## Zions

"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

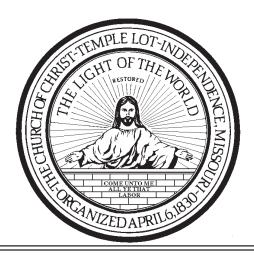


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et us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. —Revelation 19:7-8



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

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# The Hope of the Saints



**Elder Ronnie Gill** 

#### Part 1

#### Introduction

or us to truly understand and begin to pull together the events that will lead up to and also take place during the millennium it is necessary to understand that God has given us some parables that let us know the basics, or a very simple overview of what He is planning. It is in those parables that we will begin our investigative journey.

First, why do I refer to the 7th day and the 8th day in this study? Part of that comes from the first century records that we have from the early church fathers, and part of that comes from the scriptures themselves. Here we have a quote from the Epistle of Barnabas: "Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, 'He finished in six days.' This

implieth that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years. And He Himself testifieth, saying, 'Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.' Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. 'And He rested on the seventh day.'"

We also have a quote from Irenaeus: "For in as many days as this world was made, in so many thousand years shall it be concluded. And for this reason the Scripture says; 'Thus the heaven and the earth were finish, and all their adornment. And God brought to a conclusion upon the sixth day the works that He had made: and

God rested upon the seventh day from all His works.' This is an account of the things formerly created, as also it is a prophecy of what is to come. For the day of the Lord is as a thousand years; and in six days created things were completed: it is evident, therefore, that they will come to an end at the sixth thousand year."<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus lived approximately between 130-202 AD. He was considered the Bishop of Lugdunum in Gaul, which is now Lyons, France.<sup>3</sup> We add witness to what these early church fathers stated with the Bible itself. Though it is purely the opinion of the writer of this study that this passage serves as a witness, let every reader be convinced in his own mind through his own study.

"But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2 Peter 3:8).

The reason that this passage is considered as a witness to what the early church fathers believed is that in this passage

Peter is directly writing about the second coming of the Lord and also the new heavens and earth, thus giving weight to the idea that for each day of creation (6 days), the earth would exist one thousand years (6,000 years), and how on the seventh day God rested. Then the millennium would be that seventh day of rest, and at the end of the millennium of rest the earth and heavens would then be destroyed and recreated, bringing us to the 8th day or the beginning of the 8th millennium.

With these things in mind I'd also like to set some premises that might help us unravel God's plans for the future:

God is Love. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" 1 John 4:8. This is a very important concept because it can help us understand God's motives behind His actions. God does not want to annihilate the world; He wants to recover it, and heal it. He wants to save us, and oftentimes from ourselves.

God is Just. "Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let

them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord? And there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me" Isaiah 45:21. Because of this God cannot contradict Himself, nor will He force us to follow Him. He might, however, force us to choose who we follow.

God wants to communicate with us. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" Amos 3:7. God communicates with us to help us understand what He is doing, His justice, the depths of His love, and just to commune with us.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Revelation 2:17).

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee

<sup>1</sup> Epistle of Barnabas, XV:4; *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, entry on 'The Apostolic Fathers', 1917, "even if he [Barnabas] be not the Apostle and companion of St. Paul, is held by many to have written during the last decade of the first century [AD 96-98], and may have come under direct Apostolic influence, though his Epistle does not clearly suggest it."

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 5 p.557.

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia.org/wiki/Irenaeus

great and mighty things, which thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3).

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1 Corinthians 2:7-9).

There are a lot of scriptures that speak about the coming of Jesus Christ; in this write-up we cannot cover them all. In this study we will concentrate on the purpose of God's plan and His love for mankind, hopefully inspiring hope and joy for the future during a time when it is so easy to lose all hope and happiness.

## Leading up to the 7th Day

Preparing for the Journey t the onset of any spiritual journey, it is necessary that we set aside all of our personal baggage and allow God, through His word (first and foremost) and His Spirit, to guide us, because often-times our human thoughts don't even come close to what God has planned for us. As it is written:

"...Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" 1 Corinthians 2:9.

This is telling us that God has great things in store for us; He would like to tell us through His prophets as well as through the Holy Spirit. David also spoke of the great things God has planned for those that trust God:

"Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" Psalms 31:19.

Most importantly in a spiritual journey we need to believe and have trust in what it is God is telling us, knowing that all scripture blends together into a perfect tapestry. As

Mosiah tells us:

"Believe in God; Believe that He is and that He created all things, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that He hath all wisdom and all power, both in heaven and in earth; Believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend" Mosiah 2:13-15.

## Our Journey Begins with a Betrothal Contract

(And the fulfillment of the 5th & 6th feast — Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur)

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:..." Hebrews 8:10.

The importance of the betrothal contract and wedding are seen in the fact that God alludes to them many times throughout the scriptures, both Old Testament and New. And it is through these passages that we can see the great love and intent God has for His people.

And it is this love that motivates how the final events of history will play out:

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels" Isaiah 61:10.

