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A Christmas Greeting
By Edmund F. Arras, International President

The spirit which inspired the Wise Men of old to follow the Star of Bethlehem with their gifts for the Christ Child leads the Kiwanians of today in their giving to the "underprivileged child" for

"Inasmuch as ye do it unto the least of one of these ye do it unto Me."

The glory of the sunset of life is dependent upon the sweetness, the love, and the joy of childhood. Upon the anniversary of the one birthday which makes all other birthdays worth while, let us remember that,

"He took a Child and set him in the midst of them."

Joy and peace are the incense and myrrh of the Christmas season. Joy cannot exist with hunger, peace cannot prevail in the heart of a Kiwanian who fails to do his part in bringing joy to the "underprivileged child." To have assisted an "under privileged child" for even a single blessed hour is to have joined the heavenly host in tidings of joy and good will. Let our celebration this year be a truly Christ Mass, let us begin our worship with the merry day, and continue it throughout the year, not giving in material things alone, but giving of self and service.

If you would know the Merriest Christmas of a life time, go personally and search, not along the highways but in the byways, not that you may give money but that you may personally go to the manger of love and service, there finding those who are truly worthy, but not of the class who are reached by the many well-known agencies for such work. When the truly worthy overlooked and underprivileged ones are found, let Christmas joy be given through the full basket, toys and Christmas party, but, best of all, assure them of a personal interest which shall not be for a day only. May Kiwanis "build" the Christmas spirit through the practical application of the "Golden Rule," by our 85,000 members supplying the needs which they discover.
A Christmas Message

By John H. Moss
International President

To each, your President wishes a Merry Christmas, free from the troubles that disturb, relieved from the sorrows that distress, absolved from the sickness that dispirits. May the happiness of the holiday reign in your home and convey its message of help and comfort, both mental and physical, to those less favored.

Our first obligation on Christmas Day should be a proper religious observance of the occasion; the second, in giving help to the helpless and hope to the hopeless; the third, in maintaining that time-honored custom of giving gifts to those who are near and dear to us.

Far too frequently in this age of materialism, these obligations are reversed in fulfillment. This, however, is not true among such men as comprise our Kiwanis membership. Culture and character properly evaluate obligations. May your President, however, advantage by the opportunity to stress the importance of the occasion for once more giving evidence of the true Kiwanis spirit in helping those who are less able to help themselves than we are.

Christmas will mean much to many, less to others. The day will dawn on homes where sadness reigns, as well as those where gladness abides. While trees will be trimmed and toys will be arranged in the homes of many as the midnight bells tell of the new day; in the homes of others no trees nor toys will be found. Christmas will come to all, for—

"Out of the shadow of night
The world moves into light;
It is daybreak everywhere."

Yes, the day will dawn for all; but, here, a heart will ache for a dear one departed; there, a child will yearn for toys which poverty prevents; here, a mind will grieve for a son or daughter gone wrong; there, the sick will suffer for lack of proper care; here, a body will languish for nourishment unobtainable; there, a soul will struggle for moral stimulant. Such are the pains and strains we may relieve, the sadness and sorrow we may assuage.

Christmas charity should embody the personal contact, the actual delivery of the gift by the donor. The friendly grasp of hand and cheery word of comfort are always more expressive and far longer remembered than the mere amelioration of a physical want or the satisfaction of a mental desire. The personal contact conveys a heart message of hope and encouragement which nothing else can supply.

Nineteen hundred and twenty-five years ago, a voice was heard, the echo of which has never died. Let it now play upon the keyboards of our hearts and conjure forth harmonies of helpfulness and happiness for the sick and the sore, the needy and the distressed. Let us relieve the stomach-hungerings, assuage the heart-longings, assist the soul-wants. Then will we fill many a home with music, though not a sound be heard. Then will we obtain that enduring reward which one's own conscience pays, in its meditative moods, that other bodies have been better nourished because of our assistance, that other minds have been greatly cheered because of our encouragement, that other hearts have been made happier because of our sympathy.
Christmas Is an Armistice

BY ROY L. SMITH
Member, Kiwanis Club of Minneapolis, Minnesota

Christmas is an armistice!

