

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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What Is Christmas, Anyway?

Suppose you were there in Bethlehem for the coming of our Lord,
Would you know the reason why He was much adored?

When you looked down at the Christ Child in His manger fast asleep,
Would you know that soon He'd grow and have the World to keep?

And if you chanced to watch Him, starting in His youth,
Would you also marvel at His messages of Truth?

And when they nailed Him on the cross all the World to see,
Did you bow your head and cry, "This is all for me?"

And when He hung upon the cross and suffered, bled and died,
Did you truly want to be there hanging by His side?

Unless you truly understand the events described above,
You'll never have a chance to know His everlasting love.

What is Christmas, anyway? It's more than a man on a reindeer sleigh;
It's more than presents on the floor when the Savior waits outside the door.

What is Christmas, anyway? It's the star that guided the Wise Men's way;
It's the special words of God's own Son—it's the words of the Savior for a job well done.

For all of these things express the joy for today we celebrate,
The birth of a child in swaddling clothes—the One they call most Great.

Unless you have the feeling for the sacrifice He made,
You will not understand the Plan of Life He laid.

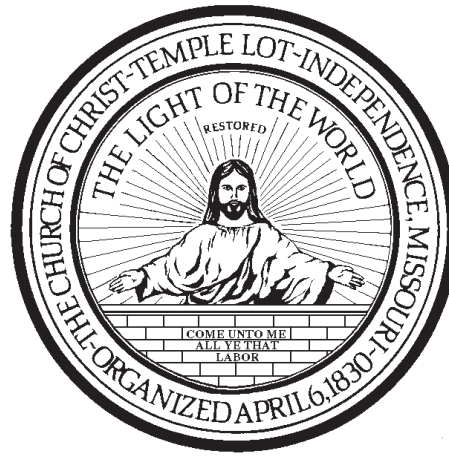
We need to understand His gift He gave to me and you,
We need to listen to His word to find what we should do.

"Dedicate your lives to me, and consecrate them too,
And recognize the gift of love I have given you."

—Sam Kidd

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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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

ARTICLE

Five Kernels



Priest Glenn Orsted

“Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written” (Ether 1:35).

“And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it

came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise; ...And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles; that they did prosper, and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain. ...And I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that they did prosper in the land; (1 Nephi 3:147-156).

Thanksgiving will soon be upon us. There have been many times of Thanksgiving throughout the scriptures, but the roots of our holi-

day are founded in that first Thanksgiving in the early 1600s here on this land. When we compare what we have to be thankful for this day to that which they had, I doubt those early settlers could scarce imagine what has resulted from their meager beginnings.

The Pilgrim fathers who landed at Plymouth Rock over 300 years ago knew nothing of the affluent times which you and I enjoy today in this great country of ours. The next time you and I are tempted to complain about inflation and the state of our economy, remember the following:

During that first long winter at Plymouth Colony, seven times as many graves were made for the dead as homes for the living.

Touching indeed is the picture of William Brewster, rising from a scanty Plymouth dinner, consisting of a plate of clams and a glass of cold water, to thank God “for the abundance of the sea and the treasures hid in the sand.”

The Pilgrims didn’t have much, but they possessed a great gratitude, and it was upon this very thing that America was built. These stalwart people, strong, devout and sincere

were the timbers upon which our nation was founded.

A custom developed from those early years which continues in at least some families to this day. It is referred to as the Five Kernels of Thanksgiving, or the Five Kernels of Corn. Before the Thanksgiving meal, a plate with five kernels of corn is placed on the table. This is in remembrance of the dire straits from which this nation emerged, as at one time that was the ration for each person – five kernels of corn per day. Each person at the table takes a turn and picks up a kernel of corn and says what they are thankful for.

We certainly have many temporal things to be thankful for, but in Psalm 103 by David, we can find five things to be thankful for, regardless of our temporal condition. Can you identify them?

“Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them. The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure. Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the

LORD, O my soul” (Psalm 103:1-22).



1. The Kernel of Forgiveness

Verse 3: *“Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;”*

Through Jesus Christ, we may be forgiven of our sins. They are tossed into the depths of the sea, or as verse 12 says: *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*

Do you ever think about why the east and west, rather than the north and the south? The north and south meet. If you go north long enough, you will be going south. If you go south long enough, you will be going north. BUT, if you go east, you will always be going east and if you go west, you will always be going west. THEY NEVER MEET!

