

**Pictures and Newspaper Clippings**  
**for**  
***God's Wonderful World***  
**and More**  
**for**  
**Agnes Leckie Mason**



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## 2 WESTPORT AUTHORS ON TV SHOW THURSDAY

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WESTPORT, Oct. 27—Herb Shelton of WRCA-TV will have Agnes Lackie Mason and Phyllis Brown Ohanian, of Westport, co-authors of "God's Wonderful World," a book of songs for children, on his show tomorrow morning at 9 o'clock with their children.

The authors' children will sing and act their mothers' songs. The Mason children are Janet, 14, Franklin, 12, Genevieve, 8, David, 6, and James, 2. The Ohanian children are David, 8, and Philip, 5.

Last Monday, the co-authors, with children of the Saugatuck Congregational church Sunday school, made an appearance on the Ariene Francis TV show.

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# A Book Painted in Words and Music for Young Children

**GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD.**  
By Agnes Lockie Mason and  
Phyllis Brown Ghanian. 192  
pages. Illustrated. New York:  
Random House and New Amer-  
ican Library of World Literature.

By SANDRA M. LOPEZ

"God's Wonderful World," is painted in words and music for young children in a book published simultaneously by Random House in hard cover, and Signet Key books, in paperback edition. It is a collection of delightful and lovely songs, hymns, and games about religion, home, animals and friends by Agnes Lockie Mason of Oak Ridge park, Westport, and Phyllis Brown Ghanian, of Hyatt lane, in the same town.

Both authors are housewives. Mrs. Mason is the mother of five children, and Mrs. Ghanian, the mother of three. Working, sometimes with the assistance of their children, and at others in the din and confusion of home life, they have unaccompanied "God's Wonderful World," simply and spontaneously.

A group of kindergartens and nursery children from the Sagesuck Congregational church, Westport, trained by Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Ghanian, have appeared since publication of the book on television shows from New York. They sang songs from the book.

Members of the chorus are: Beth Johnson, Sandra Reynolds, Diana Powers, Nancy Powers, David Layshon, Philip Ghanian, Jay Lockley, Richard Archer, Paul Seppa, James Mason, Wendy Rose Mary Sue Karsten, Phyllis Albree, Pamela Barnett, and Susan Reed.



PHYLIS BROWN GHANIAN at the piano and Agnes Lockie Mason far right are rehearsing with a group of nursery and kindergarten pupils in the Sagesuck Congregational church, Westport. They are singing and acting a song from the book, "God's Wonderful World," written by Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Ghanian. Seated on the

floor (left to right), are Katherine Archer, Allen Dietrich, Diana and Nancy Powers, Philip Ghanian, and Pamela Barnett. Seated behind them are Richard Archer, Barbara Bevis, Jay Lockley, David Layshon, Wendy Rose, Mary Sue Karsten, Phyllis Albree and Paul Seppa.

**GOD'S WONDERFUL WORLD** is referred to as a "standard work" by the publishers. According to Mrs. Mason it fills a need for songs about God and His world for young children. She first felt this need when she became a director of music for the nursery and kindergarten department of the Sausalito Congregational church. She searched through religious magazines, pamphlets, and songbooks, finally collecting about fifty songs.

Her original idea was to have them mimeographed for the Sunday school. However, one day in New York city at tea in the Plaza hotel with Henry Bell, she mentioned the project, and in conversation with the Piano orchestra sang some of the songs. Mr. Bell, who is editor of "Town and Country," suggested that the material could be a book.

Within 24 hours Mrs. Mason had talked it over with Phyllis Brown Ochanian, former organist at the Sausalito church, and the two embarked on the project which was to become "God's Wonderful World."

Driven by enthusiasm and positiveness of purpose the two women set to work on the first draft. Mrs. Mason composed some of the lyrics while putting her two-year-old son James to bed. When she had an idea she would call Mrs. Ochanian, and Phyllis would often supply a melody, either original or folk, before the phone conversation was ended.

