# 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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"How sweet are thy words unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way. Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments." —Psalm 119:103-106

#### ~ In This Issue~

EDITORIAL—King Josiah - Elder Gordon McCann. 3	NEWS
ARTICLE—The Book of Mormon and DNA - Elder	OBITUARY—Barbara Carole Housknecht-Kimball
Bob Hedrick	(9/7/1945~7/21/2014)
FROM the ARCHIVES—Story of the Small Pile of	OBITUARY—Joyce M. Lussenden
Stones - Elder James Maynard Case, and The	(7/12/1933~3/1/2014)
Corner Stone - Samuel Wood 9	OBITUARY—Jeanette (Brantner) Cunningham
TESTIMONY—My Experiences with Church History -	(6/8/1931~11/2/2014)
Apostle Roland Sarratt	NOTICES



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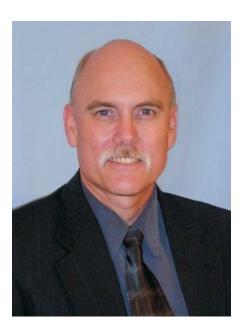
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To be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate.

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# King Josiah



By Elder Gordon McCann

(Note: references can be found in 2 Kings chapters 22 thru 23 and 2 Chronicles chapters 34 thru 35.)

s I contemplated what I would write about to start off this New Year my mind was directed towards the story of Josiah, king of Judah. Josiah was eight years old when he ascended to the throne of Judah.

Josiah's great-grandfather was king Hezekiah, who was 25 years old when he ascended to the throne of Judah. During his reign of 29 years he, along with the prophet Isaiah, oversaw the repairing, cleansing, and rededication of the temple in Jerusalem. The northern kingdom of Israel had been overrun by the Assyrian king Sennacherib due to

their wickedness of serving other gods. which was an abomination before God. The Assyrian king then turned his eyes towards the southern kingdom of Judah, and sent threatening letters and brought his mighty army to the borders of Jerusalem. King Hezekiah was quick to seek his God through humility and prayer. God heard and preserved Judah in a mighty way where "...the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (Isaiah 37:36). With the overnight death of 185,000 soldiers of the Assyrian army, king Sennacherib of Assyria returned home and was soon killed by his two sons as prophesied by Isaiah, thus preserving the southern kingdom of Judah and averting the destruction of Jerusalem by the hand of the Assyrians.

Now Josiah's grandfather, Manasseh, who was 12 years old when he ascended to the throne of Judah. was quite different from his father Hezekiah. During king Manasseh's reign of 55 years he did all that was in his power as king to bring back into the lives of his people all the idols, graven images, witchcrafts, wizards, and abominations that had been destroyed during the reign of his father Hezekiah. The very things for which God had condemned the people "...whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel" who possessed the land prior to Israel's occupation. King Manasseh went so far as to set carved images that he had

made into the house of God. The Lord spoke to Manasseh and to his people, but they refused to listen to God's warning voice. King Manasseh soon found himself bound with chains and carried off to Babylon. It was under these harsh conditions that Manasseh finally acknowledged God and sought forgiveness for the wickedness that he had done, and what he had caused his people to be part of as well. God had mercy upon Manasseh, and he was returned to his kingdom where he began to repair the damage he had caused by removing the idols and strange gods from the house of the Lord. He also repaired the altar of the Lord and began to sacrifice according to the Law of Moses before God. Even with all his efforts, Manasseh was unable to undo everything that he had done among the people.

Josiah's father, Amon, was 22 years old when he ascended to the throne after his father Manasseh had died. Sadly, Manasseh's repentance had had no effect upon his son Amon, who followed in the early footsteps of Manasseh by bringing back the idols in the house of the Lord and the worshiping of graven images, which abominations almost destroyed his father. However, Amon was not so lucky, as his servants within two years of his reign murdered him in his own house. The people of Judah had had their fill; they rounded up the servants who had conspired against Amon, slew them and set the 8-year-old son of Amon, Josiah, upon the throne in his stead.

Josiah's ascension to the throne at the young age of 8 would see a 31 year reign where it would be said of him, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left."

Over the next eight years the young king considered the paths that had been taken by previous kings and the fruit that those decisions had brought forth. He decided to surround himself with righteous individuals, the prophet Jeremiah being one of those close mentors. It was said of him, "...while he was yet young he began to seek after the God of David his father." So it was in the 12th year of his reign that at the young age of twenty he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the abominations his forefathers had brought in. It would eventually be a complete purging when he finished, even from the "... high places and the groves ... " that were built during the days of Solomon, which had remained. These were still a stumbling block to Judah and the remnant of Israel who had fled south after the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom of Israel. There was to be no stone or grave left unturned until all had been "...beaten ...into powder."

Towards the 18th year of Josiah's reign, he began the much needed repairs to the house of the Lord after the removal and destruction of the idols within. Josiah gathered those who had collected the money for the repair of the house and delivered the collection to the high priest, Hilkiah. Hilkiah then delivered the money to the workmen who were responsible for the repairs, who then began the restoration to the house. It was during this time that Hilkiah had found "...a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses" and had it brought to Iosiah. The words of the book were read to the king and it was said of him. after hearing the words, "...that he rent his clothes." The words of the book placed a heavy burden upon his heart in that he requested his servants to inquire of the Lord, "...for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah...for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book."

The Lord spoke through the prophetess Huldah, who delivered the words of the Lord to the young king of Judah. The Lord reiterated the promises of destruction to those who ignored those things that had been written, to those who had indulged in idolatry and abominations before him and said, "...therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched."

The Lord spoke to Josiah and said, "Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place and against the inhabitants thereof...I will gather thee to thy fathers...to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will bring upon this place." Thus we see that God fulfilled his promise found in the written Word, "He that is righteous is favored of God" (1 Nephi 5:122).

The story of Josiah king of Judah, provides us with a clear understanding of how God works in the lives of his people, young or old. The story also gives us a good example of God's expectations as to what He requires of each of us, if we truly want God in our lives in a positive way. It is a tradition at this time of the year to reflect upon the past year's triumphs and failures, then to set goals with a determination to make the needed changes in our lives. The Word of God tells us to "...work out your salvation with fear before God" (Alma 16:237) and to "...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" (Mosiah 2:21).

