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A Blessed Christmas

A Christian Christmas

Alfred Jensen
Synod President

BEFORE ME, as I begin writing this Christmas greeting to LUTHERAN TIDINGS, I have a two-page explanation and description of what it meant to a certain city, when the local Ministerial Association decided to sponsor for the second year in a row the project of bringing Christ to Main Street with "Christian Christmas Window Displays."

These displays were arranged and paid for by the various local churches and primarily placed in windows of Real Estate and Insurance firms, Loan Companies, Barber Shops and similar businesses. The description of the changed atmosphere, the enthusiasm of everybody involved was wonderful, "an inspirational thing to see for the thousands of people doing their Christmas shopping." The change in decorations and displays made its impact on newspapers, radio, TV, Sunday Sermons, etc. Those responsible for initiating the Christian Christmas Displays received letters of praise and thanks. A tremendous number of people were attracted to come and share in the joy over the displays that tells the story of Christ's Birth.

The result of the Christian Christmas Displays are summed up thus:

"Many retail business people are donating valuable window display space to the churches because they feel that Christ comes before profit. Their sincerity and willingness to cooperate renews our faith in our fellow man, and the church appreciates the opportunity to be able to witness for Christ during the Holiday Season. (Name of city) thanks God, that we are a God-fearing Nation, and that business isn't just inventories and bank balances, but people who are interested in the promotion of Christianity."

It is not my intention to comment on the above described sincere attempt of arresting the spreading of the misuse of Christmas as an opportunity for profit making. What I would like to do is with the apostle Paul "...to show you a still more excellent way."

Also, as I continue writing, I have before me various pieces of information relative to the World Refugee Year (WRY), especially one published by the National Council of Churches: Information Service (dated October 17, 1959) explaining the why and wherefore of the World Refugee Year. It is my feeling that the awareness of the problems involved in the WRY and the obligations and responsibilities for Christian service presented by WRY are at least equally as important as Christian Christmas Window Displays. Our Christian witness needs to be given not only at home but even more so, where the horror and bestiality of war have torn people from their homes and kept them over prolonged periods of time from obtaining other homes. It is the opinion of Dag Hammarskjöld that there are still over 2,000,000 refugees needing the assistance of the United Nations in the world today and challenging the conscience of mankind.

Where are these located now?

135,000 in refugee camps in Austria, Germany, Greece and Italy. 19,000 of these have been there more than ten years and many of these are children born in the refugee camp;

180,000 Arab refugees in Tunisia and Morocco, mostly women, children and old people, who have fled Algeria;

1,000,000 refugees who left Palestine, when Israel moved in, and who now live as follows: 240,000 in the Gaza Strip in the Egyptian part of the U.A.R.; 570,000 in Jordan; 125,000 in Lebanon and 105,000 in the Syrian region of U.A.R.

1,000,000 refugees from the mainland of China living in Hong Kong in almost unimaginable poverty and in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions.

The idea of World Refugee Year originated in the spring of 1958 with four young Britons who wanted the WRY to become a human counterpart to the International Geophysical Year. The idea took hold and Great Britain sponsored it with U.N. Now no less than 61 nations have joined in support of its aims. WRY has two main aims:

a) to focus interest on the refugee problems and to encourage additional financial contributions from government, voluntary agencies and the general public for its solution.

b) to encourage additional opportunities for permanent refugee solutions, through voluntary repatriation, resettlement or integration, on a purely humanitarian basis and in accordance with the freely expressed wishes of the refugees themselves.

A "United States Committee for Refugees" (USCR) with Dean Francis B. Sayre, Jr., Washington, D. C., as chairman was formed in May of this year and, by proclamation of the president, July 1, 1959, to June 30, 1960, was declared to be World Refugee Year. Such church agencies as Church World Service, National Catholic Welfare Agency, National Lutheran Council and Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service are members of USCR. The pattern adopted and followed since the displaced persons' program, was continued, namely that the above mentioned agencies are to carry the burden of aid to refugees. In its rush to adjourn in August Congress failed to make any laws in support of or appropriations backing the WRY. The USCR did make plans for admission of 20,000 refugees annually beyond those authorized by the existing quotas. It is expected to be passed by Congress when it assembles in January. Further plans call for admission of an unlimited number of orphans 14 years or under, according to recognized standards. Certain funds placed at the disposal of the president will be able to supply financial support for the present. An appropriation of \$10,000,000 will be asked of Congress.

No less than an average of \$125,000,000 have been spent by the American Council of Voluntary Agencies

(Continued on Page 13)

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The Church in the North Woods

Christmas in Old Swede Settlement

*The Christmas Pageantry in Roscommon, Michigan, Was a Ritual.
But it Was Gay, and it Was Generous, and it Had Vitality.*

Contributed by

HARALD KNÜDSEN

(Continued from November 20)



WEDE SETTLEMENT was quiet, relaxed and expectant. For two weeks Swede Settlement in north central Roscommon County had been the scene of feverish activity. Clothes lines were always filled with curtains, tablecloths, sheets, clothes. Wood piles were built up with neat piles of freshly split kindling. The windows in the little farm houses, some only two rooms, sparkled with extra polishing.

For weeks kitchens had been the scenes of special work. Velma Ostling had sawed the big dried codfish into pieces, soaked it in water mixed with lime and wood ash until it was fluffy and white and then soaked it for days to get the mixture out of it. It was ready now to boil and she tasted the sauce, flavored with allspice, that she would put over the lutefisk.

The loaves of limpa, the holiday rye bread, were ready for the good homemade butter and the coffee cakes flavored with cardamom were just right. In the cookie jar were spritz, kakor, pepparkakor Christmas treats. Velma Ostling took the heavy weight off the pressylta, the head cheese, and gave a relieved sigh of satisfaction. It was right for slicing.

The sausage was ready, ground beef, pork shoulder, raw potatoes, onion, salt, pepper, spices carefully put in the casing with the help of the old cow horn. And the rice pudding was just about done. The makings of the Christmas feast were ready.

"My mother said to never let a day go by without making something. I started knitting when I was eight years old, and I always knitted Christmas presents for my boys and girls. And made dolls and doll clothes. I still knit. I made 16 pairs of socks last year. Now I have 14 grandchildren and one great-grandchild," said Kirsti Soderholm.

Said Velma Ostling, "My hobby now is quilting and making rag rugs. I have 12 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, but Christmases aren't like they used to be. Children have too many toys. Too much of everything. Our children appreciated a jack-knife, a cap, a pair of mittens. In the old times Christmas was better."

Those were the years when on the day before Christmas neighbors made the rounds. They visited the sick or those who would have little for Christmas. They'd go with a basket, a loaf of bread, some meat, some Swedish cookies. No one was forgotten in the old Swede Settlement.

Those were the years when even in the poorest

homes there was a sparkle of cleanliness, of polished furniture, of scrubbed floors, of starched curtains, of gleaming silver. In each small house was a spruce trimmed with popcorn and little colored bits of paper and small candles flaming, casting the light on the new skis, the China dolls' heads, the mittens.

The Ostling's 14 by 20 home was cleaned and the tin tub was setting before the range for now everyone had to be bathed. It was December 23 and the next evening, Christmas Eve, Swede Settlement would be prepared, for that was the night that "the Guest" came.

Kirsti and Elof Soderholm had hauled their old tub into their kitchen and the same scenes were being repeated in the kitchens of the Sideman's, Andersons, Martinsons, Ogrens, Johnsons and Matsons. The next morning everyone was wearing clean clothes, faces shining, no work being done — no work but trimming the Christmas tree and waiting for the special evening meal.

On the table Christmas Eve was the special feast: the lutefisk, fresh loaves of limpa, the pressylta, sausage, rice pudding and coffee cake flavored with cardamom.

John Ostling slipped out of the house, turned his old sheepskin coat inside out, tied some cowbells on his belt, turned his collar up to hide his face and knocked on the door to announce that Santa Claus had arrived.

Gifts were much the same throughout the settlement; knitted mittens, socks, dolls with China heads and soft bodies made by the mothers, and always skis made by the fathers.

Christmas morning, before the old school was made into a church, the family started the day singing Swedish hymns. Then the youngsters headed for the snow covered hills to ski. They skied to the neighbors across the still, white fields. The little ones played with their sleds. For a whole week the oldsters visited back and forth, went to the school for a program, held a Grange party. Christmas was a wonderful time.

Velma Ostling and Kirsti Soderholm sit in their comfortable, roomy, modern homes and dream of their friends and loved ones in the past, and we are given a heartwarming picture of the days that tried and tested their strength and courage and faith. There is less hard work now, but more loneliness, even though children and grandchildren seek them often and gladly for advice and comfort and companionship. Christmas Eve the families still gather and the "Heavenly Guest" still comes with peace and good will to the homes in the old Swede Settlement.

