

## When love is all about

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 29 April 2010 10:28 - Last Updated Monday, 07 March 2011 13:35

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What is the essence of the Gospel? Answer: Love

What is the greatest quality that God possess? Answer: Love

What is the characteristic by which real Christians will be know? Answer: Love.

What is the quality that will remain forever? Answer, according to Paul: Love.

What are the greatest commandments? Answer: Love for God and Love for your neighbor.

Love is the answer to everything in the gospel. If that is so, then we must ask ourselves, What is love? The best definition I've found for love is given in Mosiah 18:8-9 of the Book of Mormon. It is interesting to note that this was the covenant which was required to become baptized and be counted among God's people. But what really is it that makes someone God's people? In Moses 7:18 we learn that Zion is the perfect expression of unity, which is the goal we should be striving towards. But without love, this unity is not possible.

The word "atonement" means "to make at one with God," but if we are not be able to become one, like the people in Zion were, it will not be possible to become "at one with God" and inherit His kingdom. The reason why we do genealogy is because we are trying to make people "at one" with us. The reason why Christ established His church is "to perfect the saints" so that we can "be one with God" (D&C 38:27). And only Love can make this unity possible.

The reason why we call each other brothers and sister in the church is because, in the church we belong to the family of God. In a real family we are supposed to love each other and support one another. And the same is true for us in the church. And, as members, we even show love for non-members when we perform missionary work and work for the dead in our temples. It is by love for our fellow man that the Lord can tell what kind of servant we to Him.

In the workplace, our paycheck is decided by the number of hours we work between when we clock in and clock out. It doesn't matter if we like our job or not, we still receive our paycheck based on these hours of work. But in the church it is different. As it tells us in D&C 58:26-29, our desire to serve the Lord is the key to receiving our reward.

Probably the most important thing we have in life, after the truth and our family is "time." Time is precious, because it is so limited, and we don't know how much of it we have. Sometimes "tomorrow" can be too late. (see Luke 12:16-20) Therefore we can't afford to waste our time because it will be all gone before we realize it.

A very good friend of mine has a wife who was confined to her bed with cancer and he wrote me, "Margie's illness has made us appreciate each day that we have! The little things in life are too important to go unnoticed. Each sunset, letter from a friend, moment of peace, etc. is so special."

Why aren't these things so special to us all the time? Because, since we have them around us all the time, we tend to take them for granted. Therefore, we don't appreciate them until they are gone or we are in danger of losing them.

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Having said that, let me tell you about a very special home teacher, whom I am so blessed to have. He is not just my brother in the Church, but it is also my friend. The word "brother" is just a title, and we are all brothers, no matter how well or bad we feel towards one another. On the other hand, a friend is someone who loves you and cares about you. That means, a brother can also be a friend. What makes the difference is Love.

Someone is entitled to be called your brother simply because they are part of your family (including your church family.) But a friend is a someone who has earned that title because of the way they treat you. You call someone a friend, not because you have to but because you want to. Otherwise you would say, "I know him." In the Italian language this is very specific. In English the idea of love is not tied to the word friend, but in Italian the word for love is "amore" and the word friend is "amico" which means "someone who loves you." That is the difference between a brother and a friend. Even God calls us friends and no more sons or daughter, because everybody is a son or daughter of God, but to become a friend of the Lord we need to develop godly qualities and show those qualities in by our action (see D&C 84:63 84:77 94:1 100:1 104:1).

I've had many home teachers, good brothers, who came to my house and asked me such questions as: How are you? How about your job? How about your family? And when I finished answering these questions, they would look at the clock, then say, "Can we have a prayer before we leave?" So they came and "clocked in", asked the required questions, then "clocked out" by saying good-bye, after filling out the papers and marking their palm pilots. These men are good brothers and they are doing their duty by the book. However, although my present home teacher comes in my house and asks the same questions, he also follows the prompting of the Spirit. Going by the book is good but you are only doing your what you are suppose to do and nothing more. When we follow the Holy Ghost our home teaching visits become special, even within the same 15 minutes. My home teacher has the Spirit with him, because he has as a sincere desire to help me and I can feel it. I know that when he says something! he really means it. Sometimes people say things just because that's what they are expected to say, but there's no sincerity in their words.

