

A Better Story

FCCNH 2022 ELDER MEDITATIONS

21 DECEMBER 2022

Brett Elliott

"I have always thought of Christmas time... as a good time: a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem by one consent to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys."

- Charles Dickens (from A Christmas Carol)

Speaking of stories... I just love A Christmas Carol. I love the original novella, I love the classic 1951 film with Alastair Sim, I love the 1984 TV version with George C. Scott. What about that Muppets version, you ask? Oh, you mean the one from 1992 with Michael Caine? LOVE. IT.

Aside from the more famous bits, there is a great deal of Christianity woven into the story and the writing, as well as some truly wonderful little hidden gems, the quote above being among my favorites — Scrooge's affable nephew Fred defending the Christmas spirit against his uncle's bah-humbug cynicism.

I agree with Fred. I love the holiday season with all its hustle and bustle, chaos and frenzy. I'm a notorious last-minute shopper, and in the BA time (Before Amazon), I would inevitably find myself right in the thick of the holiday madness, circling parking structures like a vulture or adrift in the sea of humanity flooding the store aisles.

Everyone I know would complain about the crowds, the frenzy, the commercialism — and with good reason. Still, when I'd look around at everyone rushing about, I'd recall that quote from Scrooge's nephew and feel a kinship with my fellow procrastinators. There we all were, searching for gifts not for ourselves, but for the people we loved.

Another of my favorite Christmas Carol quotes comes at the end, as Dickens is describing the reformed Ebenezer Scrooge:

"It was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!"