

Christmas Celebrations Appraised by Clergymen

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press International
For several years, churches have been imploring Americans to "keep Christ in Christmas."

Many Christian families are ready, even eager, to cooperate. But how? What can one family do to rescue the birthday of Christ from commercialization... to make its real significance clear to children.

United Press International put the question to 10 of the nation's leading clergymen. Their answers, as could be expected, varied widely. But there were several common themes.

Virtually all of them emphasized the importance of worship - not only attendance at church services, but worship in the home, with the whole family taking part.

"Read the Christmas story from the Bible on Christmas Eve," counseled the very Rev. Francis B. Sayre, dean of Washington Cathedral.

Explain Meaning of Christmas
"Let the father of the family explain to the children in simple words the meaning of Christmas," said the Rt. Rev. James A. Pike, Episcopal bishop of California.

Catholic Archbishop Joseph F. Rummel of New Orleans recommended "the recitation of the Rosary every evening in the family circle, and the preparation of a beautiful crib to be unveiled in every home on Christmas Eve."

Methodist Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam of Washington said Christmas should be treated as "a day of thought" as well as a day of merriment.

"Begin the day with the family singing a Christmas carol... then let each individual meditate upon the significance of the first Christmas gift, which was God's gift of his Son."

Most of the clergymen agreed that exchanging gifts is an appropriate Christmas custom - if it is done in the right spirit. But they deplored the giving of expensive gifts for business reasons, for purely social motives, or for show.

"It would be better to stop the custom altogether than to let Christmas giving so degenerate," said Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian church.

The Rev. E. C. Scott, stated clerk of the Southern Presbyterian Church, stated the best antidote for a "selfish" approach to Christmas is to "center our thoughts and gifts on those from whom we can expect nothing in return."

And he emphasized: "Not merely gifts of money, but of time and companionship."

Bishop Christopher J. Weldon of the Catholic Diocese of Springfield, Mass., offered this suggestion about gifts:

"Let those to whom you are giving gifts know that these gifts are being given to honor the birthday of the Christ child, and to imitate his example of opening the heart to others."

Asks True Significance
The Rt. Rev. Thomas K. Gorman, Catholic bishop of Dallas-Fort Worth, said care should be taken that Christmas

mas cards, as well as gifts, have "true Christian significance." Greeting cards that have no religious theme - and especially the so-called "comic" cards that have shown up in recent years - are entirely inappropriate, he said.

Several ministers urged that Santa Claus be de-emphasized.

The Rev. John T. Tavarides of the Greek Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sophia, Washington, said Santa Claus has been so thoroughly "identified with commercialism" that his symbolic value has been lost.

Msgr. Irving A. DeBlanc, director of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, suggested Santa Claus be quietly replaced by the real-life Saint Nicholas whose name, pronounced "sinte klaas" by early Dutch immigrants to America, gradually evolved into the modern Santa Claus.

Saint Nicholas was a Christian bishop who lived in Asia minor during the fourth century A.D. He distributed gifts to children, and to the poor, at Christmas. His gifts, always anonymous, were intended as birthday gifts to the Christ child who, when he became a man, said "inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me."

Methodists to Give Christmas Pageant

The Christmas pageant, the Light of the World, will be given in song and story by the boys and girls of First Methodist church, Medford, at 7:30 p.m., Sunday.

Children dressed in the costumes of English carollers and American Indians and repre-

senting Germany, Japan, Sweden, Africa, America, and Italy, will bring their special contribution to Christmas - while the altar choir, under the direction of Mrs. Milton Snow, sings a carol of that country.

When the Nativity scene is presented, an angel ensemble, directed by Ray Lewis, including Rosemary Doolen, Karen Paschke, Sharon Smith, Suzanne Van Sickle, Roberta Willett, Marsha Minshall, Jill Filatreau, and Denna Taylor, will sing Christmas hymns.

Mary will be portrayed by Carol McVay; Joseph by Wayne Thompson; the Shepherds by Jay Taylor, Allen Cone, Brooks Baumer, and Richard Minshall and the Wise Men, Pat McLaughlin, Boyd Oakes, and Clark Barker.

Narrators for the program will be Glen Kaye and Jeanine James. Mrs. Leslie Boardman will be at the organ, and Ray Lewis and Mrs. Robert Baccus at the piano.

Part of the program will be presented on KBES-TV Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m. At that time, Jerry Igo will be one of the narrators.

