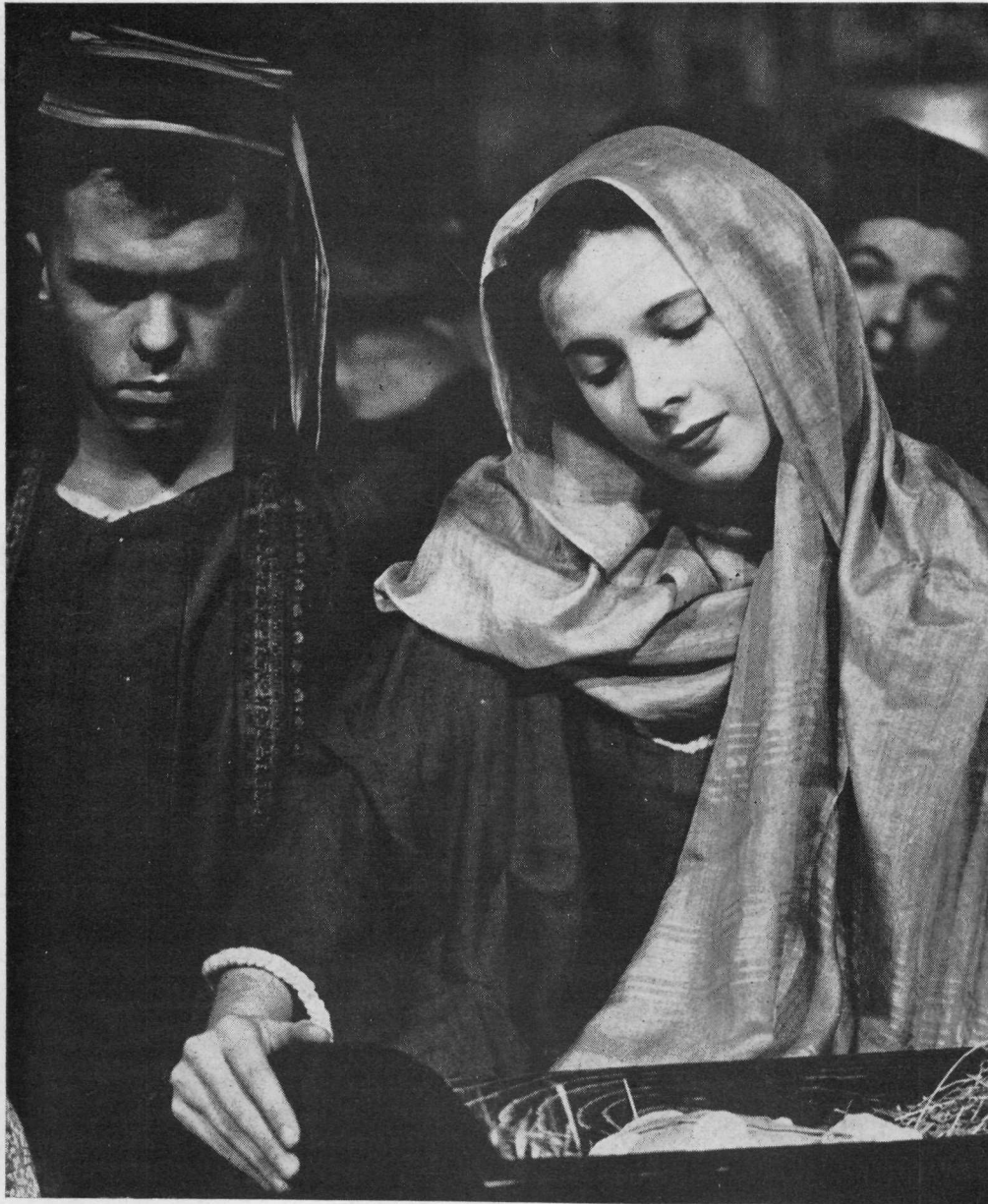


The **+** WITNESS

DECEMBER 19, 1963

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THE HOLY FAMILY

FEATURES :: TOM BARRETT & BILL SPERRY

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For Christ and His Church

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FOR CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

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Story of the Week

World Mission and Evangelism Subjects of Mexico Meeting

★ Christian mission efforts are facing a "decisive test" by many world forces and churches are challenged to answer by translating "faith into missionary witness," W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the World Council of Churches said in Mexico City.

"Now that the world has been sharply critical and seeks to silence us," he told some 200 churchmen from 48 countries, "we have a new opportunity to make it very clear that we mean what we say and that our only motive is that the world may believe that in Jesus Christ, God reconciled the whole world to himself."

The official addressed the opening plenary session of the commission on world mission and evangelism, held here Dec. 8-20. It was the first full meeting of the commission since the integration of the WCC and the International Missionary Council at New Delhi, India, in 1961.

Present were large delegations from North America, Latin America and Europe and participants from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, India, the Tonga Islands and Samoa.

Anglican Bishop John Sadiq of Nagpur, India, commission chairman, in calling the meeting expressed hope that it would "explore fresh, relevant and challenging ways of presenting Christ to the world of today."

In his opening address, Dr.

Visser 't Hooft asked whether God is not using critics of Christianity "for his own purpose?"

"Must we not learn from the wild attacks of the communists that we have obscured the prophetic message of social justice; from the criticism of the internationalists that we have given an individualistic rather than a truly cosmic and universal interpretation of Christianity; from the ironical comments of the advocates of tolerance that we have often been arrogant, rather than humble . . . ?"

He said mission activities must "hasten to undo" damage caused by "a divided witness" through new common planning and joint action.

The official also declared that "traces of foreignness" must be erased so that missions cannot be dismissed "as cultural invasion" and he called on supporting-churches to "avoid even the slightest appearance that they have any interest in maintaining control over the churches which they have helped to found."

Among questions a supporting church must answer, Visser 't Hooft said, is whether "its missionary work consists in the exporting of its own culturally conditioned brand of Christianity and in the imposing of that brand on another people."

