

Zion's Advocate

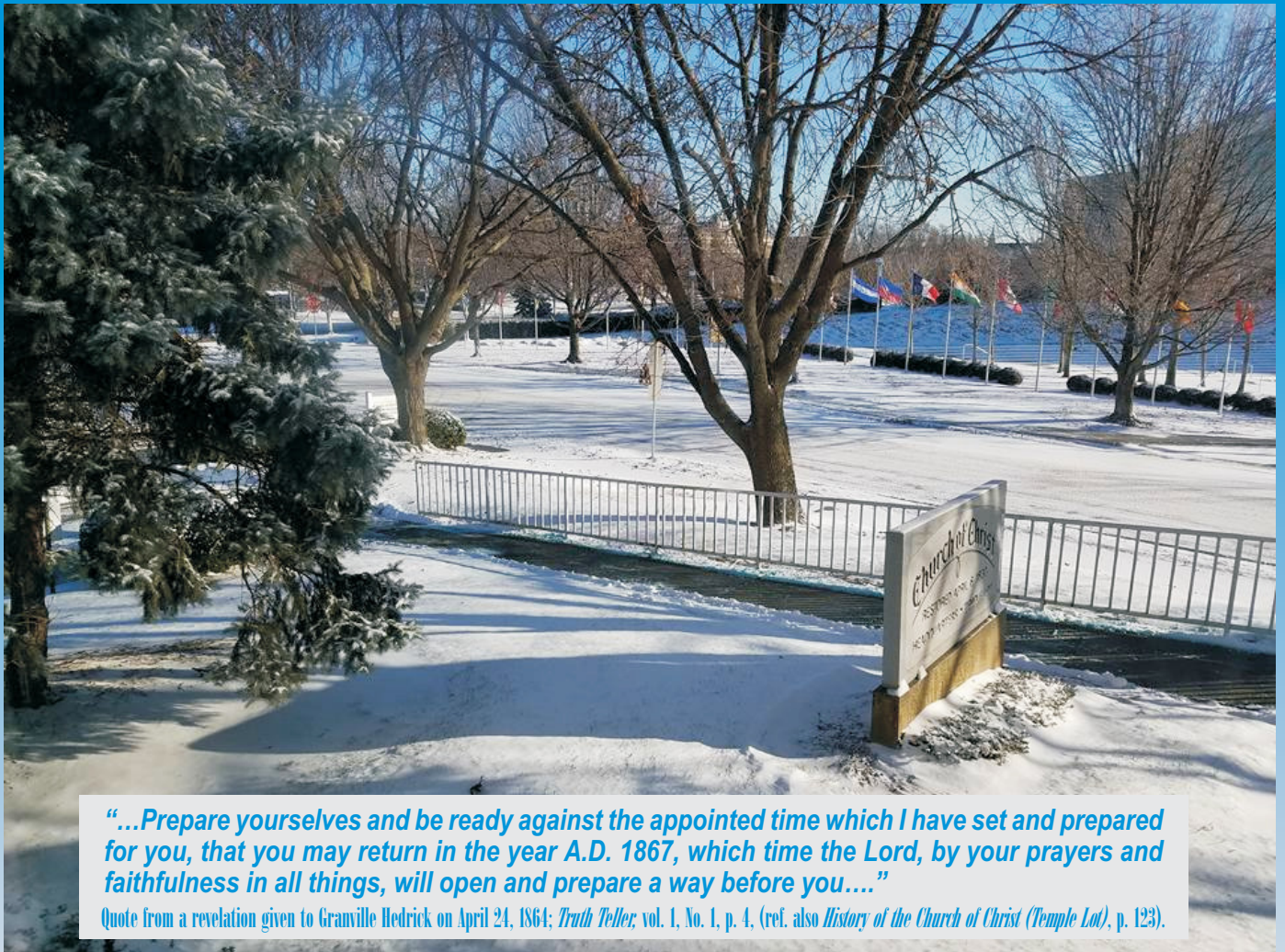
*"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day,
for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost...."*

1 Nephi 3:187

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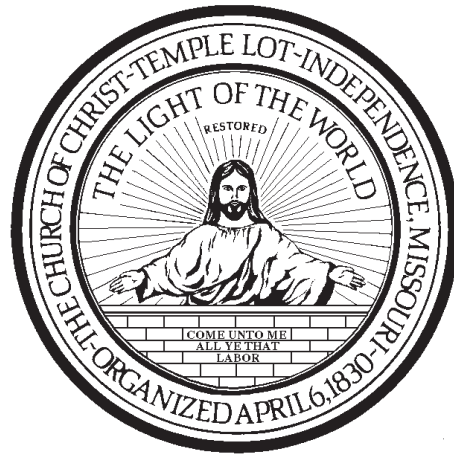
"...Prepare yourselves and be ready against the appointed time which I have set and prepared for you, that you may return in the year A.D. 1867, which time the Lord, by your prayers and faithfulness in all things, will open and prepare a way before you...."

Quote from a revelation given to Granville Hedrick on April 24, 1864; Truth Teller, vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4, (ref. also History of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), p. 123).

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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.

The Frailties of MEN



Apostle Joel Yates

...Only when we humble ourselves
can God use us as He desires.

Through the last few years I have met people who believe in God, but not in the scriptural authority of the Bible or the Book of Mormon. They believe the authors were influenced by man in his frailties. One person asked how God could use someone like Joseph Smith to translate the Book of Mormon when he could read about some of the things Joseph Smith did which were not good. In this article I

hope to show what the scriptures say about God's perfection and how He has used frail men from the beginning of time to accomplish His purposes. Along with that I will strive to help us see what God has done and still continues to do with frail man and what focus He has asked us to have. A year ago I wrote an article entitled *History and Faith* and was shown by a brother that three points of history in my article

were either insufficient or incorrect. I will strive to correct those points along the way.

The scriptures tell us that God's works, and all He does in the world, are perfect.

"Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he" Deuteronomy 32:3-4.

"As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him" 2 Samuel 22:31.

From the beginning of man we see God's perfection and plan challenged by man's frailties throughout the scriptures; it is a recurring theme. God placed man in a perfect situation in the garden with everything he would need, as well as opportunity to interact with Him. He also gave him responsibility and a commandment. Mankind, having been put in a perfect condition where everything was given to him physically and spiritually, chose a different path. The fall placed them in an imperfect state outside of the garden, requiring them to labor to provide for their needs and to understand the way back to God's perfect plan. God, knowing that man would fall, prepared a perfect plan to reclaim him and bring him back to that state of perfection through the grace, mercy and forgiveness of

Christ, where man may again dwell with God.

The Bible and Book of Mormon have various examples of God placing men in different positions of responsibility to accomplish His purposes. Often their fallen condition appears in the account as a reminder of our need to look to Christ as our only hope. The scriptures tell us of the spiritual victories and defeats of the House of Israel, the Church and many men who God used. They started with the intention to follow the Lord and accomplish His plan, but when temptations, trials, weakness and pride appeared, some fell and failed to do God's will. Others, however, persevered through repentance to endure faithfully to the end, striving to please God. Consider several men that God called to fulfill some purpose for Him who struggled to accomplish His plan:

In the days of Samuel the prophet, the children of Israel clamored for a king to lead them, even though that was not the perfect will of God. God chose Saul to be the first king of Israel and commanded Samuel to anoint him. We can read of the miraculous circumstances that set this man aside, and yet after a time Saul began to disobey the Lord, not remaining faithful, and was later rejected by God from being King. God is perfect and Saul was given a perfect opportunity to set up his family, yet he chose another path and allowed

his own sins and pride to determine his future.

When God sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons to be King, Samuel saw one of Jesse's older sons and thought he looked like the man to anoint, *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart"* 1 Samuel 16:7.

We read that God told Samuel to anoint David to be the future king. God chose David based on his heart. We know God established him as king after the death of Saul and used this man as a prophet to write the book of Psalms, encouraging the hearts of the children of men for several millennia. We read about David in a moment of weakness giving in to two of the most grievous sins known to man. He did find forgiveness from the Lord after sincere and difficult repentance. Today, his words have comforted many a sinner to know they can approach a God of mercy when they completely fail and still receive forgiveness. Did God make a mistake in His choice of David? David remained faithful to the God of Israel all his days, despite his grievous error and sins.

The scriptures record that Solomon was made king of Israel by the will of the Lord. The Bible tells us that Solomon loved the

Lord when he was made king. He asked the Lord for wisdom and it was granted to him, along with other blessings. Even more was promised to him by God if he would walk in God's ways. While Solomon was still striving to serve the Lord, even in his weaknesses, God used him to write much of the wisdom of the Lord for the benefit of all men. The world has been blessed by the books of wisdom Solomon penned, yet he did not apply the wisdom he wrote. As he grew older his many wives caused his heart to wander away from the God of Israel. He became a follower of many idol gods, incurring the displeasure of God upon him. Because of Solomon's disobedience the Lord took ten tribes from Solomon's son, giving them to a man from the tribe of Ephraim named Jeroboam; thus, the kingdom was divided.

First Kings, chapter eleven (verses twenty-six through forty) and chapters twelve through fifteen tell the story of Jeroboam, who was chosen by God to lead ten tribes of Israel. God promised him that if he would serve the God of Israel his house would be established like David's house was for Judah. Not many years into his kingship Jeroboam chose to give heed to some counselors and made two golden calves, building altars to them for the children of Israel to worship. The Lord responded to him by sending an unnamed prophet out of Judah to prophecy against him as

he prepared to burn incense at one of the altars to the false gods. Jeroboam became angry hearing the prophecy and raised his hand against the prophet. Jeroboam's raised hand dried up. Jeroboam asked the prophet to pray that his hand could be restored, which he did, and the king's hand was made whole. Later, that same prophet was killed by a lion for not following the Lord's instructions perfectly. Jeroboam went on in his ways of serving other gods and caused all Israel to sin after him. He became so wicked the Lord completely destroyed his family, leaving him no heritage on the earth. In these examples, God gave responsibilities to two individuals, and both of them fell short of His perfect plan for them.

Several years ago I had such a struggle trying to understand why God would pick a man to lead ten tribes of Israel who then led them deep into idolatry and to their destruction. In my mind I wondered how could God, Who is perfect and knows the future, choose such a man to lead His people of Israel whom He loved. With the help of several brothers I finally began to have a different understanding. First, God does know what He is doing. The Lord has shown the children of men for ages that He has a perfect plan and it involves things which we often do not understand. God gave a man an opportunity and had to allow him to choose to love

the Lord with all his heart, mind and strength, or not. Truthfully, all of us have this choice before us at some level. God gives us an opportunity to serve Him and blessings are attached if we do. But if we fail to persevere by humility and repentance we will meet the same bitter end. Jeroboam's sin did affect others, which is also true of our sins today, yet God's commandment to follow only Him was still required of the people. God promised He would preserve them if they followed Him. Beginning with Jeroboam, none of the kings of Israel set a righteous example to their people. Remember, Elijah was corrected by God when he mistakenly supposed that he was the only true follower of God in the kingdom. The Lord told Elijah He had preserved seven thousand men who would not bow the knee to worship Baal, showing God is able to preserve any who follow Him, even in an unrighteous kingdom. The scriptures continue to remind us Christ was and is to be our focus and hope. The point of every man God used was to show man's insufficiency and unreliability, pointing us back to our only true hope in Christ alone.

