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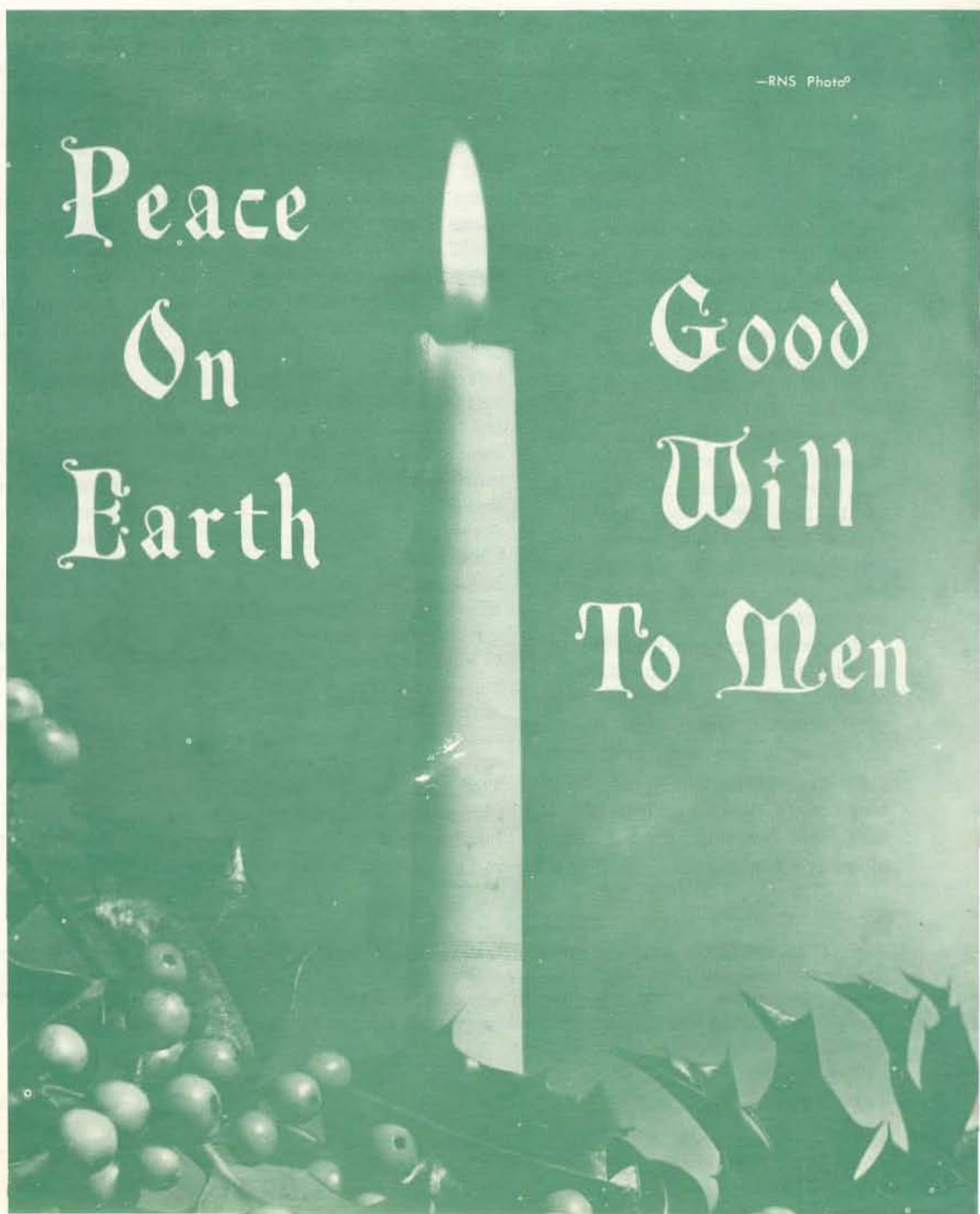
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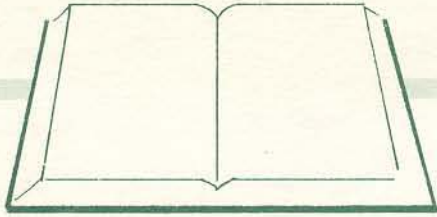
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Peace
On
Earth

Good
Will
To Men

-RNS Photo^o





According to the Word

MEGATON OR MANGER

"For to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

We were all megaton conscious two years ago at this time and in a way we still are and will be for the foreseeable future. But two years ago the Russians exploded a super test bomb that "shook" the world. The event provoked one writer to write, "On October 30 Soviet Communism so loved the world that it presented us with the greatest demonstration of power ever put on by man."

Yes, it was a big bomb, 2500 times greater than that which wreaked havoc on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If you lined up TNT-filled boxcars from New York to Los Angeles, you would have the equivalent power of that big bomb. But, officially, the United States is not afraid because she can duplicate it. So when you talk about power symbols, don't forget the megaton.

We are a strong nation. We will negotiate from a position of strength. We will observe the nuclear test-ban treaty, but we will not allow ourselves to drift into a state of unpreparedness. If the enemy cheats, we can go into production and resume testing at a moment's notice.

On the other hand, there is the manger. Like megaton it begins with the letter "m." But much of the similarity ends there. When we think of the megatons by which bombs are measured, we can cry out at the depths to which man has fallen. When we consider the manger, symbol of God's incarnation (God in human form), we can weep tears of joy because there is hope after all.

The Christmas story tells us that God has entered into the predicament of man. And He needed to because there wasn't anything we could do. We would just go on trying to educate ourselves into some sort of respectability even though the results indicated that it was useless to try. In other words, man left to his own devices digs himself down deeper and deeper like the automobile in the snow that can be set free only by a power outside itself. So, too, man must be delivered from his sins, and I understand that the manger and Christmas tell us that the power has come which can make life new when humanly it seemed out of the question and was.

The announcement to the shepherds was that a *Savior* had been born. The child was given the name *Jesus* because He was to save His people from their sins. The story of His birth is quite a nice story. The circumstances were humble and unlikely for one who is God, but it is a rather pleasant

tale and few are offended by it. Yet, to be the Savior, and His name prophesied what was to come. He had to collide head-on with the sin and evil of the world; yea, more than that, to assume it, take it on. even *become* it, as the Bible says. It is a mystery, but there is life in a look at the crucified One, in the look of faith that is unreserved identification and acceptance.

