

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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### All Excuses Ceasing

Luke 14 records a parable that speaks to our time.

In modern language it goes like this.

A wealthy Lord wanted to have a big party and sent a lot of invitations marked R.S.V.P. When it was nearly time for the party to start, not having heard from many of the invited guests, he asked his caterer to call them.

The first one said, "I have just bought a farm. There are fences to build, corrals to get ready, ponds to build, the house needs painting and my wife wants me to go shopping with her."

The second one said, "I have just bought a new car and I want to try it out on a short vacation."

The third one said, "Hey, I just got married. I can't come."

Another one said, "No way, man! There's a big game that day."

When the caterer told the Lord, he was upset -- "Big Time." He then told the caterer to fill all of the slots in his party with the homeless, and others who were just out and about on the streets. (Luke 14:16-24).

There is a story about the coronation of Elizabeth II to be Queen of England. The invitations supposedly read at the bottom, "All excuses ceasing!" When royalty calls, we respond or else.

Apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20 that we (they) are without excuse. Have you returned your King's invitation to the party?

(See Doctrine and Covenants 85:22 and 98:12d).

## TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

### Look Up and Live

Elder Norman Nelson began his Communion sermon saying, "We are here today for a very special purpose, that is to praise our God". He then spoke of the Holy Scriptures (Inspired Version) saying they are so much better than the other Bibles that if anyone does not have one, he would like to see to it that they get one. "Here we have our Lord speaking to us in first person," he declared, "while other scriptures have something else". To illustrate he quoted, "In the beginning, I created the heaven, and the earth upon which thou standeth."

"Every one of us was created a spiritual being in the beginning. God created very one of you as a very special person to do a very special work - to bring to Him a very special part of His body. If any one of us fail, then the whole body is weakened. You know, you think of various parts of your body as being different from others; but if you have ever had a tooth ache or a sore toe, you know that part of your body is weakened and the whole body suffers. It is not just the little part that's damaged, but the whole body suffers. Likewise in this world of ours, if any man - if any man is not allowed to do the very special thing that he is called to do, the whole world suffers in the same way. So you are very special, and you alone can do the work that you are called to do.

"You see, if you don't make the relationship that you need to make with Jesus Christ, He can't teach you to be what you need to be. If you don't wake up every morning and say in your heart something similar to the Lord's prayer - 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and that isn't just bread. That's everything that you will need to be with Him - everything that you will need to be the person He needs you to be to be a part of the Kingdom of God so the whole world can see the light of His countenance and can know of this wonderful God of ours.

"We see in Isaiah what he saw -" And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Isaiah 6:3-5).

"We seem to be afraid to make that very special contact that we

need with the Lord in order for Him to teach us. We are children. We need to know that we are children. We need to know that we need to learn. Certainly we make mistakes. He calls them sin. But we need to admit that we make those mistakes, and we need to learn from God, how we can be closer to him. You came from Him. You will return to Him. It isn't as if you can escape! That's an impossibility. You are His. It is a matter of whether you accept that and come to Him for the learning and the peace and the joy that you will enjoy when you can be with Him. We must repent. Stop doing the things that lead us away from contact with this wonderful God of ours. He loves you. He wants you to be with Him. We need to accept that and to do the things that make it possible for you to be there. (Norman, I couldn't hear these last two lines well. Please change it if it is not what you said.)

"Jeremiah said, 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord; But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.' (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

### **Christ Declares His Doctrine**

"Third Book of Nephi (5:32-43), 'Behold, verily I say unto you, I will declare unto you my doctrine. and this is my doctrine, and it is the doctrine which the Father hath given unto me; And I bear record of the Father and the Father bears record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me, and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me; And whoso believeth in me and is baptized, the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. And whoso believeth not in me and is not baptized, shall be damned. "Verily, verily, I say unto you that this is my doctrine; and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me, believeth in the Father also; And to him will the Father bear record of me; for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost; and thus will the Father bear record of me and the Holy Ghost will bear record unto him of the Father and me; for the Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost, are one.

"And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things. And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name and become as a little child, or ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. Verily, verily I say unto you, that this is my doctrine; and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth upon my rock; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. And whosoever shall declare more or less than this, and establish it as my doctrine, the same cometh of evil, and is not built upon my rock, but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and the gates of hell standeth open to receive such, when the floods come and the winds beat upon them. Therefore, go forth unto this people, and declare the words that I have spoken, unto the ends of the earth.' This is my doctrine! Simple. Believe and keep my commandments and learn of me."

"Now, let's look at some prophecy. (3rd Nephi 7:34-35). 'And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you; At that day when the gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth,

and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and secret abominations;'

"When the Gentiles do this. That's now!" our speaker declared. 'And if they shall do these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; and then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them.' It goes further to say that the remnant of the people of the Gentiles that will repent will be able to assist in the bringing forth of His Zion, His kingdom here on earth. Those who will repent, the remnant of those who will repent will be able to assist in that great cause.

"We are not going to build Zion. If we repent and seek to be with Him, we will be able to assist His people. We need to be sure that we have repented, that we have tried our best to be His people, to follow in His way. These things are written in all three of these sacred books. They are yours to use as a guide in your daily life. If you lay them on the shelf and don't use them, you stone the prophets, you refuse to come to God. The scriptures are for your use. If you want to be with Christ, ask, every day that His Spirit will guide you. If you forget, if you don't listen to His voice, the enemy is there, and he will guide you in the way that he wants you to go; and his ways are the ways of death!

"Look up, believe in Christ, and live. Otherwise, listen to Satan, do the things he asks and die. The choice is yours. Look up and live! Ask every day for God's Spirit to be your guide. Ask! 'Suffer us not to be led into temptation'. Look up and live!

## **Happiness**

The scripture Priest Rodney Bastow chose on which to base his message January 12 was John 15:4-12 - "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

"If ye abide in me and my word abides in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you."

