



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch



NEWSLETTER

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News & Notes

Joshua Isaac Ballantyne

The congregation was blessed January 29th as over 60 shared in the blessing of Joshua, son of Aaron and Melissa Ballantyne, by grandfather's, Gordon Winkler and Win Ballantyne.

Gloria Ross Remembered

Gloria Ross, of Hamilton, Ontario and sister to Di Smith and Doug Calford, went home to be with her Lord January 23rd due to heart complications. Gloria, a lover of the Gospel and dear Sister of the Faith, will be deeply missed by all of us who were so blessed to know her. May her bubbly spirit and sweet smile be even brighter by her reunion with loved

ones in heaven.

Nauvoo Work Weekend

The Saints at Nauvoo have purchased a new building for worship and are needing help remodeling Feb. 3rd and 4th. If you are able to help, please call Mark Dietrick at (309) 737-5800.

Valentine Pizza Party

All the Saints are invited to Pizza and a Movie, Sunday February 12th at 6:00 P.M. at Ron & Di Smith's home.

Priesthood Meeting

5:00 PM Sunday, February 19th at Bob Rowland's before the evening gathering.

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Pastoral Considerations

by Sherman Phipps

I try not to watch TV. Not watching TV seems essential to me if there is to be any chance of “coming out of Babylon” and not “touching her unclean things.” (*Sec. 108:2b-c; Alma 3:98*) I understand that there are those who disagree with me on this (my wife for instance) and it isn’t something I choose to argue about, just something I apply to myself.

Of course, in our society it is impossible not to see some TV programming and still be in the world, which we are counseled to do (*Sec. 128:8b*). So - recently I saw that a cruise ship named the Costa Concordia hit some rocks off the coast of an island named Giglio near Italy. The ship then capsized resulting in several deaths, people still missing and presumed dead, people injured and a great amount of damage to property. There are apparently some issues regarding the environment: fuel to be off-loaded, garbage strewn around the scene and one huge ship lying on its side next to the island which needs to be somehow removed.

I don’t know that anyone has determined who is at fault for this event, yet, but one might assume it was directly or indirectly the responsibility of the person(s) in charge of the ship. This got me to wondering. Who is in charge of “our ship” (our life)? Who have we entrusted ourselves to? The scriptures seem to be clear that God wishes to give us only that which is good (*Matt. 7:20; Luke 11:14; Alma 6:23*) and that, in fact, all good comes from God. (*Omni 1:45; Moroni 7:10-16*) God went so far as to sacrifice His only Begotten Son, who was without sin, for the sake of each of us who are all sinners, so that we might have the option of salvation and have our souls redeemed if we would obey His words and allow Him to be “the captain of our ship” and direct our lives. He promises to bless His people – always! This doesn’t mean His people will just go along immune to life’s struggles. (*Ps. 34:19; Sec. 58:2b; Sec 100:3a-b*) But, He will always bless those who look to Him and obey His words. (*Mosiah 1:88-90*)

On the other hand, satan offers us no good thing, and seeks only to destroy us. (*III Nephi 8:50-51; II Nephi 12:26; Alma 3:67, 16:77, 16:238*) With this in our mind I would ask you to consider what it means if our lives seem to keep running aground on the rocks and capsizing? Who have we allowed to be in control of our lives? Who have we allowed to chart our course?

Again, just because you feel afflicted doesn’t mean you have allowed the adversary to take charge. But, let’s look closely at who is “the captain of our ship.”

My prayer is that the Lord will give you strength according to your faith in Christ, even unto deliverance. (*Alma 10:61-83*) May the Lord forgive us of our sins, continue to work with us, claim us as a part of His children and be the captain of “our ship.” May we not go aground and capsize and may our lives not pollute those around us, but rather be a blessing to them.

HOPE FOR THE NEW YEAR



Seventy Ron Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
January 1, 2012

“And again my beloved brethren, I would speak unto you concerning hope. How is it that ye can attain unto faith, save ye shall have hope? And what is it that ye shall hope for? Behold I say unto you, that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal; and this because of your faith in him according to the promise; Wherefore, if a man have faith, he must needs have hope; for without faith there can not be any hope.

And again, behold I say unto you, that he can not have faith and hope, save he shall be meek and lowly of heart; if so, his faith and hope are vain, for none is acceptable before God, save the meek and lowly of heart; And if a man be meek and lowly in heart, and confesses by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus is the Christ, he must needs have charity; for if he have not charity, he is nothing; wherefore he must needs have charity.

And charity suffereth long, and is kind, and envieth not, and is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, and rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;



wherefore, my beloved brethren, if ye have not charity, ye are nothing, for charity never faileth. Wherefore, cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all, for all things must fail; but charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth for ever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with them. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen. (Moroni 7:45-53)

Susie and Stephanie Cunningham sang a beautiful rendition of “Jesus is calling for you.”

Expecting Your Hopes to Be Realized

“Good morning and happy New Year. This morning I would like to talk about New Year’s resolution. Perhaps we’ll start with resolutions (plural) and talk more about the resolution (singular) later. How many of you celebrated the New Year coming in? I know a lot of you were over at the Winkler’s and had a good time there. Some of you had hoped to be there but were elsewhere and enjoying the New Year, I am sure. We are glad that everybody is recovered, is here, and will be celebrating the New Year with us this morning.

How many of you made resolutions for the New Year? Does anybody do that any more? People used to write them down and be pretty intentional about that, but not many people write any more. We all just type into our computer and it’s off in cyberspace somewhere. How many people wished for a million dollars last year? (No one indicated an affirmative response.) How many wished to lose ten pounds or more last year? (Several hands went up.) Now we are starting to get real. My wife Di pointed out to me that, in her English as a Second Language classes, students often have difficulties between wishes and hopes: what it means to wish for something and what it means to hope for something. We talked about that. I wish I had lost twenty pounds last year, but I didn’t. Often we use wish, especially with a verb in the past tense, to indicate that something didn’t happen or really

won’t happen. I wish that I would make a million dollars this year. Everybody knows that I’m not going to make a million dollars this year, but I wish that it would happen. Right? On the other hand, using the word hope, especially with the present tense verb, means that we have an expectation that something is going to happen. I hope that we will feel the spirit this morning and during the coming year. I hope that I can do a better job of having our family worship in the morning. When you say I hope something will happen, the expectation is that it really will happen. Or at least there is a higher probability of something happening than if you just say I wish something would happen.

Understanding that the word hope refers to things that you really expect to happen, I would like to talk a little about things that we hope for. With computers, you can quickly look up how many times it says one thing or another in the scriptures. I looked up wish, wishes, and all the forms of wish, and in the scriptures there are twenty times that word is referenced. When I looked up hope and all its forms, there were about 200. I thought that was pretty interesting. What the scriptures are trying to give to us is hope, an actual expectation that something is going to happen, something we can hope for. The scripture that I read to you talked about hope. Moroni says, I want to speak to you concerning hope because you cannot have faith without hope. And then he tells us what to hope for. He says, “Behold I say unto you, that ye shall have hope through the atonement of Christ and the power of his resurrection, to be raised unto life eternal.” Do you believe that? Is that what your hope is? Do you really have the expectation that you will be raised to life eternal?

For much of the world that is just wishful thinking. Most philosophers and even many theologians believe that eternal life is just a wish people have without any expectation it will ever happen. But the scriptures say we can hope for that. We can expect that our bodies will be raised from the dead, that our bodies and our spirits will come back together again and that we will live with God. I stand before you this morning to tell you that I have this hope. I have hope that I will be raised to life eternal. I have hope to be raised from the dead to live with God.

Now Moroni says that certain things that have to happen before we can have

that hope. He says, for example, that you can’t have that hope unless you are meek and lowly in heart. Otherwise our faith is vain, he says, because none is acceptable before God unless he is meek and lowly of heart.

Evidence of Our Hope

What does it mean to be meek? There are a number of meanings, but it is often used, to mean humble and submissive. There is an older, now archaic, meaning for the word meek that means teachable. If you had meek horses they were horses that were teachable or trainable. There are wild horses that would never be meek, but there are also meek horses that are trainable.

Moroni says that we need to be humble, meek, and full of love if we are going to have hope. He also says that we have to have charity if we are going to have hope. Charity is the pure love of Christ and it never fails.

In Hebrews 11:1 Paul says, “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.” As I was thinking about the evidence of things that are hoped for, I was wondering, what is the evidence in my life of the hope that I have? What is the evidence in your life of the hope that you have? That’s what faith is all about; if we have the evidence in our lives of the things that we hope for. Does it make a difference if you hope that you have eternal life? Does it make a difference if you hope that you will be raised from the dead? How does that help in my schoolwork? How does that help in my job? How does that help in my family if I have that hope for eternal life? Does it make a difference? Is there any evidence that’s there that I have that faith?

The scriptures are saying that we need to be filled with love for our brothers and our sisters, our parents, our teachers, our coworkers, and those about us. We need to be filled with love because that is the evidence of the hope that’s within us. If we believe that love is more powerful than all of the hatred in the world—if we believe that the good things that we do are really going to last more than the bad things that happen to us—if we believe that God really is powerful enough to take care of us no matter what so that we can be humble and full of love even when people don’t treat us nicely, even when people do bad things to us, that we can respond in love—that is the evidence of the hope that is within us. That is what faith is all about! And we cannot have faith without hope. That is what the scripture says. Faith is the



evidence in our lives of the things we hope for. That is why we came this morning for our communion service at the beginning of this New Year; to re-install that hope and renew the evidence of that hope in our lives.

The hope that we have comes about because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. I want to talk for a few moments about the principle of sacrifice. You can see the sunlight streaming in. Doesn't it make you feel good that there is sunlight on the first day of the year, in January? It feels pretty good to have that sun out there and giving energy. Do you know what the sun is? It's a star, right? My brother, Doug, brought home a song in first grade. "The sun is a mass of incandescent gas, a gigantic nuclear furnace..." It had some pretty big words in it. I didn't look this up so I don't have the exact figures, but I'll give you ball park figures. The sun actually uses up about 4 billion kilograms of fuel every second so that we have all of this energy on the earth and all throughout the solar system. Four billion tons per second! The sun is burning it up. If it didn't do that, it wouldn't be the sun, but that means the sun is burning up and eventually the sun will lose its life because it's giving life to us.

