

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

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The world has just gone through the Christmas season. And now, it is back to business as usual. Many within the Restoration movement believe that Christmas, the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, is still ahead of us, in April. Now that we have completed the gift giving, let us concentrate on preparing to receive God’s gift to us as never before. We sing, “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel.” The Saints of the Restoration feel that they are a part of the House of Israel, and it is most obvious that we are being held captive. Whether it is in our own choosing, the influence of the world, the power of Satan, or all, it is most vital that we need to be ransomed. A verse of this hymn reads, *O come, Desire of nations, bind into one the hearts of all mankind. Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself OUR KING OF PEACE.*

Another Christmas hymn states, “Come Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free. From our fears and sins release us let us find our rest in Thee.” Are we desirous to be ransomed from our divisions, fears, sins, self-centered ways, isolationism, unrighteous judgments, public railings and accusations, disobedience to God’s commandments, breaking the covenants, straying from the ordinances, and all the other things that we let separate us from the work where unto we have been called? Wouldn’t it be wonderful, even without the structure of the church, to walk into any Restoration Branch and be accepted as a brother or sister in the faith, without suspicion and distrust?

As we are eager for Jesus to come to us, let us remember that He has said in many scriptures to “Come unto Me.”

Matthew 11:29 & 30; “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take MY YOKE upon you and learn of me...”

Moroni 10:27-30; “...come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift and touch not the evil gift...”; “And awake, and arise from the dust O Jerusalem; yea, and put on your beautiful garments, O daughter of ZION...”; “Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in Him.”

D&C 90:1: ”Verily, thus saith the Lord, It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins, and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, SHALL see my face and know that I am, and that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Is this not what we all desire and long for, regardless of whether or not we are in favor of this conference, that conference, no conference, this group, that group, no group, this music, that music, no music? Are we not tired of all the alphabet soup of the Restoration, the CRE, JCRB, POZ, CPR, POTL? Are we not tired of "chasing pretty rainbows and spinning round and round," as one song states? Are we not ready, as that same song continues, "to wrap up all the shattered dreams of our lives," and at the feet of JESUS, lay them down?

Only the Great I AM knows what the future holds for those above mentioned groups as well as those who have remained isolationists, in one way or another. I do not say this to

be critical, but we all know the predicament of the Restoration. As someone said, "It is time to change or die." We must change from our way to THE WAY, THE TRUTH and THE LIFE. JESUS!

How can and will this happen? When a group of people who are firm believers in Zion are willing to lay down their own armor and ask God to put His armor on them. When this group of people, come to Him in true repentance of all their sins and present a broken heart and contrite spirit. When they acknowledge Jesus Christ, not only as a babe in the manger or our Savior dying on the cross for our sins, but as our KING and allow him to rule over us and within us.

Could this happen anytime soon? It is up to us. A few years ago, a brother gave a message that if 3,000 elders came to a conference, we could expect Jesus Christ to come to us. It is very plain that a number of organizations, groups, and individuals have done much good and brought ministry through the last twenty-three years. It is also obvious that many Branches are doing much good and providing good ministry in many ways, but it is also painfully obvious that we are not one in Christ as He has commanded us to be.

What might the Lord accomplish if thousands of elders, spiritually prepared, came to Independence, Missouri this April? What might the Lord accomplish if every Restoration Branch sent elected delegates, spiritually prepared, to Independence, Missouri this April? Can organizations change? Can hearts and minds be softened? What if people from many nations came up to Independence, Missouri this April? Will there be anything for them to learn? Can we extend the hand of fellowship to our brothers? Can we demonstrate charity, the pure love of Christ? Of course, through our willingness to let Jesus melt us, mold us, fill us and use us. May the Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us!

There are some, myself included, who felt that 2007 was a year of jubilee where we might have been freed from our spiritual slavery. There are some who felt 2007 might have been the year when we would have come out of our spiritual wilderness. These desires were based on dates in the Endowment experience of Brother Earl Curry. This experience occurred in 1957 and he states that Zion could have been within ten years.

The number eight, in scriptures, is said to represent new beginnings. So what does the Lord have in store for His obedient children in 2008? If we truly come unto Him, He will share His will for us. In preparation for the activities in Independence, Missouri during the week of April 6-13, may each individual, family and branch or group be purposed in our hearts, as written in Daniel to not be defiled with the ways of the world, but to "save ourselves" for God's purposes. Prepare a personal plan of preparation involving fasting, prayer and study, consistent church attendance, witnessing and sharing with one another the "glad tidings of great joy." Find a copy of the booklet Spiritual Preparation of the Body of Christ the Patriarchs published a few years ago. As the Aaronic Priesthood request that we fast at least two meals per week. Find one of the old daily scripture guides previously used and follow it again or develop one for your family or branch. One branch has a calendar for 2008 with scriptures for each day of the year. During 2005, at least one branch, held organized worship every morning for a month or more before the

gatherings at the Auditorium. There are many things we can do that will bring us together as the Body of Christ if we will avail ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit and come to Emmanuel. He could very well come and ransom us.

President Joseph Smith III Addressing the Saints in Europe
Church History, Volume 3, Pages 511-513

"May the peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ be with you all. Leave off contentions about unprofitable points of doctrine and church government, and rather observe to do the things by which you shall be made personally pure, than to contend about the rendition of obscure passages of law and scripture.

Teachers, observe to teach the members to do their duty in the family...seeking to the Lord for wisdom...

Deacons, take honest charge of those things entrusted to your keeping, being ever ready to render an account to the church of your stewardship.

Priests observe to minister faithfully, lay aside all perversity of spirit; visit the houses of the saints, exhorting them to be faithful...

Elders, cease charging evil upon each other and contending with each other about prerogative or right of priority... Let your aspirations be for holiness..

Assemble yourselves to counsel together, spreading the truth by precept and example. Let your teachings be in humility and in confidence...let the mission of Christ be your theme, your constant meditation to do good to man... take earnest heed to the word of the lord, study to be approved of God that the fellowship of Christ may be yours."