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WILLIAM EVDOKIMOFF, Publisher

BOB RUTTER, Editor

PHONE... 877-2201

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Don't forget Joseph

Poor Joseph always gets forgotten at Christmas. The attention focuses on the babe in the manger, the mother, the angels, the promise that this child would be the long-awaited Messiah.

But Joseph was the fall-guy for everyone else's glory.

Under the circumstances, who would blame him if he had walked out? The woman he hadn't married yet was going to have a baby that he hadn't fathered.

"If this Jesus is really the son of God," Joseph might well have said, "then let God have the responsibility for bringing him up."

Of course, he didn't say that. And he didn't quit. We know he was still around when Jesus was 12, and lingered in the Temple, listening to the priests and teachers. But that's the last time the New Testament bothers mentioning Joseph.

Yet there's no doubt that Joseph was a good father to Jesus. Throughout the four Gospels, Jesus refers to God as "Father" in a way that no previous Jewish prophet ever had, as a personal God, warm, loving, friendly, caring, forgiving, just, sometimes even with a sense of humor.

We can't prove that Joseph was that kind

of father too. The New Testament offers no eye-witness reports, no character references, on the family life of Joseph and his eldest lad.

But surely if Joseph had been preoccupied with his business, or chased village women, or was harsh, cruel, or unjust — surely even Jesus would have retained traces of bitterness.

He would have said that God was unlike human fathers. In fact, if Joseph had been a bad father, Jesus himself might have developed differently.

Joseph gives the message of Christmas a different perspective. For every baby, in a sense, is a child of God.

And every parent may decide, for reasons that seem valid to him or her, to let someone else look after that child and to pursue instead that parent's own individual interests.

Bringing up a child of God is an awesome responsibility. But maybe opting out would be a more terrible responsibility.

Remember Joseph. Think of how differently the promise of Christmas might have turned out if he hadn't done his best as a parent.

EVEN A MOUSE

By Sylvia Vincent

As silently as little wisps of fire
A tiny mouse ran through a crowded byre
Where animals and people stood in awe
To gaze upon New Life asleep in straw

In wonder, mouse on hind legs stood with ease
He sniffed the air and soon began to sneeze,
An angel turned with finger to her lips
Then pointed to the Babe with fingertips.

God's gift at that first Christmas was His Son
To spread wise words and love to everyone.
Soon animals knew faith within Christ's reach
But man was blind and difficult to teach.

Two thousand years with many lessons learned
Man's finding now Christ's inner peace is earned.
Animals show love which we should borrow
"Oh we put our faith in Christ tomorrow

Our gift to God must be the way we think
In thanks for Christ before we sip our drink,
In laughter bright yet sharing of a tear,
In needed Blessings sent in silent prayer

Looking through our files

THIRTY YEARS AGO

There was a moment of stunned silence at Council meeting on Monday evening following the reading by Mayor Gibbons of a letter from P.B. Harrison announcing his resignation as clerk-treasurer of the town for reasons of health. The mayor pointed to Mr. Harrison's capable performance of his duties for the past 23 years, and said he deeply regretted the resignation of one who has held the key position of municipal government, and whose honesty and ability have been above reproach.

Esquimaux council established by bylaw a community hall at Stewarstown, with the following as a board of managers: Rev. George Cleave and Deputy Rev. George Currie (township representatives); Mrs. Walter Lawson, Mrs. Robert Cunningham, Milton J. Brown, William Alexander and H. Craig Reid.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Thomas Beor of RR1, Georgetown escaped injury last Wednesday morning when his car collided with the morning train from Hamilton, approaching Georgetown at the crossing on 17 Sideroad near Smith's Garage. There was approximately \$1,000 damage to the vehicle, a late model Ford ranch wagon. The department of education has given

permission to North Halton District high school board to replace the old section of Georgetown high school with a new building. The 1967 structure had a foretaste of doom three years ago when a substantial addition was made to the building with the understanding that it would be the nucleus for a complete new high school.

TEN YEARS AGO

The success of the Go Transit system has prompted the provincial cabinet to call for a survey of extensions to the existing line, possibly to include Georgetown. But government officials will be cagey about any announcement because past experience has proved that the mere mention of any extension in a specific area can send land costs soaring.