That's the principle of sacrifice that's actually throughout the universe. It seems to be the principle that God works on. We can apply that to the sacrifice that Jesus made. Sometimes we think that Jesus' sacrifice was just a matter of coming and dying in the flesh and being resurrected. But the scriptures talk about an infinite sacrifice, an infinite atonement. I think it works something like the sun, which keeps on giving of itself to sustain all of life. In a similar manner, Jesus gives His life so that we all can be resurrected and stand in the presence of God. I don't know how it works out in the sequence of time because the scriptures talk about being an infinite atonement, but I do know that the principle of sacrifice is there. Jesus wouldn't be Christ if he did not make the sacrifice that would take His life so that we could have life. We have hope for the resurrection because of the sacrifice that Jesus gave.

Moroni talks about having that hope within us. If we are going to have that hope we have to cleave unto charity, which is the greatest of all. All things must fail, but charity is the pure love of Christ. I think the phrase "cleave unto charity" is interesting. Cleaving means grabbing hold of it. That's kind of ironic, because you

can grab onto love all you like, but the only way to really have love is to give it away. That is, the only way to have love is to be loving. We have to give of ourselves. It's the principle of sacrifice. If we decide that it is important enough, if we want to have that eternal life with Christ, then we have to pray with all the energy of soul, Moroni says, to be filled with that love. That means giving love away, all the time. Never be weary of good works. Never come to the point where the bad things that happen, the difficulties of life, get us down to the point where we say, "I can't give any more." That's what the love of Christ is all about. That's what the sacrifice that He did is all about.

This morning we came together for a sacrament service. You notice the same word in sacrament and sacrifice. 'Sacre' means blood, it's the giving of the blood that gives us life. This morning as we came together for the sacrament of the Lord's supper, there were several things we did that were symbolic of giving the evidence of the hope that is within us for eternal life. For one thing, we all knelt down on the ground as the prayer was given. Do you know why we kneel on the ground? Do you know what difference it

"...the only way to have love is to be loving. We have to give of ourselves. It's the principle of sacrifice....That means giving love away, all the time."

makes where your body is when you're talking to the Lord about the communion?

We've had an interesting week with our granddaughter in the house. When she talks with you with her arms folded, glaring at you, and giving you icicles, it makes a difference in how you can communicate. It says, I don't want to be here. I don't want to submit to your authority. I don't want to do whatever it is that you want me to do. I want to do what I want to do. Back in the old days, the major weapons were big swords. If you got down on your knees you could not wield a big sword. When you knelt down, you were defenseless. When we get down on our knees and pray to the Lord, we are saying, "Lord, I can't run away from you. I can't get away. I'm going to submit to whatever it is that You would have me do." That's an evidence of the hope that is within us. If we submit to whatever it is

that the Lord has for us, that we will have eternal life.

When we took the bread, that was remembering the body that was broken for us. The wine was remembering the blood that was shed for us. Those were emblems, yes, but a physical evidence because, after all, if it wasn't for the Lord and His sacrifice for us, we wouldn't be here. Partaking of the emblems is a physical evidence of the hope that is within us.

Hopes and Resolutions

So we come to the idea of the beginning of the year, of a New Year's resolution. Last night at the New Year's party Joshua said, "You know what is exciting about this year? The first thing that we are going to do is go to church and have communion." I think about New Year's resolutions this way. I think about the resolution on my computer screen. I started playing these little games called Pick a Pix (don't get started). There are little pictures. The simple ones are on a 5x5 grid and the more complicated ones are 15x15. It is a black and white picture, they tell you some information, and you try to recreate the picture. When you get the right one, it tells you what it is. The resolution isn't very good because the picture is only 15x15 whereas your computer screen is about 1024x1024 or something like that. You have lots of chances to get good resolution. Do you know what I am talking about when I talk about resolution? These aren't very good resolution pictures. If you squint and get back you can kind of see what they had in mind when they say what it is.

Paul talked about it in the Bible when he said, "Now we see through a glass darkly but then we'll see face to face." We'll have better resolution. I'm thinking that our New Year's resolutions, even if we don't write something down, (which generally that's how my resolutions go), are most likely wishes for the next year, not necessarily our hope. Maybe by coming and participating this morning, we'll have a better resolution for the year. We'll be able to see that what is really important is to have charity. What's really important is to have love and to show our faith by showing the evidence of the *hope* that's within us. I hope that is not just playing with words this morning. I hope that God will bless each one of us that we will be able to share our faith and share our



hope. I just want to remind you this morning that I do have that hope and I hope that it is your hope as well. I hope that I can share that with others. I hope that I can do a better job of sharing the faith and sharing the real hope for eternal life by being filled with that love. Let's pray that we can be filled with the Love of Christ that when He does appear, whenever that is, that we'll know Him because we are like Him. The scripture says that we'll be filled with that same love because we will recognize Him. We will recognize Him and we will recognize the love that He is. May God bless you all.



THE SIMPLE LAW



Elder Steven Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
January 8, 2012

After welcoming the congregation, High Priest Sherman Phipps read Jacob 3:135-136 from the Book of Mormon speaking about the vineyard and the pruning of the vineyard. *... for behold, only this once will I prune my vineyard. And it came to pass that the Lord of the vineyard sent his servant; [to find persons to assist in that] and the servant went and did as the Lord had commanded him, and brought other servants; and they were few. So sometimes even though we are few I hope we are attune to the Spirit and understand that being few does not mean*

we are not of worth and value.'

As a Call to Worship Moroni 7:53 was read: *'Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye may become the sons of God, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is, that we may have this hope, that we may be purified even as he is pure.'*

Elder Steven Smith began his sermon. Today I would like to tell four stories and then sing a song; so when I get to the song you know it's close to the end and you can rejoice. The theme of the four stories is God has given a law that is very simple but if we choose He can give us a more complicated law - but it's better to keep the one that a child can understand. Remember in each of these stories there is a law given that was simple but people chose a more complicated route. God was fine with that except that there were consequences to their more complicated route. When they found those consequences, sometimes the people wished they'd just done it the simple way in the first place.

The Law at Sinai

Our first story comes from Exodus the 19th chapter and starts about the 4th verse. This story occurred three months after the children of Israel had left Egypt under Moses leadership. They came to a desert called Sinai. They had left Rephidi., which is a city close by, and pitched their tents in the wilderness before a mount also called Sinai. The Lord said that Moses was to talk to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel *'...you saw what I did to the Egyptians and how I bare you out on eagles' wings and brought you to me.'* He said, *'if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'*

That was a neat little promise. All they had to do was obey and keep His covenants. That was the law that God set before the children of Israel. So Moses called the elders together and told them. The elders told the people and they said that all that the Lord had spoken they would do so Moses went up and told the

Lord.

The Lord said that He was going to come to them as a cloud and that way the people could actually hear Him when He talked to Moses. He said that he wanted Moses to go to the people and sanctify them. They were even to wash their clothes and the men were not go in unto their wives on that third day. On that day the Lord said that He would come down from Sinai but He told Moses that the people should not touch the mountain. There would be a border that they should not cross. So Moses, with the traditions of the time, sanctified the people as he best knew how and had them wash all their clothes. On the third day there was thunder and lightning and a thick cloud developed and the voice of the Lord was as a trumpet and everybody could hear it. The people trembled because it was so powerful. Moses brought people to the mountain to meet God and the entire mountain was covered with smoke and fire. It says that the mountain even quaked.

Moses spoke and God answered in the presence of the people so they heard both Moses and the voice of God. They heard the voice call Moses up to the top of the mountain and Moses went. God also said to make sure that the people and the priests didn't cross the boundaries that He had set and that they weren't to come upon the mountain. At that time Moses went up on the mountain. You are familiar with the fact that he received the ten commandments, but he also received about twelve chapters of laws that were called sundry laws. They were two stone tablets written upon both sides of each tablet by the hand of God and were the words of God. The main commandments that were given were called the Ten Commandments. The lesser commandments had things like if you have a servant and he's a Hebrew he only has to work 6 years and then he's free. He has bought his freedom. If when he comes to the owner, he has a wife and children when he goes the wife and children go with him. However, if the owner gives him a wife and he has children then the wife and children are the owner's. But, if the servant chooses he can become a servant for the rest of his life and can go before the priests and proclaim himself of the owners and thus then he can keep his wife and children. There are a number of laws that were sundry laws which were kind of different than what we think of



today.

When we turn to Exodus we read that the people saw that Moses was gone for a long time. They decided that probably it was not good to keep the simple commandments of God. They went to Aaron and said that they needed a symbol that they could worship in front of and asked him to make a god that they could worship that we can see. Aaron asked them to give him all their gold earrings and all the gold that they had taken out of Egypt and he would make them a god. Aaron forged a calf. Now a calf was the symbol of the god Baal and the god Baal was an evil god. This was contrary to some of the commandments that the Lord had given.

About this time the Lord told Moses that the people were sinning and that he needed to go back down the mountain. He went down and as he did so he heard a great noise and saw the people sinning. He broke the tablets and took the golden calf and burned it to the ground. There was obviously wood underneath the gold on the calf. He took all the gold that was melted down and ground it into a powder and put it in water and made all the children of Israel drink of it.

Three thousand men were killed who had led their families astray and because the people had chosen a law that was lesser than the law that God had given, the Lord plagued the people because they worshipped the calf. They were given a law that was simple. All they had to do was to keep the covenants with God and obey His voice. They chose to follow a tradition and though they were still His people, they were plagued for a long time.

