

A Community Christmas Play

Written on November 27, 1947

Cast

HUMAN CONSCIENCE	light blue garment, a silver crown with sharp points
GREEN ANGEL	white garment, green stole
YELLOW ANGEL	white garment, yellow stole
WHITE ANGEL	white garment, white stole
STAR-BEARER	peach-blossom garment, carrying the Christmas Star on a golden rod
EVE	yellow garment
ADAM	brown garment
ABRAHAM	dark blue garment
ISAAC	light blue garment
JACOB	orange-red garment
MOSES	blue garment
ELIJAH	red garment
MARY	red garment, blue cloak
JOSEPH	brown garment
SHEPHERDS SHEPHERD BOYS	} in appropriate clothing
THREE KINGS	blue, red or green cloak and crown
ANGEL WITH LARGE WINGS	white garment
ANGEL MOTHERS	in white garments
ANGEL CHILDREN	in white garments

All participants gather in the hall. Only a few candles have been lit, so that the room is in twilight. On the first landing of the staircase there is a crib filled with straw. Over it hangs a little lantern. The Christmas tree stands in the middle of the bay, in front of the door window. The curtains are open, so that twilight shines in. At the top landing of the stair the ANGELS and ANGEL CHILDREN wait with the THREE KINGS. In the passage

the SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERD BOYS. Among the crowd of participants are MARY and JOSEPH, ADAM and EVE, the HUMAN CONSCIENCE and all other characters of the play.

[HUMAN CONSCIENCE mounts the steps to the first landing and lights the lantern above the crib as a sign that the play is to begin.]

HUMAN CONSCIENCE:

Twilight holds sway throughout the Earth,
Divining fills the human heart.
Coldness threatens and darkness reigns.
Friends, all those who here do tarry,
Ban the darkness, ban the coldness,
Bring warmth into your stiffened limbs,
Lighten up your sorrow's greyness,
Accept divining and await
What wants to happen here.

ALL PARTICIPANTS [*sing*]:

[Melody: Bless, O Lord, the way we tread ...]
From the coldness, from the night
Will the new-born light awake,
From the darkness, from the tomb
Will the new morn's laughter break.
Light for which we sought so long,
Light to which we all belong.

Shine towards us, O Christ-Child,
Stir in us both heart and hands,
Shed light on us in this hour,
Lead us to your open lands.
Give to us your grace of living,
Give us love of your own being.

[From the upper landing the THREE ANGELS descend, approaching the threshold, but not yet reaching it.]

THREE ANGELS: When mankind is calling
 Out of soul's sore need,
 When mankind is begging
 For the heavenly bread,
 When mankind is waiting
 For the Christ-Child's birth,
 We come hither, bringing
 What we are, to Earth.

GREEN ANGEL: We bring the message,
 We bring the light.

YELLOW ANGEL: We bring the joy,
 We bring the brightness.

WHITE ANGEL: We bring the radiance
 In the countenance divine.

HUMAN CONSCIENCE:

Human beings, hear the Angels' words,
 Human beings, behold Heaven's hand.
 Human beings, who to this place
 In earthly destiny are banned,
 Tell me if again you will
 That the Spirit to you turn,
 That the Light of Worlds be shown,
 That the ringing bell of Christmas
 Through your hearts resound?

SINGLE PARTICIPANTS *from the crowd*:

— We will.
 — We wait.
 — We wish.
 — We famish.
 — We long for Christmas to shine
 — Right here.

ALL PARTICIPANTS [*sing*]:

[*Melody: So while Mary is with child ...*]
 Ah, fill now our heart, we pray,
 Angels, turn again,

Stream your light into our pain,
 Stream your blessings down.

Free us from our bitterness,
 Help us in the mournfulness,
 Let light shine upon us.

Then our spirit will awake
 And compassion, promising
 Strength anew and power.

[*During the human song, the THREE ANGELS listen intently until the singing has died away.*]

THREE ANGELS: O Star, appear!

O Light, gleam forth!

O Sun, shine into the night!

Mankind is waiting,
 Children are hoping,
 Hearts are awakened.

O Word which from the stars once sounded,
 Shine into the earthly depths,
 From where human voices called
 In that stirring song.

Word, appear,
 Shine out, become!

[*While these words are being spoken, behind the three Angel Figures the STAR-BEARER appears, followed by the THREE KINGS.*]

STAR-BEARER: I am ready,

I am prepared.

