

Suggest Christmas Go Back to Pagans

By GEORGE W. CORNELL
AP Religion Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Give Christmas back to the pagans. That's the suggestion of a Roman Catholic clergyman, who says the holiday has become a "grotesque counterfeit" of its intended meaning.

A lot of people partly agree but most of them don't go along with his idea of switching the date.

"With all the changes we have had to bear, a major step such as this would be just too much," responded a Lima, Ohio, woman.

The suggestion was put fourth in an article in the U.S. Catholic, a Chicago monthly, by the Rev. Peter J. Riga. He says the Christmas season has been "perverted so grossly" that it has become a "threat to mental and emotional well-being."

"The modern commercial pagans have destroyed not only the religious basis of this feast, but also the human warmth and merriness that grew up around it," he writes.

"As Christians we should have the courage to leave this lifeless carcass to the vultures of commercialism and to choose another date on which to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas."

A sampling of readers showed that most of them agree the holiday has been seriously blighted by materialism, but 75 per cent of them definitely don't want it shifted to another date.

The Rev. Francis A. Zielinski, Plymouth, Mich., said he agreed that "Christmas is fake, phoney, commercialized and unhealthy" but the idea of another date for it "will have

about the same effect as a direct assault on motherhood or banning hot dogs ..."

Father Riga noted that the Dec. 25 date for Christmas was not set by early Christians, but was adopted in the Fourth Century, by joining the observance to the pagan Roman celebration of "Sol Invictus," the sun god.

Since the exact date of Jesus' birth isn't known, Father Riga suggested that Christmas be transferred to the date observed by Eastern Orthodoxy, Jan. 6, Epiphany, marking the manifestation of the Christ child to the Magi.

It is time to "come out of the land of Babylon which the hucksters of wares and materialism have taken over ... and leave Dec. 25 to the pagans," he says.

He says the proper religious message of Christmas, which is the gift of God's love for men and his visible revelation in history through Jesus Christ, has "long since died an ignominious death."

He adds that Christmas should celebrate "Christ's spirit of selfless and unstinting love of our brothers," especially the poor, instead of being a "seasonal orgy to escape the realization that our loves are not like that at all."

But Mrs. Sanford B. Hatch, of Chittenango, N.Y., commented: "The message of Christmas, 'Peace on earth,' is a daily prayer in the hearts of enough Christians to drown the hue and cry of the huckster."

Moliere said: "It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable."

The Times Reflected

Reflections of a time, when I was young
Endless dreams under the sun;
But I awake one fateful day
To see those clear skies now are gray.

The world it seems is crumbling down;
I see ugly scenes in every town;
What is right? What is wrong?
How can I know? Where do I go?

They say there is happiness in a song,
For it is. I'll sing to you;
And the decision about this song
Then will lie within you all.

My song will tell of many things;
Hate, riots, air pollution,
Destruction, war and strife!
But, only remember it's a song of life.

The song reflects a was in southeast Asia
Where two must fight G.I. and Charlie.
Is this war for an unknown cause
Or for freedom, but not for all?

Reflecting disease and starvation
Rampant in thousand nations—
Hundreds dying in the street
While fat poodles feast on meat.

Reflections of a place where none can
Love all of his brothers
Because of his features or his color
And there, even hate between the children.

Discrimination, interrogation,
Population running wild
Corruption in every place you look
Going up! Crashing down!
Is there any peace around?

They scream corruption, decadence of youth
Fine things to say about Mother's baby
Put me down! Push me around!
Your world is not for me!

I put this question to the youth,
What will we do about this earth?
Will it die or survive?
The answer is in you.

I am reflecting on a blessed land
Where love, peace, and brotherhood united stand;
Take my hand, I beg you all,
Help me find it before we fall.

The reflections on the water
Here today, gone tomorrow,
Life is like that too, you know
Then only these reflections will remain.
—The 1970 Chowanoka

Joan of Arc Had Reason To Wear Men's Garb

LONDON (AP) — An Oxford University investigator has concluded that Joan of Arc had reason to wear men's garb.

"Despite the French heroine's transvestitism, physical prowess and apparent masculine drive," says F. E. Kenyon "there is no very convincing evidence in her history of overt lesbianism."

Transvestitism is the tendency to wear clothing of the opposite sex.

"In fact there is no necessary connection between female transvestitism and homosexuality and she appeared to be much more masculine than she really was," Kenyon says. He concedes that Joan had a very intense friendship with a girl called Haivette. But their habit of sleeping together was "a common custom at the time, particularly with girls who had made their first Communion together."

The warrior saint's predilection for men's clothes may have been for protection "when with troops and in predominantly male company."

Kenyon, a clinical lecturer at Oxford, presents his views in a medical magazine, The Practitioner.

