

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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*"Now therefore fear
the Lord, and serve him
in sincerity and in
truth.... And if it
seem evil unto you
to serve the Lord,
choose you this day
whom ye will serve...
but as for me and my
house, we will serve
the Lord."*

—Joshua 24:14-15

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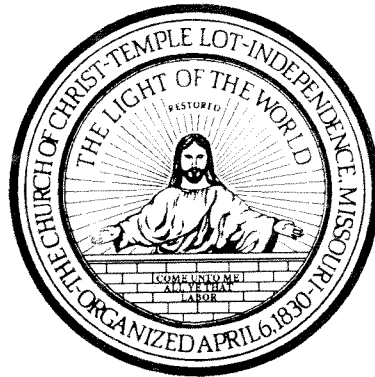
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

Where Have We Come From And Where Are We Going?

Yobain, 13 of August, 1999

A Parable That Can Change Your Life, Born of Thoughts When Thinking of You.

The Rebellion of Two Young People

In a village a lovely family named Valencia had two sons. The oldest was named Fernando Valencia and the younger Virginio Valencia. They looked like their father, and both the sons had a birthmark on their faces near the mouth just like their father. Each one had his own room to sleep in for their father had a grand ranch filled with cattle, horses, sheep, workers and servants. Their father was a man of Law and regulations. There was a timetable for working in his home and on his ranch. Everyone worked eight hours daily. When anyone had a birthday the father made a splendid banquet for all. In this manner none lacked for work, food, clothing, or rest. Everyone was happy.

However, one day the older son, named Fernando, and his younger brother Virginio began

talking about the way their father made them work. "In the first place his laws are very hard and he is very demanding in all things, and the time schedule for working eight hours daily is going to kill us. This is a life of slavery that will never end. What we need is freedom. If we want we can separate ourselves from this unhappy life. We are free young men and no one can force us to continue this great slavery. He is a father without love, without comprehension, a slaver in everything and too demanding also."

One beautiful morning when the dawn began to show and the birds of the forest began to sing Fernando awoke and said to his brother, Virginio, "Today we must carry out what we agreed upon; let's go now before anyone sees us." They each put a change of clothes in their knapsacks. On their way out Virginio saw an envelope on the table and put it in his pack, and then remembered to write a note, which said the following:

"We want you to know what we are thinking. We are leaving in search of our liberty, here we are slaves all the time. Adios."

When their parents saw the

message they cried for the loss of their sons, but the sons left happily in search of freedom. After a day of hard walking when the crickets had begun to sing they arrived at an old ranch. They spoke with the owner asking if there was any work. "There is enough work here for the rest of your lives," responded the owner. Fernando asked, "What are the conditions of employment?" The boss said, "On my ranch there are not any rules for the work. Everyone is free to work the hours that they desire." The young men were very happy and told him, "This is what we want, LIBERTY. Today we have found something better in our lives. This is a good boss."

A little later he showed them the place where they would sleep. It was an old dirty storeroom, filled with tools and food for chickens, cows, horses and goats, and the walls were full of cobwebs and cockroaches. The owner said, "Here you have a good place to sleep." The two young men looked at him and the storeroom, because they had known a good place to sleep. With pain in their hearts they entered and were almost not

able to sleep that night because it was their first night away and it was a dirty place and really smelled.

On the next morning they awoke at eight o'clock and very hungry. They went to ask the boss when breakfast would be served. He told them, "I have told you, here there is liberty, the cooks, at times, get up early and at times late. They are free; sometimes they don't make breakfast, only lunch. When they have time and when they want, they prepare three meals, but you can go to the kitchen if you want to." They went immediately, but when they arrived, the cooks served them old dried up food from a day or two before and on dirty plates. They were surprised, thinking they would be served broiled chicken. Hunger was consuming them, so they had to eat it. After they went to their work, they returned in the evening, but there was no bath. They went to the kitchen, but it was already closed. Tired and unhappy they returned to the storeroom. The next day they awoke early and drank only water and left for the job. Time passed by like this.

