

Sunday, June 25, 2017

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Psalm 72:1-11

Matthew 10:24-42

### Canada: A Confederation of Faithful People

As July 1, 2017 approaches the sales, the promos, the notices of celebration events all focusing on CANADA 150 seems to be hitting the media, the television networks and merchandisers all of which are enticing us to buy memorabilia for this 'once in a lifetime' event. But what are we really 'celebrating when we talk about Canada 150? Ecclesiastes 3:1 states, "There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven." When we read through this list of activities—we might look upon it as a history of people and particularly at this time, what it means to be human living in Canada.

There is a time—for birth and death, planting and harvesting, weeping- laughing; mourning and dancing, scattering stone- gathering them together...and of course there is a time to love and hate as well as a time of war and a time of peace. And we know that Canadians have participated in each of these activities around the world and within the borders of this country, we call home..

On July 1, 1867 Upper and Lower Canada (now known as Quebec and Ontario), New Brunswick and Nova Scotia an agreement under the British North America Act came into effect which stated that the colony of the Dominion of Canada was now a nation under the British monarchy. This Dominion of Canada took its name from Psalm 72:8 which signified not only a new country's existence, but a vision that this nation would be from sea to sea- Atlantic to Pacific. And as the West opened up with the railway in the later years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this vision was reached. But it is also noted that within these last 50 years or less, this vision has expanded and includes the third sea of the Arctic Ocean.

What are we celebrating anyway? We are celebrating the coming together of the First Nations peoples as they helped the first European explorers into this rugged land of Canada.. We celebrate leadership who worked together as they thought best in developing the union of these provinces in order that would become stronger together. This was not only because of the turbulent times of the US with its Civil War, but throughout the decades since. For we know that as a country we are stronger together.

We are also celebrating the coming together of people who first immigrated to this country and with mutual support made Canada home. They in turn helped many other immigrants and refugees throughout years and who continue to seek refuge in Canada. Canada

has welcomed many people at its borders and will continue to do this so that people striving to have a better life might be able to fulfil this dream here in this land.

But why celebrate Canada's beginnings? One of the key reasons is to see the progression of Canada's people—nationally and internationally—in all disciplines- sport, innovations, entertainment, scientific breakthroughs and research and to acknowledge Canadians and their accomplishments. And it is something to celebrate—what Canadians have done—and what makes us who we are.

But what do you think? Why should we celebrate this important event in Canadian history? Because we are people of faith and members of a church whose roots are very Canadian—stronger together uniting as one. When our church leaders discussed survival and sharing the social gospel it was as a united and uniting church. It was a union of denominations which had not been done before. It was an Act of Parliament which brought the UCC into existence and much like Canada itself, the UCC struggled and continues to be challenged all the time. Yet it is the church which has continued to do what Christ spoke about in Matthew 10. Offering cups of water to those in need and this somehow seems so Canadian!.

How often do we see and hear about Canada reaching out to others around the world to those in need not just clean water, but safety, peace, a new place to live and call home. This country was founded upon the idea of becoming stronger together and we are. We are a peaceful people and seek the same for others

. Canada was founded upon Christ's teachings and when settlers first came to this land many people assisted each other to establish homes, schools, communities and of course churches where people worshiped together. It was through the teachings of Jesus as we read from Matthew 10 that Jesus' loved is known.

Whoever receives you receives me and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. As Canadians we are often seen as peaceful, passive and appreciative of what others do and share with us. This is except during hockey games when people shout loudly and cheer on their favourite teams. But for the most part we strive to listen to each other and share that cup of water which is not only water, but life itself. It may also be the new life that people have been experiencing as they have immigrated to Canada but also the hope they receive because of God's gift of eternal life.

As we celebrate our country's birthday, let us be reminded of who we are: people of faith who live with hope; people who hope for a better life and have love, and people who love others as Jesus taught. We sing in our anthem, "God keep our land, glorious and free." Are we

celebrating the fact that we are free and the land upon which we live is good because God made it or are we praying with thanksgiving for his many blessings to us?

God calls us to live and love others; to share and work with others improving lives- in both physical and spiritual ways. Are we living and loving others as Christ teaches and are we examples of Faithful people celebrating Canada with patriotic pride and love for a country which continues to amaze us wherever we go?

Canada is a wonderful place—mountains, prairies, lakes, large cities, small villages and people of different backgrounds accents, languages and yet all are Canadian. Thanks be to God for God has called us together and we are a faithful people.