



Church of Jesus Christ *Mount Ayr Restoration Branch*

NEWSLETTER

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We dig Nauvoo!

News & Notes

What's inside?

Many summer activities

The branch had many summer activities that were special.

We had an archeological dig retreat at Nauvoo, IL on the weekend of June 6-8.

We met Friday night at the Nauvoo House, took part in an archeological dig on Saturday and shared the Sunday service with the Nauvoo branch.

The Missionary Family Reunion was held at Graceland University Sunday, June 22 through Saturday, June 28.

We hosted the Sunday morning service on Sunday, June 22 in the Memorial Student Service Center before the week-long event with many of the branch attended.

An ordination service held Sunday, June 29 where Matt Anderson was ordained to the office of teacher. See more details on page 17.

A branch business meeting was held on Sunday, Aug. 17 to elect officers for the new church year, which begins Sep-

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WHAT ARE YOU AN EXAMPLE OF?

Elder Gordon Winkler
Mount Ayr, IA
August 3, 2014

I'd like to share with you this morning two brief scriptures. The first is from the book of John 13:15-17. This is Jesus talking to His disciples. He fortells of His betrayal. He begins with these words, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Jesus had just finished washing His disciples' feet. He continues, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

I Corinthians 11:1 Paul writes, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

Michael Jordison then sang a wonderful, beautiful, and healing song, "Jesus will meet you there."

Recently Linda and I had the pleasure and blessing of having our grandchildren at our house. Some of you may know, my birthday was the middle of July. Linda had asked me what I wanted for my birthday and I said I don't need anything. So my birthday came and went. I came home from a meeting out of town on Friday, pulled into the driveway, into the garage, went into the house, and there were my two grandchildren holding a sign saying "Surprise, happy birthday Grandpa."

Great present. We don't get to see the grandson very often. Mellisa lives out in Virginia so we really enjoyed the time we had together. Out time was spent with lots of activities. We went to the zoo and we did a lot of other things. We read stories, built blocks with Lego's, sat on the tractor and did chores in the house.

One thing I observed was they

mimicked each other. If one was hopping, the other was hopping. If one was sitting with grandma, the other wanted to get up on Grandma's lap. If one was cuddling with the teddy bears, the other one wanted a teddy bear to cuddle too.

I also observed they followed the examples of everyone else, including grandpa. If grandpa was going outside and had his sandals on, Joshua wanted his sandals on. If I had my shoes on, Joshua wanted his shoes on. When I go outside, I wear a hat for obvious reasons, but if Joshua was going out with me, he had to have a hat on too.

We did the dog chores every night. I carried a jug of water to refill their pans. Joshua wanted to carry a jug too, but he couldn't carry a gallon - he's only two and a half. So we found a quart container that he could carry. Gillian noticed that when the dogs were barking Grandpa always said, "No, quiet." So whenever Gillian heard the dogs barking she said, "No, quiet."

Sometimes the examples were good and sometimes the examples were not so good. Grandpa did not always take his shoes off at the door when he came in the house, and Joshua noticed that because he's supposed to take his shoes off at the door when he comes in the house. If one would drop their silverware from the table, the other one dropped their silverware off the table too. Watching the interaction of the grandchildren confirmed what probably we all know. We are always an example for someone, for good or for evil.

Recorded in Luke 18 Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." I had always considered that scripture to mean we needed to fol-

low some of the characteristics of little children in that we should always be trusting, that we should be totally dependent on God as our Heavenly Parent, and that we must be loving the way little children are loving. I still think those are all accurate, but I have expanded my interpretation to include that we must be willing to follow Christ as the good example if we are to enter the Kingdom of God.

We are people that like to have examples to follow. For so many people in the world today, they find examples on television screens and in many other places. Sadly, most of these examples are not good examples and do not show how to live a Christ-like life. It's a sad thing to hear a kid today tell you of their examples and role models because their examples are often ones of violence, deceit, sexual symbols, cheating, and steroids. We see people finding examples in athletes, actors and actresses.

I was just looking on the MSN sports update on line and the big headlines, "Ray Rice, 'I've made the biggest mistake of my life.'" Ray Rice is a running for the Baltimore Ravens and he going to have to serve a two-game suspension for violating the league's personal conduct policy following and off season arrest for domestic violence. He had slapped his wife in an elevator and drug her out of the elevator. Just so you know, elevators have cameras so this was all captured on video film.

One of those I admirer on the PGA golf is Dustin Johnson. He is fairly tall like I am so I try to follow his swing pattern when I play golf. Dustin Johnson is not on the PGA tour now. Speculation is that he has had a third violation of the substance abuse policy, so he can't play in the PGA tour for now. It's sad to see where we find our examples. I believe that we desperately need Godly exam-



ples for people to follow. We need people who can show others what it means to live a Christ-like life and how Christ can change your life.

The Bible is full of examples of how to live our lives. We have examples for almost every different type of situation that we can be faced with. We have the example of Abraham and his unwavering faith. We have the example of Job for how to be faithful through trials that come into our lives, and of course we have the perfect example of Jesus Christ.

Years ago a saying became popular, "What would Jesus do?" The idea for that saying came from a verse in 1 Peter which said, *"For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps."* Christ is the perfect example to follow because he lived a perfect life.

Another great that we read about in the Bible is the Apostle Paul. He showed a great example to all those he was around, in fact he was able to instruct the Corinthians to imitate him as he imitates Christ. Paul set out and strived to be a good example. I believe that many of the character problems that we hear about in the church and many of the stories of unfaithfulness we have, have something to do with not having a spiritual example that we could follow. We are expected not only to be an example to the world of a Godly person, but also to our church.

In the second chapter of Alma, he speaks of the destruction of the people because of the wickedness of the church being their example. In verse 18 it reads, *"In the commencement of the ninth year, Alma saw the wickedness of the church, and he saw also that the example of the church began to lead those who were unbelievers, on from one piece of iniquity to another, thus bringing on the destruction of the people."*

We must set a good example for people to follow, so they can see Christ living in us. People should see an example from us as Christians that we are different from the world. We think differently, we talk differently, we act differently, and we view others differently.

We show through our examples what it means to be a Christian. Our lives are an example that people will follow. I hope today you want to be a good example.

We often take the example of Paul and others and learn from their examples and apply these things to our lives. Paul was a person who had real struggles and real difficulties. He wasn't exempt from anything, just like you and I aren't. He wasn't given a special gift by God to be a better Christian. He was simply a real person living out the best that he believed. He showed a great example not just in what he said, but also in how he lived his life. We too should be an example in how we live.

Lets talk a little bit about Paul and how he was an example. I found a really good article written by Jason Cole and it's entitled "Paul's Incredible Example." I'm going to share in and out of some of what he had written.

"What I am about to say may be the most important lesson that we can learn and I want everyone to grasp this thought. God, the Almighty, all-powerful, the perfect loving Creator of the Universe wants to have a relationship with us. God does not love us as simply a mass of people, God loves us individually and wants us to know Him individually.

It is difficult for me to grasp the relationship with God. It is difficult sometimes to see our faith as more than just a way to get to heaven if we do certain things. God wants to have a relationship with us. That is the exact reason why God sent Jesus into the world for our sins. We always say, and rightly so, that Jesus died so that we could be forgiven, but there is more to it than that. When God created man, He made man without sin, and we learn that in the Garden of Eden after creation, things were ideal, they were perfect. God walked in the garden with Adam and Eve and had a relationship with them. When Adam and Eve sinned, a relationship was contaminated.

I want you to know today that God wants to have a relationship with you and He wants you to know that He

loves you. He wants to help you through tough times, and to share in joys you may have.

Throughout school as I was growing up, I had the opportunity to meet a lot of people. I went to a pretty large suburban Detroit school system. There were seven elementary schools in my district, a separate junior high that was pretty large for seventh and eighth grade, and then a high school. I had many opportunities to meet people, but I have to say that few of those developed into what I would call a relationship. Most of those were what I would call an acquaintance. There is a difference in an acquaintance and a relationship and God wants a relationship. He does not want an acquaintance with you.

Relationships are built through communication. Have you ever been around someone you didn't know very well and try to have a conversation and talk about things? Sometimes those situations get a little awkward. There is a lot of dead time because you are not sure what to say or how to proceed. The reason for that is that communication is difficult when a relationship is not



Gordon Winkler



present. God wants to have a relationship with us and wants communication becoming easy. We communicate to God through prayer. Perhaps you find talking to God difficult. If that is the case you must realize that the primary means to build and form a relationship is through communication. With good communication a relationship is possible. Without good communication, it's tough to grow. God wants to be able to communicate easily with us. Paul was a man of prayer. He constantly would pray for the churches and even in his writing he would randomly break into prayer.

