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Z I O N ' S   O U T P O S T   I N C .

An Independent branch of the Restoration

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O C T O B E R   1 9 8 6   N E W S L E T T E R

The papers for the incorporation of Zion's Outpost, Inc. as a religious organization have been filed with the Kansas secretary of state. The application for tax exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service is still pending. Our intent for incorporation is to allow those who still believe in the Restoration of Christ's Church to worship according to the original beliefs and tenents of the Church as organized by Joseph Smith, Jr. in 1830, and as reorganized in 1860 by Joseph Smith, III. We have not tried to establish a "new church", but are seeking to preserve and fulfill the purposes of the Church of Jesus Christ.

At the September business meeting, the branch voted unanimously to extend a bid for the purchase of a church in the southeast part of Wichita. We feel that a permanent place of worship would be helpful for the growth and expansion of the body of Christ. We are truly thankful for all the many expressions of encouragement and gifts toward the payment of earnest money for the contract on the building.

A letter from our pastor, Gary R. Whiting, has been mailed to approximately 500 saints explaining the reasons behind our departure from the Webb Road Congregation, and our intended purposes as an Independent Branch of the Restoration. Because of several misrepresentations on the part of Central Kansas District officers, and the Regional Administrator, it has been necessary for us to continue to defend our right to worship and to clarify statements about our group which have been both false and libelous. We represent Jesus Christ and his restored Church. We are answerable to Him for our actions and not to men. As Peter emphatically declared, "It is better to obey God, than to obey men." We have not participated in any ordinances in the name of the Church. We worship in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and have never publically stated that we were acting in any official capacity of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. We believe that it is our religious and constitutional right to worship our Maker, and to declare His Gospel and the warning voice to the inhabitants of the world. We are saddened that it is no longer possible for us to be a part of the institutional church, but we nevertheless declare ourselves still to be members in good standing of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

Application's for membership in Zion's Outpost, Inc. are currently available from the branch. You may pick one up or they will be mailed to you upon request. Membership in Zion's Outpost, Inc is not a test of fellowship, and we do not encourage anyone to drop their membership with the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. The only restriction placed on non-members of Zion's Outpost, Inc. is that they refrain from voting in business meetings.

The expressed intent of this newsletter and all future editions is to promote and to teach the plain and precious parts of the Gospel of the Lamb. To declare the teachings of the Gospel as they are found in the scriptures of the Restoration, and to witness of the Spirit of Christ that

bears fruit in the lives of our congregation. We also want to provide materials and resources which can be used to increase our awareness of exactly what the scriptures teach. Currently a computerized scripture study program is available in IBM format that accesses the KJV New Testament, the Inspired New Testament, the 1908 Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine & Covenants. A complete concordance of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine & Covenants is available either on disk or in hard cover. The Old Testament will soon be available in both King James and Inspired version, as well as a complete concordance of the Inspired New Testament. The computer study materials are available through Herald House or locally by contacting Daryle Hager, Bob Giertz, or Gary Whiting. The concordances are available in limited numbers only [locally at present] until funds can be developed to produce numerous copies. Prices for these concordances have not yet been determined. Marking guides that outline the plan of Salvation in the Book of Mormon, materials for studying the doctrinal teachings of the Book of Mormon, and Life after Death are available through Zion's Outpost, Inc. These will be supplied to you for the cost of photocopying the materials plus postage and handling. Cassettes, Videotapes, manuscripts of classes, and outlines from the Zion's Camp Weekend on the Inspired Version are also available from Zion's Outpost, Inc. Cassettes are \$1.00 each, Videocassettes are \$8.00 each, and the Inspired Version class outlines are \$7.50 each. There will also be a small charge for postage and handling.

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T E A C H I N G   A N D   T E S T I M O N Y

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by  
Elder Dan Elliott

Are the Restoration scriptures for us today? Six years ago I was studying the differences between the doctrine of the Reorganized Church and the church I had been associated with all my life. I was very active in that church. I was taking fulltime classes at Wichita State University in what I believed was a partial preparation for becoming a minister for that church. It was in this setting that I was introduced to the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ. I was very fortunate. The true understanding of the full gospel was shared with me by several people. My original intent in studying the scriptures with members of the Reorganized Church was to convert them to what I believed was the truth. Soon I became confronted with the truth of Jesus in such a way that I had a life changing decision to make. Would I abandon what I had been taught and my former church for the Restored Gospel? I knew that if I joined the Reorganized Church all my friends and family would reject me. So I left Wichita for a summer to be alone with God and to study his scriptures for guidance, without the pressuring influence from people.

