

the MESSENGER

BLESSED CHRISTMAS



"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds." Luke 2:15-18

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PRESIDIUM MEETS

By Archie Penner

The following is a report on the meeting of the Presidium of the Mennonite World Conference as given by Rev. Archie Penner who is a delegate in the General Council.

The first Mennonite World Conference General Council (Presidium) meeting since the World Conference at Kitchen-er, Ontario last year and since the death of Dr. H. S. Bender was held at the European Mennonite Bible School Bienenberg, Switzerland, near Basel, November 13-15. It was my privilege under the direction of Ministerial Council to attend.

New York — Luxembourg

I left Idlewild International Airport on November 9th. What now seems a rather strange incident occurred to me shortly before I left New York. Trying to cross over the last street to the

Airline building to embark, I was halted by the police. This seemed strange. So I asked the reason for this from a bystander in the crowd that had already gathered. I was told that the President of the United States was about to proceed by this route to his plane which was waiting for him. Within some minutes the motorcade arrived. The President passed within some yards from where I stood. Little did I know or surmise while I took motion pictures of him, that by the time I would be in Stuttgart, Germany a fortnight later and ready to return to the United States, he would have met his Maker, killed by an assassin's shameless bullet.

A short night and day and an exceptionally smooth flight over the massive Atlantic in an old reliable DC-6 propeller driven plane, touching down at Gander, Newfoundland and Iceland, then winging over Scotland and England, and we arrived at Luxembourg. Here, Dr. J. Wenger—with whom I

had enjoyed fellowship throughout the flight and who is also a member of the presidium and therefore had the same ultimate destiny as I—parted company for a few days.

From Luxembourg to Saarbruecken

At Saarbruecken I was met by John Peters. Here we spent the night and travelled on by car, throughout part of France and southwestern Germany, to Basel, Switzerland the next day. For a few pleasant and spiritually rich days of fellowship with the John Peters family, I stayed in Basel. I had the privilege of looking briefly at some of the work which the John Peters are doing. Their testimony warmed my heart.

Then on Wednesday, the thirteenth, in the morning, we wound our way through the narrow European streets and clean, beautiful countryside, up into the hills. Here, on a majestic hillcrest, as if lording it over the valley and its city below it stands the European Mennonite Bible School, Bienenberg. Friend- (Cont'd. on page 8)

EDITORIAL



RETROSPECT

With this issue the MESSENGER completes one year of publication (there will be no paper during the Christmas week). We would like to say a hearty thank-you to all who have had a part in making it possible to print this paper the first year. Without you we could not have done what we did.

Looking back we cannot but marvel at the way the Lord has undertaken. At the beginning of the year we looked at the many months ahead of us and wondered, with all our shortcomings and limitations, whether we would be able to make it. But the Lord has wonderfully undertaken so that we can say that none of His good promises have failed.

Since it is again the wish of the Board of Education and Publication that I take up the work for a further year I would like to commend myself to your intercessions and prayers.

In closing I would like to wish all readers a blessed and joyous Christmas and New Year, (D.K.S.)

Correction: The second paragraph in the Editorial, "A TIME TO DIE" in the last issue stated incorrectly that, "... the late President will soon be forgotten." The way it should have read was, "... the late President will **not** soon be forgotten."

Rev. Melvin Dueck (page 4) is a minister at the Rosenort E.M. Church.

Rev. Archie Penner is the former moderator of the E.M. Conference now studying in the United States.

The Messenger

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The Challenge of Radio in Ecuador

Blessings Over the Air Waves

Dawn crept over the tall jungle trees around the little clearing. In the earthen-floored, thatched-roofed cabin the family and animals began to stir. Father Chirapa pushed the logs of the fireplace together, blew vigorously to start a flame, then hurried to the shelf where the precious "box" was kept out of reach of curious fingers. Soon the whole house was filled with the cheerful strains of a Gospel hymn. As a portion of the Gospel of John was expounded, Chiriapa felt his faith strengthened. His fears of the witch doctor's recent threats seemed to float away as the presence and power of God were made real right there in his home, in his heart. He had passed a restless night, had arisen full of doubts and fears. Now as another hymn is heard Chiriapa joins in the singing. His heart is light, the devil is defeated. Eating his morning manioc, he plans the day's work. "And this afternoon, I will go to the witch doctor and invite him to come to listen to the 'box' that he too might understand the love of Christ. He can even sleep in my home so that he can hear God's word at daybreak."

Good Words from a Box

Hurrying up the mountain trail, Jose called to his neighbors, "Good morning from God." Each one replied the same as he also hurried to his daily chores. When Jose had to work on the big hacienda and was paid the day's pittance, he said obsequiously, "May God repay you." At the city market where Jose took his grain to sell after harvest, a man offered only half of the true value. Jose ejaculated, calling on God to witness that it was worth twice that much.

What did Jose know about God whose name he used so casually? Did he know that God is the Creator of all, holy and good, hating sin? Did he know that "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life?" No, Jose knew almost nothing about the One whose name he had learned to use from childhood. That Name was just a word, not even of his own tribal tongue, but a Spanish word introduced into the Quichua's daily vocabulary.

