

Zion's Advocate

"And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost...." 1 Nephi 3:187

VOLUME 95

INDEPENDENCE, MISSOURI—July-August 2018

NUMBER 4

We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;.... —2 Corinthians 4:8



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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.

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How Do We Minister to a **FALLEN WORLD?**

—PART 1—

Apostle Alvin Moser

That is truly the question for our time. What do we do? Do we even have a right to say anything? What right do we have to judge what is right and wrong?

We can be assured that the rising generation is being bombarded by these questions. It is for the rising generation that we must answer these questions. We must openly and unashamedly proclaim that God is Good and works in our day as He has always done from the beginning of time. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Philippians 2:13 KJV).

We must first consecrate ourselves to this work and be convinced of the truth of the

Word of God. The Church from the beginning has placed its confidence in the things which have been written in God's Word. *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, ... and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Hebrews 4:12 KJV). Not only is God's word able to be used in this world but it can bring peace in the heart and between humans everywhere. *“Unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins”* (2 Nephi 2:21 1990 Ind. Ed).

The first step then must be to have confidence in the source of all life and all power. *“...All power is given unto me in heaven and in*

earth” (Matthew 28:18). Jesus is the Life of this world. We must believe and know that God is in control if we are to have an impact on this world. He will judge the world and has already given us what we need to find salvation and to effectively witness to those around us. *“For the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free. And men are instructed sufficiently, that they know good from evil”* (2 Nephi 1:65-67).

Next, we must know that God is with us. God does not dwell in unholy temples. All who have been taught the right way and heard what is written in the scriptures must obey those scriptures

(Mosiah 1:79-82). The way to honestly discern is by the use of God's Spirit when we are remembering God's Word. Has God made us feel guilty? Then the simple truth is that we must return to the Word and to consecration of our lives to God's purposes and good will toward us. This is how the Holy Spirit works in our minds by reminding us of our own errors. Then, after correcting our own errors we can witness to others.

There is a simple foundation for us all. "*...Ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things. And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and whoso buildeth upon this, buildeth upon my rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them*" (3 Nephi 5:39-41). We must build our own lives upon the sure foundation and rock. One of those chief elements of this concrete foundation is becoming as a little child. No spiritual progress can be made that will last without laying this foundation.

This humility is exactly ap-

plied in a specific direction: "*But if he yieldeth to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man, and become a saint, through the atonement of Christ, the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father*" (Mosiah 1:20).

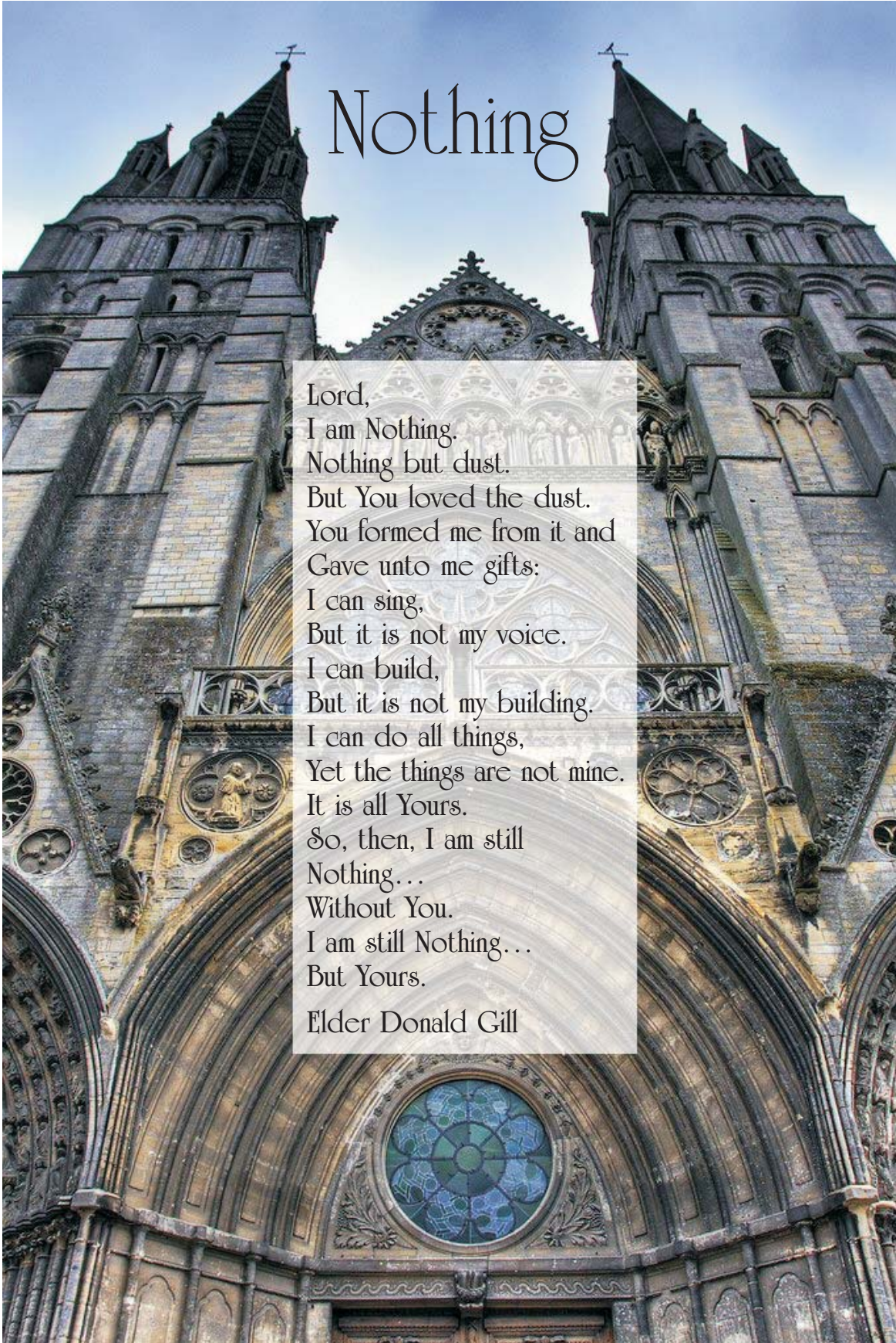
This essential part of the gospel foundation is often the first thing put aside. When the tempter comes we put aside God's Word, seek what we imagine will make us happy and become too proud to admit our error (it is part of the oldest story in the Bible). Then comes shame, which fertilizes pride and leads us into iniquity and self-justification for all we do. Yielding to God once again is the only escape. Repenting nigh unto death (Mosiah 11:190) is the only cure. Then we must humbly seek the Kingdom of God in faith toward the righteousness of Christ, Who alone is able to save (Matthew 6:33).

