



A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

The holiday season is a time for celebration—a celebration of peace, love and fellowship. For many, Christmas is also a time for reflection when thoughts turn to the manger in Bethlehem and to the Christmas message: Peace on Earth, Good Will to All People.

This year, the message of that first Christmas perhaps most needs repeating in the Holy Land itself. Bethlehem is under military occupation. Hundreds of thousands of the Holy Land's people are scattered and exiled.

This issue of the Newsletter presents traditional songs of Christmas mingled with the thoughts of present-day Palestinian refugees, with the hope that the combination will foster fresh insights and a clearer understanding of the problem in the Middle East.

HERE WE COME A-CAROLING

Here we come a-caroling
Among the leaves so green
Here we come a-wandering
So fair to be seen.

Refrain:

Love and Joy come to you,
And to you your carol too,
And God bless you and
Send you a Happy New Year
And God send you
A Happy New Year.

We are not daily beggars
That beg from door to door,
But we are neighbors' children
Whom you have seen before.
(Refrain)

There's glad tidings for today
God's Messenger has come
To make the world one country,
The hearts of men as one.
(Refrain)

Citizens of earth unite,
His teachings are so clear.
His story and His message
Will soon reach every ear.
(Refrain)

The promise made by Christ
In all the Holy books before
Make Heaven on the earth
And bring peace for evermore.
(Refrain)

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing: Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim, Christ is born in Bethlehem!
Hark! The herald angels sing: Glory to the new-born King!

"All that we want is to live as brothers in this Holy Land. Jews, Christians, and Muslims without discrimination."

"I think ... that the religion is intended for people to come closer together as children of the same heavenly Father. We have lots of things in common."

"What would Jesus of Nazareth say today? I have an idea Jesus would spoil all the factories which make planes and these kinds of things He would try to get us together. He was preaching peace all the time."

"There are governments who are ruling Christian populations, but they themselves are not Christians"

"Our Lord Jesus taught us that one does not live by bread alone. Our bread is important to us. But even more important is our freedom and liberty."

"I think if people had realized at that time that they weren't going to go back, they wouldn't have left. You see it was the first time anything like that had happened. My mother left everything Things people would not leave behind if they don't intend to return. And they thought it would be just a matter of time"

**O LITTLE TOWN OF
BETHLEHEM**

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless
sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the
years
Are met in thee tonight.

**"How long has my family lived in Beth-
lehem? You can say so many centur-
ies that I can be sure more than ten
centuries."**

"My family was in Bethlehem for nearly
500 years"

"I think our family goes back 400 years"

"Jerusalem and Bethlehem and Nazareth are not important
only as monuments ... as historical sites, but also they are im-
portant for us as places of pilgrimage. They are places of
worship. They are centers of hope for the Christian."

**"As long as they have holy shrines in their hearts, the phys-
ical shrines should be open to them."**

"I want the West to understand, especially the Christians. Can
you understand? It is not only the buildings, and the relics,
and the historical places, but it is the people who live here."

**"It is true in the West Bank at the moment it is tranquil. But
you can't say quiet and you can't say peaceful this does
not mean that the West Bankers are happy. We all hate occu-
pation whether it is Israeli, British, French, or Russian. How
can we say that we in the West Bank are happy when we know
that still more houses are being demolished. More people are
being deported. More people are being arrested."**



"We feel encouraged that we are not alone. We know we are at the beginning of
the road,"

"All Christians ... belong to Palestine. And the same thing with the Jews, the
same thing with the Muslims. This is a sacred country for three major religions."

**"We pray that you will have peace and the Christian commu-
nities in America will remember Bethlehem, not remember it
in various Christmas cards, but to remember it in fact and
deed."**

"How can they make me leave here? I love this place. I am
part of it."

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL!

O come, all ye faithful,
Joyful and triumphant,
Come ye, O come ye to
Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of angels;
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
O come let us adore Him,
Christ, the Lord.

**I'LL BE HOME FOR
CHRISTMAS**

**I'll be home for Christmas;
You can plan on me.
Please have snow and mistletoe
And presents 'round the tree.**

**Christmas eve will find me,
Where the lovelight gleams.
I'll be home for Christmas—
But only in my dreams.**

"Our problem is very simple. A foreigner came and took our land, took our farms and our homes, and kicked us out."

