

Zion's Advocate

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

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"STAND IN AWE, AND SIN NOT: COMMUNE WITH YOUR OWN HEART UPON YOUR BED, AND BE STILL. SELAH." —PSALM 4:4

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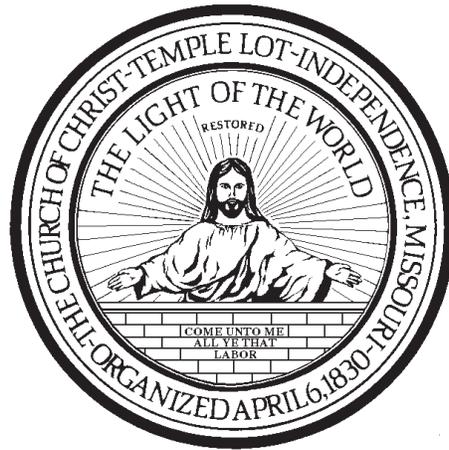
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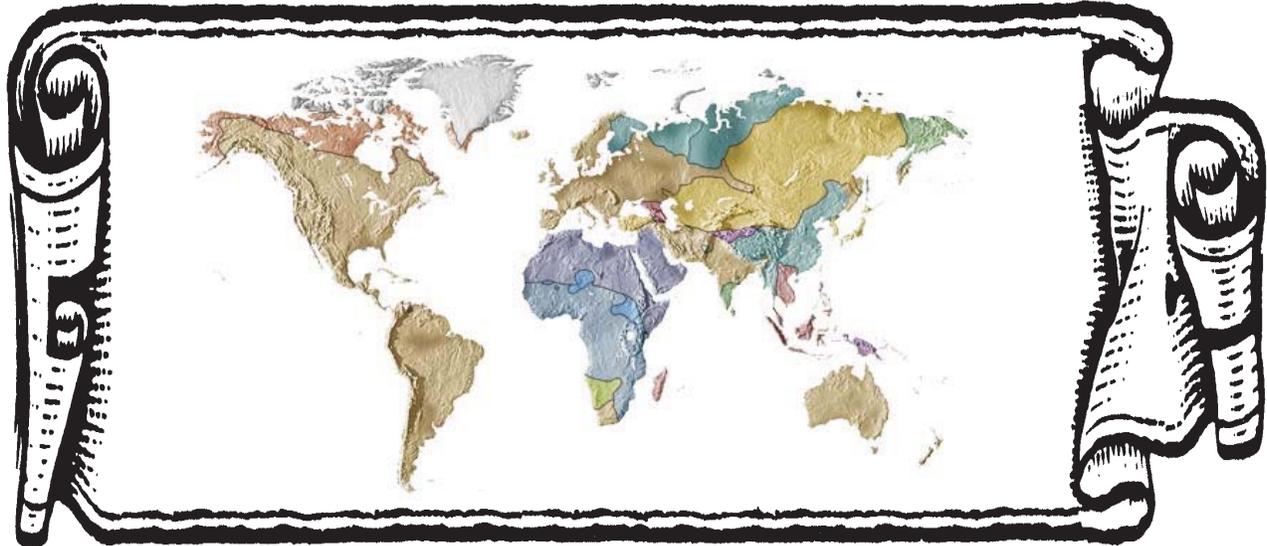
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ZION'S ADVOCATE IS...

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

A CHOICE LAND



By Elder Gordon McCann

America, contrary to popular belief today, is a nation that was founded on the principles and beliefs that are contained in the Bible that we have and can read from today. The pilgrims carried that record across the sea, seeking freedom from the tyranny of governments that supported Kings as their head, corrupt men who embraced religious leaders that were equally corrupt holding the power of life and death in their hands, who had held them captive, but found opportunity to flee. This recorded event in our country's history is an important building

block of our heritage which did not happen by chance, but was an integral part of the plan of God for the children of men.

The crossing of the sea by the Gentiles to this land had been prophesied more than 2,100 years prior to the actual event by the very people who would be most affected by the event: the remnant of the seed of Joseph.

"And it came to pass that I looked and beheld many waters; and they divided the Gentiles from the seed of my brethren. And it came to pass that the angel said unto me, Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren! And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles, who was separated from the seed of my brethren by the many waters; and I beheld the Spirit of God, that it came down and wrought upon the man; and he went forth upon the many waters, even unto the seed of my brethren, who were in the promised land. And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters. And it came to pass that I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles upon the land of promise;..." (1 Ne 3:145-149).

This remnant of the seed of Joseph had humbled themselves where their desire was to follow and obey God's commandments. In return, God blessed them and they received an inheritance which was this land, a blessed promise land for those who would serve God. As time progressed after God had abundantly prospered them upon the land, that remnant of Joseph turned their backs on the God who had blessed and protected them from all other nations.

"And I beheld the wrath of God that it was upon the seed of my brethren; and they were scattered before the Gentiles, and were smitten. And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles; that they did prosper, and obtain the land for their inheritance; and I beheld that they were white, and exceeding fair and beautiful, like unto my people before they were slain. And it came to pass that I, Nephi, beheld that the Gentiles who had gone forth out of captivity did humble themselves before the Lord, and the power of the Lord was with them;..." (1 Ne 3:150-152).

God's promise concerning this choice land that we live upon is an ancient promise. This promise goes back to a people who were lead away after the flood that covered the earth because of sin, to the time of the great tower that was being constructed of men to reach into heaven to be as God. We find this record in the book of Genesis and the book of Ether, which occurred over 4,200 years ago where a people who had humbled themselves and had found favor in the eyes of God were lead away from the land of their nativity to a blessed land prepared of God for those who would serve him upon it.

"And there will I meet thee, and I will go before thee into a land which is choice above all the land of the earth. And there will I bless thee and thy seed, and raise up unto me of thy seed, and of the seed of thy brother, and they who shall go with thee, a great nation. And there shall be none greater than the nation which I will raise up unto me of thy seed, upon all the face of the earth. And this will I do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me" (Ether 1:18-21).

With the passage of time those ancient people populated Central America and became a

great nation where archeologists today have confirmed God's blessings by discovering great pyramids with works of stone, highways that stretch from one city to the next, tracing the evidence of great wealth and prosperity by the inhabitants of those cities.

"And never could be a people more blessed than were they, and more prospered by the hand of the Lord. And they were in a land that was choice above all lands, for the Lord had spoken it" (Ether 4:78-79).

True to God's word, when those ancient people turned their backs upon the God who preserved and prospered them they were destroyed (swept off). The Jaradite people, known to the archeologists as the Olmec, became the recipient of His wrath because they refused to serve the God of the land, but rather, chose to serve other gods. Their destruction was swift and complete where archeologists can only speculate, but their demise was recorded and preserved as an abject lesson for those who live upon this choice land of God.

"Having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, etc., and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind: Having discovered a land which had been peopled with a people who were as numerous as the hosts of Israel. And for a testimony that the things that they have said are true, they have brought twenty-four plates, which are filled with engravings; and they are of pure gold" (Mosiah 5:62-64).