There are several comparisons in the New Testament to the church being the bride of Christ:

"He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" John 3:29.

Even when Christ speaks of His second coming, He alludes to typical Jewish wedding traditions:

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" Mark 13:32.

And Christ's second com-

ing also is tied to a wedding feast or marriage supper:

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God" Revelation 19:7-9.

With this in mind, let's look back and examine the traditions of a Jewish wedding with inline scriptural commentary.

#### A Traditional Jewish Betrothal

(As observed during the time period of Christ)

typically held in two parts, first the betrothal and then the actual marriage. As a rule, it was the father that would arrange the match and negotiate the terms. At the end of the negotiation, the girl would be consulted, and then the be-

trothal was complete. (These are the steps, with the proposal, that lead up to the 7th day, or the millennium.)

#### (5TH FEAST – YOM TERUAH)

The negotiation: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, which is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many" Romans 5:14-15.

- a) The negotiation is that if we will repent and follow Christ's commandments, God will forgive our sins and give us grace and the hope of salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ.
- The Bride Price: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" 1 Corinthians 6:20.
  - a) The price paid for all mankind was Christ's death on the cross. Man was not consulted, nor can man ever pay the price, but rather it was the Fa-

ther paying the price for humanity, in sending His Son, the representation of two families coming together.

- The Father arranging the match: "And the Father saith: 'Repent ye! Repent ye! And be baptized in the name of My beloved Son!" 2 Nephi 13:14.
  - a) It is the Father, first of all, that sets the terms for us. If we are willing, we may be called His children.
- The girl's consent: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" Mark 16:15-16.
  - a) There are requirements in every contract, and this one is no exception. God asks us to follow certain practices, to show our true desire to marry His Son.

The betrothal contract was typically sealed with the participation of a cup of wine. The groom would partake of the wine and then give it to the girl; if she accepted the cup and participated by drinking from the cup, then the contract or testament was sealed. This was, in

ancient times, the most important part... "the betrothal"...and held more importance typically than the wedding. At this point the couple was legally married, but they would not live together yet.

#### • The Wine and Bread:

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and break it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" Matthew 26:26-28.

After the contract is negotiated the groom would typically give gifts to the bride, and many times to her family.

#### • Gifts:

To the Bride:

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for

he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" John 14:16-18.

To her Family:

"For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" 1 Corinthians 12:8-11

With the betrothal complete, the groom would then return to his father's house. Typically the newly married man would not build his own house, but would build onto his father's house a honeymoon suite, where he would eventually bring his new bride.

#### • The Honeymoon Suite:

"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.

#### (6th feast — Yom Kippur)

It's in the latter part of the preparation of the bridal suite that we find ourselves, and the part that most affects us today. What we see happening in the world is the culmination of God's work. It can seem strange sometimes how chaotic current events seem, but God wants a perfect habitation for His people, a place where truth and righteousness can dwell and flourish. God has promised that this earth is our inheritance, but it's not ready for Christ to reign supreme, so it must be prepared.

#### • The Inheritance:

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" Matthew 5:5. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation oftheworld:..." Matthew 25:34. "Wherefore, the remnant of the house of Joseph shall be built up upon this land, and it shall be a land of their inheritance; And they shall

build up a holy city unto the Lord, like unto the Jerusalem of old; And they shall no more be confounded until the end come when the earth shall pass away;..." Ether 6:8. "And now therefore thus saith the Lord....Behold. I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: And they shall be my people, and I will be their God: And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them:..." Jeremiah 32:36-39.

#### Subjection:

"Then cometh the end, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all

things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all "1 Corinthians 15:24-28. "For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God" Romans 14:11.

Finally, tradition states that the groom can only return to retrieve his bride when he has adequately prepared the bridal suite. And it is the father of the groom who inspects the suite and decides when it is ready. Until the moment that the father says it's ready, the son cannot return. Thus, the scripture that Christ gave to His disciples regarding His return:

"But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" Mark 13:32.

—To be continued.

#### BIBLICAL CITIES WHERE CHRISTIANS LIVED



**Apostle Donald McIndoo** 

he area where the city of Philippi stood in Biblical times was settled in the 6th century B.C. as a "gold rush" site. Gold had been found in the surrounding mountains and was being mined. Around 358 B.C. it was renamed as Philippi by King Philip of Macedonia. King Philip was the father of Alexander the Great. It was known as the "Gateway between Eu-

rope and Asia."

When the Apostle Paul, Silas, and Timothy visited Philippi on the first Christian missionary journey into Europe it was a Roman colony. A Roman fortress and a multitude of Roman soldiers were placed there.

