

Baptist Herald

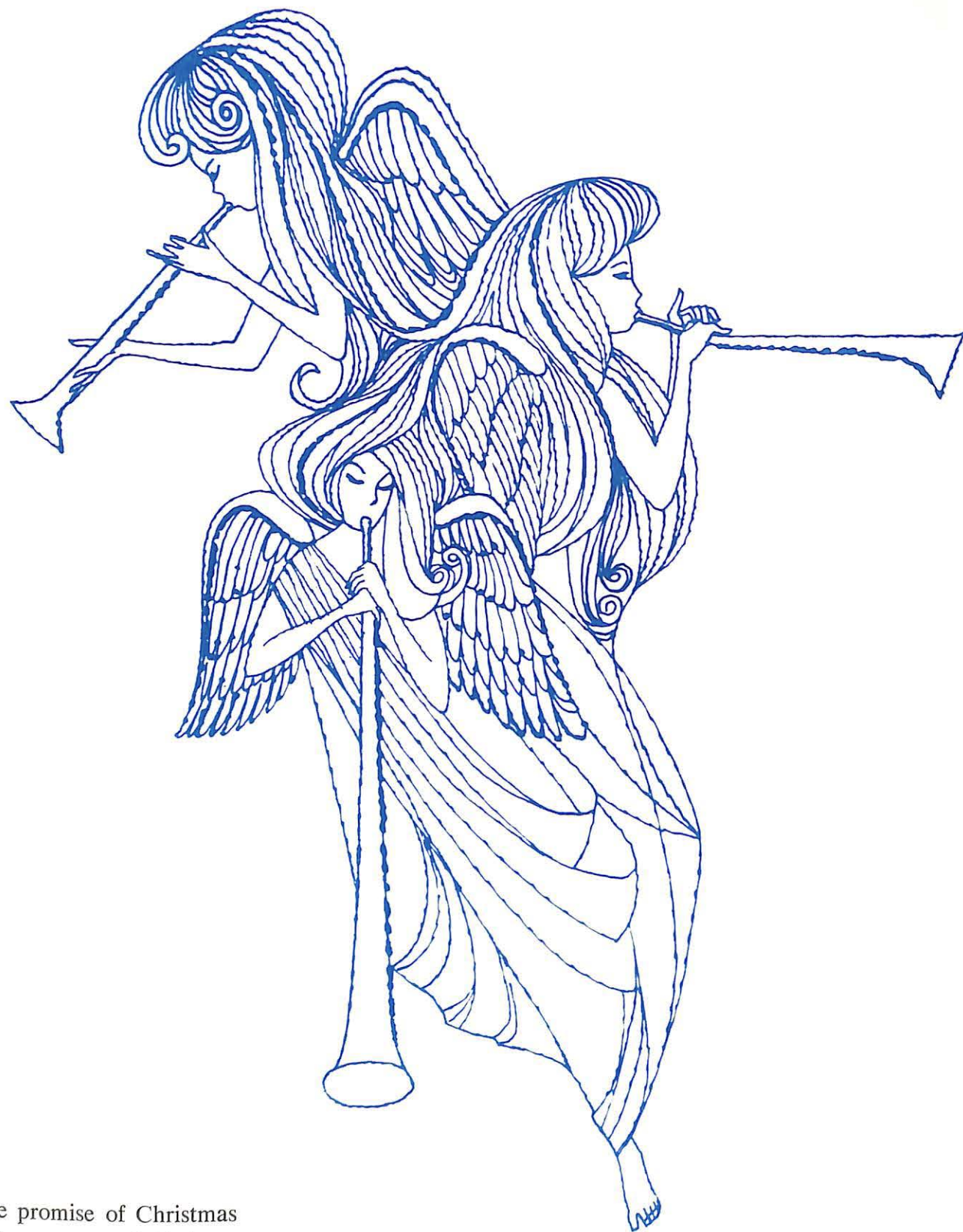
The Meaning of Gifts
by Paul Tournier

Christmas in Japan
and Cameroon
by Lucille Wipf/Peter Fehr

Liberating Christ from Christmas
by Richard John Neuhaus

December 1969





HOPE . . . the promise of Christmas
 PEACE . . . the message of Christmas
 LOVE . . . the reason for Christmas
 May these be real in your life and your living
 now and in the decade to come.

the staff of Roger Williams Press, Forest Park, Illinois

Baptist Herald

Volume 47 December 1969 No. 20

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For a long time I have wanted to write about gifts. What has been told me in confidence has impressed upon me the importance of their role in life. Gifts have many meanings, deep and subtle, both for those who give and those who receive. The significance is no less for those who hope for, but do not receive; nor is it less for those who do not give or do not receive the gifts proffered to them.

Here I am, on vacation, happy to be able to apply myself to writing. Yet, before giving myself the pleasure of undertaking a new work, I have wanted to finish up other works I have promised. This task is a kind of present which I've given myself and which I enjoy as a reward for finishing off other duties. Thus I find myself deep in this study. There are gifts not only for others; there are those we give ourselves, generous or parsimonious, according to the formation we have had.

There is, as well, a whole series of rewards or punishments which we give ourselves as prizes for our accomplishments. We set them up to benefit ourselves in two ways: both to receive the prize and to fulfill the task. First of all there are those which we allow ourselves in order to put ourselves into a better mood before assuming the less agreeable tasks. Then there are those we promise ourselves afterward, as a reward. And yet, when can we ever feel that we're up-to-date in our several responsibilities? At the very moment these words are being written my wife may well want me to make her the gift of a little time, the very thing which I measure out so sparingly to her when I am weighted down by consultations, lectures, correspondence, and so on.

Yet, my writing is also done for my wife, for she lovingly keeps a collection of all my books and published articles. When I earn some money from them, I always feel as if I were making her a present. It is just as though I did not profit by the money just as much as she, and just as though I were not a more profligate spender. Likewise, my writing is a kind of gift being prepared for the readers both known to me and unknown. When they write and express thanks for something I have written, I am very deeply moved. Thus, it becomes again a gift

which I am presenting to myself; it is not just for the pleasure of writing but equally for the public recognition so much coveted by me.

On the other hand, vacation time is for spending, not earning. It is a kind of truce in the midst of life's warfare. It is likewise a gift to which everyone feels he has a legal right, ever since our changing way of life has generalized the two-week holiday. I watch my money less closely than normally; I buy frivolously, things I would never permit myself at any other time. I feel quite free to waste time or to use it, according to my own good pleasure. I do not forget my friends. For them I shall take back a little surprise, or else perhaps simply the gift of thought, transmitted by a postcard.

Good and bad conscience constantly play a part in the number of gifts, pleasures, or self-indulgences which we allow or refuse ourselves. Everyone takes care not to spoil himself, or at the very least, not to let it appear so. A man on vacation, or after passing a test, will allow himself things he would never dare do without such a pretext; a patient similarly will celebrate some minor success by taking chocolate, or wine, or a cigarette, something in which he finds a special satisfaction, all of this quite against doctor's orders. Then there are consolation prizes for disappointments or upsets, and other types of gifts self-given in order to fill the void left when others do not make us gifts. Someone has told me of meeting a friend who pointed to her new purse and exclaimed, "Look at the beautiful gift I received from my husband!" "But I thought you were single!" replied the other. "Is that any reason," came the answer, "just because I am unmarried, that I should receive fewer gifts than a married woman? Each year, both on my birthday and at Christmas, I select something that I will really enjoy, and I call it 'my husband's gift.'"

Besides this, many favors we do others are actually gifts to ourselves, either because of the pleasure that their doing affords us or else because of a pleasure which we would not allow ourselves without such a pretext. Thus a little boy suddenly becomes very co-operative in running errands for his mother, either for the pleasure of

riding his new bicycle or of seeing the groceryman's young daughter. Sometimes I, too, will offer to drive someone home just for the pleasure of the drive or of showing him the superiority of my car. From such motivations our scruples, our connivances, and our crazy episodes are spawned innumerable. Someone makes a gesture of great generosity, while in reality he has for a long time been secretly waiting for the chance, for his own satisfaction. Many times, also, people arrange for others to present them with gifts which they would not dare buy for themselves.

Personally, I should like to be always making gifts — to everybody as well as to myself. But, is it really in order to make others happy, or is it in fact for my own satisfaction in making others happy? Is it in order to be appreciated by others? God gives me the gift of 24 hours a day; yet he is kind enough to accept in return the little time I give back to him. Happily he is interested in all that I do and is not selfish. Thus I am able to consider as a gift not only the time I set aside for worship but also the time I spend in all my other activities.

When a father enjoys seeing his child playing with the toys he has given him, is it not the child who is giving to his father, unknowingly, the gift of his joy? But let the child turn from those toys for some given by another person. Then, very clearly, he is withholding that gift from his father.

There are parents who, concerned with their child's education, instead of unnecessary toys, give only "useful gifts." Thus the little girl who was hoping for a bicycle discovers that she is given a dress. She knows very well that her parents would have had to buy her a dress, birthday or no birthday. Yes, they've chosen a more luxurious dress, but is it not for their own vanity? What they call a beautiful dress is one that they, not their daughter, find beautiful. She may well envy the more modest dress of a friend while her parents choose for her one that looks like the dress that wealthy friends have gotten their daughter.

Thus there are many gifts which really are not gifts. I think of the strict education one woman received in an austere and pious setting. Whenever she had done something particularly well, had worked hard to pick the garden fruit or had tidied up all her room, she was given two pennies as a reward, but with the added remark, "You will give these to the missionary work among the African boys and girls." Her parents might better have given directly to the Mission and have saved their daughter from being repulsed.

All day long I hear tales of lives and many childhood memories. A good part of them is about gifts received and gifts not received, the magical surprises of Christmas, and also its disappointments. Yes, the fairy tale of Christmas! The waiting, the element of surprise, the

Dr. Paul Tournier has been a physician in Geneva, Switzerland, since 1928. He is a Christian in the practice of psychotherapy.

This article is used by permission from the book, The Meaning of Gifts, by Paul Tournier, translated by John S. Gilmour, published by John Knox Press © M. E. Bratcher 1963.

locked-up cupboard containing the gifts, the running and guessing of the imagination, the rituals — stockings hanging on the fireplace, or the poetry that must be recited before the gifts can be opened. For children, as for adults, gift means party and party means gift. And no one can say how great is the thirst for parties and gifts which lies hidden in every human breast, even in the oldster's, who feigns surprise as he exclaims, "But you shouldn't have done it! I'm too old to be receiving gifts!"

The mystery of the surprise plays a big role. Basically, everyone is always living in a vague and more or less conscious hope of someday receiving something for which he had never dared ask, some regal gift symbolized so well in our fairy tales. Doubtless, fairy tales captivate us because of their marvelous poetry. Yet, their power lies also in what Jung has called the "collective unconscious," that which unites all men from one pole to the other, and from the most civilized to the most primitive, that which stirs them all in the presence of archetype-images. They also grip us because of a certain "symbolic accomplishment," as Mme. Séchehaye has called it: Both in the child and in the adult there is identification with the hero to whom the fairy extends, as a gift, a power that extends beyond the restricted and narrow limits of our human nature. Through this act of identification, we can at least for the moment live this dream-life wherein time, space, poverty, weakness, and disappointment no longer hold us in unbreakable bondage.

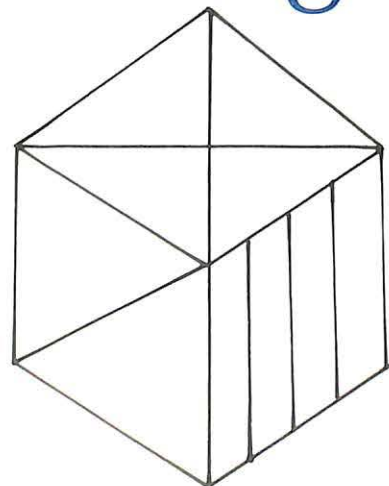
This is a double pleasure, for we identify ourselves not with the hero of the tale but also with the fairy in her joy of doing good. This is what we feel when we offer the unspoiled child a more beautiful gift than he could ever have imagined in his naïvete, one which overwhelms him. Veritable joy of the gods! The joy of taking a child into wonderland, of initiating him to pleasures he does not yet know, to the discovery of the outside world in his first trip, or of nature itself. This is the joy of taking him to the theater with all its magic, or even to a simple merry-go-round under its many-colored lights and lively music.

Thus parents who love their children look forward to Christmas every bit as much as they, or for that matter, any other special occasion for surprising them. They are always a bit afraid lest their gift will not be appreciated enough. They hesitate to make their choice; they look around, talk it over, and try to recall their own childhood memories. They stop and study the store windows filled with toys and they scrutinize the catalogs.

"The great gift, the unique and living one, is not a thing but a person. It is Jesus Christ himself. . . . Should then the little gifts of our daily existence lose their importance in the face of such a great and unique gift? Many men have thought so. . . . But this shows that they had not yet grasped the meaning of the gospel, for the gospel is never a flight from reality. . . . Far from turning us away from the world, Christ directs us to it. He awakens within us an altogether new concern for it. Then, just as little children, we can enjoy all the little gifts of this earthly life, seeing in them so many signs of that great and final gift which awaits us. □

The Meaning of Gifts

by Paul Tournier



Christmas in Japan

by Lucille Wipf

Already in November signs of Christmas begin to appear in the stores and on the streets as decorations are hung up and Christmas carols can be heard from the loudspeakers in the stores. Christmas cards, with Japanese scenes, and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year printed inside are put on sale in the shops.

Many Japanese have begun to associate cake with Christmas. This is a cake decorated much like we decorate a birthday cake. Through advertisements in the papers and in the bakeries people are reminded to order their Christmas cakes. Some stores give away Christmas cakes to lucky winners. In exchange for showing his receipt the customer gets to turn the handle on a small machine and if a colored ball falls out the individual wins a cake.

Yes, the non-Christian world has its celebration of Christmas too. Though the Japanese are known for giving gifts at New Year's time there are those who have started exchanging Christmas presents. For many Japanese, Christmas means gifts, cakes and parties on Christmas Eve. One lady came to my home and asked me to tell her how we celebrate Christmas because she wanted to have a Christmas party for her five-year-old boy and his playmates. She was, however, interested mostly in the customs connected with Christmas rather than the true meaning of Christmas. The fifth graders learn both the English and Japanese words to Silent Night from their music book at school.

During the weeks prior to Christmas the papers are filled with Christmas sales advertisements. Morning papers

Miss Lucille Wipf is a North American Baptist General Conference missionary to Japan. She is presently on furlough.

are filled with inserts placed there by various stores advertising clothing, toys and other items at greatly reduced prices.

But amidst all of the commercialization of Christmas our churches seek to make known the true message of Christmas. During the days prior to the church Christmas activities, everyone is busy with necessary preparations and practices. The ladies have a Christmas meeting to which they invite their friends and neighbors. Included are games, refreshments and a Christmas devotional. The young people sometimes go caroling as part of their celebration. Paper lanterns with a lighted candle inside are carried by the participants as they walk along singing carols. Though caroling is quite new in the Ise area some people do come to the door to listen and really seem to enjoy the singing. After the caroling they meet at the church for games, refreshments and devotional.



On the Sunday afternoon prior to Christmas a group from the Ise church presents a program at the Juvenile home near Ise. What they usually do is give the Christmas play which will be given at the church Christmas celebration. Each boy and girl is presented with a gift of fruit from the church. There is always a representative of the home who makes the thank you speech in behalf of all the boys and girls.

The program put on by the children of the Sunday school, on the Sunday evening prior to Christmas, affords the opportunity of sharing the Christmas story with the families of the children.

On Christmas Eve or Christmas Day there is a fellowship dinner prepared by the women of the church. In our Ise church the ladies prepare some special Japanese dish. During the day the ladies are busy preparing the vegetables, rice and other food. It's really a rewarding experience to work together with these ladies. When the preparations are finished the food is placed on the individual plates and



these set on the tables which have been set up in the church. Though the ladies are busy with the preparation they know that there will be many coming for whom it will be the first time that they have heard the true meaning of Christmas. Reservations are made for this meal and there are between 60 and 70 who attend. Many are young people who have read about Christmas customs in other lands in their textbooks at school but have not heard its real meaning.

The fellowship supper is followed by a Christmas play or some other presentation of the Christmas story. The candlelight service which concludes the evening is very lovely. Each person is given a candle and after some special music the lights are turned off and the flame is passed from the pastor's candle to another and on until the entire room is bright with candlelight. A short meditation brings the evening to its climax.

Once Christmas Day has ended the Japanese are busy preparing for the New Year's holidays. During the days right after Christmas is when the missionaries get together for their Christmas celebration. Last Christmas we had the Christmas party as the beginning of our annual missionary conference. The skit, musical number or other presentation put on by each missionary unit are always enjoyed by all. Christmas carols, the Christmas story and the exchange of gifts make up the program.

