

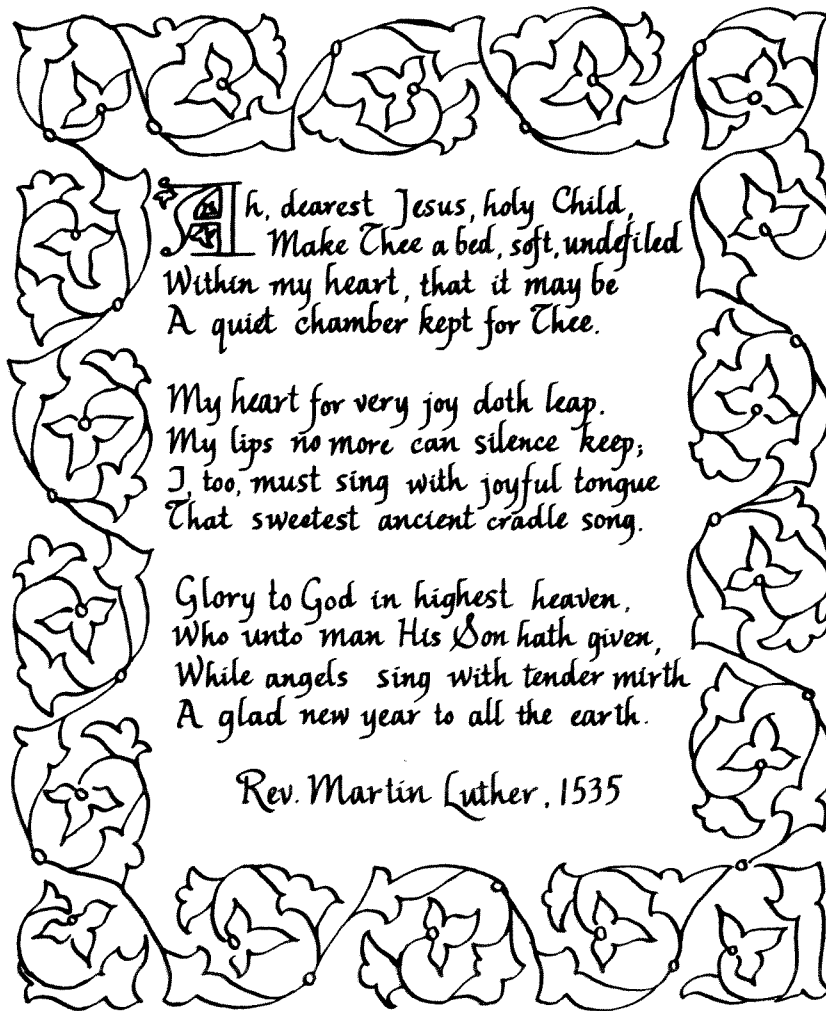
Zion's Advocate

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost;" 1 Nephi 3:187

Vol. 61

Independence, Missouri • December, 1984

No. 12



*Oh, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.*

*My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep;
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradle song.*

*Glory to God in highest heaven,
Who unto man His Son hath given,
While angels sing with tender mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.*

Rev. Martin Luther, 1535

Calig. Becky Downs

— CONTENTS —

Jolly Ol' Saint Samuel	p. 178	The Loaves And The Fishes	p. 185
The Newest Arm Of Christ's Church	p. 180	Have You Received The Holy Ghost?	p. 186
Pathlights	p. 181	The Everlasting Truth Of The Book Of Mormon	p. 187
Crossroads	p. 182	Index To Volume 61, Zion's Advocate	p. 191
Are We Asleep In The Light?	p. 183		

Zion's Advocate

ZION'S ADVOCATE (USPS 6993-0000)
 Official publication of The Church of Christ
 Headquarters on the Temple Lot, 200 S. River Blvd.
 Independence, Missouri 64051-0472
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PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Temple Lot) 200 South River Boulevard, P.O. Box 472, Independence, Missouri 64051-0472

Second Class Postage Paid at Independence, Missouri

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Zion's Advocate
 (USPS 6993-0000), P.O. Box 472, Independence, MO 64051-0472.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Subscription rates to members paid from general funds. In bundles of twelve or more for missionary purposes, \$2.00. Non-member rates: one year-\$4.00; Canadian and all foreign rates-\$4.50.

Send all donations for the Temple Fund, the Storehouse, Consecrations, Tithes, Offerings and Subscriptions for The Advocate to:

Church of Christ (Temple Lot)
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WRITTEN MATERIAL FOR "ZION'S ADVOCATE"

Articles, sermons, poems, news items, letters, notices, etc., which are appropriate to be printed in this paper are requested by the editorial staff. If possible they should be typewritten on one side of a sheet only, double spaced and grammatically corrected. If this is not possible, please send your material anyway. Send all material to one of the members of the editorial staff or to the general church. The deadline for each month is the 7th of the previous month.

ORIGINAL ARTICLES

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Editorial . . .

Jolly Ol' Saint Samuel

We are now deep in the midst of what is often referred to as the "holiday season." Madison Avenue advertising executives steer our minds fully into commercialism, emphasizing religious, but mainly pagan symbolism to sell their clients' products.

Two of the three major holidays of this period have already passed us by — Thanksgiving, most recently. This holiday is an American innovation, yet a very fine and honorable one, steeped with Christian tradition. The origin of Thanksgiving as we celebrate it today is largely due to Abraham Lincoln's belief in God and of our individual and national dependence upon Him for growth and a successful co-existence with men and nations. Thanksgiving is the least commercialized and exploited of these three holidays.

Going back just a little earlier to what I call the beginning of this commercial holiday season, we come to a celebration, quite the opposite of Thanksgiving, which origins and traditions are wholly based on evil spirits — not fictitious ones either. And yet, like many other Madison Avenue successes, the world, and even many Christians, are lulled into acceptance and participation, being caught up in the "spirit" of the

seasons. Halloween, or "All Hallow's Eve," had its origin among the Celts and their Druid religion, long before Christianity reached them. It was their belief that on November 1st each year, Saman, lord of death, called together all the wicked spirits that had been condemned to inhabit the bodies of animals. They further believed that these wicked spirits came on the eve of the November 1st Festival to be entertained with food, and that if such was not provided they would cast spells and cause havoc upon the unwilling. Thus, the tradition of the "trick or treat" that the world teaches their children every October 31st. It is the year's major holiday for a large number of real practicing witches around the world, who may be considered modern day Druids. "Halloween" was purportedly "Christianized" shortly after the Church fell into apostasy (roughly A.D. 600) when a splendid Roman edifice used for pagan ritual fell into the hands of Pope Boniface IV, and professing Christians decided to convert it to a temple in which they could annually worship and pray for the souls of "All Saints" who had died. They chose May 13 originally for this event but by A.D. 834 the name and date of this event had changed: From "All

Saints day" to "All Hallow" day and celebrated on November 1st. Though it is not known for certain, it is believed that even though the eve of November 1st became both a pagan and a Christian celebration, the influence that brought both to use the same day was Irish, or British, always the stronghold of Druidism.

