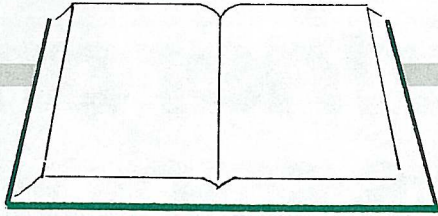


December 7, 1971

The Lutheran Ambassador

A strong pen and ink drawing shows the flight of the Holy Family into Egypt.





According to the Word

OUR WONDERFUL SAVIOR COMES

"And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger'" (Luke 2:10-12).

The true meaning and realization of Christmas must be experienced in our hearts and lives, for with the coming of the Christ Child, we have the answers to these questions: Why did Jesus come? Why did Jesus come the way He did? What does His coming mean to us?

Through the maze of the artificial meaning of Christmas, striking, yet quite meaningless, comes the afterglow bearing the personal impact which is the true meaning. The birth of our Savior has the capacity to make this truly the "glad tidings of great joy which will come to all the people."

Why did Jesus come and why was His coming so desperately needed? It was because of man's choice. God's plans for humanity were shattered and the restitution that comes to us on Christmas is the reason for the urgency of our Savior's coming. Because we know ourselves, we know how much we need this redemption

and how vital to us is the Savior's birth.

Jesus had come to seek and to save the lost and to rescue from sin the lowliest and humblest of men. God, our loving Father, proposed this so that our reconciliation could be a reality if we are attuned to the real meaning of Christmas. God's Son is born in a manner lower and poorer than anyone, to prove that there is no one so poor or so lowly as to be excluded from this love of God. In the story of Bethlehem we see the greatest demonstration of love this world has ever seen. Christ's coming means that we are no longer alone, but that God has "become flesh," as St. John puts it. Our joy has been made complete with the realization of this fullness in our in-



Rev. Reuben Wee

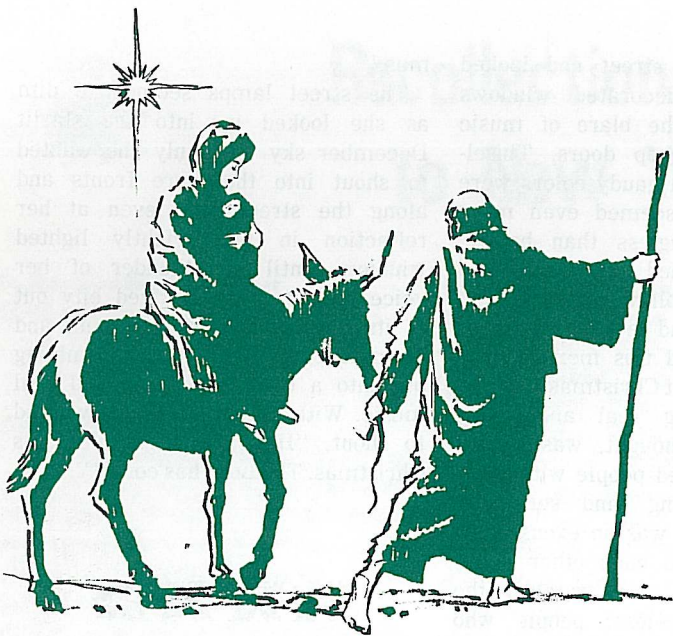
dividual lives.

Jesus came to be our Savior in totality: past, present and future. As long as grace abounds, God's love is real. In anticipation of this victory over our problems the angels sang "Glory to God and peace among men." It is as those who share this victory that we sing for joy this Christmas season. God took on Himself our life that we might share in His. We need no longer be alone, no longer separated from God, no longer caught in a meaningless, empty, frustrating existence that goes nowhere. Now we can have in Him divine sonship, full forgiveness, the joy of being accepted, the adventure of a purposeful life lived to His glory, and the promise of an eternity in His joyous presence.

For much of the world Christmas is over as soon as the presents have been opened, the decorations taken down, and the stock on the store shelves changed. Then it is a thing of the past. For those of us whom God has called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus, all the things that make Christmas a true Christmas are here right now. The meaning of it will last through all generations. The joy we know now is only a foretaste of what we will know hereafter. If we accept this gracious gift of Christmas, we can take our place with the cherubim to sing a new song of glory to the Lamb who was, is, and is to come.

—Reuben Wee

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What's Real About Christmas?

By Elizabeth J. Nelson

Almost everyone had left the church. The Sunday School Christmas program was over for another year. The gaily wrapped packages that had been piled under the tree were gone. The children had exchanged their gifts. But the tree remained, its bright lights twinkling on and off at Anita Allen. In the background she heard the happy voices of the children as they opened their bags of Christmas candy and the subdued tones of their parents as they visited with their neighbors and friends before they left the church.

Anita wondered if other Sunday School teachers felt the same mixed emotions after a program; a feeling of pride that the children had sung and recited so well, and at the same time a feeling of impatience. She wanted to hurry out of there and home to her apartment. There were still so many things to do to prepare for Christmas, but first she had a number of things to put away before she felt she could leave for the evening.

Stooping slightly, she gathered the hay from the Christmas manger and stuffed the prickly sheaf into a burlap bag. "I'll take it to my car and leave it for the garbage in the morning," she thought to herself. Next she carefully removed the doll from the manger and reached for a large paper bag.

"Are you going to put the baby

Jesus away for another year, teacher?"

It was Susan Parkins. Anita recognized the tiny voice before she turned and looked into her dark brown eyes. Anita smiled, but before she could answer, Susan asked, "Are you?"

"Am I what, Susan?" Anita asked absent mindedly.

"Are you going to put...the baby Jesus...away for another year?" Susan repeated her question with persistence and obviously strained patience.

"This is really only a doll, Susan. We used it to make the manger story seem real to us. We pretended, didn't we?" Anita sat down next to Susan in one of the little folding chairs near the altar. Disappointment and sadness clouded the five-year-old's face.

"I know, but Jesus is really here."

"Yes, He really is with us always, even if we can't see Him or touch Him. We've talked about that before, haven't we?"

"Uh huh, but we shouldn't put Him away, should we? Not in a bag. I mean, can't you take Him home and keep Him with you until next Christmas?"

"Of course, but promise me that you understand that this is only a doll. Do you understand, Susan?"

"Sure!" She smiled with delight at Anita's promise and skipped away happily. "Remember," she chanted gaily, "not in a bag, but where everyone can see Him. Merry Christmas, teacher."

"Susan, wait; I don't think you understand..." but Anita's words trailed off; Susan had left the church and dashed across the parking lot to where her parents were waiting in the car.

Anita shook her head soberly and promised herself that next Sunday she would try again to explain. Susan was such a determined little girl. Like the time she had asked, "How can we see God and He still be invisible?" Questions, always searching questions from Susan. It was such a joy to answer her, but always another deep problem to ponder.

Anita finished her tasks, turned out the lights and locked the door of the church behind her. Even after she had settled into her car she thought about what Susan had said, "Are you going to put the baby Jesus away for another year?" "...Not in a bag, but where everyone can see..." Strange, how the words of a little girl could suddenly become the voice of conscience. She hadn't meant to crowd the Lord out of this Christmas. She was so busy. Surely He understood her good intentions.

Later, in her apartment, Anita put the doll carefully under the Christmas tree. Thoughtfully she sipped her coffee and stared into space. "Where everyone can see..." Susan is only a little girl and she doesn't know how difficult it is to live your life so that everyone can see the Lord. That's what really bothered her. Susan had a way of revealing Anita's own sins

through her simple forthright questions. Was the Lord speaking to her through a little child?

Monday morning, large feathery snowflakes fell lazily to the ground and lay there like white down. Riverlets of water ran across her window, and now the brown crusty earth was covered with a blanket of white. In a few days it would be Christmas. Anxiously Anita counted off the things she had to do, on her long slim fingers: packages to wrap, parties to attend, and the packing for her plane trip home to her parents for the holidays. Anita had lived alone since she graduated from college and taken her first job. She enjoyed her work at the bank, but it seemed that each day brought new demands upon her and the responsibility of decisions seemed to weigh heavier with each week. Maybe the pressure and tension would let up after the holidays. Perhaps while she was home with her parents and family again she would have more time to meditate and think of ways to witness. It hadn't been difficult for her to witness to others at school, why was it so impossible at the bank?

She reached for her devotional book and read quickly from the page for December 20th. "Is anything real about Christmas?" The words stood out in black bold print against the white page and seemed to drive the question deep into her mind. Just last night she had tried to tell Susan the difference between pretending and reality. Could she help Susan to understand that the Lord is real? She prayed silently for a moment and then grabbed her coat and started for the office. "Are you going to put the baby Jesus away...?" Anita frowned, why should the words of one little girl bother her so much. "Susan," she muttered to herself, "if only I could take Him to work... maybe... just maybe, He'd help me through the day."

In the mirror of her mind the reflection of a little brown-eyed girl smiled back at her knowingly.

But the day, like every Monday, was hectic. Everything seemed to go wrong. There had been no time for reflection or meditation, not even at lunch, only decisions and frenzy. After closing time, Anita walked

slowly along the street and looked into the gaily decorated windows and listened to the blare of music from the open shop doors. Tinsel-laden wreaths and gaudy colors were everywhere and seemed even more fake and meaningless than before. The music turned to noise and clanged with a hollow sound until it seemed to echo and re-echo the words that she had read this morning, "Is anything real about Christmas?"

The only thing real about this Christmas, she thought, was human greed. It consumed people with over-buying, over-eating, and self-indulgence. Christmas was an excuse people used to outdo each other in almost everything. She watched the pale, almost faceless, people who walked past her, rushing from store to store, buying and wrapping gifts for each other without a thought of love. She remembered that one of the children had recited last night that Christmas was born in love. The real gift of Christ is God's Son, Jesus. He is God's gift of "good will toward men."

Anita stopped short. God's love is real! He cares. He knows. He understands. The warmth of these thoughts seemed to cover her like a glow against the cold winter evening. At last she had found the answer to the question that had lingered in the back of her mind since this morning. How could she have been so smug, so really and unbelievably tone-deaf to music of God's greatest gift of all?

The wonder of a new Christmas seized Anita. A real Christmas! The joy of it held her tight against the love of Jesus until its fullness stirred her complacent heart. If only Susan were here now! Never again would she be tempted to put the Lord in a bag and take him out for special occasions. Dear Susan, the Holy Spirit had used her and taught her a great truth. Once more the Lord had worked through a child.

