

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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And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things.

—*Moroni 10:4-5*—

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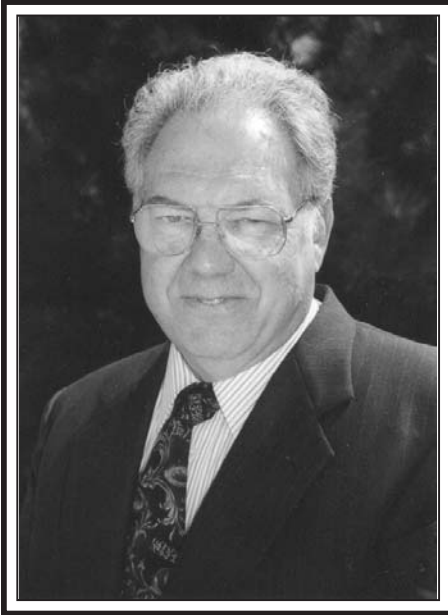
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

ARTICLE

My Testimony of the BOOK of MORMON



By Roland Sarratt

It would be difficult to say how many people in the world today believe that the Book of Mormon is the word of God. To be on the safe side I would merely say there are thousands of people who believe it. Just how many of them who have done as Moroni has admonished us to do and prayed over it to know it is the word of God is yet another question.

I was greatly blessed to be born of parents who believed the Book of Mormon, and I was raised to believe it was the word of God along with the Bible. When I was in my teens my father challenged me by telling me of his experience of praying to God to know if the Book

of Mormon is the word of God. Apparently he felt it necessary to have a witness of its truthfulness and wanted me to have that witness also. I didn't feel inclined to do so at that time, but later the Spirit of God prompted me to read and pray over the Book of Mormon. I received a spiritual experience so remarkable that it has remained with me throughout my life. The Spirit rested on me with great power and stayed with me for several days.

The two statements of witnesses printed in the front of the Book of Mormon have always impressed me as being especially important. Nephi explains it thus:

"Wherefore, by the words of three, God hath said, I will establish my word. Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses; and he proveth all his words" (2 Nephi 8:5, 6).

In His wisdom God gave more than sufficient witnesses to prove His words. First there were three witnesses who gave their testimony of having been shown by an angel the plates from which Joseph Smith, Jr. translated the Book of Mormon. Then there were eight others who gave their testimony of having been shown the plates by Joseph Smith, making a total of twelve witnesses, which included Joseph Smith himself. With this cloud of witnesses, it is of great consequence for those who have

To believe in the Book of Mormon is to believe that God provided Joseph Smith with the means to translate it.

the opportunity to know the truth and turn away in unbelief.

It is most important to consider the means by which the Book of Mormon was made available to this English-speaking people at that particular time. Inasmuch as it was translated from an ancient language (reformed Egyptian), it had to be done in a miraculous way to be correct.

To believe in the Book of Mormon is to believe that God provided Joseph Smith with the means to translate it. The translation was done as it was in ancient times with the instrument that God provided. In the Book of Mormon, that instrument is referred to as the interpreters. Joseph Smith referred to it as the Urim and Thummim. The name, Urim and Thummim, is in the Bible, which indicates a divine means to receive messages from God using some type of instrument. That name is not in the Book of Mormon.

Over the years I have read and studied the scriptures referring to the translation of ancient records and Joseph Smith's account of his translating the Book of Mormon. I have pictured in my mind Joseph using the interpreters much like we use our eyeglasses to look through to read the plates. I was content to accept such as the simple truth with no reason or desire to think otherwise.

Then came the day I read David Whitmer's book, *An Address To All Believers In Christ*, in which he gives his description of the process of translation. David's version was quite different from what I had envisioned, but I wasn't convinced he was right. Inasmuch as he was one of the three witnesses, I felt it necessary to begin a search for the truth of the matter.

David said Joseph used a seer stone, which he placed in a hat. By putting his face into the hat Joseph was able to read words that appeared to him, and he dictated those words to the scribe. This might be convincing except for one thing: did Joseph use a seer stone rather than the interpreters, or, as he called them, the Urim and Thummim?

As I searched and read various books and pamphlets and discussed this with others I soon found this to be somewhat a controversial subject among restoration people, and also among some of the members of the Church of Christ. Some had done great research, including testimonies of people outside of the restoration. To me this compounded the matter. Why would the testimony of someone who does not believe in the Book of Mormon, nor the means by which it was translated, be of any significance to one who has accepted the restored gospel?

In trying to answer that question I came upon something that began to clear up the matter somewhat. Most of my confusion came from testimonies of second and third hand witnesses, people who repeated what they heard from somebody else, but who didn't actually witness the process of translation. The Lord never used second hand witnesses to establish a truth, only first hand witnesses. He gave us twelve right from the beginning of this work.

In view of this fact I begin to review the information given by those who had first hand information. Joseph Smith told of his experience of translating 116 pages from the plates and having them lost by letting Martin Harris take them to show his wife and family. The plates and the interpreters were taken from him and also the gift to translate. His testimony is that he received the plates and the "Urim and Thummim" after he had sufficiently repented of his error. After a time he continued translating with Oliver Cowdery as a scribe. When the translation was completed the plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from him again. Joseph's account was printed in the church paper, "Times and Seasons," while Joseph was editor. This was a first-hand account given in 1842. Joseph was fully aware and responsible for what was printed at that time.