Having tried to say this much, it would not be right to pass on without emphasizing that last point. We ought not to believe that the salvation Jesus established comes to people whether they want it or not. The Lord wants followers who *want* to follow Him, not those who do so because they have no say in the matter.

So it is a matter of personal decision, and how we observe Christmas is determined by the choice we make. And what are the competitors with which the Lord Jesus must vie for the devotion of your life? He really does want your fellowship. Are you impressed by megatons? Do you see hope through them? Will science lead the way through? Or is there something else that does away with your need of Christ?

I have found the Jesus of Christmas and Calvary to be the hope for all my days here and for the world to come.

—Raynard Huglen

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Christmas Greeting

Christmas is the most thrilling season of the year for most of us. There are so many things to look forward to, to share, to give. But that which makes it most blessed is the simple, wonderful Christmas gospel.

It would have been strange indeed if God had used more conventional methods to announce the birth of His Son. This message was too great to be entrusted to mere human methods. "The Savior has come." This message was the greatest message ever given.

The temptation was great that the message would not be appreciated. The announcement had to be unique. It was. Angels made it to simple folk on the hills of Judah. A star announced it to the wise of the world. Certainly, this would be hard to ignore. But still some did, and still some do.

Your Savior has come. The only One who can save you from your sins and their wages is here. He is God's Son. He is the Redeemer. He is the Lord of lords, the King of kings. He is here to do His gracious work in your life. No one needs go lonely and lost. All can know confident assurance and peace. A Savior has been born. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He said, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Yes, this is the thrill of Christmas.

This message must be shared. It is too good to keep to one's self. The shepherds had to announce it; the wise men had to go to worship, had to speak of fulfilled prophecy. The same privilege and responsibility is ours today.

Dear friends and members of our beloved church, rejoice in the Christmas gospel. May the realization that you have a Savior completely possess you. For some of you, this may be a new experience. Receive Christ that Christmas joy may be yours. Make room for Christ in your heart and life this Christmas.

Then tell the story! Share your joy! If it is real, you cannot help but do it. You know many ways of doing it. God bless you as you obey.

I would greet you this Christmas season. May the best of Christmas be yours. May God guide you into 1964.

Thank you for the fellowship in God's kingdom this past year. We have had a rich experience as we have waited, striven, and prayed together. Much has been done, there is so much to do. But the thrill of the message given to us compels us to serve according to His will. There is no greater privilege. This is the task of our church.

Yes, I wish you a blessed Christmas, and a Christian New Year. This is possible for us all. Our Savior has come!

Pastor John P. Strand, President
Association of Free Lutheran
Congregations

BLESSED CHRISTMAS

Pastor Jonas Helland, Osakis, Minn.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Please read Luke 1:26-2:20. Anyone who receives Jesus as Savior, Lord, and King can be sure of peace and joy, while the rest of the human race lives and dies without it. There is no peace and joy on earth apart from Christ Jesus, who came to seek and save the lost.

From our first parents, Adam and Eve, to Malachi, the last prophet sent to Israel, God foretold His great and glorious salvation. But the hearts of the people were so hardened that they could neither hear nor understand.

Four hundred years passed by without a word from God. This was indeed the darkest period in the history of Israel, yet a few kept up hope and faith until the light broke through. Suddenly the shepherds on Bethlehem's plains heard the message of Luke 2:8-20, and with haste came to the Bethlehem manger where they saw the child Jesus, God's salvation.

How sad that since then to now only a very small number have received Christ, even those who call themselves Christians. John 1:11, 12 plainly tells us who are true Christians. Note also John 3:3, 5, 6, 16, 18, 19. These passages are so plain and simple that even a fool can understand them.

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked" (Isa. 48:22).

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27).

It is the peace of God which passeth all understanding that keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Cor. 9:15).

All unsaved people have fightings and war within and without, because they refuse Christ room in their hearts. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it

cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt" (Isa. 57:20). Christians say to one another, "Come, let us worship and adore Him, who to the manger came to redeem us from all sin; who is now in heaven preparing mansions for His own." Soon He will come in glory to take the blood-bought bride home, where peace and joy unending are granted unto those faithful unto death. Will you be there?

REV. CLIFFORD T. OLSON

Pastor Clifford T. Olson, superintendent of the Bethesda Homes at Willmar, Minn., died on Tuesday, Nov. 26. He made his home at New London, Minn., and the funeral service was held in the Trinity Lutheran Church of that city, Rev. B. R. Quanbeck, pastor. Burial was in the Oak Hill Cemetery.

Mr. Olson was a graduate of the Lutheran Bible Institute, Augsburg College and Augsburg Seminary of Minneapolis. He served Lutheran Free Church pastorates at Ellendale and New London, Minn. He was a former member of the board of directors of the Lutheran Bible Institute, Augsburg College and Seminary and chairman of the board of pensions of the Lutheran Free Church.

He is survived by his widow, Florence; two daughters, Mrs. Arden Rust, Willmar, and Borghild Olson, Minneapolis; two sisters, Mrs. Carl Larsen, Trout Creek, Mont., and Mrs. Chester Sealock, Seattle, Wash.; three brothers, Vernon, Seattle; Nestor, Lake Park, Minn.; and Edward, Pelican Rapids, Minn.; and three grandchildren.

(We shall also remember Pastor Olson for his good humor and ability to look on the bright side of life. Peace be to his memory.—Ed.)

* * * * *

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Clemence Dyrud has moved from Silverton, Oregon, to Kathryn, N. Dak., where he serves

a three-congregation parish south of Valley City.

Missionary Obert Landsverk of the Santal Mission, home on furlough, may be reached at 3403 S. Tekoa, Spokane, Wash.

Mr. Arthur J. Johnson, Willmar, Minn., was installed as lay pastor of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, French Lake, Minn., on Sunday, Dec. 8, in an afternoon installation and fellowship service. Mr. Johnson travels widely as an evangelist. Our Saviour's Church fellowships with the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations and was formerly of the Suomi Synod.

