

Tidings of Zion

Conference of Restoration Elders

April-May-June 2015 Issue 111



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An annual contribution of \$20 is appreciated.

Purpose of the Conference of Restoration Elders

“To bring solidarity to a growing number of Restoration branches and Latter Day Saints in general during this period of disruption and fragmentation” (Conference Operating Guidelines accepted in 1996).

The Conference exists to:

1. Organize the coming together of Melchisedec priesthood, as well as the Aaronic priesthood members, for:
 - Spiritual preparation and to unify our efforts on behalf of the work to which we are called.
 - Much needed fellowship and fraternity to prepare us to defend and preserve the faith.
 - Identify and seek divine guidance concerning the critical issues now confronting the Church.
 - Chart a course of action that will maintain the gospel as restored in 1830 (Original Letter of Intention and 1993 Conference Materials).
2. Support Restoration branches in their efforts to work together.
3. Provide needed resources to branches and members as they are requested.
4. Offer ongoing support and resources to Restoration priesthood.
5. Offer support to the elders to take the gospel message to the world.

The Conference is not the Church, but a gathering of the Melchisedec priesthood to share in testimony, prayer, legislation, and preparation to return to our branches better equipped and unified to perform our duties to minister to our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In addition, the Conference of Restoration Elders provides a forum for Aaronic priesthood and member alike to share in fellowship and to be nurtured in the Word. The Conference helps the scattered Saints and isolated branches throughout the world to enjoy the hope that we find in Jesus Christ and each other.

Conference of Restoration Elders Resource Center

Volunteers staff the office to answer questions, respond to letters and e-mail, prepare publications for mailing, and more. Hours are Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Hours may change. Please call ahead to be sure.

CRE Office Contact Information

Phone: (816) 836-3421, (816) 836-2730
or Toll Free: (877) 748-8947

Fax: (877) 748-8947 (Please call before faxing.)

Website: <http://www.eldersconference.org>

Mailing address:

PO Box 4085, Independence, MO 64051

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2015 Restoration Branch Family Reunion & Conference of Restoration Elders

The Pastors of Zion (POZ) and the Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE) are once again sponsoring a combined Reunion and Elders Conference. The Restoration Branch Family Reunion and Elders Conference will be held at the Center Place Restoration School (CPRS)/Waldo Ave Restoration Branch from June 21 to June 26, 2015.

As in previous years, the primary focus of the week will be on worship, classes and fellowship for all the Saints, classes and meeting opportunities for all priesthood, and opportunity for the Elders to meet in conference. The overall theme, and daily themes for the week are as follows:

The Way Is Prepared

"Now the decrees of God are unalterable; therefore the way is prepared, that whosoever will, may walk therein and be saved."
(Alma 19:71)

"O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would look, they might live: even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look, we may live forever. And now my son, see that ye take care of these sacred things; yea, see that ye look to God and live. Go unto this people, and declare the word, and be sober. My son farewell." (Alma 17:81-84)

Sunday
The Way is Prepared—
Whoever will, may walk therein and be saved

Monday
The Way is Prepared—
Do not be slothful because of the easiness of the way

Tuesday
The Way is Prepared—
If we will look, we may live forever

Wednesday
The Way is Prepared—
Take care of these sacred things

Thursday
The Way is Prepared—
See that ye look to God and live

Friday
The Way is Prepared—
Go unto this people, and declare the word

We invite all restoration branch saints and priesthood to consider participating in the 2015 Restoration Branch Family Reunion and Conference of Restoration Elders. We believe that this Reunion will once again be a wonderful opportunity for the Saints to draw close to the Lord and to each other.

You can register for the Reunion/Conference online by going to the CRE website at www.eldersconference.org, or by using the registration form provided in this issue of the Tidings. You can also go to the CRE website to print out a registration form. This year there is only one registration form for both the Reunion and the CRE.

For more information, visit the CRE website, or call the CRE office. Local calls: 816-836-3421 or Toll free calls: 877-748-8947. (Please leave a message if no one answers)

Cover Photo:

Cover Photo was taken by Charles Golden, Independence, MO
Sunday, February 8th, the Waldo Avenue Restoration Branch sponsored a missionary service. Representatives from the Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE), African Restoration Ministries (ARM), Latin America Missionary Board (LAMB), Greater European Missions (GEM) and Southeast Asia Australia Mission (SEAAM) came and shared testimonies from the many countries they are ministering in. The work is going forward in powerful ways!

Back Row: (Left to Right) Mike Holmes, LAMB, Rick Johansen, ARM, Richard Neill, SEAAM

Front Row: (Left to Right) Dale Bainter, Evangelism Council, Tom Rindels, GEM, John Eichhorn, ARM, Bob Schrunk, SEAAM

Restoration Branch Family Reunion and Elders Conference Schedule

June 21—26, 2015

Theme: The Way Is Prepared

(Alma 19:71 & Alma 17:81-84)

Daily Themes	<i>Whosoever will, may walk therein and be saved</i>	Daily Themes	<i>Do not be slothful because of the easiness of the way</i>	<i>If we will look, we may live forever</i>	<i>Take care of these sacred things</i>	<i>See that ye look to God and live</i>	<i>Go unto this people, and declare the word</i>
Time	Sunday	Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Registration and information desk will be open from 2:00pm to 6:30pm		Registration and information desk will be open daily from 8:30am to 6:30pm					
		7:00 am	Priesthood Worship	Priesthood Worship	Priesthood Worship	Priesthood Worship	Priesthood Worship
		7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast and Gathering	Breakfast and Gathering	Breakfast and Gathering	Breakfast and Gathering	Breakfast and Gathering
9:00	Prayer Service	9:00	Prayer Service	Prayer Service	Prayer Service	Prayer Service	Prayer Service
10:30	Worship Service	10:30	Classes	Classes	Classes	Classes	Classes
12:00 pm	Lunch (on your own)	12:00 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2:00 – 6:30	Displays & Exhibits Open in Gymnasium	1:30	Classes or Other Scheduled Activities	Classes or Other Scheduled Activities	Classes or Other Scheduled Activities	Classes or Other Scheduled Activities	Classes or Other Scheduled Activities
		3:00 to 5:00	Free Time or Other Organized Activities	Free Time & Other Organized Activities	Free Time & Other Organized Activities	Free Time & Other Organized Activities	Free Time & Other Organized Activities
4:00 – 5:00	Priesthood Meeting & Worship	Monday 1:30 to 5:00 Rest of Week 3:00 to 5:00	Elders Conference Meetings	Elders Conference Meetings	Elders Conference Meetings	Elders Conference Meetings	Elders Conference Meetings
	Dinner (on your own)	5:00	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner (on your own)
6:30	Song Service	6:30	Song Service or Other Activity	Song Service or Other Activity	Song Service or Other Activity	Song Service or Other Activity	Song Service or Other Activity
7:00	Evening Worship	7:00	Evening Worship	Evening Worship	Evening Worship	Evening of Sharing	Evening Worship
	Reception		Campfire	Refreshments & Fellowship	Campfire	No Event	No Event

Slothfulness

by Seventy Richard Neill
Independence, MO

The subject of slothfulness has been presented in a series of classes since the 2014 Elders Conference last June. This article will deal with the first part of the presentation given in September, at Kirtland, Ohio, and again in November, at Oak Grove, Missouri.

I want to begin this presentation on slothfulness with my personal testimony of how this subject has become a topic of study. Last June, during the 2014 Conference of Restoration Elders, I was in my office at Center Place Restoration School (I have since retired from the position of School Administrator). Seated around a table were several men, and we were discussing the subject of apathy. We discussed it in relationship to the world, the church, and even the priesthood and membership. After a good amount of discussion, one-by-one the other men left the office, and I found myself sitting alone. I was still thinking about our discussion when a "still small voice" spoke to my mind, "That {apathy} is not the word I use. The word I use is slothfulness." I found myself thinking about these two words, *apathy* and *slothfulness*, and I decided to do a word search in our three books of scripture. To my surprise, *apathy* never appears in the scriptures - not even in latter day revelation. However, *slothfulness* appears many times in all the books of scripture. So I decided that the Lord was telling me that I needed to study about this word that "he uses".

Apathy often tends to be influenced by external conditions or people. Apathy becomes an excuse that is justifiable. For example we might say - "I am apathetic because of the condition of the Church." Slothfulness, is more an internal response and is determined by our decisions. It is referred to in the scriptures many times. God says that this attitude is wicked (Matthew 25:26), and has no reward (Doctrine & Covenants 58:6c).

