

Lutheran Tidings

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH



A Great and Mighty Wonder

A great and mighty wonder
Our Christmas Festal brings;
On earth, a lowly Infant,
Behold the King of kings!

The Word is made incarnate,
Descending from on high;
And cherubim sing anthems
To shepherds, from the sky.

And we with them triumphant,
Repeat the hymn again:
"To God on high be glory,
And peace on earth to men!"

Since all He comes to ransom,
By all be He adored,
The Infant born in Bethlehem,
The Saviour and the Lord!

And idol forms shall perish
And error shall decay
And Christ shall wield his sceptre,
Our Lord and God for aye.

A Merry and Blessed Christmas To All !

And A Little Child Shall Lead Them

Alfred Jensen

"It is good to be a child at Christmas" is an old saying. And it is true that Christmas in its various manifestations is geared to the mind and sentiment of a child. The Story of the first Christmas itself sparkles with such wonderful beings as angels and shepherds, kings and villains, and even stars that spotlight the birthplace of the Christ child, when needed. Perhaps the gem of the story is the babe in the manger, Jesus, Mary's first born child. Add to all this the gifts and goodies of all sorts which invariably accompany the celebration of Christmas and it is no wonder that any child loves Christmas as the next thing to heaven on earth.

There is nothing wrong in all this. The numerous instances mentioned in the gospels when Jesus blesses and praises the children around Him somewhat in contrast to the rather austere minded disciples, make it clear that Jesus allows children to be childish in their likes and dislikes, but also that the childlike mind was one of the essential characteristics of the residents of the kingdom of heaven. He was constantly trying to unlock the tightly sealed minds of His disciples to see the life and love of God in nature as well as in human beings, saints and sinners alike. The pharisees were roundly scolded because of their pursuit of a supercilious and legalistic perfectness. Christ wanted the sunlight and warmth of God's love to penetrate the frozen feelings of his disciples and to have them accept this world as "my Father's World."

Jesus loved the children for their willingness to learn and to change; for their love of the new and untried, in short for their impressionable nature. The disciples, so often hidebound in traditions and customs as well as wrong conceptions of God, needed to hear more than once that "to such belongs the kingdom of God" and "Except ye become as a little child you shall not enter the kingdom of God." To Christ the hope for the future depended on men experiencing "the new birth," "the living water . . . welling up to eternal life," "the bread of heaven" in order that the spiritual life could become alive, sensitive, dynamic rather than static and self-contained.

Christmas is therefore by right a children's festival. I like to think of the child Jesus growing up in Nazareth aware of both nature and people all about Him, sensing and appreciating the beauty and grandeur of all God's creation, bringing all of it under His thoughts about the scope of the future Kingdom.

Christmas can serve as a source of a new vision, new power, as a springboard or a stepping stone toward greater sacrifice and service, an outpouring of love, a sharing with "Children of the mists, the lonely guest, dreams of the unfulfilled and unpossessed and sorrow and life's immemorial pain."

Perhaps we of the America, rich and overflowing with food and goods of all kinds, this Christmas should learn to share with a people that is fighting a losing, tragic battle on one of freedom's last frontiers. Is it not possible that the plight of the Hungarian people

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The Spirit of Christmas

Marie Hald

"For unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder; and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6

Thirty childish voices have daily been raised in unison in practice for the choral reading to be done by my sixth grade as a prelude to each of the three tableaux in our annual school Christmas program. Thirty eager faces have daily been "lifted-up, holding wonder like a cup." At the Yule season we forget the usual bickering over the constitutionality of such religious differences, strangely enough.

It is Christmas again. To one who lives alone — and likes it — comes the sképtic, cynical protest, "Oh, no, not that again!" But not for long. One does not work with youth daily without gradually absorbing some of its youthful vivacity, boundless exuberance, and sincere joy at Christmas time. And so, it is Christmas. What is the true meaning of this?

CHRISTMAS IS BELIEVING. As children, we believe in Christmas — and many other mysteries — because Mother and Father do. As adults we believe in all these intrinsics for the sake of the little children. Strange, isn't that?

CHRISTMAS IS SHARING. We early learn to share everything with one another. Later in life — and many times, oh, so late in life — we learn to share one another. Therein lies the true meaning of Christmas. The American poet, James Russell Lowell, once wrote "The gift without the giver is bare." The overjoyed schoolboy is puzzled at Teacher's reply to his question, "Teacher, what do you want for Christmas?" when she replies "Thirty good little boys and girls." For that is Christmas!

CHRISTMAS IS JOY. And again the eager voices ring out:

"Joy to the world!
The Lord is come:
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing —"

CHRISTMAS IS BEAUTY. There is beauty all around us. To the teacher — thirty, lively, vivacious, receptive children bent over their lessons are truly representative of life's rarest beauty. The same youngsters later standing before the easels "painting or drawing a Christmas scene for the room" depict all their anticipations for Christmas. This is beauty that grows with the years. As the poet said, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever." Perhaps, he, too, was thinking of youth at Christmas-time!

CHRISTMAS IS LOVE. The kind of love that cannot be defined, classified, or indexed, but love that can be felt. That love is the most important business in life and indeed, is that true of the Yuletide. "We must love Him because He first loved us." When this possesses one's heart and soul and entire being, then — and then only — can it be CHRISTMAS!

May God grant us all a true Christmas. Amen.

Not the Bethlehem Star, But
The Bethlehem Baby Is

The Light of the World

Robert J. McCracken

Jesus said, I am the light of the world. John 8:12

IT IS A FAMILIAR sentence but long acquaintance with it does not make it any less astounding. The thing about it that rivets attention is the magnitude of the claim. There is something here for which there is absolutely no precedent or parallel in history. There have been leaders among men whose personal pretensions have been unbounded but there has never been one who has come within sight of a claim as stupendous as this.

Think of it! A carpenter, hailing from an obscure village in a province under Roman rule, without wealth or official position, the author of no books, the organizer of no institutions, his friends fishermen and peasants, calmly and deliberately presents himself as the Light of the World. The majority of His contemporaries never ever heard of Him. The bulk of those who did treated His claim as incredible, blasphemous, the raving of a megalomaniac. He died in His thirty-third year in shame and ignominy, crucified between two thieves, and was buried in a borrowed grave.

Yet year by year multitudes all over the world assemble in places of worship reared to the glory of His name and celebrate His birthday. The claim that nearly two thousand years ago seemed ridiculous and preposterous has been amazingly fulfilled. Jesus is far and away the most dominant and influential spiritual fact in history. His life has changed the calendar so that we date everything from the time He came. It is impossible to tell with any adequacy the story of music or art or ethics or philosophy or religion and leave Him out. He has thrilled the souls and stirred the minds and won the hearts of men as no other has ever done, men of every race and class, men as utterly different as Paul and Peter, Augustine and Jerome, Luther the Reformer and Loyola the Jesuit, Francis the friar and Moody the evangelist, Cardinal Newman and General Booth, Albert Schweitzer and T. S. Eliot. For millions he has been, for millions he still is in John R. Mott's words, "One other than all the rest, strong among the weak, erect among the fallen, believing among the faithless, clean among the defiled, living among the dead — the Fountain-head of vitality, the World's Redeemer and Lord of all."

This is not simply the judgment of Christians. Men with no brief for orthodoxy extol Jesus as the greatest personality in history. Said Renan, "He stood in the front rank of the grand family of the sons of God. Whatever the surprises of history Jesus will never be surpassed." Said W. H. Lecky, "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the centuries has filled the hearts of men with an impassioned love; and has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; and has not only been highest pattern of virtue but the highest incentive to its practice; and has exerted

so deep an influence that it may truly be said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and than all the exhortations of moralists." Said Emerson, "His name is not so much written as ploughed into the history of the world." Said George Bernard Shaw, "I am not a Christian any more than Pilate was . . . But I am ready to admit, after studying the world of human misery for sixty years, that

I see no way out of the world's troubles but the way Jesus would have found, had He undertaken the work of a modern practical statesman." On any showing Christ is the central figure of history. Whether we approach Him along the line of His place in history or His power over men this is true.

He is not only the central figure of history. He is the moral and spiritual illuminator of the world. With His coming a new spirit entered into human life. Through His influence great movements of reform have swept the earth. All down the centuries His has been a saving force. The attitudes, habits, sentiments, values, philanthropies of men have been profoundly affected by Him. Behind our belief in the inalienability of human rights in His estimate of the infinite worth of every soul. Behind our conception of the dignity of human labor is a workshop in Nazareth. Back of every movement for the redemption of society, as on our ambulances and mercy ships, is the most sacred of all symbols, a cross. Our hospitals, our orphanages, our schools, our churches mark the forward march across the centuries of the spirit of Christ.

Unto all peoples of the earth,
A little child brought light;
And never in the darkest place
Can it be utter night.

No flickering torch, no wavering fire,
But Light, the life of men:
Whatever clouds may veil the sky,
Never is night again.



Dr. McCracken is preaching minister of Riverside Church, New York, erstwhile pulpit of Harry Emerson Fosdick.

