



Above are the Troop Carrier Hospital Ward built by contributions of American airmen who visited the mission station at Tuckitpoor, India, and the chaplain who was assigned to unit, Captain Richard W. Moore

American Airmen in India

By DONALD MCGAVRAN*

THERE was a squadron of American planes in India carrying troops to and from areas of battle, and there was a Darwin Memorial Hospital at Tuckitpoor. The Troop Carrier Outfit put an end to the Darwin Memorial Hospital, and that without a Scopes Monkey Trial! And Captain Moore went tiger hunting. But let us begin at the beginning.

Tuckitpoor is a station of the India Mission of Disciples of Christ. Mrs. McGavran and I were the American missionaries there during the recent war years. The mission assigned Dr. Philip James, an Indian physician, to the medical work at Tuckitpoor way back before the war. But Dr. James had no hospital. All he had was a small, rented, mud-floored house on the main street. It was centrally located and all the thousands who came to the Friday market at Tuckitpoor passed in front of its doors. But it was also very dusty with the continual pattering of tens of thousands of feet of men and animals passing the door on the unpaved street. However, as a mere dispensary, it was a possible place. By dint of labor it was kept relatively clean. There, day after day, Dr. James and his assistant dispensed quinine for malaria and zinc boric for sore eyes. They lanced boils, innoculated the school children against cholera and typhoid, and gave injections for the common syphilis and gonorrhoea. People came, received treatment and went away.

Impossible As a Hospital

As the Christian church grew in the villages, Dr. James felt that he must take at least the Christian sick who needed hospitalization and keep them for treatment. Possible as a dispensary, the little house was impossible as a hospital. Yet it had to be used. There were no beds and no cooking or latrine facilities. No wonder that in desperation the little "hospital," with often ten to twelve patients and their attendants living and sleeping and cooking and eating in two little

10 x 10 windowless rooms and two small verandahs, was called in sorrowful jest "The Darwin Memorial." For it did seem that only the fittest could there survive. It was so bad, such a blot on the service which the American church usually does offer! Yet it was good, too, much better than letting our Christian brethren die in the villages, uncared for.

The huge troop carrier planes continued to roar overhead, going east full and returning empty. Building continued impossible. But finally after much petitioning for a hospital, government in the interests of public health granted some permits to buy building materials, and the Mission made available a small sum of money to buy land and erect one modest little building.

Visit of Chaplain Moore

As materials for the first little building were being assembled, Chaplain Richard W. Moore,† took leave from the Army Camp in Assam and came to visit us at Tuckitpoor. He came primarily to see the work which the Christian churches in America are carrying on, and partly to try for a tiger in the famed jungles north of Tuckitpoor.

He saw the work supported by the American churches. He saw the little village congregations and the schools with their scores of eager underprivileged youth—and then he saw the "Darwin Memorial." It was crowded to the doors. He stepped over patients lying on the floor. In this corner lay a mother with a newborn baby, in that a case apparently dying from malaria, in the other a man recovering from typhoid.

Now Captain Moore had seen hospitals before. That is part of the task of any chaplain in the armed forces. He calls on the sick and renders whatever service he can. Captain Moore had been accustomed to

*Dr. McGavran is a missionary to India with The United Christian Missionary Society.

†Captain Moore, now pastor of the Christian Church at Flanagan, Illinois, went to the chaplaincy from the church at Lebanon, Indiana.

The San Antonio Public Health Department and a number of community agencies are at work trying to meet these problems through early treatment of tuberculosis, immunization of children from communicable diseases, and improvement of general sanitary conditions. Mexican Christian Institute is one of the community agencies with a going program for meeting the health needs of the people in its neighborhood.

Since 1945, when WORLD CALL carried its article on MCI's health work, the Institute has been developing its program and following it diligently. The system of using volunteers to pass on health information in their own neighborhoods proved to be a good one. MCI started that system in 1941; then in 1945 other community agencies were drawn into the visitation program. That year sixteen agencies sent four hundred women out to make over eight thousand home visits. In 1946 and 1947 the visiting program was repeated with the added backing of a District Health Council.

