

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;"*

I Nephi 3:187

Volume 69

Independence, Missouri — March 1992

Number 3

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The morning breaks, the shadows flee;
Lo! Zion's standard is unfurled!
The dawning of a brighter day,
Majestic rises on the world.

The clouds of error disappear,
Before the rays of truth divine -
The glory, bursting from afar,
Wide o'er the nations soon will shine.

The Gentile fullness now comes in,
And Israel's blessings are at hand;
Lo! Judah's remnant cleansed from sin,
Shall in their promised Canaan stand.

Jehovah speaks! Let earth give ear,
And Gentile nations turn and live -
His mighty arm is making bare,
His Covenant people to receive.

Angels from heaven and truth from earth,
Have met, and both have record borne:
Thus Zion's light is bursting forth,
To bring her ransomed children home.

Saints' Hymnal (1895) #35

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To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour;
To promote His Teachings & His Church, the Church of Christ;
To be a voice of warning to His people; To be Zion's advocate.

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The Lord is at Hand

Not to long ago a customer of mine came into our service station for service and during this time we talked about the exceptionally mild winter we are having this year; neither one of us had any complaints! We recalled one winter several years ago when the winter had started out very mild and then plunged to 25 degrees. Because of this, he lost a number of azaleas and a flowering crab tree which were always beautiful each spring. As each of you know, the real loss is the number of growing years it takes to replace these plants and trees. My customer summed it up by saying "we plant trees for our grandchildren, not for ourselves."

As I had time to reflect on this man's comment I came to know that, spiritually, we plant not so much for today but for tomorrow. In Philipians Paul writes to his brothers and sisters and in part says "the Lord is at hand." Paul wrote this in the present tense to a people that lived almost two thousand years ago. He wrote this assuring them that the wonders they looked for, the promises they longed for, the hope of what was to be theirs, was close at hand; as close as their Lord and Saviour. The "world" looks back today and, brimming with knowledge, is quick to point out the time that has passed and still no second coming. Paul wrote that "the Lord is at hand" so his brothers and sisters might be firmly planted in living a life of Christ. Choosing to live each day the example of Jesus, to keep the commandments of God, to share gladly the joy of a physical (today) and a

spiritual (tomorrow) walking with their God. Had these people not planted during their life for tomorrow, think of the wonder, promise and hope that would not be ours today.

The responsibility is ours today to build for and have hope in tomorrow. Alma 16:171-173 says that today's seed planted requires diligence, faith, patience, nourishment, and long-suffering. These are just words which the world only understands through definition. We of the Church of Christ are to understand through practice. Today's seed planted and cared for becomes tomorrow's fruit which Alma 16 promises we may feast upon until there is no hunger nor thirst! There are promises for today also! Isaiah 58 says: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not." The Lord requires only two things of his children for this promise to be made possible: First, to *break every yoke*; and second, to *have charity*. Such a small price to pay for the promise tomorrow holds.

As I view television, listen to the radio, talk to those with whom I come in contact, I tire of listening to, hearing and being filled with bad news, problems, disasters (natural and man-made), loss of hope, loss of opportunity, loss of jobs, a faltering economy, and the list is endless! In opposition to this list I want to shout, and shout gladly, "THE LORD IS AT HAND!"

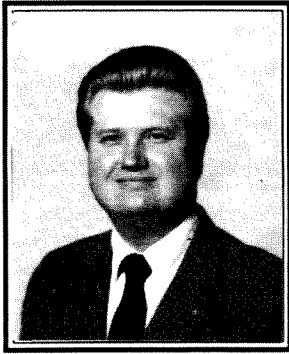
... *Editorial* ...



Priest Michael McGhee

"Please Help Me, I'm Falling!"

Condensed from a November 1991 Sermon and prepared for publication by Sister Joyce Harris



Elder Gary A. Housknecht

At the end of the reading of the following inspirational verses at a prayer service in 1986, I was deeply moved by the Spirit of God. Today I hope to demonstrate exactly why.

It came to pass that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king saith, What shall I do, that I may have this eternal life of which thou has spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, saith he, I will give up all that I possess; yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.

But Aaron saith unto him, If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.

The king did as he was instructed, and lay as if struck dead. Read the story for yourselves in

Alma 13: 48-54, and 62, but I will tell you that after quite some time, Aaron had to put forth his hand upon the king, and the Lord, through Aaron, raised the king up and returned his strength. And when the Queen and servants and others of his household saw it, "they greatly marveled, and began to fear. And the king stood forth and began to minister unto them. And he did minister

unto them insomuch that his whole household were converted unto the Lord."

I was brought to tears by this reading several years ago. Strong feelings of compassion were aroused. I realized we had to do something for our own people, our families, the "lost sheep among us," to bring them back, to restore to them the same desire this king had, that caused this to happen to him. Many will be as he was, raised up and "born again," not only for themselves, but to minister to others - if only by the demonstration of their own faith. There are many of our people who may still be in the official count of members of the Church of Christ, yet they're not here, not actually "numbered" with those of the true family of God. Others have officially withdrawn their names from the Church.

The words used in the title of this message, "Please help me, I'm falling!" may, unfortunately, be words that are never uttered aloud by those truly in need of help, nor even in si-

lent prayer to our Heavenly Father. Yet the words are painfully applicable to more of our very own brothers and sisters than any of us realize.

How beautiful it would be to see the faces of people we miss all the time to once again help fill the pews of our congregations. If not our own families (brother, sister, son or daughter, Aunt, Uncle) then someone we love as a brother or sister in the church, who has someone like this in their family; the "lost sheep" of the Church of Christ.

