



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

NEWSLETTER



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(Arrangement courtesy of Sue Beck.)

News & Notes

Guest Ministry this Month

Please welcome High Priest and Pastor Michael Beem and his wife Janie, from Zion's Witness Branch: Independence, on June 10th. There will be a short visiting session on Saturday night and a Potluck following the preaching service on Sunday.

Anderson & Schoff

Please join the congregation for a wedding shower June 9th at 2PM (Ron Smith's home) for Brandy and Josh as they prepare for their wedding August 4th at 3PM in the Maysville Restoration Branch.

Reunion!



Missionary Family Reunion
June 24 - 30, 2012

"Be Ye One"

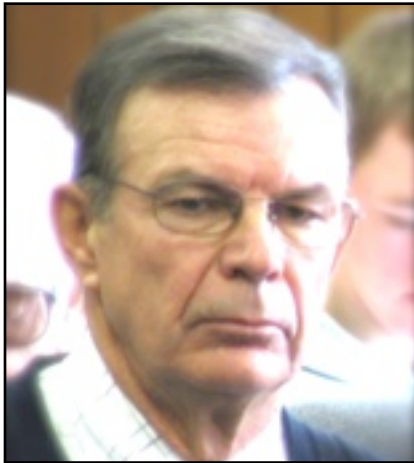
Mark your calendars for the Seventy sponsored Missionary Family Reunion, June 24-30 at Graceland University.

Contents

FEATURE:	PAGE:
Sermons	
Priest Jim Barber	2
Patriarch Milo Burnett	5
Elder Michael Jordison	8
Seventy Ron Smith	11
.....	
News & Notes	1
Humor in the Restoration	11
Calendar	16



HEARKEN TO HIS VOICE!



Priest Jim Barber
Bethany, Missouri
May 6, 2012

Behold, the field is white already to harvest, therefore whoso desireth to reap, let him thrust in his sickle with his might, and reap while the day lasts, that he may treasure up for his soul everlasting salvation in the kingdom of God; yea, whosoever will thrust in his sickle and reap, the same is called of God; therefore, if you will ask of me you shall receive, if you will knock it shall be opened unto you. (D&C 6:2)

I'd like to talk about several things this morning. Does everyone get the Beacon from the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches? Whenever we got this last month I read it from front to back because it is all about the "voice of warning" and there are some very good articles in it and some things that concern me. To start with, Gary Metzger has an article in it that was taken from the Third Book of Nephi talking about "Prophecy and Fulfillment in Our Day." He kind of divided it up into eight categories beginning first with "The Fullness of the Gospel goes to the Gentiles." The second is "Rejection of the Fullness of the Gospel." Then it says, "Remembering the Lamanites and Taking the Gospel to

Them." Then comes the one that disturbs me -- "Scourge of the Gentiles." In some ways it could be disturbing but in some ways it could be very rewarding, depending on where we are and what we are doing.

I'm not sure I agree with everything that he has said -- but then he said Zion would be established after this scourge. I was always hoping that Zion would be here when we started being scourged so that we would have a place to flee to. I guess we'll have to wait that out and see the timing. Then it says the "Fullness of the Gospel will go to the Jews in Jerusalem." Then Christ comes and it will go to the other tribes. Here again I wasn't quite sure about the order in which these things were going to happen.

I feel like that probably all of us believe that the fullness of the gospel has at least come to a portion of people. To me the Book of Mormon is the fullness of the gospel and what it brought to us as a people. It's supposed to be to convince both Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the son of god and an added testimony to the Bible that Jesus is the Christ.

Now we come to the Rejection of the Fullness of the Gospel. I'm hearing all kinds of stories about the Community of Christ church where they no longer support or use the Book of Mormon. I'm not completely in agreement with that because I know a lot of good people that still attend the Community of Christ and they still believe in the Book of Mormon. Now whether or not the church as a whole is rejecting it, I don't know. I'm not sure that is the case.

I've always believed that it will go to the Lamanites and I think its happening now. This article talked about several ways where the message to going to the American Indians, the Mayan groups in Mexico, and the migration of Hispanic people to this country. God may be moving in some way to get them in place.

The think I want to talk about this morning is what are we going to do about it. Are we going to set back and let it happen or have somebody else do it or are we going to prepare ourselves to accept God's spirit to lead us? We've talked alot of things this morning in Sunday School class about things we should be thinking about -- studying the scriptures for example. I think studying the scriptures in one of the most important things we can do. Also it talks about in the last days that

we are supposed to receive an endowment from God. We are to be endowed by his Holy Spirit and I'd like to share some scriptures with you about the endowment.

I'd like to read the introduction to Doctrine and Covenants Section 37 and 38 and then read verse 7 in Section 38.

Revelation given to Joseph Smith, Jr., prophet and seer of the church and Sidney Rigdon in December of 1830 at Fayette, New York. Instruction is given that Joseph and Sydney were temporarily o cease translating the scriptures (that became the Inspired Version) until they should assemble again at the Ohio. This is the first revelation intimating the gathering and migration of the church westward. This revelation was the last given in the year 1830.

Revelation given to Joseph Smith, Jr., prophet and seer of the church given in 1831 at Fayette, New York. The Saints opened the year in 1831 by holding a conference January 2, 1831. It was at this conference that the revelation to the church was received.

And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless: wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment, that you should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high, and from thence, whosoever I will, shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do; for I have a great work laid up in store, for Israel shall be saved, and I will lead them whithersoever I will, and no power shall stay my hand. Doctrine and Covenants 38:7

I think this might be one of the first mentions of the endowment that was to come to the states. You know that the church grew very rapidly in the beginning. One of the reasons they did was because God's spirit was there to teach them -- to teach the people to come to Jesus and accept his commandments and accept the Book of Mormon.

In section 43:4 it says *Again I say, hearken ye elders of my church whom I have appointed: ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the*



things which I have put into your hands by the power of my spirit and ye are to be taught from on high. Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with power, that ye may give even as I have spoken.

Again God promises us that if we will hearken to his voice and obey his commandments he will give us that power to be able to take the word to the world.

In Section 102 there are several verses that pertain to the endowment also.

“And this can not be brought to pass until mine elders are endowed with power from on high; for, behold, I have prepared a great endowment and blessing to be poured out upon them, inasmuch as they are faithful, and continue in humility before me;” Doctrine and Covenants 102:3d-3

I think that last part is what we need to remember -- as long as they are faithful and come to him in humility, then they can be endowed by his spirit.

In verse 5 of section 102 it says:

Behold, I have commanded my servant Baurak Ale, to say unto the strength of my house, even my warriors, my young men and middle-aged, to gather together for the redemption of my people, and throw down the towers of mine enemies, and scatter their watchmen; but the strength of mine house have not hearkened unto my words; but inasmuch as there are those who have hearkened unto my words, I have prepared a blessing and an endowment for them, if they continue faithful. have heard their prayers, and will accept their offering; and it is expedient in me, that they should be brought thus far, for a trial of their faith.

And then in verse 10:

Verily I say unto you, It is expedient in me that the first elders of my church should receive their endowment from on high, in my house, which I have commanded to be built unto my name in the land of Kirtland; and let those commandments which I have given concerning Zion and her law, be executed and fulfilled, after her redemption. There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy; and it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen, and they shall be

sanctified; and inasmuch as they follow the counsel which they receive, they shall have power after many days to accomplish all things pertaining to Zion.

There is also the account in the Bible -- I tried looking it up but I didn't find it but I know it's there. It's the account of when Christ came back to the disciples and they were blessed exceedingly and they spoke in tongues and the church grew from there also. We have to remember we have to be close to God and willing to change our lives to follow his life.

I guess we need to talk about about how we can receive God's endowment. This morning as we took the communion we promise to keep his commandment always. That's the first thing. We need to study his word every day -- to read from the scriptures every day. And we need to fast and pray as well. There are so many things that we need to do.

The thing that really concerned me in the Beacon was the idea of tithing. I would like to turn to what Bishop Ceaderstrom says because I think we are falling way short of what we need to be.