What Darkness Cannot Dim

Joseph Sizoo

Prof. of Rel., George Washington University

THIS TITLE STRIKES a thoroughly harmonious note with the 16th annual World-wide Bible Reading theme, which portrays the Bible as **THE EVERLASTING LIGHT**. This Bible Reading program, sponsored by the American Bible Society, was sparked by the request of a Marine on Guadalcanal who asked his family to join with him in reading certain verses from the Bible each day. It has now become worldwide, and the theme this year, **THE EVERLASTING LIGHT**, reminds us that the divine light of the knowledge of the glory of God, through Jesus Christ, shining in the minds and hearts of all men can yet make this a different world.

There are two things the Bible never takes into consideration:

The Bible never takes geography into consideration. It leaps across the barriers of the nations and disregards the frontiers of peoples. It is at home in every land and language.

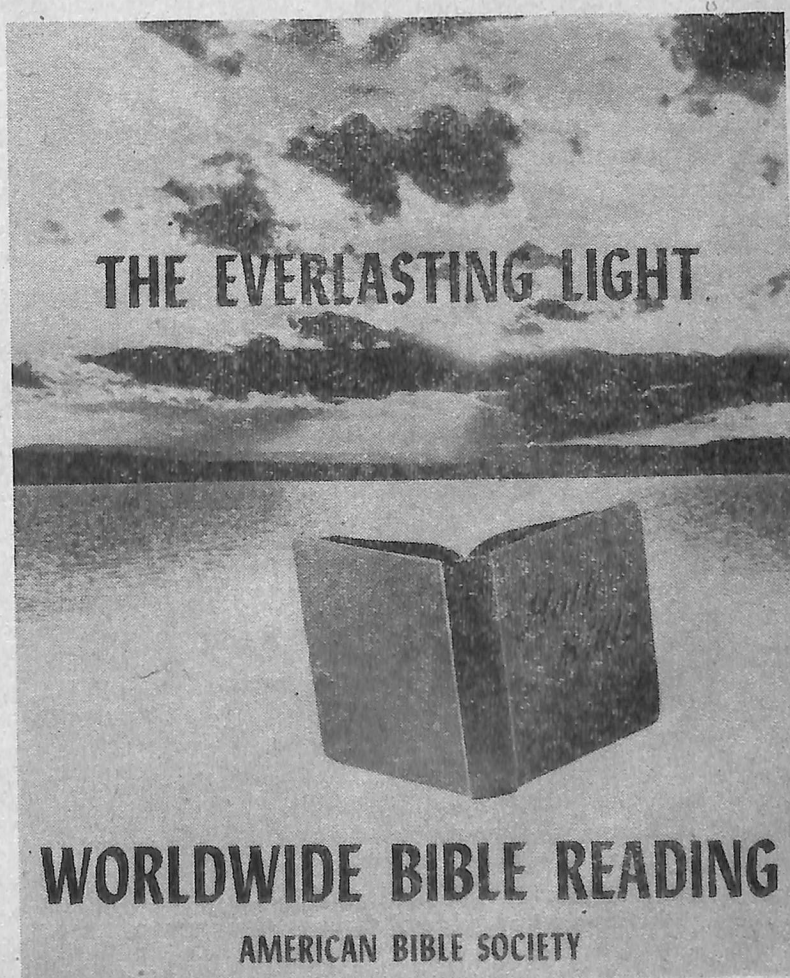
Then, too, it never takes time into consideration. Written thousands of years ago, it is as relevant today as when the words were first recorded. It is meant for all lands, all languages and all times. The Bible belongs to the ages.

The Bible lights up the road to significance. Almost every page is aflame with the story of what man can do when he is willing to let God take possession of him. It is always saying, "Look what you can do with life when it is God-guided." Moses may think himself inadequate for the responsibilities which confront him, but when he placed his hands in the hands of God he became one of the five great men of history and the founder of a great nation. A supplanter becomes a prince of God; a plowman in Tekoa becomes a prophet of social justice; a man of unclean lips becomes a herald of righteous Redeemer; a tax collector, never a popular man, becomes the writer of the First Gospel; a fallen girl by the well becomes a city missionary. A slave girl becomes the instrument through which a general is cleansed of leprosy; a boy's noonday lunch becomes a feast for thousands; an intolerant bigot becomes a preacher of the universal gospel of love. The stone which the builders reject becomes the headstone of the corner. Beneath the thin surface of the humblest are inestimable values. Deep in the human heart are talents which grace can transform and glorify. In spite of what you say, man is made a little lower than the angels, capable of thinking God's thoughts after Him. "What can a man give in exchange for his soul?" If you ever doubt the worth of life, go to Calvary and read the story of Christ dying for you. To an age overwhelmed with frustration and insignificance the Bible calls out, "Put yourself in the hands of God and leave yourself there." There are no iron curtains to

keep the power of God from lifting the humblest and weakest to places of influence and power.

When Evangeline Booth returned from a world tour for the Salvation Army, she told me of a little village in India where lived the families and members of the robber caste. The village was full of robbers, thieves and thugs. Every attempt by the government to stamp out the wrong failed. Then the government resolved to destroy the village entirely and scatter the people. The Salvation Army asked if it could have a chance to do something to save the village before the decree was carried out; so a little band of Salvationists preached on the street corners and in the rice fields. The redeeming grace of Christ began to work in the village. The chief of the robber caste was converted, and the entire village population was baptized. Strangely enough, stealing stopped; not a complaint was made against them. The village had been made over. The government police thought this was too good to last and, sure enough robbers broke out in the next village. The police sent a secret agent to shadow the leader. They saw him late one evening, slinking down a narrow trail with a bundle under his arm wrapped up in a newspaper. They were sure he was at it again. They followed him to his home, and then they watched through the window as he entered his house, closed the door, gathered his family about him and unwrapped the bundle. They expected to see loot tumble out of the package. To their surprise they saw the bundle was a Bible which he


(Continued on Page 14)



Seven Songs for Christmas

Saralice Petersen

Luck, Wisconsin

 IN DENMARK over one-third of the hymns in the authorized hymnal of the state church are written by one man. Bishop Nicolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig, who was born in the eighteenth century and whose life span covered nearly three quarters of the nineteenth, wrote over three thousand hymns in all. And, although most of his writings are over a hundred years old, the new Danish hymnal, published in nineteen fifty three, contains more of his hymns than any previous hymnbook. In it are one hundred seventy original poems plus an additional one hundred and one translations or adaptations from Latin, German and other sources as well as some rewritten from old Danish hymns. The seven songs which follow are the seven originally composed hymns for the Christmas season which appear in DEN DANSKE SALMEBOG.

1. Dejlig er den himmel blaa (1810)

Eighteen ten when this hymn was written, marks the date of what is considered to be a conversion experience. The writing of hymns, so important a part of Grundtvig's life work, was begun in this year, and from this time on his life is unwaveringly Christ-centered. It is a simple child-like carol, beginning with a descriptive introductory stanza, "Lovely is the blue sky —." The deep rich hue of a winter evening sky on which the stars appear, smiling and beckoning, has been his primary inspiration. Then follows the story, beginning with the appearance of that long-ago star, so bright, and yet in all its brilliance retaining the gentle quality of starlight; a star-sun (Stjerne-sol) he calls it. The two final stanzas bring us to the present with the reminder that "we too, have a guiding star, the "Word Divine." This can, of course, be taken to mean the Holy Scriptures, as the Bible was certainly a guide for N. F. S. Grundtvig throughout his life. However, the crisis which he came to in this very year, was brought about by his realization that his intensive study of the Bible, and his striving to live a moral life was actually contributing to his sinful pride. This was overcome only by a direct experience of God's grace. All things considered, it seems more likely that he uses "Word" in its fuller meaning as in St. John the opening verses which declare the Word (our Lord) to be the "life and light of man."

A version in English in the original meter is found in the new Service Book and Hymnal, number fifty-seven. There is no attempt below to follow the original form exactly, but only to state clearly the content.

The blue sky is lovely,
A pleasure to see
Where the golden stars twinkle,
Where they smile,
Where they beckon us
From earth to themselves.

It was Christmas,
And midnight hour,
The stars all dull and dim.

All at once came a splendid sight,
Came one so bright on heaven's bow,
Radiant star, a little sun.

When the star so softly bright
Showed itself at midnight hour
It was the sign, the old tradition:
A king shall be born,
A matchless king, upon this earth.

Wise men from the East
Into the world were drawn,
Out of their stations
That king to find,
That king to worship,
Who was born that self-same hour.

They found Him, In David's home
In Bethlehem, they found Him.
Without spire or kingly throne.
Seated there was but a lowly woman;
In her lap she cradled the child.

The star led the wise men
Unto our Lord Christ.
We, too, have a guiding star.
And when we follow willingly
We shall also come to Him.

This gentle star, so radiant,
Which can ne'er mislead us,
Is the Word Divine,
His Word which enlightens.
This He let be revealed to us
As a light unto our feet.

