

Church of Jesus Christ Oak Grove Restoration Branch



Zion the beautiful beckons us on . . .

Volume 32 Number 1

Spring-Summer 2023

Zion's Call is a newsletter published by the Church of Jesus Christ, Oak Grove Restoration Branch. It is published with the intent of glorifying God and helping to preserve His Restoration Message. All correspondence should be addressed to our editor:

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The Church of Jesus Christ Oak Grove Restoration Branch

is located approximately 3/4 mile
north of I-70 from the Oak Grove exit.
We invite you to come and worship with us.

Sunday services are as follows:

Early Worship at 9:00 a.m.

Classes begin at 9:15 a.m.

Worship Service at 10:30 a.m.

Evening Service at 6:30 p.m.

Communion Sunday only:

(the first Sunday of each month)

Prayer Service at 9:15 a.m.

Communion Service at 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Prayer Service at 7:00 p.m.



Branch Pastor: Elder Mark Nunn

Associates:

Elders Charlie Booth, Mark Griffin, and
Jeremy Lidberg; and Priest James Bullard



**Live Internet Streaming of
Sunday Morning and Evening Services
(except Communion Sunday morning)
Go to www.ogrb.org and click "Video."**

We need your testimonies to continue to print *Zion's Call*!

The biggest challenge we face with each issue of *Zion's Call* is gathering enough testimonies to fill our pages.

We all have busy schedules, but won't you **please take some time to write down your testimonies of how God has blessed you?** We welcome all of your encouraging testimonies of what the Lord is doing in your life—both little and big things! We love receiving the testimonies of our young people, too!

Don't worry if you are not a good writer. We can help you edit your testimony as needed. Your testimony can bring encouragement to many others! **You never know whose life you might touch.**

You may mail or email your testimonies to the addresses on this page.

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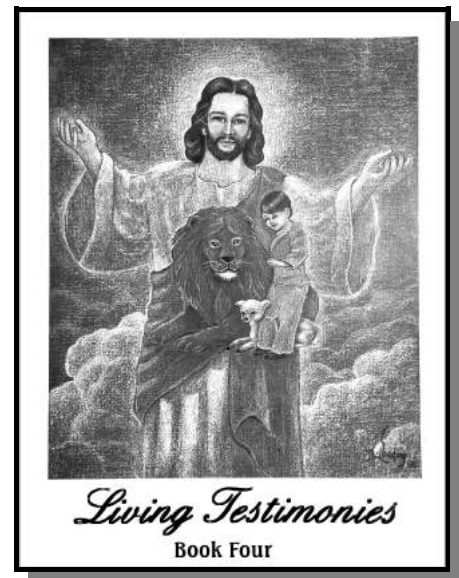
"And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light;

Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life . . ."

Mosiah 9:39-40



Announcing... *Living Testimonies* Book Four



Pre-order your copies now for the late
Autumn 2023 publication of
Living Testimonies, Book Four.

With *Living Testimonies, Books One and Two* out of print and only a few copies left of *Book Three*, the Oak Grove Restoration Branch has decided to publish
Living Testimonies, Book Four.

Living Testimonies, Book Four will feature approximately 150 pages of selected testimonies from the past 30 years of *Zion's Call* publications in an 8.5 by 11-inch format with a full-color soft cover.
(Inside pages will be black and white.)

The suggested donation per book is \$15.00 if picked up at Oak Grove Restoration Branch.
The suggested donation for postage is an additional \$5.00 per book.

Please use the enclosed order form if possible.

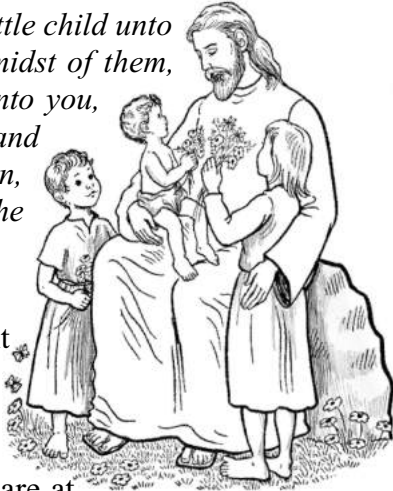
Contact Debbie Norman for reduced postage if you wish to pre-order more than two copies mailed to the same address. Make checks out to—

OGRB - Living Testimonies
and mail them to Debbie Norman at the address on page 2 or use the enclosed envelope.
Email Debbie with any question at the address on page 2.

As Little Children

-by Elder Mark Nunn, Pastor

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:2).



I find a special delight in the presence of little children. There is something about the joy of their laughter when they are at play. We are blessed at the Oak Grove Restoration Branch by children of all ages. We are doubly blessed by their parents who are teaching them in the ways of the Lord.

Who can say their spirits are not uplifted during our morning worship when we see the children's delight as they bring their offering up front to put in the cross-shaped opening in the "door" collection box? Who can say they aren't humbled by the sincerity of the prayers our children offer during the prayer and testimony service on Wednesday evenings? Who can say they don't find joy in watching the children grow and mature as they begin to lend a helping hand or share their special talents at church?

It's little wonder that Jesus insists on blessing the little children and that He presents them to us as examples of how we should be if we expect to enter into His Kingdom. The very nature and character of little children is in harmony with God. We are told that when we come to Him for baptism we must become as a little child before we are baptized, but then we are also to become (or remain) as a little child after being baptized as well.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

"And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things. And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (3 Nephi 5: 39-40).

There are certain characteristics of little children that endear them to God. We are called to adopt these same characteristics as we embrace our relationship with our Heavenly Father. The faith of a child allows them to go through each day without worrying about how their basic needs are going to be met. In fact, they are so free of worry they are often not even aware there may be a concern.

My mom and dad did all the worrying for us kids when we were growing up. I know my mom worried when there was no food to put on the table, but her biggest concern was not transferring that worry to us kids. Instead of sharing her worry with us, she would organize special game nights where she would break out all our board games and pop up a bunch of popcorn. I never knew what was going on until I later reflected on those times and my older sister filled me in on the truth.

In Matthew 6:34, Jesus refers to how He takes care of the fowls of the air and the lilies of the field then says, *"Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he not provide for you, if ye are not of little faith. Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?"*

I can't help but smile when I see a young toddler, barely knee high, grab onto the leg of a mother or father when in a crowded room. They are very watchful, observing all the activity going on all around them from a safe place, having complete trust that their parent will protect them.

When our two boys were little, they would, as kids will often do, get moving faster than their feet could keep up. Down they would go, bumping their head or skinning their knee. If it wasn't too severe of a fall, the first thing they would do would be to look at me to see what my reaction was.

I would calmly ask them, “Did that hurt?” to which they would acknowledge that it did. I would then assure them that they were okay and tell them to slow down. They would then go back to playing as if nothing had happened. Of course, if the fall was more serious, I would pick them up and tend to their injuries or comfort their fears.

A child’s first instinct is to look to mom or dad when they are frightened or hurt to see if it’s something to be concerned about. They trust their parent’s opinion about this more than their own. We should be looking to our Heavenly Father whenever we stumble or fall, trusting in Him to comfort us or tend to our injuries according to our specific need.

One of my most heartfelt moments with our boys took place while I was in college and they were three and six years old. I would be in my small study while the boys would be playing in the living room. Whenever they got a little too loud or rambunctious, my wife Sheri would remind them they needed to be quieter so Daddy could study.

I was pretty sure they didn’t really understand this until one day they became unusually quiet. I sensed a presence at my left side and looked over to see my three-year-old boy just standing there quietly watching me. The longing in his eyes prompted me to ask if he wanted to sit on my lap. He nodded that he did so I lifted him up onto my left leg and continued to study.

Less than a minute went by and there was another presence on my right side. It was my six-year-old boy standing there. I asked if he wanted to sit on my lap too. He did, so I lifted him up onto my right leg and, with my arms around my boys, continued with my reading. They sat there for about five minutes without saying a word or squirming about as they normally would, then they quietly slipped down and went back to playing in the living room.

We run around in the “living room” of our life consumed with the activities that bring us pleasure. We are called by Christ to repent and come unto Him. When the desire in our hearts to be with Him is strong enough to pull us out of our “living room” and to come into His presence, He will never turn us away, but will lift us up onto His lap and wrap His loving arms around us. However great our joy is in those moments, it is dwarfed by the joy our Heavenly Father has in our desire to be with Him.

2 Nephi 12:41 says, *“Nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them, saith the Lord God, if they will repent and come unto me; for mine arm is lengthened out all the day long, saith the Lord God of hosts.”*

One last characteristic of little children that we should emulate is their spiritual perceptiveness. Shortly after my oldest granddaughter turned six years old, my brother died. She attended the memorial service with us but I’m not certain she fully grasped the magnitude of what the event represented. She did however pick up on my sadness.

In the middle of the service, she quietly got up from the pew where she was sitting with her parents and came to sit on my lap. As she snuggled into me, she handed me a drawing of a big rainbow. In the upper left corner, she wrote: “From Samantha To Mark.” While she may not have understood the promise the rainbow represents, she did know that it was a symbol of the joy that she wanted to share with me.

When my other granddaughter, Harper, was about two years old, she wanted me to hold her anytime I was present and would not go to anyone else. When she was at church with us one Sunday morning, I was visiting with a young man who had his arm in a sling. Even though she didn’t know him, she apparently knew he was injured because suddenly, she reached out for him. He took her with his good arm, and she stayed with him for the next several minutes as we continued to visit.

On another occasion we had a young man as a guest for dinner. While we were sitting at the table afterward she suddenly climbed up into his arms and gave him a big hug then settled down on his lap. He was afraid of little children and was initially uncomfortable but quickly calmed down. Before that moment he was quite depressed. Having this little girl sitting on his lap broke his depression.

As we grow older and experience more of life, we become more aware of the needs and obligations of our family, our work, and our relationships with others. All too often this growing awareness comes at the expense of or the spiritual perceptiveness we had as little children. We should strive every day to develop a childlike faith and trust in our Heavenly Father and establish a state of mind where our focus is on Christ first and foremost in all things.

Broken Glass Made Whole

-by Erin Cornish, Columbia, Missouri

My husband, Peter, and I were at reunion during the time when a split within the Restoration branches was happening. My family was in favor of the new group moving forward and Peter's family was not. We both felt very torn and were praying about where the Lord wanted us. At the closing service of the reunion, Peter stood up and said, "I've come to this reunion really torn."

Peter's prayer was something like, "Lord, I see people on one side of the issue, and they are men that I love and respect and I know that they are doing their best to live for the Kingdom and follow God. I look up to them and have considered them to be holy men. But then I look at the people on the other side of the issue and I see men who love the Lord, men who I look up to and respect, men who are trying to follow the Kingdom way the best they can and I have considered them to be holy men."

Peter's prayer was, "Lord, who is right? Which side do I go to?" The answer that Peter received was not an answer that either of us expected. The Lord simply told him that He puts shepherds wherever His sheep are.

I can't remember the time span after this experience, but sometime after that Peter had a dream. In the dream, he was asked if he remembered a certain person's vision of the broken glass. In the dream, Peter said that he did. He had pictured broken glass on the ground and realized that it would take a great heat to get those pieces back together. He then heard the Lord's voice say, somewhat with chastisement, something to the effect of this: "How else would I preserve my people?"

When Peter was relaying this dream to a friend and thinking of those words "preserve my people," he was drawn to the parable of the olive tree in the Book of Mormon, Jacob, chapter 3. That chapter mentions the word "preserve" over twenty times.

In this parable the Lord of the vineyard is pruning here, grafting there, digging around the roots, mixing things up over and over again just trying to get his olive trees to produce good fruit. Nothing is working, and at some point he is ready to burn it all down. But the servant, our intercessor, steps in and asks the Lord

of the vineyard to give it another try. In the end, the natural fruit was preserved. The trees bore again the natural fruit and they became like unto one body.

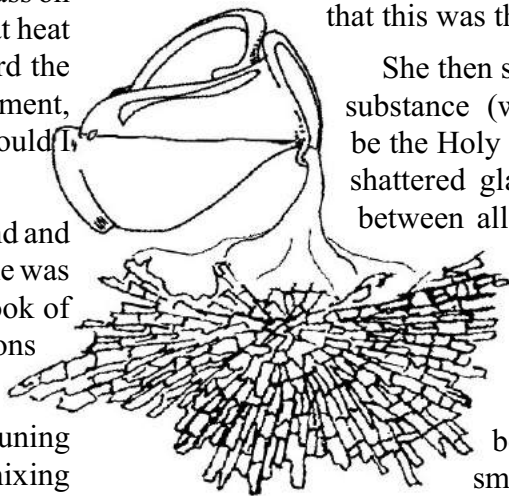
And thus they labored, with all diligence, according to the commandments of the Lord of the vineyard, even until the bad had been cast away out of the vineyard, and the Lord had preserved unto himself, that the trees had become again the natural fruit;

And they became like unto one body; and the fruit were equal; and the Lord of the vineyard had preserved unto himself the natural fruit, which was most precious unto him from the beginning (Jacob 3:143-144).

Peter found comfort in these two experiences, knowing that the Lord was aware of the Church's broken state and that He was about the work of preserving His people.

Not long after Peter's dream, I had the opportunity to visit with Penny Curtis. I told her about Peter's dream and my hope that the Lord knows we are broken, but that He has a way to bring us back together. Penny said that she had very recently had a vision about broken glass in regards to the Church. In this vision, the Lord showed her broken glass. It was similar to a broken windshield where the glass is shattered, but still held close together. She understood that this was the state of the Church.

She then saw the Lord pour a milky substance (which she interpreted to be the Holy Spirit) over the top of the shattered glass, and it trickled down between all of the cracks and filled in all of the spaces. When all of those spaces were filled in, Penny said that the glass was sealed back together, like it had never been broken before. It was smooth and clear like new glass. This was confirmation to her that the Lord would heal our divisions and bring us back to being one whole, one body.





By the Power of the Holy Spirit



-by Pat Chadwick, Oak Grove, Missouri

“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).

The Holy Spirit can be an active and powerful force in our lives if we desire it. A number of years ago, I had a very unique experience which reinforced this. It reminded me of the story of Philip and the eunuch found in Acts 8:26-40.

An angel of the Lord directed Philip to go south and Philip obeyed. When he saw the eunuch sitting in his chariot, the Spirit told Philip to go to him. Again Philip obeyed and was given a chance to preach Jesus to this man, who repented and was baptized.

“And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus . . .” (Acts 8:39-40).

We wonder, “Can these things happen today?” I have to tell you that they can.

A friend and I made plans to visit a young lady in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This lady was in the middle of a terrible divorce. She had left Independence and gone home to her parents in Fort Wayne. She was suffering and we felt directed to go see her.

Fort Wayne is 613 miles away from where we were in Independence. That is a nine hours and forty-two minute drive with no stops.

We faced several problems as we approached this trip. I had suffered a back injury and was still in physical therapy for it. My therapist said I could go on the trip, but told me that I must stop every hour and get out and walk for ten minutes. He said if I did not do this, my back would freeze up, and I would be in terrible pain.

Then the morning we were scheduled to leave, the transmission went out on my friend’s van—which was the vehicle we had planned to drive. At the last minute, we had to take a car that belonged to my husband and me. All of this caused us to leave much later in the morning than we had intended.

We called the family in Fort Wayne and told them our arrival would be later than we had previously stated. We told them we would be there, but we were leaving late and still needed to take our time on the drive up.

So off we went. We stopped often at the rest areas, and I got out and walked. We also stopped and had a leisurely lunch. Later in the afternoon, I was driving along the highway when suddenly I looked up and saw the exit sign for Fort Wayne. It came up so quickly that I almost missed the exit. “We’re at Fort Wayne!” I exclaimed. The magnitude of that hadn’t dawned on me yet.

In a few minutes, we pulled up to the parents’ house and the young lady met us in the driveway. She said, “I can’t believe you are here!”

I said, “Well you knew we were coming.”

“No, you can’t be here,” she insisted. “How did you get here?”

“Well, we drove,” I said.

She stomped her feet and said, “No, you don’t understand. You can’t be here yet. It’s too soon. It’s impossible.”

We had made the trip in a little under six hours when it was almost a ten hour trip without stops. And we had stopped many times. I didn’t know what to say. How could we be there? I didn’t know how it was possible except that at some point, we were transported by the power of the Holy Spirit as Philip was.

I wonder if I was driving in front of someone and all of a sudden they wondered where my car had gone. I don’t know, but I do know that what happened came to pass under the power of the Holy Spirit.