One day, Jose was invited to visit a neighbor's house to hear "good words from a box" just before the sun hid behind the big mountain. It all seemed very mysterious. When he reached the house he began to ask about the box, where it came from, how it could talk, what language it talked. Suddenly a voice came out of the box speaking in Quichua, music followed, then more talking. Jose was so completely astonished he did not really listen well to what was said. But he visited that home again. One day he announced to his friend, "I want to belong to Jesus Christ as the box says." In the Evangelical chapel he heard more of God's Word and what it means to belong to God. Now the Name is not just a word to Jose, but a precious name of His Heavenly Father.

Thus modern communications are being used of the Lord, along with preaching, teaching, and medical service to make Christ known and establish the testimony of His church. With some 60 transistor sets in Jivaro and Spanish daily, station HCGM-7 is heralding Christ's Gospel Message to Indians of Ecuador's Amazon jungle. High in the Andes, station HCUE-5 radiocasts Bible messages every day and practical lessons on important subjects to the Quichua Indians in their own language.

—From "The Challenge of Communication in Ecuador."

A sequel to the above is this letter from the Stan Houghtons who are in charge of station HCUE-5 mentioned above.

"A few weeks ago a man came to our service, inviting us to his place to have a meeting with his Indians. He had been listening to our broadcasts and was interested in hearing more. Ten days later Stan went up with a load of Christians from here, to see what could be done. They found only his mother home, but she was very friendly and invited them to come again soon. Please pray that a good contact be made there. It is just above Huacuna, a place that we have mentioned to you before, where there already are some believers.

As we continue to send out our program each day, we often pray that some good for eternity might come of them? We sold our last radios in July, and have been unable to get more, due to lack of funds. There is still quite a demand for them. We now have ninety radios out and think we could sell that many more easily.

Prayer Request

Another need is that for a car. The one we have is not running at present and we are not in a position to have it repaired. We appreciate all you are doing and almost hesitate to mention this need to you, but know that in the Lord you will do what you can."

* * *

THE URGENCY OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE IN HAITI

by William T. Snyder

Executive Secretary of the MCC

Haiti staggering under that awful burden of poverty and disease. It was one of the world's grimmest slum areas even before Hurricane Flora struck its devastating blow early in October. Now conditions there have come perilously close to being hopeless and unbearable for thousands of people living on the southern peninsula.

A lack of shelter, food, and medical care appears to be Haiti's most immediate problem. Only one house was left standing in Cotes de Fer, a town of 1,500. This was typical in the hurricane area. Weeks after the catastrophe, vic-

tims of the storm, some of them with compound fractures, were still lying in isolated communities, without medical attention. To make circumstances even more critical, the recently planted crop was almost completely wiped out during the hurricane and the rains that followed. About 110,000 persons will have to be fed with emergency rations for the next six months at least.

The Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches are in Haiti to help through the Mennonite Central Committee. We have sent twenty-three short term workers to Cotes de Fer to build and heal.

PREPARING FOR CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY

By Melvin Dueck

Great events require much preparation. When a monarch visits one of his countries much preparation takes place, so that he will feel welcome. We need but think back to the time when the king and queen visited our country. Millions were spent to impress this royal couple. We made sure that we'd give honour to whom honour was due.

Now then during this Christmas season as we celebrate the Birthday of our dear Saviour shall we make sure that we make right preparations. For truly is not Christ's coming the greatest event that ever took place?

I GOD'S PREPARATION

God prepared for Christ's coming even from the dawn of creation. Was it not Adam and Eve whom God promised to send someone who would crush and bruise the head of Satan?

A. Preparation through Prophets

We find also that right through the Old Testament, God reminded the people through the prophets that He would send a Redeemer. Isaiah, Micah, Joel and many others also spoke of Him who would set Israel and the world free from the bondage and slavery of sin.

B. Preparation through other People

We noticed that even a man like Caesar Augustus was unconsciously instrumental in this preparation, when he called all the people to be taxed. The shepherds seemed prepared because they had a desire to go and see this thing that had come to pass. They told others and came back rejoicing. The Wise Men prepared for him because they had long looked for the "Star of the King". They came to see and worship Him who was born king of the Jews.

John the Baptist who was the forerunner of Christ, knew that Jesus was "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world". It was he who was called to prepare the way of the Lord, and then when all preparations were made and the time was fulfilled, Jesus the only Son of God was born in Bethlehem. The Heavenly host broke forth joyfully praising God and saying "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and good will toward men! The long promised Redeemer had finally come.

II. THE WORLD'S PREPARATION

When Christ was born many were not prepared for Him and so it is also today. Millions prepare for Christmas without giving one thought or gift to the one whose birthday they are supposedly celebrating.

To many, Christmas means one big mad rush to get all the baking, buying, and shopping done. It means to many, a time when they go all out to prove that they'll not be outdone by the Joneses. Some seem to have the strange idea that Christmas is a fashion show; —It is an absolute must to have a complete new wardrobe.

It means that for a few weeks before and after Christmas nerves will be on edge. It means an empty pocket book, installment payments to make, which cause much worry and sleepless nights. To those who have found their Christmas spirit in a bottle it means headaches and hangovers.

They may ease their load a bit by reminding themselves that "The true spirit of Christmas is in giving."

It seems to me that the sales promoters of the department stores have invented this saying because the Christmas bells they like best are the ones on their cash registers. The world has commercialized Christmas. They have substituted Christmas for Xmas and the Saviour for Santa. Let's put Christ back into Christmas.

III. THE CHRISTIANS' PREPARATIONS

As Christians we would agree that the true spirit of Christmas is in giving, if we apply this saying in the right way. It is a time when we ought to give to those who are in need and not only to those from which we hope to receive in return.

