

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Rob Rolfe • 619 S. State, Lamoni, IA 50140 • 515-784-6030

What You Must Believe

A few years ago I was presiding as Judge over a case involving an assault on a young man. There was only one witness for the prosecution, the young man who was the "alleged" victim. The defense called four witnesses, plus the one who was accused of committing the assault. All four witnesses and the defendant testified that no assault occurred.

Upon hearing all of the evidence, I found the defendant guilty and sentenced him to jail. This might cause you to ask, "How could this happen?" "There were five people who said there was no assault, and only one that claimed there was an assault."

The answer is, both in the law and in common sense, the Judge does not have to believe testimony simply because it is said, even if the testimony is given with an oath to tell the truth. The plain truth is, people lie. Just because something was written, even in affidavit form, does not mean it is true. To determine the truth of a matter, you must look not only at what was said, but who said it, and the circumstances surrounding the statement.

The claim that Joseph Smith, Jr. was a polygamist is being raised again. This is not a new claim, and the evidence for it is just as tainted as it was in the 1840's. If you accept the view that Joseph Smith practiced polygamy, there are at least 10 things you must believe.

1. The numerous witnesses that knew Joseph well and swore that he was not a polygamist, were part of a conspiracy of perjury and fraud.

2. William Marks, President of Nauvoo Stake at the time of Joseph's death, lied when he declared that Joseph called polygamy a cursed doctrine just days before his murder and told Marks he must prefer charges against those involved in it. (Church History, Vol. 2, Page 733).

3. Brigham Young carried Joseph's "revelation on marriage" (Section 132 of the Mormon Doctrine and

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TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

Do you Remember?

In keeping with the day, Priest Gordon Winkler chose as his scripture setting Paul's counsel to the Corinthians Saints, 1 Corinthians 11:20-27, concerning the proper way to observe the Lord's supper. In doing so, Paul described the genesis of the practice - "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."

Brother Winkler's opening comment was, "We are assured this morning that the Lord's Spirit is with us in the partaking of our communion and in the pleasant whistle from Delbert."

Traditions had been a topic recently discussed in the adult class, and in Brother Rolfe's last sermon. "We have talked about, are traditions good or are traditions bad, and we have asked, 'Do we have any traditions in our church? Do you think that today's service is just tradition?'"

For illustration our speaker shared an internet version of an old story of a girl who asked her mother, who was preparing the Sunday dinner, why she cut off the ends of the ham before she cooked it. The mother was not really sure but surmised it was so the meat could better absorb the juices and become more tender, but suggested she ask her grandmother from whom she had learned the practice. Grandmother was like mother, believing she cut off the ends of the ham because the meat could better absorb the juices and become more tender, but suggested she ask Nana, since it was from the great grandmother that the grandmother had learned the practice.

The girl called her great grandmother by phone and asked, "Nana, why do you cut the ends off the ham before you cook it?" There was a pregnant pause in the conversation and then the little girl heard what sounded like muffled laughter.

“What’s so funny, Nana?”

“Oh, sweetie, I cut the ends off the ham before I cooked it because my pan was too small.”

“Sometimes we end up doing things for the wrong reason because no one ever stopped to ask why,” the author concluded. “We have developed habits and traditions sometimes based on nothing more than false information.”

Paul’s Purpose

Going back to the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians, Gordon suggested, “This is some of what Paul is trying to point out to those Saints at Corinth. Let’s review the circumstances surrounding Paul’s letter to those people. In verse 17 it says, ‘Now, in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not.’ That sounds like, ‘I’m not really happy about what I’m saying to you - ‘that you come together not for better, but for worse.’ So that by getting together, you are not doing anything that is good. You are not doing anything that is important. You are just getting together for this bad reason.

“So what was going on there? Can you picture this? They were getting together to drink the wine, and many of them had become drunken. Some were there gorging themselves eating the bread that was available that was a supplement for their home food budget. Some were not able to participate because others had drunk the wine, and the bread was all eaten. This was the environment that existed and the reason for Paul’s letter to the Corinthian Saints.

“Verse 27 to 33 Paul explains the importance of coming to the Lord’s supper in the right frame of mind, and in the right spirit and for the right purpose. ‘Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh condemnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.’ Paul is trying to remind the Saints there that their getting together isn’t, as we are going to do later, to have a pot luck. They are getting together to maintain the right spirit for the right purpose. It’s clear from Paul’s concluding verse that the people did not understand the significance and they did not understand the importance of partaking of the Communion. Verse 33 continues, ‘Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.’ In other words, ‘be concerned for the others that are there. ‘And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest I will set in order when I come.’

“I think the two most important passages out of this whole chapter are contained in verse 23 and verse 25. Verse 23 begins by saying, ‘For I have received of the Lord that which I delivered unto you.’ ‘I received it from the Lord.’ Does that sound like first hand information? Does that sound like Paul knew what he was talking about when he wanted to address the Saints there about the Communion of the Lord’s Supper? ‘And I’m going to deliver it to you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

“After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood; .. ‘The new testament in my blood! Why would Jesus say that. Why would Jesus say, this cup is the new testament? Does that imply that there was a previous testament? Does that imply that there was an old covenant? The answer is, ‘Yes.’ Let’s look at Exodus, the twelfth chapter, and I’m going to read selectively starting at verse 17, then

24 and 25-27. ‘And ye shall observe the feast of unleavened bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt; therefore shall ye observe this day in your generations by an ordinance forever. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever. And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he has promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.’

“That’s the old testament. That’s the testament that Jesus came to replace. Through the blood of the lamb on the side posts of the doors, God saved his people and led them out of Egypt. Jesus was making reference to that when He said, ‘You are to observe the new testament of my blood.’ The feast of unleavened bread was in remembrance of their salvation from generation to generation for the Israelites. This was the old testament. Jesus proclaimed himself the new testament, and the symbolism is the same. Jesus was the lamb’s blood shed and placed on a post then, this time on a cross.

Does the Church in Mount Ayr Understand?

“The church in Corinth did not understand, nor did they see the parallel between Jesus’ death and the Lord’s passover. They did not see the need to remember. They were just getting together to drink wine and to eat bread. Does the church in Mount Ayr understand and remember Jesus? Do we see the parallel between the new testament and the blood of Jesus Christ and the old testament of unleavened bread?

“As we sat this morning, knowing what I was going to speak about, I was thinking ‘What do we remember about Jesus?’ And I hope that you were doing the same in preparation for receiving these emblems. I hope you were thinking, ‘I am doing this in remembrance of Jesus.’ and asking, ‘What is it that I remember about Jesus?’

“Do you remember His birth? Do you remember that He was an infant, born of a virgin in a manger and raised by a carpenter? Do you remember that humble beginning? Chapter 2 of Matthew talks about it. “Now, as it is written, the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise. After his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” Brother Winkler read on through Matthew 2:8. (Please read it for yourself), then he asked again, ‘Do you remember that humble beginning?’

“Maybe you remember His baptismal experience. You can find that in several places, but it is recorded in the first chapter of Mark. Remember Jesus going to the wilderness to find John the Baptist. Let’s read that - verses five through nine. ‘And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey; and preached saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchets of whose shoes I am unworthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed baptize you with water, but he shall not only baptize you with water but with fire and the Holy Ghost.

“And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him; and there came a voice from the heaven, saying, thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And John bore record of it.’ Do you remember

that? Do you remember about Jesus' baptism and that John bore record of him being the Son of the living God?

"Did you remember the start of Jesus' ministry? Do you know when that started - how old he was - under what circumstances? You can find that recorded in the second chapter of Luke, verses 41-49. 'Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom, to the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind, in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not that he tarried; but they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey, and they sought him among his kindred and acquaintances. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem seeking him.

"And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, and they were hearing him, and asking him questions. And all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and answers. And when his parents saw him, they were amazed, and his mother said unto him, 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, Why is it that ye sought me? Knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' Do you remember that He started teaching at age twelve? Maybe you remember him walking on the water and inviting Peter to come to him. Or maybe you remember the many miracles He performed - the sight that He restored to the blind, making the lame to walk, raising Lazarus from the dead. Or, how about remembering the beautiful experience of Jesus blessing the children even as the disciples tried to turn them away from Him? Do you remember Him as a great teacher? Remember the Sermon on the Mount? Do you remember the beautiful parables and the way that He taught - the parable of the prodigal son which is one of my favorites, the parable of the lost sheep, the widow's mite, the mustard seed? Do you remember Him as a great teacher?