Anita hummed to herself as she walked along: "the hopes and fears of all the years...the dear Christ enters in!" Christmas is real, when you have Christ. "Before Him every knee shall bow," she thought. "He's coming again, but until then, Anita Allen, you have this Christ-

mas."

The street lamps seemed to dim as she looked up into the starlit December sky. Suddenly she wanted to shout into the store fronts and along the street, and even at her reflection in the brightly lighted windows until the thunder of her voice rocked a mesmerized city out of its box-like tombs of cement and aluminum to send the people tumbling out into a night of reality and real music. With all her being she wanted to shout, "Hey, world...smile...it's Christmas. The Lord has come!"



ABOUT THE FEATURE WRITERS IN THIS ISSUE

Elizabeth J. Nelson (Mrs. Vernon R.) is a housewife in Grand Forks, N. Dak., and writes as a hobby. She is also a member of the Board of Publications and Parish Education of the AFLC... **Mrs. Albert Dahman** lives in Alvarado, Minn., is a housewife and former country school teacher. She belongs to an LCA congregation and her interesting article about an old-time Christmas was first published in the *Warren Sheaf*, which has kindly permitted us to use it. . . . **Dr. Mark H. Seyer**, writer of the Christmas sermon this year, is new in the AFLC, having recently come to assume the pastorate at Olivet Lutheran Church in Spokane, Wash. . . . **Mrs. O. J. Haukeness** lives in Everett, Wash., and she and her husband, a retired ALC pastor, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary last July. They both keep busy by assisting with the work at Bethany Home in Everett. . . . **Mrs. Marlene (Russell) Moline** of Lansing, Iowa, is a housewife, but one gifted both in verse and art as her work attests. . . . **Wayne Pederson**, who wrote the poem "Christmas Postlude," is the part-time youth director of the AFLC and a student at Free Lutheran Seminary. . . . To these and the other contributors to our Christmas **Ambassador**, our sincere thanks.

I

Remember

Christmas

By Mrs. Albert Dahlman

To our family Christmas was a season, not merely a day. I hope I shall never forget Christmas as a child. It was such a joyous and beautiful season in our home. Much preparation was in progress—baking, cooking, and Mama making new dresses for her five girls. Then also there was the dry "lut-fisk" that must be put to soak at least two weeks before Christmas so it would be ready for Christmas Eve.

Then Christmas Eve arrived. At noon we celebrated with the traditional "doppa i grytan." Meat which had been cooking for hours in a large kettle on the stove gave off a delightful aroma. With plate and fork and a slice of bread we formed in line and quickly dipped the bread into the meat broth and then each one sat wherever he wished and what a feast it was! Back again and again we went but we must not stuff our-

selves too much because the big meal came after the chores were done in the evening.

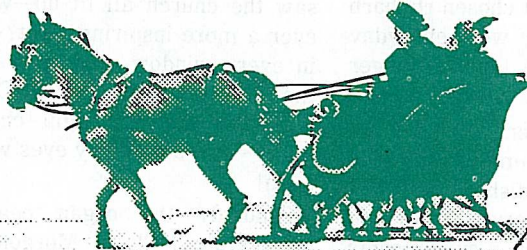
In the afternoon we strung what seemed to me miles of popcorn and cranberries for the Christmas tree. Late afternoon the tree was put up. Other trimmings on the tree were cookies which were bought. These were frosted ones and had a Christmas picture pasted on them and a loop for hanging. Then the box of many colored candles was brought out and we could each choose our favorite color. We placed these candles in a clip fastened to a tree branch and it was the duty of each one to watch their candle when lit, to see that it burned right. When your candle had burned so low that there was danger of the tree being set on fire, we could put a new candle in. Even this was a thrill for us. Then we took the little stumps and dropped little drops on a plate and let them harden. These drops were strung for necklaces. How beautiful we thought they were! If they lasted long enough we wore them to school when school convened again after the holidays.

The tree was ready! We danced back and forth admiring its beauty.

Evening chores were started earlier than usual on Christmas Eve so that we could have a longer time for the festivities. The cattle and horses had been given an extra measure of grain, the birds had been given their feast of suet and grain. The cats and kittens had extra pans of milk and a bag of candy had been provided for the family dog. Our dog, Chips, was very fond of paper covered taffy kisses and we always had a bag for his Christmas Eve meals. How we laughed to see his jaws almost locked together as he tried to eat all the candy at once!

At last it was supper time. This time we ate in the dining room. A white linen cloth covered the table and a bowl of polished red apples served as a center piece. The table was set with the best dishes and each one of us used our own bone china cup. It was customary at that time to give china cups as presents to children. This was the only time of the year that we used these cups.

What a feast we had—potatoes, "lut-fisk" served with cream gravy and drawn butter, cooked rice which had a nut hidden in it. The one who got the nut was supposed to be the



Mrs. Albert Dahlman

first one in the family to be married. When we were very young we didn't want to get this nut but as my sisters grew older they seemed pleased to find it in their dish and blushed happily. Then there were beet pickles, ripe cucumber pickles, "sulta" (head cheese), potato sausage, Swedish brown beans, brown bread, biscuits, butter and coffee. For dessert each one could choose their favorite sauce. Papa's choice was always lingon berries—other choices were strawberry, raspberry and red currant. Mama brought these choices up from the cellar. No matter how many quarts were opened, they didn't spoil as in a family of nine they were soon gone. To be sure no one had chosen rhubarb or wild plums as they were everyday fare. With the sauce, spritz, ginger cookies and doughnuts were served.

When we had eaten as much as we possibly could, Mama put the food away but often the dishes were left on the table as we couldn't wait to go to the parlor and open our presents by the Christmas tree. First each one lit the candle that was his. There was no Santa Claus as we were not taught to believe anything but that Christmas was Christ's birthday. Mama did tell of the "jul-tomte" (Christmas elf) in Sweden but these were not found in America. The youngest child usually gave out the presents after someone had read the name on the package. Presents were few but each one received something besides an article of clothing. For the smaller girls there was usually a doll—one with china head and kid skin body. How carefully we handled these dolls but always before the next Christmas they were headless!

After we had all admired and hugged our presents for some time Papa took the Bible to read the Christmas story, but before he read we must all join in singing "Glada Jul Afton" and then each one recited their piece which they had memorized for the children's Christmas program which was held December 27. It was a disgrace for us if we faltered in reciting and must be prompted. The Christmas story from Luke was the Bible selection chosen by Papa and we had heard it at home and in Sunday school until we knew most of it from

memory. After all had joined in prayer it was off to bed as we must be up early next morning to go to "Julotta" in church.

Such a sleepy group we were when Mama called us to get up before 5 a.m. We must be in church by 6 a.m., so there was a scramble to get ready—no time for breakfast so each one grabbed a biscuit or roll and we were off. Papa had the sleigh and horses ready and we all hopped in on the straw covering on the bottom of the wagon box. Then a sheep skin robe or a blanket was thrown over our heads to keep us warm and often we slept all the way to church.

When as we opened our eyes and saw the church all lit up—was there ever a more inspiring sight?—candles in every window—and as we entered the sanctuary the large Christmas tree and the six lamp chandeliers all lit—now our sleepy eyes were wide open!

Suddenly the organ pealed out, "Var Halsad Skona Morgon Stund," (All Hail to Thee, O Blessed Morn), and the congregation stood up and sang with joy in their hearts that was felt in the singing. Christ had been born, Christmas was here.

The service over it was home again and then a hearty breakfast. Usually Christmas Day was spent at one of our uncle's homes with a large number of relatives present. At these gatherings all the children must again recite their pieces and sing the songs they had learned for the Children's Festival.

The second day Christmas was a busy day, especially for Mama, getting us ready for the Children's Christmas program. Finishing touches were put on our new dresses—a new dress was a must for the occasion. Our hair must be shampooed and Mama braided it into many small braids not to be opened until the next afternoon so it would be very curly. By that time our scalps were very tender and it was a relief to have the braids opened. How curly—really kinky and bushy it was! We stood in front of the mirror and admired our beauty. I am sure that with my red hair so frizzy I must have resembled a burning bush—but I was satisfied. With a new hair ribbon added—could

beauty go further?

Christmas program time came and again we were off to church in the sleigh. If we spoke our pieces well and sang well we received a dime when we returned home. A dime! that was really money in those days. Several years the Christmas program went well for me but one year our neighbor's girl, Alice Nelson, and I were to sing a Christmas song without accompaniment. We made our bow, faced the audience, then looked at each other and began to giggle. We sang a few words and then giggled—we started again and giggled—then I caught my mother's eye—that sobered me fast and I sang—in fact I sang the whole first verse as a solo before Alice could chime in. No dime for me that evening!

Each child received an apple, a bag of candy and a book. Then home again with the sleigh bells ringing and the sleigh's runners creaking in the snow.

But this was not the end of Christmas. There were still many dinner invitations among the relatives as these must go the rounds until all had entertained. Christmas lasted until January 13. Then the tree was dismantled and brought outside. By that time all the candles were burned out and there were long stretches of string with no popcorn as through the days the temptation had been too strong and we had snatched a few now and then. The cranberry string was intact as the berries were too sour so there was no temptation to eat them. However, not so for the frosted cookies with the picture on them, they had their edges nibbled off all around up to the paper picture. As we dismantled the tree we feasted on the remains of these. The cranberries were taken off the string and washed and then Mama cooked them for sauce.

The tree was usually set in the snowdrift close to the kitchen window and bird food was hung on it. It was set there so that brother Harry could watch the birds as he was not able to get out in winter on account of his crippled limbs.

And so ended a wonderful happy Christmas season for our family, filled with fond and joyful memories.

this child



When Simeon saw the Christ Child, he said, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed."

Things are certainly "upside down" as we approach the Christmas festival. Ungodliness and unrighteousness are becoming more shameless and brazen. Righteousness and innocence are mocked and scorned. Human power is becoming more selfish and bold. Meekness, tenderness and mildness are considered weakness. Materialism and humanism are the accepted way of life for millions of people, while spirituality is suspect. **Today and now** are more important than eternity.

Things were "upside down" that first Christmas, too. God, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, entered human history as a child. God, against whom men and nations had rebelled, came to save the rebels, not to destroy them. The Lord of lords and King of kings, before whom every knee is going to bend, came as a little

baby born in poverty and helplessness. God, in whom mankind lives and moves and has its being; God, who upholds all things by the Word of His power, came as a helpless child born to a virgin in a stable at Bethlehem. The Lord left everything for a life as a servant and death on a cross. He did this because He really loves.

Many ignored the Christ Child that first Christmas. There was little room for Him. Life went on as usual for most.