The District Council grew out of a house health council originally set up to work through Mexican Christian Institute alone. It has expanded into a group more genuinely representative of the community, with members coming from eleven community agencies including the public housing authority, public schools, churches, and the public school nursing division. Working together on this project are several priests and ministers, Mr. Luna as first chairman of the district council and its guiding force for two years. The present chairman is a public school principal.

As prime mover in organized health education and disease prevention in its neighborhood, Mexican Christian Institute can now point to some tangible results of its activities. In 1944 the Health Department reported that thirty-six babies in MCI's district died from infant diarrhea. In 1947 only five such deaths were recorded. This cut in infant deaths is attributed to a systematic DDT dusting of 801 open privies in the district and to the house-to-house visits

by the community's volunteers who showed mothers how to take precautions against baby diarrhea.

Other gains in public health have been made by the city of San Antonio. Tuberculosis deaths were cut from 302 in 1944 to 280 in 1946, and typhus deaths have decreased from 91 in 1944 to 26 in 1946. Action of the district health council and its volunteer workers has been recognized by city authorities as a contributing factor in these achievements. The council's continuing program is being watched by the city with appreciation. Home visits are planned for the spring of 1948 with follow-up activities outlined for the summer months. Future plans also include participation in an X-ray drive to combat tuberculosis.

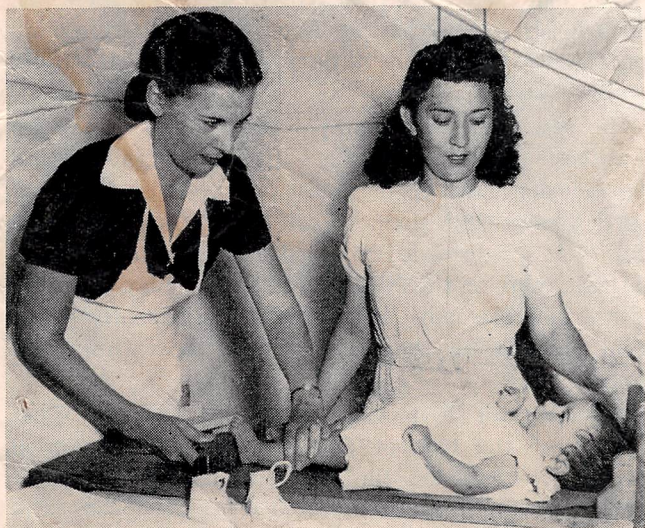
It would be enough to know that the work of Mexican Christian Institute in the past four years has given babies in its neighborhood a healthier chance for life. Over and above this record are other accomplishments which more than justify continued maintenance of this home missions institution. Mexican-Americans who worked on the health drives have been learning the real meaning of a responsible citizenship. They have developed a pride in their homes, and a new loyalty to their neighborhood through assumption of responsibility for improved sanitation and better health protection.

The health project at MCI is an excellent demonstration of the philosophy of work which motivates any good settlement house program. That philosophy is a belief that the people of a neighborhood have the ability to meet their own needs if they can have some outside help in analyzing problems and some outside direction toward a solution. MCI works on this basis by showing its neighbors how to help themselves to better health. MCI has given its neighborhood a vote of confidence simply by placing some of the responsibility for public health upon the shoulders of the people.

Mexican-Americans have other problems besides those of health. As new U. S. citizens they need to learn to master the English language, face hard work, develop the desire to get ahead, keep the promises they make, stick to a job until it is finished, and grow into a feeling that common labor is dignified. Guidance in meeting these problems is needed by the people living near MCI.

The type of social work carried on at Mexican Christian Institute requires a competent staff of workers who are experienced in dealing with groups and individuals. Workers trained in recognized schools of social work also are needed on the staff. The program at MCI is aimed at helping the people of the neighborhood to know their own worth as responsible citizens. To carry out such a program the Institute staff is being built up with trained, experienced workers who are capable of giving the guidance that is needed from them.

Mexican Christian Institute is asking for \$62,000 through the Crusade for a Christian World. This fund is to be used for boys' work and a new recreation building. If one can judge from the Institute's progressive action of recent years, it is safe to assume that effective use will be made of the new equipment.



A public health nurse checking on the progress made by one of the small visitors to MCI's well-baby clinic