

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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Glory to God

*A wondrous story comes down through the years,
Of angels singing on high,
And the message they brought to the shepherds that night
Still holds true, for you and I.
Then let us join the heavenly chorus,
And with praise and thanksgiving sing,
"All glory to God in the highest",
In the birth of our Savior and King!*

~Helen Taubert

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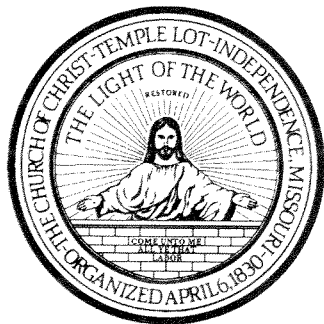
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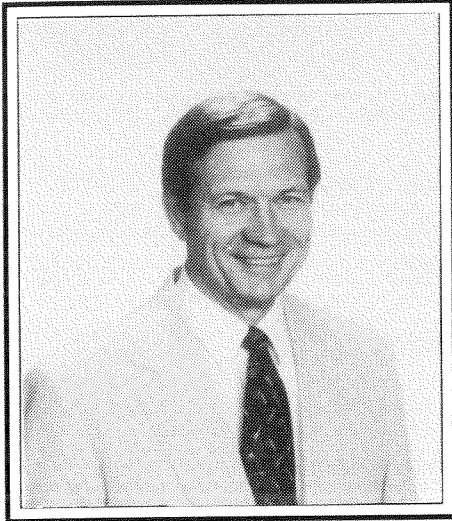
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

The Church Walking with the World

Teacher Ron Temple



I inherited some of my grandfather's papers. He had been a pastor of the Flint, Michigan, local of the Church of Christ many years ago. In those papers, I found the following poem (author unknown).

The Church Walking With the World.

The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shores of time:
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the church a hymn sublime.
"Come, give me your hand" said the merry World,
And walk with me this way,"
But the good Church hid her snowy hand,
And solemnly answered, "Nay.

"I will not give my hand at all,
And I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way of eternal death,
And your words are all untrue."
"Nay, walk with me a little space,"
Said the World with a kindly air,
"The road I walk is a pleasant road,
And the sun shines always there.

"Your way is narrow and thorny and rough,
While mine is flowery and smooth;
Your lot is sad with reproach and toil,
But in rounds of joy I move,
My way you can see, is a broad fair one,
And my gate is high and wide;
There is room enough for you and me,
And we'll travel side by side."

Half shyly the Church approached the World,
And gave him her hand of snow;
And the false World grasped it, and walked along,
And whispered in accents low,
"Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I have gold and pearls to wear;
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair."

The Church looked down at the plain white robes,
And then at the dazzling world,
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip,
With a smile contemptuous curled;
"I will change my dress for a costlier one,"
Said the Church with a smile of grace;
Then her pure white garments drifted away,
And the World gave in their place

Beautiful satins, and fashionable silks,
And roses and gems and pearls;
And over her forehead her bright hair fell
And waved in a thousand curls,
"Your house is too plain," said the proud World,
Let us build you one like mine,
With kitchen for feasting and parlor for play,
And furniture never so fine."

So he built her a costly and beautiful house,
Splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her daughters met frequently there,
Shining in purple and gold.
And fair and festival, frolics untold,
Were held in the place of prayer;
And maidens bewitching as sirens of old,
With world-winning graces rare.

Bedecked with fair jewels and hair all curled,
Untrammled by Gospel or laws,
To beguile and amuse and win from the World,
Some help for the righteous cause.
The angel of mercy rebuked the Church,
And whispered, "I know thy sin;"
Then the Church looked sad, and anxiously long,
To gather the children in.

But some were away at the midnight ball,
And others were at the play;
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
And the angel went away.
And then said the World in soothing tones,
"Your much loved ones mean no harm,
Merely indulging in innocent sports."
So she leaned still on his proffered arm.

And smiled, and chatted, and gathered flowers,
And walked along with the World;
While countless millions of precious souls
Were hungering for truth untold;
"Your preachers are all too old and plain,"
Said the gay world with a sneer;
They frighten my children with dreadful tales,
Which I do not like to hear.

"They talk of judgments and fire and pain,
And the doom of darkest night:
They warn of a place that should not be
Thus spoken to ears polite!
I will send you some, a better stamp,
More brilliant and gay and fast,
Who will show how men may live as they list
And go to heaven at last.