Many ignore Christ today. He is still a "babe" fit only for children and women, for the unlearned and naive. For them Christ is only a myth—a beautiful story with pious overtones.

Antichrist is something else again. He is likely standing in one of the "wings" now, ready to make his entrance. He will not come as a child. He will come as a mighty full-grown man moving millions to follow and obey him. In the eyes of many, he will be the answer, he will be what the world needs. But his hour will be short indeed. The Child will come again, this time not as a child, and all will bow before Him. The Antichrist and his followers will be eternally banished.

This Child is not to be feared with slavish fear. "Fear not" is the oft repeated message in Scripture and

spoken by the angels that first Christmas night. The "mighty" Herod was afraid of Him, worried that He might take his crown. The Child came, however, to give Herod His crown. That is the way it is. The Child came to crown us with grace greater than sin and give us eternal triumph and glory. No, we need not be afraid of Jesus, but can come to Him no matter who we are or what we have done. It is only when we do not come to Jesus that we need fear.

This Child can be helped. This is another mystery. The Lord of lords comes in a way which makes it possible for us to help Him. He comes as a helpless child.

There are so many ways this Child can be helped. Certainly, as we build free and living congregations, as we are true to the Scriptures, as we support Christian missions and schools, as we proclaim the Gospel, we are "helping" this Child. Of course, this helping is always of grace, too.

We greet you in the Name of this Child this Christmas season. May the Best of Christmas, this Child, be yours. Thank you for your continuing loyalty and help in the work of the Association. Remember as we go forward, we are "helping" this Child.

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



Rev. John P. Strand



Etching by Adolph Beaufriere

THE NATIVITY

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

(Gift of Albert P. Strietmann to the Mr. and Mrs. Ross W. Sloniker Collection
of Twentieth Century Biblical and Religious Prints)

CHRISTMAS POSTLUDE

Sitting cross-legged on a carpet
cushion,
Air scented by a low-burning candle,
Colored lights shimmering on a
drying Scotch pine,
Recently-reviewed carols playing
again on the stereo,
Warm mug of coffee on the coffee
table.
Lord Jesus, I celebrated Your birth.
My room was dark . . .
no structure . . .
no direction . . .
no dimension . . .
The only life I knew was the dark
space my own body filled.

You shined in my darkness . . .
A Light in the night.
Lord Jesus, I celebrated Your birth.
Your light searched me . . .
revealed me . . .
I squinted . . .
I was comfortable in the dark.
Your light searched me . . .
and illumined my way to God . . .
and to indescribable comfort.
I walk in the Light.
Sitting cross-legged on a carpet
cushion . . .
Lord, don't let these comforts keep
me from living for You.
Air scented by a low-burning candle . . .
Lord, keep my life burning sweetly,

steadily for You.
Colored lights shimmering on a
drying Scotch pine . . .
Lord, let me be a light to a dying
world.
Recently-reviewed carols played
again on the stereo . . .
Lord, keep Your song in me always
fresh.
Warm mug of coffee on the coffee
table. . .
Lord, keep me hot in the insulation
of your power and love.
And Lord, don't set me unused
on a wooden table.

Wayne Pederson

God's Love Revealed At Christmas



By Dr. Mark H. Seyer

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).

A pastor once offered ten dollars to anyone in his congregation who could remember any ten points from any of his sermons which he had preached in the past year. Although this offer was made to thousands of members, not one was able to earn the reward. What this pastor did illustrates the fact that many people shift their minds into neutral once the sermon begins, or else they quickly dismiss the lessons from their minds. There is one lesson, however, which every born-again Christian has learned, which in itself is of the essence of faith. Every Christian must know this Christmas truth, that God sent His Son to redeem us. So let us examine God's love revealed by this Christmas text.

The Fulness of Time

God's love for the world is demonstrated by His wisdom and patience in selecting the proper time for Christ's birth. Paul carefully notes,

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son" (vs. 4). It was the fulness of time because all had been fulfilled of what the prophets had said would come and occur up to the coming of the promised Messiah. So great was God's love for mankind, that a long period of thousands of years was necessary to implement His great plan of redeeming us.

God's love is revealed in preparing a language which could be understood worldwide at the time of Christ's birth. As Daniel had foretold 600 years before, "And after thee shall arise another kingdom...which shall rule over all the earth" (Dan. 2:39). This third world empire was Greece and the universal Greek language became God's instrument to spread the good news of the Gospel throughout the known world.

If Christ had been born at any time previous, the progress of the Gospel would have been impeded by a lack of a common language known by all educated people alike. Although the first significant translations of the New Testament were made in the second century after Christ, the use of Greek during the first century was essential to the survival of the Gospel message. Not only

did the Lord prepare a language, but He sent His Son at a time when men's hearts were prepared.

Gentiles and Jews

God's love is revealed in sending Jesus at the time when the world was ripe for a revival. It was ready because paganism had led men to the point of despair. In pagan Rome, children were spared the "agony" of gazing at the sick and aged. Some young men even committed suicide after first seeing what the real world of suffering was like.

Never in ages previous to this time had superstitions had such a hold on the people. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that they were polytheists, not recognizing the elementary notion that there is only one supreme and all-powerful God. They knew absolutely nothing of a one God of justice and love. The religions of the Romans were really demon worship and involved the degrading of the moral senses and the depraving of the soul.

Religion was used as a justification for immorality and lasciviousness. Mankind had reached spiritual bankruptcy: "Filled with every sort of wickedness, immorality, depravity and greed, crammed with envy, mur-

der, quarreling, deceit, and malignity" (Rom. 1:28, Berkley). Society was on the brink of collapse and men knew that they were heading up a blind alley.

In spite of the fact that paganism had led men into these perilous and perplexing times, Paul says that they had "pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32). The races of mankind which were the most cultured and educated and had tried their utmost to discover the meaning and purpose of life in paganism had been unsuccessful. The heathen had proven to themselves what the Bible had to say about them, "strangers to covenants of promise, living in the world without hope and without God" (Eph. 2:12, Berkley). The fullness of time was come. When the Hope of Israel was born many Jews and Gentiles alike would welcome Him.

The Lord not only prepared the Gentiles, but also the Jews. Among the Jews, prophecy had been completed and 400 years had elapsed since the last one had been spoken. This created an "expectancy" among the Jewish people who were waiting for one last "prophet" to arrive on the scene.

The Jews were under Roman bondage, the scepter had departed from Judah (Gen. 49:10). They yearned for political deliverance and awaited a great deliverer who would fulfill the many kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament.

The Jews misinterpreted the mission of the coming Messiah. They were looking for a worldly Messiah, but at least it made them expectant and the remnant received Christ. All the prophets had agreed that God would send a chosen one to deliver Israel from the hand of her enemies. The time had come. There was an expectancy everywhere among Jews and Gentiles alike. The proper time had indeed come! God's love brought the fulness of time for Christ's birth. God's love not only prepared everything, but His love accomplished everything required for man's redemption.

A God of Justice and Holiness

God's infinite wisdom and love devised the plan for man's salvation without violating His own holiness

and justice. God's love within righteousness is shown in not breaking the law in redeeming the whole world. The law had placed a price on sin, on the transgression or breaking of the law of God. Paul told the Romans, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). The law had said, "God will by no means clear the guilty" (Ex. 34:7b).

The Lord had definitely stated that if anyone would break the commandments, the legal penalty set would be not only physical death, but eternal separation and eternal death from God. Because God is a just God, He cannot go against His word, but must punish sin. God is the thrice-holy One and he cannot condone sin. A judge who would let every hardened criminal go scot free would soon be impeached. A God who would pass by sin without due punishment would have His honor, righteousness and integrity destroyed. Sin **must** receive its due reward. Those who are "under the law" (v. 5) must pay the price that the law demands, eternal death!

God cannot exist with sin, since He is a God of law and order. God is the "conductor" of the world. If someone in the world gets "out of tune" and plays a sinful note, the musical harmony and beauty is destroyed. God does not want to destroy the whole orchestra, but he must get rid of the musician who continues to play a bad note. God can have nothing to do with anyone who is not absolutely holy, as He is perfectly holy. Scripture therefore says, "Be thou perfect" (Genes 17:1b).

Paul told the Galatians, "Those who depend on the works of the law live under a curse, for it is written, cursed is every one who does not



Dr. Mark H. Seyer

abide by all that is written in the book of the Law so as to do it" (Galatians 3:10, Berkley). James says that if we keep the whole Law yet break **one** of the commandments, we are guilty of breaking **all** of them (James 2:10).

It only takes one rotten egg to spoil the cake, and it only takes one sin "under the law" to make us guilty and worthy of death, eternal death, as a punishment. Satan committed one sin and he was cast out of heaven! One crime and we are criminals in God's eyes. The Bible says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). That means me, you and everyone else who ever lived, with the exception of Jesus Christ Our Lord. If it were not for God's great plan of "redeeming them that were under the law" (v. 5), we would all be condemned and would be like the heathen, "without hope."

God's Love

But God's love within righteousness was shown when He "sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law..." (v. 5). Jesus Christ, the eternal omnipotent God, became a true man! This is what Christmas is all about, the incarnation of God. God the Son became man so that all sin might be duly punished in Him. The central fact of the Christian faith, which so many people miss is this, God punished his **own Son** for **your sins and mine!** Mark this! Sin, according to God's Law, "under the law" (v. 5), must be paid by **you** or by an innocent substitute. No man or priest could die for you because none are innocent, and none are divine. The one who paid for your sins, is the Son of God Himself.

When Jesus died on the cross, He suffered more than just a physical death by crucifixion. He was suffering your hell! He did not actually descend physically into hell while suffering on the cross, but whatever the pain of hell the world deserved. He suffered it there for us! He dipped his soul in the pain of hell, that you and I might never have to experience it. Yet there is still more to God's great love for us.

(Continued on page 16)



A Boy and His Dog

by Mrs. O. J. Haukeness

Alan wanted a dog for Christmas. His friend Paul had a pup named Brownie. Alan spent hours without number admiring Brownie and playing with him and watching his progress in understanding commands and obeying them.

"Mother, I don't want anything else, if I may have a dog. Mother, I want a dog so much."

When Dad came home he was told, "Please, Dad, couldn't I get a dog for Christmas? Dad, a dog is the best playmate. Dad, I wish I had a dog."

Dad would reply, "Yes, Alan, when we know you can take care of a dog, you'll get one."

If Alan were late for dinner Mother would say, "I know he is over at Paul's house. He just can't tear himself away from that pup."

Alan was eight. He was an only child and that often made him a lonely child. He was thoughtful and dependable. He went to Sunday School and had many friends among the boys and girls of the community. But Paul was his favorite companion because of Brownie.