The New Testament is also full of the failures of men and the perfection of God. The Lord chose Judas Iscariot as one of the original apostles. He was able to see the impossible things performed by the Son of God, yet he

failed to fully grasp the love of God and betrayed the Lord. In his bitter end Judas finally understood what he had done. We know Christ designed His Church perfectly, yet we read there were those who had responsibilities and fell away. John tells of many disciples who did not like some of the teachings of Christ and walked no more with him. In Acts, chapter six, verses three through six, we read about seven men who were chosen to care for the financial matters in the church. These men were chosen for their honest report and because they were full of the Holy Ghost. One of these men named Nicolas later began to teach a new doctrine of free love and gathered a following after him called the Nicolaitans. The Lord told John in the book of Revelation, chapter two, verse six, that He hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans. We know they had disagreements over doctrine and some brothers even refused to travel and work with others in the gospel. Somehow the picture of what Christ designed perfectly is dimmed by what men did, yet God called and used frail men to spread the gospel of Christ all over the world.

Paul reminded us in First Corinthians, chapter ten, verses eleven through thirteen, about why these things were recorded for us:

“Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends

of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

Paul called us to remember the failures of the past among men, so we might understand we cannot overcome without His aid. Only God is worthy of our trust and is the One able to deliver us from the power of sin which has had such a horrible effect on fallen man. Paul went on to remind us not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think in Romans chapter twelve, verse three. He also reminded the Church in verses eleven through sixteen of Ephesians, chapter four, that the ministry were called and given the responsibility by Christ to point the members to His example and perfection.

God used many prophets to foretell a time when the original church Christ established would be overcome and fall into apostasy. God also used several prophets to tell how He would restore the kingdom of God among men in the latter days. Chapter twenty-nine of Isaiah, verses eleven through fourteen, foretold how God would do a marvelous work and a wonder by using an unlearned man to

translate a book that God had preserved to bring forth in the latter days. We believe that book was the Book of Mormon, and the emphasis of the prophecy was on what God was going to do, not on the man He would use to do it. We know the Book of Mormon points all men to Christ alone as our light, and His words and commandments as our guide, just as the Bible does. Somehow, the Restoration lost this focus as we look at our history.

The overemphasis of man's importance in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the Church in our histories has caused a great problem for many, and continues to have a negative effect on the work of the Lord. This very thing has caused some to ask the question: how could God use a man like Joseph Smith to bring forth the Book of Mormon? As I have already established with the Bible, the Lord has used many men in their frailties to do His work. God has always known men are frail, and we find Him correcting Joseph early on in the work, just as He has always sought to correct those to whom He has placed a responsibility. We find in this the longsuffering of God to men.

In the second chapter of the Book of Commandments the Lord chastised Joseph in 1828 for disobeying Him when he gave Martin Harris the forepart of the Book of Mormon, which God had told him not to let out of his hands. The Lord told him the

works and purposes of God cannot be frustrated, but the work of men can be. He told Joseph a man may have many revelations, but if he boasts in his own strength and sets aside the counsels of God to follow his own will, he must fall. The Lord also stated that if Joseph would have been faithful to keep His commandments, He would have supported him against all the fiery darts of the adversary. God went on to tell him if would repent, he would be called back to the work. This has been God's way with sinful man from the beginning. He will use us only when we come to Him in humility and repentance.

Joseph repented and was given another opportunity to do the work of translating the Book of Mormon. God provided him with a man named Oliver Cowdery to be a scribe to help him finish that work as he translated it by the means God had provided him. Here I will take a moment and add a correction to the last article I wrote. I quoted the words of Oliver Cowdery pertaining to the use of the Urim and Thummim, and my lack of confidence in the use of a seer stone for this work, and leaning toward not being sure he even had one. I did quote some eyewitnesses who spoke of his using it, and a brother did remind me there were other eyewitnesses of it as well. I did additional research and there are several who mention seeing it in use by Joseph. Please forgive my error; I know I can be wrong.

I still confess that I do not know how it was used. Oliver's testimony of Joseph using the Urim and Thummim to translate while he was involved, and Joseph writing that he returned them to the angel after the work of translation was done, led me to believe these were the main instruments used in completing the work of the Book of Mormon.

During the process of translating the Lord was also instructing how He wanted them to set up the Church; that it was to be patterned as it was in the days of His disciples of old. After completing the work of the Book of Mormon, we know God used Joseph and others to officially restore the Church of Christ by commandment on April 6, 1830. However, several commandments God instructed them to do were left undone, so the recurring theme of frail man began to be repeated in the Restoration. Several revelations received in those early years demonstrate God's attempts to correct them and get them back on track. In a revelation given on September 23, 1832, the Lord chastised the entire church for their unbelief and treating lightly His word. He continued to tell them they were under condemnation until they repented and remembered the new covenant of the Book of Mormon and the former commandments He had given them, not only to say, but also to do them. The next year the saints were driven out of Missouri by an angry mob as God

continued to try to get the attention of His people and call them back to humility. The emphasis on man and not Christ became a stumbling block, leading to more errors being brought into the church. Joseph allowed himself to be placed at the head of the church in a position which Ephesians, chapter one, verses twenty through twenty-three, tell us was reserved by the Father for Christ alone. It is easy and discouraging to see the frailties of man in the pages of history; yet, if we change our view, we might also see the things God was doing to fulfill His word of prophecy.

I believe just as God had a plan from before the foundation of the world if mankind chose to sin in the garden, even so God had a plan for His church should they fall into error. It was prophesied in Daniel, chapter two, verse twenty-two, that the kingdom God would set up in the latter days would never be destroyed. I believe history demonstrates God had a plan to preserve the truth of the gospel and the church from another apostasy. During the years of Joseph's life the church grew to 200,000 members who spread over parts of the world as they heard the beautiful restored gospel. Many families and groups were converted and joined with excitement to serve the Lord.

After the saints were driven out of Missouri in 1833, the main group of the Church, numbering around 12,000, settled in

Nauvoo, Illinois. New ideas, including the book of Abraham, temple ceremonies such as baptism for the dead, sealed marriage and polygamy were introduced into the church before and after they arrived in Nauvoo. I want to correct another item I stated in my article a year ago: that Brigham Young introduced new doctrines, such as polygamy, for history does show it was known in the church before Brigham began a public practice of it in 1852.

