



Services Bulletin

"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

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Memorials to C.P.S. Mental Hospital Service

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It is too early to make a thorough evaluation of the far-reaching implications resulting from C.P.S. mental hospital service. To most assignees the discovery of the generally low standards and the atrocious practices employed in many of the state institutions came as a shock. The immediate and obvious Christian obligation was to achieve higher standards on a personal or unit basis. Oral and written testimonies of hospital superintendents indicate that this was achieved in part.

Along with this immediate objective was a growing conviction that something lasting should be accomplished. By this time at least two important developments have evolved which may well be the outstanding memorials to C.P.S. mental hospital service.

We might name, first, the National Mental Health Foundation. This organization was conceived in a Pennsylvania State Hospital unit and today constitutes an incorporated service which supplies hospital attendants with educational material, informs the

public of facts on mental health, and urges mental institutional reform on a national basis. Documented material collected during C.P.S. is the basis for the book, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind," published by this group. This material compiled by Frank L. Wright, former Educational Director of M.C.C. Greystone Park hospital unit, gives a true and vivid picture of current mental hospital conditions.

A second development concerns the Mennonite churches, primarily. This is the development of the M.C.C. mental hospital program. In many respects the situation as found in mental hospitals was a commentary on the general apathy of the Mennonite churches along with most other Christian churches toward the mentally ill. The C.P.S. hospital assignees with their vivid experiences found a ready audience in congregations, with pastors, and interested laymen. Church leaders who were already aware of this situation found it stimulating to have the support of hundreds of young men in facing so difficult a problem.

The Mental Health Service of the M.C.C. has been charged with the task of research and preparatory work which looks eventually to the establishing and operation of several mental hospitals. The M.C.C. was first approached in 1945 by one of the major Mennonite conferences offering to co-operate if M.C.C. would take the initiative in establishing a mental hospital service. A year later another conference body pledged its support in a similar way.

Upon receiving the overtures from these conference bodies, the M.C.C. appointed a committee to make preliminary studies of the need for mental hospitals, and to determine the degree of interest in the problem on the part of the church leaders. The men appointed were Bro. P. C. Hiebert, Bro. H. S. Bender, and Bro. Robert Kreider.

An interim report given at the annual M.C.C. meeting in December, 1945, indicated an unquestionable need for a mental hospital program and an overwhelming potential interest on behalf of the ministers to approach the problem in a constructive way.

Progressive study reports and M.C.C. action constitute the major develop-



C.P.S. men found many places of service in state mental hospitals. This scene shows C.P.S. men helping in the treatment of a mental patient. The experience of Mennonite young men in the various forms of therapy and treatment is a valuable asset to the program of our church in the care and treatment of the mentally ill.

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ments to this point. A seven-man Planning and Advisory Committee composed of lay and professional men was appointed early in 1947. The committee together with representative ex-C.P.S. hospital men has been instrumental in studying the problems of hospital organization, construction, and administration. It has further served in recommending to M.C.C. the type and scope of facilities to be provided and in what areas these are to be initiated.

At this time the planning provides for a 23-bed hospital at Leitersburg, Maryland, a 30-bed hospital in California, and some type of facilities in the Mid-western area. These programs are in various phases of development.

Leitersburg has experienced the earliest attention. The site for this first hospital is that of the former C.P.S. Camp No. 24, Unit I, Hagerstown, Maryland. The camp farm, owned by the M.C.C., is a 105-acre farm in rolling western Maryland and is particularly well adapted for a hospital location. It is also well suited for the diversified farming program which will accompany the hospital operations. The farm is near Hagerstown, a thriving city of 35,000. The Washington County Health Department at Hagerstown has pledged the full co-operation of its technical facilities and the modern hospital services and facilities of Washington County are also available for our utilization. An administrator, a nurses' supervisor, and a

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psychiatrist on a part-time basis have already been engaged.

