


1955

Disciples of Christ and Indian Americans

Muriel A. Watkins

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Disciples of Christ

and



by
Muriel A. Watkins

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and
Indian Americans

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The cover for this booklet was designed by Bertha Hoovan (Mrs. Oscar Hoovan) of the Yakima Indian Christian Mission staff.

WHY THIS BOOKLET?

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven." So sang the preacher (the Ecclesiastes) of the Old Testament. In modern paraphrasing we would say, "There is a time and a place for everything." This timeless adage applies to the purpose of this booklet.

TIME: This booklet is prepared at a time when our churches are studying "Indian Americans" as their home missions study theme. (The term "Indian American" is used in preference to the familiar "American Indian." This places emphasis upon the fact that Indians are first Americans. The word "Indian," then, merely identifies the kind of Americans, just as there are Japanese Americans, Spanish Americans, and other groups of Americans.)

While this booklet is timed for use with this special study theme, its use is not limited to this one year. This booklet is intended to serve as the basic piece of material interpreting the ministry of Disciples of Christ to Indian Americans. It should be used as such over a period of years.

PLACE: This booklet should be placed in the hands of every person concerned with our brotherhood work. It may be used as a reading book to provide information concerning Disciple work, or to supplement other material about Indian Americans. Therefore, it should be placed in the church library with the other books in the *Disciples of Christ Series* . . .

Since this booklet is also designed for use as resource material, it should be placed in the hands of all those who are leading a program or study about Indian Americans. This includes adults, youth, and leaders of youth and children. It may be used in church schools of missions, all-church night programs, or in the various age-level groups.

USE: *With programs for Christian Women's Fellowships.* Programs Five and Six of the *Home Missions Program Packet for 1955-56* deal specifically with the Yakima Indian Christian Mission. The material in this booklet will supplement these programs, especially the background and historical material found in the first two chapters. The pictures will add interest to your programs. The picture and information about Celilo Falls found in Chapter Five of this booklet will supplement

the story about Celilo Falls in Program Four of the Program Packet.

With Programs for Christian Men's Fellowships. This booklet should be used as resource material for the program on Indian Americans in the portfolio of programs for men's groups. Suggestions for its use are included in the program.

With the Adult Discussion Packet. The background information contained in Chapter One and the description of Indian life on the Yakima Reservation found throughout this booklet will be helpful in developing Sessions 1 and 2 suggested in the adult guide by Alice Maloney. Chapter Two will fit into Session 4. Material in Chapter Six will supplement Session 5. The interpretation of Disciple work at Yakima and the information in the Conclusion of this booklet will be especially valuable for use with Session 6.

With Youth Groups. The guidance booklets *Christian Youth Fellowship Studies Christian World Outreach* and *Chi Rho Fellowship Studies Christian World Outreach* suggest ways for using this booklet with the units on Indian Americans found in *Fellowship* and *PM Pack*.

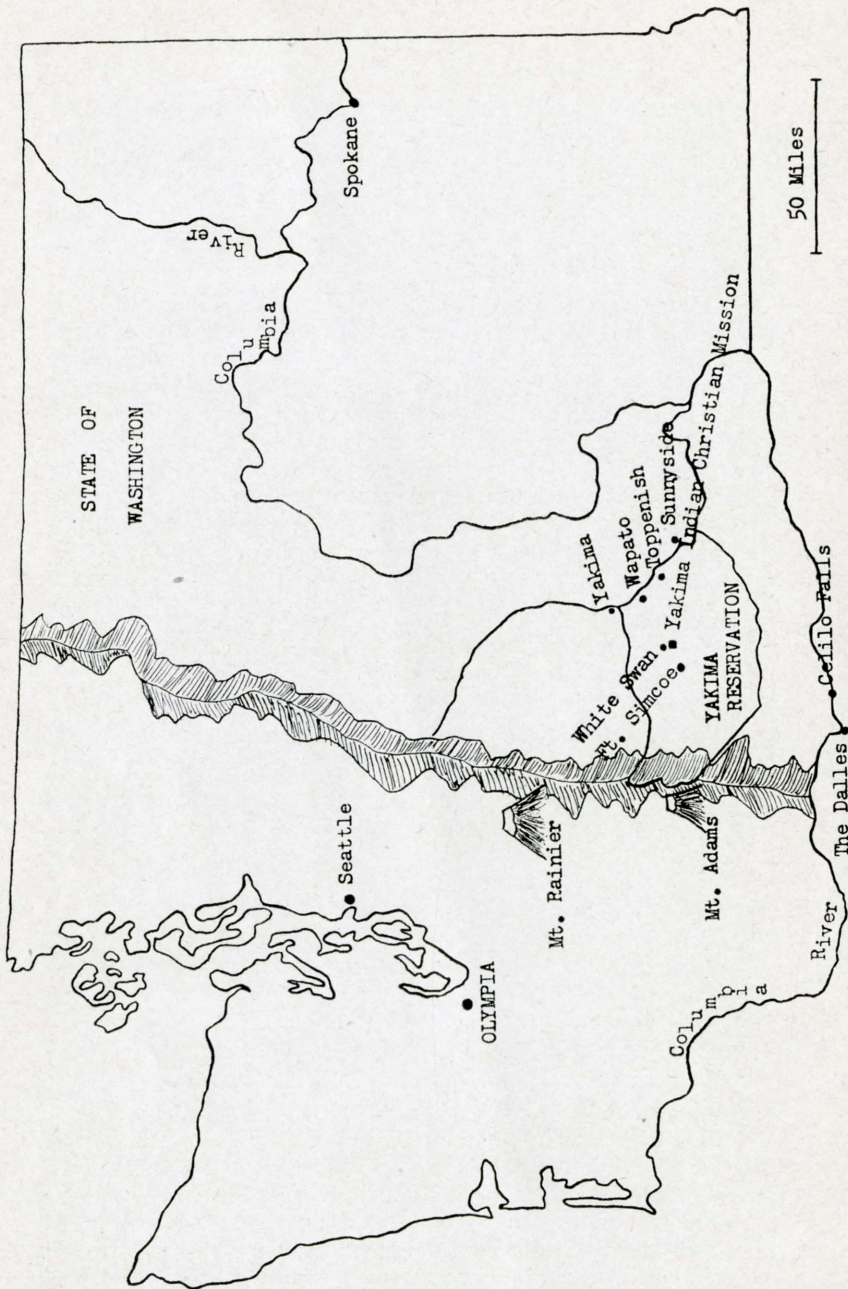
Those using the interdenominational guide for junior highs by Barbara North will find the background material in Chapter Two of this booklet helpful with Session 2 of the guide, and especially valuable for Session 3, which suggests a report on our own brotherhood work and a report on our cooperation with interdenominational work. (The Conclusion of this booklet will help with this latter report.)

Those who use the youth guide by John D. Banks may use the story of Chief Ka-mi-akin in Chapter One and the other background material in this chapter for Session 1 of the guide. The information in Chapter Six will prove helpful in Sessions 2 and 3. The interpretation of our work at Yakima found in Chapters Two through Six will tie in with Session 4 of the guide.

With Juniors. This booklet will serve as resource material for use with the unit on Indian Americans in *Junior Programs*. The pictures may be mounted on posters or clipped to provide interest in the sessions. Since the interdenominational book for juniors is *Yakima Boy*, and the guide by Doris Demaree is based upon it, the background information in this booklet will serve as resource material.

Space in this booklet does not permit a detailed discussion of the ministry Disciples of Christ render to Indian Americans through cooperative channels. Through these agencies, Disciples of Christ have opportunity to provide a more extensive and invaluable service in this area. Further information regarding cooperative work will be found in the interdenominational material prepared for this study.

