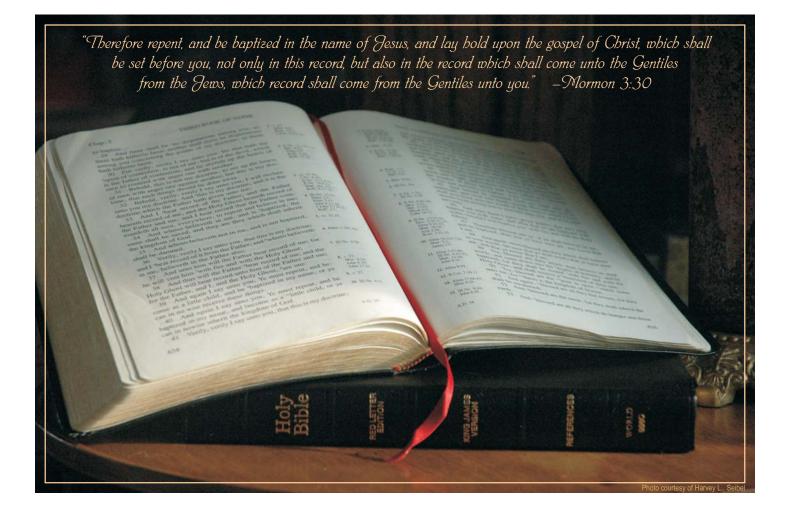
Zion's Advocate

"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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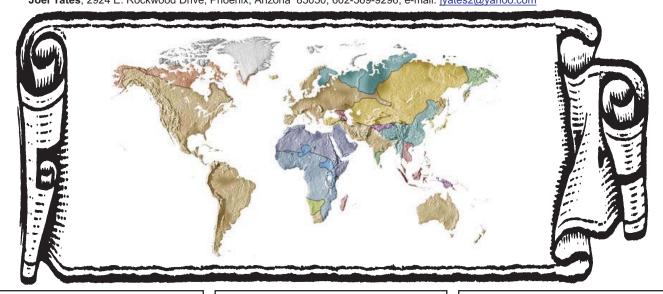


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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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.

EDITORIAL

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST RESTORED



By Elder Gordon McCann

t was 181 years ago when Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream would be fulfilled where God would set up a kingdom on earth that would never be destroyed. The King saw a "great image" (Daniel 2:30-31) which was an image of a man whose head was of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, his feet part iron and part clay. Each piece was a representation of a kingdom that was or would become (Daniel 2:32-33, 38-43). In King Nebuchadnezzar's dream he saw a "stone which was cut out without hands" which was cast at the feet of the great image where it broke the image to pieces, then the stone "became a great mountain that filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:34-35).

Daniel interprets the king's dream where he told the king that there would be a future event that would take place at a specific time in history: "in the days of these kings," where the great image would be complete, then eventually destroyed. The king was told that another kingdom would be established on the earth, "shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be *destroyed*, "and more importantly ,"shall not be left to other people" (Daniel 2:44). This kingdom that God would establish would "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms" that Daniel had described earlier to the king.

We believe that the kingdom that God had set up in the days of those kings (or kingdoms) was the restored "Church of Christ" in 1830. It was by the hand of God and it took place when the image that King Nebuchadnezzar saw was completed, again, for a very short time (less than a year). The Church of Christ that bears His name with all of the authority that God had originally established on earth when Jesus Christ the "Son of God" came in the flesh and fulfilled the will of His Father in all things. The same Church of Christ with its Apostles, along with the power of the Holy Ghost that had flourished for a time, then because of sin became apostate, fulfilling Daniels vision, 'I beheld and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them" (Daniel 7:21) and John the revelator's vision, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them;..." (Revelation 13:7).

The destiny of the Church of Christ in these last days is to fulfill Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream where we become "a great mountain" that eventually fills "the whole earth." The way that this will be accomplished will be without hands, because the Church of Christ will speak the truth by the power of the Holy Ghost and the truth, which is the Word of God, will set the world free from sin.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that beareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

The following is the doctrine of Jesus Christ as he taught a remnant of the seed of Jacob in the Americas as found in the Book of Mormon:

"Behold, verily, verily I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. And this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me;

"And I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me; "And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God.

"And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me, believeth in the Father also;

"And unto him will the Father bear record of me; for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost;

"And thus will the Father bear record of me; and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost, are one.

"And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things.

"And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

"Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and whoso buildeth upon this, buildeth upon my rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. "And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such, when the floods come, and the winds beat down upon them.

"Therefore go forth unto this people, and declare the words which I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth" (3 Nephi 5:32-43).

ARTICLE

Our Love of God Musi Come First



By Apostle Roland Sarratt

The Pharisee lawyer thought he might tempt Jesus by asking him a question He didn't know. Jesus not only knew the answer but He also used the occasion to bring a very important point to the attention of the people. He delivered the great commandment of the law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). This commandment had been given to the Israelites by Moses many centuries before the coming of Christ. The Lord was preparing the Israelites to go into the promised land to obtain it for themselves. He knew they would be tempted to serve other gods.

It appears the commandment had been overlooked by the religious leaders at the time Jesus began His ministry to the Jews. The opportunity for Jesus to declare it was more than coincidental; it was all the part of God's plan. Undoubtedly, the lawyer felt a little foolish for trying to tempt the Lord.

We might consider the warning appropriate for this day. Jesus prophesied of a time when the Gentiles will have turned to idol worship, as indicated in 3 Nephi 9:103: "Thy graven images I will also cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands."

What are the graven images that Jesus has referred to here? We don't often see the images that man actually bows down to worship in this land like they did in ancient times, but we have to admit that there are many idols of worship that stand between man and God in the world today. Anything that becomes more important to us than worshipping God is an idol of the heart.