The sense of direction in which way the M.C.C. shall proceed in this program is gained in various ways. The representatives of the various churches of the M.C.C., interested ex-C.P.S. men, and church leaders who are contacted in various ways along with official conference action of the several bodies referred to above all serve to register their convictions.

In the development of the mental hospital program there has been a constant searching for the will of the Lord in this vast and difficult undertaking. There has been little room for discouragement as doors have opened to make normal developments possible.

It is hoped that the churches will recognize this step as a means of fuller Christian service to the brotherhood in that those who are afflicted will find it easier to bear their burdens mutually. It is further hoped that the ex-C.P.S. men, those who served in mental hospitals as well as those who served in alternate projects, will feel a sense of accomplishment as well as a responsibility toward the entire program. Leitersburg, particularly, should stand out as a memorial, being constructed on a C.P.S. site.

There has already been a favorable response from ex-C.P.S. men. The early encouragement from men who have convictions on this problem, the attendance at various meetings, the response which has already been received in answer to a call for construction laborers and carpenters at Leitersburg, the response which has already reached us in reply to the need for operational personnel, and not least, the report from a young ex-C.P.S. man who stated that he wished to give of his tithes to this project, are several examples.

A "Homes-for-Mentally-Ill Establishment and Support Fund" was opened early this year to receive

To Ex-C.P.S. Men

A Parable of Two Demobilized Men

There came in the year 1945 a time when two C.P.S. hospital men were bidden "farewell" by their comrades at the hospital. And unto their respective ways they went. The first was quick to forget the high roads he had followed and the good lessons learned in C.P.S. There he had shown sympathy for his brother C.O. who needed his encouragement and his aid. But when this first demobilized man went to his 160 acres he was so thrilled with his new and huge earnings that he could not hear the cry of the starving millions across the ocean; nor could he understand his minister's plea for repentance . . . or for sharing . . . or for wound-binding . . . or for soul-winning. He was absorbed in his own little world of security for himself and family. And he thought he was happy. But later great and long was his sorrow.

The second C.O. likewise was demobilized and he too went to his father's farm. His heart was grieved as he heard his minister describe the suffering abroad. He resolved to work hard and give all he could so that his church could feed the hungry. He visited with his minister often and was eager to learn what he could do to advance the kingdom of God on earth. And often this second C.O. could be found serving his fellow men—making a playground for the Mexican children in the slums near by, clearing the ground for a church youth camp, serving in activities of the church, going out of his way to help his neighbor with his crops, standing by those who were ridiculed by the dominating folks, urging that the church have a committee to provide mutual aid in their congregation, helping the young folks start a God's Acre, or sending clothes and food overseas for the needy. Such was his attitude in all things. He was not among the richest of the community, but his needs and those of his family were provided. And great was his joy all the days of his life.

As we leave the way of life we have known for two years or more, we are stepping out of the isolated and protected existence of many close friendships, into a colder atmosphere. We will miss the satisfaction of outpouring ourselves in service such as the hospital situation offers.

But let us not pause more than a brief second in the despair of pessimism. Christian groups, a hundred times in history, have faced impossible futures. Where they have kept close to God, faithful in prayer, loyal to each other—always loving, they have been victorious.—Hubert Moore.

Farnhurst C.P.S. Reunion

The Farnhurst C.P.S. Alumni fellowshipped together in a two-day reunion held on August 23, 24 at "Camp Kidron," Kidron, Ohio. Attendance was 45 men, 28 wives, and 13 children, making a total of 86 family members present. These 45 fellows gave us a 60 per cent representation of the total number of men who served in C.P.S. Unit No. 58. The nice feature of this reunion was that since outside help was secured for serving the meals, the wives were able to enjoy the little vacation also.—Ralph W. Hartzler, Secy.

financial contributions toward the program. Gifts sent to Akron designated for this purpose will be credited to this fund. These gifts and any contributions of labor during the construction of the various facilities in the respective areas will be received "In the Name of Christ."