In the scriptures we are instructed to devote ourselves to prayer and to pray continually and that shouldn't be a burden if we want to build a relationship with God. Prayer is a very difficult thing when you are just God's acquaintance.

In friendships where relationships are strongest, spending time together is always exciting. I usually am not usually looking at my watch to see how much longer we have. Time always seems to fly when you are with somebody you have a relationship with. It's an enjoyable time and not a burden. That is the way we should look at our time with God. We should love to spend time with God through prayer and we should love to spend time with God in worship. When we are in a relationship with God spending time together should be something we are looking forward to.

One of the things that is great about the few good relationships that we may have here on earth is that of those relationships it is easy to share problems. It is easiest to be open and honest about things with people we are close to. I believe God calls us into an open and honest relationship. He wants us to be able to come to Him and share our doubts, our struggles with sin, our temptations, and our frustrations. A relationship that is honest.

In the book of 11 Corinthians, Paul speaks of a time he prayed for God to remove from him what he called the "thorn in his flesh." No one knows what the thorn was, but most likely it was something of a struggle he was having.

The interesting thing is that Paul didn't see God as so distant that he couldn't speak to Him about those struggles. In a relationship sharing struggles is easy.

Paul demonstrated through his life that he had a relationship with God. He set an example of what it means to have a relationship with God. He could say, "follow me as I follow Christ." He showed through how he lived that being a Christian should transform all of us. He showed that being Christian is more than believing certain things and doing certain things, it's all about having a relationship with God. God calls us to have a relationship with Him, to come to know Him personally and to open ourselves up to Him.

I want to ask you, do you have a relationship with God, one that has open communication, one where you enjoy spending time together, one where you can share your problems, one where you want to serve the other, and one where you can trust wholeheartedly? I hope so!

Do you ever read some of the things Paul says and wonder how a human could have faith like he had? I did when I was reading back through some of his writings. When I read about how Paul was put into prison, how he was beaten, it's hard to think how he could continue to have that kind of a trusting relationship that he had with God. I'm amazed that someone could really live like that. When he speaks of his love and his faithfulness in prayer to other Christians, sometimes I wonder if he could really be as dedicated a person as it appears he was. He is a great example for us to follow, and his character was impeccable.

I want you to know that sin starts small, with a small breach in our character and then it can grow and end in Titanic-size disasters. Sin will take you further than you are willing to go. We need to be a people of character. In our world today we do not need more knowledge, we need more character. We do not need more things, we need more character. We do not need more laws and legislation to better our world, we need more character. Paul showed us an

example of character in a world which lacked character. He had a commitment to doing what was right. Paul said that we are all in a race and we should not run in such a way as to get the prize. We should not be content with being close but only with victory. In II Timothy near the end of his life he likened his Christian walk to fighting the fight of faith. Paul was able to say in retrospect that he had fought the good fight.

We are in a battle against the desires of our flesh. In Romans 7, Paul honestly and openly discusses his struggle to do what is right and he speaks of the battle that is taking place within him. He spoke of how he wanted to do what was right, but his fleshly desires often times took over and he would struggle not to give in to them. Those fleshly desires are going to be a constant battle. There will never be a time when we are not fighting against those desires within us to do what is wrong, but we must always strive to do what is right and live lives of integrity.

Paul had a unique ability to put things in the proper perspective. Paul's greatest example may be seen in the way in which he handled the trials he was undergoing. He faced more persecution than I can imagine. Despite all that, he was faithful to God. Many people when pressed like Paul would quit. They would say it is not worth all the heartache and difficulty. Paul literally gave up everything, even himself, for the sake of Christ. Many of us as we go through difficult circumstances begin to waver, but Paul stayed true. He kept his hope in hopeless times. He kept his faith under persecution. He saw and understood his was all just temporary.

I would like to read selectively from II Corinthians 4:8 -- 5:1. This is Paul. "*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body... For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh*



for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal... For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

There are many others that are wonderful examples. Do you remember the story of Joseph, Jacob's son, and how he was sold by his brothers to the Ishmaelites. Joseph found a way in keeping his faith and being an example of his God to rise all the way up in Potiphar's house.

There are many other examples. I think also of Nephi. Nephi had older brothers and yet he was the example for his brothers in his family. I know that it doesn't have to be young or old or male or female. If you read the account of Mary in the birth of Jesus, Mary was chosen because she was pure and found in favor with God. So Mary's life was an example.

Paul continues in II Corinthians 11. He talks here about his struggles and trials and things he endured. He does this in a way that he is not trying to boast of himself but he just wants people to recognize what happens to somebody who's trying to live that example of Christ and to convert others to Jesus. He says in verse 23-28, "Are they ministers of Christ...So am I; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils

of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."

Quite a burden Paul carried and yet he portrayed his life and lived his life as an example of Jesus Christ.

One of the things I'm concerned about and I think something that Paul made mention of is the fight that we have against false teachings. Several of his letters were written to correct false teachings. In I John he wrote to correct the doctrine of Gnosticism, which taught of secret knowledge and how Jesus didn't really appear as God in the flesh. Galatians was written to correct attempts of a group called the judaizers from convincing the Christians that they needed to become Jews before they could become Christians. Paul had to face those false teachings on a daily basis and I think we have false teachings that we have to look towards.

Our culture tells us that homosexuality is not wrong, but it is an alternative lifestyle that people were born into. Our modern culture floods us with the idea that it is okay and acceptable. If you believe and speak out that it is a sin, then you will be labeled an intolerant bigot or homophobe. There is a push now to make it so we can not call our spouse's husbands or wives any longer but rather that they are partners so people living in homosexual lifestyles do not have to feel left out. We must fight the good fight.

We are told that life does not begin

until one's birth, and if you believe life begins in a mother's womb then you are labeled as narrow minded and a fundamentalist. If you value life and believe that God is the giver and taker of life, and if you see innocent life as precious, then you are in a minority in today's world.

If you tell people that Jesus is the only way to heaven, and that we are not all headed to heaven, you will be called hateful, judgmental, and condemning. Just as Paul faced persecutions of his time (remember he grew up in Rome which was a very immoral city at his time) we must be strong so we are prepared to face those in our generations.

We must fight the good fight. God's truth still prevails and no matter how many people reject it, the truth is still the truth, and we must hold on to it because we do not have the authority to change it. In all of this, Paul was able to stand strong because of this commitment to do what is right in the eyes of God and not in the eyes of man. Paul is one of many whose life is an example for us to follow. My prayer this morning is that we can say as Paul, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."

This morning I was recalling in the 12th chapter of Alma where Alma is journeying and meets the sons of Mosiah who are on their way to establish God's word among the Lamanites. Verse 19 says, "be patient in long suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands, unto the salvation of many souls." So, be a good example and see what God can do with you as an instrument in His hands.



New website

The Mount Ayr Restoration Branch has a new website.

Come to: www.gospelrestored.org for back copies of the newsletter and other information about what is going on in the branch.

You can share the site with friends who may want to be able to read the current newsletter and past newsletters on line as well.



TRUSTING THE LORD

High Priest Joel Loving Mount Ayr, Iowa August 10, 2014

Brother Joel Loving read Psalms 4:4, 5 for his scripture reading. *Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah. Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord.*

Good morning. So the greatest creator, the creator of all of the universe has painted this day. He has caused the sun to rise. Life is in our midst and He is investing everything in what is happening, bringing to pass this amazing story with us as participants. He has made this day and invited us to participate in powerful, spiritual, wonderful ways. How can we respond but with joy and glory? I know there are questions and challenges. There is much I want to say this day.

I owe this group, you, so much gratitude. I don't want to talk a lot about myself. I left an interesting position and came here without really much of an income, without a place to stay, knowing only a few of you, and you have been so amazingly loving and kind. So I stand up here to speak and I know some of us are really hurting a lot about the challenges in life but I want to sing, I want to stand tall and I want to say every single one of you, in some manner or other, maybe some of you in small ways but others in more significant ways have meant so much to Deni and I.

We have a home, a church home and a church family. These are sacred things to me and so I begin in honor to God and what He has done and what He is doing and about to do and also what you have participated in. I acknowledge that this is clearly an indication to me of the Holy Spirit, of the love of Jesus Christ and I am very grateful.

