

MORAVIAN MOMENT # 97

Christmas, the event

Christmas has a long and varied history. It was been celebrated for centuries by different people, at different times, in different places and in different ways.

In the middle ages, Christmas celebrations were rowdy and raucous. From 1659 to 1681, the celebration of Christmas was outlawed in Boston, and law breakers were fined five shillings.

Today, in the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches, Christmas is celebrated 13 days after December 25th, which is also referred to as Epiphany or three Kings Day. This is the day it is believed that the three wise men finally found Jesus in the Manger.

Christmas speaks of the word becoming flesh in a real way. It speaks of promise becoming reality. The prophets prophesied of the coming Messiah, who would be the Saviour of the world; the Messiah who would come on a rescue mission. The prophet Isaiah in a bold and daring statement declared:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” Isaiah 9:6. This prophetic word was announced by the prophet centuries before the birth of Christ.

It is John who puts it best:

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth. John 1:14. This speaks of the birth of the promised Messiah, whose coming signals the advent of a rescue mission, to save the world.

Christmas therefore is a celebration of God taking decisive action to restore a broken world. It is not so much a time to celebrate a day, as it is a time to celebrate the greatest event that has ever taken place in the history of humankind. It is a time when peace came not in word only, but is experienced in the hearts and lives of men and women. C

The Moravian Star which is erected on Advent Sunday has a three-fold meaning. It testifies to the greatness of the Creator who made the stars on the fourth day, numberless, differing in glory and praising the might that laid the foundations of the world. It is a reminder of the Star that once led the wise Men from their distant homes, until it stopped over the place where the child was, and they fell down before Him and worshiped Him. It points to the Divine Star, foretold by the prophet who said, “A Star shall come out of Jacob” (Numbers 24: 17), and fulfilled in Him who said of Himself, ‘I am the root and descendant of David, the bright and morning star’. (Rev.22:16)

As a church, we ought to celebrate the Christ Child, the Saviour and deliverer of humankind. Christmas is more the celebrating of an event, rather than celebrating a day.

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