

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

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NUMBER 1

THE PICTURE

Picture yourself in God's heaven
Only the pure will be there
Are your garments white and spotless
Is your countenance light and fair

Picture yourself in your present state
Can you say you are ready to go
Would they open the gates and welcome you
Or would stains of sin start to show

Would they give you the key to the city
Would they see in your heart that it's pure
Or would they see the scars that are left there
From the world's strong pull and allure

Would they see that you planted God's word like
a seed

Nurtured and fed it that others might heed
Would they see that your life was filled with good
deeds
Or would they see you saw first to your own selfish
needs

Can you picture our Savior with His arms spread wide
Saying "Welcome, beloved, you may come and abide"
Or is there some blemish that you cannot hide
And the gates stay closed with you outside.

Is your picture what you want it to be?

—Melissa McGhee

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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The New Year

Years are but the measurement of time, and pertain to humanity and mortality. Eternity is with God, the eternal, and those who are with him, and is a condition that awaits us all after we have done with time.

Time, and the power to use it—life—is the gift of God. Years are made up of days. We have but one day at a time, and only one day of a kind. There are never two days exactly the same. The day that has passed never comes to us again. As “The mill cannot grind with the water that has passed,” so we cannot occupy the days that are gone.

Our lives are made up of days, and the success of our lives depends upon the use we make of each day as it is given to us. A day wasted—unoccupied—is a day lost forever. We may improve the coming days, but can never reclaim the loss of days squandered in idleness.

As time is the gift of God, so God will hold us responsible for the use we make of it.

The passing of the Old Year, and the coming of the New,

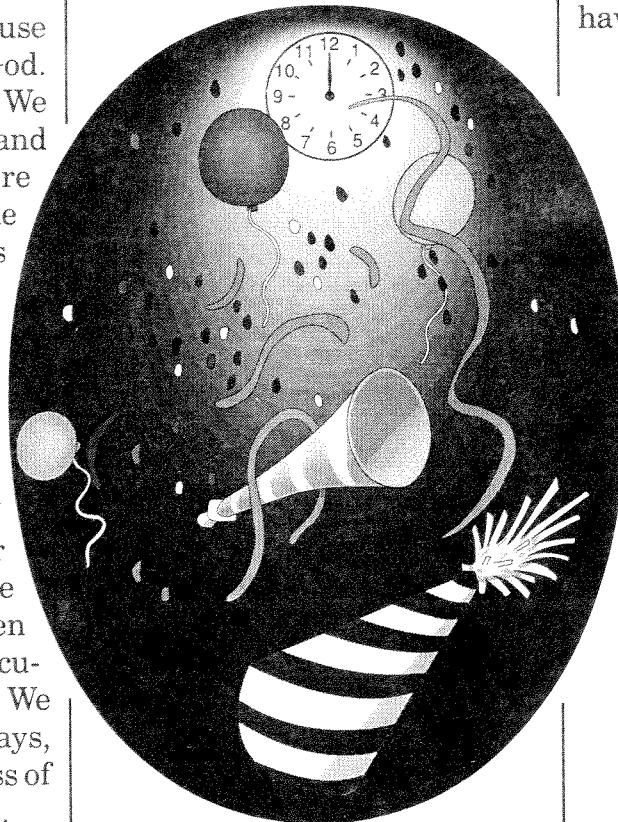
should cause every one to give thanks to God, and resolve to make proper use of the time and opportunities afforded us in the New Year. There is so much to be learned, and so much to be

ties for work, study, meditation and praise await us everywhere.

Thanks be to God for the coming of A. D. 1998 (ed. change from 1926), and may He help us to use it in such a way that when it shall have passed we shall have but little to regret.

H. E. Moler

*—from the January 1926,
Zion's Advocate*



done, that there is no time to waste. We will never be in a place or condition where we can find nothing to do. Opportuni-

Who Am I?



By Elder Arthur G. Smith

Each of us has asked ourselves this question. We have asked our mothers, "Where did I come from?" We have questioned ourselves, "Why am I here?" It is a question that lingers in our minds even as we have grown older and our children ask us the same things. The wisdom of the world never satisfies our natural desire to know ourselves. There is another part of us that tells us that there is more to life than flesh and blood.

Early, very early in life we learn some things that cannot

be easily explained by the biological approach for reasons why we are here. The very fact that we can reason and think tells us that we are not just a physical body of flesh and bones. We have the power to know good and evil and choose happiness or death.