“Obedience to or ignoring the Lord's commandments are choices each one of us is free to make.”

We talked about that in Sunday School this morning. We are free to do what we want to do and we have to make those choices. The Lord does not force us to obey him, but he does extend his blessings to those that do. Among the 3,853 identifiable JCRB members in the data base, only 112 have filed a tithing statement. It's not very good, is it? I looked up some of the scriptures pertaining to tithing too. Some of them are kind of scary.

Behold, now it is called today (until the coming of the Son of man), and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned (at his coming); for after to day cometh the burning; this is speaking after the manner of the Lord; for verily I say, Tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of hosts; and I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye

believe me, ye will labor while it is called to day. Doctrine Covenants 64:5a-b.

That's pretty plain I guess. As a farmer I take out fire insurance on my house and my barns, all of my livestock and machinery. To me this is kind of fire insurance for us. If we are following God's commandments and filing our statements and paying our tithing, making an accounting to God, then we are going to be spared. If not it might be pretty serious.

In Section 94:3 it says:

Verily I say unto you, that it is my will that an house should be built unto me in the land of Zion, like unto the pattern which I have given you; yea, let it be built speedily by the tithing of my people: behold, this is the tithing and the sacrifice which I, the Lord, require at their hands, that there may be an house built unto me for the salvation of Zion; for a place of thanksgiving, for all Saints, and for a place of instruction for all those who are called to the work of the ministry, in all their several callings, and offices; that they may be perfected in the understanding of their ministry; in theory; in principle and in doctrine; in all things pertaining to the kingdom of God on the earth, the keys of which kingdom have been conferred upon you.

It's always great blessings come when we follow God's commandments. It hasn't always been easy for us. There was a time when I didn't go to church and I wasn't a very good person at that time either. But we tried our best to file our tithing statement. I didn't feel like could pay at some times, but we would fill out our statement and pay it when we could and God always blessed us. Here is it talking about building the temple with tithes and offerings. There were all kinds of stories about the dedication of the Kirtland Temple and even the children cried out because of the Spirit that was there. All the time we have struggled God has continued to bless us. Now that we have finally got out of debt, we still have some problems like a tractor break down -- now that we have the money to pay the bills I don't think you can ever out-give God. No matter how much you give him, God will bless you more.

In section 106 it talks about how we are to tithe. Some people believe differently about tithing. I talked to some



Baptists some times. They belived that tithing was one tenth of your income. That can be a little severe for someone who spends \$95,000 to make that \$100,000. You don't have anything to pay your tithing with. It's a little different the way we believe. This was in answer to the petition, "O Lord, show unto thy servants how much thou requirrest of the properties of thy people for a tithing."

Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church of Zion, for the building of mine house, and for the laying the foundation of Zion, and for the priesthood, and for the debts of the presidency of my church; and this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people; and after that, those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them for ever; for my holy priesthood, saith the Lord. Doctrine and Covenants 106:1a-b

To me this is saying that we are to take out our necessary living expenses, what we need to sustain our lives, subtract that and tithe one tenth of what is left, rather than the whole thing. And too we've got to remember, we are kind of an immature church and we don't know who we are paying tithing to. The JCRB does have a bishop and there are also scriptures in the Doctrine and Covenants saying we are supposed to pay the tithing to the bishop, give it to the bishop, and if he doesn't use it wisely, the sin's on him. You've still got to do your part.

Doctrine and Covenants 114:1 says:
In order to place the church in a position to carry on the promulgation of the gospel, and as a means of fulfilling the law, the Twelve will take measures in connection with the Bishop, to execute the law of tithing; and let them before God see to it, that the temporal means so obtained is truly used for the purposes of the church, and not as a weapon of power in the hands of one man for the oppression of others, or for the purposes of self-aggrandizement by anyone, be he whomsoever he may be. As I live, saith the Lord, in the manner ye execute this matter, so shall ye be judged in the day of judgment.

And he's talking about the bishop here --

that's he's supposed to use the money wisely. Hopefully he is asking God how to use that money. And tithing wasn't something that just happened in our day and age. If you go clear back to the Bible in Genesis 14:17-23, it says;

And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he break bread and blest it; and he blest the wine, he being the priest of the most high God, And he gave to Abram, and he blessed him, and said, Blessed Abram, thou art a man of the most high God, possessor of heaven and of earth; And blessed is the name of the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand. And Abram gave him tithes of all he had taken. And the king of Sodom said to Abram, Give me the persons, And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lifted up my hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth. And have sworn that I will not take of thee from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, (lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich;)

So we see that even Abram paid tithes. So who all is supposed to pay tithing. Is it just the old people who have money, or don't have money. No, it's everyone, everyone that is a member of Christ's church from the youngest to the oldest.

I can't think of any better learning tool than to teach children to make an accounting of their money -- to be able to make decisions on how to spend money. They need to be guided by their parents. It seems like we live in an age where there is everything out there for young people. Everything is available, but it takes money to get those things. Sometimes we need to look at our just wants and needs. Are they needs or just things what we want but don't need? I think it's important to teach our children these things. If we really, really need it, we maybe we can have have it. If its just something you want, it might not be to their best interest to receive.

We need to teach our children where a dollar comes from and what it takes to make that dollar. We need to guide and direct them to spend money wisely.

I made a statement when we were on our trip to the bank There were some farmers there that had trouble in the 1980s too. It was never a better feeling to me than when I could finally get my debts paid off. When I got them paid off I said I would never

buy anything again unless I could pay cash for it. He said you need to teach your children that too. If you don't have the money, you don't get it. You get a job and work for it I guess until you have the money, and then you can get it. People use credit cards like there's no bottom to it and get themselves in trouble. I think it is important that we remember these things. In order to receive God's endowment we are going to have to follow all of his commandments and tithing is one of them.

There's one thing I would like to close with from the Beacon. It pretty well sums up everything I would like to say. I'm not sure if he wrote it or put it in there.

Heed the warning. These momentous days are filled with great disaster.

There is a cup of woe poured out upon the world.

Satan rules with mighty hand, on the sea and on the land

and his flag of evil conquest is unfurled.

Oh my people heed the warning I am giving you today.

Buckle on the gospel armor, you will need it for the fray.

Take my truth as your protection, consecrate your hearts with prayer

and I'll give divine direction, I'll be with you every where.

See the world is filled with greed and idle pleasure.

Love of wickedness abounds on every hand.

O withdraw yourselves therefrom, and be ready when I come

to establish righteousness upon the land.

Oh my people, middle-aged, form the call turn not away.

Can ye still withhold your offerings and your tithing fail to pay?

To expect a father's blessing while you walk your selfish way?

Why trust the men such must surely trust in vain

Filled with wisdom from above, faith and sacrifice and love.

If your heavenly fathers you would gain

Oh my people heed the message I am sending you today

Every worldly thought and action, every evil cast away

Build anew your family alters



Read my word from day to day
 Come to me and I will guide you
 In the new and living way.
 There are many souls who long to hear
 my gospel
 In the land of zion and beyond the sea.
 Will you dedicate your all, will you
 answer to the call
 that my sheep may hear my voice and
 come to me?
 Oh my people, come up higher and heed
 the spirit's voice today
 Love the Lord and one another and I'll
 answer when you pray.
 Consecrate each passing hour, sacred
 duties to attend,
 And I'll come to you in power and be
 with you to the end.

Thank you.



MOTHERS OF THE CHURCH



Patriarch Milo Burnett
 Logan, Iowa
 May 13, 2012

Elder Steven Smith read Alma 26:56, 57 as a call to worship. . . . *they did not fear death: and they did think more upon the liberty of their fathers, than they did upon their lives; yea, they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, that God would deliver them. And they rehearsed unto me the words of their*

mothers, saying, We do not doubt our mothers knew.

