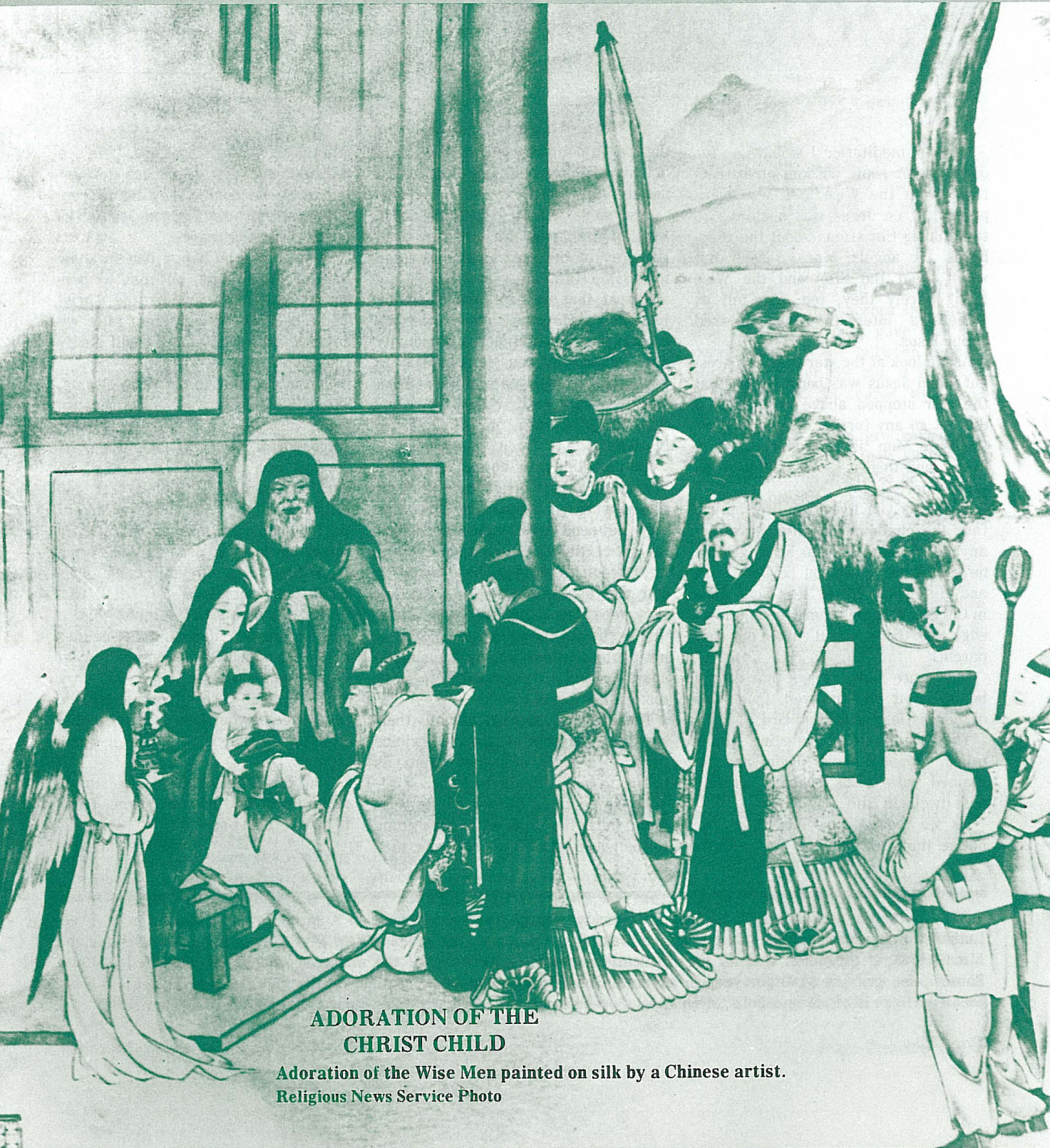


The Lutheran Ambassador



ADORATION OF THE CHRIST CHILD

Adoration of the Wise Men painted on silk by a Chinese artist.
Religious News Service Photo

MEDITATION MOMENTS

THE STAR AND THE WISE MEN

Matt. 2:1, 2, 9

For our meditation I would like for us to gather some wisdom or instructions from the Wise Men who were present when Jesus was a child. We talk during Christmas about the shepherds, the angels, Mary, Joseph, but what about the Star and the Wise Men? Surely they, too, can tell us something interesting and blessed about Jesus.

As we look at the star that was present when Jesus was born, notice that the star stopped above Jesus and it did not go any further. It went before the Wise Men till it brought them to Jesus, and then it stood still over the place where He lay.

Today as you live your life, as you face the challenges of life, never let anyone, no matter who he might be, never let him lead you beyond Jesus and His Word. Never lose your hope in Christ for some other tree of knowledge, like the tree that ruined our first parents.

There are some things that cannot be up-dated or improved upon. One of those is Jesus and His Word.

The star, after traveling many miles, stopped above Jesus and remained with Jesus because all fullness dwells in Him.

As we look at the Wise Men, we notice that they did not just admire

the star or compare it with other stars but they followed the star. They were not just stargazers.

They said, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him."

I trust that none of you would be just Jesus-admirers, or sermon-listeners, but that you would personally read the Scriptures, seek Jesus in your prayers and see and experience His blessings and truths for yourself. The Bible says, "He that seeketh findeth."

Another thing to notice about the Wise Men is that after some difficult times, when they again saw the Star they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. The Bible says that while they were inquiring among the priests the star was again revealed to them and they were at ease and full of joy.

It is a good sign when a man is not ashamed to be happy because he hears a plain, unmistakable testimony about Jesus.

Those Wise Men, with all their learning, were not ashamed to rejoice because a little star lent them its beams to conduct them to Jesus.

As we continue to look at the Wise Men, we notice that when they came to the house where the child was, they

entered in. They did not cry, "We see the star and that is enough for us; that is all we need." They did not cry, "We see the house where Jesus was born." They entered in.

May we not be happy just to know the Christmas Story, but may we personally see our need for the Christ Child because of our sins. May we come in unto Him, for He will gladly receive us.

One more thing to notice in closing. These Wise Men were wise because when they saw the child **they worshipped Him.**

Jesus was born that you might be born spiritually. He lived that you might live. He died that you might be forgiven. He rose again that He might hear your prayers and bring them to God as an intercessor. This is cause for worship.

This Christmas, remember that it doesn't matter if you have neither gold, frankincense or myrrh. What Christ wants is your faith, your love, your sins. He also wants simply the reverence of your heart. That is what worship is. That is what Christ wants from us.

And this Christmas, Jesus simply says, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out."

—David C. Molstre

The Lutheran Ambassador is published biweekly (except the second issue in August) by the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Rev. Raynard Huglen, Newfolden, Minn. 56738, is the editor and all communications concerning content of the magazine should be addressed to him. Subscription price is \$4.00 per year in advance. Subscriptions should be sent to The Lutheran Ambassador, 3110 East Medicine Lake Blvd., Minneapolis, Minn. 55441. Second-class postage paid at Minneapolis, Minn. Volume 15, Number 25

When I Almost Lost Heart

by Mrs. Harvey Carlson,
Grand Forks, N. Dak.



On a cold and stormy Sunday evening in December, with my precious Sunday School totaling 16 children, I eagerly prepared for the arrival of parents and friends for the Christmas program.

I was an enthusiastic 16-year-old in complete charge of the entire evening in my little country church. I had planned the program early in the fall, happily dreaming how special it would be. At the previous annual meeting of the congregation, our faithful, humble Christian janitor had announced his resignation as Sunday School superintendent and said he believed I ought to take his place. I was voted in. I accepted gladly. I was delighted with the confidence placed in me and also eager to try to manage the Sunday School and teach children to love my Lord and serve Him. My youthful enthusiasm made me feel so good to have the Sunday School as my project.

The children had come at 3:00 p.m. that Sunday for a final rehearsal. They each brought a sack lunch because I had invited them to stay with me at the church until program time at 8:00 p.m. The parents appreciated this arrangement because they had their regular farm chores to do and it would be a rush to eat supper, dress, and get back to church on time.

It was not so easy for me! The children were reasonable but one girl became afflicted with a severe nose bleed. Huge blotches of blood soon covered two dish towels. I had no communication with the outside world. It had begun to snow and the wind was getting stronger by the minute. I tried to remain calm and used the very limited knowledge I had, which at that time consisted of placing cold packs on the back of Ruby's neck. There

was no panic but we were all greatly relieved when the bleeding finally stopped.

At 7:30 p.m., we had our quiet prayer time for the program. It was Jesus' birthday and we wanted it to be very good, something that would please our birthday King! I heard prayers like this: "Bless our program, dear Jesus," "Help me to say my piece nice and loud," "Bless my mother and daddy; help them get here without getting stuck in the snow." By this time it was drifting heavily; we knew the roads would be difficult.

When 8 o'clock came, we were so happy to see the church filled with an eager audience, eager but tired! Many, including the pastor and his family, had left their cars at the top of the Benson hill and had walked the last half mile in deep snow. The church was cozy and warm, the candles were lit on the Christmas tree, the large gasoline lamps were burning brightly. The children were excited. So was I . . . and nervous.

The children joyfully sang their Christmas carols. Almost every child put forth his very best effort to say his "piece" with his whole heart. After the last Christmas carol, I called on the pastor for his annual Christmas greeting. It had always been an opportunity to share a little message with the hope the good news of the Gospel would reach the heart of someone who came to church only at Christmas.

Suddenly my heart began to thump. My pastor was angry! His neck was red, his lips firm, as he said in a crisp manner, "All stand for the benediction"!

What? No message? I was numb, and more so when he marched over

to me after the benediction, waved his arms and said very sternly, "You should have known better than to call on me after the last song!! When my remarks have to be at the very end of the program, you can just forget about me!!"

I really lost heart. I felt sick. How could he humiliate me in front of all those people? I knew one thing for sure; he would have no chance to do something like this again. I would quit the church!

I had respected and loved my pastor very much. I knew he was not a false shepherd. He was a very humble, faithful man of God, who had patiently instructed me in many confirmation classes that met from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon every Saturday and also on Tuesday evenings for an hour. I appreciated his deep reverence for the Word of God, his prayers and real concern for lost sinners, his yearning that his people repent of sin and become children of God by faith in Jesus. He and his family had been very kind to me. They had included me on many trips to Bible camps. In every way they could, they had encouraged me to yield my life to Christ.

Now I did not understand my pastor's behavior at all! Was this Christianity? Was it right to be angry? Didn't he owe me an apology? I could see it might have been better to have his little message earlier in the program, but couldn't he have been patient with me because I was a beginner? Didn't he appreciate my hard work and my sincere efforts?

