

# A Special Prayer for Use on Highways

AS FAR as is known the U.S. Supreme Court has not addressed the practice of praying on public highways, but don't be surprised if one of the anti-religion groups makes an issue of it.

The rector of an Episcopal church in Hanover, Miss., became aware of delays, detours, traffic jams and alternate routes during construction of a freeway into Boston. So he composed a special prayer for motorists, presumably for use on tax-supported thoroughfares and their bypasses.

Because Oklahoma City motorists face comparable problems the supplication could be of local interest. It says, in part:

"Almighty God, grant to all who, during the coming weeks and months, will face the stresses of difficult work and delay, will often be tempted to lose their tempers, and who will need a sense of humor and forbearance, such gifts of your presence as they may need.

"Protect all who work and drive. Grant us a sense of our common hu-

manity by which we are bound together, and inspire in us all good will, patience and an inner sense of peace as we face these and all the days of our lives. Amen."

We have no idea how many motorists pray as they drive but have heard a few say that they do so. With the expressway construction being done and road repairs needed but not being done there might be quite a lot of it going on in these parts.

The executive director of the Oklahoma City Transportation and Parking Authority was quoted in a news story the other day as saying:

"We don't have serious traffic congestion problems in Oklahoma City today." But he was talking about a proposed light rail transit system and maybe he overlooked automobiles.

There are people who have a notion that traffic here is pretty heavy, even if it is not congested, and they may be praying for some way to get through it to their destinations.

This is where the possibility of a court case arises. These people are on public streets and highways, built and maintained by tax money just as schools are. Both motorists and school children are subject to discipline by public employees.

Ticklish points involved may be whether motorists are reciting a prescribed prayer or prayers of their own composition, whether they feel compelled to pray, and whether other motorists may observe them praying or hear them praying.

In reality, it seems unlikely that we will be offered a prescribed prayer to recite while driving and the matter may never reach the high court. But stranger things have happened.

Personally, every time my wife and I return home safely from a trip we breathe a prayer of thanksgiving. With all of the highway hazards, reckless and drunken drivers, speeding trucks and rattletrap vehicles that could be rated as a small miracle. In such a case, God undoubtedly had more to do with it than government.

APR 15 1984

# Throw Out Clowns in Legislature

TO THE EDITOR:

I listened to the coverage of House Speaker Jim Barker's outrage at the editorial in the March 24 *Sunday Oklahoman*. I see no reason for him to be so enraged. There are clowns and crooks in the Oklahoma Legislature. It is time for the people of this state to rise up and throw out the legislators who do not reflect the voting wishes of their constituency.

Representatives are supposed to be just that. The tax increases that the membership of the House and Senate are going to foist upon the voters of this state without allowing us to reply (through the use of the so-called "emergency" clause) is nothing less than a bunch of petty dictators getting their way under color of law. It helps them to shove laws and ordinances down the throats of the tax-paying citizens without allowing US redress.

Maybe it is time for the people of this state to get an initiative petition circulated that would allow our state senators and representatives to serve only one three-year term, and to cut their pay to a reasonable amount, say \$1,500 for each month they are in actual session and to limit the session to four months of the year.

I would also favor a constitutional amendment that requires a vote of the people each time taxes are to be raised.

Peter M. Briggs III, City

## Keep It Up

TO THE EDITOR:

Instead of censoring *The Daily Oklahoman* in general and Mr. Gaylord specifically, those "tax eaters" should start listening.

Seeing the speaker ranting and raving on and on about how misunderstood they are, was sickening. Anyone who keeps up with the news of the po-

## Prayer for Today

EASE our restless hearts, O Lord, we pray. Let us not fret, but rather let us thank you for turning needless worries into a welcomed inner peace, patience and trust. Amen.

litical parasites doings knows well and true just what is going on at the Capitol.

All I can say is "Keep up the good work, Mr. Gaylord."

Dr. Kenneth E. Cook, El Reno

## Get Back to Basics

TO THE EDITOR:

I am amazed that Ferdie Deering gets paid for the stuff you published April 3 titled "A Special Prayer for Use on Highways."