"If so," he said "it has not grasped that the word of God cannot and must not be im-

prisoned in any human form of expression but claims the sovereign right to make its own impact upon every people and to create its own form of expression."

Director Reports

Bishop Lesslie Newbigin, director of the division on world mission and evangelism, stated in his report to the meeting that the work of foreign mission agencies must be closely related to home missions and evangelism efforts.

Supporting churches can obtain valuable assistance for their evangelistic task from the "spiritual experience" of the younger churches, he said.

"Younger churchmen who visit the churches of the west are not primarily involved, as they ought to be, in helping the western churches to deal with the pagans on their doorstep," said Bishop Newbigin, an Englishman who spent many years in India as a missionary and was influentially involved in formation of the Church of South India.

He pointed out that the meeting here is the first WCC gathering at which agencies of home missions and evangelism are represented along with foreign missions. He declared that separation of home and foreign missions efforts is "something which cannot fail to distort both."

The bishop also stressed the presence here of representatives of Eastern Orthodox Churches which "for historical reasons have not for many centuries

been able to engage in much foreign missionary activity."

He said they have "an important testimony to bear out of their long experience regarding the witness of the church in a hostile world."

Bishop Newbigin's report detailed a wide variety of missionary tasks in which Churches are jointly engaged around the world. They included:

Urban evangelism projects in Africa, industrial evangelism in Asia, centers for the study of religion and society, broadcasting projects, Christian home and family life programs, and mission and evangelism studies on the service of Christian laymen and the dialogue between Christians and Jews.

He reported that the committee on the church and the Jewish people is concentrating on how to help churches improve their educational materials so that "prejudice and anti-Semitic feeling may not be furthered through Biblical teaching." He said material on anti-Semitism is being collected and research on the subject is underway in various countries.

"The presence of the church in the state of Israel is a matter of very specific concern," the bishop said. "It is becoming clear that better facilities are needed to bring about a true encounter between the Gospel and Israel and to rethink the character of Christian witness to the Jewish people . . . to improve Jewish-Christian relationships."

He reported that the establishment of an ecumenical study center in Israel is under consideration, where Christian scholars could "get a first-hand understanding of contemporary Jewish life and thought . . ."

Literature Plan

A call for a world fund of \$3,000,000 to advance indigenous Christian literature was heard by the commission, which urged the adoption of a plan which would transcend "confessional and sectarian interests."

"Nowhere is the full potential of literature for the proclamation of the gospel being realized," the report declares. Most of the needed sum is already assured by agencies in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. It will be spent to advance Christian literature in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

The major aim is to advance Christian literature in each country through the development of "a thriving, well coordinated, indigenous Christian literature activity of high quality, largely self-sustaining and capable of spontaneous growth."

Among the types of undertaking outlined for the Christian literature fund are development of: literature centers for training, research, and conferences; funds for series of books and other publishing projects; capital grants for printing plants; technical and financial aid for distribution; short-term support for newspapers and other periodicals; literature to be co-ordinated with radio broadcasting; and experiments in writing, production, and distribution.

Education Fund

A proposal that the commission extend the mandate of its theological education fund for a further five years and seek up to \$4,000,000 for its work was made.

A four-man advisory group which included President Nathan Pusey of Harvard, commended the fund for its work since its establishment in 1958 and projected new goals for the period 1965-70. The fund was established with two million dollars from the late John D. Rockefeller matched by an equal sum from eight North American mission societies.

In the period ahead, the fund, it is suggested, should concentrate on projects which relate theological education to the culture and society of the local community. Aid given by the fund to theological textbook pro-

grams in 20 different languages would continue.

A major grants program was conducted 1959-63 which brought sizable grants to 23 strategic seminaries. Substantial grants to libraries were also made.

The conviction that theological education in Asia, Africa and Latin America is one of the greatest weaknesses of the whole Christian church led to the establishment of the fund.

RESERVATIONS ON SUMMIT PLAN

★ Officials of the Orthodox Church in Greece were reported to have received with "some reservations" the proposal of Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras in Istanbul for a summit meeting of the heads of all major branches of the Christian religions to coincide with Pope Paul's visit to the Holy Land.

A Church spokesman said the Patriarch's suggestion had been referred to a special committee for interchurch relations. The group has been studying a decision taken at the Rhodes Pan-Orthodox conference last September in favor of launching Orthodox-Roman Catholic talks on Christian unity upon completion of the Vatican Council.

The spokesman said the committee will prepare a report on Patriarch Athenagoras' proposal to be discussed by the church's holy synod.

At the same time, he pointed out that while the church in Greece owes spiritual allegiance to the ecumenical patriarchate, it remains administratively independent. He said Patriarch Athenagoras had no right to commit all the Orthodox Churches to such a meeting as that proposed between the Pope and leaders of other churches.

Meanwhile at Vatican City it was reported that the Roman curia was attempting to sabotage a prospective meeting between the Pope and Patriarch Athenagoras.

Father Pierre Duprey was

sent to Istanbul with a letter from the secretariat for the promotion of unity, which was reliably reported to indicate the willingness of the Pope to meet informally with the leader of Eastern Orthodoxy.

Father Duprey was not empowered to extend a formal invitation for such a meeting. But the informal tone of the Vatican seemed rather to say:

if Athenagoras happens to be in Jerusalem at the same time as the Pope, there is no reason why they should not meet. The proposal was first made by the Patriarch.

It was stated in Rome that conservative members of the curia have voiced misgivings about the Pope's trip and are opposed to efforts to improve relations with other faiths.

General Assembly Issues Program To Better Race Relations

By Edward J. Mohr

Witness Editorial Assistant

★ Concern over race relations and the fate of the civil rights bill dominated the general assembly of the National Council of Churches in Philadelphia Dec. 1 to 7. In the broad area of the ecumenical movement the response to the Vatican council was felt. The proposal of the Ecumenical Patriarch, Athenagoras I, for a meeting of the heads of major Christian bodies aroused favorable response at the meeting.

