

## FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

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### Mayan Discovery

Another Mayan city has been "discovered" by Archeologist Francisco Estrada-Belli. He is calling it Cival, being located in Guatemala. More interesting than the fact of another city being found, (Central America is covered with ruins) are some of his conclusions. According to Estrada-Belli, "it's very interesting when we reverse some existing ideas. We thought the Preclassic Maya were a relatively simple society. . . and they were not. There was a whole civilization during the Preclassic period we are just beginning to uncover." He believes this city housed as many as 10,000 people at its peak.

The Preclassic Maya period is dated by Estrada-Belli around 300 A.D. According to him, Civil "was abandoned under mysterious circumstances, never to be occupied again. He also said there were remains of a hastily built defensive wall around the city."

A stela (inscribed stone slab) found in the City was dated to 300 B.C. It is interesting to me that the Book of Mormon account is being corroborated by the changing conclusions of present day archeologists. (Should we be surprised?)

The book of Alma describes the methods of fortification of Nephite cities. (Alma 21:129-130, 150-152, 170-176; 22:1-5) Some of the ditches dug around the cities were deeper on one side than the other. I believe the ditches (moats) were dug deeper on the side from which the greater attack was believed to coming. While it is gruesome, these ditches were literally filled with the bodies of the Lamanites during these attacks.

*Continued on back page*

## TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

### The Gift Of the Holy Ghost

Seventy Ronald Smith greeted the congregation, many of whom had spent the day before together in Omaha experiencing the Zoo. He particularly addressed many of the children by name recalling how neat it was to see the animals with their young. "It was especially neat to see the little ones, the new ones that were just born and growing; and this morning we have that same opportunity again, in a sense, to see a new one just born - just growing.

"I would like to share with you a scripture from Acts the second chapter where Peter spoke to people who had been pricked in their hearts. They saw that what they had been doing - what they had done was not that which was right in the sight of God. And they said, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call' (Acts 2:38-39). And it goes on to say that Peter talked to them with lots of other words, but 'They that gladly received his words were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls (Acts 2:41)." (Brother Robert Rolfe had spoken before the baptism recalling baptisms remembered from his childhood when he would wonder if the service would ever end because there were so many. Alluding to that statement. Ron said, "And for Rob, that was a long baptismal service - 3,000! But it's nice to have a baptismal service with one, for we know there is joy in heaven.

"This morning we are going to have a baptism of the Holy Spirit in just a little while, and we are also going to have a Communion Service. As we contemplate the things that are coming, I would like to talk to you about the Gift of the Holy Ghost that is promised here; because that is the gift that God is giving to Rex this day, and the gift that He will give to anyone who repents, and follows Him and does the things that He says to do.

"Di and I were in the company of a Baptist minister who used to be an RLDS member. Di, you know is very straight forward about things that she says, so very soon they were talking about salvation,

baptism and all of those kinds of things. We found that even among Christians - among people who sincerely believe in the Bible, there are differences of opinion, and strong differences of opinion on what the gift of the Holy Ghost is all about and what it means to be born again.

“Jesus said that unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. And when Peter was talking to people about what they could do, he said, ‘You need to repent for the remission of your sins and you need to be baptized, and then you will receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost; and this promise is to you and your children and to those who are afar off - and 2000 years later is pretty far off! But we are here, and we have that promise as well.

### **Why Be Baptized?**

“Many people have thought that baptism was for the purpose of getting into the church. That is only partly true. But if you understand what the church is for, then you will understand that the church is here in order to help people to repent, to receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost and to have the remission of their sins. Doctrine and Covenants 3:16 tells us exactly what the church is. It says, ‘Behold, this is my doctrine; Whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me the same is my church; and whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore, he is not of my church.’ So those who repent and come unto Jesus in the way that He said, those are the people who are the church of God. We need to remember this morning that the church is not just we who are here. The church consists of all who repent and come unto Him.

“Jesus told us how to come to Him. He said that we must repent and be baptized and become as a little child. He said, ‘This is my doctrine. You must repent and be baptized and become as a little child.’ And then he said it again - ‘You must repent and be baptized and become as a little child.’ Actually He said it in different orders, and He said it in all different kinds of ways, but those are the things that have to happen in order to receive this Gift of the Holy Ghost. “Some have thought that the Gift of the Holy Ghost was so that we could speak in tongues. I believe the Lord is saying to you this morning, Rex, that there will be a time when your tongue will be loosed. You will have the freedom to share the love of God in His name and in His words. You will have the freedom to speak, in whatever language you use. When this happens, know that it is the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“But there is more than just speaking in tongues because the scriptures tell us that the Gift of the Holy Ghost is there to lead us into all truth. The Gift of the Holy Ghost is to help us to keep the covenant that we make to follow Him. God knows that we are sinful people. God knows that we can make a choice in our head, and that doesn’t always mean that that is what we do. We are responsible for those choices that we make and for the things that we do, but we don’t always do what we know is best. And sometimes we even do things that we know are wrong.

“Often I hear people say, ‘God, forgive me for my weaknesses.’ But the scripture says that He gives us our weaknesses so He can work through us and make us strong. It’s not our weaknesses that we need to be forgiven for. It’s for the times when we know exactly what we are doing and we don’t do what God wants us to do. That’s the time when we need to be forgiven for our sins. And this day Rex has come before God and said, ‘I am willing to repent of all of my sins, to give them to You and to follow You always so that I can have the Gift of the Holy Ghost that will cleanse me, that will help me to stand before God whole, unblemished and clean.’

He will help you, Rex. He will help you to do the things you know you need to do.

“Many of you haven’t had the conversations with Rex that Di and I have been privileged to have, because Rex is kind of shy and he doesn’t always initiate a conversation with just anybody. He is always glad to talk to anybody who will talk to him, but he just doesn’t always initiate the conversation. As Rex was considering whether or not he should be baptized, he was concerned. He said, ‘In Taiwan, lots of people have to work on Sunday. If I get baptized and go back there to work, what if I am not able to meet with the Saints?’

“In Taiwan, there is only one congregation that I know of that’s meeting, and most people have to go a long way to get there. It’s not just a matter of getting into the car and in twenty minutes more or less you are there. He might have to work, and so I know that kind of concern has been on his mind as he has made this covenant. I believe that I am speaking for the Lord in sharing with you , Rex, that God will send His Spirit to be with you. That’s His promise, and that’s what this is about. It is more than just meeting with the Saints. If you will allow Him to be a partner in your life, He will find you a way to be able to meet with those who are like minded and have the same kind of faith. We know that He is faithful and just, and He will do the things that will lead you and keep you in The Way as long as you are willing to follow whatever He says to do. That’s the promise of the Holy ghost. He will lead you into all truth. He will keep you in the covenant.

### **Why Jesus Restored his Church**

“If we read in the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants we can find out why this church is here on the earth. It says, ‘Wherefore I, the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments, and also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world; ... that it might be fulfilled, which was written by the prophets; that the weak things of the world should come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellowman, neither 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; that faith also might increase in the earth; that mine everlasting covenant might be established; that the fullness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple, unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers.’ (Doctrine and Covenants 1:4).

“As I read this passage, I see several reasons given for the existence of the church. The church exists so that we can all speak in the name of God the Lord - so that you, Rex, will be able to speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world. The church also exists so that faith might increase in the earth; so that as you have heard of the stories of faith and the testimonies that have been shared, your faith will increase, and that you will be able to be a part of those kinds of testimonies and understanding of God working in the world.

“When I was at Graceland, I had an interesting experience one day. You know, I have some depression sometimes and feel like things are down. I wouldn’t say it’s clinical depression. I’ve never gone to a clinic for it, but I do get kind of down sometimes, as I think most people do at some point in their life when things aren’t going real well. I opened my mail box and there was a three by five card that had a little verse by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. I don’t know who sent it, but I’m hoping that I share the story often enough that

whoever sent it will get thanked. The verse said, 'Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. Only he who sees takes off his shoes. The rest sit round and pluck blackberries.'