Patriarch Milo Burnett read Doctrine and Covenants 17:2f-4a. *and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old, thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever. Amen. Therefore, having so great witnesses, by them shall the world be judged, even as many as shall hereafter come to a knowledge of this work; and those who receive it in faith and work righteousness, shall receive a crown of eternal life; but those who harden their hearts in unbelief and reject it, it shall turn to their own condemnation, for the Lord God has spoken it; and we, the elders of the church, have heard and bear witness to the words of the glorious Majesty on high, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. By these things we know that there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God, . . .*

By these things we know that there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal from everlasting to everlasting the same unchangeable God. This God that we know has created all of us that are sitting in this room through His authority by His Son Jesus Christ. Christ is the creator of all we know. He created each one of us as spirits and created our bodies that would unite with our spirits at the time of conception and made it possible for us humans to grow and mature, not only physically, but to grow and mature spiritually. The spiritual aspect is where the mother comes in. Not that the father isn't important but by her nature a mother has what we call 'the mothering instinct.' She is the one that bears the child and takes care of that child in its infancy through its toddler stage and actually all the way through its life until it leaves the home. Then that mother still has ties to that child and will continue to give advice to that child when it seems appropriate and will learn quickly whether that advice is accepted or not.

My mother lived to be 93. Her mind was sharp to the very end. She would always tell me, 'Now I'm your mother and I know that you are going to travel and I want you to call me when you get there. I know your sixty-some years old but I still want you to do it cause I'm your mother.' I knew my mother well enough to know that

she would expect that and wouldn't rest comfortably until I had called her to let her know that I had reached my destination. You know what? That made me feel good because I knew that my mother cared deeply for my wellbeing. There were three of us children and I am the youngest. My oldest sister Elaine lived in Waterloo, IA with her husband Jack Perry. In my mom's last three years she went to live with them because she was wheelchair bound and could no longer take care of herself in her own home. That means she took care of herself up through her 89th birthday. My mother was diabetic and so was my sister Elaine. Elaine was very strict on what she would let my mother eat. When I would come to visit them, and if Elaine was not right there where she could hear, mom would confide in me that Elaine wouldn't even let her have two cookies at a time. She said that she was ninety or so and what did it matter if she ate two cookies at her age. She couldn't see any harm in that but Elaine was a follow-the-rules type of woman. She was a perfectionist and made sure that our mother ate what was, in Elaine's opinion, an appropriate amount even including desserts. I have to chuckle at the memory of mom telling on Elaine and telling me that Elaine was a restrictor on how many cookies she could have. Mom asked me if I thought it was wise for Elaine to do that. I said, 'Mom it would be wise for me not to comment.'

Mothers are an important part of our lives all the way through them. You young people in the room may be looking forward to the day when you can leave the nest and not have your mom telling you to pick up your clothes or to do this or that, but guess what, you'll never be outside of her reach. She'll always be able to reach where you are and influence your life. I can guarantee you that.

I want to comment about this figurine up here. (See cover photo) It's obviously a mother who has a baby in her arms. She is kissing that baby and caring for that baby and I can see the look on the baby's face from here. The baby is just relishing that experience and loving every minute of it.

I want to talk about some mothers in history. You know in the scriptures there are many mothers we could probably talk about so I am going to narrow it down to a few. These are stories that have stuck with me from mom reading me stories during



my childhood. She read to me about Moses' mother and that when her son was in danger of being killed she selected a basket made out of reeds. When the little basket that would float in the water had been made the daughter was close by in the reeds to watch the floating basket with Moses in it. The mother was hoping and her hopes were fulfilled that this basket would float over to the daughter of the Pharaoh. It did and the daughter of the Pharaoh spotted it or at least one of her attendants did, and Moses became a part of the household of the Pharaoh. He needed a wet nurse, meaning he needed a mother that was still nursing babies, and it became possible for Moses' mother to become his wet nurse in the household of the Pharaoh.

We all know that Moses was raised in that setting and became a very important figure in the Egyptian culture as a member of the Pharaoh's household. Moses had a position where he could use his skills that we would call architectural today. Those skills made it possible for him to direct and guide the building of pyramids. There came a day when Moses learned who he really was and that he was a member of the household of Israel and the Lord had a work for him to do. We know that Moses had an experience in the desert where the Spirit of God spoke to him in that burning bush. Actually it was Jesus Christ who was speaking to him. He told Moses that he needed to get his act together because the Lord had a work for him to do which was to convince Pharaoh to let the people go. We know that Moses told Jesus that he wasn't capable of speaking well. He was told that his brother Aaron could speak well and would go with Moses to be his spokesperson. Aaron did go with him when they went to see the Pharaoh and was his spokesperson in demanding that the Pharaoh let the people go. Moses had quite a life didn't he? His live was spared by a mother who was willing to give her son up to be raised by somebody else but knowing that he would be safe and wouldn't be killed.

Sariah the wife of Lehi had a tremendous responsibility with her husband as they traveled south of Jerusalem near the Red Sea and down through what is today Saudi Arabia. For eight years they crossed that peninsula and got to the ocean on the southeast corner of Saudi Arabia, probably the only part of their travels, other than by the Red Sea,

where there was an oasis. They called that land Bountiful because it had so many things. It had forests and places where they could raise their crops. Where I am going with this is that the mother of the family, Sariah, had sons. I know she had daughters but she had sons. Of her sons the one we were talking about this morning was named Nephi. Nephi was the youngest son at the time. Much to the dislike of his older brothers Laman and Lemuel, God selected Nephi as the leader of the people. Nephi must have had a very fine mind. He had a kind spirit and he was bright and could follow directions. He could follow the directions that angels gave him as to what he needed to do to get his people across the ocean after building a boat that would take them to the land in Central America, the narrow neck of land which became their new home.

Can you imagine what this mother must have gone through in the setting up and the tearing down of the tents over the eight-year period? That responsibility was primarily a woman's job. That's the way it was in their culture. There are a lot of cultures where that very tradition was practiced like in the Native American culture. The women got the teepees down and got the drag behind the horse ready with a couple of the poles and got everything packed ready to go.

One of the mothers who had a special responsibility was named Elizabeth. Elizabeth was told by an angel in her later years that she would bear a child and that this child would be a male child. She was told that his name was to be John. He became known as John the Baptist. This mother just like that figurine nurtured and cared for that little baby and raised him to be a man and set him off onto his mission. She knew what his mission was because she would have taught him what his mission was. He knew that his responsibility was to be the frontrunner for his cousin Jesus Christ who was to be born later.

Can you imagine how Mary, the mother of Jesus felt when the angel told her that she would have a child and that it would be conceived by the Holy Spirit and that this child was to be named Jesus. I don't know how much Mary grasped at the time but she did soon. She understood what she was dealing with and she knew that she was the mother of the Son of God. Some say that Jesus Christ learned who He

was as time went by. In my opinion Jesus knew who He was from the very beginning. As a little baby and toddler He wasn't able to express that but as a twelve-year old boy, He was. He knew exactly who He was and what He was up to. He was to be about His Father's business as He talked to the men in the temple. Mary had the responsibility of being the mother of the Son of God. You mothers that are out here imagine that responsibility of knowing that your son was the Son of God. Mary was a true mother right up to the end when Jesus was crucified. She was there and that would have been so agonizing for her to watch, the brutality that was impeded upon her son that led to His crucifixion. She witnessed that and also witnessed with Mary Magdalene of finding the tomb empty after He was risen from the dead. Mary the mother of Jesus was involved in His life basically to the end of His life. What an experience that must have been to have been Mary, the mother of Jesus the Son of God.

Closer to our time I want to talk to you about Lucy Mack Smith the wife of Joseph Smith Sr. Lucy had nine children. They didn't all live to see maturity which was not uncommon at that time. Of her sons she had Alvin, Hyrum, Joseph Smith Jr., and Samuel. Hyrum, Joseph and Samuel all died the same day. We know about Joseph and Hyrum dying in the Carthage jail but Samuel was there as a young boy and when he knew what was going on he was terrified. He ran all the way home from Carthage to Nauvoo. When he got home he was so exhausted he died from fatigue. This mother lost three of her sons the same day. I have never experienced losing one of my children through death. I can only imagine what it is like for a mother to lose a child through death. Even though I haven't had the experience of one of my children dying I can empathize with those who have. Mothers have their own burdens to carry. They not only carry their own burdens and the burdens of their husbands but the burdens of their children whatever they turn out to be.

