



ZION'S

A D V O C A T E

Volume 96, Number 4 | July/August

2019 An Official Publication of



CHURCH OF CHRIST.
RESTORED APRIL 6, 1830

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CCEG

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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.

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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

To promote Jesus Christ as our only Saviour; to promote His Teachings and His Church, the Church of Christ; to be a voice of warning to His people; to be

The Fiscal Irresponsibility of Leaving the Ninety and Nine

Daniel Malone

“...Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Let's begin with a few definitions that will begin to establish the truth of my title.

From Investopedia.com:

THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS refers to all the expenses incurred by a firm or a sole proprietor in producing and selling goods or services.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT—sometimes called the rate of return (ROR)—is the percentage increase or decrease in an investment over a set period. It is calculated by taking the difference between current, or expected, value and original value divided by the original value and multiplied by 100.

ASSET: anything that has

value—whether tangible or intangible—and is owned by

the business. Typical items listed as business assets are cash on hand, accounts receivable, buildings; equipment, inventory (sheep... dm), and anything else that can be turned into cash.

In the above parable we have a scenario where an investor, in this case a shepherd, has observed a loss of one of his assets. It is important to understand when doing business in any shape or form that there are

expenses incurred: these are the costs of doing business. In the case of the shepherd, one of these would be the initial startup investment of the flock of 1 sheep. Not a small amount of capital and equity would have been required to procure said sheep; indeed, it would take a large investment. An investment this large would warrant some form of strategy and analysis for sure. A good business plan would include some type of expected ROI which would outweigh the risks involved in said venture. Let's look at a few more definitions:

RISK MANAGEMENT is the process of identification, analysis and acceptance or mitigation of uncertainty in investment decisions.

RISK ANALYSIS is the study of the underlying uncertainty of a given course of action and refers to the probability of a project's success or failure.

ECONOMIC COST looks at the gains and losses of one course of action versus another. It does this in terms of time, money, as well as resources. The term also includes determining the gains and losses that might have occurred by taking another course of action. Economic cost

includes opportunity cost, unlike accounting cost, which only takes into account the amount of money spent. Economic cost is the accounting cost (explicit cost) plus the opportunity cost (implicit cost). Implicit cost refers to the monetary value of what a company foregoes because of a choice it made.

A LOSS-LIMIT SYSTEM limits losses to a fixed percentage of assets, or a fixed percentage loss from capital employed. Think of such a system as a circuit breaker. After a certain percentage has been lost the investor may very well stop investing entirely or may immediately exit the losing position. With this system, exiting a losing position is an unemotional decision that is not affected by any hopes that, "it is sure to turn around any minute now." A common level of acceptable loss for one's investment is 2% of equity.

In today's fast-paced world of Wall Street and stock portfolios, 2% of equity is a common level of expected loss for one's investment. Losing one sheep falls under this threshold and leaves the shepherd's investment in an acceptable loss status. There is no doubt that the ROI is still in good shape and there

is no need to panic. The ninety and nine are still the priority. One lost sheep does not warrant taking a potentially catastrophic financial risk in leaving the entire flock unprotected, unwatched, and uncared-for. A quantitative risk analysis would clearly come to this conclusion.... What's a quantitative risk analysis you say? Let's look at a few more definitions:

RISK ANALYSIS can be further explained by dividing it into two categories, quantitative or qualitative. Under **QUANTITATIVE RISK ANALYSIS**, a risk model is built using simulation or deterministic statistics to assign numerical values to risk. Inputs which are mostly assumptions and random variables are fed into a risk model. For any given range of input, the model generates a range of output or outcome. The model is analyzed using graphs, scenario analysis, and/or sensitivity analysis by risk managers to make decisions to mitigate and deal with the risks.

Allow me to interject: To this point we have been looking at the numbers: the math of it all. It seems so clear, doesn't it? It doesn't make sense to go after one lost sheep and risk the flock.