For three hundred and sixty-four days we have been worrying, fighting, working, competing, struggling, rushing, grabbing, scolding. Our nerves are on edge, our brain is in a whirl, our soul is in an agony of discouragement because of the depression.

Then comes Christmas!

It may seem strange, but the banks are all closed. Overdrawn accounts can wait. The stock market is quiet. No ticker tape, no bedlam, no suicides. The courts are all adjourned. No one is suing, no one is trying to recover damages, no one is starting trouble. The stores and markets are all closed. No one is trying to make money.

The board of directors is not meeting, the agitators are not haranguing the crowd, street-car motormen and telephone girls, for the most part, are working on half-time, there are no “extras.”

A new spirit has taken possession of the world.

For one brief day we stop in our mad race for power and give ourselves a chance to enjoy the great simplicities of life. The politician spends his day at home, the general manager takes dinner with his family and the corporation president impersonates a prancing horse with a shouting grandson upon his back.

For one brief day children come into their own. The whole household moves away from its usual adult-centered life and puts “a little child in their midst.” Most of the problems of society, business and government would be quickly solved if the first question settled was the rights of the children.

For one brief day we wish our competitors well. Under the spell of Christmas warmth and kindliness we forget our animosities, dismiss our grudges, soften our creeds, expand our sympathies and invite our souls. We discover that life’s greatest joys come, not through getting but by giving—not through spending but by sharing.

And everywhere there is light!

From millions of little trees the sparkling ornaments transform somber surroundings into samples of fairyland. From millions of eyes, dull through trouble and burdens, a new light of happiness shines. Faces that have worn nothing but the mask of care are now lighted up with smiles of deep joy.

If some man from Mars should visit us on Christmas day he would not recognize us as the same people he saw last week in the working world. We are not the same people. Christmas has transformed us.

It is not the gifts that came to us that made the difference. Few of us are any richer on Christmas day than we were the day before, so far as our bank balance can declare.

Few of us are more famous, powerful or wiser because of Christmas—but we are happier. We have not been elected to office, exalted to power nor schooled in scientific formula because of Christmas.

For one brief day we laugh and live. We find the deep satisfactions that generosity, simplicity, faith and love can give. We feel our lives grow in interest and our confidence in the goodness of the universe deepens as the Christmas spirit takes possession of us.

After three hundred and sixty-four days of cynicism, anxiety and bitterness we come to Christmas and for one day we really live.

But Christmas is only a day.

When will we learn to make the armistice a permanent peace?
Christmas

Christmas! The very word conjures the imagination of old and young. The spirit of doing for others and giving is in the air. Even the trees have caught this spirit of service and want to be helpful to mankind.

It was just before Christmas that three shapely evergreen trees, waving their branches in the breeze on the rough mountain side began talking among themselves about “doing something worth-while this year.” Their names were Faith, Hope and Charity.

Faith said: “Well, even if we are isolated here, I have faith in our being able to serve some useful purpose. Maybe each of us will become a Christmas tree and be decorated with gaily colored lights and tinsel for the jollification and happiness of some family. That would be my idea of the spirit of Christmas.”

“I want to be of service, too,” said Hope. “How thrilling it would be to grace a large room in some institution for underprivileged children or old people, where my green foliage would be decorated with brightly colored ornaments and sparkling lights. Just think how much joy and cheer I could bring to those who are denied the privilege of being with mothers and fathers, friends and relatives. To make the occasion complete, it would be my hope that many gaily wrapped boxes and presents would be on hand for distribution to the old and the young—things that would remind them of happier days. That is the spirit of Hope.”