These three missionaries had been on a journey visiting towns in Asia Minor. In the book of Acts, chapter 16:4, 5 we read:

"And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

But when the apostle desired to turn northward and visit the area of Bithynia, Paul was told by the Holy Spirit not

to preach the Gospel there. So they turned on a road leading southwest. They arrived at the seaport of Troas on the Aegean Sea. While here the Apostle Paul had a vision during the night. Acts 16, verse 9, tells us of what he saw: "There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

Having seen this vision Paul and his co-workers knew the Lord had a work for them to do in Macedonia. As soon as possible they boarded a ship sailing across this arm of the Aegean Sea (a journey of about 100 miles) to Macedonia. Arriving in the port, they walked to the town of Neapolis, and from there took a road to Philippi, which is about 10 miles inland.

Philippi was the major city in this region of Macedonia. They found lodging and remained there for a few days. When the Sabbath day arrived Paul and his group walked out of the city. The apostle knew the habit of Jewish people that lived in places where they were few in number. When there were not enough Jews that they could afford to build a synagogue, they would walk out along the banks of a river or stream and pray.

So Paul and his group walked along the banks of a river. They sat down and spoke with some Jewish women who were there. Now we need to read Acts 16:14:

"And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."

The city from which she came is a city in Asia Minor which was famous for the industry of dying cloth with a purple dye. This woman had traveled to Macedonia where she was the owner of a large home with servants that cared for it. There is no mention of a man in the home, so many believe she was a widow. She was still a successful business woman who sold either the

dye or, perhaps, the purple cloth.

It is not known if she was a Jew or a Gentile who had converted to the Jewish faith. What we do know is that she was a believer, and she listened carefully to the teachings of the Apostle Paul. She became the first European convert to Christianity. Now let's read Acts 16:15:

"And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us."

While enjoying the hospitality of Lydia, Paul and his companions walked in the city teaching as opportunities arose. They were often followed by a young slave woman who had an evil spirit of divination. In Acts 16:16 - 18 we read this:

"And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants

of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour."

Of course, her masters were very angry with Paul and Silas, for they had now lost their prime source of income. They took them to the magistrates of the city. Here they were judged guilty of a crime and beaten severely, then cast into prison. Here they were locked into a cell and their feet placed in stocks. They spent their time praying and singing hymns of praise to their God. Both the prisoners and the jailer heard them. In the middle of the night there was a severe earthquake in the area. The very foundation of the prison was shaken and all the prisoners were loosed, and the prison doors opened. The man responsible for them awoke; he grabbed his sword and was going to kill himself, for he knew his punishment if prisoners escaped. However, the apostle called to him that he not harm himself, for they were all present. When he had

a light the jailer went in and fell down before Paul and Silas. He asked them, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul and Silas answered him and said unto the jailer the following:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house" (Acts 16:31, 32).

In the middle of the night the keeper of the prison took Paul and Silas, washed their wounds from the beating they had received, and the jailer and all his household were baptized that same night. Now there was another family of Christians in Philippi, and there may have been others.

In the morning the city magistrates sent soldiers to the prison to tell them they were free and to leave the city. Paul and Silas returned to the home of Lydia. In Acts 16:40 we read the end of this particular story:

"And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed."

Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippian church was written in A.D. 62 while the apostle was in prison in Rome.

As we read the Apostle Paul's letter to the Philippians we learn some other things relative to his visits with these people. In the two quotations below, the first is Paul's introduction, and the second from his closing thoughts, it is easy to see his affection for these people in pagan Europe:

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;" (Phil. 1: 1-9)

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Phil. 4:13 -16).

Not only did these dedicated and loving people in Philippi send financial help to the Apostle Paul, but they also sent help to the poor Christians in Jerusalem and other parts of Israel. It is easy to see why the Apostle Paul loved them.

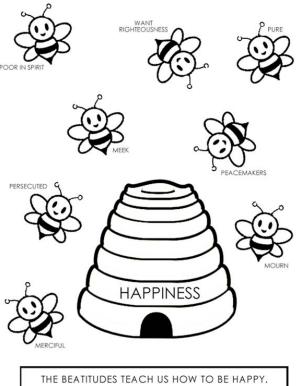
#### GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

## GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION (GSSA)

We are here to provide support to Sunday School teachers with lessons for several age groups. We are also able to provide financial support for Sunday School supplies to locals, or to scattered members. In order to receive financial support contact Sue Porter with your project idea and supplies needed (coctlgssa@gmail.com or 9 Market Street, Middleville, MI 49333).

During the 2017 General Conference GSSA meeting, those in attendance discussed how to get resources and instructional ideas to those who need them. It was decided to pursue a teaching supplies swap at reunions and at the next General Church Conference. Our social media includes a Facebook page: GSSA, and a Pinterest page titled GSSA.

For lessons, 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. Below is part of a primary age beatitudes lesson by Sister Joyce Lee. The full lesson is online.



http://ayearoffhe.blogspot.com

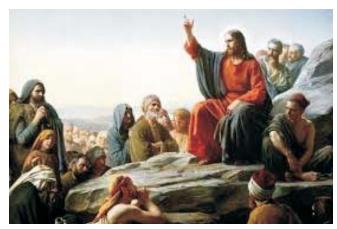
#### **GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION**

#### Jesus Begins His Ministry: The Sermon on the Mount: The Beatitudes

#### Lesson plan for upper elementary students, by Sister Heidi Jones

**Read**: The Holy Bible, KJV, Matthew 5:1-12. Be sure to explain what "beatitude" means prior to reading, and remind them afterwards.