2. Det kimer nu til julefest (1817)

In Grundtvig's day, the church bell had an important role in the daily life of the country. It not only rang for Sunday worship, and special occasions, but every day of the year it rang the sun up in the morning and down again in the evening. On Christmas Eve the bells rang out in a special way; in Danish there is a particular word, "kime," "Det kimer nu til julefest" (it chimes now for Yulefest), although chime is not the exact equivalent. Actually the bell is struck lightly and rapidly with a small hammer. This joyful song of the bell, this merry jingling-jangling sent out upon the cold clear air of Christmas Eve could very well bring to mind that multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest!"

As a young man, in his ordination sermon in particular, Grundtvig had zealously denounced some of the shortcomings of the church of his day. Due to hard feelings and repercussions, except for brief terms and limited pastorates he was unable to devote himself fully to his chosen work until eighteen thirty-nine. His meager income was augmented at this time (1817) by the grant of a scholarship. These years were spent in study, writing, and publishing, and later referred to by him as "spent in the tombs." However, the small security afforded him by the scholarship was enough for him to finally marry the young lady to

Information on Grundtvig's life is taken from DANISH REBEL by Johannes Knudsen.

whom he had been engaged a mere "Jacob's week" of seven long years. Perhaps there is some personal expression of joy in the following song.

Except for an understanding of the bell sound, the poem explains itself. New Year is, of course, the new year of the church which begins with the Advent and Christmas seasons.

A metric version of this song set to the familiar Danish melody is found in the Service Book and Hymnal, number twenty eight.

The bells ring Christmas in! They chime
For the high, the noble guest who came
To humble dwellings down, with New Year's gifts:
Joy,

and peace.
Oh, come along to David's town,
Where angels sing beneath the sky!
Oh, walk into the field and with the herdsmen hear
From God

the news!
And let us go with tranquil heart as they,
The shepherds, went in to the holy child.
With tears of joy give thanks to God for mercy,
And tidings

of grace.
O Jesus, the whole world's length and breadth
Would be for Thee too small a bed,
Too poor, though it were covered all with beaten gold,
Pearl-set,

silk-spread.
For worldly honor, might and gold
To Thee is only mold and worthless dust;
In manger laid, in swaddling clothes, Thou for me hast bought
A life

celestial.
So now, my soul, be glad, and hold
Your Christmas feast in David's city, yes,
And praise your God the while with sweet and lively song
From the depths

of your heart.
Yes, sing each one! Sing, you who can,
For light is lit in shadow's land!
While midnight rooster crowed did Jacob's star*
Become

a sun!
Now He is come, the patriarch's hope,
With flaming word, and heavenly font.
And now the child interprets in the field what David,
Dimly, saw

and sang.
Come Jesus, in our home be guest,
Thyself herein to hold Thy Christmas feast.
Then shall our New Year's song like David's harp
Resound aloud
with thankful praise.

3. Velkommen igen, gud's engle smaa (1825)

Welcome again, little angels! Here is a deep yearning for the Christmas Joy which Grundtvig hopes and prays, and knows the angels will bring. This year 1825 has indeed been for him a time of sorrow. Still not accepted fully, he has spent long months of reading, of soul-searching study, and of writing, much of which was never intended for publication. The final stanza, which does not appear in the hymnal translation, is a prayer, a desperate cry from out of deep sorrow. He is soon to resign his present pastorate, one reason being that he is not allowed to use any of his own hymns. It seems more than he dare hope that Christmas joy can be his, but Joy will come, the children at any rate, will know it.

And most surely, angels are every where at Christ-

mas-time in Denmark. Each child can be sure of his or her guardian angel keeping watch over his bed at night, every night, but at Christmas-time the air is filled with them. Paper cherubs hang on every yule tree, blowing their little trumpets, and reading the Christmas message. They hover, floating like snowflakes, in the night sky.

Welcome again, little angels! From God you come, clad in your sunshine garments, from the lofty halls of heaven to earth's vale of shadow. In spite of the crisp and killing frost, you foretell a good year for the bird and the dormant seed.

Hail, and well met, by the church path, and in the snowy midnight sky! 'Tis not in your hearts to bear Christmas away,* we may dare to rely on this; never would you cause us this sorrow, and pass by our door!

Lowly is our cottage, and humble its door, only poverty within. But it comes to mind that once before you visited a poor dwelling. Angels will be content with earthen mugs and stale cake.

With friendly eyes of heavenly blue, in beds, and in cradles, we have our little ones in each nook and corner, like flowers growing in the meadow. O, sing for them, like the lark trill, the like of which they have not heard for so long, so that they may dream sweetly of Bethlehem! Even though they do not fully understand, they will dream truly of the holy child, and His home where He lay in the manger. They will dream of playing "Christmas" with them whose song they know in their dreaming. Then they shall awaken gently at break of day, and count the hours no longer.

Then we shall hear the Christmas song anew, and the heartbeat rhyme itself with the song that sounds to the highest sky when the Christmas bells chime. Then God's angels wander up and down the psalms' tone-ladder. Then our Lord Himself shall offer peace to those who long for it. Then the castle-gate of heaven shall open of itself, and God's kingdom come indeed.

O might we only that gladness see before our eyes be closed! Then shall our pain, as a mother's birth-pangs, be sweetly rocked away.

Our Father in Heaven! Let it come to pass! Let the sorrow of Christmas be extinguished!

4. Venner, sagde Guds engel blidt (1846)

From eighteen twenty-five it is a span of twenty-one years to our next Christmas hymn. Yet nearly all of the other songs for this season in the Danish hymnal under Grundtvig's name are dated in this period. In these years he has done a great deal of work re-writing old Danish hymns and translating some of the older Latin, Greek or German ones. A collection was published in eighteen thirty-seven consisting of works of this kind entitled "Songs of the Danish Church."

In this year, eighteen forty-six, Grundtvig is at last in his longed-for position, a pastorate in Copenhagen. Although it is a small and unimpressive place outwardly, the chapel of an old people's home, it is a full pastorate. Every Sunday the seats are filled. Here most of his hymns were first introduced and sung. Here at Vartov, he is to serve fully, faithfully, and actively the remaining thirty-three years of his life.

Peace, that ancient Christian greeting, appears often in these hymns. Here peace descends from heaven like spring rain falling on the dust, mankind, upon the child, God incarnate, and from this most precious dust springs forth flowers and foliage, joy and gladness. The light from the first Christmas has

(Continued on Page 14)

* Jacob's star: Numbers: chapter 24, verse 17.

* "bear Christmas away" The guest who goes away without sharing some of the Christmas feast, even a sip of wine or a small cake, will "bear Christmas away."

The Children of Haalogaland

Bishop Eivind Berggrav

(Reprinted by permission from Augsburg Publishing House from "Land of Suspense.")

On a Thursday in July we were to have a children's service in Tana. The preceding evening we had a teachers' meeting. There had been a pouring rain all day. "You may be sure the children will come anyway," said the teachers. "Just now a number of them came over the mountain. They have walked four miles and are soaking wet, but are so happy to be here. Many of them have never seen a church before."

This might sound encouraging, but it made me uneasy. When we arrived at the church the following day, there were one hundred children present. How would they acquit themselves on the church floor? One is accustomed to seeing them bashful at the first, but, dear me, since they had never before seen a church, they would probably be unapproachable because of their embarrassment. Then, too, there was this to add to the perplexity of the situation: Very few of them spoke Norwegian in their homes. They spoke either Finnish or Lappish. So I had a three language gathering before me. From experience I knew how awkward it would be to have to use an interpreter. When that is necessary, it seems all informality ceases. On the other hand, I felt that if ever there was a time I must do my utmost, it was with these children.

On that large church floor in Tana, they stood arranged in rows — the boys on the men's side, the girls right across. I walked down and took my place between the rows as they sang a hymn to begin with. That day the bishop was more nervous than the children.

Much depends on having the first question so plain and easy that they can answer at once. One must ask very simply and speak slowly and distinctly.

"What - is - this - house - called - we - are - in - now?"

Quick as a shot: "Church."

"Yes, it is a church. But why do we have these houses which we call churches?"

Several hands were raised. I pointed to a Lapp boy.

"For upbuilding."

"That's right! We use them for upbuilding." (Then in my delight I forgot my resolve to proceed with caution, and put this difficult question): "But,

when you say upbuilding, there must be something we are to build up here in the church."

The boy raised his hand. A nod from me brought this: "We are to build eternal life in our hearts."

It took me awhile to pull myself together. Never had I received an answer like that. Later I asked the teacher about it. No, they had no idea where the boy had gotten it. And this was a twelve-year-old Lapp boy. It could not be found in any book, as far as the teachers knew. Had he heard it at home? I do not know. At any rate, that answer was made. I have published it far and wide. I have said that from that boy I have learned what a congregation is. A congregation is a group of people who help one another to build eternal life in their hearts.

