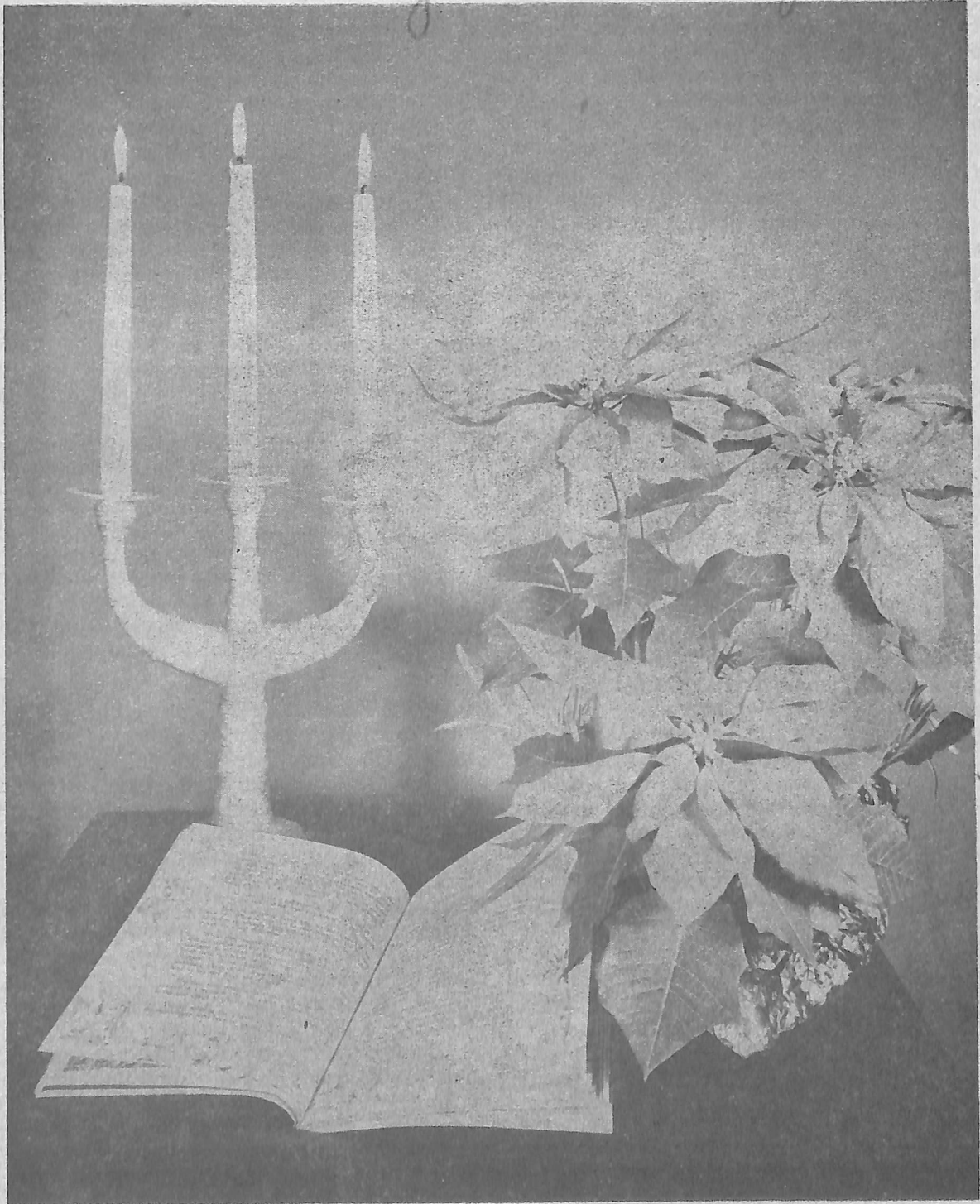


# Lutheran Tidings

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

*Ryder Old Peoples Home*  
*p. 16*



A Blessed Christmas to All

## Christmas World

It may be risky to suggest that there could be a world worthy of being called: Christmas World. We use the word: world in so many combinations today, that it no longer carries a distinct connotation. We speak of the old world, the new world, the free world, the slave world, the world of today, of yesterday, of tomorrow. All of these are attempts to generalize. No part of the world is entirely free or slave, or old or new. So why not also: Christmas World. It at least would appear to be a pleasant approach to the world, since Christmas as a symbol has endeared itself to most of us. Children would agree off hand that Christmas World should be made a permanent state of affairs. Mature persons might balk and resist, feeling, that while Christmas at proper times and places is in order, as a matter of fact, very much in order, to spread it to cover the entire world would either be impossible or objectionable.

Christmas World would be symbolic of a world, where the forces, divine and human, that made the first Christmas so memorable, would be allowed to dominate. There might be many elements in the world we live in, that could not be incorporated in Christmas World. These would then have to be changed, that is: sublimated or, failing of this eliminated. But with the abundance of material, both temporal and spiritual we have today, it should not be difficult to project Christmas World. It is my intention only to throw out a few hints about how I visualize Christmas World.

The key to Christmas World I find is provided by Mary and Joseph from Nazareth. This key is willingness and faithfulness in God's service. Did not Mary reply to the angel Gabriel: I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word? And did not Joseph faithfully respond to whatever directions God communicated to him in his dreams? However, not only Mary and Joseph, but also the shepherds, the wise men, the older generation represented by Simeon and Anna revealed a sincere hunger for God's help and an expectancy of his intervention, which proved to be an open door, through which the word of the angel concerning both the real identity of Mary's child and the distinctive quality of the angelic message could enter human hearts.

Fundamental for all those sharing Christmas World at Bethlehem was their deep and secure rootedness in the prophetic tradition and religion of their people. Without this their eyes, ears and hearts would not have been able to see, hear and receive God's wondrous gift to all of us.

It is my suggestion that Christmas World, as we humbly and urgently long for it should be built along these lines:

**FAITH** in God, who in his Son, Jesus Christ, identified himself with man in his struggle against sin and evil.

**WILLINGNESS** to follow and obey **THE CALL** to serve God in whatever capacity and under whatever circumstances might be at hand in

order that the divinely initiated life of man in Christ might reach maturity, now and forever. **CONFESSION** of our human failing and sin, while fervently and sincerely acknowledging Christ, the Son of God, also Son of Mary, therefore Son of Man, compassionate and contemporary to all in their struggles and temptations, aspirations and yearnings.

**GRATEFUL ACCEPTANCE** of the implications of the angelic message, that "This is our Father's World" in which He is operative in love redeeming his erring children through his Son in order to establish his kingdom of peace and good-will among men.

Would not all true Christians agree to this kind of Christmas World? For instance, we believe that we in baptism became united with Christ, we bear his name, we accept Paul's passionate description of the meaning of baptism: We are buried with Him in baptism unto death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in the newness of life. Such complete identification finds its prototype only in the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Phillips Brooks has touched on this mysterious relationship of the birth of Jesus, to the birth of the new man in baptism.



"O, Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray,  
Cast out our sin and enter in  
Be born in us today . . .  
O come to us, abide with us  
Our Lord Immanuel."

However, does Christmas World support and remain with us, so that this identification characterizes us in the midst of our busy and troublesome life? It is reported that when Eugene Debs, several times candidate for president on the Socialist ticket was leaving Atlanta Federal penitentiary after having served a term for transgressing a political statute, a fellow prisoner, regretting his departure, remarked: He is the only Jesus Christ I have ever known. Few, if any of us would bear witness of our identification with Jesus Christ so that it would be that clearly discernible.

Would we be willing to obey the Call to live in Christmas World as for instance Mary did? With the words of Simeon echoing in her ears: a sword shall pierce your own soul also, she pondered all she heard and experienced, trembling perhaps, for her strange, yet marvelous son as well as for herself. "And saw not the cross which the woodland was hiding" But the cross was there, eventually, for Him as well as for her. Bethlehem and the song of angels seemed a far cry from Golgotha, yet, Christmas World would not have been complete without it.

Would not this Christmas have been a much happier event for most of us, if we could have told Church World Service, Lutheran World Relief and the corresponding agencies of Catholics and Jews that the Administration was willing to furnish them with as much of our cereal surpluses as they could find ways



to distribute to all the needy peoples of the world. In spite of pleas directed to Washington, nothing so far has prevailed to that end. It is rumored quite freely that all farmers' organizations are opposed to such generosity, notwithstanding that hunger and starvation is the order of the day for half the people of the world. There seems to be a few countries which still are able to buy some of our surpluses. A giveaway program would furthermore constitute a threat to our price structure upon which our phenomenal prosperity and high standard of living depends. The question is: how much do we desire Christmas World. John says: But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little Children, let us not love in word and speech but in deed and truth. We abhor and condemn Herod, the tyrant, for killing all the male children of Bethlehem, two years and under, in order to secure his dynasty. Christmas World cannot remain half of it empty and barren and the other half glutted. It does not recognize the justice of prosperity at the cost of human suffering and deprivation.