"For those who may not get all of the symbolism there, let me just share with you what it's talking about. When Moses saw the burning bush, it was afire with God, and God said, 'Moses, take off your shoes. You're on Holy ground!' So Moses took off his shoes and he talked with the Lord; and God told him the things that He wanted him to do in life. Moses understood the significance of a burning bush that wasn't being consumed by the flames. Someone else coming by that day might have seen a burning bush and said, 'There's a bush on fire'. Another may not even have ever noticed, or might have taken out the hot dogs and roasted a hot dog, or used that in some other way. Browning's point in that little verse was that every bush was afire with God, and only those who understand the work of God in the world can see that these bushes are alive with God - that God is at work in the world. And when we do - when we see that God's work is alive in people - that His Spirit is working in their lives - that He's bringing to pass goodness in the earth - when we recognize that Spirit of God in each person, that's when we take off our shoes and recognize that He is our creator - that He is the person who made all of this - that He's the one who is bringing to pass His righteousness. That's when we worship. That's when we come to understand His Spirit and take off our shoes. The rest of us who don't understand, sit around and say, 'Oh, there are some nice blackberries' and just enjoy the fruit even though we don't understand where it came from.

#### **What Difference Does the Gift Make?**

"I think that's the kind of difference that the Spirit of God makes in us. When we are touched by the Spirit of God, then we understand that God works with all people; and wherever there is good, that's God working in people's lives. And it's our job to not only understand that but to let that Spirit work through us and in us and be a part of us. The scripture says that God's Spirit touches and works with every man that enters the earth. Wherever there is life, there is God's Spirit. But the Gift of the Holy Spirit is more than that. The Gift will allow you to do those things, even the things that Jesus did. Jesus said, 'Not only the things that I do, but greater things than these shall they do because I will pray for them.' Jesus will pray for you, and we will pray for you that you will be able to be an instrument in His hands that the Spirit of God would not only come to you this day but that it would work through you and give you the opportunity to make the world the kind of place that God intended it to be.

"What does the Gift of the Holy Ghost do for you? The gift of the Holy Ghost is something that works with you and through you and in every part of your being. I would just like to share a couple of people's experience with this gift. One of them was Alan White. I'm not going to tell you the whole story. I know that most of you have heard the story before. Alan White was a young man who had lost his way. His sister had lost her way, too. When she committed suicide, Alan was totally lost! He just wanted to sit at home and play the guitar. He learned to play classical guitar so he would have something to tell his friends that he was doing; but he mainly pulled the shades and smoked pot, and just considered suicide. He was lost, but through the miraculous power of God, he was found. I had an opportunity, after Alan had been baptized for two or three months, to ask him, 'Alan, is there any difference in what it was like now and before you were baptized?' He said, 'Oh, yes! Before, it was like I was in a black box, and there was no way out. I couldn't see

anything, and I couldn't go anywhere. Now there's hope!' The Spirit of God brings hope to people who are lost, who see no way out and see no other way.

"I don't know why the Lord chooses me sometimes, but it has been my opportunity to share the Gift of the Holy Ghost with people who are lost and see no way out. And that Gift of the Holy Ghost can make all the difference because now there is hope.

"I remember three young men in Nepal who were from Ananda's village. Ananda Karkhi was a young man who was translating for Seventy George Thomas. These three young men had never known about a god of any kind. They didn't know about the Hindu god. They didn't know about Buddha. They didn't know about the Christian God. They didn't know about any God. The reason was that they were untouchables, from the untouchable class. They were the lowest caste, and no one would have anything to do with them. In the Hindu religion, cows are sacred. You can't kill a cow. But if somebody happens to hit a cow and kill it, which you can go to jail for, by the way, if the cow has laid there a couple of days, the untouchables can come and use the meat, and nobody says anything. The untouchables are considered nothing, and no one has even bothered to share the Hindu gods with them - because they are untouchable.

"These young men came to find work because there was no work in the village where they lived. They looked up Ananda, and Ananda started telling them about Jesus. He had talked with them for less than a day. In fact, I think he had only talked with them for an hour or so, and they wanted to be baptized. So we were asking them why. Sometimes you don't know whether people are just wanting to have some financial contribution to their cause or what. Their answer was, 'When we heard the name of Jesus, our spirits leapt up inside us!' That's what they said.

"The Gift of the Holy Spirit! The Gift that makes our spirits leap for joy and brings us back into the presence of God! We know that it is God's grace that brings that Spirit to us, and those who say that there is nothing that we can do that would bring about the Gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives are partly right. The scriptures surely say that. There is nothing that we can do that would give us the right to come back into the presence of God - nothing that would give us the cleansing that He offers. But on the other hand, He says, 'Even though this is My work, I won't make you do it. It's up to you. You must be the one to come in the depth of humility and be baptized. And if you will do that, I will give you the Gift of the Holy ghost; and this promise is unto you, and to your children and to those who are afar off!' And that is the gift that we are going to give today. The gift that we give is like any other gift. It has to be used or it is no good. If you will allow the Spirit to work in your life and through you, then the gift will be worth the giving, and the giver of that gift, who is Jesus Christ our Lord, will be glorified.

"I have taken more time than I should have this morning, but after the Gift of the Holy Spirit is given, we are all going to have an opportunity to remember Him. Jesus said to remember Him in taking the bread and the wine. I would like to close with just a little reading from the Book of Mormon, (Moroni 6:4-7). It's about baptism and the way the church was supposed to be. 'And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ. And their names were taken that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ,



who was the author and the finisher of their faith.

“And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls: and they did meet together oft to partake of bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus; and they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; ... .’ These are the things that the church is for. It is not that you are joining a church to be part of a church. It is that you are joining a church that there would be a people who are willing to keep the commandments of God - who are willing to put this covenant into practice - who are willing to be used by the Holy Spirit - a people who will fast and pray together - a people who will remember Him that His will might be done in their lives. This is the entrance into the Kingdom of God. This is the way that Jesus said to come, and we are fulfilling His commandment this day. May God bless you as you are baptized by the Holy Spirit, and also as you partake of the Communion for the first time this morning.”

Rex Lin took his place in a chair placed before the pulpit as Barbara Jordison sang, “He gave His life for me,” a song that describes the sacrifice of Christ for us, then asserts, ‘He lives again for me. He says, ‘Come follow me’. So I’ll give my life to Him and live with Him forever!’”

Michael Jordison and Ronald Smith laid their hands on Rex’s head and Michael offered the confirming prayer, bestowing the promised Gift of the Holy Ghost.

#### **Prayer of Confirmation**

“Oh, Lord God, we call upon thee in the name of Thy Son, even Jesus the Christ to pour out Your Spirit upon us as we perform this Holy Ordinance. “Father of heaven, we know that we are nothing. We are as the dust of the earth - as ashes scattered in the wind, but by the power of Your redeeming love we have been transformed and made new. And it is by the blood of Jesus Christ that we even come here this day to confer that which has been bestowed upon us, even Your Spirit to comfort, to quicken and enliven. Father of Heaven, I would uphold my brother Rex to You at this time, Lord, that he may have Your Spirit to always be with him, that he may keep your commandments, even as You desire, and that You may fill his life, even as he desires.

“Lord, I pray that You would go with him as he returns home. That You would be with him among his family, and that You would calm and quiet his fears concerning them. And as he goes and he interacts with them, Lord, that Your Spirit will speak through him, and that he will change their lives and impact them for the sake of Thy Son, even Jesus Christ. I pray, Lord, that You would give him that assurance that You are always with him as he goes among his people in work and in play and in activity, Lord, that he will find ministry in the things that he does and the things that he says. Let him not be concerned, Lord, over whether or not he works upon Sunday, but let him recognize, Lord, that all days are holy unto Thee, and that his life is a living sacrifice on all days, and that he can offer his prayers and his supplications while he works and while he interacts with people. And Lord, I pray that You would open up his mouth that he may speak, even the words of Jesus Christ as He gives him utterance, and that, Lord, he may change those around him and that he may be an instrument in Thy hands in proclaiming the gospel among his people.

“Lord, you have looked down upon this time from the foundations of the world. You have formed Rex and You have nurtured him through his life and brought him to this point. Lord, I pray that You would not stay Your hand nor Your words from him, but that You

would give to him freely that he may receive freely. Lord, we have all fallen short, and we have all sinned. Nevertheless, Lord, it is by Your grace we are redeemed. I pray, Lord, that Rex may always remember of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ made and that he may find a glory in the work of the Kingdom. I pray that You would give him the peaceable things of that Kingdom, even righteousness, peace and joy in the power of the Holy Ghost, and that You will change his life from this time forward to eternity.