In race relations two major actions were taken. In an unprecedented step the assembly urged enactment of a specific piece of legislation by the congress, the civil rights bill of 1963, and went further in asking support for the legislative procedure of getting the bill out of the rules committee by a discharge petition. It called on Christians across the nation to urge their representatives in the congress to sign the petition.

The opening paragraph of the resolution declared:

"The eyes of the world are upon the American Congress, watching to see whether our national legislative body, in a bipartisan way, can meet the challenge of the greatest moral issue of our time. Six months have already passed since comprehensive civil rights legisla-

tion was introduced. Further delay by the Congress could undermine the faith of the American people in the capacity of its political institutions to function and the confidence of all men who love liberty in the ability of the United States to advance the global struggle for freedom."

Bishop Hines of Texas, one of the Episcopal Church delegates, while supporting the objective of the resolution, offered an amendment deleting reference to the specific bill now in the rules committee and substituting words describing its general purpose. This was defeated, and the resolution as a whole was adopted with only a few dissenting voices.

In the other step the assembly issued a call for action in what it termed the crisis in race relations, in the belief that "the Church of Jesus Christ is commanded by its Lord to rid itself of all those forms of racial injustice which have been perpetuated through the years by us all in our churches, church organizations, agencies and institutions."

● All churches and all ministerial positions should be publicly declared to be open to all regardless of race.

● Programs should be developed for regular meeting and association of white and Negro

Christians on all levels of organization and activities.

● All employment in religious bodies should be on an integrated basis.

● Teaching material and publications should present an objective and helpful picture of racial difference.

● Health, educational and welfare institutions related to churches should be integrated on all levels.

● Construction programs for churches should be carried out under contracts requiring fair employment practices, regardless of delays or increased costs.

● Investments of church bodies should not be made in enterprises which openly practice discrimination.

● Churches should unite in supporting prompt enactment of federal, state and local civil rights legislation providing: 1. civil rights, including the right to vote and equal protection of the law; 2. equal access to education; 3. equal opportunity for jobs and promotion based on merit; 4. the right to occupy housing everywhere; 5. access to all public accommodations.

● Churches should give moral and financial support to major civil rights organizations, denominational and interdenominational racial justice commissions, and joint actions with Roman Catholic and Jewish bodies.

● Churches and Christians must seek reconciliation in church, community and nation as the new pattern of justice is being established.

President Muller

Bishop Reuben H. Mueller, who was elected president of the council for a 3-year term to succeed J. Irwin Miller, holds that the "racial revolution in America" is the most significant question facing the churches, and that the work of the council's commission on religion and race should be given chief priority. Presiding Bishop Lichten-

berger is the chairman of the commission.

Bishop Mueller, of Indianapolis, is the senior bishop of the Evangelical United Brethren Church and president of its board of bishops. The church, with a membership of three-quarter million, is an off-spring of Methodism with a German-speaking background. He characterises himself as an ecumenist and as a progressive in ecclesiastical matters. As chairman of his church's union commission he has been working on plans for a union with the Methodist Church, and hopes that this may be accomplished by 1968.

The Kennedys

The program for the assembly had provided for an address by President Kennedy on the third day of the meeting. In its place a memorial service was held for the president, with an address by Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church. On recommendation of the general board the assembly adopted a resolution respecting the death of the president, saying that it "expresses contrition on behalf of all our people that hatred, prejudice and bitterness have been allowed to accelerate within the country. Extremist groups have sowed seeds of dissension and discord, and on November 22nd the country reaped part of the harvest. The shots fired on that day and the one fired two days later had as their target a government of law and order guaranteeing justice and freedom to all people. As a nation we cannot allow such a scourge to continue unchecked".

Speaking on behalf of the council, the assembly thanked God for President Kennedy's leadership and resolved that it would "continue to strive for those goals which were so important to him, freedom for all men and the peace of the world." Pointing out that President

Johnson had "indicated that he is fully committed to the goals of justice for all and peace in the world" the council said that it would work with him and support his efforts.

In a resolution of gratitude the assembly honored Mrs. Kennedy, saying that her "dignity and poise under the most shattering circumstances were a demonstration of the grace that enable the Christian not merely to endure but to transform tragic sorrow into triumphant courage."

Church Union

Dr. Blake and Bishop Pike of California, another Episcopal Church delegate, expressed encouragement over the developments of the Vatican Council, Dr. Pike noting that "the direction of the movement, though slow, is responsible". Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox diocese of North and South America expressed doubt about the sending of Orthodox observers to the council meetings, since the Eastern churches "have asked our Roman brothers to enter dialogue with us." He indicated subsequently, however, that the meeting proposed by the Ecumenical Patriarch would be a "great moment in history."

In addition to three public and five plenary sessions scheduled for the assembly its work was carried on in 120 section meetings centering on the conference topic "Servants of the Eternal Christ."

In other business the assembly took action on revision of the constitution and by-laws and re-affirmed the council's opposition to legalized gambling.

UNUSUAL SERVICE IN ENGLAND

★ An Anglican minister in Norbury, England, startled his congregation by having a model parade in long black stockings, tights and sweater in church to illustrate a sermon condemning

exploitation of sex in advertising.

The Rev. Vernon Mitchell, vicar of St. Philip's, and former advertising executive, told his congregation that his unusual illustration was "not a gimmick."

"Our Lord, himself, used illustration in parables and other ways," he said.

The model was Mrs. Claire Shewring, wife of an architect. While she posed three young men sang advertising jingles.

Addressing a few words to the congregation, the model said: "I sin in selling the beauty God gave me. Not in some sleazy flat . . . That would be too horrible. I sell before the cameras of commerce."

During the sermon, a congregation member jumped up, shouting: "You are profaning the house of God." He was led out of the church still protesting.

MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CANADA

★ The missionary society of the Anglican Church in Canada has accepted projects in 1964 to the value of \$480,895, following a meeting with Bishop Bayne when the mutual responsibility manifesto was discussed.

About half of the sum will be used in Africa and the rest in areas recommended by Bishop Bayne.

The action was taken by the sub-executive of the society and has to be ratified by the full executive.