"For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God" (Moroni 10: 20). The Spirit of God gives us power to witness and the sin-

cerity to convince our neighbors (which may include our children) to give their lives to God and trust Him alone. You must be the means through the Spirit to provide a moral compass to the world around you. You must call all those around you to a higher plane by your actions, decisions, words and spiritual presence. We must also be willing to be called higher by those around us who are also trying to follow God's Word...that is when the humility of a child comes into play. This humility is not based on the innocent ignorance of a child, but the knowledge of the perfect Savior Jesus the Christ and faith in Him.

After arriving in this humble obedient condition, we can then speak with the tongue of angels to bless the world with what it needs, that being the way of God more perfectly taught and demonstrated. Yes, and now you have the right (and duty) to extend yourself into this world to do His Good Pleasure in a fallen world. However, that is another subject and the next step forward....

POEM



Nothing

Lord,
I am Nothing.
Nothing but dust.
But You loved the dust.
You formed me from it and
Gave unto me gifts:
I can sing,
But it is not my voice.
I can build,
But it is not my building.
I can do all things,
Yet the things are not mine.
It is all Yours.
So, then, I am still
Nothing...
Without You.
I am still Nothing...
But Yours.

Elder Donald Gill

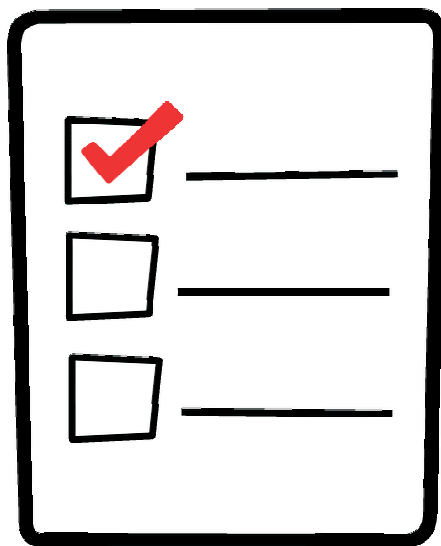
A Hope List

Spiritual Hopes and Desires

Elder Chris Moran

In April 2018 our Br. Aadam Yates was elected to the position of *Zion's Advocate* Editor. Br. Aadam shortly thereafter emailed the ministry requesting *Zion's Advocate* submissions. I replied and congratulated our brother. My brother replied in return asking if I could write an article on the topic of hope. I told my dear brother I would do so.

It is a blessing to be in the service of God and I HOPE that this article will be a blessing to you. There have been many times when I have read an article in the *Zion's Advocate* but have not applied it to my life. Therefore, I HOPE that you take advantage of the effort that our Br. Aadam and others put into the *Zion's Advocate* publication. I see how we are all tempted to wander away from the Lord and



neglect these teachings from God, just as those in our scripture did to their eventual destruction. They had forgotten their first love. They no longer had a thirst for instruction and God's Word.

Thinking about hope, I realized that there were many ways I could approach the topic. Instead of writing a lengthy disser-

tation on what scripture says about hope I decided to keep the article simple and just ask these questions: What things should we be hoping for? What things do I hope for? Would the things I hope for bring edification and value to my life, as well as the lives of my brothers and sisters and those I come in contact with on a daily basis? In trying to answer these questions I formulated a list of hopes I have for you to consider. Note that I am keeping with the common definition of hope as we understand it in our daily usage of the word.

I HOPE that this list is pleasing in the sight of God. I've tried to correlate these hopes below with what I believe is conveyed in the Word of God that we should strive for. The things we hope for should also be converted into prayers that are delivered to our Father in heaven. I

fall short too many times in directing my hopes as prayers. Only God truly knows what is good and right and what we need. God will deliver if our hopes and prayers are pleasing to Him and according to His will.

These are the things I HOPE for:

1 I HOPE that we do not idolize the things of the world, ourselves, our wisdom, or our knowledge above God:

I could make a long list of things in this world that draw our attention away from our God, but I will not do that. You know what those things are in your life that you are tempted to elevate above God. Everyone's list is different. We all have a list of things that have drawn us away from God in our past or even currently.

We also tend to elevate ourselves above God and think we always know what is best. We say to ourselves, "I surely know what's best. This is me we're talking about and not them. Everyone else is different from me. I'm special, and I'm the one that is in tune with the Lord and know what's right. My way always agrees with God's way."

Job 31:24-28 – 24 *"If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence; 25 If I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; 26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon*

walking in brightness; 27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: 28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above."

2 Nephi 3:62 – *"I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh."*

Proverbs 3:5 – *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."*

Romans 1:24-25 – 24 *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."*

Isaiah 2:8 – *"Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:"*

Psalm 31:24 – *"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the LORD."*

2 I HOPE we are able to be directed by God through His Spirit above man:

We have a tendency as humans to look to man for our answers. In the world we see how pastors and preachers are ele-

vated and worshipped. People attend churches specifically because of the pastor that serves there. They boast of them and lift them up to others. Both the Israelites and those in the Book of Mormon wanted a king. We at times also put people on pedestals and allow ourselves to be led only by them, and neglect direction from God.

Acts 5:29 – *"Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men."*

2 Nephi 7:21 – *"For I the Lord, the King of heaven, will be their king; and I will be a light unto them forever, that hear my words."*

3 I HOPE and pray that God will allow us to be instruments in the physical healing of others through our prayers, administration, and the faith of those being administered to:

As we go through life, at times we may come across someone who is in need of a physical healing or has an ailment of some sort. This might be someone outside the church that we do not even know. We may come across this person sometime during the week during our normal daily routines.

When I see people that need a blessing of healing my heart sometimes pours out with compassion for them. This especially happens to me when I see a child that is suffering. I wish

sometimes that they would let me administer to them, that they would have the faith to be healed, and God would bless them with a miraculous healing. Of course this is possible, and we have seen it before. We also read about great episodes of healing in our scripture as Christ walked the earth. The people that Christ administered to had sufficient faith to be healed in many cases. Unfortunately, in our day and age this at times is lacking.

It's somewhat ironic that I say these things. Shortly after I was called as an elder I had a dream. I was walking around in the back of a church looking out over the congregation. The congregation was full and someone was preaching up front (I don't know who it was. It was just the shadow of a person). I then saw someone I love sitting in one of the church pews. They are not accepting of my beliefs and are not currently a member of the Church of Christ. They were looking down and shaking their head to the left and right. It was impressed upon me in the dream that they were repenting of how they had treated me in the past because of my beliefs, and that they had made a mistake. I then saw someone else I love walking down the side aisle of the church. My three daughters ran up to this person and gave them a hug. This person also is not a member of the Church of Christ. I believe this occurrence will be in the fu-

ture and these two people I love will be brought to accept the fullness of the gospel. That is my hope.