As the old year draws to a close and the Christmas cards are taken off the wall one realizes that another Christmas season has passed away. Many have heard of Christ for the first time. Though the season passes away yet the Christ of Christmas remains to be shared with the people of Japan during the coming year. □

Christmas in Cameroon

by Peter Fehr

Someone asked us one day, "How did the natives of the Cameroons celebrate Christmas before the arrival of the first missionaries?"

It is natural for us as North Americans to assume that everyone has always celebrated Christmas and may indicate that we have forgotten certain facts. First, Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ and secondly, before Christian missionaries went to Cameroon the people knew nothing of Christ; therefore they didn't celebrate his birth.

But what are the Christmas customs in Cameroons? The Christmas season in Cameroons, weather-wise, is the early part of dry season. No Snow! The song "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" is very appropriate for North American Missionaries.

Dr. Peter Fehr is a former missionary medical doctor in Cameroon, Africa, now a practicing physician in Minneapolis, Minn.

The grass is dry, the leaves are falling and the air is beginning to fill with dust.

The missionaries usually find an evergreen tree to use to decorate and have a North American style Christmas. Some of the missionaries get together with those on a nearby mission station for Christmas to enjoy a big dinner, some games and fellowship. For the first-year missionaries it can be an especially lonely time but one soon overcomes the feeling. Of course, the season is prolonged for missionaries, as the mail service and the irregular mailing schedules at home bring them Christmas cards from December until Easter.

The Cameroonian celebrates Christmas in many ways following those celebrations he has seen, heard



of, or been taught. Most of the churches hold Christmas Eve services with recitations, songs and plays as we might do here. The light sources for the evening services are kerosene lanterns which carries an atmosphere all of its own. The Christmas story is frequently very dramatically portrayed with angels having flapping wings and soldiers marching. In the absence of costumes, it is the action that gives each character his role and is much more interesting to the audience. Of course this is done in pidgen English.

After the Christmas eve service the choirs go through the town or village caroling at the homes of the

church members. In some areas this takes much of the night as their transportation is their two feet, or CM2 as we say in Cameroons.

Most churches also have a Christmas Day morning service after which the people go to visit friends, have a big dinner and celebrate.

Yes, Christmas for the Christian in Cameroon is a time for new clothes, a big dinner and real celebration. Just before Christmas every tailor is completely booked up for weeks making new dresses and gowns for Christmas. The price of cloth goes up just before Christmas because of the big demand. Many of the men borrow money to buy new cloth for new clothes for their children. You could always be certain the season was approaching when the workers would request advances on their salary for these purposes. Then they spend the months after Christmas paying off their debts just as the credit card shoppers here in North America.

Many non-Christians are using this time to promote business and also as an excuse for excessive drinking.

So as we approach this Christmas Season, whether in Cameroon or in North America, let's not get lost in the rush of shopping for gifts, Christmas parties, new clothes, big dinners, but let us remember that here in North America as in Cameroon, Christmas is just another day without Jesus Christ. Let us remember that for us it is the time to be thankful that God sent us the greatest gift possible, His Son, to this earth to live as a man and to die for our sins.

Around the world wherever Christ is known, Christmas will be celebrated in the hearts of those who know and love Him. □

The entrance to the imposing Archives Building in Washington, D.C., has these words prominently chiseled into the marble at the head of the stairway: "The past is only the prologue to the future." A glimpse into the past years of the BAPTIST HERALD's ministry and the early days of this editor's apprenticeship almost 35 years ago will soon convince the reader that those early editorial efforts were only the prologue to a greater future. Many of the early hopes and dreams of years ago are now being realized with this new monthly edition of the BAPTIST HERALD serving an entire denominational family with more colorful attractiveness under the editorial leadership of the Rev. John Binder.

But one outstanding feature has not changed over the years. Thirty-five years ago when subscriptions were at a low ebb and interest was waning, the editor took on the reins of leadership, determined that this should be a partnership with all of our people and with God's direction. We felt that as our people became identified personally with this publication and could sense that it belonged to them that this sense of partnership would result in a better and more influential BAPTIST HERALD.

The first editorial written for the January 1, 1935, issue was entitled "WE." It states significantly: "This publication belongs to all of us. It will always represent our composite experiences and needs. It is WE who will make this publication a meaningful contribution to our religious life. The consciousness of this fellowship will always be a source of renewed inspiration to me."

The greatest joy of more than thirty years of an editorial ministry in guiding the BAPTIST HERALD to its greater heights of service has always been this sense of partnership. Literally hundreds of people from all walks of life were enlisted in the ministry of this publication to deepen the interest in its pages and have them participate in determining its objectives.

The cover appearance of the BAPTIST HERALD was one of our first concerns. Its attractiveness to the reader at the first glance was an objective. Instead of going to art professionals in these first years, we tried to enlist some of our people with artistic talents to make their contribution.

The cover for the 1935 issues was designed by Mr. Frank Kuenne of Philadelphia, Pa., a leading member of the Fleischmann Memorial Baptist Church, a youth leader in the Atlantic Conference and in later years the president

Dr. Martin L. Leuschner of Oak Park, Ill., served as editor of the BAPTIST HERALD from 1935 to 1966.

of the Board of Directors of the Home for the Aged. He is a nephew of the late Dr. William Kuhn, and he has always been a strong denominational supporter. Mr. Kuenne's cover design was uniquely different and very artistic, but it lacked some of the simplicity that was being widely used at that time on the covers of many religious periodicals.

So a contest was held toward the end of 1935 requesting our people to submit new designs. A dozen or more readers submitted an array of covers. Mrs. Clara

Gebauer, who had recently become the bride of the Rev. Paul Gebauer of Cameroon, Africa, submitted eight art covers. As a student at the Chicago Art Institute, she was eminently qualified for this

ministry, and one of her designs was selected and used for several years. It symbolized simplicity and permitted a practical use of pictures to be featured on the front covers.

This was the first of many contests held by BAPTIST HERALD for greater reader interest. These included snapshot contests, the submission of photographs, brief essays on "Why I Like the BAPTIST HERALD," and suggestions for improving the paper. Literally hundreds of people sent in their entries to these contests.

All of us have heard the proverb that "variety is the spice of life." The BAPTIST HERALD has endeavored to make a variety of such changes in layout, headings, type, features and art designs. As

soon as the limited budget permitted it, we featured occasional colored covers for Easter, Christmas and Publication Month. For years we dreamed of such covers



for each issue, and now this too has become a reality. Indeed, the past is a prologue opening a door of opportunity for the future!

In the earlier years of our editorial ministry, we sought to give our readers articles of unusual interest that might be regarded as "editorial scoops." During 1935 at least four such articles were featured which still have interest value. Dr. Paul Gebauer with a prophetic voice wrote about "The Pentecostal Field of the World" in which he portrayed the indigenous church of Cameroon. "There will be strange music flowing from their lips but it will confess the same faith. An African church, the tribe of Jesus, will arise to the glory of God." Even at that time Paul Gebauer felt that our missionaries should be fluent in French to be ready for God's open doors for missionary service.

In 1935 Mrs. Lydia Heinrichs, the only living child of the Rev. and Mrs. Anton Fleischmann, founders of the Fleischmann Memorial Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Pa., gave us an intimate personal account about her mother, Maria Margareta Fleischmann, who was a pillar of strength behind her husband.

Miss Anna Jaruis, the founder of Mother's Day, gave us an exclusive article on the early beginnings of this observance and the story of her home life and of her associations with her mother. Dr. Herman von Berge with his musical knowledge wrote an article about Johann Sebastian Bach on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of the birth of this German composer.

These special single features soon grew into memorable series of articles. In 1939 the editor published a series of articles about his missionary trip with Dr. William Kuhn to the Balkan countries, climaxed by the visit to the Gypsy Baptist church at Golinzi, Bulgaria. Dr. William Kuhn found it impossible to publish his memoirs in book form and so he gave BAPTIST HERALD readers the thrill of reading his 22 articles of his life story over an entire year. The history of our conference was reviewed by the Rev. Charles F. Zummach in a series of articles before the book, *These Glorious Years*, was published. The trip to eight South American countries was colorfully described by the editor in 1959 shortly before the Baptist World Congress convened in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

The BAPTIST HERALD has been the forerunner in helping to instigate other denominational publications. Mr. H. P. Donner, business manager of the Roger Williams Press, believed strongly in devotional pages and insisted that this feature, edited by Prof. Lewis Kaiser, be incorporated into the BAPTIST HERALD. Later our paper published daily prayer requests to be followed by our people. Ultimately, these early beginnings were enlarged and incorporated into the popular devotional quarterly, *Moments With God*.

The various missionary publications, *Now We Are 22*,

Now We Are 55, and *Now We Are 88*, received their inspiration through the popular introduction to our paper. Several articles were too long to be published in the BAPTIST HERALD; this gave us the vision for the preparation and distribution of *The Annual*.

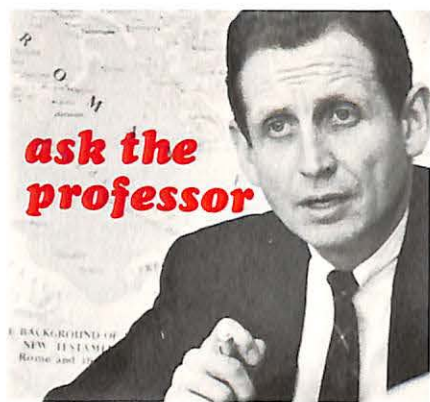
This partnership with our people kept the channel of news into our churches wide open through the years. The one feature that has remained largely unchanged since the first issue of the BAPTIST HERALD in 1923 has been the "What's Happening" page. The serial story for many years was a popular feature with some readers, but it was finally crowded out because of the more important articles. One of the highlights of the earlier years was the theological presentation of important questions and subjects. Older readers still remember with nostalgia the feature, "From the Professor's Desk" by Dr. Ralph E. Powell, seminary professor.

In closing, a few personal references may be permitted from one who can look with joy over the past 35 years. My heart was strangely warmed when many readers said or wrote that they first read the editorial page when the BAPTIST HERALD arrived. This little personal pulpit for this editor was a sacred, inspiring place behind which he could stand in the presence of his Christ and Savior.

Over the years several thousand pictures from our mission fields have passed through our hands and been filed away for future use. Every missionary in Cameroon, Japan, the Balkans, among the Indians and Latin Americans during these three decades has given us a pictorial record for our publications and for the denominational archives. Among these choice pictures has been one of Daphne Dunger as a baby riding in the hand-made wagon built by her father, Dr. George A. Dunger. (Daphne is now a missionary-nurse in full-time service among the Cameroon people.) Other pictures show Paul and Clara Gebauer in their first home in Cameroon, a primitive thatched-roof hut; Laura E. Reddig distributing dapsone pills to the first wretched leprosy patients at the New Hope Settlement; and the Indian Chiefs on the Bull and Montana Reserves of Alberta, Canada, attending the mission church services.

Most of all, we rejoiced to witness the tremendous growth of our North American Baptist General Conference in its missionary outreach, its services, its total church membership, and its beautiful new church edifices. The BAPTIST HERALD tried to keep pace with this onward progress by means of pictures, reports, inspirational articles and annual statistics.

This has been an adventure in "paper partnership" over the years working with God's people who have been wonderful friends in our churches. Above all, God continues to be the present editor's guide and partner in demonstrating dramatically that the past, however interesting and meaningful it has been, is only the prologue to a greater and brighter FUTURE! □



by Gerald L. Borchert

During the past year and a half the view has been emerging that there is again a need for the inclusion of a column in the BAPTIST HERALD in which various opinions of our constituency may be debated and in which questions of pertinence may be discussed. After some hesitation the author has agreed to chair this open forum which is modeled upon the style of Dr. Dale Irie's "Speak Up."

Naturally in a column such as this, even though the author is a member of the editorial committee, it should be understood that his remarks are personal. On the other hand, where issues of denominational or departmental policy are pertinent he will seek to consult those involved before addressing his remarks to the reader.

As the writer has travelled throughout our denomination he has found that our youth, lay people, and pastors have some very stirring ideas and questions. This column is directed to those who seek dialogue and clarification. Let no one fear to write, for should he wish to remain anonymous his wish will be granted; but according to proper journalistic policy no unsigned letters will be accepted for publication.

May God grant that through the medium of such a column we may grow to understand one another better. Although we will differ, may we accept each other as brothers in Christ, and may every one of us work more earnestly to the end that the world may sense the wonderful wholeness of life which is available in the one about whom the angels sang, "glory to God

Address letters to: Dr. Gerald L. Borchert, "Ask the Professor," 1605 S. Euclid Avenue, Sioux Falls, South Dakota 57105.

in the highest;" and about whom men shouted, "crucify him!" (For the first column a portion of a personal letter has been used with permission.)

Dear Dr. Borchert: Maybe I don't understand young people today, but why are some of our "Christian" young people becoming so involved in marches and other so-called peace efforts which help the Communists. . . . Don't they know what they are doing? J.M.

Dear J.M.: This problem is intensely complex. But try to understand the confusion which exists in many of our youth today. Most young people know only the prosperity of the fifties and the frustration of the sixties and they are by nature idealistic—probably more idealistic if they are Christian. They want an end to frustration and many are convinced that U.S. money is actually interested in keeping the war going. Certainly, there are some who are counter-productive and who care little for national identities, but most love their God-given homes. Remember, however, that they see many other youth who are dying in a war in which they find little *idealism* expressed, except the general ideal of stopping Communism.

Now I cannot go into the complexities of guerrilla warfare, but this is a strange kind of war for the U.S.; and it is a different kind of war in terms of ideology. Most of our youth do not really understand the nature of Communism. Indeed, the same could be said for politicians, both liberal and conservative, who use the war for their own political advantage.

Many of our youth wish the Church would take a stand for peace. When it does not they wonder if the Church is at all concerned. When you look at your church, do you think their question is totally illegitimate? How many of your members actually pray daily for God's answer in this war and for insight to be given to the President of the U.S.? He is only human, and he needs the prayers of Christians. Or do we think that such praying is worth anything—really? Maybe if we prayed more fervently God would show us the next step. It may be that man in his present state is unable to find the solution, but it may be that God is waiting to see the commitment of his people. This world is not the Kingdom of Heaven. The thorns and thistles promised to Adam are still present, but the Christian Church is called to be the salt of the earth. Has it lost its savor? □

GOD'S VOLUNTEERS

by Eileen Busenius,
Team 1 reporter

"Greetings from God's Volunteers Team 1." This phrase will be heard in many of our churches throughout the coming months. We, as a team, have completed our five week training period at our North American Baptist Seminary. We are thankful to the seminary president, faculty, staff and students for giving us the royal treatment. Our instructors were the Rev. Daniel Fuchs, the Rev. Bruce Rich, Dr. Hugo Lueck, the Rev. Rudy Lemke, the Rev. Leon Bill, Dr. Roy Seibel, Dr. Gerald Borchert, the Rev. Edgar Klatt, and the Rev. Raymond Harsch. To them we say a hearty thank you, for these have been very enriching classes for us all.

During training we visited 124 homes and found a possibility of 15 prospects. We were able to minister to some nearby churches and sing in some homes for the aging.

Our youth ministry was especially exciting at both Madison and the South Dakota Association. Several groups were inspired to become more involved within their groups and begin Bible studies and sharing groups within their high schools. We ask that you especially pray for our young people. Our team also covets your prayers as we continue to travel and serve Christ.



Team 1: (l. to r.), Becky Heerts, Sue Ann Salem, Ken Priebe, Perry Karges, Marsha Wilkins and Eileen Busenius. Vacation Bible school scene showing one of the four tents used for classrooms.

Youth Scene

by Bruce Rich

WOW! We finally made it—a page for young people in the BAPTIST HERALD. We want you to use this page to share your ideas with each other. Send in program ideas, personal testimonies, articles and interesting notes on trends and ideas among youth in your area, school and church. Send your questions about youth programming, problems, service opportunities and other areas that may be a concern to you. They will be answered in the RICH REPLIES column.

Here's an Idea

(Publicity idea from Bethel Baptist Church, Anaheim, Cal.)

Mission: Impossible

On the Sundays of March 23, 30 and April 6, there will be an attempt on the part of a highly organized, international subversive power to keep Junior high teens away from church. This organization is headed by someone known as *the Devil*.

Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to completely destroy this plan by not only coming, but by bringing a record number of visitors, all three Sundays, but especially on the final Sunday, April 6, when we expect to break all previous records in our department, and have the greatest program yet!

The rewards will be several. 1st, anyone bringing *one* or more visitors during the 3 Sundays will contribute to the physical fitness of their sponsor, Bob Walker, by causing him to run one mile per visitor. 2nd, the person bringing the most visitors over the 3 Sunday evenings will be rewarded with a \$10 credit applied to camp at Hume Lake.

This mission will apply only to Sunday evenings.

As always, should you be killed or captured, the secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.