The Law of Governance

The second story occurs in the Book of Mormon. I am starting in 2nd Nephi where all of Lehi's family had come to the Promised Land. As they tried to live together they found it hard to do because Nephi had been told by the angel he would be a ruler and a teacher to his brethren. His older brothers didn't appreciate that very much. His two older brothers decided that it was time to kill Nephi. The Lord warned Nephi that he was going to be killed and it was time for him to leave. Nephi left and took everybody that he could find that would listen to the Lord's voice. They fled into the wilderness many days, probably more than two or three days. They pitched their tents in a place

that they called Nephi. Nephi was kind of their leader so they called the place Nephi after him. They called themselves the people of Nephi. Now this was before they were the Nephites, they were just called the people of Nephi. Nephi taught them to observe to keep the judgments, the statutes and the commandments. The story tells us that the people prospered. They sowed and reaped abundantly and raised flocks and were able to read the records that had come with them. They prospered and multiplied. They also made some swords for defense. They built buildings and worked hard and were taught to do so, to be industrious. He taught the people to work wood, iron, copper, brass, steel, gold and silver. There were many precious ores that they worked as well. Because of their prosperity they were able to build a temple. When the Spanish arrived in Central America they found that the indigenous people prized working with their hands above most other things.

The people asked Nephi to be a king but he told them no. In Mosiah they were asking for a king too. Mosiah told them, *Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man, for the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of man are not always just.* (Messiah 13:16) He told them that if a king should establish the laws of God and judge according to the commandments, it would be good to have a king but all men were not just, so it is expedient to not have kings. A wicked king would cause iniquity and destruction and couldn't be dethroned without contention or shedding of blood. A wicked king would have friends and guards and would tear up the laws of the righteous kings and enact laws after his own wickedness. If the people wouldn't obey these laws then he would destroy them. That was Mosiah's thinking when the people were looking for his sons to be king and he instituted the reign of the judges. So Nephi had said no but the people wanted a king. They still wanted a king even though Nephi had said that the Lord didn't think this was a good idea. We don't know for certain what all his reasoning was. Although I think probably it was along the same lines as Mosiah's.

We find that forty years later the Nephites had Nephi as their king who was righteous but despite his righteousness, it identifies that there were wars and contentions forty years after they had been so greatly blessed among the people.

Eventually they had kings that were not as righteous, kings like Noah from whom Alma had to flee. What we find is that Jacob had prophesied and said that this was going to be a land of liberty to the Gentiles because they would not have any kings upon the land. God had said that with kings they would have wars, contentions and lose their liberty but God allowed them to have a king because they wanted one. Again, God gave one way and when people wanted a different way, God allowed that to happen.

The Law of Holy Matrimony

The third story is about keretoth. Keretoth is the cutting or trampling of a covenant, a matrimonial bond or what we call today, divorce. In Deuteronomy 24:1 Moses said that a man could take a wife and if she didn't show favor in his eyes or if he found uncleanness in her, he could write a bill of divorcement and send her from his house. When she was gone she was free to marry and become another man's wife. Then there were various other conditions placed on that. When Jesus was teaching on the mount he taught that that wasn't the way it was supposed to be. He said it was because of the hardness of their hearts and it made the land to sin.

Also at that same time while teaching the Sermon on the Mount, he pointed out other ways where the law that had been simple, became complex. He allowed alternate ways where the law had been given so that despite the hardness of the hearts of men, they would still worship God. *Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time that, Thou shalt not kill; (that's a pretty good thing not to do) and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment of God.* (Matt. 5:23) He said that the original law was that you weren't even supposed to be angry with your brother because if you are angry with your brother, you would be in danger of judgment. He told them that whoever said *Racca* or *Rabcha* (which literally translated means 'an empty worthless one' and is a term of vilification) is in danger of the council and if they said to their brother *thou fool* they were in danger of hellfire. By the time you even think of killing someone you've gone through a lot of these other thoughts, to make you feel like they are nothing. He then says, *Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to*



lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matt 5:29, 30) If you let this into your heart, it will be your entrance into hell. You shouldn't even get to the point where you commit adultery, you stop it way before that starts when you are thinking or lusting about another.

Again, it hath been written by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths. But I say unto you, swear not at all; . . . (Matt. 5:37-38) If you are going to say yea say yea, if you are going to say nay, say nay but don't embellish it with swearing because that is evil.

In the Sermon on the Mount He said a lot of other things including the Beatitudes and things that you should do and in those He was talking about the simple law. The consequences of choosing "plan B" were so bad that if we adhere to the simple law of God or "plan A", we would have avoided much of the pain. So divorce was not a good thing for the people and it was not good for the land.

The Law of Forgiveness

The fourth story deals with how we respond to evil. In Matthew 5:41 it talks a little bit about long suffering. I've mentioned before that long suffering was translated from a Hebrew idiom. When they said long suffering they didn't say long suffering they said long flaring nostrils, like when you get really mad. If you had long flaring nostrils then you had long suffering. Long suffering could be translated as long allowance, where you allow others in sin, time to learn wisdom from their sin. It requires patience that honors their agency. As you pray for them, forgive them, love them and finally teach them the better way. When He was talking about it He said don't resist evil. If a person smites you on the cheek, turn the other cheek. If you are sued and they take your coat let them have your cloak as well. If you are compelled to go one mile, then go the second mile. Give to those who ask.

From the Sermon on the Mount He says, *But I say unto you who hear my words, Love your enemies, do good to them who hate you. Bless them who curse you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you. And unto him who smiteth thee on the cheek, offer also the other; or, in other words, it is better to offer the other, than to revile again.*

And him who taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also. For it is better that thou suffer thine enemy to take these things, than to contend with him. Verily I say unto you, Your heavenly Father who seeth in secret, shall bring that wicked one into judgment. Therefore give to every man who asketh of thee; and of him who taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them only who love you, what reward have you? For sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what reward have you? For sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great; and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. (Luke 6:27-38)

It was a very simple law and a law that the youngest among us can understand. Be good to people. Don't be fighting with other people. Do good to them who persecute you. I would like to add to this, 1st Samuel 12:23 which says, *Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.* So when we pray for people we should teach them the good and right way.

What kind of offense should be considered as one where we pray for people and love them? I think that in Luke 23:25 Christ showed us one of the greatest offenses. What is the worst offense that somebody could do to you? Any ideas? (He asked Tanner Rowland, who replied, 'killing him'.) We see that Christ was on the cross and was about to die an excruciating death. Excruciating comes from the word 'cross.' He was about to die an excruciating death and what did He do? He prayed for the people, Father, forgive them for they know what they do. It was out of love that He prayed and ever since we have had that as a way to teach us.

That's part of what those two scriptures from Luke and from 1st Samuel were saying. Pray for the people. Forgive them. Love them and teach them.

I have born my testimony before of being so greatly offended by an individual that I thought maybe cockroaches were a little better than that individual. If I stepped on a cockroach I would be doing the world a favor and stepping on him would probably do the world a favor. Over time when I was unwilling to forgive, the Lord told me that I should pray for this individual. So I prayed with all my heart that he would die and go to hell and learn his lesson. After I had prayed enough of that, the Lord reminded me that I had to forgive that individual and so I started trying to forgive. For me forgiveness is

"I not only had to pray for him but I had to forgive him. My prayers started to change as I started to forgive him and I realized that I needed to love him and loving helped in the forgiveness quite a bit."

kind of like being an alcoholic. I kept falling off the wagon. There would be little triggers that would trigger the anger inside. I not only had to pray for him but I had to forgive him. My prayers started to change as I started to forgive him and I realized that I needed to love him and loving helped in the forgiveness quite a bit. Then I needed to teach the right way.

We have been given a greater law that this is how we should treat others with prayer, forgiveness, loving and teaching them. Now we have a lesser law that has been given. It involves a very complicated set of rules if somebody offends you. It goes back to the, if somebody offends you then pluck them out type thing. You can go to them and talk to them and then go with somebody else and then go before the elders and then you kick them out of the church and do all sorts of things like that. That's worked. It's shattered our church so that we are in a number of little groups now. We are no longer one but we have followed the lesser law in cases when we should have known to follow the greater law. So there's a consequence in following the lesser law and we find ourselves as a number of small groups because we haven't kept the greater law. Over and over in the scriptures we see it is better to keep the greater, simple law.... The one that even a child can keep.



I said I would give four stories, and I have done so, and then I was going to sing a song and that would be the end. The following are the words of this song that I have written:

Set in parallel array, Dressed like soldiers of the Lord,

Covered in his blood, Defenders of the Word.

Practiced fighting in our homes, Barricaded pews,

Pitted one against another,
In a fight where we all loose.

Chorus:

For we haven't understood, this fight is fought with prayer,

With the fruit of God's Spirit, Or His sanction isn't there.

So surprise them with forgiveness, Hit with love from deep within,

Teach his word is like a two edged sword that cleaves the shackled from their sin.

This battle's for our minds, deep down to the core,

If we win with hatred, God has lost the war.

This battle's for our words, and who we're going to tell,

This battle's for our actions, Let us pray we all fight well.

Chorus

Let forgiveness dry the tear of the vanquished and the lost,

Let the victor help restore, dignity the struggles cost.

Let us gently teach with patience, those we find in sin,

As we both grow in wisdom in a fight where all may win.

Chorus

So sit in parallel array, Dress like soldiers of the Lord,

Covered by his blood. Be defenders of his word.

Go practice fighting in your homes; bring it back to the pews,

Fighting for another's hope, Gives them one more chance to choose.

Final Chorus:

For we've finally understood, that when we band in prayer,

With the fruit of God's Spirit, God's promised to be there.

As we surprise them with forgiveness; hit with love from deep within,

Teach His word is like a two edged sword, that cleaves the shackled from their sin

Yes His word is like the sword, that freed me from my sin.



DO WE LOVE OUR NEIGHBORS?



Priest Jim Barber
Bethany, Missouri
January 15, 2012

As a Call to Worship, Alan Smith used 2nd Nephi 3:61, 64-65. *O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee for ever. Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss: therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness.*

The scripture this morning is kind of short but I think it says a lot. It's taken from 2nd Nephi 11:109. *But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money, they shall perish.*

I am not sure how this sermon is going to turn out. Through the week Linda helped me and we made an outline. She wrote down what I thought I wanted to talk about. Then Friday it was really cold outside and I was out about all morning

taking care of the livestock. I came in and ate dinner and then sat down and started going over my notes and went to sleep. I'm not sure that that's a good sign. I guess if some of you start nodding off I'll forgive you because I went to sleep also.