"We heard shots and cannons. We could see fire below in the direction of Jerusalem. All that convinced us to leave. My mother put two blankets on her head. We left without food; my mother was barefooted . . . We reached Beit'Ur and could see the lights of Israeli jeeps and tanks behind us. We avoided roads, stayed in the fields. My mother put her hand over the children's mouths, when the Israelis passed so as not to be heard. Two days later we made our way back to the village. We saw our homes being demolished. Red soil was put over the place where houses had been. My mother said, 'Just like a dream. It's as if we'd never been there.'"

HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

**Oh, there's no place like home
For the holidays,
'Cause no matter how
Far away you roam,
If you want to be happy
In a million ways
For the holidays you can't
Beat home, sweet home.**

"I am resigned to dying in this camp even though a day doesn't pass when I don't think what it would be like to return . . . Everything's changed, I'm sure, but I would like to go back."



"I want to go back to my land. Only to go back to my land."

"Of course I want to return to Palestine. It's everybody's dream. We never give up thinking about it. My own children keep asking 'What is our real home like?'"

"I only wish to reiterate that it is very important that the world really sees the Palestinian problem in its human context. We are people who have a yearning for an identity, a yearning for our home which is a very important element of man's life. The feeling that I have, my people have, is this feeling of uprootedness, of homelessness."

"Of course we all want to return to our own land, the land our fathers and grandfathers and great grandfathers owned and worked. But even if we just get back the West Bank it is better than nothing. At least it is Palestine."

"Palestine. Who does not want to go back to Palestine? Who would not want to go back to her home village?"

"This is my land. I had farmed it for 40 years and I want my children to be able to do the same."

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

**It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold;
Peace on the earth good will to men, From Heaven's all-gracious King;
The world in solemn stillness lay, To hear the angels sing.**

**O ye, beneath life's crushing load, Whose forms are bending low,
Who toil along the climbing way, With painful steps and slow!
Look now, for glad and golden hours, Come swiftly on the wing;
O rest beside the weary road, And hear the angels sing.**

DR. DAVIS HONORED

Dr. John H. Davis, Chairman of ANERA's Board of Directors, was recently invested and decorated as a Knight in the Most Venerable Order of St. John of Jerusalem; few Americans have been so honored. In 1964, Dr. Davis became affiliated with the Order when he was invested and decorated as Commander. This newest honor was conferred upon Dr. Davis because of his work with the Palestinian refugees as a former Commissioner-General of

UNRWA and as Chairman of ANERA.

The Order of St. John was founded in Jerusalem during the Crusades. The Queen of England serves as the Order's Sovereign Head. The Order of St. John operates extensively, through voluntary medical emergency teams, in England and countries of the British Commonwealth. In Jerusalem, the Order of St. John operates a modern ophthalmological hospital which serves tens of thousands of patients each year. Most of the patients are Palestinian refugees and most receive treatment free of charge. Significant research into the cure and prevention of trachoma is conducted by St. John's Hospital. Trachoma is a common disease of the eye in the Middle East and eventually leads to blindness.

Dr. Gerald D. Dorman and Evan M. Wilson, both ANERA Board Members, have also been invested and decorated in the Order of St. John.

***ANERA is a non-profit, charitable organization which seeks: to increase total assistance in cash and kind from American sources to Palestinian refugees and other needy individuals in the Arab World; to be responsive in crises affecting civilian populations in the area, particularly displacement and casualties caused by war; and to increase American understanding of the Palestinian refugee problem.**

UNITED NATIONS WEEK

January 19-25, 1976, has been designated as "Visit the U.N. Week". During the past year the United Nations has become a subject of controversy with debate on the Palestinian refugees being one of the most emotional issues before the world body.

During the month of January, the flow of visitors to the U.N. is at its lowest and it is therefore possible for the U.N. Headquarters staff to give full attention and individual care to visitors. Visitors during the week of January 19-25 will have the unique opportunity of gaining in-depth knowledge about the United Nations which should serve as valuable background information when controversy seems to engulf the members of the world body.

Note: Most of the quotations of the Palestinians were taken from the book, *The Palestinians: A Portrait*, by Frank H. Epp and John Goddard, to be published in Canada by McClelland and Stewart in 1976. Other quotations were taken from articles appearing in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Christian Science Monitor*.

Enclosed is a special Christmas donation to provide medical, educational, and community development programs for the Palestinian refugees:

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Checks should be made payable to ANERA and returned to the ANERA office, Room 900, 733 15th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005. Contributions are tax-deductible. Thank you for caring.



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