It is financially irresponsible. If I were the shepherd, I would look for the lost sheep... Let me amend that statement; I would make an effort. Wait a sec, I...I would make a reasonable effort...to reclaim the lost asset. A reasonable effort is expected, so long as I could still see the flock. I couldn't accept the risk of losing the entire flock; the benefits just don't outweigh the risk. The pros and cons don't add up to the eventual outcome of the parable. Perhaps that is why there is such a celebration when the shepherd returns with the lost sheep, because it was a gamble. It was risky and it paid off. But there is another rationale to consider. This is where it gets interesting...

QUALITATIVE RISK ANALYSIS is an analytical method that does not identify and evaluate risks with numerical and quantitative ratings. Qualitative analysis involves a written definition of the uncertainties, an evaluation of the extent of impact if the risk ensues, and countermeasure plans in the case of a negative event occurring.

To understand this concept more clearly, think "cyber security": where the overall cost of a data breach

could be catastrophic...you couldn't put a number on it. We can read about the shepherd's qualitative analysis in Ezekiel 34:11-16:

"For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord God. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was

sick:"

To continue our analysis we need a few more definitions:

MARKET VALUE is based on supply and demand. It is used to refer to a company's market capitalization value. It is calculated by multiplying the number of shares issued by the price of the company's share. A company's share price is determined by daily trading between buyers and sellers on the relevant stock exchange. Market prices are easy to determine for assets as the constituent values, such as stock and futures prices, are readily available.

The *market value* valuation of the assets is a straightforward accounting of what the sheep are worth. It is what we can sell them for on the open market to achieve a profitable ROI. This valuation of assets is the determining factor of financial irresponsibility in leaving the flock to find one lost sheep. But what is the economic valuation of the sheep? What is economic value? I'm glad you asked...

The **ECONOMIC VALUE** of an asset is based on individual preferences. The same asset may have significantly different economic values for two different companies or

individuals. For businesses, economic value represents the value that the company derives from using the asset. It is the same as the value in use. This may be higher or lower than the market value for a similar asset. However, economic value typically exceeds market value. **The primary difference between market value and economic value is that market value is determined by the supply and demand of the asset in the marketplace, while the economic value represents the maximum amount the customer is willing to pay.**

What is the economic valuation of one lost sheep? To understand the question we must ask, "What is the maximum amount the shepherd is willing to pay?"

*"When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, **It is finished**: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" John 19:30.*

Did you know that one of the other meanings of the Greek word that was translated as "it is finished" means to pay? (Strong's g5055, "discharge a debt".)

Now we begin to see...

If the flock is ever given a *quantitative valuation* and one lost sheep is deemed, "expendable" or "an acceptable loss" or "a cost of

doing business," it can be said that the entire flock of sheep are regarded accordingly, and they are only worth fair market value to the shepherd. The ROI is highest if they never stray.

If the shepherd is willing to pay "the maximum amount" for one lost sheep, the valuation of the flock goes up by the same amount. Each sheep then retains this valuation if the Shepherd will leave the ninety and nine and find His one lost sheep.

In conclusion:

The fiscal irresponsibility alluded to in the title of this article is based on a *Quantitative Valuation* of a flock of sheep and the *Market Value* of one lost sheep. If the shepherd does not go after the one lost sheep, it proves the *Quantitative Valuation* based on *Market Value* to be true. Thus, it becomes fiscally irresponsible.

However, by leaving the ninety and nine the shepherd has placed a *Qualitative Value* (unable to quantify with numbers) on **EACH ONE** of his sheep.

In verses six and seven the parable shows us that the shepherd's valuation of his sheep is based on an *Economic Value*, i.e. the "maximum amount that He is willing to pay."

Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

When applying these economic principles to the parable we can illustrate not only the value of one sheep, but the value that is attributed then to the whole. The parable never mentions *which sheep* was lost, just that a sheep was lost. All of the sheep are either equally expendable or equally invaluable, based on the shepherd's valuation of the one lost sheep.