This beginning of a catechization stands out in my mind like words cut in granite. It was as if the children carried me along — farther and farther. Unfortunately, I did not take notes on anything that happened later. I only know that everything went like cogs in a gear. They had no difficulty understanding my Norwegian. They were not in the least unwieldy. Light as mountain reindeer they went with me wherever I wanted.

Up to the altar! (Remember, many of them had never been in a church before.) The chancel in Tana church is large; the smaller children were placed nearest the altar rail, the larger ones in a circle behind them. Then I went inside the rail and showed them what was on the altar. First, the chalice. Yes, they all knew what that was. Holy Thursday, the institution — now they had all become so lively that the answers came in unison. There was a reverent silence when I asked: "Can you repeat the words of institution?"

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which He was betrayed. . . ." — low but clear came the recitation in unison. Then they were very quiet. It was difficult to say anything immediately.

The hymnal and the Bible were handled beautifully. The older ones would put our city children to shame with their knowledge of these books.

(Continued on Page 14)



THE CHURCH DINNER

A National Institution

*Watsonville, California, Congregation
Serves a Community-wide Smorgasbord*

Each year, our congregation at Watsonville invites the whole community to a Scandinavian-style dinner which has become famous in several counties, and draws upwards of 700 people.

The dinner is a fellowship event, and not strictly a money-making project, according to Home Mission Pastor Owen Gramps. Our church in Watsonville recently broke ground for the construction of a new church building. The open dinner is an added means of calling the church into attention in this largely non-Protestant community. Chairman of the event was Miss Lily Larsen, who supervised details. The entire congregation worked, however, as well as many non-member friends. As Pastor Gramps points out, even "the rolling of 3,300 meatballs is no small project."

Church dinners are a part of just about every church program, and where cooperation and conviviality are maintained, contribute much to the spirit of fellowship within the congregation. Christian fellowship in more ways than one is a table fellowship.

(Photos by Russell Johansen.)



"Did I forget to give you coffee?" "No, this will be my third cup."



It's a long reach, but it's worth it.



"Did your mother make this headcheese?"

Our Women's Work

MRS. AAGE PAULSEN, EDITOR

Beaver Crossing, Nebraska



I wish to take this opportunity to wish every one a "Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Blessed New Year."

E. P.

This Happy Christmastide We Will

This happy Christmastide we will,
With hearts and mind rejoicing,
Employ our every thought and skill
God's grace and glory voicing.
In Him, that in the manger lay,
Let us with all our might today
Exult in heart and spirit,
And hail Him as our Lord and King
Till earth's remotest bounds shall ring
With praises of His merit.

C. Ball.

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the WMS Board, which now consists of the five executive officers and the nine district presidents, met at Chicago on Saturday, November 14, 1959. We regretted the unavoidable absence of several members.

The meeting opened with devotions led by the president. Following the adoption of the agenda, we prepared to work in sub-committees. The administrative items were discussed by Committee A, consisting of the executive officers. Committee B was led by Mrs. C. S. Fynboe, District IX. This group included all the district presidents, who together discussed problems and plans related especially to their work. They found Mrs. Fynboe's leadership very helpful. Findings of both committees were discussed by the full Board during the afternoon session.

Among the actions passed by the Board, the following are of general interest:

Danish Lutheran Children's Home Jubilee Fund — The Board decided that this fund should be held intact for action at the 1960 convention.

Mary Seeley Knudstrup Scholarship Fund — Our goal was to increase this fund by \$5,000 in 1959. To date only \$700 has been received. Let's try to meet the goal. Please encourage young women of your area to apply for scholarships.

Home Missions — The treasurer tells us she has overdrawn this account in order to meet obligations. Your contributions are needed to balance this account before December 31, 1959.

1960 Dues — Payable before March 1, 1960.

A Guide for local leaders to be sent to each local group, District and National officers. Contents to be: National, District and local constitutions, 1960 budget, directory of officers, rules for Mary Seeley Knudstrup Scholarship Fund, regulations related to convention delegates, etc.

1960 Convention — General plans for the next convention were discussed. Specific announcements to follow at a later date.

Retreats — Several District Presidents announced Retreats during 1960. Agreed that the president should discuss with the Blue Print Committee the possibility of sponsoring Retreats for women of all four merging churches, at their meeting November 19-20, 1959.

Dr. Johannes Knudsen, Treasurer of the Joint Commission on Lutheran Unity, spent a two-hour session with us

during which he discussed general merger plans and also the relationship and functions of the women's organization in the new church. We felt that this period was very informative and beneficial to all of us and we are grateful to Dr. Knudsen for his interpretation of the work of JCLU and for giving so generously of his time in meeting with us.

The Board met a full day. It was evening when we adjourned. The members all agreed that much information and inspiration was gained by coming. Mrs. Fynboe expressed her pleasure in being present, adding that "such a meeting is worth coming for even if only one idea is brought home." An evaluation of the meeting on this basis makes its full value inestimable!

We all join in thanking our organization for making it possible to meet. We extend greetings to all local groups and include therein our best wishes for a blessed holiday season in your homes and churches.

Sincerely,

Emilie Stockholm.

Program Packets

In the very near future "program packets" will be sent to each district president. It is a packet that the Augustana church women have compiled, and the United Lutheran Church women are going to use it too. Planned programs are outlined for eight months, from Jan. 1 to Sept. 1. After Sept. 1, material will be available that has been compiled by women of the four merging synods Augustana, ULC, SUOMI, and AELC. As program chairman of the WMS, and with the help of other members of the committee, I will try to keep a list of program helps and suggestions before the district presidents all the time. They in turn will keep the program chairman of their respective districts instructed and informed of new material.

Every district president and program chairman of the district should get their name on the mailing list of several publishing houses or Lutheran Book Stores — order material from time to time. There is a wealth of very fine material that can be used in our local Ladies' Aids. Here are some of the publishing houses:

- (1) Muhlenberg Press, 2900 Queen Lane, Phil. 29, Pa.
- (2) Augustana Book Concern, 327 S. La Salle St., Chicago 4, Ill.
- (3) Blair Publishing House, Blair, Nebr.
- (4) Concordia Publishing House (Missouri Synod) 3558 So. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.
- (5) Augsburg Publishing House, 426 So. 5th St., Minneapolis 15, Minn.
- (6) Friendship Press, Augustana Book Concern.

Here are a list of books and magazines that are very good for program material:

- (1) Our own "Women's Page" in Lutheran Tidings. Also, Lutheran Tidings should be read from cover to cover.
- (2) "Resource," a new magazine of the four merging synods.
- (3) "My Day," Missouri Synod (a most wonderful magazine) Concordia Publishing Company.
- (4) "The Lutheran," a Lutheran News Week—(a wonderful source of current events in our Lutheran Church) 2900 Queen Lane, Philadelphia 29, Pa. \$3.50 a year.
- (5) "The Lutheran Woman," Augustana Lutheran Church Women's magazine.
- (6) "The Church Woman," official publication of "The

(Continued on Page 15)

OPINION AND COMMENT



AS CHILDREN, some decades ago, we experienced an emotion which has largely been lost in our modern practices of Christmas preparation. A parent who tries today to preserve the breathless sense of expectancy in his child, the awe of anticipation, is frustrated on all sides by so much frantic Yuletide activity that the surprise is completely lost. At Christmas, the world plunged from darkness into Light. The Bethlehem event was the sudden breaching of Time by God. It was an epochal happening. Its anniversary ought to be experienced with wonder and humility. The little child's eyes open wide as he hears of the manger and the magi and the shepherds and the dumb oxen looking on. This childhood wonder ought to stay with us; but changing customs and feverish activity which sweeps up the children, too, in a welter of programs and festivities and parties, makes the wonder and awe almost impossible to recreate. Paul in a letter to Corinth wrote, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways." But wonder at the birth of the Christ-child is a wonder which we ought not to outgrow: it ought to grow with us and on us. Jesus said once, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." This seems especially true in the approach to Christmas.

THE RUSSIAN POET, Pasternak, in his famous book, "Dr. Zhivago" has a minor character near the heart of the book speak about the miraculous nature of the birth of Christ. The words are so moving that it seems not out of place to quote them rather fully on this page today. "What an enormously significant change! How did it come about that an individual human event, insignificant by ancient standards, was regarded as equal in significance to the migration of a whole people? Why should it have this value in the eyes of heaven?.....Something in the world had changed. Rome was at an end. The reign of numbers was at an end. The duty, imposed by armed force, to live unanimously as a people, as a whole nation, was abolished. Leaders and nations were relegated to the past. They were replaced by the doctrine of individuality and freedom. Individual human life became the life story of God, and its contents filled the vast expanses of the universe. As it says in the liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation, Adam tried to be like God and failed, but now God was made man so that Adam should be made God."

