

The Christmas story

by St. Luke

And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

And all went to be taxed everyone into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone about them; and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, to men of good will.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning the child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Christmas Joy to all our readers

Free Press Editorial Page

ACTON, ONTARIO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 1972

Back Issues of The Free Press

20 years ago

50 years ago

75 years ago

Return to source of celebration

Jean Vanier, son of the late Governor-General, startled many last fall when he spoke of "the terrible things Christmas does to children."

He believes we wound them by giving too many expensive and unneeded things, which are greedily accepted but little cherished. (Witness the way so many toys are broken or abandoned before December is over.)

Vanier thinks our lavish — and often deficit gift-spending breeds distorted values that actually cripple our young.

Another peril of this Christmas over-indulgence is what it does to those who are outside it — the children of an unemployed father or a single mother on welfare. Seeing the tempting things displayed in stores, hearing the constant pitch for luxuries on television and yet be denied them; surely such wounds go deep.

Vanier spent some of his time in Canada visiting Kingston Penitentiary. In his talks with prisoners they told him this disparity between what they saw

and what they could have was often the motive for their criminal behaviour.

The solution?

Gifts are part of Christmas; they can be emotionally enriching to both giver and receiver. If we kept them fewer and simpler and listened to the carols whose sounds point us back to the source of the celebration, and listen also to the deprived, then do something constructive to assuage it; we may manage to strike a balance that will make the festival more genuine.

One of my wife's students brought in some old newspapers, and I found them fascinating.

FOR GOD AND HOME AND NATIVE LAND

VOTE OUT THE SALOON AND THE LIQUOR STORE

Thus cried the Globe of Toronto on October 18, 1919. It had a circulation of 86,547. It had 24 pages. Count the liquor advertisements in your today's big city newspaper.

Things were not so much different 62 years ago, aside from the booze question.

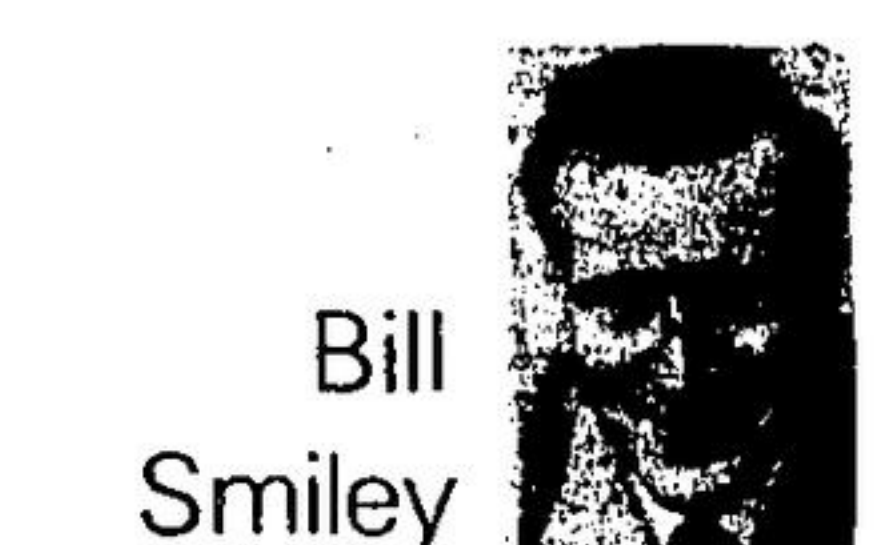
The Irish had two front page stories. There was "nearly a settlement on the Irish problem". "Hands were extended but they were never gripped" and the Sinn Fein political prisoners were released from Mountjoy Prison as the outcome of the hunger strike. Like, what's new?

START WAR ON DRUG TRAFFIC read another headline. There was to be a \$1,000 fine for improper use of narcotics. Apparently the opponents of prohibition were scattering a leaflet purporting to show that since Ontario went dry "the use of drugs has increased to alarming proportions".

But the only drugs they were concerned with were those oldies, opium, cocaine and morphine. Apparently our granddads were not acquainted with pot, hash, horse and speed. Or perhaps they didn't use slang terms. Anyway, what's new?

Another headline stated: LITTLE FIGHT LEFT IN REDS. The whole article revealed that the revolution in Russia was just as good as over, and the "reds" had had it. I wonder if Stalin or Krushchev read that, and what they thought.