I tell you this so you can know that as we face the great task before us of establishing the cause of Zion, we can go forward joyfully and faithfully with expectation that the Lord will meet our needs whatever they might be. If we will move out in faith to do what God has called us to do, we will be given power to accomplish the work.



The Lord's Work

-by John Henderson (submitted by Karen Stevens and reprinted by permission from John's booklet of testimonies)
Editor's Note: John Henderson was a high priest in the Church.

“Haven’t I Always Provided for You?”

The Holy Spirit is working in your life whether seen or not. If you do realize it, it can change your life.

I have always tried to better myself. I have taken courses of study in my field of work and I have changed careers to improve. In all, I have spent considerable money and time to better my financial and social standing, thinking it was improving my life. However, things did not seem to change much. I never got rich, but neither was I ever destitute.

When Oregon first got the lottery, I said I was not going to buy a ticket. I am not a gambler. The jackpot jumped up to eight million dollars almost immediately. While at the supermarket, I thought, “Well, I’ll buy just one ticket for the fun of it.”

I started for the ticket machine. About halfway to the machine, the Lord spoke to me clearly, “Haven’t I always provided for you?”

I had never thought about it that way. I couldn’t argue the question so I turned from the machine, but it also made me realize that the Lord has always kept me right where He wanted me—neither wealthy nor destitute.

It also made a great change in my life. I no longer waste time or money trying to advance in the world. Instead, I accepted the life I had and spent more time asking the Lord how I should use my time.

Knowing that God had and would always provide for me has taken away any worries that often restricted me by tying me to worldly concerns. I gained a freedom I had never had before.

Cleo’s Secret

One day I was alone working on a car in the shop. As I bent over the fender, a voice said to me, “When you see Cleo, ask him about his smoking.”

I was surprised because I had conducted a number of cottage meetings with Cleo and his family. [Cottage meetings are visits with the priesthood, usually in the home, to learn about the Restored Gospel.] He had become a close friend and especially active in our Corvallis, Oregon, mission. I had never seen any hint that he used cigarettes.

That day I was trying to solve a particular problem with a car, so I continued working on it and forgot about the words given to me.

When I stepped in the door at home later, the phone was ringing. It was Cleo. His voice indicated he was very distressed. “Can I come over and be administered to?” he asked. Of course I agreed, but I still did not remember the voice I had heard.

However, just as I anointed him with oil and placed my hands upon his head, it came back to me. I said, “Cleo, the Lord knows of your problem with smoking and He will help you.”

Cleo broke down in tears and said, “That’s why I asked for administration.” He later explained he had tried hard to break his addiction and had finally given up trying on his own.

This proved the turning point for Cleo. He quit smoking and later became an excellent elder in the Church. In time, he was called to the office of high priest and became district president.

Repentance

In 2008 while working at my computer, I was suddenly lifted and found myself far out in space. I felt wrapped in a warm blanket of love and as I looked down to the earth, I saw that from me to the earth was a very long winding tail.

As I inspected the tail, I found it composed of everything I had ever in my life owned or even aspired to own. I was even shown the bicycle I had begged for so much but never gotten when I was ten years old. I was astonished at all the details of my life recorded since its inception. I thought about the experience and testified to our congregation about it during the following six weeks.

Then it suddenly took place again. This time, however, I was surprised to see that some gaps were in the tail of my aspirations. In examining the gaps where things were missing, I discovered that the missing things were things that I had repented of and prayed for forgiveness. They were totally gone.

What a wonderful relief and sense of freedom to know that these errors or sins were no longer there. It was such a tremendous feeling of freedom. It magnified my understanding and appreciation for the gift of repentance.

I was impressed that this experience was not given just for me but to be shared as an aid and reassurance to others. Repentance is a gift you too should seek regularly and pray for. This proved more wonderful than I ever imagined the freedom of repentance could be.

Lifelong Guidance

My life is the only one I can review with understanding of what God has shown me. One important thing I can clearly see by looking back on a long life is that God works in our lives on projects that take so long that we seldom see the pieces together. From my vantage point of old age, I can look down the years and events of my life rather like seeing a time-lapse movie.

I made an important discovery late in life: There is a planned connection in what the Lord does. A review of connections of the many events over long periods of time reveal that the Lord was working a longtime plan in my life, although previously I had only been aware of daily events.

Before this, events and experiences seemed for the moment. Now I see how choices inspired by God have been lifelong guidance. Readers who grasp this can benefit greatly from it.

“All are called according to the gifts of God unto them; and to the intent that all may labor together... with God for the accomplishment of the work intrusted to all.”

Doctrine and Covenants 119:8b

WHAT IS YOUR GIFT?

-by Linda Stribling

So often we think we aren't talented or have no special gift to offer. Many times our gifts lay dormant until someone encourages us and helps us find them. Too often we shove aside the more timid person not wanting to take the time to help them blossom.



I had a dream. I saw this beautiful plant, and all but one stem was blooming. I thought, “Why wasn't that stem plucked out?”

Off to the side, a lady was watching me. She came over where I was standing and said, “Sad looking stem, isn't it? But you know, it will have the most beautiful flower of all.”

I thought, “I would have just plucked it out without waiting to see.”

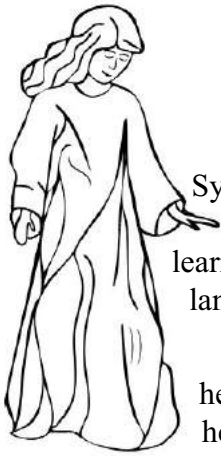
I am grateful for the opportunities given me to develop and enhance my talents. There is room for all talents and a need for each of us to use them. Too often we feel we have to be professional in order to serve, but I have found we become professional by doing!

I hope this day, each of you will discover some hidden gift God has given you. It need not be extraordinary, but an ordinary part of you that can be extended to make someone else happy or help relieve their load.

Reprinted with permission from a booklet of testimonies
compiled by the Parkersburg, West Virginia
Restoration Branch, 1995

Scott's Angels

-by Sonia Smith, Oak Grove, Missouri



Our son Scott was born with Down Syndrome. He could hear and understand but was unable to talk. He learned to communicate through sign language.

Many times through Scott's life, he'd be playing and all of a sudden he would look up at the ceiling. Sometimes he would laugh and sometimes he jabbered as if he were carrying on a conversation.

When this happened, I would ask him, "What is it? Do you see something?"

He would sign yes, point up to the ceiling, and make noises like he was trying to tell me what it was. In a few minutes, he would go back to playing.

I would ask him, "Is it still there?" He would shake his head no.

The only other ones who knew of these experiences were my husband Roy and our daughter Heather.

Scott passed away October 11, 1996. He was eleven years old. About a year after Scott's death, we were at a church reunion in Williston, North Dakota. I asked Patriarch Mike Ballantyne if I could have another patriarchal blessing. I had received one many years before when I was sixteen.

Brother Mike said although I could not have a second patriarchal blessing, I could have a special blessing. This would not take the place of my patriarchal blessing I received years ago, but it would be in addition to it.

Two days later, our daughter Heather received her patriarchal blessing and I received my special blessing. In this blessing, the Lord told me that Scott knew when the time of his passing was approaching and he welcomed it. Scott had some remembrance of when he was in the spirit world before he was born. Even though he would miss all of us, he welcomed the return to his Heavenly Father. He was visited by angels throughout his life and they protected him and communicated with him.

That answered my questions about what Scott saw on the ceiling. The angels were visiting and communicating with him.

Scott is such a special little soul. He remains in our hearts and our lives. I thank God for the special gift He gave us when He sent our special little souls to us, Scott and Heather.

Something Special

They say I'm something special,
I don't know why the fuss.
I have an extra chromosome;
That's the way it is with us.

My father took it on the chin,
"We'll keep him," was his reply.
He has a lot of faith in me
And sets my standards high.

My sister, she's a champ.
I love her with all my heart.
If she ever needed me
I'd be there to take her part.

My mother, on the other hand,
In pieces she did break.
But when she began listening to me
I set her head on straight.

We are children with Down Syndrome.
We learn and can be trained.
We have an extra chromosome
We do not lack a brain.

I help to set my mother straight,
We can do the same for you.
If you will give us half a chance,
We'll melt your heart clear through.

—Sonia Smith

My Brother Scott

-by Heather Smith, Oak Grove, Missouri

I had an experience when my brother Scott passed away. I saw Scott lying on his bed and I knew he was gone.

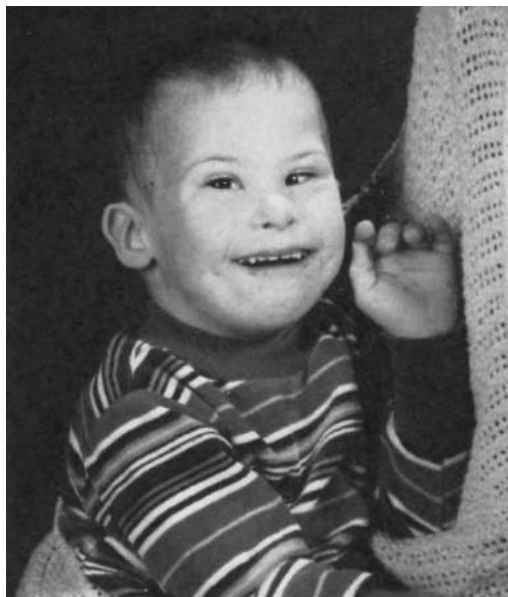
Then I felt someone watching me. When I looked up, I saw Scott in the mirror. He stood tall. In fact, he was about two feet taller than he was before and he did not have any of his disabilities.

I was thinking, "Who is this? Is this Scott?"

He smiled and said, "Yes, Sissy, it is me."

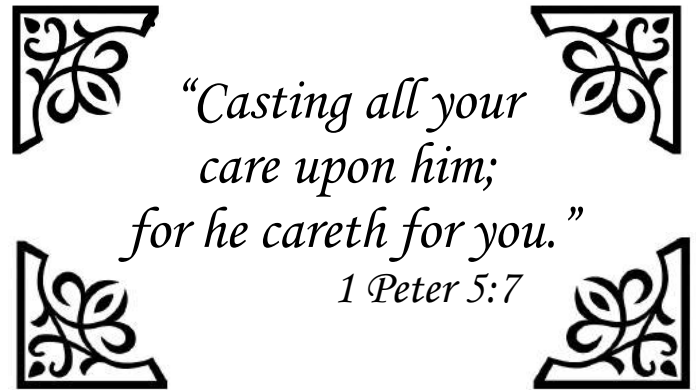
Then I heard music. The song was "Take My Hand, Precious Lord." When I looked to the right, there was a choir of angels in a pyramid coming toward our house. Scott noticed I was focused on the angels and the song. He turned and said, "You see them, too, don't you?"

As the angels began to disappear, Scott started to fade. As he was fading, he said, "I've got to go, Sissy. I love you."



"For he shall give his angels
charge over thee, to keep thee
in all thy ways."

P_{salm} 91:11



God Will Take Care of You

-by Marlene Bert

Many years ago, our son Terry fell face first onto the icy ground, breaking a front tooth. A dentist in the next town had to do a root canal and build back the broken tooth. Several trips were made the next month.

I was driving Terry to the dentist for his last treatment when a severe winter storm started. The forty-five minute drive doubled as the roads became worse. It continued to snow as Terry was being treated.

As we drove back home through the storm, I had the two younger children sit on the floor in back of the car. [This was before seat belts.] I prayed as we traveled on the nearly isolated road. It was an eerie feeling, like we were the only ones out there in all of that white.

Our car was old and usually made a lot of noise. Suddenly, there was no sound and no slipping. It seemed like we were floating.

"Mom, what's happening?" Terry asked. He stood up and looked out the window, observing the car was not leaving any tire tracks behind us.

"I know, honey, God is helping us get home," I answered.

We traveled that way until we reached our home town, then we again felt the car on the road and the engine sounds reappeared. God WILL take care of you.

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compiled by the Parkersburg, West Virginia
Restoration Branch, 1995

"Have You Ever Seen the Righteous Forsaken?"

—by Florence Davis (submitted by Jennifer Henderson, in loving memory of this dear sister in Christ)

I had just received my B.S. Degree in Warrensburg, Missouri. In 1931, during the Depression, I was taking care of my mother, and we had come down financially until we were almost destitute. School had begun, but I had no place to teach. Soon the first month of school had gone by.

My brother-in-law, my sister, my mother, and I had gone all over the state filling out applications for teaching jobs. We had sent out pictures and had done everything we could, but still I didn't have a school at which to teach. I was very worried, and I prayed.

One day I went up to the local college where a Mr. Hudson had come to interview applicants. Oh, we were all so nervous! When they interviewed me, some of the questions they asked were about what church I belonged to and what my political party was.

I tried to explain that I had taught before—I had been the teaching principal of a school—and that I had never had trouble keeping discipline. But I knew that my answers had been to no avail. I walked away dismally, because I knew that I still didn't have any way of making a living.

Between the college and the part of town where we lived the streets were quiet. There weren't any cars passing by and there were no pedestrians anywhere. I was all alone. As I walked along I pondered. I thought to myself (or I may have been praying), "What can I do to make some money for mother and myself?"

Because I had contracted polio as a child, I could not work at some jobs. I could wait on a small counter; I could print menus in a little café, but I couldn't wait on tables. I knew that so many people were out of work and that everybody was hiring their own relatives. As I walked along I felt desperately uncertain as to what I was going to do.

Then all of a sudden, right beside my head to the right of my shoulder, a voice spoke to me loudly. It wasn't a still small voice. It pierced my very being, and it said, "Have you ever seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging bread?"

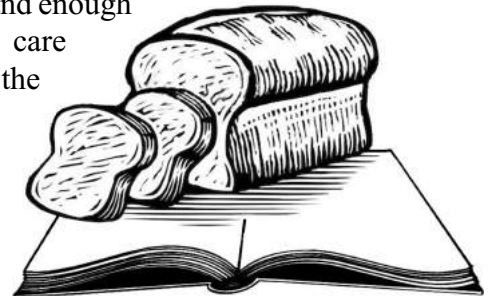
You know, it almost made me turn around in the street, but no one was there but me. I went on home and said nothing to my mother. For a while I pondered what had been said, but I didn't understand it.

My mother was a good Bible student, so finally I asked her, "Mother, can you tell me if that saying is in the Bible?"

She said, "Well, let's hunt it up and see." She turned to Psalm 37 and found verse 25 where David says, "*I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*" (I like that Psalm. It's beautiful and it's strengthening and helpful.)

In a day or two, I got a phone call from a man by the name of Dr. Myers. He was the president of the school board of Mack's Creek, Missouri, to whom we had written a month before. He said, "Miss Blowers, if you can be here by Monday, we'll have a school for you." And I was there by Monday in spite of all the obstacles.

Mother and I did not miss a meal. We always had some housing and enough clothes to take care of us. That's the testimony I bear and it is the truth.



Postscript by Jennifer Henderson

I met Florence Davis in California when she invited the Monterey group of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to come to her home in Mountain View for worship services. Florence lived alone in her mobile home, as her husband, Elder John Davis, had passed away earlier.

It was difficult for Florence to get out much, so she opened up her humble home in order to be able to worship and study together with the Saints. The Saints would meet in her home every month, or more often if they could.

Florence was usually sitting in a wheelchair with braces on her legs when we arrived. She had contracted polio when she was young, and the doctors had not expected her to live long. She was told that she would have to wear leg braces as long as she lived. Florence testified that it was the Lord Jesus Christ who blessed her to be able to live so long—to the age of ninety!

In the fall of 1992, as she sat studying with the Scriptures open on her lap, the Lord gave these words to Florence:

How dusty is your book of Mormon? You are holding a treasure in your hands. It is more valuable than silver, gold, diamonds, or any precious thing. Yet people do not thank Me for it. In many places it is no more than a book lying on some dusty shelf. It should be used more.

Florence died on March 4, 1996, shortly after inviting our little church group to join her in partaking of the Lord's Supper in her nursing home room. I feel that she truly "marched forth" to be with her Father in heaven— finally without her leg braces!



The Power of Administration

-by Helen Jones, Independence, Missouri

In March 2022 my husband Garrett and I were planning a trip to California to help his cousin move back to the east coast closer to her family. Before we were ready to leave Independence, Garrett and I were administered to by the elders for safety on our trip.

