

Zion's Advocate

*"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost...."*

1 Nephi 3:187

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"And it came to pass that I was overcome because of my afflictions, for I considered that mine afflictions were great above all, because of the destructions of my people; for I had beheld their fall." —1 Nephi 4:6

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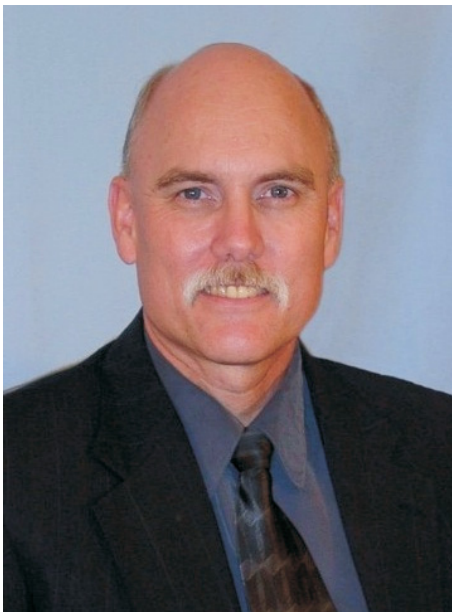
ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour;
 To promote His Teachings and His Church, the Church of Christ;

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

Cover Photo by Gordon McCann: *Iximché was conquered by the Spanish conquistador Pedro de Alvarado in 1524.*

IF YOU LOVE ME, Keep My Commandments



Elder Gordon McCann

My wife is a member of a small group of volunteers that prepare and mail recorded sermons to our scattered membership on a regular basis. One thing she enjoys doing is listening to the sermons that are mailed. My wife has a habit of grabbing a handful of CDs and taking them with us when we travel. During one of our trips we listened to a sermon by Apostle Alvin (Jay) Moser, delivered during our Phoenix Reunion in November of 2012. The title of his sermon was, *Come out of Babylon*. I remember clearly the power of the Spirit that was present and the impact his words had on me and those of us who were there to hear them firsthand. Brother Jay's opening scripture verses were Revelation 18:4 and 5.

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

When listening to that sermon again I was reminded of several scriptures that pertained to the day that the Apostle John was speaking of, one of which is found in Matthew 24:21 and 22.

For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

This scripture speaks of a time when the true believers in Christ will have their faith tested more than at any other time since the beginning of the world. The key to surviving this calamity, if we find ourselves living during that time, is to be one of *the elect*. The Greek word for *elect* is *ek-lek-tos*, which means – *select*, by implication *favorite*, *chosen*.

How does one become *elect* or *chosen* of God? The answer can be found in the words of Jesus Christ, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments"* (John 14:15). We can depend on Christ's words by exercising our faith by putting our trust in that simple statement and doing the things that Jesus has commanded us to do.

Jesus Christ made a point to his chosen disciples that he would no longer call them

servants, but friends. Jesus wanted them to understand the type of relationship that He wanted with them and how they could maintain that relationship.

Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you (John 15:14-15).

When addressing the dispersed or exiled Christians in Asia Minor, the Apostle Peter identified them as the following:

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:...(1 Peter 1:2).

These thoughts lead back to the words of the Apostle John, *"Come out of her, my people."* To escape those things prophesied it is requisite for us to become one of the *"elect"* of God, separated or set apart from the world and its sins. Though we have to live in this world, as Lot did in Sodom and Gomorrah, we can prove our faith by our choices each day as to whom we are serving.

We live in troubled times and most would agree that we are living in the last days prior to the return of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul, when counseling Timothy, spoke of the last days and gave a clear picture of what to expect from those who are part of this world as found in 2 Timothy 3:1-7:

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be

- lovers of their own selves
- covetous (money lovers)
- boasters
- proud
- blasphemers
- disobedient to parents,
- unthankful,
- unholy,
- Without natural affection
- Trucebreakers (**irreconcilable**)
- false accusers (**slanderers**)
- incontinent (**without self-control**)
- fierce (**brutal**)
- despisers of those that are good
- Traitors
- Heady (**reckless**)
- Highminded (**haughty**)
- lovers of pleasures more than (**rather than**) lovers of God;
- Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.
- Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Having faith in the words of Christ will be comforting to the “elect” when they see these conditions manifest themselves in the world. The chosen of God will clearly understand that they were not left in ignorance, but were prepared for those days by a loving Father in Heaven.

And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh (Luke 21:28).

He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Revelation 21:7)

However, there will be those who will be afraid and still refuse to believe in the words of truth as found in the scriptures, though they recognize that something is horribly wrong.

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

It can therefore be understood that if you find yourself “fearful and unbelieving” you have not applied your faith sufficiently to be favored or chosen of God.

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield

yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness (Romans 6:16)?

Clearly, the Word of God calls us to something much more beneficial than what this world has to offer. We truly can trust Jesus at His word.

And he hath said, Repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me and be baptized in my name, and have faith in me, that ye may be saved (Moroni 7:36).

Earlier I spoke of the power of our faith in terms of being favored or chosen of God. I am reminded of the scripture where Abraham “...believed in the Lord and he counted it to him for righteousness.” (Genesis 15:6) We can see throughout the scriptures that faith is an inseparable aspect of righteousness, so that if there is no faith, there cannot be righteousness.

I am also reminded of the words of a blind man from birth who gained his sight by believing and doing what Jesus Christ told him to do. The man who had been blind but now had his sight was being questioned by the Pharisees, who would not believe the blind man’s testimony, “...one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see” (John 9:25).

Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth (John 9:31).

The blind man’s conclusion again reminds me of the understanding that Nephi came to through his faith.

Behold the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one.

He that is righteous, is favored of God (1 Nephi 5:121-122).

God rewards everyone according to their faith and obedience in Him.

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

The following is a modern-day testimony of God working in the lives of those who believe in Him, having exercised their faith by doing His will in all things, thus gaining His favor in their lives. They have heeded the voice from heaven, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.”

Missionary Report

Report by Evangelist Camilo Samson

Elder Raffy and I went to visit one of our missions (on the motorbike of Elder Raffy), and on the way down to church we were about to be trapped by the cross firing encounter between the government troop against NPA guerillas, but thank God because He saved us and delivered us from destruction. The Bible said; *He will give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways (Psalm 91:1-11; Psalm 23:1)*. Actually, the mission has been restored spiritually, and I baptized five candidates for baptism. They are now having regular Sunday services; to God be the glory!!

The Rest of the Story

Testimony by Sister Ruth Vivas

When my son Mark Gregory woke up that morning, he went straight to us and said, “Let us pray; I dreamt of Papa (Elder Raffy) last night and he was shot.” He said there were shootings in his dream and his Papa was shot. (He did not even know that Elder Raffy and Evangelist Camilo had a schedule that day to go to one of our missions.) We prayed, the three of us, for protection and rebuked bad spirits to not triumph over us, and called for God’s angels to protect us, especially Elder Raffy and Evangelist Camilo. We pray hard every time warnings such as dreams occur.

When Elder Raffy came home from their mission trip he testified of how God had protected them. The dream of Mark Gregory had significance. Glory to God!! It just means God is so real, and that He is watching over us!! I can’t thank Him enough, I am in awe of Him....

And as you know already our mission leaders/pastors went back to the mission for ministry work and there were five new baptisms.

Well, that is all I could share.... We’re not keeping to ourselves what God has done, but recognizing and acknowledging His grace and favor, for to Him is all the Glory!!!

ARTICLE



A BOOK OF MORMON Critique

By Apostle Don McIndoo

The beautiful poem below was written by Renan Chuc of Ticul, Yucatan, an Elder in the Church of Christ. I believe it captures the very essence of this marvelous book. We shall use seven of the elements of his poem as our guide for a critique of the Book of Mormon.

Oh, Book of Mormon

(Translated from the Spanish)

Eternal book, thou art hidden
In Cumorah's lonely hill;
Plates of immortal wisdom
Revealing the story of the past.

Venerable book, blessed and full
Of profound and inspired philosophy;
Thou hast come to unite in joy
The houses of Joseph and Judah.

History of America, told in radiant brilliance
Of wondrous and mystical splendor:
The doctrines which the prophets spoke
Were the flowering paths of the Nephite.

Oh, book of eternal and simple truths

Containing verities announced by prophets;
Thou art the wisdom of sage and poet;
Enlightening the world through the ages.

Eternal Book, Thou Art Hidden in Cumorah's Lonely Hill

Mormon, the final leader of his people and servant of Jesus Christ, wrote the following words on one of the last plates, and today they are found in the introduction of the Book of Mormon on page iii. "Written and sealed up, and hid unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni and hid up unto the Lord. . . ."