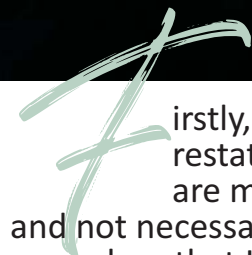
So, if you are feeling neglected and forgotten, and all the work you do for the church is unappreciated, and your self-worth is depreciating, remember the *ninety and nine* and the definition of *Economic Value*. If you are ever sitting in church and you notice that all of your ministry are off to find the lost sheep, remember this lesson. When you wonder why we spend so many resources to send ministry all over the world...smile and remember...

...Just how valuable you are. ■

HOW DO WE MINISTER TO A FALLEN WORLD?

PART 4

—|
APOSTLE ALVIN MOSER



Firstly, I want to restate that these are my thoughts and not necessarily a step procedure that I have found in the scriptures. God does not line things out one, two and three, but has given us the Word to search out. With that in mind I want to talk about God's love.

God's love is something that we continue to learn about all our lives. There is no end to His love and no finding out all of the ways that He has loved us and how He has shown us that love. He is unknowable except in those things which He gives us to know. Those points of knowledge belong to us because they have

been freely given from a Loving Father.

Our Father is different from all the pagan gods in that He not only created us with a purpose, but also has taken responsibility for our redemption. He created Adam and Eve who later, probably quickly, fell from His presence through the simple act of disobedience to one single commandment. That tells us something; that no matter how simple something is, we can always mess it up. Then the rest of scripture describes God's work in bringing mankind back to Himself.

The Bible and Book of Mormon have stories in

them that are hard to believe, even for God's people. We read that God tested the faith of Abraham by commanding him to offer his only son, Isaac, upon a mountain on an altar. We also read that Jacob wrestled with an angel, who was probably Christ, based on the comments of Jacob (Genesis 32:30). How can such things be, and why? They do not make sense to the mind of man without some instruction or help to understand. However, if we remember that in God's commandments and actions He is revealing Himself, as well as interacting with men. These are human beings that do not learn very quickly

about spiritual things. We always think of ourselves and how difficult tasks are and the common discomforts we feel. We want life to be heaven when it is really just the probation of man. It is the valley of decision. God calls us to that mountain where He met Abraham and Isaac. While we are there we will learn what God is really about. He is a loving Creator who has done everything possible for us to be saved, and He wants us to learn how to live with Him.

Those offensive or strange stories are more about God than about man. Jacob fought and struggled all night long with Christ. The Lord could have just flicked him off as some insect or speck of dirt. He did not. He patiently waited through the impetuous holding and struggling of Jacob. What does it say about God? First, He is true to His Word. In the seed of Abraham all men shall be blessed, so He also endures and condescends to that family for the benefit of us all. Second, it teaches us that He is patient and gentle even though He could crush. That is far different from most humans. Often, if we can, we do, just because we have the power to do something. God stood firm resisting Jacob, yet did not cast him off.

The story of Abraham upon the mountain raising his knife to kill his own son: I assume he intended to kill Isaac in the same manner that sacrifices were properly

offered to God, by cutting Isaac's throat so that the blood could be spilled out unto God; this because the blood of sacrifices belongs to God. Again, this is a story about God and His plan for salvation through His Son Jesus. It is meant to make us ponder and consider the absolute repulsion of this act. Why must an innocent being suffer for the unjust and vile? These stories are designed by God to bring us to understand Him in some small way. Yet, I am sure that it was a real event, so dramatic as to help us to feel what our Father felt for His Son. The prophet Isaiah recorded the thoughts of the Lord, "*What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*" Isa. 5:4. He has done everything possible to bring us to Him. The work is His, and we must approach Him, asking and believing to find understanding.

This story on Mount Moriah helps us to understand what it was like for the Father to send His Son to live and die for our sins. The Just died for the unjust. The Innocent paid for the guilty. The mind of man is nearly overwhelmed by this thought. How else could God get through to us who are by nature so selfish? Here was a perfect act of unselfishness. What else is capable of piercing us to the very core of our soul? Here is where we see what God was willing to do for us. Even the most vile person is included in this great gift of love. This had to

be something that God and man could accept together. It was also to satisfy our great thirst for justice and our great need for mercy. The pure offering of Jesus on the cross, where the blood is spilled unto God and returned to us in the resurrected Savior. Jesus said it was finished, and all things have become new. God received Him into the Holy of Holies and says it is enough, it is an infinite atonement. Now it is up to each of us to confess to God the Father that, "it is enough for me." We must see that God did everything for us and put a path that could be walked because it is enough. Now Jesus says, "*I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*" (Matthew 28:20).