Christmas is a time when we ought to present the most valuable gift—namely our hearts and lives in complete commitment to the Prince of Peace. Yes, the true spirit of Christmas is in giving because God gave His best to us. Look over your Christmas giving list. Be honest now! Will the best gift you give be to Him whose birthday it is?

A. Prepare Your Heart

We may criticize the world for how they prepare for and celebrate Christmas, but have we not to a large extent been caught in this mad rush, too?

We deck the house and hall and yet

fail to make our hearts holy? Should we not rather decorate and clean our "earthly-house" where Christ seeks admission? So busy we are with baking and buying that should Christ knock at the door of our house we would hang out the "No Vacancy" sign, like the inn-keeper did nearly 2000 years ago.

If this is the way we as Christians make our preparations it is an indication that we have forgotten the purpose of His coming. Jesus was born to die so that you and I might have life and that we might have it more abundantly.

If Jesus had refused to leave Heaven's glory to be born of human flesh and take upon Himself the form of a servant, and had He refused to be obedient unto death and take upon Himself the sins of the world, then we would, as we read in I Cor. 15, "be yet in our sins, our faith would be in vain, our preaching would be in vain and we would be of all men most miserable. There would then not be one Christian in this world but all would be doomed for all eternity. The message of peace and good will toward men would never have been proclaimed by the angelic hosts.

B. Prepare for Second Coming

John the Baptist was the forerunner of Christ. He prepared the way for the Lord for His first coming. We, then who have been bought by Christ's precious blood, have been commissioned to be the forerunners of His second coming. We must prepare the Way for his Return. Should not we with the shepherds "glorify and praise God for all the things that we have seen and heard" and experienced? Let us prepare room for Him in our hearts. Let's prepare the way for His return!

As we prepare for Christmas, let's consider our Hearts' attitude to the One whose birthday we are celebrating. As the glory of the Lord shone round the shepherds on that first Christmas morn, so should God's Glory shine forth out of our lives. Let us give Glory to God in the Highest by proclaiming the glad tidings of great joy—the message of peace and good will to those that are outside of His fold.



BAPTISM AT CANORA & PELLY

Sunday, November 24 was a day of special blessing at two of our Mission stations in Saskatchewan, Canora and Pelly. On this day twelve souls were baptized and received into fellowship. Eleven more were received by transfer from other churches.

Another step towards church organization was taken at two former Western Gospel Mission stations in Saskatchewan. Baptismal services and membership reception were held at both Canora and Pelly on Nov. 24 with Rev. B. D. Reimer officiating assisted by Rev. Edwin Wright.

At Canora the following persons received baptism and were received into membership.

Mr. Virgil Scharfenberg
Mrs. Virgil (Velma) Scharfenberg
Mrs. Isabelle May Gillespie
Mrs. Rose Anne Owchar
Miss Delores Johenne Owchar
Mrs. Anne Galandy
Miss Esther Margaret Rose Galandy
Mrs. Mary Yarenko

The following were received into membership in Canora by transfer from other churches:

Mr. John Koop, from Kleefeld EMC
Mrs. John Koop, from Kleefeld EMC
Mr. Glen Ford from Prairie Rose E.M.C.
Mrs. Glen Ford from Prairie Rose E.M.C.
Mr. Elmer Plett from Prairie Rose E.M.C.
Mrs. Elmer Plett from Prairie Rose E.M.C.
Miss Tina Penner from Prairie Rose E.M.C.

At the Pelly Fellowship Chapel the following were baptized and received into membership.

Writing of the occasion as follows is Br. Giesbrecht of Pelly. "Sunday, Nov. 24 was a day of history making at the Pelly Fellowship chapel. During this solemn and God honoring ceremony four persons were baptized and received into the membership of the EMC along with

four others who transferred their membership."

Mr. Lewis Anfinson
Mrs. Lewis (Vivian Grace) Anfinson
Mr. Clifton Abrahamson
Mrs. Clifton (Sylvia Rae) Abrahamson

The following received by transfer at Pelly:

Mr. Alvin Shostal, from Grace Chapel, Weyburn
Mrs. Alvin Shostal, from Associated Gospel Church, Weyburn
Mr. Abe Giesbrecht, Aberdeen EMC, Winnipeg
Mrs. Abe Giesbrecht, Aberdeen EMC, Winnipeg

This brings to three, the former stations that have been thus organized this year. The other was Weekes, on June 16. All the stations were former Western Gospel Mission stations whose administration was taken over by the EMC in 1961. Five stations were at that time taken over, the two other being Kam-sack and Mafeking. The work is under the supervision of the EMC Extension committee of which B. D. Reimer is the chairman.

* * *

Couple Celebrates Diamond Wedding



Celebrating their Diamond Wedding on November 22 were Mr. and Mrs. Isaak W. Reimer now in the Rest Haven Nursing Home in Steinbach.

To mark the occasion a small group consisting of children and some other relatives gathered in the dining room of the Home for a short service, led by Rev. John Reimer, son of the honoured couple. After a few songs and poems rendered by well wishers, Rev. Jacob

P. Dueck brought the closing message.

The Reimers had a family of 14 children of which 12 are still living. Seven of the children were privileged to be present for the occasion of the Diamond Wedding.

Mr. Reimer, although almost totally bedridden, was nevertheless able to sit up in a chair during the service.

