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Christmas Message

Rev. C. G. Higginson, Richmond Hill United Church

Out on the Judean Hills common shepherds were going about their usual work - guarding their sheep from the attacks of wild animals. To these ordinary men, at their ordinary task, came a vision, at once frightening and inspiring - after which they could never be the same again. Suddenly, there appeared beside them an angel, blazing with glory, who quickly allayed their fears by saying, "The news I bring is good news good news for the whole world. At last your awaited Saviour has come, the Christ of God. He is just a baby. You will find him lying in the feeding trough of a Bethlehem stable."

Then, indeed, the whole sky seemed filled with angels who sang praises to God and brought to those Jewish shepherds a message of peace and goodwill. "Let the world cease from strife! Let all men have a kindly feeling one toward another!"

What unpalatable tidings for those men of Judah. They were members of a conquered race - longing for freedom, hoping for a Messiah who would free them from the oppressor, the hated Caesar Augustus. Yet to them came the command, "Be at peace". They were people belonging to a proud nation, chafing under a foreign yoke, hating their overlord, Cyrenius, governor of Syria. Yet to them came the injunction, "Do away with all ill-will".

An unpalatable message indeed! Surely it would not have surprised us had they said: "Any suggestion that God's Chosen People should follow a path of peace and goodwill in our present plight must certainly be of the devil. The so-called Saviour who has come cannot be our Messiah". Yet, when the vision faded, the shepherds talked with one another and they went "even unto Bethlehem".

What happened to those men in that cattle shed? There are only four sentences in our Bible to tell us. Yet we know that they found the Child, as the angel had said, in a manger with Joseph and Mary, that they were full of gladness because of their visit, that they went back again to their work and that they told the amazing story to their friends. What happened to the shepherds in that Bethlehem stable? Did they have there an even greater vision, more than a host of angels — a vision of the lengths to which a Creator is ready to go that he may rescue his children from the consequences of their own sinful actions? Did they glimpse in that helpless Babe something of the immensity of the love of God?

And why, if such a revelation was shepherds? They were not men of

prestige: nor were they people of outstanding cleverness. They were men whose occupation was of a religious nature: and there is nothing to suggest that they were free from faults. Ordinary folk they were, doing an ordinary job. Yet to them came the

The vision, frightening at first,

But no! The drama begun that night is a drama which has no ending. Down through the ages the story of these Judean herdsmen has been immortalized in song and story - and will be, so long as there are pens and poets. Down through the ages, the force let loose in the world that night has been working away at the hard hearts of men and making its presence felt, often in the most unexpected places.

This year, once more, as Christmastide draws near, our hearts turn again to the Babe cradled in a manger. Beyond him we see those shepherds with their flocks. Their faces are alight with a joy we long to share. But can we? This is the twentieth century, the atomic age. We live in a world torn by strife and hatred and greed. The words, "War" and "escalation" strike fear into our hearts. Where, then, is joy to be found and how?

It is to be found in precisely the same way it was found of old in Judea, and by exactly the same sort of people. It is discovered by ordinary folk, doing ordinary tasks, by people with ordinary intelligence and their share of ordinary faults. It is not the prerogative of any race, or of any class: It can be found by the oppressed and the down-trodden even by those tempted to bitterness because of the unfairness of the world.

The joy of the shepherds can, indeed, be found by any son of man who sees the Christmas vision and is not disobedient to it. "Cease from strife! Have good will toward everyone! Go to Bethlehem!"

other than filled with gratitude and to be, did it come to those humble praise? Truly, ours is a joy which we must share with others.

Helping Hands At Christmas

The helping hand at Christmas time is a Richmond Hill tradition that has its roots back in the nineteenth century. In the 1890's the WMS of the Methodist Church appealed for "pound offerings" of tea, cheese, sugar, meats, vegetables and Christmas cakes, for distribution to

The present-day helping hand is known as the Co-ordinated Welfare Services, a committee composed of Stuart Clement (who has been chairman for the past three years), Alf Bryant and Ron Harcourt, representing Richmond Hill Lions: Dr. William Bedford and Douglas Allen (treasurer) representing the Rotarians: Dr. John Wachna and Len Newbury of the Civitans: Harold Van Dyke of the Kinsmen; Peggy Hopkins of the Kinettes; Hugh Wight of the Red Cross; Mrs. D. I. Davis of the Senior Citizens and Town Welfare Officer Alan White, who handles all investigations. They are dedicated to the principle that no family in Richmond Hill will be without a

Chairman Clement is high in his praise of the other helping hands, which include the service clubs, Lions, Rotarians, Civitans, Kinsmen and Kinettes, who each contribute a set sum each month to the committee's funds. Besides this and other individual community services, these same clubs have jointly undertaken to sponsor a 15-year-old girl at Warrendale Home For Emotionally Disturbed Children for two years.