Dr. Eugene E. Barnett, retired general secretary of the American YMCA spent almost the entire last two years visiting Japan, Korea, Formosa, Hong Kong, the Philippines, India, Egypt and other oriental countries. Dr. Barnett reported to the General Board of the National Council of Churches meeting in Omaha, recently, that everywhere he went the prevailing mood was one of suspense. The reason for this was primarily that all these countries now more or less experiencing a revolution do not yet know how America will react. Will America remain true to traditional Christian principles and humanitarianism: share its surpluses, support self-determination of peoples, continue its good-neighbor principle and its point four program of aid to underprivileged peoples without political and military strings. Or will America insist on more and stronger military bases and alliances, support petty dictators and colonial policies of European powers?

The king of Christmas World says Paul: did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, being born in the likeness of men . . . humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. The cross as a way of life is found in Christmas World always. How hard it is for individuals to accept this and even harder for nations, no matter if they be called Christian.

Dr. Barnett said other noteworthy things: "The revolution (in Asiatic countries) is against poverty, hunger, disease, injustice, exploitation, ignorance and prejudice. Christian Missions are more responsible for this revolution than Russia." If we think Moscow seems more successful diplomatically than London or Washington, self-examination is more in order than re-creation." I saw glimpses of Christmas World as he spoke.

Recently I heard a statement being made by a man who was pastor for a large congregation located in the downtown area of a metropolitan city: "There is no such thing as a local congregation." Naturally he was not trying to deny the obvious, that organi-

zationally, there are tens of thousands of local congregations. Dr. Harry B. Taylor, Cleveland, Ohio, was emphasizing his conviction that there can be but one body of Christ. The Church of Christ is one the world over. All true Christians belong together, the undisputed right and necessity of local congregations to exist, notwithstanding. The light and brightness of Christmas World shone all around the speaker and the glory of his truth remained with me.

It is the birth of Christ we exultantly celebrate at Christmas, but it is also the birthday of the body of Christ. We shall not wait for Pentecost, no matter how great and glorious that day is as the beginning of missions and evangelism.

As I write this, Christmas preparations are being made also throughout the homes and congregations of our synod. May Christmas World, joyously and triumphantly, overwhelm us and His peace and Good-Will possess us. A happy Christmas to all.

Alfred Jensen.

December 12, 1955

### The Old Refrain

"They won't miss me!" said the mother as she repeatedly left her children for rounds of parties. The devil did not "miss" the children either.

"They won't miss me!" said the soldier as he went AWOL. But he spent 30 days in the guard house later.

"They won't miss me" said the man on the assembly line, as he slipped away without permission. But that airplane crashed and killed his brother — for lack of a single nut.

"They won't miss me" said the sentry as he slipped away from the duty. But the enemy surprised and massacred his comrades that very night.

"They won't miss me," said the church member as he omitted worship one Sunday, and another, for trivial reasons, and then wondered why he no longer enjoyed a victorious Christian life.

"They won't miss me!" said the Christian worker as he shed his responsibilities in a day of crisis, and then he wondered why his country gave way to softness and demoralization.

—THE EVANGEL.

(Submitted by Stewardship Committee)

### Lutheran Tidings-PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

Office of Publication: Lutheran Tidings, Askov, Minnesota.  
POSTMASTER: Send Forms 3579 to ASKOV, MINNESOTA.  
Editor: Rev. Verner Hansen, 4260 Third Ave., Los Angeles 8, Calif.  
Circulation Manager: Svend Petersen, Askov, Minnesota.

Member of Associated Church Press

Subscription price: 1 year, \$1.25; 2 years, \$2.25

Published semi-monthly on the 5th and 20th of each month. Entered as second class matter September 16, 1942, at the post office at Askov, Minnesota, under the act of March 3, 1879.

## Being the Confession of All Who Are Filled With Great Expectations

# The Heavenly Guest is at the Door

Mrs. Axel Kildegaard

**W**E HAD LOOKED forward eagerly to Marie's visit. She was a wonderful guest, and we had prepared joyfully and diligently for her arrival. Now the telegram lay on the table like a cold wet blanket on all of our plans. At what seemed like the last possible moment, Marie was unavoidably detained and would not be coming. The anticipation of our whole family had been keen, so the disappointment at the news was very great. So much thought and effort had been directed toward the preparation for our guest. Suddenly all our preparation seemed in vain, and the feeling of loss and frustration pervaded our home.

After the children were in bed, I sat idly by the fire feeling vaguely discontent with the turn of events and the unfulfilled anticipation. Gradually my thoughts turned to the arrival of another Guest for whom we always prepared at this time of year. "The happy Christmas comes once more, the Heavenly Guest is at the door," Grundtvig sang. I began to muse on how we would feel if the news came that the Heavenly Guest was unable to come this year. My thoughts went further and I began to wonder if it would matter greatly to us if the Heavenly Guest never had arrived — would our lives be radically different if Christmas had never been? We had been diligently and joyfully preparing for Marie's arrival. We would now be eagerly and joyfully preparing for Christmas, but would we forget that the heart of this preparation would be to make ready for the Guest whom we had been anticipating? Had we even gone so far as to forget for whom it was we were waiting? Was the birthday of Christ really an indispensable and central fact in our lives?

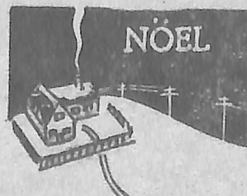
The thoughts disturbed me. I thought of our own children and how faithfully we observed and celebrated their birthdays. We do this partly through habit and custom, but actually we are primarily celebrating the revolution that they brought to our lives at their birth — the whole new dimension of living we have discovered through them. Each child seems a small miracle in the wonder of living.

But the birthday of Christ is not a miracle — it is **the** miracle! It is God's very personal invasion into history. In the fullness of time — what a rich, meaningful

phrase — God took on flesh and his word became incarnate. Those words are so familiar to us that we almost forget their immeasurable significance for our lives. All of our friends and much of the world celebrates the birthday of Jesus — but is it possible that we are celebrating through habit and custom and preparing for Christmas as if it did not matter at all whether or not Christ was born? I felt infinitely poor at the thought. If we can feel and understand the added dimension which the birth of our children brought to our lives, how much more we need to become aware of and appropriate that added dimension which the birthday of Christ made possible in the lives of all of us.

My thoughts turned to one of our friends, Professor Jones, who is a brilliant Old Testament scholar. These days he is fairly leaping for joy because of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These fascinating and valuable scrolls have proved conclusively for him that he was right all the time in maintaining that there is nothing new in the New Testament that was not already in the Old Testament. No new ideas can be found in the New Testament that have not been fully set forth in the Old Testament. But our friend Jones forgets Christ, and he forgets that Christianity is not an idea — it is a life. It is a life lived in response to that great gift of God which He gave through His Son — the forgiveness of sin. Without this great gift, how could we prepare, anticipate, grow?

I poked the fire vigorously. I felt suddenly that perhaps Marie's absence was not all loss. We had prepared so well for the guest who did not come and had done so little to prepare for the Guest who will always surely come if we are ready to welcome Him. "Come Jesus, glorious Heavenly Guest, keep Thine own Christmas in our breast." I pulled the screens together in front of the fire and prayed silently that this song would become a reality for us so that the birthday of Christ would always be the greatest gift of our lives — that we would never live as if it did not matter whether or not the Heavenly Guest was at our door.





## Fragments from the Life of Jacob A. Riis

# Reporting for God

James N. Lund

**A**MONG AMERICANS of Danish background one of the favorite success stories of all time is that of Jacob A. Riis, the New York police reporter, tireless crusader for better living conditions for the people of the slums, intimate friend of Theodore Roosevelt and other notables of his day. The story has been told innumerable times, especially in Christmas publications. And editors still call for it, in the belief that readers are still interested in it, even forty years after his death.