This love that God has shown to us in the power and blood of Jesus the Christ is the way to salvation and enough to acquit you before God without consequences. When we now go into the world this is the God that we take to the world. One who is sufficient for our forgiveness, peace of conscience and our needs, because He has done this for the blessing of all the earth. Then every soul does have the same worth. This is the challenge of our day and any day, to see the value of every soul through the Blood of Jesus the Christ, the only begotten Son of God. In this spirit of the love of God we can minister to the needs of a fallen world. ■



The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand Part 2

Apostle Roland Sarratt

“That which would cause disorder and confusion would tend to defeat the divine purposes of God by causing His people to stumble.”

We believe that the Church of Christ is the Kingdom of Heaven here upon the earth today. We are also caused to believe that the Kingdom of Heaven must have divine order and purpose. That order is defined as an observance of the law of God, which brings

orderly conduct among His people. His divine purpose is to bring about a state of peace and serenity.

We find that divine order and purpose is in the word of God. The commandments of Jesus Christ reflect that order and purpose. That which would cause disorder and

confusion would tend to defeat the divine purposes of God by causing His people to stumble. When Jesus appeared to the people on this land after His resurrection, He gave admonition to correct any previous disorder and confusion. He admonished

them to discontinue their disputations and contentions:

And there shall be no disputations among you, as there hath hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there hath hitherto been;

For verily, verily I say unto you, He that hath the spirit of contention, is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger one with another;

Behold, this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger one against another; but this is my doctrine, that such things should be done away (3 Nephi 5:29-31).

It appears that Jesus was very emphatic when He spoke these words. Was He successful in His efforts to keep the people from being contentious? Let's find out:

And it came to pass in the thirty and sixth year, the people were all converted unto the Lord, upon all the face of the land, both Nephites and Lamanites, and there were no contentions and disputations among them, and every man did deal justly one with another;

And they had all things common among them, therefore they were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers

of the heavenly gift (4 Nephi 1:3, 4).

Jesus did have success, and the account that Mormon gave may be brief, but it is very encouraging to those of us who face a world of great wickedness. Read and reaffirm your convictions of this period of time that give us hope of Zion in our future:

And now behold it came to pass that the people of Nephi did wax strong, and did multiply exceeding fast, and became an exceeding fair and delightsome people.

And they were married, and given in marriage, and were blessed according to the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them.

And they did not walk any more after the performances and ordinances of the Law of Moses, but they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord and their God, continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft, both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

And it came to pass that there was no contention among all the people, in all the land, but there were mighty miracles wrought among the disciples of Jesus.

And it came to pass that the seventy and first year passed away, and also the seventy and second year; yea, and in fine, until the

seventy and ninth year had passed away; yea, even an hundred years had passed away, and the disciples of Jesus, whom he had chosen, had all gone to the paradise of God, save it were the three who should tarry;

And there were other disciples ordained in their stead; and also many of that generation which had passed away.

And it came to pass that there was no contention in the land, because of the love of God which did dwell in the hearts of the people.

And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness;

And surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God:

There were no robbers, nor murderers, neither were there Lamanites, nor any manner of ites; but they were in one, the children of Christ, and heirs to the kingdom of God;

And how blessed were they, for the Lord did bless them in all their doings; yea, even they were blessed and prospered, until an hundred and ten years had passed away; and the first generation from Christ had passed away, and there was no contention in all the land

(4 Nephi 1:11-21).

This is a true success story, or maybe we should say, a true event in history that shows the true effects of the power and influence of righteousness that is in the person of Jesus Christ. This peaceful state existed for 200 years, and then there began to be a revolt in the church which over time resulted in many churches and persecutions. Mormon lived during the time when the people were in continuous wars. His people, the Nephites, had great anger and were finally killed off because they would not repent and turn to the Lord. He wrote of that time, showing how much a people can quickly fall away into wickedness. His son, Moroni, completed Mormon's work and was the final writer of the Book of Mormon.