Jesus didn't stop with the first great commandment, but also gave the second commandment, which He said was like unto the first one: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Emphasizing the importance of these commandments, He said: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The second commandment was given by Moses at the time Aaron and his sons began their priesthood, although some of the particulars expounded in the law at that time may be considered void, inasmuch as Jesus fulfilled the Law of Moses and it came to an end. However, Jesus did restate the two great commandments, making them continually effective. Also He restated some of the Ten Commandments, giving them as a guide as well (Matthew 19:16-19).

In review of the law concerning loving our neighbor, it might be well to read the actual

account as given by Moses:

"Thou shalt not bate thy brother in thine beart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 19:17-18).

Jesus confirmed this law, and actually added to it by including our enemies:

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:44-48).

Loving your neighbor as yourself and loving your enemies is characteristic of God. We are to be perfect in love, even as our Father in heaven is perfect. Therefore, our relationship with others directly affects our relationship with God. Jesus said, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

In the Lord's Prayer it says, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matthew 6:12). Jesus went on to explain the intent of that verse, "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" (Matthew 6:14, 15).

If someone has offended vou and then asked your forgiveness, you must frankly forgive them. If you continue to hold a grudge against them, then the Lord will not forgive you when you sin. If we have properly repented of our sins, the Lord will forgive us and forget the sins. We must do likewise with those who have sinned against us. If you are able to love others, even your enemies, you will be able to love God with all your heart, soul and mind, and your neighbor as yourself.

There is yet another commandment which gives somewhat a different aspect to our relationship with the Lord and our loved ones. Jesus gave this commandment to His disciples when He sent them out.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

"For I am come to set a man at variance against bis father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

"And a man's foes shall be they of his own bousehold.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 10:34-39).

We may say this applies

only to the apostles or maybe the ordained ministers, but can any of us say that we are justified in loving a family member more than we love Jesus Christ? This scripture is reasonable in the way it is written, but Luke's account is a little harder to accept:

"If any man come to me, and hate not bis father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and bis own life also, be cannot be my disciple.

"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26-27).

Again we have to realize the strictness of the old Mosaic Law because of the weaknesses of the Israelites toward the influences of other peoples:

"If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

"Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;

"Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him:

"But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people" (Deuteronomy 13:6-9).

We should be thankful we are no longer under the Law of Moses, for surely we and our family members are subject to be influenced by those who do not accept our beliefs. This seems rather extreme, but to God it is a matter of accepting Him or rejecting Him, which means the saving of a soul or the losing of a soul. Perhaps we are too conditioned to the various modern day attitudes toward anything that declares an absolute in religion. We hardly give thought to those around us whose beliefs run from one extreme to another.

Regardless of what we may encounter in the variations in religion and non-religion in this world we must remain steadfast in our faith in God and in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. As it is said in the prayers over the emblems of Christ's body and blood, we must always remember Him and keep His commandments. This we have done by making a covenant with the Lord according to the plan of salvation. We have exercised faith in God, we have repented of our sins, we have been baptized for the remission of our sins, we have had hands laid upon us for the gift of the Holy Ghost and we strive to endure to the end in following the example of Jesus Christ.

The fullness of the gospel of Christ has been restored to the earth in these last days for the purpose of reclaiming the Israelite people according the God's The Gentiles have promise. been chosen to carry the gospel in its purity to the Israelites. As a result of this great duty, the Gentiles themselves have benefitted from embracing and knowing firsthand the principles taught to them first by the Jewish apostles of Jesus, and again by the Gentile apostles in this dispensation of time.

As we know, the Gentile church went into apostasy and had to be restored. However the Gentiles have all but lost the favor of God in these last days by establishing in the church various innovations of man characteristic of the apostatized church. By the grace of God, a small remnant remains to carry the true gospel to the world.

The hand of God was upon the Gentiles and established a great nation with Christian ethics among them. However, time has proven that the Gentiles have rejected the fullness of Christ's gospel and the great majority are being led into a conglomerate of blended religions with no absolutes. The goal is peace in a socialistic atmosphere. The next step from socialism is communism with total atheism. The rejection of Christianity will then be complete and the church of the devil will stand erect, manifesting itself before the world. It will be as prophesied:

"And he said unto me, Behold, there are save it be two churches:

"The one is the church of the Lamb of God, and the other is the church of the devil;

"Wherefore, whoso belongeth not to the church of the Lamb of God belongeth to that great church, which is the mother of abominations;

"And she is the whore of all the earth" (1 Nephi 3:220-223).

When the Israelites would turn to idol worship, God would remind them that He was a jealous God and He would pour out His wrath upon them if they continued in their wickedness. Will He not do likewise to the Gentiles whom He has favored in the last days when they have turned and rejected Him?

It all falls upon the individual; each of us who know the truth must put God first in our lives, and not let others influence us into accepting that which is contrary to Christ's commandments. The following words of King Benjamin are appropriate to conclude this article:

"And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God,

"Or if ye have known of his goodness, and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls,

"Even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering towards you unworthy creatures,

"And humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel;

"And behold, I say unto you, that if ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins;

"And ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.

"And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is bis due" (Mosiab 2:18-24).

PATHLIGHTS

A Long, Hard Road

By Sharon Salters

ister Sharon desires for her testimony of God's love to be shared with all. Sharon suffers from diabetes and Parkinson's disease. Regardless of her physical condition, Sharon is very faithful in attending church services regularly. In October 2010, Sharon joined three other ladies from the Bradley local to attend the Church of Christ Women's Retreat in Excelsior Springs, Missouri. This experience was a blessing to all those that attended. Following the retreat we (Heidi Jones, Sue Porter & Betsy Trudgen), along with Sharon, attended church services at the Temple Lot local. Sharon appreciated this visit since she had not previously seen the current building. Her last visit to Missouri was at the age of 13 with her parents, Elder Henry & Ellen Van Duine.

