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DENOMINATIONAL REORGANIZATION

LIVE organizations are continually looking for new methods and readjustments which will eliminate friction in operation and waste of time and money, and will increase efficiency and the spirit of cheerful cooperation. Various denominations have reorganized along different lines with these ends in view. The Methodists (North) first united and then divided their home and foreign mission departments. They now have fifteen boards and commissions to do their work and have recently established a General Council of Boards of Benevolence with an executive Committee on Conservation and Advance, with headquarters in Chicago. The Southern Methodists have a Commission to study a plan for the consolidation of their numerous boards. The Northern Baptist Convention has established a General Board of Promotion made up of representatives from the various Boards of the Church. The Congregationalists not long ago readjusted and united some home mission agencies. The Protestant Episcopal Church carries on all work under one general board called "The Presiding Bishop and Council." The United Presbyterians, recently voted on a reorganization of their Boards. The Presbyterian Church (North), which, a few years ago organized a New Era Movement to bind together the promotion work of all its seventeen boards and committees, has now taken a more radical step calling for a reorganization of practically all its philanthropic and missionary agencies. This action was taken with a view to simplifying the work and in the hope of greater unity, economy and efficiency. What the results will actually be can only be conjectured.

According to the new plan the seventeen Presbyterian boards and agencies will be brought under four reorganized boards, namely:

1. The Board of Foreign Missions, which absorbs the Woman's Board of Foreign Missions, and allots to women fifteen of the forty members.
2. The Board of National Missions which is "to extend the Gospel of Christ in all its fulness, and the service of Christ in all its implications."

A Mission in the Arctic Circle

The Story of Work in the Frozen North, at Barrow, Alaska

BY F. H. SPENCE, M.D.

Missionary of the Presbyterian Board, U. S. A.

PERHAPS there is no country as little understood as Alaska. The original meaning of the word is "Great Country," and this very greatness of extent of territory, as well as the great abundance of its resources, causes it to be misunderstood. Many people think of it as a land of snow and ice and a good place to avoid. The large number of explorers and ships lost along its northern coast and the regions beyond and north of Canada, have contributed not a little to the thought of an inhospitable country under the rule of a Frost King terrible and unrelenting, and of a rigor that makes one tremble and shiver at its very mention. We are inclined to be skeptical when we read of "The Friendly Arctic," even by as renowned an explorer as Mr. Stefansson. Of a land of flowers and ferns, of a land of beauty and grandeur, of a land where fruits and vegetables and grains grow, and in parts of which the temperature reaches one hundred degrees above zero, most people know little.

The native people are very different in the southern part from those in the north. All of southeastern Alaska is inhabited by Indians very much like the Indians of the States. They live as far north as the Yukon, the great river, but north of that are the Eskimo, an entirely different people, Asiatic in appearance, in manners and customs. The old school books frequently speak of them as "Little Brown People." They are neither little nor brown, at least in that part of Alaska to the south and east of Barrow. They are about the average size of white people. All the members of the session of the Presbyterian Church at Barrow were larger than the average man of the States, and were not of exceptional size as compared to the rest of their people. They are brunettes in complexion, having black hair and eyes and tanning by the wind and sun. Neither do they "live in ice houses or eat blubber." They live in frame houses of three thicknesses of lumber and two thicknesses of building paper and they burn the blubber for fuel. The fuel problem is acute, causing overcrowding and making a hotbed for tuberculosis, almost our only disease. They would have perished long ago but for the fact that they are hunters and trappers and do not live in their houses long at a time as all the family go on the trail.

Every family has a dog team and a sled. There are from five to nine dogs in a team usually, according to how wealthy the family is.

One dog is trained as a leader to go by "gee" and "haw." Usually the man who owns the sled has made it and it is a work of art as well as a very necessary part of every Eskimo's family equipment. The man goes to the trader and buys an oak plank about two inches thick and ten inches wide and fourteen feet long. From this plank he makes his sled by hand with a cross cut and rip saw, a plane and a chisel. The largest piece is the runner, about an inch and a half wide and about a half inch thick. He makes a steam chest by soldering together two five gallon oil or gasoline cans. He steams his runner in this and bends it around a form he has previously made or borrowed. The sled is about eighteen inches wide and from ten to thirteen feet long. Such a sled will last for years and do the work to help support a family. I doubt very much whether the same proportion of white people could make that sled. This is simply one illustration to show you these people have brains.

