

True Christmas Yours to Know

There is a Christmas Spirit. Through a haze of silver trees, jingling money and hungry-eyed children it has come again. But it did not come loudly, or flashily, like dime store Santas or gaudy shop windows. Instead it came quietly, clothed in the reverence that betokens the real spirit of Christmas.

Who was first to discover the true spirit of Christmas? No one knows for certain; however, it is sure that a power greater than mortal prompted three learned men to gather rich gifts and cross boundless lands to find a tiny child in a stable. A force stronger than mortal threw a great flaming star into the black Judean sky to spangle the night with such glory that shepherds saw it, marveled and came in search of the miracle in a manger.

Perhaps it was the littlest shepherd boy who found the Christmas spirit first, he who was the last to arrive at the nativity because his legs were too short to keep up with the others. He came quickly, the smallest figure present, with shining eyes and ruffled hair. Eagerly he ran up to the wooden manger and looked in.

Then it happened. A feeling more awesome, yet more wonderful than any other in his short life warmed the littlest shepherd with a holy fire. This feeling of unceasing joy and gratefulness spilled over from his heaped-up heart and spread to every other heart there. Mary smiled. Everyone smiled, but the smallest shepherd had the gladdest smile of all. He knew that he had found the spirit of Christmas that would make this night into a Christ Mass. How well he knew that forevermore this wondrous spirit would remain and the world would rejoice in its salvation.

Have you caught the Christmas spirit yet? Offer a fervent prayer of thankfulness and you will.

—Reprinted from
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Excellent Job

Monday night's "Miss Laurel" pageant was a fine indication of the capable way in which students can carry out an idea when they have the necessary freedom and cooperation.

The entire performance, from the operation of the lights and the stage preparation to the talent and beauty displays, went off with precision. It was a genuine tribute to teamwork. The large group of workers, both those officially connected with the pageant and the volunteers, are to be congratulated.

Especially to be singled out is Jim Alexander, who designed the show and directed it from start to finish. It's a tremendous task and Jimmy did a fine job. Lining up three capable judges, in itself, is no easy task.

Pam Culler will, no doubt, prove to be a worthy "Miss Laurel". She has an abundance of natural beauty, she displays a good personality and she has a quality of gentleness about her that captivates.

A final word of appreciation is appropriate for the 17 runners-up. None should be embarrassed that she did not win. Each should take pride in being a part of a production well done. It just goes to show what students can do when they are given some freedom and cooperation.

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LITTLE MAN ON CAMPUS



Letters to the editor ...

Editor's Note: The following letter from Columnist Bill Smathers of the "Western Carolinian" was received too late for the last issue.

Dear Editor:

In your last edition you reprinted my column entitled "Facets". Since its appearance in your newspaper I have received several letters from students at Mars Hill. As of yet none of them have expressed any condemnation. Quite the contrary, they have been letters of mutual agreement and were indeed appreciated both by me and by the editor of our newspaper.

In one letter I was informed that I had erred. I would like to take this opportunity to apologize for having written about the distance rule between a boy and a girl. I acknowledge my error as being credited to misinformation received from a former student, i.e., a former Mars Hillian. I understand that the rule does not exist now, but had previously. At least this is the information I gleaned in a letter from one of your present students.

Seriously, I appreciate the interest expressed in your reprint of my column. Even though some of the letters were anonymous, it is good to know that people read the newspapers and express their opinions.

—Respectfully,
Bill Smathers
Western Carolina
College

Dear Sir:

You may not care, but I have written to you before. Since you were considerate enough (or hard up for copy) to publish my previous contributions, I shall try my luck again.

My current topic is student-faculty relationships — which, I believe this paper has also editorialized on recently.

Anyone the least bit familiar with Mars Hill College can see that there is not much genuinely friendly exchange or conversation — call it whatever you like — between the students and the faculty members outside the classroom.

Many of the teachers hurry off to their offices or homes or other responsibilities as soon as the class ends. Some of them barely make themselves available for conferences any time. Their office hours posted on the door are a joke. Whatever help a student gets from them must be obtained strictly during the class period.