We decided to leave a few days early in order to stop and visit places along the way. The weather was great and we were able to visit Tombstone, Arizona, again so Garrett could purchase a hat he had seen there on our last visit several years ago.

From Tombstone, we headed back to Tucson. We were trying to locate the house his Great Uncle Jess lived in. Uncle Jess had moved to Arizona when it was still a territory! After what seemed like hours, I asked Garrett to stop at the convenience store so I could get something to drink. It was getting hot outside and I was thirsty.

I went into the store and headed for the fountain area only to find there was no ice. The clerk told me to move to the left, because there was ice in the machine in the corner. I moved to the other machine and put ice in my cup.

I had just started to put my drink in my cup when suddenly there was a noise that sounded like a bomb had just gone off! I heard the clerk screaming so I turned to see what was going on.

Much to my surprise there was a car about a foot from where I was standing. The car had driven right through the glass window in the front of the store. I had to move the fruit basket the car had knocked over so I could get out of the corner with my drink in my hand.

No one was injured in this accident! I thank God for His protection. There is no doubt in my mind that the administration by the elders before we left for our trip is why my guardian angel was there to protect me! Praise the Lord! Garrett immediately called our pastor and gave him a praise report.



*"God is our refuge and strength,
a present help in trouble.*

Therefore we will not fear . . ."

Psalm 46:1-2



God Helped Me Calm Down and Do the Right Thing

-by Megan Lidberg, age 10

I was finishing my homework. When I was done, my brother Johnathan came into my room and asked for a Lego piece. I said no and we started fighting. Then Johnathan left my room.

My brain was going crazy. It felt like a race car. I took a moment. I said a little prayer in my brain when it wasn't paying attention.

Then I called Johnathan into my room, and I gave him two Lego pieces that were green and gray.

I came to my mom. I told her what happened. God helped me calm down my brain and let me think, so I could do the right thing.



Alonzo's Healing

-by Judith Ann Hawley, Independence, Missouri

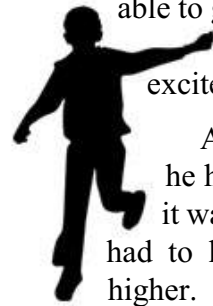
Judith began to lose her vision when she was in the sixth grade because of a rare disease. She says, "My vision loss started me on a pathway I could never have dreamed." Judith went on to live a very full life, including much travel and service for the Lord.

In 1983, Judith and her husband Harold took a group tour to Mexico City, Mexico. Harold had a spiritual experience there in which he understood that the Lord was calling him to give ministry in Mexico. The following testimony happened about four years later when Judith and Harold were working for the Lord in Mexico. Word enclosed in brackets have been added for clarity.

Rutilio and Petra's two boys, Alonzo and Edy, were about five and three years old when we arrived in Mitla [a Zapotec Indian village in Mexico with ancient ruins]. One day Harold decided to show them

how to make kites. He used newspaper, some light pieces of wood, rags, and string. Everyone, young and old, was interested in his construction. The little ones had never seen a kite.

Harold took the kite up on a hill by the ruins to be able to get a good breeze, and it flew way above the town. Everyone in the village was excited about that large kite flying in the air.



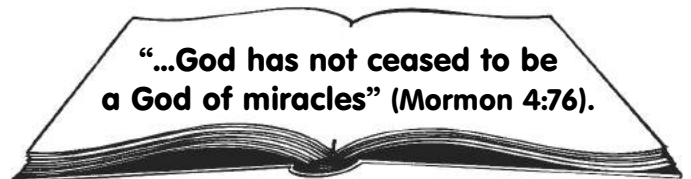
Alonzo was a very clever child, and soon he had made his own little kite. I would say it was about eight by ten inches. He knew he had to have a high place to fly it and lift it higher.

He discovered a ladder up against the building that housed the bathroom, so he used the ladder to climb on top of the roof. In his excitement to fly the kite and keep his eyes on it, he fell off the roof onto the ground.

His father came to Harold, weeping and holding a very unconscious Alonzo in his arms. Rutilio begged Uncle Harold [as he was affectionately called] to pray for his son. Harold [being an elder in the Church] put consecrated oil on Alonzo's head, then placed both his hands on his head as Rutilio held Alonzo in his arms.

Harold began to pray; and as he did, Alonzo began to wake up. When the prayer was ended, Alonzo got down from his father's arms and was back to his happy, playful self.

A miracle had happened right before our eyes!



**"...God has not ceased to be
a God of miracles" (Mormon 4:76).**

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"Welcome to My Church"

-by Matthew Lavigne, age 13,
Oak Grove, Missouri

This testimony happened on November 17, 2018, which was one day before my baptism on the 18th. I had just turned eight years old on November 11. I had decided to get baptized because I had faith that if I was baptized into the true Church of Christ, He would give me a testimony concerning the Church.

I was sitting in our backyard playing in some mud made by the garden hose, when all of a sudden the gate to the backyard opened. The area between the house and fence that led to the gate was narrow, only three feet wide and about fifteen feet long.



When the gate opened, I looked up and there stood Jesus, with His right hand outstretched to me. He said to me in a clean, pure, sweet voice, "Welcome to My Church," and then He disappeared. What joy I felt to have a personal welcome to "My Church."

You see, He welcomed me from the straight and narrow way, because as I said earlier the path was three feet wide and fifteen feet long. I praise God for that experience!

MY TESTIMONY OF JESUS

-by Ray Magargee

One day during church school, Sister Smith asked me if I had a testimony of Jesus Christ yet. I was only about ten or eleven years old at that time, and I really hadn't thought much about it. My parents were devout, had testimonies of their own, and had taught me well. Their testimonies were strong, and I surely could believe them.

The prospect of obtaining a testimony of my own was a new and intriguing thought. I had, over the years, found a favorite spot on top of a giant hill overlooking the Atherton river bottoms. This spot was

the place where I went when I really needed to think things out.

After Sister Smith spoke to me, I went to that hilltop several times over the next couple of weeks. I prayed to God that He would help me to find out how to go about knowing that Jesus Christ was real and that He was in my life.

One day, after spending much of the afternoon on my pony, playing cowboys and Indians with neighbor kids, I returned to the hilltop. I sat there looking out over the river bottoms. I could see Mr. MacMillan and Mr. Bowling cultivating corn. We had recently been blessed with a red-tailed hawk who had claimed the trees on our hill as home. I sat there and watched awhile and finally lay on my back and looked at the spring clouds blowing softly through the sky.

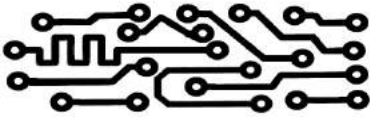
While I lay there reflecting upon all that was going on around me, I suddenly thought, "How could all of these great things happen unless Jesus wanted them to?" I suddenly sat up and looked around again, but this time more consciously. Indeed! How could all of this be here unless Jesus wanted it here?

I began to pray earnestly, "God, what a great God You are!" Suddenly, I somehow knew deep within my soul that it was going to be my responsibility to tell many people in the world about Jesus, and that He was REAL! The soft, confident Spirit that flooded over me was so real and intense that I felt there was nothing that God could not do.

Then I realized that there were tears running down my face, yet I was not upset or afraid. This was a very personal experience I was having with my God—a means of recognition that I have used repeatedly over the years to assure myself that I was indeed communicating with a powerful and consistent God.

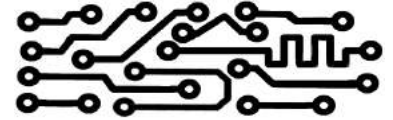
A few months later in a communion service, I was told by our pastor, through the Spirit, that God had a priesthood call for me and that I was to prepare for it. This revelation excited my parents, but really was not such a big deal to me because I had understood about the call months earlier on the hill. It was, however, comforting to have a second witness.

Our God is REAL and is very much a part of our lives, if we will allow Him to be. If you haven't yet obtained your own personal testimony of Jesus Christ, NOW is a good time to start.



Work with God's Grace

-by Jacob Smith, Independence, Missouri



In the fall of 2020 I was working on a difficult project for my job. One of our radio units used a computer module that was no longer being sold and it needed to be updated with a newer model. The radio unit also needed to pass some tests to prove that it worked perfectly with the new module.

After I installed one of the new modules, I fixed a few minor problems, but soon came to a problem that I didn't know how to solve. One of the circuits on the radio wasn't communicating properly with the new computer module. I looked at the software and the hardware. I swapped parts left and right to try and isolate the issue. I even asked the manufacturer of the new computer module for help, but I still wasn't making any progress. For over three days I tried everything I could think of but nothing worked, and I began to feel stressed.

Before this project started, the story of Ammon serving King Lamoni had been on my mind. Ammon served the king for only three days and because of the diligence and power of his service the king was converted in that short time. I looked at how I worked at my job and realized I was often lazy, distracted, and sometimes would slack off even for hours.

Every week we filled out a time sheet with hours worked on each project, and I knew sometimes I was lying by saying I worked so many hours when some of that time was spent on entertainment. No one was going to be converted by how I worked because I lacked the power of the Holy Spirit that comes through faithfulness in Christ.

Many coworkers knew I was a Christian but I knew I wasn't acting like one. With shame I confessed my sins to God and prayed for help to work in a way that would encourage those who watch me to respect God. The Holy Spirit told me I needed to confess this to my boss, too.

So I apologized to my boss. I told him how I sometimes slacked off, how I wasn't always honest with my time sheets, and that I was sorry. I offered to give back my vacation hours and accept any punishment he wanted to give. He was upset to hear

this, but didn't want to give any punishment as long as I would improve. I felt very ashamed of the way I acted and the disrespect I had brought to the name of Christ, but I was thankful my boss gave me a second chance. I was determined to do better with God's help.

And so I was trying hard to get this project done to undo the damage I had done to God's name. Because I ran out of ideas to solve my problem with the new module, I decided to write an email to one of my coworkers with a description of the problem and what I had tried. This coworker was very experienced and would likely know where to go next. I decided that after I sent the email, then I would pray for God's help.

As I sat down at my desk to write the email, I began to feel convicted because of my unbelief. The scripture from Matthew came to mind that Jesus *"needed not that any man should teach him"* (Matthew 3:25).

Why did I feel more hope in asking my coworker than asking God? Didn't God already know what to do? Wouldn't it be easy for Him to tell me? And wouldn't it bring more glory to Him if it were solved through prayer instead of the wisdom of man?

I thought about this for a little bit and decided to pray first. I apologized to God for my lack of faith in Him. Though He is more than able to solve any problem, my first inclination was to ask someone else. I asked God to show me what to do and to bring glory to His name through my work.

I finished my prayer and sat back in my seat. My mind was blank for about five seconds, but then I had an idea. I walked back to the radio, tried the idea, and solved the problem in a few minutes. What came to my mind after I prayed was the solution I needed.

I felt very relieved and thanked God, remembering that the many encouragements to pray in the scriptures are there for a good reason. Though the project wasn't finished yet, this experience boosted my confidence to work hard and do a good job.

Soon after this it was time to run tests on the radio to prove it functioned properly. The tests were going well until I came to the temperature test. The radio had passed the operational tests but it had to do so again in a temperature chamber heated to 50 °C (122 °F). The unit kept failing in the heat even though all the parts in the unit were rated to work at temperatures at or above 50 °C.

I had learned my lesson from the previous problem, so right away I began praying for God's wisdom and for diligence to do a good job for Him. I checked the computer code, the circuit diagrams, and swapped parts from different units. Then—after I had prayed, of course—I asked coworkers and the manufacturer for help. The radio's computer had a Linux operating system, and I spent much time using Linux to troubleshoot the problem. I learned much about Linux as I investigated every solution I could think of.

I was behind on the project and very much wanted to get it finished. But even with much daily prayer and diligently looking into every possible solution I could think of, I could not solve it. Many days I came home frustrated. I would pray, "God, I know you can give me the answer like you did before. Please teach me how to solve this. I know I messed up as a witness for Christ earlier, and now I want to bring you a good name."

One day after I finished praying this prayer, God spoke to me through spiritual books I was reading. He told me to continue to work and pray as I was, and to trust Him. I knew He hadn't abandoned me, but I didn't know why He wouldn't give me the solution like before. I struggled like this for almost a month, making little progress.

One day in January 2021, my boss called me to His office and I was laid off along with a few others. He said it was just a cut back and not performance based. I was disappointed that I never got to finish the project and didn't have more time to undo the damage I did to God's reputation. They gave me six weeks of severance pay which would be paid out every other week as if I still worked there, which I appreciated.

The next week I finished updating my resume and applied to a few companies. A former coworker suggested I apply to Garmin, which I did. After researching the companies I applied to, I wanted to

work at Garmin more than the others. I got a call from them and had two interviews over the course of a few weeks. At the third and final interview, I met with the people I would be working with. They asked me questions about my resume, and in particular about my experience with Linux. I explained how I used Linux on the last project I worked on at my previous job and what I had learned.

A few days after the interview they offered me a job. I felt relieved and thanked God. I would start in a few weeks on a Monday. I remember on the Friday before I started, I looked at my phone and saw that I had received my final severance payment from my last company that day. When I realized that I didn't go one day unpaid nor one day double paid, I knew it was the Lord. Not only that, but my new boss has told me three separate times that the reason he hired me was because of my experience with Linux.

I thought back to those days at my last job when I came home frustrated and confused, wondering why God had not helped me like He did before. I realized if God had answered my prayer, I would not have gained the Linux experience I needed to get hired at the new job. When I realized this, my faith was strengthened in what I had believed—that God was with me the whole time.

Even though I dishonored the name of Christ, I confessed I was wrong, sincerely sought His help to repent, and He mercifully prepared me for a better job than I had before, which I did not deserve at all.



*"He looketh upon men, and if any say,
I have sinned, and perverted that which
was right, and it profited me not;
He will deliver his soul from going into
the pit, and his life shall see the light."*

Job 33:27-28

*"For his anger kindleth against
the wicked; they repent,
and in a moment it is turned away."*

Psalms 30:5





Teach the Children

-by Jennifer Henderson, Oak Grove, Missouri



Back in the mid-1980s when our group in the Monterey, California, area was first formed, we had children among us who needed a teacher. None of the other adults wanted to do the job, so they asked me to do it, as I had taught my children at church before.

At the time, I was sort of burnt out. All I could tell them was that I would need their prayers and that I would also pray about whether it was the will of God that I do it. So I prayed. After awhile, one night I was given a dream in which I saw myself as a child growing up in the beautiful light and protection of Jesus Christ. It was impressed upon me that He had sheltered me all my young days!

Then a personage dressed in a bright royal blue robe and hood (so that I could not see a face at all) came toward me and beckoned for me to follow. The personage opened up a thin veil in the air and we stepped through onto a plain that was like the color of desert sand.

There was darkness all around, but I was directed to look to one side and then the other. In every direction, wherever I looked, I could see there were children of all ages entangled in sin in one way or another.

Whether they were involved with drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, or whether they were being abused by others, or involved in other types of crime, I saw it all. I saw weapons and all the devices of the devil, including the temptations of greed, the love of money, and the evil of envy and wantonness.

When I looked at these who were caught up in the diverse types of sin (many different groups of people mingling here and there), I noticed that there were other personages like my “guide” who wore the royal blue robes. These were going from group to group attempting to help and to save.

I then became aware that there were also other personages wearing bright red robes. When the red-robed personages came up to a child who was enmeshed in sin, a spotlight of various colors (like disco lights) would be directed upon them and the

red-robed personages would throw a red robe over the child. The child would begin to sink down into the sand of the desert as if it were quicksand.

The child would scream and cry out for help, but so many were engulfed and swallowed up—lost. There seemed to be more of the red robed personages than there were of the blue robed personages.

After showing me all of this, my guide turned to me and seemed to be questioning me as to what choice I would make. What could I do? I begged to be shown no more and to be taken back through the veil. I felt I could not stand to see any more, plus I didn’t want any spotlight to shine upon me causing me to be swallowed up in the sand. So the guide ushered me back into the “Son” light of my life and I awoke, shuddering and breaking out in perspiration.

It was early morning and nearly the time I would get up anyway, so still wondering about what was shown to me and wanting to pray about it, I went into the bathroom and locked the door. There I prayed upon my knees, asking forgiveness and thanking God for His mercy in my life.

I also asked for help in knowing if that dream or vision was given to me in answer to prayer about teaching the children. If God wanted me to do this job, I asked that He would please motivate, strengthen and enlighten me as to how to do it according to His will. Then I washed my face, and still a bit shaken, decided to share what I was shown with the church group and to try to teach the youth.