I needed some good counsel, but where could I find it? As I cried and prayed, I remembered a friend living in Racine, Wisconsin, who had been our vacation Bible School teacher. She had lived in our home and the home

of the pastor. She was well acquainted with both of us. I wrote her a long letter telling her the whole story. I tried to be completely honest.

The reply seemed straight from heaven. She pointed me to I Peter 2:20: "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God." In her letter, she stated that she could understand the pastor was tired having been at three previous Christmas programs and then trudging through that deep snow. However, she believed he should not have lost his temper. He had sinned, but God would deal with him and teach him as it is written in Romans 12:19, 21: "Leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord!' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." She encouraged me to return to the Sunday School, forgive my pastor from my heart and continue working heartily as unto the Lord and not for the praise of men. I did.

Soon the pastor was treating me kindly. God enabled me to forgive and forget. I felt relieved and happy.

Today, as I write this, my heart is full of praise and thanksgiving to my God. I look back over the years and count multiplied blessings. How grateful I am that I did not lose heart and quit the church!

I understand that pastors, their wives, (I am a pastor's wife) and members of the church are all "earthen vessels" (II Corinthians 4:7). James 3:2 states clearly, "We all stumble in many ways." Every member of the body of Christ needs a generous, loving, forgiving spirit. This gives glory to God more than anything else.

I know before my race on this earth is ended, there will be further temptations to quit, but I do not want to grow weary and lose heart. It will not be necessary, because God will not allow me to be tempted beyond my power to endure... but with every temptation He will provide a way of escape. By His all-sufficient grace, I am determined to heed the practical advice in Hebrews 10:23-25: "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope

without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near."

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.

MINNESOTA

Bagley

Ole O. Honstad, 76, Oct. 27, Grace

PERSONALITIES

Rev. Philip Featherstone has resigned as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Running Valley, Colfax, Wis., to accept a call to the Pukwana, S. Dak., parish (Pukwana and St. Olaf). He and Mrs. Featherstone will move to Pukwana in February. The Pukwana parish is being served in the interim by Rev. Hubert DeBoer.

Mr. Erling Brekke, Antelope, Mont., and a member of Bethel Lutheran Church, Culbertson, Mont., recently contributed his 72nd pint of blood and that adds up to nine gallons, all since 1950, when Sheridan County had its first blood draw. Mr. Brekke is a former member of the AFLC Stewardship Board.

MEET THE HUEBNERS



The name Roger C. Huebner should not be strange to any *Ambassador* reader. For many years now this Austin, Minnesota, dentist, whose avocation is photography, has supplied excellent photos for our magazine. One of them appears in this issue on page 16.

Pictured above are Dr. Huebner and his wife Mae, and their children, left to right, Carol, 21, Susan, 29, James, 17, Tom, 24, and John 16. The picture was taken last June at the time of Carol's wedding.

We are indebted to Dr. Christensen, president of Augsburg College and Seminary from 1938-62, for this article which he delivered as a Founders' Day address at Augsburg on November 10, 1976, under the title "Like the Shade of a Great Rock." The name of Christian Saugstad, 1838-97, appears in the history of several of the AFLC congregations in northwestern Minnesota and for that reason, too, this article is of interest. One of our pastors, Hans J. Tollefson, at one time served the congregation at Hagensborg.

They Named a Mountain After Him

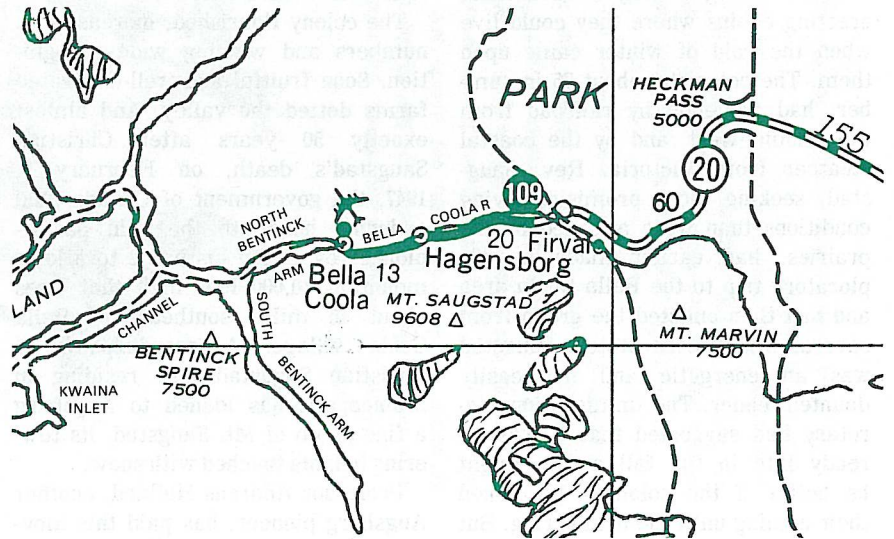
by Dr. Bernhard Christensen

"A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; . . . as the shade of a great rock in a weary land" (Isaiah 32:2).

A man can be as the shade of a great rock. I want to speak today about one such man among the founders of Augsburg College.

Toward the close of Augsburg's second year, in the spring of 1870-71, the little school in Marshall, Wisconsin, having lost its original building, was eking out a precarious existence with only one professor and 22 students. Classes were meeting in a rented 10x18 attic room. One evening in May, Professor Weenaas, who was also the president, informed the students that after long deliberation he had come to the conclusion that the obstacles facing them were so great, the hardships to be endured so many, that he could no longer continue. The school must be closed. Hearing this, the students were shocked and overwhelmed with sadness. Though they were but few, and the living conditions could scarcely be worse, Augsburg was already dear to them. Finally, one of the older students, Christian Saugstad by name, spoke up. "It must not be," he said. "Augsburg Seminary is needed. God will help us. We must carry one!" Stirred by his words, others of the students echoed the note of hope and courage. And seeing their faith and ardor, the President, too, was convinced. Carry on he would. The decision to go forward was sealed with further earnest conference, Scripture reading, and united prayer.

That was the turning point. A year later Augsburg left the little village of Marshall, and moved to a new cam-



pus in the rapidly growing metropolis of Minneapolis. Here for more than a hundred years now it has pursued its course, its program developing and changing with the decades and circumstances, but facing ever forward with the same courageous spirit that animated the little group to whom Chr. Saugstad spoke that May evening in Cooper's attic.

Saugstad graduated in the class of 1872. He became a pastor and for about 20 years he ministered in small churches among the pioneer Norwegian settlements in northern Minnesota. For a time he was serving, with an assistant, 16 congregations! Throughout these years he was a strong and loyal supporter of Augsburg and its cause. Bold and outspoken in the often bitter and divisive church struggles of the time, he was nevertheless known to be always fair and kindly, even toward strong adversaries. As the tensions within the church increased, in a time of grave crisis, when again the very life of Augsburg seemed endangered, a loosely organized group of supporters,

called the "Friends of Augsburg," was formed. Christian Saugstad, then a pastor in Crookston, Minnesota, was chosen its first president. That was in 1893.

For a few moments now let us go back in thought to a hundred years earlier. In the year 1793, the Scotch explorer, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, who had already discovered the great river now bearing his name, but was still eagerly seeking a passage to the Pacific, set out with a few companions from Fort Chippewayan in what is now British Columbia. Traveling southwestward along the rivers, they finally abandoned their canoes and proceeded on foot over the mountains. At last they reached the upper courses of a small river, the Bella Coola, and paddled to its mouth in a borrowed dugout, thus becoming the first white men to traverse the North American continent north of Mexico.

One hundred and one years after Mackenzie's historic feat, on October 30, 1894, a group of Norwegian settlers from the Middle West, under the leadership of Pastor Christian Saugstad,

were deposited by a coastal steamer at the mouth of the Bella Coola about 400 miles north of Seattle. After spending the first night in tents, with the help of some Indians who were then the only settled residents of the wooded valley, they began the arduous trip up the river to the area which had been tentatively assigned to them by the Canadian immigration authorities. Even more strenuous work awaited them—hewing out roads, clearing heavily-wooded land, erecting cabins where they could live when the cold of winter came upon them. The colonists, about 75 in number, had travelled by railroad from the Middle West, and by the coastal steamer from Victoria. Rev. Saugstad, seeking more promising living conditions than were afforded by the prairies, had earlier made an exploratory trip to the Bella Coola area and had then enlisted the group from several Midwestern states. Saugstad was an energetic and not easily daunted leader. The immigration secretary had suggested that it was already late in the fall and it might be better if the colonists postponed their coming until the next spring. But Saugstad replied, writing from Crookston on October 15:

“Would say we are ready for our journey, and leave this place on the 17th. We cannot put it off now. Hope we shall stand the hardships of your Province as well as we have here. Your obedient servant, C. Saugstad.”

The hardships and hazards of the first winter in Bella Coola were overcome. A constitution and by-laws had been drawn up, adopted, and approved by the immigration authorities. About 50 cabin-houses were built within a single year. The conditions laid down by the Canadian government were met, and each qualified settler was given 160 acres of fertile and fruitful land. During the following summer, the families of the men who made up the first contingent arrived, together with a large group of others to swell the colony. Rev. Saugstad was, at once, the president, the pastor and counselor, and the pioneering leader of his flock.

But sadly, less than three years after the arrival at Bella Coola, in

March, 1897, on a trip to Victoria to buy livestock and a much needed machine for a small sawmill, he was stricken with a serious kidney disease, and a day after his return, he died—the first of the colony to pass away. At the funeral service at the little church which had been built, the whole settlement sorrowed. On the granite slab which marks his grave is the inscription: “Pastor Christian Saugstad; Grateful colonists erected this stone.”

The colony flourished, increasing in numbers and winning wide recognition. Soon fruitful and well-cultivated farms dotted the valley. And almost exactly 50 years after Christian Saugstad’s death, on February 7, 1947, the government of Canada paid enduring honor to the bold pioneer by giving his name to a lofty mountain 10,000 feet high that rises about 15 miles southeast of Bella Coola village. A grandnephew of Christian Saugstad now residing in Minneapolis has loaned to Augsburg a fine photo of Mt. Saugstad, its towering heights touched with snow.

Professor Andreas Helland, another Augsburg pioneer, has paid this moving tribute to Pastor Saugstad, calling him “a home missionary by the grace of God”:

In the beautiful Bella Coola Valley, Saugstad’s tired body was laid to rest by loving hands, mourned even as a kind-hearted father is mourned by his loving children. For his people had long ago come to recognize the great sympathetic heart behind the stern exterior . . .”