It is my belief that all this tradition, from the Druids down to our present day witches, had its true origin as revealed in the Book of Mormon when referring to the then present descendants of the Gadianon Robbers (the followers of Akish and his secret oaths and combinations). In Ether 3:86-93 you may read of the pure wickedness of these people and how they were kept by the power of the Devil and administered oaths that were "given by them of old, who also sought power, which had been handed down even from Cain, who was a murdered from the beginning." As you read this passage, and if you were aware of some of the rituals of Free Masonry, you would note the striking similarity. And it just so happens that witches of today claim that part of their rituals comes from Free Masonry, and Free Masonry had its origins in Scotland — the same region of the Druids and Saman, the lord of death.

Finally, we come to the most commercialized of all holidays — Christmas. There are more "things," characters and events associated with this day (many invented and some real but improperly associated) than any other single holiday, and Madison Avenue fully exploits each of them, including the Christ child. Much could be said negatively about this holiday, be it about the real meaning of the Christmas Tree; or that Jesus was not even born in a winter month; the predominance of Santa Claus over Jesus; the amount of alcohol consumed and money spent; etc., but this is not my intent here.

A few years ago my brother preached a fine sermon where he admonished us all to take the "X" out of "X-Mas," and put Christ back in where He belongs, for Christ-Mas. The "X" representing all the commercialism and non-christian aspects of this day which is supposed to be a celebration of the anniversary of Christ's birth. This is what I wish to emphasize in this writing. We should not only realize the importance of seriously considering the true origins and meanings of the various holidays, and to what extent we should participate in them as Christians, but when we encounter a holiday such as Christmas that could and should be such a beautiful Christian experience, we are obligated to weed out all that is foreign to its true meaning from our family observance of it. It is a personal matter as to the details and customs of your own family's observance of the day chosen by mankind to celebrate Christ's birth; and there is much to be said about the practice of gift giving for it teaches benevolence, and some consider it symbolic of both the gifts given to the Christ child and

of the gift of salvation which He made possible for each of us to have.

But I do offer you, here, a story to tell that is a good alternative to the ludicrous tales expressed this time of year about Santa Claus. As part of college requirements to earn my teachers degree several years ago, I submitted an original childrens story about Christmas. This one happened to have been based upon what I consider to be a true story and I present to you only a brief sketch of the facts and correlating theories. You can fill in between the lines for your own story. The original theory came from a man named Verneil Simmons as recounted in *Peoples, Places and Prophecies*.

Five years after Samuel, the Lamanite, declared his prophecy about the signs that would come at Christ's birth, the author of Helaman 5:125-126, says, "But it came to pass in the ninetieth year of the reign of the Judges, there were great signs given unto the people, and wonders; and the words of the prophets began to be fulfilled; and angels did appear unto men, wise men, and did declare unto them glad tidings of great joy; thus in this year the scriptures began to be fulfilled." (emphasis mine — GH) Matthew, writing about the birth of Christ, said "wise men" came bearing gifts from the East. These same men were guided by revelation from God not to return to the wicked Herod. They brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh which can be taken to stand for 1) that the baby was to be a King (Gold); 2) that the baby would be a great High Priest (frankincense); and 3) that the baby would experience pain and suffering in his lifetime (myrrh). Legend eventually made the number of these wise men, three, and that one of them was dark-skinned (to this day, you very often find manger scenes with one dark-skinned man among the visiting wise men). Who were these men? How did they know so much about the Christ child? Consider this: Nephi, the son of Helaman, left the land of Zarahemla shortly after the news of Christ's birth, and "whither he went, no man knoweth;" (III Nephi 1:3) And verse 46 tells us that nine years later they made a search for Nephi and declared him not to have ever returned to the land of Zarahemla.

Helaman 5:120 states that immediately after Samuel was so harshly treated by the Nephites after his prophecy upon their walls, that he went to his own people to prophesy and was "never heard of more" among the Nephites. And indeed, we find no further account of what happened to him.

Now if you want to consider that Nephi and Samuel traveled together westward bound for Jerusalem and to see the Christ child, also consider this: Helaman, Nephi's father, had named both he and Lehi, his brother, after their ancestors who left Jerusalem and traveled across land and sea and told them to remember the words of the original Lehi and Nephi. Would not Nephi, and his brother Lehi, who

always traveled with him on his journeys, have a double reason to want to go to Jerusalem? And certainly Samuel, who happens to have been dark-skinned. It only took the original Lehi and Nephi a year to travel across the great oceans, and if you were to read the accounts of Jesus' birth in the Bible, you would find that by the time the wise men arrived at Jerusalem, the bright star had long since disappeared; actually, about two years previous. This is why Herod

had all male children age two and under slain.

Certainly, this is speculation based on fact, but that the "wise men" of Matthew's account were prophets of the Lord having a heritage of Israel, being also the "wise men" of Helaman's account, makes much more sense and seems more fitting than any of the legends that have previously been taught. And certainly I'd rather teach my children about "O! Saint Samuel" than Jolly O! Saint Nick!

G.H.

The Newest Arm Of Christ's Church

After several years of being a mission, it is with great joy that we, in Springfield, Missouri, report the establishment of our local. On Sunday, August 26, the Springfield group gathered at the home of Kim and Jane Ann Stancil and under the supervision of Apostle Roland Sarratt, Missionary in charge of Missouri. Our prayers for the creation of a new local were answered.

The meeting opened with a scripture reading from the Book of Mormon by Elder Victor Bates. Apostle Sarratt then suggested a season of prayer to thank God and request the wisdom and strength necessary to maintain the local. Testimonies were given by members of the new local and visitors both, all expressing their great happiness about the event.

The eight charter members of the Springfield local are Jane Ann Stancil, Kim Stancil, Florence Kommer, DeeAnna Hutcheson, Elder Victor Bates, Jennifer Cobb, Marlene Cobb, and Shirley Reeds.

The next order of business was selecting the Church officers. Elder Victor Bates, without whom the formation of the local would have been impossible, will act as Pastor for the local. Other church officers are: Jane Ann Stancil, Secretary/Treasurer; DeeAnna Hutcheson, Choir director; Jennifer Cobb, Reporter. The Sunday School offices will be held by: Kim Stancil, Superintendent; Jane Ann Stancil, Secretary/Treasurer; Marlene Cobb, Adult Teacher; DeeAnna Hutcheson, Junior Teacher; Ron Hutcheson, Assistant Sunday School Superintendent.