Preliminary to his sermon, Brother Rodney expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to read again the sermons of others through the Newsletter. He expressed his wish there had been such a service available so he could read the sermons of John Lane, Delbert Smith, Ray Zinser and others preached here through the years. He spoke especially of the message delivered recently by Patriarch Verle Cornish. He reflected of the humility of which Brother Cornish spoke, of the spiritual condition evidenced in Brother Cornish's life that caused him to believe that Brother Cornish lived very close to the Master. The hustle and bustle of his own life, he declared, sometimes makes it difficult to be as spiritually prepared as he would like when coming to the church for

services. That Sunday when Verle spoke, he said he felt such a strong Spirit that as they got to their car to leave, he and Debbie prayed about some problems that have been bothering them, and their prayer was answered.

"I'm not Verle. I don't feel quite that closeness that he has with his Heavenly Father, so I feel quite humble and quite inadequate, and I know that for God to be able to use me today to be able to serve Him, it will take your prayers for us to have that spiritual condition that we desire here this morning. And I believe that if we will pray to God and ask for ourselves to be brought closer to Him here this morning, we will feel the presence of His Spirit, and we will leave here praising His name.

"Prior to being informed of this assignment for this morning, I knew it was going to happen. Some thoughts came into my mind and along with the thoughts came the topic, 'Happiness'; and that topic still seems appropriate this morning, although there have been some challenges to me this week that made me question whether this was what I should be talking about."

A few weeks ago, you might have noticed in the news that there was a sudden demand for lottery tickets because the power ball got up to \$280 some million. Although our speaker had never bought a lottery ticket, he often thinks, and he and Debbie and others talk about, how great it would be to have that amount of money to use.

"When the winner was announced and I heard them talking to him, I was surprised about what he planned on doing with his winnings. Remember this? He planned on tithing ten percent of it. I thought, 'Wow! That's a lot of tithing there!' I thought the taxes would be bad enough; but he was going to give this ten percent to three ministers in hopes they would start a Christian school. I thought, 'Wow! That guy has got to be really close to his Heavenly Father! Just think about the happiness he is going to bring to those people! And another thing he was going to do with the money is that he has a construction company - apparently he already had money, and that might explain why he was so generous - but any way, he was going to share this money with the 150 employees that he had who were out of work. He was going to help start new construction projects so they would have work. I thought, 'That's kind of a different idea, isn't it?' It's too bad that more people aren't like that.

### **Happiness Is Not Bought**

"So many people think that money can buy them happiness; yet so many people that have money don't seem to be happy. In Jacob 2:14-24, we find these words: 'And now behold, my brethren, this is the word which I declare unto you, that many of you have begun to search for gold, and for silver, and all manner of precious ores, in the which this land, which is a land of promise unto you, and to your seed, doth abound most plentifully. And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that ye have obtained many riches; And because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren, ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks, and high heads, because of the costliness of your apparel, you persecute your brethren, because you suppose that ye are better than they. And now my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things, his judgments must speedily come unto you.

"O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye, he can smite you to the dust. O that he would rid you from this iniquity and abomination. And O, that ye would listen unto the words of his commands and let not the pride of your hearts destroy your souls. Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves,

and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.

"But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. and after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted."

"This week I happened to get up early enough to catch Jimmy Albright, who is a Baptist minister in St. Joseph and a college professor. He's quite a unique person. We have had him up to the school to speak a number of times. He has a lot of energy. I enjoy listening to him in the mornings, but unfortunately, a lot of times I miss that. The thing he was talking about this morning was that you need to focus on your heart, not on your bank account. It's how big your heart is, not how big your bank account is. I think sometimes we loose sight of that.

### **Happiness Comes When We Choose God's Way**

"This week, one of the devotional books that I use had these words in it, 'Happiness does not come in brightly colored packages as a "gift" given to us by others. Happiness comes when we uncover the gifts that lie within us and begin to use them to please God and to bless others. Happiness flows from within, and is found in the moments of life we label as "quality" rather than quantity. It rises up in life's greatest tragedies when we choose to smile at what we know to be good and lasting, rather than to cry at what temporarily hurts us. George Bernard Shaw once said, 'This is the true joy in life: Being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one ... being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish, little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.' ... It goes on and says, 'The man who is born with a talent which he was meant to use, finds his greatest happiness in using it.'

"And from Acts 20:24, 'But life is worth nothing unless I use it for doing the work assigned me by the Lord Jesus. 'How often do we think that happiness should be given to us? How often do I dwell on my hurts rather than celebrate the good things that have happened to me?'

"We have a new custodian in this year, named Kevin who is in charge of the custodians. I haven't gotten to know him too well, but he is always real friendly and if you want something done, it is done just like that. You never hear a sour word from him. One of the other janitors is really sick with pneumonia and is going to be off for awhile. Normally Kevin is the "fixit" man, but this week he was having to sweep floors and empty trash cans and things like that. I remarked to him one day, 'You have kind of a heavy load this week.' or, something like that. I didn't know how he would react, but he said, 'Oh, it's not bad. It gets me out of the housework.' He found a good side to this, and I thought, 'Hey. That's all right! What can I do to get me out of the housework?'

"You remember that the opening scripture said, if we keep God's commandments, we will have his love. If we love one another as God loves us, we will find happiness. Too often I fear that I set my agenda - I set my goals - and then I ask for God to bless me, and then I wonder why God hasn't answered my prayers. We need to ask for God's will to be revealed to us, and then we need to obey Him. We find in Proverbs that 'He that keepeth the law, happy is he.'