The last time I spoke I talked a little bit about a "hope bridge" which is my term. It's become I think important to bring up just a little bit today. A hope

bridge is what all of us walk on. As individuals we have dreams, aspirations, hopes; those things that we look forward to in the future. When things happen in life that we're not expecting or that aren't on our agenda, it can become very, very difficult. That bridge in some ways collapses and we are looking for ways to kind of make sense of life and the challenges of life. We ask God a lot of very deep troubling questions.

I want to say right now all of those questions will be answered in time. This life isn't really about God's test. It's really about our test. It's not are you, will you, can you, why didn't you. It's really more our time, our probationary state where we prove through our agency and choose wisely, strongly, boldly. I have a message for us. I know and I won't spend a lot of time talking necessarily about Kyle but I know that's an issue in this congregation to some extent.

Some of you may be over it. Some of you may not perhaps even for some time but I believe there are words of encouragement necessary. I think perhaps a little bit of us died with Kyle. Maybe there's a need for some spiritual resurrection as it were in our own souls and life so I want to address this whole talk which is about trusting the Lord in this fashion.

I'll begin with the 3rd book of Nephi chapter 13. I'm going to read several verses. This is about the Three Nephites and their interaction with Christ. These three had separated themselves. *And they sorrowed in their hearts, for they durst* (Durst is my favorite word in the Book of Mormon. We should be *dursting* more I think.) *not speak unto him the thing which they desired. And he said unto them, Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me; Therefore more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death, but ye shall live to behold all the doings of the Father, unto the children*

of men, even until all things shall be fulfilled, according to the will of the Father, when I shall come in my glory, with the powers of heaven; (listen carefully) And ye shall never endure the pains of death; but when I shall come in my glory, ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, from mortality to immortality; and then shall ye be blessed in the kingdom of my Father. And again, ye shall not have pain while ye shall dwell in the flesh, neither sorrow, save it be for the sins of the world. (16-20)

I find it quite fascinating. I read that whole piece just to get to that last phrase. The Lord gave them this amazing blessing. They are alive today walking somewhere, ministering somehow in power, in truth and yet with this amazing blessing and gift He would not take away the pains or the sorrow of the sins of mankind.

There is a role that a broken heart must play in the Christian walk. It is inevitable. It is a gift that we should choose to give. In marriage we risk. In love a broken heart. As parents we often offer a broken heart. Do we not? And this carries with it this amazing ability to somehow hold more. When our hearts break and divide I know it hurts but I also know somehow our hearts also expand.

When Enoch's heart swelled as 'wide as eternity' how did it stay intact and do that. I think it broke in order for that to happen. Remember Enoch was talking with the Lord and the Lord was weeping and Enoch said, 'Wait a second. You are God. How can you weep?' God shows him and then Enoch begins to weep and his heart swells wide as eternity. What a phrase. Do you understand what that means? I want you all to write a paper, 500 words on a heart that swells wide as eternity. What does that mean? I think a heart would have to break in order for that to happen. Enoch began to weep and then Christ comforted him.

So there is this allowing even I think an offering of a broken heart which is necessary in our Christian walk. There



are three scriptures that I have to read. The first one is 2nd Nephi 1:72, *Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.* Third Nephi 4:49, 50 says, *And ye shall offer up unto me no more the shedding of blood; yea, your sacrifices and your burnt offerings shall be done away, for I will accept none of your sacrifices and your burnt offerings; and ye shall offer for a sacrifice unto me a broken heart and a contrite spirit. And whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost.* . . . I believe this not only refers to literal baptism but an immersion, a saturation where the Spirit permeates our souls in ways far beyond what we can possibly imagine in our carnal state. Finally I would like to read from the Doctrine and Covenants 59:2e, *Thou shalt offer a sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in righteousness; even that of a broken heart and a contrite spirit.*

My testimony is that God is very aware, far more than we can possibly understand or realize of every single one of us, our doubts, our hurts, our tears and knows what it's like to lose a son, not just any son probably the best ever. We can put this son on a pedestal. We chose to put Him on the cross instead. I'm kind of ashamed of that but He gave Him knowingly, completely so that we might have something that is beyond where we are on the bridge. It's on the other side. There's a new perspective that will bring us insights but we've got to build that bridge with Christ, brick by brick, stone by stone, small steps by small steps.

It's a patient sometimes tedious process but I want to reach out to you and say I too know what it's like to lose a brother. This will be hard for me in some ways. Valle is very humble. You know her. She's really the most gifted in the whole family. She won't tell you that. She has this amazing mind and heart and she really, really does shine. The rest of us, her siblings, well that's another story. Valle was there with Kim our brother as he was dying of liver can-

cer and was the most dutiful.

I remember toward the end of Kim's life when we had gone through those moments of deep fasting and prayer and longing for the Lord to bless him. Kim was in many ways probably the most intelligent in the family. Valle was the most gifted but he was very smart. Why would the Lord take him? I wanted Him to take me instead but not Kim. In that phase of questioning and praying and fasting we were allowed one last visit when he was still conscious enough to be able to speak with us during his last days. I was allowed to go into the home. No one else was allowed to visit at this point just close family members.

I went to the home and Kim was sitting in the chair where he spent his days. I went to him and bent down to hug him. We hugged all the time but this time he grabbed me and kissed me. Kim and I never kissed. I knew this was special, probably the last time. He said these words, "I've got it." If you don't know what that meant for Kim, the Lovings are a pretty competitive family. We're highly opinionated, highly athletic and highly competitive. That pretty much describes us. We would play tennis and have these theological arguments in the middle of these matches. I would be ahead 4 to 2, 5 to 1 and then Kim would bring up some question and we would have to solve the world's problems again, struggle with these theological answers and about the time I thought I had the answer the set would be over and he would have won 6 to 4 or 7 to 5 with me wondering how he won. So when he said, "I've got it," I knew that what was coming was something powerful something from his heart. This was a man who was about to die and he had his last words for me. He said, "It comes down to this. God loves us and we must learn to trust that."

Now when he said that I knew that a kindergartner would understand those words but that those who were older and more educated might dismiss them or ignore them, but for me it was powerful. I knew that when Kim died, if he died soon, I had the choice. I had the freedom to still choose to honor God

in my life and trust Him and let go because God would take care of him. Suddenly within my heart I knew. This was no longer a faith thing. I knew I could make that choice and a month later when Valle, my sister-in-law and I were laying him down in the bed changing his position, he breathed his last. Kathy, his wife, said he's gone.

At that time I made that choice. I chose wisely. I chose honorably. I chose to praise God. He was in God's hands and I trusted that. Somehow in the trusting of that and in the love of that moment all fear disappeared. All angst went. Now I miss Kim. I think the world misses Kim, his impact of what he would have been able to do but I never grieved. I have not grieved my own family's deaths. Please don't misunderstand that. It's just that, you know what, what's on the other side of the bridge, it's OK. In fact, it's better than OK. It's pretty amazingly awesome beyond your wildest imaginations.

Death the way we define it is not the way the Lord defines it. We would call



Joel Loving



it loss. They don't call it loss in heaven. Jesus doesn't say that. It's a gain. It's a win. It's a coming home.

I shared this story at a church I used to go to about six months later. It took me a while to be able to talk about this openly. I shared it in a congregation where there were two services, an early morning one and a late morning one, and I shared it twice. My wife was present for one service and my youngest son was present for the second one.

After both services we went down from to Kansas City to visit the folks and my wife said that something strange had happened when I shared this story. She said, "When you were sharing the story about Kim there was an aura around you. There was this light, this golden reflection." I said, "Really, that's kind of strange." I didn't feel a thing. I'm often clueless. Let me just be humble and honest with you. This experience wasn't for me evidently this was for my wife.

Then on the way back from visiting the folks my son Brian and wife happened to be in the car and I said to him, "Mom said something kind of strange happened at the first service that you didn't get to attend." He said, "I know what you are going to say." I said, "You weren't there." He said, "I know what you're going to say." I said, "Well what am I going to say." He said, "She saw a glow about you, an aura around you that was sort of this sunlight." Now again I'm clueless. This wasn't for me. This was about this knowledge, this testimony of understanding that God loves us and that we have the choice to trust that. When we fully trust that things become clearer and I think there's blessings in that.

