

To Help Needy Children

Compassion Korea Office Pursues Family Projects

By Hoag Son-hi



Wallace H. Erickson

mostly managed by local staffs headed by local deputy directors nowadays. Across the world, there are three Western field directors in charge of regional management, dispatched from the headquarter in Chicago.

"But we don't have a lot of flexibility in our programs because we must work in the interests of the donors and the interests of the receiving ones," Erickson revealed.

The Compassion Korea Office's present record shows that it has brought in more than \$25 million in cash to help needy children since 1952.

The office has promoted health conditions of children in welfare establishments and in needy families with regular health checks, vitamin supply, skin disease treatment, and vermicide apply.

It also works to help children with higher education through middle and high schools, and colleges. Presently, secondary-school students benefiting by this program number about 250, and collegians 15.

To join in the celebration of the Korea office's silver jubilee, Gustav A. Hemwall, board chairman, and Mrs. Miriam Swanson, deputy chairman came here last Sunday with 61 Compassion sponsors from the United States and Canada.

They were visiting orphanages in Taegu, Chungmu, Kwangju, and Pusan to meet the children whom they have sponsored during their eight-day visit.

The visiting representative of a U.S.-based child care agency has suggested spiritual support be more stressed than material help for needy children.

Wallace H. Erickson, president of Compassion in Chicago, Ill., also said that "the best thing for children was to be kept "within family units with love and care."

With this belief, Compassion Korea Office has newly started a program called family project, helping needy children within family units.

About 5,000 children in 2,500 families are being helped by compassion along with 6,427 children in 96 children's homes, baby homes, widows' homes, blind persons' homes, deaf-mute homes, and leper homes at present.

In the past years when there were so many orphaned and abandoned children after the Korean War, the office worked for the children accommodated in social welfare establishments.

"Visiting Korea in 1952 during the Korean War, Rev. Everett Swanson was deeply moved by thousands of orphaned children who were left on the streets struggling to survive.

"Returning to the States, Rev. Swanson initiated Compassion, a program to bring support and Christian love to these suffering little ones." Erickson explained the start of the Compassion just a quarter century ago.

Today, Compassion's worldwide ministry reaches over 32,000 sponsored children in 24 countries, including children who have families as well as those who are abandoned and orphaned.

More than 25,000 people in the United States, Canada, Britain, and Australia give \$15

each a month to help provide these 32,000 children with supplementary food, clothing, school fees, and medical care, and "moreover hope and love," according to Erickson.

The Compassion president remarked that a child and his or her sponsor develop their own special, one-to-one relationship through exchanging letters, photos, and prayers.

Some helpers sponsor several children at the same time, or continue assisting the same children for more than 20 years according to Erickson, who served as field director of the Korea office during 1968-72.

He said, "There are people who try to adopt the children they sponsor. But, we tell them the best way for the children is to live as Koreans in Korean society."

Asked if there was a possibility of reducing operations in Korea with its growing economy, Erickson disclosed that the Compassion Korea Office would maintain the same level of operation as previous activities but place emphasis on family help programs.

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