This is the forgiveness of the Father, through his son Jesus Christ.



2. The Kernel of Redemption

Verse 4: *“Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;”*

Governor Neff, of Texas, spoke to the assembled convicts of penitentiaries of that state. He finished by saying that he would remain to listen if any man wanted to speak with him. When the meeting was over, a large group of men remained, many of them lifers. One by one

they each told the governor that he was there through a frame-up, injustice or a judicial blunder. Each asked to be freed.

Finally, one man came up and said, "Governor, I just want to say that I'm guilty. I did what they sent me here for, but I believe I've paid for it. If I were freed, I would do everything I could to be a good citizen and prove myself worthy of your mercy."

The governor pardoned this man. Why? Because, he admitted his guilt. So it is with us if we are to be redeemed from the awful sentence we're under. But there is a difference. We can't say that we've paid for any of it because as the old hymn says, "Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin has left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." If we will plead His blood, God will redeem us.

The Lord redeems not only our souls from hell, but He also redeems our lives from the clutches of the devil. Satan is bent on damning our souls and destroying our lives. But thanks be to God who redeems our lives from his power. All one has to do is take a look at our penitentiaries, sanitariums, hospitals, and half-way houses. They are filled with people whose lives are being destroyed by our enemy. Jesus said in Matthew 7:13-14,

"Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate,

and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

1 All healing is divine healing and all recovery from sickness, injury and surgery

All healing is divine healing and all recovery from sickness, injury and surgery is the result of the healing properties that God has built into our bodies.

But we praise God today with the Psalmist who said,

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD" (Psalm 40:2, 3).



3. The Kernel of Healing

Verse 3: *"who healeth all thy diseases;"*

When first considering this passage of scripture, I was reluctant to use it because it is difficult to reconcile it with the fact that God doesn't heal everyone who has an "incurable" disease. But I believe the Holy Spirit can help us to see three important truths contained in this verse.

is the result of the healing properties that God has built into our bodies. Medicine, surgery and therapy are merely extensions of God's healing ministry.

2 This verse doesn't say that God heals everyone's diseases, but that He heals all diseases. There is no disease or sickness which lies beyond His healing power—not even what we call "incurable." He is the Great Physician.

3 The main truth I learned is that the Psalmist is speaking to his soul. "Bless the Lord, O my soul," he said, "who heals all your diseases."

The diseases of the soul emanate from the virus of sin. Jesus identified this virus and its symptoms and disorders in Matthew 15:19-20:

"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen

hands defileth not a man."

Just as some disorders of the body can be cured by medicines and surgery, so the soul of man can be cleansed, purged, purified and made whole when God through the Holy Spirit is allowed to possess us completely.



4. The Kernel of Love and Compassion

Verse 4: *"who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;"*

A man gave the following remarkable testimony: "I got off at the depot one day as a tramp. For a year I begged on the streets for a living. I touched a man on the shoulder and said, 'Mister, please give me some money so I can have something to eat.' As soon as I saw his face, I recognized him as my father. 'Father, don't you know me?' I asked. Throwing his arms around me, he cried, 'I've found you! I've found you! All I have is yours!' Think of it! That I, a tramp, stood begging my father for a few cents, when for 18 years he had been looking for me to give me all he was worth."

How similar this is to the loving kindness and tender mercies of the Lord which accompany our lives every day.

Verse 13: *"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."*



5. The Kernel of Satisfaction and Renewal

Verse 5: *"Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."*

This reminds me of the words of Jesus, given in the Sermon on the Mount:

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

There's a great paradox here. We're satisfied but never satisfied. Imagine tasting your very favorite desert and this time it is the best ever! You eat until you are full and can't eat another bite, but you want more because what you have experienced makes you want to taste it again and again. So it is with righteousness. We're filled and the filling is so sweet and so rich and full that we want more.

But that's not the end. Verse 5 also says that God will renew my youth like the eagle's. The eagle is known for its size and strength.

This is the result of living a fulfilled, satisfied, spiritual life. I am constantly being renewed, refreshed, and revived in my soul and God is doing it all!

No wonder then that the Psalmist said, *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!"*

"And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of

Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:11-19).

