

GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN

“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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end,” (Isaiah 9:6)

This is a prophetic proclamation worthy of being shouted from the top of the mountain.

As Christmas fades to memories and the New Year begins, it can be easy to also store away all the good feelings and intentions associated with the holidays.

But we must work to consciously keep the spirit of Christmas even as we return to work, school, and the cold of a Minnesota winter.

One does not have to be a Christian to be stirred by the words of prophet Isaiah, for they echo our hearts yearning for an assurance of a new dawn to illumine the human condition. A friend of mine, from another spiritual tradition once said to me that the Christmas narrative is a universal story. It is a story whose power is in its simplicity that belies its universality. The yearning for new light to illumine our path and transform human condition is etched in our DNA. This yearning doesn't stop when the stores take down their holiday displays, it continues on into January and throughout our daily lives all year long.

We yearn for something transcendent to lift us out of our human folly and arrogance. We seek something to save humanity from its propensity towards cycles of violence that unleash thoughtless and heartless suffering, which has always been a part of human history. In a moment of mystical insight, Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:19: *“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God;”*

Once again in history, we are living in a dangerous time of uncertainty. Many have been facing an uncertain economic future; their hopes fading with each passing day. For some, suffering and economic deprivation have become the chronic conditions of their existence, such that they often are no longer in our radar screen of care and concern. Some among us may be dealing with grief resulting from foreign wars, or tragedies at home.

Let us remember that the words of the prophet Isaiah were uttered at time when the conditions were equally or even more grim and discouraging than today. We cannot help but realize that the home of this prophet, from where those words originated, has never seen any semblance of peace for centuries.

Yet, something must be special and holy where Jesus walked! It is, after all, also a region that has seen many spiritual giants and holy men and women over a long history. The holiness is to be found in another plane – a plane which mortal minds may never touch, and are too often afraid or unwilling to tread. We are reminded again that if there is ever going to be peace on earth, we must search for it in our own hearts, for that is the only place it can begin, and then spread. A glow from our light can certainly help to illuminate the world.

For we are each a child of the promise, and the government is upon us - to usher in a new universal human, conceived with undying love in our hearts, and compassion as our weapon of mass transformation. In this new vision, we can see the captives of every limiting condition set free, and we discover that hope and prosperity abound for all.

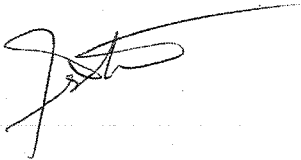
Our simple story of the birth of a child becomes even more poignant and powerful given the condition of our world. It must be continually remembered, after the season is past, and it must be told from the mountain tops. In the midst of desperate human condition, a child is born...a star peers through the thick cloud of human condition of death, hatred and suffering and proclaims:

"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, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

In the midst of human suffering and struggle for meaning often despairingly, the Star of Bethlehem peers through the thick cloud and tugs on our hearts and counsels us to look heavenwards...a Child is born!

Happy New Year!

Yours truly, in the Service of Peace and Love,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Festus Umeojiego', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Reverend Festus