"How do you remember His betrayal? How do you remember His crucifixion and His resurrection? The 27th chapter of Matthew is one place where it is recorded. Verse fifty says, 'And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachtani? (That is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?)'. Verse 54 - 'Jesus when he had cried again with a loud voice, saying, Father, it is finished, thy will is done, yielded up the ghost.' Do you remember that? Do you remember that about your Jesus?

"Do you remember that He appeared in the Americas preaching the same gospel? In the Third Book of Nephi, in the eighth chapter, the thirty third through forty third verses, 'And this shall ye always observe to do, even as I have done, even as I have broken bread, and blessed it, and gave it unto you. And this shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shewn unto you. And it shall be a testimony unto the Father, that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me, ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. When he had said these words, he commanded his disciples that they should take of the wine of the cup, and drink of it, and they should also give unto the multitude that they might drink of it. And they did so, and drank it, and were filled; and they gave to the multitude, and they drank and were filled. When the disciples had done this, Jesus said, Blessed are ye for this thing ye have done, for this is fulfilling my commandments, and this doth witness to the Father that ye are willing to do that which I have commanded you. And this shall ye always do unto those who repent and are baptized

in my name; and ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you, that ye may witness unto the Father that ye do always remember me. And if ye do always remember me, ye shall have my Spirit to be with you. And I give unto you a commandment that ye shall do these things.' Do you remember that - that Jesus brought that same message to the Americas. Did you remember that He revealed Himself to a fourteen year old boy named Joseph Smith to restore His church in the last days? There's a lot of remembering that can surround Jesus. Maybe you remembered personal testimonies of His being in your life and directing even to areas and things that you weren't aware that you could do.

Did You Come By Tradition or With Understanding?

"We came to the Lord's Supper this morning as we did many times before. Did we come out of tradition or did we come out of understanding? Knowing that Jesus is the new testament of our salvation, and we are here with intent to remember Him and to renew our commitment to keep His commandments, we must never forget. Jesus knew He would face death at the cross as He shared with His disciples in the upper room. He knew one of His friends would give Him up. He knew His time to change the world by being in it was over; yet He did it all because He loves us. He wants us to be with Him in the presence of our Heavenly Father. Did you remember Jesus as you were sharing in our Communion Service this morning? As the emblems were passed around representing His body and blood, did you remember Him? Let's do it this morning by sharing together in a prayer.

"Heavenly Father, we know how great your love for each one of us is. We know of your desires to have us follow You. Help us this day, today, right now to remember Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Lead us each one to say, 'I remember You, Jesus. I remember the things You taught - Your spirit of love in the work You did. And I remember most of all the sacrifice you made for me. My prayer is on behalf of this congregation, on behalf of Your church everywhere, and on behalf of all those who shared this day in this communion experience. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Immediately after Brother Gordon finished his prayer, Elder Michael Jordison, who was in charge of the service, started singing, "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow", as it was printed in the bulletin and directed the congregation to sing with Him. As we sang the last stanza of the hymn, we arose with Michael and stood for the benediction and postlude.

Consider the Lilies

Matthew 6:32-39 is a familiar scripture often misunderstood, Seventy Ronald K. Smith declared as he finished reading the scripture. "And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Therefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, how much more will he not provide for you, if you are not of little faith?"

"Therefore, take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy word because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that, After all these things do the Gentiles seek. Behold I say unto you that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. Wherefore, seek not the things of this world but seek

ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

“Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day shall be the evil thereof.”

“I would like to take just a few minutes this morning to consider the lilies and how they grow. Last Wednesday night, Rob asked that we think of times when the Lord has taken care of us; and I wish all of you could have been there to have listened to the stories - the testimonies that were given. There were many, many testimonies of the times the Lord has reached out and touched each of our lives and taken care of us, many times when we didn't even realize what He was doing.

“As we consider the lilies this morning, how they grow, I'm not an expert in growing lilies. My wife grows some lilies and we have some surprise lilies that come up and we enjoy them. But I do know a little about plants in general and how they grow. Sometimes we have thought that Jesus is telling us we don't have to do anything. If we are just there, He is going to give us everything we need. That sounds pretty good. Maybe we don't quite believe He really is going to do that, so we will have to do something about it on our own. We don't really take Him at His word and consider how the lilies actually grow.

How Do Lilies Grow?

“No lily would grow without some roots. There are little roots down there that the lily is always pushing into the ground. Those roots have little hairs on them, and those little root hairs are always soaking up the water and nutrients. They are always looking for the good soil. You can have flowers and grass and perhaps even lilies grow on fairly rocky ground because those roots don't care about rocks much. They just go around them and they find the good soil. And you will find that even in places that are really rocky, like in Israel, they have lilies, because Jesus talked about them. In fact, those little roots are so strong that, given long enough, they'll actually crack those rocks that they grow in and those rocks get smaller and smaller as those roots grow up among them.

“As I thought about the roots, how they are always looking for the good food and the soil, I was thinking of Phillipians 4: 8 and 9 and the advice that was given in that chapter. ‘Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. These things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you.’

“Many times we spend our lives filling our minds with other things, and we forget that rather than looking at people's bad traits, we need to be looking at the good reports about people. We need to be filling our souls with those things which will bring peace, not the things which will bring strife and hatred and anger. We need to be thinking about those things which are lovely and of good report. Consider the lilies. They don't mind the rocks. But they spring (Ron, spring doesn't sound right, but I can't get the word. What should it be?) their roots. They shove them deep, and they are always working at it, getting them deep in the soil where they can find the water and nutrients they need.

“Well, that's not all that lilies do. Lilies have leaves, as other flowers, too. And what do those leaves do? Do they just lie down on the ground? No! Those leaves are always lifted up. They are always lifted up toward the sky. Not only that, flowers actually follow the

sunlight. They go very, very slowly, but if you watch the flowers from morning until night, you will find that those flowers follow the sun. They are always looking for the light. And those leaves take the energy from the sun and use that to change the water and carbon dioxide into sugar and into the sweet things of life. And they are doing that from morning to night. They don't run around like chickens with their heads cut off, they just follow the sun from morning 'til night.

“How do lilies grow? They depend on the father for all of the light and all of the water that they are ever going to need. And you know, they don't store up a lot of water. They don't store up a lot of light. And some days when storms come, the lilies stay right there and just wait. They somehow know that when the storm is over, there will still be light. They know that they are going to get just enough water to live - just enough light to have the things that they need.

“That's not all that lilies do. Lilies and other flowers provide food for bees. And, you know, when bees come around, they don't shut their flowers and say, ‘Nope! You can't have any!’ It's there. It's open. It's free, and the bees take that nectar, that sugar water that the flowers have made and turn it into honey. They feed their young ones that way and feed us and make us happy.

“When winter comes, lilies die, or at least that's what we say happens. But what really happens to lilies? The tops fall off. The leaves seem to die, but lilies wait patiently for the spring when there is new life. After they die, they come back in the spring. We have those little surprise lilies that one day it doesn't look like there is anything much there, and the next day foof! There they are out there, doing their thing; waiting on the Lord; following the sun; holding up their leaves from morning to night and digging their roots deeper into the earth that they might fulfill the measure of their creation.

Times When the Lord Has Taken Care of Me

“As we consider the lilies this morning, I would like to just share some testimonies about times when the Lord has taken care of me. I have probably told somebody here everything that I know; so it will probably be old for many of you, but ----.

“ When I was between sixth and seventh grade, we moved from Lamoni to Weslaco Texas. For me it was a pretty traumatic move because everything was new and going to Junior High was ---. It's hard to remember in comparing exactly what my hardest year was, but if I was to choose one, my seventh grade year was the hardest I ever had. Not too many days, it might have been the first or second day that I was at school in Weslaco, a bunch of the Hispanic kids came to meet me out in the walkway and wanted to fight. (We had classrooms outdoors so when you went out of the classroom you walked from one classroom to another outdoors.) They met me on one of those walkways. You know, seventh grade is one of those times when people want to establish a pecking order, and I guess they wanted to fight to establish that order. Well, I wasn't sure what to do because I certainly am not a fighter. I've fought with my brothers from time to time, but this was a whole new situation for me. I prayed about it for just - I didn't have very long. Just a little prayer. ‘Lord, help me to know what to do!’ Then, I'm not exactly sure what I said, but I just started talking to them, letting them know I did not want to fight them; and after awhile, nobody really wanted to fight me. I haven't figured out really what went on, but I know the Lord was with me in what I said. I actually became friends with a couple of those guys - pretty good friends by the end of the year because we were on the same football team and things like that; and

I never did have to fight anybody. The Lord took care of me in that situation. It wasn't something that I did on my own that made them not fight me. I'm sure that the Lord took care of me there. There are so many times when the Lord has done that. He comes through when we really need Him most.