I have been taught to believe in the Bible all my life and in the story of creation. We read in Genesis 1:26, 27,

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."

It is interesting to note that at the end of the seventh day all the creations were finished, and yet, *"there was not a man to till the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"* Genesis 2:5, 7. Thus Adam came into being as the first man.

Later in this same chapter we read, *"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took*

The wisdom of the world never satisfies our natural desire to know ourselves.

one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man" verses 21-22. Eve became the wife of Adam and the first mother of the human race.

Thus the creation was completed in two stages, the spiritual and then the physical. This tells us that we are like Him, a spirit that is an intelligent being within bodies of flesh and bones. *"But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding"* Job 32:8. We also read, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* St. John 4:24.

I now know that I am a spiritual being as well as a physical being, a person with the power to reason and think, with passions and feelings that are not physical in nature but

very real and an identifiable part of myself.

We are different than all others around us and yet have similar features and experiences because we are spirits that have intelligence and understanding. We can communicate and learn from each other. We love and are loved. We share happiness and sorrow, and appreciate the bonds of human companionship.

One person we learn to identify with early is our mother. Her love and attention is a constant nourishment that creates a bond for life. Soon after we learn of our father, and sometimes there are brothers and sisters. Love is what holds the family together and brings happiness to our lives.

It is no different in the relationship that should exist in the church body or membership. If we would be a part of the family of God, a member of the Kingdom of God, the Church of Christ, or however we would give expression to our relation to our Lord, Jesus Christ; the key to happiness is godly love. The scriptures that are found in I John are rich with admonitions of the importance to love one another. Let us observe just a few of the thoughts that are presented.

“He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in

darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes” I John 2:10-11.

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” I John 3:17-18.

“And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment” I John 3:23.

“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” I John 4:8-9.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” I John 5:2-3

Apostle Paul wrote of the need of charity which is the greatest expression of our love of God and our brothers:

“Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil: Rejoiceth not iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth...” I Cor. 13:4-8.

Moroni wrote of the need of charity also with almost the same words, and added,

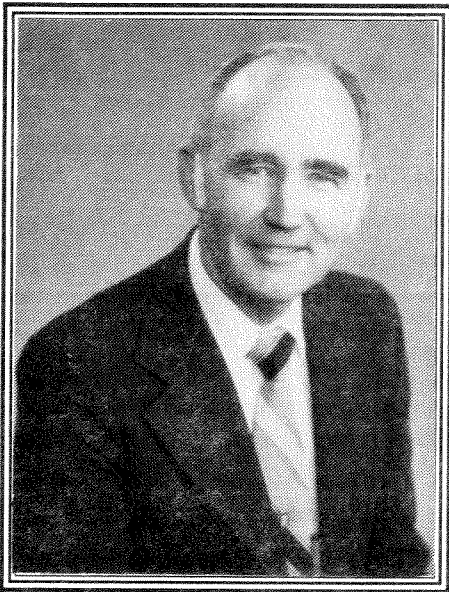
“Wherefore cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever, and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them” Moroni 7:52.

Who am I? I am identified by my behavior to my fellowman and I’m invited to become a child of God in his kingdom by obedience to His commandments, to exercise charity all my life, to love God as He loved me.

Who are you?



Building Proper Family Relationships



By Apostle Don McIndoo

“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).

The Council of Apostles presented to the 1997 April Ministers' Conference their six primary goals for the conference year. Heading that list was the following: “Make an increased effort to develop a Zion ic attitude....” One aspect of that effort was to present a

series of articles in the *Zion's Advocate* concerning ways this might be accomplished. Considering our objective one can readily see that this article is not merely to be a scriptural study about family relationships but, rather, a discussion of how we can develop those family relationships which will foster a Zion ic attitude in the lives of the family members.

Several major challenges were presented me by this thought. The first of these is the question, Just what is meant by a Zion ic attitude? The word attitude comes from the Latin and means “fitted”; hence, to be fitted, or prepared, for Zion ic living. This understanding confronts me with yet a more difficult task; namely, What is involved in the concept of Zion and in Zion ic living?

The building of a New Jerusalem, often termed Zion, upon this land in the latter day has always been a basic tenet of the Restoration, but as yet we have not arrived at a unified understanding of all that is involved in the concept of Zion and Zion ic living. This article does not pre-

sume to supply that understanding, but I would present some impressions, based on a number of scriptures, concerning some of the features that might identify the Zion of the latter day. Then we can explore the idea of how a scriptural family relationship will help us be fitted for Zion.