Now why is it that in these moments God is able to help us see so clearly? I don't know but I want to share a quick story. How many of you have read the book *Return from Tomorrow*? I am just going to remind you of the scene where this 20 year-old young man is wanting to become a doctor and catches pneumonia in the hospital and dies. He gets up out of his body and starts going to where he's supposed to get his medical training and he realizes that he's left his body behind so he goes back to this

huge hospital. He has to try to find his body. He has this intelligence about him but he's lost his embodiment in a physical form and so he's trying to seek it out.

He goes all through the wings of this hospital and finds this room where there's a body with a hand hanging out that has his class ring on it. He realizes that that's his body and tries to get back into his body. About that time there is this light that comes from a distance. It gets lighter and brighter and closer and he realizes with complete authority. This is no more guessing. This is no more estimating. This is clearly not a light but the Son of God in his presence. He shows up with two questions.

We talked in class this morning about how I might need to know Isaiah as a test. This might be the preface to that test. You don't even get to take the test unless you can answer these two questions. Do you have any idea what the first question might be? You might be asked this question. What have you done with your life? Suddenly in a panoramic view around him is every instant, every thought that ever occurred during his entire life. He watches himself being born. He sees the next door neighbor picking on him. I think it was a girl. He was ashamed. His own sister had to help him. He sees how he refuses the love of his stepmother because every time he grows close to somebody they die. His mother died, then he went to stay with his grandmother and she died and so as a little boy when his stepmother comes into his he says, "I'm not going to fall in love with you. They keep dying on me if I do."

He couldn't stand that broken heart so he wouldn't give her his love. He sees the sex thoughts that he can't control. He sees everything. Nothing is hidden. It's all present and the Lord has asked him what he has done with his life. It's kind of like, "It's pretty obvious." Then he starts thinking, "Wait a second. I died when I was 20. What did you expect? I died too early!" The Lord responds with this mirth, this love, this intelligence, this light very kindly and says, "Death can come at any age."

Though we understand this from a distance, it is hard to accept up close, and when it is personal or touches our family, it can be devastatingly painful even though we know that tomorrow is not guaranteed to anyone of us. But what we do have is this moment today and the choice to cherish it in a way with God and each other that honors the Lord for what is unfolding now in the human story... and it is grand!

We are called to a perspective that looks beyond our immediate circumstances and recognize this day as an opportunity to step up and to be alive and to let what's culminating in this grand story of humankind, what we have in the restoration and what's born out in the scriptures to really be on fire.

Then He asks him this other question, the second question which is really the more pertinent one. Do you know what the second question is? "Have you learned to love?" That's it. Have you learned to love? Even when it's hard, even when your heart breaks, even when people betray you, reject you, even when you sense humiliation or loss do you respond in love? There's a powerful message here. It is quite profound.

Let me go to the other side of the coin so we can kind of put this into perspective. I remember a child I was responsible for at a school called Ruth Houston Learning Center. This was a school that was for the rehabilitation of senior high young people. This was a school where children who didn't want to go to school or were kicked out of regular school ended up coming so that they could get their GED.

We had a particular young girl there that was kind of ostracized by everybody. She was beautiful, absolutely one of the most beautiful young ladies I've ever seen, but everybody stayed away from her because she was so hateful and so angry. She was really ticked off. One time something happened in the classroom. I was kind of a counselor in this school so she was sent to my room. I sat down with her and said, "Tell me what happened. Something happened to you a long time ago where you took a step on a path in a direction. Do you know



what I'm talking about, what I'm asking you? Does this make sense?"

She said, "I'll tell you," with these steely sharp eyes. She's going to give me what I asked for. When she was about 6 to 8 years old she was with her mother in a car. They had gone across the border into Mexico. Her little sister was with her. They stopped on the side of the road along this deserted place and waited. A pickup showed up and a man got out. The mother said, "Stay in the car and don't roll down the windows." So they stayed in the car and the mother got out, shut the door and went over to talk to the man some twenty feet away.

This young girl and her sister got really hot. It's summer in Mexico so she rolls down the window. She has to for the sake of her sister. She begins hearing the conversation which is about haggling over the price of a bag of marijuana. They were not reaching a consensus. They were not reaching a deal so the mother in her desperate state offers her children to the man. Now as young as you are you realize that bag of marijuana has more value than you do. A path, a journey has begun where you see and hear something that should be unspeakable to anyone let alone a child.

Let me ask you a question. So you go up to this young lady and say, "Well, Melissa, Jesus loves you." Her response is, "Are you kidding? Are you kidding me?" Folks, this is what we have to understand. This gift of life, this opportunity we have as parents and friends and grandparents and family where God says, "You can become co-creators with me, agents to do that which is right or not and to love. If you do it well then you'll raise them to understand what love means as a mother and a father and then they'll begin to understand if you teach them about Jesus and the Holy Spirit but if you don't we'll both suffer.

So Melissa says, "Jesus loves me? You love me? There is love? I've never seen it. Not even from my own mother and my dad left before that." Do you see the contrast? One is learning love and learning to trust the Lord and the other is being betrayed and choosing naturally, basically rejection. To all of

us rejection begets rejection. If you hurt me, if you reject me it's probably going to come back. It's just sort of natural. We have to fight that. Maybe we reject God because we feel He's rejected us or He's betrayed us so we can betray Him. We've lost and it's sort of like, "Lord, where are you?"

God knows precisely imminently more than any of us what it's like to lose a loved one. He has the consolation of knowing that Jesus will be with Him. What is particularly difficult for the Lord is to lose someone eternally. The welfare of souls is great. I choose to love and trust and in this moment and in this day when things are getting quite interesting in the world and in life I will not lose sight of the glory of God. I will recognize the power that is resident in believing what is on the other side of the bridge and I will build that bridge with Jesus. I will. I will and with you here.

Wherefore the almighty God gave his only begotten Son, as it is written in those scriptures which have been given of him: he suffered temptations but gave no heed unto them; he was crucified, died, (a chilling death) and rose again the third day; and ascended into heaven to sit down on the right hand of the Father, to reign with almighty power according to the will of the Father, that as many as would believe and be baptized, in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved: not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets, who spake as they were inspired by the gift of the Holy Ghost, who truly testified of him in all things, should have eternal life, as well as those (this is us) who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father, and of the Son, which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one God, infinite and eternal, without end. (D & C 17:5a-h)

I have a prayer. Would you bow with me. Almighty God, in this moment I want to pray and bear my heart which is broken for you and with my

brothers and sisters here for the things that have transpired and have not transpired in righteousness. I want to pray that there is a renewing of our minds that we take the next step really in feeling as you feel, understanding as you understand, seeing as you see, perceiving as you perceive all things. May our minds as well as our hearts be enlarged. May the blessing of this request come to fruition in all of our lives.

May there be a fire kindled within that burns with the eternal flame from your Holy Spirit, from your righteousness, from your mercy, from your love. May we see beyond the horizon. May we be granted the foresight to protect ourselves, to prepare for that which is to come and our brothers and sisters and to move out in faith. May we be given peace and shalom, the tranquility that comes from strength and knowing as you know, Jesus, what life really is about. May this blessing of peace and shalom be ours I ask it with full faith, with all my heart in Jesus Christ's name. Amen.



Sharing service held on fifth Sunday in August

The final Sunday service in August was a sharing service where branch members share music or other offerings.

Deb Bastow wrote this on her Facebook page following the service. We thought you might like to see it.

Wonderful music and sharing service at Restoration Branch today!

God's spirit was definitely there, bringing tears of joy more than once.

We had very talented people with all kinds of music and testimonies.

Thanks go to Michael, Julie, Joshua, Isabel, Bonnie, Rob, Lynda, Sue, Diane, Tony, Steve, Bryce and Cindy!

We hope you will be planning ahead for our next sharing service the fifth Sunday in November. We want to share in your talent that is shared with the rest of the branch.



FORGIVENESS

Elder Steven Smith
Lamoni, Iowa
August 17, 2014

Today I would like to talk about growing in God's forgiveness.

When we have faith in a command, to the point that we adjust our thoughts, emotions, words, and actions to repent, we are promised that we will be forgiven.

Acts 8:22 says: *Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*

Mosiah 2:16 says: *And again: Believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you.*

D&C 64:2b says: *There are those who have sought occasion against him without cause; nevertheless he has sinned, but verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, forgiveth sins unto those who confess their sins before me, and ask forgiveness, who have not sinned unto death.*

D&C1:5f adds: *For I the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance; nevertheless, he that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.*

The sacrifice of Christ allows us to have forgiveness whenever we repent.