As we remember this strong and striking representative of the Founding Fathers of Augsburg, we easily discern in him two notable qualities which can bring inspiration to all of us at Augsburg today:

- 1) Loyalty to a great cause; and
- 2) A bold and adventuresome spirit.

The cause was the Kingdom of God, exemplified in Augsburg College and Seminary, the school that he loved; and the main thrust of his adventurous spirit was to serve his people by improving their outward living conditions and at the same time helping to advance the Kingdom. And this was to be done, not only in the familiar

settings of the Upper Midwest, but in a field afar where, until then, no white man had ever lived.

Christian Saugstad was **loyal** and **bold**—in Cooper’s Attic in Marshall and in the forests of Bella Coola. How were these qualities born and nourished in this leader of an immigrant people? A part of the answer to this question may be found if we recall a truth to which American education today has given too little attention, namely the crucial importance of the **personal relation** between teacher and student—whereby often significant qualities of spirit and personality are shared and transmitted—where, in Tennyson’s words, “our echoes roll from soul to soul.”

This aspect of education has been well characterized by the psychologist, Professor Wayne Oates, who calls the process “identification.” “Identification,” he says, “is that process in which a person is changed into the likeness of the one whom he loves and knows, the one whom he trusts and likes, one whom he feels he can safely become.”

In a similar vein, Erik Erikson, in his book **Identity and the Life Cycle**, speaks of “leadership polarization” in which a growing person is enabled to identify himself as a person by choosing and committing himself to a leader. Erikson recognizes the possibility of disillusionment, yet says that the possibilities for growth are greater than if the choice is not made at all.

Christian Saugstad had such a creative relationship with the first two presidents of Augsburg, August Weenaas and Georg Sverdrup. From them he imbibed more than knowledge. From them he received the challenge to spiritual struggle and adventure, of daring to differ from the majority, of launching forth into new and untried fields—16 mission congregations in one parish in northern Minnesota, and at the age of nearly 60, a virgin forested valley in western British Columbia. It is fitting that a great mountain should bear his name.

Let the sons and daughters of Augsburg follow in his footsteps, catching (we pray) from their Augsburg teachers and leaders the spirit of a great loyalty and great adventure in this

(Continued on page 10)



Christmas On the West Coast of Norway



by R. J. Huglen

PREFACE

In this article, written in 1914 by the editor's father, the writer is thinking back to the Christmases he knew back home in Norway. He has been away for ten years, as he writes, but the memories are very clear. A senior in Augsburg Theological Seminary at the time, he had not yet established his own home in the new land and thus he longs back to his childhood home in a special way. The geographical setting is a small island on the West Coast of Norway. The island, Huglo, is sheltered from the ocean by the larger island of Stord. These lie approximately midway between Bergen and Stavanger. The title of the article in Norwegian is "At Christmas-time" and it appeared in JULEHELG.

In the month of November far oftener than not the weather was stormy on the West Coast. And as a breeze blew from the south and brought rain which beat against the walls of the houses, the wind would turn to the northwest and then there was another story. The sea was whipped into a fury and the waves lashed in against the shores, washing over both rocks and tiny islands so that seacraft were pulled securely into boat houses. Snow squalls weren't uncommon then either, when the wind was from the northwest. And it was necessary to be warmly dressed if one was to keep the cold out.

"But bad weather never lasts long" is an old saying and that held true of the "northwester" usually, too. It

calmed down and the wind swung to the south once more.

When Advent began it often happened that the wind came from the northeast and then the weather would usually be pleasant all the time up to Christmas, with light frost and ice that glistened like burnished steel. If the ice held up we skated wildly, and if it snowed we skied and went sledding on the hills. It was beautiful on a Christmas Day morning if the snow lay heavy on all the branches.

When Advent was near at hand, we began to ask Father and Mother if it weren't soon Christmas. "Yes, in four or five weeks," was the usual answer. But think how far away that seemed to us then. First we began to count the weeks, then the days—and soon it was Christmas.

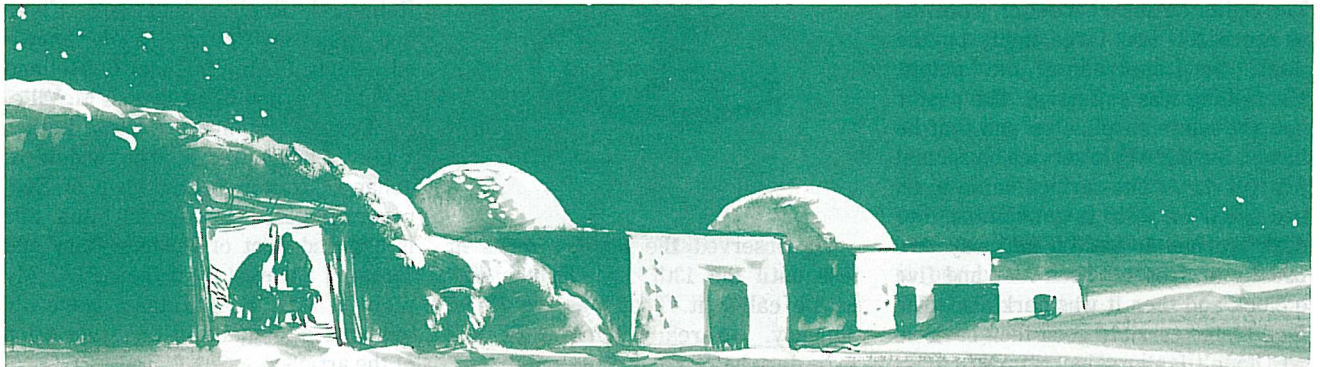
But before Christmas there was much to be done. Wood had to be hauled home and chopped and piled in big rows. The Christmas wood had to last until after New Year's, for in the meantime no one must have to be out chopping wood.

There had to be fish for Christmas. We always caught our own fish, but we had to buy the lutefisk. It was called "dry fish."

The women were very busy with baking and making food, and of the best kind at that, I should say. The homes, of course, had to have a thorough cleaning. Clothing had to be put in good repair and if the old wasn't

good enough, then new had to be purchased. It was exceptionally enjoyable to get something new for Christmas and if that didn't happen Christmas wasn't quite as happy, you understand.

The time went quickly and soon it was Christmas. The Christmas tree was brought home the day before Christmas Eve, often after much effort. It was placed in the room on Christmas Eve day as it began to get dark. All work outside had to be finished before it was dark and after the boys came in and had something to eat there was much activity with cleaning up. Everyone must go in the bathtub and after that the new clothes for Christmas were put on. And, my, how happy everyone was then! Mother was busy with making the meal and taking care of different duties around the house. Father usually sat by the table and sang Christmas carols, such as "Now We Will Gather Together" or "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come," etc. I can never forget the songs and their beautiful melodies. The girls decorated the tree and when that was done the lights were lit and we went around the tree and sang "Jeg er saa glad hver julekveld" (How Glad I Am Each Christmas Eve). The meal, which consisted of lutefisk, waffles, pancakes, potato cakes, lefse and mashed potatoes, was ready and we ate well and heartily. After devotions we went to bed almost



too excited to sleep. No one was to sleep upstairs that night. The lamp was kept burning all night, likely as a sign that Jesus is the light of the world. Such marvelous Christmas Eves I will likely never see again and as thoughts wander back, I hum:

You, Christmas Eve, with Father
and Mother
So often come to mind;
You are never forgotten wherever
on earth
I wander far and wide.

Christmas morning we were up early because we had a long way to go to church. And everyone had to go then, everyone who was able to, on Christmas Day, that is, if the weather permitted it. The Christmas sheaf for the birds was set outside before it was light and soon there were many guests for "breakfast." After again doing well by all the Christmas food the islanders went down to the dock. There the neighbors gathered and wished each other "Merry Christmas!" And the answer was, "Thank you, and the same to you!" And so the "church boats" set out on the water and it wasn't long before we entered the fjord. One could see the boats coming from Børtveit and Mehammer (on Stord). The journey was about equally divided between land and water, taking several hours in all one way.

Soon it was possible to see a crowd of people moving toward the church; some walked and others drove. There were greetings and visiting. When we got as far as Hystad we heard the clock chime and then the feeling of something festive surged within us.

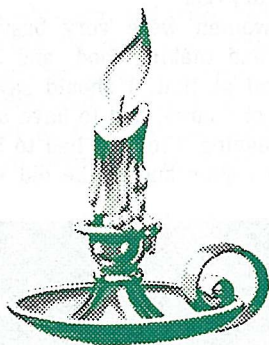
No one stood outside the church long on Christmas Day. Soon everyone was inside bid welcome by the strains of the organ. The Christmas songs began to ring out and they stirred the heart. The lights on the chandelier were lit, as were the two large lights on the altar, and one above the pulpit. Everything was so festive. The pastor had the white surplice on and that he had on for the whole service on special festival days. The service came to an end and if we were to get home before dark we had to get on our way. We usually arrived between four and five o'clock and then it was dark also. The food tasted terribly good then because we hadn't eaten since breakfast. If

it happened that the weather was bad on Christmas Day so that we couldn't go to church, we had to manage as well as we could at home.

After dinner we sang and read, as we called it. The songs we used were the traditional ones for Christmas Day: "A Little Child So Pleasant," "Ring, O Ye Bells," "In the Sweet Christmas-time," "Singing and Playing for the Lord," "Rejoice, Rejoice, This Happy Morn," "From Fjord and Sands," and many other Christmas songs. And Christmas songs have a sound above other songs.

No one could go to the neighbors on Christmas Day. But if the children were so "unfortunate" that they did look in on anyone then they always got something to taste, or something to take with them. On Christmas Day night we gathered together and marched around the Christmas tree. We gathered one evening at each home and kept on with that until after New Year's. The grown-ups sat together and visited. Usually several grown-ups watched us children when we marched around the Christmas tree. And we could see that they were with us in spirit.

On Second Day Christmas the children and teenagers gathered on the ice, if there was any. Then there was much gaiety and merriment. If there was snow on the ground, the whole group either skied or went sliding. This was excitement, you can be sure.



We observed the holiday more or less until the 13th day (Ephiphany), as we called it. That was the 7th of January. No really hard work was to be done before that time.

There was something wonderful about Christmas in Norway..... All rejoiced in it, both big and small. They were happy each with his own, even if it wasn't so great. And often the poorest were the most glad, perhaps because there was such a big difference for them at Christmas in comparison to other times of the year. For at Christmas, you see, things had to be as nice as possible even though at other times they were so poor.

