

Ferdie J. Deering

DEC 22 1983

Christ to Stay as Part of Christmas

CHRISTMAS is not a ritual prescribed by the Holy Bible. It is a day set aside by believers in God to celebrate the birth of Christ, whom they worship as the gift of God to save souls.

The cherished occasion has been desecrated, ignored, prohibited, fictionalized and commercialized but attempts to "take Christ out of Christmas" have not succeeded.

Merchants who sing "Tiding of Profit and Joy" to the tune of beeping cash registers might carry a different melody if the spirit of giving taught by Christ were taken out of Christmas.

Charities and other worthy causes might find their funds much reduced if the annual celebration of Christmas did not loosen the purse strings of people blessed with material wealth.

The Supreme Court of the United States has accepted responsibility for deciding whether Christmas is a religious occasion or a secular holiday in a lawsuit by ACLU against municipal display of the Nativity

scene in Pawtucket, R.I. Even if the court declares the creche to be only folklore, the fact of Christ's birth remains true.

For centuries astronomers, scientists and astrologers have tried in vain to explain away the significance of the star that guided wise men of the East to Christ's birthplace.

The secularization of Christmas is a bold attempt to deny the very existence of God but "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork." Each discovery in space projects our image of God in larger dimension.

The meaning of Christmas has been obscured by the Santa Claus fable, legends, silly cartoons and irrelevant stories told in print or by broadcast, but it is still there.

Evangelist Billy Graham explains the meaning of Christmas simply by saying "God has come in Christ his Son to redeem each one of us who will believe in him."

Christmas exists in the hearts of

men and women, boys and girls. It means what each wants it to mean.

To those who worship material things it is a time for getting rather than for giving.

To those who worship gluttony, it is only another day for eating, drinking and making merry, with a hangover tomorrow.

To those who are looking only for a good time, Christmas may be just another paid holiday.

To those who worship God and follow scriptural teachings Christmas has a significance that was well described by early Jewish leaders who were prosecuting Christ's apostles for preaching the gospel.

They said: "If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought; but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it."

William A. Ward, a Fort Worth writer, said: "God made Christmas happen; friends make Christmas beautiful; music makes Christmas festive; giving makes Christmas joyous; love makes Christmas complete."

JAN 1 1984

He's Tired of Culture Complainers

TO THE EDITOR:

After living in Oklahoma City for three years and walking among the affluent, young adult crowd, I have heard the phrase, "This city is a cultural desert and overgrown cowtown," once too often. In my opinion, Oklahoma City and its environs are very comparable to any other major metropolitan area in what they have to offer. However, as with any city, most of the cultural gems don't get dumped in your lap. Some fortitude and research are required. And, just like other places, to fully enjoy the activities here, local talents and culture unique to this area must be appreciated.

Many of the people who complain try to compare Oklahoma City with either the city where they grew up or the city where they went to school (or both). These comparisons are unfair until one has spent as much time here as in the comparable city or attacked this city the way a college student attacks his school's town. We cannot expect to enjoy any place until we get off our kiesters and get active. We need to explore the alternatives, see the sights, and exhaust the possibilities before we complain.

Another favorite pastime is to wish that Oklahoma City had Broadway plays and the Metropolitan Opera (like New York) or art (like Santa Fe) or classical music (like Dallas or Boston) or parks and outdoor extravaganzas (like Austin or Boulder). To this I say — We Do! They may not be as uptown or chic as the afore mentioned but a comparison to the best in the world is hardly fair. It's amusing to note that with all the complaining and pining going on, symphony performances are rarely sold out, several area theaters have gone bankrupt lately and arts festivals are poorly attended.

All of this is not to say that Oklahoma is for everyone. In today's transient society, many of us will

not live here for the remainder of our lives. However, my attitude is that while I'm here, I'm going to enjoy it and explore what Oklahoma and Oklahoma City has to offer. I'm also going to take advantage of things I can only do in Oklahoma. Then, if I leave, I will have expanded horizons and a sense of accomplishment. Also, I'll take with me a piece of Oklahoma's best culture — friendship with some of its people.

Joe Schieffelin, City

Don't-Care Attitudes

TO THE EDITOR:

The Dec. 21 article, concerning Pentagon buying practices such as paying \$9,606 for a 12-cent Allen wrench, made me mad — at Sen. Roth. His comment that such practices are "sloppy" reveals the same don't-care attitude that allowed the Oklahoma County Commissioner scandal.

The final comment in the article is symptomatic — "The system is resistant to change." Of course it is. The individuals involved probably don't even lose their jobs when these things are discovered. When such actions are called criminal, and people go to jail for them, then the system will change. In the meantime, our "public servants" who allow this to happen are just as despicable as those who use our tax money to buy \$800 transistors.

Balrd Askins, City

Appreciates Deering

TO THE EDITOR:

I wanted to send a word of thanks to Mr. Ferdie J. Deering for the excellent piece he contributed to your editorial page in the Dec. 22 Daily Oklahoman.

In a day when there is penury expression of the religious at Christmas, especially in secular newspapers, Mr. Deering's insights were refreshing as well as inspirational. I appreciated his bold convictions at a time when such convictions are seen more as evidence of a closed mind than an enlightened heart, as intellectual stymieness, not reasoned faith. A faith so expressed in such untraditional avenues as the secular press is the glimmering hope of the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

set free from the beauty of the stained glass auditorium to impress the cold realities of the workaday world in which we all live and move and have our being. A hardy "amen" to Mr. Deering's editorial and a hope that we will hear more expressions in the days ahead.

John B. Hancock Jr., City

Bias for Big Business

TO THE EDITOR:

For two years I have diligently read your editorials. It is apparent to me, and perhaps to others, that you stand foursquare for Big Business and against the ordinary working man and woman.

Would you tell your reader why you invariably defend big firms and corporations and damn the working people? One example among many: Your Dec. 9 editorial about how right you were in defending Exxon, Texaco, Standard Oil of California and Mobil, when they were accused by the federal government of unscrupulous business practices. You even got in a lick, in an aside, for AT&T.

Then there were your editorials that tried to convince your readers that Wilson Meat Co. workers were off base in seeking a decent wage from the firm's profits.

Do you believe that large firms and corporations must always be right and that employees must always be wrong in trying to better their lot in seeking just compensation for their honest labor? Do you really think it's right that Big Business go on greedily pocketing more profits — paying their top executives obscene salaries and perks — while the workers sink deeper into the economic mire?

No one expects The Oklahoman to be impartial, for it is, itself, Big Business. But some semblance of fairness should — at least on occasion — come through when dealing editorially with this subject. Do you think that just once you could manage to come down on the side of the little guy? And besides, isn't it pretty much fact that these corporate giants neither need nor benefit from your transparent and predictable support?

W.R. Kennedy, Marble City

Prayer for Today

DEAR Lord, help us to meet with optimism and faith this new year that you have made. Let us thank you for directing our pathways on positive courses. Amen.

Reamond Studios

Friday, December 27, 1983

Dear Ferdie —

Thanks for today's editorial,
and I deeply appreciate your
enclosed column on Christmas.

In this, I got the idea that
none of us are obliged to only
pretend that we love Christmas.
We either do, or else we don't.

Hope you and your family
have had another good Christmas
and all will have a very happy
new year. Again thanks for
giving me an answer to Yanks
about daily.

Port J. Reamond