VERY LITTLE TIME is left for congregations to finish gathering funds for Lutheran World Action during 1959. We are asked for the usual minimum goal, and then on top of that, because of the refugee emergency, we are asked for at least 12½ per cent

extra. Many churches have sent cartons of good clothing to depots, following the annual Thanksgiving clothing "drive." (What an unfortunate word that is! It has elements of coercion and promotion that are out of context in the area of Christian charity. The word "appeal" which is now most often used is far more meaningful.) Now that the clothing ingathering has been completed, the next urgency is to put LWA far over the minimal mark. If people are aware of what can be done with the money, it will come in — there can be no question of that. Since 1945, when Lutheran World Relief began its overseas shipments, 600 million pounds valued at more than \$100 million have been distributed. Loaded into boxcars, these goods would make a train 45 miles long. Who knows how many innocent lives have been saved directly due to these previous gifts? Our record this year must be no less impressive.

SOME INTERESTING figures have come to our attention recently. The highly-regarded organization called CARE which likewise sends food packages overseas and which has succeeded in reaching destinations previously thought inaccessible, will send 22 pounds of food per dollar given. This is quite a bit. **However, a dollar given through LWA can send 300 pounds of food overseas.** It is entirely within your personal means in your own family to send food overseas by the ton! \$7.00 will do it. For the cost of two football-game tickets you can send a ton of food overseas where it is so badly needed. If you must go to that game, go, but see to this other "must" first!

LAST NIGHT'S Los Angeles Mirror-News announced a news flash which was very exciting to many Lutheran readers. It told of the most recent JCLU meeting in Chicago, just concluded, and said that the commissioners have agreed on a new name for the merged church which is scheduled to join the ULCA, Aug., Finnish and AELC into one body. The name will be the "Lutheran Evangelical Church of America." This name, if finally ratified, will take its place along side the two other great Lutheran church names in our land: "The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod" and "The American Lutheran Church."

THE BEST Christmas gifts we receive are those which have been made by hand by the giver. Sometimes much thought and care and sacrifice goes into the purchase and wrapping of a bought gift. Love in material form has its place now as it did when the three wise men started it all. But who will deny that the most precious things we own are those which have been fashioned by the creative spirit in our friend or relative who remembers us with the gift? For we are in his thoughts all during the process of the creative act. As we now turn our thoughts to the Gift above all others, sent from the Creator above all others, we know we have been in His thoughts throughout the process of redemption which Christmas signals. "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea; with a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me." **God, give us true awareness this Christmastide. Uplift our several families, and make them worthy of a Christ-child. Calm our spirits and bring them into Thy presence. Arm us against the downward drag of worldly cares. And teach us our role in Thy great drama of peace and love.**

The Light That Shines

Our Hope

Ernest D. Nielsen

President, Grand View College

Whether there is a religious resurgence among us is a debatable question. Nevertheless, the religious climate is noticeably different from that of the thirties. Today the churches are being challenged in new ways, which may require fresh approaches not only in methods of religious life and practice, but also in the interpretation of the gospel for this day. On the part of many, the efficacy of preaching is open to question. Unfortunately, there are those theologians, in prominent centers of learning, whose views on the ministry in the present situation do not lend much encouragement to those who must occupy the pulpit. We face the curious paradox today of apparent signs of both rising interest in and indifference to religion. It is the kind of dilemma which tests the faith and love of every concerned individual, not the least the individual whose calling it is to preach to worshipers each Sunday or teach the fundamentals of Christianity to the youth in our colleges.

While this may seem a strange introduction to a Christmas greeting, I think that it is not at all irrelevant to the gospel for Christmas Day. In many of the things which are happening in the world today, the moving of God's grace is evident. The great concern for mutual understanding of the problems which face us in the church, school, and every walk of life is truly expressive of a quest for something more than purely secular solutions. Christmas is not man's answer to man's need, but God's. It is not something which we offer to the world, but something which we receive and in turn commend to others. As we receive the Christmas message we receive Him, as truly as the good news stands for the historical event in which the Word became flesh.

Our new epoch with its technological advances is upsetting too many. Some ask, is man playing God? Others ask, in such a way as to imply that God is dead, where is God? Still others seriously ask questions concerning the Life that is the light of man. The hopeful note in the Christmas event and message is that this light still shines. I am persuaded that one aspect in any fresh and effective approach to an adequate Christian witness in our day will require a re-examination of the concept of hope. What is man's hope? This is a very fair question in a modern world in which the enlarging capacities and experiences of modern man raise new questions which cannot be sidestepped.

At Grand View we have had many enlarging experiences the last few years. I am thinking presently

primarily of our relationships to the educational world at large. We need to ponder upon what it means that we have a church college. It means that it is a work which we no more can neglect than the call to any other work in God's vineyard. One reason that Grand View is deserving of our church people's financial support and prayers is that it is more than an institution; it is a community of teachers and students. It is also a place where Christian nurture and growth may take place, not at our bidding, indeed, but as the Spirit enlightens and guides us.

While we have every good reason to rejoice that the work of the church is being well supported today, we need to remember Grand View, especially at this season of the year when we like to contribute to worthwhile causes. Gifts from all possible sources have to be sought continuously so that Grand View can develop steadily and serve its students, and through them serve the church, our communities, our nation, and our fellowmen everywhere to the glory of God. The service of Grand View extends far beyond the campus! Each Christmas gift sent to Grand View in care of the president's office will be acknowledged by me personally, and placed in the unrestricted Development Fund.

On behalf of Grand View College, its Board of Directors, faculty and students, I express our best wishes for a very happy and blessed Christmas.

Christmas Greeting

Mary could become, and did become, the mother of Jesus because she was able to say: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord: let it be to me according to your word."

A joyous Christmas to all!

Valdemar and Elline Jensen.

The One Division That Matters

We divide humanity into many classes — white and colored, rich and poor, educated and uneducated, Americans and non-Americans, East and West... But Jesus drew a line down through all these distinctions and divided humanity into just two classes — the unconverted and the converted, the once-born and the twice-born. All men live on one side or the other of that line. No other division matters — this is a division that divides; it is a division that runs through time and eternity.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." (K.J.V.)

From Conversion by **E. Stanley Jones.**
(Abingdon Press)



Converted !, (?) or *

Pastor Owen Gramps
Watsonville, California

A condensed sermon by Pastor Owen Gramps, which however we would like to hear delivered by Victor Borge.

Conversion is a subject that Lutherans have a tendency to avoid whereas some groups put a great deal of emphasis on it; even so much as to teach or imply that a person isn't really a Christian at all unless he has had what is known as a "conversion experience."



We do not deny the possibility of such, for after all, this was what happened to Saul on the road to Damascus. He suddenly, even literally, saw the light which changed his life completely. We know, or at least have heard of other persons whose lives have undergone a somewhat similar dramatic and complete switch. We can definitely label these as "Converted, exclamation mark."

We reject the idea however that this is God's only way of making

Christians. Our observation has in fact been that the more usual way is by slow growth, gradual though not necessarily continuous development.

We have developed further misgivings about the idea of instantaneous conversion because of those who claim to have been thus converted but manifest some very unchristian attitudes and actions. Legalism and self-righteousness are typical. Obvious hypocrisy and insincerity are not uncommon. We know also that religion which comes suddenly, often does not last long. So it has come about that many take a doubtful view of the whole thing and cannot think of the idea of conversion without having in their minds along with the word a question mark in parenthesis.

The third possibility suggested by our over-punctuated sermon title is that the term converted may well require further explanation or some qualification. Often there should be a footnote saying "partial," for one of two possible reasons.

First, it **could** be that the person who has finally decided to affirm or reaffirm his faith by participation in the church — it could **be** that he was pretty close to it already. Many there are whose lives are really largely in accord with Christ's teachings, who have by some indirect way developed Christian attitudes. All they need, **perhaps**, is to see the added inspiration and strength they could receive through worship, and the responsibility they have to share in the magnificent enterprise of promulgating this way of life and thought. Such a step is hardly going to be as dramatic as when a thoroughly wicked way of life is replaced by Christ's way. So we should recognize that only a partial conversion is needed sometimes.

Unfortunately, the second reason for partial conversion is more common, namely, that people **want** to turn only so far and that's all. Who of us do not know persons whose Christianity is unquestionably genuine but simply does not extend quite far enough

in certain directions. I'm not talking about the mistakes and human failings that are invariably made by all Christians. The partialness of conversion to which our attention should be directed is that which does not reach into every area of life. We often hear or observe that some individual's Christianity does not extend into his business dealings. Or how someone is kind and fair and tolerant toward everyone — except his own brother. We know people who have all the Christian virtues — except generosity — or except hopefulness — or except the ability to refrain from gossip. How many there are who really **do remarkably** well at obeying all the commandments, but who like the young man who made this claim to Jesus, have a glaring lack. There are those who lead an exceptionally good life but lack the grace to be humble. Things which may seem by comparison very small matters, may be like a thorn in the toe, cripple the whole person.

