

Christmas On The Hills of Home

Lowrence G. Sieber (First United Church)

The hills of Bethlehem were watching their one night. That an unusual glory about them and the world seemed full of joy. They were afraid. But when the angels came to them: "Behold I bring you good news of great joy which shall come to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, the firstborn of Mary, the Lord hath made for us." The shepherds said to themselves: "Let us now go and see this thing which is come to pass." So they went before a shepherd with his sheep on a hillside was attracted by a bush which appeared to be aflame. He said to himself: "I will now turn aside and see this great sight." Moses in Median and the shepherds at Bethlehem, yes, and the Wise Men in the east saw something and turned aside to see God anew. They saw God as a deliverer of people. Through Moses the Israelites were led out of Egypt. Through the Babe of Bethlehem men are led out of evil... they are saved from their sins.

Now 2000 years later this Christmas Eve we are bidden to turn aside from our daily duties and cares to realize all this afresh. How much this old world of ours needs to follow in the way of the Prince of Peace

through overcoming evil! As these of old, so we may meet God and find our night resounding with heavenly voices and our common bush of daily experience aflame with glory. Surely we can thank God again for this great season of our faith.

Moses' task was to build a people together in freedom and righteousness through law. Jesus add this more—grace and love. So the bush has lost its glow in the brightness of a Star heralding the Day Spring from on High.

When Moses awoke that day it was just another day. From his tent he looked over the familiar countryside. Yonder were the sheep, so well known, so foolish and uninteresting. Perhaps he saw through the haze the splendour of those days in Egypt and through the bleating of the sheep heard the cry: "Bow the knee!" He thought of the wealth and power which was his, but now he must lead stupid sheep as a common shepherd. So it was in the morning; but in the evening he knew himself the ambassador of the Most High, the Deliverer of People. The brightness and glory of the bush and that experience was as the sun before whose light the splendours of Egypt paled as a candle at noonday.

Life's common round does

sometimes grow monotonous. Day succeeds day, each alike—the same rooms, the same faces, the same work and duties, the same pleasures, the same places, the same concerns: rent to pay, the grocer, the butcher, the light and water bills and the coal and oil account... all recurring with endless regularity until we feel like a horse in a treadmill forever walking up hill but never reaching the top.

Yet we can seek God and build His kingdom of peace and goodwill in ourselves and then with others. The sheep that day saw the bush aflame, but they didn't understand the Voice. The sheep saw the light that night near Bethlehem, but only the shepherds heard and understood the message. God has made us in his image with free will. "What are we better than sheep or goats that nourish a blind life within the brain if knowing God we lift not hands of prayer?"

Are we doing the same things this Christmas eve we did last year and the year before? Doing them with the same lost thrill, comparing ourselves with others, apparently, more fortunate? That way is the way of depression. Sheep, sheep, sheep, rod and crook, the same hillside, the same watering places, the same worn sandals, same fold at night... and yonder...? But the crook became the sceptre and the bush the shrine of God. The well-known hills of Bethlehem and night skies became the cathedral for heavenly choirs, and a common manger a cradle for deity.

John tells us he met Jesus one day and from that time on life was new. "It was about the tenth hour"—a never-to-be-forgotten time. One day Peter was busy with his nets in preparation for

Civic Centre Membership Hits All Time High In Current Year

Civic Centre Membership Secretary Don Forward, presenting a detailed report on 1949-50 membership at the Civic Centre executive meeting held this week, reported membership to date this year now stands at 1726 in comparison with last year's December 15 total of 1350 and the 1949 overall total of 1515. On the basis of last year's throughout-the-year registration the membership committee anticipates that the 1950 objective of 2000 will be reached.

There are 925 adult members, this year compared with 756 a year ago and 801 youth members in comparison with 759 in 1949. There are 425 new members to date signed up during the current drive and nearly 150 of last year's members have left the city.

A staff telephone drive for

fishing when Jesus came along. So began his discipleship. This Christmas Eve may seem like others, yet it does remind us that Christmas Day is different. And tomorrow is Christ's Birthday and the Christian Sabbath. Let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass... another step in God's eternal purpose of peace and love for all. See again that the manger led on to the giving of life on the cross for us all. Those infant hands will grow and minister unto others. That mind and spirit will lead on a new way of life.

Christmas is kept on the hills of home if we have eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand. The Saviour is born! Good Christian men awake, salutes to the happy morn!

members held during the month of November netted 308 registrations and was a highlight of the membership drive.

Some interesting figures on membership participation were presented and an all-time high of 1494 participating members was reported as follows:

Sports—Basketball 289; Badminton 280; boxing 37; wrestling 20; squash and handball 20. Total 646.

Rup-Ree Classes—Nine groups, Total 436.

Crafts—Leather, woodwork, weaving, beadwork, and sewing, 11 groups. Total 201.

Special Groups—Films, band, symphony, bridge clubs, Little Theatre, etc. Seven groups. Total 210.

CLEAN AND EASY

If dishes and glassware have been rinsed properly, it is more sanitary to let them dry in racks than to use a towel.

Merry Christmas




May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you through the New Year.

Greer & Bridden

GREETINGS

May all the joys and pleasures of the Yuletide be yours this Christmas.

And may the New Year be one of abundant good health and good fortune.



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Vera A. Farsons

May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you always.

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Season's Greetings

WITH BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

George Cook JEWELLER

KAJEN HARDWARE

Season's Greetings

WITH BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

George Cook JEWELLER

Greetings

The Christmas Season is with us again and we wish to take the opportunity it offers us to greet our many friends, and convey to them our sincere message of "Merry Christmas—Happy New Year!"

SAANICH PLUMBING and HEATING

Extending the Greetings of the Season

It is our fondest hope that this Christmas Day be filled with many warm and pleasant moments for you! And that the New Year brings you the fulfillment of all the sincere wishes that have been extended to you in the spirit of the Holiday Season!

Fraser & Payne

Best Wishes for Christmas

As all hearts echo and re-echo the joyous words "Merry Christmas", we wish to join in the spirit of the season and add our greetings to all the rest. And may the New Year bring you every happiness, too!

STAFF & MANAGEMENT

— of —

Variety Store

Season's Greetings

A BOOK full of sentiments would barely express our heartfelt wishes and hopes for a joyful Christmas and a Happy New Year

...to our many friends and neighbors whom we have so happily served through the years. A Very Merry Christmas To All!

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