



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch



Newsletter

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TESTIMONIES AND SERMON NOTES

George Knotts	1
Ed Anderson	2
Michael Jordison.....	4
Rob Rolfe.....	6
JCRB Conference Report.....	9

NEWS AND NOTES.....10

CALENDAR/DEVOTIONS..... 11

going to amaze some of you how many times you get in and out of your car, because you will keep seeing this same penny. After a week or so it came up missing, but I got another penny and put it there because it was that valuable to me. If any of you don't have a penny, I have an extra one. That's what happened to me. The Lord will be counting on you to remember Him; "In God We Trust."

If You Want Your Life to be Blessed, Praise Him More

There is something else I came across this last week, and I want to read this part here. This is the beginning of the part I'll read. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ." Just lately I came across this thought; it was some research done in Stanford or one of these big accredited universities, that when you are praising, you can't have fear at that time. In your brain when you are praising, you can't have fear. You can switch back and forth, but while you are praising, you can't have fear. If any of you have any fear in your life, you can just try praising God more. I have given away maybe a 100 to 200 of these books "Prison to Praise." That book has blessed my life and the people that I share it with as they praise God and their life is blessed. If you would like your life to be blessed more, praise him more because He is sure worthy of it.

Importance of Husband/Wife Relationship

There is another scripture—I woke up in the early morning hours this morning and there was a parable given to me. I will share it in just a minute. You are going to be willing when you are making this promise that you are going to obey all the commandments. You are going to be loving (it says to be loving), you are going to be forgiving (it says to forgive), you are going to do all things he wants you to do. Now there is a thing that came to me that maybe has never been talked about before in this congregation and that is the relationship of men and women. You see there is something wrong here (holds up shears). Now there is a male and a female side of these shears and both of them are very sharp. I have sharpened both of them, but they are not related (they wouldn't cut) and they need to be related. You see what happens when they are related (he demonstrated the action of cutting). They fulfill the purpose for which they were created. Now there is a scripture in the New Testament where Paul is talking about the relationship of men and women, husband and wife, and their relationship as it is related to the church. I would like to read it briefly before I get stoned.

George then read from Ephesians 5:21-25: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be subject to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. Well, there I am closing up the scriptures on that and that has never been talked about in my presence in this congregation. You say, 'well, that must be just Paul's idea. Paul is full of ideas. In fact, he has the majority of the New Testament under his pen. You can say that sometimes he says it is his will and sometimes he says God's will, but I would like you to read that in Ephesians 5. Read that and see if you see what he is talking

October Communion Service

with Robert Rolfe, presiding and George Knotts, speaking

Robert Rolfe asked that we bow with him while he offered the invocation. "Our Father in Heaven your goodness to us is known. In many parts of our congregation, you have blessed us freely, you have led us in the way of our lives, and you have brought us to this day. We now intend to remember you and the sacrifice you gave. We pray that as we contemplate the act of your Son, Jesus Christ, and reach forth our hands to take the communion, the bread and the wine, we will have written on our hearts the goodness of your Son as He died for our sins. We pray that all of our hearts and minds would be open this morning to your Holy Spirit and that it would bless us as we go through the services of this day. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

Rob read a scripture from John 14:16-18: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

Communion Reminds Us to Always Remember Him

George Knotts stated, "I come to you this morning in the name of Jesus. We came here for one reason today basically, besides potluck, and it is the Lord's blessing on our table here. We are going to make a covenant with Him and when we get through making this covenant, we will be, at that time, perfect unless we have some reservations about it. If we have reservations about it as we go into it, then we won't be as perfect as He would like us. I have a suggestion and I wanted to make this before. I don't think I made it to this group, but there are four times in the communion prayer that it mentions that He wants us to remember Him, four times. Something that has been helping me lately to remember the Lord has been a penny. I have told a few of you about it. I stumbled on this by accident. This penny showed up in the driver's seat of my car before I got in. I noticed there was an important message on top of it. It said "In God We Trust" not in 'God I trust' but in 'God we trust.' I left that penny there and every time I'd go to get in the car that penny would be there. You tend to want to reach down and remove it or get it out of the way, but I left it there and every time I get in the car, it reminds me that "In God we trust." Now it's

about there, and if it would be a blessing in your family and home if you would fulfill the purpose for which you were created; if the wives would be subject to the husbands and the husbands would care for the wives. I would like to leave that for you to think about.

Gospel Shared Throughout the World

After the serving of the communion, Rob shared that he had heard from many of the people who are out spreading the gospel of Christ across the earth. "I have visited with a fellow who has been into mainland China several times. We take a lot of this for granted, but they have their baptismal services at midnight. You can figure out why that is. He tells me that he has more demand for ministry there than he can supply because of the number of people who want him to come.

I talked to a fellow who had been in India, and he testified as to what is happening there; how the blind have been healed and how the church is growing and that the gospel is received so readily. The interesting thing to me is that the people in so many of these countries, when they hear the gospel, they just accept it. Over here if we have one word wrong, then people seem to quarrel about it. Maybe we ought to take a lesson as to that and realize that there are lots of things that we elevate the importance to the point that they become stumbling blocks for us. Anyway after listening to all of these different men, by the way most of you may already know this but Randy Vick is not going to be going back to Liberia. Guess where he is going; the Sudan, just north of Uganda. It is interesting that in one of the biggest hellholes in the world, in terms of people being killed—such as in Liberia, the gospel seems to be opening up there, and the Sudan is not any different than other areas. There have been so many millions of people who have died in that part of the country for a variety of reasons and yet the Lord is moving in his people there. As we think about God's blessings to us as we reach forth our hands, just be reminded that not everywhere in the world can they have the peace, security, quiet and a full belly that we have here in this country.

A Marvelous Passing for One of God's Handmaidens

Ron Smith stood and shared a little about the marvelous blessing that their family had had the past week as they shared in the last moments of their mom, Mildred Smith's, life. This happened on Thursday, October 4th. Alan, Valle, Ron, Di, Steve and Karen were in the room with Mildred in her home. Ron shares, "I had brought my guitar in, and we were singing songs together. We sang "You'll Never Walk Alone" along with a scripture reading from Isaiah, and we sang "O Danny Boy." I think we sang some other ones too, but I don't remember what all we sang. Alan, all of a sudden, said let's administer to Mom. We had administered to Mom earlier, and I had talked with Alan about administering to her on Sunday and that didn't happen and Monday came and went but we were busy with caring for Mom. So Steven, Alan and I went and I anointed Mom's head with oil, and we laid our hands on her head. Valle, Di and Karen were holding Mom's hands and as Alan prayed it was a really powerful prayer, and he said 'O God open your arms wide and take her home.' She had a pulse when we started, and she didn't have a pulse when we ended. It was just a marvelous, beautiful experience. One couldn't have asked for a better passing. I just wanted to share that with you because, of course, I know many of you are thinking about Mom today, and I just wanted you to know that the Lord had everything to do with her passing and that we are just glad to have shared in the experience."