It is a blessing to have these memories from childhood. They bring one's thoughts back to home, which is the dearest place on earth, and also to Him, who is really the true Christmas gift and Christmas joy. And we can never fully thank our parents because they taught us to celebrate Christmas in such a wonderful fashion. It will help us throughout life that we there came to see the Savior, who is the Friend of children and of all sinners.

To you who have read this and have a home of your own would I, with your permission, say this: Make Christmas home-like for your children. Teach them about the baby Jesus in the manger, who is the world's Savior. Sing many pretty Christmas songs and these will fasten themselves in the child's mind. Don't let the children believe in Santa Claus, that he brings them Christmas presents. No, let Jesus Christ have first place. Then the children can join in:

Oh, if I could again one time
With Father and Mother at home
Be able to join in a Christmas song,
I would praise the Lord.

(Ed. note: **Julehelg**, 1914, from which the above article was taken, was published by six "Augsburg men," namely, Vetle O. Aaker, Rudolph L. Dalager, Michael E. Helland, Reinert J. Huglen, Samson S. Klyve and Johan O. Reitan. To our knowledge, only Pastor Michael E. Helland is yet living and he resides at McVile, N. Dak., a member of New Luther Valley Church there. The widow of Johan O. Reitan is a resident of Ebenezer Homes, Minneapolis, Minn. She is a grand aunt of Pastors Gary and Timothy Skramstad of the AFLC. My mother, Mrs. R. J. Huglen, gave me valuable assistance in the translation of the article.)

CHRISTMAS RECEIVING

"Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled . . . and all went to enroll themselves." Thus begins the Christmas account in the Gospel of Luke. The decree created a lot of activity and concern for the people. There was much inconvenience, but the decree had to be obeyed.

Another Christmas season has come. For some, it is as though they are under a decree. There is so much extra activity. There are so many concerns. So much has to be done by December 24th.

There is much good in many of these activities and concerns. The pity of it is that our busy-ness makes us forget what God has really done. Our Christmas activities are so people-centered and demanding that the basic reality of Christmas, what God has done and is doing, gets lost.

Christmas is not what we do, but what God has done. The joy of Christmas is realizing what God has done.

GOD LOVED. Yes, God loved the world, not the impersonal world but your world and mine. Your world is what you are wrapped up in, that which holds your attention and your concerns. Maybe it is your family, your job, your church, or even yourself. God loves this world of yours. You love it, but God loves it more. He loves it enough to do something that the world be saved for something much, much better. God has already done something to save this world of yours. There is hope for your world, because of the Christ of Christmas.

GOD GAVE. Because He loved, God gave a Savior, His Son Jesus Christ. Christmas is not your giving appreciated gifts to your loved ones, as fine as this is, but Christmas is God giving to you. God gave His Son to you and for you. He gave that you and I might have eternal life. He gave that our world now can have an element of spiritual abundance, peace, and joy.

It is blessed to give. The true blessedness of giving can only be ours, however, after we have experienced the blessedness of receiving, receiving that which God gave that first Christmas. Be not so busy giving that what God wants to give you is not received.

I pray that you might realize afresh what God has done for you. He took the initiative. He gave the Gift. Christ conquered, and will reign forever. Your world has been redeemed. Receive this redemption.

God has been good to our Association family and friends this year, too. He continues to love and give. God bless each one of us as we rejoice in our Christ and His Kingdom.

Now sing we, now rejoice,
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
Lo! He from whom joy streameth,
Poor in the manger lies;
Yet not so brightly beameth
The sun in yonder skies!
Thou my Savior art!
Thou my Savior art!

Pastor John P. Strand

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wonderful age of numberless new fields and unexplored areas of investigation and of service. And whatever their special field or calling may be, let them be exemplars of this priceless spirit. No mountain may bear their names, but through them the lineaments of **living faith** and **adventurous service** will be inscribed in characters more enduring than stone.

(Map credit: Government of the Province of British Columbia.)

ALONG THE OLDEN CHRISTMAS ROAD

Along the olden Christmas road
We journey year by year;
We sing again the carols sweet,
To mem'ry ever dear.
O blessed Christ of Bethlehem,
Give us, we humbly pray,
Thy song to cheer, Thy star to guide
us
In Thy holy way. Amen.

—Dorothy Lehman Sumerau

CHRISTMAS

The stones of the stable were as cold
As the stones of a grave.
The wood of the manger was as rough
As the cruelest cross e're made.
And the thorn that grew outside the
door
Bore berries red as blood.
But 'twas there the Son of God came
down
To bless us with His love.

—Marlene Moline



WINTER

A wintery view of Stowe, Vt., suggests that the town has already gotten a bountiful response to its annual plea for lots of snow. Bumper stickers from the area appear year-round on automobiles urging everyone to "Think Snow."

RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE PHOTO

ANNA, THE DAUGHTER OF PHANUEL

by Hildegard J. Schwarz

"Anna, a prophetess, was also there in the Temple that day. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the Jewish tribe of Asher, and was very old, for she had been a widow for eighty-four years following seven years of marriage. She never left the Temple but stayed there night and day, worshiping God by praying and often fasting.

"She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she also began thanking God and telling everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the Savior that the Messiah had finally arrived" (Luke 2:36-38, in *The Living Bible*, a paraphrase).

This is all we can find in the Bible about Anna, or Hannah, the daughter of Phanuel. What might her life have been like before she saw the Christ Child in the Temple?

Anna, deep in thought, sat at the window of the Temple veranda. How long had she been living here in the Temple courts? She sighed. "It has been so long," she thought, "since I have bothered to count the years!"

This city, Jerusalem, lies at my feet. O Jerusalem! To you the Prince of Peace shall come. In your streets salvation shall be proclaimed. You, holy city, shall become the lodging for our Lord and our God!

Anna rubbed her eyes. "Hurry!" she said to herself. "Hurry! For the Lord is coming—He is coming now!" There was no time to be lost.

Anna glanced at the bundle at her feet: a sleeping mat, a cover, a few clothes, a bowl (for eating) and a drinking mug. Along with them she had a few other little necessities, all clean and neatly rolled together. She began to tremble with excitement.

Many persons already had gathered in the courtyard. It was the hour for morning prayer, and these were pilgrims who had come for the festivities. Anna looked over the crowd with searching gaze. There were business people; there were also many women. Here were several young people with small children; over there was a

group of young men on the way to one of the other verandas. These were disciples and students of the high priest and they were eagerly discussing his lessons. Anna smiled. "So they call this the School of the Prophets! Well, if they want to cram in the books and the old Scriptures looking for truth, fine. I simply look to heaven and heed what the Lord tells my heart!"

Then she prayed: "O Lord, my God, how have I deserved this, that Thou Thyself shouldst speak with me?"

For many years now no one had noticed her. She was so young then when she first came to Jerusalem at her father's side. The tribe of Asher lived in the northern province of which Galilee was a part. This had been their border territory, so they hadn't heard or had much to do with those who lived in Jerusalem. For that matter, these border residents didn't accept the religion of the foreigners who lived on the other side of the line. But Anna's father, Phanuel, served the one Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. And Phanuel had good reason for his faith in this God.

Things weren't always easy at the beginning, in business or in marriage. His wife was sickly; the children born to them hadn't lived very long. Then, one day, a visitor came, a pilgrim who invited Phanuel to travel with him on to Jerusalem—or so Father had told it. There, in the Temple of the living God, Phanuel should pray, and the Creator God in whom the forefathers had trusted would surely hear him!

So the two traveled together. In Jerusalem they parted. Phanuel's way led to the Temple. He never saw his friend again.

Phanuel had often thought about his wife back home as he traveled, and how things must be going for her. Would the child she now was expecting be healthy and survive? Would it be the son he had waited for so long? He was not a little astonished to hear his own voice declaring: "O Lord, my God, this child belongs to Thee!" If

this child lives and my wife is well, and I am promised sons, I will bring this child back here to the Temple so that it will serve Thee as soon as it is grown!"

When Phanuel came home he found a healthy wife who had no difficulties. Soon afterward Anna had been born into the world, a strong, healthy child. Things started going better with the family business, too. God had heard Phanuel's prayer and Phanuel trusted and served Him.

Meanwhile, Anna had learned everything her mother had to teach her. She was not yet 16 years of age when her father had prepared for another journey. "This time," he said, "Anna is coming along!" Everyone wondered about this. "Why Anna," they asked, "and not one of the sons?" And Phanuel, lost in thought, had simply said: "I have to redeem the promise I made in the Temple in Jerusalem. Anna will serve the Lord in the Temple as I have promised!"

When they got to Jerusalem and Phanuel had told the priests why they had come, the priests laughed. "Oh, surely now!" they had said. "This might be acceptable if she had come from the tribe of Levi. But a priestly servant—or a servantess, if you please—from the tribe of Asher? That's just too funny for words. Go home, little girl, and help your mother with the washing and the cooking. That's the better place for you!"

But the father had promised: here in the Temple she would serve, and Anna must obey. Every evening she was required to leave the Temple. Every morning when the great gates were opened she returned. Then one day she was summoned before the high priest and ordered to give up her plans for service in the Temple.

The temple guard who had taken her to the high priest told her: "You'd better obey. You're a big bother to them, and they'll do something bothersome with you! But I—I can see that you are upright and loyal. I am a servant, and I come from the tribe of Levi. I like you. Will you marry me?" And so Anna became the Temple guard's wife, living with him seven years until his sudden death.

It happened more and more often that Anna heard the voice of the Lord. "But, Lord!" she had protested. "I'm

no Samuel!" Was it just my imagination or did I really hear the voice of the Highest, the Almighty God, and His angels? Oh, that I might have a sign which I could not doubt! I long for a sign that would make it clear to me that this is the voice of God and none other!

The voice she had heard before now told her: "Why do you doubt? Have I not said that I am the eternal God? May I not choose from among My creatures whom I long after? And have I not chosen another Hannah, the mother of Samuel? Or Esther, so that My people might survive? Do you, Anna, daughter of Phanuel, think that I did not know when your father prayed in the Temple that you were no Samuel, but a girl? Do you think that anything can be hidden from Me? Am I not the Omniscient, the Creator of all things? Am I not all-powerful? Do penance, for you have doubted Me, the Holy God of Israel. And do penance for the sins of my people, for unto them and into this city shall come the salvation of the people. Yes, truly, the long-promised Savior is coming!"

So Anna began the daily trek to the Temple to pray. Soon the people who found her there asked: "Anna, pray for me!"

Word began to get around: "This Anna has made the will of God known to me. Anna is a prophetess! When Anna prays for someone, miracles happen. God speaks with Anna; ask her for advice. If she says something, it happens!"

In gratitude the people began to bring food and clothing to Anna. "You've done so much for us," they would say, "now let us help you as much as we are able!" From that time on Anna stayed at the Temple and never again left it at night. "Let me stay in the house of the Lord our God, that I may serve Him as He has commanded!"

