

Compassion Head Here

'Love in Action' Aids Hapless Kids

By Kim Suk-hyon

With just a week to go until the silver anniversary of Compassion, Dr. Wallace H. Erickson, visiting president of the agency, said yesterday that "Compassion" is a "love in action" group to help unfortunate children reach their full potential bestowed by God.

What he stressed is that this help should go beyond financial assistance. A one-to-one relationship between sponsors and children under its program is interwoven with the exchange of prayers and writings which can transcend physical distance and time, he said.

Living up to Christian teachings, the Compassion family is now sponsoring 35,000 needy children in 24 countries.

"We thank God for blessing us to celebrate the 25th anniversary and to enable us to expand our program from Korea to 24 countries," said the president.

The Compassion campaign was initiated during the height of the Korean War in 1952 by the Rev. Everett Swanson, who had been sympathetic about the plight of thousands of war-orphans on Korean streets during his service here as a U.S. army chaplain. The name of the organization, "Compassion," was borrowed from the Bible which uses the word to describe the sacred feeling Jesus Christ had toward the multitudes.

In the last 25 years, more than \$25 million have been poured into Korean programs which include the sponsorship of less privileged children, support of pioneer Christian workers, granting of scholarships and medical aid.

Currently, the benefit of sponsorship program is extended to 11,000 children at



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social institutes and homes. "Now, we are more concerned about helping poor mothers with children. Otherwise, children of such mothers may be abandoned or institutionalized," Dr. Erickson said.

Concerning the future of Compassion projects in Korea, he hinted that they may be scaled down in line with the development of the Korean economy. But he brushed aside the possibility of terminating Korean

programs. "We will be continuously concerned about the Korean people within the limit of our capacity," he said, identifying himself as part of Korea. Dr. Erickson served as the field director for the Korean office from 1968 through 1972.

During his service here, he helped the support of 21,000 children and initiated medical and scholarship programs. In recognition of his outstanding service in Korea, President Park Chung Hee presented the Order of Civil Merit, Mongnyon, to him in 1970.

According to him, 62 U.S. family members of Compassion will come to Seoul today in order to join the celebration of the silver anniversary. Among them will be Gustav A. Hemwall, chairman of its board of directors and Mrs. Swanson, widow of its founder who concurrently serves as vice chairman of the board. An official ceremony to celebrate the anniversary will be held at Yongbingwan Friday afternoon and will be followed by a grand dinner Saturday.

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