I will quote here from an article entitled, "Like a Shepherd," from the book *By The River of No Return*, by Don Ian Smith:

I remember a little orphan heifer we raised. She didn't seem to have the same herd instinct that the other cows had, and the first year I turned her out on the range, when fall came, she and her calf did not come in with the other cattle. For parts of two days I rode hard, covering the steepest, most isolated, parts of our range, always fearing I would find her dead. Then one evening my phone rang. It was my neighbor, saying he had seen my cow and her calf in a little isolated canyon, where she had settled down for a while, perhaps not knowing for sure which way to go to get home. There was a joy that I felt at this news, a joy that goes far beyond the matter of mere economic loss or gain of a cow and a calf. At daylight the next morning, I rode out to bring her home.

What rancher has not had this experience that makes so real the meaning of the great passage that

says, "If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go in search of the one that went astray." Our God is like that. He is like that, only infinitely more so.

The author referred to Luke 15:3-7. Verse 7 reads: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

Similarly, as found in Luke 5:27-32, the Lord scolded the scribes and pharisees because they did not understand why Jesus was there - the true nature of Heaven: "They that are whole (well) need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

This is how Heaven looks on these things, and Heaven does truly rejoice so much when even one person, one soul, is brought back into the fold of Christ.

I have said many times since 1986, when I have delivered this message in various locations, in prayer services and sermons, we must pray for the lost sheep among us. I use the word *among* specifically, because I am talking about those of our own kindred.

A proclamation given in Congress once, said they were going to set aside a day to honor something to do with the poor and needy. They thought themselves really marvel-

church. You may also find someone in your congregation occasionally who may be among those "lost sheep," even though they may be there, physically, that Sunday.

Primarily, though, I'm speaking of those of our own who are no longer here, no longer worshipping Christ, no longer having that as one of their higher priorities in life.

If we look back at each Conference, when the Recorder reads the statistics of baptisms, withdrawals, deaths, etc., and says what the church membership was last year and what it is this year, we'll find that for many years membership kept going down, down, down. The past couple years were the first it has gone up in a long time. The statistics were ninety-nine percent our own families. That was the growth of the

... but that is the truth about church growth - mostly our own children as they grow up. When that foundation falls apart, what will happen?

My message deals with the lost sheep among us, yet it is **not aimed at them, but at us**. These lost sheep may, deep inside, wish to cry out, "Please help me!" but cannot. We, therefore, have a job to do, a great task for us in these last days.

You're familiar with the story of the prodigal son, but I want to emphasize what happened after he had gone off to live a life heedless of God's laws, and then returned home; the other brother, who had been righteous all along, heard about it.

Luke 15:29,31-32: And he said to his father, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. (A great treat, usually a special occasion - gh)

"And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have

ous. Critics wrote afterwards, "It's wonderful that Congress set aside this day, but it's totally meaningless if they don't also dig into their pockets and give to these people they set the day aside for."

I don't want "We need to pray for the lost sheep among us" to be just an empty expression like the congressional proclamation. I want this to be a heartfelt, steadfast, persistent effort on our part, to truly pray, specifically, for these people who have gone astray, our own brothers and sisters. In this case, earnest prayer alone CAN help, but there may be more required - at least of some of us.

In Sunday School this morning, various ones had been talked about as being perfect (or nearly so), such as Abraham, Jesus Christ and others. It was said that many people are "raised up in righteousness," but later go their own way. So it DOES happen, and we're not just talking about those no longer attending

church, or the lack of it. Deaths and withdrawals were outnumbering our own children's baptisms. We're all related to somebody, somehow, most of the time. And it's such a joyous thing to bring people into the fold of Christ that do not already know any present member, and who become our brothers or sisters in the gospel of Christ purely through Christ. Never-the-less, it's a hard fact to face, but that is the truth about church growth - mostly our own children as they grow up. When that foundation falls apart, what will happen? The significance of retaining our own family as part of the "family of God" cannot be over-emphasized, and every effort should be given to bringing back those that have fallen or are falling.

The point is, there is a large number of the Church of Christ, still listed as members, but where are they? When I was first struck by this, the numbers were astonishing, for even after just a few minutes

counting those I knew of personally, I had reached several dozen! Do they vote on referendum? Do they come to Church? (Sometimes, maybe.) Are they really part of the body of Christ? They are the lost sheep among us. They desperately need our help. The sad thing is, they may not know it.

They desperately need our help. The sad thing is, they may not know it.

I'm not necessarily talking about "sinners," either. Many of the people I could name are not "sinners" any more than you or I (Are there any among us who can cast that "first stone?"). These are as good a people as any, when it comes to morals, knowing right from wrong, being a good citizen in our community, and being a good person; but they, their families and their children don't have Christ in their lives. In any case, I fear for these brothers and sisters, because they have drifted away and are not part of the fold of Christ ... and time is short, even as measured by the Almighty.

Sin is a factor, but not the most important one. The most important factor is, they are "lost" - not so much that they are sinners. We all have to repent every day, and say, "I'm sorry, I'll try not to do that again." We're all sinners. Why sin DOES become a factor, is because these people, while not particularly different than us, have a big disadvantage. Read on ...

Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

This isn't to say that, when we are in a state of living with our own

unrepented-of sin, we are totally cast out and the Lord is going to forget us entirely. Most definitely, the Lord wants us back. It does, however, take us ever further away from the state of having close, constant, precious communion with God ... away from understanding and harmony with the guidance of that precious gift of the Holy Ghost.

We sin: we grow apart. We sin again: we grow further apart. As long as sin remains, we grow further and further apart. A wall is built there, and it is harder, and harder to do what we need to do, daily, to remain close to God and free from sin. To further complicate things, the Devil, always on his guard to keep his captive in chains, teaches a man not to pray. Read all twelve verses of Second Nephi, chapter 14, especially verse 11. It's true. I know, because I have felt his influence at times in my life when I have fallen on spiritually difficult times. It becomes increasingly more difficult to pray.

Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD:

They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of

fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Because people can get in a state like the foregoing description from Solomon (Proverbs 1:24-33), it's like a "Catch 22." You're in this state, and because you're in this state, it's harder to get out of it. It's difficult. That's why WE are here — those to whom I am addressing this message. That's why we have a job to do. They desperately need our help. Not just prayer, but if that was all we did was pray, the power of prayer is unlimited. So, if nothing else, let us earnestly pray for these people.

I Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer (permit) you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

This is very true, and maybe one of the most reassuring verses in the Bible. However, to shed a little more light on this verse, I will further show what disadvantage sin creates in the people who are lost from us. Please read the first ten verses of the second chapter of II Peter, but here

To further complicate things, the Devil, always on his guard to keep his captive in chains, teaches a man not to pray.

let me quote verse 9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:"

God DOES provide the way for us to get out of all temptations. The way is there, even before the temptation comes. Here, however, Peter lends further insight by adding the

word "godly" — He is going to provide the way for the **godly** to overcome all temptations. What about those poor lost souls who don't have this daily commune with God, the week-to-week and even middle-of-

church by refusing to attend, but their frustration can usually be traced to one or more individuals. Keep that in mind, because in our day-to-day church worship, business meetings, and even church socials, it's so easy

frightened by something, probably a bolt of lightning or a bear, and jumped into a barbed-wire fence. She was about a mile from our house, up on a grassy hillside, where she often grazed. It was Heather, who first found her, weak from the loss of blood, stiff and crippled from deep, nasty, wire cuts in her front legs. With tears of compassion streaming down her cheeks, Heather spent two hours leading the injured horse down the hill and into the barn yard. I don't think I could have done it. I doubt if the horse would have followed anyone less sensitive to her suffering.

There are "Heathers" in our congregations today — the "Heather" to someone else who is not here today. Everybody has their "Heather." Someway, somehow, one or more of you have extra-special closeness, whether you know it or not, to some of these brothers and sisters. They are just waiting. You may think they don't want to be bugged about it — and you don't mention it anymore. When you visit with them on social occasions, you never bring it up because you think it could be a bitter discussion. But, for the "Heathers" that are out there, our lost brothers and sisters are just waiting ... waiting for you. Be attuned to the Spirit leading you, for those not under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit are not likely to speak first. If you get a feeling, some night, to go over to someone's house and you think, "Why in the world would I want to go to his (or her) house tonight?" Do it! The Lord may be saying, "You are his 'Heather', go on over there, he needs you."

"Please help me, I'm falling ..." may be the loudest un-uttered cry among our people today. If you want to be in service to your fellow man, and therefore God, **just LISTEN!**

ZA

... in our attempts to do the best thing for these brothers and sisters, it may not even be important anymore why they left, but to simply concentrate on getting them on the road back ...

the-week social activities with brothers and sisters in the gospel, the opportunity in prayer services of testimony to share the burdens and sorrows upon their hearts and say, "Forgive me, I need your help, I want to come back to the Lord." They are away from all this. That's what the Lord is trying to say. The Lord does provide a way for us to overcome all temptations. We have that at our fingertips. But, for those who have gone away, and are lost from among us, it's not as readily available. It's there, but it takes so much more to get back into the close communion with God and into his graces again. That's why they need our help.

We must help them with prayer, with love, with understanding, and with patience. Perhaps most have drifted away toward a more "attractive" lifestyle in the world. However, one reason why some of our members drift away is that they become discouraged with "church." They think, "I'm just going to stay away for a while." But, you know how that goes. You stay away once, then twice, then three times. It becomes easier and easier to find excuses not to go to church.

Something that is helpful to remember about this person who has become discouraged with the church, is that more often than not their discouragement translates directly to individuals — they take it out on the

to offend. None of us should be in a position where we take offense, but it happens.

After enough time goes by, though, **quite often the "lost sheep" themselves can't even remember the exact reason they quit coming to church.** So, in our attempts to do the best thing for these brothers and sisters, it may not even be important anymore **WHY** they left, but to simply concentrate on getting them on the road back — usually starting with getting the brother or sister to, themselves, pray for help.

Are you a "Heather" to that brother or sister that used to occupy the seat across the isle?

Again from the article "Like a Shepherd," as previously mentioned:

I have a fine saddle horse, named Nellis. She is rather high strung and temperamental and has some rather definite likes and dislikes about people. In fact, she is so temperamental that I have to be careful who rides her, lest someone should get bucked off. The horse is well-trained, and I think she resents someone who rides her as if she were a pack mule. My oldest daughter, Heather, is very fond of Nellis and, because of the mutual regard involved, Heather seems to be the favorite with Nellis.

A few years ago, Nellis was

Cycles in Time

As one great orator of our ancestry once said, "History forgotten is history doomed to be repeated." As is self evident in our world today of hustle and bustle, we as a people, have truly "forgotten". Do not be alarmed dear reader, for we are no more and no less than our predecessors. They erred and so do we. Things are different for us in our time, yet in reality nothing has really changed at all. Let me illustrate my point.

prosper and achieve many milestones in their development. They will, as a result of their common desires and needs, work together for the good of all. And because of the trials which did beset them, they called upon their God. He did hear them in their distress. He did help them in His own special way and they did prosper greatly in all things.

Now after they have received so many great blessings, they being but mere humans, are prone to be lifted up in the pride of their hearts. They

other. They will endeavor to bring God down to their level or raise themselves up to be as gods. The Lord sends His holy prophets to warn these people. They persecute and slay those prophets of God. Ultimately the Almighty god deals justly with them. They reap as they have sown (See Psalms 50). This scenario is recorded in all our Scriptures many times. Prophecies, not a few, are fulfilled and are yet to be fulfilled.

This brings us to the meat of this writing. Be aware, dear ones, this great nation of ours is fulfilling her role in our cycle of time. Prophetic utterances have provided ample warning to this people. Scriptural proofs abound, the very creations do cry out for this people to repent. Our nation, and even the whole world is ripe in iniquity. These facts are indisputable to any who view the facts with only a casual glance. Still our salvation is our responsibility. Even though we may live in troubled times and in different times, yet we are responsible unto God for ourselves. And so we must, each one, on bended knee, remember. Remember the travails of those who have gone before us. Remember how they suffered, bled and died. Remember the reason for their sacrifice. This they did so you and I could be free to seek after our God ... not so we might be able to amass wealth by cheating our neighbor or other evil means.