Hundreds more hands belonging to students at Bayview Secondary School will be busily engaged wrapping toys for 120 children this year. These young people, for the second year in a row, have also undertaken to see that one Richmond Hill family will have a Christmas they will never

forget. The town council's helping hand takes the form of a \$100 grant,

Christmas vision!

filled them with joy - a joy which made them want to share the good news with others. Yet, for all its blazing glory, it did not blind them to the reality of the world in which they lived. There were still wolves which might attack the lambs. The sheep still needed to be fed. Back they went to their work in the fields. This, then, is the end of the drama.

At Bethlehem, of course, we see the Babe — Love Incarnate — and grasp something of the Almighty's concern for all God's children, a concern which finally led to Calvary's cross. Faced with this, can we be

year expected to number betwee 40

and 45 families. The list of families

is prepared from names submitted by

last year and this year. Local curlers, schools, Girl Guides, church groups, fraternal organizations, employees of local industrial firms, and private citizens become helping hands

by contributing goods or money to the project, which is definitely community-wide. More helping hands will be emthe needy in our village. ployed in packing food hampers, this

the welfare officer, churches, neighbors and friends. Baskets will contain a turkey and everything to make a complete Christmas feast with extras. Where there are children all new toys are included. The work of the Co-ordinated Welfare Services is not restricted to the Christmas season. The committee works the year round in meeting emergencies of disaster or misfortune. Food, fuel and clothing are provided whenever the need becomes known to it. Those who work in Co-ordinated Christmas.

Welfare Services and its associated groups are ever mindful of the fact that the dispirited and afflicted are brothers in humanity who require warmth and understanding. In times of unprecedented plenty, it is sometimes difficult to realize that just a few blocks or a few houses away there is someone facing heavy problems in wretchedness and despair. Such people do exist in our community, though just barely, and in surprising numbers. It must be comforting to them to realize that the Co-ordinated Welfare Services are dedicated to relieving their suffering and bringing some measure of cheer

and hope into their lives. The helping hand extended now may give courage to the old and forgotten, hope and energy to cope with the future to deserted families, and restore faith to those who are filled with doubts.



Fight TB With Seals

Youngsters like these . . . make a nurse's hair go gray! Dear Mr. Editor: During their 'up' time, Brian and Randall, warmly clad in their woolley pyjamas, thick socks and slippers, turned their I can no longer contain my with the words "But I've alroom into a bowling alley and, although their method might thoughts on door-to-door collec- ready given to United Appeal. be unorthodox, their enjoyment is intense.

Brian and Randall are two young patients at Weston Sanitarium . . . and because their condition was discovered in the early stages, they will be going home soon, almost certain of a complete cure. With the help of their parents and their doctors, and follow up checks at national sanitarium centres, their condition will be carefully followed

Children of this age, in fact all adolescents, are particularily susceptible to active tuberculosis, if once infected. That is why it is the responsibility of each one of us to buy and use TB Christmas Seals and to remember to have that annual TB check-up.

Book Fare

At Your Richmond Hill Public Library

HOW TO MAKE WOOD FURNISHINGS FOR YOUR HOME By Mario Dal Fabbro

Over one hundred useful and decorative woodworking projects are presented clearly and simply for the amateur as well as the experienced craftsmen. Well illustrated; it also includes information on how to buy wood, types of hardware and other preliminary matters.

> TEN FINGERS FOR GOD By Dorothy Clarke Wilson

The author of the acclaimed "Dr. Ida" and "Take My Hands" now tells the inspiring story of Dr. Paul Brand and his work with the lepers at Vellore, India. Using the restorative techniques he learned in London hospitals during World War II, he and his team of doctors have restored mobility to crippled limbs and smiles to ravaged faces of leprosy suffer-

REPORT TO GRECO

By Nikos Kazantzakis An autobiographical work - not truly an autobiography since it deals with aspirations, inspirations, travel, friends and the influences that shaped his work - by the author of "Zorba the Greek" and "The Odyssey"

> THE GENERAL NEXT TO GOD By Richard Collier

This richly-documented account of General Booth and his army without guns has everything a powerful novel has colorful characters, tragedy, humor, struggle against towering odds, and final triumph,

> CHINA IN CRISIS By Sven Lindqvist

A Swedish newspaper man who lived in Peking for several years describes life there and elsewhere in China, notes the difference between propaganda and fact, the importance of food, the Communist attitude toward sex, brainwashing, etc. * * * * *

> RENDEZVOUS WITH FATE By Lt. Col. Raymond Lalemant

This is a story of a Belgian fighter pilot who escaped from his own country when the Germans invaded it, completed his training in England and joined one of the crack R.A.F. fighter squadrons - No. 609 - at Biggin Hill. Soon after he became 609's commanding officer, his plane was hit and caught fire and he experienced one of the most dramatic escapes from death by burning ever to be described.

