

Churchmen Speak On Christmas Commercialization and Customs

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press Correspondent
Washington — This is the time of year when church people get to brooding about what's happened to Christmas.

Some raise the perennial cry that commercialization has ruined the great Christmas holiday. Others say that pagan customs have obscured its religious significance. Nearly all agree that something should be done to "put Christ back into Christmas."

But how?

The United Press put that question to three clergymen—an Episcopalian, a Catholic, and a Presbyterian. Here are their answers.

The Rev. Robert F. McGregor, a canon of Washington Cathedral

and dean-elect of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral at Newark, N. J., said it is "not so much what we do at Christmas, as how and why we do it," that matters.

"Christmas Meaning" Needed

Instead of wringing hands over Santa Claus, office parties, greeting cards, and other secular aspects of the modern Christmas celebration, McGregor said, churchmen should seek to "invest these popular customs with Christian meaning."

For example, sending Christmas cards can be treated as an annual nuisance—"something we have to do to keep from offending people"—or it can be a real expression of friendship.

"An office party can be a slugfest of gossip and drinking; or it can be a time to establish a

needed sense of community among people who work together all year long."

McGregor said it is a disservice for churches to suggest that God is interested only in "the specifically religious aspects of Christmas."

"Christ is present wherever there are human beings wrestling with human problems," he said.

"The wise men found him wrapped in swaddling clothes in a smelly stable; and men still find him wrapped in the ordinary realities of human existence, which include the so-called secular aspects of Christmas."

"He does not ask his followers to withdraw from the customs in self-righteous scorn, but to use them in a Christian way, and for Christian purposes."

The Rev. William J. Awalt of St. Matthews Catholic Cathedral here said most of the customs that have grown up about Christmas—singing carols, giving presents, decorating homes—are meaningful only as "expressions of a deep sense of joy."

"Symbols" Reflect Happiness

Many people, he said, have a let-down feeling at Christmas because they expect these "symbols" to produce happiness, rather than merely reflect it.

"There is only one source of genuine joy at Christmas," he said. "It is belief in the good tidings which the Herald Angels proclaimed: That Christ has come into the world to redeem men from the bonds of sin and death."

"In our attitude toward Christmas, each of us answers the ancient question: 'What think ye of Christ?' If we think of him as a 'great human teacher' who lived nearly 2,000 years ago, it is simply not possible to work up much enthusiasm for celebrating his birthday."

"If we know him in our own lives as the redeemer, as the power of God unto salvation, it is quite natural to feel joyous and reverent and thankful on his day that commemorates his coming."

Point Missed In Two Ways

The Rev. Dr. George M. Doherty, pastor of Washington's New York Avenue Presbyterian church said there are two ways of "missing the point of Christmas."

The most obvious, he said, is to "let yourself become totally preoccupied with Santa Claus, jingle bells, and the tinsel on the tree."

The more subtle temptation which confronts professing Christians, he said, is to treat Christmas as a time of "slushy sentimentalism" in which the challenging figure of Christ can be forgotten while we concentrate on the babe lying in the manger.

"Whatever else Christmas is, for the Christian it should be a time of reassessment of his own personal need of Christ as savior," he said.



Stained glass window, First Presbyterian church, Medford

"And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger'."

Luke 2:10-12

Annual Christmas Vesper Service Scheduled by Medford Presbyterian, Other Churches Tell Sermon Topics

The annual Candlelight Christmas Vesper service of the First Presbyterian church will be held Sunday at 5 p.m. All of the choirs will file into the sanctuary holding candles and singing "O Come All Ye Faithful."

The junior high choir will sing the anthems "The Christmas Song" and "Rise Up Shepherd, an' Follow." The children's choir, under the direction of Mrs. Darrel Huson, will also sing two carols. An anthem titled "There Were Shepherds" will be

sung by the women's triple trio under the direction of Mrs. Harvey Field. The high school Westminster choir will sing two anthems and the chancel choir will bring several selections from Handel's "Messiah." The Westminster and chancel choirs will combine for the "Alleluia" chorus.