Lucy Mack Smith had great faith. Her husband was shown a vision and was one of the ones who saw the Tree of Life. He saw his family during that experience. The angel encouraged him to have the family come and share in the fruit from that tree which was beyond description in sweetness and very delicious. Lucy



endured the pain of having her son Joseph brutalized by people. He was dragged out of his home in the middle of winter and tarred and feathered. He was stripped down to his underpants and tarred and feathered with hot tar. When he screamed out with pain the person who had the paddle to dip out the tar stuck the paddle in Joseph's mouth. It burned a hole in the roof of his mouth. Lucy had to endure her son's suffering as a mother. Emma had to endure it as the wife of Joseph Smith.

The vision that Joseph Smith Sr. had prepared the Smith family for what they had to go through because in that vision he saw the same thing that Lehi and Nephi saw in their vision. They saw the building with people in it who were mocking and making fun of the family. They were prepared for the day when that would come true in the Smith family where people would mock and scorn their son Joseph because of what he was doing in translating the golden plates into the Book of Mormon and later on translating the King James version of the Bible into the Inspired Version of the Bible. People were very unkind to Joseph Smith Jr. in that timeframe. We talked this morning about the militia in Nauvoo. Did God ask Joseph to set up the militia? Well I don't have positive proof either way but I would rather think that Joseph did that on his own so that the people had protection from all the killings of the Saints that were going on by citizens of the State of Illinois who hated them for their beliefs, for their religion. I think the militia was established as a way of protecting them. I think Joseph Smith did some unwise things but he was human and humans make mistakes even prophets.

Let me shift gears and go to Joseph Smith III. He had several wives but not all at the same time. His wives died. His first wife was named Emmeline and he was married to her in Plano, IL when that was the headquarters of the Reorganization. She bore her husband three daughters and then became sickly. To help with the house and as a nurse to his wife he hired a woman by the name of Bertha Madison. Bertha Madison was a member of the church and was a faithful person. She was a single woman and came into the Smith home as a housekeeper and as a nursemaid for Emmeline in her last years. When Emmeline died it left Joseph with three young girls. Bertha had been there all

along really taking care of the three girls in the absence of Emmeline's ability to do so. Eventually Joseph recognized that this woman had the qualities that he needed to support him in his ministry. He courted Bertha and they were married and she became his second wife. Bertha went with Joseph to Lamoni, IA when the area was being settled by the Saints and headquarters was moved here. A brick building was built that not only housed the offices of the officers of the church but the printing presses for the Saints' Herald. That building became known as Herald Hall and some of the Graceland students ended up having that as their residence. It was a woman's dorm when I was at Graceland so I wasn't housed there.

Joseph Smith III and Bertha had offspring. They had Frederick Madison Smith, Israel A. Smith, Mary Audentia Smith, and Bertha Azuba Smith. Of those children they had I want to talk about the women. Mary Audentia Smith became a very influential person in Latter Day Saint history here in the city of Lamoni. Her cousin Vida Smith was a lyricist and wrote the words to songs and poetry. One day sitting in the Old Brick Church here in Lamoni which sat in the same spot as the Community of Christ church today facing Main Street to the north Vida Smith was looking out the window. She wrote the words to what became known as "The Old, Old Path." This path was a path that led from where they parked the carriages and curved up to the front door through the trees. That was the path that she was writing about. After church she felt directed to go to her cousin Audentia who was gifted in music and ask her cousin if she could come up with the tune for this song she had written. Audentia sat down at the piano and began to play. Talk about being inspired by God, not only was Vida inspired by God with the wording, her cousin was inspired to write the tune as she played it on the piano. What a beautiful combination of two cousins in the Smith family. That ended up being one of the songs that is so important to Latter Day Saints over the years.

My mother grew up in Lamoni and she used to talk to me about sitting in that church and looking out those windows at those paths. There were two front doors on the church and a separate path that led to each front door. That was a typical way of building churches back in those times. My mother described what she saw. She knew

these two women and treasured the association that she had with these two women when she was a young girl growing up here in Lamoni.

Bertha Azuba was the apple of Joseph's eye. This little girl was one of those children that was so loving toward her father and he relished that relationship with this little girl. He was at a reunion in my part of the state of Iowa, Harrison County, near a community called Magnolia which is only about ten miles northwest of where I live in Logan. The Saints back in the 1800s would go to a reunion and they would go for two weeks. This particular reunion was well attended. They would have between five and six thousand people. The women would have their husbands load up the kitchen stove into the buckboard and they would take that with them to the reunion so they could cook the food for their families. This was a real involved process of getting to reunion in those days.

While Joseph was at this reunion an accident happened back in Lamoni. Azuba was playing on the Lamoni grade school playground and it was recess. She was on the playground and when the bell rang Azuba ran for the door. She didn't see an older boy swinging a big stick around his head and ran right into it. It hit her in the throat and broke her windpipe and she was going to die. It was difficult to get that word to Joseph. It would have had to have been by stagecoach or pony express but they got the word to him and he got home just before little Azuba died. When she died it crushed him. It absolutely crushed him and he writes in his memoirs that he sat in his office in Herald Hall and told the Lord he couldn't continue as the Lord's prophet and president because he couldn't get over his grief for his daughter.

He had an open vision and in this vision an angel took him over the hills just like you have around here. They came to a spot where there were a bunch of little children playing and picking flowers and laughing. There was a young woman standing there and Joseph knew who that woman was. She had been a young woman in the Lamoni Congregation who abruptly died and nobody could understand it. People questioned why God would take such a young woman in the prime of her life. The angel told Joseph that she was taken because God needed her here. She had the skills to nurture and love the children and to take care of them. The



angel told Joseph that his daughter would be raised and taught the things he would have taught her on earth. Azuba saw Joseph and waved at him but didn't attempt to run to him which let him know that she was at peace and was completely content with what she was doing. There was recognition but no attempt to go to her father.

What does that experience tell us? It tells us we'll recognize our loved ones after we die. It tells us that we will have feelings for those people whom we have known who have lived here on the earth that were a part of our family and that we will know them and throw our arms around them and hug and kiss them when we see them. It tells us that there is life after death. It tells us that the things that Jesus promised are true and they will take place in all of our lives when the time comes. Every one of you out here who have as a gift the gift of singing you will be given the ability to sing at different octaves then you can sing now when you get to Paradise. You will be a part of angelic choirs. Those of you who have the ability to nurture children will get the opportunity, like this young girl did, of nurturing little children that died before they had a chance to mature. Perhaps babies that died before birth. All of those children go to heaven and are taken care of by angels and are nurtured and raised in that setting until they're mature both physically and spiritually. Now they don't have a physical body but a spiritual body but it looks like the physical body did.

Bertha Madison Smith raised some very significant children in the Latter Day Saint history. Bertha was a horsewoman. By that I mean she could run a team of horses with a buckboard and be very comfortable doing it. She was completely comfortable with a team of two horses. She had a couple of accidents driving horses. The first accident was in a buggy and it tipped over and she was thrown on the ground pretty hard but it didn't apparently do any significant damage to her. Later on she wanted to go to town and get some supplies. She wanted to take two horses and Joseph tried to talk her into just taking one because the horses were flighty and easily scared by things that weren't something they recognized. There was somebody visiting Liberty Hall at the time that Bertha took off with the horses. Joseph was afraid that when the horses came around the corner into the farm yard

they would see this other team of horses and it would set them off. Sure enough when Bertha came back and turned that corner those horses saw the other team of horses and they took off. It turned the buckboard over and threw Bertha into a rack of wood. I'm not sure how big a rack of wood is but she hit her face and chest hard on the woodpile and it led to her death.