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ONE OF NORTH DAKOTA'S OLDEST CITIZENS WAS AN ASSOCIATION MEMBER

The funeral service for Anna Svaren was held on Saturday, Oct. 12, 1963, at 2 p.m., at Bethany Lutheran Church, Binford, N. Dak., Rev. Gordon Solheim of Coopers-town, N. Dak., officiated.

The text used at the funeral was Ephesians 2:19. Cornell Svaren, grandson of Anna Svaren, sang two numbers in song, "Jesus Will" and "Perhaps Today." Rev. and Mrs. Solheim sang, "Han Skal Aapne Perleporten."

Anna Elizabeth Svaren was born March 21, 1860, in Gloppen, Nord-

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NOTICE

As the Lord lays it upon your heart to share in our work, we invite you to send your contributions to

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To Save His People from Their Sins

Our Christmas Sermon

by Pastor Morris Eggen, Spicer, Minnesota

THE Christmas message is unique in that it is a revelation of the new covenant that God promised He would give unto Israel, and not to Israel only but also to the whole world. Paul made this plain as we read in Ephesians 3: 8-11.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God had made His promises even from the time of the Fall and continued to remind His people generation after generation of the Christ that was to come into the world and usher in a new era. John 4:25, "I know that Messiah cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things."

The great purpose of God's great program for man began to be revealed when "in the fulness of time, God sent forth his son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Now this involved a perfect redemption or release from the law. As the law made no provision for the forgiveness of sin, its verdict was, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Jesus was to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). In order to do so He first had to re-

deem us from the law, which meant to satisfy the law; and this could be done in no other way but that He would take our place and "be made sin for us. . . . that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

In Hebrews 2:3, it is called the "great salvation"; and great, indeed, it is, when we consider the price that was paid and the results that it brings. Just think what a price was given! God gave His only begotten Son, the treasure of His heart, in whom He was well pleased. He whom the angels worshipped and adored came down to be veiled in human flesh, identifying himself with sinful and corrupt humanity, not being ashamed to call them brethren. Thus He went about manifesting God's love and mercy for the lost, "Going about doing good and healing all manner of diseases," even raising the dead and thus showing His omnipotent power though many regarded Him only as a man. His earthly ministry closed when He willingly submitted himself to be nailed to the cross. As the Scriptures testify, "He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

Now, who am I and how should this affect me personally? Scripture tells me that I am by nature the child of wrath even as others, "having no hope and without God in the world." What a hopeless condition to be in! Loved by God, but as a sinner not realizing it.

What grace that God sent the Holy Spirit to "reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment!" Otherwise, how would we ever become aware of our need? Our eyes had to be opened. Through the conviction of sin and a realization of our depraved condition, we became restless and

afraid, fearing the judgment, the awfulness of meeting a holy God and the horrible thought of an eternal hell in company with the devil and with ungodly and wicked men in the darkness and blackness forever. "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Where shall I flee? Who can save me from this tragic condition? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Oh yes! The Gospel according to Luke tells us, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Does this mean that He is a Savior for you and me? He testified in the synagogue at Nazareth as He read from Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears" (Luke 4:18, 19, 21).

Here is the remedy for every poor and brokenhearted sinner, blind and helpless, whose soul is bruised and torn by sin, held captive by the power of the devil. Here and here alone is where you may come and counsel with the great Physician, unburden your heart, and confess freely your need. He understands and is able to take away all your sin and guilt. When the Holy Spirit bears witness with your spirit that you are an adopted child of God, you, too, can say, "Now I know I have been born again; a new day has dawned for me and I have a new song in my heart. There comes to my heart one sweet strain, a glad and a joy-

ous refrain. I sing it again and again: Sweet peace the gift of God's love."

Then as I Peter 2:2 says, "As new born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." The Word of God is the nursery for you. Sorry to say, many who have seemingly been converted have no desire for the sincere milk of the Word and hence do not have a normal growth. They seem to think that they can grow by carrying a Bible rather than feeding on the contents of it. It is in the Scriptures we find Christ. Jesus said in John 5:39, "They are they that testify of me."

The goal is that we should be the "epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (II Cor. 3:3). This is accomplished when we "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18). Can you think of anything greater that God could have chosen us to be? Just think, sinner friend, "He hath chosen us in him [Christ], before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before him in love."

Why should we find it so hard to give up the trifling things of the world when God has such an enormous plan for us. Does it not make your heart flutter as you ask, "Is this possible for me? For me, a sinner like me?" Yes, it is for you. And listen, the half has not been told. When "we all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," then, "when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face. Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as I am known" (I Cor. 13:10). Do you believe it?

I do and "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." You, too, may have this joy if you will accept this great salvation.



FOR CHRISTMAS EVE— A PRAYER

O Lord, there sit apart in lonely places,
At this, the gladdest time of all the year,
Some stricken ones with sad and weary faces,
To whom the thought of Christmas brings no cheer.
For these, O Father, our petition hear
And send the pitying Christ Child near.

And there are tempted souls this night, still waging
Such desperate warfare with all evil powers.
Anthems of peace, while the dread strife is raging,

Sound but a mockery through their midnight hours.
For these, O Father, our petition hear,
And send Thy tempted, sinless Christ Child very near.

Lord, some sit by lonely hearthstones sobbing,
Who feel this night all earthly love denied,
Who hear by dirges in the loud bell's throbbing
For loved ones lost who blessed last Christmastide.
For these, O Father, our petition hear
And send Thy loving Christ Child very near.

—Author Unknown
(from *Prayer Poems*)



"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).



—R.N.S. Photo

O Christmas tree, O Christmas Tree
How lovely are thy branches.

(From an old German Folksong)

Martin Luther, credited with introducing the custom of lighted candles on the Christmas tree, is shown with his family and his friend and co-reformer, Philip Melancthon, at Luther's home in Wittenberg.



If You Want to See the CHRIST CHILD

ADAPTED FROM THE
"THIS IS THE LIFE" TV STORY
BY HERMAN W. GOCKEL

IT was a quiet December evening. The sturdy Swedes of northern Minnesota could remember many a severe winter, but this winter of 1906 gave every promise of being one of the coldest.

Outside the dimly lit home of Lars Erickson the drifted snow lay like angel pillows against the picket fence, and big white flakes were falling like silver dollars on the fluffy carpet of white which covered the porch.