Again, we see something God did to preserve and protect His people from false doctrines. In four different articles printed in the *Times and Seasons* from 1842 through 1845 Joseph, Hyrum, and E. M. Webb denied polygamy was being taught or practiced, and the first principles were reiterated that a man should only have one wife. Just a couple of months before the death of Joseph and Hyrum, they excommunicated a man named Hiram Brown for teaching and practicing that doctrine. Therefore, many in the church at that time were protected from that doctrine and did not know all that was going on to promote it. History and opinions are conflicted and differing about how much Joseph was involved. Some say he was fully involved in the practice of polygamy, while others give evidence he started down that road and began having marriages to others in the temple for the next life, but was not practicing polygamy as we understand it, and

eventually saw the error of his ways and repented. God knows, but my whole desire is not to focus on Joseph and his errors or strengths, but on what God did to preserve the truth of the gospel and His Church. In His wisdom and plan He kept many members away from those influences of that time.

We know Joseph and Hyrum were killed in 1844 and the church was divided and split into different groups. I believe this also was something God did to humble and test the people of the Church to see if they would repent and return to following the Lord Jesus Christ and place their emphasis on Him rather than man, or to see if they would continue to make man their trust. History does illustrate many did not know what to do, so good men and women variously dispersed into all of the groups. Brigham took most of the hierarchy of the church and about seven percent of the people and headed west. Others went west later, as they were able, until about half of the church ended up in the Salt Lake area. Some started in one group, then left there to join another of the factions that better taught or practiced what they believed.

I believe God had determined a way to preserve the truths of the gospel of Christ and place the focus back on the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The people of the church were made to consider what had gone wrong:

what practices and doctrines did not fit in the gospel of Christ? What would they do about it? The different groups have answered those questions in varying degrees for good, or have continued down the path of leadership by man.

In the Church of Christ we were blessed by forefathers of the faith that had the determination to stand upon the word of God as it was written in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and through revelation that agreed with those standards. Through the process of time they have striven to place the emphasis of our teachings and practice back on Christ as the only One worthy to be followed and praised. We have seen that only when we humble ourselves can God use us as He desires. We must continue to strive never to return to a trust in the leadership of man, but only allow Christ to be the Head of the Church. Yes, God can use frail men and has done mighty things through them, but only when it is for His glory alone. As our brother Paul of old said, "*He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord*" 1 Corinthians 1:31.

EPHESUS:

BIBLICAL CITIES WHERE CHRISTIANS LIVED



By Apostle Don McIndoo

Ephesus is one of the ancient seaports in Asia Minor. It is located along a river flowing westward from eastern Turkey into the Aegean Sea. It was at the western end of the famous Silk Road, so it was a great trade center between the western world of Europe and the eastern nations.

Ephesus became famous as the Gateway of Asia. It was the fourth largest city in the world at the beginning of the Christian

era. Only Rome, Alexandria and Antioch were larger. With the passing of the years the river became loaded with sand and it was cut off from the Aegean Sea.

Through the ages Ephesus had been governed by many ancient pagan powers. Then, in about 330 B.C., under the rule of Alexander the Great the city came under the dominion of Greece. In 133 B.C. it fell to the Romans. Under their rule it was called a "free city," with no restrictions on religious beliefs. The city, however, was always home to Greek inhabitants.

After the crucifixion of Christ the work of the Gospel began to grow rapidly. The apostles and other men, like Stephen, were diligently carrying the message to others. But Stephen was arrested and his words, when questioned by the Jewish leaders, enraged them. They cast him out of the city and stoned him to death (see Acts 7:55-60). This caused many Christians to begin leaving Israel and travel to lands northward. Some went to Ephesus and founded a Christian

church there.

Many Christians and missionaries visited Ephesus. The Apostle Paul lived there about three years. It was in Ephesus that Paul wrote his letters to the believers in Corinth. It is believed that the Apostle John spent the first years of his life in Ephesus, and that it was here the Gospel of John was written. Apostle Paul wrote his two letters to his young companion Timothy, while Timothy lived in Ephesus in AD. 62 and 67.

The Apostle Paul is now writing the believers in Ephesus a letter while he is imprisoned in Rome. He was visited by devout Christians who came from Ephesus to encourage him. One of these visitors will carry the letter back to the believers in Ephesus. This all took place in the year A.D. 62.

The book of Ephesians contains six chapters. The first three chapters are an introduction to the book. For example, consider chapter 1, verses 1 – 3:

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the

saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

As we go on in chapters four through six we find the apostle now instructing the believers in Ephesus how they should be living as redeemed followers of Christ, and the kind of relationships those who have been redeemed should maintain. Consider this as we read chapter 4, verses 1 – 4:

I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

Many cities, such as Ephesus and villages in Asia Minor, were inhabited by Grecian residents. For example, Timothy, the young traveling companion of Apostle Paul, had a Jewish mother and grandmother, but his father was a Greek. So the apostle saw the need to consider that many

members of the Church of Christ in Ephesus were Greek people who had been converted. Consider his words in chapter 4, verses 17 – 20:

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

But ye have not so learned Christ;

Now the Apostle Paul sees the need to write to these people about the new life they have taken when they were baptized into the church. Here we need to read carefully chapter 4, verses 25 – 29:

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Neither give place to the devil.

Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

I do not believe that members of the church today are telling lies or speaking dishonestly to others, nor that any of the members are stealing to gain financial aid. However, I think it possible that many fall into sin because of anger. The apostle tells us, “*Be angry, and sin not....*” But as we go through our day there might be several things that make us angry. How do we turn a moment of anger into sin? By keeping it in our thoughts, for we are told in verse two that we must be patient and keep ourselves in restraint.