Charity felt even more charitable than her sisters. She said: “I have ambitions to make many thousands happy. I want to stand in some public square—to be gaily lighted to help old and young, rich and poor, to enjoy and celebrate the Yuletide season. If my wish could come true, I would want great multitudes to gather around me and join in the singing of carols for the glory of Christmas. Then there would be ‘Peace on earth, Good will toward men.’”

Thus, Faith, Hope and Charity exemplify the real spirit of Christmas.

By Edwin F. Hill
President, Woman’s Club of Washington, D. C.
A Kiwanis Christmas Sermon

Told in many languages, in prose and in poetry, is this old legend of the humble cobbler and his vision. The legend comes to The Kiwanis Magazine as a suggestion for “A Christmas Sermon for Kiwanians,” as clubs in general and individual members in particular spend many hours and days and weeks working for children, underprivileged physically and otherwise. Christmas means much to Kiwanians and still more to the children they serve.

An hour passed, and Martin next saw a poor, miserably clothed woman, carrying a baby. She paused, wearily, to rest in the shelter of his doorway. Quickly he flung open the door.

“Come in and warm while you rest,” he told her. “You are not well,” he asked.

“I am going to the hospital. I hope they will take me in, and my baby,” she explained. “My husband is at sea, and I am ill, without a sou.”

“Poor child!” cried the old man. “You must eat something while you are getting warm. No? Then let me give a cup of milk to the little one. Ah, what a bright, pretty little fellow he is! Well, you have put no shoes on him!”

“I have no shoes for him,” sighed the mother.

“Then shall you have this lovely pair I finished yesterday.” And Martin took down the soft little snow-white shoes he had looked at the evening before, and slipped them on the child’s feet. They fitted perfectly. And shortly the young mother went her way, full of gratitude, and Martin went back to his post at the window.

Hour after hour went by, and many needy souls shared the meager hospitality of the old cobbler, but the expected guest did not appear.

At last, when night had fallen, Father Martin retired to his cot with a heavy heart.

“It was only a dream,” he sighed. “I did hope and believe, but He has not come.”

Suddenly, so it seemed to his weary eyes, the room was flooded with a glorious light. And to the cobbler’s astonished vision there appeared before him, one by one, the poor street sweeper, the sick mother, and her baby, and all the people whom he had aided during the day. All smiled and said:

“Have you not seen me? Did I not sit at your table?”—and vanished!

Then softly out of the silence he heard again the gentle voice, repeating old, familiar words:

“Whosoever shall receive one of these little ones, receiveth me. I was hungry and ye gave me meat; I was a stranger and ye took me in. Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”
The Guiding Star

By PHILIP E. AUER
Past Governor Ohio District and pastor
of Peace Lutheran Church, Galion

T IS NIGHT. As we look out over the vast expanse of desert, there suddenly shines from God’s blue sky above a light of unusual brilliance, dispelling the darkness of the night. It is a star—God’s Christmas Star. Three men, seated on camels and following the star, are led by it to a lowly manger bed in the little town of Bethlehem. And what they see there, God’s expression of love toward men in the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, dispels the darkness of their hearts even as the Christmas Star had dispelled the darkness of the night.

IT IS NIGHT. As we to-day look out upon the nations of the world it seems as tho darkness has settled over many of them—the darkness of hate, intolerance and destruction. But lift up your eyes and look! God’s Christmas Star still shines! That Star is God’s pledge of His undying love, peace and good will toward men. As long as it shines we may have the assurance that the darkness will be dispelled; love will triumph over hate; righteousness over wrong; peace over war; God over sin. God’s Christmas Star challenges men to-day to labor as never before to make these endeavors a glorious reality.

MAY PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, and we of the United States and Canada in particular, see once again at this season God’s Christmas Star. May we be cheered by its message of love and good will. May we be led by it to Bethlehem and there receive the inspiration and strength so necessary to carry on the building program of Kiwanis and so contribute toward the building of a better world.

FOR MANY PEOPLE IT MAY BE NIGHT. But the darkness shall be dispelled. God’s Christmas Star still shines!