



RELIGION AND CARDS — Local card shop sales show that Klamath Falls residents bought more Christmas cards of a religious nature this season than in previous years. This fact lends authority to a report issued by several greeting card manufacturers stating that the national trend toward religious cards reached an all-time high this Christmas, and a record number of subjects was offered.

National Religious Christmas Card Trend Extends To Local Consumers

Christmas is officially over, and now there is time to more carefully observe the designs and sentiments of cards which were so quickly ripped open and cast aside after noting the name of the sender. Greeting cards have become almost as much a part of the Christmas celebration as the traditional tree, and they have also developed as an effective means of emphasizing the religious aspects of the season.

Reports from major greeting card companies state that the trend toward more religious Christmas cards, which started in the late 1940's, has gained even more momentum. These companies offered a record number of religious subjects this year to keep up with the public demand. Approximately 35 per cent of the more than three billion cards sent this Christmas contained religious designs. In contrast, less than five per cent of the Christmas cards produced 15 years ago could be classified as religious in character, according to records of larger firms.

A check with several of the leading card shops in Klamath Falls proves the reported trend accurate to a point, but the number of religious card buyers here is evidently not as high as in other sections of the country. Klamathites seem to prefer either a religious cover design, accompanied by a conventional verse, or a conventional design and verse, with the religious emphasis supplied by a Bible quotation printed on an inside corner. Most of the store employees handling the Christmas greetings agreed that cards with both the religious design and verse were not popular sellers, unless they were directed to a particular denomination.

The majority of the stores polled stocked more religious cards this season and sold more containing scriptures than in previous years. Only a few reported they could not determine a definite increase or trend by their sales. However, of the religious cards sold by these shops, the more expensive ones were the best sellers. Religious cards without gold, silver, glitter, or striking designs, and the economy boxes of mixed cards were not in demand.

Among the most popular designs selected by local residents were scenes depicting the three wise men, the Madonna and child, and the nativity. Other religious motifs favored ran the gamut from drawings of cherubs to choirs, and from open Bibles to the traditional snow covered New England church.

Besides the religious Christmas cards for general use, greeting card publishers also made available a wide variety of cards especially designed to be sent to the clergy. In Klamath Falls such cards have reportedly always been popular, although the selection was much greater this year. Special titles available at the

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO YOU
10:10 A.M. SUNDAY
KFLW 1450 Kc

Clergymen See Religious Interest Revival Although Church Membership Gains Decline

By LOUIS CASSELS
United Press International
For America's churches, 1962 marked the end of an era.

It was an era in which "religion" achieved unprecedented popularity, and church membership rose at a spectacular rate. Since 1946, when the postwar "religious revival" got underway, American churches have gained about 42 million new members.

For 15 consecutive years, the annual growth in church membership substantially exceeded population growth. During this period, the proportion of Americans affiliated with religious bodies increased from less than one-half to nearly two-thirds.

To make room for the influx of new members, churches embarked on the biggest building boom in their history. Expenditures for church construction, which had totalled less than \$200 million in 1946, rose to a level of \$1 billion annually in the late 1950's.

Those who saw a "religious revival" in the rosy statistics of the 1950's may mourn its passing. This means that the proportion of church members in the U. S. population actually has declined—only a fraction of one percentage point to be sure—but enough to mark the end of the era of rapid and easy growth.

Just Beginning
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Begins To Ebb
The Yearbook of American Churches, the most authoritative compilation of religious statistics, gave clear warning last year that the tide was beginning to ebb. Its figures showed that church membership gains were only slightly greater than population growth.

The new Yearbook of American Churches is out this week. It reports that church membership gains, for the first time since World War II, have fallen below the rate of population growth. To be precise, church membership

rose 1.4 per cent, while the national population was increasing by 1.6 per cent.

of small groups of concerned laymen who meet in private homes to wrestle seriously with the implications of Christian doctrine; in the active interest displayed by adults in religion courses which require them to do real study; in the growing acceptance of tithing as a minimum standard for stewardship of money; in the steady demand registered at church libraries and book stores for good religious books (as opposed to the tripe which often hits the best-seller lists in the days when religion was being peddled to the public as an easy out for life's problems).

It is also reflected in growing attendance at weekend retreats; in the number of teen-agers who remain active in church life after they are too old to be "made" to go to Sunday School; in the searching curiosity of college students about authentic Christianity; in the readiness of young churchmen to risk imprisonment or injury to bear witness for the Christian convictions on such social issues as race relations.