Just what was the purpose of the Lord in hiding this record in the earth? The ancient traditions of the Toltecs of Mexico give answer. Quetzalcoatl, the White God of ancient Mexico (also called Viracocha by the Incas and Itzamná by the Maya), gave the Toltecs a warning concerning the coming of the conquerors from Europe. After this He told them, "Carry your great books into the jungles. Place your histories deeply in caverns where none of these men can find them ... For children

of War are these bearded strangers. They speak my precepts, but their ears do not listen" ¹

This ancient tradition (prophecy) alludes to the coming of the Spanish conquistadors. The accuracy of the tradition, and the danger to the Book of Mormon, is borne out by the coming of Bishop Diego de Landa to ancient Mani, Yucatan. Landa's impact on history rests, in large part, upon the "... famous Auto de fé of July 1562 at Mani, at which, in addition to some 5000 'idols', he burned as he tells us twenty-seven hieroglyphic rolls, all he could find but could not read. . . ." ²

Moroni, the son of Mormon, wrote, "I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord ... Yea, it shall be brought out of the earth, and it shall shine forth out of darkness, and come unto the knowledge of the people: and it shall be done by the power of God;" (Mormon 4:17 and 21). These words of Mormon and his son Moroni fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah given 1,200 years before these events took place.

Isaiah prophesied of the destruction of Jerusalem, and he prophesied that after her destruction the words of her inhabitants would speak as if from the earth.

“And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that bath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust” (Isaiah 29:4).

In the latter day this same Moroni, as a messenger of God, appeared to a young man named Joseph Smith. Joseph writes that on the twenty-first day of September of 1823, *“...while I was thus in the act of calling upon God I discovered a light appearing in the room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor ... He called me by name and said unto me ... that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil, among all nations, kindreds, and tongues ... He said that there was a book deposited written upon gold plates giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent....”*³

Three times the angel appeared to the young man that night and told him the same things on each occasion. He said that God was going to restore the true doctrine of the Church of Christ and the authority and power to represent Jesus Christ in the world once again after the long duration of the apostasy. This divine work would fulfil the prophecy of John: *“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, ...”* (Revelation 14:6).

On September 22 of 1827 Joseph, following the directions of the angel, obtained the ancient record. It would be translated, even as Mormon had written, *“...by the gift and power of God.”* Joseph obtained the services of a scribe named Oliver Cowdery. Oliver, also a young man, had heard of the young prophet, his visions and his possession of some ancient and sacred plates. These stories had a profound impact on his mind. Wanting to know if

they were true, he drew near to the Lord in prayer and obtained a firm conviction that this was a work of God.

On the fifth of April in 1829 Oliver renounced his post as a teacher and appeared at Joseph's door. Joseph received this young man as the answer to his prayers. Two days later they began the translation. While Joseph was translating the ancient plates with the help of the “interpreters” (see Mosiah 5:73-83), Oliver was writing the translation. Listen to the words of this young assistant:

*“These were days never to be forgotten - to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, awakened the utmost gratitude of this bosom. Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, ‘Interpreters’, the history, or record, called the ‘Book of Mormon’”*⁴

Young Joseph was not a learned person, nor was he well educated; nevertheless, within sixty and ninety days of actual labor, this book of 777 pages - a prodigious accomplishment - was completed in 1829. In this period of time no one remembered the ancient civilizations of Mexico or Central America, nor did they understand the history of the ancient inhabitants of this area. The world would have to wait ten more years for the explorer, John Stevens, to rediscover the ancient cities of the Americas. The marvel is that with all of today's knowledge gained by the studies of thousands of archaeologists, no one is able to repudiate this first description of the ancient civilization we find in the pages of the Book of Mormon, translated *“by the gift and power of God.”*

After his work was concluded, Joseph Smith delivered again into the hands of the angel the plates and the interpreters. Nevertheless, the Lord did permit eleven other witnesses to see these sacred plates. The testimony of these witnesses is found on pages iv and v of the Book of Mormon. None of these witnesses, though suffering great persecution and affliction, ever renounced their testimony about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon nor their

privilege to have seen these plates through the power of God. Some of them later, because of personal problems, left the church, but they always affirmed their testimony about the veracity of the Book of Mormon.

After completing the translation of the book in July of 1829, Oliver made a copy of the translation and it was sent to a printer. This book is the ancient history of some of the descendants of the tribes of Joseph and Judah that left Jerusalem before the destruction of that great city by the Babylonians. According to the plan of God, these persons were guided to the Americas. With the first printing of this sacred book we now hear their words, the prophecies and the preaching of those refugees from Jerusalem, founders of the great civilizations of ancient America. Their voice comes to our ears as a *“voice out of the ground”*; a voice whispering *“from the dust”* as prophesied by Isaiah.

Plates...

Revealing the Story of the Past

The prophecies of the Holy Bible are full of the mysteries of God concerning His ancient people, the house of Israel. Jacob, father of the twelve tribes of Israel, spoke to his sons, one by one, about the things *“which shall befall you in the last days.”* To his son, Joseph he prophesied in this manner:

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall. The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren” (Genesis 49:22, 26).

The tribe of Joseph shall be as a fruitful bough; her descendants shall multiply and extend themselves over a “wall.” What would constitute such a wall? This word, figuratively, signifies something that separates or isolates. The house of Israel was isolated from other nations of the world by

the great deserts to the east and by the ocean to the west. In order to understand what "wall" over which Joseph would pass, we turn again to the scriptures. In Psalms 80:11 we find the answer to this enigma. Once again, speaking of the tribe of Joseph (see verse one), it says, "She sent out her boughs unto the sea. . . ." By this we understand that the "wall" referred to the sea, and that the descendants of Joseph would cross over the sea.

Another question immediately assails us. To what place would they travel when they crossed the sea? Jacob spoke of the "everlasting hills." Ah, we have encountered another enigma. What is the significance of this expression, the everlasting hills? The prophet Moses also spoke of the house of Joseph and the land that his people would inherit:

"And of Joseph he said, Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills," (Deuteronomy 33:13-15).

Now we are able to understand that the distinguishing feature of the land of Joseph would be its ancient mountains and everlasting hills. The prophets understood that great mountains are not eternal, for they are reduced by the elements and the erosion caused by them. For this reason the prophet Habakkuk wrote, *"He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting"* (Habakkuk 3:6).

From this we understand that the prophet was not speaking of mountains and hills that exist eternally, so his use of the word "everlasting" must have another meaning; hence, a chain of mountains and hills that ran from one end of the land to the other would distinguish the land of Joseph. In the entire world only the Americas fits this description, with a chain of

mountains beginning in Alaska, to the north, and extending to the southern tip of Argentina. America, a land of everlasting mountains and filled with natural riches, shall be the inheritance of Joseph.

This remnant of the house of Israel that journeyed to America was not to be forgotten by God. They were guided by the Holy Spirit and blessed throughout the ages. The Book of Mormon is the history of this ancient people of the house of Israel that left Jerusalem about 600 years before the birth of Christ and arrived here in America. It also contains the history of a group from the house of Judah that arrived in America after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans shortly after 600 BC. There is a third short history of some of the refugees from the ancient tower destroyed by God some 2000 years before the birth of Christ. The Book of Mormon informs us that these groups of pilgrims crossed the great oceans to arrive in the Americas. One of these groups crossed the Atlantic Ocean, while the other two crossed the Pacific.

Many critics of the Book of Mormon oppose this history, saying that all the ancestors of Native Americans came by way of the land bridge at the Bering Straits between Asia and North America some 10,000 years ago. They tell us that during the subsequent centuries, there occurred a gradual development and evolution of the tribes as they moved farther and farther southward. In reality, these critics do not take into consideration the histories, nor oral traditions, of the Maya and other tribes. We also see that many times they often seem to ignore the new discoveries of other archaeologists.

Where are we going to place our confidence—in the theories of scientists that oppose the Word of God in the Holy Bible, or in the written histories of Native Americans and their ancient leaders? Let's consider a few of the records and traditions of the ancient Maya:

- a) "I...first Ahzib Quiché, write here on this paper of the coming of our fathers and grandfathers from the other side of the sea whence the sun rises." ⁵
- b) "Now on the 28th of September we sign

this attestation in which we have written that which by tradition our ancestors told us, who came from the other part of the sea, from Civan-Tulan, bordering on Babylonia." ⁶

- c) "Together these tribes came from the other part of the sea, from the East, from Pa Tulan, Pa Civan. These, then, were the three nations of the Quichés, and they came from where the sun rises, descendents of Israel, of the same language and same customs." ⁷

According to the traditions of the Maya, these people are of Israel and crossed over the sea to arrive in America. Such traditions of Native Americans are identical to the story found in the Book of Mormon. Are such traditions to be counted only as myths? This has been the case most often in the past, but perhaps a new attitude is now dawning. On December 11, 1997, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled that native claims to vast areas of Canadian territory are more valid than the current laws recognize:

"One of the most important aspects of the judges' opinion is the way it clears up a longstanding dispute over traditional claims. . . .