Going by the book is good but books don't contain everything. King Benjamin clearly explained this (see Mosiah 4:29-30). In the days of Jesus, the Jews went strictly by the book when it came to keeping the commandments of God, but Jesus showed us how the letter of the law kills but the Spirit gives life. When we go by the book we need to do it as it was intended, with the Spirit (see D&C 88:33).

Another important thing about my home teacher is the time his spends. The home teacher is giving up some of their time to the families under their care. But that time should be used as intended. Quantity of time doesn't make up for quality of time. My home teacher not only shows up each month, but he gives me quality time when he is there. If it is necessary for him to help me, he willingly puts in some overtime. (see Mosiah 2:17).

I am sure that the Lord is not looking at the clock when He judges us on our performance in His service. Instead, He looks to see how willing we are to help each other our of love, no matter how much time it takes us. Although it is important for us to do the Lord's work, it's more

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important to do it with an attitude of love and friendship, and friendship takes time and sacrifice to accomplish. In Italy we say that he who finds a real friend finds a treasure.

Strong wards and stakes can only happen when there is strong friendship between its members. We are imperfect, but Love is perfect. For us to become more perfect, we need to love our fellow man more.

Is it possible to be friends even our opinions or beliefs are different?

Well according to Jesus we should be able to love even our enemies, so why should be difficult to love somebody that loves the Lord even though he has different points of views on doctrine?

I usually feel more comfortable to stay with Christians even if they could have different ideas than mine than with people that usually swear to God or have a bad behavior. This doesn't mean that I don't love those guy, just I prefer company from people who love God. Looking at the world it doesn't seem it is working in that way: Muslims hate Jews and vice versa, Catholic and protestant in Ireland fight each other. Crusades between Catholic and Muslim. Today in internet there are more web pages against somebody instead for something. Few month ago I found a wonderful booklet, written by an lds person (fortunately) Darl Andersen. "soft answers to hard feelings"

In this book he wrote his personal experience, trying to be friend with protestants ministers. He was successful even though he had to fight, in a good way, to gain their confidence. The key of this success was the golden rule.

From his book pag 23

"There were feelings of emotion in our discussion of the LDS church being involved with the Arizona Ecumenic Council (AEC). A wonderful Baptist minister, Dr. Paul was doing his best as Executive Director to create a united effort among Christian churches for better moral and ethical behavior among our youth.

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During many previous years, issues such politics and gender had prevented LDS involvement with AEC, so we were not members of that council, but LDS activity and assistance to strengthen families and youth had been desired. The problem was, how could this take place when "part time" membership in AEC was not desired by either party.

Our discussions also included the possibility of NON-CHRISTIANS religions helping in projects to lift common moral and ethical values. I suggested to Dr. Paul that he could imagine the Lord weeping when those who proclaim His teachings of love and charity act like opponents or religious street gangs toward each other.

Since Dr. Paul was the executive Director of AEC, his influence spread all over the state of Arizona. It gave him capacity to sponsor meetings to share common spiritual values. Surely the creator we all worship would want him to do that. So the burden was on his shoulders to give it a try. With a beautiful spirit and determination, Dr. Paul assembled a group which became known as Interfaith Action Coalition of Arizona (IFACA). Early discussions among this group had some tender challenges. When we met as strangers, and expressed our religious concepts that were not familiar to each other, and often used words with different meanings to explain and defend them, the risk of disrespect and offense of others was present, but when we came to realize that each religion professed a version of that precious jewel called the Golden rule, a simple miracle seemed to bless our discussions. It beautifully turned our concerns for other more than for ourselves. It gently helped our problems become assets for service.

The Golden Rule created a deeper respect for each other. To realize that we would probably have another's brand of faith had we been raised in their home was jolting, and the goal to sincerely support each other in our common moral, ethical and spiritual virtues was inspiring because many were nearly the same.

Another pressing problem raised its head. "Who should join or be allowed to belong to the interfaith Action Coalition"?