We realize we have much to be thankful for —



Springfield, (Missouri) Local Church of Christ: Adults, L to R:

Elder Victor Bates, DeeAnna (Medders) Hutcheson, Kim Stancil, Jane Ann (Kommer) Stancil, Jennifer Cobb, Marlene (Yates) Cobb, Shirley (Gould) Reeds, Florence Kommer;

The Future of The Local: L to R: Grant Hutcheson, Trevor Stancil, Justin Stancil, Jennifer Kee (neighbor), Shannon Reeds, Nancy Hutcheson, Shawna Tabler.

especially for Brother Vic Bates being transferred to the Springfield area, and the selfless hospitality of Kim and Jane Ann Stancil. We ask for your prayers that we might walk in the true light of our Lord and offer a beacon to others in this area who are searching for the true Church of Christ.

Jennifer Cobb

Editors Note: The picture was taken in the front yard of the Stancil home after their inaugural service. For those of you who do not know, Victor Bates is a recent convert to The Church of Christ after many years as a R.L.D.S. member, Minister and Pastor. He has a powerful testimony about The Church of Christ in addition to his calling to the office of Elder which came at his confirmation immediately after baptism. The make-up of this group has origins which string out from such places as Tucson, Arizona; Nashville, Tennessee; Houston, Missouri; Independence, Missouri; Long Lane, Missouri; and Buffalo, Missouri. They met for several years as a mission, mostly in the gracious Stancil home. A schedule of visiting ministry from around Missouri kept the flock fed with spiritual food — all the while they were praying to be able to have their own minister and establish a local church. Now that this has occurred, thanks to God, they stand in need of all our prayers — for reaching out to their community, for growth and spiritual strength within themselves, and to find a permanent meeting place. Don't hesitate to write, expressing your joy, hope and concern, etc. Write in care of Elder Victor Bates, 770 South Ave., Apt. 511, Springfield, Missouri 65806.

Path Lights

OUR CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

About seven years ago, in October, we were blessed with the birth of our second child, Terry Allen. He appeared to us a beautiful and healthy baby, but right away in the hospital he started having trouble. He was losing weight and seemed to spit up an awful lot.

I mentioned this to the nurses, but they seemed to think it was more a nervous mother than a sickly baby. It didn't take long after coming home for a few real fears to set in. It became apparent that instead of nursing being an enjoyable experience to the baby, it caused him much distress and pain. He would be so hungry he'd gulp very quickly only to pull back and cry. He would draw up his legs and squirm the way babies do if they have colic or a gas bubble. This was usually followed by what we later learned was projected vomiting. Sometimes immediately, sometimes within half an hour after nursing, he would lose it all. When this happened he would be soaked (not to mention the bed and everything else around). We would change and then have to begin again. This process usually would take at least an hour or more. It seemed we would just finish when the next four hour feeding would begin again. Those nights seemed very long. I finally moved the baby to sleep in the bed with me for fear he would choke and I would not wake up.

The doctor gave me some medicine to calm his stomach before each feeding, but this did little good. He was still vomiting on the average of four times a day.

By December he still hadn't improved and we were told a valve in his stomach wasn't developed fully. If he didn't show signs of improvement soon, surgery was unavoidable.

On Christmas eve we decided to spend the night at my parents. This seemed to be the worst night ever. Terry cried continually all night. Nothing seemed to ease his discomfort. The following day, Christmas, was Sunday. We asked that Terry be administered to. No bells rang, no lights flashed and Terry continued to be a little fretty, but he didn't vomit that day, or the next. He went a week, and then a month without any further trouble.

On that blessed Christmas Day our son was healed. God gave us not only His divine son, but a miracle in healing our own little one.

My prayer is that I might remember these gifts and blessings in the New Year and have faith that God does hear and answer our prayers. Even with miracles.

Your sister in Christ;

Melissa McGhee

CHANGED PERSPECTIVE

When asked to write a testimony I always wonder which one to write about, because there are so many I could tell. Today the testimony on my mind is one about Christmas. When I was growing up I remember just waiting for Christmas morning so I could open the gifts that were for me and to me. In that time of my life that was all Christmas was about. Well Christmas morning would come and I would get up early and make as much noise as I could to wake up everyone else so we could start opening packages, but my dad had made a standard in my family that we would always kneel and have a family prayer of thanks to Christ before we would open our gifts. At that time in my life it would bother me if one of us prayed too long, because I wanted to get to opening my gifts.

As years have passed and I've grown, my thoughts in many respects have changed, and it is because of God's goodness that I've changed and now have a much different outlook on life than before. Now, I still wait for Christmas morning, but instead of being impatient about opening my gifts I can hardly wait to kneel down with my family and thank God for the greatest gift in my life, which gift is Christ and there is no way I could thank God enough for the gift of Christ, because we are ever indebted to Him.

I never cease to marvel at God's love, that He would send his only son into the world knowing that He would suffer and die for us. I marvel at the love Christ had for all mankind, to die so that we could have life. It is my hope that Christmas isn't the only day that we kneel as a family, or alone, to thank God for the gift of Christ, which is the greatest gift known to mankind. Remember to thank and praise God always for the gift of His son. When we do, life seems to have a new meaning, because the gift of Christ brings joy to those who are grateful. May Christ be in you and keep you each is my prayer.

Joel Yates

If there is a testimony in your life I can use in this series, please send it to:

Path Lights
c/o Melissa McGhee
2533 Glen Lane
Independence, Missouri
64052

Crossroads

With the Christmas season upon us we think of the Christ Child and we realize God's love toward mankind. As in last month's issue, we have some young people who want to tell you how God has personally showed His great love towards them . . .

I always pray before any test, no matter how much I've studied before, and I usually get decent grades. One day, though, I forgot to pray the night before and I forgot to pray about it in the morning. I studied really hard the past few nights and felt really confident. I got to class and got my test and my mind drew a blank! I could not answer one question! I didn't know what was wrong and then I remembered I didn't pray. So I prayed and everything came back to me and I got a perfect paper. I feel God taught me an important lesson.

Jennifer Kidd

On the trip to Arizona we were talking about when we know we were to be baptized. I told about when I knew it was my time to be baptized. It was on a Sunday morning and I felt the urge to be baptized. I also felt the Spirit saying, "You need to be baptized into the Church, the true Church of God." So I knew it was time for me to be baptized and soon! You will know when it is time for you, for God will tell you.

Nancy Case

My testimony is that if you pay your tithing God will repay you. I know this is true because it has actually happened to me. The first time I paid my tithing I paid two dollars. After I turned it in I found two dollars on top of my dresser. Whenever I pay my tithing I have more money.

David Taylor

Once my sister Laurie and Michelle and I went on a two mile hike. After we had been hiking awhile Laurie said she knew a short cut. We followed her and we got lost! We did not know where we were going. We went through three fields and crossed over two fences. Then we saw a huge snake! We were all scared and screaming. We were all also praying that God would be with us and help us find the way home. I climbed up on a rock and then I saw a trail that led home. God heard and answered our prayers.

