

CHURCHES PLAN AID FOR BELGIAN CONGO

Will Send Force of 500 Physicians Into Africa To Work Among 130,000,000 Natives

Twelve European nurses have been sent by the Belgian government to Ituri, in the Belgian Congo, to work for the reduction of the infant mortality rate among the natives, according to information received by the Interchurch World Movement.

High Mortality

Fully half the children in this region die before they are a year old and the causes that kill them tend to weaken the survivors, and undermine the strength of the native races. Malnutrition caused by improper feeding and ignorance of the most common laws of hygiene and sanitation are prominent factors in the high infant mortality rate. But the superstitious practices fostered by the witch-doctors also play a large part. Child birth is attended in many regions by cruel and horrible rites perilous to mother and child, and the cruelties perpetrated upon the sick in the name of healing are almost inconceivable.

Significant Move

This move on the part of the government for the improvement of health conditions among the natives is extremely significant. Up to the present, very little constructive health work has been done among the blacks by African governments, but now, according to the information received by Interchurch World Movement leaders, it is beginning to be realized that a mentally and physically backward population is a handicap, even in Africa, and that exploitation will continue to pay indefinitely.

In most regions of Africa, the missionary physicians offer the only modern medical care available to the natives. The Belgian Congo has about a dozen medical missionaries to minister to the needs of more than 7,000,000 blacks. In all Africa,

there are only in the neighborhood of 120 missionary physicians among 130,000,000 natives.

Seek \$336,777,572 Fund

The churches co-operating in the Interchurch World Movement propose to raise that number to 500 during the next five years. In all nearly 2,000 missionary physicians, men and women, will be sent to foreign lands in that period. The thirty denominations participating in the Interchurch World Movement have united for a simultaneous campaign to raise money for the support of these physicians and for the various educational and evangelistic undertakings of the co-operating communions. The week of April 25 has been chosen for this campaign and the goal set for 1920 is \$336,777,572. Of this amount \$175,000,000 is to be paid this year.

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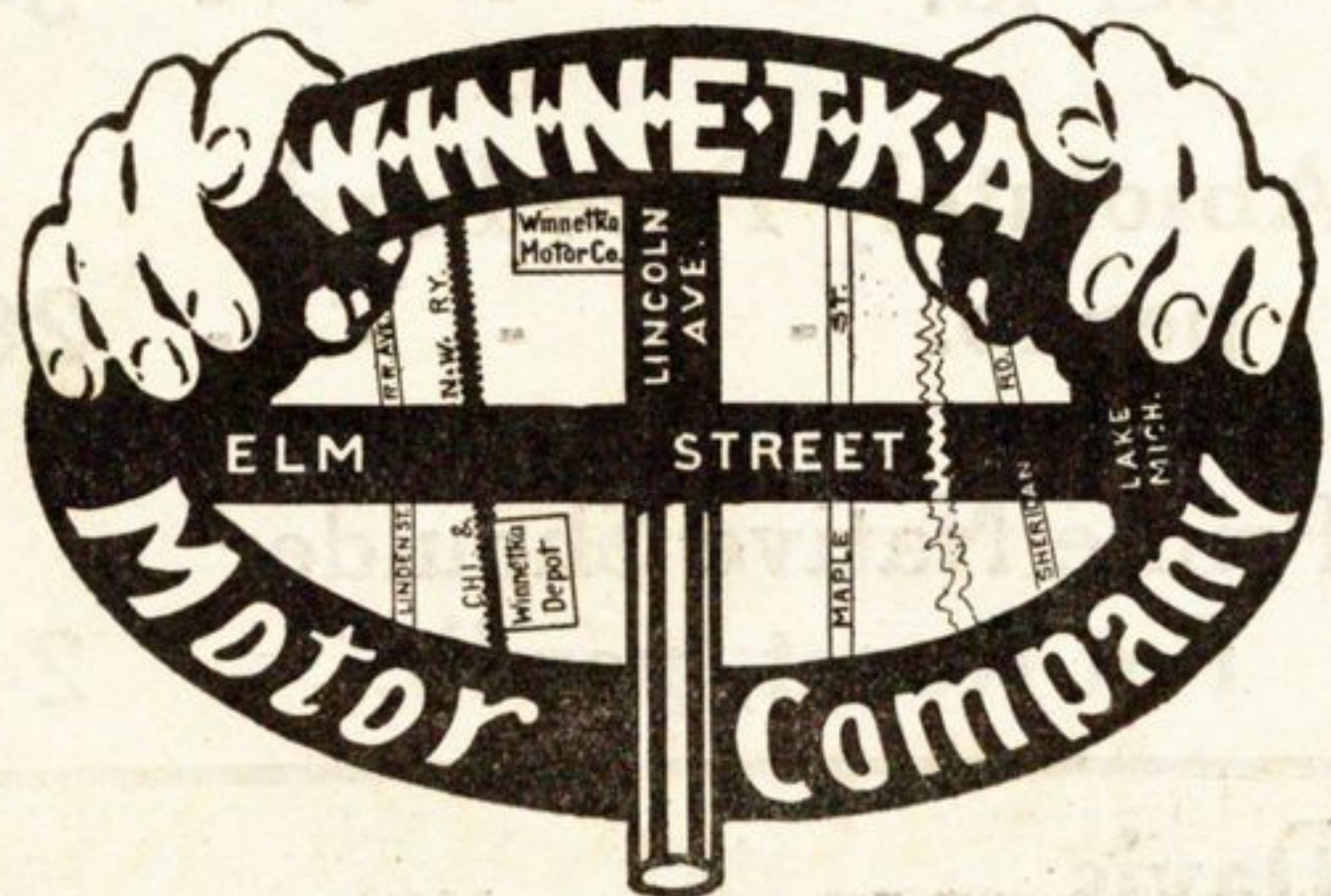
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