In getting to my point, someone then approached me in my dream and asked if I would administer to someone in need. I said yes. I eventually made it over to a room where I was to administer to this person. As soon as I reached the door two elders walked out of the room and said, "They've already been administered to." I then woke up from the dream.

Sometime later I was contemplating about this dream and I realized the point of that last statement. I need to make sure I do my job and administer when it's required, and offer up my assistance quickly in this regard. When I was first called I would get nervous when administering to individuals. I now try to direct my prayers up to the Lord with compassion for the person more fully, and that nervousness has subsided as I have grown, though I admit a part of me is always a little nervous when I do any work for the Lord. But how can I say I want to see people be healed when I have been reluctant in the past to administer to them?

Do we have compassion for people on our prayer list and people that we pray for during a church service? If we do not, then we are not exhibiting the love of Jesus Christ and fall

short.

3 Nephi 8:6-8 – 6 *“And he saith unto them, Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you: Have ye any that are sick among you, bring them hither. 7 Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner; bring them hither, and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; 8 My bowels are filled with mercy; for I perceive that ye desire that I should shew unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient, that I should heal you.”*

4 I HOPE that we read our scripture:

I had another dream towards the beginning of June 2018. I was in the process of leading a scripture study along with another brother at the Bradley Local. We were discussing various things, and I don't remember exactly what topic we were discussing; what I do remember is that at one point during the study I paused and then spoke very plainly. I said to those that were listening that it is our responsibility to read our scripture regularly and to apply it in our life. After I woke up that statement hit home and I realized its importance. I had actually been thinking about the need for more personal scripture study

during the few months leading up to that dream. The dream reinforced this thinking.

One of my daughters reads scripture with me or my wife every week. Each week she asks, "When are we going to read?" She always reminds me. She has a strong thirst for the gospel and wants to know what she believes. She is not waiting or putting it off. The time to do this is NOW, and she is cognizant of that.

Matthew 4:4 – *"But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."*

5 I HOPE that our prayers are expressed from the heart. In the last year I've made an effort to better express my prayers from my heart. We need to be in tune with the Lord if we are going to offer up a prayer. It is certainly hard to pray when our lives aren't right with God. If we are not right with God, it's just lip service and we will have difficulty finding the words. If that is the case then we are not only hurting ourselves but those around us that also need our prayers.

I am a man short on words, but I try to make my words count when I do speak. The length of the prayer doesn't matter, but the intent of the heart. Sometimes the most efficient prayers are the prayers expressed from our in-

nermost being without even speaking a word.

Are we praying to God or praying to those in the church who are listening to our prayers? Are we uniting ourselves with one another as we pray together?

Matthew 6:7-8 – 7 *"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."*

6 I HOPE that we can all see eye-to-eye in the body: This, of course is hard. If it's not one topic that we disagree upon, it's another. Some topics are minor and others are much more serious. We may agree with someone on one topic, but find ourselves in complete disagreement with that same person on something else. Therefore, who you choose to 'unite' yourself with may vary from year to year. Unite yourself with God first, and then we will become united as a body. I long for this day when we all fully will be in one accord:

Isaiah 52:8 – *"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion."*

Philippians 2:1-4 – 1 *"If there be therefore any consol-*

tion in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

7 I HOPE that we are able to confess our faults and work together to edify one another.

I am a great sinner and I make mistakes. I may also have one gift but completely lack in another. We need to work together to take advantage of each other's strengths. Where I fail I want you to help me. I want to help you where you fail. Also, without an attitude of pure humbleness and love for one another, we will find ourselves tearing down someone instead of building them up. I have seen people torn down in church in front of an entire congregation. Hurtful things are said to people even when one person's intent may have been to please God. In many of these cases it becomes very painful to the person who was criticized so openly.

James 5:16 – *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent*

prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

Proverbs 12:18 – *"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health."*

8 I HOPE that we can be encouraging.

I am not the best encourager. I know others who are and have greatly encouraged me. I appreciate the encouragement those at the Bradley Local have shown me over the years, as well as many of our apostles who are much wiser than I. Instead of always being a taker, I am striving to be more of a giver. Maybe you have the gift of encouragement? Are you using it? Are you trying to develop that gift?

I have been a supervisor now for a few years. This week I took aside an employee I supervise and let them know what a good job they were doing. It appeared to me they were having a bad day and I wanted to let them know how much I appreciated them. I was able to brighten the day of this person and he really appreciated the things I had to say. I have a long way to go here in developing this characteristic, but it's a start.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 – *"Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do."*

9 I HOPE that we are able to eliminate any indecision, fear, confusion, and mistrust

within the Church of Christ.

These four words were presented to a brother in a vision many years ago. The vision presented was a crossroads with those particular four words placed at that crossroads. I have found myself at times with indecision, fear, confusion, and mistrust – indecision regarding a choice I should make, fear regarding what might or might not happen, confused and unable to follow, understand, or determine the Lord's direction, and mistrust of someone or something I hear them say. I also have seen these characteristics exhibited by others within the church. These things clearly are among us to this day. (Additional articles have been written about this vision and are available in past issues of *Zion's Advocate* such as Volume 92, Number 6, November-December 2015, and Volume 63, Number 7, July 1986).

The past year has been particularly hard for me at times, as I know it has been for some of you as we try to sort out various issues within our minds, pleading to God for His direction. In the past year I had become so frustrated with a situation that it felt like I had put the weight of the entire world upon my shoulders, and it was up to me to solve. It was a heavy burden and was affecting my relationship with others, including some in the church. Satan was working very hard to discourage me. I didn't

understand how God could allow some things to happen, and I still do not understand all of His ways. My discouragement, though, was not what God wanted, and this was made very clear when a sister in the church told me about an experience she had. In this experience she saw my face and felt the weight of this very heavy burden that was weighing me down. I only recently turned this burden over to the Lord. I never want to go back there again. I am no expert on how to fix various problems, and only the Lord can get us to where we need to be. God has the answers we need, and we need to continue to go to Him in humbleness.

3 Nephi 8:47 – *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye are led away captive by him."*

10 I HOPE that we do not become overconfident in ourselves:

I have heard it said that we are "right where we need to be" as a people in the church. This is perhaps true in some ways, but certainly not in many other ways. There's one particular scripture that I think of:

2 Nephi 12:25-26 – 25 *"And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say, All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well; 26 And thus the devil*

cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell."

I see how dreams and visions have been given to those in the church who were truly reaching out to God and looking for help in ways they can be corrected. God has offered that correction in various forms to different individuals, including myself. I have also seen others who I have put on a pedestal corrected by God. Please remember that God loves who He corrects. I would rather be loved and corrected than not corrected and not loved.

