

AND ANGELS REJOICED

Sunday, January 17 was a day that we witnessed rejoicing in heaven as well on the earth. Two people entered the kingdom in the waters of baptism on this day.

Kevan and Klarrisa Eddy were baptized by Elder Gary Whiting. This was a grand day for the church in Wichita.

We give thanks to the Lord for his goodness and grace.

CHRISTMAS PROGRAMS

Laura Harris organized and directed an excellent Christmas program by the children. The birth of Christ was depicted in a short play. The children also sang some Christmas songs.

The service was well attended. There was a good Spirit present. Many thanks to the children and to Sister Harris for their ministry.

The women of Zion's Outpost gave a special worship for the church on Monday, December 21, 1988. Those in attendance bore testimony of the excellent presence of the Spirit of God. This was especially evident in the singing. Many spoke of the presence of the angel voices that joined the

Saints in singing praises to Christ the Lord and our Heavenly Father.

BOOK OF MORMON CLASS

Many interesting and new discoveries are being made concerning the Book of Mormon. Among the most exciting are findings concerning the language and style of the Book of Mormon.

Tom and Helen Ultican were in Wichita on January 5 and 6. On Tuesday they shared some of the new information on the Book of Mormon.

We were told about the various forms of Hebrew poetry found in the Book of Mormon. These poetic forms were very common ways of writing sacred things in ancient world. Many examples of these poetic forms are found in the Old Testament of the Bible.

There are other examples of ancient Hebrew writing styles in the Book of Mormon. These are collectively referred to as Hebraisms.

Brother and Sister Ultican did a fine job sharing these exciting findings with us. We are very thankful for their kindness to us.

For those interested in learning more about the new discoveries about the

Book of Mormon we recommend writing to the Zarahemla Research Foundation, P.O. Box 1727, Independence, MO 64055.

CONCORDANCE UPDATE

The first printing of the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants concordance is now sold out. We are in the process of picking up the errors we found and reprinting the book.

To introduce the second edition we are offering it for a pre-publication donation of \$30.00 postage paid. This offer expires March 31, 1988. After this date we must ask a donation of \$35.00 postage paid.

We are very close to having the concordance for the Inspired Version of the Bible ready. It should be in the printer's hands in less than 60 days.

You may reserve a first edition copy of this book by sending a pre-publication donation of \$30.00 before March 31, 1988. As of April 1, 1988 we must ask a donation of \$35.00 for this work. If you would like to make a larger donation to help get this work printed, please contact us at the address above. Attention to Publications, Zion's Outpost, Inc.

THE CULTURE OF THE GOSPEL

by Gary R. Whiting

The Restoration Movement came into being during a period of great softening of the hearts of men. This was accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit. With the assist and guiding of the Spirit the many workers of the Reformation began to plow the unfertile ground of people and began to form fertile ground. It is evident that many of the Reformation leaders were blessed by the Spirit of God.

However, their work was only preparatory. It was leading up to the Restoration Movement.

When Joseph Smith, Jr. knelt in the grove of trees he was told to join none of the churches that existed. This was because all of them had become tainted by doctrines which originated with men and not God. Some were outright polluted. God was telling Joseph that if the gospel was going to be taught it must be done God's way or it should not be taught in Jesus' name. These existing churches had drifted off course.

The Ministry of Jesus

When Jesus began his earthly ministry he came with the charge to repent. Repentance was for the purpose of preparing to enter the Kingdom of God. It is important to see that Jesus did not come as the king of an earthly kingdom. Instead he came as king over a heavenly kingdom. Jesus said that his kingdom was dominant over all other kingdoms of the earth.

In declaring the gospel of the heavenly kingdom, Jesus was saying that none of the kingdoms of the earth had his full approval. Because all of them were centered on men and not God. This was even true of Judah, the kingdom of the "chosen people."

Jesus told his disciples that when he was gone they would receive his Spirit. This Spirit would give them peace. Not the peace of the world, but a peace beyond the world's ability to give.

The Restoration Message

When the Restoration Movement came into the world, it was given the message of repentance to declare. This was to allow people to qualify as seekers of the cause of Zion.

The message of the Restoration was the same message that Jesus declared to the world of his days on the earth. The same message yet in times and cultures that were far apart. Jews in the days of Jesus thought and lived in a manner very much unlike Americans in the 1800's.

Despite the differences in culture, education and time, the same message was given to Christ and his disciples to preach to the world. How can this be?

