

Cornerstone Conversations

If I were God—and I know a lot of people including my husband who are deeply grateful that I'm not—I might very well have planned a stealth arrival to our planet to keep people guessing about who I really was.

Think of how cool it would have been for God to be here and for no one to know it was actually Him. With the old sunglasses, fake nose, and moustache trick, He could sneak into a lot of places without being noticed. The advantage of being able to check up on religious folk to see what they were really like when they thought He wasn't looking is almost too tantalizing of an option to refuse! He could do the Santa routine: making a list and checking it twice. And to most people that would make a lot of sense since masses of us assume that God considers it great sport to spend his time finding out who's naughty and nice. Then, after getting the scoop, He could quietly disappear and plan His sting operation against our wayward ways.

But you've got to give God a lot of credit. He resisted the temptation and arrived on our planet in the person of an unshrouded and wide-open *Jesus*. And most surprisingly, He didn't come to find out who is naughty and nice. He already knows that. Instead, He came to shock us about God. To prove once and for all that God was not a stingy-hand-wringing-grimacing-out-of-touch-with-reality God who can't wait to pull the trigger. But rather a God who generously disperses the rare items of grace and mercy to all who have at one time or another slipped up. And that's all of us! A God whose love was not the mushy kind but tough enough to risk a life-threatening rescue mission so that all of us might recover and experience the ultimate satisfaction that He promises—guaranteed!

And, it must be admitted, masses in our day have found the real Jesus to be anything but elusive. In fact, they have found Him to be compellingly available. And, for the suspicious among us, it is not just the feeble and weak who flee to Him for rest and comfort (though He gladly grants rest and comfort to those who find themselves shoved to the bottom of the heap). Many highly placed, intelligent, prosperous, and privileged people have found—in the midst of their abundance and instant access to thrills and stuff—that they are still hanging out the vacancy sign on the door of their hearts. It is these people who are finding that Jesus does exactly what He says He will: cancel the smoke-and-mirrors show and fill the hollow recesses of life with hope, purpose, and the pursuit of all that is truly significant!

So, here's the good news. If you embrace the real Jesus, you will find Him to be deeply rewarding and wonderfully different. Wonderfully different from anyone you have ever known. Wonderfully full of grace and truth!

Rev'd. Linda