

# "THE MISSION OF GETHSEMANE"

By: William N. Hollis, B.S., N.A.

Founded in the Year of Our Lord, One Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy-Eight. Gethsemane Mission is located North of sprawling Houston, the sixth largest city in the U.S.A. It is easily accessible to the network of major freeways, which circle the entire city, thus truly making it a mission.

Tourists, by the tens of thousands from all over the world, visit the Mission each year to see the Garden of Gethsemane from which it received its name. They journey down the tree-shrouded paths, lined with a breathtaking spectacle of flowers. Truly Gods' hand was here. Every stroke of the master's brush is visible here.

A wayfarer's chapel is located within the garden affording a place of meditation and prayer for those who are wearied from their journey, or from the heavy burdens, which they bear from day to day. The chapel is known as the King of Kings' Chapel, deriving its name from the cross at the entranceway. This is the cross, which was used in the motion picture by that name. The producer of the picture donated it to the mission.

Admission to the garden is free; however there are receptacles place at the exit for donations, which are gladly made by those who tour the garden. These funds are used for the Mission Christian School, which not only offers a Christian oriented education from Kindergarten through the twelfth grade; but also offers a two-year college degree in special Missionary training and education.

This is a unique church. It was brought to fruition by spirit filled Christians who dared to change from the status quo of newsletters, choir practice, and thirty-minute Sunday school lessons once a week.

The purpose of the church is three-fold, and in this order:

- 1) To honor and praise Jehovah-God.
- 2) To minister both spiritually and physically to the members of the church.
- 3) To preach Christ crucified...Christ risen... and baptism, as the only means to salvation. To carry this gospel literally to the four-corners of the earth.

To accomplish these ends, all of the offerings and contributions taken in, other than what is necessary for the local mission, are used to send Missionaries in the field both home and abroad. Often the pulpit is filled with the Missionaries coming in from the field to report the glories of the harvest to those who are directly responsible for keeping them there. Also, this lightens the load on the Pastor, freeing him to move in every strata of the community bringing in new members for the Mission.

The growth of the Mission has been phenomenal. Never before in the history of the Convention has there been one equal to it. The Pastor has accredited the unheard of growth to the fact that "people like to see something tangible from the results of their labor. They are able to do this at Gethsemane. They know where their money goes, and they can see the results. After all, the Apostle's and early Christians saw the results of Christ's ministry. The Pilgrims saw the results of their endeavors. Why shouldn't Twentieth Century Christians receive a feeling of accomplishment? Our whole system of free enterprise is based on the principle."

And so the Mission of Gethsemane continues to grow. The gentle lines of its Spanish architecture seem to caress the lovely grounds. It cradles the Garden in its bosom. The shrubs and flowers seem to receive their nourishment from these lovely buildings.

THE MINISTRIES OF THE MISSION ARE PEOPLE ORIENTED.

### *"THE MISSION OF GETHSEMANE"*

- a) **LIBRARY:** One of the finest Christian and Americana libraries in the entire country is found here. It is located on the ground floor and oriented to the street and parking lot which makes it accessible to those who use it at all times. Books may be checked out to the public by simply applying for a card. The library is opened from noon to nine p.m., six days a week. On Sundays from nine a.m. to one p.m.
- b) **NURSERY:** The Mission nursery is kept open from 5:00 PM to midnight six days a week. This supplies the area with a long needed facility where the public, as well as the members can leave their children for a short time, and be assured of mature Christian care for their children. Of course there is an hourly charge for the service and these jobs are filled with the older women of the Church who need a little extra income. The balance of the income goes into a fund for maintenance.
- c) **RECREATION CENTER:** Another Mission facility, which is available to the public, also, is a complete recreation center including gymnasium, tennis courts, playground, and swimming pool. Swimming lessons are taught free to all by members of the Mission. First Aid and Life Saving courses are taught in the evening and every member is urged to take them. These too, are available free to the public.
- d) **HEALTH CLINIC:** Perhaps the most useful, and certainly scriptural is the clinic. Like all other facilities of the Mission, the clinic is free to all who come and partake of its service.

The clinic is open six days a week and is staffed by Registered Nurse at all times who is on the payroll of the Mission. On Fridays and Saturdays Medical Doctors who are members of the Mission are there to diagnose and treat. They volunteer their services free of charge.

- e) **TEMPORARY SHELTER:** The Mission also maintains several rooms and apartments on its grounds for temporary shelter for those whose lives are uprooted for one reason or another. They participate in the services and counseling program of the Mission until they are straightened out and their lives in order again.
- f) **CONTINUING EDUCATION CLASSES:** Adult education classes in Marriage and Family relations, Motivation, How To Be Good Parents, Public Speaking, and other related subjects are taught on Tuesday and Thursday evening at the Mission. This fills a void in this area, and is available also to the public.
- g) **CHILDRENS' DAY CARE:** A Day Care and Pre School Program is a vital part of the ministry of the Mission. It is open five days a week, and provides a much needed service for the working parents in the neighborhood.
- h) **CHRISTIAN SCHOOL:** A Christian school K-12 is the center of the people oriented ministries of the Mission. The school is run principally for the children of the members. However some students are accepted from the community. A tuition fee is charged. However all of the children of the members can attend regardless of their ability to pay. All deficits of the school are made up from the contribution taken in from the Garden.

Yes. Gethsemane Mission is truly different. It is truly a ministry to the needs of the members. Yet it considers the needs of the community as well. This is the key to its success. Faith without works is dead. Members give

### *"THE MISSION OF GETHSEMANE"*

freely of their time because they can see the fruits of their labor and are involved in a whole concept of Christian living and training.

The library checks out more than 1,000 books per week. The nursery serves some 500 families per week. Well over 100,000 people visit the garden each year. The recreation center serves over 15,000 people per year. What a tremendous effect this is having on the entire community. Like a mother hen it reaches out over the community and pulls large segments of it under its wings.

Gethsemane Mission, of course, is a dream. However, it could become a reality. All that is needed is for enough Christians to read the Book of James, believe it, and then put it into practice. After all, if God is with us, who can stand against us?