We are responsible for our conduct even in the most troubled of times. We have a God on whom we may call. He will give sufficient strength to overcome all temptations. In this age of ours we must hearken to our God. The testimonies, the prophecies and the evidences are before us. We have no excuse if we

Elder Andrew Brantner

Without delving into an in-depth study which would tax even the most patient of souls, observe from a distance, all the cultures and civilizations of peoples that come to your mind. Many have slipped over the horizons of recorded history, many have not completely finished their cycle in time. But if we observe those cultures which have come and have went, those that we can see their beginning and their end, we find a pattern has developed.

Each and every one began with a people who were oppressed and seeking freedom and liberty from imposed tyranny, slavery, dictatorship, persecutions of all sorts, etc. These people either revolted from within or migrated to a new land where they could pursue their ambitions in peace. Having thus established themselves they begin to prosper and develop their settlements into organized bodies with organized rules and laws to benefit the majority.

In this phase of development they

get sensual and devilish. Greed and selfishness begins to be the motivating force in their lives. In brief, they no longer are concerned about the many; they are now concerned only for the one. As Cain replied to God when questioned about Abel wherein he said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" we hear in modern day language, "Take care of No. 1 first." And soon after they have achieved this plateau of "success" it is found that they begin to persecute those who do not measure up to their standards. Soon the racial, sexual, and age barriers give way to a new order. This order is of "the haves and the have nots." The "have nots" are oppressed and persecuted. They seek deliverance. They call upon their God. They revolt or migrate. The cycle is repeated ad infinitum.

And what of the "haves" that set themselves up in the pride of their hearts? They have not sought after the Lord God, but have set up unto themselves other Gods. They worship their possessions, and each

choose to remain in our ignorance. Soon our lives will be troubled to such a degree that we will not be able to stand of our own strength. We will be forced to choose between

Through His holy priesthood He conveys to the world the nearness of His coming, the signs of the times. The truths that have been hidden by the spiritual blindness of the apostasy

redeeming love. Jesus truly said "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:29 (RLDS "Inspired Version").

We, of the Church of Christ, entreat you to find room in your hearts and time in your lives to seek after all truth. We stand prepared to present unto you the fullness of the Gospel of Christ wherein you'll receive opportunity to drink freely of the living waters of life eternal. Find out America's role in God's Great Plan. Discover the identity of the "lost" tribes of Israel, their history and their future. We shall reveal to you who you really are and what you can become. But most importantly, once you have planted the seed, God will fill your bosom with His goodness. His Holy Spirit will be your guide, which, by following, you will be led in paths of truth and righteousness unto eternal life – the glory of which is beyond comprehension.

The Lord has promised, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."

ZA

"Repent ye, repent ye" is the call, for soon ... cometh the fall. Seek the Lord with all your heart, might, mind and strength and ye shall find Him. He has healing in His wings and compassion for you in His heart and truly, His mercy endureth forever.

good and evil. For the times of the Gentiles is about to be fulfilled and then will tribulations be loosed upon the earth. The wicked shall be burned as stubble. The righteous shall live with our Lord Jesus Christ for a millennium. There they shall be perfected and made acceptable for eternal life in heaven with the Eternal Father.

Yes, God has blessed this nation. He has spoken plainly and done nothing in secret. Will you not venture to seek Him in prayer? He will hear and He will answer. He has restored His true Church in all Her glory.

are coming to light. "Repent ye, repent ye" is the call, for soon, oh, very soon, cometh the fall. God has blessed you and I beyond measure. One day we will hear our name called. The Lord will require us to make account for our lives. Be prepared. Seek the Lord with all your heart, might, mind and strength and ye shall find Him. He has healing in His wings and compassion for you in His heart and truly, His mercy endureth forever. Can you not see? Open your eyes. Can you not hear? Open your ears. Can you not feel? Open your heart and sing the song of

Conference Notice

All services will be held at the new General Church Headquarters sanctuary commencing April 5.

Following instructions of the 1966 Referendum, the annual conference of the Church of Christ will begin on the Sunday of the week in which the 6th of April occurs, which this year, will be April 5. Business sessions will commence at 9:00 A.M. on Monday. ***A solemn assembly is scheduled for the Friday and Saturday immediately preceding the opening of Conference.*** All services and business sessions will be held at the new General Church Headquarters adjacent to the Temple Lot.

As per Bill #1, 1972 Referendum, "all committees and boards, etc., of the Church empowered to expend General Church funds or collect the same, shall be required to submit an annual report of their activities, to include a financial statement of funds received and disbursed and submit to a joint meeting of the Council of Twelve and Bishopric at

least one week prior to the opening of Conference, a proposed budget for the ensuing year."

Officers and committee chairmen should see that their reports are filed with the General Church Secretary as early as possible. Persons needing a place to stay should contact a Conference Coordinator. Those wishing to donate food or money to the Conference, should contact the Dining Hall Committee. In accordance with action of the 1985 April Conference, all requests for funds should be submitted to the General Bishopric one month prior to the date Conference convenes.

We are looking forward with eager anticipation to greeting each of you and pray that the Lord's will be done in all things.

Elder Robert W. Oldham
General Church Secretary

Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh

Part One ... of a three-part series by Apostle Sheldon dealing with the second advent of Christ

In the Church's observance of the Christmas season, we rightly and joyfully turn our special attention to an historic event of 2000 years ago - the wondrous birth of a babe, born in a manger; a most insignificant event in human annals, but destined to be considered by a few, swelling to uncounted millions in the intervening years to the



Apostle William A. Sheldon

present, as the beginning of the most influential life of all mankind- indeed, the Son of God, the Light of the world, its Redeemer and Savior. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding the multitudes which swear allegiance to this Jesus the Christ, He rightly prophesied regarding himself as the way of peace and eternal life that "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it", and "broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat". (See Matt. 7: 13-14).