And so her father's promise had been fulfilled. Anna served day and night. When people did not make any special prayer requests, Anna knelt or stood with her hands raised toward heaven in penance for the sins of the populace. "Forgive them, Lord, and blot out their guilt, that the way might be prepared for Thy salvation!" She often forgot to eat, or she deliberately

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The Best of Hallesby

THE BEST FRIEND

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

None of us are so poor that we do not own a friend.

We know that of all our temporal blessings, God has given us none more glorious than intimate fellowship with those we love.

But if it is so great to be a friend of a human being, what then is it not to be a friend of God!

Is that possible?

Yes, unto this end were we created. When we, by our sins, became enemies of God, He did everything in order to make us friends again. He left His own heaven and entered into human life. Yes, He permitted Himself to be put to death by His enemies in order to make friends of them.

And the friends He won can never fully thank Him for this incomprehensible friendship. Many have been enticed by all the honor and gold that the world can give, or have been threatened with punishment and death to make them give up their heavenly Friend. But they have bravely chosen death.

But why do the friends of Jesus weep and sigh so often?

Ask Peter, when he went out and wept bitterly. He did not weep because he was a friend of Jesus, but because he thought he could be a friend of His no longer. Ask the believers who grieve because of their unfaithfulness and disobedience toward their best Friend.

But note their joy also when Jesus speaks to their sad and bewildered hearts: "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you."

He knew beforehand what you were and is not surprised at your wretchedness. He loves you, not for your sake, but because He is love. None of your sins can nullify His love. Draw nigh to His heart again in all quietness and tell Him all your shame.

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editorials

THAT PRINCE OF VERSES

A common expression is "what it's all about." We are suggesting today that that clause describes very well that "prince of verses," John 3:16. And when we say that we are also speaking of Christmas for John 3:16 is the message of Christmas. The Apostle John didn't give us any account of the birth of Christ as did Luke, but the truth is in his Gospel and nowhere more simply or directly than in the 16th verse of Chapter 3.

Yet there are those who turn words around in that common expression and are asking "what's it all about?" as they hear about Christmas and get caught up in the rush of preparations. It shall be our privilege in Christian congregations and related Christian work again this year, God willing, to tell the world "what it's all about" and call upon people to believe and to receive life.

John 3:16, that "prince of verses," divides naturally into three parts and the first is "God so loved the world." We begin with God, even as the Bible begins with God creating. Philosophers have spoken of Him as the First Cause and the Prime Mover. That He is, but the Bible gives us the picture of a personal God, a God involved and concerned. Indeed, a God who loves man, the crown of all that He created.

The word "love" is an often distorted word today. Sometimes it is used in a maudlin or sickly sentimental way. Often it represents lust, which is no love at all. In higher forms it speaks of social concern, but this, too, falls far short of the love of God for the world.

"God so loved the world" and world refers to all people everywhere. Christmas is for everyone, the most despised and despicable, the most respectable and yet alienated. All people need Jesus Christ. Without Him they are lost.

The second part of the "prince of verses" is "that He gave His only begotten Son." God loved and He gave. Love always gives because it isn't selfish. God saw the need of mankind. He saw what happens through sin and what people do to themselves and to others because of it. God created man for Himself and that he might live in His kingdom and He realized that man would never make it unless He saved him.

And so God gave the greatest of all gifts. He gave His only Son. God Himself must provide the offering and He

did. This is real sacrifice. And so it was that He chose Mary as His handmaid and who with Joseph her husband went to Bethlehem where her Baby, God's Son, was born.

The third section of the "prince of verses" is this, "That whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Thus far we have spoken about God's part. God loved. God gave.

But now we must speak about man's part. All that God has done, tremendous and mind-boggling as it is, is good only if there is a response. It is that way with many things in life. Offers are made to us. Benefits are available to us if we act. But if we choose not to they are useless as far as we are concerned. A pastor once spoke at a Luther League Federation convention on the topic "Let God Love You." But God does love us, doesn't He? Of course, but His love is useless unless we respond to it.

We come to that key clause "whosoever believeth." "Whosoever," and never underestimate the inclusiveness of the word, accept it as it says, "whosoever" believes in Jesus, the Gift of God, the Sin-bearer of the world, and confesses his own sinfulness, that one will not perish. He won't be forever estranged from God and know the pangs of hell, but he will have everlasting life with God. This is God's purpose for man, not eternal torment. But we must be open to God's love. We must respond to it. We must let God love us.

At this Christmas-time, and always, it is the heartfelt desire of **The Lutheran Ambassador** that our readers and all the world believe in Jesus the Son of God, whose purpose is so well described in that "prince of verses," John 3:16. If you want to know "what it's all about," this Christmas celebration, you will find the answer there.

We extend our best wishes for a blessed Christmas to all our readers everywhere.

TRANSLATION THOUGHTS

Putting the article on page 7 of this issue into English from Norwegian was our first serious attempt at translation. We received some help, but largely it is our work.

Translation is a fascinating task and it is a real eye-opener about the problem of conveying thoughts from one language to another. It is simple enough to put simple declarative sentences into any language: This is a house. See Dick run. The dog is white. But when you begin to deal with adverbs and adjectives it is entirely different. At least in some cases, is there a word in another language which corresponds exactly to the one in my own language or do we simply have to take a word that seems closest in meaning? We have heard it said and you have, too, that a certain Norwegian word, for instance, loses some meaning when it comes out in English. The same is true between any two languages.

Then there are the occasions when one or two words in one language need three or four words in translation to express the same thought. Some languages present an interesting challenge in their verb tenses (time of action), at least that is true of Greek.

In connection with this we can't help but think of the translation of the Bible. How can what was first put down in writing in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek be exactly the

same in English, or Finnish, or German?

It can't be exactly the same, linguistically speaking, but here is part of the miracle of the Scriptures. The message, the impact, comes through clearly even though no two English translations or revisions use the same words in all cases. In regard to some words, translators also have to frankly admit that the manuscripts are unclear and it is at present impossible to determine with certainty what the original text said. Fortunately, these instances do not bring into question the central teaching of the Bible.

We have read the New Testament through in its en-

tirety in 11 versions (not paraphrases) to date and the Old Testament in less, but in all of them we have sensed God speaking and been assured this was God's truth. Through all of them we have felt the conviction of sin, the gentle, but compelling call of the Gospel and the strength and hope of the promises of God's presence and help in all of life's situations.

This, to us, is part of the miracle of God's Word and all the more so after our first feeble attempts at some translating, with help, of our own.



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fasted, for the sins of the people were a heavy burden for Anna's small shoulders. "O Lord, Almighty God, blot out the sins of this city so that Thy salvation should come for the good of these people!"

The older she became, the more urgent her intercessions became. Salvation was proclaimed. The Redeemer was coming. But she was now so very old. When would it all become reality? The population of the holy city was just as wicked as it had always been. Would no one out there turn to God in penitence?

Then Anna heard of the fate of old Zacharias who was a priest in the Temple. "An angel came to him, and his wife will bear a son!" The people laughed. "But she's as old as he is! That old priest wouldn't believe it, so he's been rendered mute. He can't talk any more! So there must be something authentic about this story." And as the people talked, Anna thought with high emotion that here was a sign: God was speaking through the birth of a child. What could it mean?

Anna, astonished, prayed that she might understand this sign and learn whether all this talk was true. One day a maid came from the court of the high priest.

"Anna," she began, "my master has not sent me, but my mistress Elizabeth is expecting a child even though she is already well on in years. She doesn't quite know what to make of it, and I'm worried about her. Anna, pray that all may go well with her and that our God will place His hand upon her!"

Anna laid her hands upon the maid's

head. "Be at peace," she counseled. "The Lord indeed has His hands on your mistress. She was chosen for this very thing, for what has happened to Elizabeth will be a sign for the people of God. Trouble yourself no longer. Keep your eyes and ears on the alert for the voice of God in all these happenings!"

Now Anna knew with certainty that the time was near. He, the Savior, was coming! Daily she took up her watch; daily she scanned the faces of the visitors to the Temple. She would know Him, the Promised One—she herself! That was certain.

For many years there also had been living there in the Temple the aged Simeon. He, too, had followed an inner voice many years ago. The voice had answered his longing for truth and his desire to behold the face of the Promised One. The voice had said: "Look! Your eyes shall see the salvation of Israel, and you shall not leave this earth before this promise has been fulfilled, for you have believed—and it will be for you as you have believed."

Now Simeon, too, was awaiting the Promised One of Israel. His feet led him to the Temple in Jerusalem. He left behind everything that once had been his. The people laughed, saying that he must be "tetched" in the head.

Simeon asked them: "But where will the Promised One of Israel make his appearance if it is not in Jerusalem in the Temple? I want to see Him, so I have to go there. Don't stand in my way!" And off he went.

Soon thereafter, Anna and Simeon met, and shared with each other what the Lord had made known to them. Anna, however, remained in the

outer court while Simeon was granted entrance to the inner courts. But she soon noticed that Simeon, too, was getting impatient with time. Daily he came and looked searchingly into the faces of the visitors. "Yes, yes!" Anna thought to herself, "he, too, feels it in his bones that the time is ripe, and the Promised One is about to come!"

When people came for advice she now told them, "Sin no more; repent, for the Promised One of Israel is very near!" She sent a boy into town to bring her a fresh bundle of clean clothes. She wanted to be ready when He, the Lord, made His appearance!

But today—today the suspense was particularly exciting. There was something in the atmosphere. Anna was almost sniffing the very air to find out what it might be. She looked carefully around her. Many of the people knew her—the old man, Barnabas, for example, who painfully made his way through the crowd. But there were also a lot of young people with little children. Now Barnabas had reached her and was reaching out to her. In his deliberate way he began to report to her all of his pains and sorrows. "Anna, pray for me!" And Anna herself could not explain why she could not concentrate today upon Barnabas and his needs. But Barnabas had time. He told her patiently what she obviously had not understood correctly.

Anna's excitement was mounting. Out of the corner of one eye she had noticed something. There was a very young couple there who seemed not to be at home, but rather from the country—or maybe from another province entirely! The wife was still

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the christ of christmas

by Rev. Leslie J. Galland,
Everett, Wash.



“For unto us a child is born” (Isaiah 9:6).

Never in all the years has there been a child born which was destined to mean so much to the world.

His coming and birth had been prophesied many years before. Moses had predicted His coming. “A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me” (Acts 7:37). Isaiah, 700 years before Christ’s birth, said that He would be born as a child. Micah tells us the birthplace, 400 years before His coming.