As a boy, I devoured Horatio Alger stories by the dozen, because their heroes represented my ideals and aspirations. For, I, too, would overcome the handicaps of childhood poverty, and of being born on the wrong side of the railroad tracks; I, too, would conquer every foe, succeed, and win recognition. The story of Jacob A. Riis contains all the dramatic elements of the most fascinating fiction. His struggles were no sham battles; his foes were not men of straw; his victories were not the invented happy endings of a story writer. He was a real man. He fought his way through poverty, won the girl of his dreams, though the Atlantic Ocean separated him from her for seven years; and for his great work on behalf of New York's under-dog, the president of his adopted country called him, "America's most useful citizen." And though I have read the story of his life off and on for thirty years or more, I come back now and re-read his autobiography in his own distinctive folksy style, — in "The Making Of An American," and my heart thrills to it more than ever. Theodore Roosevelt's tribute to him at the time of his death in 1914 is no exaggeration: "He was one of those good men whose goodness was free from the least taint of priggishness or self-righteousness. He had a white soul; but he had the keenest sympathy for his brethren who stumbled and fell. He had the most flaming intensity of passion for righteousness, but he also had kindness and a most humorously human way of looking at life, and a sense of companionship with his fellows." To that he might have added that at the root of these fine qualities was a growing faith in God.

In the city of Ribe, near the German border, where he was born in 1849, there was a dilapidated, ramshackle, two-story tenement house. It and the people who lived there in wretchedness, filth and poverty, left a deep impression on Jacob's young mind. It contrasted so sharply with the beautiful surroundings of Ribe,—

miles of tall grass waving in the wind, — the sand dunes stretching down to the ocean, patches of woodland and meadow where the music of birds and the fragrance of wild flowers filled the air. To these shores centuries ago had come the sturdy Vikings. On these fields their descendants had built their homes. Of this contrast between the peaceful country-side and the squalid tenement he wrote in his autobiography in 1901, — and that is certainly a "MUST" reading for everyone of Danish background, —: "Looking back now, I think likely it was the contrast of its desolation with the green hill and the fields I loved, of its darkness and human misery and inefficiency with the valiant fighting men of my boyish dreams, that so impressed me. I believe it because it is so now. Over against the tenement that we fight in our cities ever rises in my mind the fields, the woods, God's open sky, as accuser and witness that His temple is being so defiled, man so dwarfed in body and soul." Little do we realize or understand at the time, how the seemingly trivial incidents of our childhood become indelibly written in the unconscious, and account for some dominant trait of our maturer personality, or even determine our life work. There can hardly be any doubt of it in the case of Jacob Riis. He was only twelve or thirteen, he says, when the Ribe tenement challenged his resentment. For Christmas, at about that age, he had been given a shiny silver Mark, — worth around 25 cents. Instead of spending it on himself he brought it to the tenement on Christmas Eve and presented it to the poorest family there, on condition that they tidy up their quarters, and change their way of living. Modern psychoanalysts might see in this incident the makings of the zealous social reformer. Certainly it illustrates the old saying: "The boy is father to the man."

Incidentally among his school mates at the Ribe "Latin School" was a boy who later became one of the outstanding pioneer pastors in our Synod: Rev. Holger Vilhelm Rosenstand, who came to America in 1873, — three years after J. R. landed in New York, — and served congregations in Manistee and Omaha, — and perhaps others.

After four years in Copenhagen as carpenter's apprentice Riis set out for America, with a tiny picture of his beloved Elizabeth, and a lock of her golden curls in a locket in his pocket. Friends in Ribe, knowing that he had barely enough money to pay his steering



Jacob A. Riis



fare across the Atlantic, presented him with a gift of \$40, — not much of a reserve or working capital to begin life with in the new world. From the day he landed at New York's Castle Garden this new world of his dreams and hopes, which he was sure would clamor for his talents and reward him richly, began to kick him around, destroy his ideals, crush his hopes. After four days in New York he shipped out with a gang of men to western Pennsylvania, trying his hand for a short time there, building shacks for the coal miners. For several years, in the discouraging struggle to earn a living, and at the same time trying to get ahead so that he could ask Elizabeth to come over and marry him, — he led the roaming life of a migratory laborer, traveling as far west as Chicago. During these years he was carpenter, coal miner, farm hand, brick maker, lumber-jack, fur trapper, lecturer, cabinet maker, mill worker, R. R. section hand, shipyard worker, furniture salesman, book agent, and drummer for various products. Those were cruel years, when the robber barons reaped huge fortunes in the forests and industries at the expense of the men who slaved for them for \$1 a day or less, under conditions which still exist in the Latin American countries, and in most of Africa and Asia. But Jacob Riis was blessed with an incurable optimism that enabled him to take these beatings and frustrations and go on fighting. When he heard that France had declared war on Prussia and that Denmark might join forces against her old enemy, he pawned his few belongings for a R. R. ticket to New York, intending to enlist in a volunteer army which he had heard was being recruited. He arrived in New York with just one cent in his pocket. Every door was slammed in his face. He slept in doorways, starved and froze. One cold October night he stood hungry and homeless and friendless on the North River bridge, tempted to end his misery. "What was the use of keeping it up any longer with, God help us, everything against and nothing to back a lonely lad?" As if in answer to his prayer a little outcast dog that had followed him and shared his misery sleeping in friendly doorways, huddled up against him, crept up on his knees and licked his face. He picked it up in his arms, and fled from the tempter. He asked for lodging that night at a police station. His dog slept outside. During the night, huddled against other tramps on the floor, someone stole his most precious possession: the locket with Elizabeth's picture and curl in it. In the morning, he complained to the sergeant at the desk, and was thrown out. His little dog, waiting for him at the door, sensed that his master was being mistreated, and fastened his teeth in the doorman's leg. The fellow seized the little dog by the legs and beat out its brains against the stone steps. That was too much for Jacob Riis. He raged back into the police station with stones he had picked up in the gutter, but was soon disarmed, and marched to the nearest ferry to get him out of town. Of this experience he says: "The outrage of that night became, in the providence of God, the means of putting an end to one of the foulest abuses that ever disgraced a Christian city, and a mainspring in the battle with the slum as far as my share in it is concerned. My dog did not die unavenged."

Jacob Riis came to New York City as an immigrant and finally started a settlement house supported entirely by freewill gifts. He came to a time when he was out of money, and had to have \$150 or lose the project. That morning in the mail, two letters arrived and in each letter was a check for seventy-five dollars. The secretary went into an almost superstitious fit of awe. William Riis remembered that his father said to her calmly, "It is the Lord's way. That is the way He works." Jacob Riis, a Christian, was not surprised that God should see to it the money was made available for His work.

—Gerald Kennedy.

But he was not yet ready to avenge the wrong and battle against the social evils with his pen. There followed another period of wandering in the wilderness, from one job to another, seeing life at its worst, acquiring a marvelous mastery of our language, being schooled in misery, hunger and loneliness. He was bankrupt in hope and purpose and purse when he returned to New York. When he reached the depths of his darkest despair he was offered a job at \$10 a week as reporter for a news agency. Of this he writes: "For the second time I saw a hand held out to save me from wreck just when it seemed inevitable; and I knew it for His hand, to whose will I was at last beginning to bow in humility that had been a stranger to me before."

Soon another job, with better pay was offered him. Life was beginning to look brighter. But who cared? Word had come earlier that his beloved Elizabeth was to become another man's wife. And now Christmas was at the door, and sweet memories of childhood overwhelmed him. Never once during the years he had been in America had a letter reached him in time for Christmas. But this year, — when life was about to lose purpose for him, — as he returned to his lodging on Christmas Eve, there was the long-coveted letter from his father. A postscript to the letter told of the death of Elizabeth's fiancé. He lay down on his bed and wept. The next day with a down payment of \$75 he bought the weekly paper from the men he had been working for. Within a year he had it paid for, and more, and had the courage to write a letter asking Elizabeth to become his wife. Months went by, — long, long months of waiting. Then, one day, late in the year, came a letter half covered with German postage stamps. He knew at once that it was from Elizabeth, — the first love-letter he had ever received. Six years of hard knocks, and heart-ache, — and now she would accept him; he could come home in a year and she would become his bride. He says: "I knelt down and prayed long and fervently that I might strive with all my might to deserve the great happiness that had come to me." The following March they were married in the Ribe "Domkirke", and a few days later were crossing the Atlantic.