As I look at various scriptures and revelations which mention Zion and the conditions which will be found there, I am immediately reminded of a time when the inhabitants of this continent lived in like manner. It seems that, without mentioning the word, the Fourth Book of Nephi contains an apt description of those conditions which will, or should we say must, exist in the Zion of the latter day.

1 There were no contentions or disputations among them (verse 3).

2 Every man did deal justly one with another (verse 3).

3 They shared all which they enjoyed (verse 4).

4 The people lived together in peace and harmony (verse 5).

5 The love of God dwelt in their hearts (verse 17).

6 All the people were converted to the Lord (verse 3).

7 They met together often in worship, prayer and fasting (verse 13).

8 They all obeyed the commandments of the Lord (verse 13, 18).

This life-style which made them happier than any people created by the hand of the Lord reminds me of the commandment received by the church in 1829, in which they were instructed, "...keep my commandments, and seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion. Behold I speak unto you, and also to all those who have desires to bring forth and establish this work, and no one can assist in this work, except he shall be humble and full of love, having faith, hope, and charity, being temperate in all things, whatsoever shall be entrusted to his care" (Book of Commandments 11:3, 4).

Perhaps no human institution or organization is better suited to serve the "cause of Zion" than the family, the first institution established by the Lord. However, in our family relationships we will make many mistakes and often fail to accomplish our goals. The Bible lets us know that even Christians err (see 1 John 1:8), but we Christians have the promise that our lives can grow closer and closer to God's expectations through the continuous process of sanctification, being made

holy. This sanctification comes as a result of giving our attention to the leading and persuasions of the Holy Ghost and being attentive to God's Holy Word. Let's see how the Word of God can help us perfect our family relationships and prepare each family member for Zion living, as we have described it above.

Considering first the description of Zion living found in elements one through five above, let us compare them with the instructions given to the church in Ephesus. "*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye **walk** worthy of the vocation to which ye are called*" (4:1). The Christian's **walk** refers to their daily manner of living and their normal person-to-person relationships. "*See, then, that ye **walk** circumspectly...*" (5:15). (Emphasis mine - dem) Nowhere is this more important than in the family. Because of the closeness of the relationships, the many daily frustrations and problems which arise and the myriad opportunities for friction, the family becomes the real proving-ground of readiness for Zion living.

Continuing in Ephesians we find that each member of the family, whether it be the Christian family or the personal family, is to endeavor to keep unity and peace in the relationship (4:3). This will be done by treating one another with kindness, by being tender-hearted and forgiving of one another (4:32)

and by forbearing one another in patience (4:2). All problems will be resolved by speaking the truth in love (4:15). Children will learn the real meaning of love, as it is defined by the Holy Spirit in 1 Corinthians 13 and Moroni 7, by watching the example set by (and required by [6:4]) their parents. The apostle closes this portion of instruction with the definitive example of mutual love and respect, namely, "...*submitting yourselves one to another...*"(5:21). This is something quite contrary to our human nature. We must call upon the Lord for His divine help in developing the qualities of humility, meekness and submissiveness. The commandment must apply to all members within the relationship, and our little ones will understand and appreciate it only when they see it in action.

Let's examine in more detail ways by which we can teach our children an awareness of other's needs and a willingness to share our abundance with others in need. (This was number three in our list of Zion living characteristics.) Speaking to the parents, King Benjamin instructs them in this manner: "*And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due. And ye will not suffer your children, that they go hungry, or naked; Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with an-*

other, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers; he being an enemy to all righteousness; But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another..." (Mosiah 2:24-27).

But now Benjamin goes on with what appears to be a different subject but in reality is a continuation of the same lesson: "And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; And ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish" (Mosiah 2:28-29). When he was speaking of how to teach our children, why is he now speaking of the parent's behavior? Because this is the only way we can teach our children "...to love one another, and to serve one another..." (v.27). Such Zionite attitudes are only taught by example. In reality they are "caught", not "taught" at all.

In Yucatan every congregation worships the Lord in a church they could never afford to build, each member studies a Bible and Book of Mormon they could never afford to buy, many read them with bifocal lenses they could only dream about in the past. Many members work to support their families and pay tithes by using tools they could never have purchased

alone. Are they appreciative of these blessings we might take for granted? Absolutely, and they daily thank the Lord for placing in the hearts of their brethren that Zionite type of love which causes them to share of their abundance. Now the case in point is that I have seen young children making great sacrifices of their personal money to help these brothers they have never seen. Why did they do this? It is because they belong to families, or congregations, where people are talking about and praying about the needs of others. And not only do they talk, they freely give of their substance to help those in need. These children are learning there is a joy in helping others.