Let's go back to the word, "contention." There is a scripture that speaks favorably of contending:

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.

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God,

and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The qualifying word here is, "earnestly." Jude's explanation is in the need to defend the faith (the doctrine) that was given of Jesus Christ. How do we earnestly contend for the faith without being contentious?

This has been discussed from time to time in the church, and I am convinced from the result of those discussions that there is a right way, or ways, to present our views on the gospel without being unnecessarily offensive, especially to those who may be new to our beliefs. We need to offer hope and encouragement to those who are just learning the gospel. If we are able to work with them little by little, they will realize their own imperfections and want to correct themselves. If they see in us a good example they will want to be like us. More importantly, they will see the good example that we see in Christ.

We as a people have different backgrounds, having come from different upbringings. The gospel of Christ has brought us together and has given us commonalities which make us close to each other. I believe that having all things common among us doesn't just mean material things, but rather, common understandings. At our best we probably do have some differences which can cause problems from time to time, but we have the fullness of

the gospel of Christ which gives us a common understanding of the law of God. By the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can have this common understanding if we seek for it.

If we act according to this common understanding, we as a body of people can feel assured that our judgment of matters will be correct if we all agree. However, the usual ways of man in the world seldom are guided in a unified manner. We have varied political issues that can be very disturbing to the minds of the more honest seeker of the truth. To us that have the scriptures, we find a more correct way. The scriptures tell us that we should do our business by the voice of the people:

Therefore choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers, which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord.

Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right;

Therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people.

And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time

that the judgments of God will come upon you;

Yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction, even as he has hitherto visited this land (Mosiah 13:34-38).

I believe in the voice of the people in doing our business, and we are free to express our concerns by this means; but, as it says, the voice of the people can be wrong. We must choose carefully when we take a stand on a subject:

Yea, well did Mosiah say, who was our last king, when he was about to deliver up the kingdom, having no one to confer it upon, causing that this people should be governed by their own voices;

Yea, well did he say, that if the time should come that the voice of this people should choose iniquity; that is, if the time should come that this people should fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction.

And now I say unto you, that well doth the Lord judge of your iniquities; well doth he cry unto this people, by the voice of his angels, Repent ye, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Yea, well doth he cry, by the voice of his angels, that I will come down among my people, with equity and justice in my hands (Alma 8: 27-30).

The original intent of the lawmakers in this nation (USA) was to do their

business by the voice of the people for the very reason that the majority would choose that which is right. I believe this was accomplished by the fact that the majority chose Christian ethics. Every important issue would be determined by the voice of the people. However, we have had to allow for qualified or educated people to make our laws, so we have chosen those who are more educated and able to write laws in congress. They are chosen to represent the majority of the people by our electoral system.

Through the years we have seen various types of corruptions enter our society and our government. At this point we are experiencing a ripening in iniquity of this nation and the nations of the world. We are living in the last days when many peoples will do as the Nephites did when they fell away into wickedness... But not all is lost. The Lord has promised that the stone that was cut out of the mountain without hands will be victorious in destroying the wicked kingdoms of the world. It may not look so now, but God has always chosen the weak things to confound the mighty. He has established His kingdom here on earth in these last days, and it shall never be destroyed. It shall surely accomplish what God has purposed.

Going back to Jesus' words telling us that our righteousness must exceed

the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, we are also admonished by Moroni to have faith, hope and charity or we cannot be saved in the Kingdom of God:

And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ.

And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.

Wherefore, there must be faith; and if there must be faith, there must also be hope; and if there must be hope, there must also be charity; and except ye have charity, ye can in no wise be saved in the kingdom of God;

Neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God, if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope; and if ye have no hope, ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity.

