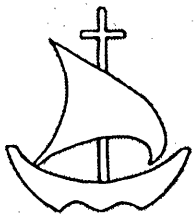


DECEMBER 20, 1973



news and views

OF THE WORLD OF RELIGION

by doris woolard

Centenary College Chaplain Robert Ed Taylor (Shreveport) has news for those who believe college students are not interested in chapel programs. When compulsory attendance was dropped several years ago, participation fell off to a handful, but this year he reports that the average attendance for eight Thursday Chapel programs had risen to 161.

The secretary general of the World Jewish Congress warned that Jews must increase their contacts with Roman Catholics and Protestants on all levels to produce the necessary understanding among Christians for Israel and Jewish causes. Dr. Gerhart Riegner of Geneva, in the U. S. to meet with members of the American Section of the WJC and to meet with Jewish specialists on relations with Christian churches, also stressed that communications between Christians and Jews "must be a two-way street."

"Impact '74: The Religious Spirit-Structure and Design" will be the theme for the 1974 National Interfaith Conference on Religion and Architecture, to be held in Cincinnati, April 23-25. Nationally known architects and theologians will lead the sessions concerned with varying aspects of the contemporary scene. Architectural exhibits sponsored by various religious communities, will include not only new worship spaces but community centers, retirement centers, fellowship halls and education facilities. Further information is available from the 1974 Cincinnati Conference, Guild for Religious Architecture, 1777 Church St., N. W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

The late David Ben-Gurion, the Jewish state of Israel's first and longest serving Prime Minister and a profound student of the Bible, is widely recognized as having contributed more than any other individual to the birth of the state of Israel and to the shaping of its character. Mr. Ben-Gurion set in motion an array of Israeli efforts — making the desert bloom, decreasing the educational gap between Israelis from Afro-Asian lands and those with Western cultural backgrounds, and reviving interest among secular-minded Jews in the Bible.

Dr. Walter Robert Matthews, retired dean of St. Paul's Cathedral (Anglican), died in London, Dec. 4. Said to be one of the most "visible" churchmen in England during and after World War II, one of Dean Matthews greatest concerns was in the recovery of moral standards and international peace following the war. While championing the cause of world security, he advised against unilateral British nuclear disarmament in the 1960s. The duty of nations and Christians, he said, was to work for the U.N. and let the international forum point the way to peace and disarmament. He said that the "scientific age" would be drab and fail to achieve peace, justice and freedom if there were nothing but the power of science to regenerate hearts and minds.

Tulsa's public school system has launched a new Indian Pupil Education program designed to give a wide range of emergency assistance and counseling to Indian children and their families. This year's program is concentrated on 20 Tulsa elementary schools which have either large Indian enrollments or a few Indians in great need for help. A program director said "Our biggest problem is Indian self-concept . . . It doesn't matter if you are below average, average, or above average. You can excel if you have a good self-concept."

Gerald R. Ford, 60, was sworn in as the 40th vice president of the U.S. with the use of a Bible that his son Michael, a divinity school student, purchased especially for the occasion. Members of Mr. Ford's family and his personal friends describe him as a committed Episcopalian who, in the words of evangelist Billy Zeoli, Grand Rapids (Mich.) evangelist, "doesn't wear his Christianity on his coat sleeve." Mr. Zeoli said that Mr. Ford made a personal commitment to Christ in 1971 at a Washington Redskins-Dallas Cowboys pre-game chapel service that was conducted by the evangelist.

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, widely known evangelical theologian and author, will become lecturer-at-large for World Vision International next March. He is resigning as professor-at-large with Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia to take the teaching ministry with the evangelical humanitarian agency based in Monrovia, Calif.

"The Christian is not in the Armageddon business," comments Kenneth L. Wilson, editor of Christian Herald, in an editorial titled "Prophecy and Christian Conscience," in the December issue. Mr. Wilson declares "For Him (the Christian), hope springs eternal. When his obsession becomes the destruction of all the supposed ungodly, he is a sulking Jonah not only out of touch with those whose deliverance is his mission, but with God." Concluding the editorial, Editor Wilson suggests a new approach: "Perhaps in the Middle East, as elsewhere, we could get a just and compassionate and therefore Christian perspective, prophecy or no, if our first question was not 'Who is right?' but 'What is right?'"

Described as the first national newsjournal of Southern Baptists, The Southern Baptist Journal has begun publication in Decatur, Ga. Editor William A. Powell, who resigned from the denomination's evangelism division staff to assume the new post, says it is "a middle-of-the-road publication for Southern Baptists." One of the Journal's purposes, according to the editor, is "to discourage churches from withdrawing from our denomination and to prevent any split within our denomination."

Episcopal Bishop William Jones Gordon, Jr., the "flying" bishop of Alaska, has decided not to accept the post of Episcopal Bishop of Florida, to which he was recently elected, because he "does not feel truly called to assume this work," according to retiring Bishop Edward Hamilton West. Bishop Gordon, who has headed the Alaskan Episcopal Missionary District for 25 years became known as the "flying" bishop because of the extensive use of an airplane to cover the wide territory under his jurisdiction.

One thousand Baptist laymen and ministers representing 19 states attended a prayer breakfast in Dallas and were challenged by the Rev. Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the denomination's board, to help reach the board's \$42.6 million budget goal for 1974. Members of 35,000 Southern Baptist churches will be asked to contribute \$20 million during the next six months to help finance the efforts of 2,500 (SBC) missionaries in 77 foreign countries.

The Research Center for Religion and Human Rights in Closed Societies in New York has issued a statement appealing "to all national and international religious and secular organizations to raise their voices in protest against the violation of religious freedom and human rights everywhere and, in particular, in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries."

†

CHRISTMAS COMET



-RNS Photo

NEW YORK — The appearance of the Comet Kohoutek, hailed by some as the "Christmas comet," is stimulating renewed discussions on the origin of the first Christmas star — the star of Bethlehem. Astronomers expect the blazing Kohoutek, which is now appearing in southeastern skies before dawn, to be at its brightest around Christmas. It will disappear from view until Dec. 29 when it will be seen in the southwest. By the end of February, Kohoutek is expected to fade from view.

Astronomers at the Hayden Planetarium in New York point out that three common theories are given to explain the star of Bethlehem: that it was a nova (a star that suddenly increases greatly in brilliance), that it was a comet, and that it was the "conjunction" of three planets aligned together and resulting in unusual brilliancy. While no explanation has been proven correct, Hayden Planetarium says astronomers appear to favor the conjunction theory — mainly because comets were seen as an evil omen in ancient times, and there is no known comet appearing in the Middle East at the time of the birth of Jesus.

This view of Kohoutek was made with the 48-inch Schmidt telescope at the Hale Observatories on Palomar Mountain, Calif. The small white lines were caused by stars during a 12-minute time exposure.

DECEMBER 20, 1973



The Hope Trio of the Arkansas Children's Colony entertained the Northwest Arkansas Sub-District Methodist Men's Club, Dec. 4, at the Sedgwick Church. Seventy persons were present. The Rev. Richard Stegall is pastor of the host church.

†

UMW appreciation program at Hot Springs

Over 100 women joined in a service of recognition and appreciation at First United Methodist Church in Hot Springs on Sunday afternoon, Dec. 2.

"Many Gifts, One Spirit" was the program's theme. Little Rock Conference UMW President Mrs. James Nix, Lonoke, was guest speaker at the event which honored new and prospective members.

Mrs. J. R. Campbell, Membership and Home Department chairman, was in charge of arrangements for the afternoon and was assisted by Mrs. T. N. Black, Mrs. Van Hope, Mrs. Phil Marks and Mrs. Irene Stone.

Special music was provided by Mrs. W. A. Goodrum, Jr., Mrs. Robert Davis and Mrs. Billy E. Wilson, accompanied by Organist-Choirmaster David Aston.

Mrs. Marshall Steel read the scripture, Luke's account of Christ's birth. Mrs. Joe Kaufman and Mrs. James

Eastburn presented a dialogue, "His Name Shall be Called Wonderful," an account of a visit between Mary and her aunt, Elizabeth.

Mrs. W. A. Goodrum, outgoing president of First Church UMW, was honored with presentation of a past-president's pin. Mrs. Harry Bischof, recently resigned director of Christian Education, was given special recognition by Mrs. W. A. Elliott, Mrs. Goodrum and Mrs. Bessie Adams, retiring UMW vice-president, presented a love gift to the society.

Thirty-three new and prospective members were honored at the event which concluded with a festive holiday tea attended by visitors from Oaklawn, New Haven, Gardner and Hot Springs Village United Methodist churches.

The Rev. Clarence Holland gave the opening prayer and the Rev. James Richardson, the benediction.

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Christian Civic Foundation of Arkansas, Inc.

