

## Christ for the Whole World!

### *Yuillogistically Speaking*

*by Major Chick Yuill –*

Difficult as it is for Margaret and me to believe, this will be our fourth Christmas in Southern California. How time flies when you're enjoying yourself! By now we're getting quite used to the incongruities of celebrating Yuletide in a warmer climate than we've been used to for most of our lives. I hardly bat an eyelid these days when someone in shorts and open-toed sandals strolls up to drop some money into the kettle. I don't even laugh any more when I see Californians wearing winter sweaters in temperatures that would be well above average for an English summer's day. I've lost my embarrassment at singing "See amid the winter's snow." In brilliant sunshine.

But just occasionally, I get a pang of homesickness. (Don't worry; I just call at the nearest Starbucks and it passes very quickly!) I must have shown signs of going through such a time four years ago, because a thoughtful member of the congregation at the TAB decided to give me a gift that would turn my thoughts homeward at Christmas—a Scottish Santa. Really! Actually, it's a delightfully crafted figure of the old gentleman standing beside a reindeer and a Christmas tree on a mound of snow. His long white beard makes him easily and immediately recognizable and his customary sack of gifts is on his back. What makes him distinct from all other Santas is simply the fact that he is dressed in a kilt and the military regalia of a Scottish Guardsman!

This whimsical figure never fails to make me smile, so I keep him on display throughout the entire year. But what affords me even greater pleasure is to turn the figure upside down and read the inscription on the base. It reads:

Santas from around the world  
Scottish Santa  
Made in China

Now you might assume that this means nothing more than that some smart entrepreneur thousands of miles from here had the bright idea of cashing in on Christmas by appealing to a combination of national pride and seasonal sentimentality. I choose to see something more in it.

My Scottish Santa figurine reminds me that Christmas is for all cultures and classes of people. It challenges me to take the concept beyond the lovable but mythical figure of Santa Claus to the historical person and contemporary presence of Jesus Christ himself. If I had the time and skill, I think I would sit down today and begin to carve the Nativity scene a hundred times over. I'd depict the Christ Child as Caucasian, Latino, Black, Asian—every racial grouping I could think of. I'd have the shepherds and the Magi dressed in an extravagant variety of clothes to represent every imaginable country.

Is all this mere fancy brought on by looking again at my Scottish Santa? Perhaps. But I think it holds within it a challenge that I cannot ignore this Christmas season. I went shopping with Margaret and our daughter Jeni the other day. They were shopping for shoes and, as usual, I got bored. So I left the shop and stood outside in the mall and just watched people walking past—always an enjoyable way to pass a few minutes. It was like watching the world go by. Right here in Southern California there are people from every culture and every race on the face of the earth. If we cannot think outside of our own cultural limitations we will fail to make the meaning of Christmas and the message of the gospel plain to them. And that failure will outweigh any other successes we might claim.

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem, this prayer we make to You:  
Please free us from our bigotry and narrowness of view;  
With humble hearts and open eyes, help us to see Your face,  
In every man and woman, regardless of their race.*