"And now I, Moroni, proceed to give an account of those ancient inhabitants who were destroyed by the hand of the Lord upon the face of this north country. And I take mine account from the twenty and four plates which were found by the people of Limbi, which is called the book of Ether" (Ether 1:1-2).

The same fate befell the remnant of the seed of Joseph where their great cities became uninhabited and destroyed and they were scattered upon the land until the coming forth of the Gentiles to the Americas.

"Behold, four hundred years have passed

since the coming of our Lord and Savior. And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city, and from place to place, even until they are no more, and great has been their fall; yea, great and marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites. And behold, it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it. And behold also, the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war. And now behold, I say no more concerning them, for there are none, save it be the Lamanites and robbers, that do exist upon the face of the land;..." (Mormon 4:7-11).

God's promises are eternal, on the one hand life and on the other death. So, it is concerning this choice land that we now possess. We can look to our history and see God's hand prints upon us where we had fashioned our laws after the laws of God, and as a people we did put our trust in Him. In America today that very foundation is in question, where those laws that supported righteousness are being removed and replaced with new laws that support wickedness, the very sins that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. With all the evidence that is before us, we have reached the point where we have turned our backs on the God who has blessed and preserved us as a nation. We will continue to see our enemies prosper over us until we are completely destroyed, if we do not repent and return to the God of this land, who is Jesus Christ.

"For as their laws and their governments were established by the voice of the people, and they who chose evil were more numerous than they who chose good, therefore they were ripening for destruction, for the laws had become corrupted" (Helaman 2:64).

"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 13:37-38).

"Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shewn unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suf-

fer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you, which are built up to get power and gain, and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you; Yea, even the sword of the justice of the eternal God, shall fall upon you, to your overthrow and destruction, if ye shall suffer these things to be;..." (Ether 3:96-99).

Our day has been foretold and has been recorded as a testimony that God's word is eternal and sure, something that will not change. The message to our nation is clear and to the point, just as it was to those who possessed this land before us, whose ruins we pick through and marvel at today. The Word of God speaks from that ancient dust in the form of a record that was kept by those people which is in our hands today, known as the Book of Mormon. Those voices speak to us from the dead as a testimony of the marvelous blessing that God bestows upon those who will serve Him, and a warning voice to those that chose not to.

"And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God, that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fullness come, that ye may not bring down the fullness of the wrath of God upon you, as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done. Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written" (Ether 1:34-35).

When Moses was speaking to the children of Israel he laid before them the following challenge.

"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:..." (Deuteronomy 30:19).

May we as a nation and a people repent and choose life is my prayer.

ARTICLE

A Christian Response to Increasingly ACCEPTABLE SINS



By Priest Aadam Yates

This day is one of great trial for the true followers of Christ. In this day, we see things that the Lord has declared to be abominable before Him becoming increasingly acceptable in our society, and perhaps within our Church. As Solomon states, "...there is no new thing under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 1:9), so we know that these sins we are seeing have been around for thousands of years. What is the difference? I believe that today we are exposed to these things in greater measure and through

As Christians, we are called to judge sin as sin, and to avoid it. We are not to have sympathy for sin, nor are we to be tolerant and acceptant of sin....

greater avenues than ever before. When we think of the different types of media outlets, printed word, judicial ruling, educational system and various entertainment venues, acceptance of sin is almost mandatory.

The thought has been in the forefront of my mind for some time now: what is our Christian response to these increasingly acceptable sins? Surely the Lord has answered these things through scripture.

The necessity of separating from these abominations has been preached since Old Testament times, yet it has often been lightly heeded. In Deuteronomy 7:1-11, we see that God warns and gives commandment to Israel that they are not to intermingle with the heathen nations before them because their sins would turn the Israelites'

hearts from God. We can see through the course of scripture that they did not heed this warning. My concern has been that we, like them, have been lightly heeding the warnings of the Lord.

In a recent presentation, Apostles Don and Brian McIndoo spoke of the "Emerging Church," that is to say, the changing face of "Christianity" today. Within this movement is this word that is being taught in churches, schools and across media today—"Tolerance."

Tolerance (from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary)—sympathy or indulgence for beliefs or practices differing from or conflicting with one's own; the act of allowing something; the allowable deviation from a standard.

Tolerance is the appreciation of diversity and the ability

to live and let others live. It is the ability to exercise a fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions, practices, religion, nationality and so on differ from one's own.... Though tolerance may seem an impossible exercise in certain situations...being tolerant nonetheless remains key to easing hostile tensions between groups and to helping communities move past intractable conflict (BeyondIntractability.org).

So what is so wrong with this word and idea of tolerance? As Christians, we are called to judge sin as sin, and to avoid it. We are not to have sympathy for sin, nor are we to be tolerant and acceptant of sin in order to accomplish something, as stated in the above paragraph. We are, however, to have love for the sinner and act to call them away from such sins. What is ironic is that tolerance is not shared for the ideals and morals taught in scripture today, which we follow. There is no acceptance by this world for our views against these things which God has deemed an abomination, or for our desire to separate from them. We are called to love all people (2 Nephi 13:29, Matthew 22:37-40, Galatians 5:14), but sin is unacceptable and not permitted in the Kingdom of God (1 Nephi 3:34-35, 1 Nephi 4:52-58, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). So then with our love for others, coupled with the knowledge that sin breeds separation from God, it is our duty to warn others of their folly and point them in the proper direction. It would be

hard to convince someone that some sin is truly wrong when we ourselves do not have or show an aversion to it.

We must be wary about what we expose ourselves to.

Proverbs 6:27-28: *"Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"*

Regardless of how strong we are, when we are continually exposed to sin, something will rub off on us.

2 Peter 2:7-8: *"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (for that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)"*

I am reminded of a class I recently had dealing with DNA evidence collection. The instructor made a statement to us, "Every scene you walk into, you leave some of yourself there, and you take some of that scene with you—it is unavoidable." I think that while we ourselves would not take part in such sins, we slowly become tolerant of them because of our repeated exposures to them.

So what is our response? I hope that for the ministry of our church, and for each of us, we would respond as we read in Numbers 25:1-18, immediately taking action against those things which the Lord has declared abominable, understanding the dangers involved.

Revelation 18:1-5: *"And after these things I saw another*

angel come down from heaven having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto the heavens, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

This world's sins are reaching the heavens. We have been hearing the cry throughout our church: we must get out of Babylon, out of the world. We will continue to work and live in this world, but what is being said in verse 4 of this passage is that we must separate ourselves emotionally, physically, perhaps financially, from the sinfulness of this world.

Romans 1:24-32: *"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural*

use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

This scripture is a stern warning to the church, which we need to listen to in these troublesome times. Those who accept or take pleasure in the sins of this world are guilty as well. That may well translate into our music, reading material, conversations, friendships, television and movie choices, families, etc.

With the help of some friends I came up with a list of sins that are on the forefront of society today, apparent in every city and perhaps in every household in one form or another. My intention is to address each point through God's word and

see how He views it and how we should deal with it. God has called ministry to bear His word, and to warn when danger is perceived (Ezekiel 33:1-10).