After Jesus did come, His ministry gave us a new look on life; His death and resurrection gave men a new message; and His grace gave men a lease on life.

Now in this 20th century we have a happier and better world in which to live because He came. We see miracles performed, lives changed, the Word of God being fulfilled. Still, millions deny Him, multitudes forsake Him, but it is only because of Him that we can come out of the blackest and darkest heathenism the world has ever known. Because of the birth of the Holy Child so long ago in Bethlehem’s manger, we have so much to tell as we visit or maybe even work in the hospitals, so much to preach and teach from the pulpits, light to bring to the prisons, words of life to the skid row missions and the message of forgiveness to the peo-

ple around the world.

We celebrate again the coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Let us look at three outstanding things about Jesus and His birth:

The Great Renouncement

He made Himself of no reputation. He took upon Himself the form of a servant, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. Christ left heaven’s throne with the Father to become the servant of mankind. He left glory for the lowly cattle stall. He laid aside the royal robes of paradise to be a poor carpenter’s son. John 1:14 says, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Jesus said of Himself later in life, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” Jesus did not possess one thing on this earth which He called His own. He was able to endure all the jeers and insults in order to show us how much He loved us. Jesus was forsaken by friends, betrayed by enemies, condemned to die and unmercifully crucified for telling the truth. He was buried in a borrowed tomb. We can cry out to Him for sympathy and understanding in this world of cruelty and shame.

The Great Arrival

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

The birth of Jesus changed the world. In the fulness of time Jesus came as the promised Savior. What a dark world ours would be if He had not been born of a virgin as prophesied and promised. His coming caused heaven to rejoice and hell to rage. The Christmas carol tells us that Je-

sus was “born to give us second birth.” When you celebrate your natural birth, do you also celebrate your spiritual birth?

Do you ever pause to wonder what thoughts Jesus has as His birthday comes around? What emotions must be His as He remembers that deity and humanity, that He appeared as the God-Man in order to bring man to God. Countless millions in heaven and on earth praise Him for His lowly birth, knowing that He came into the world to save sinners.

The true meaning of Christmas is that Jesus came to be our sin bearer. It is only Jesus who can forgive. Praise His name! This is Christ’s greatest work. It will assure us of eternal life. The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Isn’t the measure of God’s love something so wonderful? The breadth of God’s love is “Whosoever.” The length of God’s love is “everlasting.” In Jeremiah 31:3, it says, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” The depth of God’s love is that He could reach down and love you and me. The height of God’s love is in Christ Himself. Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. In Titus it says, “He saved us.” In Revelation it says, “He washed us.” In John 3:16, we shall “not perish.”

Wonderful Jesus, who can compare
with Thee,
Wonderful Jesus fairer than all the
fair is He,
Wonderful Jesus, O how my soul
loves Thee,
Fairer than all the fairest, Jesus art
Thou to me.

The Great Announcement

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:13-14).

It was an angel of the Lord that heralded the announcement of Christ's birth. The important thing was the message or announcement he had to make. He was a herald. This is our privilege, to be heralds for Christ.

The angel's message was not eloquent. It was essentially simple. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." In short, it was what all sermons should be, plain, pointed, practical, and powerful—for their purpose is to point men to Christ.

What other baby in all time has had his birth announced by angels? The announcement itself afforded tremendous news. A "Savior" has been born. The very news brings a thrill of joy to hearts everywhere.

We look, we listen, we wonder, for it is the greatest announcement of all time. The Messiah in a manger, Jehovah in a stable, the almighty Maker of the world as a Babe.

What did the shepherds hear? "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior." "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." God humbled and honored the shepherds by announcing to them the birth of His Son. The angel was not sent to the high and mighty, to the chief priests or elders, to the learned or wealthy. The angel did not come to a palace with marble halls and carpeted stairs, but instead, to shepherds in the fields. He came to them as a true messenger of God will come to all who are hungering and thirsting for good tidings. I'm sure the humble shepherds were anxious souls, looking and longing for this appearing. God often chooses the humble and the despised as instruments and vessels of His service.

It is also significant that these men were not sleeping, but they were watching and abiding. If we are going to hear and see the glorious things of God, we must be awake. We must

be concerned. We must be anticipating. Otherwise the message can pass us by. For many the glorious event took place and passed them by. Many in the city of Bethlehem did not know of the angel's presence. They did not hear the angelic chorus as it thundered in unison, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men." Many did not see the joy of Mary and Joseph as they bent over the wonderful Child in the manger. God's gift to men was in their midst and they did not receive the Gift, perhaps because they did not expect the Savior of men to be born in such humble circumstances.

And so it is today. A good many people have blamed the little innkeeper of Bethlehem because his place was full, while their lives are empty of the elements that make Christmas what it is. The tragedy of

the times in which we live is that people are half asleep. We become so indifferent and unconcerned about the opportunities at hand and the dangers to which we are exposed.

The shepherds saw the events connected with His first coming. Many are disturbed to witness things connected with His second coming. Are we wide awake and ready for His coming. Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior? The best gift you could give Jesus is to pray, "Come into my heart, Lord Jesus. Have you made room for Him? Have you received Him as your Savior? Have you placed your trust in Him?

"Come in, my Lord, come in,
And make my heart Thy home,
Come in and cleanse my soul from sin,
And dwell with me alone."



WOOD SUPPLY

Roger C. Huebner, D.D.S.

Why Christmas Cards

by Mrs. Arnold McC Carlson, Eagle Butte, S. Dak.

The crisp, cold air pinched the cheeks as one walked down the street. Already the store windows were gaily decorated in Christmas attractions and the excitement of the coming holiday season seemed apparent.

As Mrs. Johnson entered the small, crowded post office, she was greeted by several friends. Small talk about the weather, sports and family was exchanged while waiting in line at the counter. Someone said, "Oh, this line is short now, but just wait until the Christmas cards start coming! How I wish they would quit that foolishness as stamps are so expensive and usually one doesn't even have time to look at them, to say nothing about signing them." By the look on the speaker's face, one could easily see that she found no joy in exchanging good wishes at Christmas and possibly never, for that matter.

Later that evening at home, Mrs. Johnson was sitting at the table surrounded by many boxes of Christmas cards. Her daughter Wendy was seated close by and watching with deep apprehension.

"Mom, what are you doing with all those cards? They look like they've already been sent!"

"Yes," smiled Mrs. Johnson. Her voice and smile confirmed the joy of her task. "They are the Christmas

greetings we received last year from our friends and relatives."

"But, Mom, you can't use them over again, can you?" asked Wendy. "No, Wendy, but to me each one is precious. I know that whoever sent us a card did so because at the moment they had a special thought for us. We always think of the ones we love and cherish at special occasions. Christmas is no exception. We want to share our love just as God shared His love by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to be born in Bethlehem on Christmas Eve."

Wendy picked up a card and exclaimed, "Look, here is a card with an open Bible resting between two candles and an angel singing, 'Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.' On the inside is a Bible verse: 'For unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord' (Luke 2:11).

"And also in the inside, it says, 'May the peace and happiness of Christmas be yours today and every day throughout the coming New Year.' Why, Mom I never realized that a card could say so many things. It seems almost like a personal sermon and a prayer for a friend."

Mrs. Johnson picked up cards and started to sort them. She knew

Wendy was watching, so she offered an explanation. "You see, Wendy, in this pile I just put cards from friends who are special. I like to reread the notes they wrote last year. These are from friends and relatives we hear from only once a year. That is the only time we keep in touch. How disappointed I am when I receive a Christmas card with the names commercially printed and no message. It's as if they've become so commercialized they have no time to remember friends."

"Oh, here's one I like!" said Wendy. "Look, these children are worshipping the newborn Jesus. It says, 'Little prayer, be on your way. Bless all our friends on Christmas Day.'"

Mrs. Johnson held up a card to Wendy. "Oh, what a thrill when I received this card from Ruth and she shared the many blessings that had come to their family the past year. Yes, Christmas cards can be a time for sharing and witnessing for the Lord. Sharing a blessing can become a second blessing to someone else."

"But," asked Wendy, "Why are there so many different kinds of cards?" "Well," answered Mrs. Johnson, "Every person has a special feeling for Christmas. To some it's the manger scene, or shepherds, churches, snow and country, Christmas trees, friendly-looking homes and even holly, as this card will tell you:

'Holly, as everyone knows, is the symbol or sign of Christmas, but the custom of using it is older than Christianity. The Romans sent friendly greetings and sprigs of holly to one another during their winter festival.'

"Why, here's one with a Santa Claus," said Wendy. "Yes, her mother slowly replied, "some people do not want to recognize that Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. They want to make Santa Claus the key figure and remove all other aspects of the true Christmas spirit. So each one of us should really try to spread the real spirit of Christmas and let others know that He dwells in our hearts and is the Lord of our lives.

"Let our Christmas cards be the kind that speaks for itself. But also



let us each add our own personal message to our cards. This is one of my favorite scenes and verses written by Whittier. It is a nostalgic scene of snow and country, horse and sled, and says.

'Somehow, not only for Christmas
but all the long year through
the joy that you give to others
is the joy that comes back to you.'"
Whittier

Thus thought Mrs. Johnson, as she held the card in her hand. Her thoughts went back to the scene that morning in the local post office. The unknown lady who hated and dreaded Christmas cards must certainly never have known the joy of giving and sharing with others.

Mrs. Johnson picked up her pen and started to write on her cards, choosing one with this verse:

'This brings a prayer at Christmas-time
That God will always bless your home and you
And those you love, with lasting happiness.'



(Continued from page 14)

frightfully young; she reminded Anna of the time she herself had traveled here at her father's side. Still almost a child! This young wife carried a child in her arms, a child possibly one week old. Probably a little boy to be presented in the Temple for a blessing from the Lord, Anna thought happily. She smiled, even though what Barnabas was saying would not have evoked a smile at all.

As she watched the crowd dispersing for a moment, Anna saw that the young husband held a cage with two young turtledoves in it. Yes, Anna thought, these are destined for the thankoffering!

Inwardly she sighed: "Oh, Barnabas, please don't hold me up today. I have to talk with these young people.

God is at work. They know something that is important for me!" But she said it softly, for Barnabas needed help and understanding. He had no one who would care about him if Anna turned him away. When, some time later, Anna looked up again, the young couple had been reabsorbed by the crowd.

Finally, Barnabas left, and Anna looked through the crowd for the young couple. When she was almost up to the gates of the inner court, she saw Simeon. The old man had turned his face toward heaven, and it was lit up as though he stood under a very special light. His right hand was stretched out, and his left hand rested upon the little child's head as the young couple stood there speechless. Anna immediately understood: "The Promised One! Simeon has seen Him!"

