Inside This Issue

Editorial Comment ......................................................... 3
News and Updates ............................................................. 4
2015 General Conference in Review .................................. 5
   Photos by Connie Boswell, Melody Moore and Marci Damon
New Remnant Revelations .............................................. 12
An Expression of Power from on High .............................. 16
   President Ralph W. Damon
Testimony of Elder Jose Mederios ................................. 17
Moments with the Master Order Form ............................. 17
The Power of Administration for the Sick ......................... 18
   Sister Kathleen Haley
Tithing and First Fruits .................................................. 19
   Bishop Jerry A. Sherer
News from the Branches ............................................... 21
The ‘Busy Man’s Tract .................................................... 25
   Elbert A. Smith
Remnant Armed Forces ............................................... 27
Ambassadors for Zion ................................................... 28
   Sister Marci K. Damon
Children’s Pages .......................................................... 30
   Sister Cindy L. Patience
Vacation Church School ............................................... Back Page

VISIT OUR WEB-SITE
www.theremnantchurch.com
e-mail: churchoffice@theremnantchurch.com

FRONT COVER—Stock Photo – Photographer Unknown.

Our Mission Statement
The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is called into renewal to preach the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will listen, and to prepare and gather a righteous people for the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, Zion.
Editorial Comment . . .

Time, as we generally understand or define it, is measured as the period between two or more events. For those of us in the role of leadership for the Remnant Church, the events of particular significance are our General Conferences, family reunions, and our Priesthood Assembly/Women’s Retreat. As of this issue of The Hastening Times, two of the important events are the recent General Conference and our summer family reunions. The two month time period between our conference and the beginning of our first reunion (Iowa, June 2) is a wonderful time for reflection, both backward and forward. An excellent review of this past April’s General Conference is given in this issue of The Hastening Times by President Ralph W. Damon.

Two highlights, of particular, should be mentioned. First, the musical drama, “Journey to the Land of Promise,” presented on the first conference evening, not only showcased some undiscovered talent among our people but was attended by a full capacity audience with a significant number of non-members. The presentation was very professional and the feeling was that it brought new faith and conviction regarding the Book of Mormon story of Lehi and his family’s journey from Jerusalem to the Promised Land.

Secondly would be the calling and ordination of Presiding Bishop W. Kevin Romer to new responsibilities as an Aaronic High Priest. By revelatory direction, his tribal lineage was designated as Levi and named him “a literal descendent of Aaron.” While not fully understood at this time, this role does elevate the importance of the ministry of the Aaronic Priesthood and its relationship to the Melchizedec Priesthood. As given in an earlier revelatory direction to the Church (R-152:4; R-156:3i), together these two ministries will give rise to the fulfilling of the Celestial Law. We are indeed a blessed people to receive new understanding of our priesthood ministry as we earnestly seek to do God’s will in building up His Kingdom.

The next significant event for our members is the season for reunion which begins with the Iowa Reunion and ending with the Center Place Reunion (August 2). Between these two are reunions in Idaho, Oklahoma, and Geneseo, IL. Common themes have been recommended for all the reunions this year and the following years of 2016 and 2017. They are “Finding the ‘Path Less Traveled,’” “Our Journey on the ‘Path Less Traveled,’” and “The Destination of the ‘Path Less Traveled.’” The “Path Less Traveled” is illustrated on the front cover of this issue of The Hastening Times and serves as a reminder to all who wish to find favor and contentment within the arms of our Master that we each must leave the “broad way” of Babylon and find the path, so straight and true, that leads to the Kingdom. We may find ourselves often walking alone, sometimes devoid of others of God’s creation, but we will find His presence on that same path, gently urging us forward and onward. As many as possible should avail themselves of the opportunity to share in study, worship, and fellowship with their families and friends at these wonderful family reunions.

As we continue in these exciting times, and in the unfolding of the work which lies ahead for the Remnant Church, let us pay heed to the most recent counsel brought to us in Section R-160:5 of our Doctrine and Covenants: “My people of the Remnant Church, you have been called to the mission of sending forth my gospel far and wide by word of mouth, by the example of your individual lives, as well as how you live in community. The world is in chaos and needs so badly the message of Good News. Be not discouraged, for I will be with you and the end will be victorious. Remember, remember, I gave my life for you. What will you do for me?”

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

[Signature]
OUR CONDOLENCES: The prayers of the Saints go out to the family of Gavin Pryer, 17, who was lost to his family recently. Gavin was the son of Charles Davis, brother of Dwayne Davis, and his mother, Shelly Freeman. May he find the loving arms of his Savior a comfort at this time.

PASSING OF PATRIARCH CHARLES BICKELL: Brother Charles Bickell passed away April 3, 2015 after suffering a stroke. He served his Lord and the Remnant Church faithfully and will be missed by many friends and Saints as well as his family. Communication with Sister Wanda can be made by writing to her at 4900 West Luther Road, Floyds Knobs, IN 47119.

REMNANT CHURCH WEBSITE: We are pleased to announce that the newly designed web site for the Remnant Church is now up and running. You will see a new look as well as an enlarged offering of news items and services available. All Saints and friends are encouraged to “tune in” and see what is available at theremnantchurch.com.

THE HASTENING TIMES CONTRIBUTIONS: One of the most difficult things to do is keep expenses down while providing a quality magazine time after time. For the past several years we have included in the first issue of each year a contribution envelop and have asked the Saints to do what you can to assist us. We currently print 1,200 copies of a 32 or 36 page magazine. That individual cost is approximately $2.75 each time we have a printing. With the decision to go to full color, high gloss paper, we find our budget for The Hastening Times to be stretched to its fullest. However, the response each year to our plea for financial help has been nothing short of outstanding. Each year we have received approximately $3,000 to offset the cost for our publication. Words cannot express how much we appreciate your response, and dedication, to this worthy outreach ministry. God bless each and everyone who has contributed.

YOUTH CAMPS ARE HERE: Plans are well underway for this year’s editions of our senior and junior high youth camps. Directors Richard and Rebecca Paris and Corwyn Mercer have assembled their staffs, plans have been made, and preparations well under way for an outstanding 2015 camping year. Now all we need is a LARGE number of young Saints and their friends to fill the campground at Blackgum. If you have a desire to spend a Spirit-filled week with friends and become an active part of building the Kingdom of God, contact Brother and Sister Paris at 812-923-7018 or by email at this address: richardoparishii@insightbb.com. Brother Mercer can be reached at 816-721-9020 or at cmercer@courts.mo.gov. Remember, senior high camp is June 13-20 and junior high camp is June 27 – July 4.

REUNIONS FOR 2015: The front cover of this issue of The Hastening Times displays a beautiful walkway running alongside a quiet stream. This photo was selected for this issue’s cover for it similarity to the chosen themes for this year’s reunions, as well as those in 2016 and 2017: “Finding the Path Less Traveled”; “Our Journey on the Path Less Traveled”; and “The Destination of the Path Less Traveled.” The Master urges us to leave the ‘broad way’ which leads away from the Kingdom and find the path which few travel, a path designed to take those diligent enough, and faithfully strong, into His presence. May the peaceful walk, the quiet waters, the abiding sweet Spirit of God be ours as we each search for our “path less traveled.”
It is often difficult to see when a particular moment in time becomes more than just the normal course of events for any one activity, especially when the opportunity for the impress and guidance of the Holy Spirit presents itself. Over the years the annual gathering of Saints for our April General Conferences has been seen as a highlight of activity, of worship, and a time when the members and friends of the Remnant Church have the privilege of spending an extended amount of worshipful time together. When that treasured time together brings moments of delightful surprise as well as an outpouring of the presence of God, it can only be seen as one of those “moments with the Master” which we all yearn to have as a part of our day-to-day lives.