Young people of the church will lead the Vesper service. Dan Christensen of Oregon State college will give the call to worship and Miss Deanna Bruning of Willamette university will lead the evening prayer. Dick Ragsdale, moderator of the Freshman fellowship, will read the scripture and Miss Carol Keown and Robert Lichti of the Westminster fellowship will give brief Christmas meditations.

The sacrament of baptism for infants will be held during the service and conducted by the pastor, Dr. D. Kirkland West. After the service, familiar Christmas carols will be played over the church's carillon bells by the organist, Mrs. Richard W. Hart.

The college age Geneva fellowship, Westminster fellowship and the junior high young people will all go caroling to the sick and shut-in members of the community after the Vesper service.

Sunday morning at the two worship services, Dr. West will preach on the subject "God's Gift and Ours." The chancel and Westminster choirs will sing and Louis Clayson, tenor, will sing the solo "Cantique de Noel." A nursery is provided for infant children at both services.

Zion Lutheran In Yule Celebration

Zion Lutheran church, corner of Fourth and Oakdale ave., will complete its preparation for the celebration of Christmas at the worship service Sunday morning which is the Fourth Sunday in Advent. Pastor G. H. Hillerman's final sermon for the Advent season will be titled, "Where Will You Find Him?"

Sunday at five p.m. the first of special Christmas services will be held when the Sunday school presents its program. Following the brief order of opening, the nursery-begginers depart will sing their Christmas songs, and will be followed by the primary department with the presentation of the Nativity scene.

The whole congregation will then join together under the leadership of the junior department in the telling of the Christmas story through recitations, film-strip pictures, and songs.

Tuesday at 11 p.m. the congregation's traditional Christmas Eve service will be held. This service will give the congregation the chance to sing most of the familiar Christmas carols, and the choir will sing five Christmas anthems closing with the "Hallelujah Chorus," by Handel. All persons are welcome to services of the church.

Congregational Sets Christmas Programs

The choir will sing at both the 9:45 and 11 a.m. services at the Congregational church Sunday. Their anthem will be "Sing Gloria." There will also be a duet by Miss Carolyn Miller and her father, Clarence Miller, "The Birthday of the King." The sermon by the Rev. Thomas McCamant will be on "The Manger." There will also be baptism of children.

The church has received a gift which will be enjoyed for the first time at this service. Carpet has been laid on the platform and steps of the sanctuary. The givers desire to remain anonymous. The church Christmas tree was decorated by member of the high school Pilgrim Fellowship.

The Christmas pageant of the church school will be presented Sunday at 7:30 p.m. It is entitled, "God's Supreme Gift" and is directed by Mrs. Ivan Burton. Mrs. Richard Travis, the superintendent, and several of the teachers and parents are assisting. Carroll Graber and Mrs. O. C. Failing are directing the music.

First Christmas Services To Be Held By Ascension Lutherans

The Ascension Lutheran church, 2051 Barnett rd., will hold their Sunday school Christmas program and candle-lighting services Sunday at 7 p.m. at the new church.

The candlelighting service will feature more than 100 candles throughout the congregation during the singing of "Holy Night, Silent Night." This service will follow the children's program.

At the close of the program all Sunday school children will receive candy, nuts and an apple.

Monday members of the Lutheran league will sing for the sick and shut-ins. They will meet at

Christmas Services At First Church of God

A Christmas message, "From Heaven to Earth" will be presented in the call to worship hour at the First Church of God Sunday at 11 a.m.

The Youth Fellowship of the church will present a Christmas play, "Home for Christmas" at the 7:30 p.m. worship hour Sunday. Christmas treats will be passed out to everyone present both in the morning service and after the youth play in the evening. The public is invited to attend both services.

PHOENIX SERVICES

Phoenix — "That Ye Might Have Life" will be the sermon topic Sunday at 11 a.m. at First Baptist church, Phoenix, by the Rev. Perry M. Johnson, pastor. At 7:30 p.m. the Christmas program will be held. Midweek services at the church have been cancelled for this week.

