



The Message of Christmas

Mr. Marc Dalton

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38th Christmas Celebration

Hi, I'm Marc Dalton, member of Parliament for Pitt Meadows-Maple Ridge in the Vancouver area of beautiful British Columbia. It's a real honour for me to share with you a few thoughts.

Right now along the rivers near where I live, people are fishing for salmon that are swimming back from the Pacific Ocean to the exact place that they hatched years ago. This is what we all call "instinct." We see this in birds like Canada Geese, in caribou, whales, even butterflies and in species all around the world.

Human instinct connecting our heart, mind and soul

I believe that we also as humans have an instinct inside of us. It's different from animals, from birds, from fish. This instinct connects us with our hearts, with our minds, with our souls. It causes us to ask questions like: *Who am I? What is the purpose of my life? What happens when I die? Is there life after death?* We all have these questions.

I remember going on a canoe trip when I lived in Chibougamau in Northern Quebec as a teenager, far from civilization and looking at the stars and the northern lights and being so amazed. I knew that there was something more, but couldn't figure it out. It was a big mystery.

The Bible says that, "For the truths about God are known to people instinctively; God has put this knowledge in our hearts. Since the earliest times, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made and have known of his existence and eternal power."

We have "a God shaped void" inside of us.

Blaise Pascal, the famous French inventor and philosopher from the 1600s said that we have "a God shaped void" inside of us. We can try to fill this void with so many things – it could be possessions, it could be experiences, knowledge, relationships, positions - but only God can fill this emptiness.

When I joined the military and was going through training, I had discussions with another

soldier about religion and faith. I told him what was necessary was to be a good person. He said that wasn't enough. The conversations - they went on for days.

Finally a verse that he read from the Bible penetrated my heart: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life."

This amazing world was created by a God who gave us the ability to see, to hear, to taste and loved me so much that He would come down in the form of a human, Jesus.

I was struck with the realization that this amazing world was created by a God who gave us the ability to see, to hear, to taste and loved me so much that He would come down in the form of a human, Jesus Christ, and die to bring Himself to me.

I was in my military uniform on a small hill and I asked Him to forgive me for my selfishness and lack of awareness and appreciation towards Him. I surrendered my life to Him, because I knew that this was the right and proper thing to do.

As I prayed, I felt a big load lift off of me - a load which I never realized was even there. I began to cry uncontrollably and I felt that I was being washed clean inside of me. When I opened my eyes, there was an incredible sparkling brilliance and colour in the trees and the sky and the surroundings.

That was over 40 years ago. It's absolutely the best decision I have ever made and the beginning of a lifelong and wonderful relationship with Jesus Christ. That doesn't mean that there haven't been challenges, but He's been there the entire time.

The message of Christmas is that 2000 years ago, God took the human form of Jesus Christ. He came down from heaven and was born in a barn with animals. God came to earth to save us and forgive us from our wrongdoings.

The message of Christmas is hope, freedom, salvation and an opportunity for a restored relationship with a loving Father.

The message of Christmas is a message of eternal hope, freedom, salvation and an opportunity for a restored relationship with a loving Father who is calling us home.

Pour ceux et celles de vous qui parlent français, je veux vous souhaiter un très joyeux Noël.

Merry Christmas and may God bless you.