As we read on to verse 30, we are told, “*...grieve not the Holy Spirit.*” Let’s read on in verses 30 – 32 to see how we can grieve the Spirit of God:

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.

In my mind these three verses contain some of the best clues as to how our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ would have His followers to live. The Apostle

Paul continues on in chapter five with good counsel to all members of the church. We must always remember, and put into practice, verses 1 and 2:

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

Let us now consider Apostle Paul's words in verses 6 – 10:

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;)

Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, the world is absolutely full of people ready to lead us into other paths of life that are incorrect. Our lives and conduct must be led by the "words of Jesus Christ" and His Holy Spirit. That alone will keep our feet in the path of light. So the Apostle Paul tells us in chapter 5, verses 14 and 17:

Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise

from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.

Then in verses 19 - 21 the apostle admonishes all Christians:

Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.

In chapter 5 the apostle gives counsel to husbands and wives. As he continues in chapter 6 his counsel is to children and parents and to those who labor for a living. Now Paul speaks to all Christians in verses 11 – 17:

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and

having on the breastplate of righteousness;

And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

The Apostle Paul concludes his letter to these people he loves with a benediction in verses 23 and 24:

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen. To the Ephesians written from Rome, by Tychicus.

The Apostle Paul made several visits to Ephesus on his return to Asia after visiting cities in Greece. The Christian faith remained in this city and was very prominent through history. As the years passed the Christian community became more and more prominent. The pagan temples and idols fell into disuse and gradually crumbled. An earthquake several centuries later brought great destruction. The cities of Asia Minor finally fell before the Muslim raiders who conquered this part of the world.

FROM the ARCHIVES

The RETURN

CELEBRATING ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS

A revelation was given to Elder Granville Hedrick in August of 1863 which commanded the saints to prepare for the return to Missouri, that in the future the conditions will have so changed that it would be possible for the saints to begin to return to the state from which they had been driven out by a mob in the 1833. This would mean that the attitude of the Missourians would have so softened that they could now return and live in peace and enjoy their rights as citizens and neighbors.

In another revelation given in April,

1864, the saints were instructed to prepare for the gathering to Jackson County, Missouri, in the winter of 1867. (This revelation was published in the church paper, *The Truth Teller*, in July, 1864.)

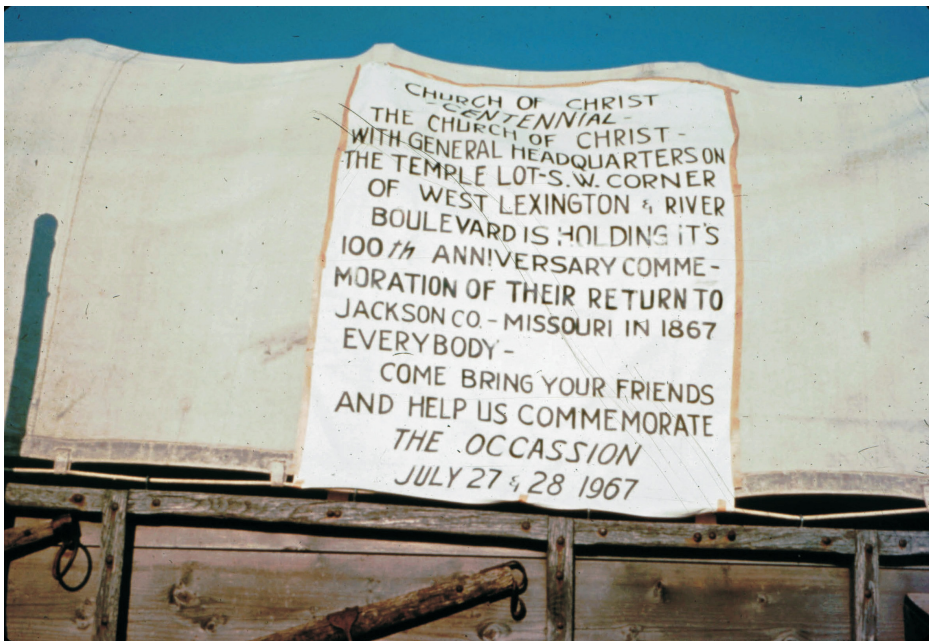
And so it was during the winter of 1866-67, the saints in Woodford County, Illinois, began their migration to Missouri, obeying the revelation given through Elder Granville Hedrick.

A caravan was formed consisting of several covered wagons carrying about 60 souls which traveled in the dead of winter across Illinois and Missouri to

the Missouri River. When the first caravan reached the Missouri River they found the river frozen from shore to shore and covered with several inches of snow and slush. Some of the members hesitated crossing for fear the ice would break through and property and lives would be lost.

Elder George P. Frisbey, who seemed to be in the lead, admonished them that the Lord had promised to "prepare the way" for their return and expressed his faith by driving out on the ice amidst much anxiety and the prayers of the other members of the caravan. He pro-





ceeded on his journey, the wheels of the heavy wagon leaving a deep track in the melting snow, until he reached the Jackson County side of the Missouri. A great cheer went up from the others and one by one they spaced their wagons and proceeded to follow the track of Elder

Frisbey until all had safely crossed on the ice without loss of life or property. They landed near Blue Mills, which is northeast of Independence, Missouri, and from there proceeded to their destination (from the *Church of Christ History*, chapter nineteen, pages 122-123).

On July 27th and 28th, 1967, the 100th Anniversary of the return was celebrated on the Temple Lot. A large group of people gathered to see the dedication of a historical marker; there was a covered wagon, as well as some church members dressed in period clothing to set the scene, and prayers of thanks were given to the Lord for His direction in bringing the saints back to the Centerplace, the place for His Zion of these last days. That celebration was 50 years ago!

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The General Sunday School Association (GSSA) is providing portions of lessons 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. Contact Susan Porter at: porter_susan@sbcglobal.net, or 9 Market Street, Middleville, MI 49333, for more information. The GSSA has a private Facebook group for all members. If you would like to be added, contact Betsy Trudgen at trucoking@yahoo.com.