In a description of a godly woman and mother, we read in Proverbs 31:20, "*She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.*" Her children see her godly behavior. They grow up and "call her blessed" (v.28). At her feet they learn a basic precept of Zionite living.

Try as hard as we might, there come those times when the peace could easily be shattered; times when the nerves are frayed, when frustrations seem to reach a breaking point or when differences of opinion threaten the unity of the family. At such times the Zionite quality of the family depends upon good, Christian communication. This, too, was addressed by the Apostle Paul, guided by

the Holy Spirit. How important it is for children to learn, from the example set by their parents, how to resolve conflicts and problems and how to deal with differences of opinion in a Christian manner.

The apostle reminds the Ephesians that in such times we must avoid all falsehood, any vague generalizations, all accusations and speak only the truth (4:25). In verse 15 this is expanded to say "...*speaking the truth in love....*" That places definite limitations on what is spoken and, above all, how it is spoken, for love is kind, it is patient, it is not accusatory, self-seeking nor self-justifying, it has no desire to hurt. He went on to say we should only speak that which edifies (4:29); in other words, that which builds and improves our spiritual condition, that which addresses and resolves the problem.

Even when conditions are such that the emotion of anger is present, we are not to allow that anger to lead us into sin (4:26). Sin results from not addressing our real problems in a Christian manner each day as they arise (4:26). If we clam up and let our frustrations and anger simmer, we are falling into sin. On the other hand, if we blow up and vent our anger our human emotions have led us into sin. In such cases, all too often, our anger is directed at one another and not the problem at all; it remains unresolved.

I believe we can see how the

application of these Christian principles in our family relationships will help us develop those qualities we identified as the first five characteristics of that Zion living pattern portrayed in Fourth Nephi. Now let's give our attention to the final three qualities listed from that description. (Look at them again.) These have to do with the family's relationship with God.

From the earliest times God has instructed His people in this manner: "*And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7). The Apostle Paul addresses this responsibility and identifies the one who bears the primary responsibility for the spiritual development of the family: "*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4).

In this same epistle, the apostle makes a comparison of the Christian family, likening it to the relationship Christ has with the church, the bride. "*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their*

own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word..." (Ephesians 5:23-26).

In a class at our 1997 Teen Challenge Camp I asked the students to give a practical example of how Christ demonstrated His "headship" of the church. One young lady, Laura Gill, astutely responded with an answer better than any of mine, "He established the pattern for worship and righteous living for the church." Here, then, is one of the primary responsibilities of the husband and father: He is to set the guidelines, standards and pattern for the family in their worship, for their prayer, for their study and learning that they might be prepared and fitted to live in Zion.

The father is ultimately responsible for the discipline and instruction of the children. The exact words are "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The term *nurture* refers to the training and discipline of the child. But that discipline is not to be done in anger or with harshness; rather, it was to be by admonition, or instruction, in the ways of the Lord. This necessitates that the Christian father be well-grounded in the scriptures and their applications to our daily living.

Certainly the mother, his *ideal* helper, will be intensely involved in the spiritual train-

ing from the earliest years of the children's lives. We are familiar with the testimony of Helaman's two thousand young soldiers concerning the lasting effects of their mothers' teaching upon their lives: "*Now they never had fought, yet they did not fear death: and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers, than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, that God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying, We do not doubt our mothers knew*" (Alma 26:56-57).

Those references to Zion living found in Fourth Nephi help us see what manner of preparation we must make to be fitted for Zion. I hope the passages from Paul's letter to the Christians in Ephesus show us how our life together in the human family can help us with this preparation right now in whatever place we might reside. Now let us look again at a revelation to the early church quoted earlier: "... seek to bring forth and establish the cause of Zion" (Book of Commandments 11:3). What is meant here by the words, the cause of Zion? I believe the Lord is telling us that we must be engaged in thought, desire, prayer and labor concerning the very *reason*, or *purpose*, of Zion. For this, also, we must be fitted and prepared. In the following list we find identified some of the basic purposes for Zion:

1 God's righteous people, both Israel and Gentile, shall be gathered in Zion at the last day. (See Micah 4:6-8; III Nephi 10:1-3; Book of Commandments XLVIII: 67.)

