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## The Need Is Great: A Plea for the Missions from Holidays for Humanity

Catholic Physicians' Guilds

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## The Need Is Great

At no time in the history of this world has there been a greater need for the dedicated interest, concern and labors of every member of the human race, for its own good. By the will of the Father, we live in the era of total responsibility—wherein every human being worthy of the name must truly say “I am my brother’s keeper.” We can no longer disconnect ourselves from the needs of our half-sick and half-starved brothers scattered about this planet; we are in truth responsible for the 10,000 human beings who daily starve to death, and the thousands of startling statistics that are capable of disturbing the peaceful waters of our self-centered lives.

I suspect that every physician at some time or other has wondered about the possibility of spending some time in foreign medical service. Perhaps the work of Dr. Schweitzer, or the books of Dr. Dooley, or the story of the Dr. Joe Foust family have disturbed our apathy sufficiently to raise the spectre of possible participation in the many needs of mankind. The thought too often is dismissed as one would dismiss a spectre—instantly—by the protecting logic that I don’t know how to go about it, or whom would you contact, or they don’t even have showers. I

would like to point out to every physician, that in all honesty, if he is capable of taking a holiday or vacation, then absolutely and without reservation, he is capable of spending some time in productive medical work in some medically indigent area of some foreign country.

The medical program for Huehuetenango is a living reality. It is just one of the many excellent programs in Guatemala which are supervised and guided by missionary groups in conjunction with the Guatemalan medical profession. It is possible for any qualified physician or dentist to cooperate within these programs and to correct some of the many needs of the areas served. We will show the relative ease of arranging for any qualified American physician to accomplish this for any specified length of time in his future. All that he need do is commit himself—to serve humanity in this manner—and it will be done. A letter written to one of the contacts listed at the end of this article will initiate a chain of events which will lead to the most unforgettable and rewarding experiences of his lifetime.

The country of Guatemala is just one country away from us in Central America. It is easily accessible via two hours of jet flight from Houston, New Or-

leans or Miami to Guatemala City, the capital. A short 30 minute DC-3 flight from Guatemala City on Aviateca Airlines brings you to Huehuetenango, the state capital of the departamento or state of Huehuetenango. Here is located Maryknoll Centro where you check in to begin your period of medical service. There is also located in the town a government hospital with Guatemalan physicians in attendance where patients may be referred for hospitalization when necessary; Sisters of The Incarnate Word have been acting as hospital administrators for the past year.

A two-hour trip by car through glorious mountains rising to altitudes of 12,000 feet brings you to Soloma, the first medical center on this, the "Mountain Circuit." It is a lovely community nestled far back in the Guatemalan highlands. A well-equipped clinic has been built and the daily patient load will vary from 50 to 100, and for lack of a physician these patients are usually seen by an American nurse. Here, the physician has his work cut out for him; he will serve these people in the general practice of medicine, and will have the opportunity to teach the American nurse and possibly the local native paramedical people. A medical residence is being built which will provide excellent living quarters during the week that the physician and his family will usually stay.

Upon being relieved by the doctor following on the "circuit," our physician drives for about an hour to the next stop which is the lovely town of San Miguel. Here, the set-up is almost

identical with Soloma, in that there is a clinic without a doctor and excellent living quarters. He will truly be fulfilling a great need during the week that he will usually reside there.

The next stop is the isolated town of Jacaltenango. It is about a four-hour horse trip through some of the most gorgeous real-estate you will ever see. Here the American Maryknoll Missionaries have built a large clinic and 40-bed hospital to service this isolated valley with its 75,000 people. An American doctor, Sister Rose Cordis, M.I. is there most of the time, and facilities are being developed so that there is the opportunity for doctors with specialty surgical talents to operate. When it is known that a doctor with a specific talent or specialty is due into Jacaltenango, then months ahead the process of collecting appropriate patients for him to treat will have been arranged and the maximum fruit will be realized from his time and talent. A week will usually be arranged at Jacaltenango, with excellent living accommodations at the medical residence. Upon being relieved and leaving here, a number of possible routes can be taken to return to Huehuetenango and so-called "civilization." One can retrace his previous steps, or if a new route is preferred, exit can be made through the towns of San Antonio Hoista and Providencia. All in all, it will be a wonderful experience in seeing the beauty of creation.

For those who may rightfully be disenchanted by the thought of spending several hours on horseback traveling through

rugged mountains, another area of medical service is available which is affectionately called the "Downtown Circuit." As all service, it begins at Maryknoll Centro in Huehuetenango, and one travels by car up the Pan-American highway for about two hours to the area of San Pedro Necta. Here, a complete busy clinic is available for the good doctor's management, together with excellent living quarters. Plans are underway for the construction of a 50-bed hospital adjacent to the clinic for total medical care.

A letter written to any one of the following individuals will produce more specific information about this program and other programs which are available for your possible participation. In the name of humanity we ask that you consider committing yourself to one month at some time in the future, or for whatever length of time you can manage. It may not be until 1964, or 65 or 66, but at least it will be some time that you can give and which can constitute a small but very important part of the overall medical program for this part of the world. It must be kept in mind that all expenses on such short-term medical work are met by the individual doc-

tor, that he will make a reasonable remuneration on a per-diem basis for living expenses incurred and for arranged transportation. However, these expenses are not excessive and are acceptably tax-deductible according to the Internal Revenue Service.

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