



The LifeLine

Summer 2021

“Contending for the faith”

lifeline2rlds.org

The Search for Peace

Carol's Corner...

Reshaping the Gospel?

For the first 100 years of the RLDS Church's existence (1860–1960), their “gospel” was the good news that God had restored His true church to the earth through the prophet Joseph Smith. The RLDS gospel included the teachings embodied in the revelations Joseph claimed to have received from God.

Church members who lived through this period, acknowledge that as the Prophets and the revelations changed over the years, so did the church's perception of the gospel. That reality continues into this century, as illustrated by the following quotes from a 2007 *Herald* article titled, “Molten Gospel ... Molten Disciple”:

“Our challenge as the body of Christ is to endure the pain of reshaping the gospel for a new generation....”

“The gospel... must be reinterpreted for each new generation and each cultural setting...”

In contrast, the Christian gospel as found in the Bible, is described by the apostle John in Revelation 14:6 as being everlasting—eternal. Something that is eternal does not need to be reshaped or redefined to fit into different cultures or time periods.

Why is it important whether the gospel changes or not? Because the Biblical gospel points the way to salvation for the souls of mankind. A changed gospel leads people away from salvation, and into an eternity separated from God.

The Biblical definition of the gospel is given us by the apostle Paul:

“...I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you...by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...” (1 Cor 15:1-4)

When a person believes this gospel and receives Jesus as Lord of his/her life, they are born again—spiritually this time—into the family of God:

“...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name....” (John 1:12)

In response to the question, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Paul and

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Peace. It's such a nice sounding word and there are so many types of peace. There's the peace within oneself and the peace between individuals. There's also peace between groups of people and even between different countries.

The Community of Christ has long considered itself a champion of peace. For a significant portion of its history its church seal has featured a young boy standing beside a lion and a lamb with the word “PEACE” emblazoned underneath.

The word “peace” is even included in the church's motto: “We proclaim Jesus Christ and promote communities of joy, hope, love, and peace.” In addition, the church holds a Daily Prayer for Peace at their Temple in Independence, Missouri.

According to the church's website, “The Prayer for Peace is the centerpiece of the Daily Prayer for Peace service. ...the prayer expresses the yearning of the gathered community for wholeness in relationships between humanity, creation, and the Creator.”

Articles in the church's bi-monthly magazine, *Herald*, may also provide some answers as to what kind of peace the church promotes.

Matthew J. Frizzell writes in the May/June 2020 issue, “Positively following Jesus means striving for the peaceable kingdom of God on Earth.” Later in the same article he continues, “Wealth, health, peace and prosperity are not the result of God's favor or supernatural forces. Rather, they are created by individual and collective human action.”

In the same issue, Glenn C. Johnson writes extensively about the sacrament of Communion. In part of the article he notes, “One common thread has been the experience of inner peace that comes through our shared meal tradition. But for me, this spiritual peace never is realized fully without acknowledging my

sense of calling to advocate for a world filled with peace.” He also notes later in his article, “In the Lord's Supper, we experience the call to live as peaceful human beings who personify Christ's peace.”

In several recent issues of the *Herald*, Christ is referred to as the “Peaceful One.” In fact, the theme of the January/February 2021 issue is Jesus, the Peaceful One. One of the articles, “Toward the Peaceful One: Worth of All Persons,” was authored by Robyn Luffman and

“Wealth, health, peace and prosperity are not the result of God's favor or supernatural forces. Rather, they are created by individual and collective human action.” Matthew J. Frizzell

David Anderson. They write, “As we move toward the peaceful One by professing that God weeps for ‘the mistreated,’ we acknowledge another truth about ourselves: We admit our complicity.”

Generally what Community of Christ writers proclaim is that peace can be achieved through human means. But Jesus told his followers, “In this world you will have trouble.” (John 16:33) He understood what perhaps the Community of Christ church may not, that the efforts of men will never be sufficient to bring about real peace.

What they neglect to acknowledge is that humans are sinful beings, who, because of their disobedience to God are separated from Him. It's no different today than in the Apostle Paul's day when he wrote in Romans 3:10 (NIV), “There is no one righteous, not even one....” And in 1 John 1:8 we read, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

So despite the noble, well-intentioned efforts of men to achieve peace, they will fall disappointingly short because the greater peace that they and the world are

missing is peace between mankind and God.