I understand that these issues may be very personal to some who may read this study. I want to say that I do not by any means intend to offend anyone. I will say, however, that the gospel of Christ can be and is offensive at times. Brothers and Sisters, the good news of the Gospel is that sin is forgivable. My hope is that by bringing these things into light, repentance can be obtained through the knowledge given. I will also say that I am not attempting to make any personal judgment. I will outline what I have found scripturally concerning each of these issues which are detrimental to our spiritual lives. I do so with the hope that it will be considered and heeded as a warning for the times we live in, for we find this stated in Revelation 22:7: *"Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book."*

Homosexuality—The Lord is very clear on His perfect plan for relationships. We see that from the very beginning, Man and Woman were created for each other. God said that it is not good for man to be alone, so He created woman to be his helpmeet, to be his partner. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of the rampant sin, in large part the sin of homosexuality (Genesis 19:1-24). It was forbidden by the Lord—Leviticus 18:22: *"Thou shalt not*

lie with mankind, as with womankind; it is abomination" Abomination (Strong's 8441)—Something disgusting, i.e.: an abhorrence.

The penalty for this sin under the Law of Moses was death (Leviticus 20:13). We read in Romans 1:24, 26-27, 32 about this sin as well.

This problem may be even closer than a co-worker who is homosexual, or a friend who supports such things. This sin may intrude even into our own families. Never in scripture are we told to hate or mistreat others; rather, Christ says:

"This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

We are called however, to avoid such sins. One who is unwilling to repent of these things is in open rebellion against God, and we must have great care that we are not influenced by such things.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6: 14).

This very issue may be very personal to us, touching our families, co-workers, etc. The world, and especially this nation, are seeking to make homosexuality celebrated, appropriate and common. What, then, is our response? Brothers and sisters, God does not change. He is the same, yesterday, today and forever. If, in the past, He has warned that sin is abominable

and worthy of death, that is still true today.

“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).

We are reminded in the writings of Apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:7-8) that surrounding ourselves with unrighteousness and evil acts vexes (vex—to torment; trouble; distress; plague; worry) our souls. We must separate ourselves from such things as followers of Christ.

Vulgarity—I am sure that in almost all of our jobs we have to deal with vulgarity. I am sure that many of you are like me, that you have heard the obscene, vile language and curse words so often you barely bat an eye when you hear them. I admit that I have become numb to every foul word with the exception of using the Lord’s name in vain, and using the name of Jesus Christ in vain. As if it isn’t bad enough that we are bombarded with foul language and conversations, we then return to our homes and engage in entertainment activities which continue to spout such sinfulness.

Even movies that are specifically for children have profanity in them. From the Motion Picture Association of America for a G-rated movie—some snippets of language may go beyond polite conversation but they are common everyday expressions. From the same guidelines for PG

movies—there may be some profanity and some depictions of violence or brief nudity. Words that would have previously only been heard on cable television (on a select few stations) or in restricted movies are now normal in mainstream television. With all this language bombarding us, it is hard for us not to be affected by it.

We read in Ephesians 4:29 and 31:

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

Strong’s Concordance defines corrupt as rotten, i.e. worthless (Strong’s 4550).

We also read in Colossians 3:8-10:

“But now ye put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man. Which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

Filthy, from Strong’s 148- (from 150 and 3056;) vile conversation. Strong’s 150—Shameful.

In Matthew 12:34-37, Christ says this about the words we speak:

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth

speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

I would find it hard to believe that any of us could imagine our Lord sitting and listening, subjecting Himself to the language, vulgarity, disgusting conversations which we surround and invite within our lives daily. We must remove ourselves from these things.

Sexuality—Advertisers realized many years ago what has become the accepted norm in our society—sex sells. There is hardly a television commercial that goes by which does not take advantage of our society’s hunger for sexuality. Take a moment to look at girl’s clothing during your next trip to the store. Our clothing stores are selling revealing and suggestive clothing that is available for the far younger than pre-teen crowd. How often are we seeing pants and shorts with lettering on the backside? Is there a magazine available which doesn’t have some sort of article dedicated to enhancing sexuality or advertizing such? Even in a *Popular Mechanics* magazine I receive there are sexually oriented advertisements throughout.

Titus 2:3-5: *“The aged*

women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”

Chaste, from Strong's 53—clean. I.e. innocent, modest, perfect.

Discreet, from Strong's 4998—self controlled (moderate as to opinion or passion).

Jacob 2:36: “...For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women.”

The Lord created relationships to be perfect, and to be private. Our bodies, likewise, are to be private. The dangers faced by this increasingly sexual world are the decline of morality, reducing of women to sexual symbols, increasing the sexual temptations to young men and demeaning the necessity for marriage before intimacy.

This does not absolve men from their part of engaging in varying issues regarding sexuality. We must realize that others are watching us. Men walking around without their shirts may not be necessarily bad, but it may be a cause for lust when around members of the opposite sex. We must be aware, men and women, of how we dress, and how we perceive ourselves. Are we wearing something to show off our body? Are we trying to impress someone? This is nothing short of pride,

and may cause a stumbling block for others.

Sexuality isn't just pushed on us in the form of clothing, but apparent in nearly every television show, movie and magazine we see.

Ephesians 5:3: “*But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints.*”

Fornication, from Strong's 4202—harlotry (including adultery and incest). Harlotry, from Random House dictionary means prostitution. Prostitution, from same source, means the act or practice of engaging in sex acts for hire.

While I am not saying that any of us are actively participating in prostitution, it is worth considering that often, through television, movies, books, magazines and internet sites, we pay to participate/find pleasure in watching/reading/listening about sexual things. As Paul stated in the previous verse to the believers in Ephesus, let it not once be named among you.

Continuing on in that reading:

Ephesians 5:5-6: “*For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.*”

Strong's states that to be unclean is to be impure, lewd (Strong's 169). An idolater is

someone who puts anything above God. This could be almost anything, to include the types of entertainment which we take in, despite the exhortation to avoid them. How often do we find ourselves “worshipping” models, actors/actresses and pro athletes, following their fashion styles, relationships, movies, etc? At what point does this become idol worship?

Our taking pleasure in things that should be private, such as sexual relationships (whether following them such as speaking with friends or co-workers about them), reading about or watching them, are shameful as members of the Body of Christ. We must deny ourselves from these things. The desire to take part in such activities is the natural man's desire; however, we know as we read in Mosiah that the natural man is an enemy to God.

How do we address these things? Paul lists many things (2 Timothy 3:2-4) that will be ever present in the coming days (our day) to Timothy, exhorting him to teach against such things, and states (2 Timothy 3:5) “...from such turn away.”

Christ, when speaking to His disciples, says this about offenses:

Matthew 18:8-9: “*Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off; and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee*

to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."

Offend, from Strong's 4624—from 4625, to entrap, i.e. to trip up (stumble or entice to sin). Strong's 4625—a trap stick, i.e. snare (cause of displeasure or sin).