Greetings be to Earth around!

Announcement issues from the mouth

That out of the form of time

Gave birth unto the Word.

HUMAN CONSCIENCE [*looks up and speaks to the Star-Bearer*]:

Send your messengers forth

Into the earthly land!
 Ask after those many
 Who sent after you.
 Proclaim the readiness,
 Form the community.

STAR-BEARER: Go then and wander,
 Seek in the darkness
 The torches of humanity.
 I am waiting,
 I await
 Your summons,
 Your words.

[The THREE ANGELS descend the steps to the lowest landing. They remain standing at the threshold of the spiritual world – between Heaven and Earth so to speak – and look into the crowd of participants.]

YELLOW ANGEL: Adam, I seek you!
 Adam, I call you!
 Adam, where are you?

WHITE ANGEL: Eve, do you know me?
 Eve, do you hear me?
 Eve, awaken!

[There is stillness; ADAM and EVE do not stir, but remain hidden in the crowd.]

YELLOW ANGEL: Adam, do not fear,
 Adam, do not hide,
 Adam, look up!

WHITE ANGEL: Eve, appear!
 Eve, where are you?

[ADAM and EVE come forward, approaching with hesitation. They are bowed down, head hanging, hands hidden in the wide sleeves of their garments.]

EVE: Adam, did you hear the calling?
 Adam, are you near the steps
 Where the angels are?

ADAM: Eve, in the plight of these times
 I heard the heavenly word.
 Are you too at your place?
[They take hands and go forward before the three Angels.]

THREE ANGELS: Adam, the time has arrived!
 The burden is taken away,
 Your destiny has been fulfilled.
 The heralds from Heaven await,
 You, poor sinner, they now will lead
 Back to the sight of the Spirit.
 Eve, will you now wait here,
 By the paradisaal garden,
 Burdened with your heavy load?

ADAM and EVE: Let us wait at the entrance here,
 Let us into the darkness stare,
 Which soon will be filled with light.
 We are waiting for our life,
 We are hoping for our work,
 Which earthly raiment veils.

[HUMAN CONSCIENCE goes between Adam and Eve, while the THREE ANGELS go into the crowd. HUMAN CONSCIENCE gives a hand to Adam and to Eve.]

HUMAN CONSCIENCE: Adam and Eve,
 You shall be guardians
 At the gate of the heavenly host.
 Adam and Eve,
 With earthly goods
 Burdened you stand
 At the eternal ocean's shore.
 Say, what shall we do?

ADAM: Seek our brothers,
 Seek our sisters,
 From today and yesterday.

EVE: Bring our helpers,
Bring our people,
From past times and today.

GREEN ANGEL [*comes out of the crowd, looks around, sings*]:

[*Melody: O holy, holy Trinity ...*]

O Abraham, you child of God,
Where shall I find your hand?
Oh come forth to meet with me,
And leave the human land.

WHITE ANGEL: O Isaac, son of Abraham,
O father, escort true
Attain to knowledge of your Lord,
Be ready, come in view.

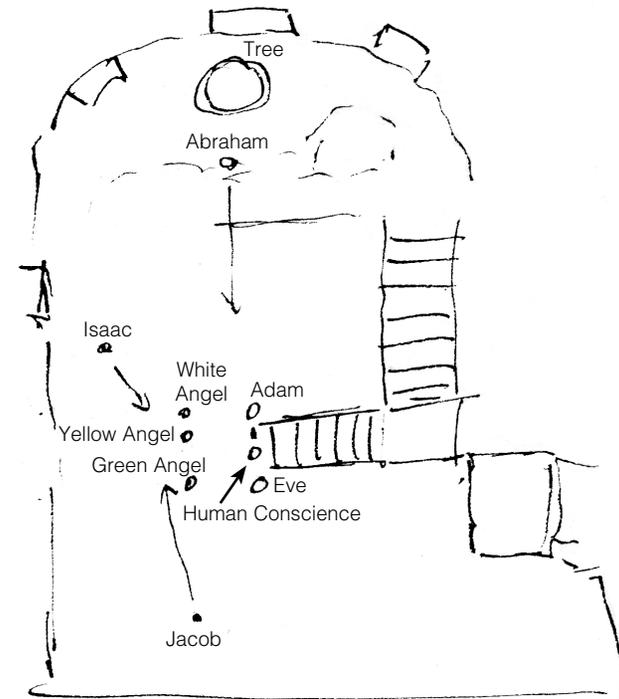
YELLOW ANGEL: O Jacob, warrior, hero strong,
Where are you in this ring?
Upon me look and quickly come
And your support here bring.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB [*sing together from where each stands*]:

We hear your call,
We feel your word.
Oh have us,
Oh take us.
We are prepared
And we are known,
We find our rightful place.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB [*move through the crowd,
to stand before the Three Angels*]:

Branches in the trees were rustling,
Waters from the springs were gushing,
Voices of the stones were sounding,
Earthly spaces were all filling
With the light's awakening
Starshine, bright and clear.
Angels, masters, leaders,
Here we are, prepared to serve.



THREE ANGELS: Is this all
That you have
To announce to us?
Do you know us
And know too
Who here before you dawn?

ABRAHAM: In the grove of Mamre
Have I hosted you.

ISAAC: In terror of death, to the altar
Was I bound.

JACOB: My hip was wrenched out of joint
By you.

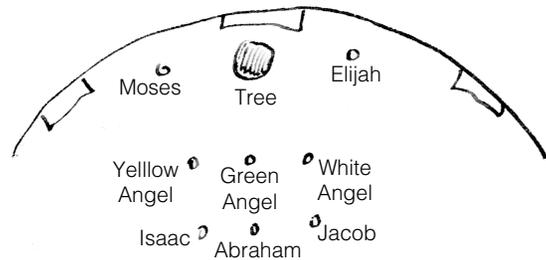
ABRAHAM: You gave the food of hope,
Into my hands.

ISAAC: The courage in my heart
Came from you.

JACOB: The power of my faith
You set into my loins.

THREE ANGELS: Since you know that in fulfilling
The work you did thus perform,
The signs of destiny now change
And light appears in darkest night,
Follow us and be prepared!

[The THREE ANGELS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB
move towards the tree. The participants move back
towards the sides, to make way for them. Beside
the tree MOSES and ELIJAH appear.]



ALL PARTICIPANTS [sing]:

[Melody: Vom Himmel hoch ...]

From times far distant they now come,
They bring our toil and our need,
They gently guide our word and work,
And carry light and strength in deed.
Brightness upon our heart is shed,
Our soul is open to the pain
Which all mankind must learn to bear,
Which all the world must ascertain.

[The THREE ANGELS are now standing before
the dark Christmas tree. Behind them the
ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB. Next to the tree,
facing the three angels, MOSES and ELIJAH.]

THREE ANGELS: The earthly need,
The earthly grief,
The human work,
The body's garb –
They have built a city
Beheld by Heaven's eye.
They have in the dark night
Achieved the work of man.
From toil and work and need and pain,
A new existence opens up.

MOSES: O Angels, come
And welcome be.
The tree is taken from the Earth.
It has grown green from earthly night,
It has atoned the guilt of Eve.

EVE: O Moses, the milk from my breast
Has not stilled you once in vain.
From child grew man,
From seed a fruit.
I have felt your mighty strength.

ELIJAH: O Angels, come
And do your work.
The light-filled body is prepared.
Kindle what is not yet bright.
Make this earthly world complete.

ADAM: Elijah, messenger from God,
Give calm of Heaven to my heart,
And let from deed of my own hands
What lay in darkness now arise.

THREE ANGELS: We begin the work,
We are prepared.
Conscience, will you free our way?
Conscience, are you awake?

HUMAN CONSCIENCE: If you, companions, whom I trust,
Have built the way to blessedness,

If you are ready for the deed
My heart can hope for the new seed.

THREE ANGELS [*sing*]:

[*Melody: Ihr Kinderlein kommet ...*]

You Angels, come down now,
Oh, stream here at last,
The morning is dawning
And dark night has passed.
The stars are all twinkling,
Their radiance shines forth,
May sunlight here brighten
Our life upon Earth.

[*Many ANGELS and ANGEL CHILDREN now go down the stairs, past the Star-Bearer and the Three Kings and gather round the three Angels. MOSES and ELIJAH light tapers, hand them to the THREE ANGELS who pass them on to the ANGEL CHILDREN. The candles are lit on the tree while ALL PARTICIPANTS sing.*]

ALL PARTICIPANTS [*sing*]:

[*Melody: A child is born ...*]

The tree gleams forth,
The light rays out,
O wonder of night,
O bright Star, that hither brought us.
The Christmas light
Now shimmers bright.
God's countenance is shining down
Gracefully here upon us,
And brings God's peace towards us.