Ten lepers met Jesus and had a life changing encounter with the Lord. When you break this story down to its simplest elements, it describes every Christian. We were outcasts from the Kingdom of God, on our way to certain death, but then we had a life changing encounter with Jesus. While we should never look back on the pleasures of sin, we should never forget where the Lord has brought us from. The Old Testament prophet Isaiah said:

"Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the LORD: look unto the rock whence ye are

hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged” (Isaiah 51:1).

In other words, look at where God has brought you from. Remember what God has done for you. Visit again in your mind the place where you first met God and His mercy and grace. However, what is so significant about these lepers who were healed is that out of the ten, only one returned to say thanks. There were nine who did not take the time to say thank you. If you were to infer the truth of this story on general humanity, we could say that nine out of ten people never really pause to give thanks for what they have.

A Christian commentator suggested some possibilities as to why the other nine never returned to give thanks. Keep in mind that these are only suggestions, but they reveal a whole lot about human nature.

- ◆ One waited to see if the cure was real.
- ◆ One waited to see if it would last.
- ◆ One said he would see Jesus later.
- ◆ One decided that he had never had leprosy.
- ◆ One said he would have gotten well anyway.
- ◆ One gave the glory to the priests.
- ◆ One said, “O, well, Jesus didn’t really do anything.”
- ◆ One said, “Any rabbi could have done it.”
- ◆ One said, “I was already much improved.”

And then there was one who returned to give God thanks. I want to share with

faces were hidden, representing that no form of intimacy could be known to them.

...We are born helpless into this world, and we are helpless to stand before sin and Satan.

you several truths from this passage of scripture that I hope will cause us to truly give God thanks for all He has done for us.



I. NOTICE THE LEPERS' CONDITION.

1 Most of us have heard stories of the horrors of having leprosy in Biblical times. It was a horrible disease to have. Not only was there the pain of the disease itself, but there was also the stigma that went with having the disease.

2 The Mosaic Law pronounced a leper as being “unclean.” They were not fit to enter into the tabernacle, or later, the Temple to worship. They could no longer live with their families, but the law required them to live outside the city (Numbers 5:2-3). The Law required that they rend their clothes as a sign of extreme sorrow, that their faces be covered and that they cry out “unclean” whenever anyone came close to them. Their

3 To be a leper meant no intimacy with anyone, no friendship with anyone; you were isolated and a total outcast. Leprosy was regarded as a disease which the Jews supposed to be inflicted for the punishment of some particular sin, and to be, more than other diseases, a mark of God’s displeasure. If you were a leper, you essentially lost everything: your family, your job, and your money.

4 Note that verse 12 of Luke 17 describes these lepers as standing “afar off.” Rabbinic tradition said that they had to stand at least 100 paces from anyone else. They could not even come close to Jesus.

5 The reason I have spent so much time in describing leprosy is because it is a picture of sin and what Satan wishes to do to every single one of you. *Eaton’s Bible Dictionary* says of this disease, “Leprosy was ‘the outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption; a meet emblem in its small beginnings, its gradual spread, its internal disfigurement, its

dissolution little by little of the whole body, of that which corrupts, degrades, and defiles man's inner nature, and

disease.

3 We like to think that we are sufficient, that we are capable of handling life, but

Grace is getting what you don't deserve and mercy is not getting what you do deserve.

renders him unmeet to enter the presence of a pure and holy God.”

6 I'm not going to equate leprosy with sin, but there are important similarities between them. Like the leper, we too were isolated from true intimacy. Like the leper, we too were outcasts (from the Kingdom of God). Like the leper, we too were in the process of losing everything to sin. And like the leper, we too were being destroyed by that which was in our bodies, the law of sin and death.



II. NOTICE THE LEPERS' CRY.

1 In verse 13 we are told as Jesus was about to enter into the city that these lepers, who had to stand afar off, began to cry, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

2 That was all that they could do. No physician could heal them, no medicine could cure them. They were completely helpless before the onslaught of this deadly

the truth is we are born helpless into this world, and we are helpless to stand before sin and Satan. We stand condemned by sin and we are totally helpless.