"The Supreme Court specifically rejected a lower court ruling in which native claims to land in British Columbia were denied. In the course of those proceedings, native people came to court to perform traditional ceremonies, chanting and dancing in ancient ways to relate the histories that had been passed down for untold generations about how they came to be on the land. Thursday, the justices made it clear that the lower court had erred in rejecting the oral evidence." ⁸

There are also many discoveries made by men of science that provide evidence of the truthfulness of the history revealed in this ancient book. Consider this Maya tradition: *"The Mayas claimed that their ancestors came from distant regions in two bands. The largest and most ancient immigration was from the East, across, or rather, through the ocean. The second band less in number and later in time came from the West..."* ⁹ This story

supports the narrative of the Book of Mormon concerning the Nephite people and the people of Zarahemla.

As we have mentioned, the critics of the Book of Mormon argue that the ancestors of the Maya and other tribes came from the north about 10,000 years ago and their cultures evolved gradually as they traveled southward. The discoveries of many archaeologists indicate something quite different, for they uphold the story as found in the Book of Mormon.

According to the noted Americanist, A. Hyatt Verrill, the coming of the Maya was, "*an abrupt and entirely revolutionary order of things, exactly as though the laws, customs, arts, sciences, industries and social organization of the new regime had been brought, ready-made and fully developed, from another sphere or unknown land.*"¹⁰ According to the words of this archaeologist, we can see this people arrived with their civilization fully developed, not in a state of gradual evolution. This is what the Book of Mormon records. And what do the archaeologists say about their time of arrival?

"*With their calendrical system already in working order the Mayas appear on the threshold of history 600 years before the Christian era...*"¹¹ Here we find the same time frame identified in the beginning of the narration of the Book of Mormon.

New discoveries continue to support this time frame. Richard Hansen of UCLA began excavations of the ancient Mayan city of Nakbé in 1989. His findings created a stir among scholars. I quote the results of his study: "*The discovery, described by scholars as surprising and exciting, puts the emergence of an elaborate Mayan civilization with large cities back to at least 600 BC.*"¹²

Interestingly, such studies caused one scholar, David Freidel, to write, "*Maya civilization banged into existence in its own way and time ... It is unsettling. For it violates the tacit rules of diffusion, and, even worse, the tacit rules of gradual evolution espoused by modern archaeology.*"¹³

For just such reasons we are able to say with all confidence, as did the poet, that the Book of Mormon contains

"Plates of immortal wisdom,
Revealing the story of the past."

To Unite in Joy the Houses of Joseph and Judah

From the time of the death of King Solomon there would be neither peace nor cooperation between the house of Judah and the house of Joseph. Judah lived to the south and her capital was Jerusalem. Joseph, in large part, lived to the north and her capital was Samaria. Between the two nations there existed a strong enmity. But the Holy Bible predicts this enmity shall be abolished at a future time. "*The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim*" (Isaiah 11:13).

Within the narrative of the Book of Mormon we find a notable instance of the reconciliation of the houses of Joseph and Judah. It serves as a type of that great future reconciliation to come, as prophesied by Isaiah. After the captivity of Jerusalem, a remnant of Judah under the leadership of Mulek, a surviving son of King Zedekiah, was guided to these American shores. Arriving with no written history or scripture, both their language and religion became corrupted. How joyful they were when into their midst came King Mosiah and his followers, descendants of Joseph. They were to be one unified people from that time forward. What a wonderful thing for Israel to anticipate.

Again, the history and traditions of the ancient Maya lend credence to this story found in the Book of Mormon. In the colonial chronicles of the Maya from the mountainous areas of Guatemala (our theoretical Nephite people of the house of Joseph) the people to the north of them (the followers of Mulek) were "...foreigners who speak our tongue brokenly."¹⁴ Other studies show that the converse of

this is equally true. "...*Kaufman describes a linguistic influence in the eastern Central Depression of Chiapas which he believes came in about 300 B.C. He describes the influence as coming from 'refugees from Kaminaljuyu' (thought by many to be the City of Nephi - dem).*"¹⁵ Both the geographical setting and the time coincide with the beautiful story one reads in the Book of Mormon.

Critics of the Book of Mormon object to this story on the grounds that the Bible states all the sons of King Zedekiah were slain by the Babylonian army. However, a closer examination of this event as recorded in 2 Kings 25:1-7 reveals that those sons of the king who were captured and executed before his eyes belonged to "the men of war" (verse 4) who fled Jerusalem in the night. The custom of these people was that the children remained with the women of the family until they reached the age of five years, when they "...*began to learn the arts and duties of life under the care of their fathers...*"¹⁶ Jeremiah relates that the women of Zedekiah were escaped to Mizpah (Jeremiah 41:10).

There is another prophecy in the Bible that speaks of these two nations. In this prophecy, the prophet Ezekiel refers to a "stick". We know that in Ezekiel's day the Hebrews wrote on scrolls of paper or leather. This material was then fastened at each end to a stick in order to roll and unroll it. So we believe that Ezekiel was prophesying about two books, one for the house of Joseph and the other for the house of Judah.

"*The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of*

Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all” (Ezekiel 37:15-22).

In this beautiful prophecy there are three aspects of the future of Israel that are very important. In verses 20 through 22 the prophet speaks of the restoration of all Israel in the latter days. The lost sheep of Israel shall be gathered together once again by the power of God. Verses 15 through 19 tell us that the two major divisions of Israel, Judah and Joseph, shall each have a book in their hands. The book of Judah is the Holy Bible and the Book of Joseph is the Book of Mormon. The two books shall be one in the hand of God to complete His work of the latter day. The third part of this important prophecy speaks of a king over the house of Israel. This king shall be our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to our Lord, we have in the Book of Mormon another witness of Jesus Christ which tells of His resurrection, His appearance to His people here in America and that He lives today and is at the right hand of the Father. This book of Joseph teaches us that Jesus is the Messiah, the Only Begotten Son of God, and that He promised to return to earth and receive His bride, the church. This faithful witness of Jesus Christ teaches us that the words of the apostles written in the Holy Bible are true.

“And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of

the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles, unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren; And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true. And the words of the Lamb shall be made known in the records of thy seed, as well as in the records of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 3:190-191, 195).

How valuable is this added witness to the understanding of the divinity of the Holy Bible? To the ordinary believer it should become increasingly of greater worth as liberal Protestant and Catholic clergy adhere to *“...the prevailing judgment of biblical scholars and mainstream theological schools that the gospels of the New Testament, like the rest of the Holy Scriptures, are a mixture of historical fact and mythological truths...”*¹⁷

Finally, having every reason for confidence in Book of Mormon prophecies, we can look forward to the day when the Lord shall raise up a special witness to assist in this reconciliation of Joseph and Judah that will make them one people:

“And there shall raise up one mighty among them, who shall do much good, both in word and in deed, being an instrument in the hands of God, with exceeding faith. To work mighty wonders, and do that thing which is great in the sight of God, unto the bringing to pass much restoration unto the house of Israel, and unto the seed of thy brethren” (2 Nephi 2:46-47).

History of America, Told in Radiant Brilliance

As our poet has written, the history of ancient America shines forth from the pages of the Book of Mormon with a radiant brilliance. What is the source of that brilliance? The answer to this question is found in the inspired words of the Apostle

John. *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not”* (John 1:4-5). Certainly Christ is the light of this dark world and Christ is the central theme of the Book of Mormon.

“For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophecy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies, that our children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins. And now behold I say unto you, that the right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; and Christ is the Holy One of Israel:...” (2 Nephi 11:43, 48, 55).

Certainly the prophets of ancient America prophesied about the mission of our Savior, Jesus Christ. But this is not all because, after His resurrection, Christ came to America and walked among the ancient inhabitants of the land. While Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees in Jerusalem, He told them, *“And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”* (John 10:16).

The Pharisees of that day did not understand His words, and many wise men today do not understand them either. Many people today believe that Christ was referring to the Gentiles, but this was not the intent of His words. Jesus always spoke with clarity and He said, *“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel”* (Matthew 15:24). It is true that after His rejection by the Jews, Christ sent His disciples to the Gentiles, according to the great plan of God. But it is also true that the Gentiles never heard His voice, except through the ministering of the Holy Ghost. No, Christ was referring to His ministry among the lost sheep of Israel, those that had been scattered over the face of the earth and the isles of the sea during the Diaspora. As the Good Shepherd of Israel, the resurrected Jesus came to America to preach the good

news of salvation to the remnant of Joseph and Judah in this land.