“Now, Rex, as a servant of Jesus Christ, I confer upon you the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and may you speak in utterance with a new tongue, the words which Jesus Christ shall give to you, and may you know that you are cleansed from your sins, and that you stand clean before your God and your Maker who seeks to know you as only a loving father could. And I pray, Lord, that these blessings would be upon Rex and upon all those to whom he goes to minister as he works for the work of the Kingdom. These things I pray in the name of Thy Son, even Jesus Christ. Amen.

## **Testimony Of Jesus In Art**

Two special tributes were given to mothers on this Mother’s Day in addition to the sermon that was delivered by Seventy George Knotts. Jim Barber sang of “That Wonderful Mother of Mine”; and the beautiful arrangement of roses that had graced the front of the church during the service was distributed to mothers. The children of mothers present first chose a rose for their mother and presented it to her, then presented roses to all other women present. After the service many chose roses to give to others who could not be in attendance.

Brother Knotts used seven wood cut blocks for his current art exhibit to bear his testimony of Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:16-17, was his choice of scripture. “And all scripture given by inspiration of God, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” He then called attention to his wood cut blocks that he called his “notes”. He invited all to attend his exhibit of prints from the cuts now on display at the Lamoni Community Center.

“The first one I want to share with you is a man suffering,” the artist explained. “‘Sure as Hell’, this wasn’t the way his mother designed this man to turn out. Nor was it the way God designed man to turn out. And do you know who has the greatest potential of getting to be sons of perdition than anyone?” he asked. “They are the ones who were once real close to God. So the Latter Day Saints have the greater potential of reaching this condition of sons of perdition than does the average Baptist; because you have more to turn your back on. That’s just something to think about. Mothers don’t design them that way. They just happen that way. When your child is rebellious - if you tell him to do something and he doesn’t do it, that’s when you punish him strongly, isn’t it? If they willfully rebel against you, that’s when you teach them so that when you train them up in the way they should go, then when they are older they will not depart from it. So the condition we are in today is because mothers have not \_\_\_\_”. The last comment was obviously tongue in cheek, and there was a ripple of laughter through the congregation.

“Jesus, Creator, Redeemer and Friend” was the next wood cut

displayed. "He is designed by God to be number one in our lives."

Our speaker said, then called our attention to two circles he had on the white board. One was of a chair with an S representing a self centered life sitting in it with life, represented by unmarked circles, revolving around him. The other circle had a chair in the center with a cross representing Christ occupying it and all life revolving around it. Each life symbol in this picture was equipped with an arrow pointing toward that representation of Christ. "The one on the right is of a God centered life. In the one on the left, self is on the throne. The circle represents life, and Christ is not in that life. The one on the right, Christ is on the throne. Self is dethroned, and all the interests that are around that are related to being Christ centered. Now, that's perfect, isn't it?"

"Jesus Christ Paid the Price" was represented as an outstretched hand with a nail print in the hollow of the hand. "Since you have seen the 'Passion of the Christ', that means a lot more to us now than it did maybe the day before. Jesus paid it all. What do we have to do to accept that? It isn't just be baptized. We have a church full of members who have been baptized that maybe haven't accepted Christ as the Lord of their life. We have to accept Him not just as our Savior, but as our Lord." George called upon Mike to tell the difference between Savior and Lord. "Your Lord is your king. The Savior is somebody who rescues you," was the response declared right by our speaker. "We have to recognize Him as Lord and be subject to Him. He says, 'If you love me, you obey my commandments.' Then He is our Lord! There are a lot of people for whom Jesus is not their Lord. He's just an acquaintance.

"The other day I was talking to a fellow on the phone and he complimented me on a cartoon that was in the paper. It said, 'It takes a risen Christ to save a dying world.' That's who we worship, a risen Christ. That kind of reminded me of a cartoon I did when I was a Seventy under general church appointment, so I told him about it. A man had been talking to us saying he was a Christian Buddhist. At break time, I did a cartoon that said, 'Jesus and Buddha both were great teachers who walked the earth, but they buried Buddha in the earth that Jesus created.' There was a long pause on the phone when I was sharing this with him. I said, 'There's a long pause. What do you think about it?' 'I never had thought about it that way. I don't think much like that.' He was thinking Jesus came more or less as a baby, was crucified and rose again. He recognized that. He just didn't realize that Jesus was the Creator of the Universe - our earth that we are living on right now. It says that in John 1 and in Genesis it tells about Christ as the creator, so I couldn't imagine a man in the Restoration not catching that instantly. That surprised me."

The next cut represented Jesus standing at the door knocking. The scriptures say, 'If any man will open, He will come in and will sup with him, and they will sup with each other'. "Jesus stands at the door and knocks. You have always heard that the latch string is on the inside, but you have to be in hearing distance to hear Him knocking. You might not be at home. The light is on, but maybe you are not home. You have to be listening for Jesus to knock if you want to hear Him. One of the things we can do in sharing the gospel is to find simple ways to reach simple people. Because there a lot of things that we spend our money for, if you look at your check book and your calendar, you find out how you are doing. What you are spending your money for and what you are spending your time on tells how you are doing.

"The Lord has a lot of interesting things going on for Him in the world. He desires us to bear fruit for Him, and fruit for Him is souls for Him - souls coming to Him - people being converted, calling

Him Lord - accepting Him as Lord of their life and being guided like that. I make a contribution to one group of people who "The Lord has a lot of interesting things going on for Him in the world. He desires us to bear fruit for Him, and fruit for Him is souls for Him - souls coming to Him - people being converted, calling Him Lord - accepting Him as Lord of their life and being guided like that. I make a contribution to one group of people who are going around evangelizing, and I got this little note the other day that for fourteen years they told me how many people had committed their life to Jesus. We could doubt them, but I don't doubt them. Anyway when I took that figure, it was a lot. And when I took that figure and divided it into 250,000, the membership of the COC - incidentally, the estimated membership of the early church was around 200,000, so we are a little more than holding our own; but you suspect that they maybe not holding their own even, because they are counting all you folks in their membership, too. If they had the real count, it might be a lot less.

So I just took that figure, 250,000 and divided it into this figure for the last 14 years, it was over 1300 times difference. That's a lot of difference. That's multiplying the RLDS Church, or COC, 1300 times more. So the Lord is active. He's out there working. People are coming to Jesus, accepting Him as the Lord of their life. Even if the figures I have received are exaggerated, you can cut them in half, isn't it wonderful what the Lord is doing with those who really trust Him?"

"We have talked about the Jesus film. It is in about 800 languages now. That's a lot of languages. Bill Bright designed this process and made it so it wasn't lip sync, so they can translate it in any language and just have somebody read it. It is said that the Jesus film was being shown in Africa when an African said, 'That's not an African up there speaking, but he's speaking perfect Swahili.' (That might not be the actual language.)

"They were showing this film back in the boondocks of Africa, using a gas generator to produce electricity. When the film showed a blind man being healed, a blind lady spoke up right out of the group and says, 'I want to see!' When it came to Jesus' crucifixion, she says, 'I can see!' The skeptics said, 'Come up here. Take this match and light the candle. She came up, took the match, struck it and lit the candle and many people accepted Jesus because of that miraculous experience."

"I've shared this with you before that it was requested by Russia to show that film in every high school in Russia. And they said, 'We can't do that. We have to have a counselor come in, and Russia was willing to send a counselor in to have them trained so the students would have some guidance after they saw it. One miracle happened after another. They needed the literature real bad, so they had to get that literature translated into Russian and get somebody to sponsor that and one thing after another happened as they moved out in faith. Why did Russia want this shown in their schools? Because they recognized that they were missing out on a core morality. Their society wasn't holding together. They were missing some core morality and they wanted that in there so they could have that core morality to be a part of their life. As a quick comparison, it's illegal to show that film in the United States High Schools, because they have to have separation of church and state. Incidentally, that's a bogus idea, but it got started and nobody has stamped it out yet. Our forefathers never had that intent at all!

"I have talked about how the Jesus Film is converting people, with one person every two seconds accepting Jesus as the Lord of their life. If you do the math on that, it comes out it will multiply the

COC Church in less than every six days.