Let's review the things that Josiah did to draw himself close to the Lord whereby he became favored of God:

- Surrounded himself with people of faith and men of God
- Humbled himself and diligently sought after God with a true desire to keep His commandments
- Completely purged out those things that were an offense to God...nothing was overlooked
- Made full use of the written Word of God
- Kept the commands of God in all things

I will leave you with the words of Alma the high priest, who had made a similar journey of faith as Josiah, which changed his life and standing before God where he became "favored of God."

"Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins?" (Alma 3:47-49).

#### ARTICLE

## THE BOOK OF MORMON AND DNA



#### **By Elder Bob Hedrick**

"The overwhelming evidence negates the Book of Mormon claim that the American Indian represents a genealogical descendant of Israel."

his statement is from a popular video production which attempts to cast doubt on the validity of the Book of Mormon. The belief in the Book of Mormon is not a popular belief and has been attacked since it was first published. In the past, various criticisms have been raised which become popular for a while, but eventually become forgotten because they are not based on truth. From time to time these criticisms are revived but don't last very long when closely examined in the light of truth. Most recently, detractors of the Book of Mormon have made the claim that DNA evidence has finally proven the Book of Mormon "false." In order to answer the question of whether DNA disproves the Book of Mormon, a brief review of what the Book of Mormon claims, DNA and its limitations, and a closer look at the actual genetic research done by scientists needs to be considered.

#### A Brief Review of the Book of Mormon

he Book of Mormon is a record of the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. It records the migration of three different groups of people which were led by God to a "land of promise." The first migration occurred around 2200 BC after leaving the tower of Babel (Genesis 11), probably located in ancient Mesopotamia. This society collapsed and destroyed itself. The second (and primary) migration was led by a man named Lehi who was an Israelite from the tribe of Mannaseh, one of the sons of Joseph who was sold into Egypt. This migration was from Jerusalem in about 600 BC, just prior to the city being conquered and carried away captive by the Babylonians (II Kings 25, II Chronicles 36). This group eventually split into two major groups called the Nephites and the Lamanites. The last migration occurred shortly after the capture of Jerusalem.

Each of these groups of people recorded their religious history, as well as other significant events. They recorded the prophecies they received and the spiritual direction they were given from time to time, as well as their times of war and times of peace. They also recorded the blessings they received when they obeyed God's commandments and the consequences they suffered when they were disobedient. The people who were alive at the time of Christ record that He visited them after His resurrection as well as the things that He taught them (see John

10:16).

Several generations after the appearance of Jesus Christ, the Nephites were in spiritual and moral decline. A man named Mormon made an abridgement of the sacred records he had in his possession. His purpose was to preserve the sacred writings with the hope that God would someday restore the descendants of the people to the knowledge that they were one of the lost tribes of Israel and to the belief in Jesus Christ that they once had. After his death, this abridgement was completed by his son, Moroni. The last entry in this record was made shortly after 420 AD, and then was hidden by Moroni at the direction of God.

#### A brief review of DNA and its limitations

he human body is made up of trillions of cells organized into different systems, organs and tissues working together to support the life of the entire physical body. Within each cell is a chemical chain of nucleic acids in a precise sequence which acts as a controller of each cell's functions and therefore the overall function of the tissues, organs and systems. This chemical chain is called deoxyribonucleic acid or DNA and if uncoiled looks similar to a ladder.

The DNA is organized into 23 pairs of chromosomes. Each human being gets one set of 23 chromosomes from their father and one set of 23 chromosomes from their mother. Continuing with the ladder analogy, each set of chromosomes contains about 3 billion "rungs" called base pairs.

Each time a cell divides, which is a continual process within our bodies, the DNA makes a copy of itself so each new cell has a complete set of DNA. This process begins shortly after conception in the womb of the mother. The DNA from the father combines with the DNA from the mother and a new unique life is begun. Within this original cell, the DNA is present which will direct the growth and specialization of the cells into bone, muscle, organs, systems and tissues of the entire organism. Each time the DNA makes a copy of itself there is the possibility of a flaw in one or more of the "rungs," called a mutation. These mutations are identified and cataloged and, along with normal genetic variation, are what makes each individual's DNA unique.

Since DNA is so unique, like fingerprints, law enforcement is able to use that information to help identify and charge a suspect involved in a crime if they have DNA evidence from a crime scene. This uniqueness is also used to prove paternity in cases where a court is attempting to determine which individual is the biological parent of a particular child. In each case, at least two samples from known sources are required in order to be able to compare and determine identity or relationship. This is an important limitation of DNA evidence.

There are also portions of the father's and mother's DNA which are passed only from father to son (in the Y chromosome) or from mother to daughter (in the parts of the cell called the mitochondria, or mtDNA). These portions of the DNA can be studied and used to show different family groups. Scientists have collected data from many individuals in isolated areas from, hopefully, genetically pure lines of heritage as far back in history as possible. They identified many of these mutations and grouped them together. These groups are called haplogroups. This is the raw data which is then filtered and interpreted into various conclusions and published in scientific journals. The claim by some is that these studies prove that Native Americans are not descendants of Israel because the mutations most commonly found in Native American populations do not closely coincide with those found in Jewish populations. This claim is repeated frequently and loudly, but a closer review of the research exposes some interesting suppositions.

### A closer look at genetic research

hen scientists prepare the results of their research for interpretation, they begin with a set of assumptions through which they filter their data in an effort to understand its meaning. These assumptions influence or even determine their conclusions. These assumptions are not generally mentioned by those who may use those results for their own purposes, such as the critics of the Book of Mormon, when they make their claims. For instance, the studies that are most often referenced (Underhill, P.A. et al; Hammer and Zegura) begin with an assumption that "the modern human species originates from a single evolutionary event." For this reason, in an effort to decide which mutation occurred first, the scientists compared the mutations to similar portions of the DNA of great apes (e.g., chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans) because of the belief that humans have a common ancestor with those primates. The fundamental assumption of the theory of evolution as an explanation of all life and all new life forms is the root from which the DNA "tree" is built. Recently there have been many excellent sources of information which challenge the theory of evolution and its validity (see Darwin's Black Box by Michael Behe).