Needless to say, this is discouraging to some of us who need and want additional assistance and sometimes just plain company. I was under the impression that an understanding and helpful faculty was one of the supposed assets of a Christian college.

It looks to me like what this college needs is an old-fashion heart-warming revival. Maybe that would warm up some of these cold faculty members and make them more sympathetic to the needs of their students.

Don't get me wrong; not all the faculty members are unfriendly and unconcerned.

Please don't use my name on this letter. A couple of my teachers might get upset. I just wanted to get this suggestion off my chest, and I thought if you print it some others who feel as I do will be glad to see it too.

—Thank you.

Christmas

When without are wind and snow,
Warmer is the fire's red glow.
When sleet is freezing on the rafter,
Merrier are the songs and laughter.
Winter has no chill nor dole
If it is summer in the soul,
The blizzard does no harm
If the house is warm.
And if the heart is gay,
It is Christmas every day.

— ROMAN S. GORSKI

Welcome, Dr. Bentley Two

The announcement this week of the trustees' selection of youthful Dr. Fred Bentley as the next president caught quite a few by surprise. There had been persistent rumors around the campus, but few knew that an announcement was forthcoming.

Naturally everyone is eager to find out about Dr. Bentley. A news story elsewhere in this issue should help some, but it will actually take quite a while to evaluate the full impact of Dr. Bentley's selection.

No doubt the process is working in the opposite direction too; Dr. Bentley is probably trying to learn all he can about us and about Mars Hill, although he undoubtedly knew enough to convince him that this is a good place to cast his lot.

These next few weeks and months will be highly important for students and faculty as well as for Dr. Bentley, the alumni, the Board of Trustees of North Carolina and other groups. Here on the campus must be careful not to rush the new man with our questions, our problems or our proposals. Such can come and Georgeto

Saturday Robert Hutchins will give us all some fresh opportunities — opportunities to make new resolutions, to put aside old prejudices and complaints, to grow up and reach out, to ask ourselves what we can contribute to the advancement of the college and to pray for God's guidance in these critical years just ahead.

Welcome, Dr. Bentley; we're behind you 100 per cent!

Quality of Thinking Most Vital Concern

As a new senior college, small and sectarian, we have been challenged on several occasions to determine our purpose in the world of higher education. Perhaps it will not hurt to consider this matter again.

We cannot hope to compete with the large state-supported universities either in size or enrollment or in the spectacular nature of research ventures. We must then concentrate on the quality of thought that we as members of an intellectual community inspire each other. We must seek to develop open-minded, critical, soul-searching individuals who can maintain their personal integrity wherever they go.

As I began to consider this article, some thoughts came to me which made me shudder. Suppose my brother, or yours, should enroll at Mars Hill while struggling with the doubts and questions which come to all of us in the adolescent years and should find himself surrounded by those supposedly enlightened individuals who, by their unwillingness to meet new ideas, suggest that they are in secure in their own faith.

Suppose a public school teacher who has received his training at Mars Hill should be approached by a ninth grader with a biology text in one hand, a Bible in the other, and questions on his tongue. What might be the tragic consequences if that teacher were able only to stutter in stupid ignorance or to deliver some pat, unsatisfactory answer?

Suppose a Mars Hill-trained pastor, who confronts by an attractive young debutante who sobs a confession that she is "in trouble," should be prepared, because of his sheltered vacuity, only to retrieve his dentures from the floor and then deliver a stern lecture which he has memorized for such occasions. Is it possible that Mars Hill has already educated some of the Southern Baptist leaders who today remain comfortably silent on the urgent issue of race relations?

Need I proceed? Shallow thought is irresponsible and dangerous. The complicated frustrating time in which we live requires that Christian thought, if it is relevant, be vital and imaginative. Mars Hill must prove its own relevancy by challenging its students to think deeply. The shallow thought of Christians whose only virtues are "cloistered" virtues will strike the death knell for Christianity sooner than all the intellect of a thousand atheists.

—Dwight Childers