There was an election on The Globe, as it



Bill Smiley

still does, tried to tell its readers how to vote.

On page 1, there is a box, with a facsimile of the ballot, and the paper urges every reader to vote No to every question on the referendum. About booze, that is.

Every story about the election is slanted toward the Tories, against the Liberals, and against booze. So, what's new, except the booze adverts?

In a desperate four-column twenty-inch advert, the Liberals try to separate the political issues and the booze issues. Not a hope. What's new?

The rest of the front page could have been printed yesterday. Trouble all over the world. Gold-dust galore from the Yukon. Lloyd George carried to his university chair by students, led by a ragtime band (except that today he'd have been humiliated and led by a rock band). Somebody's wife, with a certain lack of novelty, had presented him with his third set of twins. And similar garbage.

THE WEATHER. Same old jazz as we get today. "Probabilities: Fair weather; stationary or higher temperature". In other words, it's going to stay miserable or improve. What's new?

But the real fun of an old newspaper is

the advertisements, as they are today. Even then, the auto manufacturers took a lot of space. You had the choice among the Gray Dert, the Franklin, and something called the Lexington. But the copy hasn't changed much.

Instead of power brakes, you had the "one-tinger emergency brake". Instead of anti-freeze, you had the Franklin's "Direct air-cooled. No water to boil or freeze". Wonder what happened to that one? And instead of the 120 per cent performance promised for today's cars, the Gray Dert ad said it would take care of 80 per cent of a motor car's work. Wonder what happened to that copy writer.

But among the names are many old, familiar ones. Mason & Risch. Phonographs? Kellogg's Corn Flakes. Sherrill's Marmalade. Horlick's Malted Milk. Red Rose Tea.

And the all-too-familiar ads in tiny type for aids with dandruff, piles, underarm hair remover for ladies, kidney pills, liver pills, rheumatic remedies. What's new?

There isn't exactly an entertainment section, as such, but the King Edward Hotel offered a dinner deluxe for \$1.50 with music by Romanelli's orchestra. The Alexandria was presenting ROADS OF DESTINY with Florence Reed. And the Princess suggested La La Lucille, with music by George Gershwin. Evenings, \$2.00. Matinees, from 50 cents. This was live theatre. At Shea's there was a nine-act vaudeville show. Prices? 25 cents to 50 cents. What's new? I should tell you?

And in a coloured supplement of the time, there are full-page ads for such things as chewing gum, Bon Ami for whitening your shoes, Borden's Milk, and Pebecco tooth-paste. Can you believe? In a recent Maclean's, Canada's "national magazine", there were 126 pages of writing and just over 20 pages of liquor advertisements. So what's new?

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 24, 1952.

The United church Sunday School concert was presented Friday with about 80 taking part. Training the children were Mrs. V. West, Mrs. M. Simpson, Mrs. S. Dills and Miss E. Jennings. Rev. Currey was master of ceremonies. Gordon Hufnagel welcomed everyone, and others with solo parts were Barry Stewart, Ann DeForest, Darlene Lambert, Peter Wolfe, Mary Jane Force and Charlie Saul.

Almost 100 per cent at all industries and a "good" attendance at the Y was reported by Dick Bean following the TB X-ray survey in town Thursday and Friday. About 1700 were X-rayed. At the tannery 380 were X-rayed in two hours and 50 minutes. Mrs. H. Helwig was in charge of canvassers and Mrs. A. Long in charge of clerks.

Employees of Baxter Labs held a Christmas dinner. A wrist watch was presented to Lorne Masters by Gordon Rognvaldson and W. Benson, marking 10 years service. Gerry Candier, Rino Braida and Johnny Graham played for a singsong. In charge of arrangements for the party were Newt Hurst, Jackie Watkins and Sam Snyder.

About 25 from Acton arranged for a party at the Centennial Manor, with Charles Mason in charge.

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Wolfe announce the birth of their fifth son, John Mark.

A puppet show was a different feature at the Ospringe school concert. Taking part were Warren McKinney, John and Sherlock Aitken and Danny and Ken Winter. Teachers Mrs. A. White and Miss Fern Schell were in charge of the program.