But all is not lost. Jesus also said in John 16:33, “But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Christ offers us the gift of salvation. He took our place and suffered the punishment we justly deserve for our sin—our disobedience to God—when he willingly sacrificed His own life on the cross. By standing aside and allowing Christ to take charge in one's life, one receives His peace. In John 14:27 (NIV) He

said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”

Nevertheless, calling Christ the “Peaceful

One” may not be entirely accurate Biblically. In Matthew 10:34 (NIV) Christ proclaims, “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” The sword that He bore during His time on the earth was His word. Hebrews 4:12 states, “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” And according to Revelation 19, when Christ returns again, His sword, or divine judgement, will separate believer from non-believer for eternity.

Returning to Mr. Johnson's article about Communion, it may appear that he got it right at the beginning of his statement when he wrote, “Reconciliation calls us to make peace with God....” But keep in mind he was referring to Communion as a time of reconciliation, which we would suggest is theologically putting the cart before the horse. In Luke 22:19 (NIV) it is written, “And he [Christ] took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and

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PEACE continued from front... gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'" Communion doesn't create our reconciliation with God. Instead, it follows our reconciliation with God which occurs only when we accept and receive Christ as our Lord and Savior. Communion was established so that Christians would always remember the penalty that Christ paid on their behalf.

The reconciling peace of Christ gives us the promise of eternal life—a much more valuable and durable promise than any temporary kind of peace mankind can provide.

CAROL continued from front...

Silas replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved...." (Acts 16:31)

You will notice that nothing is said about keeping the commandments to be saved, or about the necessity of water baptism or the need to belong to the right church as many followers of Joseph Smith's teachings believe.

Perhaps nothing describes the simplicity of the gospel better than the story of "the thief" on the cross in Luke 23:42-43. After proclaiming Jesus' innocence to the other criminal on the cross who was maligning Him, "the thief" acknowledged his own sins, and turning to Jesus he said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." And Jesus said to him,

"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." This man's salvation was based solely on his belief in Jesus as his Lord and Savior, and not on anything that he himself had done.

The true gospel does not need to be reshaped or reinterpreted. It is simple, timeless and life changing for everyone who accepts it—just as it is.

"... I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...." (Rom 1:16)

Dear Friends,

It is our privilege to share our hearts' desire with you in these quarterly newsletters. That desire is to see our loved ones and all believers in Joseph Smith's doctrines come to know the simple gospel of salvation and to re-

ceive the gift of eternal life that Jesus extends to all who will believe in His Word.

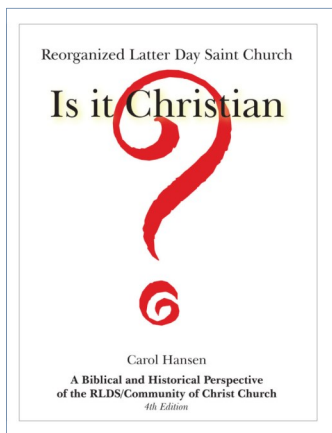
Please share with us any questions or comments that you might have, or suggestions on how we might improve the newsletter. Also, if you have any prayer requests, we would be honored to pray on your behalf.

There are ways that you can assist us as well. We would welcome your prayers for the ministry and its work. Printing and mailing costs for each newsletter total nearly \$300. If they have been a blessing to you, we would welcome your donation of any size to help reach the followers of Joseph Smith's teachings with Biblical truth.

God Bless you all,
Carol

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Resources Available

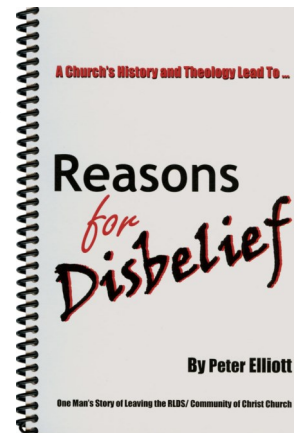


Reorganized Latter Day Saint Church Is it Christian? is a thoroughly documented book on the RLDS/Community of Christ church's history, doctrine and scriptures. \$25.00 incl. postage



Our "Seeking" series of tracts. \$5.00 for all three.

A 3-year investigation into the church of his youth resulted in Peter Elliott's book, *A Church's History and Theology Lead To... Reasons for Disbelief*. He tells why he chose to leave the RLDS/Community of Christ. \$10.00 incl. postage



These resources are available directly from LifeLine's website, some both in printed form and as a PDF. You can purchase copies for your pastor and for yourself at: https://www.lifeline2rlds.org/wp/?page_id=540 or by

sending a check to LifeLine Ministries to RLDS, P.O. Box 1536, Independence, MO 64055. Books on the website also include Paul Trask's *Part Way to Utah*, *The Long Way Home* and Ron Luff's *Faith Gone Astray*.

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