Some of the synonyms for slothfulness are - idle, indolent, shiftless, lazy, apathetic, and careless.

These are not qualities that we will want to be accused of at the Day of Judgment. I found the word *indolent* to be insightful because in addition to its definition of avoiding activity, and being lazy, it also has a medical definition. In the field of medicine, *indolent* indicates a diseased condition that causes little or no pain. This suggests a patient may have a disease for a period of time, and not be aware of it because they don't feel any pain. When pain is finally realized, it may be too late to resolve the condition. Indolence, can relate to the condition of the church, or us as individuals, as well.

If we do not feel the pain that the Lord has for the condition of the world and its people, then what are the symptoms that we need to look for to see if we are being slothful? I found an article on the symptoms of slothfulness, and applied it to fit our experience in the church. Below are identified seven symptoms of slothfulness.

The first symptom is when a person makes *soft choices*. This would be a person who makes "little decisions" with the goal of maintaining comfort. This would be a person who desires to take the easy path, or the path of least resistance. This person can procrastinate or refuse to work in adverse conditions. Proverbs 6 and 19, Alma 17:81-84, and I Nephi 3:131-137 tells about this condition of being slothful.

The second symptom is when a person *disregards time*. This is a person who is not a self-starter. He believes that tasks can easily be done tomorrow. This person becomes dependent on the diligent people to carryout the work but yet he looks to receive the benefits from the works of others.

The third symptom is when a person *leaves tasks unfinished*. This is a person who is lethargic, and allows opportunities to slip by them. This person may know somebody who is in need, but like the priest or Levite, he walks "on the other side". This person permits half-completed jobs to be his result and outcome. The assumption is that something, no matter how inadequate to the task, is better than nothing. The standard becomes lowered.

The fourth symptom is when a person lives in a world of *wishful-thinking*. This is a person who does

not take action to make a hope a reality. This person can become frustrated because things are not the way he wants or dreams them to be. This person talks of Zion, but does not live and work for Zion to come.

The fifth symptom is when a person is *not a productive worker or servant*. This is a person who is unproductive because he lacks initiative and follow-through. This person makes excuses or complains about why things are not working out well, and he adversely affects those around him because of his discontentment. Unfortunately discontentment often breeds discontentment. Proverbs 18 and 10 support these statements.

The sixth symptom is when a person is *fearful and not faithful*. This is a person who allows fear to limit his faith. This person has a fear of failure so he often decides not to try to do something. This person will often wait for a more favorable time or condition. For instance, if we wait for situations to become risk free before we share our testimony, that time may never come, and the opportunity to share is lost. This time or condition often will not come about unless the person trusts in the Lord and his promises. The Lord is perfect. This person can become inactive toward his calling and duties. Proverbs 26, and 22 addresses this response.

The seventh symptom is when a person *denies that he is slothful*. This is a person who rationalizes his inactivity. This person waits for the obstacles to be removed by God or someone else before actively engaging in the task of building the kingdom of God on earth.

Dear reader, consider these symptoms. Some of these symptoms will make us feel uncomfortable because we see them in our personal lives, our families, our congregations, and our church. If we diagnose ourselves to be in a state of indolence, and consequently slothfulness, what do we do? There are four major scriptures which explain slothfulness, and what needs to happen. In the next issue of *The Tidings of Zion* I will discuss part two. This will be concerning Section 98 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and how a people who are at variance, one with another, become slothful.

The Spiritual Disciplines

by Elder Howard Parker
Odessa, Missouri

I believe, at its root, that the gospel of Jesus Christ is about relationships; the relationship you and I have with our Heavenly Father, and with each other. Unfortunately, the busyness of the world around us tends to lend itself to an inability to maintain relationships at a deep or significant level with anyone other than those closest to us, including our Creator.

Superficiality is the curse of our age. Webster defines “superficial” as “something being on the surface, not penetrating the substance of a thing; shallow, not deep or profound; reaching or comprehending only what is obvious or apparent.” This is much like a crack in the wall that one would patch over and over again, only to find that the real problem is the foundation. Until the foundation is made sure, no cosmetic fix will be sufficient. We, as a people and as a church, must move past this shallow life, and seek the face of God. This can only be achieved through seeking our Lord with everything we are, aided by the tender touch of the Spirit. This is why exercising the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, studying, meditation, and simplicity, are so important.

While some might think of the spiritual disciplines as the means by which joy and laughter are extinguished from off the face of the earth, the Spirit calls us to this lifestyle, and through it, enables us to commune with God. Without this communion, we will find our condition as described by Donald Coggan, the Archbishop of Canterbury, “I go through life as a transient on his way to eternity, made in the image of God but with that image debased, needing to be taught how to meditate, to worship, to think.”

The primary requirement needed to exercise the spiritual disciplines is a deep longing after God. King David expressed his longing for God with these words, “As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee; O God. My soul thirsteth for to see God, for to see the living God; when shall I come and appear before thee, O God?...Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy

waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me". (Psalm 42:1,2 &7) In another Psalm, David expresses his longing for the Lord as such, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." (Psalm 73:25-26)

Maintaining the spiritual disciplines is difficult because it involve a constant, intensive evaluation of our motives. Recall the prayers of the Publican and the Pharisee in Luke 18. The Lord's purpose in sharing this particular parable was to help us understand that He looks upon the hearts of men, which is what motivates them. It is only as the light of Christ shines upon us that we can determine whether our heart is pure, or whether we serve ourselves.

As indicated earlier, there are five fundamental spiritual disciplines: prayer, fasting, studying, meditation, and simplicity. **The first discipline, Prayer,** is the greatest barometer of our Christian commitment because it's completely voluntary. It is the means by which Jesus himself maintained his relationship with his Father, and was noticed by his disciples. In Luke 11:1 we find this account, "And it came to pass, as Jesus was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples". Prayer catapults us into the frontier of the spiritual life. It is the central mechanism which God uses to change us. When we pray, we are changed, because we commune with him. Prayer is much more than just a reciting of our concerns to our creator. And prayer should be a dialogue, not a monologue with God. Let us remember to always give the Lord an opportunity to answer our petitions. He desires to reveal himself to us. Communing with God through prayer is also the first discipline we tend to abandon when we transgress.

The second discipline is Fasting. Arthur Oakman once noted that fasting is much more than just giving up food; it is the arranging of our lives for the purpose of seeking our God. Certainly the discipline of fasting from food is challenging because of our need for it, and it tests our resolve for closer communion with God. Too often we find ways to stay busy to keep our minds from our plight, when, in reality, this discipline

should be the means by which we focus ourselves on the act seeking. In fasting, we should not focus on the sacrifice, but rather the giving of ourselves. As Joseph the martyr shared in Section 59: "Verily this is fasting and prayer; or, in other words, rejoicing and prayer". We cannot allow the physical act of fasting to remain only an outward form; whenever there is a form devoid of Spirit, our offering loses its value. Another challenge with disciplining ourselves to fast is that we live in a time where the doctrine of "instant gratification" is prevalent. We want immediate response to our efforts, and if not rewarded, the exercise is considered too taxing. Fasting often requires sustained discipline for an extended duration of time.

Study is the third discipline in our endeavor to draw near to the Lord. The purpose of the spiritual disciplines is to transform us by replacing our destructive habits with new, life giving ones. Consider the words of the Apostle Paul, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is". (Romans 12:1-2) Our minds are renewed when we engage them on things that have the potential to inspire and transform us. The purpose of the discipline of study should be to direct our minds repeatedly and regularly in certain modes of thought about God and his creation. To be effective study requires four things. First, it requires *repetition*, the concentrating of our minds repeatedly in a specific direction or on a specific topic, until it becomes ingrained in our minds and part of who we are. Secondly, studying requires *concentration*, the centering and focusing of our mind on a particular matter or topic. Thirdly, it requires *comprehension*, a level of understanding of a matter or topic at hand so that the mind is positioned to gain additional insight and discernment, particularly when it is influenced by the Spirit (John 14:26). Lastly, study requires *reflection*. While comprehension focuses on understanding **what** is being studied, reflection defines the **significance** of what is being studied. Let us not make mistake the equating the simple accumulation of information, for knowledge and wisdom. When we sit down to study our scriptures, we do so not to amass information, but

to be changed. The key to this discipline is not just reading many books, but actually experiencing and understanding what we studying (II Timothy 2:15).