The first missionary went to Barrow in 1890. The Eskimo say "It is only thirty years since we knew Jesus." Some of our old men still wear the "labrette" made of hard stone like flint or jade, in the shape of a small cuff button and worn in the corners of the mouth. I have seen "labrettes" about two inches long and narrow made to be inserted in the under lip clear across the chin. None of the younger or middle aged men wear these now. Many of the old women used to tattoo lines down their chin. When we asked what they were for the reply was "When you see that, she is a woman."

These people used to be under the power of the "Devil Doctor." If any misfortune came to them or they were sick, it was because they had offended the devil and they had to employ the "Devil Doctor" to help them. Now the "Devil Doctor" has lost his sway under the light of the Gospel. When Mrs. Spence and I first went to Barrow we noticed the children were seldom or never punished. In olden time when anyone died, it was thought that their spirit went into the body of the next child that was born, so they were afraid to punish the child. There were some strange medical customs in existence still when we went to Barrow. One of them was cutting for pain if it was not otherwise relieved in a short time. We had a stereopticon and slides on tuberculosis and gave talks on hygiene and sanitation. One time a young lady had a gathering on her face and before we knew it they cut her. Then to appease me they threw the knife in the fire supposing that would dispose of the germs.

The first year we were there an old lady was taken with severe pain over her eye and she sent for one of the knife doctors. He made a deep vertical cut over the eye clear down to the bone and when she began to lose her sight they were frightened and brought her to me. Too much valuable time had been lost and she lost the sight of both eyes. Another medical method we found, was deep massage, especially for pain that persisted in the abdomen. One

of our mail carriers that went three times every winter six hundred miles down the coast to bring us our winter mails, returned with acute miliary tuberculosis and had a very irritable stomach. Nothing I could do would quiet it. One day Mrs. Spence found some one using deep massage and the man died soon after. These things were given up long before we came away. When we went to Barrow, the first year we had many cases of continued fever, but when we told them to call us as soon as they were taken sick, they did so and we had no more cases of that kind.

Eskimo people are a very happy hearted people. One of the explorers who has lived among them for years says, "They laugh more in a month than a white man does in a year." They taught us many lessons in patience and courtesy. They have remarkable powers of concentration and whatever they have to do they exercise this principle, "This one thing I do." It is wonderful to see them studying a page of the Bible. You can not divert their attention to any thing else until that is understood. The new nurse who went up last summer wrote, "They are the most honest people I ever knew." While there were large amounts of coal on the beach and the people were suffering for fuel, not a sack was taken.

Mrs. Spence and I worked for over five years to get a hospital for these people afflicted with tuberculosis and a disease brought to them by the white man many years ago. We had to come out because of a physical breakdown just as our hopes were about to be realized. There is at Barrow now a fully equipped modern hospital, the only hospital and doctor within a radius of six hundred miles. Dr. Henry W. Geist and wife, of Monticello, Ind., and Miss Florence Dakin of the Harlem, New York, Presbyterian Church, a trained nurse are now there. The last letters were written after they had been there a little over two months. Already between three and four hundred cases had passed through the hospital and there had been a number of operations performed. One operation was on the wife of the doctor for the Mounted Police of Canada, who was living at Herschel Island. His wife was confined last May and had been bed-ridden ever since. When the doctor heard there was a hospital and doctor at Barrow, he put his wife on a stretcher and carried her aboard a ship and brought her to Barrow. Dr. Geist performed three surgical operations in October and for the first time since last May the doctor's wife was sitting up and beginning to walk around and rapidly recovering. Miss Dakin is the only nurse and the hospital is full. There is a great need of a second nurse and a housekeeper. If these are not sent this summer Miss Dakin will break down as Mrs. Spence and I broke down and she will have to come out as did we. In one of the letters received in February from a young Eskimo mother are these words, "I love my Saviour and I really know He loves me." Can you think of anything more worth while than that?