Joseph Smith had hard luck with having wives that lived. He had two more wives, each of them dying early from some cause. Bertha stands out because of the children she gave birth to and the roles that they played in church history. Two of her sons became prophets in the Restoration Movement and her daughter Audentia became a tune writer for "The Old, Old Path." So mothers are very important and these are women out of our history as Latter Day Saints that have played a role in our lives indirectly.

Today you are going to go home and probably have a meal with your mother and perhaps your grandmother and your wife, whatever the circumstances are. I wish you happiness in your experience today with your families.



PREPARE YOURSELF



Elder Michael Jordison
Lamoni, Iowa
May 20, 2012

And now behold, I say unto you my brethren, If ye have experienced a change

of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, Can ye feel so now? Have ye walked, keeping yourselves blameless before God? Could ye say, if ye were called to die at this time, within yourselves, that ye have been sufficiently humble? That your garments have been cleansed and made white, through the blood of Christ, who will come to redeem his people from their sins? Behold, are ye stripped of pride? I say unto you, If ye are not, ye are not prepared to meet God. Behold ye must prepare quickly, for the kingdom of heaven is soon at hand, and such a one hath not eternal life. Behold, I say, Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy? I say unto you, that such a one is not prepared, and I would that he should prepare quickly, for the hour is close at hand, and he knoweth not when the time shall come; for such a one is not found guiltless. And again I say unto you, Is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother; or that heapeth upon him persecutions? Wo unto such an one, for he is not prepared, and the time is at hand that he must repent, or he can not be saved; Yea, even wo unto all ye workers of iniquity; repent, repent, for the Lord God hath spoken it. Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men; for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith, Repent, and I will receive you; Yea, he saith, Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and the waters of life freely; Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire; For behold, the time is at hand that whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit, or whosoever doeth not the works of righteousness, the same have cause to wail and mourn. (Alma 3:46-60)

At the beginning of this scripture Alma mentions singing the song of redeeming love. I would like to read from the Doctrine and Covenants, section 83:17. This is also a song, a new song of Zion. *The Lord hath brought again Zion: The Lord hath redeemed his people, Israel, According to the election of grace, Which was brought to pass by the faith And covenant of their fathers. The Lord hath redeemed his people, And Satan is bound, and time is no longer: The Lord hath gathered all things in one: The Lord hath brought down Zion from above: The Lord hath brought up Zion from beneath; The*



earth hath travailed and brought forth her strength; And truth is established in her bowels; And the heavens have smiled upon her; And she is clothed with the glory of her God: For he stands in the midst of his people: Glory, and honor, and power, and might, Be ascribed to our God, for he is full of mercy, Justice, grace and truth, and peace, For ever and ever, Amen.

I am reminded of the story of young Samuel in the Old Testament. As a child he was committed by his Mother to the temple, to be in the service of Eli, the High Priest. Those moments he had at night when he was lying in bed and he heard a voice call Samuel. He ran to Eli and asked if he was calling him. Eli said, “No, go back to bed.” He heard it again and ran back to him. Finally Eli told Samuel to say, “Yeah, Lord, your servant heareth.” The recurring thing that I hear is that God wants each of us to be like Samuel and say, Yes, Lord, your servant hears. Cheryl petitioned in her prayer before the adult class this morning that we could learn something new that would help us in our path. I’m of the opinion that we probably already know quite a bit. It’s not so much that we need to learn anything new this morning, but that we need to learn to do the things that we already know. I firmly believe that the Lord wants us to know greater things and he has more things in store for us, but we have to be prepared to receive those things. He is not going to deliver things to us that are greater than we already have until we are faithful and we have proved ourselves with those things that we have been given.

In my preparation for this morning, the thing that I always try to ask is what can I do or say that is meaningful to you. What is it that is going to make an impact in your life and maybe in my own life too. I have heard a lot of sermons in my life and I’ve said to myself that’s right and I might even feel the spirit, but then I go back to my daily routine in life and I don’t really put into practice those things that I’ve heard and I knew to be true. So I’m always asking, ‘what can I do or say that’s going to make any difference in your life?’ Is it going to be something that sticks with you - that you’re going to draw from and grow with? Maybe it’s not anything I have to say. Maybe it’s the way the Lord touches you. Maybe He causes something to happen in your life, whether it’s through the words you hear or a

thought that is spawned and that resonates within you and it begins to grow just like a seed. Joshua and I were planting our garden yesterday, and it’s just like a seed that you plant into the ground; you begin to nourish it and water it and fertilize it. I hope that something from today will take root within you and cause you to grow in your relationship with the Lord.

Cessaries (Galusha) and I were talking yesterday at Aquila’s reception. One of the things we talked about was the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is really centered around a relationship. We talked about the gospel, the ordinance of the gospel, the sacraments, the priesthood and its structure, the rules and regulations that govern the church, the stories that were in the scriptures, but at the very heart of all of that it’s really all about a relationship between oneself and the Lord Jesus Christ who made us. That relationship is very personal and unique between every individual. My relationship with the Lord is different than Josh’s relationship with the Lord. And it’s different than Debbie’s, and Ron’s and Brandy’s and every single one of you. It doesn’t mean that I believe something differently, it’s just that my relationship is different because God made me with certain gifts and talents to be used from my own perspective. He made me unique, just the way I am. If he wanted us all to be the same He would have made you all like me. (This comment drew some chuckles from the congregation.)

Our relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ is pivotal to our life, whether we acknowledge it or not. Everything that God has created in the physical world, he has created so that we could learn something about our relationship with him - so that we could grow and pattern our lives and our relationship after the physical truths that He has created in the world. One of those truths, or laws that teach us about our relationship with Him, is marriage. You have certain rights, responsibilities, and rules, and behaviors that transpire between two individuals that should only happen in a marriage covenant. Those experiences and privileges aren’t to be given outside of that marriage covenant. It’s only to be observed. That’s something that’s very intimate and personal. In this way, a proper marriage covenant is there to teach us about the kind of relationship that we are supposed to have with our Lord. That’s why we call

the remembering of our covenant with Him, “communion”. It’s something that is very intimate, very close, very much like the joining of a man and woman into ‘one body’ through marriage. The two are to become one. If you’ll recall from the scriptures, in Genesis God made Adam. He then took something from Adam and made Eve. He first made Adam. Then He reached from within Adam and pulled out a part of Adam to make this being called woman. Then he said two separate beings would become one flesh. That’s where we get the definition and basis for our marriage covenant. Those two halves come back together and to make one. Our relationship with our Father is much the same way. He created from within himself each one of us and pulled us out and set us here on this earth. Now something that was whole and complete had become divided. We are separated from him, being created from Him, and these two parts must come back together to become one. It’s the answer to the prayer Christ prayed in 3 Nephi, that He would be in us, that we might be one. We are to move and act as one body.

In the adult class we talked about God granting power to certain individuals on this earth. Most of us can’t even imagine having that kind of power, such as causing the mountains to move out of the way to become smooth, and the waters to rise up, raising people from the dead. We don’t see those kinds of things today. God has granted that kind of power to certain individuals on this earth, but only those individuals who have that kind of relationship with Him, that are one with Him, and that don’t do anything contrary to his will. For me that’s a pretty big statement because I seem to do a lot of things that are contrary to the Lord’s will I’m sure. Maybe some of you do as well. He is calling us every time we come back to the communion table on the first Sunday of the month to remember that covenant, that covenant that Rodney made back when he was 8 years old. He is wanting us to remember. When we remember, maybe we will remember that we are supposed to be living our lives in order that we can have that kind of relationship with God where we’re not doing the things of our own accord, but God is doing them through us. Every part of what we do actually becomes an extension of our Lord Jesus Christ. His ministry is what flows



through us, through anything we can do. I don't mean ministry just from the priesthood, I mean ministry as an individual, as a Saint; because every single one of us has ministry to offer. We have the ability, the calling, to reach out to those who are around us and to impact their lives in some meaningful way, maybe small maybe great, that will lead them to the same kind of relationship with Jesus Christ that can be theirs. They can be partakers of peace. They can be partakers of righteousness. They can be partakers of great joy in their own life with that relationship with Christ.