He got a job as reporter for the New York Tribune. The pay was small, — not enough for him and Elizabeth to live on. He was about to resign and look for something else when the city editor assigned him to be reporter for the paper at Police Headquarters, with ill-famed Mulberry Street as his beat. It was

(Continued on Page 16)



*A plea to make this season*

## More Than A Merry Christmas

Ralph W. Sockman

**O**LD YET EVER FRESH, year after year, is the familiar greeting, "Merry Christmas." Life needs its time of merriment just as streams of water need their rapids to keep them pure. "Mirth is from God", declared St. Theresa, the mystic, "and dullness is from the devil." It is good at Christmas to let mirth and jollity come bubbling to the surface of our lives. But the limitations of merriment are seen if we try to interchange the traditional words of our holiday greeting and say, "A Happy Christmas and a Merry New Year." We can be merry on certain days but hardly for a year.

The first Christmas greeting was a call to joy, not to mere merriment. "I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord." Joy is more than mirth. It is a vivid and animating pleasure, inspired by the perception of something which seems productive of good. It quickens the spirit, enlivens the countenance, gives radiance to the eye.

As Dean Lynn Harold Hough reminds us, "There is all the difference in the world between joy about a Savior and joy without a Savior." And he adds that "most of the cynicism of the world is the aftermath of counterfeit joys." When gaiety is but the passing stimulating of an artificial mood, when it is but the lightning flash of an appetite indulged, it leaves an emptiness like that of a deserted and disarranged night club on the morning after a New Year's celebration.

But Christmas continues and grows because it reopens the springs of genuine joy. It clears away the false and formal things which fill and clog our natures and lets the simple, elemental, natural things come through. The innocence and purity of childhood, the unfathomable love of motherhood, the kindly ministries of shepherds, the humble adoration of the wise men — in these we feel again the things by which and for which we are made. Although the earth may seem old with its burden of care, at Christmas it always is young.

While many will make merry without a Savior, let us try to catch the Christmas joy about a Savior.

First of all, it is the joy of a **saving light**. Admiral Peary after his long experience in the Arctic, declared that the worst menace which men had to fight was not the cold but the darkness. The long nights near the North Pole took a heavy toll of morale and health. Sunlight is essential to the health of the leaf on the tree, the skin on the body and the spirit in the man. As a boy

I was often afraid in the dark. It is not hard for me to imagine what terrors the nights must have held for primitive men before they learned the laws of nature and the explanation of darkness. In their ignorance they peopled the shadows with frightening possibilities.

Hence it is little wonder that the Old Testament spoke of the coming Redeemer in terms of light breaking into darkness. Listen to the prophet: "The people that walked in darkness **have seen a great light.**" The citizens of Palestine lived in a dark world. They had been overrun by conquering nations. They were satellites of the Caesars in Rome. Their sick souls tossed restlessly like patients in pain waiting for the dawn and a Deliverer.

In this darkness Christ was born at Bethlehem. He was hailed as "the life which was the light of men." The birth of Christ brought a saving light to illumine the life which is in each of us, to show us that we are not mere morsels of flesh raised from the dust and doomed to rot again into it, but that we are immortal souls, children of a Heavenly Father who so loves us "that he gave his Only Begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."

It is therefore fitting that Christmas should be the festival of lights. The date we celebrate follows the shortest day of the year, for the coming of Christ to our spiritual climate is like the return of the sun to our northern hemisphere. Christ brings the light and warmth and meaning which turn life's winter into spring. Our world, so filled with tension, at this moment may not seem to show it, but each year more of its people feel Christ's springtime in their hearts. And that is "good tidings of great joy."

A second reason for joy is that **Christ comes as saving love.**

Cynics have often charged that Christmas is only a perpetuation of pre-Christian pagan festivals. It is true that in the Near East some four thousand years ago, there was observed the festival of the New Year. And the Romans in their Saturnalia bedecked their halls with green trees and brought out candles. Dr. Earl Count in his delightful book, "Four Thousand Years of Christmas" traces these pre-Christian counterparts of Christmas. But in all these there was very little element of love. So in Christ there came One so magnetic that he has drawn many pagan features into the celebration of his birth, such as the Yule log, the Christmas tree, the jolly figure of Saint Nicholas. Why? Because Christ answers the hunger of the human heart for love.



Dr. Sockman



The manger at Bethlehem is the beautiful beginning of the world's greatest love story. The child cradled there grew up in the love of a Nazarene home. Out of love for his people he left his carpenter shop for the career of an unpaid teacher and healer. In love he lifted the broken bodies and hearts of the poor, the sick, the sinful. He loved them even to the end, for even on the cross he prayed for his persecutors. "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends." But Jesus gave his life not only for his friends, but also for his enemies, even for all the world.

Since Christ's love was revealed, the world has never been as it was before. Out of his love have grown a new reverence for womanhood, a new care for childhood, a new concern for the home, heightened spirit of humaneness toward the suffering, a quickened conscience regarding injustice. I am well aware of the darkness of our war-shadowed world, and yet I am confident more people today are praying and working for peace and brotherhood than ever before.

Nearly sixty years ago a New York newspaper printed an editorial written to answer a little eight year old girl who had sent in a letter saying that some of her friends said there was no Santa Claus. Listen to the editor's answer: "Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see . . . All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little . . . as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth. Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy . . . The most real things in this world are those that neither children nor men can see. . . Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding."

That editor's answer has been called the most famous editorial in newspaper history. In these dark times we talk much about being realistic. We usually mean that we must take the darkest possible view of our dangers and our surroundings. I, too, want to be realistic. I do not want to be fooled by wishful thinking. But we can be deceived by foolish fears as well as by futile hopes.

So Christmas, with its sequel through the centuries, convinces me that love is more lastingly real than our present hatreds, just as the sunshine is more lastingly real than the clouds. Therefore, I rejoice with those who first heard the "good tidings of great joy" for the Savior born in the city of David brought a saving love.

And the Savior's light and love have proved also to be a saving power. The Christmas story contains an interesting study in contrasted powers. Joseph and Mary went up to Bethlehem because of a decree



sent by Caesar Augustus that all the empire should be taxed. Caesar Augustus — what a name to ponder! The mightiest monarch the world had seen up to that time. On his words the whole world waited. What did Caesar Augustus know or care about the poor carpenter's wife and her babe in the little town of Bethlehem? And in the Christmas scene is another powerful figure, Herod, called "the Great." He had heard rumors that a rival might arise from among the Jewish people. He would risk no such danger. He bade the wise men bring him word if they found such a possibility. How helpless looked that Babe in the manger under the shadow of Herod's murderous intent!

A few years later in the reign of Caesar's successor, Jesus died on a cross. But the lowly manger of his birth and the ignominious cross of his death did not stop the Christ from outliving Herod and Caesar. Today they would scarcely be remembered except for their connection with the Christmas story. Just as the root of a growing tree can crack the solid pavement, so the divine life which was in the Bethlehem Babe has cracked the crowns of Kings and despots down the centuries.

Yet the supreme power of the One born in Bethlehem is that he saves people from their sins. That is why they called his name Jesus. That is the power above all others which our world so desperately needs today. And that is the reason above all others why Christmas to the Christian is more than merry. It brings the "good tidings of great joy that unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior which is Christ the Lord."

As all of us rejoice once again in the joy and gladness of Bethlehem, may the spirit of Christ be born in us anew, teaching our love to remember, our anger to forgive, our unkindness to forget. May that spirit make cheerful our homes that little children may laugh and parents rejoice and the aged be happy. May it spread abroad goodwill so that hard hearts may be softened, fears may be lessened and hopes may be lifted. May the joy of Christmas so fill us with compassion for our fellowmen that we shall find new ways to brotherhood and peace on earth.



# A Garland of Christmas Poetry

By Thelma Allinder



Mrs. Allinder is a Nebraska housewife whose poems have appeared often in these pages during the past years. She is a member of a Lutheran church at Osceola, and many secular and religious publications have published her stories and poetry. She has been writing for over thirty years.

## The Wonder of Snow

There is eloquence in the language of snow,  
And its message lingers with me.  
The Lord has told me and so I know.  
It tells of our God  
While blanketing sod,  
And garmenting bush and tree.

The snow is a gleam with diadems  
That no mortal can duplicate.  
Those jewels glow like the wonderful gems  
Of the heavenly Place,  
Yet the diamond-decked lace  
Is draped on my garden gate!

## The Hills of Home

The hills surround my home here on a farm.  
The sun smiles down where Nature's fingers trace  
New loveliness throughout the year and charm  
Remains for me upon my country place.  
The moon beholds the night-time shadowed hills,  
And stars acknowledge their pastoral peace.  
The vagrant winds admit that beauty fills  
These acres and their wonders never cease.  
And yet . . . I know there is a better land,  
Where hills are greener than the ones I see,  
Where Jesus waits me with an outstretched hand.  
What glory there must be for me to share,  
Who thinks these earthly hills of home are fair!