11 I HOPE that the Lord will use us to bring the fullness of the gospel to others:

The sons of Mosiah risked everything to go and preach the gospel to the Lamanites. They are a great example to us. Jesus Christ gave His all for us, yet why are we unwilling to do the same for others?

Mosiah 12:1-4 – *1 "Now it came to pass that after the sons of Mosiah had done all these things, they took a small number with them, and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them, that they might, with those whom they had selected, go up to the land of Nephi, 2 That they might preach the things which they had heard, and that they might impart the word of God to their*

brethren, the Lamanites, that perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers; 3 And that perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, 4 That they might become friendly to one another, and that there should be no more contentions in all the land which the Lord their God hath given them."

12 I HOPE we are able to withstand persecution or difficulty for the sake of the gospel:

Matthew 5:10 – *"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

13 I HOPE that we are able to eliminate all pride: Is pride really that bad? The Book of Mormon makes it very plain that pride is a terrible and unacceptable thing. This to me is another one of those "plain and precious things" that the Book of Mormon offers.

Alma 3:50 – *"Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, If ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God."*

14 I HOPE that we can speak up for what is right:

This one is hard for some

people and easy for others. Some are very bold while others are more timid. There's a time to keep our peace, but there's also a time to speak up.

I've been on Facebook actively now for about a year (perhaps to my detriment?). I post dreams and visions from those within the Church of Christ for people to consider. I know I have probably offended some people (particularly those outside of the Church of Christ that I know resist it). There are also three people I work with that see my postings. I've wondered if that's a good thing. On the other hand, multiple people I know that are not members of the Church of Christ are reading these dreams and visions and are learning about God through them.... They have told me this. From time to time an old friend from high school contacts me and tells me he is reading the dreams and visions. My neighbor reads them regularly and seems to find comfort, direction, and hope in them, though they are not a member of our church. (They even have liked some of the Book of Mormon scriptures I have posted though they don't use the Book of Mormon in their church.) A part of me didn't expect this would happen, but of course my whole reason for posting them in the first place was to reach out to others. I believe these are blessings God has given to me, as He understands

the intent of my heart and has blessed my efforts.

In order to make a difference, sometimes we have to speak boldly, and God requires it of us no matter what others might think. One day we will be rewarded, assuming those things we speak of boldly are in harmony with God. That is the hard part if we are not careful.

Acts 9:29 – *“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.”*

Jude 1:3 – *“Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”*

15 I HOPE we do not separate ourselves from one another if we disagree:

I've seen articles in older *Zion's Advocates* about this very subject. I see it in the present-day Church of Christ to some extent. People separate from one another when they disagree on even minor matters. Sometimes we aren't willing to love someone, talk to them, or even sit down with them for lunch or dinner at a reunion or during conference. If you separate yourself from a brother or sister and one day you realize it was you that had the problem or were in error

then you will regret it later. It will be to your and their detriment. This may cause others to stumble as well. Don't you know that your positive influence may help that brother or sister in need?

Matthew 5:44 – *“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”*

16 I HOPE that we do not cause a brother or sister to stumble by what we teach or believe:

This is a hard one because we all are capable of sinning and misleading others. We all are capable of making the wrong choices and being led by Satan one way or another. Sometimes we have to make choices. If I choose incorrectly, then I may cause someone to err also, and that could have very serious consequences. Before making a quick judgment (of which I have been guilty of doing), take some time to go to the Lord and get it right before you promote a particular belief. Hopefully, your belief will be in harmony with God's Word.

1 Nephi 3:175 – *“And because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceeding great many do stumble, yea, inasmuch that Satan hath great power over them;”*

Matthew 18:6-7 – 6 *“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!”*

17 I HOPE that even when we stumble we can recover and still be of use to one another:

I've seen church people make wrong choices in their lives, but have later repented of those choices and made changes. Unfortunately some brethren reject them entirely for the remainder of their life or question their service because they once made an incorrect choice, that being enough for them to permanently separate themselves from their fellowship. A permanent lack of trust develops, as does their opinion about that person. Perhaps this can be related to that crossroads vision that had the word, “mistrust.”

Mosiah 9:28 – *“And now it came to pass that Alma, who had fled from the servants of King Noah, repented of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi;”*

1 John 1:8-10 – 8 *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive*

ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

18 I HOPE that we are among the foolish and weak things of the world:

God indeed has used the foolish and weak things of the world to do His work in the past. Who among the ministry was called into his position because of a degree or speaking ability? I see within the church that the humble people are the ones God truly works with. It's the humble and weak ones that God powerfully uses to achieve His purposes. Consider Joseph Smith, Jr., the boy that God used to do a great work. He was certainly perceived as foolish and weak by the world. I see young men in the church who have not put any confidence in themselves, and they cry out to the Lord. It is certainly possible that one day these men may be called into the ministry. Others perhaps need more humility before they are able to do even a greater work for God. I think many members of the ministry had to go through this process prior to their calling, including myself. I need to stay in that place of weakness and humbleness for the remainder of my life.

1 Corinthians 1:25-29 – 25

“Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. 26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.”

Ether 5:28 – *“I give unto men weakness, that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them.”*

19 I HOPE for no more contention:

Since joining the Church of Christ in 2005, and especially after becoming an elder, I have seen things that have broken my heart. I also look back at things I have done that I regret doing. On the other hand, I have seen some very special things, and there have been great blessings.

I never thought something so beautiful could be so hard at times. I am learning more and more that it can be hard to wan-

der through various problems and make sense of them. I wonder why some of us can't get along, and then I realize the great power Satan has to tear us apart.

After my first Ministers' Conference I walked out the door to that piece of land we call the temple lot and cried. I saw anger and contention that was exhibited on that particular day and I, too, have even participated in this to a degree on a few occasions. I was told that another brother had the same experience the first time he attended the Ministers' Conference. These contentions make grown men weep and cry just as Nephi wept on his pillow at night for his people.

Another brother was in a Ministers' Conference and listened while the ministry discussed a topic on which there was much disagreement. After taking a break and then moving into the next session, this brother spoke up and said he had heard the Holy Spirit weeping as the ministry debated on the matter from the previous session.

I also see unhealthy contention exhibited on social media sometimes and it breaks my heart, especially for those that are looking in as outsiders on the conversation. It's very difficult to not slip up on these occasions and say something we shouldn't. People disagree on a matter, and some may think they are justified in saying hurtful things to an-

other for the entire world to see without any shame. If we have something against a brother or sister, it's more appropriate to talk to that person individually instead of over Facebook, or even for us in front of everyone at church, at Conference, a Ministers' Conference, or other. Be careful what you write electronically for the world to see. Believe me, I know. If I am not careful, I will slip up again in the future. We all face this danger if we use social media. There are some emails and texts I would certainly like to have back (personal as well as work emails)!