As I began to teach, there were times when I was at a loss with what to do next. I would pray and direction would be given to me shortly afterward. It was made known to me that first of all I was to work with the children on how to pray. That was hard, because my own prayer ability was greatly lacking. So I went to the best example and began with the Lord’s Prayer. Then we went on to the Twenty-third Psalm and that led to learning the Armor of God. In between, we used Bible and Book of Mormon scriptures as needed.

Several times I was blessed with ideas for crafts that were fairly easy to prepare to make the learning

more fun. One idea I was given was a more difficult project of making a scriptural concentration card game. God was helping me use the artistic talents He had given me to glorify Him!

In all humility, I continue to hope and pray that God will be glorified through the talents and abilities He has given me and through whatever I can do to help the children and to further the cause of Zion.

Although there have been times since this vision was given to me that I have faltered and although I have been guilty of backsliding, I continue to repent. I truly believe that I've been forgiven and have been blessed to continue putting forth greater effort to teach other children.



He Shows Me a Better Way

-by Carianne Lidberg, Oak Grove, Missouri

One of my favorite parts of coming to church is sitting in the quiet sanctuary. I love being quiet, not having to do anything or say anything. I find such peace sitting there, away from worldly distractions and responsibilities.

On one Sunday morning during the prayer service before communion, I was being quiet, but yet I was completely distracted by my thoughts. I sat in the service searching for God. I knew He was there, but I was unable to reach Him. My mind was heavily cluttered with thoughts, my heart was racing thinking about my roles and responsibilities, and I was aware that these things were keeping me from experiencing God at all.

I was then given a mental image from the Lord. I saw myself suffocating under hundreds of blankets. The weight and heat were intense. I knew these blankets represented the thoughts and anxieties I was

experiencing. I began to imagine pulling the blankets off, one by one, with an understanding of what each blanket represented.

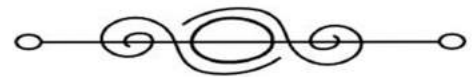
The top blanket represented thoughts of what piano songs I would play for the upcoming service and if I would be able to play the notes correctly. The next one represented being distracted by my role as a mother. The next represented all the activities in the bulletin I needed to attend.

Then I began to pull back the blankets of the busyness of the week prior and the busyness yet to come the following week. And so it went, removing blanket after blanket, until I was left completely uncovered.

Once uncovered, I realized how cold I was. I thought to myself, "Maybe I'll just put a light sheet back on." Immediately, I understood that the heat of the sheet would not be sufficient and that the heat I needed to keep me warm would only come from the Holy Ghost.

At this point my mental image closed, but I was completely aware that the Holy Ghost could now work in me because I had released my thoughts and cast them aside. Now I was fully capable of experiencing God in the service.

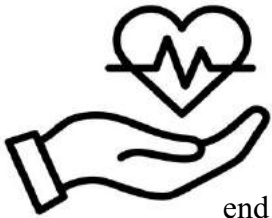
This is true for me. I am constantly going, doing, and thinking, and I must learn to take time away from these things and quiet my soul. God gives me time in church when I can be still and know Him. And when I am unable to quiet myself, He shows me a better way.



Be STILL
and KNOW
that I am
God

Psalm 46:10





Through God's Mercy

-by Cindy Green, Blue Springs, Missouri

One Friday evening toward the end of February 2016, I was at home alone exercising on my Wii Fit. I was so proud of myself for doing something good for my health. In the middle of my workout, I suddenly felt that something wasn't right. I didn't know what it was, but I decided to lie down on the couch on my left side and rest.

At that time I was volunteering at Center Place Restoration School (CPRS) where our son Daniel attended, so the next school day I talked to the school nurse about what had happened. "You know," she gently urged me, "you really should go see your doctor."

I listened to her advice. When I saw my doctor, they did an EKG, but nothing obvious showed up. The doctor said she would send a referral and have a cardiologist at Centerpoint Hospital call me to set up a consultation. It was a Monday when I saw my doctor, and I didn't realize it at the time, but she didn't send the referral until Friday.

On Monday, I took some things up to the school to give to a teacher. I parked in the back of the building. When I was carrying the items around to the front of the building, I had to stop every few feet to catch my breath.

When I finally got inside the building, I needed to go up a flight of stairs. The effort made me feel slightly nauseous. A friend saw me and asked if I was all right. I brushed off my symptoms. "Yeah, I'm okay," I told her. About thirty minutes after I went back downstairs the symptoms calmed down.

Starting on Monday of the next week, the students at CPRS were taking the Iowa Basics Skills test. To make it more fun during the testing week, I always allowed Daniel to have some special meals, including going out for breakfast before school once or twice.

That Tuesday morning, he wanted to eat at Einstein Brothers Bagels. It was March 1. When I woke up that morning, I did not feel well. I felt nauseous and my extremities were tingly. It felt different than when your arm or leg "goes to sleep." I knew something was wrong.

I went ahead and took Daniel to Einstein Brothers and paid for his order, then went back out to the car. I felt pain in my chest rather like heartburn, but I knew it was not heartburn since I had experienced that during pregnancy.

At that point, I realized I needed medical attention, but I wasn't ready to admit that I might be having a heart attack. I thought I would just go see my doctor, but first I had to get my son to school. I wasn't sure that I could drive the car to CPRS and back to Blue Springs.

Under the promptings of the Spirit, instead of trying to drive to Independence, I called a close friend. This is where the miracles started happening. Not only was my friend at home, her husband had not yet left to take their son to CPRS and was glad to pick up Daniel and deliver him to school also.

My friend came right away and she convinced me to go to St. Mary's Hospital, which was only a mile away. We went into the emergency room and as soon as they heard "chest pains," they immediately wheeled me into an exam room and hooked up the monitors.

My husband was already at work, clear out in Leavenworth, Kansas. When I called him, I said, "Why don't we just wait and see what they say before you drive all the way home?" Of course he left work and came to the hospital as soon as he could anyway, and I was thankful for that.

My friend had also called the elders to come and administer to me by anointing my head with oil and the laying on of hands. I know I received more blessings through this ordinance, manifested by how my medical treatment unfolded.

The cardiologist I saw had a kind demeanor which set me at ease, and was not at all condescending. He explained I was having a heart attack and I needed to have immediate angioplasty surgery to locate the blockage in my arteries, open it up, and put in a stent. As I lay waiting for the procedure, Centerpoint called about the cardiology consultation. I told them it was a little late now!

When I went in to have the angioplasty, they found the blockage right away. The procedure was over so quickly that my husband and his brother didn't even have time to shuttle my car back to our house and return to the hospital.

They were able to locate the blockage by going in through my wrist and did not have to insert a tube through my groin, which would have been more risky. The left anterior descending artery was more than 90% blocked, yet I did not have any significant damage to my heart.

I was blessed to go home on the following day (Wednesday). There were many prayers offered for me that evening at prayer service also.

Sometimes I marvel that I am still here at all because by all odds, I shouldn't be. It could have all turned out so differently that day at so many points: if the school nurse hadn't been a retired ER nurse who recognized the seriousness of the symptoms and urged me to see my doctor; if my friend hadn't been home; if her husband hadn't been available to pick up Daniel and take him to school; if I had not listened to the still small voice and tried to drive Daniel to school myself.

I know the only reason I am still here is because through God's mercy, I listened to the still small voice of His Spirit, and because of the administration of the elders and the prayers of the Saints. I know that the Lord blessed me!

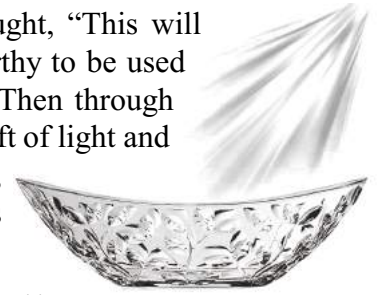
My Dream of Crystal Dishes

-by Pat Chadwick, Oak Grove, Missouri

I felt compelled to share this dream after recently reading a message by Roy Weldon, where he says, "The King will see them and lead them into the city and they shall see a table set . . . Then shall their souls melt and mourn the wasted years spent in vain pursuits of this world."

Several years ago, I had a most unusual dream. In this dream I was preparing for a great banquet to honor my King. I was looking for serving bowls to use on the King's table. I went into a supply room and there on an antique sideboard sat a plain glass bowl.

I looked at it and thought, "This will never do. It is not worthy to be used on the King's table." Then through the window came a shaft of light and it shone upon the bowl, and I understood this was the light of Christ.



The light was absorbed into the bowl, so that the bowl was full of light. It did not just reflect the light but absorbed it into itself. When this happened, the bowl began to change and it was transformed into a beautiful crystal bowl. I understood this is what happens when we actually take Christ into our inner being and into our daily lives and live by His commandments. We are changed.

Following this transformation, I saw thin gold filaments like strands of gold shoot through the glass bowl and this enhanced its beauty even more. I understood this was the endowment which will come when we start living on a higher level. Brother Weldon's message spoke of that, how we must come up to a higher level and move to higher ground in personal righteousness. He said, "I see as this people shall move to higher ground, for every height they shall scale, heaven shall reach down. They shall come in increasing contact with the powers of God."

In Brother Weldon's message, the Lord said, "The need is very great. It is later than you think." In my dream I felt this urgency and I knew more serving dishes were going to be needed. I looked on the sideboard and noticed more dishes. They were all plain glass. Some were even broken and chipped. I was dismayed at their condition.

Then I saw this same light shine upon them and they too were transformed. They shone gloriously with gold filaments through them also. I knew these dishes would be pleasing to the King and would serve Him well. No matter how broken we are, if we will come unto Christ, we can be restored, we can shine gloriously and serve the King of Kings.

The King is coming! Let us all hurry to become vessels of honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use.

(Read more of Roy Weldon's message at [ogrb.org/Women's Department / Zion Flash Cards/September 2021](http://ogrb.org/Women's%20Department/Zion%20Flash%20Cards/September%202021))



JUST FOR YOU

-by Sheri (Gunter) Nunn, Oak Grove, Missouri

When I was in high school, I was able to attend a Center Stake RLDS senior high youth camp at Camp Santa Fe near Gravois Mills, Missouri, at the Lake Ozarks. On the last evening of the of the camp everyone was down at the lodge getting ready to watch a movie.

I had been contemplating what the camp pastor had said earlier in the week when he asked us to prepare ourselves before the final worship service as though Christ would be there to meet us. I felt that staying and watching the movie wouldn't allow me to prepare to meet Christ so I separated myself from that activity and walked up the hill to the tabernacle to meditate and pray.

The sun had almost set and it was dusk as I entered the tabernacle. After I sat and prayed for a while it was becoming dark so I decided to go back to my cabin and read the notes I'd written from one of the classes that day. As I was walking, the still small voice in my mind very strongly told me to go to the cabin and said, "Do not look behind you!" From past experiences I knew to obey this prompting without doubting.

After about five to ten minutes of sitting in the cabin and reading my notes, one of my friends walked in. She was really scared and crying. She said, "I watched you walk into the cabin. I have this feeling of evil I can't get rid of and I have had some really bad thoughts about people I know. Then I saw you and I had to struggle to follow you."

I don't remember what the notes said that I had been reading before she entered, but they were just the words she needed to hear at that moment. A dream I had been given earlier came to my mind in which Christ had comforted me with an embrace, so I put my arms around her and hugged her.

I whispered in her ear, "Jesus loves you very much. You'll never know exactly how much. Even if you had been the only one He had to die for to save you from your sins, He would have done it *just for you!*"

I felt the pure love of God envelop my whole soul as it had done in my dream when Christ put His arms around me. I then sensed this feeling of love flow from my body into hers. She felt it too! She asked me to please not mention to anyone at camp what thoughts she was having or what happened here that night. It would embarrass her. I did as she asked.

The next morning for the worship service we all gathered to the designated area and sat down on the ground. We sang a few hymns and then the pastor of the camp prayed. In his prayer he asked that Christ would be among us.

He paused for several minutes then called my name. I looked at another girl who went by the same name as me, questioning in my mind which one he was calling to. The camp pastor paused again until I looked at him and when my attention was focused on him, he said my name again. He then continued speaking.

He told me I had been given the gift of love. He said that my growing up in the area and neighborhood that I had was for a purpose. It would be a strength to me in years to come.

I knew Jesus was talking to me through our camp pastor. The Christ-like love I had experienced and felt the night before with my friend was fresh on my mind. He specifically addressed a few questions I had prayed silently about at the tabernacle the night before. Only Jesus could have known those questions and He spoke to me through our camp pastor.

I don't remember the rest of what he said to me or to others at this service. Unfortunately I didn't write this experience down until 1989 after my husband joined the U.S. Army as a nurse and we were stationed at Ft. Carson, Colorado.

Reflecting back some forty-six years after having this experience, I can see how the conditions I grew up in as a child have been and continue to be a source of great strength to me. Many people seem to always be caught up in their own lives, jobs, and families, and it is hard for them to take time to reach out to others or keep in touch.

The conditions of my childhood created a desire in me to reach out to others and keep in written contact with many of my friends, both old and new. It gave me strength to cope with being separated by distance from family and friends as a military spouse and mother.

Over the years I have lost contact with some of the many friends I have made while we were in the military. However, I have had the joy of finding and reuniting with a lot of my lost friends in recent years. Now that my husband has retired and we have moved back to the Center Place, I am making new friends.

I look forward with hope to a joyous reunion with more friends that I have been separated from. I have hope in the renewal of my friendships with those who have passed on before me when we meet again in Zion.

For now I can only work on my life in preparation to meet once again with our Creator, God, the Father, and especially Jesus, my Lord and Savior, who loves each of us very much. We will never know exactly how much. Even if you had been the only one He had to die for to save you from your sins, He would have done it—just for you!

The Lord Has Power to Provide

-by Melanie Coonts, Independence, Missouri

I wanted to share with you my testimony which happened after I read Brother Mike Stice's testimony in the last issue of *Zion's Call*. (See Spring 2022 issue, page 5.)

If you have not already, I encourage you to read Brother Stice's testimony of being allowed to be with Moses and the Israelites as they crossed through the Red Sea on dry ground. I was in awe of his experience. As I was contemplating his experience, I thought of course about how we are Latter Day Israel.

The Lord made it known to me a few years back that we were also wandering around in the wilderness for forty years, just like ancient Israel. He then showed me in vision that after we have shared all that we have with our neighbors and with anyone who might come to our doors that He would also send manna into our backyards.

I saw that we must share what we had with others or this blessing would not be available to us. I saw my backyard with clusters of manna. Isn't the Lord wonderful?

God Shall Supply All Our Needs

-by Marylyn Halsall, Oak Grove, Missouri

Having been diagnosed with glaucoma, it is necessary that I put certain drops in my eyes two times a day to maintain healthy pressure. Failing to administer these drops daily could have serious consequences. I could lose my vision entirely.

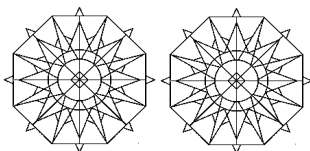
I consider it a miracle that I can see anything at all as this problem came upon me suddenly. Having had laser surgery in both eyes, plus cataracts removed, I am blessed to have some vision, even though it is blurry.

Over the past year there have been several times when the pharmacy was unable to fill the prescription due to lack of supply or a mistake made in dosage directions. Just recently, there was another mistake and I was informed that I could not obtain these drops until about five days after I would run out.

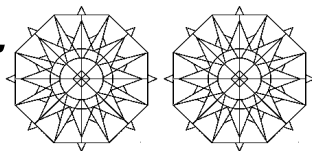
I prayed to the Lord, asking Him to please extend the drops so I would not run out. My doctor soon remedied the situation and I was able to obtain what I needed, but I want to state that as I used up what I had, the Lord extended the drops even six days after they should have been gone!

How great is our God! He surely "*shall supply all [our] need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). This same miracle had happened two other times with not only my eye drops but also one time with my heart medicine. Praise God forever!





My Kaleidoscope Reminder



-by Julie Anderson, Independence, Missouri

For about a year, I have been struggling. The adversary has been attacking me, making me feel like I am a burden to others, making me feel worthless. I would read and pray, but never felt the benefit. In a word, I felt “broken.” Discouragement overwhelmed me. I knew I needed a major change in my mind and I knew it had to come from the Lord.