And Christ truly said unto our fathers, If ye have faith, ye can do all things which are expedient unto me (Moroni 10:13-17). ■



The Good Shepherd

Clete Wiley

One hundred sheep, but one has gone astray,
The shepherd has just counted, and now is in dismay.
He still has ninety-nine, so why is he distraught?
It's because his heart is breaking, for the one he hasn't got.

So he leaves the ninety-nine, and sets out on a search,
He looks in all the bushes, and walks down to the brook.
And then he finds the sheep, almost dead upon the ground,
He puts it on his shoulder, and then he's homeward bound.

He nurtures it so loving, until it's doing fine,
And then he lets it go, back with the ninety-nine.
Oh Lord! Make me a shepherd, this loving and this kind,
And lead me to the sheep you want for me to find.

GENERAL SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The General Sunday School Association (GSSA) is providing lessons for several age groups. 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 lessons & studies for children & adults. Contact Susan Porter at: sprtr9@gmail.com, or 9 Market Street, Middleville, MI 49333, for more information.

The GSSA has a private Facebook group for all members.

To be added: contact Betsy Trudgen @ trucooking@yahoo.com. This is a place for Sunday School teachers to post their ideas, along with photos which is very helpful to many!

MY MORAL COMPASS

By Janeen Addie, Springfield, MO

I have a compass I use when I play,
That guides me on paths along my way.
It keeps me from getting lost in the woods,
Helping me to arrive where I should.
But I have a greater compass I use when I pray,
That helps me stay on the straight and narrow way.
It guides and directs me in the path I should go,
When I follow the lead God does to me show.
It's a moral compass that shows me the way
I need to treat others every day.
It helps me see wrong from right,
Helps me walk in the light.
My moral compass guides my way,
To showing kindness to others day by day.
I'm able to help others who struggle with care,
Showing them the love of Jesus until they become aware
Of just how much He desires to give
Each and every day they live.

Lesson for Families

By Susan Porter

Purpose: To learn that God has a specific direction for us and to understand how following His direction will benefit us.

To Start: Begin the lesson with a prayer. Read the poem, and number each line of the poem. We will analyze a few lines at a time to learn about God's direction for us.

Lines 1-4: Look at a real compass and talk about how one works. There are several videos on YouTube, such as: Teaching: How to Teach Young Children to Use the Compass. On a large sheet of paper, draw a compass. As you go through the poem jot down adjectives that describe morals God would like us to exhibit.

Lines 5-6: Read the lines and then read Alma 17:79. What is in this verse that will help you stay on the straight and narrow way? On your compass, record your answer.

Lines 7-12: Read the lines and Alma 5:33-42. Write at least five things God wants us to do.

Lines 13-14: Read the lines and then read Ephesians 4:32.

Lines 15-16: Read the lines and then Galatians 5:13-14, 5:22 and Colossians 2:2. Discuss how these scriptures apply to the poem. On your compass, record your answer.

Need a Sunday School Class?

You can join a virtual class (ages 12+) by contacting Stephen Stratton at

Stratton125@gmail.com.

Class is held on Sundays (except Sacrament Sunday) from 10-11:00 am EST.

COLLINS LOCAL NEWS

CZERNA KAUFFMAN

Greetings from your brothers and sisters in Collins! As it has been awhile since you've seen a report from these parts, I'll do my best to bring you up to date with the happenings from our Local...

Our brother and friend, Al Lind, left this world and the pain he endured on September 8, 2019. We miss him very much but are so grateful that he chose to share his life with us here at Collins. Vicky Pitts, Al's daughter, recalls how Al felt so comfortable here and enjoyed being able to share his thoughts and testimonies with us. He was a gentle man, filled with a kindly grace not found today in many people. He truly loved the Lord and served Him to the best of his ability.

