

## Humor Me

By Ronald P. Culberson

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### “What if We Stuff Turkey Instead of Stockings At Christmas?”

*Disclaimer: The following column does not represent the views of this newspaper nor the family of the author. Mr. Culberson is basically on his own with this one. Since he is an active Presbyterian – understanding that Presbyterians are not really that “active” but more often sit rigidly in their pews showing only the slightest head nod in response to something intellectually stimulating – this column is not anti-Christian, anti-Christmas nor anti-anything that might be construed as offensive, discriminatory or dis-holidaycious . It’s a humor column so the greatest danger is that it’s anti-funny.*

‘Twas four weeks before Christmas and all through the house, seven pounds of turkey were ziplocked in the fridge while Halloween pumpkins rotted gracefully on the front porch. The kids begged to put the Christmas tree up early as a small Scrooge-like voice in my head whispered, “Let’s deck Santa and toss the whole bough of holly out the window.” It was then I realized that I wasn’t fully *into* the Christmas spirit.

But why not? I certainly dove into the Thanksgiving gravy, so to speak. Why would Christmas generate such bah-humbug-ish-ness? The more I pondered it, the more I believed it had to do with the *way* we celebrate Christmas. So I came up with a perfect solution: Replace Christmas altogether – with another Thanksgiving. And here’s why...

In 1621, the Pilgrims held the original Martha Stewart meal, complete with raccoon skin napkin rings and floating pinecone punch, as thanks for a bountiful harvest. As a gesture of friendship, they shared this meal with the local Indians (a name attributed to the indigenous people of the Americas by Christopher Columbus who, apparently suffering from Continent Dyslexia, thought he had landed in the West Indies). Little did the “Indians” know their hosts would eventually “relocate” them and take their land in exchange for their likenesses on football helmets and easy access to the largest casinos in the world. I don’t know about you but I’d call that Thanks-*taking*.

George Washington reaffirmed Thanksgiving as the national holiday for giving thanks and eventually we arrived at the fourth Thursday of November as the official Turkey Day. Coincidentally, that’s the day the Detroit Lions and the Dallas Cowboys play football so it worked out quite nicely for football fans. Unfortunately, having to watch the “Cowboys” is yet another slap in the face for our native brothers – but it’s probably better than watching the “Redskins.”

Christmas, on the other hand, is a Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, a man who is often represented in art as a blue-eyed, light-skinned Fabio-ish fellow rather than a dark-skinned curly haired man who came from the Middle East. And just to complicate the holiday, he wasn't even born on December 25<sup>th</sup>. This date was actually a pagan Roman holiday replaced by Christmas many years later most likely to cut down on the annoying practice of feeding Christians to the lions during the slow winter months when the farmers-turned-part-time-gladiators had more free time on their hands. Over the years, Christmas became a widely celebrated holiday in which the popular Christian symbols of eggnog lattés, tinsel and reindeer captured the *true* meaning of the holiday.

So, Thanksgiving is for giving thanks and Christmas is for honoring the birth of Christ. Both have value, both are meaningful and more importantly both include a day off from work and an overabundance of baked goods. However, Christmas requires exponentially more energy, money and stress focused on what I believe are the *wrong* things.

The focus of Thanksgiving has remained the same over the years: a time for family, food and fellowship. At Christmas, however, we buy extravagant gifts for people who don't need them and we fill our houses with strange decorations worshipping not Christ but an obese man who has an unnatural relationship with elves. At the original Christmas, there were no lights, no stockings hung by the chimney with care and the only gifts were given to Jesus, not to the mail carrier or a co-worker whose name was drawn from a hat.

My suggestion is to replace Christmas with a new holiday called Thanksgiving II: Return of the Turkey. Let's ditch the stockings, the gifts and the North Pole and instead focus on family, food, fellowship and faith. We can reuse the decorations from Thanksgiving I and discover one more way of preparing the leftovers.

And if it doesn't work out, we can exchange gifts on Martin Luther King's birthday.

Until next time, just humor me.

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*Ron Culberson, MSW, CSP, CPAE is a speaker, humorist, and author of four books including Do it Well. Make it Fun. The Key to Success in Life, Death, and Almost Everything in Between. His mission is to change the workplace culture so that organizations are more productive and staff are more content. He shows people how to have more FUN while preserving the integrity of the work they do and the lives they lead. For more information, visit [www.RonCulberson.com](http://www.RonCulberson.com).*