As you can tell from the scripture I am going to talk about Zion again. It seems like I keep on the same line of thought for some reason but I think Zion is very important. I think we definitely need Zion today. I am going to read another scripture from the Doctrine and Covenants that talks about Zion, *And it shall come to pass, among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor, must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another. And it shall be said among the wicked, Let us not go up to battle against Zion, for the inhabitants of Zion are terrible, wherefore we can not stand.* (Sec 45:13a-c)

Doctrine and Covenants 1:6b-c says . . . *the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand--when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the Devil shall have power over his own dominion; and also the Lord shall have power over his saints, and shall reign in their midst, . . .* I think this is the condition that is going on right now. In South Africa we hear about how the people are treated because of racism or power or whatever it might be. Ireland has been at war amongst themselves for centuries because of differences in religious backgrounds. Somalia and Nigeria, which are part of Africa, also have many problems going on. In Haiti there are lots of struggles there and a lot of poor people. They are struggling because of the higher ups wanting to take over the country. You hear stories about how many of the Haitians have got in to little boats and tried to row to the United States. Is that fleeing to Zion? As I think about these things I wonder if we are actually living in the day where people are fleeing to Zion because of the persecutions that they suffer.

Several years ago there was a story of a young boy in Cuba that wanted to get to the United States so he crawled up in the fender well of a jet airplane and tried to ride to the United States. I don't quite remember but I don't think he made it. I think he died during the flight. People want to come here so badly that they will risk their lives because of the things that



are going on in their country.

Look at all the people who are trying to come to the United States from Mexico. The drug cartels are taking over and the Mexicans are really being persecuted. They try to get to the United States. Sometimes we catch them and send them back but sometimes they come and make it OK. I sometimes wonder if it would be better if we let them come. It seems like we spend a lot of our time and our money in going to other countries and trying to free the people. We go into a country and bomb everything and tear it all up and then we go back in and build the country back up. We end up being over there for a long time and lose a lot of American lives plus we spend billions and billions of dollars. Would it be better if we took that money and invited the people to come here to safety and protected them?

I am reminded of a story in the Book of Mormon. Ammon and Aaron were out preaching to the Lamanites. A lot of them listened to what they said which meant they couldn't live amongst the Lamanites-their own people. So they made a covenant with the Nephites that if the Nephites would allow them to come and live with them, they would never take up arms again. They called themselves the Anti-Nephi-Lehis. It worked pretty successfully. In fact, these Lamanites became even more righteous than some of the Nephites.

I am also reminded of the fact that not too long after Linda and I were married, which was during the Vietnam War, there was an effort made to bring some Vietnamese families to the United States and to provide them with homes, food and jobs. I can remember the little town that I grew up in, Parnell, MO, trying to bring a family to that town. They did bring them in but they weren't really accepted. People were afraid that these people might go into the homes and stab the homeowners in the back. Then there was the other idea that if we brought them all over here they were going to take our jobs, which happened.

I am just torn between whether we should spend money blowing something up and destroying it or whether we should spend money to help somebody. I am not saying that we shouldn't go into these countries for a humanitarian effort to try to stop people from being persecuted. We have to do something but it just seems like it costs a lot of money and sometimes it is not very successful. We go in and clean a

country up and then we pull out and there's another skirmish somewhere else so we go there. By the time we get the latest one done the one that we went to earlier is back to being evil again. I don't have the answers. I am just trying to give us food for thought I guess.

Another thing that goes along with this is that at the Statue of Liberty there's a sonnet that was written by Emma Lazarus. I'd like to read that to you.

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,

With conquering limbs astride from land to land;

Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand

A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame

Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name

Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand

Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command

The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.

"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she

With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,

Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,

The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.

Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,

I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Is this what we need to be doing? To open our hands and our arms to welcome these people who are in tribulation? Is this what Zion is about?

Zion, the Community

I'd like to take a little bit different view of what Zion is. There was a woman who wrote about the traditional Indian life. Her name was Rigaberto Menshu. Here are some of the things that she said about her people. She said her people had no word in their language for enemy. They had to borrow the word from another tongue. They had a concept of equality for all people regardless of their station in the community. They respected earth and water and prayed for permission to plant corn in the earth's soil. I had never thought about this. We plant every year

but I have never asked for permission. She said we must only harm the earth when we are in need. They didn't waste water even when it was plentiful because it was pure and clean and gave life to man. They cared for all things of nature and considered the unnecessary killing of an animal to be like killing a person. They only killed animals when they needed something to eat. I don't think they were very proud of us when we came over and started slaughtering the buffalo just for the trophy and left the meat lying on the ground. They took the hides and sold them for money. She said that as soon as their children could understand they were taught that they had a responsibility to the family and to the community. They must be productive and maintain self-respect and community-respect. Boys and girls were taught the sanctity and responsibilities of marriage at a very early age. From the beginning of a relationship through marriage the community was involved in the young couple's getting their home established. Life was centered around the family and the community both in their joys and work, and they suffered together in times of grief. The community prayed together at the end of each working day and decisions were made on a community level.

As the Bible became available they studied the ways Christ directed their lives. They found the Bible message easy to adapt to because it followed their traditional ways of life and dealing with one another. They learned from the Bible that it was OK to fight to defend themselves but never to gain dominion or riches. The people could do what they wanted as long as they did it for the people and for God. They worked not only for their own village but when other villages were in need they felt it their responsibility to help them. This follows the first scripture that I read. If we labor for Zion we'll be OK but if we labor for money then we are going to be dammed.

I believe that we as a church or as individuals or as Christians (I don't want to put all the blame just on one church.) have failed in bringing about Zion. We need to repent. Third Nephi 10:1-8, which I think is talking about the people in the United State, says *But if they will repent, and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant, and be numbered among this*



the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance, and they shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob; (I think our time has passed to build Zion. Not to say that we are done but we are to assist now because we have failed. We didn't accomplish what we set out to do so now we're supposed to assist the Lamanites or the remnant of Jacob.) *And also, as many of the house of Israel as shall come, that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem; And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem. And then shall the power of heaven come down among them; and I also will be in the midst, and then shall the work of the Father commence, at that day even when this gospel shall be preached among the remnant of this people.*

Verily, I say unto you, At that day shall the work of the Father commence among all the dispersed of my people; yea, even the tribes which have been lost, which the Father hath led away out of Jerusalem. Yea, the work shall commence among all the dispersed of my people, with the Father, to prepare the way whereby they may come unto me, that they may call on the Father in my name; Yea, and then shall the work commence, with the Father, among all nations, in preparing the way whereby his people may be gathered home to the land of their inheritance. And they shall go out from all nations; and they shall not go out in haste, nor go by flight; for I will go before them, saith the Father, and I will be their rearward. And then shall that which is written come to pass.

Eventually we will all become a part of the House of Israel. It says in First Nephi 3:201-202, *And it shall come to pass, that if the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day that he shall manifest himself unto them in word, and also in power, in very deed, unto the taking away of their stumbling-blocks, and harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; Yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel.* As we enter into the waters of baptism and take upon us the name of Jesus Christ we are becoming adopted into the House of Israel.

I think that each one of us has to make an unchangeable covenant with God. We must be all together committed to His service and in return we will receive an

unwavering faith. Through our righteousness and faith we will receive an endowment. First Nephi 3:187 promises *And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost.*

First Nephi 3:230-231 continues . . . *I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb, and upon the covenant people of the Lord, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth; And they were armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory.* There's a lot of people that claim to be Christians but I wonder if we really even understand what that word means. It seems like we want to say that we love Christ and we follow Him but we want to do it in our own way and in our own time.

Love Thy Neighbor

I mentioned last Wednesday night about the fire that was right south of us that killed a young boy. I thought that was a pretty terrible thing but it was worse than what I thought. The fire didn't kill the boy. His father killed him and then set the trailer house on fire to cover up what he did. He lived within three miles of me. I didn't know him at all. I tried to find out from the other neighbors if anybody else knew who he was but even the person that lived right across the road from him didn't know his name, didn't know what he did only that he was there with this young child. As I was thinking about this I wondered if I would have made an effort to talk to this man if this would have happened.

Do we know the people in our communities? Do we know the troubles that they have? This trailer house has had probably ten different families living in it in the last ten years. I didn't know any of them. Do we need to get more involved in our communities? I was reading to you a while ago about the Indian traditions. They knew everyone in their community. They prayed together. Are we failing? I think I am.

There's another story in the Book of Mormon in Alma. The Nephites were fighting against the Lamanites and some of the Nephites were defecting to the Lamanites and stirring them up. This went on for 15 years. Finally Moroni the commander in chief of the army realized that the dissension within their own ranks

was causing the problem. In a letter to Pahoran, governor of the land, Moroni said, *Now I would that ye should remember that God has said that the inward vessel shall be cleaned first, and then shall the outer vessel be cleansed also.* (Alma 27:43) We must ourselves become righteous before we can expect any one else to look up to us.

We have the warning given to us in Ether 1:34-35, *And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God, that ye may repent, and not continue in your iniquities until the fullness come, that ye may not bring down the fullness of the wrath of God upon you, as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done. Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.*

It seems to me that we need to simply follow the two commandments which Jesus gave us. I am going to read them to be sure I get it right. *Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.* (Matt. 22:36-39)

If everybody in the world loved God and loved their neighbor, there would be no satan. There would be no trials or tribulations. It sounds simple but it's hard to do. It's hard for me to love the man who killed his son but yet if we would have known him, if we could have helped him maybe this wouldn't have happened. I guess I've put a lot of blame on myself and all of us today but I hope that we can learn from this and get to know our neighbors and get to know those that live in our communities. There are a lot of troubled people in the world and we need to find them and help them.





GOD'S GIFT OF HEALING



Patriarch Milo Burnett
Logan, Iowa
January 22, 2012

Steve Cunningham shared Mosiah 1:52-55 as a Call to Worship. *I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole souls have power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another; I say unto you, that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and art preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move, and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another; I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole soul, yet ye would be unprofitable servants. And behold, all that he requires of you, is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments, ye should prosper in the land.*

Good morning, Saints. I'm glad to be back in your midst. I'd like to read to you from the 10th chapter of Moroni verses 10 through 14. *For behold, to one is given by the Spirit of God, that he may teach the word of wisdom; and to another, that he may teach the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; and to another exceeding great faith; and to another, the gifts of healing by the same Spirit. And again, to*

another, that he may work mighty miracles; and again, to another, that he may prophesy concerning all things; and again, to another, the beholding of angels and ministering spirits; and again, to another, all kinds of tongues; and again, to another, the interpretation of languages and of divers kinds of tongues. And all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will. And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that every good gift cometh of Christ. And I would exhort you, my beloved brethren, that ye remember that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men.