1007 Donaghey Building
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

As we enter the 1973 Advent Season and prepare our hearts and homes for the celebration of Christmas, the members of your Christian Civic Foundation staff wish to extend to each of you our sincere appreciation for the privilege of representing you in a great Christian cause. Without your gifts and without your loyal support, the work of the Christian Civic Foundation could not be accomplished. Without the Saviour, who was born in Bethlehem, all that we do would be without meaning. Unless His Love, Grace, and Peace rule in our hearts and lives, our thoughts, words and deeds will not build Christian Civic Righteousness in the lives of others. Our prayer for you and your loved ones is that the presence of the Christ in your hearts and homes may bring the Peace of which the Angels sang in the long ago. And may His prayer be fulfilled in each of our lives, our homes and churches, "that they may be one, even as the Father and I are one".

Edward W. Harris, Executive Director
Paul R. Ramsey, Educational Assistant
Beverly B. Williams, Office Secretary

Council Directors to Local Churches

Preview of 1974 training events

We are listing a few of the training events to be held during 1974 in which you may have interest. Mark your calendar as follows:

Leaders: Richard Cookson, R. Harold Hipps, Carrie Lou Goddard, and Robert Reber.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND FINANCIAL PLANNING is a course being taught by Dr. Claus H. Rohlf at Perkins School of Theology for post interns and pastors in the field. Date: January 2-12, 1974. It is a professional theological education course. Some scholarship help is available. Call your Council Director.

SOUTH CENTRAL JURISDICTIONAL YOUTH MINISTRIES TRAINING EVENT, July 8-12, 1974, Mt. Sequoyah. This is for members of the Conference Council on Youth Workers and others working closely with young people. It is open to both young people and adult leaders in youth ministry.

SEMINAR FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS "Developing The Educational Ministry Of The Congregation," to be held July 8-19, 1974 at the Center of Continuing Education at Scarritt College, Nashville, Tenn.

SOUTH CENTRAL JURISDICTIONAL LABORATORY/SEMINAR: Mt. Sequoyah, July 13-19, 1974. Training of leaders is provided in this event for persons working at any age level — Nursery to Adults — in the Church School. Each local church is encouraged to send one or more of their leaders to this event. The exact schedule and staff will be announced later. Call your Annual Conference Director of Education.

WORKSHOP ON COUNSELING SKILLS for local church educators, July 15-19, 1974. Leader: Dr. Merle R. Jordan who is associate professor of pastoral psychology at Boston University School of Theology. This program will be held at the Center of Continuing Education at Scarritt College, Nashville, also. Contact your Council on Ministries Office for more information.

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MRS. G. T. PICKLER

Mrs. Claudia Souter Pickler, 96, wife of the late G. T. Pickler, of Taylor, Ark., died Wednesday, Dec. 5, at Taylor. She was a pioneer resident of Columbia County where she lived all of her life.

Mrs. Pickler was an active member of the Taylor United Methodist Church. She had served on the official board, taught in Sunday School for many years, and was a worker in the women's organization. When she was eighty-seven, the W.S.C.S. honored her with a special life membership and pin.

Mrs. Pickler was also active in school and civic affairs. She was a lifetime member of the P.T.A. and an avid basketball fan. She attended devotional services at the Taylor Nursing Home with her pastors.

Funeral services were held Dec. 6, at the Taylor church with the Rev. Calvin Miller and the Rev. Winston Hudnall officiating. Burial was in Harmony Cemetery.

Survivors include six daughters: Mrs. Harold Harts of Cleveland, Tex.; Mrs. W. C. Horn of Stamps; Mrs. Jay Clements of Atlanta, Tex.; Mrs. Lavelle Hughes of Springhill, La.; and Mrs. W. R. Stuart and Mrs. Margaret Knight of Taylor; three sons: G. K. Pickler of Springhill, La. and William Edward Pickler and Wayne M. Pickler of Taylor. She is also survived by 22 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren, and 23-great-great-grandchildren.

BUFORD B. HAMMOND

Buford B. Hammond of 2616 North First Street, Paragould, a lifetime resident of Green County, died Dec. 1. He was 76. He had served as postmaster of Beech Grove for 34 years before retiring in Dec., 1965. He was named Postmaster of the Year in 1964.

Mr. Hammond was active in the United Methodist Church at Beech Grove, having taught the Men's Class for 35 years and having served as chairman of the Administrative Board and as church treasurer. He was a member of the Green County Methodist Men. He had lived in Paragould for the past seven years and was a member of the First United Methodist Church in Paragould at the time of his death.

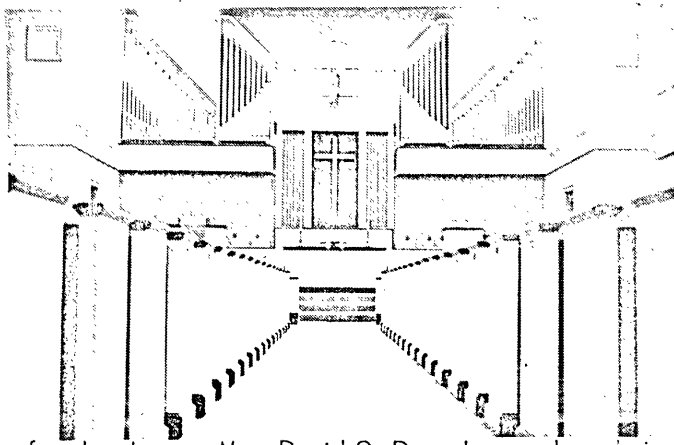
Mr. Hammond was a veteran of the first World War, a member of the American Legion, the Masonic Lodge, Knights Templar, a charter member of the Lions Club in Paragould and a retired member of the National League of Postmasters.

Survivors are his wife, Myrtle Buckridge Hammond; two daughters, Mrs. Duke (Mary) Faulkner, Crowley, La. and Miss Phyllis Hammond of the home; three brothers, Rufus and Minis of Miami, Fla., and Ellis of St. Louis; one sister, Mrs. Lloyd Westburg of Lake Placid, Fla.; and two grandsons.

Funeral service was held Dec. 3 with Dr. Raymond Franks, pastor of First United Methodist Church, Paragould, and the Rev. David Driver, pastor of the Swifton United Methodist Church, officiating.



Dedicatory Services for a new 13 rank Wicks Pipe Organ were held on Nov. 25 at the First United Methodist Church of Benton, with Dr. John Hughes (at left), Dean of the Division of Fine Arts of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock as the guest organist. He had also served as the consultant to the local committee in designing the instrument, which is especially designed



for church use. Mrs. David O. Demuth served as chairman of the local committee. The organ, which cost approximately \$30,000, was paid for before the installation was completed. Dr. Ed Hollenbeck is pastor of the church. Over 700 members and friends attended the dedication service.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Below is a schedule for the Daily Bible Reading, which the Board of Evangelism invites you to use as a regular guide for use in your homes.

Dec. 23—Sunday	Matt. 1:18-25
Dec. 24	Luke 2:1-7
Dec. 25	Luke 2:8-20
Dec. 26	Matt. 2:1-12
Dec. 27	Matt. 2:13-23
Dec. 28	Matt. 14:1-9
Dec. 29	Rev. 1:9-18
Dec. 30—Sunday	Rev. 22:16-21
Dec. 31	Matt. 11:25-30
Jan. 1	John 1:1-5
Jan. 2	John 6:7-27
Jan. 3	Gal. 4:4-7
Jan. 4	Luke 2:16-21
Jan. 5	Luke 22:21-28
Jan. 6—Sunday	Leviticus 6:1-6

MRS. HARRY WEED, wife of the Rev. Harry Weed, 1518 9th St., San Pedro, Calif. 90732, died on Thanksgiving morning after an illness of about a year. The couple had been married 51 years and had served charges in both Arkansas Conferences before retiring in 1963. The funeral service was held at Grace United Methodist Church, Long Beach, Calif., on Nov. 25.

APPROXIMATELY 35 youth from junior and senior high schools in Ashdown, who are enrolled in French classes, presented special Christmas music in French at the Sunday morning service on Dec. 9 at First Church in Ashdown. They sang five selections including one native French carol, "D'ou Viens-Tu, Bergere" (Where Do You Come From, Shepherds). The French teacher, Mrs. Cathy Endicott, directed the choral group. The Rev. William E. Cheyne is the pastor.

THE REV. C. NORMAN GUICE, retired member of the North Arkansas Conference, is seriously ill at Presbyterian Village Health Center in Little Rock. Cards and letters may be addressed to him there. The address is 500 Brookside Drive, Little Rock, Ark.

ADVENT AT JACKSONVILLE

First Church of Jacksonville held the Christmas candlelight service, "Carols and Candles", Sunday, Dec. 9. The service consisted of congregational singing of traditional carols, readings from the scriptures, special music by the Chancel Choir and a solo by Mrs. Joy Tanner. Mrs. Melba Rice was the organist and Mrs. Jane Hill, pianist.

On Dec. 16 at the 10:50 worship service, the Chancel Choir performed, for the first time, Handel's "Messiah." Susan Jones directed.