Oliver Cowdery gave his first-hand account earlier in October 1834 in a letter he had written and also printed in the "Messenger and Advocate" while he was editor. His statement is this: "Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated, with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, 'Interpreters,' the history, or re-

cord, called 'The book of Mormon.'" Oliver was also fully aware and responsible for what was printed at that time.

David Whitmer's book was printed in 1887 when he was in his early eighties just prior to his death. Throughout his book he consistently referred to the seer stone as being the instrument of translation and revelation used by Joseph Smith. Although there are some very questionable statements in his book concerning Joseph Smith and the church, I felt to give him credit for being a first-hand witness, and his book of being a printed testimony. Considering his age he may not have been fully accountable for what was printed at that time.

Since I had two statements of testimony much closer to the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon by those who were most involved (Joseph and Oliver), I favored their testimonies and set aside David Whitmer's testimony as being less accurate. This did not satisfy me, however, because I had a great concern that many were being misled by false information. If there had not been so much interest in this matter by various history buffs, I could have just passed it off. My concern is not so much about the past, but rather, the future.

Anyone who has read the Book of Mormon knows that there are yet many records to come forth and they will need the divine implementation of translation. How we might expect them to be translated is of great importance in my mind. If we are already misguided by misinformation we can easily be deceived.

At one point I was greatly troubled over this and I went to the Lord in prayer. The Lord spoke to my mind and in answer asked me a

question: What do the scriptures say? Of course I had already searched the scriptures on the subject but I hadn't looked at them as being the real authority on the matter. Primarily I was trusting modern witnesses. This answer was somewhat of a rebuke inasmuch as we of the Church of Christ have accepted the Bible and the Book of Mormon as our standard of scriptures. (See Referendum Bill #1, 1977.) Should we not rely on them first and foremost?

In researching the scriptures the answer became obvious. The Bible tells of the Urim and Thummim but gives no physical description of them. In the Book of Mormon the only instrument used for translating ancient records is called interpreters. There is no reference given for a seer stone or any single stone used for translating records.

The description of the interpreters are given thus:

"And now he translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow. Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages; And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land, the iniquities and abominations of his people; And whosoever has these things, is called seer, after the manner of old times" (Mosiah 12:18-21).

Although God could have prepared any type of instrument for this work, the scriptures make it plain that He particularly chose the interpreters exclusively.

"Doubtless, a great mystery is

contained within these plates; and these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men" (Mosiah 5:83).

Just prior to this Ammon explains some particulars about the gift of translation:

"Now Ammon said unto him, I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records: for he has wherewith that he can look, and translate all records that are of ancient date: and it is a gift from God. And the things are called interpreters; and no man can look in them, except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not, and he should perish. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer. And behold, the king of the people who is in the land of Zarahemla, is the man that is commanded to do these things, and who has this high gift from God. And the king said, that a seer is greater than a prophet. And Ammon said, that a seer is a revelator, and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater, can no man have, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God" (Mosiah 5:72-77).

Following are the words the Lord spoke to the Brother of Jared which were given many centuries earlier but recorded for us by Moroni:

"And it came to pass that the Lord said unto the Brother of Jared, Behold, thou shalt not suffer these things which ye have seen and heard, to go forth unto the world, until the time cometh that I shall glorify my name in the flesh; wherefore, ye shall

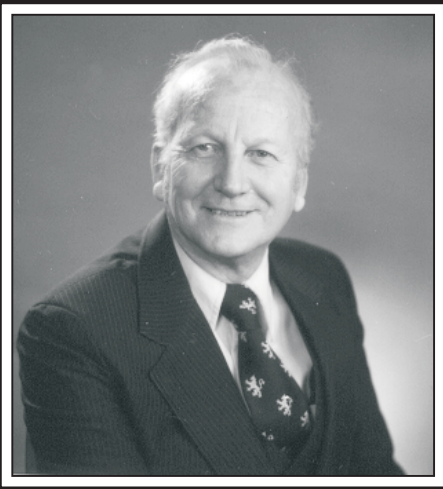
treasure up the things which ye have seen and heard, and shew it to no man. And behold, when ye shall come unto me, ye shall write them and shall seal them up, that no one can interpret them; for ye shall write them in a language that they can not be read. And behold, these two stones will I give unto thee, and ye shall seal them up also, with the things which ye shall write. For behold, the language which ye shall write, I have confounded; wherefore I will cause in mine own due time that these stones shall magnify to the eyes of men, these things which ye shall write" (Ether 1:86-89).

My only desire in presenting this testimony is to strengthen our faith in the holy word of God, as I have no pretense to any special wisdom or understanding of my own. My conviction is in the written word, which comes by way of great labors of holy men of God in ancient times and revealed to us by the power of God.

More than that I am convinced that God chose Joseph Smith as a prophet, seer and revelator to translate the Book of Mormon, not because he was perfect or infallible, but simply because he had faith. The Nephite record was translated in a miraculous way consistent to that which was done in ancient times.

Anything that takes away or confuses the order of God is not of God. Therefore I would ask that we all focus our attention on the promises God has made to His people in these last days and trust in His faithful and true witness, Jesus Christ, that we might be ready to receive what is yet to be brought forth in these last days.