Christmas was approaching and Alan continued to long for a dog of his own. In his prayers at night he would ask, "Please, God, couldn't You send me a dog—even a stray dog would do if Mother and Dad would let me keep him. You know I would take good care of my dog." Then to sleep he went, dreaming of running with a dog by his side or sitting down to rest with a dog

snuggled close to his feet. Sometimes he would wake up at night and put out his hand, dreamily thinking that a dog was near.

At last Christmas Eve came. The tree was beautiful with an angel at the top holding the Christmas star. Alan opened the many different-shaped boxes and gift-wrapped parcels. Roller skates—"Dad, they're neat. I've wanted skates like these. Thank you! Thank you!" A book—"Mother, you knew I liked to read! You are so good to me, Mother!" Grandma had sent gifts, too, a warm knitted cap, with mittens to match, another book, then a game, and Alan felt rich in love and happiness.

When all the gifts were unwrapped, Mother went into the kitchen. Alan was sitting on the floor with his cap and mittens on trying to put on his roller skates. He thought she went for the bowl of big red apples he had seen her polishing, but she came to the door with a small crate. Dad jumped up to help her carry it and they set it down before Alan's wondering eyes. It was, yes it was, it really was a puppy, a live, wriggling-with-joy, black and white puppy! Alan couldn't talk. He put his arms around the pup and rocked with pure joy. After a while, he looked up with shining eyes. "Does he have a name?" he asked.

"No," Mother replied. "We thought you would like to name him."

"I don't know if I can find a name good enough, or nice enough," said Alan. "I want the best name in the whole world for him."

"If you start thinking about names,

you'll soon get the right one," Dad said helpfully.

Alan thought, with his head leaning against the puppy. "A president is the highest man in our country, isn't ye? Would 'President' be a good name?"

"You may choose any name you like," said Dad. "But it might be too long when you wanted to call him in a hurry."

"Here, President! Here, President! No, that doesn't sound right," Alan laughed. He thought for a long time. "A king is also a great man. Would 'King' be a better name?"

Mother nodded. "King is a fine name, but it seems such a big-sounding name for such a small puppy."

"Y-yes, I guess it is," Alan looked discouraged. "He must have the finest name."

"You know that a king's son is called 'Prince' and a prince can be



Mrs. O. J. Haukeness

just a baby. Do you think you might like that name?" Father suggested.

"Prince! That's exactly right, Dad. He's like a little prince." And Alan gave an extra hug to the puppy, which gave a small glad yip. "See, he seems to know that's his name."

Happy days followed. The Christmas holidays gave much time for play and fun. Alan taught Prince to follow a leash, and to come when called.

One morning Alan took Prince to Paul's house. He had hopped and skipped and run all the way over. Paul's mother greeted them at the door. "I'm so glad you came. Paul isn't feeling well. He's still in bed."

"Hi, Paul! See my pup. His name is Prince. Isn't he the nicest dog that you ever saw?" Alan was nearly breathless with excitement.

But Paul merely turned his head away. "Brownie was better," he said.

"What's the matter? Isn't Brownie here?" Alan questioned.

"Brownie was killed by a car. He ran out into the street one evening and the lights from the car must have blinded him." Paul covered his face with his hands.

"Oh, I'm sorry, Paul. I'll let you play with my Prince when you like." Alan put his hand on the bed.

"I don't feel like playing today," said Paul.

"O.K. Paul. I'll come over again tomorrow. You might feel better then. I'll bring Prince, too."

Alan walked slowly home. The next morning he again came to visit Paul. But Paul was not better.

"We had the doctor come last night," Paul's mother told Alan. "Paul was having a high fever and we didn't know what to do. He might like to see you, I think."

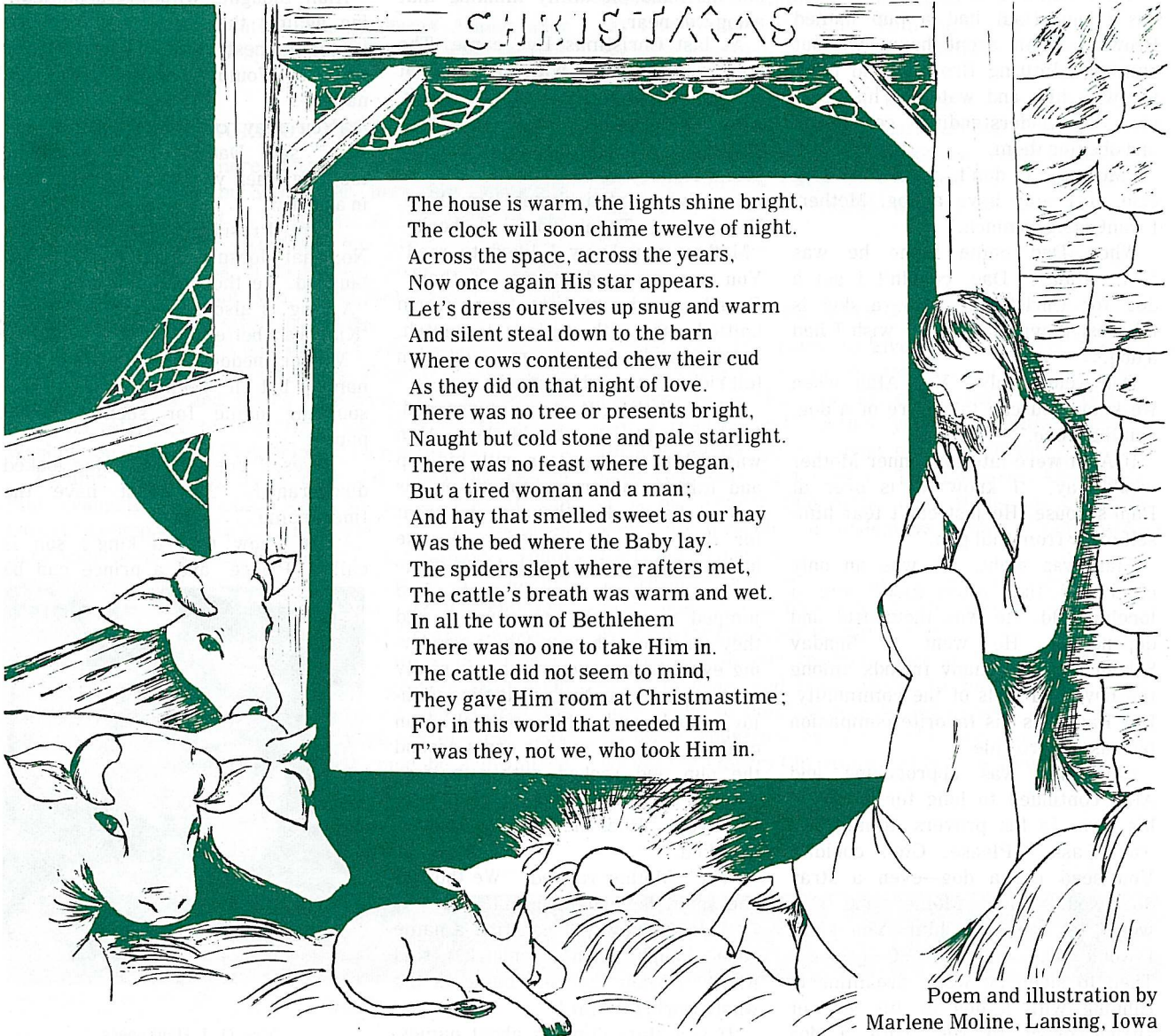
Again Paul turned his head to the wall. "It seems as if I'll never want to play again."

Thoughtfully Alan returned home. The following day he went to see his friend once more. Paul was worse.

"He doesn't eat, nor drink, nor
(Continued on page 19)

CHRISTMAS

The house is warm, the lights shine bright,
The clock will soon chime twelve of night.
Across the space, across the years,
Now once again His star appears.
Let's dress ourselves up snug and warm
And silent steal down to the barn
Where cows contented chew their cud
As they did on that night of love.
There was no tree or presents bright,
Naught but cold stone and pale starlight.
There was no feast where It began,
But a tired woman and a man;
And hay that smelled sweet as our hay
Was the bed where the Baby lay.
The spiders slept where rafters met,
The cattle's breath was warm and wet.
In all the town of Bethlehem
There was no one to take Him in.
The cattle did not seem to mind,
They gave Him room at Christmastime;
For in this world that needed Him
T'was they, not we, who took Him in.



Poem and illustration by
Marlene Moline, Lansing, Iowa



WE REALLY NEED CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR

The year 1971 draws toward its close still carrying many of the problems with which it began, and some new ones.

The year has been one in which the flames of war have ebbed in the world, but here and there in other places they have arisen to threaten new conflagrations. As an aftermath of war, hundreds of U.S. prisoners of war languish in detention and their loved ones faithfully await the word of their deliverance.

In our country December finds a great economic tug of war in progress as the government tries to find ways to keep prices and wages and profits in line. The best that could happen would be to find some way to do that. The worst is that a true depression and financial collapse could occur. The third alternative is to move from crisis to crisis, finding no lasting solutions.

The problems of human relationships, of finding gainful employment for all people, of motivating persons whose lack of will has been forged by a generation or two of their forebears, and of conquering those diseases which waste or cripple or kill people before their time, all remain without any clearly discernible solution in sight.

As we look at the problems of the world, and the escape some try to find through drugs and alcohol, the conviction grips us unshakably, we really need Christmas this year. And the Christmas we speak of is the real one, a Savior has come.

But in even the Christian observance of Christmas, such as we hope that you and yours will have, care must be taken that the Christ is not left in Bethlehem's manger. It is easy to do that. Even the world goes along with the manger, the swaddling clothes, the shepherds and the wise-men, the stars.

It is for Christians to bring the whole story, the active, present Jesus Christ to the world's attention. It is for them to proclaim the crucified, risen and returning

Son of God, as well as the incarnate Lord of the Judaeen stable. It is for them to live out His life in the home and school and marketplace so that others may see what a change He does make in life and be attracted to Him. When all is said and done, Christmas ought to mean life itself.

We really need Christmas this year. In our tired and troubled world, we may once again herald the news of Christ's birth. We may once more tell the world that there is a Savior and there is a way out and a way up. Let us make the most of this opportunity. May our Christmas observance in home and church bear witness to our belief in Jesus Christ as God's answer to man's need.

ADIAPHORA

"Where actions and practices are neither forbidden nor encouraged in Scripture by name, the earnest believer will search in the Scriptures for principles to guide his decisions and conduct."