Gospel Eyes

The gospel of Jesus Christ views each person as an individual, unique creation of God through Jesus Christ. Each person is created primarily for the purpose of learning to adjust their life to the life of Christ. In this way each may enter into God's presence.

In this basic regard all people are equal. Actually, it is the only way that all people are equal. Everyone in the gospel is as a sheep that has lost its way. There is no person that can live as God intended without God. Life in the eyes of the gospel is dependent on God. In this regard all are alike.

Most of the differences between a person in America and one in India (or an other country) is in the government, economy, philosophy and even religion. These are the elements of culture. All of these things are man made.

Therefore, the things that divide and separate people are things that man has devised. Cultures keep people apart. They change and evolve as ideas and concepts are introduced. They are essentially unstable in that they are continually changing and potentially volatile.

It was into a world full of various kinds of culture that Jesus came. This is

also true of the Restoration. Although "born" in a specific culture, neither expression of the gospel was the "child" of that culture. This is made evident by the fact that in neither case was the culture praised. Rather, the need for the Kingdom of God was proclaimed. In the gospel of Jesus Christ, the kingdom is the only way for men to live and please God at the same time. The Kingdom of God is the divinely ordained culture.

This message of the kingdom was always preceded by the message to repent. Repentance is an intensely personal and individual message. Only people can repent and only one at a time. The gospel is always given to people. People are all basically the same, in the eyes of the gospel.

Because the Lord uses people to tell people about the gospel, when he gives it to the world it must start somewhere. But its purpose is always to call men and women into the kingdom.

The New Testament church had a great struggle with the idea of culture. Many tried to make the gospel an expression of their Jewish traditions. They failed to see, at first, that Jesus had called them to a new life and culture. One that was designed by God for all those who repented. It was designed to allow men to live as God created men to live.

Restoration and Culture

The Restoration marked the re-introduction of the call of God into the Kingdom of God. Free of cultural dictates and impurities. America of the 1820's was the culture best suited to allow God to restore his gospel. God had determined it to be so.

However, we err if we assume that because the Restoration began in America, that it is an American gospel. There are two errors in this thinking.

First, it leaves out the fact that God caused the Restoration, not Joseph Smith. If God caused it to occur then it is God's. Otherwise it belongs to a man. If God did not work in it then it has no real value to us or anyone else. But God did call Joseph into the work as a

servant of God. As a servant he was to do that which God told him to do. Therefore, it is God's work, not ours.

Secondly, if because it happened in America it becomes American, then it means that man devised culture takes precedent over the Kingdom of God. If this is true then God is impotent and we are on our own. Jesus taught the contrary. The Kingdom of God is the only way to live and still please God fully. Jesus not only showed us the power of the kingdom life, he demonstrated that it could be done on the earth.

The Restoration frees us from the cultural restraints of men. It frees us to live in God's design.

We violate the principles of God by saying that the gospel must be altered to "fit" into the various cultures of the world. By trying to do this we put our wisdom above God. It limits him to our level of thinking only. We say in effect that there must be a version of the gospel for every culture. Which means that the cultural differences are the most fundamental elements in our lives. So there develops an American gospel, a German gospel, a Japanese gospel and etc.

However, Jesus never changed the message of his gospel to fit his audience. It was always repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand. To Jews, Greeks, Samaritans, to all.

When we find Christ and repent, the repentance he asks of us is to leave behind our wisdom and learn his. Because culture is man made it too must be repented of. The Kingdom of God is God's answer to how to live outside of our wisdom.

To change the gospel to fit the mold of culture is to seek to fit the greater into the lesser. This will only lead to new forms of division and unrest. Only in the culture of the Kingdom of God is there true unity of people with God and each other.

We must learn that the gospel is God's gift to us. It is given to show the need to leave our ways and follow God's ways.

DECREASING CLOUDINESS

This is not a weather report. It is the goal of all who love the Lord and dream of Zion.

Many have heard of various testimonies concerning clouds which cover Zion. These clouds are the result of the Saints ignoring basic principles of Zion living which the Lord has given to us in the scriptures.

The testimonies given by some who have seen the clouds were given to warn us to get ready for the kingdom. One person who had this experience is Ray Hugget. His experience is related in the book, Exercises in Growing Spiritually by Barbara Wilkinson.

He saw four clouds over Zion. In his experience he saw that these clouds were holding back the spiritual development of the Saints. Those clouds were:

1. Keeping the Word of Wisdom
2. Keeping the financial law
3. Sanctity of the home
4. Keeping the Sabbath day holy

In this column we will discuss these four clouds. Insights and tips concerning these areas will be given. The purpose is to help the Saints to chase away the clouds over Zion and let God pour in his Spirit upon his people.