The Spirit is given to us to bless us and forgive us as these scriptures point out:

Acts 5:30-32 *The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.*

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

2 Peter 1:4 *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the*

divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Ether 1:41 *And the Lord said unto him, I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my Spirit will not always strive with man; wherefore if ye will sin until ye are fully ripe, ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.*

Luke 12:12 *Whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, and repenteth, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him who blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him.*

We must repent to be forgiven. God is too great to remove our agency and cause us to be forgiven. Since it is the Spirit that blesses us and forgives or spiritually heals us, then it is a rejection of the Holy Spirit to refuse to repent.. the essence of the unforgivable sin, is that sin that is not repented of and thus remains unforgiven.

That refusal may come in the form of: we think our sin is too great for forgiveness; we have poor self esteem and feel unworthy; we feel our sin is too small to worry about; we are embarrassed about labeling our shortcomings as sins; we justify our sin as a shade of gray; we feel our sin is not a bad as the next hypocrite who needs repentance; we feel we have accepted Jesus, and have no more reason to repent.

When we repent, we will be forgiven with one other caveat...We have to extend that opportunity for forgiveness to others. These scriptures help us understand this truth.

Mark 3:22 *But he answered them and said, Verily I say unto you, All sins which men have committed, when they repent, shall be forgiven them; for I came to preach repentance unto the sons of men.*

D&C64:2e *I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men; and ye ought to say in your hearts, Let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee ac-*

ording to thy deeds.

Ephesians 4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Matthew 6:16 *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.*

D&C 64: 2d *Wherefore I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another, for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses, standeth condemned before the Lord, for there remaineth in him the greater sin.*

Failure to forgive others is the second part of the unforgivable sin...which remains unforgivable and if we reach death(sin unto death), remains unforgivable. The important thing is that we can repent, and we will be forgiven.

Forgiveness spiritually heals us, giving us an opportunity to interact with God's Spirit and giving access to the blessings coming from the Spirit. Forgiveness is available because of the grace and mercy of God.

Ezekiel was instructed to prophesy, and he did not want to say what the Lord told him to say to our day. He records his discussion where the Lord convinces him that he is to say what he is instructed... but the message is about forgiveness.

Ezekiel 33:11-20 *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

When I shall say to the righteous,



that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.

Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.

None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him; he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal; but as for them, their way is not equal.

When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you everyone after his ways.

But... is there more? I have forwarded the idea that as we grow closer to God benefits accrue. Just trying out forgiveness is covered by God's grace and mercy. In this case, the next step is covenanting through baptism. Taking the step of covenanting to keep the commands, and covenanting to have the Spirit with us to help us in our quest, gives what the scriptures call remission of sins, with the benefits of it. Remission still depends on Christ's sacrifice and the blessing of the Holy Ghost. It still requires our response of repenting, but now we have covenanted to repent, and God gives us the Spirit to help us keep our covenant.

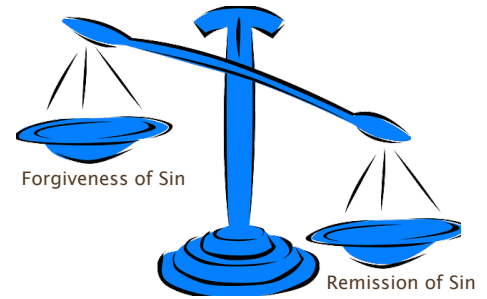
These scriptures help us understand this.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

Moroni 8:29 *And the first-fruits of repentance is baptism; and baptism cometh by faith, unto the fulfilling the com-*

Forgiveness vs. Remission

Requirements	Forgiveness of Sin	Remission of Sin
Repentance necessary	X	X
Facilitated by Christ's sacrifice	X	X
Available by God's grace and mercy	X	X
Sin dropped	X	X
Spirit ministers promised blessing	X	X
Baptismal Covenant		X
Promise to keep commands		X
God promises Spirit, facilitating covenant		X
Sin bought and no longer owned by you		X



mandments; and the fulfilling the commandments bringeth remission of sins; and the remission of sins bringeth meekness, and lowliness of heart;

D&C83:10c-11f *Therefore, as I said unto mine apostles, I say unto you again, that every soul who believeth on your words, and is baptized by water for the remission of sins, shall receive the Holy Ghost; and these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name they shall do many wonderful works; in my name they shall cast out devils: in my name they shall heal the sick: in my name they shall open the eyes of the blind, and unstop the ears of the deaf: and the tongue of the dumb shall speak; and if any man shall administer poison unto them, it shall not hurt them: and the poison of a serpent shall not have power to harm them.*

Seeing the benefit of remission of sins over simple forgiveness, why should we focus on forgiveness? So where do you go from here? If you are keeping all the commandments and you have covenanted to have his Spirit with you, can it get any better? Yes, you may choose to make God sacred or sanctified. In return, he will sanctify you.

Again it is through sacrifice that sanctification occurs, with Christ making the final sacrifice. Eating the sacrifice becomes a part of sanctification. Keeping the sabbath is an important

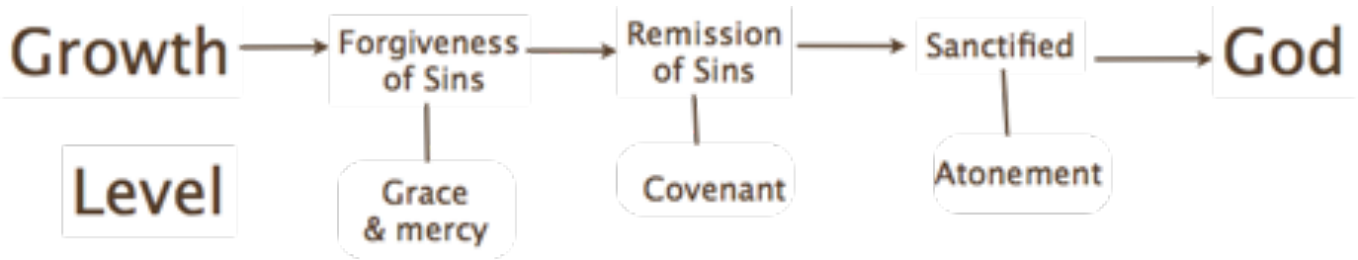
sign that we sanctify the Lord. Truth guides the sanctified to use faith to keep the commandments. Our response to the commands, causes God to be sanctified. God then will sanctify us. Priests are the ones that guide the congregation toward sanctification.

Here are some scriptures about sanctification.

Ezekiel 20:12 *Moreover also*



Steven Smith



I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.

John 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.

Hebrews 13:12 Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Genesis 6:63 For, by the water ye keep the commandment; by the Spirit ye are justified; and by the blood ye are sanctified.

Leviticus 20:7 Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God.

Romans 15:16 That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost

Finally, when we are one with God, because we are sanctified, the ultimate level of forgiveness, the ultimate level of spiritual healing, nothing can keep us from God.

Here are some scriptures which help us understand this:

Ether 1:101 And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the Brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the Brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.

DC 85:18b Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you

shall see him: for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.

DC 85:35f This is the glory of God and the sanctified; and they shall not any more see death.

Joshua 3:5 And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

Finally I would like to end with a

scripture and a paraphrased scripture.

1 Corinthians 13:11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

Joshua 3:5 (2nd & 3rd words modified) And I say unto the people, Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.

Folks, it is time to grow up.



New officers elected

The following are newly elected church officers for the coming year September 1, 2014 - August 31, 2015:

- Pastor: Ed Anderson
- Counselors:.....To Be Named
- Bishop's Agent:..... Gordon Winkler
- Stewardship Coordinator: Cheryl Phipps
- Home Ministry Coordinator Jim Barber
- Secretary/Recorder:.....Julia Jordison
- Caring Coordinators:
 -Pat Bolingbroke, Diane Anderson, Linda Boswell
- Fellowship/Retreat Coordinators Alan and Valle Smith
- Worship Coordinator.....Jennifer Rowland
- Worship Centers:Sue Beck
- Christian Ed. Director Callie Morehouse
- Evangelism Coordinator.....Sherman Phipps
- Youth Leaders:..... Lovings, Rowlands, Barbers
- Service Projects:..... Sandra Crandell
- Historian:Linda Winkler
- Facility Coordinators: Michael Jordison, Sherman Phipps, Tanner Rowland, Bob Rowland, Jim Barber, Rodney Bastow
- Building Committee:.....Sherman Phipps, Rob Rolfe (1 Yr Term)
 - Tony Crandell, Rodney Bastow, Gordon Winkler (2 Yr terms)
- Newsletter Editor:..... Alan Smith
- Newsletter Circulation:..... Cheryl Phipps
- E-mail/Webmaster: Michael Jordison



AFRICA MISSIONARY TRIP TESTIMONIES

Seventy Ron Smith
Lamoni, IA
August 21, 2014

“And again, this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come, or the destruction of the wicked.” Matthew 24: 32

As most of you know I just came back from Africa, and I have a whole book full of stuff to tell you. Di told me not to read the book so I'd just like to share a few testimonies. I have a testimony about cats for those of you who like animals. I have testimonies about lots of people and places.