Pondering the Words of JESUS CHRIST



By Apostle William A. Sheldon

Item 21: Attitude & Manner Of Prayer

Mat 6:5-13 *And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. [Thy kingdom come.] Thy will*

(Quotations are from the King James Authorized Edition of the Bible and from the 1908 RLDS Edition of the Book of Mormon; same chapters/verses as Independence Edition.)

be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [Give us this day our daily bread.] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

A difference in the Book of Mormon account (3 Nephi 5:97-106) is in the two parenthesized statements above, which are deleted from the model prayer as given by Christ to his Jewish disciples. "Thy kingdom come" is deleted because it had already taken place by the appearance of Christ to the Jews in Palestine, in the setting up of His Church. Why the second phrase ("Give us this day our daily bread") was deleted can only be surmised; perhaps an inadvertent deletion, either by Mormon or by Joseph Smith's scribe.

The term "lead us not into temptation" should bear some scrutiny. Apostle James truly said:

James 1:13-14 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for

God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

A better translation of Jesus' word in Matthew 6:13 on this point is in the Lamsa translation from the Aramaic dialect: "And do not let us enter into temptation." The evident intended sense is: Lead us through temptation so that we do not yield to it. This thought is emphasized further:

John 17:15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

Item 22: Asking of God & Receiving

Mat 7:7-11 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask

him? (Same in 3 Ne 6:19-23)

Mark 11:24 *Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.*

Mor 7:35 *And Christ hath said, If ye will have faith in me, ye shall have power to do whatsoever thing is expedient in me.*

The promises of God are sure, but contingent upon righteousness, a perfect faith, and a willingness that God's will shall prevail. Unfortunately, as we grow older, it generally occurs that we have lost our childhood faith and implicit trust in the parent, which should carry over into a realization that there is a Heavenly Father who is more faithful than any earthly parent. Can we then soberly ponder the verity of Jesus' statement concerning little children, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven"? Sadly, our basic trust is in the arm of flesh, whether it be self, our employers, the medical profession, etc.; and so it usually remains until the Lord removes that "arm" in His own inimitable way, and which He will undoubtedly do in His own time, both individually and collectively.

Joel 2:32 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*

James 1:6 *But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.*

Item 23: Forgiveness Enjoined

Matt 6:14, 15 *For if ye forgive men*

their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Same in 3 Ne. 5:107)

To trespass upon another person is "to pass the bounds of propriety or rectitude, to the injury of another; intrude offensively." How succinct (concise) this is, and sobering, as it should be to one who deliberately offends another! By the same token, it infers the need to correct an offense if possible, whether it is done knowingly or innocently. It bespeaks humility. Woe to the person whom God will not forgive!

Mos 11:137-140 *Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; And if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also; Yea, and as often as my people repent, will I forgive them their trespasses against me. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses: for verily I say unto you, He that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses, when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation.*

Item 24: The Acceptable Fast

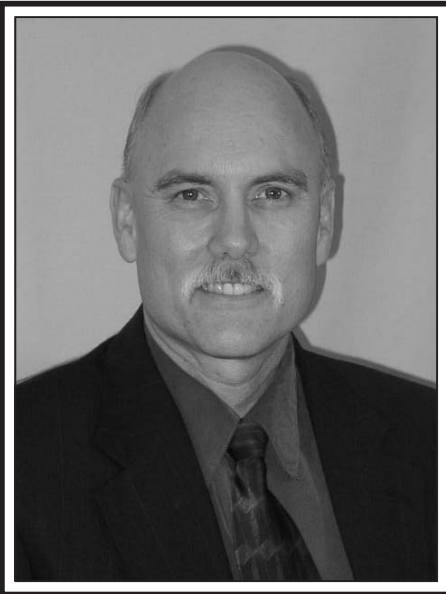
Mat 6:16-18 *Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* (Same as in 3Ne. 5:108-109.)

Briefly: Fasting is not simply

an abstinence from food; it is a single-minded search for God, to find His will, to the exclusion of worldly desires (appetites). This is usually entered with mighty, consistent, humble prayer. Yet, any effort to seek God must be done in the spirit of true charity, the pure love of God toward our fellow-man, or it is vain.

Isa 58:3-10 *Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity; And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:....*

Articles of Faith & Practice



By Elder Gordon McCann

Article #15

The local churches were designed of God to be the backbone of the church and would be a "light on a hill" for all who lived nearby to see. The Apostles and Evangelists of the general church were the men whom Jesus Christ had sent out into all the world "to preach the Gospel to every creature." Those who desired to follow Christ would

be placed in the care of a local church to be nourished by the word of God and to enjoy the fellowship of believers. After receiving baptism the convert would become a member of the local church, having opportunity to fulfill the commandments of God, becoming part of the body of Christ.

"And their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and the finisher of their faith. And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus..."

Article #15

We believe that local churches should govern their own affairs, and that general church officials should not dominate or interfere therewith. On invitation such general officers may, with propriety, give counsel and assistance. Local congregations are subject to the Articles of Faith and Practice and must be governed thereby. (Ref Bill #2, 1935, par 3-8)

(Moroni 6:5-6).