Miraculous Experiences At Reunion

Do I see some teenage boys in here? Any one 14? Then you can relate to an experience that I want to share with you this morning. All of my life my family attended what was known as the old Woodbine Reunion which was held up on top of the city park which had a big water tower standing right in the middle of it. Back in those days the road around the park was made out of dirt not gravel. It completely circled the city park and on that city park they had pitched tents. There were lots of tents. In fact they were so close together that the ropes of the tents crossed each other. They had a big tent for the adult worship services that had two big mast-like posts in the middle like a circus tent although not as big. The local men would go down to the lumberyard and get fresh pine wood and make pews. That's what everybody sat on with a grass floor. The police department would take a rope and rope off the roads so people couldn't drive on them so we had the park all to ourselves. My mother, father, two sisters and I attended every reunion since we children were all babies and so I grew up going to reunion.

When I was 14 years old I was old enough to be considered a freshman in high school although in Sioux City, IA where I lived with my family we still had junior highs. The 9th grade was the top grade of the junior high school. Technically I was considered a freshman in high school so that meant I could attend the young people's worship services that

were held at reunion. If you have ever been to the city of Woodbine and kind of know the lay of the land up there the only hill in town was where the water tower and the city park were and everything else was basically flat. Coming down off the hill was a paved road that led down into the main part of downtown. Probably about five blocks from the water tower was the wooden church that the RLDS used and it was used for youth worship services during the reunion.

Every morning about 8 o'clock we would meet at the church and would have our own prayer and testimony service led by some elders of the church. When we finished with those services we would come up the hill four abreast and we would be singing hymns that we knew by heart and camp songs, anything we could sing together in the spirit of worship. Our last day was Friday and the last service we had was Friday morning. We would walk up the hill to where the water tower was and then turn to the right and go down the grassy path into the big tent where the adults would be waiting for us to arrive. Then we would join our families in the big tent for the adult worship service that would be prayer and testimony.

On this Friday morning as we were walking back toward the reunion grounds and were close to going up the hill, we were singing in a very emotional experience. It was for me that morning. In fact I was so emotional I was crying and I didn't understand why I was crying. I had not had that experience before. I noticed that there were teenagers in the group that I hadn't seen all week but they were there. There were girls and boys who were walking with us and they were singing with us. When we got up to the top of the hill where the water tower was and turned to go down into the big tent I was so overcome that I was sobbing and I didn't understand why. We walked into the back of the big tent and went and sat with our parents. Somehow Mom and Dad must have understood because they didn't ever question me about it. What I understand about it now is I was overcome by the Holy Spirit, and it was having an impact on me that I had never experienced before. Later on in life I came to find out who those other teenagers were but I'll get to later.

The guest ministry that week was Apostle Daniel T. Williams and Patriarch Evangelist John Grice. When we got into



the big service those men were both on the rostrum for that prayer meeting. The tent was packed. It was just loaded with people.

During the service Daniel T. Williams stood up and spoke in tongues in a foreign language unknown to any of us and unknown to him too. As he spoke to the people sitting out in the audience he reached a point where he turned around to the men sitting on the rostrum. He pointed to each one and spoke to each of them separately and then turned around and spoke to the audience some more. Then he sat down. Immediately John Grice got to his feet, came over behind the pulpit and started to give the message in English. He went through all the gestures that Daniel went through particularly when it came to turning around and pointing to the priesthood members and telling them individually what God wanted them to know.

After John Grice finished and sat down, they had the prayers and when it came time for the testimonies two young Hawaiian girls sitting clear in the back of the tent by the flaps stood up. They were

Well, what I found in my experience is that God uses His gifts of the Spirit frequently when people are gathered together for worship in large gatherings like at reunions or at conferences. The purpose for God doing this is two-fold. One is to show His power and the second to strengthen the faith of the Saints. To sit under that power and that manifestation of the Holy Spirit in that way is something that will touch you deeply and you will never ever forget it. It will stay with you your entire life.

The Experience is Verified

That was 1954. In 1974, twenty years later, I was a pastor in Sioux City, IA and was with another elder taking the emblems on communion Sunday to one of our elderly shut-in ladies. Her name was Nora Johnston and her husband had passed away. She was a very faithful lady, more so than her husband. Erwin was a priesthood member but was not as active and there were many times that my family stopped at the bottom of the dirt road that Nora lived on and picked her up to take her to church. She always attended the Woodbine Reunions. When we were

I didn't know they were angels at the time but knew about it later. If a 14 year old boy by the name of Milo Burnett can have that kind of experience so can you, Tanner, and so can all the other young people that are here.

God and Jesus Christ don't share their experiences with people by age. They share their experiences with people by the faith of the person who is receiving that gift or receiving that experience. If the young people here remain faithful to God and to Christ and study their scriptures frequently, preferably every day, they will have an understanding of what the teachings of the gospel are.

Let me give you a challenge right now. In the scriptures there are what are known as the six principles of the doctrine of Christ. Find them. Go home today and get your scriptures out and find the chapter that lists the six principles of the doctrine of Christ. Those principles are important because the entire background of Christ's ministry on earth is wound around those, not only in the past but today and also into the future. It is kind of the backbone of our belief as a church.

“God and Jesus Christ don't share their experiences with people by age. They share their experiences with people by the faith of the person who is receiving that gift or receiving that experience. If the young people here remain faithful to God and to Christ and study their scriptures frequently, preferably every day, they will have an understanding of what the teachings of the gospel are.”

in route to Graceland College and had stopped by the reunion before they went on to Lamon. There was a reason they stopped by, and the Lord had a hand in this. These young women explained that they were native Hawaiians from families that were native Hawaiians and they understood the native Hawaiian language. They stood to bear witness that the tongue was in the Hawaiian language and they had understood it both times; first time when given in Hawaiian and the second time when given in English. That was very important because that was the confirmation of the experience. These young ladies knew exactly what the language was and it was beneficial I'm sure for Daniel Williams to have this happen which brought to him a confirmation of him speaking under the influence of tongues.

That was a long time ago in 1954. I heard tongues spoken at that reunion later on by another man whose name I can't remember. He was a member of the Seventy. So why does God use this gift?

visiting with this woman in her home, she and I got to reminiscing about this particular reunion. I was telling her this experience of mine of coming up the hill and being overcome emotionally, literally sobbing when I walked into the back of the big tent which was the chapel.

She said, “Oh, Milo, I know what was going on.” She said that she had turned around to look at the group coming into the big tent and Jesus Christ was walking at the head of the youth group. She said there were angels in our group that were teenagers and they were coming up the hill with you. They were singing right along with the rest of you. She was given to understand that this was what I was seeing. I told her that she didn't have any idea how valuable her testimony was to me. Twenty years later I got the confirmation, for me, as to what my experience was. What was I seeing, Tanner (Rowland)? Who were these teenagers that were in the group? Tanner answered, “Angels.” They had come with Jesus to be a part of that group. That was my first experience with angels.

We belong to the Church of Jesus Christ. Joseph Smith, Jr. and Oliver Cowdery were given to know that the name of the church should be called the Church of Jesus Christ. People in the Nephite colony when they asked what they should call their church were given to know that it was Christ's church and it should be called after Him so I belong to the Church of Jesus Christ and so do you. You have the opportunity, young people, of having some marvelous experiences with the Holy Spirit. That's a promise that's given to all people not just to the youth but particularly I am speaking to the youth because sometimes they don't think that what's going on in church matters to them but it really does. If you'll prepare yourself and study your scriptures and pray every day, you'll find that the Lord will use you in ways that you have no idea of right now. The same thing goes for the adults. If you do these things and teach your children to do them, it will definitely change your life and you'll become an instrument in God's hand to do a work



which is what we're here for.

We're to build the kingdom of God and prepare the people, not only our people but people who have not heard about the message of Jesus Christ. To prepare them that they might hear it and might know and realize that there is a church on earth that was begun by Christ. That church was begun twice, well actually three times. It was begun in Jerusalem when Jesus was giving His ministry those three years. It was reestablished in the land of Bountiful in the Book of Mormon time when Jesus Christ came to the Nephites and performed three days' worth of ministry with them. They established a church after He left. In the 1830's the Church of Jesus Christ was established by Joseph Smith, Jr. and Oliver Cowdery with other men and women present.

There are some very important things that I read to you in the scripture from Moroni. The important thing is that these spiritual gifts come from God and they are used by God, when it is within His wisdom to use them, that people might be touched by the experience and it will touch them deeply. It will create within them an understanding that God loves them and that He wants them to realize that He is the same God today as he was in the past and will be in the future. If he used the spiritual gifts in the past, He will use them today. I read a line for you that said they will never end. These gifts will always be in His church.

Gifts of Healing

I would like to share some experiences with you now that I've had. Before I do let me tell you that in the 1960s my Dad contracted cancer, a cancer that spread to different organs of his body, and he was not able to survive that. He was a patriarch evangelist in the church. Before he passed away he called me to his side and said, "I have through my experience as an elder had the privilege of being blessed with the gift of healing." He said that he had been praying for weeks that God would allow this gift that he had to be my gift too, that it would be with me in my ministry. At the time he told me that I thought it was fine but I didn't really know how to think about it because it would be something in the future, no doubt. My Dad passed away January 25, 1972. After he had told me that I thought about it and prayed about it many times. As my life and my ministry have progressed I've had evidences of the

gift of healing. I would like to share some of those experiences with you now.

In 2003 I spent a week at the Adrian, MO branch where Dan Brown was the pastor. He and his wife lived in the country between Adrian and Butler. I went down there to give Patriarchal Blessings to members of the Adrian Congregation. I did them in the Brown's home so the people came there. It was a good setting for doing them. It was very quiet and I was the only one in the house except for the person I was giving the blessing to. I gave a lot of blessings that week. I gave more blessings than I thought it was possible to give. I basically said to the Holy Spirit, "I can do this if you can. If you will be with me I know I can fulfill the expectations of the people coming for their blessing." I gave blessings to adults, young women and men, young twenty year olds and older teenagers. I had them from age fifteen on up that week. I did fifteen patriarchal blessings in one week. That's a challenge. I was young at it and new at it but it worked out fine.

