

Christmas, 1955

In the old days, a strong nation simply took what it wanted from its weak neighbors. Usually without debate or warning.

Then came diplomacy. Nations sought to attain their ends by peaceful means, by negotiation. But diplomacy relied on an alternative; the strong nation always could resort to war.

Now President Eisenhower has publicly declared that modern war is so terrible it has ceased to be an alternative. All we have left is diplomacy—without its club.

Meanwhile, we have lost our monopoly, first on the A-bomb and now on the H-bomb. Meanwhile, too, the Russians are said to be outstripping us in scientific education. Finally, the Russians appear to be winning the contest for men's minds; to mighty China it now is adding the Near East.

Furthermore, the totalitarian Communist block has two intangible but tremendous advantages over the west; it is not handicapped, as we are, by the divisions inevitable in a democracy, nor is it halted by the inhibitions that accompany the moral sense.

* * *

Perhaps the Communist dictatorship will disintegrate. Maybe the people will revolt. Possibly the Communist leaders will change.

Well, the Russian government survived the death of Stalin. We've entertained the vain hope of revolt for a generation. And "the spirit of Geneva" was dead within weeks — and proved to have been a mask while it lived!

* * *

Is it just a question of time, then? With war ruled out (and the winners of an atomic war would have conquered a barren world!), must we ultimately submit or be destroyed?

There is one possible alternative.

We might try Christianity. (We never have.)

Just as men really pray only when they become desperate, so they try religion only when everything else has failed.

This is not to suggest we disarm overnight. But we might, as a beginning, shift our emphasis. We might put our first reliance on the spirit that is Christianity, with physical force relegated to a distinctly secondary position.

Such a shift would put us on a different plane from the Russians; it would give us a spiritual strength to counterbalance the many advantages possessed by our enemies; it would arm us with a weapon the Communists do not understand — and that, therefore, would be terrifying to them.

Visionary? Idealistic? Impractical?

It is the paradox of two thousand years that men have failed to see that its practicality is Christianity's most obvious characteristic. It is the one really workable technique in human relations yet devised, and of course it is so workable and so universal because the technique is the mere outward symbol of a spirit that transforms—and is contagious.

Money Pinch May Do It

Sometimes economics will change what neither righteous indignation nor straight thinking seem to affect. That isn't a very flattering commentary on human nature, but it's true.

The combination of prisons and highways in North Carolina may prove to be an instance.

We've hired experts to study the set-up, under which roads and prisons are lumped together for administration, and they've come up with the conclusion most North Carolinians probably had reached already — it isn't right, from the viewpoint of the real purpose of prisons, and it isn't intelligent, from the viewpoint of building and maintaining roads. We've talked about it for years — but nothing has happened.

Now, however, as Mr. Ted Reber points out in his penetrating comments on this page, a situation has arisen that will make a lot of us feel the economic pinch; road maintenance, right here in Macon County, is suffering — because of the cost of prison operation.

There just isn't enough money, we are told, in the State Highway and Public Works fund to do both jobs adequately, and so the roads are being neglected. Well, North Carolinians aren't going to tolerate anything that will interfere with their ability to travel, comfortably and speedily.

So now we may do something about a setup that is both wrong and stupid — separate the prisons from the highways, spend highway funds for highways, and appropriate enough money to adequately operate the prisons, toward their objective — rehabilitation.

Letters

Highways vs. Prison Costs

Dear Mr. Jones:

In a news item on the front page of your valued newspaper of last Thursday, our division engineer, Mr. C. W. Lee, of the State Highway Department, described Macon County as being in "bad shape" from the standpoint of road maintenance funds. To many of your readers, this article must have been surprising and rather bewildering, to say the least.

In all fairness, let it be said, however, that the State Highway Department is in no way responsible for this puzzling condition. In my opinion, they are doing an excellent job with what they have to work with, and with one hand tied behind their back.

Some rather surprising facts will be uncovered, if we take a look behind the scenes of this situation. For example, I wonder just how many citizens and taxpayers of Macon County know that the cost of keeping prisoners at the local prison camp is paid out of State Highway road maintenance funds for Macon County — and to the tune of \$4.50 per day, per prisoner. In this regard, let me quote from a letter I received recently from Harry Buchanan, State Highway Commissioner for our 14th Division:

"On July 1 of this year the cost of prisoners to the Highway Commission was increased from \$3.60 per day to \$4.50 per day. Our maintenance funds in Macon County were insufficient before this happened, and this has caused an additional expense of \$50 to \$60 per day in your county."

Neither the Highway Commission nor the Prison Division are to blame for this obsolete set-up—it's the law! The two should be disintegrated by the next Legislature.

Yesterday, I talked with J. E. Cutshall, our local prison superintendent. He told me that they have an average of 60 prisoners, although there are 73 as of this writing. Sixty prisoners, at \$4.50 per day each, amounts to \$270 per day, or al-

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STORY OF THE FIRST CHRISTMAS

'Hear Not: I Bring You Good Tidings'

AND there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

THE angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, "Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou shalt have a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?"

And the angel answered and said unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible."

And Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed from her.