Deering forgot to warn newcomers to this state that the only way a prayer rises above Oklahoma is from a bowed head with eyes closed. The way we Okies identify heathens, pinkos and those of similar ilk is at a public gatherings like football games, where we pray the hardest. The ones of reddish ilk look straight ahead with their eyes open. The ones looking up with hands outstretched are of another persuasion, not mainline Protestants. It is recommended, however, that you peek only if lightning is five or more miles away. (For the anti-science folks there is a way to calculate this distance but you will have to get a friend to look it up in a science book).

So be warned, newcomer, we used to only watch out for the Saturday night drunk. Now extra caution is in order Sunday morning.

As Deering and his friends should know, prayer instructions that are clearer than any Supreme Court ruling were given over 2,000 years ago. All one need do is read and comprehend Matthew 6:6, the place you pray; Matthew 6:7, the way you pray; Matthew 6:9-13, what you say. I can find no place where Jesus condones public prayer in any place, of any kind, for any reason.

Especially: "Please Lord protect the boys from injury as they try to knock the opponent off the field." If this is not "vain repetition," what is it? Of course Matthew 6:5 gives solid evidence that praying in church and before a meal is also inappropriate. It is amazing that Jesus can reach ahead 2,000 years and strike at the very heart of current "traditional" religion.

So Ferdie, unless you can find some basis that overturns these rulings of 2,000 years ago, let's drop

the subject and get back to basics: clean government, education, criminal and victim justice, to name only a few.

Gary D. Witt, Midwest City

## We Need Incentives

TO THE EDITOR:

Oklahoma City's reneging on its tax promise to General Motors brought embarrassment to its good citizens and to the state, and points up the fact that Oklahoma does not have a tax climate that attracts industry.

Contrast Oklahoma to its neighbor to the south — Texas. Manufacturing employment there grew 2½ times the national rate between mid-1980 and mid-1981. Out-of-state businesses select Texas over other states because it has no corporate or personal income tax. This gives industry more money to reinvest in machinery and equipment and permits individuals to keep more of their spendable income. Texans' buying power is third among the 50 states.

Oklahoma has the vitality, the people and the climate to attract industry. What she needs are tax incentives, as well as a right-to-work law. Let us hope that our legislators will recognize this fact and take remedial measures.

Nettie T. Griffin, City

## GM Treated Fairly

TO THE EDITOR:

The notion that General Motors has been mistreated by the state of Oklahoma is absurd. Is it fair to ask one of the world's largest corporations to pay taxes as any citizen must? Of course it is!

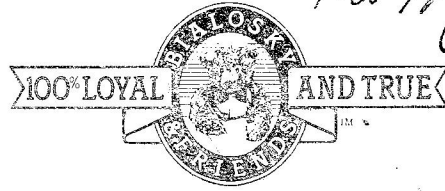
The sum of \$12 million is really a pittance as it represented one day's production from the Oklahoma City plant (1,200 cars per day times \$10,000 per car)!!!

Remember, GM's Oklahoma City plant produces nearly \$3 billion worth of vehicles per year.

Will the plant be shut down? Only if the product is shoddy or the customer can't afford it.

W.C. Arnold, Choctaw

## Smoking Over Tax



Mar. Ap. 3, 1984

Dear Edie—

I continue to enjoy your  
engine-in-check editorial page  
col.

Concerning prayer while driving  
the car, — "Driver is quicker."  
Some folks wrap cars around  
telephone poles while driving, I  
know a few who have done this.

My spouse and I have a  
policy on such matters regardless  
of who's doing the driving.

"When you drive the car drive  
the car."

We also enjoy our Thanksgiving  
prayers after returning home.

Best J. Reedmond,  
Heritage Hills, Ok City, Ok.

Over

Yes. / Referring to a recent  
article on the question  
of whether or not there  
is a so-called "general-  
public," — my answer  
is always YES!

How else can anyone  
explain a conscious  
of opinion?

If there is a Washington  
General Accounting, —  
there has to be a  
"general-public" to pay  
such "general-expenditures"  
for all our "general-public"  
servants on our remarkable  
payroll.

(Br.)

Q Henry — "Yes, Virginia, there is a  
"General Public" (a big matter.)"

My middle initials are J. for Johnson, not T.