**FIVE OF THE SONGS** in the book are by the children. Two of the Mason boys, David, six, and Franklin, eleven, collaborated on "Hear the Birds and Bees." David Ochanian, seven, wrote "I'm an Indian." His brother, Philip, age five, intrigued by the music his mother was playing to suggest monkeys, composed words and a game, which appear as "Monkeys."

Eight-year-old Genevieve Mason wrote "My Toys," and her 14-year-old sister, Janet, wrote "The Ocean." Mrs. Ochanian's oldest son, Donald, was unable to participate because he was away at Mount Herman school.

After three months the first draft was completed and Mrs. Mason's sister, Janet Leckie and Mr. Sell, acting as agents, submitted the manuscript to Victor Weybright, chairman of the New American Library of World Literature, Inc. Mr. Weybright accepted the work after testing the songs on his family and employer. He then talked to Random House's concert Carl, who was in California. Mr. Carl okayed the manuscript for Random House after hearing some of the music sung to him over the phone from Mr. Weybright's office.

**THE FIRST PRINTING** was to be 10,000 copies. However, in the midst of printing, Sears-Roebuck included it as a selection in the company's People's Book Club, and the first printing was advanced to 30,000.

Both Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Ochanian feel that their own children and those in the Sunday school had a great deal to do with the birth and growth of the book. The children all play instruments or sing.

Mrs. Mason has been writing poetry as a hobby all her life. She recalls composing one hundred verses while a junior in high school in Cleveland, O., and presenting them to a favorite teacher. She was born in Cleveland and attended schools there before going to New York where she was a student at Barnard college, majoring in government. She was married in 1933 in New York to Willard F. Mason. For the past seven years she has been a Westport resident, active in the P.T.A. and Girl Scouts.

Phyllis Ochanian teaches piano and is accompanist for the Staples high school glee club and clerical public schools. Mrs. Ochanian was born in Santa Monica, Calif. She attended Santa Monica city college, the University of California in Los Angeles, and Boston university. Mrs. Ochanian played the violin in the Stockton and Santa Monica symphonies. She has written school songs for Ginn and company, publishers.

The co-authors will be guest authors at the Trumbull book fair Nov. 9 in the new Middlebrook school.

## 'BOOK FAIR' SET TOMORROW NIGHT

TRUMBULL, Nov. 8—The "Book Fair" sponsored by the Education association will open tomorrow at 4 p.m. in Middlebrook school.

Teachers and PTA council members from Long Hill and Edison school will be on duty in charge of the sale of books from 4 to 5 p.m.; teachers and council members from Nichols and Center schools will be in charge from 5 to 6 p.m.

At 7.30 p.m., there will be a demonstration of the teaching of activity songs to small children by Mrs. Agnes Mason and Mrs. Phyllis Ohanian, authors of "God's Wonderful World". The songs will be taken from their book. A group of twelve children from Westport will participate.

This will be followed by a panel discussion, "with The Authors". The Student panel will include Thomas Demers, Charles Heimann, Yvette Nabel, Sandra Lotty, Ronald Jennings, and Richard Stanley. Authors participating will be, Elisabeth Lansing of Norwalk; Phyllis Ohanian and Agnes Mason of Westport; Jean Tamburini, illustrator of Meriden; and David Cameron of Stamford. Dr. Frances Humphreys of Stratford will act as moderator.

Exhibits of film strips, pictures, charts, and dioramas made by the children of all Trumbull schools will be on display. There will also be an exhibit of old books and newspapers. The book sale will conclude at 9 p.m.

WESTPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY  
WESTPORT, CONNECTICUT

# BOOKS

and Authors

By TAYLOR GLENN



Sunday Post photo—Schulze.

PHYLLIS BROWN OHANIAN (left) and Agnes Leckie Mason (right), co-authors of "God's Wonderful World", unique and joyous songbook for children, will be two of the speakers at the YWCA next Saturday afternoon when the annual Books and Authors luncheon, sponsored by the World Fellowship committee of the YW, takes place. Hartzell Spence, Essex novelist, Clare Leighton, Woodbury author and wood engraver, and Mae Kelly, Fairfield High teacher and author, will be the other speakers. Luncheon begins at 12:45 p. m., and tickets are available at the YW, 263 Golden Hill street.