4 Grace is getting what you don't deserve and mercy is not getting what you do deserve.

5 They are begging the Lord to have compassion on them, to help them in their time of need.

6 Their only hope was placed on this man Jesus. Everything had come down to this moment, to this encounter with Jesus. Aren't you glad that when your only hope is placed on Jesus, He will be more than enough. Jesus had compassion on them and told them to go and present themselves to the priests, as the law commanded. The priest would inspect them and give them a clean bill of health so they could rejoin their communities and families (Leviticus 14:2).



III. NOTICE ONE LEPER'S CELEBRATION.

We are told that as they began their journey to the priests, they were cleansed or healed. What is significant is that out of the ten, there was one who reacted differently than the rest. The Bible says that he saw that he was healed, he turned back and glorified God and he came to Jesus and gave Him thanks.

Why did this one react differently? Here is the meat of the message. This is a sermon within a sermon. There are three distinctions between him and the others.

1 Note the perception of gratitude.

a) The Bible says, “*And one of them, when he saw that he was healed.*” The Bible says that he saw he was healed. Now the others no doubt knew that they were healed, but there was something different here. He took the time to note that he had been blessed. He realized that something wonderful had happened to him. He was sensitive to the power of Christ working in his life. His perception had entirely changed.

b) There is an old Jewish story that illustrates this point. There is a man who goes to the rabbi and complains, “Life is unbearable. There are nine of us living in one room. What can I do?” The rabbi answers, “Take your goat into the room with

you.” The man is incredulous, but the rabbi insists. “Do as I say and come back in a week.” A week later, the man comes back looking more distraught than before. “We cannot stand it,” he tells the rabbi. “The goat is filthy.” The rabbi then tells him, “Go home and let the goat out. And come back in a week.” A radiant man returns to the rabbi a week later, exclaiming, “Life is beautiful. We enjoy every minute of it now that there’s no goat — only the nine of us.” The situation was the same as at first, but now his perception had changed. He realized that he was blessed to begin with.

c) Do we really perceive the ways that God has blessed us? Not a one of us is starving, not a one of us is naked, but most importantly, if you are a Christian, you have been given everything through Christ Jesus our Lord. The devil will do his best to keep your mind off the blessings of God. He will constantly tell you how bad you have it, of how everything is wrong in your life. You see, it’s when you begin to realize how much you have in the Lord that you will truly begin to be thankful, and when you are thankful, your heart will abound with love for the Lord that has so graciously given all to you.

d) An unthankful Christian is a defeated Christian, for he/she has lost their joy.

2 Note the priority of gratitude.

a) When he saw that he was healed, he turned around. Now the Lord had given the

this man, “*Arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole.*”

An unthankful Christian is a defeated Christian, for he/she has lost their joy.

command to go to the priest, but he delayed, he turned around and went back to the Lord. Why didn’t the Lord rebuke him for this? The reason is because this man realized the priority of gratitude and worship. I believe that this man fully intended to obey what the Lord had told him to do, but he realized that he had a higher calling that must come first. If you don’t give God thanks, it won’t be long until your obedience just becomes a job to do, you lose the meaning of what God is wanting you to do. You become unthankful. It is fitting and proper to give thanks and praise to the Lord for what He has done in your life.

3 Note the perfection of gratitude.

a) As he drew near to where the Lord was, he glorified God. The Greek means that he made the Lord glorious, he manifested the worth of the Lord. He came to Jesus and fell down before Him in perfect submission and gave Him thanks. The Lord asked the question, Were there not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Then note what He told

b) This was something that the others did not receive. Ten were “healed”, but only one was made “whole” – the thankful one. Only one was complete.

Remember to be thankful!

Remember: Throughout time the majority of mankind has been in slavery. At minimum wage in the United States, you are at the 50% mark for the world for income and in the top 10% for history of mankind.

If you lost all your possessions, you still have a loving God and Savior that laid down his life so that you might be forgiven, redeemed, healed, loved and renewed – and be complete in this life and dwell in eternity with our Heavenly Father.

Thanksgiving – remember the 5 kernels of corn; be thankful and “whole.”

