

members appear on the roles of the church, but most feel that church leaders do not really consider them as members and have excluded them from church government. For instance, most saints in our setting are enrolled as "members at large" and have no arena in which to participate in church government. Church leaders can honor our membership and its attending rights by acknowledging that members in independent branches may lawfully meet in a joint conference and that such a joint conference is a legitimate conference of the church within its own jurisdiction as long as it complies with the law of the church.

2. ~~The General Church can help to facilitate the joint conference.~~ There are at least 3 ways it can help: publicity, consultation, and facilities. ~~Publicity:~~ The church can publicize the retreat and joint conference in its publications and announcements. ~~If it does, it will take a big step in claiming ownership of the church members who meet for those activities.~~ ~~Consultation:~~ The church can consult with those planing the conference. There are some logistical and operational challenges that the church has experiences in solving. The church can also advise on the legality and appropriateness of the actions and activities planned for the conference. ~~Facilities:~~ The church can provide some of its facilities for use during the retreat and conference. Those facilities could range from the Auditorium to a specific church building.

3. The church is currently in a state of emergency. Many saints in Restoration settings are as concerned about the emergency as the rest of the membership. Our branch has made it a matter of continual prayer. We have joined other branches to fast and pray on specific Wednesdays in preparation for our individual prayer services where the central activity is to pray for God's leadership over the church. The issue will be a concern to the joint conference. Our question is: How can we help in this time of emergency? We certainly can fast and pray. In our present state, we can do no more. As I understand it, church members are already engaged in dialogs concerning the change in leadership. If true, church leaders could extend that dialog to include members meeting in independent branches. Church leaders can also open a more direct way for us to interact with the rest of the membership on this important issue. ~~It can allow the joint conference to have some role in the process of deciding the next president of the church. For instance, it can allow the joint conference to send delegates to the special conference scheduled for early June.~~

I realize that some church members will find all these suggestions unacceptable. Some members in Restoration settings will reject all of them as well. On the other hand, some on both sides of the separation will find them acceptable. I suspect that it will be a "hard sell" to gain a majority on both sides who will consent to all these terms.

We have worked together in times past to bridge the gap between the saints. Is there a way to work together now to foster additional reconciliation? Please contact me if you can see a way that any off these suggestions can be examined or implemented. Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Moore