

WITH ACTION and ingenuity he fills many positions — minister, marriage commissioner, carpenter, mechanic, dentist, hunter, and fisherman. And now to his lot has fallen still another — emissary of the Alaska Covenant Conference to the "lower 48" states.

He is the Rev. Howard I. Slwooko, pastor of the Mountain Village Covenant church and chairman of the conference ministerial association who by invitation of the denomination's board of missions last month attended the 28th midwinter conference of the Covenant Church in Galesburg, Illinois, and visited selected churches in that state, Minnesota, and Washington.

Coming to the "lower 48" was a first for 48-year-old Slwooko, who left a temperature of 29 degrees above zero in Alaska to experience a reading of five below in Galesburg. The major portion of his two-week stay was spent in the Chicago area,



Howard Slwooko

nant church, and on a February Sunday in '54 his minister, the Rev. Paul B. F. Carlson, mentioned the need for pastors in two villages. The situation met a positive response with restless

the Slwookos through the winter.

Besides learning the ropes of the ministry, the new pastor had to deal with an unfamiliar Eskimo dialect. He came to establish Psalm 16:8 as his basic aim: "I keep the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." Four years of service in Elim came next, 1960-64, and then three in Hooper Bay. Last June he took up his present duties in Mountain Village on the Yukon River, where this spring he will put his talents as a carpenter to use in building a new church to replace a well-worn log facility. While his 113 members, many of whom work in the community's fishing industry, will help—as will volunteers from other villages, he will do much of the work himself.

Slwooko is licensed as a marriage commissioner, and he is recognized as a dentist—something he learned by doing. He can fill and extract teeth and perform minor oral surgery. Perpetuating a skill gained

Alaskan Emissary Visits 'Lower 48'

Covenanters Hear Man of Action and Ingenuity

where he said, "I see big city, big church, and big people," and where he did not like the air pollution. "Make me headache," he complained.

In Galesburg as well as his other stops, he repeated this message: "I want to thank you so much for supporting Alaska Covenant churches." And he usually also conveyed his favorite Scripture verse: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

Howard Slwooko, reared a Presbyterian, became a Covenant minister in 1954. With training received during service in both the Army and Air Force during World War II, he had secured employment with the Alaska Communications System in Nome, becoming head mechanic and earning a sizeable salary. He and his family had affiliated with the Nome Cove-

Howard, who as a teenager in a hunting accident at his birthplace, St. Lawrence Island, fell through the ice, was drowning, and cried to God to save him. "If so, I will serve you," he promised. Miraculously saved he was, but military service and his years with the ACS followed before his volunteering to go to the village of Mekoryuk on Nunivak Island.

His call from the Alaska Conference promised transportation to the island and \$600 in income *per year*—less than he was making monthly at the time. "Are you crazy, or am I?" his ACS boss asked when Slwooko told him of his plans. At the very start he put his ingenuity to work, for by promising to help en route to Nunivak he got the skipper of the government supply boat to reduce the cost of transportation for himself and his family from \$250 to \$20! And at the end of the trip the skipper threw in enough supplies to keep

as a youth surrounded by the sea, he is a capable hunting and fishing guide.

To all of these roles can be added still another new one this year—celebrity. Northern Consolidated Airlines, which serves western Alaska, selected a painting of Slwooko done 12 years ago for its 1968 calendar. The pleased subject says, "All over I see it."

Former Ellen K. Ahmasuk is Mrs. Slwooko; their wedding took place January 25, 1949, in Nome. They have two sons and three daughters ranging in age from 16 to 7. The children attend the Bureau of Indian Affairs School in Mountain Village.

For his itineration in the "lower 48" last month, Slwooko was accompanied by his former pastor in Nome and currently a furloughing missionary, Paul Carlson. "Of our younger pastors in Alaska, Howard is our best man," Carlson says. ■