**Discuss**: Go through the beatitudes one by one and discuss their meanings. Ask the children to give an example of each and how they will use these teachings to follow Christ. Some words will need explanation. During the discussion, record the responses on a white board or chart paper.



**Beatitude**: supreme blessedness or happiness; any of the declarations of blessedness made by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount.

- Meek: humbly patient or docile, as under provocation from others; submissive or compliant; tame, gentle.
- \* Mercy: compassionate or kindly forbearance shown toward an offender, an enemy, or other person in one's power; compassion, pity.
- Revile: to assail with contemptuous or shameful language; address or speak of abusively.
- \* Persecute: to oppress, harass, or maltreat, especially because of race or religion.

**Activity #1**: (Activities to be run simultaneously).

Create a wall hanging of the beatitudes as a decoration for the church or your Sunday School.

#### Materials:

Blank canvas, craft paint, varying sizes of paintbrushes, cup of water, paper towels, pencil, straight edge, extra adult volunteer

#### **Directions:**

- 1. Use your straight edge and pencil to make straight lines, dividing the canvas into 10 sections. Leave more space for the first section because this is the space for your heading where the children will paint "The Beatitudes."
- 2. Take turns with the children painting the beatitudes. If you wish, choose alternate colors for each beatitude, as long as they are dark enough to show. Ask your volunteer to guide their spelling.

#### Activity #2:

In this activity we will be illustrating each beatitude. It can be a project to take home, or if your students do an extra special job it could be used for a display. This activity is meant to run simultaneously with the previous one, since the painting can only be done one student at a time.

#### Materials:

White paper, thin black marker, pencil, erasers, colored pencils

#### **Directions:**

1. Each child chooses one or two beatitudes, depending on how many children are in your class.

## 1950 Wisconsin State Reunion

#### Memories of Times Past

Back Row-Elwood Babcock, William Sheldon, Clyde Babcock, Barbara Babcock, William Anderson, Metta Anderson, Harry Hutchison, Jr., John Davies, Harry Hutchison, Sr., Freda

Flint, Gladys Brockman Marquette Barton.

Center Row-Doris Hutchison, Beatrice Babcock, Clarice Addie, Doris Sheldon, Anna Matilda Matthews, Stella Davies, B. C. Flint, Bud Justice Smith, Ray Hunholz. Front Row-Rollo Addie, Darl Hunholz, Cheri Hunholz Briggs, June Smith Sarratt, Sharon Davies Leikness, Susan Hunholz Brickhouse, Randy Sheldon, Darl Sheldon Temple.



## DON 1911 STEP THERE

ome *Advocate* readers are familiar with some of my recent past, while most others are not. I am moved to put my testimony in writing, not only in praise to our Heavenly Father, but to demonstrate what can happen when we step away from day-to-day church activity, regardless of the reason.

Let's back up twenty years. By the late 90's I had been a member and national officer in the VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.) for nearly a decade. The VFW is a fine, upstanding organization in support of the vets. I did not participate in any post activities, partly because I was too busy full-time as the National Director of Life Membership. However, a drawback to national and regional conventions I was required to attend is the fact that drinking - alcohol, that is - is a significant part of such activities, although not during

business hours. My VFW comrades all drank, and after several years I started to yield - to be more part of the "in-crowd." After a few years of that I brought the problem home and began to drink locally and behind my darling wife Neva's back. Then things got serious.

I was doing things a Christian most certainly should not be doing. It led to problems in the marriage and, around the turn of the century, I stepped away from the church as a minister, a Sunday School teacher, and a member. It is about a period of around ten years that followed that I wish to address here for my brothers and sisters in the church.

I haven't had a drink in about seven years now, and haven't had even a twitch of an urge to do so, but that alone did not solve my problems. I began to see what I thought was "the Light" about all things Christian. Much doubt crept into my soul about even the most basic of Christian beliefs. Looking at the church, its people, its beliefs and activities from without the church was revealing a lot of truths to me - obvious things - common sense. But obviously, not so. I thus became entrenched in negative views of the Church of Christ and all of Christianity. I rarely attended church, and when I did and listened to Sunday School talks and sermons I felt very out of place and uncomfortable.

A few months ago I received an email from the Temple Lot local pastor, Jim Case. He simply stated that, should I wish to talk about reinstating my membership he would be happy to help. I largely dismissed it as my not being interested. I have deep pockets of memory loss from various stages in my life - seems rather inconsistent - but especially recent events. In any case, something happened in the past month or

two via either another note from Jim or maybe something he said to me in person that stirred my thinking. I discovered that I really had not totally dismissed Brother Case's email from months ago. Admittedly, I was perplexed.