"I remember one of the dark times in my life was after my first trip to Kenya, and you have all heard this, but I just want to share it again because I want you to know that the Lord was really with us. I got bit by a mosquito over in Kenya, and when I came back, I had malaria. I have a leg that doesn't work very well, and I was going in to the hospital every day for some treatment. Every day they shot me full of stuff, and every day I ran a low grade fever; so I didn't think anything of having a fever, although the fever was more intense. So it was actually several days before I figured out that something other than the treatment was going wrong. By the time we actually got to the hospital, I was pretty sick. I remember in the days before I went to the hospital Di was trying to take care of me. I was freezing cold and shivering then hot as hot could be, then freezing cold and shivering then hot as hot could be. I went through the cycles every day and sometimes she would leave, and when she would leave, I would start singing hymns at the top of my lungs because that was all that I could think to do. There was a lot of pain, and it even got to the point that I said, 'Lord, if you are going to take me, now might be a good time. I wasn't afraid of dying, but sometimes the pain got pretty bad. I didn't really want to leave Di alone, but I was hurting, so that's the way I talked with the Lord. "But you know, people everywhere were praying for me. I got not only prayers from you guys but down at CPRS. I think everybody at CPRS sent me a card. I had a whole basket full of cards from all around. It was one of those times when you just depended on the Lord. He brought me through. Once I got to the hospital, I was actually discharged in a week. I had some complications. I had a lung collapse, and I went back into the hospital for another week, and then I was out. But the Lord took care of me. You know, people who don't believe in God can look and say, 'Well, that would have happened anyway.' But I don't believe it. I think that God was there and I believe it was because of the love and prayers of you all and others that the Lord spared my life.

"When I went back to Kenya the second time, I was with Doug and Di. Doug and I went to Eldoret. We were supposed to meet Elisha Kerry, but he wasn't where we thought we were supposed to meet him. We missed him and had absolutely no idea what we were going to do. We checked in at a hotel and I said, 'Let's go for a walk.' We started walking down the street. There were several hundred people on every block. It was after dark, and people were looking at us. We weren't normal folks, and we sort of stood out; so we went back to the hotel, asking ourselves what we could do. We decided we could pray. So we shared in prayer and confessed our sins to each other. We told each other things that we had not told anybody else about our lives. We were confessing to God and to each other, and we prayed that God would take care of it.

"First thing the next morning, Doug payed for the another day figuring that we would be there for at least one more day. When we went down to the lobby, there was Elisha and two other men waiting for us. They took us to a house in town, and we had the most unusual experience! People came to the house and asked questions from morning until night. It was the second night when parents brought a little nine month old baby who had not nursed for four days. He was limp. He was dehydrated, just barely breathing - just limp. That's all I can say. They asked us to pray for the baby. So we

opened our Bibles to James and read where he says, 'Is there are any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick' We asked if that was what they wanted us to do for their baby. They said, 'We are not of your denomination.' I said I never knew when Jesus asked anybody what denomination they were from before He healed them. They asked us to pray. As we stood up and started across - it was only a couple of steps to where they were, I nudged Doug and said, 'This is the test!' and thanked God for the opportunity.

"I took the little baby in my arms. Doug anointed with oil and placed his hands on the little one's head. Doug is a doctor. The baby had about a hundred and four temperature, he guessed, and as he prayed he said he felt the fever leave. When I handed the baby back to the mother, he kicked his leg and sat up in her arms. He was healed. Everybody was just 'AHH!' except they were very exuberant about that 'AHH!'. So they were praising the Lord, but Doug told the parents to go get heir baby something to eat, and they did. The Lord took care of us and took care of that little baby.

"The next day, a young woman came in. She had gone to teach school out at her home where her family lived. While she was gone, her husband had decided that she was having an affair and even had her arrested when she came back. They beat her at the police station trying to get her to confess. (Getting arrested and going to the police station is a little different in Kenya that it is here, hopefully.) Elisha found out that they were beating her trying to get her to confess and arranged for her to get out of the jail. So she showed up. Incidentally, her husband had contracted a venereal disease and had shared it with her. It was a really bad situation, and he was very, very angry at her. She came and was introduced to us. They told us a little about her story and asked if we would pray for her. She said that as we prayed for her, the pain of both the beating and of the venereal disease left. Then I told her to go home to her husband. She didn't want to do that, and I said, 'We will pray for him.'

"Don't ask me why I said, 'Go home to your husband,' because I didn't know anything about the situation. I had no particular insight unless the Lord was really leading me. So we prayed for her husband and sent her home. The next day her husband showed up. He said, 'Would you pray for me?' So we prayed for him, and he discovered under the influence of the Spirit that he was wrong and that he should not be treating his wife as he was. I don't know what ever has happened to that family, but I know that that day the Lord was there and was with us and was with them. Sometimes the storms do come, and we need to recognize that if we wait through the storm, like the lilies do, there will be light at the end.

"I was thinking back on Peter and Amy Bueckert's little son Shoen. Shoen had something that Steve knows what to call it. Steve, what is it? Tetrolgy of Fallot. It's a hole in the heart. It's an inherited disease characterized by the bad heart, of course, and thickened ends of fingers so they look like ET's fingers. Shoen was mentally retarded, and his legs were drawn up so he couldn't walk - couldn't handle his body, I don't know what all the symptoms were. He was in very bad shape. My heart went out to him and to Peter and Amy, and I thought that we just needed to have more faith, and I still think we need to have more faith. I thought maybe, if I fast for three days, we could pray and Shoen would be healed. So, at a reunion, Di and I decided to fast for three days. We didn't eat anything. I don't think we told anybody what we were doing. At the end of the reunion, he was administered to and I thought he would get well - jump up. He didn't. I was feeling pretty bad about that, but

Brother Jim Crumm was there, and the Lord spoke to several people at the end of the Reunion. He turned to me and told me that the day would come when His people would be healed. Brother Crumm had no reason to know anything about what we had done. So I have lived with that hope that that day will be here when the promises of the Lord can and will be fulfilled. I know that it's coming, and I know that we have in many ways seen some of the fulfillment of that promise; but I know that there's more that the Lord has and wants us to have. Shoen died not too much later, about five years of age, I think. But God used Shoen to touch the lives of many people. And I know that many of the blessings in Peter and Amy's life were there, some would say in spite of Shoen, but some would say because of Shoen. They learned many, many things about love and so did we.

Lilies and Us

"So God doesn't keep bad things from happening to lilies, but He does give them strength. They do come back in the spring, and they grow, and they have the promise that their heavenly Father will take care of them just like you and I have the promise that God will take care of us. They spread out their roots continually seeking the soil, soaking up the water and the nutrients. They lift up their leaves to the light day after day from morning 'til night. They follow the sun in its course through the day, and they depend on God to get them through the storm. They depend on God to give them just enough light for each day - just enough water to live; and they provide food for the bees and delight for you and me. When winter comes, they die, that new life can spring forth from the bulb. Let's consider the lilies, how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, how much more will He take care of you?"

"May God bless!"

The Fullness of the Gospel

Elder Alan Smith opened his presentation by explaining that he had a letter from Cloyce Coffman saying he had some people with whom he was working who wanted to know what the "fullness of the Gospel" means. Cloyce had listed several scriptures and asked whether Alan knew anything more. Alan decided that while he was looking up the response for Cloyce, he had just as well share his findings with the congregation, too.

"The fullness of the gospel.' We have heard the phrase a lot. Hasn't every Christian heard the phrase, 'The fullness of the gospel'? No. They haven't! The King James version of the Bible doesn't talk about there being a fullness of the Gospel. It's only in the Inspired Version, the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants that we hear the phrase, 'fullness of the gospel'.

