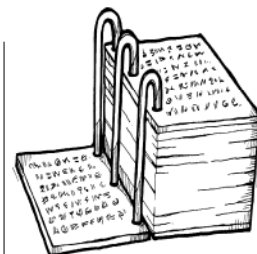


The Branch Newsletter

The Church of Jesus Christ
Zion's Outpost Branch



The Covenant
Ye Have Made
is a Righteous
Covenant

Branch to Discuss Recent Conference

A special branch business meeting will be held at 9:30 am on Sunday, January 8, 2006. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the events of the recent Conference of Restoration Branches. Twenty-eight resolutions were passed by the delegates and voting members in November. Our branch needs to consider these and decide if we agree to abide by these resolutions.

According to the rules of the Conference, each participating branch has 60 days from the time of the Conference to decide whether or not to accept the various decisions of Branch Conference. A written response is required for dissent or disapproval. No action is considered the same as approval of the Conference actions.

Each member of the branch should become acquainted with the resolutions before the business meeting. A copy of the minutes of the Conference and the resolutions are in the pastor's study on the desk.

Those with access to the internet can read the material online or print a personal copy from www.conferenceofbranches.org. Any person who cannot obtain their own copy from the internet can contact Gary Whiting and ask for a copy.

Please take the time to read the material before our meeting on January 8. Ask the Lord for wisdom so that we can act in faith and make a righteous decision. Your preparation before the business meeting is absolutely required for a timely and use-

Mary Robinson Turns 90

Sister Mary Robinson celebrated her 90th birthday with family and friends at an open house on December 11, 2005. The celebration was held at the Senior Center at 200 S. Walnut.

Mary has been a longtime member of the church in Wichita. She joined the church after meeting her late husband, Lindon. Her major ministry in the church has been through

music. Mary has played the piano and organ at church for many decades. She was a delight to work with and always seemed to know how to play any piece of music the first time.

She has taught piano, voice and violin to many students. Many of her students are now teaching and playing for others. Her musical legacy is moving forward through her students. HAPPY BIRTHDAY Mary!



Sister Mary Robinson in a 2003 photo.

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January 2006

Special points of interest:

- 2006 Branch Calendar is available at the church.
- Scripture Reading guides are still available to help you read through the scriptures this year.

Inside this issue:

Christmas Celebrations	2
Gates of Splendor	2
Facilities Update	2
January Theme: Believe in God	3
Branch Themes for 2006	5
Oh, By the Way	6

Insert: Calendars for January and February

Christmas Celebrations

We enjoyed celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ in many different ways in December. All of them the season more memorable and enjoyable.

The sanctuary was decorated with Christmas greenery after church on November 27. The basement was decorated by the children on December 14. The wreaths and garlands give the church a friendly and warm feeling.

Christians have traditionally prepared for the coming of Christmas through Advent worship. The worship in this season involves scriptures, music and readings that bring a sense of anticipation for the coming of Christ. It also is a season to prepare for Christ ad so involves a spirit of repentance and reflection.

Sister Debbie Newman prepared brief Advent worship moments that were

observed just before the start of the main morning worship. An advent wreath with candles that were lit during the worship, one candle for each Sunday of the Advent season.

The Women's Department held their annual Christmas worship on the evening of December 3 at the Newman's home. After a worship of music and

(Continued on page 5)

The Gates of Splendor

Five American missionaries and their families traveled to Ecuador in 1955. they hoped to carry the gospel of Jesus Christ to the native people of the region. In particular, they wanted to reach the Waodoni tribe. Face to face contact was made in early January, 1956. A tragic misunderstanding ended in the death, by spearing, of the five missionary men.

The Gates of Splendor is a well done documentary that tells the story of these missionaries. A special 40 minute preview version of the film was made available to the church. It was played on Friday, December 16 and on Sunday morning, December 18.

Facility Update

We have been informed by our contractor that the replacement windows for the upstairs have arrived. The date of installation is still not known.

After the holidays we will attempt to finish installing the windows for the basement.

Winter weather interrupted work on the garage. Over the Christmas season, a break in the weather allowed work to resume. The building is almost ready for use now.



"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

— Jim Elliott



January: Believe in God

The gospel of Jesus Christ is very simple to understand. God created men and women and placed them in a world optimized for their life. He made them to be a source of joy and fellowship with Himself. God gave agency, or free-will to the human family. Through this gift they could be willing participants in the family of God as His sons and daughters.

