



EDITH TEGOSEAK

Edith Tegoseak translates and gives advice

In Alaska, Eskimos who move from their Native villages to a city, often leaving family and friends behind, can find themselves lonely and unable to cope with many aspects of their new life. But many of those coming to Fairbanks, Alaska, from Barrow area, find someone waiting to help.

Edith Tegoseak, a 76-year-old Eskimo woman who looks 20 years younger, translates, gives advice and otherwise help new arrivals. She is a familiar figure in her gaily colored parka.

As a child, Edith was sent to the Presbyterian mission school in Barrow, Alaska, where she was born and raised. She often helped the mission doctor in the clinic there.

Edith later married Reuben Tegoseak, a reindeer herder, and with him followed the herds over the tundra, winter and summer, and reared their 11

children. Edith kept her faith strong. She held services in the Tegoseak tent on Sundays, leading the hymn-singing and translating the Scripture for all those in attendance.

The Tegoseaks later moved to Fairbanks, where Reuben worked on the Alaska Railroad until his death in 1966. But despite her own sorrows (two children have also died), Edith is always ready to help others.

For example, one day she was looking through her purse and realized that it contained enough for her needs. She felt, at that moment, that God wanted her to share her good fortune, so she asked for guidance. Then she remembered some relatives who had recently moved to the city from a remote northern village and who spoke little English.

When she arrived at their

out-of-the-way Quonset hut, she found that the elderly couple were very ill. Edith felt that God had answered her prayer to be of service. She took them to her own home until she was able to arrange for hospitalization, and then acted as their interpreter.

Edith Tegoseak has seen a lot of changes in Alaska over the many decades of her life, but she intends to keep trying to help others adjust to a new way of life as long as she is able.

—Suggested by Margaret A. Gray
Fairbanks, Alaska

(Reprinted from Guideposts
Magazine)