With her little freckled nose pressed tight against the semifrosted window, and her chubby hands cupped on either side of her face, little six-year-old Greta Erickson had stood peering out into the night, enthralled by the glory and the beauty of it all.

"O Papa," she exclaimed, "there is sure gonna be a lotta snow for Christmas!"

"Yah — that's yust about all there's going to be plenty of around here," grunted Lars, as he threw another scoop of coal into the potbellied stove which stood in the center of the Erickson living room.

"Lars!" exclaimed his faithful wife, Anna. "Don't talk like that!"

"Vell, it's true, ain't it?" replied Lars, his anger and desperation adding a sharp edge to his words. "Look, Anna, you know as good as I do. Things aren't going to get any better. I haven't worked for two months. And with this game leg, it don't look like I'm gonna

get a job for a long time."

A strained silence fell over the Erickson living room, as little Greta resumed her place on the floor in front of the stove, with her scissors and paste, working on a crude little manger scene. She had already made cardboard cutouts of the Christ Child, the manger, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds.

At length Anna broke the awkward silence: "Hilda Gruber was here today. Wanted to know if you would go with them on Christmas morning — singing carols."

Lars looked up from the well-worn almanac which he had been perusing with unseeing eyes, thought briefly, then snorted "No!" with a finality which left no doubt in the minds of Anna and Greta that the discussion was over.

Later that evening, after she had said her prayers and had been tucked snugly in bed, Greta was suddenly awakened by a sharp noise from the living room. Clutching "Katy," her beloved rag doll who had become a sort of fourth member of the family, she waited momentarily to make sure of the direction from which the sudden noise had come. In his foul mood Lars had slammed the door of the coal stove to punctuate a point which he was making to Anna.

As she sat up in bed, her little heart almost broke as she heard her disconsolate father giving vent to his bitterness. The door to the

living room had been left open just a crack, and through it she heard something her ears could not believe.

"Lars, how can you talk like that!"

"Vell, it's true. Ain't it?"

"You should be ashamed of yourself — carrying on like this at Christmas. Think of everything we have to be thankful for."

Somewhat chastened, Lars slumped into his rocking chair next to the coal burner, pondered thoughtfully, and then from the depth of his desolate soul muttered bitterly: "Yah — we should be thankful — for our worries — for having no money — for bills we can't pay. . . ."

"Lars!"

But Lars was not to be silenced: "Sometimes, Anna, I wonder. I wonder if the good Lord really cares. It yust don't make sense, Anna. Maybe it is all yust a big fairy tale — about Christmas and God's love."

And in her bedroom little Greta — shocked, horrified, incredulous — buried her face in her pillow and sobbed herself to sleep.

The next afternoon, just before supper, Greta was busy arranging the figures in her manger scene on the floor in the corner of the living room, when Lars returned home from a fruitless mission.

Warming himself at the stove, he reported to his eager wife that

the job at the lumber mill for which Hans Gruber had recommended him had already been taken. "Maybe next spring."

Concealing her disappointment, Anna reassured her husband that something was bound to turn up soon, and left for the kitchen, saying supper would be ready shortly.

"How do you like it, Papa?" asked Greta, still seated on the floor, some distance from the stove.

"Huh?"

"How do you like it? — *my manager set!*"

Glancing over his shoulder absently, while warming his hands at the stove, Lars replied: "Looks fine."

"But you can't really see *inside*, Papa, from way up there," she reminded him, pointing to the front of the pasteboard box into which she had cut an opening.

"Yah, I know."

Undismayed by her father's preoccupation with the concerns of the moment, she pursued: "If you really want to see the Christ Child, you gotta get down on your knees."

For a long moment Lars looked at her, strangely, as if her artless remark had jolted him. Could she possibly have meant it the way he had taken it? Of course not.

Dissembling, he shrugged his shoulders, and with all the kindness he could muster he dismissed the subject with: "I'm tired, Greta. I ain't in a kneelin' mood right now."

That night it was a somewhat mellowed Lars who sat next to the coal stove, watching Anna remodel her wedding gown so that Greta could have a new dress for the children's Christmas Eve service.

"I was yust thinking, Anna," he mused. "This footstool — if I would put rockers underneath, put sides on it, and do some finishing, it would make a fine doll crib for Greta for Christmas."

"O Lars, that would be wonderful!"

The next day found Lars in the family woodshed working on Greta's Christmas present, when

Pastor Anderson paid him a visit. "What's this I hear about you not being willing to go out caroling this Christmas?"

"I'm not in the mood, Pastor. Not *this* Christmas. The way I've been kicked around, sometimes I feel yust like this footstool." For a moment Pastor Anderson made no reply, just studying Lars as he sandpapered the legs of the stool a bit savagely.

Finally, referring to the wooden frame in Lars' hands, which by now was half a footstool and half a doll crib, the pastor observed: "You know, Lars, our lives are pretty much like this gift you're making for little Greta. We can be just a footstool, or we can be made into something quite different. It all depends into whose hands we're willing to put our lives."

The snow fell quietly, like bits of white velvet, on the picket fence in front of the Erickson home, as Lars looked impatiently out the living room window. It was Christmas Eve, and almost time for the children's service. Anna was nervously buttoning the new dress she had made for Greta, and telling her to "hold still."

Greta, thrilled by her new dress, was more nervous than her mother. Pastor Anderson had asked her to sing a solo at the service, and she wasn't sure she'd remember the words.

Just before they left the house for church, Greta suddenly remembered! "O Mama," she said. "Stay here a minute. I've got something for you. And for Papa, too!" Disappearing momentarily into her bedroom, she returned with two crudely tied boxes. Handing one to her mother, she urged: "Open it!"

First hesitantly, then eagerly, Anna opened her box. In it she found a small bouquet of artificial flowers, tied together with a red ribbon. "Why, you made these from the trimmings from your dolly's hat!" Anna's eyes were moist, as she realized the sacrifice and the love which lay behind this gift. But this escaped the excited child as she replied: "My dolly won't

miss 'em. Anyway, they're for you to wear tonight."

So saying, she handed the second box to her father. Wonderingly, he removed from it a woolen scarf, crudely stitched together with green thread, made from a couple of doll blankets, blankets which he knew Greta treasured.

