

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*

VOLUME 90

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI—January-February 2013

NUMBER 1

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." —1 Cor 1:21



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Yucatan Priesthood Meeting, July 3, 2012, Photo courtesy of Elder Gordon McCann

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STATUS of PUBLISHED ARTICLES

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To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

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RESOLUTIONS



By Priest Bill Malone

This New Year will probably bring many resolutions, or promises we make to ourselves or someone else. Resolutions to better ourselves spiritually should be the goal of each one of us. If we keep the resolutions, or promises of determination to better ourselves in some way, we are usually improving the physical or spiritual aspect of our

I believe each one of us...made a complete commitment to love and to serve Him, and keep ALL of His commandments ALL of the time.

lives. We quite often keep the resolutions or promises to ourselves so no one else can see if we fail, or we just don't set the goal very high. If we set the goal too high we might fail on the first day. We can make these mental commitments to ourselves, or maybe openly to our family, our friends or to God. I would like to talk about the resolutions, or promises, or commitments we make to God or have made to God, or need to remember that we made to God. Our baptism is a good place to start.

Do you remember the promise you made to God at your baptism? In thinking back to that moment, I be-

lieve each one of us here who are members of this Church of Christ actually made a complete commitment to love and to serve Him, and keep ALL of His commandments ALL of the time. We shouldn't have to make new resolutions unless we realize we have fallen short on our part of the bargain or commitment. Sadly, I think that is where the majority of us are in life. We are all sinners to a certain degree, maybe some of us more than others, by treating that commitment too lightly.

The more I read and study the scriptures and listen to sermons, the more I realize being good is not

enough. God expects much more from us as Christians, and especially us in the Church of Christ. We must do good also. It is absolutely re-

admit I read this scripture many times for many years before I received what I believe to be another message that Jesus was trying to get

that came to my mind was Matthew 21:28-31. *“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go sir, and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of the father?”* Which one are we? Have we made our commitment to God and then treated it lightly, going about doing our own thing instead of His will? Jesus spent His time in the ministry living His life for others...not just His friends (or His local), but even those who persecuted and tormented Him. Can we do that? Are we doing that? Can you look beyond the weaknesses and frailties of mankind and love others, all others, with the same love that Jesus has for you and me? Do you pray for the mind of Christ? 1 Cor. 2:16.

Have we ever had bad feelings for someone and tried to convince God, and maybe others, that we love them because we said the right words? Let's read in Matthew 7:20 and in 3 Nephi 6:32 the words of Jesus: *“Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.”* Not just by the things they say, but by

Proud people or Humble people, which one are we?

quired of us. Jesus told us over and over again how important it is to follow Him: *“For that which ye have seen me do, even that shall ye do; therefore if ye do these things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be lifted up at the last day”* (3 Nephi 12:35).

There are millions of professed Christians that proclaim their love for God and Christ. More is required of each of us. Charity or love is not just something we profess. It is the action portion of those three things: faith, hope and charity. There are two scriptures that come to mind right away. In John 21:15 Jesus is talking to Peter. He asks him, *“lovest thou me?”* Peter responds with, *“Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee.”* Jesus tells Peter, *“Feed my lambs.”* Jesus does this three times, and Peter's response was the same all three times. Jesus heard Peter's response and realized Peter's grief after having said the same thing three times. I have to

across to Peter, and to each one of us; not just the ministry, ALL of us. Feed my sheep. Do unto others. Love one another in word AND in deed. Show me. First tell me, then show me. You can tell me all day long how much you love God, and Jesus, and me, but if your actions don't show your love for others, then you can expect to hear the words from the Bridegroom at the last day, *“I know you not.”* These are words spoken by Jesus in the parable of the ten virgins who had chosen to keep themselves holy while waiting for the Lord's return (Matthew 25:1-12). Where do we sit right now? With the five wise or with the five foolish, those who thought being good was enough, or those who were being good and doing good (feed my sheep)? I believe that is the big difference between the five wise and the five foolish virgins; five were being good and five were being good AND doing good.

The second scripture

the way they live their lives. Are you pleasing God with your actions, or with the way you act when things aren't going right or with the things you do or say or think? We must recognize opportunities to respond as Jesus would.