We might well consider here a pre-requisite to conversion, namely to be convertible. Whether total, substantial or partial conversion is necessary to make saints of us, we are going to have to be open to God's help, willing to relinquish that which is not Christ-like in us, and be ready and willing to do whatever God directs as necessary for us. God may see fit to change in us only one thing at a time. Then it is up to us to accept His schedule. He may not help us as much as we feel He should, but this He does that we may be strengthened.

Another appropriate footnote for many occasions when the term converted can be applied is the word "tentatively." We are not happy with the word "tentative" attached to anything connected with our religion, but we do well to recognize that there is much that needs such a label.

Several notable examples of the "Converted — asterisk — footnote — tentative" condition are evident in the life of Peter. Jesus met Simon and his brother at the shore of the lake and said "Follow me; I will make you fishers of men." Immediately, our record says, they left their nets and followed Him. Converted, exclamation mark? Wait now, what about the time when Jesus was a prisoner and Peter swore he never heard of Him? In spite of this however, I don't think we can question the authenticity of the initial conversion; and of course, it wasn't long until the cock crew and Peter went out and wept bitterly. But then after the resurrection what happened? We might have expected Peter to be the one to organize the disciples for the great task of continuing the work which Jesus had started, for which in fact they had been commissioned. But no; Peter announced that he was going back to the fishing business.

Even after Pentecost when Peter was a leader in the church work, we recall his prejudice in regard to race — and how eventually, but not without a struggle, he was given a new outlook on that matter. So quite unlike that of Paul, the conversion of Peter was a complicated chain of experiences. Or we might say that he had to be converted again and again. This could be God's plan for us too. And certainly it is not for us to determine how God shall work His salvation in us — only for us to be ready, willing, open and trusting.

A Christian Christmas

(Continued from Page 2)

for Foreign Service since 1946 for their total programs of relief, vocational training, migration and resettlement, excluding the value of U. S. government surplus commodities.

Since 1945 a total of 630,000 refugees have been resettled in the United States:

Church World Service.....	106,000
Lutheran Refugee Service	60,000
Catholic Resettlement Service.....	217,000
Hebrew Immigration Aid Soc.....	160,000
Smaller Agencies	87,000

One of the most tragic situations pertains to the so-called "hard-core" cases of 19,000 refugees in camps in Europe and which especially are the object of the proponents of WRY. They are the result of nations choosing only the young, strong and highly skilled refugees, and leaving behind the blind, tubercular and the aged who would be needing institutional or semi-institutional care. Further complications are caused by families with a large number of children or family units with perhaps one member suffering from TB or some other disease. During the WRY one of the programs having highest priority is clearing the refugee camps by the end of 1960 of the 12,000 refugees who remain under the protection of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Some of the European nations like France, Norway, Sweden, Belgium have received a great number of the "hard-core" cases. Special projects in various countries have been started to help especially these cases. U.S. has brought no less than 4,350 such cases into this land. (Catholics 1,500, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Service 1,500, Church World Service about 1,000 and the National Lutheran Council 350.) For the healthy and younger refugee it now seems that the prospect for work will be included in his opportunity for resettlement.

With the aid promised or in sight from these many nations it now seems to be possible to eye the end of many refugee problems in Europe. The efforts now engaged in to this end by the nations of the U.N. should also be looked at from the point of view of economy. The U.N. at present maintain, with the assistance of UNESCO, 380 schools with 125,000 pupils in attendance while 55,000 study in government and private schools with assistance from UNRWA. The two most baffling refugee problems are the Palestinian refugees and the Hong Kong refugees. The most sordid conditions exist in those two places. No less than \$5,000,000 worth of food is furnished by U.N. annually for Hong Kong.

The question may perhaps have been raised in the minds of some of you. Is it fair that the government of this country sets the standards and adjust the rules by which the refugees

are admitted and must abide? Why does not the government itself engage in admitting and resettling refugees rather than demand the Voluntary Agencies of the various denominational groups to do so? Is it not a hardship on our churches and synagogues? Why should the State in our particular situation, recognizing the separation of state and church, be allowed to throw its burden of responsibility over on the churches?

The answer it seems to me is easily found: Our government recognizes that in the process of resettling great masses of people a large degree of adjustment must be made if no arbitrary action is to prevail. The process of resettling people who have lost their homes by involuntary action will require the largest amount possible of spiritual compassion, love and understanding. The reservoir of such love and care will be found in the churches. No governmental decree or legal rules should be made to apply when the refugee is settled in a new place which he may call home. Such resettlement should not be by force but by the love of Christ, the love of which is kind, not jealous, nor boastful, not arrogant or rude, not insisting on its own way, not irritable or resentful, not rejoicing at wrong, but in the right, the love which bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

There is nothing else or nothing less, which will suffice if the millions of homeless people in the world are to find homes and a new life. Has the love which moved God to send us his son reached and touched us, so we will want to channel our dollars from the wasteful spending for unnecessary gifts to the support of those agencies already mobilized for the meaningful and satisfying work of bringing homes and homeless people together. Herod's cruel and cunning political crimes as well as the innkeeper's no vacancy sign could not thwart God's plan: the birth of His son turned the shabby stable into a sacred place, gloriously marked by the star and by the presence of the Christ child. Is it not possible that the distress and despair, the human tragedy spelled out so clearly for us in the figures quoted above and the prayer for help coming to our ears from the misery of the refugee camps, will awake in us a desire so urgent and over-powering that Christmas will make us aid generously those who propose and prepare to be neighbors to homeless refugees. May our gifts to Lutheran World Action at least be doubled. G. K. Chesterton once expressed the human need of a home now and in all eternity in a beautiful, though mysteriously fashioned verse:

To an open house in the evening,
Home shall men come,
To an older place than Eden,
And a taller town than Rome,
To the end of the way of the wander-
ing star,

To the things that cannot be and that
are,
To the place where God was homeless,
And all men are at home.

I cannot wish anything better for the people of the congregations of the Synod this Christmas than the experience of joyfully giving according to ability in order that at least a great many more homeless people of the world may find homes.

OUR CHURCH

Seattle, Washington. Dr. J. C. Kjaer, pastor of St. John's Church here, and a Reserve Chaplain (Lt. Col.) recently conducted a Chaplain Conference attended by 32 chaplains and 3 line officers of the armed forces from the Pacific Northwest and California... On November 15, in the church, 20 adults, two teen-agers and six children were welcomed as new members. Four adults were baptized and three were confirmed at the services. New choir robes for the Senior Choir were dedicated on December 13.

Los Angeles, California. Emanuel Congregation here and Our Redeemer Congregation (Aug.) experienced a pulpit exchange on December 13, preparatory to an experimental period of worshipping together to begin in January. The two congregations are the only two in the immediate area of the city which will very likely belong to the soon-to-be-formed "Lutheran Evangelical Church in America"... Recently, an intercom installation was donated by a member of Emanuel for the parsonage, connected it with the pastor's office in the church. The same member likewise donated an electric door chime for the parsonage.

Marlette, Michigan. According to the Marlette church paper, Pastor Robert Fallgatter of Wilbur, Washington, has accepted the call to serve the Marlette and Juhl-Germania congregations, and will arrive there January 31. A Panamanian missionary, Pastor Charles Moses, preached at services here December 20.

Edison, New Jersey. Pastor Kai Kirkegaard-Jensen and his wife have been on a three-week vacation by ship to Panama. Meanwhile, Pastor Ove Nielsen and Mr. Herluf Jensen have served the temporary vacancy in St. Stephen's Church. While the Kirkegaard-Jensens were in Panama, according to the report in Kirke og Folk, unrest broke out and they were confined to their hotel and guarded by U. S. soldiers. The new church is rapidly being constructed in Edison, and expectations are that it will be completed about Easter time.

Des Moines, Iowa. Paging Youth Editor and Seminary Student Everett Nielsen recently was presented by his wife with a son, David Kraig, born November 21,

St. John's Bell Tolls 75 Years

Sunday, November 8, at 10 o'clock the bell that hangs high in the tower of St. John's Lutheran Church, Sidney, Michigan rang out its message as people gathered from far and near to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the church's founding.

It was on Sunday, November 16, 1884, at 10 o'clock, that it first sent its message of gladness over this settlement of Danish pioneers as they gathered for the dedication of their church by the Rev. Ole Amble.

For 18 years it rang, calling both youth and old for services by their beloved pastor, Ole Amble. Then on June 12, 1902, when the church building was destroyed by a tornado the bell ceased to ring for 13 months. On July 12, 1903, this same bell had once again found its place high in the tower of a new St. John's Church that stood high upon the same hill.

Sunday after Sunday, year after year, it called the little flock and has seen many come first as babes to be baptized, as youth in confirmation, and as young men and women to the altar in marriage and communion. It has also tolled its last farewell as loved ones are carried to their resting place.

There still are ears in this community that remember hearing this old bell ring loud and clear each Christmas eve to proclaim the birth of Christ.