“My Work Must Hasten” was the theme for this year’s General Conference, a theme designed to more fully stress to the Church as a whole the need to be more actively involved in the life and purpose of Christ’s ministry. In the preparations for the conference, additional days were added to the schedule, days designed for instruction and the sharing of information from nine vital programs of the Church, some recently added, and some which have been in place for many years. Further, under the direction of Sister Ardyce Nordeen, we were enthralled with the dramatic and musical story of the family of Lehi as portrayed in the “Journey to the Land of Promise.”

Regarding the educational sessions which began on Monday, March 30, opportunity for the Saints to hear from the following program leaders was given: Media Outreach with Sister Ardyce Nordeen, the Music Department with Sister Barbara Sherer, our Religious Education Department with Sisters Beckie Hogan and Linda Burnett, Patriarchal Ministry with Presiding Patriarch Carl VunCannon, Jr., our new Missionary-in-Training (M.I.T.) Program with Apostle Terry Patience, newly initiated Zion’s Academy with Carl VunCannon, Jr. and Sister Linda Gussman, our Remnant Web Site with President James VunCannon, the Women’s Council with Sister Marci Damon, and the Youth Council with High Priest Corwyn Mercer.
These presentations included the genesis of each program, the intent of their use and value to the Remnant Church, and what goals and programs are planned for the near future. Question and answer time was provided and many who attended felt this sharing of information was very helpful in learning more of the day-to-day activities being undertaken by the various leaders and program directors of the Church.

Tuesday brought more sessions of instruction, but this time it was specifically directed to the priesthood and members of selected quorums and orders of ministry. The First Presidency took this opportunity to visit specifically with the branch presidents, Bishops’ Agents, and other branch leaders and giving opportunity in sharing their common views on several operational aspects of branch and church management. Further, sessions on the duties and responsibilities of priesthood quorums and orders was discussed, time was spent with the members of the apostolic and seventy quorums, and time was taken to review President Frederick N. Larsen’s thoughts and comments on his earlier prophetic declaration of Presiding Bishop W. Kevin Romer as “a literal descendent of Aaron.” As would be expected, and due to the nature of this designation, much discussion was had, giving President Larsen the time to share the background of this call as well as introduce two supporting testimonies, one from Presiding Patriarch Carl VunCannon, Jr. and one from President Ralph W. Damon.

As mentioned earlier, the first activity of our 2015 General Conference was the drama directed by Sister Nordeen. This was a great undertaking involving many who became actors, singers, musicians, stagehands, and helped in many other support areas. Over 300 attended the play and enjoyed the performance. Headlining the cast were Apostle Don Burnett as Lehi, Sister Cassie Scott as Sariah, and Michael Durant as Nephi. Months of preparation and practice came together in one evening of song and celebration.

Our normal daily schedule for our conference was followed with just a few deviations and changes. As they have for many years, the Order of Patriarchs, under the leadership of Presiding Patriarch Carl VunCannon, Jr. led us in our daily morning prayer services. Starting each day in close communion with God is an excellent way to enter into the “business” of the conference. Time for quorum and order
discussion sessions was provided, giving the Saints and priesthood ample opportunity to discuss the three documents presented to the conference for their consideration and ultimate vote of acceptance.

Time for activities for the youth, always exciting adventures for our young people, included their annual luncheon with President and Mrs. Larsen, as well as an ice cream feast and evening campfires.

The Women’s Reception, a high point in each annual conference, saw the leadership of the Women’s Council change from Sister Christy Williams, who had served in that role for two years, to Sister Marci Damon. Recognition for the outgoing members of the council was also a part of the reception with special recognition given to Sister Williams for her diligent and loving service to the Church in her two years of leadership.

Friday afternoon found Sister Barbara Sherer hosting a time for the ministry of special music supplied by several of our members. Haleigh Wilson, Tessa Woods, Connie Boswell, and Keilah Zahner displayed their talents in song and music for a very appreciative audience.

Evening worship services, all following the conference theme of “My Work Must Hasten,” were led by several of our leading quorums and orders. On Thursday evening, Bishop Jerry Sherer brought his thoughts to the conference. Friday evening found Apostle Terry Patience challenging the members with his view of this “hastening time.” Saturday night was the opportunity for President Larsen to address the conference with his view of the past year as well as the need to prepare for the time and times ahead of us.

Saturday afternoon brought us to an outstanding ordination service where five men were set apart and/or ordained into deeper ministries for the Remnant Church and for their God. Elders Matthew W. Goodrich and Roger D. Schuelke were set apart to the ministry of the seventy, Elder Rodney Walsh was
ordained to the office of high priest, Seventy Richard L. Wilson was ordained to the office of high priest and set apart to the ministry of patriarch, and High Priest James E. Gates was also set apart to the ministry of the patriarch. Each of these men provided a deep and powerful testimony of their callings and this service provided them the opportunity to sit before God and the Saints, receiving that power and authority to now act in their new ministerial roles.

Special recognition was given to Brother Wilson and his wife Joyce for his long ministry in the Remnant Church as a member of the Quorum of Seventy. Brother Wilson has served faithfully and well in this ministry, traveling many miles over many years to bring missionary outreach to Saints so far from the Center Place. President Larsen presented him and Sister Wilson with a memento of the Church’s appreciation for their valiant service these many years and a standing show of appreciation from the conference followed.

Sunday morning was a special worship day as it coincided with Resurrection Sunday. Thus, we were fortunate to be able to not only to partake of Communion on the first Sunday of April but to also celebrate the resurrection of our risen Christ. High Priest David Van Fleet brought the Communion address and the Saints then shared in that wonderful Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.
At the close of the communion service, time was taken to complete the calling and designation of Presiding Bishop W. Kevin Romer as “a literal descendent of Aaron” and to ordain him to that specific and unique ministry. Under the hands of the First Presidency and the Presiding Patriarch of the Remnant Church, he was anointed and so sealed to that ministry. Following that action, Brother Romer gave his testimony, and shared a portion of his dreams, of this new ministry now available to the Remnant Church as well as to the world at large.

After a brief interlude to reset the rostrum, President Ralph Damon delivered the message of the Resurrection service, “New Life in the Church,” so appropriate with the additions of spiritual insight, expansion of ministries, and sharing of activities and programs being such a part of the Remnant Church’s daily life.

In looking back at the business activities of this conference, three documents were presented to the conference for its deliberation and ultimate vote for approval. The first to be considered was a “Statement on Priesthood,” a resolution prepared by the Quorum of Twelve, with the approval and support from the Quorum of Seventy attached to it. The second document was the latest “Counsel to the Church” as presented by President Larsen for this particular General Conference. The final document was the inspired direction given to Presiding Bishop Romer through President Larsen at the February 2015 Aaronic Priesthood Retreat, direction naming him “a literal descendent of Aaron.” Each of these three documents were placed before the conference, the vote of the quorums, orders, and membership taken, and each document was accepted as being the mind and will of God toward the Remnant Church. These will now be included in our book of Remnant Revelations. Each document will be published elsewhere in this issue of The Hastening Times.

Much could be written regarding this past General Conference, but if there was a lasting impression which found its way into the hearts of each one who attended, it might be the simple, pure evidence of peace and harmony with which the business of the Remnant Church was conducted. Discussion brought insight; differing viewpoints became points of understanding; solidarity became the standard while individual needs waned and diminished. We thank each and every person who brought that tender, inclusive spirit with them and allowed the presence of heaven to abide with us for this past conference.

May God’s Spirit continue to abide with us as we earnestly understand the full impact of His words to mankind today: “My Work Must Hasten.” May it be so!
New Remnant Revelations

In the just completed April General Conference, three documents were presented to the quorums and orders of the Church for their deliberation. Each document was then presented to the conference for acceptance and inclusion in the Remnant Revelations. We now present to the Saints each document, with its preface and background information. Copies may be obtained by contacting the Church headquarters or your branch president.