Alan Smith brought the benediction for the service. "Our kind and loving Heavenly Father, we do praise you for all that is past and trust you for all that's to come knowing of your blessing in our lives. We would ask that you would go with each one here today; that you would bind up our broken hearts; that you would help us repent and change the way that we walk

with you; that you would help us find the joy of your kingdom in our lives; and help us understand the great and marvelous work that you are doing around the world and even here among us. May we be able to respond to your leadings. May we be your people and your church. We pray in Jesus name. Amen."

Ed Anderson

Will you Choose the Easy or Hard Way?

Ron Smith welcomed everyone to the service and as a call to worship, he read from the 23rd Psalm. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Our speaker for the morning, Ed Anderson read from Doctrine and Covenants 58: 6 c, d for a scripture reading: "...for, behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things, for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward. Verily I say, Men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves."

"I would say that I have been blessed growing up. My parents did the best job that they knew how, as far as instilling in me the gospel of Jesus Christ. More importantly, they instilled in me the necessity to establish a relationship of my own with Jesus. Now that's not to say that I wasn't a challenge. I kept probably several guardian angels busy most of the time.

When has God looked out for you?

"About two weeks ago in prayer service they asked 'when has God looked out for you?' I sat there and thought, and it didn't take me very long to figure out that there are a lot of them. I didn't know which ones to share so I thought maybe I would share a couple depending on how it goes here. I am not going to put these in chronological order because they're not occurring to me in that way. I ran around with some kids who were kind of on the rough side. We were sitting around their house, their parents were not home. I am not even sure that they had parents at this time. One of the kids got down a 22 rifle off the wall and was pointing it around. He pointed it at the clock and said, 'Watch me shoot the clock off the wall,' and pulled the trigger; the clock fell off the wall because the gun was loaded. Here he was pointing the gun around at everybody. What had happened was, of course, he thought it was unloaded, but his brother had taken it out hunting and had left it loaded.

"Another instance when God looked out after me occurred when my brother was living in Quincy, IL, and I went over to visit him. My sister-in-law worked downtown in a doughnut shop, and so I hung out at the doughnut shop. I was on the street for some reason and this guy came along. I didn't know him because Quincy, IL has probably 50,000 people. He said, 'Why don't you come up to my hotel room with me.' Being naïve and stupid, I went up to his hotel room. I had bought a paper that I told my sister-in-law that I was going to buy for her. I got to looking at the paper and said 'you know, I have to go take this paper back to my sister-in-law.' So before he had any chance of getting us into the room, I was gone. Again the leadings of the Spirit kind of forced

me, it took me by the hand and said 'get out of there,' and I left.

"I went up to visit some friends in St. Catherine's, Ontario, Canada. There was a guy walking down the street who came up to me and squeezed me. I won't say where. He said, 'You got any place really private.' I said, 'There's a store front here, kind of recessed back in. We can talk there.' He said, 'No, really, really private.' I said, 'No, I don't think so.' He said, 'Why don't we go down to the bar.' I said, 'O.K.' We got down to the bar, and I opened the door, pushed him in and took off. I know these are times that maybe I shouldn't have been there; maybe it was my fault that I got into some of those situations, but God was there.

"How many of you remember the high steel bridge over the Grand River on Highway 2? One pitch black night when it had been raining like crazy forever, a friend and I crossed that bridge. The water was about up to the level of the bridge. It was just below the structural part that was about a foot out of the water. We couldn't see, it was raining and the water was that far down from us. Here I was again being looked after by God. That doesn't include the car wreck I was involved in Osceola. I pulled out in a little Volkswagen in front of a 65 Chevy at the place where Casey's is now. I kind of got broad-sided, and I woke up unhurt. It knocked me out because I hit my head on the mirror. Again, God was looking out for me.

Choosing good needs to be an everyday decision

"When we say that we should be engaged in a good cause, I would say that the things that I was involved in were probably not for a good cause, but I was protected. I looked in the scriptures where I could find maybe just exactly what a good person or a good cause would be. I found in Moroni 10:6, 'And whatsoever thing is good, is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is.' Those activities that put Christ in the center are good. Do we choose good? You know there are some churches that say accept Christ and come forward and you will be saved. You can choose good once. At one time I sat outside on one of the cars in the parking lot listening to the Assembly of God activities in Decatur. People you would not expect to see accepting Christ would go forth and accept Him, but then the next week you would see them doing something that if they really had accepted Christ wasn't an acceptable event.

"Choosing good is not a once in a lifetime event. Choosing good is an everyday decision. We have incidences that occur where we have to make a decision on what we are going to do. We can choose the easy way or we can choose the hard way. I went to an induction into the National Honor Society this week. On the back of the program was printed the easy and the hard way. This is what it said, '*bad is easy-good is hard; losing is easy-winning is hard; talking is easy-listening is hard; watching TV is easy-reading is hard; giving advice is easy-taking advice is hard; sleeping is easy-waking is hard; holding a grudge is easy-forgiving is hard; play is easy-work is hard; falling is easy-getting up is hard; spending is easy-saving is hard; doubt is easy-faith is hard; borrowing is easy-paying back is hard; an "F" is easy-an "A" is hard; lying is easy-truth is hard; growing weeds is easy-growing flowers is hard; war is easy-peace is hard; messy is easy-neat is hard; naughty is easy-nice is hard.*' Where are we setting our goals? How high are we setting our goals? I want to be up here. I want to be doing these things. I can set my goals as high as I want, but if I am unwilling to carry on and make the necessary decisions, making and meeting goals is hard.

Making a commitment is hard

"Saying that you are going to do something is easy. I am a little frustrated when at times people have said they would be somewhere or do something, and they are not there. I am equally as frustrated when I ask someone if they can help me on Saturday, and they say, 'I don't know what I am doing Saturday.' That's kind of interesting because all they would have to say is, 'Yes, I will help

you,' and then they would know what they were going to be doing on Saturday. That's an easy solution. It's hard to make a decision; it's easy just to flow with life. To make a commitment is hard. To be the good guy and let things pass is easy. You can't force anybody to do anything. I have done some substitute teaching this last week at school. In the classroom, you kind of have to do it yourself. A lot of times you take them to the office and nothing is accomplished. I have told the class, 'I really can't make you do the work, you have to do it yourself. Your life is going to be a lot easier if you stay within the lines. If you just keep your nose clean and do what is asked of you, you have a pretty good shot at not getting into trouble.

"For one kid it has actually worked. I had an incident with him, and he ended up three days out of school, but he came back, and said, 'OK I am going to stay within the lines.' I said, 'Good because that is going to be of benefit to you.' He has stayed within the lines. I didn't say that he has done his work at school, I said he stayed within the lines. He hasn't improved his school work, but he has improved his behavioral work. That is a step forward. You can only take one step at a time. You can't take four or five steps and get there. There is a struggle between seeing the need to be good and being good. I know I need to do that, but man it is going to take a commitment out of myself, and I don't feel like doing that. Gee, I would like to be a pro player, but I don't know if I can do all the strenuous exercises and all the rigorous practice that's necessary. For those who are older, 'You can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink,' kind of thing. A person has to want to do it himself.

