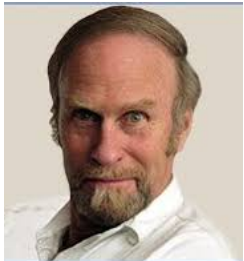


It's A Wonderful Life With Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed: But How And Why?



By Frosty Wooldridge

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Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed starred in Frank Capra's 1946 iconic Christmas movie, **"It's a Wonderful Life."** At the time of its release, critics condemned it, and movie-goers gave it a lukewarm reception.

But most baby boomers have watched it over 50 times in their lives. I know I have! It pulls at my heart strings. It pulls at my sense of friendship, purpose, dreams and wishes. The brilliant underlying theme remains to this day that we all need love, friends, family and purpose in our lives.

At the end of the movie when George Bailey stands on the bridge in a snowstorm about to end his life, he is granted his wish to come back to his time and be with his family. The angel Clarence said, "No man is a failure who has friends." Of course, because Clarence did a good turn to help George Bailey from committing suicide, the little daughter said, "Every time a bell rings, an angel gets its wings."

This Christmas in America, Canada, and Europe where Christianity still tugs at peoples' heartstrings, millions of people will celebrate the birth of Christ. That divine birth stands as "renewal" for living, hope, and faith. Our species needs "hope" in the face of the multitude of challenges we

have created for ourselves in the 21st century. Often times, I'm at my wits end as to how America is going to survive our exhaustion of energy, our overpopulation crisis, our water crisis, our immigration predicament, catastrophic climate destabilization, species extinction rates, our national debt, and terrorism.

What's happened lately with that Mangione kid executing that CEO of United Healthcare--just leaves me sickened. Worse, 40 percent of Generation Z kids support his killing the CEO Brian Thompson. It tells me that their "moral relativism" will tear at the foundation of our "rule of law" and sense of living in a free society. You just can't go around shooting people...and think it's okay for your reasons. Chicago and New Orleans, the murder capitals of the United States, cause everyone to fear for their lives just walking down the street. That's where "moral relativism" ends up.

This Christmas, many people will spend time with friends and family. Many other people, less fortunate, will spend Christmas living on the streets in their rags, tents and sleeping bags. Their only comfort might be a bottle of Scotch, or a syringe filled with some horrible drug.

It's the dichotomy of life in the United States and around the world. We've got tens of thousands being killed in Ukraine on both sides of the battle line. We've got starvation and death in Gaza. We hear about 3.1 million children who have starved to death in 2024 around the world. Another 10 million adults died from starvation and malnutrition in 2024. Even in the richest country in the world, we see 1 in 6 people in America facing food insecurity. Soup kitchens find long lines of desperate people. If you live in a large city, you see beggars on many street corners.

For this journalist, this time of Christmas grows my sense of gratitude for my good fortune. Unlike George Bailey, I did get to travel the world. Thankfully, in the United States,

most people live decent lives. We're the fortunate ones. We're the lucky ones. Yes, for certain all of us have faced some nasty persons in our lives like that banker scoundrel Mr. Potter. That guy would cut your throat for a dollar.

But you know, I have discovered in my long life, that nasty people like Potter get their "Karma" returned because they lack honorable friends, family and standing in the community.

The one rule that I follow when I meet up with such insidious characters that lie, cheat and/or steal from me--I maintain my integrity. I forgive them. I thank God that I am not one of them. Definitely, the world is full of pickpockets, embezzlers, liars, cheats and thieves. They can keep that negative energy and negative life force. I'll move toward the light.

I've always chosen education, hard work, and determination to guide me along my life's path. Last year, trying to get a movie contract for one of my books, I got conned out of a chunk of money. After it happened, I said to myself, "Never again!"

As you watch the different dark paths that George Bailey walked during the movie, you can't help but understand the genius of the writer who created the script that was a short story by Phillip Van Doren Stern, "The Greatest Gift", in 1943. You must know that WWII had all our parents by their throats for five years. Millions of kids died in WWII. It's tough trying to look at the good side of life, but Stern created his masterpiece that we all watch 70 years later with Donna Reed and Jimmy Stewart.

So, this Christmas, wherever you are in your life, whatever your age, whatever your family, and whomever your friends--take stock of your blessings. Please know that your friends depend on you for laughter, fellowship, listening ear, love and heart. Many times, they cannot express it, but each person

they touch, or you touch, makes a difference in all our lives. A civilization like ours succeeds when we respect one another, care about each other, and work toward the common good. That's the beauty of the United States of America.

May God bless you. May God bless your family. May God bless your community. Vaya con Dios!

Merry Christmas from Sandi and Frosty Wooldridge, Golden, Colorado

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