The assumption of the development of all life by means of evolution results in researchers spreading the mutations in the human genome over 70,000 to 130,000 years. This despite other studies which suggest a much more frequent rate of mutation, some bringing the estimated time to as little as 6500 years ago (Parsons, et al., 1997). With the assumed rate of mutation the studies used, most of the mutations would have occurred before the migrations recorded in the Book of Mormon from Jerusalem approximately 2600 years ago. However, if a literal biblical perspective (i.e. Adam and Eve were created and then driven from the Garden of Eden about 6000 years ago and the flood at the time of Noah was 4000-5000 years ago) is applied to the raw data and a more frequent rate of mutation is used, as much as 60 percent of the mutations would have occurred after the separation of the Book of Mormon populations from the rest of Israel. Therefore, it would naturally be very difficult to find similarities in DNA.

Many who claim that DNA disproves the Book of Mormon point to the fact that studies show that the Y chromosome DNA (from the father) of most Native American DNA is most similar to the populations in East and Central Asia. However, the Book of Mormon itself only records a period of time from roughly 2200 BC to 400 AD. It makes no claim to explain the presence of all populations found in both American continents before Columbus. While the raw data indicates the similarity between Native American and Siberian DNA, genetic evidence alone doesn't fully explain migration patterns. Some scientists have even hypothesized that the similarity is "better explained by back-migration of males from North America to Siberia with subsequent gene flow in Asia" (Hammer and Karafet).

### So what does DNA tell us?

he collection and organization of the raw data does have merit. The organization of populations into haplogroups can show the relationship between the populations. Software programs are used by scientists to calculate the "genetic distances" between populations. Those populations which are more similar genetically are grouped closer together on a "tree." The result is that the "Native American Y chromosomes show remarkably close association with Caucasoid (European and Indian) Y chromosomes," while "other Siberian populations are very distinct, clustering with other Asians" (Santos, et al., 1999). This result points to the possibility that they may actually share a common ancestry as claimed.

There are also many interesting developments regarding the research done on the female chromosome (mtDNA) haplogroups. There is a haplogroup which has been found in small amounts in modern Native Americans as well as ancient Americans which is also found in small

amounts in Europe and Asia Minor, but not found in Asia. This suggests "the possibility that some Native American founders were of Caucasian ancestry" (Brown, et al., 1998). Another researcher suggests an "early split" of this Native American haplogroup "likely at the beginning of their expansion and spread from the Near East" (Reidla, et al., 2003). These findings pose significant problems for the popular theory that all migrations of Native Americans came from Siberia.

While these are interesting observations, new discoveries in the future may change what scientists believe they know. Therefore, caution should be used when attempting to apply any new scientific discovery to support a religious belief.

#### Conclusion

fter reviewing the limitations of DNA comparison and exploring the assumptions made by the scientists who have published genetic research, there is no DNA evidence which "disproves" the Book of Mormon. In fact, no peer-reviewed scientific research has been performed or published regarding the question of DNA evidence relative to the Book of Mormon. While there are popular theories, no definitive ancestral population or migratory path for the ancient inhabitants of the Americas have been determined scientifically.

There are no available samples of DNA from populations positively identified in the Book of Mormon for direct comparison. The published scientific studies which are cited by critics of the Book of Mormon assume evolution as the origin of all life and over a very long period of time. These assumptions ultimately determine the conclusions reached. When the raw data is viewed through the lens of a biblical worldview it actually provides a logical line of reasoning that the events described in Scripture are possible.

Matters of faith, like the belief in God, the Bible or the Book of Mormon are not subiect to study by science because it cannot be observed or measured. Likewise science will never be able to "disprove" or even "prove" the validity of the Book of Mormon, or the Bible or Creation. These are supernatural things of faith and spirituality. Paul tells us that "...the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14).

The belief in the Book of Mormon is not popular in today's society and will continue to be attacked as it has been since it was first published. Critics have used other arguments in the past and will undoubtedly think of new ones in the future. These criticisms appeal to those who already don't believe, whose assumptions have already determined their conclusions about the Book of Mormon. Like the criticisms of the past, the attempt to claim that DNA disproves the Book of Mormon fails when the question is examined in the light of truth.

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#### FROM the ARCHIVES

### Story of the Small Pile of Stones

#### By Elder James Maynard Case, reprinted

he following is an accounting of the sacredness to the Indians of this spot of ground (The Temple Lot). On the north side of the Centennial Marker on the church lawn there is a plaque describing a pile of small stones that marked the site of the temple. In our research we found in Oberlin College at Oberlin, Ohio, the poems of Hiawatha by Longfellow. These poems tell that the Indians met upon this sacred piece of ground centuries ago, holding their ceremonies, and their worship services. It seems there were those among them that had different ideas and wanted to do things their way, which caused confusion and finally war among the Indians. There were many killed. At the height of the conflict, a white personage with a beard appeared and shamed them for the things they had done here upon this sacred spot of ground. He told them to go down to the river and wash off. (It is a shame that it cannot be said in the poem verses as Longfellow placed them.) This personage instructed them to go back to their reservations and select a man among each tribe to carry a small stone back to the place and mark the spot where the great Lodge was to be built for Christ to come to, as spoken of in the Book of Mormon. So we find that there have been preparations and dedications for some time here upon this ground.

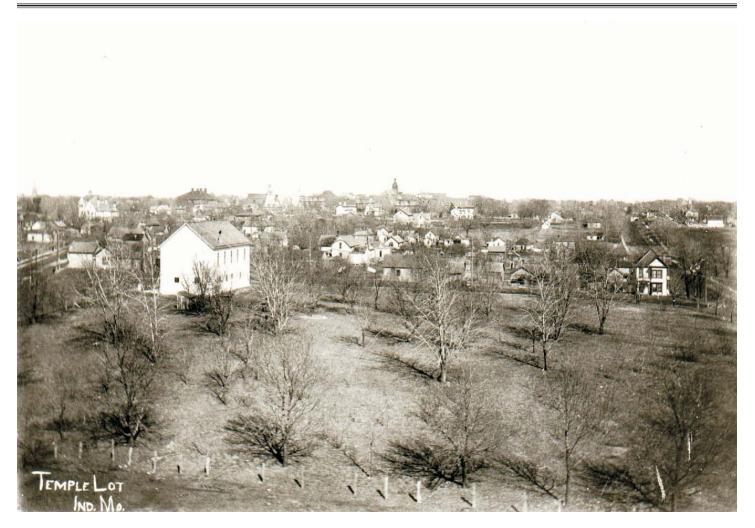
### The Corner Stone

By Samuel Wood (later an Apostle in the Church of Christ)