2 It shall be a holy city where peace and safety are found, while all the world is engulfed in tribulation and violence. (See Isaiah 24:17-23; 26:20-21; 62:10-12; Joel 3:9-17; III Nephi 10:21-23; Book of Commandments XLVIII: 59.)

3 The glory and presence of the Lord shall be there. (See Psalm 132: 13-14; Joel 3:17; III Nephi 10:4; Book of Commandments XLVIII: 37.)

4 Zion shall become an ensign (a standard, a banner, a light) to all peoples. (See Isaiah 11:11-12; II Nephi 9:127.)

5 Out of Zion will go forth the law of the Lord. (See Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3; II Nephi 8:19.)

That we, together with our children, might be fitted for this great latter-day work of Jesus Christ there appear to be at least three areas of need where the church, in our preaching and writing, our camps and reunions, our Sunday Schools and Vacation Church Schools, needs to be supporting the family instruction.

**Need Number One:
A Genuine Love For All Men**

To be prepared and fitted for the great work of Zion, it is essential that we develop and display a genuine love and concern for all men. Before the Apostle Peter could be used by the Lord to begin the Gospel work among the Gentiles, he

had to be first instructed and prepared that he might surmount his ingrained, cultural prejudices. We, too, must learn to overcome all racial and ethnic prejudices and by word and example teach our children "...that God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34).

Indeed, Christ's promise of the New Jerusalem, the Zion of the latter day, is expressly made to the remnant of Joseph, many of whom can be identified with the indigenous Native Americans of this land. (See II Nephi 2:44-47; Helaman 5:101-105; III Nephi 9:56-59; 10:1-4.) Identified as a different racial group, certainly from a different cultural and economic background; these people comprise the poorest and most oppressed peoples of the western hemisphere today. These are the people with whom our own future in Zion is inexorably bound. For this very reason, Mormon spoke boldly and clearly "...to the Gentiles, which hath care for the house of Israel" (Mormon 2:37).

Parents need to take advantage of every opportunity for their children to develop friendships with wholesome Jewish, Native American, Mexican, Afro-American, etc. peoples.

One such opportunity exists at our Teen Challenge Camp. Make every effort to have your children attend. Make an effort to invite people of other ethnic backgrounds to Camp, to Vacation Church School and to church. To be fit-

ted for Zion living we must break down the walls of prejudice and develop a real love and concern for the spiritual well-being of others around us.

**Need Number Two:
An Awareness of Prophecy**

The church and all its members need to be fully aware of the prophetic events yet to unfold. Let's work together to make prophecy about our day real and vital, so that our youth will, like the people of King Benjamin, "...have great views of that which is to come..." (Mosiah 3:4). As this latter-day work began to unfold, the church received a prophecy concerning its mission. This must become our mission, our desire, the burden of our prayers and whole-hearted efforts.

"...And for this very purpose are these plates preserved which contain these records, that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people; and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name; and that through their repentance they might be saved: Amen" (Book of Commandments II:6).

This is exactly what is referenced in the ancient prophecy of Zenos, speaking of the final labors of the Lord in His vineyard; hence, a prophecy for our

generation: (v. 125) *"Wherefore, go to, and call servants, that we may labor diligently with our might in the vineyard, that we may prepare the way, that I may bring forth again the natural fruit, which natural fruit is good, and the most precious above all other fruit. (v.126) Wherefore, let us go to, and labor with our might, for this last time; for behold the end draweth nigh: and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard. (v.127) Graft in the branches; begin at the last, that they may be first, and that the first may be last, and dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last, and the last and the first, that all may be nourished once again for the last time"* (Jacob 3:125-127).

Verse 127 informs us where this latter-day work of grafting Israel back into the mother tree is to begin: *"Graft in the branches; **begin at the last** . . ."* (emphasis mine-dem) This *last* is a reference to the discussion found in verses 58 through 68 between the Lord of the vineyard and his servant concerning the remnants of Israel which were transplanted in various parts of the world. Verse 68 says, *"And he said unto the servant, Look hither, and behold the **last*** (emphasis mine-dem): *behold, this have I planted in a good spot of ground; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a part of the tree hath brought tame fruit; and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit: behold,*

I have nourished this tree like unto the others." This is clearly a reference to the Nephite/Lamanite migration to America, and Christ's latter-day work is to begin with the carrying of His gospel to the Native American peoples.

