Husband-Wife Medical Team To Be Missionaries in Nepal

Dr. Edgar and Dr. Elizabeth Miller to Leave Early In 1956 for Himalayas for at Least 5 Years To Fulfill Long-Standing Dream

By MARY ELIZABETH POWER

It isn't often that a dream of some 25 years can be finally realized, but such is the case with the Wilmington husband-and-wife medical team of Drs. Elizabeth and Edgar R. Miller.

The couple will leave early next year for Nepal, northernmost neighbor of India, huddled at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains. There, for at least the next five years and probably for the rest of their active careers, they will fulfill a long-standing wish to dedicate themselves to medical missionary work.

In the Nepal capital of Kathmandu they will join Dr. Bethal Harris Fleming, a medical school friend of Dr. Elizabeth Miller, and her husband, Robert Fleming, a Ph.D. who is a hospital business administrator. The Flemings, missionary workers in the Far East for nearly a quarter century, are now in charge of a hospital which the government has turned over to the United Missions Board of the U.S. for

Dr. Elizabeth Miller  Dr. Edgar R. Miller
Doctors
(Continued From Page One)

development and use under a five-year program.

Millers are giving up their extensive practices, selling their home on Buck Road in Greenville, trading their modern auto for a jeep, and exchanging a thoroughly American way of life for what the husband calls "a challenge which we've always wanted."

Married in 1927, just as their medical training was finished, the Millers went before the Methodist committee of the United Missions Board, a combined missionary unit representing seven denominations. "Each of us still had to pay back to our families the expenses of our education," Dr. Edgar explained, "and yet we wanted to enter medical missionary work at once. But the church committee told us to go out and practice, repay our families, and then plan for a foreign career. That was 28 years ago," said the physician, a past president of the Delaware Academy of Medicine, "and we're finally getting around to fulfilling the dream."

During that time the responsibilities of raising two children, caring for other relatives, and demands of their careers managed to delay any missionary service.

But Dr. Fleming and her husband, first attracted to Nepal from India on a hunting expedition, have never ceased pleading with the Millers to come and share the adventure. And with both children married and their careers well established, the two Wilmington physicians feel free to undertake the totally different life.

Only recently opened to the outside world, Nepal has some 7,000,000 residents, a mere 84 miles of actual roads, and is the size of Iowa. It looms as an important factor in tension between Communist and free world forces.

The combined $2,350 salary for the Millers from the United Missions Board is not a matter of importance to the physicians, for they are prepared to support themselves in the new career. Permitted two tons of personal belongings, they are more interested in the equipment and supplies which they will take to Nepal and the genius of the work.

Dr. Edgar Miller, a cardiac specialist, plans to ship a fluoroscope, electro-cardiograph machine, and other equipment. A technician will be recruited as part of the American team and it is hoped that a surgeon from India will join the American team. The Nurses will be secured from both native and foreign sources.

Nepal, originally a cholera treatment center, now has 13 beds. In the five-year development, the Millers, Flemings, and cohorts envision a fully equipped and staffed unit for 40 patients.

The interest of Nepal royalty, engendered when Mr. Fleming went hunting for rare bird specimens, brought about the invitation to help dissipate the country's parasitic diseases and generally low level of public health.

 Clinics in the outlying districts, which were inaugurated by another medical missionary, will become part of the hospital's service.

Active in Richardson Park Methodist Church for many years, the modest Dr. Elizabeth and Dr. Edgar have a deep spiritual motivation for their entire careers, and this newest phase is similarly buttressed.

Without any thought that they are making great personal sacrifices, they consider the Nepal future as "bread cast upon the waters"—a chance to try to repay for past blessings.