Throughout the scriptures we read of the many mistakes that mankind has made. Sometimes entire civilizations are destroyed because of their evil ways. Sometimes God has given people many chances to change their evil ways, and sometimes they do and are blessed for it. We can see throughout recorded history that the fall of man has usually been because of his pride.... Maybe **always** would be a better word than **usually**. Pride—Humility: Proud people or Humble people, which one are we? How great is our desire to be the humble followers of Christ?

Each one of us has probably prayed the words, forgive me and help me to overcome some weakness in our lives. Do we sit back and wait for Him to change us into the people He wants us to be? I don't recall any teachings in the scriptures that show where Christ was behind us, pushing us in the direction we should go. I do recall Christ saying, "...Come and follow me." It is our choice. Jesus tells us 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*

then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Are we guilty of similar thoughts? Have we not paid

Nowhere in the scriptures do I see where we need to gradually ease into becoming a good Christian.

in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The scriptures don't tell us that life will be easy. We all must endure to the end. We are told in the scriptures that we will not be tempted more than we can bear IF we allow God to help us. 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 1 Nephi 1:65. We must call on Him continually and not just rely on Him to automatically jump in when things get tough. "The devil made me do it" isn't going to cut it. Proclaiming the Lord isn't enough either, as we read in Matthew 7:21-23. "*Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, Have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And*

our tithing, and visited the sick, and helped people in need, and attended every church service? What more does God want from me? OBEDIENCE: 1 Nephi 5:122 "He who is righteous is favored of God." Isn't that what we want from God, to be favored? Be righteous, if not for yourself then for others who ask for our prayers. James 5:16, "...*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*"

How do we attain the level of righteousness that is required from us? Let's start with a heart that recognizes our need to seek total forgiveness. Don't even ask for forgiveness if you have not made up your mind to commit your life to God 100%, and in sincerity and humility you have determined to overcome all of your weaknesses and sins. Nowhere in the scriptures do I see where we need to gradually ease into becoming a good Christian. Remember,

you don't have to do this by yourselves. If you try it alone you will fail miserably. Let go—let God. Be the person God wants you to be...de-

base this idea on many things that Jesus taught us in the scriptures. A good example is found in Moroni 7:8; *“And likewise also it is counted evil*

to us?”

Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans 3:23, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* Recognizing our need for greater humility in our life is the beginning of the rest of our journey through this life. Doing something specific in the right direction to attain the required level of humility is taking the first step...like committing to be at every service, praying out loud in a prayer service, sharing a testimony, loving one another, and many more.

I hope that each of us this New Year won't let a week go by that you have not been a blessing to someone. I pray every day that I would recognize the opportunity to be a blessing to someone. And then I pray that I will respond to that opportunity. I still have to take that step of faith and allow God to bless me by my actions toward someone else. Good intentions are not worth much if not put into action. The private lives that we live are not seen by all of our brothers and sisters, but they are seen by God. He knows what is deep within our hearts and our thoughts. Do you honestly think that some of those justifications we come up with for not doing the things that you know God wants you to do are pleasing to God?

Don't even ask for forgiveness if you have not made up your mind to commit your life to God 100%

pendant on Him, to help and guide you.

Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28-30, *“Come unto me all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you”* (a yoke puts one beside another) *“and learn of me,”* (find out what He expects of you) *“for I am meek and lowly in heart;”* (we must be like Christ and humble ourselves, and be obedient to all of God's commandments) *“and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”* We must humble ourselves to the extent that God sees in our hearts the desire to submit ourselves completely, and overcome our pride and allow His spirit to be with us as promised...to help us through the trials we will have in this life.

If we have not humbled ourselves sufficiently we could be adding to our sins instead of eliminating them. I

unto a man, if he shall pray, and not with real intent of heart.” Would the same principle apply to someone that makes a mental or verbal commitment to God, and treats it lightly when he fails to keep his word?

A modern-day story about Isaac and the sacrifice he was to make to God was mentioned in a prayer service recently. First, let's read Matthew 10:37-39; *“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.”* The words that were mentioned in the telling of the story that Isaac's son said to him, *“Is there nothing that you would not do for the Lord?”* Would any of our children say something like that

I would like to see each of us renew that commitment that we made when we chose to follow Jesus.