Lars' eyes were suddenly rimmed with tears, and he found it difficult to speak. "But Greta," he managed, "these were your dolly's only blankets." As she wrinkled her freckled little nose into her characteristic grin, she assured: "Aw, she'll be all right. She wanted you to have a new scarf to wear to church tonight."

Lars had all he could do to swallow the swelling lump in his throat as he knelt down and swept the youngster into his arms and muttered: "Thank you, Greta, thank you."

The tree in the church that night reached to the ceiling, and its branches were heavy with strings of popcorn, candy canes, shiny apples, glittering tinsel, and burning candles. To Greta no Christmas tree had ever been more beautiful.

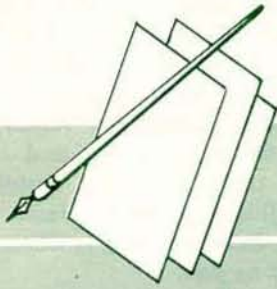
Her eyes sparkled in the reflected glow of the candles as she stood next to the tree and sang her solo. And her father found it difficult to conceal his emotion as he heard the sweet voice of his daughter repeat the words of the carol:

As each happy Christmas
Dawns on earth again,
Comes the holy Christ Child
To the hearts of men,
Enters with His blessing
Into every home,
Guides and guards our foot-
steps,
As we go and come.

Both Lars and Anna exchanged meaningful glances as Greta returned to her seat, her face wreathed with innocent joy, and as Pastor Anderson rose to address the congregation.

"I believe that little Greta Erickson has just given us the key to our entire Christmas celebration," he began. And then he repeated

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EDITORIALS

PEACE ON EARTH

It is a sadder America which comes to the holy Christmas season, 1963. Events that have shaken us to the foundations haunt our minds. A month ago our President was cut down in the prime of life and violence begat more violence. When those horror- and grief-stricken days were over, our nation had to humbly acknowledge that we hadn't come very far after all and that the affluent society doesn't supply all the remedies.

Earlier in the year we witnessed the brutal murder by bombing of four Negro young people in their church. Their only crime was having been born with a dark skin. All year long the struggle surged back and forth as Negro Americans sought the rights which are elemental to anyone fortunate to be white.

And for Canadian readers, there was the fraternal strife in Quebec which erupted into terror we thought couldn't happen here.

We haven't spoken of the world tensions which have kept all nations in a constant state of uneasiness, but then we shamefully remember that the world's new generation has never known anything but crises. And yet, come to think of it, which of our generations has been very trouble free? Furthermore, we must be prepared for a long pull because there can be no complete resoultion between the titans who presently dominate the world scene. That is, as they are currently constituted.

Someone will say that the Christmas story is irrelevant to a dog-eat-dog world like this. He will say that the night-stick speaks with authority and a crash education program is still the only hope for salvation.

But we beg to differ with such an opinion. We say that Jesus Christ is the answer. We say that society is redeemed as individuals are redeemed. Peace on earth comes as people receive the peace which the world cannot give. Peace is possessed as the despairing soul comes to the Prince of Peace and renounces all intentions of continuing the rebellion against God. Then peace "like a river" descends on the heart.

The peace of God does not indicate the absence of trouble. Having it within the heart doesn't mean that suddenly the world around the Christian will

be very nice and pleasant. Some who possess this peace are in very unlovely places. Nevertheless, they are serene because their life allegiance is right. They do not hide from God in the shadows and therefore they do not fear their fellow men.

Possessing the peace of God doesn't inoculate the believer against world concern. Did not Jesus say, "You are the salt of the earth," "You are the light of the world"? Even so, the peace of God impells the one who has it to introduce the Prince of Peace to others and to work for the good things in life for all people.

It has been one of life's mysteries that many times people who can testify to having the peace of God in their lives have revealed precious little concern for the earthly lot of their fellow human beings and not too much for their eternal welfare either. Why this should be so, as we said, is difficult to determine. But it has hurt the kingdom of God and it has prevented its coming. And after all, how shall the kingdom be extended except through those who are already in it? And how shall the love of God be passed to others but by those who know first-hand the divine love?

We were speaking of peace and now we have come to love. That shouldn't surprise us, though, because it seems to us that a great man, inspired by the Holy Spirit, once said, "And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." So also we could say, "If I have all peace, but have not love, I am nothing."

The angels announced to the shepherds, Peace on earth, good will toward men." The world needs this peace. The world needs peace-filled hearts that, like their Master, go about doing good and doing works even greater than He did, for so He prophesied. The world is waiting, but can it wait long enough?

It is Christmas time, glorious season of the year. There is hope. Jesus the Savior is born. God has visited His people. May you find great joy in the Christ who came. May the world hear the message and believe. There is no other way to peace.

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE

In all the wonderful warmth of Christmas-giving to loved ones and receiving their gifts in return there rises a disturbing feeling. That feeling finds expression in the question, "In addition to all the giving and receiving in which I am involved, what gifts of charity do I make at this season which marks God's greatest gift to me?"

We do not meet the spirit of the season by giving love gifts to members of our families, to dear friends and to persons whom we must repay for last year's present to us. We would capture the spirit of the One who gave more than we can repay by sharing

with people about us who need a bit of love and concern because they are down on their luck.

Far be it from us to minimize a dollar or two for Christmas seals, but this is not going far enough. There may be some personal act of kindness you can do in your town or community in which the effort you make will mean more than the gift itself. Perhaps it would be to bring a coffee cake or cookies to a lonely person or a small gift for someone who may not receive anything else. In some cases a basket of groceries for a needy family will bring much cheer.

It is true that sometimes you may be unable to give some gift because it may be misunderstood. At times great wisdom and tact are needed. The more impersonal way, and yet very effective, is to give a cash gift to some organization that has the facilities to reach into situations of need. These are such as rescue and rehabilitation missions, voluntary relief organizations, agencies which deal with mental and physical problems of children, etc.

You've dug deeply thus far to finance your Christmas. Some of you will be paying for this holiday's activities for several months to come. Now dig down again for something for others. It will make your Christmas brighter and it's for sure someone else will face the future with a little more hope because you helped.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Lutheran Ambassador extends its wishes for a blessed holiday season to you and yours at Christmas, 1963. We praise God that though He is the exalted One, yet He is mindful of us and has visited the earth with salvation. And the Lord Jesus shall one day return to herald the resurrection of the saints and to receive the living believers unto himself.

