

A Child Shall Lead Them

... And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the falling together; and a little child shall lead them Isaiah 11:5-6.

On this eve of Christmas, harsh words are outlawed and even the discord of the daily life appears to be in harmony as the spirit of Christmas rules the earth.

While Sherman tanks and all the atomic power of the West could not be brought to bear to blast a hole in the ugly concrete prison wall that the Communists have erected around East Berlin, the spirit of Christmas has caused even the Godless-professing Reds to make a path through the barrier that West Germans might spend Christmas with their captive brethren behind the wall.

In Jerusalem where the holy temples lie and where Israel and Jordan face each other over barricades, the spirit of Christ has brought calm and peace as a truce of the moment permits Christians to cross over to honor the Christ Child on his birthday.

In these far-off places where hatred has triumphed over brotherly love for so long there is a peace for the season by tacit consent of both factions.

In this country the consuming spirit of self-centered greed, envy and bitterness drains out of each of us and is replaced with a warm, glowing concern for our fellow men. Unfortunates find people on every hand quick to share with them their worldly possessions. 'Tis the Christmas season and happiness permeates the air and takes possession of our mind and hearts.

While all the earthly powers that man can muster can do little to change his inward self, the spirit of a child, born this day almost 2,000 years ago, has the power to change everything.

Man finds a new inner peace, a new consideration for others, a new feeling toward his fellow man.

Regrettably, it is only for a time.

What a wonderful, glorious world it would be if the spirit of the Christ Child would prevail in our hearts and our minds every day in every way.

For then would mankind possess the greatest of all gifts, the one that the Angels promised from on high that night so long ago when Jesus Christ was born . . . the promise of "Peace on earth and good will toward all men."



Like The Three Kings — Yule Customs Come From Afar

By DON OAKLEY
The jolly ghost of Christmas Present trails a pleasant caravan in his wake: the Christmas traditions of a score of lands—some centuries-old, some recent—

legend was brought to the New World by the Dutch, who called him Saint Nikolaas — whence "Santa Claus."

In 1822, Clement Moore took out a poet's license and in his "A Visit from St. Nicholas" added a number of characteristics to the elf. No one has ever complained about what he did. Later, the famous cartoonist Thomas Nast helped fashion the picture of Santa as we envision him today.

The first Christmas card was devised and posted in London in 1846 by one Sir Henry Cole, public spirited gentleman. His first card was a crude lithographed affair, sent out to 1,000 recipients. The custom spread, and in a few years quite elaborate cards were all the rage.

It is difficult to trace some of these traditions back to their beginnings because of the modifications they have undergone over the generations. Also, similar customs may have come into being independently in different countries so that it is impossible to say which is the "original."

In the 17 years since that first card, though, no one has improved upon Sir Henry's inscription: "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year."

Here, briefly, is what we know about a few of them:
—Santa Claus, of course, has a long line of forebears, going all the way back to the original St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra in what is now Turkey. In the late 3rd and early 4th centuries A.D. he became famous for his generosity and habit of distributing presents anonymously to the poor.
Eventually, the St. Nicholas

—Every girl knows what must follow from her proximity to a piece of hanging mistletoe. But to the primitive Britons and their Druid priests, mistletoe was believed to have the magical power to heal disease, neutralize poisons, protect from witchcraft and bestow fertility.
If a couple plighted their troth and sealed it with a kiss under the mistletoe, they would have good luck and live happily ever after.
—The exchanging of Christmas cards is the most recent of our customs, and the only one to have grown into a year-round industry only incidentally connected with Christmas.

—The Yule log is remembered only symbolically today, for though wouldn't it be dragging in a log over her wall-to-wall carpeting, even if she had a fireplace.

Myra. The good bishop was delivering some gold to three worthy but penniless maidens in need of dowries.

The custom originated in Scandinavia, where a huge log was set afire to honor Thor and to mark the time of the winter solstice. In many parts of Europe, bringing in the Yule log is still a big event of the year. Traditionally, it is set alight by a fragment from the previous year's log.

That night, the girls, coming in from the rain, hung their stockings over the fireplace to dry. Quite by chance, Nicholas' bag of gold, tossed into the room, fell into one of the stockings.

—Wassail! meant, loosely, "Here's to you," and it was how they greeted one another in Merrie Olde England — preferably with strong and heady brew.

By such fortuitous juxtapositions of events is tradition made.

For some obscure reason, the custom, and the strong and heady brew, are still popular.

—Anthropologists would trace the Christmas tree back to ancient, pagan Europe, when trees were worshipped. The Egyptians, Jews, and Romans also employed trees as festive decoration.

—According to one story, Christmas stockings go all the way back to St. Nicholas of

More recent legend has it that Martin Luther originated the first lighted parlor Christmas tree. It remained almost exclusively a German custom until the 19th century. Since then it has completely conquered the Western world and is, perhaps, our most cherished Christmas tradition.