PRIME MINISTER'S SISTER TO ADOPT NEGRO CHILD

★ Mrs. Joan Wilkes, wife of the Anglican vicar in Marlow, England, and the sister of Prime Minister Alec Douglas-Home, said that she plans to adopt a Negro baby.

The parents of four children of their own, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkes earlier adopted an Indian boy.

EDITORIALS

Echo of the Nativity

CHRISTMAS is a season which is based on certain historic facts, certain human aspirations, and certain imaginative ideals.

To those who believe in the reality of Christ's birth and the certainty of his promises, it is a season in which love, joy and peace have their finest fruitions.

It is a time to worship God, to honor Christ, to cement the ties of friendship, to hallow the family circle.

It is a time which children love and for which older folk are thankful.

It has a sound foundation, an animating motive, and an adequate purpose. The world endeavors to appropriate the results without accepting the spirit of the season. Instead of honoring Christ, they send senseless greetings about Allah, as though the morals of the Turk could produce the harmonies of Christmas.

Instead of relating their family ties to the Christ who sanctified the family they invent Santa Claus and then commercialize him. Instead of becoming as little children, they proceed to make little children act as adults.

Christmas presents, instead of being symbols of affection, have become causes for divorce and premonitions of bankruptcy.

"The world itself keeps Christmas Day." That is merely a recognition of the fact that the world would like to appropriate the joyousness of the Christian without assuming the obligations which are the sole basis of that joy.

In the pagan festivities of today there is small place for Christ in the inn; for the hotel is so full of other guests that Christ has to seek his friends elsewhere.

What is the antidote? Just one, we think. It is the echo of the nativity.

Whether we are poor shepherds or prosperous wise-men, let us go to Bethlehem (the House of Bread) and worship our King; let us catch his spirit of simplicity and kindness and reverence, and let us go back into the world full of cheer that he gives to those who love him.

We are a feeble folk numerically. About one in a hundred, but we have a mission today to

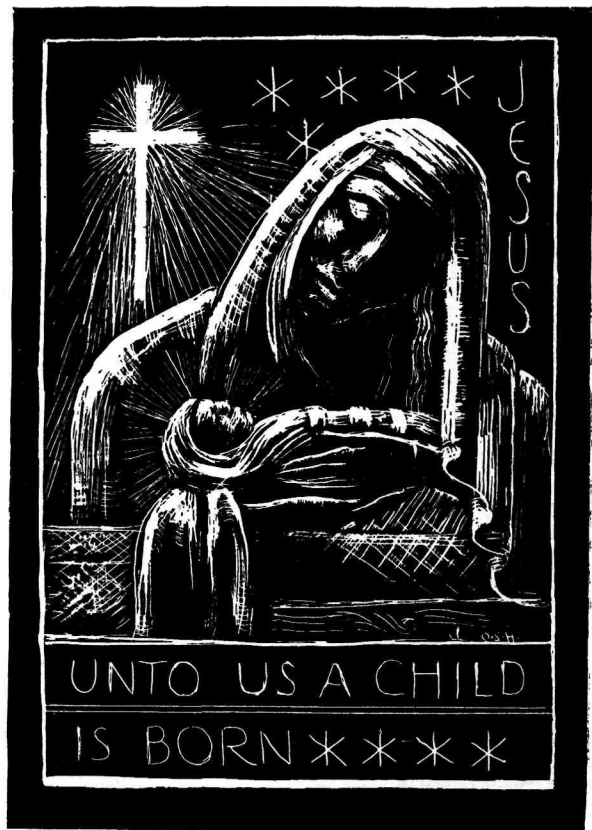
keep the Christian world reminded of the fact that nothing can take the place of personal devotion to Christ on the day which commemorates his birth.

We live in a time when men are striving to reduce human life to mechanical laws, and to justify human lust as the rational expression of those laws. Our wise men say that man is an animal whose animal instincts will find their highest expression in animal acts.

Christ came into the world to tell us that we may become the sons of God if we will follow him. It was he who gave us the joys of Christmas. The season did not originate in the scientific or commercial world. It could not.

And yet men think that religion is solemn and forbidding. Why, the Christian religion is responsible for the joys of children and invites solemn adults to become like them.

You couldn't have a Merry Christmas, if the inspiration was to come from a laboratory or a bank. These institutions have their uses, but



they do not feel responsible for inspiring gaiety. It is the Christ and the Christ only who has put gaiety into Christmas.

The Christian religion is the one institution which exists to keep men young and to make

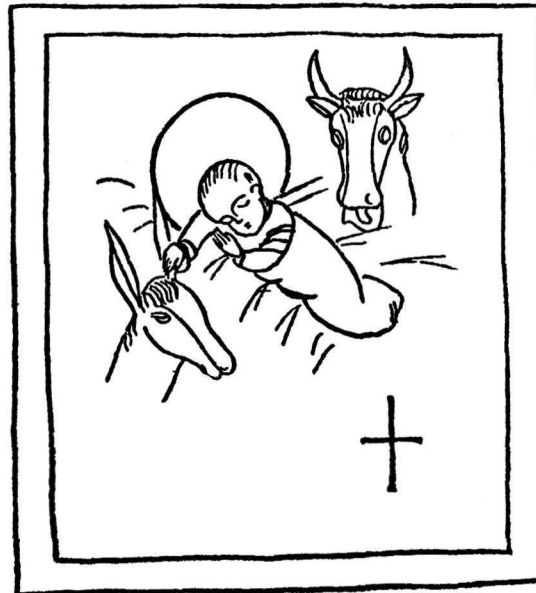
children blithesome, and to fill the atmosphere with good fellowship.

The world is living on its capital if it thinks it can retain Christmas from which they have expelled its authors.

A TRUMPET, A DRUM AND AN ANGEL

By Thomas V. Barrett

Professor at Church Divinity School of the Pacific



PART OF THE HAPPINESS of Christmas is in the giving and receiving of things that are new: neckties, electric irons, toy trains, new baseball gloves, and all the bright paraphernalia strewn beneath the tree. But another part of the happiness is in rediscovering things that are worn by the handling of many years, and saturated with the memories of Christmas Past.