One day they arrived where they had begun a job. There doing that same job was another laborer. Fernando said, "Why are you doing our work? It is our work! This is not right!" The man became infuriated and began to hit him. When Virginio saw that his brother was on the ground, he hit the other man, but other workers came and beat them. They were

badly hurt, but were able to escape with difficulty. Right away they went to tell the owner what happened, but the owner told them:

"I can not do anything because here, there is freedom, everyone is free to solve their own problems in any manner they can. I want to show you something that you have not seen." He took them outside the borders of the ranch. When they arrived he showed them the graves of the people that were killed and buried beneath the trees. The graves surrounded the ranch and there were new ones. Only a little lacked until the entire ranch would be surrounded. The owner said, "This is how the people here solve their problems. You have been saved and should already have been buried here." After hearing this, the young men began to cry and their countenances fell. This day they felt no hunger while returning to the storeroom. Fernando lay down for a moment. Virginio sat down on a rock, sad and worrying. Suddenly he remembered the letter he had picked up and put in his pack the day he left his old home. He went and retrieved the letter and began removing its contents. First he found a photograph of his parents when they were young. He removed another that was a recent one of them taken by their father. He placed the two together and saw the appearance of his father was similar to theirs and that beside each mouth was a birthmark.

He knew that in truth it was a wonderful family. After this he removed another and saw the rooms where they slept and the clean and beautiful dining room where their mother served meals. Finally he removed the last photo. It was his father's ranch, looking like the garden of Eden, clean, everything in order. After thinking about the photos, he thought: "Where have I come from and to where am I going?" Fernando was looking at his sad brother and asked him, "What are you looking at Virginio?" He answered in a sad voice, "Come and see." He drew near and Virginio showed him the photos. "I have a question," said Virginio, "From where have we come and where are we going? I believe I have the answer, we have come from a wonderful family and we are going to our death." The throat of Virginio almost closed when he finished saying this. Together they lamented for an hour for having committed a grave error in their lives. After weeping bitter tears they promised to love and obey the laws and rules of life. Fernando said: "Truly, our father is a prudent man governing his ranch and house. There is no other man good and honorable in the world like our father, and there is no place where love and cleanliness reigns.

"To work eight hours a day is fair. Exhortation, reprimand (reproof) and discipline are life and health for all human beings. Now let us return to the house of our father and request for-

giveness from our parents. We will return to our wonderful family and there we will have happiness and a better life." Virginio responded, "I am afraid and ashamed, perhaps our parents won't receive us or will punish us and throw us out." Fernando said, "We must be ready to receive punishment, as I said before, exhortation, reprimand (reproof) and discipline are life and health. If they punish us, it is fair and earned by our rebellion to them." Virginio said, "You are right, we shall return to the house." Very early they awoke to leave, hearing the pretty songs of the birds in the forest. Virginio said, "I remember the morning we left our house and the pretty song of the birds, for me it is a new beginning in our lives this morning." Fernando felt the same. They left and when crossing the last street Virginio looked at the old ranch and said "Cursed ranch of licentiousness." They continued walking for three hours when they encountered another road with a sign that read: "Large ranch seeking workers for a year's labor." Fernando said, "Don't even look at the sign of this temptation, our only need is to be with our family where we are going."

Continuing walking more rapidly to arrive earlier, they arrived exactly at the supper hour. Their mother was serving supper to their father. Together they stood in the entrance of the home, trembling, dirty, tattered clothing, hair and beard unkempt, thin, hungry and thirsty.

