

Nineteen Centuries Later

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was 30 and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never traveled 200 miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things which accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself. While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. His execution-

ers gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying, and that was His coat. When He was dead He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today He is the centerpiece of this column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has that One Solitary Life.—Anonymous Woman.

The First Christmas

And there were shepherds in the same district living in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them and the glory of God shone round about them, and they feared exceedingly. And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which shall be to all the people; for today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men of good will."

And it came to pass, when the angels had departed from them into heaven, that the shepherds were saying to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. And when they had seen, they understood what had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard marvelled at the things told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept in mind all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying God for all that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken to them.—Luke Chapter 2:8-27.



Represent Children Everywhere

These pre-schoolers of Riviera Hall, nursery school operated by the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, carry out a centuries old tradition of visiting the manger on this Christmas Day. They are, from left, Janette Smalley 4, Blair Smith 3, and Ricky Peterson 3. (Press-Herald Photo)

Merry Christmas From Other Lands



SEASONS GREETINGS from left, seated Amata Navamaret of Thailand; Rikid Cotta, Italy; Toos von Boetzelaer, The Netherlands; standing, from left, Clara Thomas, Colombia; and Nora Pinon, Maldonada, Uruguay.

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Nino Dios, Sinterklaas, Babbo Natale It's Still Christmas

Christmas in America is being experienced by five young women from foreign lands, here attending high school and living with American families, under the American Field Service Program.

They are Clara Thomas of Popoyan, Colombia, who is attending West High; Amata Navamaret of Thonburi, Thailand, Torrance High; Toos von Boetzelaer, Renkum, The Netherlands, South High; Nora Pinon, Maldonado, Uruguay, North High; and Rikid Cotta, Turin, Italy, South High.

The Christmas novena observed in every home is the highlight of the Yuletide season in Colombia, according to Clara Thomas. It is a time of reunion of relatives and friends. After the prayers, carols are sung to the accompaniment of timbales, guitars, marimbas and panderetas, simulating the instruments the shepherds would have used in the first visit to see the Christ Child in Bethlehem.

After the midnight mass, the family gathers for Christmas Supper. In response to letters written to Nino Dios, the Christ Child, the children are showered with gifts left under their beds or Christmas trees.

The holiday of Christmas is not usually celebrated in Thailand, according to Amata Navamaret, however there is a mammoth celebration on Jan. 1, New Year's Day, when there is a big feast and the exchange of gifts and cards.

The national religion of Thailand is Buddhism, and most festival and ceremonies are of a religious nature in connection with the Life of Lord Buddha, the most important Visakha Bucha.

Visakha Bucha takes place during the full moon of the sixth lunar month (about May) and commemorates the triple episodes of the birth, enlightenment and passing into Nirvana of Lord Buddha.

In the Netherlands, Christmas and Santa Claus are separated, states Toos von Boetzelaer. Santa Claus is not Father Christmas, but a bishop whose

birthday is celebrated on Dec. 5. About three weeks prior to this day, he arrives in a boat from Spain, docking at Amsterdam. There is a big parade for him with his white horse and his servants, the Black Peters.

Between his arrival and Dec. 5, the children set their shoes under the chimney with food for the horse of Santa Claus (Sinterklaas) and sing special songs. At night, Sinterklaas rides his horse on the roofs of the houses to drop presents into the children's shoes.

The true Christmas, Dec. 25, is a religious holiday, without presents, and celebrated within the family. In the morning people attend church and in the evening there is a feast followed by songs and the reading of Christmas stories by the father or mother.

Nora Pinon of Uruguay points out that in her country Christmas goes from Dec. 24 to Jan. 6. Elaborate decorations are used and the Nativity Scene is placed on rocks since it is summertime in Uruguay and there is no need for the fireplace. Christmas and New Year's are observed with church services and family dinners and it is on Jan. 6, Epiphany, that "Children's Day" or "King's Day" is observed. Observing the arrival of the Three Kings at the manger to visit the Christ Child, children believe the Kings bring presents on the night of Jan. 5. It is this night that bread and water are put out for the King's camels by the children.

An Italian cliché "Christmas with your family and Easter with whom you want" has its double meaning for Rikid Cotta of Italy. Rikid will be present with her American family for Christmas and with her Italian family in thought.

These visitors to America will be sharing traditional Christmas festivities in the homes of their American parents, Messrs and Mrs. William Robertson, Lester Foster, A. Orrell, John Rotolonte, and Lloyd Money.