Parents, ministry, teachers, we need to be developing and sharing innovative ways to make prophecy come alive, to make it meaningful to our lives and exciting to our children. We all need to be praying for the fulfillment of specific prophecies which relate to our generation. Then we must be watchful that we might recognize opportunities which are presented to the Lord's people to help bring about their fulfillment.

Need Number Three: Developing A Missionary Attitude

There is a great need in the Church of Christ to develop within our youth a true missionary attitude. I can testify that I have personally seen wonderful evidence of how the Lord is working with our youth, both in this land and in Mexico. Our young people need to be encouraged to witness to others about the precious message of Jesus Christ. They can become some of our best missionaries. They will be greatly aided by seeing their parents being active witnesses to others.

"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of

the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).

"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Timothy 2:1-3).

Basic to good witnessing is the necessity of being firmly grounded in the scripture and in the history and doctrine of the church. When our young people do try to witness and their friends find they believe in the Book of Mormon, they often come under immediate attack. Without a knowledge of the history of the church and without knowledge of the many reasons why we accept the Book of Mormon as a divine record, they can be discouraged from witnessing. We parents, ministry, teachers and counselors need to be providing rigorous teaching of the basic tenets of our faith to our children so that it can be said of them as Paul said to Timothy, *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15).

Only by such means can we truly become fitted to occupy our rightful place in Zion.

PATHLIGHTS

A Sister's Testimony of a Blessing Given to Her from God

Recently Bro. Charles Brantner stopped in to serve me the sacrament, which I never have the opportunity to partake of. I miss that terribly because I always feel joy in my heart when I have had that privilege and opportunity. Then he ad-

ministered to me for an illness I was having and the Lord blessed me because that was the end of the problem I was having. That was a blessing for me to have him and his wife Jeanne come and visit with me in my home. What a joy it is to see and talk

with people of like faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

*Your Sister in Christ
Hazel Niedens
Racine, WI*

The Goodness of God

During a discussion I had with my brother, Bob Oldham, I decided to write this article. He was sharing with me how he felt that miracles are not as absent from the church today as others believe. There is a story in Luke 17 which tells of ten lepers that Jesus healed, but only one returned to thank Him. This story points out a very obvious fact about all of us. Once we get what we want from God we tend to take up life where we left off without too much concern as to whether anyone knows of God's goodness towards us.

We all have experiences we are not sure of. The last thing I want to do is to encourage someone to go beyond what they know. But brushing doubtful

testimonies aside there must still be a lot of "The goodness of God" stories we are missing.

To illustrate let me say this. As many of you know I was in the hospital with a heart attack a month ago (as of this writing). I came through it without any permanent damage to my heart. My brother talks about how ill and blessed I was, but that's his testimony, not mine. I was too anesthetized to know much of anything.

In closing I would remind you of what happened in Mark 5. Jesus cast a legion of evil spirits out of a man who was possessed into a herd of swine. The Gadarenes, who lived there, asked Jesus to leave. The man who had been possessed wanted to go with our Lord. But

since Jesus couldn't stay he told the man who was healed, "Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." For one reason or another Jesus can't be at all places telling of His goodness to all people. He relies on us to do that. Have we been responsible in this duty? Think it over.

Jim Gordon

NEWS

TEMPLE LOT LOCAL

As another Missouri winter plays tricks on us, mixing a few warm days right in with the bitter cold ones, we reflect back on pleasant fall days.

On October 11, the Don Case family hosted the annual Cider Press at their home in Higginsville, Missouri. While some were busy making cider the old-fashioned way, others played volleyball, basketball, jumped on the trampolines, or just sat and enjoyed the fellowship. As with most Church of Christ gatherings, a guitar appeared and the soft singing of hymns was heard.

This year's cider press was special because earlier in the afternoon Forest and Irene Maley celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Last year, they had moved from their Independence home to Higginsville to live with their daughter, Bonnie Case, and her family. Their afternoon was full of reminiscing, congratulations and hugs from family and friends, some having traveled great distances to share with them.

Another event many of us look forward to in October is Clete and Nancy Wiley's Harvest Celebration held at Dora Adams' farm near Warrensburg, Missouri. A potluck, highlighted by Clete's chili cooked over an open fire, precedes a hayride and singing and visiting around the fire. The Wileys provide the celebration as a wholesome alternative to Halloween night.

In October, in an effort to help the local attend Sunday school on time, Superintendent Don Case began scheduling family "specials" at 9:40, five minutes before Sunday school begins. Each Sunday, a family gives a contribution, usually of music or a reading. It has been a blessing

to the local and has increased early attendance.