## Stars of Christmas

The Stars of Christmas glow above the earth  
And bring a surge of joyous faith to me,  
That mingles with the awe of Jesus' birth  
So long ago in abject poverty.  
The angel-choirs sang most gloriously  
About the Infant and His royal worth.  
These very stars heard that grand symphony,  
With its great message meant for you and me!

I feel the wonder of these stars that shine,  
And yet a brighter Star once shone of old,  
Across the desert; was the heavenly sign  
To guide the Magi with their gifts of gold,  
Of frankincense and myrrh, when David's line  
Brought forth the Son whom prophets had foretold!



IT NEVER SNOWS LIKE IT USED TO. (IT PROBABLY NEVER DID).  
BUT THE WORST OF ALL WINTERS WAS

## The Winter of 1880-81

By The Old Timer

(as told to Nanna Goodhope)

"Talk about snow", said the Old Timer to the young farmer who had stopped by the old smithy to offer the season's greetings; "shucks, this ain't nuthin'. You should have been here in the winter of eighty - eighty-one; that year we had snow. It began with a sleet in mid-October. Then the wind whipped up from the northwest, and soon we had a raging blizzard. And it continued without a let-up for three days. By that time the snow had piled so high that in places you had to dig tunnels to get out to feed the critters — that is, if you were fortunate enough to have any, which we were; our stock was in the shed when the storm struck." — The old man stopped to draw a few puffs from his corn-cob pipe.

"But a neighbor lost a-plenty good critters that winter. They were bein' fed in a yard. An when the blizzard came, some of-em got clean out-o-hand. They let themselves be driven by the wind, until they could go no further, an were stuck in the snow. There they stood as stiff as a poker. Yes-sirree, the next spring when we kids drove our herd out to grass, we found their skeletons lying along a draw where the snow had been deepest, the bones picked clean by wild beasts.

"There was one young steer, however, that had gotten away from the rest and wandered over toward our neighbor Ander's place. Must've been driven right up agin a small shed, made of poles and slough-hay, where he kept a couple pigs. And munchin on the hay, it had eaten its way clean into shelter, despite objections raised by the pigs, whose squeeling drew the attention of Anders and his wife when they went out, after the storm, to try to uncover some of the out-buildings. Imagine their surprise, when the first thing they saw when they reached the shed was not the pigs, but a young steer chawing away on a mouthful of hay." — Here the Old Timer pounded the ashes from his pipe, filled and re-lit it.

"Yes-sirree, that was some winter. There seem to be no end to the snow; and it drifted so it was impossible to git anywhere. At length the neighbors got together by making paths around the snow-drifts. I remember as how a neighbor only a half mile away came in a stone-boat drawn by two strong horses, to get my mother, (who was herself ready to deliver a child most any time) to aid his wife in childbirth. It was my good friend Ole who then made his appearance into this cold world. I was only eight years old then, but I remember it well.

"Well, as it neared Christmas time, like most of our neighbors, we were clean out of meal of any kind from which to make bread. My father always used to make a

trip to the grist mill at Finley or Centerville — ten to twelve miles away — in late fall to get enough corn and grain to last us throughout the coldest part of the winter, and a supply of groceries. But that year the weather had snook up on us, an gettin' to town was impossible.

"But we were lucky to have a good, stout coffee-grinder — one of the old-fashioned kind we all used then. We put it into service; and on it we ground wheat, rye and corn enough to keep body and soul together. We were eight at home then; so it was necessary to keep the mill grinding practically all day long. I remember how we kids took turns, turning the coffee-grinder and twisting hay for the stove. For hay was our only fuel then. We were fortunate in having the stacks close to the barn, so we could get at it; for it was feed for our critters too." — Again the old man stopped to draw a few puffs from his pipe.

"There was no Christmas for you kids then that year, I suppose," ventured the young farmer.

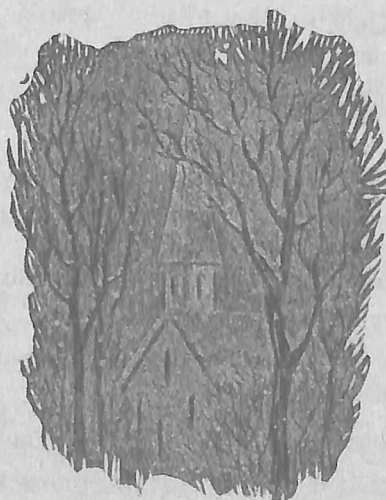
"Oh, but you're wrong," persisted the Old Timer, drawing another long puff on his pipe. "Christmas is Christmas. When it comes it comes. It's in the very air — you feel it. I do believe that we even heard the song of the angels much clearer then than folks do now. There wasn't so much noise and commotion — and merchandising to draw one's attention away from the real meaning of the holy season.

"I believe we butchered a sheep that year for Christmas. We always kept sheep in those days; besides meat they furnished us with wool for clothing and tallow for candles. And mother baked a big molasses cake — oh, yes, we made our own sorghum. Sugar was too expensive to buy for a family of our size. We also made a coffee substitute from barley, which was first made into malt, then roasted in a large pan in the oven.

"And we kids made oodles of pop corn — and peppernuts. Father read from Holy Scriptures, which was a daily habit in my home. — And it's surprising what even a white cloth on the table can do to make a meal festive.

"No, we kids didn't suffer much in those days. — We had fun too, as when we occasionally got a little time off from our chores to go toboggan sliding down the hill. And when the weather was fit and we could be spared at home, we also went to school now and then. For even then it was considered advisable for folks on the prairie to be able to read and write and do a bit of figuring."

"Oh, must you go, Jim? — Well, as I was saying, that year the snow lay clean into the middle of April. — Yes-sirree we sure had snow in the winter of eighty - eighty-one!"





## Greetings from "Valborgsminde"

As we approach the Christmas season again we send cordial greetings to all friends of the home.

Life at the home for the forty residents and staff goes on with the minimum of upsets despite the varied interests of the group. I marvel at the ability of our aged to adjust to one another and to the group life which naturally is different from life in their former homes. Besides this adjustment, our residents have had to endure adverse conditions due to different building projects which have been going on the past few years such as the West addition, elevator installation, alteration of the third floor and at present the alteration going on in the dining room and kitchen. The latter, in progress since November 1st, being the most trying. Our thanks to all inhabitants from residents to cook, cleaning personnel and managers. The finished project being the one bright spot in the picture.

The dining room has been too crowded since the elevator made it possible for all residents except bed-patients to come down for meals. The kitchen has long been outmoded. It now will be enlarged by approximately 60 square feet by the addition of waste space. The kitchen will contain stainless steel sinks, worktables, new cupboards, dishwasher, garbage disposal unit and a pass window between kitchen and dining room. In other words all will be new except stove and mixer.

To the dining room will be added one room plus part of the hallway approximately 275 square feet. Two storage rooms off the kitchen will also be put in shape. If the money holds out we plan a walk-in cooler and deep freeze in one of the rooms and new chairs and tables for the dining room.

While these most important facilities are transformed the whole group is cooperating to the utmost. The meals are prepared in the lower hall, transported by cart and elevator to each floor where the residents dine in the hallways. The laundry makes room for an improvised dishwashing department.

We had hoped to have the new facilities in use for the holiday season but must forgo this because of difficulties in getting delivery of the stainless steel items for the kitchen.

When the work is done we hope many of our friends will come and see the much needed improvements.

At present all our residents are well except Mrs. Marie Jensen of Council Bluffs, who fell and broke her pelvis a couple of months ago, Mrs. Sarah Jorgensen of Kimballton who fell and bruised herself quite severely and Mrs. Mildred Schnell of Des Moines who is in the hospital following an operation. We hope that all will be on the way to recovery when this is published.

Again best wishes for the Christmas season and a happy New Year on behalf of all at "Valborgsminde!"

Sincerely,  
**Theo. J. Ellgaard.**

## The Living Word

When "COMPREHEND" Means "OVERCOME"

(Fourth in a Series)

The word "comprehend" comes from a Latin verb which means to seize or grasp. The primary reference of the Latin *comprehendere* was to the physical laying hold of something; but it readily acquired a secondary meaning, and was applied to the intellectual grasp or understanding of a matter. In the sixteenth century the English word "comprehend" was employed in both the physical and the intellectual senses, as was also the related word "apprehend." Today the physical sense of "comprehend" is obsolete, while "apprehend" retains both senses.