The difference Jesus has made in the world is the difference between night and day. I am not saying that all was completely dark before He came. Many stars of truth had shone prior to His advent, but they were not enough. In spite of the great Hebrew prophets, in spite of Socrates and Plato, and Confucius and Buddha, the world was still groping in the dark. Gilbert Murray, an expert in the literature of the period, says that civilization was on the verge of collapse. Judaism had become a formal religion, the Pharisees play actors going through the motions, the Sadducees materialists. Among the Gentiles, the temples of the gods were unfrequented and in many cases falling into ruins. Men were skeptical and cynical. Pilate's question, "What is truth?" was typical of the mental climate of the time. The only philosophy that had taken any sort of hold was an open and frank materialism. Yet everywhere there was an awareness of a personal and corporate need, a need sharpened and intensified by the fact that the Roman Empire, the buttress of law and order and civilization, was slowly but surely disintegrating. Matthew Arnold's lines come to mind —

On that hard Roman world
Disgust and secret loathing fell:
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life like hell.

In that hard Roman world the Christian Church took its rise. Its members banded themselves together into the closest unity the world has ever seen. Read what they had to say for themselves and what do you find? For them the darkness was past and the true light was shining. They knew that Jesus was the light of life shining in a dark world in the same way that they knew the difference between night and day. They knew it experimentally, because when they accepted Him they were no longer bewildered and confused. The way was clear before them. They had not only found the meaning of life; they had found life itself.

To those who give Him a fair chance Jesus still proves Himself the light of the world. When we take Him seriously, open our lives to His spirit we find His promise true; we no longer walk in darkness but have the light of life. No one else does for us what he does — changes our outlook, develops new instincts in us, creates in us a concern for the welfare of others. He is the moral and spiritual illuminator of our world touching nothing that He does not ennoble, our conception of God, our estimate of man, our sense and scale of values. It is humiliating to think how reluctant men have been to take Him seriously, but one fact stands out clear and incontrovertible: whenever and wherever He has been taken seriously light has come to the world. Francis of Assisi took Him seriously and think what happened in Europe. John Wesley took Him seriously and think what happened in England. William Carey took Him seriously and think what happened in India. Walter Rauschenbusch took Him seriously and consider what has happened in the United States. More and more Christians have resolved to seek the application of the principles of Jesus to the

economic and political life of men, with the result that more and more our social ideals are approximating to His standards — our ideals for the family, the school, the hospital, for social service. In the study of the man of letters, in the classroom of the teacher, in the councils of economists and industrialists, in the discussions of workmen in factories and mines, the influence of Christ is felt, even by those who do not acknowledge His claim.

Is this too optimistic a reading of the situation? With the world, like the old Roman world, on the brink of chaos can it be maintained that the difference Christ has made is the difference between night and day? After all, it may be protested, Christianity has had nineteen hundred years in which to work, yet things seem to be going from bad to worse. There are some who say quite candidly that so far as they can see, in times as terrible as these, Christmas only has a message for those who fly to it as an escape from reality.

I cannot see the Christ Child
For the soldiers marching past.
I cannot hear the angels
For the bugle's angry blast.
I cannot see the Christ Child
For the smoke is in my eyes.
I cannot hear the shepherds
For the little children's cries

The contemporary situation provides an abundance of grist for the cynic's mill. The world is in such an appalling state that it seems almost a mockery to invite people to sing about peace on earth and good will among men as the sequel to the coming of Jesus.

But we should not forget that there is another set of facts to be reckoned with. Addressing a public forum some time ago Kirtley Mather of Harvard affirmed his faith in the moral order of the universe and in the ultimate triumph of spiritual values. When he had finished the first question asked was: "How can you believe in a moral order when Jesus was so cruelly defeated?" Mather paused for a moment and then replied: "In the light of what Jesus did while He was here on earth, and what has been done in His name since, do you really think that He was defeated? I do not."

Nor do I. It is disappointing that nineteen hundred years after His advent men should still be living in insecurity and fear. It is no less disappointing that our generation like its predecessors should refuse to make room for Christ and to take Him seriously. It is not His way of life that has been tried and found wanting; whenever and wherever it has been tried it has brought light to the world, as He said it would. He has shown us the way; He does not force us into it. He is not the Dictator of the world, resorting to compulsion to extend His empire. He waits patiently until people see the light He has brought. It is not the Prince of Peace who has failed our generation; it is our generation that has failed the Prince of Peace. As H. G. Wells said, "The truth is the Galilean has been too great for our small hearts." This is no time to be apologetic about the Christmas



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Christmas Guests

A seventy-five year old account of a prairie experience by pioneer Pastor K. C. Bodholdt of Hamilton County, Nebraska. The translation from the Danish first appeared in the Bethlehem Messenger, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Christmas was a great day for all of us. I will not easily forget the first Christmas I shared with the congregation out on the prairie in Hamilton. In the forenoon of Christmas Day, we held church services. As we sang the old familiar Christmas hymns, I think the majority forgot for a moment that they were in America.

In the evening we were to have a Christmas tree for the children in the home of Chr. Hansen. My wife, together with several of the other ladies of the congregation, had gone to the home directly after dinner to decorate the tree and make arrangements for the evening. I was alone at home; what I was doing I do not remember now, but suddenly I was startled by loud talking outside of the parsonage. The language spoken was unfamiliar to me and I hurried to the window to see what was happening. To my amazement I saw a group of mounted Indians. They were a colorful sight, wrapped in gaudy blankets, several with feathers in their hair. Someone pounded on the door. I hastened to open it and in order to prevent them from entering stepped out among them. As I couldn't understand their language and none of them could understand English, it was hard for me to grasp what they wanted. I guessed, however, that it was food, and nodding to them several times to show that I understood, I hurried into the house to collect whatever I could find.

My wife and I had had roast goose for dinner; most of it was untouched. Surely roast goose would be a delicacy for an Indian, I thought, so wrapped up the remainder of it, together with some Christmas cookies, and carried it out to the visitors. I offered it to the nearest one with a wish for a Merry Christmas (which he probably didn't understand). He immediately ripped off the wrappings from the goose. When he saw the contents he nodded to me in a satisfied manner. Then he opened the package of Christmas cookies which he viewed with skeptical eyes. Several of the group collected to examine them, but for the cookies I received no thanks. Then they swung themselves up on their ponies and headed towards the south. When they were some distance down the road I noticed they threw something away. As soon as they were out of sight, I walked down to find out what it was. I had a suspicion it was my cookies, and sure enough, I was right.

A short time later that same afternoon another band of Indians galloped in. These, however, asked for nothing and I offered nothing. I could make out that they were inquiring about my first visitors and in what direction they had gone. I pointed towards the south and they sped off in that direction. The road south led past the farm of old Mr. and Mrs. Frank where I knew no one was at home that afternoon. Knowing that the Franks never locked their doors, I was concerned over what the Indians might do if they stopped at the house and found no one there. I later learned that when the Franks returned to their home late that evening after the Christmas tree, they found that the Indians had entered the house, but outside of carrying off various foodstuffs, had done no damage.

Towards evening I went over to the Hansen home

The Living Word

"Do not know" or "cannot tell"

(No. 23)

The King James Version of the New Testament translates the Greek verb *oida* by the English verb "know" 280 times. But there is a little group of exceptions to this general practice. Nine times it translates *odia*, accompanied with a negative, by "cannot tell."

Three of these passages are Matthew 21:27, Mark 11:33, Luke 20:7, the answer of the Pharisees to Jesus' question concerning the baptism of John. Three are in the Gospel of John: 3:8, addressed to Nicodemus; 8:14, addressed to the Pharisees; 16:18, the puzzled comment of the disciples, "We cannot tell what he saith." Three are in 2 Corinthians 12:2-3, Paul's statement concerning his visions and revelations.

These nine cases of "cannot tell" come from the translation by William Tyndale, and appear also in Coverdale, Thomas Matthew, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible. They are examples of Tyndale's lively and occasionally wayward style. He uses the expression elsewhere — three times in the account of the man born blind (John 9:21, 25), who answers: "Whether he be a sinner or no, I cannot tell; one thing I am sure of, that I was blind, and now I see." Tyndale's version of Mary Magdalene's excited word to Peter and John is (John 20:2): "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we cannot tell where they have laid him." In 1 John 2:11 Tyndale had "cannot tell whether he goeth."

Thus out of fourteen cases where Tyndale and the other sixteenth-century translators from the Greek used "cannot tell" for "do not know," the King James translators kept nine, and rejected five.

Modern translators, beginning with the English Revised Version of 1881, have rejected "cannot tell" in all these cases (except that J. B. Phillips uses "I couldn't tell" in John 9:25). The reason is not so much that the expression is wrong, as that it is inaccurate and ambiguous. "Do not know" is a clear and accurate translation.

Luther A. Weigle.

where we were to have the evening festivities. You can be sure that my wife, in fact all of the women present, were excited when I told them of my afternoon experiences.

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Will There be Christmas?

Alfred C. Nielsen

If I address thee in archaic style —
Words obsolete, words obsolescent,
It is that for a little while
The heart must, oh, indeed must from this angry and out-
rageous present
Itself withdraw
Into some past in which most crooked Evil,
Although quite certainly conceived and born, was not yet
the Law.

This cry of anguish came from the heart of Edna St. Vincent Millay in 1941. Much has happened since that year, and it is not any easier for the tender heart to rejoice now.

