

CHRISTMAS COUNTERPOINT

By

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No room at the inn for the Savior of men,
A manger will do for a bed;
The Son of God is humbly born,
As prophets of olds had said.

*Jingle bells, bargain sales
And parties by the score;
Get in the race for parking space
At Dillard's department store.*

The mother who never had lain with man
Had accepted God's strange plan.

*A holiday wardrobe one must choose,
And don't forget to buy the booze.*

Apparent shame she bore with joy,
That God's own will she might employ.

*Have fun, be cool and wear a smile;
Make sure you dress in the latest style.*

Shepherds heard the angels sing
Praises to the new born King.

*Wise men, angels, why the fuss?
We've got WalMart and Toys R Us.*

In the manger there they saw
The infant Jesus on the straw.

*Cushioned pew and carpeted floor
Are what the modern sheep adore.*

The wise men came from lands afar,
Let to the house by a special star.

*We know where to find the light –
It's Rudolph, with his nose so bright.*

Precious gifts to him they bring,
Tribute worthy of a King.

*Make the season bright and gay!
You've got 90 days to pay.*

They hurried away by a different route,
Being warned of God in a dream.
For Herod Feared the new born babe
Might spoil his stately scheme.

*Wise men, nice men, who give a smather?
The important news is by Dan Rather?*

In jealous rage young males he slew
But Jesus' life was saved.
To Egypt Joseph and family flew,
'Till Herod slept in his grave.

*Peace and love, to all good will.
What really counts is how your feel.*

Every good and perfect gift comes down from heaven above,
And Jesus was God's greatest gift,
Revealing His great love.

*But look who now get the applause?
None but good old Santa Claus.*

Jesus, Savior, born to die,
According to the Father's plan,
On a cross 'tween earth and sky,
To pay the debt for sinful man.

*Christmas is for kids, you see,
Buy them everything they dream.
Never mind reality –
What they need is self-esteem.*

Up from death He now has risen
To sit at God's right hand,
With all the power of earth and heav'n
Under Christ the Son's command.

*Public schools across the nation
Gladly join the celebration
Children have the best intention,
But God and Jesus dare not mention.*

In the midst to this world's strife
Peace can be found still,
If you commit to Christ your life,
And seek the Father's will.

FACT VERSUS FANTASY

Truth is stranger than fiction, but in spite of this the world generally takes greater interest in fiction than in fact. This is especially true in religion.

No holiday or celebration is filled with so much myth and imagination as Christmas. While in a department store last week (the week before Thanksgiving), a child of about four years stepped on a piece of carpet at the door which activated a voice saying, "Ho, Ho, Ho, merry Christmas." The startled child exclaimed, "Santa Claus!" The mother replied, "Sure; Santa's watching us all the time." It is indeed strange that parents would want their children to believe that this non-existent character has the attributes of God. Not only is he supposed to be omniscient (all-knowing), but he has the supernatural power to grant wishes. He also must possess the divine attribute of omnipresence, the power to be in all places at the same time.

Christmas seems to be the season for fantasy. "Snow White And the Seven Dwarfs" is one of the films that is dusted off for repeated showings, along with "It's a Wonderful Life" and "A Christmas Carol." The latter two involve ghosts, and none of the three have anything to do with Jesus and His mission. The list of fantasies this season includes a new Disney film, "The Lion King," which has the leading characters resorting to witchcraft to solve their problems.

Why are such fantasies so popular at Christmas time, when the true story of Jesus presents some of the strangest and most dramatic events ever heard? Once again, here they are:

Mary, a devoutly religious girl who had guarded her virginity and who was engaged to be married, was confronted by the angel Gabriel, with the incredible announcement that she would be made pregnant by the power of God's holy spirit. What would have been a devastating condition to most people she accepted without a whimper of complaint.

Her betrothed husband Joseph, with no choice but to conclude that she had been unfaithful to him, was willing to break the relationship privately and shield her from public embarrassment. Here was love and drama unsurpassed. But upon instructions from an angel of the Lord, Joseph took the pregnant girl to be his wife, although the child she carried was not his.

The birth was announced to shepherds by an angel and the singing of a heavenly choir. Wise men from distant lands were directed to the home by a miraculous star. The birth of this child was of such importance that the King felt threatened, and plunged the nation into terror by the murder of all the male children under the age of two. To protect Jesus, Joseph had to flee with his family, like fugitives, to the land of Egypt.

This child, the son of Almighty God, turned out to be the Messiah, long expected and awaited for many generations. He was the one, the only one in all history, to make forgiveness of sin possible by paying its penalty in his own death. Eternal life for every person in the world depends on Him.

The climax of the story came the third day after His death, when he was raised from the dead. A few days later He physically ascended to heaven to be proclaimed Lord and Christ, with authority over heaven and earth.

No novelist ever thought of a story one tenth as strange and exciting. But that's the trouble: the story is true! It fulfills prediction made by authentic prophets hundreds of years earlier. Its characters are part of history.

Because it is true, everyone who hears it is forced to take a position. If one accepts it as truth, he accepts that Jesus is Lord and only Savior and ultimately Judge. The truth concerning Jesus is demanding.

By contrast, Santa Claus requires nothing. He showers his gifts upon all. He is silent about sin, and gives no commandments to be obeyed. Besides that, we know he is fiction, so nothing is threatened. It is easy to see why he is more popular than Christ.

The question is: What will you do with the story of Jesus? Is it fact or fantasy? Believe it, or not?

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