The historian, K. S. Latourette, wrote, "Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet." It is true that the world has been changed completely by His presence. In this same manner, if Christ appeared here in the Americas, we should expect to encounter His influence among the nations of the Native Americans. And so we do; the anthropologist, Laurette Sejourne, calls the White God of the Native Americans, "...the greatest figure in the history of the New World."¹⁸

We are able to trace the footsteps of Christ in the traditions of the tribes of Native Americans. Almost all of the prophecies in the Book of Mormon relating to Christ and all the stories told of His ministry in America are found in their ancient traditions. Beginning with the prophecy of His birth, the anthropologist, Karena Shields, writes of the tradition of the Maya: "We are the Maya. We came from the east, we came out of the morning.... Hunab Ku, the All-God, was the only one who knew. He saw, and sent Itzamná his son to earth to teach man.... Itzamná was made into child and then man, with a hand that blessed, and in turn the earth blessed him."¹⁹

Samuel, a Lamanite prophet in the Book of Mormon, prophesied about some of the signs of the birth of Christ on the other side of the great sea. "And behold there shall be a new star arise, such an one as ye never have beheld; and this also shall be a sign unto you" (Helaman 5:59). The anthropologist, L. Taylor Hansen, writes of a tradition of the indigenous people of the state of Oklahoma. The God of the Americas "...told them that He was born across the ocean, in a land where all men were bearded. In this land He was born of a virgin on a night when a bright star came out of the heavens and stood over His city. Here, too, the heavens opened and down came winged beings singing chants of exquisite beauty."²⁰

In the Book of Mormon, Alma prophesied about the life of the Savior who should come into the world: "And he shall

go forth, suffering pains, and afflictions, and temptations of every kind; And he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 5:20, 22). Rudolfo Anaya, a professor at the University of New Mexico, wrote of the traditions of the God of his ancestors in old Mexico. "He knew he would be tempted many times while he lived in the body of a man. He knew the path he followed in the heavens, far away from the realm of man. He had come to Tollán to understand the flesh."²¹

The Book of Mormon tells us that when Christ made His first appearance among the people of America, ministering to them, He told them, "My bowels are filled with mercy; for I perceive that ye desire that I should shew unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient, that I should heal you. And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth, with their sick, and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all they that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him,..." (3 Nephi 8:8-9). All the great tribes of Central America and South America have their traditions which tell of the God of miracles Who walked among the inhabitants of the land. The Maya say that there were presented before Itzamná "...the sick, the halt, and the dead, and he healed and restored them all to life by the touch of his hand..."²²

When Christ established His church here in the New World, He began by choosing twelve disciples the same way He had chosen twelve apostles in Israel. In 3 Nephi 5:44, we read, "And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words unto Nephi, and to those who had been called, (now the number of them who had been called and received power and authority to baptize, were twelve,)..." The Book of Mormon always refers to these

twelve as disciples. In the traditions of ancient Mexico, we read about the time when their God was about to depart: "The ultimate signs of His departure began to crowd upon them. He had chosen one of the Priesthood (from the favored Twelve who were always around Him) to be His successor."²³

The prophet Samuel spoke of the birth of the Christ child and the signs that would accompany that birth as we have previously read. He also prophesied about the death of Christ and of His resurrection after three days. We can read this prophecy in the fifth chapter of the Book of Helaman. During the Conquest of Mexico the Bishop of Chiapas, in the land of the Maya, wrote of their tradition: "About the Son, they say he was killed and lashed and a crown of thorns put on him, and that he was placed on a timber with his arms stretched out. They did not understand that he was nailed, but rather they thought that he had been tied, and there he died. And he was dead for three days, and on the third day he came to life and went up to heaven, and that he is there with his father."²⁴

We conclude this section concerning the traditions that relate to Christ in ancient America with a marvelous promise. In the Bible we have many beautiful promises made by the Lord, but none of them gives us more hope than the promise that He will once again return to the earth. Christ said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:3). Some of the last words of Christ to His disciples here in America contain the same promise: "...even until all things shall be fulfilled, according to the will of the Father; when I shall come in my glory, with the powers of heaven;..." (3 Nephi 13:18)

Throughout the ages every believer has hoped to see the fulfillment of this promise during his or her lifetime. But in the last few years there has appeared a notable change. Today there are many, including Protestant ministers, Catholic priests, students of the Bible and profes-

sors of religion who no longer believe in this promise. Many think these words were the creation of the apostles and that Christ never promised to return. In truth, many of these persons do not believe that Christ was even resurrected from the dead. For just such reasons God has caused the Book of Mormon to come to us as another witness to the truth.

When Isaiah, in chapter 29, prophesied about the Book of Mormon, God had in mind just this modern attitude of skepticism by the scholarly. *"Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid"* (Isaiah 29:14).

We are grateful to our Lord that we have another witness of such truths. We have yet a third witness of this marvelous promise of Jesus Christ. This third witness is found in the traditions of indigenous peoples. If Christ walked in America and made such statements, surely the ancient cultural wisdom of the Native Americans would reflect this promise.

- a) The anthropologist, Honoré, wrote, *"Everywhere in the Indian states of Central and South America the legend of the White God is known, and it always ends in the same way: the White God left his people with a solemn promise that he would one day come back."*²⁵
- b) Professor Anaya, in his description of the ministry of Quetzalcoatl, ends his narration in the following manner: *"His story is still told by the people, they keep it in their hearts. A vital part of that story are the remembered words of the resurrected Quetzalcoatl: '...one day I will return to you.'"*²⁶
- a) A very respected anthropologist is Frank Waters. He writes of Quetzalcoatl, *"...a god who manifested himself as a white, bearded man, taught the people all the arts and sciences of civilization, and then disappeared with the promise to return some day in the year of his birth, Ce Acatl."*²⁷

The Doctrines which the Prophets Spoke

Just as the Bible, the Book of Mormon is full of wonderful prophecy, but there is a notable difference between the two books. The majority of the prophecies in the Book of Mormon relate to the inhabitants of the Americas and their future. So this book becomes a very important book to those who dwell in this land. Some of these prophecies are directed to the indigenous peoples, while others speak to the Gentiles who arrived much later from European nations. Each prophecy, as does all God's Word, has great relevance to us and to our children.

A powerful witness to the divinity of this book is that it contains many prophecies that have already been fulfilled. Let's consider some facts we can now read in the pages of history that have been fulfilled according to the words of Book of Mormon prophets. Nephi prophesied of the discovery of this land in later years by an individual who would be led by *"...the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land"* (1 Nephi 3:147). Of course, this unnamed explorer is known to us as Christopher Columbus.

Critics could proclaim that Joseph Smith certainly knew about the discovery of America by Columbus, and they would be correct. However, it has not been written in our histories that he was a man inspired by the Holy Spirit in his quest as the prophet had stated. Now comes a chronicle written by Columbus himself: *"It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel his hand upon me) the fact that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit..."*²⁸ Do the biographers of Columbus indicate that he was a man who would be apt to receive inspiration from the Almighty? Let's examine the literature:

- a) *"He looked upon himself as in the hand of God, chosen from among men for*

*the accomplishment of his high purpose. He supposed that he saw foretold in the Holy Writ his contemplated discovery, shadowed forth in the revelations of the prophets."*²⁹

- b) *"In the end he looked past the geographers, astronomers and philosophers and sought interlocutors among the prophets. The Bible came to his aid."*³⁰

The history of America is rooted in this beautiful prophecy of Nephi. *"And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles; that they did prosper, and obtain the land for their inheritance;..."* (1 Nephi 3:151). Anyone seeing the little band of Pilgrims referred to in this prophecy would laugh at the prospect of their prosperity. The spring of 1621 found only five men left alive, strong enough to work and defend the little colony. Almost half the original colonists had died, leaving but five of the original eighteen wives among the living. One day a lone Indian, named Tisquantum, entered the compound. Who was he, why was he here and from where had he come?

He arrived in the camp by way of a tortuous journey. Twice kidnapped and carried to Europe; once to be sold on the auction block of slavery, he spent more than fourteen years away from America while in England and Spain. When finally returned home by Captain John Smith, he found himself the lone survivor of his people, who probably had been exterminated by some white man's disease. Like young Joseph so long before, in his sufferings he was a special man prepared by God for His purposes.

Tisquantum, an English speaking Christian, now showed the men of this starving colony how to fish for eels for an immediate food supply, how to plant and fertilize corn for next winter's food and how to trap beaver for a future commodity of sale; in short, how to prosper in this new land to which God had led them. One year later, while on a trip with Governor Bradford, Tisquantum became ill and died. He was prepared and present in that moment necessary to fulfill prophecy.