I was in Vienna for a few days this summer. It is one of the most beautiful cities I have visited. While there I took an old street car out to the east end of the city. I wanted to see the "Blue Danube" made famous by Johann Strauss. Across this impressive river is a high bridge built by the Russians after World War II. It is called **Liberation Bridge**. On the right bank near the bridge is a hideous monument also built by the Russians. It is painted red and the paint is washing off. One cannot help wondering why the Austrians have not torn it down. Perhaps they will now.

As I stood on the bank looking east toward Hungary, I thought of Austria, Hungary and Russia of yesterday. Eighteen hundred forty-eight was the year of revolutions in Europe. There was bloody warfare in Paris, Berlin, Rome and Vienna. Oppressed peoples over much of the continent were crying for freedom, and crowned heads in many places ran for cover. The revolution also spread to Hungary. There the people rose against the hated Habsburgs of Austria. Under the leadership of Louis Kossuth they seemed to be winning. But freedom can be dangerous. The Russian leaders have known that for centuries. A free Hungary might give ideas to the oppressed masses of Russia. That would never do, so a Russian army was sent across the Carpathian mountains and poured on to the Hungarian plain. Patriotic Hungarians were taught how to die, and the uprising was crushed. Refugees poured across the borders to seek freedom elsewhere. Some of them came to the United States. Among them was Louis Kossuth. That was one hundred seven years ago.

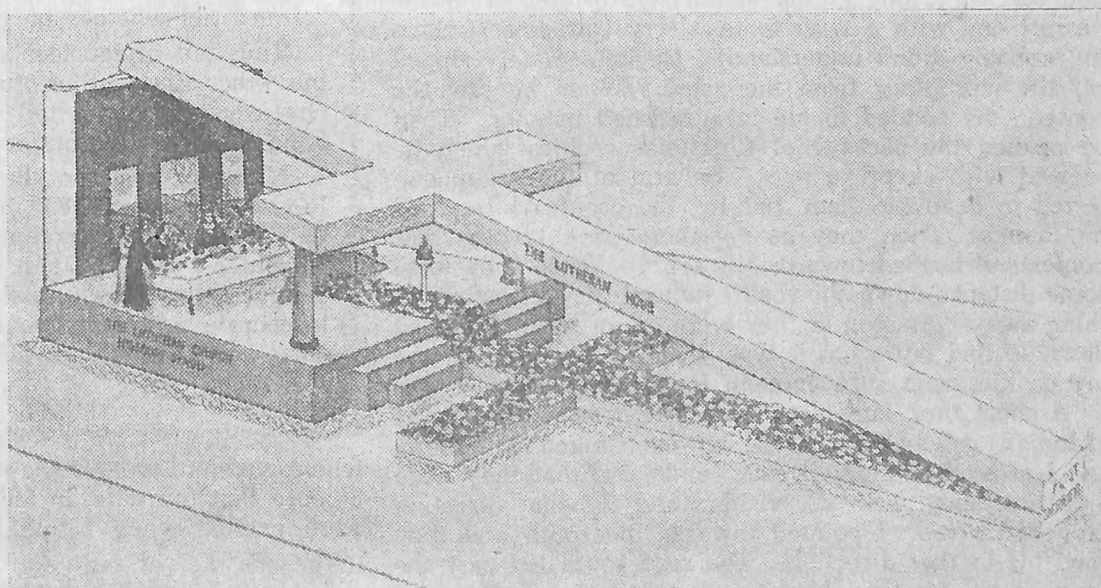
In World War II Hungary was "liberated" by

the Russians. They have been there since. Some weeks ago the Hungarians decided that they had had enough, and there were uprisings in Budapest and other cities. Russian built monuments were torn down by students and workers. What rejoicing there must have been when a statue of Stalin bit the dust! Mighty resolutions and proclamations of freedom and independence were shouted to a startled world. Then came the lull before the dreadful storm. Once again the Russians were coming. This time it was not cavalry, but Russian tanks. It is more difficult to stop a tank than a horse. But the youth of Hungary, indoctrinated with Communism and brainwashed of all heretical ideas, fought savagely against Russian monster-tanks. They went down fighting and lost.

The refugees poured across the borders from Hungary in 1849. They are pouring across the borders again. With nothing but the clothes on their backs, and perhaps a loaf of black bread, they are seeking a new world . . . Perhaps they do have something more precious than stocks and bonds — the conviction that freedom is worth fighting for. Some of their friends died for it.

While I was in Germany this summer. I talked with dozens of people from behind the Iron Curtain. One day at the Frankfurt Kirchentag I had a long talk with a German shoemaker from the East Zone. This took place near the great Frankfurt cathedral where there had been a youth rally. This German could speak no English at all, and my German is poor indeed. But he did manage to tell me something about life at home under Russian "protection." During the conversation he became quite wrought up emotionally. His state of mind gave me at least some insight into the attitude

(Continued on Page 15)



ARTIST'S CONCEPTION of the Lutheran Hour float which will appear in the 1957 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California, on New Year's Day. A recreation of Leonardo daVinci's "The Lord's Supper," the float will be 43 feet long, 20 feet wide and 17 feet high. It will be covered with 100,000 white, brown and yellow chrysanthemums, 4,000 sweet peas, 1,000 red roses, 1,000 stemmed stocks and 1,000 stemmed gladiolas and orchids. The word "The First Sacrament" will be on the front apron. On the sides will be the wording "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod," and "The Lutheran Hour" will be the length of the cross. The float was designed by Paul Mueller, Yorktown, Iowa, in a nation-wide contest. The Lutheran Hour, the world's most wide-spread radio broadcast, is sponsored by the Lutheran Laymen's League, a 90,000-member organization with headquarters in St. Louis, Missouri.

Recalling Old Customs of the Scandinavian Northland

Where Christmas Lasts a Month

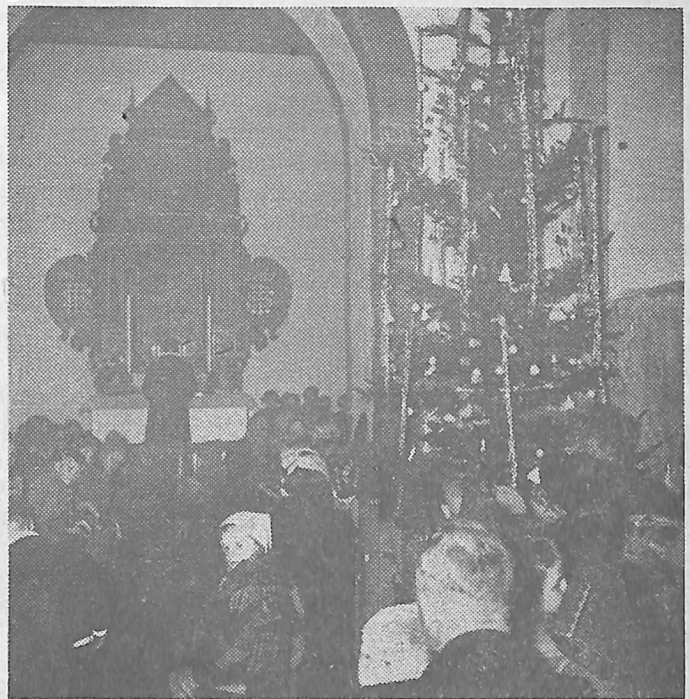
Franklyn Morris

IN THE LUTHERAN lands of Sweden, Norway and Denmark, ancient customs add a charm and glow to this holy season which makes the Christmas celebration like none other in the world. Nature and men conspire to make of Christmastime an extended holiday, and in lands where one needs to spend no time "dreaming of a white Christmas," snow-covered village churches provide a picturesque setting as Scandinavians gather to herald the birth of Christ. Many of the seasonal traditions have their roots in the ancient Nordic past, and some come even from the days before Christianity's beams first brightened the Northern nations. Today, however, Christmas would not be so grand without the traditional dishes on the festive board or the time-honored holiday customs of St. Lucia's Day and Epiphany, or of sleeping on the straw-strewn floor and placing porridge in the barn loft for the "Christmas goblin."

The "Lucia Fest"

Christmas in Scandinavia begins with the lovely "Lucia Festival" on St. Lucy's Day, December 13, and lasts until past Epiphany, ending on St. Knut's Day, January 13, providing a full month of happy days in the midst of the wintry dark. Lucia was a Christian maiden martyred under Roman Emperor Diocletian, and the story of her death was carried to Scandinavia, where the Christianized Vikings heard of her. They imagined her shining figure, crowned with a halo of light. Since her saint's day happens to fall on December 13, when daylight soon will increase after the dark winter months, she becomes a favorite with the people of the North. In city homes and farmhouses alike, early in the dark morning, the family is awakened by the daughter of the house, who serves coffee and newly baked buns to the other members in bed. She is attired in a white, flowing gown and on her head she wears a wreath of greenery from which stands a circle of lighted candles. The song she sings, "Santa Lucia," is a lilting old Italian melody which still lingers in the Northland. In recent years the celebration of "Lucia Day" has attracted enormous interest, and in the city of Stockholm an annual contest is held to pick the loveliest girl in the city as Stockholm's own Lucia Queen. Swedish Americans still perpetuate the custom and annually the "Lucia Fest" is held, to commemorate the martyred maid whose white-robed figure with a halo of fire, brings joy and peace.

"Mute was the night with gloom;
Now hear faint bustling.
In ev'ry silent room,
Like pinions rustling.
Lo! on our threshold there



Christmas service in Norwegian village church. (Norwegian Information Service photo.)