Michael then held up some different rock specimens and pointed out the different surfaces. Apostle Peter made a comment in the first book of Peter. Do you know what he said about stones? I want to challenge you to do a study on stones in the scriptures. It is eye opening. From I Peter 2:5 *Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* In the context of stones, how do we refer to Jesus Christ? He is the chief corner stone that we are to build our lives upon. If He is the corner stone then we could probably be referred to as stones too, right? If you take a look at the stone that is being passed around you will notice that it is rough. Then Michael held up a brick. This is an old brick from Herald House that I managed to salvage when they tore it down. When this brick was fired it was made perfectly smooth on all the sides. This stone, when it was created, was made to be fit into a wall, building, or structure that would have other bricks around it. You can see being smooth how they would all fit together. When you take a stone like the one I passed around first, what would happen? I would have to have something packed in between them. Being uneven they would create a very uneven and unsafe wall. But these smooth bricks could be stacked on top of each other. (Alan Smith commented that in Ireland he saw buildings made with stones that didn't have any internal support.) When the brick was made it was designed to be fit into a building. When you and I were created we were made to be fit into the Kingdom of God, Spiritual house - a temple. Something happened to us, and it's usually called 'sin'. Somehow when sin changed us, it changed us from being made nice and smooth and ready to

be fit in that building into something very rough and uneven. All of a sudden we became something that wasn't going to fit together without preparation and the aid of something else. Those rough and uneven edges have to be smoothed out and the edges bonded together with mortar. Mortar in the temple of God is **the love of God**. All of the bricks fit together, but in between each layer is mortar, love, that holds us together and gives that wall its strength and stability.

Michael then pulled out two cement blocks. Bob (Rowland) has used a lot of these I know. My father could pick these up with his pinky finger and set them down, slap some mud on them, and keep right on going. I have to use two hands to pick them up. You see how they were made perfectly to go into some kind of structure. Next, Michael held up a geode. If I had a rock saw I can cut through the rock and get to the center. If I didn't have one I would have to take a hammer and chisel and chip away before I could get to the beautiful crystals that are inside. When we were made, we were made perfect. Sin caused imperfections to come on us. (He then held up another brick.) If you take a look at this brick it's got pieces of old mortar stuck to it that have taken it from the smooth, ready to go building block, to something unusable in its present state. That mortar is like sin that has to be chipped away. It has to be taken off before it can be fit back into the building. The same thing happens with the geode—if we want to get to the beautiful crystal center we have to chip away the outside or ruggedness before we can get to that center.

The Lord is chipping away at each one of us, trying to strip that sin away from our lives so we can become the beautiful creatures that He created us to be. He wants for each of us to become creatures ready to be fit neatly into His spiritual house. There are some cultures that have stones cut so perfectly that they don't even need mortar. The Lord wants us to fit that well into his temple.

(Next Michael passed around a rock with a fossil.) A fossil is the mineral deposits left by a void in rock where a shell or bone was. When I was a kid we went to Dinosaur National Monument in Colorado. They had a big room in the visitor's center with an enormous cutout of some kind of rock. Inside that rock was an

embedded fossil of a large dinosaur. Dinosaurs fossils are dead, and through sin death has overtaken us, but Peter said that we are to be lively stones. There is a difference. Remember in the garden of Eden at creation when the Lord breathed into the clay and man became a living soul? We have in essence been fossilized because of sin. The Lord has to breathe upon us again to bring us back to life. That's what is represented in the baptism that we each undergo. Elyse (Jordison - age 7) will hopefully be baptized in the next few months. She will have new life breathed into her and will be recreated, but she will still be stuck in that rock, in a manner of speaking. The Lord, with His infinite sacrifice, will chip away all that rock around her and she will become again a living breathing stone, as she was in the day that she was created. If in her life she chooses not to rid herself of sin she's going to be like these rocks with the rough edges and she is going to have to chip away at those again and again until she becomes smooth and can fit like a brick that's made for the kingdom of God.

Read along with me in the Doctrine and Covenants section 90:4. This gets to the heart of what I want to share. This isn't anything new. *And now, verily I say unto you, I was in the beginning with the Father, and am the Firstborn; and all those who are begotten through me, are partakers of the glory of the same, and are the church of the Firstborn. Ye were also in the beginning with the Father; that which is Spirit, even the Spirit of truth; and truth is knowledge of things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come; and whatsoever is more or less than this, is the spirit of that wicked one, who was a liar from the beginning. The Spirit of truth is of God. I am the Spirit of truth. And John bore record of me, saying, He received a fullness of truth; yea, even of all truth, and no man receiveth a fullness unless he keepeth his commandments. He that keepeth his commandments, receiveth truth and light, until he is glorified in truth, and knoweth all things.* Raise your hand if you know all things yet? The way is very simple---keep my commandments. We have heard that if you keep the Lord's commandments you will prosper in the land, and you shall be given all things that are expedient for you. If we keep all of God's commandments we shall be the recipient of knowing all things.



The last time I spoke I shared about Taekwondo. For those of you who weren't here I shared that when I was just starting out as a white belt I thought that when I became a black belt I would be an expert and would know everything. Once I finally got my black belt I realized that it was really just the beginning. All of the things that I had learned up that moment were getting me to the point where I could really start to learn. This is the same with our Spiritual lives. God is wanting us to come to the point where He can really start to work with us. We've been baptized maybe, but have we patterned ourselves after Him, have we chipped away our rough edges so God can really teach us, so He can move forward with us as a people in power? This church was called out of the wilderness. There is a special purpose for this church upon the face of this earth. God doesn't want us to just sit back and continue as we have been. He wants us to move forward in power just as we talked about Nephi this morning, with an endowed power from on high. We are not going to get there unless we have prepared ourselves to be a part of that work.

To illustrate this I am going to try something here. (Michael then got the two cement blocks and put them in front of him, then put a flat slab of cement across the top of both of them. He then asked for a volunteer. Ryder went to the front and Michael had him stand on top of the cement slab, illustrating how sturdy it was. Michael then stated that as a white belt, when you're learning things, you don't break things like this. He asked if anyone would like to break it. No volunteers.) As a white belt you start with pads then work yourself up to small boards. Elyse is getting pretty good at Taekwondo and has even broken a few boards. Then you move up to two boards, then eventually up to five boards. The idea is that when you're working on the boards you are training your body to perform the technique correctly so that when you get to something more difficult your body has already been trained to do it the right way so you don't hurt yourself. The same principle is in life. God has given us a rulebook of commandments and steps we need to take. But he doesn't want us to get to the end, until we are prepared for it. He doesn't want us to build the kingdom right now, unless we are capable of not just building it, but perpetuating it. He wants

us to be prepared to build the kingdom so when the trumpet calls we answer, "Here am I Lord, send me." I'll do whatever you ask of me because it's not me that lives, but You who lives within me. That's where he wants us to be. I'm only going to break one of these. Michael then prepared himself for the act of breaking the cement slab. He stated that you have to do everything just right. (With much concentration and one motion of his arm he actually broke the cement slab!!!! It fell into two pieces on the floor.) I wasn't trying to show off here. I just want to illustrate the principal I'm talking about here. We don't start out keeping all the commandments. We don't start out building the kingdom of God unless we have prepared ourselves, unless we have honed our lives to the point where God can really speak to us and he can really work with us. I think that's the theme that Sherman (Phipps) was talking about---repentance. 'God, change me in some way. Take me from where I am to where you want me to be so that I can be filled with such unspeakable joy that all I can do is praise You and shout praises to Your holy name!' Thank you all and bless you in the name of Jesus Christ.



HUMOR IN THE RESTORATION

"Perhaps there will be only five wise virgins in the last days; but the parable seems rather to underestimate the number of foolish ones."

Saints' Herald, March 13, 1929, p. 297



REMEMBER



Seventy Ronald K. Smith
Lamoni, Iowa

May 27, 2012

Good morning! What a pleasure to see you here. I have chosen for a scripture reading Mosiah 2:20-29, 48-50.