Declaration of Faith, IV:2

We said last time that one of the distinguishing marks of the Christian life is that it is a life which is seeking to follow the commandments of God. Therefore, there can be no carelessness in regard to His Law.

Perhaps we should begin by saying that the goal of Christian living is to live life so that it may bring honor and glory to God the Father. To that end there must be a continual seeking of His will and a desire that life be patterned after His most holy design. "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is **the will of God**, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Rom. 12:2). If we do not begin with common adherence to this challenge, we have no basis on which to discuss the issue before us.

But if we agree on the highest good (**summum bonum**) for the Christian as being the will of God, then we can address ourselves to the question of the Christian's relationship to those matters not spoken of by name in Scripture, as to whether they are good or bad for him.

A word has been given to this issue which, according to its derivation, is unfortunate. The word is **adiaphora**, used to designate that which is neither required nor forbidden by name in the Scriptures by the Lord. But the word in Greek means "indifferent" and when we are dealing with knowing God's will there are a good many things which cannot be matters of indifference.

That which is called **adiaphora** often deals with social and recreational matters. The earnest Christian will look to the Bible for principles to guide him in making his own decisions relative to what is in question. And after all, it is those choices which one makes individually which are truly meaningful.

There are some Bible principles that are far-reaching in their implications. Paul catalogs the "works of the flesh" in Galatians 5:19-21: "immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunken-

ness, carousing, and the like." "I warn you," he said, "as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Therefore, any practice which tends toward any of these works of the flesh ought to be avoided.

Consider also such passages as Matthew 6:24; I Thessalonians 5:21, 22; Galatians 5:16, 17; Luke 8:14; I John 2:15; II Corinthians, 6:14-7:1; James 1:27, 4:4; Matthew 5:8; Luke 13:24; Colossians 3:17; Matthew 5:27, 28; and I Corinthians 6:19, 20.

We have found the following questions useful in counselling the young in regard to decisions they must make.

- 1) Is what I contemplate helpful to my spiritual life, and to my body, the temple of the Holy Spirit?
- 2) If there is risk involved, is it worth taking the risk?
- 3) If I should decide something is all right for me to do, what about my example to a weak brother?
- and
- 4) Will I be doing God's will in what I propose?

For one who is willing to look, the Bible has ample principles upon which the earnest inquirer may make his moral choices.

Some time in the future **The Lutheran Ambassador** will carry several articles which will deal with specific cases of adiaphora.

FINAL WORD ON NEW YORK

I have given a more detailed account of my trip to New York City in September than was originally intended. The account is concluded in this issue of **The Lutheran Ambassador**. Whenever one becomes "wordy," there is also the risk of becoming boring, but enough of you have said that you found the earlier articles of interest to make the effort gratifying.

For my own part the trip was an invaluable experience, an education in itself. As you know, there is no substitute for seeing places and things in person. For this opportunity in reference to New York, and in lesser exposure, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia, I am grateful.

I came away from New York City with the feeling that evangelical Christian work is but a drop in the bucket in comparison to the needs that exist. For whatever lives have been reclaimed through Teen Challenge, Youth Development, Inc., other agencies and local Christian congregations, hundreds and thousands are unreclaimed, many of them not even touched by real Christian outreach. The job looks so immense. It is easy to be pessimistic.

A second impression is this. I have greater admiration than I can possibly express in words for those Christians who are working in those unlovely places of New York and other cities of the world. They could be some place

else, too, but they have chosen to go to the Fox Streets, the **el barrio** of the Puerto Ricans and the Bedford-Stuyvesants and to remain with those needy. And even though they do not go in the name of Christ's Church and many do not have His Gospel to give, I have great respect for anyone who is tackling the great problems of the cities and trying to alleviate poverty and its related curses and to motivate people toward productive life.

Thirdly, I believe that Christian people should support Christian work that is being done in the cities to a greater extent than before. The situation is critical. If you know of rescue missions, drug treatment centers, and programs for reclaiming and rehabilitating the unfortunate of society, operated under Christian leadership, support them generously. The Gospel is all-powerful. Every life is precious.

Fourth, I hope that some day some type of rescue mission or center for reclaiming drug offenders, perhaps both, can be established under the direction of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Maybe God will lay this burden upon some from our midst. Why couldn't there be evangelical **Lutheran** ministry to the drug addict in some of the cities?

Finally, let us pray for revival in our land and for more consecration to the Lord among His people so that we be faithful in our tasks and responsibility and show the love of Christ to everyone we meet. God will still have to work through people, whatever is to be accomplished.

Raynard Huglen

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The time has come to give our Christmas greetings to the readers of our magazine. And it is always a pleasure to do this. We appreciate very much that you are a reader. And whether you have followed with us through all the year, a part of it, or in this issue have seen your very first copy of **The Lutheran Ambassador**, it is our prayer that some good thing has come into your life through our endeavors. That is our purpose for being, you know.

We hope that you will have a good and joyous Christmas, one that honors Christ, the gift of God's love. We pray for His peace in your hearts.

And so, to our readers, who are to be found from coast to coast and from border to border in the United States, and to those in neighboring Canada and a number of other countries of the world, we extend our best wishes for a merry Christmas and good new year.



The Legend of Befana



The stars in still procession march
As they did long ago.
Again the frost has caught the earth
With promises of snow.
Again we seek the warming fire
And dreamy nod content;
Befana dozed before her fire
On that night of wonderment,
When on the winter withered grass
Strange starlight etched a gleaming path
Straight by her cottage door.

Befana smiled, her shelves were full,
Her shawl new woven, warm.
Within the chest the spring shorn wool
Lay knit for winter's storm.
The firelight leaped from gleaming plates,
The pans were mirrored brass;
Befana's days were ones of work
And she could rest at last.
Preserves were made, potatoes dug,
Shadows danced past a clean hearth rug
Onto a clean swept floor.

Three travelers took the valley road
Step from the ridge crest down;
Rich were their robes, rich were their cloaks,
And richer still their crowns.
The hoar frost sparkled beneath their path
Like diamonds of their rings.
Few homebound peasants stopped and stared
At mighty earthly kings.
While over all there shone the light
Of Heaven's love and God's great might
That none had seen before.

At her stout door the three kings tood,
For they had need of rest;
Befana stared in mute surprise
At such undreamed of guests.
But the table soon in linen best
Beneath the feast was spread.
Out came the meats and jellies bright
And apples rosy red.
Loud sang the kettle on the grate,
For kings must neither want nor wait
Nor have to ask for more.

"Come with us, Befana, this night
We follow God's own hand
Over the mountains' frigid waste,
Over the restless sand.
Clear burns the path of holy light
That flows from heaven down
Since we have left our palaces
For a small country town.
For we have come to seek a King,
To give our hearts as offering;
Beside Him we are poor."

Befana sighed and shook her head;
The night was very cold.
"Kind sirs, I cannot come with you
For I am growing old.
I would stay here beside my fire
And warm my aching bones.
Why do you not stay here and rest,
For pleasant is my home?
We can go when the sun shines bright,
Far better than the cold starlight
When we would Him adore."

"We dread to leave your cozy fire
And promise of soft beds,
But we have been called to our King;
The star leads straight ahead.
Our journey will be short, my friend;
Bethlehem's the next town.
What means the comforts of this world
Beside a deathless crown?
If we should stay He might be gone
Before the coming of the morn
And we'd find Him no more."

"The cow must be milked, the calf fed,
The eggs all gathered in.
Then I'll take cakes and a warm gown
And go to Bethlehem.
I cannot go with you, kind sirs,
There's so much to be done.

What matters a few hours or so?
Tomorrow I will come."
The starlight mingled with the snow
As silently she watched them go
Before she closed the door.

Befana rose before the dawn
As she did every day.
She milked the cow and gathered eggs
And gave the calf some hay.
She did the other daily tasks
That she was wont to do;
The sun was high up in the sky
When she at last was through.
She dressed herself in Sunday best,
Took from the oaken storage chest
Gowns fine as princes wore.

"Where is the star that led the way?
Where is the silver path?
They said He was in Bethlehem,
I'll simply go and ask.
'Tis certain someone there will know
Where the Child can be found.
Where peasant and king worship Him
Must be hallowed ground."
Gay were her thoughts of seeing Him,
Of giving the gifts she'd tucked in
The basket that she bore.

"The little Lord? Oh, He was here
But He's gone now," they said.
"For jealous is our wicked king
And he would have Him dead."
"Where has He gone?" They did not know.
Oh, what was she to do?
What good is a gift if there is
No one to give it to?
Befana searched o'er plain and hill,
They say she even searches still
And will forevermore.

In Italy the legend goes
She brings good children gifts
In hopes that at this Christmas time
She'll find the Child she missed.
A legend, yes, but aren't we loath
To cast the world away?
And aren't we prone to answer Him,
"Tomorrow, not today"?
Beware that like Befana we
May search for Him eternally,
Yet find Him nevermore.

Poem and illustration by Marlene Moline, Lansing, Iowa

Continuing the reprinting of sketches of men, women and children the late Pastor Wm. Hagen met as he made his rounds as a hospital chaplain in Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota.

(Continued from page 10)

Adoption of Sons

God's love in righteousness is revealed "in the adoption of sons" (v. 5). All are adopted who believe that Jesus paid for their sins. Jesus did all this for us, but it does us no good unless we receive this salvation personally by faith. Either we trust in the fact that Jesus suffered the pains of hell for us, or we ourselves will have to suffer it.

Our text speaks about the "adoption of sons" (v. 5). It's like the boy in Luke 15 who wanted to leave home and wandered into the far country. That's all of us, for "There is none righteous" (Romans 3:10). Redemption means going home to the Father who has already redeemed us. The Father wants us to come home. He has sent our brother, Jesus, to the bank of Heaven where our sins have incurred a huge bad debt. The debt has been paid for all men. We have to go home, that is, accept Christ as our Savior.

How do we go back home? A father who has a son who has wandered away from home would make it as easy as possible for him to return home. He would be ready to receive him with open arms if he would but come back and ask to be received into the family again. Our loving Heavenly Father requires us to do nothing of our own merit to receive us back into the family. Neither does He force us to come back home. He wants us to come back willingly by believing the good news that "Christ died for us."

The key that opens the door to the Father's house is faith in the Savior. "Because of His kindness you have been saved through trusting Christ. And even trusting is not of yourselves; it too is a gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8, Living New Testament). Someone has said that faith is the hand of a beggar, receiving the gift of a king. Faith is trusting in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

That is the real meaning of Christmas and this Christmas text. It is the one thing needful for every true Christian to understand and believe. Let's not miss the true message of the most beautiful story ever told. Amen.