As you progress with your study on Indian Americans, and as you read this booklet relating brotherhood work among them, it will be interesting to recall the changes that have taken place in the lives of Indian Americans since the discovery of America. So far as Disciples of Christ are concerned, it will prove even more interesting to discover that the time and place for ministering to Indian Americans is now and wherever individual Christians live. Seldom before in the history of Indian Americans have such challenges and opportunities been presented to those who care.



State of Washington, locating the Yakima Indian Reservation, with points of interest in Yakima history.

Disciples of Christ and Indian Americans

"How!" This expression was a common greeting between the white man and the Indian of early America. The Indian was usually pictured wearing feathers, moccasins, a buckskin garment—or just a loincloth—and carrying a bow and arrows. This type of primitive Indian is completely gone today. He belongs to the pages of history that describe covered wagons, sod houses, and the pony express.

Today's Indian is still greeting the white man with the expression "How." Only today it is a question. He asks the white man: "*How* do you justify breaking the treaties our forefathers made with your ancestors? The treaties were to last 'as long as the sun shines.' *How* can you explain these new laws Congress is passing? They end federal protection of our property, our health, our education. Often the congressmen do not even ask us if this is what we want. They are supposed to be *our* congressmen, too. We are American citizens. *How* do you expect us to change our way of living suddenly, to learn new occupations, to move to your strange cities before we understand your language, your society, your methods of earning money? *How?*"

These are a few of the questions today's *reservation* Indians are asking. But Indians who have already left the reservation are also greeting the white man with the question "How?" They ask: "*How* can we make a successful life in the city when people still think we belong to a past age? *How* can we want to stay in the city, live as you live, when we are denied jobs, service in restaurants, lodging in hotels, homes in certain residential areas because we belong to another race? We want

to take our place in the main stream of American life; we want to make our contribution to American culture and progress. *How* can we prove that we are 'civilized' when you insist upon pushing us back into dead history? How?"

Today's Indians, both on and off the reservation, are facing the most crucial period in their history since the white man landed on their shores, gradually took their land, and placed them on reservations. Then, during all the intervening years, far too little was done to help them adjust to the new way of life being forced upon them. Now we are in the midst of a movement to "redeem" our past injustices. Through passing a series of laws we propose to end all special services for Indians *as Indians*, and apply to them the general laws for all American citizens. We call this ill-timed legislation the "termination act."

Fortunately, enough persons and groups who understand the Indian American situation—educated Indians, church leaders, workers with Indians, organizations concerned for Indian welfare, even some far-sighted legislators—have been able to check the "enthusiasm" of proponents of this movement. As a result of their efforts, in most cases Indian tribes are now being consulted first before such laws are passed. Likewise the period of time before termination will become effective has been lengthened. However, too many termination laws are still being passed prematurely. The majority of the Indians are not yet ready for this step. There is still too much danger that many of them will be exploited by such a move. *Nor is the American public on the whole ready to receive Indian Americans as fellow-citizens.* So the Indians seek desperately for help and ask their non-Indian brothers, "How?"

Christians must answer that question. We must take responsibility in preparing both Indians and non-Indians for this step. We must work with and for Indian Americans in achieving their rights.

How are Disciples of Christ answering this challenge today? Of course, in a number of urban areas across the land individual churches have opened their doors to receive Indian members. They are now benefiting from the contribution these Indian Americans are making to their total church program. Ministers of these churches have wisely insisted that these members not be singled out as Indians. They are treated just

like the other members of the congregation. Thus they are better able to lead a normal life within the community.

In many other urban areas Disciples cooperate with local councils of churches in helping to maintain community centers or to carry on specialized work among Indian newcomers. Those near reservations or Indian schools cooperate in projects conducted there.

On a national level Disciples cooperate with the National Council of Churches of Christ in providing various types of special services for Indian Americans throughout the land. World Day of Prayer funds help support many of these projects.

The only direct, brotherhood-sponsored work among the nearly 600,000 Indian Americans in the United States *and Canada* is the Yakima Indian Christian Mission. Located at White Swan, Washington, this work is supported through The United Christian Missionary Society.

Chapter One:

"People of the Valley"

The history of the Indians of the Northwest differs greatly from that of their brothers along the East Coast. When the white man came to their land, it was impossible to push the Indians westward, as they had been wont to do with the Eastern tribes. There was no land to the West, only the Pacific Ocean. Nor could the white man move the Indians eastward, for that land was already occupied. The only alternative was to set aside a small plot of land as a reservation for the Indians, then take all the rest for the white settlers.

But the Indians of the Northwest had no intention of giving

up their land. They formed a confederacy and vowed to fight before surrendering. When the governor of the area called a meeting to draw up a treaty, their chiefs requested a second meeting before signing. The governor, however, would not postpone the action. When promised "special benefits," a few of the chiefs were persuaded to compromise. Protesting Indians, led by the Yakima Chief Ka-mi-akin (*kah-my'uh-kin*), threatened death to any white man who would venture onto the reservation.

The treaty was signed in 1855. Soon thereafter the Indians carried out their threat and the Yakima War broke out. The government soldiers, of course, subdued the Indians, and the treaty became effective in 1859. Fourteen tribes of the area were placed upon a reservation covering slightly more than a million acres of land. For convenience, the government classifies all fourteen tribes as Yakima Indians. The Indians themselves still retain their separate tribal names.

The Indian Agent appointed to the Yakima Reservation in 1859 took advantage of the subdued and restricted Indians. He treated them cruelly and exploited them and their resources for his own profit. Such was the situation James Wilbur found when he arrived on the scene. Wilbur was a Methodist circuit rider. The Yakima Reservation was included in his circuit. When he discovered the abuse the Yakimas were receiving at the hands of the agent, he attempted reform. The corrupt agent tried to prevent the missionary from working on the reservation. Wilbur then made a trip to Washington, D. C., to denounce this official to the president, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln immediately recalled the offending agent and named Wilbur to replace him. Wilbur returned to the Yakima Reservation not only as Indian Agent but as the spiritual father of the Yakima tribe. He became popularly known as "Father" Wilbur, and is so remembered today.

"Father" Wilbur maintained that the Bible and the plow must go hand in hand. He began to teach the Yakimas to farm. He established schools and churches and set in process a program to prepare the Yakimas to become self-sufficient under their changed status of living. At the end of twenty-five years he left a force of well-trained Indian leaders.

The agent that followed Father Wilbur lacked the insight and sympathy of the missionary-agent. The Indian school that

Wilbur had established at Fort Simcoe was closed. Not long thereafter Congress passed the Allotment Act, parceling reservation land to individual Indians. After a twenty-five-year period the Indians were permitted to sell their land. On the Yakima Reservation, as on almost every reservation across the land, non-Indians bought up Indian land and moved onto the reservation. Eventually they took over the community life and leadership, establishing their own schools and infiltrating the reservation churches. Gradually the Indians reverted to their old life, and much of the good work established by Father Wilbur was lost.

About this time there came a new religious leader among the Yakimas. This was a Yakima Indian who, in a skirmish with a white settler, had been shot and supposedly killed. But the Indian's wounds healed and he made his way to the Southwest. Here he came in contact with old Indian cults of other tribes, with various Protestant sects, and with Catholicism. He gathered up parts of each of these religions and formed his own religion. Returning to his own people, he told them he had returned from the dead. He proclaimed himself a prophet to whom God had given a new religion for his people. This emotional faith-healing cult became known as Shakerism because the adherents dance around shaking bells to heal the sick. This religion spread rapidly among the Indian tribes of the Northwest and has become the chief rival of Christianity in its bid for the soul of the Indians of this area.