Night after night I would ask God if this "Restoration Gospel" was true. I asked God if his scriptures were true; if I could base my decision on what the scriptures taught. Late one night I asked God if what Jesus said in the following was true,

" . . . heaven and earth shall pass away, yet my word shall never pass away . . . "

Matthew 24:56 Inspired Version

I asked that if this verse were true, and his words were restored once again in the Inspired Version that he would show me the appropriate sign of a falling star. God quickly gave me the sign! In unbelief I asked God to repeat it, which he did! So I asked Him to repeat it one more time, and HE did again! I did not want this answer, yet I knew I must not forget it. Later God's Spirit touched my life and I obeyed the fullness of the gospel, gaining the truth, but losing many friends and loved ones. God's scriptures "by the power" of His Holy Spirit led me to the truth.

People inside and outside the church often ask me, "What is purpose for the scriptures?" "Is its teachings binding on God's saints today?" God has already given me the answers to those questions and has continually prompted me to bear testimony of that truth to every person whose life I come into contact.

Much has been written by modern theologians and contemporary ministers concerning the nature and purpose of the scriptures. Do these writings take into account the message of the scriptures? Do they make a "serious" examination of what the scriptures claim about themselves? Sadly to say, too often they do not. But then, many of these writers do not have the scriptures of the Restoration to aid them in their understanding. It is important for each reader to take time to discern righteously the truth that God desires them to know concerning "His message" (through the scriptures) to His people today.

As members of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who believe in the three standard books, it is essential that we uphold all the sacred writings God has blessed us with (given us stewardship over). Let us not be hypocrites and say we believe and not back up this faith with an effort to study and increase our awareness of the message of the scriptures to us, today. Do not harden your hearts. The scriptures testify that the "Spirit of Truth," even the the Holy Spirit will guide us to all truth, as we open our hearts to Him. Let us not reject the Holy Spirit's counsel as it is recorded in the scriptures of the Restoration. The following is a brief encounter of the things the scriptures teach regarding themselves. First, the scriptures teach that they shall "make us wise unto salvation." Second, that every member of Christ's church is under obligation and commandment to study the scriptures, and are accountable for the contents of those scriptures. Finally, the priesthood and members are to teach and expound "all scripture" by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures shall make us wise unto salvation! Those who hold not unto the the rod of iron (Word of God) shall be lost in the vast wasteland of spiritual darkness and despair. The apostle Paul gives us each hope in his letter to Timothy, reminding him of his upbringing. (See 2 Timothy 3:15). When we have faith in Jesus Christ, then we believe all that he has said to us by His holy prophets in ages past. Paul continues, (See 2 Timothy 3:16, and 17) Saints of God, do you want to be prepared for every good work! Saints are you confused in regards to doctrine or in instruction in righteousness? God has provided you a "path" to understand his unchangeable ways! His scriptures will make you "wise" to His salvation and the freedom He offers you. As a believer in restoration scriptures we have a precious tool we must use! But some, both in and outside the church, say the scriptures cannot be relied upon. Listen once again to what God has said:

"And the Scriptures shall be given even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect . . . " D & C 34:5b

The restoration scriptures are an ember of fire which has come from God's holy presence. They are pure even as He is pure, even as we are to become pure if we abide in His word. They have been given to us for our salvation. What do the scriptures teach? The apostle Paul gives us still more reason to have confidence in the written word.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."  
2 Peter 1:20-21

Let us give ear to the "word of prophecy"! Let us walk with open eyes and willing hearts and follow the "day star" which God has placed before us. Much has been said in regards to interpretation of scripture. Peter says that no prophecy of scripture is given after the manner of man's will, but always according to the will of God. This means that man's background, reasoning ability, education, or station in life does not prepare him to reveal God's will without the intervention of God's Holy Spirit. The true prophets of God were "moved upon" by the Holy Ghost as they wrote and spoke. The scriptures therefore must reflect the mind and will of God, not the mind and will of man.