A 33-year career ended officially last Friday when an auction sale at the home of Mrs. Caroline Colbus concluded. It was the final sale for a veteran district businessman, Frank Petch, who has decided to retire from the business after over half a century.

The 2nd Georgetown Club Pack which meets every Monday night in St. George's Parish Hall, enjoyed a Christmas party on Dec. 18th. Instead of exchanging gifts with each other, the boys bought a story book each to go to the Children's Ward at the Georgetown Hospital.

Apparent dislike showing between Davis, Smith

By DON O'HEARN

Queen's Park Bureau

There is a deep, personal dislike growing between Ontario Premier William Davis and Provincial Liberal Leader Stuart Smith, at least from the premier's side.

This became evident in the closing days of the session.

When the premier was replying to the Liberal leader he would almost invariably cut him up.

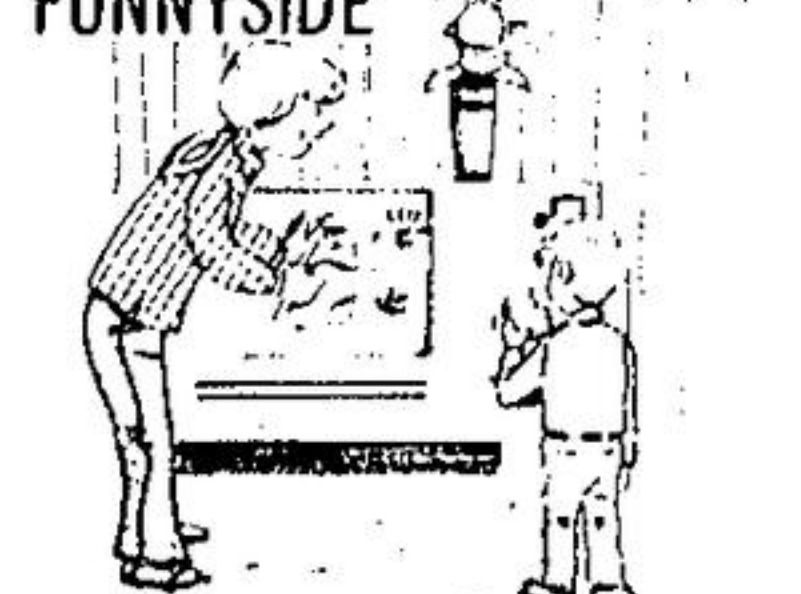
This wouldn't be in an outright attack, but in that subtle, cynical way of reply that polished politicians can have when they don't like each other.

And listening to it, one could have little doubt that there was bitterness underneath.

Behind this could be the fact that Davis just doesn't like Smith's line of attack, and for reasons of his own, consider it unfair or distorted.

The observer doesn't know just what these reasons could be.

What on TV seems mostly to be peanut butter



Rumors persist of wholesale budget cuts

By STEWART MACLEOD
Ottawa Bureau

Prime Minister Trudeau has done his best to dampen speculation that his government may eliminate entire departments as part of its own spending restraints program. Still, the issue continues to dominate cabinet meetings.

"We've had some pretty hot sessions over this," says one minister, "and there are more hot sessions coming up." He seemed to be looking forward to the arguments.

Treasury Board President Robert Andras who announced last March that the government would limit increases in total federal spending to seven per cent this year — compared with 14 per cent last year — is apparently leading the campaign to chop certain departments. And he is supported by the so-called right wingers of the cabinet.

But they have a light on their hands, particularly from representatives of slow-growth areas, as they consider administering the axe to departments of regional economic

expansion, consumer and corporate affairs, communications, urban affairs and science and technology. External Affairs Minister Don Jamieson, Newfoundland, and Privy Council President Allan MacEachen, a Cape Bretoner, are among those who don't want to see the department of regional economic expansion eliminated while their provinces are so plagued by unemployment.

BIG SAVINGS

The five departments spend about \$750 million of the government's 1977 total outlay of \$45 billion, but their elimination would not result in a saving of \$750 million. Many of the responsibilities would be transferred to other departments.