rother Arthur Brackenberry, one of the old time members of the Reorganization in Independence in the early days, while in conversation with the writer, stated that he knew the very place where the corner stone of the Temple was laid by Joseph Smith, on the 3rd day of August, 1831. He described a pile of rocks which for "years and years" had marked the exact spot where the stone was laid. In after years when the old road bed across from the Temple Lot was filled in, the stones were scattered. Brother Brackenberry stated that he knew within ten feet of where they lay. And the place is just a few feet off the southwest corner of the white building occupied by the "Church of Christ-Temple Lot." This would be the correct place for the building if it is to occupy the lot now owned by the Church of Christ.

Many years ago when I was a boy and while attending a General Conference of the Reorganization, Elder T.W. Chatburn, one of the greatest missionaries of the church, and who was my mother's brother, led me over to the Temple Lot and pointed out the spot where the corner stone was laid, describing the pile of rocks and the clump of brush just as Brother Brackenberry had as related above. It will be remembered that the family of Brother T. W. Chatburn was among the first members of the Reorganization to settle Independence, and to his death, T. W. Chatburn held to the belief that some time in the future the temple would be erected by divine command on the spot where the pile of rocks and the clump of brush marked the place where the corner stone was laid by Joseph Smith.

Reprinted from the Zion's Advocate from February 1927



Visual Evidence of the Stones on the Temple Lot? Do you see a light colored mass at the bottom of one of the trees near where the NE corner marker would be?

The Temple Lot – Independence, Missouri View East Northeast towards the Jackson County courthouse (center horizon). Photograph by C. Ed Miller taken between 1902, when the Temple Lot Church was finished, and 1907 when the courthouse remodel was completed. The shape of the courthouse tower was changed to a box style at that time.

#### TO BE CONTINUED...

# My Experiences with Church History



#### **By Apostle Roland Sarratt**

aving been raised to believe in this Church of Christ, I had the advantage of learning the gospel of Christ and some of the particulars of the history of this church early in my life. The truth of the gospel was easy to embrace as a child, and the Bible and the Book of Mormon were read and taught to us as a family regularly. When I was in my preteens we started having Sunday School and church services in a one-room school house across the road from our farm home.

The history of the church with its uniqueness was also related to me in various ways. but I barely understood the varied accounts of how the church was split into several independent organizations. The fact that my parents didn't belong to the same church as their siblings on both sides was barely comprehended by me. It was apparent that most all of them were members of the same church at one time. but my parents had left that church and had joined this Church of Christ. I was aware that most of them believed in the Bible and the Book of Mormon.

Although the history of the church was taught to me verbally, I had very little exposure to the latter-day revelations. The Doctrine and Covenants and the Book of Commandments were not read or discussed much until I had become an adult. My parents were strong in their convictions of the Bible and the Book of Mormon, and my father counseled me to read and pray over the Book of Mormon that I might receive a witness of its truthfulness.

As a child I had become very interested in the Book of Mormon. I tried to read it but I wasn't quite old enough to understand what I was reading. There had been some occasions when I felt the Spirit of God when it was read to me. After I left home, I began to more seriously study the Book of Mormon, and on one occasion I was overcome with the Spirit of God. The Spirit was with me for some time. I was given a witness of the truthfulness of that book which has stayed with me to this very dav.

Unfortunately, by that time church history had complicated my convictions concerning this church. There had been many views and uncertainties exposed to me by the time I had become an adult. Although my mother and others had talked to me about being baptized, I didn't feel convinced that this church was the true Church of Christ. There were too many uncertainties that I didn't feel right about. I went on a quest to find out what church was the right church, but I ended up being more confused and dissatisfied. Finally I did what I should have done to start with: I prayed to God asking Him which church was right. He had to answer me twice before I got the message. Then I had to sorely repent of my sins and be baptized.

Immediately I was in the arena of doctrinal controversy. The church was torn by conflicting concepts established with highly emphasized points of debate. Within a vear I was called and ordained an elder, and the pressure was on me to align myself with one cause or the other. Usually I found that many of the causes were beyond my ability to fully understand and to adequately defend. Nonetheless I felt it my duty to take a side and fight for the cause. There didn't seem to be any middle ground.

As church history seemed to be a necessity in most all debates, I was forced to search for the truth in the history books that were available to me, along with the Book of Commandments and the Doctrine and Covenants. There were several things that I found in church history that didn't seem to fit with the gospel as I understood it. No matter on which side I found myself in an issue, I was always confronted with an opposing argument. This was truly a trial for me. It seemed that the beauty of the gospel of Christ was repeatedly treaded down to make way for the show of superior knowledge and understanding of man.

As I look back on the situation now, I recall the pain of the constant fight of controversy. When certain truths which I had come to hold dear were subject to be exposed as being false, it was like a knife being plunged into my very being. At first retaliation was ugly; and I had no desire to hurt others as I was being hurt. Then at some point my natural reactions to defend myself came to life, and I tried to respond by proving my stance. If I was ever successful of really convincing someone that I was right and they were wrong by my wit or superior knowledge, I don't recall it. My simple conclusion is that debating church doctrine is not the way of attaining personal righteousness.

Nothing that I had experienced during the early part of my ministry prepared me for what I was to experience in my later years. When I began to compile data for church history, the real truth found on the pages of the church conference minutes revealed to me just how great is the folly of men. The actual accomplishments usually were good and needed, but the process of attaining those accomplishments showed how inadequate human minds are in any orderly system of making rules, even when a parliamentary procedure was used.

There were times I would have to stop my efforts of researching historical data to regain a positive sense in my mind. The debates would become too real and I would be reliving them mentally. I ended up documenting the pertinent conference actions for reference purposes and not giving personal comments on most issues lest I be guilty of arousing the wills of those who might want to start the war on controversial matters again.

