

CHRISTMAS STATEMENT OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TRANSCRIBED FOR BROADCAST OVER RADIO STATION WNOK, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, DECEMBER 24, 1949.

Once again we have come to the most joyous time of the year, when our hearts are warmed by the spirit of giving, and by reverent thoughts of the most precious gift mankind has ever received -- the birth of the Prince of Peace.

The people of South Carolina have always been deeply religious, with a sincere reverence for the underlying meaning of the Christmas story. Knowing that God gave his son that man might have everlasting life, we have interpreted the Christmas season as one of sharing with others all we have to give. And in so doing, we have made the Christmas season one of great joy and gladness, because the truest happiness comes from giving.

It is only natural that Christmas in South Carolina should be a happy occasion. Our State has been richly blessed in the good things which serve to gladden the heart at Christmas-time. Our soil is rich in abundant yields, our woods and fields shelter wild game in plenty, and our land is covered with evergreen -- the traditional symbol of Christmas. Even the old turkey gobbler himself, the center of many a Christmas dinner, is a native of our woods.

It is true that such abundance has not always found its way into every South Carolina home. There have been times when many a South Carolina table was bare even at Christmas, and when the joys of the Christmas season came from hopeful hearts, and from little else.

Today, however, we have every reason to believe that our State is leaving those days behind. The long upward struggle of our people toward economic prosperity is beginning to yield

lasting results on every hand. We know that South Carolina is among the richest of States in natural resources, and in the energy and ability of her people. We are learning how to take advantage of our great natural assets, and there is good reason to hope that all our people will soon be enjoying the blessings of an abundant land. Because of that, this Christmas should be one of our happiest.

The blessings of life in South Carolina and in America are without parallel anywhere else on earth, because our principles of freedom have enabled us to realize the bounties of our great land. At Christmastime, when we are enjoying the fruits of our labor to the fullest, it is well to remember that our prosperity and our principles of liberty go hand in hand. Let us remember, too, that there are countries where there is very little respect for either Christmas or freedom, and let us cherish our respect for both.

The spirit of Christmas -- peace on earth, good will to men -- is more widespread in the world today than it ever was before. The Christian principle of peaceful relationships between men is accomplishing more than it ever has in the councils of nations. We may take courage from this fact, and look forward with hope and confidence to the day when the ideals of Christianity will prevail every time men gather to discuss their differences.

Faith in the coming of that day should be the spirit of our Christmas this year. It is in that faith that Mrs. Thurmond and I say to the people of South Carolina, with all our hearts:

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!