Some groups questioned why they had not been included. The profound answer was found The Golden Rule. IFACA was created for those wanted to serve others, not themselves. Those who would not eagerly promote the practice of the Golden Rule would not feel very comfortable there.

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Various small events were held where we became better acquainted with each other, and the faiths that each of us professed. These retreats helped us build strong bonds of friendship and respect as we studied together, ate together, and yes even prayed together, each in our own way.

What a joy it was to hear a Rabbi respond when he was asked if it offensive to him to hear us pray " in the name of Jesus Christ" That it had been initially, but now he realized that "tha's just the way you pray"! He has become a dear friend and we have shared many wonderful moments together..

As the group grew, we also developed more "faith" in our organization, and yes, even a little bravery. We decided that we needed to demonstrate this unity to others.

, and scheduled an evening we called "The faces of faith" at a large hotel in downtown Phoenix.

Each Faith group was given about 20 minutes of public time to discuss their faith, and who they were. Information tables were set up, and about 700 chairs were in place to handle "the crowd". A large advertising campaign that included radio, television and print media all at no cost to our impoverished organization had been used to invite the public. The meeting was scheduled to last about 3 hours. As the appointed hour arrived, the staff of the hotel began to add more chairs to those already in place. What a joy to see nearly 1200 people participate in a wonderfully spiritual evening of sharing feelings of love. It was truly an example of the Golden Rule in action, and has lead to other similar events.

Darl had the privilege to give talks from protestant pulpits.

Children of one protestant minister joined the LDS church and even though he was bitter Darl was able to talk to him and gave him some very good answers to his feelings. These are the ideas he gave to him.

"Point one: within your church's theological structure, there is a considerable latitude to

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accommodate individual opinion. Right or wrong, probably your children honestly feel they have rejected none of the beauty and faith taught by their parents. They have found what they feel is additional exciting evidence of the truths in the scriptures. They have gained added understanding of the meaning and purpose of life. They have experienced a personal witness of the Spirit to support their faith that Jesus Christ is truly their Lord and Savior. In their minds, they are expanding the beauty and strength of their faith.

Point two: religious feelings run deep and tender, but suppose your kids had gone the way of crime, become drug addicts, traveled the sex route or displayed hatred and contempt for their parents. Then you would have real heartache. But on the contrary, your kids have taken the most honorable and right course they understand. They have followed their most noble impulses, despite opposition from those they love. They have had the strength to maintain their integrity and clear consciences before their Father in Heaven. No doubt your children have a deeper love for their parents now than ever before.

As we parted, we both felt much better and very fortunate. He did attend their baptism. He even spoke at his son's missionary farewell. the family has remained close and united, and they have been such a delightful example of love, charity and respect in a family which has members of different religious faith.

Sometimes when Darl was going in Protestants churches, trying to explain thelds point of view, he found the "concerned Christians". Those are the people that usually go to the Mesa Temple trying to disturb the lds people and the visitors. Those particular people would be better if they name themselves "frustrated Christians". I talked to them once, they are no moved from love in their preaching, they are moved from bad feelings and you can feel them really. darl loved to point this out quoting Galatians 5:15-26

### Fruits of the real Christian vs. fruits of the hypocrite

Love one another	Bite and devour one another
friend	antagonist
peace	strife
Goodwill	Ill will
Long suffering, kindness	Critical, Fault finding
Joy	Misery
Goodness, gentleness	provoke one another
forgiveness	condemning
meekness	vain glory
lead by the Spirit	evil nature
They are Christ's	They are from the evil one
Hypocrisy _ The dreaded	disease of religious leader

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Jesus was very forgiving of peoples' sins, he didn't condemn the woman caught in adultery, he forgave the people who crucified him. Some of the Scribes and Pharisees received Christ's most severe condemnation. His chastisement of their sins as recorded in Matthew 23 is scorching. It is disturbing that these sinful men were religious men. So what was the nature of their sins that caused the Savior to judge them fools and blind, hypocrites, serpents, children of the adversary and unable to enter the Kingdom?

