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Kansas Program Recalls Events In Early Church

(The following is the first installment of a program presented by members of the St. John, Kansas, Mission at the Arlington, Kansas, MBA Field Trip in August, 1967.)

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE EAST

Recited by Sue Rich

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as we all know, was restored in the years of 1829 and 1830, in Palmyra, New York, through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, whom the Lord used to translate the **Book of Mormon**. Others were called into the ministry along with Joseph Smith from the very beginning to testify of the truth of the **Book of Mormon** and the "marvelous work and wonder" which God had performed in revealing unto men a knowledge of His ways and by what means they might serve Him in spirit and truth.

Many in the Church have a more perfect knowledge of the various events which transpired throughout the next fourteen years or an era, we might say, which ended with the death of Joseph Smith. However, as has happened in all ages of time, the early followers of the Restoration were persecuted by organized religion as well as the unbelieving world and were forced to move from one place to another. Beginning in Western New York State, they went to Pennsylvania, then to Ohio, to Independence, Missouri, and then to Navoo, Illinois, a beautiful city which the saints built on the Mississippi River. Navoo represented the Indian word for "beautiful." Threats, persecution, and mob violence followed them wherever they went. They, themselves, were of a peaceable nature and, being guided by the admonition of Christ, were disinclined to fight violence with violence. Thus, more often than not they fled before their persecutors. There were those whose property was destroyed, whose land was seized, and whose lives were taken. But belief increased.

Within the first six years after the restoration

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MBA Officers Visit Navoo and St. John

By Isaac Smith

Brothers Domenic Thomas, Joseph Calabrese, Joseph Carlini, Kem Metz, and I left from Toledo, Ohio, on Thanksgiving Day for a trip to Navoo, Illinois, and St. John, Kansas.

We stopped briefly at Cathage, Illinois, early Friday morning and then proceeded to Navoo. We discovered a very nice camp near Navoo, operated by the Reorganized Church, which the MBA may consider as a possible site for a future field trip. After looking the camp over, we made a phone call to Mr. Gunn, a camp official, who told us they would have a meeting in December to decide on time availability and price.

We continued on to St. John, Kansas, and arrived there about 9:00 p.m. We were wonderfully received by young and old alike.

Immediately upon arriving, we went to the train station to meet Brother Amos Udo, who was arriving from Emporia, Kansas, for a weekend visit.

Brother Udo is a student from Nigeria, Africa, attending college in Emporia. He was delighted with the reception he received.

We stayed at Brother Alex Robinson's home, where after some light refreshments and wonderful singing, we retired late.

The next morning before breakfast some of us took a walk around the peaceful town of St. John.

Before leaving to talk to the officials of the Y Ranch regarding the possibility of using the Ranch for a field trip next summer, we enjoyed a Thanksgiving dinner with the Robinson family, who had postponed their Thanksgiving celebration to share it with us.

Sister Louise's parents from Hager, Kansas, spent the day with us. Also Brother and Sister Bittering who had been in St. John for a week were with us on the weekend.

After visiting the Y Ranch, we returned to the Robinsons for an outdoor wiener roast and afterward a very nice house meeting. We had a good Sunday meeting which included the ordination of Brother David Robinson as a deacon.

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Light From The Watchman's Lamp

By Spencer G. Everett

"Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth."
(Isaiah 21:6)

The following narrative was taken from an issue of *Life* magazine and was entitled "Oldest Paintings in the Americas."

"On a mountainside 75 miles northeast of Acapulco, Mexico, a man hunkers down to rest in the cool overhang of a cave. For all the peace and quiet of the setting, this cave contains one of America's most exciting archaeological finds — a series of life-size murals made by the ancient OLMECS, whose high culture flourished in Mexico between 800 and 400 B.C. They were discovered by an amateur archeologist named Carlo T. E. Gay, who was searching for just such traces of the OLMECS. About a mile into the cave he came upon this jutting slab at right with its drawing of a huge red-and-black serpent. Nearby was a picture of some unidentifiable animal leaping into the air.

"The Olmec civilization is the oldest one ever discovered in the New World. It tantalizes archeologists because they know so little about who the Olmecs were, where they came from or how they developed their culture — and because the answers to these questions are inextricably bound up with theories about the origin of civilization itself in the Americas, some scholars believe that the Olmec may prove to be the 'mother culture' of the subsequent high civilizations of Middle America — the Zapotecan, the Mayan and the Teotihuacan, Toltec and Aztec.

"Centuries before the time of Christ, the Olmecs were building elaborate ceremonial centers along the southern Gulf coast of Mexico. At La Venta in the state of Tabasco, archeologists have found an enormous earthen pyramid, 100 feet high, surrounded by low platforms, courtyards and other smaller mounds. The most famous Olmec monuments are the colossal heads they carved out of basalt: huge, square-faced, helmeted human heads, some of them 9' high.

"This cave is known as the Juxtlahuaca Cave (the name means 'beautiful blue-green valley,' an apt description of the view from its mouth).

"The most elaborate of the murals (found in a chamber nearly two-thirds of a mile from the cave entrance) depicts a pair of human figures who seem to be performing some obscure Olmec ritual. One man—standing five feet five inches—wears a black animal pelt slung over his left shoulder, a knee-length garment banded in red, black and yellow and a plumed headdress similar to the ones depicted in other Olmec art. He gestures with a trident shaped object in his right hand toward a seated figure, who is naked save for a wide black sash and a band circling his neck. The standing figure appears to be performing a ritual exorcism upon the seated figure, says Gay." (end of article)

Perhaps, instead, it is a priest casting out a demon from a demon possessed man or healing a crippled man as Jesus and his Apostles did on various occasions. This comment is by the writer and is not part of the article. Who were the Olmecs? No one seems to know, but here is a possibility.