However, there would be significant saving and even more important, any drastic step like this would have a profound impact on the private sector. There will also be pruning programs carried out in existing departments.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation is one government agency that is likely to be a major victim of the government's restraints

program. After seeing the CBC's 1977 spending climb to \$467 million from last year's \$415 million, cabinet is determined to halt the particular spiral.

"I think we'll be cutting the CBC budget by about \$29 million," says one chatty minister. And he talked about how Andras was sending other departmental spending estimates back to the responsible ministers for downward revisions.

"That guy can be tough."

Although Trudeau has appeared to be scotching rumors about the possible execution of departments, he has carefully avoided flat denials. When asked about the possibility of DREE being eliminated, Trudeau mentioned that Regional Expansion Minister Marcel Lessard had already denied this.

"I shall simply add that they, the rumors, might originate from the fact that, more and more, we hear the premiers, their ministers and newspapers congratulating the government for its initiative, recapitulating the amounts spent during the eight or nine years of existence of that department and asking

the federal government to continue that beautiful enterprise."

This statement did not alter the fact that the prime minister had earlier told New Brunswick Premier Richard Hatfield that DREE might be eliminated.

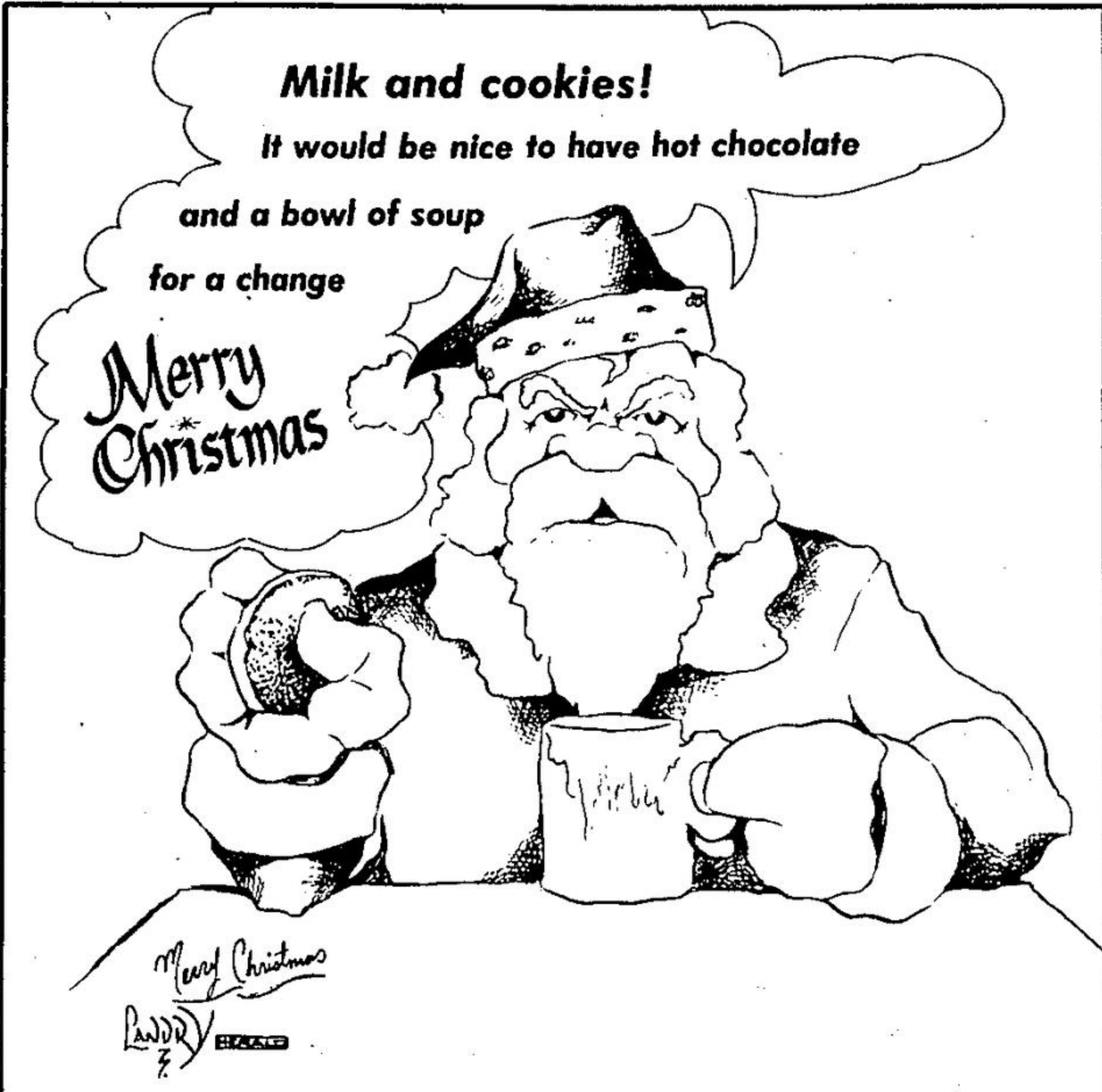
But in Parliament, Trudeau said "there is no present policy for the government to reduce the number of ministries or, for that matter, to multiply them." Again, he carefully avoided issuing denials.