We know some of these verses so well:

3 Nephi 5:30 – *“For verily, verily I say unto you, He that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me, but is of the devil, which is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger one with another;”*

James 3:13-18 – 13 *“Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. 14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. 15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. 16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. 17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gen-*

tle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Ecclesiastes 3:7 – *“A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;”*

Proverbs 17:27-28 – 27 *“He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit. 28 Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise: and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding.”*

Matthew 18:15-16 – 15 *“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”*

Ephesians 4:29-32 – 29 *“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. 30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: 32 And be*

ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”

20 I HOPE you know how much every one of you means to me:

Philippians 1:8 – *“For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.”*

In summary, as I write these things down my heart breaks at times. I think of my own shortcomings and I think of those things we need to work at as a church body. These things weigh on my heart.... Please forgive me of my shortcomings and slip-ups.

I HOPE that this list will be of some benefit to both to you and to me. May God help and bless us in the years to come as we turn to Him and try to stay on the straight and narrow path.

Romans 8:24-25 – 24 *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.”*

TESTIMONY

Confess. Pray. Be Healed.

(Suggested title from co-editor
Br. Bruce Haines)

Sr. Erica Lavin

I arrested a murderer a very short time after becoming a police officer. In the years since then I have arrested and contacted people who are guilty of just about every kind of crime you can imagine. At the start of my career I was surprised how the people committing these crimes did not “look” like criminals. We imagine criminals to be wearing masks with facial scars and angry eyebrows. We imagine people who make their criminal agenda blatantly obvious and, therefore, people who are easy to spot. In fact it is often quite the opposite.

Generally speaking, people breaking the law do not want to be caught. However, it is common for people to say when they have been arrested, “It was the best thing that could have happened for me.”

This usually implies a positive lifestyle change, improved relationships, sobriety, and many other positive results of being forced to face a criminal action brought to light.

If you remove criminal law from the picture and replace it with spiritual law, the same principles apply. Generally speaking, no one wants to be caught. However, sometimes it is the best thing that could ever happen to us.

There is another group of people who commit crimes and resolve to turn themselves in. It is usually unexpected for someone to walk up to a police officer and say, “I robbed that gas station the other day. I need you to arrest me.” People will come into the police station and turn themselves in on warrants or other crimes. The difference between being inconveniently arrested and self-reporting is that the person who self-reports is calm, prepared for jail without any

unnecessary personal items and has already informed people close to them where they will be. Unexpected arrests, on the other hand, can result in physical fights, searches of property that can often reveal other issues, temporary or permanent loss of personal property, relationship struggles, etc. The advantage of self-reporting also applies to spiritual matters.

The military has a program for pilots to self-report alcoholism because it is a life-and-death safety issue for everyone around them. Rather than being treated with punishment, they are entered into a process to help them recover and ultimately restore them to their regular job and duties. It is a safer environment for everyone, not just the pilots, if the pilots are able to be healthy. The program is incredibly successful, with job restoration and maintenance percentages in the

high nineties.

When the pilots are allowed to self-report without fear of losing everything they have worked for, and knowing there is support for them to achieve sobriety and return to work, they feel safe admitting the fault they have.

That does not take away shame, fear, and embarrassment. Self-reporting of any kind in a safe environment is still very difficult. So it stands to reason why people who cannot identify a safe environment around them do not self-report, ask for help, or show the issues they are struggling with. There is fear of losing family, jobs, friends, respect...everything. If there is just one person in the life of someone who is struggling that will listen with compassion and not judgement it can make all the difference in the world.

Mental health is something we have a difficult time understanding. It's easy to step on a scale, watch blood pressure, blood sugar, etc., and make a plan based on those measurements.

Where are the scales and measuring devices for mental health? We were created by an all-knowing and compassionate God. He gave us all the information we need to be healthy. There is a distinction between our body and our soul. I believe it is the soul that makes mental health so

difficult to measure. We have spiritual needs we cannot even understand, as well as the instincts and body of an earthly creature.

I am by no means a mental health professional. These conclusions are simply based on personal experience and what I can only describe as spiritual guidance.

Mental health has been studied for centuries and has made some standard practices to address common mental health issues. A great deal of it has simply to do with communication: Talk to a therapist. Go to group therapy and talk with other struggling people. Write down your struggles in a journal or a letter and mail it to someone who you want to hear you.

This is nothing new. God already addressed it with very simple advice:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed" James 5:16.

Confess to each other. Pray for each other. Be healed.

A personal confession of mine follows. It is how these thoughts were placed on my heart....

God has given me wonderful blessings in the past couple of years. He brought a great man into my life for companionship along with a sweet and lovable stepson. He then gave us a beautiful and wild baby boy to add to the mix. I am so

grateful for these three guys in my life and the joy they bring. If only I could stop there and say, "we lived happily ever-after"....

Changing at 35 years old from a single woman with a career and home who made the big and small decisions on my own, to having a husband and two children within a year was a big adjustment. Add in some pregnancy complications, a difficult infant, a stressful job, and it was a terrific recipe for significant postpartum depression and anxiety.

Never in my thinking did I imagine I would seek professional help for the struggles of everyday life.... That is, until my husband and mother separately confided in me their concern and encouraged me to talk to a doctor. I obliged and began receiving care for my mental struggles, including seeing a counselor and two therapists.

Fast forward one and a half years...I recently had a panic attack while talking with my boss about issues resulting from previous work experiences. His concern (for which I am grateful) ended up with a peer support colleague suggesting I go to group therapy for First Responders and Military.

Just the idea of going to a group to talk about my feelings was terrifying, not to mention the intake process! Once in the group, I was asked

to introduce myself and if I could share what brought me there. I told them my name and said, "No." After several sessions of listening to others tell about the struggles they had it became a safer environment to be vulnerable in. I agreed to talk about why I was there; I was terrified, shaking and crying. I was embarrassed and scared of what the people there would think of me. I felt shame for not having the ability to deal with the struggles facing me, for being weak, and I hate crying in front of people.

I was the only police officer in the group made up of all military and some medical professionals. Feeling disconnected and possibly hated for simply being an officer, it was very difficult to speak. After sharing that fear with the group, they were able to provide support and encouragement, letting me know I could speak to them without judgement.

As the sessions progressed, I told more and more of my story and felt more of my burden lifting as I shared it with others.

Group therapy is interesting. It is in the hands of the group. There is a moderator to lead things, but the needs of the group and individuals determine how the session goes. The point is not to give advice when people share with the group or to fix anything,

because you can't. The point is to listen, let them know you heard them, let them know if you can relate, and to acknowledge their struggle. That's it. It is very simple. The simple act of sharing struggles and confessing brings healing.