These manifestations of real Christian commitment still are confined to a creative minority in the church. They do not refute the observation that a great many church members remain lukewarm, ill-informed and apathetic. But they do provide better evidence of real religious revival than could ever be found in the soaring membership statistics of the postwar era.

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Gifts Given For Orphan

The young people of St. Paul's Episcopal Church adopted the spirit of gracious giving this holiday season. In lieu of Christmas presents from the church to them, the Church School students decided to give a gift to someone less fortunate, according to Rev. Robert L. Greene.

A total of \$80 was collected from their offerings to be sent to an Episcopal Church orphanage in Pakistan. The money will cover the cost of caring for an orphan for one year.

Church Youths Hail New Year

Rev. Robert L. John, minister of the First Christian Church, has announced that the Youth Committee will sponsor a Watch Night Party, Monday, Dec. 31. The activities will begin at 8 p.m. and continue until midnight. All members and friends are invited to attend.

Association Holds Party And Meeting

MALIN—The Women's Association of Malin Presbyterian Church recently met at the home of Mrs. Loyal Lovensness for their Christmas meeting. The hostesses were Mrs. George Smalley, Mrs. Evelyn Hagerty, Mrs. Bill Hays, and Mrs. Ethen Whitman.

The Christmas theme was carried out in the holiday decorations, and members provided special entertainment. Mrs. Ernest Gray and Mrs. James Bunnell performed several medleys of carols at the piano and organ. Vocal numbers presented included "Gods Little Candles" by Mrs. Gerry Brown, accompanied at the organ by Mrs. Gray, and "No Candles Were There and No Fire" by Mrs. Gray.

All members and guests joined in the Christmas carol singing and spiritual fellowship. Devotions were given by Mrs. D. P. Reid. At the business meeting, the nominating committee gave their report on the new officers for the coming year. They are Mrs. Halbert Wilson, president; Mrs. Laddie Rajnos, vice president; Mrs. Gerry Brown, secretary, and Mrs. Les Unruh, treasurer.

The next meeting of the Women's Association will be held Jan. 3 in the church social room.

Teeners Open Christ Rally

WASHINGTON (UPI)—More than 12,000 teen-agers from all parts of America converged on the capital today for a three-day religious rally sponsored by Youth for Christ International.

Along with the American young people were delegates from 45 foreign countries.

Youth for Christ International is an interdenominational organization of Evangelical Protestants. Evangelist Billy Graham, one of the founders and still a chief sponsor of the organization, will be the principal speaker at the closing session of the convention Saturday afternoon.

Thanks For All Advocated

By RALPH W. LOEW, D.D.
Written for
Newspaper Enterprise Assn.

The late Peter Marshall used to tell of the table prayers of his son. The lad would fold his hands, bow his head, but with half-opened eyes scanning the table, would thank God only for the food he enjoyed. He skipped the spinach.

Any of us can understand this in a boy. As a matter of fact, we have trouble thanking God for everything. Who of us could look back upon 1962 and be grateful for it all? How, then, can we look forward expectantly and gratefully for 1963?

Reading these letters of Saint Paul in the light of the outburst of disgust from a young minister who resigned his ordination earlier this year, one is astonished. The young parson in 1962 met a few discouragements, bumped into some of the sins of humanity and threw up his hands in horror. Now he is running into some kind of a New Year to a new profession. But into what year or profession will he run that is free from discouragements?

All the more amazement that this ancient Saint Paul could say, "I thank God upon every remembrance of you." And he was honest. He was able to thank God, even for the people who upset his world.

Looking around, with at least one eye open, we can find enough in 1962 to wish that we had skipped those dishes on our table. Who of us would not have avoided some of the food we've been forced to eat, the experiences we've been forced to endure, or the burdens we've been compelled to bear?

Yet, in the end of this year, the virtue of gratitude is not in pretending that everything is all right. It is in the honesty to see it all and still to say, "I thank God upon every remembrance." It's a fitting way to confront 1963.

There's something of this in Saint Paul, who said, "I thank God upon every remembrance of you." At the very moment in which he mentioned his thanks,

he also knew of the problems. In the same letter he could speak of the irritations, the problems these people had imposed upon him, and the many disappointments.

There is a story of a headstone in Norway which reads simply, "Tak For All."—Thanks for Everything." In remembering an entire lifetime, there must be some things which that good soul would rather have missed. Or forgotten. Yet at the end of her years, it was simply "Thanks for Everything." The important fact is that this could be said with integrity, expressing an understanding of life's vicissitudes and the power to overcome them.

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