With a sad voice Fernando spoke, "Good evening father." Three times he spoke and the third time his father said to his wife, "Someone spoke." She peered out the entrance and said, "They are bad men, no doubt thieves; don't pay attention to them." But Virginio began to call urgently, "Good evening, Father." The third time the father told his faithful servant, "Go and see if you know these two people that are calling at the door. They sound like they are in trouble." When the servant drew close to the doorway, Fernando and Virginio called out, "Father, open the door, we want to enter on our knees." When the servant heard their voices, he told them to wait one moment. Moved with mercy for the two young men he went and spoke to the father, "These two are your sons, Fernando and Virginio Valencia." "What?" said the father, "How do you know?" The servant said, "By the two birthmarks they inherited from you." The father instructed his servant to let them enter. He went and opened the door and said, "You may enter." The sons said, "Thank you, Father, for your love and your mercy toward us." They entered and walked on their knees until they were at their parent's side. They asked for forgiveness and told him about their poor condition. The father recognized the marks on their faces. They confessed rebellion against his laws and rules of life for his home and ranch. They said, "We thought

we were seeking freedom, but all we found was licentiousness and that is what we are now, but we have learned that exhortation, reprimand (reproof) and discipline are life and health for all human beings and we are ready to obey until death." The father told them go and bathe yourselves and tidy up. The servant took them and cut their hair and shaved their faces and then they bathed and changed their clothes. Afterward the servant led them to the father's room. He was moved with compassion saying: "Now I recognize you; truly, you are my sons, not as you were when you arrived. You were disfigured, now we can eat together." When they sat at the table the father told his wife, "Look at our sons." They embraced with tears of joy. After eating their father gave them the keys to their rooms. They were happy to be with their wonderful family on a beautiful ranch where life and happiness exist. This is how they learned the saying: WHERE DID WE COME FROM AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

I am grateful to God for the opportunity that he has given me to be able to write this parable to help you reflect about your present life and your future and be happy.

*Attentively,
Placido Koyoc Yam*

He Makes Me Lie Down

“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul”
Psalms 23:2-3.

It is very satisfying to give someone something he really wants. One of the pleasures of being a stockman is the pure enjoyment of feeding cattle or sheep when they are hungry; the pleasure of watching these creatures satisfy their need for food; the sense of achievement one feels in having had a part in preparing the food or leading the animals to the pasture where the food is available.

When one turns his cattle onto a green meadow after they have been brought in from the dry range, it is pure pleasure just to sit on your horse awhile and watch. At first the cattle are so excited with the rich new pasture that they run about like children after the sack has been broken at a piñata party and they are scrambling for the goodies. The cows are in such a hurry to eat all the grass that they don't even stop to graze. They just take a bite here and a bite there as they hurry about. Then pretty soon they seem to realize that there is more than enough and they settle down to

serious grazing, biting and swallowing, biting and swallowing, never taking time to chew. This is why a cow has four stomachs; so she can graze in haste and chew in leisure.

When cattle first go on pasture their grazing has a quality of frenzy about it. Their greed reminds one of people in a bargain basement. Then after a few hours they begin, one by one, to find shady spots along the creek where they will drop down to rest, to spend many hours chewing what they had so hastily gathered. They have come to a time when they simply must stop gathering and lie down. It is at this time of day that I like to ride among my cattle, seeing their contentment, knowing I have cared for them well.

And it is at this time of day that I have pondered the great psalm. That stockman of long ago, considering His own flock and thinking of the goodness of God, did not say: “He makes me graze in green pastures.” **Not at all!** The wise shepherd put the emphasis other than on the grazing. He knew that it is even more important to lie down and chew what has been received. Green pastures are not just for grazing—they are places for lying down. The love and mercy

of God is not only in His gracious giving of rich pastures, but in the fact that He also makes me lie down when I have gathered enough.

We who live in an affluent society will do well to consider this insight from the twenty third psalm. For most of us in America, the pastures have been green. We've been pretty good at foraging, gathering even more than we need. But often we have forgotten to lie down, to relax, to trust, to think, to enjoy, to grow. There is a time for gathering, but we cannot gather all the time. There must be a time for chewing the cud spiritually and mentally. There must be time for soaking up the strength we have received; a time for digesting and making use of the insights and research we have accomplished.

Most of us have been good at gathering the abundance around us, but too few of us have been good at assimilating and enjoying our abundance. The man who is making enough money, yet works seven days a week and will not take time to worship, to play, to contemplate—this person will come to the time when God will make him lie down, even in the midst of the pastures.