White-clad, with flame-crown'd hair
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia.

Christmas Eve is a Busy Time

As in America, the day before Christmas is a hectic one. However, as though by a legal decree, all work must cease at four p. m., and every city worker and shopper, and every farmer in the fields, hurries homeward to the cozy confines of hearth and family. In rural areas, the last bit of work is done in the placing of the largest sheaf of grain from the year's harvest high on a pole or on the gable of the house as a treat for the winter birds. This practice, common today, goes back to old heathen rites in which the last scythe-swing of grain from the harvest was offered up to the pagan god of growth. There are other than earthly creatures abroad this evening, some say, and there are those who put a bowl of Christmas porridge in the hayloft as a special treat for the family's "Barn Brownie," who is said to claim the stable for his domain. If the Brownie is overlooked, it may mean dire consequences during the coming year; a harness strap may break just as the heavy sled begins to move, a cow might kick over a nearly full bucket of milk, or any one of a number of things might happen at the wrong time. On Christmas morn the porridge bowl is always found empty, though it is possible the barn cat may have helped to finish the bowl.

A good scrubbing from head to toe is part of the Yuletide preparation. This custom is accompanied by the practice of wearing something new on Christmas, and folk everywhere in Scandinavia have a good bath and a complete change of clothes for every member of the household on the afternoon of Christmas eve. On farms which had a bathhouse in which steam was

Pastor Morris is minister of First Lutheran Church, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, a congregation of about 3,000 members.

produced by pouring water over red-hot stones, it was customary in times past for the last man out of the bathhouse to fire up well before he left; there might be others abroad that night who wished to use it.

When supper time arrives the first course on "Juleaften" always occurs in the kitchen. On the stove simmers a large iron pot of collected drippings of pork, sausage and corned beef. Slices of wort bread are speared on forks and dipped into the liquid until saturated. It is lucky to have the last dip, for this will insure a good year. When the "dipping" is over, dinner is served in the dining room, and the traditional menu is seldom varied. It is usually preceded by a smorgasbord, and lutefisk, or lye-cured codfish, follows. Ham or pork is always present, and on the farm the slaughtering of the Christmas pig is a veritable ritual. It must be done in the first light of dawn; one must face all corners of the compass and swear an oath. The pig was the special animal of the ancient goddess Freya, the patroness of fertility, and to slaughter in the wrong way is to place in jeopardy next year's crop. Rice pudding or porridge is also a traditional Christmas eve dish, and in its midst lies hidden an almond, and legend would have us believe that whoever finds it will marry before the next Christmas. No less than fourteen varieties of Christmas cookies and pastries adorn most Yuletide tables, and a cook needed a good memory in times past when few recipes were written down. The baking of the endless Christmas delights was done in the light of a new moon and under no circumstances when the winter sun stood above the horizon! If the dough rose well a good year was in prospect, but if the maid forgot to cream a cake she would be a spinster for life. Is there any wonder that many a Swedish swain has been admonished by an old proverb: "Watch a young girl at the dough pot rather than at the dance."

In rural areas the ancient custom of sleeping on the floor on Christmas eve still persists. All the family, including the servants, sleep this night on the floor before the great fireplace of the home, for the spirits of the dead would be abroad and might want a resting place, and to deny them a bed is an ill omen. Fresh straw is laid upon the floor with great care, for the direction of the strands determines the luck of the year to follow. Later, the straw is saved and strewn on the fields to insure good fortune.

The Christmas Tree is a Newcomer

The ancient Norse Christians did not include a decorated fir tree in their Yuletide decorations, though the "Yule Log" which is customary in England, was to be found everywhere. Only as late as the seventeenth century did the "Christmas Tree" make its appearance. However, in the land of the spruce this German custom soon became the rule, and today the candle-decked Christmas tree is to be found in homes and churches alike. The use of candles, even in the electrified twentieth century, is everywhere preferred, and in Denmark red or white candles with small paper flags are found on every tree. For weeks before Christmas it is usual for Nordic children to spend their evenings making paper chains, cones and bells for the tree. Red apples and gilded pine cones are to be found on almost every tree, along with the straw goat, a braided creature with long horns. This is the ancient animal of the god, Thor. In Denmark ginger cookies in the form of a man and woman



In Denmark, "Santa Claus" brings the Christmas presents to the children on Christmas Eve after dinner. (Danish Information Office photo.)

called "Nisse" and "Nasse" decorate the trees. At the topmost branch, of course, is the Christmas star.

"Christmas Day in the Morning . . ."

Very early on Christmas the family rises in the dark of dawn to dress for the sunrise services in church. Each greets the other with "Merry Christmas and God be with you." Driving toward the churches throughout the countryside, the farmers carry torches on their sleighs, and over the snow-covered fields can be seen the lights coming from every direction toward the candle-light churches through the darkness. The flares are stuck in the snow outside the church as the worshippers enter, and there seem to be two candle-decked altars, one outside and one inside. As visitors to Northern lands will attest, there is nothing to compare with the joyous, somber and mystical experience of an early Christmas service at one of the Lutheran churches, whether stately cathedral such as at Lund, Trondheim, or Roskilde, or one of the many village churches. The glistening candles on each pew-end and surrounding the ancient altars provide a majestic setting for heralding the birth of the Saviour.

This glorious day that here we behold

From heaven itself hath descended.

Its advent is fraught with bliss manifold,

(Continued on Page 15)

Our Women's Work

MRS. ELLEN KNUDSEN, EDITOR

1033 South Tenth Street

Maywood, Illinois



New Material Solicited

The Lutheran Women's Coordinating Committee, which is made up of women representatives from the Lutheran church bodies which are members of the Lutheran World Federation, has solicited material from various Lutheran church women in foreign countries. This material will be used in our publications from time to time before the LWF meeting in Minneapolis, August 1957. These two prayers have just been received under this program.

Let us look beyond our own and join hands with these Christians in the far corners of the earth as we gather to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child.

A Blessed Christmas to All!

A Prayer from a Mother in Moshi

British East Africa — Tanganyika Territory

Heavenly Father, we Lutheran women of Africa are so happy to come to you holding the hands of our sisters in lands far away. You can see, O Father, that some of our hands are white and some are black and some are brown, but we know that that makes no difference to you. We have come to sing to you of our love. Our songs run very high when we remember your Son on Calvary.

Together with our sisters having white hands and brown hands we want to give ourselves to you and serve you well each day. Especially we ask you to help us to teach our children about you so that children all around the world, brown and black children and white children, will love and follow you.

We do not deserve to ask anything of you, but for Jesus' sake we know you hear us. Amen.

Prayer by Mrs. Kishi, Japan

Most merciful Father of us all; We thank Thee that Thou hast delivered us from the bondage of sin and from eternal death through Jesus Christ.

We thank Thee that this deliverance is given for all mankind, as there are no Jews or Greeks, and there is no East or West in Christ.

We humbly ask of Thee to fill our hearts with Thy Holy Spirit as we are in the midst of this troubled world.

We pray Thee to grant to us the power to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Christmas in Finland

The celebration of the birth of the Christ child and the tidings of light which came into the world in Him, occurs far up in the north at the time of the year when the nights are long and the days dark and gray. The

white snow which covers the ground in abundance makes a beautiful contrast with the darkness of day and night.

Wherever people celebrate Christmas they make many preparations for it, and the days before Christmas are busy, especially for the housewife. In Finland it is traditional to bake special cakes, such as Christmas tarts with prunes, cookies, and jouluparkakut (peppernuts) which are brown cookies made with syrup and many different spices and decorated with red icing.

A big cleaning takes place in every home just a few days before Christmas and often a whole family gathers to make different kinds of decorations for the home. Perhaps the most typical Finnish decoration is "himmeli." This is a large ornament made of straw which is hung from the ceiling. Beautiful yellow straw is much used as a material for such decorations as stars, angels and also goats. The latter is explained by the Finnish word "pukki" which means goat, but combined with joulu (Joulupukki) it means Santa Claus. Santa's small helpers made of red crepe paper or other suitable material are also popular decorations.

Although everyone tries to get everything ready before Christmas Eve there still remains things to be done. A Finnish housewife wants to have her sweetbread, (joulupulla), made in the shape of a wreath, really fresh so she bakes it the morning of Christmas Eve.

At noon, in the city of Turku, Christmas peace is proclaimed to Finnish people from the steps of the City Hall and broadcast by radio to the whole country. It is an old custom, even the language and the form of the proclamation sounds old fashioned, but it is still appreciated by people.

About noontime the Christmas trees are brought into the homes and decorated while Christmas carols are sung.

Finnish are famous for their sauna (Finnish steam bath) and they cannot think of starting their Christmas celebration before first having their sauna. When this is over they come fresh and clean for supper and then the Christmas celebration has really started.

In the cities there is a vesper service at five o'clock in the afternoon. It is also traditional that people remember their beloved ones who have passed away by lighting candles on the graves (these are shielded from the wind by glass coupolos). The cemeteries look beautiful in the darkness as the candlelight shines on the white snow.

When we return to the warmth of our homes we find people coming together to hear the Christmas gospel, read by one of the family and then Martin Luther's Christmas hymn, "Good News from Heaven to Earth I Bear," is sung. This hymn is as common to us as "Silent Night" is in United States.