Bobbi Olson

My brother and my Dad have not been getting along at all. They fight or just don't talk. I think that a Father and a son should be friends. It says in the Bible that the Father and the son will turn away from each other, and I don't want that to happen. I asked the Lord to help them so that they will be friends again. Then the next day my brother came to our house and asked my Dad for a part for his car. My Dad helped him with his car and they both got along so well. When my brother left he yelled to my Dad from his car. He said, "Bye buddy." I think that the Lord answered my prayer and is helping our family, and I hope that they will be friends again like old times. Please pray for us. Love you all,

Tricia Pennington

I NEED TO GO SHOPPING

Author Unknown

I am flat broke from overspending at Christmas time. But I need to go shopping again soon because I am completely out of self-respect. I've said things I wish I could take back, and I am not feeling too good about myself.

I also want to exchange a carton of self-righteousness for an equal amount of humility. I hear it is less expensive and wears well. And while I'm at it I'm going to check on tolerance and see if there is any available in my size.

I must remember to try to match my patience with the little I have left. My neighbor is loaded with it, and it looks awfully good on her. I was told the same department has a repair shop for mending integrity. Mine has become frayed around the edges from too

much compromising. If I don't get it refurbished soon, there won't be any left.

I almost forgot the most important thing of all—compassion. If I see some—no matter what the color, size or shape—I'm going to stock up heavily, regardless of the price. I have run out of it so many times, and I always feel ashamed when it happens.

I don't know why it has taken me so long to get around to shopping for these items. They don't cost nearly as much as some of the frivolous things I bought at Christmas time, and I'll get a lot more satisfaction from them.

Yes, I'm going shopping today, and I can leave my checkbook and credit cards at home! The things I'm looking for have no price tags. What a joy!

Are We Asleep In The Light?

"Now behold, because of the things which you have desired to know of me, I give unto you these words: Behold I have manifested unto you, by my Spirit in many instances, that the things which you have written are true:

"Wherefore you know that they are true; and if you know that they are true, behold I give unto you a commandment, that you rely upon the things which are written; **FOR IN THEM ARE ALL THINGS WRITTEN CONCERNING MY CHURCH, MY GOSPEL, AND MY ROCK.**

"Wherefore if you shall build up my church, and my gospel, and my rock, the gates of hell shall not prevail against you.

"Behold the world is ripening in iniquity, and it must needs be, that the children of man are stirred up unto repentance, both the Gentiles, and also the house of Israel."

"For behold I command all men everywhere to repent, and I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with the same calling with which he was called."

"Remember the worth of souls is great in the sight of God:"

"For behold the Lord your God suffered death in the flesh: wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him.

"And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him on conditions of repentance.

"And how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth.

"Wherefore you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

"And if it so be that you should labor in all your days, in crying repentance unto this people, and bring save it be one soul unto me, how great shall be your joy with him in the kingdom of my Father?

"And now if your joy will be great with one soul, that you have brought unto me into the kingdom of my Father, how great will be your joy, if you should bring many souls unto me?

"Behold you have my gospel before you, and my rock, and my salvation.

"Ask the Father in my name in faith believing that you shall receive, and you shall have the Holy Ghost which manifesteth all things, which is expedient unto the children of men.

"And if you have not faith, hope, and charity, you can do nothing.

"Contend against no church, save it be the church of the devil.

"Take upon you the name of Christ, and speak the truth in soberness, and as many as repent, and are

baptized in my name, which is Jesus Christ, and endure to the end, the same shall be saved." (Book of Commandments, Chapter 15: 1-5 & 11-23)

I pray brothers and sisters we are not sleeping in the light. Christ did not call out of the world to build Him fine sanctuaries or to continue with the old covenant temple works and rituals. Christ has given a new commandment which fulfills the old. That commandment is to, love thy neighbor as thyself. Christ will build his institution and his kingdom on this earth. Christ has called his apostles, elders, priests, and teachers to spread his gospel. He has called his children to portray his love to all of mankind. This is what makes us that peculiar people he wishes to have. The love you bestow upon your brothers and sisters in Christ and also upon those who spitefully use you will be a testimony for all the world to see.

"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye have love one to another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13: 34 & 35)

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Galatians 5:14)

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27)

I pray we will cease to follow after the seducing doctrines and precepts of men. "Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted.

"Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted; and their churches are lifted up; because of pride, they are puffed up.

"They rob the poor, because of their fine sanctuaries; They rob the poor, because of their fine clothing; and they persecute the meek, and the poor in heart; because in their pride, they are puffed up.

"They wear stiff necks and high heads; yea, and because of pride, and wickedness, and abominations, and whoredoms, they have all gone astray, save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ;

"Nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err, because they are taught by the precepts of men." (Second Book of Nephi 12: 13-17)

I pray that the plain and precious doctrine of Christ in the Bible and Book of Mormon will be revealed in its purity and simplicity, that we will become unified in Charity, thus making us free to carry this precious Gospel of Christ to all people, kindred, tongue, and nations. Let us not be as were the Jews of old, who despised the words of plainness,

seeking for things they could not understand, becoming blinded by looking beyond the mark, causing God to take away His plainness from them, and deliver unto them many things which they could not understand, because they despised the words of plainness, God allowed them to stumble. (Book of Jacob 3: 22-25)

It is especially my prayer that we are not among those spoken of by Christ in Luke 14: 16-35: "Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

"And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready:

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

"And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused."

"And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

"So that servant came, and shewed his Lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said

to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

"And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

"And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled.

"For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

I pray that we will be dutiful to the responsibility that the Lord has called us to. That as we reach out to those who stand in need both temporally and spiritually our faith and love for all mankind will grow and we will truly become that light of Christ shining forth for all the world to see. I am reminded at this time of the words of a song, written and sung by Keith Green. "The world is sleeping in the dark that the church just can't fight, 'cause it's asleep in the light, how can you be so dead when you've been so well fed? Jesus rose from the grave and you, you can't even get out of bed." I pray this is not true for us.

Nana Gill

Something To Think About

By Paul Wieduwilt

Heroes. Every child, young or old has them . . . those people they look up to and admire and who they want to be like. Have you ever stopped to reflect who your child's heroes are and why?

In today's world everyone screams for your child's attention. Rock stars, stars of TV and movies, sports figures, even political figures clamor for their affections.

Advertisers scream out their philosophies: smoke this, drink that, wear this, be like me, and you will be popular, beautiful and successful.

Is it any wonder Christian young people are attracted to the gods of this world? We allow them to watch television, sometimes at will; we give permission to attend almost any movie; we let them listen to whatever is on the radio and to read the world's books and magazines. Then we wonder why they look up to the world's heroes, and we wonder why they want to date those who resemble their heroes in appearance, moral values and goals.

What can we do? Where can we turn? The best approach is to begin when your children are young,

but the principles hold true for older children too. Help them choose only the best, those things that honor the Lord and do not conflict with His Word. Re-evaluate your own habits in the areas that are questionable. Choose not to lead your children into the things of the world.