The dusty boxes are brought down from the attic, the antique ornaments are uncovered, and there once more are the worn, cherished symbols of our faith.

One of the remarkable elements in Christianity is the voracious appetite with which it claims the whole earth. By the time the tree is trimmed in the American home, a hundred pagan idols and heathen symbols have been re-dedicated to the Christ Child. Any second rate anthropologist could see in the Christmas home the remnants of totemism, animism, polytheism, pantheism, Druid worship and animal idolatry!

But I am not one to complain about this. Chris-

tianity inundates every creek and inlet of our lives. So out of the old boxes come the implements with which we celebrate the season: birds, and animals, and elfin figures of a pagan world; the holly and the ivy, and the tree to be decorated, as the ancient Romans decorated trees with trinkets, and masks of Bacchus during the Saturnalia.

It is by instinct rather than by reason that we use these outward symbols of our candle-flame faith; to signify a portion of our joy, a fragment of our wonder.

I rediscovered three little pieces this year. A silver trumpet two inches long; a tiny drum; and a small angel. They were somewhat seedy from the usage of the years, and by their summer sleep in the attic. But these three have swung in the silence of many a Christmas Eve, awaiting the day-break gladness; and for that reason are the more cherished.

The Trumpet

I CAN THINK of nothing better than a trumpet for the sign of man's hope. From ancient battlements, and lonely, blood-soaked fields the clear blast of the trumpet has summoned men to rise up with courage. Whenever a composer of music, brooding of failure and bitterness through strings and flutes and horns, desires to sound again the eternal rage of man to be unbound, to live, it is the blare of trumpets that awakes men from sleep and bids them never to surrender.

Whenever the sound of a people is thick with guilt, and mournful in the remembrance of disaster the voice of the Lord roars above the wasteland, trumpeting the good news: "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors and the King of Glory shall come in".

Hang high upon your tree a trumpet; that the hopefulness of man may be remembered through all the winters of your life.

The Drum

I COULD THINK of nothing better than a drum for the sign of man's earth-bound nature. For he cannot escape time. This most ancient instrument answers a most ancient need: to bring all things into order; to make all things conform to the rythm of man's life, to the pulse of the universe.

What a curious instrument. It beats the tempo for the trumpets when the heart sings for joy; It beats out the moments of our defeat. It can dance upon a Christmas morning, and when all trumpets fail, sound the slow measured steps of sorrow and of death. Above all the symbols I can think of, the drum is the token of our mortality, our earthliness; of all the little noise we make between the cradle and the grave, the beat-out stated rythm and rattle of man's life where there is no escape from time. It follows the beat of the heart, and speaks aloud the throbbing of the soul.

Hang high upon your tree a drum; that you may remember through all the winters of your life, that man is in bondage to this temporal world.

The Angel

AND I CAN THINK of nothing better than an angel for the emblem of eternity. What angels are I know not; if they exist I know not. Yet in this season of the year every one must know that we live not by trumpets nor by drums alone, but by the grace of the Lord. I am quite sure a tree with drums and trumpets, birds and baubles and

all tinsel would be a poor thing, unless somewhere high in the branches a small angel wings its way.

There is the natural and the supernatural; there is time, and eternity. All our trumpet sounds of boldness, our drum beats of upstart joy and resolution are meaningless without the gathering arms of the Lord God.

Christmas means that all the hopefulness, and all the transiency of man are not futile. God whose ways are higher than our ways, and whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts, has entered the world of drums and trumpets, and all things brash, commonplace, and pagan and blessed them; to tell us that the odd little emblems and implements with which we surround ourselves are not silly, but the half faulty tokens of a hope that was fulfilled, a world made meaningful by an ancient victory. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord."

Hang upon the tree the trumpet and the drum. And high above them put a little angel; that this small, tarnished figure may sing among the branches the song that earth has been accepted as it is, and all our life blest. For the great and everlasting God has come to Bethlehem.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

IT IS A WARM and somewhat humid day in the middle of September. My telephone rings. It is the man who must see that I have a Christmas message written and ready so that it will be distributed in time. He apologizes for such an early asking; I tell him I understand. So I begin.

But my first thoughts about the Good News of Christmas are all mixed up with the day's news: the bombing of a church and the murder of several Negro children; the opening of the General Assembly of the United Nations; the mustering of the necessary majority of affirmative votes in the Senate to ratify the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. What will the headlines be in December, and what does this sort of news have to do with the News we sing about at Christmas?

First this. The joy of Christmas, and the assurance and strength it brings, does not arise out of the circumstances of our lives or the events of our time. It is rooted in this mighty fact: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." The joy of Christmas is found in God's love poured out for us in Jesus Christ.

But we who celebrate this coming with great joy are in this present world, here, now. We cannot keep the fact of Christmas and the events of our lives in separate compartments; they are all of one piece. For God came into the life of the world in Jesus Christ, that He might take us into His own life. When we worship Christ, the newborn King, we are not taking refuge from the troubles and sorrows of the world, rather we bring ourselves and the world as we know it to God in Christ.

To celebrate Christmas, then, is to greet Jesus Christ in our worship and in our work as the Lord of life.

Arthur Lichtblum

PRESIDING BISHOP

A Dinosaur At the Manger

By Corwin C. Roach

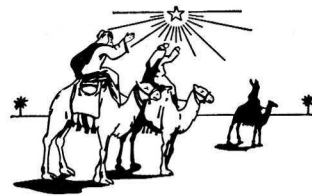
Director of School of Religion, Fargo, N. D.

I AM IN DEBT to December Findings for the title. It headed a report of a Nativity scene last year where one imaginative child had included a dinosaur among the animals about the manger. Of course the sober adult shakes his head and says there were no dinosaurs at Bethlehem. They had died out ages ago in some Jurassic swamp.

Gigantic reptiles, the dinosaurs were a victim of over specialization which had taken the wrong direction. There was a stress on bulk and brawn to the exclusion of brain. Some specimens ranged up to a hundred feet in over-all length with a brain the size of a nut. Accordingly the dinosaur had no survival value and was shunted to one side in the evolutionary process.