To give you a little back story, my husband Kevin passed away on December 14, 2016. Kevin was very talented in music, playing the piano and singing tenor. Our home was full of music when he was alive. A month before he passed, I had major surgery and was supposed to spend eight to ten weeks recovering. Two days after Kevin’s funeral, my sister’s family was going on vacation and she insisted I go with her. She wanted me to rest, and she knew I wouldn’t if I stayed home. After much encouragement from family and friends, I took the trip. This started a tradition for my sister, Lori, taking me on a trip for Kevin’s anniversary every year.

In October 2022, Lori called and asked where we were going on this year’s trip. (It is always my choice.) Because of my despondency, I hadn’t even thought about the trip. I opened my mouth to say, “I don’t know,” but the words “Sedona, Arizona” came out. I knew nothing about Sedona and had never been there. Lori asked me why, and I honestly said I had no idea. So, I decided to start researching.

At the same time, I had started seeing a new chiropractor. When she discovered I was planning a trip to Sedona, she exclaimed that she had lived there for many years and helped me plan the trip. At one visit, she mentioned a town called Jerome, Arizona, and said there was a unique store that had been opened in 1890 and sold kaleidoscopes. Most of the kaleidoscopes are made by artists around the world and each one is unique and special.

At the word “kaleidoscope,” my mind was instantly taken away to a childhood experience I had from reunion. Our teacher had set a pile of trash in front of each of us: empty paper towel and toilet paper rolls, bits of colored plastic, aluminum foil, etc. She explained we would be making a kaleidoscope.

The interior of this toy is lined with mirrors, and the end is encapsulated with broken pieces of colored glass or plastic. You look through one end of the scope and the mirrors reflect awesome designs from the colored pieces.

Our teacher taught us that our lives were like the kaleidoscope. If we would reflect Jesus Christ in the mirror of our lives (Alma 3:27-29), He could take the broken pieces of our lives and make a beautiful design.

Remembering this lesson, I immediately started praying for a kaleidoscope experience. I knew I needed the Lord to fix my broken spirit. I also remembered the second most important part of the toy, you must look to the light to see the reflection through the broken pieces.

As the trip drew nearer, I became so excited. We arrived in Jerome on the first morning, and I was like a child on Christmas morning. I couldn’t wait to get into the store! I had prayed mightily that the Lord would be with me and give me a beautiful experience, that He would have a kaleidoscope that was just for me, and that I would feel Kevin was a vital part of the experience.

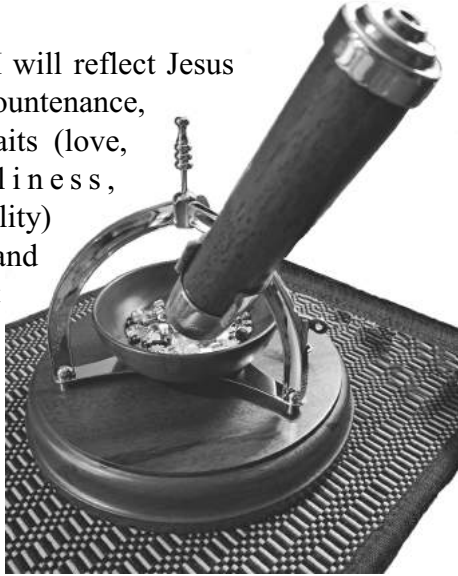
I started walking around the store, looking at every artistic scope, praying all the time. After looking at over a hundred beautiful creations, none had felt special to me. My sister called me over to look at one she loved. As I started to look in the scope, the Holy Spirit flooded me. It was so overwhelming, I can’t even describe it in words. I started to cry even before I focused on the scope. Just then I saw Lori’s wrist move and music started. I realized that this was my kaleidoscope. It was my music box from Kevin. Love overwhelmed me, and the Holy Spirit began to heal my soul.

As we drove away, the Lord spoke to my mind. He reminded me that my kaleidoscope was just like my life. You see, my scope has a wooden base with the music box inside. On top of the base is a small bowl lined with a mirror. Inside the bowl are small beads. The music box rotates the bowl as it plays, and you

look down the scope to see the design created by the colored beads in the bowl. You also must have a source of light shining on the bowl in order to see.

The Lord reminded me that in my life, as in my bowl, what is put into my bowl determines the beauty seen. If I fill my life with anger, offense, irritation, etc., and focus on darkness, I will never see the beauty possible.

However, if I will reflect Jesus Christ in my countenance, put the right traits (love, faith, godliness, patience, humility) into my mind, and look to the Light of the world, my Heavenly Father can create an absolutely magnificent masterpiece.



*"Have ye spiritually been born
of God? Have ye received his image
in your countenances? Have ye experienced this
mighty change in your hearts?
Do ye exercise faith in the redemption
of him who created you?"*

Alma 3:27-30

God Watches over His Own

-by Clara Bennett

In the past, I have had a problem of falling asleep while driving home from work. I have always felt God was watching over me at these times. Years ago on a spring afternoon about 4:00 o'clock, I fell asleep again while I was driving. I lost control of my car and hit several trees and a building.

The road I drove usually had steady traffic, but it seemed like there was never any traffic at the times I nodded off. This particular time there was another car coming, but thank God, I missed her! I had on my seat belt and escaped with just a few bruises and scratches. I knew that God had been there again protecting me.

I usually would have had my grandsons in the car with me because I picked them up after work and took them home with me. I thanked God that they were not with me that time because the glass breakage would have come in on them.

Although I wrecked my car, there could have been a more tragic ending to my story. I am grateful to have my Lord God always watching over all of us.

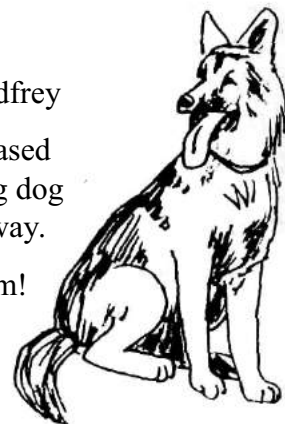
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compiled by the Parkersburg, West Virginia
Restoration Branch, 1995

Comfort Sent

-by Charlotte Godfrey

One year, when my brother-in-law was showing a video of my deceased husband, I had to leave the house. I went to the creek to weep, and a big dog was there. I put my arms around this dog and wept my loneliness away.

Afterwards, I asked about the dog and no one knew anything about him! I felt the Lord had sent him to me to comfort me. I believe that many times He comforts us in unexpected ways as we go through life.





Grandpa Martin's Encounter with the Devil



-by Pat Chadwick, Oak Grove, Missouri

"Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart; this is he who received seed by the wayside.

But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and readily with joy receiveth it, yet he hath not root in himself, and endureth but for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

He also who received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word and understandeth and endureth; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, and some thirty."

Matthew 13:17-21

My grandfather, Clarence Martin, my mother's father, died of a stroke when I was very young but I very clearly remember him telling this experience. Later, my grandmother Alma also shared this experience. This is really their two testimonies blended together to make a whole story.

This took place when my mother and her siblings were very young. My grandfather was upset with something that had taken place in the Gudgell Park congregation where they attended. He never said what had happened, but whatever it was he took it personally and became insulted and deeply offended by it. It made him downright mad, as I recall him stating. Grandpa decided that he and his family would no longer attend church.

My grandmother felt differently but Grandpa forbade her to go to church, declaring that the whole family would no longer attend. Grandma thought he would soften in time, but this did not seem to happen. If anything he became stronger in his determination to never go back to "that church" again! He had many arguments for not going, but the main one was, "they are all hypocrites."

Grandma was very upset about Grandpa's anger, bad attitude, and his inability to forgive. She made it a matter of serious prayer. Several months went by and finally she confronted Grandpa once again about returning to church. It was a Saturday night and she put forth a good argument for returning to church on the morrow.

She gave her husband quite a speech that according to Grandma went something like this: "Clarence, you need to forgive these people and go back to church. We all sin and fall short of the glory of God. Even the very best people make mistakes that can offend others. Look at Peter and how he denied the Christ, yet the Lord forgave him and he became a mighty worker for the Lord. What do you say? Tomorrow can we just put this behind us and return to church?"

Grandma said he was angry and defiantly stated, "Alma, I am an innocent party in all of this! I refuse to go back to that church and you and the children are not going either. That is my final word. I don't want to discuss this ever again." He then stomped off to bed.

Grandma prayed fervently long into the night that somehow my grandfather would have a change of heart. Finally she went to bed also, but with an extremely heavy heart. Her heart did not need to be heavy, for her prayers were answered in a most unexpected way while she slept.

In the early morning hours, my grandfather was awakened. He said he was wide awake and sat up in his bed. He wondered what had awakened him. He swung his feet over the side of the bed and just sat there looking into the front room.

He knew that he had been awakened for a purpose, but he did not know what that purpose was or what he needed to do. Actually all he needed to do was to be awake and observe. He just did not know that yet.

The way their house was designed, there were bedrooms on both sides of the house with the front room in the middle. Hence from my grandparents' bedroom you could look across the front room and into the children's bedroom.

A movement caught my grandfather's eye. He turned his head to look and was most surprised to see a man enter the house. The man came through the front door. He did not open the door; he came through the closed door.

Grandpa said the most terrible chill came over him and he knew who this man was. It was Satan! Grandpa said that he was extremely handsome, the most handsome, perfect man he had ever seen. He was dressed in a black suit, and his whole appearance exuded beauty and great power.

Satan did not seem to even see my grandfather, but instead swept across the front room and went to the open door of the bedroom where their small children were sleeping. Standing just at the open doorway to the children's room, he looked into the room, rubbed his hands together in glee, and threw back his head and laughed a most terrible laugh. "They're all mine," he said.

He then proceeded to move into the children's bedroom. He walked around the children's beds all the while rubbing his hands in glee, repeating "They're all mine! They're all mine!" Finally he left, laughing, going out through the children's bedroom wall.

Grandpa said he just sat there in horror and with great fear, for he knew that his actions had caused this great rejoicing by Satan. Grandpa stated that he knew if he continued in his anger, Satan would indeed take hold of his children and they would belong to Satan and his order. He understood for the first time that he was not so innocent after all, but by becoming offended and then harboring anger toward the people at church, he was actually in greater sin.

His wife was right. He needed to forgive and go back to church. A mighty understanding came to him that he had fallen right into a trap set by Satan, and this too was an appalling thought to him. Grandpa quickly repented of his anger and his unforgiving attitude!

Grandma was most surprised when she awakened in the morning to find Grandpa sitting in the front room with his Sunday suit on. She said the first words out of his mouth were, "Alma, get the children up and ready for church. We are going back to church."

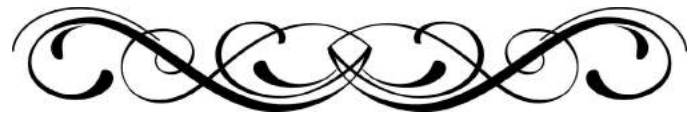
She did not know what had happened and she did not question it, but she knew that God had answered her prayers. They were the first ones to arrive at church that day and were ever faithful from that day forward.

Eventually Grandpa shared his experience with Grandma. They both were so thankful that God had answered her prayers and allowed Grandpa to see the real battle that was taking place, even a spiritual battle.

In recent years, I have come to realize that when Satan stood in that bedroom and declared with glee "They're mine! They're all mine!" he was not just talking about the four children in that room, but all their descendants. If my mother had not had the Church, where would I be? Where would my children be?

Generations are lost when even one person leaves the fellowship of God's people. Who will then teach the next generation about Jesus? Who will teach them to pray? Who will take them to Sunday school to learn of Jesus? Who will bear testimony of Jesus to them?

You see, it is a domino effect. What we do affects the generations to come. We must stand firm in our faith and not be deceived by Satan into leaving the Church or be lulled into inactivity. We must endure to the very end and be a light to those who come behind us.



"Yea, we see that whosoever will lay hold upon the word of God which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning, and the snares, and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a strait and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked, and land their souls . . . at the right hand of God, in the kingdom of heaven" (Helaman 2:26).

The Lord's Bow—An Answer to Prayers

-by Jennifer Henderson, Oak Grove, Missouri

My eldest son, his wife, and my grandchildren lived in Independence, Missouri, before my husband and I gathered to the Center Place. My parents, eldest sister, and two younger sisters and their children also lived in Independence. While still living in California, it was my heart's desire to visit them as often as I could, but this meant I had to fly, take a train or bus, or drive myself. The latter options took too much time, so I knew flying was the best way for me to go.

When one of my younger sisters divorced her husband and moved to California, her children needed someone to fly with them to Missouri for their summertime stays with their dad. Sometimes they needed someone to fly back to California with them as well. My sister asked if I would be willing to help her, as she sometimes could not fly with them. My prayers to be able to visit my children and other family members were answered when my husband agreed to make do without me and allow me fly to Missouri for a week or two.

The first time that I flew with my niece and nephews, I had to fly from Monterey Airport to San Francisco to meet them. Then we flew together the rest of the way to Missouri. That morning was quite foggy and drizzly so I was praying for a safe flight to San Francisco. The plane was small, only carrying fifteen or so passengers for the short hop to San Francisco. My seat was on the aisle next to an older woman who had the window shade up and was looking out. Our seats were on the right side of the plane and just behind the wing.

During our small talk the woman let me know that she hoped the flight would not be too rough as the weather was beginning to look worse. The little plane began its ascent and seemed to sway and tremble a bit more than I was comfortable with. I was used to more powerful, large planes. I prayed more intently in my heart for the pilot and other passengers and again that we'd be blessed with a safe ascent and trip.

The woman next to me motioned for me to look out the window from time to time. After a somewhat rough jolt from flying into some turbulence, I felt my

stomach and heart almost come up into my throat. The woman told me to look out again, so I leaned forward as far as I could since she was pointing to the wing tip.

There I saw for the first time in my life, a short, horizontal rainbow that seemed to begin at the edge of the wing tip and curved back to meet the edge of the plane's tail wing! The reason I said it was a horizontal rainbow is because it lay exactly parallel with the body of the plane, instead of going vertically like most rainbows you see that go from a cloud down to the ground.

I had to crane my whole body and neck to see all the way back to the tail wing, but the woman was quite slender and didn't seem to mind my leaning so far into her space. In fact, when I think back, it was as if she wasn't even there, because I had such a good view (even though that little window didn't permit you to see much). I know that she and I did not trade seats because the seat belt light was still on, letting us know that we were not allowed to move around during the ascent.

After seeing this horizontal rainbow, I realized that my Heavenly Father was letting me know that I, and everyone in that plane, was in His sight and in His loving care. I still didn't quite understand fully what this experience meant; however, I felt reassured and blessed throughout the entire trip back to Missouri with the children.

On another flight escorting my niece and nephews, I was blessed with a similar experience, except this time I was able to see that the horizontal rainbow went from the tip of the airplane to the tail wing touching the large wing in the center! It was such a blessing to view, giving me a special feeling that my Father in heaven had again heard my prayers and those of others who were praying for my safety.

Still, it didn't occur to me in either of those experiences that the rainbow went around the entire airplane. The only thing that stayed in my mind was that I had been blessed to see that portion of rainbow (as if that was all there was to the rainbow)!

The very last time my sister asked me to fly back to Missouri with the children and return with them to San Francisco I had another experience. This time I hadn't slept well the night before and was feeling quite ill. When I went to the Kansas City Airport my head was beginning to ache. The children were already there with their father and step-mom waiting for me. We said our goodbyes and found our places in the plane.

Once we were seated, I could barely stay awake to answer their questions or make any attempts to talk to the children at all. It was difficult to rest though, as my head and body were aching more and more. Being so much more grown up and a precocious young lady, my niece quietly talked to her brothers and kept them interested in the things they'd brought with them. I was very grateful for her help as I hardly had strength to lift the baggage into the overhead compartments.

After we arrived in San Francisco and departed company, I had to get on another small plane for the short hop back to Monterey. The weather was very blustery and made me feel quite a bit more uncomfortable and cold. The wind seemed to be getting stronger and stronger. It seemed to me that the little plane would not be able to take off in that strong wind.

I thought as I settled into the upper left seat in front of the wing that I heard the pilot telling the host that it would be a challenge to get the plane up. It was hard to hear because the plane's engines were very noisy (and the wind was also). The pilot was yelling, laughing, and making light of the weather (I suppose to calm the passengers), but I just wanted to have peace and quiet so I could rest.