"It's kind of like a wrestling match. Everybody is familiar with a wrestling match, right? You have a circle that you put two people wrestle in, and they try to pin one another. On the outside, depending on what wrestling meet you are at, there are fans slapping the mat and cheerleaders giving the cheer for the two people that are inside the circle. Those people outside can not do anything for the two people inside other than to cheer them on, to support them. It's the people that are inside the circle that have to do it themselves. The other people on the outside can't reach in, can't force them. They can tell them all they want, 'grab his arm, flip him over.' They can give all kinds of direction and guidance to those people on the mat. However, it's the people on the mat that have to do it. We find ourselves that way individually. Nobody can force us. We can look at each other and we can tell each other how to do things. We need to listen. At that wrestling match, there are probably people on the other team that are giving negative feedback to the opponent, giving him bad advice.

"Does it make a difference who we associate with? Does it make a difference if the people supporting us are saying take the easy way? Are we associating with people who say, 'go for your dreams, set your goals high, follow Christ to the end?' It has to be an internal control. We have to want to. We want to change our lives, but we come up against things that we are doing that we shouldn't do, or we are not doing what we should do. We can make that commitment and say, 'Yes, I really want to do that,' or 'No, I don't want to do that.' However, when it comes down to it and that little whisper says, 'Do it, do it, do it,' you really have to not want to do it; you really have to have changed your internal structure. Sin is somewhat of a habit. You associate with certain people. You get in situations where the way you have acted in the past is the way your mind works. You turn that way. You have to change that mindset and say, 'I am not going to do it,' and mean it. I think that's part of the problem. It is easy to say that I am going to do better. It's easy to say that I am going to be like Christ, but to do that is the next question.

Are we putting forth the effort to build the kingdom?

"As I read the scripture this morning, being involved in those kingdom building activities, being involved in a good cause,

we really have to think about our lifestyle. I read all the things that are easy. Those things are easy but to forge out and to put yourself at risk in a new situation is hard. How bad do I want it? Am I willing to stick my nose out and get my face slapped a few times, my hand slapped a few times, to fail a few times? You have to push yourself and anything that is worth doing is worth doing well. If we are going to make that commitment, we've made it a 100% of the way. When we approach our commitment, maybe this is what we are talking about with the sower. Some only brought forth 30 fold, some 50 fold, some 100. It has to do with the amount of effort that was put forth. Even though they made a decision and accepted the word of Christ, not everybody brought forth the same amount. Let us be those people that bring forth the 100 fold, that bring in the highest that we can possibly get. Let us do the best that we possibly can, for only in that way can the kingdom be."

Michael Jordison offered the following benediction, "Would you bow with me. Almighty God, we come before Thee at the close of this service. Lord, we would like take the opportunity to thank you, to thank you for your tender mercies, for you are indeed wonderful and kind and benevolent to your children. Like a loving father you watch over us. You watch us go and do our own thing and make choices that take us away from you, and choices that harm us and sometimes that harm others. Yet your watchful eye is there over us and your hand is extended to us and calls us forth to return back to you. O Lord, we thank you for your love. We thank you for your light which brightens our way. We thank you for your hope which gives us a burning within ourselves of something greater yet to come. We thank you for life, the opportunity to be created, to experience all that you have and all that you are. We thank you Lord for this world. We thank you for the suffering, the hardships and the trials that we go through. Lord we recognize that when we go through these things, we are learning about you and about how to love. So Lord we come before thee now at the close of this service and pray that your Spirit might attend each one here to impact us for good for the sake of your kingdom and for the work that is ahead of us. We pray this in Jesus name. Amen."

Michael Jordison How Well Do We Know God?

Gordon Winkler welcomed the congregation and invited them to share in the Lord's Day. As a Call to Worship Gordon read from Mosiah 2:48-50:

As a scripture, Michael Jordison read from James 1:1-8: 'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into many afflictions; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways.'

Are you a double minded man?

"The scripture that I read from the book of James I have read many times in the past. It is one that often comes to my mind, and in particular the part that says, 'a double minded man is unstable in all his ways.' Of late it has really been impressed upon me in those times in my life when I feel confused and unsure

about what I should be doing - like everything is falling apart. I can't seem to keep my home organized, our finances organized or even focused on my job. I feel like this 'unstable man' because he is double minded, like a reed blowing back and forth in the wind, or as the scripture says, like a wave driven by the wind. And I question, why is my life like this at times and then at other times, when I seem to be so sure of things, that my life feels so solid? I believe the answer is because I simply don't know God well enough. One who is double-minded - sometimes following after God and other times following after his own will is, as the scripture says, 'unstable in all his ways.' If I knew God well enough, or loved Him as I ought to, I wouldn't find my life in these situations of uncertainty and instability. That anchor in my Spiritual life would be a sureness that would branch into all the other avenues of my life. After listening to our class this morning (the morning class consisted of reports from attendees of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches the preceding week) and considering all the conflict and animosity in the church today regarding who has authority to do this or that, or who does or doesn't constitute the church, I am thinking that perhaps with of all the turmoil in the church, maybe it's because this church doesn't know God well enough (love Him enough). So in the church, we're like a double minded man, sometimes knowing the will of God and following it and sometimes following our own will, therefore struggling in every way to find consistency and sureness.

With that in mind I would like for you consider some things that we might be sure of, or absolute truths. These not the same as the absolute value that you find in mathematics, but what we would consider perhaps as proven axioms. I just have a short list here. 1) You can drive a vehicle out of gas if you drive it long enough. Would you say that is true? 2) The sun will come out tomorrow. Would you say that is true? 3) If you drop an object that is denser than air from the sky, it will fall to the earth. Does that sound true? I have heard it said that there are only two things that are sure, death and taxes. We will avoid the tax issue right at the moment, but would you say death is inevitable, let's say death or transition? (There were more than a few exceptions from the congregation to this one.) 'For our purposes here let's just say pretty much death is a given. It is going to happen. 5) That God exists. (Isabel Jordison pointed out that if you were in outer space, whatever you dropped would not fall to the earth. Michael pointed out that was true unless you got close enough to the earth that the earth's gravitational pull could pull it down, and it doesn't burn up in the process.) Anyway those are five statements of what we would consider 'relative truth' or for our discussion here, absolute truth. However...

Can we say with all certainty that those statements are 100% true? I have read a couple of testimonies, and I even have testimonies of my own about the first statement. I have heard testimonies of cars that kept moving even when they ran out of gas. So I can't say with 100% surety that that statement is true. Regarding the sun coming up, if we had a child that was afraid that the sun was not going to come up tomorrow, none of us would have a problem saying it would be up there. Cloudy or not, the sun would still be there, right? Well, if you recall from the Book of Mormon, we find the account that at Jesus' crucifixion there were three days of complete and utter darkness. There was no sun or any inkling that it came up at all. (I am not trying to get into a debate of whether the sun was actually up or not, because we can't prove that it was or wasn't. But for those people who were there during those days of darkness it wasn't there. And for those children the sunrise wasn't a reality for them. The sun simply wasn't there.