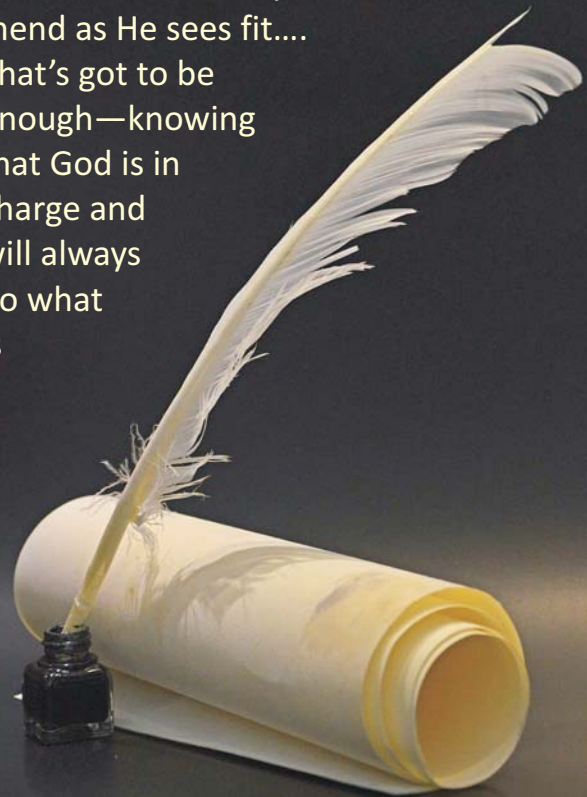
Also, our brother Greg Kelly from the Preston area left this life March 15th, 2019. Greg had double pneumonia and then a stroke. A memorial was held March 23rd where we were able to meet much of his family. Greg had a willing smile and a good sense of humor. He loved his family and his wife Beth. He also is missed by all who had the opportunity to know him.

My sister, LaVange Johnson, who lives in Seely Lake, Montana, has been caring for her husband, Steve, who has been in declining health for some time. Steve had a stroke and was taken to the Veteran's

Hospital in Helena, Montana, but was in such a weakened condition that nothing could be done; He passed away March 25th, 2019, leaving Vangie and his five grown children and their families.

Sometimes our understanding is greatly lacking. We pray and plead with our Heavenly Father for our loved ones, knowing that only God can heal the sickness, whether it physical or spiritual. Then we wait, and have to just trust that He will repair and mend as He sees fit...

That's got to be enough—knowing that God is in charge and will always do what is



right. My brother and friend, Rodger Bruner, wrote a song that declares how when God answers prayer He answers it according to all involved...I believe that—even when I don't always understand. The beauty of all this is that these who have gone on have lived their lives, made their choices and have been received by our Heavenly Father to behold His glory, and have been given a place of waiting until that day of resurrection and judgement (the Book of Mormon gives a good view of this in Alma 19).

On May 5th, 2019, we were privileged to witness the baptism of Cherylynn Hitt into the body of Christ. Cheryl is the wife of Mike Hitt from Goodman, Missouri. She had a beautiful testimony of her need for baptism that she shared with us through tear-filled eyes. Brother Martin Addie gave some beautiful scriptures, and Sister Janeen Addie had written a poem she gave to Brother Mike to read prior to the baptism. Brother Allen Kauffman had the honor of baptizing Cheryl in our little font in the dining room of our church here at Collins. The laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost was

conducted by Brothers Albert Leighton-Floyd and Martin Addie. It was a wonderful day and we all thanked the Lord for His abundant mercy!

We here in Missouri have had some serious storms around us, but by the grace of our Heavenly Father we have been spared any great damage. However, it appears there are more to come. Allen was recently checking out our front door and came back inside saying he believed we should get on our knees and ask God for protection—we did. I am so grateful that God is willing to hear and help when we call...

I have a few sermon quotes to share with you and hope that I am able to express them so that they make sense as I heard them originally:

- *Just going to church will not save you, but it WILL lead you to righteousness.*
- *The power of God defies the understanding of man.*
- *Just because you don't see it doesn't mean it isn't there!*
- *How does it happen that we could dwindle in unbelief?*
- *I am not a sinner—I am a "repenter"!*
- *Whether you believe you*

CAN do it or you believe you CAN'T—you're right!