The GSSA has purchased FRUIT of the SPIRIT posters from Rose Publishing. Contact us to receive a free poster.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT:
FOCUSING ON LOVE & GENTLENESS

GALATIANS 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, LONGSUFFERING, GENTLENESS, GOODNESS, FAITH, MEEKNESS, TEMPERANCE: against such there is no law.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: adaptable to other age groups.

PURPOSE OF LESSON: To understand how we should exhibit love and gentleness in our daily walk with God.

Table with 2 columns: Definition of LOVE and Definition of GENTLENESS. Includes biblical references like 1 John 4:8, 16 and descriptions like 'Soft, humble, calming—useful when others are upset.'

DISCUSS: God loves us. How do we know this? What testimonies do you have of God's love for you? What about gentleness? How does speaking softly or kindly bring about gentleness not only in you, but in conversation with others?

Table with 2 columns: EXAMPLE. Includes text like 'We love others like God loves us when we don't let our emotions or feelings get in the way.' and 'We are gentle with others when we are calm and not threatening.'

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

LOVE Scriptures

"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." (1 John 4:7)

"Charity (love) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunted not itself, is not puffed up." (1 Corinthians 13:4)

"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John 13:34)

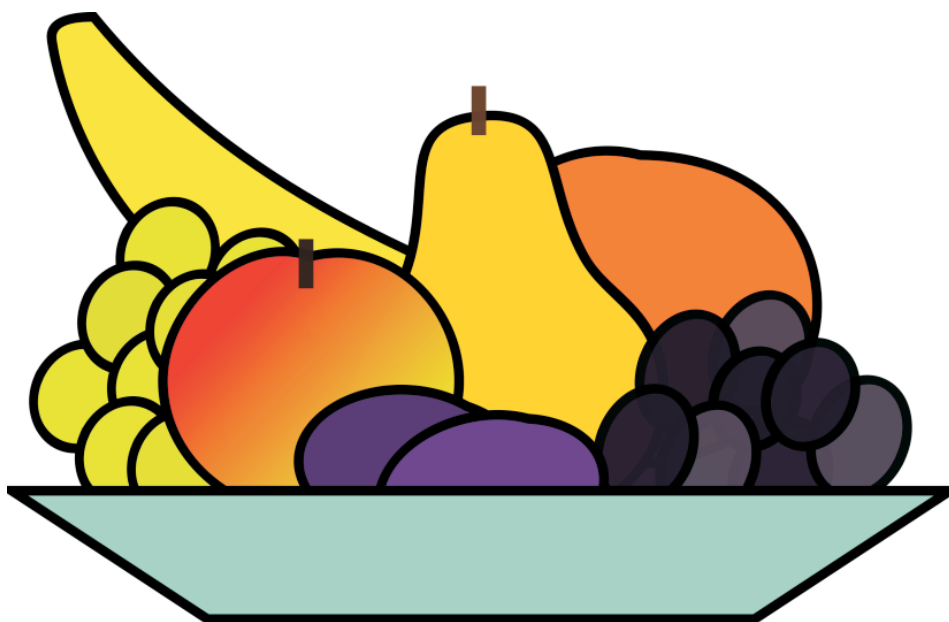
GENTLENESS Scriptures

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17)

"But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children: so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because you were dear unto us." (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8)

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." (2 Timothy 2:25)

FAMILY ACTIVITY..... Set an empty fruit bowl in a convenient place.



Go shopping for your family's favorite fruits.

Each family member chooses a piece of fruit that represent them.

When someone notices that a family member has shown love or gentleness, they add a piece of that person's fruit to the bowl. When the bowl is full, have a family meeting and discuss how God has blessed your home with so many acts of love and gentleness. Make a fruit salad and blend all your blessings together!

BOOK TALK



A Book of Mormon Companion

Witnesses to its Validity

By Apostle Don McIndoo

Dedicated to those who seek the truth

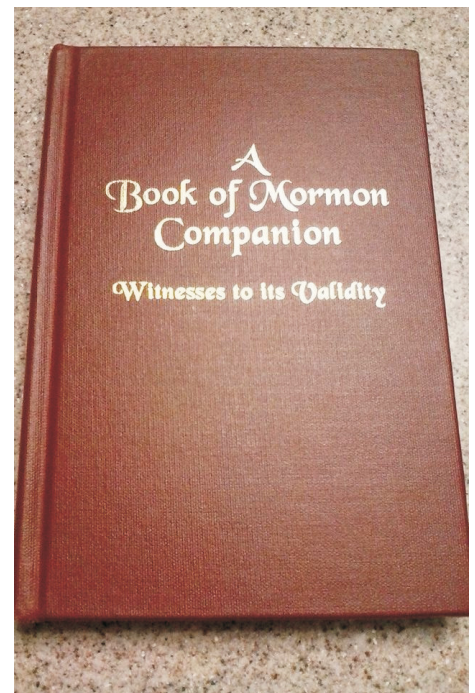
The *Book of Mormon Companion* is a comprehensive compilation of proofs of archeological discoveries which prove the truth of the Book of Mormon. These discoveries were not known to modern man at the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (1829); they were only just beginning to be known to a few archeologists a decade later.

In the introduction, Apostle Don McIndoo tells us that in 1592 there was a great effort put forth to destroy all evidences of 1600 years of Mayan history, literature, and culture. This was the history of the Mayan people which was revealed in the Book of Mormon and preserved for our

day. Proof of that are the items focused on in the *Book of Mormon Companion* and the verbal history passed down from generation to generation as additional witnesses.

The *Book of Mormon Companion* provides a wealth of material to strengthen and support the Book of Mormon and give viable answers to many criticisms which are sometimes brought against it. Apostle McIndoo has done a wonderful job of describing the history, geography, archeology and culture of the Mayan people, and thus brings the Book of Mormon to life before our eyes.