Lunch was served after the close of the programme.

NO ROOM FOR JESUS

He was cradled in a manger
His own angels sang the hymn
Of rejoicing at His coming
Yet there was no room for Him.

Oh, my brothers, are we wiser?
Are we better now than they?
Have we any room for Jesus
In the life we live today?

Not much room for our Lord Jesus
Has there been, or will there be;
Room for Pilate and for Herod—
Not for Him of Calvary.

Room for pleasure — doors wide open,
And for business — but for Him—
Only here and there a manger,
Like to that at Bethlehem.

—Selected



His Christmas Birthday Cake

Gwendoline A. Lear

It was a very happy, jolly-faced family that gathered around the Christmas table at Number 10 Vernon Street.

Mr. Wood was far from being a rich man with worldly riches, but counted himself rich man in his family. At the foot of the table sat the sweetest, most cheerful-looking wife that a man could ever wish for. Upon either side of the table sat an even number of healthy rosy-faced boys and girls. David, the eldest, was 11. Mary, the fair beauty of the family, was ten. Billy the firefly (as they called him) was eight. The twins, Tom and Tiny, were five; and last but not least, Baby George, just 22 months to the day.

The little dining room was gaily decorated with spruce and pine branches and evergreen. Streamers of red, white, and blue were attached to everything in the room they could conveniently be attached to. The yule logs sparkled and spluttered in the wide, old fashioned grate.

The table, covered by a crisp white cloth, fairly groaned under the weight of the old, family china, piled with goodies! Hot sausage rolls, mince pies, nut cookies, and red jelly, with mountain of whipped cream heaped upon it. Then a frosted pound cake, stood in the good, old-fashioned cake basket decorated with a number of small, red candles, the light from which glowed with dazzling brightness in the breezy, laughing atmosphere of the cheery room.

"Three cheers for the Christmas cake!" cried David, who simply adored fruit cake. Then all the young Woods cheered joyously! Even Baby George made a vocal effort to twine in correctly, while he pounded the table with his silver mug.

Then when Mr. Wood raised his hand, there was silence while he offered up grateful thanks to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

"The Christmas cake is Jesus' birthday cake, isn't it, Dad?" asked Billy.

"Well, Billy, my son, I hardly know how to answer that question," said his father with a puzzled look at his good wife.

"Perhaps a Christmas Birthday Cake would sound more reverent."

"Yes, indeed," assented Mrs. Wood,

"and a birthday cake should always have a piece of silver in it, to make it a real birthday cake!"

"I don't suppose, Daddy, that you have a dime left in your pocket since our Christmas Eve shopping?" questioned Mary anxiously.

"Let me see," laughed her carefree father while he turned his limp pockets inside out. "Ah! I have one nickel and a bus ticket—all's well!"



"Surely all's well, if you have a nickel!" laughed his wife, as she seized the silver coin and wrapped it in wax paper. "Now you children shut your eyes up tight while I slip this into the cake, and cut our eight slices."

This added feature of interest brought the meal to a climax of excitement.

"Well, who's got it, anyway?" grumbled David, as he demolished his last rich mouthful of cake. "I believe, Mother, you kept it for yourself!"

"No, she hasn't!" commented Bill, who was still munching a part of his slice, to prolong the treat. "I have it in my pocket!"

"You have! Well, you're the limit! What are you going to do with it?" questioned David.

"I'm going to give it to you for that book you got in your stocking this morning. You said you'd read it. It cost a

nickel, now you can buy a story you haven't read. See?"

"It's a bargain; give up the nickel, and the book's yours right here!" said David rushing to the living room where his precious store of stocking gifts lay.

The exchange was soon made, and both boys looked well pleased. The book was one of those invaluable books printed by a tract society. The name of the book was **Christie's Old Organ**, a story that has been a blessing to thousands of its readers.

"Say, Bill! What do you want with it?" queried David, when the nickel was safely deposited in his pocket. "You've read **Christie's Old Organ** as often as you've read the Bible!"

Billy made no answer, but a few moments later he was heard banging the front door. His mother was humming a Christmas carol while she washed the dishes.

"Mother!" he called before going out, "I'll be back in half an hour—ready for games!"

Down icy streets, and around slippery corners, Billy ran as fast as his eight-year-old legs could carry him. His heart was beating overrate from the speed with which he had covered the ground. But when he stood quite still before a gate that opened into the inner court of the city jail, his heart fairly palpitated!

"What do you want around here?" growled a man suspiciously.

"I want to see old Tom Smithers. He's in here for driving his truck through our butcher's window!" answered Billy stoutly. "I want to see old Tom because—it's Christmas! And because—because—one day he gave me a bag of peanuts!"

The cross expression on the jailer's face relaxed into a smile. "Come in, boy," said he.

Tom gripped the outstretched hand of the boy so warmly that Billy felt quite satisfied he had made no mistake in coming to see him.

The jailer sauntered to the window and stood drumming his fingers upon the dark glass, while he listened to the conversation.

"Do you remember, Tom, when you kept the peanut stand at the corner of our street? You gave me a bag of peanuts one day. So when I heard you—you—were not going to be home for Christmas, I thought you might be kind of lonesome. I brought you a nice book to read."

Billy dived into his overcoat pockets and drew forth **Christie's Old Organ**, a

large orange, and a pink and white peppermint walking stick.

"I got 'em in my stocking," he apologized, as he put them into the man's trembling hands.