The fourth discipline we use to seek our Lord is Meditation. Often, there are those who question the appropriateness of meditation in the lives of Christians. Our scriptures teach us that meditation is not the exclusive property of the eastern religions (Genesis 24:68; Psalms 63:6; Psalms 119:148; I Timothy 4:15; and Doctrine & Covenants 76:3e). One reason why meditation is so important, and yet so threatening to us, is because it boldly calls us to enter into the living presence of God. Through meditation we draw near to God, where he is able to fellowship with us on a very personal level.

The final discipline is Simplicity. Simplicity is the process by which we remove much of the clutter in our lives, and set aside more time for God. Eleanor Roosevelt said, "A little simplicity would be the first step towards rational living, I think..." Simplicity is an inward reality that brings about, or results in a lifestyle that cultivates peace. So many times, we allow the world and its modern conveniences to rule us, not vice versa. Simplicity is the determination to remain sufficiently unattached to the things and activities of this world, so that when the Lord call us, we are able to hear and respond, both temporally and spiritually, to His call. Paul writes, "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ". (II Corinthians 11:3) The complexities of this world, though helpful at times, often result in bondage, anxiety and fear, while simplicity, generally brings about freedom, joy, and balance in our lives.

It is only as we taste the fruit of the spiritual disciplines, and a experience a renewed nearness with our Redeemer, that we can truly be effective in the work of the restored gospel. As the building of any city begins with one block, so the future we desire for ourselves, and this world, begins in the heart of each individual. We are called to be seekers of "He" who desires to be discovered. Only as we give ourselves unreservedly to the spiritual disciplines, will our labors be fruitful in the building up of His Kingdom here on this earth. To this end may we labor together.

Trust without Borders

by Rebekah Friend
Nashville, Tennessee

"We live by faith, not by sight." 2 Corinthians 5:7
January 2014: *"Jesus, this new year I'm at a loss as to knowing what to do,"* I scribble in my notebook. I feel confused, and my heart is longing for clear answers. I need help. *"So please help me not to lean on my own understanding, but to listen to you instead. To gain strength and comfort from leaning on you and listening to your heartbeat."* I'm in the middle of my first year of teaching in Guadalajara, Mexico. I know at the end of the academic year, I'll have a decision to make as to whether or not to stay another year or face the upheaval of life as I know it and leave. The choice feels anything but easy. I turn back to written prayers, *"Jesus, how do I know how to decide whether I stay or go? What are the right questions to ask? What guiding factors do I consider?"*

June 2014: The sensation of butterfly wings beating against the insides of my stomach attacks me as I read the words *"Rebekah, we would be honored if you would join our team for 2014-2015..."* I lean back in my chair, just staring at my computer screen. I know this is the answer to my prayers. I just had never imagined God would answer in this way. The railing bars on the pedestrian bridge are cold beneath my hands as I grip them, looking out over the city, as lights blink in the darkness. I gaze for a few minutes at the cars sweeping under the overpass and breathe in. *I'm going to miss this place so much,* I think. I've decided to accept the job offer from Preston Taylor Ministries, a non-profit organization in Nashville, Tennessee. My head understands what that means, but tonight, my heart doesn't. I'm on my way home from a school event and it's beginning to hit me that in a couple of weeks, I'll be leaving this place that I love. The night air blows around me, bringing with it the voice of comfort. *"Rebekah,"* I hear my name, and I know God has chosen to join me in this moment of sadness. *"Rebekah, I brought you here. I am going with you to Nashville, and I will bring you back again."*

"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place...obeyed and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8

July 2014: "We're sorry, but your card cannot be authenticated" reads the ATM screen. I sigh and pull my debit card out of the machine. Not wanting to carry a lot of money with me through the airport, I'd withdrawn \$100 from my bank account in Mexico and left the rest. Now the card linked to the account wasn't working. "It's ok," I think to myself, "I'll just have to call the bank." I called the bank about ten times that day. I explain ten times, in Spanish, that I need someone to check my account. But no one is able to help me. Over the next few days, I try everything possible to resolve the issue, but to no avail. I finally break down, because this is not the way things were supposed to be, yet I still want to trust. I open my computer and begin to type, "Ok God. You never said this would be easy. You never said I wouldn't be without access to money and trip up and feel like a failure and feel like I did something wrong. You never said guilt wouldn't threaten me. You never said shame wouldn't rise up in front of my face. You just said walk on the water. So how do I do that? I stepped out on top of it, but now I am Peter and I am sinking. If I call out to you will you forgive my lack of faith? Will you still save me from these waves? Because I have no idea what to do, and I'm at the end of my resources. Please help me."

August 2014: I'm sitting in a small circle with my dad and a friend of his. I'd flown from Guadalajara to Kansas City before heading to Nashville so I could see my family and friends before starting my new job. Now, just a few days before my departure, my dad has invited me to spend some time talking and praying. I have resolved that I am going to Nashville on nothing but faith. I don't have any money but God's voice was clear. Still, as I sit here, I wonder how it will all play out. I'm lost in thought, tuning out the conversation when suddenly, my dad's friend turns to me. "When you get to Nashville," he pronounces confidently, "everything you need will be provided." My breath catches and I can't find a response. He doesn't know that I can't access my bank account. He has no idea of the desperate place I'm in. "Ok, God. I hear you," I silently pray.

A couple of days later, I pull into a gas station. My sister has generously given me enough money to pay for the gas it will take to drive to Nashville. As I wait for my tank to fill, I ask "God, I know you promised to provide everything I need. So, when I get to Nashville, could you just get me some socks? If you lay it on someone's heart to give me socks, then I will know that you are going to take care of me."



Nine hours later, I have almost arrived to my new home. It's getting late and I'm starting to think about dinner. "God, I'm getting hungry. Can you somehow please feed me tonight?" I get to the apartment, and my new roommate and supervisor are already there. "Welcome!" they say, and usher me upstairs to see where I'll be living. The door opens, and I'm shocked. I'd known they planned to furnish it for us, but this goes far beyond my expectations. It doesn't just contain the necessary items. The walls are painted, there are coordinating pillows, decorations, and pictures. It's beautiful.

"Hey," begins my supervisor, breaking into my thoughts, "I know you will want time to settle in, but it's getting late and I wanted to take you out for dinner. Where would you like to go?" My heart leaps with thankfulness, because God has heard me and cares that I am hungry. He cares, and he is meeting my need.

After dinner, we returned to our apartment. Before my supervisor leaves she hands each of us a gift bag, explaining that the organization had put together a few things to welcome us. We open the bags excitedly, pulling out cards, candy, and cooking magazines. I then pull out two gift cards, one for a grocery store and one for a department store. Each one for a \$100. *When you get to Nashville, everything you need will be provided.* I almost start to cry, because this is so much more than I could ever have imagined. I had asked for socks and dinner for that night. God gave me all the clothes and food I would need until I received my first paycheck. "God, you could not show yourself any more faithful than you did today. I'm blown away, and now I understand (at least in part) why you allowed my Banamex card to fail. So you could show yourself to me in this way. Thank you. For your unfailing love in the midst of this doubt and fear. For showing how powerful you are so I would come to know you as provider in a greater way than I did before. There are not enough words to adequately express my thanks. You are so great. So much more love than I understand."

Do You See What I See?

by High Priest Paul J. Gage
Independence, MO

As you might recall from the Christmas season, the words in the title of this article are some of the words in the song, "Do You See What I See?" What do you see? What is your "range of vision?" As you know, in a trial, 100 witnesses could have 100 interpretations of what they "saw." It is interesting in Matthew 26:58-60, in the trial of Jesus that the words "false witnesses" are used three times. Are we, as "followers of Christ," ever a false witness, or do we sometimes just "see" things the way we want to see them?

Have you ever heard a great sermon or class on such topics as loving as Christ loves, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us, being one with Christ, the requirements of those who would be in Zion, slothfulness/apathy, the Financial Law, the Word of Wisdom, being obedient to God's commandments, etc. and then said, "I sure wish brother or sister so and so, or any other person could have heard that? In other words, that sermon or class was not for me, it was for someone else. The question might be, "Did I hear it?"

There is within the church, the Restoration, our branches, groups, families, and in our individual lives, what some call a "religious spirit." A religious spirit is defined as one in which a person in their "religious humility," judges and/or criticizes another person thinking that the other person is not up to our "spiritual level," or that the other person sure

needed that message that was given today. We are told plainly in I Corinthians 11:28, "But let a man examine himself..." and in II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves..." So, why are we so quick to "examine" others, but not ourselves? Could it be to ignore our own need to come before God and "be refined?"