*The mountain-side
boundary of the
Yakima Reserva-
tion viewed from
the mission girls'
dormitory
balcony*



Just as Shakerism was gaining power and the Methodist Mission work was fading out, the Disciples of Christ established a mission on the Yakima Reservation between the town of White Swan and Fort Simcoe.

Chapter Two:

A Children's Home

It was in 1918 that two educated Christian Indians of the Blackfoot tribe of Montana, Red Fox and Black Hawk, visited the Yakima Valley. At Spokane, Washington, they had learned of the Disciples of Christ. The fact that this movement originated on American soil and is based on the Bible alone appealed to these "original Americans," and they united with the First Christian Church of Yakima.

Red Fox and Black Hawk were greatly impressed with the need among the Yakima Indians. Since the Agency school had been discontinued, few Indians were sending their children to school. About a third of the reservation land was owned by non-Indians. Few of the Indians farmed their own land. The majority of them led a rather nomadic life. Some worked as agricultural migrants, traveling about the state. More of them preferred to live as had their ancestors, fishing for salmon in the Columbia River, digging herbs and picking berries in the mountains on the reservation. The children usually accompanied the parents on their excursions, but often they were left behind to shift for themselves. A minority of the Yakimas were economically prosperous. Few knew how to plan to make their seasonal income provide for off-season unemployment.

Such conditions prompted Red Fox and Black Hawk, accompanied by the northwest regional secretary and several Disciple ministers, to tour the Christian Churches of the territory. This

tour aroused church members to the need for a mission among the Yakimas. Conferences were held with leaders of the American Christian Missionary Society, one of the three organizations which later joined to form the present United Christian Missionary Society. In 1919 a report was presented to the Cincinnati Convention and a resolution was adopted to establish a boarding school for Indian children on the Yakima Reservation.

Red Fox and Black Hawk had been staying in the home of Ben Olney, a successful Yakima Indian cattleman. Since Mr. Olney knew which reservation lands were for sale, he helped to select the site for the mission. The largest concentration of Indians lives in the part of the reservation near White Swan, so this site proved the best location.

Ben Olney and his cousin Nealy, a cashier in the only Indian bank on the reservation, made an "every member canvass" among the Yakimas. They explained the purpose of the project and raised \$2000 to help in the construction of the mission. Seventy-nine-year-old Chief Stire Waters donated \$100 to the project. One of Father Wilbur's converts, he stated: "I have five grandchildren, six nephews, and six nieces. I want all these to learn the Bible and all good things, then I will be ready to go on." Chief Waters, Ben Olney, and Nealy Olney served as the Indian members of the first local advisory board for the mission.

When the mission was opened in the fall of 1921, however, it was decided that the Indian children should attend the public school in White Swan. In this way the children would not be

*Bon Olney, a
pioneer promoter
of the mission,
costumed for a
square dance
broadcast*



segregated. By associating with non-Indian children in the school community, they would more easily learn to take their place in the general community.

The mission then became a *home* for Indian children attending the White Swan public school. For many of the children this is the only real home they have ever known. It is quite different from the small, unpainted frame houses most of their families live in, or to use the Indian expression, "stay" in. Their nomadic life gives them little sense of permanency. Family life is rather disorganized. Grandparents often keep the children. Relatives and neighbors feel free to leave their children for others to care for. One day a mother brought her little boy to the mission, commenting, "I would have brought my little girl along, too, but I couldn't find her." She had come from the Columbia River fishing grounds, ninety miles away. She had left without the child, knowing that neighbors would probably bring her along later.

At the mission the children are taught a sense of responsibility. They learn that they must abandon their care-free habits and learn to live with a group. They learn how to be dependable and to cooperate. Each child makes his own bed, tidies up his locker, and keeps his room clean. General tasks around the buildings and grounds are rotated so that the children will receive training in all types of work. They wash and dry the dishes, help in the kitchen and dining-room, clean the chapel and playrooms. The smaller children have light tasks, such as emptying waste-baskets and brushing crumbs off dining-room chairs after meals. Since most of the children belong to the 4-H Club and to Future Farmers of America, they care for their own club projects.

The children from the mission are consistently high in their scholastic standing. School teachers maintain that the care and training these children receive in the home, besides their regular attendance, make an outstanding difference. The staff at the mission participate in the school P.T.A. organization and have frequent conferences with the school principal and teachers. This personal contact helps the mission staff to know how the children are progressing at school, and helps the school teachers to understand the children.

The number of children in the home averages thirty-six. Due to limited facilities, more children must be turned away from

the home than can be accepted. Preference is given to children who have lived at the mission previously. Almost all of the children now living in the home have lived there at least one other school year. The longer a child lives at the mission, the greater is the influence upon his life.

More and more of the children are remaining to complete high school. This is one of the most notable achievements of the mission. Comparatively few Yakima Indians complete high school; fewer yet go on to college. There are still some Yakima children who receive no education at all. But, largely due to the influence of the mission, the majority of the Indians are now sending their children to school, even though attendance is often irregular.

For many years the Yakima Indian Christian Mission continued successfully as a children's home. While serving a specific need, it stood as a living testimony of Christianity and love in action. Then in the late 1940's it was decided to enlarge the service of the mission in order to help meet the total needs of the entire reservation. A new program was adopted that ultimately will make the Yakima Indian Christian Mission an Indian community center. The home will continue as an important phase of the mission activities, but its story now becomes the *opening* chapter in the history of the Yakima Indian Christian Mission.

Chapter Three:

A Dream Becomes a Reality

February 6, 1955, marked a high point in the religious life of the Yakima Indian Christian Mission. Many people, Indian and non-Indian, had come from miles around. Newspaper reporters were on hand and press photographers' cameras were flashing. The faces of Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Norment, directors of the mission since 1948, were radiant as a long-anticipated



*Dedication Day at the Yakima Indian Christian Church.
Note the beaded buckskin communion cloth and choir robes.*

dream reached fulfillment. Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Rice, who had served as directors of the home from 1930 to 1947, returned this day to share in their joy. Mr. Ben Olney, who helped to establish the mission, was one of the first persons present for this significant occasion. Members of the Yakima Indian Tribal Council and representatives of the Indian Agency were also in attendance. The day had arrived when the Yakima Indians were dedicating their own Christian Church!

This church building is unique in our brotherhood. The sanctuary is built entirely of logs which are visible inside as well as outside the church. The panel walls of the chancel are of California redwood. Although all the rustic designed furnishings were not ready for the dedication service, most of them were installed by Christmas, 1955. No cushioned pews and polished pulpit mar the simplicity of this church sanctuary. Instead are found simple benches with backs, while the pulpit and lectern are built from slabs and logs of fir wood. The communion table is made of two thick slabs of white pine, setting it off from any other piece of wood in the building. The communion cloth of deep fringed white buckskin with a blue and red beaded cross embroidered in one corner provides an effective worship center against the maroon drapery of the knotty cedar baptistry. The communion cloth is the expert workmanship of an Indian mother. Another Indian woman designed and made the cedar root offering baskets.