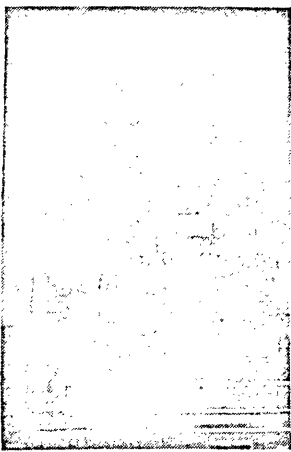
On December 23 at the 10:50 worship service, the Wesley (1,2,3, grade) and Asbury (4,5,6 grade) Choirs and the Vansant Bell Ringers will present a program of Christmas music. The annual "Family Communion" will be conducted by the Rev. Bob Edwards on Dec. 24 between 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

RHODES SCHOLAR candidates from Arkansas this year are Steve Shults of Little Rock, who is a student at Yale University, and George Cheatham, Jr., of El Dorado, who is a student at Hendrix College. Shults and Cheatham competed against candidates from five other states on Dec. 15 in New Orleans for the two-year scholarships to Oxford University. Four of the twelve candidates will receive scholarships.

MISS LILY PETER, Arkansas' Poet Laureate, was honored at a reception by the Hendrix College Choir following a performance of the Choir's candlelight carol service Sunday night, Dec. 2. The Choir presented Miss Peter a bound certificate of appreciation in recognition of her generosity and of her support of the arts in Arkansas. The Choir especially wanted to show its gratitude to Miss Peter for her unselfish gift of \$5,000 toward the Choir's European concert tour in 1974.

MR. AND MRS. Roland Shelton of Little Rock will be honored on the occasion of their 60th wedding anniversary with an open house at Asbury Church in Little Rock on Dec. 23. Times are from 2 to 4 p.m. and all friends of the couple are invited. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Ford are chairmen of the host committee.

MRS. GRACE DWYER, who recently retired as Church and Community Worker with churches of the Hot Springs area, has moved to Tennessee. Her new address is: P.O. Box 346, Findley, Tenn. 38030.



The Chrismon tree in First Church, Jacksonville, is shown at left.

The 20 foot Chrismon tree at right decorates the sanctuary of First Church, Searcy.



DR. RUTH HUGHEY, professor at Ohio State University, Columbus, O., recently fell while boarding a plane in Memphis and is confined to the Baptist Hospital, Room 767UE, Memphis, Tenn. 38146. She is the daughter of the late Dr. James M. Hughey, member of the North Arkansas Conference.

CHARLES BARNETT was recently elected to serve as president of United Methodist Men in Central Avenue Church, Batesville, in 1974. Other officers will be Jim Shirrell, vice-president, Roy Thomas, secretary, and Charles Buchanan, treasurer. Dr. Charles Casteel is their pastor.

MCCRORY UNITED METHODIST Men elected L. J. Sawyer to be president, Bill Tiner, vice-president, and Curtis Houston, secretary. The Rev. Lon Brewer is their pastor.

WASHINGTON AVENUE United Methodist Men had as guest speaker at the December meeting the Rev. John S. Workman, editor of the ARKANSAS METHODIST. Lt. Bill McCord of the North Little Rock Police Dept. is president of the men's group and the Rev. Kenneth Renfro is their pastor.

ADVENT ORGAN RECITALS in First Church, El Dorado, have featured Gordon Betenbaugh, minister of music in First Church, and guest organists Charles Rigsby of Trinity Cathedral (Episcopal), Little Rock, and Scott Mouton, Dallas, candidate for Master's Degree in Church Music at SMU.

CHRISMONS ON EXHIBIT AT WHEATLEY

United Methodist Women of the Wheatley Church held their first Chrismon Pageant on Sunday, Dec. 2, at five o'clock. A live seven foot balled tree, for later planting in the church yard, had been decorated before the service, except for the special symbolic ornaments which were used in the pageant.

As the narrator told the story, each special symbolic ornament was added to the tree after a brief explanation of its meaning. The dimming of the sanctuary lights made the tree the focal point with its gold and white ornaments, all handmade by women of the church at work parties.

THE GEYER SPRINGS Church of Little Rock will have the cantata, "Story of Christmas" by Peterson, presented on Sunday, Dec. 23 at 7 p.m. Bill Kennedy will direct with Mrs. Bobbie Carpenter at the organ and Mrs. Bill Miller at the piano. Soloists will be Mrs. Sam Wood, John Cowan and Robert Baker. Ray Lange is narrator. The Rev. Rayford L. Diffie is pastor.

THE UMYF of the Greenbrier United Methodist Church presented a Chrismon Service at the evening worship hour on Sunday, Dec. 9. Each Chrismon placed on the Tree was made by a member of the UMYF. The Rev. James D. Harrison is pastor.

P. K. KORNER

THE REV. CLAUDE E. BARRON, a student at Scarritt College, Nashville, Tenn., was home with his parents, the Rev. and Mrs. W. W. Barron, of Keith Memorial United Methodist Church, Malvern, for Thanksgiving. He brought with him the Rev. S. V. Kant, also a student at Scarritt. Mr. Kant is a Methodist minister from India studying to obtain his Masters' Degree in Evangelism. He is a nephew of the Rev. Ithiel Masters who visited the Little Rock Conference about 10 years ago and at that time was a guest at the Barron home in Rison.

DECEMBER 20, 1973

CHRISMON TREE PROJECTS INCREASE

Christmas trees in churches are usually relegated to the educational building for the benefit of children, or as a decoration for class parties.

The "Chrismon 'Tree," however, is appropriately placed in the sanctuary, for every ornament is a symbol of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ (thus the name "Chrismon," a combination of CHRIST and MONogram).

The idea originated with a Lutheran congregation in Danville, Va., in 1957. The group copyrighted the plan, not to make money (there is no charge), but to assure that symbols will be handmade, never sold, and made of gold and white.

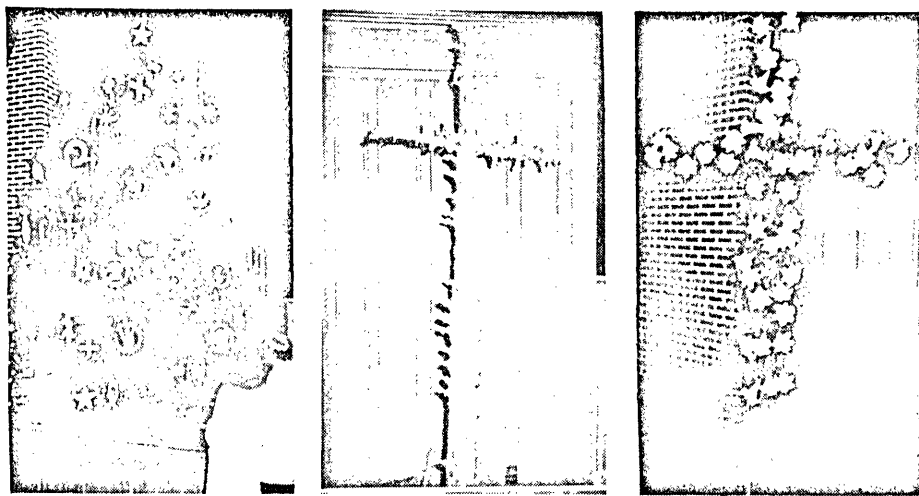
Now churches of all denominations all over the country are displaying Chrismon trees. Almost every town in the state will have one on display in one or more churches, many for the first time this year.

CHRISMON TREES ON DISPLAY IN GREATER LITTLE ROCK

Many churches of the Little Rock area are open during restricted hours for the public to view Christmon trees. This is the eighth year that St. Paul United Methodist Church, 2223 Durwood Rd., has exhibited a tree. The viewing hours are during office hours and from 7 until 9 o'clock in the evening. Winfield United Methodist, 1601 Louisiana, is open for viewing for the second year, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m.

Churches in Little Rock displaying Chrismon trees for the first year are: First Christian, 1500 N. Miss.; First United Methodist Church, 8th and Center; Pulaski Heights Baptist, 2200 Kavanaugh; Westover Hills Presbyterian, has had a Chrismon tree for at least three years, Kavanaugh and Pine Valley. In North Little Rock, these churches are open to the public for viewing trees: First United Methodist, 22nd and Poplar; Gardner Memorial United Methodist, 18th and Schaefer; Trinity Lutheran, 3902 Olive St.; and in Jacksonville, First United Methodist. These displays are worth a sight-seeing tour.

†
IN RUSSELLVILLE, the Gardner Junior High Choral Department, under the direction of Mrs. Robert Casey, presented Christmas music during the Dec. 4 meeting of United Methodist Women in First Church.



This sequence of pictures reveals the manner in which a Chrismon tree can portray Christian theology from the birth to the resurrection of Christ. The same Chrismon tree at left, above, is made into an "old rugged cross" for Holy week services, and then the same tree blossoms at Easter to symbolize the resurrection. These pictures were made by D. R. Thompson in St. Paul United Methodist Church, Little Rock, last year.

Missionary Helen Wilson sends greetings

"GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER"

"He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation...He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." Colossians 1:15,17

This is the first portion of the scripture selection in this year's Christmas folder of the Bible Society, which I personally will be giving to those whom I meet, to witness to the love of God for each of us through His "first-born" — Jesus, who "holds all things together" for me!