"And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be Scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation."  
Doctrine & Covenants 68:1c

The scriptures are truly the power of God unto Salvation. We can never be ashamed of the scriptures of the restored gospel, nor can we attempt to wrest the intent nor purpose of them.

Understanding that the scriptures are given for our salvation, it is our obligation to study and search out their teachings as they apply to us yesterday, today, and tomorrow. What are we learning in our churches today? Is it the holy word of God or is it the natural learning of men? I pray that the path to salvation is being taught. The early missionaries in the church were told:

"Behold, I say unto you, that you shall let your time be devoted to the studying of the Scriptures, and to preaching . . . ."  
Doctrine & Covenants 25:1a

Under these conditions of divine instruction and preparation, the church flourished in regards to numerical and spiritual growth. Why? Because they studied the scriptures and knew its author, even Jesus Christ.

The Book of Mormon also tells us about the great spiritual blessings which follow those who devoted themselves to the study of the scriptures. See Alma 12:4-6. When study is accompanied with humble prayer and fasting-growth results. The manifold blessings of Jesus Christ are realized. The mysteries of the Kingdom are not only unlocked, but are revealed. Saints, let us awake, shake off the coals of unbelief, and put our trust in what God has spoken by the mouths of his holy apostles and prophets of old. Compare the words spoken today against the yardstick God has declared as a measuring tool.

"The word has been already given in agreement with revelations long since delivered to the church . . . The word which has been given at a late period should not have been so soon forgotten and discarded . . . I am God; I change not . . ." D & C 129:8

Let us turn our hearts to the counsel of our fathers in the faith! Let us embrace the wisdom God has already revealed to them, for us in these the last days. God does not vary, nor does He walk crooked paths. His paths are straight and His course is one eternal round, as found in the 3rd chapter of Ecclesiastes, verses 14 and 15. The things that God has done shall be forever, nothing can be put to them, nor taken away. That which has been is now; and that which is to be already has been; and God requires that which is past. There is really nothing new under the sun, only that which God has already done, and man now discovers. We know that God doesn't lie, and that "truth" is independent to act for itself, and not to be acted upon by culture, learning, or evolution. God's instruction is the same to all people.

Finally, it has been commanded that all the priesthood of Christ's Church teach from the Bible and the Book of Mormon, for in them is contained the fullness of the Gospel. How often is this gospel expounded from the pulpits of our church? How often do we hear the basics of the Gospel of Jesus Christ explained from the scriptures? See D & C 42:5. When was the last time you studied or heard the redemptive power of Christ as found in the Book of Mormon? When was Life after Death, or Baptism last expounded from the scriptures of the restoration from your pulpit?

Jesus taught from the scriptures. He used the scriptures to draw men into the presence of His Father. He taught from the words which He himself had inspired to be written. He emphasized the importance of scripture at every opportunity to teach the principles of the Kingdom, and to reveal His heavenly Father.

"And now it came to pass that when Jesus had expounded all the scriptures in one, which they had written, he commanded them that they should teach the things which he had expounded unto them."  
Third Nephi 11:1

Jesus knew it was important for His people to understand all scripture. He taught his disciples to teach these same things. If the scriptures are given to make us wise unto salvation, should not God's holy priesthood teach they are true, or is our wisdom greater than God's?

The Book of Mormon offers a tremendous promise to all sincere readers. That promise is found in Moroni 10:4-5. Has God revealed to you that the message of Book of Mormon is true? Has God revealed to you that the message has changed? God desires not only to stand by this promise to those who have read this, but to those countless many who have yet to have the fullness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ taught them. Open your hearts now to Jesus Christ as He was, as He is, and as He will continue to be. Ask God in faith if these things are true. The application of the scriptures then are also for today. The message of the scriptures is timeless. If the message of God to His people seems to have changed, it is because man has changed, not God.

Saints, we must discern truth in righteousness. We must not only say we believe the scriptures, but practice them as well. But first we need to know what they teach concerning God and our response to Him. We do this by a diligent and continuous study of the word of God. Let us then teach others the unchangeable ways of Jesus Christ!

I know that heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's word shall never pass away. Let us submit our wills to God regardless of the cost. In Jesus' words we shall find new life and meaning which the world cannot give. The words of Christ will tell us all things we must do.