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

POEM

When I Take the Time

When I take the time, a moment, to have a
thought,
Chills come up from the bottom of my feet.
When I think of the nations, the turmoil,
The decisive battles yet to be fought.
Even this great land, that was once desirable,
Has sold her birthright and polluted her shores.
Her pillars of old are unrecognizable.
Do you really want to know what things will be
burned?
His truths are told on every page that is turned.
The sword of his justice is about to sever,
Men: from their frivolous lifestyles,
From their idols, their pride, their rebellion,
Their ignorance, and from the one's they love.
It has been decreed and determined it will be
forever.
The Lord our God is about to reveal,
The Word, coming in His glory with the powers
of heaven,
To minister, as promised, to the House of
Israel.
For out of the books which have been written,
Shall the world be judged, and the wicked
smitten;
But before that great and dreadful day of the
Lord,
Elijah the prophet will now be heard.
This is the time and place to start,
The pure love of Christ must dwell in your
heart.
He'll search it with candles, no dark spot can
remain,

Come clean before him, remove every stain.
Now, and with joy, take upon you the name of
Christ,
Let him be your silver and gold,
Your treasure, your life, to have and to hold.
He abundantly pardons, blesses and heals,
He bid us to His wedding, His kingdom as well,
All of this hope His gospel reveals.
So will you sing praises with the choirs above,
Will you bridle your passions and vain
admiration
For that kind of love?
All things are His, He comes for His own,
He built them a city near to His throne.
But, still to come are sorrows and trials,
Now the world will see, He meant what He said,
As He makes bare His arm, there can be no
denials.
But, at the end of it all, He has healing in His
wings,
A new life, a new way, a new world,
You'll be so amazed at all that He brings,
That you'll thank Him forever, your Lord and
your King.

Kathy Cloyd, Phoenix Reunion 2009

REPORT

Greetings From Telephone Land

In September, 2009, our little telephone conference local celebrated our two year anniversary with a service of prayer and testimonies of praise and thanksgiving. When we had the first meeting of our virtual local in September 2007, four telephone lines participated in the conference call. The participants on that initial conference call service included Elder John Case and his household, Elder Gerry Case and his household, and Elder Benny Case and his household. Lately, we have had as many as 15-20 telephone lines on the conference call.

A website has been established for our local, which includes a prayer list, testimonies, a calendar of upcoming services, Sunday School materials, and links to other Church of Christ websites. The website is:

<http://churchofchrist-southernoh.org/default.aspx>.

During our two plus years, we have been blessed to have sermons from visiting ministry, including Apostle Buzz Brickhouse, Apostle Joel Yates, Elder Bob Hedrick, Elder Don Hitt, Elder Marvin

Case, Elder Don Case, Elder Jim Case, Elder Hube Yates, Elder Bob Oldham, Elder Mark Hill, Elder Rodger Bruner, Priest Shaughn Sprague, and Teacher Dan Lawrence. Sermons are recorded and available on the website. You can listen to the sermons on the website or download them to an MP3 player and listen at a later time.

In March 2009, we held our first election of officers. Elder Benny Case was elected Pastor, and Elder Gerry Case, who had been acting as Pastor, was elected Assistant Pastor and Sunday School Superintendent.

Sunday School begins at 9:00 a.m. Central time. Sunday School is followed by prayer service on the first Sunday of each month, and preaching the other weeks. In October 2009, we added a second service to our week. Tuesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Central time we have an open forum service. It is for us to ask questions, study together, pray together, or discuss problems we may be having or other things going on in our lives. A minister is always present on the

call. It has been a great means to get reacquainted with each other and to build stronger relationships. Before closing the service, we have a season of prayer about what has been discussed during the meeting.

If you are isolated or happen to be home sick some Sunday, or would like to join us on a Tuesday evening, we would love to have you join us. The telephone number for the conference call is not a toll free number. However, most of us either use our cell phones (no long distance charges) or have a telephone service that has no long distance charges. The telephone number is 605-715-4900. You will be asked to provide an access code, which is: 552571. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Elder Gerry Case, Elder Benny Case, or Elder Jeff Oldham.

Please remember our little local in your prayers, and our prayers are for you.

Sr. Debbie Hedrick

NEWS

2009 Phoenix Reunion Report

Many of us were anticipating this year's Phoenix Reunion and the spiritual renewal we hoped it would bring. I feel confident in saying that we did not walk away disappointed. Each service built upon the one before and the sermons spoke to us as individuals and a people. We were blessed to have visitors from many places join us, and although the numbers were fewer than in previous years we enjoyed the company of those who were able to meet with us. We had friends and family from Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Yucatan and even Honduras spend the weekend in worship and fellowship with us.

