

Christmas television movies, specials never lose appeal

What would the Christmas season be without the endless stream of movies and specials on television, most that focus on the spirit and meaning of the Christmas season? Some of the movies never seem to lose their appeal even after decades of viewing. Some of the favourites include:

“National Lampoon’s Christmas Vacation” (1989) – Those zany Griswolds are up to their antics again! Led by an all-star cast including Chevy Chase and Beverly D’Angelo, the Griswold family Christmas should be merry, but naturally turns into a hilarious disaster. Look for appearances by Julia Louis-Dreyfus (formerly of “Seinfeld”) and Doris Roberts (of “Everybody Loves Raymond”).

“A Christmas Story” (1983) – You won’t want to miss this classic of 1940s Americana which was partly filmed in Toronto. Young Ralphie has his heart set on a Red Rider BB gun for Christmas, but it seems like Mom, teacher and even Santa are certain he’ll “shoot his eye out” with such a gift. Will Ralphie find his heart’s desire under the tree? Watch to find out.

“It’s a Wonderful Life” (1946) – Many versions of this movie have been made throughout the years, but the original outshines them all. When distraught George Baily (Jimmy Stewart) meets a compassionate angel, he learns what life would have been like if he’d never existed. Holiday magic wins out in the end.

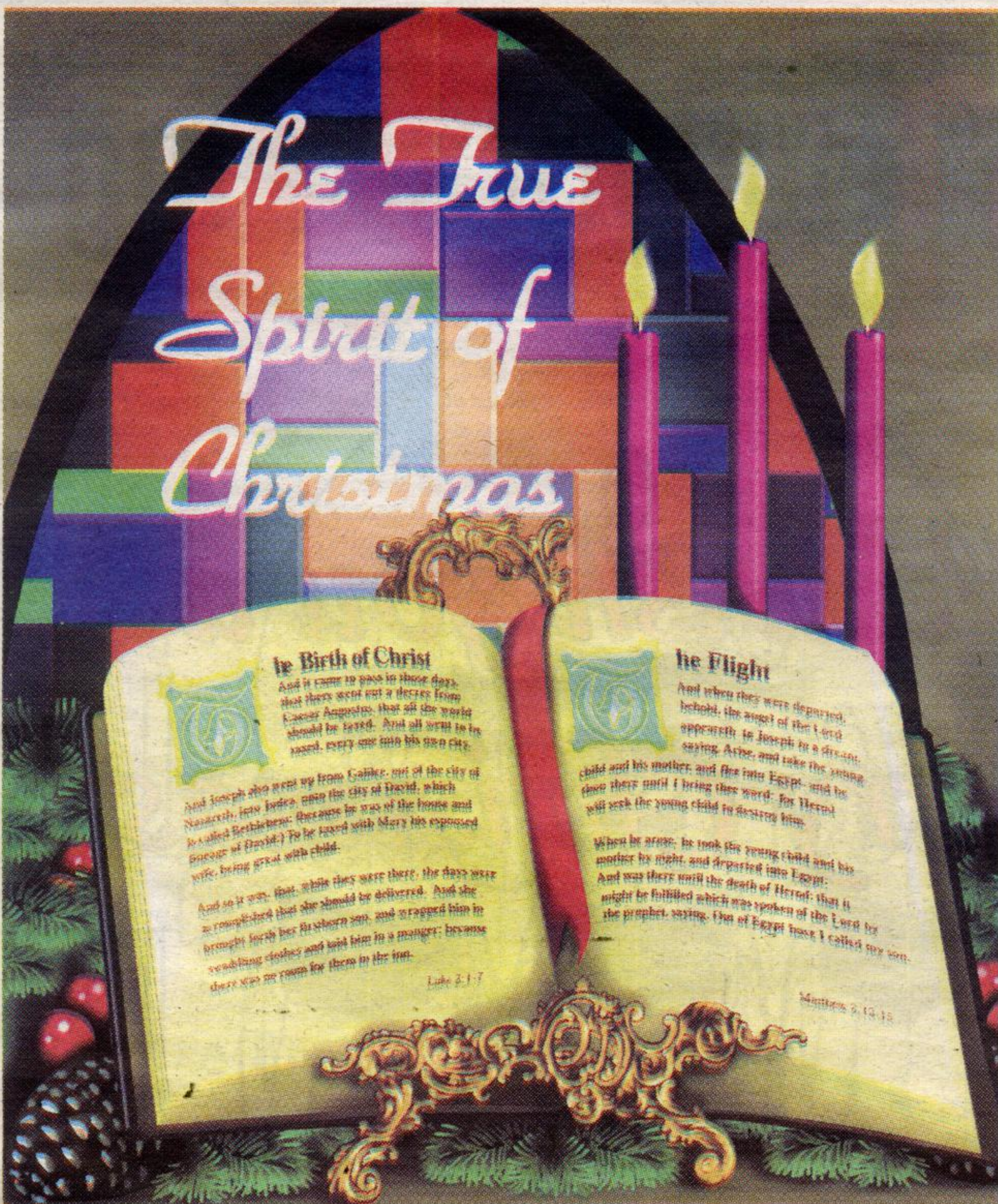
“Miracle on 34th Street” (1947) – Another classic that can’t be missed! When a man claiming to be Santa Claus is deemed insane, a young lawyer and a headstrong young

girl come to his rescue. “A Christmas Carol” (1951) – Yet another movie that has spawned a series of more recent remakes. This one stars Alastair Sim as Mr. Scrooge, a bitter, miserly man who doesn’t give a bah humbug about the holiday season. But will a haunting by three ghosts change his mind and ill will?