Yet dinosaurs do not die that easily. The Bible is full of their spiritual equivalents. At the very beginning we have Cain killing his brother after God's grim warning, "If you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you." The author of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, speaks of "the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan," who will be bound and thrown into the pit.

The little child who thought of dinosaurs at the manger was in the best tradition of biblical



thought. For this is the meaning of Holy Innocents which follows so closely upon the Christmas festival. The dinosaur, the ancient monster of unreasoning, uncontrolled force, is there in the massacre carried out by Herod's soldiers.

The dinosaur has been abroad in our land in this past month in the senseless and brutal assassination of our president. It is to be found wherever man meets man as a brute and an animal, force pitted against force, rather than as a fellow human being, sons of the same heavenly Father. We have seen it in Little Rock, Birmingham and now Dallas but dinosaurs are abroad in every city, in the heart of every man.

Edward Chiera in his "They Wrote in Clay" traced this same myth of the monster through the literatures of the ancient East and its conquest in turn by the Gods of these peoples, Enlil, Marduk, Asher and Jehovah. In our day, he went on to say, one of our great universities erected a statue in honor of its president, a celebrated scientist. There was depicted the scientist crushing a great lizard underfoot, a symbol of science destroying the evil influence of ignorance.

But we know that science alone can never slay the dragon. Modern man by his inventive genius has fashioned a worse monster than ever roamed the earth. Who then can slay the dragon, this new dinosaur? It is our Christian faith that the power of evil can be destroyed only through the peace and love revealed in the Christ Child.

When will the Church learn, and the world through the Church, that there is only one name under heaven by which men can be saved from these demonic forces that ravage the land? That name, that person is Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God's love, whose birth we celebrate this month.

Yes, there are dinosaurs in the forces and powers unleashed by man but they can be subdued and bound. For this is what the prophet meant,

"The wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid and the calf and the lion and the fatlings together and a little child shall lead them."

THE OFF-BEAT ANGEL

By William B. Sperry
Rector of Christ Church, Detroit



NOW WHEN JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judea about forty furlongs south of Jerusalem — which being interpreted means about an hour and a half by donkey back—a lot of other things were also happening. Cyrenius the governor, in Damascus was planning the biggest Saturnalia celebration that ancient city had ever seen. The manager of the King David Motel in Betalehem was putting the last touches on a complete renovation in anticipation of a rush of business. Herod, a churlish, suspicious fellow at best, was worried about rumors of revolt. The shepherds in the Tekoa Hills were worried that the early onslaught of winter found them without a winter fold for the sheep fully prepared. Another confusing circumstance was that some travelers from the east were puzzled by the deviations of a star which they had used to reckon their journey and in spite of their knowledge of astrology they were completely stumped.

To get back to Cyrenius, he was having breakfast with his wife, a comely and well disposed lady, and was saying to her, “My love, I’m going to give these people something to talk about. After the games we will have the arena in total darkness and at a special signal soldiers with torches will appear all around the top of the wall, a column of men will march in simultaneously from each of the eight entrances and a huge pyre will light in the center of the ring. Do you get it?

Light reappearing on earth! To mark the days getting longer! They’ll love it”.

“You know best, Cy, my dear. I’m only thinking of those investigators from the senate in Rome who worry you so about the entertainment budget.”

“Well”, he answered, “that’s a point but I’m going to charge this up to public relations. I think they’ll see it my way”.

Just then an officer appeared at the door and said, “Pardon, my Lord, but there is an urgent dispatch from Herod”.

“Herod! It would be him”, he said testily. Then in a lower voice to his wife he continued, “that old codger can dream up trouble even when there isn’t any”. Then to the officer he said, “Did he give any details?”

“He’s expecting a revolt in Bethlehem. He wants you to come over.”

“Bethlehem? Where’s that?”

“It’s a small town near Jerusalem. But the Jews make a lot of it because it seems one of their kings was born there.”

“Near Jerusalem! I couldn’t get there in two days even in one of those late-model four-horse chariots — and all they give us here is the old two-horse models. I’ve got this Saturnalia on my hands and I want to make a big Do of it.” He then drew himself up in dignity and addressed the officer, “Adjutant, write a dispatch to Herod and tell him that having perfect confidence in his

ability and knowledge of the people I give him full authority to carry out such measures as he deems appropriate to preserve the accustomed peace of the realm."

"Very good, sir", answered the officer and departed.

"Well, Cy", said his lovely wife, "I hope you know what you're doing. Now tell me more about this big Do you're planning."

Back in Jerusalem Herod had called a counsel that included everyone from first deputy down to ward heelers. He was looking his craftiest and his angriest. "I want you fellows to get to the bottom of this", he was saying. "We've got a pretty good espionage system but somebody has slipped a cog. Frankly I don't think these three fellows from the east represent any organized movement, but we can't take any chances. But what's the matter with you astrologers and egg-heads that you can't figure out this star? Here's what I want you to do. Buddy up with them. Promise them anything. But be sure to get all the information they've got. Let 'em explore around a little but then come back to you and give you their dope. I've told Cyrenius all about this — even asked him to come down here. Then if these three guys are up to anything I'll figure out something they'll never forget. I don't know what it will be but believe me it won't ever be forgotten."

So that was that, and they all slunk out shivering just a little as they wondered just what Herod had in mind.

Down in Bethlehem the proprietor of the King David Motel, and his wife were in a real tizzy. The contractors had not finished the renovation and the big census was to start the next day and the road would be full of travelers and they just had to be ready. The motel was on the main square of the town in front of a big civic plaza. You drove up to the office where you were assigned to your room and then without getting out of the chariot just drove on and tethered your horse or donkey outside your room. You could watch him through the window all night to see that he wasn't stolen. There were boys to bring hay, oats and water to your animal and you just went to your room after your day's journey where you could relax and get comfortable. It had just been whitewashed and each cubicle had its pail of water hanging outside which showed that it was as yet **unoccupied**.

