



Joint Conference of Restoration Branches

One People with ... One Priesthood having ... One Voice... Under GOD

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The purpose of this letter is to invite you to participate in a gathering of God's people. In order for us to claim we are gathering as His people we will first have to gather in obedience to His word. We will need to gather humbly and penitently, acknowledging our complete dependence on God, on His Son Jesus Christ, and on the power of His Spirit. We will have to gather without disputation or contention – in the spirit of charity.

The Lord has made it very clear that we cannot claim to be *His people* unless we truly love one another (John 13:34-35; 1 John 3:9-11; and 1 John 4:7-8, 20-21). This invitation, therefore, comes to all who truly love God and thereby love their brothers and sisters; to those that stand ready to defer to the direction of the Spirit.

I want to affirm my understanding that there are only two churches in this world: 1) the church of the Lamb of God, and 2) the church of the devil (1 Nephi 3:220-237). Regardless of the many names we have attached to our various organizations, we ultimately belong to one of these two churches. It is important to love one another and to put an end to all of the things (and doctrines) that we have allowed to separate us. The doctrine that is important is summarized in II Nephi 13:7-32; Alma 16:130-138; III Nephi 5:29-42; and III Nephi 8:32-57. There are others too, but it always comes back to loving God and loving each other. Obeying God and upholding one another in prayer, with a willingness to have all things in common (physical and spiritual), is key and can happen only where there is an absence of pride.

The invitation to attend and participate in this conference is not an attempt to proselytize for the JCRB. The JCRB is simply an organization, amongst several, which desires to help in bringing people to a knowledge of Christ and His Father, the great Jehovah (Moroni 10:31); to assist them in remaining faithful to their covenant with God. Hopefully those who participate in the activities of the JCRB, like this conference, will be found to be a part of the Church of Jesus Christ when they stand before the judgment bar of God. However, the JCRB is not in and of itself that Church. It is simply an organization which hopes to support the work of said Church and encourage those who commit themselves to that work as God's children.

As I have penned this invitation I have felt it important to also share with you my view of my own role in the JCRB. I was asked by the spring, 2017 Conference body to act as President of the JCRB. I felt prompted by what I believed to be the Lord's Spirit to say "yes," and I agreed to do so. In thinking about this role I have become convinced, and want you to consider, that I am not the president of the church in this role. God is the head of His Church. He needs no man to take His position. I am only the presider over the planning for the upcoming conference – nothing more. For this conference to be of any worth to God's people it has to be presided over by God's Spirit for His purposes. His purposes are not restricted to one organization or "ite." His invitation and His promises are extended to all who love Him, take upon them His name, obey His commandments, and remain faithful to Him all the days of their lives. Hopefully, by His power and direction, this conference will help and strengthen those who attend to become and/or remain His people—His Church—as He has defined that in the scriptures cited above.

If you have a desire to be a part of His people, if you feel a need to be encouraged and strengthened in your efforts for the kingdom, please come and participate in His conference. Come fasting, humble, repentant, prayerful, having prepared yourself to be open to His Spirit. This conference will be judged by the fruits it bears in your lives, not by those who sponsored it.

May God give you wisdom and direction in knowing how you should respond to this invitation.

Your brother in Christ,

Sherman W. Phipps, *General Conference President (2017-2018)*