The Father is merciful, great and good,
Loving and tender and kind;
Do you think He'd take one child to heaven,
And leave another behind?"
So she called for pleasing and gay divines,
Deemed gifted, and great, and learned;
And the plain old men that had preached the Cross
Were out of her pulpits turned.

Then Mammon came in and supported the Church,
And rented a prominent pew;
And preaching and singing and floral display
Soon proclaimed a gospel new.
"You give too much to the poor," said the World,
Far more than you ought to do;
Though the poor need shelter, food and clothes,
Why thus need it trouble you?

"Go take your money and buy rich robes
And autos rich and fine;
And pearls and jewels and dainty food,
The rarest and costliest wine.
My children they dote on all such things,
And if you their love would win,
You must do as they do, and walk in the way,
The flowery way they're in."

Then the church her purse strings tightly held,
And gracefully lowered her head,
And simpered, "I've given too much away,
I will do, sir, as you have said."
So the poor were turned from the door in scorn,
She heard not the orphan's cry;
And she drew her beautiful robes aside
As the widows went weeping by.

And they of the Church, and they of the World
Journeyed closely, hand and heart,
And none but the Master, who knoweth all,
Could discern the two apart.
Then the Church sat down at her ease and said,
"I'm rich and in goods increased.
I have need of nothing, and naught to do,
But to laugh and dance and feast."

The sly World heard her and laughed within,
And mockingly said aside,
"The Church has fallen, the beautiful Church,
Her shame is her boast and pride."
Thus her witnessing power, alas, was lost,
And perilous times came in;
The times of the end, so often foretold,
Of form and pleasure and sin.

Then the angel drew near the mercy-seat,
And whispered in sighs her name,
And the saints their anthems of rapture hushed,
And covered their heads with shame,
A voice came down from the hush of heaven,
From Him who sat on the throne;
"I know thy works and what thou has said,
But alas! Thou hast not known

That thou art poor and naked and blind,
With pride and ruin enthralled;
The expectant Bride of a heavenly Groom
Is the harlot of the World!
Thou hast ceased to watch for that blessed hope,
Hast fallen from zeal and grace;
So now alas! I must cast thee out,
And blot thy name from its place."

O Church of Christ, redeemed by precious Blood.
Break this alliance, glorify your God!
Forsake the Christless World that lures to ill,
Thou mayest be blessed and prove a blessing still.

Away with ease and dalliance and play.
The great commission now in haste obey.
In holiness and zeal thou canst excel.
And save the perishing from sin and hell.

Gird on thy robes with purity impearled.
And keep thyself unspotted from the World.
Humbled in dust and ashes sin no more.
Repent while Christ stands knocking at the door.
O let thy heart be true to Him alone.
For lo, the heavenly Bridegroom cometh soon.

In Hos 10:13 it states, "Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men." In the first several verses of the poem, the Church is eating the fruit of lies instead of doing as it says in Hos 10:12, "Sow to yourself in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you."

In Levi's vision, and also in part of Nephi's vision (1 Nephi 2:41-92, and 2 Nephi 3:91-126) we are told of a dreary waste. That is where the World is now, and the church is close to the World. Then we are told of a tree, "...whose fruit was desirable to make one happy." That happiness is not the happiness that the World offers, but true happiness, which is the love of God. But there were many that would not partake of the fruit. It tells of a rod of iron, which we know is the gospel that will lead us to this tree of life. It tells of a straight and narrow path, the interpretation being given as the entering in by repentance and baptism and continuing to follow the commandments of God. See 2 Nephi 13:7-14, and 22-30. Many want this true happiness, but they do not know how to take hold of this rod of iron. The World does not tell them. In fact, it tells them that the broad way is the way to go. It is hidden from them by the "mists of darkness" which are

"...the temptations of the devil, which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men, and leadeth them away into broad roads, that they may perish, and are lost" 1 Nephi 3:125. Lehi's vision tells of a great and spacious building which we are told are the vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men, and many of those entering in are from the Church.