Good luck, and remember . . . " . . . with God, all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

Rich Replies

This column is for answering letters from young people. In quoting you, only your initials will be used. The following problem was raised at a youth-adult workshop.

Adults do not seem to realize the changing needs of youth in a world of daily change. They want to maintain the ideas of their own generation. They are narrow-minded and unwilling to listen to new ideas.

Do young people live in a different world? We all face the same changing world. It is only natural for adults to hold on to their ideas, until they find adequate new ones to replace the old. As young people you are discovering; you are forming ideas. Its all new to you. A communication barrier exists. Have you tried to understand the changing needs of adults? A growing teenager in a home creates a rapidly changing world for an adult. Be patient kids, the adults will catch on.

"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning. . . . The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:4, 7).

Youth Congress Echoes

As a result of the Congress at Green Lake, the youth of Kansas have formed a group called "The Living Circle." They are touring the churches of their state giving a ministry in music and testimony as they promote their mission project, camp and Christian living. — Bob Lang, Kansas

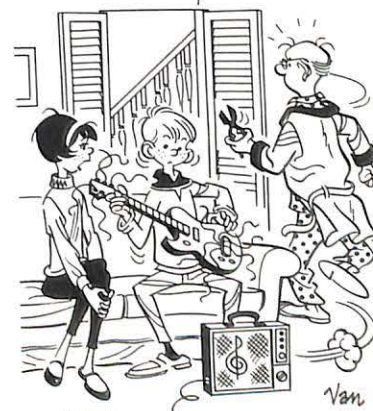
The Youth Congress was just great. Word got back to one of our members from someone outside our denomination that he considered it of a high caliber. — Rev. Tom Kramer, Nebraska

Boy has the Lord been working since we left Green Lake. At the Congress there were six kids that rededicated their lives. On the way home these kids really went to work on the bus, sharing what Christ had done to them and before we got home, a little over one-half of the bus had rededicated their lives. We asked for volunteers to say something in the Sunday evening service and 15 young people gave their testimonies. Many of them had never spoken in public before. What a service! There were over 300 in our evening service and the impact of their testimonies has really been something to behold.

Last year we started a bi-weekly Bible Study for anyone who was interested. We averaged about 8 or 10. Tuesday night we had 21 present. We had a sharing time and about one-half of the kids told of how they have shared Christ with their friends at school. We prayed for one another and tried to help those who were having problems witnessing. It was one of those meetings you dream about . . . thank God this was real. Now the challenge is to keep this enthusiasm going. After two weeks it is increasing which seems to be a good sign. — Rev. Jim De Boer, British Columbia

I wouldn't have missed this Congress for anything. It was so different. All the kids came searching for answers and got them. — Dixie Kruse, Iowa

Through the Youth Congress I learned to let Christ control my life. It was an awakening experience that was too good to miss. — Ted Bronleewe, Iowa. □



"Well anyway, Reggie — it was nice while it lasted."

BOOK Reviews

by B. C. Schreiber

The Broadman Bible Commentary. Nashville, Tenn., Broadman Press. \$7.50 per volume

Volume 1, General Articles; Genesis-Exodus and Volume 2, General Articles; Matthew-Mark are available now. Volumes 3 to 8 will be published and completed by 1972.

Clifton J. Allen, retired editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is the General Editor of this challenging project.

Contributing editors number about 60, most of whom are professors of Southern Baptist Seminaries or scholarly pastors of Southern Baptist churches. A Fuller Seminary professor and a few British scholars are the exception.

Whether such a commentary will find a ready market outside of Baptist circles in this age of ecumenism is presently debatable. However, there are many evangelical conservatives who welcome good commentaries.

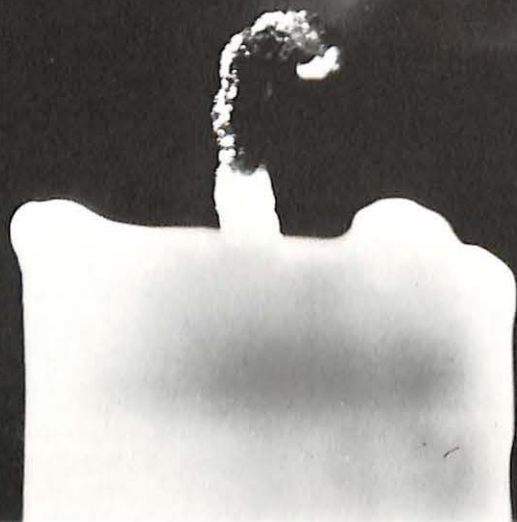
The format follows the usual arrangement of most commentaries. The general articles in the first volumes of the Old and New Testaments include information on translation, interpretation, geography, archaeology, history and theology. Addressed primarily to the student and the minister rather than to the established scholar, these articles give important and inspirational information in concise form. All the material has been brought up to date according to the latest Biblical scholarship.

The commentary follows the common pattern of paragraph-by-paragraph interpretation and exposition. Criticism has been kept at a minimum. Alternative views are presented without comment. Footnotes, technical words, Greek and Hebrew are used sparingly so that the average student of the Bible does not become lost in scholarly exegesis. The Revised Standard Version is used as the Bible text.

POST-CHRISTMAS PRAYER

I tell myself you cannot understand.
That loneliness and lostness are unique
Within this human landscape born of sin,
And I am man. None else. Long though I seek
The pages of your written word and try
For easy answers, consolation waits
Beyond my grasp, and I divine instead
That you were lonely when you fashioned me.
How can it be? How has that factor led
Time to the pivot point of Nazareth?
The trees are gone, splashed to a spray of needles
on the soiled snow; and carefully
We've wrapped Love in his cradle lest he grow
And die for us. Oh, Father, can you feel
The ice that chills the only heart I own?
Then take it, warm it, use it, set it free
So we no longer need to be alone.

— Charles A. Waugaman



Valley View Baptist Plans to Organize and Build

by Herbert Vetter

There are two verses that seem to apply to this work of church extension. They are found in Phil. 4:13-14, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Not withstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction." There can be no question but that we as church extension pastors and workers can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. He is all sufficient to meet each trial and testing. It is clear from this statement that the church at Philippi, and the Christians there, had given of their means to help him in his need as he sought to extend the church of Jesus Christ. He says, "This is good." We as church extension pastors must say the same. It is good when others communicate with us in our affliction.

People moving into these urban areas have been uprooted from their former church ties and it is difficult for them to find another church that seems like home. Add to this all the attractions of the new world about them and we find a people hard to reach and become activated in the work of the Lord and His church. This becomes increasingly harder in church extension because of poor or inadequate facilities and no church building to which we might invite people. On and on we

The Rev. Herbert Vetter is the pastor of the Valley View Baptist Church, Everett, Wash.

could recount the problems or afflictions of which Paul speaks.

But thanks be to God for the strength afforded us by Jesus Christ and the communication and help of our sister churches and fellow Christians. We are deeply grateful.

On the first Sunday of October 1968 the Valley View Baptist Church, Everett, Wash., met for the first service in the Jefferson school auditorium located about three fourths mile from our church property. That first service was attended by the pastor's family and two other families, constituting 13 in all. On December 15, the parsonage was completed on the 4½ acre plot of ground purchased for church development. The pastor and the family took up their permanent residence there.

Since then much calling has been done. There have been two canvasses of the area, one to inform the people of the beginning of the new church and one to invite children to our Bible school which was held in August. Our first Bible school had 32 enrolled besides the teaching staff. This was held in the parsonage and borrowed tents that were used for added class room space.

In the last part of June we gave thought to organizing. Eleven expressed their willingness to become charter members. We are presently in the process of drawing up a church constitution and moving forward to official organization and recognition.

Plans are also being made for the much needed church building. We will only be permitted to use our present facilities until October, 1970. We must make provision for our own facilities before that date. Already



Vacation Bible School scene showing one of the four tents used for class-rooms.

our church attendance is running at 30 or more. Interest is growing and the possibilities are increasing.

The area has great potential for growth. There is much land available for new growth. There are several areas of new housing developments planned within only a mile or two from the church property. It is considered that with its accessibility to Interstate 5, the main west coast

CHURCH EXTENSION BUILDERS' PROJECT FOR DECEMBER, 1969

Will you pray and contribute?

Anyone having friends or relatives in the area is encouraged to send their names and addresses to the pastor: The Rev. Herbert Vetter, 9717 - 31st Ave., S.E., Everett, Wash. 98201.

highway via Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, etc., and the big Boeing 747 plant, which is only about five miles from our present location, this could become one of the fastest growing areas in all Snohomish County.

The city of Everett has grown from 40,000 in 1960 to 57,000 in 1968. This is being accelerated year by year. Last year alone some 1500 new phones were installed in the general area which our church should have part in serving. Just one mile from our present location there is a planned interchange off of Interstate 5 that is to be completed in 1971 at the cost of about five million dollars. Surely it is a Strategic Area and one that is deserving of the fullest support of God's people. □



Marilyn Vetter with a V.B.S. group in a tent.

In India, one tells this legend about the creation of man and woman:

When he had finished creating the man, the Creator realized that he had used up all the concrete elements. There was nothing solid, nothing compact or hard, left over to create the woman.

After thinking for a long time, the Creator took the roundness of the moon, the flexibility of a clinging vine and the trembling of grass, the slenderness of a reed and the blossoming of flowers, the lightness of leaves and the serenity of the rays of sunshine, the tears of clouds and the instability of the wind, the fearfulness of a rabbit and the vanity of a peacock, the softness of a bird's breast and the hardness of a diamond, the sweetness of honey and the cruelty of a tiger, the burning of fire and the coldness of snow, the talkativeness of a magpie and the singing of a nightingale, the falseness of a crane and the faithfulness of a mother lion.

Mixing all these non-solid elements together, the Creator created the woman and gave her to the man.

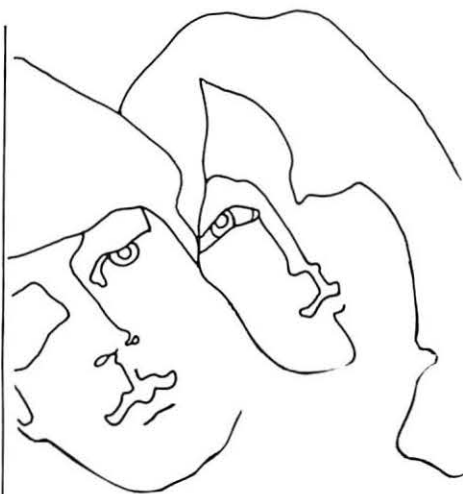
After one week, the man came back and said:

"Lord, the creature that you have given to me makes my life unhappy. She talks without ceasing and torments me intolerably, so that I have no rest. She insists that I pay attention to her all the time and so my hours are wasted. She cries about every little thing and leads an idle life. I have come to give her back to you, because I can't live with her."

The Creator said: "All right." And he took her back.

After a week had passed, the man came back to the Creator and said: "Lord, my life is so empty since I gave that creature back to you. I always think of her—how she

Walter Trobisch, also author of I Loved a Girl, is a well-known speaker in Europe, the United States and Africa on questions of love and marriage.



LOVE IS A FEELING TO BE LEARNED

by Walter Trobisch

danced and sang, how she looked at me out of the corner of her eye, how she chatted with me and then snuggled close to me. She was so beautiful to look at and so soft to touch. I liked so much to hear her laugh. Please give her back to me."

The Creator said: "All right." And he gave her back.

But three days later, the man came back again and said:

"Lord, I don't know—I just can't explain it, but after all my experience with this creature, I've come to the conclusion that she causes me more trouble than pleasure. I pray thee, take her back again! I can't live with her!"

The Creator replied: "You can't live without her either!"

And he turned his back to the man and continued his work.

The man said in desperation: "What shall I do? I can't live with her and I can't live without her!"

Love is a feeling to be learned. It is tension and fulfillment. It is deep longing and hostility. It is gladness and it is pain.

There is not one without the other. Happiness is only a part of love—this is what has to be learned. Suffering belongs to love also. This is the mystery of love, its beauty and its burden.

Love is a feeling to be learned. It caused Sylvia almost physical pain to give up her dream. But now she was sure: This was the end of it.

Before she had met him, she had had a dream image of what her future husband would be like: tall, slim, a good athlete, intelligent, full of spirit, a university graduate, a few years older than she, and, of course, a lover of music and poetry, possibly a professor of English literature or religion or a holder of a well-paid job with the government.

When she passed a florist shop and saw the dark-red roses in the window, Sylvia pictured to herself just how it would be some day when someone would bring her such roses as a declaration of his love.

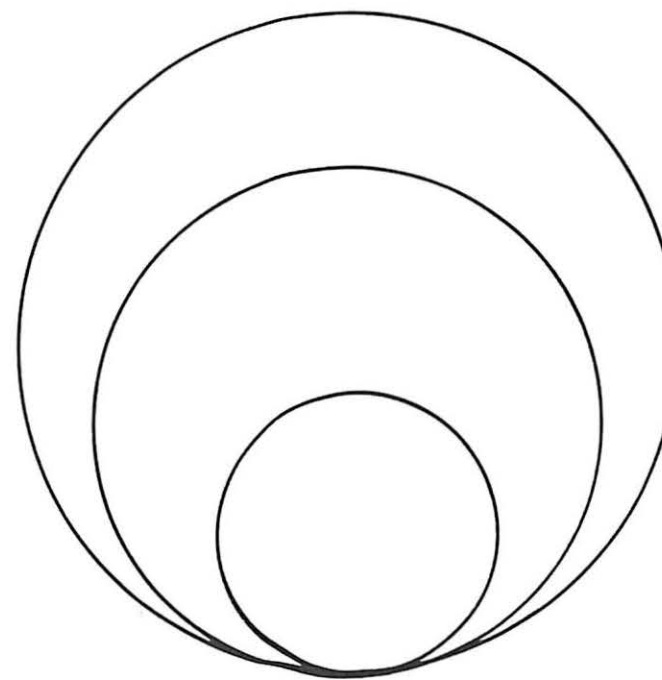
Gone was the dream! He was so different. There was absolutely nothing exciting about him. When he had asked her for their first date she had prayed in her heart: "Please, Lord, not him! He's not the one I want to marry!"

She had never been interested in technical things and that was his whole field of interest, because he was a construction engineer. He also was rather dull. No, he didn't bring her roses. He didn't bring her anything. He just came and there he was.

He was so down to earth and so sober.

Not that he was without feeling. But just the expression of his feelings irritated her. She couldn't rely upon them, because they could change so quickly. One minute he was impetuous and enthusiastic and the next he was as solemn as a stick. When she longed for a tender word, he offered her a kiss instead, and in the same breath talked about football or his studies.

(Continued on page 35)



Liberating Christ from Christmas

by Richard John Neuhaus

Liberating Christ from Christmas. The very suggestion seems presumptuous. If he is Christ and Lord, as we say he is, we cannot do him any favors. But we can, for our sake more than his, honor him, or at least stop dishonoring him. One way to do this, some concerned churchmen argue, is to get Christ out of the Christmas business.

The argument is appealing but runs into the same problems encountered by yesteryear's admonitions to "Keep Christ in Christmas." Some distinctions are in order. For instance, which Christmas are we talking about?

There is the Christmas of Main Street so scathingly celebrated by Howard Nemerov as "This annual savior of the economy."

Since the image of Jesus is so vulnerable, we have been able to do weird things with him. Among the weirdest is this palship with Santa, making Christ an accomplice in Main Street's Christmas crime. But I am not at all sure that Jesus wants this association terminated. The "bums" who play Santa for money are just the type Jesus was always taking up with back in Palestine. I personally have reason to fear the day when Jesus stops associating with phonies. Anyway, the overstuffed men in red are not among the more subtle and dangerous phonies of our society.

Yes, you say, but the dressed up derelicts are not the issue. The problem is with the media men, manufacturers and shopkeepers for whom Santa and the Child are but puppets in the commercial exploitation of the wistful and the sacred. Be fair. They are only making a buck like everyone else. And aren't we always urging that "Christ be brought into the marketplace"? You have heard it said: "We have to make Christ relevant to people where they are!" Good. For better or worse, the department store Christmas is where Americans are. And right in there is the Christ Child being as relevant as relevant can be.

If we try to dissociate Jesus from the grubby business of Christmas, we may "purify" him right out of the consciousness of our contemporaries. We would be left with a theologically lucid image of Jesus carefully preserved within the four walls of our empty churches. Jesus was not known for keeping himself untainted by contact with the sordid and perverse. The job is not to get Christ out of Christmas, but to get the real Christ, the whole Christ, into Christmas. More on that later. First consider another version of Christmas that some people would like to get Christ out of.

Unlike the Christmas of the commercial pitch, the other Christmas is soft and sweet and nostalgic. For the commercial Christmas we like to blame the shopkeepers, and they come in for a verbal whipping from ten thousand pulpits each year. But this other Christmas of delusive sentimentality is our own handiwork. Consider the silly things done in the churches: the elaborate and, for the most part, tasteless decorations; the demeaning of God's angelic warriors by turning them into sexless fairies or bouncing cherubs; the "worship of the Christ Child," as though Jesus never grew up to be murdered as an adult extremist but was caught in Herod's bloody scheme after all; the semi-annual homecoming of faithless folk who just adore the carol-sing on Christmas eve.