Here in Bolivia it is eminently inhabited by people known as Aymaras and Quechuas, but these cultures have been intentionally and systematically dominated in every realm of their being, like original inhabitants of other countries.

I remember my first Church Conference in 1953 at which there were only a few Aymaras, who didn't say very much. Over these 20 years I've seen a fantastic growth numerically, spiritually and in their being able to express themselves as dignified sons of God. Recently nearly a whole community of some 150 families on the high Andean plains accepted Christ through the witness of one of our Aymara pastors. I had the privilege of visiting them with representatives of the Board of Global Ministries of the U. S. A. United Methodist Church. When I was introduced as a Promoter of Work with Women, they immediately caught the idea of my role and the men particularly expressed their desire that their wives and daughters have opportunities of learning — to read, to write and to better their family life. When persons experience "New Life in Christ", the name of our Spanish Christian Education material, these are some of the changes and challenges — "He is before all things.....".

In November I was on the committee to plan the first Laymen Conference — "Laywomen", too — as each church sent at least one man and one woman. It was held in the heart of Aymaraland near Lake Titicaca where some of our members never had been. The majority were Aymara, and were they ever vocal, claiming their place, as were other laymen, in the organization of the Evangelical Methodist Church in Bolivia which is completing its first quadrennium of autonomy and will be revising its Discipline at the General Assembly in January.

As I live and have an office, as administrator of the Central District, in the Methodist Center, I have the privilege of receiving visitors. One morning early an Aymara Brother arrived who had ridden all night on a truck to visit his son conscripted in military service. I invited him in for a cup of coffee. To further verify himself, he showed me his identification card, which the government requires of all of us, that he took out of a very worn New Testament. I asked him to read a passage before we gave thanks. He thumbed through until he found exactly where he wanted to read — not a long passage — only three words — "DIOS ES AMOR" — GOD IS LOVE!!! He looked up beaming and said, "That's the name of my Church from which I bring you greetings." A flood of God's presence and love filled the room.

Helen B. Wilson

Casilla 770, Cochabamba, Bolivia, S. Am.

MRS. RICHARD RYAN THOMPSON

Mrs. Johnnie Key Thompson of Quapaw Towers, Little Rock, formerly of Eureka Springs, died Nov. 21. She was the wife of the late Richard Ryan Thompson, a state senator from 1935 to 1939.

Mrs. Thompson was a daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Key, formerly of Conway.

She was a graduate of Hendrix College, an officer of the Ozark Water Co. and Lake Lucerne Co.

She was formerly employed by the State Department of Education.

Mrs. Thompson was a member of First United Methodist Church, Little Rock.

Survivors are a brother, Wylie G. Key of Marked Tree; two sisters, Mrs. Earl Quigley of Little Rock and Mrs. Sherwood Gates of Tampa, Fla.; two stepdaughters, Mrs. Nancy Thompson Whitaker and Mrs. Ruth Thompson Nance of Tampa, and nine step-grandchildren.

Funeral services were conducted at Drummond Funeral Home with Dr. James W. Workman and the Rev. Maurice Webb officiating.

Burial was at Eureka Springs.

CONWAY DISTRICT MINISTERS AND FAMILIES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS SEASON

The Conway District ministers and their families met in Conway's First United Methodist church for their annual family Christmas party on Dec. 7 at 6 p.m.

The husbands of the officers of the Conway District parsonettes served as the program committee with officers of the parsonettes in charge of decorations and the smooth flow of traffic around the buffet dining table.

The program included the singing of carols under the direction of Doris Clark accompanied by Bonnie McKay; a special presentation of "Away in a Manger" by the Herschel McClurkin family; the Christmas story by Dr. Ralph Clayton; Dr. Myers Curtis singing "O Holy Night" accompanied by Mrs. Dessie Mae Traylor; a filmstrip of "The Other Wise Man;" and the benediction by the Rev. Jim Pollard.

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LLYN McEUEEN has been elected to serve as president of United Methodist Men in Grand Avenue Church, Stuttgart. Lee Earhart is vice-president. The Rev. George Meyer is pastor.



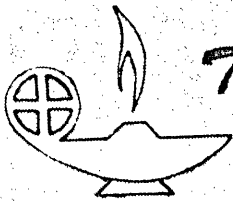
Hope District held its annual Parsonage Families Fellowship on Dec. 7 in the new building at First United Methodist Church in Hope with the Rev. Norris Steele as host pastor. The ladies of the church served as hostesses for the dinner. Some of the pastors present are pictured in first photo. FIRST ROW (left to right): R. T. Jarrell, Royal Dodson, Guy J. Downing, David B. Wilson.



SECOND ROW: John Alston, Wayne Bell, Dorothy Claiborne, John Wesley Hogan, John H. Oliver, Dale McKinner. THIRD ROW: Edwin Dodson, J. R. Callicott, Roger Armstrong, Richard Poss, Horace Grogan, John Wesley Rushing. FOURTH ROW: Charles Walthall,



Aultus Block, DeWitt Harberson, Darrel Bone, Bill Cheyne, Norris Steele, Bruce Bean. Pictured in the second photo are spouses of the pastors and the third photo shows some of the children present.



The Sunday School Lessons

by Dr. Ethan W. Dodgen

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 30:

"Water for the Thirsty"

BEGINNING A NEW UNIT: Still using the Gospel of John we begin a new unit entitled: "THE SON OF GOD ACTIVE AMONG US." There are six lessons in the unit, dealing with: water, bread, light, love, life, and the promise of a counselor. This describes the reaction of Jesus to basic human needs. Today the subject is "Water for the Thirsty."

SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND: John 4:1-42

MEMORY SELECTION: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." John 4:14 (RSV)

PURPOSE: To emphasize the basic needs we have today which are not satisfied with ordinary things, and to describe how Jesus offers the satisfying experiences that are permanent. To discover the eternal values as revealed by God's Son.

* * *

JESUS AND THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

Jesus attended the passover feast in Jerusalem. Following this he stayed for a while in the surrounding villages of Judea. A controversy arose over baptism and Jesus did not want to become involved with the Pharisees over this at this time. He decided to return to Galilee and chose to take the nearest way, which was through Samaria. When he and his disciples came to an ancient well near Sychar in Samaria, they stopped to rest. Jesus sent his disciples into the village to buy food. A woman of Samaria came to the well to draw water. Jesus asked her for a drink. She expressed surprise that he would even speak to her, since he was a Jew, and she was a Samaritan. Then followed the famous conversation dealing with "living water" and the unhappy condition of the woman's life. When things became too personal the woman tried to change the conversation by bringing up the quarrel between the Jews and Samaritans over the place of worship. Jesus described to her worship as a spiritual experience, not necessarily related to any one place. "For God is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24 (RSV)

I have tried to summarize briefly the story to be sure we have in mind the events out of which the messages of this part of The Gospel of John come, as we relate them to our own experiences. May I suggest that this is a good exercise in Bible study. After you have read a familiar passage try to tell it in your own words. Then compare what you have said or written with the actual record. Many parts of the Scripture will come alive to you and a deeper understanding of the message of God will come. It may change some of your misconceptions as well as enriching your understanding.

JESUS AS A NON-CONFORMIST

Jesus dared to defy custom and tradition where it crossed the purposes of God, as he understood God's will for persons. He did this, not to shock people, nor to antagonize them, but to elevate human life. A Samaritan became the hero in the immortal story of "The Good Samaritan." The woman of Samaria needed his help in overcoming the sin and misery of her life. Where customs or standards tend to enslave and inhibit people the non-conformist can serve God and man by defying them. But if their motives are only selfish and the concern is just for personal pleasure or comfort they are

missing the spirit of Jesus.

"The Jews had no dealings with Samaritans." (John 4:9) There was a quarrel of long-standing. These Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had profited from the occupation of their land by an enemy power. The bloodline was corrupted by intermarriage. When faithful Jews returned from captivity and set about rebuilding the temple, the Samaritans offered to help. Their assistance was refused. They were treated as traitors and outcasts. So a rival temple was established in their own land. Jesus ignored this fuss and the feelings of prejudice and recognized the Samaritan. He sent his disciples into the village to buy food from Samaritans. He refused to conform to their taboos and prejudices.

The position of women in Jewish society also demonstrates a strong prejudice. Dr. Barclay tells us there were Jewish teachers known as the "bruised and bleeding" rabbis. When a woman appeared on the street they closed their eyes so as not to look upon them and bumped into trees or buildings injuring themselves. A woman was not recognized in public. Jesus refused to conform to this custom. He gave the woman recognition and she responded to this treatment with surprise and appreciation.

"Here was the Son of God tired and weary and thirsty. Here was the holiest of men listening with understanding to a sorry story. Here was Jesus breaking through the barriers of nationality and orthodox Jewish customs. Here is the beginning of the universality of the gospel; here is God so loving the world, not in theory, but in action." (William Barclay, THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, V. I, p. 143.)

GIVE ME A DRINK

Jesus was hungry and thirsty. He sent his disciples into town to buy food. He had no rope or buckets with which to draw water from the well. When the woman came with her water jar he asked for a drink. John emphasizes throughout his Gospel the human quality of Jesus. He was a real human being — not an apparition or spirit.