For this reason the translation of John 1:5 in the King James Version has now become misleading: "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." That seems to the reader of today to be a statement concerning the stupidity of those who were in the dark, and their lack of understanding. The translation by the American Standard Version is better — "the darkness apprehended it not" — but it is still open to the same misunderstanding.

The best translation is that which was given in the marginal note of the American Standard Version, and has now been adopted by the Revised Standard Version: "the darkness has not overcome it." The opening sentences of John's Gospel concerning the Word in whom is life and who is the light of men do not close with the anti-climactic idea that it is all very puzzling, but with the triumphant assertion that the light dispels the darkness, and that the darkness can not overcome the light. Here is the present rendering of the first five verses of the Gospel of John:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Other modern translations have "did not master it" (Moffatt); "has never put it out" (Goodspeed, Phillips); "has never overpowered it" (Weymouth, Twentieth Century, Williams); "overcame it not" (Torrey); "did not conquer it" (Rieu).

**Luther A. Weigle.**



## Christmas Hymns

When in the stillness of evening or night I ponder upon the best loved English hymns, there are certain lines that have become very dear to my heart. These lines tell me some wonderful facts in few words. I shall mention a few such lines.

The first are from Joseph Mohr's hymn of 1818: "Silent night, holy night," — where we are told that "all is calm" and "all is bright," and also Edmond Sears': "It came upon the midnight clear"—"The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the angels sing." It reminds us of how necessary is stillness at Christmas even if it is hard to obtain.

Next we have that beautiful hymn of Phillip Brooks, 1868: "O little town of Bethlehem" and the two last lines in the first verse: "The hopes and fears of all the years, are met in thee tonight." To me, it opens up a portal to the great world of human souls and life, generation after generation.

In the last stanza we have his prayer: "O, holy child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray," and as an answer to this prayer, I quote from Isaac Watts 1719, "Joy to the world," the following lines: "He comes to make his blessing flow, far as the curse is found." Here we have the height, the breadth, the length and the depth of Christ's love, and if I then would open my New Testament and turn to the Ephesians 3:8 I would read of the unsearchable riches of Christ, especially if I think of his redemption. And there is something more in Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hid all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge."

We are told in many hymns what the angels are doing "that night of all nights" as it has been called. "Hark! the herald angels sing, glory to the new born king," and "still through the cloven skies they come with peaceful wings unfurled, and still the heavenly music floats o'er all the weary world."

Even the nature sings: "There is a song in the air, there's a star in the sky," and in 1863 Longfellow heard the bells on Christmas day more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth he sleep; the wrong shall fail! the right prevail! with peace on earth good will to men." We learn also about the wise men.

"From the eastern mountains, pressing on they come.  
Wise men in their wisdom to his humble home.  
Stirred by deep devotion hasting from afar,  
Ever journeying onward guided by a star."

And now the question is raised: how should our attitude be? I find the answer, Reginold Heber, 1811:

"Shall we not yield him, in costly devotion  
Odours of Edom, and offerings divine,  
Gems of the mountains, and pearls of the ocean,  
Myrrh from the forest, and gold from the mine?  
Vainly we offer each ample oblation,  
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure;  
Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor."

Or in the Latin hymn translated by Frederich Oajeket, 1841:

"O come all ye faithful,  
Joyful and triumphant.

O come, let us adore him.

O come, let us adore him.  
Christ the Lord."

P. Rasmussen.

## Yule

Published by the American Evangelical Lutheran Youth Fellowship, Des Moines, Iowa. Pastor Harris Jespersen, Editor, 75c.

Let it be said from the start the issues of this Christmas magazine have improved steadily through the years. This issue is no exception.

It is the front cover which gives the first pleasing impression: a surprise of large white snowdrops against a background of dark-blue midnight. The appearance of the magazine is well suited to lend decorative beauty to any living room table. It is designed by Saralice of West Denmark, (I trust it is permissible to call her just that).

Of the various meditations and articles the first, **O Ye Holy and Humble Men of Heart**, by Marybelle A. Boston, is outstanding. It is a rare combination of deep spiritual insight and artistry of words. Here the old well-known truths of Christmas are brought out again, not in the usual sermonic platitudes of the season, but full of throbbing vitality so they become new and fresh once more.

The meditation, **The Babe and The Man**, by the editor, is packed with vibrant concern that the sentimentalism, which encumbers the right observance of Christmas, may yield to that which is truly important about the coming of Christ.

Appropriately, there is an article about Helen Keller in the year of her seventy-fifth birthday. It is written with wonderful understanding of the woman whose life story and personality are a challenge to every member of the human race.

The biography of Ole Bull by Pastor Verner Hansen is delightful. It brings the great Norwegian virtuoso with his enthralling music, his daring pranks, and his incredible foibles to walk again.

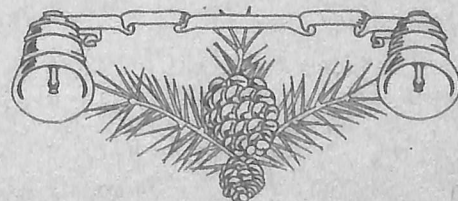
Really good Christmas plays are scarce; but there is one in YULE, "The Legend of The First Christmas Tree," which may well be regarded as a godsend to Sunday schools. It is about Christmas in the home of Martin Luther, and it is written by Saralice.

Many, perhaps too many, have written about Kaj Munk and his literary works; but Dr. Johannes Knudsen's analytic mastery brings to light so many new points about this outstanding Dane that a person reads about him again with keen interest.

Interspersed through the pages there are several fine creations of poetry. The stories this year are by Dorothy Clark Wilson, **Brothers**; Dagmar Potholm Petersen, **Who Is My Brother**; and Viggo H. Andersen, **Where Happiness Lies**. I believe it is fair to say that these short stories have a finer literary quality than many which have appeared in former years. As for the selection of photographic pictures, a person wonders again this time at their fine artistic beauty.

Marius Krog.

Omaha, Nebraska, December 6, 1955.





# Paging Youth

American Evangelical Lutheran Youth Fellowship

Editor: Ted Thuesen, Grand View Seminary  
Des Moines 16, Iowa

## Christmas — A Festival of Home and Church

by Dr. Johannes Knudsen

Christmas time is home time. We love to go home for Christmas, especially when we are away at college. We celebrate Christmas eve or Christmas morning, whatever the case may be, not in public or even with friends, as we do on New Year's eve, but in the intimate and exclusive joy of family life. Only after we have shared together, parents and children, grandparents and perhaps aunts or uncles, do we reach out and say "Merry Christmas" even to our neighbors. When we do have company Christmas eve, they become part of the family circle.

This is one of the fine features of Christmas. It helps preserve and bring out the value of the home. Our home life would be poorer without it. And it is in wonderful accord with the story of the nativity. The Son of God was born into a home. He was given parents who loved Him, gave Him care and protection, and shared with Him. Christmas time is home time, for it centers about the life in a home that was blessed by God.

But Christmas time is also church time. We move from the intimate fellowship of the family to the larger fellowship of the church to worship and to proclaim in song, prayer and sermon the glory of God which has come to man. It is altogether proper that we should do this. But it is more than proper. It is necessary for its own sake, but it is also necessary for the Christmas of the home which would lose its content, if it were not placed in the greater fellowship of the congregation.

The Christmas story is part of the gospel, and the gospel is the proclamation of the church. Therefore the church proclaims joy to the world at Christmas time, and we, being members of the church, must be part of the proclamation. We proclaim also within the church. With untiring repetition we renew the proclamation year after year in order that the joy may continue to live in our hearts.

Christmas is a great festival of home and church. May you re-experience the joy of Christmas in your home as well as in your church, wherever you are!

## AELYFlashes

**Atlantic District Publishes "Newsletter"** — We have received two issues (November and December) of "Newsletter," a monthly paper published by the Atlantic District of AELYF. The "Newsletter" which had not been published for some time, was revived with the November issue. It is edited by Mrs. Dorothy

Petersen of Newark and is a very neat and newsy paper. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, there are now two districts of AELYF that publish a paper. The other one is, of course, the Lake Michigan District, publishers of "The Lutheran Lantern."