It is a great privilege for our humble paper to come to your home. In our mind's eye we try to visualize the many places. City homes in the West and

Midwest. Low, ranch-style houses of the western plains. Large, older houses of the eastern Dakotas. Homes in view of the majestic Rocky, Cascade and Olympic Mountains. Homes in the woodlands of Minnesota and the hill and dell country of Wisconsin. Scattered houses across western Canada and occasional houses here and there in many states of America. Missionary dwellings in several lands and a Norwegian home or two. Everywhere it is Christmas and we send our greetings to you.

We hope the number of our subscribers who merely tolerate us is not large. We hope that such will find something in *The Lutheran Ambassador* in which to rejoice even though they may disagree with the organization we represent. Others of you, in or out of the Association, welcome the *Ambassador's* arrival and have told us that it is read eagerly the day it comes. To you all, whatever the reception you give us, our best wishes for a pleasant Christmas observance.

At Christmas, as we think of Him whose advent we celebrate, we are reminded, too, of the essential oneness of all who trust confidently in the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus. Therefore, we greet believers from non-Lutheran communions who read our paper and those fellow Lutherans who live and work in organizations different than ours. God's blessings on your endeavors for Him.

Finally, we reach into educational institutions, offices, hospitals and rest homes, too. We greet our readers in these places, remembering those particularly who will not be "home" for Christmas or for whom the family scene is a thing of the past. We hope even though the setting is different, loving hearts and hands will make this a joyous Christmas for you.

And, oh yes, we must not forget our service men and women. We have *Ambassador* readers among them. Wherever you serve, God be with you.

To everyone, a blessed Christmas from *The Lutheran Ambassador*.

[Continued from page 4]

fjord, Norway. She was the daughter of Peter and Anna Ommedah. She was married to Markus Svaren, April 8, 1880, in Norway. In the year 1886, they sailed to America and settled in Brookings County, South Dakota, which was then Dakota Territory.

Her husband was a school teacher in Norway. He became a pastor and served several congregations around Sinai, South Dakota, for a number of years.

In the year 1911, Mrs. Svaren and her family moved to a farm

north of Binford, where she resided until the last eight weeks, during which she lived with her son, Palmer, at Sauk Centre, Minnesota. She passed away Oct. 10, 1963.

Her husband and eight children have preceded her in death.

Those who survive are three sons, John, at Loreburn, Sask., Canada; Lawrence, at Binford, North Dakota; and Palmer, at Sauk Centre; one daughter, Mrs. Carrie Heieie, Chaplin, Sask., Canada; 25 grandchildren, 50 great-grandchildren and three great-

great-grandchildren.

Blessed be her memory.

—Rev. Gordon Solheim

WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

"A Christian—

is a mind through which Christ thinks

is a heart through which Christ lives

is a voice through which Christ speaks

is a hand through which Christ helps." —F. A. Noble

before He went to Calvary. Make a list of the intercessions Christ made for Christians

Above all, the Christian's new position in Christ is a glorious and victorious one. What promise is given in I John 4:4; I John 5:4; Romans 8:31-39?

Discussion: Why do some children of God succeed in living a victorious, rejoicing Christian life while others dwell in the depths of despondency and despair? Hebrews 2:18; II Corinthians 13:5; I John 4:4; Philippians 4:13

E. THE CHRISTIAN HAS A NEW PURPOSE

Life takes on new meaning. We have a new purpose in our daily life. What is it?

Mark 5:19; Matthew 28:19, 20 _____

Ephesians 2:10; John 15:16 _____

Philippians 3:14; Ephesians 1:12 _____

Discussion: To what extent does our purpose in life direct our energies?

In Christ we have a new perspective, a new possession, a new person, a new position, and a new purpose. As we attempt to comprehend all that can be ours by accepting Him, we can only respond as Paul did in II Corinthians 9:15, "Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift!"

To those who have not accepted this gift of salvation, we leave two questions: "Do you not know God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4). Therefore, "How long will you go limping with two different opinions? If the Lord is God follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (I Kings 18:21).

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE



THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

INTRODUCTION

"The Christian Woman" is the title of a Bible study prepared for the Women's Missionary Federation of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. It is our prayer that the women of our church will be blessed unto a stronger faith and greater usefulness to their Lord and the church through this course. This first lesson will lead us to consider *who* a Christian is. The successive lessons will reach out to various aspects of the Christian woman's life, such as her use of the Bible, her prayer life, her stewardship, her witness, etc.

Your blessings from this course will be in proportion to what you personally put into it. Do not leave all the studying up to your leader. Prayerfully study the lesson on your own and then come to our meeting prepared to share your answers. Do not be disturbed if some of your answers differ, rather let it lead into discussion. The richness of God's Word can never be exhausted. Many different truths can be found in even one verse; therefore, share with one another blessings that have come to you in your study. Your life will be enriched as you pray—study—share. "And now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are being sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

Who Is She?

This Bible course entitled "The Christian Woman" is intended to help us live for Christ in every area of our life. Before we consider the Christian woman's relationships in various spheres of life, we need to determine *who* is a Christian.

We are living in an age when the term Christian is broadly used. Some may consider a woman to be Christian simply because—

- "She's active in church organizations"
- "She's always in attendance at Sunday morning worship"
- "She does so many good deeds"
- "She teaches Sunday school," etc.

We could make a long list of criteria, but standards that people set for Christianity are of little value. These activities can be worthwhile only as they are motivated by a heart rightly related to the Savior. It is *God's* standard we must measure up to. I Samuel 16:7 reminds us that "the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance but the Lord looks on the heart."

Let us examine then *who is a Christian* according to God's standard. Read the references given. In your own words write a brief statement after the reference.