"Last Sunday, Rob remarked to me about how happy I seemed to be on the farm. And he's right. Last week we were here on Christmas vacation. One thing that I did was to go up and get my

Iowa driver's license which I haven't had for ever and ever. I finally think that I am getting close to that time when I can be here and use an Iowa drivers' license. (It's difficult to know where you live. People ask, 'Where do you live?' And you say, 'During the week I live at Burlington Junction, Missouri. Weekends, summers, most of the time I live at Mt. Ayr.' And so it felt good to finally have an Iowa driver's license. The thing that really felt good was that I didn't have to take a test to get it! I felt like I am one step closer to my goal. Then Rob told me last week, 'You know, by the time you can afford to farm, you'll probably be too old to do it.' That is a concern! However, I need to remember that I need to do what God wants me to do.

"It seems like I have met a lot of teachers here in the past few years that have retired. I'm getting to know more and more of them all of the time. I don't know why it is, but all of these teachers that have retired say how happy they are. There are a lot of days I can really understand that! Just talk to a teacher, and they will tell you, it's a real challenge. The kindergarten teacher at Rockport has 13 or 14 kids. He has to have three one-on-one aides with the students that they have. That makes for a challenge to the teacher. But, you know, I have found that if I begin my day by asking for God's direction, for His guidance, if I ask Him to forgive me for my weaknesses - for the times I have said or done things that I probably shouldn't have. If I try to keep God's commandments - if I have a love for others as I go to school, on those days I enjoy my school day a whole lot more. Other teachers notice it and enjoy being around me a lot more.

"In Mosiah 2:1 - we find these words, 'And now, it came to pass when King Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes around them on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them; and they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth, and they all cried aloud with one voice, saying, O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ, that we may receive forgiveness of our sins and our hearts may be purified: For we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things, who shall come down among the children of men. And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words, the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of conscience, because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, according to the words which King Benjamin had spoken unto them.'

### **Living Happily Witnesses Our Faith**

"Last Sunday, we had the opportunity to ask forgiveness of our sins and to covenant anew with our heavenly Father. Like King Benjamin's people, we have been forgiven of our sins because of the sacrifice that Jesus has made for us. Were we filled with joy? Did we carry that happiness through the week? Did others see the difference? In Verle's sermon, he talks about creating a spiritual condition. Isn't that our goal also - to create a condition so that others will wonder why we are so happy and will ask us to share with them our testimony of the love of Jesus Christ?

"I have one last reading. This is one that I wanted to share for sometime and kept forgetting to bring it with me. I found an opportunity to share it with you this morning. Written by Edgar A. Guest, it goes like this:

'I'd rather see a sermon than hear one any day.

I'd rather one would walk with me than merely show the way.

The eye's a better pupil, and more willing than the ear;  
Fine counsel is confusing, but example always clear;  
And the best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds,  
For to see the good in action is what everybody needs.

I can soon learn how to do it, if you'll let me see it done.  
I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.  
And the lectures you deliver may be wise and true;  
But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.  
For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give,  
But there is no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

'As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do. From James 2:18, New International Version: 'Show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do.'

"I want to thank you for this morning. I hope you will remember to be happy as you walk with the love of Jesus Christ in the days ahead."

## **God's Amazing Creation**

On Sunday morning, January 26, Elder Gerald Bolingbroke began his sermon about the creation by reading the beautiful scripture from Doctrine and Covenants 22:21-23:

And the Lord God said unto Moses, For mine own purposes have I made these things. Here is wisdom, and it remaineth in me. And by the word of my power have I created them, which is my Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created, and I also created them for my own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten. And the first man of all men have I called Adam, which is many. But only an account of this earth, and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you; for behold there are many worlds which have passed away by the word of my power; and there are many also which now stand, and numberless are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me; for they are mine, and I know them. And it came to pass, that Moses spake unto the Lord saying, Be merciful unto thy servant, O God, and tell me concerning this earth, and the inhabitants thereof; and also the heavens, and then thy servant will be content. And the Lord God spake unto Moses, saying, The heavens, they are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine; and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words; for this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality, and eternal life of man.

This scripture was given to Joseph Smith Jr., in the form of a Hebrew chiasm with the central part or message being "Call Upon God".

Apostle Arthur Oakman testified of an experience he had at a reunion in England in 1938. He could not tell if the experience lasted for ten hundred thousand million years or one ten hundredth part of a second. In his experience he was taken into the bosom of eternity at the moment of creation. He was there and God knew he was there. He said there was no before or after. There was no time; there was no space. Everything had vanished. He expected the words to be uttered, and they were, "Let there be light and there was light", Gen:1:6. Arthur went on to say that there proceeded forth

from God, and from his Son, Jesus Christ, and from a third person who was there, in an amazing unity, the creation of time and space. As the words were uttered there streamed forth from the presence of God, the mind, the will, and the word of God. The third person was the mind and will of God. It created space, time, the suns, the stars, and the galaxies.

According to the Big Bang theory, space and time came out of a single point. First there was energy and exotic particles. Out of quarks there formed protons, neutrons, and electrons. This happened in a period of time called inflation when energy moved faster than the speed of light.

When the protons and electrons were created then light could decouple from matter and there would be light. This theory agrees with Oakman's experience. Hydrogen would form after the electrons and protons were created and some helium would also form, scientists calculate about 75% hydrogen 25% helium. Next stars would form and then galaxies. All matter was made in the interior of the stars.

Oakman said Genesis is literally true. With Paul of old, "We look not at things which are seen but at the things which are not seen, for the things that are seen are temporal but the things which are not seen are eternal", II Cor.4:18.

Astronomers have found planets orbiting other stars, but they are nothing like our solar system. Giant planets have been found orbiting close to their star in elliptical orbits. Here are some ways our solar system shows that God had a hand in its creation:

The star or sun around which the planet revolves must be of the right variety in order to provide stable temperatures for billions of years. It cannot be a binary or multiple star system, which eliminates 2/3 of all stars.

