



ONCE AGAIN NOEL! The Christmas season is such a heart-warming time to "reach out and touch someone", and my thoughts, like antennae, seek you out to convey my good wishes. I dare not expand on world affairs, but I'm sure many share my thoughts with me.

Some happenings are lovely and encouraging ones such as the celebrations this Fall by most of the christian world of the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's birth. To me, the good tidings are that much of it has been done in his native land by decree of Dr. Erich Honecker, president of the German Democratic Republic. We met Dr. Honecker in 1959 on our way to Russia. He was then head of the Education Committee which entertained our small group that day as we journeyed into East Berlin through the Brandenburg Gate.

Last week at church, I was especially thrilled to see a documentary film on Luther, narrated by Dr. Roland Bainton, Professor Emeritus at Yale. His golden voice and the exceptional beauty of the pictures made it an emotional experience. The National Geographic pictures in their article on Luther were lovely too, and stressed the large ecumenical meetings celebrated with joy in various parts of East Germany. All we need is Time!

A last year's Christmas present from my children, resulted in my flying to Florida in late January to visit Ruth and Frank Percy who met me in Orlando, and at same time met my sisters, Margaret from Dayton and Eleanor from California. While our energies were still high, we visited EPCOT and the next day Cyprus Gardens, before going on to the Percy home at Ponce Inlet on the East Coast. Those two weeks just flew by and we even squeezed in a visit to Kevin Percy at the U. at Gainesville. We three departed from Orlando, going our different ways, having had a special reunion that was a rare treat.

In May I was in Bethany for a meeting and to see three grandchildren graduate from the College, - cousins, not siblings, - Jennifer Percy from Northfield, Ohio, Reid Renner from Skaneateles, N.Y., and, with special honors, Jane Renner from Pepper Pike, O. The Commencement speaker was Dr. Jean Kirkpatrick, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. At the luncheon that followed, I was greatly surprised to be brought to the podium to have presented to me by Pres. Todd Bullard, a most beautiful stained-glass panel to be hung in my window. (see over) It was taken from a window accidentally broken in the current restoration process, in the old Chapel in Old Main. It is of goodly size, nicely framed in stainless steel. The colors are soft and lovely, and the glass dates from before 1858, Old Main, patterned after one side of the Quad at Glasgow University, is one of the National Trust's best example of gothic architecture. In my reply of thanks I tried to recall other events which went on there beside the daily, compulsory chapel service.

Mary was East again and helped me go through a lot of our books, and I was so glad Dr. and Mrs. Seele (new president of the Historical Society), could visit me and select books I had offered the Society, -- three big boxes full. Also here for a few days was Kay Draper, newly added to my collection of Canadian cousins. Her husband is head of the Biochemistry Dep't of Guelph University. How we did explore our roots and fruits on the family tree! We agreed there is no one like Jessie Trout who has again gone back to Japan to help them celebrate 100 years of our mission work there.

The hot summer was made bearable by getting a number of cards and a couple of long letters from Ruth and her family, who again, as in 1981, exchanged houses with families in Europe. This time it was, first, in NW England, from which they drove in that family's car to Wales and up to Scotland where they explored the Isle of Mull where my great grandmother Catherine MacKinnon Trout was born. Also they were at a chateau in France near Angers where Rudy's Base Hospital was in W.W.I. Still sorting out slides, Ruth gave a very interesting slide-talk on their experiences, a week after their return, for the first of our Fall programs at Church.

It is always a special thrill to reach out to my larger "family" of dear friends at this blessed season. I hope all is well with you as it is with me.

NOEL *** NOEL *** NOEL

Jennie Renner

24 th November 1983