- *Our past shouldn't define us; it should prepare us.*
 - *There's a difference between getting a job done and getting it done RIGHT.*
 - *God is still God even when we have, or go through, difficulties.*
 - *Stop focusing on how stressed you are and focus on how blessed you are!*
 - *God doesn't want "left-overs"—He must be first.*
 - *How easy it is to take things for granted.*
 - *The Sacrament – to remember – so we don't forget!*
 - *Do we forget the things that are most precious? Sometimes it's good to have trials, so He can teach us—so much.*
 - *"Will ye also go away?" (John 6: 67)*
- Thank you for remembering us, and know that you are in our prayers—may our Great God and Father bless and lead us all to Him. ■

EAST INDEPENDENCE LOCAL NEWS

DEB HAINES



After a long, hard winter here, our Spring began with the East Local's Annual Business Meeting on April 22nd. We take this opportunity now to report a change in our East Local line-up: Elder David Rudd remains our Pastor, with Assistant Pastors now being Elder Isaac (Bick) Brockman Jr. and Priest Bruce Haines.

Joyous baby blessings to report are a baby boy, Isaac, to Br. Tom and Sr. Renae Arnold on November 22nd. Shortly after birth, baby Isaac had surgery to correct damage caused by Spina Bifida. The Lord blessed him

greatly with less damage than predicted by the doctors; he is doing very well and we pray for continued healing. A baby girl, Laney Bella Oldham, was born to Br. Jason and Liz Oldham on March 8th. Another baby girl, Macy Layne, was born to Br. Tony and Sr. Lindsey McIndoo on April 2nd, here visiting with parents Br. David and Sr. Becky Rudd while they and big sister Blakley awaited the birth.

Br. Bob Oldham made a missionary trip to the Southeast, and on his way home he was sideswiped by a vehicle and forced into

another vehicle. He wasn't injured, but his truck and trailer suffered much damage. We are thankful for the hand of the Lord and His blessing of protection on Br. Bob! He was still able to drive the vehicles several thousand miles to finish his rounds and then home before repairs were made. It was a miracle that the truck and trailer held together!

Br. Bruce Haines spent several winter months in Michigan caring for his mother, Sr. June Haines, while Sr. Deb Haines stayed in Independence caring for their daughter, Jenni, who was on

bedrest. It was a difficult time and, sadly, the loss of the baby who was born too early. Thank you for your prayers during this time.

Meantime, others from the local were fighting their own health problems. We thank the Lord for His watch care over them: Sr. June Sarratt spent much time in hospitals and rehabilitation centers until she was finally able to return home with help. What began with a broken femur bone continued on to a diagnosis of Pulmonary Edema and Congestive Heart Failure. We praise the Lord that she is doing much better now and able to join us at church again. Please keep her and Br. Roland in your prayers.

Apostle Smith "Buzz" Brickhouse began having some A-fib symptoms. He underwent an Ablation

procedure which seems to have corrected the problem, and he is once again doing well and continuing his dialysis. We keep him in our prayers for his health and to be able to have a kidney transplant as soon as the Lord makes it possible.

Sr. Dana Taylor and Sr. Renae Arnold continue to stand in need; please keep them in your prayers for the rare Myasthenia Gravis they both suffer with.

Br. David Taylor, Sr. had surgery, and with God's blessings has recovered nicely.

Apostle Mike McGhee went in for surgery to repair an irregularly shaped retina, which affected reading for a time following his last trip to the Philippines. The surgery had to be postponed that morning due to a low heart rate. The following week he

had a pacemaker installed, and the eye surgery can be rescheduled anytime.

Br. Ralph Clark is in need of our prayers for his health problems; he has been too weak to be able to come to church. Please pray that God will strengthen him and Sr. Kathy.

Sr. Diane Brockman stands in need of our prayers, as she underwent surgery on April 30th. We pray for her recovery and that tests come back indicating she won't need further treatment.

I close this rather lengthy report now, heavy with prayer requests, and ask for your prayers to be added with ours for our loved ones.

It's been a long winter for everyone...but God is good.

May God bless you all abundantly is our prayer. ■



Isaac Arnold



Macy Layne McIndoo



Layne Oldham

Church of Christ

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An Official Publication of



CHURCH OF CHRIST.
REVISED APRIL 8, 1990