## Westport Writers to Attend Book Luncheon



PHYLLIS B. OHANIAN

A "Book and Author" luncheon at the YWCA, Golden Hill street, tomorrow, at 12:45 p.m., will celebrate National Book Week. The event arranged by a committee of librarians, teachers and members of the press, is sponsored by the fellowship committee of the YWCA. Among the guest speakers scheduled is Mrs. Agnes L. Mason and Phyllis B. Ohanian, both of Westport, who collaborated in a songbook for children, "God's Wonderful World." Mrs. Mason, above, writing a lyric for music already scored, receives the interested scrutiny of her own brood: left to right, Genevieve, eight; James, two; David, seven this week; Franklin 12, and Janet, 14. Other guests at the book even; will include Clare Leighton of Woodbury, who has written and illustrated "Where Land Meets Sea"; Hartzell Spence, of Essex, author of "Bride of the Conqueror," and Mae E. Kelly, of Fairfield, a teacher at Roger Ludlows high school, whose book, "The Adventures of an Exchange Teacher" has just been published. Mrs. May Bradshaw Hays will preside over the luncheon and introduce the guests.



# HOWLAND'S

*A Good Store For All The Family All The Time*

## Book and Author Luncheon

**Y. W. C. A. Bridgeport**

**November 20th, Saturday — 12:45 P.M.**

### *Guest Speakers:*

Clare Leighton — "Where Land Meets Sea" (Rinehart)

Hartzell Spence — "Bride of the Conqueror" (Random House)

Mae E. Kelly — "The Adventures of an Exchange Teacher"  
(Vantage Press)

Agnes Mason and Phyllis Ohanian — "God's Wonderful World"  
(Random House)

Howland's Book Department has these and many more for you to select for endless hours of literary enjoyment.

## Two Mothers Campaign to Make Children Like Sunday School

Westport Woman Aids Crusade to Change Teaching Methods

By GEORGE W. CORNELL, NEW YORK, Nov. 25.—(AP)

When you have to drag your Johnny to Sunday school by the scruff of the neck, you might conclude without that Johnny is a bad boy—or the Sunday school is a flop.

A couple of spirited, young Connecticut mothers, convinced the fault usually lies with the Sunday school, today are doing a bit of crusading to make it more attractive for children.

Their idea is that church school classes for youngsters can be both whimsical and worshipful—at the same time. That is, if the grown-ups will quit trying to run everything in their own staid way.

"Sunday school can be the big event of the week for children," said Mrs. Agnes Leckie Mason, who

has five children of her own. "But it has to be in their language, in a form within their own experience."

She and Mrs. Phyllis Brown Olanias have researched the subject both in theory and practice—the theory blossoming into a book and the practice into a Westport, Conn., church packed with kids.

### "Too Grim"

"Many Sunday schools are too grim," said Mrs. Olanias. "It's holdovers from Puritan days. If children get the impression that religion is dour, they leave the church as they grow older."

The field is a broad one covering some 30 million children who attend Sunday classes in this country—more or less willingly or unwillingly.

Basic thesis of the two teachers, who have become virtual religious philosophers to the small fry of Westport's Seaside Church Congregational church, is that religion for children can be fun.

"Giving them a positive, pleasant

approach toward religion is of basic importance," said Mrs. Mason. "Their underlying attitude toward the church is greatly determined by experiences at this age."

### Principles Outlined

She and Mrs. Olanias, in summarizing their mental of children's hymns, devotions and games called "God's Wonderful World," said they sought to put in concrete form some principles about children, including:

1. That fear and compulsion don't produce devotion, or hard stable Christian foundations, and that Sunday schools thus should be run so children want to come—not because they have to.

Publishers grabbed up the unusual work, the New American Library putting out a paper-bound volume, and Random House issuing a big, illustrated edition.