In Finland the children know that "Joulupukki" comes from far up in Lapland where he has his workshop in the big mountain called, Hallatunturi. When

(Continued on Page 15)



OPINION AND COMMENT

since it seems to give her parents such a delight to think they are fooling her. So we'll all be listening, on Christmas night, for the sleigh-bells of the man in the red flannel suit It must be terribly confusing to our seven-year-old; she is in on both sides of the conspiracy.

IN OUR AGE of condensation it was not surprising the other day, to run across a "telegram" in which someone had put the essence of the Christian history and message into a fifty-word night letter. It ran something like this: GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD HE GAVE HIS SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVER-LASTING LIFE . . . I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH, AND THOUGH THIS BODY BE DESTROYED, YET SHALL I SEE GOD! . . . MEANWHILE, WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE TRUE, LOVELY, OF GOOD REPORT, THINK ON THESE THINGS.

THE GREAT festivals of the Christian church, Pentecost, Easter and Christmas, are days of great joy. Two of these festivals are closely connected with still another day of Christian commemoration which is all tragedy — Good Friday. Christmas, however, is far removed from the events of Calvary, both on the calendar and in general meaning for us. So it is that especially at Christmas the emphasis is on Good News — "Joy to the World." It is at Christmas that we feel in simplest form that the Gospel is Good News. It is at Christmas that the warmth, the radiance, the happiness of the Christian faith seeps through every hardened shell of worldliness and selfishness, and penetrates deepest into the experience of non-Christians. . . Nevertheless, we must not forget that the baby of Bethlehem came in order to die. That was His purpose in coming — to die. And even on that blessed Christmas Eve, the setting in Bethlehem was cold rather than warm: An imperial tax decree — a peasant couple tired by travel — a woman heavy with child — the closed door of an inn — a lowly manger — and lurking in the dark background, bloodthirsty Herod. Yet Christmas kindles warmth like a grate fire in a cold room. It attracts into it pagan customs — the yule log from Iceland, the fir tree from pre-Christian Germany, mistletoe from pagan England, etc. What has delighted peoples the world over becomes absorbed into the annual celebration of the great Good News that at a manger in Bethlehem God came close to earth. May God continue to come close to earth and bring "joy to the world!"

WE DROVE by a Christmas tree lot the other day that looked like a dream sequence in some technicolor extravaganza. Trees had been sprayed every conceivable pastel and/or vivid hue of the rainbow. We hope this is a purely local outrage, but we suspect that if it gets started in Southern California it will spread like a contagion all over the land. And in thus gilding the lily, tree merchants select their best, most symmetrical, most healthy trees for their paint jobs. One disgusted father we know of pawed through the entire selection of natural, green trees and found none that he could use. So finally he bought a beautiful, bushy, shapely fir in a nauseous pink shade, took it home to his garage and there sprayed it back to a rich, foliage green again! Then it was fit for his living room, he said. We agree with the gentleman, and in this respect are proud to be terribly old-fashioned.

AT OUR HOUSE there is an unspoken agreement to continue the Santa Claus myth. Our four-year-old is the most serious member of the conspiracy. She knows that there is no Santa Claus, of course, but she doesn't think that we know she knows. And in her warm, big-hearted way, she is willing to perpetuate the myth

Christmas Symbols

Eastern **star** from heaven shining,
Sending gleams both far and near,
Ever you are us reminding
That our home it is not here.
Tears are blending with our song
As we, stumbling, tread along,
But our star is still us guiding
Though a cloud it may be hiding.

Little **candle**, how you're beaming
Like the beacon on the strand —
Always warming, always gleaming,
Pointing to the far-off land.
Light of heaven, come to me —
Let my torch still brighter be;
Never let Thy smile divine
Cease upon my soul to shine.

Christmas **bells** now tolling, ringing,
Soothing as a mother dear,
Mem'ries sweet you back are bringing,
Thoughts of loved ones who were here.
Ring out evil thoughts and hate
Upon which we meditate;
Ring in joy and man's salvation,
Which was meant for every nation.

Angel bright, with peace descending,
Sing your song once more on earth,
Myriad voices now are blending
In the song of Jesus' birth.
Fill us all with Love's sweet lay,
As we journey on our way,
Till in everlasting glory
Jesus tells His own sweet story.

Mrs. C. C. Nielsen.



This Japanese Boy Thought of a Prize,
Not for Himself Alone, But

For All Family

Hazel Severson McCartney



CLEAR AS A Christmas bell, his hearty laugh rang out! "Even an artist to carry out all my wishes! How lucky I am to be in Japan!" I had just remarked. His school uniform, worn thin in many places, was out at both elbows, I noticed as I stood watching him step down, wide feet bare, into his wooden clogs. A gray December rain was falling, and I trembled with cold even in my twin sweaters and wool jacket when he opened the outside door.

"But you don't have an umbrella. I'll get my husband's for you!" I exclaimed, starting for the hall closet where his green oiled-paper-and-bamboo umbrella stood.

"No, Sensei, no! Is little ways only! I never mind!" And he smiled his broad smile, thanked me again in his big hearty voice, and then ran down the flagstone walk to the little white gate under our old camphor tree.

"I hope he does buy himself a warm sweater with that money," I thought as he waved his stiff-visored student cap to me from the street. I hadn't been able to keep from dropping such a hint.

In the warmth of our living room, I looked again with delight at the last of the Christmas cards he had been painting for me. The design was my idea, but he had worked it out with his usual infinite care. On each narrow card, which he had edged with gilt, a humble brown-and-gray sparrow looked for seeds under a clump of bending bamboo, narrow leaves bright green.

His delicate drawings were a contrast to his big rugged self. It took two hours, he told me, to make one card. I was sure he had worked late into the night, sitting on the floor bent over the low battered desk, his brothers and sisters sleeping between shabby "futon" in the same room. He had made dozens in all, most of which, in long narrow envelopes, were already on their way to friends in America.

He was the oldest son of one of the teachers at our boys' school. Theirs was a jolly family, always fun to visit, though the old house in which they now lived was even more decrepit than others in the neighborhood that year after the war. The straw mats on the floors were torn: the sliding paper doors were full of holes; the narrow veranda was broken. On a low table was one luxury, an old phonograph with a few cracked records. A shadow fell over the sunny temperaments of the family, however, when they told us that it, too, was broken.

At dusk that December day, the rain still falling, I heard him call again at the entrance. Rain-spattered though he was, his smile was broader than ever when I came to the door.

"I thought maybe Sensei like see what I bought with the money," he said, putting a rough hand, blue with cold, down into the sagging pocket of his threadbare coat.

I was puzzled. What could it be? He wasn't wearing a new sweater, to my disappointment, I could see that.

"Oh, yes," I said, curious, "do show me!"

The rough hand came slowly, impressively, out of the sagging pocket holding — a gleaming mouth organ!

"Now I can play Christmas carols for all family. All family very delight. I can already play 'Silent Night.' Shall I play for Sensei it? Would Sensei like?" And putting a rough blue hand carefully at each end of the slender gleaming mouth harp and keeping time with his shoulders, he filled the cold entrance with the lovely serene melody.

Listening, I understood why the Ohba family is always happy.

Editor's Note: The writer, Mrs. McCartney, is wife of Sedoris McCartney (who also is an author, "There Is A Lad Here"). The McCartneys live at Oak Hill parsonage near Atlantic, Iowa, where he is pastor of Oak Hill and Exira congregations. They are missionaries to Japan, awaiting an opportunity to return to the land about which Mrs. McCartney writes so charmingly in this piece. Meanwhile, our Synod is most thankful to have them in our fellowship . . . "For All Family" is a short section of a book being published by Harper's next month called "In the Gray Rain" and is printed with permission from the publisher.

Merry Christmas

I wish there was some new way to say "Merry Christmas."

Twice today I have overheard that remark. And each time I have said reverently to myself: "Thank God, there isn't."

The spirit of Christmas is as simple as the heart of a child.

It needs no new slogan and no special sales effort. No advertising agent can lend new glamor to its ancient magic.

It is as elemental as the sun and the wind and the rain, as the stars that glowed on Galilee on holy night and now shed their same steady light on an older and perhaps a wiser world.

No, there is no new way of saying Merry Christmas. Nor would we want one.

The tree you will deck is the same as all the trees of its kind that have stood on all the hills since the world was young.

The joy in a child's eyes on Christmas morning is the joy that has filled the eyes of children since Christmas became an annual institution.

Back of the gifts and the gaiety is an immemorial spirit of good will to men.

Christmas is still Christmas. In a world awry with changes, let us give thanks for one precious permanency!

—Merle Crowell in Rockefeller Center Weekly.

This year is the 250th Anniversary of the birth of possibly the most remarkable personality in American history. He could have been a millionaire, but preferred to be

Poor Richard

TEXT AND SKETCH BY THE EDITOR



person and Washington and Hamilton and Adams. And it was the age of Franklin.

It is two hundred and fifty years since the birth of this remarkable person whose reputation for thrift has caused the use of his name for a large chain of 5 and 10 cent stores, and of a chain of savings deposit banks, but who at the same time was responsible for such pithy, unfrugal expressions as: "Wealth is not his that has it, but his that enjoys it." And further: "Spare not the parson's wine nor the baker's pudding." And he could follow that with still further imprudence, as in: "An egg today is better than a hen tomorrow." But, "Nothing but money is sweeter than honey."