—A related custom, decking the halls with boughs of holly, comes from England. In olden times, unmarried women went to fasten a sprig to their beds for luck.

—It is to Italy that we turn for the origin of the Christmas creche, first fashioned in 1223 by St. Francis of Assisi to dramatize the Christmas story to illiterate peasants.

—St. Francis, too, is considered to be the father of the Christmas carol. The word itself gives an idea of the circumstances of its origin. It comes from the Old French and means "to dance and sing."

—Gifts, of course, have been given by all peoples in all times. Sentiment, however, ascribes Christmas giving to the first Christmas in Bethlehem, when wise men from the east brought rare presents of gold and frankincense and myrrh and laid them at the feet of the newborn Christ child.

Overtones Of Sadness

Christmas this year is inevitably tinged with sadness for Americans, as indeed it is for men of good will the world over.

The shock that followed the sudden, brutal murder of President Kennedy just over a month ago had to subside in the face of practical affairs and daily routine. But the sickness at heart engendered by that dreadful event will remain with most of us for the rest of our days.

Since we cannot unmake history, it only remains that we try to learn from history. If any good can come from the death of this brilliant leader, it is that his fellow countrymen will put aside their petty regional and political differences and choke off the evil weeds of hate springing up in every part of the country from seeds scattered carelessly in previous years.

Abraham Lincoln spoke briefly at the site of one of the awfullest battlefields of the then raging Civil War. With the blood of the fallen scarcely dry on the Gettysburg fields, he called for a rededication to the principles upon which the nation had been founded.

With the death of John F. Kennedy still fresh in our minds, perhaps the nation can again experience a new birth of freedom — or, at least, perhaps we the living can take new determination to proceed toward the realization of the American dreams of justice and the right to a good life for all men.

What better time than Christmas to reflect seriously on the events of the past month and thereby resolve that it should not all have been in vain, just as those who followed the One whose birth is celebrated today gained strength and purpose from the sacrifice made for them.

In one other November, 100 years ago,

Congress Shows A Defiant Mood

By DORIS FLEESON
WASHINGTON — A veteran Congressman surveyed the House as it sought to clean up at least a few chores before Christmas and revealed his considered opinion that "a rattlesnake would have to fight his way up that center aisle."

help a fellow member of their party to look good, or even cross party lines in a bow to a well liked Congressman, may be only a passing mood. If it is not, the prospect for a record President Johnson can run on next fall is dim indeed.

political necessities to go along with them either, Republicans, whatever their own contributions to his difficulties, can be expected to campaign harshly against his failures.

He was describing a defiant mood rather than a specific contest. All of Congress has been criticized for its no-saying, its infinite delays, its shabby scandals, its indifference to internal reform.

Advocates of civil rights and tax cuts are certain to return to the arena with renewed energy next year. Powerful voices with convictions about the unsatisfactory state of the Presidential succession and the dead hand of seniority will not be cured of their beliefs by mere defiance.

Unless a very substantial change of temper prevails fairly soon in the next session, the President will need to contemplate some changes of his own. He was a masterful parliamentary leader with a moderate President of the opposite party in office. The task of being an effective President himself, with his own party heavily in control of the legislative branch, is something else again.

The Senate is not happy about it, but a spirit of willingness to try again and seek change is evident. The House, in contrast, is bitter and obsessed. From the Speaker to the subcommittee chairman, it is defensively proclaiming its eternal righteousness, its defiance of critic and questioner.

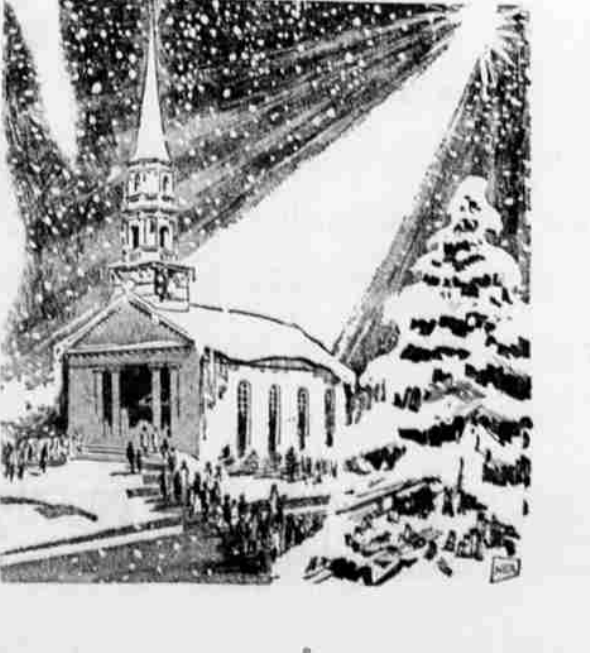
A Congress, the House particularly, which does not care or care to challenge its entrenched leaders is not his best 1964 omen.