The local church of Christ would have at least

one ordained elder to be a pastor or “overseer” to care for the membership and their meetings would be conducted by the church, after the manner of the workings of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 6:9). This concept is found throughout the teachings and writings of the Apostle Paul.

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed” (Acts 14:23).

“For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee...” (Titus 1:5).

The disciples in the Book of Mormon established local churches under the elders’ care no different from what the Apostle Paul had done by the direction of the Holy Ghost.

“And it came to pass that the thirty and fourth year passed away, and also the thirty and fifth, and behold the disciples of

Jesus had formed a church of Christ in all the lands round about. And as many as did come unto them, and did truly repent of their sins, were baptized in the name of Jesus; and they did also receive the Holy Ghost” (4 Ne 1:1-2).

The chosen elders were commended unto the Lord to be servants to the local membership, wholly focused on their needs. The Apostles and Evangelists, on the other hand, would have the general watch care and responsibility for the bride of Christ throughout the world.

When the Apostle Paul was preparing to leave Ephesus, for what he believed would be his last opportunity with them, he called the elders of the church together so that he could speak to them. Paul left the elders with these words of exhortation and warning upon his departure to Jerusalem:

“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:26-28).

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

BOOK OF MORMON HEROES

The Promised Land at Last

REFERENCE: 1 Nephi 5:212-219, 236-253.

INTRODUCTION: In our last story Lehi and his family were sailing smoothly across the ocean to their new home. Nephi's brothers forgot that it was God who was blessing their journey. They forgot to thank Him. Instead they decided to celebrate with a wild party. When Nephi scolded them they became so angry that they tied him up. Then everything went wrong. A terrible storm came. Fierce winds blew the ship backward for four days. The Liahona, which had led them through the wilderness, stopped working. Huge waves were about to sink the ship! Finally, Laman and Lemuel were sorry and they untied Nephi. Nephi asked God to save them. The storm stopped and the Liahona began to work again.

Lehi and his little band of travelers were on their way again. After many days of sailing a cry was heard on deck, "Land! I see land!" Before long the tired sailors were wading through the water to the shore. What was that under their feet? Land! The promised land! They were here at last! Out came the bundles. Fathers, mothers, children—everyone carried something to shore. It was time to begin a new life.

After resting up the pilgrims began to move out to find a plot of land for each family. The supplies they had brought with them would come in handy now. They had honeybees and seeds to plant crops. The precious seeds went into the ground and God blessed them with rain. When harvest time came there was plenty to pick. The forest was full of animals. There were animals to hunt and animals that could help with the farm work and give milk: cattle, goats, donkeys, and horses. The rocks were full of metal: gold, silver and copper.

Soon Nephi and his brothers were busy melting, hammering and shaping the metal into tools. Then God spoke to Nephi. "Make metal plates to write on." When the plates were done Nephi sat down to write. Writing wasn't an easy job back then. Nephi didn't have pen and paper like we do. Each letter had to be chiseled out of the metal. Nephi wrote about their long trip through the wilderness and across the ocean. He wrote the prophecies that God had given his father Lehi. A prophecy is when God shows someone what is going to happen in the future. Sometimes it's just like looking at a picture of what's coming. Sometimes it's what's coming soon, and other times what's coming many many years in the future. God showed Lehi in a prophecy that evil people wanted to kill his family in Jerusalem. He warned Lehi to leave Jerusalem. God gave Nephi prophecies about the future too. Nephi began to write them. This is what Nephi saw:

In 600 years from the time that they left Jerusalem, Jesus, the Son of God would come to earth. He would first come to Jerusalem. He would teach people about God and some would believe Him. But the wicked people there would hate Him and kill Him. After three

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

days God would bring Him back to life. The people at Jerusalem who had killed the Son of God would be punished for a long time. But someday, after many, many years, they would believe in God again.

After Nephi finished writing on the metal plates he began to read them to his people. He taught them about God. Remember the brass plates they brought from Jerusalem, the plates that Nephi and his brothers had to work so hard to get? Nephi taught from the brass plates too. He did not want his people to forget God in the Promised Land.

Do you know where this Promised Land was? It was the Americas, North and South America. In our next story we'll find out about life in the Promised Land.



GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

BOOK OF MORMON HEROES
THE PROMISED LAND AT LAST

**What happened when Lehi and his family reached the Promised Land at last?
Circle the correct answers.**

What did Lehi and his family bring with them that was very useful in their new home?

- A. Seeds and honeybees
- B. Books and newspapers
- C. Tennis shoes and sweat pants

What did they find in the rocks in the new land?

- A. Flowers
- B. Metals
- C. Mushrooms

They melted and hammered the metal into...

- A. Automobiles
- B. Jewelry
- C. Tools

Some of the animals found on the new land were...

- A. Giraffes and zebras
- B. Cattle and horses
- C. Penguins and walruses

God told Nephi to make metal plates so that he could keep a record of...

- A. God's prophecies
- B. How tall everyone was
- C. How far it was to the watering hole

A prophecy is...

- A. A recipe for stew
- B. Directions for building a house
- C. God's picture of the future

God warned Lehi to leave...

- A. Nairobi
- B. Manila
- C. Jerusalem

God showed Nephi that Jesus would be born in...

- A. 30 years
- B. 600 years
- C. 200 years

The unbelieving people in Jerusalem would...