The chatty minister I was referring to said that while there is still no over-all policy on departmental eliminations, one could be developed in a matter of hours. But he doubted whether as many as five departments would be affected.

"If you really want to get ride of a couple of departments you start by suggesting five. Then you back off and settle for two and that way everyone emerges as a winner."

"The only thing I am sure of is that Bob Andras is not fooling around this time. Just wait and see."

We will.



Christmas—a magical time

By GERRY LANDSBOROUGH

Christmas — that magical, joyous, and festive time of year. Christmas is the time for throwing off the shackles of adulthood and allowing the child that lives within each of us to frolic if only for a little while.

Unfortunately some of the "children" within who reign at Christmas time are holy terrors. They over-spend and buy beyond their means, and as children they stamp their feet and insist it's their right.

Some "holy terrors" go on boozing binges and the "hurt child" within them takes over. No matter how sincere the promise or how painful the memory of last year's office party the child within shakes its head with a firm "it's Christmas too bad if I can't enjoy a drink after working my butt off all year."

Within all of us the child stands strong at Christmas time. For some its remembrances of not enough to eat and so they gorge themselves more and more as does a child till well past the bursting point.

For others the strong emotions that Christmas evokes makes over-indulging a "need" that must be met in order to cope with the holidays and that child just wants to "try a little please" — and its little eyes are always bigger than its belly (or almost).

It is the child within us that buys the Christmas gifts — very often it buys not what is practical or even realistic but instead it answers a need from deep within childhood past and buys the longest for beautiful doll or the fancy rare car set.

We all answer the child within us, but sometimes our adult is pushed out by an angry, demanding, never satisfied child. Of course when that happens the bills start pouring in and December has long since faded away everyone pays for the "holy terror" rampage.

However, not everyone has a holy terror

reborn at Christmas time. For some the child that appears is an anticipating one, shaking presents and cuddling under the mistletoe and throwing aside for a time the woes of the world.

This child delights at the crunch of snow beneath the feet and giggles at the wrapping of presents wondering if the gift receivers will have as much pleasure as the gift giver.

It is the child within us that tiptoes down the stairs at midnight placing parcels under the tree and filling the stockings, quite often, with a definite "ho! ho!"

Christmas is for childhood and because of this we often become quite childlike in our delight with the season. Those of us whose "holy terror" takes over during Christmas could catch the little devil at work and not doing away with childhood altogether but allowing the adult that is also part of us to have a firmer stand.

A few years back I wrote a poem of childhood remembrances that seems quite appropriate at this time. I hope you'll enjoy sharing it with me once again as my Christmas wish for all of you — and as always from my house to yours the happiest of Christmases.

Christmas Thoughts and Wishes

By G. LANDSBOROUGH

A child looks at Christmas, at the height of the tree

Touching the ceiling just as giant as can be

A child look at the table, with so much to try

A woman thinks of other years and brushes tears aside

A child races happily, banging parlour doors

A child rattles presents and slides on Grandmas floors

A child sings out loudly and joins in the spree

A woman remembers how childhood can be

To keep Christmas as children, for we all hide a child

Got a beef?

Got a beef? Want to write to your elected member of the federal or provincial parliament? Then you can contact them at the following addresses:

CANADA

Halton constituency — (Liberal) Dr. Frank Philbrook, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.

Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe — Constituency (Liberal) Russ Milne, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.

Wellington — Constituency (Liberal) Dr. Frank Maine, MP, House of Commons, Ottawa, Ontario.

There is no requirement for postage to be affixed in letters mailed to elected members of federal parliament. There is, however, no provision for free mailing to elected mem-

bers of the provincial parliament.

ONTARIO

Halton-Burlington constituency — (Liberal) Julian Reed, MPP, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.

Oakville constituency — (Progressive Conservative) Hon. James Snow, MPP, Queens Park, Toronto, Ontario.

Brampton constituency — (Progressive Conservative) Hon. William Davis, MPP, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.

Wellington-dufferin-Peel constituency — (Progressive Conservative) Jack Johnson, MPP, Queen's Park, Toronto, Ontario.

Readers contacting their elected representatives about any concerns they may have should also feel free to direct a copy of their correspondence to The Herald where it will be considered for publication. We welcome letters.

Is religion all but gone?

Dr. Daniel Cappon, a professor in environmental studies at York University, Toronto, at a recent international conference in New Zealand suggested that the United Nations convene a meeting of the hundred best intellects in the world to discuss the purpose of human existence. He has explained why he is calling for such a meeting: "With every ideology warring, religion all but gone, science unable to give the answers to why, no one can tell us any more what it's all about."

Really professor? Surely you recognize that it is of the nature of an ideology to waver, for it is a response of emotion and mind, a matter of anxiety and aspiration, with respect to a broad pattern of circumstance which is constantly changing. Only for the totalitarian mind do ideology not waver.

And science as such has never purported to give answers to life's basic "Whys" — although it can help clear underbrush and indicate new directions.

"Religion all but gone?" Perhaps in some countries, but it still seems to have an effective life in Canada and to be showing signs of becoming stronger than it has been in the recent past.

Religious leaders report that more and more people now seem to be looking to church and synagogue for help in coping with the deep, basic problem of their lives. The pressures and menaces and confusions of life today are causing many to look for meaning and purpose in the resources of religion — and there is evidence that religious leaders, recognizing this, are offering in their ministrations the basics of religion, and are less concerned with the mere incidentals of religion than many have been in the recent past.

The alleged evidence that "religion is gone" is often superficial, depending upon how many people went to church or synagogue last week. But religion goes much deeper than that. It's not a question about organized religion at all but "does life have meaning for you? And is that because, like a member of AA, you are trusting a power beyond yourself and working that out daily?"

Dr. Cappon's suggestion certainly is worthy of serious consideration — but he shouldn't rule out the effectiveness of religion, not yet anyway.

Editor's notebook

One half of the world cannot understand the pleasures of the other.

Jane Austen

Good advice

This holiday season — and at every party you host — give your guests the gift of true friendship by considering those that must drive home.

That's the advice of the Hamilton Automobile club, which is launching its annual "First A Friend...Then A Host" holiday campaign.

The idea behind the campaign is to place the best interests of driving guests one step ahead of efforts to entertain lavishly at the bar, anyway.

Recognizing that it's impractical to discourage drinking altogether, especially during the Christmas and New Year's season, the club suggests subtly de-emphasizing the liquor. The low-joy methods the club proposes won't dampen the spirit of the party and guests are more likely to be in a condition to drive home safely.

The basic point is to simply centre attention on food and fun rather than bottled spirit.

Here are the club's suggestions on how to be "First A Friend...Then A Host":

—Mix the first drink for guests, if you wish, but consider setting up a self-serve bar so guests may pace themselves. If you plan on playing bartender yourself, always measure moderate amounts of liquor.

—Include a variety of low and non-alcoholic beverages for those who may wish to abstain.

—Never push drinks on driving guests.

—Centre attention on food. Have an attractive and generous display of rich and starchy foods and serve plenty of them throughout the evening. Here's where your culinary talents can be displayed. Such foods will help slow down the absorption of alcohol into the bloodstream, too.

—Set an example and don't over-indulge in drinking.

—Keep guests circulating with dancing, games or conversation, diverting attention from the bar.

—Make sure coffee is that "one for the road."

—While coffee won't sober anyone up, it gains time — and time is the only factor that leads to sobriety.

—As the evening wears on, serve a rich dessert

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