Saturday afternoon, March 31, the day before the 2017 church conference was to convene, I was sitting quietly at home when all of a sudden I was struck with the need to pray. I hadn't prayed for many years, yet there I was in deep, fervent prayer, filled with what I felt strongly was the Spirit of God. It was as if the Lord were sitting there right next to me. I praised Him, especially for the immeasurable patience He has had with me, in particular. I asked forgiveness for the many things I could name, but most especially for my absence, my attitude and my lack of respect for my wife over the years that resulted in some foul language and loss of self-control. I had been diagnosed by VA doctors with PTSD from my time in Vietnam, but that was no excuse for my actions with my ever-patient wife. I was ashamed, yet I knew right at that moment, during the prayer, that I was stepping away from that life. I took the liberty of asking God to give me a sign or speak to me in some way, to instill confidence in my new determination.

The next day, after one of the services at church, I was standing in the center aisle talking to friends.

My dear brother Elder Hubert Yates stepped up to me and, completely out of the blue, told me that he had spiritual enlightenment to speak to me about returning to the Fold of Christ. I was admonished to do so by the Lord! Less than 24 hours after I asked, I received. I am thankful that my long-time friend and brother, Hube, allowed himself to be a vessel for the Lord, and in my behalf. I was in tears as I told him of my prayers the day before. I had my answer. I have realized since that my brother Jim Case was used by the Lord for the same cause, and I am thankful to Iim as well.

DON'T STEP THERE ... is the Lord's counsel to us all. Shortly after making the decision, and while Pastor Jim and the local priesthood discussed the matter, I was singing, or trying to, as part of the congregation in a church service. But I had forgotten my glasses that morning and was working hard at trying to decipher the blur of words on the page and for a song with which I wasn't real familiar. I just couldn't make out the words. Later that day, just a couple weeks ago, it hit me. That is, the Lord was striking me with a truth I was expected to share with my brothers and sisters.

It dawned on me that, while I thought being away from the church and its people these past years was bringing to me a new understanding, the opposite was true. For those

of you who don't wear glasses, I apologize that I don't have an analogy for you, but I'm certain you can understand...it is this: Being away from the church for any extended period, regardless of the reason, is like trying to make sense of Christianity without your glasses on. While it is happening, you don't realize that anything you "learn" from the world, away from God and the church on a regular basis, is blurred. Satan blurs the truth and substitutes his own evil in the guise of new clarity and understanding. The counsel is simple: Don't step there. Do whatever it takes to deal with personal and/or family problems OTHER than stepping away from the one part of your life that can help you: Jesus Christ.

I am richly blessed with a loving wife and family, and with friends like no other - in the form of you, my brothers and sisters. I pray I'll live up to this blessing the Lord has bestowed upon me and, for this, I seek your continued prayers.

Your Brother in Christ, Gary Housknecht

## PHILIPPINES estimonies

#### Testimony of Brother Eulesis Cabanes (newly called to be a Priest)



am Brother Eulesis Cabanes. I live in Mapaso, New Bataan, Compostela Valley. I started serving God at the age of 15. I was assigned in Danawan when I was 21 years old under a religious group named "Charismatic."

When the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) entered

the Mapaso area I invited my friends Mapalad, Rosales and Tamavo to attend and listen to the exposition. I accept it and I received it and was baptized in 2002. Then I was assigned as a leader in Montevista, Compostela Valley, for five years until I met my wife Jonalyn. Presently, I served God in Mapaso with my family for six years now. We met many trials during my mission work, but we always put our trust in God.

Actually, I already saw in a vision that God will call me, and it was realized last November 2016 during our reunion with Apostle Alvin Moser and Elder Gordon McCann. I was called to be a Priest. Praise God for another responsibility that God gave me. We will continue to serve God and do things that are pleasing to Him

To God be the Glory!

## Testimony of Brother Danny Acob (newly called to be a Priest)



am Brother Danny Acob. As I worked for several years in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot), I met many trials and problems in my life, such as sickness that really bothers me in serving God. But I encouraged myself, knowing that God will help me by giving me strength and wisdom to stand and continue to do

His work. Until the time comes during our prayer and fasting that called me to be Priest. I thank the Lord for the responsibility that He gave. I will work till He comes.

## Testimony of Brother Judy Rey Noa (newly called to be a Priest)



irst of all, I would like to send my greetings to our missionaries and also to our brothers and sisters in the United States. I am Brother Judy Rey Noa, presently residing at Pako, Bagumbayan, Magpit. have a lot of experience serving God while in mission work in Pako. I was baptized Feb 6, 2014, by Elder Wilson Manali. As I became a leader, I met various hardships in terms of financial and material status. But in spite of all these I survived in the field where I remain firm in my stand as a leader of a congregation. During our prayer and fasting in Panabo I did not expect to be called in the ministry as a Priest. But when I feel that is calling, I was happy because I know that God cares for me, and I know that my labor is not vain as I continue to serve Him in the ministry.