Comparing the written word of God in the scriptures that we have with our personal efforts to put into words simple statements of rule. I have to agree with Moroni when he said, "...when we write, we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words ... " (excerpt from Ether 5:26). The inherent trust in manmade rules is in fact a Gentile trait that we must deal with in our human affairs if we don't have sufficient faith in the Lord.

Some valuable books and documents were made available to the church in recent years pertinent to the lawsuit in 1891 when the RLDS Church sued the Church of Christ for the temple property. I felt the urgency to study that case to acquaint myself with the facts. By reading the court record and the effort made in defense of the Church of Christ by the one in charge, along with the church minutes and other bits of information, I was faced with facts that I could hardly believe existed.

My personal evaluation of the church at the time of the first court hearing is simply this: it was the lowest point this church has ever experienced. However, by the end of the second court (the appeal). this church had made a complete turnaround. Coming to the realization of these happenings, as hard as they are to accept, I am more than ever convinced of the truth that the Lord acted in our behalf. This is because He has a purpose in this church.

There are many evidences in our history that have proved to me that the Lord has preserved this small group of people as the remnant of the original church. That is what we declare, but only we are privileged to know that as a truth. It is not because we are more righteous than other church groups, but it is because the Lord has determined to save this church in spite of our own willful ways. We have acknowledged the faults and mistakes of man, but we have also recognized the simple truths that have been revealed and confirmed to us. Our only qualification for the favor of the Lord has been that we have held on to those truths.

At the time this church, the Church of Christ, had declared itself as being separate from the other divisions in the 1850s, it had renounced certain teachings and practices that had been accepted by one of the larger groups. Contrary to that position, the one in charge of defending the Church of Christ during the first court had resorted to using those teachings and practices as a means of defense against the claims of the RLDS Church. In reality he was not defending this church, but rather he was using members of the larger church as witnesses supposedly to counter the RLDS Church. He was actually supporting the teachings and practices of the larger church which this Church of Christ had officially renounced at an earlier time.

When the man who was in charge realized he had lost the case, he and his family left the Church of Christ. The members of this church then rallied to appeal the case; and they had to go to a great expense and make personal sacrifices to do so. By the hand of God they were able to win that appeal. The fact is that they could not change the original defense except to declare that the man who had been in charge was no longer representing this church. The horrible fact is that the court record of the case still retains those witnesses, although we deny them as being true teachings and practices of this church.

As I have wrestled with this fact. I have had to open my mind to accept a viewpoint that I had never been able to come close to experiencing before. In His own way, the Lord has revealed to this remnant of His church the simple truth about mankind in the flesh. There is no mortal man equal to the person of Jesus Christ in righteousness whereby he would qualify to occupy the position of Jesus Christ as the head of the church. That position was never to be given as a ministerial office, but when man has determined to establish such an office, it is a sign that the church is becoming apostate. That is a scriptural historical fact which has been declared as a necessity for the restoration of the gospel of Christ and the establishment of the Church of Christ is these latter days.

So we of the Church of Christ say that those who have declared that the Lord Jesus Christ has set in His church an office wherein a mortal man is to occupy in the place of Jesus Christ as head of the church have made a serious error. That error has made it possible for the exaltation of man to be equal to Jesus Christ. Some have declared that Joseph Smith and other men who were accepted as being the president of their church made no mistakes; everything they said or did was the absolute truth because of the position they claimed to hold. Also, it has been reasoned that a later revelation which conflicts with a former revelation or scripture can become the rule. In other words, God may change His mind from one time to another.

We believe that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. So it is true that this is not a real concern in this church today, but in fact it was a concern in the 1850's and again in the 1920's, which makes it a concern when we study church history now. We have to understand how our church fathers thought on various subjects even when their beliefs seem to conflict with our beliefs today.

Especially we should realize that at certain times in history the Lord has reached down and rescued this handful of people out of the murky waters of apostasy. It was a process which was an ongoing thing. In fact we should realize that we are in the process of being purged and cleansed even now. The church is yet to be set in order and prepared as a bride for the Bridegroom. We cannot prepare ourselves independent of Jesus Christ, but we must strive against our own carnal ways for the Lord to endow us more fully with His Holy Spirit, that we may become a holy people.

A very helpful fact of history concerning this Church of Christ is something that we mention quite often. This church has never been a part of any of the other so-called restoration churches. Of course, we were all one church prior to Joseph Smith's death. After his death, the church split up into several groups as a result of being led by men who claimed the right of the office of which Joseph Smith occupied, i.e.: the office of President of the High Priesthood. This group of members resided in Illinois and Indiana some distance south and east from Nauvoo. Illinois. It seems evident to me that the Lord kept those people separate for His own purposes, although they might not have realized it at that time.

Our church fathers determined to return this church to the original church structure and teachings of the church as organized on April 6, 1830, and to pattern it after the New Testament church. They did not focus on the church as it was at the time of Joseph Smith's death. In the 1920's this church determined that certain innovations had been made in the church which were not authorized by the Lord. They had to realize that as a fact and take action to make corrections accordingly. That was no easy task and they labored hard in their conference bodies.

Through the years this church had considered merging with one of the other churches, but by one means or another it appears that the Lord allowed certain things to happen to prevent this people from merging or joining that church or any of the others. This has been proven to have happened somewhat contrary to the will of this people at the time, but divine providence rescued us.

And so it is that this Church of Christ exists today only because the Lord has determined it. The preservation of this church has not been by any single heroic act of man or set of men, but by the hand of Be prepared to see God. God's hand in all events vet future. We have seen His hand in the past; we can see His hand in the present; if we look, we will see His hand in the future. Let's look for His hand, for it is "His hand is written. stretched out still."

#### Zion's Advocate

#### **NEWS**





Greetings from the Bradley, Michigan Local of the Church of Christ. The Lord has truly blessed us since I last reported.

The past year again seemed to just fly by. With a never-ending winter that Michiganders and many other states experienced this past year, we thank God for the safety of our brothers and sisters traveling on the roads and keeping them safe from the perils of such a hard winter.