We all know that we will stand before the Judgment Bar of God, and when we do, it may be like seeing a video of our life including all of our "religious spirit" moments. We can hide nothing from God, and when we are judged, it will all come forth to confront us, unless we have truly repented of our sins. Wouldn't we rather be "refined" now by our own willingness to "examine ourselves," and let God, who is the only one with such authority, examine others? It is not pleasant to face ourselves in the mirror, or to confess our faults to whoever needs to hear the confession, but it is better to do it now, of our own choosing, than to wait until the day of judgment.

God has given us that option, as we find in Genesis 7:40 "And in the garden of Eden gave I unto man his agency; and unto thy brethren have I said, and also

gave commandment, that they should love one another; and that they should CHOOSE ME THEIR FATHER." Whom do we choose?

Psalms 26:1-3
Judge, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity; I have trusted also in the Lord; therefore I shall not slide. Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes; and I have walked in thy truth.

Evangelism Council Report

by Elder Lyle Smith, Chair
Grain Valley, MO

The Evangelism Council has been active this past year in assisting the other missionary boards, and providing ministry in various parts of the world. We continue to see our primary role as helping to coordinate and assist the efforts of the area missionary boards. Our elected council members this year are Russ Reid, Dale Bainter, Mark Clement, and Lyle Smith. Those who are representatives from the other councils are John Mundy from ARM, Joe Hale from LAMB, and Richard Neill from SEAAM and the Coordinating Council.

We have also endeavored to be in the field and actually participate in the ongoing work. Our funds are limited, but we were able to fund the Priesthood Retreat in Nepal, as well as pay the expenses for a council member to bring ministry at the retreat.

Twenty priesthood members from Nepal and parts of Eastern India participated in the retreat. The participating priesthood included elders, priests, teachers, and deacons. It is wonderful to gather with our brothers at these retreats which provide opportunity for them to be a part of a church that is much greater than just individual branches. This is critical in the ongoing life of the Church. It is faith-strengthening to those of us who go, to see the growth of these priesthood members and their branches. They face many of the same issues that we do in bringing ministry to their members in their areas.

One young brother had the courage to stand up in front of the group and say, "Brothers, I have a problem with anger. I need your help with this issue." He asked for administration and was administered to. Words can hardly tell the change that has come into this young man's life since he became a Christian. Raised in a devout Hindu family, he was completely disowned when his family became aware that he was

reading the Bible. He said, "I used to believe in gods that were made of silver and gold; they had mouths, but could not speak, they had eyes, but could not see, they had ears, but could not hear. *Now, though, I believe in a living God that sees and speaks and hears. His name is Jesus Christ.*" The faith and courage of this young priesthood member is a testimony to all of us.

In addition to the assistance we were able to provide in Nepal/India, one of our council members also brought ministry at the Priesthood Retreat in East Africa. Several years ago the leaders in East Africa wrote the Evangelism Council requesting us to make sure that they could hold an annual Priesthood retreat. As a council, we have worked to do so. It is strengthening and encouraging to witness that our efforts are being blessed.

Around 40 brethren gathered for the East African Retreat that was held in the western part of Kenya close to Lake Victoria. Funds were provided to bring priesthood members from The Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya. Elders, priests, teachers, and deacons participated. We had a full three days to share together.

One of the amazing testimonies from Africa is about a middle aged man in Kenya I met six or eight years ago. He held the office of deacon. He lives in a small cluster of mud houses with thatched roofs out in the country. I have met him each time I have gone to Kenya and have been in his home several times. As is the case in so many areas of Africa, the young girls growing up where he lives, did not attend school beyond the first few grades and were often married at the age of thirteen or fourteen. On a visit a number of months ago, I saw him talking to a group of younger teenage girls outside one of the homes in the village. It was obvious that they wanted to be talking with him. I asked another priesthood

member why he was talking with a group of girls. He told me this story.

When this man came into the Restoration and was ordained a deacon he began to look at his village and the surrounding area, and realized that life for early teenage girls was not what it should be. He began working with the younger teenage girls, and their mothers, to convince them to go on to school a few more years. He has been successful in that endeavor and today, most of the girls remain in school longer

than before, and many are also waiting more years before they are married. *If ever I have seen the power of the gospel of Christ at work, I see it in that village.* The Lord has used a humble deacon whose efforts have made an amazing difference in the lives of the girls in this village.

We ask for your help to continue the work. Your financial contributions make it possible. Your prayers greatly bless the efforts to share the gospel!



Stewardship in Australia, Chook, Chook

as reported by High Priest Paul Gage

What are some good techniques to teach children in the area of stewardship? A proven method is to give them a project and require them to assume some responsibility for seeing that all things are done properly and in a timely fashion. They learn how to be responsible and then benefit from the results.

In Medowie, New South Wales, Australia, David and Melissa Game and their children, Lauren age nine and Micah age six and a half are raising range free chooks. Sure you have heard of chooks, just ask Colonel

Sanders, founder of KF chooks. The Game family is raising eight chooks and gathering and selling the eggs. Lauren and Micah are involved in helping take care of the chooks and gathering and selling the eggs. Money from the sale of eggs goes back into the project to cover the expenses and at the end of the year they share in the proceeds. Parents and children, as part of their stewardship, being responsible citizens of God's Kingdom.

Philippines-Luzon Missionary Trip Report, October/November 2014

by Elder Murray Broughton, Euroa, Australia

We left Australia for the Philippines on Sunday, the 19th of October, 2014. On Monday, we started visiting the people, held a Bible study in the evening, and administered to those who were sick. The next day we traveled to Baguio City and shared with the Saints for two days, which included an afternoon preaching service on Wednesday. Virginia Nilo taught a class during the day, and in the evening we held a Bible study. Over the next few days, we continued the pattern of visiting the people, teaching classes and studying in the evening.

On Sunday, we enjoyed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper and held a Sunday school class. There were 27 children present. After lunch, we took the Sacrament to those who couldn't attend the services, and in the evening we gathered to sing hymns and answer questions about the Bible.

Money was given to many people in order for them to go to the doctor, obtain medications, and have medical check-ups. Money was also provided so a young lady with a lump in her breast and an elderly man with cancer could have operations. They were both administered to as well. Some Saints also received financial support so they could return to their homes. One sister borrowed

money from us to build a little house to replace the one she had lost in the last typhoon.

November 1st is "All Saint's Day" in the Philippines, and we went with some of the people to visit a cemetery. It is the tradition there to go and visit the graves of loved ones on that day. While there, the people shared prayers with some of the other visitors.

We walked and visited with some people I had never met before. One young lady supports herself and her two year old daughter because her husband had left her. We talked about the gospel and the church. Brothers Ace De Vera and Julius Candido were with me. Another young lady walked with her daughter in her arms to church so the child could be blessed, and returned later to attend the Sacrament service. Many need our prayers and our help.

We had a baptism in the Agno Mission as Janelle Natino made her covenant to serve the Lord. We left Agno on Monday the 10th of November at 7 p.m. and arrived in Manila the next morning. While there, my hearing reached a point where I couldn't hear what people were saying. I went and saw a doctor who confirmed that I had an ear infection and was put me on antibiotics.

Although I had an ear infection, it didn't keep me from visiting people in Trece Martirez. While there, we had a study class every night, and had three baptisms in a private swimming pool. The Saints came from Antipolo to be with us and we had Sacrament together. We also had a business meeting during this time. All is going well. Praise the Lord!

We arrived safely back in Australia on the 23rd of November 2014. Thank you to all of you who gave money for the poor and needy, as well as for your prayers.



SEAAM Addendum to our Brother from Australia's article:

SEAAM would like to add some things to Brother Murray's article. It is significant that the Philippines is receiving ministry from two continents working together. Together we find that special things are happening in this country. Brother Murray has been working in the northern area of the Philippines, known as the Luzon region. Through his efforts, with the support of his wife Delma who is native to the Philippines, the work has gone forth in the area near Manila. Brother Murray has been coordinating their efforts through SEAAM. Many good things have happened as the church grows in this part of the Philippines.

At the same time, SEAAM Board members have been working on the island to the south called Mindanao. Between these two regions there are now over 700 members, and several priesthood. One of the significant things to take place, has been the sending of two elders from Mindanao up to Luzon to work with the church in that area. This has been strengthening to both the church and the priesthood in the Philippines. As the church grows and expands in that part of the world, more and more of the ministry that takes place will be dependent on those ministers who live there, and the interaction they have with one another. Visiting elders who have been sharing ministry in the Philippines have stressed the importance of this to the people there, and the SEAAM Board.