In his beautiful prophecy about

America, Nephi was caused to know that these colonists God had brought to this new land would be delivered out of captivity because they "...did humble themselves before the Lord, and the power of the Lord was with them;..." (1 Nephi 3: 152). The pages of history record the validity of this prophecy:

John Hancock, President of the Provincial Congress, declared to them, "We think it is incumbent upon this people to humble themselves before God on account of their sins, for He hath been pleased in His righteous judgment to suffer a great calamity to befall us.... And also to implore the Divine Blessing upon us, that by the assistance of His grace, we may be enabled to reform whatever is amiss among us...." ³¹ (Wouldn't you love to hear such words fall from the lips of our political leaders today? Or see them written in a child's history book?) Heeding his counsel, the Congress declared May 17, 1775, as a day of national fasting, prayer and humiliation.

We shall continue with a prophecy found in 2 Nephi 7:17-19: "But behold, this land, saith God, shall be a land of thine inheritance; and the Gentiles shall be blessed upon the land. And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles: and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. And I will fortify this land against all other nations;..." This prophecy was given about 550 years before the birth of Christ. The only inhabitants of the land known to the prophet were of the house of Israel. The Gentile peoples of Europe had yet to discover this land, but upon the arrival of Columbus in 1492, the door was opened and a flood of conquerors sailed in to establish their empires.

In North America the Gentiles were governed by the powerful king of England, while the king of Spain, the king of Portugal, the king of France and the emperor of Russia governed other parts of the Americas. But the prophecy in 2 Nephi 7 said, "...there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles." Let's return to the prophecy in 1 Nephi

3:153-155. *Nephi saw that the Gentiles to the north "were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations."* He was prophesying of the Revolutionary War of 1776 when the United States gained her liberty. After this historical revolution, all the nations of the Americas began their struggle for independence. Mexico was liberated in 1810, Venezuela in 1817, Columbia in 1819, Peru in 1822, etc. By the time the Book of Mormon appeared, just as recorded in Jacob's prophecy, the era of foreign dominion was coming to a close in America. What begins as prophecy, ends on the pages of history books.

The marvel is that during the course of our lives we have seen with our own eyes the fulfillment of many of those prophecies. Let's use, as an example, the prophecy about the gathering of Israel in the latter days. Seventy years after the birth of Christ the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and from that time forth Israel has been scattered among the nations of the world. But God had given a promise to them through prophecy:

"And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth; And the nations of the Gentiles shall be great in the eyes of me, saith God, in carrying them forth to the lands of their inheritance. Yea, the kings of the Gentiles shall be nursing fathers unto them, and their queens shall become nursing mothers;..." (2 Nephi 7:13-15).

Through the leadership of the United States and Great Britain, leaders among the Gentile nations, the United Nations made, in 1948, a mandate making the state of Israel a free nation for the first time in nearly 2000 years. It was an action that no one thought possible, but with God all things are possible. Our generation has seen the fulfillment of this marvelous prophecy. The only thing that detracted from the joy of the Jewish people was the fact that they still had no free access to the city of Jerusalem.

When Christ arrived in the first Christian century among the ancestors of

Native Americans in Mexico, there is a great deal of evidence that He appeared in the area near Chiapas or Tabasco where the Mayan people lived. Some of the inhabitants of this area later moved to the Yucatan Peninsula. While Christ was teaching the multitudes He revealed to them many important things that would take place in future generations. An example of this is found in 3 Nephi 9:85 - "Then shall this covenant which the Father hath covenanted with his people, be fulfilled; and then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again with my people, and it shall be the land of their inheritance."

In verse 87 of this passage Jesus continued, "And behold, this is the thing which I will give unto you for a sign...." The Master explained what the sign would be for this marvelous event. Then in verse 88 He told them that the Gentiles would receive these writings now known as the Book of Mormon. This part of His prophecy was fulfilled in 1829 when the book was translated and printed. His promise continued in verse 89 when He told them that some day the Gentiles would return these writings to the descendants of those hearing His prophecy that day. This was to be the sign that the liberation of Jerusalem was about to be accomplished.

This prophecy was fulfilled in 1951 when Apostle Clarence Wheaton came to Yucatan with the Gospel of Christ and the Book of Mormon. With the baptism of the first believers in 1953 and the calling and ordination of the priesthood among them, the Church of Christ really commenced among the Maya, descendants of those original hearers of the prophecy. The sign for the deliverance of Jerusalem had appeared. Fourteen years later, as a result of the Six-Day War in 1967, Jerusalem was liberated for the first time in nearly 2000 years. This is one of the great prophecies fulfilled in our day, and a definite proof of the divinity and dependability of Book of Mormon prophecy.

In like manner there are many other important prophecies that shall be fulfilled. When illuminated by the light of day, this natural world appears as the beautiful

creation of our God. In the same way, the life of man shall appear a beautiful creation when illuminated by the revealed word of God. Certainly the inhabitants of America should give attention to the prophecies of this sacred book. Of great importance is a prophecy found in the Book of Ether: "And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of his wrath shall come upon them" (Ether 1:31).

Thou Art Inspiration of the Learned and Poets

The Old Testament of the Bible is a book filled with poetic writings. One scholar, David Freedman³² explained in his text that in ancient times in Asia Minor, poetry was the traditional manner of expressing one's religious experiences. Many times the poetic forms of the Bible are not recognized because the poetic style of the Hebrews is different from that of other peoples. Hebraic poetry doesn't have the type of rhyme to which we are accustomed. It has a rhyme of thoughts, not words.

A scholar of Hebrew poetry, Angela Crowell³³, wrote a treatise, comparing the poetry of the Bible and that of the Book of Mormon. In her article she described more than twenty-five poetic forms found in the Holy Bible which appear also in the Book of Mormon. Many of these forms had not been identified until after the Book of Mormon had been translated. Neither Joseph Smith, nor any other person of that day, knew about these ancient poetic styles. So how did such forms appear in the Book of Mormon? There is only one plausible answer to this query: It is because the Book of Mormon is an ancient book written by Hebrew people who understood such poetic styles.

We shall use Angela Crowell's study to demonstrate a few of these ancient poetic styles. The first form is called Synonymous Parallelism. This type of parallelism

occurs when the second part of the couplet repeats the first line, but uses different words.

From the Old Testament (Psalms 34:3)
"O **magnify** the Lord with me,
And let us **exalt** his name together."

From the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 1:14)
"For his **soul** did rejoice,
and his whole **heart** was filled."

Another type of parallelism is called Antithetic Parallelism. This type of parallelism occurs when the second part of a verse contrasts with the first portion.

From the Old Testament (Psalms 1:6)
"For the Lord knoweth the way of the **righteous**,
But the way of the **ungodly** shall perish."

From the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 5:144)
"Ye are **swift** to do iniquity,
but **slow** to remember the Lord your God."

Another poetic form used by the Hebrews was the Simile. A simile is a comparison which uses the words "like" or "as." This poetic form was often used to introduce or to close a discourse.

From the Old Testament (Isaiah 1:8)
"And the daughter of Zion is left
as a cottage in a vineyard,
as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers,
as a besieged city."

From the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 6:25-26)
"O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments;
Then had thy peace been **as** a river,
And thy righteousness **as** the waves of the sea,
Thy seed also had been **as** the sand;
The offering of thy bowels **like** the gravel thereof."

Another poetic form of the ancient Hebrews is called the "chiasm." This liter-

ary style is not common, nor easy to use, but it was used a great deal by the ancient Jews. A noted authority on this ancient style of writing, John Welch, stated, "*Chiasmus remained a common literary form in the Hebrew world until the first century after Christ, when it and most Jewish institutions were destroyed.*"³⁴ This poetic form was not even recognized in the time when the Book of Mormon was revealed and translated; nevertheless, there are many beautiful examples of chiasmus found in the Book of Mormon. Everyone, including critics of the Book of Mormon, recognizes that young Joseph Smith did not invent this very difficult form of writing. It is another evidence that the Book of Mormon was an ancient book written by skilled writers of the house of Israel.

This poetic form of writing contains a sequence of words or thoughts. Arriving at some central point, the same words or ideas are repeated, but in reverse order.

From the Old Testament (Exodus 9:31)
A "And the **flax**
B and the **barley** were smitten;
B1 for the **barley** was in the ear,
A1 and the **flax** was in bud."

From the New Testament (Matthew 19:30)
A "but many that are **first**
B shall be **last**,
B1 and the **last**
A1 shall be **first**."