If we are not content with

what we can gather in a regular working week and insist on working, not only on our time, but on God's time, we soon get life out of balance. In a cow we call it bloat. Just what to call it in man is a problem, but we see it around us on all sides—in lives that have lost their meaning and direction; in homes that have become second-rate boarding houses; in lives of boredom seeking escape through speeding, drinking, gambling and other perversions of what are basically wholesome and normal drives in life. Sometimes it takes sickness, or mental breakdown, or some other upset to make us lie down, but if we will not do it ourselves, sooner or later we will do it anyway.

God restores my soul and my body, and the way He does it is to make me lie down even when the pastures around me are still green, even when others around me are still gathering. When I have had enough, He makes me lie down to use what I have and to be restored.

In the process of restoring, or healing, it is important for us to remember that it is God who does it. We are all blessed by progress in medicine and in the techniques of hospital care. But it is a fact that in actual healing, no progress has been made at all. Medicine can improve the circumstances and make conditions more favorable for healing. The actual healing is something that we cannot control. We can guard against infection that will delay healing; we can put broken bones in line so that when they heal they will heal properly; but it is still God who heals. And He does it by making us change pace—making us pause in the hurry of life so that the healing can take place.

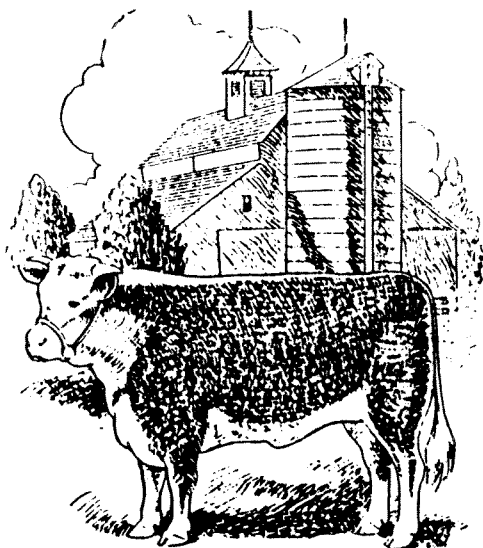
When a weary body rests we call it sleep. When a weary mind relaxes we call it recreation. When worn out soil is given a chance to grow grass and stop erosion and build up fertility, we call it conservation. When a weary spirit worries

about wrongdoing, and stained by guilt, finds forgiveness and a new start in life, we call it salvation. And God is the one who does the renewing.

We troubled, hurried humans could learn a lot about spiritual growth from the humble cattle that know enough to lie down in green pastures. We need to learn to come to the end of the day and lie down in simple trust, knowing we have gathered enough for one day; knowing that it is time to just lean back on the goodness of God and trust that tomorrow there will be plenty of time for more gathering. Most of us go through the green pastures of life too fast to really appreciate all that God has done for us. We need to take more time for chewing the cud.

Selected

Contributed by William A. Sheldon



The Position of the Council of Apostles

Regarding Some Issues of Today

The Apostle Paul gave a prophetic warning about the last days of mankind prior to the return of our Lord, Jesus Christ. "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, trucebreakers, 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. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

Paul accurately describes many of the issues we face daily in this life, sometimes requiring us to make personal decisions as

well as political decisions. We can see Satan's cunning and craftiness, causing the values and morals of society to migrate away from God's word, often under false precepts of creating a better and more peaceable world. In an effort to assist the Body of Christ to remain focused on God's truth for mankind, we submit our position, based upon God's word, regarding some of the issues we face in this dispensation of time.

I. We believe in the sanctity of marriage as established by the Lord in the beginning as being a union between one man and one woman. Any other type of relationship, such as homosexuality, polygamy, multiplicity of marriages, common-law marriage, and cohabiting are not sanctioned by God and are disharmonious with the plan for His creation. Jesus reaffirms God's perfect will concerning marriage, "But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his

wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" Mark 10:6-9.

We believe a great deal of thought, prayer and consideration should be given to the selection of a mate. One should endeavor to find a companion who will help them to grow in the gospel. A mutual belief in Jesus Christ and His word will be the foundation upon which to build their relationship. As the prophet Amos asks, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. Ample warning has been given to discourage the union of a believer and a non-believer in Christ, for their goals and priorities of this life are not the same. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14.