My Testimony

by Susan de Guzman
Ago, Luzon, Philippines

Before I entered and committed myself to a lifelong covenant with Jesus Christ, I asked myself, "Am I ready, and am I worthy to make this covenant?" These were the two big questions that my mind kept on asking. I didn't know that I was seeking for a clear and big answer. As time passed by, I felt very disappointed in myself because I had told Brother Murray that I wanted to be baptized, and join the Church of Jesus Christ, and yet, my questions remained.

Try as I might, I could not find the answers to the two big questions that were always running through my mind. I knew that it was wrong to have asked Brother Murray to be baptized, before I was ready to become part of the holy covenant. I was so sorry. The only thing I could do was to pray for the answer in every prayer to include myself in every prayer, to pray that one day I would receive an answer to my two big questions. Even though the questions were always there, I knew in my heart that I wanted to be

part of His covenant. My heart was telling me to go, but my mind was always reminding me of those two questions, "Are you ready?" and "Are you worth it?"

Many days passed, and then one day while I was reading the sixth chapter of Matthew my attention was drawn to the words in verse 21. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." I wondered if this was the answer to my big questions. I continued to read, and in Matthew 8:22 the words "Follow me" spoke to my heart. I took a deep breath and said, "Lord, thank you!" I know that He gave me the right verses to answer my questions.

I know, that surely, I've found myself. Now I don't need to ask these questions anymore. I choose to follow, to serve and to accept His calling. The Lord is so great! I will keep His covenant and become His servant. Thank you Lord for giving me the answer. With this answer, my mind and heart are now one.

My Testimony

by Richelle Nilo Candido
Cavite City, Philippines

I am currently 17 years old. It took me seven years before I decided to be baptized on May 26, 2014. I remember Brother Murray, a visiting missionary from Australia, asking me several times when I was going to be baptized. I have always been quiet and shy, and he said that it was okay for me to take my time and wait until I felt ready in my heart.

Why did I decide to get baptized? It all started last year when I worked in sales at my auntie's clothing shop in Manila. I was influenced by my friends to experience the night life of drinking. I would lie to my uncle and auntie in order to maintain my social life. My mother found out about my behavior, and she was very angry. She forced me to come back to our home in Cavite City. She scolded me, and asked what was happening to me.

What was really happening to me? I'm not this Richelle! For me, the last nine months in Manila were really different. When my mother said we would be having a vacation in Pangasinan, our province, I was excited about meeting my cousins again. When we arrived, I was surprised at the great number of Saints attending the Church of Jesus Christ. When Brother Ace invited me to attend a youth class one afternoon, without knowing what prompted me, I automatically said "Yes." I was impressed to see more than ten youth attending the study class. They were all really listening and answering questions asked by Brother Ace. Then Brother Ace asked, "What will you do to enter the Kingdom of God?"

I asked myself, "What am I going to do to enter God's Kingdom?" Brother Ace continued by saying that in order to enter the Kingdom of God, you should obey God's commandments, forget all your evil ways, and start committing yourself to God. He also said that we need to repent, be baptized, and make our covenant with the Lord.

Then, it struck me! Repent and be baptized! That day I

started attending evening services, and I asked myself again, "Am I ready? Again, the answer was "No," not now. I have plenty of time to know Jesus.

One day, Brother Murray asked each of us to pray. What would I pray? I don't know how to pray. How can I pray to Him if I'm committing sins against Him? These questions kept running through my mind. Brother Murray told us not to be afraid of praying. He said to pray from your heart; pray without ceasing, and God will hear your voice. Brother Murray was right; I know that God listens to me, even when I've sinned. I apologized, gave thanks, and asked God for wisdom.

Months passed, and I was helping Sister Susan and Brother Julius in the Church of Jesus Christ, Cavite City Branch. I was attending their church services and helping them teach the children attending Sunday school. You know what? It made me happy seeing the kids studying and worshipping God. It caused me to think, and ask for wisdom and guidance in what I should do, and how I could repent of my sins. I decided to follow Jesus.

Brother Murray and Sister Delma were visiting again, and at first, I didn't know what to say to Brother Murray. I just told him that I wanted to be baptized. He asked me if I was sure. I said that I was very sure. I believe God gave me a sign and another chance. I can be a better person. I can be new again.

I used to escape from services. Now, I rejoice whenever we have services. God makes me feel special because I am one of his daughters. He has changed me into a better person. I am happy to be able to serve Him.

For now, I am one of the newest members of Trece Martirez Restoration Branch in Cavite City. I am teaching the youth with Sister Susan and Brother Julius. I am blessed to be one of the instruments in God's vineyard through sharing and studying His word. And, I will not get tired of serving Him, for I have made a covenant with the Lord. This is only my first chapter, and there will be many stories and happenings awaiting me. I know Jesus Christ loves me, and I love Him too.

Be Ye Transformed

By Elder William "Vim" Horn, CRE Chairman
Sibley, MO

In the book of Acts we find the account of Simon, a popular self-proclaimed sorcerer who when he heard the gospel preached was baptized. After he was baptized, "[H]e continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done. Now when the apostles...heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John; Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost...And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, If perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me." (Acts 8:9-24)

The scriptures recount numerous occasions such as the one above with Simon where someone believed in Christ, was baptized, and yet did not fully understand or embrace what it means to give their life to God. Simon sought for fame and glory and missed the essential transformational aspects of what it means to be a Christian. We like Simon, may tend to want to be "affirmed" rather than "transformed." There is a distinct difference between the two. "Affirmation" means to accept: to uphold: a positive assertion. Affirmation often involves us seeking to find acceptance and approval, as we are, from those around us, and even God. Affirmation is very popular in our society today, and there

are many things that exist for the sole purpose of making us feel good about ourselves.

Affirmation is an essential aspect of life and can be a very good thing. However, can our need and desire for affirmation go too far? The answer of course is "Yes"—to be "affirmed" for something we are not, or while we are mired in sin is to deceive ourselves. It is one of the adversary's strongest tools for keeping us from focusing our attention on who God wants us to be, and to find true "Joy."

God desires to "Transform Us." Certainly transformation begins with God's affirming love, but it cannot stop there. For God so loved the world that he sacrificed his Son for us. In response, we must sacrifice "self" and be transformed. Transformation involves us becoming new creatures through Christ. It requires a renewing of our minds. Romans 12:1-2 summarizes this.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God is."

Transformation has to do with the renewing of our minds, what we think about and how we think. Romans 8:7 tells us that the carnal mind is enmity against God. Our minds must be renewed if we are to abide with God. No longer should we think on the things of this world only, walking in the vanity of our minds (Ephesians 4:17), fulfilling the desires of the mind (Ephesians 2:3) those that are temporal in nature—but now we should put off the old man, be renewed in the mind of the Spirit, and put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness (Ephesians 4:22-24). Phillipians, chapter 2 encourages us to be Christ minded, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Who, (Christ) made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, humbled himself and was obedient unto the death

of the cross. 1 Peter 4:1 challenges us as follows, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." I Corinthians 2:16 informs us that we have the mind of Christ if through humbleness of mind, we allow the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit to work within us.

Transformation also has to do with the renewing of our hearts, what we love and how we love. Simon, as reflected in the opening account, had not experienced a renewing of his heart and was admonished to repent. Luke 12:37 states that where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. In Mark 7:7 we find the Lord expressing the following rebuke, "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit, in vain do they worship me," No longer should our hearts be set on ourselves and the lusts of the world, but rather on righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (II Timothy 2:22).

God desires to "Transform Us." Certainly transformation begins with God's affirming love, but it cannot stop there. For God so loved the world that he sacrificed his Son for us. In response, we must sacrifice "self" and be transformed.

The Book of Mormon speaks of how the Spirit of the Lord wrought a mighty change in the hearts of the people, and how they had no more desire to do evil, but to do good continually (Mosiah 3:3); and how because of this change they were made free, were spiritually begotten, and became his sons and his daughters (Mosiah 3:9-11). In Alma 3, Alma calls the church in remembrance of how Abinadi preached the word unto their fathers and how, "a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts; and they humbled themselves, and put their trust in the true and living God. And behold, they were faithful until the end; therefore they were saved." Alma went on to ask the brethren of the church, "Have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?" (Alma 3:21-29)

These questions may well be asked of each of us. Let us pray that our hearts have been transformed and that our response to these questions might be to declare unto all people the self-same thing; that our hearts have been changed; that we have no more desire to do evil. (Alma 12:176).