"We all know that gravity pulls objects from the sky. However, when Jesus left after His Judean ministry, what did he do? He ascended up into heaven and then He descended from heaven to the Saints in the land Bountiful. Would you say that

that's an exception to the rule? Do all objects in the sky fall to the earth with a thud? Jesus didn't, so I can't say with any certainty that that statement is true 100% of the time. What about death? Are we sure that everyone is going to die? We have the accounts in the scriptures, and I know with this group here, this might be one of the harder ones to get by you. We know that Jesus raised Lazarus, He raised Jarius' daughter, Nephi's brother was raised, I think it was Timothy. And I am sure there have been other people that have been raised from the dead. We don't know if any of these lived on, but we do know that they died at least once. But there were three Nephites who did not die. Jesus was with the twelve, and He said, 'What is it that you will?' There were three that decided they wanted to continue their earthly ministry. So Jesus touched them and they were changed so that they would not taste death; in the same way that John the Beloved, as recorded, has tarried on this earth and not tasted death. Therefore, can we say with any certainty that everyone dies? No, we cannot.

So these statements are not absolute truths, or proven axioms. Perhaps where our thinking went wrong was in our perceptions. According to natural laws these statements are true; but only in a natural sense, in a physical sense. So something outside of the natural world had to impact them in order to create this anomaly or the change from 'truth' to untruth.

"We can demonstrate with a probability, like you said Ron (Smith), of 99.999999999% that these statements are true. We can test these statements to find out their validity. I can fill up a car 10,000 times and drive it until it runs out of gas. And if every time I do it, it runs out of gas, I can be pretty sure that this is a true statement. I can keep track of 10,000 days in a row when the sun comes up and test my statement. I can jump out of an airplane 10,000 times (only once if I don't wear a parachute) and test whether or not I am going to fall to the earth or whether I am going to stay aloft in the air. I can do a study of 10,000 babies that are born in a hospital and track their lives and see whether or not they die. After I have performed all these experiments to test my theories, if I decided to test them one more time, I would expect that I would have the same result. Because of the exceptions to the rules though, I can't know for certain that the outcome is going to be the same since I don't have an absolute knowledge of the future. How do I 'know' with 100% knowledge that the outcome is going to be the same when I haven't performed the experiment yet? All I have knowledge of is what happened in each experiment in the past.

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for

"This brings us to faith, one of the things I want to talk about this morning. Paul in his letter to the Hebrews shares that 'faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' Reading that before, I used to think that that meant that there was no evidence for our faith. In other words, I hoped for something that I wasn't really sure about. However, that's not what Paul is saying and that is not what faith is. Faith is evidence of things not seen or as yet are unknown because they are yet to happen. Faith isn't a blind belief.

"You see I can choose to believe that a herd of elephants is going to come walking through this sanctuary, but I don't have any basis for that belief. There is no evidence to support that belief. There aren't a herd of elephants that I know of around Mt. Ayr, and even if there were, I don't know why they would be inclined to enter this building even if they could get through the doors. You see I can choose to believe that that herd of elephants is coming into the sanctuary, but that's a belief that I have. It's not based on any evidence, and it is not faith. We read in latter day revelation 'that the glory of God is intelligence or light and truth, and whatsoever is light is Spirit, even the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' It is that Spirit of Jesus Christ that is given to every man, woman and child born into this world to help them to know good from evil. This Spirit

that's given to us is a reflection of God's intelligence upon our very being, and all of our faith is founded upon that intelligence or that truth or light or understanding. My belief that a herd of elephants is coming into the sanctuary is not based on intelligence. It's not based on any truth. It is based on my hope; oh, I hope that a herd of elephants comes in here. Wouldn't that be exciting in many ways? Even though I hope for something with all my heart and might it doesn't make it true, and therefore, my belief in it doesn't mean that I'm exercising faith, if that makes sense to you. The scriptures teach us that by faith the world was created and everything in it. By faith is brought to pass the redemption of all mankind. By faith mankind is even given this opportunity for a probationary period, a time to repent, and a time to learn and to grow. By faith all miracles are wrought. I think that faith, when it is built upon pure intelligence or something that is absolutely true, becomes perfect faith which in turn becomes perfect knowledge. If something is true, it means that it has already happened or it is happening or it is going to happen. That would be the definition of what is true, simply, 'what is'. When you have faith in something that is going to happen, does it happen? Yes, of course because it is going to happen. It's going to happen whether you have faith in it or not because it is true. So when we have a belief or a hope for something that we don't see, and we don't have any evidence for its truth, then that's just a belief for us. It's not faith. It's not an exercise in faith.

Faith, if practiced, leads to perfect knowledge

"The Book of Mormon talks about faith along with the term perfect knowledge. In the 16th Chapter of Alma we are told about an experiment that we can make in faith that leads to this thing called perfect knowledge in that one particular thing of our experiment. When we begin to see the evidence of that experiment - the results, we no longer have a reason to doubt it, because now we know for a surety that what we were hoping for that's grounded in faith is true because we can behold the outcome. This doesn't mean that we know everything with a perfect knowledge after that experiment, but whatever it is that we are exercising our faith in, we can know with a perfect knowledge. That knowledge becomes a building block for our faith because faith is founded upon intelligence or truth and knowledge is truth. So whenever we gain new understanding and new knowledge *that* becomes the building block for more faith, for more understanding, for an opportunity to learn more. The reward for utilizing our faith is more faith, and the ability to exercise more faith which is a greater amount of intelligence or understanding of truth. Now this doesn't mean that we will always keep progressing in our knowledge of truth. There are many things that I have forgotten. I have made experiments in faith, and I haven't always built upon those experiments. Therefore, I have forgotten some of those things, but what we do and what we are suppose to do aren't the same thing.

"A few years ago I had an opportunity with Brother Anthony Ayze to administer to a man who was suffering from poison ivy all over his body. At the end of reunion, he came to us and said, 'I am healed.' When we administered to him, we didn't know with a perfect knowledge that he was going to be healed, but we had faith. After that experience, when he came up to us and said, 'I am healed,' then we had a perfect knowledge in that thing. Based on that particular experience, I was then faced with two options the next time I went on an administration: I could choose to build on that faith from the experiment expecting that the Lord is going to answer my prayer, or I could be like I many of us and say, 'Lord I know that last time you answered my prayer, but will you answer it this time?' Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever questioned the Lord saying, 'I know, God, you have blessed me so many times getting through that one experience, but are you going to help me get through this one?'

Faith is given to us so that we can know God

“Faith is given to us so that we can know. When I read to you earlier about a double minded man (he reads James 1: 5-8), we are given faith so that we may have knowledge so that we don’t have to doubt and be double-minded. This brings me to the problem which I struggle with. Why is it that we have faith? It is so that we can know God. Why do I struggle so many times? It is because I don’t know God the way that I should. I am not exercising faith in the way that it was meant to be exercised. In some of my earlier statements I said that God exists as an absolute or as an axiom of truth. To be more specific, I would say that Jesus Christ is God, and He exists. Can we prove that? Can we prove that God exists? Absolutely prove it, not 99.9999999999% but can we with 100% assuredness prove that God exists? If I were to say to you this morning, show me God, could you prove to me that God exists? Any takers?”