## Testimony of Brother Lody Jay Alameda (newly called to be a Priest)



am Brother Lody Jay Alameda and this is my testimony.

My father is already a pastor long since before I was born. So I can say that I live my life being exposed in the service for God.

I never dreamed to be in the ministry since I was a child because I want to work for my family and to alleviate them from poverty. Since before I wanted to be a soldier. I took a COTC (Cadet Officer Training Course) course in High School in preparation for ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Course) in College, all the way to be enlisted as a commissioned officer in the army.

But God changed my course by using circumstances along the way. He brought me to a training institution for three years where I was trained to preach and face a congregation boldly. That is also the time when the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) started the work here in the Philippines through my father as the channel. Since then he asked me to join him as helper to the growing work, but I refused. I was brainwashed by the other religious group. I remained hard and still refused until his death in July, 2006. It was in 2009 that I realized that I was wrong. So I listened and study about the doctrine of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). I decided to enter through the water of baptism in the month of June, 2010. All I

wanted is to help, so I helped whoever needed my help, according to my ability. I just want to be a blessing to others, especially to our brothers and sisters.

I am a Leader/Pastor of a small mission in the town of Kapalong, 55 kms from Panabo. There we serve God with my family for almost 7 vears now. We met various trials and suffering, we had accident twice in a motorcycle; that's the only mobilization we had, but that hasn't stopped us in serving God in that remote and unfamiliar place. The love from the people and their zeal to God is the reason why we stayed to be their leader there.

I was surprised during the reunion in Mapaso mission last November 2016, that God through Apostle Jay Moser called me to be a part of the ministry as a Priest. I am content of my present position as a leader, but God gave another responsibility. So I thank God for that because I know that He will not give us a responsibility that we cannot bear. So with His help I will make it through. All I want is to be a channel of blessing for the work here in the Philippines. Thank vou very much and to God be the glory.

## Testimony of Brother Rogelio Villa (newly called to be a Teacher)



ood day Brothers and Sisters.
I am Brother Rogelio Villa, presently residing at Eden, Bayabas, Toril, Davao City.

I thank the living God that He converted me through the efforts of Mr. Eric CaZete last June, 2004, and I was baptized into the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) last October 28, 2004. I really thank the Lord because He blesses me after the baptism. I started a work in Baracatan, Toril, and God blessed the work there. After that I also started a work there in my place in Eden, Bayabas, Toril, and presently God is doing great work. I have

also recently started mission work in Quelate, Toril. Honestly, I never expected to be called in the ministry to be a Teacher, but God called me while we are on prayer and fasting. Since then, I will take it heartily, and I want to be used by God while I still have life and strength.

To God be the Glory.

## Testimony of Brother Degrino Bada (newly called to be a Priest)



ood day! I am Brother Degrino Bada. First of all I didn't expect anything that I gained today, about the position of being a Leader and the calling to be a Priest, because for 21 years I live a life that is not pleasing to God. I was a black sheep to the commu-

nity, to my family and most of all, to God. I didn't expect that there is a miracle that happen to me. This miracle gives me hope, joy and, most of all, faith and trust in God.

Year 2008 I joined a worship service in a small church and I felt a unique and special joy, and that's the start that I longed for the presence of God. There comes a time that there's a trial we faced with my wife. She had a goiter that was as big as my fist. But with the prayer of the servants of God it was healed completely, and I promised God that we will serve Him together with my family. Because of my joy I always attend every worship service.

Year 2009 I joined a Bible training for one week. In that training I committed my life in service to God. And I prayed that I will serve Him in His work. One time in the middle of the night I saw a vision; that vision encouraged me to take a responsibility to feed a flock. I always prayed day and night even in my line of work just to realize that vision.

God heard me and He gave me partners for His work, and they are Sister Marlyn Pogado, Sister Marina Iligan, Brother Charlie Naigal and Brother Michael Bada. We started a work without any religious affiliations, believing that there is always joy in serving. But we encounter problems along the way; rejections and persecutions that leads to a point that I almost quit. I shared it to my partners and they said, "If you will quit what will happen to us?" That question struck my heart and encourage me to continue in spite of that. And we give ourselves to prayer and fasting and overnight prayer meeting, asking that God would send His true servants to help us.

One year has passed; there is a religious group that approached us bearing the name "Life Jesus." We asked God if it is the answer to our prayer, and due to its complications and money problems we realized that it's not the answer.

Since then, it took two years before the Lord send His true servants of God from the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). We feel happy for them but we didn't expect much because of our past experience, but due to their good explanations we became eager and curious to learn more about their teachings. So after a month they came back (Elder Cabriadas, Elder Operio, and Sis Melba), and they

teach and preach to us the word of God from the scriptures, and we are satisfied and filled with so much joy in our hearts! We proved that they are true servants of God that are sent to be our partner for the work, and we appreciate God for His goodness. Even if there is trials, we still abide and continue doing God's work in the Church of Christ (Temple Lot).

We are thankful to God for you. Praise His Holy Name.

