

Santa Claus Legend Began In Turkey

(Ed. Note: Jerry Wilson, serviceman son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wilson and his wife Kathy are in Turkey. Their Christmas letter details many interesting facts, as well as that they will spend Christmas in Egypt and the Holy Land.)

Christmas Greetings from Turkey—a land that knows no Christmas! Are you aware of the fact that the Santa Claus legend began in an area which is present day Turkey? Saint Nicholas, born in Parara (in Asia Minor), was Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor (near present day Antalya, a Turkish city on the shores of the

Mediterranean Sea). It is said that he secretly helped very poor people by putting gifts of money through their windows during the night when no one could see him. As an orphan himself he became the beloved father figure to many orphans bestowing much kindness and charity on the children teaching them the Word of God and delighting them with many little presents.

History tells us that he was cast into exile and prison during the persecution of Emperor Diocletian and released by Constantine the Great. He died in Myra about 350 A.D. According to tra-

dition as early as 450, churches were being built in his honor, and he was well known throughout the Greek Church. In 1087 his body was brought by Italian merchants from Myra to the city of Bari in Italy where his relics are still preserved in the church of San Nicola. By 1200 this much loved man had captured the hearts and imaginations of all European nations. Now, over 1600 years later, in 1965 St. Nicholas is depicted as a pudgy, red suited, rosy cheeked, white bearded, rich benevolent old man who lives at the North Pole and travels with eight reindeer (flying ones if you please) in a sleigh. As a true Christian, St. Nicholas would no doubt be very sorrowful if he thought that today his image would overshadow the true meaning of Christmas Day.

Another three months and another weekend break for Jerry have rolled around. We spent

this one visiting the ancient site of Troy. At the site the ground was strewn on the surface with the relics of Roman Troy. In modern terms it was hardly more than a village. There were nine cities of Troy built one upon another. The high walls of one city stand in part as mentioned in Homer's Iliad.

We learn some history of Troy from the Iliad. Menelaus was the king of the Greek city-state of Sparta. His wife Helen eloped with Paris, son of Pralam, king of Troy. This brought on the ten years of the famous Trojan War. After much subduing by the Greeks, Troy still held our city the Greek's began to despair. They began to make preparations to abandon the siege; some of their ships were withdrawn and lay hidden behind a neighboring island. They then began building an immense wooden horse, which the ysaid was a propitiatory offering to the goddess Minerva

but in truth was filled with soldiers. The remaining Greeks then went to their ships and sailed away indicating a final departure. The Trojans, seeing the encampment broken up and the fleet gone, concluded the enemy had abandoned the siege. The gates were thrown open, and the whole population rejoiced at the new freedom of coming out of the city and passing freely over the battlefield. The great horse was the chief object of curiosity. Every body wondered what it could be for. Some said to take it into the city as a trophy; others were afraid of it. A priest of Neptune exclaimed "have you not learned enough of Grecian fraud to be on your guard against it? I fear the Greeks even when they offer gifts." He struck his lance at the horse's side and a hollow sound reverberated.

At that moment a group of people appeared dragging forward a Greek soldier they had captured. The Trojans promised the Greek life if he answered their questions truthfully. He told them the wooden horse was a propitiatory offering to Minerva and was made so huge to prevent its being carried into the city for a prophet told them that if the Trojans took possession of the horse they would assuredly triumph over the Greeks. After this the Trojans regarded the horse as a sacred object.

They tore down the city gates and took it into the city with song and great festivity. That same night the imprisoned Greek soldiers enclosed in the body of the horse opened the gates of the city to their comrades who had returned by ship under the cover of night. The city was set on fire; the people, overcome with feasting and sleep, were defeated, and Troy completely subdued. As for Helen, Menelaus recovered possession of her. (She supposedly had not ceased to love him even though she deserted him for another). Upon their reconciliation they left for their native land.

Hundreds of years later a new Troy had Biblical significance. The Apostle Paul stopped on his missionary journeys.

The site itself was no different than other archeological sites. Stones, stones, and more stones. The view from the hill overlooking the wide sweeping plains with the Aegean Sea in the background was outstanding. Archeological sites are rather interesting. If it's your first one, you cannot see enough or take too many pictures. If you have seen several such as Jerry and I, they are "old stuff." Skip, the fellow that was with us on the

trip, took about 100 slides; Jerry and I took about twenty. Troy was the poorest site we have been to in that it was small and poorly maintained. However, wherever you are, you cannot help being awestruck by the historical significance of the site.

On the return trip, Jerry made an unexpected stop to the side of the road after passing a group of road signs. His explanation was that one of the signs was red and that meant something special. We would find nothing on the map but Jerry's curiosity led us down the road anyway. After about fifteen miles of dirt road, we came to a Turkish village which was at the foot of what appeared to be another archeological site. It was. It turned out to be Assos which we were unable to identify at the time. After looking it up at home, we learned that it was a city in New Testament times; Paul mentions it in passing in the Book of Acts. All in all it turned out to be a very interesting enjoyable weekend!