The hanging lamps of black wood, simulating wrought iron,

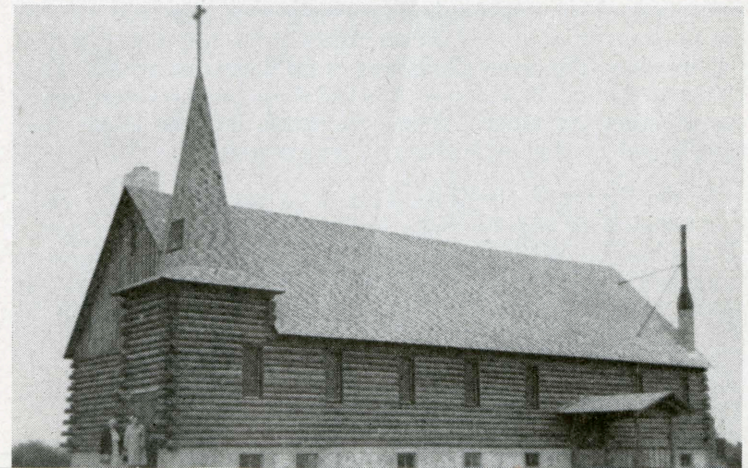
with a cross significantly designed in the parchment on each side, were made and given by Mr. William Nettleship, the contractor who built the church. Mr. Nettleship and his son Jack, a partner in the firm, took a personal interest in the church. They drew up the detailed plans for the building themselves and waived all profits in order that the church could be built at the estimated cost. In addition, they donated the two lovely fireplaces for the church building, one at the rear of the sanctuary, the other below in the social hall.

This is truly a distinctly Indian church with an Indian atmosphere. The Indians were much concerned, however, that the outside not look like a grange hall. The beautiful steeple surmounted by a tall cross makes it quite different. The lovely-toned bell for the steeple was a gift of the Christian Church of Anaconda, Montana.

The mission children themselves provided the choir robes from proceeds earned through their presentation of a Christmas pageant. Several years ago the children worked out a dramatization of the Christmas story as it had been told to the Huron Indians of Canada many years ago by a missionary. The children adapted and presented the story as though the birth of Christ had taken place among the Yakima Indians on Mount Adams, rather than in far-off Palestine. The setting and the terms used were thus familiar to the Indians.

This Indian version of the Christmas story appealed to the Yakimas. They invited the children to present it in the Indian Longhouse at Toppenish, the largest of the four Longhouses on the reservation. The Longhouse, the community hall used as a gathering place for tribal meetings, is also the church for

The Yakima Indian Christian Church



the old Indian Pom Pom religion. Until this time only events related to the Pom Pom religion were permitted to take place in the Longhouse. This was the first time a *Christian* program had been permitted. So successful was this performance that the children repeated it for several years, not only in the Indian Longhouse, but in a number of Christian Churches in Washington and Oregon. Then for two years the dramatization was discontinued.

With the building of the new church, however, the children's interest in the pageant was revived. On December 23, 1954, even before the church had been dedicated, its chancel floor became the scene of a pine forest. Once again an Indian brave and his squaw sought shelter under the tallest pine tree, for there was no room for them in the tepees of their people.

The following Christmas Day some three hundred fifty Indians gathered in the Longhouse to watch the pageant. How differently the Indians reacted this time from the first presentation six years before! Then the crowd had been disorderly and many were the interruptions from drunken people and from others who opposed the religion of the "Palefaces." Now a very attentive and appreciative audience approved the pageant and sat in silent admiration during the showing of the film *Silent Night*, which followed.

Before Christmas the children presented the pageant at the First Christian Church in Yakima and again at nearby Sunnyside. Proceeds from these two presentations enabled them to secure their choir robes, used for the first time at the church dedication service.

Many years of labor and prayer led up to this eventful day of dedication. From the beginning, evangelism had been part of the mission program. However, since there was no church at the mission, the new Christians were baptized at the First Christian Church in Yakima. Most of these converts were young people from the home. When the youth left the home, they usually lost contact with this city congregation.

In the Spring of 1949 the first steps were taken to form a congregation at the mission. For a long time Sunday school classes had been held in the home; now adults were invited to worship in the mission chapel along with the children. But the adults were slow to respond. To them the chapel, a room in the

girls' dormitory, was part of the children's home. They did not feel that it was a church. In order to reach the adults the mission staff began to conduct cottage prayer meetings in Indian homes.

The cottage prayer meetings really began when the Norments visited the home of a young Indian woman who had attended church services at the mission. This woman lived in White Swan with her elderly grandmother, who was blind and suffering from an incurable disease. The grandmother requested the Norments to pray for her. Members of the staff began going to her home regularly for prayer services. Soon neighbors began to attend these services. Then other Indian homes invited the missionaries in for similar meetings.

When invited to a home, the missionaries would often take along some of the children from the mission, as well as hymnals and a portable organ. The Indians love to sing and the prayer meetings always began with a song service. The scripture would then be read. Following a period of prayer, the scripture lesson would be explained. Sometimes slides were used to illustrate the message. Many adults became interested in the church. A few began to attend the chapel services. The majority, however, were waiting for a church of their own.

Before the church was built, both mid-week and Sunday evening vesper services were held in the chapel. Active youth groups, enlisting youth from all parts of the reservation, had been organized. These groups have contributed to the Sunday school and church enrollment.

The two vacation church schools held each summer at the mission have also served to recruit new members for the Sunday school. The first vacation school is conducted primarily for our own Sunday school clientele. In 1954 over a hundred children were enrolled in this school. Most of these children come from the White Swan and Medicine Valley areas. This school has been conducted each summer since 1950.

Enrollment in the other vacation school conducted annually

Missionaries call at reservation homes to take children to religious activities



at the mission depends almost entirely upon the number of Northwest Indians who attend the religious celebration held at the White Swan Longhouse during the ten days following the Fourth of July. This celebration is not a patriotic affair, but a religious and social gathering. Indians from all over the region set up their tepees around the Longhouse. Many don their ceremonial costumes. There is much dancing and gaiety and revelry. Typical of so many other Indian festivities, the curse of liquor has turned this gala occasion into a period of carousing. Children are left to amuse themselves while the adults celebrate.

Since the Longhouse is near the mission, the staff has succeeded in enrolling most of these children in the vacation church school conducted during this period. Classes in religion and directed recreation take the children away from their unwholesome environment for a good share of the time. Some of the children begin to attend the church services on Sunday as a result of this contact.

Of course, the children in the mission home are surrounded continuously with a Christian atmosphere. Every morning at breakfast one of the missionaries, or one of the children, conducts a devotional period, with Bible reading and an appropriate story or comment on the Christian way of life. In the evenings there is a Bible story for the young ones and intimate talks with the older students who need guidance and counsel with their personal problems. There are devotions in the dormitories at night. The children themselves participate in and often lead the services, both on Sundays and throughout the week.

One reason the Christian atmosphere is so noticeable at the mission is that the missionaries themselves regularly hold weekly staff prayer meetings. Here they receive spiritual enrichment for their own personal lives. They pray specifically for the projects and program of the mission. They pray personally for those with whom they work. For many years they prayed and dreamed and worked for an Indian church, a church that would truly make the Indians feel it belongs to them. Their prayer has been answered; their dream has been fulfilled.



*Mission staff
meeting for
weekly prayer
service*

Fifty-four members were on the church rolls when the mission congregation moved into its new building. Most of these were young people from the home or those who had lived in the home at some time. (Almost every young person becomes a Christian before leaving the home.) Now more and more of the older Indians and young people who do not live at the home are becoming interested in the church. With an Indian Christian Church in their midst, increasingly the Gospel will have an added appeal to these people, and many more will undoubtedly identify themselves with Christianity. Here, in truth, the "fields are white unto the harvest."

Chapter Four:

From Medicine Man to Clinic

Practically all of the children who come to the home suffer from some sort of malady due to malnutrition, heredity, or unhealthful surroundings. Indians are easy victims to the white man's diseases. Trachoma and tuberculosis are especially prevalent among them.