It is well for us to fondly remember the birth of Christ and to turn our

thoughts to an adoration of this blessed Son of God; not alone toward that event, but more so in remembrance of what He taught as He revealed the mind of our Heavenly Father; the obedience to which secures the entrance to and the abode in heavenly mansions.

Shall not we, who claim to be the Church of Christ in this last age of human and Satanic dominion, turn our thoughts, expectations and hopes toward the *second advent* of our Savior and King, the mighty God of the universe, regarding whom it is written that "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord", and this "to the glory of God the Father" (see Philippians. 2:9-11)? What an astounding display of worship and praise! It defies human description! Although the birth of Christ was too marvelous to imagine, yet His coming again to the earth to finally reign in might, majesty and dominion, is to cause the wicked to fear exceedingly, while the poor in spirit will

shout their praise in glorification of the Prince of Peace.

Yes, Jesus Christ shall come again, but this time, not as a babe who became the greatest teacher of all who ever lived, and gave His life in ransom for all, but as King of kings and Lord of lords to reign upon the earth for a thousand years; to reign until there shall again be a universal display of wicked rebellion outside the camp of the saints, the Zion of God upon the earth, culminating in the physical destruction of the heavens and the earth, to be replaced by a new earth (see Revelation, chapters 20 and 21).

But our concern, here, is the second coming of Christ, in power and great glory. We might attempt to delineate at this time all the events preceding the literal appearance of Christ, as prophesied relative to the "day of the Lord", but the magnitude is probably beyond expression, nor is it our purpose to harrow up the minds of the readers in such an attempt. We can only catch a glimpse here and there, however stark and fearful to behold. The overall vision is clear to those who are watching and waiting upon their Lord (see Mark 13: 35-37), and which will undoubtedly be revealed to all mankind in this generation. The scenes have begun and the judgments of an offended God will grind to a relentless conclusion. Offended? Yes, He is offended in that His supreme offering of love by the gift of His Son is rejected of men. The agent to effect His judgments upon the earth is none other than the meek and lowly Jesus, who becomes in the last days the executioner of diving wrath upon the nations which will not submit to the gospel of peace, but rather do love the enticements of and the rule by Satan.

The latter day time of the Gentiles has come in with the proclamation of the fullness of the gospel under the ministry of angels to Joseph Smith and others; all this in preparation for the second coming of Christ. Thus was fulfilled the second appearance of John the Baptist as alluded in Isaiah 40: 1-5 with reference to the coming of Christ in glory and power; and thus was fulfilled the appearance of Elijah the prophets before the coming of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord". John the Baptist came in the spirit of Elijah, or as it were, wearing his mantle, to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers of old, to the promises given

to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to prepare a people for the coming of their Lord in power, as a bridegroom to take unto himself his bride, the Church of Christ (see Malachi. 3:1: 4:5-6 and also the *Outline History of the Church of Christ*, pages 21-22). This appearance of John the Baptist was to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. He authorized them to baptize and to ordain each other to the priesthood of God to open up this great latter day work of God in preparation for the coming of Christ. See *Outline History of the Church of Christ.*, p. 35.

the whole earth" (Isa. 28:22); yet he said that "the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness" (Isa. 10:22,23). It seems apparent that such desolating sickness is revealed in the rapidly increasing scourge called AIDS, at least in part.

While the fullness of the Gentiles has come in, demonstrated by the evidence of gross wickedness in the rejection of the gospel of Christ and an overwhelming exhibition of violence, pollution, corruption, sex perversion, etc., yet the Lord is willing to save those who will repent and

iniquities upon their own heads, saith the Father" (v. 66; read also v. 65).

Then Jesus said He would remember the covenant made with His people of Israel, and the "fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them" (v.69). Verse 70 tells us that "then shall their watchmen (those of the Indians, w.a.s.) lift up their voices, and with the voice together shall they sing (or, preach the gospel of peace, w.a.s.); for they shall see eye to eye".

However, v. 74 broadens the scope to include all the children of Zion, even those among the repentant gentiles of that day, for it says: "Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength, O Zion ..." Verse 77: "Verily, verily I say unto you, that my people shall know my name; yea, in that day they shall know that I am he that doth speak".. Isa. 52:7 gives this same language, but significantly adds: "Behold it is I."

It is here revealed that Christ shall appear, not to the world, but to His people, especially to His ministry in Zion; and shall there perfect them, according to Malachi. 3:3: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi (his priesthood of the latter day Church of Christ, w.a.s.), and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness" (a sanctified people, w.a.s.).

The people of Christ shall know that He has been in the midst - "And then shall they say, How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings unto them, that publisheth peace ... that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

(to be continued)

Shall not we, who claim to be the Church of Christ in this last age of human and Satanic dominion, turn our thoughts, expectations and hopes toward the second advent of our Savior and King ...?

Again, the time of the Gentiles has come in, and that time was signaled by a proclamation of the fullness of the gospel; but the Gentiles as nations have not received it; only a relative few have accepted the angel message, and with it, the Book of Mormon, given to test their faith. In that same generation which is offered the fullness of the gospel, restored to earth, that generation has not received the light, but do reject it, and this bears witness that the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled; it must go henceforth to the remnant of Jacob, principally the American Indians. Please read 3 Nephi 7:34-37 and Book of Commandments. 48:26-27.

In this same generation, there was to be an overflowing scourge, a desolating sickness to cover the land (ibid., v. 28). The prophet Isaiah gave it as a "consumption even determined upon

humble themselves before Him. For this reason, a final call to repentance is yet to be given.

In the early days of this restored Church of Christ, the command was given to "say nothing but repentance to this generation"; a command only partially and rather weakly declared to this point in time. Therefore, there is one yet to be revealed who will deliver a mighty call to repentance before the "arm of the Lord" shall fall upon the nations. I say, one, because he shall apparently excel in his mission to the Gentiles; Yet there will be others.