Often our children do not admire and make Christian leaders and teachers their heroes simply because of criticism their parents heap upon these people. If you find fault and criticize your pastor, for instance, how can you expect him to be chosen as your child's hero?

It's time we evaluate our responsibility to our children in this area. Do we tear down the very persons who we should want our children to admire? Do we shove them to the world's heroes because none can be found in the Christian community?

Children and young people do follow the examples of people they admire. Let's help them find worthy Christian examples to take the place of worldly godless heroes.

The Loaves and The Fishes

By Amy Schrader

In St. John, chapter six, we have an account of the Lord's miraculous feeding of the multitude, about five thousand persons, by the blessing of one lad's five barley loaves and two small fish. Later, after Jesus had withdrawn from the scene, and his disciples had departed in a boat toward Capernaum, the people also came to Capernaum seeking Jesus. But hear what the Lord had to say to them:

"Ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, (not persuaded by seeing that here indeed was the Son of God) but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." (v.26)

Can that reproof in any way apply to us today? What is the real reason we seek after Jesus? Are we, too, following after Him in hope of the physical blessings? Do our prayers deal first or primarily with our physical well-being, ills, wants and needs? Jesus continues:

"Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you . . ." (v.27) Is our chief concern the quality of the physical life or the quality of our spiritual fellowship with God? Our bodies have legitimate appetites, and so do our souls. There is a distinct life in each. Which is most important to be nourished?

"I am that bread of life.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven . . . and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give you for the life of the world.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in Him.

". . . so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

"Doth this offend you?

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

"From that time many of *his disciples* went back, and walked no more with him." (John 6:48, 51, 53, 56, 57, 61, 64, 66)

Could that, in any sense, be true of any of us? Does the fervency of our discipleship wane if there is not a continual miraculous provision of all, aptly termed, loaves and fishes? If or when our prayers for the physical blessings are not granted (they are always answered, sometimes with, "No," sometimes, "Wait,"

or sometimes, even as Jesus spoke to the two and their mother who came seeking a place, one on his right and one on his left, in his kingdom, "Ye don't know what ye ask"), do we waver in the faithfulness and diligence of our discipleship to him?

Perhaps we cannot comprehend the whole of the meaning of these words of Jesus. What does it signify to eat of the body of Jesus and to drink of his blood? Perhaps we cannot adequately define the meaning, human language not being sufficient to express the things not of earth. One writer suggests that we are made to be invaded, invaded by the very mind, spirit and love of the Christ dwelling in our being. Is it thus, as we make room for him so, that we partake (eat) of the life that was sacrificed for us?

Perhaps those first disciples did not fully understand his words either, but shall we not with them perceive that there is something of greater value than the loaves and fishes. Setting our heart's desire on that spiritual life offered, when asked, "Will ye also go away?" be able to answer with, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (Vv. 67, 68)

If in seeking and receiving only the loaves and fishes of physical blessing, we become satisfied, however affluent we may become, we will yet find ourselves of all men most miserable. Having received what we sought after, we will still famish because we did not value nor seek that which we could have received.

Luis Evelyn sees God as always wanting to give us more, much more, of himself than man is willing to receive. We are eager for Him to change our circumstances, to prosper us in them (again the loaves and the fishes), but he wants to change us. He wants to make us like unto Himself that He may, by the power and grace of His Holy Spirit, live the life of the man Jesus, over and over again through each of us.

Jesus said, Fear not them that can kill the body only, but fear him who can destroy both body and soul. Let us seek not for that which can feed the body only, but for that which will save the soul when the time has come for the body to die.

Jesus also said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (the loaves and the fishes—A.S.) shall be added unto you." In another place he adds, "for your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things." It is dependable. Will not he who, alone, can supply that which is greatest, that is needful for the spirit, also give that which is less, that is needed for the body?

Have You Received The Holy Ghost Since Ye Believed?

(Acts 19:1-6)

What would be your answer to the question, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" How would you answer? If your answer would be "Well, I think so" or "I don't know", I would like to show you a few scriptures in this article that will not only help you with a positive answer, but will make the reality of the Holy Spirit exciting in your life.

In Acts is written how to receive the Holy Ghost. First: repent. Second: be baptized, and then the promise is "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." "... repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38.

First: repent. Did you repent. The answer should be yes. You may wish you had repented a little more before you were baptized and I think most of us have felt that to some extent. There is a reason for that. You see you did receive the Holy Ghost and He is doing several things in your life. One of them is to convince you of sin. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin . . ." John 16:8. For that reason we can now see, or be convinced of, more sin in our life than we could see before.

Second: be baptized for the remission of sins what Peter said to do. Have you been baptized? I hope your answer is yes. If you have made up your mind to follow christ, then follow him into the water and do all the things he said to do.

After you have done these two things: repent and be baptized, the promise is "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

In Acts 19:6. we read "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and They spake with tongues, and prophesied." So according to Acts 2:38 and 19:1-6, because you repented and were baptized and hands laid on you, you did receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. If you don't feel like you received it, perhaps I can show you more to help your faith so you can believe that you received it.

First of all, we must live by faith. Many times we don't feel like the word is true, but it is, anyway. For example: we may remember some past sins and wish we had never done them. They were committed

before we were baptized for the remission of them, but they keep coming back to our minds. By faith in the word, we remember they have been forgiven, so we just have to forgive ourselves, and by faith that all those things are behind us. That is an example of how one kind of faith works. Even when we don't feel like it, the word is true.

Now use your faith on this passage: Galatians 3:14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that WE MIGHT receive THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT THROUGH FAITH."

Now one last thing to strengthen your faith in that you did receive the Holy Ghost when you believed. Book of Moroni 2:2 (notice the words "ye shall") — "...Ye shall have power that on him whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it. . ." Did this laying on of hands happen to you? Then did you receive the Holy Ghost. After reading these passages you should be able to believe by faith that you did receive the Holy Ghost since you believed. Ephesians 1:13 ". . . after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy Spirit of promise."

Where is He? He is in you. John 14:17. "... for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Wouldn't it be nice if you were to pray every morning, "Lord, I pray that somehow the Holy Spirit that lives in me will be manifested in my life today." Don't be afraid of what God wants to do in your life. Ask Him, He wants this power He gave you to work in your life. Ask Him.

Book of Ether 5:31-32 "... thou workest after men have faith; for thus did thou manifest thyself unto thy disciples. For after they had faith and did speak in thy name, thou didst shew thyself unto them in great power . . ."

One, and there are many, of the sweetest things the Holy Spirit will begin to show you is Jesus. John 15:26. "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." Jesus will begin to become very real in your life. Be looking for it.