Section 159

Throughout the year of 2013, the combined quorums of the First Presidency, the Quorum of Twelve and the Quorum of Seventy held several joint council meetings for the purpose of discussing and clarifying procedures and operational standards affecting these three major leadership quorums of the Remnant Church. In November of that year, at the specific request by the Quorum of Seventy, President Frederick N. Larsen sought the mind and will of the Lord for further insight and direction. On February 20, 2014, he presented this document as the response from God relating to the points of concern identified within message itself. Due to the nature of what was shared with these three quorums, and the impact this document has upon the Remnant Church as a whole, it was recommended that this insight be presented to the April 2015 General Conference as the mind and will of God and, if so accepted, to be included in the Remnant Revelations as binding upon the Church as a whole. That action was taken and approved on April 4, 2015. The preface to the document provides President Larsen’s narrative as to the full intent of the insight he received from our Heavenly Father.

STATEMENT ON PRIESTHOOD OFFICE AND RELEASE ISSUES

February 20, 2014

As I sit here in my den this evening, contemplating the burden to bring the Spirit of revelation to this Joint Council, my Scriptures and my mind are open to the leading of the Spirit from on high. I have been reading from Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians in Chapter 12, speaking of the unity of the body of Christ and the officers of the Church: “For the body is not one member, but many…now they are many members, yet but one body…there should be no schism in the body;…Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.”

Also from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 136:3b: “Contentions, bickerings, and strife are unseemly, hinder the work of the church, and should not find place among the Saints. Only in the peace of fraternity and unity of those caught up in the spirit of Zionic redemption can the work of the Lord be accomplished. To this task let the church devote its energies.”

How absolutely important is it for us to consider unity within the Remnant Church?

How absolutely important is it for us to find peace, not strife?

And then I read from the Remnant Revelations, R-147:5a: “The Spirit directs further: I have set in my Church those offices of priesthood necessary to bring to pass the building of my earthly kingdom-even Zion.”

And from R-151:4b: “Differences between those whose duty and special calling is to spread my Gospel must be reconciled. If they will go forth in humility and meekness, my power and endowment will be upon them.”

We, the First Presidency, Twelve and Seventy, have met several times with discussions on our quorum callings, authority, responsibilities and prerogatives, not always coming to a common understanding.

To this situation now before this Council, I have taken that counsel and declaration found in our Doctrine and Covenants, Section 122:1, 2: “My servants have been harsh with one another; and some have not been sufficiently willing to hear those whose duty it is to teach the revelations which my church has already received.

“Until my people shall hear and heed those who are set in the church to teach the revelations there will be misunderstanding and confusion among the members.

“The burden and care of the church is laid on him who is called to preside over the high priesthood of the church, and on those who are called to be his counselors; and they shall teach according to the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and as they shall be directed by revelation, from time to time.”
In 1894, the Joint Council of the First Presidency, Twelve, and High Priests, which had been holding sessions during this conference, presented the following report which was thereupon adopted by that conference:

“Members of the Presidency are leading interpreters and teachers of the laws of revelations of God, and are of right presidents of the General Assemblies of the Church.” (GCR 386:9)

As I closed my preparation, and sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit, the following was given.

1. Thus saith the Spirit to the brethren of the Quorums of Twelve and Seventy: You have indeed, in the past, been harsh with one another and I have withdrawn My Spirit on many occasions from you. It is now that you must reconcile yourselves, preferring your brothers, and go forth, hand in hand, with each other and with My Son who desires to lead and direct you to those waiting lost souls around you.

2. Lay down your attempts to wrestle with my words in the Scriptures and governing rules of my Church and be about the work whereunto you have been called. You have lost precious time in seeking for he who is the greatest among you. All are of one priesthood, but different offices. Priesthood is that which you receive from me to minister with authority. Your offices of apostle and seventy are what you use in your different labors to men on earth. Your priesthood is eternal; your office can be lifetime, but often is transient.

3. The various quorums and orders of the Church are set in place to meet various needs of my people and are to function as “…the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord” and not to act independently.

4. As clearly stated in Church law (the Doctrine and Covenants), the office of apostle is under the direction of the First Presidency and the office of seventy is under the direction of the apostle. Authority in the Church organization must be recognized or confusion and misunderstanding will exist. To that end let the brethren of the twelve and seventy recognize and accept that the right to call and to release all General Church Officers resides within the First Presidency of the Church. Release from a particular office means the loss of a specific area of labor but does not necessarily mean silencing from priesthood authority.

5. It is equally inherent for the Quorum of Seventy, under the direction of the Council of Presidents of Seventy, to release men from their quorum. However, for the present time, let GCR 996 stand as it is, but let the First Presidency, together with consultation from the twelve and the seventy, prepare a policy for the “Release of General Officers from Specific Offices,” including honorable release, release for just cause, administrative release, reconciliation procedures, etc., to be brought before the conference of 2015.

6. This ends the counsel given. Much more could be said but let the above suffice for the present. Let us truly be brought together as one and join hands in that blessed fraternity of peace, humility, and meekness.

Your servant,

Frederick N. Larsen
President of the Church
As I contemplated whether or not there should be a message for the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints at this General Conference, I felt, due to my recent tiredness and the stress in my everyday life, I could not, in good consciousness, bring prophetic direction at this time. I felt so unworthy as not to be in tune with the mind and will of the Holy Spirit. However, after a season of prayer and reading of the Scriptures, particularly Apostle Paul’s counsel to the Philippian Saints, I sensed clearly the voice of the Lord assuring me that my sins were forgiven and that, through Christ, I could do all things through His strength. 

I asked for His help and I felt His hand reach out and grasp mine, almost as if it were in the physical sense. I was at once at peace in my soul and knew that I could, if it was His will, through the prophetic office, bring comfort and direction to the Remnant Saints. With this burden of unworthiness lifted, but still in my weakness, that which follows is given as a witness, through the impress of the Holy Spirit to the Remnant Church, as the mind and will of God.

To the Councils, Orders, Quorums, and Membership of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints:

Thus saith the Spirit:

1. Even though there exists now greater unity than ever among the leadership of my Church, there still remain many who have been bruised by events of the recent past. If my work is to go forward with greater strength and power, there must be greater unity of the whole body. To this end, let the process of forgiveness and reconciliation among the body of Christ go forward in earnest. In the policies and procedures of the Church there is direction how this may occur. However, the best guidance to accomplish this can be found in my Word. Seek and follow that counsel.

2. I have blessed the Church with many who have been able to leave the secular world and give of themselves and their talents to new support ministries. Among these is included the Media Outreach and Missionaries-in-Training programs so essential for the growth of the Church. Even so, I will continue to bless, with spiritual strength, wisdom, and opportunities, the Twelve and Seventy in their united endeavors to add such as will come to join the Remnant Saints in assisting in building the Kingdom of God here on earth.

3. It is pleasing that, in recent months, many new programs are taking place within the Church, allowing many more opportunities for service, especially for those of my Church. This is especially true of those who are now commended for their involvement in continued social outreach, thus fulfilling the commandment to “clothe the naked and feed the hungry.” Those who have seen the need to provide a Christ-centered education for my children will continue to receive my blessings through their labors with endeavors such as Zion’s Academy.

4. With the calling of he who directs the financial and temporal affairs of my Church, even the Presiding Bishop, to an additional emphasis of the work of the Aaronic Priesthood and its role in these last days of the Gathering, and the need for preparing a righteous people for the building of the Kingdom, there will be new challenges for my people in discipline and sacrifice. This work will hasten my coming. This enhanced ministry of my servant W. Kevin Romer will come forth as the role of an Aaronic High Priest is better understood.

5. My people of the Remnant Church, you have been called to the mission of sending forth my gospel far and wide by word of mouth, by the example of your individual lives, as well as how you live in community. The world is in chaos and needs so badly the message of Good News. Be not discouraged, for I will be with you and the end will be victorious. Remember, remember, I gave my life for you. What will you do for me? May it be so.