Christ warns us that it is better to go to an extreme to avoid those temptations which cause us to trip up and sin. What are the precautions you are willing to take? We must take every precaution to guard ourselves, and our children from sexual sins.

Violence—A study taken by TV-Free America (copyright 2007) shows these statistics:

- Number of murders seen on TV by the time an average child finishes elementary school: 8,000
- Number of violent acts seen on TV by age 18: 200,000
- Percentage of Americans who believe TV violence helps precipitate real life mayhem: 79

Violence has become almost a normal part our entertainment, perhaps part of our life. For centuries violent acts have been a source of entertainment, from the Coliseum of ancient Rome where thousands of citizens cheered brutality and death, to modern movies, television and professional sports. I will admit enjoying watching the technical aspect of professional fighting; however, this can very quickly turn into the love of violence and bloodshed. In movies and television, violence and gore are constantly

pushing the envelope, as well as making the death of a human being something casual and honorable.

There are very clear instructions in scripture about when violence is acceptable. In all cases it is when it is condoned by God. Moroni was given instruction from God for when to kill, and by scriptural accounts he was very good at it. But we read that he did not joy in killing, but in protecting his family, his religion and his countrymen, Alma 21:127-139, 146. We also read of Nephi being commanded by God to kill Laban (1 Nephi 1:110-115) and the Israelites being commanded to kill every man, woman, child and living thing (1 Samuel 15:2-4). In all cases, violence was instructed by God.

What does God say?

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

Psalms 11:5: *"The Lord trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth."*

2 Peter 3:9: *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."*

Galatians 5:22-26 gives us a listing of fruits, products, of the Spirit of God. This listing gives no place for the love, pleasure or entertainment from the suffering of others. Holding up

and honoring violence with our time, money and attention is not the action of a follower of Christ.

Co-habitation—I can remember my wife recalling to me what her co-workers told her when they heard she was getting married: You haven't even lived together, how do you know it will even work? We find this mindset everywhere, from friends and co-workers, to television and movies, and even to some of our own families.

It is this attitude that is detrimental to our souls. What God has placed in order is perfect. A relationship is capable of being perfect in the Lord's eyes if all things in that relationship are done HIS way. There is no need to "try before you buy" in a relationship when God and His commandments are at the center.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20: *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

I believe this scripture clearly presents the fact that sex is dedicated solely to the covenant of marriage. Verse 16 states that being joined to another person makes you one flesh, just as Christ described the relationship of husband and wife. The word Joined used here means—to glue, to stick, cleave (Strong's 2853).

1 Thessalonians 4:3-4: *"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;..."*

The Greek word used here for Vessel means—a vessel, implement, equipment or apparatus (literally or figuratively a wife as contributing to the usefulness of the husband). We are to have our wife or husband in sanctification (holiness) and honor.

I am certain it is possible for a man and a woman who are romantically involved together to live in the same house without engaging in compromising or sexual activity. However, we must be aware that we are to be examples of a child of Christ at all times, in all places without exception. The perception of a couple living together out of wedlock is that they are having an intimate, sexual relationship. This is well understood throughout this nation. That being said, what impression are you giving to others, even though your relationship may be totally chaste and honest?

Paul tells the church this:

1 Thessalonians 5:21-23: *"Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

We are to abstain (to hold oneself back voluntarily, esp. from something regarded as improper or unhealthy, Random House dictionary) from anything that can appear to be evil.

Peter also addresses this:

1 Peter 2:11-12: *"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."*

This Greek word for conversation means—behavior (Strong's 391); our behaviors should show forth good works, and the lifestyle taught in the Gospel.

This may be a very difficult place to be found in. Perhaps one is living with their boyfriend/girlfriend because they can't afford to live apart, have nowhere to go, are being pressured to do so or can't bring themselves to make the necessary separation. We find these promises made in scripture:

1 Corinthians 10:13: *"There is no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above*

that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

God respects our effort when we are trying to do right:

James 4:7-10: *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*

There is a right and honest way to go about relationships. We must guard ourselves against temptation. There are enough opportunities for temptation in a relationship without living together. Even those who are of utmost moral character can be tempted, especially when time and opportunity are presented. Seek the Lord's plan in your relationship; do not fall into the trap laid by the devil which is ever present in this world regarding relationships.

Divorce—

According to Enrichment Journal on the divorce rate in America:

- The divorce rate in America for first marriage is 41%
- The divorce rate in America for second marriage is 60%
- The divorce rate in America for third marriage is 73% (taken from divorcerate.org)

The issue of divorce was addressed by Moses in the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 24:1-3. By reading this passage one could say that divorce is

condoned by God. However, Christ is perfectly clear when addressing this issue when being questioned by the Pharisees.

Mark 10: 2-9: *“And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them. For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. And for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave to his wife. And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”*

From the beginning, God intended man and woman to become one, united in a covenant with Him. When we think about marriage, we must think about the example for marriage, Christ’s relationship with the church. We see that Christ has chosen one church, not many, to be His bride. He has not left it because He tired of it, or because the church wronged Him. He has loved His church from the beginning, so much that He was willing to die for it, Ephesians 5:25-27. This is an example to us on how a relationship should be.

Christ did give one basis for divorce, which we find in:

3 Nephi 5: 79-80: *“It hath*

been written, that whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement. Verily, verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery; and whoso shall marry her who is divorced, committeth adultery.”

What is that basis for divorce that Christ has given? Fornication—having a sexual relationship with someone who is not your spouse. It is not because you get tired of them, or because of disagreement. Perhaps we in the church have not been faithful to the commandments of Christ in this aspect of life, and because of that there have been many families which have broken, children who have wandered (not having united parents) and an acceptance of worldly values.

Malachi 2:14-16: *“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.”*

The Lord hates to see a

marriage broken. He mourns the loss of a family. In searching the scriptures, it is plain to see that a family is to consist of a Father and a Mother. This combination, when built in Godliness and scriptural living, is the perfect family God has ordained.

So what do we do about divorce? Perhaps the answer is easier than we think. God is able to heal all wounds. God is able to open all lines of communication. As members of the Church of Christ, we must understand that divorce, absent adultery as its cause, is a SIN, plain and simple. If you find your marriage dissolving, first seek God, then seek your minister. We cannot simply give up on our marriages because of trouble, anger, pride or hurt. We, as a church and members of the Body of Christ, produce these same issues to Christ, who is to be our husband. Rather than giving up on us, He has provided a way to be reunited with Him.

The sin of divorce is forgivable. To repent of such a sin is undoubtedly a difficult process. After all, the process that led to divorce was probably painful, with plenty of hurt on both sides. We must ask for God to soften our hearts, to help us overcome the anger, hurt or pride which is certainly there. Then we can come to the Lord, as David writes:

Psalm 51:17: *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”*

As ministry, we cannot turn a blind eye to the troubles facing the families of our church. We must not be afraid of doing what is right, of saving the sinner. We will continue to see the dissolving of our families unless we begin to stand firm upon what God has established through His Son as the gospel.

Lack of respect for authority—I find this attitude daily in my line of work. There has been a declining respect for authority over the past several generations. I believe this has happened in part because of the decline in true families (father, mother), the decline in moral standards and because of tolerance which I addressed earlier.