- A. Throw flowers at Jesus
- B. Throw stones at Jesus
- C. Kill Jesus

God would bring Jesus back to life in...

- A. Three days
- B. Six years
- C. 30 minutes

After many years the unbelieving people at Jerusalem would...

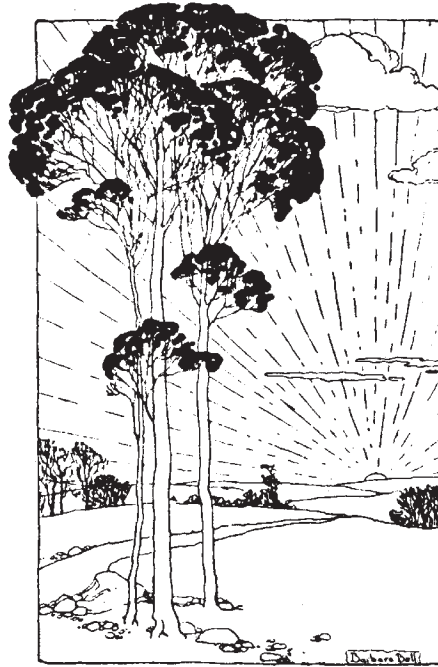
- A. Give Jesus money
- B. Believe in Him
- C. Give a party for Jesus

The Church

Nestled quietly in a small corner of earth sits my home away from home. This haven, only two blocks from my house, is in a rural area of this giant metropolis.

After careful placement of your vehicle and gathering your things needed for the service, you will walk through the soft, green grass under the giant mulberry tree toward the chapel. The air is filled with the sound of happy children trying desperately to play as hard as possible on the small playground before being summoned inside by their parents. The humble brick building lined with beautiful flowers planted there by Betty, our church "green thumb," is a comfortable and welcoming introduction to the chapel.

Approaching the large, dark, wooden double doors you are sure to be greeted by one of the many young boys, whose job it is to hold open the doors for the congregation. As you enter through this passageway, life is somewhat transformed into something more pure and comfortable than the outside world that surrounds us. It is like coming home after a long hard day. Here you find love, acceptance and peace like nowhere else. Everyone you pass as you make your way toward the chapel greets you with a friendly smile



PATHLIGHTS

and a hug and a never failing inquiry as to your well being. There are no strangers here.

You enter the chapel through the double doors that swing open and closed in a sort of welcoming silence. This is the most cherished place of rest and renewal; the place where the spirit of the Lord joins us at each service; the place where we all lift our voices in glorious unity in songs of praise. I love and adore this place as I do my own home. As you enter through the doors you will find yourself at the back of the chapel. There are two rows of long pews,

seven on each side, all standing at attention waiting to accommodate you. The songbooks are neatly arranged in their racks, patiently awaiting the opportunity to provide you with the words of an uplifting song. At the front of the chapel there is a small stage that provides the steadfast support and presentation of the beautiful wood pulpit, hand-crafted by one of the church elders. On the wall behind the pulpit hangs a simple picture of Jesus, portraying Him as a perfect man. To either side of this warm and familiar picture hangs a wrought iron candle holder decorated with flowers to mark the present season. Under the portrait of the Lord quietly sits a long table, accompanied by a chair on each side, waiting to serve the preacher and his assistant who are to introduce the speaker of the hour. Just below and in front of the stage there stands a table, sturdy and meek. It holds the seasonal flower arrangement and also serves to support, in gracious service, the sacrament bread and wine. In the corner to the southwest sits the ever-faithful piano, offering up its beautiful music when played ever skillfully by one of our many talented churchwomen.

Finally, you will take your seat, and as you do you will find a place of

comfort and rest as you wait for the service to start. As the sound of the people conversing one with another and the babies crying fills the room, the comforting and inspiring piano music will be playing in the background. All will come to a peaceful silence as the service begins. The familiar words, "It is time to begin our service, if you will all open your song books to page ___" warm my heart each and every time I hear them. After the congregation finishes raising their voices together in a blessed song of praise, all will kneel as an opening prayer is offered. Once again we will all take our seats and the children will scurry off in excited anticipation to their different Sunday School classes and the mothers will breathe a quiet sigh of relief.

The adults will remain in the chapel and hold their Sunday School Service. After an hour, Sunday School comes to an end and our at-

tentions are distracted by the children noisily returning to the chapel as they proudly present their parent with the project of the morning. Once again we will all rise and close the service with a song and prayer.

After the service has been opened and we are all once again comfortably settled into our seats, the preacher of the hour will be introduced. He will approach the pulpit to deliver his message to the congregation. The gently commanding voice of the preacher will fill the room, occasionally interrupted by a baby's cry or a small child's complaining protest. The sermon will be spread throughout the room from across the pulpit and reach out to grab us by the heart. You may be shaken, encouraged or chastised by the words of the preacher as he tries to touch you with his message, intended to help you through your journey in this world.

The service will come to an end

with the preacher thanking us for our attention and we will all rise one last time for a closing song and prayer. When the service is complete the little children will hastily push past their parents and race for the playground. The adults will linger for a time in the chapel, enjoying each other's company and conversation. A perfect day of love, warmth, support and encouragement is what you will find among these wonderful people, my wonderful family. All are sheltered by this old, humble and blessed building—the church.