In November 2010, due to medication interactions, Sharon experienced horrible hallucinations that caused her and her husband Bill much frustration. Sharon spoke about these hallucinations at the December 5th, 2010, sacrament service, with her testimony being recorded. Sharon saw a woman, named Mary, just the head of this woman, and her three girls, aged 2, 4 and 6. They were cute little girls. Out of her living room window she saw a red car pulling into the yard with a lot of people who brought wastebaskets of junk into her house. Following this incident, Bill took her to the emergency room at Allegan hospital. On the way to the hospital, the mother and girls were constantly bothering her. This continued in the hospital. The doctor checked all her vitals and conferred with her neurologist's staff in Kalamazoo. She was released home, and told to see her doctor on Monday, which she did. The doctor said if she wanted to be seen by a



^ A T H L I G H T S

neurologist, she could go to Borgess Hospital emergency room, as her neurologist was on vacation, and doesn't offer a referral. Tuesday evening, the hallucinations had become unbearable and Bill took Sharon to Borgess emergency room, where she was examined, neurologist consulted by phone, and one medication eliminated from her schedule, and released home.

Wednesday evening, Bill took Sharon back to Borgess emergency room and after the exam and much deliberation she was admitted to the hospital. Sharon was yelling, and blowing puffs of air non-stop for two hours. Bill offered her water, and she responded, "No, not now." Finally she did drink, but kept blowing. Mary's friend's started putting hot water on her bed, just to make them mad. Sharon told them, "Thank you." When the hot water didn't work, they poured blood on her. Sharon told Mary that she wasn't a very good mother. Sharon also saw Mary's friend in her hospital room doing inappropriate things with Bill. Sharon told her that she's not jealous. She also felt like she saw bugs all over her wheelchair, bed and in her food. She kept telling herself they weren't real. Mary and a man with long black hair were pulling her bed downhill, into the darkness, through an opening the size of a garage. Sharon curled her toes to help pull herself up, but needed God's help. It was so real, but Sharon knew that Mary, the kids, and the man were not of God. After a week and a half, and changes in medication, Sharon was transferred to a physical rehabilitation center near her town, since she had lost a lot of mobility during this time.

After a few days at the physical rehabilitation center, the hallucinations had stopped, and Sharon was building strength and mobility skill. While she was there, one night her sugar level dropped so low the paramedics were called, and after bringing it back up she was taken to the emergency room to be checked out, and was released later that night to the rehab center. Sharon continued physical rehab and has been home for about three and a half weeks now, still doing exercises and getting stronger.

Sharon thanks God for all He's done for her. God is so good being with her during this long, hard road. The experience, as horrible as it was, drew her and Bill closer together. Her sisters and their families, and relatives on both sides have been wonderful. Sharon thanks all the brothers and sisters for their patience, love and prayers.

> Submitted by Sue Porter, Bradley, Michigan Local

REPORT

Women's Retreat 2010

The first and second days of October 2010 were special. The weather was the best of Missouri's fall, and the women who had gathered at the Women's Retreat desired to be there. The months of planning fell into place, guided by the hand of God. The focus was on becoming servants, and we anticipated that the 24 hours spent together would culminate in greater commitments to God

and new and stronger bonds with each other.

Friday's activities began midday with some sisters meeting at a restaurant in the quaint old town of Excelsior Springs, later joining those who had gone directly to the retreat center to enjoy an afternoon of fellowship. The laughter started early as we tackled craft projects provided by Sister Karin Malone.

Through the evening, women

continued to arrive from five different states; and most of us were gathered to enjoy supper together. The campground staff pampered us with their table settings, fine meals, and gracious preparations and clean up.

At 7:00 p.m. we gathered back at the lodge for the opening session. It was once again amazing to hear the voices of 57 women joined in praise. Sister



Czerna Kauffman organized specials and led us in music throughout the retreat. Each time was a blessing.

Sister Jane Ann Carmichael, coordinator, welcomed us and acknowledged the women who had worked on the retreat the past year, as well as noting the ministry who had reviewed the teaching material. Then Sister Jennifer Oldham divided us into groups for a fun icebreaker. Each group was given a basket of ordinary household items and told to create new purposes for them. Laughs and applause were our rewards as the inventions were judged.

The theme was then introduced with a skit by Sister Kate Malone. She portrayed a young mother: baby in a sling, toddler in a stroller, and cell phone and planner in hand. As she's finishing her power walk, she retrieves her cell phone messages: her mother needs emergency computer help, her husband wonders where the clean laundry and supper are, her mother-in-law needs help canning a truckload of apples, the church needs dozens of cookies, and a community worker wants her to volunteer to build a house. "How can I feel so empty when my life is so full?" she asks.

That would be the focus of the next day's search through the scriptures: finding out how to balance it all—this deep desire to serve our families, our church, and our communities, and still attend to our personal relationships with God. After several beautiful specials were sung, we relocated to the basement area for snacks and fellowship, later drifting off to our rooms to find beautiful "welcome" gifts and a good night's sleep.