While I was there Dan asked me if I would be willing to go up to Overland Park, KS to a hospital to administer to a man that was paralyzed completely because of some rare disease. Dan had been to administer a couple of times before and asked me if I would go with him. It was in the spring of the year when we drove up there. By the time we got to the hospital it was getting dark. We went into this hospital room and there lay a man in the bed hooked up to a respirator and there were all kinds of beeps coming from the machinery. The only thing he could do was open his eyes and roll them. Everything else was paralyzed. He name was Vladimir. Vladimir and his wife came from Czechoslovakia and were in the United States on green cards. They were looking for work. His wife was an RN and while they were traveling around the United States, he got some kind of rare disease that affected his nervous system and paralyzed him from the head down. It didn't paralyze his diaphragm completely but it paralyzed it partially so that was why he was on a respirator. As we stood beside his bed, Dan offered the prayer of anointment and while he was doing that the Holy Spirit gave me instructions to pray for this man's healing. During my prayer of confirmation of that anointing I said to him, "Vladimir, the Holy Spirit has instructed me to tell you that you will be

healed and you will be healed completely." After I ended my prayer he was making sounds with his throat and was trying to get his wife's attention. I don't know how he communicated this to her but he communicated to her that he wanted to sit up and have the trach taken out so he could talk. She sat him up and went out in the hall and got the floor nurse to come in and help her so that she could disconnect things. His respirator was turned off and for the first time this man spoke. This is what he said, "Good evening everyone. I am glad to meet you." He turned and looked at me and turned and looked at the four of us in the room and greeted each one of us individually. Dan was just shocked because that was the first time the man had not only sat up but had turned his head and spoken. We had a nice chat with him. His wife told me that he liked music and that he played a guitar like the Smith family does and that he liked to sing. I told him, "Well, Vladimir, you've got lots of hospital visits down the road to get you restored back to normal but you will be restored back to normal. When you are done with all of that, you get ahold of Dan Brown and have him get in touch with me and I'll come down here wherever you are and you and I are going to sing together. We're going to sing a duet at the church. Is that a deal?" He replied that yes it was. I reached down and took his hand, he couldn't shake my hand, and told him that this was a promise on my part and I wanted him to do it.

When I returned to Adrian, MO the next year, 2004, for Patriarchal Blessings, I was in church and as Dan was giving the announcements, I looked out into the foyer through the closed doors that had windows in them and here came a couple. The man was walking with a crutch and I recognized him. It was Vladimir. He was walking slowly with his wife and their baby daughter. They came in and sat in the back pew. I was just overwhelmed to see them there. When it was my turn to stand up I couldn't speak because I was overcome by my emotions. I looked at him and through my motions conveyed to him that he had touched my heart. When I could finally utter a word I told him that I was so glad to see him there and to see him walking. I told him that I expected him to maybe be in a wheel chair but he was walking with the use of just one crutch. I told him that the Lord was keeping his promise to him and that he would be



completely healed when this was done. I was notified later on that he and his wife came back to church when all of his treatments were finished. His treatments were done in a specialized hospital in Denver, CO and he was completely restored and had the use of all of his hands, arms, legs, fingers and toes. He was back to normal.

If the Holy Spirit hadn't told me to tell him that he would be completely healed, I wouldn't have done it. I still had my choice, didn't I? I could have questioned that and decided that I wasn't going to tell him that he would be completely healed. It's a big challenge to tell a man that he's going to be completely healed when he can hardly move but that's what I was told to tell him and so that's what I told him. The Lord did keep His promise. I don't know what became of that couple but he will never forget what was done for him through the gift and the power of the ordinance of the administration for the sick by the laying on of hands.

At the end of the week that I spoke of above in 2004, Dan told me that there was a woman that lived up by Harrisonville, MO in the country. She was at her sister-in-law's house who was a member of the Adrian Congregation. She has gangrene on her ankle and a staph infection and was allergic to penicillin. He said that there was nothing they had found that they could give her to kill that infection. She's was going to have to have her foot removed. Her last effort to avoid this was to be administered to. Dan and I walked up to her and asked her if she was comfortable and she said she was. I asked her if she understood what we were going to do today. She replied that she wasn't sure. I explained to her that administration of the sick was an ordinance in the Church of Jesus Christ for the purpose of asking the Holy Spirit to heal someone of their afflictions. We told her that we were going to administer to her, that Dan was going to anoint her head with olive oil which is symbolic of Jesus Christ's loving and healing ministry. I told her that then I would stand and lay my hands on her head too and offer a prayer of confirmation. As Dan was praying once again the Holy Spirit gave me the instruction to offer a prayer that she might be completely healed. So when I offered my prayer during the administration, I said, "Mary, I have been instructed by the Holy Spirit to tell you that you will be completely healed

of this affliction. You have nothing to fear and nothing to worry about. Just be patient. The Lord moves in His own time." Dan Called a few months later and he said that Mary's foot was completely healed. She didn't have to have it cut off. It healed on its own and was back to normal and she could walk on it without pain. I said, "Praise God." He gave this woman the chance to have her foot healed but more importantly He gave her a new sense of faith to believe in the ordinance and the power of the ordinance of the administration to the sick.

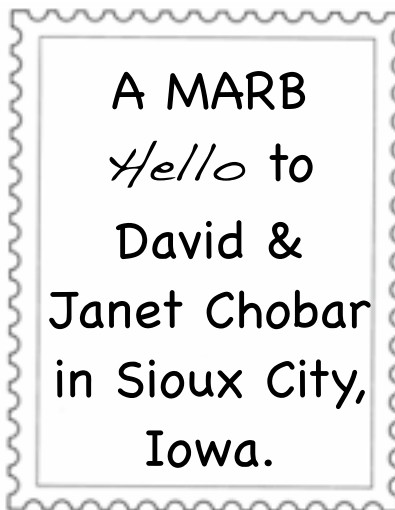
When I offer prayers for people I don't always ask for them to be healed. I do ask that if it's within God's wisdom that they would be healed but I always leave it up to God. It's God's call. Of course, it always is God's call but when the Holy Spirit moves on me and I feel that I'm to ask for that then I do it. I don't question the Holy Spirit. I do what the Spirit tells me to do.

I have one more experience that I would like to share with you. This happened in 2004 to 2005. There was a woman who was a friend of Marilyn's daughter. This woman's name was Julie. She was in the Mercy Hospital in Council Bluffs and was about to go into surgery. She was scared to death. Trisha, Marilyn's daughter, called us in Omaha at another daughter's house and told me that Julie was going to have emergency surgery and she was petrified. She asked if I would come and administer to her. I said, "You bet I will." Marilyn and I jumped in my car and drove across the bridge and went to Mercy Hospital in Council Bluffs. Trisha was there to meet us and took us right upstairs to the surgical area. Julie was already being prepared for surgery. The

nurses were getting the IVs going. I was by myself and I went in and didn't have time to explain to Julie really what I was doing but I quickly told her that I had olive oil which was a symbol of the healing and loving ministry of Jesus Christ. I told her that I was going to lay my hands upon her head and pray for her and ask God's Spirit to be with you. As I offered that prayer, brothers and sisters, once again the Holy Spirit told me to tell her that she would be completely healed of her affliction. She was being operated on for perforation of the bowel. After the administration I went out into the hall where the surgeon was standing out at the nurses' station. He had his green outfit on with his mask hanging down. I walked out to him and stood right up beside him and said to him, "Doctor, I want you to understand what I just did. I used pure olive oil and I administered by laying my hands on Julie's head and I offered prayer that she might have God's Spirit to be with her." This doctor turned and looked right at me and asked me to pray for him. I said, "You bet I will." So, I prayed for him that he might be able to use his God-given skills to do the best job he could in taking care of this woman.

Marilyn and I stayed at the hospital and after the surgery was over, the doctor came down to the waiting area, sat down and talked to us for over an hour and a half. He wasn't in any hurry to leave. He just stayed there and talked with us. I have never ever had a doctor ask me to pray for him when I've been up there administering to someone before surgery but he did. He recognized apparently the spirit that I was carrying and wanted to have me share it with him which I did.

Julie spent eight months in the hospital because they couldn't get the perforated bowel problem solved. They would operate and take out a section of the colon and think everything was all right and the next section would start to perforate. She had an infection. I can't remember the name of the bacteria but it was a really dangerous one. She was transferred from Mercy Hospital in Council Bluffs to the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha where they had lots of people who were very specialized. She had two surgeons and pathologists who were very specialized in dealing with the bacteria that she had. She spent a long time in that hospital and there was a point where they had eradicated the disease but it took a long time for her





bowels to mend. They didn't close her up in front. They left it open and put some kind of a window so that they could watch her intestines and see if that infection was coming back. She was like that for a long time. Whenever I went in to her room to visit her, she would always ask me, "Did you bring your oil?" because she wanted me to administer to her.

Julie had her own experience and she told me about it when I came to visit her one day. She told me that that morning she was sitting up for a while in a chair. She had on clothes with no sleeves so her arms were bare. Nobody was around but she could hear her name being whispered in her ear several times. I smiled and told her that I had had that experience too. Those were the angels that I asked God to be with you the entire time that you were to be in the hospital. I told her that they were letting her know that they were there. They let you know that so that it will give you comfort and strength. She told me that that wasn't all. She said she had the feeling of water dripping on her arm. She looked up at the ceiling and there was nothing up there that would cause water to be dripping on her arm. She said it continued and she couldn't understand it. I told her that I could.

Her angels were letting her know physically that they were there by letting that water slowing drip on her arm. I told her that she had been blessed. These angels had made their presence known to her and that know she had that testimony that she would have for the rest of her life. I told her that she was going to be blessed. That she was going to be healed of this. She told me that the doctors told her that they didn't think she would make it, that she was going to die. I told her that the doctors had their understanding of this and God had his understanding. I asked her if she remembered what I said to her when I administered to her in Mercy Hospital for the first time. I told her that she would be completely healed. I wouldn't have said that to you if that wasn't going to be the case. You are going to be completely healed.