Lorrain S. Vega

ANNOUNCEMENT

APRIL MINISTERS' CONFERENCE 2004

As instructed by the 1964 April Ministers' Conference be advised that the 2004 April Ministers' Conference will begin on Monday, April 5, 2004; "Conference Sunday," will be Sunday, April 4, 2004. The first business session will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday, April 5, 2004, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot. According to action taken during the 2003 April Ministers' Conference, Solemn Assembly will be held Friday, April 2nd, and Saturday, April 3rd, 2004, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot.

All committee reports should be forwarded to the Conference Secretary at least two (2) weeks in advance of the beginning of the first business session. As is always the case, it is requested that any business desiring to be placed before the 2004 April Ministers' Conference be forwarded in advance of the first business meeting so that document packets may be completed for distribution.

The mailing address for the above requested information is:

**Harvey E. Seibel,
April Ministers'
Conference Secretary
9800 E. 32nd Street S.
Independence, MO 64052**

*Your brother in the Lord's work,
Harvey E. Seibel,
2004 April Ministers'
Conference Secretary
Church of Christ
(Temple Lot)*

PHOENIX LOCAL REPORT

The past few months have been very busy for our local here in Phoenix. In November we hosted the annual Phoenix Reunion, which was very well attended. We had brothers and sisters from across the United States and Canada joining us for three wonderful days of fellowship. We were fortunate to have our church and our homes full of old friends, as well as new faces, that we have grown to love and cherish.

Our reunion began on Friday with a special service of thanksgiving to the Lord for the many blessings He bestows upon each one of us. Our prayers and testimonies were dedicated to praise and thanksgiving to God for His mercy and power in our lives. It served as a reminder to each of us that we can not forget to glorify God daily in our lives. Although we have been commanded to go to Him with our cares and concerns we cannot leave out our praise. This theme was evident throughout the entire reunion. The sermons called us to remember the power of the Lord and our duty to serve Him. The prayer and testimony services were filled with words of thanksgiving and praise. People were quick to stand to their feet to share their blessings, as well as raise their voices in prayer. I know I share my gratitude with many when I say thank you to all those who participated in the services. I appreciate those willing to share their talents of music and song, as well as each testimony and sermon that was given over the course of the reunion.

We have had many changes take place in our local recently. These changes have brought both smiles and tears, but the Lord has been there through them all. After nine long months of anxiously awaiting their arrival, we have been blessed with

two new babies in our congregation. Aaron and Amy Moser had their first, an adorable baby boy, Aidan Joseph Moser, in October. Bob and Liza Hedrick's third child, a girl, the beautiful Meleah Anne Hedrick, soon followed Aidan. Babies and moms are all healthy and adjusting well to their new surroundings. We have had quite a baby boom here in Phoenix over the past year, and see no end in sight just yet. Which is fine with all of us. We love having these little ones around. Another recent change took place right in my own family. My brother Tim Oar and Melissa Denham were married in December in Independence Missouri. Although snow filled the air, (which is something a Phoenecian like me is not used to!!) it was a beautiful wedding.

We have had many new additions to families, but have lost a few of those near and dear to us as well. Our sister Charlotte Hinkle, mother of Betty McIndoo, passed away in 2003, as well as Shirley Ely, mother to Duane Ely and Patsy McCann. Although she was not a member of the Phoenix local, her children and their families are. Those in our local who were privileged to know her remember her time with us fondly. Shirley and Charlotte will be missed. My grandfather Joe Moser also recently passed away. He was not a member of our church, but many knew his wife Donna Moser, as well as his children Jay Moser and Marlene Oar, who are long time members. His family and friends will also miss him. Memorial services were held for Joe and Charlotte here in Phoenix. Shirley's services were held in her home of Grand Junction, Colorado.

As always we have many of the ministry away from our local as they travel to destinations around the corner and

around the world. I'm thankful to be able to witness the spreading of the gospel first hand when these men share their experiences with us. Apostle Don McIndoo returned from a trip to Mexico to leave us again at the start of a new year. He and his son, Apostle Brian McIndoo, are on their first joint trip to Africa. Brian has been many times, but this will be Don's first. Joel and Hubert Yates recently returned from a trip to Washington where they ordained two elders, Harry Lloyd Shillam and Stanley Buscher, in one of the church's newest locals in Colville. Another father and son duo, Jim Yates, Sr. and Jim Yates, Jr. are traveling through the eastern part of the country on a six-week missionary trip. Jay Moser will be leaving at the end of January, along with his daughter Erica Moser, for a month long trip to Yucatan and the surrounding areas of Mexico. I know each of those traveling will have many wonderful experiences to share when they return. Our prayers are with them as they travel, and we hope to see them all home safely soon.

Until next time, our love and prayers here in Phoenix are with our brothers and sisters in the gospel, wherever they may be.

*Your Sister in Christ,
Rebecca Oar*

COLLINS LOCAL NEWS

Sometime toward the end of December the robins came back to this area! Now, if I'm not crazy, I don't believe they usually come back until February or so. I've noticed a lot of "happy bird sounds" in the early mornings too, and yet we're still having snow and ice from time to time. I saw a large group of pelicans flying over a few days ago; maybe they were bewildered, but it looked to me like they were headed back north! They must know something the weatherman doesn't! In either case, I find myself looking forward to spring and all the neat things I can get Allen to do with the yard, the garden, the edge of the drive-way and the pile of rocks out back.