I took his hand

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Some people would no doubt have called this elderly lady a bit queer, talking about her "revelation," as she so often did.

"God has told me that I will be going home the last week of the year—home to God, you know. There isn't much time left now. Won't you please pray for me so the time will not seem so long?" She had an unquenchable spirit of prayer.

She had suffered much and was often very tired. The only nourishment she received for some time was fresh air and water. Even that she had a hard time to "digest." On the other hand, she never seemed to get too much of God's Word and prayer. She begged me to be sure to awaken her if she was sleeping when I came, so that she would not miss having devotions.

One day some time ago when I came to see her she was troubled. Her eyes roved restlessly back and forth. She asked me right away to read the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. After it had been read, together with the last part of Hebrews 4 and the first verses of Hebrews 12, she found blessed comfort and strength in Jesus' victory. One could see that she had that deep peace which characterizes souls that live in fellowship with God.

At other times when I read for her she would exclaim joyfully: "Thank you! Now I can wait until Christmas. Then He will come and take me home—home to heaven, you know."

Today again: "Please, won't you sit down and read for me?"

Gladly I read, and every word

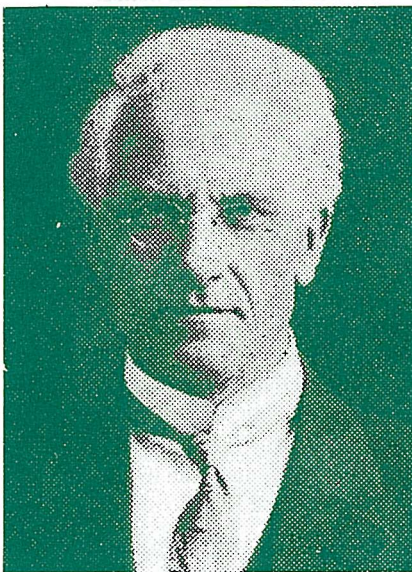
seemed to come as a healing balm in an open sore.

"Oh, that was good. Now I see Jesus right before me. How beautiful He is!" she said with some effort.

It may well be that she will go "home" before Christmas. Happy Christmas!

The day before Christmas Eve, death's bright angel came for her about noon. It was like a thin cloud disappearing in a noonday sun. Her empty bed brought us a message of joy; one more place filled in heaven, where the beautiful tones of the Christmas carols resound forever.

—Wm. Hagen



TRAVERSING THE HIGH ANDES

Part II

After an interesting morning in this mining area we were on our way, anxious now to get to Antofagasta, Chile, for Sunday. Saturday evening we pulled into the city and called up the Kenneth Parks, whose address had been given us by the Reddings. We did not plan to spend much time visiting in Chile, as we knew the Communist party was trying to put through a law that would make tourism more expensive and difficult. We didn't know how the law would affect us so we were anxious to be out of Chile. We were also concerned about travel dangers or problems, knowing that if we should have some trouble in Chile we could not expect much consideration from government officials, although the common people treated us very kindly. We spent an interesting Sunday with the Parks as we attended various native Chilean churches, yet these missionaries told us they did not know how much longer they would be able to continue in the country, for in some parts it was already embarrassing for the nationals to have missionaries visit them. The city of Antofagasta is considered a stronghold of Communist labor organizations and the party. While we were there they were having a three-day teachers' institute, the children were all out of school and the teachers were being instructed in "How to speed up the Socialization of Chile." At the border between Chile and Argentine we were to meet an army officer and his wife and another couple who were now preparing to move to Argentine or Spain because they felt it would be difficult to free Chile from Communism and they did not want to bring up their children under this system.

On our way from Antofagasta it was a long two-day drive to the capital, Santiago. We spent only a few hours there, checking on our Chilean auto insurance which I had purchased at the border, and which had to be endorsed at the capital.



At a Chilean Sunday School

We drove around Santiago looking at some of the main buildings and parks. Then after dinner we started up the road that would lead us to the top of the Andes mountains and to the famous ski resort of Portilla, then into Argentina.

Up to this point in our trip we had all enjoyed good health. Now, after leaving the Parks, Debby, our 15-year-old and a real livewire and camper, began to run a fever. Ruby and I suspected that the measles had caught up with us. But Debby was not to go down easily, for as we traveled up the mountain that afternoon and stopped at a quaint little city where all the taxis were old-style Elizabethan horse carriages, Debby was out with the rest of the gang, taking pictures and walking in the park. After an hour or so in this town we began our drive up the peak. We were a little concerned as we drove along toward the frontier, for, according to our map, we were to rise to 12,500 feet and as yet we were cruising along on only a slight grade and not too far away from the border. Then our suspense ended. Up ahead we saw the road curling like a staircase, climbing up in hair-pin curves for miles. We had only about 12 miles to go, but what a ride. Shifted down into first in our automatic, with the engine roaring, I wondered now if our overloaded Ford would pull the trailer up to the top. Only once did we meet a car coming down, so we rounded the curves in wide arches and with all the power we had, yet we were going slower all the time. By the

time we reached the last few curves there was snow around us and the road was a little icy. The engine indicated "hot," but we kept going, and then there appeared around the bend the famous "sky high" ski resort of Portilla. Its large Alpine-type buildings loomed closer and soon its wide front entrance came into view. We barely crawled, it seemed, into the gate. The kids gave a yell and with a sigh, we relaxed. We had made it.

The resort seemed a little too fancy for our taste and pocketbook, but then we found out that they had cafeteria-style and would let children double up in the rooms. The boys insisted they could sleep in the car again. I thought it would be a good idea to let them try it. This sort of below freezing camping produces good experiences and some self-confidence. The temperature dropped to about 15 above that night but Joni and Paul said they had a good warm night with plenty of blankets under and over them.

As we went into the hotel to eat Debby felt sick and dizzy, so she had soup and went to bed. She felt bad about this as she missed out on the after-supper skating and some of the sights of the picturesque place. The next morning before leaving we got a good view of the high snow capped peaks and the long ski lifts carrying skiers up the mountain. I told the kids to appreciate this now and throw a few snow balls. It would be the last snow they would see for a few years. By ten in the morning we were at the International Tunnel that cuts through a peak separating Chile and Argentina. This is really a railway tunnel and you bump along for just over two miles in the darkness, straddling the tracks. What a rough looking place it is, with icicles hanging down from rough rock walls. They allow a line of cars to go through from the other direction when there are no trains, and then a line of cars to come through from the other

direction. We were a little concerned now as we went through the Customs on the Chilean side. They had passed a law requiring tourists to buy so much of their money for each day in the country. However we had been in the country before the law was passed. Fortunately, the border was a great crowd of confusion. No one seemed much concerned about papers, just to take your passport, stamp it and get you out of the way.

As we headed down into Argentina, we found ourselves on a dirt road, the first one we had had to travel on during the entire Pan American route, except in Bolivia. But now we were more relaxed. We had made it through Chile and Debby was better. Little Priscilla was now running a fever, while Debby had broken out in a light case of measles. We fixed up the back seat of the wagon as a bed. The only thing to do was keep them warm, and keep rolling. That evening we arrived in Mendoza, the second largest city of the country. We were now back on the blacktop. Through the Auto Club we found a clean second-class hotel and very reasonable rates. They also helped us get car insurance, maps, etc. Driving on from there, we made Buenos Aires in two days. We arrived on a Sunday, but not knowing anyone there, and having some sick children, we decided to have our own church services and shortly be on our way toward Brazil. Buenos Aires is the second largest city of South America and for years was the cultural leader of the continent. We drove around the city for half a day looking at the various parks and ancient government buildings, homes, etc. Then by nightfall we were out of the city and at a motel. We had now decided to leave off most of our camping, as we were in a hurry to arrive and, also, prices at motels in this part of the world are about half of U.S. ones.

In another two days from Argentina's capital, we were at the Paraguay river which marks the line between these two countries. The border is only about 10 miles out of the capital of Paraguay, Asuncion. It was a unique experience to find that the Auto Club of Paraguay meets all incoming cars and a representative

takes your documents in hand and within about 15 minutes has you through Customs and on your way, all for free. We appreciated the polite, sharp young fellow who took care of us at this border and were glad we could share some Gospel tracts with him.

In Asuncion we had the address of the Mennonite Mission Home. You can get along fine here in either German, English or Spanish. These people have 3 different colonies in the country that have immigrated from Canada, Germany and Iron Curtain countries. I met several who had lived just over the border, near Winnipeg, Canada. They knew of and had been in my old home-towns of Hallock and Stephen, Minn. So we felt right at home. Our sick ones were pretty well recuperated, except Mother, who now had a bad headache and felt that she would be the next one on the sick-list. Well, we were all relaxing a little now, as Brazil was just 200 miles down the road.

I suppose this is a good place to end the odyssey of our trip. We had only now to go down the road to the great bridge, called "Friendship Bridge," that separates Paraguay and Brazil, then a couple hundred miles further and we would be home." From here on the journey seemed to be sort of an anticlimax. Yet, I can vividly remember the reaction of the children as we drove across the bridge. First there was shouting, then the singing of the national anthem of Brazil, then the doxology, and finally a word of prayer as we passed through Customs on the other side. We decided we must stay in the Brazilian border city of Foz de Iguasu. First, the children wanted to have a short look at the world-famous falls, and Mother was feeling pretty upset and wanted to get to bed early.

The next morning, up bright and early, and everyone feeling pretty fit, we had high hopes of being home by nightfall. We followed the tar road to where we would branch off on a dirt one and then with another 100 miles be at our destination, but now it started to rain. When we came to the city at the end of the asphalt, we had dinner and talked to several people. They could hardly believe we

had driven over 12,000 miles to arrive in their state and how they looked at our Minnesota license plates and our car which was longer and larger than the Brazilian models. Whoever we asked about the road advised us not to take the dirt "cut across," but rather drive the asphalt on the long way around. This would mean an extra 300 miles for us and arriving the next day. We prayed about this and felt we should take their advice, so after dinner, resigned to yet another day of travel, we headed out. That night we slept at a truck-stop, the boys sleeping in the car as usual. We did enjoy the good Brazilian cooking, with their usual three types of barbecued meat. The next day was Sunday. We were anxious to get to Campo Mourao and worship with our missionary and national brethren. The car was working well as usual. We had on this entire trip only changed a rear wheel bearing in Panama and the points in Chile and had a couple of flats. But now the trailer acted up a little and we had two flats in one day, Paul and Joni changed these in the rain.