Circular orbits, like ours, could not form in multiple star systems. Single stars cannot be smaller or larger than our star. If the star was smaller, the planet, to support life, would have to be close to the star, but one side would be always facing the sun and the other would always be in darkness. The tidal forces would cause this to happen. This is what has happened to the planet Mercury. If it was a larger star, it would burn out too quickly. For life to survive on a planet, suns, or stars, would have to be in the range of 0.83 to 1.2 solar masses, similar to our sun. The host star would have to begin its life surrounded by a protoplanetary disk, which scientists believe our star did. The disk must be short lived and small. Planets within medium or massive disks are doomed to spiral their way into their host stars.

Star systems cannot have large planets in elliptical orbits like the ones recently discovered. These systems would eject or destroy any smaller planets. On the other hand large planets are needed to protect us from killer asteroids and comets. There would be mass extinctions every 100 thousand years instead of every 100 million years. To be habitable, a planet must not only maintain a circular orbit, but it must also be in the life zone. Astronomers have run simulations showing that if Earth's orbit was 5% smaller, a runaway greenhouse effect would have occurred early in Earth's history. Oceans would have boiled away. If it was 1% larger, a runaway glacial effect would produce an ice age where the oceans would freeze over.

A habitable planet must be large enough to hold an atmosphere, and small enough to not crush everything. It must also hold onto the right kind of atmosphere. If it is too small, it won't hold water vapor. If it is too large, it would have deadly hydrogen, methane and ammonia.

Temperature is also important. Astronomers have calculated that the planet must fall between 0.85 and 1.33 of Earth's mass. If the planet is too small the atmosphere would not be able to be maintained. If it is outside this range, the temperature variations would make the planet inhabitable within two billion years.

The planet must have a moon that is similar to our moon. Our moon is huge compared to the relative sizes of other moons in our solar system.

It is a stabilizing anchor for the Earth, preventing Earth from undue attraction by Jupiter. Without our moon, Jupiter would cause the tilt of the Earth to be too great, causing a runaway greenhouse effect or a permanent ice age. The moon formed, according to astronomers, when an object hit Earth at just the right angle. A one in a million freak accident, or a work of God?

The period in history when a parent star heats up must coincide with the era in which the planet's atmospheric composition changes from its heat trapping mixture to cooler mixture, as we have today. Our own sun was 30% dimmer when the Earth was born, but we know that the Earth managed to stay within a 25 degree centigrade window, until the warming greenhouse gases disappeared.

The plant life was introduced by God at just the right time to reduce the carbon dioxide, and thus to keep the temperature in a certain range, as the sun increased its energy output. The chance that this would occur is very unlikely, unless God had a hand in it.

In order to cause precipitation and to keep from freezing, a habitable planet must have some mechanism to keep carbon dioxide from disappearing. Water, which is so necessary for life, begins a chain reaction that always depletes the atmosphere of carbon dioxide. Scientists today know that the Earth's crust is broken into sections or plates. Tectonic plate activity causes part of the Earth's surface to continually sink to depths where carbonate decomposes to create carbon dioxide. Carbon dioxide also comes from volcanic activity, replenishing the atmosphere, since water vapor in the atmosphere removes carbon dioxide. No other planet has plate tectonic activity like Earth's.

There must be a mechanism for providing stability to a planet's crust for billions of years. If Earth had not manufactured two types of crust and kept them stable for billions of years there would be no human intelligent life.

We have both continental and oceanic crust. Without a continuous recycling of material within the crust, we would have a water world because the land would all be level; there would be no mountains. The thickness of the crust is also critically balanced. A thicker crust would take our oxygen and fix it as oxides in the crust. A thinner crust would cause much greater tectonic activity causing many volcanic eruptions which would cause ash in the atmosphere that would make the Earth dark and cold.

A habitable planet must have life on it. But intelligent life is very unlikely according evolution. As Michael Denton writes: Between a living cell and the most highly ordered non-biological systems, such as a crystal or a snow flake, there is a chasm as vast and absolute as it is possible to conceive. It is impossible for a prebiotic Earth, an Earth before life, to produce even 200 bits of information which falls short of the 6 million bits in E-coli, which is one of the most simple life forms. This alone is proof that a Higher Being was the Creator of life. It is very unlikely that a planet would have a high degree of intelligent life, which even most evolutionary top biologists believe to be a rare event, unless God was the one to create that intelligent life.

In Jacob 3: 9-13 we find these words, "Behold great and

marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the Mysteries of Him; and it is impossible that men should find out all His ways. And no man knoweth of his ways, save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. For behold, by the power of his word, man came upon the face of the earth; which Earth was created by the power of his word. Wherefore, if God, being able to speak, and the World was; and to speak, and man was created, O then, why not able to command the Earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure. Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand.

Arthur Oakman saw the creation of Man, and he also saw the creation of animals. His intellect was unlocked and his mind enlarged as he named the animals. He also saw Adam asleep, and he saw Eve created out of the wound in his side.

There are thousands of different enzymes with different functions to produce the simplest living cell. Sir Fred Hoyle calculated that 2,000 enzymes are needed to form a single bacterium like E-coli. Hoyle calculated the odds in these enzymes coming together by chance as 1 in 10 to the 40,000th power. This number is so vast that any mathematician would say it is an impossibility. The total atoms in the observable universe is ten to the 80th power. Chandra Wickramasinghe, a physicist, said there is a greater chance of a typhoon blowing through a junkyard and constructing a Boeing 747. Assembling a DNA molecule by chance is also very unlikely because it contains so much information.

The fine tuning of the Universe is truly amazing. The constants of nature are fine tuned so life would come about. This is called the strong anthropic principle. The constants of nature, such as the gravitational force, have exactly the values necessary for the existence of stars and planets. There are four forces in nature: Gravity, electromagnetic, Strong, and Weak force. If the Strong force was changed by 2 percent, there would be no hydrogen and hence no water.