God is free from imperfection

“When I looked in the dictionary under the word absolute, I found the simplest definition of the word is “free from imperfection.” That sounds like God doesn’t it? God is absolute, He is free from imperfection. So can we absolutely prove that God is absolute? Can we prove God exists like we might try to prove the air around us exists? We can see the trees sway with the wind, and see its effects upon the water. We can smell the aromas carried to us from distant places. The effects of the air are all around us, but we can’t see it nor feel it. Is God all around us but we can’t see Him? He’s moving all around us and He’s interacting with other people. He’s giving them testimonies. He’s manipulating things in their lives or maybe even things in my life and therefore, that proves He exists. How do we know that these things that we see by this force that is outside of us is from Jesus Christ, from God? How do we know they are not from Buddha, Allah, Rah, Zeus or one of the other pagan gods? How do we know with a surety? God has to be proved absolute through a personal experience. If I wanted to prove to you that the Easter Bunny existed, I could take you to a store, and show you the Easter cards, Easter candy and Easter baskets that are there. I could even sing you Easter songs. Would that be proving that he existed to you? No. But if I brought the Easter Bunny here and I said, ‘Here, this is the Easter Bunny,’ and you came up and saw him with your eyes and ran your fingers through his fur and you could smell whatever rabbits smell like, you would know with a surety that the Easter Bunny exists.

“Jesus isn’t like the Easter Bunny but if you want to know that He exists with a 100% assuredness, then you need to see and feel Him. When He came to the people after His resurrection, what did He do? He said, ‘Come feel the prints in my hands. Put your hand in my side.’ What Jesus does is not for a select group of individuals. What He does for one, He does for all. If he wanted the people while He was here on this earth in the flesh, to come and to feel Him and to experience Him then He wants us today, 2000 years later, to come and to feel the prints in His hands, to feel the wound in His side, to see the gaze of His eyes upon us.

“Faith is evidence of things that we cannot see, things that we hope for that are true. Jesus wants us to exercise faith so that we can have knowledge that He is indeed the Lord, that He is the creator and He is the savior of the world. He has made each one of us. From Doctrine and Covenants Section 90 given in 1833, ‘Verily, thus saith the Lord, It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face, and know that I am, and that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world.’ Because I so often live my life with doubt and misunderstandings and I am running to and fro, it means that I have not taken the opportunities that are there for me to know my Lord, Jesus Christ in a greater way. It says it here five times in this scripture: forsake your sins,

come unto Him, call on His name, obey His voice and keep His commandments. When we do these things, the promise is that we shall all see His face and know that He is. Knowledge is truth, intelligence, light and glory. When we are possessors of these things, there is no room for any more bickering, there’s no more room for uncertainty, whether it’s of how to put the church in order or whether it’s how to put my family or my life in order. When I have a relationship with Jesus Christ and have exercised that faith, that knowledge is mine to have as a gift. It makes me not the double minded man, but makes me the solid man, one that we sing about in the children’s song, ‘The wise man built his house upon the rock...’ (and the foolish man built his house upon the sand – which shifts and changes as the wind and waves move against it.) Where we need to be as a church, as a community, as a people, and individuals, are ones that know God and can say ‘I have seen Him face to face and felt the prints in His hands’. These experiences are personal to each one of us, and we don’t have to prove them or God to anybody else. God desires to prove Himself to us on an individual basis, and He desires to prove Himself to those other individuals out there. Now, if you see me running to and fro, looking like I have a lot of chaos still in my life, remind me to get to know God a little better, to exercise the faith that I’ve been given, and I will try to do the same for you.”

Robert Rolfe

The Garbage Truck Principle

For a scripture, Rob read from Ezekiel 11:16-20. “I got an e-mail a week or so ago from Lynda’s family. If you are like I am, if you have e-mail, it seems like the amount of stuff coming in just increases. Some of those you look at and automatically delete; some of them you look at and think maybe I’ll look at this; and some you save for later. There are always some that you say, ‘I wonder what that is?’ because you are kind of glad to get the mail. This one came from Lynda’s brother-in-law and sister. I don’t get very much mail from Pete so I thought, ‘I wonder what he is sending me?’ He sent me an e-mail called, “The Garbage Truck Principle.” It starts out with this guy in New York City riding in a cab. You probably have heard about cab drivers in New York City, about how rude they are and how they yell obscenities and all this kind of stuff. So you are in New York City and the traffic is bad, and this vehicle cuts the cab driver off. Instead of getting the usual bad language, the cab driver smiled and said, ‘Have a good day,’ and went on. The passenger said, ‘How can you do that after that guy cut you off?’ He said I call it the garbage truck principle. Many people go through life and keep collecting garbage. It just keeps coming on and coming on and when someone bugs them, then they download it.’ You know how the garbage truck just reels it all out the back and dumps it? He said they all dump it on you when you’re the one that wrongs them in some way. He said that he didn’t want to go through life collecting garbage. He didn’t want to be a garbage truck so he just ignored all that. When people do things that bugged him, instead of yelling at them, he just wished them a good day with a smile. That really disturbs some of them. It’s kind of fun to do that.

“Aren’t we kind of that way? Don’t we, like a garbage truck, just collect stuff and it bugs us. Eventually, whether it’s our wife, our kids, the neighbor next door or somebody driving down the road, every so often we just download and off it comes. You all are saying that is not a good thing. If we are going to be included in those that I read about in Ezekiel 11:16-20, which talked about God removing a stony heart from and replacing it with a heart of flesh, we have to be able to withstand those kinds of experiences that bug us from day to day. You know the Apostle Paul had a lot of

experiences, and one of those was when he was shipwrecked. They told them that if they just stayed with the ship they would survive, and they all survived and got to the shore. They were going to build a fire and when Paul went over by the firewood, a serpent took hold of his arm and just hung there. How many of you think that would be a great experience to have a poisonous snake get a hold of you and just hang from your arm? It wouldn't be so good probably for most of us, but do you know what Apostle Paul did? It says he just shook it off and suffered no affect from that snake biting him. What would happen for most of us if that happened? It would pump us full of poison, wouldn't it? It would go into our heart and lungs.

We need to rid our lives of a stony heart

“That's the way it is when we allow the garbage to just collect in our lives. It collects in us and keeps collecting and before long our heart turns to stone. That's why the prophet was talking about getting rid of the stony heart. That's really what we have to do if we are going to be a part of this gathering that Ezekiel talks about which we call Zion. We believe that there are two of those kinds of gatherings.