## Testimony of Brother Manases Cepe (newly called to be a Priest)



am Brother Manases Cepe, presently residing at Pandaitan, Paquibato District, Davao City. This is my testimony. When I was in the 6th grade my dream is to be a lawyer because I want to be like my uncle, and also I want to be a (Catholic) Priest because I have a relative who is also a Priest. But due to our poverty and lack of finances all of the above are just only my dream.

When I reached at the age of 15 I entered a religious group named "Foursquare Gospel Church," and there they trained me to preach. After two years I transferred to a group named "United Pentecostal Church," and they sent me to handle a mission work for a couple of years until 1983, and I stopped being a leader of that church and I went to work to a small-scale mining area. Unfortunately I was in a backsliding situation for many years also. But in year 2000 the Lord showed me a vision; in that vision I saw myself standing in front of the multitude and preaching the Gospel. I rejected that vision because I don't want to preach anymore. But in year 2002 I saw that same vision again and it bothers me much, it gives me sleepless nights, all I want is to forget, and that's why I got drunk almost every day. Month of July that same year I got sick, and due to that sickness the doctor prohibited me to drink wine. And that time the vision keeps coming back until the month of November, that I kneeled down and totally surrendered myself to God, and miraculously my sickness is also healed totally.

Time passes so quick that in the year 2003 I saw another vision. In that vision I saw a man standing in front of my house and preaching. After three days there was a vision again, and I saw that the same man is having a lecture in my house. And in the month of December I saw again in a vision that there is a worship service inside my house. After I saw those visions I decided to wait on God's will and right time to fulfill those visions.

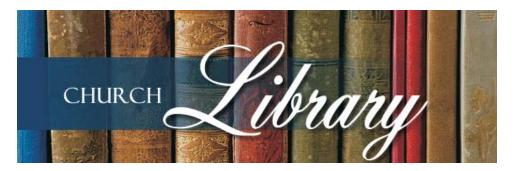
Month of June, 2004 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the late Elder Prudencio Alameda arrived at my place and asked me if he could use the front of my house as a stage for preaching, since my house is in the center of the community. Then I remembered the first vision was realized. After three days Elder Prudencio came back with the late Teacher Ben Retanal to have a lecture about the salvation of the Gentiles and the Book of Mormon. And that was the second vision realized. Before they leave they asked permission from me to have a worship service in my house every Sunday, and it was so. And that was the realization of the third vision.

Month of July I entered the water of baptism and became a part of the Church of Christ (Temple Lot). I promised to God that I will remain a part as long as I have life. I became a Leader in a small mission at Pandaitan for many years. I committed my life to God to serve Him with my family.

There's a new calling that happened last November, 2016, through Apostle Jay Moser; I was called to the office of a Priest. I felt very blissful that time because, unexpectedly, it was the fulfilment of my dream. I really know that this calling is from God through His servants. I really thank the Lord for His unfailing love and care. To God be the Glory.

The Lord knows that this testimony is true. Thank you and God Bless.

#### **BOOK TALK**



In the church library, there is a large section of books that I go to frequently. Side by side, they span almost two shelf widths; tall books bound in black covers with gold print. They are bound copies of the Zion's Advocate, beginning with the first issue of May 15, 1922.

The early issues were published under the authority of the Board of Publication: Brothers C. L. Wheaton, Andrew Himes, and A. O. Frisbey. The cost was fifty cents per year, seventy-five cents for foreign. The articles were missionary in purpose, but also included conference minutes, referendum decisions, testimonies, local news and notices, short missionary reports, and poetry—much like our issues today. The policy statement welcomed "courteous discussion of principles."

I initially open to the pages to do research on a specific topic, but quickly I find myself drawn into the issues and people from previous decades. In church history I can read about controversial issues that the church faced through the years. I can find the facts; but when I read the early

years of the *Advocate*—the strong emotions in the letters and articles, the scriptural reasoning—those facts take on life and the history seems real.

Throughout my years in the Church of Christ, in testimonies and histories, there are names I hear often. I did not have opportunity to know some of these brothers or to sit under their ministry, but I have become acquainted with them in the pages of the Advocate. I've read their sermons and letters, or the news of their travels and their families. Whether I'm reading the report of Apostle Clarence Wheaton and wife Angela's first days in Yucatan, or Apostle Brian McIndoo's testimony of the door opening to Kenya, my excitement grows and I feel part of the mission.

I've read the news of locals that no longer exist, reports on youth activities, the return of a brother from war, the births and deaths of loved ones. Through print, the Advocate brings together believers scattered across the nations and decades, making us feel less isolated and the church more like family.

The Advocate has evolved over the years. The quality of the paper has changed from that first issue—the use of pictures, colors, and different fonts—but throughout 95 years the mission has been constant: "To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour; to promote His teachings and His church, the Church of Christ, and to be a voice of warning to His people; to be Zion's advocate."

