another anniversary Feb. 11, the Mission can proudly paint the number "five" in the vacant space.



**CLOTHING ROOMS** — All types of clothing from undergarments to hats are donated to the Mission by church groups and interested individuals. The articles are usually clean when sent, and those too dirty are discarded. After mending, the clothing is stored on racks and shelves in the men's clothing room or in the room designated for women and children. Since the mission opened, more than 50,000 articles of clothing have been distributed.



**LAUNDRY EQUIPMENT** — The washer, dryer and extractor obtained by the Mission in October were welcome additions to the laundry. Mr. Pedersen, pictured, said before the new equipment arrived, the numerous towels, sheets, pajamas and gowns were washed in a household washer in the basement and carried to the roof for drying — weather permitting. The equipment is valued at \$2,000, but through the efforts of local businessmen, the Mission was able to purchase the units for \$650.



**DINING ROOM** — The dining room, which has a capacity of 150, is open for breakfast at 6:30 a.m. and dinner at 8 p.m. An average of 40 men are present for the two meals served each day in the pleasant pastel room. The focal point is a brightly colored mural covering the entire length of the front wall. The Arizona desert scene was painted last year by one of the transient men who completed the work in less than five days. A similar mural enhances the staff dining area.



**LADIES AID** — The Ladies Aid, headed by Mrs. Pedersen, meets at the Mission the first Thursday of each month to mend and sort the donated clothing. Nearly all of the churches in the Klamath Basin are represented by the women, who often bring their own donation of material to make sheets and gowns for the men. The average attendance at the sewing sessions is 15 to 20.



**DETAILS CHECKED** — John Pedersen, superintendent, checks with Paul White, staff member, on one of the many details of the daily routine. Paul, who has been a member of the Mission staff for over six months, is one of the men in charge of cleaning, laundering, and distribution of clothing. The staff is usually composed of from six to eight rehabilitated men.



**BARBER SERVICE** — A haircut and a shave are standard services at the Gospel Mission. The Mission furnishes soap and blades, and the barber is any one of the transients who happens to have a talent for cutting hair. Many of the men stopping there are licensed barbers. Fortunately, when one barber leaves, it is only a matter of one or two days until another man appears to replace him.