

MERRY Christmas

· · · C H U R C H O F T H E N A T I O N S · · ·



**FROM
TONY'S
HEART TO
YOURS**

It's the most wonderful time of the year...

...the old song says; and so it is! Family, friends, feasting and fun! For those of you in the southern hemisphere, Christmas is spent in the sunshine on beaches and enjoying holidays (vacations). For us in the north, it's quite different- cold weather, snow and a few days off. As I look out the window of my office it's nice to see it all white as we had our first snow

of the season yesterday. Marilyn and I have been blessed to spend about half of our lives in each hemisphere so we have had the joy of experiencing it all.

Growing up in The Salvation Army, the build up to Christmas meant 2 or 3 nights a week 'Christmas carolling.' For us it meant the brass band was on the back of a truck as we drove from stop to stop. By the time Christmas Eve came my thoughts were, "I never want to hear a carol again!" But then on Christmas morning a few of us younger band members would get up early and surprise families in the church by playing outside their front doors. So many carols, but I must admit, much of the message escaped me.

This year, maybe more than any other, I have been aware of the Kingship of Jesus proclaimed in so many of the old carols. Charles Wesley, for instance, penned these great words:

*Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace! Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings Ris'n with healing in His wings
Mild He lays His glory by Born that man no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth Born to give them second birth
Hark! The herald angels sing
"Glory to the newborn King!"*

What a vision of the King and His Kingdom the Wesley brothers had; such a victorious eschatology. John Wesley wrote on how he saw things developing on the earth.

“All unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes, that He (God) is already renewing the face of the earth: And we have strong reason to hope that the work He hath begun He will carry on unto the day of the Lord Jesus; that He will never intermit this blessed work of His Spirit until he has fulfilled all his promises, until He hath put a period to sin and misery, and infirmity, and death; and re-established universal holiness and happiness, and caused all the inhabitants of the earth to sing together Hallelujah.”

God is already
renewing the face
of the earth

Another great carol, “**It Came Upon a Midnight Clear**”, was written by Edmund Hamilton Sears in 1849. The carol started life as a poem written by its author who was a minister living in Massachusetts at the time. What great words make up the last verse.

*For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophets seen of old,
When with the ever-circling years
Shall come the time foretold,
When the new heaven and earth shall own
The Prince of Peace, their King,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.*

Still more lyrics

*Born a King on Bethlehem's plain
Gold I bring to crown Him again
King forever, ceasing never
Over us all to rein*

*He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders, wonders, of His love.*

It's inspiring to remember how many of the writers of Christmas carols looked forward to the return of the King and Jesus' rule on earth. A friend of mine, wrote an article on 17 reasons why he preaches the gospel of the kingdom. He said:

Jesus' call as ruler over the NATIONS

"The kingdom message alone gives Jesus His proper place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords because every king must have a kingdom to qualify as a king! To separate the gospel from the kingdom is an attempt to give good news that only applies to the next life. Hence, it does away with the power of the messianic prophecies that speak of Jesus' call as ruler over the nations (read Genesis 49:10, Psa 2:9-11, Psa 110:1-3, Isa 9:6,7, Daniel chapters 2,4,7)

As you enjoy this glorious season, whether in sun or snow, continue to allow the truth that the babe born in a manger was born to be King and His Kingdom rule is forever increasing on the earth.



From the Apostolic Council we pray that you have a blessed Christmas season and

that it is a time of refreshing. We believe with you for hope and destiny to fill your heart and that you approach 2011 with great expectation.

Tony

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