Several years ago the book, THE MANHOOD OF THE MASTER, described the humanity of Jesus at a time when the popular conception pictured Jesus as a weak and effeminate creature, shielded from the rough and tumble of ordinary life. Here we see him as one who is hungry and thirsty. He was often weary from toil and personal ministry. He wept with sorrow and agonized over decisions. No human problem I may have is foreign to the experience of Jesus. For that reason he can speak to me as a human.

Not only as a man, but man with the viewpoint and strength of God. Someone has said there is no problem that God and I together cannot solve. Jesus brought to bear the help of God in all his problems.

LIVING WATER

When the woman at the well expressed surprise at the request of Jesus for a drink of water, he told her if she had asked him, he would have given her living water. She would never thirst again. The Samaritan took these words of Jesus literally, when he meant them to be taken spiritually. Our attention is called to the fact that often people took the words of Jesus literally when he meant them symbolically. A literal interpretation can miss the whole meaning of God's message to us.

They thought of running water, in contrast to cisterns or stagnant pools, as "living water." It was pure. It was alive. But Jesus was speaking of the dry and arid spirits of persons who needed the "living water" which God provides to quench the thirst of the soul.

The late Dr. Sockman said man could get enough to live on if he had enough to live for. Dr. Viktor Frankl, who was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration

camp, learned from his experiences with fellow prisoners that when they lost a future goal in their lives they were lost. Life without meaning or purpose was of no value to them. Relief workers among war refugee camps report that many simply give up and do not care to live. The dull monotony of purposeless living even in a highly developed nation, with abundance of goods and comforts testify to the need for spiritual refreshment and nourishment. Whatever the experience of our lives that lead to a sense of futility, Christ offers the incentive and hope that refreshes our spirits.

GO CALL YOUR HUSBAND

The sensitive point in this woman's experience was her unhappy married life. We do not know how Jesus learned about this, but it was evident that he put his finger upon the sore spot in her life. She had asked for this living water, Jesus offered. But to have the thirst of her life quenched she must first deal with this problem. To receive the blessing of Christ we first have to want it. Then we must deal with the problem or problems of life that disturb our peace of mind. We cannot solve our problems alone, nor will God solve them for us unless we do our part. Jesus offers us soul refreshment today if we will take it. Life will be renewed.

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

The woman raises the point of difference between Jews and Samaritans about the place of worship. Perhaps she had a vague notion that this was a pointless quarrel and wanted to see what this friendly Jewish teacher would say about it. She must have been somewhat surprised when he told her, in substance, that the place was unimportant. God, as spirit, is present wherever the person turns to him as spirit and seeks him sincerely.

As Dr. Irwin says in THE ADULT BIBLE STUDIES, "For many persons, worship has become a dead formality. It has no real connection with daily life. But worship 'in spirit and in truth' must pervade all of life . . . Worship, simply stated, is the way we acknowledge that God is the author of our lives and that his will is sovereign for us" (P. 38-Graded Press, United Methodist Publishing House).

But it is quite true that we find help in worship in the sanctuary that is dedicated to that end and calls our attention to God. Most of us need a place to call us to worship. We need the habit of regular worship to bring to us an awareness of God's presence. The point is: we do not leave God when we leave the church or sanctuary. "Spiritual worship," says Dr. Irwin, "requires the gifts of the spirit — loyalty, obedience, and love."

NEVER THIRST AGAIN

"Speaking of spiritual things to a scientific society such as ours is not easy . . . How can we present the message of Christ in a manner that will be clear to persons who are used to thinking in a scientific manner?" asks Dr. Laymon in THE INTERNATIONAL LESSON ANNUAL. This may partly explain why the church is accused of being irrelevant in current society. How would you change the vocabulary to describe the experience Jesus refers to as living water? Dr. Laymon describes the blessing Jesus gives as a new source of inner refreshment, and a new outlook on life. Is this an adequate and satisfying explanation for today?

THE NEXT LESSON: "Bread for the Hungry" is the topic for the next session. The scripture is John 6. The main question is how does Christ meet a person's deepest hunger? What substitutes do contemporary persons offer or use to satisfy spiritual hunger?

LESSON FOR JANUARY 6: "Bread for the Hungry"

ORIENTATION: The theme for this unit in the study of the Gospel of John is "THE SON OF GOD ACTIVE AMONG US." This is the second lesson. The topic is: "Bread for the Hungry." There are six lessons in this unit of study. The first dealt with "Water for the Thirsty." The study of the Gospel of John is divided into three units. The first one was "The Son of God came to Us." The final unit will be a series of three lessons on "The Son of God Victorious for Us." John is presenting the personal experience of Christ, after three quarters of a century have passed. The historical order of events in his life are less important than in the purposes of the other gospels. So we are dealing with the great themes developed and repeated in John that describe his experience of God in Christ. Today we concentrate on another of the basic needs of man and Christ's ministry to this need.

THE SCRIPTURE BACKGROUND: JOHN 6

MEMORY SELECTION: The bread of God is that which comes down from heaven, and gives life to the world. — John 6:33

PURPOSE: Jesus is concerned with a person's basic human needs. Our purpose will be to discover what these needs are; how Jesus meets these needs in a unique way; to be warned of the substitutes offered; and to create a desire to receive what the Spirit of Christ offers.

* * *

THE SCRIPTURE SETTING

Chapter Six in the Gospel of John falls into a fourth section of the outline of the book under the topic: Signs and controversies. Two signs are described that attest to the power of Christ and a controversy that alienated many of his followers. The first part tells about the feeding of the five thousand, the second about Jesus calming the storm at sea, and the discussion in the synagogue at Capernaum.

John gives a deeper meaning to the feeding of the multitude than the earlier accounts. The great demonstration of the power of Christ to provide food for a hungry crowd with a small lunch points to the idea of bread from heaven that satisfies man's spiritual hunger. "I am the bread of Life," says Christ. So we have found. He is as necessary to us as our food . . . in Christ there is that which feeds, which sustains, which restores spent vigor and exhausted energies, a strength we can appropriate and make our strength" (Interpreter's Bible, V. 8, p. 567).

The marvelous works of Jesus attracted such crowds and demands upon his strength that he had to escape to a place of quiet. As the disciples returned in a boat across the sea of Galilee a sudden storm arose and they were filled with fear. Jesus, from the shore, sees their plight and walks to them, quieting the storm and their fears. So does he speak peace and courage to us in times of stress if we have learned to turn to him in faith.

The third section of the chapter finds Jesus speaking in the synagogue in Capernaum about the bread of life. Christ is identified with the bread that comes down from God, as manna in the wilderness fed the early Israelites fleeing from Egyptian bondage. Many are offended at this. We know this man, his parents, the town from which he came. How can he claim to be from God, or give us this bread? So they begin to leave. Were some disappointed that they could not have an easy, free time, while this miracle worker got food for them every time they were hungry? Did some have pressing business or personal duties that called them and they could not afford to spend more time with this teacher? Were others offended because he challenged their ideas

and they were unwilling to change? Whatever the reason the crowd thinned out until there were only the twelve left. Jesus could not help but wonder if they would also leave. But no, they were faithful. As Peter said, they had come to believe that he had the words of eternal life.

FEEDING A MULTITUDE — USING WHAT YOU HAVE

Dr. Gossip in the Interpreter's Bible commenting on this event pictures the audacity of Jesus as he faced the five thousand hungry people and commanded them to be seated and took the boy's little lunch and blessed it and had his disciples distribute it to the people. What if he had failed to satisfy them? But with the faith he had in God he could use what was available and it would be adequate. I do not know what happened or how it was done. I would not attempt such a thing, or expect God to give me success if I did. Yet in the face of great need God does help us to accomplish what seems to be impossible tasks. By using what we have, including the best knowledge and judgment we have, God accomplishes his purposes through us. It has been my experience to see things accomplished for God and the church that to me seemed utterly impossible. But there was no way I could claim credit for it, or anyone else connected with the project, for we hardly knew how it happened.

TWO KINDS OF BREAD

If we were speaking to people in a poverty stricken land and had no bread to offer would we place our emphasis on this story in the Gospel? We soon learn that persons who are starving need to be fed before we preach to them. Jesus saw the hungry multitude and was concerned that their physical hunger be satisfied. But he was also concerned that they know about the other bread. The bread that comes down from heaven. Many years ago in a town ravaged by a tornado, professional social service workers came to provide food, clothing, and shelter for the homeless people. At first there was great appreciation for his help. Then the callous way in which the people were treated brought dismay and disillusionment even to those who were aided. They wanted food and shelter, but they wanted also genuine concern and personal attention. Both kinds of bread are needed. Followers of Christ try to dispense both kinds.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life." The soul must be nourished even as the body is fed. The experience of the Israelites in the wilderness receiving manna from heaven has been referred to above. This great gift from God in the time of need lived in the history of the nation. But even those who ate of the manna died. In contrast, says Jesus, the bread that comes down from heaven will give you eternal life.