We were studying the parables of Jesus in our Sunday School class today. We talked briefly about the parable of the ten virgins. I think all of us fit into that parable...we are waiting for the return of Jesus. Are we ready for His return? Is there enough oil in your lamp? Or mine? None of us knows the time of the end, or how much time we have left before we are called home. There might be a few more years until Christ returns, but you or I might not have a few more years left before we are called home.

We are told in Paul's writings to the Thesalonians 5:22 to, "*Abstain from all appearance of evil.*" Do we pray like Nephi did as recorded in 2 Nephi 3:53, "*Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?*" I hope and pray that each of us will take upon us this same outlook as Paul and Nephi.

It is my prayer that we may have, each of us, the love for others, all others, that He has for each of us and for all mankind. A good example of the strength and amount of that love is explained in Mosiah 1:101. This scripture shows us how concerned He

is about the sins of His people of this world, the sins of our society. "*For behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for*

and intensified by giving it away. It is available to us in unlimited quantities. Let us enjoy it and share it more than we ever have before.

Preach Jesus Christ to everyone. Use words if you have to.

the wickedness and the abominations of his people." In Luke 22:44 the wording of this parallel scripture led me to initially believe that Jesus was agonizing about the suffering that He must endure before and during His crucifixion. His concern was for you and me. Can we feel that much love for one another? Not without accepting that same love from God and committing our lives to sharing that same intensity of love for others. He loves us even though we have different ideas from His as to what is acceptable. If we disagree with someone else, do we have the right to love them any less? Would you want God to love you any less?

The love we must have for one another, all "one anothers," the guy who cuts you off in traffic, and the guy that thinks you are an evil infidel, and yes, even the brother that believes the scriptures differently than you, can only come from God, and can only be replenished

REMEMBER: Preach Jesus Christ to everyone. Use words if you have to.

Caring for Others through Prayer



By Elder Moses Ohuru Chuma

Caring for others through prayer is more than just idle words. As we join in prayer for others who are in great need, we also express to God our appreciation for what He has abundantly provided for us. Let us ask ourselves an important question: “Do I really care for others, and especially those of the household of faith”? (Mosiah 2:30, 31, 36, 43, 44; 9:60-64).

We are aware that the Word of God says:

“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother

As members of the body of Christ and joint heirs with Christ, we are obligated to lift up each other in prayer and care.

abideth in death.

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

“But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

“And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him” (1 John 3:14-19; see also Alma 2:18-21 & 16:218-224).

As we care through our

prayers for our fellow men, so let us provide for the brethren, as we are able. Our Heavenly Father gave every good example on this, for the scripture says:

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:4-7).

God cared for Israel in order to provide for all who would believe in the Messiah, which hope

was preserved under Israel. God had foretold as to the manner of the Messiah coming into this world:

"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:18).

God's loving care upon all mankind has been provided through His separating anointing unto himself.

We as Christians need to care for each other as heirs of God. One of the great examples of this was the true illustration that Christ gave:

"And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

"And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

"And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

"And went to him, and bound

up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

"And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee" (Luke 10:30-35).

This is a very good example of the care that we should have for each other, both with material needs and prayer requests. As members of the body of Christ and joint heirs with Christ, we are obligated to lift up each other in prayer and care. It is also a privilege to pray for one another, being brothers and sisters in the Lord:

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.

"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

"For the body is not one member, but many...

"...That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).

May we as believers accept the responsibility to pray for one another. Often times those prayers involve confessing for both the healing of the soul, the spirit, and body:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Our care for others through prayer is another indication of our desire to live uprightly for the Lord:

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared,

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

"Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

"This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:3-8).

As members of the body of Christ, let us be mindful of one another, as the Word says:

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

"Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:9-13).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

God has made provision for us as the body of Christ to share in His great undertaking to redeem precious souls. We have been entrusted with the great commission to evangelize and teach the Word of God. Sharing through prayer, helping one another, unite us as the redeemed, bringing glory and honor to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1Peter 5:7).

