

A Hallmark Christmas?

By: [David Michael](#) - December 22, 2010

I ran across an article about the true spirit of Christmas verses the commercialism it has become today. This got me thinking about the Spirit of Christmas. What is the Christmas spirit? I mean, most people understand that Christmas is about the birth of Christ, but, my question is, What is the 'Spirit' of Christmas? Whether someone is religious or not, it's clear to everyone that, for the most part, Christmas is commercialized. Perhaps none have stated it better than a young girl named Lucy who said, *"Let's face it. We all know that Christmas is a big commercial racket. It's run by a big eastern syndicate, you know."* lol

It's interesting to note that each adult generation tends to look back at Christmas when they were a child and compare it to the Christmas of today. They'll say, "I remember when Christmas was so much nicer.. It was more about family and love.. You could sense Christmas in the air!" How many of you have heard something similar or maybe even said it yourself? I know I certainly have. We 'say' it was better when we were kids and in-part that is true, but only in-part... When we were kids, we often didn't see the hassles, struggles, and disgruntled shoppers as clear as we do as an adult, but I assure you that our parents saw it... The truth is, when we were younger Commercialism had already crept in.. Remember it was Lucy who made that comment and that Charlie Brown Christmas tv special first aired in 1965, which was before some of us were even a thought in our parents mind.

If you go back further and study the history of Christmas you will learn that during the Late Middle Ages (1300–1500) the celebration of Christmas was anything but joyful. Christmas was physically dangerous filled with exploitations, revelries and drunken binges and all sorts of crazy activity. Eventually Christmas had undergone a lot of changes, even being outlawed in England in the mid 1600's during the Puritans reign. By the late 1700's and early 19th century Christmas had almost been forgotten. It held nothing but bad associations, controversy and faint traditions.

So how did we get from that Christmas to modern Christmas? Well, a book was written. This book is actually credited to reinventing Christmas into many of the concepts that we know it to be today. This book brought Christmas back into the picture and it attempted to cause people to focus on Christmas with an emphasis on love and harmony. It was published in 1843 titled-- A Christmas Carol written by Charles Dickens.. Ever hear of it?

When this book was written Christmas was nothing like it is today. Nevertheless, through Dickens and other influential writers of his time, a new idea of the Christmas Spirit had been born and we see that concept or goal as part of our Christmas's today. If we look at the references in our culture, I.e. Christmas movies, comments, Christmas cards etc. it becomes easy to see what the "Christmas Spirit" is supposed to be. I mean, aside from the birth of Christ—The spirit of Christmas, according to this way of thinking is a sort of a, *"Can't we all just get along"*. It's a Hallmark sentiment about a world that is filled with peace and harmony. The idea is that if we could simply absorb the "Spirit" of Christmas, there would be no more war or strife or hostility between us and other fellow-humans.

Is this right?.. Well..yes and no. The truth is, this Hallmark idea of Christmas sets people up for great disappointment. After all, we're told year after year this is the idea of Christmas yet in-spite of what we're told, it never actually comes in that form. This concept of Christmas bringing peace, love and harmony among all mankind just simply doesn't happen.. And why is that?--- Well, Charlie brown yelled out, *"Can someone please tell me what Christmas is all about!"* Then the great theologian Linus answered by quoting Luke chapter 2 to Charlie Brown:

Luke 2: 8-14 "Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9)And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10)Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11)For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12)And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 13)And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: 14)" Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

The answer to Charlie Brown's question was Jesus Christ... You see, it is true that Christmas is about love and peace, but the true meaning of Christmas is not about mankind loving his fellow man. The true meaning of Christmas is first and foremost about God loving mankind. It is about God giving the most amazing and spectacular gift to mankind; that is, the gift of salvation and the promise of the coming Kingdom. You see, modern Christmas is no different than that of the Late Middle Ages in that they're trying to create a Christmas outside of Christ and, of course, you simply cannot. It's worth noting that more and more fuzzy-feeling Christmas specials come out each year and each year the people get further away from that idea.. It's Not working!

You can package it any way you want, i.e. parties or ideal peace and harmony, but you will always end up feeling the Christmas spirit lacking because without Christ the true spirit of Christmas does not exist... Simply put - You cannot have peace outside of the Prince of Peace! In other words, while the Christmas 'Spirit' may be of love, peace, goodwill and so on, the true Christmas Spirit will never be achieved without It's Owner, It's Maker, It's Creator.

So..... Am I saying the simplest message of all?...That You can't have Christmas without Christ? AM I repeating that age old message? Well, I suppose I am... But more specifically, there is a joy and hope that Christmas represents and that joy and hope is Salvation through Christ to any and all who choose to receive it; ANY time of the year!

While we may live in a world of discontent and strife, we can still be filled with joy, hope and peace because we have received that wonderful gift. We are embodied by the giver of Christmas... We are filled with His spirit that indwells us all-year-long and we are given His peace that surpasses all understanding. Furthermore, Christ is coming back and He will establish His kingdom forever and when He does we will see true joy, true peace and true harmony. Not by fuzzy feeling tv specials but by the love and power of God almighty sitting on the throne and Him personally putting an end to the immorality in this world... What an awesome day that will be!

In closing,

We are often told to spread some 'holiday cheer' around.. Therefore, we would do well to be mindful that if we are to do that successfully then that means we are to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

From my family to yours, Merry CHRISTmas!

David