The Rev. Richard John Neuhaus is a Lutheran clergyman in Brooklyn. He is the author of many articles and has contributed to a number of books.

Is this Christmas a more accurate statement of the Christ-event than the statement exhibited in Macy's window? It is only more outrageous, for it is Christ in the name of Christ whereas the other is more candidly Christ in the name of the dollar.

Last year the pastor of a liberal Presbyterian church touched in his Christmas sermon on the racist bigotry disguised by the kindly facade of his community. "We want our minister to speak on social questions," declared the church's distressed leaders, "but his timing was bad. That sort of thing is not for Christmas." Be fair to these men. Decades of American Christmas piety taught them what is for Christmas. For Christmas this year — like last year, and way on back to that little white clapboard New England chapel where Grandma went to meeting — is the charming bundle of religious sedative to soften the blows of a hard world. The Christmas ceremony is the homage that unbelief pays to tradition.

God knows, it is a hard world. And men will not, and should not, give up their suspicion that there is something better. We suspect we are meant to be more than we are in a world that is more than it is. Quench that intuition and we quench our humanity. The Christmas observance, for all its distortions, speaks to our yearning for that "more." We cannot help but criticize, and we are tempted to laugh at, the things we do at Christmas. But there is something real there; to despise it is to despise an authentic part of the human experience. The problematic truth is that people do "find meaning" in Christmas.

In their legitimate search for meaning people are encouraged to look backwards. Christmas, for instance, seems designed to recapture some lost innocence of childhood. But the truth of Christmas is not so much a remembrance of things past as it is an anticipation of things to come. As it is usually observed, Christmas is a gazing into the rear view mirror in order to determine our direction. Such navigation is bound toward disaster. Surely there is value in knowing where we have been, to the extent it illuminates where we are going. But the gospel message is that paradise is not to be recaptured from the past but welcomed from the future.

We must turn around our celebration of Christmas. We do not worship the child of memory, nor even the rebel rabbi of the cross, but the eternally risen Lord in whom is our promised destiny. To be sure, he cannot be separated from that Palestinian sojourn. In him all history past, present, and future — holds together. The event of the incarnation is the good news that our time is not without purpose, that within our calendar days God is relentlessly and mysteriously present, preparing our world to receive his rule.

Mystery is a word much used at Christmas. The "mystery of the incarnation," the mystery of candlelight flickering on gothic walls, the mystery of psalms and songs to ancient tune. It is a much abused word, it gets used to cover everything from the grace of God to the

spine-tingling sensation of listening to boy sopranos at midnight mass. Yet mystery is at the heart of it all. This is mystery, how the future of mankind came bawling into our history at a birth in Bethlehem. This is mystery, how that future keeps confronting us in the most unlikely ways: through the blacks who are the Jews of our time; through students who prove their love in resistance to our wrong; through the peasants of Vietnam and the starved corpses on the streets of Calcutta. This is the mystery of our future, that they will surely rise to witness against our power, pride and indifference.

This is the present mystery of Christmas, revealing the future; they will come with him, dusty from the roads of Palestine, of the Congo, of Brazil and of Indochina, a great host of the unkempt, joined by our own neighbors in whom we failed to see "the mystery of the incarnation." The aged who exhausted our compassion, the mentally ill we refused to understand, the poor we determined not to notice.

Christmas is not finding our place in the lovely tableau of a silent and holy night long ago, Christmas is the mystery of God's will in the present. Christmas is judgment. And to those who repent, Christmas is hope.

I can understand why people want to separate Christ from the orgy of exploitation and sentimentality that we call Christmas. But he will not let us separate him. We don't have to keep Christ in Christmas. He is already in it for keeps. It will not even do, as one churchman suggests, to transfer our celebration of Christmas to January 6, following the eastern orthodox pattern. We cannot, God help us, evade December 25 of America 1969. Here the lordship of Christ must be asserted and celebrated or not at all.

"Christ is indeed the Lord of all things," Luther declares, "of good and bad, of angels and devils, of virgins and harlots . . . His Kingdom is not an outward body or government, yet everything is subject to him, whether spiritual or material, heavenly or hellish." There is much that is hellish in our society and, in its own evasive, manipulative way, our Christmas observance adds to the hellishness. There is a terrible cruelty in suggesting, as our observance does suggest, that relief from the horrors of life is to be found in an annual game of "let's pretend" with its pageants, tinsel and soft lights. We sense the pathos of man's desperate effort to escape the brutal reality, if even for a moment. Thus Christmas becomes the supreme feast of despair. People leave our Christmas sanctuaries, eyes misted by the beauty of it all, and crying inside, "Oh God, if life were only like that!" But they have been tricked again; their yearning titillated but not satisfied; hungry people offered stones instead of bread.

It is the feast of despair unless "Christ is indeed the Lord of all things." The redemption of our prostituted Christmas observances depends on our readiness to assert and celebrate the claim of his lordship. This requires changing what we do around Christmas time in the

churches. Perhaps, as is often suggested, we need to find new symbols to communicate what we mean by Christmas, but equally urgent is taking more seriously the symbols we already have that say so much more than we are ready to mean. "The startling truth," writes J. B. Phillips, "must break over us afresh — that we live on a visited planet."

Recently a group of liturgical scholars invited social scientists to discuss with them the possibility of developing new symbols to communicate ideas such as incarnation, redemption, resurrection, judgment. Sociologist Peter L. Berger remarked to the liturgists and theologians, "You are frustrated because you feel you are not communicating with people inside the church and out. But I suspect the problem is not one of communication so much as it is of content. If you know what you want to say, I believe you will have gone a long way in finding the symbols to say it." This sounds simplistic in a time when the conventional wisdom includes McLuhan's maxim that the medium is the message. The fault is with the maxim. The question of truth cannot be evaded. The Christmas medium may be beautiful, moving, poetic and in some deeply felt sense "meaningful." But is it true? That is, does what we say and do at Christmas reflect our understanding of the universe in which we live, or is it a seductively fanciful escape from the reality we think we know too well? No revision of our observances will renew Christmas unless such revision grows out of the daring premise that "Christ is indeed the Lord of all things whether spiritual or material, heavenly or hellish."

Such a renewed feast is for grown up people. Christmas is for children, to be sure; but not so much for children still gullible enough to believe anything as for those who have become as children in the fervor of their response to the gospel of the Kingdom. Here is no place for the cloying sweetness of fairy tales and pretty choirs; here is the startling news of God's becoming man to make all things new. This does not mean that our Christmas observance should be bereft of beauty or poetry. It does mean Christmas should be relentlessly honest.

If what we say about the lordship of Christ is true, we are compelled to stretch our imaginations to their limits in order to capture its meaning and, failing to capture it, to break into poetry of sheerest praise. The poetry of our praise, however, is no escape from the immediate. That is, when we envision the fields of Bethlehem, we envision them not so much as they were in the first century but as they are under the mortar fire of the twentieth. We envision the trash strewn streets of Brooklyn, the bomb scarred valleys of Vietnam, the political prisons of Guatemala.

Do not sing the Christmas songs if in order to do so you must block out what is contemporary and unpleasant. Do not praise the wonder unless you are prepared to undertake the work the wonder demands. The Christmas celebrated in song is not a magic moment of the past to be retrieved, but the promise of a future to be realized.

Christ is not imprisoned in Christmas past. He is the liberated Lord calling us to the works of liberation. If Christmas is to call men to new life, we must liberate our image of Christ from the Christmas observances that are dominated by the forced cheer and seductive nostalgia which are among the more pathetic forms of despair.

Let the churches refuse this year to hold Christmas services designed to play to the gallery of pagans who will return at Easter to lunch on the hill of Calvary. We might even celebrate the Christ-Mass, the meal of communal commitment and hope, challenging the crowds not to admire the Christ Child but to follow the Christ. Church groups might well abandon their schedule of Christmas parties in the month of December and let the austerity of the weeks of Advent prepare us for the wonder of Christmas hope. Let preachers surprise their members who think they know what's for Christmas. What's for Christmas this year? The promise and challenge of God's rule in justice and love.

We liberate Christ from the perversions of Christmas not by trying to take him out of Christmas but by asserting his lordship within Christmas. Why should we surrender this feast to the merchants of Main Street and to the spiritual tourists who crowd the churches twice a year? Those who would serve Christ can challenge those who would use Christ by demanding that merchants present the full picture in their display windows. Negotiate and demonstrate to get the beatitudes posted alongside the shepherds, the cross behind the creche, Jesus' invitation to poverty beside the merchant's pitch for possessions. It is not a bad thing if merchants wish to advertise the message of Jesus. But if they want to promote sales through the cult of divine babyhood, let them find another myth. Our job is not to deplore the presence of Christ in the commercial Christmas, but to help businessmen decide between presenting the whole Christ or no Christ.

As for the tourists at Christmas services, let them be confronted by the pilgrims. If the churches ignored December 25, we would miss this chance. No doubt the television networks would produce their own midnight masses, delicately omitting references to the broken body, spilled blood and brutal death of the Christmas child. If the churches declined, others would take the lead in celebrating what they think is the Christmas story, all smoothly refined to offend the sensibilities of no one, to challenge no one, to save no one.

Christmas is here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future. It is a piece of culture religion. The church's job is to make the best of the feast, to reform it where possible, to check its more outrageous perversions where necessary. And don't worry about Christ being mixed up in this Christmas business. He is already liberated, his lordship is secure. His freedom is perfected in self-surrendering involvement in the ambiguous affairs of man. The real issue this Christmas is whether we are liberated by the same involvement. □



Coming World Peace and Evangelism

by Senator Mark O. Hatfield

Last December I had the privilege of visiting India. There are grave problems facing that land, which holds one-fifth of humanity. One particular area of the country is plagued by a minor, yet serious revolutionary movement. This is in the northwestern frontier region, where members of the Naga tribes have been in rebellion against the central government. When I went on to visit Thailand, I then became more thoroughly informed about the insurgency that threatens the northeastern section of that country.

I was fascinated to learn that both of these areas had experienced the extensive influence of Christian missionaries. In my judgment, this is perhaps more than coincidental.

The Christian message of salvation includes the truth that all men are equal and valuable in God's eyes. Old customs, social mores and class distinction are dispelled. The gods that freeze men in cycles of superstition, fear, and resignation to fate are destroyed. Man is offered the possibility of new life—with social and spiritual dimensions. So when social patterns of oppression and in-

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equity continue, isn't it plausible that revolutionary pressures claiming allegiance to human dignity and equality may be related to the influence of the Good News?

The relation between evangelism and peace in the world is far more complex and stimulating than many of us would like to believe.

What is the true meaning of peace. What do we mean—and what does our Faith teach—about this issue?

I. THE DIMENSIONS OF PEACE

Some academic strategists and national security advisers avoid even speaking about terms as vague and idyllic as "world peace." Rather, they would like to increase the probability of a world "that minimizes the incentives for armed, violent solutions to conflict situations." In other words, this means that if there is anything one can call peace, it means the absence of war or violent conflict. This, I suspect, is the notion many of us share about the meaning of peace. We also hear of how the "balance of power" is the guarantee of peace. The United States and the Soviet Union together possess explosive power equivalent to 15 tons of TNT for every person

on the earth. Yet, many postulate that such a "balance of power"—or "balance of terror," to be more precise—is the only trustworthy condition of peace.

But there is not true peace when the threat of instant annihilation hangs over the head of the majority of mankind. There is no peace when fear of destruction, rather than hope for reconciliation, is the only force restraining the use of our arsenals of nuclear destruction. I reject the simplistic notion that peace is the absence of conflict. Peace is not merely stability or order. Rather, peace is fulfillment, harmony, satisfaction, understanding, and well-being.

As long as there is deprivation, suffering, alienation, self-seeking, exploitation . . . there is no real peace.

Peace can come only when needs—physical and spiritual—are fulfilled; for us, peace means far more than simply avoiding conflict.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for peace is "Shalom." The full meaning is actually "wholeness, soundness, completeness."

Peace is a wholistic concept. It entails the fulfillment of needs, whether this be within a nation or within an individual. A true understanding of peace includes harmony between nations, reconciliation between people, and the well-being of individuals.

Too often we speak of world peace as though it were completely unrelated to peace within nations, within communities, within families, and within individuals.

It is inconsistent, for example, for a citizen to urge warring nations to make peace if he lives in hostility toward his neighbors. It seems unreasonable to protest against violence in Vietnam by employing violent tactics here at home. And it is hypocritical for a Christian to claim he has the peace of God in his heart if he remains oblivious to the violence and destruction in the world.

II. THE OBSTACLES TO PEACE

When I discuss these matters with some of my fellow Christians, they will often claim that the reason we have no peace in the world is be-

cause of man's sin. As long as sin abounds, there will be "wars and rumors of wars," they say. I, of course, do not dispute the reality of man's selfish and sinful nature. But I do take issue with those who reject any responsibility for overcoming the obstacles to peace simply because sin is a reality. That was not the way of Christ. He has not told us evil will ultimately triumph, and that we should resign ourselves to such a fate. Rather, He asks that we follow Him into the midst of man's turbulent world with His reconciling and redeeming love. Recognizing the existence of sin does not eliminate our mandate to act as peacemakers.

Christ calls us to witness to His love through our lives. That witness involves ministering to man whenever and wherever he is in need.

Christ's description of the Good Samaritan provides us with valuable insights into our responsibilities as Christians. As we heal wounds, we nurture peace.

We all know of those who suffer from deep personal needs—meaninglessness, emptiness, futility, estrangement, alienation, and lack of love. These needs, when unfulfilled, will frustrate peace. They will create envy, bitterness and discord in families and between friends; they will sustain anxiety, turmoil, and despair at the core of one's life. Here is where the obstacles to peace have their beginning—in the individual life that lacks fulfillment.

The love of Christ brings inner, personal peace. The gift of His Spirit is the true resource for wholeness of personality. Then the task of peacemaking includes the call to evangelism.

Peace, however, is also frustrated by unjust social conditions. In the communities where we live, there are those who suffer from impoverishment, through no fault of their own, despite the prosperity of our land.

Consider the condition of our world; but rather than looking at ourselves from a limited terrestrial perspective, let us remove ourselves from the confines of our earthly environment. Picture our planet from outside of ourselves—from outer space. Look back on this blue, beautiful

sphere floating through space. And then consider that the inhabitants of that planet spend 15 times more money on creating weapons to destroy each other than on efforts to cooperate together for social and economic improvement. Yet, 10,000 of its citizens die each day because they do not have enough to eat. The total wealth of those "developed" parts of this world is broken down to an average of \$2,107 for each inhabitant; yet, the total wealth of the remainder of the world equals only \$182 for each person.

That is how we look from outside ourselves. And our Creator views His world from this perspective.

As long as such an unjust distribution of the world's resources persists and continues to grow, as it is at present, we can never expect to be granted true peace on earth.

Living in a country that we somehow feel bears God's seal of approval, many of us as evangelicals tend to discover these foes of peace only in other people and nations. But Christ warns us about criticizing the speck in our brother's eye when we ignore the plank in our own.

In all candor, it is my conviction that this is precisely the case with our involvement in the Vietnam war.

Let us face this matter honestly. Any discussion of peace today cannot ignore the gravest, most destructive event that presently keeps our world seething in violence and our nations seething in unrest. It is my conviction that peace will not come to Vietnam as long as we persist in applying military solutions to fundamentally social, political, and cultural problems.

We intervened in what was essentially a civil war, in my judgment, having its origins in the desire of the Vietnamese people to rid their country of foreign domination and bring themselves independence and dignity. This cause has been constantly frustrated, in ancient history by the Chinese, and in modern history by the French, the Japanese, the French again, and now by our own involvement. But such a nationalistic determination can never be quelled by bombs and bullets. By interpreting the war as an ideologi-

cal struggle, we have lost sight of the human dimensions of the conflict—of the passion, will, and suffering of individuals which lies at the roots of this war.

We have failed to understand the Vietnamese people and to sense their true needs. And once having imposed military measures which have only escalated the violence, we have resisted any change in our action, and any admission of our misunderstanding.

The war will cost us about \$30 billion this year, one out of every five tax dollars. Currently, we spend this at the rate of about \$950 per second. Most tragic, this war has claimed the lives of more than 38,000 Americans, 96,000 South Vietnamese, and 540,000 "enemy" Vietnamese. Through our effort, then, more than half a million Vietnamese have died because somehow, we believe they individually are our enemy, and a threat to our nation. We continue to measure our success of these efforts by the brutalizing nomenclature of "killratios"—by comparing how many of the enemy are killed for every American that dies. Christian compassion, I believe, cannot remain quiet when the basic value and dignity of human life is depreciated in such a manner. This war has been brought into each one of our homes. Living in our comfort-laden sanctuaries, we are spectators to this hatred, slaughter, and death. Gradually, we become insensitized to it all; the nerves of compassion that once caused us such anguish so easily become numb.