We are guilty of preventing God from leading as he desires by our disobedience in these four basic areas. God is calling his people to obedience in these areas. Then - watch out! We can not dream of what God will do after that.

One more point. Clouds appear over places. These four clouds appeared over Zion. It is a place just as much as it is a way of life.

Zion is real to God. When it becomes real to us then we will do what God asks us to do. We hope we can help it become real to you.

Zionic conditions are no further away nor any closer than the spiritual condition of my people justifies... Sec 140:5 [1947]

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

In the last edition of this newsletter we shared some typographical errors we have found in the printed Inspired Version of the Bible. There are some things you should know concerning the various editions of the Inspired Version.

Generally speaking, the more recent the printing of the Inspired Version, the more accurate it is. The latest edition of the Inspired Version was set in 1974. There have many reprintings of this edition in the years since then. Some of the typographical errors we gave will be found in one printing of the Inspired Version and will be correct in others. There is some evidence that changes were made in the text even between printings of the Inspired Version.

One of the changes that has been made in the I.V. text during the printings of the 1974 edition is found in Gen 7:39. In early printings this verse read, ... I gave unto them their knowledge ... Later printings of the same edition substituted intelligence for knowledge.

It is a little difficult to know why the change was made. Not having the original manuscripts on hand, it is also hard to know which word ought to be there. Some clues may be gained by looking at other place where this passage is quoted.

Section 36 of the Doctrine and Covenants in verse 7a uses the word knowledge. Section 36 is a quote of chapter 7 of Genesis {Inspired Version}. This passage of scripture is also quoted in the Pearl of Great Price in the Book of Moses. {This part of the Pearl of Great Price is directly from the Inspired Version} In verse 32 the word used is knowledge.

While this is not absolute evidence, it does appear that the word knowledge is the word that ought to be there.

Someday I hope to spend some time with the original manuscripts. I will check on this point if that chance ever occurs.

Just how important is the knowledge of Christ?

by Robert E. Giertz, Jr.

JOH 8:24 I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

SEC 76:4 h. that through him all might be saved, whom the Father had put into his power, and made by him; who glorifies the Father, and saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him;

MAT 21:31 Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and bore record of me, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him; and ye, afterward, when ye had seen me, repented not, that ye might believe him. 33 For he that believed not John concerning me, cannot believe me, except he first repent.

HEL 2:25 Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name; yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God;

HEL 5:62 And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall believe on the Son of God, the same shall have everlasting life.

What does it mean to believe in Christ?

JOH 14:10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; or else believe me for the very works' sake. 12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

HEL 5:67 And if ye believe on his name, ye will repent of all your sins, that thereby ye may have a remission of them through his merits.

3NE 9:69 And it shall come to pass that the time cometh, when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them, and they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

2NE 11:78 And as I spake concerning the convincing of the Jews, that Jesus is the very Christ, it must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God; and that he manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost;

1CO 12:3 No man can know that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus the Christ Testifies of His Divinity

SEC 3:14 a. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I came unto my own, and my own received me not.

SEC 6:10 a. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 11 b. What greater witness can you have than from God?

SEC 10:12 a. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the life and the light of the world. I am the same who came unto my own, and my own received me not;

SEC 12:5 a. Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of the living God, who created the heavens and the earth; a light which cannot be hid in darkness;

SEC 34:1 b. I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was crucified for the sins of the world, even as many as will believe on my name, that they may become the sons of God, even one in me as I am in the Father, as the Father is one in me, that we may be one.

SEC 52:9 f. But, behold, I the Lord, will hasten the city in its time, and will crown the faithful with joy and with rejoicing. Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God, and I will lift them up at the last day. Even so. Amen.

Witnesses of the Christ Testify of Him

JOH 1:36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God!

JOH 1:49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

JOH 6:69 And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

JOH 9:35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

JOH 9:38 And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him.

JOH 11:27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

{this discussion will be continued in next issue}

If you and I shall be content to justify our every transaction with the hackneyed phrase of our time, "Business is business," we shall never, world without end, redeem Zion. It can not be done according to what is ordinarily considered business; but we must carry Jesus Christ, and the principles of his life and all his commandments with us into our everyday transactions. Except, brethren, when we go into business, our transactions shall be touched by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and therefore be mellowed and sanctified by that Spirit, we may profess the inspiration of God as

long as we have breath, but without avail.