From the Book of Mormon (1 Nephi 7:3-4)
A. "Behold, they were made manifest unto the **prophet**,
B by the voice of the **Spirit**:
B1 For by the **Spirit**
A1 are all things made known unto the **prophets**,"

The Book of Mormon is full of this ancient poetic form. This causes me to greatly enjoy the introduction to The Companion Bible. The editors of this work discuss these poetic forms which their Bible beautifully displays. They write that these forms are "...seen to be one of the most important evidences of the Divine Inspiration of its words. For these Structures

constitute a remarkable phenomenon peculiar to Divine Revelation; and are not found outside it in any other form of known literature.”³⁵ Believers in the Book of Mormon wholeheartedly welcome this endorsement of its inclusion in the “Divine Revelation” of the Lord.

Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon often has many parts, showing us the artistic skill of these ancient writers. The Hebrews used such forms of poetry to help them memorize the scripture. A good example of a complex chiasm is found in the Third Book of Nephi. This chiasm is not a sequence of words, but of large concepts.

A the Gentiles shall be trodden under foot
(3 Nephi 7:40)

B Isaiah 52 and Zion (7:42)

C the sick restored (8:4-26)

D the communion (8:28-43)

E prayer (8:47-57)

F baptism (8:62)

G the ascension of Jesus
(8:73-75)

F1 baptism (9:4-16)

E1 prayer (9:17-39)

D1 the communion (9:40-45)

C1 the restoration of Israel (9:46-69)

B1 Isaiah 52 and Zion (9:70-73)

A1 the Gentiles shall be trodden down
(9:99-106)

Oh, Book of Eternal and Simple Truths

The Book of Mormon, just as the Bible, is a book of great value, and these two books shall exist together for eternity. As we have read in the prophecy of Ezekiel, in the latter day they shall be one in the hand of the Lord. The beautiful words of the Apostle Peter explain the reason for their eternal nature:

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever” 1 Peter 1:24-25.

In the words of our brother and poet, Elder Renan Chuc, the Book of Mormon contains eternal and simple truths. Our brother expresses himself as did the first

author of this ancient book:

“But I give unto you a prophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; wherefore I shall prophesy according to the plainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out of Jerusalem with my father. For behold, my soul delighteth in plainness unto my people, that they may learn;...” (2 Nephi 11:6-7).

Both Nephi and his brother Jacob used the words of the Prophet Isaiah many times to teach important aspects of prophecy which related to that people and/or their descendants. However, the response they often heard was, “What meaneth these things which ye have read?” (1 Nephi 7:1). So each time we find a lengthy portion of the biblical prophets being read to their brethren, it is followed by a careful, yet plain and simple, explanation of the prophecy in terms that related to the lives of their listeners. A wonderful sidelight is that this explanation often relates to their future progeny as well; hence, it speaks also to our time and generation.

An evidence of the plainness of Book of Mormon scriptures is borne to my mind as I am permitted to see that many of our older members among the Maya, people who never learned to read, are able to understand and apply these scriptures to their lives. Many of these non-readers have a simple, but powerful, testimony of the divinity of the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon teaches the same doctrine of salvation that we find in the Holy Bible. Many times, due either to the authorship or possibly the translation, the words of this book are couched in simpler, more easily understood terms. There is little possibility for the variation of belief and practice one finds so commonly among the Christian denominations. As a good example, let us consider the subject of repentance, one of the fundamental teachings of the Gospel of salvation.

In the Book of Mormon we read this simple statement about the atoning grace of Jesus Christ: *“And since man had fallen, he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of*

Christ atoneth for their sins, through faith and repentance,” (Alma 13:46). It is evident that salvation can be attained only with the exercise of one’s faith, coupled with repentance (an act of contrition and change).

The Biblical record also shows with certainty that Jesus taught the necessity of repentance. He began His ministry with a call to repentance (see Matthew 4:17), and He ended His earthly ministry with a commission to His disciples to teach repentance (see Luke 24:47). But often the absolute necessity of true repentance is camouflaged in the Biblical text by exhortations of His disciples as they strive to make another point, according to the needs of those being addressed. Consider the following example:

The frightened heathen jailer cried out, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”* (Acts 16:30, 31). This has become the basic dogma of many concerning the attainment of one’s salvation - simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. A simple reading of the next verse would show that the disciples then taught all *“the word of the Lord”* to both the jailer and his household. Now the time was ripe for the apostles to explain to this man and his family the necessity of repentance, baptism, obedience, endurance of faith, etc. In many Book of Mormon passages these principles are made so clear that none could stumble.

I believe there are two scriptural explanations for the greater clarity and plainness of the Book of Mormon. Let us consider a prophecy given to Nephi that revealed many events that would come to pass. One of his notable views of the future was *“...the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches;...”* (1 Nephi 3:167). The next two verses demonstrate one of the primary reasons this church was identified as being abominable. *“For behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; And*

also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away." This leads us to the understanding that many parts of the Holy Bible which were plain and precious (valuable for our salvation) were altered or removed as the original manuscripts passed through the hands of this abominable church. This is a statement that will offend some, while others will find it difficult to believe, but many Biblical authorities substantiate the validity of it. We refer to but a few:

- a) "Still we fail to understand our Bible of today if we do not take full account of the many passages where, in spite of all the care of the scribes - rather, should we say, occasionally because of such care? - changes did find their way into the text. For the astonishing fact is that in some cases deliberately and with full knowledge they altered the text they had received."¹
- b) "In the late first and early second century, the oral traditions and the written word existed side by side with equal status - especially with respect to the material of the Gospels. Often, the text was changed by scribes attempting to conform the written message to the oral tradition.... Other scribes, however, felt free to make 'improvements' in the text - either in the interest of doctrine or harmonization or due to the influence of a competitive oral tradition."²

How could God permit such a travesty of righteousness to take place? The Apostle Paul wrote about the coming apostasy that would be brought into existence as that "great and abominable church" grew into prominence. He stated succinctly, "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

This identical thought can be seen in the reply of Jesus to His disciples when asked why He taught in difficult parables. He responded, "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of

hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matthew 13:15).

In the Book of Mormon we find Jacob warning his brethren here in America of what befell the stiff-necked people of Israel in the Old World. "For God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they can not understand, because they desired it. And because they desired it, God hath done it, that they may stumble" (Jacob 3:24-25). Jacob's prophetic comment has a basis in God's revealed Word found in such passages as Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 14.

So the Book of Mormon with its clear and simple doctrines and teaching, when used with the Holy Bible, has come to the world with a special purpose: "And that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, Unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, And bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; And also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord" (2 Nephi 2:20-23).

Reader, the last author of this sacred book, he who hid it in the earth according to the purpose of the Lord, has included a dependable promise to you:

"Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you,

by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:3-5).

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GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

FISHERS OF MEN

The General Sunday School Association (GSSA) is providing portions of lessons (teasers!) for several age groups on a common topic. Please visit the Church of Christ's Audio Visual Aid (AVA) committee website at www.cocsermons.net and click on the "Resources" tab to view all complete lessons and studies for children and adults. More information regarding Sunday School lessons can be found on www.edmodo.com. Contact Susan Porter at: porter_susan@sbcglobal.net, or 9 Market Street, Middleville, MI 49333, for more information.

Reference: Matthew 4:19: "And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Purpose: The way in which the Lord prepares men to do his work.

Supplies needed: Bible and Book of Mormon.

Read: 2nd Timothy 2:15, Ephesians 5:15-17, Acts 10:34, Alma 16:228.

Memory verse: Matthew 4:19.

Lesson: In this first scripture we see Jesus telling Peter and Andrew that if they follow him he will make them into fishers of men.

What are fishers of men, and how do we become one?

Who has gone fishing before?

The idea behind fishing is to know the fish and be able to attract them, so you can make a catch. To catch a fish we must know the equipment to use, the depth of the water we will be fishing in and what kind of bait the fish will go after. Only after understanding all of these factors will we have dinner. Being fishers of men also requires great preparation on our part.

Talk about how to prepare to be used by God (2nd Timothy 2:15).

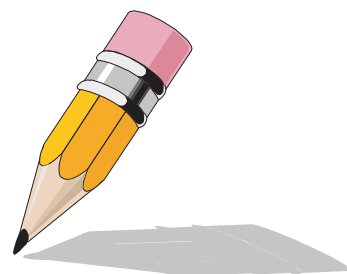
- * Reading and studying scriptures (getting to know our equipment).
- * Praying
- * Fasting

In Ephesians 5:15-17 he is talking about being wise, understanding the time we are in and what the will of God is in our lives. God is not a respecter of persons. It doesn't matter who you are or what you have done we are all equal in his eyes (Acts 10:34-35). Now, today, this life is our time to prepare to meet Him and to prove to Him that we are willing to serve Him.