Saturday morning was crisp and exhilarating for those who chose to enjoy a morning walk or run on Lake Maurer's lake-side paths. The rest of us joined them at the dining hall at 8:00 a.m. for a morning devotion and breakfast. When we gathered back at the lodge, Sister Carrie Geier used a Powerpoint presentation of stirring photos and scripture verses based on Mosiah 1:49: "And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God. "

As we followed in our scriptures, the words provoked us to examine our attitudes and motivations in serving. Do we serve with willing hearts and godly discernment, or with criticism, comparing, and complaining? Do we serve for recognition and appearance, or from hearts open to the nudgings of the Spirit of God. What about our priorities? Do we accept the talents God has given us and serve accordingly, considering the season of life we are in; or do we volunteer for everything, ignoring the responsibilities we know He has given us? Are we willing to graciously accept help when we are the receiver and not the giver, or does our pride hold back a blessing? We had much to consider.

We were then divided into age groups to discuss practical, real-life ways to serve our fami-





lies, churches, and communi-The presentation had ties. caused us to look deeply, to exam and commit: but the discussions in our group time put teeth to the desire. In each group, personal experiences were shared, testimonies of how rich service can be when done for the love of Christ. We discussed examples from the scriptures of women who served: Mary, Ruth, Dorcus. For every "but I can't," someone had an idea of a way they could.

After our annual group picture and lunch, we gathered again, this time in three groups of mixed ages. We rotated through each class: (1) "MAKE AND TAKE": quick and easy recipes to make and share with someone in need, gift baskets, special chores, creative hospitality. This class was taught by Sisters Bonnie G. Case, Michelle Fisher, and Belinda Smith. The

class was loaded with specific ways that we could serve others simply and economically. We were excited to get started. (2) "COUPONING" with Sister Lisa McGhee: Amazing, especially for those of us who have the economic desire to use coupons but haven't got past the "I cut them out, but . . ." Stage. We learned the basics, plus what the serious couponers watch for. (3) "EARLY CHILDHOOD" taught by Sister Becky Rudd: Through humorous and touching anecdotes, she boiled it down to four common sense points: set clear rules, be consistent, be positive, and "Parent from your feet, not your seat." The information was especially helpful for those with young children, but was an encouragement to the rest of us who come into contact with little ones.

During our wrap-up session, Sister Jane Ann asked us to

write prayer requests on cards. The cards were then gathered and passed around, giving each of us a name or situation to pray for until the retreat in the fall of 2011. Then our retreat came peacefully to a close as we held our lit candles and sang, "Make Me A Servant." After the final prayer and goodbyes, we hurried off to our different destinations with hopeful hearts. "Let your light shine through us, dear Lord. Let us serve you by serving others. Let us serve with all our hearts, with wisdom and pure intentions, motivated by your example and love."

Debbie Vogel

Please begin praying now about attending this year's retreat, September 30—October 1, 2011. Our theme will be Hebrews 12:1-2:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

FROM the ARCHIVES

This 1888 photo shows the very first building ever built on the Temple Lot property. In this view facing the North, we see the small white Church of Christ building just right of the center. The Temple Lot property was fenced in at the time.



REPORT

2011 SOLEMN ASSEMBLY AND GENERAL CHURCH CONFERENCE

n Friday morning, April 1st, we gathered into the House of the Lord for Solemn Assembly. Apostle Brian McIndoo and Priest Bill Malone welcomed us. Br. Brian used Romans 15:6. 1 Corinthians 1:10, to illustrate that we should be in unity with Christ with no divisions. Using 1 Corinthians 2:16. Br. Brian admonished us to have the mind of Christ: that we did not come to tell Him what we wanted, but to ask Him what His will is. He also used Moroni 6:9 which tells us to let the Spirit move.

Many voices were raised as we knelt in a season of prayer unto our Heavenly Father. Following were testimonies of God's blessings; here are just a few:

- A brother testified that he believes everything in the scriptures has a fuller revelation, and the word of God gives us depth that we cannot give it.
- Another brother testified of his experience with a move last spring. He had filled his pickup very full, and as he traveled the wind buffeted him and his load rocked violently. As he prayed about it, the words, "Peace, be still," came into his mind. He was reminded of Christ out upon the sea. He spoke the words out loud, and instantly the truck settled down. He thought the wind had stopped, but the grass was still swaying. The wind had turned and now was pushing him along from behind. His heart was filled with joy and

understanding. We are to lean upon God, and lean upon His examples.

Friday evening we reassembled for another prayer service. Elder Dan Lawrence and Apostle Placido Matu were in charge. Br. Placido used Alma 16:219, which tells us the scriptures are the bread of life. He told us we need to humble ourselves first, and then pray so God can hear and answer our prayers. We should pray for everything, our families, and for our generation, that God will touch them. He told us Satan is always looking for ways to destroy us and the church. Br. Placido asked us to pray for the work. He used Enos 1:5-7 and Psalms 62:7 as examples to show us how blessings come from God only. We need to be confident in His promises. God is with us and is our refuge.

After a season of prayer followed many testimonies; here are just a few:

- A brother testified that as Christ's body we need to show His love. There are many ways to show our love to one another. He mentioned just a few of the many ways he has been shown love from the body. He told us showing our love to those visiting the church takes time and patience. He asked that we pray for those, and that the Lord will open their eyes to the love in our midst.
- Another brother testified of a similar experience. Many years ago he attended another church; he

believes that church lacked belief as even the pastor didn't believe in miracles. Finally it was his step-grandfather who preached to his family and he learned of the true gospel. He was converted by the Book of Mormon. He told us that he has been prompted by the Spirit that we are to be the Bride of Christ as we are told in Revelation 21. This is a time in the future to look forward to. He doesn't hear that in other places. We'll have purity, as we are told in Ephesians 4:11. He never heard this in other churches, but he did read of it in the Book of Mormon, perfecting ourselves so as to be worthy and coming in unity to be the bride of Christ. Our goal is to be like Christ; this should be the center of our church effort.