"Say, boy, you're the only one as thought enough about me to come and see me on Christmas Day," said old Tom huskily. "Me own folk's too ashamed to come near me in this place that's like hell!"

"Well, you see, Tom, it's not a very cheerful place, on Christmas Day. Maybe your folks will like to come tomorrow, better than today," reasoned Billy hopefully. "I'm sorry I couldn't come early this morning, but didn't think about coming until dinner time. When I got the nickel in the birthday cake, I thought I'd like to give it to Him, on His birthday, in the form of a gift. So I bought the book from David."

"Billy Boy, don't you know this is an awful place—a—wild place, to come to—to pay Him a visit, and to give Him a present on His birthday? I know what you mean—I was taught right when I was a little chap like you. I remember a verse in the Bible about sick, or in prison and 'ye visited me.' But, Billy Boy, I've wandered very far away from that teaching—very, very far away, Billy! Now there's no hope! No hope for such as I!"

"I'm awful sorry for you, Tom," said Billy, with tears in his eyes. "But if you'll only read **Christie's Old Organ**, you'll see how old Treffy was far away

from God, just like you. When he had only a month more to live, Christie found out the way for him to come back to God, and then he got saved!"

"Billy!" Old Tom placed his hand impressively upon the curly head, with the trustful, expressive eyes, looking up innocently into sin-polluted face. "If I had a million dollars to give, to find my way back, I'd give every cent of it gladly."

"You don't have to give money, Tom," said Billy with great assurance. "Jesus died to save sinners, and He don't want any money for saving them. He wants them to thank him for what He's done!"

Old Tom suddenly turned his back upon the boy. It seemed as though he might escape through the door. Just then the jailer, being touched, spoke more tenderly.

"Time's up, boy! You must wait here until I return to let you out."

Billy's hopeful spirits fell into his boots! He felt quite sure he had offended old Tom. He never turned to speak or look at him, but stumbled toward the door following his keeper.

He passed over the threshold, then suddenly halted—turning around. He was blowing his nose on a very soiled handkerchief, and his voice was very husky. "Boy," he sobbed, "perhaps I'll find my way back—thank you for caring! You're the only one as cared for my body and soul on Christmas Day."

"Billy!" where have you been?" questioned his mother anxiously, when Billy arrived home with his cheeks burning red, and his hat and coat covered with a mantle of snowflakes.

"I've been to jail!"

"Been to jail! Billy! what are you talking about?"

said his father, leaving the comforts of an armchair before a glowing fire to encounter his son in the hall.

"Dad, I went to see old Tom! I thought he'd like a Christmas gift—so—I took **Christie's Old Organ** for him to read."

Billy thought that his father was acting a bit like old Tom, because his father looked at him without a word—then turned his back upon him while he blew his nose and walked off, to the little living room, where David, Mary and the twins were playing.

Years have passed since that happy Christmas night when old Tom came home to God.

Old Tom was no longer a poor, old, lost sinner, but a **saved one**. When he turned from his temptation to find his way to God, he felt the touch of his Saviour's hand. Ever since that time he heard a voice saying: "Fear not, I will hold thee by thy right hand."

"**CHUMA FINDS A BABY**" is the name of a brand new children's story which will start in January. Watch for the first installment in the first issue of the New Year.

* * *

THE STORY OF SILENT NIGHT

It was Christmas Eve, 1818. Franz Gruber, church organist in the little town of Oberndorf, Bavaria, made an alarming discovery. The organ would not play!

For several days previous to Christmas Eve Oberndorf had been snowbound. Gruber knew there was no one in the town capable of repairing the organ. No music for Christmas! He could hardly imagine Christmas without music.

Quickly he went to the minister, Joseph Mohr, and related his discovery. He asked Mohr to write a new Christmas song which could be easily sung without the use of the organ.

Later as the minister sat reading Christmas stories from his Bible . . . "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour . . ." the words

welled up in his soul like heavenly anthems. Long into the night he sat meditating on them. As the full meaning gripped his soul, he wrote a poem about the wondrous story.

Early the next day Gruber composed a melody for the newly written words. The people began gathering at the church. One man who could pick out tunes on a guitar was asked to accompany the new carol.

The group worshippers loved the song immediately. Joseph Mohr and Franz Gruber had given to the world one of the most beautiful and best loved of the Christmas carols. It was not long before a group of singers took the song to America. For years it was known as "Song from Heaven." It quickly became very popular in America, and today "Silent Night" is sung in nearly

every language of the world.

Oh, that the real meaning of Christmas would grip each of us this season as, like Joseph Mohr, we consider these glorious words: "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). This Saviour is unto you — you who have gone astray, you who are overcome with problems, you who need the forgiveness of sin.

Tonight will be a "silent night" and a "holy night" in your soul if you will trust in the Saviour, Christ the Lord. "(God) loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10).

—Adapted from a tract by
Clyde Dennis

* * *

TRUTH FOR YOUTH

CHRISTMAS INSIDE PRISON WALLS

How would you tell the Christmas story to someone who is unhappy, or sick, or cold and hungry, or in prison?

Christmas will soon be here now. What will it mean to you? Could you pass its meaning for you on to someone else and make them happy? If you read your Bible you will know how someone did just that in a prison in China a few years ago.