II

IN THE CELESTIAL REALM things were — to put in mildly — expectant, and with the expectancy there was even a suggestion of confusion.

The golden streets were crowded. Angels, seraphs, cherubs and archangels thronged the sidewalks with no sense of rank or order. Chariots taking the musicians to their final rehearsal scraped hubcaps and Gabriel's traffic detail had to struggle to keep their tempers.

No one knew exactly who was in charge of the music. All the archangels were good trumpeters, but even Gabriel had no experience in directing a chorus. They turned the task over to an elderly seraph who had been music director for about a hundred thousand years and spent much of that time in composing a tremendous symphony for both chorus and instruments. He had named it, "In the Fullness of Time". The harps, pipes, cymbals and dulcimers had been rehearsing for eons so that they could play while in flight. It was the choral part that worried the old seraph.

This final rehearsal was in a field just outside the golden gates and as everyone took their places with a sort of joyous dignity the old seraph looked over the group. Right in the front row in the sopranos he saw this same young angel who had been somewhat of a problem to him. The little angel scarcely more than a cherub could hardly have been more than twelve or fourteen thousand years old and had only been in the choir for five thousand years. Many of the others had been singing for thirty-five or forty milleniums. Some of them had not been too pleased to see the little angel but being heaven no one had been disagreeable. It just happened that when anyone was off key or off beat it always seemed to be this angel. And then, his appearance! His halo was always sliding forward on his forehead, his wings did not seem to match, his golden slippers always seemed to be untied and flapped loudly on the shiny pavement. But he was such a willing, happy singer that they always made a place for him.

But this time it was different. The greatest event of eternity must have perfection. The seraph rapped with his baton. They began the first phrase of a mighty chorus. The voices rose in glorious tumult. The seraph was thrilled. He held the baton high and then suddenly brought it down to end the note. There was grandeur in the sudden silence — sure enough, to break this heavenly effect, there was a tiny, off key, off beat, tremulous thrill.

Now indeed, there was silence. The little angel looked up at the seraph and said, "I'm sorry sir, I just wanted to help. I'll try to do better." No one spoke. And just then Uriel, the archangel, who had been listening to the rehearsal, came over

and said, "Son, Gabriel just asked me to get him someone for a special assignment. Could you help us out?" The little fellow jumped up, shoved his halo back in place, hitched up his awkward wings and clattered out holding Uriel's hand.

III

IT WAS INDEED a special assignment. They needed someone to fly on ahead of the Heavenly Host, to be down on earth and to give a signal as to exactly when the host should appear and break into song. This was complicated, not only because of the tremendous speed at which angels fly but because the seraph had to see that the lutes, cymbals, dulcimers and pipes were all in position with the chorus properly assembled, and then to remain in the same place in the sky while they rendered the symphony.

The little angel was proud of his assignment — and excited. He was to land on earth, make sure of the location, and then with angelic instruments guide the flying host to a place where they would remain stationary for the chorus. That seems rather complicated but we must remember that with angels almost anything is possible — and in this case so it turned out to be.

Off the little angel went. He was thrilled with the marvels he saw. The Milky Way was brighter than a city street at night during the Christmas season, and then out in space there were Venus and Mars and at a distance Orion and the Pleades. It was a thrilling trip for a boy who was joyous, expectant — and curious. He came on down toward earth, satisfied himself that he was in the right area and began to look about on the surface for a good place to land. Then off to the right he suddenly saw a big blaze. "My that looks interesting", he said. "I know it's not Jerusalem — nor Bethlehem, but I better take a look". So he did.

There he was at the side of the big arena in Damascus with Cyrenius giving a signal and the torches all lit and pandemonium in the circus.

Like any other ten or fourteen thousand year old angel he DID take a look. "Yippee" he shouted and then had to take off suddenly with a steep ascent to get out of the way of the heat and smoke from the arena. As he did so he waved his

angelic instrument in ecstasy. That did it.

The heavenly host, flying swiftly but in good formation, got the signal and suddenly swerved to the north. By this time they were in sight of earth and Herod's astrologers, out to watch for signs, were in a terrible tizzy. They called back all their scouts and advisors and went into a huddle

in Jerusalem. The wise men from the east gravely said, "This is a portent. There does seem to be a smaller, guiding star. We will follow it."

Of course, the little angel, realizing he had lost some time now hurried on to Bethlehem. He decided to land and on landing became just as an ordinary earthly boy. He walked through the plaza of Bethlehem to where the King David Motel was standing resplendantly lighted. He felt sure this would be a wonderful place for the EVENT, — crowds of people to see and hear and they all looked like such fine people.

He was preparing to take a stance from which to give his signal when he saw a man and woman trudging sorrowfully away from the handsome door of the motel. Being an angel, he could not help but have concern for them so he walked over to inquire the trouble. "My wife is not at all well," said the man, "but they seem to have no room for us there." Then with a smile, "We do not have a chariot and I do not think we were really wanted."

"You may be right," said the angel who was having second thoughts about all the fine people in the inn. "I just flew in myself. That is, I just got here, but I did see a place up the road that don't look so busy. Want me to show you?"

So off they trudged and a few furlongs distant they came to a modest hut with a sign "Ruth and Boaz Place — Accomodations for Anyone".

Ruth and Boaz were just as hospitable as their sign. They did have a full house, but Ruth said "My Dear, don't worry about a thing. I'm going to make you comfortable. Boaz has a pallet he can put out in the stable. You'll have more privacy. No one to disturb you but the animals and I'll be there any time you need me."

Now the little angel began to think about his own job. He ran out back of the stable and there was a huge field with some shepherds slowly walking toward him. "Hey, kid," said one, "what's going on around here? Did you see that big light in the sky. Looked like it was way up in the sky in the direction of Damascus. We're worried about the weather. Is there some kind of a storm coming up? We thought someone over in Bethlehem might tell us".

"Don't know a thing," said the angel and ran out into the center of the field. When he heard "Bethlehem" it reminded him of his task. He must get that angelic host — right away.