A careful reading of 3 Nephi, chapter 9, will reveal that when the Gentiles shall have scattered the house of Israel (Lamanites, or American Indians) upon this continent, and shall have received the fullness of the gospel, then "shall harden their hearts against me, I will return their

Morning Dew

I went out early this morning to plant some flowers - a few, And as I gazed around me, I noticed the morning dew.

The grass was heavy laden with droplets of many a hue; It sparkled like many diamonds, Although it was only dew.

I noticed some turn silver, while others turned to gold, Some were green or rosy - Truly a joy to behold.

We take things so for granted, If we only take time to view; The wonders of God's creations - We'd see everything anew.

Doris E. Jensen, Bellview, Nebraska

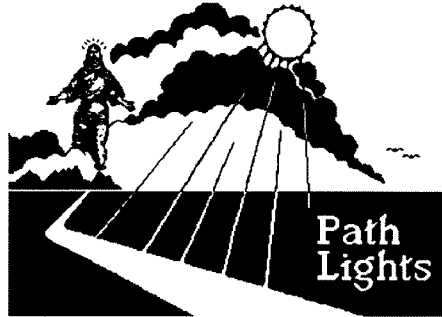
The Temple Will Be Built

From the day that the Temple Lot church building burned until the recent near-completed state of the new building (approved for occupancy), I have had a personal concern in all aspects of the rebuilding of a structure there. I favored, and still favor, the plans as approved by the general conference. Yet in the back of my mind, I believed that some day another building, much greater, would occupy the marked area designated as the "spot" for the Lord's Temple. I believed in the temple, but I had never received any spiritual confirmation.

Throughout the time that the new Temple Lot building was being erected, I had predetermined to make a special effort to lend my limited abilities in voluntary work such as painting, cleaning, etc. when the time came to do so. Unfortunately, when that time did come and from then until now, I have been scheduled to work overtime on my job, being required to work as many as seven days a week and some twelve hour days. This is quite unusual for the department in which I work. Consequently, I have been disappointed that time slipped by and I never turned a hand to help in the actual work on the building. This bothered me for awhile, but I dismissed it as being of no real importance as it was merely a desire to satisfy myself by saying that I helped build the building if only in a very small way.

Sometime during the night of De-

ember 10, 1991, I awoke from a dream. From what I could remember, it was very short, almost momentary dream. It seemed that I had been working on a new building on the lower floor (possibly laying tile or something of that nature). I was aware that that which I had just com-



by Apostle Roland L. Sarratt

pleted in that work was the completion of the building. It was finished.

Thoughts seemed to flash through my mind instantly, the first thought being that this building was the new Temple Lot building.

Then immediately, I corrected myself. This was not the new Temple Lot building; this was the Temple. As I pondered this, I awoke, having this thought strongly impressed upon my mind in my conscious state.

I then tried to recall what my sur-

roundings looked like in the dream or exactly what I had done in completing the building, but the only significant thing that I could recall was the fact that it was the Temple that I was working on and that it was completed.

I didn't stay awake long, and actually, I don't recall thinking about the dream again until the next evening at prayer service. Then it came to me that this was the first

spiritual confirmation that I had ever received that a temple would be built, although I had always believed it. It was impressed upon me to relate this dream at the service.

I don't know that the emphasis and the purpose of the dream could have been more plainly conveyed to me if the Lord had spoken to me. The imposing message was simply that work on the Temple would not only be commenced at some future time, but also it would be completed. This was of certain importance to me inasmuch as my studies and research of church history had left somewhat of a stigma on the subject of building the Temple, having felt the great disappointment that our church fathers had felt in not being able to build the Temple in the 1930's which they undertook to do. In my sympathy toward them, I had built up a mental guard against repeating history by commencing something we could not finish, but the Lord gave me a necessary confirmation that the Temple will be built and that it will be completed.

We Need Your Testimonies!

Don't think ANY blessing from the Lord is insignificant.
Short or long, typed or hand-written, please send them in.

There is someone out there who needs to hear your story of the greatness of our God.

Send them to Sister Melissa McGhee at the address listed on the inside front cover.

Thank you!

Sunday School Lesson
AGES 2-6

Being God's Oxen

TEXT: Matthew 11:28-30

Show a picture of some oxen. People used to use oxen for work. They were strong and could pull heavy loads and do heavy work. People would put a yoke on the oxen. That would make them easy to control, and you could lead them better.

Jesus was comparing our lives to those of the oxen. We all have things we have to take care of. What are some of the chores you have to do? What are some things you have to worry about? (IF you don't take a nap, you don't get a snack. Or if you leave toys out little sister might get into them) As you get older you will have more things to guide your life. You can make the "yoke" whatever you want because God has said you have a choice of the way you could follow. You could decide that you want to follow after getting as much toys as possible and don't worry about what any one else has. You could decide to have as much attention from mom as possible and not think of brother's and sister's. And as you get older you could decide that you will try to get as many things as you can, and get a job that pays lots of money so that you can buy lots and lots of things. That could be your yoke—what leads your life and decides what you are going to do. Maybe it will decide

that you can't go to church on Sundays. Maybe it will make you tired so that when you come home at night you will be a grouch. If you follow your own way will you be happy? If you follow any way but God's way whose way are you following? Does Satan's way make you happy? Satan wants you to be miser-



able, and unhappy. He will tell you lies so that you think you want things. Then he will get you in his yoke. And that yoke will begin to feel heavy. You will get tired of this yoke, and you will never be satisfied with what you have.

God says if we follow his way—let him lead us, then we will have his yoke on us. He said we need to follow his way and learn of him. Can we truly follow his way if we don't know his way? We have to learn what his way is. Then we will know

how to follow it better. And since he loves us he will not give us anything that would make us unhappy. He will help us with our burdens. Since God created us it is only with him—who loves us that we could be truly happy. If you lived in a house with people who didn't love you could be happy? Do you think they could give you good things to eat and a warm place to sleep? But instead you live with your mom and dad and they love you. they give you good things to eat that will help you grow. And they give you a good place to sleep that will be warm. They have rules and things you have to do. But if you do them, then you will grow to be good people. And it is easy to do things for those that you love.