The Apostle Paul was able to see our time. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And shall turn their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" 2 Tim 4:3-4. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of Godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. ... Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" 2 Tim 3:1-5, 7. And a couple of verses from the Apocrypha, "And the angel that was sent unto me, whose name was Uriel, gave me answer, and said, thy heart has gone too far in this world, and thinketh thou to com-

prehend the way of the Most High?" Is this not a question that we should consider for ourselves? When the Lord comes, will we have to, as it states in the poem, "cover our heads with shame"?

Also in my Grandfather's papers there was a cartoon (by Joseph Hoy) that showed cars and trucks and other motor vehicles racing and crowding one another down a road at breakneck speeds. A man was standing at the intersection, waiting to cross that road, and in the distance, where the man was heading, was a shining hill marked, "spiritual achievement." Marked on each of the vehicles were marked some of the sins of the world, namely: irreverence, excitement, irreligion, extravagance, recklessness, unrest, amusement, godlessness, vulgarity, gambling, Sabbath breaking, row and racket, money mania; and I'm going to add to those listed in the cartoon some more that fit today's society: divorce, fornication, adultery, drugs, abortion, homosexuality, and new age thinking (a new religion). The caption under the cartoon said, "How much longer am I going to be held up by this crowd who think they're getting somewhere? I want to get up the hill!..." We are like that man, wanting to get to that spiritual achievement that will bring us to salvation, but letting the world and its ways keep us from obtaining the goal. In fact, we even partake of the world and its sins. We might be riding along in one or more of these vehicles,

letting it take us further and further from where we should be going.

We are told in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." And in Rev 18:1-4 we read, "...I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power:... And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, ...For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Here, Babylon is the world and everything in it that would pull us away from God. We are commanded to come out of that condition. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ..." 2 Cor. 10:3-5. In 1 Cor. 10:1-11, it tells us that God was not pleased with His people

after they crossed the Red Sea. It says there that they lusted after evil things, and that this should be an example to us not to commit fornication, neither tempt Christ, neither murmur as they did.

Consider, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and all the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness. Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall melt with fervent heat" 2 Peter 3:10-12. And, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire (the gospel), that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment (righteousness), that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness (our sins) do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve (read the scriptures), that thou mayest see" Rev. 3:18. In the refining of metals, the less pure it is, the more refining fire that is needed. The more we are in the world and partakers of her sins, the more refining fire (trials and tribulations) we will need to go through to reach the level of righteousness we need to enter in to the rest of the Lord.

What will it take? "...Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask

in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you: ...ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering toward you unworthy creatures, And humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come,..." Mosiah 2:16, 20-21. And, "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, That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" Eph 5:25-27. We must get rid of the spots and wrinkles. We have a long way to go. The world has drug us along with it for way too long, and we are getting further and further away from where we should be. And the farther we are from where we should be, the harder it will be to get back. It's time, before it is ever too late, to get back to that righteousness we need to enter into God's kingdom. Don't procrastinate!

TITHE OFFERING

Elder Gordon McCann

As a member of the Church of Christ I feel a great responsibility towards the commandment concerning tithing and offerings. I have heard few sermons devoted to the topic of tithing, and it would seem as though the church is somewhat reluctant to preach about the concept of giving a tenth for the Lord's work. As a Church, I believe we do support the teaching of tithing but would rather avoid this topic in a public discussion. The reason for this aversion is to not have the same appearance as those churches soliciting for money on the air waves of radio and television. Most of those organizations are compelled to solicit funds to support their huge capital outlay and salaries. There are some who are solely in the business to get gain, power over their listeners, and to become popular in the eyes of the world through the deception of appearing to care for the souls that contribute. I am fully persuaded that institutions and people that engage in those repulsive lies and deceptions will find no more sympathy from

their Lord than those of the moneychangers within the temple as recorded in the Scripture.

The fact remains that the Lord does require from us His just due for His purposes here on this earth. So, unlike many other churches, our tithe is not used to support a paid ministry or fine sanctuaries, temples, or synagogues. Our tithing is used to support a missionary outreach with the basic necessities to reach as many people as our little church can by trusting in the Lord of Harvest. Those basic needs would be active locals, travel expenses, tracts, books, and money to distribute to those that are contacted and have need of our assistance. Another thing that is unique to our belief is that when we give an offering for special needs, which is above and beyond our tithing, all of that offering goes to the intended cause or need.

Nephi of old made a statement that I try to remember and use in my ministry because I feel its application delivers the most effective results. Nephi wrote:

"For behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn...."