During these 75 years this bell has seen five ministers come and go. First, the Rev. Ole Amble, who served from 1884 to 1927; the Rev. A. C. Kildegaard, 1927 to 1937; the Rev. C. A. Stub from 1938 to 1950, the Rev. Peter Thomsen, 1951 to 1954; and last, the Rev. Beryl Knudsen, 1954 to October 1, 1959. Arnold Johnson, lay pastor from Cedar Springs, Michigan, is now holding services at 9 o'clock until a regular ordained pastor is secured.

The St. John's Lutheran Church is a parish of the First Lutheran Church of Montcalm County and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church Synod. Its present officers are: President, Ervin A. Woerpel; vice president, Clarence E. Olson; secretary, Maren Noah; treasurer, Jerry J. Thomsen; and trustee, Dewey Hansen.

Yes, the bell rang out on Sunday, November 8, 1959, at 10 a. m., for services and holy communion by the Rev. Howard Christensen, district president from Detroit and Arnold Johnson, lay pastor. Dedication of parish house at 11:30 a. m. After November 8, the red brick building located on Pakes Road was no longer to be called District No. 8, Sidney township, the old Hodge school or the Dickerson Lake schoolhouse, but the new St. John's Parish House. Many a person, both young and old, will find themselves at home as they enter into the life of the

parish house. As we dedicate our new parish house, we are continuing the purpose of the building for we find in the old school records, quote: "This building shall be used for education and religious purposes only, for all time to come." Dinner was served at one o'clock at the DBS hall in Sidney followed by the anniversary program. All former baptized and confirmed members and friends were welcome to come and join in the fellowship of the day.

May the bell of St. John's Lutheran Church, North Sidney, Michigan, continue to ring so the church which was started in His name, shall continue to grow in grace and favor with God.

Harriet K. Olson.

Seven Songs for Christmas

(Continued from Page 6)

never gone out; the angel's song re-echoes down through the ages to our own day. And our Bethlehem, where we may go to seek Him, is the church.

"Friends," gently spoke God's angel, "Now why are you afraid? Only joy springs from my message, sheer joy poured out in song, for He who brings delight into the world is born on earth in David's city.

"Jesus the Christ, the son of David, our deliverer from all danger, is born, take note of this; and lies swaddled in the manger. From heaven high comes the Christmas message: 'Now glory be to the God of grace!'

"Now glory be to the God of grace! Peace, descending, comes now to the dust, and gladness, like flowers, like foliage, springs up from the swaddling clothes."

Thus loud and sweet beneath the sky sounded the tidings, as of all the stars together singing their morning song.*

God gave to us Heaven's light and angel's song, with peace. Afterglow and echo have shone and resounded throughout Christendom, where spirit has voice, and song has power, where eyes shine brightly on Christmas Eve.

Church, our Bethlehem are you! And all the little ones therein shall, after it is spoken to them, find their Savior with the Christmas Day's gospel, in the manger room of their hearts.

* Job 38:7

(To be continued)

The Children of Haalogaland

(Continued from Page 7)

Now I had nothing further on which to question them. All the altar furnishings had been discussed. No, not the candles. (We usually have them lighted during children's services.) Delighted that I could have a further conversa-

tion with the children, I asked: "But the altar lights, my dears, why do we have them on the altar? What do the lights represent?" As soon as I had the question on my lips, I hesitated; for what in the world should I answer myself? I knew very well all the theologic-liturgical answers, that the two lights symbolize the law and the gospel, etc. — but was this anything to offer the children?

A brief silence. Then came the answer, this time from a Norwegian boy:

"The lights represent hope; the hope of eternal life."

I turned around, and we all stood a moment and looked at the buoyant yellow flames which lifted themselves so quietly in reaching to the heights. Now I had learned this also. And I shall never forget it. This "explanation" is the correct one. The church should make haste to accept it. The children in Tana had given it. The lights on the altar represent hope, the hope of eternal life.

One might well ask who learned most from this catechization in Tana — the bishop or the children.

What Darkness Cannot Dim

(Continued from Page 4)

had borrowed from a neighbor in another village. The children gathered about him near the light, and through the open window they heard a clear voice reading: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." This is the Book which pierces the darkness of sin and offers redemption.

Some years ago, early in my ministry, I came to know and to befriend a man who was later convicted of murder. I stayed with him through his long trial and his imprisonment in Sing Sing. I visited him often in the death house. One day I asked the guard who was always with me when I talked with him if I could give him a copy of the New Testament. The guard looked the book over very carefully and handed this New Testament to this condemned man through the steel screen which separated us. I remember well the last visit I had with him a week later. It was his last night on earth; the following morning he paid the penalty. As I walked through the corridor with the guard, he heard me come, and walked to the door of his steel cage and said to me, "That man Luke wrote a great story." His face was lit up with a light and a peace that I have never seen before. It would be Luke — the gospel of redemption for all those who have lost their way; for sheep that are lost; for lilies that fade and of prodigals who step across the pathway of indiscretion. "Be Merry" for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." This is the Book which sheds a light which no darkness can dim.

In World Refugee Year, Your Gift Will Do This

Geneva—(LWF)—How far will your World Refugee Year gift go in helping some homeless person or family keep alive and perhaps come a little closer to self-sufficiency once again?

You can feed an undernourished Chinese refugee child in Hong Kong for as little as twelve and one-half cents (U.S.) a day, says the WRY committee for that Far Eastern colony.

For \$34 you can feed him or her for a whole year, adds the committee, whose chairman is the Rev. K. L. Stumpf, Lutheran World Federation senior representative in Hong Kong.

Here are some more figures from Hong Kong:

A boy or girl can be kept in school for a year by a gift of between \$8 and \$15.

You can train a young man or woman for a trade by which he can earn a living by contributing \$5 a month, or \$20 for his or her whole course.

For \$17 a month you can provide basic food, clothing and shelter for an entire refugee family.

For \$200 you can supply a capital grant to build a small concrete dwelling for a family.

And here are some examples of "what money can buy" in the way of help for the Arab refugees in the Middle East. These are WRY "targets" suggested by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, with which the LWF works closely in its service to Palestinian refugees:

For \$42 you can supply a school for Arab refugees with essential equipment for physical culture.

For \$70 you can provide a cash grant enabling an individual refugee to resume self-respect and self-sufficiency by working as a blacksmith, coffee grinder and seller, vegetable hawker, barber, photographer, tailor or shoe-maker.

You can give an Arab youth a year's vocational training for \$180, and a crippled refugee child in the Middle East can be rehabilitated for \$840.

For Europe, here is a sample taken from the LWF's own project list for World Refugee Year: For \$1,000 you can enable a Baltic, Hungarian or Polish Lutheran pastor-in-exile in West Germany to replace his heavily-used six-year-old car with a newer one and thus continue to serve his widely scattered parishioners.

Liberty

But who shall reconstruct the fabric of demolished government? Who shall rear again the well proportioned columns of constitutional liberty? No, if these columns fall, they will be raised not again . . . Bitterer tears, however, will flow over them than

were ever shed over the monuments of Roman or Grecian art; for they will be the monuments of a more glorious edifice than Greece or Rome ever saw, the edifice of constitutional American liberty.

Daniel Webster.

From eulogy on
George Washington, 1832.

Program Packets

(Continued from Page 9)

General Department of United Church Women; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A." 475 Riverside Drive, N. Y. 27, N. Y.

(7) "Lutheran Women's Work," published by United Lutheran Church Women.

(8) OUR NEW MAGAZINE? ? ? ? ? (WATCH FOR NEWS OF THE INTERIM MAGAZINE TO BE PUBLISHED AS A JOINT VENTURE OF THE ALCW, ULCW: SUOMI LCW; AND OUR OWN AELC WOMEN. We hope that our women will subscribe 100 per cent. The cost will be \$1.25 per year and the first issue comes out in March. 'Nuff for now. (Notice inserted by editor.)

BOOKS that make good program material can be bought at the nearest Bible stores:

(1) "Their Sound Goes Forth," History of Lutheranism by Ruth Juram Smith.

(2) "The Christian Woman," ten programs for women's organizations, by Ruth Youngdahl Nelson.

(3) "The Woman Beautiful," Ten programs, by Ruth Youngdahl Nelson.

(4) "A Handbook for Church Women," by Ruth Nothstein.

(5) "Why I Am a Lutheran," by Dr. Smith.

(6) "The Concerns of a Continent," James W. Hoffman.

(7) Adult guide on "Christian Concerns of North American Neighbors," by Rhoda C. Edmeston (6 and 7 go together).

(8) "The Little Service Book," published by School Press, Our Saviour's Lutheran School, 1734 Williamsbridge Road, N. Y. 61, N. Y.

(9) Every home, in our synod, should have a subscription to the "Santal Missionary."