Brother Case also began having each class alternate in giving a five minute presentation after class demonstrating what the lesson was about. It has helped the local, especially the parents, to become more aware of the children's classes.

Another change for the local this fall was the beginning of song services. We now have song services on the Wednesday following sacrament and the third Sunday night. Assistant pastor, Elder Gary Housknecht, opens the services with a season of prayer and welcomes specials and testimonies along with the congregational singing.

The CARE Group met in October with the YPCL at Apostle Brickhouse's home for a Book of Mormon presentation. The young people also had a study with Elder Gary Housknecht on the Book of Mormon; election of officers; a presentation by Aubrey Case on her trip to the British Isles; a visit with Edna Smith; game night; visit to the IMAX at the K.C. Zoo; December hay ride and treasure hunt; and a Christmas party at the Lee's Summit airport with Andy Brantner providing airplane rides over the K.C. Plaza. Leaders for this year are Jane Ann Stancil, Stephen Kimball and Tabitha Sheldon.

Debbie Vogel and Darla Warfield are now leaders of Jr. Young People's. In October, they had a hay ride and wiener roast at the Sheldons. They made a Thanksgiving wreath and visited the Farrell's home in November and had a "Trail to Bethlehem" and crafts in December.

The United Workers made their annual trip to Parkville, Missouri, in October. In November, they had potluck lunch and made gifts for the children's choir; and in December, they enjoyed a Christmas party and gift exchange.

The Social Committee hosted a

Christmas party for the local in December. We heard some humorous and touching stories as several adults showed toys from their childhood. The children had fun decorating cookies and everyone enjoyed the music of our sister Kate Moyer.

I have saved wonderful news for the last. Wednesday, December 3, on his 15 birthday, Milo Housknecht was baptized by Elder Nicholas Denham. He received the laying on of hands for the Holy Ghost from Brother Denham and Elder Leslie Case. Milo is the son of Gary and Neva Housknecht.

As a final thought...recently the subjects of charity and thanksgiving have dominated the sermons. Elder Gary Housknecht said, "God sees the love we have for each other, knows we're lacking the pure love of Christ towards each other. I believe this charity is required of us before our sacrifice of thanksgiving is acceptable to him. Let us be full of thanks all the time and for each other, for the messages God gives. We are at the end of one thanksgiving year and at the beginning of another." He pointed out that our prayer services, led by the spirit, are a "total package of worship of God, offering up thanks in our prayers, testimonies and songs. Give thanks without reservation or limitation. Totally give of yourself when offering thanks to God."

*God bless you,
Debra L. Vogel*

NEWS

COLLINS, MISSOURI

It's cold and drizzly today—the perfect day for a hot cup of cocoa or tea and a visit with a good friend. I hope this writing finds you all well. It seems so many things have been going on around here—aside from vaccinating the cows and setting a new corner post to hold up a new fence, there have been other happenings that you might be more interested in.

Our brother, Marvin Cook, has been back to visit his mother, Sister Norma Cook, a couple of times since my last writing. Aunt Norm said those few days they spent together made many cherished memories. You see, when Marvin got back to his home in Nebraska, his doctor's report was not favorable. It seems that his cancer has advanced and spread into his bones. No further treatments will be used. Marvin and his wife, Gwen, have shared this sad news with their teenage daughter, Samantha, as well as all the rest of their family. Now, don't hang your head—Marvin isn't hanging his. He has placed his trust in God and is relying on Him for whatever is to come next. He hopes to come back to Collins for Christmas and all of us here are looking forward to that. God is all powerful and has all wisdom and knowledge. Who better could we entrust our lives and, most importantly, our souls to?! Thank you for your prayers.

The Collin's Rally (October 19th) was well attended and enjoyed by all. It seems that it slipped up on us ladies on the food committee—but not to worry, no one went hungry! Our guest speakers were Elders Tony Grzincic, Warren Johnson, Priest Ron Temple, and Apostle Roland Sarratt, along with our assistant pastor, Jack Martin

My cousin from Phoenix, Beth Or-

stead, was visiting her parents in Bates City, Missouri, and slipped in during the Rally, but duty called for me—dishes after lunch—and I barely got to say "hello". We will have to resume our E-mail visiting, I guess.

