

Testimony on Calling for a Solemn Assembly

Dear Brothers and Sisters, members of the true and living church of Christ, we, beggars and simple servants, come now to share our collective testimony and assurance with you, that the Lord of Hosts is calling for his people to gather together for a solemn assembly. It is our testimony that the call has been so directed by the Lord, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

We believe this call to assemble together is for all people, of all ages, in harmony with the passages in *Joel, 2:16-17*.

We believe this call to assemble is for all who are part of this gospel founded in 1830, and fully reorganized again in 1860.

We believe this call to assemble is for all who are willing to repent and come unto Jesus Christ.

We believe this call to assemble is for all who will share with a broken heart and a contrite spirit (D&C 17:7b).

We believe this call to assemble is for all who will seek for God's purpose in their life, and have a desire to 'spread the gospel of the kingdom unto all nations' before the end shall come.

We now invite each of you to prayerfully consider and prepare your hearts to gather in a solemn assembly this September.

CRE Chairman – William (Vim) Horn

CRE Coordinating Council – Richard Neill (Chair), Jack Hagensen, Steve Kropp, Tom Mitchell, Brian Mundy, Mark Nunn, Howard Parker (Members)

The following narrative describes the foundation of our testimony and why we are sharing it at this time. (Compiled and written by William (Vim) Horn on behalf of the group)

In 2019, the coordinating council found its meetings going longer because, in addition to considering matters pertaining to the conference, time was spent discussing important topics concerning the restoration branch movement and the world at large. As a group, over the past year we had sensed an acceleration and urgency concerning the conditions within the restoration branch movement and the world at large. Because of never having enough time to fully address these topics, we were unable to spend the quality time needed to discuss them in depth. So, it was determined that we would draw apart for a 24 hour retreat where we could spend time together in worship and prayer, and more fully consider a variety of subjects.

On December 27 and 28, 2019, the Conference chairman and six of the seven members of the coordinating council, came together at the Odessa Hills Campground. Brother Howard Parker, the seventh council member, was unable to attend due to illness. After settling in, we began with a period of worship led by brothers Mark Nunn and Jack Hagensen. Concerning that worship and our time together, Brother Nunn shared the following, *“It is my personal testimony that as we gathered together in fellowship and worship in the name of Jesus Christ that His Spirit rested upon each one of us. The Holy Spirit remained and grew stronger throughout the short time we were together.”*

After a shared meal, we gathered together for the evening discussion. Brother Vim Horn began the discussion by sharing some scriptures and thoughts concerning the *Hastening* time and the urgency of the hour. He then asked each one to share some initial thoughts about what was on their hearts concerning the condition of the church and focus of the retreat. Brother Brian Mundy began by sharing an experience he had the night before concerning his attending the retreat. This is his account of that experience. *“Thursday December 26th was a very rough day for me, not only physically but spiritually. I was under attack all day.*

That night around 10:30pm I went out on my back deck and was soaking in my hot tub reflecting on the day. I decided I wasn't going to go to the retreat. With the spirit that was upon me I didn't want to take away any blessing my brothers would receive. I was busy and had a number of things I could work on, besides nothing really important was going to take place just another meeting (these were the thoughts going through my head justifying me not going). When all of a sudden in a powerful way God spoke to me and so clearly that it penetrated my very soul and said "Brian you have to be there! Just as I chose those 6 men April 6 1830 I have chosen you and your brothers for this day." Let me clarify right here, I did not think then or now that I had to be there because he had chosen us to re-reorganize the church, simply that something special was going to take place and he wanted to make sure I understood it and was there."

Brother Mundy then read D&C 138:3 and shared that the words contained there had been pressing upon him for several months and should be part of our consideration. Each of the other brothers then, in turn, shared their thoughts, ending with Brother Richard Neill.

Brother Neill expressed that early that morning he had, what he believed to be, a spiritual dream. (See "Dream" in this issue) He then shared the dream with us. In the dream Brother Neill saw a large room filled with the Spirit of revelation and a group of excited people. He was directed to read the book of Joel for understanding of what was taking place, the essence of which is to call for a solemn assembly, a call for the people to repent. Upon completion of Brother Neill sharing his dream, including the reading of portions of the Book of Joel, Brother Horn testified that he had felt the confirming spirit that Brother Neill's dream and experience was of the Lord.