The Michigan 2014 Reunion was held June 28 and 29th. Amanda Stratton took over the kitchen committee at this year's 2014 Michigan Reunion. Her goal was to design the meals so that the women working in the kitchen wouldn't have to miss being part of the services. She definitely accomplished her goal and still the meals were wonderful! Amanda also last year became our new Church Recorder, taking over the position from Laurie Jones. In 2013 we added Gerry Lee as our Church Photographer. Steven Stratton joined our classes assisting Br. Gerry Lee and Br. Ted Lee as Sunday School Superintendent Co-chair. Elder Adam

Porter remains as our Pastor, with Elder Dennis Trudgen as Assistant Pastor, and Elder Chris Moran assisting with our Sunday morning sermons.

At our 2013 Michigan State Reunion on Sunday June 9th we were very blessed to have our Brother Chris Moran called as Elder. He was ordained by Apostle Joel Yates, assisted by Elders Adam Porter and Dennis Trudgen. Our brother Chris had made himself ready to meet whatever Christ has in store for him. It has been evident with his messages each time he has preached. The Lord is truly using him to bring His message to the congregation, as well as those able to listen in via live streaming. Also, the studies that he brings to us along with our Br. Trudgen on our Tuesday night via Skype are truly something you don't want to miss. If you would like more details, our Bradley web site is: www.churchofchristbradley.org.

Last year on July 21, 2013, we added three new members through baptism: George Greig, Mike Jones, and Steven Stratton. What a blessed day it was to



**Baptism** of Mike Jones

join together to witness such an event as this. I'm usually writing about the birth of a new baby, but being born again is equally important and the most important decision we will make in our lifetime. I know our Lord is welcoming each of them with open arms. One of those baptized, being my companion, I am looking forward to sharing this gospel and growing stronger together serving our Lord and Savior. At the baptisms Pastor Porter had the children sitting at a small picnic table by the shore. There isn't a better example than that for our young ones! and Sr. Betsy Trudgen opened their home again for others to camp in their yard to enjoy rafting, canoeing, hiking and fellowship one with another. On Sunday everyone enjoyed coming there for services with Elder Chris Moran giving the message on "Temptations of Satan," asking the questions: What does Satan whisper in your ear? Has Satan found a weakness in your life? Ending his message with (I Peter 5:8): "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (We must always be found in prayer.)



#### ► Jay & Evelyn's 65th Anniversary

On August 21, 2013, our Br. Jay and Sr. Evelyn celebrated their 65th anniversary. What a blessing they are to our church local, and I know a blessing to each other and the many years they have shared together. Our Sister Evelyn has used her God-given gift of making quilts for gifts throughout the years. Now the last few years she also makes lap quilts for those in need at hospitals and nursing homes and anywhere else the need arises.

On Labor Day weekend Br. Dennis



► Evelyn Lee

September 20th Br. Adam Porter again hosted this year's annual pig roast. We get many visitors: Elder Mike Bevaart came the farthest, from Canada, as he has done many times before. The food and fellowship we all share one with another is always a fun and spiritually uplifting time for all.

On October 25 & 26, 2013, we had our annual Ladies Sleepover hosted by Sister Betsy Trudgen at her home in Belding, Michigan. Our theme was the Parable of the Ten Virgins from Matthew 25. The night of the sleepover at midnight we got the wake-up call to bring our lanterns and meet in the living room. Remember the story: What it means to be ready. Would we all have lanterns or sufficient light to be ready to go and meet our Lord? During our Women's Retreat. Mary Lee led a class on Procrastination. The meaning (hold until tomorrow), why we procrastinate? Fear, time, dreading, tired, age. What we are afraid of? Do not procrastinate the day of your salvation!

Another presentation was led by Joyce Lee on gossip. We all know the dangers involved with gossiping that led to much discussion. Our last presentation was by Kelli Moran with her daughter Lydia helping. They had made a jeopardy-type question board with Bible answers with everyone coming up with the correct question. It was a lot of fun for everyone. Again we thank Sr. Betsy and Bro. Dennis for opening up their home for our ladies annual sleepover. Plans for this year's Women's Retreat (sleepover) will be on Oct. 24 & 25.

This past winter in Florida we were very fortunate to have visits from Elder Leslie Case and his son Elder Jim Case. They were able to come to Jeff and Beverly Butts' home in the Jensen Beach area where we had a meeting on January 19, 2014, with Randy and Mary Lee and George and Loretta Greig attending. It is always wonderful to enjoy time with them and the messages they are able to bring to us.

On February 9, 2014, Elder Dennis Trudgen and wife Betsy visited us at our brother Randy and Sister Mary's home in the Port St. Lucie area. Randy's parents Jay and Evelyn have now joined them to spend the winter with them. It was so nice to be able to have a service and sacrament. Elder Dennis and wife Betsy reside for the winter in Lakeland, Florida.

Also on March 26, 2014, again at Randy and Mary's home, we were visited by Elder Bob Oldham and his wife Jennifer. We all thoroughly enjoyed his message and look forward to his visits.

We are sad to report that our faithful Sister Joyce Lussenden went to be with her Lord and Savior on March 1, 2014. Her husband Laverne, our previous pastor for 37 years, has now been placed on kidney dialysis three times a week. With our brother having only one arm it remains a major concern with bleeding and still being able to use his arm. Please remember our Br. Verne and the Lussenden family with your prayers.

Please especially remember in your prayers our Sister Georgia Trudgen and Sister Sharon Salters for their daily struggles with health issues, as well as so many that have asked to be placed on the prayer list. We are so thankful that God has given us the avenue of prayer on behalf of our loved ones.

May God bless you and we send our love to you all from the Bradley Local.

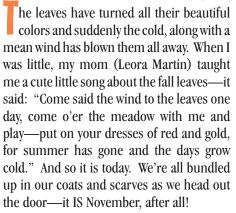
Your Sister in Christ. Loretta Greig



► Women's Retreat — Sleepover

#### **NEWS**

Collins Local Report



The young people visited our local Sunday, November 9th, 2014, after having had a nice weekend camp-out at Sister Marlene Cobb's cabin over in the Preston area. Brother and Sister Randy and Becky Sheldon along with Sister Jennifer McClure were their overseers. The young folks played and sang "Amazing Grace" as a special, accompanied by the cello (Van McClure) and flute (Wesley Welch). It was absolutely beautiful and so appreciated.

Our sister Betty Martin is heading back to Oklahoma to visit with her family during the Thanksgiving holiday. She has slipped in for services here now and then, as she was able. She has always been one of our "pillars" here at Collins—so many memories!