In the city where we lived in China there were several prisons and some were terrible places. Our story took place in one of them. In this prison there were four hundred prisoners. At night they slept on a platform of clay with a little straw. No place to take a bath. On the walls the soldiers kept close watch and punishment was harsh for those who misbehaved. All prisoners had chains about their ankles and those who had been unruly were chained together in couples with shackles about their necks.

One Christmas several of us went to visit this prison and we carried with us baskets full of small gifts; oranges, candy, and something special for their dinner. Enough for four hundred men!

As we entered the prison court yard the guards lined the prisoners up in rows before us. Their chains rattled as they moved in their ranks. Some of our group spoke to them and then our Bible Woman, Mrs. L—— stood up to tell them the story of Christmas. I thought to myself, "How can she explain the meaning of Christmas to people so wretched and in prison?"

This is what she said:

"We come to you today and bring you small gifts because this is the time when Jesus was born. Why should we give you gifts because Jesus was born so long ago? This is the reason why. If the Li family have a son born to them all the Li family will be happy. If the Wang family have a son born to them all the Wang family will rejoice because he is their son. But it was different with Jesus. Jesus loves all men so much and was so kind to everybody that his birth meant a lot to all people, the Li's and Wang's and all the rest. That is why we came to see you today

and give you small gifts because Jesus taught us to love all men, including you."

Then we gave them our gifts. Our nurses attended to their sickness and bound up their wounds and tried to show them the true meaning of Christmas love.

Try to remember this Christmas that the birth of Jesus has meaning for all men no matter who they are or where they are. That others in other lands will only come to know of His love as they have the Bible in their own language.

Share your Christmas joy with others. Give them the Bible in their own language. A Happy Christmas and A Happy New Year to you all and to all people.

Canadian Bible Society

Sunday School Monthly News-Story

* * *

(Cont'd. from page 2)

PRESIDIUM MEETS

ly faces, spiritual atmosphere and Christian hospitality greet us. Here amid nature's beauty and peaceful circumstances, linked with dedicated service, we were permitted to have our presidium meeting.

The Presidium Session

The whole presidium was moved to thankfulness and praise to God. First, the representation was exceptionally gratifying. Only three members out of alone would seem to point to the fact that the work of World Conference is taken seriously and its importance is recognized.

Second, while we all felt the great loss of brother H. S. Bender's absence, yet there manifested itself a deep consciousness that we must all shoulder the total responsibility of our task and that it is futile and a matter of unbelief to look backward instead of forward. So, by God's grace we set our goals. And by his grace and guidance we determined to march ahead.

Erland Waltner Succeeds H. S. Bender

We experienced, third, a remarkable unity in the Spirit, which, we felt worked itself out in almost total unanimity on most matters of discussion

and decision. The officers which were elected were as follows: Erland Waltner of Elkhart, Indiana, was elected president. The three vice-presidents were elected in the following order: First vice-president, Dr. J. A. Oosterbaan of Holland, second, Peter Wiens, South America, and third, Dr. J. C. Wenger. The office of recording secretary was given to B. J. Braun of California. Brother C. J. Dyck of Elkhart, Indiana who has served as executive secretary for some years was re-appointed for this task.

Fourth, it was unanimously decided to accept the invitation of the Dutch brethren to conduct the next World Conference in The Netherlands. This will be, the Lord willing, in the year 1967. The sequence of Conferences, their rotation and facilities, as well as the nature of the conference, seemed to dictate this decision to us.

We had also before us a warm invitation from the Mennonites from South America. In order to remain true to our obligation to all areas of Mennonites, it was decided that a preparatory conference should be held in 1966 in South America. This decision seemed to be in the best interests of all concerned.

To sum up the presidium meeting was a singular success. The spiritual fellowship was superb. Mutual understanding was manifest throughout. Only to the Lord belongs all praise. The representatives separated in much thankfulness to Him and with keen anticipation of blessings to come.

In France for the Weekend

From Switzerland, this land of exquisite beauty, I made my way to Colmar, France for the weekend. Here I had the opportunity to speak twice and thus testify for my Lord. The fellowship among these French and German speaking Mennonites will always leave a deep imprint on my experience. It would, perhaps, be helpful to remind ourselves that their language problem is as acute, or more so, as ours in North America has ever been.

Brussels and Amsterdam

For academic purposes I now went to Brussels and from there to Amsterdam, Holland. In Amsterdam I had the privilege to confer with the Dutch Mennonite historian Dr. van der Zijpp. The chairman of the ministerial council of the whole Mennonite church in The Netherlands introduced me to their ministerium. The church's official Dutch name is the Algemene Doopsgezinde (Cont'd. on page 12)

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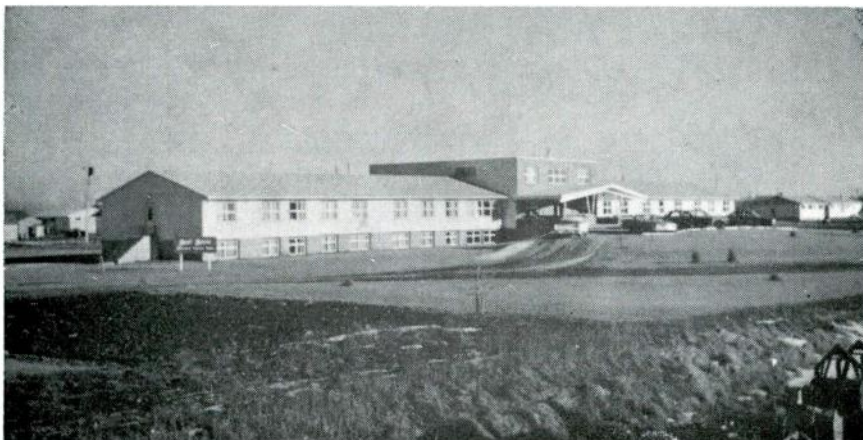
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CHRISTMAS WITH THE SHUT-INS



For the 58 residents at the Rest Haven Christmas started on Dec. 6. with a group of well wishers from Kleefeld rendering a program and distributing gifts. (Aprons for the ladies, foodstuffs for the men)

From here on their will be an air of

expectancy as various other groups render programmes and distribute packages.