Entropy is the measure of disorder in the universe, and our universe began in a low state of entropy. Roger Penrose, an English physicist, calculated how precise the Creator's aim had to be in order provide a universe compatible with the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It had to be 1 part in 10 raised to the 10 to the 123rd power, an enormously large number. If we were to write it, we would have to write the power as 10 followed by 123 zeros. If a zero was written for every atomic particle in the Milky Way galaxy, a person could never in a lifetime write the number down.

The galactic material at the Universe's beginning is mostly hydrogen and helium. Heavier elements are made inside a star and dispersed as the star ages and explodes in a supernova explosion. These explosions depend on a very precise value of the weak nuclear force. If the weak nuclear force were much smaller, neutrinos would escape stopping, the creation of heavier elements necessary for life's formation.

In China scientists found a layer of rock in which there were many animals, and under that layer they found sponges, with baby sponges under that layer. There were no intermediate forms, as evolution claims.

Brother Bolingbroke concluded his sermon by telling a story from Chicken Soup for the Soul that testified of the necessity of believing that God is in charge and is the Creator. It is entitled "Winter Morning Guest" by John Edmund Haggai.

One winter morning in 1931, John came down to breakfast and found the table empty. It was cold outside and the worst blizzard

on record had paralyzed the city. No cars were moving. The snow had drifted two stories high against the house, causing the windows to be dark.

John, who was six years old at the time, asked his dad what was happening. His dad told him that their fuel and food supplies were exhausted. His father had put the last piece of coal on the fire. His mother had eight ounces of milk left for his baby brother Tom. After these things were used up there would be nothing. John asked his father what they were going to eat. His father told him that they would have their devotions first, in a voice that told him that he should not ask questions.

His father was a pastor. As a Christian he had been chased out of his Syrian homeland. He arrived as a teenager in the United States with no money and barely a word of English. He had nothing except his vocation to preach. He knew hardship of a kind few see today. Yet John said that they gave away at least 10 percent of their income, and no one but God ever knew when they were in financial need.

That morning, his dad read from the scriptures as usual, and afterwards they knelt for prayer. His dad prayed earnestly for his family, his relatives and friends, for those he called "missionaries of the cross", and for those in the city who had endured the blizzard without adequate shelter.

Then his father prayed something like this: "Lord, Thou knowest we have no more coal to burn. If it can please Thee, send us some fuel. If not, Thy will be done. We thank Thee for warm clothes and bed covers, which will keep us comfortable, without the fire. Also, thou knowest we have no food except milk for Baby Thomas. If it can please thee..."

For someone facing bitter cold and hunger, his father was remarkably calm. Nothing deflected him from completing his family devotions, not even the clamor they heard beyond the wall of snow. Finally, someone pounded on the door. The visitor had cleared the snow off the windowpane, and they saw his face peering in. The man told them their door was iced up, and he could not open it. The devotions were over, and his dad jumped up. He pulled on the door, and the man pushed. When the door finally opened, an avalanche of snow fell into the entrance hall.

Neither John nor his dad recognized the man. John's dad asked the man if he could help him. The man explained that he was a farmer who had heard his dad preach in Allegan three years ago.

The man told them he was awakened at four o'clock that morning and could not get the preacher out of his mind. His truck was stuck in the garage, so he harnessed the horses to the sleigh and came over.

John's father asked him to come in. On any other occasion his father would have invited him to have breakfast with them. But, of course, today there was no breakfast. The man thanked him. And then to their astonishment, he plucked a large box off the sleigh. Years later John could see that box clearly. It contained milk, eggs, butter, pork chops, grain, homemade bread, and a host of other things. After the farmer had delivered the box, he went back out and got a cord of wood. Finally, after a very hearty breakfast, he insisted that John's dad take a ten dollar bill.

Almost every day John's dad reminded them that God is the provider. And John's experience throughout his adult life has confirmed it. "I have never seen the righteous forsaken nor their children begging for bread." (Psalm 37:25) The Bible said it. But John said his mom and dad showed him it was true. God is the provider, as we see in this story. He is also the Creator of all.

Brother Bolingbroke closed his message by reading from the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 83: 12.

## What Does God Do For A Living?

With reference to our human experience of identifying others by what they do for a living, Pastor Robert Rolfe asked, "What does God do for a living?" He had just read from Doctrine and Covenants 22:23, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, The heavens, they are many and they cannot be numbered unto man, but they are numbered unto me, for they are mine; and as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works, neither to my words; for this is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." You may read that, 'This is my work, and what I do for a good time is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man?' The word Glory has a lot of different meanings, but it sure sounds to me that God is enjoying Himself, and I wonder sometimes how He can take such weak, sniveling monsters as us and make that His life work to bring us to immortality and eternal life. It's really highly inconceivable.

"This is January. What happens in January every year? We all go on a diet and say we need more exercise right after we have pigged out for the holidays. I would like to give you an exercise that you can do, and it's not really that hard. Go outside tonight, if it's clear, and look up into the sky. That's not too hard, is it? And when you do, just think for a moment what a tiny speck of dust you are compared to what you see. And we can't even see the end of it. All we can see is the beginning of the universe. Gerry tells us that what we see is getting bigger. David said, when he considered this, 'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou has ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him?'

"When I thought about this and I thought about that scripture, 'This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.' I wondered why someone as important and as powerful as the creator who continues to create would want to mess with us - especially when it says, 'The glory of God is intelligence, or in other words light and truth.' Why would He want to fool around with mankind to try to bring them to eternal life. If you read the last three thousand years of history, He has not done such a good job, at least if you look at it from our point of view.