• Another brother testified his earliest memory was of his mother reading about the birth and resurrection of Christ from the Book of Mormon. He understood the emotion his mother felt while reading it. He tried at a later age to read the book himself, but got frustrated. Years later, as a teenager, his father challenged him to read it and pray over it. He did, and he felt the Spirit rest upon him as he read. He wanted that Spirit to stay. He admonished us that if we are touched by the Spirit, this is the confirmation and the promise. Seek the Spirit; pray for it to guide you.

Saturday morning we once again entered the House of the Lord. Apostle Joel Yates and Elder Glenn Gill were in charge. Brother Joel read Ephesians 5:8-17, reminding us that we come here to seek the will of the Lord. We need to claim the time we've been given to seek God's direction. He read Ephesians 5:18-21, 25-30. Br. Joel admonished us that we are the Bride of Christ, and He cherishes us. He desires to cleanse us of every spot or wrinkle. Br. Joel hopes this is the process that we are going through. He read 1 Peter 5:5, and told us God resisteth the proud but gives grace to the humble. So, if we are proud His favor will not be with us. He read 1 Peter 5:6-12, where we are told to be sober and vigilant. If we have the desire to have His grace, then He helps us to stand. We want Him to mold us, shape us, and cleanse us so He can use us.

After a season of prayer in which many prayers were lifted up to our Heavenly Father, an administration took place, followed by many testimonies. These are just a few:

- A sister testified of God's goodness. In moving a plant from one state to another it froze. After bringing it back, she discovered just that morning that it was showing signs of life. It needs water to nourish it each day to flourish. She testified that she is like that; she needs living water every day, and in order to flourish she needs her soil, which is songs, prayers, studies and participation. Her being planted in the gospel will keep her grounded and she'll blossom.
- A young brother asked for and led us in a season of prayer.
- A brother stood and testified of the Lord's goodness. Years ago he left a load of frozen food on the receiving dock, after telling one co-worker that it was there. The following

work day, he was called into the office and chastised for not being responsible. His supervisor told him that from now on he needed to be sure he was their very best truck driver. WE must do our best always; we are our brother's keeper. We must maintain what we've been given; we've all got a job to We have great perform. expectations for the Lord's work, and we can all help in that effort. We all have a part to play, and we need to use our talents for the Kingdom's sake.

- Another brother testified that old age has found him. He was blessed recently with his back surgery. His doctor suggested that he go home and pray about whether he should have the surgery. On the day of his surgery, his doctor and whole staff prayed before operating. After his surgery, he was in so much pain that he prayed through it, all night. The next morning he was doing better. He got through the hard spots, with Jesus. He admonished everyone to have hope; the pain will go away and things do get better.
- Another brother told us most of his life he's been faithful in prayers and trusting God. He's broken his back twice, and six months ago he broke his neck. He fell forward while running, chasing after his hat. When he woke up, he picked himself up and drove himself to the hospital with a scraped-up nose and a gash in his forehead. God watched out for him even though he's done some foolish things.

Saturday afternoon we reassembled for another prayer service as our Solemn Assembly continued. Apostle Don McIndoo and Elder Jeff Oldham welcomed us. Br. Don read from Alma 16:238 where we are told to live in thanksgiving daily; and 3 Nephi 8:46-51, where we are commanded to watch and pray always. Br. Don reminded us we are to pray to God the Father, not Jesus. We are instructed by Jesus to pray unto the Father in His name, and to ask for that which is right, that which is also in harmony with His purpose for us. We must also pray believing we will receive. In verse 53 we are told we must meet together oft. Br. Don admonished us that God's holy purposes are unfolding before us, and the time of the Gentiles is coming to a close; the time of the house of Israel is coming.

After a season of prayer in which many prayers were lifted up to our Heavenly Father, many testimonies followed. These are just a few:

- A brother testified of something that happened 35 years ago when he and his wife were driving to Yucatan. They were stopped at a truck stop for the night. He was saying his prayer when the Lord gave him a vision. He saw the words of his prayer go up to the ceiling of their pickup camper and float around. His wife had gone right to sleep, but he couldn't, as he was thinking about what he'd seen. He prayed in urgency to the Lord and he was given another vision. In this vision he saw his words like a beam of light ascend up to the heavens. Our prayers are measured by sincerity and intensity: some go up and some just circle. We have the opportunity at every prayer service to send them up to God collectively.
- Another brother testified of an experience he had when he was a young man. When going to bed at night, he prayed and fell asleep. He was awakened. Staring up at the ceiling, the roof rolled back and he saw up to Heaven. There was a large gathering and He saw the

Father on the throne. There were many beings there, including the adversary, who had accusations against him. Our brother said sadly, they were true. His allegiances were with man and other worldly things. He heard a voice from the throne asking, "What shall I do?" He thought and said, "Oh God, whatever it takes to save my soul." He heard a voice say, "So shall it be." Then all in the room went back into place.