Why should we—a nation founded by those seeking a New World blessed by God—now be bound by "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"? Do the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity . . . and self-control—do these have any relevance to the concrete realities we face?

III. GOD'S STRATEGY OF PEACE

We must always remember that regardless of the circumstances the world is in, history remains under God's sovereignty.

God's entrance into history

through Christ has revolutionary implications for our attitudes toward our fellow man. Again in Ephesians, "He has made a unity of the conflicting elements of Jew and gentile by breaking down the barrier which lay between us. He . . . made in himself out of the two, Jew and gentile, one new man, thus producing peace. For he reconciled both to God by the sacrifice of one body on the cross, and by this act made utterly irrelevant the antagonism between them. Then he came and told both you who were far from God and us who were near that the war was over" (Ephesians 2:14-17, Phillips).

In God's eyes, then, every individual is of the most infinite value. God does not judge people as Americans or Russians or Chinese; he does not categorize them according to nationalistic, political, or ideological labels. Christ has broken through those barriers. God views each person as His creation—as unique and as infinitely valuable to Him, so valuable that He gave His son for each of them.

God's purpose is to bring all creation into unity through Christ.

In the Old Testament, the vision of God's final peace is clear. In Isaiah, for instance, as well as in Micah, we are told of the day when nations "shall beat their swords into

plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4, Micah 4:3). God's strategy is to bring this to pass; we do not know the time, but we know that He controls history and is moving it toward this end.

IV. OUR MISSION OF PEACE

Our responsibility is to bear witness to the love of God through Christ. This is a mission of peace, and we are under the call of God to fulfill it. In this task, we must not be bound by rigid categories of what is a spiritual message and what is a social action.

Our task requires personal involvement in the world. We cannot abdicate our personal responsibility to an institutional response.

That, of course, includes churchly responsibilities of preaching, edifying, and instructing. But evangelism—our message and mission as Christians—is primarily an individual, rather than an institutional responsibility.

Our faith calls us to seek God's will for man and for the world. As such, we must look at our own country—look at the values that are guiding our culture and ask whether they are true to God's will and purpose. If not, they must be challenged with a prophetic word,

and Christians must witness to the need for national repentance; that is, to turn from present ways unto the "way of the Lord."

For we who are Christians, then, it is our basic responsibility to express the values and truths that we have acquired through our faith. Further, we must attempt to implant them within the lives of others.

We are called to be stewards of our resources. Are we, as a nation, utilizing our abundance in a way that pleases God and seeks His purposes for mankind?

The nation of Israel experienced situations similar to that of our own land. In their quest for stability and power, they were often tempted to trust in their military power as the ultimate source of their security. Hosea warned prophetically against this danger: "Because you have trusted in your chariots and the multitude of your warriors, therefore shall the tumult arise among your people" (Hosea 10:13-14).

The question is not whether we should have an army, but rather, it is whether our trust rests solely in our military power as a means of insuring our security and peace. The Scripture does not condone such a trust.

Thus, the mission of peace cannot be severed from the task of evangelism. Seeking peace requires witnessing to God's will, judging nations, orienting one's life to the purposes of His peace, influencing the thinking of the public, action in love towards our neighbors, and proclaiming the power of Christ to remake human life according to the "fulness of Christ."

We cannot protect the status quo. We know that peace is not static. The Christian must realize that the impact of his message challenges and questions things as they are, and claims that new life is possible.

So we go forth into the world seeing new possibilities—grasping God's vision of what He can do. We have the certain hope that He can impart new life—new life to individuals, to nations, and to all creation. That hope is based in *the Risen Christ*. All history is consummated in Him. He is our Peace. ☐

AN AGNOSTIC AND CHRISTMAS



It is that time of year when a lot of people who do not normally worry much about it, get reminded of the Christian religion. I don't mean the Christmas-and-Easter Christians, because they are satisfied and comfortable with the sentimentality of the season; a good wallow in "Silent Night" or "Good King Wenceslaus" satisfies them until spring, when they will listen to Handel and again feel vaguely holy. Nor do I mean the solid Christians. Christmas to them is a just reward and delight in the pageant of their year.

I do mean the kind of people you might call the intellectual Christian agnostics. There are more of them than you think, some of them high in the councils of one denomination or another. Through the year their relationship to God bothers them, almost irritates them; and then along comes Christmas and its retelling of the fantastic story and they have to decide whether they believe it or not. They are reminded that for a long time grown-up intelligent men have accepted that God was born in a stable, and that if they also believe it, then they are supposed to act in certain ways and to live a new life as a "witness". . . . That is what makes these agnostics uncomfortable, because along with the beauty and solace of the story and the season, come reminders of the responsibilities of Christians.

Your good, kind, thoughtful agnostic might choose not to embrace the story even if it suddenly seemed blind-

ingly true. Because religion is not all comfort, Christianity, for instance, expects you to give up adultery and swearing and cheating your neighbor, and a lot of other interesting human activities. It sometimes looks like a kind of rough and gloomy life, particularly if you are already a little nervous and tense. There are obvious advantages in a neutral position. But then along comes Christmas reminding one that just possibly something is being said and if you're not listening you might never get over feeling alone and sad. . . .

Another insidious thing for the agnostic is that at Christmas there is emphasis on warmth and love and gaiety. Christmas turns you to watching children who take to it naturally without any doubts, and who think the whole idea sounds pretty good. A child sees only delight in the Christmas story. So perhaps the Christmas message to the tempted agnostic is the hope of recovering and sharing that childlike joy and faith.

For instance, take this Christmas drawing by a six year old girl. It is a sort of disorganized angel. I seem to remember that one is supposed to hold the cross in the right hand, not the left, and anyhow, this angel's grip is insecure; she may very likely drop it. Her hair is a little messed up and there's some question about those wings. But the important thing is that smile. I think it has to be called a successful drawing, saying to a lot of us serious, troubled doubting Thomases, "Remember, being an angel can be fun." ☐



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We the Women

by Mrs. Herbert Hiller

Mrs. John Wobig is giving the report on our recent Executive Committee session. She has served faithfully with her husband during the 35 years of Dr. John Wobig's ministry to three of our churches in Wausau, Wis., St. Paul, Minn., and Portland, Oreg. She has always been keenly interested and active in the various mission societies, and capably filled the position of president of the Northwestern and Pacific Conference WMU's, as well as being president of the Oregon Baptist Women. Even in their recent retirement years the Wobigs are serving churches in an interim capacity. They have two daughters and one son who is a doctor. All are active in the Lord's work.

Her many acquaintances and contacts within our denominational family qualify Mrs. Wobig for the position of Nominating Committee chairman for our Woman's Missionary Union at the next General Conference in Winnipeg. Her committee consists of the nine regional conference WMU presidents. Please support them with your prayers in their great responsibility.

Mrs. Wobig shares with you some facts and thoughts as she observed our business sessions.

Report on W.M.A. Executive Committee meeting

by Mrs. John Wobig

It was a delightful and enlightening experience for me to meet with the WMU Executive committee at our Headquarters in Forest Park, Ill., for their annual meeting from Sept. 30 to Oct. 3.

The first evening was set aside for a time of fellowship. Each one present shared some of the blessings and experiences they had during the past year. We realized anew how God works in and through us as we commit our lives to Him. After a brief

but thought-provoking devotional by our president, Mrs. Herbert Hiller, the group had an unbroken chain of prayer which caused our hearts to beat as one.

Each morning as we gathered around the conference table at 9 o'clock, the tone for the day was set with a devotional thought and a prayer for guidance under the leadership of Mrs. Ernest Hoffman, Mrs. Walter Stein and Mrs. Adam Huber respectively. Thus, as our business meeting was called to order, we looked to the day with a challenge. The work of the past year was reviewed as the various reports were given by each executive member, and by Mrs. Evelyn Pyle the WMU office secretary, and Mrs. Viola Nelson the office White Cross secretary. We were also given helpful suggestions and assistance by our Executive Secretary, the Rev. G. K. Zimmerman and other members of the Executive Staff, which were sincerely appreciated.



Mrs. John Wobig (l. to r.), Mrs. Henry Fluth, Mrs. Willy Herke, Mrs. Adam Huber, Mrs. Paul Kohman, Mrs. Elton Kirstein, Mrs. Herbert Hiller, Mrs. Charles Littman, Mrs. Ernest Walter Stein. These all served on the W.M.U. Executive.

With grateful hearts we praise God for the faithfulness of the women who have given so generously of their time, money and effort for the cause of missions. During the past year four shipments of White Cross materials, a net weight of 35,153 pounds were sent to Cameroon. Some WMU groups accepted special projects above their assigned quotas to furnish bed linens, curtains and drapes for the Belo, Bamenda, and Victoria Rest Houses, the Belo Maternity Ward, and the Leprosy and General Hospital in Mbingo. Ladies, do you realize how much one, two or three pages of a book of S & H Green Stamps can mean to help supply some of the needs on our mission field? A large supply of bed linens, towel sets, blankets, thermos jugs, etc., were made available through the

use of these stamps which you have given so generously.

The WMU Executive previewed the White Cross filmstrip "Unto the Least of These." We realized anew how this labour of love and concern is the connecting link that keeps us as NAB women communicating with those who are yet without Christ on our mission fields.

The WMU publications were discussed at great length. Noteworthy is the excellent work the editors have done to provide inspirational and informational reading materials for us. To have a wider circulation of the same, the "We, the Women" column will be extended to a full page in the BAPTIST HERALD. Special silver cover editions are being used to note the observance of the 25th year of publication of the BROADCAST and UNSER AUFTRAG. The program packets continue to be an invaluable source for program planning. All women are urged to use these program materials.

There are only 10 months left to reach our \$90,000.00 goal project. Through sacrificial giving, we will again be able to have the joy of bringing the message of salvation to a needy world.

The next 1970 General Conference Women's activities co-ordinator, Mrs. Walter Stein, gave a detailed account of preparations being made for the women's luncheon and missionary tea which are being planned for the Conference at Winnipeg. Plan now to join us for a time of spiritual blessings and Christian fellowship.

The WMU executive committee sessions adjourned at 4 p.m. on Friday after many hours of study and planning to make our Woman's Missionary Union effective in every phase of its outreach.

Many of us do not realize the countless hours the members of the executive committee give to the advancement of our WMU program. I, for one, have seen them at work and have a deeper appreciation for the service they render not only to the NAB women but to Christ, their Lord and Saviour. Let us remember them in prayer as they carry out their duties which we have entrusted to them. The Apostle Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." As we commit our lives to Christ His promise is "Greater Works Shall Ye Do!"

Mrs. John Wobig, Portland, Oregon

Insight into Christian Education

Children are Natural Believers

by Ervin Gerlitz

It was New Year's day. We were enjoying a quiet holiday. The children were playing with their Christmas toys; Mother and I were talking about our Christian faith. Suddenly, our five year old daughter announced, "Mommy, I want to be a Christian." After some gentle questioning, we felt that she was able to make a decision for Christ. After prayer our seven year old son said, "I want to be a Christian, too." After careful questioning to determine his motives, we knelt once again and asked the Lord to come into his heart.

That was twelve years ago. There have been some severe testings of such young faith, but we can joyfully affirm as we look back that this was the beginning of a salvation experience. We shall always be grateful that God open the hearts of our children at a tender age and gave us as parents the great joy of leading them to the Savior.

The first seven years

Children are natural believers. It is both a profound responsibility and joyful privilege to have the opportunity to influence an impressionable child for Christ. Measured by eternity's values, there is probably no service more rewarding than the ministry to children.

The Rev. Ervin Gerlitz is pastor of the Sierra Heights Baptist Church, Renton, Wash.

As Christian parents and teachers, we need to be aware of the importance of the first seven years of a child's life. Psychologists tell us that a child's character has been largely shaped by the time he reaches school age. It is time for Christians to take advantage of this fact.

Scripture teaches that spiritual things are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:14, Rom. 8:5). This is also true for children. They can spend years in Sunday school learning Bible stories and spiritual truths without being given an opportunity to respond to Christ as their personal Savior. Is it possible to promote spiritual growth before there has been a spiritual birth? Jesus was displeased because His disciples refused to give children the dignity of being human beings. "Let the children come to me! Do not stop them, because the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14 TEV).

Adults often assume that a child is unaware and unaffected by his environment. A mother in a troubled home remarked that her little son "doesn't know what's going on." What a tragic mistake! How often Christian parents have cause to lament about their twelve, fourteen or sixteen year old, "We started too late!" They didn't realize that their casual religious life when their children were pliable had left a permanent impression.

A natural experience

Leading a child to Christ is easy! If the Gospel truth is presented lovingly, simply and clearly, most children will be responsive. For this very reason it is important that the child's salvation experience be natural, personal and absolutely clear. It should be a natural experience. We should not urge or pressure for decisions. The decision

must be a natural response to Christ, not to please the teacher or parent. A child can understand that he has a need (Romans 3:23), that Jesus is the way to meet that need (John 3:16), and that he must personally ask Jesus to do so (Revelation 3:20). Prolonging an emotional appeal or frightening the children with hell is not appropriate.

A personal experience

It should be a personal experience. It is easy for children to respond *en masse*. The wise teacher will avoid giving an invitation which will result in group pressure. If several teachers are available, they can be waiting in separate rooms where interested children can seek them out. The leader can ask children to come to her after a service is dismissed. The sensitive teacher is aware of the subtle change in a child who is seriously considering the claims of Christ. She can seek out the child after a meeting, or arrange for a later visit when it will be possible to complete the work begun during a class session.

Understanding is essential

It should be a clear decision. The child should be questioned to determine his motives. If there is an obvious lack of understanding, the child should not be encouraged to think he has made a decision. A child should be encouraged to pray in his own words as a part of his salvation decision. Some of the most thrilling experiences we have had have been the beautiful, simple and sincere prayers of children.

Follow-up work is equally important. Try to meet with children a week or two after their decision. Give the child a booklet such as *First Steps* by Child Evangelism, *The Way* by Wayne Leitch, or *My Personal Commitment* workbook by Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Teachers should be instructed to give special encouragement to these children. Do not urge little children to be baptized.

Let love be genuine

Children can quickly detect whether or not we are interested in them as individual persons. If we can love a child, we will find an eternal soul as well as an unspoiled life open to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The teacher or parent will find many helpful suggestions in the booklet, *Explaining Salvation to Children* by Marjorie Soderholm, Beacon Publications. □

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS
(Dec. 14, 1969)

Scripture: Ps. 119:1-8; Luke 2:1-3

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT. The events of the Inter-Testamental Period prepared the way for Christ's coming.

INTRODUCTION. Following the Jews' return to Jerusalem, the Greeks became the new world power by conquering the Persians. Alexander the Great swept into control and spread the Greek culture and language throughout the Mediterranean. After Alexander died, the Egyptians and Syrians took turns dominating Palestine. During this time Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian leader, sacrificed a pig (unclean) upon the altar in the Jewish Temple. Such outrageous acts produced the revolt by the Maccabee brothers. Finally the Roman general, Pompey, conquered the land just prior to the first coming of Christ.

I. BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS LEGAL TRADITIONS WERE REVERED. Ps. 119:1-8. The religious world into which Jesus came emphasized the law. Though the Jews finally gave evidence that they had overcome the tendency toward idolatry, a new monster reared its head. Their awe of Scripture advanced to the place of worshipping its interpretations. Dead legalism replaced idol worship. The Pharisees exemplified this emphasis upon human tradition. They exalted the learned opinions of great teachers to the point of absurdity (Matt. 23:4).

In contrast, the Sadducees opposed these legalists. They advocated compromise with the Roman rulers. With regard to doctrine they rejected immortality, the resurrection, and the existence of angels and spirits. Various radical groups developed in reaction to these dominant groups such as the Zealots. They advocated violent overthrow of the Roman establishment. Also there were the Essenes who isolated themselves in communities away from where all this action was. Asceticism, marked by self-denial, labor, and purity, comprised their chief pursuit in life. The famous Dead Sea Scrolls were preserved because of their efforts.

II. BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS THE POLITICAL AND CULTURAL

These lessons, prepared by the Rev. James Schacher, Stafford, Kansas are based on International Sunday School Outlines. Copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education, 1964.

WORLDS RIPENED FOR THE MESSIAH'S COMING. Luke 2:1-3. The Roman government controlled the political fortunes of the day. This insured that there would be a time of unrivaled peace. A system of roads eased the travel of early missionaries. A postal system permitted more direct communication between different churches. The Greek language provided a universal tongue with which to converse. Large urban centers grew up around bustling seaports where trading ships anchored. The spread of the Roman army throughout the Mediterranean world established a common

BIBLE STUDY

cultural bond which promoted the civilizing process. The increasing Roman skepticism concerning the Greek gods created a religious vacuum into which Christianity could burst.