Good will at last has been fulfilled.
O radiant light,
You have mankind's goal unveiled.
Unto man's spirit is revealed

The word which points him towards Heav'n,
And joyously we follow,
And joyously we follow,
All of us here below,
The peace of God awaiting,
The peace of God awaiting.

THREE ANGELS: The light rays out,
Shining most clear.

Who will of light the bearer be?

ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB: Who will of Light the bearer be?

ADAM and EVE: Who will of Light the bearer be?

ALL PARTICIPANTS [*sing*]:

[*Melody: Which of us shall now be first?*]

Who will of Light the bearer be?

STAR-BEARER: In the earthly valley,

In mankind's foundations,
There where are men's depths,
Where mountains tower
And rivers rush along,
Where trees blossom out
And fields spread wide,
Where beasts frolic
And stones repose,
Where in abundance
All beauty is formed,
There waits the sacrifice,
There is waiting the heart
To prepare the bearer of Light.
Figure of Conscience,
Call forth the sacrifice,
Question the heart.

HUMAN CONSCIENCE [*calls to Moses and Elijah*]:

Do you know the heart?
Are you aware of sacrifice?
Is your readiness prepared?

MOSES: Joseph, my son,
 Where do you tarry?
 Have you made ready
 Your ear
 To hear the call of Heaven?

ELIJAH: Mary, O Mother,
 Will you sink your gaze
 Into the realm of the stars?
 Do you see
 Your divining fulfilled?

THREE ANGELS: Harken, hark!
 The call goes forth.
 Listen, give ear,
 Spirit-wind is blowing,
 Turning the tides.
*[MARY and JOSEPH are hidden in the crowd
 and do not stir.]*

STAR-BEARER: No-one is waiting,
 No-one is stepping out,
 No-one is at their place.

MOSES: Joseph, my son,
 Pay heed to the voice!
 Moses, your father, calls you.

ELIJAH: Mary, mother,
 Wake, awake!
 Elijah, your son, implores you.
[MARY and JOSEPH are hidden and silent.]

GREEN and YELLOW ANGEL *[to WHITE ANGEL]*:
 Brother, take two Angel Children,
 Search for Joseph and for Mary,
 That the Word may be fulfilled.

WHITE ANGEL: Brothers, I shall find them both,
 In my wandering I shall tell them
 What the Spirit from them wants.

*[The WHITE ANGEL takes two ANGEL CHILDREN
 and searches through the crowd while singing.]*

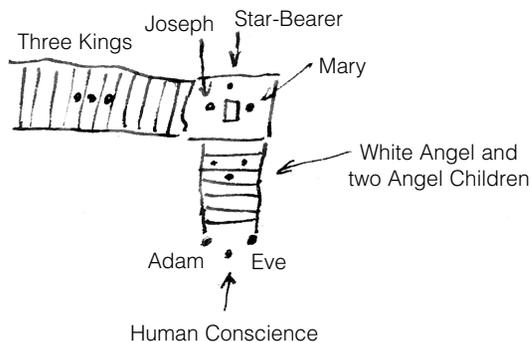
WHITE ANGEL and two ANGEL CHILDREN *[sing]*:
[Melody: Silent Night ...]
 Joseph mine and Mary mine,
 Hear us now,
 Join us now,
 Let the Heaven's light
 Enter in,
 Open up your hearts within,
 Hear, oh hear the call,
 Hear, oh hear the word.

MARY and JOSEPH *[answer in song]*: Angels, see:
 Here are we,
 Take us now,
 Hold us now.
 We are both wholly in your hand,
 Darkness fills the earthly land,
 Bright is all our heart,
 Bright is all our heart.
*[The ANGELS find Joseph and Mary and go with
 them to the first landing, past Adam and Eve.
 There MARY and JOSEPH stand beside the crib.]*

MARY and JOSEPH: From the manger,
 From the straw,
 Shines a light towards us.
 Our hearts become devout and glad.
 A star, which breaks right through the Earth,
 Raises us on high.
 Open is the door,
 Open is the space.
 The tree of souls rays out the light.

STAR-BEARER *[goes down to the first landing]*: Bearer of Light,
 Son of the stars,

Your time has now arrived,
 Your grace will us avail,
 Our guilt will be removed,
 Bearer of stars,
 Son of the Light.