The reality is we all must answer to a higher authority than us. Whether we like it or not, one day we will stand before our Maker and His word will be followed, regardless of our feelings toward it.

Law is ordained by God and His law is what maintains order in the Church.

God places men in authority over the church, His ordained ministry. These are men who are given authority to preach, teach, administer, exhort and govern the church through God's laws.

Mosiah 11:112-113: *“Therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin that were in the church, should be admonished by the church. And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests, delivered up unto the priests by the teachers; and the priests*

brought them before Alma, which was the high priest.”

As Alma seeks wisdom from the Lord, we find the Lord directing him in verse 137, *“Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he hath committed.”*

We must adhere to the laws which God has put in order, and those called and ordained to oversee those things. Respect for laws and authority starts with a person who respects and follows God's laws, and the responsibility given His called ministry.

We read this in Proverbs 22:6:

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

When we as parents cease to enforce rules and to provide order, our children will begin to fail.

We also read in Proverbs 23:13-14:

“Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”

These seem like harsh instructions, but what Solomon is telling parents is that if we do not make our children adhere to rules and order, and do not teach them that there is accountability and authority above them, they are on a path to destruction. We do not have to look far to see the folly that invades families when parents

are not maintaining discipline with their children.

Paul states in Romans 13:1-7:

“Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually on this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”

While we may not agree with certain laws or taxes, we must remember and teach that rulers have power from God. We have a responsibility to follow the laws of the land so long as they coincide with the Laws of God. We are given to know through scripture when we are within our scripture rights to rebel against governments and laws. We find this in:

Alma 20:33-34: *“And now as Moroni knew the intention of*

the Lamanites, that it was their intention to destroy their brethren, or to subject them and bring them into bondage, that they might establish a kingdom unto themselves, over all the land; And he also knowing that it was the only desire of the Nephites to preserve their lands, their liberty, and their church, therefore he thought it no sin that he should defend them by stratagem; therefore he found, by his spies, which course the Lamanites were to take."

Alma 21:38-41: "Yea, we see that Amalickiah, because he was a man of cunning devices, and a man of many flattering words, that he led away the hearts of many people to do wickedly; Yea, and to seek to destroy the church of God, and to destroy the foundation of liberty which God hath granted unto them, or the blessing God had sent upon the face of the land, for the righteous' sake. And now it came to pass that when Moroni, which was the chief commander of the armies of the Nephites, had heard of these dissensions, he was angry with Amalickiah. And it came to pass that he rent his coat; and he took a piece thereof, and wrote upon it, In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives and our children; and he fastened it upon the end of a pole thereof."

In our friendships, in entertainment and growing in society (the "question everything" mindset which is becoming ever more prevalent) we are seeing a growing lack of respect for authority. We must remember, teach and hold fast to the Biblical principle of laws and

authorities who are to oversee things in this life.

Slothfulness—There is a growing attitude which can be easily seen throughout our nation. This attitude and lifestyle is most certainly unchristian. I may, because of the nature of my employment, see this as more apparent than most, but it is most certainly evident all around us—Slothfulness/Laziness. Slothful—Disinclined to work or exertion (American Heritage Dictionary).

I am not looking to make any political statement here, but I will relate something I heard on the news which points directly to where we are as a nation. It was made by a woman who was being interviewed in support of the current president during his campaign for office. She made the statement, "I don't have to worry about putting gas in my car, I don't worry about paying my mortgage anymore...."

In my line of work, I run into people that are living off of the hard work of others on a daily basis. I am not going to say that social programs are bad, however there is a Biblical principle that we find given in Genesis in chapter 2 when God tells Adam that he is to dress the garden. From the beginning, man had a job to do.

I can't exactly put a finger on when, but perhaps it was after the World War II generation that this nation started to become a nation of Takers, rather than Givers. Today we see 2 and 3 generations of families living off of the efforts of others,

whether through government programs, or living off of parents/grandparents, etc. In my line of work I see this daily, children learning from parents (who learned from their parents) how to work the system, to be housed, fed and clothed by the efforts of others, while making no efforts themselves.

This is not to say that if someone is having a difficulty in life that we are to turn our backs on them. We read in Mosiah 2:28 & 36:

"And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; And now, if God, who hath created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives, and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how had ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have, one to another?" (See also Mosiah 2:43-44).

We also read of the New Testament church:

Acts 2:44-45: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

I am not advocating having all things common as a church, in that the church distributes goods to its members. I will, however, make this statement: to have all things common is to do as this group had done, to see that all men had their needs attended to. This is a choice

which the members took upon themselves, their love for each other causing them to see to each other's needs. We have this now in our church. When a

when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at

tion which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

We have to separate ourselves from those things that God has repeatedly warned us of, through prophecy, in scripture and in sermons....

brother or sister has a need, it is provided through the charity of another member. How many of us have been recipients of meals when a family member was ill, or have received financial aid to help in times of stress? This type of giving is appropriate, and blessed by God.

That being said, it is not appropriate for a member to continually take of the goods and services of others without making the efforts to support themselves. We are required to work, to labor to support ourselves, from the minister (Mosiah 9:57, 59, 11:155, Alma 1:37-39), to the individual (Mosiah 11:154, 1:46, 2 Nephi 4:26).

Paul addresses the church in Thessalonica, whose members were having difficulty with this very problem.

2 Thessalonians 3:8-12: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even

all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

Men, it is your duty to provide for your families (Ephesians 5:28-29). Women, it is your duty to be industrious (Proverbs 31:10-31). Our children will learn these Christian principles through our example.

I would like to offer a few closing thoughts. We are to be a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9-10), who are separate from the world and its ideals. We have to separate ourselves from those things that God has repeatedly warned us of, through prophecy, in scripture and in sermons. What should we do, as members who desire to follow God's word in this world?

2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 & 14-15: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradi-

I heard a quote once that has stuck with me—Sunlight is the best disinfectant. By bringing these issues to light I hope we as a church will deal with them, for they do exist within our membership.

I also understand the things I have studied here may be difficult and perhaps upsetting to some. I would again like to state that I am not trying to bring offense or accusation to anyone, but would remind you that this gospel is offensive to sin. Christ speaks of this in Luke 12:49-53. Doing right will cause division from those who refuse to do the same. Let us remember this:

2 Nephi 6:77-78: "Do not say that I have spoken hard things against you; for if ye do, ye will revile against the truth: for I have spoken the words of your Maker. I know that the words of truth are hard against all uncleanness; but the righteous fear them not, for they love the truth, and are not shaken.

ISAIAH ELEVEN: THE GATHERING



By Apostle Don McIndoo

As we continue with our study of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, we are now ready to read verses eleven and twelve. “(11) *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the*

PART 2 The Kingdom of God

sea. (12) And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.” The things described in these verses will have great importance in our lives. Let’s analyze them as we go.