They were opponents of His Gospel of LOVE. They looked for and found fault with His doctrine. They declared it to be heresy and blasphemy, contrary to scripture. They followed Him around to molest His teaching. They fomented and stirred up the people against Him, then accused Him guilty for being the troublemaker. They thought evil in their hearts against Him. Why did they do all these things? As religious leader, why could they not recognize the light and truth of the Savior's message? Why were they not aware of the error of their attitude? Why did they not see that they were Hypocrites?

There are many reasons but all of them are lusts of the flesh.

Heaven help us so that this most dangerous attitude may not be found among us today. Sometimes there are strong indications of its presence. Those who have the disease may not recognize it.

We need some protection against the chance that we could end up with the dreadful disease of those religious leaders the Lord so condemned. The only thing we can use to avoid this problem is to honestly use the golden rule. When we don't do for others what we want them to do for us, we should realize it is a warning signal.

Sometimes lds people are criticize because they believe that works are necessary to gain eternal life and a minister answered Darl this question: "How do you explain the greater dedication and commitment to service the Lord and their neighbors among Mormon as compared to his own congregation he hesitated before he answered "You Mormons have a philosophy of "work your way to Heaven. For you salvation doesn't come from being centered in Christ, and being saved by grace through faith. You believe in earning your salvation by your own works. This makes your works much more apparent and visible."

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That was a common answer so Darl referred John 15

Surely the most precious and desirable fruit comes through the "vine" of Jesus, and Love and the Golden Rule are the keys. If they love me they will keep my commandments. The desirable fruit seen among Mormons is the result of their personal faith and testimony of Jesus Christ. If this is not evident, then what is their value?

The love of the Lord is never found in the spirit and words of contention or abuse. At the end of this I'd like to post the letter that a very good friend of Darl gave him before to leave for his mission. It is written from a protestant minister who felt his real friendship and love and it is a very good witness about what love and the golden rule can do in our relationships in the life

**love is far richer in action than it ever is in words.**

*RE: Darl Andersen*

*Friends, Brothers, Sisters, fellow Lutherans*

*I wish to introduce Darl Andersen.*

*He is a Mormon.*

*He is a strong Mormon.*

*You won't be able to convert him.*

*HE IS A WONDERFUL PERSON.*

*I have known him for almost 30 years now. We became acquainted when he came to visit me, a newcomer in the city of Mesa, Arizona in 1963.*

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*We battled, BOY DID WE BATTLE.*

*I told him every error of Mormonism.*

*In that terrible strife, Darl and I became dear friends.*

*I want you to know.*

*He is sincere in his desire for friendship.*

*He is sincere in his words of wanting to serve together.*

*If he calls you "brother" or "sister" he means it.*

*Darl is willing to forget "doctrine" and be a friend.*

*If you take the time, eventually you will question, "Is this guy real?" He is. He is a paradox. He is a devout Mormon yet he is sincere in his desire for cooperation. He is not doing and saying the things he does and says to "use" you.*

*He has a very naive, kind, humble personality - frankly too naive, too kind, too humble to deliberately pull tricks to use you.*

*He is still a Mormon. I wouldn't deny it. Neither will he, yet, he is a fine person that I believe has done much to help both "Mormons" and "Gentiles" in our community. You will appreciate him as a friend. I respected him so much that he and his wonderful wife were my choice to raise my four children if something happened to my wife and me. He would have raised them Lutheran.*

*Mesa was a "Mormon" town when I moved there in 1963. There is a temple in Mesa and the economy and politics are largely controlled by the Mormons. I served among them for 27 years in First Ev. Lutheran Church. Because of Darl, I saw many changes in the Mormons, from arrogant people to people who wanted to cooperate and work honorably with main line Protestants and Catholics. I felt a change within myself from wanting to openly destroy them to a willingness to work with them in areas that we could labor. These changes in me came because of my relationship with my friends Darl and Erma.*