"Well, that is what is written. We can't understand God and why He does what He does but I, for one, am happy that He considers me worth saving. I sort through things and throw them out. Don't we do that? We look through stuff and if it's not worth saving, out it goes. I'm glad that He considers each of us worth saving.

### What God Wanted From the Children of Israel

"If you look on the front of your bulletin, you can see Moses standing there ready to smash something. Michael asked me what I was going to talk about and I said I was going to talk about Exodus 19 through 34. This is not going to be the Cecil B. DeMille version that you saw in the 'Ten Commandments' with Charlton Heston and about everybody who was a Hollywood actor in those days in that movie.

"Why did God bring His people out of Egypt? An initial

observation might be they were going to go into the Promised Land. That was what they were looking for from their point of view. I would like to suggest to you that God not only wanted to get them out to go to the Promised Land, He got them out to live with Him, because He's a God of love. I don't know if you could say it this way. Does it bother you to say that God is a lover? God is love? We have some context with the word lover that it might bother you; but isn't God a lover? God is love. That's what John says. And He pursues us because He loves us. And when He took the people out of Egypt, it sounds almost in chapter 19 as if there was a marriage ceremony going on. For those of you who have not been married, let me explain how this works. The bride plans the wedding and the groom shows up. Then the minister or the judge says, 'Do you agree to do this and this and this? All you have to remember is to say. 'Yes. I'll do all of that,' and then you get married. It was kind of like that at Sinai. God is making a covenant with His people. And what did they say: 'All the words that the Lord has said, we will do!'

"For all those who have gotten married and maybe didn't do all of those things you said you were going to do, you are kind of like the children of Israel because they kept saying that over and over. This is what God said - and I am starting out in chapter 19 and going through this pretty fast. He said through Moses, 'You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians,' (The Ten Commandments. You've seen the movie. That's pretty graphic.) 'and how I bear you on eagles wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shall speak unto the children of Israel.' And so Moses said it to them, and they said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do.'

"In case you are wondering, it says that more than once. They didn't do it, so Moses is called up on the mountain, and it says that it smoked and it quaked and the trumpet sounded loud and long. It got louder and louder and the people were supposed to be ready when this happened. God told them to wash their clothes, wash themselves, sanctify themselves - 'Get ready because I'm going to be meeting you'. And all the people saw the thundering and the lightning, and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, and when they saw it, they ran to the mountain to meet God! Right? No, they didn't. They stood afar off and said unto Moses, 'Speak thou with us and we will hear, but let not God speak unto us lest we die.' In other words, here is God inviting them to come unto Him. He wants to be with them. He wants to live with them. And they are saying, 'We don't think we want to live with you, God. Thank you very much. We don't want to get that close. Moses, you take care of that, then come and tell us and we will do what you tell us; but we don't want to meet God.'

### Israel's Greatest Failure - May Be Ours

When you think about it, this is probably the biggest failure of Israel. There they have God who wants to live with them because He loves them. Those are His people, right? And they say, 'No. We won't do that.'

"Moving to the 24th chapter - Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the judgments and all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the Lord hath said we will do.' And he took the book of the covenant and read it in the audience of the people, and they said, 'All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient.' Does it sound like a pattern? And the Lord said unto Moses, 'Come up to me in the mountain, and be

there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.' So he goes up onto Sinai, and we have seen that.

"One of the interesting passages here in chapter 25, verse 8, says, 'And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.' There are several chapters on the sanctuary. Remember He was very specific on how this sanctuary was to be built. And He said, 'That I may dwell among them.' God wanted to live among the people. Now, what's so bad about that?

"Well, Moses goes up. Spends a long time upon the mountain. He's having a good talk with God, and all of a sudden God says, 'There's trouble in River City!' - You know, 'Get you down for I'm going to destroy those people! They are worshipping an idol!' That's where we pick up the story according to Cecil B. DeMille. They come down. There's a golden calf, and they are all turning wicked. I'm not going to go into all that has happened to them other than to remind you that Moses ground that golden calf up, put it into a drink and made the Children of Israel drink it. (Just think, that's the first gold shot. For those of you that have arthritis, they give you gold shots. They were a pain, and God gave them a gold shot! Now you'll remember that, now that you have something to put it in.)

"It's interesting to me that Moses and the Lord spake unto each other face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend. I don't know about you. Would you want to speak to God face to face and talk that way? One of the interesting things that God said to Moses was, 'My presence shall go with thee.' This is verse 14 of chapter 33. And Moses said, 'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.' In other words, God's saying to Moses, 'I'll go with you. My presence can go before you.' And Moses said, 'If it isn't, I'm not going!' And do you know what God said to Moses? He said, 'I like you, Moses!' Not those words, but in verse 17 He says, 'Thou hast found grace in my sight' because of his faith.

"So the tablets are broken because the Children of Israel sinned, and Moses goes back upon the mountain. This is verse 1 of chapter 34. 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written on the first which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.' We talked about in class today about whether the God of the Old Testament was a different God than the God of the New Testament, and that was not the case.

"So Moses came down off the mountain after another forty days, and he had the two tables of testimony, and gave them to the people. Many people don't realize that Moses made two treks up the mountain, and that the plates he brought down were not the same each time. So I ask you this, this morning, 'Does God want to live among us and we with Him like He did the children of Israel? Do we want God to live with us. Think about this for a moment - or are we like the Children of Israel?' 'Pastor, could you go to God and find out what He has to say, then come and tell us, because I really don't want to get that close. I'm not sure I can trust God enough to not fry me or do some other loathsome thing if I get too close to Him.' Are we that way?