Verse 11. – “And it shall come to pass in that day....” Again, we read **“in that day.”** It would be well to remember that in God’s timetable a day can represent a long period of time during which a definite, specified process continues. It need not refer simply to a period of 24 hours, and in this case it certainly does not. **“...That the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people,....”** The Prophet very specifically identifies the day to which this prophecy relates; it will be the second

time that the Lord’s people, Israel, will be recovered from a great dispersion that had occurred. Now the first recovery of Israel from a captive state took place when they were brought up out of Egypt and established in the lands God had previously promised to Abraham and his descendants. This second recovery of Israel could not relate to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, for it also includes the recovery of the “ten lost tribes” **“...which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.”**

The scattering of Israel had taken them throughout the northern regions of the Middle East (**“Assyria and Hamath”**) where they were carried by King Tilgath-pilneser and then later dispersed even further by conquering tribes into other parts of the Orient. Their dispersion included the northern portions of

Africa ("**Egypt, Pathros and Cush**") and through the southern portions of the Middle East ("**Elam and Shinar**"). We are told they had been scattered even to the "**...islands of the sea.**"

Most commentators consider this to refer to the islands of the Mediterranean Sea. Others are more far-sighted and include the isles and shores known to the Phoenicians, early maritime explorers with whom Israel had close contact since the days of King David. It is interesting to note that there is a lot of evidence today that even the Americas were known to those ancient Phoenician explorers.

We who accept the Book of Mormon as an added witness to the veracity of the Holy Bible know well that the Nephites, relying on the prophecies of Isaiah, considered their new homeland to be one of those "**...islands of the sea.**" We quote Jacob as he teaches his people, as found in 2 Nephi 7: "Nevertheless, we have been driven out of the land of our inheritance; but we have been led to a better land: For the Lord has made the sea our path, and we are upon an isle of the sea. But great are the promises of the Lord unto those who are upon the isles of the sea;" (2 Nephi 7:34 – 36).

Many years ago I was visiting Brother Dick Wheaton when he and Velma lived in Gallup, New Mexico. As we were talking, the title of a book on their coffee table piqued my attention; *Indian Oratory*, W. C. Vanderworth, Editor. Looking through it I found this interesting note.

Vanderworth is quoting the words of Red Jacket, a Seneca chief who lived between 1752 and 1830: "*Brother! Listen to what I say. There was a time when our forefathers owned this great island. The Great Spirit had made it for use of Indians*" (p. 39).

Verse 12. - "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations...." Again, as in verse 10, the Prophet Isaiah tells us the Lord will lift up "**and ensign.**" The Hebrew word indicates a flag, or banner, such as a military leader might lift high before his followers. That banner around which the people will rally is Jesus Christ and His precious word. It will be set up before the nations of the world "**...and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel,....**" This refers to none other but remnants of the ten northern tribes that had been carried away by Assyria and placed among the Medes. They would later be scattered even further by the Medes, Persians, Scythians, etc. But "*in that day*" a remnant is to be assembled by the Lord. Here the word "**assemble**" is synonymous with the word "**recover**" used in Verse 11.

"...And gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Now the prophet speaks of Judah, and she was certainly scattered to the four corners of the earth after Titus conquered and burned Jerusalem. The surviving Jews were carried to Rome, from whence they would be dispersed throughout the Empire. And even much earlier, sad to

say, when King Cyrus of Persia allowed the Jews to return and build up Jerusalem once again, many of the Jews scattered throughout the Persian Empire elected to stay. There still remain pockets of Jewish believers scattered throughout the Muslim nations of the Middle East. Through the years they have continued, even though terribly persecuted during some of the reigns of Muslim kings.

The "**four corners of the earth**" refers to the four quadrants of the compass, north, south, east and west. In another prophecy to Israel the Lord says through His servant, Isaiah, "*Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;*" (Isaiah 43:5, 6).

I believe there is an important question we should pose at this point: Do the Holy Scriptures contain any clues as to when this time of gathering shall take place? The Book of Mormon is just as explicit about the recovery of Israel as is the Holy Bible. As a matter of fact this very Chapter Eleven of Isaiah is quoted in Chapter Nine of 2 Nephi, verses 116 through 131. But the prophets of the Book of Mormon also tell of something that must take place before this gathering of the dispersed of Israel will be accomplished. To do as Nephi had suggested; *i.e.*, "*...hear ye the words of the prophet, which were written unto all the house of Israel, and liken*

them unto yourselves,...”, we need to know what must be done first, for we are to be involved.

“And they who shall not be destroyed, shall be scattered among all nations. But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers, that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth, unto the lands of their inheritance. And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion from the isles of the sea, and from the four parts of the earth;” (2 Nephi 7:11 – 13). This prophecy tells us exactly what must happen before God will recover His scattered people Israel – they must first come to a knowledge of Jesus Christ, believe in Him and accept Him as their long-awaited Messiah.

The Apostle Paul gives us further understanding of this marvelous event: “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins” (Romans 11:25 – 27). Now the key to the time when this prophesied event will occur is found in the expression, “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.” Again, we must turn to the Book of Mormon to identify

this time, for this is an expression that many Bible scholars do not understand and misinterpret.

Nephi explained, “And behold, are we not broken off from the house of Israel; and are we not a branch of the house of Israel? And now, the thing which our father meaneth concerning the grafting in of the natural branches through the fullness of the Gentiles, is, that in the latter days, when our seed shall have dwindled in unbelief, yea, for the space of many years and many generations, after the Messiah shall be manifested in body unto the children of men, then shall the fullness of the gospel of the Messiah come unto the Gentiles, and from the Gentiles unto the remnant of our seed” (1 Nephi 4:15, 16).

The fullness of the Gospel has been restored to the Gentiles in this latter day through the restoration of the Church of Christ and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. It has gone to a remnant of the seed of the House of Joseph. The church, together with the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and His divinely called ministry has been established among the Mayan people of Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo.

We must remember that the seed of Lehi is also to be found in the heredity of many Latin American people, for they are descendants of both Spanish and Native American peoples. Many of these people qualify as being, as Nephi explained, a “...remnant of our seed.” And that work is now opening up in many parts of Latin America.

Now Nephi expands his teaching about God’s purposes among the remnant of his seed: “Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea; Yea, and all the people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos, from the four quarters of the earth;” (1 Nephi 5:253 – 255). What did the prophet Zenos have to say about the gathering in of the dispersed tribes of Israel?

We will find this in the 3rd chapter of the Book of Jacob: “Wherefore, let us go to, and labor with our mights, for this last time; for behold the end draweth nigh: and this is for the last time that I shall prune my vineyard. Graft in the branches; begin at the last, that they may be first, and that the first may be last, and dig about the trees, both old and young, the first and the last, and the last and the first, that all may be nourished once again for the last time” (Jacob 3:126, 127).

As we study this prophetic “parable of the olive tree” of Zenos we find the Father speaking to His servant, Jesus Christ, about the salvation of His people Israel. As we study this parable we realize that the “*last branch*” referred to represents the descendants of Lehi and his party who were led to America. Their “*grafting in*” signifies their conversion to Jesus Christ, unifying them once again with God’s people Israel, bringing forth those good fruits meet for salvation.