Since the unbelievers in the world are dead spiritually, their

only avenue of understanding is in the temporal realm. They have been blinded by Satan and under the bondage of sin. We as the Church of Christ need to declare to the world that we care for each other, and that the Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme challenge to the world (Mosiah 1:49).

"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost:

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us" (2 Corinthians 4:3-7).

This is certainly a great responsibility entrusted to Christians. It is an easy task to preach about oneself or personal interests, but it is of the utmost importance that we lift up Christ before the nations. As the Lord prayed prior to the crucifixion; listen to what He said:

"Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause

came I unto this hour.

"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

"The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

"Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

"This he said, signifying what death he should die" (John 12:27-33).

We are the spokesmen for the Lord, making known this gospel.

As God's witnesses in this world of strife, envy, greed, hatred, jealousy, adultery, fornication, idolatry, drunkenness, murders, and all sorts of godlessness, we are vessels of righteousness for the outpouring of God's caring love. By your loving care through prayer, you declare to the world the saving grace of our loving Lord. Many Christians are so involved in the cares of the world and for the things of the world that they are "out of touch" with God, neglecting a life of prayer and trust.

When these things, surrounding us in this world, get ahold of us, the Word of God is neglected:

"And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

"And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful" (Mark 4:18-19).

"And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

"For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (Luke 21:34-36; see also Alma 16:228-233).

If Christians are to be used of God to deliver the children of this world from the power of darkness, it must be the power of God working in and through them. The world wants proof of something better than what this world offers. Discord among the brethren is an abomination unto God:

"These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him:

"A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood,

"An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief,

"A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

These hateful things are often used by Christian leaders in order to exalt themselves above their fellow believers. This is a misuse of the responsibility that has been entrusted to them, lording it over others and changing their good works into "wood, hay, and stubble." Fellow Christian leaders do not be guilty of such, but rather humble yourself before God.

"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.

"For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Hebrews 12:1-3).

As the Apostle Paul used every opportunity to witness for the Lord, so ought we to be willing to welcome others into this wonderful royal family of God. Be concerned about the problems which your fellow man faces, and show him that you care. The living God may be unknown to him, and that gives you

an opportunity to introduce him to the true God who answers prayers and cares.

Now concerning those who are of the family of God, we certainly should be willing to care for one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord. A prayer life for each other portrays that divine love working in and through each believer toward one another. The body of Christ is made up of many members and of all races of people around the world. It is our family responsibility to care for one another in the divine love of God. This caring love for fellow believers goes far beyond any natural love among the saved:

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

"No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

"Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

"And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

"Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness

in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

"We love him, because he first loved us.

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

"And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. (1 John 4:11-21).

Care and prayer with love is so important in our Christian walk through this temporal life. It is one of many ways in which we express our love to God by caring for one another. The Christian who endeavors to please the Holy Spirit and allow Him to fill his life is well on the way to maturity. That divine love that sent Christ to Calvary's cross must also flow through us to our fellow believers. We are all homeward bound to our heavenly Father with the Lord. These earthly bodies of ours are to be changed and be like the Lord Jesus Christ in His glorified incarnate body:

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

Those around about us will

readily discover the joy in our lives when we are in the right relationship with God. God's love will radiate through our lives when filled by God's Spirit:

"Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not;

"But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (2 Cor 4:1-2).

May God help each of us to be established in the Lord of Glory:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6-7).

May our walk always be in the light of God's Word, so that we have a continual fellowship with God Almighty. This walk with the Lord through our prayers and cares demands that we walk in the truth of God's Word:

"For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth" (3 John 1:3-4).

We need always to exalt our

Lord Jesus Christ and ask ourselves a personal question: Are we satisfied as Christians that we are glorifying the Lord in thought, word, and deed? One day we shall see Him face to face and certainly will want to hear Him say, "Well done!"

It will be too late to change our whole pattern of prayer life after we breathe our last breath. Make sure that your priorities are right and you can say, for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

As we conclude this study of "Caring through prayer for others," we must always keep in mind that a life of prayer is greatly involved in our lifestyle. If our prayer life is to grow we must search out the deep things of God's Word and anything less than that our prayer life becomes stagnant; our prayers become vain repetition and a mere form. As members of the body of Christ we should be concerned about the other members within the body. That is why it is so important that we care for one another in prayer, with thanksgiving, earnestly uplifting one another before the throne of Grace. Anything short of this misses the wonderful blessings that the Lord has in store for us through prayer. Let's walk and talk with the Lord often, bringing before Him our brothers and sisters in the Lord with thanksgiving.