I thought I'd start out by showing you a map of East Africa. This is Lake Victoria. It is about half the size of Iowa. The map shows the territory of East Africa, which consists of the five countries of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. Kenya, on the northeast of Lake Victoria, is about four times the size of Iowa. Uganda, on the northwest shore of the lake, is about twice the size of Iowa. Tanzania is south of the lake and is about 6½ times the size of Iowa, or about 1½ times the size of Texas. Rwanda and Burundi lie to the west of Uganda and Tanzania, and they are each about a fifth the size of Iowa. This map also shows a small part of the Congo, which lies to the west of East Africa.

Rwanda was the place where the genocide took place in 1994 where the majority Hutus killed nearly a million Tutsis in 100 days. It is now illegal to identify as Hutus or Tutsis in Rwanda. The country has made a significant comeback since that time. If you've ever watched the movie Hotel Rwanda, it really happened. People cut up their neighbors with machetes and it was all based on what the Europeans did.

The Europeans came in and had

ideas about evolution that white people were supreme. So if you were lighter skinned that was better than the darker skin, so they issued identity cards as Hutus or Tutsis based on the color of skin and some of the characteristics which had nothing to do with anything else. But the Tutsis got all the jobs and all the opportunities in school and they were the government workers, and they were the minority.

After the Europeans left, the Hutus decided that wasn't a good situation so there was the genocide. Everywhere you go in Rwanda you will find mass graves and monuments to the genocide. It is very real and very recent in people's memories.

My journey started in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda. I'll tell you about 4 of the places we went and share some testimonies from the people. My brother Doug arrived a few days earlier and had gone to the wedding of a wonderful lady named Frieda. She has taken care of us a many times. She is a gourmet cook. We were invited to the week-after-the-wedding homecoming party. The whole family came with gifts. There were nearly a hundred people there. They had a big meal for all of us. Frieda made a salad. She took tomato skins and made roses out of them for little garnishes on the salad. They were gorgeous, and she insisted that I eat them, so I got the rose garnishes.

One of the people we met in Kigali was named Michael. He had this testimony. He had been going to a church and had not been satisfied because people would praise the Lord at church and say, "I'm saved," and then go and be the same kind of people that they had been through the week. He just didn't think that was quite right and was not satisfied. One day he was walking along

and saw a lady going down the street. He greeted her and asked where she was going. She said she was going to church. He asked if he could go with her. She said yes.

They boarded a bus traveled two hours to Gahini to go to church. The lady was Frieda. People at church talked about a youth retreat that was coming up, and Michael asked if nonmembers could go to a youth retreat. They said sure. He went to the youth retreat, heard the gospel, and decided to be baptized.

We met with three other people in Kigali, Martha, Emile, and Aimable. They speak Kirwanda and French and a little English. I had the privilege of baptizing the three of them while we were there. We had a prayer service the next morning, and went around the circle telling something we were thankful for. Both Emile and Aimable said that their parents, uncles, and cousins, all their families, were murdered during the genocide. They are in their late twenties now. They expressed profound gratitude because they were now part of a church family. That was the thing they were most grateful for. I thought that was quite remarkable.

We left Kigali and went to Kampala, the capital of Uganda, on the north shore of Lake Victoria. In Kampala we met with Obed Mwiri, a fellow I baptized several years ago as a young man, about 13. He was William Mwiri's son. We met Obed's wife and children. Obed then took us to meet Tom, another church member who lives really close there. We had a wonderful time with Tom's brothers and sister. Then Obed took us up to Mbale, pretty close to the Kenya border.

We met with a number of the church people at Nauyo, a little village near Mbale. One of the elders there is



Simon Maraka. We were sharing some of the blessings that the Lord had given. Simon told us that after William died, the person who held that title to the grounds on which the church building was built was not a member of the church. Also, when Simon went to check on the church registration, he found that the church had been registered as a charity and not as a church for the last ten years.

In Africa, the church registration is really important because the government has the right to tell you if you can meet or not. That's a little different in this country – hopefully we'll keep it that way. The church, of course, is not a charity, so Simon asked what it would take to fix the registration. The government office gave him a whole list of things that had to be done. Simon worked hard and got all the papers together. He came back to the office down in Kampala and gave them everything. They told him to go home and they would call him when things are ready. He asked if he could just wait there. They told him no. Simon went home and waited for a year with no results.

He decided this last June that something needed to be done. So he started fasting and praying about it and asked the congregation there to fast and pray about it as well. That week he got a text from the office in Kampala saying the registration was ready. Simon thought it was a scam. So he called the office to see if it was really them who sent it. They said yes, so he went and got the registration. That same week the man who held the title to the land came to Simon's house and gave just gave it to him. Simon was rejoicing. Here they had just started fasting and praying about it and both the title and the church registration issues were resolved. They were so excited about the prospects for the church since they now had the registration and actual title to the land.

Sam is the pastor there at Nauyo, where the church building is. Sam is a wonderful young man, a little older than our Sam here. He was telling us that what he was thankful for was a lady named Zita who was there. He



said that sometimes when there was only one person at church on Sunday, it was Zita. She was always there. She has been so faithful. Two of her daughters are among the outstanding church members in East Africa. Zita was there when, after William's death, some other churches tried to take over the church building. They told them not to worry that they would remain a Restoration Branch, they just wouldn't use the Book of Mormon and some other things that they didn't want. Zita said you are not going to do that. They told her she was just an old lady. So Zita's daughter, Lydia, stood up and gave them what for and told them they were going to have the Book of Mormon and the other things. Zita and Lydia actually saved the church

there. Sam expressed his gratefulness for the faithfulness of Zita.

Another lady at that service was Teddy. She was thankful that her child had been blessed two years ago.

We visited many homes. We walked quite a ways to Bumagene, to Simon's home. On the way, I heard some accordian music. It sounded like it might be a hymn. We were carrying my guitar, so I whipped it out and started playing along with the accordian music and I went up to the house. They invited us in and we played accordian and guitar for a while. Then we got a chance to teach a class, so I introduced the Kingdom of God, went through the scriptures, had about an hour's worth of class, and we introduced ourselves. The guys name



was Ben and his brother Issac was playing the accordian. Ben was a youth minister at a Pentecostal church. We made some contacts and who knows? Perhaps the seed of the Kingdom is planted there.

One of the people we visited was Christian. He was William Mwiriri's father. He had disowned William when he became a Christian. William died without being reconciled to his father. Now, Christian was 100 years old and very sick, but he asked us to come.

The lady who took care of him asked us to pray over him, so I did. Later in our trip I saw Sam again. He expressed appreciation for that prayer. He said that Christian had died the next day. He said that most of the time people just pray that someone will get well and then when he dies they say the prayer was ineffective. But, Sam said that in my prayer, I outlined the alternative and prayed that Christian endure to the end. Sam said that now he knows how to pray for somebody like that. I don't know exactly what I prayed, but Sam expressed appreciation, and I thank the Lord for the opportunity.

From Mbale, Uganda, we went to Kisumu, Kenya. Kisumu is on the northeast shore of Lake Victoria. This is where Eric Odida lives and has a house. There are probably between one and two thousand members of the church in and around western Kenya. They are trying to raise money for a church headquarters there. The Kenyans are used to having fundraisers where people will go and just ask for funds. They don't have a social security system so people have fundraisers for all kinds of things. If somebody gets sick, they have a fundraiser. If somebody is trying to go to school or start a new business or whatever, they have a fundraiser. People donate whatever they have at these fundraisers.