Sen. Muskie Now Supports Women's Lib

SCHENECTADY, N.Y. (AP) — Sen. Edmund S. Muskie says he is a "new convert" to the cause of women's rights but he hedged when asked if he would accept a woman vice presidential candidate.

The Maine Democrat, a contender for his party's presidential nomination next year, spoke to the Schenectady Freedom Forum Monday night and focused on women's liberation.

He said the women's rights movement is "not a temporary fad or passing fancy."

A questioner reminded Muskie that he had rejected the idea of a black vice presidential running-mate because such a ticket would not have "electability," then asked the senator if a woman would be an acceptable running mate.

Literary Musings

By PROF. ROBERT G. MULDER

Herod's Dream

The music in the banquet hall
Had given way to calm,
Such merriment and ribaldry
And deeds to cause alarm
Had long since ceased; the king and queen
Had to their room retired,
Assured success had crowned the night
In party they inspired.

He sensed the hatred of the Jews,
Nor cared he for their need,
So honor to his queen's command
Produced such selfish deed:
A man that Herod once admired
Had questioned his romance,
And on a charger gave his head
To pay Salome's dance.

Much later as the night wore on
And guilt produced effect,
A restless Herod viewed his deeds
In boastful retrospect;
He saw the lives that were no more
Pass on the distant stream,
Until the god of sleep came down
And ushered in a dream:

An angel occupied his throne
And thousands stood behind,
Their voices sang of One who came,
The Savior of mankind;
The earthly king felt so alone
And recognized his fear;
When soon the Master angel spoke
And beoned Herod near.

"It's true your sinful deeds are dark,
But that's why Jesus came:
To give new life to those who stray
By trusting in His name;
For even you may enter in
As you now hear my voice,
The life that He can give to you
Should cause one to rejoice.

"Despite the error of your ways,
He begs you to repent,
For God so loved the world and you
That Jesus Christ was sent;
To know the love that He can give
Will make your life anew,
If you will harden not your heart,
His peace will come to you.

"In years to come one special day
Will honor Heaven's Gift,
And those who know will find that Christ
May every burden lift.
The many who will find in Him
A peace beyond compare,
Will long to make His message known
And seek His love to share."

The angel seemed to fade from view.
While others disappeared,
And Herod turned in restless sleep
Not knowing why he feared.
When morning came, the dream was gone
With few impressions made:
The king refused the Son of God
Nor claimed the price He paid.

And we, like Herod, must decide
If Christ will rule our heart,
Or if the lesser things in life
Will claim the greater part;
Within the life of any man
Where Christmas Spirit lives,
Will be the peace and joy and love
Which only Jesus gives.

Robert G. Mulder

Chowan College
Christmas, 1970

Gospel According to Norton

By GRADY NUTT
NICODEMUS: By Night and By Day

Jesus and I were sitting together in an olive grove outside Jerusalem. It was near midnight, and we were eating some fish and dry bread Mary and Martha had fixed us that afternoon in Bethany. The coals of the fire glowed softly and brightened slightly as the gently Palestinian breeze stroked them.

The conversation was light. We'd really had a busy day and a long after-dark walk; it was good to relax. Simon and some of the others were down the hill a bit in a small lean-to they had constructed.

Simon called up the hill: "Someone to see you, Sir." Jesus cocked his head to one side and looked a bit puzzled: "Wonder who at this time of night?"

Twigs snapped under the long, bejeweled robe we saw returning our fire's flicker in the shadows. In closer he came, and we recognized Nicodemus—ruling elder of the Jews, Pharisee, most important. I made as if to leave, but Jesus smiled and put his hand on my knee, a stay-where-you-are-it's-okay-Norton kind of gesture.

I must admit. I was excited! I had been with him for several weeks now, and this was the first time I had seen him encounter a really big leader. Nicodemus was uneasy; Jesus lifted his eyebrows and opened one hand in an effort to give Nicodemus openers.

"Now, Jesus, we know you are a most remarkable young man with rare gifts for teaching and for doing great and mighty ... works ... even though you didn't go to seminary!" Jesus smiled at me with his eyes. Then he spoke to Nicodemus: "Nicodemus ... you must be born again."

Nicodemus seemed miffed: "Look, my good fellow; I came here for a serious conversation and you start playing riddles with me. Return to my mother's womb indeed. Would you try to make some sense?"

"I never made more sense, Nicodemus," he replied. "Sit here beside me and let's talk about it ..."

Nicodemus lifted his robes and sat on a large rock by the fire; the session began. It was one of the most beautiful moments I remember in my time with him. He was always trying to cool down my hostility which boiled whenever I got around any of the established leaders. I couldn't avoid the lesson in his stay-where-you-are-it's-okay-Norton gesture: he was teaching me while he talked with Nicodemus. The lesson was plain: his gospel had to be experienced and not argued.