**Hartford, Conn., Reorganizes Youth Group** — From Beverly Jensen, secretary of the Hartford Youth Group, we received the following report: "A Young People's Society has been formed again in Our Savior's Lutheran church. For two years we didn't have a Young People's Society due to the fact that we had no resident pastor. At our first meeting we elected the following officers: Carol Jespersen, president; John Larsen, vice president; Rev. George Mellby, treasurer; Beverly Jensen, secretary. Our advisors are Rev. and Mrs. George Mellby. We also have "Friends of Youth." They are Miss Dorothy Pearson and Kristian Jensen, Jr. They help and advise our group when Rev. and Mrs. Mellby cannot be present. We are hoping for more "Friends of Youth." We meet every Sunday evening at 7:30 o'clock. The first Sunday of every month we are invited to a member's home and we have the meeting there, instead of in the church where we hold our meetings the other three Sundays of the month. Our first service project was to make Christmas decorations for the Christmas tree. We are also preparing a skit for the church Christmas party. We are all enjoying the wonderful YPS meetings, thanks to Rev. and Mrs. George Mellby."

**Newark, N. J.** — The LYF is sponsoring a drive for a food basket and funds to be given to their "adopted family," a needy family that they helped last Christmas.

**Withee, Wisconsin** — The LYF has prepared a lighted Christmas display to be placed in front of the parish hall. They also plan a caroling party for shut-ins.

**Troy, N. Y.** — A new Youth group has been formed here. It is a small and rather young group made up of the eight members of the two confirmation classes, and a few of their friends from other churches who like to attend. It was organized in October under the leadership of Howard Toftegaard who returned to civilian life recently after several years of service in the navy. A few of the other members of the old Troy YPS of pre-war days also help out.

**New National AELYF Mailing Lists are available upon request from Secretary Ardythe Hansen, 336 Davis Hall, Kalamazoo, Michigan.**





# Our Women's Work

Mrs. Ellen Knudsen, 1033 South Tenth Street, Maywood, Illinois  
Editor

## Freedom from Fear

For the sake of one small Child of long ago,  
God, give men wisdom that all fear may cease  
In little children's hearts, that they may know  
Only the glad, sweet blessedness of peace.  
Never again, oh, never again may fear  
Of bombs' black shadows swooping from the skies  
Blanch children's faces, may no sudden tear  
Of terror rise again to blind their eyes.

For one Child's sake may childhood henceforth be  
A land of wonder and of keen delight;  
May every race upon the earth be free  
To live and learn . . . Lord, out of this long night  
That men in their mad lust for power have made,  
May we emerge to face life unafraid.

Grace Noll Crowell.

To all friends of WMS: Best wishes for a joyous and blessed Christmas!

## A Thanks that Anticipates

A few weeks ago, Grand View Seminary received a second contribution from the Women's Mission Society bringing the total of their gifts to \$4,000. It was a bit early to consider this as a Christmas gift, but writing at this time in response I would like to think of it in that manner.

Most of us in remembering the Christmases of years past think first of all of home — and of that person who usually did the most in setting the stage for the high festivities there. One of the favorite Christmas songs of my childhood gives an account of that magic hour around the Christmas tree. It ends with the comment that mother is already in the kitchen readying all the good things that she has to serve. She is hardly preparing it, for that is how Christmas began: with her preparations many weeks previously. One of the first signs that we knew came that day early in November when we children came home from school to find the house filled with the heavy, rich and wonderful odor of the fruit cakes baking in the oven. After that came the endless cleaning, all the special cookies to be baked, the polishing of silver, the gifts to be found or made, and the many other tasks of preparation.

Christmas began and ended in our home with Mother's service. And therefore to her, so goes the song, this purse — lift it, see how heavy it is! Perhaps that is another reason why that song came to my mind tonight, as in gratitude I write to the mothers of our Church who have given such a heavy purse to their Seminary.

That purse is really the source of that "extra" which has made and is making our Seminary improvement successful. Our congregations responded generously but the improvements have even exceeded our original plans. That is true despite the fact that

the costs had the disturbing habit of disregarding our estimates. Today our new quarters which include classrooms, offices and library fully meet our ambitious expectations.

One new feature of our refurbished Seminary which I consider at least the equal of the others in significance is our Seminary Residence on Boyd Avenue. These days we are just completing the remodelling of the former Young People's Home which now contains five apartments and six single rooms for married and single students. In addition to these there are attractive common rooms. Here our students will have an opportunity for a life together while preparing themselves for the service of the Church. I am confident that this will not only give more meaning and value to the three seminary years but to the entire course of their life in the ministry. I can give personal testimony to the abiding quality of friendships formed during seminary years — and can only covet the same wealth for present and future seminarians.

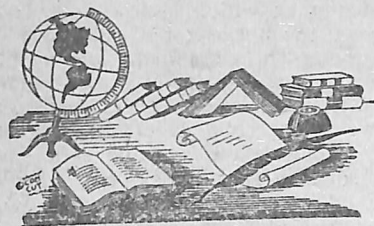
The cost of this home for seminary homes including the necessary remodelling will be almost \$20,000. This is really the "extra" of our program. Through the help of the Women's Mission Society we were able to make a substantial down payment. The remaining amount will be paid over a period of years out of the nominal rent that will be charged. I think it singularly appropriate that the women of our Church make possible our seminary home.

Grand View Seminary still lacks in numbers the students for which it hopes and for which the Church is in need. But there are many signs that they are coming. One of the signs is to be found in the kind of support that your gifts indicate. Your gifts ultimately come from the homes of our Church. They must mean that there is a genuine interest and concern in our homes for our Church and school. If this is true, then we can never doubt the future. Fifteen hundred years ago a mother's prayers and love brought the man Augustine home — to become one of the great men of the Church. Saint Monica's story is not unique. On the contrary, I would imagine that it comes closer to being typical. The homes of the Church are the real source of the servants of the Church. From this concern and interest our students of tomorrow will most certainly come.

Mother's preparation for Christmas began many weeks previous to the actual event. The baking, the cleaning, and the planning were all a prelude to that climax which we so vividly recall. My gratitude is directed toward more than the generous financial gifts of the Women's Mission Society. It is a thanksgiving that anticipates as well as recalls. I see the children nurtured by that love which lives in their home; I see the young men brought home by the prayers of their parents. May these your gifts today be tokens of an even greater gift to God and His Church in some tomorrow which now may seem far

(Continued on Page 16)





## OPINION AND COMMENT

"JOYFUL, ALL ye nations, rise!" Wesley's great hymn reminds us of the universality of the Christmas time. Around the 24,000 circumscribing miles of the earth's surface, Christmas comes, hour by hour, the fulfillment of the eager expectancy of all God's children. While we celebrate here in the United States, Christmas is almost over in Bethlehem. In some isles of the Pacific, as we worship on Christmas morn in our churches, it will still be Christmas eve, for the day dawns bit by bit as the earth revolves. Christmas is so solidly a part of our life, that it is hard to realize how different it was in the past. Christmas eve in the early church calendar-year, (that is December 24), was known as the day of St. Adam and St. Eve. The first parents are not usually thought of as the symbols of joy with which we associate this season. They are the symbols of man's sinfulness. Yet, Christmas is here with its joy untold only because of man's sin. Mankind has avoided God, has turned from Him, has ignored Him, and so God came to earth, and we have Christmas. And this tiny Christ-child, born into a world where children's lives were cheap — so cheap that a ruler could order them all slain by hundreds — grew into an international, incarnate figure who swept across the world with the great hope of release from sin. As Wesley further says, "God and sinners reconciled," — that is what the childbirth meant, there in that stall that heretofore had seen only the birth of horse and cattle. Jesus wrote no books, but the world's libraries are filled with volumes about Him. He painted, no pictures, created no sculpture, but the artists of the world have disclosed for us the beauty in the story of His life and His church. He composed no music, but our hymns, carols, oratorios and symphonies are paeans to Him. And His influence spreads. (In our country, only 10 per cent of the people were church members in 1796. Today, half of them are.) No wonder we join universally in commemorating the birthday. As Bancroft, the historian says, "The name of Jesus is written on the top of every page of history," and around the world people pray the prayer of Wesley's hymn, "Come, Desire of Nations, Come!"

A WORD OR TWO is in order about the authors in this issue. Dr. Ralph Sockman is the Methodist minister of Christ Church, in New York City, and is known for his broadcasts of almost two dozen years, "The National Radio Pulpit." Pastor James Lund is minister in Manistee, Michigan, and formerly served our church at Troy, N. Y. Mrs. Axel Kildegaard is wife of the Dean of our Seminary in Des Moines. She writes that her contribution is not actually autobiographical, except in a very unliteral and general sense. Dr. Alfred Jensen is, of course, Synod President. Nanna Goodhope, of Viborg, S. D., is a prairie housewife who frequently contributes to our synod publications. P. Rasmussen, retired, was pastor for many years at

Dalum, Alberta, Canada, and is a former folk-school director. Our thanks to these writers for their cooperativeness and fine response.