Although there still are instances where Johnny is taken to Sunday school screaming and kicking, the Connecticut teachers said their studies indicate the situation gradually is improving.

"People are taking a look at what children are really like, what goes on in those little heads," Mrs. Mason said. "There's been a change

somewhere in the past 10 years. But it's still not universal."

Available adult hymns are too complex, or in the case of simple Gospel songs, like "I Was Sinking Deep in Sin," set up negative reactions, the teachers said.

So they've packed their book with songs glorifying the simple things—our home, family, the ministers, flowers—surrounding little pieces like "God Made Me," "Shining," "Thank You God for the Snow," and "The Wonder Song."

Mrs. Olanias, a musician, composed the melodies or drew them from old folk tunes, and Mrs. Mason, the words. Most of them include directions for accompanying gestures by the children.

### Dramatization

"Dramatization comes naturally to children," the teachers said. "They like to be the things they are talking about."

For example, in the song, "The Creation," they can flap their arms to imitate birds, and hold up their fingers for blades of grass.

2. That youngsters actually have a natural eagerness for religion, and that to them, learning about God and His world can be an eye-opening adventure—a happy time.

3. That for it to be that way, Christianity has to be translated into a special "Child's Realm"—simple words, familiar objects, illustrations and actions.

4. That it is positive to set a child down and expect him to absorb a lot of theoretical material and then recite it back to the teacher," said Mrs. Olanias, a pretty brunette mother of three.

In the first place, it bores them stiff.

"The emphasis," Mrs. Mason said, "should be on applying ideas to the actual activities of children, to their own relationship to life as they see it, not as pretexts for it."

These women battling Bible teachers into sort of modern, childish parables—much as Jesus used a few adult parables to make profound concepts plain to adults in His day.

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One of the big shortcomings the Connecticut teachers said they found was the lack of religious songs children could understand and feel—and children like to sing.

# Women Urge Make Sunday School More Appealing For The Children

Santa Cruz Sentinel-News-7  
Friday, November 26, 1954

By George W. Cornell

New York (AP)—When you have to drag little Johnny to Sunday school by the scruff of the neck, you might conclude either that Johnny is a bad boy — or the Sunday school is a flop.

A couple of spirited, young Connecticut mothers, convinced the fault usually lies with the Sunday school, today are doing a bit of crusading to make it more attractive for children.

Their idea is that church school classes for youngsters can be both winsome — and worshipful — at the same time. That is, if the grownups will quit trying to run everything in their own somber way.

"Sunday school can be the big event of the week for children," said Mrs. Agnes Leckie Mason, who has five children of her own. "But it has to be in their lingo, in a form within their own experiences."

She and Mrs. Phyllis Brown Ohanian have researched the subject both in theory and practice — the theory blossoming into a book and the practice into a Westport, Conn., church packed with kids.

"Many Sunday schools are too grim," said Mrs. Ohanian. "It's a holdover from Puritan days. If children get the impression that religion is dour, they leave the church as they grow older."

The field is a broad one covering some 30 million children who attend Sunday classes in this country — more or less willingly or unwillingly.

Basic thesis of the two teachers, who have become virtual religious pied-pipers to the small fry of Westport's Saugatuck Congregational church, is that religion for children can be fun.

"Giving them a positive, pleas-

ant approach toward religion is of basic importance," said Mrs. Mason. "Their underlying attitude toward the church is greatly determined by experiences at this age."

She and Mrs. Ohanian, in assessing their manual of children's hymns, devotions and games called "God's Wonderful World," said they sought to put in concrete form some principles about children, including:

1. That fear and compulsion don't produce reverence, or build stable Christian foundations, and that Sunday schools thus should be run so children want to come — not because they have to.

2. That youngsters actually have a natural eagerness for religion, and that to them, learning about God and his world can be any eye-opening adventure — a happy time.

3. That for it to be this way, Christianity has to be translated into a special "child's realm" — simple words, familiar objects, illustrations and actions.

"It's pointless to sit a child down and expect him to absorb a lot of theoretical material and then recite it back to the teacher," said Mrs. Ohanian, a pretty brunette mother of three.