Many Indians either do not know or do not practice the most simple principles of good health. A number of the homes still have no plumbing and no refrigeration. Often two and three families live crowded together in a small frame house. A pile of blankets in the corner of a room may be spread out at night to serve as a bed. Sometimes tepees are used for sleeping accommodations. Most of the Indians sleep in the same clothes they wear all day. (Pajamas are considered a white man's garment!) Superstition, belief in evil spirits, and faith in medicine men and women contribute somewhat to the adverse health conditions on the reservation. In the light of such need, provision for reservation-wide medical services became an important must in the new expanded program of the Yakima Indian Christian Mission.

There was no trained medical personnel on the mission staff. But Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm Norment shared with Dr. Douglas Corpron of Yakima their plans for opening a clinic at the mis-

sion. Dr. Corpron was formerly a missionary to China. When the Communists took over China, he returned to his home town of Yakima to practice medicine. At one time he had served for several years on the Navaho Reservation, and had a special interest in Indian Americans, too. When the Norments approached him, he immediately consented to give Saturday afternoons to the proposed mission clinic, free of charge.

Mrs. Norment agreed to serve as his clinic nurse although she had had no formal nurse's training. Before going to Yakima the Norments had spent a number of years in Paraguay. Therefore they possessed that missionary spirit of willingness to learn new tasks!

Now that a doctor and a "nurse" had been secured, all that the clinic lacked was a budget! About this time a Christian woman in Oklahoma City sent a special gift to the Norments, with promise of a monthly check for their work. Here was the budget—and within a short time the clinic was established. Other Christian friends and church groups provided necessary equipment. At first the clinic was set up in the basement of the boys' dormitory. Later it was moved to the Norments' home.

Dr. Corpron gives each child in the home a physical examination when he registers and periodic check-ups. At first only a few other Indians came for clinical service. Their medicine men and women have a strong hold on them. Those who belong to the Shaker church believe in faith healing. It took a while to convince the Indians that they need the medical services the



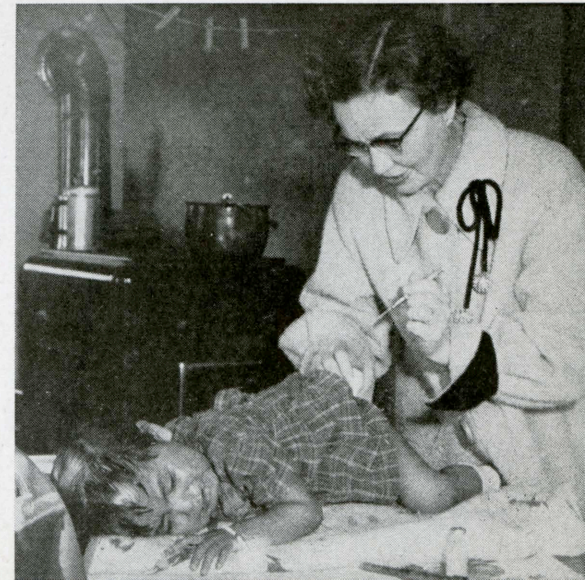
Dr. Douglas Corpron treats a patient at the mission clinic

clinic provides. Those first few years Mrs. Norment made many home visitations trying to get the Indians from the reservation to use the clinic.

Eventually both she and Dr. Corpron won the confidence of the Yakimas. Many of the Indians call Mrs. Norment the "Woman with Power." They believe that the Great Spirit gave her the gift of healing. Dr. Corpron seems to have a special way with the Indians. They all recognize his kindness and sincerity. Several of the babies have even been named for him! Large numbers of patients now await him when he arrives at the clinic on Saturday afternoons.

Dr. Corpron's service to the Indians is not limited to the one-half day he conducts the clinic at White Swan, however. He makes himself available to them at all hours. Many, many times between clinic visits he consults with Mrs. Norment over the long distance telephone. Mrs. Norment cares for the sick throughout the week, attending those who come to the mission for medical help and going to the homes when needed. She administers the medicine Dr. Corpron prescribes. Dr. Corpron jokingly remarks that Mrs. Norment is a very special nurse, for she gets much of her training over the telephone! Very serious cases are sent to Dr. Corpron at his office in Yakima. He also attends the Indians in the hospitals. All of this service he renders voluntarily.

It is still difficult to get many of the older Indians on the



Mrs. Norment in a reservation home gives penicillin to a sick child

reservation to accept medical help, but most of them now request medicine for their children. Mrs. Norment tells of a visit to the home of a very sick grandmother who refused medical help for herself. However, the baby in this home was dying of pneumonia and the grandmother asked Mrs. Norment to give the child a shot of penicillin. When Mrs. Norment returned the next day, she found the baby sitting up in the tepee outside the house, practically well. The grandmother still refused medicine for herself, even when she saw its effectiveness. Instead, she had the medicine man come. Through chanting, shaking sticks, and ringing bells, he tried to chase away the evil spirit that had made her ill.

Because of this reliance upon medicine men and women, illnesses often become too critical to heal before proper medical attention is administered. Dr. Corpron states, "Conditions on the Yakima Reservation are every bit as bad as those in interior China." He finds here a way to continue his missionary service. Because of this service, the Yakima Indians are beginning to turn from medicine man to clinic.

Chapter Five: Into All of Reservation Life

Through the various religious activities and the clinic services, the mission was beginning to reach into Indian life on a reservation-wide scale. Still other projects provided an opportunity to reach Indians who would not ordinarily be contacted through such programs.

One of the most popular of these new activities has been the mission Trading Post. The Trading Post is a used clothing store which has been set up in one of the farm buildings no longer used for farming purposes. Since the few towns on the reservation are scarcely more than villages, practically all shopping has to be done in the city of Yakima four miles from the reservation border and thirty-two miles from the mission. Even

if there were a clothing store conveniently located on the reservation, most of the Indians are so needy or cannot adequately manage their income that during off-season unemployment they cannot afford to buy new clothing at regular prices.

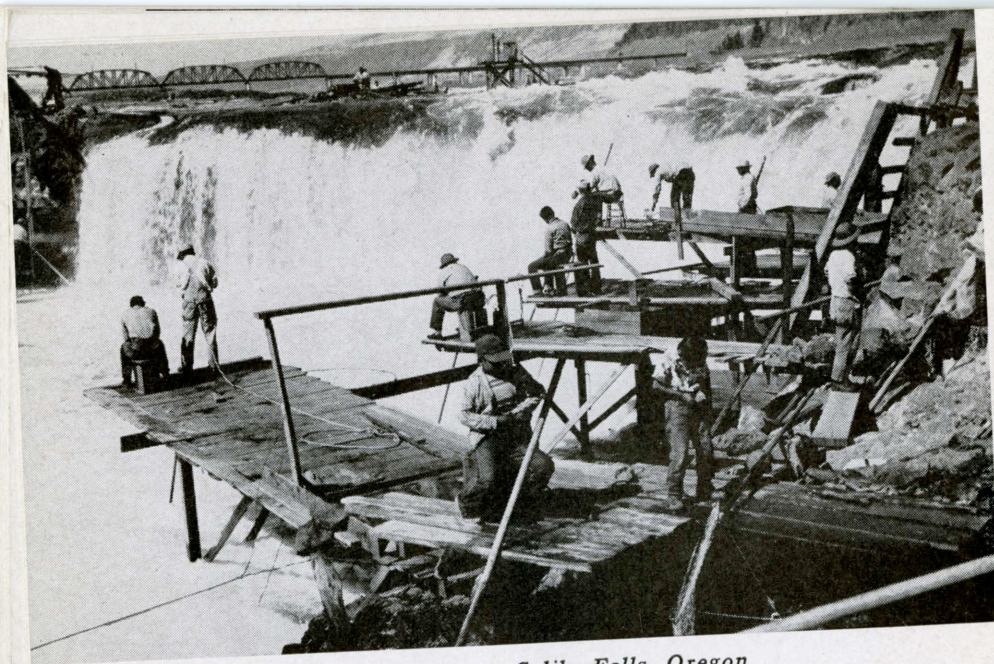
Clothing for the Trading Post is furnished by church groups and interested individuals. An Indian woman has been employed to sell the clothing. She takes great pride in her responsibility and keeps the Trading Post "as neat as a pin." Indians come from all over the Yakima Reservation and from other reservations to purchase this used clothing.