ALL PARTICIPANTS [*sing*]:

[*Melody: The bell chimes out ... (St John's Play)*]

Bells of the Christmas Night,
 Ring out and resound!
 Blessing is brought to us,
 Wreath is made round.
 Yea, we did hope for Him,
 Yea, we did strive for Him,
 Holiest human child,
 Holiest Heaven's Child.

You are among us now,
 Born as the holy one.
 We are among You now,
 Joyfully chosen ones.
 Hearts open up in joy,
 Mouths are proclaiming you,
 Stay close by us here,
 Let us remain with you.

SHEPHERDS and SHEPHERD BOYS [*come towards the Child*]:

We shepherds now come
 The little Child to greet,
 He will feed us,
 And receive us.
 We bring presents,
 We bring the gifts.
 We are there
 As witnesses to the Child.

THREE KINGS [*approach*]: Star which has guided us
 Rays out bright and clear.
 Star which gave its guidance
 Has now touched us here.
 Our goal is now reached,
 Our longing fulfilled.
 We behold the star-sign
 In gazing on the Child.

JOSEPH and MARY: Shepherds, Kings and Angels,
 Heart and head and star.
 Sacrifice, turning of time,
 The gods behold with joy.

THREE KINGS: Little Child,
 We greet you.

THREE SHEPHERDS: Little Child,
 We worship you.

ANGELS: Little Child, our treasure,
 We lovingly behold you.

[*At this moment the ANGEL WITH LARGE WINGS
 appears on the upper landing, surrounded by many
 LITTLE ANGELS.*]

ANGEL WITH LARGE WINGS [*bending over banisters, calling
 into the crowd*]:

Abraham,
 Look up!
 The Heavens again reveal

What from you was closed.
 Isaac,
 Hearken!
 Peace enters into human hearts
 And fills the world with stillness.
 Jacob,
 Be aware!
 Good will in human limbs
 Brings freedom to the earthly world.

ABRAHAM, ISAAC and JACOB [looking up with raised hands]:

The crib is built,
 The ship made firm,
 The oars are hewn,
 The sails are set.
 The bearers of Light
 Are in us.

The Child has been born.

ANGEL WITH LARGE WINGS: Yea, so it is.

WHITE ANGEL and ANGEL WITH LARGE WINGS

[sing to lyre accompaniment]:

There is a flower springing ...

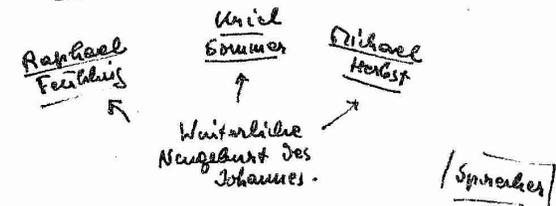
[The play closes in complete stillness.]

II. Zunächst das „Korpspiel“.

9.)

Es ist ja beherrscht durch die Gestalten der
 Drei Engel & jener Jünglingsgestalt, die als
 der wieder-erweckte Johannes, der neue Johannes,
 befehlhuet werden darf.

Es ist Weihnacht im Himmel.



Diese Wolkenlandschaft aber ist auch
 die Metamorphose des Felsentempels.

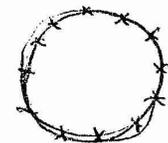


Der neue Johannes
 die grüne Seilauge.

Sammelter König

Der Engel (der Alte mit d. Saube)
 als Gruppenseele
 der zwölf Jünger

Es ist bedeckt,
 er trägt noch das
 Tink, das über dem
 Zandorfen wuchs.



Damit aber
 beginnt schon das Karfreitags-Spiel.

From Karl König's preparatory notes.

Firstly: The Prelude

It is dominated mainly by the figures of the three Archangels and the figure of the youth who can be seen as the re-awakened John, the new John.

It is Christmas in the heavens.

Raphael (spring) Uriel (summer) Michael (autumn)

The winter re-birth of John.

The Speaker

This cloud landscape is however also the metamorphosis
of the underground temple

Silver King Golden King Bronze King

The new John

The green snake.

The Angel (the old man with the lamp)

as group soul of the 12 disciples.

The mixed King.

He is covered; he still wears the
cloth that was thrown over him.



With this, however, the Good Friday Play already begins.