- * Alma 16:228
- * Ephesians 4:22-24

Challenge: read 1 verse a day and try to relate it to your life

PHOENIX Local News



Greetings to all my friends and family from sunny Phoenix. What a beautiful spring we have had. The weather has not gotten hot yet, and couldn't be better for all the activities of the church. And, it has been a busy few months.

Some of the many events going on over the last couple of months include: a dinner at church, a wedding shower for Sr. Mary Galvan for her upcoming wedding on June 2, an open house for our Sr. Erica Moser and Brandon Lavin to celebrate their wedding, a women's breakfast, a salsa competition, and so much



► Abigail Ruth Olson



► Blakely Grace McIndoo



► Erica Moser with Dad

more that I haven't even mentioned – both for our families and young people. I think the activities, especially for the young people, are so important in helping to form relationships and lifestyles. Important skills are learned, from hosting dinners to putting on a garage sale to raise money.

I'd like to introduce a couple of new additions to our church family in case you haven't met them. Little Sr. Abigail Ruth Olson arrived several weeks early on March 8. She has since gone home to her very happy and grateful family. On May 9, the McIndoo family welcomed their newest member to the family. A daughter, Sr. Blakely Grace was born to Sr. Lindsey and Br.



► Two Happy Moms



► Aaron Moser, Gary Jacobsen, Aadam Yates ordination

Tony. Congratulations to both families.

Several graduations took place and are still to come. Our prayers go out to all those who will be deciding what to do with the rest of their lives. Some will be attending college while others will be looking for employment. All need our prayers that God's will be done.

And, finally, a very exciting bit of news! Prayers were answered when in March we had several brothers who were called to serve. Our brothers Aadam Yates and Gary Jacobsen were

called to become Elders, while brothers Jose Galvan and Aaron Moser were ordained as Priests. Br. Stephen Kimball accepted an earlier calling as a Priest. We are so blessed here in Phoenix to have so many men who are willing to help spread the word of the Gospel. Please pray for them and all who are willing to take on this important task in the church when called to do so.

Continued prayers and wishes of course go out to the family of our Sr. Marlene Oar, who left our family to go to her everlasting family on March 14, 2016.

Although she is sorely missed, we know that she is no longer suffering and more happy than we can imagine.

Please don't forget to remember all those who are in need of prayers, whether it be for health related issues, family problems, decisions about careers, or many of the other problems of this world.

God bless you all.

Your Sister in Christ,
DiAnn Hedrick

REPORT

Collins Local Report

Report by Czerna Kauffman

The calendar and the heat testify to the arrival of summer. Some days it is nearly oppressive. I often pray for the folks who have to work out in terrible weather conditions, and also give thanks to God for the inventor of air conditioning!! When Allen and I lived out on the farm south of Collins we didn't have air conditioning and we survived okay, but Jack and Betty Martin came back here to live and Betty worried about us not being able to rest well at night because of the heat and humidity. Silly us, we didn't know any better, but Jack checked into some things and found a way for us to afford a heat pump through the local Electric Coop. He installed it for us, with a little help from Allen, and we only owed for the unit and not the labor. For his kindness and Betty's concern, I will always be grateful.

I haven't heard from Sister Betty Martin for a while, but Allen and I plan to visit in Arizona and New Mexico and will stop to see her in Oklahoma on our way back.

Our Brother Curtis Yates was in a care center in Raymore, Missouri. He had a pacemaker put in and later on had some trouble with his medication and oxygen which put him in the hospital for a time, then was transferred to the care and rehab center I mentioned. We drive up to see him every week or so and he seems to be doing well. He says they have him doing weights and exercises to improve his ability to move around. He has just been released to stay with his son Layton Yates, who lives in Belton, Missouri. Maybe soon he can return to his home in Preston (more prayers). He is such a fine fella and we love him very much.

Marjory Routh is keeping very busy, no

matter what the weather, but remains faithful and always is in attendance here. Her grandson, Travis and wife Summer, came to visit several months ago and brought their sweet little Marley Rae, who was about 8 months old then—what a beautiful little dolly!!

The Inglis family is pretty busy through the summer, but share their time with us as often as they can. They have brought and introduced us to some of their family—mom and dad, sister and family, etc., and let me tell you—they can sing, too!! What a joy!

Al Lind and Vicky Pitts are such a part of our congregation and contribute so much in Sunday School. Vicky also shares her ability to sing with such a beautiful spirit.

Brother Curtis' sister, Peachy Mathis, comes every Sunday and often rides over with Al and Vicky. She used to come with Curtis, too, but drives herself sometimes now.

Brother Larry and Sister Jewell Beem visit here pretty often and we are becoming rather attached to them and their attendance.

Paul and Sharon Leikeness are here regularly and bring with them the goodness of the Spirit of God. It makes me smile just to see the door open and there they are!!

Also, another of our regulars, Shawna and Dale Herd, can be counted on no matter what else is going on. Shawna is a good cook (as are all the ladies) and does so much by way of getting dinner together on our dinner Sundays, and my fine son-in-law Dale will do whatever is needed. He has helped Marjory with some sort of cattle watering system, and though he doesn't "say" a lot, he is paying attention and I'm sure is treasuring up many good things he hears.

We are still missing my Sheala girl—Shawna and Dale's daughter (my grand-

daughter). She works at a convenience store in Osceola and sometimes works on Sunday. She used to sit beside me in church and I miss her terribly (maybe a prayer or two?). Her smile and sense of humor are priceless, plus she has a good understanding of the gospel.

We haven't had a business meeting to change any of our officers, so Brother Curtis Yates remains our pastor and Brother Allen Kauffman is still his assistant pastor, as well as coordinator for this local. We're still here holding on to the Rod of Iron, and pray the same for you, where ever you are. You're my brothers and sisters and we are yours.

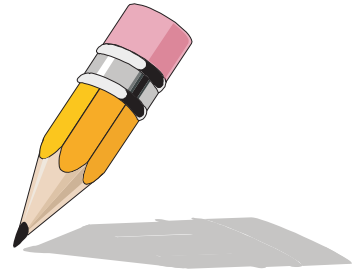
I have some quotes from some sermons I'd like to share with you, whether from this pulpit or via live streaming.

- *God's word is counsel for our souls.*
- *We don't "believe" in miracles—we RELY on them!*
- *Prayer in the morning is your key for the day, and prayer at night is the lock.*
- *How guilty am I and what am I doing about it?*
- *Fear diminishes faith.*
- *I may learn an uncomfortable lesson—to my good.*
- *We have no REASON for pride.*
- *Does God become offended?*
- *Shall I fear man for my belief in God—or fear God for NOT standing for Him?*
- *Meeting together should not be a convenience but a NEED!*
- *We've got to be careful of how we fill the Book of Life.*
- *Our thoughts and deeds will either justify us or condemn us.*
- *There is religion—but only ONE doctrine of Christ.*
- *"Busy" is a thief of the Spirit of God.*
- *Samuel—they haven't rejected you—they have rejected ME.*
- *There is something greater than "knowing" the truth—it's OBEYING the truth.*
- *"How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied?" (Balaam)*

Thank you for your time and consideration.

REPORT

East Independence Local Report



Greetings to one and all, It's been a busy Spring here, and turning out to be a busy Summer too...but we know it's good to be busy at the work of the gospel and traveling to reunions when we can.

Our annual East Local business meeting took place April 18th. Our Pastor is once again Elder Rick Olson. Our local has decided to elect two for Assistant Pastor: Priest Bruce

Haines and Priest Kevin McGhee. Our Sunday School Superintendent is Br. David Rudd. Sr. Diane Brockman is our Secretary, Br. Harvey L. Seibel is our Treasurer, and Sr. Deb Haines is the Advocate Reporter.

We recently hosted the Hampton Family, who visited our local to sing for us. Sister Neva Housknecht and Brother Milo Housknecht were part of the group, which was made up of

family members. It was such an enjoyable evening and we very much appreciate their blessing us with their God-given talents.

Our Apostle Michael McGhee had replacement hip surgery this spring. He missed a trip to the Philippines, but is now on the mend and looking forward to his next trip soon. Our Apostle Buzz Brickhouse continues to have regular check-ups and treat-



► Hampton Family Singers



► Faith Taylor

ments for his bladder cancer. We thank the Lord for His continued watch care over our brothers, and blessing them as they diligently labor in the missionary field even while the frailties of life hinder.

On March 1, Elder and Bishop Charles Brantner passed from this life after surgery and lengthy illness. Br. Charles left family in our local: Andy and Carol Brantner, Deb and Bruce Haines; also Cheryl (and Carl) Pease from Michigan. On April 3rd, Andy and Carol Brantner's son, Jacob, was killed while being robbed. He leaves behind wife, Kim and daughter Makenzie. Please keep them in your prayers as they mourn their great loss.

