



By President  
Howard W. Hunter  
(1907–95)

Fourteenth President  
of the Church

## THE REAL CHRISTMAS

*The real Christmas comes to those who have taken Christ into their lives.*

In Paul's short letter to the Galatians, he showed great concern over their apparent disbelief and their forsaking of his teachings regarding Christ. He wrote to them: "But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you. My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:18–19). In other words, Paul expressed himself as suffering pain and anxiety until Christ be "formed" in them. This is another way of saying "in Christ," as that expression is used by Paul repeatedly in his writings.

It is possible for Christ to be born in men's lives, and when such an experience actually happens, a man is "in Christ"—Christ is "formed" in him. This presupposes that we take Christ into our hearts and make Him the living contemporary of our lives. He is not just a general truth or a fact in history, but the Savior of men everywhere and at all times. When we strive



to be Christlike, He is "formed" in us; if we open the door, He will enter; if we seek His counsel, He will counsel us. For Christ to be "formed" in us, we must have a belief in Him and in His Atonement. Such a belief in Christ and the keeping of His commandments are not restraints upon us. By these, men are set free. This Prince of Peace waits to give peace of mind, which may make each of us a channel of that peace.

The real Christmas comes to him who has taken Christ into his life as a moving, dynamic, vitalizing force.

In his contemplation of the Christmas season, James Wallingford penned these lines:

*Christmas is not a day or a season,  
but a condition of heart and  
mind.*

*If we love our neighbors as  
ourselves;  
if in our riches we are poor in spirit  
and in our poverty we are rich  
in grace;  
if our charity vaunteth not itself,  
but suffereth long and is kind;  
if when our brother asks for a loaf,  
we give ourselves instead; if each  
day dawns in opportunity and  
sets in achievement, however  
small—  
then every day is Christ's day and  
Christmas is always near.  
(In Charles L. Wallis, ed., Words of  
Life [1966], 33) . . .*

If you desire to find the true spirit of Christmas and partake of the sweetness of it, let me make this suggestion to you. During the hurry of the festive occasion of this Christmas season, find time to turn your heart to God. Perhaps in the quiet hours, and in a quiet place, and on your knees—alone or with loved ones—give thanks for the good things that have come to you, and ask that His Spirit might dwell in you as you earnestly strive to serve Him and keep His commandments. He will take you by the hand and His promises will be kept. ■

*From "The Real Christmas," Liahona, Dec. 2005,  
12–15.*