“Here is the prophet, Joseph Smith.” Our speaker announced as he presented the next carving. “In the last days God called Joseph Smith to represent Him and to bring forth the Book of Mormon, and if you don’t think he’s a prophet, the Book of Mormon proves him a prophet. If you don’t think he translated the Book of Mormon by the power of the Holy Ghost, then you have to give him credit for all of it, and that makes him a prophet. And if he did translate it by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, he has to be a prophet. So any way you cut it, Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.

“This block is the ‘Bride of Christ’ waiting for Jesus to come.” Brother Knotts said as he presented the next work. “That’s where we are now. We are the bride of Christ waiting for Jesus to come. Now you notice she is not necessarily happy waiting for Him to come, and He’s off in the distance coming. Wouldn’t it be a shame if she was pregnant when He got here? How could that be? Because if the bride of Christ gets involved with other organizations - gets involved with other things, she wouldn’t be saving herself for Jesus. Jesus is coming. The bride is maybe waiting. Maybe she is not focused on where He is - maybe she is not looking in that direction - maybe the lights are on but nobody’s home. What are we doing about Jesus? Are we going to be happy to see Him coming? Or are we going to say, ‘If you will just wait a minute, I have some things I would like to repent of before you get any closer.’

“Here’s the last one. This is the ‘Family of God’ or the ‘Kingdom of God’ because it’s a loving family. Here’s the father, the bride and the child. Who would the child be? The kingdom. It’s a loving family, and we have built in our homes a model for God’s kingdom.

“I hope you can remember this graphic presentation, and if you want to see the real pictures, these and more are down at the Community Center. They are not put in this order. They are just put up on the wall.

“Jesus wants you for a sunbeam to shine for Him each day.” Our speaker then turned to the Michael and Julia Jordison family who had provided the early family worship for the congregation. ‘I appreciate you folks’ worship, every time I see you as a family.’ Speaking to the rest of the congregation, Brother George continued,

“This is my image of the family as they came up and led the morning worship this morning, and that’s how I think of them. Your families: I love the mothers. I love the children. They bear good fruit. Mildred, I know all of her sons are pretty good, and I have admired all of them. But it wasn’t until the other day that I got a chance to get acquainted with her daughter, and what a good job she is doing in the Centerplace in the school - a Christian school - a Saint’s school, and she is the assistant administrator of it. I sat there and heard her testimony and I just appreciated it; and I appreciate all the other mothers here who bear good fruit. You all can claim your good fruit.

“I would like to bow out now in the name of Jesus and leave you plenty of time to get home for this mother’s day dinner. In Jesus Name, Amen!”

## Do Your Words Have Iron In Them?

“For a scripture I have gone to the Inspired Version, Matthew

21:26-31,” Priest Ed Anderson announced on Sunday, May 16. He read, ‘But what think ye? A man had two sons; and he came to the first, saying, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I will serve; and went not. Whether of these twain did the will of their father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you.’

“I’m going to divert a little bit here. I am going go back to the Christmas party again. By now there ought to be some miraculous things happening in this congregation if we have done what was requested of us to do at the Christmas party at Winklers. Does everybody remember what we were supposed to do? We were supposed to pray for somebody. The name was on a sheet of paper, and we were supposed to pray for them for an entire year. Everybody does remember the person they were supposed to pray for, right?” When some protested that they were not at the Christmas party, Ed suggested that somehow next time we find a way to include even those who do not attend an event in which such an important request occurs.

“I’ve come this morning with some kind of, not really concerns in my heart, just observations of society in general. We seem to be a nation that for whatever reason, we can’t make a commitment. Before the Presidential election, not the last one but the one before, you could watch one of the candidates on television; and you could see. When he was in California he was telling the California people something, and when he was in New York, he was telling the New York people a different thing about the same thing, whatever object it was, The only trouble was the guy was elected! I haven’t figured that one out yet.

“We can’t take a stand. We can’t make up our mind. We say things sometimes, I’m not speaking here individually in this congregation, I’m speaking of society in general. Too often, we have no intention of doing what we say. We are saying things to each other, maybe we do it here in the congregation. Maybe we don’t, but we sure do it in society. We are saying things so it can look good for us.

“I had an incident here just the other day. I got the opportunity to sit in on a student teacher. Later I happened to be in the class at Graceland that her supervisor teaches, and he asked me, ‘Did she tell the truth?’ because she came into the class and told about things that happened in the classroom. I sat in and listened to her in the class, and she didn’t. They asked her if she drank. She told the high school class, ‘Yes.’ She told the college class, ‘No’, she didn’t drink. I haven’t quite figured that one out yet! To have a duplicity of thought is to say what people want to hear. I’ve heard it said by one individual in particular, ‘I say the things I know you want to hear.’ Then what do I believe? I sure can’t believe you no matter what you say, if that’s the case! Are we afraid of saying, ‘NO!’ When somebody asks us to do something, do we say, ‘No, we can’t do it.’ or do we say, ‘Yes, I’ll do it!’ with no intention of carrying through? Do we say to ourselves, ‘I know that I can’t, but I can always call and say, ‘I can’t make it.’

“It’s good that everybody says, ‘Yeah. He said, ‘yes. I’m going to do that’, but very few people remember that they probably didn’t do it. Have you ever asked somebody if they will do something for you and they come back with the comment to the effect that, ‘You know, I really want to help you, but I don’t know what I am going to be doing that day’? Have you ever heard that one? I’m sitting here



bewildered. You know, if he doesn't know what he is going to be doing that day, all he has to say is, 'Yes, I'll help you,' and then he knows what he is going to be doing that day. Right? It bewilders me that somebody would actually say, as a response, 'I don't know what I am going to be doing that day. I don't know if I can help you or not.' Just say, 'Yes.' Then I know you are going to be here helping me, and you know what you are going to be doing that day. It's kind of a simple no brainer!

"I like Clint Eastwood movies, and one that comes to mind is 'Outlaw Josie Wales' Remember toward the end of the show where the Indians have them surrounded in their little house and are threatening to obliterate them and Clint Eastwood hops onto his horse and the girl says, 'Don't go! Don't go!' Clint goes anyway. He rides into the Indian camp and basically tells the Indian chief, 'I came here to kill you.' The Indian chief says, 'Well, you've come to the right place, because if you keep talking like that, we are going to kill you.'" And it comes down to that they decide that since Clint took the initiative and made the venture and was willing to die for what he was saying, that Clint Eastwood's words had iron in them. That's the term they used, 'Had iron in them!' And words of life have iron in them. Eastwood's character lets them know that if they would live cooperatively together that would be good. But if not, if they didn't think they could achieve that, then obviously they are standing there with their guns are all trained on him and his words had the word of iron of death in them, too.

"When we talk, do our words have 'words of iron' in them? When we come before each other and before God, when we say something, is it a covenant? It used to be that when you would shake hands with somebody, it was a deal. It was a done deal! They didn't need to have contracts. Whatever you agreed upon, that was the way it was going to be. I would say that's probably not the case any more. Today you would have to get it in a contract. If you want help, you would have to go pick up the person that was going to help you or call them to remind them to make sure that they come and help you. You can get four or five or six people to say, 'Yeah. I'll come', and do they come? Probably not. Words of iron?

"I've had people say certain things, like 'I lift weights Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I have been doing that for seven or eight years'. So what they really mean is, 'I intend to lift weights Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and I probably get it done maybe every other week or, last week it was on Thursday.' I do know one thing. It sounded good that they lifted weights on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, but when they go to try out for the football team or the baseball team or the spiritual team, at the pearly gates - that team, what then? You know you live your life and then show up at the championship team at the pearly gates - saying one thing is not going to get you in the gate. Saying that you have lifted weights and that you have practiced your sport or whatever else, is not going to get you on the team by itself. You have to have made that commitment and carried it through. And the same is true as far as the spiritual realm is concerned.

"Another problem that I think that we kind of have in this society is - (I'm not trying to pick on society today. This is not a pick-on-society day.) When we have made a commitment, who have we made that commitment for? We look at each of our lives. Who are we living for? What is our goal? Christ is asking, 'What have you done for me?'

"Let's go back and look at a few of the ten commandments. Thou shalt not -. Let's not start with 'Thou shalt not kill'. I don't think that one is probably really applicable here, but we'll get to it

anyway. 'Thou shalt not steal'. Are the majority of our actions for our benefit? Obviously, if you steal from someone, you are doing it for you, unless you are giving it away like Robinhood. I think that Robinhood had some problems in that when he gave it away, he got the recognition for being a good guy. But if you steal, you are doing it for you. You take the money, take the object, and you use it for your own purposes.