### **Or Are We Like Zaccheus?**

"Or are we like Zaccheus? Remember the story of Zaccheus in Luke 19. He's up in the tree, and he wants to see Jesus. And Jesus says, 'Zaccheus, make haste, and come down; for today I must

abide at your house.' And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.' I wondered about that. Would we receive Jesus joyfully if he met us today and said, 'I want to come to your house' for dinner?' What would we say, 'Jesus, we are extremely happy that you are coming to our house.' Or would we say, 'Sorry, Jesus. This is not a good weekend. The super bowl is on and I don't want to mess with you today. The kids have got a game this afternoon. We're going to be gone. There's nothing in the fridge, and the microwave is broken. Could we just take you to a restaurant and then split up. Besides, the house isn't clean enough for visitors - especially someone like you. And so we aren't going to be able to make it. Besides, there are some things we want to get rid of before you come and see them.' Would we have an attitude like that if Jesus came to our house. "All the words which the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient.' And I have heard another phrase, 'And always remember Him and keep his commandments.' You have heard that phrase before? Have we said that before? Yes, we have.

"The covenant of marriage. I really think in a real sense, that is what was going on at Sinai. God made a covenant. Have you ever heard of Jesus being the bridegroom and the church being the bride? God uses that simile a lot. Many of you here have a marriage covenant with your spouse. How many of you husbands say, 'I love you dear.' Have you said that today? 'Just don't ask me to spend any time with you!' 'I love you, but I'm not going to be spending time with you.' How about, 'I love you, God. Just don't ask me to spend any time with you. We come to church. We sing songs. We say, 'I love you Lord', and then we don't spend any time with Him until the next Sunday. Is that what you do when you have a marriage? Maybe, if you pattern it after the way we do things. Exodus 24:7 says, 'All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do and be obedient'. 'Always remember Him and keep His commandments' we will be saying again next Sunday.

"Well, if we are going to spend time with the Lord, and He is going to come to our house and dwell with us. Psalm 1 says, 'Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.' Do you think about the law of God day and night? Well, if you have someone you love, you might.

"They did build the tabernacle. They built it just like God said, and God came down and dwelt in it; and the Children of Israel wouldn't go in or near it if God was there. And when God's presence left, then they moved. As long as His presence was there, they stayed where they were. They called that the Shekanah glory - the glory of the Lord. And when Solomon built the temple, the Lord came down and dwelt in it. You could see His presence in the temple. Has God's Spirit come to you and dwelt within you? Can it be seen? Can we see His glory in you as a Christian? If the Holy Spirit is within you, is it not visible in our faces because it fills our lives? Apostle Paul in Romans 12 - this is quoted a lot, but I heard it in a different way this time, 'Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed.' What he is saying there, is, 'Don't form your life after the pattern of the world. And if you do that, then you are not living the Christian life. You are supposed to form your life after the pattern of the Gospel. If you don't, you are living your life in a way in which you are following idols - you are serving idols.

### **What Idol Do You Serve?**

We have idols of pride, idols of acquiring things - that's a good American thing - the pursuit of happiness - getting more stuff! Idols of performance in job or sports. There are lots of idols that can be worshipped. But Paul says, if we are alive in Christ, we are new



creatures. We are not the same person anymore. Alma says it another way. 'My brethren of the church, have ye been spiritually born of God? Have ye received His image in your countenances. Have you experienced this mighty change in your hearts?' You know, the day is going to come for each one of us when we will stand at the bar of God, and at that time we are going to want to get in. How many of you have heard stories about people at the pearly gates talking to St. Peter? That's because all jokes are made out of an element of truth. They are based on some truth. That day is going to come, and when you are there, you are going to say, 'Can I come in?' And the person who is going to be admitting you will be say, 'Only those that have the image of Christ in their face can enter.' When he looks at you, what will he see? Will he look and see nothing? Will he look and say, 'You never knew me.' Or will he say, 'Yes. I see Jesus in your face. Come thou good and faithful servant. Enter in to the joy of your Lord.' Would you hope that that is what God can see in your face as you enter heaven at that time?

"God is so faithful to us and does such wonderful things to those who love Him, I would like to encourage you to think about this and ask God to just live in your house. Just say, God, you are welcome here. And not only that, you are welcome in my heart. I want you to come in and I'm going to risk what that's going to mean to have God within me - what's that's going to mean as far as changing my life if He is within me.' Are you willing to risk that? Or are you afraid like the Children of Israel. 'Ron, go talk to God; then come and tell us, because I don't want to get that close. I don't want God getting that close to me. And Tim and Gerry and all of the rest of you, would you rather have someone else to talk to God, or would you like to have him come and live in your house and live within you?

#### **Don't Be Afraid - We Have An Awesome God!**

"Don't be afraid of the freedom that's going to come from that kind of experience. I had a testimony I shared at church the other night, and I would like to tell you a short version again. This happened about fifty years ago. There was a missionary who was not of our church, who was working in Africa. His name was Lovett. He came back from Africa to his home, I think it was in South Carolina, and was speaking at a church there. He was preaching, and when he got done, he came to the back and a young sharecropper who had not accepted Christ and didn't want anything to do with Him was so moved by the service that he said, 'I heard that you need a Jeep in your ministry there in Africa, so I'll give you mine.'

"Dr. Lovett knew this was the only vehicle this guy had. He also knew this thing had over a hundred thousand miles on it and was all beat up. (How many of you have seen these farm pickups. Would you want to accept a gift like that and transport it across the ocean and try to drive it. So he just said to the man, 'Why don't you think about it tonight, and if you still want to give that to me in the morning, bring it over. Six o'clock in the morning, here comes the Jeep. Remember Jeeps back then? You remember, they all looked like they came out of an old, World War 2 movie.

"So another group came up and said, 'We heard you needed a Jeep, and we want to help you out. Here is four hundred bucks.' For those of you that are a lot younger, let me tell you something. Even in the fifties, you couldn't buy Jeep for four hundred bucks. It was a lot more than that. So he has four hundred bucks and a beat up old Jeep. What's he going to do with it?