II. We believe in the sanctity of human life and consider

it a precious gift, which was created in the image of God. The taking of human life by abortion as a means of birth control, euthanasia, violence or suicide are all disobedient to God's commandment, **"Thou shalt not kill"** Deuteronomy 5:17. We believe life begins in the womb, at the time of conception, and should end when the Creator calls upon the soul to depart this flesh, according to His will and purpose, and return unto Him which gave life. This is not meant to condemn the use of deadly force for defense and preservation of your own life or that of another, or participation in war for the preservation of the nation's liberty. **"Nevertheless, the Nephites were inspired by a better cause; for they were not fighting for monarchy nor power; but they were fighting for their homes, and their liberties, their wives, and their children, and their all; yea, for their rites of worship, and their church; And they were doing that which they felt was the duty which they owed to their God; for the Lord had said unto them, and also unto their fathers, That inasmuch as ye are not guilty of the first offense, neither the second, ye shall not suffer yourselves to be slain by the hands of your enemies. And again, the Lord has said that ye shall defend your families, even unto bloodshed; therefore for this cause were the Nephites contending with**

the Lamanites, to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion" Alma 20:50-52. Neither does it condemn the state's right to effect capital punishment on those who have shown a disregard for the sanctity of another's life. **"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"** Genesis 9:6. (See also Alma 19:99-101.)

III. We believe God has granted man the gift of knowledge, skill and ability wherein he can perform medical procedures and create medicine, which not only helps to preserve life but improves the quality of life for many of the afflicted. **"And there were some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year was very frequent in the land; But not so much so with fevers, because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared, to remove the cause of diseases to which man was subject by the nature of the climate"** Alma 21:75,76. These resources are to be used wisely, but with the understanding that our dependence is on the Lord as the Divine Healer.

IV. We believe our bodies to be the temple in which the spirit dwells. **"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and**

that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16. For this reason we believe our body should be treated with respect for the way God has created it. Believers should not deface one's body by tattooing, body piercing, or adorning it with attire indicative of a godless person.

We also believe the internal body should not be desecrated by the use of alcohol, all tobacco products or illicit drugs. **"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are"** 1 Corinthians 3:17.

Furthermore we believe our bodies should be presented in modest and appropriate attire which would neither offend nor cause another to lust after the flesh. **"And they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely..."** Alma 1:41.

V. We believe our actions and conduct should exemplify Christ and be a light of truth unto all who see us. **"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying"** Romans 13:12, 13. Not only our actions but our words and manner of communication should show forth the light of Christ. **"Be not de-**

ceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” 1 Corinthians 15:33. Today’s society has made the use of profanity, slang, vulgarity and crass comments a common practice, not only among the commoners and criminals, but also among the leaders of nations and business. We need to resist being kindred to the common man of today, for each of our words fall upon the Lord’s ears, and we will stand accountable. **“But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish” Mosiah 2:49.** (See also **Matthew 12:34-37.**)

VI. We believe in the support of our government by being a law-abiding citizen, paying taxes and seizing the opportunity to exercise our right to vote for those issues and candidates that support moral and Godly principles.

We believe no ruler exercises control except God permits; a nation, its rulers and people stand accountable for their choices. We as Christians need to be obedient to the laws of the land, when these laws are not in contradiction to God’s law, for this is God’s decree. Those who resist authority also resist God. **“Let every soul be subject**

unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” Romans 13:1-7. (See also **Colossians 1:16 and Mosiah 11:23-66.**)

We believe anti-government attitudes and militias should not be found in our midst. We acknowledge government as God’s plan; submission is required and rebellion is deemed evil. **“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it**

be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” 1 Peter 2:13,14.