We pulled into Campo Mourao about five in the afternoon, but imagine our surprise to see most of the inhabitants up on their roofs. Yes, in this city of about thirty thousand, they were literally up on the roofs, all rushing to try to get ready for the night, as rain seemed imminent. You see, they had been hit early that morning by the worst hailstorm in the history of the state of Parana. For a few minutes it had rained down hail stones, many they had weighed at a pound or more, big enough to break up all the tile roofs in the city and break much glass, damage automobiles and ruin crops. The next day the Governor of the state declared the county a disaster area. How thankful we were now that we had taken the long way around and so arrived a day late. We found our missionary colleagues up on the roofs with the rest of the populace, trying to get together enough good tiles to cover a room or two for the night. We set up our trailer tent. Ho hum, another day of camping. Ruby helped Mrs. (Connelly) Dyrud dry out the floors and walls, as she did not have

(Continued on page 24)

Winter Afternoon

Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.



(Continued from page 12)

sleep. He was delirious for a while last night. We are so worried," and Paul's mother wiped her eyes.

"May I see him?" Alan whispered.

"Of course you may. Don't stay too long. He gets tired so fast."

Alan nodded, then went slowly into Paul's room. Paul was restlessly turning his head from one side to the other. Carefully Alan lifted Prince and placed him in the crook of Paul's arm.

"He is yours now," said Alan.

A wide-eyed questioning look came from Paul. "Not really!"

"Yes, take him. He's yours."

Alan patted Prince's head and turned to go. He saw Paul put a shaking hand out to touch the puppy.

Alan walked sturdily home. The back of his hand had to wipe the mist from his eyes occasionally.

"Where's Prince?" Alan's mother asked when he came in to the kitch-

en.

"Oh, Mother! I gave Prince away." And Alan couldn't hold back his tears any longer.

"Not really? How could you?" Mother couldn't conceal her surprise.

"I had to, Mother," Alan hiccupped. "Paul was so sick. He needed a dog of his own right away. I had to do it, Mother."

"Yes, I see," said Mother slowly. "Prince was your very own and you could do with him what you wanted."

When Mother answered the telephone the next morning, it was Paul's mother calling.

"It was like a miracle. Paul went to sleep at once. When he woke up he smiled and wanted a drink of milk for himself and one for Prince. He is going to be all right."

"We're so glad," said Mother.

Alan was strangely content. He had had a dog. He had sensed the

need of a sick friend and given his best gift. He would miss Prince. Many times the tears came—but his heart was content. One day he said, "There NEVER, EVER was such a dog, was there, Mother?"

"No," said Mother softly, "there never, ever was such a dog."

* * * * *

Our hearts are touched by Alan's love for a friend. He gave his treasure to one who would love, cherish and care for him. There is no comparison with the love of God who gave His greatest treasure, His only begotten Son to save His enemies who would hate, despise and reject Him and finally nail Him to a cross. Let us remember the Giver of this Gift.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16)

WOMEN for Christ

NO ROOM FOR JESUS

By Mrs. Oscar N. Christopherson,
Bloomington, Minnesota

The Anniversary of the Christ Child's birth again brings its "good tidings of great joy."

"Anticipation and excitement" perhaps best describes man's attitude at Christmas time.

Bells, glowing candles, glittering trees, parties, church and school activities, these are but a few of the many festivities that spell Christmas to many people.

"By the time Father gets the vacation bills paid it will be time to think about Christmas." These are remarks typifying the sense of value that many people put on Christmas.

The glory of Christmas returns each year to remind the Christian that God revealed Himself in Christ. Brought to mind are the Star of the East; a Babe in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes; air filled with familiar passages such as: "Glory to God in the highest—"; "Fear not, for I bring you good news—"; "And you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins—"; "No room in the inn—".

Long ago, the heavenly angels heralded the birth of Christ. Time has been kind in preserving the songs and the story. From the first written record of the Christmas story by Matthew and Luke to the great printed works that retell the story now; from the splendid mosaics of the early days to the beautiful paintings that have come to us through the centuries; from the slow tones of the plainsong to the triumphant choruses that echo throughout our world today—there

has been one song and one story—and its message is for everyone: "CHRIST IS BORN!"

How different today is the method of advertising His birth. Radio and television can broadcast happenings within minutes. In those days it was done by word of mouth. And in spite of the marvelous methods of communication which we enjoy ALL people have not heard the angels' message, "Good tidings of great joy for all people." What are we doing about it?

We are touched as we read and hear read the Christmas Gospel and are saddened at the thought that there was NO ROOM in the inn for this Christ Child. What a tragedy to necessitate giving birth in such a lowly environment. However, whatever serious thoughts we might have at this time, they are soon overshadowed by glittering festivities on every hand. We become so busy buying, wrapping gifts, eating and merry-making that we too have NO ROOM for Him. Even though man's heart at this time seems to have undergone a transformation and petty differences toward one another seem to be put aside, the spirit of outward love does not continue inwardly, although it could, and should. All meaning of Christmas is soon forgotten. For many it becomes a tinsel Christmas without the Christ Child. But for those who love the Savior, the Gospel message, the joyous news that Christ was born to save man from the bondage of sin becomes the heart and center. The custom of sharing gifts is an opportunity for an expression of love and appreciation. What, then, is the Christian's expression of gratitude for

God's unspeakable gift in His only begotten Son?

All through Christ's life there was **no room** for Him. No room to be born—He fled to Egypt; No room in the land of the Gadarenes where he had rescued a man of sin who was possessed with demons—He was forced to leave; No room in the homes of Samaria, of which Christ said, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head"; No room for Him on His last night on earth—He spent it in the Garden of Gethsemane—in His deepest need. He who gave His blood to become our Redeemer was given **NO ROOM**.

There are three reasons why there was no room for Him in the inn: people did not expect Him; did not recognize Him and did not want Him. These reasons apply to our day as well. Few recognize signs of His coming, they are not interested and, lastly, do not want His coming.

How sad, indeed, that from the very beginning men had **no room** for Jesus. How tragic that today there still is **NO ROOM** for Him. We have room for war, room for sin, room for lust and pleasure but **NO ROOM FOR THE SAVIOR**.



In Memoriam

Key: The name of the town is the address of the deceased. Following that is listed the name of the deceased, age, date of death and the church in which he or she held membership.

NORTH DAKOTA
Valley City
Mrs. Ove (Thelma) Aaker, 63, Sept.
21, Grace

SOUTH DAKOTA
Webster
Mrs. Andrew (Josephine) Dalager, 92
Nov. 18, Tabor



Recollections of a Trip to New York City



by Raynard Huglen, Editor,
The Lutheran Ambassador

Part V

A Final Word

Last time I told about talking to a board member of Youth Development, Inc., and going up to see where that agency is working on East 105th Street in Spanish Harlem. I didn't get to see Jim Vaus there, the founder of that work, but it was my privilege to meet him when he came to Webster, S. Dak., on Nov. 16, to speak at the Armory. Much of his talk to the several hundreds of people gathered dealt with his conversion and the beginning of his work in the Hell Gate section of Manhattan. He did not say a great deal about the present program of YDI. But he is seeking to build up a nationwide program of aid to troubled youth in the name of Christ.

To conclude my remarks about New York, I respond to the question, how safe, or dangerous, is New York City? You or I can read various statistics about the high incidence of crime in that city. We can read Life's recent article about the burglarizing and terrorizing of apartments in New York. It is all true.

On the other hand, my own experience was uneventful enough. In five days I walked many miles, usually alone, sometimes in areas where I shouldn't have been, and no one molested me. From my experience,

then, I could say that New York is safe, but we know that there are many dangers. Still, on that Sunday night I walked 25 blocks, mostly on Fifth Avenue, back to my hotel. Off hand, I don't know of any sizeable American city where I could walk any 25 consecutive blocks at night and feel any safer, or as safe, as I did there. That is quite an indictment of American cities in general.

Of course, if one is out late at night in any city the risk of danger rises rapidly. And there are areas of New York City I wouldn't want to be out alone in at night at all.

Let me say also this word in defense of New Yorkers. We may have heard that they are aloof and uncaring. I found them much like people elsewhere. Many, many times, I had to turn to them for advice and directions and they responded as well as in any other city. Some were more pleasant than others, but you can find that anywhere. It seemed almost more natural to strike up a conversation with others at a lunch counter there than it does, say, in Minneapolis. Perhaps it is because in New York, and I refer really to Manhattan here, everyone seems to be sharing in an adventure together.

And yet, I could see how a Kitty Genovese could be beaten to death before 30 or 40 witnesses and no one come to her aid. There is a great impersonality about the city and it is easy to pass responsibility over to others. And if enough do that the

crime has been done and the culprit goes free.

So I end my remarks about New York by saying that there's good and bad about it. There are the fascinating things and the ugly ones. It is a place to be loved and one to be feared. It is so much like many another place, only there is so much more of it.

Washington, D. C.

I changed my plan to stay in New York most of Monday and instead made the 200-mile trip to the nation's capital where I could spend the afternoon before going to Philadelphia. The three-hour trip was made on the Metroliner, a speedy and modern train. Stops were made at Newark, Trenton, Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore.

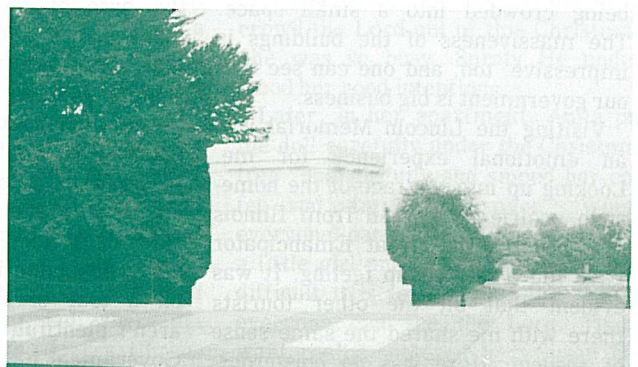
This was my first trip to Washington and I looked eagerly for anything recognizable as we came into the city. The tip of the Washington Monument was the first and only thing I saw and knew for sure what it was.

After checking my bags, I left the railway station, which is quite an architectural showpiece itself, to see the sights that could be packed into six hours. To my satisfaction and relief, the Capitol was only a few minutes' walk down Delaware Avenue. It certainly is an impressive building both inside and out.

I joined a tour which was led by a lady in her late 50's. She was the



The White House from Lafayette Park



The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

soul of efficiency but exhibiting an air of detachment that comes from leading a thousand similar tours. Like many tourists before me, I was rather shocked at the almost unoccupied House and Senate floors. But we were reminded that senators and representatives are not required to be on the floor at all times. I didn't see anyone whose face I recognized in Washington, but from the Senate gallery I heard a familiar voice although I couldn't see the person speaking. I was told that it was John Stennis of Mississippi and he was speaking in reference to a draft bill.