A small issue shows how harshly it is prepared to treat the rare few of its own members who support the critics.

President Johnson may be able to take the House and Senate along with him, but he will be unable by reason of his own

Back in the small study, after administering Christmas Mass, he sat down to put on paper what had happened to him.

Rep. Arnold Olson, a Democrat now in his second term, is from Montana, which is showing a marked conservative trend. Both he and Senate leader Mike Mansfield face hard fights there for reelection next fall.



'We Have Seen His Star'

It was doubtless too much to expect that Olson could get the House in its present temper to approve the Knowles power project which, he argued, would relieve economic stringencies in Montana. He did have the right to think that his fellow-Democrats, with their 52 majority, and their leaders would help him make a showing.

So on Christmas Day, 1818, one of the greatest Christmas hymns of all time had its world premiere in the small church of Oberndorf, near Salzburg, Austria, sung by a school choir, accompanied by a guitar since the church organ had broken down.

The Story Of Creation Of 'Silent Night'

(Author of this story was a United Press correspondent in Salzburg, Austria, in 1950 who had occasion to do extensive research into the origin of this Christmas song.—Editor.)

By ERIC GEIGER

More than 140 years ago, on Christmas Eve of 1818, a young Austrian village priest was on his way from a small but in the mountains where he had been called to christen a newborn infant.

But several years were to pass before the song became known outside Austria. For Father Mohr and his friend Franz Gruber, this was of little importance. They were plain and humble men who never intended to, and never did, earn even one penny from their song.

From that day on the "Song of Heaven" struck out on its own and spread all over the land. Soon people everywhere in Northern Europe sang the song of Father Mohr and Franz Gruber at their Christmas celebrations.

Today "Silent Night" is at home in the vast jungle of the Amazon as much as in New York City or some small French village.

beloved Christmas carols in all English-speaking countries. And this year again the song will be sung.

Passing by rocky slopes and ice-coated ravines, the newly-ordained priest felt strangely moved. As the stars guided his way through the night, he kept thinking of the small child who had just received his priestly blessing.

One day a visiting organ builder from the neighboring Tyrol, who had come to repair their ailing instrument, heard Gruber playing the new Christmas melody. He listened quietly and then asked "Where did you get that song? I have never heard it."

The song continued to travel across oceans and continents.

It was first translated into English by an Irish priest, Rev. Stefford Augustus Brooke. Since then "Silent Night" has become one of the most popular and

The simple melody will sound as beautiful sung by the rough, untrained voices of Oregon lumberjacks as it will chanted by the elfin voices of little Chinese girls.

There was little resemblance between the wooden hut he had just left and the manger of the little Jesus, but somehow it seemed to him as if the Christmas miracle had just happened before his eyes.

In the valley where the old instrument-maker lived, word of the new Christmas song spread quickly, the children learning it first.



STRICTLY PERSONAL

No, Virginia, there is no Santa Claus.
There is no ruddy fat man with merry eyes and a white beard, who comes down the chimney at night to reward little boys and girls for being good.
Because, you see, Virginia, all over the world there are millions of little boys and girls who have been as good as good can be—but they get no toys and sometimes they awake on Christmas morning without enough food to eat.
There are fathers and mothers, Virginia, who have been appointed by God to love their children—and they give them love, although they cannot always give them presents.
And these mothers and fathers, Virginia, are more wonderful and magical and mysterious than Santa Claus could ever be.
They bring something infinitely more precious than dolls and trains to their children — they bring the mark of God's love down to every boy and girl.
And, sometimes, even these fathers and mothers are taken away. But there are others in the world, divinely touched, who look after these children and share with them their meager possessions.
Compared with this miracle of care and tenderness, Santa Claus is a pale figure of fantasy. For he, you see, only rewards boys and girls who have been "good." But in the eyes

Almanac

By United Press International
Today is Tuesday, Dec. 24, the 338th day of 1963 with seven to follow.
The moon is approaching its full phase.
The evening stars are Jupiter Saturn and Venus.
On this day in history:
In 1814, a treaty of peace was signed between the United States and Great Britain, at Ghent, Belgium, bringing an end to the War of 1812.
In 1871, Verdi's opera "Aida" was premiered in Cairo, Egypt.
In 1943, President Franklin Roosevelt announced the appointment of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower as the commander-in-chief of Allied forces in the planned invasion of Europe.
In 1951, the United Nations proclaimed the North African nation of Libya free and independent.
A thought for the day — The Prophet Isaiah foresaw the birth of Christ and predicted: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son. And shall call His name Jesus."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
Q — How long do sponges live?
A — Some species live only for a year or even less, but some live to 20 to 30 years.
Q — In what year did General John J. Pershing receive the Pulitzer Prize for History?
A — 1902.