I decided to listen to a hymn that was coming into my mind (as quite often comes unbidden) and pray at the same time. After we took off, it seemed like the plane was having such a terrible time gaining altitude. It struggled so much that it felt almost like I was riding on a toothpick in a tornado! The more I listened to the hymn, the more I began to shut out the noise around me, and I must have actually slept for some of the time!

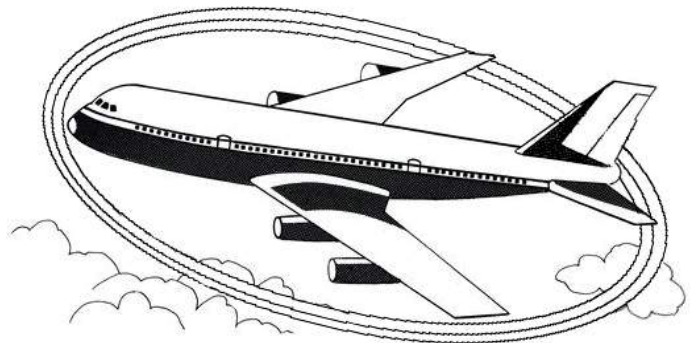
The next time I opened my eyes the plane was flying smoothly. I heard the pilot calling out that we would soon be descending into Monterey! I looked

out the window and saw that we were flying in the blue sky and going down into a fog bank. The sight was beautiful!

The sun was bright above us—so bright that it caused the airplane's black shadow to fall upon the fluffy, pure white fog bank below us. And there before my eyes was the most beautiful, yet small, rainbow entirely encircling the shadow of that little airplane! We seemed to be encased in a pillar of bright light, which glowed off of the wing outside my window. I couldn't bear to look directly at the reflection of the sun there.

I turned my gaze again to the rainbow around the shadow, which disappeared as we flew down through the thick, moist cloud of fog. The realization of how blessed I was came to my heart and made me so thankful that I began to sing in my heart hymns of praise and prayers of gratitude, dabbing the tears that came to my eyes.

It is so wonderful to positively know that our Father in heaven sees our needs, hears our prayers, and extends His love in such miraculous and personal ways when we put forth the effort to rely on Him with the simplest faith we can muster in our weakness.



*“And the bow shall be in the cloud;
and I will look upon it, that I may remember
the everlasting covenant, which I made
unto thy father Enoch; that, when men
should keep all my commandments, Zion
should again come on the earth, the city of
Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.”*

Genesis 9:21

I Walked with an Angel

-by Judith Ann Hawley, Independence, Missouri

One afternoon in February of 1978, while living in Bates City, Missouri, I felt the need of a spiritual uplift. My husband Max had died a little more than a year before, and I was still grieving deeply for my loss. I thought immediately of our new neighbors, Zeke and Edna Rose, who had recently moved into our community from Ohio. They were people of great faith. I felt that a few minutes with them would lift my spirits tremendously.

It was about four in the afternoon when I started off across the snow-laden field which separated our homes. This path was more direct instead of my walking down the driveway and up the road to the paved highway, which ran in front of their home. Their home was about three-quarters of a mile away, as the crow flies, but much longer by walking along the road.

At this time, I was legally blind—having only five percent of my vision. It was not wise that I walk across an unknown field, but I was eager to go that way since the other route was much longer. As I walked through the field, the deep snow obscured the ditches and swales of the pasture. I found myself tripping and even falling into some of them.

Fortunately, I reached the Rose home safely. We had a wonderful visit, sharing testimonies of our many blessings from the Lord Jesus Christ. It lifted my soul. Time passed, and I suddenly realized how late it was getting. It was becoming dark rapidly, and my vision was even more limited in the darkness. After farewells, I started for home.

I had not gone far when I became lost in a garden heavily overgrown with weeds and covered with deep snow. I wandered for some time in that area. At last I found the fence and climbed over it. Soon, I found my tracks leading back the way I had come earlier in the day. I started home following that path, but all too quickly, I realized it had become too dark for me to see my way any farther. I was stranded in the middle of a big field in the dead of winter. Even if I called out, no one would hear me. Worse yet, the temperature was dropping rapidly.

I did the only thing I knew to do. I bowed my head and prayed, “Well, God, here we are in the middle of this field. Now what are we going to do about it?”

Immediately, a light shone around my feet. I blinked my eyes and shook my head, but still the light persisted. I began walking toward home with the light guiding my way. When I stopped or turned back, the light would go out. When I continued toward home, the light continued to shine.

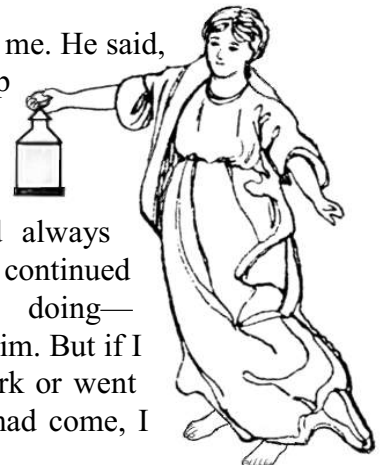
It was as though I was walking on a surface as smooth as glass. I could see each of my footprints below the smooth surface as I walked. It was almost inconceivable that my prayer was answered so quickly.

When I finally calmed down, I began to perceive just what was really happening. I was looking forward with my physical eyes, but I found myself looking backward with my spiritual eyes. Behind me, I beheld a large blonde angel clad in a flowing white robe and carrying an old-fashioned square lantern in one hand.

As we walked, he would occasionally swing the lantern forward. As he did, the light at my feet would go before me to lead the way. Then he would swing the lantern back to his side, and the light would return to the area directly around my feet.

We continued walking in this fashion. My heart began to swell within me, and I wanted to walk on and on with this angel. I did not want the experience to end.

Then God spoke to me. He said, “My word is a lamp unto thy feet and a light unto thy path.” (See Psalm 119:105.) He told me I would always have His light if I continued doing what I was doing—centering my life on Him. But if I stopped doing His work or went back from whence I had come, I would lose His light.



He further explained to me that I would find His path and His light in the Scriptures. Then I heard the song, "Let Us Walk in the Light," as it flooded my mind. What joy filled my being! I had walked with an angel, and God had talked to me!

The angel led me safely to my front door. Then the light went out, and the angel was gone. But the light did not go out in my heart, nor did the memory of the cold, wintry night when I walked with an angel.

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What Would We Do Without Our Dear Savior?

-by Beverly Conoley, Blue Springs, Missouri

I was born prematurely and had a heart defect and a ruptured navel. They didn't think I would live, but God let me live. He has been with me all of my life. I have so many testimonies of His goodness to me. God told me in my patriarchal blessing to share my testimonies, so I am trying to do that.

Our family was in a tornado when I was five years old. The tornado blew our car, as we were riding in it, into a big tree. The car beside us went into a deep ravine. We were safe, but it tore up our car. I know that God saved and protected us.

In 1945, my parents decided to move out of the rough neighborhood in Kansas City where we had been living. I was ten years old. Our new home was in Buckner, Missouri. A neighbor at our new place would give us kids a ride to church. He was on his way to the Buckner RLDS church and we were going to the Methodist church, but he helped us.

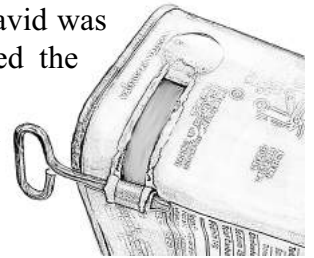
One day, he asked us if we wanted to go to his church and we said yes. He talked to our parents and they said it was okay. A bit later, he asked if he could show our family a series of slides that taught about his

church. In 1948, our family slowly came into the Restored Gospel.

If we would have stayed in Kansas City, it is hard to tell what I would have ended up doing or being. I believe God moved us to Buckner to lead us to His Church.

In the fall of 1951, my mother became very sick with thyroid cancer. The doctors said she might not make it. We were afraid she might not make it through her surgery. Many prayers were said for her. I too prayed. A voice spoke to me and told me she would be okay. I kept telling others that she would be okay. Mother did come through it. The doctors said it was a miracle! She was forty years old at that time and she lived to be ninety-six.

In 1957, when my son David was two years old, he swallowed the metal key that was used to open a can of meat. It got caught in his throat. I was alone with him. I had no car, no phone.



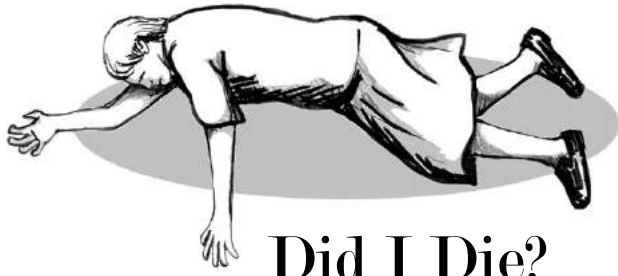
I cried out to the Lord for help and He did. God told me to pick him up and shake him hard. When I did, the key just fell out of his mouth onto the floor. David was okay. It was a miracle!

My dad died in 1956. He was my buddy and I missed him so much. He had suffered a bad stroke and was in the hospital. God told him that he would die on the thirteenth day after entering the hospital and he did.

God does still speak to us. He is not dead! God is very much alive and always working for our good. I do not know how it helped my dad to know when he would die, but I trust God that it was for my dad's good.

In 1967 during a time when I was having many troubles, I kept wishing I could talk to my dad. I was very troubled. One morning, I awoke at 5:30 a.m. and my dad, in spirit, was beside my bed. He looked so good! He talked to me and helped me a lot. My clock stopped at the time he was there. The Lord graciously let him come to me in my time of need.

What would we do without our dear Savior?



Did I Die?

-by Carol Allen, Grain Valley, Missouri

In late December 2004 I had a knee replacement. Not even two months later, early in February 2005, I had a hip replacement. In May I started getting short of breath and as the summer went on I got worse. I became so short of breath I could hardly walk fifty feet before I would have to stop and get my breath.

I went to my doctor and he sent me to an allergist, a cardiologist, and another doctor which I can't remember. None of them helped me, so my doctor just told me he had no idea what was wrong and gave me no instructions on what to do.

On September 17, my daughter planned to stop after work and get me some groceries. I felt like the least I could do was to fix her supper. I decided to make spaghetti and meat sauce, so I put some water on the stove for the spaghetti and then went down to my basement garage where my freezer was to get some hamburger.

As I went down the stairs, I got very short of breath. I couldn't understand how going down the steps would make me so breathless. I think I was able to get the meat from the freezer and that is the last I could do before I passed out.

I don't know how long it was before I woke up on the floor. I tried to get up, but I passed out again. I tried to get up three times and each time I passed out and fell back on the garage floor.

This worried me because I knew I had water boiling on the stove and had to take care of it. I thought maybe I could just lie there until my daughter came, but I knew she might shop quite a while and I had no idea when she would get to my home.

I had a wall phone about six feet from where I lay so I decided to roll over onto my hands and knees and crawl to that phone and try to pull it down. I did this. When I got the phone, I called 911. The lady asked me, "Is this Carol?" I said yes. She asked, "Is this a

fire or medical emergency?" I said medical. I could hardly speak because I was gasping for breath. She asked what was wrong and I told her I couldn't breathe. She asked if I was alone and the answer was yes. She said, "They are on their way right now."

I told her, "Garage floor." She asked if I was on the garage floor and I answered yes. Then I said, "Combination."

She asked, "You have a combination on your door?"

I said, "Garage door." She then asked for the combination and I told her.

The ambulance arrived very shortly and they finally got the garage door open. When they came in to load me on the gurney, the man said, "How long have you been lying here?" I told him I didn't know for sure. He said, "You are cold as ice." I told him I had water boiling on the stove and asked them to please not let my dog down to the garage because she would go out the garage door.

The 911 lady had called my daughter and she was at the hospital when I got there. The first thing they did was to take a scan. They told me I had a large blood clot. I asked how large and they said very large. They finally found that this blood clot was at the point where your artery divides and the blood goes into your lungs. It had my right lung 100% blocked off and my left lung partially blocked.

Then another clot had come through and blocked off my left lung. The pulmonary specialist told me when that happens you cannot live. He said, "You actually died!"

I knew I was dying because I lost control of everything. He also said that the reason I was ice cold was because I had no blood flow.

They gave me medicine that would keep me from having another clot and I was in the hospital a few days for observation. They said the clot would have to dissolve on its own. I have learned since then that hip replacements sometimes cause blood clots and I believe it now.

I believe that it just wasn't my time to go home to my Lord so He gave me back my life. I feel that there is still something I need to do in my life or the life of someone else, but I have not learned what that could be. Maybe someday He will let me know.

Actions of Godly Love

-by Mike Stice, Oak Grove, Missouri

It has been difficult for me to walk since suffering a stroke in 2016. Recently, I started walking for exercise to strengthen my legs and improve my ability to walk. My walking route from my home takes me across the bridge over I-70 Highway.

Sometimes after I cross the bridge over the interstate highway, I continue on to a nearby store. The number of folks who stop and ask me if I need help is a testament that there are still many good people in the world who are trying to live out the love of God. The other day not one, not two, but three different people stopped and offered me a ride home.

The first one was in the parking lot of the store as I put away my shopping cart. A young man who was perhaps twenty-one or twenty-two told me I looked tired and insisted that he wanted to help. I could see that his kindness was based in godly love.

The second time was as I was leaving the parking lot and a woman drove past me. She turned her car around and came back and stopped to ask if I needed a ride. She was willing to take me home. Again I saw this same godly love in her countenance.

The third time was also as I was leaving the parking lot. This time a bus stopped and the driver offered me a ride home. Another day, two different women stopped and asked me if I needed help.

One day while walking north across the bridge, a man came along going south. He asked me, "Do you know Jesus?" I've never had anyone ask me that question before.

The man was surprised when I said yes. He had thought me ignorant of the truth and was confounded when I responded, "I love Christ!"

This man had a New Testament of the Bible and some money he wanted to give me. As we talked, I told him that I had my own copy of the Scriptures and that Jesus means everything to me.

It was a powerful moment as we connected through both of us knowing the love of Christ in our lives. All of this happened in about thirty seconds and then the traffic light changed and we went on our separate ways.

The point I want to make is that there are still many Christians who are doing good works with the love of God in their hearts.

"I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord; the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad" (Psalms 34:1-2) In Psalm 34, David was praising God and thanking God for his many blessings. I thank God for all of His blessings to me as well.



Meditation

I sit here in the church pew
Where I usually like to sit.
I look around me at my friends,
And meditate a bit.

Do they feel the love and strength
That is present here today?
Do they find a peaceful Spirit
That makes burdens melt away?

Does the promise of the Scriptures
Fill their hearts and minds with knowing
That in this troubled world
God's loving plan is growing?

Do they know that they are needed?
They are part of His great plan.
Do they know that they are special,
Every woman, child, and man?

Do they have a joy in coming
To this fellowship of love?
Will they leave here today feeling
There was ministry from above?

It is in meeting here together
That our strength and courage grows.
We go out again to do our part,
And we pray God's Zion shows.

-Barbara (Cawley) Holtsclaw, Missouri

The Depth of God's Mercy and Love

-anonymous

"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men"
(Daniel 4:25).

In the early 1960's teaching jobs were available everywhere. I took advantage of this situation to travel with my wife from a California job to an Alaska job to an Arizona job. Unfortunately, I was self-centered and proud and did not take good care of my wife, so she left.

In Arizona, I met a widow with three children and God filled me with compassion. I did not recognize it as God's hand. I thought I was in charge. We married and continued to live an adventurous lifestyle, not recognizing that all the while God was directing our paths. I did not recognize that His hand was in all things.

My second wife had grown up in the RLDS church. The non-denominational church I had attended elsewhere did not exist in Tucson. After two elders from the church visited us, we started attending the RLDS church. Our children and I were later baptized.

After learning about Zion, we gathered to Missouri and bought a small farm in the Ozarks. My wife had a military pension from her deceased husband which we thought would sustain us if we lived a simple lifestyle. However, three years of double-digit inflation made life difficult. I felt responsible, but I still was not relying on God for direction. Finally, she had enough of my floundering and I was forced out.

I moved closer to the Independence area and got a job teaching at Sionita School, a small private church school near Bates City, Missouri. Later, I remarried, built a house, and asked God to straighten me out. God has more than done His part in blessing us.

The three children of my second wife now live in the Springfield, Missouri, area. The boy works with a small group there. He called me this last Father's Day. Suddenly I was hit with the fact that God was directing my path all along, even when I thought that I was in charge.