In all of these human factors, the power of the Holy Spirit is not denied. Rather it was by His superintendence that these conditions ripened in the world that would reject and then listen to the Savior.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) What are examples of legalism in our churches today?
- 2) List various ways in which the world was prepared for the coming of Christ (religion, politics, culture).
- 3) What part did God play in these preparatory events? What role is He pursuing in our day?

GOD WITH US

(Dec. 21, 1969)

Scripture: Matthew 1:1, 18-25

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT. Christ came to us in a miraculous manner, fulfilling the Old Testament and preserving the sinlessness of His Deity.

INTRODUCTION. Jesus was born in a barn. To recreate this scene it would be proper to hold Christmas Eve services among the smell and sounds of the cows and horses on a farm. The glittering stars made of tin foil and the shiny rayon bathrobes would be replaced by ancient lanterns and rags and gunny sacks. Perhaps, sitting on a cold, dirty floor, the audience then would grasp some of the humility of God which was revealed when He lowered Himself to provide for our redemption.

I. GOD CAME TO BE WITH US BY MEANS OF A VIRGIN. Matt. 1:1, 18-21. Christ did not have a human father. This view has been supported by J. Gresham Machen who has written a classic volume defending the Virgin Birth of Christ against the Form Critics. How can the average layman make up his mind about such scholarly questions? The answer is that a person's general theological position often determines the way in which he will interpret a specific passage of Scripture. For instance, if one rejects the reliability of the Bible or if one discounts the possibility of a miracle before the evidence is considered, then obviously there can be no acknowledgment of the Virgin Birth. However, if one feels that Christ was a sinless Substitute, then there is no hesitation to accept the direct statement such as Matt. 1:18 which provides supporting evidence.

The details of this story back up the conservative viewpoint. Joseph was ready to divorce Mary. It required a supernatural message to thwart his intention and to soothe his alarm.

The second point is that this is not only a virgin birth but also a virgin conception (a baby conceived by a virgin). This means that the genesis of Christ and not merely the delivery-experience was of the Holy Spirit. This teaching is an important corollary to the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, His role in the creation of the world, and His native Being as Deity (Col. 1).

II. "GOD WITH US" FULFILLED PROPHECY. Matt. 1:22-25. The simple fact is that Isa. 7:14 was spoken to King Ahaz as a sign—in spite of that king's stubborn refusal to seek one (Isa. 7:10-14). Therefore the birth of a child was somehow to be a message to Ahaz in his time. The meaning of this sign to Ahaz was that before the child was old enough to make moral decisions the political for-

tunes of the nations of his day were to be greatly altered (Isa. 7:15-17).

The manner in which this fits into the context of Matthew chapter one is quite clear. God spoke one message for King Ahaz's day. But this same passage possessed an additional (or double) interpretation. Under divine inspiration this sequel explanation is uncovered by the New Testament. Unhesitatingly, the New Testament asserts that Christ fulfilled Isa. 7:14 in the New Testament era by being born of a chaste woman.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Is there any difference whether one asserts the Virgin Birth of Christ or the Virgin Conception of Christ?
- 2) List the fundamental doctrines which would be affected if the Virgin Birth were not true.

GOD'S HERALD

(Dec. 28, 1969)

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT. As a final preparation for Christ, John declared that true religion affected one's attitude and actions.

INTRODUCTION. There had been a prophetic silence for about four hundred years. During this period the scribes had studied, taught and interpreted the Law and the Prophets. But no fresh word from God had broken the hush—until the voice of John the Baptist erupted. He was a colorful, uncompromising figure.

I. JOHN PROCLAIMED REPENTANCE. Matt. 3:1-6. The piercing cry of John the Baptist now shattered the silence of the Intertestamental Period. He declared that final preparations were being concluded (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1). The Messiah was about to be unveiled. He coupled this information with a demand that the people individually be ready to give Him a proper reception. They needed to admit the wrongs they had committed, feel regret for their actions and then reverse their pattern of living. To signify this change of heart John baptized them in the Jordan River.

II. JOHN PROCLAIMED RETRIBUTION. Matt. 3:7-10. John declared that God in righteous displeasure over sin will punish rebels. Some may object to this thought on the basis that it may scare people into heaven. But if a father on vacation in the mountains with his family failed to warn his children about the danger of getting lost in the forest, he would be negligent in his duty. Or if an electric signal at

a train crossing shorted out, it would be the duty of a by-passer to alarm a truck driver that a train was rounding the bend.

III. JOHN PROCLAIMED REVIVAL. Matt. 3:11-12. The One who was to replace John would provide God's Spirit to empower their lives, John asserted. The Presence of the Holy Spirit is almost a secret to modern Christians. According to the manner in which they occupy their time, it would appear that they trust in other things rather than in God's working. Programmed publicity plans, specialized filing services, professional financial

BIBLE STUDY

drives, tape recorders and mimeograph machines are lifted out of their places as instruments of service to become ends to attain. In the next endeavor, why not try consciously concentrating on the nearness and working of God?

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) How many synonyms for repentance can you name?
- 2) Was it unkind to label the Pharisees a "brood of vipers"?
- 3) Have you had an experience that you would identify as being baptized by the Holy Spirit? ☐

GOD'S BELOVED SON

(Jan. 4, 1970)

Scripture: Matt. 3:13-17; John 1:32-36

CENTRAL THOUGHT. At the beginning of His ministry Jesus was approved by the Father as our Leader. His credentials were publicized.

INTRODUCTION. The start of our new year coincides with the beginning of Christ's Public Ministry. We know very little about His older childhood and youth. But He emerged from obscurity in connection with the activity of John the Baptist.

I. GOD'S SON COMES FOR BAPTISM. Matt. 3:13-15. John the Baptist had denounced sin and had announced doom for sinners. The agricultural surroundings provided an illustration of judgment (3:12). The farmers of that day commonly tossed the grain into the air so that the chaff would be fanned out by the breeze. Then the priceless wheat would be separated and stored, but the worthless residue would be destroyed.

But Jesus was holy (Luke 1:35). John could not understand of what sins Jesus had to repent. Why should Jesus be baptized? Jesus' reply was that this was necessary to complete righteousness. He wanted to demonstrate that He was identifying Himself with men. Thus, as a perfect offering, He could die for us.

II. GOD'S SON IS ACCREDITED. Matt. 3:16-17. Jesus taught that God is the Father of all who follow Him. The parable of the Prodigal Son and the Lord's Prayer contain evidences to support this idea. Somehow God may be Father to human beings.

But in today's lesson the idea of Father and Son has a higher meaning. It concerns the Son and the Father who alone knew one another in this special intimate acquaintance (Luke 10:22). In fact, it is said that "as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). We should grant the Son equal honor with the Father (John 5:23).

The application of this is that the doctrine of the Trinity is more than just the logical reasoning of scholars. The Scriptures specifically interpret who this Jesus is. He is the unique, only-begotten Son of God.

III. GOD'S SON IS ANNOUNCED. John 1:32-36. The divine signal was given and the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the likeness of a dove.

Jesus, we discover through this experience, is Lord. If He had immediately retired to heaven after He arose out of the water we would still know His identity. He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. His is the exalted Name to which every knee shall bow. This means that He is the one who calls the signals. He maps the route. He programs the computer as far as our Christian lives are concerned.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) Describe the impressions you experienced when you were baptized.
- 2) What would Peter have blurted out if he had been present? ☐

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CHUCKLE WITH BRUNO

Definition of a committee: A group of uninformed persons appointed by the unwilling to do the unnecessary.

Mother to neighbor, "I always wanted a child with long hair, but I was hoping it would be a girl."

OUR CHURCHES IN ACTION

Cameroon College Singers give concert in Ashley

ASHLEY, N.D. On Oct. 3, 1969, the Ashley Baptist Church had the privilege of hosting "The College Singers" from Cameroon, Africa. About 1,200 attended the inspiring concert at the Ashley High School Auditorium. The Rev. Etan Pelzer is pastor of the church. (Mrs. Carl Fischer, reporter.)

Pastor and wife observe 50th anniversary

ERIE, PA. The Rev. and Mrs. Richard A. Mikolon (pictured) celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on Sunday, Aug. 24, 1969.

A reception was given in their honor at the Holiday Inn for 200 friends and relatives who came from eight states and Canada. The Mikolons have five children, 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. The Rev. Mikolon had the pleasure of dedicating their only great-grandson, Paul O. Bischoff Jr., of Deerfield, Illinois.

The Mikolons were married Sept. 10, 1919, at Maspeth, L.I., New York, in the Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church. Since graduation from the International Baptist Seminary in 1925 the Rev. Mikolon served Polish Baptist churches in New Jersey and New York under the American Baptist Home Mission Board. In 1951 they moved to Erie to serve the Baptist Open Bible Tabernacle. Since retirement in 1964 he served as interim pastor and pulpit supply.

The Rev. Richard L. Mikolon Jr. followed in the footsteps of his grandfather and entered the full-time ministry after his ordination in May, 1969. He served the Community Baptist Church of Addison, Vt., until his death, July 6, 1969, at the age of 24. (Wanda Mikolon, reporter.)



Rev. and Mrs. Richard Mikolon

Four girls receive scripture memory award

MARION, KAN. Sunday evening, Oct. 7, Dwight Kruse, Strassburg Baptist Church Sunday school superintendent, presented Sallman's Head of Christ to four girls who completed nine years of



the Scripture Memory course. Left to right the girls are Judy Kreutziger, Diana Evans, Autumn Kaufman, and Diane Weber.

The Strassburg Baptist Church observed its annual Harvest-Mission festival Sunday, Sept. 28, with the Rev. Walter Sukut, Avon, S.D., as guest speaker. The Marion and Durham churches were invited to share in the service. The Rev. Sukut also showed pictures of our mission work in Japan. (Mrs. Harvey Kruse, reporter.)

New church building dedicated

WASHBURN, N.D. June 15, 1969, the Washburn Baptist Church dedicated their new building. The maximum seating capacity is 475. Total cost of the project is \$120,000.

Dedication festivities began on Saturday evening, June 14, with an Appreciation Banquet. Special guests included local public officials who donated time, effort and funds. The Rev. Reuben Stading, former pastor, brought the message.

Dr. J. C. Gunst, Central District Secretary, brought the messages on Sunday. The Rev. Emanuel Broeckel, who was pastor of Washburn Baptist Church when its former building was constructed in 1913, led in the dedication prayer. Mayor Earl Chase, representatives of local churches and pastors of neighboring churches brought greetings. (Harry Haas, pastor.)



Washburn Baptist Church

Dallas Church presents scripture memory and attendance awards

DALLAS, TEX. The North Highlands Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas, presented a record number of *Scripture Memory* awards to 16 young people. Each person received a choice of a partial scholarship to camp, a Bible, or a book. Cross and Crown pins were also presented to 16 young people who had attendance records from one to eight years. Scripture Memory teachers for the year were Mrs. Bill Allen, Mrs. Robert Thomas and Mrs. Gordon Thomas.

In addition to these awards, a pastor's trophy is presented each year. The person with the highest number of points has his name engraved on the trophy which is on display in the church. If the same person wins three years in succession he is allowed to keep the trophy. This year's winner, as well as last year's, was Suzanne Thomas. The Rev. Gordon R. Thomas is pastor of the church. (Mrs. Duane Lindsey, reporter.)

Grace Church bids farewell to pastor and welcomes another

CALGARY, ALTA. After four years of service at Grace Baptist Church, Calgary, the church bid farewell to the Rev. R. Neuman and family, on Aug. 24, 1969. The Rev. Neuman accepted the call to the Capilano Baptist Church, Edmonton, Alta.

The Grace Baptist Church members and friends expressed their thanks for their services in the church and community.

On Sept. 21, 1969, Grace Baptist welcomed the Rev. Peter Schroeder as their new pastor, formerly of Esterhazy, Sask. (L. McColl, reporter.)

Father and Son Banquet held in Ashley church

ASHLEY, N.D. The men of the Ashley Baptist Church Brotherhood held their annual father-son banquet on Oct. 16, 1969. A good representation of men and boys came from a number of neighboring towns as well as from the local community. The Rev. Etan Pelzer is pastor of the church.

The highlight of the evening was a group of men from the Calvary Baptist Church, Aberdeen, S.D., and their pastor, the Rev. Eugene Kern, who brought Team II of God's Volunteers whose director is the Rev. Raymond Harsch. They conducted a crusade at Aberdeen from Oct. 14-24. (Mrs. Carl Fischer, reporter.)

Christian Service Brigade and Pioneer Girls receive awards

DALLAS, TEX. *Christian Service Brigade* awards were presented by the boys' leaders, Edwin Tieszen, Daryl Tyree, Bill Allen and John Barnett, to 16 boys of the North Highlands Baptist Church who qualified in their particular category.

Mrs. Russ Atkinson, Mrs. Daryl Tyree and Mrs. Duane Lindsey are the Guides for *Pioneer Girls*. They presented awards at a Pal-gal party to 18 girls who qualified in various stages of their program. (Mrs. Duane Lindsey, reporter.)

WMS holds annual birthday and guest night

ASHLEY, N.D. The ladies of the Woman's Missionary Society of the Ashley Baptist Church held their annual birthday and guest night on Oct. 7, 1969.

A program was arranged by the pastor's wife, Mrs. Etan Pelzer, composed of appropriate readings, several special numbers in song by various groups and a clarinet solo. The new filmstrip, "Unto the Least of These," depicting White Cross work was shown. The men were also invited as guests. (Mrs. Carl Fischer, reporter.)

King's Highway Church installs new pastor

BRIDGEPORT, CONN. The Rev. Jesse G. Hood was installed as the new pastor of King's Highway Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn., Sept. 28, 1969.

Mr. Raymond Taylor, chairman of the Board of Deacons, gave the welcome and recognition to the new pastor, his wife and three children. The Rev. A. Malmberg, Central Baptist Church, Hamden, Conn., gave the invocation and charge to the pastor and congregation. Dr. Herbert Hiller, Woodside Baptist Church, Woodside, N.Y., and moderator of the Atlantic Conference, was the guest speaker. Words of welcome were brought by representatives of the North American Baptist General Conference, the Atlantic Conference and the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches of Greater Bridgeport.

Special words of welcome were extended to Rev. Hood and his family by the moderator, Mr. Charles Wallace; President, Mrs. Lillian Jacopian of the Women's Missionary Society; President, Mrs. Ottie Gilmore of the Sun-

shine Society and Mr. John Smith, President of the Men's Fellowship. (Mrs. Hilda Zopf, reporter.)

Couple observes 50th wedding anniversary

HUNTINGTON, N.Y. A luncheon was held Sunday, Aug. 31, at the Huntington Baptist Church in honor of the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schneider. About 150 guests attended. Many gifts, cards and telegrams were received including a personal telegram from President and Mrs. Richard Nixon.

Mr. Schneider and the former Katrina Yudt, natives of Yugoslavia, were married there 50 years ago Aug. 28, 1919, in a German Baptist church in the town of Charles. They emigrated to this country in 1921 and lived in Queens, N.Y., where they owned and operated a dry cleaning business until retirement in February 1961. They moved to Huntington, N.Y., upon retirement. They are closely associated with friends in the Immanuel Baptist Church, N.Y. (Mrs. R. C. Lohman, reporter.)



Mr. and Mrs. Charles Schneider

Illinois Association Women hold first retreat

CHICAGO, ILL. The first women's retreat of the Chicago area Baptist Women's Service Union and the Illinois Association was held at the Covenant Harbor Bible Camp, Lake Geneva, Wis., Oct. 3-4. The retreat committee and the chairman, Mrs. Sharon Rich, planned an inspiring weekend with the theme, "Reflecting Christ" (Col. 2:6). Our guest speaker, Mrs.

OUR CHURCHES IN ACTION

Melva Wickman of the Immanuel Covenant Church of Chicago, spoke to us on "Faith." Miss Barbara Kieper, our missionary on furlough from Cameroon, gave us an outline of her 36-hour day on the mission field. Music director, Mrs. Bea Pankratz and her daughters, led us in old and new songs. Everyone said they are looking forward to the next retreat. (Mrs. Gladys Siemurd, reporter.)

Woman's Missionary Society Dinner has global flavor

RACINE, WIS. Delving into family and church history, members of the Woman's Missionary Society of Grace Baptist Church, Racine, Wis., learned more about each other and other nations at their 88th anniversary dinner on Oct. 2, 1969. Flags of many nations graced the table and corresponding costumes were worn by hostesses.

Speakers representing their countries were Mrs. H. Brygger, Africa; Mrs. L. Kelm, Russia; Mrs. C. Knatske, Italy; Miss M. Schacht, Germany; Mrs. S. Schacht, Philippines.

Scripture was read in Spanish and an Indian version of Psalm 23 was read. Miss Dorothy Nelson was the soloist. Mrs. G. Breitreuz closed with prayer.