So we can now see that the words of Isaiah, found in verse 11, “**And it shall come to pass**

in that day...," certainly relate to this day and to this people. That day which will see the recovery of the scattered tribes of Israel has begun. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the restoration of the fullness of the Gospel were the first steps. This was followed many years later by the establishment of the church and the ministry of Jesus Christ among our people in Yucatan, Campeche and Quintana Roo. The first phases of "that day" covered many years and the work has just begun. But be assured, you live in "that day" of which Isaiah prophesied. I would like to conclude this segment of our study with a spiritual witness given to our brother, Plácido Koyoc Yam.

In 1994 Brother Plácido was given a very vivid dream. He related this dream to Brother Jay Moser and myself some time later. In the dream he was walking through the forest on a trail. He suddenly came out of the forest and saw a large agricultural area being harvested. He recognized one of the men doing the harvesting. It was Evangelist Cayetano Alfaro, a long-time friend who had been instrumental in bringing the Gospel to the village where Plácido lived. Of interest is that in the field being harvested there were two flags flying on the burned stumps of two trees; one, the flag of Mexico and the other of the United States, showing a relationship that was involved in the harvest.

Closer to Plácido was a man, dressed in white, sitting on a rock and reading a book. When the man looked up and

saw Plácido, he arose and drew near. He extended the book to Plácido and said, "Read this." What Plácido read were the verses 11 through 13 of Isaiah Eleven about the gathering of the scattered people of Israel, though he did not know where they were found. Then the man said to him, "*This day has begun the fulfillment of this prophecy among your people.*"

Upon awakening Plácido studied his Book of Mormon until he found this prophecy in 2 Nephi, Chapter Nine. As the Prophet Zenos had prophesied, this work shall begin with the conversion of the descendants of Israel upon this land. That step has been taken, and within the first decade of this twenty-first century the work has expanded into Africa, Asia and South America.

Isaiah and other prophets speak of this gathering of Judah and Israel. But to where, and to what shall they be gathered is seldom specified. We are indebted to Jeremiah for identifying the point of their gathering: "*In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers*" (Jeremiah 3:18). Yes, they will be gathered again into the lands their forefathers had been given.

The Book of Mormon prophets were also very specific about this. Mormon prophesied, saying: "*And now behold, I say unto you, that when the Lord shall see fit, in his wisdom, that these sayings shall come unto the Gen-*

tiles, according to his word, then ye may know that the covenant which the Father hath made with the children of Israel, concerning their restoration to the lands of their inheritance, is already beginning to be fulfilled; And ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled; and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel;" (3 Nephi 13:54, 55).

We can assuredly do as Nephi desired, and relate Isaiah's prophecy to this day and to this people.

We will conclude this study of Isaiah Eleven in the next issue with Part Three: The Conclusion.

COLLINS LOCAL NEWS

Good morning! It has been a long time since I have written to you, my brothers and sisters. About a month and a half ago (May) we had our annual business meeting and elected our pastor and other officers to serve for the upcoming year. Our brother Jack Martin has agreed to continue as our pastor for the time being. He has told us that he and Betty will probably be spending the winter in Oklahoma with their children. It is becoming increasingly difficult for them to come to church here and also to maintain their home. Goodness knows we all understand, but it saddens our hearts to hear and accept the changes that are upon us now. I would ask your prayers for these two special people, and also for our little congregation as well.

Our brother Curtis Yates will serve as the assistant pastor, and Bob Eddy will continue to help conduct services by teaching Sunday School and preaching when called upon.

Paul and Sharon Liekness have returned from their wintering in Texas. Also Curtis and Margarite Yates spent the winter in warmer climates. I think they traveled to Arizona and Texas, visiting relatives and friends, before arriving back to Missouri in March. They stayed a short time in the same area as Paul and Sharon in Texas and got to visit with them. In either case, we are only too happy to have them all home again and to see their smiling faces at church.

We have had some sadness here as our sister Marjory Routh has lost her husband R.C. R.C. had struggled along

with Alzheimer's disease for the past three years. Marjory took care of him and saw to his needs until he took a turn for the worse and had to spend a short time in a nursing home facility which cares for Alzheimer patients. We all miss his kind ways and quick wit. He was a good man and loved his family very much, and all his friends.

In May we received word that our brother Larry Kelly also had died. Larry had served as our Sunday School superintendent here in Collins many years ago. He was a quiet man and a joy to know. In spite of the sadness of the occasion it was good to see the family again and share a few moments of our lives together in consolation.

The world keeps turning and time keeps passing. Life happens to all of us—some for good and some for not so good. We are alive in a momentous time, according to the Scriptures. We must hold on to the teachings of Christ and strengthen one another as the days go by. We cannot afford to let our guard down because when that happens, Satan is so ready to take advantage and destroy, wreck, and ruin our lives and souls.

I have a few sermon quotes I would like to share with you. I know they're not new ideas, but something to consider and ponder upon for a moment or so.

- *Discipline is necessary.*
- *How much of a problem solver are you? How much of a problem maker are you?*
- *The world has an influence on our*

lives—we have choices.

- *We need to be armed with the whole armor of God—not those things that will weigh us down—like Saul's armor.*
- *Think righteously and speak wisely.*
- *There's a difference between spirituality and Christianity.*
- *SOMEDAY is a more "convenient" day than THIS day.*
- *God can change things that we cannot.*
- *Are we a Christian nation if we're ashamed of God?*
- *Unless we change our direction we are likely to end up where we are headed!*

*Your reporter,
Czerna Kauffman*

INDEPENDENCE EAST LOCAL REPORT

We send our love and greetings, and with thankfulness we'd like to share our blessings with you.

The East Local's annual business meeting was held on April 19th, 2010. Our pastor this year is Elder Bick Brockman, and our assistant pastor is Elder Rick Olson. The Sunday School Superintendent is Priest Rusty Granger, with the Assistant Superintendent being Br. Ammon Seibel.

Since our last report Apostle Smith (Buzz) Brickhouse made a missionary trip to India, accompanied by Elder Dennis Trudgen from the Bradley, Michigan local; Brother Buzz and Sister Sue Brickhouse traveled to Kenya, accompanied by Priest Bill and Sister Karin Malone; and Bro. Buzz and Elder Bob Oldham went on a missionary trip to Nigeria. In addition, Apostle Frank and Sister Carol Fann, Apostle Michael McGhee and Sister Michele Fisher completed a missionary trip to the Philippines.

Sadly, for us, we have lost two of our loved ones. Sister Jeanne Brantner passed away May 15th after having been diagnosed four years previously



Ordination of Bruce Haines by, Apostle Roland Sarratt (right), assisted by Elder Charles Brantner (left).

with stage-four lung cancer. Sister Melissa Seibel passed away June 10th after suffering with diabetes and cancer. They have left us physically, but remain in our hearts forever. All take joy in knowing that they now rest in the arms of our loving Savior.