NOW the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came to-

gether, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save the people from their sins." Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife; and knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

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, every one into his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto 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 first-born 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 flock by night. And, lo,

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He

never went to college. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. Nineteen centuries have come and gone. Today He is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. I am far within the mark when I say that

all the armies that ever marched; all the navies that ever were built; all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

— Phillips Brooks.

What Is Christmas?

Christmas is the star on top of the tree. It is a carol in the night. It is the gift of a cloak when a coat was asked.

It is gold, frankincense and myrrh to the needy, the humble and the sorrowing.

It is a present of Truth wrapped in Beauty. It is "good tidings of great joy" to a wicked, weary and incredulous world.

Christmas is a stocking hung with Faith and filled by Love. It is homecoming, the orange glow of an open door on the blue snow shadows with well-remembered faces in the background.

It is the night depository in which past-due payments are made on debts of friendship and love which have accumulated during the year.

Christmas is an inspired insight into the joy of life at the core of the universe.

Christmas is the candle in the darkness which no whirlwind can blow out. It is a song from a star, a halo in a stable.

—The late William T. Polk long-time associate editor of The Greensboro Daily News.

STRICTLY

PERSONAL

By WEIMAR JONES

Two-thirds of a century ago this was a tiny hamlet, set on a hill, with perhaps a slightly larger number of the few families that made up the community living outside than within the corporate limits.

It was cut off from the rest of the world — no railroad, no telephone or telegraph, and mails that sometimes didn't come till the next day, or even the next week; for roads, a slow-winding succession of mudholes and rocks had to serve. And Franklin was poor—terribly poor, by today's stan-

dards; poor in everything except the quality of its people.

A vivid picture of the Franklin of that day, and particularly of Christmas here in the old days, is sketched in some lines written by Mrs. Lily Lyle Jones to her father, Dr. J. M. Lyle, Christmas, 1891.

The ties of kinship; the big family gatherings; the money poverty (the gift referred to is said to have cost a quarter); the confusion of many children, accentuated by the noise of their Christmas fire-crackers, probably the one big extravagance of the entire year; even

his star in the east; and are come to worship him."

When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 'And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.'"

Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way. And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: and was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son."

Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life." And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. . . . And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

that day's horseback mode of transportation — all these are suggested.

For this Christmas letter-inverse I am indebted to Mrs. W. M. Bryson, of Franklin, Route 5. She copied it from an old scrapbook and sent it to me the other day.

GRANDPA'S GIFT

Dear Pa,
I wanted this Christmas to make you a gift;
So I called on old "Santa" to give me a lift.
He told me his sleigh was full to the brim,
So I felt no uneasiness but left it to him.
The day before Christmas he brought his sleigh round,
And in all the great parcel just guess what I found.
There were presents for women and no end of toys,
Dolls for the girlsies and tops for the boys.
I searched through his sleigh and I searched through his pack,
That the picture folks tell us always hangs to his back.
But for fathers and grandpas I searched through in vain
And could never a present worth naming obtain.
"And tomorrow is Christmas", said I with a tear,
"And we all go to Grandpa's to bid him good cheer."
At last when his patience had clean given out
And I was disgusted and ready to pout,
He asked me if all of the children would go
To "Grandpa's", said I "Yes, certainly so".
Then he counted them over, "Harry, Maggie and Paul,
Gene, the two Lauras, Lyle, Willie and all."
With Leona and Jimmie, Aunt Mary and Dan;
And I know that he pitied in his heart the poor man.
"Then" said he, "take this whip to your father and give him my very best wishes that long may he live
To keep it and use it, for e'er the day's done
He will wish I'd sent twenty instead of just one.
Now if he gets tired of crackers and noise,
Just try it to quiet the girls and the boys.
But tell him the children all through the year,
Count 'Grandpa's' and 'Christmas' of all things most dear,
And if for one day his patience they prove,
In the end they will pay him with kindness and love."

VIEW

By

BOB SLOAN



Franklin is losing out on one thing that most of the rest of the communities of Macon County are sharing in. Where is our community development program? Not only do we have great need for one, but there is something to be gained from the people in a community working together for the good of the whole that can be gained in no other way. Franklin, let's not miss out on this opportunity.

A great deal is said against control of production and prices in agriculture, but the proof of a pudding is in the eating. Let's look at the situation here in Macon County. Dairy farming and tobacco are the two forms of agriculture that we have here where both the price you get for your commodity and the amount of production are controlled to a certain extent. It seems to me that they are the two most dependable forms of income for a farmer here. Also it seems that those who have engaged in either of these forms of farming have not lost much of their independence or pride, two sins which are laid at the doorstep of controlled production.

Again, it is Christmas and again the Franklin Lions Club is sponsoring the Dime Board to raise funds to make sure that, if possible, every child in Macon County has a happy Christmas. This is one of the finest projects we have. Proof is, that it has been operated year after year, and the people support it very generously. One of the interesting things about it is where the money comes from. It is given by children who have come to town with only a dollar to spend for a long list of family presents; from people, young and old, who have limited incomes, but who get pleasure from having an opportunity to contribute to making someone else happy at Christmas; from people of different races; from strong church workers and some who never go to church but within whom in some way the Christmas spirit of sharing has found its way.