This precious gift was misused by our First Parents and each subsequent human, save one. This misuse is called sin. Sin brought separation from God and the promise of death to every person. The separation brought great distress to God and His creatures. Where fellowship was once enjoyed was a void of infinite width and depth.

God was the only one who could bridge the gap and restore fellowship. So, it is written, God sent His Only Begotten Son into the world. He first sent Jesus through the preaching of the gospel and the testimony of the holy prophets. Later, Jesus came as the physical embodiment of God's word.

The Word of God came into the world with the same promise from the first day until the very last moment — to “as many as received Him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God; only to them who believe on His name” (John 1:12).

The way of salvation has been declared to the human family from Heaven since the day of Adam and Eve. It was known in those days to every person on the earth, i.e., the family of Adam (Genesis 4:12, I.V.). Most of them rejected the testimony—they would not believe.

When Jesus was asked by a large crowd of people what they needed to do in order to work the work of God, “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (John 6:29, I.V.).

What does it mean to believe in God. King Benjamin, from whose powerful sermon our 2006 themes are taken, spoke clearly on this subject to his people. He said that believing in God entails accepting an essential group of facts

about God and who He is. In Mosiah 2:13-17, King Benjamin exhorted his people, and us, to believe these things about God and about the response they must make to Him:

1. Believe that He is.
2. Believe that He created everything that is.
3. Believe that He has all power in heaven and earth.
4. Believe that He has all wisdom in heaven and earth.
5. Believe that you cannot understand what God knows.

These five things are the essential things to believe about God. Belief is an acceptance that a thing is true without certain proof. King Benjamin did not spend a great amount of time defending these things. He simply said, these things are true about God and you must believe them if you wish to continue in fellowship with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

The first basic thing is to believe that God exists. This seems simple enough, but many people refuse to believe this or delay belief because they do not have sufficient data to prove it. They remain unsettled and unable to receive the gifts of God.

God not only exists, He is the reason that you exist and the source from which all life and all inanimate objects in the world and universe arose. He is the Creator. This means that God is our origin, that He is bigger than the created order and that He pre-dates all of creation.

The next step in belief is to understand that God is the one and only power source of the Universe and eternity. He has all power. The corollary to this is that no one else has power, except as God provides her or him power. God has no real competition. Therefore, if another has power, it is somehow in the wisdom of God that this is so.

Ah, wisdom. King Benjamin told his people that God has all wisdom. Because God is God, He also comprehends things we are incapable to understanding. He is far above us, and yet in Jesus, He dwelt among us and by His Spirit,

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

He continues to dwell in the hearts of those who believe in Him.

After laying the foundation of what we must believe about God, Benjamin begins to describe the response required of all who wish to receive the benefits of the atonement of Jesus Christ. In essence he said, "You must believe the gospel." The key points to believe are:

1. That ye must repent of your sins and forsake them.
2. Humble yourselves before God.
3. Ask God for forgiveness.

You must believe that repentance is required of every person who comes to God through Christ. To King Benjamin, repentance required a forsaking of sin. Jesus called this forsaking, taking up your cross daily and following Him (Matthew 16:25).

It is crucial that we humble ourselves before God. Benjamin already showed us that God is eternal, all powerful and wise. It is no small thing to enter into the presence of the Holy, Infinite God. We are never worthy of the presence of God, except through the merits of Jesus Christ. We have nothing therefore to be proud of. There is nothing for which we can boast. Nothing about any of us is so noteworthy that God would turn His head to see us in action and wonder. To come into the presence of God for an audience requires self abasement.

Having humbled ourselves, we must yet ask God for His forgiveness. This asking is to be done with a determination to serve Him to the end, i.e., real sincerity.

The cross of Christ, the spilt blood, the empty tomb, the witness of hundreds and thousands of believers before

us and of the Holy Spirit testify that God will save all those who call on His name. Therefore, we have confidence through faith that if we seek God for the forgiveness of sins that He will grant it.

This then, is the proper use of the great gift of agency given to us in the beginning. To love God and choose to serve Him.

Finally, King Benjamin told his people, "If you believe all these things, see that ye do them!" In the *Lectures of Faith* it is written that faith "is the moving cause of all action in them (men). Without it both mind and body would be in a state of inactivity, and all their exertions would cease, both physical and mental" (*Lectures of Faith*. Section 1:10). Belief must lead to an action based on the belief or the belief is dead.