Brother Neill, recalls this about our time together: *"The Conference of Restoration Elders Coordinating Council with the Chairman of the Conference had set aside a 24-hour gathering to take place at the Odessa Hills Campground from 3 PM, December 27 to 3 PM, December 28. It was the morning of December 27 that I had the dream. I believe the exact timing of the dream – on the morning of the gathering for the Retreat was not coincidental. I remember distinctly that each of us, at this Retreat, was sharing about our thoughts on our gathering together. Up until this time the thought of a Solemn Assembly was not on the minds of anyone in this meeting prior to gathering, including myself, until the message was received on the morning of the 27th. Having written down the dream, as I awoke that morning, when it became my turn to share, I announced to the group that I had a dream that very morning and I shared the message for the first time with these men. The spiritual nature of the dream has been reconfirmed to me every day since then."*

It was determined, after some discussion and prayer, to continue consideration of the dream and its meaning the next day. In the morning, after a spirit filled two hour sacrament service led by Brothers Steve Kropp and Tom Mitchell, Brother Neill was asked to share his dream again. At that time two others confirmed that the dream was of the Lord and discussion of its meaning ensued.

As we shared and discussed with one another the calling of a solemn assembly, there were certainly different perspectives shared on how to move forward, particularly how quickly. At one point, because of these differences, we stopped to pray to for direction. Immediately a calm ensued and Brothers Kropp and Mitchell suggested that we each go to the leadership of our individual branches and share the dream and the calling of a solemn assembly with them before any decisions were made on how to move forward. Unanimous agreement on this was reached, and the meeting moved forward to consider other matters.

While only three of those attending had a direct testimony concerning Brother Neill's dream, all seven had a testimony that the Lord is calling His church to gather for a solemn assembly.

Brother Nunn summarizes our time together as follows. *"Much prayerful consideration was given to the message of the dream and each one in attendance, while not necessarily having a direct confirmation of*

the dream, agreed that the Lord was calling his people to gather for a solemn assembly. Not for the purpose of establishing new doctrines for the branches but rather to gather together in faith and brotherhood for the specific purpose of seeking the Lord' for His divine intervention and to glorify Him. The presence of the Holy Spirit was strong during this gathering,”

Brother Hagensen shares these thoughts concerning the meeting, *“This was a very humbling experience for me. The reason that I felt the way that I did was because of the Spirit that was present. I could tell that my brothers on the council were on the same page, desiring to ask and receive the Lord's will. After hearing Richard testimony of his dream and the concern that all of the brethren had to seek the Lord's will and the love that we all had for our brothers, sisters and all their families. This is the time to follow the instruction given in Joel 1:14 Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord. I believe that the time has come that we gather together to seek the Lord's will and not our own concerning this great latter day work. Especially for His glory and honor.”*

Brother Mundy recalls our deliberations as such, *“As I looked around the circle I saw such a variety of personalities as well as gifts and talents. I saw cautiousness as well as excitement. And yet under this spirit that was upon us one asked “brothers are we all together on this? It will require us to be all in”. We looked around as though something special was taking place like a spiritual roll call was happening. We were in full agreement with the message of the dream. God was calling for us to call all the people together to call a solemn assembly! Questions started being asked, “What does this mean? Who gets invited? Etc etc” I remember clearly saying at one point “Brothers under the spirit that is upon us now all I want is to be obedient. For us to be obedient and do what he has asked us to do. For if he asks us to jump, we are not to even ask how high, because if we just jump, he will provide whatever height is required.” So, my testimony is that God is calling us to come together in a solemn assembly. To offer up to him our whole souls even a broken heart and contrite spirit. Not only individually but collectively. What he does then is up to him. I honestly have no preconceived ideas or agendas all I want is to be obedient and he will provide whatever is necessary.*

Brother Kropp's reflections include the following. *“The Friday night thru Saturday retreat of the coordinating council, in response to a dream shared by Brother Rischard Neill, became focused primarily on the idea of inviting all those in the Restoration to join in a Solemn Assembly. The Good Spirit accompanied our discussion and our coming together and sharing one with another of spiritual dreams and our studies associated with the call to assemble in solemnity. This idea of God's people gathering in a solemn assembly as spoken of in the Book of Joel, is not new to the Restoration nor to Christian groups in general. It is a call to the people of God to fast and assemble themselves with no intent to promote an agenda, nor to escalate the ideas of man nor with the intent to convince those in attendance, but simply to honor God and present the appropriate sacrifice.*

My testimony of this message to the Restoration and all those who would have ears to hear is that it is given to his people to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God , (D&C 6:3, Mosiah 1:39) As we began to consider calling the restoration branches to a solemn assembly, the Holy spirit that has accompanied me in times past began to bring that assurance that we are in a unique window of time for us to gather together, with our eyes single to His Glory and worship in a Solemn Assembly.