The offering was designated for our mission in Japan and Brazil. (Mrs. H. Schacht, reporter.)

Church reports baptism and other activities

TURTLE LAKE, N.D. Our beloved physician's wife, Mrs. F. Luke Chiu, was baptized by our pastor, the Rev. Gordon Huisinga. She and the Doctor, and Mrs. Gertrude Kessler, were welcomed into our fellowship.

In June, the young people of our BYF spent a week on the mission field at Monte Vista, Colo., helping with VBS and doing repair work and painting in some of the homes.

On Aug. 24, we had a fellowship dinner and farewell service honoring the Rev. and Mrs. Douglas Woyke who sailed for Japan to serve on the mission field.

In October we observed our annual Missionfest. The Rev. Oliver Bender of Underwood, N.D., was guest speaker.

The Cameroon College singers were with us and brought their songs and testimonies to a packed house.

Scripture memory awards were presented to Cynthia Haas and Mark Wolitarsky who completed nine years. Mr. Rubin Mehrer, superintendent, and Mrs.

OUR CHURCHES IN ACTION

Edwin Wacker, Scripture memory director, are pictured with them. Evangelistic meetings were held on



Turtle Lake, Marion, Strassburg

Oct. 22, with the Rev. G. G. Rauser of Paul, Idaho. (Mrs. A. F. Schiller, reporter.)

Community Baptist welcomes new pastor

XENIA, OHIO. On Sunday, Sept. 28, Community Baptist Church, Xenia, Ohio, had an installation service for our new pastor, the Rev. Will Dachtler. The Rev. Reubin Kern was the guest speaker.

Since the pastor came attendance at Sunday school and church has increased. A visitation program is under way; various boards and committees are busy making plans for the

future. The emphasis is not on numbers, but on individuals. The pastor and his wife are pictured. (Geraldine Martin, reporter.)



Rev. and Mrs. Will Dachtler

1969 Giving of North American Baptist General Conference Churches

Conference	Local Church Operating Expenses	Local Building Fund Expenses	Total for Local Field	N.A.B. Missions and Benevolent	Local Conference Missions	Total for all N.A.B. Missions	Non-N.A.B. Missions	Total for all Mission Purposes	Total for all Purposes
Atlantic	\$ 267,636.87	\$ 175,459.72	\$ 443,396.59	\$ 56,329.42	\$ 3,933.60	\$ 60,263.02	\$ 71,956.92	\$ 132,219.94	\$ 575,316.53
Central	1,111,625.86	336,531.78	1,448,157.64	304,718.29	26,394.78	331,113.07	116,201.35	447,314.42	1,895,472.06
Dakota	554,673.89	218,470.11	773,144.00	181,500.84	24,077.64	205,578.48	20,997.76	226,576.24	999,720.24
Eastern	287,938.76	154,720.48	442,659.24	36,925.10	4,523.03	41,448.13	25,224.87	66,673.00	509,332.24
Northern	680,177.82	260,866.31	941,044.13	220,612.16	72,960.71	293,572.87	39,823.38	333,396.25	1,274,440.38
Northwestern	504,415.18	373,393.97	877,809.15	157,914.28	14,597.69	172,511.97	73,283.33	245,795.30	1,123,604.45
Pacific	1,033,663.98	300,941.94	1,334,605.92	278,570.76	57,397.45	335,968.21	52,738.25	388,706.46	1,723,312.38
Southern	75,315.47	10,706.64	86,022.11	12,984.16	4,228.78	17,212.94	1,729.89	18,942.83	104,964.94
Southwestern	201,255.15	39,134.90	240,390.05	79,573.71	6,772.43	86,346.16	7,497.31	93,843.45	334,233.50
Totals	\$4,716,702.98	\$1,870,225.85	\$6,586,928.83	\$1,329,128.72	\$ 214,886.11	\$1,544,014.85	\$ 409,453.06	\$1,953,467.89	\$8,540,396.72
Totals Last year	4,515,524.38	2,165,885.64	6,681,410.02	1,178,022.11	180,286.90	1,358,309.01	369,018.63	1,727,327.64	8,408,737.66
Total Increase	\$ 201,178.60			\$ 151,106.61	\$ 34,599.21	\$ 185,705.84	\$ 40,434.43	\$ 226,140.25	\$ 131,659.06
Total Decrease		\$ 295,659.79	\$ 94,481.19						

1969 Statistics — North American Baptist General Conference Churches

Conference	Churches	Baptisms	Church Members	Sunday Schools	Sunday School Enrollment	W.M.U. Societies	W.M.U. Members	B.Y.F. Societies	B.Y.F. Members
Atlantic	21	83	3,441	19	2,422	34	866	18	237
Central	41	439	10,403	41	9,765	70	2,544	65	1,113
Dakota	65	175	7,951	65	7,650	82	1,365	93	1,346
Eastern	25	73	3,213	22	2,486	35	847	30	505
Northern	66	289	8,623	66	9,065	94	2,302	66	1,499
Northwestern	39	210	6,810	39	5,480	59	1,641	73	1,164
Pacific	50	446	11,194	49	11,467	77	2,686	82	1,782
Southern	11	30	822	12	771	12	176	11	170
Southwestern	27	59	2,623	27	2,518	38	703	39	424
Totals	347	1,804	55,080	340	51,624	501	13,130	477	8,240
Totals Last Year	339	1,874	55,100	335	51,689	489	13,372	487	8,216
Total Increase	8			5		12			24
Total Decrease		70	20		65		242	10	

W.M.U. Figures Include Girls Groups

Rex Folkerts, 74, of Steamboat Rock, Iowa, died on Oct. 7, 1969. He was born near Steamboat Rock, Iowa, Dec. 19, 1894. On Dec. 4, 1917, he married Minnie Christians to which union the Lord gave three children.

In 1914 Mr. Rex accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. On March 29, 1914, he was baptized and united with the First Baptist Church, Steamboat Rock. He served faithfully on the Trustee Board for six years and could always be counted on to lend a helping hand to build up the Church.

He is survived by his wife, Minnie; three children, Harry and George, Steamboat Rock, Iowa, and Mrs. Wilson (Luella) Patterson, Elgin, Iowa; four sisters, Mrs. Esther Daleske, Mrs. Erastus (Anna) Akers, Mrs. Tom (Kate) Kruse, Mrs. Louis (Elizabeth) Muller; 10 grandchildren. Three brothers and two sisters preceded him in death. Funeral services were held in the First Baptist Church, Steamboat Rock, Iowa, with the pastor, the Rev. Jacob Ehman, officiating.

Fred W. Ziegler Jr., 77, of Jamesburg, N.J., died on Oct. 11, 1969. He was born on Sept. 19, 1892, in Philadelphia, Pa.

Mr. Ziegler was a retired farmer and long-time resident of Monroe Township. Recently the Zieglers made their home with their daughter, Mrs. Frank Katona. As a member of the First Baptist Church of Jamesburg, Brother Ziegler served as a trustee of the church and in other capacities.

He is survived by his wife, Clara; a daughter, Mrs. Frank (Ruth) Katona, and many relatives and friends. Funeral services were held at the First Baptist Church, Jamesburg, N.J., with the pastor, the Karl E. Bieber officiating.

Adrian E. Werner, 70, died recently in Mohler, Wash. He was born Aug. 7, 1899, at Crab Orchard, Neb. In 1923 he moved to the west coast making his home at Mohler in 1928. On Sept. 28, 1930, he married Addline H. Roloff of Lamona, Wash. Three children were born to this union.

He later took Christ into his life and was baptized in the Odessa Baptist Church. He served as S.S. Superintendent for many years and as adult Bible teacher. He also held several responsible jobs in his community. He was known for his kind hospitality and helpfulness to others.

Surviving are his wife Addline; three

children: Donald, Mrs. Lewis (Gloria) Kaiser, Miss Jean A. Werner; six grandchildren and six brothers and sisters. The Rev. Albert W. Richardson officiated at the funeral services.

Mr. Edwin Wacker, 60, of Turtle Lake, N.D., died on Oct. 16, 1969.

Mr. Wacker married Lydia Klein of Washburn, N.D., on Oct. 3, 1929. Their marriage was blessed with two sons: the Rev. Lyle Wacker of Elmhurst, Ill., and Professor DuWayne Wacker of Grand Forks, N.D. Mr. Wacker experienced faith in Jesus Christ, and was a member of the Turtle Lake Baptist Church for the past 27 years. He served as Sunday school superintendent, trustee and deacon.

He is survived by his wife, Lydia; two sons: Lyle and DuWayne; one brother, Walter of Greely, Colo. and one sister, Mrs. Chester Johnson of Turtle Lake, N.D., a grandson and a granddaughter. A memorial service was held in the Turtle Lake Baptist Church with the pastor, the Rev. Gordon Huisinga, officiating.

Mrs. Christine A. Woyke, 58, of Silver Spring, Md., died Oct. 22, 1969, in Oak Park, Ill. Mrs. Woyke was born to Mr. and Mrs. Garabet Jacopian on Sept. 6, 1911, in Long Hill, Conn. Early in her life she accepted Christ as her Saviour, was baptized and became a member of the King's Highway Baptist Church of Bridgeport, Conn.

On June 5, 1937, she was married to Frank H. Woyke, who served as a member of the faculty of the North American Baptist Seminary at the time. During the years 1946-1968 she lived in Forest Park, Ill., where her husband served as Executive Secretary of the North American Baptist General Conference. Two children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Woyke: John F. and Frank H., Jr.

Besides being a devoted wife and mother and maintaining an interest in her church and denomination, Mrs. Woyke had in recent years also been a beloved elementary school teacher. Mr. Daniel Franco, her principal at Lincoln School in Oak Park, Ill., for several years, said of her: "She was an outstanding teacher who really took her job seriously. She had a way of getting to difficult children who gave some teachers a rough time. She had a charm about her. She had written several children's story books that are being used in the schools. She was very

In Memoriam

well liked — a top-notch teacher — a real fine person."

She is survived by her husband, her son John and his wife, Priscilla, her son Frank H. Jr., two brothers and two sisters.

Memorial services were held in Forest Park, Ill., and in Bridgeport, Conn. Participating in the services were the following: Dr. Richard Schilke, Oak Park, Ill.; the Rev. John E. Grygo, Norridge, Ill.; the Rev. Gideon K. Zimmerman, Forest Park, Ill.; the Rev. Jesse Hood, Stratford, Conn.; Mr. Edwin H. Marklein, Hempstead, N.Y.; and Dr. James M. Windham, Silver Spring, Md.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested that memorial gifts be sent to North American Baptists, Inc. for the education of missionary children in Cameroon, Africa.

Mrs. Anna Jacopian, 84, of Stratford, Conn., died Oct. 22, 1969, at Oak Park, Ill. Mrs. Jacopian was born to Mr. and Mrs. Johann Muschitz on June 15, 1885, at Vienna, Austria. In 1904 she was married to Mr. Garabet Jacopian. In the first decade of this century they immigrated to the United States and settled in the area of Bridgeport and Stratford, Conn. Here they became members of the King's Highway Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Conn. Six children were born to them: Francis, Fred, Sabina (Mrs. Reuben Jeschke), Christine (Mrs. Frank H. Woyke), Minas and Marion (Mrs. Kronmuller).

Mrs. Jacopian was a truly remarkable person, gifted with many talents and languages. Although she had traveled widely and raised a large family, she still found time to honor her Lord and Saviour. She was a member of the King's Highway Baptist Church for 60 years. During this time she was also a member of the Women's Missionary Society.

She is survived by two sons, two daughters, two sons-in-law, three daughters-in-law, eleven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren. Memorial services were held in Forest Park, Ill. and Bridgeport, Conn.

When an obituary is submitted for publication in the BAPTIST HERALD, please follow the format used in this issue. However, in the future, the "In Memoriam" items will be reduced to a maximum of 15 lines. Payment, of a flat rate, of \$2.00 per item is to be sent with the obituary. This will eliminate the billing procedure of the past. □

Kentucky Association refuses to oust churches over Baptism
VERSAILLES, KY. (BP) — The Elkhorn Baptist Association refused to consider motions to withdraw fellowship from churches practicing "alien immersion" and from one church in the association which has ordained women as deacons.

The effort to withdraw fellowship from churches that accept as members, persons who have been baptized (immersed) by churches of other denominations and ordaining women as deacons was led by Ross L. Range, pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky.

At least six churches would have been excluded if Range's motion to exclude churches practicing alien immersion had been approved.

Range, vice moderator of the association, said that such a practice was unscriptural, unbaptistic, and was disrupting to the fellowship of the association. He cited several historical Baptist statements supporting his view, including an association constitution provision for the association to determine its membership and protect its unity.

Frank Owen, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, the largest church in the association, argued against the motion, saying that alien immersion was not a test of fellowship for the Southern Baptist Convention or the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and should not be for the Elkhorn Association.

British religious press circulation is declining

LONDON, ENG. — (ABNS) — British religious newspapers have lost 60,000 readers in the past year, according to a detailed survey published in the first issue of The Christian Record, new evangelical weekly journal here.

In the same period, it said, the combined circulation "of Britain's two kinkiest sex magazines shot up by 29,000."

Well-known papers for whom the survey shows considerable losses during the past year include the Universe and Catholic Herald (both Roman Catholic), the Christian Herald, Life and Work, Challenge and the Methodist Recorder. All lost 5,000 and 11,000 readers each. The leading Anglican newspaper, Church Times, kept its loss below 2,000, while the Baptist Times and the (Nonconformist) British Weekly maintained their positions.

Koosman gets N.T.

NEW YORK — Jerry Koosman, star pitcher of the World Series winning New York Mets, received on Oct. 17 from the American Bible Society the 17 millionth copy of "Good News for Modern Man," best selling modern language version of the New Testament.

The presentation took place at a news conference at the Travelers Hotel-Motel, at LaGuardia Airport, home of the Mets during the season near Shea Stadium.

"This volume is presented to Jerry Koosman in recognition of his service to the Bible cause," said Dr. James Z. Nettinga, executive secretary of the A.B.S.

Koosman, with the Mets since 1968, expressed his concern that Sunday afternoon games meant leaving for the ball park by 11:30 a.m., preventing many players from attending church services.

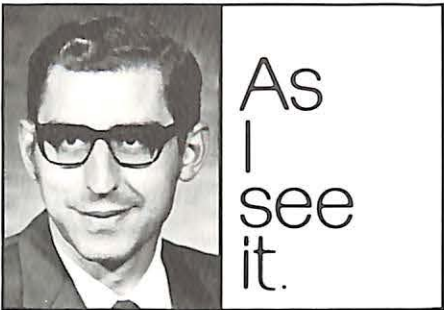
"Some of us would like next season to start the custom of an interdenominational half-hour service, conducted by a visiting clergyman, in the motel, on Sundays before games," he said.

"The message of the Bible," said Koosman, "has been a source of strength and guidance to me many times."

He recommended its reading daily to "anyone in search of direction for living." Koosman, who has a special desire to use his influence to help American youth find meaning in their lives, said he has accepted many speaking engagements this fall and winter in order to reach them.



Dr. James Z. Nettinga and Jerry Koosman.



by Paul Siewert

Dr. Eugene Carson Blake has said that the reason religions die is that their words wear out. He also noted that many of the great Christian words are suffering grave abuse and are becoming threadbare. This is a rather startling reality. Too often "love" simply refers to what goes on between movie stars, off and on the screen today. "Service" has the image of the unpleasant menial task of the uneducated. "Redemption" reminds you of green stamps. They are redeemed for household items. "Gospel" is a slang for truth. We must tell the Gospel truth! "Grace" is a girl's name. And "hope" is confidence in the unlikely.

There is another significant word that has been so castigated it almost escapes recognition as a Christian term. You guessed it, it's the greeting, "Merry Christmas."

We all know that the word "merry" means "joyful." But I wonder how many of us realize that the word "Christmas" comes from the medieval word "Christes Masse" which means, "Mass of Christ," or the "Worship of Christ." Actually, if you can imagine yourself a little dated, you could be saying, "Have a Joyful Worship of Christ" when you say "Merry Christmas."

So, in the tradition of the golden past, may I wish you all a "Merry Christmas!" □

■ The Rev. and Mrs. Edwin Kern, of Nagoya, Japan, announce the birth of twin brothers, Joel Herman and Nathan Philip, born Oct. 8, 1969.

■ The Rev. and Mrs. Donald Decker of Lorraine, Kan., announce the birth of a son, Monte Richard, born Oct. 17, 1969.

■ Dr. Gerald Borchert of Sioux Falls, S. D., was appointed secretary of the Baptist World Alliance Commission on Cooperative Christianity, during the B. W. A. sessions in Baden, Austria, July 1969.

■ Mr. John Silvey from Mill Valley, Cal., has become the pastor of the First Baptist Church, Mercer, N. D., effective Nov. 2, 1969.

