



### ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS READING

(With apologies to Dr. Luke, who could not be contacted at time of publication. Copyright privileges are therefore waived. Similarities between this sketch and part of his work is entirely deliberate)

Now it came to pass from about the eighth month of the year, that there went out a decree from the profit-makers that the entire Western world should go out and spend exceedingly. This decree was first made when it was realised that there was much money to be made from the misguided love of parents at Christmas-time. And all went to be ripped off, each in his own city. And Derek also went up from the suburbs into the city to spend with Sharon, his wife. And so it was that while they were in Toy and Hobby, that Lo! Their wallet and purse were delivered of their contents and behold their earnings were given to the profit-makers, which did rub their hands with glee, and their tills did ring with joy. Their purchases were wrapped in brightly-coloured paper and shiny ribbon, and were laid in the wardrobe, because there was no room for them anywhere else.

Now in the eleventh month, behold there came grandparents from a suburb in the east, to spend even more exceedingly, according to the decree. And Lo, in the window of Toys R Us, a great star-shaped banner which did say '50 percent off, pay next June'. When they saw the sign, they rejoiced, and their hearts were glad. At the end of the twelfth month, when the grandparents came to the house of Derek and Sharon, they did bring a great quantity of gifts for everyone, and didst receive the same unto themselves. They verily did eat of the fat of the land, and didst watch television by night. And it came to pass that the grandparents returned to their suburb, and Derek and Sharon went back to work saying amongst themselves. Eeee, worra beltin' Christmas we 'ad' and didst enquire of the bank manager for an extension of the loan repayments. And verily, the underdeveloped tribes of the Third World murmured amongst themselves, saying 'Where is the great joy and peace on earth, and goodwill towards men that was announced by the angel?' Moreover they grew exceedingly thin. Notwithstanding, the profit makers grew exceedingly fat from the hand of those who had been led astray by the false prophets. The advertisements in the Western media continued to proclaim the decree that to love means to spend, and to love much more means to spend much more than thy neighbour hath spent.

And thus, the music of the cash-tills and the rustle of paper money in the hands of the profit-makers didst smother the crying of a Child in a manger. And the Lord looked down from Heaven, and His heart was grieved for His people.