...Unlike many other churches, our tithe is not used to support a paid ministry or fine sanctuaries, temples, or synagogues.

Nephi understood that plainness and truth comes from God because that is His nature, and the opposite is true, where lies and deceptions come from the father of lies, who is Satan. God gives us instruction to bring order and purpose into our lives, and ultimately accomplishing His desire in us. So to understand the concept of tithe we must first understand what God had intended for us in the beginning.

After God created all things, God appointed man to have dominion over the things He created, thus mankind became stewards over His creation on earth. So as stewards of God's creation nothing really belongs to us and that fact is obvious when we die because nothing we possess in this life can come with us in death. Con-

sider the following scripture to support the concept of who really owns what.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth" (Gen 1:26).

"And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance, that he perish not, and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation, for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you, but to God, to whom also, your life belongeth..." (Mosiah 2:37).

Once we come to understand that we really own nothing, but are care takers of God's creation, we must also realize that our very lives belong to Him as well. So we are stewards of God's creation, and how good of a steward we are in this life will be a testimony for or against us in the next life.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give

you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:10-12)

The concept of "RETURNING" a portion that God has given us, for His service, is not a new one. Abraham of old, as is recorded in Genesis 14:20, "Gave him tithes of all." This was well before the Mosaic Law came into existence and most likely its origin goes back to the very days of Adam and Eve after their expulsion from the garden of Eden. The Hebrew word used in this passage of scripture for tithe was *maaser*, which is interpreted as *a tenth part*. As we follow the history of tithe we find Jacob following in his father's fathers footsteps, and then we come to the Mosaic Law.

The Book of Mormon says the Law of Moses is "a shadow of those things which are to come" (Mosiah 8:90), referring to Jesus Christ and the new covenant that He would bring. Within the Law of Moses there were very specific requirements concerning tithing which can be found in the book of Leviticus.

"And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord" (Lev 27:30).

After God identified to Israel what they were to tithe, God then told them where and to whom the tithe and offerings should go.

"But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they

offer as an heave offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit: Therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance" (Num 18:24).

Upon receiving from Israel their tithe and offerings it was then the Levites responsibility to care for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

"But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance" (Num 18:23).

The Levites were also commanded of God to make an offering of a tenth of what was given to them, by the House of Israel, for their tithe offering to God.

"Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe" (Num 18:26).

Israel was commanded of God to bring all their tithes and "lay it up" (or put into a storehouse) within their gates to be used by the Levites, stranger, fatherless, and widow. Those tithes that were stored were

consecrated and Holy unto God and His purposes. God expected Israel to follow His commandments and by doing so there would be meat in His house.

“At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest” (Deut. 14:28-29).

“When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them;” (Deut. 26:12-13).

We find in the book of Malachi, many years after the Law of Moses was given, that the Lord was using his servant as a messenger to rebuke the children of Israel. Israel had coveted and had forgotten the Lord's commandment concerning tithes and offerings. As is the order of God, He always first sends His messengers to rebuke the sinner, with the hope of bringing about repentance prior to sending His wrath upon His children. The Lord was very direct in His rebuke towards the House of Israel and their sins.

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it” (Malachi 3:8-10).

The Hebrew word for storehouse in the above quoted scripture was *owtsar*, which means *depository, cellar, treasure or treasury*. It was the very depository that was to be used to store the tithes and offerings of Israel on the third year as was previously discussed. Israel had withheld their tithes and offerings so God judged them by ac-

cusing them of robbery.

We understand through scripture that the Law of Moses was fulfilled by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We were also told that the law was to be a shadow of things to come, which meant all things pointed to Christ and the new covenant. The Law of Moses had an end, but tithing was from the beginning and was to continue and not be done away with. We can turn to the scripture to find the evidence of the continuance of tithing and the importance that God places on following that early commandment.

I would like to take you to the book of Acts where we read about a devout man that was recognized by God. Cornelius saw a vision wherein an angel of God came to him and said: “Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God...” (Acts 10:4). Your alms or tithes rank up there with prayer as to importance to our God.

In the Book of Mormon when Jesus Christ was visiting his people in the Americas he instructed them to add the words of Malachi to their records because they had left Jerusalem before Malachi was even born. It was that very same rebuke that the Father made to the children of Israel close to 500 years ago on another continent. Jesus expounded all the new passages that He gave them and then made this statement:

“...These scriptures

which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you, for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations” (3 Nephi 11:29).