Another event that the elderly look forward to with anticipation is their own Christmas program where they can take part. In the past this has been

attended with real blessings and spiritual victories.

Then there is the Christmas dinner. This will be served this year the last week before Christmas. Everybody receives a gift from the Home. In addition to this the inmates also, "draw tickets" for an exchange of gifts among themselves.

Most of these elderly folks can no doubt look back on many happy family gatherings of former years when they would gather with children and Grandchildren at their home. This is for them no longer possible. Thus the festivities and activities in their present surroundings fill up at least a little the void that is created when they leave the old home to come to the Rest Haven.

The staff to, will find time to have their own small Christmas gathering with the exchange of gifts.

And if you want to do something worthwhile and receive a real blessing, make it a point to pay a visit to the Rest-Haven this Christmas. You will be warmly received and amply rewarded.

* * *

DECEMBER 25 AT THE UNION GOSPEL MISSION

CHRISTMAS WITH THE SHUT-OUTS

"Christmas can be the most lonely and miserable day in all the year." Thus spoke one who had seen thousands of social outcasts come and go. Frank Koop, superintendent of the Union Gospel Mission in Winnipeg, was the speaker. Haunted by memories of what they had left or what might have been; homes gone, or broken, old men; chased. Thus they come to the Union Gospel Mission on Winnipeg's Main Street. Rejected by society they here receive a welcome.

So as to be better able to grasp the magnitude of the task of ministering to these men we quote the following figures taken from the Annual report.

Total attendance in the last year (Oct. 1 to Sept. 30) 39,352. Free lodging was supplied to 581 men during the year.

A Gospel service was conducted every evening during the past year. Some 40 different churches or church groups participated in this. Late meetings were conducted three or four times a week. During these meetings there are counsellors present to deal with the men who come in. Some 1883 men were dealt with personally during these meetings. These services have been very fruitful.

At noon a half-hour Gospel service is conducted. As high as 80 men are present. A free lunch consisting of soup, bread and desert is served after the



meeting. 6657 attended these meetings last winter.

Something that Brother Koop the superintendent is quite enthusiastic about is the rehabilitation program. Or a place where he can keep a select group of these men who want to make a new start. A small room serves as lodging for these men. There are three at present. After a short stay at the Mission (Cont'd, on page 11)



they try to find jobs for them. Each also requires a sponsor who takes it upon himself to be a kind of guardian to the person. This sponsor then takes a real interest in the probationer; prays for him; takes him to church, etc. One of the problems is getting sponsors.

On Christmas Day some 100 to 120 of these homeless will find their way to the Mission. On this day at 8 p.m. the Ladies Auxiliary will serve a turkey dinner to the men. The Koop family will sing and Frank will give the message. There will also be small gifts for the men.

To give these men an outlook on life the Mission needs those who will pray and take an interest in the rescuing of men from the brink of despair. A newsletter is issued periodically and will be sent to any one interested. The Address is: Union Gospel Mission, 645 Main Street, Winnipeg 1, Manitoba. The work is worthy of our support.

* * *

One dollar spent for lunch lasts five hours.

One dollar spent for a necktie lasts five weeks.

One dollar spent for a cap lasts five months.

One dollar spent for water power or a railroad grade lasts five generations.

One dollar spent in the service of God lasts for eternity.—Roger W. Babson.



CHRISTMAS MEDITATION

By Elma B. Dueck

The soft beautiful strains of "Silent Night" floating through the house—the spicy aroma of baked goodies—the children eagerly memorizing their recitations—all tell me that Christmas is in the air!

What does Christmas mean to you? What do I like at Christmas?

I like to hear over and over again the beautiful familiar carols of "Silent Night, Holy Night" and thrill to the joy of that first Christmas at Bethlehem with the holy family. And "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" and feel something of the awe and wonder of those shepherds that night so long ago.

I enjoy the traditional school programme with all my heart, when our sparkling eager eyed children, full of the expectation of Christmas, bring us the Christmas story in words and song.

I like to hear the cheery greeting from a passing friend, the happy smiling faces of children.

And because its Christmas time I am glad for the privilege of giving. And if I receive—let it be with a grateful humble heart.

I enjoy our own family Christmas devotions, the grateful happy eyes of our children as they come to thank us for gifts received—and await with eager expectation the opening of their little gifts to us.

On Christmas morning I like going to the worship service in the little white church of my youth, feeling the warm handclasp of old friends and worship together our Lord.

Then what if the precious privilege of gathering with our dear families—of father taking his Bible, reading again the old but ever new story to children and grandchildren. The family circle has grown larger, but one dear beloved face that used to be here in bygone days is absent, leaving a trace of sadness, but again peace in the glorious hope that she's with the Lord.