It's been awhile since you've heard from our little local so I'll try to bring you up to date. Margarite Yates had hip surgery November 5th and is getting along very well now. So well, in fact, that she and Curtis are vacationing in warmer climates in their new 5th wheel trailer. They were headed for the Phoenix area, visiting family and friends along the way. We sure miss them and are looking forward to their return in April.

Sharon Leikness has also had hip surgery and is getting along wonderfully well. Both these ladies will give credit to God for their blessings and recovery.

My little Aunt Normie (Cook) is doing pretty good. She was in the hospital in October due to her asthma, but has not had any severe problems for awhile. Aunt Norm enjoys having her granddaughter, Keri Cook, close at hand, as Keri is working at Big Spring Care Center where Aunt Norm lives. Keri is Terry and Debbie Cook's daughter. She is a senior in high school and is able to work a certain number of hours a week, along with studying to be a C.N.A.

Donna (Cook) McCarter, Aunt Norm's daughter, had a heart attack, followed with by-pass surgery. Oddly enough, her heart attack was a blessing in disguise. Had that not happened, Donna was about to schedule a surgery she needs on her back. Her doctor said if she hadn't had the heart attack and by-pass surgery she might not have made it through the back surgery if they had gone ahead with it. Donna is healing and able to be up and going again. She is grateful to God for His wisdom and mercy. She still needs back surgery, but it will have to wait. Please remember her in your prayers. I know she would appreciate it.

Jack and Betty Martin are hoping to attend their grandson Greg Elwell's wedding the 28th of February. I hope this will work out for them. I could see the love she feels for her family as Betty told about this today at church.

I'll leave you with some sermon quotes to consider. May God bless you in this new year of 2004.

- *The main thing is to keep the Main Thing the main thing!*
- *We fear the faces of men more than we fear the face of God.*
- *If I speak with any strength, it's because The Master of All Men is holding me up.*
- *There's always "payday" at the end of life.*
- *When was the last time you got up and asked God how you could glorify Him that day?*
- *It's a test everyday and it's a pass or fail test.*
- *Our focus should not be so much on ourselves, but on others who we could help along the way.*

- *Let us always have an appetite for the truth and righteousness.*
- *We fall in two categories, part of the problem or part of the solution. We have choices to make.*
- *The Truth cannot be a lie.*
- *Baptism is required, not just happenstance.*
- *Looking at the serpent on the staff meant they'd have life NOW, baptism means having life LATER.*
- *There will always be problems, don't be discouraged.*
- *You could be touched by the one who's been touched by the One.*
- *We're all responsible unto ourselves, according to our understanding.*

*Your Reporter,
Czerna Kauffman*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Camp Teen Challenge 2004

Date: 4 January 2004
To: All Prospective CIT's
From: Bro. Robert Hedrick
RE: 2004 CIT Sign-ups

Prospective CIT's:

Happy New Year to all! The New Year is here and so it is time to start preparing for the Teen Challenge 2004. We are calling out to all prospective CIT's who would like to take the Challenge and sign-up for Camp.

It may seem early to sign up for camp; however, we need your help from the very start of this important service. As taken from Mosiah 1:49: "...that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God." We are **CHALLENGING** you to be in **SERVICE** of your God. **WE NEED YOU!!!** Below are a few details relating to camp.

When is Camp? Camp will be held this year from July 25th through July 30th 2004.

How do you sign up? That is the easy part. Please e-mail Bro. Bob Hedrick at (bobnliza@juno.com) or call at 602-494-9661.

When do you need to sign-up by? We are asking that you sign up to be a CIT no later than May 10th. We need your help in setting up classes and taking part in the planning process of camp.

Don't miss out on this great opportunity! Additionally, be thinking about any suggestions or ideas that you may have for a class at camp!

Don't delay, and sign-up today! We are looking forward to seeing you there!

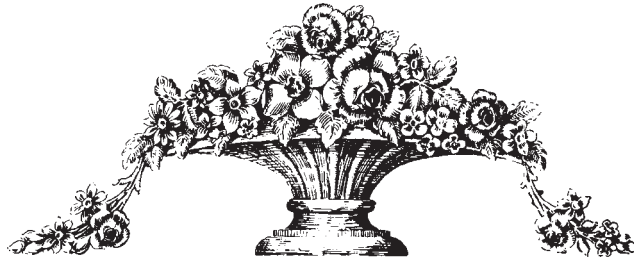
May God Bless,
Brother Robert Hedrick

P. S. Keep in mind the camp theme for this year. At your first chance, please look up and read the following: **Mosiah 2:13-17.**

OBITUARY

Shirley M. (Fash) Ely

November 8, 1924~November 24, 2003



Our beloved sister, Shirley May Ely, passed away Monday, November 24, 2003, at St. Mary's Hospital in Grand Junction, Colorado. She was 79 years old. Services were held in Grand Junction on November 29, 2003. David Larsen, pastor of the Orchard Mesa Local, officiated, assisted by Brother John Bell.