Fernando De Alva De Ixtlilxochitl (pronounced — Eesh-tleel-sho-cheetl) was born about 1568, a grandson of the last king of Texcoco, from whom he inherited all that were saved of the records of the public archives after the destruction by the armies of Cortez. Hubert Howe Bancroft indicates that he wrote honestly, compiling a history of the ancestors of his people (the Mayan) from authentic documents in his possession. In 1941, George C. Vaillant, distinguished archeologist and authority on early cultures in Mexico, said of him, "He was a descendant of the old Texcocan lineage and had access to many of the ancient records." His works were translated into English in 1939 by Arnulfo Rodriguez, an instructor in Spanish at the University of California.

Ixtlilxochitl, like the *Book of Mormon*, tells of three groups of people who came across the ocean to settle America. He says of the third group of artisans who migrated to America that they came from the Near East about 586 B.C. or fourteen years after a group called the Nahuas or Nahuales. (Notice the similarity to the name Nephites.) He states that both groups came from the same locale, and he calls this second group Olmecs or Ulmecs. (Notice the similarity in the name *Olmec* and the word *Mulek* found in the *Book of Mormon*.)

The Mulekites of the *Book of Mormon* may be identical with the people that Ixtlilxochitl calls "Ulmecs," not only because of the name but because of many other similarities he mentions which are too numerous to mention here.

The Ancient civilizations of our world recorded in stone great events, names, laws, lists of kings, accounts of victories, etc. These stones are called "stele," for example the stele of Hammurabi of Babylon, the Rosetta Stone from the Nile, and the Tablets of the Ten Commandments. We can follow the stele's course in the old world from Mesopotamia across the Nile River and into the land of Greece.

The Mayan stelae found in Central America served the same purpose, but other more ancient peoples of Central America knew of these stones. The Olmecs or Ulmecs, the oldest people in this area, were already masters of this craft. The stele passed from one people to another just as it did in the old world. In a course of several millennia it has apparently followed a direct path through all civilizations. The question which seems so elusive to the archeologist is how it passed from the Old World to the New World. This is no mystery to the reader of the *Book of Mormon*, for we know that the people who founded the great civilizations on this promised land were led by God from the very places where the stele was in common use.

Scripture — "And it came to pass in the days

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Editorial Viewpoint

"We are bound to make the mistake of accepting some harmful changes and rejecting some good ones."

The old year has passed, and the new year has arrived. This is a fitting time of year to talk about the subject of change, since traditionally this is the time many of us like to resolve that we are going to make certain changes in our lives to improve ourselves.

Change is as inevitable as life and death and is as common in our lives as eating and breathing and seeing the sun rise and set every day. We are all quite accustomed to changes, especially in our modern age which is producing so many changes that we cannot remember them all from one day to the next.

Within this life of changes, however, we have become used to a certain stability, a certain routine of living which we follow day by day, year by year. These are such things as having a home, raising a family, going to work or school, belonging to a church, etc. This routine not only includes what we do but also how we think and feel about things.

We are not generally concerned about changes in our daily routine of living until something happens that threatens to interrupt this routine. Then we must either prevent the change from occurring or make some adjustments to offset the effects of the change.

It is quite natural to resist change, since change often threatens our peace, security, and even our survival. Today certain changes are taking place in American culture that many of us see as threatening to our continued well being as a nation. One of these changes is a new attitude toward morals. The practice of pre-marital and illicit sex is becoming not only very prevalent but also more and more accepted by the general population. This same attitude toward sex is invading our dress, literature, and entertainment. Another alarming change is the increased unrest throughout the country created by a growing lack of respect for law and order. The breakdown of the home as a stable family unit is one of the greatest threats to the continued stability of American society. Many people recognize and deplore these changes, but, unfortunately, as a nation we seem to be unable to effectively resist them.

While it is good to resist certain changes, it is not good to resist all changes, for mankind has only progressed into something approaching a civilized being because he has accepted certain changes. Though this be true, we are continually placed in a quandary by many changes that occur because we cannot always be quite certain whether they will eventually benefit or harm us.

If the church in the Middle Ages had successfully resisted change as she attempted to do, we would still be tilling the soil as peasants in a feudal society. We would have none of the advantages of modern science and medicine, and there would be no political or religious freedom. The church was quick to attempt to silence any new idea, as she did with Copernicus' scientific observation that the sun did not revolve around the earth but that the earth revolved around the sun. When Martin Luther asked for some changes in the way of reforms, the church did every thing in her power to destroy him and his ideas. The Inquisition and the bloody violence that followed attests to the strength of her resistance.

The resistance that Jesus met is a classic example of man's inability to distinguish between beneficial and harmful changes. The Jews saw His ideas as radical changes to their long established traditions. They accused Him of trying to destroy the Law, not realizing that He came to build upon and improve it, not destroy it.

Just about every change that has proven beneficial to mankind was condemned at its birth and had to struggle, often violently, to live.

How can we as a Church resolve the problem of knowing when to resist or accept changes? There is no easy answer to this question, if, indeed, there is an answer at all. Like everyone else down through history, we are bound to make the mistake of accepting some harmful changes and rejecting some good ones.

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