"We look a another commandment. 'Thou shalt not commit adultery'. We are consuming for what? For ourselves. 'Shall not kill'. Probably the ultimate selfish act if you feel like you need to take someone else's life, and it benefits you and you alone. You shall not lie. Why are we lying? Is it to benefit us? More than likely, we don't tell the truth because we can't face up to it. It's we ourselves that we are trying to protect. If we are always doing things for ourselves, we can kind of understand maybe the scripture that says it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. How do rich men become rich? Generally they do things for themselves. Their intent and goal is to accomplish something for themselves. Sure, I know that rich people give money and do a lot of good that way, but probably to get there, you are going to have to make a lot of decisions that benefit yourself rather than benefitting somebody that may be around you. Then the question is, 'What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?'

"You can see where I am heading with this. Christ is demanding of us to be His servants - to work for Him - to be dedicated to Him. We become separated from Him when we work for ourselves. It's a totally opposite way in which we are going. I think I would rather have my soul than gain the whole world. If I see somebody in need, I should contribute. If I see somebody who is in need of help, I should be able to make that commitment for that particular day. 'Yes, I'll help you,' and then show up. You've got to show up. You can say all you want, but you've got to show up! Those that make themselves first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Again, who are we putting first? What is our effort? Our efforts are to go to serve God and to serve other people. The scriptures say that when you are in the service of your fellowmen, you are only in the service of God. How many times have we gone by somebody who needed help along side of the road and said, 'I really don't want to stop!' Has anybody ever been at the checkout counter when the person ahead of them, who is obviously poor and doesn't have enough money, winds up setting something back. Could you have paid for that? Could you have helped them out?

"Again I want to say, it's not necessarily those who say they are going to do things. It is not necessarily the people who are out front of the organization, that are out front of the community, that are out front of the schools, that are out front up where everybody can see them that are the good people. It's those that are behind the scenes that have done these things not to be seen but because somebody needs help. We're not supposed to do things so people will say, 'Oh, yeah! Ed Anderson is such a good person. He's given to the community. He's given to so and so over there'. That's not why we do this. Because, what is that? You are doing things for yourself, and not for Christ or for the individual. You are doing it just to be seen rather than doing it because it's necessary.

"We are commanded to do good. The scriptures say if you are commanded to do good, and that's what it's going to take for you to do it, you probably are not as well off as if you do it because you love Christ; and because you love Christ, you love other people. It's like an athlete. You command somebody to lift weights, and they are not going to be quite as dedicated to it as if they just see the

necessity and do it of their own accord.

“So, when we move forth in service, let us do it with a joyful heart. Let us do it because we love Christ, because we see the need, because we love other people, and not for ourselves to be noticed. The scriptures point out, and I am sure there are experiences of people that point out, where angels are in the world, and those sometimes present situations where you entertain them. Do we know when we are meeting people at Wal-Mart which one might be an angel? There’s one thing I know for sure, you will never fool God and Christ about what’s in our heart. I don’t care what we tell each other. I don’t care what we tell ourselves. I know people who say, ‘I lifted weights Monday, Wednesday and Friday.’ They can tell themselves all they want that that’s what they do, but God will know the difference. God will know the difference in what the intent of your heart is when you perform your service - when you give your gifts of love for others. You may be doing it to angels. You may be doing it for one of the Three Nephites. We never know, do we?”

“Let our words be true. Let our hearts be true. Let our words be of iron. Let our commitments be solid to each other - to God and to Christ. And when we make the pearly gates, He’s not going to have to ask us, what have you done for Me?”

## God Has The Way Prepared

Struggling against deep emotions, High Priest Sherman Phipps announced, “If I can do it, I would like to read a couple of scriptures. They both are kind of lengthy, and I hope you will bear with me. And I hope somehow I will be able to tie them together for you, or perhaps not myself. One comes from the Doctrine and Covenants. (I really wish I could just sit down now! I didn’t know reading could be so difficult!)

“Hearken ye, for, behold, the great day of the Lord is nigh at hand. For the day cometh that the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven; the heavens shall shake and the earth shall tremble, and the trump of God shall sound both long and loud, and shall say to the sleeping nations; Ye saints arise and live; Ye sinners stay and sleep until I shall call again: wherefore gird up your loins, lest ye be found among the wicked. Lift up your voices and spare not. Call upon the nations to repent, both old and young, both bond and free; saying, Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord: for if I, who am a man, do lift up my voice and call upon you to repent, and ye hate me, what will ye say when the day cometh when the thunders shall utter their voices from the ends of the earth, speaking to the ears of all that live, saying: Repent, and prepare for the great day of the Lord; yea, and again, when the lightnings shall streak forth from the east unto the west, and shall utter forth their voices unto all that live, and make the ears of all tingle, that hear, saying these words: Repent ye, for the great day of the Lord is come.

“And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Hearken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not? How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and

pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor, and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not? Behold, the day has come, when the cup of the wrath of mine indignation is full. Behold, verily I say unto you, that these are the words of the Lord your God; wherefore, labor ye, labor ye in my vineyard for the last time: for the last time call upon the inhabitants of the earth, for in my own due time will I come upon the earth in judgment; and my people shall be redeemed and shall reign with me on earth; ... .” (Doctrine and Covenants 43:5-7b.)

### God Gives Good Gifts

“I don’t know if these two will fit together for you at this point, but this is the Lord speaking. (Luke 11:5-14) ‘And he said unto them, Your heavenly Father will not fail to give unto you whatsoever ye ask of him. And he spake a parable, saying, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine has come to me in his journey, and I have nothing to set before him; And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.’

“I don’t know if that makes sense to some of you, but if you have had children, you probably know once you are in bed and finally get the kids settled down, you really don’t want to get up. But He goes on and says: ‘I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity (asking), he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one who asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

‘If a son shall ask bread of any of you who is a father, will he give him a stone? or, if a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good gifts, through the Holy Spirit, to them who ask him.’

“There are two parts of what I feel like I want to share with you this morning, and I know none of this is new to you. Even reading these two scriptures to you this morning, I understood these are scriptures you have heard many times, some of them probably pretty recently; but I still felt they were appropriate. I could probably boil this down to two points. On the one hand, as the first scripture indicated, we live in a day and age when we can anticipate that all of those things which the Lord has told us would come to pass, will. (Our speaker paused to make reference to weather conditions of the recent past saying, ‘I didn’t prepare this this way, but as you know, it has been pretty stormy this week with the lightnings and the thunders and such.’) I think on the one hand you can anticipate that these things which the Lord has told us will come upon the earth in judgment will, indeed come. And that’s why it is so important for us, on the other hand to understand that at the same time God stands ready to give only the best gifts to His people - to those who will repent and humble themselves and look to Him and count on Him. Maybe you already understand it. Maybe I am just talking to myself.

“I have read that scripture that talks about asking and receiving. It talks about, if a son shall ask bread of a father, would he give him a stone, etc.? I have read that a lot of times and thought to myself, it’s true. God has all of these choicest blessings to give to us. He



wants to give them to us. He longs to give them to us. He tries to give them to us. Sometimes we just don't accept them. But as I read it in preparation for this morning, it struck me just a little differently. Again, I don't expect this will be news to any of you. It's always tough talking to this group because I feel many of you know a lot more of this than I do. But it struck me a little differently, and I wondered how many of us realize and consider that God not only has these choicest blessings and gifts. He not only hears and understands our prayers and knows what we have need of, but this whole thing of receiving gifts isn't a lot of times a future thing. I guess I have always read this scripture thinking, 'Well, I guess the Lord has all of these things He is going to give to us'. I think that's true in a sense, but I think it's also true that if we really consider our lives, He has, in fact, already given us these gifts.