Alan began by doing research on the words fullness and gospel to help understand what the Scriptures in this regard really mean "One definition of fullness was being complete as in number, amount or duration. So fullness means completeness of the gospel. Containing as much as possible is another definition of fullness - having everything that can possibly be there. And also it means possessing or containing in abundance - having all that we need. Kind of interesting, down at the bottom of the definitions for full and fullness the dictionary gives three synonyms, "complete" like

completeness of the gospel. One was "replete", and that has the concept of being filled to the brim or running over. And the third was "plenary" - fullness without qualifications. Here we have people today saying there is no such thing as plenary inspiration and there is no such thing as plenary gospel when 'the fullness of the gospel' is saying just that! That's what we have.

"You have heard of scriptures about having good measure, pressed down and running over - a cup running over- those kinds of things. We are to be talking about the fullness of the gospel and some of these various aspects of these definitions.

Of course, the definition of the "gospel" is the "good news" - glad tidings. What were the angels doing when they sang to the shepherds? Singing the gospel - "glad tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people." So the gospel was the good news, the good message of Jesus. If we are looking for the fullness of gospel, we are looking for all the good news about Christ. We are looking for an abundance or extra richness of the good news about Christ. We are looking for the authoritative good news about Christ. So with those definitions, can we find the fullness of the gospel in the Restoration Scriptures? Does that help you understand better what we are looking for? We are looking for those things which complete the idea of what the gospel is. We are looking for those things that add richness to the gospel or help us understand more about Christ than we can find any other place. We are looking for the authoritative things about the gospel that are going to help us as we try to understand the scriptures. And yes, we can find the fullness of the gospel in the Restoration scriptures.

Some Scriptures About Fullness

"Sometimes these scriptures talk about the "fullness of the gospel" and sometimes it talks about our having the fullness of Christ" and having that fullness in our lives. The first mention that we have in the Inspired Version is in the eleventh chapter of Luke, the 52nd verse. Jesus is talking with the Pharisees. He calls them Pharisees at the beginning and lawyers later, so maybe we are not talking about lawyers like Rob Rolfe and Sherm Phipps (two lawyers in our congregation). He has been talking about them and how they focus on the outward part of the law but not with what the law means or what the law does to our hearts when we really follow it. Jesus was asked to come to a dinner, and He didn't wash His hands beforehand. The Pharisee was very upset that Jesus had not washed His hands. And Jesus talked about the outward part of the law. You say you have washed your hands. You say you have washed the outward part of your body, but the inward part of you stinks! You haven't had a change of heart on the inside that is helping you live and understand that. It was at the end of Jesus' talk about it to them that they decided they were going to try to destroy Him because of the things He said. But He said to them, 'Wo unto you, ye lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge.'" If you just read the King James version, that's as far as it goes. The Inspired Version tells us what that key of knowledge is - "the fullness of the scriptures."

'Wo unto you, ye lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge, the fullness of the scriptures. Ye enter not of yourselves into the kingdom; and those who were entering in, ye hinder.' In the Inspired Version it adds the part about the Kingdom so we know what they are trying to enter and what they are going to hinder.

"So, here we have Jesus, in the Inspired Version, telling the religious rulers of that time that they have taken away the key of knowledge, the fullness of the scriptures. They have taken away some of the understanding of the scriptures, and because of that, you are not entering into the kingdom and you are holding other people

out. This gives us a little understanding, then, that it is important for us to have the fullness of the Gospel in order to enter into the kingdom and to understand what the kingdom is all about.

“In the first and third chapters of John, we have some more Inspired Version references to the fullness. This is John the Baptist talking about Jesus. Of course, this is not in the King James Version, so I won’t point out all of the differences here. ‘For in the beginning was the Word, even the Son who was made flesh, and sent unto us by the will of the Father, and as many as believe on his name shall receive of his fullness, And His fullness have we all received, even immortality and eternal life through his grace; for the law was given through Moses, but life and truth came through Jesus Christ, for the law was after a carnal commandment through the administration of death, but the Gospel was after the power of an endless life through Jesus Christ, who is in the bosom of the Father, and no man has seen God at any time except he has borne record of the Son; for except it be through him, no man can be saved.’ John was telling us that we need to receive of the fullness of Christ if we are going to be saved. That’s what brings us eternal life. That’s what brings us immortality.

It’s interesting at the bottom if you are reading the King James version, it says, ‘And no man hath seen God at any time.’ Period. In the Inspired Version, it goes on to say, ‘except he hath borne record of the son.’ In other words, unless he knows Jesus, he has never seen God. So this fullness of Christ is needed in our lives as we come to know him more.

“In John the third chapter it talks about fullness again. It says, ‘For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God, for God giveth him not the Spirit by measure, for he dwelleth in him, even the fullness. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hands, and he who believeth on the Son hath everlasting life and shall receive of his fullness, but he who believeth not the Son shall believe of his fullness, for the wrath of God is upon him.’ The promise here is that we can have the fullness of Christ in our lives, not just a measure of the Spirit. Isn’t that about as complete a portion of the good news that you can think of - that promise?

“The Book of Mormon talks about the fullness of the gospel in several places. A lot of them are talking about the fullness of the gospel going to the Gentiles and then going back to the house of Israel through time. There are a couple of different places in First Nephi where it talks about the fullness of the Gospel coming to the Gentiles, then going back to the remnant of the seed of Israel, and how important this all will be. In First Nephi 4:19 it says, ‘Wherefore, they shall come to a knowledge of their redeemer and the very points of his doctrine that they may know how to come unto him and be saved.’ Part of this fullness of the Gospel is coming to a knowledge of their redeemer and the points of his doctrine which will help us come to salvation.

When Jesus was here, He talked about the fullness of His doctrine. In Third Nephi 7:34-38 He says, ‘And thus commanded 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’ (Do you think that might be speaking about our time? Some people rejecting what we have gotten?) and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations and above all people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lieings and deceits and of mischiefs and of all manner of hypocrisy and murders and priestcrafts and whoredoms and of secret abominations, and if they shall do all 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 I will remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O House of Israel, and will bring my Gospel unto them. And I will show unto thee, O House of Israel, that the Gentiles shall not have power over you, but I will remember my covenant unto you, O House of Israel, and ye shall come unto the knowledge of the fullness of my Gospel. But if the Gentiles will repent and return unto me, saith the Father, behold, they shall be numbered among my people, the House of Israel.’ Jesus was talking about a time when the Gentiles have had the fullness of the gospel and reject it. It goes to the House of Israel, and the Gentiles will not have power over the House of Israel. But if we will repent, the Gentiles will repent and return, they can be a part of and be numbered among His people as well.

“Jesus also issued a warning to us about what happens when we harden our hearts against the fullness of the Gospel. From Third Nephi 9: ‘Nevertheless, when ye shall have received the fullness of my gospel, then if they shall harden their hearts against you, I will return their iniquities upon their own heads, saith the Father.’ What does Jesus do for us when we understand him and come to him? He takes away our iniquity. He takes our sin upon Himself. What happens when we understand and then reject it? ‘I will return your iniquities on your own heads.’ I will give your sin back to you - the consequences of your sin. ‘And I will remember the covenant which I have made with my people, and I have covenanted with them that I would gather them together in mine own due time; that I would give unto them again the land of their of their fathers for their inheritance, which is the land of Jerusalem, which is the promised land unto them forever, saith the Father. And it shall come to pass when the time cometh when the fullness of my gospel shall be preached unto them, and they shall believe in me that I am Jesus Christ the Son of God and shall pray unto the Father in my name.’”

“Those are just a few of the references to the fullness of the gospel in the Inspired Version and the Book of Mormon. The Doctrine and Covenants has the most. Section 1 of the D&C, the introduction it is talking about the whole reason for the Restoration it says in verse 4a, ‘Wherefore, I, the Lord, knowing the calamities which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Junior and spoke unto him from heaven and gave him commandments and also gave commandments to others that they should proclaim these things unto the world. And all this that it might be fulfilled that is written by the prophets that the weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither should he trust in the arm of flesh, but that every man might speak in the name of God, the Lord, even the Savior of the world.’

Do you understand what the Lord was saying through Joseph there? As part of this fullness that was coming, you don’t have to go through an intercessor. No one stands between you and the Lord. Every man can speak in the name of the Lord. ‘That faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established, that the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed to the ends of the earth before kings and rulers.’