In the first place, it bores them stiff.

"The emphasis," Mrs. Mason said, "should be on applying ideas to the actual activities of children, to their own relationship to life as they see it, not as grownups see it."

This means putting Bible teachings into a sort of modern, childish parables — much as Jesus used a few adult parables to make profound concepts plain to adults in his day.

And for children an effective "parable" usually involves some action on their part since they understand mostly by doing, seeing,

and feeling.

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## Speaking of Families

# Singing Quiets Mason Children

By BETH JUDSON

Nothing seemed more natural to Agnes Leckie Mason than to sing songs to her children. And as her family grew — now there are five—she made a remarkable discovery. Singing was more than a pleasure. It was a most useful device!

Were the children getting noisy? Obstreperous? A song would soon quiet them down. Did they dilly-dally along the road? A peppy marching song kept them stepping right along. Did they dilly-dally along the road? A peppy marching song kept them stepping right along. Did they start to bicker when riding in the family car?

They soon forgot it when they all joined in singing. Were they pestering their mother while she was trying to work? They would always listen happily to a song.

"Once when I was trying to get the dishes done with three of the little ones under foot," laughed Mrs. Mason, "I'll bet I sang 'Home on the Range' 100 times—by request!"

Yes, singing proved to be a useful tool in the Masons' Westport home. And as the children

grew, with the older ones singing to the younger, or all the family together, it provided a center of family interest that did much to weld them into one happy unit.

But when Agnes Mason started teaching Sunday School, that's when she made another discovery. Songs, for the young child especially, were a marvelous teacher!

"My little girl has been running all over the neighborhood," one mother reported, "telling her playmates they must all take turns at play. She got the idea from that song 'Taking Turns' you taught them."

Little experiences like this started Agnes Leckie Mason thinking. Perhaps a collection of songs about God and church, about day and night, about seasons and animals and home and friends could teach more than all the direct talking of parents and teachers put together!

And so, with the help of gifted musician Phyllis Brown Ohanian, she painstakingly compiled a book of songs that bring a simple, cheerful message of religious faith and love.

They selected songs that would hold the interest of children; implant in them a happy, wholesome attitude toward those they meet; help develop in the child a feeling of reverence toward God and His works.

This songbook is called "God's Wonderful World." Through it, Mrs. Mason hopes that other parents and teachers may share her happy experiences with children and song.

Says Agnes Leckie Mason:

"For family harmony and togetherness; for laying the foundation of a child's emotional and spiritual growth; for teaching the wonders of God's world, I never cease to marvel at the power of a simple, easy-to-learn song."

• • •



Admiral Fife's picture on the cover, was one of the great *Town & Country* features of 1954.

On their Christmas card that year Lila and DeWitt Wallace, of the *Reader's Digest*, wrote a little note to Henry, asking if he had any new careers. Replied he: "If they can be called careers I cannot say, but new projects are plentiful." Among those he reported to the Wallaces was a songbook by my sister, Agnes Mason. Called *God's Wonderful World*, it is made up of enchanting songs Agnes had written for her own children and for her Sunday-school classes. Henry Sell showed it to Victor Weybright, who agreed to publish the paperback edition in the New American Library and to find a publisher for the hard-cover version. At a Christmas Eve party in his home, Victor and his guests began to play the little tunes on the piano; finally everyone was singing along. Someone in the group suggested it would be a perfect Random House book because they would illustrate it so beautifully. Bennett Cerf was in Hollywood that evening, but Victor got on the telephone to him, the whole group sang the songs, and, sight unseen, Bennett agreed to publish the book.



Agnes Mason and her children. Henry sponsored her book of songs for children, *God's Wonderful World*, published by Random House in 1963 (Photo courtesy of Russell O. Kuhner).