When I went to church that Sunday, the first hymn we sang was about the love of God. I was completely overwhelmed with emotion as I caught a glimpse of the depth of God's mercy and love for us.



The Lord Does

-by Mick Ballantyne, Oak Grove, Missouri

I don't remember how it got started
... but the Lord does.

Many years ago—well, many, many years ago—one of my first memories goes back to when we were a family of five (Dad, Mom, my sister Darla, my brother Montie, and me). Dad was home from work every night. When we ate supper together around the kitchen table, we would offer a blessing before the meal. We all took turns, rotating to a different family member every evening.

Church was many miles away and it was a rare occasion when we would be able to attend. Back then we lived in the northern states—Montana, North Dakota, and Ohio—and winters were long and the snow was deep. Road crews weren't able to keep roads open as well as they do today. Also, at that time cars were more temperamental in cold weather than they are now. It wasn't wisdom to try to travel long distances in that type of weather.

Every evening as we offered our prayers to bless the food, we asked the Lord to help us to be able to go to church the next Sunday. No matter who offered the petition—mom, dad, or one of the kids—without fail they always included that request: "Lord, help us to be able to go to church next Sunday."

Years went by. We continued to pray that same prayer. Then in the late 1960's, Dad's job took him to Lafayette, Louisiana, so our family moved. In town in a small house owned by the pastor, was "our church." Attendance was small in number. Our family made up a third of the congregation. We were now able to attend church on Sundays and Wednesday evenings. Our prayers had been answered.

I don't remember when we stopped praying that prayer . . . but the Lord does.

A Vision of Zion

-by Robert E. Giertz, Jr.

I was awakened early one morning by the sounds of a thunderstorm. God speaks to His creation through the power of nature. As the thunder crackled outside my window, I could see the flashing of lightning illuminate the darkness.

I knew that this storm was but a small portion of the power that resonates from the hand of God. I was made aware that this same power which fueled the thunder and lightning and produced rain to renew the earth, would also bring destruction to the earth as God brings His judgment upon His people.

Section 105 of the Doctrine and Covenants immediately was impressed upon my mind. Even as the blackness of night completely blanketed the Center Place at that moment, so the gross darkness of sin covered the earth:

Verily, verily I say unto you, Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people, and all flesh has become corrupt before my face.

Behold, vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth — a day of wrath, a day of burning, a day of desolation, of weeping, of mourning, and of lamentation — and as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth, saith the Lord.

And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord.

First among those among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me, and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house, saith the Lord (Doctrine and Covenants 105:9a-10b).

As the immensity of these words pierced my soul, I was also reminded of a vision I had been permitted to see a number of years ago. I felt within me an urgency to share this vision at the prayer service in our branch that evening. After doing so, I was then instructed to write down the testimony so that it may be shared with others. I had been reluctant to write the testimony in the past, because it has always

remained fresh in my memory. But a testimony is not a testimony unless it is shared. I pray that these words will strengthen the body of Christ and confirm the truth of the Lord's promise to His Church.

There is complete darkness. As the vision unfolds, I am permitted to see imagery, and at the same time, to see the words of scripture which are being fulfilled. As the darkness shrouds the vision, I saw the words of Section 105:9-10 and also Isaiah 60:2. I was also shown in large, bold letters the words: "THE EARTH, MY CREATION, GROANS FOR THE LIBERATING TRUTH OF MY GOSPEL."

As the darkness was penetrated by just enough light to see, I saw, as well as felt, the horizon change shape. It was as if the earth had opened up and a giant mountain range was rising up as far as I could see.

As the immense power of the hand of God moved upon the earth, I was aware that I stood in the Center Place. As the mass of rock and earth erupted from the ground, I knew that Zion was being born.

The mountain was massive in comparison to the Grand Tetons or Rocky Mountain ranges that I was familiar with. As the mountain grew and filled my view, the words of Isaiah 2:2-4 were overlaid:

And it shall come to pass in the last days, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it;

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem;

And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

I also saw Isaiah 5:26:

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly . . .

As the darkness began to lift, light began to flood my field of vision. Before I was permitted to see what would happen next, I began to realize that the promises made to Noah concerning the last days were about to be fulfilled. These words seemed to flow from the mountain of the Lord's house:

And the Lord said unto Enoch, As I live, even so will I come in the last days, in the days of wickedness and vengeance, to fulfill the oath which I made unto you concerning the children of Noah.

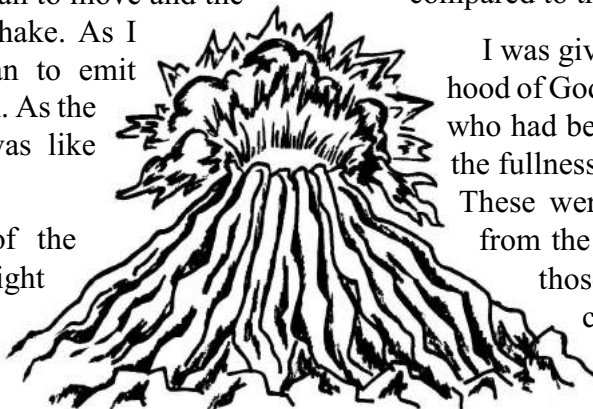
And the day shall come that the earth shall rest. But before that day the heavens shall be darkened, and a veil of darkness shall cover the earth; and the heavens shall shake, and also the earth.

And great tribulations shall be among the children of men, but my people will I preserve; and righteousness will I send down out of heaven, and truth will I send forth out of the earth, to bear testimony of my mine Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead; yea, and also the resurrection of all men,

And righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth for the time of my coming; for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem (Genesis 7:67-70).

As I pondered the meaning of this passage of verse, the top of the mountain began to move and the entire mountain began to shake. As I watched, bright light began to emit from the top of the mountain. As the brightness intensified, it was like seeing a volcano erupt.

All at once the top of the mountain sheared off, and light flooded forth from the opening that was created. I saw the power of God



emanate out from His holy mountain. This was the fulfillment of the scripture that I had just seen. God was sending forth righteousness and truth upon a darkened and sinful world to gather in His elect. This was indeed the New Jerusalem which was to stand in Joseph's land.

I also saw another scripture. It was in the midst of the light which now filled my sight: *“For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea”* (Habakkuk 2:14).

As the light continued to flow out of the mountain, it began to lessen in its brightness and intensity. I soon began to see on the left hand side of the mountain, a steady stream of small figures moving up toward the top. The brightness of the light was now focused on the top of the mountain and I could see the entire mountain from my perspective.

As these tiny figures began to move closer to the top, I became aware that these were the nations of the earth who were being directed to come and learn of Zion, just as Isaiah had prophesied. They entered into the light and appeared to be consumed, but I knew that they were in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Many of these people who flowed into Zion were those who once had had a testimony of Jesus Christ, but because of the power of the adversary, had been overcome. The light of truth that was sweeping across the earth had broken their chains of captivity.

Many people refused to come and see and were fleeing from the mountain. Many of these people perished. Suddenly my attention was shifted again to the top of the mountain. Out of the top and down the right side of the mountain there appeared people coming down. These people were small in number compared to those coming up the other side.

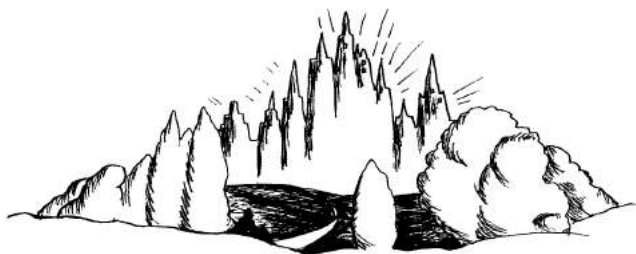
I was given to know that these were the priesthood of God who had received the endowment and who had been summoned to go forth and declare the fullness of the gospel to the ends of the earth. These were those that had been washed clean from the blood of this generation. These were those who had been held back in consequence of the transgressions of the Church, but were now empowered to go forth with power from on high.

As these men began to come down the mountain, I saw their numbers grow as the endowment was upon the mountain of the Lord's house in great power. I was shown that as they went forth, many would respond to their words and would be led to gather and see the Lord Jesus Christ.

This continued for some time. The priesthood would go out from Zion, and many would return after a time. Others would then leave in their place. The gospel was going to all the world as a witness before the end of the earth.

As the vision closed, the image of Christ began to come out of the mountain. He continued to grow in size until he hovered over the entire mountain. I could see that one foot of our Lord was upon His Zion in New Jerusalem, but that the other foot stood upon His holy mountain in Jerusalem. He was Lord of all. He had gathered His own elect. He had reclaimed the remnant of His people and brought them back safely to the sheepfold.

I hope that this vision might bring you encouragement. I have the hope and the assurance that Zion will be, and that the Lord has made provision for that faithful remnant of His people who will not allow themselves to be overcome.



Guide us, O thou great Jehovah,
Saints unto the promised land;
We are weak, but thou art able;
Hold us with thy powerful hand.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,
Feed us till the Savior comes.
When the earth begins to tremble,
Bid our fearful thoughts be still;
When thy judgments spread destruction,
Keep us safe on Zion's hill,
Singing praises, Singing praises,
Songs of glory unto thee.

-- William Williams

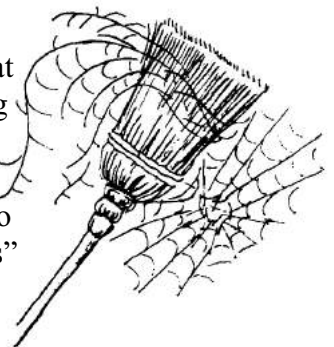
The Endowment

-by Nelda Brosam

It is said, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Maybe that's why the Lord gave me a special picture in my mind. My husband Ira and I have prayed off and on for the endowment for the priesthood and church members. One particular day I was thinking of the endowment and wondering if it would really be like I thought. I received more spiritual enlightenment when a picture came to my mind. Some call them "mind's eye pictures."

I was in an unfinished house with sheetrock on one wall and just 2 x4's on another wall. It was quite dim. I don't remember any windows. Then suddenly there was a lot of light flooding the room. I thought, "Now if this has been unfinished for a while, there must be cobwebs in the corners." When I looked, there were none to be seen. This room was very clean, as if it had just been cleaned.

I decided this meant that the endowment would bring sudden spiritual light to our minds, as I had always thought, but it would also clean out the "cobwebs" of our minds. Our minds would be very clean.



When you are older, it's nice to think that when this enlightenment comes, we will be able to say what we mean and recall certain scriptures when we need them as spoken of in Doctrine and Covenants 83:14d:

Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say, but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man.

Since this was given to me, a member, I think it means all members will receive this much endowment. God has promised that His priesthood, of course, will receive much more:

For, behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them [the elders of the Church], inasmuch as they are faithful, and continue in humility before me (Doctrine and Covenants 102:3e).

The Power of the Cross

-by W.V. (Bill) Davies, Evangelist-Patriarch, Missouri, 1999

"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (I Corinthians 2:9).

Dear Saints, the Lord is crying unto us: *"To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? . . . behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it"* (Jeremiah 6:10).

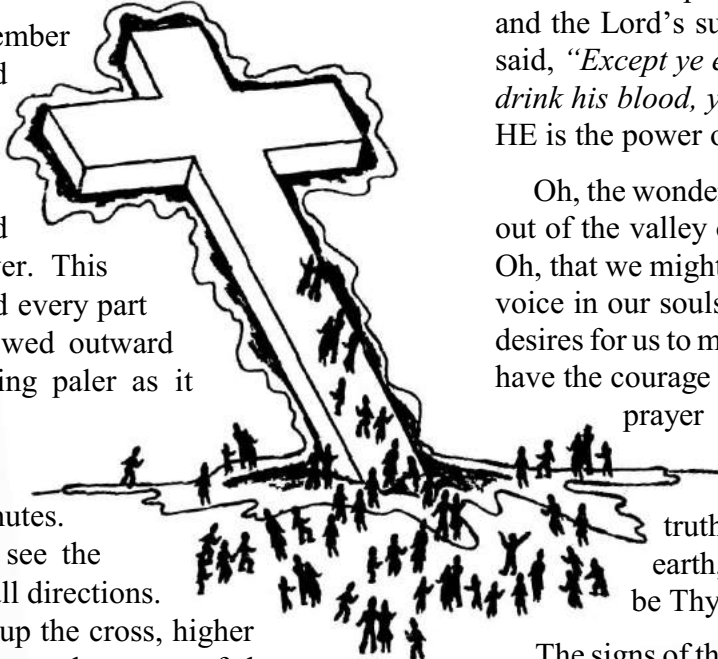
He speaks to us in the voice of warning:

Hearken, O ye people of my church, to whom the kingdom has been given, hearken ye, and give ear to him who laid the foundation of the earth, who made the heavens and all the hosts thereof, and by whom all things were made which live and move and have a being.

And again I say, Hearken unto my voice, lest death shall overtake you; in an hour when ye think not, the summer shall be past, and the harvest ended, and your souls not saved (Doctrine and Covenants 45:1a-b).

One night in September of 1989, I awoke and saw a vision. I saw a huge cross leaning upward into the sky, glowing red with a pulsing power. This red glow with a filled every part of the cross and flowed outward from its base, growing paler as it went.

I looked at this cross for many minutes. By its light I could see the Saints coming from all directions. They began walking up the cross, higher and higher, as they sang the songs of the Restoration. They were striving with all their might to move upward, and some slipped backwards at times. I realized it took a certain determination and commitment to move upward.



And so, our path is not always easy. The Lord lays trials at the feet of each one, that we might overcome and that He might be glorified. In this way He blesses us, for He has such a great desire to bless us. And He has said, *"For after much tribulation come the blessings"* (Doctrine and Covenants 58:2b).

We must endure and never turn away from the power of the cross. One woman, whom I recognized in this vision, had made it two-thirds of the way up the cross when she looked around furtively to see if anyone was watching and then slipped away to one side and into the darkness. She never returned; my heart ached for her.

I recognized that the red glow of this cross which was so strong was the power of Christ. Read again in God's Word the story of the cross and what it means to us. Ponder upon the relationship between the cross and the Lord's supper (see John 6:35-58), for Jesus said, *"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you"* (John 6:53). HE is the power of the cross. HE is the resurrection.

Oh, the wonder of our God of glory, who brings us out of the valley of darkness into His glorious light. Oh, that we might listen with our hearts and hear His voice in our souls urging us onto higher ground. He desires for us to move upward to places where we will have the courage and fortitude to offer a sacrifice in prayer and fasting for those who are suffering. For we must bear each others burdens, and be able to truthfully say, *"Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name."* (See Matthew 6:10-11.)

The signs of the times whisper to us of the urgency of this hour. The coming of the Savior, our Lord, is near, even at the door.

Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the

good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein (Jeremiah 6:16).

Let us examine ourselves. Are we refusing to walk in the paths where the Lord has called us to walk?

This is an exciting time to serve our Heavenly Father. Just think—Christ called you forth for this particular time out of all the world. He wants each one of us to do something special for Him. In Jude 1:3 we are exhorted to “*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.*”

Do not feel that you are of no use to the Lord. Christ ignored the recognized church of His day—the Sanhedrin and the high priests. He walked alone by the seashore and chose for His disciples lowly, despised, and unlearned fishermen. (See Acts 4:13.) Also, the Lord said unto Paul, “*My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness*” (II Corinthians 12:9).

Let us go on to perfection, praying always for the Holy Ghost which speaketh of the Father and of the Son. Our Lord is a loving God. He is waiting to lift us up if we will seek Him with all our hearts. He says to us, “*Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid*” (John 14:27).

There are many tribulations which lie ahead, but God has made powerful promises unto His people.

Yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the storm cometh, they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm can not penetrate to whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them.

But behold, they are in the hands of the Lord of the harvest, and they are his; and he will raise them up at the last day (Alma 14:86-87).

Dear Saints, let us not fear, but move ever upward by the power of the cross—even through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Don't Quit

When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure turns about
When we might have won had we stuck it out.

Don't give up though the pace seems slow,
You may succeed with another blow.
Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faltering man.
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the winner's cup.
And he learned too late
when the night slipped down
How close he was to the golden crown.

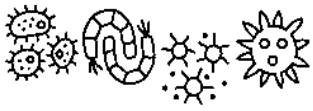
Success is failure turned inside out,
The silver lining of the clouds of doubt
And you can never tell how close you are—
It may be near when it seems afar.
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit,
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.