### **You Are Where God Put You For a Purpose**

"In my life anyhow, I have often thought, 'Someday He is going to move me from here to here, and it's going to be great!' other than realizing that He put me here because that's where He wanted me. I guess that's what I am trying to say this morning: that I hope that as you consider the things that are yet to come upon the earth, you can recognize that you are where you are because the Lord put you there, and He put you there for a purpose. Fulfilling His word is not necessarily going to move you from where you are to some other place. But it's going to require you, right where you are, to bear witness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Probably about week and a half or so ago I was driving down the interstate on my way to work one morning. I was thinking about one of our grandchildren. (She's not really a grandchild, but we claim her, and she claims us.) She was going off to spend the summer working in a place where she has never been before. I was thinking to myself, 'I wish I had funds to give her some money to help her out because I think she is going to need a little help this summer'. So I was thinking about what I could give her. I am talking money now, and that is not really what this is about, but I was thinking, 'I wonder what I could spare - what I could give her.' Right in that moment I was thinking, 'You know I wish I had done better with my life. I wish I had done differently so I would have more to give'; and the Spirit, I felt it was the Spirit, came over me very strongly and told me not to worry about it, that the Lord would take care of it. It wasn't necessary for me to give her anything. I could give her something if I wanted, and I did give her a little, but it wasn't for me to give her what she would have need of. She could get what she needed only from the Lord, and she would get what she needed from the Lord if she would ask and rely upon the Lord.

### **God's Gifts Prepared for us and For The Nations**

And I thought about how that applies to not just this one little situation that I am talking about but how the Lord has already prepared for all of us those things that we need, not just for us individually but for the nations. It's already there. It's His gift! We just need to learn to ask and, I guess, learn how to receive sometimes, and how to understand that which we receive. I don't know why I wanted to share that with you this morning, but I felt this, and I felt this morning that it was important for you to know that the things which those around you - your loved ones and those you are equally concerned about, the things which they need, God has already prepared the answer for them. He has already prepared the gift which they need. It's a matter of us going to Him, asking in faith and being willing to receive.

"The scriptures are full of, (How do I say it?). It says a lot of times in the scriptures in different ways that we should turn our

burdens over to the Lord, and I wondered, as I prepared for this morning, if we really know how to do that, or if we just insist on carrying them around ourselves. I don't know what all each one here in this room struggles with, what it is you feel is your burden, but I can assure you this morning that it's not really your burden unless you insist on it being your burden. There's a scripture in Jeremiah that talks about how men complain because they have this burden or that burden and the fact is, we don't have any burdens. The Lord carries our burdens for us. Those things that we struggle with, that keep us from making the progress that we need to make spiritually, are things we just need to let loose of - to let go of; because if we are struggling with things that are really important, and I am not saying we should never struggle with them. It's through your struggle sometimes that you grow. But ultimately we need to be aware of the fact that in as much as the things that we think of as burdens have any spiritual significance and are really something the Lord has asked of us, He has prepared a way and He carries those for us.

"I don't know why I wanted to share this with you this morning, either. This is just kind of a mish-mash this morning. It's not a nice flowing sermon like you might have hoped for. Again you have probably all thought this through and it's nothing new to you, but the movie, the Passion of Christ that most of us went to, maybe more than once. I don't know. I ended up going twice because my grandson wanted me to. I didn't really want to go again, but one of the scenes in there, of course, has to do with Judas and him going out and hanging himself. That's always been kind of interesting to me because, apparently he hung himself because of his consciousness that he had betrayed Christ. On the other hand, Peter also betrayed Christ. He denied Him three times, just as Christ had told him he would do. It was the same with Judas. Christ had told him that he was going to betray him.

"So you have two men. Both of them betrayed Christ in different ways. One commits suicide. The other goes on to even greater service than what he had participated in before. And that has always interested me. What was Judas' real sin, then? I think there was probably a time in my life when I thought that somehow committing suicide was just a natural result of betraying Christ. And I suppose, in a way, you could say that's true; but when you think about it. You have these two men and they have such different reactions to their realization that they have betrayed Christ, then what was Judas' real sin? My own conclusion, and you can think about this if you want and maybe its not something you want to think about, my own conclusion is that Judas' real sin was in failing to recognize, after all the time he had spent with Christ, that Christ could forgive him for what he had done - that he could be made clean and whole again.

### **The Greater Sin Is to Quit**

"And so, each of us here today, as we sit here, I don't know what kind of things trouble you - what kind of things seem to come in upon you and make you feel like somehow you have reached a point where you can't serve the Lord - that He just wouldn't use you. Maybe you don't feel that way. Maybe that's just me that feels that way, but I struggle with that sometimes. But I think our real sin would be to reach the point where we give up - to reach the point where we say, 'I'm unworthy. I can't go on. I am going to quit!' It's the quitting, and what I guess I am asking you to do today is, no matter how far away from God you feel like you may have moved at times in your life, to understand His ability to forgive us, and His desire to forgive us. I mean, He paid the ultimate price with His Son

so He could forgive us. So none of us, as we sit here this morning has any excuse for giving up or quitting.

“And as we anticipate the things that are yet to come upon this earth, we need to be filled with hope and faith. We need to be anxious to go forward in His work - not the kind of thing where we decide we are going to take off and go one way or another on our own. That will just get us in trouble, but the kind of thing where we are willing to recognize that He is still willing to work with us - that He will forgive us, and that we can stay right where we are and be an instrument in His hands.

### **No Place for Broken Cisterns**

“There is a scripture in Jeremiah that I felt was significant this morning, too. In Jeremiah 2:12, God is speaking - maybe it wasn't God. Maybe it was one of the prophets. I think it was one of the prophets. I guess that would be God speaking through the prophets. He says that the people have committed two great evils. One is forsaking Him, the fountain of living waters, and the other one is hewing out broken cisterns that can hold no water. I don't know what that means to you, but I think He was calling them, and I think He is calling us today, to recognize that there is only one God. There is only one way that we can be saved and that we can experience eternal life.

“And we need to quit hewing out broken cisterns, this scripture said. I don't know what that means to you, but I started thinking about all of the broken cisterns I have in my life - all of the things I put time and energy into that go nowhere - that really do nothing for anyone else in terms of the salvation of their souls. (Two year old Joshua Jordison began to cry, and his father started to take him from the room. Sherman spoke to that situation by speaking the child's name and musing, “I was just standing here thinking, I don't know what he is unhappy about, but I wonder what Joshua could tell us about the love of God and the humility that we need to have if he could stand up here instead of me this morning and speak. I surely wouldn't want him to go away.)

“I don't know what else to tell you this morning. I told you this was a kind of a mish-mash. I came this morning feeling pretty strongly that - .” Our speaker paused reflectively. “I don't want to say something that is just of me. I don't want to mislead you, but I feel pretty strongly that all of those things that are talked about in the scriptures that are to come upon the earth in the last days are at our doorstep; and at least for some of us, and I am not trying to tell you what the time is, but at least for some of us, life is going to be very different than what it is now. And as we face those changes, we need to understand that God has indeed prepared a way for us. He has given us the greatest gifts and will continue to do so if we will but look to Him and make Him our only God. I don't know how to tell you what that means in your life, each one of you. But we have, in many ways, forsaken Him and hewn out broken cisterns. We need to turn away from those, return unto Him. We need to fall on our knees before Him, and to repent while there is yet time.”

## **Music Filled Our Hearts! Our Spirits Sang!**

The service of the fifth Sunday of May was dedicated to praises and petitions to our Heavenly Father in music and song, as are almost all our fifth Sundays throughout the year. Pianist Nathan Smith provided the prelude and accompanied the congregation as

we sang our first prayer, “Touch Me Lord With Thy Spirit Eternal” Elder Alan Smith, in charge of the service, read the Latter Day call to worship in music from Doctrine and Covenants 119:6:

“The service of song in the house of the Lord with humility and unity of Spirit in them that sing and them that hear is blessed, and acceptable with God; but song with grievous sadness in them that sing and bitterness of spirit in them that hear is not pleasing to God. Therefore, in all the congregations of the people of God, let all strife and contention concerning song service cease; and that the worship in the house of the Lord may be complete and wholly acceptable, let them who shall be moved thereto by a desire and the gift to sing take upon them the burden and care of the service, and use therein instruments of music of the reed and of the string, or instruments of brass in congregations that are large, and as wisdom and choice may direct.

“Let the young men and the maidens cultivate the gifts of music and of song; let not the middle-aged and the old forget the gladness of their youth and let them aid and assist so far as their cares will permit; and remember that Saints should be cheerful in their warfare that they may be joyous in their triumph.”