Happily, we report a calling that took place at the Michigan Reunion on June 20th. Our Brother Bruce Haines was called to the office of a Priest through Elder Adam Porter during the prayer and testimony portion of the Sunday sacrament service. There were many that stood and bore witness to the call. The East Local gave their acceptance vote, and the ordination took place July 28th, performed by Apostle Roland Sarratt and assisted by Elder Charles Brantner.

Others of our local have been through health difficulties recently. Elder Steve McGhee and Br. Mike Smith each had surgery on their shoulders; Alex Gahner had ear surgery; Brother Sam Kidd had surgery for a ruptured appendix; Elder Charles Brantner was hospitalized for a bleeding ulcer; Sister Helen Kidd was hospitalized for pneumonia; Sister Pat McGhee had surgery on her ankle once again; and Sister Becky

Olson had surgery on her foot. Please remember them in your prayers as they continue to heal. Also, please remember two of our elderly sisters, Ruth Brockman and Lorraine Welton, in your prayers. They are in much need of God's hand of comfort for them and their families.

*May God bless you all is our prayer,
Deb Haines*

PHOENIX LOCAL REPORT

By Rebecca Yates

In this year's Vacation Church School program some of the children sang a song about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that contained the phrase; "Hot, hotter, hottest..." Although they were using those words to describe the fire the men would be thrown into for not worshipping the idol as they were commanded by Nebuchadnezzar, I couldn't help but think it also accurately describes our summer weather here in Phoenix. That being said, the warm weather didn't stop the kids in this year's VCS from having a great time. They spent five wonderful days working on crafts, singing songs, and learning of some amazing heroes of the Bible and Book of Mormon. I think kids and teachers were all worn out by the end of the week, but it was well worth the busy schedule for everyone involved.

We were blessed with some visitors this year from Colorado. Liza, Cody, Travis and Meleah Hedrick were home again with us for the week. They also brought some friends along; Julie Larson and her children Katelyn, Sydney and David Larson. Julie helped Jennifer Yates with the 3-4-year-old class, which had eight students this year, so the extra hand was much appreciated. It's always nice to have visitors with us any time of year.

As always the summer months can keep our regular attendance numbers down. We have many from our local who travel to the various activities throughout the summer. This year was no different. We had several attending the Washington Youth Retreat, Colorado Reunion, Idaho Reunion, Yucatan Youth Camp, and the Teen Camp and Missouri Reunion. Even though our local members were often traveling, we were lucky enough to get a few visitors here as well. Not only did we have friends come for our Vacation Church School, but Joanie, Cameron, Sasha, and Natasha Gill spent a few days with us as they traveled to the States for Teen

Camp. Although they miss their homes and families while away, we are thankful to have the opportunity to spend time with brothers and sisters from across the country and the world.

The number of young ones in our local continues to grow. Asher Yates was born May 27 to proud parents Aadam and Rebecca Yates. He is of course adorable (at least his mom thinks so!). He will soon be joined by another little one. Gary and Alesha Jacobsen are expecting their fourth child in September, also a little boy. There is no shortage of children in our local and it's wonderful to see the room filled with so many young faces each Sunday and Wednesday.

Our local will be growing in number in another way soon as well. We not only have births, but we have relocations. Gerry Case recently received a new position at work, one that moves his family here to Phoenix. We are so excited to have Gerry, Cindy, Caleb and Jeremiah Case here as a part of our local. We know there are many stresses involved with a move; buying and selling a home, leaving friends and loved ones, and packing up and traveling to a new place. We look forward to them being here and pray for a smooth and easy transition for their family.

The Young Peoples and Junior Young Peoples groups have been keeping very busy with activities over the past few months. The Junior Young Peoples group has had picnics, played volleyball, done crafts and several other activities, including a few with the older youth group as well. Our Young Peoples group has weekly activities that include: BBQ's, studies, work projects, scavenger hunts, ice skating, swimming and many other activities. One of our favorite yearly events is our salsa competition and Mexican Dinner. This fundraiser is always well attended and it's great to get to try so many delicious homemade salsas! This year's winners were Kenny Shaw taking third place, Joel Yates coming in second and Rebecca

Galvan winning the first prize. All the salsas are always amazing and it's so hard to choose which one you like the best—it requires a lot of sampling! The salsa dinner is an old favorite, but the group also had some new firsts for activities. They invited several members of our local, those who met a specific age requirement, to spend the evening eating and visiting with the younger members of the local at their first Words of Wisdom Dinner. The young people provided the food and their guests provided the wisdom. It was a great opportunity for the youth to spend time with other members of the local and share life experiences with each other. The evening was a big hit with all who attended and will be something the group definitely does again. There is so much wisdom to be gained from the experiences of those who have already gone through many of the things the youth are facing in their lives right now.

As we endure the summer heat here in Phoenix, we continue to find joy in the daily blessings the Lord sends our way. He answers our prayers, speaks to us through the messages He gives His servants to share, and provides us with so many opportunities to see His hand working in our lives. We rejoice to know that it is not only just with us here in Phoenix that the Lord provides these things, but to His people wherever they may be found. Our prayers are for those continued blessings for our brothers and sisters.

NOTICES

2010 CAMPS & REUNIONS

- **Minnesota Reunion:** September 3 - 5. Contact: Elder Merlin Eddy at 651-438-9738, or Elder Peter Gould at 218-586-2774.
- **Women's Retreat:** October 1-2, at the Lake Maurer Retreat Center, Excelsior Springs, Missouri, for women 18 years and older. Cost: \$35 if registration is received by August 31, and \$40 afterwards. Registrations are available on the retreat website: <http://home.comcast.net/~ccwr/index.htm>, or by contacting Coordinator Jane Ann Carmichael, 14930 Tomasha Drive, Independence, MO 64055, (816) 478-7166. This year's theme is: "...When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye are only in the service of your God" Mosiah 1:49.
- **Brant-Norfolk Reunion:** October 9-10 in Teeterville, Ontario, Canada. Contact: Marn Vieveen at marnie.vieveen@sympatico.ca or Elder Michael Bevaart at

eighteen30@sympatico.ca.

- **Collins Rally:** October 17, at the Collins Local, Missouri. Contact Elder James Martin at 417-275-4424.
- **Arizona Reunion:** November 26-28, at the Phoenix Local. Contact Elder Gordon McCann at 6020569-2341 or gpjmccann@cox.net, Elder Jim Yates, Jr. at 602-692-4205 or jimyatesjr@yahoo.com, or Priest Glenn Orsted at 623-780-8764 or gorsted@gmail.com.

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.

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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:

Pat McCann (Committee Chairman)

18808 N. 30th St.
Phoenix, AZ 85050

Marlene Cobb

630 S Pickwick
Springfield, MO 65802

June Haines

11589 Genuine Rd
Clare, MI 48617

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 W. Oldham at rwoldham1@sbcglobal.net, or any member of the Board.

PRIESTHOOD VISITATION

If you or someone you know (member or non-member) would like to be visited by a member of the Priesthood of the Church of Christ, please call or write to the Council of Apostles at Church Headquarters in Independence. The phone numbers and addresses are listed on the inside front cover.



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- Zion and the Temple of the Lord

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