As you reflect on what it means to be transformed, consider the following:

Be ye transformed, through the renewing of your mind

Be ye transformed, exercise the gifts of the Spirit

Be ye transformed, use your time, talents, and treasure wisely

Be ye transformed, full of hope in the Resurrection of Christ

Be ye transformed, rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, and instant in prayer

Be ye transformed, full of hospitality, meeting the needs of the saints and others

Be ye transformed, cleave to that which is good and righteous, live moral lives

Be ye transformed by the renewing of your heart

Be ye transformed, rejoice with them who rejoice and weep with them who weep

Be ye transformed, raising families for the Kingdom

Be ye transformed, praise God by bearing good fruit

Be ye transformed, live peaceably, mercifully and honest with all men

May God Bless us as we honestly look at ourselves and consider what it means to live "transformed" lives.

The Power of Words

by Elder James H. Daugherty, CRE Historian
Adrian, MO

Church historian, Charles A. Davies, was asked to explain the addition of the words, “Only Begotten Son” found in John 3:16 in the Inspired Version of the Holy Scriptures. In part, this was his response: “This particular phrase is one of interest because it is not found in the earliest manuscripts of the Johnine (John) Gospel. The word “begotten” does not appear in John 3:16 in any version earlier than the Latin Vulgate, which was the work of Jerome. The word translated “only begotten” by Jerome simply meant “single kind” or “one of a kind,” in the sense of being unique. This change from the original was probably influenced by Catholic tradition.” Question Time Volume 2, p. 16.

Over the years there have been countless arguments and debates over the relationship of Jesus Christ the Son, and God the Father. The words used, too often, turn from focusing on the issue to being personal attacks, leading to divisions and separations, and often causing irreparable damage.

Language often conveys the concepts, imagery, and culture of all members of the human race. The choice of words used in expression of important issues evoke emotions, both good and bad. The proper use of words and phrases, and an understanding of their meanings, is not just optional, but necessary, if we, as Saints, develop as we are instructed to do.

Brother Vim Horn, Chair of the Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE), at the 2014 Restoration Branch Family Reunion and CRE, spoke directly to this issue. “The problems facing the Restoration Movement is not so much doctrinal, as it is with personal relationships.”

The understanding some Saints have of issues, and their application of scripture and history, often arise to a feeling of righteousness, believing God’s stamp of approval is on their actions and beliefs. Because of their self-righteousness, the teachings and actions of the scribes and Pharisees were condemned, in the strongest of words, by Jesus Christ. Remember the counsel in

Alma 18:16, “Do not say, O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say, O Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy; yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.” Humility’s main characteristic is the understanding that you don’t know it all, but are continually growing.

There are similarities between the situation some Saints and branches find themselves in and a dysfunctional marriage. Any good marriage counselor will not take sides, but will offer advice that will change the path the couple is currently traveling. In other words, “If you are in a hole, stop digging.” Without compromising moral and ethical beliefs, there are some things that can be applied to help repair damaged relationships. For example: 1. Stop using words that hurt and find some that will help and heal. Heed the advice of James 3:2, on the use of the tongue, “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able to bridle the whole body.” 2. Be willing to listen, and give freedom, to others that may have different ways of worshiping and praising God, but share your understanding of the goals of the Gospel. To embrace different ways of worshiping is not a bad thing, and does not imply you have to change how you feel comfortable with your own spiritual expression and growth. 3. Examine your priorities: if you truly love someone, or some higher cause, you must be willing to discipline yourself to spend time with and be sensitive, to their needs and desires. Love comes and goes, and there are times we all become unlovable, but as in a marriage, it is the commitment that counts. No one branch alone can build Zion, but a committed community of Saints can. “The world needs the Zion of Christ’s hopes and longings. Somewhere, and somewhere soon, there must be brought into being, communities of reborn people, in which the environmental factors can be so under the domination of the Divine Spirit, that children can be born, reared, nurtured, and dedicated, without the terrible divisive and destructive elements which dominate our world and its cities today.” Arthur A. Oakman, Radio Sermon, Sept. 15, 1968. 4. Find ways to rebuild trust. Look for ways and opportunities to be together, to work and worship with each other, and to be the servants the Lord has called us to be.

The CRE was formed primarily to bring together, and support, branches, priesthood, and the Saints. It provides accountability and structure for missionary work and CRE council activities. The CRE has intentionally shied away from making controversial doctrinal statements and premature organizing efforts that rightly belong in the church, when it is reestablished.

Make plans, now, to attend the 2015 Restoration Branch Family Reunion and CRE, June 21-26, in Independence, MO. and be prepared to offer your time and talents. The goal of each Saint should be toward righteousness, right relationships between each other, and a right relationship with God.

Joseph Smith III in October 1899, wrote these words of counsel: "We are in the work to labor, not to build up any particular persons or branch of the human family, not to follow human policies or designs, but in the interests of the race, by strict adherence to the truth. Just so soon as we are sufficiently developed to adhere closely to the spirit of our work, in all branches of the service, ministerial and lay, we shall be permitted to enter in and occupy higher conditions and to move still further forward. We have been admonished to occupy higher ground, necessarily so. It is absolutely necessary to our success and the success of truth that this be done." Church History Vol. 5, p.471.

My Book of Mormon Testimony

by Elder Ray Treat
Independence, MO

My Book of Mormon testimony begins on a cranberry marsh in Wisconsin. January is the ideal month for sanding, a process used to prepare for the growth of cranberries. The process involves first encasing the cranberries in ice. During a cold spell in December, the marshes are flooded until the water covers the tops of the cranberry vines. The water is allowed to freeze solid to the top of the soil in the bed. Outlet gates are then opened and water is drawn off into the ditches surrounding the beds. The remaining ice protects the

cranberries from the -20 degree temperatures by acting as a warm blanket.

My job was working on the sand spreader. This is a two-man job, so my father hired Jim Schorr, a local farm boy, to help. We did not know that he was a priest in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Sparta, Wisconsin.

To accomplish the sanding, we had a half-yard shovel and four dump trucks. The sand pit was a mile from the marsh. After the fourth truck finished unloading, there would be a ten-minute wait before the next load. After a few days of working with Jim, he told me that he had a book he wanted me to read. The next day, he brought the book and gave it to me. It was the Book of Mormon. He said it was the story about the Indians. I had never seen the Book of Mormon before. All I knew about Mormons was that they lived in Utah, were connected with polygamy, and had the Book of Mormon.

Once I began to read the book, I could hardly put it down. I would run my car out on the ice, whenever a ten-minute wait came, so I could read it. I took the book home and read it every spare minute I had. I even read while in bed and often read myself to sleep. In four days I had read two-thirds of the book. Then, the sanding job ended and I stopped reading the book for two to three months. When I started to read it again, I quickly finished it. After finishing reading the book, Elder Victor Lakowaska presented the "Go Ye and Teach" slide series in May of 1960 at the home of Jim Schorr which I attended, and on May 25, 1960, I was baptized.

When I remember back on this time, I think the main thing going on was that I did not have any doubt about the Book of Mormon. However, I realize that my present-day thoughts are deeper than those of 1960. Nevertheless, I have a growing awareness that the Lord is going to raise our understanding of the Book of Mormon to the point where we think we are "new" Book of Mormon believers. Consider our history—the Lord brought the entire church under condemnation in 1832 (DC 83:8.) I am not aware that the Lord has ever lifted this condemnation. When He does, our understanding of the Book of Mormon will grow to the point where we will think that we are new "born again" house of Israel believers.

Women's Council January Brunch – Two Testimonies

Testimony by Susan Freeze, Bates City, MO
The theme for the January Brunch was “Bless Us Indeed”. This was a great morning as around 80 women from many different Restoration Congregations came together to enjoy worship and fellowship as sisters in Christ.



The program was one of up-lifting testimonies and music. Jennifer Raffety played the cello and Shirley Holloway the violin during a reflection video of pictures with scriptures. Jean Coney and Kay Black shared wonderful testimonies of the many different ways God has blessed their lives. Karen Brown led the hymn sing and Marla Kroesen played the piano. Vocal music was provided by Beth and Hannah Milligan and Eva and Kenesse Cartright. All the music was exceptional. Bob Bobbit was the pastor and brought the closing remarks.

The whole program was very inspirational. I had asked a friend to attend with me and it was her first time at such an event and she also enjoyed the morning and felt it was a very up-lifting experience. The food was delicious and we truly enjoyed fellowshiping with our many sisters in Christ. This was a beautiful, inspirational morning and a great way to start the New Year!!