Again we sang. This time it was the joyous hymn, “My Life Flows on in Endless Song. ... Since Love is Lord of heaven and earth, How can I keep from singing?” and the prayer of invocation was offered by Gordon Winkler.

When the opportunity to give monetary offerings was announced, it was declared that there would be many opportunities to give other offerings throughout the morning. The first of these was one of Ronald and Di Smith singing “Santo, Santo, Santo” first in Spanish and then in English, “Holy, Holy, Holy. My heart, my heart adores You. My heart knows how to say to You, ‘Holy, are You, Lord!’”

Lauren Smith played a beautiful arrangement of “The Old Old Path” at the piano. Immediately the clear sweet voice of Kathleen Myers came from the rear of the room singing another prayer, “I am weak, but Thou art strong. Jesus, keep me from all wrong. I'll be satisfied as long as I walk, Dear Lord, close to Thee.”

Pat Bolingbroke read from two Psalms of praise, Psalm 28:7 and 96:1-6. “The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him.”

“Oh sing unto the Lord a new song; sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His holy name; show forth His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.”

The David and Karen Bates family, accompanied by Nathan at the piano, sang, “Here I am to worship. Here I am to bow down. Here I am to say that You're my God. You're all together lovely, all together worthy, altogether wonderful to me.” The Alan and Valle Smith family sang a hymn of invitation, that describes the life available through the ministry and sacrifice of Jesus Christ - “life everlasting and strength for today”. It invites all to “drink the living waters and never thirst again”, then asks all to “Come and See! Come just as you are. Hear the Spirit's call. Come and see Christ the King. Come and live forever more!”

Sherman Phipps read Isaiah 12: 1-6, “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore

with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things; this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

Alan announced that the congregation would sing, “These things shall be; a loftier race than e’re the world has known shall rise, with flame of freedom in their souls, and light of freedom in their eyes. They shall be gentle, brave and strong, And spill no drop of blood, but dare all that may plant Christ’s lordship firm on earth and fire and sea and air!” He quoted the last verse saying, “We are looking for a time when a grander music thrills the skies and every life shall be a song, when all the earth is paradise!”

The original plan for this service was for Rodney Bastow to preach because it was thought most of the musicians of the congregation who usually make their offerings on the fifth Sunday would be elsewhere on this holiday weekend. When it became apparent that there would be others present who could augment the few congregational members remaining in Mount. Ayr, Rodney chose to read a favorite piece of proverbial counsel with a few appropriate comments of his own.

He said, “When Alan told me last week what his plans were for today, he asked me if there was something that I might be able to share with you. I tried to think of something that I could sing that would fit my voice range, but it seems like my voice is still changing. I’m not sure whether I haven’t reached puberty yet or what is going on, but that seems to be happening. So, on the way back to Burlington Junction last weekend, Debbie has a CD, ‘Mercy Me’ which has some really nice songs on it, and I thought, ‘Boy, it would really be nice to sing like those guys do!’, but I can’t.

“I picked out some really good words and thought maybe I would say the words; then I happened to think of when I was little, John and Florence Irving somewhat adopted me. We would go to church on Sunday night and there would only be six or eight of us there. And when you put three of those people up front, that doesn’t leave a lot out there to sing. You know what I mean? One night when I was there, I was sitting between John and Florence. You have to kind of know John and how to take him a little bit. John would say something in jest, but there would be a little bit of seriousness in with it usually. Anyway, this time he says, “Rod, if you can’t sing good, sing loud!”

“That’s why this morning I have decided to share a reading with you. I know I have shared a lot of these with you before and this may be a repeat, but I looked through my collection and this is the one that I seemed to be drawn to the most:

‘Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one so that when we finally meet the right person, we will know how to be grateful for that gift.

‘When the door of happiness closes, another opens, but often we look so long at the closed door that we don’t see the one which has been opened for us.

‘The best kind of friend is the kind that you can sit on the porch and swing with, never say a word, and then walk away feeling like it was the best conversation you have ever had.

‘It’s true that we don’t know what we have got until we lose it; but it’s also true that we don’t know what we have been missing until it arrives.

‘Giving someone all your love is never an assurance that they will love you back. Don’t expect love in return. Just wait for it to

grow in their hearts. But if it doesn’t, be content that it grew in yours.

‘It only takes a minute to get a crush on someone, an hour to like someone, and a day to love someone, but it takes a lifetime to forget someone.

“Don’t go for looks. They can deceive. Don’t go for wealth. Even that fades away. Go for someone who makes you smile, because it only takes a smile to make a dark day seem bright. Find the one that makes your heart smile.

‘There are moments in life when you miss someone so much that you just want to pick them from your dreams and hug them for real.

‘Dream what you want to dream. Go where you want to go. Be what you want to be because you only have one life and this chance to do all the things that you want to do.

‘May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you human, enough hope to make you happy.

‘Always put yourself in other’s shoes. If you feel that it hurts you, it probably hurts the other person, too.

‘The happiest of people don’t necessarily have the best of everything. They just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

‘Happiness lives for those who cry, those who hurt, those who have searched and those who have tried, for only they can appreciate the importance of people who have touched their lives.

‘Love begins with a smile, grows with a kiss and ends with a tear. The brightest future will always be based on a forgotten past. You can’t go on well in life until you let go of your past failures and heartaches.

‘When you were born, you were crying and everyone around you was smiling. Live your life so that when you die, you are the one who is smiling, and everyone around you is crying.”

Steven Smith followed, with an apology to George Knotts for not singing the new song George expected. Instead, by special request, he sang his own ballad of Tina, the young crippled Indian girl whose father encouraged her with the words, ‘One day you are going to soar like an eagle; run with rabbits that never tire; climb up mountains without getting winded, if you’ll wait on the Lord for awhile!’ Tina waited on the Lord for a lifetime until the angel bore her spirit away promising, ‘Today you’re going to soar like an eagle; run with rabbits that never tire; climb up mountains without getting winded, because you’ve waited on God for awhile.”

Nathan Smith played an inspiring rendition of a favorite hymn of the Saints, ‘Sweet Hour of Prayer’

Linda Winkler read from Alma 3:46-51: “And now behold, I say unto you my brethren, If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, Can ye feel so now? Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, If ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such an one hath not eternal life.”

The Bates family sang again, featuring Micah and Jerah for each introductory stanza. The song narrates the various stages of Christ’s ministry, death and resurrection and affirms. “In Christ alone my hope is found. He is my life, my strength, my song. ... My



comforter, my all in all. Here in the love of Christ, I'll stand! ... For every sin on him was laid, Here in the death of Christ I live. ... Out from the grave he rose again, and as He stands in victory, I am his and he is mine, bought with the precious blood of Christ. No guilt in life. No fear in death, this is the power of Christ in me. From life with Christ 'til final rest, Jesus commands my destiny. ... 'Til he returns, or calls me home, here in the power of Christ I stand.'

Douglas Smith introduced his and Judith's family offering with the Isaiah scripture, Isaiah 6:8: "Also, I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." The song they then sang narrates the Lord's observance of the suffering of the people of the world, expresses His longing to give them all that they need, even his life, and asks "Whom shall I send" to bear the message, to give the ministry? Then comes the very poignant reply, "Here am I Lord. I have heard you calling in the night. I will go, Lord, if you'll lead me, I will hold your people in my heart!"

Diane Anderson read from the Doctrine and Covenants 36:10 h: "Whoso comes in at the gate and climbs up by me shall never fall: wherefore, blessed are they of whom I have spoken, for they shall come forth with songs of everlasting joy." D&C 45:14: "And it shall come to pass that the righteous shall be gathered out from among all nations, and shall come to Zion zinging, with songs of everlasting joy." D&C 98:4f-g.

"Therefore, let your hearts be comforted concerning Zion, for all flesh is in mine hands: be still, and know that I am God. Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered, they that remain and are pure in heart shall return and come to their inheritances; they and their children, with songs of everlasting joy; to build up the waste places of Zion. And all these things, that the prophets might be fulfilled."

"The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning' surged through the sanctuary as we rose to sing our last congregational offering and joined hands in the benediction offered fervently by brother Alan.

"Our kind and loving heavenly Father, it is truly sharing in songs of everlasting joy that we have worshipped this morning. May Your Spirit rest with us. May we be able to say, 'Here am I, Lord.' May we be able to love with Your pure love of Christ. May we be able to be Your people, and share Your gospel and Your love with the world in so much need?"