When we learn of God we will find out some things we have to do for him. But we know he loves us and is trying to make us into good creatures who will grow to be worthy to live with Jesus. So we shouldn't mind doing those things. And since we are on the right path being led the right way we feel at peace within ourselves. Just as in our house at home we feel happy sometimes, just to be near mom.

PROJECT: Using a paper plate and construction paper have them make a happy looking ox that is wearing God's yoke.

Rebecca Burnett

Donations to General Sunday School Association Needed

This is a reminder to those local Sunday Schools who contribute to the General Sunday School Association. The association periodically mails Sunday School materials to isolated members and interested parties, and we occasionally have need to reprint materials.

We need and appreciate your donations.

Please make donation checks payable to the Church of Christ, and send to:

**Dan Lawrence, Treasurer
8420 Lee's Summit Road
Kansas City, MO 64139**

New Building Dedication & Open House

A Time of Thanksgiving and Dedication

The dedication service for the new Church of Christ headquarters building at the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri, will be held the first day of conference, April 5, 1992, from 3:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The service will include a choral

presentation, three speeches, special music and the dedication prayer. We invite all who desire, to share with us in this special time of sacred observance.

Open House

The general public is invited to an open house at the new Church of

Christ headquarters building at the Temple Lot in Independence, Missouri, Saturday, April 11, 1992, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Slide presentations and refreshments along with tours of the building are planned activities.

Come share with us a glimpse of our past and our hope for the future.

Recipes Wanted

Many more recipes are needed for the next edition of the *Church of Christ Cookbook* now being prepared for publication. Many of us have sampled the countless mouth-watering dishes prepared for various rallies and reunions over the years, so we know all you cooks out there are about the best source we could turn to for fine recipes. Please send some of your favorites that were not included in the first cookbook published a few years ago.

Send to:

**Cheryl Taylor
1210 W. Waldo
Independence, MO 64050**

Your earliest possible response to our desperate need will be greatly appreciated!

Thank you.

BEVERLY ANN TYLER

Beverly Ann Tyler of Puryear, Tennessee passed from this life on January 23, 1992 after an extended illness. Sister Beverly was the daughter of O. C. Cole and Lovie Tyler Cole, born September 5, 1934 in Lynn Grove, Calloway County, Kentucky. She had one sister Iva Shepard of Murray, Kentucky, and four brothers, Edgar Cole, and Joe Rex Cole of Paris, Tennessee, Barkley Cole of Murray, Kentucky, and O. C. Cole Jr., who preceded her in death.

Beverly Ann Cole and Thomas Edward Tyler were married April 25, 1957. To them were born two daughters and four sons: Carol Lowrey and Richard Woodard of Paris Tennessee, Thomas Randall and Danny S. of Puryear, Tennessee, and Eddie Allen who preceded her in death 1969. They also have 13 grandchildren.

Sister Beverly was baptized by Brother Heman Paschall, June 23, 1963 in Paris Tennessee as a member of the Foundry Hill Local of the Church of Christ. Her faith helped her to endure many afflictions and was the means where by her decision not to be put on dialysis was made. Her light

was let shine to the benefit of those who follow. In her life time she was a house wife and home maker and at times worked in restaurants. For a time she and her husband Thomas operated a restaurant in Paris, Tennessee.

On Saturday January 25, 1992 friends and family assembled in the McEvoy's Chapel in Paris where the memorial service was held by Elder Glenn Gill, Sam Gould, and Leslie Case. Sister Margret Gill played the organ and sang "Beyond The Sunset" and "Whispering Hope". The procession took us out of Paris through Whitlock and past the Foundry Hill Church of Christ where Sister Beverly was laid to rest in the Foundry Hill Baptist Cemetery.

Among those that assembled with Brother Thomas, the children, and grandchildren were his mother Sister Hester Tyler and many friends, loved ones and brothers and sisters in the gospel. We pray for God's blessings of comfort and strength to be with the family and all those that loved her.

MOGOLLON NEWS

Brothers and sisters, in the bonds we share, I feel to say that it has been a somber year for the Mogollon local. In such a small local the loss of our sister and her children in our midst is deeply felt. The Cloyd family was gone half the year, but our gracious Savior is always with us. We carry on as you all do, and have been blessed with the addition of our new member, Jerry.

Tom Karas has the care for this little flock again this year of 1992

with Andy Brown assisting. I will try to share some thoughts from our sermons in hopes that it will edify you.

We talk of the nature of man. He is the same today as he was in Jesus time. People followed Him for His miracles. Still today they want to see proof or signs from heaven. The enemy is giving them these desires and showing forth his power. Many in times past have seen definite miracles, yet followed not after the gospel of Christ. Their thoughts were not on seeking the law and living thereby. The Father of Lies can show

signs and wonders. We are in spiritual warfare. Blessed are those who believe His word without tangent proof and without being compelled. God is a god of miracles: serve Him and you will have your evidence.

As this new year draws us closer to the return of the Lord, may our hearts and deeds draw closer to Him as well. Keep in your remembrance what great things He can and will do.

Reporter,

Kathy Cloyd

RAVENNA NEWS

Greetings to everyone from the Ravenna Michigan, Local Church of Christ.

Sunday December 22, our first hour instead of classes, we enjoyed songs by Priest Aaron Heath playing guitar and singing "I Surrender All." Sr. Vivian Spencer sang "Waiting and Watching." Sr. Debbie Vogel and Elder Gale Brantner sang "Silent Night." Brother and Sister Max Spencer and Brother Alan Scott sang "Away In A Manger." One song by Jenny Vogel and Danielle Brantner. And a poem, "In the Morning," sub-

mitted by Sister Marie Piatt and read by Priest Aaron Heath. Also a song by Sisters Amanda Felfe and Ann Harrelson and Priest Aaron Heath.