■ The Rev. Ted Keck has become the pastor of the Glencullen Baptist Church, Portland, Ore., effective November 1969. He previously served the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Hope, Kan.

■ Congratulations to the North American Baptist College of Edmonton, Alta., which received full accreditation in the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (A. A. B. C.) of the United States and Canada, at the annual sessions of the A. A. B. C. held in Chicago, Ill., Oct. 29, 1969. The College held associate membership with the A. A. B. C. for several years.

■ The Rev. John von Harten of St. Catharines, Ont., has accepted a call to an American Baptist Convention church in the state of New York.

■ The Rev. Arthur Kliever, has become the pastor of the Elim Baptist Church, Beausejour, Man.

■ Mr. Elwyn Zimmerman has accepted the call to become the pastor of the First Baptist churches (American Baptist Convention) of Hudson and Towanda, Ill., Dec. 14, 1969. He previously served the Shell Creek Baptist Church, Columbus, Neb.

■ Mr. Walter Bernadsky, a recent graduate of the North American Baptist Seminary, has accepted the call to become the pastor of the Esterhazy Baptist Church, Esterhazy, Sask., effective November 1969.

■ The Rev. and Mrs. E. P. Wahl express thanks. "So many of you dear Christian friends have been such a great comfort and encouragement to us after our accident. We herewith wish to thank you one and all.

"We were on our way home from a blessed Sunday of services at the First Baptist Church, Leduc, Alta., when while crossing a railway track, we were struck by a train. The car was completely demolished. We were brought to a hospital in Edmonton.

"Mrs. Wahl was discharged from the hospital on Oct. 24, 1969, and Mr. Wahl left the hospital on November 10, 1969. God has been gracious, loving and good. His name be praised."

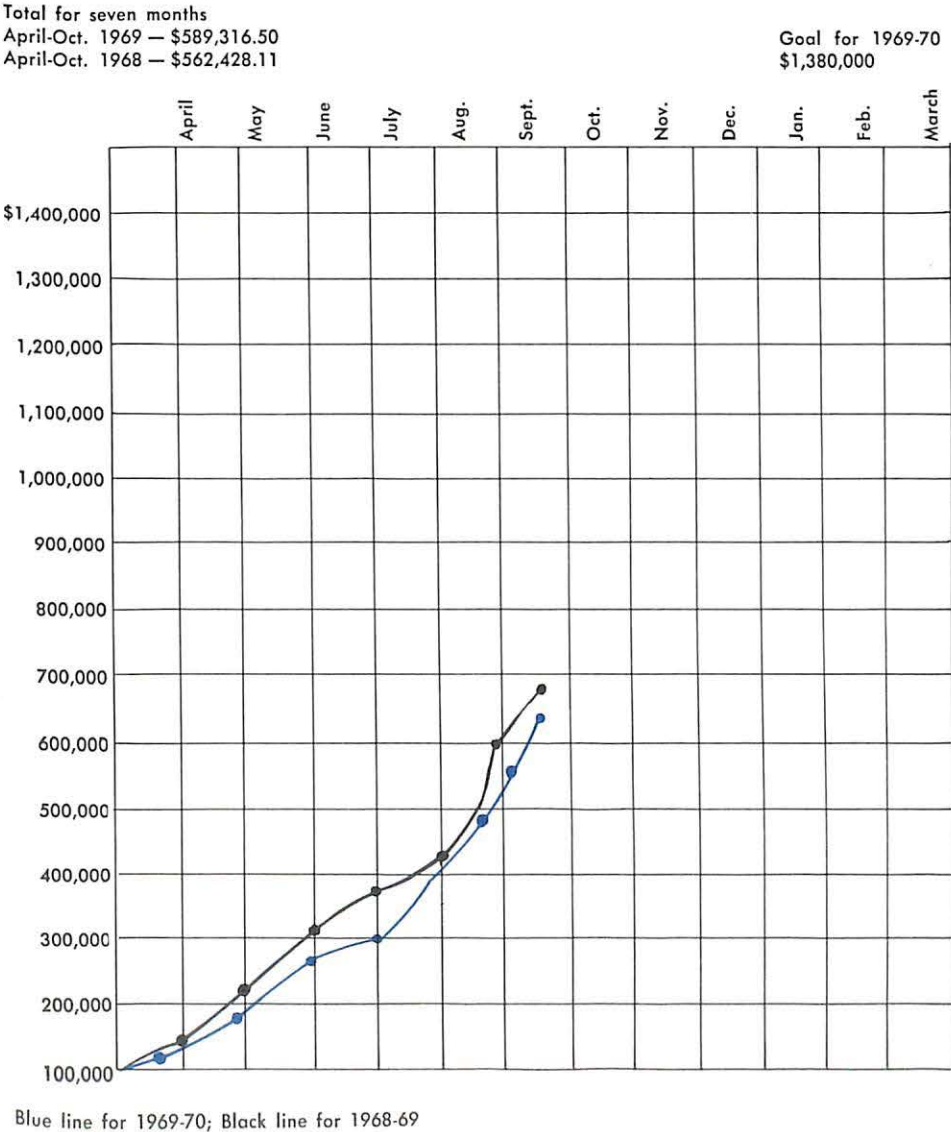
■ The College Singers from Cameroon, Africa, sang at the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York on Nov. 27 just before they returned to Cameroon. They are a group of 19 students that have toured the United States and Canada for three months under the sponsorship of the North American Baptist General Conference. The following comments illustrate some of the enthusiastic responses to the College Singers.

The Rev. Allan Strohschein, Minneapolis, writes: "The choir was certainly well received and most enjoyed by all who were present. It was a blessed experience!"

The Rev. Peter J. Wiens, Hebron, N.D., writes: "We cannot say enough about the appearance of the choir. It was simply fabulous. . . . Crowds were tremendous. In the high school in the afternoon we had over 800."

Mr. Paul Mueller of Minitonas, Man., writes: "With great joy we expected and welcomed the Cameroon College Singers and heard their concert and their witness. This was a highlight such as Minitonas never experienced. About 835 were present in our church."

OUR STEWARDSHIP RECORD — NAB BASIC MISSION PROGRAM



EDITORIAL



A New Look

It's a monthly! It has more color! It has a new design! This new look of the BAPTIST HERALD is a result of the editor, the editorial committee and the Board of Trustees of the Roger Williams Press seeking answers to some significant questions.

What is the purpose and function of the BAPTIST HERALD today? Is it a news magazine? Is it a promotional magazine for the denomination? Is it educational? Is it a combination of these things? What should its main thrust be? What is the best format for the future?

It was agreed that the appearance of the magazine should give an impression of aliveness, conviction and contemporaneity. To accomplish this, better photos, more readable type, at least two colors in every issue and professional assistance in design were needed.

It was also agreed that the content must be made more relevant to the readers' life situations. The magazine must be more than a cheerleader for the denominational team. It must deal with controversial issues in some depth from a Christian perspective. It must speak to the concerns of people. This is a big order, and we don't presume for one minute that the new look of this issue is going to achieve these goals. The degree of achievement is for you to judge.

How could the BAPTIST HERALD move in this direction without greatly increasing the publication cost? The Board of Trustees struggled with this question for about a year.

The costs of producing and mailing the magazine have been going up about five or ten percent a year for the last several years. The subscription price has not been increased for decades. A magazine with 9000 circulation cannot pay its own way, it needs to be subsidized. However, it was not thought feasible to increase the sub-

scription rate or to request greater subsidy.

In order to make some significant and necessary improvements, and still keep the cost down, it was recommended to the General Council, and approved, that the BAPTIST HERALD become a monthly magazine with December 1969. The number of pages are to be increased from 24 to 32 pages with some special issues having 36 pages. At least two or three colors will be used in each issue and four colors on the cover of some issues.

The BAPTIST HERALD was one of very few magazines issued on a semi-monthly basis. Most news magazines are weeklies, and if they try to deal with subjects in some depth, they are usually monthlies.

There are several magazines that have recently changed from semi-monthly to monthly. The semi-monthly issues seem especially unnecessary during the summer months when people go on vacation and get behind in their reading of magazines to which they subscribe.

To achieve some of our objectives, it was also necessary to change our printing process from letterpress to offset. This meant getting another printer as well. The HERALD is now being printed in Grand Rapids, Mich., by Dickinson Brothers, Inc.

By these changes, we do not think that we have adequately answered all the questions raised about the future of the BAPTIST HERALD. We ask you to help us answer these questions.

Sharing the Christmas Event

And suddenly the shepherds saw, on their peaceful hillside, the angels come to proclaim: "Don't be afraid! For I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. This very night in David's town your Savior was born — Christ the Lord! . . . Glory to God in the highest heaven! And peace on earth to men with whom he is pleased!" (Luke 2:10-14).

When the angels left, the shepherds hurried off to Bethlehem. After their confrontation with Christ the Lord, "The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them" (Luke 2:20). May we also share the good news of the love of God in Jesus Christ with our fellowmen. — J. B.

OPEN DIALOGUE

letters to the editor

"I have read and reread with great appreciation the articles on Evangelism in the October 1, 1969 issue of the BAPTIST HERALD. The article by Rev. Barker, "What The Community Thinks Of Us," gave some shocking news to us comfortable Christians! The data, in empirical research, of similar studies, would reveal similar or worse evidence in nearly all of our church communities. Maybe, we have been preaching too long as well as believed the concept, "just preach the Gospel and people will come and be converted!" That concept is false and our growth exposes the startling evidence.

"It is the writers contention that we must get back to Biblical methods of proclaiming the Gospel. The neighbors knew during those N.T. days, that they had Christian people living near them and so did the employers of these converts. Evangelism must be done in both the mass and personal method. Maybe, we are so fearful of persecution, in a time when we aren't persecuted, such as the N.T. believers experienced, in our affluent society. We must remind ourselves that the person without Jesus Christ as his personal Savior is going straight to hell! The N.T. believers were young Christians but they had zeal and maturity, in sharing their faith, that turned the 'world upside down.' May God lay such a burden on the heart of every Christian is my prayer and may it begin in me, for the Glory of God!" *Curtis Haas, Pastor, Valley City, N.D.* □

"Just want you to know we enjoyed the BAPTIST HERALD — especially the one telling about the General Conference at Winnipeg and the article reporting on the ministers' salary survey." *Orville H. Meth, pastor, Elgin, Iowa.* □

Just a note to thank you for the editorial, "We Never Get the Full Picture," in the Oct. 1 issue of the BAPTIST HERALD. It was something we need to hear often. I am glad you had the courage. *Bernard Schalm, professor, Edmonton, Alta.*

Love is a Feeling

(Continued from page 14)

Everything was reason and will with him. He called her stupid and sentimental when she put more faith in her intuition than in his reasoning and thinking.

Why can't a boy be like a girl?

Sometimes she wanted to be like a porcupine, roll together and show her prickles in order to make him understand in a thorny way that moonlight did not increase her desire for contact.

In his presence, she felt the desire to withdraw into the fortress of freedom and hoist the flag of independence.

Yet Sylvia did not send him away. Not yet, she thought; maybe later on.

But later on, a half a year or so, a few things dawned on her. She began to understand that a young man who sends a book to her which interests him, may be more serious than someone who sends roses.

The book says: I want to share something with you which moves my heart at present. I want to give you a part in my life. I want to know what you think. It is important to me to know what you think.

She discovered to her astonishment one day, that she had stopped to look at a bridge. For the first time she saw the beauty of its swing, of its lines. Or she stood and watched as the beams for a skyscraper were hoisted upwards and thought: I should show this to him.

It was no longer important to her just to be understood. She herself had begun to understand. She had learned the first lesson in love: one has to give up dreams, because they stand in the way of happiness.

Love is a special way of feeling — something to be learned. □

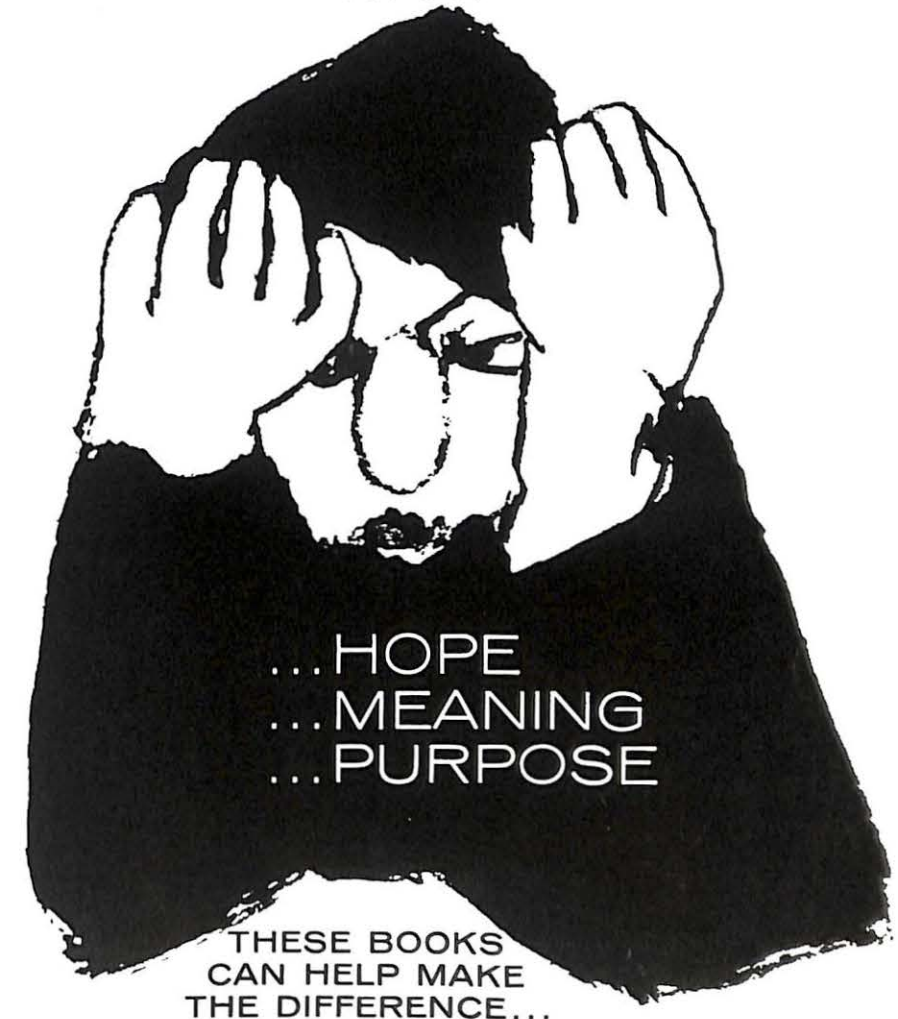


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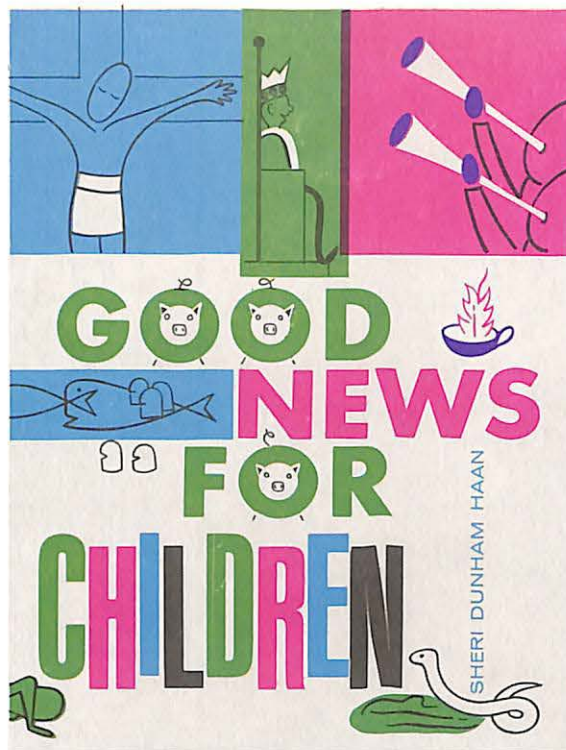
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One glance will tell you that this Bible storybook is different from all others.

The first thing you will probably notice is its large type. This Bible storybook is meant to be read **by** children and as well as **to** children and therefore a large typeface was selected. Most second- and third-graders will have little difficulty in reading this book. The style is conversational and natural, using contemporary language which little children understand.

A second feature which distinguishes this book from others is its thematic arrangement. The Bible stories in **Good News for Children**, a Baker Book House Publication, are arranged according to topics. All of the stories were carefully selected from both the Old and New Testaments

for their interest and value to young children. The author helps young children to understand such abstract concepts as honesty and dishonesty, love and hate, pride and humility, faith and unbelief. Each of these concepts is illustrated by carefully selected stories from the Bible. They speak to the child and influence his everyday life.

The bold, colorful, yet simple, line illustrations team up with the simple, straight-forward text to provide interest and create lasting impressions. These illustrations, much like the young child would draw himself, can be easily understood and interpreted by the child.

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