Frederick N. Larsen
President of the Church
March 29, 2015
Section 161

The Designation and Calling of
W. Kevin Romer
As A Literal Descendent of Aaron
February 22, 2015

At the Aaronic Priesthood Retreat of the Remnant Church, held on the weekend of February 20-22, 2015, it became clear to the President of the Remnant Church and the High Priesthood (Frederick N. Larsen), that this was an opportune and appropriate time to bring forth the call of a literal descendant to the office of Presiding Bishop. This calling was revealed to the President/Prophet of this Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints many months previous, but waited for an independent confirmation from another member of the First Presidency. It was determined to make this call known to the Church prior to or at the April 2015 General Conference. However, this Aaronic Retreat offered the right timing.

At the close of the Communion Service on Sunday, April 22nd, I arose to bring a few comments regarding the importance of the just-concluded instructional and worshipful weekend with its emphasis on the pathway to Christ as illustrated in the Tabernacle model which lay before us and the description of the parting of the veil as recorded in Matthew, the 27th chapter:

After a few moments, the mantle of prophecy came upon me and the Spirit directed me toward our Presiding Bishop, W. Kevin Romer.

1a. “Thus saith the Spirit to my servant W. Kevin Romer. It has been revealed that your inheritance is from the tribe of Levi and you are a first born son of Aaron, thus you have claim on that long-awaited fulfillment laid down in Sections 68 and 104 of our Doctrine and Covenants. You shall have the prerogative to serve with or without counselors.

1b. You have served selflessly and worthily as the Presiding Bishop in the restoration of my Church through your Melchisedec ministry and are now called to serve as an Aaronic High Priest and President of the Aaronic Priesthood with greater-than-ever responsibility for the temporal affairs of the Church in bringing to pass my earthly Kingdom, even Zion.

2. A more complete understanding of your role as Presiding Bishop, with this new designation and ministry, will come forth with time. As for now, plans should be put in place so that you may be anointed and ordained at the upcoming General Conference. Amen.”

President Frederick N. Larsen
President of the Church
AN EXPRESSION OF POWER FROM ON HIGH

By Ralph W. Damon

One of the benefits of being the managing editor of The Hastening Times is that I have the opportunity to read the submittals which come from the Saints early on in the selection and editing process of preparing each edition of our magazine. I am often thrilled to read of someone else’s experiences and their connection with the power of God and the Holy Spirit. Many times I am reminded of a similar incident which may have occurred in my life but somehow has been stored in the deeper recesses of my mind, long forgotten and lying dormant. After receiving a number of experiences written down by a long-time friend of mine, I found one in particular that shook the cobwebs off of an experience I had as a very young, and inexperienced, elder so many years ago. Perhaps what I experienced will have some value to you also.

As best as I can recall, it was sometime in the spring of 1974 when my family and I lived in the suburbs of St. Louis, MO. We attended a small branch in Arnold, MO where I had lived since the sixth grade. I had just been ordained to the office of elder a few weeks prior and was still trying to understand all that the ministry of the elder entailed. I was also attempting to bring ministry to the same people who, from the sixth grade onward, had a great deal to do with raising me. Not an easy task at all!

I worked shift work at the plant where I was employed, and on this particular day I was working the 4:00 PM to midnight shift. Normally I would sleep in to around 10:00 AM and then get up to spend time with the family before preparing to leave for work in the early afternoon. On one day in particular, a phone call changed all of those plans.

District President Sebe Morgan phoned the house and asked if I would be willing to take some time, on that day, to stop by a hospital to administer to a Saint who was getting ready to undergo surgery for cancer. Mind you, this was my very first request to participate in an administration as an elder. I explained that fact to Brother Morgan but he was insistent that he could not find anyone else who could go at this time. Reluctantly, and fearfully, I agreed that I would do what I could.

I made several phone calls to elders in my branch but could not find anyone who could go with me. At my last phone call, a young man who had been ordained to the office of priest at the same time as my ordination agreed to accompany me. We decided to meet at the hospital at a certain time.

When we entered Brother Ed’s room, he was sitting in a chair, waiting for us. We introduced ourselves and made the preparations for the administration. He was facing surgery for cancer somewhere in his abdomen. The doctors weren’t sure exactly what they would find but Ed was informed that it was a necessary, life-saving procedure. I asked the young priest to offer a prayer for the ministry of angels to be with us at this time and then proceeded to anoint and lay my hands upon Brother Ed’s head. And the heavens opened!

The moment I closed my eyes and began my prayer, I could see Ed and myself from a distance across the room. I watched as I prayed over Brother Ed and then began to see the most amazing sight—I could see myself being lifted up from behind him and rising off the floor high into the air. My hands continued to remain in contact with his head, stretching long and thin, but I was being drawn higher and higher away from the room. It was an amazing sight to see.

At the “Amen” of my prayer, my eyes opened and I was again standing beside our brother and all was as it was at first. But the power of the Spirit lingered and sheltered us. My young friend and I left Brother Ed with our prayers and the intent to check on him in the next few days.

Two days later I received a phone call from Brother Ed. He was gathering his clothes and preparing to leave the hospital. The day after the administration, the medical staff did a pre-surgery evaluation and could find nothing wrong with him. All the symptoms had disappeared, his health was on the rebound, and they were dismissing him, sending him home with his family. With tears, he thanked me for bringing this blessing to him. All I could do was marvel at this first experience of administration that God allowed me to be a part of.

My new friend passed away about twelve years later, but not from the cancer. He was privileged to live a longer life with his family and I was given the assurance that, even with those of us who often feel unqualified or unworthy, the power of divinity will always have power over us—and through us—if we will only provide the opportunity for its expression.
Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It is my testimony that I know Jesus Christ lives. He died on the cross for our love, rose again the third day, and soon He will return to govern the Church personally from Zion.

I know that God, our Eternal Father, has provided for us a Church here on earth and it is called the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I know that God chose, from among men, a prophet in these last days, and through him He revealed scriptures and commandments for us. This prophet was called Joseph Smith and it was through him that God and Jesus Christ established the Church.

My testimony is that the Book of Mormon is a sacred Scripture that came to us through ancient records which were revealed to the prophet and translated by him. I accept fully, as revelations of God, the teachings contained in the book of Doctrine and Covenants; they are a guide to our lives.

I know Frederick N. Larsen, our President, personally and I accept him as a prophet of God. I have an understanding of the importance of these revelations that God has passed to us through him and the recent revelations that he has received from heaven are further guides for today.

And finally, I want to confirm my belief that all these revelations support and uphold the teachings of the Holy Bible.

This is my humble message I leave in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Moments with the Master

A Remnant Church daily devotional, available now by subscription!

You may order issues sent to your home for the months of July through December, 2015. The cost per subscription is only $10.00. Fill out the form below and send it, with your payment, to: Ardyce Nordeen, Remnant Headquarters, 700 W. Lexington, Independence, MO. 64050. Make checks payable to the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and note for: MWTM. Order one for yourself and another for a loved one!

Subscription Information:

Your Name ________________________________

Your Address ________________________________

__________________________________ Zip/Postal ________
The Power of Administration for the Sick

By Kathleen Haley

On August 29, 2005, I picked up my new car. I did not notice until I started to drive it every day that the seat needed to be pushed back another inch or so but the seat was already back as far as it would go. As it is now, I have to twist my leg differently to work the gas and brake pedals. This threw out my hip and leg muscles. The nerve sure let me know that it was in distress. Every nerve in my body picked up the signal and started to hurt. I couldn’t sit or walk or sleep. There was no position that was any better than another. I was in agony.

I went to church on Wednesday night fully planning to ask for administration but somehow forgot to ask. The next four nights were pure torture. The nerves would start their biting from about 9 pm to 2 am. About 2 am, I was finally able to get some sleep. The only problem was I had to get up about 4 am. My nerves were totally out of control and I was so tried.

