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## UA37/23 WHAS Broadcast No. 71

WHAS

Western Kentucky University

Earl Moore

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WHAS Broadcast No.71

Tuesday, December 21, 1937

3:30-4:00 P.M.

From Extension Studio in Bowling Green

Strahm (chimes) "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," fading for:

Moore The Ministerial Association of Bowling Green, using the studio facilities of Western Teachers College, is sponsoring this Christmas program. Mrs. Margaret Posey and Mr. David Highbaugh, accompanied by Mrs. Nell Dickey Bowen, will present selections. The Rev. Robert H. Clarke will be the speaker.

(Chimes up)

Moore The college chimes are heard. Prof. Franz J. Strahm at the console.

(Chimes up)

Moore Mrs. Margaret Posey sings "Cantique De Noel," by Adolphe Adam. Mrs. Nell Dickey Bowen at the piano.

Posey "Cantique De Noel."

Moore The sponsoring organization has selected the Rev. Robert H. Clarke as the speaker. His subject is "The Voice of Christmas." Dr. Clarke.

Clarke It is Christmas time again. A star pierces the gloom of night. A weary world kneels before the manger of its Hope, while down across the years comes the chorus of the angels and their mes-

sage of goodwill. Radiant love for all mankind is everywhere abroad. Or, is it?

Christmas, as almost everyone knows, is the annual festival of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Founder of Christianity. There are few people in America who do not observe it. It is true, however, that the vast majority of these participants have no real interest in the traditional, much less the vital, religious implications of the day.

For more than three hundred years after Jesus' birth there was no Christmas. Neither the Church nor Christians observed the anniversary of His lowly entry into the world. Though the story of the shepherds in the field and the Magi from the East are familiar and full of poetic beauty, it yet remains true that we do not know when Jesus was born. The world will never know when that Babe first opened his eyes, whether in the radiant month of spring, the meridian splendor of summer, the evening glory of Autumn, or the bleak midnight of winter, yet for all our want of knowledge, tradition has firmly rooted the Holy Nativity in the heart of winter's cold.

In the fourth century we find the church in Rome accepting December 25 as the date of Jesus' birth, while other sections of the church were observing March 25 or January 6 as his natal day. Not until the fifth century was there anything approaching general agreement in the celebration of December 25. And why, we may ask, did the church choose December 25? Well, scholars are



rather well agreed that the selection of this date is closely connected with the fact that Roman paganism celebrated on December 25 the winter solstice, the annual birth of the Invincible Sun. Again and again the church undertook to displace a pagan festival by placing a Christian festival in its stead. Perhaps the church was wise in so doing; but there were also certain inevitable results.

The masses merely transferred the old pagan customs to the new festival. The giving of Christmas presents, commendable though it may be, is a survival of a common custom connected with the celebration of the Roman Saturnalia and the Kalends of January. The lighting of candles is likewise a remnant of Roman practice.

Not all of our customs, however, have come to us from the Roman world. When Christianity moved into the northern parts of Europe and took Christmas with it, it encountered the great festival called Yule. All the customs and superstitions which had belonged from time immemorial to their own Yuletide, and all they had imbibed from the Romans, began to cluster about December 25. It became a day of feasting and riotous celebration. The use of the evergreen is a relic of Teutonic animism, a profound reverence for all natural phenomena. Every fountain had its spirit, every mountain its deity and every water, grove and meadow its supernatural associations. Even the mistletoe, so commonly in use today, is a contribution of Celtic religion.

Santa Claus, that mythical being so dear to the heart of childhood, young and old, is a strange mixture of Woden, the Teutonic god, and Saint Nicholas, who is said to have been

Bishop of Myra at the beginning of the fourth century. It is generally believed that Santa Claus was brought to this country by the early Dutch settlers; but such wonderful transformations have taken place in him that he scarcely seems now to be the same being. His canonical robes of gray are gone and he wears a cap and suit of brilliant red. He has traded his famous gray horse for reindeer and sleigh. Once, lean and ascetic, he is today a fat, jolly old fellow. Thus we have created this day of days.

It is Christmas time again. With all the accumulated traditions and customs of the ages, we will celebrate it. But is Christmas really a Christian festival? Why not? In spite of the many incrustations we may answer that it is. After all the trappings have been cleared away we come at last to the real meaning of Christmas. We are celebrating the birth of the Christ child.

Even so, we are beset with a very real danger. We are so likely to give ourselves over to sentimental goodwill toward all men for one day only. We permit the beauty of the Christmas scene to blind us to the real world in which we live. We satisfy ourselves with a general impulse, seeking for one brief day to alleviate the world's great woe, neglectful of the underlying causes that produce the world's distress. It is so easy to place one's benediction on things as they are. It is so difficult to transform the world and make the spirit of Christmas the spirit of every day. How gloriously Christian Christmas might be if we could only free ourselves sufficiently from the business, festivity, and pageantry of the season to remember that He, whose birthday it is, was himself Love Incarnate -- to remember He insisted that love should motivate every act of man through all of life.



5 Yes, Christmas is the natal day of one who came to feed the world's starved soul and did himself forever live the life of Love. That is why its jubilant bells echo from every hill:

"Ring out the old, ring in the new,  
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;  
The year is going, let him go;  
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

"Ring out the grief that saps the mind,  
For those that here we see no more;  
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,  
Ring in redress to all mankind.

"Ring out a slowly dying cause,  
And ancient forms of party strife;  
Ring in the nobler modes of life,  
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

"Ring out the want, the care, the sin,  
The faithless coldness of the times;  
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,  
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

"Ring out false pride in place and blood,  
The civic slander and the spite;  
Ring in the love of truth and right,  
Ring in the common love of good.

"Ring out the old shapes of foul disease;  
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;  
Ring out the thousand wars of old,  
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

"Ring in the valiant man and free,  
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;  
Ring out the darkness of the land,  
Ring in the Christ that is to be."

And, perhaps, this year, as we approach the Christmas tide, we may feel constrained to pause a moment and silently, yet reverently together say:

"Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown  
When Thou camest to earth for me;  
But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room  
For Thy hold nativity.

O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus:  
There is room in my heart for Thee !

"Heaven's arches rang, when the angels sang,  
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;  
But in lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,  
And in great humility.  
O Come to my heart, Lord Jesus:  
There is room in my heart for Thee !"

The spirit of Christ in the hearts of men makes Christmas Christian.

Moore From Wilson's cantata, "The Everlasting Light," a mezzo-soprano and baritone duet, "Room in My Heart for Thee," is sung by Mrs. Posey and Mr. Highbaugh. Mrs. Bowen at the piano.

Posey and Highbaugh "Room in My Heart for Thee."

Strahm (chimes) "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," fading for:

Moore The college chimes are played by Prof. Franz J. Strahm.

Strahm "Joy to The World," fading for:

Moore This program comes to you from Bowling Green, Kentucky, sponsored by the local Ministerial Association, using the studio facilities of Western Teachers College. You have heard Mrs. Posey, mezzo-soprano, and Mr. David Highbaugh, baritone, with Mrs. Nell Dickey Bowen at the piano, and a talk on "The Voice of Christmas," by the Rev. Robert H. Clarke.

(chimes up)

On next Tuesday at the same hour the Players Guild of Bowling Green will present a one-act play, "The Maker of Dreams." You are invited to hear it.

(chimes up)

This is Earl Moore saying goodbye until next Tuesday at 3:30 o'clock C.S.T.

(chimes up and continue)