We believe using disruptive protests is contrary to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Satan’s tools are anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, violence, deceit and overbearance. These are not appropriate qualities for believers. **“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;)” 2 Corinthians 10:3, 4.** Our weapons against the adversary are, **“...truth...righteousness...gospel of peace...faith...salvation...the Word of God...and prayer...” Ephesians 6:12-20.** (See also **Romans 12:17-21.**) Not only is violent protest contrary to God’s word, but it also shows a great lack of faith in God being mighty to deliver. **“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities” 2 Peter 2:9,10.** (See also **Alma 14:48-54.**)

VII. We believe the entertainment industry exerts an un-

godly influence upon our society and dominates too much of people's time through the medium of movies, television, professional sports, literature, music and the Internet. This industry has become most profitable by arousing and stimulating the human senses and carnal lusts through highly technical, fast pace, suggestive or seductive words and displays. These techniques can cunningly program, influence and instill the world's values in their audience rather than God's values. The Lord has created man to work. **"Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest:..." Exodus 23:12.**

The **"rest"** we are to engage in on the seventh day is a **"rest"** unto the Lord, not unto the flesh. Certainly we need to spend some time from the cares of our labors, but the utmost care should be given that we are not finding our refuge in that which will influence our mind to evil. **"Neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" 1 Timothy 5:22.** We encourage the members of The Church of Christ to put into practice family activities which promote a simpler and less technical standard of life that will instill Godly values and thoughts. **"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise,**

think on these things" Philippians 4:8.

VIII. In a day where the majority of churches have an open communion, we believe the Lord has commanded us, through His written word, to practice a closed communion. **"And now behold, this is the commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall not suffer any one knowingly, to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it, for whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to his soul; Therefore if ye know that a man is unworthy to eat and drink of my flesh and blood, ye shall forbid him;..." 3 Nephi 8:60,61.** The reference to **"unworthy"** is not to mean we think of ourselves as being better than others, for as the text states, **"Nevertheless ye shall not cast him out from among you, but ye shall minister unto him, and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name" v. 61.** It does mean we have entered into a covenant with our Lord, through repentance and baptism under the hands of one with the authority to perform such an ordinance. The invitation is extended to all to be partakers in His sacrifice. **"And if it so be that he repenteth, and is baptized in my name, then shall ye receive him, and shall minister unto him of my flesh and blood..." 3 Nephi 8:62.**

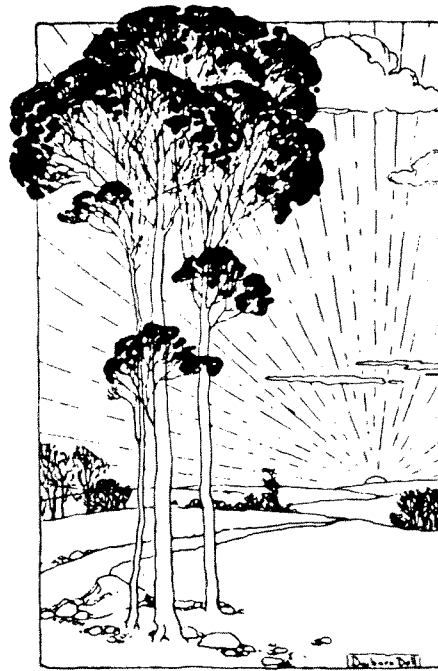
In conclusion, we believe those of the **"body of Christ"** are commissioned to be the light in a dark world, commanded to do those things which Christ himself would do, and to preach the truth and fullness of the gospel. We understand our position is in contrast to the general opinion of the world, and not necessarily politically correct. Practicing the principles from the word of God concerning these issues will make us considerably different than the world. We have been called out of the world, called to be a peculiar people, called to be different than society because we live after the things of the Spirit, not the flesh. **"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" Ephesians 4:1-3.** To do this we must never depart from the written word of God. **"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" 2 Thessalonians 2:14,15.**

Respectfully Submitted,
The Council of the Apostles

Testimony of Bob Oldham

The testimony of my conversion to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) begins when I first started attending the Edgewood Congregation of the R.L.D.S. I attended the second Sunday morning service without talking to anyone, except with maybe a nod or "hello." After the service, an elder followed me to my car and introduced himself. We became very good friends and I became very involved with the different functions of the congregation.