Everything is Christmassy but the weather — foggy.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 21, 1922.

The salary of W. J. Reid, waterworks inspector, was increased to \$1,200 and of Chief Cooney to \$1,400 per annum.

Without doubt the hardest worked staff in town since the middle of December was the post office. An enormous volume of mail demanded their constant attention. Some of the parcels sent are so flimsily wrapped the staff must take the trouble to re-tie them so they will reach their destinations. The general public owes a debt of thanks to the venerable postmaster James Matthews, the deputies Mr. J. Chester Matthews and Miss Fern Brown, and his assistant James Matthews Jr. for their prompt and careful handling of the mail and their uniform courtesy to all. Through storm and cold the rural couriers performed their work faithfully entailing hours of extra service. It is gratifying to learn that numbers of kind-hearted farmers on the rural routes have shown practical application of the faithful services of the couriers during the year by Christmas gifts, in some cases of very decent sums.

Mr. Roy Thomson and Mr. Birchell were here on Tuesday looking at factory sites.

During the Christmas rush on Saturday a party of police officers entered —'s store (name given) at Rockwood and located four bottles of whiskey. As a result of the raid a charge has been laid.

Mr. J. V. Savage, who is handling the Alladin lamp, has already disposed of 24 in this community. It really takes to the homes the effect of electric light.

The sleighs with the merry sleigh bells put it all over the motor cars. The cars lack the sentimental rhythm.

Sunday night after church carollers were out till after midnight.

Taken from the issue of the Free Press of Thursday, December 23, 1897.

The weather probabilities ensure good sleighing for Christmas.

There's no seven o'clock closing this week. Christmas buyers are busy and Christmas stocks are being rapidly reduced.

When the energetic and painstaking workers of St. Alban's church undertake any enterprise they invariably carry it to a successful consummation. The Christmas entertainment in the town hall on Tuesday evening was a highly creditable performance replete with Christmas flavor. The solos by Master Joe Lake of Georgetown were much enjoyed. The sacred cantata The Advent was the major production of the evening. The distribution of Christmas presents had many happy surprises.

Holiday Goods in Abundance at Henderson and Co. Furs of all kind, Collarettes, Ruffs, Muffs, Jacket and Capes. Improve the appearance of your home and buy a handsome silk Piano or Mantle drape. From \$1 up. Also embroidered silk scarfs and table covers. They do not cost much but they brighten the house wonderfully for Christmas. Also a line of plush and tapestry Table Covers just to hand from the old country, marvellously cheap. A mass of handkerchiefs of all kinds.

At Pringle's — Photograph Cameras, manicure sets, dressing cases, work boxes, fancy china, Japanese novelties, canes and umbrellas, fountain pens, gold spectacles.

Savage and Co., Guelph — Tea sets, sugar bowls, cruet stands, cake baskets, card receivers, syrup jugs, biscuit jars.

C. F. Goodeve, Acton — for Christmas fresh figs, dates, prunes, peaches, raisins, lemons, oranges, peel, nuts, 500 lbs. assorted candies, 12 kinds of fish.

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The star we follow

News these days, whether reaching us through the paper or via the airwaves, seems to consist of one calamity after another—more deaths in Ireland, more repression in South Africa, more examples of injustice and man's inhumanity to man. When we reflect on all this woe, it is easy to despair of both individuals and society. But not at Christmas.

As we prepare for this "festival of the heart" another and happier aspect of mankind is revealed. Human beings can be unselfish and tender too, and the heartening message of this season is that we can trust these qualities. We are as capable of love as of hate, of idealism as of cynicism, and on them the world makes its slow but not always insubstantial gains. Despair always fetters; it is love that inspires.

History is studied with the names of the ruthless from Caesar's legions to Hitler and Stalin, but their stars flashed briefly and then vanished. It is another star we follow with hope and yearning each December, and it takes us to a Bethlehem stable and a Babe whom man cannot forget. In his name and in his spirit the Cardinal Legers, the Dr. Robert McClures, the Jean Vaniers and the Dag Hammerskjolds live, or have lived among us.

At this season we dare believe the best and final word is with them: "Where charity stands watching And faith holds wide the door The dark night wakes, the glory breaks and Christmas comes once more. . ."

—Phillips Brooks

MAY IT SO COME TO US ALL