

# Joseph Smith Ministries

VOL. 1

NOVEMBER 21, 2012

NO. 12B

*“LAY DOWN THE FENCES AND FIND COMMON GROUND”*

## *A Thanksgiving Thought*

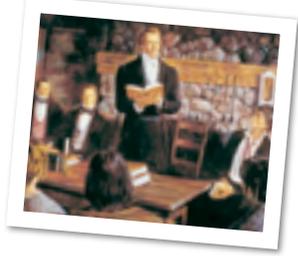
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As we struggle to prepare for the coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we find ourselves in the midst of a desert—a desert of confusion. Perhaps we bring this on ourselves; nevertheless it holds us in an unfruitful condition. We are not forwarding the progress of that Restoration movement, nor are we bringing forth the promised Zion. We are specifically called to build up these two things. These are the movements of God and we are told to push their causes forward. So let us look at the problems we face and see if we can find solutions that will free us from this stagnant condition.



In every philosophical movement there is a core or principle that presents the desired goal and a means to achieve it. Take for instance my Thanksgiving dinner. The turkey is the core or the principle around which this meal is built. The potatoes, gravy, cranberry sauce, hot rolls, vegetables, and so forth, are trimmings added to enhance the meal—to bring satisfaction to those who partake of the feast. Those who prepare the meal can destroy the event by burning the hot rolls, making watery gravy, forgetting the cranberry sauce, adding too much salt, or not enough, and letting the meal get cold before presenting it to the guests. Or, they can become overly concerned about the trimmings and improperly prepare the turkey—maybe forget to cook it.

The Restoration of the Kingdom of God has a core purpose around which the Church can be built. This core or principle can be stated in several steps. First, we were directed to declare repentance and to establish the principle of baptism, and the means of receiving the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. Then, we were directed to purchase the land of Zion and to begin to push forward the establishment of that Zion. In August 1831, Joseph and others laid the foundation for the Holy City—the appointed place that was to be established as the New Jerusalem. This will become the center of the House of the God of Jacob—the spot from which the Lord will rule this New Jerusalem in the land of Zion. We agree on these principles. Regardless of which portion of the Restoration and which fellowship in which we worship, we agree. Why not work to further the saints' togetherness and declare the Restoration principle to the world in which we live?



## *A Thanksgiving Thought (Continued)*

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Like the Thanksgiving dinner, we, as members of the Restoration, became carried away in preparing the trimmings. We allowed ourselves to forsake our instructions—how we were directed to accomplish our work. Some even designed and chose their own philosophy. Then, we began judging each other and dividing over such things as who has the right to lead, who has the authority, who was teaching the right philosophy, what is the right way. We did these things without listening to the voice of the Lord or to the directions that He had given. Have we hearkened to spirits that were not of the Lord or did not conform to the scriptures? Spirits that did not come from the Lord, but rather from the hearts of desirous men? Spirits that led us away from the purposes set forth in the beginning? Spirits that gave us substitutions for the real thing? In the middle of our disagreements, separation and confusion, the adversary has gained influence among us.

I believe the only way we can prepare for the coming of Christ—to be found with sufficient oil for our lamps—is to begin to be obedient to the directions we have received. The Bible, Book of Mormon and Latter-Day revelations tell us what type of person we should be. We must all begin to walk in the path of righteousness laid out for us to follow. We must hearken to the voice of the Lord from the scriptures and from latter day revelations.

Joseph F. Smith

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