I would have loved nothing more than to lock concepts with Nicodemus. Jesus talked with him about that part of his life that blocked his proper relationship with God: he was a Jew of the Jews and thought himself in proper relation with the Father because of his earth-birth. Jesus said only when a man of his own will is born a second time from above has he been properly related to God.

They parted with Nicodemus in a somber mood. I saw him several times in later weeks. On the day of Jesus' crucifixion I was startled to get a message from him asking me to come to his home right away. He wanted to know what plans had been made for the burial. I told him Joseph from Arimathea had offered a tomb. He had me take him to Joseph, which I did.

The town was shocked when the body of Jesus was taken from the cross and carried away by Joseph and Nicodemus, who had brought a king's ransom in spice and ointment. I carried these and walked beside Nicodemus as we made our way to the tomb in the late afternoon sun. We passed the olive grove where he had first met Jesus, and he paused for a few moments and looked quietly up the slope. Then he turned and looked at me, and through his tears he smiled at me with his eyes ...

(Note from the Editor: Grady Nutt is a professional entertainer and writer from Louisville, Kentucky. This article appeared in the November 1971 publication of "The Student Campus Morals" and was supplied for publication in "The Smoke Signals" by Carole Byrum.)

'Billy Jack' Astounds Entire Movie Industry

By BOB THOMAS
Associated Press Writer

HOLLYWOOD (AP) — The success of "Billy Jack" astounded the movie industry. But the willowy blonde who produced it wasn't surprised at all.

Dolores Taylor's film is an earnest account of youth vs. the Establishment in a Southwestern town.

Except for a few critics, the film drew middling to poor reviews in New York and Los Angeles and died in its first runs. But the story was different in the American heartland: "Billy Jack" opened in April and is still running in several Midwest cities.

"Warner Bros. is still in shock," said Miss Taylor happily. "The company never expected this to happen."

"But it happened the way we expected. We insisted on a contract provision of four-week guaranteed playing time. 'Billy Jack' is the kind of a picture that takes time to catch on."

"We" means herself and husband Tom Laughlin. Together they are a one-family studio. Both starred in the movie and he directed. They use their own names as actors, but pseudonyms for the other duties. Why?

"Because, as Tom says, it becomes an ego trip if you have your names on everything." How did she get involved? "By accident," she said. "When Tom started making his pictures, I helped out wherever I could. Things like packing

lunches and finding locations. I became a kind of super-gopher." In film terms a gopher is a set handyman who takes orders: "Go for coffee" etc.

"As Tom's picture became bigger, I started doing more things. It's a job, and I like it."

The Laughlins come from Milwaukee, where she was a commercial artist and he drove a truck. Tom had a driving ambition to make films, and they moved to Hollywood and starved a bit. He caught on as an actor, but his real ambition was to make films himself. He shot his first one in six days for \$25,000.

Next came "The Young Sinners," in which Dolores became involved. "Born Losers" proved such a money-maker that American-International agreed to back "Billy Jack" at a bit less than \$1 million.

"Our deal assured absolute freedom," said Dolores, "but we started getting inquiries about the budget. Tom closed down the picture after three weeks on location and we all came back to Hollywood."

It was a big risk, but after four months the Laughlins got backing from 20th Century-Fox and resumed filming. When it appeared that Fox would tamper with the finished movies, the Laughlins pulled out and took the deal to Warner Bros.

Bank Note
In the United States there are more than 13,000 commercial banks which employ half a million men and women.

Hexanes

By CRAIG THOMPSON

"WHY"
Demands the steely phantom
Voice raked through anthracite,
And flapping above me on wings of relativity
I pray him peace.
Enraged,

screaming the Anti-Christ
He swoops to kill
Grasps me in his claws of truth,
and

Pours my blood on the clear blue
sands of the arena.
The crowd cheers and
burps again.

"WHY"
He shrieks
feeling fearless terror,
I remember duty
And spit my clear cold blood and broken teeth
on his bowels
Taunt him with his own eternal cursed weapon,
Truth

"I DON'T KNOW"
The traditional crowd gasps!!
And my driftingly powerful foe
Begins to sense his ebb.
Scarlet rage oozes from his eyes
And he brandishes his ancient chainsaw,
CONFORMITY

Presses it to his brain
It whirrs, and whines, then shatters
As my inner shell,
of polished innocence holds.

"WHY"
He cries again
And again I laugh
But softer now
"I DON'T KNOW"

He strikes\$\$
Twice time with leprous reason
My innocence is shattered
To crystal stark of bone,
Yet my deep and resilient faith still holds
And he screams again,
"WHY"

But I cannot answer
For my body is crushed and smashed;
But still my soul is pure.
He batters on and flails my skull
Putrid chunks of id and ego
Plop onto the sand.

