

## **Glorifying & Praising God**

(Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:8-20)

10:30 am, Christmas, Dec. 25, 2011; Windsor UBC; J G White

Just a few days ago, Sharon and I were wrapping gifts, down in the basement, with the wood fire blazing. Sharon hunted through the old video cassettes – packing them away, actually – and came across a recording of The Living Christmas Tree. Now you may have attended a concert somewhere, sometime, put on by a choir calling itself a Living Christmas Tree. This one is an annual event in Port Greville, Cumberland County, and is a community event in support of the local ecumenical Sunday School that meets at Grace United Church.

It was 1996, my first December in Cumberland County, and there, among the young and old in the Living Christmas Tree was a branch of clergy. Three local pastors, Three Wise Men, you could say, though we also got called everything from the three stooges to the Righteous Brothers. (play video clip)

The memories that recording brings back are wonderful. Memories of all the wonderful people from Parrsboro through to Spencer's Island, whom I knew, and who were quite good at banding together and cooperating and doing good stuff. Memories of how the folk and the pastors of the various Churches worked together, and were family. An Anglican, a Baptist and a United pastor sang together regularly. Our churches had combined services in Advent and in Lent. The churches founded the Parrsboro and area Food Bank.

Christmas is a time of celebrating the fact that God makes us one, one in Christ. The angels called the shepherds to the birth scene of Jesus, and the star called the Magi a couple years later. Our festive legends see the drummer boy and the littlest shepherd and every animal imaginable gathering – drawn together by this Jesus. Even a myriad of flowers and trees bloomed that first Christmas, so the stories say. From the heavenly angels, to the foreign Kings, to the poinsettia, to the little lamb, all seem to come out and worship this child. Everyone belongs, all are one, at the Birth of Jesus.

One thing I appreciate at Christmas is how the Lord uses it as

a reminder that, while we are so scattered on this earth, how open the doors are to reconciliation and belonging. The birth story of the Saviour is but the beginning of His salvation to us. In so many ways Christ's business is including people, and helping them come to Him, and thus come together.

*When the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, He saved us... according to His mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. (Titus 3:4-5)*

He appeared about 2015 years ago. Today we celebrate Jesus' 2015<sup>th</sup> birthday, thereabout. That 30 or so years of His appearance on Earth is God's saving work in our lives today. God the Spirit applies this to our souls, our lives, now.

So this is a day of great rejoicing. Glorifying & praising.

Here, today, the Saviour has brought people together again. Not only to worship Him in awe and wonder. About seventy people will be gathering for a feast, a 'traditional' Christmas dinner here in the Sunday School Hall. Jesus does it again; He brings us together. Our denominational roots are unimportant. Our faith or lack of faith are actually unimportant. What is important is what He does, who He is, how He is with us now, how He loves us now.

Let us rely upon Him, and count our blessings, our gifts from Christ to us this Christmastime.

Let us pray.