When Jesus made the statement referring to future generations He was talking to our generation for our benefit. We are the future generations and it was to be for us as an example and a warning to prevent us from sinning as the children of Israel, and to not be found guilty of robbing God.

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings” (3 Ne 11:11).

The modern definition of tithe is: the tenth part of the annual produce or income due or paid as a tax for the support of the priesthood and religious institutions; any tax, levy, or the like of one tenth. (New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language, deluxe encyclopedic edition). We as a church do not support a “paid ministry” as is suggested in the above definition because of the teachings in the Book of Mormon which says:

“And the priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God, that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and

authority from God” (Mosiah 9:59).

The thing that I wanted to bring out in the definition was

God...expects us to make offerings when we can and when the need arises; anything less than that would be robbery.

“the tenth part of the annual produce or income due or paid.” We believe in an unchanging God and He has tried to make it very clear that we are required to give our tithe (a tenth of our annual produce or income) for His work in these last days. God also expects us to make offerings when we can and when the need arises; anything less than that would be robbery.

Remember the prayer that we were given of the Lord to be offered over the bread?

“...That they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God the eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them....”

As a people or a member of the body of Christ, if we desire to keep His commandments we have one option, and that is to fulfill the commandment and

give to God His due of a tenth of our annual produce or income. We could be like Israel and try to rationalize as to a tenth of what, or be like a child who has a candy bar given them by a parent with instruction to share the bar with another, and the child quickly devours half of it, then gives a small portion of what remains to the other child and feels justified within for following the instruction.

When you receive your next paycheck remember the words of King Benjamin when he said:

“...How much more just will be your condemnation, for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you, but to God, to whom also, your life belongeth...”

Mission Impossible?

**Excerpted from a sermon by
Elder Aaron Heath given at the
Ravenna, Michigan, local**

Years ago, there was a program on television called Mission Impossible. This program started each show by giving some instructions, from a tape recorded, to the person in charge of the mission. This recorded message told of the mission that was to be accomplished, and also gave vital information regarding the people, places and things to be watchful of.

While thinking about this show, I find that the gospel plan is similar in nature. We are given scriptures (instructions) to help us accomplish the mission that the Lord has for all His children. In fact, we have one main mission, but then along with that one comes several for us to devote our time to while we live on this earth.

The group of people on the TV program that were to set out on their mission had to rely heavily on whom the recorded information was given, because after the message was given, the tape recording self destructed! Therefore the group turned to

this person for further instructions from time to time, when and if the plan went wrong in any way.

Jesus Christ is the one that we each need to turn to in our lives, even when we make mistakes or wrong decisions. He is the One who will give us the strength and direction we need to continue on our journey and to accomplish the task that is before us, and when the adversary turns us the wrong way, He is always there to give us what we stand in need of.

In Matthew 1:21-23, we read, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."

This was only the beginning of the mission. Matthew 4:17 reads, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Many things transpired after that time, and He taught and gave instructions, even set up His

church, then after all these things, He was nailed to the cross and crucified, but arose from the grave, to fulfill this portion of His mission.

What greater example can be shown to us than this? We are given many other examples in the scriptures to help us to accomplish even the most difficult of tasks set before us. I would hope and pray that we would mirror the boldness and tenacity in which our Saviour showed as he went about His mission.

Our main mission is eternal life, but to accomplish this we must complete the little jobs first, like helping others, following the commandments, using our talents, etc., etc. On the TV program, the mission was always accomplished, maybe not the way it was originally planned, but it did get taken care of, we too can change things around a little because of having our own free will to abide by the Light or to go away from it, but I hope and pray that we would take the straight line, for it is the right line to the finish line!

NEWS

COLLINS, MISSOURI

The Collins Local sends its greetings to all that read the *Advocate*. We have been enjoying some wonderful, yet unseasonably warm weather. It has been much appreciated, but it is beginning to confuse the trees and they think it's spring!

We have had two baptisms since I last wrote to you. On August 16, 1998, George Allen entered the kingdom of God by the way of the waters of baptism in a quiet setting over in Almond Valley. Brother Curtis Yates had visited with George for several months as George's desire grew to join the Church of Christ. There was a calm and a sweet spirit present as several scriptures were read before George and Brother Yates walked down into the stream of water. Brother Allen Kauffman officiated for the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost and was assisted by Brother Curtis Yates.