"Well, he's driving this Jeep down the road and they go by this dealership that has a red Jeep out in front of it. Today the red Jeep would not be a surprise to most of us. We have all kinds of colors,

right? But back in those days there was one color of Jeeps - green. Kaiser corporation, for whatever reason, decided to build a hundred red Jeeps. Maybe they were test marketing those, I don't recall that now. Dr. Lovett's wife, as they were driving by says, 'Stop! There's our Jeep!' So they go in and say, 'We'd like to make an offer on this Jeep.' And the salesman - when someone comes in and says, 'I want to make an offer', they're ready, right?

"Dr. Lovett says, 'I'll give you four hundred dollars and my old Jeep for that red Jeep.' And the salesman says, 'You've got to be kidding! That won't even pay the tax! Lovett says, 'Well, that's my offer. Is the owner of this dealership so and so?' The salesman said, 'Yes he is.' Dr. Lovett says, 'I went to school with him I know him. Just tell him that I made that offer.'

"So the owner shows up an hour or so later and the salesman comes up and says, you ought to hear the crazy guy that was in here. He told me he would give me four hundred dollars and that beat-up old Jeep for that brand new Jeep standing out there.'

And the owner said, 'Who did you say that was?' He told him his name, and he said, 'Give it to him!'

"So he had a Jeep, a brand new one!. He took it over to Africa, drove it around for two or three years. All of a sudden God comes to him and says, 'I want you to go to this tribe over here that none of the Africans would go to because they were vicious cannibals. None of the other tribes wanted anything to do with them. (Before I say that, you know, when you have someone say, 'You've got to be kidding!', I wonder if God doesn't say that to us when we pray to Him - 'Yes', and 'No, and 'You've got to be kidding!')

"In any case, if you are asked to go to man eating cannibals who were so vicious that the Africans didn't want to have anything to do with them, would you go? And, if you did, would that mean that you were courageous or would it mean that you were humble enough to do what God wanted you to do?

"Well, Dr. Lovett found someone he thought could speak this language. They drove for days and finally came across this river to where the cannibal's territory started. They barely get across the river when this great big guy jumps up and lets out a humongous shout, yells something at them and takes off running. Dr. Lovett says, 'What did he say?' And the interpreter says, 'I don't know, but it sounded something like, 'Here comes lunch!'

"So they drive into the village, and all of the tribe comes all around - surrounds them all the way around. You've seen the old western movies where the Indians gather round. You know what happens next, right? Dr. Lovett, for whatever reason, I expect it was the Spirit of God, took this fruit that grows in that region and broke it on the hood of that Jeep. Out of that fruit came insects, and those insects were a certain color. When they ran out on the hood, they almost disappeared because they were the same color as the Jeep. "Well, when he did that - when the natives saw that, they all fell down and they all were crying. Well, what do you do if you are the preacher - you have been over there, Ron? You get up and start preaching, right? That's what he did, and converted that entire village to Jesus Christ. Afterward he learned that ten years before a prophetess in that village had said 'There's going to be a man come to this village - I don't recognize what he is, but he's not like us. And he's going to be riding a four wheeled bicycle.' They had not seen cars. And she said, 'This will be a sign, that the bicycle will be the same color as the insects in this fruit.'

"Well. I don't know how God gets all that worked out. When you have a hundred Jeeps, and you get them a certain color, and that color has to be the color of insects in fruit on the other side of the

world, but He did. And I don't know - that had to be many years before Dr. Lovett got there. And because of that, because he obeyed the Lord telling him that, he was able to preach the gospel and bring Jesus Christ to many of the people there in Africa and that message is still going forward. Isn't God an awesome God to be able to do things like that? Isn't it great that He isn't just working with us - that He's working with other people to bring His son Jesus Christ to live with the people?

"By the way, the other thing that this lady told the tribe was that, 'This person who comes will teach you of the one true God. That's what they are going to be doing when they come.'

"All that He has spoken, we will do, and be obedient.' That's what the people said. "This is my work and my glory, to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man."

## News and Notes

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### **Family Missionary Reunion Registrations Opens**

Registration forms are ready for those preparing to attend the Seventy sponsored Missionary Family Reunion at Graceland University June 22-28. The 2003 theme is, "For the Love of Jesus". Pick up a form and brochure at the church or contact Registrar Valle Smith, 607 E. Madison, Mount. Ayr, Iowa 50854, E-Mail [valsmith@iowatelecom.net](mailto:valsmith@iowatelecom.net), telephone 641-464-2949. A \$50 deposit reserves a room for a family. The forms are also available at the branch web-site listed below.

### **Branch Business Meeting Considers Future**

At the branch business meeting held January 29 consideration was given primarily to four issues before the congregation:

1. Starting services earlier on Sunday mornings to give more adequate time for classes. The congregation decided to keep the starting time the same, but to start family worship on time at 9:45 a.m. and have classes begin promptly at 10 a.m. and finishing at 10:45 a.m. A song service will be held before the preaching service at 11 a.m.

2. Ordering 100 new Hymnals. The congregation will purchase the reprinting of an expanded version of The Hymnal, the book the congregation currently uses.

3. Receiving the report of the property committee on upgrading the sound system. The branch voted to purchase some new sound equipment to upgrade the sound and recording at church. Some current equipment will be sold. The new microphone, amplifier and speakers would be able to be reused if a sanctuary is built later.

4. Receiving the report of the property committee regarding the possible building of a sanctuary. Gordon Winkler reported on two metal building firms which may be helpful in building a sanctuary. More study will be done.

### **Branch Web Site Reactivated**

Our congregation's web site is back on-line. You can visit our web site by going to <http://www.angel-message.org>



**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST**  
**Mount Ayr Restoration Branch**  
**607 E. Madison**  
**Mount Ayr, IA 50854**





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# **From the Pastor's Desk**

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*Continued from front page*