“I remember years ago when I would read about those, I would think, how are those people going to get out of Russia because I knew there were a lot of Jews in Russia, particularly with the Berlin Wall. It seemed like they were walled up, and apparently I didn't remember my faith, because I thought somehow that it was impossible for them to get out. Do you remember how long it took for that wall to come down? A day and they came out. About 100,000 of them came out at that time alone. It reminded me that when the prophets talk about these things that are going to be happening here on the earth, it is a cinch that they will. If God has foretold that it is going to happen, it is going to happen. Our problem is that if you are like I am, you always think it is way off in the future rather than maybe tomorrow.

The day of the Lord has begun

“How many of you were at the retreat that the branch had? Francis Harper talked about how the *day of the Lord* has begun. His idea was that the *day of the Lord* is not a 24-hour period but that it's a longer period, although there is a day that Jesus is scheduled to come back. He is going to be coming in glory and we are all going to see him. I even wondered how that could be when I was younger. I thought how could everybody see him all around the earth? If He's coming on one side of the earth, how could people see Him on the other side? Do you have a question about how that could happen today? How could His word go around the world? For those of you who use the internet, it doesn't take very long for it to get around, does it? It goes pretty fast.

“I would like to read a few verses from 2nd Peter 3. “I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance; That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior; Knowing this first, that in the last days there shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts. Denying the Lord Jesus Christ, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things must continue as they are, and have continued as they are from the beginning of the creation.” For you young people that is called uniformitarianism. That is a big word to spell. If you want to make it antiuniformitarianism, I think that is what I believe. Everything is going to stay the same just like it has been from the beginning, nothing is going to change. Then Peter goes on to say, ‘For this they willingly are ignorant of’ (in other words, they are not just ignorant, they are willingly ignorant) “that of old the heavens, and the earth standing in the water and out of the water, were created by the word of God; And by the word of God, the world that then was, being overflowed with water perished; But the heavens, and the earth which are now, are kept in store by the same word, reserved unto fire against the

day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But concerning the coming of the Lord, beloved, I would not have you ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise and coming, as some men count slackness; but long-suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall shake, and the earth also shall tremble, and the mountains shall melt, and pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be filled with fervent heat; the earth also shall be filled, and the corruptible works which are therein shall be burned up.’ Then Peter asked a great question. ‘If then all these things shall be destroyed, what manner of persons ought ye to be in holy conduct and godliness?’ It is a good question, isn't it? I think you can find the answer in this book right here (he holds up the Bible) and the other scriptures.

“Another scripture I would like to read to you is from the 21st chapter of Luke. The reason I am reading this is because of the question of timeliness. Here it says, ‘Verily I say unto you, this generation, the generation when the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, shall not pass away till all be fulfilled,’ which sounds like a birth. Once it gets started the pain may increase, but it doesn't take long until it is ended. Jesus says, ‘Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.’ It's kind of like a guarantee that that is going to happen. Part of the reason people don't like reading the prophets is because they talk about some pretty scary, bad things that are suppose to happen. What can I say about that, they are there? Some of the people in Christendom say this God of the Old Testament is not the same God as the New Testament. I just want to remind you that the New Testament says who created the world. Who was that? Jesus. Well if He was back at the beginning creating the world, then He was the God of the Old Testament and He's the God today so apparently He is the same God. If that God is going to do these scary things, it probably means that He is giving His rebuke unto the wicked who are going to be paid for their wages at that time.

Zechariah tells of events happening today

“Alan called me Saturday to ask me to speak today. He said to just preach the same sermon that I preached at Colbern Road. Well, I can't do that very well. It is hard for me to preach the same sermon because it is a different time and a different congregation. However, there is one thing I would like to talk about because it does fit in with getting our stony hearts out of us; that is, the promises that are in Zechariah. I think we are watching those be fulfilled. If you pay any attention to what is going on in the news, and I do, the events that are going on in the Middle East right now I think are prophesied of in Zachariah and we are seeing that kind of thing happen. Let me start out by reading Zechariah 12:2, ‘Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem.’ If this comes to pass, what can we expect to see? Jerusalem will be under siege just like we were talking about in Jeremiah; Nebuchadnezzar's siege around Jerusalem. Now it is talking about another one. “And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.” (Zechariah 12:3)

“Why would all the people of the earth be concerned about such a little nation as Israel? When you think about it, we have several states in the United States that are many times bigger than the country of Israel and have many times more people. Why would all the nations of the earth be gathered together against it? If you read Zechariah 14:1, it says, ‘Behold the day of the Lord cometh, and thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.’

How many nations will that be? It says all nations. You have to think, why would all the nations be so concerned with Jerusalem? "...the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, and the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city." There are certain things that are suppose to happen there. These things in Zechariah, by the way, are going to happen before we get rid of the stony hearts, that is afterwards as I read the prophets.

"What is going on now that could make this be a reality in a very short time? What could Israel do to cause all the nations of the earth to come up against her? Just think of the dynamics in the Middle East. How many friends does Israel have in the Middle East? When you think about the nations there, are there any that are Israel's friends or allies? Not really, they are by themselves. Let me just tell you about a story that I have followed because I think it is fascinating. I have seen some of these in the past and I always think there is one that could have the capacity to cause all of this to break loose.

"In July they had an accident in Syria (I read about this on the internet). There wasn't much on it anywhere, but several of the people in this place died. September 6th Israel, for some reason, bombed that same location and blew it to smithereens. Not only that, the IDF flew over Turkey and made another long route and flew back in from the North and bombed it. You might wonder why they would fly all the way around and over Turkey? Not only that, they were carrying long-distance fuel tanks. You don't have to be much of a pilot to know that to fly from Israel to Syria is not a long-distance flight with a jet, but they had long-distance tanks.

"Yesterday I read that Israel's Prime Minister is going to explain those tanks. They haven't said anything. In fact, they never even admitted that they did it for a long time, that they bombed this site. There are only two countries that even commented on it. You can guess who the first one was; Syria, who didn't think it was real good, and the other one was North Korea. How did North Korea fit into this? According to the news accounts they are providing nuclear technology to the Syrians. Just last week I saw a picture of this site, both before and after this bombing, and the Syrians have completely obliterated that site. Everything is gone. They have just completely cleaned it off. You wonder what would be there that they would want to do that so quickly? Probably because like some others, they want to destroy the evidence. Israel claimed that this was a nuclear lab and they were making weapons at that site. Syria said it was an empty building. If it was really an empty building, why did they go to so much work to clean the site up after the attack? Some of these questions you don't find the answer to because all of these countries didn't even admit it happened for several weeks. Finally they have admitted that yes they did do that. If you recall about 10 years ago, Israel bombed another site in Iraq or Iran. I remember they went in and blew it to pieces and said that they were protecting themselves from nuclear weapons.

