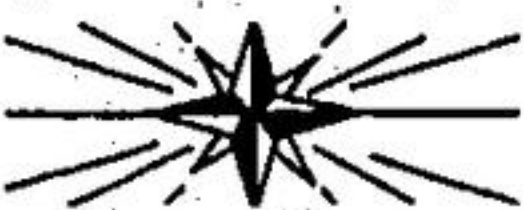


CLERGY COMMENT

The Miracle Of Christmas



by Rev. H. R. Patzer
Immanuel Lutheran Church

Can Christmas survive? This has been asked and wondered about at various times. Worded otherwise, it might be asked "whether people can survive Christmas?" with all the pressure of shopping, parties, and agonizing over gift selections.

Let us consider this thought from a spiritual, rather than a materialistic viewpoint. Christmas is intended to be primarily a spiritual matter, although it also has very particular visible things attendant to it, as decorations, lights, Christmas trees, and gifts. At times, however, the balance becomes tipped or weighted heavily by the visible things toward being only an event with external, physical concerns. Indeed, this is all it can be, if the spiritual element is removed.

As a spiritual event given through human means, it is a miracle. The message of the miracle is in the Bible, as "And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." (Luke 2:7). "And the Word was made flesh." (John 1:14); and, "When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Galatians 4:5).

The miracle aspect of this is threefold. One, that Christ's birth is of the Virgin Mary. This is a miracle when measured against all natural understanding of human conception and birth. But, it is a miracle because God was acting with His divine power over and above natural laws to accomplish His purposes. Our Lord's birth may be described as of an earthly mother, but by a heavenly Father. The second aspect of miracle is the fact of Christ's coming to the earth. It is within the mind of God that He chose to do it in this particular way. But when we consider that He left His realm or throne of glory to come to this earth and world, it seems beyond our comprehension that He would do so in the humble manner that He did. In so doing - He endured and accepted all manner of human difficulties: poverty, ridicule, persecution, false accusations, betrayal, and death by crucifixion. The reason as given in His message in the scriptures is that this was done for the purpose of salvation of sinful, fallen, mankind. He did all this in our place, that is, for us; and offered Himself as sacrifice and payment for our guilt and sins. We do not deserve this effort of God on our behalf, nor can we earn it somehow. Rather, this is God's great love for us in Jesus Christ, in action. Nothing else could produce this. We find it stated in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

The third aspect of miracle is that the individual can have the benefit of Christ's work of salvation through repenting of sins, and truly believing in the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. This is God's good, great, free gift to man. This is a miracle also, when we realize that in most human relationships and dealings, one does not receive anything without first paying for it, or giving something of required value. Yet, this is what God does through Jesus Christ, through faith in Him as Saviour and Lord.

Christmas is only really Christmas when the message of Jesus Christ is there. This is God's gift to us all, in comparison to which, our gifts to one another are but a small reflection. The love and the warmth of spirit at Christmas are also drawn from that eternal and heavenly love of God, which we can share with one another as we center our attention on the simple, yet wonderful account of Jesus' birth at Bethlehem. The miracle of Christmas will continue as such, as long as the proclamation of Christ's birth as Saviour, also continues as the central message of the Christmas season.

Not Sorry To Go Says Councillor

A motion that the last Georgetown council meeting, held Monday night, be continued past 11 p.m. was defeated by a 4-2 vote and prompted, COUN. Phil Siddali to say it "was a disgusting thing to do."

"If that's the way we wrap up our business, then my leaving this council will be a pleasure," COUN. Siddali said.

A motion by deputy reeve Ernie Sykes, seconded by COUN. Roy Booth, that Mayor Bill Smith call a special meeting of council was passed. Mayor Smith said he did not know when the special meeting will be called. "It will either be this Friday or sometime late next week," he said.

Mayor Smith gave a brief speech following the council meeting thanking present and past council members for their efforts throughout the years on behalf of Georgetown.

"I'd just like to say, in wrapping up 1973, that I've enjoyed my 12 years in Georgetown council," he said. "I certainly speak for all of the people of Georgetown when I say that all the people connected with the Georgetown council have done an admirable job."

"If my eight years as councillor have been enjoyable," Mayor Smith said, "then my three years as mayor have been more enjoyable."

He went on to say that he expressed regret that council did not implement some of the things it had set up to do throughout the year.

"I'm only sorry that as of Jan. 1 there will be no more Georgetown. I'm not saying that I don't support Halton Hills, I'm just saying that this is the end of an era."

Mayor Smith also extended his best wishes to the council members and people of Georgetown for a merry Christmas and a happy new year.



ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS . . .

Santa Clause visited first Christmas party. Residents at the Sargent Road seniors apartment building last week at their first Christmas party. Putting in last requests for Christmas Eve are the building's two oldest residents, Mrs. Lillian Carey (left), 81, and Mrs. Verla Rawson, 84.

Motorists Brave Ice

The icy road conditions which prevailed in Georgetown following a blizzard last Thursday did not result in a rash of serious accidents. Georgetown police chief Floyd Schwanz commented that he knew of only four accidents Thursday evening and commended Georgetown motorists on their safe driving. Chief Schwanz also noted that Georgetown police cruisers experienced some difficulty.

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Personal

Jimmy Redmond, son of Mr. and Mrs. Allan Redmond of 7 Keats Avenue, Georgetown, and a student at Harrison school, is recovering from surgery performed at Sick Children's hospital in Toronto on December 13. Friends will be happy to know that Jimmy expects to be home for Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Church School of St. Alban's The Martyr held their annual Christmas concert on Sunday evening. The talents of the children were exceptionally high and received with great appreciation by a large gathering of the congregation. Santa appeared right on time to distribute oranges and candies to children who were so enchanted they never noticed he brought with him an English accent.

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