About six months later, I was administered to by two of the elders, and as I stood and shook hands, thanking them both, one said, "Bob, I don't know why, but I feel led to instruct you to follow the prompting of the Spirit." The next Sunday at 11:00, I had taken my normal seat in the rear. Suddenly, it was as though I was above every one looking down on them. Then a voice asked, "Do you love these people?" As I looked at the people, my eyes stopped at one man and I had to



PATHLIGHTS

admit that I feared him. It was not fear of his harming me, but, rather, that I was so uncomfortable about him that I would rather not be around him. Then I saw the members of what at that time I called "Jen's church" (the East Local of the Church of Christ—Jen is Bob's wife, Jen-

nifer). Another question came, "Do you love these people?" With no reservations, the answer was yes! Again, I was brought back to the congregation where I was sitting and the question was asked once more. As I looked over the congregation, I still feared the one man. The people of the East Local appeared another time, followed by the familiar question. My answer was still quick and unreserved, "Yes!"

Now I prayed that if I was not supposed to be where I was, He would make it possible for me to leave without making a scene. I sat a moment, then offered the same prayer again. For the third time, the petition went up. Immediately a song was called for and, as we stood, I knew that this was my chance. I walked out. My friend was standing talking to someone; he looked right at me, but said nothing. This was not like him.

Not knowing what to do or where to go, I went and had a cup of coffee. There I felt led to go to

"Jen's church." Now I had made a pact not to join her church. I had been baptized into the R. L. D. S. and I thought I would be turning my back on the Holy Ghost and committing the unforgivable sin. However, as I sat in that cafe, I knew I should go to "Jen's church."

As I drove there, I wondered why. Soon I was given the answer. When I arrived and went to be with Jen and the children, she had a look of absolute disbelief on her face. Elder Frank Fann was in charge that day. After the service, for some reason, both priesthood members went to the back of the church before anyone got up. Jen went without me to talk to Frank. He told her that I had a great decision to make. I had not told anyone about my experience or why I had come to the East Local that morning.

At work, I decided not to say anything about the previous Sunday. I would just attend "Jen's church" for awhile. Wednesday evening at prayer service I kept praying that I would say nothing about why I was there. I didn't know what prompted me, but I was the first one to stand and bear testimony...of the whole experience. I finished by saying that I was not going to join this church but, if they would have me, I would like to attend for awhile. A

moment later Frank stood to give a testimony about the peace he felt here; then he stopped and tried to control strong emotion. When he again spoke, it was under the influence of the Spirit. Counsel was first given to the person in charge and then the following was given to me: "And to My servant Bob, I have tugged at your heartstrings many times; you know where you are supposed to be."

Afterward I asked Frank if I had properly understood that this was to mean I should join the Church of Christ. He said that was what he understood.

I asked to have the baptism set as soon as possible. It was set for the following Sunday, March 23, 1976 (my birthday!). I was still concerned about turning my back on the Holy Ghost—I spent the rest of the week waiting for another confirmation. On Sunday, we spent the time between the morning service and my 3:00 P.M baptism at the home of friends. I remember, as we drove to church, Jen was saying that, at this time, I was forgiven all my sins. As we reached the church, I felt the need to pray again. I prayed that if this was not His will He would allow me a way to get out of it, no matter what.

As we walked into the water, I put the matter in my Father's

hands and asked Him to forgive me if I was wrong. Still I knew I was supposed to be there. As I changed my wet clothes, I still felt so much fear that I cried. Frank put his hand firmly on my shoulder and told me he felt Larry Beem should be the spokesman and he should assist in the confirmation. Sitting down in front, I remember feeling very, very cold from my waist to the top of my head. As they placed their hands on my head, I wished they could warm me. Then, when Larry called for the Holy Ghost to be placed upon me, the cold moved up in a wave from my waist through the top of my head, followed by the warmth I had asked for. I knew that I had received the Holy Ghost and had not committed the unforgivable sin, but had, rather, heeded the call to Christ's Church. Through this experience I was taught that, as a servant of Jesus Christ, my responsibility is to GO, BE, and DO as Christ instructs! After the confirmation service, two people, one of them Church of Christ and the other an R. L. D. S. member, came to me at different times, both giving the very same testimony of the Spirit surrounding and attending my baptism and confirmation.

