

Alaskans Convene in Golovin

Annual Session Recalls Eighty Years of Labor

FOR 14 FAMILIES to host 175 guests seems like an almost impossible task, but that is what took place the first week of last month in the village of Golovin in Alaska's Norton Sound. There the little Covenant church was the scene of the annual meeting of the Alaska Covenant Conference.

The villagers prepared for the meeting with enthusiasm. They built in addition to their church—working in sub-zero temperatures, strong winds, and blowing snow. They borrowed extra benches from the White Mountain church 15 miles away and transported them by snow machines. They bought new hymn books. They put in a supply of fish, reindeer meat, berries, and greens. They secured a building being remodeled as a store for sleeping space. And they even saw to such a detail as cellophane-and-ribbon name tags.

The countdown on how the 175 persons who were the objects of these preparations got to Golovin reads like this: 2 by skis, 6 by dog teams, 49 by snow machines, and the

Norman Barram. As at all such sessions, testimonies had an important part as did the eagerly anticipated choir numbers sung by each village.

Guest speaker was the Rev. Emory E. Lindgren, the recently installed pastor of the Turlock, California, Covenant church who is chairman of the denomination's board of missions and a former Alaska missionary. "His messages were an inspiration," reports Superintendent Barram, "and the Holy Spirit moved in lives for rededication, renewal, cleansing, and forgiveness."

This was an anniversary year for Alaska—the 80th since Swedish Covenant Missionaries A. E. Karlsson and Adolph Lydell came to the state and opened work at Unalakleet and Yakutat, respectively. (Their support was assumed by the infant American Covenant Church two years later.) A display of old photographs brought back "many poignant memories," says Barram, "and somehow stilled voices seemed to speak again."

Delegates from the 12 Alaska churches convened on Saturday to transact business. The Rev. Thomas Tungwenuk of Wales was chosen chairman for a second term, and Mr. Wallace McIver of Nome was elected chairman of Frontier Builders, an organization which seeks to raise funds in the conference for construction of new churches.

The Golovin sessions were preceded by a pastors conference in Unalakleet the week before. During that time the rite of ordination was administered to two retired Eskimo pastors, Reuben Paniptchuk and Jacob Kenick, with the Rev. Mr. Lindgren officiating.

During the Golovin meeting the women in attendance met separately to discuss how to make the Bible relevant to everyday living. To help them in this matter they named Mrs. Barram along with Mrs. James Oksohtarak, Anchorage, to make available a supply of biblically-based materials dealing with the areas of

health, social activities, husband-wife relations, and the care and guidance of children.

"How can such a conference be evaluated?" asks Superintendent Barram. In giving an answer he states: "There was the stirring reminder of 80 years of faithful gospel witness—accepted by some, rejected by others, as it is wherever men are confronted with God's truth. Surely grateful appreciation is due those who have shared in the planning and fulfillment of the ministry of each church, the Children's Home at White Mountain, Covenant High School at Unalakleet, and radio station KICY at Nome. It was evident too that the task is not finished, that



Delegates pack the church.

the problems of indifference, sin, and clashing cultures are very much present."

Continuing, Barram says: "The real impact of the conference will have to be finally lived out in the lives of those who attended as they went home spiritually refreshed, dedicated and willing to become actively involved in the ministry of their churches. As they left—the skiers, the dog teams and snow travelers, and the planeloads, one was reminded that 'it is not by might nor by power but by my spirit, saith the Lord.' And again the strains of the conference theme song, 'We Wait for a Great and Glorious Day,' came to give hope and joy." ■

The Lindgrens head for Golovin.

...et by plane—albeit because of inclement weather some air travelers arrived just before the final service! The conference ran from Thursday through the weekend with at least three services each day and a total of ten hours of services as a Sunday finale. The latter brought "no complaints, only joy," reports out Alaska Superintendent