Elder Don Hitt

Ready For Christmas? Anonymous

"Ready for Christmas," she said with a sigh
As she gave the last touch to the gifts piled high,
Then wearily sat for a moment to read
'Till soon, very soon, she was nodding her head.
Then quietly spoke a voice in her dream,
"Ready for Christmas, what do you mean?"
Ready for Christmas when only last week
You wouldn't acknowledge your friend on the street?
Ready for Christmas while holding a grudge?

Perhaps you'd better let God be the judge."
She woke with a start and a cry of despair
"There's so little time and I've got to prepare.
O, Father, forgive me, I see what you mean!
To be ready means more than a house swept clean,
Yes, more than the giving of gifts and a tree.
It's the heart swept clean that He wanted to see,
A heart that is free from rancor and sin,
So be ready for Christmas and ready for Him."

Thus Speaketh Christ Our Lord

Ye call Me MASTER and obey Me not,

Ye call Me LIGHT and see Me not,

Ye call Me WAY and walk not,

Ye call Me LIFE and desire Me not,

Ye call Me WISE and follow Me not,

Ye call Me FAIR and love Me not,

Ye call Me RICH and ask Me not,

Ye call Me ETERNAL and seek Me not,

Ye call Me GRACIOUS and trust Me not,

Ye call Me NOBLE and serve Me not,

Ye call Me MIGHTY and honor Me not,

Ye call Me JUST and fear Me not,

If I condemn you, blame Me not.

Anonymous

The Everlasting Truth of the Book of Mormon

If one would do a little researching, you would find that the Book of Mormon is the stick of Joseph. Look at Ezekiel 37:17-21. The Book of Mormon presents a witness to the Bible. It testifies of the truth in the Bible. A testament of Christ being the Son of God. Both the Bible and Book of Mormon are a history, working of the Spirit, hold the commandments of God and tells of the things to come. The Bible tells of the way and the Book of Mormon witnesses to it. One book is not to be above the other, as they are one in your hand, one in purpose, as the Father and the Son are one in purpose.

The Book of Mormon has fifteen books in all; much like the Bible, it has an old and new testament. This book is a divine and sacred record. There are two ancient traditions of a sacred book of the Americas. These talk about what is believed to be the Book of Mormon. The name "Mormon" came from one of the writers in this book. The writers of the Book of Mormon claim to be a remnant of the house of Israel (see I Nephi 3:190-197). The claim made in this passage can not be confused with any other meaning. It points us all to the Saviour, the Lamb of God. It was said by Christ in Matthew 12:25-26, that Satan is not against himself. Satan would not hold up the Book of Mormon because it testifies of the Lamb of God, to be the only true and living God.

God treats all people with equality, leading them where and when He will. He uses the Holy Ghost to be our guide now as in times past. We can find, if we look, that there are many books which we do not have a record of for one reason or another. You can look forward to seeing other written witness coming forth.

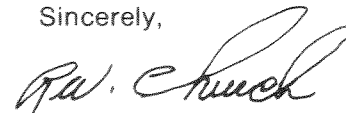
Look in I Chronicles 29:29; I Chronicles 9:1; Jude 1:14, II Chronicles 9:29, 12:15, 13:22, 20:34, Numbers 21:14.

The Book of Mormon foretold of how it would be received (II Nephi 12:42-74). God is an unchangeable God, therefore works with all men everywhere, using the same laws, doctrine, speaking to all people, as He wills it. Read Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; and Matthew 8:11.

It, then, is no surprise that we have the Book of Mormon which is a witness to His laws, works and blessings; which lead one of the houses of Israel to this side of the world as He willed. Turn to John 10:16, where He talks of others which he must bring. There are still others which we do not know of at this time, but will come forth at its appointed time.

There are those who claim to believe in the Book of Mormon and say they teach from it. But there are those who misuse the book as they who misuse the Bible. This leaves a bad picture as well as poor testament for those who are looking for the way. But just because others fall short of the mark doesn't mean we are not responsible and they can not take your choice away from you. Therefore, you must read and pray for yourself and God will give a witness to you of the truth therein. You must seek to find, you must pray so you do not trust in the arm of flesh. It is said to ask and it will be given. For if you know the way no one can mislead you.

Sincerely,



R.W. Church

Editors Note: Brother Church wished to have the following sections from the *Outline History of The Church of Christ* printed here as a supplement to his article.

The Mission of the Book of Mormon Vindicated

In the preface to the Book of Mormon, by the Prophet Mormon, he gives the mission of the Book of Mormon to be the "convincing of Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ".

In the contents of the book we find that Christ did indeed visit this continent of America after His resurrection and ascension, and that He here organized His Church and endowed it with the same gifts and blessings as were given to Christ's church in Palestine. This fulfills the statement of the Savior in Matthew 15:24, where he says: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel, descendants of Joseph through his son Manasseh, they were entitled to the ministry of Christ the same as were the Jews in Palestine.

Therefore, we are not surprised to find that when the Book of Mormon is presented to those whom it is intended to benefit that light and understanding regarding the mission work of Christ is engendered and disseminated among all such who will believe and accept the story it tells.

It is indicated in the book itself that there were to be a number of witnesses, not only to the book and its nature, but also witnesses of the angelic messenger who was to bring it to light. We have already noticed the testimony of the young Prophet Joseph Smith as to the wonderful vision he had, and of the angel's visit to him upon various occasions following the night of September 21, 1823, when he was visited three times in succession, by the last writer of the Book of Mormon, the Angel Moroni. Subsequent to that time this angel went with him to the Hill Cumorah in New York and gave to him the plates containing the record, which he

was to translate by the Urim and Thummim. This angelic messenger made the promise to him that he would also appear to others in order that they might add their testimony to that of Joseph Smith. We will give their testimony:

Testimony of Three Witnesses

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and the power of God, for His voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety, that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvelous in our eyes, nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

Oliver Cowdery
David Whitmer
Martin Harris

1984 MISSOURI REUNION

Brothers and sisters of the Church of Christ began to congregate at Hudson Hall near the campus in Warrensburg, Missouri, early on Friday, August 10th. The Missouri Reunion is really several reunions in one. First, of course, is the annual gathering of church members and their families and friends. Among these may be several small family reunions. The last few years the date for the Reunion has been set to take advantage of the gathering of the ministry for their August conference. And always there is the hope that

we can all learn to come closer to a union with our Lord. As Brother Jones put it, these are the days of our preparation to meet our Master. Others also spoke of this time of preparation and probation.

Over and over, in sermons and testimonies, it was stressed that we individually need to know God and to have more personal righteousness. As Christ asked the people in 3rd Nephi, "What manner of man should you be?" And then He answered it clearly for us all, "Even as I am."