SUBSTITUTES FOR REAL BREAD

There is much discussion today about the real food value in our diet. Some claim the food we eat is actually dangerous to our health. Others claim it is only filling and fattening and does not contain the essential minerals and vitamins. So we are warned to beware of food that does not provide the proper nourishment, or may even contribute to disease. How much more important to be alert to substitutes that fail to satisfy our desires and aspirations for a full life!

A few years ago young people seemed to have as the main goal in life to find happiness. Not so long ago the majority of people surveyed said they wanted most "to get away from it all," escape from life. Now a generation is experimenting with dope and alcohol to "turn on" as the expression has it. The desire for a fuller and richer experience of living is recognized. A generation wants to escape from boredom and meaninglessness. Mere existence is not

enough. The inner self is hungry for fulfillment. The tragedy is the means used to feed this desire. The ultimate consequence of these means are worse than the original state of unhappiness. Pornography and obscenity are cheap substitutes for real excitement, and leave the soul flat and impoverished. The mad pursuit of pleasure, the greedy grasping for place, position and power never brings the desired satisfaction and leaves the soul withered and undernourished, or completely destroyed. Nothing new here, I realize. We've heard this over and over, but it is so vital to our day it needs constant repetition.

Human hungers are summarized in our desire for peace among nations, meaning in life, success, beauty, understanding, and a sense of destiny. Jesus feeds these hungers in a spiritual way that not only satisfies, but ennobles them.

Bishop Robert E. Goodrich has expressed our situation in a striking way. "When we want God more than we want gold; when we want to be good as much as we want a cigarette; when we desire to be righteous with the same intensity that some men desire a drink of whiskey; when we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be filled." (Quoted in Tarbell's Teacher's Guide, 1973-74, Revell, p. 154.)

LIFE RENEWED IN HOLY COMMUNION

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh . . . Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:51-54). Apparently the early church laid great stress on the Lord's Supper as a bond of fellowship and a continuing relationship with Christ. However, as we see here, there was opposition in the synagogue at Capernaum when Jesus spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. When they made a literal interpretation of Jesus' words they were offended. They did indeed miss the spiritual meaning of sharing in the life and sacrifice of Christ.

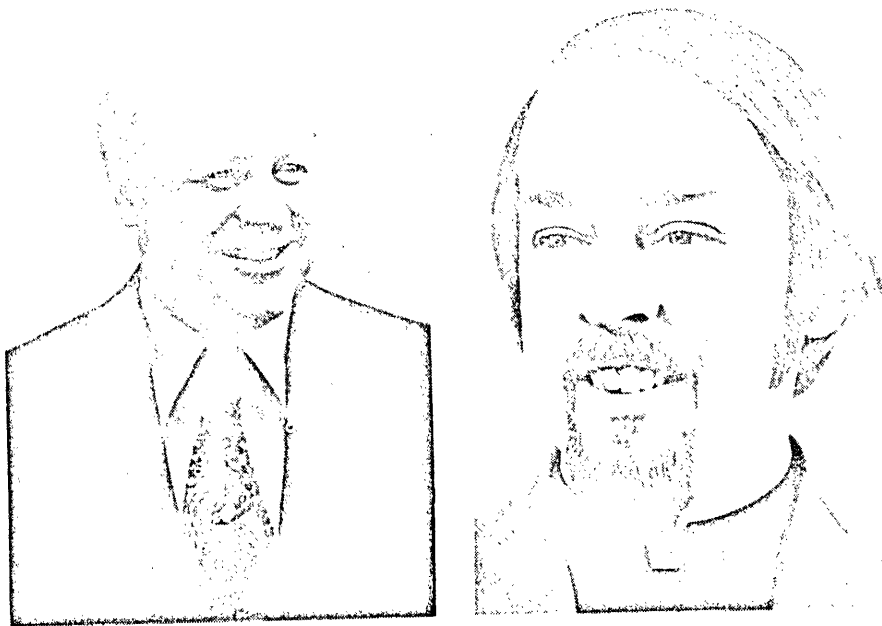
Many today do not find in the service a meaningful experience in which the elements become symbols of spiritual food that sustains our better selves and gives us courage to face the issues of life. For many it is the means of recognizing their dependence on God and humbly receiving the spirit of Christ in their lives. "John reminds us that at the Lord's Table we remember Christ in a unique and intimate way." (Dr. John C. Irwin in THE ADULT BIBLE STUDIES, p. 45).

FAITHFUL TO THE END

We are grateful to those who remained loyal to Christ in the day when the crowd was leaving him. And Peter has given us a rich insight when he realized that Jesus has the words of eternal life. Today the church faces heavy criticism. Many are turning away and it is not always easy to stand against our own friends as they ridicule or abuse the church. But when passions have cooled and tensions subside we find those who have remained true. Their loyalty helps to keep the words of eternal life heard in our day. Will you join with those who offer Christ as the Bread of Life and witness to his words of eternal life?

"Jesus himself . . . is the life-sustaining bread given to the world. The crowds want him to give them **something**, some blessing, some benefit. He gives them **someone**: himself. This is his gift and we are still trying to decide whether to be pleased or disappointed" (Saunders, E. W., JOHN CELEBRATES THE GOSPEL: Abingdon Press, p. 83).

NEXT WEEK: Another of the basic human needs discussed is light and understanding. The subject is "Light for the Blind"



The Board of Discipleship has named two persons to executive staff positions. To be business manager and head of the Office of Central Support Services is John Hereford (left), who also serves as treasurer for the Board. A consecrated lay worker in the Louisiana Conference, Hereford has been business manager-treasurer of the Board of Laity. The Rev. Ronn Kerr (right) has been appointed communications officer and head of the Office of Information and Interpretation. A member of the Iowa Conference, Kerr has been director of Communications for the Board of Evangelism.

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'Crash program' to push Equal Rights Amendment

WASHINGTON, D.C. (UMC) — A renewed attempt to gain ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by eight more states was launched in December by two national agencies of the United Methodist Church.

Ms. Nancy McConnell, a Washington, D.C., editorial worker, was named coordinator of the six-months "crash program" undertaken by the Board of Global Ministries' Women's Division and by the Board of Church and Society.

Ms. McConnell has been assistant editor of *engage/social action* magazine here for the past two years and on the Church and Society publications staff since 1969. She is a graduate of Wheaton College in Massachusetts.

The effort will concentrate in the 20 states which have not yet ratified the amendment passed by Congress in March, 1972, to assure legally equal rights for women with men. Most of these states' legislatures, the ratifying bodies, will meet early in 1974.

The amendment was endorsed by the 1972 General Conference of the church, as well as by numerous women's organizations.

The ERA Support Project will operate chiefly as a clearing-house for resources on the subject and provide education on ERA in the states involved and organization of supportive units. Ms. McConnell will work primarily through the United Methodist Women whose annual (regional) conferences have been asked to select contact persons, as well as in coalitions with other groups.

Administrative liaison with the sponsoring boards is directed by Ms. Ellen Kirby, executive secretary for administration in the Women's Division, and Ms. Jessma Blockwick, director of the Population Department of the Board of Church and Society. The ERA of-

fice will be at 100 Maryland Avenue, N.E., Washington.

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Bishop calls on new vice president

WASHINGTON, D.C. (UMC) — In keeping with a two-century tradition, a United Methodist bishop has paid an early call on the nation's new vice president, and has prayed with him.

Bishop James K. Mathews of Washington visited Vice President Gerald R. Ford on Dec. 10, even before Ford had had a chance to move from his long-time House of Representatives office to new quarters in the Executive Office Building or the Senate. Swearing in of the new vice president was Dec. 6.

The bishop said he expressed the best wishes of church people, and particularly of United Methodists, for the new leader, and of the desire to be supportive in prayer. He spoke also, said Mathews, of his belief that there is, in spite of the nation's current agonies, a resurgence in the human spirit, a reaching out for life. He pointed also to the church's role of being prophetic as well as supportive of civic leadership.

Accompanied by Dr. Edward G. Latch, retired United Methodist minister who is chaplain of the House of Representatives, Bishop Mathews said he was warmly welcomed by Vice President Ford, who is an Episcopalian.

The tradition of the visit antedates the federal government in Washington. In 1789, Bishops Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke of the Methodist Episcopal Church made a formal call on George Washington in New York, only a month after his inauguration as President.

From Our Readers

NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Editor:

Personally, and in behalf of our church here, I wish to express to you, to your predecessor Alfred Knox, and to his predecessor E. T. Wayland, and others, our appreciation for the marvelous service rendered in the Louisiana Conference by your office. You have been most generous in the space which you have allotted to our church. For that we are profoundly grateful.

Best wishes to you and the ARKANSAS METHODIST in the days that lie ahead.

Best wishes for the Christmas Season.

W. D. Boddie
First United Methodist Church
Monroe, La.

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TURN IT OVER TO THE LAYMEN FOR AWHILE

To the Arkansas Methodist:

(In reference to the issue of Dec. 6, page one: "(the speaker) noted that 'not a single layman spoke against the program . . . not one lay person opposed it.'"—See editor's note below).