The first thing I did when I arrived at church on the following Sunday was to ask for administration. After the service, Elders Robert Murie Jr. and Ken Wallace and I went into the room for the ordinance. Brother Murie anointed my head with oil and gave a beautiful prayer to invite the Spirit to attend. Then Brother Wallace laid his hands on my head to join the hands of Brother Murie. Halfway through the prayer, Brother Wallace’s hands started to shake a little bit but as he continued to pray, his hands shook harder. When he ended the prayer and said “Amen,” the shaking stopped. I realized that it was due to the power of the Spirit. The Spirit was physically there blessing me.

When I stood up to leave, the biting pain was gone. It has not returned. The stiffness in the leg was still there but it did not hurt as much. I’d put my faith in the Lord and He came through with a blessing. At bedtime, I thought that I’d put some Arnica gel on it. Arnica is for the stiffness of muscles, etc., and I’d used it many times before. When I rubbed it on, the nerves started to make my leg jump and tingle again. What was I going to do?

I had taken the healing power out of the hands of the Lord and used man-made products. It was not that I doubted the blessing but I did not let the Lord finish the job. I got my bottle of consecrated oil out which I have used many times before and rubbed it right over top of the Arnica. As I was doing this, I offered up a prayer of apology and asked for the Lord to finish His work. My leg calmed right down and I was able to sleep nearly all night long.

I did not doubt that the Lord could or would heal, but I just tried to help Him out a bit. In His own way, the Lord let me know that He could do it himself. It’s been almost a week now and I have had no reoccurrence of the pain. Praise His Holy Name.
Although our giving goes far beyond tithing, the principle of tithing was ingrained in the beliefs and life styles of early Christians, most of whom grew up in Jewish homes. We see this in reading of Leviticus, Chapter 27, v. 30: “And all the tithes of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or the fruit of the tree, is the Lord’s; it is holy unto the Lord.”

We are told it belongs to the Lord and not to people. It applies to “everything,” not just some things. It was “holy,” to be set apart and given to God, not used for any other purpose.

The meaning of the word tithe is “a tenth part.” The Remnant Church practices, and always has determined, that to mean “a tenth part of our increase.” The Bishopric has suggested, for budgeting purposes, a good way to estimate tithing owed is to take 3 to 4% of our gross income. However, when determining the owed tithing, we still use 10% of our increase.

In Malachi 3:8, we are asked the question: “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.” He then goes on to say “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse.” Whatever God provides for us, we should consider 10% of the increase, that which belongs to God.

The practice of tithing began long before the Law of Moses. Abraham tithed to Melchizedek and Jacob promised a tithe to the Lord. “And the place of this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be the place of God’s house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee” (Genesis 28:22).

Tithing’s scriptural purpose is found in Deuteronomy 14:23: “And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.”

“That thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God.” God is trying to train people to put Him first in their lives. It gives us perspective. It reminds us that all we are, and all we have, is from God.

Tithing requires calculation. When we deal specifically with the amounts God has provided, we see God’s goodness to us. We literally count our blessings and thank Him for His generosity. Tithing begins as a duty but, as we draw closer to Him, we realize it has become a delight. Unclenching our fists and opening them to God has a thousand trickle-down benefits. There are times and circumstances when some may feel it necessary to withhold their tithing, however we need to think this through.

Jesus was raised in a devout Jewish home. That meant His parents tithed and instructed Him to tithe. We read throughout all of Jesus ministry that He was put under a microscope by His enemies and accused of every possible offense, including breaking the Sabbath. But never once was He accused of breaking the law of tithing. In fact, the Jewish Talmud forbade a strict keeper of the law from sitting down to eat with anyone who did not tithe. Yet, on several occasions, the Pharisees ate at the same table with Jesus. Obviously Jesus tithed.

The giving of ‘first fruits’ made an important statement to ancient Israel, as well latter day Israel. It simply states: “All the best of the oil, and all the best of the wine, and of the wheat, the first-fruits of them which they shall offer unto the Lord, them have I given thee” (Numbers 18:12). We give of our first and best to you, Lord, because we recognize all good things come from you.
Tithing represents the amount of the offering, ‘first fruits’ represents the nature of the offering. In ancient Israel, tangible goods were the natural things to tithe. The same principle applied to money. The first 10% of our increase of what God has provided us is to be returned to the Lord. God was regarded as the provider of the harvest. The ‘first fruit’ offering reminded people of God’s ownership. They saw God as the source of all life and blessings. The first offering also said “We trust you, God, to help us harvest the past.” To hold back any of the ‘first fruits’, or give anything less than the best, was to incur God’s wrath.

I Samuel 2:12-17 tells us about the temple priests who took off the top of the sacrifices the people brought for an offering, and left what was left to the Lord. The Lord referred to “the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord” They were struck down in battle because they had stolen from God. This is a good lesson for anyone who is tempted to hold back from God, both temporally and spiritually.

The name ‘first fruit’ requires to be taken off the top. It is the cream of the crop. It is both the best and first. As soon as it was harvested or preserved, it was to be given unto the Lord. It is not to be stored, hidden up, horded, or distributed in any other way. Those who kept the best and gave God the leftovers brought God’s judgement on Israel.

What we give back to the Lord is a thermometer of faith. When Israel slid spiritually, they ceased to give as they should. When they ceased to give as they should, they slid spiritually. The cycle continued.

These principles of giving are timeless, and they apply as much today toward Latter Day Israel as they did to ancient Israel. Why? Because we live in a time of abundance, perhaps like no other time in the past. No one knows for how long this will last but, as a people, our standard of living is far above other peoples of the world. As we look at our individual standard of living, perhaps we also need to examine our standard of giving.

I have read that there are three levels of giving. First, less than our ability. Second, according to our ability, or three, beyond our ability. In my opinion, our nation is noted for its giving but would it be fair to say 96% would give less than their ability? Perhaps 3% or more give according to their ability, and less than 1% give beyond their ability?

What does it mean to give beyond our ability? It means to give away not just the luxuries, but also some of the necessities. For most of us, giving according to our means would stretch us. Our giving beyond our means, or sacrificing, feels like an inconvenience. We need to look within ourselves and remember our blessings and examine our giving. We can never out give the Lord.
First Michigan – Sr. Kathleen Haley Reporting

Due to the weather conditions, we’ve had to cancel services three weeks out of the last four Sundays. Believe me, many prayers went up to the Lord for good weather on February 8 and they were answered.

During the Communion service, Apostle Bob Murie talked about “Failure.” So many times we degrade ourselves when we fail. If we learn from our mistakes, pick up the pieces, it can be a good thing. It could even be considered a teaching or learning experience. He gave some examples of great men who made mistakes and went on, like King David, Peter, Paul, and Joseph Smith. Remember, “To err is human, to forgive is divine.”

Jim Malmgren was ordained to the office of Elder by Apostle Bob Murie Jr. and Elder Tom Vanderwalker. Elder Vanderwalker gave the charge to Brother Jim. He told him that it was a privilege to serve in the priesthood, that each priesthood office is equally important, and only God can call men to service. Each man has a unique gift. The Lord’s Spirit attended both services. Thank you Lord, for this calling and may Jim faithfully serve you always.

This Sunday we had a special class on a prophecy given by Apostle Arthur Oakman back in 1974. It is amazing how we are seeing that fulfilled today.

Elder Vanderwalker gave the Communion address this day. He used scriptures from III Nephi pertaining to the meaning of the emblems we use. We need to walk in such a way, and along the proper pathways, so that the contrite Spirit may always stay with us. He closed his remarks by reading hymn #220, “There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in this Place.”

The Gifts of the Spirit was the topic of Apostle Robert Murie’s class this morning. What is the difference between spiritual dreams and visions? Dreams happen when you are sleeping and the mind can’t control our dreams. Visions happen when you are awake. An entire vision can happen quickly. It may only take a second or two and these are controlled by the Lord. It is a rare privilege to have either experience.