The reunion officially began Friday morning with a prayer service, but many of us met together Thursday evening for our annual Thanksgiving program. This year we watched a video presentation of the story of Samuel the Lamanite starring mem-



bers of the Phoenix local. We were reminded of the prophecies in the Americas concerning the birth of Christ. This event was hosted and prepared by our Program Committee. We appreciate the hard work they put in, as well as their volunteers who

donned costumes, practiced lines, and took photos to help make the program a success.

We had time each morning to participate in a prayer and testimony service. Each of the services were filled with testimonies of God's goodness in mercy in the lives of His people. We heard of God helping with financial, spiritual, and physical battles in our lives. It was obvious the hand of the Lord has been working among His people on a personal level and it was uplifting to hear the testimonies of praise and thanksgiving that were offered each day. Sunday morning we were took part in a sacrament service led by Apostle Jay Moser and Apostle Joel Yates. There was a very sweet spirit there at the service and we each knew the Lord was in our midst.

The sermons prepared by our ministry were truly inspired. I am so thankful the men God has chosen are ready and willing to share the word of



the Lord with us, even when it includes things we need to change. God loves us enough to show us our weaknesses. My prayer is that each of us who were in attendance took those words to heart and is striving to apply them to our lives. Each sermon tied in with the others to create the complete message God wanted us to hear. We were blessed to hear sermons from Apostle Smith Brickhouse, Apostle Duane Ely, Apostle Don McIndoo, Apostle Frank Fann, and Apostle Placido Koyok. The themes from their sermons pointed out that we must remain focused on the Lord. We must strive to become a more righteous people. We must look to Christ as our example; we are commanded to be like Him. Are we truly emulating Him in our daily lives? We were reminded that the time is now to be a light and an example to the people of this world. Many will never hear of Christ if not from us. In order to be that light we must be like Christ. We must watch our actions and strive to remove sin from our lives. We must



have charity for all we come in contact with, and we must trust in the Lord to strengthen us if we will only allow Him to. The time is now to regain focus on what is truly important, and that is the Lord.

Not only did we hear wonderful sermons and testimonies, but we were also able to enjoy the musical talents of our members. God has given great talent to so many and we are blessed

when it is shared with us. The beautiful music that was shared with us added to the spirit that was present at each service. Praise to the Lord can be done in so many ways, and we were blessed to hear it in song on many occasions. The entire congregation was able to join us as well during our song services each night.

The 2009 Phoenix Reunion was a time of fellowship and praise to our Lord. It was a time of reverence and of rejuvenation. It was a call to action. I know each of us in Arizona were thankful to those who made the effort to be here with us, and hope you will join us again next year. For those who have never been to our reunion we hope that you will one day join us as well.

*Rebecca Yates,
Phoenix Local Advocate Reporter*



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AVA WEBSITE

On the Church of Christ AVA web site you will be able to access media such as sermons on-line, studies, *Zion's Advocate*, the Bible and Book of Mormon, and much more. We invite you to take a look and discover what a useful tool this can be in expanding your knowledge and faith. The site is cocsermons.net.

CORRESPONDENCE COMMITTEE

The General Church Correspondence Committee would like to extend the opportunity for any who wish to communicate through written correspondence to contact one of the following three committee members:

Pat McCann (Committee Chairman)
18808 N. 30th St.

Phoenix, AZ 85050

Marlene Cobb

630 S Pickwick

Springfield, MO 65802

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11589 Genuine Rd

Clare, MI 48617

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(Available to Church of Christ Membership Only)

As a fundraiser for the Philippine missionary effort we are offering a CD of church history photos. On each CD there are over 800 photos of various church buildings, activities and members from 1887-2006. Included is a file with photo information.

If you would like a copy, please contact:

Deb Haines (816) 478-6839

debruhaines@juno.com

Barbara Kimball (816) 252-5829

michael.and.barbara@comcast.net

Pat McGhee (816) 796-6255

mcgheeme@msn.com

Please send your Philippine Fund donation (amount to be determined by you) to the Church of Christ, East Local, P. O. Box 2243, Independence, MO 64055-9243.

PRIESTHOOD VISITATION

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



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