We know him as Poor Richard, and countless maxims picked up from here and there in such writers as Pope, Swift, Bacon, Dryden, Rabelais, etc., were garnished by his sharp wit into more meaningful shape, or used simply as they were, to become fillers between the paragraphs of the now-famous Almanac. Though aimed at current application, most of them have an everlastingness about them that make their truth still valuable today. "Do good to thy friend to keep him, to thy enemy to gain him." Also, "When the well's dry we know the worth of water." And, referring to the strict self-denial and fasting observed by many, he said, "He that would have a short Lent, let him borrow money to be repaid at Easter."

Benjamin Franklin was his real name. He was a wise and human person. His intellect taught him skepticism, but his human qualities tempered this with good will, and the combination is a healthy one. His nature was serene, but not dark; in fact, playfulness kept lighting it up, so that it was said that they did not want to ask him to write the Declaration of Independence for fear he would conceal a joke in the middle of it. He was part of that exciting time, and into it he plunged with vivacity and charm. In our piety we may perhaps criticize some of his behavior, but we must also admire the ideals and aspirations which Franklin shared with that Age of Enlightenment. No space can be given to the biographical details, many of which are already well-known, but we can illumine his character and his personality with an illustrative anecdote or two.

For example: When Franklin was asked about his dis-

covery concerning electricity, "What good is it anyway?" he replied readily and with real insight, "What good is a newborn baby?" He staked his faith on the potential, not on the obvious.

In the later years of his life, he heard from a small Massachusetts town which desired to name itself Franklin. They were raising money for a bell for the church steeple, the letter said, and would Franklin care to donate to this namesake town? He replied, "I am very much honored and I am very glad indeed to send you a sum of money, but I do not want you to use it to buy a bell. Instead, start a public library, because I have always preferred sense to sound."

Fund-raising must have been as prevalent then as now. Ben one time gave this advice to a minister who had asked him how to raise money for a church: "In the first place, I advise you to apply to all those who you know will give something. Next to those whom you are uncertain whether they will give or not and show them the list of those who have given. Lastly do not neglect those whom you are sure will give nothing, for in some of them you may be mistaken."

This practical bent characterizes Franklin — indeed, he has been called one of the earliest pragmatists. He seems to have invented the combination chair-and-stepladder which many of us have in our kitchens. Likewise, the long grapple which the grocer sometimes still uses to reach cereal boxes on high shelves was devised by Ben to help him reach books in his library. He has been credited with the rocking chair, and in his later years used one which he had equipped with a fan so that as he rocked, a breeze automatically whispered across him. In contrast, he also invented and first used an adjustable draft to make his fireplace heat better.

But his importance lay not in his talent for gadgetry, but in the soundness of most of his ideas. In many cases, these ideas were little-suspected physical principles in which he saw possibilities. The classic statement about him by Turgot says "he snatched the lightning from the sky and the scepter from tyrants." (This he denied — at least, the last part — saying, "the Revolution . . . was . . . the work of many able and brave men . . .") The experiment with lightning solved a mystery for the minds of men, and since then lightning has lost most of its terror. Kant, echoing Turgot, said Franklin was a new Prometheus who had stolen fire from heaven.

He was born at about the same time as the famous Puritan theologian, Jonathan Edwards. But while Edwards was developing into a mystic, Franklin was developing into "the representative American," the "multiple American," the defender of the American way of life, (if there be such a thing), and, as Van Doren calls him in the closing words of his biography, "with his marvelous range, in spite of his personal tang . . . more than any single man: a harmonious human multitude."

The Revolution began when Franklin was already an old man. He might have been excused for retiring from that fray into the anonymity of silence. Instead, he risked his fortune, his prominence and, indeed, his neck by casting in with the upstart colonies. And when the fighting was done, Franklin attended the Constitutional Convention in 1787 to give of his mellowed wisdom for the formation of a new government under a constitution. That proposed

document was not perfect. Franklin knew it. It has been amended many times. But in his speech, Franklin said, "I confess that I do not entirely approve of this Constitution at present . . . (But) when you assemble a number of men, to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests, and their selfish views . . . Thus I consent, sir, to this Constitution, because I expect no better, and because I am not sure that it is not the best. The opinions I have had of its errors I sacrifice to the public good."

What a tremendous spirit motivated the man whose judgment and temperance could issue in such words as those! In our American Evangelical Lutheran Church, with its history of divisions, of opinions, of doctrinal differences, of constitutional committees, such a spirit would be welcome. That speech of Franklin's has been a heartening inspiration for this writer many times.

Franklin had a passion for improvement. We often shun "do-gooders" — those who make themselves tiresome in their attention to the ills of others and in their forgetfulness over their own faults. Franklin was no Pharisee. He began with himself. Early in life he made a long list of personal virtues (13), such as Temperance, Silence, Industry, Moderation, Chastity, etc. For a whole week he would give his attention to one of these virtues, checking on himself frequently, striving for improvement. After thirteen weeks, he would begin over again, going through the entire "course" four times a year.

This passion for improvement made him a very useful citizen. He started a city police force; a project for paving city streets and for their lighting; he started a library, the first in America. He invented bi-focal lenses for eye-glasses. He founded the American Philosophic Society, a city hospital, and a college which was to become the University of Pennsylvania. He was postmaster, printer, philanthropist, politician, but still found time for science. He detailed weather data and made accurate deductions; he invented a stove which can hardly be improved upon; he invented a clock which told the seconds, minutes and hours with only three wheels in the movements. In the summer of 1752 he devised his famous and dangerous kite experiment to test the identity of lightning and electricity. Out of this experiment he became famous as a scientist, and earned degrees from Yale, Harvard and William & Mary. The Benets pay tribute in a clever quatrain which attests to the importance of this work which he undertook for his own "amusement:"

Ben Franklin made a pretty kite and flew it in the air,
To call upon a thunderstorm that happened to be there.
And all our humming dynamoses and our electric light
Go back to what Ben Franklin found the day he flew his kite.

After a long period of service to the infant republic, including negotiating the peace between the newly freed colonies and Great Britain, his last public act, some seventy years before Lincoln became president, was to remind Congress to abolish slavery.

Franklin is worth remembering, and this anniversary year is as good a time as any to refresh ourselves in what we know about him. The best biography is Carl Van Dorn's, but there is also, of course, the famous Autobiography. Within these two books Franklin comes alive. His self-portrait was designed as something that might be useful to his son and was left unfinished, but in its pages we get the flavor, the dignity, but also the flashing wit and piquancy of his style, and the thoughtfulness which undergirded his most casual remarks.

From childhood up we remember him as Poor Richard. We never tire of those maxims, and it is delightful to see what he could do with them. The old proverb, "Many strokes fell great oaks" became deeper and more pointed in his own version: "Little strokes fell great oaks." So revered was he in his own time that Congress wore mourning for a month when he finally died. Chances are that he will never be forgotten by us, his debtors, thus disproving his own maxim that "Creditors have longer memories than debtors."

Maxims from the Almanac

"What maintains one vice would bring up two children."

"'Tis hard for an empty bag to stand upright."

"Half a truth is often a great lie."

"Having been poor is no shame, but being ashamed of it is."

"Cunning proceeds from want of capacity."

"He's a fool that makes his doctor his heir."

"As we must account for every idle word, so must we account for every idle silence."

"He that takes a wife takes care."

"Why does the blind man's wife paint herself?"

"Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards."

"Three may keep a secret if two of them are dead."

"He that falls in love with himself will have no rivals."

"Love your neighbor, yet don't pull down your hedge."

"The bell calls others to church, but itself never minds the sermon."

— Poor Richard.

YULE 1956

Last week, a young lady read a Christmas story for one of our local women's groups. It was called "Soren's Music Box" and was written by Rudolph Bruhn. Only today we discovered that the story was a translation from the Danish by Editor Harris Jespersen; it appears in the current edition of the Christmas annual, YULE. It was a much appreciated story.

But this is only one of the features which make the YULE magazine, published by the American Evangelical Lutheran Youth Fellowship (75c) such a treat. The bright cover invites a peek inside. A peek inside invites the settling into an easy chair (far from street noise, TV noises, pressing occupational or housekeeping duties), and the enjoying of many hours of quiet pleasure. In many of our congregations it has become customary to have public, "out-loud" readings from YULE, and there are a number of items in the present magazine that lend themselves to such use. But this year, it appears to this reviewer that the stress can be placed on the enjoyable meditative and inspirational sections. Song and Christmas go together, and we are reminded of this by the pieces of Thorvald Hansen and Alfred Nielsen. The Vachel Lindsay article by Gertrude Hanson will please poetry lovers, and may excite the interest of those unacquainted with the writer of such tremendous poems as "The Congo" and the Booker Washington Trilogy. Then there is Vagn Fenger's interesting "Where Denmark Meets the World," well illustrated by U.N. photos. Putte Kildegaard's "The Great Gift" has become a confirmation class assignment in my church, and will do all ages good to read.

The art work and photography is good as ever. We have heard some people wish for color pictures in YULE. This writer does not agree. A color photograph caresses the eye, but there is power in black-and-white which a color plate rarely achieves. See, for example, the starkness of the picture on page 43. (There is no need, either, to try to compete with the financial resources of such publications as "CHRISTMAS.")

It is a good magazine, YULE — and thanks, Harris Jespersen, for helping to complete our Christmas.

— V. H.