- Another brother testified of an experience he had years ago while he was working three jobs and going to school. While he was laying in bed thinking of material things he'd like to have, he heard a voice say, "All these things you can have, but you can't have my Spirit." Immediately the Spirit withdrew. He repented all night, but his prayers didn't even go to the ceiling. The next day he continued to pray while at school and work. Nothing happened, but he knew God didn't hear. He drove out to the country to pray until God might give back His Spirit. He found himself in the woods, near a stream with a muddy bank. He couldn't find a dry spot, so he knelt in the mud and prayed with all the energy of his soul. At that time he heard a voice say, "Ask, and it shall be given." Instantly the Spirit re-entered. He feels he was taught that God wants us to know what REALLY asking is—with ALL the energy of our soul.
- Another brother testified of the scripture in James which says the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much... there are a couple of requirements in that statement. It must be effectual, fervent and righteous...that puts the responsibility back on us to become that righteous individual. He spoke of a time, years ago, when his

local met and offered effectual, fervent prayers. He can still remember that night, and all the tears that were shed. There were about twenty people there. The subject of their prayers was his younger brother who had gotten into trouble. Two or three days later he received a letter from his brother in which he said that all of a sudden he experienced an overwhelming desire to learn more about the church. He asked that someone visit him, teach him and bring him a Bible and Book of Mormon. Those fervent prayers were effectual, from those who were trying to attain righteousness. Our brother spoke of this need for all our sons and daughters who fall into that same category. This is so much more important than temporal things...no matter what for. They are all our own family. We need to pray effectual, fervent prayers unceasingly for our sons and daughters, pray for every situation and every need for everyone you know. When you finish, start over again. Our God is a jealous God; He wants to know if you are serious.

Another season of prayer was called for and entered into.

• A sister testified years ago that she heard her mother having a deep conversation with a family member. Her mother spoke of "groanings that could not be uttered...." Then, years later, she herself was in a situation where she was upset. She poured her heart out to God. She told Him she wanted to claim Him and to have the Spirit intercede on her behalf. She heard a strange noise and knew the Spirit had interceded unto the Heavenly Father. The Lord was magnified on her behalf. There's no problem too big for God.

Sunday morning we entered into the House of the Lord for a Sacrament Service.

Apostles Jay Moser and Michael McGhee were in charge. Br. Jay greeted us and used 1 Corinthians 11:23, where we are told, "This is my body, which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me." Br. Jay said the word "submission" comes to mind, and he read the three accounts describing when the Lord served the sacrament: Matthew 26:36, Mark 14:32, and Luke 22:39. The sacrament was then blessed and served. There were eight administrations before we entered into a season of prayer, in which there were many voices lifted up in concern for others, as well as in praise and thanksgiving unto our Lord. Many testimonies were then given; these are only a few:

- A sister stood and bore her concerns and her sorrows in describing the problems her family is facing. She witnessed that through all the troubles she knows the Lord is there for her and her family. She has been greatly troubled, but blessed; she knows He will bring them through their problems, and that she has to set the right example, no matter how difficult it is. We have to put God's will first.
- Another sister testified of a decision she made recently. She asked God for His will and His way to be done. He led her to make her decision, and led her to others who were in need of work. God opened many windows for her to be able to help others. In looking back she sees that while helping them she has also been helped. She doesn't know where it's going, but she is going to trust in God. She gives all thanks and praise to God.

- A brother stood and introduced himself and his family. Being raised in another church, there came a time when he had to examine his beliefs. He read the Book of Mormon and it made perfect sense to him. He admonished us not to take this church or the Temple Lot for granted.
- A young brother testified that it has been ten years since he has been here. At his last year at teen camp he asked for a sign. The Lord did just that. He was impressed, yet it didn't keep him where it should have. Three months ago he heard a statement, "Feed their souls." This touched something in him, and he realized that's what he needed: he was hungry. He made the decision to come, and he's full of joy. God is working mysteriously; we've planted seed in the young that aren't here, but He'll work on them and hopefully bring them back.
- A brother testified of a dream he was given. He was standing on a path on the edge of a mountain. There was some sort of a sheet hanging over the edge and down into the mist. People were floating up the cliff, looking at the sheet, and after looking at him, going back down. His feet which were on the path, and the path was made of pieces of leather; his piece was torn. He heard a voice, "Prepare ye the pathway of the Lord, He is coming, prepare ye." He was scared and crying, as he couldn't fix the piece of leather he stood on. He saw the dream again and understood: the mountain was books covered in leather, and his actions caused people to turn away. Since then he has been called into the ministry and is trying to correct the wrongs. Everything he's heard today agrees with this-if we're not careful our actions can cause people to turn

away.

• A brother testified of chaos in the lives of people he saw when traveling recently. Most people here, however, don't have that chaos and confusion. The difference is a life plotted out by God. Prove Him herewith and He'll pour out a blessing. Have courage and strength, put your feet on the path of righteousness, and chaos begins to disappear.

After lunch, we gathered to enjoy a beautiful music service. There were many musical gifts raised up in praise to our Lord, and a wonderful cantata by the Conference Choir entitled, "Jesus—His Life and Teachings."

The afternoon sermon was given by Apostle Brian McIndoo. Br. Brian spoke of our humble service to God; this is our duty. He used 1 Nephi 5:22, 1 Peter 5:5, and James 4:6. We need to have God's favor and grace. God is impartial and gives all an opportunity. We need to be righteous to gain God's favor. In 1 Nephi 5:3 we are told we need to be willing to accept the truth, heed it, and put it into practice. Do not murmur about it. In 2 Nephi 6:42; 2 Nephi 11:72; and Ether 5:29 we are shown examples of faith, hope and charity to be righteous, humble, long suffering, and to endure, for the righteous receive God's favor and the humble receive God's grace. Br. Brian used Romans 1:25; Mosiah 1:59-62, 2:32; and Alma 16:136-137. If God has to humble us it will be hard on us. It's better if we humble ourselves. He used Psalms 22:3-7; Mosiah 1:48-50; Ecclesiastes 1:2-4; 1 Corinthians 15:58, 6:20; Mosiah 1:53-54; Luke 19:12-13; Moroni 9:6; and 1 Peter 5:6. Occupy! To serve God. This life is all vain, but service to Him is eternal.

he Monday morning prayer service was opened by Elders Ronnie Gill and Sam Gould. Br. Ronnie used Mosiah 13:56-57 and admonished us that liberty and responsibility come together. We make decisions today that affect the whole church. The only hope we have is if our all is on the altar. Every job is important for the future of the work of the Church of Christ. Work not in fear, but joy. A season of prayer followed in which many voices were lifted. There was only time left for one testimony:

• A brother shared a vision a brother had been given. This brother saw a church body; all seats and floor space was filled, the doors and windows filled with people also. He recognized some. There were ministers up front, like in a preaching service. It was announced that Christ was going to preach. He saw Him come up and preach. Afterward, Christ told him someday he'll have to preach. He was struck with fear. The Lord smiled and said, "Don't worry, when the time comes I'll tell you what to say."

