

December 2011

Dear Friends,

Velma and I want to wish you and your families all the very best of the Christmas Season and throughout 2012. May the Lord bless each of you and your family.

It has been a pleasure ministering beside you over the past few months since arriving in British Columbia and we look forward to a good continuing transition into 2012.

This Christmas Season is a wonderful time, as Advent itself is the church's way of allowing anticipation to build as we look forward to celebrating the Incarnation of our Lord.

All that makes us a community (having something in common and a reason for communing with one another) is the purpose we have in Christ's mission.

In the first fourteen (14) verses of Ephesians, Paul summarizes the purpose of Christmas when he said; *"And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ"* (1:9-10).

This is further amplified by Paul in Gal 4:4-5 where he says, *"...when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons"*.

The alleviating of human estrangement, hurt, violence, abuse, poverty, fear, disadvantage, and corruption is the mission of The Salvation Army and comes out of the Ancient Scrolls containing the word and will of our Creator, God.

During this season, let's remember what happened in a humble stable: *"You will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High"* (Luke 1:31-2). This connects time and eternity, you and me and the *"great cloud of witnesses"* (Heb 12:1), as John reminds us, *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was with God in the beginning...the word became flesh and lived for a while among us"* (John 1:1-2, 14).

"You are to give Him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Mt.1:21B). This is our foundational message and mission—the salvation/reclamation of the lost.

Christmas is a special time of spreading joy and happiness based on the confidence we can have in God's unfathomable love.

For each of you, I pray that this Christmas:

Yours is the **hope** of life in its fullness.

Yours is the **love** made manifest in Jesus Christ.

Yours is the **peace** of the silent night.

Yours is the **joy** of friends and family; remembered, and close by,

Yours is the **blessing** of God our Father, whose gift to us is Christmas.

This Christmas, Velma and I wish that you enjoy family, friends, relaxation, fellowship, recreation, and Christ. Oh yes....we also hope you enjoy a few good gifts!

God Bless,

Larry and Velma