Brother Bill Sheldon spoke of the need for study, saying that when Christ came the first time, the message was in the scriptures, but the understanding of the people was incomplete so they did not recognize Him. This was repeated by other speakers. "Feast upon the words of Christ." "We take life into our body by the things He provided." "Rely on that which is written." Brother Alvin Harris emphasized that even as the first apostles taught, saying, "It is written," so should we also learn and believe. "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God" . . . "the anointing which ye have received of Him . . . teacheth you of all things." Brother Bob Oldham read, "for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles . . ." Hebrews 5:12

They did remind us of the first principles too. "Remember that it is upon Christ that ye should put your foundation." "Repent, . . . for the promise is unto you." "Repent ye, . . . and continue in the way which is narrow until ye shall obtain eternal life." The purpose of Christ was to bring repentance. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord." "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. "Pray for ourselves that we may have the light and charity and . . ." "He (Jesus) went out . . . and continued all night in prayer to God." "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said . . ."

Brother Albert Leighton-Floyd spoke of the restoration as a moving, growing process, and said we are in the process of restoring the Church of Christ. He used the illustration of the process of restoring a fine, old car. You have to know what it looked like to begin with. You have to have directions, "I have done all these things at Thy word." You have to have equipment and power to do it. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." Others also spoke in different ways of this improvement of His tools and ongoing restoration. " . . . press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men . . . feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure . . ." II Nephi 13:29-30. "Take unto you the whole armor of God . . . praying always . . . Be strong in the Lord." Brother Allen Kauffman advised, "Let's make sure that we represent Jesus Christ." "Present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . Know ye not that ye are the temple of God . . . ye are not your own." In prayer a young man referred to the emblems of the coming sacrament as partaking of the "emblems of life."

One of the nice things about our reunions is the combination of ages in fellowship and worship together. God doesn't have only gray haired children. As Brother Loren Bryant told of the circulatory accident that caused him to contemplate the possibility of passing from this life, and as we missed others who had already taken this step, it was good to

see little ones brought by their parents to ask God's blessing. Jessica Lynn Harris was held before the Lord by her grandfathers, Albert Leighton-Floyd and Alvin Harris, and given a special kiss of benediction by her great-grandfather, Howard Leighton-Floyd who was also on the platform to assist the next speaker. Alfredo Diego Tovar was blessed in the hands of brothers Hube Yates and Nicholas Denham.

If we were a hard-hearted people, surely the sunny, trusting faces of the toddlers in our midst would have softened them. Some have smiles that must be a part of the national treasure. All have the calm honest eyes that make you examine your conscience for any dark secrets, for it seems that those innocent eyes must surely see through pretense. And so, even the little ones teach us.

Among the school age children, friendships begin and grow in spite of the distances between families and other difficulties they face. In the protected environment of love and brotherhood they can make decisions and begin to learn of the good things of the spirit of God. In return they remind those older of their own beginning of learning, and provide a point of comparison for those who would be the children of God.

In other years the young people have led the way in providing a time for communication of thought and opinion among all ages. This year they brought a report on one of their efforts to promote communication and fellowship between groups geographically far apart as they told of their trip to visit the Arizona Camp for All Ages.

Some of the speakers said, "You don't have to be called to the ministry to do God's work . . . Go home to your friends and neighbors and tell what great things the Lord has done for you. There is a great responsibility for those who sit in the corner God gave them." "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God . . . And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." I John 3:1,3.

During the Sacrament service the reading was given from Mosiah: (1:76-77) ". . . ye are eternally indebted to your heavenly Father, to render to him all that you have, and are . . ." The song of Admonition was sung, and a new admonition was given, that we should "lay down our armor of selfwill and let the Spirit work through us; that we become closer together to the glory of God."

The last song of the Reunion was a special solo by David Rudd, "The Lord's Prayer." With him we pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven, . . . they will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Ella Engle, for the
Missouri Reunion
Committee

Ava Local News

We are enjoying the cool days of autumn with the most beautiful display of fall colors that I have ever seen. Back in August we wanted rain and now we have that too. Though August was uncomfortable with 100 days we have beautiful moments to cherish for on the 12th of August Michel Grant Jenkins was born. His parents are Larry and Pam Jenkins of Rogers, Arkansas. Grant was blessed during church services on September 2nd. His grandparents are Lester and Barbara Burgin. But the gifts of August were not done, on the 19th Lester and Barbara were again blessed with a grandchild. On this day Sarah Michelle Burgin, the daughter of Wesley and Kathy Burgin, was born. They also live in Rogers, Arkansas.

Since we are such a small church in numbers we always look forward to the visits of our friends and relatives. On September 2nd Lovita Seibel brought her family to worship with us and participate in communion services. Loren Bryant and Mary Lois Bryant were with us on September 16th and stayed to share our meal following church services. Loren Bryant's message to us was of the great strength of meekness and the responsibilities which we have one to another as we struggle constantly to be back in the presence of God. His message had a special meaning for me and I have meditated on his words often during the past few months. Our pastor, Arthur Smith, has also brought us this message—our commitment must be to love and help one another, we must dedicate our resources and talents toward the service of God. These are the messages which we must take into our hearts. This is how we must live.

Each of us have our special channels by which we communicate with our God. Shared earnest prayers and uplifting testimonies bring us together in the loving arms of Christ. There is another channel that seems to bring us together, even the very youngest and the oldest—it is the songs which we pour from our souls. My heart swells with happiness when I hear Earl Darlington singing "Amazing Grace". Have you felt it?

In October Merle and Earl Darlington took Sister A.M. Smith to Phoenix, Arizona so that she can spend the winter with her daughter, Georgia Tate. While they were gone we were happy to have Merle and Earl's daughter, Dorothy Deewall, and granddaughter, Dolly, in our community. They added joy to our hearts to help us through this unusually gloomy October weather.

Our regular business meeting was on the second Sunday in September. Arthur Smith (R 2, Box 669, Ava., Mo. 65608) continues as our pastor and Barbara Burgin (R2, Box 675, Ava, Mo. 65608) continues as our secretary.

May peace and joy be yours during this holiday season.

Sandra Smith — Reporter

Warrensburg News

We at the Warrensburg local feel privileged to have had the Missouri Reunion here in our little city. What a joy to see all the loved faces, exchange greetings, and then, most precious of all, to worship our Lord together.

Since acquiring our copies of "Cut from the Rough" at the reunion, we have all spent many happy moments reading about the Yates family. We smile at the childrens' antics, cry at the hard times, and rejoice at the Lord's blessings to that family.

Our several guest speakers have brought us very timely and inspirational messages. We have enjoyed hearing the gospel brought to us by Ron Temple, Buzz Brickhouse, LeRoy Wheaton, Eugene Gould, James M. Case, Nicholas Denham, Isaac Brockman, Tony Grzincic, and from our own local, Bob Eddy and Charles Brantner. Each sermon made our hearts fill with gladness that we are God's children.