Even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering towards you unworthy creatures, And humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel; And behold, I say unto you, that if ye do this, ye shall always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of your sins; And ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true. And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according to that which is his due. And ye will not suffer your children, that they go hungry, or naked; Neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another, and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers; he being an enemy to all righteousness; But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another; And also, ye yourselves



will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need; And ye will not suffer that the begger putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish...And finally, I can not tell you all the things whereby ye may commit sin: for there are divers ways and means, even so many, that I can not number them. But this much I can tell you, that if ye do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, and observe to keep the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.

Thank you, Steve, for your song. You all know that Steve makes up his own songs every time he does special music. Yesterday he came over and asked if he could run a song by me. It was something like this one, although it has been changed about six or seven times since yesterday. I appreciate the song and what went in to bringing that to you this morning. The song talks about how God's Spirit is like a flashlight. If we want to have the Spirit and the power, we certainly have to turn it on, but it is not enough sometimes to just flip the switch. There are certain things we have to do, like changing the batteries and the bulb and cleaning the contacts if necessary to allow the electricity to flow. And then once we understand how that works, we can generate the power that goes to light up the night and our way.

It is Memorial Day. I know that this has been a difficult week for many of you, and especially in the Cunningham family. We appreciate the fact that you have chosen to come and share with us today. For those of you who may not know, the Cunninghams lost a 17 year old cousin who killed himself. The funeral was Thursday. There is not a whole lot to say, except that I want you to know, Stephanie, that your prayers have been heard. And there is nothing that any one of us can do, or that Lawrence could have done, to keep him from the love of God. The Bible tells us (Romans 8:38) that neither life, nor death, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus. The Book of Mormon tells us (Alma 19:43) that the spirits of all men,

whether they are good or evil, go back to that God who gave them life. And we have not begun—eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor entered into the heart of man those things that God has prepared for those who love him. (I Cor. 2:9) There are so many scriptures that talk about the way that God works with people. It is not up to us to judge how a person has lived or how they died or what happens to them because God knows those things. I just wanted to remind you that Joseph Smith was very concerned about his brother Alvin who died before he heard the gospel. He prayed mightily about that for a long time. Then he had a dream in which he saw Alvin standing in the Paradise of God, and he knew that God had overcome whatever the situation was. So we do not make other people's choices for them. We don't know how they have lived, and we don't know what the circumstances may be. But we do know that nothing can separate us from the love of God, not even his death. And so I wanted to assure you of that this morning by the power of God's Spirit, and may God bless you.

This morning as we think about Memorial Day and the remembrances that we have, I was thinking about the time I was at my Grandmother Tony Nelson's house on Decoration Day, as she called it. We went out to the cemetery by Guilford Missouri where she lived, and we put flowers by the headstones of various relatives. I must confess that I as a teenager at the time, and did not really know the stories behind those people, and I did not at the time appreciate the fact that remembering people was important. I did not understand that remembering history was important at all. So I confess that I don't remember who those people were whose graves we decorated, but I do remember going with her.

This morning as I thought of some things that I could share with you about remembrances, there were three scriptures that came to mind, four if you count my opening scripture. So Ryder, if you want to know when I am ending, just count the scriptures that I read, and when I get to the fourth one, that will be it.

We often don't remember or think about how thin the gospel is. In a sense is one generation thick. When I was a child, it never occurred to me that the giants of

the restoration wouldn't always be around to share their testimonies and their faith with me. It never occurred to me that there would come a day when people would look to such as me to articulate the gospel and say, "Oh, there is someone who knows what the gospel is about" without all those other people whom I looked to for inspiration and understanding. That's what I mean by saying that the gospel is one generation thick—it is those who are alive who must share the gospel today. If we don't remember what has gone on before, and if we don't share those with our children, and with others, they will be forgotten. I remember as kid reading the Book of Mormon and wondering how it happened that in just a few years time, you could have people who would respond to the lord, and fall away. It seemed like it was up and down and up and down. How in the world could that happen? But we have all seen great changes within the church in our lifetimes, with people responding to the Lord and falling away. As a nation, how many of you remember September 11, and its aftermath. Everybody went to church. Everybody was praying. It was the thing to do. But we don't always remember for very long. We tend to have collective amnesia when it comes to things of the Lord unless we stop and purposely remember those things.

As our thoughts turn to those who have died to defend our country and our liberties and our freedom, there are many of us (including myself) who don't fully appreciate all of the freedom that we have. I have certainly appreciated our freedom more since I have gone to other countries and I have seen that all of those freedoms aren't necessarily there. I have taken them for granted, but they have to purposely be put into place. I am reminded that this land is a very special land. It is a land that has been set apart by God for the building of Zion. I am reminded that the Puritans who came to this land came over to this land. Now today's historians are quick to point out that the Puritan's did not necessarily allow religious freedom very much. If someone did not tow the line in their colony, they were outcast, but fore their own religious freedom they came, so that they could worship God as they felt he needed to be worshipped. They looked at their coming to America as part of God's plan to save the reformation of the church. They preached about that even before the



restoration occurred. And there were among the great preachers of the time, there were those who preached that there would be a great restoration of the original church to the earth. Alexander Campbell preached about the need for the restoration of the church. Of course he did not recognize when the Restoration came under Joseph Smith, Jr. that that was the restoration he was looking for. And so he was an opponent of the Restoration and the Book of Mormon. We have some great promises if we will remember them. This is one of the remembrance scriptures that I wanted to share with you. It comes from Ether 1:31-35. Listen to the promises made to this land.

And now we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise, and whatsoever nation shall possess it, shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fullness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fullness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity; for behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God, or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fullness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off. 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

their wickedness. And this is a promise that we have. And it is very interesting that it does not say that it is because of the wickedness of other people that we will be wiped off this land. It says that it is not until the fullness of iniquity among the children of this land, that they will be swept off of the earth. Of course we don't think that our great nation could ever be wiped off the face of the earth. We are, after all the greatest nation on the earth. But the Lord has said that if we do not serve him, that we will be wiped off. And that is a promise. So we need to remember and not let all of those who have died before die in vain as we have been reminded in our morning worship. We have the freedom to worship as we please because of the sacrifices that have been given. Not everyone in this world has that freedom, and we need to remember that, and appreciate it, and worship God as he has commanded us to do.

There is another scripture in Mosiah 11:174-176. These are the last words of the angel to Alma the son of Alma.

Now I say unto thee, Go, and remember the captivity of thy fathers in the land of Helam, and in the land of Nephi; and remember how great things he has done for them: for they were in bondage, and he has delivered them. And now I say unto thee, Alma, go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more, that their prayers may be answered; and this even if thou wilt of thyself be cast off. And now it came to pass that these were the last words which the angel spake unto Alma, and he departed.

prophet came and was telling king Noah that he needed to repent and serve the Lord. King Noah did not like that, and had Abinadi burned at the stake for his preaching. One of the priests of King Noah was Alma. Alma listened to Abinadi, heard his words, and began to teach those things to the people. He did this in secret, because of course Abinadi was on the outs, and king Noah was trying to get rid of this troublemaker and his teachings. One day the Lord came to Alma in a dream and told him to take the people who would go with him and leave the land. So Alma took the people into the wilderness and fled from the armies of king Noah. They escaped to a place that was a beautiful spot. It was only a few days' journey from where they started. It took them about a week to get there. I used to wander about that because if it was Iowa and you walked for a week, how would someone not know where you were? But after having been in the hills in Mexico, we talked to some people who had never been outside of the valley they lived in during their life. If you don't have compasses, and everywhere around you is dense jungle, your world is bound to be rather small. So the people followed Alma a few days journey to a beautiful spot, and they called it the land of Helam. The built a city, they started tilling the land, and they prospered there.

There were others who escaped from the land of Nephi, including the other priests of Noah. When the people finally had enough of King Noah and the priests, they actually burned king Noah at the stake, but the priests escaped. They managed to kidnap some Lamanite women

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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.