I suggest that the district presidents and officers avail themselves of the workshop schools the Augustana Lutheran Church Women and United Lutheran Church Women conduct in their localities. They are very helpful.

Some changes may have to be made, in the program material that will be coming to each district president, to prepare programs that will suit your own local groups.

Adelaide Fynboe,
Program Chairman WMS.

Notice

As the congregation at Flaxton, North Dakota, is now disbanded, the Rural Lutheran Ladies' Aid members are writing a history of the church, and its activities, through the years 1900 to 1958. The booklets should be ready about the first of the year. The cost has not yet been decided but it will be less than \$2.00. Anyone interested in securing a copy may write to Mrs. Carl Lind, Treasurer, or to Mrs. Helmer Nygaard, President, Flaxton, N. D. A copy will be reserved.

Acknowledgment of Receipts From the Synod Treasurer

For the Month of November, 1959

Towards the Budget:

Unassigned Receipts:

(by Congregation)	
Enumclaw, Wash.	\$195.44
Manistee, Mich.	50.00
Dwight, Ill.	196.77
Racine, Wis.	314.99
Tacoma, Wash.	94.75
Victory, Ludington, Mich.	69.75
Bridgeport, Conn.	100.00
Detroit, Mich.	728.21
Trinity, Greenville, Mich.	113.00
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	458.72
Menominee, Mich.	97.73
Minneapolis, Minn.	201.00
Brush, Colo.	212.00
Muskegon, Mich.	149.00
West Denmark, Luck, Wis.	600.00
St. Ansgar's, Lindsay, Nebr.	432.71
Clinton, Iowa	194.80
Des Moines, Iowa	377.88
Diamond Lake, Lake Benton, Minn.	200.00
Bridgeport, Conn.	100.00
Newell, Iowa	502.85
Brayton, Iowa	200.00
Wayne, Alberta	487.60
St. Ansgar's, Lindsay, Nebr.	20.00
Marquette, Nebr.	872.25
Bridgeport, Conn.	100.00
St. Paul ELC, Cedar Falls, Ia.	146.60
Solvang, Calif.	634.30

For Pastors' Pension Fund:

(by Congregation)	
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	160.00
Marquette, Nebr. (Ladies' Aid)	10.00

For Children's Home:

Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa	10.00
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For Seamen's Mission:

(by Congregation)	
Danish L. A., Grayling, Mich.	10.00
Bosenborg, L. A., Lindsay, Nebr.	10.00
Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa	10.00
Brayton LWC, Brayton, Iowa	20.00

For Santal Mission:

(by Congregation)	
Danish L. A., Grayling, Mich.	10.00
Danish L. A., Tyler, Minn.	50.00
Fredsville, Cedar Falls, Iowa	25.00
Dagmar L. Petersen, Tyler, Minn.	10.00
Danish L. A., Danevang, Texas	25.00
Muskegon, Mich.	131.00
Ladies' Aid, Troy, N. Y.	68.25
Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa	48.55
Bethany Women's League, Menominee, Mich.	25.00
Ladies' Aid, Lake Norden, S. D.	10.00

Brayton LWC, Brayton, Iowa	20.00
In memory of Joy Eckstein, Viborg, S. D.	10.50
South Lutheran Society, Viborg, South Dakota	15.00
Guild, Solvang, Calif.	25.00
For Tyler Old People's Home: (by Congregation)	
Willing Worker's Society, Dwight, Ill.	10.00
Danish L. A., Grayling, Mich.	10.00
Danish Ladies' Aid, Dwight, Ill.	10.00
For Home Mission: (by Congregation)	
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	132.00
In memory of Mrs. J. C. Nielsen, by relatives and friends, Bone Lake, Wis.	11.00
Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa	10.00
For Grand View College:	
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.	76.00

Total Budget Receipts from Congregations \$8,812.65
Previously acknowledged 63,167.32

Total to date \$71,979.97

Other Budget Receipts:**Pastors' Pension Contributions:**

Manistee, Mich.	\$ 18.00
Victory, Ludington, Mich.	3.00
Bethlehem, Cedar Falls, Iowa	22.00
Diamond Lake, Lake Benton, Minn.	27.90
Rev. Thorvald Hansen	30.00
St. Paul, Cedar Falls, Iowa	19.25
Synod President	10.50
Synod Secretary	1.25

Total for Month \$120.15
Previously acknowledged 3,128.46
\$3,260.36

POSTMASTER: If undeliverable as addressed, attach Form 3579, give new address, and return entire paper to:

LUTHERAN TIDINGS, Askov, Minnesota
Return postage guaranteed.

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, 1959

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____ State _____

JENSEN, JENS M.
TYLER, MINN.
KLE.2,
6-3

Annual Reports:

Enumclaw, Wash.	\$ 6.00
Manistee, Mich.	3.00
Tacoma, Wash.	6.00
Bridgeport, Conn.	7.50
Detroit, Mich.	12.50
Trinity, Greenville, Mich.	2.50
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	10.00
Muskegon, Mich.	6.00
Lindsay, Nebr.	5.00
Diamond Lake, Lake Benton, Minn.	2.00
Wayne, Alberta	5.00
St. Paul ELC, Cedar Falls, Ia.	9.00
Solvang, Calif.	7.50

Total for month \$ 82.00
Previously acknowledged 305.50

\$387.50

Total Budget Receipts to date,

11-30-59 \$75,627.83

Received for Items Outside of the Budget:**For Lutheran World Action:**

(by Congregation)

Dwight, Ill.	\$ 41.83
Racine, Wis.	5.00
Mr. Greenley Nielsen, Des Moines, Iowa	2.00
Trinity, Greenville, Mich.	5.15
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	327.60
Menominee, Mich.	17.07
Minneapolis, Minn.	39.30
Brush, Colo.	59.50
Lindsay, Nebr.	132.00
Clinton, Iowa	5.20
Des Moines, Iowa	61.10
Diamond Lake, Lake Benton, Minn.	7.00
Wayne, Alberta	88.80
Hampton, Iowa	39.50
In memory of Joy Eckstein, Viborg, S. D.	10.00
Solvang, Calif.	300.00
Guild, Solvang, Calif.	25.00

Total for month \$1,166.05
Previously acknowledged 10,692.30

Total to date \$11,858.35

For Santal Mission:

In memory of Mrs. Hilda Gammelgaard, Minneapolis, Minn., and Mrs. John Sorensen, Dagmar, Mont., by Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Jensen, Dagmar, Mont.	4.00
Racine, Wis.	5.00
Mrs. Minnie Mathisen, Des Moines, Iowa	5.00
Victory Trinity Ladies' Aid, Ludington, Mich.	15.00
Trinity, Chicago, Ill.	128.00
Emma Clausen, Genoa, Nebr.	10.00
Lutheran L. A., Marquette, Neb.	50.00
Rosenborg L. A., Lindsay, Nebr.	20.00
Ladies' Aid, Troy, N. Y.	31.75
Des Moines, Iowa	2.00
Sunday School, Dwight, Ill.	300.00
In memory of Mrs. Solveig Petersen, Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa	1.45
Cordova, Nebr.	15.50
Miss Dagmar Miller, Des Moines, Iowa	5.00

W. N. Hostrup, Des Moines, Ia.	1.00
For "Tractor Fund, Mornai," from friends in Solvang, Calif.	721.78
Sina Petersen, Owen, Wis.	5.00
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Sunday School, Cedar Falls, Iowa	18.31
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Sunday School, Cedar Falls, Iowa, for Kaerabani Jeep	22.64
Mr. Jorgen Juhl, Des Moines, Ia.	4.00
For Schooling of a Santal Child, by South Lutheran Society, Viborg, S. D.	30.00

Total \$1,395.43

For Eben-Ezer:

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago Ill.	56.00
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For Women's Mission Society:

Willing Workers, Dwight, Ill.	29.00
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For Faith and Life Advance:

Bethania Congregation, Racine, Wis.	71.00
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For American Bible Society:

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago, Ill.	24.00
Diamond Lake Lutheran Church, Lake Benton, Minn.	5.00

Total \$ 29.00

From Gertrude Guild, Clinton, Iowa, for Des Moines Old People's Home	10.00
Solvang Lutheran Home	10.00
	\$ 20.00

North Cedar Building Fund:**District IV Home Mission:**

Luther Memorial Church, Des Moines, Iowa	\$350.00
Support for Mission Churches, St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church	175.00
St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, North Cedar	85.00

For Danish Lutheran Children's Home, Chicago, Ill.

Thyra Danebo Lodge No. 7, Danish Sisterhood of America, Clinton, Iowa	5.00
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Respectfully submitted,

American Evangelical Lutheran Church
M. C. Miller, Treasurer
79 West Road
Circle Pines, Minnesota

Yule

1959

Don't miss this generous and gay Yuletide magazine. Your local youth group has copies for only one dollar.

Or write to:

Mrs. Paul Gantriis
7238 Wentworth Ave. So.
Minneapolis 23, Minnesota