WHILE WE are joyfully happy at Christmas, it is worth remembering that it was not always acceptable to celebrate this season. In Massachusetts, soon after the landing at Plymouth, the Puritans wrote into their laws this incredible statute: "Whoever shall be found observing any such day as Christmas, or the like, either by forbearing of labour, fasting, or in any other way shall be fined five shillings." These curious pioneers who came to our shores in search of religious freedom had some peculiar ideas as to what such freedom meant! Descendants of those Pilgrims have observed Christmas openly for only the past 100 or 150 years.

SINCE WE opened this page with several quotes from one of our favorite Christmas hymns, it occurs to us to wonder why the great hymns of the English language have not found their way into the Danish hymnals. Translation has seemed to have been a one-way street. Our English hymnbook is packed with beautiful hymns of Christmas sung by Grundtvig and Kingo and the rest. "Silent Night" is universal, of course, but it is German. Some Latin hymns are known in all languages. But, as P. Rasmussen notes in this issue, some of the best Christmas hymns and spiritual songs have been written in English. It would seem that Danish-Americans have a duty to make translation travel both ways.

THIS YEAR the youth magazine YULE is a better buy than ever, and no seventy-five cents is ever spent which is more profitably invested. Many people will spend that much on a decorative doo-dad for the fireplace, and for its decorative quality alone, YULE is an attractive bargain. Inside, any number of features struck us as particularly worthy of calling into attention, (see review by Pastor Marius Krog). Contributors range from coast to coast, but about half the issues come to us from capable pens of New England writers. This most charming section of our country has long been known for its literary productivity, and our YULE is further evidence of the "flowering of New England." Throughout, the 1955 edition bears the stamp of experienced and discerning editing.

MAY WE, for once, conclude our page with a bit of moralizing? The Christmas spirit ought to be maintained all year, and this is so obviously platitudinous that if it is to be said again, it must be said in a special way. And so we say it the way Don Marquis said it: "On many a heart you will find written, 'Not to be opened until Christmas.'" And from our California editorial office, where we are dreaming of a white Christmas, we say to all, **A Very Merry Christmas.**





## Tyler Old People's Home

Our synod at its last convention moved to build a new and larger home for the aged in the Tyler community.

The present home has room for only a dozen residents and it is located too far from our church and from the town. Danebod Lutheran Church has offered to donate a site for a new home and we hope to build a new and larger home already next summer. Committees which include men and women from our local church, our district, as well as the community at large, are already at work and the response has been very gratifying.

A building committee is busy making plans for a home which will probably house some thirty-five residents, and it is estimated that the cost will be approximately \$125,000.

Plans, approved by the synodical board, will be published as soon as they are available. In the meantime, it is our hope that many people throughout the synod will support our new synodical project generously. Please send donations to the treasurer of the finance committee, Mr. Robert L. Seibert, Citizens State Bank, Tyler, Minnesota, or to me.

Enok Mortensen.

## New India Film

A beautiful sound film in color, "FROM THE JUNGLES OF ASSAM," picturing the work of the Santal Mission in the colorful province of Assam, India, where live and work about 16,000 of the Mission's 33,000 Christians, has now been released.

Terms: (1) A free-will offering to the work of the Santal Mission, part of which will be allocated to cover cost of film, or (2) Rental: \$12 per showing.

It may be obtained by writing to The Santal Mission, 803 Phoenix Building, Minneapolis 1, Minnesota.

## Notice to all Church Boards

The printing costs of LUTHERAN TIDINGS is constantly increasing as our mailing list grows.

The Publication Committee is somewhat puzzled why we print and mail 8,500 copies when our statistics indicate that there are only 7,787 contributing members in our synod.

LUTHERAN TIDINGS is to be sent gratis to contributing members only. There are, of course, a few subscribers who are not members, and we mail some complimentary and exchange copies of the paper; but the discrepancy between the two figures is still too large.

Our conclusion is that congregations are not sufficiently careful in weeding out names of people who are not entitled to receive the paper without charge.

Consequently we shall have to ask each congregation to submit a complete mailing list with names and addresses of all members in good standing as of January 1, 1956. This mailing list must be in the hands of our circulation manager, Svend Petersen, Askov, Minn., by February 15, 1956. If this is not complied with the Publication Committee may find it necessary to discontinue sending LUTHERAN TIDINGS to all members of the congregations involved until the revised mailing list has been received.

This may seem a stern measure, but we must somehow impress upon our members the necessity of economizing where we can.

On behalf of the Publication Committee.

Enok Mortensen, Chairman.

## Reporting for God

(Continued from Page 6)

the hardest job on the newspaper staff. But it gave him the opportunity he had waited for. He telegraphed his wife: "Got staff appointment. Police Headquarters, \$25 a week. Hurrah!" This was the job to which he devoted his life. "So in my soul I commended by work and myself to the God of battles who gives victory, and took hold."

His job was to gather news of the murders, suicides, robberies, fires and scandals before they got into court. It was not always easy to get this information from the police. There was the keenest rivalry between the reporters of competing papers. Some were specialists on writing up fires, others on murders, or robberies, or tear-jerking stories. One of his first reform objectives was to try to do away with "the frightful abomination of the police lodging house," — the only provision made by the city in those days for its homeless wanderers. "They cared less for those men and women than for the cur dogs in the street." Here was his opportunity to get revenge on the sergeant who had killed his little dog. He had to fight long with himself not to take his revenge. He saw a better way. He would kill the abuse — not the man who was both the victim and the instrument of it. He succeeded, and saw these reforms carried to other cities.

People did not know about the poli-

tical corruption within their city government, nor the unspeakable conditions of misery and depravity among the people of the slums the staggering infant mortality rate, the rapacity of the landlords, the sweatshop, child labor, alley tenements, cruller bakeries, cable cars, rascality, squalor, sordidness, poor schools, lack of playgrounds, and dozens of evils that worked to degrade old and young. He made it his business to inform them. It would take several articles to tell of these battles and of how Jacob Riis used the columns of the newspaper to fight against the evils—trying to arouse people to demand a house-cleaning.

The newspaper let him have his way in nearly everything, even to writing articles that were opposed to the paper's editorial policies. He fought hard against the corrupt Tammany machine. His books, "How The Other Half Lives," "The Children Of The Poor," "The Battle With The Slum," "Children Of The Tenements," and numerous magazine articles exerted great influence. He lived to see most of his reforms carried through. Children's rights were won back for them, parks replaced tenements that were torn down; new schools with playgrounds were built, and living conditions were improved for many thousands. Of course he made mistakes. Perhaps he overestimated the influence of environment. But others caught something of his passion for social reform, and carried on after he died in 1914.

## A Thanks that Anticipates

(Continued from Page 14)

distant. In their manhood, the boys of today will grasp the realities of their childhood.

Our ultimate thanks must be to our heavenly Father. In every Advent season, as I pray that this is for our Church, our gratitude both recalls and anticipates. God is in Christ the source of that love which I am assured lives and is at work in our congregations and our homes. Insofar as we continue to open our lives to Him in this most immediate relationship of father, mother and child, His grace will be more than sufficient for all our tomorrows. In the keeping of His birth, we rejoice at our own fulfillment.

Your Seminary is the immediate means of witnessing to your concern. As any other institution ours functions to serve this hour in which we do have a purpose. Times and institutions pass but the purpose which is of God abides. The women of our Church have helped us to become more effective in our service, and for their work we are grateful.

A. C. Kildegaard.

## Announcement

The Synod has purchased a copy of the Martin Luther film which will be available to all congregations at no cost other than postage. The booking of the film will be through the Grand View College Film Library. This is a 16 mm sound film on 2,000 foot reels. The film library will also send an empty 1,000 ft. reel with the order.

NEW ADDRESS—If you move, then write your name and new address in the space provided. Be sure to state what congregation you belong to. Clip this out so that the old address is included and mail to LUTHERAN TIDINGS, Askov, Minnesota.

I am a member of \_\_\_\_\_ the congregation at \_\_\_\_\_

December 20, 1955

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

JENSEN, JENS M.  
TYLER, MINN.  
RTE. 2,  
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