One week later another beautiful service was held in the same setting as Polly Sanders, foster daughter to Dennis and Olivia Yates, also chose to make her covenant with God by way of baptism. This was also conducted by Brother Curtis Yates. After the quiet service of baptism, we all were invited to Dennis and Olivia's home where Brother Allen Kauffman again prayed for the gift of the Holy Ghost to be given to one who had complied with Christ's commandment to be baptized. Brother Yates assisted him.

Polly is going to college in Springfield and George is a truck driver who seldom is home on weekends. Though this writing is past due, I know prayer is needed at all times. So I ask you to remember these two new members in your prayers—just as we need to remember one another each day—that we may remain faithful.

Our brother, Johnny Mathis, has suffered a stroke which has garbled his speech. He is taking therapy three times a

week. I know he becomes very frustrated with his situation and needs your sincere prayers that God may take this burden from him and his sweet wife, Peachie, who, as you may guess, is very worn, but very patient. Their faith has not slackened in the face of adversity.

Our rally was held in October and well attended. We enjoyed the day together with our brothers and sisters in the gospel. One of my favorite "happenings" of the rally was getting to hear two of our newest elders preach—Brothers Rick Olson and Jeff Oldham. No, they didn't bring anything particularly new; they just taught the truth—the gospel of Jesus Christ—just like Brothers Bob Oldham and Frank Fann. It was a very enriching day. Our thanks to all who came and made it possible.

Leon Yates, brother to Marlene Cobb and Ronald Yates, died October 7th, after battling lung cancer for a length of time. He was able to maintain his integrity and take care of himself almost until the end when he came to stay with Marlene for the last few days. His family was with him at the last, which I think was a great comfort to everyone. A memorial service was held in honor of Leon's life. Brother Curtis Yates officiated, with tributes paid by Leon's daughter (I apologize for forgetting her name) and niece, Jennifer McClure. Leon was a kind man with a quick wit and sense of humor. He will be missed a great deal, but he left behind some very good memories.

Meghann Welch is attending college in Warrensburg and coming here to church when she can. We enjoy her presence very much, as well as her beautiful voice.

The young people from Independence filled our church today (12-6-98) and shared their talents, testimonies, and love with us. Our thanks for their visit!

In closing, I will leave you with some sermon quotes to think on:

- *We cannot make God greater or higher than what He already is.*
- *We have strengths that we draw from each other.*
- *We have to be Christian enough to repent to a brother when we have offended him.*
- *There's a high price for low living.*
- *If we accept things that go on around us as "okay" then soon we're "thinking" wrong.*
- *God really doesn't need ME—I need God!*
- *You'll find yourself on Sunday morning either on the inside of the church doors or on the outside.*
- *There are results or consequences to the choices we make. If you choose wrong, life isn't over—there is repentance.*
- *There's no greater joy than to know that we resemble our creator.*
- *God has a wider picture than what you and I see.*
- *The greatest "bug-a-boo" we have among us is to nit-pick.*
- *True friends are quick to admit their mistakes and true friends are quick to forgive.*
- *"Endure" is not something we can do once and it will stand forever—it is until the end of your life.*

Your reporter,
Czerna Kauffman

NEWS

COWGILL, MISSOURI

Greetings from all of us from the Cowgill Local to our brothers and sisters in the Church of Christ.

We have been enjoying this beautiful weather we have been having in November. It looked as though in October we might not be able to get our crops out after all the rain we had in October. Our fields were flooded and the combines couldn't get through the mud, but God blessed us with dry weather at the beginning of November and we were privileged to go ahead with the harvest. God blessed us with a bountiful harvest and we were very thankful since the crops are our livelihood. We have been very fortunate. God spared us from destruction from the terrible storms and flood. Our homes and families were protected.

Sr. Lois Harris and her granddaughter Susan Harris spent some time in Colorado visiting Sr. Harris' sisters Mildred Hooker and Enid and John Bell. They also attended the Colorado Reunion. Enid and John visited our little church one Sunday when they were here early this fall visiting Sr. Lois. Bro. Bell preached for us while he was here. We were glad to have them and hope they will come again soon.

