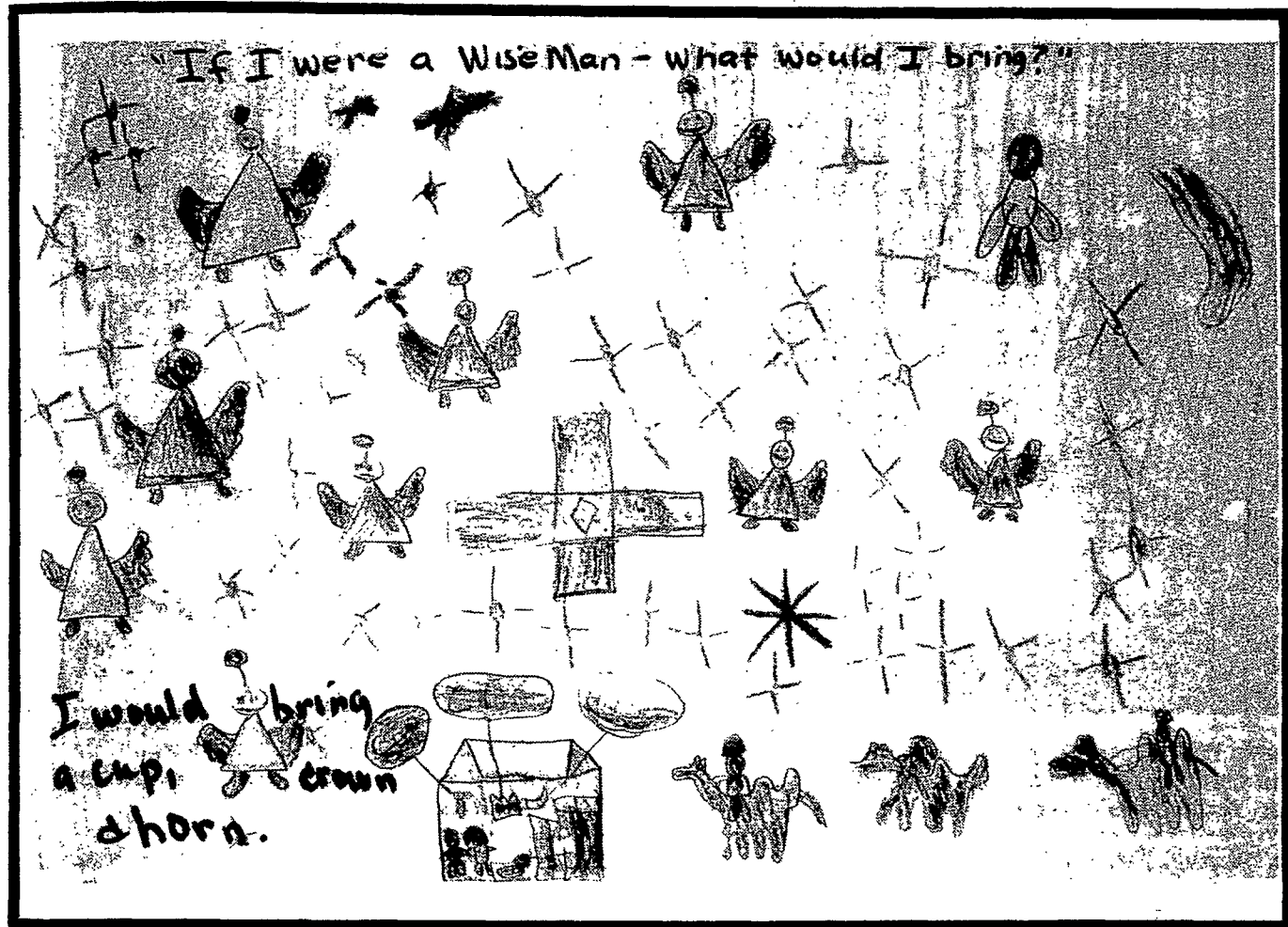
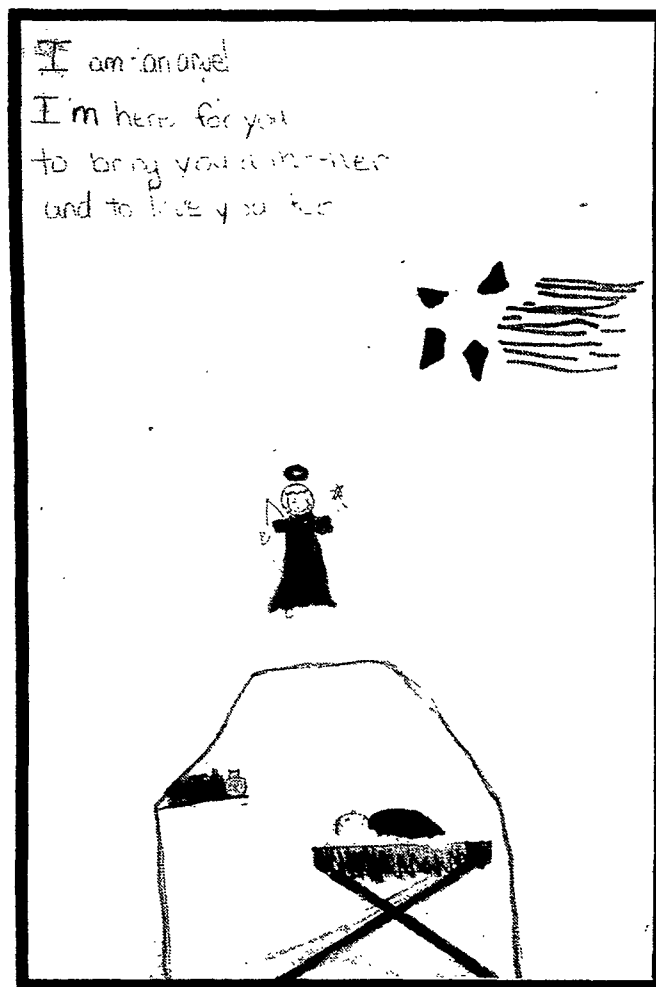