Testimony by Margaret Hobbs, Independence, MO
The annual CRE Women's Council Brunch was held at Colbern Road RB in January, 2015. The council members do a wonderful job of providing ministry for the women of the church. This event was no exception as there was not only a delicious meal provided by the Colbern Road women, but there was also a spiritual feast as several ladies shared musical talents and testimonies.

The theme was the Prayer of Jabez as found in I Chronicles 4:9-10, with the focus on his request to God, “Bless me indeed.” I felt that God blessed us right away through the song service that started the activities of the day. I always was ministered to and felt a spirit of peace and oneness with the women when we all sang together in beautiful harmony. Singing praises to God helped us to transition from the distractions of the world, to focusing upon worshiping our Lord. The special music presented was very uplifting and caused me to be thankful for those willing to share their gifts with the Saints.



The day was designed to help us reflect on the many ways God has blessed us, and cause us to expect Him to bless us even further, as we step out in faith and accept those challenges that lie before us.

2015 Restoration Branch Family Reunion and Elders Conference Registration Form

June 21-26, 2015, Independence, MO at CPRS/Waldo

Please complete this registration form as soon as possible and send it to the, Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE) at PO Box 4085, Independence, MO 64051, or bring to the CRE office at 500 N. Union in Independence, MO. **PLEASE PRINT**

FAMILY MEMBERS REGISTERING (It is suggested that anyone 18 years or older should register separately)

Name of Primary Adult Contact:		Name of Adult 2:	
Name of Child 1:	Age:	Entering Grade:	
Name of Child 2:	Age:	Entering Grade:	
Name of Child 3:	Age:	Entering Grade:	
Name of Child 4:	Age:	Entering Grade:	
Name of Child 5:	Age:	Entering Grade:	

Add information concerning any additional children on the back of this form.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address:	Street	City	
	State (if USA)	Zip Code	Country
Phone:	Email Address:		

Home Restoration Branch:

ATTENDANCE PLANS (Please mark boxes which best reflect your family's planned attendance)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All Sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning Worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Morning Classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> CRE Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Evenings |

HOUSING, MEAL & OTHER PREFERENCES

HOUSING: If you have room for guests who are attending the Reunion/Conference, or need housing, contact the CRE. Email: eldersconference7@gmail.com OR call 816-836-3421, or out of area at 877-748-8947(toll free). Leave a message.

- Will Make Own Arrangements
- Need Housing Assistance # in Family: _____ Prefer: Private Home Motel/Hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be provided on campus each day beginning with Monday, June 22, 2015. Last meal will be served at noon, Friday, June 26, 2015.

Check box, or boxes that best represent(s) your family's eating plans.	Number in family eating meals at Reunion:
<input type="checkbox"/> All Meals <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch <input type="checkbox"/> Dinner	# Adults: _____ # Children: _____

OTHER PREFERENCES: Need Nursery Services # Children: _____

Other Special Needs (Please describe)

SKILLS/INTERESTS (Check items below that you are willing to help with. Please list first name of applicable family members)

<input type="checkbox"/> Special Music--Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Piano/Organ--Name:
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach/help w/class--Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Children/Nursery--Name:
<input type="checkbox"/> Dining Rm/Kitchen--Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify, including name):

COST & GENERAL INFORMATION

FEES: There is no registration fee for the reunion. Expenses will be met through offerings and donations. If you would like to make a donation prior to reunion, make checks payable to the CRE and write in memo note, "for Reunion/Conference." Conference notebooks are available for a minimal fee to cover the cost of the binder and printing. **DISPLAYS:** To request having a display, contact the Conference Manager as soon as possible by contacting the CRE office. **YOUTH:** Youth under the age of 18 yrs should be under the supervision of an adult when attending Reunion/Conference activities. **QUESTIONS:** Email the CRE at, eldersconference7@gmail.com OR call the CRE Office at 816-836-3421, or out of area at 877-748-8947(toll free) and leave a message if no one is there.

Signature of Adult Registering:

Date:

Use Other Side to Provide Priesthood Information and/or Register for the Conference of Restoration Elders

Melchisedec Credentials Guidelines

Amended April 6, 2010

The following guidelines will serve as the basis for seating all elders in the current assembly and in other CRE activities, and continue in effect unless, or until altered through future conference action.

Participation in the Elders Conference shall be extended to authoritatively ordained Melchisedec Priesthood—

1. Who, currently function within a “Restoration Branch,” and whose office and ordination have been determined to be in order by the Credentials Committee of said conference, or the Coordinating Council between conferences. (A “Restoration Branch” does not accept such doctrines as the ordination of women to the priesthood, the serving of the sacrament to persons without authoritative baptisms, or participate or accept the calling and ordination of men to priesthood offices other than elder, priest, teacher, or deacon. Any branch previously engaged, or associated with an organization which participated in such actions are required to renounce the same in order to be considered and function as a “Restoration Branch.”)

2. Who, while not joined with a branch, have remained faithful to their calling by supporting the “Restoration Position,” and whose office and ordination have been determined to be in order by the Credentials Committee of said conference, or the Coordinating Council between conferences.

3. Who, for reasons of conscience or physical location have continued to minister within the framework of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints/Community of Christ, but who have not subscribed to, nor participated in any divergent practices or doctrines, and whose office and ordination have been determined to be in order by the Credentials Committee of said conference, or the Coordinating Council between conferences.

4. Who, have since then been affiliated with one or more of the factional movements—who are willing to renounce said affiliation, and repent of any participation in divergent practices or doctrines including, but not limited to the rejection of any subsequent ordinations, whose office and ordination have been determined to be in order by the Credentials Committee of said conference, or the Coordinating Council between conferences.

5. Who, by accepting a call to the priesthood, have accepted the personal responsibility of maintaining the highest standards of Christian conduct. Verified failure to maintain such standards may constitute grounds for denying or revoking one’s right to voice, vote, and participation in CRE activities.

- Upon the written statements of two or more credible witnesses to conduct on the part of a Melchisedec priesthood member that is unbecoming a priesthood member, or conduct that is detrimental to that members’ ministry, or the ministry of others, the Credentials Committee, or Coordinating Council between conferences, will determine whether said priesthood member is eligible to participate in the Conference of Restoration Elders.

Circumstances or questions concerning eligibility of a Melchisedec priesthood member to be seated in the CRE that may arise that are not covered by any of the above guidelines will be reviewed and acted upon by the Credentials Committee on a case by case basis.

Appeals of the decision of the Credentials Committee for seating shall be made in writing and submitted to the CRE Coordinating Council for review, consideration, and action. If the appeal is denied, and one of the parties involved desires to appeal the decision of the Coordinating Council, a committee of seven Elders shall be elected from the seated body of elders in conference to review and consider the appeal. The elected representatives will consider the appeal during the convening conference, and render a decision that shall be final for that conference. In this way, the rights of the individual and the rights of the body to consider matters pertaining to the conference will be preserved and protected.

2015 Restoration Branch Reunions

- June 1-6 **Zion's Ridge Reunion**
Independence, MO
Contact: Ray Lane 816-650-6573
- June 14-20 **South Crysler Restoration Branch**
Graceland University Lamoni, Iowa
Contact: Richard Mark 816-795-5028
Registrars: Paul and Lynette Davis 816-795-0703
- June 6-13 **Central Missouri Restoration Branches**
Odessa Hills Campgrounds Odessa, MO
Contact: odessahills.com or Howard Parker 816-230-4000
- June 21-26 **Restoration Branch Family Reunion & Conference of Restoration Elders**
Sponsored by the CRE and Pastors of Zion (POZ)
Independence, MO at Waldo Avenue RB/CPRS
Contact: CRE Office 816-836-3421, or 877-748-8947 (Toll-free) eldersconference.org or POZ website
- June 27-July 3 **Buckner Restoration Branch**
Odessa Hills Campgrounds Odessa, MO
Contact: Eric Baker 816-765-8802
- July 4-11 **Orthodox RLDS**
Odessa Hills Campgrounds Odessa, MO
Contact: Russ Copus 573-480-7820
- July 18-25 **Maine Restoration Reunion**
Brooksville, Maine
Contact: Dwight Staples 207-348-2420
- July 25-Aug 1 **Woodbine Reunion**
Little Sioux, Iowa
Contact: Mic Coolman 712-310-7495
- July 27-Aug 2 **Great Lakes Regional Reunion**
Vassar, Michigan
Contact: Helen Danicke 248-651-3208
- August 1-7 **Kirtland Area Family**
Temple Grove Transfer, Pennsylvania
Contact: Peter Peterson 440-639-1752
- August 17-23 **Northwest Regional Reunion**
Vancouver, Washington
Contact: Brian Herren 503-949-2482