A. THE CHRISTIAN HAS A NEW PERSPECTIVE. She has a new and different outlook on life.

1. She has been made aware of what she is *apart* from Christ.

Psalm 51:4, 5 _____

Romans 5:12 _____

Discussion: How is this new viewpoint of our relationship to God brought about? Romans 7:7; John 16:8; Acts 2:37, 38

2. She is aware of what she can be *in* Christ.

I John 1:9 _____

Ephesians 1:7 _____

Discussion: Forgiveness is a free gift of God. Why do some people refuse it? II Corinthians 4:3, 4; Matthew 9:12; Luke 18:11

B. THE CHRISTIAN HAS A NEW POSSESSION

1. Who is it? John 14:23 _____

Galatians 2:20; I John 5:11, 12 _____

2. What condition must we meet to possess Him?

John 1:12 _____

John 3:36 _____

Jesus Christ is THE Lord and THE Savior of the world, but unless we accept Him as our *personal* Lord and Savior we cannot claim salvation in Him. Read John 20:24-28 about Thomas' experience in meeting Jesus after the resurrection. What personal pronoun do you find in Thomas' confession?

C. THE CHRISTIAN IS A NEW PERSON

Read II Corinthians 5:17. Because Christ dwells within we are a new creation. How does this affect our spiritual life?

II Corinthians 5:15 _____

I Peter 4:2; Philippians 1:21 _____

Discussion: Has Christ been permitted to affect my way of life? Are there areas where He is not pre-eminent?

D. THE CHRISTIAN HAS A NEW POSITION

The Christian finds herself living *in* the world but not *of* the world. As long as we are in the world, what does Jesus tell us we can expect?

John 15:18-21 _____

Jesus was fully aware of the position in which the Christian would find himself. He knew the temptation of discouragement that would come. Read John 17 keeping in mind it was His prayer for us just

WOMEN for Christ

NORMAN LADIES AID HONORS SEVEN WOMEN

Norman Lutheran Ladies Aid of White Earth, N. Dak., gave honorary memberships to seven women at a special service on October 6, 1963. The Rev. John P. Strand is pastor of the congregation. Prior to the presentations a duet was sung by Mrs. Vernon Zunick and Mrs. Lyle Fox. A reading was given by Miss Mary Beth Skaar, and Pastor Strand sang a Norwegian solo. The pins and certificates were presented by three granddaughters, two daughters and a niece. A seventh pin was given later to Mrs.

Esther Hanson who was not able to be at the service. The candle-lighting service was conducted by the Ladies Aid president, Mrs. Walter Enger. In closing, Mrs. Robert Reith played two numbers on the marimba.

After the program a luncheon was served with a specially decorated table for the honored guests and their husbands. Also at the table were four women who had been honored several years ago with their husbands. Fall flowers graced the dining room. —Corr.



The four women who were given Honorary Memberships in the W.M.F. several years ago by the Norman Lutheran Ladies Aid are, left to right: Mmes. Minnie Lee, Marianna Sather, Anna Hulberg and Dora Hoiby.



NO ROOM

No room in the inn for the Christ-child
His loved ones turned sadly away.

They made Him a bed in a manger
And pillowed His head on the hay.

No room in our homes for the Savior
With the glitter and tinsel array.

While Jesus awaits for admission
And then He turns sadly away.

No room in our hearts for this Jesus,
We're too busy on His own birthday.

There are gifts large and small
there for others;

But Jesus turns sadly away.

Make Christmas a day of beginnings;
Give Jesus first place every day.

The reward will be numberless blessings,
And Jesus will not turn away!

—Mrs. Milton Tollefson
Leonard, Minn.



"A Christian is anyone in whom Christ lives."
—Eugenia Price



Shown in the front row are six of the seven ladies who were presented Honorary Membership pins by the Norman Lutheran Ladies Aid in October. From left to right they are: Mmes. Ole Locken, Joe Rice, Carl Locken, Arthur Lee, Clifford Syverson and Andrew Bohn. In the back row are the relatives who presented the pins and certificates.



Edited by Mrs. David C. Hanson



LITTLE ONE

My name is Little One. You can tell from my long ears that I am a donkey. Perhaps Little One seems like a strange name to you, but my master gave me that name when I was born because I was such a *little* baby donkey; and even though I am now full sized everyone still calls me Little One. I don't really mind, though, for they always say it in such a loving way.

I had a good life in Nazareth. My master was a carpenter and sometimes I helped him carry long pieces of wood to his shop. Other days we delivered the yokes he had made for the neighbors' oxen, or perhaps it was a chest or a table they had ordered. There were times, too, when my mistress and I worked together. She would load bundles of firewood on my back and then walk beside me as we made our way home. Sometimes Mary would scratch my nose and tell me, "You are a good helper, Little One; Joseph and I are grateful for you."

One day Joseph came to my humble home with such a serious look on his face that I knew he was troubled. "We must make a trip to Bethlehem, Little One," he said. "This is not a good time for Mary to travel so far, so you must be very careful where you walk. Keep your eyes open for holes in the road or stones that might cause you to slip." As he spoke, Joseph placed a blanket across my broad back and, with a friendly pat, he led me to the door of the house where Mary waited. His hands were gentle as he helped Mary to find a comfortable position on my back, and Mary answered with a sweet smile that seemed to say, "Don't worry, Joseph, God will be with us as we travel."

There were others, too, along the road to Bethlehem, and Joseph and Mary called to old friends as we travelled; but they soon left us behind, for we moved very slowly along the dusty way. Joseph walked at my side, and now and then he spoke words of encouragement to the young woman who sat so patiently on my back. "It won't be much farther, Mary. We should be able to see Bethlehem around the next turn in the road." And Mary smiled and patted the rough fur on my neck.

Sure enough, the road turned, and there was Bethlehem in the distance. All I could think of was a stable where there would be rest and a manger full of sweet hay—and my steps quickened at the thought. "Slowly, Little One," Joseph said. "We are almost there. You must look after Mary for only a little way now before you will have rest and food."

But Joseph didn't know how difficult it would be to find a place to stay. As we entered the city, the crowds of people swarmed about us. There seemed to be no place where we could rest. My legs were so weary and the noises of the crowd bothered me. Oh, how I wished I were home in Nazareth in my quiet little shed!

Mary and Joseph were tired, too, and Joseph's steps were slow as he walked to the door of the inn in Bethlehem. His step was quicker and his face more hopeful as he returned to the place where we were waiting. "The inn keeper has given us permission to spend the night in his stable, Mary," he said. "I would like to have had a more comfortable place for you, but the city is so full of travellers there seems to be no other place for us to lay our heads." "It will be fine, Joseph," Mary said, and we moved to the rear of the inn.