I prefer to read from a bound book, but for those of you who prefer digital or who live away from the church library, old issues of the Advocate are now available. The years 1922 and 2003-2017 are on the AVA webpage. The remaining years will be added as completed. The available issues can be accessed by going to cocsermons.net, clicking "resources," scrolling down to "publications," and selecting "Zion's Advocate." Available years will appear. If we can help you search for an article please contact us.

#### **OBITUARY**

## In Memory of Robert Charles Case

obert Charles Case (Bob), the first child of James Maynard and Bertha Matilda Case, was born September 12, 1924, in Cameron, Missouri, and passed from this life on March 28, 2017, in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, at the age of 92 years.

The family attended the Church of Christ in Hamilton, Missouri, until they moved to Independence, Missouri, in 1932, where they attended the Temple Lot Local of the Church of Christ, many times walking the three miles. Bob was baptized into the Church of Christ in 1936 and was active in the Sunday School. He was the

treasurer for a time, and also involved in the organizing of the Young Peoples Christian League (YPCL) in 1941. He graduated from William Chrisman High School and was drafted into the US Army in World War II, but was not permitted to go into active combat service due to an eye injury suffered in his youth. While serving as a guard to prisoners of war in Texas, he met and married Joyeleen Smith (Joy), who was an army nurse. When they were discharged from the army they returned to Columbia, Missouri, where Bob finished his education with a degree in chemical engineering. Back in Independence Bob again became

active in the Church, teaching an adult Sunday School Book of Mormon class. He and Joy moved to Bartlesville, Oklahoma, to work for Phillips Petroleum Company, where he was employed for 28 years. He volunteered in various civic activities such as Little League baseball, Boy Scouts, and voting place volunteer.

Bob is survived by his wife, Joy, of 71 years; brothers Leslie and Marvin Case, and sister Mary Johnson; two daughters, Bobbie Dearing and Janice Jones; one son, Steve Case; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

#### **NOTICES**

#### **REUNIONS**

- ▶ JULY 28-30: 2017 Missouri Reunion Apostle Smith Brickhouse Apostle Michael McGhee Apostle Jeffery Odham Apostle Roland Sarratt
- ▶ SEPTEMBER 1-4: 2017 Minnesota Reunion at 14748 Wilderness Drive NE, Bemidji, MN 56601. Elder Samuel Gould (218) 368-1427 Elder Merlin Eddy (651) 338-2253 Elder Winfield (Bill) Gould (218) 586-2743 Sister Linda Gould (218) 368-8419
- OCTOBER 20-22: Ontario Reunion Mike Bevaart (226) 934-4250 mikebevaart@gmail.com

#### **HONDURAS**

- SEPTEMBER 21-23: General Reunion
- ▶ JANUARY 11-14, 2018: Youth Camp
  Elder Ronnie Gill
  rongill@la-comarca.org
  Elder Thomas Gill
  thomasgill@la-comarca.org

#### **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 would like to become a member of CCEG, or if you are an existing member and are not currently receiving emails as expected, please email the CCEG manager at:

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 <a href="mailto:rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net">rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net</a>, 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 ex-

tend the opportunity for any who wish to communicate through written correspondence to contact one of the following three committee members:

**DEBBIE VOGEL** (Chairman) 403 w. Colonel Drive Independence, MO 64050 **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.



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#### CHURCH OF CHRIST PUBLICATIONS

Mormon) Baptism for the Dead—A Fallacy of the Restoration A Book of Mormon Companion (plastic) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 6.00 trine and Covenants Book of Mormon Concordance.....8.00 A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Jesus Christ A Marvelous Work and a Wonder, by Daniel MacGregor . . . . . . . . . . . . 4.50 Concerning Marriage and Polygamy Outline History of the Church of Christ (paperback) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 6.00 The Cost of Salvation Belong? Thumbnail Sketch of the Book of Mormon (paperback) ......8.00 El Libro De Mondamientos - Su Funcion En La Historia Un Librio de Mandamientos - Spanish Book of Commandments (paperback) . 3.00 Evidences of the Book of Mormon First Presidency or First Apostles?

#### THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CHURCH PUBLICATIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE:\*

Ancient Prophecies Fulfilled in 1830 Apostasy from the New Testament Church Articles of Faith & Practice of the Church of Christ Article of Faith, #1 (concerning God; earliest Restora-

Article of Faith, #9 - (concerning the Bible and Book of

The Book of Commandments - Its Role in the History

Brief Commentary: Book of Commandments & Doc-

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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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churches) That Sacred Spot is Definitely Located The Teachings of the Gospel - As verified in the Bible

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Why? (Amplifies absence of a First Presidency in

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.

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(City)	(State)	(Zip)
NEW ADDRESS: (Street address)		
(City)	(State)	(Zip)
NAMES of all Church of Christ (Temple Lot) members residing at new address:		
NAMES OF All SHARM OF SHIRST (TOTALISE EST)	nembers residing at i	new address.

#### **CHANGING** YOUR ADDRESS?

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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http://www.church ofchrist-tl.org/