From: *A Talent for Living: The Story of Henry Sell, An American Original*, Janet Leckie, Hawthorn Books, Inc., New York, 1970, pp 235-236

Henry Blackman Sell (1899-1974) was an editor with the Chicago "Daily News" during the 1910s. He was the editor of "Harper's Bazaar" from 1920 to 1926. From 1926 to 1940 he was the president of Blaker Advertising Agency. In 1940, he founded Sell's Specialties, a food processing company. Henry Sell was the editor of "Town & Country" magazine from 1949 to 1964 before returning to "Harper's Bazaar" as editor from 1965 to 1970.



With kindest regards  
and my best wishes

Victor  
Borge

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, DEAR VICTOR !

*There are unique personalities, much to the public eye, about whom there is a wide difference of opinion. You, Victor Borge—musician, comedian, wit, and friend—are such a one. So, as a Happy Birthday gift we have asked AGNES MASON to prepare for you this brief character sketch, based on the projective technique of handwriting analysis.*

VICTOR BORGE, you are a sensitive, versatile man with a warm heart and a keen mind. The almost limitless variation in the size and shape of the letters shows that you have a complex and involved personality. It also reveals that you are full of contrasts and contradictions; that it is difficult to understand the intricacies of your character.

In contrast with the small height of the letters, the words are extended along the lines, and the connecting strokes are large and curved. By these and other signs we know that you are sociable, responsive, adaptable, and that approval of others is important to you.

Your signature, which is completely illegible, shows that you would like to wrap yourself in a cloak of mystery; to be aloof, formal, restrained. This concern for appearances seldom lasts long, however, for there are no indications in your writing of snobbery or social conceit. Instead, you think of yourself as a plain, ordinary fellow, and when you relax completely this is the way you are—no airs, no fustiness, no fustiness.

But you really are not a plain, ordinary fellow. In spite of your adaptable, sweeping nature, you are blessed with an imagination that will not be bound. Things pop into your head, apparently from nowhere. As a result, you have sparks of impulsive activity, quite out of character with your usual quiet, poised self.

The words and the lines in your handwriting are well separated, a sign that you have the ability for clear, straight thinking. This characteristic, combined with creative imagination, is a clue to your unique personality. It is unusual to find combined in one handwriting both brilliance of mind and friendliness and interest in others.

The many fluctuations in height, width, and slant in your writing, show that you have exceptional sensibilities. In combination with the firm, heavy pressure which reveals energy and vitality, these indicate that you are open to experience and are very responsive to emotional stimuli. As a consequence, although usually outgoing and accessible, you are at times reserved and unapproachable.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the ambition and possessiveness revealed in some details of your writing, the sign for materialism—large lower loops—is completely missing. The exceptionally abbreviated lower zone shows that while you like to live graciously, physical comforts and the satisfaction of appetites are not especially important to you. All the rhythmic and artistic forms concentrated in the upper third of the writing space indicate the intellectual and aesthetic interests which accompany your active and fertile imagination. The soft, round loops on the small letters show that your imagination is playful and fanciful, but the impulsive thrusts in the writing warn us that it is also quixotic.

Your theatrical success, including the hilarious effect your performance has on audiences, is probably a source of amusement to you. But you will undoubtedly be able to go on endlessly producing new material because, in a sense, you aren't acting at all. You are just being yourself, or more accurately, your two selves—the quiet, poised one and the imaginative, impulsive one. The circle "5" dots are an example of the attempt to bridge the gap between these divergent sides of your personality by adopting mannerisms and artifices which, though they have no deep relationship to your real nature, are useful in your performance. If one who knew you only as a neighbor got together with someone who knew you only in your professional capacity, the two might have difficulty in coming to an agreement as to what your personality and character really were. They could end up wondering if they were talking about the same person.



MONDAY MORNING, JUNE 9, 1958

## Mother of Five Graduated From UB



Photo by Victor Mantec

Mrs. Agnes L. Mason, 43, of Oak Ridge park, Westport, mother of five children, is congratulated by Sen. Prescott Bush, commencement speaker, upon the receipt of a bachelor of science degree in elementary education from the University of Bridgeport's College of Education at Campus commencement exercises yesterday. Children include (left to right) James, 6; David, 10; Vivian, 12; Franklin, 16, and Janet, 17.