We have been blessed with many ministers and their families this past year. We're always glad to have them on the fourth Sunday of each month.

Sr. Lois, with the help of Lisa Wratt and Karen Claypole still teach and enjoy their junior class. They are studying about David and Solomon. The students respond very well to their teaching.

We have all been very concerned about Bro. Gerald Bryant since his accident. He

was coming in from the hay field one evening on the tractor and mower when he was hit from behind by a pickup truck. The impact threw Gerald off the tractor over the hood and he landed in the ditch on the right side of the road. The tractor traveled on and went off the left side of the road. It did quite a bit of damage to the mower and the tractor. Gerald suffered cuts and bruises and shock. God was watching over him or he couldn't have survived such an accident. We are all thankful to God that he is improving and pray for a complete recovery.

We are fast approaching the holiday season. May you all have a Blessed Christmas and New Year.

Pray for our little church local. We need you.

Sr. Elizabeth Crist

EAST INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI

Greetings from the Independence East Local. We hope your holidays were wonderful, and wish you God's blessings for this new year.

We enter this new year of 1999 with hope for our future and thanksgiving for the blessings of this past year.

Until recently, we have had beautiful, unseasonably warm weather. Now, we are experiencing some real winter weather, although the worst storms have thankfully passed us by.

Our many good sermons have kept our hearts light and our spirits bolstered through the season.

We are reminded that our souls cannot be satisfied with what is here on earth—we must look above. We must preach this gospel to the world, making sure that we do not limit the power of God. From the moment of baptism our purpose should be to be in the service of our fellow men. If we desire to enlarge our personal borders, we must spread our concerns and our serv-

ice ever outwards to others.

We were given some steps to help us build our spiritual lives:

1. Our relationship with God must be passionate and real.
2. We must always trust in God.
3. We must talk with God often.
4. We must praise Him in ALL that He gives, whether good or bad.
5. We must love one another.

After all we do, we look forward with faith to the time when we will live again with Jesus, knowing that Zion will be better than the most beautiful place or joyous time we've ever known.

We have been a busy local lately, and have remodeled our basement to add some new Sunday school rooms, giving the basement a new, fresh and clean look. The results are very nice.

We have been blessed with four ordinations to the office of elder: Brother Jeff Oldham was ordained by Elder Robert Oldham, with Apostle Frank Fann assisting, and Brother Rick Olson was ordained by Apostle Frank Fann, with Apostle Roland Sarratt as-

sisting, on Sunday, the 23rd of August. Priest Randy Sheldon was ordained by Apostle William A. Sheldon, with Elder Alvin Harris assisting, on the 15th of November. Priest Steve McGhee was ordained by Apostle Frank Fann, with Elder Larry Beem assisting, on the 22nd of November. Both Steve McGhee and Randy Sheldon had been called some time ago, but only recently received the witness they had been seeking.

We were further blessed on the 6th of December by the baptism of Brother Scott Adams, by his brother Elder George Adams. Elder Larry Beem, assisted by Elder Randy Sheldon, said the prayer of confirmation. Scott has been regularly attending with his wife, Becky, and their children. Becky was baptized last July.

We are thankful that the Spirit of the Lord has been moving among our people, and pray that we might walk more closely in His ways.

*Your sister in Christ,
Melissa M. Seibel*

A Day of Fasting *and* Prayer

The Council of Apostles is setting aside Wednesday, January 27, as a day of fasting and prayer for the need of additional ministry in the church. We would like to invite the whole church to join with us in fasting for this need.

We read in the new testament portion of the Book of Mormon that the church often set aside time to fast and pray together concerning their needs. We know, too, that the Lord delights in our giving of ourselves to Him in prayer, and when we are united in that prayer the Lord has always responded powerfully to our requests.

The church in Mexico and Honduras, as well as several places in the United States and Canada, have a great need for ministry, just to have someone locally to feed them God's word. The church also stands in need of more evangelists and elders, that the word of God might be spread to others.

We hope that as many as can will join us in this endeavor to seek the Lord. Who knows what good things the Lord has in store for us if we but seek Him together.

*In Gospel Bonds,
Joel Yates
For the Counsel of Apostles*

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

Book in the Stone Box, The—About the Book of Mormon

Church History for Juniors—Includes a Teacher's Guide

Jesus' Life and Teachings—4 Quarterlies for ages 8-10

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