For we know the Father above looks down,
He sees our struggles and holds the crown.
He knows the way though it's rough and drear,
He will give strength so we need not fear.
He offers to you the refreshing cup
Of the water of life; then in faith look up.
Continue on 'til the crown is won
Which He will give when our work is done!

—author unknown

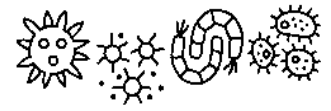
“And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold;
but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

Mark 13:13



Our Microbiome and the Word of Wisdom

-by Debbie Norman, Oak Grove, Missouri



Let me begin by saying I firmly believe the Word of God is our foundation for all truth. I believe we must hold up everything to the standard of God's Word. We can confidently accept the Word of God as truth over any wisdom of man, including scientific research. Research can be flawed and lead to skewed or false conclusions. Scientific understanding has and will continue to change dramatically over time, yet the Word of God stands firm and constant.

With that foundation, I would like to introduce you to one of the hottest current topics in scientific and medical research: our human microbiome. In recent years, there has been an explosion of new research in this area. Our microbiome is the community of diverse, dynamic, and individualized microorganisms (such as fungi, bacteria and viruses) that exists in and on every part of our bodies, from our skin, to our mouths, to our gastrointestinal tracts.

When most of us hear the words "yeast, bacteria, and viruses," we think of bad microbes—the ones that make us sick. But there are also millions of good yeast, bacteria, and viruses that we need for health. We cannot live without them. These good microbes are not invaders, but rather beneficial colonizers in our body.

We now understand there are more microbes in our human bodies than there are cells. It is estimated there are 38 trillion microbes in our large intestine alone. To put this in perspective, there are 100 billion stars in our galaxy. That means we would need 380 galaxies worth of stars to match the number of microbes just in our large intestine.

Scientists now say that 70 to even 80% of our immune system is in our gut. In other words, those trillions of microbes in your large intestine, along with the ones in your small intestine and stomach, have a huge influence on your immunity to disease.

We are learning that these microorganisms literally influence every aspect of our health and well-being. Besides immune response, our microbiome influence mental health, asthma, obesity, inflammatory diseases (like heart disease and diabetes), cancer, and more.

One recent study looked at dietary fiber in the diets of people with melanoma cancer.¹ The patients were divided into high fiber and low fiber diet groups. The cut off for the high fiber group was 20 grams of fiber, which is less than the recommended daily allowance of

25 grams for women and 38 grams for men. Seventy-one percent of the people in the study didn't even hit 20 grams of fiber daily. The 29% in the high fiber group had a greatly improved rate of survival. For every five grams that daily fiber increased, the survival rate increased by an astounding 30%!

Because of the influence of our gut microbiome on our immune response, it's not surprising to find a connection between our gut microbiome, fiber, and COVID 19. A study was done with hospital workers from six countries, looking at dietary patterns and health outcomes.² The study did not ask exactly what they were eating, but asked them to choose one of the listed categories that they felt described their diets.

Those who said they were eating a whole foods, plant-based, or vegetarian diet were put together in one category. Persons in this category were 73% less likely to have a moderate to severe case of COVID 19! It also appeared this group had less likelihood of getting COVID in the first place, but that part of the study was nonconclusive. This study was done before COVID vaccines were released, so no one was vaccinated. People who fared the worst were those eating low carb and high protein diets. They were 3.8 times more likely to develop moderate to severe COVID.

Next let's talk about genetics. Scientists used to believe that our genetic code was set. You were born with a certain code and that was it. Now, they are discovering that our genetic code is more like a series of switches that can be turned on or off, and it appears that our gut microbiome controls the switches. A healthy microbiome can apparently keep dormant undesirable genetic tendencies toward disease. This is just one more reason we need to be passionately concerned with developing a strong gut microbiome.

Research concludes that when it comes to a healthy microbiome, diversity is the key. There are hundreds to thousands of different varieties of microbes in our bodies. The more different types of good microbes we host, the healthier we are. More diversity equals more health. It is also apparent that the way to have a diverse microbiome is to eat an abundance of fiber.

Many of us think of fiber as a distasteful supplement one takes to promote good bowel movements. As you can see, we are discovering that fiber does so much more for our bodies and that the best fiber is not

consumed as a supplement, but eaten from food. What foods provide this health-giving fiber? Whole grains, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and fruits! Fiber is only found in plants. But there is more: Not all fiber is created equal. The fiber from whole grains may offer specific health benefits that can't be replicated with fiber from fruits or vegetables alone.³ This is undoubtedly one reason God told us grain is the staff of life.

It is good news to discover that our microbiome can be manipulated. You are not stuck with the microbiome with which you are born. Have you heard the story about the two wolves inside us? The old Native American story goes like this: There are two wolves battling inside us. One is good (love, joy, peace) and one is bad (anger, greed, selfishness). Which one will win? The one you feed.

This is also the story of our gut microbiome. The different kinds of microbia in our gut have different “dietary needs.” Good food choices will feed the beneficial kinds of microbia, and they will flourish and increase. Conversely, poor food choices will feed the bad microbia in our digestive system, and they will gain ground in our gut, causing havoc. If we don't give the bad microbia what they need to live, they will die out. Just like the story about the wolves, the microbia we feed will flourish.

Interestingly, it appears that the flourishing, dominant microbes in your gut can cause cravings for more of what they need. Most of us have felt this. When we eliminate junk food from our diet, at first we have cravings for those foods. The bad microbes that thrive on these foods want to be fed! If you don't eat the junk food for a while, the cravings subside as the bad microbes die off.

You can actually change your taste buds over time by beginning to eat small amounts of good foods that you don't currently like. The good foods you don't like can begin to taste delicious to you over time as your gut microbia change. You can start to love and even crave new healthy foods when the good bacteria fed by those good foods begin to rule in your gut.

When a healthy balance of the microbes in the gut is disrupted, it leads to the development of various chronic diseases with an underlying inflammatory condition. The typical American diet—high in sugar and other processed refined carbohydrates, high in meat, and low in fiber—results in dysfunctions and disruptions in our gut microbiome. This in turn contributes to the increase in the development of

chronic inflammatory diseases such as intestinal bowel disease, colorectal cancer, allergies, autoimmune diseases, and obesity with its associated health problems. These diseases can, at least in part, be prevented by adequate dietary fiber.

Are you beginning to see how these new discoveries about our gut microbiome relate to the Word of Wisdom found in Section 86 of the Doctrine and Covenants? In the Word of Wisdom, God clearly tells us the following dietary information: Grains are the staff of life and wheat particularly for man. We are to eat meat sparingly. God has made all wholesome herbs (vegetables) and fruits for our use with prudence and thanksgiving, to be used in season. Not surprisingly, it turns out that this is the perfect recipe for a healthy, diverse gut microbiome!

Diets high in animal protein (meats) have been associated with an increased growth of inflammatory (bad) microbes in our guts, while diets high in whole grain, fruits, and vegetables (including legumes) have been shown to promote the growth and diversity of good microbes in our guts.

“But wait,” you say. “What about carbs and gluten being inflammatory?” Carbohydrates (carbs) have gotten an evil reputation in recent years. People think they need to avoid them to be healthy and to lose weight. Low carb diets are dangerous because they are low fiber diets. As a matter of fact, low carb diets—which are high in animal protein—have consistently been associated with increased growth of bad inflammatory microbes. If you follow the Word of Wisdom, you will not be eating a low carb diet.

It is true that we need to avoid REFINED carbs: sugar, refined grain products, high fructose corn syrup, etc. These are gut disrupting foods. Complex carbohydrates, on the other hand, are the foundation of a healthy diet.

Doctor Will Bulsiewicz, MD, (a board-certified, award-winning gastroenterologist) says in his research-based book *Fiber Fueled*, “If you want a healthy microbiota, whole grains are the foundation of building a healthy gut.” But you don't have to take Dr. Bulsiewicz's word for it. It's what God says in the Word of Wisdom: Grain is the staff of life, and wheat for man. We need to believe this! Whole grains are a healthy complex carbohydrate and an excellent source of prebiotic fiber which feeds the good microbes in our guts. We need to stop being afraid to eat generous amounts of whole grains!

Scientific research backs this up. A meta-analysis combining results from studies conducted in the U.S., the United Kingdom, and Scandinavian countries (which included health information from over 786,000 individuals), found that people who ate 70 grams per day of whole grains—compared with those who ate little or no whole grains—had a 22% lower risk of total mortality, a 23% lower risk of cardiovascular disease mortality, and a 20% lower risk of cancer mortality.⁴

An analysis of six studies including nearly 250,000 people showed that those who were eating the most whole grains had a 14% lower risk of stroke from those who were eating the fewest whole grains.⁵

One study showed a 20% reduction of the risk of colorectal cancer for every three servings of whole grains eaten per day. The risk was reduced even more in those eating more than three servings of whole grains per day.⁶

In a large study of nearly 200,000 U.S. adults, those eating whole grains most frequently had a 29% lower risk of developing type 2 diabetes across the approximately 30-year study period than those who rarely or never eat whole grains, even after adjusting for other lifestyle factors.⁷

Eating three servings of whole grains each day is linked to lower body mass and less belly fat.⁸ (So don't believe that book about a wheat belly.)

Eating whole grains even appears to help our mental health! An analysis of twenty-three studies shows that people who eat more whole grains are more likely to have better mood, less depression, and less anxiety.⁹

Studies consistently show that whole grains are not inflammatory, but in fact are anti-inflammatory and that swapping out refined grains for whole grains greatly improves our overall health, (at least in part by improving our gut microbiome).

What about gluten? If you have celiac disease, by all means, avoid gluten carefully. But if not, gluten is not the villain it has been portrayed to be. If gluten was inflammatory and caused gut issues that should be shown in research studies of the gut—but it is not. Quite the opposite has been found. After healthy subjects spent a month on a gluten-free diet, researchers found lower levels of healthy gut bacteria and higher counts of *E. coli* and other unhealthy gut bacteria.¹⁰ Other studies have confirmed these findings. Eating whole wheat improved intestinal integrity and reduced intestinal permeability (leaky gut).

Research debunks the idea that gluten causes “brain fog” also. In a study of 13,494 women without celiac disease, there was absolutely no relationship between gluten and cognitive function.¹¹

Food intolerances, including gluten intolerance, are a deeper subject than there is room to address in this article, but training your gut microbiome is the basis for healing in this area also.

What does it look like to make grain the staff of life within a plant-based diet? The American Heart Association says we should eat at least six servings of whole grains every day. I think this is a great goal. If we do this, I believe we can say we are using grain as our staff of life. To eat six or more servings, you need to eat whole grains at every meal and for snacks, too.

Six servings of whole grains mixed into a plant-based diet might look like this:

Breakfast—½ cup of cooked oatmeal, with blueberries and walnuts. I like to add flax and chia to my oatmeal as well. (1 serving)

Lunch—An almond butter sandwich on two slices of (homemade) whole wheat bread, plus veggies with hummus. (2 servings)

Snack—A whole wheat homemade muffin, plus an apple. (1 serving)

Dinner—Chili with a small amount of meat and plenty of beans, plus added whole barley, with homemade whole grain cornbread, and a green salad sprinkled with cooked millet. (2 to 2.5 servings)

This is just one menu example. The variations are endless!

Finally, remember the best way to change to a healthier diet is slowly. Increasing fiber in your diet slowly will give your gut microbiome time to adjust. Also be sure you are drinking enough water to help your body use that extra fiber.

I find it exciting to learn more about fiber and our gut microbiome, because it adds a deeper and fuller understanding to why God has given us the principles of the Word of Wisdom and why it is SO important that we apply them to our lives.

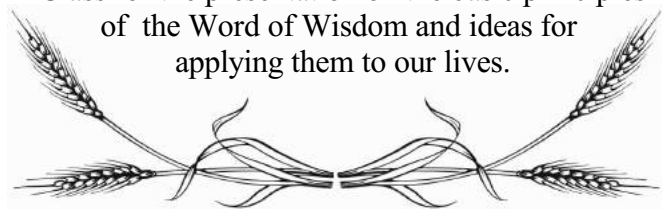
Pray for a deeper understanding of the Word of Wisdom as part of God's Word. Pray over the changes you want to make to your diet. God will help us. He will give us guidance and strength to keep the Word of Wisdom.

For further information and tips on keeping the Word of Wisdom, visit my blog at the following web address: www.RunningWithTheGrain.blogspot.com

You may also view my Word of Wisdom classes at [www.OGRB.org /videos/online video channel](http://www.OGRB.org/videos/online%20video%20channel).

Go to October 6, 2022, Women's Department Class for the presentation on the Word of Wisdom and our gut microbiome, which contains additional information.

Go to February 5, 2022, Oak Grove Word of Wisdom Class for the presentation on the basic principles of the Word of Wisdom and ideas for applying them to our lives.



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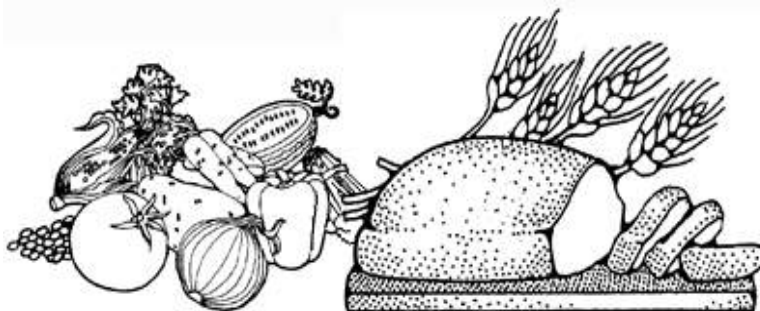
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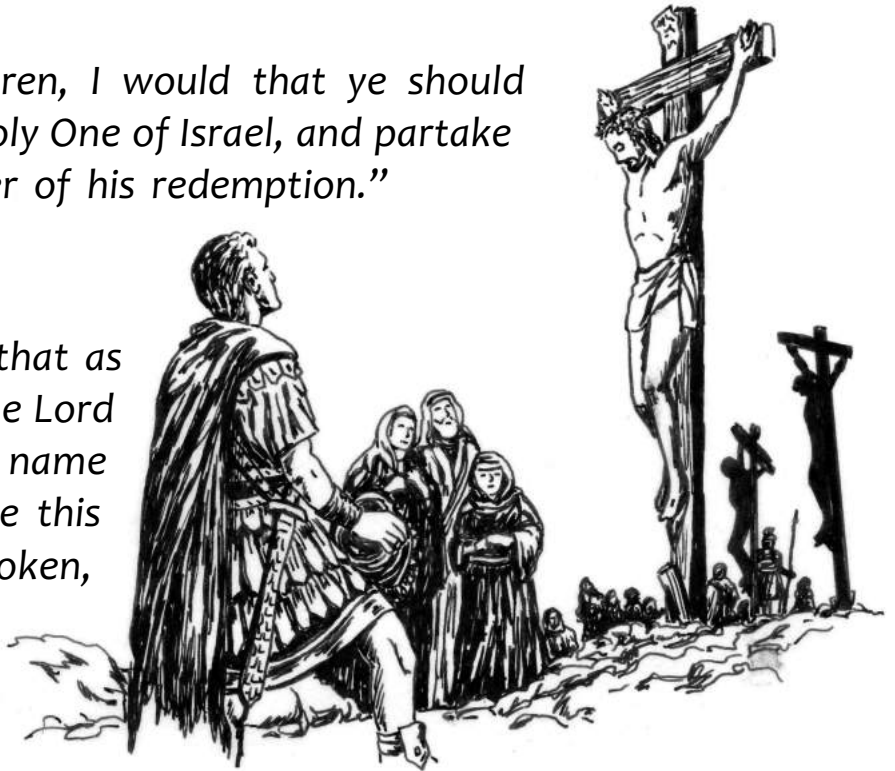
The Book of Mormon . . .

“And now, my beloved brethren, I would that ye should come unto Christ, who is the Holy One of Israel, and partake of his salvation, and the power of his redemption.”

Omni 1:46

“Yea, behold, I say unto you, that as these things are true, and as the Lord God liveth, there is none other name given under heaven, save it be this Jesus Christ of which I have spoken, whereby man can be saved.”

2 Nephi 11:39



A Second Witness of Jesus Christ

For more information about the Book of Mormon, or the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ restored to earth in the latter days, write to Zion's Call at the address below.

Zion's Call

Church of Jesus Christ Oak Grove Restoration Branch
c/o Debbie Norman
9664 Gillespie Road
Napoleon, MO 64074

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