

SHINE ON, CHRISTMAS LIGHT!

I'm headed for Winnipeg. Commonly referred to as "Winterpeg", it's a well-deserved title for the city that often bears the brunt of Canada's harshest winters. To quote my favourite *Fiddler on the Roof* character, Tevye, "on the other hand" the climate really is no more challenging there than in any other city located on the Canadian prairies. Let's face it – winter is winter and we aren't called "The Great White North" for nothing.

But enough of my rambling...I love the prairies but it's more than the sentimentality that prompted me to book my mid December flight. Family is there and next to loving God, there is nothing more important to me. Running a close third is the matter of blue skies and bright sunshine. No matter how green the grass out West, it can't quite obliterate the grey of overcast skies and the chill-to-the-bone unending rain; no matter how low the Winnipeg thermometer dips, I long to see the light.

Christmas is all about light, light in a world that back then, as now, was draped in the darkness of injustice, racism, and conflict of every description. Christ came to pour light into a cesspool of gloom, to ignite a flame of hope in the midst of the ashes of despair.

It's all too easy to mentally transform the stench and darkness of the stable into a fictionalized spa-like setting for the birth of Christ. It's easy to forget that even the mention of His existence transformed a power-hungry king into a mass murderer of babies – all in an attempt to eliminate Light.

The apostle Paul was inspired in his description: "For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God...."

Blessed Christmas Light!