Seven of our members attended General Conference. Due to the fact that three of our four priesthood men were going, and we had to travel on Sunday, we had to cancel church on Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday.

We all enjoyed conference and were very happy with the acceptance of the three documents that were passed for inclusion in the R-D&C. It was a very exciting and Spirit-filled Communion service, especially when Brother Kevin Romer was anointed and ordained to the office of High Priest of the Levitical priesthood. Thank you, Lord, for the fact that we were able to witness the fulfilling of prophecy. We left Monday morning to return home, bringing part of Missouri with us. Four of the seven that went down there came home sick. That meant that we had to cancel another Sunday service. The best news now is that we are all on the mend and feel much better. Praise God!
Please pray for our branch. We still have our sick among us: Muriel and Dick Nolff, Ray Tent, Priest Karl Bell, Fayrene Maclntosh, Tom and Dicki Vanderwalker, and Dicki’s sister Joelyn Karpeles, and Brother Murie.

I’d like to thank you for the prayers on my behalf. I’m feeling more like my old self again. Through all our sicknesses and trials that we’ve had, we’d like to thank the Lord for the blessings that He has also given us.

Sperry, OK Branch – Sr. Debbie Eastin Reporting

Our branch was blessed to have several special events during this last quarter. All began with a multi-branch service on March 8th. Patriarch Ernie Shank presided over the morning prayer service and brought counsel that all members, not just the priesthood, were responsible for the spiritual growth of our branches and the building up of the Kingdom of God. High Priest Steve Van Meter presided over our worship service with Elder Corwyn Mercer bringing a wonderful preaching ministry. As is our custom, members and all guests were invited to stay for food and fellowship after the services.

As Easter Sunday approached, many worked diligently in that preparation. The priesthood raised and anchored the cross and prepared the lawn and other areas of the church building. Coral Rogers and family prepared the chapel and foyer. Donna Carter and Joyce Van Meter pulled weeds, cleaned flower beds and then joined other volunteers to fill 250 plastic eggs. As if to remind us of Jesus’ crucifixion, on Resurrection morning the sky darkened, wind and rain beat the earth while lightning and thunder rattled the windows. In due time the storm eased and the members began to gather. Sister Pat Whiteman and Elder Mike Zahner performed a piano and organ duet which ushered in the Holy Spirit. Seventy Roger Tracy delivered the Resurrection message to a small but dedicated group of Saints. After the service, our children and the young at heart gathered in the gym for an Easter egg hunt and fellowship.

We were further blessed with Elder David Tevebaugh returning as our guest speaker on April 12 and an evening musical performance by guest artist Joyce Johnson and Russ Roberts on April 19. The Women’s Department held a fellowship luncheon at Luige in Skiatook and the annual Garage Sale Giveaway on April 25. The giveaway event was a big success in meeting the needs of local residents and providing a forum for discussion of our beliefs.

Mother’s Day was no exception. Our branch not only celebrated this special day but also the baby blessing of Wesley John Seaton by Seventy Roger Tracy and High Priest Elbert Rogers. The service included special music by the Burd family and Steve Van Meter. Brother Van Meter recognized the newest mother, mother with the most children, the oldest mother, the youngest mother and the “meanest” mother nominated by a young child’s waving hand. All the women of our branch received a flower, a handmade gift from the children and a crocheted rose by Sister Kim Young. After the service, a Mother’s Day luncheon was prepared and served by the men.

Scripture studies continue in the home of Charlene Burd the first Monday of each month, and George and Bonita Reynolds the last Thursday of each month. On the first Saturday of each month the men meet for breakfast at the Country Corner Fire Station. This event continues to be successful in unifying the group and meeting people. The men labored with love and muscle over the last few months, preparing homes, mowing lawns, cleaning up properties for members and non-members. Of course, our priesthood blessed many with home and hospital visitations and transportation as needed.

Rogers, AR Branch – Sr. Lucy Minardi Reporting

The Rogers Congregation has experienced some changes the last few months. Earlier this year Alice Batten went to live in an assisted living center near Springfield, MO. She is missed by all the members of our branch. Also in April, Sister Cleo Acord passed away after a long illness.
The Minardi family welcomed a new granddaughter into the family in October.

Several members attended Conference in April.

Jim and Lucy Minardi visited relatives in March and met Norma Billings at Oklahoma City for a mini family reunion with relatives from Colorado and Maryland.

Nita Cook bought a dogwood tree to be planted in memory of Cleo Acord. She also purchased a new piano for the congregation. Thanks, Nita.

Even though we are small in number, we still have members participating in our programs and musical numbers. Bev Parrish and Chuck Pententler provide special music regularly for us.

Violet Minardi was blessed at our church during the Christmas program.

Hopefully, all our fellow members are doing well. Please continue to keep our congregation in your prayers.

Southern Indiana Branch – Sr. Rebecca Paris Reporting

Our branch mourns the loss of a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend and acquaintance with the passing of Charles Bickell on April 3, 2015. As with any loss from this life, there are now vacant places in our lives which cannot be filled. However, we also have the memoirs of a life well lived, a ministry purely given, and a guiding presence by which we can live. We will never forget!

As a congregation we have started a new and exciting study of C.S. Lewis’ Screwtape Letters at the request of our youth. After just two weeks, we have become truly excited to see how this unique writer is able to open our eyes to the subtle ways that Satan tries to lead us away. It is really interesting to have a topic that crosses the boundaries of age and years of Church membership. Everyone can relate to the topics covered, and it is easy to invite others outside our fellowship to come and see!

Another way we have adapted to the schedules of our priesthood is by having a family prayer service once a month on a Sunday morning. Our first service was blessed in a rich way with the Holy Spirit. God is faithful and we trust Him for our every need.

Our love and prayers are with each of you! Through your struggles, pain, and celebrating, we hold you in our prayers now and always.

First Branch – Sister Brenda Evans Reporting

Greetings to the readers of The Hastening Times. The First Branch of the Remnant Church is in Independence, MO, and is located in the complex called The Gathering Place. First Branch is blessed with members who have a multiplicity of talents and abilities. Walk into First Branch on any Wednesday evening an hour before prayer service and you will be greeted by the sounds of bells interspersed by the happy chatter of the ringers. The Bell Choir works diligently on Wednesday evenings to prepare music for worship. They play about once a month for a worship service at First Branch. The bells combined with organ, piano, trumpet and a vocal chorus to present a beautiful rendition of “Because He Lives” for the Resurrection Sunday service at conference.

The bell ringers at First Branch began playing borrowed chimes about 10 years ago and then purchased a three octave set of chimes. In the summer of 2014, the branch voted to purchase a set of bells and now the choir plays music combining 4 octaves of chimes and 3 octaves of bells. There have been many people involved with the bells and chimes through the years. The present members include: Don and Linda Burnett, Roxanna Fishel, Emily Kreutner, Dan Keleher, Lois Moe, Dave and Kay Van Fleet, Linda VerDught, Haleigh Wilson, Keilah Zahner, Beckie Hogan, Terry Holloway, Linda Gussman, Lou Zahner, and others at various times.
At First Branch there is a variety of opportunities to work together, worship together and study together. Several volunteer at the Lunch Partners program. The youth programs for Handmaidens, F.I.S.H., and Remnant Warriors are actively supported by branch members. Linda Burnett from First Branch and Judith Deacon from Center Branch lead a children’s choir that has been visiting the Centerplace congregations and providing the ministry of music for their services. Corwyn Mercer from First Branch, and Darren and Melody Moore, now from Center Branch, are heading up the FISH program.

Kay Van Fleet, Linda Burnett, and Beckie Hogan lead the Junior Church program on the first Sunday of each month during the church school hour. This is a multi-age group from 4 years old through 6th grade. This year the theme has been “I am learning to be pure in heart so I can live in Zion!” They sing and learn new songs, have puppet shows, stories, and crafts.