First Christmas For New Church

The Mt. Pitt Avenue Church of the Nazarene will celebrate its first Christmas season as an organized group. In harmony with the season of the year they are presenting a program in which the primary, junior and senior departments of the Sunday school will participate.

Sunday morning at 9:45 the Sunday school under the leadership of Fred Hall, superintendent, will dramatize in poem, prose, and song the story of Christmas. Directing the primary and junior department activities will be Mrs. Robert Edwards, departmental supervisor. The senior department under the leadership of Roland W. Kruegel will act out a pantomime entitled "Carols are More than Music."

Also participating in the direction of the activities will be various teachers.

The First Church of the Nazarene loaned necessary costumes for the production.

Following the presentation of the Sunday school program the pastor of the church will present a message entitled "Let's Keep Christmas Christian." At the close of the service Christmas candy treats will be given to all.

PARTY MONDAY

A Christmas party will be held Monday at the Salvation Army building, Fourth and Bartlett sts., Medford, at 7 p.m. A Christmas play will be presented and gifts will be distributed to the children 15-years and under.

March to the Manger Set Sunday by Methodists

brings their gifts to the "watering trough," at the chancel steps, where a nativity scene will be placed.

A Vesper Christmas program, presented by the church school, at 5 p.m. Sunday, will include live Christmas cards, drama, and music.

The Junior Methodist Youth fellowship will sing Christmas carols at Camp White at 7 p.m., and at the home of shut-ins later in the evening, and will complete the evening at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. George A. Trobough, for worship and refreshments. Miss Marylou Gardner is the counselor.

The Senior Methodist Youth fellowship will sing carols Monday, Dec. 23, starting from the church at 6:30 p.m. Plans are for the group to sing at the Milledge Convalescent Home, and at the Park View Nursing Home, as members of the church who are shut-ins. The MYF will complete the evening at the home of the Rev. and Mrs. G. A. Trobough. Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Igo are the counselors.

Baskets will be delivered to families in need on Monday, by the staff of the First Methodist church. The Shipmates class, the Builders class, and the Methodist Youth fellowship groups have all contributed food and money to help provide a happy Christmas for others. The church is cooperating with the Inter-Service agency in clearing this aid.

Nazarene Services Includes Speaker

Children of the Sunday school of the First Church of the Nazarene, 520 North Holly st., will present their annual Christmas program of recitations and songs, under the direction of Mrs. Joe Johnson, Sunday school teacher, will meet at 9:45 a.m., with the Christmas worship and program to begin at 10:30 a.m.

Kindergarten department will present recitations and songs and rhythm band will play "O Little Town of Bethlehem"; primary department of choral reading and Twelfth Century Carol; and the junior department will present a pantomime, "By That Same Star," with the junior choir, under the direction of W. Lee Mansfield, minister of music, will sing, "Bethlehem," and "Star of the East."

Message by the pastor, the Rev. R. W. Hurn, will be "The Up-Side-Down Christmas Tree." Treats will be given out at the close of the service.

The Rev. R. E. Griffith, superintendent of the church of the Nazarene in New Zealand, will show pictures of the church in that country and tell how Christmas is celebrated there at the First Church of the Nazarene, Sunday at 7 p.m. The father of Roland Griffith, 492 Park st., Mr. Griffith arrived by plane last week to spend Christmas in Oregon.

Assembly of God To Present Play Tonight

A three act Christmas play will be given at the First Assembly of God church, 1108 West Main st., tonight at 8 p.m.

The play, "Home for Christmas," will be put on by the young people of the church.

Between the acts two numbers have been planned by the junior high group and the senior high and college young folk.

Sunday the choir will present a Christmas cantata entitled, "Night of Nights." Solos will be sung by Chloe Tvedell, Helen Graves, and Jim Nilsen. A duet will be featured, sung by Rosalie Tvedell and Betty Cook. Mrs. Agnes Thorton is the accompanist and Mrs. Thelma Heide is the organist.

Former Teacher Wills \$10,000 To Local Churches

The First Methodist and First Presbyterian churches, Medford, will each receive a \$5,000 legacy, local church officials were notified this week. The money was willed to the churches by the late Miss Mabel C. Mickey, Portland, former Washington school teacher here.