The reality of how sharing results in healing struck me on a particular day. A fellow member of the group had suffered postpartum depression and anxiety, and began drinking alcohol to cope. She would say, "...then something really bad happened and that is how I ended up here." One day I asked if she was willing to share what happened. She made a big sigh and said, "Yes." She said how she was afraid of what I would think of her because of my job in law enforcement. She was involved in a fender-bender while driving after drinking and was arrested. It took a long time to get those words out. She was shaking and crying while talking and was embarrassed because of what she imagined I would think. I asked if she wanted to know what I thought and she very quickly said, "Yes." I told her I saw her arrest as a success because she was here and sober. Her marriage was better, her family was better and she was working through her struggles in a healthy way. It would be great if every arrest ended that way!

Immediately and visibly her burden lifted. She was able to calm herself down. The moderator asked if she felt better and she said, "Now I do" and thanked me for telling her my thoughts. She no longer had to be careful about the words she chose, trying to hide what had happened. From that day on she was comfortable and smiling.

Confession results in healing. God designed it that way. It allows people to connect in a more profound way:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed...."

When someone confesses to us, we are told to pray for each other. That is the action we should take. That is the main way we help. The rest of James 5:16 reads, *"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."*

I have always thought of this portion of the verse standing alone, and it does that well. However, it directly follows the admonition to confess our faults to each other and pray for each other so we can be healed. There are big issues that we cannot begin to address and may have no answer for. Allowing someone to express their struggle out loud so they and others can hear it is, in itself, powerful and brings healing. Add to that the effectual fervent prayers of God's people and it will ac-

comply a lot.

The group member who was anxious and did not want to share had no idea what I would think. After not sharing, her imagination took over and created a burden for her. When she had the courage to share it, it vanished. The same happened when I was hiding my profession and, therefore, could not share my story because I was afraid of the mounting hatred toward law enforcement in the past years. It was a fear without any validity. It could not be resolved until I shared it, and then it instantly vanished.

(That led me to realize that by no intentional act of my own I had part in hindering someone's healing. I cannot make anyone confess based on my actions, but I want others to know it is safe to share when I am there and am trying to figure out how to show that.)

What makes an environment where guilty sinners can self-report the struggles they face? As always, the scriptures provide insight:

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves" 1 Peter 4:7-8.

So, we watch out for each other. We pray for each other. *"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves."* As we know, charity is

scripturally defined as the pure love of Christ. Christ could see great joy ahead of Him after the trial of bearing our sins on the cross. As a result He suffered for us to pay our consequences and take our shame on Himself. He had no shame of His own doing. He bore the shame that we create:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" Hebrews 12:2.

What greater charity could ever be expressed? To what level of charity should we aspire to show others?

We often hear, "no sin is too great." The only sin that cannot be forgiven is to deny the Holy Ghost once you have received it. The context of those words is usually to convey that no matter what you have done, God has paid the price for you and you can be forgiven.

Looking at it from a different angle: Is there any sin you could not bear to hear confessed out loud by a brother or sister? In other words, is there any sin too great for you to forgive?

Another way to think of it: If you needed to confess a sin but a brother or sister could not bear to hear your sin confessed, would that result in healing for you? Would you

even be able to confess?

We each have sins to confess and weaknesses that take hold of us. What might it be like if everyone could share the struggles they face and have faced in the past? What would it be like if we all fervently prayed for one another after hearing those confessions with fervent charity? What would it be like if we were all able to obtain healing in this way? If we saw each other as we really are and loved each other in spite of it all?

We have a habit of demonizing particular sins. Which is (a little) humorous because all sins are of the devil, not just some of them. We likely each have slightly different sins we put in that category. Each of the sins that disgust us and that we find no excuse for are common. It is a common occurrence for mankind to commit those specific sins. It happens regularly. It happens by people you would never expect, people who don't "look" like the devil's servants. It happens in our communities, our families, and in our church:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:" 1 Col 10:13.

In no way do I mean to minimize sin.... Quite the contrary. Just as with the military pilots, if one is struggling with alcoholism, everyone's safety is at risk. We are all in danger

when sin is not addressed in some way. How can we create an environment where the sins and struggles of our people can be addressed, and where self-reporting can be positive? It is terrifying enough as it is without the judgement and disdain of others. We are told:

"... Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" Phil 2:12.

After watching the stress and discomfort of confession, this scripture has taken on new meaning.

Some sins are harder to bear than others, no question. If we view someone as lower, filthy or unable to be of value in the body of Christ because it is difficult for us to bear the temptations they are struggling with, we deprive ourselves from obtaining a great blessing:

"And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" Mat 25:40.

Charity is the key. The pure love of Christ is the answer. A little further in 1 Peter 4:

"But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins. Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received

the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" 1 Peter 4:7-10.

So much is said in a few words! Charity is above all things. The reason is that it covers the multitude of sins; "The multitude," not a multitude. It covers all of the sins. It does not erase them, but covers the sins from view. The best application of this is the charity we have toward others covers their sins from our eyes. We love them and value their soul's salvation more than we focus on the sin that was committed. We should use hospitality toward one another. Be kind and don't hold grudges for the sins we should be covering with charity.

Lastly, we have all been given the marvelous gift of God's grace. By that grace we are saved after we complete our struggles on earth. It is a gift from God that we possess. We are to be good stewards of that gift by giving it to others. Grace will only grow when shared, and thusly to have great healing power.

Confess. Pray. Be healed.

There is a passage in Isaiah that seems to bring all of this together:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

"Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy reward."

"Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity;

"And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noonday:

"And the LORD shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water; whose waters fail not."

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" Isaiah 58:6-12.

ARTICLE

M A FEW THOUGHTS ABOUT Marriage & Counseling

EDITOR'S NOTE:

I received this article/study from brother John Gill while on a missionary trip in Honduras. I felt it was very good, sound advice for ministry dealing with issues in marriages within the membership of the church. As such, I had not felt fully convinced that I should publish it but rather to offer it up to the ministry.

But as I considered my intention I had the thought interjected into my mind—the ministry are frequently “late to the show” when it comes to troubles that enter into a marriage. Often issues within a marriage have already been discussed with or observed by friends, family and church family, oftentimes putting them in the position to begin the process of counseling and advising. So with that in mind I felt some of the suggestions contained within this article help to give some guidance and thought process to those who find themselves thrust into the position of listener, counselor and friend to those whose marriage may be troubled.

Priest John Gill

On a sunny afternoon at a beautiful park in Minnesota with flowering bushes and giant evergreens to surround them, John and Nana Gill were wed.

Elder Thomas Maley read scripture and stated the pledges that were repeated by the couple. After a banquet among relatives and friends as well as brothers and sisters of their church family, the bride and groom left on the journey of life that they had pledged to follow as one.



They had a two-week honeymoon in which they spent much time alone and visited church locals throughout the United States.

