

# The Franklin Press

AND

# The Highlands Maconian

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### Christmas, 1946

CHRISTMAS comes this year to a world strangely troubled.

So short a time ago it was that we joyfully celebrated the end of the war. . . . it was a world filled with hope and courage. . . .

Then we hailed the coming of peace. Now that peace still seems far beyond the horizon. In China there is civil war. Russia, the nation we were praising, only a few months ago, as a brave ally, grabs what she wants. And in America each group seems at another's throat—capital and labor spar for advantage. . . . And . . . the best informed and most thoughtful persons are deeply pessimistic about the outlook for a stable world peace.

Then we had beaten the German and Japanese nations. Now we find we still must defeat the evils we fought against.

We are permitting thousands in Europe to go hungry and cold. . . . thousands are virtual slaves under a forced labor system, a system the Germans started and their victors have now adopted.

Our scientists have developed the atom bomb—and we fear war more than ever before. Our technologists have built labor-saving, mass-production machines—and capital-labor strife is at a new peak. Our schools have developed intellectual giants—and our problems grow more acute.

\* \* \*

The comments above might well have been written yesterday, but they were not. They appeared in a Christmas editorial in this column one year ago this week.

Yet how true they remain today!

Truly, our progress is slow. Heart-breakingly slow, when measured in terms of a year, a decade, a generation.

But progress we do.

No longer is crucifixion a routine punishment, as it was in the days of Jesus. On the contrary, the love that He taught is expressed in a pity, a sympathy, a kindness that is widespread and admired today, whereas it was a despised exception in the first century.

We have progressed a little even in the past 12 months.

To take a single concrete example, it can no longer be said, as it was in last December's editorial, that "we still hold thousands of Germans in American prison camps".

Notable, too, is the way the GI's are affecting the situation. True enough, too many of them are voluntary members of the 52-20 club; true, some of them are motivated solely by selfish ambition; and it is true that they seem cynical and disillusioned.

But the fact remains that they have done something, in a single year, to clean up the mess their elders have made of the world, particularly in politics. And if they are disillusioned, it is not with life itself; they are disillusioned only with surface things—with the same old ideas, the same old methods, the same old stuffed shirt leadership that has proved ineffective in the past.

\* \* \*

We can take hope, too, by remembering that all human history has been a series of crises, and that every crisis has been met and conquered through the inexhaustible courage of the human spirit.

Most encouraging of all, perhaps, is the growing conviction that, in the final analysis, intellect alone is not enough; our way must be lit by the lamp of the human heart. And the growing conviction that the solution, and the only solution, of the world's problems lies in the teachings of Him who, down through the centuries, has been the great Lamp Lighter.

A grateful mind is a great mind.—Secker.

Thou that hast given so much to me, give one more thing—a grateful heart.—George Herbert.

# THE FIRST CHRISTMAS STORY

AS TOLD IN THE FOUR GOSPELS

AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.

For unto us a child is born unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

\* \* \*

The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

\* \* \*

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. . . . Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name JESUS.

\* \* \*

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. . . . And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David;) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 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.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of

the Lord shone around about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them; "Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us."

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

\* \* \*

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are coming to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel!'"

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt; and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. . . .

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life". And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. . . . And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

## LETTERS

### PRaises TELlico CHURCH

Editor, The Press:

For more than 23 years we persuasive workers have labored hard to discover and develop the Persuasive Church Plan, which everybody says is good. I have taken a leading part in this work from its beginning and have done some work in 11 counties.

Hundreds of dollars have been given us. A number of preachers and churches have cooperated beautifully. But Tellico Baptist church in Macon County has the honor of being the first to put on and use the plan.

The four preachers in its membership have the distinctive credit of being the first to send their names to the county secretary that they were in favor of the churches of the county adopting the church resolution, as described in chapter 4 of "The Unreached Field".

One of these was its pastor, Theron Slagle. This was hard to get preachers to do because they were afraid of their churches. Brother Slagle is a live wire and staunch supporter of the Persuasive Church Plan. He is trying through Brother M. A. Huggins to get the Baptist State convention to adopt it.

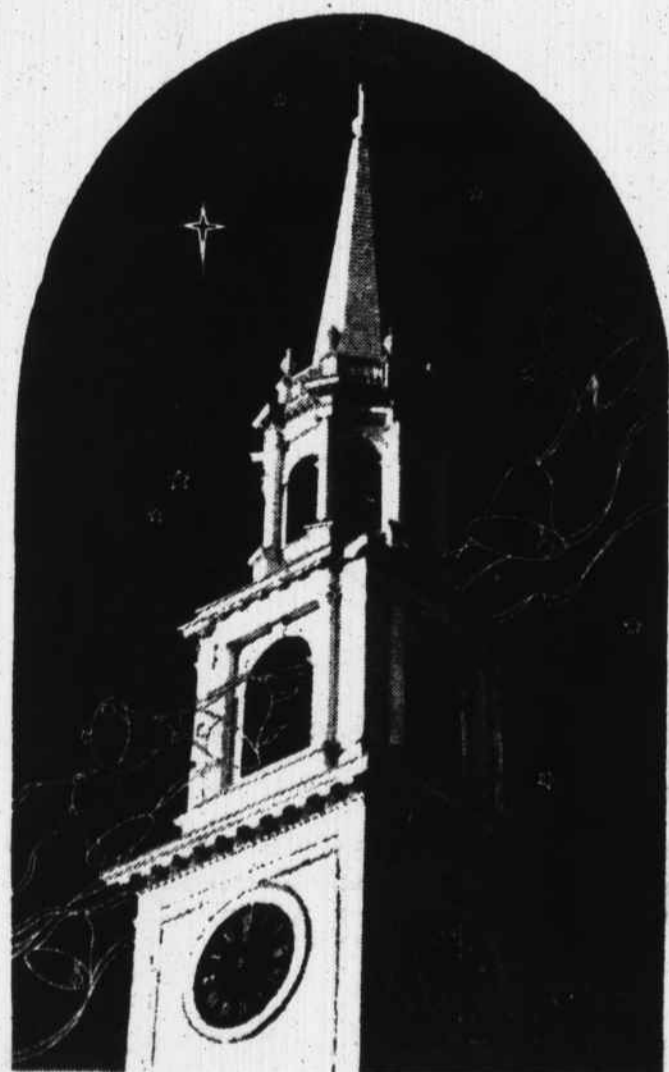
Tellico church has bought a school bus to convert into a church bus to increase attendance.

This is a spirit in action, going out into the unreached field. The unreached field is the people and wicked places not being reached by the general work of the church.

Eight other churches in Macon County have started in the path with Tellico and they will progress as they have opportunity and learn how. They are Burningtown, Oak Grove, Liberty, Cartoogechaye, Newman's Chapel, Calvery, Union Methodist, and Longview Baptist.

The overhead machinery created by sending so many names to the county secretary constitutes an organization without attempts at parliamentary organization, and in many times

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Wherever a Church steeple rises to pierce the blue skies of daylight, and commune with the stars of night—there is Peace. And as we enter our Church this Christmastide, the full spirit—meaning—and essence of the word shall enter our beings and inspire each of us to fulfil our own small roles in achieving for all time Peace on Earth; Good Will to Men.

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