FROM the ARCHIVES

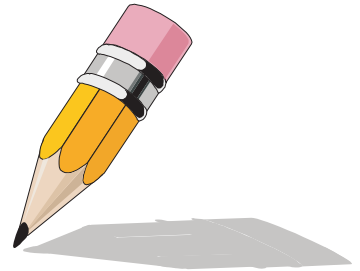
Church History Photos



While the excavation for the temple was being done on the south side of the Church of Christ, a special landscaping to beautify the northeast corner of the church grounds (Lexington and River Streets) was created with flowers and shrubs outlined with white stones sometime around 1931.

—The Church of Christ Archive Committee

2012 Phoenix Local Reunion



By Rebecca Yates

Preparations for the Phoenix Reunion began early this year with some changes to our church building. The Maintenance Committee and other helpers worked to do some remodeling of our bathrooms to make them more accessible to everyone. This was a big project and made for many long days (and nights), but it was finished in time to accommodate everyone for the reunion. With all of these efforts it was nice to have a time before reunion to meet together to relax and enjoy the company of friends as we gathered to say goodbye, for now, to our good friend Brandall. Although the reason for the get-together was one we wish we didn't have, it was a wonderful opportunity to let him know how much he will be missed as he is away on military deployment. We appreciate his service to our country and look forward to his quick and safe return.

As we have done for the last few years, the Young Peoples group took charge of the Wednesday night worship service prior to reunion. The young people performed specials, shared scriptures, and chose songs for the congregation to sing that were meaningful to them. This is a good opportunity for the young people to serve, as well as for us to begin our attitude of praise and thankfulness to God as we prepared for the reunion. We also met together Thanksgiving evening to enjoy a musical

program that included some of the music and history of a difficult time in our country's history. They performed songs accompanied by narration that portrayed the plight of slavery, but the story was one of hope through trial. It showed how those individuals turned to God and to guide them during difficult times; giving them strength to help others as well. The music was beautiful, and the hours of practice of those involved were worth the effort as we were able to once again meet together and fellowship while we enjoyed the talents God has blessed them with.

Our reunion began Friday morning with a prayer service led by Priests Gary Jacobsen and Aadam Yates. We started out with a time of thanksgiving for the many blessings we have received this year. Instead of asking for prayer needs we made a list of blessings and then knelt to thank the Lord for the things He has done for us, for our family and for our friends. It was a great start to our reunion. The service went on with many testimonies, as well as prayers for the need we still have for continued blessings among our people. By Friday afternoon our reunion was off to a great start and we looked forward to what was to come. We were not disappointed as we met together for our first sermon from Elder Robert Oldham. In it he admonished us to stay focused on God's word and increase our knowledge of the scriptures. God is speaking and we should not wait to do the things He tells us. He gave examples of God's intervention in the lives of His people, and reminded us the Lord wants us to be with Him. But we must do our part

to become more righteous. Each of us individually has a responsibility to grow closer to God and to remove the things from our lives that would hinder that, but it remains our choice to do so. Brother Oldham's sermon began the theme that continued throughout the messages during the remainder of the reunion. Later that evening we heard from Elder Brandon Tarbell. He encouraged us to be passionate about our service to God; to not be satisfied with less than our all. He prompted us to support those we see serving with zeal to continue and to share in it with them, to lift up others around us. Service takes action and is an expectation of the Lord. The more we serve Him with all that we have the closer we become to Him.

Saturday morning we met for another prayer service led by Elders Andy Brown and Rich Bove. They reiterated the importance of the sermons we heard the previous day and that we should strive to apply these things to our lives. Later that afternoon Elder Dan Lawrence presented a PowerPoint lesson about the Kingdom of God. He explained different aspects of earthy kingdoms and related it to God's kingdom. There are expectations of those who wish to be a part of it. We must remove from our lives the things of this world that hinder our relationship with God, and replace them with things that will draw us closer to Him: taking on responsibilities to serve, trusting in His strength and not our own, and repentance. It takes action on our part.