Shirley was born November 8, 1924, at Rocky Ford, Colorado, to James L. and Jewel Rickman Fash. She spent her childhood on the eastern slope of Colorado and in Oklahoma. She moved to Grand Junction in 1937 and graduated from Grand Junction High School.

On November 19, 1942,

she married Robert L. Ely at Grand Junction. They celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary a few months before Bob's death in May 2001. For about 50 years they lived in the house on the corner of 32 and B 1/2 Roads, just down the street from the Orchard Mesa Local.

Shirley worked outside the home for a number of years as a bookkeeper for several Grand Junction businesses. She enjoyed various crafts such as crocheting, embroidery and cooking. She was a great cook and spent many hours creating incredible desserts for church functions.

She was baptized into the Church of Christ on June 6, 1955. She remained a faithful

member until the end, and was always in her pew unless she was ill or the weather was really bad.

Shirley is survived by her children and their spouses, Duane and Kathy Ely of Phoenix, Arizona, and Patsy and Gordon McCann, also of Phoenix. Her three grandchildren, Michelle and Jared Ely and Jennifer McCann, all reside in Phoenix. She is also survived by two brothers, Ron Fash of Belaire, Texas, and Larry Fash of Piedmont, Oklahoma; and two sisters, Beverly Wilkerson of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Jimmy Jewel King of Cleveland, Oklahoma.

In addition to her husband, Bob, she was preceded in death by two brothers, Harold

and William Fash, and two sisters, Lois Ferrell and Donna Casey.

Reflections and memories from Shirley's friends and family:

John Bell: As I reflect on my many years of acquaintance with Shirley, I am reminded of a statement borrowed from John Wayne: "Success is not measured by your wealth, but in your worth."

David Larsen: Shirley loved to cook. You could gain weight by smelling her various favorite dishes and looking at her latest dessert. Along with her obvious testament to her love to cook, she always had a heartwarming smile to brighten everyone's day.

Jennifer Yates: Shirley was a wonderful woman. When Joel and I were on our honeymoon we traveled through Grand Junction and I remember being treated like family by Bob and Shirley. She was quite a hostess and a great example to those of us just starting a home, and a wonderful inspiration of how our idea of hospitality should be throughout our lives.

Joel Yates: I have so many wonderful memories of Bob and Shirley. My first memo-

ries were of staying at their house as a little boy when our family came to the Colorado Reunion. She had a love for kids that made you feel special when you were there. The love Shirley had for us kids never left as we got older, and every time I saw her and we greeted each other there was always such a warm expression of love that made me feel so good. I praise God for her example of faithfulness as she endured life's troubles, and for her example of service to her family, church family and friends.

Duane and Patsy: Our mother's love was evident by her joy of cooking for the pleasure of others. Her biscuits and gravy were a special treat enjoyed not only by her family but by the many who stayed at her home during the Colorado Reunion.

After our father's stroke in 1997 she devoted all her time and energy to his care until his death. She suffered kidney failure in 2000 and therefore was on dialysis for her remaining years. Although we will miss her, we know that God blessed her by taking her home to Him, away from the struggles of this life.

Shirley led her life in a way that influenced many people and those of us that were privileged to know her will be forever grateful for the example she set.

*Sister Karen Bell
Palisade, Colorado*

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CHURCH OF CHRIST CONFERENCES

The **2004 Ministers' Conference** (general membership) for the Church of Christ will commence Sunday, April 4. The business sessions will start at 9:00 A.M. Monday, April 5. A **Solemn Assembly** will be held prior to the conference, on April 2 & 3. All services will be held on the Temple Lot.

The **2004 Ministers' Conference** (priesthood membership) of the Church of Christ will be held Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, August 2, 3 and 4, at Independence, Missouri.

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

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Article of Faith, #1 (concerning God; earliest Restoration history)	God's Promises to Israel
Article of Faith, #9 - (concerning the Bible and Book of Mormon)	God's Purpose in America
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Christian Sabbath is the Lord's Day, The - Sunday	Priesthood—Divine Authority
Colored Tracts to Native Americans: 1) Book in the Stone Box, 2) Did you Know?, 3) Epistle to American Indians, 4) Promises of God and Straight Talk	Principles of the Gospel—Baptism
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	Why? (Amplifies absence of a First Presidency in Scripture)
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Church of Christ

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

Allow adequate advance time for handling and shipping, and for your own preview of the programs. Write to the AVVAA Committee, Church of Christ, P.O. Box 472, Independence, Missouri 64051-0472.

LAMP UNTO MY FEET, A (32 minutes)—Directed specifically toward American Indian viewers, compiled from three other programs.

LIGHT AT EVENING (27 minutes)—Story of the bringing forth of the book of Mormon and the restoration of the Church of Christ in the 1820's and 1830.

OUT OF THE DUST (45 minutes)—Tells the story found within the Book of Mormon.

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

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

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For a sermon on cassette tape write to Dan Lawrence, 8420 Lee's Summit Road, Kansas City, Missouri 64139; on video tape contact your local missionary.

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Send orders for Sunday School materials to Debbie Vogel, 403 West Colonel Drive, Independence, Missouri 64050. All materials are free of charge to members of the Church of Christ, except as noted. Donations will be accepted to cover postage.

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

Church History for Juniors—Includes a Teacher's Guide

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