Consider the words of James who wrote that "faith, if it have not works is dead, being alone" (James 2:17). Jesus taught the same thing in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. The word or seed was given for all to enjoy. Those who received the seed are those who believed. But only those whose belief moved forward into bearing fruit are described as blessed. James writes of the work that belongs to faith, not our own works. This is what King Benjamin was exhorting his people to do, allow your faith to move you forward into a righteous life of blessing in Christ.

We will be exploring the works of faith through the rest of the year. The covenant we make with Jesus Christ calls us to live righteously. Righteousness arises in us through the work of His Spirit and our willing obedience to His word. God blesses the willing submission of our will to the will of the Spirit with the fruits of His Spirit and thus we are able to please God and serve one another in unity and peace.

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

Plans are being made for this summer's Very exciting Bible School (VeBS). Our theme will be "Jesus is Our King: Living the Royal Way." The dates will be July 10-14. Everyone is invited, so please mark your calendars now for a great week of fellowship together!



Christmas Celebrations

(Continued from page 2) scripture readings, a feast of snacks were consumed by the attendees. Some of the snacks were used to pack care boxes prepared for our college students and elderly.

The morning worship on December 11 was dedicated to a review of the Christmas story. Scriptures from the Bible and Book of Mormon were used to tell the

story of the prophecies and the events of Christ's birth. Between the readings were various kinds of music. Pictures of the Christmas story were projected on the screen during the worship. Sister Jill Whiting, Co-Music Director for the branch, developed this worship service.

The Christmas potluck dinner was held on December 18. Attendance on this Sabbath was hindered by a six

inch snow that fell on Saturday and Sunday. The fellowship was nonetheless sweet.

Christmas morning worship at the church began at 10:45am. Hot cocoa was served to those who gathered early. The worship emphasized joy and thanksgiving for the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Special attention was given to the Book of Mormon's Christmas story.

14 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah.

15 In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

16 In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely, and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.

(Jeremiah 33:14-16)

The Branch Themes for 2006

2006 General Theme:

The Covenant Ye Have Made is a Righteous Covenant (Mosiah 3:7)

January: Believe in God (Mosiah 2:13)

February: Ye Must Repent of Your Sins and Forsake Them (Mosiah 2:16)

March: Always Remember the Greatness of God (Mosiah 2:20)

April: Humble Yourselves in the Depths of Humility (Mosiah 2:21)

May: Call on the Name of the Lord Daily (Mosiah 2:21)

June: Have a Mind to Live Peaceably (Mosiah 2:24)

July: Ye Should Be Steadfast and Immovable (Mosiah 3:21; 2:21)

August: Always Abounding in Good Works (Mosiah 3:21)

September: Ye Should Impart of Your Substance (Mosiah 2:36, 43)

October: Do All Things In Wisdom and Order (Mosiah 2:44-45)

November: Watch Yourselves – Your Thoughts, Words and Deeds (Mosiah 2:49)

December: Remember and Retain the Name Written In Your Hearts (Mosiah 3:16)

The scripture calendars are available on the table at the back of the church. Please feel free to take one for your home, workplace or a friend who might enjoy it.

The Church of Jesus Christ
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The Branch Newsletter is a monthly publication of Zion's Outpost. Its serves to relay news of the branch and its members to inform members and friends of events and as a means to teach the principles and doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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Oh, By the Way . . .

- Our evening study of the book of Isaiah is scheduled to resume on Sunday, January 8 at 5:00pm. Please read the first five chapters in preparation for this class.
- Our branch has asked to be linked with a Spanish speaking branch of the church in Central America. We hope that this will give us an opportunity to expand our ministry and develop new friends. Please pray for this wonderful opportunity and for those with whom we will be laboring in the cause of God's Zion.
- Many thanks to all of you who have contributed to the work of the branch over the last year. You have come through with tithes, offerings and time. Your prayers and sacrifices for the cause of Christ in 2005 are greatly appreciated. May the blessing of God be upon each of you in the year ahead.

4 For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

5 Thou meetest him that worketh righteousness, and rejoicest him that remembereth thee in thy ways; in righteousness there is continuance, and such shall be saved. (Isaiah 64:4, 5)