That evening we met and heard from Apostle Placido Koyok Matu, whose mes-

sage was a continuation of things God had been sharing with us throughout the reunion. Brother Placido shared with us that our ultimate goal is the Kingdom of God, and that God has placed us exactly where He knows we can grow and flourish to achieve that goal. The Lord continues to give us opportunities to serve, what will we do with them? We need to do something extra, not just what is necessary to serve God. Our labors are not in vain and we have a responsibility to share the gospel with others. We must prepare ourselves to do the work God has for us.

Sunday morning we met together again for the Sacrament service, which was led by Apostles Smith Brickhouse and Brian McIndoo. Again we were reminded of the theme that had woven itself through the reunion: the time is now to make our choice to follow God or to go our own way. As with the other prayer services there were many testimonies of God's blessings, as well as reminders of His love and care for us.

There are many things around us that cause anxiety, but the scriptures have told us the righteous need not fear. There is no power greater than that of God, and He will be victorious.

That evening we met for our final sermon, given by Apostle Jay Moser. He pointed out that God is actively building His kingdom, and our hearts must be softened to His words in order to be a part of it. God expects us to serve Him and if we choose not to we will not be a part of the things He has prepared for His people. We are surrounded by things whose only purpose is to separate us from God, but we must choose not to partake of them. It is our duty to hear God's word and not rebel against it no matter how difficult it may seem to accept. We must live daily in thanksgiving for His blessings, and make the changes needed to be a part of God's kingdom. Brother Moser admonished that the Lord will not allow anything less.

The 2012 Phoenix Reunion was filled

with fellowship, as well as a great outpouring of the Spirit of God through the testimonies and sermons we were able to hear. We were blessed with many musical offerings as well. The many choirs and individuals who shared their gifts in praise to the Lord were uplifting to all of us who heard them.

The services of this reunion emphasized that the time is now to choose whom we will follow. God's promises are there for His people and we can rely on His strength, but only if we have made the decision to follow Him with real intent. We must each strive to become more righteous and seek out ways to serve God with all we have. We are thankful to all those who traveled to share in this reunion with us and are already looking forward to next year.

NOTICES

APRIL GENERAL CONFERENCE 2013

As instructed by the 1964 April Ministers' Conference be advised that the 2013 April General Conference (name changed per 2006 conference action) will begin Monday, April 1, 2013; "Conference Sunday" will be Sunday, March 31, 2013. The first business session will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday, April 1, 2013, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot. According to action taken during the 2012 April General Conference, two days of fasting and prayer will be held Friday and Saturday, March 29th and 30th, 2013, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot.

All committee reports should be forwarded to the Conference Secretary *at least two (2) weeks in advance of the beginning of the first business session*. As is always the case, it is requested that any business to be placed before the 2013 April General Conference *be forwarded in advance of the first business meeting* (please) so that document packets may be completed for distribution.

Send the above requested information to:

HARVEY E. SEIBEL

General Church Secretary
9800 E. 32nd Street S.
Independence, MO 64052
harvenes@juno.com

Your brother in the Lord's work,
Harvey E. Seibel

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 rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net, or any member of the Board.

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 (Chairman)
18808 N. 30th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85050

MARLENE COBB
725 S. Pickwick
Springfield, MO 65802

JUNE HAINES
11589 Genuine Rd
Clare, MI 48617

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.



Church of Christ

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| Article of Faith, #9 - (concerning the Bible and Book of Mormon) | God's Purpose in America |
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CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

To insure your membership records remain as current as possible when moving or relocating, fill out this form and return it to the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), Attn: General Church Recorder, P.O. Box 472, Independence, MO 64051-0472, or e-mail the information to cofcrecorder@sbcglobal.net. One form per family, please.

MEMBER'S NAME: (First) _____ (Middle) _____ (Last) _____

OLD ADDRESS: (Street address) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

NEW ADDRESS: (Street address) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

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Speed delivery of your *Zion's Advocate* by sending us your new address immediately. Each undeliverable *Zion's Advocate* costs the church more than the value of a first class stamp, in addition to regular postage.

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