OUR CHURCH

Seattle, Washington. Word has come of the death of two former pastors of our Synod, one of whom was L. C. Larsen, who passed away December 1 in a Seattle hospital. Further details will appear in the next issue of our paper.

Danevang, Texas. In a tragic auto accident, a second former pastor died, together with his wife, on November 29 when driving to have Thanksgiving (a week late in Texas) with their family. Obituaries will be published Jan. 5.

Ringsted, Iowa. The two women's groups here packed and shipped six cartons and seven sacks of clothing for the Lutheran World Relief. Other congregations which we note have been cooperating in this clothing ingathering are Los Angeles, Waterloo, Denmark, (Kan.), Marquette, Tyler, Salinas, Greenville, Cedar Falls.

Bridgeport, Conn. Young people here attended a Christmas party on invitation from the Hartford, Conn., group. Pastor Viggo Hansen has received a salary increase for 1957.

Kronborg, Nebraska. Dr. Alfred Jensen spoke here recently, on "the outreach of our church", and stressed mission work in India. This congregation's gifts to Faith and Life Advance amount to \$6,265, according to a recent monthly bulletin.

Seattle, Washington. This month, St. John's church here welcomed 26 adults (plus 16 children) as new members of the congregation. The church choir here, under Mr. Talmage F. Elwell's direction, gave a Christmas concert December 16, presenting the Waring-Ringwald "The Song of Christmas" with Gloria Steberl and Sonja Kjaer as soloists. Dr. F. Edward Ehlers was at the organ, and the pastor, Dr. J. C. Kjaer, was narrator.

Salinas, Calif. St. Ansgar's church building here will soon be sold to the city for the expansion of community facilities. Relocation plans are in progress.

Des Moines, Iowa. The two choirs presented a Christmas concert December 16, followed by a sandwich supper in Luther Memorial Church. The LYF sponsored an Operations India evening December 2, with Gora Tudu as speaker. . . . The Grand View College Choir also presented a Christmas concert in the church December 17. . . The congregation reached the phenomenal total of \$25,000 cash and pledges for Faith and Life Advance.

Greenville, Michigan. The Sunday School here adopted a unique idea — a Birthday Party for Jesus. Children brought "love offerings of money" for Jesus' loved ones suffering in Hungary.

Detroit, Mich. According to "Kirkeblad," the church paper of St. Peter's Church, Prof. Howard Christensen,

Grand View College

And Suddenly It's Christmas

In just another week, we will be on our way home for Christmas. It seems just a very short time since we arrived here in Des Moines for the beginning of another school year. Now we are getting ready for the holidays and the "see you next year" routine.

There's something very festive about

chaplain at Grand View College, has accepted a call to be resident pastor here beginning after the current school year is over next June. Mr. Adolf Pedersen, local layman, has served on the Church Board here for 25 years, and now, after so many years of faithful service, has been given public recognition in the December issue of the church paper. The Sunday School here has purchased a Bell and Howell projector for visual education.

Tyler, Minnesota. Pastor Enok Mortensen will be at Askov pr. Vejen, Denmark, until Feb. 1. News note from "Tyler Journal" and also "Danebod Hilsen" runs as follows: Flash! We have water at Danebod. It's almost better than striking oil." — A drainage firm has completed ditching and tile operations to pipe water to the college, thus relieving a serious water shortage.

Troy, New York. Two choirs, Senior and Junior, presented what has been called an "outstanding" concert recently here. The Senior Choir numbers 26 and is directed by the church organist, Mr. Harry Nielsen. For the concert, Pastor Einar Andersen served as accompanying organist. Mrs. Hiram Sheffer was special soloist.

Tacoma, Washington. Missionary Muriel Nielsen will be guest speaker here January 9.

Marlette, Michigan. Pastor and Mrs. James Lund, of Manistee, will move to Marlette in March to assist Pastor Harry Andersen in serving of the Juhl, Germania and Brown City congregations. The Lunds will live in the Germania parsonage. The mission congregation in Brown City has now been formally organized as Trinity Lutheran Church, (November 11) and marked the day with special Confirmation and Communion Services. President of the congregation is Dr. Raymond Kraft, with Mrs. Carl Schultze as Secretary.

Hampton, Iowa. Pastor Gudmund Petersen will participate in the Winter Camp of the Iowa District of AELYF, December 28-30 near Luther, Iowa. Christmas Eve midnight services will be held here again this year.

the college these days. There are decorations everywhere, beautiful trees lighted up in every color of the rainbow, icicles dripping from tree branches, yes, and even a bit of holly (and perhaps I should whisper this — mistletoe) hanging not too much in evidence, but lending its atmosphere to the scene! ! !

The Education Department usually opens the season with its banquet, and this year it was held in the Garden Room of the Hotel Kirkwood on December 12. The GVC choir sang three carols to start us off. Rev. Christensen gave the invocation. After a most delicious dinner, we had our program. Dr. Erling Jensen gave a talk on the atom bomb. His subject was "Today's Revolution." Carol Jensen gave a short greeting, after which we listened to the Girls' trio. Mr. Horace Oliver, Superintendent of the Saydel School District, our guest speaker from Des Moines, had as his subject "Teaching in Saydel." He stressed the practical, everyday things one must know and do in order to be a good teacher in his or any district. Dean Emeritus A. C. Nielsen gave "Impressions", and surprised some of the female element. We'll just have to resolve to keep our voices down in the dorm. No two ways about that. Mrs. Noyes gave a humorous reading with just enough good common sense blended with the humor to make it delightful listening. Janet Thuesen acted as toastmistress, and did a fine job. As you have probably surmised, it was a wonderful evening.

The GVC choir will present its Christmas concert in Luther Memorial church on Monday, December 17 at 8:15 p. m. As usual we have been practicing very faithfully for it, and hope for a good attendance. Just following the choir's concert, the girls will have their annual dorm Christmas party to which the faculty women are invited. There will be carol-singing and exchange of gifts. (Refreshments, too).

Now here's something that has absolutely nothing to do with Christmas, but too important to add merely as a postscript. Our basketball team is doing fine. Oh, sure, we have lost a game or two, but the overall picture is excellent, and we have that all important quality called "Team work." Since most of the basketball season comes after our Christmas vacation, we have some good games to look forward to, come 1957.

This was intended to be just a little greeting, so we'll keep it that way. But during this season of gifts and giving, let us not lose sight of the greatest Gift of all time — "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And now, a joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year to all, — and suddenly it IS Christmas ! !

Hi-Fi.

Where Christmas Lasts A Month

(Continued from Page 8)

Great joy with its bounties is blended.

This day Lord Most High we beseech
Thee to guard us
Against all sin and affliction.

"Second Christmas" Day

On December 26, the "Staffan's Ride" is an annual game in farming regions, and takes its name from the day in the Church calendar, for December 26 commemorates St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr. After chores are done, the hired hands have a wild ride on horseback to see who can reach the spring or stream first. The victor has the privilege of drinking the "Staffan's Water" or "Christmas Foam," the first draught from the spring, which is thought to insure health and progress during the year, and the real purpose of watering the horses is overlooked.

"Stephen was a stable boy,
Glad thanks are beseeching.
Five colts he watered for employ,
All by the stars' bright beaming.
Daylight glimmer'd not at all,
But up above the stars in heaven glister'd"

The days between "Staffandag" and New Year's are spent visiting friends, and it is told that in some Swedish districts one must stop for a visit and refreshments at every house on the way, and hosts must receive all who come. It is impolite to have food in short supply, and though it is part of convention to ply each guest with food and drink, it is thought rude not to refuse.

The "Star Boys" of Epiphany

On January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, when the Three Wise Men were supposed to have arrived at Bethlehem, a procession of boys traditionally went the rounds of towns, singing and carrying before them a large, lighted star on a pole. Three would be dressed as the Magi Kings, while all sorts of costumes would be found in the retinue, including a Judas with a purse and Herod as well. Epiphany means the end of the Christmas season in Scandinavia, but the Nordic folk are slow to discard the trappings of a festival so affectionately held by all. Not until St. Hilary's Day, on January 13, called Knut's Day, is the Christmas table dismantled, and the straw swept from the floor. This gives a fine chance for another party, and at the "Knut Party" appears a person in showy rags who plays pranks and comes to "Sweep Christmas out," for "On twentieth-day Knut we dance Christmas out." Apparently many a Scandinavian would have wished for a longer Christmas celebration, for the song is still popular which says "Christmas lasts until Easter," but the second line cautions, "This is not true, for Lent comes in between."

For Norwegians, Swedes and Danes, Christmas is said to last a month, and whether we celebrate the birth of the Infant King on but one day or through an extended holiday, the message of the Christ-Child's birth sheds its holy light over many months, and indeed has brightened many centuries, while its beam shines on to illumine with peace and joy the years to come.

Christmas in Finland

(Continued from Page 9)

he starts his journey south he drives the Lapp's sleigh and reindeer (pulkha) and is accompanied by his helpers. He goes from house to house after supper and leaves gifts for everyone.

The Christmas Flowers of Finland are the Christmas tulip and the hyacinth and they decorate the festive tables. A fresh pork shank is the main meat dish and this is prepared with a coating of dough, made of rye flour and water and baked for hours in the oven. Lutefisk, rice pudding, and homemade rye beer are other Christmas foods found in every home. On Christmas Day roast beef is the "turkey" of the Finns.