This is the prophet Ether, who had watched his whole nation—a great nation—destroyed by war. His people were wiped off the face of the earth because they had gone away from the commandments of God. And we also know that the Nephites were wiped off the face of the earth as a nation because of

and married them. They went to a place that they called Amulon. Now Amulon was the name of one of the priests who was in charge. So Amulon and Alma knew each other.

It struck me as I was reading some of the scriptures that many times we are told to remember the captivity of our fathers. I don't know if you all know the story of the bondage of Alma's father, so I thought I would just tell that story, and try to include enough of the details so that you will appreciate the fact that Alma was actually a slave, and went through a very difficult time of bondage in his life. This is Alma the father of Alma, not the son. The story was that Alma lived in the land of Nephi. King Noah was the king. Abinadi the

Years later, under Limhi, who was Noah's grandson, most of the rest of the Nephites escaped from the land of Nephi and the domination of the Lamanites there. As the armies of the Lamanites were chasing them, they got lost, and had been lost for many days, when they happened on the land of Helam. The Lamanites made an



agreement with Alma, that if he would show them the way back to the land of Nephi, that they would spare their lives and give them their liberty. So Alma showed them the way back to the land of Nephi. Of course the Lamanites reneged, and instead set guards over them, and brought their families since this was a nice place that had been cut out of the jungle and tilled. So the Lamanites took over and weren't very nice. They actually made slaves of the people of Alma. They also located the land of Amulon. However, Amulon said that they would be glad to join the Lamanites. Now Amulon was a learned man. He could read and write, and he taught the Lamanites to read and to write. They were apparently illiterate, and Amulon taught them the Nephite language, and taught them how to keep records and correspond with one another. Because of this, he ingratiated himself with the king of the Lamanites, and became a big wheel in the government. The King of the Lamanites made Amulon king over the lands of Amulon, Shemlon, and Shilom.

Now Amulon hated Alma because Alma had listened to Abinadi, who in his mind had brought all of the problems to the land. Now Amulon couldn't kill Alma, because Amulon was subject to the king of the Lamanites, but he could impose heavy burdens. And so Amulon enslaved the people of Alma and appointed taskmasters over them, and took them into slavery. Now Alma and the people were crying out to the Lord, and because of their prayers, Amulon decided to make it illegal to pray. He decreed that anyone who was found praying to the Lord would be killed. This was a difficult time. The writer, Mormon, makes a comment about how the Lord did not keep the people from being slaves, but he used that to shape them into the people he wanted them to be, and Mormon says that their deliverance came because of their obedience to the commandments of the Lord. The people kept on praying in their hearts, and kept trying to do that which was right. Let me read from Mosiah 11:59-65

And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts. And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying, Lift up your heads and be of good comfort,

A MARB Hello to Peter Archer & Family in Tamworth, Australia.



for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with this my people, and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you can not feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; And this will I do, that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions. And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren, were made light; Yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord. And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience, that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying, Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage.

And so it was that that night they gathered together their flocks and their herds and their grain, and everything they could carry, and in the morning, they found that all of the task masters were asleep. The Lord just made them sleep, and the people were able to leave the land of Helam. And due to the persecution, the Lord was able to take them to the land of Zarahemla, and that is how the church got to the land of Zarahemla and became the church that was spoken of later in the Book of Mormon. So the Lord's purposes were brought to pass.

You may wonder about that story: Can God really make burdens light? Something like that happened to Eric and Pam Odida. There were some American missionaries with them in Kenya. The missionaries were supposed to go to one of Eric's uncles' houses. But one of them got violently ill right before they were to go. Eric and Pam left them and went by themselves anyway. They went to the gate of the house, and Eric got out of the car to knock on the gate. There were five men with clubs who jumped him. They had apparently been waiting for the missionaries, but decided to rob Eric and beat him instead. Eric said that he knew when the blows were coming. He knew that they were hitting him. But he said that God made it so that he did not feel the blows. God helped him through that, and they were able to survive.

So it was that when Alma's son Alma grew up, he decided that there was nothing to this God thing, and decided to destroy the church. He would go to where people were meeting and he would disrupt the meeting, take the scriptures, and preach that there was nothing to this. People were praying and praying. Finally the Lord sent an angel, who said, you need to remember the captivity of your fathers, and the goodness of God in bringing them out of captivity. He said you can destroy yourself if you want to, but you must stop destroying the church. Of course that was the turn around in Alma's life. He was so concerned about his sins that they were about to consume him. But he remembered his father had talked about the coming of Jesus and the fact that Jesus would take away those sins. And he called out to Jesus, and when he did, the Lord came to him and told him that his sins were forgiven. Alma turned his life 180 degrees around, and he became one of the greatest missionaries of the whole Book of Mormon story. Most of you know the rest of that story. But it was because he remembered the captivity of his fathers.

We too need to remember that our fathers have been in captivity. It has been more generations than just one. I remember in our family history about some of our family that had to leave Utah with rags wrapped around the wheels so they would not make noise in the night because

(Continued on page 16...)



June 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	30

Sunday Schedule

DATE	JUNE 3	JUNE 10	JUNE 17	JUNE 24	JULY 1
SPEAKING	Elder Steven Smith	High Priest Michael Beem	Priest Rod Bastow	Seventy Nathan Sherer	High Priest Sherman Phipps
PRESIDING	Elder Gordon Winkler	High Priest Sherman Phipps	Elder Steve Cunningham	High Priest Alan Smith	Seventy Ron Smith
PIANIST	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Becky Starks	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke
SPECIAL MUSIC	Sue Beck	Alan Smith	Jordison Family	Cunningham Family	Anan Smith
FAMILY DEVOTIONS	Alan Smith	Becky & Alma Hawley	Bob Rowland	REUNION	Ron Smith
GREETERS	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler	Ed Anderson	REUNION	Sue Beck
CUSTODIANS	Ed Anderson	Jim Barber	Michael Jordison	REUNION	Bob Rowland
SUNDAY EVENING	Rob Rolfe	Ron Smith	Family Visits	REUNION	Steve Smith

Wednesday Prayer Service Schedule

DATE	JUNE 6	JUNE 13	JUNE 20	JUNE 27	JULY 4
LOCATION	Norman Nelson	Gordon Winkler	Ron Smith	REUNION	Rob Rolfe
PRESIDING	Alma Hawley	Alan Smith	Michael Jordison	REUNION	Jim Barber



Special Events & Activities

Sunday June 3rd: Priesthood Meeting at 8:30AM - Potluck following Communion service

Sunday June 10th: Guest Ministry, Michael Beem - Potluck following the 11:00 service

Sunday June 17th: Father's Day

Wednesday June 20th: Day of Fasting & Prayer

June 24-30: "Be Ye One" ~ Missionary Family Reunion at Graceland University

July 14-21: "Be Ye Transformed" ~ Geneseo Family Reunion at Geneseo, Illinois

Notes: There will be no regular services in Mt. Ayr Sunday June 24th and Wednesday the 27th. Services will be held at Graceland University during the Missionary Family Reunion.

Birthday's this month: (23rd) Jacob Cunningham

Anniversary's this month: (2nd) Alan & Valle Smith; (15th) Darren & Lori Cunningham; (16th) Sherman & Cheryl Phipps



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

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



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

JUNE 2012

And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Revelation 14:6-7)

Remember (Continued...)

of the threats on their lives. I remember that in earlier times our ancestors came to this land because of the need to be free to worship God. We have that freedom, and we need to remember.

My final scripture is from II Chronicles 7:14. This has been made into a beautiful song, but the song doesn't have all of the scripture in it, so I will read the scripture instead of singing the song.

If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

He is talking about His people. He is talking about us, today. If we, His people, those who are called by His name, will humble ourselves and pray, and seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways, He will hear from heaven, and will forgive our sin, and will heal our land. This is the message of the restored gospel that has come to this land. This memorial day, we need to remember those who have gone before. We need to remember to be true to the principles of the gospel. We need to humble ourselves and keep his commandments so that he can forgive our sins and heal our land. May God bless you all.



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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
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Priest Ed Anderson

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SERVICE PROJECTS
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