Next, out to Constitution Avenue and almost at once to Pennsylvania Avenue. How familiar these names were. As I walked the historic avenue toward the White House there were various government buildings to the left. And, to my surprise, the downtown section of Washington lay immediately to my right. I hadn't realized that this famous route bordered the city's loop.

It wasn't possible to get on the White House grounds, but I spent a few minutes in Lafayette Park across from them. The Treasury building is immediately to the east. Next I turned toward the Lincoln Memorial, noticing the Blair House where President Truman had lived while the White House was being remodeled. Right west of the White House is the Executive Office Building, which I thought had a most interesting architectural style.

The Lincoln Memorial lies at the end of the Reflecting Pool. On either side of the Pool are lawns and trees. Again and again I was amazed at the large area occupied by the government departments and the foresight which had prevented everything from being crowded into a small space. The massiveness of the buildings is impressive, too, and one can see that our government is big business.

Visiting the Lincoln Memorial was an emotional experience for me. Looking up into the face of the homespun prairie statesman from Illinois who became the Great Emancipator gave me a choked up feeling. It was evident that all the other tourists there with me shared the same sense of respect. Here was no boisterousness, but the spirit of quiet honor.

Arlington Cemetery

The same spirit prevailed in Arlington Cemetery which lies across the Potomac River in Virginia. There are two focal points of interest in the Cemetery. The one closest to the walk-in entrance is the grave of President John F. Kennedy and just off from that, to the left, that of his brother Robert. John Kennedy is flanked on either side by the graves of an infant son and daughter. Here, too, the noticeable cluster of tourists maintained respectful silence. Perhaps all of us pondered in our own minds the tragedy of young lives snuffed out by the bullets of assassins.

The other spot in the Cemetery that attracts major attention is, of course, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It is some distance from the Kennedy graves. I came to it, on the beautiful September afternoon, just as the guard at the Tomb was being changed. A country which maintains this round-the-clock honor guard over the representatives of the unknown dead of three wars can't be all bad. We watched in quietness as one young man took over from another and began to walk his measured paces before the white marble tomb.

Arlington Cemetery is a lovely spot. It is a hilly wooded area and all over are the white gravestones and crosses. Now and then I spotted a familiar name as I walked along.

And now it was time to get back to Union Station. I walked the entire distance, as I had all afternoon in my sightseeing. It took nine minutes to cross the Potomac bridge (Arlington Memorial Bridge) alone and about an hour and twenty minutes of near continuous walking to get back to the station. My route took me by the base of the Washington Monument where I could do little more than gaze skyward at the 555 foot shaft of stone.

Near exhaustion by the time I got back to Union Station, it was good to get a bite to eat and then relax on the hour and 45 minute Metroliner ride back to Philadelphia. By the way, opportunities for eating while on a tour of the government area aren't plentiful. Fortunately, the U.S. Government has not allowed the area to become another State Fair setting.

Philadelphia

In the city of Brotherly Love, I attended the Lutheran Editors' and Managers' Conference at the Marriott Inn. The first night I stayed at the Inn and it was such a large place that it seemed like I walked two blocks from the lobby to get to my room, all indoors. Not having a reservation I had to walk across the way to the Holiday Inn for the second night. From there, on eighth or ninth floor, there was a good view of Philadelphia at night. Both motels were across the Schuylkill (pronounced School-kill) River from the center city.

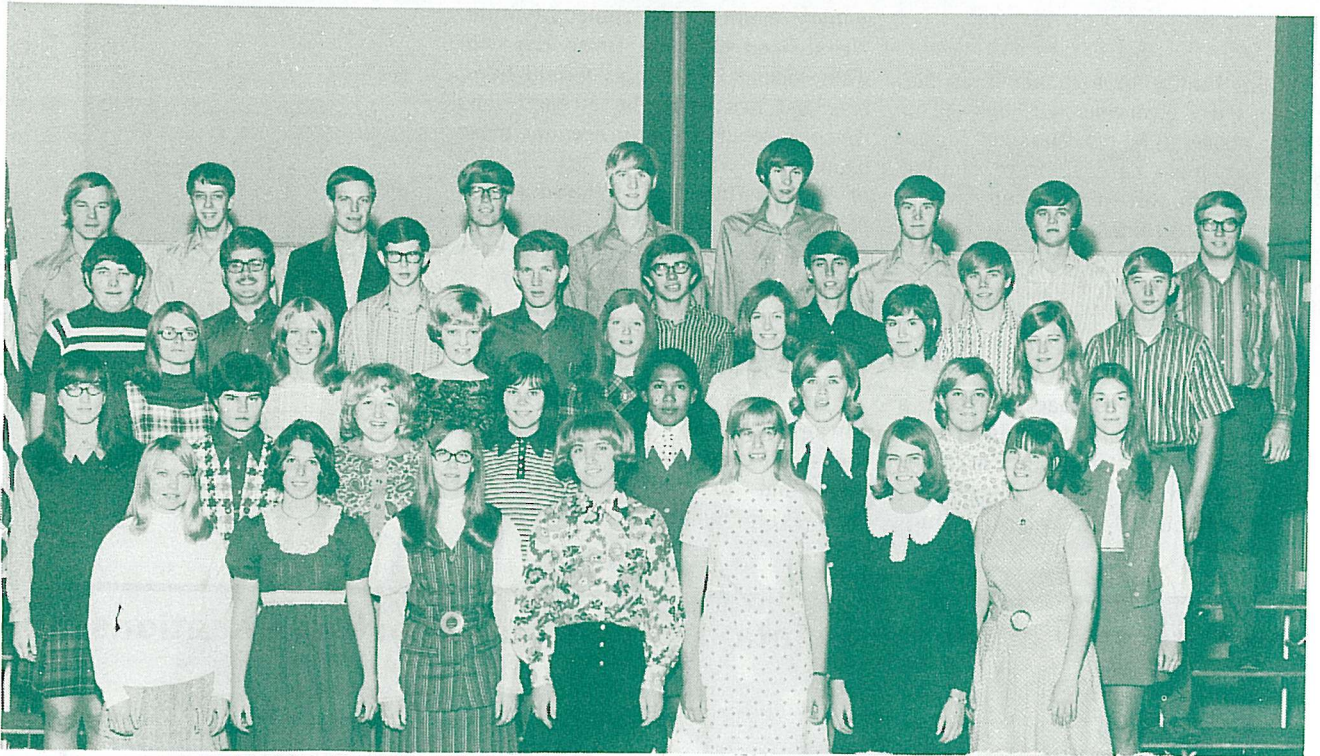
Of the conference itself, I shall not say much. A couple reports from it have appeared on the Church-World News page of earlier issues of the *Ambassador*. The program theme was "Community." I found it stimulating. After it was over, on a Wednesday, Mr. James Finley of Fortress Press kindly took me out to Queen Lane so that I could see the LCA book store and the Eastern Pennsylvania Synod office building. After browsing around there for an hour he drove me to a suburban train stop so that I could visit the city center for a while before going out to North Philadelphia to catch the Amtrak train to Chicago and points west.

The Penn Station has many little shops near it, all underground. Outside, I walked over to the City Hall, which is supposed to be as large or larger than the U.S. Capitol, and to the John Wanamaker Store. The latter is quite old now and has nothing special about it. John Wanamaker, of course, was one of the most famous of American merchandisers.

I did not get over to see any of the historical buildings of Philadelphia. I didn't get to spend enough time in the city to form any real pictures in my mind.

Bur from my whole trip I carry away many memories, some disturbing, all of them broadening to my own personal experience and I only hope that these accounts have been of some interest and help to the reader.

The end



The Senior (second year) Class at Association Free Lutheran Bible School, 1971-72.

Dr. Oswald Hoffmann To Spend Christmas With the Remaining U.S. Troops In Viet Nam

Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffman, speaker of the world-wide Lutheran Hour broadcast, will return to Viet Nam to spend his third Christmas with service men and women.

The invitation came from General Creighton W. Abrams, Commander of the U.S. Forces in Viet Nam, on behalf of servicemen and women who extended the invitation to Dr. Hoffmann to rejoin them at Christmas.

As he has for the past two years, he will conduct special Christmas services as well as visit with thousands of those still stationed at large bases, aboard ships and on fire-line positions.

Dr. Hoffmann, an ordained minister

of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, has been described as a minister with a pulpit that girdles the globe. The broadcasting programs, of which he is the principal speaker, go to over 1,600 stations with an estimated 30-million people audience. He is sponsored by the Lutheran Laymen's League, an auxiliary organization of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The funds for Dr. Hoffmann's visits to Viet Nam are contributed by various persons and organizations.

"It's such a great privilege to again be with our dear young people in Viet Nam at Christmas time. Youth is looking for something," he said, "to replace their general mood of disillusionment and despair. I'm grateful for this opportunity to meet with them to help build their understanding of what life is all about."

According to General Gerhardt W. Hyatt, chief of chaplains, U.S. Army, under whose auspices Dr. Hoffmann's visit is arranged, thousands of troops will be sent home this Christmas, "leaving behind legions to succumb to boredom and withdrawal.

"With combat diminishing," he said, "there is even more need for Dr.

Hoffmann's visit than ever before. Boredom and frustration set in, demoralization follows. Dr. Hoffmann is able to relate in terms the soldier understands, not only bringing his own message, but the love and solicitude of the American people."

In his broadcasts, Dr. Hoffmann speaks directly to young people with more than a third of his tremendous mail coming from youth in the 12-21 age bracket.



Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann

(Continued from page 18)

the big family to help her that the Knapps do. Everyone was busy. The place looked like a flood had hit it. All over town ceilings were coming down, floors were coming up, pianos and furniture ruined. It was a gigantic setback for this fast-growing frontier city. We ate by candlelight and our big camping light. The electricity was out, lines were down all over the country.

Since this last climactic event, a few weeks have passed at this writing. We have helped the native Christians here get tile and cover some of their homes and our two churches, the mis-

sionary homes and Bible Institute. We stepped out of a tiring trip into what looked like a battle field here, but God has given us strength and much strength and grace to these people to carry on. We are all well at this writing. The children are in school again and we are happy that the odyssey of our Andes journey has ended. This has been a memorable journey. We do not expect to undertake such a one again. Perhaps this is an experience of a lifetime. At any rate, we shall remember it always and as we remember it we shall continue to give thanks to God and to you brethren (your prayers) for upholding us all the way.

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