*If you have any questions, CALL ME!*

*In His Service*

*/s/ Howard C. Hahn Jr.*

*Retired Pastor of First Ev. Lutheran Church of Mesa*

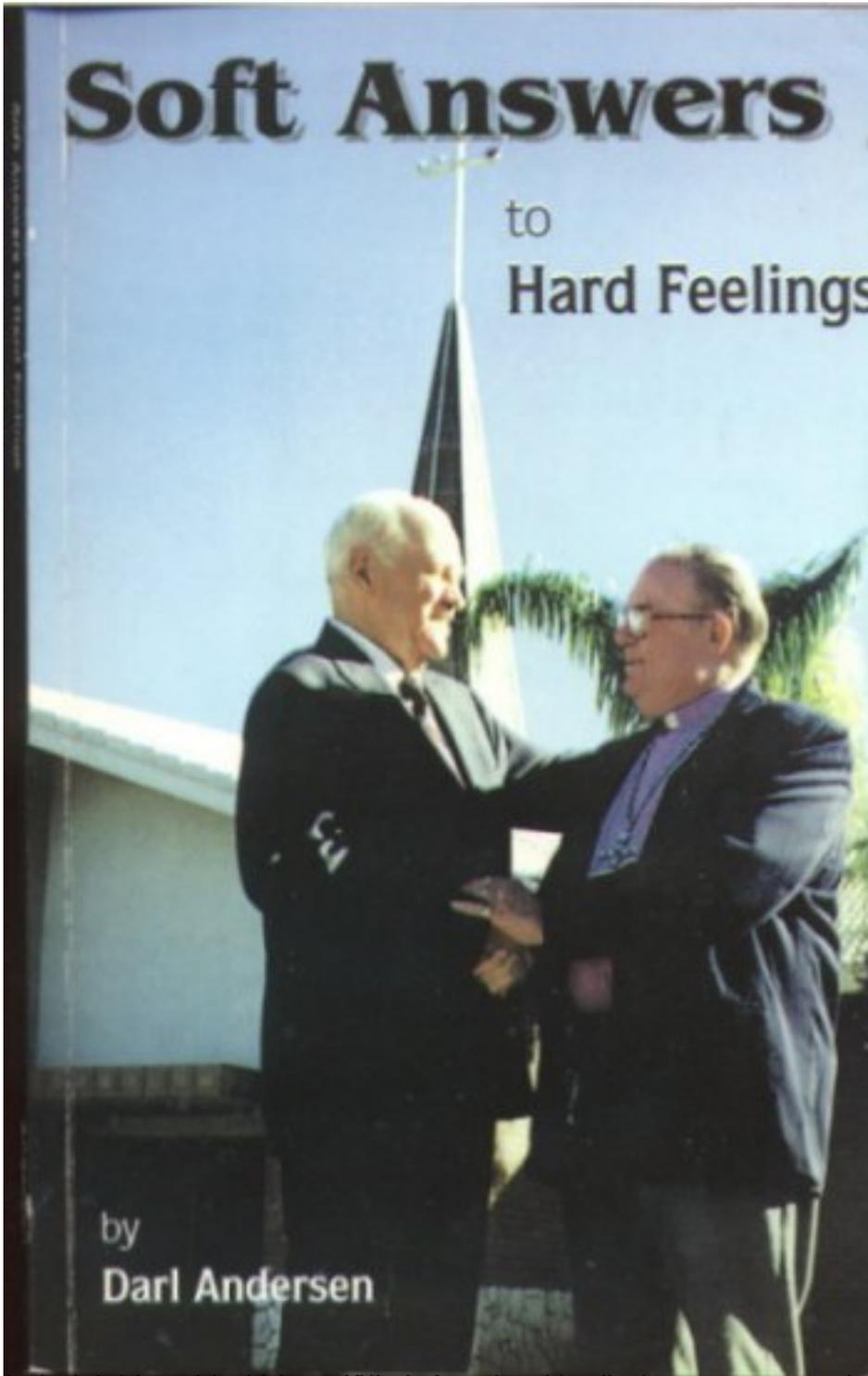
*Interim Pastor of Lutheran Church of Hope of Phoenix*

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trans to his obit, then to his obit before he died. one year ago. I am writing this trying to