During the summer the Trading Post moves to Celilo Falls, Oregon, where many of the Indians go for salmon fishing. However, the summer of 1955 was probably the last year for this activity. A government dam built near The Dalles, Oregon, and slated for completion in 1956 will end the traditional Indian fishing.

Since the Columbia River is not within the boundaries of the Yakima Reservation, the Treaty of 1855 provided that the Yakima Indians would forever possess the right to fish at their accustomed places on the Columbia River. These sites were located wherever a falls occurs. Here, between May and October, as the red salmon made their way up the river to spawn, the Indians would build platforms over the river and use dip nets to catch the salmon. As the years passed, however, one fishing site after another was taken away from the Indians

Esther Johnson (right), Indian saleswoman, and Mrs. Hoovan, staff member, help Rosie select a dress at the Trading Post.





*Salmon fishing at Celilo Falls, Oregon
Note the dip net at lower right.*

until the only spot left was at Celilo Falls, near The Dalles, Oregon.

A few Indians live at Celilo Falls all year, but during the fishing season other Indians would migrate to this site. At the height of the fishing season 2,500 Indians lived crowded together in shacks and shanties. All was turmoil and confusion. Children were left to fend for themselves while the parents fished. Temptations were great, especially for the young people. Drunkenness and immorality prevailed.

When objectives were set up for the enlarged program designed to help meet the total needs of the Yakima Indians, it was apparent that the mission should undertake some sort of program at Celilo Falls. The Church of God operates a small project there throughout the year, but their facilities and personnel were inadequate to cope with the influx of migrants during the height of the fishing season. They welcomed the suggestion that our mission cooperate with them for four or five weeks during the busiest period of the season.

Two or three of our missionaries would take the mission house trailer with supplies down to Celilo Falls in the summer. The program there consisted primarily of a vacation Bible

school, directed recreation in the afternoons and evenings, preaching services on Sundays and on one other night during the week, a social life program, counseling, and personal evangelism. The program at Celilo Falls gave opportunity for year-round contact with families of children from the mission home. It likewise made many new contacts for the mission.

One day in June, 1950, the Indians were startled when army engineers began work on a dam not far from Celilo Falls. A large irrigation and flood control project had been launched by the government and dams were being constructed in several places along the Columbia River and its tributaries. The Indians had not been consulted before the Celilo Falls dam was begun; nor had treaty rights even been considered.

The Indians sent delegates to Washington, D. C., to try to stop the building of the dam, or to have the location moved a few miles upstream so that it would not destroy the fishing grounds. Mr. Norment joined the Indians in their fight for justice. He aroused Christians across the land to join in the protest. The International Convention of Disciples of Christ meeting in Portland, Oregon, in 1953 voted to ask President Eisenhower to stop the construction work until a satisfactory treaty agreement had been worked out with the Indians.

By the time enough Christians had organized their protest, it was too late to stop the construction of the dam. The government, of course, offered to pay the Indians for the loss of their income. But the Yakima Indians were fighting for more than their source of income. Their way of life and the principle involved in treaty rights were at stake. To them money could not compensate for these other values.

In August, 1953, the tribal council, advised by the tribe's lawyer, called a special meeting of the general council. At this meeting the lawyer convinced the Indians that it was useless to fight any longer. He persuaded them to settle for the thirteen million dollars offered by the government. Most of the fishermen involved were at Celilo Falls fishing and were unable to attend the meeting. They protested the agreement and requested reconsideration. But the government denied their request. The settlement was paid *to the tribe as a whole*, rather than to the Indians individually. Since there are 4,200 Yakima Indians on the reservation, this amount was an average of less than \$3,000 each, although the Indians did not receive the money personally. Some Indians make two or three times that amount in just *one*

fishing season. In good seasons a few make as much as eight or nine thousand dollars each! (Of course, most of the Indians have not yet learned how to manage and spend wisely. Many of them squander their entire summer's income recklessly within a few weeks.)

It was with heavy hearts the Yakimas left Celilo Falls at the end of the 1955 season. The next year their traditional fishing grounds would become flooded. Celilo Falls as a fishing site would be no more. The Yakimas will have to learn new trades and occupations. The missionaries realize that a greater responsibility than ever before will be theirs to help the Yakima Indians adjust to this new life. Thus, while one phase of the expanded program will be discontinued—the program conducted at Celilo Falls—a new challenge opens to the mission staff. The future holds greater opportunities than ever before for serving the Yakima Indians on a reservation-wide scale.

Chapter Six: What the Future Holds

Indian tribes all over the United States are finding themselves in a new relationship both to the government and to their own tribal life as Congress continues to debate laws which will terminate federal supervision of Indian Americans. Before we consider the effect such legislation will have upon the future of the Yakima Indians, it might be well to recognize the part history has played in bringing Indian Americans in general to this crisis point.

We have already noted the effect of the Allotment Act of 1887 which divided reservation land among the Indians and eventually permitted them to sell it. Many unscrupulous non-Indians took advantage of the Indians' unfamiliarity with money or property values and bought this land cheaply. In 1934 the Indian Reorganization Act, introducing a number of reforms, ended this practice. The government took Indian land

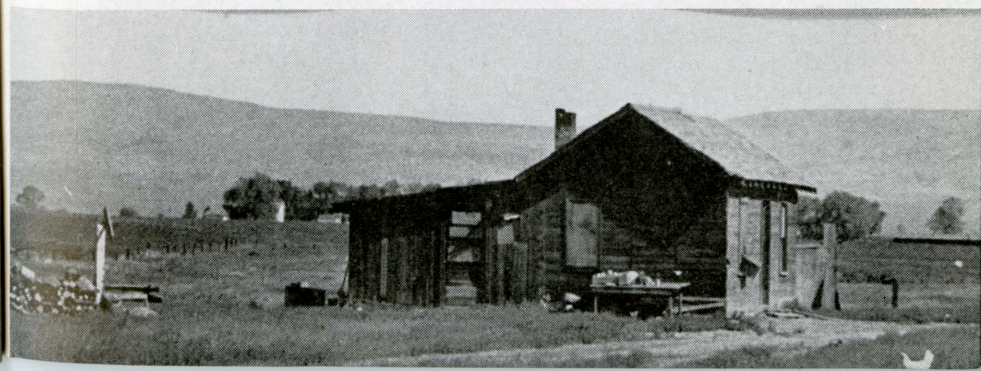
in trust. Some land they purchased and restored to tribal councils for tribal ownership. Under trusteeship Indians must transact any business involving their property through the government Indian Agency. However, when a tribe comes under the new Termination Act, government trusteeship of their land is discontinued. "Released" Indian Americans are able to sell their property, and non-Indians may again take advantage of this opportunity to secure reservation land for their own profit.