A Book of Mormon Companion (209 pages, which includes il-



lustrations), written by Apostle Don McIndoo, of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) can be purchased at the Church of Christ Headquarters/Visitors' Center at 200 S. River Blvd., Independence, Missouri, 64051. The book can also be ordered on line at churchofchrist-tl.org (under publications).

POEM

Mary's Words: More Than Praise (Luke 1:49-55)

Prophecy profound is what she was giving,
Open your ears ye nations of the living,

49 He that is mighty hath done unto me great things; and holy is his name.

For His precious promises can we not say the same?
The life He puts in our life, the power to reignite our flickering flame.

50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Indeed, His mercy never faileth our sincere intention.
How rich the moments when He is near through our humbled condition.

51 He hath shown strength with his arm;

He holds up, He lets go, He gathers, He sends ambassadors for peace,
Or sounds the alarms.

he hath scattered the proud in the imaginations of their heart.

Filled with vanity do they run against the wind with their carts,
Full of gold and stubble which cannot be spent in the heavenly mart,
Full of morals and doctrines never given from the start,
And will be cast down to the ground when He arises to cleanse His court.

52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats,

Whether man or nation, your boasting shall only hasten your defeat.
The Lord will not uphold vanity or the lying heart that cheats.

and exalted them of low degree.

Exalted you say, and how can it be! An invite to paradise and all for free.
Your treasure, and your light, shall shine at last for all to see.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things;

The humble heart will have the gifts that the Trinity brings.
And shall know of His love which the angels and the harpers sing.

and the rich he hath sent away empty.

For the rich hath ignored every counsel openly.
For the rich seeks his own like alone gentry.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel,

He will establish them firmly and take it from Ishmael.
He will fight for them as did the wise Pharisee, Gamaliel.
Whose forefather was prince of the tribe of Manasseh, native son of Israel.

in remembrance of His mercy;

Surely every soul has received of His mercy,
But His elect shall be polished to shine mostly.

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

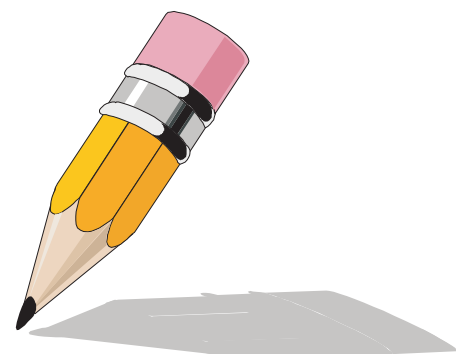
Abandon His people, forsake His promises, No, never.
His Word was sent forth from Eden to the pilgrims' endeavor.
As they settled the shores of the world's rivers.
Now He will gather and secure them in hardship, but with careful measure.
The sheep from the goats, the good from the bad, the righteous from the ungodly,
Say it however,
It is set in stone and sealed in blood, He will separate and sever.
Now at last, on bended knee the ransomed shall behold with pleasure,
The Lord Jesus Christ whom we can be with and be blessed by, forever and ever.
How blessed the world has been to have such a Savior.

And so God, our amazing Father, who rules above all that ever was,
Made in His image, but sown of the dust sprinkled with flaws,
Ever watching and directing from His throne of mercy,
You endured so much, yet remain extraordinary.

WE THANK YOU

By Sister Kathy Cloyd

PHOENIX Local News



Greetings from all of us here in sunny Phoenix. Just wanted to offer a nice bedroom for anyone wanting to get out of the Arctic for a couple of weeks...!

The year has flown by. I think it is really true that the older you get, the faster the time goes by. It seems it was only yesterday that we started 2016 and now, well, it is gone. And, oh my goodness, so much has happened.

It was a great blessing to see Sr. Amy Moser back in church recently. She has not been able to attend for some time. Not only did she come, but she sang a song to the congregation and the Lord, a very special treat. How many of you have spent time praying for our Sr. Amy Moser? Probably everyone. I'm sure you all haven't had the opportunity to see the pictures that she posted of herself with friends and family showing that she has started climbing mountains! Yes, real mountains. How could this be anything but a miracle? And frosting on the cake—it looks like her book will be getting published. Congratulations to Sr. Amy, and praise be to God!

Our Sr. Michelle Yates, along with some help from Br. Tim Oar and others, put together a fantastic video on the history of the Phoenix Local. If you weren't fortunate enough to see it on the opening night at church you can order it from Michelle and have your own copy.

Sometimes it's fun to get together and do something to help out the community. One afternoon



Amy at Church



Amy on the Mountain

in July Sr. Hedrick and Sr. McCann did just that when they helped prepare meals that would be sent to different parts of the world. It was a very rewarding afternoon. Other times, it's just fun to get together and be a kid—like on one of the rare occasions when it rains enough to make a pond in the yard across the street. The Yates' kids certainly were not going to let that opportunity go to waste!



Yates' Kids in the Water

No matter your age, something is always going on at the church: outings for the young people, barbecues, ice cream socials, mens' breakfasts, womens' breakfasts, camps, a sock exchange on December 17, just to name a few. We are in the middle of a new session of Dave Ramsey's "Money Makeover," for those who would like to learn how to better manage their finances.

Sr. Erica Lavin had a baby shower on November 5, and several weeks early, on December 19th, she delivered her new son, Ashton. Thankfully, both she and the baby are doing fantastic...more prayers answered. On December 10 we were blessed to witness the union of our Sr. Katie (Blaker) and Br. Jared Ely, and coming up shortly will be the wedding of Sr. Natasha Gill and Br. Nathan Brown. It is really exciting to see our local grow!