Thusly, bonded as one before the Lord and His church, they returned to the new home John had built for their life together and the lives of whomever their union would bring to be.

Now to the union mentioned here, we, John and Nana, each brought our own experiences—some good, some bad, and our several abilities into one whole. “Separate we are not equal but together we are one.”

A number of years ago while I was praying about how I, as a minister of Christ, should approach (in my heart) the task of counseling any couple in a failing marriage, God gave me a spiritual experience of what it is like for them in a personal sense. I received an awareness filled with tearing emotion

that ended in profound desperation....

In this vision of the Spirit I felt the love that Nana and I have built for each other through many years of love, sacrifice, trials and fantastic joys, being ruined. In the projection I saw us divided back to back, back to separate individuals so that everything we had built, all that was Nana and John, was gone.

Then I knew what it was like when those I must counsel were losing or had lost the oneness that had been theirs. From this awareness and the knowledge that there is only one unpardonable sin, I have subsequently developed from my study of the scriptures a few principles to be used when one is called upon or seeks to aid and counsel the suffering souls in a failing or failed marriage.

For a breach of the marriage covenant the first approach by the ministry or those seeking to assist the offended union should be fasting and prayer. Then in the spirit of meekness, considering ourselves lest we also be tempted (to pride), the offending couple in question should be counseled toward REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS. “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

ON REPENTANCE

"Behold he sendeth an invitation to all men; for the arms of mercy are extended toward them and he saith, Repent and I will receive you" (Alma 3:57).

"Behold are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, if ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God" (Alma 3:50).

"And save they shall cast these things away and consider themselves fools before God, and come down in the depths of humility he will not open unto them" (2 Nephi 6:85).

(Other references depending on each couple—1 Corinthians 6:9; 2 Nephi 6:73-84, 89-93; 2 Nephi 11:39.)

"And finally, I can not tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin: for there are diverse ways and means, even so many, that I cannot number them" (Mosiah 2:48).

"...And thus, none but the truly penitent are saved" (Alma 19:106).

ON FORGIVENESS

"Recompense to no man evil for evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

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

"And the fruits of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (James 3:18).

"But he giveth more grace,

therefore he saith God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:6-7).

"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13).

All believers whom this married couple affect should be advised to read Romans 12:21. When tempted to take sides, *"Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good."* They should be directed to the commandment, *"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep"* (Romans 12:15).

The brothers and sisters in Christ of the couple should be admonished to pour out their souls in sadness and compassion for those who are losing or have lost all they have brought to and built within that bond of marriage that was theirs.

"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

"For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:30-31).

"Behold what the scripture says; man shall not smite, neither shall he judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord; and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay" (Mormon 4:25).

The couple in question should be treated with love and compassion by the ministry and the body

of Christ, knowing that he whomsoever pointeth the finger of shame bringeth shame on himself, for we are all called to draw out our soul to satisfy the afflicted (Isaiah 58:9-10). We also should not be wise in our own conceits (Romans 12:16).

Of course, the member or members in question having a marriage that went aground have need to compare himself, herself or both in the light of the scriptures in order to understand what happened, identify their position and ascertain what can be done about it.

A If the unbelieving spouse abandons a believing spouse, the believing member is free and has no responsibility or obligation to that union— 1 Corinthians 7:15 *"But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace."*

B If a man puts away a wife for any other reason than fornication he is guilty for any choice she is caused to make (going on with her life) due to being put away from marriage with him (Matthew 5:32). One must consider, however, that the word fornication as used in Matthew 5:32 of the King James translation is derived from the Greek word (feminine form) *porn ne*, pronounced *por-nay*, from which it is interpreted to mean 'strumpet', 'harlot' or 'whore'.

Of course, if even such a woman were to repent and her husband to forgive her we should all rejoice with them.

C To seek intimacy in any form outside of one's wedded state, or to deny it to your spouse without an understood reason or plan, is not God's plan for mankind.

(1) *"Wherefore my brethren, hear me, and hearken unto the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none: for I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women"* (Jacob 2:36).

(a) *"But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart"* (3 Nephi 5:77). (This would include pornography by printed word or photos via paper or electronic medium of any kind.)

(2) *"Defraud ye not one the other, except if be for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency"* (1 Corinthians 7:5).

(a) The Greek word for incontinency, or *akrates* (pronounced *ak-rat-ace*) as used in 1 Corinthians 7:5 in the Bible means: powerless - without self-control. Thus in 1 Corinthians 7:5 the commandment for husband or wife is to not deny intimacy without a mutually determined reason or plan so as not to cause your partner to sin.

D Finally, we should consider the marriage covenant from the beginning:

From the beginning God holds the man responsible for the choices they make, not his wife. Thus, God addressed the man when they sinned in the garden. He said, *"Adam where are thou?"* (Genesis 3:9). The scriptures further blame the man for their sin which separates all mankind from

God; which separation made the divine sacrifice of Christ on the cross necessary (Romans 5:12, 14, 19).

It is also explained in scripture that by the woman's desire for her husband that God created within her, he (the husband) would rule over her (Genesis 3:16).

This is the built-in pattern that God has given mankind, but it is in a delicate balance to the sense of oneness, security and mature leadership he establishes for her. It is lost immediately when he demonstrates arrogance, pride of self, deception or machoism.

Man is to be responsible for them. God put him in charge of their choices, present and future, for the woman who follows him in the new family they have created. BUT, he is commanded to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. They two should be one flesh, thus building the bond that would establish his leadership. This is critical (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:17). If he cannot do this yet, he should be taught to remain unmarried until he can. And what father is there among us who should offer his daughter in marriage to one before he is ready? None! And what daughter is there among us who should offer herself to a young man who is not ready? None!

FOR SUCCESS IN COUNSELING

The bottom line is I must be humbled by the task of trying to help them: the body of believers must be supportive in prayer, and the couple must humble themselves with a broken heart and a contrite spirit as they enter the

realm of repentance and forgiveness.

I know by living and loving with my dear wife, as indeed she knows and all who read this must know, there is a delicate balance that any marriage rests on, and that balance is:

"My dear, dear wife or husband, I love you! Will you please forgive me?"

And,

"I love you too! Yes, yes, yes, I forgive you!"

In order to help them in their hour of need, (we) must suffer with them in our hearts and lead them, ever so gently, toward those magnificent words and the feelings which accompany them:

"Honey, please forgive me,"

And,

"Yes, my dear, I forgive you."

Without this, all the scriptures, the oratory, the counseling classes or motivational speakers cannot repair the broken hearts, and they must suffer their great loss. In those cases where reconciliation is not possible they each need our unqualified love and fellowship to get through the days, months and years ahead.

In closing I must say, for any marriage: Men, if we are to be the leaders, we must be the first to say, "I'm sorry" or "I forgive."