> THE INSTANT SAINT By John Sherlock

The story centres around the young American doctor, whose hospital stood on the high Himalayan plateau between India and China. To the refugees he was some kind of god and to the American TV audience he was a new kind of hero. The question of whether he was a fraud or a humanitarian will plague readers right up to the end.

In Years Gone By

One of the best-known hotels of the early nineteenth century in Richmond Hill was Dolby's, which stood where the parking lot for the Richmond Inn is now, according to William Harrison, writing for "The Liberal" in 1889.

It was a long, low, one-storey some day by the Board of frame building, reaching nearly Works. But why Richmond Hill across the front of the lot, with should be so called I never could discover, for it is neither a stable to the north. Here the aristocracy of York picturesque nor so very highly on their trips to and from the poetical, although Dolby's is a upper lakes would stop for re- most comfortable resting place I was given weakness, that I might feel the need freshment and it was one of for a weary traveller, at which the most popular hostelries on a prose writer or a poetizer might find a haven. Attention, Yonge Street.

Captain Bonnycastle, after- good fare and neatness prevail." wards Sir Richard Bonnycastle, Dolby's was the stopping the author of "Canada and the place for the old stage coach But everything I had hoped for, Canadians" passed through which ran between Toronto and Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were Richmond Hill in 1846, and in the Landing, with its great lumhis letters refers to the settle-bering box swung on heavy ment: "We reached Richmond leather springs, bouncing and Hill, 17 miles from the (Hol-jolting its dusty occupants to land) Landing, having made a their destination.

better journey than usual The arrival of that coach through a road that might be once a week, with its four and called the 'Slough of Despond' sometimes six horses in hand, and which will be macadamized (Continued On Page 12)

Dear Mr. Editor

come around to the doors for

contributions. I once was bold

UNWANTED COLLECTORS | when most associations have to

I feel the time has come when enough to challenge a collector tions in Richmond Hill.

Go see them," only to be told For years I have given to the that it only covers Metro To- the bosses make like Santa Claus and hope all the organizations that seem to ap-ronto. Well I think it is about pear from nowhere on my door- time it became a little larger step every Monday evening - than Metro Toronto and bloswell it seems like every Mon-somed into province or even day - but tonight I am pro-dominion-wide and incorporate with municipal employees who want two pensions in testing against this. Tonight I everything and cut out all these their Christmas stacking. Premier Robarts says the gave a collection for - wait for extra solicitations, especially at it - Branson Hospital! Now Christmas when people are al-

why would I be wanting to give ready feeling the pinch. to Branson Hospital when I Requests through the mai have a hospital in my home are another source of irritation town that probably needs dona- to me. Like the Christmas cards tions too and why would a can-you don't have the heart to send vasser be allowed to solicit here back. "Oh well", you say "it's anyway - isn't North York only \$2". But when you've Township big enough - or is already spent \$10 on cards and it there are more people like you don't need these 10 . . Then myself here who say to them- there's the raffle tickets and the selves "well, it's for a good bars of chocolate, etc, etc, etc. RICHMOND HILL, ONT. . . . Where is it going to end -I vaguely remember an or- and when? I hope it is soon! Phone 884-1212

ganization that calls itself 'Just a girl who can't say NO!' UNITED Appeal, but I fail to MRS. JEAN RALLS, 324 Elmwood Ave. see where the United comes in



The Word Made Flesh By The Reverend James F. O'Neil

St. Mary's Anglican Church Many strands go to make up the festoon of popular Christmas celebration. Germany contributed the tree; Holland gave us St. Nicholas . . . Santa Claus . . . from many countries have come the carols. But all of these together, plus the present giving and receiving, the family reunions and kind remembrances of the friends of yesteryear are but outward trappings. These expressions of deep joy and happiness spring from a great and glorious mystery. 'Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given . . .

The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.' To record what the divine Birth has meant would be to write the history of the Church in all lands wherever she is found, to sum up the lives of the heroic martyrs and Godly saints, and of the multitude of unknown men and women who lived and served as seeing Him who is invisible.

To record the results of the coming of Jesus Christ as man to reveal God and to redeem mankind would require also the re-writing of the whole history of the western world during nineteen and a half centuries.

(Continued on Page 12)

Christmas 1895

(The following editorial appeared in the Christmas edition of "The Liberal" 70 years ago. Many of its thoughts and sentiments are still pertinent seven decades later.) -Editor.