It wasn't long before Joseph had found clean hay and made a place for Mary to rest. The blanket she had used for a saddle now became the covering for her bed. I was thankful for a manger full of hay and a quiet spot not too far from my master and mistress. Soon the noises of the city began to dim as everyone settled down for the night. I fell sound asleep.

I don't know what it was that awakened me—perhaps it was the strange glow in the darkened stable. Was there music in the air? I never have been



Behold the Lamb of God!

certain; but everything seemed different somehow. My feeding trough was gone, and, as I peered through the dim light of the stable, I saw that Mary and Joseph were bending over the manger. And in the manger was a beautiful Child!

The other animals were stirring now, and, as we watched, a group of shepherds came to see the Child. Their faces were filled with wonder as they knelt beside the manger. They spoke of angels and a heavenly message. I heard the words "Savior" and "Christ the Lord," and I found myself trembling as I listened. God seemed very near.

I have never been able to explain the events of that night. I only know that a simple little donkey like me was permitted to be a part of the greatest miracle of all time. For in the stillness of that night God showed His love to all men by sending His beloved Son into the world as a Babe in a manger.

(The story was written to be used with the paper bag puppet of a donkey that is published by Scripture Press and is available in Christian bookstores.)

LUTHERAN LEADERS JOIN IN MOURNING PRESIDENT

New York (NLC) — Lutheran leaders joined the nation and the world in mourning the stunning murder of President John F. Kennedy, shot and killed by an assassin in Dallas, Texas, on Nov. 22.

"All Americans, whatever their political, religious or economic views may be, are shocked and grief-stricken by the tragic news of the assassination of their President," said Dr. Paul C. Empie, executive director of the National Lutheran Council, in a statement issued here shortly after the death of Mr. Kennedy.

In a telegram to Mrs. Kennedy, Dr. Empie said: "Your fellow Americans mourn with you the loss of your husband and of their President. May God's Spirit comfort you in the certain hope of the resurrection. Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

In Minneapolis, Dr. Fredrik A. Schiotz, president of The American Lutheran Church, and also of the Lutheran World Federation, in a message to the President's widow assured her and her family of the ALC's "heartfelt sympathy in the

tragic death of her beloved husband and esteemed leader of the nation."

"Christians of all persuasions will surround you with their prayers," he said. "May these words of Scripture bring you comfort: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead' (1 Pet. 1:3)."

In St. Louis, Dr. Oliver R. Harms president of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, proclaimed Sunday, Nov. 24, as "a day of penitence and prayer" in the Synod. Dr. Harms said in his telegram to Mrs. Kennedy, "May a sincere faith in the comforting assurances of a gracious God wipe away the tears from your eyes so that you may be able to see through the mist beyond death and the grave, to the resurrection and life assured by the glorious victory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ over death and the grave. May He sustain you and our country in this hour of grief."

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"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days."

—Micah 5:2

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"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'"

—Isaiah 9:6

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Mrs. Trygve Dahle, wife of the pastor, passed away on Friday, Dec. 6, at Willmar, Minnesota. Funeral services were held on Dec. 10 at Spicer. Our sympathy is with the Dahle family in their sorrow. A complete obituary will be printed later.

## IF YOU WANT TO SEE THE CHRIST CHILD

[Continued from page 8]

the words of the carol: "As each happy Christmas dawns on earth again, comes the holy Christ Child to the hearts of men."

"For, after all," he continued, "what is it that makes us Christians happy on this most holy night? I know there are many things that go to make up our joy at Christmas time—the warm fellowship of friends and neighbors, the good cheer of family celebrations, the gifts which we give and those which we receive."

Lars fingered the crude scarf in his hands affectionately at this reference of the pastor.

"But the heart and center of our joy, as another Christmas dawns on earth again," continued Pastor Anderson, "is the Gift of the holy Christ Child, whose birth this day commemorates. The Babe of Bethlehem is God's greatest Gift to you and me."

Lars' mind began to wander back over the years, to the many Christmases in which his heart had reveled in the news of the newborn King. What joy he had found, down through the years, in the simple assurance: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior!"

Lost in reverie, Lars missed out on much of Pastor Anderson's sermon. Be he did manage to bring his mind back to the pastor's message as the man of God concluded:

"My friends, it would be wrong for us to think that tonight the Christ Child is still confined to that crude little bed in Bethlehem's stable. He is here! Today! Tonight! He is with you, with me, in our church, in our homes! Our mighty Savior—our mighty Friend!

"Enters with His blessing

Into every home,

Guides and guards our foot-  
steps

As we go and come.

"Does it seem to one or the other of us tonight that God has perhaps forgotten him, that God has passed him by? Remember, my

"But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman" (Gal. 4:4).

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### JOHN 3:16—THE GREATEST VERSE IN THE BIBLE

God — the greatest lover  
so loved — the greatest degree  
the world — the greatest number  
that he gave — the greatest act  
his only begotten Son — the  
greatest gift  
that whosoever — the greatest  
invitation  
believeth — the greatest sim-  
plicity  
in him — the greatest person  
should not perish — the greatest  
deliverance  
but — the greatest difference  
have — the greatest certainty  
everlasting life — the greatest  
possession

—Selected

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"The people who walked in dark-  
ness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep  
darkness  
on them has light shined."

—Isaiah 9:2

friend, God *never* forgets. He who remembered us on that first Christmas night, by sending us His Son, remembers us on every night.

"His Son, our Savior, and our Lord, is always ready to bless, ready to guide, ready to guard—if we will only take Him into our hearts by faith, and let Him dwell there, and let Him lead us in the paths of His own choosing."

With the tender solicitude of a shepherd for the individual members of his flock, the elderly man leaned forward and asked his congregation in a quiet voice: "Will we take Him into our hearts and homes — tonight?"

The snow had stopped, and a bright star shone overhead, as Lars and Anna and Greta made their way home from church through the

driven snow. Little Greta chattered gleefully about the events of the evening. But Lars was strangely silent.

Perhaps never before had he been this "low" at Christmas. And yet, somehow, never had a Christmas Eve service meant so much. In a sense more real than ever before, he felt he had seen the Christ of Christmas.

And as Greta ran on ahead, dashing through the new-fallen snow, there suddenly echoed in his heart the words she had spoken just a few days before: "If you really want to see the Christ Child, you gotta get down on your knees."

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