

True Christmas

Christopher R. Bollinger

This time of year is busy and hectic for all of us. We all wish we could stop and ponder the true meaning of Christmas. Indeed, there are many television shows, movies, plays, editorials, sermons and what not which make attempts to “share the true meaning of Christmas.” So why not me too?

What is the true meaning of Christmas? We all know certainly that the “commercial” Christmas we claim to despise, yet fall into lock stock and barrel every year, isn’t really it. I’m not going to rail against commercialism. Nor am I going to give you some trite crap (OK, well perhaps, that is indeed what I’m going to do). It seems to me that you can’t really tell people the true meaning of Christmas. It means different things to different people at different times.

For me, it’s really always been about family. (OK, that’s a little trite, but none-the-less true). My most indelible childhood memories of Christmas are Christmas Eve at Aunt Dotie’s and Christmas morning with my parents and sister. I don’t recall the presents, but I do remember being with those people. As I have grown older, those times have been supplanted with a variety of memories with my wife and my growing family.

I know for others that Christmas is about religion. That the birth of Jesus ushered in a whole new world and this is a celebration and a remembrance of that event. For still others, Christmas is about giving; not only to our loved ones, but to those less fortunate. For still others, Christmas is a time for gathering with friends and neighbors for revelry and companionship.

As you begin to celebrate Christmas this year, don’t let the media, or anyone else, decide the true meaning of Christmas for you. Watch for it yourself. You’ll know you’ve caught a glimpse of it when you feel a genuine laugh erupt from your belly; or perhaps when you feel a shiver go down your spine at some special moment with family or in a church. If you feel like crying because you are so touched emotionally by song, or by words or perhaps by the look of child at some special moment, you’ll know that you’ve seen the true meaning of Christmas. Or even if you feel sadness and compassion for those who are poor, hungry, or oppressed; you’ve shared the true meaning of Christmas.

Watch for those moments. Stop when they happen. Open yourself to the experience of those feelings and emotions. Sometimes it only takes a moment. Don’t worry if you “look like fool” for crying or laughing or whatever. Embrace it. The true meaning of Christmas is really discovering your humanity and connecting with humanity around you. Frankly, it’s the meaning of a lot more than Christmas.

May you and your family have a wonderful and joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year