“Several times in the Doctrine and Covenants it ties together the concept of the fullness of the gospel with the idea of the everlasting covenant, which is a part of the good news -- part of the fullness of the gospel which we have and other people don’t have. From Genesis 9: ‘And this is my everlasting covenant, that when thy posterity shall embrace the truth and look upward, then shall Zion look downward, all the heavens shall shake with gladness, and the earth shall tremble with joy, and the general assembly of the

church of the first born shall come down out of heaven and possess the earth and shall have place until the end come. This is mine everlasting covenant which I made with thy father Enoch.' Does even just this one scripture add fullness to the gospel that other people don't have if they haven't heard about it?

"What does the everlasting covenant mean to us? It means that we are not just to worry about our own salvation. We should worry about the salvation of others. It's the promise that if we can live together to where we don't fuss and fight and back bite and do all these things to each other, we can help save the world. Is that good news? Is that a little more complete good news than other people might understand? That's part of the fullness of the gospel to me.

"Other sections of the Doctrine and Covenants talk about the Book of Mormon including the fullness of the gospel. In fact, it says that there are none that do good in this generation except those will accept the fullness of the gospel, 'that I have sent forth in this generation' - Section 34. In Section 39 it says that those who receive the fullness of the gospel can become sanctified - another promise. Section 42 indicates that the fullness of the scriptures will contain more than just the Bible and the Book of Mormon. 'Again, the Elders, Priest, and Teachers of this church shall teach the principles of my gospel which are in the Bible and the Book of Mormon, in which is the fullness of my gospel, and they shall observe the covenants and church articles to do them, and this shall be their teaching and they shall be directed by the Spirit, and the Spirit shall give unto you by the prayer of faith, and if ye receive not the Spirit, ye shall not teach. And all this ye shall observe to do as I commanded concerning your teachings until the fullness of my scriptures is given.' It tells us that even besides the Bible and Book of Mormon, the fullness of the scriptures is coming in the Doctrine and Covenants and Inspired Version of the Bible. So all of these scriptures have fullness to help us understand what we need to do for the Lord.

"Section 66 says, 'Verily I say unto you, Blessed are you for receiving mine everlasting covenant, even the fullness of my gospel sent forth unto the children of men that they might have life and be partakers of the glories which are to be revealed in the last days as it was written by the prophets and apostles of old.' So here's another concept or part of the idea of what's in the fullness of the gospel, helping us understand life after death, the glories - these kinds of things that come in the Doctrine and Covenants.

'Section 87 of the Doctrine and Covenants has this promise: 'For it shall come to pass in that day that every man shall hear the fullness of the gospel in his own tongue and in his own language through those who are ordained unto this power by the administration of the comforter shed forth upon them for the revelation of Jesus Christ.' The time is coming when in every language here will be people who will be talking about this richness of the gospel - this fullness of the gospel as the power of God is made manifest through the administration of the comforter - the revelation of Jesus Christ.

Examples of Fullness of the Gospel

"The scriptures indicate that there are parts of the gospel that have been revealed in Restoration scripture that add fullness to the gospel story that the rest of Christianity doesn't have. We have talked about some of these. We talked about the Everlasting Covenant which indicates that we go beyond our personal salvation to a corporate responsibility for living together and bringing others to Christ. I shared with you in a sermon before the concept of "endure to the end," which is in Restoration scriptures and not in the King James Version -- the fact that not only are we to come to Christ

and make a covenant with him, but we have to live that covenant and endure to the end of our lives if we are to truly have the blessings that the Lord wants us to have. That's another of one of the pieces of the whole puzzle in terms of the complete gospel that we have that we need to be able to share with the rest of the world. Life after death and eternal judgment is one of the principles of the gospel which we find in the Doctrine and Covenants, given in all kinds of detail that we do not find anywhere else. The scriptures talk about how the choices that we make in our lives reflect the kinds of things we can do for eternity, too. In other words, whatever we are happy with now, we may be able to have but that's not all the happiness we should have in our lives. What is it that we are looking for and seeking? If we find it, is that what we want to have for the rest of eternity?

"But then, we can go on and talk about the fullness of the gospel in terms of richness. I just have a list of some of them here that came to me as I thought about it - some of the things that are unique to the Restoration scriptures, at least in the detail that we have that enrich our understanding of what God wants us to do, and enriches our lives if put them to practice.

- How do works and grace fit together? Do we have to do works? Is it all grace? that question many in Christianity have asked and battled about for a long time. The Book of Mormon tells us that we can't do it all by ourselves. We have to have the grace of God. The grace of God fills in what we can't do ourselves, but we need to be doing what we can do ourselves. It helps us answer that question. Is that good news to people who are asking that question about richness? Is there something authoritative there that can help them?

- "How about little children? How do they come into the world? The Book of Mormon tells us that they come in innocent. They don't need baptism until they can make that covenant. Baptism doesn't save you until you make a choice and a covenant yourself, and you can't do that until you have reached an age of accountability -- when you come to be able to make that choice.

- We don't have to trust in the arm of flesh for spiritual things, but 'every man can speak in the name of the Lord.' Is that good news? You don't have to have an intercessor. There's not someone that you have to go through to find the Lord whether that's asking Mary or whether that's going through some other person that you would have to have stand in the way between the two of you.

- "The gospel of Christ was preached from the beginning. Is that good news? Is that a part of the gospel that people might be interested in? Just like he shares with us that God is the same yesterday and forever. He didn't wait until two thousand years ago that people would know about His Son and salvation, but he preached it from the very beginning to the first man, and he has cared for us all this time?

- "How about Priesthood offices and functions-setting up order that watches after both our physical and our spiritual needs when it is functioning at its fullest - making sure our families are working - making sure we understand the financial law and get the help we need when we need it - working on the spiritual part of our lives as well - helping us to understand that worshipping and coming to the Lord. Is that a part of the fullness of the gospel? I think so.

- "What about the concept that men are that they might have joy? Our whole being - the reason we are here is to find joy in our lives. Not everybody has that. Not everybody understands that.

- The understanding that God created everything, his rule is down to the smallest particle of life - however small or however

large you get, His rule is there. He set that in motion. We find that in the Doctrine and Covenants. It goes beyond just the idea that He created things, but that He set everything in order, from the smallest to the largest. Is that good news? Is that the fullness of the gospel to you?

- “The importance of the marriage covenant - that it is to be a covenant with God reached mutually by husband and wife for as long as we both live? That we not only keep ourselves from all others but for each other. Is that something people need to understand in the world today? Is there richness there?”

- “How about the understanding of how we can keep our bodies healthy - the Word of Wisdom? Is that fullness of the gospel if we want something that is rich - something that can bring happiness and joy to our lives. The promises there are not only for physical health but mental health and minds that can receive rich treasures of knowledge. Is that important to our quality of life in Christ? I think so.

- “The fact that God cries for our wickedness. Is that important for our understanding of Him? We don’t have that in the King James Version as we do in the experience of Enoch in the Inspired Version and Doctrine and Covenants. Does it enrich your life to know He loves you that much? As well as sending His Son, He cries over your wickedness.

- “A series of axioms in founding our belief is available. King Benjamin gave them. ‘Believe in God. Believe that he is, that he created all things, that you can’t comprehend everything that God can comprehend - giving us a basis for setting up our beliefs as we go through life. Is that richness to the story of the gospel?’

“Is there any question that we have fullness in the scriptures that are important, things that God has given us? Not only are there some of the key things in terms of salvation such as enduring to the end for a completeness to the gospel but also a richness to the gospel in so many different ways. I could list them all morning, probably, but I would like you to stop and think, what’s a piece of the fullness of the gospel that has touched your life? Where is there a scripture that you can say, ‘You want to know what the fullness of the gospel is? Here’s a piece of it to me.’ Somebody comes to you and says, ‘What’s all this fullness of the gospel stuff? I’ve never heard of that before’. And you can say, ‘I’ve got one for you. But the exciting thing is that there is a whole bunch more out there that I don’t have yet. And there are some out there that will minister to you and help you understand - help your cup to overflow! There is something there that will help you understand better what Christ wants you to do in your life.’ If you do that, it’s easy to explain. It’s easy to say, ‘I know what the fullness of the gospel is - at least a little bit of it - because it has touched my life. There’s a scripture from our expanded scriptures that has meant something to me.’