Our community Thanksgiving Program was hosted by our friends at the Baptist Church. They have a new young pastor who is endeavoring to say and do all the right things. He's very friendly, as was everyone. We all had a good evening of fellowship. The young pastor brought a message about the ten lepers and the one who returned to give thanks. I'm thankful for our community and the sincerity of our friends who worship Christ.

I'll leave you with a few sermon quotes to ponder:

- ◆ *Guilt is actually a divine tool—it's meant to prompt us to come back into God's presence.*
- ◆ *En-couragement is the tool that defeats dis-couragement.*
- ◆ *Life is not smooth and easy—it's just not smooth and easy!*
- ◆ *We're too busy—because we WANT.*
- ◆ *Unless we turn our eyes to the Light and away from the "darkness", we will be blinded by the "darkness".*
- ◆ *He said what He said and He meant what He said and He'll DO what He said!*

- ◆ *Our hope and belief in God is essential to our salvation.*
- ◆ *There is a reward for doing good and a consequence for doing bad.*
- ◆ *Silence is consent!*
- ◆ *The future of our Church is in our children's hands—what will we teach them?*
- ◆ *Can you imagine spending eternity with someone you don't love?*
- ◆ *The ultimate grace of God is the salvation of your soul.*

Your reporter,
Czerna Kauffman

NEWS

RAVENNA, MICHIGAN

News in Our Ravenna Local~
We have been blessed with two baptisms!

On September 7th, Michael Horn walked into the waters of baptism with his grandfather, Elder Max Spencer. Michael is the son of Annette and Jerry Horn.

On October 19th, Bruce Haines walked into the waters of baptism with Elder Aaron Heath. Bruce is the son of June and Ken Haines.

We are so very pleased to 'officially' have these two members now in our family. Many prayers were answered! Welcome, to both of our new brothers.

We were saddened at the loss of one of our dear brothers: Loren DeVries passed away on November 16th, after a long battle with heart disease. He is survived by his wife, our dear sister, Marie, his son Dale, daughter-in-law Linda, and also a grandson. He was preceded in death by a son. We will greatly miss him and his warm loving smile.

On November 30th we had a surprise visit by brothers Peter and Bill Gould, from Minnesota. We were very pleased to see them, and greatly enjoyed the song specials that they blessed us with.

The Ravenna local is working on a new missionary effort to start the new year. We will be writing letters to scattered members and to those who we haven't heard

from in a while. We would appreciate your prayers and support for everyone involved in making this work.

The Ravenna Local would also like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas. We pray that the Spirit of God be with you and your families throughout this blessed season and the new year to follow.

*Your sister in Christ,
Jenni Vogel*

If you would like to add someone in Michigan to our list of people to contact in our missionary effort, let us know!

Church of Christ E-Mail Group

The Church of Christ E-mail Group (CEEG) is now connected coast-to-coast with over 70 members/families, including those in Guatemala and Honduras, Central America. The voluntary group is not officially sponsored by the church and is not moderated, monitored, nor otherwise controlled except through mutual cooperation. Participants include church members, some apostles and many other church ministry.

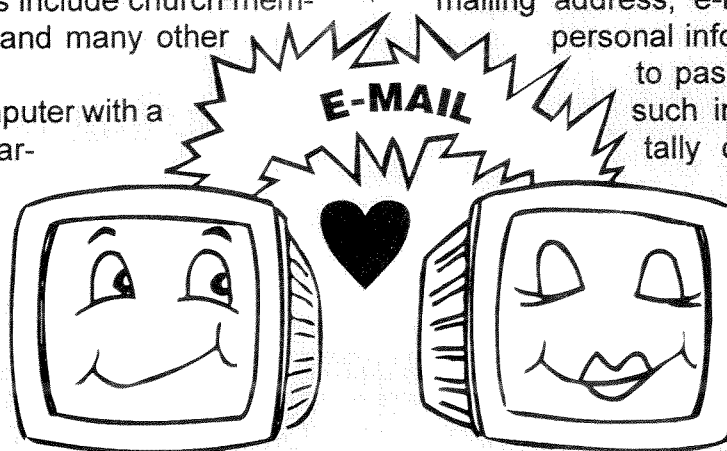
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Preferred sign-up is at this Internet Web site—<http://www.kc.net/~gah/>

If you don't have Internet access, send e-mail (gah@kc.net) with your name, regular mailing address, e-mail address and any personal information you may wish to pass on to the group. All such information remains totally confidential within the group.

For further information write to Gary Housknecht, 11308 E. 78th Street, Raytown, MO 64138.



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