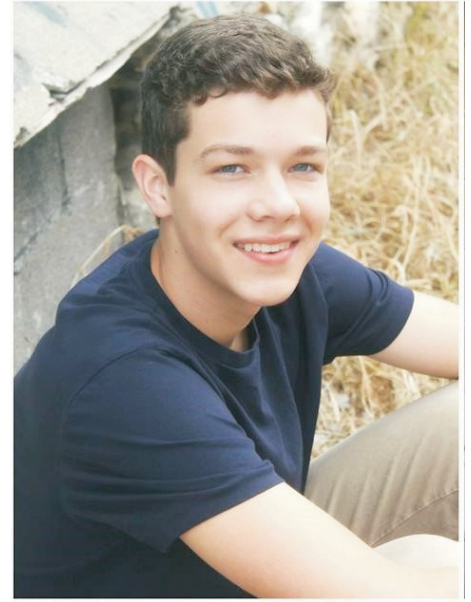
Since we last reported, Sr. Jennifer Oldham was blessed greatly with her knee replacement surgery and recovery. Br. Pat Fisher also recovered

nicely from his shoulder surgery. Sister Melissa McGhee continues to recover from her breast surgery. Sister Dana Taylor continues to struggle with her illness, Myasthenia Gravis. We ask for continued prayers for her and her family. Sister June Sarratt and Brother Larry Beem have had surgeries for infections in their feet. Br. Eric and Sr. Sheila Sarratt stand in need of blessing also. Please keep all these loved ones in your prayers.

Brother Bick and Sr. Diane Brockman and Br. David and Sr. Cheryl Taylor enjoyed a recent cruise to Alaska. The Brockmans were celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary. Brother Bob and Sister Jennifer Oldham will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary in July with an Open House at the East Local.

Br. David and Sr. Becky Rudd are now grandparents for the first time! They traveled to Phoenix to be there for their daughter, Sr. Lindsey and Br. Tony McIndoo to await the birth of little daughter Blakely, who was born May 9th. Br. Rick and Sr. Becky Olson are happy to be grandparents again. Little Abigail was born in early March...way ahead of schedule. Proud parents are Joseph and Pamela Olson; siblings are Olivia, Sarah and Hannah. Br. Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines are happy to be grandparents again. Little Gianna was born to daughter Jenni and Jason Lomonte on April 3rd; siblings are Enza and Grayson.

High School graduates from our



► Braden Oldham

local this year are Faith Taylor and Braden Oldham. We would like to take this opportunity to again congratulate them on their achievements.

Travelers from the East Local to the Michigan Reunion this year were: Apostle Buzz and Sr. Sue Brickhouse, Apostle Jeff and Sr. Michelle Oldham, Apostle Roland and Sr. June Sarratt, and Priest Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines.

*May God bless you all, and we hope to see you soon,
Sr. Deb Haines*

OBITUARY



Sallie Smith Bradley

March 7, 1914~April 29, 2016

Sallie Smith Bradley, age 102, of Cherokee, North Carolina, passed away April 29, 2016. Sallie was born March 7, 1914, in Swain County to the late Sam and Artie Hornbuckle Smith.

Sallie's family lived on Mingo, Cherokee, N.C., where she met and was courted by H. Seaborn Bradley, and were soon married. Sallie spent the rest of her life, 54 of those years with Seaborn and their three children, David, Lydia Marie, and Tom.

The Bradleys both held to Christian morals and beliefs, and were eager to find a church to embrace where they could raise their children. Sallie prayed diligently that

God would direct them, and her prayers were answered in 1949 when Apostle R. R. Robertson came to visit Sallie's boss and preached a sermon that the Bradley family attended.

On October 14, 1951, the family were baptized and united with the Church of Christ (TL) and were affiliated with the Puryear Local in Tennessee until the Lord moved upon Elder M. Harvey Seibel to open up a mission and establish the Calico Local on her property in Cherokee, N.C. in 1974. Sallie loved her church and church family, and was instrumental in the building and maintaining of the church which housed many pastors and missionaries over the ensuing years until her passing. Elder Samuel S. Gould felt moved to write her a note at the conclusion of one of his missionary trips that she prized and shared with others. She highlighted the words, "You are a precious gem that has been fashioned by the hand of the Lord," along with the scripture, "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth;

and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; for the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us forever" (2 John 1:1-2).

Sallie was preceded in death by her husband of 54 years, H. Seaborn Bradley, daughter Lydia Marie and son David; 4 brothers, 4 sisters and 9 half siblings. She is survived by her son Tom (Sadie), sister "Candy" Maness, 2 grandchildren, 2 great grandchildren, and 3 great great grandchildren. She especially wanted to live long enough to see her great great granddaughter Eliza Jane born. When she came along Sallie told everyone that she put in a special order to the Lord for her. Sister Sallie's hope rests in this final scripture:

"Yet there shall be a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. For Zion shall come, and God shall be in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her right early" (Ps 46:4-5).

TESTIMONY

My Dream of the Return of Jesus

Sister Inez Wolfe, Calico Local, Cherokee, NC (Feb 2016)

In the dream I was sitting in the living room watching TV and the children were out on the porch talking and laughing with each other. It started getting cloudy, and then it started getting darker clouds. It started to flash lightning. The clouds went to moving around. Then there was a purplish

lightning in the clouds. One of the children said it must be a U.F.O., and they called me out on the porch and asked me, "Why are the clouds like that?" I said, "I don't know," and then a big boom came out of the clouds and they started opening up and there was Jesus standing in the middle. A child asked me what it was. I told them it was Jesus. Then He came down out of the clouds and He started separating everybody. When He came to me He said, "You be-

long here and here." So He took my hand and took me where the little children were. He said, "You belong here." And then I woke up.

"And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats (Matt 25:32)."

NOTICES

2016 ACTIVITIES

- **JULY 29-31—MISSOURI REUNION**
Temple Lot, Independence, Missouri
Contact: Roland Sarratt
816-373-6605
Mike McGhee 816-796-6255
Smith Brickhouse 816-356-9214
Jeff Oldham 660-631-3963
- **SEPTEMBER 2-5—MINNESOTA REUNION**
Bemidji Local
Contact: Elder Samuel Gould
218-368-1427
Sister Elaine Gould 218-586-2774
Elder Merlin Eddy 651-438-9738
- **SEPTEMBER 30 & OCTOBER 1—WOMEN'S RETREAT** at Lake Maurer Retreat Center, Excelsior Springs, Missouri
Contact: Carrie Geier: 816-739-9386
geiers214@sbcglobal.net
- **OCTOBER 1-2—ONTARIO REUNION**
Teeterville Church of Christ
Contact: Marn Vieveen:
519-759-8087
marnvieveen@sympatico.ca
Michael Bevaart: 226-934-4250
mikebevaart@gmail.com
- Please be advised travel back into the US from Canada requires a passport, passport card, enhanced drivers license, or nexus.

HONDURAS

- **JULY 23—PRE-MARRIAGE RETREAT**
- **OCTOBER 2-4—GENERAL REUNION**
- **JANUARY 5-8, 2017—YOUTH CAMP**
Contact: Elder Ronnie Gill
rongill@la-comarca.org
Elder Thomas Gill
thomasgill@la-comarca.org

YUCATAN, MEXICO

- **JULY 28-31—YOUTH CAMP** in Dzan
- **SEPTEMBER 11—SECOND CHILDREN'S REUNION** at 10:00 a.m. in Ticul
- **OCTOBER 9—REUNION** at 4:00 p.m. in Merida
- **DECEMBER 11—YOUTH FORUM** at 4:00 p.m. in Merida
- **FEBRUARY 26—66TH ANNIVERSARY of the FOUNDATION of the CHURCH in YUCATAN** at 4:00 p.m. in Merida
Contact: Apostle Placido K. Matu:
ap.matu2@gmail.com

CCEG

The Church of Christ Email Group is a church member-only (and spouses, even if not a member) email communication group existing to keep the general church membership informed about prayer needs, blessings, and more. It does not have officially elected management (member volunteer only), although it regularly functions for the Church of Christ for missionary news and various announcements, like state rallies and reunions.

If you have email capability and are not a member of the CCEG, you may join by first visiting the Web site at www.cceg.net and after reading about us on the home page, click the link in the left sidebar, "Join the CCEG" and follow the simple instructions.

If any existing members feel you are not getting CCEG emails as expected, contact the CCEG manager (below) so you can be verified.

RHEA HOUSKNECHT
CCEG Manager
ccegmgr@icloud.com

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

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:

MARLENE COBB (Chairman)

725 S. Pickwick
Springfield, MO 65802

SUE PORTER

9 Market St.
Middleville, MI 49333

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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