When Anna came near enough she could hear his words: "My eyes have beheld the salvation of the Lord! Now I can depart in peace!"

Anna gazed and gazed, first at the transfigured countenance of her old friend and then at the young couple and the infant. Now she saw what Simeon had seen. The glory of the Lord surrounded the baby boy, and she knew that this child was indeed the Holy One of Israel, the Holy God, the Savior of His people.

"He will free the nation, and Jerusalem is His city," Anna declared. "He is my Lord and I am His servant. Lord God, Creator Almighty, O Thou God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, unto Thee be honor and praise and thanksgiving unto all eternity!" And Anna declared to the people around her that on this day the salvation of God had arrived in the city of Jerusalem.

A young priest who happened by just then shook his head. "This Anna—she's something else all right!" he thought. "Now she's quoting the prophets!"

The young wife thanked Anna with tears in her eyes. The father of the child self-consciously looked away. Then the young mother pressed her child to her bosom with a sigh. Anna remembered that Simeon had said:

"But to you, mother of sorrows, will come a sword that will pierce your

soul..." Anna couldn't understand much more because of the crowd around her. But now Anna saw something that brought tears to her eyes, too. In place of the golden crown on the head of a proud young man who would make the triumphal victor's entry through the walls of Jerusalem, she saw a face full of pain and a crown of thorns pressed deeply into the forehead. She saw arms which had merely been extended out in love fastened to a tree with giant spikes. And she heard words which sounded, not like the shout of victory, but like the outcry of hate: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

"This is indeed the Redeemer of Israel!" said the voice of the angel of the Lord, the voice she knew so well and which never had lied to her. "This is He who will redeem mankind from their sins, for it is sin which holds men captive!"

And Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher in the land of Galilee, turned around, crept back to her corner of the veranda, fell down and wept for the Child, the Redeemer of the world!

"Yes, Lord, I have seen Him, the Promised One! And therefore, whatever else comes, unto Thee be thanksgiving and honor for all eternity. Amen."

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Kirchliches Monatsblatt,
Dr. Adolph Wegener, Editor.
Translated by Pastor Edward A.
Johnson, Ohio, Wab., Nebr.



ACROSTIC

Peace.
Everyone talks of peace.
A lways seeking, yet never finding,
C enturies of men have pursued
E choes of peace.
On a hill outside Bethlehem,
N ight winds whispered the word,
E wes and lambs and shepherds heard
A ngels sing of peace.
R estlessly we strive for peace—but
T here is peace only in
H im born that night.

—Marlene Moline

Pray with the assurance that He will answer. Read II Chronicles 7:14.

WE ARE NOT ALONE

How good it is to realize that God will undertake
For all who, burdened, cry to Him, "Help me for Jesus' sake."
For through His Son, He has for all not only sin's release,
But grace for every trial of life, **He keeps the soul in peace.**
Sometimes when we implore the Lord to meet some special need,
It seems as if His ear is deaf, no matter how we plead.
But up above the leaden skies, He watches o'er His own;
He sees our teardrops, hears our cry, No, we are not alone.
For every trial, care, and cross, He giveth us more grace,
And every storm-sky has its rift that shows His loving face.
Afflictions of the righteous oft abound 'tis very true,
But He delivers, bless His Name. **He sees His children through.**

Mrs. Torkel Ose
Thief River Falls, Minn.

The illustration for the 1978 Studies is by Joseph O. Valtinson, Jr., a grandson of Mrs. Ose. He has had his artwork appear in *Decision* magazine.



W.M.F. BIBLE STUDY



PRAYER

January, 1978

Read Psalm 55:16, 17 and 22.

We are not limited to any certain place or time of day in which to commune with our Lord. As we pray for the furtherance of the Lord's work, for His servants and for ourselves, our minds are at all times open to His leading and guidance. He puts into our hearts what we should do and say and even puts out of our minds that which does not edify. The most important activity of our lives is constant, earnest prayer. Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which is outside the will of God. What did Jesus say in Luke 18:1?

Intercessory prayer is our mightiest weapon and supreme call. Progress in missions is the result of much prayer. This applies to the people at home as well as to the missionary on the field. Prayer is the highest of all our privileges as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us prize it highly and prove it thoroughly.

1. Psalm 65:2—How extensive is God's care? _____

2. Psalm 66:20—What is David's conclusion concerning God? _____

3. Matthew 21:22—What did Jesus promise at this time? _____

4. Romans 15:30—What is Paul's admonition to us? _____

There is no limit to what our prayers can include. When our hearts and minds are in the attitude of prayer, we will be concerned about the spiritual condition of our loved ones, neighbors, our young people, our missionaries, the ill and aged, our pastors and their families, and our homes. Let us pray especially for our churches that they may ever be lighthouses, giving out the Word of God in truth and bringing precious souls to true salvation in Jesus Christ. Let us pray for the many nations in distress, and for our own nation, for those who have never known Jesus Christ and His redeeming love and great grace. Pray for our national leaders and the many issues which confront them.

5. I Samuel 1:27—What was Hannah's request? _____

6. I Samuel 12:23—How can sin be related to prayer? _____

7. I Samuel 16:7b—What was the Lord's word to Samuel? _____

Each prayer breathed heavenward by a child of God is effective. It may seem at times that the answer is slow in coming, but when a company of believers continues to pray, wonderful results take place. The accumulated petitions of the saints are pleasing to God. His power is manifested in unusual ways. He may lift a burden too heavy to carry or remove a hindrance too large to meet. Let us not forget to pray for one another nor be ashamed to request prayer.

8. I Corinthians 14:15—(a) What did Paul associate with prayer? _____

(b) Ephesians 6:18—What else did Paul associate with prayer? _____

9. I Thessalonians 5:16-18—What is suggested before and after prayer in these verses? _____

10. I Timothy 2:8—What must be left out of prayer? _____

11. James 5:13-16—What is involved when praying for the afflicted? _____

12. Isaiah 56:7—How was God's house referred to in the Old Testament? _____

13. Luke 6:12—What great importance did Jesus place on prayer? _____

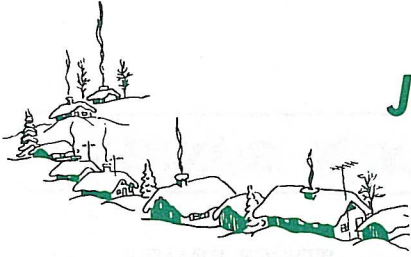
14. I Peter 4:7—What is Peter's admonition to us? _____

15. Revelation 5:8 and 8:4—What is the incense in heaven? _____

16. I Chronicles 16:34—What is a very essential part of our prayer? _____

There are many instances in God's Word where He directly responds to the earnest prayers of His people. God heard Abraham's prayer for Sodom and Gomorrah. Daniel's prayers made a great impact on the Babylonian Empire. Nehemiah's courageous leadership and hard work and continual prayer were used in restoring a defeated and scattered nation. When the doom of Israel seemed imminent by Haman's plot signed by the king, prayer reversed the whole situation, as we read in Esther 4:10-17.

Surely God is able to hear the cries of His people for America. Let us all be found at the throne of grace, praying with serene confidence and holy boldness, knowing that God is faithful to perform that which He has promised. Read Ephesians 3:20, 21.



John's First Christmas in America

by Mrs. Ordella Walker Arveson, Kenyon, Minn.



It was Christmas Eve. John had often wondered how it would be celebrated in America. He had come from Norway to Hillsboro, North Dakota, hoping to make a living, not a fortune. However, during the winter months, a young man had to be satisfied to be able to work for board and room.

It had been bitterly cold chopping wood all day near the river. John had worked up a ravenous appetite and was eagerly anticipating the Christmas Eve supper. However, during the past days, he hadn't detected any signs of Christmas baking such as Mother had done in Norway. Possibly the ladies had hidden it as a surprise!

A horrible thought flashed through his mind, "Maybe the Yankees don't celebrate Christmas! How awful!"

Finally, the supper bell rang, calling everyone in to eat. John didn't know what to expect. There were several guests; that made the newcomer youth even more bashful and diffident than usual. Everyone sat down at the long table. The hired girl brought in a big platter of roast beef, huge bowls of mashed potatoes, gravy and vegetables. Mr. Smith began serving the food and passed the plates to the guests.

John was dismayed. "Aren't they going to give thanks—on Christmas Eve?" He had become accustomed to them eating without saying grace, just like the pigs at home in Norway! He had thought it surely would be different tonight.

When John received his plate, he noticed that he had been given only a scant portion, whereas the other plates were heaped high. He quickly ate his meager fare. This had been only an appetizer. He looked hungrily at the savory food remaining in the serving dishes. He waited, hoping someone would notice his empty plate and offer him more food.

The boss and his friends were laughing boisterously, carrying on their insipid conversation and paying no attention to the half-starved immigrant youth.

Finally, John, in desperation, spoke up, in his broken English, "Can jeg hav some more meat og potatoes, please?"

Everyone stopped eating and stared at him, causing the young man to blush furiously.

Mr. Smith, though only recently well-to-do, apparently had forgotten his own less affluent years. He often treated his hired people sadistically. His vitriolic wrath was easily aroused. Now he swore vehemently and began a tirade about the worthlessness and malingering of hired people. He added deprecatingly, "That Norskie is trying to eat me out of house and home."

The guests laughed derisively, showing their unconcern for John's plight. The crestfallen youth hung his head, his eyes blinded by tears. Mr. and Mrs. Smith turned their attention back to their guests.

While the others continued eating complacently, the embarrassed young man sat staring at his empty plate. The guests were loquacious and lingered over their meal, while Mr. Smith hospitably replenished their plates. John's presumptuous request was completely ignored. The meal seemed interminable to him.

Finally, when all were satiated, except the young Norwegian, they left the table. John turned to take refuge in his cold upstairs bedroom.

Mr. Smith called to him in a peremptory tone, "John, take a pan of milk and bread out to the barn for the mother dog and her puppies. Since it is Christmas Eve, I want them to have a good meal."

The hired girl looked at John sym-

pathetically, but, didn't dare give him anything except the food for the dogs. He quickly put on his heavy coat, glad to get away from the boisterous group.

As he came outdoors, he looked up. The heavenly dome was ablaze with millions of shimmering stars—the true Christmas lights. They looked the same as they did in Norway.

Forgetting the difference in time zones, John thought nostalgically, "At home, we would have been getting into the sleigh to go to church for Christmas Eve services. The lights would have been shining brightly from the church windows. Oh, why did I ever leave home?" Was this what America was to mean to him—hunger, cold, loneliness, scorn? Work had been hard on the rocky island of Karmøy, providing only a bare living, and yet, wouldn't that have been better than this? Never had John felt so discouraged, so forsaken by God and man.