The holidays are again upon us, and, as Christmas will intervene between this and the next issues of "The Liberal" we wish to all our patrons the compliments of the season — a

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Christmas! How the mind goes back on the memories of nearly nineteen centuries! How the little ones, and the larger ones too, of Christendom, from the frozen regions of the north to the sunny slopes of the south, all along the ages, have watched the rolling year, waiting with pleasing anticipation the day kept in memory of God's greatest gift to man—the Saviour of the human race. How unanimously the millions of our great Christianity unite in commemorating on this day the advent of the Messiah to whose ever-increasing sway we owe the innumerable privileges that

help to make life safe and enjoyable. Amid a thousand blessings on this welcome day we enlarge our hearts by the long established custom of holiday congratulations, bestowment of gifts, exhortations to merriment, innocent amusements, and the setting up of Christmas trees, which flourish, bloom and yield their fruits in an hour to the joy and satisfaction of all concerned. Christmas comes but once a year; let us help to make it pleasant and, as it rolls by add to the aggregate of human happiness.

It is true that the year that is now drawing so near its close has had its drawbacks and its privations. To many it has not been so successful as may have been desired. Many of our young men in this fair Canada have had to walk the streets anxious for work but without success; want has perhaps been felt in many a home, but

gaunt famine is a foreign enemy that has never invaded the homes of this community. The necessaries of life are plentiful and cheap, and luxuries are within the reach of many.

To all our friends, especially the subscribers of "The Liberal," we again wish a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. May you enjoy on this auspicious day the reunion of relatives and friends, and surround a table laden with the delicacies of the season. May the turkey be as fat, the goose as plump, and the plum pudding as rich as on any Christmas past and gone. And let us not forget the little ones, the boys and girls of every household.

Let us for a day quit grumbling about the cares, the disappointments and anxieties of life. Let those who are older forget that their heads are streaking for the grave, and bend their stiffened backs and romp with the children. Let us help to elicit hilarious shouts of laughter that will make our homes ring as with sympathetic joy. Our days of gifts and acts of kindness will soon be at an end. Our children will too soon have to put their shoulders to the burden of the hour. They will have to fight the stern battles of life. Let us prolong their boyhood and girlhood days as long as we can. Let us leave behind us some bright spots in the memories of those we love. On that glad day let us not pile all our gifts on the pet of the household until he ceases to appreciate, or lavish all our liberality within the home circle. It may be that there are those whom fortune has not favored, whose homes would be made gladder by generosity kindly and courteously bestowed.



"I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;

I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to

I asked for health, that I might do greater things; I was given infirmity, that I might do better

things . . . asked for riches, that I might be happy; was given poverty that I might be wise . . .

I asked for power, that I might have the praise of

of God . . . I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;

I was given life, that I might enjoy all things . . . I got nothing that I asked for -

answered.

I am among all men, most richly blessed!"

-Author Unknown The above prayer of a Confederate soldier has had a profound effect on the crippled and disabled, offering as it does a philosophy of hope and understanding for them. It has been adopted and titled "A Creed for Those Who Have Suffered" by scores of rehabilitation centres throughout the world.

Second Thoughts

BY GEORGE MAYES

O Yesterday's news is not necessarily dead

This is the week of the big office party - when girls will sit on their lap.

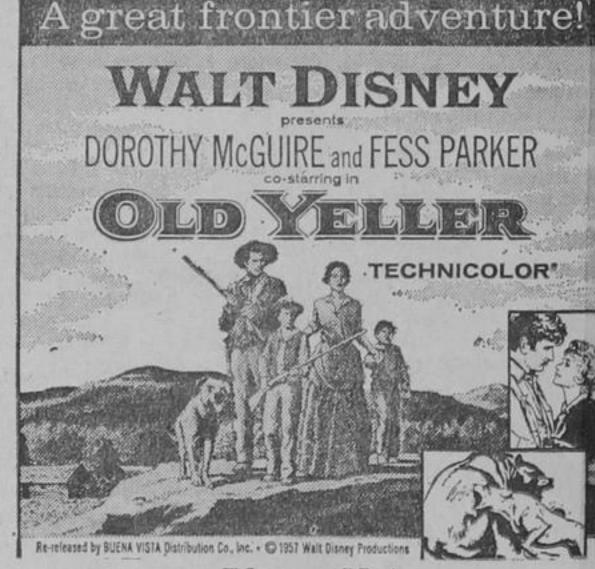
The Ontario Government is having a problem (Continued on Page 12)

Enjoy Sunday Movies This Sunday and Every Sunday Continuous from 5 p.m.

Thurs., Fri., Sat., Sun., Mon., Tues, Dec. 23 - 28



and MAURICE GHEVALIEK as PHILIP DULAINE / A Universal Picture plus



Please Note

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1st Show 7 p.m., last complete show 8.30 p.m. SUNDAY, DEC. 26

MATINEE 2 P.M. "OLD YELLER"

EVENING CONT. FROM 5 P.M.

HOLIDAY MATINEES MON., TUES. AT 2 P.M. "OLD YELLER"

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