Every time I see a statement by one of our church leaders in our church press regarding what the laymen of the church vote for or against I lose what little religion I might have.

Anyone who keeps up with church business would know that if ALL of the laymen voted for or against a motion they still couldn't win if all the other voters of the Conference were cast against the laymen's vote.

It is a known fact that all ministers are expected to support the wishes of the church leaders so when there is never a chance to win against the leadership, why expose yourself to a voting loss when you can't win except when the church leaders will allow it?

I attended the set-up meeting on the pension plan and I also was present at Forrest City when a "hot shot" promotion man told what we laymen should give and why we should give it. His remarks as far as I'm concerned were about as simple as I have ever heard. About all we ever hear from our church leaders is a plea for more money and, since the money keeps coming in — even if it's from people who are trying to find a relief from taxes and who seldom see inside the church — our leaders insist that the church is growing even though our membership is getting lower every year.

If the money was left out of the picture it seems to me that it's a simple deduction that our church is slowly losing its lure and I can blame most of it on our church program . . .

I never miss Sunday School and church, if I can help it, and have traveled extensively over the United States for the past several years. I've found empty pews in the churches more and more as the time has gone by. With the membership and attendance dwindling yearly it might be a good time to put the church in the

DOES ANYONE KNOW?

Dear Editor:

Does anyone know? Is there any record of the names of the Methodist churches on the Searcy circuit when the White River Conference was first organized in 1870?

The exact year of the establishment of Harmony Methodist Church is being sought. It is said to have been built in 1869. The deeds were not recorded until 1870. The first person buried in the church cemetery was Mrs. William Clements in 1873.

W. T. Dowdy and Harry Barger donated five acres of land to the White River Conference for this church and cemetery.

A complete history is wanted for the second annual homecoming to be held the fourth Sunday in April, 1974. Any information will be appreciated.

Mrs. C. E. Dewberry
5218 R. Street
Little Rock, Ark. 72207

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SAVE US!

To the Arkansas Methodist:

My copy of the Dec. 6 issue of the paper has just arrived and the story in the lower right-hand corner of the first page (THE LOUISIANA METHODIST to be under new management) prompts this letter.

PLEASE DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO US, the readers of the ARKANSAS METHODIST!

Many of us here in the Southern California/Arizona Conference, who receive the UNITED METHODIST REPORTER by virtue of some particular office we hold, find (to put it mildly) that it leaves much to be desired. That's why a number of us have subscriptions to the ARKANSAS METHODIST, read them and pass them on to others.

For example: the plane-load of women who left Los Angeles for the Assembly in Cincinnati had been unable to get any information in advance about the program there through any of our regular sources. But a friend of mine had taken her copy of the ARKANSAS METHODIST which gave an account of what they could expect. Naturally, the paper was eagerly read as it was passed from seat to seat during the flight. You made a hit!

In the hope publication continues for many years, I am enclosing my check to extend my present subscription another two years.

Please don't use my name or address . . .

A California/Arizona
Conference reader

†

hands of the laymen and try their ideas for awhile.

G. B. Britton
Crawfordsville, Ark.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The article the writer refers to related to the pension program of the Little Rock Conference, not to that of the North Arkansas Conference, as the correspondent seems to have assumed.

DECEMBER 20, 1973

Poetry Panorama

by barbara mulkey

It has been observed that the way to Christmas is through a little gate, child-high, and child-wide, and the password is "Peace on earth, good will to men."

Never Old News

The Christmas news is still the same -
Our Christ was born in Bethlehem,
And angels sang a glad refrain
To bid Him welcome to His reign!

The shepherds came, and wise men, too,
Kneeling before the Christ-child, who,
From the moment of his lowly birth,
Brought hope to men throughout the earth!

The greatest of stories ever told
Will never, through the years, grow old.
How grand if men could find a way
To have a Christmas every day!

-by Deener W. Wardlow

My Gift

The gifts of the Magi rare and sweet
Were laid at baby Jesus' feet.
To place them there they traveled far,
Led by a lone and brilliant star.

But I think it matters not at all
To the One who was born in a cattle stall,
That I can't go to the distant land
With precious offerings in hand.

He values more the treasures of
A willing spirit and selfless love,
With service humbly laid at the feet
Of the least of His children I should meet.

-by Barbara L. Mulkey

A Gift That Pays You Life Income

Many Hendrix alumni and friends, recognizing the financial pressures on higher education, would like very much to help their college. But these same people feel financial pressures of their own and regretfully conclude that there is nothing they can do.

The facts of the matter are frequently quite different. The present tax law favors the use of the Charitable Remainder Trust, which enables a donor to make a gift to Hendrix during his lifetime while continuing to receive the income from the gift as long as he and a designated beneficiary live.

Frequently the donor gets increased income, and usually there are substantial tax savings.

We will be glad to supply detailed information about income-producing trusts or discuss with your financial advisors the many ways these plans can help you and Hendrix.

Write in confidence to:

James E. Major, Vice President
and Director of Development
Hendrix College
Conway, Arkansas 72032

Or send in the following coupon:

Mr. James E. Major, Vice President
and Director of Development
Hendrix College
Conway, Arkansas 72032

Dear Sir:

Please send me information about the Charitable Remainder Trust. I understand that there is no obligation incurred and that my request is strictly confidential.

Name _____

Address _____

METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME

The following people gave memorial gifts to the Methodist Children's Home in November as tribute of their love, sympathy, and respect of a loved one or friend. A memorial card has been sent to the family in notifying them of this remembrance.

CHARLES ALEXANDER
by Mr. & Mrs. J. F. Stafford
ROY LYNN AVERY
by Mrs. Myrtle Atkins & Edward
by Miss Martha Pugh
by Mr. & Mrs. R. B. Newcome
MRS. DOYLE ADKINS
by Mrs. E. M. Murphy
MISS GLADYS BOZARTH
by Miss Marsha Kaylor
MRS. MAY BARTON
by Jema, Marga, Rusty Taylor
MRS. FRANK H. BEALE
by Lois Kinser & Bill Lowry
W. HAROLD BYNUM
by Miss Catherine Alexander
by Mr. & Mrs. Ralph L. McQueen
MRS. W. J. BARTON
by Mrs. Dru Willie Lowe
HAROLD BYNUM
by Mrs. Dale C. Loyd
ROBERT L. BANKSON
by Mr. & Mrs. J. A. Riggs, Jr.
HAROLD BYNUM
by Fannie Meyer
by Mr. & Mrs. Bernard Levi
MRS. GLADYS M. BAKER
by John & Lois Tomlinson
by Mrs. Thelma Teeter
ARTHUR BURROUGHS
by Mr. & Mrs. Othello Gordon
ROBERT BANKSON
by Mr. & Mrs. W. E. Daniels
by Mrs. James C. Becknell
HAROLD BYNUM
by Mr. & Mrs. Harold Dyer
MRS. BENSON
by Mr. & Mrs. Harold Dyer
HAROLD BYNUM
by Dr. & Mrs. Lee Parker
LLOYD BARNETT
by Mr. & Mrs. Tom Dennis
EMIL J. BRENNER
by Mrs. Vera D. Brenner
HAROLD F. BASTIAN
by Mrs. Harold F. Bastian
ARTHUR F. BUCKLEY
by Rev. & Mrs. S. T. Baugh
MRS. LIZZIE WALTHALL BETTES
by Mrs. John C. Shewmake
by Mrs. Roy Riggins
REV. BILLY BARGAR
by Mr. & Mrs. J. R. Reynolds
CLARENCE BURTON
by Miss Lucy Doris Patterson
by Mrs. Fred Loe
CLEMONS BURNS
by Mrs. E. P. Blankenship
MRS. OLIVE BYRN
by Viola Willoughby Class,
McGehee
CHARLES CHALFANT
by Mr. & Mrs. Edwin B. Conner
by Mr. & Mrs. Edwin B. Conner, Jr.
OLLIE MEDFORD CALLAWAY
by Mrs. Louis Marshheimer
MRS. REBECCA BARRETT COFFIN
by Mr. & Mrs. George Kell
MRS. CHARLES CHANEY
by Mr. & Mrs. Robert H. Jacob
MRS. BLANCHE CASSIDY
by Frank & Dorothy Mann
MRS. JANIE CHANDLER
by Mr. & Mrs. R. D. Patton
by Mr. & Mrs. Bryant Wall
MRS. C. P. CHANEY
by Mr. & Mrs. Felix S. Bunch
by Mr. & Mrs. Tom Hasty
MRS. CRAMNS
by Mrs. Homer Williamson
MRS. JANIE CHANDLER
by Friendship Couples Class,
Jonesboro
MRS. KATE CARRUTHERS
by Mr. & Mrs. Martin Borchert
INEZ COUCH
by Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Weber
GAY CHRISTIE
by Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Weber
CHARLES CHERRY
by Mr. & Mrs. Carl Baumgardner
JAMES E. CORDELL
by Mary Jane Scott
J. ED. CORDELL
by Mr. & Mrs. J. P. Robbins