Just then he heard a baby cry — a sort of first little shout, but with a note of triumph. He waved his angelic instrument. He jumped. He shouted. He was filled with ecstatic joy — and

then through the deep dark blue in back of the stars, came a vision, and music — and THE EVENT had happened.

And that, boys and girls, is how it happens that Jesus was born in a stable, that Herod was fooled, that the Wise Men were saved and the shepherds happened to be there. So we can thank the Off-beat Angel for the memories we have of Christmas today.

Over, Under And in the Inn

By Henry H. Wiesbauer

Chaplain at State Hospital, Westboro, Mass.

How can today's children
(That's all of us on Christmas Day!)
Who fly to visit Grandma via jet stream,
Find true and lively, words
Like
"And ascended (up?) into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand . . . "?

We know that "up"
(How high is up?)
Beyond the bright blue sky,
Van Allen belt, radioactivity and all,
While aloft in our non-stop superjet,
We'll see no sapphire throne;
No right hand!
Our Superdoopershoppingplaza Santas
Bring space helmets, not angels' harps.
"Halo" associates with our hair, not angels';
"Herald" not with "Hark! the . . ."
But with "Square".

To know something of The Word,
And other words, like heaven, earth, and hell,
We must leave off looking "up" or "down"
For God,
Like Titov claimed he did "up" there.
(Have Frigga's hoary gremlins
Infected also the Kremlin
With the power of three-decker universe think-
ing?)

Instead, as The Christmas Gospel
Thunders forth in living silence beneath
The gold and guilt of solemn high (up?) masses,
We must fall on our knees before The Word who
Would redeem our "religion" and our "science"
From compulsive obsession to get out of this
world —

To "heaven" or to the "moon", it matters not to
which —

And reveals Himself in "is now" among men and
nations,

As He has from the beginning, and ever shall.

Shoppers, awake!

Put down your credit cards

And lift up your hearts

To the One who nuzzled close to Mary's breast,
Jesus ben Joseph, now Christ The King,

Whose Way is not out of this world

But here, now,

"On earth as it is in heaven".

Re-member Him who, for us man and for our
salvation,

Came "down" from heaven in such a carnal way:
Layed on the cold ground in the bleak mid-winter.
Re-member Him who offers us His down-to-earth
religion

We now confront with
Millions for missiles
And mites for missions.
Telstar and Epiphany,
Evermore and evermore,
And world without end!
Amen.



- BACKFIRE -

Austin Vick

Methodist Minister of Aruada, Colo.

The Rev. Malcolm Boyd was invited to Colorado recently by the Rev. Ernest Cubbon, the Rev. Gene McCornack of Denver and myself.

"The Christian faith is unintelligible to thousands of unmarried young adults between the ages of 21 and 35 in America's urban centers who are cut off from contact with the church", Boyd told the Colorado young adults conference in Estes Park, as a pioneering missionary effort was launched for action in this new area of evangelism.

Young adults representing the Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian and United Church of Christ churches heard Boyd as he emphasized the themes of sex, race, Christian ethics and Christian education. He spoke at the conference under the sponsorship of the Denver Council of Churches young adult department.

In an experimentally-structured Sunday morning worship service, Chaplain Boyd read from a Denver newspaper and called upon the worshippers to offer intercessory prayers for persons and situations mentioned in news stories. He said that Bible study must not be separated from a study of the newspaper, and that personal piety must be linked in a radical way to a profound awareness of social problems.

"Jesus Christ is Lord of the totality of human life, not merely lord of a narrow spectrum of life labeled religion," the chaplain told the young adults.

He challenged them to take the lead in their churches in the matter of advancing racial integration and called for a vital stepping-up of adult education

in the churches to overcome the present condition of bankruptcy in religious education.

Boyd cited the results of a survey he has recently conducted among young adults: "Their definitions of God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, sin, hell and salvation are startling evidence of the terrible ignorance among nominal Christians concerning essential teachings of the Christian faith", he said.

Chaplain Boyd read from Edward Albee's play "The Zoo Story" and Ferlinghetti's "Poem No. 5" as illustrations for points he stressed during his talks.

Charles R. Allen

Rector at Gastonia, N. C.

At this time of the year Episcopalians are bombarded with requests for funds from many organizations. No one who is willing to give what he or she can give wants to be parochial or provincial, but I hope that Episcopalians will not overlook the merits of some of our own church's institutions.

In the state of North Carolina no organization is permitted legally to solicit funds from the general public unless the organization is licensed to do so by the department of welfare of this state. Recently I have been pleased to learn that our own St. Francis Boys' Homes in Kansas have been licensed to make such solicitations.

There are several organizations for boys operating in our western states which perhaps are worthy but which nonetheless have not complied with the provisions of the North Carolina solicitation law. Miss Sara E. Wilkerson, a supervisor in our state board of public welfare, indicates that this department is unhappy with the fact that these organizations, even though they are church related, continue to solicit in North Carolina with full knowledge of and without regard to the North Carolina solicitation statute.

I pass this information along

in case there are people who may not know all the facts and particularly that the Episcopal Church is doing such a fine work at the St. Francis Boys' Homes and in other similar homes. I hope that our own church people will not be unmindful of this good work and may be willing to remember it in their giving and in their prayers.

Jane Nelson

Churchwoman of Libby, Mont.

Innumerable writers have expressed their respect for Jacqueline Kennedy as she bravely faced her terrible grief. Everyone has been amazed and deeply touched by her fortitude and wisdom as she calmly made the decisions that necessarily she must make in planning for the burial of her beloved while all the world looked on.

Can her calm assurance and obvious courage be evidence of anything less than the very real presence of our Lord the Holy Spirit, the comforter, the strengthener? Isn't her super-human, super-natural fortitude an outward and visible sign of the grace of God looking within this his child in her hour of need. Isn't this a superb example of what our Lord meant when he said "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted."

Everyone who has been through Gethsemane knows it takes more than "inner courage," marvelous strength of character, "sheer guts," "majestic bearing." Only God Almighty can sustain us. Let us praise him that he does. And let us declare boldly to all the world that he does.

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