Our local here in Warrensburg held our annual business meeting and election of officers directly after the close of church services on Sunday, October 14, 1984. Our newly elected officers are: Pastor: Bob Eddy; Asst. Pastor: Charles Brantner; S.S. Supt.: Andy Brantner; Asst. S.S. Supt.: Don Case; Secretary/Treasurer: Jeanee Stephens; Pianist/Song Leader: Jo Eddy; Librarian: Sarah Brantner; Auditors: Harold Adams and Charles Brantner; Reporter: Jeanne Brantner. The teacher of our adult class is to be any volunteering adult member on a rotating basis, the number of Sundays teaching left up to the discretion of the teacher and the S.S. Supt. The primary class teacher is Carol Brantner, also with others volunteering on a rotating basis throughout the year.

A cider-fest/weiner roast was enjoyed by many of us on October 13, 1984 at the home of Jim and Bonnie Case.

A few members of our congregation were able to attend the Collins Rally. It was the first time this reporter and her husband had been present at the Collins gathering, but if the Lord is willing, we won't miss another one. Others of our local present were Jeanette Cunningham and Bob and Jo Eddy.

We continue to have our Wednesday evening study class at our home. Our numbers have ranged from six to twenty-one, but we feel God does bless us for the effort we make.

May God bless each and every one of you.

Jeanne Brantner — Reporter

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Our cookbooks have arrived! All your favorite recipes! Perfect gift for: birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and Christmas. If you would like one, or more, mailed to you, please send \$5.50 plus \$.75 postage (for each one you order) to:

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INDEX TO ZION'S ADVOCATE — VOLUME 61 (1984)

TITLE/AUTHOR	NO.	PAGE	TITLE/AUTHOR	NO.	PAGE
Alcohol Use Among Teens — A Modern Dilemma — AIDS	5	71	Newest Arm of Christ's Church — J. Cobb	12	180
All Right, Let's Look at Job — G. Tate	4	60	Obituaries:		
Amen	5	76	Brantner, George I.	6	90
Are We Asleep In The Light? — N. Gill	12	183	Hunholz, Darl Tucker	7	107
Are White Lies Ever Justifiable — E. Sills	4	62	Morris, Wilbur Leon	6	89
Arizona Bound — D. Brockman	9	134	Paschall, T.W.	5	70
Ars Amandi (Art Of Loving) — E. Sills	10	158	Yates, Elmer Leon	7	107
Audio Visual Programs Available — G. Housknecht	3	47	Oneness With God And In God — A. Kauffman	11	164
Book Of Commandments — A. Schrader	3	41	Our Commission — J. Smith	3	36
Case of the Hidden Diary — G. Housknecht	10	146	Pathlights:		
Cherry Bush — E. Bell	10	155	Attitude — P. McCann	11	167
Christ — In Type and Reality — R. Hunholz	1	4	Changed Perspective — J. Yates	12	181
Conference Report, 1984	7	99	Commitments — G. Brantner	9	136
Correcting Wrong Requires More Than Faultfinding — R. Sarratt	8	114	Constantly Abiding — J. Stancil	10	150
Crossroads	1	8	First Testimony — J. Brantner	11	167
Crossroads — Testimonies	11	165	Five Dollar Bill — E. Smith	7	105
Crossroads — Testimonies	12	182	God Meets Deadlines Too — M. McGhee	11	167
Count Your Blessings — E. Smith	9	138	Miracle Of The Electric Bill — E. Smith	10	150
Directory of Officers and Committees	6	93	Our Christmas Miracle — M. McGhee	12	181
Do We Hurt Those We Love	6	83	Piano — M. McGhee	7	105
Endless, Suffering Love of God — S. Winegar	9	139	Testimony — M. Fisher	6	85
Eulogy, Wilbur L. Morris — J. Morris	6	88	Testimony — J. Moser	8	118
Everlasting Truth of the Book of Mormon — R. Church	12	187	Trust God — I. Maley	9	136
Feast Upon The Words of Christ — S. Winegar	7	106	Prayer And Diligence In Keeping His Commandments — A. Gould	8	126
"Gifts" (Use Or Lose) — C. Brantner	10	147	Referendum Report	10	154
Have You Received The Holy Ghost Since Ye Believed? — D. Hitt	12	186	Relativity And The Devil — G. Housknecht	6	82
I.O.U. To A Very Special Person — D. Gill	6	87	Sermon Excerpts	9	137
Isolated Members — E. Arden	4	63	Set of "Coincidences" — I. Maley	4	59
Jennie's Example — V. Filley	5	73	Something to Think About — P. Wieduwilt	12	184
Jolly Ol' Saint Samuel — G. Housknecht	12	178	Sunday School Lessons:		
King's Life Insurance Company — Author Unknown	3	46	Creation	10	152
Learning Everyday Lessons Of Life — R. Sarratt	5	66	Return Of Christ	11	175
Letter Excerpts	5	79	Test Yourself — R. Temple	1	11
Liberty And Religion — Dr. B. Trumbell	5	78	Thanksgiving Day — A Significant Tradition — R. Sarratt	11	162
Like Christ In Suffering Wrong — H. James	10	153	The Way (pt. 1) — M. Ely	8	116
Live As If Jesus Were Coming Today — A. Gould	1	10	The Way (pt. 2) — M. Ely	9	131
Loaves and The Fishes — A. Schrader	12	185	Thou Art Weighed In The Balances — R. Sarratt	7	98
Look For The Rainbow — M. McGhee	5	76	To Know The Will of God — A. Schrader	2	18
Lord Does Watch Over His Children — S. Winegar	5	74	Transformed By Prayer — J. Schut	8	125
Love And Hate — R. Sarratt	1	1	Tri-State Reunion — August 31 to Sept. 3	11	169
Memorial To T.W. Paschall	5	70	Tribute — S. Seibel	6	86
Mission To Europe, 1983 — W. Sheldon	2	23	Tribute To Apostle Elmer Leon Yates	8	120
Missouri Reunion — 1984	12	188	Two Kinds Of Sin — A. Schrader	4	50
Need For Sincere Fasting And Prayer (pt. 1) — M. Ely	2	19	Unchangeable Always True — E. Smith	10	157
Need For Sincere Fasting And Prayer (pt. 2) — M. Ely	3	39	Unnecessary Burdens — G. Housknecht	9	130
			Unsealed (pt. 1) — V. Filley	4	52
			Unsealed (pt. 2) — V. Filley	5	68
			Voices Out Of The Past, 1942	2	30
			Way Back To God — R. W. Church	5	72
			Where Do We Stand — S. Winegar	2	29
			Whom Say Ye That I Am — H. Leighton/Floyd	11	168
			Whose Fault Is It — R. Sarratt	3	34
			Will A Man Rob God — G. McCann	5	74
			Words Of Christ — A Road Map — Unknown	3	45

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The 1985 Ministers' Conference (general membership) for the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) will commence Sunday, March 31, 1985. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 1. A Solemn Assembly will be held prior to the conference, March 29 and 30, 1985.

The 1985 Ministers' Conference (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) will be held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 14th, 15th and 16th at Independence, Missouri.

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