Of course, among all of this we had Thanksgiving and Christmas, along with our yearly Reunion. Did I mention it has been a busy, busy time! With all the wonderful things that are happening it is always im-



Pat and Diann



Ashton Lavin



Jared and Katie

portant to remember to keep those with special needs in our thoughts and prayers. I know I won't remember everyone and I apologize for those I miss, but please remember the following: on December 9 we lost our beloved Sr. Meredyth Malone. Our loss, but I can't imagine the happiness she is feeling now. And please remember and pray for: Sr. Betty McIndoo, Sr. Debbi Brown, Sr. Holly Bartlett, Sr. Louise and Br. Hube Yates, Sr. Wanda Yates, Sr. Pat McCann, Br. Isaac Ferrier, Br. Andrew Brown, Br. Brandon Lavin, Br. Tim Oar, and others who are looking for employment, wondering about choices in school, needing direction in life, etc. The list is long.

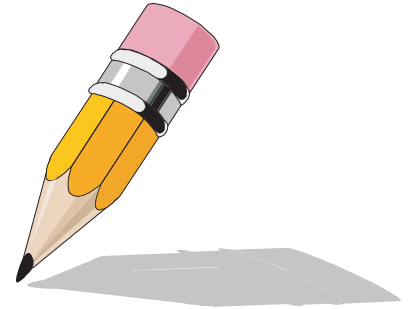
I hope the coming year is a blessed one for you all.

*Your sister is Christ,
DiAnn Hedrick*



Children Singing

East Independence Local Report



By Sister Deb Haines

Happy blessed New Year's greetings to you from the East Local in Independence, Missouri.

Since our last report we've had another 50th Wedding Anniversary. In October, Br. Isaac (Bick) and Sr. Diane Brockman celebrated their 50th Wedding Anniversary with a reception held in their honor given by their children: Michelle and Jeff Oldham, and Aimee Brockman.

Apostle Mike McGhee missed

out on two trips to the Philippines because of hip replacement surgery earlier in the year...it has been a long recovery. Once our brother was sufficiently recovered he next underwent cataract surgeries. Both times the recovery was difficult, but he was blessed in the long run.

Apostle William Sheldon fell several months ago and injured his shoulder; it turned out to be a fracture of his shoulder. He has been greatly blessed though and has healed nicely.

At our Missouri Reunion at the end of July we were very blessed with the calling of another elder; Br. David Rudd, was ordained a few weeks later. We are very thankful to have another in the ministry.

Last fall Br. Mike Smith underwent a liver transplant; he is still recovering and needs our prayers, though the Lord has greatly blessed him throughout this trial.

Sr. Helen Kidd journeyed to

Arizona in November and will stay with family in Phoenix for the winter months. Others traveling to the Phoenix Reunion from the East Local were Br. Buzz and Sr. Sue Brickhouse, Br. Bob and Sr. Jennifer Oldham, Br. Steve and Sr. Melissa McGhee, and Br. Bruce and Sr. Deb Haines.

Sr. Sheila Sarratt had surgery to repair several vertebra in her neck. She had been in severe pain for a long time. Sr. Sheila was greatly blessed with a successful surgery and her recovery went well, for which we are very grateful. Please keep Br. Eric Sarratt in your prayers as he is having problems concerning his eyes.

Br. Ralph Clark has been ill with lung and heart problems; Sr. Kathy Clark has been diagnosed with cancer. They both stand in need—please keep them in your prayers.

Our East Local United Workers held their annual Christmas Breakfast on Dec. 3rd. There was

a “scene” provided for photos which made for many smiles and giggles.

Br. Bruce Haines had rotator cuff surgery Dec. 7th. His surgery went well and he is recovering.

Br. Buzz Brickhouse is still receiving ongoing treatments for cancer. He is able to get out into the foreign missionary fields in between treatments. Please pray for him that his health will hold and he can continue in the work.

Sister Dana Taylor is in great need of our prayers for relief of her discomfort and pain from her illness.

Our Children's Sunday School classes put on our yearly Christmas Program again this year. Ev-



WOMEN'S CHRISTMAS BREAKFAST:
Becky Olson, Diane Brockman, Betty Olson, Cheryl Taylor, Aimee Brockman, Michelle Oldham



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM: Madison Fisher, Reese and Graham Oldham

Photos courtesy of Jennifer Oldham

ery year they do a Nativity Play/Skit for us. Parents and grandparents look forward to it every year. Even with a winter storm blowing outside there were warm hearts filled with love inside!

May God bless you greatly in the New Year ahead,
Sister Deb Haines

NOTICES

YUCATAN, MEXICO

■ **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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200 S RIVER BLVD PO BOX 472
INDEPENDENCE MO 64051-0472
churchofchrist-tl.org

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Zion's Advocate Subscription Rate Non-Members	12.00
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Book of Commandments (plastic bound)	6.00
Book of Commandments (hardcover)	11.00
Book of Mormon (1990 Independence Edition—plastic)	12.00
Book of Mormon (1990 Independence Edition reprint—leatherette)	46.00
A Book of Mormon Companion (plastic)	6.00
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THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CHURCH PUBLICATIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE:*

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Article of Faith, #9 - (concerning the Bible and Book of Mormon)
Baptism for the Dead—A Fallacy
The Book of Commandments - Its Role in the History of the Restoration
Brief Commentary: Book of Commandments & Doctrine and Covenants
A Brief History of the Church of Christ
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The Christian Sabbath is the Lord's Day - Sunday
Colored Tracts to Native Americans: 1) Book in the Stone Box 2) Did You Know? 3) Epistle to American Indians 4) Promises of God and Straight Talk
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What about the Book of Mormon?
Why? (Amplifies absence of a First Presidency in Scripture)
Zion and the Temple of the Lord
*Donations will be accepted to cover postage & printing costs. (Multiple copies available: 6-50¢/100-\$5.85 plus postage.)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

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

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

OLD ADDRESS: (Street address) _____

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

NEW ADDRESS: (Street address) _____

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

NAMES of all Church of Christ (Temple Lot) members residing at new address: _____

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

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ccegmgr@icloud.com