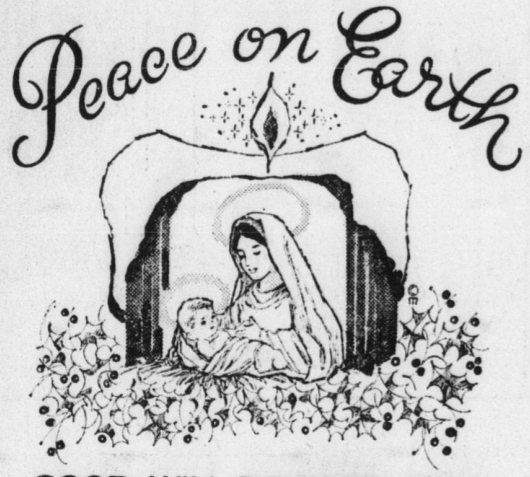
After three years in Muslim countries I think I will begin something I have been intending to do for some time—tell you a little about their religion. The most known fact of the Islam faith is their prayers and bowings in the direction of Mecca five times a day. I shall begin by explaining what this means.

Their worship is conducted in a mosque (place of prostration literally). In Yalova the men attend the services at daybreak, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and early part of the night. We live directly across the street from a mosque and we hear the imam (prayer leader) giving the call to prayer over a loud speaker. The men arrange themselves in rows behind the imam. Before entering the mosque they perform an abulution...wash faces and hands up to the elbows and feet up to the ankles. Outside of each mosque is a fountain or faucet for this purpose. Prayer is only valid when this ritual of purity has been done.

There are seven movements and appropriate recitations with the bowings. No. 1 recitation of the phrase "God is most great" with the hands open on each side of the face; No. 2 recitation of the Fattiha followed by another passage or passages from the Koran while standing upright; No. 3 bowing from the hips; No. 4 Straightening up; No. 5 sliding to the knees and a first prostration with face to the ground; No. 6 sitting back on the haunches; No. 7 a second prostration. The Fattiha, the "Lord's Prayer" of Islam is:

"In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate
Praise be to God, the Lord of the Worlds,
The Merciful One, the Compassionate One.
Master of the Day of Doom.
Thee alone we serve, to Thee alone we cry for help.
Guide us in the straight path
The path of them Thou hast blessed.
Not of those with whom Thou are angry
Nor of those who go astray."
Friday is their "Sabbath" or day of solemnized community prayer. It is not a day of rest, and business is to be suspended

only during the noon service itself. In addition to the prayers and bowings of the daily meetings this service has in addition an address or sermon. The address is fixed. It has the praise of God and a blessing of the Prophet. It offers a prayer for the Muslim community, a recitation from the Koran, and an admonition to piety. In a small village like Yalova women do not attend the mosque. In larger cities like Istanbul you will see a few in the mosque. We have visited many mosques in large cities.



GOOD WILL TOWARD MEN

The blessed wish of the Christmas season is expressed anew, as we join our heartfelt prayers with yours, that peace and good will may soon endure for all.

WEE LANTERN



A Christmas Prayer

With all the happy peacefulness of a child's prayer, we greet you during this holy season.

Willie's Jewelry

In the Spirit of Christmas

Let us turn our thoughts to the first Christmas and capture in our hearts all the peace, love and understanding of that Day.

In the true spirit of Christmas, we wish you a happy and holy Day and pray that the blessings of the season will truly be yours.

Home Savings & Loan Association

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| DR. J. E. ANTHONY
President & Director | G. A. BRIDGES
Vice-Pres. & Director | J. H. THOMSON
Vice-Pres. & Director |
| THOMAS A. TATE
Sec.-Treas. & Director | EMILY A. HERNDON
Asst. Sec.-Treas. | JACOB A. DIXON
Mgr., Bessemer City Branch |
| I. G. PATTERSON
Director | B. D. RATTERREE
Director | DR. PAUL E. HENDRICKS
Director |
| R. S. PLONK
Director | FRANCES HERNDON
Teller | Teller
NANCY S. SCISM |

A Joyous Christmas

Our wish—that the meaning of Christmas be deeper, its friendships stronger and hearts filled with its peace and good will.

Patterson Oil Co.

Happy Holidays

Happy holidays, good fun and cheer

... we send these wishes to all our customers with a note of thanks for their patronage.

Bridges Hardware

Greetings

May the happiness of the holidays be with you always.

GRIGG GARAGE

Merry Christmas TO ALL

...and to ALL a HEALTHY NEW YEAR

GRIFFIN'S DRUG

YOUR PRESCRIPTION STORE
FREE PICKUP + DELIVERY
PHONE 739-4721 • 129 MOUNTAIN ST.

Sarah Hord	Kathy Butler
Claudette Corn	Linda Webster
Beatrice Howell	Gloria Leftwich
Steve Rathbone	Ellis Fincher

Wilson Griffin

To all of our friends... may the peace and joy of this beautiful season always be yours.

GREETINGS

for Christmas

CITY SERVICE STATION

Otis Falls Otis Falls, Jr.

Santa rings his bell to send very best wishes for a fun-filled Holiday to all.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

LYNCH FURNITURE

Haywood E. Lynch Lester L. Lingerfelt
Janell Summitt Robert Taylor