The frenzied monster
(not satisfied with simple death)
Lets loose the triple lash of
DUTY
GOD and,
Mother

All the while
pigsqueling
"Why"

Then in one prismatic purple of instant
I'm flushed with godly insight
And shredded, dying soul
I unite
And scream
"BECAUSE" !!!!!!!

His brilliance fades,
and dries,
and sourly pops
At my bubbling laugh.
The crowd shutters and
drifts away
And I'm bathed in the light of life.

Don't Send Me for Christmas

By HAL BOYLE
NEW YORK (AP) — Please, please—don't send me an adenoid for Christmas!

Or the deed to a square inch of Texas either. Or two live tropical birds. Or a cobra-skin necktie.

One of the trials of being a columnist is the habit some readers have of bombarding him with unexpected weird gifts. Some of them are rather hard to dispose of.

The adenoid came in a test tube full of alcohol. You'd be amazed how few people want to buy a second-hand adenoid. I did, however, have a few bids for the alcohol.

I gave the cobra-skin necktie to a teen-ager. The two birds died. The deed to a square inch of Texas I put away in a safe deposit box. There's always the chance that some innocent promoter may come along and build a big city over my inch of soil.

But my point is that it isn't the presents you get at Christmas that make you happy—it's the ones you don't get.

So, if by any chance you were planning to get rid of something in your house by mailing it to me as a Christmas present, don't send me:

A life-size, inflatable, plastic white elephant.
The carcass of your yuletide turkey. The wishbone, however, will be welcomed—if properly cleaned.
Photos of your latest grandchild taken while the baby was lying face down on a tattered buffalo robe.

A worn-out light bulb from your Christmas tree. You may send a few dried-up needles in

an envelope if you really think the tree was all that beautiful. A hearing aid built in 1923 which no longer works.
A deck of pornographic playing cards. They simply break up a poker game, and three of them disappear everytime you try to play a hand.
A stringless zither you found while cleaning the attic.
That spiked German helmet which you brought home after the first World War—and which

your 49-year-old son has finally tired of playing with.
A broken electric toothbrush. All this may sound like I'm brash and a bit of a curmudgeon. This isn't true. I like Christmas as much as anyone else. I just don't like getting Christmas presents I have no worldly use for.

So, if you want to send me a Christmas gift, send me a kind word. Nobody gets enough of these.

Shopping for a trustworthy secondhand car in an auto lot run by a dealer whose eyes are set too close together.
Getting invited to spend the weekend at the boss's country place only to discover that he gets up at 5 a.m. for a five-mile jog—and insists on having company.
Sitting on a park bench and listening to two young hippies on the other end discuss the mysteries of love and the universe.
Looking at the photos of wanted men on a post office wall and finding that at least three of them look like relatives—yours, not your wife's.
New dentures from the dentist that make you lither when you don't whis-s-s-ssle, and whis-s-s-ssle when you don't lither.
Guests who spill red wine on your new light-colored rug the day after you finish putting it down.
The high cost of low living.

Writing a love song and trying to get it published.
Going to a natural history museum with a youngster and being asked to identify by name all the dinosaurs shown there.

The comparison between the way fried onions taste when you eat them and how they feel in the stomach four hours later.
The sickly look of feigned gratitude you get from a young married couple for the silver-plated tray you gave them as a wedding gift. They assure you that of the 24 trays they got yours was the loveliest.

Reading an explanation of what the U.S. monetary policy really is—and isn't.

My Neighbors



"I like to join this 4 o'clock rush in order to avoid the 5 o'clock jam!"

Hal Boyle Writes . . .

By HAL BOYLE
NEW YORK (AP) — Some things we could all do without: Grocery prices going up, wages standing still.
Dollars that ain't what they used to be.
Amateur harp players.
Sex brags and confessions at cocktail parties.
Clocks in bars that show the face reversed and thus further muddle the confused minds of veteran martini drinkers.
Cats at home which refuse to enjoy canned food like the amiable cats in the television commercials.
Finding that your fly-swatting average has dropped at least 20 points in the last 10 years. With old fly-swatters, it's the speed that's first to go.
Having to do without breakfast on a 30-day diet just to lose 30 ounces.
Figuring out the pension pay you'll get when you retire—and whether, in order to exist, you'll have to build a tree house on the back yard and rent your home to strangers.
Writing a love song and trying to get it published.
Going to a natural history museum with a youngster and being asked to identify by name all the dinosaurs shown there.

The comparison between the way fried onions taste when you eat them and how they feel in the stomach four hours later.
The sickly look of feigned gratitude you get from a young married couple for the silver-plated tray you gave them as a wedding gift. They assure you that of the 24 trays they got yours was the loveliest.

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The Old Timer



"Every self-made man requires working parts."



"To keep friends always, give your candid opinion."