Miss Mickey, according to friends in the valley, moved to Portland with parents between 1910 and 1915. She had taught elementary grades at Washington school for five or ten years.

According to the will the amount given the First Methodist church is to be used for its endowment fund in memory of Miss Mickey's parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Marion Mickey, and their family. The other \$5,000 will be used by the Presbyterians for its endowment fund in memory of Olaf M. Neidenoff, brother-in-law of Miss Mickey, and Mabel C. Mickey.

It is believed by friends here that the Mickey family moved to their home on South Ivy st., Medford, in 1890. They had four children, Roy, Guy, Mabel and another daughter, later Mrs. Olaf M. Neidenoff. The sister also taught at Washington school, it was reported. The family was believed to have been active in the Methodist church.

Reports show that Miss Mickey died in Portland last August. She was in her late seventies.

Letters received from Roscoe C. Nelson, Portland attorney, said that Miss Mickey's estate is now in the process of probate in the Multnomah county circuit court and distribution of funds is expected about June, 1958.

Catholics Tell Schedule For Christmas Week

The Rev. Timothy Sandes, OSB, of Mt. Angel Abbey, will be guest priest at Sacred Heart Catholic church during the Christmas week.

Christmas masses scheduled at the county Catholic churches include 6, 7, 8:30, 10, and 11:30 a.m. masses at Sacred Heart; 9 a.m. at St. Joseph's Catholic church, Jacksonville; and 11 a.m. at Our Lady of Fatima, Shady Cove.

Christmas eve midnight masses will be held at both the Sacred Heart church and St. Mary's school gymnasium in Medford, and at both the Shady Cove and Jacksonville churches.

Confessions will be heard at Sacred Heart church in Medford Sunday and Monday from 7 until 9 p.m., and Tuesday from 1 p.m. through the evening.

Pre-Nativity Observances At St. Mark's Church

Anticipating the Nativity season a special church service of praise will be held at St. Mark's Episcopal church at 11 a.m. Sunday. Many of the best known Christmas hymns and carols will be sung with congregational participation, and the choir will present Gruber's arrangement of the anthem "Silent Night."

The Nativity passages from St. Luke's Gospel will be read by Lay Reader Jerome McDougalls, and a brief meditation will be given by the Rev. George R. V. Bolster. Following the service a coffee hour will be held in the church Markade.

At the church school family service at 9:30 a.m. following the regular worship period, Miss Vera Cingade will present a flannelgraph demonstration entitled "Why the Bells Rang." Following her talk the school will adjourn to the classrooms where candles and gifts will be distributed and the roll call taken.

The junior church school invites all parents of six, seven and eight-year-old children to be guests of the school at the 9:30 a.m. service. Following the worship period a Christmas play will be presented in which all the service will be available in children will participate. Nursery service will be available in the annex, both for this service and also at 11 a.m.

The Young People's fellowship of St. Mark's will gather at the church at 7 p.m. for a hayride and carolling expedition to which all college young people on vacation are invited.

Young People Plan For Christmas At Butte Falls

Butte Falls—Young people of the Butte Falls Community Bible church are preparing a Christmas pageant, "The Promised Messiah" for Sunday at 7 p.m. The opening scene shows an early Israelite family reading from the sacred scroll about the coming Messiah. Subsequent scenes depict the fulfillment of the prophecies.

The choir, directed by Dean Bogan of the high school faculty and accompanied at the piano by Mrs. Roger Harris, will sing throughout the service. Mrs. Elmer Leatherman will sing the closing solo, "Star of the East." Charles Stratton will be the pageant reader and Eugene Irwin will manage the lighting effects.

Sunday school children of the church will present their Christmas program of songs and recitations at 9:50 a.m. After their brief program they will go to their regular classes. There will be treats for them that morning.

By special arrangement Mr. and Mrs. Elga Abbott will give recorded Christmas music from the vestibule of the church for the enjoyment of the whole neighborhood. Young people's group plan to sing carols during Christmas week.