“I’d like to share just a little story with you from the early days of the church. This is Henry Stubbinness who shared this testimony in the Autumn Leaves of 1908 about Sister Carolyn Randall who had died fifteen years earlier and who had had this experience many years before that. I would just like to read a few words: ‘When sister Randall was young, soon after her marriage, while a member of the Baptist church, she was stricken with a consuming fever and to all appearance died so that her friends began preparations for her funeral. She related to me and others that at that time her spirit departed from her body and rose above it and that she looked down and saw her husband and friends weeping over her. Then a person of beauty received her into his charge and conducted her beyond the confines of earth, even she realized for a great distance until they

came without the walls of a beautiful city - one that shone in splendor. The gates were open, and she looked within and saw its glory and a throng of bright ones, a company of light activity and intelligence. As she gazed upon the glorious scene, she desired to enter, but her guide said that she could not go in - that she was not prepared to enter there. When she asked why she was not, he answered, ‘You have not received and obeyed the gospel in its fullness, but if you return to earth to your mortal body, the time will come when you shall have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ preached in its completeness, and if you accept it and live it, faithful to the commandments, you will have the right to enter into that city that you have seen. He then conducted her to earth again.

She entered the room where her body was lying, and her spirit entered into it. Then her astonished friends saw her move and her eyes opened, and she spoke and said that they should not weep, for she would get well and remain with them, and very soon she received her strength and speedily recovered from her sickness. This occurred in the state of New York about the year of 1830, and a few years later the Elders of the Latter Day Saint work came into the neighborhood preaching Christ’s gospel restored with its full doctrines and blessings. For a time she would not attend the meetings but finally went, and when she heard the plan of salvation unfolded as preached in the New Testament times, when she considered as evidences the words of her heavenly guide came to her memory, and as she listened, her heart was filled with the divine spirit, and she realized the truth was being preached. She obeyed it, and all who knew her can truthfully say that she lived faithfully and reverently and bore as clear a testimony, sustained by the able argument, as very many of the Elders can state, in giving reasons for the hope that was in them, when called to answer. And she continued ever in the hope of the promise made to her by the bright attendant that her Spirit was caught away to see the city of God and to be instructed.’

“The fullness of the gospel is available to us. We have that promise that resides in the scriptures and in our putting them into practice in our lives, our understanding can become more complete, our cups can be filled to running over. So take the time to find it for ourselves. We have a responsibility to continue to learn by study and by faith, which is another rich concept of the good news that we have in the scriptures. What part of the fullness of the gospel has touched your life? Do you want some more? We need to continue to study and find the gems that the Lord has prepared for us in His good news. And when someone asks you, ‘What’s this fullness of the gospel?’ (talk about a two minute testimony) you can say, ‘I’ve got one, but there’s a whole lot more. Would you like to hear about it?’

“My prayer this morning is that the good news of the gospel in its fullness will come into your hearts and into your life in new and richer ways so that you will understand what it means to be complete in the gospel, full measure, pressed down and running over.”

Save Yourself: Go Out From This Untoward Generation

“I sense that there are many here this morning who have come hungering and thirsting,” was the opening statement of High Priest Sherman Phipps on Sunday, February 23. “I guess those who know me know that if you receive this morning that which you need, it will be because the Lord honors your prayers.

“I was asked to preach my first sermon when I was fourteen years old. Every time I have to preach, I feel like fourteen years old. I don’t feel young and enthusiastic. If that would happen, that would be OK. I just feel like I did when I was fourteen. I stood up in front of the congregation, looked out at those adults and knew these people were so much smarter than I was and so much more capable, and I thought, ‘What on earth can I offer?’ And I pretty much knew the answer was nothing, unless the Lord gave me something to offer; and I feel the same way every time I am asked to preach.” Brother Phipps explained his custom of coming to preach a sermon with the idea that the Lord already knows who is going to be there, what they need, and, he said, “My job is to get out of the road.” He expressed his appreciation for the two prayers that had been offered for him at the beginning of the service, and asked for continued prayer.

Brother Phipps had read two scriptures on which to base his sermon - Acts, 2:40 “Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” and Doctrine and Covenants 38:9e - “Go ye out from among the wicked. Save yourselves. Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.” Now he referred especially to the Acts scripture. “I didn’t just pick this scripture out of the air. Sometime back - several months ago, Rob talked to me about maybe speaking some Sunday, and shortly after this scripture came to mind very strongly. I will read it again since it’s so short. ‘Save yourselves from this untoward generation.’

“I looked in Strongs to see what untoward meant and what saved meant, at least in there. The word saves came from a Hebrew word which meant to come out, leave or to withdraw, to shoot forth. And that might be where we are at. Shoot forth from this untoward generation. We need to get away from it. We need not to be a part of a lot of what’s going on in the world. That doesn’t mean we need to withdraw from the world, because the world definitely needs you folks. The world needs somebody to show them, the way to Christ.

“Untoward, and I thought this was significant, untoward comes from the expression that means - a number of things - but the one that struck me means breathing out of life - causes to lose life; and I believe that’s where we are at. We are living in a fashion that if we get locked into the way society is doing things, it just sucks the life out of us. As I thought about it this morning, I thought about why would it be so important for us to be so different - to save ourselves, and I assume along with ourselves, those around us - from this untoward generation.

Experiences That Teach

Our speaker then shared two experiences from his youth that illustrated his point. When he was in high school, probably sixteen or seventeen years old, he went to an early morning service at a camp in Nauvoo. The staff and the young people were standing in

a circle, and of course, they had some prayers, a scripture, songs. “I had been asking the Lord to use me, and allow me to somehow be helpful to people around me. And in the midst of that, and I still don’t understand how those things work, but in the midst of that, a darkness came over me like I have never experienced, and I never want to experience. It was paralyzing. I could tell the other people were still there. I could tell that somebody was saying a prayer. I could tell they were singing now. I knew that was going on, but I couldn’t see anything. I was in total darkness. I couldn’t move - couldn’t speak, and I’ll tell you in a minute why I am talking about this. And I could tell when the little worship service was ending and when everybody else was starting to walk away, but I couldn’t move. I couldn’t see them. One of the staff who had been standing fairly close to me, walked over and put his arm around me; and the second he touched me, the darkness fled. I could move again and I could see. I interpreted that as being a result of his love for me, and God’s love for me.

“Now I want to share a totally different thing with you, and then I’ll tell you how to tie these things together. At another camp - this was some six or seven years later, maybe more, I really was kind of having the same struggle in terms of wanting to know how to reach out to other people at that camp - wanting to know how I could share with them what God wanted them to know - to help them - I wouldn’t probably have put it in those words at the time - but to help them learn to save themselves from this untoward generation - to come out and do something different - to allow the Lord to work with them - to use them. I was thinking about that and praying about it, and on this occasion, the Spirit of the Lord came over me in such a - I don’t know how to describe it - a way that I had never experienced before but would like to experience again - which is just the opposite of the other. I don’t know how to describe it, but I no longer felt my physical being. It wasn’t like the other where everything was dark and scary and paralyzing. I was free! And when it ended, my body was on the ground. I was able to reenter - I don’t know how to say that, so don’t take this literally, but I was able to come back into my body again. But during this experience, I was completely free from the physical limitations that I usually had. And during that experience, the Lord showed me - to the extent I was able to understand it - I’m sure there is more to it - but showed me how much He loved me. Me - because I thought I was worthless - but also showed me how that was true of everybody. Every person and every thing that He creates, He loves. He’s in and through everything, so how could He not love us?

“That experience completely changed my life. Both of those did in a sense, and I want now to get back to the scripture that has to do with saving ourselves from this untoward generation. I think it’s really important that we understand the need to be different from the rest of the world - to be different from what is going on in our society; because, ultimately, we are looking at spending eternity in darkness or spending eternity in light in the presence of the Lord. And when I thought about those two experiences, coming here this morning, I thought, ‘I hope the Lord will allow me to share something of these that will prompt each one of you to look at your lives and see where your present course will take you in terms of eternity. It is important. These aren’t just words. We are, as we live each day, determining where we are going to spend eternity. The Lord allows us to do that. And if we just go along and live like the rest of the world lives, my fear is, and I suspect that we will not spend eternity with the Lord unless He is just very, very merciful unto us and allows us another opportunity to understand the truth

and to make choices that most of us, because of what we know, should be making in this life. I hope that makes sense to you.”

From What Are We To Be Saved?

Brother Phipps was reminded of a scripture that he thought was in Genesis 3 and took time to apprise the congregation of his confidence in our knowledge of the scriptures and to ask for help if he had difficulty remembering either the scripture or the reference. Not finding it immediately, he continued his discussion of the scripture relating to ‘this untoward generation’.