At the Sunday services Dr. George G. Roseberry will speak on "Jesus Came With a Purpose." The youth choir will sing "Our Pure Virgin" and "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" at the 9:30 a.m. service. The church choir will sing "Christmas Songs of Sweden" and "On This Good Christmas Morn" at the latter service.

Memorial poinsettias and Christmas candles will decorate the altar at the services.

The Christmas offering, "March to the Manger," will be applied to the church's share of pension for retired ministers.

Ashland Lutherans Tell Plans for Week

Ashland - "Who Is Coming to Your House?" will be the sermon subject at 11 a.m. Sunday at Grace Lutheran church by the Rev. E. Paul Riedel, pastor. Holy communion will be included in the service.

At 2:30 p.m. the Walther League Christmas tree trim party will be held followed by chili supper and caroling.

Wednesday at 7 p.m. the Christmas eve service will be held and Christmas day at 10:30 a.m. a service with holy communion is planned. The sermon will be "God Sent His Only Begotten Son Into the World."

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Masses Told By Roman Catholics Here

The first masses of Christmas will be offered at midnight Christmas eve at Sacred Heart Catholic church and St. Mary's gymnasium in Medford; St. Joseph's church in Jacksonville; and in Our Lady of Fatima church in Shady Cove. All will be high masses.

At Sacred Heart church the mass will be preceded by the blessing of the Infant Jesus after His image is carried from the sacristy, in procession, and placed in the sanctuary manger.

The men's choir, directed by Bruno Pellegrini, will sing the "Missa Brevis," with the credo from Carnevali's Missa "Santa Maria." "Adeste Fideles" has been selected as the offertory hymn and other familiar carols will be sung before the mass.

Celebrant of the mass will be the pastor, the Very Rev. Carl Mai.

Student Mass
The Marian choir of St. Mary's High school will sing "Mass in Honor of St. Francis" at the students' midnight mass in the school gym.

"Laetentur Caeli," is their offertory selection, and the Gregorian Proper will be chanted by the Boys Glee club.

A visiting Benedictine priest from Mt. Angel will be the mass celebrant.

At 11:30 a.m. the Marian choir will repeat this music at the final high mass of Christmas day in the church, using the Rossini Proper. There will be Christmas carolling preceding both services.

Toni Adams and Mary Robinson are the organists for the Marian choir.

Low Masses
Low masses will be offered in Sacred Heart church on Christmas day, following the regular Sunday schedule, at 6, 7, 8:30 and 10 a.m. Groups of St. Mary's students from the sixth, seventh and eighth grades will sing carols before and during the 7 and 8:30 a.m. masses.

Confessions will be heard in the church on Wednesday from 2 to 5 p.m. and from 7 to 10 p.m.

At Jacksonville the high

mass at midnight, sung by the Rev. William McLeod and a local choir, will be followed by two low masses in succession, the first beginning at 9 a.m.

The only Christmas mass at Shady Cove will be the high mass at midnight, with the Rev. John Ilg as celebrant.

Confessions
Confessions in these mission churches will be heard immediately preceding the masses.

On New Year's day, a holy day of obligation for all Roman Catholics, all masses in the three churches will follow the regular Sunday schedule.

STORY IN FILM

Sams Valley-Gilbert Mack will narrate a showing of colored slides telling the Christmas story at 10 a.m. Sunday at Sams Valley Community church. Included in the program for Christmas will be recitations and songs by Sunday school students directed by Mrs. Edgard Pleasant.

Cantata Planned By Local Friends

The Christmas cantata, "Night in Judean Hills," will be presented at the Friends church Sunday at 7:30 p.m. by the combined choirs, directed by Mrs. Claude Lewis. Mrs. Kenneth Boshears will be organist. Solo parts will be sung by Mrs. Lewis, Dr. Lewis, Dr. and Mrs. Wayne Roberts, Mrs. Clynton Crisman, Deane Roberts, Miss Janet Johnson, and Bill Houston.

In the 9:45 and 11 a.m. worship services the choirs will sing "Christmas Jubilate," and the pastor's message will be, "This Is A Wonderful Christmas!" An offering, "birthday gifts for the King," will be received to be applied toward the building fund for the new sanctuary. Members of the congregation are invited.

A candlelight service will be held Sunday at The Aquarian Hall of Truth at 8 p.m. during the regular service for the Christmas worship service.