After the retreat, I discussed the idea with the priesthood at our Wellington Restoration Branch and subsequently with the entire branch to invite our sisters to fast with us every Wednesday to understand the Mysteries of God. Our goal being to understand how we are to come together to be pleasing to Him?

Brother Mitchell shares that he thought our meeting in December was, *“spirit lead and spirit filled,”* and affirms that, *“the Lord is calling us to gather together for a solemn assembly and that there is a window of opportunity open and the writings of Joel are pertinent to us now.”* However, he is also one that did not

have a specific testimony of Brother Neill's dream, and so he has, *"been praying for more discernment about Richards dream."* On May 5th, Brother Mitchell had a dream which he recounts as being a response to seeking discernment about Brother Neill's dream. The following is a portion of his experience. *"As I asked God in prayer if this was the answer I was seeking, and if Richard's dreams were of God and this dream was a testimony to and for me, I was made to know by what I believe is the spirit, that Richard's dreams, especially the first dream, did not have to be plenary to me to be valid and true. I was amazed at that word for I had studied revelation and in particular plenary revelation and what that means as we interpret and validate gifts of the spirit. The remembrance of that word brought confirmation immediately of the direction the council is trying to pursue for an assembly."*

The spirit then clearly reminded me that Nephi had asked of God to understand his father Lehi's dream, and because of his faith he was given his own similar dream...that was a plenary experience-his own between Nephi and God. But the spirit reminded me of the experience of Joseph in the grove, how he saw the vision and heard the voices and instruction of God the father and His Son. Many have believed in his testimony, us included, but not all, in fact very few, have had a similar open vision, yet the spirit confirms that the angel message and the restored gospel is true. The words of Jesus came to me "But more blessed are they when they believe on your words..." This was my feelings concerning the direction given us at the retreat as we prayed about our focus and as Richard shared his initial dream.

I came into my study and wrote these thoughts down as soon as I awoke while they were fresh in my mind. I hope they may be of worth to you. I believe I now understand Richard was given these dreams, I perceive, because he is currently the leader, the focal voice and chair of the council of the elders, the same reason he has been prompted to write the letters or papers of research and instruction, based upon his years of study and preparation concerning the church and its history and function. And because he is the most active and visible member of the Seventy in our midst and has a special witness of Jesus according to the office which has been bestowed upon him.

Brethren, I have believed in a need for a solemn assembly for some time beginning with the restoration branches, long before our current discussion, maybe not calling it by that name specifically...My heart is now content on our endeavors and on the testimony of Richard's recent dreams. Moreover brothers I agree with brother Brian, I sensed an urgency in my dream during the resurgence in the 'team', not concerning an official organization or legal right to organize, but to move with all diligence toward solemn assembly and other activities already in motion with the results of a living and moving group of dedicated people, what has been coined 'the living church'."

I, Vim Horn, concur with what my brothers have shared. Our time together was attended and led by the good Spirit, and I add my testimony to theirs, that God is calling his people to gather for a solemn assembly. While Brother Howard Parker was not able to attend the December meeting, as we have continued to meet and pray together about the calling for a solemn assembly, he has shared his personal testimony, and has affirmed in no uncertain terms, his strong support as well.

Since we met in December, we have continued to study, pray, and discuss together concerning the calling of a solemn assembly at this time, and testify to you that our assurance that the lord is calling for his people to come before him in a solemn assembly has only increased.

In the history of the Restoration, so many men have attempted to garner a following after man's interpretation of the Gospel, many in the Restoration are hesitant, and rightfully so. Notwithstanding that temptation to be hesitant, we would invite you to join many of us who are praying and fasting all, or some part, of every Wednesday to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom and in preparation to gather together in a Solemn Assembly as a people presenting the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit before the Lord.