“What does that mean in terms of today and how we live today?” He asked. “If we are going to save ourselves from that, what is it we are saving ourselves from? I don’t know if this is fair to pick on you, but I am particularly concerned about the young people in our group. What do we teach our young people? I don’t mean just in classes. I mean by example. Do we teach them how to escape from what’s going on in our world and how to find the Lord? I mean really find Him. We talk about Him a lot, but the relationship with the Lord is really a personal thing, at least in my experience it is. He isn’t just off somewhere. I depend on the Lord every day in a very real way; and I find that when I don’t, in fact, a lot of times I am reminded. Oh yes, I should be really grateful to Him for His presence all the time. I could tell you some little things - some little experiences. In a way they are little. In a way they are not. But I think these things happen in everybody’s life, but often it’s easier to just go on and not realize God’s hand at work.

Sherman then told us about a time that he was traveling down the interstate with his cruise control on, and he thought he was paying attention to his driving. He had just started to pass a semi. “I was almost to the front of this semi when I heard him let off on the accelerator. The semi, when it’s let off, makes a different sound. If you had asked me was I watching the road, I would have said, ‘Yes’, but when he let off the accelerator, I realized something was going on. I refocused, and there was a big old deer standing right in my lane. A big one! I didn’t even hardly have time to realize it was there, but at the last second - just - you know it just happened so quick, and then the deer jumped right in front of the semi. He was standing in front of me and at the last second, he jumped out of the road. I heard him hit the semi. You might say, ‘Well, that was just a coincidence’. I don’t believe that. I don’t believe in coincidences. I believe the Lord, if we let him, is right there all the time ready to care for us and to carry whatever burdens we think we have to carry. Don’t take it wrong. I wasn’t happy about the fact that the deer hit the truck, but at least the trucker was sitting up another 3 or 4 or 5 feet higher than I was, and it didn’t affect him. It affected his truck. “One night we were coming back from Des Moines in Cheryl’s car, which is like Rob and Lynda’s car, a convertible with no solid top on it. She pulled out to pass a semi. I had my seat back and was trying to sleep. I felt her jerk the car over and knew something was happening. I sat up just in time to see the deer that was standing lengthwise instead of sidewise, go between us and the semi. Again, you could say, ‘Oh, that just happened, but I don’t believe that. I believe the Lord has a hand in all those things.

“Last summer, I took my grandson Cody, who is here this morning, and I said, ‘Let’s go to Des Moines to a motorcycle show.’ It’s a thing they do every week. I like to go to them, and he wanted to go; so we got on the motorcycle and took off. It looked pretty nice most of the way up. When we got to where 35 runs into 80, making that curve to the east, the sky was pretty dark. You could see the sky was pretty rain streaked? It was just pouring rain. The place we were going was over on the east side, over close to Merle Hay. I

looked at those clouds, and I thought, ‘Well, I think they might move off to the south and we might be able to make it.’

“We got over to Merle Hay Road. The moment we turned onto the off ramp, it let loose. I thought, ‘There is no sense going on in.’ and we turned around and started back. That, of course, puts you out on Interstate 80, and you know how the traffic on 80 is! When you are on a motorcycle trying to run 65 miles an hour trying to stay kind of with the traffic and not get run over, and it’s pouring as hard as it was pouring that day, I mean, I couldn’t see anything - I just flat couldn’t see anything - I was trying to see the white line on the edge of the pavement to keep from running off the road, but I was having a hard time. It was really pouring down rain! And in the process of struggling to try to see that white line and trying to stay on the pavement, I heard this loud noise. I didn’t have time to react. This semi went by, and you could tell as he went by that he was really struggling to keep from running over us. He hadn’t seen us, and as he went by he probably didn’t miss us by six inches to a foot. Once again, I was impressed that, ‘This is not luck. This is not chance; but the Lord has some things that He wants from you, and He has some things that He wants from your grandson; and you have been spared again because the Lord wants something from you.

“I don’t know what your experiences are in terms of these kinds of things happening to you, but I know the Lord wants something from every one of us. I know He loves everybody who is sitting here today. I know He wants you to come out of this generation. He doesn’t want you to be sucked into what’s going on in the world and have the life sucked out of you like this Hebrew term implies. He doesn’t want to lose us. He doesn’t want to lose any one of you, but He leaves that to us.

We Choose Darkness or Light For Eternity

“And that brings me back to the fact of what I started to share with you from Genesis 3. Here’s something that I think is really important for us to understand as we go through our daily lives and try to choose right or wrong and realize that every day we are progressing towards an eternal state that will be determined by whether we respond to the Spirit in this life or not - whether we repent or not. I had another experience several years ago I would like to share with you where I felt like the Lord showed me something about this scripture and how significant it is. In this scripture He says, ‘And I, the Lord God, spake unto Moses, saying, That Satan whom thou has commanded in the name of mine Only Begotten, is the same which was from the beginning; and he came before me, saying, Behold I, send me, I will be thy Son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore, give me thine honor.’ It goes on and talks some more about it. You might like to go read it; but I was impressed with how really important agency is to God’s plan and how He never takes that agency away from us. He always prepares a way for us to escape, for instance, from this untoward generation, but He never makes us do that. And this thing of agency - this thing, oh I don’t know how to say it - this was the difference between Satan and Christ. It goes on and says, ‘But behold, my beloved Son, which was my beloved and chosen from the beginning, said unto me: Father, thy will be done, and the glory be thine forever.’ Satan didn’t come to him and say, ‘I’m going to go and destroy your work.’ Did you hear what he said? He said, ‘Send me and not one soul will be lost.’ He was going to force mankind to respond. And the Lord said, ‘No. that won’t work!’ And there were some other things about what he wanted to do, but, our ability to choose is very, very significant and very important. What I really want to get to this morning is how

significance that difference is in terms of our relationship with other people.

"If we are going to take the gospel to other people, how do we do that? We don't force it on them. We can't go and try to make them believe. We can't take the scriptures and beat them with them, you know. We can't do that. That was the way Satan was going to do it. He was going to force everybody - make sure nobody got away. We have to do this by example. We have to do this by loving other people, caring about them. We have to exercise our agency to allow the Lord to work through us as only He knows what will reach these other people. But He does know, so for us to be instruments in His hands, we need to make the choice that we are going to be God's people, I mean individually as well as a community; but we need to do that and then let Him direct us as to how we take it to other people. We need to be careful not to get off on our own program. That doesn't mean there is something wrong with some of our own programs, but we need to be open to the direction of the Spirit; and if we are not, then I have great fears about what we are going to be able to accomplish.

"I started out with the scriptures that has to do with coming out of satan's - coming out of this untoward generation. I wondered as I thought about this, what are our children learning, and it really can apply to us as adults, too. Let me give you an example of what I have been struggling with. We live in a world that really worships wealth. Whether you agree with me or not, it's everywhere. It's in the movies. It's on the news. The people that this generation would put up there and tell us, 'These are the people to follow. These are the people that live good'. How many of them would lead you to Jesus Christ? Not very many, I'm afraid. Now that's just my opinion. You can disagree with it, but mostly they are people that make a lot of money. Because they make a lot of money, we think they are important. There are the people that our children use as role models - sports figures. But if you really look at what their lives are like and where they would lead our children, and even ourselves, it's not where we want to be. I don't know how we can convey to our children humility or how even we can keep a real grasp on the principles of the gospel ourselves. How do we teach our children humility? Where is humility in our society? It's not a very popular thing, I can tell you, at least not from where I'm at, but it's the key. It's essential. We can't be the Lord's people if we are not humble.

"I wish I had some answers to these question. How do we convey, and how do we practice a recognition of a scripture that talks about the least of these? All of you are familiar with that scripture in Matthew 25:41, I know. Where in our society are our children going to be, or where are we going to be encouraged to remember that in as much as we have done it unto the least of these, we have done it unto God? What's our society teaching?" "Live and let die," someone from thee congregation said. Sherman repeated, "Live and let die is pretty much it. Take advantage of whoever you can take advantage of.