Our first business session began after that and continued for the rest of the day. After a song service, the evening sermon was given by Apostle Michael McGhee. Br. Mike read Helaman 3:19; Matthew 26:36; and Alma 6:11. Br. Mike explained the common thread was that they all found a closet and sought God's will. We are not perfect. Sometimes we are too hard on ourselves and each other. He used Romans 5:12; Moroni 7:16; Revelation 12:10; 2 Nephi 1:120, 115, 118-122 and 127.

Br. Mike told a story about his

grandmother and how she influenced him. He then used Proverbs 4:18; 4:1-4 in describing how his father always told Mike to, "Keep your hat on straight." Br. Mike used Acts 13:15, 26; Proverbs 7:3; 2 Nephi 5:82 and asked us if we have to legislate right, then what does it say about what's in our hearts? Our righteousness needs to exceed that of the Pharisees. Br. Mike then read Mosiah 9:42-43; Ephesians 6:11; Isaiah 6:8; Genesis 22:1-11; Ether 1:29 and asked if we push the limits of God? Choosing to step over the line? He also read Hebrews 12:4; Romans 6:14, and asked us to go to our closets.

The Tuesday morning prayer service was opened by Elders Dennis Trudgen and Thomas Gill.

Br. Tommy read from Alma 12:1-6. Following this reading there was a season of prayer in which many names were lifted to our Heavenly Father. There was only time for one testimony:

• A brother told of a brother's experience while in a Sacrament Service. While in the Spirit, this brother saw a beam of light come down as a path. He began walking the narrow path. Different things popped up all along the sides of the path... Distractions. As he turned to look, the Spirit grabbed his face and told him to keep looking forward. This happened several times. We must keep our eyes looking ahead.

Following a song service the evening sermon was given by Apostle Don McIndoo. Br. Don began by reading 2 Nephi 1:71-75 and 3 Nephi 12:25-30 and 35. He explained that marvelous sacrifices are being made by people of the Church of Christ, which is why the church is seeing growth. We are called to make sacrifices. He read Psalms 50:3-5. Br. Don explained that Alma was driven out, and then during the day the people would go out to him and he would teach them of the gospel. He read Mosiah 9:39; Psalms 116:15-17; Jeremiah 33:11; Romans 12:1; Hebrews 13:15-16; 3 Nephi 4:49-50; Psalms 4:5 to explain that our reasonable service is our sacrifice, a sacrifice of righteousness. In the Book of Commandments chapter 62 we are told the requirements of the hearts of the children of men are our tithes and offerings, which require our sacrifice. Br. Don spoke of the momentous days of the past which may equal these latter days and the prophesies being fulfilled. Then he read 1 Nephi 7:17; 3 Nephi 9:85-89, 93. Br. Don then told us of Apostle Clarence and Sr. Angela Wheaton's trip to Mexico in 1951, and the true story of the Prophet's visit to the people there. He reminded us we are told in Matthew that the laborers will be few, and this is true...we need more ministry everywhere. Please pray for more ministry. Our ministry are making great sacrifices. We as a people need to make more sacrifices and pray more. Br. Don read 2 Nephi 11:28-30 and 3 Nephi 13:37. He then admonished us to be a witness, even to fellow members, and to be good examples.

The Wednesday evening song service was followed with a sermon given by Elder Dan Lawrence. Br. Dan said he would title his sermon, "God will deliver you out of bondage." He read Mosiah 5:26-40 where we learn of the story of King Limhi and his people who were in bondage because of their

iniquities. Br. Dan read Mosiah 5:47-52 where we are told we need to turn to the Lord with FULL purpose of heart. He read Deuteronomy 10:12-13 and exhorted that it should be a joy to serve the Lord! Br. Dan also read 2 Nephi 13:16, and reminded us that we cannot fool the Lord; He knows our hearts. Also in 2 Nephi 3:62 we are warned not to trust in the arm of flesh. Br. Dan read Psalms 31:1 and admonished us that God is a jealous god, and He wants us to trust only in Him. He read Deuteronomy 8:19; Psalms 100:2; and Mosiah 1:49. Br. Dan read Joshua 24:24, and explained that if you do this He will deliver you from bondage. He also read Genesis 50:24; Isaiah 55:7-11; 2 Peter 2:19; Galations 5:1; 2 Nephi 1:119-120; and Mosiah 5:52, where it exhorts us to claim that promise.

The 2011 General Conference for the Church of Christ had come to a close. We especially thank our Heavenly Father for His Spirit which was with us throughout, and for the message He had for His people to prepare ourselves in righteousness. Our hearts were overflowing. We give all thanks and praise to God for His gifts and blessings. Our prayers are for each of you and for the work of the Gospel in these last, momentous days.

May God bless you all, Your reporter, Sr. Deb Haines

OBITUARY

Richard E. Brantner

ichard E. Brantner of Eagle, Michigan, age 76, passed away January 19, 2011, after a year-long battle with cancer. Dick retired from the Michigan State Police (MSP) in 1982. While with the MSP, he was on the pistol team and dive team and was also the number one pilot for the state police for some years before retiring. He loved to golf, ran the Grand Ledge Airport for three years, was an avid news junkie, and also won State championships in both novice and open heavyweight divisions in boxing. Dick also loved football, bowling and shuffleboard.