The barn loomed dark before him as the sounds of revelry became more indistinct. His cold fingers fumbled at the latch. As the door swung open, creaking on its rusty hinges, Fanny gave a soft welcoming yelp of recognition. Immediately, John felt an upward lift of his usual buoyant spirits. At least here was someone who loved him, who didn't despise him for being a poor newcomer. The ice began to thaw about his frozen heart, while the warmth of many animals took away the bitter sting of cold. It was quiet and peaceful in the barn.

"Jesus spent the first Christmas Eve in a stable. This is the best place to be after all." Though John was, by nature, gregarious, he now felt more at home with the animals than with the Godless revelers.

As he set the big pan of milk and

bread down beside Fanny, he thought longingly of the lefse, the lutefisk, and gomme (a pudding used for special occasions) in Norway. "Here I am so hungry, I feel weak; but, the dogs have more than enough to eat." Again, he was overcome by loneliness and hunger.

Sobbing bitterly, the homesick youth sank down in the hay beside Fanny and the puppies. In desperation, he grabbed huge chunks of bread and devoured them ravenously. The food tasted good, for, it was well salted by his tears.

Having appeased his hunger, John lay down in the hay and thought of Christmas in Norway, of home and of church. It all seemed so far away. He fell asleep. In his dreams, he was again at home. His mother was tucking the bed-clothes around him for it was cold. Just as she stooped down and kissed him good night, he awoke. A little puppy had snuggled down beside him and was licking his cold face.

(Ed. note: The above story is true, occurring in about 1886. The man, John Walker, now deceased, father of the writer, has had four grandchildren attend Association Free Lutheran Bible School.)



WISE MEN

They followed His star
 Across the plain,
 Across the desert
 To Bethlehem,
 To kneel in a barn,
 A stable cave,
 Before the manger
 Where God's Son lay.
 Dark now the stable
 Where once He lay.
 Gone is the manger,
 To dust decayed.
 Yet through the ages,
 Here and afar,
 Wise men still follow
 His holy star.

—Marlene Moline



SEEK THE KINGDOM FIRST

"I hope this war continues for a long time because I'm making more money now than I ever did before." A man in my home community spoke these unbelievable words during World War II. Describing a banker in my home town, a banker from another city commented, "He's a nice man, but he isn't a money-maker." For both of these men, money making was their top priority.

While only in his freshman year of high school, a boy succeeded in setting a new record for his school in track. His coach and parents were naturally filled with great hopes for his future in track. However, the next year he gave up track to work in a supermarket. Earning money became more appealing than earning track awards.

A hospital chaplain states, "There is something inviting about having riches. They unlock doors for luxurious living, they give a sense of prestige and status that can be found in no other way. They have a strange power over the human spirit. A day's visit in Las Vegas, and a view of the people at the gambling tables, will show how the lure of riches inflames the imagination and goads men to greed."

Jesus said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the Kingdom of God!" Though He doesn't condemn riches, He does say that riches can be dangerous to our spiritual health. The Bible instructs us that instead of trusting in uncertain riches we are to trust in the living God. If we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, then all physical needs shall be ours as well.

—Einar Unseth

N. N. RØNNING

WINTER BEAUTY

It did not look a bit like Christmas. The weather could not possibly have been worse. All forenoon it rained. What can be more useless and out of place than rain in winter?

Dark pools formed on the lawns, muddy streams raced in the gutters; sidewalks and streets became slippery, making walking difficult and driving dangerous.

But while man was grumbling because of a spoiled Christmas, the mist and the moisture up in cloudland were preparing their magic, the magic of the snow.

When darkness had settled upon earth, large, fluffy flakes began to fall, softly and silently. They fell on slippery streets and sidewalks, on wet house tops, on dripping branches. The first flakes melted and added to the slush and mud. More of them fell, still more, an endless white host, and little by little everything on earth became lovely.

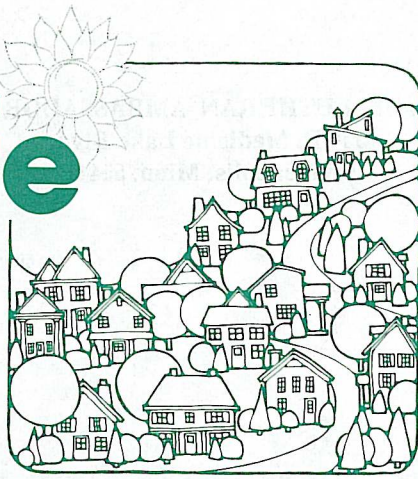
And when morning dawned, we looked out upon a new world; everywhere the all-forgiving, comforting snow.

Man builds stately cathedrals, paints beautiful pictures, chisels graceful statues, writes immortal poems, but the snow transforms a soiled world into a world of purity and beauty. All unsightly places disappear; all broken lines vanish. The shrubbery turns into white cascades, and when one looks into a wooded landscape he beholds a fairyland of such eternal beauty that the sheer beauty stabs the heart with pain.

And you said, "Nothing can be more beautiful than this!" But the next day it was more beautiful. During the afternoon a slight thaw set in; later it grew colder and a thin film formed on branches and twigs, weeds and bushes. As the afternoon sun sent its slanting rays out of the

(Continued on page 24)

Life on the Edge of Town



YOUR PASTOR'S CHRISTMAS SERMON

Perhaps I am more free to say this now that I'm not serving a church regularly, although I hope to be preaching on Christmas Day. Perhaps what I say here comes only out of my own experience, but I wonder.

Christmas is a highlight of the year. With Easter and Pentecost it is one of the three festivals of the church year. A pastor wants to come to his Christmas services especially well prepared. He wants to spend more time in prayer for his sermon that day, more hours in reading and study. Attendance will be good and it is a festive season.

In actual practise, it doesn't always work out that way. There are family matters for a pastor, too, and he gets involved with the shopping, gift-wrapping, attending school programs, etc. As Christmas nears he thinks again of the elderly or shut-ins in his parish and how he should see them before Christmas, perhaps bringing the Lord's Supper to some of them. Other parish activities continue, extra demands on his time arise. There are always some who are hospitalized at Christmas, too, it seems. Maybe there are many miles to drive to see them.

Gradually but irrevocably the hours for prayer and study slip away, unused for those purposes but for something else. He comforts himself with

the only thought he can, that the time spent in ministering to people must count for something in God's eyes; surely He will understand that he meant to do better in getting ready for the Christmas message.

The preparations for preaching that can be made are made. Perhaps they fall far short of the goal. But Christmas Day comes anyway and at last the pastor steps into the pulpit. The sermon seems to go reasonably well. God undertakes.

I hope that people in church on Christmas Day will hear a good sermon from their pastor. And I hope that they will also realize that maybe things didn't work out for him the way he wanted in regard to getting ready. But if his love for the Savior and his excitement for the old familiar Christmas story show through, that's the main thing.

BOOKS

Books have held a life-long fascination for me. I grew up in a home with many books in it. Father had his library, pretty formidable-looking to a boy, but their presence made an impression anyway. And there were many other books around the house.

I had some of my own, too, and Christmas was always happier if I received a book or two as presents. Then there would be some enjoyable hours of vacation reading for me. But one time one of my sisters gave me

the book **Quo Vadis** for Christmas or my birthday, which comes soon after. It didn't appeal to me and for years it was unread. But eventually I did read it and found it excellent.

We got a set of encyclopedias when I was quite young. What a sense of adventure they added to life. There were libraries in the schools and in one town, a small public lending library, more sources for reading material.

Every home should have many good books. Parents, don't consider money spent for good books and good magazines wasted. Rather, it will be some of your most wisely used money. Buy books before you buy TV or a stereo set.

Now, of the making of books there is no end, it has been said. Thus, it is impossible to keep up with them. I have often said to myself that the reason I don't read more new books is that I haven't finished reading the old ones yet. And I did get some comfort when I came across the advice that C. S. Lewis once gave that if a person must choose between reading only the new or the old, it is better to read the old. Of course, we should do some of each.

My reading tastes are varied and not as profound as they should be. Let me give you the titles of 17 books I bought recently at sales. The first nine were purchased at a well-known used books bookstore in Minneapolis: **A Reasonable Faith**, by L. S. Keyser (whose writings I appreciate much); **From Baptism to Holy Communion** (an Anglican book); **The Praise of Him Who Died** (Lenten sermons by G. E. Lenski); **Thy Rod and Thy Staff** (daily devotionals by Harold B. Kildahl); **Eyes That See**, by Martin Hegland; **Perhaps I Was Dreaming**, by C. A. Wendell (you'll hear more about this one); **The 30th Anniversary Reader's Digest Reader**; **The Horse and Buggy Doctor**, by Arthur E. Hertzler, M.D.; and **Herbert Hoover** (a 1928 biography by Will Irwin).

At a book fair at a Twin Cities shopping center this fall I picked up these eight at 25 cents a piece: **The Church of Our Fathers** (for children), by Roland Bainton; **Prairie Town Boy** (autobiography of Carl Sandburg); **The Reader's Digest Twen-**

tieth Anniversary Anthology; Chappell's Special Day Sermons; A View of the Nile (the story of an American family in Egypt); The Word (a meditation on the prologue to St. John's Gospel); I and Other Essays, by Pennefather Buchan; and Famous Negro Athletes. Not having read any of these, I am not necessarily endorsing them all, but they struck me as interesting.

When these will get read is anybody's guess, but a book lover never catches up, not in this day and age anyway.

I hope that you get a book for Christmas.

—Raynard Huglen

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(Continued from page 22)

west, the whole scene turned into sparkling, flaming silver. Again you said, as you stood there almost unable to move, "Nothing could be more beautiful than this." You were right, nothing could be more beautiful.

One cannot behold scenes like these without having the question leap up in the mind: Is there a thought, is there a design back of all this? Is there an architect of this marvelous universe?

From the dawn of history serious-minded people have asked questions about the origin of things. Philosophy makes conjectures, Science is silent. Atheism laughs and Agnosticism shakes its head.

A book has come down to us through the weary centuries; its pages are worn by much use; many passages are wet with human tears. Learned men have tried to tear it to pieces; the reading of it has at times been forbidden under penalty of dark dungeon. The book is still with us. We open it and read words of incomparable dignity, strength and beauty.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand hath spanned the heavens (Is. 48:13).

Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host (Neh. 9:6).

He stretched out the north over the empty place and hangeth the earth upon nothing (Job 26:7).

He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them by their names (Ps. 147:4).

He giveth snow like wool; He scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes (Ps. 147:16).

He hath made everything beautiful in His time (Eccles. 3:11).

(from *Fifty Years in America*,
1938)

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