Our sister Marjory Routh has been having some health issues recently, but seems to be doing much better now and able to do a little "cat sitting" for her sister Helen Kidd. I hope that goes well for all parties involved!

Brother Curtis Yates is so vigilant and ever-present here when the doors open. He

says he believes he is getting "better" as he has had some breathing problems awhile back, but is not packing around his oxygen now. We are so grateful to our loving Heavenly Father for the answer to so many of our prayers.

Our brother Dale Herd was kept from tragedy as he had a motorcycle accident a few weeks ago. Yes, he got hurt, but not like it surely "could have been." He is doing fine now and only missed a very few days of work. This is another testimony of God's protective hand that we pray for one another—daily.

Do you hear the voice of our Lord speaking to us, trying to caution us and give that guidance we need from time to time? He COULD leave us completely to our own devices and our own "wisdom," but praise be to God that He hears us and His compassion is so gratifying—though we, perhaps, are hardly "worthy" of His consideration.

The Collins Rally was October 19th with brothers Martin Addy, Mark Hill and Marvin Case bringing the sermons. Our souls were filled. Our thanks to all who came and also for the extra food that was brought! What a joy-filled day!

Back in August, Allen and I were able to take a trip, first to New Mexico to visit our son Brian Coberly, Sandra, Dion and Deandra, then on to Phoenix to visit our grandson Aaron Herd and wife Niki. What a wonderful time we had, and were blessed with safety and good weather there and back. The BO-NUS was to get to attend church services there at Phoenix AND see some of our broth-



ers and sisters.

I guess when this "news" comes to you it will be the new year of 2015, so allow me to wish you strength, courage and the love of Christ for the time ahead. We need each other and must hold tight to His righteousness and that Rod of Iron that will keep us on the straight path we've promised to follow.

SERMON QUOTES TO SHARE:

- The kind of life you live will prove what you believe.
- If you KNOW—you are responsible.
- God without man is still God, but man without God is nothing.
- How is your "perfection" going?
- When we speak to the Lord, it's like a blind man speaking to the One who sees ALL.
- When you pray—BE before the Lord—seek His face.
- There's always a consequence for sin.
- Just because you CAN—doesn't mean you SHOULD!
- Behavior is the mirror.
- *It's in believing—that we see.*
- None of us are innocent—we have all earned our wages.
- What if you were going about your daily activities and met Jesus...
- Consider the values that you live by.
- Your body's not yours—it's for the glory of God—repent of tattoos—He will forgive you.
- It's time for us to CLAIM the NAME!

Your reporter, Czerna Kauffman

#### NEWS

**Phoenix Local** 





▶ Baptism of Sr. Linday Cunningham

Greetings to all our friends and family from Phoenix. I hope that you are enjoying your fall as much as we are here. The weather has finally turned cooler and I am reminded of why Dan and I moved to the valley.

So much is happening at the Phoenix local that I don't know where to start. One of the most memorable and exciting events occurred on November 2 when our Sr. Lindsay Cunningham was baptized. The next time you see our new member of the Church of Christ, make sure you give her a hug and a big smile, welcoming her into the family.

Sr. Kasey Kidd was given a baby shower on October 18, another fun time for all involved. Yet another shower will be given on November 15, this time to celebrate the upcoming wedding for our Sr. Aimee Yates and Br. Caleb Case.

In October, the church received a new floor in our kitchen area! It was certainly not an easy job voting on the type of floor to install, but the end result is worth all the trouble. Hopefully this floor will last as long as the previous one. New grass was planted outside and play equipment moved around. Seems like there is always something going on at our little church!

The Young People raised \$1,000.00 during our annual Cider Press. A big thank you goes out to the young people and all those who donated.

But Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 14:14). It is such a pleasure when our youngest members become involved and are willing to sing for the Lord and congregation. Great friendships are formed when they sing together and of course, have plain ol' fun together, like the recent field trip to the Tolmachoff Farms.

Of course, in the midst of all the excitement and fun times, we must always remember those who are in need



► Tolmachoff Farms

of our prayers. Just a few of the many who are having medical or other problems are: Sr. Amy Moser – there is really nothing to say other than our poor sister needs a new body – as she has often stated herself! She had made much progress and has truly been blessed, but has a long hard road to travel yet. I'm sure Sr. Wanda Yates would appreciate continued prayers. Sr. Suzanna Case is still struggling with some medical issues – please pray for her. Let's not forget those with cancer: Sr. Marlene Oar, Sr. Debbi Brown and Sr. Pat McCann. Again, in each case, each has received many blessings along their way.

We seem to have a rash of foot injuries and/or problems. Those folks include: Sr. Becky McIndoo, Evangelist Hubert Yates, and Br. Glenn Saracino.

Sr. Betty McIndoo continues to recover from her knee surgery and we must of course remember Apostle Don McIndoo for his eyes.

There are so many more that could

be mentioned. Please remember all in your prayers and make sure to visit and/or help out those that need it. A short visit or help with dishes or a supper can sometimes really brighten up a day.

I pray that you all have a truly wonderful Christmas season and a happy new year!

Your sister, DiAnn Hedrick



► Aimee Yates & Suzie Case

#### Zion's Advocate

#### **OBITUARY**



Barbara Carole Kimball passed from this life at her home in Independence, Missouri, on July 21, 2014, at the age of 68. Born on September 7, 1945, to parents Don and Doris Housknecht of Flint, Michigan, Barbara was the middle child with siblings Donna (Gill) Green, Victor Housknecht, Gary Housknecht and Rhea Housknecht.

On June 24, 1956, her father Apos-

### Barbara Carole Housknecht-Kimball

#### September 7, 1945~July 21, 2014

tle Don W. Housknecht baptized Barbara into the Church of Christ. The family had moved to Fenton, Michigan, where she attended and graduated from Fenton Senior High School in 1963. After graduating she worked at Hazelton & Perkins where she met the love of her life, Michael Louis Kimball. After a two-year courtship they were married by her father on June 17, 1967, at the Flint local Church of Christ.

Michael and Barbara made their home in Fenton, Michigan, and on September 5, 1968, celebrated the birth of their first son, Jeffery Michael, and then Stephen Michael on October 19, 1971.

In 1979 Michael was transferred to the Oklahoma City General Motors plant.