"Be with each of us as we go from this place this morning. May we recognize Your Spirit and It's leading in our lives. May we move forward in the calling that You have made to each of us. May we give up our sins and come to You that we may be clean.

"For the blessings of this morning, and for the blessings of each new day ahead, we thank You. For Your love and for Your Spirit, we thank You. For the gift of Your Son, we thank You. And for the gift of each life that is here this morning, we thank you in the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Nathan added the piano response, "God be with you 'til we meet again!", then followed with the postlude, "Sent forth with God's blessing, our true faith confessing, the people of God from his dwelling take leave ... His grace did invite us; His love shall unite us to work for God's kingdom and answer His call!"

## News & Notes

### Student's Letter Brings Teacher Special Honor

Valle Smith was named the Dekko Foundation Teach to Reach award winner at the senior awards day for Mount Ayr Community high school, due to a nomination letter written by Heidi Winkler.

Seniors were invited to write a letter nominating one of their teachers for the award. Heidi chose to nominate Valle, who was her second grade teacher.

The award includes a \$1,000 grant to be used for something to help Valle's Title I reading classroom or some other school item.

Heidi's letter of nomination, which was mentioned by superintendent Bill Decker in his short talk at commencement, said:

"Changes in today's social structure, such as single parenting, increasing divorce rates and decreasing value on the family unit have changed the traditional role of teachers as educators. More teachers than ever before must provide students with training and preparation for live beyond reading, writing and arithmetic. Mrs. Valle Smith, my second grade teacher, exemplifies the qualities of a teacher deserving recognition of this award.

"For the past 20 years, Mrs. Smith has taught Special Education, Title I and second grade in Mount Ayr Community school. No matter what area of education Mrs. Smith teaches, she demonstrates a genuine love and concern for all students. She is willing to give extra time to a student struggling with a new concept and is patient with the class bully, redirecting their attention-seeking behavior to constructive class participation. She made learning fun with projects and activities. Her activities not only included lessons for school, but lessons for life. Mrs. Smith emphasized character before our school system adopted the Character Counts program.

"During my second grade year, she taught me a life lesson that I will always remember. I learned that if you make bad choices, bad things happen; and if you make good choices, good things happen. To quote Mrs. Smith, "Good choices have good consequences; bad choices have bad consequences." Before I make choices even today, I remember her precious words. Her advice has kept me from trouble when other classmates were not so fortunate.

"Her interest in student education extends beyond the classroom, as she serves as a Sunday School teacher, director for summer youth camps and registrar/assistant director for a large family church camp for the past three years. Her responsibilities include recruiting staff and teachers, approving the class curriculum and responding to the needs of young campers. During these events, Mrs. Smith reinforced the point that we should always do what is right, even if no one is watching.

"Mrs. Smith lives the life lessons she teaches. Her students are well prepared academically to be successful in school, and she attempts to improve the deteriorating social structure facing students by helping them with lessons for life."

### Family Missionary Reunion Imminent

Registration for the Missionary Family Reunion sponsored by the Restoration Seventy at Graceland University June 20-June 27 is near the six hundred mark. If you have not registered, please do so now if you want a place to lay your head on campus. Registration is also essential for insurance purposes and it allows you to join the camp for meals. Remember that the cost of housing, meals, pro-

grams and incidentals are paid by our offerings.

## **Zoo Excursion Enjoyed**

Forty nine members of the Mt. Ayr Restoration Branch of the Church of Jesus Christ met at the church building for doughnuts and worship before traveling to the Henry Doorley Zoo in Omaha on May 1. Many of them gathered again in the evening for dinner before returning to their homes.

## **Graduating Seniors Honored**

A large cake bearing the inscription, "Congratulations Graduates" was the centerpiece of the dessert table at the May 2 Zion Dinner. Heidi Winkler, Brandy Anderson and Dan Martwick were graduated from High School and Rex Lin from University this month. Each was honored at a personal graduation reception. Rex welcomed well wishers at the home of Ronald and Di Smith in Lamoni, Brandy met hers at the home of Jan and Merle Jordison, the reception moved from the Anderson's country home to Leon to make it easier for her friends and faculty to attend, and Heidi and Dan met theirs at their respective homes in Mount Ayr and Creston. The array of medals and honors displayed at each reception was truly impressive. Scholarships awarded were abundant. Heidi will attend William Jewel this fall. Brandy will be at Central Missouri University at Warrensburg. Dan, who is already an administrative assistant in Army Reserves, will be off to Ft. Jackson in South Carolina June 7 for advanced infantry training.

## **May Services Open With a Baptism**

Lin Chih-hao, a Graceland student from Taiwan known to Gracelanders, church members and American friends as Rex Lin, was baptized Sunday, May 2, 2004 in the Mount Ayr sanctuary during the 10:00 church school hour. Pastor Robert Rolfe was in charge of the service and Seventy Ronald K. Smith performed the ordinance.

Brother Rolfe recalled his baptism, among many others of his childhood. He recalled thinking, 'Now I'm clean! I don't have any sins!' and then, remembering the kind of child he was, wondering, 'How long will it last?' His expression of thanksgiving for the new life in Christ that Christ offers for all was followed by Naomi Russell's beautiful hymn, "Baptized in Water, you become a person born anew", and by two volunteer prayers.

Brother Rolfe continued explaining that this day we experience a life changing event that will be recorded both in earth and in heaven. For all who experience it, baptism is not a destination but a journey, a new walk with Jesus Christ. Characteristic of the journey is that as we come closer to our Lord, we begin to see more and more clearly our own faults and limitations. Paul said he was the worst of sinners because he was walking close to Jesus and seeing the difference between what he was and what God wanted him to be.

As members of the body of Christ, we are all one people, characterized by the Book of Mormon description of the great baptismal event at the Waters of Mormon recorded in Mosiah 9:38-41: "And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called His people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times, and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye

may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life; ... if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?" The people responded positively and there followed one of the most significant baptismal services recorded in scriptures.

When you are baptized, all your problems do not disappear, Brother Rolfe explained, but it does mean that there are others who will stand with you. You are making a covenant with God, and He is making a covenant with you.

Again there were volunteer prayers. This time there were three. Brother Rolfe spoke of the symbolic putting on of the robe of righteousness spoken of in Isaiah 60 and Revelation 6, commenting that the price may not be getting killed as the Revelation scripture implies, although none of us knows but that it might be the price we may have to pay.

The congregation sang the first two verses of 'The Old Old Path' as Rex and Ron took their places in the baptismal font. The baptismal prayer was said by Ron with upraised hand and the immersion accomplished. We sang the last two verses of 'The Old Old Path' as the two men wrapped themselves in terry cloth robes and took their places in chairs behind the font. The rest of the service time was given to testimonies and prayers for Rex.

Rex, who has been a part of the congregation since entering Graceland in 2000, was graduated May 16. He was the second in his family to attend Graceland, and he has a brother expecting to attend next year.

## **Fall Retreat Planned**

The South Iowa Restoration Retreat is being planned for October 1,2 & 3 at Jericho Hills near Lucas, Iowa this year. Costs will be paid by donation as previously. At Jericho Hills, food is furnished and cleanup provided. When asked what we are to do in the way of food service, the management answered, "You are to pray and eat!" That will give us more time for fellowship as a group.

Volunteers will be needed to assist in children's classes, recreation, ministry of all sorts. Since it will be a First Sunday of the month, Mount Ayr has been given the responsibility of providing a Communion Service for Sunday. Although there is no registration fee, each congregation is asked to estimate how many will be in attendance so the numbers of meals and spaces can be planned successfully. Mount Ayr congregation may report to Norman or Cathy Nelson.

**CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST**  
**Mount Ayr Restoration Branch**  
**607 E. Madison**  
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## **From the Pastor's Desk**

*Continued from front page*

There are numerous battle accounts described in the Book of Mormon. The authors describe being overwhelmed by numbers of warriors, leaving cities to regroup at other cities, and eventually being totally destroyed. The Mayan Preclassic period was the last century of Nephite existence. If we had the information, there would be more corroboration of the Book of Mormon account. You can find more information about City of Civil at <http://www.msmbc.msn.com> .