Above all I am deeply thankful that Christ did not remain in the manger but went to the cross for us all, and now is interceding for us in heaven, so we now can have this glorious hope of eternal life with Him.

My prayer is that all mankind might have that joy and hope this blessed Christmas season.

* * *

Ready For Christmas

"Ready for Christmas," she said with a sigh,
As she gave a last touch to the gifts piled high,
Then wearily sat for a moment and read
Till soon, very soon, she was nodding her head.

Then quietly spoke a voice in her dream:
"Ready for Christmas! What do you mean?
Ready for Christmas when only last week
You wouldn't acknowledge your friend on the street.

"Ready for Christmas, while holding a grudge!
Perhaps you had better let God be the judge.
Why, how can the Christ-Child come and abide
In a heart that is selfish and filled with pride?

"Ready for Christmas when only today
A beggar lad came and you turned him away
Without even a smile to show that you cared.
The little he asked — it could have been spared.

"Ready for Christmas! You've worked it is true —
But doing the things that you wanted to do.
Ready for Christmas! Your circle's too small;
Why, you are not ready for Christmas at all."

She awoke with a start and a cry of despair,
"There's so little time, and I've still to prepare!
Oh, Father, forgive me, I see what you mean:
To be ready means more than a house swept clean!"

Yes, more than the giving of gifts and a tree,
It's the heart swept clean that He wants to see;
A heart that is free from bitterness, sin,
Ready for Christmas, and ready for Him.

—The Union Signal (Young Pilot)

NEWS

WYMARK ELECTS LEADER

Elected as leader for another three year term at the Wymark church recently was Arnold Fast. Two persons were baptized at a baptismal service at the Wymark E.M. Church recently. They are: Brother Jack Schlamp and Sister Nettie Kneesen.

BROADCAST TERMINATES

The weekly radio broadcast, "MOMENTS OF MEDITATION" sponsored by our Wymark and Swift Current churches with Rev. Ben Friesen as speaker will terminate after about a year of broadcasting.

PRAIRIE ROSE

The ladies of the Goodwill sewing circle again were host to a fellowship supper for their husbands. Some 40 couples were present, for this annual event, this year. The program consisted of the play, "The True Spirit of Christmas". An offering was taken which went to the Back to the Bible Broadcast.

A mission emphasis Sunday with C. B. Loewen as speaker was held recently. Various other reports were brought. The day was attended with blessings. Three services were held.

The Arnold Wiebes, EMC Extension workers at Kamsack are in the near future expecting to be transferred to Calgary where a new work is to be opened. The Wiebes request prayer for this new venture.

The Peter Martens, missionary candidates to Paraguay, are now itinerating in the different churches.

Margaret Neufeld, EMC missionary candidate to Europe expects to leave for Germany on Dec. 28.

BLESSINGS AT ROSENORT

Every local congregation no doubt has its annual highlights where the members experience in particular the blessing and nearness of God. The month of November has been such an occasion for the Rosenort E.M.C. Evangelistic services with the Rev. Corny B. Loewen were held from the 4th to the 20th inclusive. Although many of our dear friends, whom we so desired to see coming to the Saviour, did not heed the glorious invitation, we still thank God

for those who did come and for those who rededicated their lives. The interest in and attendance at prayer meetings, was very encouraging as well.

On the weekend of Nov. 23rd and 24th we had our local missionary convention with the Rev. Ben Friesen from Swift Current as main speaker. Among those in attendance were the Frank Brauns from Oak Lake Indian Reserve, Bro. Dave Dueck from Mafeking, and Margaret Neufeld, Steinbach. At the last session on Sunday night most of the young people responded to the call of unconditional dedication to the cause of Christ.

Young People Hear Christian Laymen

A series of lectures with the topic, "The Witness of the Christian Layman" are being held in the Steinbach E.M.C. church on the Young People's meetings. Representing their profession in these professions in these talks were Dr. John Dyck, and Evangeline Reimer, a nurse. Mr. Ben F. Klassen, a contractor, and Reginald Toews, a government social worker are expected to discuss their profession of the next two meetings.

COMING EVENTS

January 5 Dedication services of the new Prairie Rose church at 2:30 p.m. Deacon ordination will take place at 7:30 p.m.

January 6 to 10 Bible Lectures with Dr. Frank C. Peters at Prairie Rose E.M. church.

BIRTHS

To Mr. and Mrs. Peter K. Wiebe of Steinbach, on Nov. 1, a son, Myron Paul.

(Cont'd. from page 8)

PRESIDIUM MEETS

Societeit. I greatly appreciated meeting these pastors, professors and leaders. I had the opportunity of speaking briefly to them and so I conveyed greetings from our Conference to theirs.

Home

From Holland I went once more to Germany and then to Luxemburg and home to Iowa. The return trip was as

remarkable as the one going to Europe. And again I can only praise God for His providence and care. Even the lost suitcase with clothing, which caused me some concern, (and Mrs. Penner—who stayed dutifully at home,—more)—manifested itself as a means to praise the heavenly Father.

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS

"Precious memories, how they linger"

Christmases in days of yore
Filling hearts with joy and gladness,

As we count them o'er and o'er!
Stockings hung for gifts resplendent,

Whether large or small,
Scurrying to catch their fulness,

At the morning's faintest call!

Precious mem'ries they still linger,

May they ever with us stay,

'Till the day we celebrate it —

That eternal Christmas day!