There are no midnight services in the churches in Finland. The main service is early Christmas morning at 6 or 7 o'clock. The day is usually spent quietly in the family circle. The second Christmas day, St. Stephen's Day, is also a holiday in Finland and then people get together and play the traditional folk games, visit, go sleigh riding, and make merry.

The Finnish Christmas greeting: Hauskaa Joulua, means: Merry Christmas to all.

Liisa Krumsieg.

(Liisa Krumsieg came as a bride to U. S. in August of this year. Her husband is studying at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary at Maywood, Illinois.)

The Light of the World

(Continued from Page 4)

Festival. God bethanked for Bethlehem! In the message it brings lies the one hope of the world. It is responsible for the fact that there are millions of men and women who have been so affected by the principles and spirit of Jesus that, whether they acknowledge his influence or not, their own influence is thrown into the right side of the scale so visibly trembling in these days between good and evil, right and wrong, love and hate.

There is no need to apologize for Christmas. With the coming of Christ there was given to the world the quality and principle of true living. The twenty-fifth of December serves as an annual reminder that it is more blessed to give than to receive, that force must ultimately bow before gentleness, that love is stronger than hate. The twenty-fifth of December stands for the fact that love is the

very groundwork of human relationship and the life-principle of society. Dick Sheppard never took a sounder line than when he urged that man comes to his senses at Christmas. He is mad when he scorns love and fights for his own selfish interests. He is sinning against the very nature of things when he hates and quarrels, and will not be at peace with his fellows. His real life is the life he sees and responds to at Christmastide when feuds are forgotten, when grudges are buried, when old enmities are laid away, when the motto of everyone is, "With malice toward none, with charity for all."

Will There be Christmas?

(Continued from Page 6)

of the peoples in the Russian dominated states in eastern Europe.

It was said that there were 20,000 Germans in Frankfort from the Russian zone. They came for the Kirchentag. Rarely have I heard people sing as they sang in Frankfort. They sang hymns in the streets, in the street cars, and everywhere they went. Perhaps, it was mostly people from behind the Iron Curtain who sang a hymn of thanksgiving because they were again permitted to breathe free air.

Will there be Christmas for the Hungarian refugees? Will there be Christmas for the people in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary? They have so little, but so did the people in Bethlehem under Roman domination.

Will there be Christmas for you and me? We have so much and there is so much noise among us that it is often hard to hear the Voice that said: "Be still and know that I am God."

Holiday Magic

There is magic in the air —

You can sense it everywhere,
In the stores and on the street
And wherever people meet.

There is magic in the air —

It will drive away your care
And make all around you shine
If you take this Gift Divine.

There is magic in the air —

It is here for all to share.
Would you like to have it stay?
Then help others on Life's way.

There is magic in the air —

And the dear Lord placed it there;
Thank Him for it, use it, too —
More blessings He will send to you.

—Dr. W. J. Thompson.

Acknowledgment of Receipts by the Synod Treasurer

For the Month of November, 1956

Towards the budget:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Congregations: | |
| Racine, Wis. | \$200.00 |
| Menominee, Mich. | 38.34 |
| Kimballton, Iowa | 500.00 |
| Marlette, Mich. (Zion) | 88.27 |
| Salinas, Calif. | 300.00 |
| Grant, Mich. | 100.00 |
| Askov, Minn. | 75.00 |
| Los Angeles, Calif. | 100.00 |
| Bridgeport, Conn. | 75.00 |
| White, South Dakota | 35.00 |
| Manistee, Mich. | 112.62 |
| Alden, Minn. | 300.00 |
| Marinette, Wis. | 26.00 |
| Solvang, Calif. | 589.25 |
| Fredsville, Dike, Iowa | 2,042.50 |
| Des Moines, Iowa | 354.75 |
| Hartford, Conn. | 150.00 |
| Cordova, Nebr. | 732.00 |
| Bone Lake Luth., Frederic, Wis. | 100.00 |
| Tyler, Minn. | 884.26 |
| Seattle, Wash. | 644.30 |
| Omaha, Nebr. | 120.00 |

Pension Fund:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| Congregations: | |
| Jr. Ladies' Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 5.00 |
| Waterloo, Iowa | 25.00 |
| Seattle, Wash. | 213.50 |
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 5.00 |

Home Mission:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Nathanael Sunday School, Dagmar, Mont. | 34.50 |
| Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa | 25.00 |

Children's Home, Chicago:

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| Congregations: | |
| Racine, Wis. | 25.00 |
| Waterloo, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 10.00 |
| Old People's Home, Tyler: | |
| Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Danish L. Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 10.00 |
| Jr. Ladies' Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 5.00 |
| Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 5.00 |

Seamen's Mission:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Ladies' Aid, Des Moines, Iowa | 5.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Danish L. Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 10.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Rosenberg, Lindsay, Nebr. | 10.00 |
| Jr. Ladies' Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 5.00 |
| Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 15.00 |

Annual Reports:

| | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Congregations: | |
| Detroit, Mich. | 5.00 |
| White, South Dakota | 2.50 |
| Des Moines, Iowa | 20.50 |
| Alden, Minn. | 9.00 |
| Solvang, Calif. | 12.50 |
| Junction City, Ore. | 6.00 |
| Fredsville, Dike, Iowa | 15.00 |
| Hartford, Conn. | 5.00 |
| Circle Pines, Minn. | 6.00 |
| Waterloo, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Los Angeles, Calif. | 7.50 |

Pastors' Pension Contributions:

| | |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Rev. Willard Garred | 40.00 |
| Rev. Vagn Duus | 43.46 |
| Rev. Holger Jorgensen | 61.24 |
| Rev. Harris Jespersen | 17.40 |

Total budget receipts in November, 1956 ----- \$8,316.39

Previously acknowledged -- 47,408.94

Total to date ----- \$55,725.33

Received for Items Outside of Budget:

For Lutheran World Action:

| | |
|--|----------|
| Congregations: | |
| Racine, Wis. | |
| Towards Minimum Goal ---- | \$ 59.84 |
| Special—Sunday School ---- | 50.00 |
| Menominee, Mich. | 10.33 |
| Marlette, Mich. (Zion) | 22.00 |
| Salinas, Calif. | 50.00 |
| Alden, Minn. | 211.00 |
| Marinette, Wis. | 44.10 |
| Des Moines, Iowa | 71.75 |
| Circle Pines, Minn. | 31.00 |
| Cordova, Nebr. | 141.75 |
| Fredsville, Dike, Iowa, in memory of Maria C. Andersen, from Andersen, Larsen, Nielsen, Pedersen families of Tyler, Minn. | 7.00 |
| Tyler, Minn. | 205.28 |
| Omaha, Nebr. | 270.90 |
| Tacoma, Wash. | 17.75 |

Total for month of November, 1956 ----- \$1,192.70

Previously acknowledged ---- 8,009.84

Total to date ----- \$9,202.54

For Eben-Ezer Mercy Institute:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Jr. Ladies' Aid, Grayling, Mich. | 10.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 10.00 |
| St. Stephen's Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| | \$ 30.00 |

For Women's Mission Society:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Congregation, Waterloo, Iowa.... | \$ 50.00 |
| Ladies' Aid, Omaha, Nebr. | 21.00 |
| | \$ 71.00 |

For Wisconsin Lutheran Student Foundation:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Bethania Sunday school, Racine, Wis. | \$ 25.00 |
|---|----------|

For Lutheran Welfare of Wisconsin:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Bethania Sunday school, Racine, Wis. | 50.00 |
|---|-------|

For Old People's Home, Des Moines, Iowa:

| | |
|---|----------|
| St. Stephen's Ladies' Aid, Clinton, Iowa | 10.00 |
| Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa.... | 10.00 |
| | \$ 20.00 |

For Chicago Children's Home:

| | |
|---|------|
| Danish Sisterhood Lodge, Clinton, Iowa | 5.00 |
|---|------|

For North Cedar Mission, Cedar Falls, Iowa:

Building Fund:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Mrs. Dagmar Petersen, Tyler, Minn. | 5.00 |
| Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Hansen, Des Moines, Iowa | 5.00 |
| | \$ 10.00 |

General,

From Women's Mission Society 882.43

Respectfully submitted,

American Evangelical
Lutheran Church,

M. C. Miller, Treasurer.
P. O. Box 177,
Circle Pines, Minn.

And A Little Child Shall Lead Them

(Continued from Page 2)

can penetrate our callousness and self-centeredness so all those we can reach may find help?

Youth leaders from the Eastern zone in Germany say that there are two things which the Christian youth of that unhappy land dare not do. They dare not deny that man is created in the image of God or that Christ is the Son of God, whose love embraces all God's children. No matter what they will have to pay to keep this faith intact, it must be done. Do we realize what it means to be children in Hungary or in the Eastern Zone of Germany this year? Or what suffering Christian parents are put to, knowing what strain their children are under at all times, being denied the coveted privileges of an education and employment, unless they are ready and willing to sacrifice their most cherished possessions of heart and soul.

Shall we not this Christmas let a little child lead us in the path of God's Messiah, the king of Bethlehem? May we all share the treasures of our hearts and souls with others this Christmas, then it will indeed be a happy and blessed Christmas.

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, 1956

Name _____

City _____ State _____

New Address _____

JENSEN, JENS M.
TYLER, MINN.

RT. 2,
6-3