Anyone who knew Dick recognized his quick wit and sense of humor. He was a man with strong principles and values. He was a member of the Church of



Christ since his early teens.

Surviving are his loving wife of 33 years, Char; his mother, Sarah Brantner; brother, Elder Charles Brantner; sisters, Jeanette Cunningham and Jeanece (Ross) Stephens; daughters, Patti (Michael) Mack, Beth (Tommy) Adair, and Glenda Brantner; sons, Richard (Vickie) Brantner, Scott (Deena) Bunce, Chris Bunce and special friend, Natalie; 19 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. His father Elder George Brantner and brother Elder Gale Brantner preceded him in passing from this earthly life.

Dick may not be here with us, but he will always be in our hearts and memories. Memorial services pending in the spring.



NOTICES

2011 WOMEN'S RETREAT

This year's theme:

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" Hebrews 12:1-2.

- When:September 30 (Friday) October 1 (Saturday), 2011
- Where:Lake Mauer Retreat Center, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024
- Cost:\$35.00/person if registration is received before Aug. 31, 2011, \$40.00/person if received after Aug. 31, 2011, which includes one night's accommodation and 3 meals
- Meals are provided at the Retreat Center: Friday supper served 5-7pm, Saturday: breakfast & lunch
- Meet for lunch and shopping at 11am Friday in Excelsior Springs, Ventana Gourmet Grill, 117 W. Broadway, or come directly to the Retreat Center after 2 pm (see Retreat registration for further details)

The Retreat program will start at 7:30 pm Friday evening. This is an outreach opportunity, so please invite friends and family, members and non-members alike!!

Visit the Women's Retreat Website at: <u>HTTP://HOME.COMCAST.NET/-CCWR/INDEX.HTM</u>

WOMEN'S RETREAT MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide an opportunity to learn practical applications of God's word in our lives, so that we may develop a closer walk with the Lord, while strengthening relationships and enjoying fun and fellow-ship.

For registration forms:

They are available in the foyer of the Temple Lot local or contact Jane Ann Carmichael at 816-478-7166 or janecarmichael@sbcglobal.net

We look forward to seeing you!!!

NOTICES

2011 REUNIONS Colorado Reunion

June 10-12, 2011 Orchard Mesa Local 3233 B 1/2 Road Grand Junction, CO 81503

Please notify us if you plan to attend so we can plan our meals and arrange housing if needed.

Marvin Carroll

634 Leah Court Grand Junction, CO 81503 (970) 523-9047 beemarvin@gmail.com Bob Hedrick 333 34 Road

Palisade, CO 81526

(602) 750-9661

rhedrick11@gmail.com

John Larsen

581 Agana St

Grand Junction, CO 81504 john.julie98@yahoo.com

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Michigan Reunion

June 17-19 Bradley Local Elder Adam Porter Cell# 616-240-3902 Elder Dennis Trudgen Cell # 616-302-6364

Idaho Reunion

June 24-26 Siscra Camp Grounds Elder Rich Bove (208) 870-3807 Elder Roy Coon (208) 365-3410

Phoenix Vacation Church School

July 4-8 Ages 3-15 Laura Gill #602-421-6203.

New York Reunion

July 8-10 Hogansburg, New York In Canada contact: Wayne and Susan Miller (613) 933-5469 <tel:+16139335469>

wmiller12@cogeco.ca

<u><http://wmiller12@cogeco.ca></u> In the United States contact: Eli and Gretchen Barbell (518) 358-2911 <tel:+15183582911>

<u>egtarbell@hotmail.com</u>

<u>http://egtarbell@hotmail.com</u>
Brandon and Tara Barbell
(518) 358-9153 <tel:+15183589153>

<u>b t a r b e l l @ t h e t m g . c o m</u> ≤http://btarbell@thetmg.com>

Ontario, Canada

October 8-9
 Brant-Norfolk Church
 163 Teeter St.
 Teeterville, Ontario
 Canada, NOE 1S0.
 For accommodation information and directions
 please contact:
 Bill and Marn Vieveen
 519-759-8087

 Michael and Debbie Bevaart

 519-805-9790
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 onbassed driver's license to ratum to the United

enhanced driver's license to return to the United States.

Arizona Reunion

 November 25-27
 Those who plan to attend or requiring more information please contact the following people: Pastor Elder Gordon McCann

18808 N. 30th St. Phoenix, AZ 85050 (602) 569-2341 gpjmccann@cox.net Asst. Pastor Elder Gerry Case 19015 N. 28th Place Phoenix, AZ 85050 (623) 234-4684 gerrycindy1@gmail.com Asst. Pastor Priest Glenn Orsted 1327 E. Wescott Dr. Phoenix, AZ 85024 (623) 780-8764 gorsted@gmail.com

AVA WEBSITE

On the Church of Christ AVA web site you will be able to access media such as archived sermons in video and audio formats, past issues of *Zion's Advocate*, searchable Bible and Book of Mormon, studies and Sunday School lessons. Real time live streamed sermons are broadcast every Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. central time which can also be accessed from the site. We invite you to take a look and discover what a useful tool this site can be in expanding your knowledge and faith. The address is www.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

JUNE HAINES 11589 Genuine Rd Clare, MI 48617

THE HOPE OF ZION

The Board of Publications has made available a copy of the report from the Committee to Study Zion entitled, *The Hope of Zion*. Contact Elder Robert W. Oldham at woldham1@sbcglobal.net, or any member of the Board.

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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