

children's faces lit with a joy that is reflected in their parents' eyes. The beloved Christmas story itself is a story of light, for, as the Gospel of John tells us, Jesus came into the world as "the true Light" that illumines all humankind.

Almost 2,000 years later, that Light still shines amid the dark places of our world. It is reflected in the lives of so many quiet and generous people who strive daily to make life better for others—feeding the hungry, caring for the ill and elderly, cherishing and nurturing children. It radiates from the hearts of those who work for peace and justice in their communities, our nation, and the world. It shines in the efforts of

men and women striving to break down the walls of fear, ignorance, and prejudice that cast shadows across too many lives and prevent us from becoming the people God intended us to be.

May all who celebrate Christmas this year rejoice in the special gifts of light that it brings: the love that warms our hearts, the faith that lights our journey, and the hope that promises us a bright future. Hillary and I wish you joy and peace during this Christmas season and much happiness in the New Year.

BILL CLINTON

## Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1997

*December 22, 1997*

Warm greetings to everyone observing Kwanzaa.

As America embarks on a season of renewal and reconciliation, the principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith—ring true not only for African Americans, but also for all Americans. By emphasizing the importance of family in our lives and the blessings that come with a true commitment to community, opportunity, and responsibility, the celebration of Kwanzaa can help us to enter the future as a stronger nation and a more compassionate and united people.

The symbols and ceremony of Kwanzaa, evoking the rich history and heritage of African Americans, remind us that our nation draws much of its strength from our diversity. As millions of Americans observe Kwanzaa this year, let us renew our commitment to realizing America's promise as a land where all people are free to pursue our common dreams—to live in peace, to provide for our families, and to give our children the opportunity for a better life.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa.

BILL CLINTON

## Statement on the Death of Esther Peterson

*December 22, 1997*

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Esther Peterson. She was the mother of the modern consumer movement, a woman who dedicated her life to improving the standard of living for all Americans. In her long career, she was a trusted adviser to President Kennedy, President Johnson, and President Carter. I was

grateful for her sage counsel and for her service to this country. As a member of the United States delegation to the United Nations, she was dedicated to promoting American values at home and abroad. She will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her children and grandchildren.