So the Saints were going to do some fundraisers for the church but they were worried that some people came from really poor areas and some came from more prosperous areas and they didn't want there to be inequality. So at the Kisumu branch they decided to have a fundraiser and designate that for this

week all the fundraising is for one or two people. Everybody would raise their funds but they would all be in the two names. So everybody got a chance to donate some funds for the church. That has been going rather successfully.

When we reached Kisumu, we walked to the YWCA. We called Eric to let him know we were there, and then had a few hours to kill while we were waiting for someone to pick us up. So I got out my guitar and started playing. It started raining so we had to go inside. There were a couple of guys sitting there so we started singing with them. We introduced ourselves. One of them was a Reverend Dan Ojal, an Evangelical minister and the hospital curator at a public hospital. When he found out that Doug was a doctor and interested in getting credentials in Kenya he said it would be no problem. He told Doug he would help him get his credentials, and then Doug could work anywhere in Kenya that he wanted to work as a doctor. Doug was really excited about that.

Elder Austin Odicoh has a brother-in-law is named John Oyoo. He was introduced as a "back-slid Apostolic church minister." John's wife went to a women's retreat last year and heard the gospel, got excited about it, and was baptized. But John has not wanted anything to do with the church. So everyone was really excited when John invited us to his home. When we got there, we found that John had invited all the neighbors. He had put chairs out under a tree. There were eight people when we started, and about twenty by the time we finished. Nobody left. We talked about the Kingdom of God and shared with them all of those exciting things. John was very happy.

After we finished, there were some other speeches. Austin Odicoh stood and gave a wonderful speech about how the church was begun in 1830 and let them know this was not just a fly by night church. He said this church came from America, but he pointed out that all the churches came from some place. The Catholic church came from Rome, there were Methodists and others that came from England. Then he said, you

don't have to wait for the missionaries to come back. If you want to have your own church here, all you have to do is call, and these people from Bondi will come down and they'll support you and help you get set up. Austin's wife Jane and one of the ladies from Bonde also rose to speak, but they spoke in Kiswahili, so I could not tell what was said. Everyone seemed pleased with the response.

On one of those nights, we met the cats. We were sleeping in a little hut. Most have a double bed and a curtain right next to the bed that divides the room in two. Cats have the run of the house to keep the mice out. Doug Smith, Ammon Sindt, and I were sleeping when there was a cat fight. Doug prayed for the cats that the Lord would take care of them some place else. They jumped up on Ammon and used him as a springboard to get up to the top of the wall to get out of the house. Ammon had some wounds, but the cats left us alone, so we praised the Lord.

We traveled for four hours to Sori Bay, on the shore of Lake Victoria, to the south of Kisumu. We were with the John Onyingo family. Doug and I



Ron Smith



got the master bed. John and his wife brought in a bed, and there was another bed for Ammon. The five of us were lying right next to each other. We had a curtain between the two of us and the three of them but, as I have often observed, privacy is best obtained by closing ones eyes. That happens a lot.

The big event of the trip was the youth retreat in Kisumu. It was a youth retreat like you've never been to before. Youth refers to anyone from 8 to 40 who is not married. There were some mamas with kids, and some older folk besides. All together there were 220 campers from all over East Africa and the Congo. For the 220 bodies, there were 100 mattresses. On the first night Michael Onyiego said that everyone should share a mattress. Everyone did.

Doug Smith had to leave before the retreat started, since it started a day later than originally announced. Seventy Micah Bates joined us for the retreat. When Micah, Ammon, and I went to sleep in our room, there were no mattresses, and only a concrete floor. Micah put some clothes out for a pillow and wrapped in a sheet. Ammon was doing the same. I knew that we were going to have a marathon the next couple of days and I knew sleeping on concrete would make my hips get really sore. So I asked if we could get some mattresses.

Michael said no problem. He went to the next door and took 3 mattresses. I knew there were 4 people in there and I'd seen that they each had a mattress, so I knew that it was just changing the venue. I insisted that he take 1 of the mattresses back so each of the rooms had 2 mattresses. We slept with our heads on the mattresses and our bodies on the concrete, which worked out pretty well.

At that retreat there wasn't a schedule. We just had classes and then you had to go by the spirit to see when the others were done. We had four different language groups, so you did your class and then you were supposed to trade, but they didn't tell us when the class was supposed to start or end. You kind of watched to see if somebody else was through or you went to the end of your material and traded off. We would go from 7 o'clock in the morning for the

morning worship, which could last for a couple of hours, and then if breakfast wasn't ready we would have a class. If breakfast still wasn't ready we'd have another class. Sometimes breakfast would be at 11 o'clock. Then you'd start having classes until lunch, which might be at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Then maybe a class until supper. Then you'd have an evening meeting which usually went from 6 to 10:30 or so. That was the schedule such as it was.

On the last day of the retreat, we had 36 baptisms and 28 confirmations. That was an amazing day. Only the people who were going to be baptized and those involved in the service got to go to the baptism because they had to hire a matatu, which is a 14-passenger van to get the 40 people out there. It took 2 trips.

We went to Hippo Point. There weren't any hippos there but they did have excursion boats that went out to see the hippos. The excursion boats landed right next to us during the baptisms. The tourists got off and a couple of them watched almost the whole time. It took a long time because the rocks were really big boulders on the bottom of the lake. This is all volcanic area, mossy, slippery and sharp.

Micah Bates (USA), Deward Kibuya (Congo), John Onyingu (Kenya), and Simon Maraka (Uganda) did the baptizing. I had them all go out together to find places where they could stand. Then we had four people at a time go out and they were baptized one by one. It took quite a while but it was a wonderful service. We sang and sang and sang and had a great spirit there.

Most of you know about the blessings that I had getting back. When the retreat was over, the Rwandans and the Congolese and I took the bus from Kisumu up to the Uganda border and from there to Kampala. We started about 10 o'clock in the morning and reached Kampala about 8 p.m. that night. The 9 p.m. bus had only two seats on it and there were 12 of us. So we sent two on ahead and the rest of us got on the 1 a.m. bus to Kigali. We arrived about 10 a.m. My flight didn't leave until 8 p.m. that

night and they won't let you in the airport, they have armed guards out there to keep you from getting in the airport, until 3 hours before your flight. But that way they don't have to worry about terrorists coming in.

So we went to the home of Pastor Eugene. We had stayed there before. He had gone to the retreat with us. He's the pastor of an Evangelical group. We've preached in his church several times. He expressed his desire that the next time he will be baptized. They had prepared a meal of potatoes and green beans for me. I got a shower and a bed. I told them I had to be at the airport by 5 o'clock.

On the rough bus ride through Uganda, Francis Baganizi's phone was broken. So he went to get his phone fixed while I rested. He didn't get back until 5 o'clock. Then he sat down to eat supper. He hadn't had anything to eat since the previous day except for some white bread that he had bought on the bus ride. It was something like 6 o'clock when we got out to try to find a motorcycle to take us down the hill, to take us where the matatu was, to take us to the main bus ride, to where there was a car we could get to go to the airport. We got down the hill and got to the matatu.

We waited for it to fill up because you have to have 18 people in these 14 passenger vehicles before it is full and before it will go. We got into a traffic jam at a construction site. So it took us a long time to get to the main bus stage. By then I wasn't sure we were going to make it. We got a private car to go to the airport except we got into another traffic jam due to a football (soccer) match that just ended. We got to the airport about 10 minutes before the plane took off, but the gate was closed and they wouldn't let us in the airport. We made our way back to Paster Eugene's place, where everyone praised the Lord that I had an extra day to stay with them. I said, "Thank you, Lord" because the scripture says to give thanks always. I showed a couple of Book of Mormon videos to the kids that night.

The next day I told Francis to take me to a hotel where I could pay with a credit card because I had less than a



hundred dollars with me and knew if I had to wait several days going standby I wouldn't have any money. I wanted to find a place that I could pay with a credit card and had a shuttle that I could take back to the airport. That didn't translate very well. He took me to a little dive across the street from the airport. We said goodbye. I didn't have any way to pay for another night or anything so I was praying I could get on standby this time.

There was one seat left. Everybody in the airport told me how lucky I was to get on this plane. Everything was booked up through the end of August. September was the first time I could get an actual, confirmed flight out. But they said the only way I could do it was to buy a new one-way ticket to Brussels. Everyone was praying for me and so we made it.