! If any additional camps, retreats, or reunions should be listed or any corrections needed, please notify the CRE Office at 816-836-3421 or Paul Gage at pauljg_64055@yahoo.com

2015 Restoration Branch Youth Camps

IOWA

June 7-13 Jr. High-Sr. High at Little Sioux, Iowa
Contact: Dave and Karla Hamblen 402-659-8211

July 5-9 Junior Camp at Little Sioux, Iowa
Contact: Gina Birdsall 712-456-2048

GREAT LAKES REGION

July 12-17 Jr and Sr. High at Sanford, Michigan
Contact: Jay and Kathi Havener 248-628-9702

July 19-25 Children's Camp (Grades 3-7) at Erie Beach, Ontario CAN
Contact: Betty Lou Newman 519-734-1097

MISSOURI

CENTRAL MISSOURI RESTORATION BRANCHES

Odessa Hills Campgrounds, Odessa, MO

May 17-23 Older Youth
Directors: Reggie & Suzanne Bendorf

May 31-June 4 Jr. Camp (Grades 4-6) Directors: TBA

June 14-20 Sr. High (Grades 10-May graduates)
Directors: Stu and Milee Gage

June 21-27 Jr. High (Grades 7-9) Directors: TBA

Contact: Judi Smith 816-633-4199 or odessahills.com

RESTORATION CAMPING INC. RCIcamps.org

June 20-26	Mountain Camp	Grades 10-13	Colorado
July 12-18	Mammoth Camp	Grades 9-13	Lake of the Ozarks
July 19-25	Bountiful Camp	Grades 7-9	Odessa Hills
July 26-29	Tiona Camp	GIRLS Grades 4-7	Odessa Hills
July 29-Aug. 1	Liahona Camp	BOYS Grades 4-7	Odessa Hills

NORTHWEST REGIONAL

Aug 2-8 Grades 6-12 at Yacolt, WA Contact: Kevin Herren 503-562-9384

TEXAS

July 8-12 2000 Strong Adventure Camp (Grades 3-college)
Wednesday July 9 at 5:00 pm to Sunday July 14 at noon
YMCA/Collin County Campgrounds, Anna, Texas
Contact: Jerry Skotak 214-674-3051

2015 Restoration Branch Retreats:

Northwest Region

May 15-17 Men's Retreat at Yacolt, WA
Contact Brian Herren 503-949-2484

Sept. 18-20 Priesthood Retreat at Yacolt, WA
Contact Brian Herren 503-949-2484

CRE Women's Council

Sept 26-27 Fall Retreat at Odessa Hills
Contact Sylvia Powell 816-240-0095

CRE Priesthood

Sept. 19-20 at Kirtland, Ohio
Contact CRE Office 816-836-3421

2015 Calendar Of Events:

May 3 Central Missouri Restoration Branches
(CMRB) All Branch Gathering at
Oak Grove Restoration Branch

June Restoration Branch Family Reunion and
21-26 Conference of Restoration Elders (CRE)
Sponsored by the CRE and Pastors of Zion

READER'S COMMENTS

Greetings to the Saints from the Restoration Branches in Australia: Brisbane, pastor Elder Al Kerswell, asst. Elder Noel Rowlatt; Euroa, pastor, Elder Geoffrey Grayden, asst. Elder Murray Broughton; Tamworth, pastor Elder Peter Archer, asst. Deacon Roy Schubert and the Sydney area, Elder Danny Archer.

Announcements:

Domestic Outreach Program

The Domestic Outreach program sponsored by the CRE coordinates needed ministry throughout Canada and the USA. If you, or your Branch desire ministry, there are a number of priesthood and Saints willing to travel and provide it in the form of preaching, teaching, witnessing weekends, women or youth ministry, etc. To schedule ministry, contact us at Domestic Outreach c/o CRE PO Box 4085 Independence, MO 64051 or email Paul Gage at pauljg_64055@yahoo.com.

SHARE WITH US!

Please send your articles, testimonies, branch news, youth activities, regional events, etc. to the CRE c/o Publication Council. Also, please notify the CRE of any changes in your mailing address, phone number, email address, etc., or if you wish to discontinue receiving the *Tidings of Zion*. All contact information is on the inside front cover of each *Tidings of Zion*.

ONGOING EXPENSES

As with everyone's personal expenses, so it is with the expenses of the CRE. Your continued support to address CRE operating cost is needed and appreciated.

Continued financial support for the *Tidings of Zion* is needed. Around 5000 copies are printed per issue at a cost of about \$6000. The magazine goes into 4400 homes around the world, in places such as Australia, Belize, Canada, Germany, Honduras, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mexico, Nepal, the Philippines, Russia and the United Kingdom, as well as 48 states in the USA.

An annual donation of \$20 would cover the cost of someone receiving the *Tidings* for a year. If 25-30 branches, groups, or individuals could contribute \$1000 per year, it would cover the cost of *Tidings of Zion*. Some branches and individuals are already providing significant support, which is greatly appreciated. Checks should be made out to the CRE, and in the memo line, write, "Tidings of Zion."

Go Ye into all the World...

African Restoration Ministries (ARM)

In December, two retreats were scheduled in East Africa. The first one was a missionary retreat, as the majority of people attending would not be members of the church. People from Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) participated as well. It was held December 5-7, 2014, in Kayonza, Rwanda. The theme was "Come and Follow Me". The retreat was held at the first church building in Rwanda which was recently erected. Thanks to the dedication of many Saints who donated funds for the registration of the church in Rwanda. The second retreat was a youth retreat, held December 12-14, 2014, at Kisumu, Kenya. A focus of the retreat was on older youth who have graduated from college and are working. Guest ministry from the United States included, Lucas Boyce, Doug and Judi Smith, and Riane Thomas.

ARM is planning mission trips to Africa in April, August, and December. There will be priesthood retreats, camps, etc. Teams will include priesthood, women, and youth.

Latin American Missions Board (LAMB)

The Saints in Honduras held their annual conference in January of 2015. Several representatives of LAMB joined them for the conference. Seventy Juan Reyes continues to provide a great ministry in Mexico.

Southeast Asia and Australia Ministries (SEAAM)

The SEAAM Board, in operation since 1998, functions under the Evangelism Council of the CRE, continues to provide ministry and support to the following areas of the world:

Australia: Visiting ministry from the USA included Hal and Pat Chadwick, Paul Gage, Daniel and Lauren Nixon, and Doug and Judi Smith. Brother Gage was in Australia from February 13-April 8, 2015. The Chadwicks, Nixons, and Smiths provided ministry from April 2-20, 2015. The gospel of Jesus Christ is alive and fervent in Australia wherever the Saints are located. Please continue to uphold the Saints and the work of the Lord in Australia.

Saints from throughout Australia gathered at Mt Seaview, near Wauchope (Wahope) in New South Wales, Australia April 3-6, 2015, for the 2015 reunion. Saints came from Adelaide, Brisbane, Euroa, Gawler, Melbourne, Medowie, Newcastle, Sydney, Tamworth and other areas. Elder Peter Archer served as reunion director and Elder Noel Rowlett served as reunion pastor. The theme was "Behold the Lamb of God."

The Philippines: The work in the Philippines continues to go forward. In the Manila area, Elder Murray Broughton and wife Delma, from Australia visit at least twice a year. Delma is a native of the Philippines. The Broughtons were in Luzon during the month of November 2014, and are planning to return to Luzon in May of 2015.

A NOTE FROM THE PHILIPPINES:

Greetings in Christ's holy name.

Praise God for the blessing that you have shared with the Saints in the Philippines.

God bless you all. Your Brother in Christ, Jun Pamongcales

Greater European Missions (GEM)

GEM is planning trips to Germany in April or May and September. Younger priesthood interested in serving in Germany may contact Brian Mundy. Two families from Germany are scheduled to attend the Maine reunion this summer.

All the missionary boards have a need for financial assistance to be able to continue the efforts that are underway around the world. Thanks to all who continue to support these efforts. God bless you.

Tidings of Zion

Conference of Restoration Elders
PO Box 4085
Independence, MO 64051

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Philippians 2:5-11

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus;
Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be
equal with God;
But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the
form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men;
And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,
and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a
name which is above every name;
That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in
heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is
Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