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ed to place a signed Christmas card on the large decorated poster in the foyer as their greeting to others in the church.

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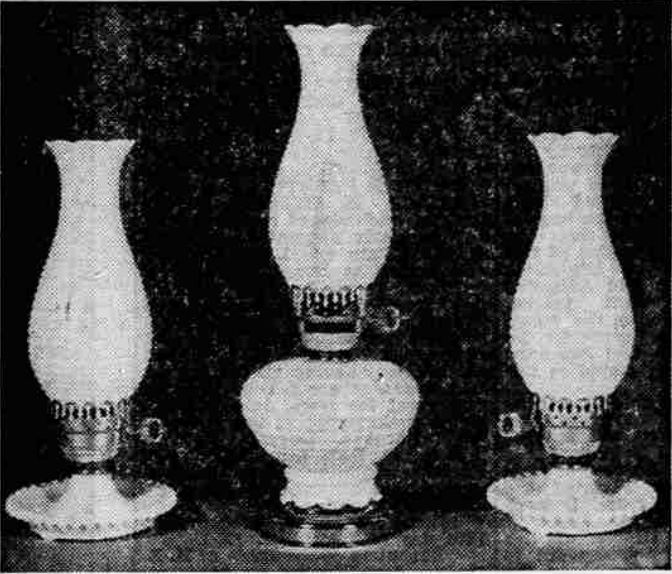


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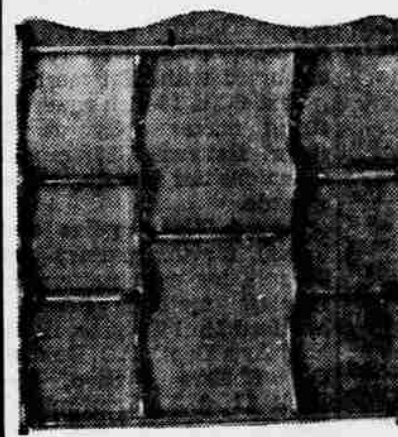
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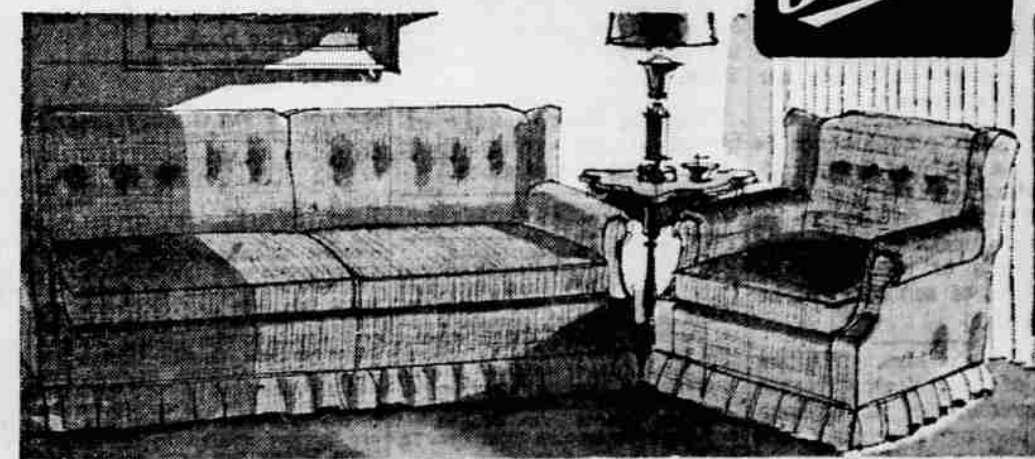
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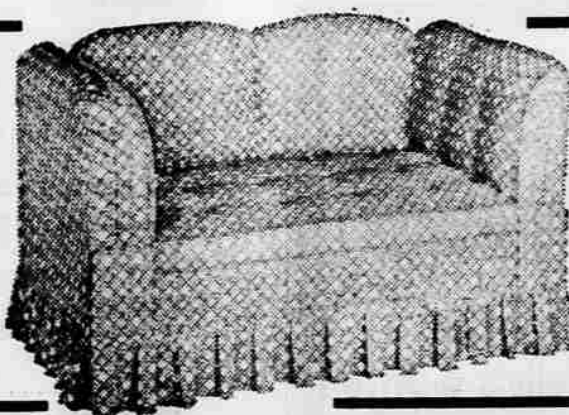
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