“A Charlie Brown Christmas” (1965) – Charlie Brown is depressed and can’t find the Christmas spirit. When he is put in charge of the school’s holiday pageant and comes in with a meager Christmas tree, the school

kids ultimately learn about the true meaning of Christmas.

“The Nightmare Before Christmas” (1993) – Halloween resident Jack Skellington stumbles upon an alternate universe called Christmastown one day. It inspires him to organize a Christmas celebration in his town. The worlds of creepy Halloween characters and bubbly Christmas spirit meet in this stop-action animated flick. Some of the characters may be too scary for younger children, but older ones may enjoy the humour of this PG-rated movie.



Candles Christ symbol

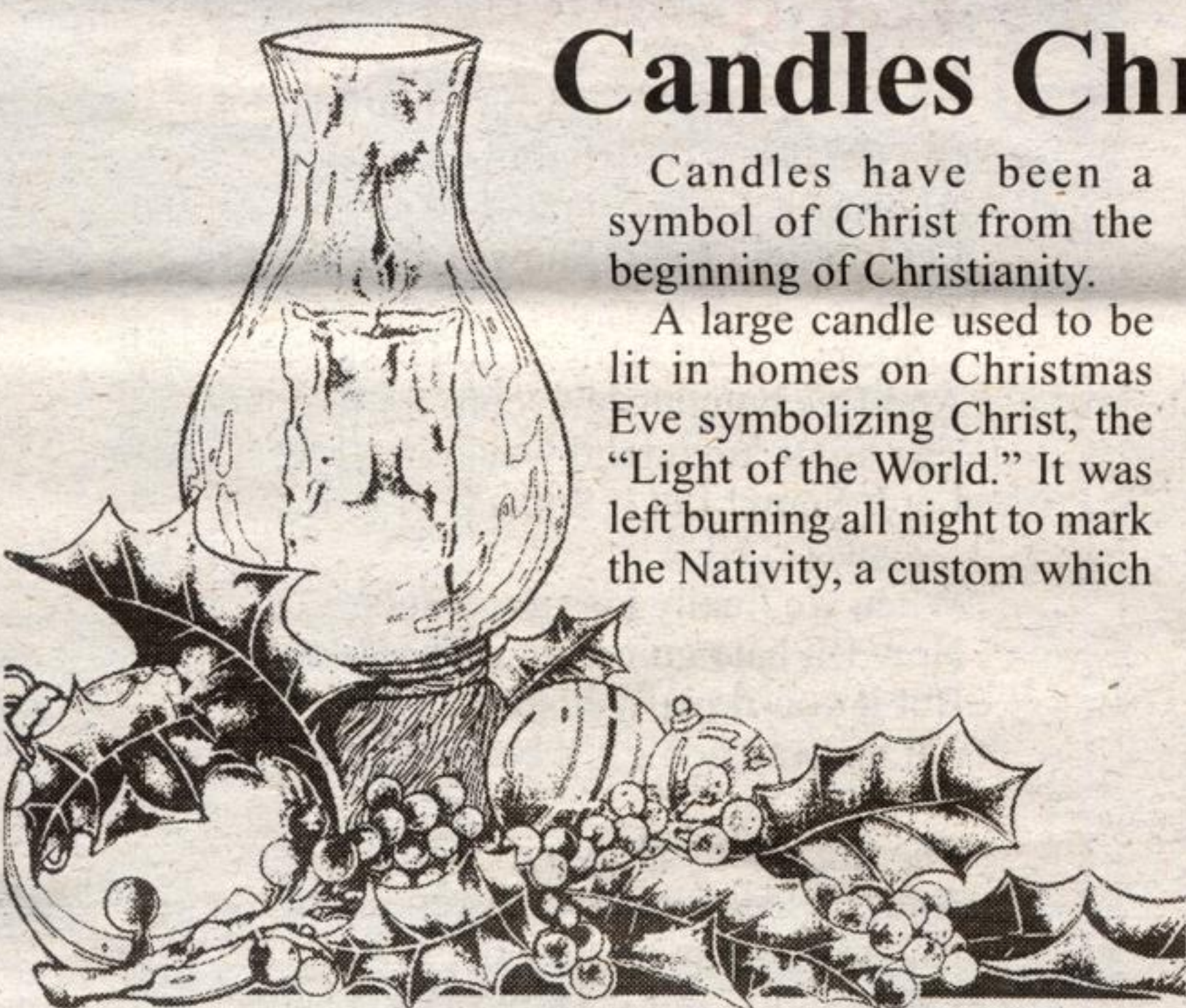
Candles have been a symbol of Christ from the beginning of Christianity.

A large candle used to be lit in homes on Christmas Eve symbolizing Christ, the “Light of the World.” It was left burning all night to mark the Nativity, a custom which

still persists in countries such as France, Denmark, England and Ireland.

Canadian families often light candles decorated with pine or fir branches during Christmas dinner but the original meaning has been obscured by the passage of time.

Candles are again enjoying a comeback and fire departments are imploring people never to leave lighted candles unattended. Careless people can make the Christmas season one of grief and loss as well as ruining the season for firefighters.



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