

Lately I have been reminded of a night long ago when everything in the world seemed “right” and hopeful. It was Christmas Eve, I was 6 years old and trying hard to get to sleep so Santa could come.

But, the peace and hopefulness I felt soon turned to confusion and disillusionment, as I lay in bed wide awake listening to the rumblings of a disagreement down the hall.

My Mom and Dad had friends over for the evening, a holiday party of sorts that ended badly as the subject of Santa Claus was discussed. All at once I heard my father shout “Don’t tell me to quiet down, my girls don’t believe in Santa!” My breath caught in my throat at the statement and it seemed as if time itself slowed to a stop. I anxiously awaited what would be said next.

My mind was racing, why would my dad say such a thing, of course we believed in Santa! Didn’t everyone? The conversation quickly turned to an argument as my dad continued to dominate the atmosphere with boisterous proclamations that “no kid of his was going to believe in a pagan lie!”

The more I heard, the more my heart ached. I couldn’t recall actually being told Santa existed, but there was evidence everywhere I reasoned. And hadn’t we always magically received gifts under the tree each Christmas morning? I hoped Santa had not heard my dad’s statement and would decide to skip over our house.

But then ...what if it were true? What impact did that have on life as I knew it....no Santa? I could barely stand the thought. Santa loved all children. We were not a bother to him. After all, he spent all his time preparing gifts for us and not just any gifts, gifts we would really like! He knew us by name, the naughty and the nice. And although we all knew that the naughty would receive only coal, just the thought of Santa inspired you to be a better you. He was watching after all, but always with a smile, as if to say, “I see you, *the real you* and I like what I see.”

Santa was always depicted as having an essence of kindness, joy, and goodwill towards all. He also walked in a peaceful, bigger than life authority. Nobody messed with Santa, not even the magician that tried to take Frosty’s hat!

That night I felt robbed of my hope in all that Santa stood for in my little mind. But I can’t blame my dad; he was just responding to the teaching of the time and wanted to do the right thing by religious standards. It scared him to think that something other than God would have my affection and focus.

Now that I am a parent, I can better understand the zeal behind my dad’s exclamation all those years ago. After all Santa Claus is a fictitious character used by the media to promote materialism and commercialize Christmas. And yet..... Jesus, Himself has opened my eyes to see something more.....

Consider the fact that Santa’s worldwide appeal speaks to something greater. A great need that resides in all of mankind for a benevolent, faithful, wise, and supernatural being that can defy the status quo and bring hope, love and joy.... even if just for one night; a hope that restores child-like faith to trust that *anything* is possible for those who believe.

The truth is there *is* some One greater, The Spirit of Christmas Himself. I'm no longer referring to Santa but a Savior for all people, Jesus Christ, come in the flesh.

The angels said it best: *I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For unto you a Savior is born, He is Christ the Lord.....suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!*

There is a longing in the heart of all humanity for Him whether we recognize it as such or not. The real tragedy from my childhood was not the disillusionment I felt from a fictitious holiday character, but that with all the Sunday school classes and vacation Bible schools I attended, I never saw Jesus for the Hope, Joy and Rescuer He is.

All the attributes that my heart longed for in Santa could rightly be found in Jesus, God's own Son, but the connection was never made until much later in my life.

As a result of my new perspective, I look upon old Kris Cringle differently than I once did, no longer as an affront to the true meaning of Christmas, but now as a bridge to share the True Lover of my soul with all those in need; the One who really *does* know us by name and never tires of our voice. He is busy preparing a place for us much grander than the North Pole, a glorious place. He alone can restore our hope, bringing salvation and healing to our soul.

How life giving it is to know Jesus is not threatened by Santa any more than He was intimidated by satan in the wilderness. You can be certain that He *knows* who He is, even if some of us do not.

We can rejoice that truly anything *is* possible for those who BELIEVE in some One greater; some One with greater authority than even the man in the red suit. His name is Jesus, the Name above all Names!

This Christmas season may you BELIEVE in the Greater One who loves you most.

Merry Christmas,  
From all of us at Crossroads Christian Academy

Willa Vallin, Administrator  
December 2011

...for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me and have believed that I came forth from God.  
John 16:27