Misdirected Admiration

"Look at the people that we think are great people. I think it was People magazine that on the cover said something about idol talk. Idol was spelled i-d-o-l. It had all these things in it that people are saying - well known people - big names in movies and such. Here's what these people think about such and such, and I thought it was interesting that the magazine called it idol talk and didn't see the problem. But that's what it is. It's idle talk, but they thought we would all be interested by and probably influenced by it, and probably a lot of people are. But where in the midst of all that are

we to learn and really appreciate the fact that in as much as we do it unto the least, we do it unto Christ? These people aren't interested in helping the least of these. These people would teach our children and us that the thing is to have more than anybody else.

"Where would we learn respect? When I look around me, it worries me that we don't learn to respect each other in this society. We learn to just run over every body that we can run over. You know what I'm talking about. How are our children going to learn respect? Because I think it is really important for us to remember this one, 'In as much as we have done it unto the least of these.'

"I want to go down to Matthew 25:46. I have heard this quoted all these years, and I don't remember the last paragraph which is kind of the same thing in reverse. It says, 'Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me.' It's the same thing in reverse, but I don't remember ever reading that and realizing that I need to be very careful that I don't overlook somebody's needs, too.

"One more thing. It's really important that we come out of untoward life in these last days. I know I am in mine. How clear are we on that which leads to Christ and what pulls us away? That's another reason it is so important that we know Jesus Christ and seek him every day. When I had a broken arm, he healed it. When I was on the mountain and needed to get down, He took me down. Our children need to know that God is still there."

Two Added Testimonies

Brother Phipps started to close when Ron Smith spoke up saying, "I don't know about your broken arm. Can you tell us about it?"

"One night while we lived in Des Moines, it was 7 below zero and the wind was blowing a storm when we saw a car with the hood up and a man standing beside it. We did not live in the best part of the city. It was late, and I did not know for sure whether there was real need or if maybe it was a setup. I knew that Cheryl would be waiting, but I could imagine how I would feel if I saw in the paper the next day that the man had frozen to death. So I pulled crosswise in front of his car, rolled my window down and asked if he needed some help. There was no response. I asked again, and again the third time and there was no response. So I started thinking about getting out of the car. I started to open the door. He never looked at me but went around his car, started it up and headed for my car. I stuck my arm out automatically. It got in his grill, and as it came back toward my car handle, you could hear it pop as the arm broke about here." (And he demonstrated the spot.) "By the time I was out of the car at home, the arm had swollen twice it's size and my hand was like a grapefruit. Cheryl wanted me to go to the hospital, but I couldn't. We had no money - no insurance. We were in school with 4 kids. We knelt and Cheryl prayed. As she prayed, the pain went out of the arm and when she had finished, the arm was just like it is today." "And the mountain?"

"My parents gave us \$50.00 for a honeymoon. We went to Colorado. The first night we slept on the ground in our little tent. That was so hard that we took \$5.00 of our \$50 and bought air mattresses that lasted a only a few minutes. That day we went to Bear Lake, parked our car and went hiking along narrow paths around steep places where it was very uncomfortable for me to be. We were above the tree line. It was nice. Up there all is quiet - no birds, no animals, only snow and ice.

"Every afternoon it rains on the mountain. This afternoon it started to rain and was getting dark. I looked at my watch and,

thinking of those slick, narrow trails we came over said, 'I don't think we are going to get out of here safely.' We prayed and twenty minutes later we were at the bottom of the mountain. It was then I realized that I didn't remember going by any of those the things that I saw when we went up. So I decided to go back up the mountain the next day to the same place and see how long it would take me to come down. Cheryl didn't want to go, so I went alone, and that is quicker -- not having to keep together. Getting down that mountain took me an hour and a half to an hour and forty minutes. It took 20 minutes the night before."

Sherman finished with the affirmation, "I know He's very real. He knows what's going on with us every day. He will take care of us if we will let Him."

From the Pastor's Desk

Continued from front page

Covenants) for nine years before he published it to the world. As he and others of the leaders of the Mormons were practicing polygamy during this time, it might be asked, "Why did he delay making this document public?" You must believe that he carried this important "revelation" with him for nine years and didn't publish it to the world.

4. Oliver Cowdery (despite him not being associated with the church at the time) was lying when he wrote a letter dated July 24, 1846 that polygamy was not publicly taught at Nauvoo before Joseph's death. He also added in his letter that "of what that doctrine and faith is, and was, I ought to know . . ." (Referring to the doctrine of polygamy.)

5. Joseph was publishing revelations that taught monogamy while practicing polygamy from 1831 to his death.

6. Joseph had numerous wives, (allegedly seven) but none bore him children, but Emma bore him eight. (If there had been others, would not Brigham have trumpeted their existence to the world?)

7. Joseph's statement in which he declared polygamy a false and corrupt doctrine, published in the Times and Seasons, Volume 5, Page 475, dated February 1, 1844 (just before his murder) was a lie and a fraud.

8. Hyrum Smith's statement in which he declared there is no such doctrine taught here (Nauvoo) published in the same Times and Seasons, Volume 5, page 475 (just before his murder) was a lie and a fraud.

9. Emma Smith and her children, who declared that Joseph was not involved in polygamy, were either innocent dupes, or were joining the conspiracy of perjury and fraud.

10. Eliza R. Snow, who claimed in 1879 that she was married to Joseph, lied when, as Secretary of the Women's Relief Society, she signed a statement, published in the Times and Seasons Volume 3, Page 940, dated October 1, 1842, stating that Joseph Smith was not guilty of teaching or practicing polygamy. (This statement was also signed by Emma Smith and several other women in Nauvoo). Are all of them liars?

News & Notes

Cessarries Galusha to Sing at Carneige Hall

Cessarries Galusha and nine of her friends from Lamoni and vicinity will travel to New York this summer to sing in Carnegie Hall with a choir of some 150 to 200 persons. The girls are members of a selected choir called "Notation on the Line".

Their director is Rhonda Mickelson who, as a youth in Leon High School, was a member of the "Notables" and made a similar trip. The Notables then not only sang in Carnegie Hall but also got to tour the city and attend a Broadway play. It is Rhonda's teacher who is a good friend of the person in charge of Carnegie Hall's activities who has made this experience possible.

The girls and Rhonda presented a benefit concert at the Lamoni Community of Christ Church on Sunday, February 2 to help defray the cost of the trip, about \$1,200 for each of them. A number of the Mount Ayr congregation attended the concert to support the endeavor.

Reunion Reservations Coming In

Space in Walker Hall is filled and registrants are being assigned to other dormitories as registrations for the Seventy sponsored Missionary Family Reunion pour in. Registration forms are available on line at centerplace.org, or by contacting registrar Valle Smith on line at valsmith@iowatelecom.net or by mail at 607 East Madison, Mount Ayr. Iowa 50854.

Phipps Named Circuit Judge

High Priest Sherman Phipps was recently named Judge of the Fifth District Circuit Court by Iowa's Governor Vilsack. He was sworn in to that office at the Decatur County Courthouse on Friday, February 7 in the presence of a large number of dignitaries, family and friends. Those assembled filled the Decatur County Court Room, covered the top floor hallways with standing room only and spilled down the stairs to the first landing. This branch's Pastor, High Priest Magistrate Robert Rolfe was the first of a number of dignitaries to address the assembly and give counsel to the new judge. A reception followed at the Leon Golf Course.

Cub Scouts Win in Derby

Akela Galusha of Den 3, Troop 116 of BoQui District took home the winner's trophy from the 2003 Cub Scout Pinewood Derby held recently at the Community of Christ church in Lamoni. There were four rounds of races, 30-40 runs each round, and Akela lost only one race. His brother Gabel won second place.

In the competition for design, the Galusha brothers winnings were reversed. Akela's blue "roadster" with a silver stripe garnered the third place award for design. His brother Gabel's orange vehicle with the fire sticker decoration won second.

Youths Win At Speech Conference

Brandi Anderson and Jared Beck both had winning scores in the prose competition at the recent Pride of Iowa speech conference. Both received one ratings, the highest rating available. Brandi received a one and Jared received two. Jared received an outstanding performer award for the conference.

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

News & Notes (cont.)

Church Teens Meet in Competition

Brandi Anderson and Heidi Winkler are each in winning basketball teams. Brandi plays for Central Decatur and Heidi Winkler for Mount Ayr. Tuesday, February 25 their teams met again in the playoffs and Brandi's team advanced in the tournament playoffs.

60th anniversary celebrated

The 60th wedding anniversary of Charles and Helen Bastow, who are residents of the Mount Ayr Health Care Center in Mount Ayr, was held Saturday, Feb. 15. Congratulations to the Bastows!