The glass partition between the auditorium and the main Sunday school room is in place so that parents of small children may view the service and watch their children at the same time without disturbing anyone.

Baptists Schedule Varied Activities

A wide variety of activities have been scheduled during the coming week at the First Baptist church to celebrate the Christmas season.

Sunday evening, the adult choir will present "Gloria in Excelsis," a Christmas cantata arranged from the musical compositions of Felix Mendelssohn. The cantata will feature duets and solos along with the combined voices of the choir. The cantata will be directed by the Rev. Kenneth Raymond, music director at the church.

Sunday morning during the Sunday school hour, the beginner's department will have a Christmas presentation of the scene at the manger. Monday night at 7:30, the rest of the Sunday school departments will give a Christmas play that was featured in a recent issue of Moody Monthly magazine. The play is directed by Mrs. Donald Zimmers.

The Sunday morning worship service will also have special Christmas music by the adult choir, and Pastor James W. Neely will bring the Christmas sermon, "Let Us Go To Bethlehem."

The Christmas observance will end with prayer service on Christmas night that will begin at 7 p.m.

Unitarian Fellowship Schedule Holiday Party

The Rogue Valley Unitarian Fellowship will hold a holiday party Saturday, Dec. 28, at 8 p.m. at the Kreisman home, 111 Bush st., Ashland. The party will be held Wednesday, Jan. 8, at 7:30 p.m. in the Girls Community club, 229 North Bartlett st., Medford.

St. Peter Church Tells Programs

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran church, 1020 East Main st., has announced its Christmas schedule.

The children will have their final rehearsal for the Christmas Eve service, Saturday, at 2 p.m. The children's service is scheduled for Tuesday at 8 p.m. Their program is called "The Little Lord Jesus."

Sunday beginning at 2 p.m. members of the congregation will gather to decorate the church for the Christmas celebrations.

Christmas Day services will be held at 10 a.m. with sermon and Holy Communion. The choir will sing at this service, according to the pastor, the Rev. Kenneth Korby.

Phoenix Church Closes Contest, Awards To Be Presented in January

Phoenix — Church of the Nazarene, Phoenix, Sunday school has completed a contest held during October and November between the blue and red airplanes. Winner of the competition was the red airplane with 1,684 points or miles ahead of the blue.

The contest was held to encourage attendance at the Sunday school. Awards will be presented during January.

A good attendance was reported at the Sunday school Christmas pageant held at the church last Sunday. Women and children of the church helped with the program direction while others aided with the wrapping of candy and gifts distributed at the close of the program.

Berean Baptist Plans Christmas Pageant

A Christmas pageant, "The Promised Messiah" will be presented Sunday at 7:30 p.m. in the Berean Baptist church, White City.

The program, under the direction of Mrs. Ray Palm, will include the children and young people of the Sunday school. Features will be a vocal solo by Dallas Redding and several accordion selections by Randy Ullom. Mrs. Fred Phillips will provide the organ background music for the program. The Rev. Glenn S. Wade will be the narrator.

Following the program treats will be given the children which are provided by the adult class which Charles Stoffmeister teaches. The treats were packaged by the high school class of the church school.

First Christian Church
"The Friendly Church"

Welcomes You
TO ALL SERVICES

Bible School — 9:45 a.m.
Morning Service — 10:50 a.m.
Youth Meeting — 6:30 p.m.
Evening Service — 7:30 p.m.

9th and Oakdale • Medford, Ore.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

United Church of Christ

Groveland Ave. and Oakwood Drive

Church Worship at 9:45 and 11 a.m.
Church School at 9:45 and 11 a.m.

SERMON: "The Manger"

Annual CHRISTMAS CONCERT
Sunday, Dec. 22
8:00 P.M.

Sunday: Radio Broadcast—KMED 8:15 A.M.
Sunday School 9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship 11:00 A.M.
Young People's Meeting 3:00 P.M.
Christmas Concert 8:00 P.M.
Wednesday: Special Christmas Service 11:00 A.M.
Friday: Evangelistic Service 8:00 P.M.

APOSTOLIC FAITH CHURCH
Third and Central—Medford