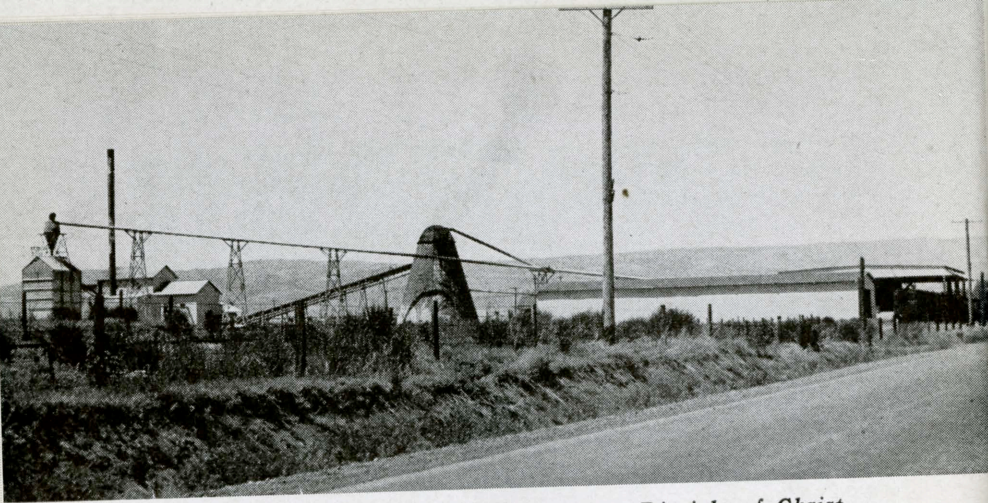
Mr. Norment has been much concerned about the significance of this new legislation. In discussing its bearing upon the Yakima Indians, he has stated: "It is too early to predict with any certainty when the Yakimas will be released from government supervision. All of the Northwest Indians (including the Klamath Tribe of Oregon, which has already been 'terminated'!) are unalterably opposed to 'termination,' unless it be at the end of a preparatory period of from twenty-five to thirty-five years. They feel it will take this long to get the tribes ready for it. If 'termination' comes within the next five years, it will leave the Indians confused and bewildered.

"Under the old allotment system, each Indian was given a certain portion of land, which was divided among his heirs. The heirs of the original allottee have multiplied through the years so that their inheritance is inadequate to provide a living. In some cases the inheritor gets only a few cents as his share of the inheritance.

"During all these years the young people have been clamoring for allotments for themselves. They do not have them. The Yakima Indian Tribal Council, out of the income from tribal timber, grazing, and farm lands, is just now beginning to make an annual per capita payment of a hundred dollars or more to help the young people. The old surviving Indians who have their own property are not too needy; in fact, some of them

A typical reservation home. Note its isolation.





The White Swan sawmill, operated by a Disciple of Christ, seeks to help meet employment needs of Yakima Indians.

are well off. But the younger ones are economically bereft. They have not been trained for vocations, especially the professions, but have shifted and shuffled around as indifferent migrant laborers. A few have found steady employment at the White Swan Lumber Company's sawmill. This employment has become a stabilizing influence for a number of Indian families of the community.

"When 'termination' comes, some are proposing that the Yakima Tribal Council form a corporation under federal laws to hold and administer the tribal lands in the interest of the Indian population living on what is now the Yakima Reservation. The tribal council, of course, can have no control over privately-owned land. This is the land that the leaders fear will be lost if termination comes too soon.

"The Yakimas are not in a situation like that of the Navahos whose land will not support the Indian population. The irrigated area of the Yakima Reservation comprises one of the most fertile agricultural tracts of land in the country. About half of this irrigated reservation land is Indian owned, and the other half is owned by non-Indians. A large number of Indian landowners rent their lands to white farmers."

Looking ahead to the time when termination reaches the Yakima Reservation, Mr. Norment ventures to make some fearful predictions, based upon past experiences and observations.

"My personal opinion," he states, "is that most of the Yakima Indians who own land, when the restrictions on their right to

sell it to whites is removed, will almost immediately dispose of it to non-Indian buyers, just in order to have some ready money to buy cars and TV sets, and to waste in 'riotous living.' The larger part of these Indians will probably be on State Welfare before a year has gone. Enterprising white farmers will move in and possess the lands. They will bring pressure on Congress to appropriate the millions necessary for irrigating the rest of the unirrigated lands in the Yakima Valley. (The Indians have been trying for years, without success, to get the government to do this.) For the past several years oil companies have been prospecting for oil here in the vicinity of the mission. Whatever minerals may lie under the soil, therefore, will be in the possession of non-Indians."

Even now many non-Indians live on the Yakima Reservation, especially in the towns. In 1948 at Toppenish, where the Indian Agency is located, non-Indians outnumbered Indians fifteen to one. At Wapato there were seven non-Indians to every Indian living in the town. Even at White Swan, where the irrigation project does not extend and where fewer white people have been tempted to buy or rent land, the Indians were outnumbered by three to one in 1948. Doubtless the ratio is even higher now. It is probable that these towns will continue to grow and other towns will be established as more non-Indians move onto the reservation. The Indians will find it more and more difficult to live on the open reservation and, despite their wishes, will find themselves in or near towns. Reservation life as such will eventually disappear.

Those who know the Yakimas well do not expect them to leave their reservation in great numbers to seek employment in urban areas. Since most of the Yakimas avoid the towns *on* the reservation, it is not likely that many of them will rush to the large cities *off* the reservation. Of course, as the young men

Mrs. Buckner, U.C.M.S., and Mr. Norment, talking with land agent at the Indian Agency in Toppenish



who are drafted into the army get a taste of off-reservation life, they may be less satisfied to live on the native lands again. These boys, like the ex-servicemen of most Indian tribes, will undoubtedly be among the first to leave their reservation life and move to the cities. But the greatest responsibility of the Disciples of Christ to Yakima Indians will be *on* the reservation itself.

Mr. Norment adds: "When this present generation of old Indians dies off, the younger ones will gradually feel themselves more a part of the general community life. But there will be many casualties in the process. It will not be easy for the Indians to make the adjustment readily. Our expanded program is more necessary now than ever before."

Just what does the future hold so far as this expanded program is concerned? Of the objectives in this program, the church and the parsonage are perhaps the closest to complete realization. The parsonage is slated for completion in late 1955. The church was formally organized soon after Easter, the same year. Now that the Yakima Indians are welcoming this new church, it is important that Mr. Norment be released from some of his present responsibilities in order to devote more of his time to evangelism and church activities. This can be accomplished only by providing additional personnel.

Fellowship Hall, the basement of the church, is already the center of much social activity, especially among the youth. This hall will be the only recreation center on this part of the reservation until such time as the mission may have a separate building for that purpose. Folk from the community are being attracted to it already. A neighbor gave money for the purchase of shoe roller skates for the young people to use in Fellowship Hall. Another gave a good shuffleboard set. One of the most gratifying and promising outcomes of this recreational program is that the Indian young people are inviting some of their white neighbors to participate in the social events held here.

Fellowship Hall is neither large enough nor high enough for basketball or volleyball practice. However, the mission staff hopes in the future to lay out an athletic field in the vicinity of the church. This field will be used also for baseball, football, and other sports. Some day there may even be a gymnasium at the Indian Community Center!