An interesting thing was that when we were trying to get the ticket changed Francis was telling me to let him tell the story. He was going to tell that we started from Kisumu and basically tell the truth only he was going to leave out the part about resting and whatever in between. So I had a chance to talk to him about what it meant to be truthful. I told him the scriptures say to *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."*

I told him about how dad had taught me about that when we lived on the Mexican border. Bob Fishburn lived down in Saltillo. His dad died and left him a whole bunch of projectors and audiovisual equipment. They shipped it all down to Weslaco, TX and left it on the border because trying to get it across the border was dangerous. You couldn't take that kind of stuff across without paying humungous bribes.

Dad prayed about it. He knew that the audiovisual equipment would be good for Bob's ministry. In the middle of the night he woke mom up and told her he was going to take the stuff. The next day they packed it up. They went to the border. They opened up the trunk and the customs official said what's all this. Dad said that's a projector and this is

how it works. He explained how everything worked. The official said correcto, correcto, correcto and waived them on. They got to the first checkpoint after the border. The guy had them open up the trunk and they went through everything again and dad just told them exactly everything that was there. They just said, go.

Dad reached Saltillo and knocked on Bob Fishburn's door and said, Bob I've got some things I want to show you. Bob's eyes got really big and he asked, "How did you get all that across? I would have been in jail for 6 months if I had even tried."

So I knew that the Lord would take care of me and He did. I don't know whether the insurance is going to pay for the \$1,435.20 ticket or not. That still remains to be seen. The travel agent wanted me to tell them there was an automobile accident and give the insurance company a name. I could have told them that, but there wasn't. There were two traffic jams and one was due to a soccer match and one was due to construction.

We'll see what happens, but I know

the Lord will direct our paths if we really are honest, if we really tell the truth. "Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart; So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man."

I had a lot more to tell you about the Kingdom of God. We preach specifically about that and about keeping the commandments, and believe that's really, really important, and fulfilling to prophecy that "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come."

We believe that prophecy is being fulfilled literally. We are spreading the gospel of the Kingdom. I have lots more to say about that but my time is up. If I was in Africa I would just keep going until 2 p.m., but I'm in the USA and people have lunches so maybe some other time I'll get a chance to talk with you more about that. I really appreciate all the prayers that you gave for me and maybe some of you will be inspired to be missionaries and help spread the word. God bless.



Matt Anderson ordained to office of teacher

Matt Anderson was ordained to the office of teacher in a worship service Sunday, June 29.

He was ordained by Sherman Phipps and Ed Anderson. Matt is a student at Iowa State University in Ames.

Matt's ordination was one of many special experiences the branch had over the summer months when the newsletter takes a break.

The newsletter will be back with monthly issues until next summer.



SEPTEMBER 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
	1 Nephi's Vision of Christ's Healing 1 Nephi 3:83-85	2 Type in the Wilderness Alma 16: 191-199 (Also 2 Nephi 11:36-39)	3 Nephi prophesies of Christ's healing 2 Nephi 11:68-73	4 Jacob says word can heal soul Jacob 2:6-10	5 King Benjamin prophesies of Christ's healing Mosiah 1:97-103	6 Healed with Christ's stripes Mosiah 8:18-20																																																																																																		
7 Alma heals Zeezrom Alma 10:89-101	8 Healing before Christ arrives 3 Nephi 3:63-66	9 Voice offers healing for repentance 3 Nephi 4:40-46	10 Jesus heals sick 3 Nephi 8:6-11	11 Jesus on repentance and healing 3 Nephi 8:61-68	12 Jesus prophesies about healing 3 Nephi 9:95-97	13 Jesus heals people again 3 Nephi 12:6-13																																																																																																		
14 Mormon on healing and gifts 3 Nephi 13:58-62	15 Disciples heal people 4 Nephi 1:6-7	16 Iniquity takes away gift of healing Mormon 1:13-15	17 God of miracles unchangeable Mormon 4:65-70	18 Healing one of gifts of God Moroni 10:8-14	19 Healing can be required to fulfill scripture D&C 26:3	20 Healing part of great things to be shown forth D&C 34:3a-d																																																																																																		
21 Elders should be called, live or die to Jesus D&C 42:12c-d	22 Healing for those not appointed to death D&C 42:12e-13b	23 Gifts: Faith to be healed and faith to heal D&C 45:5a-7f	24 Healing sign to follow believers D&C 83:10c-11g	25 Promise of health D&C 86:3c-d	26 Healing result of repentance D&C 105:5c-d	27 William Law given gift to heal sick D&C 107:30a-c																																																																																																		
28 Sidney Rigdon given gift to heal sick D&C 107:32a-b	29 Bear burdens healing doesn't relieve D&C 119:8a-9c	30 Environment can affect exercise of faith in healing D&C 127:1c-2d																																																																																																						
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<p>Healing This is the third and last study calendar to focus on scriptures about healing. Learning about the faith to heal and the faith to be healed -- physically and spiritually -- should be a big blessing to the Restoration. This month focuses on Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants healing scriptures.</p>																																																																																																								

SEPTEMBER 2014

Sunday Schedule

Date	SEPT. 7	SEPT. 14	SEPT. 21	SEPT. 28	OCT. 5	
Speaking	Tony Crandell	Rodney Bastow	Michael Jordison	Rob Rolfe	Jim Barber	
Presiding	Rob Rolfe	Joel Loving	Alan Smith	Ed Anderson	Sherman Phipps	
Pianist	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Pat Bolingbroke	Cheryl Phipps	Pat Bolingbroke	
Special Music	Sue Beck	Jim Barber	Michael Jordison	Rob Rolfe	Steve Smith	
Family Devotions	Bob Rowlands	Tony Crandells	Alan Smiths	Rod Bastows	Joel Lovings	
Greeters	George Knottses	Sherman Phippses	Gordon Winklers	Joel Lovings	Tony Crandells	
Custodians	Steve Smiths	Alan Smiths	Joel Lovings	Rod Bastows	Sherman Phippses	
Sunday Evening	Bob Rowlands	Rob Rolfes	Ron Smiths	Steve Smiths	Bob Rowlands	

Wednesday Night Prayer Service Schedule

Date	SEPT. 3	SEPT. 10	SEPT. 17	SEPT. 24	OCT. 1	
Location	Rob Rolfes	Steve Smiths	Gordon Winklers	Bob Rowlands	Ron Smiths	
Presiding	Ed Anderson	Ron Smith	Ed Anderson	Steve Smith	Gordon Winkler	

SPECIAL EVENTS

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 7 -- Priesthood Meeting at 8:30 a.m., Communion Service and Potluck

Sunday, SEPTEMBER 7 -- First youth meeting

Happy Birthday: Rob Rolfe (1), Elyse Jordison, (13), Ron Smith (15), Pat Bolingbroke (22), Ed Anderson (24), Debbie Bastow (28) and any others me missed.

Happy Anniversary: Dave and Barb Houston (19), Bob and Jennifer Rowland (23), George and Yvonne Galusha (26) and any others we missed.



Church of Jesus Christ Mount Ayr Restoration Branch

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

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www.gospelrestored.org



CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST - MT AYR RESTORATION BRANCH

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)

MORE NEWS AND NOTES

September 1.

The results are included on page 12.

Celebration of Life service

A celebration of life service for Kyle Chown, grandson of Sherman and Cheryl Phipps, was held at the Lamoni Community of Christ in August, following a similar service in Ohio.

The branch had been supporting the Chowns and their extended family in prayer for many years as Kyle fought a valiant battle with cancer.

Sherman Phipps led the service and the branch provided the meal following for family and friends.

Retreats planned

The branch has been invited to share in several retreats this fall.

The retreat at the Followers of Christ camp in Little Sioux is set for September 12-14. Several members of the branch plan to attend.

Several retreats are set at Odessa this fall. The theme for all of them is "That Your Joy Might Be Full" John 15:11'

Retreats include:

Junior Retreat Oct 4-5 with Josh & Elyse McLeod

Young Married Couples Retreat - Oct 10-12 with Erik and Amy Simmons

Senior High Retreat Oct. -- 17-19 with Stu & Milee Gage

Junior High Retreat - Oct. 24-26 with Brian and Monica Twombly

Older Youth Retreat - Nov 7-9 with Reggie and Suzanne Bendorf

For more information on the Odessa Hills retreats and to download forms or to register online, go to www.OdesaHills.com

JCRB Fall Conference

The fall national conference of the Joint Conference of Restoration Branches will be held at the Independence Branch in Independence, MO, October 9-12.

The branch will need to vote on delegates for the conference again.