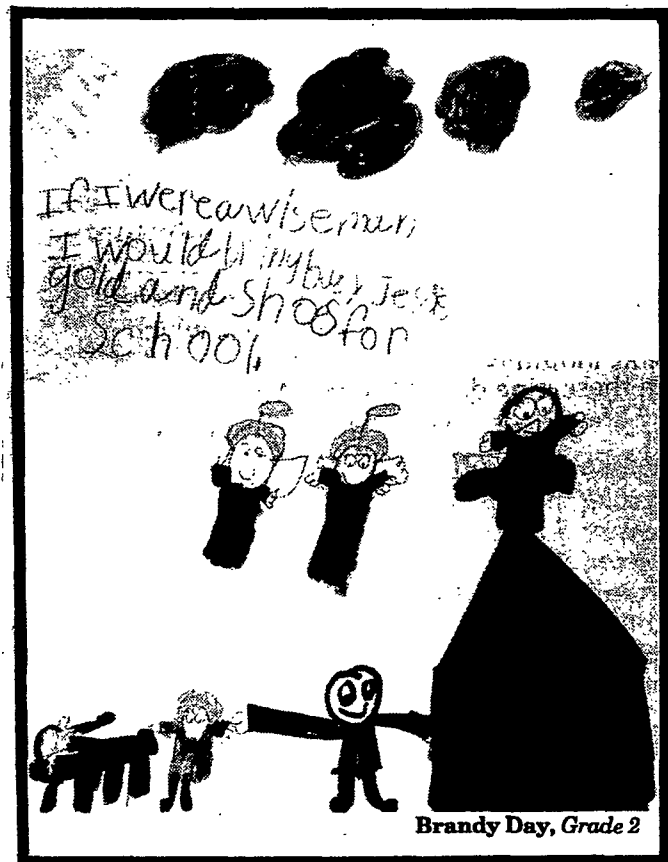
# with gifts from diverse lands



Rickey Mack, Grade 3



Jenny Dorsey, Grade 4



## Christmas follows lead of Christian faith by being melting pot of varied traditions

By Brian Milford  
Guest contributor

Christmas is a multi-cultural encountering. It is a time for everybody to come together as brothers and celebrate the birth of our Lord in the flesh, Jesus Christ.

No one culture can dominate this experience. All cultures must have their own influence and everybody must respect the customs of another way of life. As the United States is a melting pot, so is Christianity. This is not a religion for one group of people. All are welcome no matter what race, age, sex, or nationality. Jesus invited everybody to His table. We must do the same. It is only right to see others and their ideas as equals of our own and combine them.

The celebration we are so familiar with today has been influenced by many cultures and has slowly evolved into what we partake of each

Christmas. December 25 was chosen as the date for Christmas to correspond to pagan celebrations near the winter solstice. Many of our traditions for this joyous time were borrowed from these pagan rituals.

On the Roman New Year houses were decorated with greenery and lights. Gifts were given to the children and to the poor. When the Celts penetrated Europe they brought the traditions of the yule log and fir trees. Fires and lights were common to all winter festivals as symbols of warmth and lasting life. The Christmas tree is thought to have originated in Germany. Evergreens, symbolizing the tree of Paradise, were put in houses on December 24, the Feast of Adam and Eve. These trees were often decorated.

In the home there was also a Christmas Pyramid with shelves for Christmas figurines. These two practices are thought to have been combined to form the well-known Christmas tree.

The notion of Santa Claus comes to us from St. Nicholas of Asia Minor who was noted for his good works. The idea of gift giving in his honor spread to us from Asia Minor to Europe and to the U.S. by means of the Dutch settlers. All these traditions and many more have evolved through time to what we, today, call Christmas.

It is obvious that no one culture can influence a world-wide holiday. This is true in the case of Christmas. A religion that has gone through many changes and seen varieties of people must take on new customs whether voluntarily or not.

When an institution reaches out and touches new people it can not help but be touched back. Whether we are aware of it or not, the church today is slowly taking in new people and new ideas and these will gradually work their way into our customs and rituals just as Christmas has been tremendously affected.

## Clean world small return for all that Jesus gave us

By Peter Austerman  
Guest contributor

If I was one of the Three Wisemen, the gift I would give Jesus would be a clean world. With no garbage, no air pollution, and no litter on the ground, the world would be clean again. The reason I would do that would be so our environment would last longer. Another way I would help the world be clean would be by planting trees. Not waisting trees would be a way to save forests. If we would do this, we wouldn't have a hole in our ozone layer. Jesus made this world and we shouldn't waste the resources He gave us.

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