PHOENIX LOCAL NEWS



While summer heats things up here in the Phoenix area, we haven't let it slow us down one bit!

For the young people at our local, it's been a busy past few months! The Intermediate and Junior Young Peoples enjoyed a trip to the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park on April 21st. Everyone had a great time as there were several rides to be enjoyed, as well as a huge indoor model train museum.

A salsa competition was hosted on May 5th to benefit the Young People's groups and help fund activities. Many delicious and unique salsas were shared to be tasted, voted upon, and ultimately complement a huge Mexican dinner prepared by our youth. Jared Ely won first place, with Easton Yates scoring second place and Amy Kimball coming in at third.

Also, on June 16th, the Young People and Intermediate Young People had an exciting afternoon of laser tag (their choice)! It was a sizable group with 14 kids total. They certainly got the chance to burn off a little extra energy!





We were blessed with the baptism of Alexis and Jeremiah Bartlett on the morning of June 17, and Logan Jacobsen, who was baptized on June 3rd at the Washington retreat, also received the warm hugs and welcomes of the congregation later that evening. It's always such a great blessing to witness God's people make their decision to follow the Lord and receive His spirit, especially the little ones!

Vacation Church School was held the week of June 24th here at the Phoenix local. It was a busy and exciting time for all of those who were involved, with 34 kids in attendance ages 3-15 and a total of six classes. Topics included: virtues, Book of Mormon heroes, parables, the structure of the church, and remaining faithful. Outside of class, kids got to enjoy

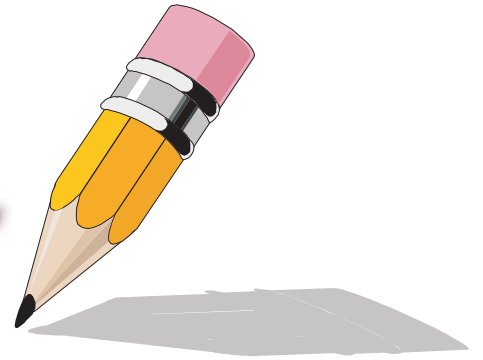


making edible crafts and lots of pool time! The week ended with a Sunday evening program on July 1st, and the kids were rewarded afterwards with root beer floats for their hard work.

Let's not forget to remember those that need our prayers and are facing important life decisions, health concerns, and other struggles. The ways in which we have been blessed are too many to count, but we still continue to face challenges every day that we need to seek God's guidance for, that we might better know the path to take which best glorifies Him.

*God Bless,
Katie Ely*

Bradley Local Report



With the grass full and green and flowers blooming bright we are happy to have everyone back from their winter travels. Our cold northern weather sends many of our brothers and sisters to Florida through early spring. The warm weather has returned to Michigan and it's wonderful to have everyone back together.

Our children's Sunday School groups have been learning about God's word each week in their classes. The younger classes have been sharing new songs during church and reenacting stories from God's



word. The older group has been learning about the history of the restored Church of Christ. They recently led the adult Sunday School class, asking questions and quizzing the older ones on their knowledge of the early Church of Christ history.

A special couple in our congregation is reaching a beautiful milestone this summer. On August 21st, Jay and Evelyn Lee will be celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. Family and friends will have the opportunity to celebrate with them at the church on Sunday, August 19th.

Our local has also wel-



came a new baby to our congregation. On March 21, 2018, Autumn Evelyn Lee was born to Jordan and Emily Lee.

Sadly, one of our dear friends, David Sans, passed away on June 9, 2018. He and his wife, Lynn, have been attending our local. We were excited to celebrate with them as they joined together in marriage on March 21, 2018. It was a blessing to the congregation to have the time of fellowship that we did with David, and he will be greatly missed.

Kelli Moran

NOTICES

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 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:

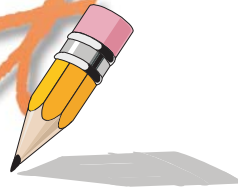
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Independence, MO 64050
SUE PORTER
9 Market St.
Middleville, MI 49333

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.

East Independence Local Report



Spring flew by so fast...that April feels like long ago. Conference activities and meetings went well.

We have our Local's business meeting results to share: Elder David Rudd was reelected as our Pastor, with Assistant Pastors being Elders Isaac Brockman and Steve McGhee. Priest Kevin



McGhee is again our Sunday School Superintendent. Sr. Diane Brockman is once again our Local Secretary.

Shortly after Conference, for a Sunday evening service, we greatly enjoyed thirteen of our handsome young men who acted out the Last Supper for us. It was informative and entertaining all at the same time!

Sister Erica Olson Williams and her husband Brandon were blessed with the birth of a baby boy on May 7th. He weighed in at 7 lbs, 3.25 oz., and 19½ inches long. Carter Casey Williams was welcomed home by his big sister, Adelynn. Grandparents Rick and Becky Olson were overjoyed with finally having a grandson after having a total of five granddaughters! We at the East Local witnessed the blessing of baby Carter on July 8th. Elder Isaac "Bick" Brockman (Great Uncle) gave the opening scriptures and Elder Rick Olson (Grandfather) gave the prayer of blessing. There was much family present: Carter's parents and sister, his two cousins from Phoenix, his Grandmothers, Great-grandmother Betty

Olson, and many more.

Elder Rick Olson spent four weeks traveling in the missionary field in East Africa. Apostle Mike McGhee has traveled several times doing missionary work in the Philippines since our last report. Elder Robert Oldham spent four weeks traveling for the first time in the northwest states doing missionary work.

Our Local held a garage sale at the home of Br. Steve and Sr. Melissa McGhee again this year. We did quite well and the funds will help with the missionary work.

Br. Trent Oldham graduated this Spring from the University of Missouri. Congratulations to your young brother!

Br. Eric and Sr. Sheila Sarratt were blessed to be able to take in a little boy, a cousin, as a foster child.

Loved ones that are in great need of prayers are: Apostle Buzz Brickhouse, who has had several A-fib interventions, besides his dialysis and being on the waiting list for a transplant; Sr. Dana Taylor, who is undergoing a new treatment for her Myasthenia Gravis; Br. Gerald Cox, who is recovering from a stroke; Sr. Rose Cox, who is under Hospice care for cancer; Eric and Sheila Sarratt with health problems and adjustments with their growing family; and also Sr. Florence Kommer who is in a nursing home.

Deb Haines





Church of Christ

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THE FOLLOWING GENERAL CHURCH PUBLICATIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE:*

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- A Synopsis (Compares beliefs of three Restoration churches)
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- The Teachings of the Gospel - As verified in the Bible and Book of Mormon
- What about the Book of Mormon?
- Why? (Amplifies absence of a First Presidency in Scripture)
- Zion and the Temple of the Lord

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE

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

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

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

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