



Canadian Conference
of Mennonite Brethren Churches

Christmas Greeting – December 2018

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Greetings, MB family. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, both in our churches and in our homes, I wanted to take time to wish you, your family, your congregation, your ministry, a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

As I reflect on preparing myself for this celebration, I go back to a chapter in the Bible, in the book of Luke (Luke chapter 2), and the particular story of Simeon and Anna who waited patiently in the temple for years, anticipating that God would send his salvation for the world, salvation for the Jews. And as I reflect on that text, there are a few things that really help me to prepare, help me to make this season more meaningful, and to really connect with the purpose for what Christ has come to do.

There are several things – four in particular – that are very important to me.

First, reading Luke 2:25, we find that there is a sense of anticipation for Simeon. He waited, he expected that something was going to happen.

My hope and my prayer for myself and for you, for your ministry, for your family, is that there still exists a sense of anticipation that God is at work, that God is doing, that God is showing up. That when we get up to worship on a Sunday morning, that when we go about our business of the day, when we meet with friends, that God is already there: already doing, already transforming.

Second, verse 27 says that Simeon, as he walks through the temple, he walked in the Spirit. There was a spiritual vigour in Simeon that allowed him to wait for Christ.

Do we still have a spiritual vigour that connects us to the presence of God? Do we see it reflected in the way that we worship, in the way we act, in the way we relate to people? Do we have this hunger for God's presence?

Third, Simeon clearly had a recognition, when he saw Jesus, that he was the One. He says, "My eyes have seen the salvation!"

Do we recognize God at work? Do we see Christ redeeming around us? Do we see the work of God around us? Or have we lost the sense of recognition to what he is doing and how he is operating among us?

Fourth, we move now to the story of Anna, who – the Bible in this text relates to us – at an old age, still went to the temple daily to worship. Actually, the form of the verb is in a continuing form: she was worshipping daily; in other words, she never stopped worshipping.

Do we have that as an attitude? Do we consider ourselves, do we know ourselves, to be worshippers? Do we carry ourselves in a posture of worshipping God? Do we make time?

You and I were made to worship him. We are part of his creation. We connect and enter into his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise.

So, during this Christmas season, my prayer for you and for me, and for our family of churches is that we can rediscover our place as worshippers. First, that we have a sense of anticipation; second, that we carry on and grow in our spiritual vigour; third, that there is a recognition for God's presence; and fourth, that we are clearly worshippers.

So, on behalf of CCMBC, the staff in this office, and our partners across this country, I want to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.