So, it is not enough for us to say, "Business is business," in justification of everything we do, but it is required of us if we shall be the children of light, to manifest that light in the dealings we have with our neighbors.

-- James A. Thomas, Saints' Herald, May 9, 1928. From a sermon given at Walnut Park Church, Independence, MO on April 15, 1928.

The Restoration Letter is published by Zion's Outpost, Inc. A donation of \$5.00 is requested to assist, if you can.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AT

ZION'S OUTPOST BRANCH

Beginning February 1, the Women's department of the branch is beginning a class on topics pertaining to spiritual development. For information on times and such contact Lana Elliott, % Zion's Outpost Branch or call (316) 682-6986.

Every Sunday evening at 5:00pm through the month of February until ??? classes and discussions on the Christian family will be presented. All are invited to attend. A special marriage weekend is planned for April 23 and 24 as an adjunct to the Sunday classes. For information contact Zion's Outpost Branch.

March 12 -- Priesthood retreat centered around principles of worship

April 9 -- Women's retreat

April 22,23,24 -- The annual meeting of the Association of Independent branches and groups in Independence, MO.

April 30 and May 1 -- Representatives of Sionita School will be in Wichita. This is an excellent time to learn about this Restoration school.

May 27-29 -- Revival preaching series

June 19-25 -- Youth camp for Junior High and Senior High youth. Sponsored by Zion's Outpost. To be held at Chouteau, OK {that's in NE Oklahoma, South and east of Tulsa}. Approximate cost per person is \$50.00. If you are interested in attending as a camper or as camp staff please contact David Newman, 382 Hillsdale, Wichita, KS 67230 phone (316) 733-0902.

July 8,9,10 -- Fifth Annual Zion's Camp in Wichita. Topics for study and schedule to be announced later. All are invited to attend this weekend of study and

worship. If coming from out of town, we will try to find homes for you to stay in during the weekend.

July 18-22 Vacation Bible School

August 19-21 -- Missionary preaching series with guest minister.

From the Pastor to the Branch
(excerpts from a letter, 1/5/1988)

In the name of Jesus Christ the Savior I greet you into the new year and I look forward to serving the Lord and his sheep with great anticipation.

As we begin this new year together let us continue to remember the promises that are ours when we keep the Lord's commandments.

Perhaps the most obvious challenge [of this year] is the division of the duties of Presiding Elder and Pastor. As we have fasted and prayed about this, we have been given insight as to the purpose of this change. The primary calling of the Teacher is to execute the primary pastoral duties. These duties being cared for by the Teachers, frees a large portion of the Elder's time to pursue missionary outreach. This pattern contributed to growth in the early days of the church.

The Melchisedec priesthood will spend time preaching and teaching wherever possible. The Aaronic priesthood will focus on home ministry. This will include teaching family duties, member duties, prayer, study, family worship, stewardship and witnessing. The overall strength of our branch depends on the strength of each family.

Many Christ - centered activities highlight the coming year. [Ed - some of these are listed on this page.]

The Presiding Elder [Dan Elliott] and branch officers join with me in extending our warmest wishes for the New Year.

Your Servant in Christ,

Steven W. Anders

Dear Saints,

THOUGHTFUL SAYINGS

As we enter this new year we discover many challenges before us. Specifically in the ministries that are developing and new ones beginning. We pray that these may bear fruit for God's Kingdom.

The purpose underlying these ministries is to bring glory to God. He is our life source. He created us in his image. To God, and only to God, through Jesus Christ, we owe complete devotion.

We will be successful in 1988 if, through the Spirit of Jesus Christ, we learn to mourn with those who mourn and rejoice with those who rejoice. In this we fulfill the law of Christ, by bearing one another's burdens.

All are invited to attend our worship services. Your attendance and participation will cause the gospel to become real and of practical use in your lives. God will make a difference.

Dan Elliott, Presiding Elder

Zion's Outpost Branch
1733 Northeast Parkway
Wichita, Kansas 67208-2339
(316) 686-3012

The Kingdom of God has to take form, and become concrete, and it is in the earth, in the life of the earth, that we have to express it and so make it real. To refuse to build it here upon the earth is to be content with our dreams...to shirk the cross, to be disobedient to the heavenly vision, and so be damned. Because we build the kingdom on the earth and with it, that does not mean that we build it for earth alone. Once built, it is a thing of beauty and a joy forever to God and man. But it must be built, not dreamt. The only bricks we have are made of clay, so we must use them.

-- The Wicket Gate
by G. A. Studdert Kennedy

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