"Does Israel have to worry about nuclear weapons? Yes, one good sized bomb and their country is gone. They don't have the choice like we do. We could stand a lot of nuclear weapons and still have lots of people left over because of the size of our country. Israel doesn't have that and all I can tell you is that in my mind Israel was rehearsing for an attack on Iran. That's why they were using long-distance bombers that have these extra fuel tanks. They jettisoned the fuel tanks over Turkey who said, what are you doing this for? It is interesting that Turkey or any other country didn't interfere. They just let them blow this thing up. All I can say is if you start having attacks like this and Israel is doing it, then it sets the stage for a serious attack. If you read the papers over there instead of the papers over here, you will find that a constant theme is that Israel cannot not attack Iran. They've got to stop Iran because once Iran gets nuclear weapons,

it will obliterate Israel. You might say, what would be the effect of that politically, if Israel did that? Would it not create a firestorm and all the nations saying we can't have Israel bombing all these Arab countries and then they would reverse the attack against Israel. At that time Zechariah suddenly becomes a reality.

"Another thing you can read in the 14th chapter of Zechariah is what happens to the people in that day? If you saw the movie, Raiders of the Lost Ark, when they opened the Ark of the Covenant, remember the SS guy that just melted down? That's a description right out of the 14th chapter of Zechariah. You can see that described as far as the effect that that has. It is different than being blown to smithereens by typical nuclear weapons. What we are talking about there are neutron nuclear weapons that have a massive amount of radiation. Those weapons can kill people inside tanks. If you are driving a tank, you are still just as dead even though the tank is not hurt because of the massive radiation. It is a formidable weapon. Our president, Jimmy Carter, stopped all research on these because he said it was too horrible to build, but Israel didn't, Russia didn't and the Chinese didn't. All of them still have these and if you think you can't wipe out a lot of people fast, just read about that kind of technology.

"The point of this is not in terms of the military aspects, but if you see that God uses all of these nations to fulfill His prophecies, I cannot believe that it can be too long in the future before those prophecies will be fulfilled. The good side of this is that the prophets' prophecies talk about the coming forth of Zion and how that is going to come to pass. That's going to be happening at the same time. There is always the good going on with the bad.

Has the Book of Mormon gone to the Lamanites and the Jews?

One of the things that has struck me, and I am not sure that this is prophetic, but I am thinking that perhaps the reason we haven't brought forth Zion as we have been commanded is because we haven't done what is required to bring forth Zion. That is, we haven't taken the gospel to the Lamanites, at least not any serious effort. We have not taken the gospel to the Jews. What does the Book of Mormon say that that book was written for? It is interesting that the two groups that are mentioned are the two groups we have pretty well ignored in the last couple hundred years as far as taking the gospel to them. The 10th chapter of the third book of Nephi says that when this happens, then there is going to be power come down from heaven to the people who are doing it. I found that that's the way I notice things happening. Those who are taking the gospel out across the world have the power from God to heal the sick, heal the blind and those kinds of marvelous things. The ones who are setting comfortably in their homes and don't think about those things don't have much of the spirit of God. That's how the endowment really is going to be given. It's going to be given to those who are the doers. I use to be more of a doer than I am now. You know what's happened? I have found that at my age that actions creak louder than words. That's kind of what has happened to me and so my arthritis doctor says to me when I come in, 'How long do you hurt in the morning?' Some of you may have similar experiences as you get up and say why won't my legs work? You know it takes a little bit to get everything working again.

"One of the things that concerns me with what is going on with this stony heart is a scripture from the 3rd book of Nephi 3:15. 'And thus there became a great inequality in all the land, insomuch that the church began to be broken up; yea, insomuch that in the thirtieth year the church was broken up in all the land, save it were among a few of the Lamanites, who were converted unto the true faith.' When we look at what has happened over the last 25 years, our church is broken in pieces and the pieces keep breaking. It's been going on all over the land. I would hope that for you in this congregation, because I think of you more as my

family then any other natural family that I have, I hope that this would not be the case, that we wouldn't break in pieces and that we would remain faithful to the true gospel even as the Lamanites did back in that day. If not, it's only a fulfillment of prophecy. **The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night**

"What I think, Saints, is that we don't have much time left to be arguing over those other details and that we need to be getting ready for the great day of the Lord as it unfolds. You know many of the Bibles say that the angels in heaven don't know when this is going to happen. In some versions it says not even the Son knows. I don't think this is the case. I think that that is not a good translation, because if the Father and the Son are one then the Son knows what the Father knows. Nevertheless, it says the angels in heaven don't know when that is going to occur and that's why Peter says it will come as a thief in the night. If it is tomorrow then you have to be prepared for that. I might just ask you this, so many of us take for granted like Peter says that this day is going to be the same as tomorrow and the next day will be the same as the day before, and we don't anticipate how quickly those things can change. Any of you that have had a severe sickness come upon you all of a sudden, you know you think you are well one day and then the next day you are sick. You don't anticipate all the problems you are going to have. The same thing can happen in terms of the fulfillment of prophecies. I can just tell you this because I grew up without it. What if the electricity shuts off? What are you going to be able to do without it? I know that some of you out there grew up without electricity so you know what that means that you may work 12 hours to do something that takes 10 minutes now. Life becomes very hard. That's why I think the scriptures say that people will be praying for the rocks to fall on them because mentally they can't stand that kind of a world. They've been too soft and too pampered and too much wrapped up in the pleasures of the world. So when that day happens, they are going to say I'd rather be dead. I don't want to live like this. I grant you this I would rather get up in the morning and put my feet on a warm floor because I have a furnace. It is great because I remember when the water in my glass froze solid over the nighttime. If you like sleeping in those kind of rooms then you will love it if you don't have electricity or any other way to keep warm.

"That's not the only thing and I don't want to dwell on that. I think we need to be dwelling on not becoming garbage trucks, not going through our life collecting all of this. We have to shake it off just like the Apostle Paul shook the snake off his arm. When that comes we need to not let that poison continue to come into us, but we need to shake it off and move on and say, 'Have a good day.' So I'll say to you this morning, 'Have a good day and may God bless you.'"

Report from Fall JCRB Conference

The Joint Conference of Restoration Branches held a fall national conference October 18-20, 2007 in Independence, MO at the Walter Avenue Restoration Branch. The theme for the conference was "May the kingdom of God go forth that the Kingdom of Heaven may come" (Doctrine & Covenants 65-1f). Delegates from the Mount Ayr Restoration Branch were Jan Jordison, Cheryl Phipps, Alan Smith and Gordon Winkler. High Priest Rob Rolfe presided over the conference. The conference was called to order at the opening session on Thursday morning. The scope of the conference was to consider and address the following items: 1) Do we want the seventy to form a quorum? 2) Do we want the High Priests to consider their presiding responsibilities?

3) Four resolutions from the African Conferences identified as TN1 through TN4 (Cohabitation, Fornication, Polygamy and Factional Priesthood). 4) Other relevant activities and resolutions pertaining to the United States to be forwarded to the April 2008 spring conference. The structure of the conference allowed time for informal questions and answers, general discussion, business sessions, prayer services and group meetings.

The first item of business was the passage of a resolution to direct the officers of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches to incorporate under the laws of the state of Missouri as a not-for-profit ecclesiastical association for the purpose of doing business as a domestic and international organization. The action was a response to the world social and political events that have caused many countries, including the United States to enact laws (Patriot Act) for the protection of its citizens. These laws make it very difficult to conduct banking and international business under the JCRB's current legal status.