About seven months into the ordeal for her the doctors told her that they thought it would be another three months before she would get out of the hospital. The next time I visited her she was down because the doctors had told her that it was going to be another three months before she could go home. I told her to look me

in the eye. I told her that the doctors had their timetables but God had his own timetable and she would be out of there before that. She was out of the hospital one week later. They had sewn her shut so the opening was gone. She had lost a huge amount of weight. She was one of these women that had a large amount of weight on her and she lost it all over the eight months she had been in the hospital. She went home to her three children who were teenagers. When Julie comes to visit Marilyn and me in our home, she always walks up and throws her arms around me and steps back and says, "You know you saved my life." I always tell her that I was simply the messenger. Jesus Christ saved your life. She told me that if it hadn't been for me her healing wouldn't have happened but I told her that might not be true. She might have been healed anyway but we know one thing for sure the ordinance was placed in this church for the purpose of healing people with the laying on of hands by the elders of the church. That ordinance exists for a purpose and that is that people can receive blessings. We should expect healings every time the administration takes place if we are in the right frame of mind and our faith is strong. It depends on our faith. If our faith is strong and the faith of those who come to administer is strong and they are not distracted by anything, then many good things can happen in an administration.

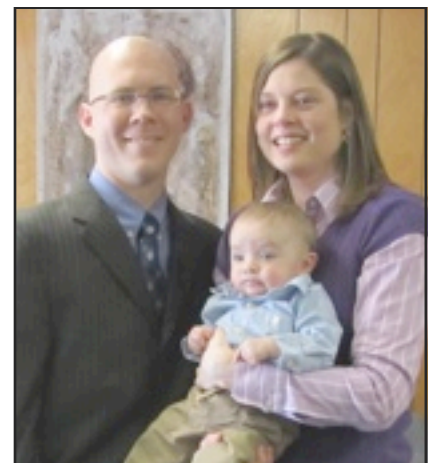
How many of you were at the Seventy Reunion last summer? Karen Bates had a miraculous healing at the reunion. She was in the Chevillie Chapel where I gave my Patriarchal Blessings that week. She hadn't seen me so I didn't want to startle her. I went and sat down in one of the back pews and just waited until she was ready to leave. We both walked out of the chapel and as she left she stepped on her foot wrong and turned it. It was very painful. I told her that I would call the staff and have them bring her a cart so she could go back to the MSC. I told her that hopefully her brother Dr. Doug Smith would be on the campus so he could take a look at her. I learned later that when the cart picked her up and took her to the Memorial Student Center that her two sons administered to her and asked for a healing. Her ankle immediately was healed. She stood up and walked back and forth and there was no pain at all in that ankle. I knew about this and shared it with the people at the reunion that I thought

might not have heard about it. There was a miraculous healing at that reunion. There can be miraculous healings in Mount Ayr Congregation. There may just well be one taking place as we speak.

God gives us these experiences that we might have our faith strengthened, that we might recognize that these gifts of the spirit are available today and that if we are in the proper frame of mind they will happen. They are waiting to happen for all of you. God would like to bless each of you with a special outpouring of His spirit that would just flood you in a way that you maybe never experienced before. I know Bob (Rowland) had that experience with me last summer and you'll never forget it, will you? This is possible for everybody. I leave you with these thoughts. It was good to be here again and to share my testimonies of the power of the Holy Spirit and how the Holy Spirit works with me.



OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD BLESSING OF JOSHUA BALLANTYNE



January 29, 2012

Rob Rolfe who presided over the service of sharing and blessing of children shared the following. I'd like to make a



little comment. I hope I'm not stealing any of Alan's remarks here. I was reading 3 Nephi 5:39, 40 which says, *And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and become as a little child, and be baptized in my name, or ye can in no wise receive these things. And again I say unto you, Ye must repent, and be baptized in my name, and become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.* I was thinking in a very real sense the kingdom of God is laying right there in Aaron's arms and we can all hold the kingdom in that sense. We were all in that same state at one time, pure and innocent, and look what has happened to us. For those of us who believe in that kingdom being a reality somehow we've got to go back and recapture that innocence and purity that comes from being a little child.

(For the story of Aaron and Melissa Ballantyne's adoption of Joshua, please reread Gordon Winkler's sermon in the December Newsletter.)

High Priest Alan Smith shared his thoughts on the blessing of children. We are celebrating the miracle of new life each time we come to share in the ordinance of blessing of a little one. I feel like there is a special miracle this morning. I remember the power of the administration experience when Gordon (Winkler) and I asked the Lord that a miracle would happen in the life of Aaron and Melissa so that they could have a child. There's no doubt that that miracle brings little Joshua here this morning for this blessing. We are here to share in an ordinance that Jesus instituted in His ministry. Just as we have the Patriarchal Blessing to help us with guidance in later years of our lives, we come to have a blessing for a little child asking that God's Spirit will help nurture a whole personality, to help him in his emotional, spiritual and physical growth and development. Remember when Simeon gave a blessing to Jesus when He was brought to the temple. He gave a blessing to Jesus' parents as well and told them of their responsibility and some of the things that would be the responsibility of their young son.

Jesus blessed the children in the New Testament. I'd like you to remember this experience that was shared in Matthew 19:13-15. The Inspired Version gives us a little more detail than the King James on this. *Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them and pray. And the disciples*

rebuked them, saying, There is no need, for Jesus hath said, Such shall be saved. But Jesus said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid hands on them, . . . In some ways the disciples were right. Jesus had talked about children being saved from the beginning but this blessing wasn't for remission of sins that comes later in baptism when a person has a choice to be taught about Christ and is old enough to make a covenant decision. Those children had parents like Melissa and Aaron today who felt somehow that it was important to bring their children for a blessing of the Holy Spirit to help hem develop into citizens of the kingdom just as we're asking for help from God for the nurture of Joshua this morning. The promise is that this blessing can help make a difference in the life of little ones. I've been praying, and I know many of you have as well this week, that Joshua's grandfathers, Gordon and Win, when they take him in their arms this morning would be blessed in their office and calling to provide the very same blessing that Jesus would provide if He were here among us at this time in body.

Aaron and Melissa, we know you come this morning realizing that there are many responsibilities in shaping a new life, teaching Joshua how to become a member of the kingdom of God. In this world of change your family is called to be a point of stability for Joshua. This can only happen when the Spirit of God leads you in relationship with one another and with your son. We have some unique concepts in the Restoration about children. Children are born without sin because of the sacrifice of Jesus. Children are not accountable for their actions as they learn right from wrong until they reach the age of accountability. Our responsibility as parents is not to make an inherently sinful child good but to help an inherently good child remain in the light and not be led into darkness. As parents Section 68 of the Doctrine and Covenants specifically gives us some ideas about what we need to be teaching Joshua as he grows. We're commanded to teach him the doctrine of repentance, to have faith in Christ the Son of the living God, to be ready to be baptized and given the gift of the Holy Ghost when he's eight years old, to teach him to pray and to walk uprightly before the Lord, to teach him to observe the Sabbath Day and keep it holy, to teach him

to be a worker not an idler and to teach him to seek the riches of eternity and not have eyes full of greediness. These are some wonderful things that if Joshua learns them will help him in his life. It's a big responsibility and you need the support of family and church family. That's why we're gathered here today to let you know that.

Some people wonder if there really could be an experience of power so great in the life of a little one like Joshua this morning that would make an impression on them that they would remember. That's why the recounting of the experience in the Book of Mormon where Jesus blessed the little children is so memorable to me. I'd like to share that with you. *And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude, that they were overcome. And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them, and bade them arise. And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them, Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold my joy is full. And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bear record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them. And when he had done this he wept again, and he spake unto the multitude, and saith unto them, Behold your little ones. And as they looked to behold, they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were, in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about; And they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them, and the multitude did see and hear, and bear record; and they know that their record is true, for they all of them did see and hear; every man for himself. (3 Nephi 8:20-26)* What a wonderful experience of blessing for those little ones but that's not the end of the story. A couple of chapters later this is recorded. *And it came to pass that he did teach and minister unto the children of the multitude of whom hath been spoken, and he did loose their tongues, and they did speak unto their fathers great and marvelous things, even greater than he had revealed unto the people, and loosed their tongues that they could utter. (3 Nephi 12:7)* A difference had been made in the lives of those children from that blessing but that's still not the end of the story. Here's what Jesus



said just before He left them. *And now behold, my joy is great, even unto fullness, because of you, and also this generation; yea, and even the Father rejoiceth, and also all the holy angels, because of you and this generation; for none of them are lost. Behold, I would that ye should understand; for I mean them who are now alive, of this generation; and none of them are lost; and in them I have fullness of joy.* (3 Nephi 13:7, 8)

My prayer for Joshua and his parents this morning, and for all of us, is that we too can grant Jesus that same fullness of joy. That He can say about each one here this morning because of you and this generation none of them are lost, no, not one. Each of us can respond this morning even as Aaron and Melissa have by bringing Joshua for a blessing and as Win and Gordon have for taking the responsibility of standing in the stead of Jesus and bringing this blessing. Jesus said just before He shared the statement about His joy and that none would be lost, *Therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, Even as I am. And now I go unto the Father. And verily I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father, in my name, it shall be given unto you; therefore ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for he that asketh, receiveth, and unto him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* (3 Nephi 13:5, 6)

Aaron and Melissa asked for a miracle. They received it in the life of Joshua and they have been entrusted with that life. Are we asking for a miracle this morning in the blessing of Joshua that he can receive a blessing so that he and none of his generation will be lost because of our response to Jesus and His call to change the world beginning even with one life? Ask and ye shall receive is the promise. My prayer is that the miraculous power that brought us to this place will be shown forth in the ordinance of this hour and the lives of each of us will be touched by that Holy Spirit in sharing in this experience. To help us do that I would like for you to join me in a moment of silent prayer for Joshua, his parents, Winn and Gordon and for each of us that we may be blessed by this ordinance. After a few moments of silent prayer Brother Sherman (Phipps) will come up and offer a prayer and make a few comments as well.