ANNOUNCEMENT

DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER

THE COUNCIL OF APOSTLES IS SETTING ASIDE WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2000, 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, ELDERS AND THE VACANCY WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF APOSTLES, 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. PASTORS AND LOCALS ARE ENCOURAGED TO OPEN THEIR CHURCH DOORS AT TIMES THROUGHOUT THE DAY THAT THOSE WHO ARE ABLE MAY MEET TOGETHER. WHO KNOWS WHAT GOOD THINGS THE LORD HAS IN STORE FOR US IF WE BUT SEEK HIM TOGETHER.

IN GOSPEL BONDS,
APOSTLE MICHAEL MCGHEE
FOR THE COUNSEL OF APOSTLES

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

It appears that winter has arrived in Michigan. It seemed for a while that we were going to have a green Christmas, but that has changed with our first real snow of the season on December 15.

Attendance has been down quite a bit lately. Grant and Pride Haines left for the sunny south some time ago; Sister Lois Heath spent a couple of weeks with her daughter Betty in North Carolina; Elder Aaron Heath was at Bradley one Sunday filling in for their pastor; Elder Adam Porter has been visiting the Flint Local; and Tony and Annette Bazinaw have been on vacation, so our small congregation was made even smaller with the absences of many of our members from time to time.

We had a wonderful get-together with the Bradley folks on December 5. We participated in a wonderfully uplifting sacrament and prayer and testimony service, after which we enjoyed a delicious holiday potluck. After dinner, we had a special program of music and readings, with excellent participation by

young and old alike. It's really encouraging to see the young people of the church take such an active part in these programs.

On December 19, our local presented our annual Christmas program, consisting of the reading of scripture from Isaiah, St. Matthew, and the Book of Mormon prophesying of the birth and suffering of our Savior and the story of His birth. We were happy to have with us at this service Brother Charles and Sister Jeanne Brantner, who were in Michigan spending part of the holidays with their family. Besides participating in the program, Brother Brantner was pressed into service to preach the Sunday morning sermon. He read from Matthew 14:45-46, which is the parable of the pearl of great price; Galatians 1:6-9, in which they were warned not to preach any other gospel than that which they had received; and Romans 10:15, which asks "How shall they preach except they be sent?" Brother Brantner pointed out that nowhere do you find where anyone was given the authority to preach anything other than what was

taught by the Apostles of old, and that it was necessary to restore that authority in the last days. Brother Brantner asked that when we celebrate this time of the year and the birth of Christ that we also remember that He made a great sacrifice for us.

At this time of year, as we celebrate the birth of the Son of God, it is hoped that we all remember the real meaning of Christmas and what we really should be celebrating. Let's all be grateful to God for the many wonderful blessings each and every one of us has received, and be especially thankful for the gift of His Son who took upon Himself the sins of the world and gave His life that we might have the chance for eternal life.

May God's blessings be with each and every one of you as we face the challenges of another new year.

*Your Sister in Christ,
June Haines
Reporter, Ravenna Local*

To all local churches and all members in Missouri and elsewhere who are interested:

In our Missouri Reunion Committee meeting in August, it was decided that we would not set a date for the 2000 Missouri Reunion until a date for the Teen Challenge 2000 Youth Camp was set. Recently the date for the Youth Camp was set, so here are the official dates for the Youth Camp, the Missouri Reunion, and the August Ministers' Conference:

TEEN CHALLENGE 2000 YOUTH CAMP: JULY 30-AUGUST 4, 2000

2000 MISSOURI REUNION: AUGUST 4, 5 & 6, 2000

2000 AUGUST MINISTERS' CONFERENCE: AUGUST 7, 8, & 9, 2000

Roland Sarratt

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