The children’s Sunday school classes are continuing to try the new church school curriculum. Our goal is to give our children a good foundation in their relationship with Jesus Christ and help them learn to share their gifts and talents to accomplish His purposes. We want them to truly believe in God and never doubt that God promises to be with them wherever they go. Our dedicated teachers are a blessing to this program. Thank you Taylor Foreman, Laura Terry, Corwyn Mercer, and Sue Petentler.

The youthful Remnant Warriors, with Don Burnett in charge, have finished building a fire pit at the campfire location behind The Gathering Place Conference Center.

Another wonderful experience for the youth both in and out of the Remnant Church is the educational opportunity offered by Zion’s Academy. Studies and activities are being held in the First Branch fellowship wing and classrooms. Initially Zion’s Academy was formed to meet the specific needs of the growing home-schooling population. More information can be found at the e-mail address: zionsacademy@comcast.net, or call the Remnant Church Headquarters at 816 461-7215. You can also visit Zion’s Academy on Facebook.

Young adults are being encouraged to attend a new class for them in the branch church school taught by Phil Strecker. Brother Phil prefers to say he is directing the discussion about “Comparative Religions, Outstanding Doctrines and Practices of Our Church.” It is good to see more of our young adults attending Church school and worship services and we hope to see this group steadily grow to an even greater number.

Patriarch Leland Collins has almost completely recuperated from the fall which shattered his elbow in December. We’ve missed his ministry and are thankful that he is feeling so much better. He is once again ministering, including taking his turn in teaching the New Testament to the adult Sunday school class. Mike Hogan and Jack Evans also share the teaching of this adult class. They bring out many interesting points as we study together. The history of the early church and the writings of the Apostle Paul have brought enlightenment to the class and challenges for the serious-minded members.

Early this spring, Elder Will Jobe and Apostle Terry Patience diligently worked on developing an in-branch Witnessing Weekend for First Branch. There were many families visited, but more could have been visited if there had been a larger number of participants to show up for assignments. Those who took part in this exercise in love and faith testified of spirit-filled visits. All are encouraged to come and support this activity the next time it is scheduled. Heartwarming experiences will be your reward.
“The dead in Christ shall rise first.”
1 Thessalonians 4:16

“He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world.” Acts 17:31

“The doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.” Hebrews 6:2

God threw King Belshazzar into the balances and weighed him and declared that he was “found wanting” (Daniel 5:27). That ended the reign of Belshazzar. When God tires of the folly of a king, it is an easy matter to take him from the palace and set him to sawing wood in Holland or brooding with the sea gulls on Saint Helena.

If kings are not spared, how may ordinary mortals hope to escape? In fact, God is “no respecter of persons,” and king and peasant will be treated without partiality.

A DAY IS SET

There is to be a great final time of judgment, happy for some, sad for others. “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained” (Acts 17:31).

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works” (Revelation 20:12).

“Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened” (Daniel 7:10).

EVENTS PRECEDING THE JUDGMENT

Certain momentous events are to precede the final judgment. First is the second personal advent of our Lord. Jesus told His disciples: “I will come again” (John 14:3).

This coming is to be personal. The angels said: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Closely associated with His coming is the “first resurrection.” “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The follows the millennial reign of a thousand years: “And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection” (Revelation 20:4-6).

Following the thousand years reign comes the resurrection of the wicked: “And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished” (Revelation 20:4, 5).

The idea of two resurrections is carried out in other scriptures: “They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:29).

“A resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust” (Acts 24:15).

“Some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2).

We have then the following events in their order: The second coming of Christ; the resurrection of the just; the millennial reign; the resurrection of the wicked; and then the great judgment pictured by John.

THEOLOGICAL BLUNDERS

Concerning this judgment, many blunders have been made in the name of God. Not the least of these
was the old dogma of predestination which fain would have sent some men and angels to hell and others to heaven quite irrespective of anything they might have done – merely “for the glory of God.”

Another blunder is the idea that there are but two places, one for endless torment, one for endless bliss, and all men divided into two classes.

Let us in imagination arrange a line of men before us for judgment. At one end of the line is the meanest man that ever lived. At the other end is the best man that ever lived. They are graded down morally from the best to the worst, and stand scarcely an inch apart physically and morally.

Where can you put your hand down in this line and say that all on this side shall go to heaven and all on that side shall go to hell?

If God fixes the dividing line between two certain men, will He say that this man who has missed hell only by the thickness of hand shall go into heaven and share celestial glory equally with the best man who ever lived? And that this other man who has lost heaven by an inch shall go to hell and suffer the same punishment that is meted out to the worst man who ever profaned the human form?

We do better than that here, in our high schools and or police courts. We at least try to give reward in promotion to merit, and mete out punishment according to degree of guilt.

As a matter of fact, God has an infinite variety of rewards and of punishment to meet the needs and deserts of all men.

Another blunder is to assume that the mere profession of religion is the determining factor. Here is a case from actual life: Henry Clay Bates murdered his young wife in cold blood. On the eve of his execution he called for a minister, “accepted Christ,” was told that he was “saved,” and said, “I die happy.” Theologians send him to heaven with John the Beloved and Stephen the Just. His poor wife, though a good woman, had not accepted Christ, so perforce, she is consigned to torment forever and forever.

No, there is quite a different basis of judgment, and profession is not the only factor.

**THE BASIS OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT**

That judgment is to be absolutely just. No errors will be made. Rich and poor, small and great, will have justice. And this is the basis of judgment: “And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their own works” (Revelation 20:12)

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according to his works shall be” (Revelation 22:12).

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body...whether it be good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

This idea of merit as a basis of reward appeals to common sense. It is just, as God is just.

**THE GLORY OF THE STARS**

The rewards that God will bestow are as diverse as the sun, the moon, and the multitudinous stars.

“The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:40-42).

Paul tells us that every man shall be rewarded according as he has builded of “gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble” (1 Corinthians 3:11, 15).

It is clear, too, that God will differentiate in punishment as in reward. Jesus said of certain people: “It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city” (Matthew 10:15).

We warn you of judgment to come. Accept Jesus – He makes salvation possible. Obey His gospel, for it redeems and regenerates. Diligently give yourself to works of righteousness, for by your works and by the word of God you will be judged; and according to your works you will be rewarded.
Please remember active and reserve personnel/families in your daily prayers. **Let them know how proud and thankful you are for their service!** If you know of other military members, please contact Marissa Van Biber at mjvanbiber@hotmail.com or 816-229-2479.

Names and addresses of military personnel will not be published on the Web Site.

If you want to mail a card or letter to a service member deployed overseas, it takes the same postage as other first-class mail in the United States. If you wish to mail a care package, there are rules and guidelines for the contents and it requires specific mailing procedures. Please contact Marissa Van Biber, address above, for that information, for suggestions on items to send, and names and addresses of military personnel.
Talking with God

By Marci Damon

Have you ever imagined yourself sitting on the floor, looking up into the face of God, talking to Him? What if you had God’s cellphone number and could call Him? What would you talk about, and how would you feel with Him on the other end of the phone? You may not be able to use a cellphone to have a conversation with the Lord, but everyone has the ability to talk to Him - through prayer. Prayer is an important part of your life and it is your own private link to God and Jesus. Through prayer, you can communicate with God at any time and in any place.

Again imagine that you are sitting on the floor looking up into the face of God. You are sitting in front of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. He is the Almighty, He is holy and wonderful. He created everything, including YOU. All these things are impressive and magnificent, but one of the most amazing things is that, right now, God would not want to be anywhere else but with you! He wants to hear what you have to say and He wants to help you, and most of all, He wants you to know that He loves you. With these things in mind, don’t you think that, somewhere in your prayers, there should be a time for praise, praise because He is God? And how about some thanks, thanks because of everything He has done and will ever do for you? Praise and thanks are two very important parts of a prayer, but often they are left out. Have you ever tried to count all the blessings that God has given you? He has given you life, given you His Scriptures, given you beautiful things to hear and see and taste; and the list goes on.