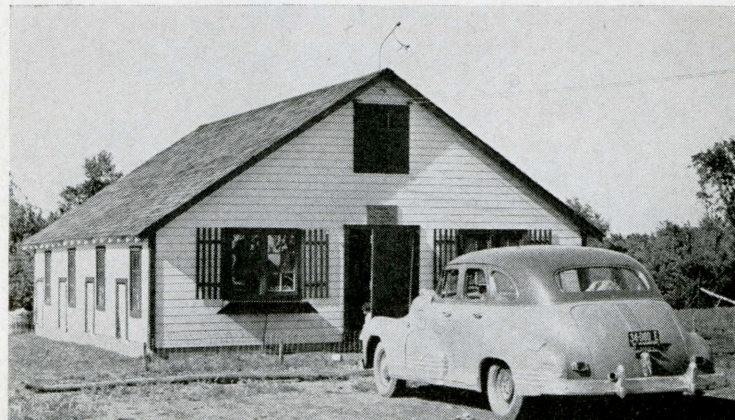
The next building that should be erected, just as soon as

possible, is a separate clinic building. At the present time, the only other medical care provided for the Yakimas is at the Indian Agency at Toppenish, twenty miles away from our mission. A nurse there attends patients who come to the Agency. She refers serious cases to a local doctor, or sends critically ill patients to the Toppenish Hospital. A dentist is maintained at the Agency on a part-time basis. Of course, in the case of "termination" this help will be abolished along with the Agency. There will consequently be a much greater demand for medical and dental services at our mission clinic. This health service can become one of the most important phases of the mission community center program.

All of the buildings in the new Indian Community Center will eventually be located in the section of the mission property where the new church has been erected. The church building is situated near the road, while the buildings of the children's home are set in an arc-like arrangement away from the road. The Trading Post therefore will someday be moved from the grounds of the children's home and rebuilt at the community center site. Not only should the new Trading Post building contain a clothing store, but it should provide shower baths, both for men and for women. There should also be laundrette automatic washers here where, for a small charge, the Indians may come to do their laundry, since many of the Yakimas still do not have any water on their property.

Another of the objectives of the enlarged program for the Yakima Indian Christian Mission is the development of arts and crafts. Mr. Norment remarks: "Basket weaving and beadwork have been important in the past life of the tribe, but have never been developed as a source of income for the families.

The mission Trading Post at present is housed in an attractively converted farm building.



seek to increase our service to the Yakima Indians through our support of this mission. We can do no less than this. Yet, as we recognize the present crisis facing Indian Americans throughout the country, we realize that this is not enough. We have a responsibility to Indian Americans living on other reservations and in urban areas in both the United States and Canada. Disciples of Christ help to meet the needs of these other Indians as we cooperate with other Christians in work beyond the Yakima Reservation.

Conclusion:

Disciples Beyond the Reservation

The Indians are coming to town! They do not come on swift horses. They are not wearing war paint. They do not even take us by ambush nor surprise us with a shrill war whoop. Indeed, they come quietly, almost hesitantly, some of them even full of fear or dread. Many of them are leaving their reservations, their old ways of life. They are accustomed to a close-knit community. The impersonal life of the city, the rush and rebuff experienced by city dwellers, add to their difficulty in adjusting to the strangeness of this new environment.

Some come with expectation and high hopes. They have tired of trying unsuccessfully to make an adequate living from arid reservation land. Others have been associated with non-Indians in schools and covet the opportunities of employment or higher education in the cities. Many have served with the armed forces, have had a taste of off-reservation life, and find the old customs divorced from their new way of life. These who come with anticipation often become disillusioned when they are not received well in the city.

There are those who have quietly been living in the city for a long time. Some have become an integral part of the general community life so that few people realize they are of Indian American ancestry. Others have stayed together in their own

little communities, often unnoticed or unaided by their non-Indian neighbors living in the main communities of the city.

Today there are few sections of either the United States or Canada without Indian American residents. Their population has multiplied until in many parts of both countries they have had to leave their reservations in order to survive. The new "termination" laws in the United States are forcing many others to seek new methods of earning a living. Christians must help those who are having difficulty making a satisfactory adjustment.

Disciples of Christ have no organized work through The United Christian Missionary Society among Indians in urban areas of the United States and Canada. Yet, since we cooperate with the National Council of Churches, we share in an urban ministry. Our share is primarily financial, but some persons in communities where such work exists have given of their time, talent, and service as well. Through the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches we help financially to provide religious work directors in thirteen off-reservation government boarding schools for Indian children and youth. Through this program over 5,000 Protestant Indian boys and girls are receiving Christian training. Others from non-Christian backgrounds are being won to Christ through the religious program conducted in these schools. Some Disciples who live near these schools volunteer their services to teach in the week-day religious education classes held for the children. Others invite Indian children into their homes during vacation periods, or for informal visits during the school term. Through such contacts both the Indian child and the host family learn to appreciate each other's culture. The child also learns to adjust more quickly to modern society.

*Disciples cooperate
with the American
Bible Society in
translating the
Bible into
Indian
American
languages*



World Day of Prayer funds help to support these religious directors and their program. They also help to train Indian leaders at the interdenominationally-sponsored Cook Christian Training School in Phoenix, Arizona. This is the only school devoted entirely to training Christian Indian youth for religious vocations.

Whether we live in urban or rural areas, we share in the interdenominational ministry to the vast numbers of Indians living in Rapid City, South Dakota; Phoenix, Arizona; and Minneapolis, Minnesota. The National Council, through our help, maintains Christian Centers in these cities to serve reservation Indians newly come to the city in search of jobs. Services of these centers include help with employment opportunities, housing, personal problems; contact with established churches, social agencies, the community; provision for recreation, fellowship, vocational training, and numerous other activities.

Many other projects the National Council sponsors in this field. Individual Christians have a share in ministering to Indian Americans when they support this interdenominational work. We need to increase our financial support of these projects by giving more to the World Day of Prayer offering and through contributing more to the United Society, whose budget helps to maintain the National Council work.

In addition to cooperating with national organizations concerned with the welfare of Indian Americans, each of us has a *personal* responsibility to our Indian brethren. We should personally discover whether or not there are Indian Americans in our community. We must make sure our church doors and our homes are open to them. Our local churches should extend to them the hand of Christian fellowship and understanding. If there is organized work among Indian Americans in our community, we should support it and cooperate with those conducting the program. We may be needed to volunteer our services in such a work.

Furthermore, each Christian should become aware of the problems facing Indians in both the United States and Canada. In this pamphlet we have discussed primarily the status of Indians in the United States. Yet Canadian Christians will find a challenge in their own country if they study the needs and conditions of Indian Canadians. For example, in Canada the ma-

majority of the Indians are not yet Canadian citizens. Many persons feel that the Indian Act, although amended in 1953, is still unsatisfactory. Information from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration, Ottawa, Ontario, will help to alert Canadian citizens to conditions existing in Canada.

In the United States, it is of primary importance that Christians act *now* to prevent the passing of many termination bills which can prove harmful to the future of Indian Americans. Every Christian should know what these bills are and work with others to assure that the Indians' interest will be served by such laws.

Religious journals, especially *The Christian Century*, will report congressional actions concerning Indians. Our own Disciples of Christ *Social Action Newsletter* will alert Christians to major bills which will affect Indian Americans adversely. Program and study materials prepared for the mission study theme "Indian Americans" list names of national organizations working for the welfare of Indian Americans. By working together, Christians may turn the course of history. The initial responsibility for action, however, rests upon the *individual* Christian.

Let us remember that as we serve Indian Americans, whether through the Disciple-sponsored work at Yakima or as individual Christians, we are joining hands with fellow Christians across the continent. Therefore, because the challenge is great and the opportunity unlimited, "Let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men."

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