Father in Heaven, as we come this morning we are very much aware that that

which you would have take place here this day can take place only by the power of your Holy Spirit so we pray that you would be merciful unto us, that you would forgive us of our trespasses, that you would cleanse our hearts and our minds that we might be able to receive and participate in the presence of your Holy Spirit as Joshua receives that blessing which we pray would come from you. Father, I pray that you would uphold my brothers as they stand in your stead and that they might truly so stand this day and that their feelings and their words might be directed by you and that Joshua and his parents and all of those who will influence his life might truly be blessed this day that your purposes might be fulfilled in this life and in the lives of us all. I pray, Lord, that you would be present and that you would allow us the presence of your angels and I ask it in the name of your Son Jesus.

Alan's probably already said it but I had asked earlier if I could have a minute so I'll go ahead and take it. A few weeks ago when I understood that Joshua was going to be blessed and we would be able to participate and observe, I felt a couple of things that I wanted to share with you. When I say you I am thinking Aaron and Melissa but also Gordon and Linda and Win and Marilyn because they will be very significant in this too. I was reminded of how in the scriptures we have a number of examples of children who were specifically given to a certain pair of parents. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samuel, John the Baptist and even Jesus were specifically placed with certain parents for the Lord's own purposes and in His wisdom. I thought also of Moses who was born to a mother who we don't know much about. She may have been a perfectly good mother but through the Lord's wisdom and for His purposes Moses was hid up and given to another set of parents that the Lord's purposes might be fulfilled. I've been very, very impressed that Joshua has been specifically given to you, not only as an answer to your prayers and as a blessing to you and your family, but also as a blessing to Joshua that he might be delivered from darkness into light. I pray this morning as he is blessed by his grandfathers that you too might be very, very conscious of the fact that you need to be very diligent in keeping your own covenants with the Lord and with each other that this child might learn to do

likewise that he might be a blessing to God's people.

Joshua Isaac Ballantyne, son of Aaron and Melissa Ballantyne, was blessed by Elders Gordon Winkler and Winston Ballantyne.

Our Heavenly Father, we come before you this day with great joy in our hearts and we present to you the life of Joshua Isaac Ballantyne for your blessing. Lord, he has been brought here this day by his parents, Aaron and Melissa, who have accepted the truth of the gospel and the doctrine of Jesus Christ in their life and in so doing are following that example which you have presented in your scriptures of bringing their little one to you for a blessing.

Heavenly Father, we have heard already of just what a great miracle Joshua's life has been in their family, and Lord, we know that it is because of your purposes that he has been placed here. Father, we then would pray upon him that your Spirit might always reside within him. We pray, Lord, that just as we see that Spirit exemplified in his smiles and in his giggles that as he grows and develops that that same spirit might be expressed and shown to others that all might know that he is a child of yours.

Heavenly Father, just as he has brought his family and friends here this day in front of this congregation, we would pray that he might be blessed with that power to always be able to bring forth your good word to whoever he comes in contact with and that he might have that ability to bring others unto Christ. We pray, Lord, that you might bless him with knowledge and understanding that he might be able to distinguish good from evil and that he might be led to make wise choices and that his choices might be for good that he might always be found in that righteous path that leads to you.

Heavenly Father, we also know that he will be challenged many times in his life. We pray, Lord, that he might come to rely on his family and his friends for guidance and direction. We pray that we might be able to be of assistance to him and we might have your strength in helping to raise him up.

Lord, we pray that your kingdom might come on earth as it is in heaven and we would further pray, Lord, that you might bless Joshua with the opportunity to walk in your Zion that he might have that relationship with His Lord and Savior



Jesus that would truly magnify your love for him. So, Heavenly Father, we present Joshua to you knowing full well that you have known him in the spirit before he was born on this earth. As we watch him grow and develop physically, we know that also his spirit and his relationship with you will grow in that same manner that he might truly become a servant of yours. We ask, Lord, on behalf of your Son Jesus Christ whose joy was made full by the blessing of children in years past. We pray that His joy might be made full this day. In His name we pray, Amen.

Joshua's grandmother, Linda Winkler, read the poem Hands by Bessie Perry while a slide presentation of pictures of Joshua and also pictures of members of our congregation in various forms of service was being shown.

Hands

Hands are often used as an expression bringing joy to a saddened heart, reaching out with love and compassion. This all plays an important part.

The hands of a baby so precious while you rock and hum a song and soft little fingers are entwined lovingly around your own.

Then we see a tear-stained face as the plane lifts to the sky and as a parting loved one waves a fond goodbye.

The hands of a steady surgeon as he tenderly uses his skills to lessen the pain and suffering in accordance with God's Will.

Or to greet a friend you've encountered it's much the same in every land. You smile as you acknowledge the meeting by extending to them your hand.

When congratulations are in order for words you never lack as you empathize your sincerity by a tap upon the back.

There is the one who writes a letter or a phone call dials to say, Hello, we all love you To have a lovely day.

At the bedside of a loved one pain almost too severe to stand often not a word is spoken

as you tenderly hold their hand.

Then to the less fortunate who have a real need to offer up a helping hand is a worthy cause indeed.

Or the little mischief maker as unpredictable as a bomb on being disciplined grabs your hand and says I'm sorry, Mom.

Then we have a young man with firm and steady feet who politely takes the arm of the elderly and guides her across the street.

There are those who have the answer and always seem to know how to bring solace to the sufferer by stroking a fevered brow.

The hand of an older couple who have weathered the storms of life clasping their hands in affection loving gestures of man and wife.

Then as evening approaches after a day of care we clasp our hands in reverence and offer up to God a prayer.

There is no greater invitation and after all is said and done then the offer of our Heavenly Father's hand as He softly beckons "Come."



After the baby blessing various members of the congregation shared in the reading of poems and stories and the sharing of musical talents. The last offering was from Susie Cunningham who teaches art in the public schools. She drew a picture on our white board accompanied by Petra's, "The Coloring Song".

Red is the color of the blood that flowed
Down the face of Someone,
Who loved us so.
He's the perfect man,
He's the Lord's own son,
He's the Lamb of God, He's the only one
That can give us life,
That can make us grow,
That can make the love between us flow.

Blue is the color of a heart so cold
It will not bend when the story's told
Of the love of God for a sinful race
Of the blood that flowed down Jesus face
That can give us life,
That can make us grow,
That can keep our hearts from growing cold.

Gold is the color of the morning sun
That shines so freely an every one.
It's the sun above that keeps us warm
It's the Son of love that calms the storm
That can give us life,
That can make us grow,
That can turn our mornings into gold.

Brown is the color of the autumn leaves
When the winter comes to the barren trees
There is birth, there is death,
There is a plan
And there's just one God,
And there's just one man
That can give us life,
That can make us grow,
That can make our sins as white as snow

That can give us life,
That can make us grow,
That can turn our mornings into gold.
That can give us life,
That can make us grow
That can keep our hearts from growing cold.
That can give us life,
That can make us grow
That can make the love between us flow.



February 2012



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

Sunday Schedule

DATE	FEB 5th	FEB 12th	FEB 19th	FEB 26th	MAR 4th
SPEAKING	H.P. Robert Rolfe	H.P. H. Alan Smith	Elder Gordon Winkler	Priest Rodney Bastow	Elder Steve Cunningham
PRESIDING	Seventy Ron Smith	Elder Gordon Winkler	H.P. Sherman Phipps	Elder Alan Smith	H.P. Robert Rolfe
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Linda Rolfe	Sue Beck	Ron & Di Smith	Jordison Youth	Diane Anderson
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	Jim Barber	Steve Cunningham	Michael Jordison
GREETERS	Ed Anderson	Rodney Bastow	Sue Beck	George Knotts	Sherman Phipps
CUSTODIANS	Jim Barber	Michael Jordison	Rodney Bastow	Sherman Phipps	Robert Rolfe
SUNDAY EVENING	Norman Nelson	<i>Pizza & Movie</i> Ron Smith	Bob Rowland	Robert Rolfe	Steven Smith

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	FEB 1st	FEB 8th	FEB 15th	FEB 22nd	FEB 29th	MAR 7th
LOCATION	Ron Smith	Steven Smith	Gordon Winkler	Norman Nelson	Robert Rolfe	Alan Smith
PRESIDING	H.P. H. Alan Smith	Priest Jim Barber	Priest Ed Anderson	Seventy Ron Smith	Elder Steven Smith	Elder Michael Jordison



Special Events & Activities

Sunday February 5th: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

Valentine Activity: Pizza & a movie for everyone. 6 PM at Ron & Di Smith's

Tuesday February 14th: Valentine's Day

Wednesday February 15th: Day of Fasting & Prayer

Sunday February 19th: Priesthood Meeting at 5 PM - Before Evening Gathering

Birthday's this month: **1st-** Alan Elefson; **5th-** Teegan Rowland; **8th-** Dorothy Logan, Lori Cunningham, Steven Cunningham; **11th-** Beth Knotts; **20th-** Ben Anderson; **22nd-** Rodney Bastow; **24th-** Jared Beck

Anniversary's this month: **22nd-** Orlin & Ruth Thomas



**Church of Jesus Christ
Mount Ayr Restoration Branch**

c/o Cheryl Phipps
15581 270th St
Lamoni, IA 50140



(Photos courtesy of Diane Anderson)



New Year's Eve Party

To see more photos visit the MARB  Facebook page.



OFFICERS

PASTOR/PRESIDING ELDER:
High Priest Sherman Phipps
High Priest H. Alan Smith (Counselor)
Elder Gordon Winkler (Counselor)

BISHOP'S AGENT
Elder Gordon Winkler
Cheryl Phipps (Stewardship Coord.)

HOME MINISTRY
Priest Rodney Bastow
Priest Ed Anderson

SECRETARY/RECORDER
Julia Jordison

FELLOWSHIP COORDINATOR
Valle Smith

WORSHIP COORDINATOR
Jennifer Rowland

MUSIC DIRECTOR
Lynda Rolfe

EVANGELISM COORDINATOR
Michael Jordison

YOUTH LEADER
Jennifer Rowland

SERVICE PROJECTS
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