God loves you and wants you close to Him, but He cannot look the other way and ignore the things you do which are wrong. But this also does not mean He will ignore you. If you ask for forgiveness, and try each day to do better than the day before, God will be there to help you overcome your sins. He is also a God that desires to bless and help you; all you need to do is ask. But again, this does not mean that He will help you do things that are not good for you, or help you do something that you should have done on your own (like ask God to help you earn an A on a test when you have not even studied).

Now, go back to imagining that you are sitting on the floor, looking up into the eyes of God. I hope you can feel the love and comfort coming from God. Maybe your prayer would sound something like this: Dear God, How wonderful and great you are. Thank you for all that you have blessed me with, but thank you most of all for loving me. Please forgive me of the things I have done wrong and help me to recognize what I need to change in my life so that I can become the son or daughter you want me to be. Please help me to always remember you and help me to overcome the things of the world so that I can be with you. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.

Your prayers are your special time with God and Jesus. You need to make time for these two special friends of yours, just like you make time for
your other friends. You need to make time for your prayers. Sometimes your prayer will be planned, like when you say a prayer over your food, and sometimes it will be unplanned, like when you hear someone is in the hospital and is in need of prayers. You should also plan a quiet time each day when you and God can talk. Remember that God does not like to be ignored, just like you don’t. One way that you show God that you love Him is through your prayers. You are very special to God and Jesus. Take time to show God and Jesus how special they are to you by praying to them often.

Congratulations to our youth and all their accomplishments!

Brooke VunCannon will graduate from Truman High School, Independence, MO in May. She will be attending Truman State University, in Missouri on a softball scholarship. Her accomplishments include: playing on 2012-2013 state high school championship softball team, selected as 2015 All Conference shortstop and named to the All State academic softball team, and is a member of the National Art Honor Society and National French Honor Society. Brooke attends the Blue Springs Branch, in Blue Springs, MO.

Matthew Jobe, son of Robert and Patricia Jobe, will graduate from the University of Oklahoma in June with his Doctor of Pharmacy degree. He attends the Sperry Branch, in Sperry, OK.

Will Jobe, son of Robert and Patricia Jobe, will graduate from University of Missouri-Kansas City in May with a Doctor of Jurisprudence degree. He attends First Branch in Independence, MO.

Shannon Bowerman, daughter of Reginald and Lesa Bowerman, will graduate from University of Central Missouri with her degree in Psychology. She will attend the University of Wichita in Kansas to work on her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology.

Amber Tilton will graduate from Fort Osage High School, Independence, Missouri in May. Her future plans are still being considered.

Rachel Paris will graduate Salutatorian from Christian Academy of Indiana in May. She is a member of the National Honor Society, National Spanish Honor Society, and International Thespian Society. While in school, she participated in cheerleading, theater, and competitive dance. She has been awarded the 1907 Founders Scholarship to Western Kentucky University where she will be studying Musical Theater and Communications.

Nathan Paris, a freshman at Christian Academy of Indiana, is on the Honor Roll. He also participated in theater, basketball, baseball, choir and band.

Riley Woodruff, of the Southern Indiana Branch, is on the Honor Roll at Highland Hills Middle School. She also participated in volleyball and orchestra where she plays the violin.

Kevin Woodruff, of the Southern Indiana Branch, is on the Honor Roll at Highland Hills Middle School. He participated in basketball and band where he plays the clarinet.

Jacob Pancake, son of Tracy Morgan and Rick Pancake, and grandson of Paul and Trudy Burke, and great grandson of Elsie Lemasters, will graduate in May from Magnolia High School, New Martinsville, WV. Jacob is a member of the Mu Alpha Theta (mathematics honor society), National Science Honor Society, and is Co-President of the National Honor Society. While in school, he participated in soccer and track. He will attend West Liberty University where he will major in Dentistry.

Rebecca Craighead will be graduating from Vian High School in Vian, OK. She is a member of the Blackgum, OK Branch.

Cooper Hobbs, son of Jennifer Hobbs and grandson of Don and Linda Burnett, attends First Branch, Independence, MO. This spring he participated in the National Federation of Music Clubs Festival where he received a superior rating.

We congratulate all of our graduates and students for their outstanding accomplishments and wish them well in their many activities and endeavors in the years ahead.
“Mom, where are my shin guards?” Eli called out as he pulled his Team Avengers shirt, a stray Lego, and two pairs of crumpled socks out from under his bed.

“Where did you leave them last, Eli?” Mother replied, somewhat impatiently.

“I thought they were in my room but I can’t find them anywhere!” Eli complained.

“Well, you can’t play soccer without them. You’ll skin your legs,” Mother replied as she looked in Eli’s closet.

“But I’m late Mom, and I can’t find them. I’ll have to play without them.” It was time to go so Mother gave in and drove Eli to his game.

When Eli got to the soccer field, his coach, who was a friend from Eli’s church, didn’t say anything about his missing shin guards, but he didn’t let him on the field to play either. He had told his team many times that they must come in full gear if they expected to play.

Eli, disappointed, watched his team mates kick and maneuver the ball across the field as they tried to score a goal. Over and over Eli watched them as they went back and forth across the field. The game was close, but finally one of his buddies kicked the ball between the goalie’s legs and right into the netting, winning the game. Eli was happy for his team but he felt left out as they hurried from the field triumphantly.

After the game, Eli’s coach took him aside and talked to him about why he hadn’t let Eli play.

The coach pointed at a scar on his own left shin where he had fallen while playing soccer without his shin guards many years ago. He had hurt his leg seriously enough that he had to give up playing for awhile. He didn’t want the same thing to happen to Eli.

The coach continued. “Son, it’s not just physical hurts that we have to guard ourselves against in life. Playing a game of soccer and protecting our legs is just a starting point in the whole scheme of things. But learning to take care of the small things helps us to prepare for the bigger challenges in life. If you want to grow up and be a strong witness for God, you must eventually learn to take care and to wear the proper spiritual equipment to guard yourself and others from bad influences. Never think that trying to get away without the right preparation will make you ready to serve God. Wearing your shin guards prepares you to play soccer, but wearing the whole armor of God will prepare you to serve Him. I want you to go home and read Ephesians 6:10-18 and learn what equipment the Lord expects us to wear. Then come back next week with your shin guards on and ready to play.”

Eli looked up to his coach and took his advice seriously. He nodded his head “yes” and returned to his mother’s waiting car. Never again would he try to play a game without the proper gear. Thinking about what the coach had said, as he got into the car, he asked his Mom, “Where is the book of Ephesians in the Bible, Mom?” Unlike Eli’s shin guards, this time Mom knew exactly where to look and they drove home to find his missing guards and, more importantly, to read Ephesians 6:10-18.
In Ephesians 6:10-18 you can read that the Lord wants us to be strong in him and in the power of his might. He tells us to put on the whole armor of God to stand against evil. Just as in Eli’s story, he doesn’t want us to get hurt because we are not wearing the right equipment. Below are the scriptures from Ephesians that Eli’s coach told him to read. Open your Bible, find Ephesians 6:10-18 and then draw a line from the scripture verses below to the type of armor on the right that is mentioned in the different verses.

- Ephesians 6:14 first part
- Ephesians 6:14 second part
- Ephesians 6:15
- Ephesians 6:16
- Ephesians 6:17 first part
- Ephesians 6:17 second part

Helmet of Salvation
Feet shod with Peace
Loins girt about with Truth
Breastplate of Righteousness
The sword of the Spirit
Shield of Faith
VCS 2015

PUT ON THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD

Age 3 through 8th Grade
Cost: $6

July 13 – 16 9am – 12:30pm
The Gathering Place Directors: Austin & Christina Purvis