The question "Do we want the Seventy to form a Quorum?" sparked considerable discussion. Seventy Neil Simmons answered many questions pertaining to the process, authority and need for the formation of the Quorum of Seventy. Brother Simmons stressed that the Seventy were willing to meet and organize themselves through the naming of a president and prayerful consideration of other calls to the office of Seventy IF there would be a body of saints willing to be the formal conference to approve the recommendations from the Seventy. There was much time given for opinions, statements of support and opposition. Brother Rex Curtis remarked that as all were invited to participate and some had declined, the smaller body should move forward as the body brother Simmons referenced and pray that others will soon join in support. He read from the Doctrine & Covenants Section 58:6d-f. A vote was taken in support of the Seventy meeting to form a Quorum so that the world of the Lord can continue moving into the world.

The second question addressed was "Do we want the High Priests to consider their presiding responsibilities?" Unlike the previous question, the response of the conference was a resounding "Yes" with little discussion from the conference floor.

The business of the conference continued with a resolution to adopt all four of the African National Conference resolutions simultaneously. The resolution was defeated. It was clear that the desire of the conference was to discuss and consider each resolution separately.

The resolutions pertaining to cohabitation, fornication, polygamy and faction priesthood each came to the conference floor for discussion, debate and amendment. The process of voice and vote lead to some remarkable agreement among the participants during consideration of the resolutions. All four resolutions were passed in an amended form and will be recommended to each branch for support once they are published with the conference minutes.

A resolution to recognize an annual April international conference as a general conference and an October conference as a national conference was approved.

A substitute amendment was also passed dealing with the use of the name "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Days Saints" by the JCRB. The resolution asked the organization as a group not to use the name in its letterhead or newsletter until it is freed from the legal questions now in court. This was done so that individual branches that are part of the JCRB would not be drawn into the legal conflict unwillingly.

In addition to the business session there were evening presentations on Thursday by Elder Bob Moore entitled "A Reply To Our Critics: Where Is the Church? The Legal Case for Claiming the RLDS Church." On Friday Elder Rudy Leutzinger presented

“What is the JCRB? What are the parallels in church history? Where do we go from here?” Some of the information from the presentations is available from the delegates for any one who wants to see it.

On Saturday morning the conference was encouraged to separate and met in groups as membership, Aaronic priesthood, Elders, High Priests and Seventy. Following the morning meeting, each group reported to the conference on their time together. The reports reflected the spirit-led discussions of each group. Contained in the membership report were references to being kind, encouraging one another, accepting membership responsibility, fix ourselves (repent), the desire to have our children be in Zion, admonition to the priesthood to do their jobs, fulfill their calling and teach. The Seventy and High Priests reported willingness to meet and form a Quorum and the desire to have the most powerful missionary program in the world. The Aaronic Priesthood also reported the need to organize themselves into Quorums for study and training in their offices of Priest, Teacher or Deacon. A resolution to move ahead with quorum organization for the Aaronic priesthood and Elders (which was added by the larger group) was approved by the conference.

The Elders meeting began with a season of heart-felt prayer and then the questions of what the elders should do. Elder Bob Moore brought up the idea of sending three representatives who were chosen and set apart to do so to visit with Wallace B. Smith to invite him to come to the April 2008 conference and give any message of direction for the portion of the church which was not part of the Community of Christ. This idea had been discussed earlier in the conference and not brought to the floor. In the spirit of the session, however, it was again looked at and with the exception of one person voting against it and two abstaining, the concept was brought back to the whole conference for action. After the first vote in the Elder’s meeting, the matter was discussed and prayed about some more to make sure those voting for it understood the reservations of those that had problems with the issue. People who at first were set against the measure talked about how their mind had been changed in the prayer and discussion. The measure was brought back to the whole conference, which also approved it.

The conference concluded with a sermon from JCRB president Rob Rolfe Saturday night and a sermon by vice president Gary Whiting Sunday morning. These services were held at the Colburn Road Restoration Branch.

NEWS AND NOTES

Women’s Retreat Held October 6th and 7th

Cathy Nelson and Cheryl Phipps traveled to Camp Wilderness, east of Lawson, MO to attend the fall women’s retreat sponsored by the Restoration Women’s Council. The classes, worship service, and drama focused throughout the weekend on Matthew 25:1-12 which tells the story of the Ten Virgins. Those who taught classes were Pat Chadwick “Taking the Holy Spirit to be your Guide”; Aaron Smith “Don’t Procrastinate the Day of your Repentance” and Sylvia Powell who talked about Mary vs. Martha. Marsha Bird led us in devotions to start the weekend. All of the classes focused on preparing our lives so that we could be part of the kingdom of God. One of the highlights of the weekend was a drama that was presented Saturday evening based on a book about the Ten Virgins. A women’s group also shared a number of contemporary Christian songs at various points in the drama. The whole evening ended with a wedding reception when the bridegroom came. Wedding cake and punch were served as though we had attended a wedding. Sunday morning we took part

in a communion and dedication service that Aaron Smith presided over. The whole weekend made us want to make the necessary preparation so that we would be numbered among the wise virgins and be able to take part in the wedding.

Congregational Hayride and Picnic

On October 21, thirty members of the congregation traveled to the home of Jim and Linda Barber for a hayride and picnic. Even though it had looked like rain earlier in the day, it was a beautiful afternoon and evening for the activity. Jim and Linda had prepared a list for a scavenger hunt, and several teams headed out into the woods to find those items. One group was successful in finding all of them. After the scavenger hunt, we divided into 9 groups for a corn- shelling contest of popcorn that the Barbers had grown. The popcorn that was shelled was sent home with members of the congregation to pop at a later date. After a picnic including a weiner roast and s’mores, we ended the evening with a campfire led by Ron and Di Smith, and then another hayride back to our vehicles. Everyone from Norm and Cathy Nelson to Elyse Jordison had a great time.

Christmas Cantata

The Mount Ayr congregation will sponsor a Christmas Cantata on the evening of December 16th. We are inviting others in the communities of Mount Ayr and Lamoni to sing with us. If you would like to sing in it, or know someone who would like to join us, contact Jan Jordison at 641-446-7887. You will be notified of scheduled practices and receive a CD to practice your part with. This helps to cut down on the number of practices. If you do not live in the Lamoni or Mount Ayr community, but can make it to at least some of the practices, you are invited to join us. We find that we receive as much ministry as we give while singing. I hope to hear from you. Jan Jordison

Woman to Woman Conference

Saturday, November 10 from 9:00-3:30 will be the Woman to Woman Conference at Colbern Road RB. Lunch and child care are provided. There will be a \$10 donation. RSVP to Linda Gwen. Poster and information is on the bulletin board at the church.

Movie Night

Sunday, November 11 at 6:30 p.m. is movie night at Ron and Di Smith’s. Eat before you come but bring snack foods for during the movie.

Congregational Thanksgiving Dinner

Sunday, November 18 following church will be the Thanksgiving dinner. Sign-up sheets will be at the church.

Report from Fall JCRB Conference