Brother Gale Brantner preached the next hour. On Christ's teachings rather than his birth. The next Sunday a Sermon by Priest Aaron Heath of all the Witnesses of the Book of Mormon.

New Years Eve we had a gathering. After the Fondue, some questions were asked and answered. Then we had Prayer Service. The best part to me was when the five little children setting in the front pews, each one offered a prayer. What a

wonderful way to close out the old year and welcome the new.

January 11th there was a Memorial Service held at our Local for a cousin to Max Spencer, but a non-member. 38 were present. Elder Gale gave a short sermon.

Another good sermon given by Elder Gale Brantner, Sunday, January 12. On the Nephites, Columbus called them Indians, thinking they came from India.

Next meeting Priest Aaron Heath preached on the different spirits, and that we should try them.

Sister Lois Heath
Advocate reporter.

Next Month...

Behold, the Bridegroom Cometh - part 2, by Apostle Wm. Sheldon

Sermon by Priest Steve McGhee

Commitment - by Apostle A. (Jay) Moser

To Whom is This Warning Given? - A *Zion's Advocate* article from the past, by Apostle T. J. Jordan

More **Path Lights** & another **GSSA Sunday School lesson**

PASS IT ON

If you feel so inclined, and have the opportunity, pass this issue of *Zion's Advocate* on to another . . .

One never knows what will happen when even the smallest of seeds is planted!

CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The 1992 Ministers' Conference (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 5. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M., Monday, April 6. A Solemn Assembly will be held prior to the conference, April 3 and 4. All services will be held on the Temple Lot.

The 1992 Ministers' Conference (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, August 19 through 21, at Independence, Missouri.

CHURCH OF CHRIST PUBLICATIONS

Send all orders to the Church of Christ, P.O. Box 472, Independence, Missouri 64051-0472

	Price Each
Zion's Advocate Subscription Rate:	
Members (optional)	\$ 4.00
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Book of Mormon (1990 Independence Edition - Leather)	24.00
Book of Mormon Concordance	8.00
Outline History of the Church of Christ	4.00
Book of Commandments (paper bound)	4.00
Book of Commandments Controversy Reviewed	4.00
The Marvelous Work and a Wonder - by Daniel MacGregor	3.50
What the Restoration Teaches Concerning God	2.50
Historical Facts Concerning the Temple Lot	1.30
Temple Lot Deed	.30
Changing of the Revelations	.50
Comprehensive Comparison of Changes to the Revelations	1.30

The balance of these General Church Publications are free of charge.*

- A Brief History of the Church of Christ
- The Principles of the Gospel - Faith & Repentance
- The Principles of the Gospel - Laying on of Hands
- The Principles of the Gospel - Baptism
- The Latter Day Restoration
- The Book of Mormon (tract)
- Articles of Faith & Practice of the Church of Christ
- Articles of Faith & Practice (Spanish)
- Sermonettes on the Teachings of Jesus
- What the Church teaches about Matrimony (Spanish)
- Mighty Acts of the Ages (Spanish)
- Priesthood - Divine Authority
- Why? (Amplifies absence of a "First Presidency" in Scripture)
- A Synopsis (Compares beliefs of 3 Restoration churches)
- First Presidency or First Apostles?
- Marriage for Time and Eternity? - A Fallacy
- Baptism for the Dead? - A Fallacy
- Zion and the Temple of the Lord
- Does it Make a Difference to Which Church You Belong?
- God's Purpose in America
- The Great Plan of Redemption
- The Cost of Salvation

*NOTE: Donations will be accepted to cover postage & printing costs.
(Multiple copies available: 6-50¢ / 100-\$5.85 plus postage)

Sunday School Materials

Send orders for SS Materials to Becky Sheldon, 31607 E. Major Rd, Grain Valley, Mo 64029. All materials are free of charge to members of the Church of Christ except as noted. Donations will be accepted to cover postage.

Church History for Juniors - includes a Teachers Guide

The Book in the Stone Box - About the Book of Mormon

Bible Stories to Grow By - 52 lessons about God and Jesus for ages 5-7

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Who Am I? - Bible game on cards; Free to Sunday Schools / \$1.30 individuals.

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AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS

The following materials are available on loan to members of the Church of Christ from the Audio, Video, Visual-Aid and Archeology Committee:

Slide Programs with Taped Narration

Specify program(s) wanted, anticipated dates of use, and the make of your projector. Slide projectors and tape players are not provided except in the Independence, Missouri, or Phoenix, Arizona, areas.

Allow adequate advance time for handling and shipping, and for your own preview of the programs. Write to the AVVAA Committee, Church of Christ, P.O. Box 472, Independence, MO 64051.

Out of the Dust (45 minutes) — Tells the story found within the Book of Mormon.

Light at Evening (27 minutes) — Story of the bringing forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the Church of Christ in the 1820's and 1830.

A Lamp Unto My Feet (32 minutes) — Directed specifically toward American Indian viewers, compiled from three other programs.

The Return (12 minutes) — Reveals the significance of the return to the "land of Zion" in 1867 by the members of the Church of Christ especially as holders of Title to the previously dedicated Temple Lot.

Holy Scriptures on Audio Cassette Tapes

Complete set narrating the King James Version of the Bible New Testament and a set for the entire Book of Mormon. Write to Dan Lawrence, 8420 Lee's Summit Rd., Kansas City, MO 64139. Specify which set is desired and the estimated length of time you expect to use it

Sermons on Audio Cassette Tapes

For a sermon on cassette tape write to Mike Kelley, 1949 E. Libby St., Phoenix, AZ 85022, or Ron Temple, 5621 Logan Rd., Kansas City, MO 64136.

PRIESTHOOD VISITATION

If you or someone you know (member or non-member) would like to be visited by a member of the Priesthood of the Church of Christ, please call or write to the Council of Apostles at Church Headquarters in Independence. The phone numbers and address are listed on the inside front cover.