They lived in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and their boys attended school in nearby Dale. Barbara was an avid supporter of the boys at their school as a substitute teacher as well as their baseball games.

After Michael retired from General Motors, they moved to Independence, Missouri, where they were active members of the Church of Christ.

Barbara leaves behind her husband Michael, two sons, Jeff and Stephen, her daughter-in-law Amy, two sisters and two brothers, four beautiful grandchildren and a host of nieces and nephews. Barbara was loved by many and she will be greatly missed.

#### OBITUARY



oyce M. Lussenden of Hopkins, Michigan, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Saturday, March I, 2014, at the Allegan County Medical Care Community.

Elders Adam Porter and Aaron

### Joyce M. Lussenden

#### July 12, 1933 – March 1, 2014

Heath were the officiants at her funeral service.

Joyce was born July 12, 1933, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, the daughter of George and Cynthia (VanDuine) Miller.

She worked for over 20 years as a secretary at the Hopkins High School, and later at Brenner Tours.

Surviving are her husband, Verne (they celebrated 63 years of marriage), four children; Rick and Kathy Lussenden, Cindi and Steve Sebring, Cathy and Jesse Treece, Carol and Ted Lee, eleven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren, two sisters, Shirley and Gene Collings, Georgia and Norm Trudgen. She was preceded in death by her daughter, Brenda, and her two sons Daniel and Wayne.

Joyce was baptized in the Church of Christ in 1952 with her husband Laverne (Pastor of the Bradley local for 37 years.) She spent her entire life loving and serving the Lord. Joyce was always crocheting or doing some needlepoint project. You would consider yourself very blessed if you received something that was made by Joyce. We enjoyed many years hearing Joyce, Laverne and son Rick singing as a trio in the church.

Joyce had a beautiful and giving spirit that she shared with all that knew her. She will truly be missed.



## Jeanette (Brantner) Cunningham

April 8, 1931~November 2, 2014

eanette Irene Cunningham, 83, of Leeton, Missouri, passed away Sunday, November 2, 2014, at Lee's Summit Medical Center.

She was born April 8, 1931, in Rockford, Michigan, the daughter of George and Sarah (Hoskins) Brantner.

Jeanette loved her family and church very much and enjoyed spending time with both. She loved to travel when she was able, quilting and reading. She enjoyed her job in food service at the University of Central Missouri for 40 years, where she made many lifelong friends until her health forced retirement.

Jeanette is survived by her daughter Tricia Vaughn and husband Larry of Leeton, Missouri, son Daniel Cunningham and wife Carrie of Goodlettsville, Tennessee, son Edward Cunningham and wife Cynthia of Lowell, Michigan, and son Michael Cunningham of Lee's Summit, Missouri, 9 grandchildren, 10 greatgrandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren, 7 step grandchildren, 11 step great grandchildren, and 3 step great great grandchildren. Also surviving a brother. Charles W. Brantner of Lone Jack, Missouri, and a sister, Jeanece Stephens (Ross) of Warrensburg, Missouri, many nieces and nephews and a host of friends.

She was preceded in death by her



parents, 3 brothers: George Daniel Brantner, Gale Irving Brantner, and Richard Earl Brantner.

Our Sister Jeanette was one of those special creations of God, a rare blend of strength and softness. Her quiet demeanor hid her wonderful sense of humor. Always gracious and willing to forgive, she would also expect you to do and be your very best. She asked nothing more than that which she was willing to abide.

Her life was one of struggles. A single mother with four children, she worked hard and long to survive. Her work ethic brought her success in her vocation. Her integrity and moral character befitted a follower of Christ all her days. True grit combined with an elegant grace allowed her to endure and be endearing to all who knew her. Her life was one of service to God, family and friends.

Baptized on Mother's Day, 1942, with her older brother Charles, she amassed over 72 years as a faithful member of the Church of Christ. Living and loving, forgiving and being forgiven was her joy. Though health problems limited her she never complained. Her faith was never shaken.

Her life upon this earth has concluded with an expression of total surrender to the will of God, as she passed in peace to her reward in the Paradise of God with an anxious expectation for the life to come. She leaves us behind, knowing we too will make this journey one day. She will be there to greet us, to embrace us once again. This is our hope, and we have this hope because we have Jesus Christ.

God Speed Sister Jeanette, Till we meet again.

#### NOTICES

#### APRIL GENERAL CONFERENCE 2015

As instructed by the 1964 April Ministers' Conference be advised that the 2015 April General Conference (name changed per 2006 conference action) will begin on Monday, April 6, 2015; "Conference Sunday," beginning Sunday, April 5, 2015. The first business session will begin at 9:00 a.m. Monday, April 6, 2015, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot. According to action taken during the 2014 April General Conference, two days of fasting and prayer will be held Friday, April 3rd, and Saturday, April 4th, 2015, at the General Church Building on the Temple Lot.

All committee reports should be forwarded to the Conference Secretary <u>at least two (2) weeks in advance of the beginning of the first</u> <u>business session</u>. As is always the case, it is requested that any business to be placed before the 2015 April General Conference be forwarded in advance of the first <u>business meeting</u> (please) so that document packets may be completed for distribution.

**NOTE:** Please address all reports, i.e. missionary reports, etc., to the General Conference of the Church of Christ. This will help your Secretary distinguish periodic missionary reports from those intended for the General Conference and their inclusion in the Minutes.

#### NOTICE

The Council of Apostles has appointed Sister Rhea Housknecht as the interim General Church Secretary. Brother Harvey E. Seibel has faithfully served as Secretary for many years, but he is unable to continue at this time. Please send any correspondence for the General Church Secretary to Sister Rhea Housknecht at <u>cofcbo@sbcglobal.net</u> or mail your correspondence directly to P.O. Box 472, Independence, MO 64051, Attn: General Church Secretary.

Sincerely, Council of Apostles Duane L. Ely Secretary

#### 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 Oldham at <u>rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net</u>, 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 <u>www.cocsermons.net</u>.

#### 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:

MARLENE COBB (Chairman) 725 S. Pickwick Springfield, MO 65802 JUNE HAINES 11589 Genuine Rd Clare, MI 48617 PAT MCCANN 18808 N. 30th St. Phoenix, AZ 85050

#### 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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