by Mrs. Ben C. Jarvis
CHARLES DILLARD
by Miss Lucy Doris Patterson
by Mrs. Fred Loe
MRS. CATHERINE DUDLEY
by Mr. & Mrs. Bill Block, Jeff & Steve
by Mr. & Mrs. Gene Harris
by Mrs. Lee Purcell
MRS. R. L. DUDLEY
by Dr. & Mrs. E. W. Rainwater
by Mrs. Frances Burnett
by Mrs. Dorothy Mack
by Miss Evelyn Long
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by Mr. & Mrs. Garvis Pollard
by Mrs. E. H. Jeter
MRS. JOSEPHINE DICKINSON
by Susannah Wesley Bible Class
MRS. FANNY DAVIS
by Mrs. Gaylon Miller
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by Simon and Irene Capps
ROY DAVIS
by Mr. & Mrs. Jane H. Rumph
MRS. MABLE DICKINSON
by Mrs. C. A. Walker
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by Mr. & Mrs. Carl Baumgardner
MRS. IVY EZELL
by Sloan-Gatling Circle, Bearden
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by Mr. & Mrs. Cecil Steinmetz
MILES FLECKINGER
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MRS. CLARA McRAE GANTT
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by Mr. & Mrs. Joe Matthews
by Mr. & Mrs. Duncan L. McRae
GAILE GREGGS
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by Mr. & Mrs. Wm. D. Leavitt
by Mr. & Mrs. Joe R. Parker
by Mr. & Mrs. Tom Dennis
by Mr. & Mrs. Hardin Stark
by Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Burns
and Family
by Mr. T. A. Prewitt
by Mrs. W. B. Hays
by Mr. & Mrs. W. M. Harkey
by Dr. & Mrs. Clifton Rule
by Rev. and Mrs. John O. Alston
MOTHER of Mr. O. T. Hunt
by Mr. & Mrs. Roy C. McGinnis
MRS. VICTOR HAYNES
by Mr. & Mrs. Harold Dyer
ROBERT LEE HALL
by Grace Knight & Eva Cummings

(To be continued)

For
COLDs
take 666

Did the angels really sing?

A Christmas Story

by

Mildred Hughes Duke

This is a true story. It happened in a small Mississippi town during an Advent season of many years past.

I was beginning preparation for Christmas. It was to be the happiest of all Christmases for my daughter was to have her first child and was coming to spend the holidays with us.

The women of the church were having their Christmas party at my house. It had become traditional. I was planning the Christmas story I was to tell — getting out all the decorations to make things ready for the wonderful celebration — when interrupted by a knock at the door.

In front of me stood a small woman of at least seventy years. She was very plainly dressed, gray hair pulled back in an old-fashioned way. I saw, waiting out front in an old model car, her husband.

Did I have any room for them, she asked. They had been to the hotel and there was no space there. Once before I had helped the hotel by taking a woman and child into my home. Could I now help this couple?

My first thought was I simply cannot take time now; they will be in my way, what with all I have to do before Christmas. And the car — my garage was filled with horses!

I also had a fifteen-year-old son, and our home was the gathering place for five boys. There were horses — and dogs — coming and going day and night. Those were the good days when boys went camping on horses; no cars to worry about.

I had made each boy a hitching post with horseshoes. They were welcome in the driveway, in the garage and the barn lot; they were even welcome five in a bed, crosswise, or on the floor. They were happy there, and I loved them all.

So, I had to say to the woman at the door, "No, I'm sorry. I do not have room for you." She turned sadly and I watched as she went to her husband. They talked but did not leave. As I watched, something inside spoke to me. What am I doing? They are in need! Of course I can make room for them!

So I ran out to the car and said eagerly "Do come in. You may have my guest room. It will take no time at all to make ready. I saw that they had very little to move in.

THE QUIET ONES

They were so happy and began to assure me that they would be no bother at all. They would stay in their room at night and be up early at work. They were photographers from the midwest

and had set up a place in town to take pictures; they had come south for the winter. So, I put them in my best room and didn't give them much more thought for I was busy "fixin' for Christmas."

They left early each morning. I would rarely see them. Sometimes she would come home after lunch and rest, and she seemed amused at what was going on, the decorating being done and all. She watched the tree go up; observed the boys trimming it with their laughter. She had seen all the horses and I'm sure she wondered about those five dogs!

THE GUMDROP TREE AND A SPECIAL DAY

One of the boys knew I liked making a gumdrop tree so he brought a branch from a thorn bush. I showed it to her, how I would stick the gumdrops on the thorns, and I mentioned that I had not been able to find enough of the candies at our store.

The next afternoon when she came in for her rest she carried a bag of bright colored gumdrops. She had driven the old car to a small town six miles away and found them. She was so like a child, seeing things for the first time.

Finally the day came for the decorating event that was most special to the boys and me. I cleared my desk and put the manger scene in place. There was Mary, so young and so sweet, and Joseph standing protectively behind her. The donkey they had ridden to Bethlehem was tied outside, and the baby Jesus lay in the manger. The shepherds and their sheep approached; one lad with a lamb on his shoulder. The wise men were coming from afar, bearing gifts. The camels followed. The star shown. You could almost hear the angels sing.

What a joy it was to recreate that holy scene and feel the angel's song in my heart! It all became real. I was once again kneeling with them, adoring the Child.

DID THE ANGELS REALLY SING?

I was in the kitchen that special afternoon and did not hear her as she came in. I walked in and saw her standing, looking down at that little scene. Tears were falling softly down her face. She looked at me with a wonder and amazement and said "Did the angels really sing? Did it all happen as I see it here? Was He really born a baby, as they say?"

I had been to Sunday School all my life and was reared in a Christian home. I had taught in the Church School for years, but no one had ever asked me "Is it true?"

She continued, "Always I have heard the story, but never knew it to be real. Did the angels really

sing?" I took her by the hand, remembering what E. Stanley Jones had asked him the same question. "If they didn't they should have," was his answer. Those were my sentiments exactly.

I led her weeping into her room. She said they were not members of any church. Their only son was an alcoholic. They were traveling about, working to be able to live. Would I tell her what to do, she asked.

Seventy years without Christ and the church. No Christmases. A lonely, unfulfilled life. What was I to say?

A SERMON REPREACHED

Just the last Sunday our minister had preached on "Every day is a new beginning with God." I began to preach that sermon, word for word. Today was her day; her new beginning with Christ. She believed it and began to say "Can one begin a new life after seventy? Can I walk the road to Bethlehem and can I find the baby Jesus? Will I really hear the angels sing?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes" were my answers; "the angels sing for those who love and believe!" And she did believe that it could be real for her. And she kept saying over and over "And you almost didn't let me in . . ."

OTHERS WANT TO HEAR

There are always those like this dear friend who want and need to hear the simple story; to stand before the truth and know that Christ is born. They want to know that the shepherds and the wise men came. That the star shown. And that the angels sang.

So I told the boys and the women of the church — and my minister — that I had preached his sermon. I told everyone. And she attended the parties I had planned, the one for the young and the one for the old. The Christmas story was read; she felt the warmth and love of Christian fellowship. The smile was radiant upon her face.

In a few days they moved on, having been with me for almost a month. I packed some cake and Christmas goodies for them. They left early, before daylight. No goodbyes. She wanted it that way. She had found something and everything was changed. She was going home.

God has blessed us both. The miracle of Christmas had happened again. He had filled her heart with the voices of angels and He had let me share in telling the good tidings of great joy.

A DOORWAY STILL OPEN

A year went by; a year during which I had thought of her many times. Then at Christmas time a card and a letter came. The letter was written with a pencil on tabloid paper. The card had a picture

of a doorway that looked like mine. "This doorway reminds me of your home and the experience I had there. Since then I am a member of the Church and of the Women's Society. My life has changed for good. My burdens are lighter, all because you let me in your door at Christmas time."

That was many years ago. I am in the shopper's rush now, working in a large department store in downtown Memphis. I no longer live in a quiet little Mississippi town. There are no boys, no dogs, no horses. The house is an apartment. But still I remember to keep the door to the inn open.

On one day in each Advent season I clear my desk. I reverently recreate the lowly, lovely scene. The simple manger set I had then is worn and gone with time. I have since made one in ceramics, of deep blue and gold. I stand before it until it becomes real. I lose all sense of time and place. I think of that night so long ago, of how Christ came and who he was and who he is, the true light that shined out of darkness.

Oh Light of the world,
The world is dark about Thee.

Far out on Judean hills the night is deep.

Not yet the day has come
When men shall doubt Thee.

Not yet the hour is come
When Thou must wake and weep.

Sleep little one,
Or Lord of glory sleep.
Rest little one,
So mighty and so weak.

Oh newborn Life,
Of Life Eternal, sleep.
Far out on Judean hills
The night is deep.

"He hath shined in our hearts to give light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Did the angels really sing? I am sure of it.

This is my favorite Christmas story, and perhaps it is hers, too, wherever she is.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Mildred Hughes Duke is a long-time subscriber, now living in Memphis, Tenn. Her daughter, Rosemary Clements, is a regular contributor to our Poetry Panorama column.